

THE MISER OF SHOREDITCH.

An original Romantic Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

THOS. PECKETT PREST,

*Author of the popular Tale of the same Title, Gallant Tom, Morna
of the Glen, There's Nothing like a Friend at Court, &c. &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND.

LONDON.

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THE MISER OF SHOREDITCH.

First Performed at the Royal Standard Theatre,
November 2nd, 1854.

CHARACTERS.

SIR MILFORD WELBORN	(of the Old <i>Grange at Hogsden</i>)	MR. DALE.
EVELYN HEARTWELL	(in love with <i>Constance</i>)	MR. W. GORDON.
OLIVER DALTON	(his Rival; an Adventurer)	MR. J. F. YOUNG.
CALEB COSEY	(Host of the "Old Tankard")	MR. J. GATES.
TIMOTHY TAPCAN	(a travelling Tinker)	MR. H. LEWIS.
SAMPSON BRAYLING	(a Gipsy Chief)	MR. J. BRAIDSHAW.
BLACK WILL	}	{	MR. COOKE.
ZOAH	}{	{	MR. WALLACE.
JASPER SCRIMPE	(the Miser of Shoreditch)	MR. E. B. GASTON.
TOBY TAPER	(his Man)	MR. G. B. BIGWOOD.
SIR THOMAS OVERTON	(a Magistrate)	MR. G. PENNET.
MATTHEW SMELTON	MR. WILKINS.
MARTIN	(a Servant)	MR. BIRD.
CONSTANCE	(of the Grange—Niece to Sir <i>Milford</i>)	MISS C. GIBSON.
ABIGAIL ALLSPICE	(her Attendant)	MISS E. TERRY.
MABEL	(the Gipsy Girl)	MRS. R. HONNER.

Gipsies, Peasants, Guests, Soldiers, &c. &c.

PERIOD OF THE DRAMA—1560. TIME OF PERFORMANCE—2 HOURS.

Costumes.—Period, Henry VIII.

Doublets and trunks, arm-hole cloaks, round-toed shoes, and boots, caps and round hats, hair cut rather close, moustache and short beards; the above is the general character of the costume, varied by the rank and circumstances of the wearer.

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THE
MISER OF SHOREDITCH.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Exterior of “Ye Old Tankard, near unto ye Village of Fynesburie. Maypole, c. ; VILLAGERS, GUESTS, &c. assembled—MABEL, R. U. E., wrapped in thought—CALEB COSEY in attendance, L. Curtain rises to music; GUESTS, &c. come forward.*

Chorus.

Let us be jovial, let us be gay,
To welcome blithe and cheerful May;
Nature smiles on all around,
Then let each heart responsive bound.
Balmy perfume fills the air,
Pleasure reigning everywhere;
Care and sorrow far away,
Welcome to the morn of May.

CALEB. (*coming forward*) Ah, as I was saying, my friends, there's nothing like drinking, to keep body and soul together. Why, it's nothing but the want of good liquor, that drives so many persons mad; and for one very good reason: when the mortal clay is not properly moistened, is it at all wonderful that it should become cracked? (*all laugh and retire back*)

TIMOTHY TAPCAN. (*without, R., singing*)

The best of strong liquor, it makes a man mellow,
So he who gets drunk is a hearty good fellow.

CALEB. (*looking off*) Eh, by the bye, here comes one of the best customers to the Old Tankard, Master Timothy Tapcan, the tinker. He's a wet soul, and I honour him for it.

Enter TIMOTHY, R. staggering.

Ah, Timothy, here thou art then? and I am highly gratified to see thee in thy cups as usual.

Tim. Wh—wh—why, I do begin to think that I'm a leetle bit tos—tossti—tosicated. I feel in a state of all—overishness, topsy-

turvishness like. I've had a fall which has disarranged my internals. Caleb! bring me a tankard of your very best, or I shall swoon.

CALEB. Aye, marry will I, for there is nothing like drinking. Steady, steady!

Exit CALEB into house.

TIM. Now, I dare say they think that I—I—I'm in—in—inebriated; but I never do that sort of thing. No, I'm as sober and temperate a man as need to be; but somehow, whenever I pass a tavern, the smell of the liquor makes me feel queer. It's love that causes me to act as I does—I wants to enter into the salubrical state of hemlock.

Enter CALEB with drink.

Ah! here's the medicine that will cure all complaints. Here's pros—prosperity, Caleb! (drinks) I say, Caleb, you know my Abigail—Abigail Allspice I mean—the waiting maid of Mistress Constance Welborn, of the old Grange, near Hogsden, where I am now going; isn't she a lovely creature? Here's her health. There's rare merry-making at the Grange, to celebrate the birth-day of young Mistress Constance; and I can tell you a secret, Caleb.

CALEB. A secret?

TIM. Aye, Constance Welborn is going to be married next Monday-week.

CALEB. Marry! and is it even so?

TIM. Yes it is, I heard all the particulars yesterday. It's all over with poor Master Evelyn Heartwell. It seems the young spark's ruined, so Sir Milford Welborn has broke off the match.

MABEL. (aside, joyfully) Ah, 'tis well!

CALEB. Then who is to be the husband of Constance Welborn?

TIM. Oliver Dalton, to be sure.

CALEB. Well, I am not sorry for that, because he's a liberal-hearted youth, and one of my best customers.

TIM. Well, I am then; I don't half like that Oliver. If he's not a scoundrel at heart my name's not Timothy Tapcan. Nobody knows who he is, what he is, or where he comes from. He happened to save the old gentleman's life, when he was attacked by robbers, and that established him in his favour. Besides poor Evelyn Heartwell is a good lad; he has been unfortunate, and so far as the word of a respectable travelling tinker will go, he's welcome to my influence to persuade Sir Milford to accept him as the husband of Constance.

MABEL. (vehemently and coming forward) Never! the maiden may possess his heart, but his hand must never be hers—I, Mabel, the wandering gipsy-girl say so.

TIM. Bless me, Mistress Mabel, and what can you have to do with the business? Any one might be inclined to think that you had a sneaking regard for the young man yourself.

MABEL. (sternly) Silence, idiot! (she again retires back)

TIM. There's a vixen for you! But come, Master Caleb, as all our friends are here assembled, and this is May-morning, what say you to a dance?

OMNES. Aye, aye, a dance! a dance!

Rustic Ballet in which TIMOTHY and CALEB join grotesquely—Maypole dance, during which EVELYN enters, L., crosses R., and seats himself at table disconsolately, MABEL watching him from back anxiously—DANCERS retire.

TIM. (*aside to CALEB*) Why, I declare here is the very man we've been talking about. How pale and careworn he looks, poor fellow.

EVELYN. (*rising and coming forward*) Lost—ruined—beggared in fortune—scorned by the world—rejected by the proud uncle of her whom my soul adores, I am indeed a wretched being; poor Constance, thou alone art faithful. (*takes out letter and reads it*) Dear, dear girl; yes, I will indeed meet thee to-night;—sigh my last farewell on thy bosom, and then tear myself from thy presence for ever. The wide ocean shall in future be my home, and when the wild tempest tosses about the frail barque, I will fancy I hear thy gentle soothing tones in the voice of the storm, and smile at its terrors. I cannot help thinking of old Jasper Scrimpe, the miser. He has appointed me to meet him at his house in Shoreditch this evening; the house whose doors have ever been closed to the poor and needy. 'Tis strange, what can he want with me? However, I'll attend him. (*reseats himself at table and drops the letter*)

CALEB. (*bowing*) Welcome, Master Evelyn Heartwell to the Old Tankard, the best hostervie for miles round—capital old wines. What shall I have the honour to bring you?

