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UNDER THE ROSE

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# Under the Rose

*A STORY IN SCENES*

BY F. ANSTEY

AUTHOR OF

"VICE VERSÂ," "VOCES POPULI," "THE MAN FROM BLANKLEY'S," &c., &c.

*WITH FIFTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS BY*

J. BERNARD PARTRIDGE

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Reprinted from "Punch"

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LONDON

BRADBURY, AGNEW, & CO. LD., 9, BOUVERIE ST., E.C.

LONDON :

BRADBURY, AGNEW, & CO. LD., PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.



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## Dramatis Personæ.

MR. THEOPHILUS TOOVEY.

CORNELIA TOOVEY (*his wife*).

ALTHEA TOOVEY (*his daughter*).

CHARLES COLLIMORE (*Mrs. Toovey's nephew*).

CLARENCE CURPHEW.

COLONEL MERRIDEW.

CECILIA MERRIDEW (*his wife*).

CAPTAIN ALCHIN.

JANNAWAY (*a stockbroker's clerk*).

MISS MILLY (*his fiancée*).

PHOEBE (*parlour-maid at Hornbeam Lodge*).

MRS. RUFFLES (*a landlady*).

A Cabman.

Artistes, Officials, &c., at *The "Eldorado" Palace of Varieties*.

AN UNEASY CONSCIENCE.



## Scene I.

*A decorously-furnished Drawing-room at Hornbeam Lodge, Clapham, the residence of THEOPHILUS TOOVEY, Esq. It is Sunday evening. Mr. TOOVEY, an elderly Gentleman with a high forehead, a rabbit mouth, and a long but somewhat wispy beard, is discovered sitting alone with a suitable book, upon which he is endeavouring to fix his thoughts, apparently without success.*

MR. TOOVEY (*reading*). “With what a mixture of indescribable emotions did I find myself actually standing upon the very brink —” (*To himself, as he puts the volume down.*) It’s no use, I can’t concentrate my mind on Palestine to-night, I can’t forget this horrible “Eldorado.” Ever since I got that official warrant, or demand, or whatever it was, yesterday, I’ve been positively haunted

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by the name. It seems to meet me everywhere ; even on the very hoardings ! Why, *why* didn't I invest Aunt Eliza's legacy in consols, as Cornelia told me, instead of putting it into a gold-mine ? I think Larkins said it was a *gold-mine*. If only I had never met him that day last year—but he seemed to think he was doing me such a favour in letting me have some of his shares at all ; he'd been allotted more than he wanted, he told me, and he was so confident the Company was going to be a success that I—and now, after hearing nothing all this time, I'm suddenly called upon to pay a hundred and seventy-five pounds, and that's only for one half year, as far as I can make out. . . . How can I draw a cheque for all that without Cornelia finding out ? I never dared tell her, and she overlooks all my accounts. Why did I, who have never been a follower after Mammon, fall so easily into that accursed mine ? I am no business man. All the time I was a partner in that floorcloth factory, I never interfered in the conduct of it, beyond signing my name occasionally—which was all they allowed me to do—and they took the earliest opportunity of buying me out. And yet I must needs go and speculate with Aunt Eliza's five hundred pounds, and—what is worse—lose every penny, and more ! I, a Churchwarden, looked up to





“ How shall I ever tell Cornelia ? ”



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by every member of an Evangelical congregation, the head of a household like this! . . . How shall I ever tell Cornelia? And yet I must—I never had a secret from her in my life. I shall know no peace till I have confessed all. I *will* confess—this very night—when we are alone. If I could speak to Charles first, or to that young Mr. Curphew—they will both be here to supper—and Charles is in a Solicitor's office. But my nephew is too young, and Mr. Curphew, though he *is* a journalist, is wise and serious beyond his years—and if, as Cornelia thinks, he is beginning to feel a tenderness for Althea, why, it might cause him to reconsider his — No, I can't tell anyone but my wife. (*Sounds are heard in the hall.*) There they are!—they are back from Church—already! (*He catches up his book.*) I must try to be calm. She must not notice anything at present!

MRS. T. (*outside*). I've left my things downstairs, Phoebe; you can take them up to my room. (*Entering.*) Well, Pa, I hope you feel less poorly than you did, after your quiet evening at home?

MR. T. (*flurried*). Yes, my love, yes. I—I've had a peaceful time with *Peregrinations in Palestine*. A— a most absorbing book, my love.

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Mrs. T. You would find it more absorbing, Pa, if you held it the right way up. You've been asleep!

Mr. T. No, indeed, I only wish I—that is—I may have dropped off for a moment.

CHARLES (*who has followed his Aunt*). You wouldn't have had much chance of doing that if you'd been at Church, Uncle!

Mrs. T. No, indeed. Mr. Powles preached a most awakening discourse, which I am glad to find Charles appreciated.

CHARLES. I meant the cushion in your pew, Uncle; you ought to have it restuffed. It's like sitting on a bag of mixed biscuits!

Mrs. T. We do not go to Church to be *comfortable*, Charles. Pa, Mr. Powles alluded very powerfully, from the pulpit, to the recent commercial disasters, and the sinfulness of speculation in professing Christians. I wish you could have heard him.

Mr. T. (*squirming*). A—a deprivation indeed, my love. But I was better at home—better at home.

Mrs. T. You will have other opportunities; he announces a course of weekday addresses, at the Mission Rooms, on "The Thin End of the Wedge of

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Achan." Charles, I gave you one of the circulars to carry for me. Where is it?

CHARLES. In my overcoat, I think, Aunt. Shall I go and get it? [ALTHEA enters.

MRS. T. Not now; I haven't my spectacles by me. Thea, did you tell Phœbe to pack your trunk the first thing to-morrow?

ALTHEA. Yes, Mamma; but there is plenty of time. Cecilia doesn't expect me till the afternoon.

CHARLES. So Thea's going up to town for a few days' spree, eh, Aunt Cornelia?

MRS. T. (*severely*). Your cousin is going on a visit to a married schoolfellow, who is her senior by two or three years, and who, I understand, was the most exemplary pupil Miss Pruins ever had. I have no doubt Mrs. Merridew will take Althea to such entertainments as are fit and proper for her—picture-galleries, museums, concerts, possibly a lecture—but I should not describe that myself as a "spree."

CHARLES. No more should I, Aunt, not by any means.

MRS. T. I never met this Mrs. Merridew, but I was favourably impressed by the way she wrote. A very sensible letter.

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ALTHEA (*to herself*). Except the postscript. But I didn't like to show Mamma that!

CHARLES. But you'll go to a theatre or two, or a dance, or something while you're with her, won't you? [ALTHEA *tries to signal to him to be silent.*

MRS. T. Charles, you forget where you are. A daughter of *ours* set foot in a playhouse! Surely you know your Uncle's objection to anything in the nature of a theatrical entertainment? Did he not write and threaten to resign the Vice-Presidency of the Lower Clapham Athenæum at the mere hint of a performance of scenes from some play by that dissolute writer Sheridan—even without costumes and scenery? His protest was most admirably worded. I remember I drafted it myself.

MR. T. (*with some complacency*). Yes, yes, I've always been extremely firm on that subject, and also on the dangers of dancing—indeed, I have almost succeeded in putting an entire stop to the children dancing to piano-organs in the streets of this neighbourhood—a most reprehensible custom!

MRS. T. Yes, Theophilus, and you might have stopped it long before you did, if you had taken my suggestion earlier. I hope I am not to infer, from

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your manner, that you are yourself addicted to these so-called pleasures, Charles?

CHARLES. Dancing in the street to a piano-organ, Aunt? Never did such a thing in my life!

Mrs. T. That was not my meaning, Charles, as you very well know. I hope you employ your evenings in improving your knowledge of your profession. I should be sorry to think you frequented theatres.

CHARLES (*demurely*). Theatres? rather not, Aunt, never go near 'em. (*To himself.*) Catch me going where I can't smoke! (*Aloud.*) You see when a fellow has lodgings in a nice cheerful street in Bloomsbury, it isn't likely he'd want to turn out of an evening after sticking hard at the office all day!

Mrs. T. I am glad to hear you say so, Charles. It is quite a mistake for a young man to think he cannot do without amusement. Your Uncle never thought of amusing himself when he was young—or our married life would not be what it is. And look at Mr. Curphew, who is coming in to supper to-night, see how hard *he* works—up to town every afternoon, and not back till long after midnight. [*The bell rings.*]

CHARLES. Rather queer hours to work, Aunt. Are you sure he doesn't go up just to read the paper?

ALTHEA (*with a slight flush*). He goes up to write it,

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Charles. Mr. Curphew is on the press, and has taken rooms here for the air of the Common. And—and he is very clever, and works very hard indeed; you can see that from his looks.

PHŒBE (*announcing*). Mr. Curphew.

[*A tall slim young man enters, with a pale, smooth-shaven face, and rather melancholy eyes, which light up as he greets ALTHEA.*

Mrs. T. How do you do, Mr. Curphew? You are a little late—but some services last longer than others. Oh, Phœbe, now I think of it, just bring me a paper you will find in one of the pockets of Mr. Collimore's overcoat; it's hanging up in the hall—the drab one with grey velvet on the collar. (PHŒBE *goes.*) It's a circular, Mr. Curphew, which was given out in our Church this evening, and may interest you to see.

PHŒBE (*returning*). If you please, m'm, this is the only paper I could find.

Mrs. T. (*taking it from the salver, without looking at it*). Quite right, Phœbe—we shall be ready for supper when I ring. (*When PHŒBE has gone.*) I can't see anything without my—— Althea, just go and see if I have left my spectacle-case in my room, my dear. It's astonishing how they're always getting mislaid,



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and I'm so helpless without them. (ALTHEA goes.)  
Mr. Curpew, perhaps you will read this aloud for me; I want my husband to hear.

CURPHEW (*suppressing a slight start*). May I ask if they distribute papers of this sort at your Church—and—and why you think it is likely to interest me in particular? (*To himself*.) Wonder if this can be a trap!

MRS. T. (*taking back the document, and holding it close to her nose*). Gracious goodness! *this* isn't the—— Charles, perhaps you will explain how you come to have a paper in your pocket covered with pictures of females in shamelessly short skirts?

CHARLES (*to himself*). In for a pie-jaw this time! What an owl that girl is! (*Aloud*.) It's only a programme, Aunt; thing they give you at a music-hall, you know.

MRS. T. (*in an awful voice*). Only a programme! Pa, tell this unhappy boy your opinion of his conduct!

MR. T. (*rising magisterially*). Charles, am I to understand that a nephew of mine allows himself to be seen in a disreputable resort such as——

CHARLES. Oh come, Uncle, you can't know much about the Eldorado, if——

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Mr. T. (*with a bound*). The *Eldorado*! How dare you bring that name up here, Sir? What do you mean by it?

CHARLES (*surprised*). Why, you must have heard of it—it's one of the leading music-halls.

Mr. T. (*gasping*). A music-hall? the *Eldorado*! (*To himself.*) If it should turn out to be—but no, my nerves are upset, it *can't* be—and yet—what *am* I to say to him?

[*He falls back into his chair with a groan.*]

Mrs. T. Charles, if you can stand there and feel no shame when you see how disturbed and disgusted even Mr. Curphew looks, and the agitated state to which you have reduced your poor Uncle, you must indeed be hardened!

[CURPHEW *has considerably walked to the window* ;  
Mr. TOOVEY *endeavours to collect his faculties* ;  
CHARLES *looks from one to the other in bewilderment.*]

IN SUSPENSE.



## Scene II.

*The Drawing-room as before.*

Mr. TOOVEY *is slowly recovering from the mental collapse produced by the mention of the word "Eldorado."*

MRS. TOOVEY. Althea is out of the room, Pa, so there is no reason why you should not speak out plainly.

Mr. T. (*to himself*). No reason—oh! But I must say *something*. If only I knew whether it was *my* Eldorado—but, no, it's a mere coincidence! (*Aloud—shakily.*) Charles, my boy, you—you've shocked me very much indeed, as you can see. But, about the name of this establishment, now—isn't it a curious one for—for a *music-hall*, Charles? M—mightn't it be confused with—well—say a *mine* now?

Mrs. T. Theophilus, this is scarcely the tone—. I expected you to give this misguided boy a solemn warning of the ruin he may incur by having anything to do with such a haunt.

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MR. T. (*to himself*). Ah, I'm afraid I'm only too well qualified to do *that*. (*Aloud.*) I do, Charles, I *do*—though at the same time, I can quite understand how one may, unwittingly—I mean, you might not be aware of—

MRS. T. You, Pa, of all people in the world, trying to find excuses for his depravity! The very name of the place is enough to indicate its nature!

MR. T. (*hastily*). No, my love, surely not. *There* I think you go too far—too far altogether!

MRS. T. I appeal to Mr. Curphew to say whether such a place is a proper resort for *any* young man.

CURPHEW (*to himself*). Wish I was well out of this! (*Aloud.*) I—I really don't feel qualified to give an opinion, Mrs. Toovey. Many young men *do* go to them, I believe.

CHARLES (*to himself*). Is this chap a prig or a humbug? I'll draw him. (*Aloud.*) I suppose, from that, you never think of going yourself?

MRS. T. Mr. Curphew's tastes are *rather* different from yours, Charles. I am very sure that he is never to be seen among the audience at any music-hall—are you, Mr. Curphew?

CURPHEW (*to himself*). Could I break it to her

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gently, I wonder? (*Aloud.*) Never—my professional duties make that impossible.

CHARLES (*to himself*). I *knew* he was a muff! (*Aloud.*) I should have thought you could easily get a pass to any place you wanted to go—in your profession.

CURPHEW (*to himself*). He suspects something. (*Aloud.*) Should you? Why?

CHARLES. Oh, as you're on a newspaper, you know. Don't they always have a free pass for everywhere?

CURPHEW. If they have, I have never had occasion to make use of it.

CHARLES. Well, of course you may turn up your nose at music-halls, and say they're not intellectual enough for you.

CURPHEW. Pardon me, I never said I turned up my nose at them, though you'll admit they don't profess to make a strong appeal to the intellect.

CHARLES. If they did, you wouldn't catch *me* there. But I can tell you, it's not so bad as you seem to think; every now and then they get hold of a really good thing. You might do worse than drop into the "El." or the "Val.," the Valhalla, you know, some evening—just to hear Walter Wildfire.

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CURPHEW. Much obliged ; but I can't imagine myself going there for such a purpose.

MRS. T. Charles, if you suppose Mr. Curphew would allow himself to be corrupted by a boy like you——

CHARLES. But look here, Aunt. Walter Wildfire's all right—he is *really* ; he was a gentleman, and all that, before he took to this sort of thing, and he writes all his own songs—and ripping they are, too ! His line is the Broken-down Plunger, you know. (Mrs. T. *repudiates any knowledge of this type.*) He's got one song about a Hansom Cabby who has to drive the girl he was engaged to before he was broke, and she's married some other fellow since, and has got her little daughter with her, and the child gives him his fare, and—well, somehow it makes you feel choky when he sings it. Even Mr. Curphew couldn't find anything to complain of in Walter Wildfire !

ALTHEA (*who has entered during this speech*). Mamma, I can't find your spectacles anywhere. Mr. Curphew, who is this Walter Wildfire Charles is so enthusiastic about ?

MRS. T. (*hastily*). No one that Mr. Curphew knows anything of—and certainly not a fit person to be mentioned in *your* hearing, my dear, so let us say no more about it. Supper must be on the table by this time ;



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we had better go in, and try to find a more befitting topic for conversation. Charles, have the goodness to put this—this *disgraceful* paper in your pocket, and let me see no more of it. I shall get your Uncle to speak to you seriously after supper.

MR. T. (*aloud, with alacrity*). Yes, my love, I shall certainly speak to Charles after supper—very seriously. (*To himself.*) And end this awful uncertainty!

CURPHEW (*to himself, as he follows to the dining-room*). “Not a fit person to be mentioned in her hearing!” I wonder. Would *she* say the same if she knew? When shall I be able to tell her? It would be madness as yet.



LEARNING THE WORST.



### Scene III.

*The Study at Hornbeam Lodge.*

Mr. TOOVEY *and* CHARLES *are alone together.* Mr. TOOVEY *has found it impossible to come to the point.*

CHARLES (*looking at his watch*). I say, Uncle, I'm afraid I must trouble you for that wiggling at once, if I'm going to catch my train back. You've only seven-and-a-half minutes left to exhort me in, so make the most of it.

MR. T. (*with embarrassment*). Yes, Charles, but—I don't wish to be hard on you, my boy—we are all liable to err, and—and, in point of fact, the reason I was a little upset at the mention of the Eldorado is, that a very dear old friend of mine, Charles, has lately lost a considerable sum through investing in a Company of the same name—and, just for the moment, it struck me that it might have been the music-hall—which of course is absurd, eh?

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CHARLES. Rather! He couldn't possibly have lost it in the *music-hall*, Uncle; it's ridiculous!

MR. T. (*relieved*). Just what *I* thought. A man in his—ah—responsible position—oh no. But he's lost it in this other Company. And they've demanded a hundred and seventy-five pounds over and above the five hundred he paid on his shares. Now *you* know the law. Can they *do* that, Charles? Is he legally liable to pay?

CHARLES. Couldn't possibly say without knowing all the facts. It's a Limited Company, I suppose?

MR. T. I—I don't know, Charles, but I can show you the official document which—ah—happens to be in my hands. I'm afraid I didn't examine it very carefully—I was too upset. (*He goes to his secrétaire, and returns with a paper, which he offers for CHARLES'S inspection.*) You won't mind my covering up the name? My—my friend wouldn't care for it to be seen—I'm sure.

CHARLES (*glances at the top of the paper, and roars with laughter*). I say, Uncle, your friend *must* be a jolly old juggins!

MR. T. (*miscrably*). I don't think he could be described as *jolly* just now, Charles.

CHARLES. No, but I mean, not all there, you know—trifle weak in the upper story.



“ If I were you, I wouldn't mention this to Aunt.”





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MR. T. (*with dignity*). He never professed to be a man of business, Charles, any more than myself, and his inexperience was shamefully abused—*most* shamefully!

CHARLES. Abused! But look here, Uncle, do you mean to say you don't see that this is a dividend warrant!

MR. T. I believe that is what they call it. And—and is he bound to send them a cheque for it at once, Charles?

