

HOLLY BUSH HALL

OR

THE TRACK IN THE SNOW

A Drama

IN TWO ACTS

BY

W. E. SUTER, Esq.

[DRAMATISED FROM THE STORY OF THE SAME NAME PUBLISHED IN
REYNOLDS' MISCELLANY]

LONDON.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND,

(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market.)

First Performed at the QUEEN'S THEATRE, under the Management of Mr. C. J. TAMER, February 25, 1860.

A New and Original Drama, in Two Acts, written expressly for this Theatre, by W. E. SUTTER, Esq., and Dramatized from a Story Published in "Reynold's Miscellany," entitled

HOLLY BULLSHALL!

OR THE TRACK IN THE SNOW!

SIR ERNEST MILLWARD	Mr. J. GREEN.
EDWARD MILLWARD	(his Son)	Miss SLADE.
GENERAL MILLWARD	Mr. RANDALL.	Mr. FORTUNE.
					MAJOR BELL	Mr. VERNER.
CHARLES ACTON	(the Banker's Clerk)	Mr. MONTAGUE.
MARK ACTON	(a Deserter)	Mr. CHARLES SENNETT.
JOYCE	(Constable)	Mr. G. HARDING.
PETER POTT	(a Gipsy)	Mr. RUSSELL.
LADY MILLWARD	(Sir Ernest's daughter)	Miss BLANCHE FORDE.
MABEL	(a Widow)	Miss FANNY DOUGLAS.
DAME ACTON	(her daughter)	Mrs. J. PARRY.
MAY ACTON	(a Serving Woman)	Miss HASLEWOOD.
MEDA	(a Gipsy)	Miss SENNETT.
					Constables, Domestics, &c., &c.	Mrs. COWLE.

INTERIOR OF DAME ACTION'S COTTAGE!

Mother and Daughter—the Raging Tempest.

THE WY⁹ S¹⁰ R¹¹ R¹² W¹³.

The signal at the Window—the Alarm of May.

MARK SEEKS REFUGE IN HIS MOTHER'S COTTAGE.

THE TRACK IN THE SNOW!

Mark nearly perished with cold—Brother and Sister—the Mother's Appeal—the Distant Shout—a Tale of Horror

THE MORNIGHT ASSASSINATION!

The Dame urges her Son to fly—the Constables on the Track—Potts's valour very doubtful—the Warrant.

Potts' Served with a Notice of Ejectment.

THE SISTER'S STRAIGHT!

A Mother's Prayer—Troubled Thoughts,

* * * THE FEARFUL VISION

OF ROBBERY AND MURDER!

A PARTMENT IN HOLLY BUSH HALL.

Edward's Dignity is Hurt—Bartered for Gold.

SONG

Potts not Harmonious—a peculiar constitution—a good thrashing promised—Winnifred wishes to be a witness—a guilty conscience—the Young Wife.

**THE HUSBAND'S TERRIBLE SECRET.
SUSSEX DOWNS.**

The Wounded Traveller—the Bitter Storm.

THE CONFLICT BY THE WOOD.

MEDA IN THE POWER OF JAFED.—THE DEAD CHILD!

The Heart of Stone—the Devoted Wife—an unpleasant style of conversation—a persevering individual—Meda's determination—the Cry for Help.

MEDA DISCOVERS THE WOUNDED VICTIM!

The timely Interruption—the Villain's Scheme—the Welcome Holloa—the Gipsy Girl's Promise—the Lost Road—the Robber's Trap.

**JAFED OFFERS TO GUIDE THE GENERAL.
THE TREACHEROUS FRIEND.**

THE TRACK IN THE SNOW ! !

Again the Cry for Help—the WOUNDED SOLDIER.

Charles Accused of the Murder.

“ SHE HAS MY ADORATION.”

HOLLY BUSH HALL.
Potts is a new situation—one of the lazy—away—a difference of opinion—Mark Acton takes refuge in Holly Bush Hall—^a
History of Wrong and Guilt.

THE FORGED WILL. **A Tale of Blood!**

Lady Millward's loathing for her Husband—she seeks to fly from his presence.

THE DOVE IN THE EAGLE'S POWER.

The Oath Proposed—the arm uplifted, when

MARK DISCOVERS THE MYSTERY!
THE BRIBE REJECTED.
MARK RESOLVES TO STICK TO SIR ERNEST.
A THICK WOOD.
JAFFED ON THE TRACK—THE LAST PATCH.
THE GIPSY MURDERER!

A slanderous individual—take care of number one—THE BLOW AND ESCAPE OF MEDA.

A CHAMBER IN THE HALL.

Edward and May—Sunshine after Showers—cheering words—Winnifred's Sacrifice.

Trio

"My Heart is full of sorrow" ...

The Tortured mind—Mark in another character—a rather strong pull—Winnifred makes a mistake.

* * **AN UNPLEASANT RECOGNITION.**

Potts in a Fog—a rather loose habit.

 **SIR ERNEST POISONS THE WINE.**

Mark takes the name of Smith for want of a better—the little packet.

**MARK RAISES THE GLASS, WHEN
CHARLES ACTON BEFORE SIR ERNEST.**

Mark sees his Brother—the heart-sticken Mother—Mabel avows her love

A WITNESS FOR THE DEFENCE.

The Rage of Sir Ernest.—The Malediction.

SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF

MARK REVEALS ALL, AND SUES FOR MERCY.

A Brother's Pardon—Meda seeks shelter in Holly Bush Hall—Jafed Caught.

* * **THE FRACTIONIDES DOOM!**

A Repentant Individual—Dame Acton pleads for her Son—joy and hope beam on all in

HOLLY BUSH HALL.

This Drama is the Property of Thomas Hales Lacy.

HOLLY BUSH HALL.

ACT FIRST.

SCENE FIRST.—*Interior of Dame Acton's Cottage. Door, R. C.—window, L. F., with curtains drawn—table, L., with candle burning—large old-fashioned easy chair, on Audience side of table, obliquely placed towards R., other chairs—fire burning, L. 2 E.—howling of wind heard.*

DAME ACTON discovered, sitting in easy chair—**MAY ACTON** sitting on a stool on the other side of the table.

DAME. How the wind howls and moans about our poor old homestead—and how heavily the snow is falling ! most appalling are the wild terrors of this night ! Five miles from the sea though we are, I can hear the wild foam dashing on the rocks. Oh, what a night is this for the homeless and the friendless !

MAY. (*rising*) It is, indeed, mother. Heaven help them all ! The hollows on these downs of Sussex are terrible dangers to all wayfarers on such a night as this !

DAME. My boys, my poor, dear boys—oh, Heaven protect them !

MAY. Mother, heaven does, and will protect our dear Charles. Is he not well and happy, and but for this storm would he not be with us now, from his employment at the banker's in London, to pass his Christmas with us, dear mother.

DAME. Yes, yes—but my eldest boy, my first-born, Mark—wild and wayward as he now is, still the dearest cherished of his widowed mother. Sometimes I am tempted to bless Heaven that my poor husband is indeed dead ; for, to have lived, and known what Mark has now become, would surely have broken his father's heart.

MAY. Yes, alas ! the copse—the thicket—the ale-house, and dissolute companions have long possessed far more attractions for him than the calm delights of home.

DAME. Poor Mark ! It is now twelve months since we have seen or heard of him ! (wind heard)

MAY. Will this terrible storm never abate ? (goes to window, and draws aside curtains—the snow is seen covering the landscape—she recloses the curtains, sadly shakes her head, and comes slowly forward)

SONG—**MAY.**—AIR—“The Thorn.”

‘Midst the wild falling snow,
Those poor wretches now shrinking,
With shrieks and with cries so forlorn—
Oh, may Heaven protect them, or they perish
In their cold bed slow sinking !
This terrible storm !

(knocking without at window.)

DAME. (rising) What was that ?

MAY. Hush, mother—hush !

(Music—She goes to window, and draws aside curtains for an instant, then with a scream, lets them fall hastily, as she perceives MARK ACTON standing without, at window)

DAME. May, my child, what has terrified you ?

MAY. Mark—I saw him—he was standing there. (pointing)

DAME. Mark ! Oh, impossible !

MARK. (without) Open ! help me ! open—open !

MAY. (throwing her arms round **DAME**) My brother’s voice ! Oh, mother, it is, indeed, Mark !

DAME. My son ! Comes he as the storm, and the whirlwind, to bring woe and disaster to those whom he should love—or as the prodigal, who is thrice welcome ?

Music—**DAME** signs to **MAY**, who unbars, and opens door, R. C.—

MARK hurries in, hastily closes door after him, and replaces bar—he is gaunt, and wild-looking, and has on the ragged remnants of a soldier’s dress, and carries a small portmanteau.

MARK. Keep them out—keep them out ! bars and bolts—bars and bolts ! They are on my track—the track in the snow—the snow which has now ceased to fall, that so my footsteps may be revealed ! Has Heaven, then, resolved at last to crush me ? Where shall I hide ? I dashed over the downs, and through the hollows—but they are after me—they are near me ! Hide me—conceal me, or I am lost !

MAY. Mark !

DAME. My son !

MARK. Yes, yes, I am your son—not much doubt about that!—Ha, ha ! and good reason have you to be proud of me ! Why, May, my darling, you grow prettier and prettier ! Give a fellow a kiss, now that he has come home ! (*MAY throws herself into his arms—he thrusts her from him, starting*) What is that ? listen—no, no, I was mistaken ! But they will come—oh, yes, they will come ! (*he draws a chair, and seats himself close to the fire, shivering, and warming his hands*) Ugh ! I am mortal cold ! there is not an atom of my frame that, through these tatters, is not visited by the cutting north-east wind. Ugh ! (*shivering—MAY goes to him, and puts her arm round his neck, on his L.—his back is towards R.*) Well, little May—(*holding up valise*) you see, I have not come home empty handed !

DAME. (*clutching MARK's right arm*) Mark, Mark—my dear, dear son, say that you this night see the evil of your ways—that you will begin a new life, which shall blot out the past, dear, dear Mark !

