

**The Social Glass, or, Victims of the Bottle**

**The great sensational temperance drama in five acts**

Author: T. Trask Woodward

Samuel French Publication Date:1887

## Editor's Introduction

**Nineteenth Century American Drama:** It is important to note that at this time the theater was the only vector for the delivery of social commentary to a mass audience. There was no television or radio. Newspapers were dedicated to local coverage, and while a small-town editor might think about cultural criticism (think Mark Twain or Horace Greeley), that is not where arguments for social betterment were aired.

That reality produced conflicted motives for those responsible for maintaining the morals of the community, especially the pastors of the flock. The theater has never been held in high esteem by the clergy, and the identification of actresses and prostitutes is well-known. Often, the stage was banned, as during the years of the Protectorate in England. In all cases the theater acted under the close supervision of the State.

But as the theater had the potential for evil, it could also be used for good. William Dunlap, America's first impresario and a playwright himself, called it a "great engine" for improving community morals. Religious leaders, recognizing the power of drama to affect morality, were tempted to use it, as in the case of this play, to inculcate morals. Printed with this play are praises from local pastors for its uplifting character. In particular, by showing the horrors of intemperance in such a graphic manner, the theater was a powerful weapon for temperance.

**The Temperance Movement:** The 19C Temperance Movement used every weapon at its disposal in a drive to banish Demon Drink from American (and British) homes. Walt Whitman began his writing career with a temperance novel,<sup>1</sup> and Abraham Lincoln delivered temperance speeches.

The weapons deployed against alcohol certainly included the popular drama. Accordingly, playwrights responded with plays graphically displaying the evils of Demon Drink, in the words of Harold Hadley, from the opening scene in *The Social Glass*:

*I consider the cause of temperance the cause of humanity. Read the daily records of crime; see the poverty, disgrace, and misery which is everywhere increasing; look at the degraded young men and women that we daily meet upon our streets; the premature old men, the half-starved. Hollow-cheek women, the little ragged, emaciated children. And then seek the cause of all of this, and you will find that nine tenths of all this is the*

---

<sup>1</sup> Franklin Evans, or *The Inebriate: A Tale of the Times* (1842).

*results of liquor-drinking. This, and the desire to do my duty to my fellow men, and help to elevate them, are some of my reasons for becoming an advocate for temperance*

This play is solidly embedded in that Temperance/Melodrama tradition. The stage directions in Act IV, Scene 1, for example, speak of using as a prop in the play “*either red or blue ribbon, whichever you are playing under.*” That is, a ribbon that was the insignia of one or another of the main temperance organizations that was sponsoring the dramatic presentation.

While not an exhaustive list, the following were prominent and active temperance societies from the mid-19C. The first three of these are referenced specifically in the script:

- The Blue Ribbon Movement. The blue ribbon badge was created by Francis Murphy (1836–1907) as a symbol of the temperance movement in 19th century North America. The badge was worn by those who pledged abstinence.
- The Red Ribbon Reform Club, created by Henry A. Reynolds in 1874 in Bangor, Maine. Inspired by the Blue Ribbon Movement, these clubs became common in New England.
- The International Organization of Good Templars, a fraternal organization and part of the temperance movement, promoting abstinence from alcohol and other drugs.
- Women’s Christian Temperance Union. The WCTU grew out of spontaneous demonstrations by women against taverns and “rumsellers.” It assumed a formal organizational structure in 1873. It continues as an international organization today. The “ribbon” of the WCTU was and is white.

The temperance movement was the driving force behind Prohibition in the United States and Canada<sup>2</sup>, achieving a constitutional amendment banning the sale of alcoholic beverages in 1920. Widely regarded as a failure, despite a documented decline in alcohol consumption and its associated diseases, Prohibition was repealed in 1933 by the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment in the U.S.

As part of the campaign against liquor, local chapters of temperance organizations would invite a dramatic company to come to town and present the play. The Cast of Characters reproduced below from the published version shows that *The Social Glass* played with substantially different casts in Louisville, Kentucky, Effingham, Shelbyville, and Danville, Illinois, and Seymour, Indiana. The

---

<sup>2</sup> National prohibition in Canada was imposed only during World War I, but provincial and local prohibitions were imposed from the later 19C until as late as 1945.

playwright himself is the only actor appearing in all productions. His wife appears in two.

The rest of the cast, it appears, was made up of local amateurs, recruited and prepared by Woodward. As is evident from the stage directions, these would be of varying quality. For example, the play opens with Eva Thornley on stage, singing a “modern ballad” but only “if talent will permit.” “Modern ballads” of the 1880s were much more commonly written for men to sing than women, but Eva might have been “Strolling Through the Park One Day” or dreaming “On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away.”

**T. Trask Woodward** was an American playwright and actor, about whom information is sparse. Judging from the plays attributed to him, he appears to have written primarily (or exclusively) for the temperance movement (or perhaps it is only that more temperance plays have been preserved than other genres). The published edition of Woodward’s “Romantic Military Drama,” *The Veteran of 1812 or Kesiah and the Scout*, dated 1883, identifies him as the author of *The Social Glass*, so the latter play must have been written prior to 1883.

*The Social Glass*. Published in 1890 by Samuel French, *The Social Glass* had been playing in towns across the American Midwest for some years. Published with the play are newspaper notices dating from 1879. In these notices it is compared favorably with some of the best-known temperance plays of the era. In 1899 it was presented with a local cast in Everest, Kansas.

Dramatically, *The Social Glass* contains two inter-linked plots, one focusing on the problems of alcohol, the other on rejected love. This complexity gives the play more texture than the average temperance play (*Ten Nights in a Barroom*, or *The Drunkard*). The rejected suitor (Hollis) uses alcohol as the instrument for his revenge on Eva Thornley, but he is, himself, abstemious. This subplot is actually a throwback to the Melodrama, with which Temperance drama is closely intertwined. Banker Hollis functions as the mortgage holder, taking his revenge because the maiden refuses his advances. In a typical melodrama, he would force the maiden; here he resorts to revenge by ruining her husband and family.

**Notes on the Production:** In addition to the cast of characters (which misidentifies Bob Brittle as Bob Nettleby), the Samuel French Acting Script contains a Scene Plot, a Property Plot, and a Synopsis of the action.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Original, at Masonic Temple, Louisville, Ky.	Register Hall, Effingham, Ill.	Opera Hall, Seymour, Ind.	Vermilion Op. House, Danville, Ill.	Parker's Op. House, Shelbyville, Ill.
CHARLES THORNLEY.....John McGrath.	Art. Bailey.	Chas. B. Harton.	J. L. Fate.	Ed. Leach.
DR. SLATER.....W. W. Crandell.	A. W. Lecrone.	Lew. Saltmarsh.	C. French.	E. H. Prince.
HAROLD HADLEY.....J. G. Sweet.	Ed. Blair.	W. F. Plaffenberger.	E. C. Dodge.	T. Pollard.
JOHN FARLEY.....J. J. Collison.	Frank Blair.	H. H. Moore.	Chas. Boener.	John Cook.
BOB BRITTLE.....T. Trask Woodward.	Woodward.	Woodward.	Woodward.	Woodward.
JAMES HOLLIS.....A. J. Crandell.	T. T. Thompson.	Harvey St. Claire.	Ernest Steene.	J. E. Knox.
EVA THORNLEY, Miss Hettie Hawthorne.	Mrs. Belle Lyons.	Miss Emma Wright.	Lola Morgan.	Lila Redmon.
NETTIE NETTLEBY, Miss Marie Leonards.	" Nellie Prouty.	Mrs. T. Trask Woodward.	Mrs. Woodward.	Minnie Sutton.
MRS. FARLEY.....Miss Bertie Chapman.	Miss Lillian Miser.	Miss Jennie Mathews.	Laura Smith.	Lizzie Reber.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.—When Facing audience, your Right is right of stage. R. means Right; L. Left; W. Wing. R. 1 E. means Right, First Entrance, etc. Entrances are numbered from the curtain up stage.

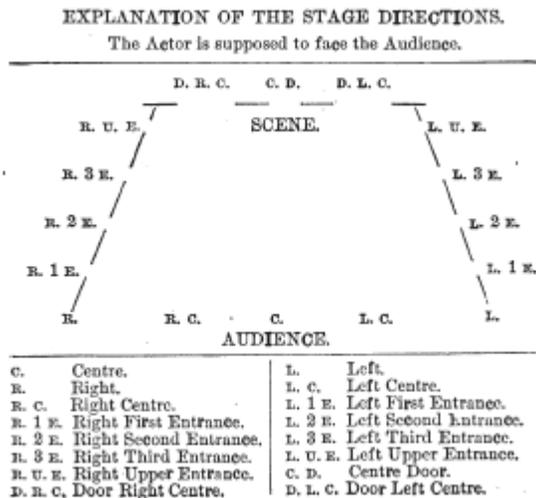
SCENE PLOT.—*Act First*—Parlor, good mountings, full stage. *Act Second*—Plain room, set Bar L. *Act Third*—Plain room and props, to represent lawyer's office. *Act Fourth, Scene First*—Bar-room, as in *Act Second*; *Scene Second*—Street in First groove, *Scene Third*—Bar-room as before. *Act Fifth, Scene First*—Lawyer's office again; *Scene Second*—Street as before; *Scene Third and last*—Parlor as in *Act First*.

PROPERTY PLOT.—1 Salver—4 Wine Bottles and Glasses—Cigars—Matches—Pack of Cards—Cold weak Tea to represent Wine—Bowtie Knife—2 Revolvers—Letters for Bob Nettieby, Hollis, and Eva—Broom for Nettieby—Papers, to represent Bonds, etc.—Writing Material for Hollis' Office—Trick-Bottle—Stage Mountings and Properties set as per directions in piece.

SYNOPSIS.—*Act First*, The Thornley Mansion—Fast Company and the Social Glass. *Act Second*, Farley's Bar-room—The Murderous Assault. *Act Third*, Hollis' Law Office—The Discomfited Villain. *Act Fourth*, Farley's Bar-room again—"Almost Persuaded"—Murder and Suicide. *Act Fifth*, The Denouement—Gossip makes Brittle Happy—Happy Home—Finis.

COSTUMES.—Those of ordinary everyday life.

I add the following schematic to make the stage directions clearer.



In the following script, I have modernized some spelling, corrected a few typographical errors, and added a few footnotes to provide more clarity for readers not used to 19C literature or the conventions of stagecraft.

I would also like to thank my former students at Williamsburg Learning for doing the hard work of transcription at the early stages of this manuscript.

## ACT I

[SCENE – Thornley's sitting-room. Set in 4<sup>th</sup> Groove. Card table L. Wine table or sideboard R., on which are four wine bottles, glasses, cigars, matches, cards, and salver. Four chairs, Easy chair R. Sofa at back. Eva opens with modern ballad, if talent will permit; if not, clock strikes seven when curtain is up. Curtain rises to lively music.]

**EVA.** So late, and my dear Charles not returned to tea. What can detain him? It is but two weeks since our return from our wedding-tour, and he late to supper. Perhaps business detains him. (*Door-bell.*) But why do I find fault? That must be him ringing the door-bell. (*Rises, come down C.*)

[*Enter CHARLES L. Exchange greetings. CHARLES sits.*]

**CHARLES.** Am I late, darling Eva? Well you must excuse me, for my old friend Hadley detained me; and would you believe it, Eva, he really gave me a long temperance lecture; tried to persuade me to banish wine from our house, especially from our social parties.

(*EVA leaning over him at R.*)

**EVA.** I am inclined to think that Harold Hadley is right; for there is but a small share of the poverty and crime existing but what is caused directly or indirectly by intoxicating drinks.

**CHAS.** (*Laughing.*) Why, Eva, you quite surprise me. With a little training you would become a first-class temperance lecturer. However, there is no danger of my becoming a drunkard. So let the matter drop, and we will go to tea; for I expect visitors to-night.

**EVA.** Do not be angry with me, Charles, for I have thought very seriously of this subject for some time; and I wish you to weigh the matter well and think of our future; for I feel assured that after due reflection you will conclude to banish forever the wine bottle from our house. (*CHARLES rising angrily.*)

**CHAS.** Come, come, Eva, you are really becoming too serious. What is the matter with you? I do believe the "Praying Band"<sup>3</sup> have been here.

**EVA.** Do not scoff, Charles. Look at the history of some of our town folk, who began life in good circumstances, but had their little parties, with wine and cards, little dreaming that they were sowing the seed of poverty, disgrace, and ruin. Now some of them fill drunkards' graves; other are outcasts, their families dependent upon charity, or in the almshouse; and but very few have banished the wine cup from their homes, and become temperance men.

**CHAS.** Well, well, Eva, I will think of the matter, and perhaps –

[*Enter BRITTLE, L. 2 E.*]

---

<sup>3</sup> These were spontaneous groups of (usually) women who gathered spontaneously outside taverns to discourage their husbands from patronizing them. These "bands" eventually formalized themselves as the Women's Temperance Union.

**BOB BRITTLE.** Here's the mail, Mister Charles. (*Handing letters.*)

**CHAS.** Very well, Robert, I will read my letters while at tea. Do not go out again tonight, for I expect visitors. Come, Eva, I am as hungry as a half-starved wolf.

[*Exit CHARLES and EVA R. 2 E. BOB watches them off.*]

**BOB.** (*Solus.*) Going to have visitors, eh? Well, Bob Brittle knows what that means. It is wine, euchre, cigars, and late hours tonight, and a headache and soda cocktail tomorrow morning. Now, Mister Charles is a fine young man, but he hain't sowed all his wild oats yet, and I kinder hate to see him go to the bad; because I am kinder related to him – my father was his father's gardener. I don't exactly know what relation that is; but when my honorable old daddy died, old Mr. Thornley gave me a home here – Heaven bless him. But if Mister Charles don't hold his horses, he'll get to be a regular guzzler. Then there's that Squire Hollis; he is administrator of all Charles' fortune, and if he don't keep his head pretty level old Hollis'll skin him out of his eye teeth. However, I will keep my eye on that sly fox, and if he comes any of his shenanidigs<sup>4</sup> over my young master, I'll yank him into the middle of next huckleberry time. Yes!

If he doth act the traitor's part,  
I'll shove my dagger in his heart. (*Strikes attitude.*)

[*Enter NETTIE NETTLEBY L. 2 E., dressed gaudily. BOB strides R., exhibiting disgust and impatience.*]

**NETTIE NETTLEBY.** How do you do, Mr. Brittle? How's all the folks? I saw that they were at tea, so came right in. How are the newly married couple? How is Mrs. Thornley after her wedding tour? How is Mr. Charles? They *do* say that he is just as wild as ever. But, Bob, if he don't stop drinking wine he'll get to be a regular tippler. (*BOB, stopping his ears, watches her.*) I declare, if here ain't wine on the table. (*Goes to table, examines wine.*) I don't approve of wine-drinking, but this looks like our communion beverage.<sup>5</sup> (*Pours and drinks.*) I declare, if that isn't nice That's pure communion wine; that won't intoxicate; that's so refreshing, I'll take another swallow. (*Pours and drinks.*)

**BOB.** (*Aside.*) 'Twouldn't take many such swallows to make a bucketful.

**N. N.** (*Coming down to BOB.*) Why don't you speak to a body?

**BOB.** Garrulous feminine, avaunt and haunt me not

**N. N.** (*Aside.*) Oh, the stage-struck fool! Now Bob, don't be unsocial. I called to get the news, and do all the good I could, for you know I do like to make folks happy.