CHARLES. Send them a cheque? Great Scott! Why it *is* a cheque! They're paying *him*. It's the half-yearly dividend on his five hundred, at the rate of seventy per cent. And he was going to—— Oh, Lord!

MR. T. (*rising, and shaking C.'s hands with effusion*). My *dear* Charles; how can I thank you? If you *knew* what a load you've taken off my mind! Then the Company *isn't* bankrupt—it's paying seventy per cent.! Why, I needn't mind telling your Aunt. (*With restored complacency*.) Of course, my boy, I have never occupied myself with City matters—but, none the less, I believe I can trust my natural shrewdness—I had a sort of instinct, Charles, from the first, that that mine was perfectly sound. I knew I could trust Larkins.

CHARLES. *You*, Uncle! Then it was *you* who was

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your friend all the time? Oh, you're really *too* rich, you know!

MR. T. I have never desired it; but it will certainly be a very useful addition to our—ah—modest income, Charles. But you should check yourself, my boy, in this—ah—immoderate laughter. There is nothing that I can see to cause such mirth in the fact of your Uncle's having made a fortunate investment in a gold-mine.

CHARLES (*as soon as he can speak*). But it *ain't* a mine, Uncle, it—it's the music-hall! Give you my word it is. If you don't believe me, look at the address on the warrant, and you'll see it's the same as on this programme. You're a shareholder in the Eldorado Palace of Varieties, Piccadilly!

MR. T. (*jalling back*). No, Charles! I—I acquired them in the most perfect innocence!

CHARLES. Innocence! I'd back you for that against an entire Infant School, Uncle. But I say, I must be off now. If I were you, I *wouldn't* mention this to Aunt. And look here. I'd better leave you this. (*He hands him the Eldorado programme.*) It's more in your line than mine now.

[*He goes out, and is heard chuckling in the hall and down to the front gate.*]

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MR. T. (*alone*). That ribald unfeeling boy! *What a Sunday I've had!* And how am I ever to tell Cornelia now? (*A bell rings.*) That's to call the servants up to prayers. (*He stuffs the programme into his pocket hastily, and rises.*) No, I can't. I can't conduct family prayers with the knowledge that I'm a shareholder in—in a Palace of Varieties! I shall slip quietly off to bed.

PHŒBE (*entering*). Missus wished me to tell you she was only waiting for you, Sir.

MR. T. Phœbe, tell your mistress I'm feeling poorly again, and have gone to bed. (*To himself.*) If I could only be sure I don't talk in my sleep!

[*He shuffles upstairs.*]



CONFESSIOŒ UNDER DIFFICULTIES.



## Scene IV.

*An Up-Platform at Clapham Junction.*

TIME—*Monday afternoon.*

URPHEW (*to himself, as he paces up and down with a pre-occupied air*). I ought to have been up at the Hilarity rehearsing hours ago. Considering all that depends on that play of mine—but there'll be time enough to pull '*Flattery*' together before Saturday. And this is the only chance I have of seeing Althea for days. Her mother hinted last night that she was obliged to let her travel up to Waterloo alone, and if I *did* happen to be going up about this time—and of course I *do* happen to be. I *must* tell Althea; I can't go on playing a part any longer. I felt such a humbug last night over that confounded Eldorado business. But if I'd revealed myself then as "Walter Wildfire, Comedian and Vocalist," those puritanical parents of hers would probably have both had a fit on the floor, and have me kicked out of the house as soon as they were sufficiently recovered!

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That's the worst of becoming intimate with a serious Evangelical family in the character of a hard-working journalist. I ought to have undeceived them, I suppose, but it was such a blessing to sink the shop—and besides, I'd seen Althea. It would have been folly to speak until—but she must know now, I'll have no more false pretences. After all, there's no disgrace in being a music-hall singer. I've no reason to be ashamed of the means by which I've got my reputation. Ah! but she won't understand that—the name will be enough for her! And I can't blame her if she fails to see the glory of bringing whisky and water nightly to the eyes of an enraptured audience by singing serio-comic sentiment under limelight through clouds of tobacco-smoke. Heaven knows *I'm* sick enough of it, and if '*Flattery*' only makes a hit, I'd cut the profession at once. If I could only hear her say she—there she is—at last—and alone, thank goodness! I wish I didn't feel so nervous—I'm not likely to get a better opportunity. (*Aloud, as he meets ALTHEA.*) Mrs. Toovey said I might—can I get your ticket, or see after your luggage, or anything?

ALTHEA. Oh, thank you, Mr. Curphew, but Phœbe is doing all that.

CURPHEW (*to himself, his face falling*). That's the



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maid; then she's *not* alone! I must get this over now, or not at all. (*Aloud.*) Miss Toovey, I—I've something I particularly want to say to you; shall we walk up to the other end of the platform?

ALTHEA (*to herself*). He looks more serious than ever! Is he going to give me good advice? It's kind of him to care, but still— (*Aloud.*) Oh, but we shan't have time. See, there's our train coming up now. Couldn't you say it in the railway carriage?

[*The train runs in.*

CURPHEW (*to himself*). For Phœbe's edification! No, I don't quite— (*Aloud, desperately.*) It—it's something that concerns—something I can't very well say before anyone else—there'll be another train directly—would you mind waiting for it?

ALTHEA (*to herself*). It's very mysterious. I *should* like to know what it can be! (*Aloud.*) I—I hardly know. I think we ought, perhaps, to—but this doesn't look a very nice train, does it?

CURPHEW (*with conviction*). It's a *beastly* train! One of the very worst they run, and full of the most objectionable people. It—it's quite noted for it.

ALTHEA (*to PHŒBE, who hurries up with her hand-bag*). No, never mind; I'm not going by this train, Phœbe; we'll wait for a more comfortable one.

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PHŒBE. Very good, Miss. (*To herself, as she retires.*) Well, if that isn't downright barefaced—I don't know what is! I hope they'll find a train to suit 'em before long, and not stay here picking and choosing all day, or I shan't get back in time to lay my cloth for dinner. But it's the way with all these quiet ones!

ALTHEA. Did you want to speak to me about last night, Mr. Curphew? Has my cousin Charles been getting into any mischief? I only came in afterwards; but you were looking so shocked about something. Was it because he had been to a theatre, and do *you* think that very wicked of him?

CURPHEW (*to himself*). I ought to manage to lead up to it now. (*Aloud.*) It was not a theatre exactly—it was—well, it was a music-hall.

ALTHEA. Oh! but is there any difference?

CURPHEW. Not much—between a music-hall and some theatres. At theatres, you see, they perform a regular play, with a connected plot—at least, some of the pieces have a connected plot. At a music-hall the entertainment is—er—varied. Songs, conjuring tricks, ventriloquism, and—and that kind of thing.

ALTHEA. Why, that's just like the Penny Readings at our Athenæum!



“He does mean that!”



## Under the Rose.

CURPHEW. Well, I should hardly have—but I'm not in a position to say. (*To himself.*) I'm further off than ever!

ALTHEA. It couldn't be *that*, then; for Papa has presided at Penny Readings himself. But Charles must have told him *something* that upset him, for he came down to breakfast looking perfectly haggard this morning. Charles had a long talk in the library with him last night after you left, and then Papa went to bed.

CURPHEW (*to himself*). I felt sure that fellow spotted me. So he's let the cat out to old Toovey! If I don't tell her now—— (*Aloud.*) Did Mr. Toovey seem—er—annoyed?

ALTHEA. He looked worried, and I believe he wanted to consult *you*.

CURPHEW (*to himself*). The deuce he did! (*Aloud.*) He mentioned me?

ALTHEA. He talked of going round to see you, but Mamma insisted on his staying quietly indoors.

CURPHEW (*to himself*). Sensible woman, Mrs. Toovey! But I've no time to lose. (*Aloud.*) I think I can explain why he wished to see me. He has discovered my—my secret.

ALTHEA. *Have* you a secret, Mr. Curpew? (*To*

## Under the Rose.

*herself*.) He can't mean *that*, and yet—oh, what *am* I to say to him?

CURPHEW. I have. I always intended to tell him—but—but I wanted you to know it first. And it was rather difficult to tell. I—I risk losing everything by speaking.

ALTHEA (*to herself*). He *does* mean that! But I won't be proposed to like this on a railway platform; I don't believe it's proper; and I haven't even made up my mind! (*Aloud*.) If it was difficult before, it will be harder than ever now—just when another train is coming in, Mr. Curpew.

CURPHEW (*angrily, as the train passes*). Another—already! The way they crowd the traffic on this line is simply dis—— But it's an express. It isn't going to stop, I assure you it isn't!

ALTHEA. It *has* stopped. And we had better get in.

PHOEBE. I don't know if you fancy the look of this train, Miss, but there's an empty first-class in front.

CURPHEW. This train stops everywhere. We shall get in just as soon by the next—sooner in fact.

ALTHEA. If you think so, Mr. Curpew, wait for it, but we really must go. Come, Phoebe.

PHOEBE. I only took a second for myself, Miss, not knowing you'd require——

## Under the Rose.

CURPHEW (*to himself*). There's a chance still, if I can get a carriage to ourselves. (*Aloud.*) No, Miss Toovey, you must let me come with you. Your mother put you under my care, you know. (*To PHOEBE.*) Here, give me Miss Toovey's bag. Now, Miss Toovey, this way—we must look sharp. (*He opens the door of an empty compartment, puts ALTHEA in, hands her the bag, and is about to follow when he is seized by the arm, and turns to find himself in the grasp of Mr. TOOVEY.*) How do you do, Mr. Toovey? We—we are just off, you see.

MR. T. (*breathlessly*). I—I consider I am very fortunate in catching you, Mr. Curphew. I accidentally learnt from my wife that you were going up about this time—so I hurried down, on the bare chance of——

CURPHEW (*impatiently*). Yes, yes, but I'm afraid I can't wait now, Sir. I—Mrs. Toovey asked me to take care of your daughter——

MR. T. Althea will be perfectly safe. And I must have a few words with you at once on a matter which is pressing, Sir, very pressing indeed. Althea will excuse you.

ALTHEA (*from the window*). Of course. You mustn't think of coming, Mr. Curphew. Phœbe will look after me.

## Under the Rose.

CURPHEW. But—but I have an important engagement in town myself!

ALTHEA (*unkindly*). You will get up quite as soon by the next train, Mr. Curphew, or even sooner—you said so yourself, you know! (*In an under-tone.*) Stay. I'd rather you did—you can tell me your—your secret when I come back.

THE GUARD. Vauxhall and Waterloo only, this train. Stand back there, please!

[*He slams the door; the train moves on, leaving*

CURPHEW on the platform with Mr. TOOVEY.

CURPHEW (*to himself, bitterly*). What luck I have! She's gone now—and I haven't told her, after all. And I'm left behind, to have it out with this old pump! (*Aloud.*) Well, Sir, you've something to say to me?

MR. T. (*nervously*). I have—yes, certainly—only it—it's of rather a private nature, and—and perhaps we should be freer from interruption in the waiting-room here.

CURPHEW (*to himself*). I wish I'd thought of that myself—earlier. Well, he doesn't seem very formidable; it strikes me I shan't find it difficult to manage him. (*Aloud.*) The waiting-room, by all means.

[*He follows Mr. Toovey into the General Waiting-room, and awaits developments.*



A STARTLING SUGGESTION.



## Scene V.

*A General Waiting-room at Clapham Junction. CURPHEW is leaning against the mantel-piece. Mr. TOOVEY is seated on one of the horschair chairs against the wall.*

MR. TOOVEY (*to himself*). I do wish he'd sit down, and not look at me in that austere way! (*Aloud.*) Won't you take a chair? It would be so much more comfortable.

[*He shifts on his seat uneasily.*

CURPHEW (*stiffly*). Thanks, Mr. Toovey, but I'd rather stand—for so short a time. (*A pause.*) Well, Sir, you have something to say to me, I believe?

MR. T. (*to himself*). Oh dear, I'm almost sorry now I—he won't make sufficient allowances for me. (*Aloud, after another pause.*) The fact is, Mr. Curpew, I—I've just made a—a very painful discovery, which—is there any water in that decanter? because I—I feel a little thirsty.

[*CURPHEW pours him out a glass of water, which he sips.*

## Under the Rose.

CURPHEW. Come, Sir, we needn't beat about the bush. I think I can spare you the preliminaries. I suppose you've heard about the Eldorado?

MR. T. (*to himself*). He knows already! These journalists find out everything. (*Aloud.*) I—I have indeed, but I assure you that, up to the very moment my nephew informed me, I had no more suspicion—

CURPHEW. You naturally consider that I ought to have told you at once, but the fact is, I—well, I had some reason to doubt whether Mrs. Toovey—

MR. T. Oh, you were quite right, it would never have done—never have done. I haven't breathed a word to Mrs. Toovey myself as yet. I was afraid I might be obliged to this morning. She discovered that dreadful Eldorado programme in one of my pockets, and was curious, very naturally curious, as to why I had kept it, but I passed it off—I managed to pass it off. I—I thought it better, at all events till—till I had talked it over with you.

CURPHEW (*to himself, relieved*). He takes it wonderfully well. I shouldn't be surprised if I could talk *him* over. (*Aloud.*) Oh, decidedly, Sir. And may I ask you what your own views are?

MR. T. I—I don't know what to think. For a man in my position to have even the remotest connection

## Under the Rose.

with—with a London music-hall! Wouldn't it be considered scandalous, or at least indecorous, if it were to leak out now? Shouldn't I be regarded as—as inconsistent, for example?

CURPHEW. Oh, no one could reproach *you*, at all events, Sir!

MR. T. (*to himself*). And I thought he was going to be so hard on me! (*Aloud.*) I am glad you take that view of it—yes, I can't be held responsible for what I did in absolute ignorance; but, now that I *do* know, I can't go on, can I?—after a lifetime spent in condemning such entertainments!

CURPHEW. But are you quite sure, Sir, that your condemnation was based on any real foundation; mayn't you have been too ready to think the worst? Have you ever troubled yourself to inquire into the way they were conducted?

MR. T. (*to himself, in astonishment*). Why, he's actually making excuses for them! (*Aloud.*) I have always been given to understand that they were most improper places, Sir; that was sufficient for me—quite sufficient!

CURPHEW. I dare say I have no right to speak; but you may not be aware that all music-halls are now subject to the strictest supervision. And a body like

## Under the Rose.

the London County Council is not likely to sanction any impropriety in the entertainments.

MR. T. (*to himself*). If I could only persuade myself that I might keep the shares with a good conscience! To give up three hundred and fifty a year, without necessity! I wonder what he would say. (*Aloud.*) True, that didn't occur to me before; and the London County Council, they wouldn't encourage anything really—— If I could only be sure—and I'm open to conviction—I hope I'm always open to conviction.

CURPHEW (*to himself*). He's coming round; he's not such a pig-headed old Pharisee as I thought. (*Aloud.*) I am sure you are. You are not the man to condemn any form of amusement, however harmless, merely because you find no attraction in it yourself.

MR. T. No, no. And I see the force of what you say; and if I could only once satisfy myself that the entertainment was really harmless——

CURPHEW (*to himself*). He couldn't very well object to *my* part of it—it's an idea, and worth trying. (*Aloud.*) My dear Sir, why *shouldn't* you? In any case I should terminate my connection with the music-hall as soon as possible.

MR. T. (*disappointed*). Would you? Then you *do*

## Under the Rose.

think——? But the sacrifice, my dear young friend, it—it's a great deal of money to give up!

CURPHEW (*lightly*). Oh, that's of no consequence. I shouldn't think of that, for a moment!

MR. T. (*to himself, annoyed*). It's all very well for him to talk like that, but it's *my* sacrifice, and I *do* think of it! (*Aloud*.) But—but wouldn't it be a little Quixotic to withdraw from this Eldorado, supposing I found there was no moral objection to it, eh?

CURPHEW. I thought you would be the first to insist that the Eldorado should be given up! Surely, Sir, when I tell you that I love your daughter; that I hope, though I have not spoken as yet, to enter your family some day as your son-in-law, you will look at it differently?

MR. T. (*to himself*). He *does* want to marry our Thea? Cornelia will be delighted—delighted, but I really can't allow him to dictate to me whether to sell the shares or not! (*Aloud, with dignity*.) My good young friend, I have lived longer than you in the world, and you will permit me to say that if, after investigation, I see no cause to disapprove of the Eldorado, there is no reason that I can discover why *you* should hesitate to enter my family. I—I must

## Under the Rose.

act on my own judgment—entirely on my own judgment!

CURPHEW (*to himself*). He is an old tramp! Who would have thought he'd be so reasonable. (*Aloud, overjoyed.*) My dear Sir, how can I thank you? That is all I ask—more than I could possibly have expected. And I was about to suggest that you might drop into the Eldorado some evening this week and judge for yourself.

MR. T. (*recoiling in consternation*). I? I drop into a music-hall! Oh, I couldn't, indeed! Why, I never was in such a place in all my life. And if anybody were to see me there!

CURPHEW. You need not be seen at all. There are private boxes where no one would notice you. I could easily get them to send you one, if you like.

MR. T. (*to himself*). What a power the Press is, to be sure! I remember Charles said that newspaper writers could get seats for everything. (*Aloud.*) Really, I hardly know what to say; it's so very contrary to all my habits, and then—to go alone. Now if *you* would only accompany me—

CURPHEW. You forget, Sir, that's quite impossible. I can't come in the box with you!

MR. T. (*to himself*). There it is—it's against his





“I drop into a Music-hall!”



## Under the Rose.

principles to go himself, and yet he expects *me* to! (*Aloud, peevishly.*) Then why are you so anxious to have *me* go, eh?

CURPHEW. Why? Because there are Mrs. Toovey's prejudices to be considered, and I'm anxious that you should be in a position to assure her from your own personal experience that——

MR. T. Oh, my dear young friend, if I did go, I don't think I could ever mention such an experience as that to Mrs. Toovey. She—she might fail to understand that I merely went for the satisfaction of my own conscience.

CURPHEW. She might, of course. So long as you satisfy yourself, then. And—what night will suit you best?

MR. T. You're in such a hurry, young man. I—I never said I should go. I'm not at all sure that I *can* go; but if I did allow myself to venture, it would have to be some evening when my wife—let me see, on Saturday she's going out to some special meeting of her Zenana Mission Committee, I know. It had better be Saturday, if at all—if at all.

