

**THE MONEY SPINNER;
AN ORIGINAL
COMEDY IN TWO ACTS**

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The money spinner; an original comedy in two acts by Arthur W. Pinero

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ARTHUR W. PINERO

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AN ORIGINAL COMEDY

IN TWO ACTS

BY

ARTHUR W. PINERO

*Author of "Two Hundred a Year," "La Comete," "Two can Fly
at that Game," "Daisy's Escape" "Hester's Mystery,"
"Bygones"*

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THE MONEY SPINNER.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>Prince's, Manchester, November 6th, 1882.</i>	<i>St. James's, London, January 6th, 1881.</i>
Lord Kensington.....	Mr. J. Bolton.....	Mr. W. H. Kendal.
Baron Croods.....	Mr. E. J. George.....	Mr. John Hars.
Harold Boycott.....	Mr. B. A. Roberts.....	Mr. J. Clayton.
Jules Faubert.....	Mr. A. C. Ford.....	Mr. Mackintosh.
Porter.....		Mr. D. Versey.
Millicent Boycott.....	Miss Emily Lévelles.....	Mrs. Kendal.
Dorinda Croods.....	Miss Nellie Young.....	Miss Kate Phillips.
Margot.....	Miss Kate Thoburn.....	Mrs. Gaston Murray.

ACT I.—Ten A.M.

ACT II.—Ten P.M.

SCENE.—Boycott's Lodgings, 17 Rue Beauvoisine, Rouen.

TIME.—The Present.

THE MONEY SPINNER.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*HAROLD BOYCOTT'S lodgings, 17, Rue Beauvoisins, Rouen. Time, ten o'clock in the morning. A large morning room furnished in French fashion, brightly and gaudily. Walls and decorations in white and gold. At back two windows which open on a railed balcony overlooking the centre court. On R. of stage, large double doors, closed. On the opposite side a similar opening leading into another apartment, closed by curtains in place of doors. Below doors R. a small writing-desk and chair. In the centre an ottoman to seat three people. Between the two windows at back a pretty black pianette; on the top of pianette a folded newspaper and three unopened letters. A small drugget in centre is the only carpeting. Light chairs, mirrors, gold candelabre, etc., to fill spaces. On balcony, outside left window, a small table and two camp-stools. The table is laid for breakfast, prettily, à la Française. The sun is streaming into the room. Lively French music to open. At rise of curtain MARGOT enters through doors R., carrying a bunch of grapes, a melon, and a bundle of flowers. MARGOT is BOYCOTT'S housekeeper, and is a blunt and jovial-looking woman of fifty. She wears a blue cotton print dress, with a scrupulously white cap and frilled apron. She closes the doors after her.*

MAR. (*who speaks French-English with the pronounced style of a Frenchwoman, surveying her purchases*) Voilà! there we all are! (*music ceases; she goes up to breakfast table and puts the flowers in a small vase in the centre*) It is grand! (*goes to the opening L. and draws curtain—she claps her hands sharply and calls*) Madame Milly! Monsieur Boycott! ze breakfast! Madame Millicent! ze breakfast! (*she goes off calling, through the opening L., closing the curtains after her. Directly MARGOT has disappeared there is a knocking outside the doors R. It is repeated.*

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Then the doors slowly open and the head of MONSIEUR JULES FAUBERT appears

FAU. *(who also speaks with the accent of a foreigner)* Boycott, my friend, are you at home? My friend Boycott, do you hear me? *(receiving no answer he enters rather cautiously and looks round. He is in black, wearing a long tightly buttoned frock coat and a tall hat. His hair is red and closely cropped, his voice is soft, and his manner stealthy and mechanical)* Where is Boycott, my friend? Ah, he has not yet taken his breakfast. *(He crosses over to the curtains L., and looks through)* No one to be seen. Boycott asks me to call for him at ten o'clock in the morning, and it is now a quarter-past ten by the Great Clock, and he is not visible. *(walking round the room inspecting the objects with curiosity)* Yet he could not have left the house, for I have been watching at the front door since eight o'clock. *(takes letters from top of pianette)* Besides, here are his letters unopened. *(examines them narrowly, scrutinizing the writing, and weighing them in his hand)* One Mr. Boycott, with the postmark of London. Two, Monsieur Boycott, with the postmark of Rouen. Three, Madame Boycott, with the postmark of Paris. *(replacing letters)* Ah, I have not yet the pleasure of the acquaintance of Madame Boycott. Poor soul, perhaps she will know me some day. *(going over to door R.)* Well, I shall call again after breakfast. My friend Boycott is getting very unpunctual—a bad sign—a very bad sign.

