

# A L I C E G R E Y

THE SUSPECTED ONE

OR

THE MORAL BRAND

A DOMESTIC DRAMA

IN

THREE ACTS

BY

JOHN T. HAINES, Esq.

AUTHOR OF

*Amilie—Henriquez—Charming Polly—Wizard of the Wave—  
Idiot Witness—Love and Mystery—Wraith of the  
Lake—Uncle Oliver—Wizard Skiff—  
French Spy.*

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# ALICE GRAY.

*First performed at the Royal Surrey Theatre,  
April 1, 1839.*

## CHARACTERS.

<b>JOB MERRITON</b> , <i>Landlord of the Cornflower Inn</i>	Mr. HESLOP.
<b>CHRYSSTAL BAXTER</b> , <i>his Ostler</i>	Mr. NEVILLE.
<b>MR. CALEB KIT</b> , <i>Professor of Dancing, Toxophilical and Calisthenic Exercises</i>	Mr. ROSS.
<b>MR. JEREMY JENKINSON</b> , <i>from Norton Folgate</i>	Mr. W. SMITH.
<b>HARRY HAMMERTON</b> , <i>the Village Smith</i>	Mr. DALE.
<b>WILFRED HEARTON</b> , <i>a Young Artist</i>	Mr. COURTY. Mr. FORBES.
<b>MR. DAVID DEMURE</b> , <i>a Grocer, afterwards Magistrate</i>	
<b>CADGER COLLINS</b> , <i>a Returned Transport</i>	Mr. E. F. SAVILLE.
<b>BILLET &amp; CLUMP</b> , <i>Village Constables</i>	Messrs. FRANCE & DIXON
<b>FARMER GROVES</b>	Mr. R. GREEN.
<b>GILES, HOSKINS, HARROW, DIBBLE, &amp; WHEATEAR</b> , <i>Husbandmen with a glee</i>	Messrs. MILLER, BUTLER, WILSON, HENRY and JONES.
<b>ALICE GREY</b> , <i>Niece to Merriton</i>	Mrs. H. Vining.
<b>MISS SACCHARISSA SIGISMUNDA SIMPKINS</b> , <i>from the Old Bailey</i>	Miss MARTIN.
<b>MISS ELLEN MORDAUNT</b>	Miss CHARTLEY.

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The Cornflower Inn and Picturesque Village of Heathfield—Interior of the Village Inn—Rural Ball, and Re-union—Gathering of the Village, en deshabille.

ACT II.—After a lapse of Three Years.

Interior of the Abode of “The Suspected One”—Saloon of a Village Aristocrat—Fearful destruction of Merriton’s Dwelling.

ACT III.—After a lapse of Four Years.

The New Cornflower Inn—A Winter Prospect—the Justice Room—Brotherly Love again.

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## COSTUMES.

**JOB MERRITON.**—Old man's brown suit, green apron, brown George wig. *2nd dress.*—Black coat, red waistcoat, dark corduroy breeches, shabby. *3rd dress.*—Dark ragged great coat, grey hose pulled over, dark patched breeches, very thin white hairs.

**CALEB KIT.**—Crimson short-waisted swallow-tailed coat, white dirty satin waistcoat, stone colour pantaloons, short splashed black gaiters. *2nd dress.*—Sky-blue coat, yellow waistcoat, brown tights, short nankeen gaiters. *3rd dress.*—Black heavy cut coat, black satin breeches and waistcoat, black silk hose, powdered hair.

**JEREMY JENKINSON.**—White close-bodied coat, gaudy yellow and blue waistcoat, drab trousers, and white short gaiters, quizzical hat.

**WILFRED HEARTON.**—Gentleman's walking dress, varied in each Act.

**HARRY HAMMERTON.**—Red waistcoat, striped shirt sleeves, turned up, smith's apron, neat cord breeches, hose and shoes. *2nd dress.*—That of an Egyptian Bey.

**CHRYSSTAL BAXTER.**—Rude country ostler's, (*vide description.*) *2nd dress.*—Black coat, groom's stable waistcoat, black breeches, grey hose, shoes and buckles. *3rd dress.*—Dark brown suit, high black boots.

**CADGER COLLINS.**—The extremity of ragged slanginess, (*vide description.*) *2nd dress.*—Itinerant showman's velveteen suit, (*see M.S.*) *3rd dress.*—Flashy green, or sky-blue coat, long swallow-tail, many brass buttons; white buckskin, or cord breeches with many strings at the knees, striped showy waistcoat, high crowned hat, top boots.

**MR. DAVID DEMURE.**—Black suit, great coat of camlet with velvet cape.

**FARMER GROVES.**—Farmer's respectable holiday suit.

**HUSBANDMEN.**—Farm servants' frocks, &c.

**BILLET AND CLUMP.**—Brown great coats, cord breeches, laced boots.

**ALICE GRAY.**—Blue and white neat gingham dress, black silk apron, cap neatly trimmed, black mitts, bunch of keys at waist. *2nd dress.*—Brown cotton dress, neat white apron, plain cap. *3rd dress.*—Dove-coloured cotton dress, clean but patched, white wrist mitts of linen, half-way to the elbow, plain cap.

**MISS S. S. SIMPKINS.**—Flaunting and gaudy silk travelling dress, bonnet yellow, and extravagantly trimmed. *2nd dress.*—Vulgarly fine dress, distinguished by many colours. *3rd dress.*—Showy morning walking dress, &c.

**FARMERS' WIVES and LASSES.**—Neat country girls' dresses.

## SCENERY AND PROPERTIES.

### ACT I.

**SCENE I.**—Entrance to the village of Heathfield from the London Road—the Cornflower Inn, with rudely painted sign, R.—

Alice Grey—3.

a gaudily painted house, with green verandah and blinds, and a huge brass plate on door, inscribed "Caleb Kit," L.—at the back, as the village is supposed on a hill, a very extensive and picturesque landscape, with the road for a great distance visible. Rudely painted Inn sign of the "Cornflower," R.—a huge brass plate on door, L., inscribed "Caleb Kit"—a sign board stands against house, L.—table and forms, R., with drinking cups, &c., discovered—jug of ale ready at door, R. 3 E.—the sign board against house, L., on the off side written "Mr. Caleb Kit, Teacher of Dancing, Grecian Exercises, and Toxophilical Positions; late a Pupil of Monsieur Malfried, of Paris and London."—basket of tools for Harry Hammerton—a wisp of straw for Chrystal Baxter, and curry comb—whip ready behind, L. U. E.—carpet bag, boxes, bundles, &c., for Jeremy—address cards for Caleb Kit.

SCENE II.—Apartment of the Inn—practicable windows in flat, L. lighted candles for Caleb—chairs, tables.

SCENE III.—A Large Room of the Inn—a staircase, R.—another, L., supposed to lead to sleeping rooms above. Fiddle for Caleb Kit—small bag of money and locket for Alice—white apron for Collins—trays of sandwiches, wine, glasses, &c.—umbrella and candle for Caleb—blanket for Collins.

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—A Wretched Apartment—very dilapidated, yet very clean—the furniture very mean. Mean furniture—stump bed, L. U. E.—needlework, &c.—chairs, stool, &c., discovered.

SCENE II.—A Parlour in the house of Mr. Jeremy—furnished in a style of vulgar finery. Highly ornamental harp—bows and arrows scattered about—a cheval glass, L.—sofa, book, chairs, &c., discovered—bundle for Alice—letter—lights for servants, &c.

SCENE III.—A Retired Walk, or avenue, in Jeremy's Garden. A black patch for Collins, also a square box and clasp knife.

SCENE IV.—A Room in the Cornflower Inn—steps lead to doors in flat, supposed bed rooms—a window, L., practicable. Dark lanthorn—wallet, or horse-bag for Chrystal Baxter—large clasp knife—torches—red fire.

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—Exterior of the Cornflower Inn—the House of Mr. Caleb Kit, as in Act I.—the dancing board taken down—the windows closed—and a large placard written, "To let, enquire of Caleb Kit, Esq., Terpsichore Hall," conspicuous over the door—the stage, and the adjoining country covered with snow. A placard written "To let, enquire of Caleb Kit, Esq., Terpsichore Hall."

SCENE II.—Interior of Alice's Habitation. Stools, chairs, table—tablecloth, knives, &c., on table—letter scrap burnt, written—pistol for Chrystal—a paper—miniature—locket for Hammerton.

SCENE III.—Justice Room in the Inn—large windows fill almost the whole of the back of the stage through which is seen a snowy landscape, &c.—fire, R.—a clock, practicable, stands R.—a glass door at the back—two others, R. and L. Fire-place with fire, R.—clock, L.—chairs, &c.—a pocket-book for Mr. Demure—pistol to fire for officer.

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**ALICE GRAY.**

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## ACT FIRST.

**SCENE FIRST.—The Entrance to the Village of Heathfield from the London Road.** The Cornflower Inn, a neat rural tavern, with its vine covered front, and rudely painted sign, stands R.—a gaudily painted house with green veranda and blinds, and a huge brass plate on the door, inscribed “Mr. Caleb Kit,” is L.—at the back, as the village is supposed on a hill, a very extensive and picturesque landscape seen below, with the road for a great distance—a table and forms at the door of inn—a sign board stands against the house, L.

*The curtain ascends to Gay Music, during which JOB MERRITON brings in ale—HUSBANDMEN discovered, drinking.*

**CALEB KIT** trips on, followed by **HARRY HAMMERTON**, dressed as a smith, and carrying a basket of tools, L. U. E.

**CALEB.** There is the board, Mr. Harry—in the first position as I placed it. Ah, Mr. Merriton—good evening to you. London does much for a man’s style.

**JOB.** Wilt thee take a glass, Mr. Caleb?

**CALEB.** Never drink ale—it extends the limits of the corporation. I take especial care in shortening my commons. Ha, ha! turn the board round, Mr. Harry—amaze the gentlemen—perhaps they will become pupils. (*bows to HARRY, who has been preparing his tools*)

**HARRY.** You see, Mr. Merriton, I am attempting a new line; but Jack Plane, the carpenter, is out for some frolic. (*turns the board—HUSBANDMEN come forward to read it—the inscription*

*on it is as follows.* "Mr. Caleb Kit, teacher of dancing—Grecian exercises, and toxophilical positions—late a pupil of the celebrated Monsieur Mal pied, of Paris and London."—HARRY, *touching JOB on the shoulder*) Where is Alice this evening?

JOB. (*rudely*) Do thee attend to thy work. That's better than looking after the girls, especially when people have debts to pay.

HARRY. True, I have debts to pay—but I encountered them to save my father's memory from disgrace. I work hard to meet them, and no man should reproach me with the performance of a sacred duty.

JOB. Well, thee needn't look so grand—get thee from them before thee carryest so high a head.

Enter CARYSTAL BAXTER, the ostler, from inn, R.—he has a pale, sanctified look, with a sleek head of black hair—his dress the common dress of his calling, with a whisp of straw in his hand, and a curry comb stuck in his girdle.

BAX. That smith always washes his face when he comes in the way of Miss Alice.

JOB. What of that, eh?

BAX. Nothing.

JOB. Thee'st got some meaning.

BAX. Farmer Grove lost another sheep last night.

JOB. Um!

BAX. Smith's work's heavy—animal food's good for hard work.

JOB. Why, d——n thee, thou wouldn't hurt—that he—for shame, Chrystal! Whenever I do want thee of a Sunday I find thee hast gone to meeting—why don't thee learn the first duty of a man, charity towards thy neighbours? (*during the above, CALEB has assisted HARRY up the steps with the board—he proceeds to fix it against the house, L.—JOB turns to a FARMER*) So farmer Groves lost another sheep?

1st FARMER. 'Ees, but thief were taken—there were two on em, but one got clear off.

JOB. (*to BAXTER*) There, you see.

BAX. Ay, but one got clear off.

ALICE enters, R., neatly dressed as a barmaid—the FARMERS crowd around her kindly shaking hands—CALEB capers across elaborately bowing—she sees HARRY, who has descended the steps, and getting away from the FARMERS, slightly notices CALEB, and hastens over to him.

ALICE. Harry, you here so early? (*he points to the board*) Bless me, Mr. Caleb, how fine! (*crosses to L.*) Quite an ornament

to the village. Really, with *your* London acquirements, you'll civilise us all so much, that strangers will scarcely know Heathfield again.

CALEB. You flatter me. That house would be a paradise if Miss Alice would but dance down the rosy avenue of Hymen with *me* as her partner, and become its mistress.

ALICE. (*curtseying*) No, Mr. Caleb, no—I have given a promise already. (*giving her hand to HARRY*)

CALEB. With all deference to Mr. Harry, I would just insinuate, that at present he is not in a condition to make one of a set—his embarrassments—

HARRY. (*inaignantly interrupting*) My embarrassments! It was the pride of a son brought them on me—and with the honour of a man shall they be discharged.

BAX. (*aside to JOB*) See that he pays if he do call for ale—she often lets him off his reckoning, I take it. So, Master Hammerton, your bellows were going—your hammer were at work last Sunday. Ha! (*sighing*)

HARRY. They were; I was shoeing a poor fellow's horse, who, with tears in his eyes, told me he feared he should be too late to reach the bed of his father ere he died.

ALICE. Bless thee for that, Harry.

BAX. (*sneering*) Ah, you're *so* good—it's pity you're not rich!

JOB. Thee beest a waspish toad! If I didn't know thee to be an honest one I couldn't abide thee. *Exit, R. U. E.*

CALEB. (*handing cards to the FARMERS, who are going*) Going, farmer, eh? Dame Raddle can read—allow me—happy to teach the little Raddles. I don't mind their coming in nailed boots. Good evening—good evening.

*Bows off the wondering RUSTICS—HARRY brings BAXTER forward.*

*Enter HEARTON, R. U. E., with sketch book.*

HEARTON. Ah, my pretty Alice, I have been taking a sketch of what you call your favourite prospect.

ALICE. Oh, thank you—thank you! Look, Harry, look—there is a view of your cottage and your forge, and—

HARRY. I shall see you in the evening. He is, then, paying court to Alice, as I've been told.