MARK. Too late—it is too late ! Why, I am a ruffian, a deserter, a gambler, a poacher, a thief!—who knows but I am likewise a—

MAY. Mark—Mark !

DAME. My son, do not—oh, do not say the dreadful word that hovers on your lips—oh, do not !

MAY. Oh, Mark, be you what you may, you are still my brother.

DAME. Still my beloved son—my eldest born !

(*Music—They embrace him—he drops the valise to the ground, covers his face with his hands, and weeps*)

DAME. Can you forget, Mark, that you were the pride and hope of your poor father.

MARK. Oh, that he were living now, and here, that he might kill me—that I might lay me down to rest in the old garden, beneath the turf on which I played when a little, happy child—they would not find me then, and disgrace would never light upon this honest roof. (*again covers his face with his hands, and weeps—the WOMEN cling around him—a pause—MARK then starts to his feet, and listens*) Hark—hark ! did you not hear them ? (*ALL listen—SHOUTS heard very distant*) There, there—they come ! that cursed track in the snow ! Where will be the most secure place for me—and—(*pointing to valise*) for this ?

DAME. Yourself only need be hidden—your valise is nothing.

MARK. My valise ! yes, it is mine now—you do not know all. Well, I will tell you—I deserted—you can guess that—

was on my way here, when—hungry—famished—I, on the old cross road, by the ruined church, I met a traveller, I took this from him, and left him in his blood in the snow—now you know all—all that I need tell you.

DAME. Oh, Heaven!

MAY. Mark—Mark! (*weeping*) But you must not remain here—fly, fly!

DAME. Yes, yes—for your brother may presently be here—he would have arrived before this, but that the storm doubtless, has detained him.

MARK. My brother! Ah, time was—but, I should not care to meet him now.

DAME. For your own sake, then—for all our sakes—oh, fly, and quit this place!

MARK. Yes—'twere best so. I will—I will! (*loud knocking at door*) Ah, they are here—they are here.

JOYCE. (*without*) Open, in the name of the law.

DAME. Go quickly, Mark, to my room, and—

MARK. No, no—'tis that fellow, Joyce, and he will search every corner of the house. Sit you down, mother—sit you down. (*placing Dame in easy chair*) I have but one chance.

JOYCE. (*without—knocking*) Open—open!

MARK. May, give me that valise—they must not see that. (*MAY gives him valise*) And now, let them in—(*aside, half drawing bayonet, which is hanging from his cross-belt*) for if the worst comes to the worst, I have this.

(*Music—MARK crouches behind the DAME's easy chair—MAY goes to door, removes bar from door, and opens it*)

JOYCE enters, R. C.

JOYCE. So, at last—a pleasant night, isn't it, to be kept outside a door!

MAY. What would you here?

JOYCE. Wait a minute. (*calling*) Here, you Potts—come in, will you?

POTTS enters, R. C.

POTTS. It's very cold, Mr. Joyce, and the snow has found its way down to the small of my back. But, notwithstanding, I have no objection to stop outside.

JOYCE. I know that. Ugh, you coward.

POTTS. Nothing of the sort—the man we want might try to escape by the back door you know, and in that case, if I was outside you know, why, of course you know, I should—

JOYCE. Run away as hard as you could. Ugh, you coward!

POTTS. (*raising his voice*) I tell you, nothing of the sort.

Joyce, you are an ignorant man, and don't understand the peculiarity of my constitution.

DAME. Would you aught with me or mine.

JOYCE. A little matter of business, that is all. Here's a warrant signed by Sir Ernest Millward, to search for the body of one Mark Acton, charged with desertion from the army, robbery of the regimental plate of his gracious majesty's forty-fourth regiment of foot.

DAME. (*aside*) Oh, Mark—Mark!

JOYCE. I am very sorry, Dame Acton, but I must search your house, for we caught a glimpse of him awhile since, and traced his footsteps in the snow up to your very door. Potts, do you remain here.

POTTS. (*aside*) And while he is gone, perhaps these two women will murder me. (*aloud*) No, Joyce, I'll go with you—in fact, I'll never leave you—for if you should find Mark, of course you would need assistance.

JOYCE. And a deal of use you would be! No, stay here, and if you should see him, shout your hardest.

POTTS. I don't think I could, for any strong surprise always takes away my voice. But it's no use talking to you, you don't understand the peculiarity of my constitution.

JOYCE. I know you are a coward.

Music—He goes off, L. 1 E.—MARK stealing aside as JOYCE passes chair.

DAME. (*near chair*) Fly, Mark, fly!

POTTS. (*turning*) Eh? where you speaking to anybody?

MAY. Yes, to you, Mr. Potts.

POTTS. Oh, ah! I was afraid—that is—I thought—I hope Mark isn't here, for I respect you and all your family, Dame Acton, but I should be compelled to take him into custody.

(*MARK is stealing across at back, towards door.*

DAME. You would not surely?

POTTS. Certainly. But, dear me, the door is open, and there is such a draught—(*turns towards door, and sees MARK, who has just reached it*) Oh, there he is—there he is! Mur—

(*Music—MARK darts to, and grasps him by the throat, drawing and threatening him with bayonet*)

DAME. Mark, forbear!

MAY. Brother! (*she seizes MARK's arm*)

POTTS. Oh, pray don't stick me with that thingamy! you don't understand the peculiarity of my constitution.

MARK. Silence!

POTTS. Recollect I am a constable, and if you kill me, I shall be compelled to take you into custody.

MARK. (*sheathing bayonet*) May, open yonder window.

MAY. What would you do?

MARK. Open it, I tell you.

POTTS. (*shouting*) Murder—murder!

(*Music—MARK tightens his grasp on POTTS's throat—MAY draws aside curtains and opens window—MARK drags POTTS up, then lifts him in his arms, and throws him out of window*)

MARK. A soft fall in the snow—(*looking out of window*) and already he is up, and off like a stag!

JOYCE. (*without*) Potts—Potts!

MARK. Ah!

Music—The WOMEN express terror—MARK again crouches behind chair—JOYCE enters, l. 1 E.

JOYCE. What is doing here? Where is Potts?

MAY. He—he—

JOYCE. (*having gone to door—looking out*) Who is that running yonder?

MAY. (*aside*) Oh, Heaven! an inspiration. (*hurrying to door and calling*) Fly, Mark! oh, fly, they are at your heels!

JOYCE. You are right—we are, we are!

(*Music—He hurries out—MARK comes from behind chair, goes to door, and looks out cautiously.*)

MARK. Well done, May, well done. But he will presently discover his mistake, so I must be off. Yet stay, the valise.

(*MAY fetches it from behind chair*) No, now I think of it, I will leave it here for the present, 'twill be best—only hide it, mother. (*taking it from MAY, and throwing it into corner by the fire*) Hide it, or you may both be implicated.

DAME. You will return to us, Mark?

MARK. Perhaps, mother, perhaps. Good bye! (*she falls upon his neck*) There—there! this is no time for your tenderness—besides, I don't deserve it. Good bye. (*placing her in easy chair*) Good bye, mother—(*taking MAY's hand*) good bye, little May. (*going towards door*) If it were not for your sakes, I should not care how soon I was hanged.

MAY. Oh, be careful, Mark!

MARK. Fear not—I will slip round to the back of the house, and down into the old chalk quarry, and once there, I defy the devil to hunt me out.

Music—Exit, R. C.

DAME. Oh, that a son of mine should come to this!

MAY. Poor Mark! he has gone without food—but no matter, I will presently take him some to the quarry—he will know my voice, and will answer to it. (*she bars the door*)

DAME. Mark! he was ever my darling, and now—now—

(Music—Still seated, she raises her hands and eyes towards Heaven—after a while her hands fall upon her lap, and her head drops upon her breast—MAY seats herself on stool, near her mother, and before the fire—she presently turns and looks into her mother's face)

MAY. Ah, exhausted with sorrow and fatigue, she has fallen asleep. 'Tis very late, and hours since she should have been in bed. But I will not disturb her—for in sleep only can come oblivion of her heavy grief. Oh, Mark—Mark! we never thought to see you thus. (she bends forward, covering her face with her hands.)

(Music piano.—The flats are slowly and quietly withdrawn, discovering a Road, skirting a Wood. The whole scene is covered with snow, and snow is falling.—CHARLES ACTON enters R. U. E., he wears a cloak, and a cap with a long, peculiarly shaped cape—the cap is drawn down, concealing almost his face—in his left hand he carries a valise exactly resembling that which is lying near the fire—snow on his cloak—he gives signs that he has lost his way, and looks around him bewildered—then puts his hand to his mouth, indicating that he is shouting for assistance. MARK then appears from the wood at back—pauses for a moment.)

DAME. (murmuring in her sleep) Mark! Mark! do not—oh, do not!

(Music changes—still piano—MARK darts forward seizes CHARLES—they struggle—MARK is forced to his knee, when he draws his bayonet, and stabs CHARLES—rises—snatches valise, strikes CHARLES with it on the head, and hurries off, L. U. E.—CHARLES staggers—his cap tumbles off, and he himself falls to the ground—the snow has continued falling.—the whole of the above must be done in perfect silence.)

DAME. Charles—hold, it is your brother. Mark—Mark!

(she starts to her feet—MAY rises alarmed.)

MAY. Mother—dear mother!

DAME. Oh, Heaven! my son has slain his brother. (falls into chair—MAY kneels beside her)

(Music, which has continued piano through speaking, is now forte.—closed in by—

SCENE SECOND.—Chamber in Holly Bush Hall. (2nd grooves).

Enter MABEL and EDWARD MILLWARD, L.

EDWARD. Now, Mabel, 'tis useless to attempt denying it—you love Charles Acton.

MABEL. What a silly boy you are.

EDWARD. Boy, indeed! well, really, I think 'tis too much to be called a boy at my time of life, and by my own sister too.

MABEL. Well, Edward, you will be a man some day.

EDWARD. I hope so, for I am a strange anomaly a present. My feelings are all manly, and yet everybody tell me I am a boy; but, as I was saying, you love Charle Acton.

MABEL. If I confess it, will you keep my secret?