**BOB.** (*Bowing.*) Yes, a lady fair of great renown,  
(*Aside.*) She peddles all the gossip of the town.

[*Enter EVA R.*]

**N. N.** How do you do, Mrs. Thornley. How odd it sounds to call you Mrs. Thornley.

**BOB.** (*Aside.*) There she goes again; her tongue is hung on a pivot and runs round and round.

---

<sup>4</sup> shenanigans

<sup>5</sup> Wine used in the celebration of "communion," or the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In modern days grape juice or water is substituted, but in the 19C wine was often used.

**EVA.** (*To N. N.*) Excuse me one moment. (*To BOB.*) Robert, Mr. Thornley desires your presence in the library. (*BOB bows and turns to R.*)

**BOB.** If that gossip is going to remain long I will have to go for an undertaker.  
The most terrible pest that e'er to man has clung,  
Is a female gossip, with a lying tongue. [*Exit BOB R.*]

**N. N.** I wonder how you can keep such a stage-struck fool as that Bob Brittle; and they do say that he gets drunk on your wine sometimes; but then I don't believe all I hear. Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

**EVA.** Why, I never knew him to be drunk in my life.

**N. N.** Well, folks will talk, you know; and they do say that your husband gets too much wine sometimes; but then he's young and may outgrow it. Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

**EVA.** Has the tongue of scandal already commenced an attack upon my husband? (*EVA exhibiting displeasure.*)

**N. N.** I see that you are going to ask me to take a seat, and take off my things, but I can't stop. I must go down and see Widow Simpson; her son Willie has been stealing, and I must go down and sympathize with her, and tell her all they do say about it. By the way, I believe that Willie Simpson is a cousin to your husband; but then it ought not to disgrace him if his relations do get into the penitentiary. But I must go. Umph! I do like to make folks happy. [*Exit L. 2 E.*]

**EVA.** O Heaven! The tongue of scandal already set in motion about my dear husband, and then poor Widow Simpson. If her son has got into trouble it will break her heart. (*Enter CHARLES R. 2 E.*) Oh Charles, have you heard the story of your cousin Willie Simpson's stealing?

**CHAS.** No; but Willie Simpson received a large reward today for detecting a man in the act of robbing Judge Wilford's safe, and causing the burglar's arrest. But where did you hear the absurd story of his stealing?

**EVA.** Miss Nettleby was here and informed me.

**CHAS.** Her presence would account for almost any amount of gossip. She is rightly named *Nettie Nettleby*, for she nettles every one she meets.

**EVA.** She certainly caused me to feel very uncomfortable. But as your visitors are to be gentlemen only to-night, I will retire to the library to write a few letters. (*Crosses to R. 2 wing slowly*). Charles, *do not* drink too much wine tonight, or entertain your friends late. [*Exit slowly R. 2 E.*]

**CHAS.** () Well, well, Eva is fast becoming a temperance lecturer. What does it all mean? Everyone seems over-anxious about my course of life; and yet I am a temperate man – only a little wine now and then – occasionally a night at euchre with a social party – merely these. Yet *everybody prates* at me. But pshaw! I will drive this foolishness from my mind with a glass of wine. (*Goes to wine table, pours wine. When about to drink calls "Robert" Enter ROBERT R. 2 E., while CHARLES is drinking.*) If any of my friends call, seat them in this room. Arrange the cards, wine, and cigars. I will soon return. [*Exit L. 2 E.*]

**BOB.** (*Solus. Watching him off. Laughing.*) Mister Charles, you are a wild youth, and you will have to stop it. You haven't got a copper-clad stomach the same as I have. Now old Grandpa Brittle used to tell old Grandma Brittle that "what was good for the goose

was good for the gander;” so what is good for the *master* is good, for the *man*. (*Drinks from bottle.*) Ah. It comes kinder natural for *me* to drink out of a bottle, for I was brought up that way. Oh, ho You bring a young fellow up on green peas and he is sure to hanker after them. (*Door-bell.*) There’s someone at the door. [*Exits L. 2 E., and after a beat, re-enters, followed by JAMES HOLLIS.*]

**BOB.** This way, Squire Hollis; this way sir. (*Places easy chair.*) Take a seat, sir. Take a seat. Mister Charles will soon be in. (*BOB exits suddenly L. 2 E. HOLLIS goes to wine table, examines, takes C.*)

**HOLLIS.** (*Solus.*) So, so: cards, wine, and cigars. Thornley is said to be very fast, and here is the proof. This is as I would have it. Charles once an inebriate is in my power; for, being the administrator to the vast estate left him by his father, I can easily transfer the bulk of it to my own purse. Then, Mrs. Eva Thornley, with a drunken brute for a husband, and reduced to poverty and disgrace, you will regret the day that you spurned the hand of the wealthy and influential James Hollis. (*Enter BOB L. 2 E. HOLLIS crosses to L. BOB to R. Aside.*) Now to question the servant. Robert, how do you like your situation with Mr. Thornley?

**BOB.** (*Aside*) What is the sly fox at now? Oh, very well, very well, sir; but I only hold the situation until something better comes to me. In fact, I am like Micawber,<sup>6</sup> “waiting for something to turn up.”

**HOL.** And then like him –

**BOB.** Like him, “I’ll hang my banners on the outer walls and defy the world.”

**HOL.** Why, Robert, I see that you are possessed of much dramatic talent; you should become an actor.

**BOB.** Hist! Hush! I am going to become an actor. I am already an author. You shall hear the plot of my great seventeen-act drama. It takes three nights and a matinée to play it, introducing 125 actors, 200 supernumeraries,<sup>7</sup> and a full ballet troupe – gorgeous scenery—

**HOL.** Well, well, Robert, come to my office and explain it. I will appoint a time, and if I can assist you in producing it, I will. *Which does your master usually prefer?* (*Both nearing table. Bob holds up bottle*)

**BOB.** Oh, his is old sherry. Yes, old sherry is his style. (*Familiarly leading down C.*) And you’ll assist me in producing my drama – oh, I am a made man. I have my name in big letters on the bills – Robert Brittle, Esq., actor and author. (*Door-bell rings. BOB crosses to L. HOLLIS to R.*) Oh, hang that bell!

Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell,  
That summons you to heaven or to –<sup>8</sup>

(*Bell again.*) Coming, sir. [*Exit suddenly to L. 2 E.*]

**HOL.** Well, he is stage-struck surely. But if I can mold him to my purpose, he will be a useful tool to have about. He said that Charles preferred *sherry*. (*Takes paper from pocket, pours contents into sherry bottle, replacing powder paper in pocket. Shakes bottle. Sits in easy chair.*) So, so; all is well.

---

<sup>6</sup> Fictional character in Charles Dicken’s *David Copperfield*. Known for his philosophy that “something will turn up.”

<sup>7</sup> Persons present in excess of the normal or requisite number; extras on a stage, without speaking parts.

<sup>8</sup> From Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. Continuing to demonstrate Bob’s dedication to the stage.

[Enter CHARLES followed by FARLEY, DR. SLATER and BOB, singing and exhibiting the first stages of drunkenness. Any lively song will do. *Courtesies of Society, etc.*<sup>9</sup>]

**CHAS.** Good evening. I am sorry to have kept you waiting, Squire<sup>10</sup> Hollis. Here's our worthy host of the Rising Sun Hotel, and his guest Dr. Slater. But as you are all old acquaintances, we will throw ceremony to the dogs, and draw up to the table. (*All seat. CHARLES R. front. HOLLIS at CHARLES' L. SLATER to L. front. FARLEY at his R.*) Robert! The wine! (*BOB brings wine on salver. Four bottles and four glasses.*) Fill up, gents. Here's Rhine,<sup>11</sup> port,<sup>12</sup> sherry,<sup>13</sup> and Madeira.<sup>14</sup> (*All fill and raise glasses.*)

**HOL.** Gentlemen, while we congratulate our worthy friend Thornley upon his acquisition to such a valuable piece of property as a beautiful young wife, and his safe arrival from his wedding tour, we will drink to his and his bride's future happiness and prosperity. (*Touch glasses and drink.*)

**CHAS.** Fill up again, gents. (*Business repeated.*) Here's to the Rising Sun Hotel. Long may it flourish (*Repeat business.*)

**OMNES.**<sup>15</sup> Good! Good!

**FARLEY.** Thornley, your port is the best I ever tasted. I wish that I had a few barrels of as good in my cellar.

**SLATER.** And, surely, the Rhine cannot be beat.

**HOL.** And the Madeira surpasses *all* that I have ever tasted.

**CHAS.** (*Laughing.*) I don't see how you can judge the *quality*, Squire, for the *quantity* in your glass was almost imperceptible.

**HOL.** I never drink heavy. My *head* will not bear it. (*All laugh and deride him.*) But then I do love the sociality of it. We all have our little failings, you know. (*Laugh repeated.*)

**CHAS.** Well, fill up again, gents; and then then for a game of euchre.<sup>16</sup> (*All drink.*) Robert, take away the wine. (*BOB obeys.*) Pass the cigars. (*BOB obeys all orders.*) Gents, have a smoke. Pass the cards, Robert. Shall we cut for partners?

**FAR.** No; we will play as we sit. We are partners, Thornley. (*CHARLES shuffles. SLATER cuts. CHARLES deals a euchre hand. Calls the trump. HOLLIS passes.*)

**FAR.** I play it alone. (*CHARLES bunches his hand.*)

**SLA.** Well, Squire, I think that we can warm them.

---

<sup>9</sup> I have been unable to locate this specific song, but any collection of songs such as *Songs of the Gilded Age* by Margaret Bradford Boni, Golden Press, New York (1960) will provide an ample selection.

<sup>10</sup> A courtesy title awarded to a local dignitary. In this case, Charles recognizes Hollis as an important personage in the town society.

<sup>11</sup> Likely Rhenish, a table wine originating in the German Rhineland.

<sup>12</sup> A fortified wine originating in Portugal. The country is named for Oporto, "the port," which also gives the wine its name. Fortified wine has had alcohol added beyond what is produced by natural fermentation.

<sup>13</sup> Another fortified wine, originating near the city of Jerez, in Spanish Andalusia.

<sup>14</sup> The Madeira Islands, off the coast of Africa, are Portuguese possessions and the home to this fortified wine. The dangers of Madeira are chronicled by Michael Flanders and Donald Swann in their comedy number "Have Some Madeira, M'Dear."

<sup>15</sup> All.

<sup>16</sup> Euchre is a trick-taking game similar to whist or bridge. At this time, it was considered to be the national card game in the U.S. The rules of the game are important to the action of the play, because Bob Brittle will thwart Squire Hollis in the final act by metaphorically holding the Right and Left Bowers (jacks), the two highest-ranking cards in the game.

**FAR.** Play to the two bowers<sup>17</sup> on the ace (*throwing three cards. HOLLIS and SLATER do the same.*) Now to the ten and the eight. (*Throwing remaining cards, they doing the same.*) Ha. A march.<sup>18</sup> Chalk us four, Thornley. (*CHARLES and FARLEY shake hands across table, chuffing HOLLIS and SLATER with "Oh, ho we can warm them," etc. During this scene, BOB watches the game and steals a drink when an opportunity offers. Sits in easy chair and smokes. Introduces any comicalities that do not interfere with dialogue. After the first hand HOLLIS deals and the game goes on, and conversation incidental to the game. Doorbell heard. BOB exits L. 2 E. Re-enters, followed by HAROLD HADLEY.*)

**BOB.** This way, Mr. Hadley. This way. Mr. Hadley, Mr. Charles. (*BOB pushes easy chair to R. front. All rise as CHARLES speaks and shakes hands with HADLEY, then sits. While HADLEY is on, game is suspended, and all listen, but exhibit signs of intoxication, except HOLLIS.*)

**CHAS.** Good evening Harold. Gents, this is Mr. Hadley. (*After introduction HADLEY passes to R. Places hand upon back of easy chair, but does not sit.*) Take my hand and seat in the game and I will be an observer.

**HADLEY.** No, thank you. (*CHARLES sits.*) I was not aware that you were engaged, or I would not have intruded; besides I never take pleasure in cards or wine.

**FAR.** (*Sneeringly*) Yes, I think that I have heard you spoken of as a *great* temperance advocate.

**HAD.** I am proud to say that I am an advocate for temperance

**SLA.** Perhaps sir, that you would inform us why you are so interested in the cause?

**HAD.** To give you my every reason this evening would consume too much of your time, particularly as you are preoccupied, and are already prejudged against the cause. But, sirs I consider the cause of temperance the cause of humanity. Read the daily records of crime; see the poverty, disgrace, and misery *which* is everywhere increasing; look at the degraded young men and women that we daily meet upon our streets; the premature old men, the half-starved. Hollow-cheek women, the little ragged, emaciated children. And then seek the cause of all of this, and you will find that nine tenths of all this is the results of liquor-drinking. This, and the desire to do my duty to my fellow men, and help to elevate them, are some of my reasons for becoming an advocate for temperance. But gentlemen I called to see my friend Thornley and wife, and not wishing to interrupt your pleasure I beg leave to withdraw. (*All rise and bow. HADLEY exits L. 2 E., followed by BOB who immediately re-enters. As soon as HADLEY is off all laugh.*)

**FAR.** By Jove. If Hadley was in some better cause he would become popular; he is quite eloquent.

**CHAS.** Yes. He is a very fine young man. Robert, the wine.

**SLA.** Yes, I think we ought to have something to wash down that temperance lecture. (*BOB obeys.*)

**HOL.** (*While all are pouring wine.*) I think Hadley is a rising young man, and would like him in my office as a partner, if it were not for his conscience scruples.

**CHAS.** Well, drink; then fill up again, gents. I don't know what the deuce ails me this evening. I am deuced dry and see double. (*Maudlin drunk.*)

**HOL.** (*Laughing.*) Thornley will have to adopt my principal and drink light. (*All laugh.*)

**FAR.** Yes, he is rather weak-headed. (*All laugh.*)

---

<sup>17</sup> Reflecting the German origin of euchre, the term "bower" is derived from "Bauer," "farmer in German.

<sup>18</sup> From German "Marsch," "march," often applied to a military raid. Compare a "slam" in bridge.

**CHAS.** Gentlemen, I ad(*hic*)mire your chaff very (*hic*) much. But drink. Drink heart(*hic*)ty.

**SLA.** Well, here's to us. (*Touch glasses and drink.*)

**CHAS.** Come, come, gents. (*hic*) Let's have a song! (*hic*). Let's – have – a song! (*One of the party sings some rollicking song*<sup>19</sup>. *All join the chorus, regardless of music or harmony.* **BOB** repeats the last words after the rest have ceased. **BOB** is sitting on easy chair, allowing his feet to protrude. **CHARLES** kicks them, and **BOB** goes to stage rolling toward footlights. All shout and continue song, filling and drinking between each verse, during which **BOB** steals a bottle from table and says the following.)