HEARTON. (*aside*) But if you will look on—

HARRY. (*abruptly—going*) Farewell, Alice—sir!

*Nods coldly, and exit, R. U. E.*

CALEB. Very bad bow—bent like a piece of hot iron under a sledge hammer. Not a very bright spark I take it. (*dances up.*

HEARTON. I have offended him.

**ALICE.** (*nearly crying*) Oh, never mind—there, I won't look at his nasty forge, nor his uncomfortable bachelor cottage. To look so, and speak so—I won't see him in the evening, that I won't—he can't vex me—just as I was going to show him—no matter, I won't notice it—no, no! (*sobbing*)

**CALEB.** (*bustling about her*) What's the matter, divinest of barmaids?

"Let me catch a sacred drop  
To treasure as a shrine."

**Unfold to me the—**

**HEARTON.** (*turning him round*) Don't bother.

**CALEB.** Don't bother! don't bother!

(noise of wheels and whips heard behind, and **JOB** ushers in from behind the house **MR. JEREMY JENKINSON**, attired ludicrously for travelling, and loaded with carpet bag, boxes, bundles, &c., l.)

**JEREMY.** You're sure this is the principal inn, quite sure; because under present interesting circumstances, I wish to do things in style. You're quite sure, before I put down these bundles?

**CALEB.** (*capering forward, l.*) If you will allow me to offer a remark, sir; I am resident, where you see that handsome board, and can answer for this being the principal inn in Heathfield—it's the only one.

**JEREMY.** I dare say you're right then; you are very polite; the moment I divest myself of these travelling apparatus, I'll make free to thank you! (*ALICE crosses and takes it*) Take care of that box—that's got my new white beaver, bought for an interesting occasion, I wouldn't have it squeezed for the world; I put my new white westcoat, and a bran new coat brush in it to keep it in shape, and I came down in the pochay with it on my knee, for fear of its being joggled.

**ALICE.** You may depend sir, on everything being taken the greatest care of. *Exit with carpet bag into inn r.*

**JEREMY.** That I'm sure I may, miss, if you look after them; (*the boxes are carried in*) I should think they're not used to compliments down in these wild countries. (*aside*)

**CALEB.** I do all I can to humanise my neighbours—that's my house, my board, my card. (*giving one*)

**JEREMY.** But I'm surprised—this can't be your nativital place. You must have come from London.

**CALEB.** I have that honour.

**JEREMY.** (*eagerly*) I knew so—I rejoice to meet a friend; you know Norton Folgate—ha! I see you do—embrace me—what a joy it is when one wanders to distant parts to meet a

fellow-countryman. I'm in an *interesting situation!* Is there a rural retreat to let in this neighbourhood—a flowery, bowery place—don't look at me in that manner—you seem to be reading my feelings; is thers such place, for me—and—and—

CALEB. And some one else.

JEREMY. (*sentimentally*) Yes, a somebody—the circumstances are *interesting*—the *white waistcoat*, the *white hat*—you guess? Yes, yes, it is true—I'm—I'm going to be married.

CALEB. Indeed! I congratulate you. You will remain among us—there will be several Jenkinsons. I may look forward to pupils from your respectable family.

JEREMY. (*whispering mysteriously*) To avoid suspicion, Miss Sigismunda Saccharissa Simpkins and I, as it's a *'runaway* match, agreed to come down in separate chaises; it was more delicate—she'd faint at the idea of being alone with me.

CALEB. A model of chastity; but where are you to sleep?

JEREMY. (*staggered*) La, I never thought of that. Oh, oh! we must have two rural retreats till after the ceremony. Do you know of any?

CALEB. There was a beautiful one down in the vale.

JEREMY. In a vale—yes!

CALEB. But it was let yesterday to one Captain Mor-dau-t. Then there was a lovely place on the top of Kindlebush Hill.

JEREMY. Just the thing.

CALEB. But it was burnt down last week; but here comes Miss Alice—(*crosses R.*) perhaps she can assist us.

JEREMY. Not a word of my *interesting situation*—I should blush up to the eyes.

Enter ALICE and JOB from inn, R.

JOB. Walk in, sir—a neat parlour, good ale or wine, sir.

CALEB. Hark ye, Mr. Merriton—my friend here is rather in a dilemma.

JEREMY. Yes—an *interesting situation*.

CALEB. He wants a house in the neighbourhood—and till he can procure one—

JOB. We can recommend him—

CALEB. But ay, there's some one else.

ALICE. Another gentleman?

JEREMY. (*crossing to her*) No, miss, a lady in an *interesting* situation.

ALICE. Sir!

JOB. She wants a place to lie in.

ALICE. (*startled*) Bless me!

JEREMY. (*following her*) And so do I—till the event's over that.

ALICE. (*offended*) Upon my word, sir, I—

CALEB. You mistake, it must be told—my friend is about to be married—the lady will be here soon. Can you till after the ceremony accommodate both?

JOB. To be sure we can.

JEREMY. Separate rooms, mind.

JOB. Ecod, sir—a wedding will set the village alive. We'll have a night of it.

CALEB. So we will; and when the bride arrives, we'll have a dance, eh? you like dancing, sir?

JEREMY. I met my Sigismunda at a ball in the Old Bailey.

CALEB. Capital, sir. I'm as happy as if I was going to be married to Miss Alice. "Merrily dance, and merrily sing." Enter, partake the cheer, merrily dance, &c.

(*sings and dances*—JEREMY takes his hand, and they dance formally into the house, followed by JOB, R.

ALICE. So there will be rejoicing and a wedding. What will Harry feel when he sees the happy pair going to church? they pass by his door. I fancy I see him thumping away with his hammer to drown the ringing of the bells, and goes to work harder than ever, convinced that the bells *will* ring for him and Alice. And so they shall, Harry—so they shall, if life be spared.

HARRY HAMMERTON enters, R. U. E., in great agitation, and throws himself on a bench near inn, R.

ALICE. (*alarmed*) What's the matter? are you ill?

HARRY. All hope has left me—I must leave you, Alice.

ALICE. Leave me!

HARRY. As I went home from fixing that board, I saw Catchem, the bailiff, grinning like a demon before the forge door—my heart felt like a lump of ice, yet I couldn't think of anybody cruel enough to crush me more, for I had only that morning called on Davy Demure, the Methodist grocer, to beg him to give me a month for the money my poor old father owed him, and he promised me three. I went boldly up, and with one of his infernal scrapes of the leg, the bailiff handed me this—a writ, Alice, from the man who had so kindly promised me three month's grace, where I asked for one—who had commiserated my situation—told me I was a good son—said that Heaven would reward me, and yet was all the while preparing an instrument of hell to drag me to destruction.

ALICE. Be calm, Harry.

HARRY. I am calm! the law of the land empowers the tyrant,

and I bow to the law ; it was framed by those who have placed themselves beyond its powers—let their own hearts tell them of its justice. It's well to talk of a prison in the green fields—it's well to talk of its high walls and iron bars under the shelter of a title ! but to him, who is robbed of the power of earning what would free him—who is stripped of the little he *has* earned, and is thrust hopeless into a dungeon—it is despair, Alice—it is madness !

ALICE. But is there nothing can be done ?

HARRY. Nothing. I must fly, and somewhere else earn independence—you will not let me go without your promise to remain true to me, and my Alice's word I know to be as sacred as an oath.

ALICE. If it must be so, Harry, you shall have my promise. You have honestly toiled night and day to perform an act of duty, which the cruelty of man prevents. Go—I know you will perform your duty, so will I mine, I promise you—maid or wife, Alice Gray is yours till death.

(throws herself into his arms.

BAXTER enters behind, from inn, R.—starts on observing them.

BAX. Very pretty doings, for young women to be hugging men in that fashion.

ALICE. (receding, blushingly) There is no harm, Chrystal—Harry is my betrothed husband, and he is going from me, for, perhaps, a long time.

BAX. Going ! um—everybody won't be so sorry as you seem.

HARRY. Spiteful fool—silence !

BAX. Why ? when I've come with a message. Mr. Merriton, do you want me ?

ALICE. I come, and you shall return this evening to me, Harry. You will want money—I will procure you some from my uncle. Come, cheer up—I feel a presentiment all will be well yet.

HARRY. Can your uncle aid me, Alice ?

ALICE. Easily—this inn will be his entirely to-morrow. He has now the money by him to pay for it, and more ; he will not refuse me. Come, Harry, dear Harry, all shall yet end happily.

Embraces—they exit, ALICE into inn, R.—HARRY R. U. E.

BAX. So, he pays for the inn to-morrow—he keeps his money in his room—the house will be full to-night—this fool from London and his mate—ha, ha, ha ! there will be scraping and dancing—other people will be scraping at the same time—let me see—old aunt Margaret be ill—a good excuse—then if I be going out at the hay loft and along the top of the house—why —ha, ha ! yes, all will be mine—mine !

Exit, L.

SCENE SECOND.—*Apartment in the Inn. Practicable window in flat.*

**CALEB** without, and entering, L. 1 E.

**CALEB.** Mind, madam, there's a little step at the door—that chaussée across the landing place was grace itself. This way, this way.

**CALEB** enters with lights preceding **JEREMY JENKINSON**, handing **SIGISMUNDA SIMPKINS**, who is dressed in the extreme of vulgar fashion—**JOB MERRITON** follows, **CALEB** capers up and hands a chair, which, with affected ceremony, she accepts.

**SIGIS.** I'm alarmingly excited by the indelicate situation in which you've placed me, Mr. Jenkinson. — I'm fit to faint.

**JEREMY.** I'm a little upon the goish myself—the novelty of the responsible charge I'm undertaking—don't faint, my angel—for I feel such an up-and-downishness here, I'm sure I should follow your example.

**CALEB.** Don't be alarmed, madam—we are all here friends anxious to show the susceptibility of our precipitation in your delicious delirium of quickly approaching happiness.

**SIGIS.** Then everybody knows of—oh, Mr. Jeremy!

**JEREMY.** Yes, I've revealed all.

**SIGIS.** Have you got the natural retreat yet, sir?

**JEREMY.** Not yet, love; the one I intended was burnt down last week.

**SIGIS.** Then where am I to sleep?

**JEREMY.** Here, my adored.

**SIGIS.** And where are you to sleep?

**JEREMY.** Here, my angelic.

**SIGIS.** (screams) Oh, I'll go back—where's the coach? what will they say in the Old Bailey, where character is everything? I'm galvanised, as Doctor Calomel says.

**JOB.** Oh, we can easily manage that, miss; thee canst sleep in the same room with my niece Alice. (*calling off*) Alice!

**SIGIS.** Well, let it be so. Did you bring down the tiger you promised, Mr. Jenkinson?

**JEREMY.** No, love—time enough to get the boy after our marriage; but I've brought down his livery.

**SIGIS.** Ah, you've done nothing. (*to CALEB*) I'm most happy to find a professor of the elegant art here, sir—one so graceful as yourself too—really a fine man. (*aside*)

**CALEB.** (*bowing elaborately*) Shall we adjourn to the dancing room?

SIGIS. Lor' bless me, I must take off these travelling debilities—your niece will show me to your room. Mr. Jenkinson, I hope you'll brush up a little.

CALEB. I shall be most happy to give my friend the polish. Ha, ha, ha!

SIGIS. Ha, ha! capital! (*curtsies to Caleb*) A very nice man indeed! *Exit, L.*

CALEB. Come, my Orestes. (*crosses to L.*)

JEREMY. Eh? no, I restes here. (*sitting down*) I want to collect myself. Go, landlord—go, my friend, and see that all the vittles is ready.

CALEB. I will, and run home for my fiddle. We'll have a night of it. Perhaps I may pick up a pupil or two—hem. (*aside*) Come, Merriton. *Exit, followed by Job, L.*

JEREMY. Going to be married—hem! run away with an heiress. Mrs. Jones, when she comes to my shop in Norton Folgate to-morrow morning for her breakfast butter, she'll say to Tom, my man, "Where's Mr. Jeremy?" "Gone to be married." She'll drop down and smash the pretty plate she always brings for the quartern of fresh; she had a design on me—how she fixed her eyes on me—she was a nice woman, too, only I know she couldn't be worth much, in spite of all her hints, or else she'd have more than a quartern of fresh—it isn't hot weather all the year round. I hope that Tom won't rob the till while I'm gone. Though he is cousin, relations ain't always honest; there was brother Peter, I won't think of him; I told Tom to write down, if Mrs. Jones was ill; Ha, ha, ha! with her two ounces of Cheshire, and her quartern of fresh—pooh!

*The window at back is put up L. & CADGER COLLINS, wretchedly ragged and blackguard in appearance, with the remains of a black eye, &c., gets through.*

CADGER. Yes, it's the filial von; I know'd him the momen I popp'd my learys on him, in spite of the outside crest being finer and better. (*comes forward, L.*) All's right! (*touches Jeremy on the shoulder*) How is your noble self, my rum vun?

JEREMY. (*starts into a corner*) Hollo! who are you?

CADGER. Come, stash your gammon! you knows vell enough; look on this ere physog, I suppose you never seed that afore?

JEREMY. Never. Go away you nasty fellow, I'll call for help. Who are you?

CADGER. Why, I vas a thief, then a convict, then a condemned convict, kos I rewolted—here's the marks of the hirons on my harms—then I was a escaped convict, then I was a

cadger, then I was a sheepstealer, and now I'm convicted again as your brother Peter.

JEREMY. Peter returned?

CADGER. To be sure—I've had twelve years on it. But don't think I'd got sich a little feeling as to stay all my life in that ere Wan Demon's Land, away from my twin brother! No, natur triumphed, and I've kin home to your harms. (*goes to embrace JEREMY, who keeps him off with the chair*)

JEREMY. Keep off—keep off!

CADGER. Vhy, what's this ere, a brother rewolting agin natur? this orts my feelings—vhat, you're ashamed of these ere rags? Vell, give us a kivering—a new pair of kicksies would feel comfortable, and the coat ain't werry fashionable. (*turning round*)

JEREMY. (*aside*) What a wretch! If Sigismunda was to come— Go away!

