

**SOLID SILVER: A PLAY IN  
FIVE ACTS. AS PERFORMED  
AT THE CALIFORNIA THEATRE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.**

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**WILLIAM H. L. BARNES**

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# SOLID SILVER

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A PLAY

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE CALIFORNIA THEATRE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

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BY

WILLIAM H. L. BARNES.

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SAN FRANCISCO:

1871.

# Persons of the Drama,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

## CALIFORNIA THEATRE,

San Francisco, Cal.

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Paul Weir.....	Mr. JOHN McCULLOUGH
The Earl De la Lande.....	Mr. FRED FRANKS
Captain Gerard Morris.....	Mr. W. A. MESTAYER
Mr. Sponge, Senior.....	Mr. HENRY EDWARDS
Mr. Sponge, Junior.....	Mr. J. C. WILLIAMSON
Mr. Oldcastle.....	Mr. SEDLEY SMITH
Mr. Barclay.....	Mr. GEORGE FRENCH
Leon.....	Mr. EDMUND LEATHES
Bertha Huntingdon.....	Miss MAY HOWARD
Kate Delaire.....	Miss MINNIE WALTON
Lady Emily Peele.....	Miss IMOGENE VANDYKE
Countess De la Lande.....	Miss LOU. JOHNSTON
Mrs. Weir.....	Mrs. JUDAH
Mrs. Busby.....	Mrs. C. R. SAUNDERS
Clementine.....	Miss LOU. HARMES

Stage business, cast of characters, relative positions,  
etc., arranged and correctly marked by Mr. ROBERT  
M. EBERLE, Assistant Stage Manager, California  
Theatre.

# SOLID SILVER.

## ACT FIRST.

SCENE I.—*Room at Huntingdon Towers; half library, half office. Portrait of young lady over door at L. Chairs, hat-rack, etc. Large library lamp burning on table at back.*

PAUL.

(*Rising from seat at secretary, R. H.*) I am tired as an old man: I am weary of life and my father's honorable name. I hate this place, and yet can not tear myself away from it. I loathe my daily duties, yet can not abandon them. Those who bring their flatteries here, as slaves bring tribute to a queen, are of no better lineage than I. Yet, poverty leaves me only the solace of honest labor. [*Looking up at the portrait over the mantel, L. H. 2D E.*] Ah! you never change that sweet smile as you seem to listen, while I dare to say—"I love you;" but when your living presence comes and has gone, I deride myself for speaking, even to you, save as a servant speaks. No! my heart shall listen to my reason. If I can not conquer myself, I will at least hug my secret as closely as a murderer holds his, and bewail my dead hope in solitude. I will bury it with labor. [*Sits at desk R. H. Enter, unobserved by PAUL, Captain MORRIS, JOHN SPONGE, Sr., and JOHN SPONGE, Jr. R. C.*] Yes, by heaven, life is labor. I sentence myself to work as perpetual in degree, if not in kind, as that of the ploughman or railway-navvy. I hail them both as comrades! From this moment I abandon

that unhealthy pride which has so often urged me to seclusion, or to criminal effort to make a gentleman of myself, such as some of these who haunt her footsteps.

CAPTAIN MORRIS, (R. C.)

(*Interrupting, to SPONGE, Sr.*) Did he speak to me? Quite eloquent, I declare! Sponge, when you stand for Parliament, let this orator present your cause to his friends of the working-classes.

SPONGE, SR. (C.)

Let the man alone. I presume he is Miss Huntingdon's secretary, or steward; isn't he, John?

SPONGE, JR. (L. H.)

Dunno, Governor. Shall I speak to him, Governor?

MORRIS.

As somebody says, be mine the pleasing task. [*Going up to PAUL, who has observed them and then resumed his work, and tapping him on the shoulder with his cane.*] My man, you don't know me?

PAUL.

No, sir.

MORRIS.

Where 's Miss Huntingdon?

PAUL.

(*Rising.*) I don't know.

MORRIS.

I think you 've heard of me! my name is Captain Morris, of the Sixteenth Lancers, cousin to Miss Huntingdon, and here by her invitation, with my friends, to pass a few days.

PAUL.

I have heard many things of you, if you are the person to whom these estates revert in the event of Miss Huntingdon's death, with no children surviving her.



MORRIS.

