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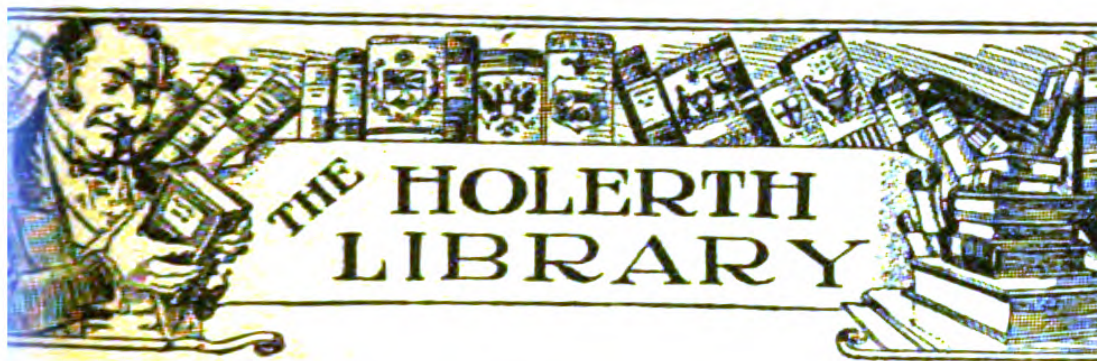
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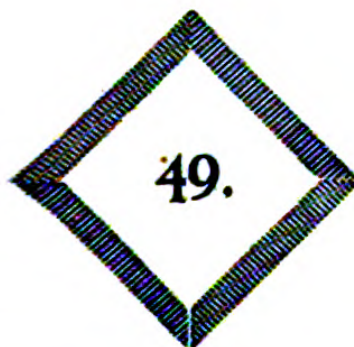
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THE HOLERTH
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TOM TAYLOR.

NINE POINTS
OF THE LAW.



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OF THE LAW.



THE HOLERTH PRESS,
46, FLEET St.,
LONDON,
E. C. 4.



NINE POINTS OF THE LAW.

NINE POINTS OF THE LAW

*First Produced at the Royal Olympic Theatre
On Monday, April 11th 1859.*

CHARACTERS

JOSEPH IRONSIDE* MR
CUNNINGAME, *an Attorney* MR
RODOMONT ROLLINGSTONE, *a Gentleman
at Large* MR
JOHN BRITTON MR
MRS. SMYLIE, *a Widow* MR
KATIE MAPLESON, *her Niece* MIS
SARAH JANE, *a Village School Girl* MIS

SCENE.—A Cottage near a Kentish Village

TIME.—1849.

TIME IN REPRESENTATION.—1 hour and 25 minutes

COSTUMES

IRONSIDE.—Dark body coat, drab waistcoat, black
brimmed hat.

CUNNINGAME.—Old fashioned black body coat, black
trousers, low crowned hat.

ROLLINGSTONE.—Blue jacket, fancy woollen shirt, ex
trousers and scarf round waist, Russia boots, straw l

JOHN BRITTON.—Plain modern walking dress.

MRS. SMYLIE.—Neat grey check silk morning dress
silk mantilla.

KATIE.—Neat white morning dress.

SARAH JANE.—Blue frock, white apron with bib,
and white cap—complete charity schoolgirl's dress.

* This part may be played with a north country dialect
with admirable effect by Mr. Addison at the Old

NOTE.—Mr. Savage's novelette, "Clover Cottage," supplied the idea on which this little piece is founded.

NINE POINTS OF THE LAW.

SCENE.—*A pretty morning room in Fairfield Cottage, with French windows, opening on lawn—in the distance a view of the village, with Church. Old Manor House, &c.—chintz furniture—doors, R. and L.—table, with writing materials, &c.—flowers in vases, and other signs of female occupancy—a portrait of Mrs. Smylie, L.*

As the curtain rises, JOHN BRITTON is discovered on his knees to KATIE.

JOHN. Yes, Katie, I adore you, and if you won't marry me, I'll join the Tower Hamlet's Militia—ship as stoker on board a Government Steam Transport—or do something equally desperate.

KATIE. Get up, John, do! if aunt were to catch you—you must ask her consent. Do get up!

Enter MRS. SMYLIE, L. D.

JOHN. Not till I've got *yours*—till then, here I stay, uncomfortable as this position, is, for the rest of the morning.

KATIE. Then I'll leave you there all
(*sees MRS. SMYLIE*) Oh, dear, here comes n

MRS. S. (*seeing JOHN on his knees*) Bless

JOHN. No bless *me*, Mrs. Smylie—bless
kneel, Katie! (*he seizes KATIE'S hand, and
to her knees*) I adore her, ma'am—she ac
implore your blessing!

MRS. S. (*getting above them, C., and wa
over their heads melo-dramatically*) Bless you,
And now, you blessed full grown babies, g
me what the meaning of this is.

JOHN (*getting up*). It means that we ar
mean to marry,

MRS. S. (C.) Mean to marry is all ve
Britton, but means to marry is quite an
I have no objection to the match, but it
you can find a home for me, instead of ex
find one for you. (*sits.*)

JOHN. Where can we be so happy as in
of all possible snuggeries? I do think the
Mrs. Weathercock ever did, in her long an
was to die and leave you this rural Elysi
KATIE *seats herself R. of table.*)

MRS. S. Oh! so you are under the sam
as everybody else in Fairfield—that she
cottage.

JOHN. Didn't I draft her last will and
old Groper's office, in this very village?

MRS. S. I have no doubt she *meant* to
but a few days after her will was drawn, s

with me, as she generally did once a week, and revoked her legacy by a—a—what d'ye call it?

JOHN. A codicil!

MRS. S. Precisely! I needn't detail the steps by which this codicil, contrary to her intentions, remained in force at her death, so that Mr. Ironside, the residuary legatee, became legal owner of the cottage, and I only the possession of it.

JOHN. Nine points to one in your favour! But has this barbarian—this intruder—this wretched Ironside, attempted to assert his rights?

MRS. S. By an extremely polite letter, in which, after setting out his claim, he said he would not willingly do anything to inconvenience me.

JOHN. Which you answered—

MRS. S. By one equally polite, in which I assured him that it would very much inconvenience me to leave Fairfield, so I would avail myself of his kindness, and remain where I was.

JOHN. And there the correspondence stopped?

MRS. S. For a couple of months, when he followed up his own polite letter, by one much less polite, from his attorney, a Mr. Cunningame.

JOHN. I know—one of the sharpest practitioners in London. And how did you answer him?

MRS. S. By regretting that my ignorance of legal phraseology entirely precluded me from understanding much less acting upon, his letter.

JOHN. But he wasn't satisfied with soft sawder like that?

MRS. S. He sent me a great many more more legal, and therefore more unintelligible other, which I didn't take the trouble of answering.

JOHN. That was right—didn't commit myself. They served you with a declaration of ejectment. (SMYLIE *appears not to understand*) Have they served you with a declaration of ejectment?

MRS. S. I haven't the slightest idea. A declaration that here I am, and here, convinced of my right, not my legal rights, I mean to stay. (*folding paper*)

JOHN. That's right—I'll act as your attorney. Cunningame and I don't manage to disagree with law between us, say I'm unworthy of my profession. I shouldn't wonder even if we manage to get into chancery—and then you may stay in the cottage, till you attain a green old age.

MRS. S. Young or old, John Britton, never be green enough to get into a chancery. A Widow's weeds are bad enough, but one does find a way out of them; but a chancery suit has the effect in a woman's eyes—it never wears out.

Enter SARAH JANE, C. D., with a letter.

SARAH. A letter for missus, please'm. (*goes C. to MRS. SMYLIE, bows, gives her letter, bows, and exit, R. D.*)

MRS. S. (*reads letter*) What's this?—from my lawyer. (*reading*) "Madam,—Finding that neither my lawyer nor those of my lawyer have been attended to with effect in inducing you to give up possession of the cottage."