CADGER. Never no more, dear brother.

JEREMY. Oh, my agonies! if any body comes—how did you find me?

CADGER. You see, I helped Sam Stickem to bone a sheep last night from one farmer Groves. Vell, it was darkee sure enough, but some how they contrived to grab Sam, but I scuttled under the thatch of a hay rick, hoppersite this ere ouse. I vas very ungrateful laying there all day and no grub; all at once I hears wheels—I looks out, and you can judge what I felt when I seed my twin brother Jeremy git out of a pocahy. All's right, says I—natural affection will triumph. I will throw myself on his buzzom, and here I is.

(*goes to JEREMY, who runs away*.)

JEREMY. What's to be done? If you'll go, I'll give you ten pounds—twenty, thirty—what do you want? (*to CADGER, who shakes his head at every offer*)

CADGER. To live in natural affection with you hall my life.

JEREMY. Curse your natural affection! wait till I come back. (*crosses, L.*)

CADGER. (*catching hold of his coat*) Not a bit of it. We'll never part no more, dear brother.

JEREMY. Oh lord—oh lord! I shall go mad—I'm ruined! I'm ha—I have it—the tiger's livery, if it will but fit. Wait, and I'll bring you a suit of clothes. (*going*)

CADGER. (*stopping him*) I'll go with you, and try 'em on. I'm von of two twins—we vere born together—we vill die together, dear brother.

JEREMY. Oh dear! oh, hush! come to my room! Do not make a noise.

CADGER. Pooh ! do you think I've been a ken cracker so long not to know how to cut it stilly ?

JEREMY. Now—oh, my agonies ! Ah, dear !

*They creep off, L.*

SCENE THIRD.—*A Large Room in the Cornflower Inn. A staircase, R.—another, L., supposed to lead to the sleeping rooms above door of entrance, L. C.*

*A large party of FARMERS and their LASSES assembled—CALEB KIT with his fiddle—ALICE and JOB closing the window shutters at the back—a practicable door in flat, L.*

ALICE. Uncle, there's Chrystal crossing the road, shall I call him to assist us ?

JOB. Thee beest mistaken, lass ; Chrystal, the waspish toad, ha' been gone to his old dying aunt long ago ; he cried to me till I couldn't refuse his going to her death bed.

ALICE. (*coming forward*) I could have sworn it was he.

CALEB. There's the star of the night ; where's the bride elect ? I must brush up my heels a bit, à la Vestris.

(*runs prelude on fiddle, entrechats, pirouettes, &c. &c. ; when he has done, the rustics applaud, "Capital ! beautiful !" he bows round and capers about.*)

Enter HARRY, D. in F. L.—ALICE hastens to him.

ALICE. Harry, dear, he has refused me ; but I have collected my savings for you ; I intended the money to be my wedding gift to my dear Harry, my little portion ! but take it, it will fit you out for the foreign lands you are about to visit.

HARRY. I cannot take it, my own Alice !

ALICE. Cannot ? you must ! and see, if you will obey me I will give you *this*, it was my poor mother's gift, she always wore this little locket, and since her death it has constantly been round my neck ; you shall have it as a memorial of *me* ; (*he is eager to secure it—she draws back*) but you must take the money first—there, there ! (*forces it on him*) Now, I give you *this*, 'twill keep me in your thoughts, and when you come back, if you find me untrue to you, shew it me, and the voice of my mother from the grave will seem to curse my falsehood. (*kisses it—is about to give it, when JOB, who has been watching, snatches it*)

JOB. You shan't have this, it were my sister's ; I'll lock it up with my money, since she don't know how to keep her poor dear mother's gift. Come not near ! I'll lock it up I tell'ee, with my money. (*rushes up staircase, R.*)

**HARRY.** Miserable wretch that I am!

**ALICE.** Heed him not, Harry, heed him not! (*throws herself on his bosom*) Go now, dear Harry, and wait for me at the three elms. Ah! (*with sudden thought*) Mr. Hearton has done my picture, I will get it for you, and bring it to you at the Elms; indeed, indeed, I will! but stay not now, for my sake, my sake, Harry!

*Exit, dragging him off, L. C.*

**SIGISMUNDA** appears on the stairs, L.—**CALEB** hastens to hand her down—she enters in a vulgarly fine ball suit—**CALEB** hands her down, introducing her—**JOB** re-enters R., and looks round.

**CALEB.** Farmer Groves, Miss Sigismunda Sacharissa Simpkins; Miss S. S. S., Farmer G., Squire Bagini, Miss Um, &c. (*after the introduction, they bow and curtsey ludicrously—then Caleb capers up, handing his cards among the company*)

**SIGIS.** Where's Mr. Jeremy? he's very unpolite to leave me to enter the ball room alone; he'd a been scouted in the Old Bailey; there they understand refinements. Where is he? oh, here he comes!

**JEREMY** enters, L. stairs, followed closely by **CADGER COLLINS** ludicrously dressed in the tight jacked of the boy tiger, much too small and too short for him, a white cravat, showing off his unshaven chin, black eye, and uncombed hair, he has one of **JEREMY'S** waistcoats on, and a long white apron, which conceals the front of his wretched trowsers, leaving, when he turns, their rags behind conspicuous—**JEREMY** is in the greatest trepidation.

**JEREMY.** Do wait for me in the other room.

**CADGER.** No, never no more, dear brother.

**SIGIS.** Why, where have you been, Mr. Jenkinson? And ah! what object have you got there?

**JEREMY.** Here! why, I—I—

**CALEB.** A positive curiosity! from whence did you import the animal, eh, my friend?

**CADGER.** Why, you see, my smart von, I imported myself from Wan Demon's land, after having been trans—(**JEREMY** pulls him) Mum, dear brother.

**SIGIS.** But who is it?

**CALEB.** What is it?

**JEREMY.** Why, you see, my dear Sigismunda, you know my tender heart—I—that is—this is a schoolfellow of mine; he's lost a deal of money by the breaking into of a bank—was very respectable I assure you—is in distress—when I saw him, my heart melted, and so I engaged him as our tiger. He'll look

very well when he gets in flesh—the livery's a *leetle* too little.

CADGER. The kicksies wouldn't go on at all, so you see—

(*Lifts his apron shewing his rags—SIGISMUNDA screams and falls into CALEB's arms, pretending to faint, the rustics laugh—JEREMY anxiously pulls down the apron.*)

JEREMY. Oh dear, I'm ruined! I'm undone!

*Enter JOB, ALICE, L. C., and SERVANT, with sandwiches, which they hand round.*

CADGER. Oh, here's the grub—I am so hungry.

JEREMY. For Heaven's sake, be careful—consider my unsullied reputation.

CADGER. Consider natur, dear brother.

JEREMY. Well, don't follow me so close—I want to speak to my intended.

(*during this, the sandwiches are handed round, with wine, &c.*)

—CADGER seizes on the plateful, sits down, and eats voraciously—CALEB is busied arranging partners for a dance—

JEREMY is explaining to SIGISMUNDA, who points, with disgust, to CADGER)

*HEARTON enters, L. C.—ALICE goes to him.*

HEARTON. Here is the picture, Alice; bid him be of good cheer; say that till he returns I will guard you like a brother.

ALICE. Thank you, Mr. Hearton—thank you.

CALEB. Come, Mr. J. J. and Miss S. S. places; Squire Bagini and Miss Squat; Miss Alice and I; now Farmer Groves.

(*at the sound of the name, CADGER drops the plate—JEREMY hurries over*)

JEREMY. What are you about?

CADGER. The man's kim after his sheep.

JEREMY. Hush! Come, never mind his awkwardness—a dance, a dance. (*aside*) I shall faint.

(*they take their places—CALEB directs, plays the air, &c.—a country dance takes place, during which CADGER watches JEREMY closely, and as he alters his situation in the dance, sticks to his side to his utter confusion—at length CADGER dances with them—the dance being over, the COMPANY prepare to depart*)

SIGIS. If you don't get rid of that nasty, ugly fellow, Mr. Jeremy—

JEREMY. Don't be alarmed, my adorable—I'll send him about his business in a day or two.

CALEB. Good night, Farmer Groves. Miss Squat, you have my card—over the way—the brass plate and large gold board. Good night—good night—we shall all meet again at the wedding—good night.

(they all curtsey, and bow to SIGISMUNDA, &c.—CADGER avoids FARMER GROVES—they depart, L. C., ALICE lighting them)

SIGIS. What a horrid set! did you ever see such dancing?

ALICE. (aside) Harry will be tired of waiting at the Elms.

SIGIS. Now, child, show me to our room. Jeremy, we'll hunt for a cottage in the morning. Mr. Caleb, I may perhaps, have the honour of your company. Good night, sir—Jeremy, adieu!—come child—

JOB. Alice, thee can't go to bed at once. I'll fasten all the doors.

*They take leave for the night, and ALICE lights SIGISMUNDA to her chamber, L. stairs—CALEB exits, kissing his hand, to her, L. C.—HEARTON retires, as if to bed, R. stairs.*

JOB. Now, sir, this fellow of yours can sleep in Chrystal's bed; as he be not come back, why, he may put up with the barn, so I'll fasten the door. (*bolts door*)

CADGER. (aside to JEREMY) I shan't leave you.

JEREMY. You must.

CADGER. I shan't. As I an't slept in a bed some time, I may snooze sound, and you may bolt afore cock crow.

JEREMY. He's so attached he won't leave me.

JOB. Well, thee know'st thy room.

JEREMY. (taking candle) Oh, yes, come.

*Expresses all signs of disgust, and exit with CADGER, stairs, L.*

JOB. So now all's fast for the night, I'll go up stairs, and add the profits of the day to my store—to-morrow this house will be mine, that's good—ten years of labour has done that—I have four hundred pounds to pay. Well, it's all there—ay, and nearly fifty to the good. Ha, ha! industry early and late! Ha, ha, ha!

*Goes up R. staircase to his room.*

ALICE is seen watching on L. staircase—as he disappears she descends and unbolts the door, R.

ALICE. Now for the Three Elms, and my dear Harry.

*Exit D. in F.—The moment she is gone,*

JOB. (is heard to cry out above) Thieves! murder! robbery! thieves! thieves!

*JOB rushes down in the greatest agony.*

Help! I am robbed! everything stolen! I'm ruined! murder thieves! thieves!

*Music—Rings a bell violently, calling all the while—great confusion ensues—the CHARACTERS rush in, ludicrously clad in their night-clothes—JEREMY brings in SIGISMUNDA wrapped in a sheet—CALEB, half undressed, with an umbrella up, and a candle—CADGER L. corner in a blanket.*

ALL. (*cry out*) What's the matter? where's the fire?

JOB. I am robbed—ruined! Where's Alice, Alice, Alice?

SIGIS. She has not been to bed. I shall expire with the indelicacy.

JOB. What do this mean?

ALICE enters by the door in flat, L. C.

Where hast thee been, girl?

CADGER. Been! she has been fencing the swag—I'm fly!

JOB. What has *she* robbed *me*—*me*, her uncle, her protector, her father?

ALICE. Oh, no, no, dear uncle.

JOB. Touch me not! Rob *me*? All is gone—my hard earnings gone!

ALICE. I am innocent.

JOB. Robbed of what would have made the inn mine—and by you! Snake—serpent!

ALICE. No—I rob! O never—never!

JOB. Why were you out?

ALICE. (*confused*) Out? I—I—

JOB. Guilty—guilty! wretch—wretch!

ALICE. Oh, no, no, no!

ALL. Shame—shame!

(she stands the picture of dismay, the others in ludicrous amazement—the Drop descends on the tableau)

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

## ACT SECOND.

SCENE FIRST.—A wretched apartment, very dilapidated, yet very clean—the furniture very mean—a stump bed, L. at back—door R. C.

ALICE discovered working at her needle—she is very meanly but neatly dressed.

ALICE. It must be near two, and Mrs. Padit, the post woman, is as true as the clock itself. I'm in such a fluster, as the time

comes round each day, that every one of my fingers are as sore as possible—I've pricked them so often. Three years gone, Harry, and not one letter—'tis too bad—I will not believe he has forgotten me—no, no! (*clock strikes two*) Ah! there's two—through the thin wall I can hear Sparable, the cobbler's little Dutch clock striking—she'll not be long now. (*rises and puts down her work*) Oh! if it should be a letter at last, it will pay me for all my misery and tears. (*goes to window*) There she comes, stumping up the street—she stops to look at her packet—oh, she's looking across here—she takes a letter out—I'm sure she's looking at this house—I can scarcely breathe—here she comes—yes, yes, there is one at last—no, no, she has pass'd—oh, this is worse than all. (*bursts into tears and throws herself into her chair*) What a fool am I! every day am I disappointed, yet every day do I expect and hope, and cry till my heart seems breaking. I'll not do so again—no, I'll forget him—I'll not care for his letters. (*a knock heard at the door—she starts up from her chair*) Hark! she has made a mistake—she has passed the door—she brings me a letter. (*knock again*) Yes! (*in an ecstacy*) I'm coming—one moment—I'm coming.

*Rushes up, opens the door, and staggers back, on seeing CRYSTAL BAXTER, R.C.—who enters—he is better dressed, though still characteristic of the stable.*

BAX. How do you do, Alice Gray? I've been selling a horse to our preacher, and as I had to pass your house, I thought, for old acquaintance, sake I'd look in.

ALICE. Did you bring me any message from my uncle?

BAX. (*taking up her work*) You get your bread this way, now your uncle has discarded you?

ALICE. Yes.

BAX. That was a bad business. Are these Jenkinsons wise enough to send their money to a bank, or do they keep it in the house?

ALICE. I am sure I know not—why do you ask?

BAX. I thought *you* might know—you were suspected of knowing how your uncle's went—he was foolish enough to keep it by him.

ALICE. If you came here only to insult me—

BAX. Pooh, pooh, girl! how can I insult you—everybody knows you were tried for it.