**BOB.** That sherry must be kinder fascinating. I guess I'll drink a little of it. (*Steals bottle and drinks.*)

Of all the drinks to make one merry,  
Give me a quart of good old sherry.

(*At close of song CHARLES shouts.*)

**CHAS.** Wine! More wine! (**BOB** places fresh bottle.) Fill up, gents (*hic*) and drink to the jol(*hic*)ly (*hic*) wine. Gents, (*hic*) I'm (*hic*) the (*hic*) jolliest – fellow – out.

**HOL.** (*Rising.*) Gentlemen, it is getting rather late. Suppose that we retire. (**CHARLES** staggers to feet, pushes **HOLLIS** to seat, then goes to **FARLEY**, who has risen and repeats business; thence to **SLATER**, **CHARLES** meanwhile talking. But **HOLLIS**, while **CHARLES** is staggering around to the other guests, rises again, goes to R. 1 wing, and remains.)

**CHAS.** (*While staggering around table.*) No, no, gents. (*hic*) Sit down (*hic*) Let's (*hic*) make a night (*hic*) of it. Let's make a (*hic*) night of it. (*Falls to his own seat. Lays head on table.*)

[MUSIC VERY LOW AND SOFT, “Annie Laurie”<sup>20</sup> until Act Drop.]

**HOL.** (*At wing. Speaking through music.*) The drug has the desired effect. Now, Mrs. Eva Thornley, you will begin to feel my hatred.

**CHAS.** (*Rising and staggering toward table R. Places hand upon it.*)

**BOB.** Look out, Mr. Charles, or you will carom under the table. (**CHARLES** staggers toward the footlights and falls across stage C. **FARLEY** and **SLATER** at table L. each with one foot on table. Glass raised in right hand. Cigar between fingers of left hand. **BOB** near table R., facing right, drinking from bottle. **HOLLIS** pointing exultantly. Enter **Eva**. Goes to **CHARLES**.)

**EVA.** (*Kneels.*) Oh, Charles! Charles! Has it already come to this? Heaven help me! (*Hands upraised.*)

PICTURE.<sup>21</sup> SLOW DROP.

---

<sup>19</sup> See note 8.

<sup>20</sup> 18C Scottish schmaltzy song, with various later local alterations. Sometimes known as “Maxwelton’s Braes are Bonnie.” Robert Laurie, first Baronet Maxwelton, and his daughter Anne were historical personages, as was poet William Douglas, who may or may not have written the poem on which the song is based.

<sup>21</sup> This is a dramatic “tableau,” a theatrical convention dating as far back as Greek tragedy. The actors on stage assume and hold a pose to emphasize the drama of the moment or scene, in this case as the curtain

## ACT II

[SCENE. ---Two years have passed. FARLEY's bar-room in the Rising Sun Hotel. Bar L. in rear of 2 E., running half-way across stage. Table and chairs R. All the properties for a first-class bar. FARLEY must have a Bowie-knife secreted in breast, easily drawn. Introduce supernumeraries according to talent and size off stage. A good opportunity to introduce barkeeper and waiter, beer-tables, etc., but do not interfere with dialogue. All optional with the manager. FARLEY and SLATER discovered on. SLATER invites FARLEY to a morning drink, etc. SLATER then takes seat at table, taking up morning paper.] FARLEY wiping bar, etc. Dialogue commences.

**FARLEY.** Dr. Slater, I think it is about two years since you became my guest?

**SLATER.** Yes; I arrived in this flourishing town just two years ago – and, do you remember shortly after my arrival we passed a social evening at Charley Thornley's? We all drank too much on that occasion except Hollis; but I never could account for Thornley's getting so confounded drunk that night. How I pitied his wife.

**FAR.** Pitied her! It's her own fault. She knew what he was before she married him – knew that he was fast, and she threw away a good opportunity when she rejected Squire Hollis.

**SLA.** I cannot see it in that light. Although Thornley is going down the road to ruin at a very rapid rate, yet there is a chance for his redemption; and we all know him to be a man of honor and integrity, while Hollis is penurious, grasping, and treacherous. It is said that he is not rightly dealing with Thornley.

**FAR.** That is town *gossip*, and not to be credited. I hired this hotel for over a year after old Mr. Thornley's death, when Hollis came into the possession of it. A short time since I bought it of him, and have ever found him honorable in all his dealings.

**SLA.** Then where is the two hundred and fifty thousand dollars that old Mr. Thornley willed to Charles? Hollis only accounts for about twenty-five thousand. But Charles keeps so full of *your* brandy that his head is always muddled, and he is unfit to look after his own interest.

[Enter NETTIE NETTLEBY R. 2 E, account-book and pencil in hand, Goes to bar. Reaches pencil toward FARLEY. Lays book on bar.]

**FAR.** (As NETTLEBY enters.) What the devil brings that gossip here?

**N. N.** Mr. Farley, I called to see if you would subscribe toward furnishing our new church and increasing our Sunday-school library.

**FAR.** Why didn't you go into the parlor (NETTIE NETTLEBY crosses to R.) and see Mrs. Farley? This is no place for a woman.

**N. N.** Why not? Don't you pretend to be a *gentleman*? Don't you *profess* to believe that your business is *honorable* and *respectable*?

**SLA.** There are some pointed questions for you to answer, Farley.

---

falls. "Tableaux" can be used in prose writing as well. For example, there are a number of points in Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* when the action slows down and stops, before resuming.

**FAR.** Well, I have no money to give Sabbath-schools and churches. Only a short time since your very society sent a delegation of women here, called the “*Praying Band*,” to break up my business. So you may as well skedaddle, dust, git, emigrate, or anything else you like, so that you get out of my hotel, for you will get no money from this house.

**SLA.** (*Rising.*) Yes, she will, Farley, for I will subscribe a small amount. And allow me to inform you that I think a man that will speak disrespectfully to a lady is beneath the dignity of a common *cur*. (To NETTIE NETTLEBY) Although I am not much of a church-going man, yet I *cannot* forget the principles taught me by my mother. You may put me down for twenty dollars, Miss Nettleby, and mark it paid. (*Handing bill.*) I go on the cash principle. (NETTIE NETTLEBY *marks in book.*)

**N. N.** Thanks, Dr. Slater, and ---

**SLA.** No, no; no thanks. [Exit suddenly L. 2 E.]

**FAR.** There, you ought to be satisfied now. So you had best go.

**N. N.** No thanks to *you* for this money. And I will free my mind before I go; and I will go when I get ready. They *do* say that you drug the wine that poor Charley Thornley drinks in your house.

**FAR.** Curse your gossiping tongue.

**N. N.** Umph! I *do* like to make folks happy. And they *do* say that *you* and old Hollis are in league to rob the poor fellow of all his fortune.

**FAR.** (*Coming down in front of bar L.*) What the devil do you *mean*? *Who says so*?

**N. N.** Oh, now you needn't go to getting your mad up to me. Folks will talk, you know; and they do say that this hotel property belongs to the Thornley estate, but that old Hollis gave it to you for helping him in his frauds. (FARLEY *walking up and down stage excitedly.*) Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

**FAR.** Now, you gossiping meddlesome *fool*, I have had enough of your scandal, and if you don't clear out of here your sex shall not protect you. Are you going?

**N. N.** Yes when I get ready. (FARLEY *advances*, NETTIE NETTLEBY *stepping back R.*) Don't you put your hands on me, you old toddy-stick.

[Enter BRITTLE L. 1 E. *Seizes FARLEY and throws him to L. Assumes a pugilistic attitude.*]

**BOB.** Hold, vile miscreant! Lay not thy polluted hands upon feminine innocence and maidenly virtue! (FARLEY *appears anxious for a conflict.*) Advance but one step, and with a powerful blow I'll annihilate you. (BOB *squaring off*. FARLEY *sneaks behind bar*. BOB *turns to NETTIE NETTLEBY*).

**N. N.** Mr. Brittle, I thank you for your timely interference.

**BOB.** No, thanks madam; for whenever the feminine gender require a champion there you will always find *Robert* Brittle; for I am positively informed that my mother was a female woman of the feminine gender. But I advise you to *avaunt*! *Begone*! and *haunt* no more this hall of pleasure and dissipation, lest thy purity be contaminated by its foul atmosphere, and thy good name blasted forever. (*Going to bar.*) Farley, talking makes me dry. Mix me a gin sour.

(FARLEY *mixing drinks*. NETTIE NETTLEBY R. BOB *front of bar L.*)

**N. N.** (*Aside.*) Now, Bob Brittle would be a nice young man if he would only leave off his “gin sours” and not to be so stage-struck. (*Turning to FARLEY.*) Good-by, old toddy-

stick!<sup>22</sup> (FARLEY *raises tumbler*. BOB *guys him, and presents him from throwing the tumbler*. FARLEY *very excited*.) If you keep on drinking at the rate you are going, you will soon die of the tremens;<sup>23</sup> but that won't be any loss to the public. Umph! I do like to make folks happy. [Exit R. 1 E.]

BOB. (*Laughing and guying FARLEY*.) Oh, ho! Nettleby's a trump card, ain't she Farley? Come, come! hurry up, for my stomach cries out for the gin sour.

FAR. (*Mixing drink*.) Bob Brittle, you had no right to interfere with me in this affair. But as we are old friends, and you are Hollis' right-hand man, I will excuse it. Here's your gin sour.<sup>24</sup> (*Passing drink*. BOB *drinks*.)

[Enter THORNLEY R. 2 E.]

FAR. (*Coming down*.) Ah, Charley, old boy How do you find yourself? Have a drink? (CHARLES *is dressed very carelessly – has the appearance of having passed a night of debauchery*.)

CHAS. Yes. Mix me a brandy punch, and make it *strong*, for my nerves are a little unstrung to-day. (CHARLES *at R. end of bar*. BOB *leaning against bar L. front*. FARLEY *behind bar between the two in the picture*. *All the bar-room scenes and pictures should be studied*.)

FAR. What is yours, Bob? The same as you took before? It's my treat.

BOB. Yes, the same; for I never mix, for fear of creating an internal warfare with the digestive organs, that might force the alcoholic effluvia to the brain, and cause this noble form to ignominiously roll in the gutter.

FAR. Oh, dry up and simmer down You will explode some day in one of your elocutionary attempts. The drinks, gents. (*Business of drinking*.)

CHAS. Farley, you beat the *world* making brandy<sup>25</sup> punches.

BOB. And gin sours. (BOB *crosses to R*. CHARLES *to L*.) But I must be off for the office; for if there are no new cases come in I must go to work on my great seventeen-act drama, *which* I am reducing to five acts. It is entitled the "Demon of the Falls," (CHARLES *and FARLEY guy BOB*) introducing gorgeous scenery, delightful music, startling dramatic positions, thrilling pictures, and beautiful tableaux. It will astonish the world, and totally eclipse all modern dramatic productions. My lords, I go. Au revoir. I am nothing but plain Bob Brittle now, but soon I'll wear a wreath of *fame* upon this noble brow.<sup>26</sup> (*Low salaam*<sup>27</sup> *and exit R. 2 E.*, FARLEY *and CHARLES laughing*.)

---

<sup>22</sup> "The toddy stick, beloved for the welcome ringing music it made on the sides of glass tumblers, was used to stir up toddy and other sweetened drinks. It was a stick six or eight inches long, with a knob at one end, or flattened out at the end so it would readily crush the loaf sugar used in the drink." Wikipedia

<sup>23</sup> "tremens," or "delirium tremens" is a state of psychological disorientation and physical debility caused by the withdrawal of alcohol after extended use of it. Nettie seems to confuse it with alcohol poisoning, which would be death by overconsumption of strong drink.

<sup>24</sup> Gin is an alcoholic drink distilled from the juniper berry. A "gin sour" would have been flavored with lemon and sugar, egg white, and perhaps Angostura bitters.

<sup>25</sup> A variety of distilled wine, with a high alcoholic content. A "brandy punch" would have been flavored with any of a number of fruit flavorings.

<sup>26</sup> Bob may be under the impression that the laurel wreath was the prize for the winning playwright at the Greek Dionysian festivals. Actually, it was Greek athletes who got the laurel wreath; playwrights got a goat. The word "tragedy" is derived from the Greek for "goat-song."

<sup>27</sup> A "salaam" is an Arabic salutation involving a bow and the touching of the forehead.

**CHAS.** Come, Farley, join me in another drink. I will take the same.

**FAR.** (*Mixing drinks.*) Bob Brittle is a queer genius, fearfully stage-struck, or something of that sort, but he has much originality; and Hollis says that he is the best copyist<sup>28</sup> he ever saw. The drinks! Here's fun! (*Touch glasses and drink.*)

**CHAS.** Well, Bob was a faithful servant to me, and we supposed that he would remain with us, as father reared him; but Hollis coaxed him away. He loves his liquor, and always keeps full, yet I never knew him to be beastly intoxicated in my life. Is there any game going on in the club-room?

**FAR.** Yes, a rousing game of *faro*.<sup>29</sup> You had better go in and try your luck; you may hold winning cards to-day.

**CHAS.** I believe that I will "fight the tiger"<sup>30</sup> to-day. Luck like everything else, has been against me lately. [*Exit L. 1 E.*]

**FAR.** (*Leaning over bar laughing.*) He had better let the tiger alone. Ha, ha, ha. But I won't find fault as long as I get my share of the plunder. (*Enter HAROLD HADLEY R. 2 E., FARLEY coming down C. and shaking hands with him.*) Good morning, Mr. Hadley; I am astonished to see you in *my* house.

**HAD.** My visit to your house is easily accounted for; business calls me here. I feel it my duty, sir, to come and talk with you in regard to this accursed traffic of rumselling.<sup>31</sup> I do not wish to interfere with any person who is doing an *honorable* business; but, sir, this dealing out death and destruction by the glass *is not an honorable* occupation. It is a fearful business to contemplate. Look at the large number of young men of this town who are fast going down to drunkards' graves; their parents with fond hopes blighted, bearing their heavy burdens in sorrow to their tomb. Mr. Farley, do think of this matter seriously. There are many ways by which you could make an *honest* living, without the stigma of *rumseller* affixed to your name.

[*Enter Dr. SLATER R. 2 E. Goes to table R., sits, and, apparently unheeding the conversation, reads newspaper.*]

**FAR.** Hadley, I have had all the temperance lecture I want from you today. I keep a respectable hotel. I pay the United States, the State, the county, and the corporation for licenses to sell liquors.<sup>32</sup> My boarders are mostly men of means, as well as my customers, and I *do not* sell liquor to loafers.

---

<sup>28</sup> In addition to someone who makes fair copies of hand-written documents, a "copyist" also has the connotation of one who can imitate the handwriting of others, a forger. Farley may be using the word in this latter sense, while Charles would understand it in the former.

<sup>29</sup> Prior to poker, *faro* was the most popular gambling game of 18C America. As Pharaoh, or Pharaon, it was outlawed in 1691 in France, only to reappear in various guises before migrating to England and America.

<sup>30</sup> A slang phrase for gambling. Possibly from the striped cover of a gambling table, possibly from the Chinese god of gambling, a tiger erect on its hind feet.