Cottage, I have taken the liberty of coming in person, with my legal adviser, and trust to your respect for the intentions of the testatrix to grant us an early interview. Awaiting your answer, I am, madam, your obedient servant, Joseph Ironside." So, the enemy has advanced his parallels—close quarters at last!

JOHN. Don't see him, my dear Mrs. Smylie. Let me meet him in single combat, with legal, not lethal weapons.

(KATIE rises and goes up to window, C.)

MRS. S. Thank you, John Britton. But we poor, weak women have weapons of our own. What arms—offensive or defensive—can your legal arsenal supply, equal to our artillery of look, smile, and sigh—our armour of helplessness and innocence—our shield of weakness and submission? And when all these fail, think of that irresistible resource—a woman's tears! Like the old Dutch Burghers, we have but to open the sluices, and wash the enemy from the field. Yes, I'll try my woman's weapons—if they fail, I'll come to you for legal ones.

(goes over to table, L., and sits to write—KATIE comes down, R.—JOHN goes to her)

JOHN. (aside to KATIE) Wonderful woman, your aunt, Katie. I'm glad I fell in love with you before I knew her, or I should have popped to her, infallibly—notwithstanding the disparity of our ages. Don't be jealous.

KATIE. (R.) Of auntie! Oh, nobody can be jealous of her! She's the dearest, cleverest thing! Isn't everybody in love with her, from the old rector to that odious

Mr. Rollingstone?—whom I saw just now in the garden.

JOHN (C.) Ah, an extremely fishy party—and such a thundering humbug! (*goes and looks out*)

MRS. S. Give this to the messenger Lion, darling. It's to invite Mr. Ironside up directly.

KATIE. What, the horrid man who drove you out of this dear home?

MRS. S. (L.) Nothing like civility, but they have remarkably soft paws, but the velvet of their scratching, you know.

KATIE. Oh, I'm sure you never saw my auntie. I'll give boots the note directly.

Runs

JOHN. (*coming down, R. C.*) Here comes Whiskerandos. Now, my dear Mrs. Smythe, be cool and distant with this fellow.

MRS. S. (L.) Oh, I must be civil to him, for the sake of Mrs. Weathercock, you know.

JOHN. Who cut him off with a shillings upon it, he has designs upon your hand, Fairfield Cottage, which he thinks your property. I'll tell him the real state of the case—he'll quit the premises.

MRS. S. (*aside*) That's precisely what I want. (*to BRITTON*) Oblige me by holding your tongue on the subject. Promise!

JOHN. Of course, if you wish it. But I'll manage the facts yourself, and send him about his business.

MRS. S. What, throw away a weapon just as I am going into battle?

JOHN. A weapon?

MRS. S. What weapon like an admirer? One can use him to draw the foe into an ambuscade, retreat behind him when the fire becomes too hot, or, as a last resource, fling him at the enemy's head. I shall take the liberty of employing *my* Rollingstone in any of the three ways I may find him most useful. Here he comes!

Enter ROLLINGSTONE, *through window, from R., and down C.*

RODOM. Ah, Mrs. Smylie? *a los pies de usted* as we used to say in Mexico. Good morning, Britton! Excuse my abrupt entrance, but I am one of those unhappily constituted individuals who never can go round to a door when they see a window open.

JOHN. (R., *aside*) And the spoons on the table!

MRS. S. (L.) Fairfield Cottage is Liberty Hall, you know.

RODOM. (C.) All the better suited to me! (*sits*) I got rid of my last vestiges of social propriety that summer I spent with the Yankee whalers in the South Sea Islands. Charming people the Fejee Islanders, and by no means so wedded to cannibalism as is generally represented. (*rises*) By the way, I was just thinking, as I came through the garden, how capitally my Brazilian grass hammock would swing between those two sycamores on the lawn. I fancy I see you in it, *à la Mexicaine*, a cigarrito in your mouth.

MRS. S. Thank you, I don't smoke.

RODOM. I'll teach you; I give you
you'll take to it—one of my genuine *pape*
an Indian corn leaf—admire the perfume.
case from his pocket, and presents it to M
case, is'nt it? Made for me by the fair h
quita, only daughter of the terrible Rosas, v
Paraguay. Ah! if I had stayed in South Am

MRS. S. What a pity you didn't.—

RODOM. Yes, it offered a noble field
gies. By the way, Britton, I've a splendid id

JOHN. (*aside*) Then you never came h

RODOM. I must talk over it with you
days.

JOHN. What is it?

RODOM. A railway company to deve
mous cereal resources of the Entre Rios
secretary, you should be solicitor. There's
be done in shares.

JOHN. But not everybody—everybody h
in shares already.

RODOM. Good, deuced good!

Re-enter KATIE, R. D.

Ah! Miss Mapleson!

KATIE. Oh, Mr. Rollingstone, good n
given boots the note, auntie.

MRS. S. Then run away, darling, and
room made very comfortable for our welco

KATIE. Yes, auntie, directly. *Exit KATIE, L. D. 3. E.*

RODOM. (R., *aside*) Our welcome visitor! Oh, ho!

JOHN. (C.) Why, you don't mean you've invited him here?

MRS. S. (L.) In the relation we stand in, I hope you don't think I could leave him at the Red Lion!

RODOM. (*aside*) Relation she stands in, eh?

MRS. S. Go down to the Red Lion instantly and show him the way.

JOHN. (*aside*) Invited into the lion's den! Poor old bear, I pity him! *Exit JOHN, R. D.*

MRS. S. (*who has seated herself at table, L., rings hand-bell*) Will you excuse me for a moment, Mr. Rollingstone?

RODOM (R.) A rival on the field for a hundred! I must lose no time—this cottage is worth a bold stroke—I've been heating the iron for a month—it must be hot—let me strike!

Enter SARAH, L. D., she curtseys.

MRS. S. (*seated*) Take care that everything is particularly neat and nice at luncheon, Sarah Jane.

SARAH. Please m'm, yes! (*curtseys*)

MRS. S. You will be very careful in cooking the hops.

SARAH. Please m'm, yes. (*curtseys*)

MRS. S. And don't forget the pickled walnuts.

SARAH. Please m'm, no. (*curtseys*)

(SARAH JANE goes up to L. D., *curtseys and exit*—

MRS. SMYLIE rises and crossing to table R., sits to work, R. C.)

RODOM. (*aside at back, C.*) Chops, pickaxe! It must be a rival! (*comes down. L. C.*) What wife you would have made, my dear Mrs.

MRS. S. (*seated, R. C.*) Well, I do think of the village school afford about as good missionary labour as your friends of the F

RODOM. (*L. C.*) Ah, what pleasure to be with a congenial female companion, to the cause of civilization. I once thought of turning missionary. It was after assisting at a dog feast among the

MRS. S. Unluckily you had not the congenial female companion.

RODOM. Precisely; my energies have to be put to seed for want of one. Ah, Mrs. Smylie, you are without sympathy! Man or woman single is a poor thing (*stoops over her—she has her scissors in her hand—nearly pricks his nose as she raises them in comparison—he starts*)

MRS. S. Like a single blade of a pair of scissors. It's a feminine simile, rather, but I think it has some meaning.

RODOM. Beautiful! I am a single blade of a pair of scissors. I am me for saying so—are another; separate, but united, rusting in our sheathes—united we should cut our way through the world like a bowie knife through a hump. (*crosses at back to R.*)

MRS. S. A charming simile—for my blade.

RODOM. (*R.*) Ah, Mrs. Smylie! believe me, my rough experience as mine awakens one to the value of a home like this.

MRS. S. (*still seated*) At per annum?

RODOM. No, no! (*comes down, R.*) I may have been weak and wayward—rash and reckless; but sordid I am not. I alluded to its value to the heart. Yes, since I knew you I have felt for the first time what woman is—in you—what man might be—in myself.