EVELYN. A glass of water!

CALEB. Water! water!—awful idea!

EVELYN. Away! away! (*crosses*)

CALEB. But what shall I bring you?

EVELYN. Civility and attention, when your service is required.

CALEB. Humph! he's a stubborn fool, that's evident. But come along, Timothy, let's into the house and enjoy ourselves. Nothing like drinking.

Music—Exit CALEB and TIMOTHY into house—MABEL comes down R., EVELYN observes her.

EVELYN. Mabel, the gipsey-girl, here?

MABEL. Yes; the gipsey wanderer feels a sad pleasure in following in your path, and listening to the tones of your voice—misfortune has overtaken you, and—

EVELYN. You pity me?

MABEL. Pity you! Oh, how much more ardent is the sentiment I entertain towards you; you love the fair Constance of the Grange, and that thought is madness to my soul!

EVELYN. For heaven's sake, what mean you?

MABEL. Oh, canst thou not read it in my looks? Think you that the wild child of the forest glade is insensible to the tenderest emotions that can animate the human breast? But mark me, Evelyn, scorn and indifference may excite other passions in my bosom, and—but no more—farewell, and when distance perchance

may separate us, remember that there is one who loves you yet more fondly than it is possible for Constance Welborn to do.

Music—Exit MABEL at back, L.

EVELYN. Poor girl, too well do I read thy feelings ! (*he sits and relapses into meditation—music*)

Enter OLIVER DALTON, R. 1 E., he does not notice EVELYN.

OLIVER. Bravo ! bravo ! fortune smiles once more upon me ; this money that I have duped the fools out of at the gaming table, will enable me to support the character I have assumed, and to cozen still further the foolish old baronet. Well done, gipsy Luke, the thief, the mur—no, that name must be erased from my vocabulary. Well, after all, here I am, professing to be the very paragon of honour and virtue, and talking love and sentimentality to one of the loveliest of her sex—the wedding-day fixed, and—ha, ha, ha ! Luke, this is better than following the beggarly fortunes of the gipsy tribe.

EVELYN. (*abstractedly*) Oh, Constance, dear Constance !

OLIVER. (*aside*) Ah ! my rival here ! should he have overheard me. I know not how it is, but whenever I look upon him a sensation thrills at my heart, for which I cannot account. Poor fellow ! his power is at an end now—it is almost too contemptible to finally trample on a worm ; yet do I so heartily hate him, that I delight to taunt him. Good-day to thee, Master Evelyn, I greet thee.

EVELYN. (*with emotion*) Oliver Dalton !

OLIVER. (*sarcastically*) Aye, your friend.

EVELYN. (*scornfully*) Your friendship is gratuitous ; I am not your friend.

OLIVER. Humph ! and why not, good Evelyn ?

EVELYN. The man who would be Evelyn's friend, must first prove himself possessed of honour and virtue.

OLIVER. Nay, you are sarcastic, Heartwell ; but I bear you no malice, though you did seek to rival me in the affections of Constance Welborn.

EVELYN. Rival you !

OLIVER. Aye, but it is all past now ; I am too happy to-day to quarrel with any one ; the baronet has fixed the day for my union with Constance, and—

EVELYN. (*passionately*) Heartless villain ! Oliver Dalton !—

OLIVER. (*coolly*) At your service ; nay now, be cool. Come, we will be merry to-day, I am resolved ; so be seated, and—

EVELYN. Oliver Dalton ! arouse not my anger ! You are planting a dagger in my heart—let me be gone ! Oh, Constance ! (*sinks on seat overpowered by his feelings*)

OLIVER. Come, come, Evelyn, we shall soon understand each other, and be friends. What ho ! host !

Enter CALEB, from house.

OLIVER. Wine ! wine ! the best your hostelrie can produce.

CALEB. Attend to you in a tangent, sir. (*aside*) Nothing like drinking wine unlimited!—what liberality!

Exit CALEB *into house*.—MABEL and GIPSIES are seen to be watching secretly at back.

OLIVER. (*aside*) My railery galls him; 'tis glorious revenge! Ah, a letter! (*snatches up letter*)

Enter CALEB, with wine.

OLIVER. (*charging glasses*) Now, Evelyn, my friend, drink. Pshaw! arouse yourself from this melancholy—Why, zounds, man, you look as dull and cheerless as a November day.

EVELYN. Urge me not; I am not disposed to drink, especially with Oliver Dalton.

OLIVER. In spite of all, I will not be angry with you. I say you shall pledge me a toast, and that shall be my future bride, the fair Constance Welborn.

EVELYN. (*rising, and with emotion*) Constance! my Constance! Oliver Dalton, came you here to insult me?

OLIVER. Is it then an insult to try to persuade you to drink to the health of one of the most lovely of her sex, and who you once pretended to admire?

EVELYN. (*indignantly*) Pretended to admire! Shameless slanderer! You come to triumph o'er my misery.

OLIVER. (*fiercely*) Aye, to exult o'er your degradation, Evelyn Heartwell! base-born reptile as you are!

EVELYN. (*passionately*) I'll have no more. Villain! (*strikes OLIVER—Chord*)

OLIVER. Ah, a blow! Oliver Dalton struck by a wretch like Evelyn Heartwell! Revenge! revenge!

Music.—OLIVER rushes on EVELYN—a struggle, in the course of which OLIVER snatches a dagger from EVELYN's belt, and having felled him, is about to stab him, when MABEL and GIPSIES rush from back, R. and L. and interpose. CALEB, TIMOTHY, and GUESTS enter hastily from house, and the Scene closes on Tableau.

SCENE II.—*The Old Roman Road, now called Old Street Road.*

Music.—Enter OLIVER hurriedly, L.

OLIVER. Perdition! to be struck by this upstart—But I will have revenge. This dagger bearing his initials, may serve me. And this letter too, which he dropped, and I fortunately picked up—Ah! 'tis in the handwriting of Constance! (*opens letter and reads*) "Dearest Evelyn—In spite of every danger, I will meet you at ten to-night in the Lover's Walk.—Ever yours—Constance." By Jove! this is fortunate! I will be at the place of assignation. Now, Evelyn Heartwell, dearly shall you feel the vengeance of Oliver Dalton.

SAMPSON BRAYLING steals across the stage at back from, R., and exits, L., watching OLIVER without being observed by him.

I have often thought, that could I by some means or other contrive to get at the coffers of old Jasper Scrimpe, the Miser of Shoreditch as he is called, it would be an excellent thing for me under existing circumstances. They say that he is immensely rich, the old curmudgeon, while I am but a poor, needy adventurer at the best. The old house he inhabits. I think might be easily entered, and one bold effort might secure me all I want. I must e'en consider of this. I will now return home to provide myself with the means to execute my plot, and then to meet my rival at the place of assignation.

Music.—He is about to exit, l., when SAMPSON abruptly enters and obstructs him.

OLIVER. How now, fellow? Why dost thou cross my path? What would'st thou?

SAM. Charity, good sir—charity!

OLIVER. Away! I have nothing to give.