Goes quietly out, R., closing the doors after him as he leaves. HAROLD enters from L., followed by MILLICENT and MARGOT. MILLICENT goes to the breakfast table on the balcony. HAROLD seats himself dejectedly on ottoman, C. MILLICENT is a pretty girl, dressed lightly and tastefully. HAROLD a good-looking fellow in a dressing jacket.

MIL. *(at breakfast table)* Oh, what beautiful grapes! Thank you, Margot.

MAR. I knew madame would love zem. *(MILLICENT sits at table. MARGOT fetches newspaper and letters from pianette, coming down R. of ottoman)* Lettares for monsieur. *(giving HAROLD newspaper and the letters: as HAROLD takes them he turns his head sharply towards door R.)*

HAR. *(suspiciously)* There are footsteps on the stairs. Who is there?

MAR. I shall see.

MIL. *(on balcony)* The sun has quite boiled the wine. *(MARGOT has gone to the doors R., opened them, and looked out)*

HAR. *(to MARGOT)* Well?

MAR. I do not see zee footsteps, monsieur.

HAR. (*giving MARGOT a letter*) Give this letter to your mistress, then go downstairs and ask the *conclerge* if he has allowed anyone to pass this morning.

MAR. Yes, monsieur. (*MARGOT takes letter to MILLICENT, and then goes out, R.*)

HAR. (*opening his letters; aside*) The curse of these public staircases. One is never free from intrusion, might just as well live on the high road. (*reading letter*) Nothing but ill news from London. Nothing but dreary, dreary disappointment morning after morning. God help us! (*crushes letter and puts it in his pocket; opens the other*) Of course from Gourville, the tailor—will sue me for his account, will he?

MIL. (*from balcony*) How many letters, Harold?

HAR. One, dear.

MIL. From whom?

HAR. (*opening newspaper*) Gourville, the tailor, for his bill.

MIL. Oh, Harold, you ought to pay him.

HAR. Yes, I ought. Who writes to you?

MIL. It is father's handwriting. I don't want to spoil my breakfast, so I shan't open it yet.

HAR. (*irritably*) What, in Heaven's name, does your father want now?

MIL. (*cutting bread*) A couple of my silk dresses for Dorinda, I'll be bound. Or another frockcoat of yours, or a something to make up the rent. Poor dad! down on his luck again, I suppose.

HAR. Yes, but I wish to goodness he wouldn't be so down on other people's. Why does not your sister Dorinda go out into the world and earn her own living, and wear honest stuff dresses, as other women do?

MIL. Poor Dolly is so helpless.

HAR. Helpless! She is clever enough at turning the king at *écarté*.

MIL. Oh, Harold!

HAR. It is the truth. The first time that I met you at your father's house your ingenious little sister cleared me of six weeks' salary. I don't say she could help her position, poor girl, but it is a false one. I say, let your father give up his ugly little gambling parties and go to Australia.

MIL. The Baron can't dig.

HAR. "Baron," indeed! Well, then, if he can't dig, let him go to—

MIL. Ah, where? Come, Harold, where?

HAR. Well, my darling, don't insist on my allotting a destination to the Baron. It is a point on which I am likely to get a little warm.