MRS. S. Oh, Mr. Rollingstone! (*rises*) This is almost a declaration.

RODOM. Call it not almost—say quite—a declaration from the frankest of men to the most charming—the most bewitching of women. Yes, adorable Emilia, Rodomont Rollingstone has not been used to stoop, but behold him at your feet. (*kneels*)

MRS. S. Mr. Rollingstone, you're the second full-grown man I've seen in that posture to-day, and it isn't becoming. Get up, pray! You can say what you have to say quite as well on your legs.

RODOM. You are right! (*rising*) We have both seen the world. In plain words, then, I love you—would marry you—would fain concentrate in this small but elegant abode energies for which, till now, two hemispheres have scarcely sufficed.

MRS. S. Oh, dear! we should certainly have an explosion. It would be as bad as the gas blowing up.

RODOM. Do not mock my fervour. I have lived in the sunny south where life is a fever—language a cataract—and love a lava-flow.

MRS. S. And I begin to feel uncommonly like Pompeii just before the eruption of Vesuvius. Suppose we adjourned to the garden! Only you must promise not to

scorch up my poor flowers. Come, will my mantilla?

RODOM. (*taking mantilla from sofa, R.*) it, as I have often done for the sun-gilded the shadow of Popocatapetl. (*he puts on she drapes herself coquettishly*)

MRS. S. Eh? Popo—what?

RODOM. Popo—cata—petl—the giant looks down on Mexico. Like him, the fro-tialism may rest upon my brow, but the fcano is latent at my core.

MRS. S. But mind, no explosions, or tively send for the parish engine. Come, my Popo-patch-a-kettle.

Exeunt into garden by window

Enter KATIE, R. D., she looks after

KATIE. There goes aunty, with Mr. Oh! how ever can she bear to leave dear I have been so happy here. There's nowhe sing so sweetly, and the sun shines so bri when I get up of a morning, I feel like and sing, because I can't help it.

INTRODUCED SONG—KATIE.

Enter JOHN BRITTON, at R. D.

JOHN. This way, Mr. Ironside—don't ceremony.

1) This song had better be omitted, unless it can piano-forte, as young ladies *do* sing, and not as is usu stage in a bravura style, at the foot-lights, to a companiment.

Enter IRONSIDE, R. D.—he crosses down to L.

JOSEPH. Thank you, young man! I'm not much used to stand upon ceremony at any time, *(to himself)* and least of all in coming into my own house. *(to KATIE.)* Good morning, Mrs.—eh? no! you can't be Mrs. Smylie!

KATIE. (R.) Oh dear no, sir, I'm her niece.

JOHN. (C.) Miss Mapleson—Mr. Ironside. *(introducing them)* That was Mrs. Smylie we saw in the lime walk, as we came through the garden.

JOSEPH. (L.) I suppose you take charge of the garden, young lady? I congratulate you upon it. I know something about gardens.

KATIE. My aunt sees to the garden herself.

JOSEPH. Come, I'm glad she looks after the property, at all events. *(after pacing the room)* A nicely proportioned room—don't like this bed-curtain style of thing though. *(pointing to chintz furniture)* Give me honest horse hair—nothing like it for wear. *(sits L.)* Are you a relative of Mrs. Smylie's, young man? *(to JOHN)*

JOHN. (R. C.) Only a friend, Mr. Ironside, as yet.

JOSEPH. As yet, eh? *(rises, looking first at KATIE, then at him)* Oh, I see. Turtle doves! pairing, eh? *KATIE turns away confused)* Don't blush, young lady. Too many old fools fall into it for the young ones to be ashamed of themselves. Tell your aunt, young lady, that I have only a few minutes to spare, and my time is precious.

JOHN. Mrs. Smylie is in the garden! we'll send her to you. Come, Katie! *(aside)* He is a hyæna! but if your aunt doesn't tame him, call me spooney.

Exeunt JOHN and KATIE by window

JOSEPH. (*calling after them*) Mind, no the bushes! Silly things! like young bear troubles before them. Thank my stars, I've head under any woman's apron-string. A is bad enough, but a female tenant for (*shrugs his shoulders*) Well, why doesn't wonder what she's like. (*goes to R. C., and notable woman, I suppose, from what t the Red Lion—with a brassy face, a br tongue like a mill-clack. Well, she shan't or talk me down either, that I promise h*

Enter MRS. SMYLIE, L. D., she has on cap, looks demure and resigned, and in manner presents a studied contrast to the former scene.

I've been put off long enough, but now to a meeting, I'll stand no nonsense— (*turns and sees MRS. SMYLIE*) Eh? (*aside*)

MRS. S. (L. C.) Mr. Ironside, I believe Smylie!

JOSEPH. You? eh? oh, yes, I thought ahem! (*embarrassed.*)

MRS. S. Pray be seated, Mr. Ironside, I regret extremely that the agitation nature your arrival should have precluded my person—I am stronger now. I hope my the honours of my poor cottage.

JOSEPH. (*aside*) That's an opening. I beg your pardon, ma'am, you said *my*—

MRS. S. Did I? (*mildly*) Forgive me if the associations of the many years I have lived here so happily (*sighs*) should have caused me to forget for a moment that—I—am a trespasser on your most gentlemanlike consideration.

JOSEPH. (*aside*) Hang it! I wish she'd bounce a little. Why, you see, ma'am, law is law, and right is right. I hope you don't mean to persuade me that I'm a ruffian for desiring to enter into possession of my own house?

MRS. S. (*faintly smiling*) Such harshness of construction is very, very foreign to my nature, sir, as you will admit when you know me better; but when you take into consideration my unfriended position, how the mind, left to create its own occupations, its own pleasures, clings to every little memento of happier times, I am sure you will make some allowance for a poor weak woman, suddenly summoned to quit the scene of her many sorrows, the shrine of the few consolations which time has spared her.

(*she turns away and wipes her eyes.*)

JOSEPH. (*aside*) Confound her sentimentality! but she shan't wheedle me. I can make every allowance for your feelings, ma'am, as you call 'em, but when you talk of being "suddenly summoned," remember you've had nearly four months to make your arrangements.

MRS. S. Is it possible? can it be four months since you wrote me that letter, so full of indulgence? I have, indeed, sadly encroached on your good nature.

JOSEPH. Pretty well, I think, ma'am. I know what's due to a woman, though I haven't had the experience of the sex. However, ma'am, time is a commodity with me to be wasted, so I'll enter on business the better.

MRS. S. With all my heart, but you will be a sad, helpless creature.

JOSEPH. Helpless! why, they tell me "the Lion," you're gardener, schoolmistress, pick-axe brewer—no, don't say helpless.

MRS. S. I mean in matters of business. Men have some feminine accomplishments, and women's accomplishments are so feminine as those that relate to the comfort of a home and the improvement of the world.

JOSEPH. Sensibly spoken. I am sure that any woman won't take long to understand that a man here any longer is out of the question.

MRS. S. I admit that at once.

JOSEPH. That my rights are as clear as the noon-day.

MRS. S. Believe me, my dear sir, nothing is further from my intention than to question them.

JOSEPH. Confound it, ma'am, I don't want to admit everything—I want you to be satisfied. I have brought my lawyer with me with a copy of the law. you know, is no respecter of persons, nor of sexes either. Justice is blind and deaf, but I will not be deaf.

MRS. S. Happily you are not justice. I am not, but I see you do.

JOSEPH. Hang it! I can't help listening to a lady in her own house—that is—(*pauses embarrassed*)

MRS. S. Still less in your own. Nay, I but interpret your generous thought. (*a pause*) My dear sir, your past kindness makes your wishes law to me. I will see your attorney.

JOSEPH. That's right—then I may as well go for him; (*rising*) and deuced glad I am to get away—she'd soft sawder a Poor Law Guardian. Eh? where's my hat?