SAM. Ah! that voice! Marry, methinks I've heard it before. (*looking eagerly at OLIVER*) 'Tis—'tis Luke Stanton!—(*chord*)

OLIVER. (*alarmed*) Confusion! my former associate, Sampson Brayling; I'm lost!

SAM. (*sarcastically*) Oh, no, my runaway, thou'rt found! So thou thought'st to slip thine old friends for ever, didst thou?

OLIVER. Do not detain me, Brayling, if I'm seen in company with thee, I'm ruined. I will meet thee again at midnight, here, anywhere, or—

SAM. Oh, no, we part not so easily.

OLIVER. Villain! thou would'st not, dare not—

SAM. Ha, ha, ha! come, come, Luke Stanton, no nonsense,—you know me, and I know you; we are old friends, and I cannot think of parting with you so soon.

OLIVER. What shall I do? For mercy's sake, detain me not; I will not betray you, I swear—

SAM. Betray me! you dare not; you would but place your own neck in the halter. I know more than you suspect, and now that I have found you, I mean to profit by my knowledge. You are the "Young squire," as you've called yourself, and have duped old Sir Milford to give you the hand of his fair niece. 'Tis well;—myself and my companions will invite ourselves to your wedding, Luke Stan—Oliver Dalton, I mean. Ha, ha, ha!

OLIVER. What would you?

SAM. Money, to be sure.

OLIVER. Money? I have none.

SAM. (*ironically*) What! a squire, and no money? You have not bettered your fortune then, by turning gentleman. No matter, I can accompany you to Sir Milford's, doubtless he will accommodate you with a few broad pieces till you get your remittances, Luke Stan—Oliver Dalton, I mean, ha, ha, ha!

OLIVER. (*aside*) What shall I do to escape? (*giving purse to SAMPSON*) Here, take this; 'tis all I have at present—take it, and begone. Be secret, know me not, and I will well reward you.

SAM. (*weighing the purse in his hand*) Hump ! this will do by way of a beginning ; but I shall want more soon, so you had better meet me and the rest of the tribe at our encampment in the Green Lanes of Fynesburie, or we shall not be too bashful to call at the Grange for you. Good-bye, Luke Stan—Oliver Dalton, I mean, ha, ha, ha !

Music—Exit SAMPSON, R.

OLIVER. Curses light on this misfortune ! Now shall I have to pander to all the extortionate demands that those fellows may think proper to make ; or they will betray me. This meeting with Sampson Brayling at such a juncture is most inopportune, it distracts and bewilders me. What is to be done ? However, I must make up my mind to extricate myself from the difficulties by which I am surrounded at all hazards. Let me but secure the hand of Constance Welborn, and I will find ready means to quiet the dogs. Now to business.

Music—Exit, L.

SCENE III.—*Room in the Old Grange at Hogsden.*

Enter ABIGAIL, R., singing.

ABIG. Dear me, how very merry I am this evening to be sure. Well, I have executed my love mission to poor Evelyn Heartwell, and have invited my dear little Timothy Tapcan to meet me here. Bless his heart ! Dear me, what a strange thing this love is to be sure ; it will not leave us pretty young girls alone. Heigho ! (looking off, L.) But here comes my young mistress.

Enter CONSTANCE, L.

CONS. So, Abigail, you have returned ? Say, did you see my poor Evelyn ?

ABIG. Oh, yes, miss ! poor young man, he did look so pale ; but when he had read the letter, his eyes brightened up—you know he has very pretty eyes, miss, something like my Timothy's, only not quite so sparkling, and—

CONS. Did he say he would meet me ?

ABIG. Yes, miss ; he pressed the letter to his heart—kissed it —called it an angel, you an angel, I mean ; then he called me an angel of angels, and said he would be sure to be in the Lover's Walk at the time of appointment.

CONS. Alas ! poor Evelyn, it may be our last meeting.

ABIG. Heigho ! What a very tantalizing thing this love is to be sure.

SIR MILFORD. (*without*) Constance—Constance, I say !

ABIG. Ah, your uncle has returned, miss, he's coming up the stairs. La ! how impatient he seems, to be sure.

CONS. Leave me, Abigail.

ABIG. Yes, miss. (*aside*) That's always the way when a woman's curiosity is excited to the utmost pitch. (*aloud*) I'm going, miss.

(aside) Now to meet my dear little Timothy, and to console myself with love and kisses. (*singing*)

Men may try all they can to our smiles to say nay,
But we pretty maids o'er their hearts bear the sway.

Exit, R.

CONS. Poor Abigail, would that like thee, I could be so light of heart and cheerful.

SIR MILFORD. (*without*) Constance—Constance, I say!

CONS. Oh, my uncle, how my heart sinks when I hear your footsteps on the stairs. Formerly it leaped for joy at the sound of your voice, and I would rush to your arms, eager to receive the approaching kiss of welcome; but you loved me then, and Evelyn too, and bright was the sunshine of our hopes: alas! how sad is the change! (*she retires*)

Enter SIR MILFORD, L., speaking.

SIR M. Now, now, Constance—Constance, wench, where—oh, there she is, moping and fretting as usual. Come, lass, arouse thee, and no longer give way to those sad thoughts. Constance, I say.

CONS. Sir—uncle—I beg pardon, but—

SIR M. Nay, child, this gloomy bearing pains me to witness. Come, come, put on one of those pretty radiant smiles with which thou wert wont to delight me. Why, if you give way to this fretting you'll make but a dull wife methinks.

CONS. I hope, my dear uncle, the time is far distant when I shall be put to the test.

SIR M. Indeed, Constance, the time is not far distant. I've settled it all this very day, and next Monday week will become the bride of Oliver Dalton.

CONS. Oliver Dalton!

SIR M. Yes; why do you always evince such disgust at the bare mention of his name?

CONS. Alas! my dear, uncle, I know not; but there is something about that man which makes me view him with horror; but to think of him as my husband—oh, I dare not.

SIR M. Dare not! But I tell you girl that you must. I am resolved that no other but Oliver Dalton shall be your husband. He has won my esteem; besides, did he not save my life? Tut, tut, girl, isn't he a comely youth? And—and by all my hopes I swear that you shall have him.

CONS. It is my duty to obey you, sir, and though my heart break in the effort, you shall never find me shrink from it.

SIR M. Well, well, that's a good girl; so you must cheer up and think no more of Evelyn Heartwell. He's a good-looking lad to be sure, but then he must have been improvident to lose all his money; and the niece of Sir Milford must never be sacrificed to a spendthrift. Good-bye, Constance, good-bye! and fear not but marriage will cure you of all these vagaries. (*embraces her*)

Exit, R.

CONS. Alas! he remains inexorable, and there is no hope—I am wretched! (*clock strikes*) Ah, the time is approaching for me to meet Evelyn; let me be gone.

Exit CONSTANCE, L.

SCENE IV.—*Wretched Room in the Miser's House. Everything denotes the greatest misery—table with lamp burning on it, R.*

Music—JASPER discovered; he goes to secret cabinet in the wall, and taking out bags seats himself at table, empties them, and counts his money.