EDWARD. On condition, sister, that you shall keep mine.

MABEL. Yours!

EDWARD. Yes, I no sooner saw that you had given your heart to Charles Acton, than, as an affectionate brother, I felt it my duty to fall in love with his sister May.

MABEL. Oh, Edward!

EDWARD. You know our poor mother told me always to follow your example.

MABEL. But such boyish affection—

EDWARD. Will last till I am a grey-headed, venerable gentleman—as old, but not, I hope, as cross and as gloomy as our father.

MABEL. Cross—yes, indeed; and he was always so, even during our poor mother's lifetime.

EDWARD. And he's far worse since he has taken a second wife, who is no older than her daughter.

MABEL. But she is very good, and I am sure I pity her with all my heart, for she was constrained by her parents to marry our father—they were poor, and sold her.

EDWARD. And Sir Ernest Millward was rich, and bought her. Sooner than be sacrificed to one I did not love, I would—well, I don't know exactly what I would do; but you who have seen me in a state of desperation, may guess it would be something terrible.

MABEL. I dread my father's wrath when he shall know that I have given my heart to one, whom he will deem so far beneath me.

EDWARD. Charles comes of honest, worthy parents, and is himself most worthy; and such a man is equal to the highest—nay, a nobleman of Nature's making should, to my thinking, rank above a baronet whose title was purchased by his wealth.

MABEL. Oh, that Sir Ernest thought like you.

EDWARD. Ah, but, unfortunately, with him a man has no weight in the social scale unless he can bear it down with lumps of gold.

MABEL. If, Edward, you could one day contrive gently to break to our father the knowledge of my love for—

EDWARD. Yes, and then he would, most likely, gently break my head as a recompense for the information ; but in your service, Mabel, I shouldn't mind that, so very soon—though you say that I am only a boy, you shall find that I will speak out like a man.

MABEL. Dear, good brother.

EDWARD. My own little attachment he need not, at present, know anything about, for as May and myself are, both of us, still very young, and should not be allowed to marry for a year or two, why—

MABEL. Seriously, then, you love each other.

EDWARD. Seriously ! do you think we have fallen in love for a joke ? no, I assure you ours is a very solemn affection.

SONG—EDWARD.—AIR.—“Last Rose of Summer.”

She has my adoration—I adore her alone.
 She shall be my companion—yes, bone of my bone.
 For wedlock I am panting—pity me you can,
 That I'm forced to be waiting—till I've grown a man.
 Oh, I ask not for riches—with my charming dove ;
 Nor food should we crave for—we could live upon love.
 I must wait for such transport—must wait for such joy.
 Oh lawks ! how it grieves me, that I'm only a boy.

Enter Potts, R.

POTTS. Sorry to interrupt the harmony, but—

EDWARD. You don't !

POTTS. Exactly what I thought ; and since you think so humbly of your musical talents, I may venture to tell you my opinion of your voice.

EDWARD. Well, Potts !

POTTS. Well, sir, your voice is like—in fact, when I heard it just now as I came through the hall, and before I got nearer, I really thought it was some poor pig stuck fast in a gateway.

EDWARD. Why, you insulting rascal—just wait a minute, and I'll horsewhip you.

POTTS. No, no ; of course I know now that you are not a pig—only I—the fact is, you don't understand the peculiarity of my constitution.

EDWARD. I shall try if your constitution will understand a peculiar thrashing.

Enter WINIFRED, L.

WINIFRED. If it's Potts you are going to thrash, I should like to see the operation.

POTTS. Now there's a speech from the woman I have selected for the mother of the future little Pottses.

EDWARD. Winifred, bring me a horsewhip, there's a good girl.

WINIFRED. I will—the heaviest and strongest in the Hall.

POTTS. Now, there's a girl worthy a man's affection.

MABEL. No, no—come with me, Edward—'tis no use being angry with Potts—he is only a fool.

EDWARD. Ah, true, I forgot that. Potts, thank your stars that you are only a fool.

POTTS. Oh, only a fool!

MABEL. Yes, only a fool.

EDWARD. Only a fool. *Exeunt EDWARD and MABEL, L.*

POTTS. (*calling after them*) I beg your pardon—I'm a constable.

WINIFRED. (*at his back*) Potts, you are only a fool.

POTTS. Nothing of the sort—you don't understand the peculiarity of—

WINIFRED. There, don't bother me—I don't want to know anything about your peculiarity.

POTTS. Oh, Winny, Winny, that's the most unfeeling observation you ever made to me. Oh, Winny, Winny, how can you? oh, Winny, Winny.

WINIFRED. Don't stand winnying there, like an old horse that wants his supper.

POTTS. Well, I do want my supper; but I am not an old horse, for all that.

WINIFRED. No, certainly, you more closely resemble a less dignified animal.

POTTS. Less dignified! ah, yes—thank ye, you mean a mule.

WINIFRED. No, I don't—an animal that has remarkably long ears.

POTTS. Long ears—eh, why—curse me if she doesn't mean a donkey.

WINIFRED. (*laughing*) The identical quadruped.

POTTS. And you have dared to say that you love me.

WINIFRED. I said so? when! for I really do not remember it.

POTTS. No, no, I am wrong—it was I that said I loved you.

WINIFRED. Ah, that is very likely.

POTTS. And if you would consent to marry me—

WINIFRED. And that is very unlikely.

POTTS. Don't say that—you make me feel very ill.

WINIFRED. Feel ill! well, then, go to a doctor.

POTTS. Doctor! pooh! I've been to every doctor for miles round, and they are no use—they don't understand the peculiarity of my constitution.

Exeunt, R.

Music.—Enter SIR ERNEST MILLWARD, L.

SIR E. The day has come round again—the dreadful day, and I, who should be so happy—what am I? oh, Heaven! the veriest wretch that crawls upon the face of earth would pity, or would loathe me.

LADY MILLWARD enters, R.

Madam, would you aught with me?

LADY M. Yes, I would know—for I can no longer endure the misery and gloom which attend my every step about this mansion—I would know why it is that I behold you the wretched man you ever are—I would ask if I was purchased from my parents, only, that I might share the heavy burthen that weighs you down—that I might weep away my life, for you have rendered my existence here more miserable, far, than was ever dreary cloister or convent cell.

SIR E. Adele, it was my hope perpetual sunshine would reign around you; but 'tis hidden by my gloom—obscured by my guilt.

LADY M. Guilt, say you? and yet you wedded me.

SIR E. I was innocent, then, of the deed by which I since have given my soul unto perdition.

LADY M. Oh, what mean you?

SIR E. You have sought my terrible secret, and I will reveal it to you; but rest assured that you will curse the hour which gave it to your knowledge.

LADY M. Oh, then, do not—

SIR E. You must listen now, that you may no longer wonder at the remorse you have so often witnessed. Know, then, there is a spirit ever stalking within this mansion—a phantom by which I am haunted unceasingly.

LADY M. A disorder of your tortured mind.

SIR E. Oh, would it were only that; but you shall hear. I had a brother—

LADY M. Justin Millward. I have heard of him—he was your father's eldest son, but by that father never loved.

SIR E. True, true.

LADY M. Unable to endure his home he left it, so, at least, runs the story I have heard; and after many years of roving, perished in a far distant land.

SIR E. It was supposed so, and therefore, when my father died, I took possession of the hall and the estates, believing that I was the rightful heir.

LADY M. Supposed so! your brother, then—Justin—was he not really dead?

SIR E. No, no, he was not dead?

LADY M. Heaven!

POTTS. (*without, r.*) I tell you I must see Sir Ernest.

SIR E. Ah, all is discovered. (*thrusting his hand into his breast, partly withdrawing a pistol*) But living they take me not.

Enter POTTS, r.

POTTS. Sir Ernest, if you were having a little pleasant chat with her ladyship, pray go on, you needn't mind me—consider me one of the family. I am only Potts—Peter Potts, a constable, and an awful terror to all evil doers.

LADY MILLWARD goes off, L.

SIR F. What would you with me?

POTTS. That deserter and thief, Mark Acton—

SIR E. You have taken him?

POTTS. No, I haven't; and I want a fresh warrant.

SIR E. What say you?

POTTS. Yes, for a heinous assault on my worshipful person.

SIR E. Psha!

POTTS. You and I, Sir Ernest, are both in power. I am a constable and you are a magistrate; but supposing you were a criminal—a guilty wretch—and I held a warrant against you—

SIR E. Silence!

POTTS. Do you think, in that case, you would put a climax to your atrocities and throw me out of window.

SIR E. Fool!

Hurries off, L.

POTTS. Fool! how astonishing, that on that point, there should be such an unanimity of opinion. If he had staid any longer, he would have found out, of course, that I am a hungry old horse, and a donkey. Ah, it's a melancholy fact, there isn't a living soul that understands the peculiarity of my constitution.

Exit r.

SCENE THIRD.—*Road—Wood, &c.—(night)—precisely as seen in the vision—only snow not falling.*

Music.—CHARLES ACTON discovered lying on ground, and partially covered with the snow—his cloak has become unclasped—his cap has fallen off, and is lying at a little distance from him—his vest is open, showing blood upon his shirt—after a short pause, one arm is slightly raised—he appears to recover somewhat of consciousness, raises his head, endeavours to speak but cannot—crawls about a yard up stage, then again falls back senseless, his cloak remaining on the spot which he had just left—his cap still as discovered. *Music changes*—JAFED enters, L. 1 E., dragging on MEDA.

MEDA. Villain—villain! and there is no help.

JAFED. Not the slightest morsel, for when you would shout and scream, the howling wind drives your voice back again into your throat—so you had better keep cool, which you may easily do on such a night as this, and listen to me like a reasonable individual.

MEDA. Oh, my child—my darling infant, you have murdered him.

JAFED. Me! don't talk like an insane individual. Why, I never so much as looked at the blessed kinchin.

MEDA. No, but you stayed me here, on these wild Downs—thrust me into a wretched cove, and my poor babe soon sank and perished beneath the piercing cold.