MRS. S. One moment, my dear Mr. Ironside. Come, (*winningly*) you will not refuse me one little moment, (*he pauses irresolutely*) I am sure you will not. (*coaxingly*) I am not so very formidable. I have had so few friends, is it any wonder I should cling to those whom kind fortune offers me?

JOSEPH. (*aside*) Confound her coaxing look! Well, ma'am, what is it? (*sits down again*) I'm at your service!

MRS. S. (*sits*) Oh, I'm sure you are, in spite of the affected roughness of your voice and manner. You feel for me, dear Mr. Ironside! Indeed—indeed, I have need of sympathy! (*clasps her hands, and looks tearfully in his face*).

JOSEPH. Well, ma'am, I'll give you what I have got—sorry I'm so short of the article. What *do* you want?

MRS. S. Only a little time to prepare myself for a great struggle. When do you wish me to go?

JOSEPH. Whenever you please—but I should say the sooner the better—nothing like short partings.

MRS. S. True—too true. How well you know the secrets of the heart!

JOSEPH. (*aside*) The deuce I do!

MRS. S. I hope you will not think a word I have so many things to wean myself from. I have trained to come at my call—the flowers I have planted—the bees I have watched at their labours—even the hens in the poultry yard have become friends to me.

JOSEPH. I'll give you time enough for that over every new laid egg in the roost.

MRS. S. Ah, if you knew what deep roots and flowers, and dumb things can strike in my heart, you would pity me, instead of laughing. Indeed—indeed, you would! (*turns away as if to cry*)

JOSEPH. (*soothingly*) There—don't cry, Mrs. Smylie—I can't bear to see a woman cry! You're not used to it! Come, dry your eyes, do. You'll be a fortnight.

MRS. S. (*through her tears*) Oh, thanks—

JOSEPH. A month.

MRS. S. (*through her tears, as before*) Oh, thank you so much!

JOSEPH. Confound it! Well, now—I'll be at the end of the quarter.

MRS. S. Most generous—kindest—best—don't give the emotion that chokes the expression of my gratitude. I shall be better soon, and then you shall thank you as I ought. Promise me you will be so good.

JOSEPH. Yes, yes. (*rises*) Compose yourself, go and dry your eyes, and wash your face—

(MRS. SMYLIE indulges in a fresh burst of emotion, and suddenly retires into room, L., after pantomime expressive of her inability to speak.)

Confound the woman! She fairly threw me off my balance! Who would have thought it would have affected her so much? Perhaps I have been too rough with her! After all the good she's done in the place too—and she certainly admitted my rights at once! I was in hopes she would have stormed—or at least, argued the point! How is a man to hit at a petticoat, when it offers no resistance? She's a very pretty woman, too! (*shaking his head*) Joe Ironside, I think you'd better have stayed away, and trusted this business to your lawyer. (*pauses, and looks at MRS. SMYLIE'S portrait, L.*) I'll go and fetch Cunningame. (*going, R.—sees ROLLINGSTONE.*)

Enter ROLLINGSTONE, through window, C., and down, L.

Eh? Whom have we here? (*goes down, R.*)

RODOM. (*L., aside*) So, the welcome guest! Eh?—if it isn't old Ironside, of Rochdale!

JOSEPH. (*R., aside*) I've seen that face before! Yes, it's the rascal that tried to do me out of that lot of grey shirtings.

RODOM. (*aside*) Nothing like brass! (*going up to him*) My dear Mr. Ironside—you recollect me—Rollingstone, you know. Who would have thought of seeing you south of the Trent?

JOSEPH. Eh, Master Rollingstone?—better than meeting you north on't, when it comes to ordering goods, at all events.

RODOM. Ah, you allude to that affair for the body guard of his Majesty, the King of Mosquito Shore—a large order, which your confidence prevented you from executing. Myself knew what you had lost—

JOSEPH. Any way, lad—it's something I haven't lost—and that's the price of the

RODOM. (*seating himself on back of chair*) dear sir, consider the splendid opening for an athletic population, in a state of absolute want for shirts and unmentionables—the millowners crying aloud for customers.

JOSEPH. (R.) And the millowners cry brass down, good bills, or a satisfactory order—as you didn't offer brass down—as your references and your references t'other side of satisfaction—it best to decline the order.

RODOM (L.). Which has since been to the entire satisfaction by a more enterprising

JOSEPH. I wish 'em joy of their country—his Mosquito Majesty was pretty well with him last!

RODOM. Thank you, he's as well as the British protectors on the one side, and the millowners on the other, can be expected to have no idea you were a friend of our excellent Mosquito Smylic—that it was for you she was made a secret! I shall scold her for not letting it secret.

JOSEPH. Do, lad, do!

RODOM. Charming woman, isn't she?

JOSEPH. D'ye think so, lad? d'ye think so?

RODOM. Nice, snug little property this! (*surveying it.*)

JOSEPH. Uncommon.

RODOM. Improvable, isn't it?

JOSEPH. Well, I do think it is, lad.

RODOM. Ah, close files, you north countrymen.

JOSEPH. Well, we arn't counted fools in a general way!

RODOM. Don't think I'm curious—but as I'm a very particular friend of hers, may I inquire what you're up to? (*standing with his hands on his knees.*)

JOSEPH (*imitating his manner*). Well, you may inquire as you're a particular friend of hers—but as you ain't a particular friend of mine, I shan't tell you. (*rises*) So good morning! (*going up, R.*) And give my best respects to the King of the Mosquitos the next time you write to him. *Exit. R. D.*

RODOM. (*follows him up to door, then returns to C.*) Confound his low-bred familiarity! He's after the widow—I know he is—I see it in the grin of triumph on his mahogany figurehead. But I flatter myself I know when I've sent home my harpoon—and it shan't be this lubberly cotton-spinner that shall prevent me from hauling my fish safe alongside.

Enter JOHN BRITTON, R. D.

Well, Britton! I've seen the welcome guest—turns out to be an old acquaintance of mine.

JOHN (*down R.*). My dear fellow, he's co-
widow!

RODOM. Trust an old digger to nose a
means to stick a spade into his claim.

JOHN. Ah, you're terrible chaps, you d-
do you mean to do?

RODOM. If we were at Ballarat, I cou-
two short cuts (*imitates action of stabbing and*

JOHN. You don't mean—

RODOM. Bowie knife or revolver! "Yo-
carcase, my little dear, and you takes your
in this confounded old country there's soc-
besides an infernally inquisitive police. I
lynch him, at least I can bully him off the
challenge him—you shall take the message!

JOHN. Done! I know nothing about c-
cept challenging a jury—but you'll put m-
dare say you've fought a duel before this.

RODOM. Fought a duel! I don't think t-
on used in single combat, from pen knives
ers, but I have employed with deadly effe-
boastful man, John Britton, but if there i-
pride myself upon, it is the affair of honou-
never stand fire—cotton is notoriously incor-
JOHN). Come along! I'll put you up to deliv-

Exit by window,

JOHN (*R.—putting on his gloves*). Capita-
only make Ironside beat a retreat! In law-
time's everything! Then if Ironside turns o-
by Jove, I believe Rollingstone will make

—or best of all, suppose each frightened away the other! It would be a case of the Kilkenny Cats, minus the fighting.

Exit by window, C., and off L.

Enter SARAH JANE, R. D. shewing in MR. IRONSIDE.

JOSEPH. Tell Mrs. Smylie Mr. Cunningame is here.

SARAH. Please sir—yes! *Exit L. D.*

JOSEPH. Now, this way, Cunningame.

Enter CUNNINGAME, R. D.

I want you to explain the will to her. You say it makes out my rights as clear as daylight?

CUNNING. (R) Ah! I hope so—but do you know, Mr. Ironside, I heard something at the Red Lion just now—

JOSEPH. (L. C.) Eh?

