

"HUMBUG!"

A Comedy,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

F. C. BURNAND, ESQ.

[Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society.]

AUTHOR OF

Patient Penelope, or The Return of Ulysees; Ixion, or the Man at the Wheel; Alonzo the Brave, or Faust and the Fair Imogene; Villikins and his Dinah; Lord Lovel and Lady Nancy Bell; Romance under Difficulties; In for a Holiday; Dido; King of the Merrows; Deerfoot; Fair Rosamond; Robin Hood, or The Foresters' Fete; Acis and Galatea; The Deal Boatman; Madame Berlioz's Ball, or the Chalet in the Valley; Rumpelstiltskin, or the Woman at the Wheel; Snowdrop, or the Seven Mannikins and the Magic Mirror; Cupid and Psyche, or as Beautiful as a Butterfly; Ulysses, or the Iron-clad Warrior and the Little Tug of War; Pirithous, the Son of Ixion; Windsor Castle; Dido (second edition); Paris, or Vive L'empiere; L'Africaine (opera-bouffe); L'Africaine (burlesque, Liverpool); Boabdil el Chico, or the Moor the Merrier; Sappho, or Look Before you Leap; Our Yachting Cruise (G. Reed's); Der Freischütz, or a Good Cast for a Piece; Antony and Cleopatra, or His-story and Her-story in Modern Nilo-metre; Olympic Games, or the Major, the Miner, and the Cock-a-doodle-doo; The Latest Edition of Black-eyed Susan, or the Little Bill that was Taken Up; Guy Fawkes, or the Ugly Mug and the Couple of Spoons; Helen, or Taken from the Greek; Mary Turner, or the Wicious Willin and Victorious Wirtue; The Contrabandists, or Law of the Ladrones; White Fawn, Etc

AND PART AUTHOR OF

B.B.; Volunteer Ball; Turkish Bath; Carte de Visite; The Isle of St. Tropez; Easy Shaving, etc., etc.

THOMAS HAILES LACY
89, STRAND, LONDON.

HUMBUG.

First Performed at the New Royalty Theatre, (under the management of Miss M. Oliver), on Thursday, December 19, 1867.

[The idea of this piece was partly derived from, the Comedy of " Les Faux Bonshommes," but the plot is, in other respects, entirely original]

CHARACTERS.

*DUKE OF CHEFBOROUGH	Mr. M. D. Fairfield
LORD BRADSTOCK	Mr. Siddons
MR. JOHN KEGG	Mr. J. W. Ray
VINCENT WENHAM, ESQ.	Mr. E. Danvers
SIR SIMON HOLT { <i>(of Holt, Capel, &c Co. Bankers)</i> }	Mr. Percy Charles
MR. CARFAX.....	MR. Kenward
DRYESDALE.....	Mr. Cobbett
LAWRENCE DOLAN, ESQ.....	Mr. J. Russell
AUGUSTUS SAWDER.....	Miss Fowler
AYLMER TRAFFORD } <i>(Artists)</i> {	Mr. Philip Day
EDWARD FURSDEN } {	Mr. J. Dewar
SANDARS	Master Wright
MRS. SAWDER	Mrs. J. Rouse
GERTRUDE KEGG	Miss Nelly Bromley
BEATRICE KEGG	Carlotta Addison

* This character in speaking invariably repeats his last words.

Time while in representation—One hour and twenty Minutes.

Costumes of the day.

"HUMBUG!"



ACT I.

SCENE.— *Morning Room at "The Priory" on the Thames near Richmond. The large window at the back opens on to the garden and in the distance is a view of the meadows, a park, the river, and the opposite bank. Good sized door to the room, L. — a conservatory R. from 1st grooves to join R. flat. The room is furnished with great taste. There are pictures on the walls—statuettes on brackets—articles of vertu, arranged about, chairs, sofas, tools, &c. The time of the year is supposed to be about the middle of June. Upon an easel R. is placed a half-finished, half-length portrait of Mr. Kegg in volunteer uniform.*

AYLMER TRAFFORD *discovered standing by the open window at back, R., EDWARD seated L., with a photograph book in his hand at table, and DRYESDALE looking over his shoulder. Table and two chairs up stage, R. Fauteuil, C.*

EDWARD. (*seated R. of table, L.*) Yes, Mr. Dryesdale, I shall put your portrait in as one among the lucky ones in this book.

DRYES. (*going up to AYLMER*) Ho ! Mr. Fursden! he calls me lucky, Mr. Trafford.

TRAFF. So you are, if Mr. Kegg lets you have the old Keep for a mere song.

DRYES. (*going down R.*) The old Keep ! a ruin ! a tumble down old ruin: valuable to a poor antiquary like myself !

EDWARD. The very place for artists.

DRYES. Not worth a sixpence to any one—a few curious old manuscripts, parchments, old volumes that have not

seen the light for years. To grub among them is only a labour of love to me—nothing more—I haven't the good fortune to paint pictures.

EDWARD. Selling them is the point.

DRYS. (*X ing to L. and takes up his hat from table, L.*) Mercenary view, my dear Mr. Fursden. But I must go to the old tumble down place—I shall see you again when I come in to meet Mr. Kegg's lawyer about this, good morning, I may say I'm going—he, he, he, I'm going to my ruin, he, he, he. (*exit c. and R.*)

EDWARD. Going to his ruin! old humbug! a speculator in antiquarian dust bins, who often finds a diamond in the heap. Old Kegg will let him have the place for nothing because the fellow's got a name, and a tenant like that throws a lustre upon the enlightened landlord.

TRAFF. Then he is not a collector for love?

EDWARD. No, it's a business. Before now he's found valuable old family records, and has been handsomely paid to keep his discoveries to himself.

TRAFF. But Ned you are very fond of setting down everyone as a humbug.

EDWARD. Most people belong to the house of Humbug. We're in an atmosphere of it now. It's like ozone in the air, and I begin to think we can't exist without it.

TRAFF. (*X ing to c. and sitting on fauteuil*) Excepting exceptions.

EDWARD. We're not exceptions if you mean that. You've been three months over that portrait of old Kegg, but paint him as you will, you'll never exhibit him in the catalogue as "Portrait of Mr. John Kegg, by his son-in-law, Aylmer Trafford."

TRAFF. Nor will you make Miss Beatrice Kegg into Mrs. Edward Fursden.

EDWARD. I don't wish it; I was fascinated when I first saw her, but she's a mercenary little beggar and thinks of nothing but money and a title.

TRAFF. Gertrude is different.

EDWARD. Perhaps so, but it will be all the same in the end as far as you're concerned. Kegg is a humbug, and a weak-minded old humbug too, but everything he's touched, from blacking to building, has turned into gold, and his daughters are not going to be a losing speculation.

TRAFF. You're not encouraging.

EDWARD. I should be if I wanted you to humbug yourself—what chance have you against this man? For

instance, (*showing photograph*) a son-in-law after Kegg's own heart, who speculates on the turf under a false name so that he may gamble respectably in the city in his own.

TRAFF. Lord Bradstock.

EDWARD. Yes, and the portrait at his back is Sir Simeon Holt, of Holt, Capel & Co., Bankers, who makes a considerable capital of his public piety and a "serious" reputation! Humbugs, humbugs, humbugs, living on one another like the animalculae in a drop of Thames water.

TRAFF. Let's look. (EDWARD *gives him the book and rises*) Come, Dolan isn't a bad fellow.

EDWARD. (*at back of fauteuil, looking over AYLME*R) A hearty humbug. Noise goes a great way towards a character for honesty.

TRAFF. Carfax, the solicitor.

EDWARD. A humbug who finds that caution swells a bill. (GERTRUDE *appears in the conservatory* R.)

TRAFF. (*looking at another*) I give Mrs. Sander up—she's a humbug with Kegg for the sake of her son marry—Miss Beatrice, (*looks at another*) Vincent Wenham.

EDWARD. (*coming down L. c., and taking the book*) Wenham—*ducued* good likeness—a disagreeable humbug, who praises you one moment (*during EDWARD'S speech TRAFFORD joins GERTRUDE and they talk together*) to abuse you the next. It's like the game of sticks, when a man puts a doll on a pedestal for the pleasure of knocking it down again afterwards. (*puts book on table L., as Miss BEATRICE enters by L. door.*)

BEAT. (*down, c.*) The easel is on the lawn and so is my horse, Mr. Fursden.

EDWARD. (X *ing over to easel R., takes up paint-box, &c., and goes to R. of fauteuil, packing them up*) I am quite ready, Miss Beatrice. (BEATRICE *sees GERTRUDE and TRAFFORD in the conservatory.*)

BEAT. (C, *evidently annoyed*) It's too bad of Gertrude! one would almost think your friend, Mr. Trafford, was proposing to my sister.

EDWARD. (x. C, *sarcastically*) Oh, impossible.

BEAT. It is impossible, she is engaged to Lord Bradstock, and if she were not, papa would never hear of such a mis-alliance.

EDWARD. Perhaps he *would* never hear of it.

BEAT. Then she would have nothing. And what can she do without a carriage and horses.

EDWARD. (R. C.) Walk.

BEAT. (L. C.) Walk!

EDWARD. Or go in an omnibus.

BEAT. Gertrude in an omnibus!

EDWARD. And Trafford on the knifeboard. There's a picture!

BEAT. Knifeboard! vulgar.

KEGG. (*without*) Don't let me bring you in!

BEAT. Here's papa, (*in a sharp tone to attract her sister's attention*) Gertrude! (GERTRUDE *joins BEATRICE up stage R., who appears to remonstrate with her—GERTRUDE kisses her, and evidently tries to pacify her. TRAFFORD comes down R., and prepares his paints, &c.—EDWARD, down R. corner, speaks earnestly to TRAFFORD. Enter KEGG, pointing out the view to DOLAN—WENHAM salutes the LADIES and comes down L.—DOLAN and KEGG c., KEGG sits L. near c., TRAFFORD commences painting—all enter c. from L.*)

DOLAN. (*up stage, R. c.*) Your father has a charming place here, Miss Kegg—'tis a paradise with a couple of Eves.