ALICE. (*shrinks*) And who persuaded my uncle to stain my hitherto spotless name with such suspicion? You—your insinuations about poor Harry Hammerton—*your* foul lies about my clandestine meetings with him.

BAX. Don't be in a passion—what did I say? I told that as I

was returning from the sick bed of poor Aunt Margaret—now a blessed saint—I met Hammerton in great distress of mind ; he told me he was forced to fly the country—I left him, and when I came home, everything was in confusion ; your uncle had been robbed, and you had been detected in leaving the house secretly—the thing speaks for itself.

ALICE. Dare to repeat this insult and you shall repent it. I endured the shame of a trial, I experienced the triumph of an acquittal. Conscious of my own innocence, I await with patience Heaven's own time for making it manifest ; but that time will come—my uncle will yet ask my forgiveness for his cruel suspicions, and I shall see the still more cruel guilty one humbled at my feet.

BAX. Come, come, girl, I didn't come here to quarrel with you—I've something to say. You see, everybody shuns you.

ALICE. Oh, yes ! innocent or guilty, 'tis enough to be suspected.

BAX. It is ! I thank Heaven I was gone to poor Aunt Margaret's death bed—it was a joyful visit for me ; even my character might not have saved me. But listen—there is a way to return to society—you may again be received—the suspicions removed or made of no weight.

ALICE. (*eagerly*) How? how?

BAX. Marry me.

ALICE. (*shuddering*) You!

BAX. Yes, I'm a man of character—a thriving man—a constant attender of meeting—they'll think I was convinced of your honesty, or—

ALICE. Begone, sir !

BAX. Come, come—don't trifle with me—even a lamb may be roused. There are ways of ridding a place of suspected persons—the hulks and the colonies are good schools of reparation.

ALICE. (*aside, shuddering*) He terrifies me.

BAX. (*seizing her arm*) So, do you hear, girl ? I shall make a good husband—it's my nature to be kind. If you refuse, you shall never cross your threshold without danger—you shall not look, speak, think, but it shall weave a mesh around you—do you hear? you may look on me as your fate.

ALICE. (*shrinking*) I defy you—I will expose what you have said.

BAX. And who will believe the word of one who has been tried for felony ? ha, ha !

ALICE. True, true—Heaven assist me ! (*she sinks upon her knees—he stands over her exulting*)

*The door R. C. opens, and HEARTON and ELLEN MORDAUNT enter—ELLEN hastens to ALICE.*

ELLEN. (L C.) Alice—Alice ! what has happened ?

HEARTON. (C.) Mr. Baxter, what is the meaning of this ?

BAX. (R. in a sanctified tone) Alice and I have been talking over the events of three years ago—she seems to feel keenly remorse and sorrow at the mention of that time.

ALICE. (L.) Oh, misery !

BAX. I have made a weak endeavour to recall her to the path of truth.

HEARTON. Silence, sir—she has never departed from it.

BAX. You have your reasons for thinking so. A pretty girl, be she ever so debased, will not want advocates among the young and thoughtless of the other sex.

HEARTON. Mr. Baxter, I will not suffer this language in reference to Miss Alice.

BAX. Miss Alice—ha, ha, ha ! (goes up to door) Miss Alice will remember my words, and, I am sure, profit by their meaning ; I am now going to her uncle, she will understand—the poor old man has never recovered the robbery—but Heaven always assists the weak. I profit by its care. Miss Alice, (bows sneeringly) good afternoon. *Exit D. in F, R. C.*

ALICE. No, no—he says truly—nothing can be an insult to one who has been tried for felony—to struggle or to hope is useless !

HEARTON. 'Tis not useless—those who encounter not dangers may boast of passing through life's path ; but if we undergo the ordeal and escape unscathed, how resplendent is the brightness shame's trial gives to innocence. When Harry departed, he consigned you to my protection ! he has been three years absent, and I know his love for you was such that were he alive—

ALICE. Oh, Mr. Hearton !

HEARTON. Were he alive, you would at least have heard from him. Alice, possessed of no title to the right, my means are feeble to protect you—give me one—let me proclaim you as my affianced wife, and name your own time for giving me your hand. (ALICE recoils) It is enough. May the dispenser of all good send him to your faithful heart. I—you will excuse me, Miss Mordaunt—I—farewell, farewell !

*Exit in agitation, R. C.*

(ELLEN from the moment he mentions his love, has sunk into the chair motionless.

ALICE. Noble-hearted friend ! Oh, my benefactress —you are pale, Miss Mordaunt—you are ill—your hands are icy cold—speak to me—you love him—he will be

yours—yet you alone deserve him—living or dead, Harry Hamerton shall be my only bridegroom. (*seriously as a vow, then changing her manner—clock strikes three*) Hark! there's three o'clock striking in the next cottage. I promised Mrs. Jenkinson to be with her and bring this work at half past. Come, cheerily, Miss Ellen—if you will honour one so degraded as I am by accompanying me.

ELLEN. You are a good girl, Alice.

ALICE. I hope to see you a happy one. Oh, when I meet Mr. Hearton won't I joke him for being so silly as not to see that—

ELLEN. No, for heaven's sake, no.

ALICE. I will, I will, I protest I will; (*striving at cheerfulness*) but come, Miss Ellen, come this way. By crossing my little garden and the old wooden bridge we avoid the high street—I always do that. I fancy every finger pointed at me, as one who has been tried for robbery. (*bursts into tears*) I—I—yes, I will so joke Mr. Hearton—I will—the silly, blind, fellow—ha, ha! Oh my heart—only a spasm, only—I'll shame him, I will—come, come.

*Making a violent effort to suppress her sobs, and striving to laugh while she leads ELLEN off, L.*

*The door at back is opened, and CHRYSSTAL BAXTER looks in, then beckons.*

BAX. I tell you no—she's not here; and I won't answer thee, till thou'rt come in.

*Drags in JOB MERRITON—he is thin, pale, nervous, and querulous—he looks quickly round.*

JOB. I won't see her—I tell 'ee I hate—hate—

BAX. Well, well, I am sorry to say I ain't got so much money. (*aside*) I wish she were here.

JOB. Can't thee, then—can't thee? I—I—it's all made up, but twenty pounds; it will put me straight in the world. Thee hast been very kind, but—but, *thee art a thriving man—Heaven conspires against me.*

BAX. (*with affected sanctity*) Hush! hush! a good name be everything, master. I can't help calling you master—you were a kind one to me, and if ever the inn should be mine—

JOB. (*shaken*) Oh, Chrystal—Chrystal!

BAX. Well, I was only saying, if ever it be—for there's no knowing the ways of fate—you'll find me as humble as ever, when you be my ostler, as I were yours.

JOB. (*with lingering affection, gazing round*) How did she look?

BAX. Oh, same as ever! perhaps a little paler. Well, how people can be robbers, and—

JOB. (*glancing trembly about*) Hush! hush!

BAX. Pooh! there's not a doubt of it. Didn't the fellow she robbed you for abscond? has he ever written even to her since? not a bit. He taught her to steal, and then left her to take the reward of her crime.

JOB. Don't talk of her. I'm thinking of to-morrow, of the money I've got to pay. I'm all of a tremble. Chrystal, I wish I were dead.

BAX. Don't, that's sinful! so you only want twenty pounds to make up the four hundred for the inn. Are you going again to put it in the place where you had it when you were robbed?

JOB. Oh, no, no! I keep it in a strong chest under my bed. No, I was afraid to try it again.

BAX. Under the bed—um! (*aside*) Well, I must be going. It's near the time of the mail passing through for London. I must look to the horses. (*aside*) Under the bed—ha, ha!

JOB. Come, only twenty pound more—ha, ha! twenty—twenty—ha! how to get it? come, come, how to get it? ha!

*Exeunt, D. in F.*

SCENE SECOND.—*A Parlour in the House of Mr. Jeremy Jenkinson—furnished in a style of vulgar finery—a highly ornamented harp stands conspicuous—bows and arrows scattered about—a cheval glass, L.*

MR. CALEB KIT stands before the glass in an affected attitude, with a bow, &c — MRS. JENKINSON, late MISS SIGISMUNDA, is lolling on a sofa, with a book in her hand.

SIGIS. (*applauding*) Very elegant—very, very!

CALEB. (*figuring away*) That's something like something?

SIGIS. Admirable, I do declare—very like Apollo at the Belvidere Tea Gardens.

CALEB. (*attitudinizing*) It's a graceful recreation, and shows off the figure—hem!

SIGIS. Especially when gentlemen happen to be blessed with statues, like Mr. Caleb Kit's.

CALEB. (*bowing elaborately*) Madam J., gratitude is dumb, choked by its own bigness.

SIGIS. (*admiringly*) Eloquent—irresistible.

CALEB. Not so bad, was it? I should like to see Mr. J. doing a toxophilical.

SIGIS. (*affecting to suppress laughter*) Don't—you'll kill me with the preposterous idea. Ha, ha, ha! the unlicked city cub—Faugh!

CALEB. (*cautiously*) Hush ! should you be heard. (*brings a chair near the sofa, and taking out his white pocket handkerchief arranges it and himself in attitude, frequently referring to the glass as he speaks*) As I was saying—hush ! it might pain the little man, who is *really* a *very good* weigher of sugars and teas, and not so very very awkward with the yard measure—to be sure there is a difference between the measure and the bow, as there is between the persons of some persons, and *some* persons—yet he is useful, dearest Sigismunda Sacharissa !

SIGIS. (*starting and fluttering*) Oh, gracious, Mr. Kit !

CALEB. I crave your pardon—my feelings o'erpowered me, my feelings of pure friendship for—I—I crave your pardon, Mrs. J.—honoured Mrs. J.

SIGIS. Dear Mr. Kit—I—oh dear me—I am forgetting—I—turn your eyes away and give me my lesson, for if my Jeremy should foolishly suspect—

CALEB. (*putting his arm round her*) Suspect ? the silly man. Sigismunda—ha !

SIGIS. (*in great fright*) Here he comes.

CALEB. (*suddenly withdrawing his arm*) Take the fourth position with the toe well pointed—with the toe. (*looking round, then putting his hand on his heart and staggering to a chair*) Oh dear, you have brought my too sensitive heart in my mouth.

SIGIS. Don't be afraid of him, for between you and I, I suspect he's a coward.

JEREMY bounces in with apron on.

JEREMY. Coward ! who's a coward, Mrs. J. ?

MRS. J. (*confused*) Who, my dear ? why—why—Mr.—Mr.—what's his names—who had the howdaciousness to set up against you for churchwarden.

JEREMY. Ah, no matter—I'm elected—yes, Mrs. J., you are now Mrs. Churchwardeness Jenkinson—merit will rise.

CALEB. (*affectedly embracing him*) It will, it will—I congratulate your elevation, and I trust you will execute a favourite plan of mine—have the charity children taught dancing. If the girls go out as servants, with what grace will they handle the mop, or stoop to the scrubbing brush.

SIGIS. And I hope you'll make Cageum the beadle wait at table when we give parties, and walk behind us to church on a Sunday.

JEREMY. Don't trouble me about such trifles—I feel all over queerish and trembling at the importance of my duties. It's really something to be one of the potentates of society.

(*strutting to the glass.*)

SIGIS. Take your apron off. How often have I requested you not to enter my presence with that vulgar appendage!

JEREMY. Vulgar! Bishops wear aprons—why shouldn't churchwardens—eh, Kit, eh?

CALEB. Certainly! though, for my part, I never see one without remembering that friend of yours, who, comet-like, appeared and disappeared on the night of your arrival in these parts. You remember him, dear Mrs. J. in the tiger's jacket and the um—eh?

SIGIS. Oh, the monster!

CALEB. You rember him, don't you, my Pythias?

*(slapping his shoulder—JEREMY, from the moment KIT mentions CADGER COLLINS, stands in affright.)*

JEREMY. *(starting)* Remember! oh yes—remember! to be sure—with the ragged—eh? oh yes, I shall never forget him.

*(aside.)*

CALEB. Do you know I have often suspected he knew something of the robbery of poor old Merriton.

SIGIS. Yes, and he vanished on that very night—I was so glad.

JEREMY. *(aside)* So was I.

SIGIS. However, if he comes here again, Mr. Churchwarden Jenkinson will have him taken up—won't you, dear?

CALEB. I recollect you said he was an officer in the army—ha, ha! queer army, eh? ha, ha! I must be off—this is collecting day with me.

SIGIS. Collecting day, Mr. Kit?

CALEB. Yes, madam. In order to be agreeable to all, to distribute my knowledge of the graces, and receive payment in commodity from many. Chuck the Butcher pays in steaks—legs of mutton for legs instructed. Brick the Baker sends me rolls for reels, and quartern loaves for a quarter's waltzing. Ha, ha! you see I have the honour to teach fat Mrs. Dip, and have just been home with a gig load of short sixes.

JEREMY. Ha, ha! capital! could you take out Siggys teaching in treacle? I've a large stock on hand—eh? ha, ha!

CALEB. Ha, ha! farewell, Mr. Churchwarden—dearest madame, good bye. Three months more and Mrs. J. will be added by the poet to the number of graces. Adieu! farewell! heigho, good bye!

*(trips off L. with an aside expression to SIGISMUNDA—JEREMY draws a chair and in deep thought sits—SIGISMUNDA does the same, heaving a tremendous sigh.)*

JEREMY. What are you sighing for, Sigg? you break up my great calculations.

SIGIS. Break up your nonsense ! and again I tell you I won't be called Siggy.

JEREMY. What matters it ? your old father, at the ham and beef shop in the Old Bailey—

SIGIS. Ho! (screams) How often have I bid you, in speaking of my parental posterity, to call him the provision vender.

JEREMY. Pooh, pooh ! I always observe that you quarrel with everything I say and do, when that dancing fellow has been here.

SIGIS. (turning her chair sharply) Mr. Kit is a gentleman, sir !

JEREMY. (doing the same, face to face) And what am I, ma'am ? mine's the most wealthiest and most sharpest shop in the town ; and what's Mr. Kit ? his gentility is summat like your harp.