CURPHEW (*making a note*). Very well. I will see you have a box for that evening, and I hope you will manage to go. But there's a train coming in—I must

## Under the Rose.

really be off. Good-bye, Sir, and very many thanks for the kind and generous way in which you have treated me. I am very glad we have had this explanation, and thoroughly understand one another. Good-bye—good-bye!

*[He shakes Mr. Toovey's hand with cordial gratitude, and rushes out.]*

Mr. T. (*looking after him in some mystification*). A most high-minded young man, but a little too officious. And I don't understand why he makes such a point of my going to this Eldorado *now*. But, if I do go, I mayn't see anything to disapprove of; and, if I don't, I shall keep the shares—whether he likes it or not. He may be a very worthy young man, but I doubt whether he's quite a man of the world!

S U S P I C I O N .



## Scene VI.

*The Breakfast-room at Hornbeam Lodge. Mrs. TOOVEY is alone, making the tea.*

TIME—8.40 A.M. on Saturday morning.

MRS. TOOVEY (*to herself*). I cannot think what has come to Theophilus. He has come down late for prayers every morning this week. Such a bad example for any household, and Cook is beginning to notice it—I could see it in her eye as she came in. He is so strange in his manner, too; if I did not know he was absolutely incapable of—but *why* did he secrete that abominable programme of Charles's? He *said* he kept it with a view to making inquiries, but I have heard nothing about them since. (*Aloud, to PHŒBE, who brings in dishes and two letters.*) Oh, the post, Phœbe? It's late this morning. (*PHŒBE goes out.*) One for Pa, and one for me—from Althea—it was certainly time

## Under the Rose.

she wrote. (*Reading her letter.*) “Delightful visit . . . the Merridews so kind . . . so much to see and do . . . back on Monday . . . no time for more at present.” Not a word of where she’s been or what she’s seen—not at *all* the letter a girl should write to her mother! I wonder whom Pa’s letter is from? (*She turns it over.*) What’s this? “Eldorado Palace of Varieties” printed on the flap! Why, that’s Charles’s music-hall! Then Pa *has* been making inquiries after all. As Charles’s aunt I have a right to—— (*She is about to open the envelope.*) No, I’d better not. I hear Pa’s hum—he will be sure to tell me what they say.

MR. T. *enters* (*humming, to give himself a countenance*). Ha, so you’ve had prayers without me? Quite right—quite right.

MRS. T. (*severely*). Anything *but* right, Pa. You ought to have been down long ago. I heard you brushing your hair as I went out.

MR. T. (*feebly*). It was very tiresome, my love, but my collar-stud got under the wardrobe, and I couldn’t get it out for ever so long.

MRS. T. Your things have taken to behave in a very extraordinary manner, Pa. Yesterday it was your braces!



## Under the Rose.

MR. T. I—I believe it *was* my braces yesterday. Ah well, we must bear with these little tribulations—bear with them! (*To himself.*) A letter for me? From the Eldorado! It's the box! I—I hoped Mr. Curphew had forgotten.

[*He thrusts it into his pocket unopened, in a flurry.*]

Mrs. T. Is there any reason why you shouldn't read your letter, Pa? It may be of importance.

MR. T. I—I don't think it is, my love—particularly. It—it will keep till after breakfast. What is this—kedgerree? Ha! I've come down with quite an appetite—quite a famous appetite!

[*He pecks at his kedgerree ostentatiously.*]

Mrs. T. Perhaps I'd better ring and have two more eggs boiled if you're so hungry as all that, Pa?

MR. T. (*in terror at this suggestion*). Not for me, my love, not for me. I—I've made an excellent breakfast!

Mrs. T. Then now, Pa, perhaps you will be at leisure to read your letter. I am curious to know what correspondence you can possibly have with an Eldorado Palace.

MR. T. (*to himself*). Oh, dear me, she's seen the flap! Why do they put the name outside—so

## Under the Rose.

thoughtless of them! (*He opens the letter.*) Yes, it is the order. I *can't* show it to Cornelia! (*Aloud.*) I—I told you I was making inquiries.

MRS. T. About Charles's habits? So you've written to the Manager, without consulting me! Well—what does he say?

MR. T. (*to himself*). I don't like these deceptions—but I *must* consider poor Charles. (*Aloud.*) Oh—hum—very little, my love, very little indeed, but satisfactory—most satisfactory—he's no complaint to make of Charles—none whatever!

MRS. T. As if it was likely you would get the truth from such a tainted source! Let me see his letter.

MR. T. (*pocketing the letter again, hastily*). No, my dear love, you must excuse me—but this is a private and confidential communication, and—and, in common fairness to Charles—— I'll trouble you for another cup of tea. (*To himself.*) It's for this very night. I've a great mind not to go. How am I to make an excuse for getting away? (*Aloud.*) I've half a mind to run up some time, and—and look in on Charles.

MRS. T. (*to herself*). If Charles is misconducting himself, I ought to know—and I *will*, sooner or later. I'm sure Theophilus is keeping something

## Under the Rose.

from me. (*Aloud.*) I've only put in one lump, Pa. You may find him at home if you went up this afternoon.

Mr. T. (*relieved*). An excellent suggestion, my love. I *will* go this afternoon. He—he might ask me to stay and dine with him; so if—if I don't come back, you'll know where I am—eh? You won't be anxious?

Mrs. T. (*to herself*). He's trying to spare me, but I can see he's *most* uneasy about Charles. (*Aloud.*) Well, Pa, I don't like the idea of your dining out without me—it will be the first time for years—but still, I shall have to be away myself this evening; there's a special meeting of the Zenana Mission Committee, and Mrs. Cumberbatch made such a point of my attending—so, if you feel you really *ought* to see Charles—

Mr. T. Oh, I *do*, my dear. He—he wants looking after. And perhaps, if I could have a little quiet, serious talk with him, after dinner—or over a game of draughts. (*To himself.*) What a dissembler I've become; but I *do* mean to look in on Charles, before I go to this Eldorado place, and there *may* be time for a game of draughts!

Mrs. T. You would learn more, Theophilus, by

## Under the Rose.

putting a few questions to his landlady. But remember, when you come back, I shall insist on being told everything—*everything*, mind!

Mr. T. Oh, of course, my love, of course. (*To himself.*) If my visit proves satisfactory, I—I might tell her. It will depend on how I feel—entirely on how I feel.

PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT.



## Scene VII.

*The Drawing-room. It is after luncheon. Mrs. TOOVEY is sitting knitting.*

MR. TOOVEY (*entering, in a frock-coat, carrying a tall hat*). Er—Cornelia, my love, you don't happen to know where the—the latchkey is kept, do you?

MRS. T. The latchkey, Theophilus! One has never been required in this house *yet*. What can you possibly want with a latchkey?

MR. T. (*to himself*). These performances go on till a somewhat advanced hour, I've no doubt, and I might feel it my duty to stay as long as—— (*Aloud.*) I—I only thought it would save Phœbe sitting up for me, my dear.

MRS. T. You need not trouble yourself about that, Theophilus. I will sit up for you, if necessary.

MR. T. (*quaking*). But you forget your Zenana Mission, my love; you will be out yourself this evening!

## Under the Rose.

MRS. T. (*severely*). I shall be back by a reasonable hour, Pa,—and so will you, I should hope.

MR. T. I hope so, my love, I'm sure, but—but I may have a good deal to say to Charles, you know.

MRS. T. (*to herself*). There's some mystery about that wretched boy, I'm certain. If I could only find out what was in that letter. I wonder if it's in Pa's pocket—I'll soon see. (*Aloud.*) Turn round, Pa. Ah, I *thought* as much; one of your coat-tail buttons is as nearly off as it can be!

MR. T. (*innocently*). Dear me! My Sunday coat, too. I never observed it. Could you just fasten it on a little more securely?

MRS. T. If you take off your coat. I can't do it with you prancing about in front of me, Pa. (Mr. T. *takes off his coat.*) Now, I can't have you in my drawing-room in your shirt-sleeves—suppose somebody called! Go into your study and wait there till I've done. (Mr. T. *departs submissively.*) Now if the letter isn't in one of these pockets, it must be in— (*She discovers the envelope.*) There it is. Now I shall know what Charles— I'm sure his poor dear mother would wish to be informed. (*She opens the letter.*) “Eldorado Palace of Varieties. Admit Mr. Toovey and party to Box C. This portion to be re-





“ Admit Mr. Toovey and Party to Box C.”



## Under the Rose.

tained." (*She tears off a perforated slip.*) I will retain it! So Theophilus has been deceiving me—*this* is his business with Charles! *This* is why he kept that programme! And he's allowing himself to be misled by his own nephew! They're going to this music-hall to-night together! He shall *not* go—never while I—stop, let me think—yes, he *shall* go—he shall fill up the measure of his iniquity, little dreaming that I have the clear proof of his deceit! (*She thrusts the slip she has torn off into her workbox, and replaces the envelope with the remainder of the order in the pocket.*) There. He won't notice that anything is missing. He's coming back. I must control myself, or he will be on his guard.

[*She pretends to secure the button with unsteady fingers.*

MR. T. (*entering*). Cornelia, my love, don't trouble to do more than is absolutely necessary to keep the button secure—because I'm rather in a hurry. It doesn't matter, so long as it looks respectable!

MRS. T. (*with an effort to restrain her feelings*). I daresay it is quite respectable enough, Pa, for where you are going.

MR. T. Quite, indeed, my dear. But it would never have done to go and call on Charles with a

## Under the Rose.

button off the back of my coat—no, no. It was fortunate you noticed it in time, my love.

MRS. T. I hope it will prove so, Theophilus. (*To herself.*) And this monster of duplicity is Pa! Oh, I wish I could tell him what I thought of him, but not yet—we will have our reckoning later!

MR. T. (*after putting on his coat*). Then I think I must be going. Any message I can take to Charles?

MRS. T. Yes, tell him that I trust he will profit by his good Uncle's example, and that I expect him to dinner on Monday. I may require to have a serious talk with him myself, if your account of this evening is not perfectly satisfactory.

MR. T. I'll tell him, my love, but there's no reason to make yourself uneasy about Charles—he'll behave himself—he'll behave himself. (*To himself, as he goes out.*) I must go and see Charles now. Oh dear, I do feel so apprehensive about this visit to the Eldorado.—If I could put it off.—But I can't continue to hold those shares without some knowledge—— And Mr. Curphew made such a point of my going. No, I must go. I—I don't see how I can get out of it!

MRS. T. (*alone*). There he goes, looking so meek and lamblike! Who would suspect, to see him, that that black coat of his was buttoned round a whited

## Under the Rose.

sepulchre? Oh, Pa, Pa! That after all these years of blameless life you should suddenly be seized with a depraved desire for unhallowed amusement like this! While I am at the Cumberbatches, engaged in discussing the affairs of the Zenana Mission, you and Charles will be—— Stop. How do I know he is going with Charles at all? If he is capable of deceiving me in one respect, why not in all? (*She takes out the slip and looks at it.*) Mr. Toovey and party! *What party?* May not Pa have been leading a—a double life all these years for anything I can tell? He is going to the Eldorado to-night with *somebody*—that's clear. Who is it? I shall never be easy till I know. And why should I not? There's the meeting, though. I might have a headache. Yes, that will do. (*She goes to her writing-table.*) No, I won't write. I can make some excuse to Eliza when I see her. And instead of going to the Cumberbatches this evening, I can easily slip up to Waterloo and ask my way to this place. There will be no difficulty in that. Yes, I will go, whatever it costs me. And when Pa goes into this Box C of his, he will find his "party" is larger than he expected!



AN ACQUIRED TASTE.





## Scene VIII.

*A prettily-furnished Drawing-room at the MERRIDEWS' House in Hans Place. Mrs. MERRIDEW has a small tea-table in front of her. ALTHEA is sitting on a couch close by. Both ladies are wearing their hats, having just returned from a drive. Mrs. MERRIDEW is young and attractive, and her frock is in the latest fashion; ALTHEA is more simply dressed, though her hair and toilette have evidently been supervised by an experienced maid.*

TIME—About 5.30 on Saturday afternoon.

MRS. MERRIDEW. I don't think I've ever known the Park so full before Easter as it was to-day. Try one of these hot cakes, Thea, or a jam sandwich—we don't dine till late, you

## Under the Rose.

know. It's been so nice having you, I do wish you hadn't to go on Monday—*must* you?

ALTHEA. I'm afraid I must, Cissie; it has been the most delightful week; only—Clapham will seem dreadfully flat after all this. [She sighs.

MRS. M. Notwithstanding the excitement of Mr. Curphew's conversation?

ALTHEA. Mr. Curphew, Cissie?

MRS. M. Now don't pretend ignorance, dear. You have quoted Mr. Curphew and his opinions often enough to show that you see and think a good deal of him. And, really, if you colour like that at the mere mention——

ALTHEA. Am I colouring? That last cup was so strong. And I don't see Mr. Curphew at all often. He is more Mamma's friend than mine—she has a very high opinion of him.

MRS. M. I daresay he deserves it. He's a fearfully learned and superior person, isn't he?

ALTHEA. I—I don't know. He writes for the paper.

MRS. M. That's vague, dear. What sort of paper? Political, Scientific, Sporting, Society—or what?

ALTHEA. I never asked; but I should think—well, he's rather *serious*, you know, Cissie.

## Under the Rose.

MRS. M. Then it's a comic paper, my dear, depend upon it!

ALTHEA. Oh, Cissie, I'm *sure* it isn't. And he's very hardworking. He's not like most men of his age, he doesn't care in the least for amusements.

MRS. M. He must be a very lively person. But tell me—you used to tell me everything, Thea—does this immaculate paragon show any signs of—?

ALTHEA (*in a low voice*). I'm not sure—— Perhaps—but I may be mistaken.

MRS. M. And if—don't think me horribly impertinent—but if you're *not* mistaken, have you made up your mind what answer to give him?

ALTHEA (*imploringly*). Don't tease me, Cissie. I thought once—but now I really don't know. I wish he wasn't so strict and severe. I wish he understood that one can't always be solemn—that one must have a little enjoyment in one's life, when one is young!

MRS. M. And yet I seem to remember a girl who had serious searchings of heart, not so very long ago, as to whether it wasn't sinful to go and see Shakespeare at the Lyceum!

ALTHEA. I know; it was silly of me—but I didn't know what a theatre was like. I'd never been to see a play—not even at the Crystal Palace. But now I've

## Under the Rose.

been, I'd like to go to one every week ; they're lovely, and I don't believe anything that makes you cry and laugh like that *can* be wicked !

Mrs. M. Ah, you were no more meant to be a little Puritan than I was myself, dear. Heavens ! When I think what an abominable prig I must have been at Miss Prains'.

ALTHEA. You weren't in the least a prig, Cissie. But you *were* different. You used to say you intended to devote yourself entirely to Humanity.

Mrs. M. Yes ; but I didn't realise then what a lot there were of them. And when I met Frank I thought it would be less ambitious to begin with *him*. Now I find there's humanity enough in Frank to occupy the devotion of a lifetime. But are you sure, Thea, that this journalist admirer of yours is quite the man to—— He sounds dull, dear ; admirable and all that—but, oh, so deadly dull !

ALTHEA. If he was brilliant and fond of excitement *we* shouldn't have known him ; for we're deadly dull ourselves, Cissie. I never knew *how* dull till—till I came to stay with you !

Mrs. M. You're not dull, you're a darling ; and if you think I'm going to let you throw yourself away on some humdrum plodder who will expect you to find



“Yes; but I didn't realise.”



## Under the Rose.

your sole amusement in hearing him prose, you're mistaken; because I shan't. Thea, whatever you do, don't be talked into marrying a Dryasdust; you'll only be miserable if you do!

ALTHEA. But Mr. Curphew isn't as bad as that, Cissie. And—and he hasn't asked me yet, and when he finds out how frivolous I've become, very likely he never will; so we needn't talk about it any more, need we?

MRS. M. Now I feel snubbed; but I don't care, it's all for your good, my dear, and I've said all I wanted to, so we'll change the subject for something more amusing. (Colonel MERRIDEW *comes in.*) Well, Frank, have you actually condescended to come in for some tea? (*To ALTHEA.*) Generally he says tea is all very well for women; and then goes off to his club and has at least two cups, and I daresay muffins.

COL. M. Why not say ham-sandwiches at once, Cecilia, my dear? pity to curb your imagination! (*Sitting down.*) If that tea's drinkable, I don't know that I won't have a cup; though it's not what I came for. I wanted to know if you'd settled to do anything this evening, because, if not, I've got a suggestion—struck me in the Row just after you'd passed, and I

## Under the Rose.

thought I'd come back and see how *you* felt about it. (*He takes his tea.*) For me?—thanks.

Mrs. M. We feel curious about it at present, Frank.

Col. M. Well, I thought that, as this is Miss Toovey's last evening with us, it was a pity to waste it at home. Why shouldn't we have a little dinner at the Savoy, eh?—about eight—and drop in somewhere afterwards, if we feel inclined?

Mrs. M. Do you know that's quite a delightful idea of yours, Frank. That is, unless Thea has had enough of gaiety, and would rather we had a quiet evening. Would you, dear? [*To ALTHEA.*]

ALTHEA (*eagerly*). Oh, no, indeed, Cissie, I'm not a bit tired!

Mrs. M. You're quite sure? But where could we go on afterwards, Frank; shouldn't we be too late for any theatre?

Col. M. I rather thought we might look in at the Eldorado; you said you were very keen to hear Walter Wildfire. (*He perceives that his wife is telegraphing displeasure.*) Eh? why, you *did* want me to take you.

ALTHEA (*to herself*). Walter Wildfire? why, it was Walter Wildfire that Charles advised Mr. Curphew to go and hear. Mr. Curphew said it was the very last thing he was likely to do. But he's so prejudiced!



## Under the Rose.

MRS. M. (*trying to make her husband understand*).  
Some time—but I think, not to-night, Frank.

COL. M. If it's not to-night you mayn't get another chance ; they say he's going to give up singing very soon.

MRS. M. Oh, I hope not ! I remember now hearing he was going to retire, because his throat was weak, or else he was going into Parliament, or a Retreat, or something or other. But I'm sure, Frank, Althea wouldn't quite like to——

COL. M. Then of course there's no more to be said. I only thought she might be amused, you know.