WENHAM. (*down L.*) Dolan is right, it is delightful—admirable!

EDWARD. (*R. corner, aside to TRAFFORD*) Wenham's put the doll on the pedestal.

WENHAM. Only— (*stops as if considering the view.*)

EDWARD. (*R. corner, aside to TRAFFORD*) Now he'll knock it off again.

WENHAM. (*continuing*) Only I don't think much of the view. In fact there can be no real distance without mountains; you may say what you like about it, but it's flat, flat; besides, I should say it was damp. This whole place must have been a swamp once, (*exeunt GERTRUDE and BEATRICE, by window at back, followed by EDWARD off c. and L.*)

KEGG. (*seated L. C.*) It suits me well enough, I'm not pretentious—'t isn't as if I was a duke.

WENHAM. (L.) True, quite true; you could buy up many a marquis, or a duke either. (KEGG *flattered*) And yet what I like in you, Kegg, is, that you never forget there was a time you had nothing.

KEGG. (*uncomfortable*) Yes, yes.

WENHAM. You're not too proud to own you rose from being a common shoeblack, and it does you credit—and it does you credit!

KEGG. (*aside—annoyed*) Damn the credit.

WENHAM. You hold your position among men of rank, and can patronise the arts and sciences, although I don't mind saying it before your face, what I say behind your back, you never had any sort of educational advantages, in fact, had no education at all. (KEGG *fidgets*, WENHAM *goes up, and then X 's over to R. c.*)

TRAFF. You've moved, Mr. Kegg.

DOLAN. (*up stage, L. c.*) That's true, sir, he has moved, and we're proud of him ; .England's proud of him, so's Ireland, so's-----

Enter MRS. SAWDER, by window, from R.

Ah, Mrs. Sawder ! this is a pleasure. Our friend is sitting for his portrait and looks about as happy as if it was his teeth and not his face that was being drawn. He'll smile again on seeing you, ma'am.

Enter AUGUSTUS, through c. from R.

MRS. S. (*down R. c, seeing KEGG about to rise*) Don't move, I wouldn't have anyone decomposed on my account. If cousins can't come in and out of each other's houses without ceremony, what's the use of living in the country ? I've brought my work, I shan't say a word. And my dear Augustus who's home for the vacation—that's the college phrase for holidays—will go and talk with the dear girls in the garden. Beatrice is there, Augustus.

AUGUST. (*aside*) Hate girls, (*sitting on fauteuil, L. C.*)

MRS. S. (*taking out her work and sitting on fauteuil, R. c.*) You haven't said good morning to your uncle, I was just going to say, your father-in-law.

WENHAM. (*down R. corner, aside to TRAFFORD*) The wish was father-in-law to the thought.

KEGG. I can't talk now.

MRS. S. And how is the picture getting on ?

DOLAN. 'Tis a speaking likeness, ma'am, though the original has to keep so quiet.

MRS. S. It's consoling to think that your features will be handed down to prosperity.

WENHAM. (*extreme R.*) Very, it's a good picture—there's no mistaking it for anyone else.

DOLAN. (*a little up stage, L.*) Which is a great thing in a portrait.

WENHAM. Only somehow it's not Kegg. (X's R. C.)

TRACT. Then, Mr. Wenham, it fails in its object.

WENHAM. (R. C.) No, I don't say that, only the subject is not inspiring.

TRAFF. I shan't get inspiration from Mr. Wenham. (WENHAM goes up R. c.)

KEGG. He can't paint if you talk.

MRS. S. (*suddenly seeing AUGUSTUS is asleep, pricks him*) Augustus! I know you're longing to go and talk to dear Beatrice. There go, go, I won't keep you.

AUGUST. Very well, mother, (*aside*) I shall go and smoke. (*exit R. in conservatory*)

MRS. S. Ah, what a pair they'll make. "Sure such a pair." What is it the poet says—dear me! Augustus and Beatrice, A. B.; I love my love with an A, because he's Augustus; I love my love with a B, because she's Beatrice. We've all played it.

DOLAN. (*who has got up stage behind fauteuil*) Sure, ma'am, I think there's mighty little play in that game.

MRS. S. You're right, you're right, and dear John must think seriously about settling Beatrice.

KEGG. Yes, when Gertrude's married.

KRS. S. Ah! then it is settled; to Lord Bradstock! (TRAFFORD gives a perceptible start and smudges the picture.)

WENHAM. (*going down to picture, R.*) Hullo! (KEGG starts.)

TRAFF. Nothing; merely an effect in shadow—sit still.

MRS. S. Of course it's a great thing for Gertrude to be Lady Bradstock.

KEGG. It's not that alone, but he's a thorough man of business. In one day he's made a fortune. All young noblemen and honourables go into business now.

DOLAN. Maybe that's a good thing for the dishonourables.

KEGG. I've e'en heard of a Duke who's taken to the wine trade.

WENHAM. (R. goes up R. c.) Yes: as the only way of keeping his head above water.

MRS. S. Poor Augustus is no Duke, he's not in business, but you know John, he'll be very well off.

KEGG. We'll settle about Augustus and Beatrice when Gertrude's married.

MRS. S. That's a promise, John: a promise, Mr. Wenham, so kind—so like you.

TRAFF. It's more than the picture will be, if we're not more quiet.

DOLAN. (*up stage R. c, looking off, L.*) Sure the sitting in the garden is finished—it's a capital notion, Miss Beatrice being taken on horseback.

WENHAM. (*who by this time is down L.*) Excellent; only she can't ride.

DOLAN. Why, then the more reason she should have the practice.

WENHAM. (*at L. table*) Tes; only I wonder at Fursden attempting it, he's not an animal painter.

TRAFF. Then Mr. Wenham won't go to him for a portrait.

Eider GERTRUDE, BEATRICE and EDWARD, C. from L.

WENHAM. (L.) I don't say that. He's an excellent colourist only.

BEAT. It's getting near luncheon time, papa. You've got a lot of people coming down: you'll never be ready.

TRAFF, (*looking at GERTRUDE*) Only five minutes more. (*EDWARD gets down R.*)

DOLAN. (R. C, *up stage*) Luncheon! that reminds me. (*as if going—WENHAM gets over R. up stage.*)

GERT. I wish you'd been able to stop.

DOLAN. Ah ! I can't refuse you, Miss Gertrude. I'll stop to luncheon with pleasure, but it's a bargain that ye mustn't press me for dinner, for there'll be no denying you. (*WENHAM takes DOLAN'S bag off chair up stage R., puts it in DOLAN'S hand*) But I've brought my bag with me in case of an accident.

Eider SANDARS, C. from, L.

SAND. Lord Bradstock and Sir Simeon Holt,

Enter LORD BBADSTOCK, followed by SIR SIMEON, C. from L.

LORD B. (R. C.) Ah, Miss Beatrice, Miss Gertrude, my dear sir! (*over to L. c.—SANDARS shows DOLAN out, c, and off, L., who gives him his bag to carry.*)

BEAT. (L. C. *up stage*) Papa, mayn't speak.

TRAFF. (R.) Smile slightly, thank you. (*to KEGG.*)

SIR S. (*to KEGG, by table L.*) You'll excuse my not having accepted your kind invitation for last Sunday. I beg your pardon, (*to BEATRICE*) But I like to be a little unworldly on one day in the week, and I do not approve of Sunday travelling.

EDWARD. (R.—*to TRAFFORD, aside*) He does sixty per cent, privately: of course he objects to Sunday travelling : it's the only chance his clients have of getting away.

SIR S. (L.) I'm sure that Lord Bradstock's future father-in-law, if I may call him so-----

LORD B. (*Xing to KEGG, L; C.*) I believe I may call you father-in-law.

KEGG. (*about to rise*) My dear Lord-----

TRAFF. (R.) Don't speak. (MRS. SAWDER *and* WENHAM *get up* c. LORD BRADSTOCK *sits* L. C. *on fauteuil*.)

LORD B. (*to* GEBRTRUDE, *who is sitting on fauteuil*) I beg pardon, (*to* TRAFFORD) You admired that bracelet the other day. I have ventured to bring it for your approval; if you will honour me by accepting it I may hope to see on the day of our marriage.

TRAFF. There, the sitting is at an end now. (KEGG *risés and shakes hands, first with* SIR SIMEON, *who is* L., *then with* LORD BRADSTOCK, *who is now* c.)

MRS S. (*to* WENHAM) Charming young man, Lord Bradstock.

WENHAM. Very, very, most charming, only — (*whispers, she takes his arm, they turn, go up, and out together, c. and off* L.—GERTRUDE *is now down by picture, R.*)

KEGG. (*to* LORD BRADSTOCK) Then you've seen Carfax ?

LORD B. (R. C.) Your solicitor ? Yes, he'll be down here to-day.

KEGG. About the conveyance of an old ruin on the estate, (*to* DRYESDALE—EDWARD *is now c. — goes* R. BEATRICE *joins him*) Wonderfully clever man, Dryesdale, in his line.

LORD B. Yes, he's a clever man ; but what I wanted to say to you was, that as he's here we ought to—that is, we might go into the question of settlements. (SIR SIMEON *listens attentively, L.*)

KEGG. Yes. (*hesitates*) Yes. It's about settlements, eh, Sir Simeon ? (TRAFFORD *and* GERTRUDE *exit into conservatory*.)

SIR S. (L.) The sooner concluded the better (*piously*) upon the very highest grounds.

KEGG. (R. C.) Eh, the highest ?

LORD B. (C.) Decidedly. It removes anxiety—say, on paper, of course, fifty thousand pounds, and have done with it.

KEGG. My dear lord, we fixed thirty thousand pounds, can't give a penny more. (KEGG *leads* BEATRICE *down to fauteuil*—EDWARD *goes down* L.)