<sup>31</sup> During the Temperance Movement, this spelling of the verb and its nominative counterpart was common.

<sup>32</sup> "Sin taxes" are commonly assessed by governments on products or activities deemed to be harmful, such as gambling, alcohol, or tobacco. The theory is that since people will engage in these activities in any event, government can mitigate the ill effects to some extent by licensing and taxing them. Tobacco taxes, for example, could be used to treat lung diseases. Typically, governments will seek to maximize these taxes in the hope of reducing consumption, but these efforts invariably lead to corruption and smuggling, as

**HAD.** Perhaps not; but no one becomes a drunkard in a day. It is not in the low grog-shops that our young man *first* begin to sip their wine, but in the so-called *respectable* hotels; then step by step they sink to the level of the loafer. Yes, the gilded saloons and the first-class hotels are the drunkard manufactories.<sup>33</sup>

**FAR.** You are putting the case pretty strong, Hadley; I don't want any insults in my house.

**HAD.** I do not wish to insult you, but I must speak the truth, and I believe that I am talking for your welfare. Mr. Farley, we cannot see ourselves as others see us; but as sure as you do not leave off drinking you will go the road that poor Charley Thornley is travelling; and Farley, for his sake and his wife's sake, do not sell him any more liquor.

**FAR.** I would be a *fool* to drive away one of my *best* customers, wouldn't I? I will tell you what it is, Hadley, I have heard just enough of your *temperance blarney*. Now there (*pointing R. 2 E.*) is the door, and you put yourself on the other side of it, or I will throw you through it. (*FARLEY advances, HADLEY backs R. SLATER drops paper and leaps between them, seizing FARLEY and throwing him L. SLATER C.*)

**SLA.** Not while *I* am here. Farley, I have watched your course for some time past, I have also viewed with painful feelings Thornley's downward career, and I resolved to try and save him. I have boarded in your house for two years, and of late have seen you display too much penury, meanness, and cowardice. In fact, you are no gentleman. but in many respects you are a disgustingly low and vulgar brute. Perhaps "you will throw me through the door?" (*FARLEY goes sheepishly behind bar.*)

**FAR.** This quarrel was between Hadley and me. I have nothing to say to you in the matter.

**HAD.** I did not come here to breed contentions, and will soon go. Dr. Slater, you say that you have resolved to try and save Thornley. If you mean it, combine forces with me, and we will accomplish our object.

**SLA.** I do mean it, Heaven knows. Farley, make out my bill; I will call and pay it this evening. (*To HADLEY.*) I have for some time past felt the appetite for strong drink increasing upon me, but with Heaven's help I will become a temperance man.

**HAD.** Thank Heaven.

**SLA.** Come, Hadley, I will seek another hotel, and one that is free from the odors of alcohol.

[*Exit HADLEY and SLATER R. 2 E.*]

**FAR.** (*Leaning on bar.*) The devil take that meddling puppy Hadley. Slater was my *best* boarder, and gave *tone* to the house. He is a man of means and is fast becoming rich through his profession and speculation.<sup>34</sup> And this temperance brawler must come in here and interfere. But I will be even with him yet.

---

indeed happened with Prohibition in the U.S. in the 1930s, and as does with cigarette taxes in 21C New York City today.

<sup>33</sup> Hadley outlines here the idea of the "gateway" drug or activity, the idea that, for example, smoking marijuana is the "gateway" to heroine addition. Indeed, this concept is the explanation for the title of the play: that it is "the social glass" that leads inexorably to death in the gutter from alcoholism. This debate over the "gateway" is timely in the 21C with respect to e-cigarettes and vaping.

<sup>34</sup> Buying something, often land, with the expectation that it will be more valuable in the future. Economists defend the practice as useful in assessing value and directing assets to their best use. However, "speculators" are typically denounced as exploiters by populists. Farley is recognizing the economic success of the speculator without necessarily approving it.

[Enter THORNLEY L. 1 E., very drunk, dress disarranged, etc.]

**CHAS.** Plague (*hic*) take the (*hic*) luck – another (*hic*) thousand gone. Farley, gim'me some (*hic*) brandy. (*Going to bar, FARLEY sets up liquor.*)

**FAR.** Drink Hearty, old boy Never mind the luck. You will win next time.

**CHAS.** (*While pouring liquor.*) Far-far-ley, is (*hic*) this your best brandy (*hic*) eh?

[*Drinks*]

**FAR.** Yes, yes. Drink hearty, etc. (*Charles tries to get fingers in pockets for money. Fails.*) Oh, never mind the change. I will chalk it down.

**CHAS.** (*Staggering toward table R.*) That's (*hic*) all right. Chalk her down (*hic*), chalk her (*hic*) down. (*Sits at table, lays hands on same. Hat falls off. One arm hanging helpless. Right hand under face, which is near edge of table and toward audience. Watch-chain dangling, vest unbuttoned, etc. Muttering.*) Chalk her down.

**FAR.** (*Marking in account-book.*) I will just make this four drinks; I must have interest where I trust; and it will make up for treats.

[Enter HOLLIS R. 2 E. Stops and looks at CHARLES. Then goes to bar.]

**HOL.** He is pretty drunk, eh? (*Pointing at THORNLEY. FARLEY chuckles and pantomimes exultingly.*) I believe I will wake him up to drink; the quicker he is out of the way the better. (*Goes to CHARLES. Slaps him on shoulder.*) Come up, Thornley, and take a drink. (*Returns to bar, allowing CHARLES to come by himself.*) I will take some of your best brandy.

**CHAS.** (*Staggering to bar.*) Yes (*hic*), oh yes, I'll (*hic*) take brandy. (*Mutters as he pours.*)

[Just as he raises his glass EVA enters suddenly R. 2 E. Goes to bar. Seizes glass. Sets it on bar.]

**EVA.** Come, Charles, do come home with me. Come: I have the carriage at the door.

**CHAS.** (*Turning R., EVA leading him. As he gets to table R. he falls into chair, head on table, again muttering.*) I'll come (*hic*). Oh, yes (*hic*), I'll come.

**EVA.** Oh, do come, Charles It is so lonely without you; and you are not well, you know. (*HOLLIS goes to R. 1 W. Folds arms and exhibits a fiendish exultation. FARLEY comes in front of bar and to L. Must have Bowie-knife in breast handy to be drawn.*)

**FAR.** Leave him here, Mrs. Thornley; I will take good care of him.

**EVA.** You take *good care* of him? Upon my word, you are very kind in your offers. What a kind, good heart you must have, John Farley, to get him helplessly intoxicated and then offer to take good care of him.

**FAR.** Upon my *honor*, he did not get drunk in my house. And to tell you the truth, it goes against my conscience to sell him liquor. (*CHARLES weeping and struggling to sober up.*)

**EVA.** John Farley, *dare you* talk of *honor* and *conscience*? The *conscience* of a *rum-seller*. The honor of a keeper of a *gambling den*. Shame upon you, John Farley Look upon your work. (*Pointing to CHARLES.*) See manhood shorn of its manliness by the vile

stuff you retail from the bottle (*Pointing to the bottles behind bar.*) Oh, Farley, as sure as there is a Supreme Ruler, just so sure there will come a day of retribution, when *you* will fall into the very pit that you have dug for others.

**FAR.** I do not wish for any more insults. I have received too much insolence to-day.

**CHAS.** (*Rising and staggering to R. C.*) Oh, what a wretch, what an outcast I have become. (*Care should be taken not to appear too sober.*)

**FAR.** Take my advice and go home. No *respectable* lady would think of entering a bar-room to seek her drunken husband.

**CHAS.** It wanted but that insult to sober me. Apologize to my wife, or your worthless life shall pay the forfeit.

[MUSIC TREMOLO UNTIL DROP.]

[CHARLES *staggers towards FARLEY. They clinch. A struggle. EVA throws up both hands; seems about to faint. CHARLES is thrown to L. upon one knee. FARLEY holding with left hand, quickly raises Bowie in right. EVA catches his uplifted arm. HOLLIS pointing exultingly.*]

**EVA.** Murder! Help! Help!

PICTURE. QUICK DROP

### ACT III

[SCENE – HOLLIS' law office. Book case at back. Writing table or desk across R. L. 2 E. Two chairs. Pen, paper inkstand on table. Office broom at L. 2 E. BRITTLE discovered at table, key in hand when act commences.]

**BOB.** (*BOB's nose is very red.*) Well, I think that this key will fit now. So I will secrete it. If this key will but give me the "open sesame" to the inner vault, then, Squire Hollis, you will hear something drop. (*Looking L.*) Ah, here comes the Squire. (*Puts key in pocket. Rises.*)

[Enter L 2 E JAMES HOLLIS]

**HOL.** I am glad to find you here so early this morning, Robert, for I shall be very busy today. I shall foreclose the mortgage on the Thornley mansion, and then there are two writs to serve. You may now take your hour for breakfast, and leave this message at the Thornley mansion on your way. (*Handing letter. BOB takes hat and crosses to L. 1 E. HOLLIS at table.*)

**BOB.** So poor Charley Thornley has lost all at last. Well! Rum did it. Now why can't people learn to drink liquor as I do. I have got my gauge and only get my tank about so full. (*Placing fingers across throat.*) Well, if Thornley *will* be a fool, I can't help it. Now I'll take this letter to the Thornley mansion and

Then I to the restaurant fly,  
And with brandy cocktails wash down my oyster pie

[Exit L 1 E.]

**HOL.** (*Solus*) Now, to look over the papers and destroy all that could be used as evidence against me. (*Exit R. 2 E. Re-enters with package of papers representing bonds mortgages etc. C. Sits at table examining the papers.*) Now I will destroy the will and all the papers, and when everything is settled, I will retire from business and lead a life of pleasure. I shall live in luxury and splendor, while she will drag out a miserable existence with a drunken brute for a husband. (*Re-enter BOB L. 1 E. HOLLIS rises.*) How in the devil is this? Why do you return to disturb me?

**BOB.** why I thought as there was so much to do, I wouldn't stop for breakfast, but I'd – I'd –

**HOL.** Well, clear out! And don't return for an hour. (*HOLLIS resumes seat again.*)

**BOB.** (*Quietly.*)

My Noble duke, your imperative order I will heed,  
And stride away with (*Loudly*) lightning speed.

[*Strides off L. 1 E.*]

**HOL.** I hope that he will stride to the devil. (*Facing right, at table. Examines papers. (Enter NETTLEBY L. 2 E. Silently tip-toes to back of his chair, and peers over his shoulder.)* I ought to destroy these, but I will not at present. Here are the original bonds, and mortgages, and the original deed of the Rising Sun Hotel. (*Looks around. Discovers NETTIE NETTLEBY by. She suddenly retreats L. HOLLIS rises quickly.*) Well, you are impudence personified What brings you to my office this early in the morning?

**N. N.** Business – special business.

**HOL.** Special business to pry into my *secrets*; but I rather think you found but little to make capital for scandal of by looking over my shoulders. Be seated. I will remove my papers and then listen to your “Special Business.” (*Points to seat. Takes papers and exits R. 2 E.*)

**N. N.** (*Seated L. C.*) I wonder if I haven't found anything to make capital of! I will set him crazy yet. Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

[*Re-enters Hollis R. 2 E. Sits at table*]

**HOL.** Now I am ready to listen to your “Special Business.”

**N. N.** I called to see if you would lend your influence to the temperance cause (*HOLLIS displays disgust*), and help to reform some of our young men who are fast going down to drunkard graves Charles Thornley is one. You very well know that he is very capable young man, but that rum has got the upper hand of him. Why, even after old Farley committed that murderous assault upon him he went there for his liquor, and is a constant visitor there now.

**HOL.** I have no time to waste on *drunkards*. If people will be *fools*, and drink too much whiskey, the quicker they kill themselves the better. And as for Thornley, he is a vagrant; his case is hopeless, and I will have nothing to do with him. (*Turns to write.*)

**N.N.** Only think of his wife and little child. (*HOLLIS facing NETTLE NETTLEBY again.*)

**HOL.** I remember his wife only as heartless coquette, who married him, thinking that he was possessed of a large fortune. And she knew him to be a libertine and a drunkard.  
(*Turns to write again.*)

**N.N.** (*Rising*) I know that to be false; and I know that you hate Eva Thornley because she rejected *you* (*HOLLIS turning and twisting.*) Oh, you needn't squirm and twist so. And they *do* say that you and Farley have drugged Charley Thornley's wine time and again. Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

**HOL.** (*Rising R. Striding up and down stage.*) Oh, stop this scandalous talk and leave my office.

**N.N.** Oh, you needn't go to getting your mad up to me; folks will talk, you know; and they *do* say Bob Brittle is only a tool in your hands to work out frauds.

**HOL.** The deuce take your gossip (*mocking*), with "They *do* say" and "They *do* say"  
(*Very excited.*)

**N. N.** (*Very loud*) Umph! I *do* like to make folks happy.

**HOL.** (*Standing quietly R. pleadingly.*) Miss Nettleby, my time is valuable, and I have none to waste listening to your gossip; and the quicker you leave the better I shall like it.

**N. N.** Oh, yes, I'll go. But they *do* say (*HOLLIS beginning to stride and placing fingers in ears.*) that you and old Farley have a regular systematic plan of robbing Thornley.

**HOL.** (*Stopping R. Front of table.*) Will you get out of my office?

**N. N.** Yes, but I haven't told you half yet. (*HOLLIS takes hat from table. Crosses L. BRITTLE enters suddenly, runs against him. Both fall to stage. NETTIE NETTLEBY laughing and pointing.*) The downfall of aristocracy!

**HOL.** (*Rising and kicking BOB.*) The devil take you. You stupid fool. [*Exit L. 1 E.*]

**BOB.** (*Still on stage.*) I think I must have "bust" off a suspender button. I heard something snap. (*Rising*) The Squire is in awful rage. He hit me a tremendous kick with his tanyards.<sup>35</sup> You must have been nettling him, Miss Nettleby.

**N. N.** I only told him some of the news, and –

**BOB.** And, as usual, tried to make him happy

**N. N.** Now Mr. Brittle, *don't* be rude.

**BOB.** (*Aside*) *Mr. Brittle!* oh! ah! She's putting on frills. I wonder what's up.

**N. N.** Your employer is a very curious man. I can't exactly make out what he *is*. What *is* he?

**BOB.** Hush! hist! (*Very mysteriously goes to all the wings, comes down R. C.*) "Lend me your ears!"<sup>36</sup> Miss Nettleby, to use the best of my judgment – and I have studied deeply and consider myself a good judge of human nature – (*Pause*)

**N. N.** Yes, yes; you are

**BOB.** To use the best of my judgment – (*Pause*)

**N. N.** Well, Mr. Brittle.

**BOB.** Hush! (*Goes to all the entrances again, coming down R. C. and remaining dumb.*)

**N. N.** Well Mr. Brittle, what is he? (*Loudly and very impatiently.*)

---

<sup>35</sup> Bob trying for elegance and missing? Or, is he alluding to the slang identification of "tanyard" with a tandem bicycle, common in the late 19C? There are other definitions of "tanyard" in association with places where tanning vats were kept, and (in Scots) with poor houses created by the Poor Law of 1845, but they don't seem to be appropriate.