JAFED. Can I help the cold? to hear you talk, one would suppose that I had the regulation of the weather. What a preposterous individual!

MEDA. Villain! through your vile contrivance my husband is now in Lewes jail, and will soon be sent across the seas, on a false charge concocted by you, and rendered successful by the fearful perjury of our people.

JAFED. Well, and so—

MEDA. I fled from them—resolved to abandon a tribe which had combined for my ruin and the destruction of my husband, whom I resolved to seek—to see him in his captivity, and console him with the assurance that his wife and child would join him in the far off country to which, unjustly, he will be banished.

JAFED. Exactly. But when missed from our tents, I easily guessed whither your steps would tend, and so followed and overtook you here, upon the Downs.

MEDA. Oh, my poor little child! that but two days since was smiling in my face—and now, cold—dead—dead! (*weeping*.)

JAFED. There, don't cry—it's not worth while making such a bother about a juvenile individual.

MEDA. Ruffian! Heaven will, ere long, call you to a terrible account for your many and atrocious crimes.

JAFED. Now that is not the style in which you ought to talk to your future husband.

MEDA. Wretch!

JAFED. You are now a widow, or all the same—for never again will you behold your present husband—so hold yourself in readiness for a second mate. In a few hours some of our people will be here, and they will drag you back to our tents, where our queen will unite you to the man whom you rejected for him who is now lying in gaol, to the man who, when you gave yourself to another, swore that that other should one day dearly rue the bargain he had won, and that she, the wife, should yet belong to him who first had sought her, and whom

she had always scorned—he has watched and waited, and his reward is close at hand. So you see what it is to be a persevering individual.

MEDA. Your just reward for all that you have done would be the gallows! a reward that may be nearer than you think for.

JAFED. Then you will be a widow of two husbands—the first of whom was transported, and the other hanged—and, of course, then *you* will be considered a respectable individual.

MEDA. Of one thing I am determined—no longer to be held within your thrall. I will go from you, and if I do not perish amidst the snow, will reach my husband, will place my dead child within his arms, and will denounce you to the doom you merit, murderer that you are.

JAFED. You are mad if you believe that I will suffer you to escape.

MEDA. I do not fear your power, for Heaven's might is with me. Ah, yes, Heaven will surely aid a poor, distracted wife, a poor, bereaved, and broken-hearted mother. (*a faint "Halloo" is heard, r.*) Ah, did I not tell you—there is some one wandering on the Downs! Heaven has heard my prayer—aid is near. (*calling*) Help—help! (*about to fly—JAFED seizes and whirls her round*) —CHARLES ACTON, *at same moment, is seen to stir.—Music*)

JAFED. Silence—silence! do you hear? (*drawing knife, and forcing her to her knees*) Silence, I say! you shall be my wife, or nothing! A cry for help, and your heart's blood shall mingle with the snow around.

CHARLES. (*who has now struggled to one knee—in a faint voice*) Help—help!

(*Music—JAFED and MEDA start—JAFED recoiling a step or two—MEDA springs to her feet, and CHARLES again sinks back insensible*)

JAFED. Why, who—who is this interfering individual? Is he drunk, or—

MEDA. (*hurrying to CHARLES, and kneeling beside him*) He is wounded—terribly wounded—he has been waylaid, robbed, and stricken by some such ruffian as yourself.

JAFED. Ah, no doubt! so 'tis no use to ransack his pockets.

MEDA. (*placing her hand upon CHARLES's heart*) If care be taken of him, he will live, and to the heavy snow will owe life—but for the intense cold, the warm blood would have poured forth from his wound, and quickly would have drained the heart. You have brandy—give it to me—give it to me, and he will live.

JAFED. No, he must not. By one of our tribe this blow must have been struck—and should this fellow recover, one of

my friends might be hanged; so as a very slight blow will serve to finish this prostrate individual, why, here goes.

(*He advances towards CHARLES—MEDA rises, grapples with JAFED, and forces him back*)

MEDA. And you would strike him, prostrate and helpless as he is—would dare complete the deed that as great a ruffian as yourself, though with a somewhat feebler arm, has left unfinished? Oh, villain, and coward—coward! if you must slay, it shall be a double crime, for over my lifeless body only shall you reach his heart.

JAFED. Well, upon my soul, you are a queer individual.

(“Halloo” again heard, somewhat nearer.)

MEDA. Ah, again that cry! thank Heaven!

JAFED. It could not save you, nor him—but a bargain with you—give me your word, I know you will not break it—give me your word that you will not attempt to escape, and he shall live—refuse, and he dies, even though, as you have said, you perish first.

MEDA. I consent. I will not doom this poor young man to death, and Heaven will hereafter recompense me, that for his rescue I sacrificed my every hope on earth.

JAFED. Here, then.

(*Music—JAFED throws brandy-flask to MEDA—she places it to CHARLES ACTON’s lips, chafes his forehead and his hands—after awhile he sighs deeply—they slowly raise him, and he gazes around bewildered*)

MEDA. (Joyfully) I said that he would live—he will—he will.

(“Halloo” again, close at hand.)

JAFED. Ah, who is this shouting individual? At any rate, he is close upon us now—quick, into the wood with this fellow.

(*Music—JAFED and MEDA support CHARLES and disappear with him in wood at back—during which, “Halloo” is repeated nearer and nearer—and GENERAL WILLIS enters, R., spurred, and with riding whip in his hand.*)

GENERAL. I am certain that I saw figures hereabouts—gipsies in all probability, and they are a dangerous set! But I must risk something, for I have lost all trace of my proper road, and—(*suddenly turning towards wood*) Ah, there are persons there—gipsies, and my pistols are in the holsters of my saddle; I will get them, for I know these men too well to trust myself amongst them unarmed.

(*Music—He hurries off, R.*)

JAFED emerges hastily from wood.

JAFED. ‘Tis General Willis—I know that at this moment,

his pocket-book is well lined—but he is brave, and—no matter, I will have it! (*seeing cloak and cap on ground—a thought appears to strike him*) Ah, good! (*Music—He puts on the cloak, wrapping it well around him, and draws the cap well down over his face—holding his knife in his right hand, concealed*) Now, should I fail, it will not be me that will get the credit of the attempt.

GENERAL WILLIS *re-enters, R., pistols in sash.*

GENERAL. How unfortunate! while taking the pistols I loosened the rein, and my horse has broken from the branch to which I tied him, and has galloped off I know not whither.

JAFED. (*aside*) So much the better.

GENERAL. (*seeing JAFED*) Ah, good evening—are you, sir, like myself, a bewildered traveller here?

JAFED. Oh, no—I know every inch of these Downs, and am now making a short cut to the main road—if you choose, I will be your guide.

GENERAL. You will oblige me greatly—for I no longer recognise a path—the snow has utterly perplexed me, and I shall be glad to get from this place, for there are gipsies in yonder wood, and they—

JAFED. Yes, I know—are very desperate individuals! But they have no terrors for me, bless you—so have the goodness to walk straight a-head, General Willis.

GENERAL. (*as he is going, R. U. E.*) Ah, you know me!

JAFED. Yes—and now you know me! (*stabbing him in the back*)

(*Music—GENERAL staggers, utters a cry—quickly draws pistol from his sash, and fires at JAFED, wounding him in the left shoulder—GENERAL attempts to draw second pistol, but falls to the ground L.—JAFED snatches the remaining pistol from GENERAL, tears pocket-book from his breast, and hurries off into wood, L. U. E.—MEDA appears on the edge of the wood, from R., as JAFED disappears, and is advancing towards GENERAL, when voices are heard, R., and she darts into wood, as MAJOR BELL, JOYCE, and several other MEN enter, R. U. E.*

MAJOR. See—see, the general is here. (*MEN partly raise him*) We were alarmed by your horse galloping riderless past us—we have traced you by the tracks of his hoofs upon the snow. Oh, general, who has done this? surely you are not seriously hurt?

GENERAL. I have my death wound! a few moments ago—

MAJOR. But the author of this vile crime—

GENERAL. I should know him—by a cloak—and a cap—that—

MAJOR. Yes, yes.

GENERAL. The cap was so peculiar, that—but I—I hit the rascal—I—I am sure of that.

CHARLES ACTON totters forward from the wood, L. U. E.—he has on again his cap and cloak.

He—he has my pocket-book—one of—of my pistols also—he—

CHARLES. (who has advanced, R.) Oh, help me—aid me—or I die!

GENERAL. (seeing him) Ah! (pointing) look—look! that man is my assassin!

CHARLES. I—I—oh, Heaven!

(Music—Two MEN rush over to CHARLES, and hold him—

JOYCE draws from inside pocket of cloak, the pistol and pocket-book, and holds them up to view c.—CHARLES, amazed and horror-stricken, sinks in the arms of one of the MEN, R. as he attempts to speak—GENERAL is dying in the arm of MAJOR BELL, L.—MEDA appears on edge of wood, R. C held back by JAFED, whose knife is pointed to her breast.

—Tab leau.

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

A C T S E C O N D .

SCENE FIRST.—*Handsome apartment, not modern, in Holly Bush Hall, door R. and L.—folding doors, c.—old fashioned massive furniture—large arm chair, and table, R., table, L.—Music.*

WINIFRED enters, L. D., and looks around.

WINIFRED. No, not here—where can the fellow have hidden himself; I have hunted a score of rooms, and cannot find him and Sir Ernest has called him a dozen times, and is in such rage!

POTTS enters, L. D., wearing a rich livery, breeches, silk stockings hair powdered, &c.

POTTS. Oh, Winifred, I saw you dive into this room, and followed you, because I thought it probable that you might want to make love to me.

WINIFRED. Oh, here you are ! I have been running after you all over the mansion.

POTTS. Shows you are a young woman of taste.

WINIFRED. I am sorry now that I prevailed on her ladyship to use her influence with Sir Ernest, that you might be engaged here.

POTTS. Sorry, why ?

WINIFRED. Because you are so lazy.

POTTS. You are quite right, I am ; and that's why I sought a situation here, for I have always understood that a gentleman's servant had nothing to do but to read the newspaper, with his feet on the fender.