ALTHEA. But indeed I should, Colonel Merridew, please let us go !

MRS. M. But, Thea dear, are you sure you quite understand what the Eldorado *is* ?—it's a music-hall. Of course it's all right, and everyone goes nowadays ; but, still, I shouldn't like to take you if there was any chance that your mother might disapprove. You might never be allowed to come to us again.

ALTHEA (*to herself*). They're both dying to go, I can see ; it's too hateful to feel oneself such a kill-joy ! And even Mr. Curphew admitted that a music-hall was no worse than a Penny Reading. (*Aloud.*) I don't think Mamma would disapprove, Cissie ; not

## Under the Rose.

more than she would of my going to theatres, and I've been to *them*, you know!

COL. M. We'd have a box, of course, and only just get there in time to hear Wildfire; we could go away directly afterwards—'pon my word, Cecilia, I don't see any objection, if Miss Toovey would like to go. Never heard a word against Wildfire's singing, and as for the rest, well, you admitted last time there was no real harm in the thing!

ALTHEA. Do say yes, Cissie. I do want to hear this Walter Wildfire so!

MRS. M. I'm not at all sure that I ought to say anything of the sort, but there—I'll take the responsibility.

COL. M. Then that's settled. We'll take great care of you, Miss Toovey. I'll just go down to the Rag, Cecilia, and send out to get a box. I'll see if I can find someone to make a fourth, and I daresay we shall manage to amuse ourselves. *[He goes out.]*

MRS. M. Thea. I really don't feel quite happy about this. I think I'll go after Frank and tell him not to get that box after all; he won't have left the house yet. *[She attempts to rise.]*

ALTHEA. No, Cissie, you mustn't, if it's on my account. I won't let you! *[She holds her back.]*

## Under the Rose.

MRS. M. But, Thea, think. How would you like this Mr. Curphew to know that——?

ALTHEA (*releasing her suddenly*). Mr. Curphew! What does it matter to me what Mr. Curphew——?. . . There, Colonel Merridew has gone, Cissie, I heard the door shut. It's too late—and I'm glad of it. We shall go to the Eldorado and hear Walter Wildfire after all!



TU QUOQUE!



## Scene IX

CHARLES COLLIMORE'S *Sitting-room in Keppel Street, a rather depressing apartment, with folding doors at the back communicating with bedroom.*

TIME—*Saturday afternoon.*

MRS. RUFFLES (*the landlady, showing Mr. TOOVEY in*). Oh, I thought Mr. Collimore had come in, Sir, but I expect him in every minute. Will you take a seat?

MR. T. (*sitting down*). Thank you, I'm in no hurry—no hurry at all. (*To himself.*) Cornelia wished me to put a few questions quietly to the landlady. I suppose I'd better do it while— (*Aloud.*) Hem, I hope, Ma'am, that you find Mr. Collimore a—an unexceptionable lodger—in all respects?

Mrs. R. (*crossing her hands stiffly in front of her*). Mr. Collimore conducts hisself as a gentleman, and treats me as a lady, which is all *my* requirements.

## Under the Rose.

MR. T. Quite so—very satisfactory, I'm sure, but—does he keep fairly regular hours? Or is he at all inclined to be—er—fast?

MRS. R. (*on her guard*). I can't answer for the time his watch keeps, myself. I dessay it goes as reg'lar as what most do.

MR. T. No, no; I was referring to his habits. I mean—does he usually spend his evenings quietly at home?

MRS. R. You'll excuse *me*, but if you're arsking me all these questions out of mere himpertinent curiosity——

MR. T. I—I trust I have a higher motive, Ma'am. In fact, I may as well tell you I am Mr. Collimore's uncle.

MRS. R. (*to herself*). The old fox! So he's trying to ferret out something against him, is he? Well, he *won't*—that's all. (*Aloud.*) If you *are* his huncle, Sir, all I can say is, you've got a nephew to be proud on. I wouldn't wish to let my first floor to a steadier or a more industrious young gentleman; comes in punctual to a tick every night of his life and 'as his dinner, and sets studyin' his book till 'udf-past ten, which is his bed-time. I don't know what more you want.

MR. T. (*to himself*). This is really very satisfactory





“ Mr. Collimore conducks hisself as a gentleman.”



## Under the Rose.

—if I could only believe it. (*Aloud.*) But do I understand you to say that that is his invariable practice? Occasionally, I suppose, he goes out to a place of amusement—such as a music-hall, now?

Mrs. R. (*to herself*). Well, he may; and why not? He don't get into no mischief, though light-'earted. I ain't going to give him a bad name. (*Aloud.*) Lor, Sir, don't you go and put such ideas into his 'ed. Bless your 'art alive, if he knows there *are* such places, it's as much as he does know!

Mr. T. (*testily*). Now, now, my good woman, I'm afraid you're trying to deceive me. I happen to know more about my nephew's tastes and pursuits than you imagine.

Mrs. R. (*roused*). Then, if you know so much, whatever do you come 'ere and ask *me* for? It's my belief you ain't up to no good, for all you look so respectable, comin' into my 'ouse a-pokin' your nose into what don't concern you, for all the world like a poll-pryin', sneakin' Russian spy!

CHARLES (*entering behind her from bedroom*). Hallo, Mrs. Ruffles, what's all this—who's a Russian spy, eh? (*Recognizing Mr. TOOVEY*). What—Uncle! you don't mean to say it's *you*?

[Mr. TOOVEY *stands stricken with confusion.*]

## Under the Rose.

Mrs. R. I may have spoke too free, Mr. Collimore, Sir, but when a party, as is elderly enough to know better, tries to put under'and questions to me about where and 'ow any o' my gentlemen pass their hevenims, and if they go to the music-'all and what not—why, I put it to you——

CHARLES. All right, Mrs. Ruffles, put it to me some other time; you didn't understand my uncle, that's all—you needn't stay. Oh, by the way, I'm dining out again this evening. Tell Ruffles to leave the chain, as I may be late. (*After Mrs. R. has retired.*) Well, Uncle, I'm afraid your diplomacy hasn't had quite the success it deserved.

Mr. T. (*sheepishly*). I assure you, my boy, that I—I was not inquiring for my own satisfaction. Your Aunt is naturally anxious to know how you—— But your landlady gave you an excellent character.

CHARLES. She didn't seem to be equally complimentary to *you*, Uncle. "A Russian spy," wasn't it? But really, you know, you might have come to me for any information you require. I don't mind telling you all there is to tell. And surely Aunt knows I've been to a music-hall; why, she pitched into me about it enough last Sunday!

## Under the Rose.

MR. T. I—I think she wanted to know whether you went frequently, Charles, or only that once.

CHARLES. Oh, and so she sent you up to pump my landlady? Well, I'll tell you exactly how it is. I don't set up to be a model young man like your friend Curphew. I don't spend all my evenings in this cheerful and luxurious apartment. Now and then I find the splendour of the surroundings rather too much for me, and I'm ready to go anywhere, even to a music-hall, for a change. There, I blush to say, I spend an hour or two, smoking cigars, and even drinking a whiskey and soda, or a lemon squash, listening to middle-aged ladies in sun-bonnets and accordion skirts singing out of tune. I don't know that they amuse me much, but, at all events, they're livelier than Mrs. Ruffles. I'm dining out to-night, at the Criterion, with a man at the office, and it's as likely as not we shall go into the Valhalla or the Eldorado afterwards. There, you can't say I'm concealing anything from you. And I don't see why you should groan like that, Uncle.

MR. T. (*feebly*). I—I'd rather you didn't go to the—the Eldorado, Charles.

CHARLES. There's ingratitude! I thought you'd be touched by my devotion.

## Under the Rose.

MR. T. (*to himself*). I *can't* tell him I was thinking of going there myself! (*Aloud.*) You will show your devotion best by keeping away. The less young men go to such places, my boy, the better!

CHARLES. Not for *you*, Uncle. You forget that it's the humble five bob of fellows like me that help to provide your next dividend.

MR. T. (*wincing*). Don't, Charles, it—it's ungenerous and undutiful to reproach me with being a shareholder when you know how innocently I became one!

CHARLES. But I *wasn't* reproaching you, Uncle, it was rather the other way round, wasn't it? And really, considering you *are* a shareholder in the Eldorado, it's a little too strong to condemn me for merely going there.

MR. T. I—I may not be a shareholder long, Charles. Unless I can conscientiously feel able to retain my shares I shall take the first opportunity of selling them.

CHARLES. But why, Uncle? Better stick to them now you have got them!

MR. T. What? with the knowledge that I was profiting by practices I disapproved of? Never, Charles!

## Under the Rose.

CHARLES. But you can't *sell* without making a profit, you know; they've gone up tremendously.

MR. T. Oh, dear me! Then, do you mean that I shouldn't even be morally justified in selling them? Oh, you don't think *that*, Charles?

CHARLES. That's a point you must settle for yourself, Uncle, it's beyond me. But, as a dutiful nephew, don't you see, I'm bound to do all I can in the meantime to keep up the receipts for you, if I have to go to the Eldorado every evening and get all the fellows I know to go too. Mustn't let those shares go down, whether you hold on or sell, eh?

MR. T. (*horriified*). Don't make me an excuse for encouraging young men to waste precious time in idleness and folly. I won't allow it—it's abominable, Sir! You've put me in such a state of perplexity by all this, Charles, I—I hardly know where I am! Tell me, are you really going to the Eldorado this evening?

CHARLES. I can't say: it depends on the other fellow. But I will if I can get him to go, for your sake. And I'm afraid I ought to go and change, Uncle, if you'll excuse me. Make yourself as comfortable as you can. Here's to-day's *Pink 'Un*, if you haven't seen it.

## Under the Rose.

MR. T. I'm not in the habit of seeing such periodicals, Sir. And I must be going. Oh, by the bye, your Aunt wished me to ask you to come down and dine and sleep on Monday next. Thea will be back, and I believe Mr. Curphew has got a free evening for once. Shall I tell her you will come, Charles?

CHARLES. Thanks; I'll come with pleasure. But, I say, Aunt doesn't want to give me another lecture, I hope? After all, she can't say much if you've told her about those shares, as I suppose you have.

MR. T. N—not yet, Charles. I have not found a convenient opportunity. There, I can't stay—good-bye, my boy. *[He takes his leave.]*

\* \* \* \* \*

MR. T. (*outside, to himself*). I'm afraid Charles has lost every particle of respect for me. I wish I had never told him about those wretched shares. And what *am* I to do now? If I go to this Eldorado place, he may be there too; and, if he sees me, I shall never hear the last of it! And yet my mind will never be easy unless I do go



## Under the Rose.

and see for myself what it really is like. That young Curphew expects me to go. But I don't know, I do so dread the idea of going—alone, too! I should like to ask somebody else what he thinks I ought to do—somebody who is a man of the world. I wonder if I went to see Larkins—he won't be in his office so late as this, but I might catch him in his chambers. It was all through him I got into this difficulty; he ought to help me out of it if he can. I really think I might take a cab and drive to Piccadilly, on the chance.

*[He hails a Hansom, and drives off.]*



UNE BOÎTE À SURPRISE.



## Scene X.

*Entrance to the Eldorado Music Hall. Mrs. TOOVEY, who has just alighted from a Waterloo bus, approaches; she wears a veil, under which her spectacles gleam balefully, and passes the various boards and coloured posters with averted eyes.*

TIME—Saturday evening, about  
8.30.

MRS. TOOVEY (*to herself*). I'm late—I ought to have taken a cab, instead of that dawdling bus. Still, I shall be in plenty of time to surprise Pa in the very midst of his profligacy. (*She looks around her.*) Gilding, rosewood and mahogany panels, plush, stained glass—oh, the wicked luxury of it all! (*She pushes open a swing door.*)

## Under the Rose.

Where is the place you call Box C? I—I have to meet somebody there.

[*She finds herself in a glittering bar, where she produces a distinct sensation among the few loungers there.*

A BARMAID (*tartly*). There's no entrance to the music-hall this way. You've come to the wrong place.

MRS. T. (*with equal acidity*). Ah, young woman, you need not tell me *that!* (*She goes out with a withering glance, and hears stifled sniggers as the doors swing after her.*) A drinking-bar on the very threshold to trap the unwary—disgraceful! (*She tries the next door, and finds a stalwart official in a fancy uniform.*) Will you have the goodness to conduct me to Box C, instantly?

THE OFFICIAL. Next door, please, Ma'am. This only admits to the Grand Lounge.

MRS. T. (*to herself*). The "Grand Lounge" indeed! (*She opens another door, and finds a Pay-box, where she addresses the check-taker through the pigeon-hole.*) I want to go to Box C. I've asked for it at I don't know how many places, and——

CHECKTAKER (*politely*). I'm really afraid you'll have to ask again, Ma'am. This is the Promenade. Box-office *next* entrance.

## Under the Rose.

MRS. T. (*to herself, indignantly*). I only hope they make it as difficult for other people to get in as they do for me! So Pa comes here to lounge and promenade, does he? Oh, let me only catch him, I'll send him promenading! (*She goes to the Box-office.*) I want Box C, wherever that is.

BOOK-KEEPER. Can give you Box D, if you like. Box C is reserved for this evening.

MRS. T. (*sharply*). I am quite aware of that. For Mr. Theophilus Toovey. I have come to join him here.

BOOK-K. (*referring to book*). It is entered in that name, certainly; but—hem—may I ask if you belong to Mr. Toovey's party?

MRS. T. (*crushingly*). No doubt you consider that his wife has no claim to—— Most *certainly* I belong to his party.

BOOK-K. That is quite sufficient, Madam. (*To Attendant.*) Show this lady to Box C. (*To himself, as Mrs. T. follows the Attendant up some velvet-covered stairs.*) Well, it's no business of mine; but if Mr. Toovey, whoever *he* is, isn't careful what he's about, he may be sorry for it—that's all!

MRS. T. (*to herself*). They never even asked for my ticket. Pa's evidently well known here! (*To Attendant.*)

## Under the Rose.

A programme? with pictures of dancing girls all over it! You ought to be ashamed to offer such things to a respectable woman!

ATT. (*surprised*). I've never heard them objected to before, Ma'am. Can I bring you any refreshments? (*Persuasively.*) Bottle-ale or stout? Lemonade and brandy? Whisky and soda?

Mrs. T. Don't imagine you can tempt *me*, man. I've been a total abstainer ever since I was five!

ATT. (*opening box-door*). Indeed, Ma'am. I suppose now you 'aven't mistook this for Exeter 'All?—because it *ain't*!

Mrs. T. I am in no danger of making *that* mistake! (*She enters the box.*) I am here before Pa after all. What a gaudy, wicked, glaring place to be sure! Ugh, this *filthy* tobacco! it chokes me, and I can scarcely see across the hall. Not that I *want* to see. Well, if I sit in the corner behind the curtain I shan't be seen myself. To think that I—I—should be here at all, but the responsibility is on Pa's head, not mine! What are those two girls singing about on the stage? They are dressed *decently* enough, I'll say *that* for them, though pinafores and baby bonnets at *their* age are ridiculous.

[*She listens.*



## Under the Rose.

THE SISTERS SARCENET (*on stage*). You men are deceivers and awfully sly. Oh, you *are*!

MALE PORTION OF AUDIENCE (*as is expected from them*). No we *aren't*!

THE SISTERS S. (*archly*). Now you *know* you are!

You come home with the milk; should your poor wife ask why,

“Pressing business, my pet!” you serenely reply,  
When you’ve really been out on the “Tiddle-y-hi!”

Yes, you *have*!

MALE AUDIENCE (*as before*). No, we’ve *not*!

THE SISTERS S. (*with the air of accusing angels*).

Why, you *know* you have!

MRS. T. (*to herself*). It’s to those young women’s credit that they have the courage to come here and denounce the men to their faces—like this. And it’s gone *home* to them, too! they’re shouting out “Over!” (*Here the Sisters suddenly turn a couple of “cart-wheels” with surprising simultaneity, amidst roars of applause.*)

Oh, the shameless minxes! I will *not* sit and look on at such scandalous exhibitions. (*She moves to the corner nearest the stage, and turns her back upon the proceedings.*) How much longer will Pa compel me to assist at such scenes, I wonder? *Why* doesn’t he come? Where is he now? (*Bitterly.*) No doubt on

## Under the Rose.

what those vulgar wretches would call the "Tiddle-y-hi!" (*The Brothers BIMBO, Eccentric Clowns, appear on the stage.*) I can't sit here in a corner looking at nothing. If I do see anything improper, Theophilus shall answer for it. (*She changes her place again.*) Acrobats—well, they're inoffensive at least. Oh, I do believe one of the nasty things is climbing up to the balcony; he's going to walk along here!

FIRST BROTHER BIMBO (*on stage, to his confrère, who is balancing himself on the broad ledge of the box tier.*) Ohè—'old up, there. Prenny garde! Ah, il tombera! There, I told yer so! (*The SECOND BROTHER B. has reached the front of Mrs. TOOVEX's box, where he pretends to stumble.*) Oh, le pover garçon, look at 'im now! Come back, do! Ask the lady to ketch 'old of your trousers be'ind!

MRS. T. (*to the SECOND BROTHER, firmly.*) Don't expect me to do anything of the sort. Go back, as your brother asks you to, you silly fellow. You shouldn't attempt such a foolhardy thing at all!

SECOND BR. B. (*to the FIRST.*) Oh, my! There's *such* a nice young lady in here; she's asking me to come in and set along with her! *May I?*

[*He lets himself drop astride the ledge, and wags his head at Mrs. TOOVEX, to her intense horror.*]



“Goo’bye, ducky!”



## Under the Rose.

MRS. T. (*in an audible undertone*). If you don't take away that leg at once, I'll *pinch* it!

SECOND BR. B. Eh? Not *now*; my brother says I mustn't. "Come round afterwards?" Well, well, we'll see! (*He springs up on the ledge again, and kisses his hand to her.*) Goo'bye, ducky! 'Ave no fears for me, Whoo-up!