CUNNING. It appears testatrix's next of kin has turned up—the vagabond nephew, Rollingstone—you remember she once said something about a will in his favour.

JOSEPH. A nephew, eh? The chap I met this morning—this accounts for his pumping me.

CUNNING. Bless me, Mr. Ironside! you never allowed yourself to be pumped?

JOSEPH. Working the handle is one thing—getting water is another! Trust me for keeping my own council.

CUNNING. Perhaps, while I am with the widow, you might as well try and find out what this nephew is really after.

JOSEPH. I will—don't be harsh with me. (*pauses*) She's a poor, helpless soul—the least bullying upsets her. (*pauses again*) but firm—firm—and don't let her wheedle.

CUNNING. Wheedle *me!* Mr. Irons has a large experience of the sex in general, and in particular. The late Mrs. Cunninggame was married to her! That estimable woman spent a large part of our wedded life in trying to wheedle me, without effect. I have reason to think that she accelerated her end.

JOSEPH. Well, the proverb says—"where there's a will there's a way"—you've got the will (*opens Cunninggame's papers*) find the way as you best can.

CUNNING. Now for a formidable attack (*unfolds his papers*) I have observed the contents of a number of documents.

Enter MRS. SMYLIE, L. D., with a paper bag. Her manner throughout this scene is a mixture of alertness and assumed during her interview with Mr. Irons. She is alert, brisk, and determined—CUNNINGGAME moves to L. of R. table, for MRS. SMYLIE—she sits to R. of table, and sits.

MRS. S. Ah, Mr. Cunninggame! Mr. Irons has had a very formidable interview. But I can't see how it can be anything in this case really difficult for you.

CUNNING. Why, my dear madam, in your letters such a total inability to use the commonest legal phraseology—

MRS. S. Oh, I've been studying the law of wills since ten, Mr. Cunningame! I've found it so entertaining you can't think!

CUNNING. No—really—

MRS. S. Do you know, I fancy the law must be the most delightful of professions!

CUNNING. So I always say, my dear madam, when silly people talk of it as dull and dry—so the sooner we go into the papers, the better. (*opens his papers*)

MRS. S. I have a copy of the will and codicil, you know—I've noted a few points here, on which I think we may require a little discussion. (*looks at paper*)

CUNNING. (*aside*) A helpless sort of a body! What could Mr. Ironside be thinking of? She's evidently a most superior woman! Our title, my dear madam, as you are probably aware, rests on the will of the late Mrs. Jane Weathercock, duly executed and dated August 18th, one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight.

MRS. S. I may have a word to say about that, bye and bye—but let me hear your case.

CUNNING. There is—*inter alia*—a devise by the testatrix to her dear and faithful friend, Mrs. Emilia Smylie, widow, &c., &c., of a certain messuage or tenement, called or known by the name of "Fairfield Cottage," with the curtilage, yards, gardens, tenements—

MRS. S. Pass over the pigstyes!

CUNNING. Which devise is, as you are aware, re-
ked by a codicil—

MRS. S. I admit execution of codicil.

CUNNING. Then we come to the re-
entire will!

MRS. S. I admit that, too!

CUNNING. Then the next step in
revival of the will, without express declara-
to revive gift to legatee, so that the
your legacy still remains operative, and
clear course of law, ousted of all r
Cottage.

MRS. S. Your exposition of the case
—at the same time you are aware that
was against the intention of testatrix.

CUNNING. Oh, intention—(*contem*)
quite admitted.

MRS. S. So that my claim being c
nical operation of law, you will grant
employing the technicalities of law to d

CUNNING. My dear madam, I adm
nothing can be fairer. (*aside*) She's
woman, and uncommonly good-looking

MRS. S. Now, suppose, Mr. Cun
suppose—it were my intention to disp
gether.

CUNNING. Dispute the will? But
madam—on what point?

MRS. S. The statute 1 Vic. cap. 25
tator's name is to be signed at the fo
will. Now, if you examine the orig

Doctors' Commons, as I have done, you will see there is at least two inches between the last word of the will and the signature. You are aware it has been held in the leading case of *Quillett v. Quirk*, that the leaving such a space was not in compliance with the statute, and the will was therefore void.

CUNNING. (*aside*) She's hit the blot! Really, my dear madam, I was not prepared for this. But suppose you do defeat the will, the heir-at-law would step in, as in case of intestacy. *You* won't take anything.

MRS. S. He would probably be too glad to carry out the intentions of the testatrix by leaving me in quiet possession of the cottage.

CUNNING. My dear madam, I can only say, if he did, it would be a most proper return for your acuteness in taking the point.

MRS. S. You admit there's something in it, then?

CUNNING. Something in it! if I were not acting as attorney for Mr. Ironside, I should say that it was a monstrous strong point indeed.

MRS. S. Ah, Mr. Cunningame, why are you Mr. Ironside's solicitor, instead of mine—not for this suit as to the validity of the will, merely—though that would be a long business.

CUNNING. I believe you! why, it would be in the Ecclesiastical Court, you know. (*aside*) Costs enormous, and payable out of the estate—a thousand pounds, at least in my pocket.

MRS. S. We should probably have other legal proceedings growing out of this.

CUNNING. Not a doubt of it! a whole lot of issues raised, perhaps—who knows, a bill perhaps.

MRS. S. Nothing more likely. I should like to set up an equitable claim to the cottage, if the law were to acquiesce in my possession. Need I say that I would avail myself of your services as my lawyer?

CUNNING. My dear madam—*(aside)* A fortune in my fortune would be made!

MRS. S. Our business intercourse would be far removed from the usual dry, distant dealing of attorneys. With our congeniality of disposition, our ready willingness to discuss—*(aside)* but I forget, the difference of our positions makes any further dwelling on this aspect of the matter unbecoming.

CUNNING. By no means, my dear Mrs. S. On the contrary, there is nothing in the prospect of a business so suddenly opened which so much tempers the intimate relations it would establish between us. *(moves his chair a little closer)*

MRS. S. Oh, Mr. Cunningame! you must not be so poor weak woman—our heads are so soon together.

CUNNING. It would take a deal of flesh off your head, my dear madam. But you really must not be so business, in which I have been acting for years, in quite a new light. I see now how odious my position is—how much you are to be pitied, as well as I. *(moves his chair still closer, after looking cautiously at Mrs. S.)* Between ourselves, the position of the sign

tatrix is not the only flaw in the will. I have reason to believe, it could be proved that the testatrix turned round in bed just as the last witness signed, so that the will wasn't signed in her *presence*, as the law most properly requires. I have no doubt I shall be able to find out other weak points, on careful inspection.

MRS. S. Ah, if you were not hampered by your confidential position with regard to Mr. Ironside—

CUNNING. (*rising*) Madam, the tie of attorney and client, happily for the interests of justice and humanity, is not indissoluble. I owe something to Mr. Ironside, but more to my own conscience—more to my feeling for you, my dear madam—something even to my professional interests, which may be so much advanced by acting for the defendant, if I may be allowed the expression, instead of the plaintiff. In short, my dear Mrs. Smylie, (MRS. SMYLIE *rises*) if I only felt that you would smile approval on my efforts, that the services of the attorney might not be unavailing to plead for the man—

MRS. S. (*blushing and looking down*). Really, my dear Mr. Cunningame—

CUNNING. I understand that blush, my dear madam. (*she smiles*) That smile—what could it not accomplish with Nathaniel Cunningame! (*seizing up his papers*) Let what has passed between us be considered strictly confidential—I will look over the papers again, and let you know of any *more* defects I may discover in Mr. Ironside's most iniquitous title.