WINIFRED. It isn't so in this house, for there is a great deal of work to do here.

POTTS. That won't matter to me, for I shan't do any of it.

WINIFRED. Sir Ernest is calling you.

POTTS. (*coolly*) Probably.

WINIFRED. And you know how fiery he is.

POTTS. Perfectly ! so I shan't go near him till he has had plenty of time to cool.

WINIFRED. Why you are quite an altered being.

POTTS. Decidedly ! when I donned this suit, I became one of the aristocracy.

WINIFRED. One of the *lazy-ocracy*, you mean.

POTTS. Well, it's all the same.

WINIFRED. Go to Sir Ernest !

POTTS. Nothing of the sort—I don't intend to be always trotting at his heels ; I had enough running after people while I was a constable.

WINIFRED. Perhaps so ; but you took care never to catch anybody.

POTTS. Because I had such a feeling heart—always tempered mercy with justice.

WINIFRED. Justice, indeed ! there is nothing like justice in the world, or poor Charles Acton, wounded and suffering as he is, would not now lie in custody on charge of murder.

POTTS. Depend upon it, he'll be hanged according to law.

WINIFRED. And you call that justice ?

POTTS. Me ? nothing of the sort ! a pretty constable I should have been, if I hadn't known the difference between law and justice : but, according to evidence, I should say that Charles Acton is guilty.

WINIFRED. Should you ?

POTTS. Yes, and if there was no evidence, should say he was guilty.

WINIFRED. Well, you are an amiable creature.

POTTS. There can be very little doubt about that ; but you see, Mark, this young fellow's brother, is a horrid vagabond, and so, of course—

WINIFRED. Charles must be the same ! well, you *are* a nice man.

POTTS. Glad to hear you confess it ; never could persuade you to it before.

WINIFRED. Just wait a minute, and we shall see ; *you have* a brother, I believe.

POTTS. Yes.

WINIFRED. Very well ! and pray what is *his* character ?

POTTS. He's a fishmonger.

WINIFRED. Psha ! I mean his moral character.

POTTS. He hasn't got any ; I'm sorry to say he's a drunken rascal !

WINIFRED. Exactly ! and according to your delightful argument, you should be the same.

POTTS. Well, and so I am, when I get the opportunity.

WINIFRED. Oh, very well, now I know—never more aspire to the honour of being my husband.

POTTS. Why not ?

WINIFRED. You drink !

POTTS. Never ! except, now and then, a little toast and water.

WINIFRED. You confessed it.

POTTS. But, I don't.

WINIFRED. And you say that Charles Acton is guilty.

POTTS. But he isn't.

WINIFRED. (*going*) You are a wretch !

POTTS. (*following her*) Of course I am !

WINIFRED. You will say anything !

POTTS. Of course I will ! you don't understand the peculiarity of my constitution.

Exeunt L. D.

Music.—A short pause, and MARK ACTON, after having slowly and cautiously opened the door, looks on R., seeing room empty, he ventures to advance.

MARK. Now if anybody should walk in and tell me I have no business here, I should be too much of a gentleman to contradict them—discovered and hunted, at last, from the chalk quarry, I suddenly bethought myself of Holly Bush Hall, and of the little grated window I used to climb in and out of when I was a little lad, and was allowed the run of the premises ; my situation had grown desperate—nothing could well make it worse, and a bold step might make it better, so I said here goes—there are rooms in the old Hall, hidden away as it were,

never tenanted, and beds that are never slept in, so why shouldn't I occupy a few of the rooms, and a few of the beds; and every night I could make my way down to the pantry for necessary provisions. So I made my way, unobserved, to the little grated window which I found rather too little, for I wasn't long in discovering that my carcase is rather larger now than when I was a little boy—however I managed to squeeze myself through, to the further injury of my wardrobe, which was already sufficiently tender and delicate, and then very soon lost myself amongst the old passages with which formerly, I was so familiar—years make a difference—ah, they have indeed altered me, for, here, in this old hall, where once I was a petted guest—I am now a skulking thief—oh, that those days might come back to me—but they never can, they never can—I must go forward in the path I have so madly chosen—*(looking about him, and changing his tone)* not in this path, though, or it will lead me to the jail, for I have got to the inhabited portion of the mansion, and—hark, surely I—*(goes quickly on tiptoe to L. D., which he opens a little, and then hastily recloses it)* Ah, 'tis well that constant danger sharpens the hearing, or else—

Music—he hurries off, R. D.

SIR ERNEST enters, leading in LADY MILLWARD, R. D.

LADY M. Pray release me, Sir Ernest, I would know no more.

SIR E. Adele, you should have been contented with your ignorance. You sought my secret, and liking not the portion of it you have heard, would now withdraw from further knowledge. But that may not be; the secret I have partly revealed must be given to you in its entirety. *(sarcastically)* 'Tis fit the fond wife should carry a portion of that heavy burthen which, alone, her husband cannot bear—that she should know a portion of that terror which nightly shakes him like a reed—that she should bear her share of the agony ever gnawing at his heart.

LADY M. Oh, terrible!

SIR E. I told you that I, in full confidence, took possession of this hall and the estates, having learned from, as I then believed, reliable report that my brother had ceased to live; though indeed, whether he lived or died, rightfully I could never claim them, for, Adele, my birth was illegitimate.

LADY M. *(shrieking)* Ah!

SIR E. You have doubtless often heard that my father was a man whose morality would not bear the strictest test—and so, Adele, my mother was a low born peasant woman, whom heaven had cursed with most surpassing beauty—she early died, and I then became an inmate of this, my father's mansion, and he—

well, the little love of which his own iron heart was capable was given to me—his elder and legitimate son, he from the very cradle loathed—he had hated Justin's mother whom, as a matter of interest only he had wedded—well, Justin was driven from his home, and I taught to expect that wealth and dignity would ever surround me.

LADY M. (*sinking into chair*) Oh, no more, no more !

SIR E. (*not heeding her*) My father was thrown from his horse, and killed on the instant—no provision had been made for me, and I became a penniless outcast ! What did I then—my brother dead as I believed, I forged a will which gave me all.

LADY M. (*shuddering*) Oh, heaven !

SIR E. Oh, so far my crime was venial, for, as I have said, I believed my brother dead, and knew my father had fully meant fully to leave me all ; and so I wedded, and—shall I confess it, I was happy till—my wife—I—I loved her, and she—my first punishment from heaven was that she was taken from me—well, two years further passed, and I became enamoured of your beauty—you became mine—(*LADY MILLWARD buries her face on chair*)—and happiness seemed still within my grasp, when, one terrible night—oh, I tremble now at the mere recollection—

LADY M. Oh, be silent, I implore you !

SIR E. (*not heeding her*) Seated alone, here, in this very apartment, my brother—living—suddenly appeared before me—(*LADY MILLWARD starts to her feet*)—what he said I know not, for my brain was all a chaos—I could understand only that he had entered the hall unseen and unknown, and that, exhausted with fatigue, he retired to the chamber in which, when a boy, he had been accustomed to sleep—a chamber far removed from the frequented and inhabited portion of the mansion, and to which he had been driven first by a wish to be as far as possible from the father who treated him so harshly.

LADY M. Unhappy son !

SIR E. At that moment, when threatened with the loss of all for which I had struggled and sinned, madness seized upon me—I flew through the hall—from chamber unto chamber—till by some infernal agency, I was driven into the armoury ! Ah ! surely, then, it was the great fiend himself who whispered into my ear. I snatched a dagger, strode like a demon to the apartment, and as my brother slept I—I—oh, horror, horror ! (*sinks into chair, covering his face with his hands*)

LADY M. You slew him ? Oh, powers of mercy !

SIR E. In that fatal chamber his mouldering bones are lying still—for never since have I dared to cross its threshold. (*starting up*) Oh ! would they were entombed, for then might his spirit cease to haunt me !

LADY M. His spirit say you?

SIR E. Yes, Adele, yes—night and day the terrible phantom of the brother that I murdered appears before me.

LADY M. Horrible, horrible! Oh, let me go hence! I will never speak of this that you have thrust upon me—but let me go hence—I cannot abide another hour within this crime stained mansion—can never again clasp the hand that has shed a brother's blood.

SIR E. Yes, Adele, henceforth we are sundered. I knew it would be so, and wished that so it should be, for I would be alone, ever alone, to brood over my remorse—would have no eye, save heaven's, behold the terror with which so oft I'm shaken.

LADY M. Oh, what a fate is mine—wedded to a fratricide! Oh, let me hence—let me quit this fearful man—let me go from beneath this terrible roof lest it should fall and crush me!

(going L.—SIR ERNEST follows and brings her back)

SIR E. No, Adele, no! You go not from the Hall till one of us shall be laid within the grave.

LADY M. Would you dare—

SIR E. Having done so much, can you think there is aught now would make me pause? Adele, this terrible secret, which you could not rest till you had learned, has united us more firmly than ever—heavy and stained with blood, the chain by which now, and henceforth, we are linked together, not in love, but, on my side, fear—on yours, shuddering hatred, loathing horror. The chain will be long enough to take you from my presence, but will not reach without this mansion. (ADELE starts) You comprehend? Adele, you have doomed yourself to an imprisonment which can end only with my life, or with your own.

LADY M. Oh, say not that! for never to mortal will I reveal—

SIR E. (clutching her arm) Swear it! for without your oath I could not be safe, even here, in Holly Bush Hall! Did you think I had forgotten that?—down then—(forcing her to her knees) Down, and swear!

LADY M. To do that were to make myself a sharer in your crime. I will not!

SIR E. (threatening) You must, you must! Swear by all that's terrible here and hereafter, closely to guard this fearful secret—swear, I say, or—

Music—The folding doors suddenly fly open, and JUSTIN MILLWARD appears—he is very pale, and is wrapped in a large cloak.

JUSTIN. Forbear—forbear!

SIR E. (*recoiling aghast*) See there—see—the phantom again—oh, mercy, mercy!

Music.—JUSTIN disappears—folding doors close—LADY MILLWARD springs from her knees and darts off, L. D.—SIR ERNEST endeavours to follow her, but staggers and sinks overpowered into chair, L.