JASPER. More gold! more gold! Oh, how the glittering pile increases. I am rich and hap—; no, I am not happy. Conscience, with voice of thunder, roars in my ears and makes me wretched. (*pause*) Of what use is this gold to me? Every coin has been purchased by blood—the blood of my nearest of kin—the good and innocent, and has it not brought upon me misery and despair in the midst of all my ill-gotten wealth? Why what a poor crawling wretch am I—shunning the very light of day, and looked upon with disgust and loathing by my fellow-creatures. The demon's at work again! I'll go forth and reveal my crimes! I'll surrender myself to justice! I'll resign my gold!—distribute it among public charities—feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and endeavour to make my peace with heaven! I'm mad! I'm mad! Fool! Can I end this torture by death? No—no, that would be but to rush upon an eternity of horror. I cannot, dare not, dare not die! (*pause*) Let me be calm, the time approaches which I appointed for Evelyn Heartwell to meet me. 'Tis strange that I, who never before knew what pity or compassion were, should now feel my heart warm towards this friendless youth. I know not how it is, but whenever I look upon him there's something seems to tell me that my fate is involved in his. (*knock, JASPER starts and goes to practicable door, c.*) Who's there?

Toby. (*without*) 'Tis only I, good master. (*JASPER opens door*)

Enter TOBY.

JASPER. (*harshly*) How now, knave? Why do you thus intrude?

Toby. Pr'ythee, good master, are we not going to have supper? I'm so hungry.

JASPER. Hungry, varlet! thou liest! Why 'tis not more than six hours since thou ate a most extravagant meal!

Toby. An extravagant meal! bacon rhinds and cabbage leaves, and of that scarcely sufficient to bait a mouse-trap. I feel as full as if I'd swallowed a snow-ball. Pr'ythee, good master, do relieve my wants or I shall certainly be compelled to eat my jerkin. Oh, I'm so hungry!

JASPER. Out upon thee for a shameless glutton! Thou'rt getting fat and corpulent, and gross withal. I must e'en lower thy diet, for indulging thee so much of late has rendered thee indolent, sleepy, and saucy!

Toby. Lower my diet! Oh dear, surely it is not possible to do

that, unless you feed me from the bellows. Why I'm so thin and genteel already that people have a great difficulty to see me; I cast no shadow before me—I have not substance enough to do that; and I'm called the shadowless man. I must not venture out on a windy day without a couple of weights attached to my person to keep me on terra firma. Oh, I'm so hungry.

JASPER. Greedy dog! wouldst cram that voracious maw of thine to surfeiting? Wouldst ruin me? Have I not fed and clothed thee like a gentleman, in slothful indolence, from a child, ungrateful as thou art?

(bell rings)

JASPER. 'Tis Evelyn. (to TOBY) Show the youth into my presence; and harkye, let me hear no more of thy grumbling, or I'll put thee on low diet for a month!

TOBY. (aside) The heartless old skinflint, he has certainly got a design on my life. Oh, I'm so hungry!

Exit TOBY at door—JASPER returns his money to the safe, and then admits EVELYN.

JASPER. Thou art punctual, young man. My business with thee is brief. Thou'rt unfortunate?

EVELYN. Alas! good sir, I'm wretched.

JASPER. I pity thee, I pity thee!

EVELYN. Thanks, thanks, good Jasper, your commiseration for the misfortunes of your fellow-creatures does honour to your head and heart, and well becomes your grey hairs.

JASPER. Bah! I hate flattery. Thou'rt ruined?

EVELYN. (with emotion) Alas! I am beggared!

JASPER. And did misfortune bring thee to this?

EVELYN. It did—it did; for heaven knows how I struggled with adversity to maintain an honourable position in society.

JASPER. (aside) His words move me, and there is something in his voice and features that—phsaw! I'm wandering. (aloud) I believe, young man, that the late Master Heartwell was not your father?

EVELYN. He was not; but I must ever revere his memory and that of his excellent wife, for they received me as a foundling when an infant, and ever acted as the most affectionate parents to me.

JASPER. Thou lovest the fair Constance Welborn, dost thou not?

EVELYN. To distraction!

JASPER. But her uncle has resolved to sacrifice her to another—is it not so?

EVELYN. Alas! 'tis too true.

JASPER. And what think'st thou of doing?

EVELYN. To-morrow it is my intention to enter on board ship, and in the service of my country seek to win myself an honourable station in life, and if possible, to forget that such a being as Constance Welborn ever existed.

JASPER. A noble resolution. But thou must not want for money; thou'l need it.

EVELYN. Oh, where shall I find a helping hand?

JASPER. (giving him pocket book) Here! take this pocket book; it

contains a sum sufficient for thy wants for some time to come. Take it, and may heaven prosper thee.

EVELYN. Oh, generous, sir, how much the world has wronged thee!

JASPER. (*wildly*) The world! talk not to me of the world, young man, mere novice as thou art in its various phases and bitter mockeries. The world! 'tis one wide cheat, a monstrous delusion, it has made me what I am, and therefore do I loathe and despise it. Men point at me the finger of scorn, and call me miser—wretch—grovelling dog—one who knows no other passion but sordid avarice—no other god but gold! And what has made me so? The world, and the hollow sycophants that crawl upon it, under the insidious guise of honour and integrity. The world! oh, there was a time when I looked upon it as one vast garden of flowers—I found it but a wild desert, full of thorns, and rank and poisonous weeds. My eyes were opened to the light of reason; I looked around me, and what did I see? The brow of villainy encircled by a jewelled coronet; virtue and integrity without a roof to shelter them from the winter's blast! Fawning parasites stalking in silk and velvet, and bedizened with ermine and gold; honest merit clothed in rags! I asked myself the cause of this strange perversion of the laws of nature and justice; and a voice seemed to thunder in mine ears "Gold—'tis gold!—get gold!" It came like a spell upon me. From that moment the fiend of avarice entered my breast—I cast aside every feeling of honesty and virtue; my heart became hard, cold, and sterile as marble, and I bowed myself a willing slave to the glittering deity. Madly, recklessly, the impetuous torrent hurried me on!—deeper and deeper I plunged into crime, and my fast accumulating riches stifled the voice of conscience. Mankind hated, shunned me, but I heeded it not; I had learnt the all-important secret, and as I hugged and gloated o'er my precious treasure. I shouted aloud "I have the world, the world at my command—for I have gold! Gold! Gold! Ha, ha, ha!" (*laughs hysterically and sinks exhausted in chair*)

EVELYN. My dear sir, I pray you do not thus excite yourself, but—

JASPER. (*hastily*) Enough, enough! begone! and when thou art in a foreign land, in thy prayers do not forget the wretched miser Jasper Scrimpe, he needs them.

EVELYN. Good old man, hear me.

JASPER. Away, I would be alone.

Music.—EVELYN presses his hand and exit at door.

JASPER. So, then, Jasper Scrimpe, for the first time in thy life thou hast performed a benevolent action. My heart feels light and buoyant, and as it never did before. Oh, how pleasant must be a life of virtue, if this one simple act of benevolence can impart such happiness. But I must to my secret hoard in the Lover's Walk, and conceal part of my treasure—it might not be safe here. Ah! how little does the traveller suspect the golden treasure that is secreted there: but 'tis getting late, and I must begone. (*music—*

he puts on his cloak, places bags in his pouch, and then secures the secret depository) What ho ! Toby ! Toby, thou varlet !

Enter TOBY, from the door.

How now !—Why dost thou not hurry when thou hearest me call, knave ? Hast thou been asleep ?