MRS. S. You'll find a retired summerhouse in the garden, Mr. Cunningame—

CUNNING. Till then, adieu, most interesting, most ill-used of women! (*goes to window, C, then aside*) The third Mrs. Cunningsworth the other two put together! *Exit*

MRS. S. Victory! Thanks to mother Britton's lesson, never was so little law made a long way. Cerberus has bolted his soul, silenced, and his bite disarmed! The terrible monster! And he positively ventures to enter law too. No, no, Mr. Cunningame. I declare decidedly. Poor dear Mr. Ironside, his roughness, his heart is in the right place, pity him. With Mr. Cunningame for his enemy, Mrs. Smylie for his enemy, he's between the two. I hardly know which is the hottest.

Enter SARAH JANE, R. D.

SARAH. Mr. Ironside, please m'm—

MRS. S. Very well! (*looking out of window*) sits the old fox in the arbour. Shall I venture once? Ah! here comes Mr. Rollingstone. What do? I can't receive him and Mr. Ironside. The two Mrs. Smylies are such very different creatures, there would be no harm if the one saw the other's act of adoration. (*to SARAH JANE, who is standing*) Show in Mr. Ironside!

SARAH. Yes, please m'm.

Enter ROLLINGSTONE from the garden

MRS. S. (L.) Ah, Rod—Mr. Rollingstone

RODOM. (*coming down R.*) Say Rodomont, and let me say Emilia. Yes, hear me renew the vows which the arrival of that intruder interrupted this morning—thus at your feet—(*he kneels*)

Enter IRONSIDE, R. D.

MRS. S. (*seeing IRONSIDE*) Oh, goodness gracious!

(*she gives a faint scream, and runs off into her room,*

L. D.—ROLLINGSTONE *rises and sits with his chair reversed, L. C.*)

JOSEPH. (*up the stage R.—aside*) The nephew on his knees to the widow—the impudent rascal! (*Coming down, R.*) Sorry to interrupt your *tête à tête*, young man—I expected to find Mrs. Smylie in conversation with a lawyer, not a lover.

RODOM. (*L., aside*) My rival! You must perceive, Mr. Ironside, you are rather too late in the field. I think when you know what are my pretensions in this quarter—

JOSEPH. I've just been making inquiry, (*a pause*) and know all about 'em.

RODOM. In that case, I think the best thing you can do is to quit the field.

JOSEPH. D'ye think so? And give you up possession, eh? (*sits, R. C.*)

RODOM. Precisely my meaning.

JOSEPH. Then I tell you I shan't do anything of the kind—I don't value your pretensions that—

(*snapping his finger and thumb.*)

RODOM. Beware, old man! The party who interferes in my diggings must take the consequences.

JOSEPH. I'm ready for 'em. We'll see who peccavi first.

RODOM. Then I beg to refer you to John Britton. Doomed cotton spinner, you know the man you have defied! *Exit*

JOSEPH. Doomed puppy! John Britton, the young lawyer I met here this morning. So Rollingstone means to contest the will, does he—very well, well, well, comes Cunningame!

Enter CUNNINGAME, C. and down

JOSEPH. (R.) Just the man I wanted. Rollingstone means to fight us. He's to see you. You receive him here? *(rises)*

CUNNING. (L.) Hadn't you better settle their case?

JOSEPH. No; set a thief to catch a thief. You know—lawyer to lawyer's all fair. You talk of settling, go and walk in the garden till you've had your say out. *(going up C., CUNNINGAME)*

Re-enter JOHN BRITTON, C. from L., meeting

JOHN. (L. C.) Mr. Ironside, I come, as you are Rollingstone's friend—

JOSEPH. (C.) I know your business, Mr. Ironside, friend, here, *(pointing to CUNNINGAME)* I leave it to him.

CUNNING. (R.—*aside*) The nephew's law!

JOHN. (C.—*aside*) Mr. Ironside's friend, I see. It seems you have full authority to settle even

Ironside—so have I for Mr. Rollingstone. Where two directly contrary claims are set up, I'm afraid apology, compromise or arrangement is quite out of the question.

CUNNING. I'm quite of your opinion, sir; the matter must be settled by action.

JOHN. Exactly my friend's wish, and the sooner the better.

CUNNING. Of course you'll take the first step, as you mean to contest the lady's will.

JOHN. On the contrary, we say the lady's will is distinctly in our favour.

CUNNING. I have the instruments all ready.

(goes up to table, and opens his bag.)

JOHN. Why, he can't have got the pistols in that blue bag.

CUNNING. You don't mean to pretend you've an instrument anterior to this of the eighteenth of August, one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight, on which my client rests his claim?

JOHN. Mr. Ironside rests his claim to Mrs. Smylie's hand on an instrument dated the 18th of August, 1848?

CUNNING. His claim to Mrs. Smylie's hand?

JOHN. Yes, that claim which my friend is determined to resist; for which purpose he sent me here to settle with you the time and place.

CUNNING. Of a trial at law?

JOHN. No, of a trial by battle.

CUNNING. A duel! and you a lawyer? Oh, sir, I blush for you.

JOHN. What—you won't fight?

CUNNING. Won't we, though? but in the proper legal instruments—as much paper like, but no powder and shot.

JOHN. But who ever heard of two their claims to a lady's hand by an action

CUNNING. But we don't set up any lady's hand. It's the cottage we want, with gardens, closes, orchards, tenements, and thereunto appertaining and belonging.

JOHN. And it's the lady *we* want—bonnets, flounces, fallals, and crinolines, the taining and belonging. I must explain this principal.

CUNNING. Do, sir, by all means. I'll satisfy him out of my blue bag. (*goes to the mages bag*)

JOHN. (*aside*) I promised Mrs. Smylie Rollingstone the cottage wasn't hers—Cunningham and then he'll vanish, I know. Here he comes. *Enter* ROLLINGSTONE, *through window, from the left*. (C.) My dear Rollingstone, we're in error—your side's friend and legal adviser has just explained that that gentleman has no pretensions to the cottage. Mrs. Smylie.

CUNNING. (R.) Certainly not! We are in possession of this cottage.

RODOM. (L.) Possession of this cottage is no what right?

CUNNING. The right of ownership. Myself and the cottage as residuary legatee under your

RODOM. Why, you don't mean to say that this cottage is not Mrs. Smylie's property?

CUNNING. Certainly not.

RODOM. (*aside*). Eh, John—is this true?

JOHN. I'm afraid it is! I thought you knew all about it!

RODOM (*aside*). A precious fool I've been making of myself! Pray what did Mrs. Smylie inherit from the elderly Weathercock?

JOHN. Nothing at all. Mrs. Smylie's fortune is six hundred pounds a-year, derived from property left in trust for her by her late husband.

RODOM. (*aside*). Six hundred a-year! Come, that's not bad, either.

CUNNING. (*aside*). A nice little income!

JOHN. But which she forfeits if she marries again.

CUNNING. (*aside*). Oh, dear!

RODOM. (*aside*). The deuce she does!

CUNNING. (*aside*). But there's the connection.

RODOM. (*aside*). My dear Britton, are you certain of that?

JOHN. Yes, she showed me the clause in the will of the late lamented Smylie. Ah, how gratifying it must be to know that no one can attribute your advances to a mercenary motive.

RODOM. Yes, highly gratifying—amazingly gratifying! But still, a fellow should think twice before he compromises the future of such a woman. You know money-making has not been my object in life, Britton. I have been where the dross is dug, my dear fellow—and I know

how much dirt you must go through to get a nation says "Marry her," but duty—duty—its head, and—I'll just smoke a cigar, till a nation have settled the point between them.

Exit in

JOHN (*crossing to R., aside*). Bravo! of Don Whiskerandos.

CUNNING. (L. C.). A mercenary party to Mr. Britton.

JOHN. Decidedly. Mrs. Smylie may be her escape!

Enter IRONSIDE, through window,

JOSEPH (*coming down, C.*) Well, have you had your wrangle out?

CUNNING. (L.) It's all a mistake, sir. The stone doesn't set up any claim to the property after the widow, and thought you were his.