LORD B. My dear sir, the question is-----

SIR S. (L.) Pardon, one moment, (*to* BRADSTOCK *aside*) Don't budge an inch. Bring him, and twenty thousand pounds into our Consolidated Credit and Perpetual Finance Company, and we're quits.

LORD B. (L. C.) If not?

SIR S. We must protect ourselves. It is our duty—some one must suffer. But there are consolations, (*goes up* L.—LORD BRADSTOCK *and* KEGG *talk up stage* R.)

EDWARD. (*who has gone over to L.*) This is out-humbugging humbug.

LORD B. Now, my dear Mr. Kegg, will settle.

KEGG. I'm a man of my word, thirty thousand pounds—we'll put it in black and white if you like. (*SIR SIMEON goes up, then presently out c, LORD BRADSTOCK talks earnestly to KEGG—BEATRICE seated c, EDWARD speaks to her so as to distract her attention from GERTRUDE and TRAFFORD*)

GERT. (*R. to TRAFFORD*) You are thoughtful!

TRAFF. (*R.*) I am losing all hope.

GERT. Do you think I could marry Lord Brndstock ?

EDWARD, (*L. c.*) It was a very handsome bracelet.

BEAT. (*C. seated*) And Gertrude didn't even admire it. I wish he'd given it to me. I'd accept the bracelet, and him too, if he offered.

KEGG. (*X ing to L.*) Come, girls, I shall be ready for luncheon before you now. (*exit L. D.—LORD BRADSTOCK offers his arm to GERTRUDE, while TRAFFORD presses her disengaged hand*)

BEAT. To-morrow morning again, I suppose ?

EDWARD. (*up stage L. c.*) Yes, Trafford and myself will come some part of the way—on the omnibus. (*BRADSTOCK leads GERTRUDE to door—exit GERTRUDE and BEATRICE, L.—LORD BRADSTOCK sits considering and making calculations in his book L. of table, L.*)

TRAFF. (*R.*) I suppose we must go.

EDWARD. (*L. c.*) Yes, art is supposed to be divine, and therefore is not asked in to luncheon.

TRAFF. I wish I could contrive some means of remaining here. But seriously, the picture does want a touch or two before I go.

EDWARD. Humbug ! You'd better spoil it for to-morrow, like the crossing-sweeper who shuts up shop at night by brushing all the mud over the path again.

Enter DRYESDALE with CARFAX C. from L. down to L. table.

DRYES. (*at table L.*) Of course, Mr. Carfax, I can't remove any papers until the place is mine.

CARFAX. (*at table L.*) I can draw up a case for you and get the opinion of counsel.

DRYES. It's not worth while. I was only supposing—merely supposing that the sort of paper I mention should happen to be there, why I shall have great pleasure in offering you my professional assistance, (*opens papers and looks to pen and ink—EDWARD overhearing, directs TRAFFORD'S attention*)

LORD B. (*disarranged by CARFAX*) You've done what I asked about the settlements ?

Enter KEGG, L.

CARFAX. I have brought the drafts for approval.

KEGG. (*down c.*) Ah ! (*pulls out his spectacles*)

Enter MRS SAWDER, C. *from* L.

MRS. S. Now, dear John, immediately this is done we can settle—why not here ?—the marriage of dear Beatrice and Augustus!

KEGG. Oh, I see, the conveyance, (*round table L., at back of table stands CARFAX, L. of table BRADSTOCK—R. of table is seated KEGG, at his back is DRYESDALE, and on his R. is Mrs. SAWDER. These places are perpetually being changed according to whatever the interest of the different parties in the document KEGG is reading*)

DRYES. (*R. of KEGG to the others*) Won't take up any time. The Keep is a mere ruin, filled with old rubbish. Scarcely an acre of ground where perhaps one may find an old medal or Roman spoon. I think you ought to give me a premium for taking it. (*laughs*)

EDWARD. (*R. to TRAFFORD*) Going, going (*R.*)-----

KEGG. A hundred pounds. (*CARFAX bows*)

Enter SIR SIMEON, L.

DRYES. A hundred ? My dear Mr. Kegg, you who could afford to give it me ! I was prepared for thirty or forty.

SIR S. (*as KEGG moves his chair impatiently comes in between him and the table*) A minute, (*to the others*) I won't detain him a minute, (*to KEGG, bringing him forward*) You know I say avoid all speculation, it's rash and hazardous, and city men, I grieve to say, are sadly deficient in true Christian principles. Now I want to recommend to you as a friend, for I wouldn't do it for any one else, a good substantial investment, our Consolidated Credit and Perpetual Financial Banking Company.

KEGG. I trust you, Sir Simeon, but I really-----

SIR S. Quite right to be cautious, but you may be a little over-cautious. I'll let you into the secret. The Company's mismanaged, the secretary grossly incapable, the directors mere dummies, the shares to be had at a great loss. I know they can't meet their engagements on behalf of Mattock and Swampy's Yokohama contract. The consolidate credit fails, Mattock fails, there's a panic

in the city, the Bank will give us assistance, then in we come, the Diabolical Machina, if I may use u pagan illustration, we have the capital, the market is ours, and in a few months time we receive a thousand per cent, for our money—its clear.

KEGG. Its grand. It'll take all my available funds.

SIR S. It will take all mine, it will take all Capel's who will be in with us; but (*solemnly*) I shouldn't advise you to embark in anything that I couldn't honestly go into myself. You can command two hundred thousand pounds, we only want it in reserve.

KEGG. (*back to table, L.*) Well, just let me settle this-----

CARFAX. The conveyance, (*Giving him paper*)

DRYES. (*insinuatingly*) Forty! It's not worth twenty.

CARFAX. I beg your pardon, sir, I've given you the settlement draft.

LORD B. Come Mr. Kegg, there can be no question about it, fifty thousand pounds.

MRS. S. And the same for Beatrice.

KEGG. Eh?

SIR S. If you sign, this will authorise me to act for you.

CARFAX. Better take the opinion of counsel.

SIR S. I must return to town immediately.

LORD B. }
and } Well, let's finish the settlements first.

MRS. S. }

DRYES. No, no, the conveyance.

SIR S. It is stamped.

CARFAX. (*seeing KEGG utterly bothered*) Let's take one thing at a time.

Enter WENHAM, C. from L.

WESHAM. (*down R. c.*) Luncheon.

KEGG. (*rising*) Thank heaven! we'll settle it all afterwards—my daughters are waiting—Sir Simeon, will you take my cousin? (*all exeunt door L.—KEGG is following last, when SANDARS enters from c. and gives him a letter. KEGG, L. c., seeing TRAFFORD, who has by this time put the picture up stage R. and returned*) Shan't be able to sit any more to-day, Mr. Trafford, sorry I can't ask you to stay dinner, for we shall be quite full.

EDWARD. (*at table R., aside*) Yes, after luncheon.

KEGG. (L. C.) Not room to squeeze in a pin's head, even if it had a coronet on it. Hulloo! (*reads letter*) " My dear Mr.

Kegg—Inconsequence of certain recent mineral discoveries in my Cornwall property where you wished to become a purchaser, I cannot accede to the original proposition." What a fool I was not to have it in black and white. "But as I am interested in a new scheme affecting your part of the country, it will be as well for me to call on you to-day and talk matters over to our mutual advantage. Yours, &c, Cliffborough." Sandars, let me know the instant the Duke of Cliffborough arrives.

TRAFF. (R. to EDWARD) The Duke of Cliffborough! (*sarcastically*) He's my uncle.

KEGG. Eh?

EDWARD. (R. C.) The Duke of Cliffborough is Mr. Trafford's uncle.

KEGG. (*getting c, EDWARD down L.*) Eh, why ? Then, bless my soul, you're his nephew.

TRAFF. So it ought to follow, of course, but-----

KEGG. (*pursuing his own line of thought*) Of course it ought, but you don't talk about it—why the duke's the richest man in England, property everywhere, half of London is his—they say he's got three thousand pounds a day—and his fortune is managed by two or three committees.

TRAFF. Everyone knows he's very rich.

KEGG. And no children.

EDWARD. (L.) A bachelor, no nephews or nieces.

KEGG. (C.) No?

TRAFF. (R.) I believe I'm his only existing relative, and yet the difficulty of my position is this-----

KEGG. Quite so, I understand, if everyone knew it, you'd be inundated by beggars, place-hunters, toadies, of course you would be, as his favourite nephew, his heir, why you'll be a duke some day, dear me, dear me. His Grace is coming here, he'll stop dinner, you must meet him.

TRAFF. I must explain. There has been a dispute between my father and his-----

KEGG. I see, a coolness. P'raps you would take to painting, or did something to offend him.

TRAFF. It's a question of family-----

KEGG. A family quarrel! bah! a famous idea I'll bring you together and smooth matters. You'll stay to dinner.

TRAFF. But we shall be crowding your table, you said so just now.

KEGG. Yes, yes, but I didn't know-----

EDWARD. That the duke was coming.

KEGG. Quite so. I must make a place for him, so why not for two more ?

EDWARD. For *me* ? I'm not a duke's nephew.

KEGG. But you're his friend—I mean—but there, what matters rank and money, Art in itself confers nobility. (*Xing to table c. and rings bell*) You'll both stop.

Enter SANDARS, L. D.

Take these gentlemen's bags to the blue room, they'll sleep here.

EDWARD. (*who gets c. when KEGG X 's to L.*) Our things are at the inn, the Blue Pig.

KEGG. (L.) At the inn! Sandars send at once, (*exit SANDARS L. door*) What's the good of being in the country if you can't be hospitable. (*aside*) Perhaps the Cornwall property can't be sold without his consent. Ahem! (*aloud*) The idea, ha, ha! of my paying the Duke of Cliffborough's nephew for a picture.

EDWARD. (*aside*) Stick it on, Aylmer. (*goes up stage.*)

KEGG. The duke is thinking of buying property here—strangely enough a small part of this was once the Cliffborough Estate, it changed hands about a century and a-half ago, and I'm actually selling a tumble-down old-ruin that was part of the castle, this very day, he, he, he, your property.