TOBY. Asleep ! ah, no, I'm too hungry to sleep. I had half a mind to make a meal upon my finger ends, and—

JASPER. Out upon thee, for a greedy ravenous churl, as thou art ! An' thou hadst thy will, thou wouldest soon empty my larder altogether, and e'en eat me out of house and home.

TOBY. (*aside*) His larder !—a small cupboard double-locked, and which contains nothing but mouldy crusts, well-picked bones intended to make soup of, and a small portion of rotten cheese—but even that would be a luxury to me, if I could get at it; I'm so hungry !

JASPER. What art thou muttering to thyself!—grumbling as usual, discontented varlet as thou art ? I tell thee what, Master Toby, I have been too liberal and indulgent a master to thee, and this is the return thou makest me for it. What wouldest thou do if I were to turn thee adrift upon the wide world to seek for a living ? Where couldst thou hope to fare so sumptuously as thou dost in my house ?

TOBY. Sumptuous fare ! why the turnspit dog is a perfect prince to me.

JASPER. Beware, beware, rascal !—Evelyn Heartwell has quitted the house, has he not ?

TOBY. He has. (*aside*) Heaven bless him !

JASPER. 'Tis well; but I must begone. Toby, see to the security of the house during my absence, and mind that thou dost not go to sleep, as thine overloaded stomach might induce thee to do. Thou mayest expect me to return in about a couple of hours, mind me.

Exit at door.

TOBY. Thank heaven he has gone, the stingy old knave—he will starve me to death if I remain with him much longer. Heaven bless Master Heartwell, for he has made a man of me to-night ; as he left the house, he slipped a silver piece into my hand ; and now while my old master is away, I will have a hearty meal, if I never have one again. How shall I lay out this sum of money ? I never was so rich in my life before. I will lay every farthing of it out in victuals, and won't I have a sumptuous repast for once—for I'm so hungry ! Blissful thought ! I can scarcely contain myself.—Now for a glorious feed !

Exit, L.

SCENE V.—*The Lover's Walk, by Moonlight. At back, R., a large tree with hollow in the trunk, the place where the Miser conceals his money.*

Music.—*The GIPSIES discovered, and so grouped as to form a striking tableau—MABEL leaning against tree, L., meditating—SAMPSON BRAYLING at back—GIPSIES come forward.*

Chorus.

Roving gipsies all are we,
 Who so jovial, who so free?
 Caring not where'er we roam,
 In ev'ry clime we find a home.
 'Neath the old oak's leafy shade,
 In the bonny greenwood glade;
 Our tents we pitch, with pleasure rife,
 Then, hey for the wandering gipsy's life !
 The merry, merry gipsy's life !

Characteristic Gipsy Ballet.

GIPSIES retire and exeunt.

SAM. Why so dull, Mabel?—and why dost thou not make thyself sociable with the rest of the tribe, as thou wert wont to do? Now would I give a trifle were I able to penetrate thy thoughts.

MABEL. (*coldly*) And what boots my thoughts to thee?—they concern not thee nor thy companions; therefore trouble thine head with thine own business, and leave me to myself.

SAM. Humph! thou art getting crabbed and sour, Mabel, like an ancient beldame;—but I guess the cause—the youth, Evelyn Heartwell, has made a powerful impression on the wandering gipsy-girl's heart, and—

MABEL. How know you this?—has a word ever escaped my lips that could have revealed the secret of my breast? And yet, why should I seek to conceal it? Why should I fear to acknowledge it? Yes, yes, Evelyn Heartwell, has indeed won the affections of the wretched Mabel.

SAM. Why shouldst thou prefer this boy, Evelyn Heartwell, to one of our own tribe? He loves thee not.

MABEL. Alas, alas! Too well do I know that. 'Tis that painful conviction which corrodes my heart, and renders me wretched. Oh, could the poor gipsy girl excite in his breast one tender and affectionate feeling towards her, the grand empress on her imperial throne might fairly envy her happiness.

SAM. Pshaw! Hast lost thy senses, Mabel? Where is now that proud and independent spirit that once distinguished thee? Arouse thyself, girl, and deign not to own thine heart the slave of one who views thee with scorn and indifference.

MABEL. (*with emotion*) With scorn! With indifference! No, no, no, 'tis not in Evelyn Heartwell's nature to harbour such a feeling towards any of his fellow-creatures; if I thought it were so, my detestation for him would be as great as is now the love I bear him. Base libeller, thou wrongest the character of Evelyn, and—but, pardon me, Brayling, if the excitement of my feelings should cause my wayward tongue to run riot against thee. From the earliest days of childhood, when I found myself among the wandering tribe, I have been accustomed to look upon thee as a father, for I never knew one but thee; and though thy manners are generally uncouth and repulsive to others, thou hast ever been

most kind to me, and I honour thee for it. Pardon me, Brayling, pardon me. (*music—she kneels at his feet SAMPSON raises her tenderly*)

SAM. Poor girl, poor girl, I pity thee;—yes I, Sampson Brayling, the Wolf as I am commonly called, from the bottom of my heart, pity thee, and will watch o'er thy welfare even at the hazard of my life. Thou hast done me but justice, girl, in the respect thou hast acknowledged for me, for I regard thee, and have ever done, with the same affection as if thou wert my own offspring; and therefore would I fain eradicate from thy breast that unfortunate and hopeless passion which thou hast suffered to take possession of it. Evelyn Heartwell is good, is generous, and honourable, but thou knowest full well that he loves Constance Welborn to adoration and that she returns his passion with equal ardour and enthusiasm.

MABEL. (*passionately*) And therefore do I hate her.

SAM. But she is fair and gentle, Mabel, and merits thine esteem, not thine hatred. And mark me, girl; (*gently grasping her wrist and fixing upon her an ambiguous and mysterious look*) thou must banish this unlucky passion from thy bosom; for I tell thee it is criminal for thee to love, as thou dost, the youth called Evelyn Heartwell!

MABEL. Ah! what mean those mysterious words? Explain thyself, for thou hast created in my breast a certain feeling which I cannot comprehend, and for which I am at a loss to account.

SAM. Oh, Mabel, scorn not my warning, for it concerns thy future weal or woe. Oh, did not stern necessity for the present control my tongue, how marvellous and startling is the tale which I could reveal to thee.

MABEL. Thou triflest with me—keep me not in suspense.

SAM. Be content. I have already hinted as much as I am permitted to do at present. Thou hast heard my warning, and if thou studiest thine own welfare thou wilt not neglect it. I must rejoin the tribe. *Exit hastily at back.*

MABEL. Stay, Brayling, one word in explanation, I implore thee. He's gone! What fearful and mysterious meaning doth his words convey? I am lost in doubt, perplexity, and amazement. It is criminal for thee to love as thou dost, the youth called Evelyn Heartwell!—Torturing ambiguity!—What strange fears and suspicions doth it excite in my breast! But will this captive heart suffer me to heed the warning? Ah, no! it may entail misery upon her,—it may be productive of the greatest horrors that can attend humanity, it may be vain and hopeless, but never while the purple current of life shall continue to circulate throughout her veins, can the gipsy-girl cease to love, nay to worship Evelyn Heartwell. And yet, too soon may he have quitted these shores, and I may no more behold him. Agonizing thought! Oh, were he but the companion of my wanderings, my partner in the green-wood-shade, or leafy dell, so that I were only permitted to gaze upon him, and to listen to the beloved tones of his voice, methinks, though I could not hope to secure his heart, that I could be happy and content. But now—ah me! I am wretched,—very, very wretched.