JOSEPH (*awkwardly*). Me—his rival—pooh! Poor woman! I saw how matters caught him at her feet just now. Why, the better than a swindler! Somebody should—it would be a thousand pities such a kind, creature, should throw herself away on a vagabond.

CUNNING. So it would.

JOSEPH (*to JOHN*). Do you think she

JOHN. I hope not—but there's no saying of a certain age—(*shaking his head*) you know you would only speak to her—she has a chance for you.

JOSEPH (*interested*). Has she?

JOHN. I never heard a woman speak of a man in terms of more regard than she did of you this afternoon—of your kindness—your considerateness.

JOSEPH. Well, well, well! (*flattered*.) No occasion to repeat all her nonsense, poor thing! But if I can expose this fellow—

Enter MRS. SMYLIE, L. D.

JOHN. Here is Mrs. Smylie. Come along, Mr. Cunningame—let's leave Mr. Ironside to deal with her.

CUNNING. (*aside*). Oh, there can't be any danger from him!

Exeunt JOHN BRITTON and CUNNINGAME through window, off L. C.

MRS. S. (L.) Oh, Mr. Ironside, what must you think of me? I blush to see you, after—(*she pauses embarrassed*.)

JOSEPH. (R.) After being caught with a man kneeling at your feet, eh? It's not the lady who ought to blush on these occasions. Make no apologies, ma'am—men will make fools of themselves—and what's worse—men will make fools of you!

MRS. S. Ah, Mr. Ironside—we are the slaves of our affections!

JOSEPH. And the victims of our rascality. My dear Mrs. Smylie—we are but recent acquaintances, and perhaps you may think my interference in your affairs impertinent.

MRS. S. Oh, no—believe me—I take it as a proof of your interest in me.

JOSEPH. Then will you allow me to say that the young man has proposed to you?

MRS. S. (*blushingly*) Yes.

JOSEPH. And you have accepted him?

MRS. S. You came in at such a critical moment.

JOSEPH. I'm glad of it, if it stopped here. Depend upon it, my dear Mrs. Smylie, you shall not let this matter go further—this man shall make you happy.

MRS. S. Do not say that, dear Mr. Joseph. Do not add weight to the ominous whisper which has reached my heart.

JOSEPH. Eh? Then you have had some one else propose to him?

MRS. S. Alas! too many.

JOSEPH. Then may I ask how you will give him courage to let him go so far?

MRS. S. Oh, sir, need you ask the question? Not a woman—without a friend—without a home—without a home.

JOSEPH. Don't say without a friend. I'll be a friend to you—sit down—I'm a rough man, but I'll assure you that you will always find a friend here. (*places chair, c.—they sit.*) And as for a home, you're very comfortable here!

MRS. S. (L.) Yes, while you're here. But in a week from now you'll go forth alone, to battle with the world—best I may, in cold and unfamiliar surroundings. It's a prospect to a woman, Mr. Ironside, to one

strong arm to lean on—a clear head to guide—a loving voice to counsel her. These are what we look for in a husband.

JOSEPH. And do you suppose you'll find them in this vagabond?

MRS. S. We women have a power of hoping, even against hope—at least, he will give me a home—and I will try to make it so cheerful, and so bright for him, that he must needs love me—a—little. (*timidly*)

JOSEPH. (*moving closer to her*) By Jove, if he isn't a scoundrel he'll love you a great deal. But I'm afraid he's a mercenary dog—that he seeks you for your fortune—

MRS. S. I forfeit it by marriage. But I am willing to risk poverty for a home and a husband.

JOSEPH. A home—which, do what you will, he may make miserable, squalid, and comfortless.

MRS. S. It will still be home.

JOSEPH. A husband who may turn out selfish, sulky, a swearer, a sot—

MRS. S. He will still be my husband.

JOSEPH. But consider, my dear madam—you're throwing yourself away, and on a fellow who won't appreciate, much less repay, the sacrifice. If you must marry, madam, surely, with your good looks—your attractiveness—your intelligence, you might get a better husband than this vagabond. Wait, ma'am, wait—look about you—you'll see—(*rises*) something will turn up.

MRS. S. Ah! do not flatter me! at my age the chance does not come so often that we can hope to

choose. But you have kindly given me
(*rises*) let me give you one in return. I
attorney!

JOSEPH. Cunningame!

MRS. S. He is ready to betray *your* interest
and wherever he may think it *his* interest

JOSEPH. The deuce he is! (*slaps*)
always hated law and lawyers! But how
this out?

MRS. S. In my interview with him just
we women are quick to read characters.
myself to his cupidity, his hopes of litigation
on till he not only admitted all the weak
yer had pointed out in your case, but
gently to work to find out new ones.

JOSEPH. The rascal! why, he said
weak points in my case.

MRS. S. I fear there are.

JOSEPH. Fear? you mean you are guilty

MRS. S. Why should I be? I do not
myself of them. I have already trespassed
on your generosity, without putting you to
delays of law. No, no, in a week from
forth—homeless, but hopeful; and whether
a husband's arm, now and ever grateful
Mr. Ironside, for all your past kindness
present counsel: so now we are quiet
warning. Good-bye, good-bye!

(*offers him her hand—he takes it mechanically
it a moment, grasping it hard.*)

JOSEPH. Good bye! (*pauses*)

MRS. S. Have you anything more to say?

JOSEPH. No, no! (*MRS. SMYLIE looks towards her hand, which he is still holding, he kisses it—she goes up towards L. D., stops, and turns*) But, Mrs.—

MRS. S. Eh?

JOSEPH. No—nought. *Exit MRS. SMYLIE, L. D.*
(after a pause, and looking at Mrs. Smylie's picture, L.)
 Oh, if I only durst! Was there ever such a noble, disinterested creature! instead of taking advantage of this fellow's rascality, she puts me on my guard against it! And how touching it was to hear her talk of home in that way. What a home she'd make. What a charming place she has made of this, though she hadn't a husband to work for! Oh, dear! oh, dear! why didn't I know her ten years ago? It is too late now—for me, I mean—not for her. I wouldn't have her a day younger. And to think of a jewel like this being thrown away upon a swine like Rollingstone! At all events, she shan't be driven to it by want of a home. *(striking table)* I'll settle this cottage upon her, and the Elmhurst Farm, besides. *(Sits R. C.)* It's a big gift, but it mun be done.

Enter KATIE, R. D.

My dear, go and find young Britton—bring him here directly.

KATIE. Yes, Mr. Ironside—he's in the garden. *(aside)*
 How very kindly he spoke to me.

Exit KATIE through window and off, L.

JOSEPH. Yes, he shall draw a deed of simple—if the law will allow of such a

Re-enter KATIE with JOHN BRITTON,
Sit down here and draw me a deed of cottage and the Elmhurst Farm, as brief as it. I suppose you lawyers can be short

JOHN. (*sits at table, R.*) I'll turn your conveyance that would delight the Law America and throw an old equity draughtsman in
(*writes*)

KATIE. (L. C.) Giving away the cottage? Well, but, sir, it isn't yours to give.

JOSEPH. (*seated, R. C.*) What, do you dispute my rights, wench?

KATIE. No, but auntie does.

JOSEPH. Before you get into a passion with a young lady, whom do you think I mean? Guess!

KATIE. Oh, I shan't do anything of the kind.

JOSEPH. Try—try!

KATIE. I shan't!

JOHN. What name shall I insert?

JOSEPH. This young lady's aunt—don't know her christian name.

KATIE. Auntie! what, do you really mean auntie the cottage. Oh, how dear—how dear! Oh, I wish you'd let me give you a hearing.

JOSEPH. Do, my dear! come along, I

(KATIE leaps on his neck)

JOHN. Katie! now, sir! (*remonstrating*) Here you are, short and sweet.

JOSEPH. (*taking paper, and reading it*) This is the first piece of lawyer's writing I ever understood in my life.