<sup>36</sup> Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

**BOB.** He's a man of –

**N. N.** Of what? (*Loudly*)

**BOB.** Of the *male gender!* (*Bawling in her ear, then striding to extreme R. NETTIE NETTLEBY to extreme L.*)

**N. N.** Bob Brittle, I'll never speak to you again.

**BOB.** Then I won't have to be carried off on a stretcher.

**N. N.** Oh, confound your impudence! I want to ask you a few questions. (*BOB hands pencil and paper from table. Very politely bowing, and with much pomposity.*) What are these for?

**BOB.** For you to write on, as you are not going to speak. (*NETTIE NETTLEBY throws them in his face. BOB mocking.*) Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

**N. N.** Bob Brittle, you are a *brute* to treat a lady so. (*NETTIE NETTLEBY crying. BOB looks at her, then commences a facial struggle to suppress tears. Work up a good burlesque crying scene.*)

**BOB.** M-M-Miss Net-Net-Nettleby, do-do-don't cry. I didn't mean to be rude. Oh dear, I never could bear to see a pretty girl cry. Oh ho boo-hoo o-o-o– (*NETTIE NETTLEBY goes to him, and with handkerchief wipes his tears.*)

**N. N.** There, Robert, don't cry. It is all over now, and we are friends again.

**BOB.** Yes, Nettie.

**N. N.** Now I want to tell you about some strange papers that I saw Squire Hollis looking over this morning.

**BOB.** Hush! If you have seen any strange papers in his possession, don't talk about it here. I will see you again and talk it over. Until then, "guard well your secret," "for e'en the very walls may prate."<sup>37</sup>

**N. N.** Oh, pshaw Don't put on your stage style, but listen to me.

**BOB.** No, no! Listen to me! listen to me! I know all about those papers, and soon facts may be known. And thereby hangs a *tale*,<sup>38</sup> which for the present must not be *retailed*. So mum's the word. (*BOB to R. NETTIE NETTLEBY to L.*)

**N. N.** (*Aside.*) There's no getting anything out of him. He's too deep in the plot with old Hollis. Bob, I wish that you would go down to Farley's and coax Thornley home. He is on a terrible spree.

**BOB.** I will, Nettie; for I love Charley Thornley better than anyone else in the world except–

**N. N.** Except who?

**BOB.** Ex–cept (*Yankee courtship business*)<sup>39</sup> you. Oh, my darling Nettleby. Cupid's dart pierced this heart – this heart that ne'er before was conquered. Yes, the fatal dart hit its mark just as the well-springs of your eyes overflowed (*kneeling*), and now I am thy slave forever (*Rising.*)

---

<sup>37</sup> These quotations are so far unidentified. The first one is sometimes attributed to "the sage."

<sup>38</sup> Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, setting up Bob's pun, which Shakespeare would have appreciated.

<sup>39</sup> "Yankee courtship business" appear repeatedly in the stage directions. From the time of Royall Tyler's *The Contrast* (1787), Yankee bumpkins have been a fixture on the American stage. In *The Contrast*, the bumpkin's name is Jonathan, and that came to be a stock name for this stereotype. The courtship would involve clumsy advances by the Jonathan and his repulsion by the object of his desire, but I can find no specific description of what that might look like on the stage. It is easier to see in written form, as in *The Stage-Struck Yankee* by Oliver Everett Durivage (1856).

Oh my lady fair, bid me not despair,  
Or I'll go raving mad and tear my hair (*Burlesque attitude.*)<sup>40</sup>

**N. N.** Why, Bob Brittle, do you really love me?

**BOB.** Yes, you are the sunflower of my affections.

**N. N.** Are *you sure* that you don't love anyone else?

**BOB.** Yes, I *am sure*, for you are the dandelion of my hopes.

**N. N.** (*Presenting right hand.*) Then kiss my hand. (**BOB obeys.**) Now kiss the other. (*Presenting left hand. As BOB kisses it NETTIE NETTLEBY slaps his face with the right. BOB goes to R. rubbing cheek. Comic facial business. NETTIE NETTLEBY to L., laughing and ridiculing him.*) Why, Bob Brittle, do you think that I would marry you, with such a toddy-blossom<sup>41</sup> for a nose? and *breath* that smells of gin sour? Ha, ha, ha good-by, Bobby. Don't tear your hair. Ha, ha, ha Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

[*Exit L.*]

**BOB.** (*Striding R. and L.*) *Toddy-blossom* for a nose *Breath* that smells of gin sour! Oh, I used to *hate* that girl, but somehow the fatal dart has pierced my heart.

[*Enter HOLLIS L. BOB cools down suddenly, and assumes the air of a servant.*]

**HOL.** (*Crossing to table.*) So that gossip has gone at last? Brittle, the next time she comes in here, kick her into the street. But leave me now, for I wish to be alone. (*Sits at table. BOB goes to L.*)

**BOB.** (*Aside.*) Oh, no! I won't try on that kicking business. I have just had a touch of her pugilistic propensities, and I have too much respect for my own cranium. Besides I am in love with that girl. But it is a hopeless passion.

For she has cast a darksome shadow o'er my soul;

But I'll go down to Farley's and drown my sorrow in the flowing bowl.<sup>42</sup>

*Exit L.*]

**HOL.** (*Solus.*) Soon, Mrs. Eva Thornley, you will become a beggar. My revenge will then be complete.

[*Enter EVA L. Crosses to R., speaking as she crosses. HOLLIS rises, places chair to R. C., and takes R. off stage. EVA has note in hand.*]

**EVA.** Why have you sent this imperative message to me? What business of *vital* importance can you have with me? What *demon* can possess you, James Hollis, to thus persecute an unfortunate woman?

**HOL.** The demon of blighted hopes, ruined prospects, spurned offers, and rejected love. Wealth, honor, and position, rejected and spurned by *you*, for drunkenness, poverty, and disgrace.

---

<sup>40</sup> This is not written as a couplet in the script, but I cannot see why not.

<sup>41</sup> A red and rough appearance of the nose, such as was believed to be produced by alcohol consumption.

<sup>42</sup> Again, These two lines are not indented as Bob's poetry usually is, but they do rhyme, and can be made (with a little effort) to scan.

**EVA.** This message informs me that you wish to see me on business concerning the Thornley mansion; but it seems that you merely wish to taunt me of my wretchedness. Have you not already done me injuries, and given me insults enough to satisfy your revengeful feelings?

**HOL.** I first sought *your husband* at Farley's, his favorite resort, and found him *too drunk* to understand business. Therefore I sent for *you*, to inform you that I have this day foreclosed my mortgage on the Thornley mansion.

**EVA.** A mortgage on the Thornley mansion, and *I* not informed of it? When was this mortgage given?

**HOL.** Just previous to your marriage, when Charles was on one of his *social* sprees. Therefore *your* name was not required.

**EVA.** (*Exhibiting great emotion.*) Oh, I well remember that just previous to our marriage Charles was taken to his home insensible. He had been at Farley's. His physician decided that he had been drugged. Oh, I have had hopes that the murderous assault which Farley committed on Charles, some months since, would prove a warning, and that he would never visit that death-dealing place again.

**HOL.** You *wrong* Farley, and have a very poor conception of the character of your husband. Farley keeps a respectable hotel, while your husband has fallen *so low* that were Farley to kick him into the street today he would go there for his liquor tomorrow.

**EVA.** Charles Thornley *has* fallen *very* low in *your* estimation and the world's, but still *lower* in his *own* opinion, and the fact of his being keenly sensible of his own degradation will yet be his salvation. (*HOLLIS sneers.*) I know not in what manner his reformation may be wrought; yet I have faith in wifely affection, earnest prayer to the throne of grace, and in the efficacy of his Christian mother's teachings while he was a youth.

**HOL.** (*Very sneeringly.*) Your *prayers* and his early teachings are *powerless*; his reformation is impossible.

**EVA.** (*Indignantly.*) James Hollis, if you have any further business with me, *finish it* and I will go. But be assured that I see through your villainy. This mortgage is either a *fraud* or a *forgery*, and I will contest its legality.

**HOL.** (*Stepping toward her. She shrinks back R.*) Eva Thornley, *dare* you accuse me of *forgery* or complicity in fraud? (*Slowly.*) The mortgage is signed by *Charles Thornley* and witnessed by Robert Brittle.

**EVA.** (*Sinking to chair.*) Heaven help me (*Weeping.*)

**HOL.** (*Pleadingly and advancing toward her.*) Eva Thornley, you are throwing your life away on a man that is entirely unworthy of you. People are astonished! Eva, you could easily be freed from this degraded life. Habitual intoxication and neglect are good grounds for divorce. Give me the order to file a petition for your divorce, and you shall be free in less than sixty days; and were you free from Thornley I should again place my hand and fortune at your disposal. Come, say the word, and I will immediately file a petition in the court.

**EVA.** (*Slowly rising, pointing and looking upward.*) Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.<sup>43</sup> (*Weeping. HOLLIS strides L. savagely.*) Charles Thornley, *drunkard* though he may be, is still my husband. (*Very slowly and exhibiting much emotion. Pause. Then suddenly changes to anger and contempt.*) James Hollis, I *loathe* and *despise* you My husband, with all his other faults is a man of his honor and integrity;

---

<sup>43</sup> Matthew 19:6.

while you are a base libertine and villain My heart *is*, and ever *will* be, *true* to my husband. In his darkest hours, through all peril and disgrace, to me he may ever look for comfort, love, and sympathy. And you, base, cowardly scoundrel, can never destroy his wife's fidelity. But I will leave you: your words are evil, and your presence pollution. (*Attempts to cross to L. HOLLIS steps in front of her. She shrinks back; R., near wing*)

**HOL.** Eva Thornley, these are not the *first* insults you have given me, but they *shall* be the *last*, for I will leave you to your fate. When you rejected me and accepted Thornley, I took an oath to be revenged. How well I have kept that oath (*looking around*), as there are no witnesses you shall hear. I drugged Charles' wine at our social parties; I employed others to do the same at the hotels; I put expert gamblers on his track (*during this Eva exhibits fear.*)

**EVA.** (*Sinking to chair weeping.*) Oh, Heaven!

**HOL.** You call on heaven, and well you need, for Charles Thornley will fill a drunkard's grave, and *you* shall become a pauper.

**EVA.** (*Rising. Speaking slowly with deep pathos.*) James Hollis, I despise, yet I pity you, for you will have much to answer for in the high court of Heaven. And let me beg of you to stay this vindictiveness. Charles Thornley was my betrothed long previous to your proposal, as I then informed you. Do try to right the wrongs which you have done ere it be too late. Strive with me to restore my husband to manhood and sobriety, and you may take all of our worldly possessions. (*Kneeling.*) And I will do the work of the lowest menial, or beg for bread from door to door, for the sake of seeing my husband redeemed. Ay, I will sacrifice all! – all but honor. (*Covers face with hands, weeping. HOLLIS standing over her exultingly.*)

**HOL.** Eva Thornley, I have longed for this hour. I once knelt to you and pleaded for your love. Now you are the supplicant. Give me the order to file a petition for your divorce (*EVA rises indignantly, goes extreme R.*), and pledge me your hand, and I will do all in my power to make you happy. Refuse, and you shall drain the cup which I have prepared, to its bitter dregs (*Goes extreme L. Folds arms.*)

**EVA.** Never! Never! Villain! There is a great, a good, a loving, all-wise Being, who sooner or later, will right all wrongs, reward the innocent, and punish the guilty. In Him I trust. (*Starts quickly toward L. HOLLIS puts forth both hands suddenly, and speaks rapidly.*)

**HOL.** Hold Eva Thornley, I will have one kiss from those sweet lips. (*Immediately starts toward her.*)

MUSIC TREMOLO UNTIL ACT DROP

**EVA.** Help! murder! murder! help!

[*As soon as the word lips is spoken, NETTIE NETTLEBY enters I.2 E. Seizes broom, which is leaning against L. 2 W. Strikes HOLLIS on head. He turns to see who it is, and then tries to reach his hat, which he has placed upon table, at entering. NETTIE NETTLEBY drives him around stage and off L. 2 E. When EVA screams, she seizes law-book from table and stands in attitude of defense. Laughs while NETTIE NETTLEBY is driving HOLLIS around stage. After HOLLIS is off, NETTIE NETTLEBY takes center of stage, broom upraised.*]

N.N. (*exclaims*) Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

QUICK DROP.

## ACT IV

[SCENE I.—FARLEY's bar-room, as in Act II. Any variety may be introduced as the Act opens, but all must exit previous to the opening soliloquy. FARLEY with red face, one black eye, and apparently in last stages of the liquor mania, and verging on delirium tremens.]

**FAR.** (*Solus, and leaning over bar.*) I wonder what the matter is with all of my customers? Thornley hasn't been here for a week, and Bob Brittle don't come as often as he used to. And it's the way with all of them. Two or three years ago the women crusaders nearly broke up my business; and now here's the cursed Red Ribbon, and the Blue Ribbon, and the Good Templar, and a whole pack of other fanatical societies, raising the dickens with the whiskey traffic. But I will just take another drink, and drown trouble in the liquid that kills grief. (*pours liquor*)

[MRS. FARLEY enters L. 2 E. just as FARLEY is drinking. Crosses to R.]

**MRS. FARLEY.** Come, come, John Farley, you had better be attending to your business than to be drinking whiskey. You patronize the bar better than any of your customers. Everything is going to ruin, and you are getting into debt; you have become a confirmed sot, and even now are on the brink of the tremens. Oh, John it is frightful to think how you have changed since I first became acquainted with you (*Sits at table R., weeping.*)

**FAR.** Have I changed? Yes, I know it, for when I first knew you, you was a sprightly girl of eighteen, and I was a young man of twenty. Your father leased and run this hotel, and I was in his employ. I had come fresh and innocent from the country (*half crying*); I had been taught by my dear old mother that liquor-drinking was wrong. I loved you, and *you* it was that handed me the *first glass of wine* I ever tasted, and with a winning smile you said, "Drink it, John; it will not harm you." I drank it. I *loved it*. And if it *harm me then*, it won't *now*. So go along into your own part of the house, and attend to your own affairs. (*Turns L. and mixes drink. MRS. FARLEY sits R., partially facing R.*)

**MRS. F.** Oh, what wretchedness, what misery, what woe, one thoughtless act of my life has brought upon me. Little did I think, when I passed that tiny glass of wine to him whom I loved, that I was creating a demon that would forever haunt me; that I was fondling a viper whose sting would prove fatal to my happiness. (*Rises and goes to R. end of bar.*) Oh, John! John! Let us give up this way of making a living; let us, ere it be too late, give up this fearful traffic. I acknowledge that I was the temptress that lured you from the path of honor and sobriety. Yet it was a thoughtless act, committed by a heedless girl, and *bitterly* have I repented. (*FARLEY lifting glass to drink, MRS. FARLEY seizes it.*) John, do not drink any more! Please don't. (*FARLEY raises bottle.*)

**FAR.** Go along into *your* part of the house You make me wild! Go, or I will hit you with this bottle.

**MRS. F.** (*going L.*) Oh, what a miserable life I am living!

[Exit L. 2 E.]