EDWARD. (*down c.*) What? the old Keep? (*aside*) We'll cut Dryesdale out. All's fair in love and humbug, (*aloud to KEGG*) The fact is, though my friend is too modest to mention it, he has taken a great fancy to the old Keep, and—(*apart to KEGG*) Think if you could—you understand.

KEGG. (*ringing bell on L. table*) My dear sir, I'm obliged to you for mentioning it. (*to SANDARS, who enters L. D.*) Tell Mr. Carfax I want him. (*exit SANDARS, L. D.*) Dryesdale says its of no value, not thirty pounds. He knows all about these things, I don't; but I dare say it's an artistic fancy. Duke's nephews can indulge their fancies.

Enter CARFAX, L. D., KEGG shows him conveyance.

TRAFF. (R.) He's not such a bad old fellow.

EDWARD. (R. C.) No, no, there's a great deal of good to-be got out of him.

CARFAX. (*at head of L. table*) Better take counsel's opinion.

KEGG. (R. of L. table) It's not worth asking money for. Insert the name of the duke's nephew.

CARFAX. Eh?

KEGG. Mr. Trafford.

TRAFF. (*xing to L. c.*) And join my friend's to it. He suggested it.

KEGG. Good—quite a business idea—a sort of bonus for the promoter. Add Mr. Edward Fursden.

CARFAX. A valuable conson must pass between the parties, a mere matter of form—a shilling will do.

EDWARD. Sixpence each. (KEGG rings bell.)

Enter SANDERS—CARFAX whispers to him.

KEGG. I only wish I'd known it before, (*to CARFAX aside*) Duke of Cliffborough, to buy for a speculation ; got his own nephew in the property. We'll meet in friendly-term. (KEGG delivers it—he goes over to R., after signing—TRAPPORD signs next, then EDWARD—SANDARS last, who goes off immediately after, L. D.—TRAFFORD takes deed and gives it to EDWARD.)

TRAFF. (*getting L. c.*) It is really most kind.

KEGG. (*over a.*) Not at all—is there anything else ?

EDWARD. (*c, aside to him*) Yes, now's your time.

TRAFF. I can't.

EDWARD. Nonsense. I'm going to take possession of our property—I'm going to the common ruin.

(exit c. at back, and of L.)

TRAFF. (*L. c, looking towards CARPAX and speaking to KEGG*) I should like to say a few words to you privately, Mr. Kegg. (CARFAX bows, and retires L. D.)

KEGG. (*R. C.*) Now, my dear Mr. Trafford, what is it?

TRAFF. (*nervously*) It is in your power, Mr. Kegg, to make me a happy man.

KEGG. Name it, my dear sir, name it. Won't you sit ? I've sat to you long enough, (*laughs, sits C.*)

TRAFF. (*L. C.*) It is a difficult subject to—in fact—I—I can only say that I am—in love.

KEGG. And it's in my power—you don't mean-----

TRAFF. I think, sir, you have guessed it.

KEGG. A daughter of mine ?

TRAFF. Yes, sir, I am afraid I must plead guilty to some deception, but I was afraid you would not permit-----

KEGG. (*rises*) My dear Mr. Trafford, do you think I've not noticed it ? We old men are not such fools as we look. I'm not a hard-hearted father, my daughter's happiness is my first care. I might have hesitated-----

TRAFF. Before you knew me.

KEGG. Naturally; not simply because you were not rich,

or without a title, for a man who's a mister to-day maybe a Duke to-morrow and a millionaire into the bargain, that makes no difference to me, (*shaking his hand*) and if my dear Beatrice-----

TRAFF. Yes, yes. (*nervously*) I was—speaking of Miss Gertrude.

KEGG. Hey ? why! Gertrude! that's awkward—she's promised to Lord Bradstock—it's all arranged you couldn't make it, Beatrice ?

TRAFF. (L. C.) My dear sir-----

KEGG. (R. C.) No, of course, not: it's put me in such an awkward position, though as to promises there's nothing down in black and white—I'm not bound—but-----

TRAFF. You are obliged to refuse ?

KEGG. No, I don't say that. Let me think (*aside*) Duke of Cliff borough, an enormous future, I can't lose such a son-in-law ; and I dare say Bradstock would take Beatrice. I've got it, (*aloud*) you have probably heard that I can give my daughter, £50,000 a-piece.

TRAFF. You surely don't suppose-----

KEGG. That you believe such a thing ? Certainly not, I can't do it. I have other uses for my money, and ahem, to come to the point I can only give Gertrude £25,000.

TRAFF. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me.

KEGG. Of course it is, of course to a man like you. (*aside*) I ought to have made it £20,000. (*aloud*) Almost an insult to mention it. Therefore if we settle £20,000.

TRAFF. Twenty, fifteen, ten, anything you like, nothing.

KEGG. Nothing ? No, no, I couldn't allow—£10,000 is the very lowest I can hear of. Then it is settled £10,000.

TRAFF. My dear, sir, (*shakes his hand—going up stage*) Miss Gertrude is in the garden, may I tell her ?

KEGG. You shall shake hands with the Duke to-day. I'll bring it about. Have you any idea what he'd give you?

TRAFF. (*not following his question*) Anything you like, I leave it all to you. (*up stage.*)

KEGG. I'll go and tell Carfax to alter the settlements.
(*exit L. D.—as KEGG is going out, EDWARD enters c. from, L., carrying some old parchments—TRAFFORD meets him, and says a word to him. EDWARD stops astonished.*)

EDWARD. (C. *up stage*) Accepted ! old Kegg !

WENHAM. (*entering L. c.—down L.*) Accepted what? a bill?

TRAFF. (C.) No, me as the husband of Miss Gertrude.

WENHAM. (L.) Eh ? no, he's not been in to luncheon.

EDWARD. (*at table, R. up stage, with papers*) But did you come to a question of money ?

TRAFF. (C.) Yes, he's no humbug. He settles £10,000 on her.

EDWARD. (R. *table*) It sounds generous.

WENHAM. (L.) Very generous : only he saves £40,000 by it.

EDWARD. Saves ?

WENHAM. Yes, he was to have given Bradstock £50,000

TRAFF. Oh, confound Bradstock. (*exit hastily, c. and L.*)

WENHAM. (L.) Odd.

EDWARD. Very.

WENHAM. If true.

EDWARD. (*up at table, R.*) Trafford wouldn't tell a lie.

WENHAM. Oh, of course not, of course not. Only it does sound deuced improbable. I wonder where Bradstock is ?

EDWARD. (*opening his papers*) He'll know sooner or later.

WENHAM. (L. C.) Quite so : only it would be friendly to tell him at once. By the way, Drysdale's gone perfectly wild at your having taken possession of the old Keep.

EDWARD. Did you mention that I'd found his valuable parchments ?

Enter CARFAX, L. D.

WENHAM. (L.) Oh, yes, I thought he'd like to hear it all. He swears he'll go to law.

CARFAX. (*down c.*) I told him just now that I'd draw up a case for counsel's opinion.

EDWARD. I think there'll be some work for you here, Mr. Carfax (*CARFAX goes to R. of table, up stage, L.*) if you'll give your attention to these papers. I can see they're important, but what their legal value is you can decide better than I can. (*during the above, WENHAM has gone up C, and as he is leaving is met by BEATRICE, who speaks to him hastily, then comes down angrily. WENHAM looks at her as if amused*)

BEAT. I can't believe it. (*to WENHAM—exit WENHAM, L. c.*) Papa give his consent to her marrying a penniless painter ? It's some deep scheme, and you my father's adviser, Mr. Carfax!

CARFAX. (R. *of table*) My dear young lady-----

EDWARD. (L. *of table*) You forget Miss Beatrice that the penniless painter is my friend-----

BEAT. (L. C.) I'm not likely to forget it.

EDWARD. (*comes forward, R. c.*) And the superior of any member of this family in birth and everything, excepting money.

BEAT. (L. C.) And so he has graciously condescended to accept the one thing necessary to his perfection from us who are so far beneath him. How kind!

EDWARD. (R. C.) I can make excuses, Miss Beatrice, for you-----

BEAT. Thank you; you will want them all for your friend and yourself. If he was Lord Bradstock's equal he'd call him out and shoot him—I will speak to papa at once.

CARFAX. Here he is: with the Duke of Cliffborough. (EDWARD goes back to table, R.)

Enter KEGG and the DUKE OF CLIFFBOROUGH, a soft spoken man from L. door.

DUKE. (L.) You see, my dear Mr. Kegg, the value of property has never varied so much as in these times.

KEGG. (L. C.) My daughter, Beatrice, your grace. (*introduces her.*)

DUKE. (*bows and resumes*) Never so much as in these times. (CARFAX rises.)

KEGG. (L. C.) Don't move, Mr. Carfax. (CARFAX resumes his seat) Your grace, Mr. Fursden, a great friend of some one of whom we will speak presently.

DUKE. (*bows and resumes—sits L.*) Never so much as in these times. You (*sweetly*) want land in Cornwall, I want it here. What did you say? (*as if KEGG had spoken.*)

KEGG. Nothing, your grace.

EDWARD. (*aside to TRAFFORD*) He's like a punch doll.

DUKE. Eh?

KEGG. I didn't speak, your grace.

DUKE. Oh, my mistake, (*sweetly*) I thought you said something, so we can meet each other half way. I have a bill to come before the committee for a new line, and in connection with that a Barge and Wharf Company for the conveyance of goods by river—you follow me.

KEGG. By river, yes.

DUKE. (*inclining his head and resuming*) Goods by river, and another company for the establishment of a magnificent Hostelrie—a hotel upon the largest and complete scale possible for the vast influx of visitors. You are certain of a mine of gold from the lead in Cornwall, we take the chance of a mine of gold in the meadow land here.

KEGG. (L. C.) If I understand your grace rightly, it is my property that this will affect.