MIL. You are unkind, sir. Come to your breakfast, (HAROLD does not pay any attention but reads newspaper absently)

HAR. (*aside*) Suicide of a poor fellow from off the quay last night—for what reason I wonder? It's very fine and bright on the quay at night-time. The water looks warm and soft and clear, and if a man has a trouble upon his mind—ugh! I mustn't think of anything like that! (*rises hurriedly and takes newspaper to desk R., at which he sits. Turning newspaper and reading*) They were trying criminals yesterday at the Court of Assize. Who is this? (*reading*) "Octave Bernier, a clerk, charged with embezzling the moneys of his employers." Embezzlement! Good heavens! the very thing they would say if—(*reading eagerly*) "GUILTY—no extenuation—sentenced ten years." Ten long years. Poor wretch, what do his friends say? —the friends who have respected him? And his young wife?—mocked at by the world, scorned by those who had professed to love her—poor girl—poor girl! (*the paper drops from his hand and he sits thinking. MILICENT has risen from the breakfast table and walks along the balcony to the window, R. She now appears there with a flower in her hand, which she has taken from the bouquet on the table*)

MIL. (*opening the window softly*) Harold! (*he does not hear her*) Come to breakfast, like a good boy (*she throws the flower towards him—it falls short—then comes down to him quietly and places her hand on his shoulder*) What is wrong, dear?

HAR. (*starting*) Who is that?

MIL. It is I—Milly. What is the matter?

HAR. What are you doing? Where is Margot? Who was that I heard upon the stairs?

MIL.—I don't know, Harold. Are you angry with me?

HAR. Angry—no. Forgive me, Mil, I was dreaming.

MIL. (*leaning over his chair*) Don't be selfish—halve your thoughts with me. (*kissing him*) I'll buy them of you.

HAR. You are a true woman, always ready to make a bad bargain.

MIL. Ah, I knew something was wrong with you. For the past week you have been so anxious and careworn—have had long deep wrinkles on your poor old forehead (*tracing them with her finger*) like the tramway lines to Soneville—and ugly red eyes that look like danger signals. You are as white as the ceiling, you are silent when not muttering to yourself, and you smoke two dozen cigars and eat a thimbleful of food a day. There is something on your mind; won't you tell me what it is?

HAR. It is nothing—at least almost nothing. As you know, the heads of our firm are superintending the erec-

tion of another great factory at Marseilles, and I am for the moment left alone in Rouen with the sole direction of many hundreds of people, and with great cares and responsibilities. I am a young man—perhaps the position is too grave for me. At any rate I am a little—worried. (*leaning his head on his hand*) That is all.

MIL. You have nothing more to tell me?

HAR. N—no.

MIL. Sure?

HAR. (*painfully*) Yes, I—am—sure. Why do you ask so persistently? (*MILlicent kneels beside him*)

MIL. I'll whisper it to you. (*drawing his head near hers*) Because, although I have been married nearly two years, I am over head and ears in love with Mr. Harold Boycott. And if I thought that my sweetheart could keep a secret from me it would break my heart. (*they rise. HAROLD walks slowly to c.*)

HAR. (*c.*) Millicent.

MIL. Yes?

HAR. Don't you remember your *old* sweetheart—the man from whom I took you when we became engaged—the man you would have married but for your love for me? Don't you remember?

MIL. Yes, Lord Ronald Kengussie. What of him?

HAR. I wish most sincerely that I had never taken you away from him—I wish that your love for him had been deeper than your love for me—and that you had become his wife. With all my heart I wish it.

MIL. If you have any love for me, you won't speak to me like this, Harold, for shame!

HAR. I wish it because Kengussie is rich and I am poor—because he is a gentleman and I a clerk in a cotton factory—because he would have placed you beyond the reach of trials and dangers, and I, perhaps, may live to drag you down to them.

MIL. Trials and dangers! (*going to HAROLD*) I knew it. Let me share your danger—I ask it as a right.

HAROLD. (*kissing her*) You shall share it when it comes. I wish to heaven it were a right I could deny you.

MARGOT *enters door, R., MILlicent starts from HAROLD.*

MAR. (*clapping her hands*) Oh, madame, I am so sorry that I enter on *ze* suddenly. I love so to see you kiss Monsieur Boycott.

MIL. Be quiet, Margot!

MAR. Ah, pardon me, madame, but I am a widow. If I had kissed my poor Alphonse more frequently I should now be a happier woman.

HAR. I am afraid you have been gossiping, Margot. Have you asked if any one has called for me this morning?