**FAR.** Blast that woman I will be the death of her yet.

[Enter BRITTLE very seedy.]

**BOB.** Hello my lord. “How goes the battle?”<sup>44</sup>

**FAR.** Ah, Bob! Glad to see you. Have a *drink!* Have a dozen! Get blind, staring drunk and be happy.

**BOB.** Yes, my noble duke, I’ll take a smile,  
These weary moments to beguile; (FARLEY *setting up liquor.*)  
For a cloud of darkness is on me now,  
And sadness sets upon my brow.

**BOB.** (*Pours and drinks. FARLEY picking at his own clothing at insects.*) But what the deuce ails Farley? He must have the jim-jams<sup>45</sup> coming on. (*Aside.*)

**FAR.** How do things go, Bob? Right or wrong?

**BOB.** Oh, everything goes wrong. Hollis is cross, and has been ever since Nettleby hit him that crack on the head with a broom.

**FAR.** Nettleby’s a regular tiger-cat. (*Delirious.*) What’s – what’s that on your coat-collar, Bob? (*looking at collar.*) There he goes! (*Comes from behind bar.*) There! There! he is crawling right up – up into your ear. Ha, ha, ha! (*BOB quickly places hand to ear, frightened, but soon recovers*)

**BOB.** Oh, pshaw! Farley, you have been drinking too hard. That’s imaginary; there is nothing there.

**FAR.** I tell you there is! It is an enormous spider – no, no; he is some fly insect. (*Pointing and turning in the direction imagined. BOB turning, etc.*) There he goes! there he goes! There he’s gone. Ha, ha, ha! (*Goes behind bar.*)

**BOB.** (*L. front of bar.*) Come, come, Farley, you have been drinking too steep. You’ve got the jim-jams, and if you don’t let up you’ll get snakes in your boots.

**FAR.** Oh, there is no danger of that; but, to tell the truth, I do feel queer to-day. Is Hollis pretty busy now?

**BOB.** Yes, he is, for Hadley is retained as counsel by Thornley, and Hollis will have to work sharp or he will lose the case.

**FAR.** Oh well, you are safe enough, Bob; your part of the work was well done.

**BOB.** (*Alarmed, and looking at all the entrances.*) Hush Don’t talk so loud; there may be listeners. “The very walls have ears betimes.”<sup>46</sup>

**FAR.** Why don’t Thornley come here now? He hasn’t been here for a week. (*Picking at clothes.*)

**BOB.** Why, he’s been sick; he has had the jim-jams and snakes in his boots, and spiders and tarantulas crawling all over him – *fleas* in his eyes, *bugs* in his ears. Oh, he’s had ‘em *bad*, I tell you. But they are trying to cure him of the appetite for liquor now.

**FAR.** Cure the devil! I suppose that *Hadley* and *Slater* have a hand in that affair?

---

<sup>44</sup> A common enough way of asking how things are, but traceable to Lord Nelson’s last moments before dying at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

<sup>45</sup> Normally a fit of depression or nervousness. Used here as a synonym for the hallucinations accompanying *delirium tremens*.

<sup>46</sup> Woodward puts this speech in quotes, but it does not seem to reference any specific literary figure.

**BOB.** yes, but there is mourning in the Thornley mansion now. Their darling little child is dead, and is to be buried at three o'clock this afternoon. It's about that time now.

**FAR.** (*Very nervous.*) What – what the deuce ails me? I see two Bob Brittles, when I know that there is but one. But come, come! drink! drink! I must drive these thoughts and sights away. (*Seizes bottle to drink.*)

**BOB.** (*BOB takes it from him, and leads him to table R. BOB speaking as he does this, and FARLEY half resisting. BOB sits on corner of table, and FARLEY in chair playing cards.*) No, no, Farley, don't drink any more. Why don't you drink *moderately*, same's I do? Why don't you gauge your tank? We'll have a game of euchre. It will divert your mind. (*Seated.*)

**CHAS.** (*Enter R. 2 E. Comes down C.*) Here I am again at Farley's. Oh, would to Heaven that I could stop this craving appetite for liquor. It is one week since I tasted the accursed poison, yet I crave for it. Something seems to be gnawing at my very vitals. (*Pause.*) My darling little child is dead, and today they lay him in his last resting-place; and it were far better for me were I to be laid in that silent home than to remain the reeling, staggering, bloated libel on humanity that I am. Oh, but this accursed craving! (*Pause.*) *Come, Farley, give me some brandy.* Quick! for I am dying of thirst. (*Going suddenly to bar. FARLEY and BOB spring to feet in surprise. FARLEY goes behind bar. BOB R. end of bar. Charles R. front of bar.*)

**FAR.** What is the matter? Cheer up! Drink hearty. What is yours, Bob? It's my treat.

**BOB.** Brandy, plain. (*They fill, and are about to touch glasses when bell, in rear of scene, tolls three slowly, to represent church clock. CHARLES sets glass on bar untasted; the others do the same. CHARLES goes down stage slowly. BOB raises finger warningly to FARLEY, who leans over bar heedlessly. BOB at end of bar in attitude of mourning.*)

**CHAS.** this is the hour for the burial of my little darling; and my noble wife thinks me sick in my room. Oh, what a wretch I am to abuse the confidence of that loving, forgiving, self-sacrificing wife, who has stood so nobly by me through every trial and disgrace. I must, I *will* conquer this accursed appetite. Heaven help me to do so. (*Pause.*) But I am so thirsty. (*Charles should portray the struggle between the force of appetite and his good resolution. Slowly goes to bar, raises his glass, holding it from him. BOB and FARLEY drink theirs hastily, Charles conquers, and dashes his glass to stage.*)

**FAR.** Fool! what is the matter with you?

**CHAS.** John Farley, I have drank (*enter Slater and Hadley while he is saying this*) my last glass of liquor! And, Heaven helping me, I will henceforth lead a sober life. (*Sinks to chair L. weeping.*)

**SLA.** A good resolution, Charles. (*Remaining R.*)

**HAD.** (*Crossing to Charles.*) Yes, and one step toward the higher life. We missed you from your room, and feared the worst; and –

**FAR.** (*Seizing the bottle and attempting to advance toward HADLEY. Bob seizes and restrains him.*) Now, clear out, the whole pack of you! I don't want any of your temperance (*hic*) blarney.

**BOB.** (*Pushing him behind bar.*) Now you dry up, and keep order, for I'm going to be chairman of this meeting.

**FAR.** (*Leaning over bar.*) All (*hic*) right, Bob.

**HAD.** Thanks Robert. Charles, a good resolution should be put in force at once; delays are dangerous. Sign this pledge (*holding pledge card*), and declare your emancipation from the curse of alcoholic slavery.

**SLA.** Yes, don this badge of sobriety (*holding either red or blue ribbon, whichever you are playing under*). And let it be a reminder of your obligation. Join with us in the reformation and in the good work, forget the gloomy past.

**FAR.** (*seizing bottle and advancing,*) oh, dry up and –

**BOB.** (*Pushing him behind bar.*) Order! Order in the meeting or I'll bring my gavel down on your pate! (*Raising fist. FARLEY again leans over bar.*)

**FAR.** All – (*hic*) – Bob.

**HAD.** Charles, for the sake of the love you bore for your dear Christian mother ere she was numbered with the dead; for the sake of all you hold near and dear, I beg of you, sign this pledge.

**SLA.** Yes, and then go to your home wearing this emblem of total abstinence, and you will see the sad face of your beloved wife light up with the smile of hope, and the sunbeams of joy will gleam in her eyes at your approach.

**HAD.** And ere long the bright roses of health and happiness will bloom on her now pale, grief-stricken cheeks. (*Charles takes pledge-card, rises.*)

A CHORUS OF VOICES SING IN REAR OF SCENE, “ALMOST PERSUADED.”<sup>47</sup>

[CHARLES goes slowly (to time of song) to table. Signs with trembling hand. HADLEY follows to L. of table. SLATER at R leans over and pins on ribbon. Both shake hands with him, he passes to R. 1 wing. While CHARLES is going to table BOB leaves the end of bar where he has been standing, watches CHARLES until he takes the pencil to sign, then exhibits deep emotion, and to time of song goes to L. 1 wing, leans head on arm against wing as though weeping. HADLEY goes slowly to BOB, and as the strain ends places hand upon BOB's shoulder and speaks. FARLEY over bar, seemingly heedless.)

**HAD.** Robert, will you sign, and become another standard-bearer in this grand army to fight against King Alcohol?

**BOB.** (*Turning to HADLEY.*) Well, that would be rather hard on old Farley. Why, if I leave off drinking it will surely “bust up” this old shebang. Farley has made more than half his living off of Charley Thornley and me, ever since this ribbon movement struck the town. And I have got so that I want to guzzle the infernal stuff all the time. (*Pause.*) But, however, I guess I will try a dose of temperance, and kinder work it off. (*Takes pledge-card, goes rapidly toward table. FARLEY comes front of bar flourishing bottle. BOB throws him behind bar again.*)

**FAR.** Now clear out!

---

<sup>47</sup> Well-known temperance hymn written by George Dew and published in *Bible Temperance Hymns*, edited by J. Merritte Driver and published by John Church, Cincinnati (1878). Its first verse Almost persuaded, now to be free./Almost persuaded, God helping me./Now from **the social glass**,/Now from the wretched past,/Into the light at last,/God helping me.) contrasts with the last (Fully persuaded, can I be free?/Fully persuaded, God helping me./Free from the galling chain,/Free from the bitter shame,/Free ever to remain/God helping me.) unfortunately, this edition includes only the words for this hymn.

**BOB.** Now you keep quiet. This meeting hain't adjourned yet. (*Goes to table and signs quickly. HADLEY and SLATER shake hands with him. SLATER first pinning on ribbon.*)

**SLA.** Bravo, Bob! stick to your pledge.

**HAD.** Robert, keep your ribbon in sight. Come, Charles!

**CHAS.** Farley, I have drank my last glass of your poison. When I am fully restored to manhood I may forgive you, but shall never more frequent this *gate to ruin*. (*Exit SLATER, HADLEY, and THORNLEY R. 2 E. BOB begins to laugh, and points at FARLEY. Comes down R.*)

**BOB.** Ha, h, ha! Old Farley looks just as though he'd lost all of his friends, and all his relations was in the penitentiary. Ha, ha, ha! (*Looks at bar.*) I am getting awfully dry. I wonder how water will taste! I reckon that it will give me a surprise party. I'd like a drink; but then – this ribbon.

**FAR.** Come up (*hic*), Bob, and (*hic*) take a drink. you only (*hic*) signed that pledge to fool the fools. Come up! (*hic*) Come up!

**BOB.** (*Aside.*) Now comes the tug-of-war. (*Going to end of bar, and pushing back the bottle and glass which FARLEY has set out.*) Farley, I have expended the most of my earning for a number of years at your bar. Now I have got so seedy and drink so much liquor that Hollis says that if I do not stop drinking so much whiskey and dress better he'll discharge me. Now I've signed that pledge and donned this ribbon, and I am going to s-t-i-c-k (*spelled very slowly*) stick. (*Shouted very loudly in FARLEY's ear. FARLEY leaps back.*) And allow me to inform you that I consider any person who will try to induce a fellow to go back on that ribbon, beneath the dignity of a *ground-hog*.

**FAR.** (*Coming from behind bar, and pointing.*) Bob Brittle, you're (*hic*) a fool!

**BOB.** (*Seizing him.*) "Thou call'st me *fool!* I call thee *liar!* And if thou gettest me *mad*, I'll tear thee limb from limb," and throw your bones to some hungry bull-dog. (*Throws him down at end of bar. He half rises on elbow.*)

**FAR.** Bob Brittle, you're (*hic*) a fool!

**BOB.** John Farley, erase from the catalogue of your customers the name of Robert Brittle, Esquire, and consider our friendship at an end forever.

**FAR.** (*Quickly.*) You're (*hic*) a fool!

**BOB.** I nevermore shall enter within the radius of your contaminating influence, or breathe again the polluted air of your diabolical den of evil.

**FAR.** (*Still in position on floor.*) You're a fo-(*hic*)-ol!

**BOB.** I go to do great deeds, for within the hour,  
The innocent shall triumph and the villain feel my power.

[*Exit BOB R. 2 E., Farley repeating "You're a fool, etc."*]

[**Scene II.**—*Street or landscape (either will do).* Enter R. 1 E. HADLEY, followed by SLATER and CHARLES.]

**HAD.** How gloriously the great work of reform goes on. I trust that it will not be long ere this town can boast that it has no grog-shop within its jurisdiction.

**SLA.** And may the good work progress all over our land, until the fires of the distilleries are quenched and the white flag of temperance<sup>48</sup> floats from every housetop, every dome and balcony of this our beloved country.

**CHAS.** I can indorse all of your enthusiastic remarks, but I feel that I am not free from the grasp of the demon. Yet it is a fight between me and old King Alcohol, but with Heaven's help I'll conquer.

[Enter BRITTLE hastily R. 1 E. *Runs across stage to HADLEY. Hands package, apparently legal papers tied together.*]

**BOB.** Mr. Hadley, here is a package which I wish you to take charge of. Inclosed is an explanation.

Now question me not, for I must away.  
Strange things will come to pass this day;  
Strange secrets doth that package hold,  
And stranger the tale that I'll unfold. [Exit BOB hastily L. 1 E.]

**HAD.** I cannot fathom Brittle; he is either a fool or a knave, or else a deep devoted friend to you, Charles. We have always regarded him as a tool in the hands of Hollis. If this be true, this package may be part of their plot. Be this as it may, I trust that Hollis' frauds will in some way be brought to light, and a part, at least, of your fortune be restored.

**SLA.** I propose, Mr. Hadley, that we return to *your* office and examine the package, while Charles returns to his sorrow-stricken home to gladden the heart of his weeping wife by exhibiting that emblem of happiness. (*Pointing to CHARLES' ribbon.*)

**HAD.** A good thought. And this evening I wish you both to visit Farley's with me. I fear that he has the tremens coming on, and I feel it *duty* to assist him all in our power.

[Exit CHARLES, followed by HADLEY and SLATER R. 1 E.]

**BOB.** (*Re-entering L. 1 E. Watching them off.*) Ah! they have gone to examine the package. That's all right. (*Looking L.*) By all the powers! here comes the bewitcher of my heart, the June blossom of my affections, and the rosebud of my hopes. How I long to clasp her to my heart and hear her exclaim, "Dear Robert, hug me good!" (*Leans against L. 1 wing, staring.*)

[Enter NETTIE NETTLEBY R. 1 E. *Stops and gazes at Bob.*]

**N. N.** Well, what are you staring at? Are you moonstruck? or have you been drinking too many gin sours to-day? (*BOB steps forward.*)

**BOB.** Dare you accuse me of imbibing that intoxicating and exhilarating and infatuating beverage usually termed gin sour? Would you insult me, madam? *I*, who have so lately renounced the wine-cup and espoused the temperance cause? (*Showing ribbon.*)

**N. N.** *You* espoused the temperance cause? How long since?

---

<sup>48</sup> Woodard may have in mind the White Ribbon of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, founded by Frances Willard in 1873. Similar to the blue and red ribbons already noted, the white ribbon, tied in a bow, symbolized purity.