Music ceases.—MARK ACTON enters from R. D.—walks coolly and quietly, and throws himself into large chair, R.

SIR E. (*rising—feebley*) I must follow her—my life is in her hands—yet, no—there is no danger—she will, for her own sake, be secret. I have nought to fear from her.

MARK. When you have a little leisure, Sir Ernest—

SIR E. (*starts, turns, and gazes amazed on MARK, who reclining cross-legged, coolly nods to him*) What vagabond is this? Villain! whence came you, and wherefore this insolent intrusion?

MARK. I am one for whose capture you, in your capacity of magistrate, have issued a warrant.

SIR E. I understand. Rise, then, insolent wretch. (*MARK folds his arms, and lies back in chair*) Weary of being hunted, you come to give yourself to justice.

MARK. No, Sir Ernest—(*laughing quietly*) you, as a magistrate, may think it droll conduct for a criminal; but I came to you for safety.

SIR E. Is this madness, or mere audacity?

MARK. You do not recollect me, and I am not surprised, for I have lost much of my early beauty.

SIR E. Who are you, fellow?

MARK. I am Mark Acton.

SIR E. Oh, that scoundrel—

MARK. (*coolly*) Yes.

SIR E. Deserter and thief!

MARK. Precisely.

SIR E. And you have dared intrude into my very chamber!

MARK. (*shaking his leg*) Here I am, you see.

SIR E. I will instantly give orders that you be taken back to your regiment.

MARK. And then I know what would await me, "the lash. I am now, I know it, a degraded man—but should the delightful cat once put its claws upon my back, I should be sunk beyond all hope of future redemption—the lash is an institution fit only for dogs—though they get off easily compared with a poor refractory soldier.

SIR E. Ruffian! but officers of the law are now within the hall, and—(*going*)

MARK. (*rising, quietly*) You will not trouble them.

SIR E. (*haughtily stopping, and turning sharply towards MARK*) Wherefore not?

MARK. Because, Sir Ernest, I—(*deliberately*) I have heard every word of your interview with Lady Millward. (**SIR ERNEST** staggers back as if shot—**MARK** walks coolly and throws himself again into chair, r., lies back, and pulls from his pocket a short, dirty pipe) Sir Ernest, if you don't object to 'bacca, I'll trouble you for a light.

SIR E. (*utterly overwhelmed*) You—you heard—

MARK. Every word, I tell you. (*pointing*) I was in that room, with the door ajar, all the while—how I came there, you shall know another time, if the information will afford you any satisfaction, but I fear it won't. A pretty magistrate you are, to issue a warrant against a poor fellow, not half so great a scoundrel as yourself.

SIR E. (*groaning*) Oh!

MARK. I little thought such a piece of luck was in store for me—I feel now quite warm and comfortable—quite as if this noble mansion and estates were all my own. How valuable a property is a great man's secret!

SIR E. Listen to me—you shall have a thousand pounds, and I will secure your escape to a foreign land.

MARK. (*rising*) No, I shall remain in old England—it is my native land, and its climate agrees with me.

SIR E. Two—five thousand!

MARK. And you might, perhaps, give some other scoundrel ten to kill me before I was a hundred yards from your doors. No—the further I travelled from you, the weaker would grow my power over you—so I shall take up my abode here, in Holly Bush Hall, and day and night will never leave you.

SIR E. Impossible.

MARK. Nonsense! you have managed worse difficulties than that, you know, to continue lord and master here. You shall say I am a friend come to stay with you.

SIR E. A friend—you!

MARK. Yes, and one you should be proud of, considering you are a forger and a murderer.

SIR E. Silence—oh, silence!

MARK. Certainly, unless you should force me to speak out loudly. Come, you shall give me some clothes from your wardrobe—and mind, they must be new, bran new.

SIR E. But you—you will be known, and—

MARK. No, no—I will have a good shave, and wash my face, and when so disguised, nobody will recognise me. Come on! (*taking his arm and leading him*) I say, what a blessing I happened to be in the next room—for me, I mean.

SIR E. Oh, torture—torture!

MARK. This is the first time I was ever arm-in-arm with a live baronet.

Music—Exeunt, R. D.

SCENE SECOND.—*A Wood. (2nd Groves)*

Music—JAFED enters hastily, R., his left hand thrust into his breast.

JAFED. No, no, I can find no trace of her! Was there ever such an aggravating individual! And I can't run very fast, for every step I take jars my shoulder, and it feels as if a pack of dogs were gnawing at it. Curse that general's bullet! 'tis well the gipsies are skilled in herbs, or I might have died. But Meda, where can she be? She saw me strike the general—has gone, perhaps, to denounce me! But no, she wouldn't dare—for she herself would then be a doomed individual. (*looking off, r.*) By the gipsies' star, she comes! (*conceals himself*)

MEDA enters, R.

MEDA. I can find no path will take me from this wood, can see no one that I might ask which road will lead me towards my husband.

JAFED. (*advancing on her L., and grasping her arm*) Your husband! you have found him, Meda—or he has found you, which you will.

MEDA. The corse of my poor babe—you have stolen it from the cavern—where is it now—what have you done with it?

JAFED. Buried it in the wood.

MEDA. Oh—oh, where?—show me the spot.

JAFED. 'Twould puzzle me to find it again—'twas somewhere in the wood, and that's all I know about it.

MEDA. And shall I, then, never know the last resting place of my poor little murdered infant—shall I never be permitted to weep beside his grave?

JAFED. Certainly not. What's the use of being a snivelling individual? The kinchin's dead and buried, so all you have to do is to forget all about him as soon as possible.

MEDA. Oh, wretch! the most abandoned and depraved have always some particle of humanity left about them—some human chord that, rightly struck, would vibrate to the touch—but you—oh, you are all devil!

JAFED. What a slanderous individual! What do you from the cave?—you gave your word that you would not attempt escape.

MEDA. Yes, if you would suffer that young man to live,

JAFED. Well, I did not strike him.

MEDA. Not with your knife—no, it had been better for him so, for you have given him to ignominy and the scaffold.

JAFED. Must take care of number one—can't help it, but I'm a selfish individual.

MEDA. Oh that I were not a stranger to all the country for miles around, that I but knew which way to direct my steps—yet if I were free—

JAFED. (*sneeringly*) Well, if you were free—

MEDA. I should encounter, surely, some one who would tell me all I wish to know.

JAFED. And that is—

MEDA. The place to which they have taken this poor, falsely charged young man.

JAFED. That you might denounce your intended husband to the gallows.

MEDA. My husband—you! I would sooner perish!

JAFED. The choice will not be given to you, unless you should betray me to the hangman, and then, by the laws of our race, first torture, and then death would be your doom.

MEDA. The opportunity given to me, and I would brave the worst that could befall, so I might save the man who, without my voice to rescue, will surely perish for your crime.

JAFED. Because I have but one hand now to use, you are a presuming individual! But see—(*indicating r.*) yonder come some of our tribe, and they will hold you fast enough.

MEDA. Yes, if they o'ertake me—but Heaven will give speed unto my purposed flight. (*Music—She hurries towards L.—JAFED follows, and grasps her—(of course with the right hand, and drags her back—MEDA shrieking)*) Release me, villain! (with a sudden thought) Ah! (with a strong effort, she breaks from his grasp, raises her arm, and with her clenched fist, strikes him heavily on his wounded shoulder—he utters a yell of pain, and sinks to the ground—*MEDA darts off, L.—JAFED, with difficulty, rises, and displaying great agony, staggers after her*)

SCENE THIRD.—*Chamber. (Same as Scene I, Act II.)*

Enter EDWARD MILLWARD and MAY ACTON, L. D.

EDWARD. Now, my dear, pretty May, do pray cease weeping, behave like the month you are named after, and having indulged in a refreshing shower, do pray let us have a little sunshine.

MAY. But Charles—my poor innocent brother, Charles!

EDWARD. And is it not enough to know that he is innocent.

MAY. Oh, no—for, alas, I fear his innocence will not avail to save him.

EDWARD. It must—it shall! only wait till his examination, presently, before my father, and you will see that he will scatter to the wind the circumstances that have combined against him.

MAY. Oh, that it may be so, for should he perish, my mother, too, would die. Was it not enough that Mark should have given himself to evil, and so have made the misery of our poor, unhappy mother: but must the innocent son be made the instrument to complete the work his guilty brother had begun, and hurry our last surviving parent broken-hearted to the grave.

EDWARD. There shall be no broken hearts, and no graves, take my word for it; but, before long, there shall be marriage offerings, and a jolly faced parson, and two blooming couples, brimming full of happiness, shall stand before the altar, while crowds shall throng to stare and envy their felicity.

WINIFRED *entering*, L. D.

WINIFRED. Yes, sir, I shouldn't wonder; but I don't think anybody will envy me when I marry Potts.

EDWARD. And have you really resolved so to sacrifice your youth and beauty?

WINIFRED. I am afraid I must—I don't know why, but I am afraid I must.

POTTS *entering*, R. D.

POTTS. That's just like me—I don't know why, but I am afraid I must.

EDWARD. Now, Master Potts, your services are not needed here, so begone!

POTTS. Certainly, Mr. Edward—merely passing, having had the honour to wait on Sir Ernest. (*going, l.—stopping*) Oh, by the bye, Winny, just say when you would like to be married —tell me the day, and I will let you know if it will suit my convenience.

WINIFRED. Did you ever know such an impudent fellow—never, sir!

POTTS. That wouldn't suit me, I know—I shall be busy then, so we'll say Friday week—and mind you prove a tender wife—in fact, when we are married I shall expect you thoroughly to understand the peculiarity of my constitution. *Exit L. D.*

EDWARD. Well, Mr. Potts has some assurance.

WINIFRED. Yes, and Mr. Potts must take care or he will find himself dished at last.

EDWARD. He is in love, and, therefore, as a matter of course,

a little crazy--the senses of people who are in love are generally a little on the loose! (*to MAY*) Isn't it so, my pretty little darling!

