Yes: Maybe life overdid the lesson for me and made a dollar worth too much and the time came when that mistake ruined my career as a fine actor: I've never admitted this to anyone before lad but tonight I'm so heart sick I feel at the end of everything and what's the use of fake pride and pretense: That God damned play I bought for a song and made such a great success in: A great money success: It ruined me with a promise of an easy fortune: I didn't want to do anything else and by the time I'd woke up to the fact I'd become a slave to the damned thing and did other plays it was too late: I'd lost the great talent I once had through years of easy repetition: Never learning a new part; Never really working hard: Thirty five to forty thousand dollars net profit a season like snapping your fingers: It was too great a temptation: Yet before I bought the damned thing I was considered one of the three or four young actors with the greatest artistic promise in America: I'd worked like hell: I'd left a good job as a machinist to take supers' parts because I loved the theatre: I was wild with ambition: I read all the plays ever written: I studied Shakespeare as you'd study the bible: I educated myself: I got rid of an Irish brogue you could cut with a knife: I loved Shakespeare: I would have acted in any of his plays for nothing: For the joy of being alive in his great poetry: And I acted well in him: I felt inspired by him: I could have been a great Shakespearean actor: If I'd kept on: I know that: In 1874 when Edwin Booth came to the theatre in Chicago where I was leading man I played Cassius to his Brutus one night: Brutus to his Cassius the next: Othello to his Iago and so on: The first night I played Othello he said to our Manager: That young man is playing Othello better than I ever did: That from Booth the greatest actor of his day or any other: And it was true: And I was only twenty seven years old: As I look back at it now that night was the high spot in my career: I had life where I wanted it: And for a time after that I kept on upward with ambition high: Married your mother: Ask her what I was like in those days: Her love was an added incentive to ambition: But a few years later my good bad luck made me find the big money maker: It wasn't that in my eyes at first: It was a great romantic part I knew I could play better than anyone: But it was a great box office success: The praise Edwin Booth gave my Othello: I made the manager put down the exact words in writing: I kept it in my wallet for years: I used to read it every once in a while until it made me feel so bad I didn't want to face it anymore:
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JAMES O'NEILL  
1849 – 1920  

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The high spot of *The Count Of Monte Cristo* occurred when James O'Neil as the escaped wrongfully imprisoned convict Edmund Dantes discovering a cave full of treasure screams:

**THE WORLD IS MINE!**