

exist. The business was, in fact, merely the machinery by which Mr Slygne raked in money for his own personal use and comfort. It was the web of a single spider, and none other had part nor lot in it.

At No. 12 were also placed the headquarters of three joint-stock companies, as various smaller plates on which were painted the words "registered offices" showed. Into all these concerns Mr Slygne had himself breathed the spark of life, and they existed under his personal supervision and management. Moreover, they would sink into oblivion only at his word or owing to a lightning stroke from the great cloud of "Limited Liability" which hung over Burdett Street, and gave such a comforting and friendly obscurity to the financiers who practised there.

The *Mount Pisa Gold Mine, Limited*, now in its second year of life, had been launched off the rails of a prospectus that sent its one pound shares up to three and a half ten days after flotation. It was confidently predicted that before long this mine would pay its proprietors one hundred per cent. Mr Slygne himself had not entirely concurred in this view. "My