WINIFRED. Yes, that it certainly is--oh! I beg your pardon, I thought you spoke to me! (*EDWARD laughs*) I know that I am mad--stark staring! or I shouldn't give my mind to Potts.

TRIO—AIR,—“A rose tree in full bearing.”

MAY.	My heart is full of sorrow, Fled all its hopes so bright ;
EDWARD.	Sunshine may come to morrow, Bright day succeed dark night.
MAY.	Dark sorrows cloud before us, Happy days no more shall see ;
WINIFRED.	While heaven watches o'er us, Who can say what soon may be.
TOGETHER.	Dark sorrows cloud before us, Yet happy days we soon may see ; While heaven watches o'er us, Who can say what soon may be.

Exeunt, l. d.

SIR ERNEST *enters, r. d.*

SIR E. Oh, there needed not this, for already had my torture reached its utmost limit; this man—I cannot live and he ever beside me—better to die, and so escape from him—from all! This poison—(*producing phial*) the moment has now arrived when I must use it—yes, I must perish a suicide—or die a felon's death, for on this man's silence I dare not rely—he is reckless—is craving even now for drink—and then, discretion gone, he would shout forth all the terrible truth, and I—oh, cursed fate that brought him hither; oh, that heaven's lightning had seared and withered him on his way!

Music—**MARK ACTON enters, r. d., dressed preposterously—**
trowsers too short—large frill to his shirt—gaudy necktie, and large old-fashioned showy dressing gown—his beard is gone, but his hair is still ragged and uncombed.

MARK. There, you see, Sir Ernest, how soon a few fine clothes makes me look like a gentleman—but, I say, these trowsers must have been made for you when a little boy, or else I have made a mistake and put my legs too far through them—but, come, let us have some wine—gentleman's drink—I can't condescend now to vulgar beer.

SIR E. No, no!

MARK. But I say yes—I have a right to it—it's my own

property now—everything that's here belongs to me—you belong to me—body and—(*touching his trousers*)—breeches!

SIR E. (*aside*) Oh, I will not live thus—I will not live thus.

MARK. (*tugs at bell rope till he breaks it*) Why, what gim-crack thing do you call this? (*throwing bell rope from him*) I must have something stronger, for I pull hard.

SIR E. (*aside*) Yes, he shall drink, and he, not I, shall perish by this poison; I shall easily find means to account for it—yes, he shall die, he shall die!

MARK. (*throwing himself into chair*) Sir Ernest, that was capital wine I found in your dressing-room—I should like some more of the same sort.

WINIFRED enters, L. D.—*seeing only MARK, goes hastily over to him and curtseys.*

WINIFRED. (*to MARK*) I beg your pardon, Sir Ernest, no wonder you are angry, but you see—

SIR E. (*at her back*) Silence, girl!

WINIFRED. (*she jumps away with a slight scream*) Oh, gracious me, Sir Ernest! Oh, dear! how you frightened me! Isn't that you, sitting there!

MARK. No, it's me! I say, you are a pretty girl!

WINIFRED. Yes, I know that, sir, but—(*aside*) who is this man, and how did he get here in master's dressing-gown?

SIR E. Why come you girl? Go, and desire one of the footmen to bring wine.

MARK. And tell him that I drink out of a tumbler.

WINIFRED. Yes, sir, I shouldn't have come, but—

SIR E. Go!

WINIFRED. (*going*) Yes, sir.

MARK. (*rising*) Here, come back! (*she returns*) Are there many such pretty girls as yourself about this old hall?

WINIFRED. No, sir. (*aside*) Well, I can't understand this a bit!

MARK. Here—(*taking from his pocket a small sealed packet*) Give this to the most trustworthy fellow about the place, and bid him ride with it, fast as horse can gallop, and deliver it to its address. (*WINIFRED looks towards SIR ERNEST without taking packet*) Oh, Sir Ernest does not object, (*going over to him*) do you, my dear friend?

SIR E. (*uneasily*) What is that packet?

MARK. Only a letter to my young woman, and a few of the bank notes that I have just drawn from you—the poor thing must be very uneasy on my account, and she will know from this that I am well and jolly—eh, Sir Ernest? we are both of us jolly, eh? Here, you may look at the address to see that it is all right.

SIR E. (*to WINIFRED—glancing at the address*) Obey him !

MARK. (*giving packet to WINIFRED*) Yes, obey me—do you hear ?

WINIFRED. Yes, sir. (*aside*) Never knew anything so mysterious in all my life.

Exit, L. D.

MARK. Sir Ernest, when I am a little rested from my fatigue, we will ride together over our estate, to see that the tenantry are all snug and comfortable, and pay their rents ; and we must see that there are no poor and suffering—that, you know, is only the duty of us rich people.

SIR E. (*aside, writhing*) Oh, he must die--he must die !

Music.—POTTS enters, L. D., with decanter of wine, wine glass, and tumbler on salver—places them on table, L.—MARK throws himself into chair—POTTS, directed by SIR ERNEST, pours wine into tumbler, places tumbler on salver, and goes with it over to MARK—he takes tumbler from salver—POTTS at same moment looks at MARK, and starts back amazed, dropping salver—SIR ERNEST hastily advances.

SIR E. How now—what means—

MARK. (*aside*) Curse me if it isn't Potts, the constable !

(empties tumbler.)

POTTS. Sir Ernest, look here—this is the fellow that threw me out of window.

MARK. (*to SIR ERNEST*) My dear friend, we must discharge this flunkie, he isn't right in his mind.

POTTS. Yes, threw me out of window, and—the very voice, too !

MARK. You hear that—the very voice that threw him out of window ! 'pon my soul, he's in a dreadful state !

POTTS. I—I don't know how he got here, nor where he stole those clothes, but I'll take my solemn oath that this is Mark Acton.

MARK. Mark Acton ! who is he ? never heard of him !

POTTS. Oh !

SIR E. (*agitated*) Some fancied likeness has deceived you—this is—

MARK. (*rising*) A very particular friend of your master's, come to stop a long while with him.

POTTS. A—a friend of yours, Sir Ernest ?

SIR E. (*with difficulty*) Ye—yes.

MARK. Pick up that small tea-tray, will you ?

POTTS. (*stooping, and taking up salver*) Well, this—this doubles me up—never saw such a likeness in all my life !

WINIFRED enters, L. D.—MARK returns tumbler to salver, and POTTS goes up and places both on table, L., staring all the time at MARK.

WINIFRED. If you please, Sir Ernest, I was desired to tell you that the constables have arrived at the hall with the poor young man charged with the murder of General Willis.

SIR E. Very well.

MARK. What's this, Sir Ernest—have we a little magisterial business to attend to? then in that case, young woman, fetch me a coat that you will see lying in my dear friend, Sir Ernest's dressing room. (WINIFRED looks towards SIR ERNEST)

SIR E. Go!

WINIFRED. (aside) Can't make it out a bit. *Exit*, R. D.

POTTS. (coming forward—completely bothered) Never saw such a likeness in all my life.

SIR E. (aside) Now, every moment's delay is an added danger.

Goes towards L. table, but stops as WINIFRED re-enters, R. D., with coat, which she throws to POTTS.

WINIFRED. (aside) No, it's no use, can't make it out a bit.

Exit, L. D.

POTTS. (aside) Never saw such a likeness in my life—especially about the voice.

Music.—MARK takes off dressing gown, and POTTS, with a bewildered stare, helps MARK on with coat, which is considerably too large for him.—SIR ERNEST steals to table, L.—empties contents of phial into tumbler, and then pours wine from the decanter—music ceases:

MARK. (carelessly, turning his head towards SIR ERNEST) Halloa, my dear friend, have you taken to drinking?

SIR E. (confused and agitated) No, no—'tis for you that I—

MARK. (carelessly) Oh, thankye! Here! I say, you Potts, doesn't this coat wrinkle a little in the back.

POTTS. Well, slightly—but—I beg your pardon, sir, but are you quite sure that you are not Mark Acton, the blackguard that threw me out of window?

MARK. My name, sir, is Smith.

POTTS. Smith?

MARK. Yes, Smith—you must have heard that name before.

POTTS. (shaking his head) Never—never in all my life.

MARK. Well, I wonder at that, for there are a few of them about. Never heard of John Smith?

POTTS. John Smith—(*trying to recollect*)—I think I have somewhere heard mention of a John Smith.

MARK. Well, that's me.

POTTS. Oh!

SIR E. (*to POTTS*) Go!

POTTS. Oh! (*goes up to table, L., about to remove wine*)

SIR E. Leave it.

POTTS. It's no use talking, I never did see such a likeness in all my life. *Exit L. D.*

MARK. (*laughing*) Potts is rather bothered. But where is the wine, so much talking makes me thirsty.

SIR E. (*brings forward tumbler half filled, and presenting it to him*) Drink then.

MARK. (*taking tumbler*) Ah, now you are behaving like a friend. (*raising tumbler towards his lips, then suddenly pauses and looks keenly at SIR ERNEST, who quails beneath his glance*)

MARK. (*carelessly*) I suppose this wine is all right?

SIR E. What mean you?

MARK. (*as before*) There is no poison in it?

SIR E. (*agitated*) Poison! can you believe that I—

MARK. (*as before*) No, no, certainly not—I know your amiable character too well—only, my dear friend, 'tis as well that we should thoroughly understand each other—so just listen a moment: that little packet, which has gone to a girl who loves me, and who, strange as it may seem, would, I believe, give her life for me—

SIR E. (*impatiently*) Well, well.

MARK. That little packet has, no doubt, by this time reached its destination.

SIR E. (*as before*) And what of that?

MARK. (*still carelessly*) Oh, nothing—only a portion of the contents of that packet is a firmly sealed letter, with directions (which will be obeyed) that she, the aforesaid girl, must not break that seal unless she hears that I am in a jail, or dead; and that letter contains a full, true, and particular account of all your pretty little history. (*SIR ERNEST is paralyzed*) So, now, as I have made all clear, and am very thirsty, why, good luck to one of us. (*raises tumbler to his lips*)

SIR E. (*clutching MARK's arm*) Hold! do not drink!