SIGIS. How, sir ? how ?

JEREMY. Why, it's a sort of ornament which he can't play upon.

SIGIS. (in a passion) Sir, sir ! you know I play ! you know I do.

JEREMY. You says you do ; but I never heard you.

SIGIS. Because, sir, the diffidence of my nature, even to you—to my husband, won't let me.

JEREMY. Your diffidence don't prevent your playing on your tongue, Mrs. J. ! but I don't believe —

SIGIS. Believe what, sir ?

JEREMY. Well, I don't.

SIGIS. Don't believe what, sir ?

JEREMY. Since you will have it, I don't believe you can play at all.

SIGIS. (starting up and walking to and fro) Oh, this is too much. Can't play ! I that had three quarters under a composer of the beautiful air about wearing a green willow tied round a hat. Can't play ! I—I'll shame you—sink you through the ground, sir—I'll play, sir—now, sir—now.

(going to the harp.)

JEREMY. Well, do, now, there's a dearest Siggy, and I'll buy you a new yellow satin dress for the churchwarden's dinner—I will.

SIGIS. No, sir, I disdain—I'll not play. You'll think you bribed me—no, sir, no. (sits down in passion)

JEREMY. You'll do nothing to please me, so I'll cut you off in your dancing.

SIGIS. You dare !

JEREMY. I don't like that Kit being always here.  
 SIGIS. Nor I, sir, don't like that Mrs. Jones over the way—what's more, I believe your story about her making love to you in Norton Folgate—that boy, since I must say it, has just your look and way; and she's opened that undertaker's shop in hopes of burying me. (*sits down and sobs*)

ALICE enters L., with a bundle.

ALICE. I beg pardon, madam, your gown—(*on seeing the confusion of both parties, she stands surprised.*) I will look in again.

JEREMY. No, stay, young woman—Mrs. J. will see you now. I'll go into the shop. Mind you don't take your eyes off the silver spoons—recollect she's been tried.

(*aside to her, and exit, L.*

SIGIS. Vulgar, unfeeling—sit down, child—I shall be better soon.

ALICE. Are you ill, madam—can I aid you?

SIGIS. No, no—my sensibility's a little excited—I am well now. So you have kept your word—you have made the alterations to the moment you promised—very good child.

ALICE. I hope it will please you—I have done my best with it!

MRS. J. Very good, very good—you intend to remain in town then?

ALICE. O yes, madam; the only hope of my existence binds me here.

MRS. J. The hope of hearing from Hammerton?

ALICE. 'Tis not that I mean, madam; though, of course, that forms part of what my heart desires.

MRS. J. You cannot surely be so silly as to hope to discover the robber of your uncle?

ALICE. I do, I do, madam! Heaven's justice will not let cruel suspicion rest on an innocent girl for ever. I feel confident, madam, when I lay my head on my pillow every night, that I am nearer the time when the truth, by some ordination of Providence unseen and unknown, will be made manifest. I feel too that while I remain here—here, where I have been branded—I am taking the wisest course, to let time and my blameless life wear off the unmerited stain—did I fly, I should feel like a guilty coward, and by doing so, madam, I should abandon all hope of ever seeing my poor Harry.

MRS. J. You still love him then?

ALICE. I loved him truly at the first—dearly, because I knew his worth; and I somehow think, when an innocent girl's

heart is really given to a deserving object, that no time or change of circumstances can make her forgetful of her young first-love.

MRS. J. What would you give now for a letter from him?

ALICE. (*bursts into tears*) O, madam, don't ask me.

MRS. J. Suppose, now, the post-woman had one for you.

ALICE. (*eagerly rushes towards her, pauses, and looks steadfastly at her, then shakes her head and retires*) No, oh no; if she had, the dear old woman would have run all the way to me with it. She knows—ah, she knows how I have watched and plagued her every day and cried when she said "No," till at last, good soul, she used to cry with me and pat me and kiss me, and promise me one in a week, and go away from me ill as I was with the disappointment.

MRS. J. But she really had one for you to-day.

ALICE. (*trembling*) Oh, don't joke with me.

MRS. J. I persuaded her I could bring it sooner, so got it from her.

ALICE. (*almost choked*) Oh, madam, don't be so cruel.

MRS. J. I was afraid you wouldn't get the dress done; here it is. (*shows letter*)

ALICE. (*unable to move for it*) For—for me?

MRS. J. (*giving it*) Yes.

ALICE. (*shrieks*) 'Tis from him! (*she turns it over and over with bewildered glee*) 'Tis a letter—Harry—yes, a letter! Ha, ha, ha! from him—a real letter! Oh, my eyes burn, and my throat—'tis reality—I dare not open it, Harry, dear! (*kisses it, falls on both knees, holding it up*) Heaven—heart—thanks—merciful! (*choked by her sobs, tries to open it, succeeds in doing so, and falls insensible*)

MRS. J. (*in great alarm*) Poor girl, she'll die! help—water! Oh, they'll be a month! I'll fetch some, and some salts. Here, Betty, Betty!

*Exit, calling, R.—a momentary pause.*

JEREMY peeps in, L.

JEREMY. What's the matter with my wife? she's rushed up stairs like mad! Why, there's Alice on the ground! have they been a fighting? Ha, a letter from that dancing chap to my wife. (*snatches it up*) What shall I do? she's in her room—I'll lock her in, then read. I'll send Betty to this girl, then read. Oh, if I discover—pistols, daggers, poison! I'll lock her in—yes, yes.

*Exit, R., hastily, with the letter.*

*After a moments pause, CALEB KIT, drunk, enters L., on the opposite side—stage partially dark.*

CALEB. I am afraid I've broke the—the glass—in—in that

d——d hothouse ! I'm afraid I have, but it's a near—near way in. Where's the angelic individual ? How the cursed place does gallopade ! (*sits down on sofa*)

**ALICE.** (*recovering, and striving to rise*) Oh, cold ! where—where am I ?

**CALEB.** There's a cat moving in the room. Puss—puss !

**ALICE.** (*struggling up at the voice*) A man's voice ! Great heaven ! what has happened ? am I awake ? (*meets with a chair, and sinks into it*)

**CALEB.** It's a cat ! puss, puss ! (*gets on his knees on the sofa*) Tshee—tshee ! I hate cats !

**ALICE.** (*hearing the voice, has listened in thought*) Who is in the room ? I can see some one—is it you, Mr. Jenkinson ?

**CALEB.** Is that you, divine creature ? It's I—I, your—your devoted Caleb. (*approaching*)

**ALICE.** (*quite bewildered*) What's to be done—and what is this thought running in my mind about some letter ?

**CALEB.** How I came to see one angel, and stumble on another, I can't tell. Alice, my love, I keep a gig—I must have somebody to ride in it—it shall be you.

**ALICE.** (*starting, as if for the first time she seems to notice and comprehend*) What means this jargon ?

**CALEB.** Jargon ! all eloquence—love's eloquence.

**ALICE.** (*wildly*) What place is this ?

**CALEB.** How odd—very.

**ALICE.** (*fiercely*) Answer me.

**CALEB.** Why, as well as old Sloe Juice's wine will let me, I will. This is Jerry Treacle's parlour. Ha, ha !

**ALICE.** (*with wild energy*) It must be ! She gave me the letter—you have found it—give it me.

**CALEB.** Give you what ?

**ALICE.** (*almost mad*) The letter.

**CALEB.** (*struggling to kiss her*) So I will, by word of mouth.

**ALICE.** Back ! you grapple with a tigress ! Back—fool ! (*dashes him from her—he falls—she rushes out, wildly shrieking, l.*) My brain—the letter ! Oh, mad—mad !

**CALEB.** (*rolling on the ground*) She's mad ! she'll smash the whole of Jeremy's hothouse.

MRS. JEREMY *rushes in, R.*

**MRS. J.** What is this ? who locked me in ? Alice—Alice !

**CALEB.** Mrs. J ! Mrs. J !

**MRS. J.** Mr. Kit, and on the ground !

**CALEB.** Topsy turvy, by Jove ! (*she assists him up—he gets on his knees*)

**JEREMY,** (R.) followed by SERVANTS with lights, enters—he sees them.

**JEREMY.** On his knees to her! Crim con! pistols! actions and bullets!

**MRS. J.** (staggering) Oh, my character—my reputation!

**CALEB.** Topsy turvy, by Jove!

(**MRS. JEREMY** goes into a fit in a chair—**JEREMY** stamps about in extreme rage—**CALEB** in vain trying to get up—SERVANTS assisting all parties—closed in by)

SCENE THIRD.—A Retired Avenue to Mr. Jenkinson's Garden.

**ALICE** enters, L., greatly agitated.

**ALICE.** Stay—stay, Alice—why do you fly? Will rapidity of action calm rapidity of thought—this maddening and chaotic whirl? Let me summon my firmness—the top of my poor head seems to open and burn! my tongue is parched and swollen to my mouth—yet I am not mad! No, no—there is Jenkinson's house, and there the spire of the old church—my mother's grave is close to the east door—yonder too, is my own little garden, I see, I recognise, and I remember—my senses are entire, and I recollect she said she had withheld the letter for fear I should not finish her dress. Cold hearted, selfish woman! yet I did not read the letter—no, I could not have forgotten one word of what Harry had written! What then could I have done with it? I will return to the house, procure a light, and search. Yes, now—now.

*Going, she encounters COLLINS, L., he is dressed as an itinerant show man—he wears a small round black patch closely pressed on one eye, is very pale, and bearing a square box strapped on his shoulders—he puts out his hand, silently but knowingly impeding her.*

**CADGER.** Jest stay von minute, young 'oman.

**ALICE.** (striving to pass eagerly) I can't—not a moment! Oh, no!

**CADGER.** (seizing her wrist) But yer must, no mistake about me—on a dark night in a lonesome place, I'm werry like a emperor in my horders.

**ALICE.** (alarmed) Who are you?

**CADGER.** Why that's the werry question the beaks axes fust.

ALICE. What—what do you want?

CADGER. Why, what are you trimbling for, jest like a aspin leaf? there ain't nothin' so werry unsightly in me I take it.

ALICE. O let me go—let me go!

CADGER. So I vill when I gets what I vant.

ALICE. I am poor—I live by my labour—I have no money.

CADGER. I arn't on that say, bless yer; it's only natur risin' in my 'art, that's all. Answer me truly now, and stash all gammon, 'cause you see—(*opens a large clasp knife—she shudders*) Look up, I won't have no faintin'—ain't that Mister Jeremy Jenkinson's house, eh?

ALICE. Yes.

CADGER. He's been a getting on, an't he?

ALICE. I believe—

CADGER. I suppose he's got some of the stuff by him?

ALICE. I cannot tell—indeed, indeed—

CADGER. Stand still—I aren't seen him since the night the inn was robbed.

ALICE. Oh, let me go!

CADGER. Why, my dainty von?

ALICE. I will tell yon, only in pity let me go; the husband of my heart's love left me on that night. I have watched and prayed for news of him, every moment since. To-night a letter came—I opened it, but my heart was so full I couldn't read, and it fell, and I became insensible, and somehow it is lost.

CADGER. (*quickly*) And you not read it?

ALICE. No, not a word; and I was going to search for it, for oh! I would lay down my life, my soul so yearns to look on his dear name—let me go.

CADGER. Ah, that I vill, poor thing—Lord forgive me stoppin' you von minute. (*crosses to R.*)

ALICE. Oh bless you!

*Eagerly rushes off, L.*

CADGER. Poor little thing! Lord—lord! I'm quite a warment in a gul's way. Yet I never can bear to do nothing, to make the sinivating creatures cry. So! that's my brother's house. I was obligated to bolt ven that robbery was put up. I thought they might suspect a gentleman returned from Wan Demons; but from this ere werry hour, we'll never part, never no more, dear brother.

*Exit, L.*

SCENE FOURTH.—*A Room in the Cornflower Inn. Steps lead to doors in flat, supposed bedrooms—a window, L.—stairs, bannisters, L.*

*As the scene is discovered, CHRYSAL BAXTER is soon getting through it—he has a dark lantern and a wallet or horse bag—he listens cautiously.*

BAX. Nobody saw me get in. This window were built on purpose to assist an industrious man; it be so easy to get out of my hay loft and along between the sloping roofs. I found it easy three years—before the stables were mine—ha, ha! that's the door—under the bed he said—um! (*listens*) If he or anyone do interrupt me, sooner than lose my character, I'll—(*opens large knife*) Ah! character be all in this world, ay, ay! here the bottle of turpentine, and the tow and wood; and I've plenty of it among the hay; that's right, close up to the wooden wall—it'll do—no suspicion—fire and water do hide everything. Now for it.

*He, after listening, stealthily opens centre door, and exit in Merriton's bedroom, R.*

*A moment's pause, and JOB MERRITON ascends from L., as if from below, followed by HEARTON.*

JOB. Now, now, good Master Wilfred, thee may speak—those noisy soger chaps and clodhoppers below, I dare not speak of money before they. There, sir, there it be in that room—my room, all safe, all right—only twenty pound short. Oh, perhaps—eh—you be so good—you be as a son to me—eh—eh—it be only twenty.

HEARTON. I have it not to lend you, sir. I would to heaven I had; but seeing you so unhappy, I wished to speak to you to say that one way has just struck me.

JOB. How I may get it? oh, tell me, tell me. (*a great noise heard below*) Oh mercy, what be that?

(*VOICES and noise resumed L.—VOICES heard to call.*

VOICES. Merriton! Job Merriton! here! here!

HEARTON. Let us descend—strangers have arrived. Come, come. *They exent to stairs, L.*

BAXTER instantly appears coming from bed room—he has a canvas bag of money in his hand.

BAX. I thought I were ruined, but all's safe. Ha, ha! nearly four hundred more. Quick, quick! I've placed the candle so that the tow and turpentine—hark! now to set fire to the hay. Ha, ha! four hundred. Good!