[*He continues his tour of the balcony, amidst roars of laughter.*]

MRS. T. (*falling back in the box, speechless with fury*). And *this* is the treatment Pa exposes me to—all those unmanly wretches laughing at me! But I don't care; here I stay till Pa comes. *Oh*, this smoke; I shall be poisoned by it soon! Upon my word, there's a bold hussy coming on to sing, in a man's coat and black satin knee-breeches. I'll stop my ears; they shall see there's *one* woman here who respects herself! (*She does so, during that and the subsequent performances; an hour passes.*) How much longer am I to be compelled to remain here? This is terrible; three creatures in tight red suits, got up to look like devils! I wonder they've no fear of being struck dead on the stage! They're standing on each other's stomachs. I daren't look on at such blasphemy! I'll take off my spectacles; then, at least, my eyes won't be offended by seeing

## Under the Rose.

anything distinctly! (*She removes her glasses, and replaces them in their case, which she lays on the box-ledge.*) They're gone, thank goodness. What's this? There's someone opening the box-door. Pa—at last! Well, I'm ready for him!

[*She stiffens in her chair.*

ATTENDANT'S VOICE (*outside*). This is Box C, Miss. Can I bring you any refreshments? Bottle-ale, stout, lemonade, Miss?

A FEMALE VOICE. I—I don't know. There's a gentleman with me; he'll be here directly; he only stopped to speak to somebody. Ah, he's coming now.

Mrs. T. "Miss"?! This is Pa's party, then. *Oh!!*

[*A quietly dressed, and decidedly good-looking girl enters, and starts on seeing that the box is already occupied.*

Mrs. T. (*rising in towering wrath*). You were not expecting to find *me* here, Miss, I've no doubt?

THE GIRL (*sitting down*). No; Phil didn't say there would be anyone else; but any friend of his, I'm sure——

Mrs. T. Phil? you dare to call him "Phil!" Do you know who I am, you insolent girl, you? I am his Wife!

THE GIRL. His wife? I don't believe it. Are you

## Under the Rose.

sure you don't mean his mother? My Phil married to *you*, indeed—a pretty story!

MRS. T. (*trembling with rage*). Go out of this box instantly, or I'll make you!

THE GIRL. I shall do nothing of the kind. Wait till my friend comes, and we'll soon— (*As the door opens.*) Phil, Phil, here's an abusive old female here who pretends she is your wife, and wants to order me out. I believe she must either be intoxicated or out of her senses!

MRS. T. (*pouncing upon the newcomer and boxing his ears soundly*). Is she? it is you who are out of *your* senses, Pa! Take that—and *that*—and now come home with me, do you hear?

THE NEWCOMER (*with his hand to his cheek*). “Pa, am I? I thought I was your *husband* just now! Well, I must have married before I was born, either way. And now, perhaps, you'll explain what all this means?

MRS. T. (*faintly*). Oh, my goodness! I've made a dreadful mistake; it *isn't* Pa! Let me go—let me go!

THE NEWC. (*putting his back against the door*). Not yet, Ma'am; not yet. You don't go like this; after insulting this young lady, to whom I've the honour of being engaged, and telling her you're my wife, and then smacking my face in her presence. I've my

## Under the Rose.

dignity to consider, and I want satisfaction out of you. Come, we won't have a row here, for the sake of this young lady; just step out into the lobby here, and I'll give you in charge for assault. Stay where you are, Milly, my dear. Now, Ma'am, will you go, or shall I send for a constable? (Mrs. T. *totters out, protesting incoherently, and begging to be released.*) Well, I don't want to spoil my evening's pleasure on your account. You give me your name and address, and I'll simply summon you for assault; which is more than you deserve. If you won't, I'll charge you!

Mrs. T. (*reluctantly*). Oh, indeed it was an acc—I will *not* give you my name. Yes, yes, I will; anything to get out of this horrible place. (*The young man produces a pencil, and pulls down his left shirt-cuff.*) Mrs.—Too—no, I don't mean Too—Tomkinson Jones—The—the—Laburnums—U—upper Tooting. There, *now* are you satisfied?

THE YOUNG MAN (*recording it*). Thank you, that's all I require. You'll hear from me later on. Good-evening!

Mrs. T. (*as she crawls down the staircase*). I have only just saved myself by a—a *fib!* And I haven't even found Pa out. But I *will*. I'll go straight home and sit up for him!



AN OPTICAL DELUSION.



## Scene XI.

*Another box at the Eldorado.*

*Enter Mrs. MERRIDEW and ALTHEA,  
followed by Colonel MERRIDEW and  
Captain ALCHIN.*

TIME—*About 9.30 P.M.*

MRS. MERRIDEW. Frank, the man *did* say, Walter Wildfire hasn't sung yet, didn't he? Yes? then *that's* all right! Oughtn't you and I to sit at the back, Thea? Well, you shall have this corner at any rate, and then the curtain will hide you. Captain Alchin, will you come between us, please, and then you can explain any of the jokes we don't understand? *[They settle down.*

CAPTAIN ALCHIN. Pleasure! *(To himself.)* Think I see myself explainin' the jokes and that! *(Aloud.)* Afraid I shan't be of much use, really. Rather out of my line this sort of thing, you know!

Mrs. M. I'm sure you must know more about it than Miss Toovey and I do. Tell me who is this

## Under the Rose.

rather good-looking girl in knee-breeches with the horrid voice and the blue eyelids, and why does she walk like that ?

CAPT. ALCH. (*off his guard*). Oh, that's Miss Lardie Lushboy ; it's her usual business—drinkin' song, young man about town, and all that.

MRS. M. There, you see, you know all about *her*!

[CAPT. ALCHIN *hastens to explain that her name is on the programme.*

MISS LARDIE (*sings*)—

See us lurch along in line, with a straggle serpentine,  
[*She suits the action to the word.*

For we've done a heavy fuddle, and we never pass  
a "pub"!

And if you want a proof how we chuck about our  
"oof"—

Why, come along and have a drink with the  
Rowdy Razzle Club!

MRS. M. I suppose that's intended as a satire on noisy young men, isn't it, Captain Alchin ?

CAPT. ALCH. (*who hadn't thought of it in that light*). Well—ha—that depends on how you *take* it, don't you know.

MRS. M. That's the way *I* shall take it, and then it's quite moral. (*A Low Comedian in a broad-brimmed*



“ See us lurch along in line.”



## Under the Rose.

*hat and a rough black wig, makes his appearance.)*  
This must be Walter Wildfire, I suppose. Thea, do you see? He looks *quite* nice, and not really vulgar. Now he's going to sing. Isn't he too delightfully funny! What, Frank? *Not* Wildfire? Mr. Alf Redbeak. Are you *sure*? I was wondering what there could possibly be in such a common little man as that to make such a fuss about. And *what* language! Captain Alchin, what *does* he mean by saying that he was "dotted on the crust by a copper," and "went off his onion"?

CAPT. ALCH. (*who foresees rocks ahead if he once undertakes to interpret*). Oh, well, they're always inventin' some new slang, you know, Mrs. Merridew; no use tryin' to keep up with it.

[MISS CARRIE CINDERS *appears as a bedraggled maid of all work, and sings a doleful ditty to the effect that*—"Her missis will not let her wear no feathers in her 'at, so her sojer's gone and given 'er the chuck."

MRS. M. (*delighted*). Isn't she refreshing—so *deliciously* vulgar! I do hope she hasn't finished. Thea, you're sitting as quiet as a little mouse in that corner. I hope you're not too dreadfully shocked? *I'm* not—at least of course I am, really; but it's not nearly so bad as I expected.

## Under the Rose.

ALTHEA. Oh, I'm not in the least shocked, Cissie, thanks; only I don't quite understand it all.

MRS. M. My dear, no more do I. I don't understand *any* of it—but that makes no difference.

ALTHEA (*to herself*). I don't like to say so, but I *am* disappointed. Mr. Curphew said it would be like a Penny Reading; but it's not a bit, it's ever so much stupider. But he never goes himself, so of course——

MRS. M. It's quite a respectable audience; I thought we should be the only people in evening dress, but we're not. I do wish they wouldn't allow quite so much smoking, though; the atmosphere's getting something too awful. Oh, Thea, do look in that box just opposite. Can you see through that lace curtain? Ah, you can't see now!

ALTHEA (*looking round the edge of the curtain*). Where, Cissie?—who is it?

MRS. M. Why, quite the typical British Matron—the most tremendously proper-looking person; so if *she* doesn't see any harm in being here, I'm sure we needn't. I'll tell you when she pops her head out again. There, quick! Thea, quick! Did you see her that time?

ALTHEA (*faintly*). Y—yes. I—I saw her *that* time.



## Under the Rose.

(*To herself.*) Is this a wicked conscience—or what? It was *so* like Mamma! But how could it be?

MRS. M. Did you *ever* see such a grim old frump, Thea? I wonder what possessed her to come to a place like this? She doesn't look as if it was amusing her much.

ALTHEA (*distractedly*). Doesn't she? (*To herself.*) If it *should* be Mamma! If she has found out in some way that we were to be here to-night and followed us! But how *could* she know? Suppose she were to see me, and—and come round and fetch me away; how awful it would be! But she can't see me through these curtains. I don't believe it *is* Mamma. I—I wish I dared look again. Oh, why did I get Cissie to bring me here?

CAPT. ALCH. May I borrow your opera glass for a moment, Mrs. Merridew? Thanks awf'ly. (*As he looks through it.*) There's goin' to be a row in that opposite box. Your British Matron's gettin' her quills up—give you my word she is.

MRS. M. Oh, do let me see! (*She holds out her hand for the glass, which Capt. A. surrenders.*) Yes, I do believe you're right. Somebody's just come in and—— Now there's another, a young man, and—oh, Thea!

## Under the Rose.

ALTHEA (*in an agony*). What is it, Cissie? *do* tell me! (*To herself*.) It must be Charles—I'm *sure* it's Charles. Then *that's* why—and it is Mamma! (*Aloud*.) Mayn't I have the glass?

MRS. M. I think you had better not, dear. The British Matron has boxed the poor young man's ears—she has really. I wonder what—but well, it doesn't matter. Now she's turned him out of the box. He's coming back—alone. Yes, the old lady has certainly gone—it's all over. I'm *so* sorry; it was ever so much more interesting than that big fat man who's singing!

ALTHEA (*tremulously*). Mayn't I look now, Cissie, if it's all over? (*She almost snatches the glass, and directs it at the young man in Box C—then to herself, with relief*.) Why, it isn't Charles—it's not even like him. Then—oh, what a goose I've been! It wasn't Mamma either. It was all my fancy, and she had on rather the same kind of bonnet. As if Mamma would come to a music-hall and box the ears of somebody she didn't know! But *what* a fright it gave me!

[*She begins to feel capable of enjoying the performance.*]

COL. M. (*later*). Now we're going to see the great man, Cecilia. Wildfire's down to sing next.

## Under the Rose.

CAPT. ALCH. Don't you be too sure, Frank. They haven't put the number up yet, you see. As likely as not they'll put in an "extra turn," and he won't come at all. I've known that happen lots of times when you come on purpose to see somethin', don't you know.

MRS. M. Really, Captain Alchin, I shall begin to suspect that you are more of an authority about music-halls than your modesty would admit at first.

CAPT. ALCH. (*in some confusion*). No, really now, Mrs. Merridew, all I mean is Wildfire's bringin' out a play or somethin' to-night at the Hilarity, so he mayn't be able to turn up here, don't you see.

MRS. M. I won't have you predicting evil like that; it's not at all nice of you, and you're quite wrong too; for there's his number in the frame now!

[*The scene on the Stage changes once more from an Oriental Palace to a London Street; a bell tingles; the Orchestra dashes into the air of "The Hansom Cabman," which the bulk of the audience hail with delight; then a stream of limelight is thrown on the boards, and*  
WALTER WILDFIRE *appears.*

MRS. M. (*after the first verse*). I don't know what it is, but there's something about him very different from

## Under the Rose.

all the others. And they say he writes all his own songs and music—so clever of him! Quite a striking face he has, rather handsome, with that drooping moustache. Don't *you* think he's handsome, Thea? (*ALTHEA does not answer; WILDFIRE sings the last verse; as he concludes, the house is hushed for an instant, and then breaks into a thunder of applause.*) It's quite beautiful that last verse; poor, *poor* fellow! it all seemed so real, somehow! Ah, he's not going to sing the last verse again. I'm rather glad, for I very nearly howled, and it would be too silly to cry at a music-hall. (*Interval.*) Here he is again; how different he looks! I suppose it's the sandwich-boards. (*WILDFIRE goes through the second song with the small child; in the midst of the second stanza he suddenly falters, and only recovers himself by a violent effort; ALTHEA has bent forward out of the shadow of the curtain.*) It's too frightfully pathetic; he's such a dear, isn't he? (*The applause is more rapturous than ever; an encore is clamoured for; WILDFIRE reappears looking ghastly pale, and makes a mute plea for indulgence; after he has finally retired, the clamour still continues, until the scene and the number are shifted.*) He won't sing any more—how sad! Wasn't he charming with that child? (*In an undertone.*) Why, Althea, *darling!*

## Under the Rose.

ALTHEA (*in a shaken voice*). D—don't speak to me just yet, Cissie. I know it's very foolish of me ; but I can't bear it.

CAPT. ALCH. (*to himself*). Gad, I'd give somethin' to sing like that Johnny, and make her eyes shine like that !

Mrs. M. Frank, we may as well go now, there's nothing else worth staying for, and I'm sure this horrid tobacco is ruining my poor pearls ; or would you rather stay a little longer, Thea ?

ALTHEA. Oh, no, no ; I don't want to hear anybody else—after that. (*To herself, as Capt. A. helps her on with her cloak.*) And that is the man Mr. Curphew said nothing would induce him to go and see ! And I actually persuaded myself that— But I am wiser now. He can never be anything to me !

[*She leaves the box with her party.*]



A PYRRHIC VICTORY.





## Scene XII.

*“Behind” at the Eldorado. The Stage at the back of the Scene-cloth is in partial darkness; in the centre, a pile of lumber and properties. Bare white-washed brick walls; at one side, two canvas cabins for the Lady-Artistes to change their costumes; near them a deal table, with a jug and glasses. At one of the wings, behind the proscenium, a shelf and small mirror, at which the Comedians can arrange their make-up, and a frame, in which a placard, with each Artiste’s number, is inserted before his or her entrance. A “turn” has just been concluded, and the Stage is clear.*

TIME—about 10 P.M.

**T**HE STAGE-MANAGER (*bustling up to FOOT-MAN in crimson plush breeches*). Now then, look alive, there, can’t you, they’re getting impatient in front. Why don’t you change the number?

## Under the Rose.

FOOTMAN (*with aggrieved dignity*). Because, Sir, Mr. Alf Redbeak ought to come on, by rights, and, not 'aving chosen to appear yet, I think you'll see yourself, on reflection, as it would be totally——

STAGE-M. Well, don't argue about it; here's Miss Lushboy ready to go on, put *her* number up!

FOOTMAN. I always understood it was the regulation 'ere that no number was to be put up until the band-parts were passed into the orchestra; which Miss Lushboy's music most certainly has not been handed in yet, and, that bein' so——

STAGE-M. You can spare a good yard off that tongue of yours, you can; put Miss Lushboy's number up, and—— Ah, here comes Mr. Redbeak; never mind.

[*Enter Mr. REDBEAK, breathless.*

MR. REDBEAK. Phew! I've had a job to get 'ere in time, I can tell you. (*The Orchestra strikes up.*) 'Ullo, *that* ain't mine. (*To FOOTMAN.*) What are you about? Put up my number—sharp, now!

MISS LUSHBOY (*to FOOTMAN*). Here, let me go on; I've been messing about long enough. What are you taking my number out for?

FOOTM. Now, look 'ere, Miss, I can't please everybody! (*Indicating STAGE-MANAGER.*) You are as

## Under the Rose.

well aware as what I am that it's for *him* to give the word 'ere, not me. I'm on'y actin' under what——

MR. REDB. It's crule, you know, that's what it is— crule. I've got to go right across London for my next turn, and——

THE STAGE-M. (*returning*). What the blazes are we waiting for *now*? Alf, dear boy, you should come up to time. (*To FOOTMAN.*) Why don't you do as you're told? You're getting too big for your boots, it strikes me! (*To MISS LUSHBOY.*) There, go on, my dear, go on.

[*Miss L. bounds on to the stage, and begins her song.*]

MR. REDB. (*to FOOTMAN*). I've got a bone to pick with you, old feller. Don't you go wool-gatherin' to-night, as you did last. I've told you till I'm tired that when you see me chuck this property pie-crust into the wings you've got to throw down these fire-irons—it's a safe laugh every time it comes off, and you know 'ow important it is, and yet you forget it nine times out of ten! What's the good of me thinkin' out bits o' business like that when you go and crab 'em for me?

FOOTM. (*pathetically*). Mr. Redbeak, Sir, you'll excuse me, but I'm on'y one man 'ere, I ain't a 'undred. *Don't* thank 'eaven for it, Sir, it's 'ard

## Under the Rose.

when a man as tries to do his best, and with all my responsibilities on him——

MR. REDD. (*impatiently*). Oh, cheese it; you're not on a stool in 'Ide Park, are you? I'm only *tellin'* you.

MISS L. (*on stage, singing chorus*).

Say, boys, say, if you'd like to come. Who's for a merry old "Tiddley-um?"

Fall in behind, and we'll all get "blind," before they close the pub!

You're not jays, so you won't refuse. Join our band, for we're on the booze,

And you'll see some larks with the rollicking sparks of the Rowdy Razzle Club!

(*Here she capers off, brandishing a gibus, and has a difficulty in opening the practicable door in the wing. To FOOTMAN.*) There you are *again!* How often am I to tell you to keep that wood open for my dance off? I break my fingers over it every blessed night, and lose my enecore as well!

FOOTM. I'm exceedingly sorry, Miss, but the fact of the matter is my attention was took off at the time owing to——

MISS L. Oh, hold *your* jaw, do.

FOOTM. (*to himself*). I'm to hold my jaw! Oh, these hartistes, they lead me a dorg's life among em!

## Under the Rose.

MR. REDB. (*touching Miss L.'s coat as she passes*). What's that badge you're wearing? Salvation Army, Temperance, Primrose League, or what?

MISS L. No, only the colours of the Balls Pond Football Team; they presented them to me the other day. I told them *I* didn't play football.

MR. REDB. You're pretty fair at the 'igh kick though, ain't you? There, there. 'Alf time. Goin' on again?

MISS L. With a cold like mine? Not likely. Just look at my tongue! (*She protrudes the tip of an indigo-coloured tongue for his inspection.*)

MR. REDB. (*concerned*). Why, it's like one o' those chow-chow dogs, I'm blest if it isn't! You *are* off colour to-night, no mistake!