That 's me. So far as I know, the likeness is correct, Sponge, eh?

SPONGE, SR.

[*Sponge, Jr. retires up, examining books, pictures, etc.*]  
He knows you well enough for the present. Don't push the man's knowledge too far; it won't pay.

MORRIS.

Since you do recall me, my man, allow me to ask if you are too far removed from the position of butler to tell me what apartments have been reserved for my friends and myself?

PAUL.

I will ring for a servant, who can inform you, sir.  
[*Rings bell.*]

*Enter LEON, (R. 1 E.)*

Leon, these gentlemen say they are expected guests. Ask Mrs. Busby where their apartments are and show them the way.

LEON.

Madame Busby has already informed me where they repose themselves. Messieurs, I am at your service.  
[*Crosses up to L. 3 E.*]

SPONGE, JR. (L. H., *back to audience.*)

Go easy a minute, Frenchy; I'm looking round a trifle. I say, Mr. —

PAUL. (R. H.)

Weir.

SPONGE, JR.

Weir, then, who 's that handsome gal hanging over the mantel there? [*All turn towards L. H. and look at picture.*]

PAUL.

That is a portrait of Miss Huntingdon, the owner of this house.

SPONGE, SR. (C.)

What? let me see it! God, how healthy she looks!  
[To MORRIS.] Say, I thought you told me —

MORRIS. (R. C.)

Well, well, never mind now, Sponge; let us go to our apartments. [To LEON.] Confound you, sir, why don't you go? What are you waiting for, you idiot?

LEON.

I don't know, Monsieur. Messieurs, the father and son will repose in those apartments, [*pointing to door L. 3 E. of scene,*] and will use this one at their convenience. I will show this gentleman his apartment in another part of the house. [*Cross to R. H. 3 E. LEON and MORRIS exit R. 3 E.; SPONGE, JR. and SPONGE, SR. L. 3 E. In a moment, SPONGE, Sr. returns. PAUL seats himself at desk.*]

SPONGE, SR.

Excuse me, young gentleman, no offense I hope, in asking a question or two? no questions—no lies, is the old saying; no questions—no knowledge, is my motto. You see, I'm in a sort of financial bother which I don't like, and I don't mind paying, if that will help me out of it. Is that really Miss Huntingdon's picture up there?

PAUL.

I told you before that it was, did I not?

SPONGE, SR.

So you did. But a man must be told a thing twice, and oftener, which he does n't want to believe, before he takes it all in, don't you see? Painted some time ago, you said?

PAUL.

It was taken in the spring. You won't see many faces as radiant with the grace and beauty of youth and perfect health as hers. Angels in heaven may look more pure, but there are none more angelic than she. Why —

SPONGE, SR.

Yes, yes; I understand all that, and am glad she's

good, for the comfort of her friends when she's gone. I'm going to get in some of it myself one of these days. No time just now. How long can she live, now, do you think?

PAUL.

I hope many, many years will pass before nature will claim its debt of her sweet life.

SPONGE, SR.

You hope so? Well, christianly speaking, so do I; but in a business point of view, I can't admit the proposition. I supposed now she was feeble, decrepit, consumptive, and couldn't hang on, say, well—not much beyond the close of the present fiscal year.

PAUL—(*starting up.*)

Who told you such a falsehood as that? Feeble? Decrepit? I wish you could have seen her this morning, coming up the avenue on her huge thoroughbred horse "Titan." He was swinging along, with eyes of fire and wide-opened nostrils; his great brown limbs striking now on the turf and now on the gravel, his slender mane standing straight out, like a flag in a hurricane—just as he came in winner at the Ascot last year; while she rode him so gloriously and fearlessly, with such a color in her cheeks and such a light in her eyes, that no living man could associate the idea of decay and death with her, and none but a double-dyed scoundrel could wish her dead. Who told you that lie, I say?

SPONGE, SR.

Softly, softly, my young friend; I don't like your language, and your manner is unbusiness-like in the extreme. I wish to regard the subject without nonsensical enthusiasm. I'm too old for it, by Jove! I only said what I supposed to be a fact, and wanted you to make me more certain of; and I've got your views as fully as I want 'em, too.

PAUL.

Excuse me if I am rude to you, an old man and a stranger; but I could not endure to hear Miss Huntingdon so spoken of.

B