Music—exit at back, music continued.

Enter OLIVER, R.

OLIVER. All is still—my victim has not yet arrived. I am prepared to meet him. Ah, some one comes this way! Should it be he I seek. (*looking off, r.*) No, as I live, and mine eyes deceive me not, 'tis the old miser, Jasper Scrimpe! What can bring him to this spot at such an hour of the night? Would that I had known the old rat had quitted his hole, it would have been an excellent opportunity for me to have paid a visit to his coffers; he comes this way; his step is cautious. I'll conceal myself and watch this strange adventure. (*goes behind tree, l., and watches*)

Music.—Enter JASPER, R., looks cautiously round, goes to tree, R., and searches in the hollow of the trunk.

JASPER. All's safe!—no one observes me; my wealth is all secure as when I last beheld it. Now, go ye there, and rest with thy glittering companions. (*taking bags from his pouch and counting them*) One—two—three—four! Ha, ha, ha! Oh, how my wealth increases! How little doth the eye of suspicion penetrate the golden treasure this ancient tree conceals. But I must be quick!

Music.—Deposits his money in the hollow of the tree—OLIVER watching him—JASPER approaches, l., raises his lantern, the light falls upon OLIVER, and he discovers him.—Chord.

JASPER. (*wildly*) Ah! I am betrayed! Wretch!—Villain!—Prying sycophant! thou shalt not have my treasure! (*imploringly*) Good sir, do not—oh, do not rob the poor old man of his gold! (*wildly*) But thou shalt not rob me of my money! My arm is yet strong enough to resist thee—miscreant! robber! (*grasping OLIVER by collar*.—*Hurried music*)

OLIVER. (*fiercely*) Rash old idiot!—let go thine hold! I am a desperate man! Yield up thy money!

JASPER. (*struggling*) My gold! my gold!—never while I have life!

OLIVER. Obstinate fool! take then thy choice!—die! (*a desperate struggle*—OLIVER stabs him with EVELYN's dagger—the MISER falls) So, then, that job's accomplished; I had much rather been spared the shedding of the old man's blood. (*footsteps without, l.*) Confusion! some one approaches! I must begone with all speed, and return for the remainder of the treasure at the earliest opportunity. Rest thou there! (*throws dagger by the side of JASPER*) That dagger bearing his initials, will cast immediate and confirmatory suspicion upon Evelyn Heartwell, and my revenge will be gratified. Away! away!

Music.—Exit hastily, R.—pause.

Enter EVELYN, l. 2 E.

EVELYN. The hour of appointment is past, yet Constance has not arrived; surely some accident must have occurred to prevent her. My spirits are unusually depressed to-night, and the most dismal forebodings haunt my mind; I feel as though some terrible calamity were about to befall me. Pshaw! let me not give way to such weak and childish feelings. (*JASPER groans—EVELYN starting and*

looking round) Ah! what sound was that? (*advances towards JASPER and discovers him—chord*) Gracious powers! can I believe the evidence of my senses?—it is the poor old miser, Jasper Scrimpe! Oh, who hath done this atrocious deed? (*raises him*) He still breathes—it may not yet be too late to save his life! Let me convey him to the gipsy encampment, where I may procure assistance.

Music.—He kneels, and is about to bear off JASPER, when OLIVER, SIR MILFORD, PEASANTS, and DOMESTICS enter, R.

OLIVER. It was in this direction I heard the 'cries of distress. Ah! see! a dreadful crime has been committed, and (*pointing to EVELYN*) behold, the murderer, in—

SIR M. and OMNES. Evelyn Heartwell! (*chord—tableau of horror*)

OLIVER. (*picking up dagger*) And see, this blood-stained dagger bears the initials of Evelyn Heartwell!

EVELYN. Horror! horror!—I'm lost! (*aside*)

SIR M. Wretched youth! what could tempt thee to this inhuman deed?

Shriek—Enter CONSTANCE, L., and rushes to EVELYN.

SIR M. Hold, Constance—I command thee! he is a robber and a murderer!

CONS. No, no, no! he is innocent—by heaven, he is innocent!

Music—JASPER slowly revives, looks wildly about him, and fixing his gaze on EVELYN.

JASPER. (*wildly*) Robber! murderer! art thou still here? Give me back my gold! give me back my gold! Stand from the tree! What is concealed there is mine—all mine! (*falls senseless*)

OLIVER. Confusion! I shall yet be thwarted of the miser's store.

EVELYN. (*struggling*) I am innocent! By all my hopes of eternity, I declare most solemnly, that I am not the guilty wretch circumstances would make me appear to be. Oh, Sir Milford Welborn, I pray you be cautious what you do. But, surely you cannot in your heart, although unfortunately I know I no longer possess favour in your eyes, you cannot believe me to be a miscreant so deeply steeped in turpitude. For the sake of this poor innocent maiden, whose warmest passion, I am convinced, is so closely interwoven with mine own, I do beseech you to be charitable and merciful in the conclusions at which you may arrive on this painful subject.

OLIVER. You hear him, Sir Milford; the presumptuous villain! even in the midst of his guilt, he boldly acknowledges his unholy passion for your fair niece, and would through her, attempt to excite your sympathy, and hoodwink your reason. Can hypocrisy and shameless effrontery further go?

EVELYN. Traducer!—liar! you are the insidious fiend who is the cause of all this; and, if you have a conscience to appeal to, it must acquit me of the villainous deed which you would endeavour to fix upon me.

SIR M. Wretched young man, the violent observations thou

hast just made use of, so far from serving to exonerate you from the guilty charge, only tend to strengthen suspicion against you. The facts so far as they have gone, speak trumpet-tongued against you, and must be fully, calmly, and carefully investigated. Let him be conveyed before Sir Thomas Overton, the magistrate. Bear the unfortunate old man, Jasper Scrimpe, to the nearest house, and see that he lack not every assistance that his case may require, his wound may not be mortal.

SERVANT. (*takes pocket book from EVELYN's breast*) Behold, here is a pocket book containing money, and which bears the name of Jasper Scrimpe.

EVELYN. That pocket book ! 'Tis mine !—'twas given to me by the unfortunate old man, only about a couple of hours since, at his own house, whither I went by his own appointment.

OLIVER. A very likely thing, that Jasper Scrimpe, the Miser, should open his sordid heart so much as to make large presents of money to almost a stranger.

SIR M. No, the assertion carries a falsehood on the face of it. His guilt is now made more manifest. Away with the prisoner.

CONS. (*with emotion, and clinging to EVELYN*) Oh, spare him !—spare him ! he is innocent !

Music—SERVANTS seize EVELYN, struggle—Chord.

MABEL *rushes hastily from back, armed with pistols.*

MABEL. Hold ! Evelyn Heartwell must be saved at any cost. What ho, Brayling—comrades ! rescue ! rescue !

Music—SAMPSON and GIPSIES rush on r. and l.; brief combat—The GIPSIES triumphant—Striking Tableau.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

Three Months supposed to have elapsed.