MISS L. Oh, that's the remedy, not the disease—*liquorice*, you know.

STAGE-M. Now, Alf, if you're in such a hurry, go on. Cut it as short as you like—no extra turns to-night.

MR. REDB. No fear. Oh dear, oh dear, such a rush as it is! [*He goes on grumbling.*]

A SMALL BOY (*who has been sitting patiently on a chair by the wing—to STAGE-MANAGER*). If you please, Sir, will Mr. Wildfire want me to-night?

## Under the Rose.

MISS L. Want you, indeed, you silly kid! What would Mr. Wildfire want a shrimp like you for?

THE BOY. If he's going to do the Sandwich Man 'ere to-night, he'll want me, *I* know. Why, it all *depends* on me, that song does. (*To* STAGE-M.) *Is* he going to do the Sandwich Man to-night, Sir?

STAGE-M. Oh, don't bother me; wait till he comes and you'll find out. (*To* Miss L.) I suppose you've heard he's talking of not renewing his engagement after to-night—giving up the halls altogether!

MISS L. And no great loss either! I don't see anything particular about his songs myself. As for all that gas about his raising the tone of the halls, it's sickening. Anyone would suppose we *lowered* it!

MISS CARRIE CINDERS (*coming out of a dressing-cabin, in a battered old velvet hat and broken feathers, with her face smudged*). Who's that you're talking about? Wildfire? Ah, my dear, this 'Igh Art and Littery rot 'll be the ruin of the 'alls—him and his articles in the swell magazines, praising us all up—he can keep his praises to himself—I don't want 'em! I've never set up to refine the public myself, or else I could fake it easy enough! [*She passes on to stage.*]

MR. GUS TADMAN (*Variety Vocalist*). We could all do it, come to that. But there, he won't last, you'll



“It’s like singing to a lot of ‘ap’ny ices!”





## Under the Rose.

see. Why, look at the 'it I made with my "*Rorty Naughty Nell*"! That *was* a good song if you like, and well-written, mind yer. But lor, it's clean forgotten now. I 'ear Wildfire's bringing out a play to-night at the Hilarity, it'll serve him right if it gets the bird, going back on his own profession like that! (*To* Miss CINDERS, *who has just sung.*) House cold to-night?

MISS CINDERS (*in a temper*). Cold! it's like singing to a lot of 'ap'ny ices! I used to have the choruses all sung for me when I brought out that song first; and now they've let me go off without a 'and! We shall see whether they'll rise to Wildfire to-night. Ah, here he is. Actually coming up to speak to us; there's an honour!

MISS BETSY BENO (*to* WILDFIRE, *as he passes the table where she is sitting waiting for her turn*). 'Ere, Watty, old man, stop and 'ave a drop along of me. Do—there's plenty 'ere! (*as* WILDFIRE *excuses himself laughingly*). Well, I'm sure—refusing to drink when a lady goes out of her way to ask him—he hasn't the manners of a pig! And I draw my sixty quid a week the same as he does!

MR. TADMAN. Well, dear boy, how's the play going on? Not a frost, I hope?

## Under the Rose.

WILDFIRE. No; I just looked in on my way from the Val. here, and they seemed to think it was all right; but I couldn't stay till the finish. They're going to send round and let me know. (*To the SMALL BOY, who has approached anxiously.*) Oh, there you are, youngster! Yes, I shall want you—for the last time, you know.

THE BOY. Why, you—you ain't going to take the part away from me, Sir, when I created it, too!

WILDFIRE (*patting his shoulder kindly*). I'm giving up singing altogether—that's why. Never mind; I'll see it makes no difference to you, so don't distress yourself. We'll find you something or other to do.

THE BOY (*with a gulp*). If I ain't going to be with you any more, I—I don't care *what* 'appens, Sir. I'd as soon throw up the perfession myself, I would!

[*He turns away into a dark corner.*]

WILDFIRE (*to himself, as he goes to the wing*). Nice boy that; didn't think he'd care so much; must keep an eye on him. '*Flattery*' must be over now. I wish I could have stayed to see it out; it was going magnificently; but there were some rather risky scenes ahead. Still, I believe it's a success; and, if it is, I shall have done with all this for ever after to-night. I can go to Althea and tell her, without—— By Jove! wasn't it

## Under the Rose.

to-night that old Toovey was to be in front? I wonder what he'll think of it. (*He looks at himself in the mirror.*) He'll have some difficulty in recognising me in this get up. Well, I shall know on Monday. (*He goes on, and sings; then rushes back to the wing to change his costume, with the assistance of his dresser.*) Yes, the coat now, dresser, please. (*To himself, as he paints some lines on his face.*) I couldn't see any-one at all like old Toovey. Very odd! They must have sent him the box, I suppose. Well, it doesn't matter; if he didn't think it necessary to come, so much the better. (*Aloud.*) Wig-paste, please. Now the boards. All right—I'm ready. (*To the Boy.*) Now, youngster, look out for your cue. [*He goes on.*

THE LIMELIGHT MAN (*up in the flies—to himself*). What's wrong with Mr. Wildfire? He as nearly broke down just now as—and I can't keep the limelight on him nohow to-night! He can't have been drinking—he ain't *that* sort. But he do look bad—it's as much as ever he can do to go through with it; somethink's given him a turn.

WILDFIRE (*to himself, as he goes back to the wing, unsteadily*). She's here—and, what's worse, she's recognised me! She must have, or she would never have looked like that. If I could only have told her

## Under the Rose.

first; but, to discover it like this—she'll think I meant to—— (*He pitches away his boards in a fury.*) Well, I've done for myself—it's all over! (*To his dresser.*) A note, eh?

[*He opens it, and reads the contents mechanically;*

MR. TADMAN *and one or two other artistes*  
*come up with curiosity on seeing his expression.*

TADM. Why, Wildfire, old man, what's this? Play gone wrong? Never mind, dear boy, we can't have everything. But what's the report, eh?

WILDFIRE (*impatiently*). Oh, I don't know. What does it matter now? (*He lets the note fall.*) There, you can read it if you want to know. [*He walks away.*

TADM. (*with complacency*). Poor chap, he's hard hit! But I could have told him it wasn't to be expected that—— (*He picks up the note, and reads it with a falling jaw.*) Hullo! What's the meaning of this? It says the piece is a tremendous go—safe for a long run—had to raise the rag again and again. Why, he'll make his fortune over this alone; and yet, look at him! (*Pointing to WILDFIRE, who has seated himself on the pile of lumber, in utter dejection.*) And all those fools in front clapping and stamping for him to come on again. What *more* does the feller want, I wonder!

THE BITER BIT.



## Scene XIII

*The Study at Hornbeam Lodge.  
It is about 11:30 on Saturday  
evening; Mr. TOOVEY is sitting  
alone by the fire, which he has just,  
after much difficulty, succeeded in  
rescuing from extinction.*

**M**R. TOOVEY (*to himself*). There, it's beginning to burn up again now. Oh, the inestimable blessing of having nothing on one's mind again! How providential that I found Larkins in! He was a little unsympathetic at first, to be sure; he *would* have it that I must have known all along what the Eldorado really was! but as soon as he saw how strongly I felt about it, he was *most* helpful. I could *not* have gone to that place this evening; how could I have met Cornelia's eye after it? As it is, I can face her without—— Surely she is later than usual from this Zenana meeting! (*Wheels*

## Under the Rose.

*are heard outside.*) A cab? I do hope nothing is the matter! Why, that sounds like—like a *latch-key*! Can it be—ah!—a dispute with the cabman—it *must* be Cornelia! [The front door bangs.]

A VOICE (*in earnest remonstrance through the key-hole*). 'Ere, I say, you don't sneak off like *that*, you know! I *knowed* you was no good the minnit I clapped eyes on you! Are you going to gimme my legal fare or not? I ain't goin' till I git it. I want another shellin' orf o' you, I do!

MR. T. (*to himself*). Another shilling? Why, it's under a mile! He little knows my wife's principles if he expects—

THE VOICE. You orter be *ashimed* o' yourself! A lydy like you to tyke a man orf his rank at this toime o' night, all the w'y from— (*The front door is hastily unlocked again.*) Thankee, mum, thankee; lor, I only want what's my doo, and the distance 'ere from — [The door shuts with a bang.]

MR. T. She's given him the extra shilling—she *can't* be well! I'm afraid she's really poorly. She's gone into the drawing-room, but there are no lights there. She'll be here directly. [He sits up expectantly.]

MRS. T. (*to herself, in the hall*). Just as I expected. Theophilus not home yet! I shall sit up for him in



## Under the Rose.

the study. (*She opens the study door, and starts.*) So there you are, Pa! And pray when did you come in?

MR. T. (*mildly*). Yes, my love, here I am; I've been in a long while, quite a long while.

MRS. T. (*to herself*). And he imagines I believe that! (*Aloud.*) I understood you intended to spend the evening with Charles.

MR. T. So I did, my dear, so I did. I went to his rooms.

MRS. T. And you went out somewhere together, Pa? Come, you won't deny that!

MR. T. (*to himself*). What a mercy I didn't go to that Eldorado! I should have had to tell her! (*Aloud.*) Why, you see we—we didn't go anywhere. I found Charles was engaged to dine with a friend, so I went away again.

MRS. T. (*to herself*). A very likely story! Where has Theophilus learnt such brazen duplicity? (*Aloud.*) Oh! and then of course you came straight home?

MR. T. Why, no, my love; not immediately. I—I suddenly recollected that I had to see a friend on—on a little matter of business which was—hem—some-what pressing, so I went there first of all.

MRS. T. (*to herself, contemptuously*). Exactly the

## Under the Rose.

excuse in all those horrid songs! (*Aloud.*) And the business kept you rather late, eh, Pa? Some business *is* apt to do so, I know!

MR. T. (*to himself*). She makes me almost feel as if I'd gone after all! (*Aloud.*) I *was* a little late, my dear, not so very. I suppose I must have been home between eight and nine, and Phœbe brought me up some nice cold mutton and the apple-tart, so I did very well, very well indeed.

MRS. T. (*to herself*). If he is deceiving me, I can soon find out from the look of the joint and tart!

MR. T. By the way, my love, surely *you* are rather late this evening, are you not? it's nearly twelve!

MRS. T. (*to herself, with a start*). Oh, but I will *not* fib unless he forces me to. (*Aloud.*) I—I was detained later than I expected.

MR. T. And you didn't expect to be back so very early either, for you took the latchkey, didn't you?

MRS. T. I happened to find it, Pa, and I thought I might as well use it—and why not?

MR. T. It was most thoughtful of you, my love, to think of saving Phœbe. By the way, do you notice —? (*He looks round him suspiciously.*) Ah, well, it may be my fancy. And you had a successful meeting? Were there many interesting speeches?

## Under the Rose.

MRS. T. (*choking*). As—as interesting as usual, Theophilus! (*To herself.*) I'm sure *that's* true enough!

MR. T. And supper provided afterwards, I suppose? Which accounts for your being late. Dear—dear me! [*His face grows troubled again.*]

MRS. T. Is there any reason why there *shouldn't* be supper afterwards, Pa?

MR. T. Not in *that* house. Our dear friends the Cumberbatches do everything on such a truly hospitable scale. Now, most people in their position would have considered tea and coffee and sandwiches *quite* sufficient. Was it a *hot* supper, my love?

MRS. T. (*desperately*). Yes—no—*rather* hot—I didn't notice. You ask such preposterous questions, Theophilus!

MR. T. I didn't mean to, my dear. I was just a little surprised, do you know, at your taking a cab for such a short distance. I thought you might have felt unwell; but perhaps dear Mrs. Cumberbatch insisted——

MRS. T. Why, of course, Pa; you know how kind and considerate she is; otherwise I should never have dreamed of——

MR. T. Just what I thought, my love. But wasn't

## Under the Rose.

the cabman rather uncivil? I wonder you gave way to him—unless, of course, he was drunk.

MRS. T. He *was*—disgracefully drunk, Pa; if you heard so much, you must have noticed that; and how you could sit quietly here and never think of coming to my assistance! Ah, it is hardly for *you* to reproach me for submitting to his extortion!

MR. T. Indeed, my love, I'd no idea—you are generally so very firm with cabmen that—— (*Changing the subject.*) By-the-bye, I don't know if you noticed a note for you lying on the hall table? It must have come after you left. It looked to me wonderfully like dear Mrs. Cumberbatch's writing, but what could she have to write about when she would be seeing you directly? Did she allude to it at all?

MRS. T. From Eliza Cumberbatch? No; at least, she—I'll go and get it. (*She goes into the hall and finds the note.*) Good gracious, it is Eliza's hand! (*She reads it hurriedly under the hall-lamp.*) "Just a line. Zenana meeting postponed at last moment. Will let you know when another day fixed." Well, it will save me the trouble of writing to her; but, oh dear, the stories I've been telling Pa! But he's as bad—I *know* he's as bad!

MR. T. (*as Mrs. T. returns*). So you found the

## Under the Rose.

note, Cornelia, and what does Mrs. Cumberbatch say?

MRS. T. (*putting the note in the fire*). It—it was only from—from my dressmaker. (*To herself.*) He drives me to this!

MR. T. (*again uneasy*). Do you know, Cornelia, I—I may be wrong, but I've a very strong suspicion that——

MRS. T. (*in terror*). Pa, speak out! In—in the name of Heaven, *what* is it you suspect?

MR. T. It's getting stronger every moment. I'm sure of it. My love, there's a strange man downstairs in the kitchen!

MRS. T. (*with a gasp of relief*). A man! Oh, this must be seen into at once! (*She rings the bell furiously; presently PHŒBE appears, evidently only half-awake.*) Phœbe, what does this mean? I insist on the truth!

PHŒBE. I'm very sorry, m'm, but I'd no idea you was home, and I was sitting up for you downstairs, and I expect I must have dropped asleep, and never heard you come in.

MRS. T. Don't attempt to deceive *me*! You are entertaining a man downstairs, contrary to all my orders. Yes, it's useless to deny it, your master has distinctly heard sounds.

## Under the Rose.

MR. T. No, my love, I can't exactly say as much as that—but—yes, every time the door opens it's more perceptible! (*He sniffs.*) Don't you observe yourself, my dear, a remarkably strong odour of tobacco-smoke? Now, as I never have been a smoker myself, it stands to reason that——

[Mrs. TOOVEY *suddenly sits down, scarlet.*

PHŒBE (*roused*). I'm sure if you and master suspect me of concealing followers downstairs, you're welcome to search as much as you please! Cook's gone up to bed hours ago, and for a poor girl to be kep' up to this time o' night, and then have her character took away—why, I'm not accustomed to such treatment, and, what's more, put up with it I *won't!*

MRS. T. (*to herself, guiltily*). It's that filthy smoke at the Eldorado! (*Aloud.*) Theophilus, how can you have such ridiculous fancies? Tobacco, indeed! I—I don't notice anything. Phœbe, it was a mistake of your master's; I don't blame you in the least. There, you've sat up long enough, go to bed, go, girl!

PHŒBE. Beggin' your pardon, m'm, but insinuations have been descended to which I can't pass over in a hurry, and before I go I should wish——

MRS. T. (*feverishly*). I tell you it was all a mistake.



Mrs. Toovey suddenly sits down, scarlet.





## Under the Rose.

Your master will apologise for it. Pa, say you're sorry!

PHŒBE. I don't require no apologies from *master*, m'm. I can make allowances for *him*—more partickler as there's no mistake about there being a smell of tobaccor-smoke. I don't wonder at *anyone* noticing it. It's your sending for me like this, and trying to shift the blame on the innercent, when all the time——

MRS. T. (*to herself*). This is too intolerable! (*Aloud.*) Haven't I *said* I didn't blame you, you unreasonable girl! Let us have no more of this impertinence! Leave us!

PHŒBE. I will, m'm, as soon as ever you can get suited, for, to tell you the truth, I don't like such goings on as these; and I'll take care I get a good character, too, or I'll know the reason why! (*As she closes the door.*) And I 'ope master will satisfy himself where the smell of tobacco reelly *does* come from, I'm sure; it isn't from *downstairs*!

[*She vanishes, leaving Mrs. T. petrified.*]

MR. T. You see, my love, it couldn't have been all my fancy, because Phœbe noticed it too. Dear me, it's dreadfully late; I'd better go and see that everything is locked up. (*As he passes Mrs. T.*) It's very extra-

## Under the Rose.

ordinary. Surely they don't allow any of the missionaries to smoke at these Zenana meetings, my love—do they?

MRS. T. Of course they don't. I—I am at a loss to understand you, Theophilus, and—and I am going to bed.

MR. T. No, but really—— Why, I *see* how it was! Depend upon it, my dear, that cabman must have been sitting inside the vehicle smoking, with the windows up, before you got in. Yes, yes; that accounts for everything.

MRS. T. (*faintly*). Do you think so, Theophilus? I—I remember noticing a smell of cigars.

MR. T. (*as he goes out*). My poor dear love, *what* a trial for you; and you never complained! Now, when I see dear Mrs. Cumberbatch at church to-morrow, I must really caution her not to employ that cabman again—she may have taken his number, and he really ought to lose his licence—drunk, and smoking inside his cab! Oh, I shall tell her! [*He goes out.*]

MRS. T. (*alone*). Pa shall *not* go to church to-morrow. I will take care of that, and by the time he sees Eliza again he will have forgotten all about it. Is he doing all this to cover all his own misdoings? I can't rest till I know! I will make Charles tell me on

## Under the Rose.

Monday. But what if Pa is blameless? No, he must have been doing *something* he oughtn't to. It would be too horrible if it turned out that I—I am the only person who has been (*she catches her breath with a shudder*) “hi-tiddley-ing,” as those vulgar wretches would call it! There's only one comfort that I can see: nobody here is ever likely to know, unless I choose to betray myself. Oh dear! oh dear! I wish I could forget this awful evening!

[*She ascends the stairs with a heavy and dispirited tread.*]



A NEW DEVELOPMENT.