**BOB.** Oh, ho! It's a *long* while. I should say it was more than a half hour. But I must confess I am getting rather thirsty and water don't seem to be *thick* enough.

**N. N.** Oh, there's no danger of old Farley's losing *your* custom. (**BOB** *indignant.*) But Bob, why have you never told me about those papers I saw in Squire Hollis' office? Now there's something wrong about it (**BOB** *striding from L. to C.*), and folks *do* say that you are Hollis' right-hand man in knavery and fraud. Umph! I *do* like to make folks happy.

(BRITTLE L.C.)

**BOB.** Miss Nettleby, "He that steals my purse—" <sup>49</sup>

**N. N.** (*Quickly.*) Don't find much cash in it.

**BOB.** (*Very excited.*) "But he that robs me of my good name—"

**N. N.** (*Quickly.*) Makes a bad bargain.

**BOB.** Don't interrupt me. Miss Nettleby, thou think'st me a villain. Canst thou keep a secret?

**N. N.** Oh, stop that stage-struck style. Yes, I can keep a secret. (**BOB** *goes to L. 1 E., then crosses to R. 1 E., comes R. C. very mysteriously.*)

**BOB.** Hush! Come here! come nearer! Are you *sure* that you can keep a secret?

**N. N.** (*Eagerly.*) Yes, yes, I am *sure* I can keep a secret.

**BOB.** (*Places hand to mouth and mouth near her ear, and loudly bawling.*) So can I.

**N. N.** (*Springing back.*) Oh, you brute! You fool! You great big stupid!

**BOB.** (*mocking*) Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

**N. N.** Oh, I will pay you for this when the trial comes off about Hollis' mortgage on the Thornley mansion (**BOB** *again showing anger. Striding from R. to C.*), for they do say that it is a forgery and that you had a hand in it. (**BOB** *very angry*) Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

**BOB.** (*Stopping R.*) Miss Nettleby, look at this noble brow – this broad, expansive forehead – this well-developed cranium!

**N. N.** Yes, a regular swell-head.

**BOB.** Illiterate damsel, do not interrupt me. (*Aside.*) Pshaw! why do I waste words with her? It is casting pearls before swine.

But duty calls, and I must away,  
For e'er the morrow's dawn of day,  
Bob Brittle will surprise the world,  
For on the outer walls my banner is unfurled.

[*Exit R. 1 E.*]

**N. N.** (*Calling.*) Mister Brittle! Mister Brittle!

[*Re-enter BOB R. 1 E. Makes low bow.*]

**BOB.** My darling Miss Nettleby, what do you desire?

**N. N.** I advise you to drink hop tea; it is said to be very quieting to the nerves. (*Laughing.*)

**BOB.** (*Again excited.*) Oh, pshaw!

---

<sup>49</sup> Bob's chopped-off quotations are from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

[Exits indignantly R. 1 E.]

N. N. Umph! I *do* like to make folks happy. [Exit N.N. L. 1 E.]

**Scene III.** – FARLEY’S bar-room again as before. FARLEY discovered in same condition lying on floor near end of bar repeating, “You’re a fool,” etc.

[Enter MRS. FARLEY, L. 2 E. Goes to FARLEY. Attempts to raise him.]

**MRS. F.** What is the matter, John?

**FAR.** (*Springing up and glaring at end of bar.*) What! what is that monster sitting on the bar? Ha, ha, ha!

**MRS. F.** Why, John, there is nothing there, it is only your imagination.

**FAR.** It’s a lie! I can see his eyes glare. (*Recovering.*) No, no; it is as you say – only imagination. (*Sitting in chair R. rear table.*) Oh, how wretched I am! There, wife, leave me now; I will be all right soon.

**MRS. F.** No, John, I must remain with you until you are better. (N. N. *heard off* L. 2 E.)

N. N. Mrs. Farley! Mrs. Farley! (*Enters L. 2 E.*) Oh, here you are. (*Crosses to R.*)

**FAR.** (*Going behind bar.*) What do you want, you gossiping fool?

N. N. Oh, I come to tell you the good news. I just saw Charley Thornley with Mr. Hadley and Dr. Slater, and Charles had a nice new ribbon on his coat. So, you see, old toddy-stick, you will never have a chance to rob or drug him again.

**FAR.** Who says that I robbed Thornley?

N. N. Everybody And they *do* say that when the trial comes off about the Thornley mortgage, it will be proven that you was in the plot. (MRS. FARLEY *in chair weeping.* FARLEY *very excited.*) Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

**FAR.** If you don’t (*hic*) get out of here, you meddlesome old (*hic*) windmill, I’ll be the death of you!

N. N. Oh, you can’t scare me, you old rum-cask. I came here to free my mind.

**MRS. F.** (*Rising*) Please, Miss Nettleby, do not vex John; for he is ill today and cannot bear it.

N. N. He is drunk; that’s what is the matter with him; but for your sake I will go. I pity you, but then you don’t deserve it, for they do say that you gave Farley the first glass of wine he ever tasted. (MRS. FARLEY *sinks to chair weeing.* FARLEY *Excitedly seizes bottle.*) Umph! I do like to make people happy.

**FAR.** (*Raising bottle.*) Now you confounded (*hic*) old gossip, clear out of here, or I’ll throw this bottle at your head.

N. N. Oh, don’t you dare throw that at me You had better go to bed and sober off. (FARLEY *threatening with bottle.*) Oh, throw it. (FARLEY *throws, it misses.*) You’re too drunk to hit a flock of barns. Umph! I do like to make people happy.

[Exit NETTIE NETTLEBY R. 2 E.]

[FARLEY *Pours liquor. Is about to drink, holding glass in left hand.* MRS. FARLEY. *goes quickly to bar, seizes tumbler, sits it on bar.* FARLEY *seizes her wrist with left hand, draws trick bottle<sup>50</sup> from under bar with right hand. Comes around bar speaking,* MRS. FARLEY *at the same time pleading and struggling.*]

---

<sup>50</sup> This substitution is made so that this “trick bottle” can be used to hit Mrs. Farley without injuring her.

**FAR.** Clear out you temptress! You fiend (*Bottle raised.*)

**MRS. F.** (*At the same time, so that their voices are mingled.*) Oh, John! John! don't!  
Don't kill me!

MUSIC TREMOLO

[*Music changes to Pleyel's*<sup>51</sup> "*German Hymn*,"<sup>52</sup> *very soft until end of act. All speak through the music.*]

**FAR.** You have been haunting me for months – ay, for years. And now I will have my revenge! Die! (*Strikes her on the head with bottle. She drops to one knee.*) Die, foul monster (*Repeats blow. She falls to stage. FARLEY throws bottle alongside of her.*) Ha, ha, ha! I have conquered, and now I am free. Ha, ha, ha! more, more rum! (*Goes behind bar for drinks. Then leans over bar long enough to count ten. Seemingly asleep. Arouses, looks wildly around room.*) Wife! wife! (*Looks over bar. Discovers her.*) What is the matter? Wife, what is the matter? Come, get up and get me some supper (*Going around bar.*) What is the matter! Look up! Speak! (*Kneels and peers in her face, then springs to feet.*) Good Heavens! she is dead. Oh, it all comes to me now: I have murdered her! Henceforth I must wander an Ishmael<sup>53</sup> upon the earth, with the brand of Cain<sup>54</sup> upon my brow. But no, no! the penalty is the gallows – yes, the gallows. (*Again delirious.*) Ha, ha, ha! but I will cheat them all; yes I will cheat them all. *Goes behind bar, takes phial which has white sugar in it, and pours a part of it in tumbler. Adds whiskey. Tea should be used to represent whiskey. Drinks. Leaves phial on bar. Staggered front of bar.*) Ha, ha, ha! I have cheated them all! Yes, yes—(*Pause. Goes to wife, kneels beside her and in piteous tones.*) Oh, wife, wife, why did you tempt me with that *first glass* of wine? Little did you think that it would rob us both of health, wealth, happiness, and life. (*Weeping. Then springing up.*) Hark! Hark! I hear them coming. Ha, ha, ha! They would take me to the gallows; but I have cheated them all; yes, for the poison already begins its work Ha, ha, ha! (*Falls.*)

---

<sup>51</sup> Ignaz Pleyel (1757-1831) was an Austrian-born French composer and musician.

<sup>52</sup> Woodward references Pleyel's "German Hymn" here, but I think it likely he intends another composition, usually styled "Pleyel's Hymn," published with varying sets of lyrics, sometimes "People of the Living God," or "Welcome, Welcome, Day of Rest." One of Pleyel's compositions was published in collections of "shape note" songs that would have been widely used in the 19C across the central U.S., geographically coterminous with the areas where *The Social Glass* would have played. In my copy of *The Sacred Harp*, for example, edited by B.F. White (Cooper Edition) in 2012, "Pleyel's Hymn Second" appears, dated 1786, with the following words by Helen Maria Williams: "While thee I seek, protecting power,/Be my vain wishes stilled./And may this consecrated hour/With better hopes be filled./Thy love the pow'r of thought bestowed,/To thee my thoughts would soar;/Thy mercy o'er my life has flowed,/That mercy I adore." Since the music here is not sung, the words are not an issue.

<sup>53</sup> Abraham's son by his concubine Hagar (Genesis 16:3). There's no particular reason to identify him as condemned to wander, unless it stems from the identification of Ishmael as the ancestor of (nomadic) Arabs.

<sup>54</sup> First-born of Adam and Eve, who *is* cursed to a life of wandering after his murder of his brother Abel, and marked with a sign in his forehead (Genesis 4:1-18).

[Enter HADLEY, SLATER, and CHARLES, R. 2 E. They exhibit astonishment and seem uncertain what to do or say at first, but SLATER, physician-like, goes to MRS. FARLEY. and kneels. Examines her head, showing contusion.]

**HAD.** (*Recovering.*) Good Heavens! what can have happened here. (*Goes to L. CHARLES searches room.*)

**SLA.** Mrs. Farley is dead. Her skull is fractured, evidently from a blow inflicted with a bottle. (*Goes to FARLEY. Speaks rapidly.*) Farley seem in the agonies of death.

**CHAS.** (*Having discovered phial on bar, hands it to SLATER.*) Doctor, what is this?

**SLA.** (*First smelling, then pouring in hand and rubbing with fingers.*) Strychnine!<sup>55</sup> Evidently a powerful dose. I will go to the druggist for an antidote,<sup>56</sup> and also have the coroner called. [*Exit R. 1 E.*]

**CHAS.** (C.) What a warning this is to me – I who so lately have renounced the wine-cup!

**HAD.** (L.) and it should be to each and all to beware of “*The Social Glass*,” lest they end their lives like these poor *victims* of the *bottle*.

SLOW DROP. END OF ACT

## ACT V

**SCENE I.**—HOLLIS’ law office as in Act III. HOLLIS discovered seated. Bowie-knife in table-drawer. Mortgage and papers on table.

**HOL.** (*Solus.*) So, Hadley is retained by Thornley. Now I must proceed carefully, for Hadley is shrewd and keen. I wish that Thornley had engaged some other lawyer, for Hadley is above bribery. However, Brittle did imitate Thornley’s signature nicely, and Charles was so drunk and stupid that night Thornley cannot take oath to its being a forgery. Now, to look over the mortgage. (*Examines mortgage.*) What the deuce is this? The mortgage surely, but no names signed to it, and no number of registry. This must be a copy. (*Enter BOB L. Dressed nobby<sup>57</sup> and ribbon on coat. His nose not quite so red as in Act IV. Crosses R. HOLLIS rises, comes L. C.*) Ah, Brittle, I am glad you have come. Did you have the Thornley mortgage recorded as I ordered you at the time it was given?

**BOB.** I have the supreme pleasure of informing you that I did—ha, ha, ha!—not.

**HOL.** The devil! Why did you not? (*Aside.*) What does this mean? I will lock the outer door to prevent intrusion. (*Exits L. Re-enters, key in hand, which he places in pocket.*) He is now completely in my power. I gave you two thousand dollars to sign certain names to certain documents.

**BOB.** And didn’t I do it?

**HOL.** Where is the Thornley mortgage?

**BOB.** There you have it, on the table.

---

<sup>55</sup> Powerful crystalline alkaloid, attacking the nervous system, and paralyzing the lungs, producing death rapidly, if not quite as fast as portrayed here.

<sup>56</sup> He will go in vain. There is no antidote.

<sup>57</sup> Chic, stylish, as a “nob,” a person of some social position.

**HOL.** But there are no names signed to it.

**BOB.** Well, you see, boss, it is a kinder “hocus pocus” game – *now* you see it, and *now* you don’t. It isn’t the legitimate style, but a kinder “side show.”

**HOL.** Brittle, I believe that you have been playing me false; if so, you will find it risky business trifling with me.

**BOB.** (*Coolly placing chair L. of table, and taking a seat R. of table.*) Sit down, boss. Don’t let your angry passions rise. But I have forgot that little melody.<sup>58</sup>

**HOL.** Curse your impudence (*Aside.*) But, no; I must not get excited; I must work easy, and learn the extent of his treachery. (*Sits.*) Well, Robert, what have you to say?

**BOB.** Well, boss, that’s just what I was going to ask you.

**HOL.** There is the Thornley mortgage, with his name signed as the principal and yours as the witness. (*Pause.*) I will no longer trifle with you. (*Goes to table drawer, takes large Bowie-knife, and returns to seat.*)

**BOB.** (*Shoving his seat extreme R.*) Now boss, that looks as though you were getting stage-struck.

**HOL.** Where is the Thornley mortgage?

**BOB.** There on the table. Now, boss, allow me the extreme felicity of informing you that I once saw a *drama*—

**HOL.** (*Quickly.*) Oh, the devil take the drama!

**BOB.** And a part of the language of the play—

**HOL.** Oh, the deuce take the play!

**BOB.** I always remembered. It was this: “Promises made to be broken should be written in *sand*.”<sup>59</sup>

**HOL.** (*Rising.*) What has this rigamarole to do with the mortgage?

**BOB.** (*Rising and backing off against wing.*) Oh, keep quiet! Don’t let that amiable disposition get riled; it will only make you bilious.

**HOL.** (*Sitting.*) well, the mortgage!

**BOB.** (*Sitting.*) You gave me two thousand dollars to *forge* the name of Charles Thornley to that mortgage, and, remembering the language of the play, I wrote his name, as well as that of my own, in a solution of gum Arabic<sup>60</sup> and water, and sprinkled it with blotting sand. The sand and solution have become dry, the sand has fallen off, and, hocus pocus, the names have flown! (*HOLLIS leaps to feet. BOB the same, backing against wing, constantly showing fear.*) Hold on, boss! Don’t interrupt my little story. I deposited the two thousand dollars to the credit of Eva Thornley in the savings bank.