DUKE. Precisely. There is a corner of the estate which, oddly enough, was once in the possession of our family, a

valueless bit of waste ground now, there is nothing but the ruin of the old Keep standing—shall I say standing or falling—upon it. (CARFAX *draws EDWARD'S attention to the papers before them*) Eh ? I beg your pardon, I thought you said something. Now you will not oppose us ; no, you will join forces with us.

KEGG. I am glad to say, your Grace, that there won't be much difficulty in fully meeting your views. And if that old Keep is the site you've fixed upon for the hotel ——

DUKE. For the hotel, yes, yes. (*sweetly and slowly.*)

KEGG. Why the fact is, I have, only this day, given it away.

DUKE. (*slowly*) Given it away.

KEGG. To, in short, to your Grace's nephew.

DUKE. (*regarding KEGG curiously, and smiling most sweetly*) My nephew ?

KEGG. And more than that, if your Grace has no reason for withholding your sanction, he is to marry my eldest daughter, Gertrude.

DUKE. (*as before*) Eldest daughter, Gertrude! A most fortunate young man ; but-----

KEGG. "But"——I know what your Grace is going to say-----

DUKE. (*as before*) Go on, my dear Mr. Kegg, go on. "You knew I was going to say----- "

KEGG. That there was some coolness between you, but I've undertaken to smooth all difficulties, and I'm sure, under the circumstances, your Grace is the last man to refuse to shake hands with your own nephew. Why, if you did refuse, after all I've promised to do in the way of peacemaking, I should look a perfect old fool.

DUKE. (*very sweetly*) Perfect old fool! Oh no, no, no, not *that*. But, my dear Mr. Kegg-----

KEGG. Your Grace.

DUKE. Excuse the question—perhaps it's my stupidity—but who is it you are talking about ?

KEGG. Your Grace's nephew.

DUKE. Oh ! (*very sweetly*) And who is my nephew ?

BEAT. Ha!

KEGG. Why your Grace has but one ; and though you assume this air of coldness, I am sure you would not allow a mere quarrel to separate relations for a lifetime.

DUKE. (*sweetly*) You are quite right.

KEGG. Forgive and forget.

DUKE. (*sweetly*) Quite so, quite so.

KEGG. You forgive him ?

DUKE. I do ; and what is more, Mr. Kegg, (*very sweetly*) I quite forget him.

KEGG. Oh, you can't forget him.

DUKE. You're right, my dear Mr. Kegg, you're always right—I don't forget him, because I don't even remember the existence of such a person.

BEAT. (*who has been seated R. on fauteuil c. rises during the above dialogue*) An impostor ! what a scandal!

KEGG. S-s-s-h, be quiet. But does your Grace deny that Mr. Aylmer Trafford-----

DUKE. (*rises*) Oh, I see! Mr. Trafford's father disputed my title, and, I believe, ruined himself in legal proceedings. The question—I will not trouble you with details—turned upon the proof of the second duke's marriage. The precious document they relied upon to establish their case was not forthcoming. It's existence, I need hardly say, was a myth. Mr. Trafford may have our blood in his reins, but he can scarcely expect me either to acknowledge or befriend him.

KEGG. But good heavens ! I've—you don't mean-----

Enter LORD BRADSTOCK and SIR SIMEON HOLT, *from L. D.*

SIR S. (*at door L.*) Ask him.

LORD B. (*down L.*) Is it true that you've broken your promise to me ?

BEAT. Yes.

KEGG. (*c. to her*) Ss-s-h, be quiet, (*to him*) No, no, that is—I mean, in a way—it wasn't in black and white.

BEAT. You have been shamefully treated.

LORD B. If Miss Beatrice thinks that I could make her happy—(*to KEGG—aside*) Fifty thousand pounds.

BEAT. (*R. C.*) If I thought I could repair the scandal —

LORD B. (*xing to R. c.*) You consent? (*takes her hand.*)

Enter MRS. SAWDER, *C. from L., and* WENHAM, *R.*

KEGG. (*C. gradually more and more distracted*) But there's no necessity.

MRS. S. (*down L. C.*) Oh, John! you know it was to be Augustus and Beatrice.

BEAT. (*disdainfully*) Augustus !

Enter DRYESDALE, *wildly, C.*

KEGG. (*to MRS. SAWDER*) You misunderstand; I said when Gertrude was settled, she isn't settled, that is——

DRYES. (R. C.) Is it true ?

KEGG. (L. C.) Oh dear!

WENHAM. (R., *up stage*) Here's another.

DRYES. That you've sold the ruined Keep after promising it to me.

KEGG. I didn't promise. It wasn't, in black and white, ask Carfax.

CARFAX. (*at table B.*) Better get counsel's opinion.

DRYES. Hang counsel's— (*CARFAX shows him the old parchments in EDWARD'S hand, and DRYESDALE is petrified— EDWARD signs to him to be silent.*)

DUKE. (*going*) I suppose you'll scarcely be able to decide now.

SIR S. (*between KEGG and MRS. SAWDER*) The financial matter is settled of course.

LORD B. (R. C.) Fifty thousand pounds with either.

MRS. S. (L.) Beatrice and Augustus.

BEAT. (R.) Papa ! decide something.

ALL. (*but EDWARD*) { Mr. Kegg.
My dear John.

KEGG. (*c, distracted*) Heavenly powers !

Enter Miss GERTRUDE and TRAFFORD.

MISS G. (R. *of KEGG*) My dear kind papa !

TRAFF. (L. *of KEGG*) My dear father-in-law !

KEGG. (C.) I'm not your father-in-law any more than the duke is your uncle.

TRAFF. (L. C.) Mr. Kegg !

KEGG. (C.) You've deceived me, sir.

MISS G. (*sinks on seat, c.*) Papa !

TRAFF. (L. C.) Stop, sir; you gave me your word here not half an hour ago.

KEGG. Yes, but it wasn't binding—it wasn't in black and white.

TRAFF. If you would avail yourself of such a subterfuge.

KEGG. Subterfuge ! why you said you were the duke's nephew, that you'd be a duke some day.

EDWARD. (*up R.*) Well, if he did-----(*is restrained by CARFAX and DRYESDALE.*)

MISS B. (R. *c, to him*) The police van, not the omnibus.

KEGG. The duke disowns you.

TRAFF. I never said he would acknowledge me—you jumped at your own conclusions, wouldn't hear me, and

undertook to reconcile us, and you gave me to understand that you had it in your power to do so.

KEGG. (C.) You haven't behaved as a gentleman.

TRAFF. (L. C.) You dare to say that, you who were ready to speculate in my love, as I now find, for your own advantage, and were doubly glad to accept me because you'd save forty thousand pounds by it.

LORD B. (*at back, R. c.*) What?

KEGG. It's false.

TRAFF. It's true. I told you then I'd take her with nothing.

KEGG. I was a fool not to have seen there was something wrong when you made such a preposterous offer. It's all over, and the sooner you leave my house the better, (*gets over R.*)

TRAFF. (L. C.) Perhaps so, good bye Gertrude.

KEGG. (R.) Don't call my daughter Gertrude.

MISS B. (R. C.) Impudence!

MRS. S. Horrid!

TRAFF. 'Tis better that I should go now.

MISS G. (L. C.) Aylmer, you trust me ?

TRAFF. (*kisses her*) You know I do.

KEGG. (R.) Here, don't do that.

BEAT. (R. C.) Gertrude! you disgrace yourself.

TRAFF. (*going up*) I shall hold your father to his word—and to be under no obligation, I shall return you the conveyance of the old Keep.

DRYES. (*jumping forward, R.*) You've me given the refusal.

DUKE. (L.) I can make an offer.

EDWARD. (*down R.*) Stop, I am joint proprietor and I withhold my consent.

TRAFF. (*up L. c.*) Edward !

EDWARD. (*aside*) I'll explain; it's for your good. (*x's in front up to TRAFFORD, L. c.*)

TRAFF. (*up c.*) Again good-bye, dear Gertrude.

GERT. Dear Aylmer. (*they embrace.*)

KEGG. (c, *in a fearful passion*) Leave the house! here Sandars, where's the bell, where's-----

Enter SANDARS with two travelling bags, from L. D.

SAND. (*up stage, L.*) I've brought the two gentlemen's things, from the Blue Pig.

KEGG. (*utterly losing himself*) D—n the things ! D—n the Blue Pig! leave the house. (DOLAN *enters hurriedly with napkin as if from luncheon, L. door, and remains up*

stage L.—TRAFFORD, c, takes a step towards GERTRUDE, BEATRICE withholds her, and she falls weeping on BEATRICE'S neck, L. c. EDWARD stands at window waving TRAFFORD away; KEGG, R. C, in a fit of rage on fauteuil, MRS. SAWDER leaning over him, WENHAM R. C, between him and TRAFFORD—DRYESDALE with CARPAX, R., LORD BRADSTOCK up R., SIR SIMEON L., and DUKE L. corner.)

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The interior of the Old Keep, partially restored, R. flat a large window with a staircase behind leading off R., backed by country—a return piece down c. of stage L. flat a large arch cross from C. to L. backed by exterior. Table and chair against return piece down C, chair R,—in R. division of stage—a chair L. division.*

EDWARD discovered leaning over BEATRICE, who is seated L, giving her a painting lesson—and through a Norman em-
erasure in the wall is seen AUGUSTUS, sitting smoking a short pipe on steps behind R. flat. AUGUSTUS looks in from above.

AUGUST. I say, Mr. Fursden ! I say, Mr. Fursden ! shie up a cushion, will you ? (*EDWARD X 'S to the R. division and gets one*) When you were making this queer old Keep of yours habitable, you didn't allow for sitting comfortably on the top of the walls, (*catches the cushion*) Thank you.

EDWARD. Getting this place from Mr. Kegg was a piece of good luck, and I'm not going to grumble at it.

BEAT. (*seated L.*) I think you've done wonders to it.

EDWARD. (*back to BEATRICE, L.*) I think I see the effect of a lady's taste here and there, the chair you embroidered is the most comfortable I've ever sat in.

BEAT. There's very little of my embroidery on it. But you certainly have effected a wonderful change in a short time.