*Exit through window.*

*A noise of quarrelling heard, and JOB enters, l., followed by HEARTON, JEREMY, MRS. JENKINSON, and Two COUNTRY-MEN with CALEB, drunk.*

JEREMY. You're a constable—next week I shall be church-warden—I give this man in charge.

SIGIS. For what, Mr. Jenkinson? do you mean to insinuate anything to injure my spotless name?

CALEB. Oh, my spotless reputation! I, the best dancing master for miles round!

JEREMY. I insist!

CALEB. And I insist. Mr. Yardmeasure Jenkinson, your wife's an angel; and Sloe Juice, the wine merchant's, cursed port, turned me topsy-turvey in pour parlour.

JEREMY. But I have proof—deep, dreadful proof—a letter. It was too dark to read it.

HEARTON. Stay, stay, this is serious.

JEREMY. Serious! I believe you.

SIGIS. (*sobbing*) It's all a hoax, and I defy him!

CADGER. (*heard below*) Up the stairs, is they? come along little 'un.

ALICE *rushes in stairs, l., followed by COLLINS.*

ALICE. Oh, madam, you are here! The letter—you have it—do not, for heaven's sake, deprive me of it!

HEARTON. Alice, what means—

MRS. J. Why, it means, Mr. Hearton, that this wise church-warden and cheesemonger, this sapient enticer of widow Jones, the undertaker, has found a letter she dropped—(*pointing to ALICE*) and dares accuse me—

ALICE. (*darting to him*) Oh, dear sir, give it me—it is from Harry—poor Harry, who has been gone three years—I'm sure you wll not refuse me, sir.

JEREMY. I don't believe—

CADGER. Yes, yes, do.

JEREMY. I tell you I don't—not one word!

CADGER. Yes, yes, do, every vord! Give it to the poor thing, dear brother, and ve'll never part, never no more. (*he whispers the latter part*)

(*JEREMY staggers nearly fainting—CADGER takes the letter and gives it to ALICE, who receives it with rapture—she kisses it, is about to open it—suddenly recollects*)

ALICE. Uncle, this is from poor Harry—you know what was said when I was accused—'twas said I robbed you for him, and that he received the money, and then left me for ever—here

is contradiction to one of the falsehoods. Dear uncle—dear uncle, do you believe the remainder? I'm sure you cannot! Oh, before I open this, let me hear you say so—I will then read it all—you shall be convinced there is no disguise; and here, dear uncle, here are my savings, and the presents I have had from poor Miss Ellen, and other good hearts; there are only twenty pounds—but it will help you to-morrow—you do not believe me guilty, nor Harry, do you—do you, dear, dear uncle?

JOB. (*bursting into tears*) No, no, dear Alice—I were, indeed, a wretch if I did. (*she rushes into his arms*)

CADGER. Embrace your wife, and never quarrel no more.

(JEREMY in agony submits.)

CALEB. You're a good fellow—embrace me. (*seizes CADGER.*)

JOB. I have all the money now, dear niece—all, all, Hearton.

ALICE. Now I am blest, indeed—and now for dear Harry's letter. (*kisses and opens it*)

(*a tremendous noise and shouts heard below—a glare of light seen*)

PEASANTS, &c., *rush in, L.—BAXTER, in agitation, follows.*

ALL. What has happened?

BAX. The inn and stables be a fire.

JOB. Ha, my money—my money! (*rushes towards bed room.*)

BAX. (*aside*) I left the horse bag with the turpentine—I shall be discovered. Stay—stop, old man, thee'll be burned!

(*he seizes JOB near the door—they struggle, JOB calling out “My money, &c.”—both enter—flames seen within*)

ALICE. (*in agony, rushing up*) My poor uncle will be lost! Oh, save him—save him! (*HEARTON seizes, and draws her back.*)

*The SCENE falls in, and discovers the whole interior in flames.*

*JOB is by his box holding up the horse bag—BAXTER snatches it, throws it in the flames—seizes JOB, they struggle—he pushes the old man, who falls—the floor sinks with him—flames rush up—as he disappears, ALICE wildly screams—BAXTER returns through the fire—all in confusion—Tableau.*

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

## ACT THIRD.

**SCENE FIRST.**—*Exterior of the Cornflower Inn—a new and handsome modern posting house. The house of Mr. Caleb Kit, as in Act I.—the dancing board taken down, the windows closed, and a large placard, conspicuous over the door, on which is written “To let; enquire of Caleb Kit, Esq., Terpsichore Hall,”—the house tops and the adjoining country covered with snow.* (2nd grooves)

**CHRYSSTAL BAXTER,** *methodistically dressed as landlord, comes from the house, R., followed by COLLINS, flashly dressed for riding, rather tipsy.*

**BAX.** Come into the air, fool. Belzebub himself hath taken possession of thee.

**CADGER.** Right, my rum 'un—he's got his claws on my flapper now. (*points to BAXTER'S hand on his arm*)

**BAX.** You will betray yourself.

**CADGER.** No, no, old sanctity; that's not the rig you're afeard on—you thinks I may betray *you*.

**BAX.** Speak lower—the voice travels so in frosty air.

**CADGER.** Then vy not let me stop by the fire?

**BAX.** You are so careless—the company might catch some word—you might endanger my character.

**CADGER.** (*laughing*) Your character? ha, ha!

**BAX.** What news have you brought? Know you anything of this St. Leger?

**CADGER.** St. Leger? not I! I knows nothing of the St. Legers, though my ancles and wrists does of the Darbys.

**BAX.** Fool, why came you here? I told you never to come back.

**CADGER.** I knows you did, my vicked 'un—but now I tell you, I shall ven I likes. I have been here twice before.

**BAX.** When?

**CADGER.** On werry memorable 'casions. I'd jest returned from my involuntary hexile when that robbery vas put up.

**BAX.** (*aside*) Ha!

**CADGER.** Of course I didn't stop for no inquiries, 'cos vy—'cos I vasn't like you, *a man of character*. Ha, ha!

**BAX.** And your second visit?

**CADGER.** Vas on the werry night the ken vas dewoured by the raging helement, as the newspapers says. But what's this Leger, eh, old sanctity?

BAX. Drunken sot ! you have forgotten about the two foreign gentlemen booked to come down in the coach in the name of St. Leger, as far as Nettleton, with a hoard of money from abroad ? they were then to come on on horseback.

CADGER. (*regretfully*) My eyes ! all slipped me. I was touched when you told me—that is a pity. But now, my tight 'un, about this last job—the chap vot vas to get the gal's fortin, and—

BAX. Hush !

CALEB KIT enters, R., dressed in mourning, in the extreme of fashion, and fatter—GROOM following.

CALEB. (*foppishly*) You will promenade the horses on the road, up the middle and down again—keep them warm, sar.

GROOM. Yes, sir, but you told me to gallop hard.

CALEB. Gallopare ! how dare you mention a dancing term of me, sir ?

GROOM. Me, sir—I !

CALEB. Yes, you, sar—you, you are sniggering now. Go, sir.

*Exit GROOM, R.*  
Such impudence ! did you ever hear the like, Baxter ? everybody forgetting I am now a gentleman, throws the dancing school in my teeth.

CADGER. Great shame, sir—I'd punish the whole kit.

CALEB. (*starting, and eyeing COLLINS*) Kit ! perhaps you mean to insult me, sar ?

BAX. O no, I'm sure not—a wild harum scarum youth, but of high birth, sir.

(whispering CALEB, who, quite softened, bows to COLLINS—he returns it vulgarly but profusely)

CADGER. (L.) Ve vas a talking, squire, of this 'ere late robbery.

CALEB. What, the robbery of poor Hearton ? Ah, Baxter, sad thing !

BAX. (C.) I pity him, sir—and the poor young lady, Miss Ellen, I could almost cry when I think of her !

CADGER. (*aside*) Almost cry ! I should like to see a praying villain's tear ! summut like a drop of akyfortis, I take it—clear and cold to the eye, but werry burning and destroying to what it seems to moisten.

CALEB. Hem ! my brother magistrates—have they come ? the other justices, eh ? you know we are to meet here to-day, as the new town-hall isn't finished—we are to form a set here, to inquire into this matter.

CADGER. Robberies is frequent about here, arn't they, squire ?

CALEB. Very.

BAX. Alas! crime, I fear, is on the increase.

CADGER. (*looking at BAXTER*) Yes, in spite of the meetin' 'ouses and them as goes to 'em.

BAX. Silence, cur! (*aside to COLLINS*) Be pleased to walk in, sir—you will find a fine fire in the justice room.

CALEB. I shall take a glass or two of wine. Perhaps you will honour me by setting me, eh, sir? (*bowing to COLLINS*.)

CADGER. (*returning the bow*) You're a good 'un, squire—von of the right sort—so give us hands across on it.

CALEB. (*drawing back offended*) Hands across, sar! I can resent insult! (*goes to the door*) When the other justices of peace arrive, I am ready for a partner. Hem!

*Enters the house offended, R.*

BAX. You hear, the magistrates are to be here.

CADGER. Vell, the beaks von't 'urt us.

BAX. But about this robbery!

CADGER. Vell, I didn't do it. Hark ye! it's made a good gal, I'm told, a beggar, and a fine young feller almost mad at losing it for her.

BAX. It's a great pity.

CADGER. (*whispering*) Pity! let 'em have it back.

BAX. Are you mad? you surely wouldn't be so great a fool.

CADGER. Think of the misery—vy, it makes me feel.

BAX. So did the whip and the treadmill. Go in, go in.

CADGER. You are the devil.

BAX. Heaven forbid! don't mention the wicked one—go in, go in. I will give you liquor, and gold, and a new job—go in—go in.

CADGER. Well, well, on your head the crime is.

BAX. Indulge your pity by the fire; it's much more comfortable to be tender-hearted there, than shivering here in the snow.

CADGER. That's werry true, now—though, somehow, a scene like this here always seems to me a sort of landscape of the world's charity. There's enough of the lily-vite material here to make 'arts for a whole benevolent society.

BAX. (*with a sneer*) Quite a philosopher.

CADGER. (*fiercely, seizing him*) No; though I'm a larceny cove, cracksman, gemman of the road, or any other title you choose to give a thief—I aren't a philosopher; 'cos why? I feel I've got a 'art. I don't like misery myself, and I can't abide it in others. A woman's tear's worse nor poison to me; and so as I aren't got many virtues, why, I holds my tongue about the article. You trade in a different way; you've got a sham stock of the commodity, and draws largely on the show you

makes of it; but, von day, my covey, von of your bills will be dishonoured. There'll be a run on your character varehouse, the contents will be found hempty kivers, and all the conjined sanctity of your snuffling set von't be able to save you from immortal smash! there's the pictur' I draws for you—with a gallows in the distance, by way of enlivening the prospect.

*Exit into house, R.*

BAX. The gallows isn't in the *distance* with, *you*, fool! yet, should he be taken, how to save myself if he disc'oses! I only went to meeting once last Sunday; I must go every time—keep *that* up—I have not trusted him beyond those two last things on the road. He shall take for his share the few notes I took from Hearton—they may be traced—the bulk of the property is in jewels—I must quit this place when all has died over—not now, no. I must again seek for the pocket book I lost in the scuffle—the sudden fall of snow has hidden it—there is nothing in it but a close description of this fellow, and of Avis, my London accomplice—no one has ever seen me with it—there is nothing in it can point to me—no, I am safe—ha, ha! all safe—safe—yes, yes.

*Enters house.*

*Enter JEREMY with MRS. JENKINSON, muffled up, R.*

SIGIS. Don't hurry so perdigiously.

JEREMY. I shall, ma'am—I've the natural warm feelings of a man in me, ma'am, and I don't want 'em frozen into icicles. You see—there! (*looking at house, L.*)

SIGIS. (*surprised*) Where?

JEREMY. There, don't be pretending innocence—there.

(*seizing her arm and pointing*.)

SIGIS. (*screaming*) Mercy on me, Mr. J.! you brute! what do you take my arm for, that you pinch it so? do you think I've got no feelings?

JEREMY. (*tragically beating his bosom*) Do you think I haven't got none?

SIGIS. He's mad, mad!

JEREMY. That uninhabited house aren't got nobody living in it.

SIGIS. Well!

JEREMY. If it had, and *he'd* a been the individual, you'd a walked quick enough to get here.

SIGIS. You're a fool. I wish I'd never left the Old Bailey.

JEREMY. You'd ha' been turned off there before now.

SIGIS. Monster! I understand your vile insinuations! in the first place, didn't he, *he* you speak of, marry the rich widow of Grains, the brewer?

JEREMY. Yes.

SIGIS. Then dare you insinuate anything against my fair immaculate fame, with a married man?

JEREMY. No.

SIGIS. What do you mean, then?

JEREMY. You know—ah, crokydile! you know his fat wife is gone dead, buried, and he's a widow. You smile—you dare to look pleased. I'll be revenged.

SIGIS. And so will I, sir—I'll be divorced—separate maintenance—damages for injured innocence! you dare not tell Mr. Caleb this!

JEREMY. Dare not! oh, how I wish our Anti-nudity Tepid and Cold Bath Club was down here. Why, I challenged every one of it's members.

SIGIS. Pooh, pooh!

JEREMY. Pooh, pooh! Oh, (*with the resignation of despair*) it's all over now. A woman who would pooh pooh to her husband.

SIGIS. I know you challenged the club.

JEREMY. (*running to her triumphantly*) There, madam.

SIGIS. But it was to swim across the New River.

JEREMY. Oh, oh!

BAXTER enters from house, R. C.

BAX. Squire Caleb Kit desires your worship's company.

SIGIS. He shall vindicate me, he shall; I'll seek him. Come, sir, come and prove your words. *Rushes into house, R. C.*

BAX. Will you walk in, sir?