**HOL.** And you have been playing me false all this time, *traitor*? (*Raises knife. But HOLLIS lets knife hand fall by his side when BOB commences to speak, so as to learn the extent of his duplicity.*)

**BOB.** No, no, not *traitor*, but detective. Ahem! self-appointed detective. Now listen, boss. Charles Thornley’s father was my best earthly friend. I saw through your villainy, and vowed to save Charles Thornley’s fortune, I have done it! Charles and all the

---

<sup>58</sup> Bob is quoting from “On a Late Fracas at Newmarket,” an 1883 parody of a poem entitled “Against Quarreling and Fighting” by Isaac Watts (1674-1748). Many of Watt’s poems or hymns were set to music, and many of them were subject to parody. Indeed, Watts’ best-known poem is “How Doth the Little Busy Bee,” likely because Lewis Carroll parodied it in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* as “How Doth the Little Crocodile.”

<sup>59</sup> An unidentified quotation.

<sup>60</sup> The sap of the acacia, used as an adhesive.

townsfolks believed me a tool in your hands, but now they will know that Bob Brittle is an *honest man!*

**HOL.** Brittle, your life is in my hands, and I will not be *foiled*. Enter into my plot, and I will make you a rich man; *refuse*, and I will murder you in an hour. I have sworn to beggar Eva Thornley, and I *will* keep my oath. All the estate is now in my hands except the homestead. Sign that mortgage, and *that* will be mine. (*Raising knife.*) Sign it! (*Business repeated.*)

**BOB.** Hush! Your temper hold  
And an enormous tale I will unfold.

The original *Thornley will*, the original bonds, stocks, and mortgages, are now in the hands of Harold Hadley, and soon the officers of the law will be here to arrest you. (*HOLLIS staggers to extreme left.*)

**HOL.** Then I am indeed ruined. But no, the papers were in my inner vault, and the key in my pocket. *Who* opened it?

**BOB.** Well, boss, I *cannot* tell a lie; I did it with my little key.

**HOL.** Then I am disgraced and ruined forever. But you, *traitor*, shall die. (*Raises knife. Is rushing toward him. BOB aims two revolvers, which he draws from coat pockets. Picture.*)

**BOB.** You're euchred, boss; for I hold both bowers.<sup>61</sup>

*Closed in. Quick change to Street or Landscape in first groove,  
which is*

## SCENE II.

[*Enter SLATER R. HADLEY enters L., meeting*]

**HAD.** How fast startling events do crowd upon us. Last week the murder of Mrs. Farley by her husband, and *now* Hollis, it is rumored, has cut his throat. Is it true?

**SLA.** Yes, it is true. Yesterday Brittle informed him that all of his villainy was exposed. Hollis then made an attempt upon Brittle's life, which Bob cleverly foiled; and thus learning that the officers were about to arrest him, he cut his throat, and now lies dead in his office. I have been summoned to sit on the coroner's jury. But here comes Brittle. (*Enter BRITTLE R. 1 E.*) Good-morning, Robert (*Shaking hands, BRITTLE passing between HADLEY and SLATER.*)

**BOB.** Good-morning, gentlemen (*Shakes with HADLEY.*)

**SLA.** Robert, you have proved a *true* friend to the son of your old benefactor.

**HAD.** And a true friend to yourself, for I see that you still wear the ribbon, and are picking up in every way.

**SLA.** Well, Hadley, I can no longer delay. Please accompany me to the inquest. (*Crosses to L.*)

---

<sup>61</sup> See Note 15.

**HAD.** I will, doctor. Good-bye, Brittle. If I can assist you at any time, I am at your service; only stick to our motto, “*Dare to do right!*”<sup>62</sup> [Exit L. 1 E. SLATER and HADLEY.]

**BOB.** (*Solus.*) Well, well, what will happen next? What strange things do come to pass! First the Ribbon movement strikes the town like a thunderbolt, and all the old guzzlers, myself included, sign the pledge. The whiskey traffic stops. Old Farley gets the jim-jams by drinking his own benzene<sup>63</sup> – hits his wife with a crack on the head. Verdict, death by the bottle. Then he suicides himself into his kingdom come with strychnine. And Hollis, learning that his frauds were exposed, cuts his throat and goes to join his master in the infernal regions. (*Pointing down.*) Charley Thornley is going to turn the Rising Sun Hotel into an asylum for the cure of inebriation -- and I find myself like Micawber again, “Waiting for some-thing to turn up.” I know that I added fresh laurels to my brow by euchring<sup>64</sup> Hollis in his little game of fraud, and that people have stopped calling me old Hollis’ knave. But what does it avail? I am like *Othello*. “My occupation’s gone.” Now if I could induce Nettleby to marry me. (NETTIE NETTLEBY enters R. 1 E. Comes behind BOB, who is partially facing L.) I would have a nice snug little home, for she has a beautiful cottage and two acres of land, and a snug thousand at interest. Besides, as she is an orphan, there would be no old mother-in-laws<sup>65</sup> to interfere. Oh, Nettleby! (NETTIE NETTLEBY slaps him on the back. He jumps to L. very frightened.)

**N. N.** Mr. Brittle, what have you to say derogatory to the character of my mother?

**BOB.** (*Going toward her, and attempting to speak. When he advances she meets him with indignant expressions and gesticulations. Business repeated*) M-M-Miss Nettle– Oh, Lord Oh dear (*advances*) Miss Nettle– Oh, Lord (*retreats*) I’ve upset my kettle of fish. Miss Nettleby, I–I–have nothing to say de-rogatory to the character of your mother. I have no wish to disturb the poor old departed defunct. I was speaking of mother-in-laws in general.

**N. N.** I have a great mind not to give you this letter. (*Showing letter.*)

**BOB.** A letter for me Who is it from?

**N. N.** Perhaps it’s from one of your creditors.

**BOB.** Insulting damsel, know that the estate of Robert Brittle is solvent. Hand me the letter. (*She hands it, but just as his fingers are about to close upon it she pulls it away. Repeats. BOB angrily strides L.*)

**N. N.** Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

**BOB.** Miss Nettleby, I shall require the writer of that letter to send his letters, in the future, by the *mail*, and not by the *fe-male*.

**N. N.** Now, Robert, don’t get angry. Here’s your letter. Mr. Thornley sent it. (*Hands letter.*)

**BOB.** (*Eagerly.*) Mr. Thornley? (*Faces L. Opens and silently reads letter. NETTIE NETTLEBY stands tip-toe peeping over his shoulder. Then goes extreme R.*)

**N. N.** (*Aside*) A legacy of five thousand dollars, and a present of five thousand more. Oh, my Robert is rich now. Oh, my if he would only propose now.

---

<sup>62</sup> A motto used by many organizations, before and since, but specifically the title of a popular temperance hymn.

<sup>63</sup> A common slang term for alcohol, especially cheap alcohol, because of its toxicity to humans.

<sup>64</sup> A pun on Bob’s use of the “bowers” to stymie Hollis, but also a slang term for cheating, thus enriching the pun.

<sup>65</sup> Mothers-in-law. Bob makes a common error with this plural.

**BOB.** (*Left aside.*) Now, Bob Brittle, *something his turned up*. Now I'll get married to some nice young lady and go off on a wedding-tour. How fortunate it is that I have left off imbibing, for not a penny of this shall go for whiskey.

**N. N.** (*Right*) Robert. Ahem, Mr. Brittle, is the news good, or are some of your relations dead? (*Getting toward C. slowly and coquettishly.*)

**BOB.** (*Going towards C.*) Miss Nettleby, Robert Brittle is an orphan, with not a living relative. The news is good. (*Getting nearer.*)

**N. N.** I am glad of it, for you know that I do like to make folks happy.

**BOB** (*Aside.*) Egad, that letter has made me so happy that I would like to kiss the bearer. (*Kisses her.*)

**N. N.** (*Stamping her foot and pretending to be angry*) Bob Brittle I should think that you would be ashamed of yourself.

**BOB.** Now, now, Net-Net-Nettie, don't go to getting mad. I was only paying the postage<sup>66</sup> on that letter — and you know my breath don't smell of gin sour now.

**N. N.** And—and—your nose ain't—quite so red?

**BOB.** (*Aside.*) Ah, if I could induce her to marry me now, while she doesn't know that I am rich, I should know that she loved me for myself alone, and not for my money. Nettie, I want to tell you something.

**N. N.** (*Getting close together. Yankee courtship business.*) What is it Robert?

**BOB.** I'm—I'm—I'm—

**N. N.** Well, I guess you *am*.

**BOB.** I am going to get *married*.

**N. N.** (*Backing R.*) I did not know that you were engaged. Who is the young lady?

**BOB.** Why, ah — (*twiddling thumbs*) — ah — why — ah — *you*. That is, if you'll have me.

**N. N.** Why Mr. Brittle

**BOB.** (*Both close together.*) Now, Nettie, I have been thinking what a nice place your cottage could be made into. We'd put in bay windows and repaint it, and build a balcony and portico. We'd fix up the garden with arbors and fountains, and have a nice orchard. We'd keep a pony, a pig, and cow, and ducks and geese, and chickens, and we'd have a nice lawn in front of the house. Come, what do you say— will you marry me?

**N. N.** I—want to—think about it.

**BOB.** (*Crossing to R., NETTIE NETTLEBY to L.*) Only think what delightful walks we would have when the moon was shining in all its transcendent beauty. "We'd wander by the brookside,"<sup>67</sup> or "through the garden while the perfumed light steals through the mists of alabaster lamps, heavy with the sighs of orange groves, or murmurs of low gushing—"<sup>68</sup>

**N. N.** (*Quickly.*) Oh, pshaw you are altogether too *gushing* now.

**BOB.** Nay, gentle maiden, let not a frown darken that snow-white brow, but name the day that you'll be Mrs. Brittle.

---

<sup>66</sup> "Post Office" was a common kissing game played by adolescents in the mid-20C. It has been played since the mid-19C. You can find it in Laura Ingalls Wilder.

<sup>67</sup> "I'd Wander by the Brookside" is a traditional song, with lyrics developing from a poem by Lord Houghton (Richard Monckton Milnes) about 1850 that begins with that exact line. It was set to music by James Hine, but as is usual with traditional songs, there are various musical settings.

<sup>68</sup> This effusion seems to have been taken by Woodward from *Lady of Lyons*, a play by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, performed in London and published in 1838. Bulwer-Lytton was better-known as a novelist, but best known for having begun one of his novels with the line "It was a dark and stormy night," appropriated by Madeleine L'Engle for her 1962 novel *A Wrinkle in Time*, and by Snoopy as a running gag in *Peanuts*.

**N. N.** Are you *sure* that you will never drink any more gin sours?

**BOB.** Yes.

**N. N.** Will you leave off sprouting theatrical nonsense, and stop writing play books?

**BOB.** Yes, for Shakespeare, Dion Boucicault,<sup>69</sup> and Bartly Campbell<sup>70</sup> have overstocked the market.

**N. N.** Then four weeks from next Sunday.

**BOB.** Hurrah I am going to marry a girl who loves me for myself alone, and not for my money. And know, darling Nettleby, that I am rich; for old Mr. Thornley's will bequeaths me five thousand dollars, and Charley Thornley gives me five thousand more for spoiling old Hollis' game of fraud.

**N. N.** Ha, ha, ha Well, I knew all that before.

**BOB.** (*Astonished and angry.*) The deuce you did How did you obtain the information?

**N. N.** (*Laughing.*) I looked over your shoulder while you were reading the letter.

**BOB.** (*Striding R.*) Then—then—you—you—don't love me for myself alone?

**N. N.** N—o!

**BOB.** Is it for my money?

**N. N.** N—o!

**BOB.** Then *what is* the inducement?

**N. N.** Because I *do* love to make folks happy. [N. N. *exit* L. 1 E. *laughing.*]

**BOB.** Umph! I am sold; and, as usual, she has got the best of me. [*Exit* L. 1 E.]

*Scene changes, showing*

**SCENE LAST.**—*Thornley's sitting-room. Guests (the number to suit size of stage and talent) having a social party. Ladies and gents all wearing the ribbon. Or if EVA sings, the guests may be dispensed with. The social party is the most popular. As scene changes they sing some modern song. At close of song,*

DIALOGUE COMMENCES

**CHAS.** Friends, how happily passes the time, and how I enjoy the comforts of my home since I banished the bottle from our house, the wine-cup from my lips, and became a temperance man.

**EVA.** You may then judge of my feelings to see you a man once more, beloved and respected by your fellow-men. Oh, you know not how my heart throbbed with joy when you made a solemn vow to abstain forever from intoxicating liquors. It seemed an answer to my prayers, for during the dark days of your disgrace I never lost faith in prayer, or in the efficacy of the good principles taught you by your Christian mother while a youth.

**CHAS.** Eva, I do believe that the principles taught me by my mother was my salvation. And I do believe that there never was a man so degraded, so debased, but what in his

---

<sup>69</sup> Dionysius Lardner Boucicault (1829-1890) was an Irish actor and dramatist famous on both sides of the Atlantic.

<sup>70</sup> Bartly Theodore Campbell (1843-1888) began to write plays in 1871, after a successful career as a newspaperman and critic in Pittsburg.

sober moments would acknowledge, to himself, that he often felt the influence of his mother's love and good advice.

[Enter HADLEY and SLATER L. 2 E. *The courtesies of society extended, and HADLEY and SLATER stand r., CHARLES and EVA C. Guests in background.*]

**CHAS.** Welcome to our house, my friends.

[As HADLEY and SLATER enter, enter BRITTLE L. 2 E.]

**EVA.** And here is Mr. Brittle—he who saved our fortune. Thanks, and welcome to our now happy home. (*Business repeated. Enter NETTIE NETTLEBY.*) And here is Miss Nettieby

**BOB.** (*At L. of CHARLES. Quickly.*) Or rather the future Mrs. Brittle.

**N. N.** (*Quickly.*) Don't tell all you know, Brittle.

**CHAS.** Brittle, allow me to congratulate you, for to you I owe much; for you saved my fortune by your shrewdness.

**BOB.** And you amply rewarded me; so that balances accounts.

**EVA.** And now, kind friends, we will pass a social evening, our happiness unmarred by that tempter, the wine-cup.

**CHAS.** And let the past teach us that "The Social Glass" is but the first step on the road to ruin and disgrace.

**SLA.** And if we are ever tempted to depart from the principles of temperance, let us remember the victims of the bottle.

**HAD.** And may we all lend our influence to stop the progress of intemperance, and to induce both old and young to adopt as their beverage the liquid nature brews, sparkling water.<sup>71</sup> (*Stepping forward to C.*) And now, kind friends—

**BOB.** (*Quickly waving him back and stepping to L. C.*)

(*To audience.*)  
One moment, Hadley: your rather lag;  
I claim it my privilege to speak the tag.  
Ladies and gentlemen, allow me your attention.  
I thank you for your condescension,  
Liberal patronage, and applause,  
And hope that you will all join our cause.

(NETTLEBY pulls BOB back.)

**N. N.** Now, Brittle, you've said just enough. Don't get soft and sappy

**BOB.** Don't interrupt me

**N. N.** (*To audience.*) Umph! I do like to make folks happy.

---

<sup>71</sup> Invented in 1787 by British chemist Joseph Priestly, carbonated water was widely drunk as an alternative to alcoholic drinks in 19C America. Even before that, naturally carbonated water was drunk in classical Greece. When flavors and sweeteners began to be added in the 19C, "seltzer" sales boomed.