JOHN. Now, if you'll execute the deed, put your finger here, and say, "I deliver this as my act and deed."

JOSEPH. (*signs, &c.*) "I deliver this as my act and deed." (*goes to C.*)

JOHN. We'll witness it! (*JOHN and KATIE sign paper*—*JOHN gives paper to JOSEPH*)

JOSEPH. You give Mrs. Smylie the deed—say it was Joe Ironside's parting present.

JOHN. (C.) But you'll see her—you'll let her thank you?

JOSEPH. No, no I'd rather not. (*crosses to R. C.*) The sooner I'm out of this, the better, (*aside*) or I shall be sticking here for life. (*shakes hands with JOHN, goes up, C., then stops—to KATIE*) You may take another smack, if you like. (*she does so*) She's very like her aunt.

Exit hastily by window, off R.

KATIE. (*hugging JOHN BRITTON*) Oh, my dear John! I am so happy!

JOHN. (L. C.) Yes! and happiness with you seems at once to translate itself into hugging! It's all very well when I'm the huggee, but the promiscuous practice is objectionable.

KATIE. Oh! but I am so happy—I could hug anybody—(*ROLLINGSTONE appears at window, C. from R., and listens*) Even that horrid Mr. Rollingstone!

JOHN. Mind, he mustn't know that I've given the Cottage and Elmhurst Farm to her—he'll be renewing his addresses to her—I don't want any trouble in getting rid of him!

KATIE. The mercenary wretch! I hate him!

JOHN. Let's take the deed to your aunt—it will make her—and I say, Katie, we'll go directly!
Exeunt JOHN BRITTON and KATIE.

Enter ROLLINGSTONE, C.

RODOM. So the widow will have the cottage and a farm into the bargain! I've gammoned old Ironside out of the deed! She'll never flatter yourself Rodomont Rollingstone with betting, eh? I'll show you this chief is on a hunting path. Everything's open—I may have a disinterested countenance. *(he retires up)* She is!

Enter MRS. SMYLIE L. D., and crosses.

MRS. S. How little I expected this! I thought a man I thought it a pleasant sport to trifled with was a querade—the man I imagined a sordid and vulgar fellow. How much the nobler he is of us two.

RODOM. *(aside, up L. C.)* Come—I'll have more of this! *(comes forward, L.)* My Emilia!

MRS. S. Mr. Rollingstone!

RODOM. Mr.—what has become of you of this morning? Why this coldness—this change?

MRS. S. John Britton has informed me of what passed between you a quarter of an hour ago.

covery that I was not mistress of this Cottage—and your very intelligible change of tone thereupon. It was natural—you thought you were courting a substantial freeholder—

RODOM. Emilia, can you believe your Rodomont influenced by motives so sordid? No! He asked your hand when he believed you rich—he asks it still, now he knows you are poor.

MRS. S. (*aside*) I'll test him! You are sincere in this?

RODOM. Does not this renewal of my offer prove it? Oh, grant my request, and make me the happiest of men!

MRS. S. Rodomont, I am not so poor as you think me. I hold a deed of gift of this Cottage, and a farm besides, from Mr. Ironside. Look! here it is. (*takes out deed*).

Enter IRONSIDE from garden, R. C., and remains at back.

JOSEPH. (*aside*) I can't leave the place without seeing her. Eh! that vagabond still here!

RODOM. (L.) Is it possible! (*looking at deed*) Signed—sealed—witnessed! Ah, it's lucky I was not informed of this sooner! Now, none can call me sordid. Emilia, I love you not for house or land, I love you for yourself alone!

MRS. S. Oh, how glad I am to know it! Yes Rodomont, you wooed me poor—you must win me penniless! None shall be able to throw doubt on the unselfishness of your love. (*about to tear up deed*).

JOSEPH. (*aside, at back*) Bravo!

RODOM. (*aside*) Confound it! Don't be rash—what are you about? Would you sell yourself of a valuable property in this absurd

MRS. S. Yes! Thus do I renounce the gift! (*tears up deed into small pieces*).

RODOM. Do you mean this?

MRS. S. I do!

RODOM. Honour—bright?

MRS. S. Yes, my Rodomont! for you

RODOM. But I won't take advantage of you! I, too, have some generosity about me. Right should I link a gentle, delicately nurtured son to my wild and wandering fortunes? No! I would rather take advantage to reside in—a farm to cultivate—perhaps I have fettered me; but once loose upon the world, the torrent will have its rush, the wild horse his gallop, the less prairie, and his free pasturage. No, I would rather have an older—a tamer—a less romantic mate. *Turn aside*—you've torn up his deed of gift—find it a good spec to invest your affection for per cents.

MRS. S. Mr. Rollingstone, you would do better by not ridiculing a generosity you cannot understand, and indulging your very questionable wit. We might, both of us, with greater advantage be of. (*Crosses to L. C.*) I respect Mr. Irons too much to allow it to be bandied between us.

RODOM. As you please—only I thought I was evidently hooked the old gentleman, you would do better than land him.

MRS. S. Mr. Rollingstone, you are impertinent! Mr. Ironside has no affection for me. (IRNSIDE comes forward, L.) Mr. Ironside! you here!

JOSEPH. (L.) That's the first wrong thing you've said since I've been listening to you. Joe Ironside has an affection for you, more than he thought he ever could have for any woman. You began—

MRS. S. By an unworthy deception—by assuming a weakness and helplessness I did not feel.

JOSEPH. (L. C.) I was a rhinoceros! Nothing less would have gone through my hide. But, however you began, you have ended in earnest, and in earnest Joe Ironside offers you his hand. I'm rough, and hard—

MRS. S. But not hard *here!* (*Indicating his heart.*)

JOSEPH. You accept? (MRS. SMYLIE takes his hand.) I say, young chap, don't you think you had better go and offer your valuable services to the King of the Mosquitos?

RODOM. (R., seated on table.) I go to the happy hunting grounds—there are widows as fat and as fair in other prairies! I will strike one, and eat meat!

Enter CUNNINGAME from window, L. C., and down R. with will in his hand.

CUNNING. (R.) Now to put the widow up to our weak points! Eh! (*Sees IRNSIDE with MRS. SMYLIE on his arm.*) What's the meaning of this?

JOSEPH. It means that plaintiff and defendant have greed to a friendly compromise.

CUNNING. Without consulting your

JOSEPH. On the contrary, I *have* consulted your adviser—here he comes!

Enter JOHN BRITTON *and* KATIE, L. JOHN Britton, *vice* Cunningame, cashier. Oh, you rascally old snake in the grass!

CUNNING. Snake in the grass! that's what I shall have my action for libel.

JOHN. We'll justify, plead it's true, and for the public benefit the character of the rascal is well known.

CUNNING. I'll upset the will!

JOSEPH. I'll upset you!

CUNNING. I'll upset the will! Mr. P. put yourself in my hands—you have the law on your side, sir.

RODOM. Then sound the war-whoop! (war-whoop.) Let the strife begin!

JOSEPH. Pooh, pooh! You've bragged, but where's your tin?

CUNNING. (*Aside.*) I'll even give up my hate is.

(*To* ROLLINGSTONE.) My dear sir, I'll have my action gratis!

JOHN. That's unprofessional! Be satisfied. Only *good* actions are their own reward.

MRS. S. Take my advice. (*All seem to stare?*)

Rely on't, few men

Can equal *us* in lawyer-like acumen.

KATIE. I'm sure there's not a lawyer of the crew

Can plead, dear auntie, half as well as you.

MRS. S. Reflect, your declaration 'ere you draw

That we've possession—"Nine Points of the Law."

Only one point remains—(to audience)—that's your
applause.

You give it? Good! Then we have won our cause.

CUNNING, RODOM. MRS. S. JOSEPH. KATIE. JOHN.

R.

C.

CURTAIN.