JEREMY. No, sir! I won't have nothing to do with that man. I won't hold no converse with him; (*BAXTER going*) but you needn't tell him so—you are a religious man, and wouldn't provoke quarrels. Mix me a glass in the little back bar by myself, and I'll come in. *Exit BAXTER into house, R.* I'll appeal to the law; but then that separate maintenance. Surely they wouldn't allow her more than—eh, a pound, or thirty shillings a week? Um, if they should—ha, then about my own rights. I'm a raging lion when I think on it—all fight and courage from top to toe. She's telling him now—perhaps he'll come out here—perhaps he will. I'll not demean myself by a blackguard contention, no how; nor I wouldn't break my country's laws with pistols—no, no how—he's coming. I won't stay to disgrace myself—no, no how. *Hurries off L.*

SCENE SECOND.—*Interior of Alice's habitation. (3rd gaoves)*

**ALICE** is discovered preparing her dinner—**JOB MERRITON**, weak and ill, is sitting wrapped up and bandaged by the fire.

**ALICE.** (*spreading her neat table cloth*) I will prepare the dinner, dear uncle, and strive to make everything as cheerful as I can. When poor Miss Ellen wakes, she may be induced to eat a morsel. I'm sure it looks very nice, don't it, dear uncle?

(*fondling him.*)

**JOB.** (*querulously*) Don't, don't—you hurt me; don't touch me! do you mind, girl?

**ALICE.** I will, dear uncle—I didn't mean to hurt you.

**JOB.** (*softened*) No, no, I'm sure you didn't—I'm an ungrateful old man; but you forgive me when pain makes me cross to you.

**ALICE.** Forgive! I never feel that I have anything to forgive. Can I be angry with *you*—you who protected my early years, and fed and clothed me?

**JOB.** Hush! hush! I turned you out of doors—I branded you with a prison and a trial—I ruined your name and spotless fame, and I refused you a morsel. I am an old wretch!

**ALICE.** (*striving to be cheerful*) Uncle, uncle! fie! fie! you mustn't fib.

**JOB.** I did all this to you, yet you worked early and late to lend me your savings.

**ALICE.** Don't speak of it—don't!

**JOB.** I will! and then, at the hazard of your life, you rushed into the fire, and dragged my worthless, seared, maimed, carcass from it—you've nursed me—giving your little pallet to me, and slept upon the floor—you are thin, for you forego food to procure me a doctor. You are ragged, for you have sold your clothes to procure me restoratives. Alice, I am not blind—my more than daughter, I have watched all this.

**ALICE.** (*on her knees by his side*) Dear Uncle, what do I want with clothes? I never feel inclined to go out—so that I see *you* recover—so that I feel your fearful burns are healing, I am happy. Besides, dear uncle, Harry *will* yet come home; though his dear letter was lost to me—burned before I had read it. I have yet a morsel of it saved; see, see. (*takes a half burnt scrap from her bosom and unfolds it—reads*) “Ever true to my own Alice, by time or distance still unchangeable. Yours affectionately,—Harry Hammerton.” There it is, dear, dear uncle. Bless him—I’m happy, though tears are in my eyes—though my heart has been wearing away with a hope ever struggling not to die—bless him—bless him!

**HEARTON** enters D. in F. R. C.—his appearance is pale and haggard—his arm in a sling—**ALICE** motions silence to him.

**HEARTON** (*in a whisper*) Is she here, then ?

**ALICE**. Yes, there ! (*pointing L.C.*) She is sleeping, poor thing ; she cried herself off—but sit down, Mr. Wilfred ! how pale you look ! why did you venture out, so badly wounded as you are ?

**HEARTON**. I have master'd the faintness arising from loss of blood ; and as there is a meeting of the magistrates to enquire into particulars of the robbery, it is my duty to attend ; calling at Miss Mordaunt's and finding her out, I supposed she—

**ALICE**. Might be here—yes ! she is here, and has been grieving more for your wounds, than her loss of property.

**JOB**. Could you not recognise the robber ?

**HEARTON**. No ! it was dark ! I heard his horse's feet, I saw the outline of a tall man wrapped in a cloak, and as he passed me, I received a pistol ball which struck me from my horse ; my arm was broken, the fall stunned me, and on recovering my senses, I found I had been rifled ; a heavy snow had fallen, and all trace of the robber and would be murderer had vanished.

**ALICE**. I wish my uncle had the twenty pounds he borrowed of you to repay you now, Mr. Wilfred ; but, somehow, I feel there will be a time.

**JOB**. There will, girl—there—

**BAXTER** enters, D., in flat at back, R. C.

will ; pray with me, Alice, that the cruel robber, who destroyed your uncle and yourself—and he who has now ruthlessly ruined two young and noble hearts, may soon from the laws of the country, meet the doom they merit ; pray—

**BAX.** (*abruptly coming forward*) Master Hearton, the magistrates are at my house.

**JOB**. Ah, Chrystal ! you are a strict man, your prayers will be heard ; pray with us, that the accursed robber and destroyer may soon be discovered.

**BAX.** (*agitated*) The magistrates be a wanting you.

**HEARTON**, I attend them.

**JOB**. (*excitedly*) Pray, Chrystal, that the villain ! the robber, may be found ! may be hung ! may die amidst the curses of all honest folks ! dost thee hear ? pray—

(*BAXTER retains the sanctity of his appearance, till he has bowed HEARTON out at D. R. C., he then turns on JOB, and with brutal fierceness speaks*)

**BAX.** Hold thee damn'd tongue !

**ALICE** How ?

BAX. (*changing his manner*) For damn'd it will be, if you be so uncharitable.

JOB. Charitable to the wretch who destroyed me?

BAX. Hush! I didn't come to hear you complain, but to propose how I might restore you.

JOB. How?

BAX. Alice knows! I gave her from last Sunday till to-day to think of it.

ALICE. And I have thought of it; and I will work on night and day—work contentedly. I can earn enough to support my uncle and myself, and he will be content too—so I am happy; will you not, uncle, will you not?

JOB. I will, my poor child, I will.

BAX. Then he shall be content in a gaol, for there I'll send him, if you refuse to marry me; yes! send him this very hour, I lent him twenty pounds, mayhap he has forgotten it.

ALICE. Oh, no! you would not be so merciless!

BAX. Would I not? and this cottage happens to be mine too, is that forgotten? there's some rent not paid, I take it; mayhap you can work and be happy in the open air, for out you turn.

ALICE. Oh, villain!

BAX. Do you hear, old man? mayhap an old cripple like you won't die in a gaol? and mayhap she who robbed you—

ALICE. Liar!

BAX. She who robbed you, and brought you to it, won't be guilty of your murder?

ALICE. Heartless wretch, no!

BAX. And mayhap the world won't say so?

ALICE. No! it dares not; it is not so madly foolish—it cannot think so—'tis not in nature—yes; I forgot, it thinks you religious and humane.

BAX. Will you consent?

ALICE. No!

BAX. Indeed! (*seizes old JOB roughly*) Will you to gaol, old man?

JOB. (*rising firmly erect*) Yes, to gaol! to die, to rot, before I'd see my innocent poor lamb the prey of such a savage wolf in sheep's clothing; I'm ready, take me—ready, strong, ready. (*falls backwards exhausted in his chair*)

BAX. Do you see that? that be your work.

ALICE. No, villain! it is yours

BAX. (*advancing*) If he dies I'll drag him there.

ALICE. (*seizing a knife from the table*) You shall die if you lay finger on him.

BAX. (*taking pistol from his pocket—after a pause*) I will soon settle that.

ALICE. (*almost fainting*) I will proclaim you to the world a hypocrite and a villain!

BAX. Indeed! and who would believe what was said by a suspected thief like you, when you spoke against a man of my known reputation? no one! they would laugh you to scorn —you are without a witness.

ELLEN coming calmly from room at back, L.

ELLEN. No, she is not, Chrystal Baxter—I have heard all.

BAX. Damnation! (*recovering*) I hope you have, young lady, you then heard the good I proffered, humbled myself to ask, nay, even threw aside my nature so far as to threaten, that I might force her, for her own good, into comfort and plenty. You have heard all this.

ELLEN. I have heard enough to convince me you are a heartless, cruel man; who, under the mask of sanctity, regard neither the dictates of humanity, nor the tender pleading of pity. 'Tis such as you, sir, who give the irreligious cause to scoff at the doctrines of the church; and I feel that she could do no better service to society than to unmask so base and dangerous a character.

BAX. Really, a very pretty sermon from a beggar, miss—ha, ha, ha! I'm pretty well revenged, though; as for the others, I'll send the bailiffs down at once; yea, the Philistines shall come upon them, ha, ha! (*aside*) You will, perhaps, pay the money they owe, Miss Mordaunt? I will send a gentleman, quite a gentleman, ha, ha! good morning. *Exit D. F. R. C.*

ELLEN. Alice, cheer up, he is gone.

ALICE. (*faintly*) Look to my uncle, they will drag him to prison.

ELLEN. No, no! Baxter will never be so cruel.

ALICE. Ah, you do not know! I have had strange thoughts, Heaven forgive me, about that man—do you mark how he has risen, as it were, out of every misfortune of my uncle's—ha! (*a sudden thought*) She has promised me often, I can but try! (*aside*) Uncle, I will soon return—Miss Ellen will stay with you till then. I am going to a friend—they shall not drag you to prison; you will stay, will you not, dear madam? A something whispers me I shall succeed—oh, if I should, how grateful will I be; how I will work to repay her—I won't be long—great Heaven, I pray assist me!

*Puts on her bonnet, &c., during the above, and hurries out, R. C.*

JOB. (*tremblingly*) Has she gone?

ELLEN. She will soon return, sir.

JOB. Don't believe it, don't believe it, she finds I must go to a prison, and she won't be longer troubled with me.

ELLEN. She has not deserved this, Mr. Merriton.

JOB. Deserved it—no! don't look, don't speak kindly to me, a wretch, ungrateful and unthankful. Oh, what has pain and misfortune made of me; yet it do seem scarcely possible she can be so kind to one who so ill used, and doubted, and injured her—hark! they be coming—hark!

ELLEN. Don't alarm yourself so—perhaps it is Alice returning.

JOB. No, no, I do hear the clank of a prison in their very tread; cold and stormy, and heartless—they be stopped at the door—let 'em come, they *must* let me out when I be dead.

*The door R. C. opens and CLUMP and BILLET enter, they look all round, then CLUMP calls off.*

CLUMP. T'young lass beant here.

CADGER. (*without*) All's right, my reg'lar, I'm with you!

*Enter CADGER, R. C.*

But here's another on'em. I can't abide it; I hopes, ma'am, you wont offer no unpleasant obstructions to the werry unpleasant business we've come about, in this singular unpleasant manner.

ELLEN. What is it, sir?

CADGER. Why, you see, I'm not much used to it, ma'am; that made me particklar about Alice being here. I don't know how it is, but when a man's got a nasty job in hand, he don't like the eye of woman, even a strange 'un, to be upon him.

JOB. Thee be come to take me to a prison.

CADGER. Well, that's very good as a guess, old un.

JOB. Thee, Jacob Clump, came a poor sick beggar to Heathfield, and I took pity on thee, and gave thee a bed, and food, and a doctor, til thee got well, and a home and employment afterwards, till Grub the lawyer gave thee a shilling or two more, and now thee be come to take me to prison.

CLUMP. Dooty, master, dooty—do yours, and read that!

(*gives paper to CADGER.*

CADGER. What, me remain here, and take the poor things' cheers and tables, for rent! if I do I am blessed! Oh, I sees I must put a stop to these here wagaries. Take the old gemman to gaol, Mr. Gratitude—I've a word or two for preaching Chrystal, shall soon bring him back.

ELLEN. Will you though, good stranger? will you? Heaven will bless you for it!

**CADGER.** (*starting from her*) Don't touch my hand, miss—I aren't worthy—I mean it aren't a werry clean 'un. Heaven bless me! Lord love you—I'm too far gone for that—a bad fellow, miss, werry. Why, the old man's asleep, or dead—no—a bit of a faint. Take him out gently into the garden for air, then across the field is the shortest way—there, gently, gently—come along, miss—we'll soon have all right again, that we will—gently, gently.

(*MERRITON is carried off, R., by the MEN, ELLEN supporting him, CADGER directing.*

*The door R. C. opens and HARRY HAMMERTON enters as a stranger, in a rich oriental garb, followed by JEREMY.*

**HARRY.** (*looking round*) You are sure this is the house, sir?

**JEREMY.** Quite sure! I wonder who he is! (*aside*) He carries no rhubarb box.

**HARRY.** Bless the hearthstone and roof tree of her dwelling, my poor girl! I could kiss every plank in the neatly scrubbed floor.

**JEREMY.** What an odd man! blesses the hearthstone. What would he do to the scrubbing brushes, since he admires the clean floor? (*aside*)

**HARRY.** Dear Alice—she has felt poverty, eh? And how did it come on her, eh?

**JEREMY.** If you mean Alice Gray—she has, indeed, been poor—she was tried for a robbery, and—

**HARRY.** (*darting at him*) Robbery? liar! (*shaking him*) Oh, I wish I had you where I have come from, I'd do myself the pleasure of seeing all the skin off the soles of your feet, though I had to bastinado you myself.

**JEREMY.** (*frightened—adjusting his dress*) 'Pon my word, I'm much obliged, Mr. What's-yer-name; but I'm a magistrate, and we allow no sole and heel skinning here, except amongst the fishes. It's true, however—she was tried, and acquitted.

**HARRY.** Of course—I knew that. Go on—what next?

**JEREMY.** Why, then she took to sewing; till her uncle was sewed up by having his house burnt down—since then, she's been glad to do any kind of hard work to support the old cripple.

**HARRY.** Bless her, bless her! her pretty little fingers have all got horny and hard, eh? I'll love 'em better than all the digits of a duchess. Well?

**JEREMY.** Well, well, that's all! excepting that they've got poorer and poorer every day. I've often seen her go with a

bundle into Ticket, the pawnbroker's, and as often come out without one.

HARRY. Poor girl! So you've got a pawnbroker's, eh, in Heathfield?

JEREMY. Oh, bless you, we've improved every way.