SCENE I.—*Room in the House of Jasper Scrimpe. The MISER discovered sleeping in an arm chair. TOBY watching and picking a bone greedily. Lamp burning on table.*

TOBY. The old fellow still sleeps—'tis lucky for me that he does, for I can enjoy my bone in comfort. I only wonder that the thought of his gold suffers him to sleep at all. I dare say he dreams about it though ! I too have my golden dreams sometimes, but I always awake to penniless reality ; and with the addition of an hungry belly. (*sees a rat*) Eugh ! there's my old enemy, that cursed rat. That fellow robs me of many a meal.

JASPER. (*waking and alarmed*) What sound was that ? Where

am I? Bar all the doors!—Guard well the treasure it has cost me so much time and trouble to accumulate. There are thieves in the house; I hear their stealthy footsteps approaching; they seek again to rob me of my gold. What, ho! Toby!—Toby!—Toby! I say!

Toby, (coming forward trying to conceal that he has been eating)
I am here, good master.

Jasper. Oh, thou art? Rascal, why dost thou neglect me now that I'm so ill, and cannot help myself? Is there any one in the house?

Toby. No one but ourselves, good master, and those imbecile rats and mice that will so pertinaciously invest our dwelling, in spite of the warning of empty cupboards, that is constantly before their eyes.

Jasper. Bah! What's the time?

Toby. But now it struck nine o'clock.

Jasper. Nine o'clock—and where hast thou been till this time?

Toby. Watching thy safety, kind master.

Jasper. Come hither, sirrah! (*Toby approaches fearfully, still trying to clear his mouth*)

Jasper. (passing his fingers across his lips) Thou liest, varlet! There is grease upon thy lips; thou hast been eating.

Toby. 'Twas only a stale bone, good master, which I found; 'twas not one of those thou hast in keeping for our winter's supply of soup. Eating!—ah, I only wish I had the chance to do so; but 'tis so long since I performed that operation, that I'm afraid I should fail if I were to try. Pr'ythee, charitable master, do put me to the test.

Jasper. Thou hast been feasting that over-fed belly of thine again, I say.

Toby. Now, does my poor belly look as though it were over-fed? Oh, I'm so hungry.

Jasper. Out of my sight, dissatisfied glutton; but mind thou art within hail to attend my summons.

Toby. Yes, kind benevolent master.

Exit slowly through D. in F.

Jasper. (after a pause) Oh, these torturing feelings of fear, anguish, and remorse, they still keep gnawing at my heart like hungry vultures. They prey upon my brain, and drive it to frenzy! For what have I hoarded up my gold and made it an idol? To create for myself an endless source of misery and anxiety. Oh, that I could recal the past, restore those to life whom I have so basely wronged, and become again poor and happy. Fool! why should I repent, when all the world conspires to rob me? No one pities me; all mankind look upon me as a thing of disgust and loathing. Hark! some one approaches! The wretches come again to plunder me of my gold. But they shall not have it, no! I am but a weak, feeble old man, but still I will protect my gold—I will protect my gold!—Hark! (*starts and listens*) Pshaw! it was but my disordered imagination. I have slept and been dreaming. Oh, that I might never sleep again, to be haunted by such visions

as those that have this night disturbed my troubled fancy; even now the remembrance of them harrows up my soul, and chills the blood in my veins with horror. Methought I was wandering through a strange and glittering labyrinth—a maze of avenues supported by pillars of marble, and surmounted by a dome of crystal—piles of golden ore were heaped up in huge masses on every side, upon which the rays of the sun streamed with effulgence—turn my eyes whichever way I would, they encountered nothing but gold in bewildering profusion—and at the end of one of the avenues, rushed a torrent of the same liquid precious metal. Oh, how I laughed and chuckled as I gazed enraptured around me, and cried—"All this is mine! Who is now so rich as Jasper Scrimpe?" Eagerly I rushed to gather the golden treasure; when a shock, like that of an earthquake, shook the place—terrific peals of thunder reverberated above—frightful shrieks and noises resounded in the air—the glittering pile around me, changed to hideous faces, and unnatural ghastly forms, that grinned and scowled upon me—and the golden torrent was turned to liquid fire, whose intense heat scorched my quivering limbs. Appalled, frenzied, I sought to escape, but could not; my heart was ready to burst its boundaries; my eyes seemed starting from their sockets; my brain was maddened; the spell of sleep was broken. I—I—Oh, mercy—mercy! What will be the wretched miser's doom? (*sinks overpowered by his feelings in a chair; loud knocking without, R., JASPER starts alarmed*) Ah! what mean those sounds? I am betrayed!—The officers of justice come to apprehend me.

Enter TOBY at door, alarmed.

JASPER. (*hastily*) How now? What has occurred? Speak quick, on thy life!

TOBY. A strange man, wrapped in a large cloak, and with not one of the most amiable of countenances, waits below, sir, and demands to see thee upon important business—he will not be refused.

JASPER. Ah! a strange ruffian, and in my house? Rascal! how darest thou admit him?

TOBY. Because, good master, I could not help myself; he would not be refused—he would come in.

JASPER. Coward! and is this the care thou takest of my welfare and safety? Why didst thou not put forth all thy strength, and oppose him?

TOBY. My strength! Now, do I look like a second Hercules? Why, I have no more strength than a titmouse, and the mere sight of a clenched fist, is little better than sudden death to me. It's all very fine to talk about four stone of skin and bone, opposing fourteen stone and a half of flesh, bone, and muscle, to say nothing of an ugly-looking cut-throat knife, and a brace of horse pistols; but I should very much like to know who's to do it?

SAMSON. (*without*) A murrain seize ye! Is a gentleman upon important business to be kept waiting here all night in this rat's den? Marry then, I must e'en introduce myself.

TOBY. There ! thou hearest, dear master. He is coming this way. Heaven preserve us !

JASPER. (*seizing him wildly by the throat*) Villain ! thou hast betrayed me ! Thou art colleague with this ruffian to plunder me But weak, old, and feeble as I am, I will not resign my dear-earned gold but with my life. Rascal !—Traitor !

TOBY. (*struggling*) Master !—dear, kind master !—oh, oh, oh !—I'm choking !

Music—SAMPSON BRAYLING disguised enters hastily, door in flat, and releases TOBY. JASPER staggers to chair, overpowered by his exertions, and stares at the GIPSY.

SAM. Miserable old dotard; wouldst add one more crime to the dark catalogue already on thy conscience ? Wouldst murder the poor fellow whom thou hast even brought to death's door by griping starvation ? (*to Toby*) Begone !

TOBY. Oh, most gladly ; I never was so frightened in all my life.

Exit, D. in P.

SAM. (*after contemplating Jasper scornfully*) So, so, this is Jasper Scrimpe, the man who rolls in riches and pines in sordid misery ; why, what a foul blot art thou upon humanity ; what a poor despicable wretch art thou ! every one looks upon thee with disgust and loathing ; all shun thee as a pestilence !

JASPER. Ah ! those bold and piercing words ! Ruffian ! what means this daring intrusion ? Comest thou to rob me ?

SAM. Fool ! I covet not thine ill-gotten wealth ; even were it to save me from death, I would not touch that dross—every coin of which thou hast purchased by fraud, injustice, and bloodshed !

JASPER. By bloodshed ! Oh, horror !

SAM. Aye ! with the blood of thine own kindred, Gerald Aubrey !

JASPER. Ah ! that name ! Stranger, on thy life repeat it not ;—the walls have ears—and—and—oh, my brain !