EDWARD. Yes ; and I've seen a more wonderful change than that since I've been here, (*a pause*) You're letting the colour run.

BEAT. I'm afraid this painting lesson will be the last I

shall have for some time. Papa and Gertrude return from Paris to-day.

EDWARD. They've been away nearly two months.

BEAT. Two ! more than four.

EDWARD. Ah!

AUGUST. "There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft," but he has only caught a glimpse of one arrival.

Enter a BOY, carrying a carpet-bag, R. back of fiat.

BOY. (R. *at back*) Letter for Mr. Fursden.

AUGUST. Pitch the bag up here, (*catches it, the Boy x's to L. flat and gives EDWARD a letter*) I thought it was an old friend, (*reads brass plate on bag*) Lawrence Dolan, Esq. (*throws it down again*) Where to ?

BOY. Mr. Kegg's, sir, the Priory. Mr. Dolan don't go nowhere else down here. (*exit with bag*)

EDWARD. One may be certain the carcass is not far off, as a social vulture has put in an appearance. Humbugs and toadies are always playing the Ogre's game.

" Fee, fi, fo, fum,

(AUGUSTUS *enters through window and sits R.*)

I smell the gold of a wealthy man,

Take him alive and let him be bled,

I'll grind his bones to make my bread."

BEAT. Do you think papa's friends such ogres ?

EDWARD. Yes, from the Castle of Humbug.

AUGUST. (*seated R.*) I say, Mr. Fursden.

EDWARD. (*imitating—sits L. of R. division*) What do you say, Mr. Sawder, (*laughing*) Drop the mister—say Ned.

AUGUST. Well, Ned—I say it's been all very well while my maternity's been keeping house for Beaty's governor.

EDWARD. What's been all very well ?

AUGUST. Why, these drawing lessons here.

BEAT. 'Gus!

AUGUST. Oh, don't humbug, as Ned says, we've enough of that up at the other shop, But look here, my mother thinks that we two, Beaty and I, go out spooning together, and that Beaty's society breaks me of that horrid habit of smoking.

EDWARD. Well?

AUGUST. (*puffing*) Well; the spooning's done, the smoking's done, and the maternity's done. It's her fault if she likes to humbug herself about me and Beaty, isn't it ? But I think there'll be a difficulty when governor

Kegg and Gerty return. D'ye see ? How's that, umpire ? Just turn it over in your mind while I replenish, (*goes back to steps behind window, R., fills and smokes.*)

EDWARD. (*over L.*) It is very kind of him. Is it three months ago since you took your first lesson, (*thoughtfully.*)

BEAT. (*L.*) Yes, a few days after Gertrude had quite recovered from her illness and had set off with papa for France. I had promised her I'd send her news of Aylmer, and I thought my best informant would be yourself.

EDWARD. (*C.*) He is coming down here to-day. He says nothing more in his letter.

BEAT. (*L. C.*) Gertrude loves him very dearly.

EDWARD. And you were so much against him.

BEAT. I told Gertrude when we thought she was dying, how sorry I was for my mercenary, cruel conduct. I made a vow to myself that if she got well I would do my best to bring about their mutual happiness, for I am certain that it does not depend on money and rank.

EDWARD. (*C.*) Do you indeed think that—but on your sister's refusal you—in fact—you are now, I believe, engaged to Lord Bradstock ?

AUGUST. (*jumps up suddenly*) Oh! (*burns his hand with pipe*) " Thou art the cause of this anguish, my mother." (*hands the pipe to EDWARD, and stands by BEATRICE, R., who goes to him up stage L., EDWARD C.*)

Enter MRS. SAWDER, L. C, and down L. C.

MRS. S. Augustus ! Augustus! there's a picture, Mr. Fursden, what shall we call it, the Two Doves or Cupid and Sukey ? (*x's to C, EDWARD over L.—sniffs*) I declare I smell tobacco, I hope, my dear Beatrice, you've not been weak enough to allow Augustus to smoke.

EDWARD. (*L. C, producing pipe*) Here is the offending instrument.

MRS. S. (*R. C.*) Ah ! an artist is privileged. " Art," as the poet says—dear me, what does the poet say ? Odd—and to think that I suspected you wrongly Augustus, come and kiss me, my dear boy.

AUGUST. (*at back R.—aside*) Yes. Ahem! not for Joseph!

BEAT. (*forward R.*) I think I hear the pony chaise.

MRS. S. Yes, your papa and Gertrude are stopping at the stile. Come, Beaty; come, Augustus dear, let us go and welcome them, (*exit MRS. SAWDER, followed at a respectful distance by AUGUSTUS, L. C. and off L.*)

BEAT. (L. C.) Good bye, Mr. Fursden. (*coming back from L. arch.*)

EDWARD. (R. C, *taking her hand*) I'm afraid it is a long farewell. Good bye. (*he detains her hand.*)

Enter GERTRUDE, suddenly, c. from L.

GERT. Beatrice, (*they embrace—exit EDWARD by the window R. F. and X 's behind and off, L.*)

BEAT. (L. C.) How well you are looking, Gerty.

GERT. (L. *with intention*) And what a colour you've got. Beaty.

BEAT. Where did you last come from ? how's papa ? Tell me about everything.

GERT. We last came from Dover. Papa's quite well, but anxious about some business matters. And I can tell you all about everything easier perhaps than you can. So Mr. Fursden has been giving you lessons.

BEAT. Yes, I told you so in my letters. Aylmer will be here to-day, (*over to R.*)

GERT. Papa, who never allows what he calls "private feelings " to interfere with his business feelings, actually wants to see him.

BEAT. Wants to see him! that's strange.

GERT. But that is not so strange as for me to come home and find this proud money-loving little sister of mine in love with a poor artist.

BEAT. Oh, Gertrude, it's not fair.

GERT. But what has become of Lord Bradstock; of course he has released you from your promise.

BEAT. Not formally. I have seen him occasionally but Aunt Sawder during her regency has discouraged his visits on account of her Augustus.

Enter KEGG, WENHAM, MRS. SAWDER and EDWARD—EDWARD goes to GERTRUDE, R.

BEAT. (R. C.) My dear papa.

MRS. S. (L. C.) What does the poet say, " does not a meeting like this ?" dear me. I forgot what a meeting like this does.

Enter DOLAN, and shakes hand warmly with KEGG, who goes up R. to EDWARD.

DOLAN. (c.) I'm delighted, and Miss Kegg, too.

GERT. (*comes down R. c.*) We have to thank you, Mr. Dolan, for the newspaper you so regularly sent us lately.

DOLAN. (c.) Don't mention it. Tis one we've lately started. The " Evening Pitcher " will be a first-rate property. Our social notes signed " little Pitcher " supply a want. There is not a word in it, madam, that can bring a blush to the face of any of our readers.

WENHAM. (L. C.) Great praise: only it depends upon the readers.

DOLAN. We give news you won't find in any other journal.

WENHAM. That's perfectly true.

KEGG. (*down R. c.*) Yes, we read how Dryesdale's discovery of papers here affected Mr. Trafford's claim to the dukedom.

DOLAN. Ah, you should have seen the contents bill of that day, " Romantic Ruin, " " The Peer and the Painter." Extraordinary disclosures. We've kept up the excitement in short stirring paragraphs ever since.

KEGG. We were also glad to read that Mr. Trafford had succeeded so well with his new picture. For I am willing to forget the past. We must forget and forgive Mr. Fursden.

WENHAM. Disinterested sentiment.

KEGG. (*to EDWARD, who is up R.*) I should like to see you Mr. Fursden for a few moments on a little matter of business. (*EDWARD and GERTRUDE crosses over to L.*)

WENHAM. Ah!

MRS. S. Come, dears, I dare say if we walk on we shall have the escort of Augustus. He's waiting for one of us. (*exeunt MRS. SAWDER, GERTRUDE and BEATRICE, C. and L., when they are of, EDWARD returns to steps back of R. flat.*)

DOLAN. (L. C.) You talk of business, sir; the " Pitcher " will be invaluable to you as a city man ; all the latest news. We anticipate every other paper and get well into the middle of the day after to-morrow with an eighth edition. It occupies my time, sir, mightily, and I've been so busy to-day that after receiving £5000 at 3.30: it was 4.30: before I found out I was too late to do anything with it to-day. But I'm in the way.

KEGG. (*aside to him*) No, you're not. I'll let you into a secret—I am going to make a bid to get this old Keep back. If I can shew him ready money perhaps I may succeed. Have you got yours in notes ?

DOLAN. A couple of those, the rest in cheques,

KEGG. Can you spare £2,000 till to-morrow morning ?

DOLAN. With pleasure, my boy. I'll just go up to the

house, and you shall have them immediately. By the way you're with Holt in his Yokohama tunnelling. Pick, Mattock, & Co. have undertaken the contract. It's gigantic ye'll make your fortunes a thousand times over. I'll put my name on the notes and they are at your service, (*going up L. with REGG.*)

WENHAM. (L.) And if your third edition is out I'll go down and get it at the station.

DOLAN. Do, the afternoon's nothing without it. (*exeunt DOIAN, L., at back, and WENHAM through arch and off, R.*)

KEGG. (*sitting L. C.*) Now, Mr. Fursden.

EDWARD. (*comes forward and sits R. c.*) Now, sir.

KEGG. We must be honest with one another.

EDWARD. Decidedly, (*aside*) Now for a glorious piece of humbug.

KEGG. To put it plainly then you got this most valuable ruin and ground for nothing.

EDWARD. To put it equally plain it suited you to give it us.

Enter AYLMEY TRAFFORD, at back, R.

KEGG. But my dear sir, such a state of things must be most unsatisfactory to so high-minded a couple of young men, so straightforward, as yourself and Mr. Trafford.

EDWARD. You flatter us.

KEGG. Not at all. I came back from Paris on purpose.

EDWARD. To say this?

KEGG. No, permit me— To ask if instead of litigating we can't settle this affair amicably?