HARRY. Improved, do you call it? I might have been sure there was a pawnbroker's, though, for I saw a fine white fronted house, with a large lamp, and the word "Gin" in large letters in its window—and three brass plates with the names of lawyers on them. Three lawyers and a gin palace—a pawnbroker's is a necessary—

JEREMY. And my late establishment, with a large golden sheep hanging over the door—did you see that? kept now by young Mr. Jones, a widow's son, a handsome youth, supposed to be like me. Why, what are you about?

(*during the above HARRY has seated himself at the table, and commences eating heartily*)

HARRY. About! why, clapping on more fuel; we engineers know, that to keep the steam up, the furnace must be fed.

JEREMY. You are an engineer, then?

HARRY. I am; I was a smith, I ran away from a cruel creditor—went to sea—in Egypt attracted the Pasha's notice by repairing an engine, which was then working one of his military supply purposes—no other workmen near—became of great value; he employed me ashore, made a Bey of me, and installed me his principal engineer—showered gold and presents on me, till at last, a poor runaway smith is enabled to come home one of the richest men in merry England.

JEREMY. Allow me to wish you joy, sir; and I have an idea a bit of meat's a rarity in this house. (*aside*) I'll just step into the garden, and see if any of the folks is in the way. *Exit, R.*

HARRY. So, my pretty Alice has drooped in the world! Cruel—cruel, not to write to me! Ha—(*seeing picture*) as I live, my picture! (*starts up, and snatches it*) Yes, 'tis me! she thinks of me, then—dear Alice, you sometimes looked on this, and sighed for him who was toiling under a hot sun, with the plague his next door neighbour, that he might earn competence for you. Here is the locket you prized so—it has always lain with your dear portrait on my heart—I will tie it round this, now, that you may guess your faithful Harry is near you. (*ties it on miniature, and hangs it up*) I told her in my letter how I got it, so when she sees it, she will know I am returned. My own Alice, what will be her joy when she sees me—what my triumph, when I face my old oppressors, my poor dead father's creditors, as I tell down the full sum to each, with the just interest—I shall feel prouder than an emperor! and the story

of my struggles shall incite the heart of youth to industry, when I am cold and mouldering in the grave. *Exit, r.*

**ALICE** enters hurriedly, D. in F.—her appearance is jaded, she throws herself quickly into a seat.

**ALICE.** I can find her nowhere, nor him either! I have no one else I can ask, and the poor old man is in a cold dungeon. He will die—yes, die, and curse me, and I might have saved him my poor mother's brother, whom she loved so dearly—I might have saved him, and I would not. How? ah, marry Chrystal! My flesh creeps on my bones when I name him! marry—desert my Harry, and wed a being I loathe—loathe— Oh, let me die at once! (*bursts into tears—after a moment's pause endeavours to master her emotion*) I know not what to do; but for the poor old man's sake, I must forget my own insults! Yes, yes, I was wicked to wish to die while he is in a prison, with no one to take him a morsel of food—time will prove my innocence. I will hope—I will hope yet! I will take him his dinner to the gaol, he said he was hungry, and—(*starts, on seeing the table*) Gone—gone! the only food we had! Oh, this is cruel! but what—what can I do? he will starve before my eyes, and I can save him! Yes, I will not think—but Heaven will forgive me for praying for death, before I leave the church. Harry, should you ever come back, then you—ha! (*stands for a moment transfixed, as at the mention of HARRY's name, she raises her eyes to the portrait, and sees the locket—she passes her hand across her eyes, and looks again, as if doubting the evidence of her senses*) The locket! my mother's locket! (*darts to it, and clutches it*) It is! what thought flashes like a lightning stroke across my brain? (*speaks rapidly*) This was locked up with my uncle's money, and was stolen with it! it may point the thief, it may. (*pauses to think*) I'll fly to a magistrate—yes, it will clear my name! Blessed proof, it will secure the miscreant. Heaven aid me—my strength falters—heart, bear up till all is over—burst—burst then—burst then—I shall be happy.

*Rushes frantically out D. in F.*

**SCENE THIRD.—*The Justice Room in the Inn.*** Large windows fill almost the whole of the back of the stage, through them is seen a snowy landscape, &c.—a fire burns, R.—a clock stands L.—a glass door at the back, two others, R. and L.—the wings enclosed, &c.

JEREMY discovered, seated disconsolately by the fire.

JEREMY. I'm a miserable man—nothing can add to my misery! Yet there's a gleam of comfort—I've got the best room, and *that Kit* is in the little bar—

CADGER appears, c. recognises him, and approaches softly.

sneaking in the little bar! I'll have a double magnum to comfort me.

CADGER. (*approaching him, and going down on his knees*) I'm come to comfort you—open your harms, and take me to your 'art.

JEREMY. (*starting up*) Who are you?

CADGER. Don't you know your truly 'fectionate brother?

JEREMY. Not hung yet?

CADGER. How's your wife, my rum 'un? (*embracing him*)

JEREMY. Go—fly! There's been a rohbery—that accounts for seeing you!

CADGER. Pure filial 'fection, deor brother!

JEREMY. If they take you?

CADGER. Jest say I'm your brother. It's a werry fine thing to have respectable connixions! (*linking arms with him*)

HARRY is seen at the door, c.—he rushes down, R.

HARRY. So you are here, sir—have you found Alice? How altered is this once peaful and innocent place! I hear of nothing but robberies—officers from London are arrived.

(lays his cloak down—the CADGER in alarm.)

CADGER. Traps from Lunnon, eh? where—the game's up—Where are you going to hide me, you unnatural brother, you?

(seizing JEREMY aside—HARRY looks through the glass door.)

JEREMY. Me—I—I hide you?

CADGER. One word of where I am, and I blows your brains out, dear brother. (quickly enters the clock case—JEREMY staggers back, and supports himself with a chair)

HARRY. Ha! 'tis she, and hurrying this way—I recognise her, though so pale and altered. How pale and wild she looks!

Who are those following her! one has my locket in his hand—I know him—my cruel creditor. If she sees me suddenly, it may prove too much for my poor girl.

(seats himself, and lays his face on the table as if asleep.)

**ALICE**, *her hair dishevelled, rushes in through glass door, c., followed by DAVID DEMURE, CALEB, HEARTON, ELLEN, CLUMP, BILLET, and VILLAGERS—she attempts to speak, but is falling, when HEARTON catches her.*

**CALEB.** (to DAVID) I can swear to hearing old Merriton, a hundred times, say he had locked up that locket with the money which was stolen, and that it was taken likewise by the robbers.

**DAVID.** She has just said so. Had it been found on her when tried for the robbery, it would have condemned her.

(they consult, crowding together.)

**JEREMY.** (looking fearfully to the clock) He's stopped the clock. Oh, dear—oh, dear! he'll be found—he'll be hung—my blood freezes, and my hair begins to bristle. (aside)

(they have placed ALICE in a chair—she revives slowly.)

**CHRYSSTAL BAXTER** enters, c.

**BAX.** The London Officers want to speak with your worship. (he looks round—aside) Oh, he's gone—all be right, then!

**DAVID.** I will go to them.

**BAX.** (seeing the locket and starting—in alarm) Eh, it be—it be?

**CALEB.** (aside) He knows it too, you see.

**DAVID.** We'll hear what the girl says first—I'll soon return. Come, Chrystal—come with me

**BAX.** (his eyes fixed on the locket, from which he has never moved them) Yer, sir—the devil be turned against me; where did that come from? I must think.

(aside, following DAVID out, l. without moving his eyes off the locket—all look at ALICE who is endeavouring to recall her senses—JEREMY seizing the opportunity to look at the clock—he encounters the face of CADGER looking out—he calls out and falls back in his chair—CADGER disappears.)

**ALICE.** (starting up and searching) Where is it? if it be lost, I am ruined.

**DAVID** enters, a pocket book in his hand, l.—**BAXTER**, pale and agitated, enters, gazing at it.

**DAVID.** Strange news, gentlemen—the officers in searching the scene of the late robbery have found this. Here is a de-

cription of two notorious highwaymen written in it. Listen—"Jenkinson, alias Crabs, alias Cadger Collins"—a flash swell now in luck, and—

CADGER. (*watching from the clock*) My eye!

*Disappears—all start and look round.*

JEREMY. (*in confusion*) It was me spoke—when I heard my name—um—Jenkinson—oh, lord!

DAVID. Doubtless one of the robbers who shot Mr. Hearton. I have sent the officers for old Merriton; so we'll first attend to this locket.

ALICE. (*as he produces it*) Ah, yes, I gave it to you, sir—that may lead to the discovery of the cruel robbers of my uncle.

DAVID. It may, girl. (*to BAXTER*) Did you ever see this locket?

BAX. Ye—yes—on the night when poor Aunt Margery died—while I were gone to close her poor eyes, the robbery were committed.

DAVID. Girl, how came you by it now?

ALICE. I found it twisted round a picture of a friend—a dear absent friend, only a few minutes since, in my poor house.

DAVID. And you know not who placed it there?

ALICE. No, sir! I flew with it to you—I told you so, when I came to you as a magistrate for your advice.

DAVID. It is a most improbable tale you tell. Think you we can believe the robber would willingly throw a trace in he wa of justice?

ALICE. I have told the truth.

DAVID. I wish it may prove so—was it not locked up with your uncle's money? Was it not stolen with that money?

ALICE. It was.

DAVID. Yet you wish us to believe—Girl, you are guilty!

HARRY. Alice! Alice!

ALICE. (*starting wildly*) That voice!

HARRY. (*rising and rushing to her*) My dearest Alice, 'tis Harry, your true Harry! (*she shrieks and rushes into his arms*)

CADGER. (*looking from the case*) They've laid that ere book on the table; it's the prayin villain's own—I wish I could grab it.

*Disappears.*

HARRY. I placed the locket where it was found that she might know I had returned.

DAVID. She knew then that you had it?

HARRY. She did.

ALICE. (*starting*) No, Harry, no.

BAX. Take notice of that—they contradict each other.

DAVID. How did she know you had it?

HARRY. I told her of it in a letter some time since.

DAVID. Where is that letter?

ALICE. Here, here is part of it! It was burnt in saving my uncle from the fire.

DAVID. But you had read it?

ALICE. No, I had but just received it. Yes, Harry—I had been watching and watching, and praying and praying but for a line from you, one line to prove you had not forgotten your poor Alice—I was too happy when it came—I couldn't read for tears—and then that dreadful fire—I saw the old man sinking through the burning floor, and I rushed in to save him. Your letter was in my hand, it fell, I missed it, and madly braved the flames to save it—but too late, too late—I preserved but this, this dear assurance of your love, it has been my stay and solace since.

HARRY. Dear beloved Alice! her words are true as heaven, I know they are—can you doubt? Oh, I remember me—you are the man of mercy—you proffered me three months grace for my poor father's debts when I asked but for one—you had then a writ for me in your pocket, and you would now condemn her to a gaol! The same mean spirit and low mind would now destroy the innocent, which then oppressed the industrious! There, sir, is your money—the want of that made me your victim—the having it enables me to tell you to your teeth you are a merciless, bad man, and I defy you!

DAVID. Indeed! you are too quick, sir, in your defiance—how came you possessed of this locket?

HARRY. I bought it on the night I left the village, of that man there, of Chrystal Baxter.

BAX. (*with affected horror*) Oh, world of wickedness! would they say I robbed? Listen, sir, as I have a sinful soul to be saved he, that man, is the robber—that smith, that run-away from his just debts—a likely story they should burn *that very part* of the letter that told about the locket—oh, very likely! And now at the very time he comes back, here's another robbery—this dear young lady is ruined, and this worthy gentleman wounded. Wicked man, do you seek to throw your crime on me? I do rest me on my character.

DAVID. Officers, these two persons are your prisoners. (*pointing to HARRY and ALICE*) Your money nor your insolence will now avail you.

ALICE. (*in agonised surprise*) Harry!

HARRY. Be not alarmed—look not so wildly, Alice, Alice, if you love me.

ALICE. If I love you? Oh, you do not doubt my love, Harry? I have borne a moral brand without repining for years, for I thought the time *would* come when you would re-

turn to your poor girl. You come, but 'tis to be entangled in my ruin, to be stained with my stain, to be made my fellow inmate of a prison, and at last to consummate the union of our fate upon a scaffold. By heaven, by my soul's hopes, innocent, innocent !

(falls insensible—HARRY tenderly places her in the arms of HEARTON and ELLEN)

HARRY. (pointing to her) Look on her, vile man. (to BAXTER) Have you no pity for her innocence? for innocent you know she is. Chrystal Baxter, I make one last appeal to you—did I not buy the locket of you, near the three old elms? Would you consign her after a youth of trouble to a shameful Dare you think of the inevitable hour when you must meet your Judge Eternal?

BAX. You are guilty—both—both guilty!

CADGER. (bursting out, and thrusting the book in the fire, while he stirs it) You lie, you sanctified warment! Well you knows you do. Stand still, you convicted ken cracker. Lunnon traps look to him—he it was, robbed the poor old chap twice, and the second time set fire to the 'ouse to hide his roguery. He did sell the locket to the gemman there, I knows it. I'm a bad un, myself, but damme, I never hinjured a woman. Oh, you black sheep of a werry nice flock, save yourself from the devil now!

HARRY. (eagerly) You'll prove it?

BAX. No, he's a highwayman—seize him!

CADGER. Vait a bit! I've more to say—who robbed the—(BAXTER draws a pistol and shoots CADGER, who falls—BAXTER is seized—they raise CADGER, who speaks faintly) Search him—in his left pocket is the diamonds, in his right is the notes and gold belonging to—(points to HEARTON and ALICE)—he's all over villainy—(the stolen things are found)—there—there! Let me look at the canting hound—ha, ha, ha! (beckons JEREMY) I won't tell—no. Pray for me—I'm dying! when I found him I might have turned to good, but for Chrystal's persuasion—the gallows isn't in the distance, eh? but I shall be buried in the pretty green churchyard! Yes, yes—ha, ha! dim, dim! brother—brother!

(Music—Dies, c. ALICE is in HARRY's arms, R. C.—  
—CHRYSSTAL prisoner, L.—Tableau.

R.

CURTAIN.

L.