## Scene XIV.

*The Drawing-room at Hornbeam Lodge. It is about six o'clock on Monday evening; ALTHEA is listlessly striking chords on the piano; Mrs. TOOVEY is sitting by one of the windows.*

MRS. TOOVEY (*to herself*). Where did Theophilus go last Saturday? He is either the most consummate hypocrite, or the most blameless lamb that ever breathed; and I'm sure *I* don't know which! But I'll find out when Charles comes. It would be almost a relief to find Pa *was* guilty; for, if he isn't— But, thank goodness, he is not very likely ever to hear where *I* was that evening!

ALTHEA (*to herself*). It couldn't *really* have been Mamma in that box; she has never made the slightest reference to it. I almost wish she *had* been there; it would have been easier to tell her. What *would* she

## Under the Rose.

say if she knew I had gone to such a place as the Eldorado?

[*She drifts, half unconsciously, into the air of*  
“The Hansom Cabman.”

MRS. T. What is that tune you are playing, Thea?

ALTHEA (*flushing*). N—nothing, Mamma. Only a tune I heard when I was in town. The—the boys in the street whistle it.

MRS. T. Then it's hardly fit to be played upon *my* piano. I shouldn't wonder if it came out of one of those abominable music-halls!

ALTHEA (*to herself*). She must mean something by that. If she was there after all! (*Aloud, distressed.*) Mamma, what makes you say that? Do—do you know?

MRS. T. (*in equal confusion*). Know! Explain yourself, child. How could I possibly——? (*To herself*). I shall betray myself if I am not more careful!

ALTHEA. I—I thought—I don't know—it was the way you said it. (*To herself*). I very nearly did for myself *that* time!

MRS. T. (*as ALTHEA strikes more chords*). For goodness' sake, Thea, either play a proper piece, or shut up the piano and take up some useful work. There's



## Under the Rose.

the crazy-quilt I've begun for the Bazaar; you might get on with that.

ALTHEA (*closing the piano*). The colours are so frightful, Mamma!

MRS. T. What does that signify, my dear? When it's for a charity! Really, I'm beginning to think this visit to town has not had at all a good effect upon you. You've come back unable to settle down to anything. Yes, I see a great change in you, Althea, and it's not confined to the worldly way you do your hair. I sincerely hope it will not strike Mr. Curphew as it does me. You know he is dining here this evening? I told him in my note that if he *liked* to come a little earlier—— (*Significantly.*) I think he has something to say to you, Thea. Perhaps you can guess what?

ALTHEA (*twisting her hands nervously*). Oh no, Mamma. I—I can't see Mr. Curphew—not alone, I mean.

MRS. T. Don't be ridiculous, my dear. You know perfectly well that he admires you. He has very properly spoken first to your father, and we both consider you a most fortunate girl. He is a truly excellent young man, which is the *first* consideration; and, what is even *more* important, he is, as far as I can gather, making an excellent income. And you

## Under the Rose.

can't deny that you were interested in him from the very first.

ALTHEA. N—not in that way, Mamma. At least, not any longer.

MRS. T. Nonsense. If Mr. Curphew proposes, I shall be seriously annoyed if you put him off with any foolish shilly-shallying. Mind that. And here he is—at least, it's *somebody* at the front door. I've mislaid my glasses as usual. And if it is Mr. Curphew, I shall send him in here at once; so remember what I've said. (*She goes out into the hall, and discovers her nephew CHARLES.*) So it is *you*, Charles! You're rather earlier than I expected.

CHARLES. Nothing much doing at the office, Aunt. And I thought I might have to dress for dinner, you know.

MRS. T. You ought to know by this time that we are plain people and do not follow the senseless fashion of dressing ourselves up for a family dinner, but I am glad you came early, all the same, Charles, as I should like a little talk with you before your Uncle comes in. We had better go into the study. (*To herself, as she leads the way.*) Now I shall get it out of him!

IN THE STUDY.



## Scene XV.

*In the Study.*

MRS. TOOVEY (*fixing CHARLES with her eye*). What is this I hear of your proceedings last Saturday night, Charles? Come, you can't deceive *me*, you know!

CHARLES. I never made any secret about my proceedings. I told Uncle we might probably drop into the Eldorado or somewhere after dinner.

MRS. T. (*to herself, in consternation*). The Eldorado? They *did* go there then! If only they didn't see *me*! (*Aloud.*) Yes, Charles, go on. And while you were there, did you see anyone you—you thought you recognised?

CHARLES (*to himself*). She's heard! (*Aloud.*) I should rather think I *did*, Aunt. Never was more surprised in my life.

MRS. T. (*with a groan*). And—and was your Uncle surprised, too, Charles?

CHARLES. Uncle? I haven't told *him* yet.

MRS. T. But he was *there*, Charles, with you; he must have seen—whatever you did! Or didn't he?

## Under the Rose.

CHARLES. At the Valhalla? my *dear* Aunt!

MRS. T. Who's talking about a Valhalla? I mean the *Eldorado*, of course; that was where you *said* you went!

CHARLES. No—no, we couldn't get in at the El.; all the stalls gone, so we went to the Val. instead. Just the same sort of thing.

MRS. T. (*to herself, relieved*). To the Val.! What a fright I've had for nothing! (*Aloud.*) I quite understand, Charles. You took your Unele to a place called the Val., *not* the—er—El. What did you *see* there? that's the point!

CHARLES. I didn't take Unele there; I was with a man from our office when I saw him. I must have seen him there often enough, but somehow I never spotted him before. It was the make-up, the *disguise*, you know, wig and moustache, and all that.

MRS. T. Do you mean to say your Unele attends music-halls disguised in a wig and moustache? Charles, who was he *with*? I *will* know!

CHARLES (*in fits of laughter*). Unele? At the Val. in disguise? now, is it *likely*? I thought you knew all about it, or I shouldn't have said a word!

MRS. T. You have said too much to stop *now*,



“Dear, dear me!”





## Under the Rose.

Charles. It is useless to try to turn it off like that. If it was not Pa you recognised at this Val. place, who *was* it?

CHARLES (*to himself*). If I don't tell her she'll only go on suspecting poor old Uncle Theo. (*Aloud.*) Well, you're bound to find it out sooner or later; and I admire him all the more for it myself. I'd no idea he had it *in* him. Shows how mistaken you may be in fellows.

MRS. T. I've yet to learn who and what you are talking about, Charles!

CHARLES. Why, that quiet, modest friend of yours, Mr. Clarence Curphew, if you *must* know!

MRS. T. I don't believe it. Mr. Curphew is not at all the sort of young man to spend his money in such resorts.

CHARLES. He don't *spend* it there—he *makes* it. My dear Aunt, you ought to feel honoured by having such a distinguished acquaintance. Don't you remember my mentioning the great music-hall star, Walter Wildfire? You must. Well, Clarence Curphew and Walter Wildfire are one and the same person—honour bright, they are!

MRS. T. (*sinking back with a gasp*). A—a music-hall star! And I have been urging Althea to— Oh, how fortunate it is I have been warned in time!

## Under the Rose.

He shall not see her—I will write and put him off—  
at once! [Mr. TOOVEX *enters blandly.*

MR. T. Ah, Charles, my boy, so here you are?  
that's right, that's right. You, too, Cornelia? (*To  
her, in an undertone.*) It's all right, my love—our  
dear young friend, Mr. Curphew, you know—we met  
on the doorstep just now, and I've left him and Thea  
together in the drawing-room. I thought it was  
best, eh? [*He looks to her for approval.*

MRS. T. You've left—— But there, I might have  
known! No, don't speak to me, Pa—there's no time  
to lose! Come with me, Charles, I may want you.

[*She rustles out of the room, followed by CHARLES.*

MR. T. (*looking after her in mild perplexity.*) Dear,  
dear me! I wonder what can be the matter *now*.  
Cornelia seems so very—— I hardly like to go and  
see—and yet, perhaps, I ought—perhaps I ought.  
There's one comfort, whatever it is, it can't have any-  
thing to do with that dreadful Eldorado. Yes, I'd  
better go and look into it! [*He goes out.*

A REVOLTING DAUGHTER.



## Scene XVI.

*The Drawing-room at Hornbeam Lodge. CURPHEW and ALTHEA are standing at some distance from one another, in evident constraint.*

CURPHEW (*sadly*). It's only what I expected, and yet—tell me this—is it entirely because of —of what you saw at the Eldorado last Saturday?

ALTHEA. Ah, you *know*, then! but what does it matter now? I was mistaken—isn't that enough?

CURPHEW. Don't judge me by what you saw of Walter Wildfire. I can do better things than that. I can make you forget him—forget that he ever existed, if only you will trust me!

ALTHEA (*indignantly*). Do you really suppose that he—that I—oh, it's *too* insulting! And you will do no good by disparaging *him*. The man who could write those songs, and sing them like that——

CURPHEW (*wincing*). Don't! I know how they

## Under the Rose.

must have struck you. I would have prepared you, if I could. I *did* try—that afternoon at the station, but I was interrupted. And now it's too late, and the harm's done. But at least you'll never see Walter Wildfire again!

ALTHEA (*exasperated*). Have I ever said that I *wanted* to? Why will you persist in talking as if—? Once for all, I *can't* care for you; whatever I may have thought once, I know now that I can have no sympathy with the sort of life you lead; the pleasures you are content with would not satisfy me; I should want more than you could ever give me. We should have nothing in common—nothing— There, *now* do you understand?

CURPHEW. Yes, I think I do. I suppose it's natural, and yet—don't think too hardly of me if you can help it. I might have chosen a higher walk than I did, but at least I've kept out of the mire, and now at last I see my way to— But that wouldn't interest you. There, I had better say good-bye; you won't refuse to give me your hand at parting, will you?

[*As he takes her hand, Mrs. TOOVEY enters with CHARLES, and stands transfixed.*

Mrs. T. Althea, don't tell me I'm too late! You have not accepted that man?

## Under the Rose.

CURPHEW (*releasing ALTHEA's hand*). On the contrary, I have just had my dismissal, Mrs. Toovey; we were merely saying good-bye.

MRS. T. Thank Heaven! but I knew I could trust *my* daughter to detect instinctively the designing serpent in wolf's clothing—(*correcting herself angrily*)—the sheep in dove's plumage, I *should* say.

CHARLES (*sotto voce*). Similes are cheap to-day!

MRS. T. (*more angrily still*). Well, I know what I mean, and so does he! (Mr. TOOVEY *enters*.) And how a person with Mr. Curphew's antecedents could ever had have the face to thrust himself into such a household as this——

MR. T. (*coming forward*). Cornelia, my love! Such language to our dear young friend! Surely, surely, there must be some sad mistake!

MRS. T. There has been indeed, Pa, and so you will say when you hear who and what he really is!

CURPHEW. Mr. Toovey has been quite aware of it for the last week, and was kind enough to say he saw no insuperable objection.

MRS. T. Pa, is this true? You knew who Mr. Curphew was, and never told me!

MR. T. My dear, I've no more notion who he is, if he's not Mr. Curphew, than a babe un——

## Under the Rose.

CURPHEW. But surely, Sir, you forget our conversation at Clapham Junction this day week? You certainly knew everything *then*. I thought your nephew had probably——

CHARLES. I'd no idea of it myself till last Saturday, so it couldn't have been *me*!

ALTHEA (*impatiently*). No idea of *what*? Who is Mr. Curphey, Papa?

CURPHEW (*to her, in astonishment*). But you know! surely you know? What else have we been talking about?

MR. T. (*helplessly*). I think we might try to be a little more clear, all of us. I do indeed. I'm in a perfect fog myself.

MRS. T. Then, Pa, let me inform you that you have been encouraging the acquaintance of a person who gains his living by singing ribald songs at music-halls under the name of Walter Wildfire!

ALTHEA (*to herself*). Walter Wildfire! Then it was —— Oh, if I had known!

MR. T. A—a music-hall singer! He! Oh, dear, dear me; *how* one may be deceived in people!

CURPHEW. Really, Sir, this can hardly be news to you, when you allowed me to send you a box for the Eldorado for the express purpose of——



## Under the Rose.

Mrs. T. Don't deny you were sent the box, Pa, because I know better. The question is—what you wanted one at all for?

Mr. T. (*to himself*). There's no occasion to say anything about those shares now! (*Aloud.*) To be sure. I *was* sent a ticket, my love; I could not help that, but (*drawing himself up*) it was not likely that I should compromise myself by visiting such a place, even from the best of motives, and I did not use the ticket myself, though I believe some other person *did*.

Mrs. T. (*in some distress*). Well, well, never mind that now, Pa. What *you* have to do is to ask this Mr. Wildfire to oblige us all by walking out of this house—for ever.

CURPHEW. I should not have stayed so long as this, only I hoped that Mr. Toovey at least would have done me the justice— However, I've nothing to keep me here any longer now.

[*He moves towards the door.*

ALTHEA (*coming forward and intercepting him*). Yes, you have—you've *me*. Oh, do you think I'll let you go like this—now I *know*? Can't you understand what a difference it makes? [*She clings to his arm.*

CHARLES. Bravo, Thea! I always knew you were a sensible girl!

## Under the Rose.

CURPHEW (*utterly bewildered*). Then you weren't—you don't——? I wonder if I can be awake!

MRS. T. Althea, if you had the remotest conception of what a music-hall singer *is*, you would never——

ALTHEA. I know what Mr. Curpew is, Mamma. He is a great artist, a genius; he can hold a mixed crowd of careless people spell-bound while he sings, make them laugh, cry, shudder, just as he chooses; and whatever he does is all so natural and human and real, and—oh, I can't put it into proper words, but one goes away thinking better of the whole world after it—and to hear him treated as if he were some outcast—oh, I can't bear it! [*She breaks down.*]

CURPHEW (*to himself*). I don't care what happens now. They can't take *this* away!

MRS. T. Upon my word! And pray where did you learn all this about Mr. Wildfire's performances?

ALTHEA (*boldly*). Where, Mamma? Why, at the Eldorado, last Saturday evening.

[*Sudden collapse of Mrs. Toovey.*]

MR. T. (*electrified*). A daughter of mine at the Eldorado! Thea, my child, you *can't* know what you are talking about; look at the effect on your poor mother!

ALTHEA (*desperately*). But indeed, Papa, there was



“ Can't you understand what a difference it makes? ”



## Under the Rose.

no harm in it. I went with the Merridews. And—and I may be mistaken, of course, but I—I thought I saw *Mamma* there too! [Sensation.]

CHARLES. Oh, I say, Thea; aren't you coming it *rather* strong? Aunt at the Eldorado! Why, Aunt thought *Uncle* was there!

MR. T. Cornelia, my love, don't pay any attention to her; the child must be stark staring mad to say such things. It's bad enough that *she* should have gone; but to think of *you* in such a scene! (*To ALTHEA.*) Why, it was that very Saturday evening that your dear mother went to the Zenana Meeting at Mrs. Cumberbatch's—yes, to be sure. (*To Mrs. T.*) You remember, my dear, how you came home so late, in a cab the driver had been smoking in, and how the moment you entered the room I——

MRS. T. (*hastily*). My dear Theophilus, I remember the circumstances perfectly, but I should not condescend to answer so preposterous a charge; especially when it is my own daughter who brings it!

ALTHEA (*in distress*). But indeed I don't, *Mamma*. I only fancied it *might* have been you, and of course, if you were at the Cumberbatches——

MRS. T. (*to herself*). I must put a stop to this once and for all. (*Aloud.*) *If* I was at the Cumberbatches!

## Under the Rose.

When your father has just *told* you I was there—really, Althea! Did I hear wheels outside? Just look, Pa. I haven't seen my spectacles since Saturday.

MR. T. (*at the window*). Why, really, my love, it does seem to be a carriage, indeed. I wonder who can be calling at such a—— Now, it's quite a coincidence, truly—it's dear Mrs. Cumberbatch! I hope she'll come in, because I really think it's a duty to warn her against employing that particular cabman again. A driver who permits himself to smoke inside his own vehicle to that extent——

[Mrs. TOOVEY makes ineffectual efforts to speak.

ALTHEA (*in a whisper, to CURPHEW*). Do look at Mamma! You don't think she could really——?

CURPHEW. I don't know what to think yet; but we shall all know in a very few seconds now.

[*The hall-door is heard to open; Mrs. TOOVEY attempts to rise, but has to remain in her seat, dumb and paralysed.*

A TIGHT PLACE.





## Scene XVII.

*The Drawing-room, as before.*

PHŒBE *has appeared at the door, but, observing a look of secret apprehension in her mistress's countenance, pauses maliciously before making her announcement.*

PHŒBE (to Mrs. TOOVEY.) If you please, ma'am, Mrs. Cumberbatch—

MRS. TOOVEY (*in a rapid whisper*). Not here, Phœbe! Show her into the study—anywhere. Say I'll come!

PHŒBE. She said she hadn't time to come in, m'm! She left her compliments, and just called to let you know the Banana Meeting will be next Friday. And oh, if you please, m'm, I wished to ask you about that dress you wore last Saturday. I've tried everything, and I *can't* get the smell of tobaccor out of it, do what I *will*, m'm. (*To herself.*) That'll teach her not to accuse me of hiding followers downstairs!

## Under the Rose.

ALTHEA (*to herself*). Mine had to be left all night in a thorough draught. Where *could* Mamma have been, unless—— ?

MRS. T. (*with dignity*). I came home in a smoky cab, and you know perfectly well this is not the place to ask me such questions. Leave the room !

PHOEBE (*to herself, as she leaves*). A smoky cab indeed ! There's no smoke without fire—as Master will find out before long !

CHARLES. Had your cabman been giving a smoking party inside his four-wheeler, or what, Aunt ?

MRS. T. I don't—yes, I believe he had. He apologised for it; it—it was his birthday. (*To herself*.) Oh, dear me, *what* makes me tell these dreadful stories ?

MR. T. His birthday ! Why, if you remember, Cornelia, you *said* the man had been drinking. That would *account* for it ! But did I understand there was to be *another* Zenana Meeting, my love ? That seems *rather* soon, does it not, after having one only last Saturday !

MRS. T. (*to herself*). I *must* go on, or he'll suspect something. (*Aloud, severely*.) And why not, Pa—pray, why not ? You know what an energetic creature Mrs. Cumberbatch is ! *Can* we do too much

## Under the Rose.

for those poor benighted heathen women? And there was a great deal that we had to leave unfinished the other evening.

MR. T. Dear me, and you were home so late, too!

MRS. T. Perhaps you disbelieve my word, Pa? If you do, *say so*, and I shall know what to think! Though *what* I've done to deserve such suspicion——

MR. T. (*astounded*). My own love, I never for one single moment—— Hem, the wife of Cæsar is above suspicion.