AYLMEY TRAFFORD *during the above dialogue comes quietly forward, R.*

TRAFF. (R.) We can, quite amicably; we don't intend to give it up.

KEGG. (L. C.) Not for one thousand pounds. It cost *you* nothing.

TRAFF. (R.) Since we parted I've speculated and been successful, I know the value of property. Now sir, either this place is *ours*, or it is not. If not, we can't sell it to you. If it is, its worth more than two thousand pounds.

KEGG. More than two thousand pounds? How do you know that.

TRAFF. (*Xing c.*) Because you offer one thousand pounds. The fact is this, Mr. Kegg, when you accepted me as a son-in-law, and afterwards turned me out of your

house, I told you I would hold you to your bargain and I determined to gain money and title.

KEGG. (*rises*) Ah, I heard that Carfax had undertaken your case on spec.

TRAFF. (R. C.) He has, and successfully, so far. I went into a promoter's office, when among other companys which I was rapidly enabled to bring out was the Cliffborough Grand Hotel Company in conjunction with the duke's new line. He is on the ground now surveying—I haven't spoken to him yet—I found that this place was worth-----

KEGG. (L. C.) What—what—its what I've come from the continent to hear—worth what ?

TRAFF. Anything we like to ask.

KEGG. Yes, but mayn't you open your mouth a bit too wide, like the dog who lost the bone.

TRAFF. The simile won't hold. The dog snapped at a sham bone and dropped the real—we've got the real and mean to keep it—you are snapping at ours. We can't lose and may be enormous winners, (*goes up R.*)

Enter WENHAM with newspaper, and DUKE from R. at back, cross over and through L. flat.

KEGG. True ! What a fool I was to be humbugged in parting with it.

TRAFF. (*up R.*) Yes, but that's past.

EDWARD. (R.) And gone.

DUKE. (*down c.*) Mr. Trafford—let me say at once that four months ago I did you a great and unintentional wrong. I came here to welcome you as my nephew. Excuse us a minute, (*they withdraw apart, R.*)

KEGG. (L. C.) Generous conduct.

WENHAM, (L.) Very. Only you haven't seen the third edition of the " Pitcher." " The Cliffborough Romance ! right of the rising young artist to the Cliffborough title being, as it is said, incontestably proved, will not furnish matter for the gentlemen of the long robe. We hear that a mutual arrangement has been entered into, whereby the present possessor retains the title during his lifetime which then descends to Mr. S. R. F. D., and his heirs." (*goes up and gets to back of R.*)

EDWARD. (R.) Ah, I thought it was humbug, (*goes up*)

KEGG. (L.) Why he will be a duke—they'll hold this infernal property—the two dukes—a magnificent speculation—a colossal fortune—(*Xing c.*) Stop, I see. (*to MR. TRAFFORD*) Mr. Trafford, I am a man of my word-----

TRAFF. When in black and white.

KEGG. (C.) I accepted you as my son-in-law, on certain conditions, money and the prospect of title, for your mutual happiness and comfort, not because-----

TRAFF. (R.) Well?

KEGG. (C.) Well; now-----

DUKE. (R.) I give him whatever he wants—afterwards he is my heir. (EDWARD *joins* WENHAM, R.)

KEGG. (C.) Most satisfactory, and I'll give Gertrude ten thousand pounds.

DUKE. (R.) Fifty thousand.

KEGG. Fifty thousand! I will, (*aside*) I'll take it out of Sir Simeon Holt, its a better investment.

TRAFF. (*at table* R.) As we know you like everything in black and white, Carfax has drawn up this legal promise, you may as well sign at once.

KEGG. (*at table, R.*) Quite a man of business, (*he signs, they witness.*)

EDWARD. (*at back* R., *to* TRAFFORD) Gertrude is walking towards the Priory with her aunt.

TRAFF. Then (*taking the contract, Xing to* L.) I will overtake her with *my* edition of an evening paper. (*exit* 1.

KEGG. (C.) Well your grace, with this property in our hands, we shall realise considerably.

DUKE. (R.) My nephew and myself are our own company, you may perhaps *come in* for one hundred thousand pounds.

KEGG. Eh ? what! into this—why—

EDWARD. (*down* L.) His grace forgets, though Alymer does not, that I am still joint proprietor in the concern.

DUKE. (R.) Hum.

KEGG. True !

EDWARD. (L. C.) I may, perhaps, be bought out.

KEGG. (C.) At one hundred thousand pounds.

EDWARD. (L. C.) No, you may come in for that. Mine's a vested interest, I don't go out under one hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

KEGG. (C.) That's business. We won't go out under —

EDWARD. Oh, you wish to come in ?

KEGG. Decidedly !

EDWARD. Give me one hundred thousand pounds to come out. (*x's to* DUKE, *who is* R.)

KEGG. Eh?

EDWARD. (*to* DUKE) Done in this matter, and one hundred and fifty thousand pounds to go out, and that's all ? (*goes up to* WENHAM *at back*)

KEGG. (R.) And *this* is an artist.

DUKE. (*xing L.*) I must see my nephew before anything is done in this matter, (*going up*)

Enter LORD BRADSTOCK running against him and CARFAX from, L. c.—CARFAX goes to table, R. c.—EDWARD and WENHAM x over and down L.)

LORD B. A hundred thousand pounds, I mean pardons, my dear duke !

DUKE. Done in this matter. (*exit L. and off*)

LORD B. Mr. Kegg, a word with you. (*they go up a..*)

WENHAM. (L. *aside to EDWARD showing paper*) Read that sporting intelligence !

EDWABD. (L. C.) " Mr. Vandermillen hit heavily at Newmarket. Loses about one hundred and fifty thousand pounds." Well, what's Vandermillen to me.

WENHAM. (L.) To you he's Lord Bradstock. Read lower down. " A marriage is on the *tapis* between Lord B—r—s—k and the daughter of one of our wealthiest merchants."

LORD B. (R.) Miss Beatrice has given her word to accept me.

KEGG. (C.) Ah, but it's not in black and white. Gertrude is Mrs. Trafford in black and white.

Enter TRAFFORD and GERTRUDE at bach L. and X over to R. at back.

CARFAX. But it's Miss Beatrice, his lordship says.

KEGG. With thirty thousand pounds.

LORD B. Fifty thousand pounds.

Enter BEATRICE, L. C.—WENHAM goes up L. c. looking off L.

KEGG. (C.) Thirty thousand pounds, take it or leave it.

CARFAX. (R. *aside to LORD BRADSTOCK*) Take it—she's here.

LORD B. (R. C.) I take it, in black and white. Carfax has it. (CARFAX *produces document*)

EDWARD. (*down L. aside*) What can I do ? (KEGG *examines paper and signs at table R.*)

LORD B. (R. *takes contract from table and, gets R. c.*) Let me say, Mr. Kegg (*pretending ignorance of the lady's presence*) that my affection for your daughter is not founded upon the sum of money you may give her, therefore I put up with the manifest injustice, and only wish to take her as she is.

EDWARD. (*aside, going up to c.*) A sacrifice to humbug, will nothing stop this ?

WENHAM. (*aside to him*) Nothing, except Mrs. Sawde and Augustus. (*exit EDWARD L. at back*)

BEAT. (*to* LORD BRADSTOCK) I have heard your generous sentiments and they cause me a pang I had not expected to feel. Four months ago, in a moment of impetuosity, and pitying the apparently hard treatment you had received, I promised I would be your lordship's wife.

KEGG. (R.) It wasn't in black and white.

BEAT. But equally binding on my conscience.

CARFAX. (*at table*, R. c.) She ought to take counsel's opinion

BEAT. It was a promise.

Enter MRS. SAWDER *and* AUGUSTUS, L.

MRS. S. (L. C.) A promise which Lord Bradstock would, I am sure, never expect to be carried out against the lady's wish. Oh, John, what did you say to me about Beatrice and Augustus? It was a promise—you heard it, Mr. Wenham?

WENHAM. A promise! Yes, only it wasn't in black and white.

BEAT. Let me speak, aunt. Before witnesses who heard me make it, I here ask Lord Bradstock not to exact the fulfilment of my promise.

LORD B. (C.) Excuse me. In my present position I cannot listen to a proposal of this nature—I refuse to present at a scene. *(exit v.)*

MRS. S. (L. C.) He's a brute. It may all be arranged pleasantly, and when you've heard what my Augustus says you'll own that there's necessity for it. Speak, Augustus.

AUGUST. (*taking* BEATRICE'S *hand*) Beatrice, I should like to see you a happy wife.

MRS. S. (R. C.) They're just an age.

AUGUST. (L. C.) We've often talked this matter over privately-----

MRS. S. Between themselves, John. Don't blush, Augustus, dear.

AUGUST. (L. C.) And we are both agreed-----

BEAT. (L.) We are, cousin-----

AUGUST. That we are always to be cousins—never husband and wife.

MRS. S. What! Augustus! He won't marry her. This all comes of that horrid habit of smoking! (*bursts into tears and falls on chair*, R. C.)

KEGG. (C.) Beatrice, you are bound by your own word. You would do it. Carfax, come and fetch him back and settle it. *(exeunt* CARFAX *and* KEGG)

MRS. S. Oh, my dears, oh!

GERT. My dear aunt!

WENHAM. (R. C.) Marriages, ma'am, are made in heaven.

MRS. S. (R.) They must be, for the arrangements would try the temper of an angel. *(exit* L. *at back)*

Re-enter BRADSTOCK.

LORD B. (L. C. *aside*) Just in time, (*aloud*) Miss Beatrice.

GERT. (R. C.) Lord Bradstock!

TRAFF. (L.) My lord, I must take upon myself as one of the family-----

LORD B. (*aside*) Poor devil! (*aloud*) Pardon, sir, one moment. Miss Beatrice, I have talked the matter over with my own heart, and, hard as is the blow to me, I release you entirely from your promise.

Enter EDWARD L., with newspaper, he pauses and listens.

BEAT. (R. C. *confused*) Lord Bradstock !

GERT. (R.) You have indeed acted nobly !