MARK. (*laughing quietly*) Ah, I see—the wine is a little thick. (*going over to L., and replacing tumbler with wine on salver*) How careful he is of my precious health; well, (*coming forward, L.*) I may say, without flattery, I never had such a friend as you before, in all my life.

Enter POTTS, L. D.

POTTS. Sir Ernest, the prisoner—

MARK. Bring him in, and we'll attend to him.

POTTS. (*aside*) Then I suppose, Mr. John Smith is a magistrate too. But I never saw such a—eh? (*seeing wine in tumbler, and observing that SIR ERNEST's back is towards him*) If I don't drink this, I shall spill it, so—(*raising tumbler and about to drink*)

MARK. (*seeing him*) Potts! (*POTTS starts*) you musn't! (*quietly takes tumbler from POTTS's hand—goes up and throws the wine from it into fire-place*)

POTTS. (*aside*) There's extravagance!

MARK. (*returning and placing tumbler on salver*) It wouldn't agree with you.

POTTS. Wouldn't it? (*aside*) Mr. Smith doesn't understand the peculiarity of my constitution. *Exit L. D., with salver, &c.*

MARK. My dear friend, who is this unlucky prisoner?

SIR E. (*suddenly struck*) Ah! I had forgotten—he is—

Music.—Enter L. D. MAJOR BELL, EDWARD, MABEL, CHARLES ACTON, still weak and pale, and supported by DAME and MARY, and followed by JOYCE and OFFICERS, PEOPLE, male and female, crowd into the apartment.—SIR ERNEST sits R.—MARK is behind his chair.

MARK. (*aside*) I am either mad, or that is my brother Charles! (*to SIR ERNEST*) And he is charged with murder!

SIR E. (*to MARK*) His guilt is clear.

MARK. (*leaning over back of chair and hissing the words into SIR ERNEST's ear*) You lie, you lie! What, my good and noble brother Charles! No, he is not of my stamp; but if he were, or if he were the devil himself, you must acquit him—mark you that, mark you that!

CHARLES. Mother, sister, you I knew would not believe me capable of the dreadful crime with which, so falsely, I am charged.

DAME. Charles, dear Charles!

MAY. My dear brother!

CHARLES. And you, Mabel—

MABEL. Would stake my life upon your innocence, and gather courage from the calamity which has befallen you to avow boldly, and before the world, before my father even, that love for you which, until now, I trembled but to utter to my own fond heart.

SIR E. (*starting to his feet*) Oh, degradation upon degradation!

EDWARD. Dear Mabel, your courage gives me a noble example. (*taking MAY by the hand*) Father, behold another fond couple who implore your blessing; but, understand, we are in

no hurry for it, for we are both too young to be married immediately.

SIR E. (*to DAME*) Woman, you have connived at this—oh, beware, beware!

MARK. (*to SIR ERNEST*) Give not a wry word—cast not an angry look on my poor old mother, or, though I would not willingly turn informer—I'll tell them all, and hand you over to the executioner.

DAME. Why should you despise my children? their birth, Sir Ernest, was not illegitimate—no, they were born of honest, wedded parents, and could derive no honour from alliance with your name.

SIR E. Hag, dare you—dare you—(*MARK clutches his arm*) Oh, curses, curses—

JUSTIN MILLWARD appearing suddenly, at folding doors, c.

JUSTIN. Invoke them not, for on your own head long has rested heaven's terrible malediction.

ALL. Justin Millward. (*Music.—JUSTIN advances*)

SIR E. Oh, again, again that horrible phantom!

JUSTIN. No, a living reality. (*leading SIR ERNEST forward*) Rejoice that the blow you struck me, proved not fatal; I returned not alone to this old Hall—I came to you with pardon on my lips, and you sought to slay me—not even my supposed spirit could lead you to repentance and atonement—you still clung to the wealth and title you had, with so much guilt, obtained; go—I will not publish your infamy to the world—I leave your punishment to heaven.

SIR ERNEST *rushes off despairingly*, R. D.

MAJOR. For this young man, back with him to prison, till the scaffold claims him—his guilt is but too well proved; it was proclaimed by the dying lips of his victim—the pistol, and the pocket book of the murdered general were found upon his assassin, and the wound he had received—

CHARLES. Was given by a man in soldier's garb, who way-laid, wounded, and plundered me of my valise—and left me senseless and bleeding on the snow.

MARK. (*aside*) His valise? his—it was he! Oh—merciful powers!

DAME. (*aside*) And I—I dare not speak, for so should I condemn my other son—Oh, Mark, Mark!

MAJOR. (*to CHARLES*) Your mere assertion is no proof—away with him.

MARK. (*rushing forward*) If you dare, if you dare! (*throwing his arms round CHARLES—all show surprise*) Charles, brother, curse me, kill me—it was my hand that struck you to the

earth—to me is due that now you are standing here, branded with another's crime. (*sinking to his knees*) Oh, curse me, curse me!

CHARLES. (*raising him*) No, dear Mark—heaven is my witness that I freely pardon you—and love you still with all a brother's love.

JOYCE Mark Acton, you are my prisoner.

MARK. Yes, yes—wait but a minute, and—Major Bell, the wound inflicted by the general on his assassin was—

MAJOR. A bullet wound—well?

MARK. Oh, ask then of the doctor who has cured *his* hurt, (*pointing to CHARLES*) and he will tell you it was given by a bayonet—do you hear? *my* bayonet—now, take me away—hang me—do with me as you will; but, let him go free—let him go free.

CHARLES. Brave Mark! (*to him*) Oh, silence, silence.

DAME } } (embracing him) Dear, noble Mark.
MAY }

Music—MEDA rushes on, L. D.

MEDA. Oh, save me, save me—I saw the doors of thi mansion open, as if inviting *L. D.* to shelter, and I—oh, save me save me!

CHARLES. Ah, I rec_{gnize} that women.

MEDA. It is he—it is he! Heaven has guided my steps! (*pointing*) He is no assassin—I saw the deed committed—the murderer of General Willis was—

JAFED *hurries on, L. D.*

see—he is there—he is there. (*Music.—JAFED turns back, endeavouring to retreat—on a quick sign from MAJOR BELL, MEN hastily place themselves before, L. D.*)

JAFED. (*aside*) Fool that I am, in my mad haste I have rushed blindly into the trap.

MEDA. The general wounded his assassin, as you know—well, on that man's left shoulder—

JAFED. 'Tis false—I am not wounded! (*MARK places his hand on JAFED's shoulder, he utters a cry of pain*)

MEDA. And in his breast he has the notes he took from the murdered man—a locket too— (*Music.—MEN seize JAFED, MAJOR takes notes and locket from him*)

JAFED. 'Tis all over with me—I am a suspended individual. (*pistol shot without, R.—Music—all start, and turn*)

LADY MILLWARD *rushes on, R. D.*

LADY M. Sir Ernest! oh, horror! he has destroyed himself.

MABEL. Dead—my father?

JUSTIN. He was not your father; you were your mother's children by a former marriage, but you were very young when she became Sir Ernest's wife; and by his command you were taught to think he was your father.

EDWARD. Well, now, somehow, I always thought there was something droll about it—but you are our uncle, ain't you? there is nothing wrong about that, I hope.

JUSTIN. As far as depends on me, all shall go well with you, even in your love.

CHARLES. (*taking her hand*) Oh, dear Mabel!

EDWARD. (*taking her hand*) My blooming May!

JUSTIN. (*to LADY MILLWARD*) You, madam, have reason to rejoice that you are free—you shall not lack the wealth for which your parents sold you.

MAJOR. (*pointing to JAFED*) Take that ruffian hence.

JAFED. Meda, since I find you are not to belong to me, you shall have your husband back; my fate will soon be settled, so it's time I should become a repentant individual.

He is taken off, l. d.

MEDA. My darling child, my little babe, I shall never see that more—that can never be restored to me.

MAJOR. You shall have no reason to repent, good woman, that you have given freedom to an innocent man—for you, Mark Acton—

POTTS and WINIFRED enter, l. d.

POTTS. There, I knew it—I said that Mark Acton was Mr. Smith—no, I mean, Mr. Acton was Mark Smith—no, I mean—

WINIFRED. You don't know what you mean—you have been drinking!

POTTS. (*pointing to MARK*) *He* knows better than that. Ah, Mr. Mark Acton, you were not sharp enough for me; you might deceive everybody else in the world, but not me, my good fellow, you don't understand the peculiarity of my constitution.

DAME. Mercy, Major Bell! it is from your own regiment that my poor boy has deserted—suffer us to purchase his discharge, and let him then go free—oh, have pity on a doating mother's heart.

EDWARD. Oh, yes, Major, mercy for poor Mark Acton.

ALL. Mercy, mercy!

JUSTIN. Use your influence for him, Major, for be certain that his inmost core is sound; free him, and I will place him beyond further temptation to sin.

MAJOR. I will use my utmost interest for him, and doubt not that I shall succeed. (*a shout*)

MARK. And if you *do* succeed, I swear that you will then have won a soul almost lost, back to true integrity, and to honour. I will take nothing from any of you, except from you, my mother, and that only the means to carry me away to far off lands, where I will toil and struggle hard, and honestly—nor return to you till I have fully wiped away the foul stain now resting on my name—a rough hand drives to further sin—a tender grasp leads back to virtue; if ever I am here again, on this spot, it will be a new man whc then will stand beneath the roof of Holly Bush Hall. (*Music—Tableau*)

EDWARD.
R.MAY.
M.MAJOR.
M.LADY M.
M.JUSTIN.
J.MARK.
M.DAME.
D.CHARLES.
C.MABEL.
M.POTTS.
P.WINIFRED.
W.PEOPLE.
P.

L.

CURTAIN.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C *Centre*; R. C *Right of Centre*; L. C. *Left of Centre*; D. F. *Door in the Flat*; or Scene running across the back of the Stage; C. D. F. *Centre Door in the Flat*; D. R. C. *Right Door in the Flat*; L. C. F. *Left Door in the Flat*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; 2 E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*.

* * * *The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.*