MRS. T. (*with relief*). I should hope so, Theophilus; not that you are *Cæsar*—but there, that is enough of a very painful subject. Let us say no more about it.

CURPHEW (*to himself*). I'm more certain every moment that this immaculate matron is lying like a prospectus, but what can I do? I've no proof, and if I had, I couldn't bring myself to—— Well, I must wait, that's all.

MRS. T. What *I* should like to know is, why Mr. Curpew still remains here after we have distinctly informed him that we do not desire his further acquaintance?

CURPHEW. Before I go, let me say this: that I have no intention of giving up your daughter until she gives up me. I am in a position to marry and support her,

## Under the Rose.

and if you refuse your consent, you will only reduce us to the painful necessity of doing without it.

[ALTHEA *intimates her entire acquiescence in this ultimatum.*

Mrs. T. We will never consent to give our daughter to a notorious music-hall singer—*never!*

CURPHEW. That objection is easily met. I am no longer a music-hall singer. I have left the profession for ever; not that I consider it any disgrace to belong to it, but I prefer to live by my pen in future. (*To Mr. TOOVEY*) I appeal to *you*, Sir. You had no objection before; what can you have now?

[*Mr. TOOVEY opens his lips inaudibly.*

Mrs. T. Tell him, Pa, that in the circle in which *we* move, the remotest connection with—with a music-hall would be justly considered as an indelible disgrace.

CHARLES (*sotto voce*). No, hang it, Uncle! It's no business of mine, and I'm not going to shove my oar in; but still you know as well as I do that *you* can't decently take that line, whatever Aunt may do!

Mrs. T. I heard you, Charles. So, Pa, there is something you have been hiding from me? I felt positive there was some mystery about that box. Now I *will* know it. Althea, leave us.

## Under the Rose.

MR. T. There is nothing she had better not hear—*now*, my love. It—it's true I would rather have kept it from you, but I'd better tell you—I'd better tell you. The fact is that, without being in the least aware of it—I was under the impression I was investing in a gold-mine—I—I became the proprietor of several shares in the Eldorado Music-hall.

CURPHEW (*surprised*). You, Sir! you were a shareholder all the time! Is it possible?

MR. T. (*bewildered*). Why, but you *knew*! I consulted you at the Junction about whether I ought to retain the shares or not, and you advised me to go and judge for myself!

CURPHEW. I assure you I thought we were talking about *my* connection with the Eldorado, not yours.

MRS. T. So, Pa, by your own story you found yourself in possession of those horrible wicked shares, and you actually hesitated what to do! You considered it necessary to—to visit the scene!

MR. T. Indeed, I never actually went, my love. And—and Mr. Curpew assured me the establishment was quite respectably conducted, under the supervision of the London County Council; and then there was the dividend—seventy per cent. on only five hundred

## Under the Rose.

pounds—three hundred and fifty a year, Cornelia ; it —it seemed a pity to give it up !

Mrs. T. (*to herself, impressed*). Three hundred and fifty a year ! Why, we can keep our carriage on it ! (*Aloud.*) Well, Pa, of course—as you bought the shares under a misapprehension—and I'm bound to say *this* for the Eldorado, that there was nothing positively objectionable in the performance so far as *I* could—(*correcting herself hastily*)—have ever been given to understand—why, I'm the last to blame you.

Mr. T. (*overjoyed*). Ah, my dear love ! I scarcely dared to hope for this leniency. But I never would have gone—oh, never. Why, I could never have looked you in the face again if I had !

Mrs. T. (*with a twinge*). That *depends*, Pa ; it is quite possible to go to such places, and yet——

Mr. T. Yes, but you see I *didn't* go, my dear. I found I couldn't really bring myself to visit it when it came to the point, so I went to call on Larkins instead, as it was on his advice I had taken the shares, and I told him my difficulty, and he quite sympathised with my scruples, and most good-naturedly offered to take them off my hands.

Mrs. T. But surely, Theophilus, you never gave

## Under the Rose.

up three hundred and fifty a year without so much as consulting Me!

CHARLES. You can't count on such dividends as a certainty, you know, Aunt, and I've no doubt Uncle got rid of them at a very good figure; they've been going up like sky-rockets!

MRS. T. (*mollified*). Of course if your Uncle did *that*, I——

MR. T. Well, you see, my love, Charles very properly pointed out to me that there was no moral difference between that and keeping the shares, and—and Larkins took the same view himself; so (I'm sure, Cornelia, you will consider I have only done what was my strict duty!) I agreed to surrender the shares for just what I paid for them—five hundred pounds—and so my conscience is clear.

MRS. T. If it's no clearer than your *head*, Pa—— I never heard of such downright Quixotism! As if *you* could be held responsible; as if anyone here need *know*! I call it folly—sheer ruinous folly!

PHOEBE (*opening the door—to Mr. T.*). A young gentleman to see you, Sir; says he comes from Mr. Larkins, with a paper to be filled up. I've shown him into the study, Sir.

MR. T. Ah, to be sure, yes; tell him I'll come. (*To*

## Under the Rose.

Mrs. TOOVEY) It's about those shares ; Larkins said he would send a clerk down to complete the transfer.

Mrs. T. So it isn't completed *yet*? Mr. Larkins has been trying to get the better of you, Pa ; but it's not too late, fortunately. (*To PHŒBE.*) Show the young man in here. I wish to see him about this business. (*As PHŒBE goes.*) I shall insist on the fair market value of the shares being paid before you put your signature to any document whatever ; leave this entirely to me, Pa. I *think* I shall be a match for any young——

PHŒBE (*returning.*) Mr. Jannaway.

MR. JANNAWAY (*to Mr. TOOVEY.*) From Mr. Larkins, Sir. Brought a transfer-deed for your signature.

Mrs. T. (*to herself.*) Gracious goodness ! It's the man whose ears I boxed at the Eldorado ! What *shall* I do ?

[*She seizes the current number of "The Quiver," and retires behind it.*

ALTHEA (*to herself.*) He's *awfully* like the young man in that box on Saturday ! If Mamma really *was* there ! (*She glances at Mrs. TOOVEY, in whose hands "The Quiver" is rustling audibly.*) Ah, then I *wasn't* mistaken. Oh, how dreadful if he should recognise her !





“The last place I expected to find you in!”



## Under the Rose.

MR. T. My signature? Yes, yes, yes, to be sure, just so: but the fact is, I—I've been thinking over the matter, and—and—but that lady by the window will explain my views.

MRS. T. (*in a muffled voice, from behind "The Quiver"*). I—I shall do nothing of the sort. I—I'm busy. Sign whatever the young man wants, Pa, and don't bother *me* about it!

MR. JANN. (*to himself*). That's rum. Where have I heard that voice? And "*Pa*," too! *Very rum!*

MR. T. Oh, very well, my love; I only thought—but I'll sign, I'll sign. Only, I rather fancy you're sitting just in front of the writing materials, my dear.

MR. JANN. (*gallantly*). Allow *me!* (*He goes towards Mrs. TOOVEY'S chair. "The Quiver" treacherously collapses at the critical moment; their eyes meet.*) Well, Ma'am, this is the *last* place I expected to find you in; after 'unting for you the entire Sunday afternoon all over Upper Tooting, too!

[*General sensation. Tableau.*



CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.



## Scene XVIII.

*The Drawing-room. Mrs. TOOVEY is still regarding Mr. JANNAWAY, after the manner of an elderly bird in the presence of a young and somewhat inexperienced serpent.*

MR. TOOVEY (*coming to the rescue*). Excuse me, young Sir, but I don't think you quite realise who that lady is. (*With mild self-assertion.*) She is my wife, Sir, my Wife! And she is not *accustomed* to being hunted all over Upper Tooting, or anywhere else!

MR. JANNAWAY (*to himself*). I've got this dear lady on toast, *I* can see! But I mustn't do anything ungentlemanly or I may get the sack if the governor gets to hear of it. (*Aloud.*) If I'm mistaken I'm ready to apologise; but the lady bears such a really remarkable likeness to a Mrs. Tomkinson Jones, residing (so she gave me to understand) at The Laburnums, Upper Tooting, that——

## Under the Rose.

MRS. T. (*finding her voice*). I do *not* reside at Upper Tooting!

MR. JANN. (*in silky tones*). Precisely *so*, Madam. No more does Mrs.—hem—Tomkinson Jones!

CHARLES. And is *that* the only point of resemblance between your friend Mrs. Jones and my Aunt, eh?

MR. JANN. That's a matter of opinion, Sir. I've my own. But neither the lady nor yet myself are particularly likely to forget our meeting. It was only last Saturday evening, too!

MR. T. Why, then you must have met Mrs. Toovey at the Zenana Mission Conference?

MR. JANN. Well, that isn't the name *I* know it by; but if the lady prefers it, why——

MRS. T. (*hoarsely*). I—I deny having ever met the young man before, anywhere: that is, I—I don't remember doing so. Take him away!

MR. JANN. I should be most averse, of course, to contradicting a lady, but I can only conclude that she is so much in the 'abit of fetching unoffending strangers what I may venture to term, if you'll permit the vulgarity, a slap in the jaw, that such a trifling circumstance makes no impression on her. It did on *me*!

MR. T. (*outraged*). Young man! are you endeavour-



## Under the Rose.

ing to suggest that my wife goes about—er—administering “slaps in the jaw” to perfect strangers at Zenana meetings?

MR. JANN. Pardon me, I said nothing whatever about any—er—Pyjama meetings. I don't know what may go on *there*, I'm sure. The incident *I* alluded to occurred at the Eldorado music-hall.

MRS. T. (*to herself*). There ; it's out at last ! What *have* I done to deserve this ?

CHARLES (*to himself*). The Eldorado ! Why, *Thea* said—— What *can* Aunt have been up to ? She's got herself into the very deuce of a hole !

[CURPHEW and ALTHEA exchange significant glances.

MR. T. At the Eldorado ? Now, do you know that's very singular—that really is very singular indeed ! You're the *second* person who fancied Mrs. Toovey was there last Saturday evening ! So that you see there *must* have been a lady there most extraordinarily like my wife !

MRS. T. (*to herself*). Dear, good, simple Pa ; *he* believes in me ! After all, I've only to deny everything ; he can't *prove* I was there ! (*Aloud.*) Yes, Sir, and on a mere resemblance like that you have the audacity to bring these shameful charges against me—*me* ! All you have succeeded in establishing is that

## Under the Rose.

you were in the music-hall yourself, and I doubt whether your employer would approve of a clerk of his spending his time in such places, if it came to his ears!

MR. JANN. It's very kind of you to concern yourself on my account, Madam; but there's no occasion. It was Mr. Larkins himself gave me the ticket; so I'm not at all uneasy.

MR. T. Why, dear me, that must have been the ticket Mr. Curphew—I should say, Mr. Walter Wildfire—sent me. I remember I left it with Mr. Larkins in case he could find a use for it. So you were in *my* box; quite a coincidence, really!

MR. JANN. As you say, Sir, and not the only one neither, seeing that—

MRS. T. Pa, isn't it time this young man finished the business he came about, and went away? I am not accustomed to seeing my drawing-room made use of as an office!

MR. T. (*snatching up the transfer*). By all means, my love. (*To Mr. JANNAWAY.*) Er, I really think we should be more comfortable in the study. There—there's a bigger inkstand.

[*He leads the way to the door.*

MR. JANN. (*following*). As you please, Sir. (*Turn-*

## Under the Rose.

*ing at the door.*) I must say I think I've been most cruelly misunderstood. If I've been anxious for the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Tomkinson Jones again, any revengeful motives or lowness of that description was far from my thoughts, my sole object being to restore a piece of property which the lady, whoever she may have been, left behind her, and which, as I 'appen to have brought it with me, would, if recognised, settle any question of identity on the spot. But that can wait for the present. Business first, pleasure afterwards!

[*He goes out. A silence. Presently a succession of violent sniffs proceed from behind "The Quiver."* All rise in concern.

CHARLES. I say, Aunt, you're not going to give way now, are you? That fellow hasn't frightened you?

ALTHEA (*kneeling down and embracing Mrs. TOOVEY.*) Dearest mamma, *don't* you think you'd better tell us all about it? It was *you* who slapped that horrid little man's face—now, *wasn't* it? And serve him right!

MRS. T. (*in a burst.*) I took him for your father! Oh, what have I *said*? I never meant to admit anything! And what must you all think of me?

CURPHEW. No one who has had the benefit of your

## Under the Rose.

opinions of music-halls or their entertainers can possibly imagine you went to one with any idea of *amusing* yourself, Mrs. Toovey.

Mrs. T. (*without heeding him*). And Pa, what will *he* say? When I think of all the wicked stories I've had to tell that poor dear man! And after he once finds them out, there's an end of all his respect for me, all my influence over him, all my power in this house—*everything!* Why, for anything *I* can tell, Pa may actually believe I went to that detestable place on what (*to CURPHEW*) I suppose your friends would call the—the (*utterly breaking down*) Tee-hiddle-dy-hi!

CHARLES (*after a highly suspicious fit of choking*). Don't think there's any danger of that, Aunt; but look here, how if I went into the study and kicked that little cad out, eh?

Mrs. T. And have the whole affair in the police reports! *You're* a pretty solicitor, Charles! But Pa *knows* by now, and oh, what in the *world* am I to do?

CHARLES. Well, my dear Aunt, it sounds an immoral suggestion, but, as you seem to have given Uncle a—hem—slightly picturesque version of your doings last Saturday, hadn't you better *stick* to it?

Mrs. T. What's the use? Didn't you hear that wretch say he'd found something in the box? It's my

## Under the Rose.

spectacles, Charles ; a pair in a Rob Roy tartan case, which Pa gave me himself, and couldn't *help* recognising ! I remember now, I left them there, and——  
(*The door opens.*) They're coming back !

MR. T. (*entering*). That's really a very honest young fellow, my love, nothing will satisfy him but bringing in the article he's found, and seeing whether it belongs to you or not.

MRS. T. (*breathlessly*). And have *you* seen it, Pa—have you *seen* it ?

MR. T. Not yet, dear love, not yet. He's getting it out of his great coat in the hall.

CURPHEW (*starting up from behind ALTHEA*). I think, if you will allow me, I'll go and speak to him first. It strikes me that I may know the lady who was in that box, and I'm naturally anxious to avoid any——  
[*He goes out.*]



CLIMBING DOWN.





## Scene XIX.

*The same; a few minutes later.*

CHARLES occupies ALTHEA in conversation; Mr. TOOVEY moons about the room, humming feebly, and casting anxious glances from time to time at his wife, whose expression as she resumes the study of "The Quiver," appears to him to indicate that he is still under the ban of her displeasure.

MRS. TOOVEY (*to herself, in a fever*). Why doesn't he come back? What are those two plotting together? Oh, if Mr. Wildfire imagines he will get a hold over me, so as to obtain my consent to— I'd sooner tell Pa everything! (*To CURPHEW, who re-enters, smiling.*) W—where is—the other?

CURPHEW. The other? Oh, he's gone. I made myself

## Under the Rose.

known to him; and you would have been surprised, my dear Mrs. Toovey, at the immense effect my professional name had upon him. When he realised I was Walter Wildfire he was willing to do anything for me, and so I easily got him to entrust his find to me.

MR. T. (*inquisitively*). And what is it—a fan, or a glove? There would be no harm in showing it to *us*, eh?

CURPHEW. Well, really, it's so very unlikely to compromise anybody that I almost think I *might*. Yes, there can't be any objection.

[*He takes something out of his pocket, and presents it to MR. TOOVEY.*]

MR. T. (*mystified*). Why, it's only a hairpin! What a scrupulously honest young man that is, to be sure!

MRS. T. (*relieved*). Only a hairpin? (*Then, uncasily, to CURPHEW, in an undertone.*) Where is—you know what? Have you kept it to use for your own advantage?

CURPHEW (*in the same tone*). I am a very bad man, I know; but I don't blackmail. You will find it behind the card-basket in the hall.

[*Mrs. Toovey goes out; ALTHEA draws CURPHEW aside.*]



"So you've found your spectacles!"



## Under the Rose.

ALTHEA. Clarence, I—I *must* know; how did you come to have a—a hairpin? where did it come *from*? (*As he softly touches the back of her head.*) Oh! it was *mine*, then? *What* a goose I am!

MR. T. (*as Mrs. TOOVEY returns*). Why, Cornelia, my love, so you've *found* your spectacles! Now where did you leave them *this* time, my dear, eh?

MRS. T. Where I shall not leave them *again* in a hurry, Theophilus!

MR. T. Don't you be too sure of that, my love. By the way, Mr. Curphew, that lady of your acquaintance—you know, the one who made all this disturbance at the Eldorado—is she at all *like* Mrs. Toovey, now?

CURPHEW (*after reflection*). Well, really, there *is* a resemblance—at a distance!

MR. T. (*peevishly*). Then it's annoying—very annoying; because it might compromise my poor dear wife, you know. I—I wish you could give her a quiet hint to—to avoid such places in future!

CURPHEW. Do you know, Sir, I really think it will be *quite* unnecessary. [*PHŒBE enters to announce dinner.*]

MR. T. Dinner, eh? Yes, yes, dinner, to be sure. Mr. Curphew, will you take in my dau—— (*correcting himself*)—oh, but, dear me, I was quite forgetting that—h'm!——

## Under the Rose.

CURPHEW. — that Mrs. Toovey has been expressing an ardent impatience to close your doors on me for ever ?

MRS. T. (*not over graciously*). That was before—— I mean that—considering the manner in which we all of us seem to have been more or less mixed up with the music-hall of late—we can't afford to be too particular. If Mr. Wildfire chooses to stay, he will find as warm a welcome as—(*with a gulp*)—he can expect !

CURPHEW. Many thanks, but I'm sure you see that I can't stay here on sufferance. If I do stay it must be as——

MRS. T. As one of the family ! (*She chokes.*) That—that's understood, of course. (*To herself.*) They know too much !

MR. T. (*to Mrs. T., chirpily, as the others precede them in to dinner*). Do you know, my love, I'd no more idea you would ever have—— Well, well, it might have been worse, I daresay. But we must never let it get out about the *music-hall*, eh ?

MRS. T. Well, Pa, I'm not very likely to allude to it !

THE END.



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