TRAFF. (L.) Most generously-----

WENHAM. (L.) Most generously, only-----

TRAFF. (*annoyed with WENHAM*) You are unjust.

EDWARD. (*down L. C.*) Lord Bradstock, I accidentally overheard the scene that has just passed. Let me add my congratulations, (*aside to him*) You've heard of the smash in the city ?

LORD B. (C.) I-----

EDWARD. (L. C.) You've seen the fourth edition of the "Pitcher?"

LORD B. (C.) Sir?

EDWARD. You dropped it as you came along, (*hands it to WENHAM and TRAFFORD*)

LORD B. Sir, this conduct-----

WENHAM. (*L. reading to TRAFFORD*) " Panic in the city ! Holt, Capel, and Co. failed." Then Kegg-----

TRAFF. Hush !

EDWARD. Good bye, my dear Lord Bradstock.

GERT. (R. C.) We shall never forget your conduct.

BEAT. (R.) Never!

OMNES. Never!

GERT. You will always be welcome at our house-----

EDWARD. Whenever he feels inclined to come ! (*goes up L.*)

GERT. }

and } (R.) Whenever he feels inclined to come.

BEAT. }

WENHAM. (*shakes LORD BRADSTOCK'S hand*) Whenever he feels inclined to come ! (X's R. c.)

TRAFF. (*shakes LORD BRADSTOCK'S hand*) Whenever he feels inclined to come. (*X ing over to c—aside*) I've half a mind to kick him out now ! (WENHAM X's to R. TRAFFORD and Miss GERTRUDE go up to back R.)

LORD B. (C.) Miss Kegg, Miss Beatrice — (EDWARD shows him off at back, L.)

BEAT. (R. *with* WENHAM) Poor fellow, he seemed quite overcome!

WENHAM. (R.) Quite ! He had positively nothing to say for himself.

EDWARD. (*L. aside*) There's one humbug less in our society, at all events.

GERT. (*up R.*) Aylmer, you seem troubled, you are concealing something from us.

EDWARD. (*X ing to R. c.*) I am—I have been. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent, that for speaking has arrived.

BEAT. (R. *near c. to her sister*) Gertrude ! (GERTRUDE *comes down to her*)

EDWARD. Now, every minute is of consequence. Miss Kegg, in your presence, and that of my dearest friend, I would put a question to your sister.

GERT. (R. C.) She will answer you, I'm sure.

EDWARD. (C.) For months I have had it on my lips to say I love you. The day has come when I can say it, and ask you-----

BEAT. (R. C. *with* GERTRUDE) It is so sudden.

GERT. Have you spoken to papa ?

EDWARD. Can he tell me if my love is returned ?

BEAT. What shall I say ?

GERT. My darling, the truth ! (*goes up to L.*)

EDWARD. To hear from you that I may, at all events, hope—to hear that I am loved ever so little—one word.

BEAT. What word do you want me to say ?

EDWARD. (R. *to c.*) Do you love me? (WENHAM *and* TRAFFORD *get over to L.*)

BEAT, (R.) And I am to answer that in one word ? then—
(*she is about to speak when OLD KEGG enters from back L., pale and ill, and sinks on chair.*)

{ GERT } Papa, what *has* happened? (EDWARD *hands*
BEAT } *chair forward c.*)

KEGG. (*sinks in chair c.*) Those infernal scoundrels, Sir Simeon Holt and Capel, failed. Every shilling I had was in it.

BEAT. (R. C.) Papa, when did you hear this ?

KEGG. (C.) 'Tis in that infernal newspaper that Fursden has there—I saw it when it first came down.

BEAT. (R. C. *to* EDWARD *who is R.*) You knew of this ? (*gives her hand*) Yes.

KEGG. (C.) And I was going to have drawn fifty thousand out of it to-day. It's in black and white.

TRAFF. (L.) Don't let that annoy you, sir. Gertrude provided for.

KEGG. I know she is. And Beatrice too, if she will but marry Lord Bradstock.

TRAFF. He has refused-----

WENHAM. (*extreme L.*) After hearing of your loss, (*goes up with paper*)

KEGG. (C.) My loss ? I can't believe it; that villain Holt. That I should have trusted such a sanctimonious humbug. But Bradstock had two hundred thousand pounds, he showed it me in black and white.

WENHAM. (L.) That's where it was. It looks so well in black and white, (*goes up to back, L.*)

KEGG. (*rises*) But why shouldn't I start again—I've friends—I've done it before. Five thousand pounds will float me, and what's that ? Dolan offered me that sum directly I asked him.

EDWARD. (R.) Since the fourth edition ? (*DOLAN with bag appears at back from L., and talks to WENHAM who is up c.*)

KEGG. No. But that won't make any difference to *him*, he's no humbug ; he'd do anything for me even though I am ruined.

WENHAM. (*comes down L. c.*) Good bye, Dolan. (*taking his bag, and goes over to L.*)

KEGG. (R. C, *suddenly*) Ah, my dear fellow, come in—this is kind of you.

DOLAN. (C.) I've hardly a minute to catch the train—my dear fellow, I'm heartily sorry. 'Tis mighty cruel. 'Tis difficult in these days to trust anybody. Ye'll rise, sir, like a financial Phoenix from the ashes. Good bye.

KEGG. Now the two thousand pounds you so kindly offered will be of real service.

DOLAN. (C.) Ah, I was coming to tell you, I don't know how this panic's affected me in the city. I'm hurrying up now, but I shan't know till to-morrow morning as—a man of business you understood.

KEGG. (R. C.) Perfectly.

DOLAN. (c.) Precisely, my dear boy, the most unfortunate thing in the world. But if I can be of the slightest service to ye in town command me in any way you please. Sure it'll all come right. I lave him in good hands, ladies, ye'll cheer him up. (*railway whistle*) There's the train whistle. Good bye, my boy and good luck to you. I'll send you down the next three editions of the " Pitcher " with all the latest intelligence. (*exit at back and off L.*)

KEGG. (*seated R. c.*) They run like rats from a falling house.

WENHAM. (L.) He'll come back again.

EDWARD. (R.) Not he—he's nothing to come back for.

DOLAN. (*c. returning*) I've returned-----

WENHAM. For your bag. (*gives it—railway whistle very loud—DOLAN hurries off at back and L.*)

EDWARD. There's another humbug gone—come like shadows, so depart.

Enter CARFAX, hurriedly, c. from L.

CARFAX. (L. C.) After I left you I heard of it. I was at the station, and knowing how deeply you are involved—saw Mallery, Q.C., he was in the train, I immediately asked counsel's opinion.

EDWARD. (R. to TRAFFORD) Ah!

CARFAX. (to KEGG) Don't think for a moment that that's to be an item in a bill! Drop that subject between us.

KEGG. (C.) My dear Carfax, this kind tone, so unexpected.

CARFAX. (L. C.) I couldn't do less for an old friend and client.

KEGG. And Council's opinion was-----

CARFAX. That you were not a shareholder in the concern at all.

KEGG, &c. Why then----- (*all joyfully.*)

WENHAM. (*extreme L.*) Not a shareholder—only-----

CARFAX. You are involved as a partner. There's no doubt of it. Now if there is anything I can do, I am not a rich man, but my cheque book up to £500 is at your service.

KEGG. (C.) My dear Carfax-----

CARFAX. (L. C.) Don't mention it. By the way, you've got enormous interest in the right quarter, now Holt & Co.'s affairs must be wound up. You can get me appointed as solicitor to conduct the winding-up—you'll do your best—write at once—I'm off to see two or three of the influential shareholders. Terrible things these gigantic smashes
Good bye. (*Exit at back and off L.*)

WENHAM. (L.) Yes, only it'll make your fortune.

EDWARD. (R.) Another gone. The atmosphere's becoming quite clear.

GERT. (R. C. to KEGG, *who is seated at table*, R. c.) Papa, yes, Beatrice, it is better to speak now. Papa, Mr. Fursden, knowing your misfortune has proposed for Beatrice, and she has accepted.

KEGG. (*rises c.*) He's got nothing—no more have I.

TRAFF. (L. C.) Excuse me, he possesses this property, give up my share of it, and my uncle and myself will purchase for two hundred thousand pounds if he will sell.

EDWARD. (*R.*) Fifty thousand I settle on my wife—half of the remainder, sir, is at your disposal. (MRS. SAWDER *at back of stage*, L.—*the DUKE appears at back*, R., *with plan of an estate.*)

KEGG. (*c, seated*) Don't speak to me for a second—what a company we shall make, (*taking EDWARD and TRAFFORD'S hands*, EDWARD R., TRAFFORD L. *of him.*)

DUKE. (*at back R.*) Capital situation for an entrance to the Hotel.

GERT. (R. C.) Give up speculation, dear papa.

BEAT. (R.) Make our houses your home.

MRS. S. (*coming forward*, L.) And mine dear John—I've heard all about it.

WENHAM. (L.) She waited till she'd heard *all* about it.

TRAFF. (L.) Our fortune has resulted from our ruin—a good omen—and if we must expect some dash of bitter in our cup of happiness—there he is. (*turning to WENHAM*, L. DUKE *surveying arch*, L. *at back*)

EDWARD. (R.) For our part let us devote ourselves to educating a new generation in an honest anti-humbug school.

GERT. (*seated R.*) Make them true friends-----

WENHAM. (L.) You'd upset society.

TRAFF. (L. C.) Straightforward men of business.

WENHAM. (L.) You'd ruin commerce.

KEGG. (C.) I'm afraid there'd be no speculation.

WENHAM. My dear friend, Edward's notion is an excellent one, a capital one.

EDWARD. Only-----

TRAM. Only-----

WENHAM. Only what he says is in itself-----

OMNES. What?

WENHAM. Humbug!

AUGUSTUS.

	MRS. S.		DUKE.	
EDWARD.	BEATRICE.	KEGG.	TRAFFORD.	WENHAM.
	GERTRUDE.	(<i>seated</i>)		
R.		C.		L.