SAM. Thou hearest I know thee, wretched old man.

JASPER. For mercy's sake who art thou ! and what cursed ill-fortune brings thee hither ?

SAM. Thou'lt know that soon enough ; 'tis many years since we met before. But come nearer ;—look closer into my features ;—time may have somewhat changed them ; but I dare say it has left sufficient traces for thee to have the pleasure to recognize them. (*throwing aside his cloak*)

JASPER. Death ! death ! 'tis Sampson Brayling !—Lost !—Ruined ! Thou comest to denounce me ! I read thy malicious purpose in thy looks ! Oh ! open, earth, and hide me from the appalled gaze of mankind ! Shield me ! Shield me from the avenging wrath of heaven ! (*sinks exhausted in chair*)

SAM. Hark ye, Jasper Scrimpe ; Jasper Scrimpe, as thou think'st proper to call thyself ; my business with thee is brief, but it must be to the purpose. No doubt thou thought'st me long since dead, and that thy guilty secret was secure ; but thou seest that I still live, and thou knowest full well that at any time I have the power

to expose thee to the horror, disgust, and execration of the world as a murderer—

JASPER. Oh, hold! hold! Hold, I implore thee! Do not mention that dreadful word, which would turn my heart to marble, and freeze the hot blood which now circulates through my veins to ice. Oh, mercy!—mercy!

SAM. Mercy—mercy to such a heartless, mercenary, sordid wretch as thou art? Darest thou to sue for it, and to him whose miserable poverty thou didst take advantage of to make him the tool, the instrument of thy villainy? What, does thy conscience at length sting thee, Jasper Scrimpe? 'Tis fit it should, and torture thee to madness.

JASPER. Oh, forbear—forbear!

SAM. Ah! this sight is as food to the soul of Sampson Brayling. Thou knowest, old man, that one word of mine might place thy neck in the halter.

JASPER. (*crouchingly*) No, no, no; mercy, good Sampson Brayling, thou shalt have gold; I will share my wealth with thee; make thee as rich as myself; but thou wilt not bring the poor old man to misery and shame.

SAM. And canst thou expect mercy who never shewed it to others? But on one condition only will I consent to grant thee yet a little longer respite from the gallows.

JASPER. Oh, name it, good Sampson, name it, I do beseech thee.

SAM. Thou must immediately do justice to the unfortunate Evelyn Heartwell, he whom thou wilt know better anon. Thou must fully exonerate him from the foul charge which is so erroneously brought against him.

JASPER. Ah, the ingrate! He robbed me of my gold! he sought my life and—

SAM. 'Tis false! false as thou art black in crime. Evelyn Heartwell is innocent; thou art labouring under a delusion, old man.

JASPER. No, no, no. Did I not see him? Did I not denounce him on the spot? No, I cannot, I will not acknowledge him innocent.

SAM. Enough, obstinate old man! then thou knowest thy doom. This instant I go to consign thee to that justice thou hast for so many years escaped! (*going—JASPER detains him*)

JASPER. Hold! hold! for the love of heaven! Spare me! I—I will do anything—anything thou mayest demand! I—I will forgive Evelyn! I will proclaim his innocence and—

SAM. Aye, but I must have more than thy bare word.

JASPER. What wouldst thou?

SAM. (*taking paper from his bosom*) This paper, thou must affix thy signature to it.

JASPER. That paper, its contents?

SAM. (*walking to table and pointing to document, and pen and ink*) Ask no questions—thy signature, if thou wouldst save thy life.

JASPER. (*tottering to table*) Yes—yes, good Sampson, I—(*makes an attempt to burn the paper, when SAMPSON prevents him, and presents pistols at his head—Chord*)

SAM. Ah, wouldst thou? Come, no more hesitation—sign, sign!

JASPER. Ye—yes, good Sampson Brayling. (*signs paper*) There, there, 'tis done!

SAM. (*snatching up paper exultingly*) Yes, it is done—Evelyn Heartwell will be saved! And now, Jasper Scrimpe, I have thee fast; thou art completely in my power. I congratulate thee on the pleasant prospect before thee; the prison walls, with the gallows in the perspective! Fear not, but we shall quickly meet again—ha, ha, ha! I triumph! I triumph!

Exit, door in flat.

JASPER. Gone, gone! what have I done? Signed my own condemnation! Horror palsies my heart! A death of shame and ignominy is before me! My brain's on fire! Oh help, Toby!—quick—quick!

Enter TOBY, L.

TOBY. Oh, my good, kind master, how ill you look; whatever can be the matter? Oh dear, how sorry I am to see thee so! (*aside*) The heartless old starve-mouse!—ugh!

JASPER. I—I am faint; I—I am ill! thine arm! lead me to my chamber, oh!

TOBY. (*taking his arm*) Yes, my poor, affectionate—(*aside*) confounded old master.

Music—TOBY leads him off, L.

SCENE II.—*Gardens of the Grange by Moonlight.*

Enter TIMOTHY and ABIGAIL, R.

TIM. Ain't I delighted to see thee, Abigail? How charming thou dost look, to be sure; thou becomest more lovely every day. It's no use; on the word and honour of a tinker, I must have a kiss. (*kisses her*) Oh, that was delicious!

ABIG. La, Timothy, how rude! I declare you quite shock me.

TIM. I can't help it, it's a natural propensity I've got, and I know the women like it. But how's thy good mistress, my dear Abigail?

ABIG. Ah, poor young lady, she is almost broken-hearted, and enough to make her, uncertain as she is of the fate of Evelyn.

TIM. Then she has heard nothing of him?

ABIG. Ah, no, though I fervently hope that he is at present in safety, and likewise that he will quickly be exculpated from the heinous charge which is brought against him, and the real guilty party may be brought to justice.

TIM. Amen! to that wish do I respond most devoutly. It is a sad job, my dear Abigail; but we have no cause to be melancholy you know. That delicious kiss has quite invigorated me. Abigail, thou art an angel.

ABIG. Ah, Timothy! I'm afraid thou art trying to flatter me, and only seek to make me vain of myself.

TIM. On the word and honour of a tinker, thou wrongest me, Abigail. Thou art the apple of my eye; the core of my heart; the sunshine of my hopes; and the pearl of my affections.

ABIG. Lor, Timothy, how you talk; upon my word you make me blush. Ah, you men are such flatterers! But after all the vows you have uttered, Timothy, and the promise you made me, only yesterday, that you would purchase the wedding ring in a tangent, much I fear you are going to deceive me.

TIM. Deceive thee, angelic! The bosom of Timothy Tapcan swells with indignation at the thought! Oh, Abigail, how canst thou suspect mine honour? But I say, my dear, canst thou not admit me to an hour's chat with thee this evening?

ABIG. Oh, yes, Tim, if you will only now accompany me, I've got something so nice for you.

TIM. No! you don't say so.

ABIG. Yes, a beautiful pigeon pie, which I made on purpose for you.

TIM. Pigeon pie! Delicious; my mouth waters at the thought!

ABIG. Jugged hare, gooseberry pasty, and turtle soup!

TIM. Jugged hare? gooseberry pasty, turtle soup! Heavenly names! I only wish poor Toby Taper, the Miser's man, could be one of the party! Come along, my dear kind-hearted Abigail;

Exit, L.

Music—Enter OLIVER and WILL, from gate at back.

OLIVER. (*looking round*) The coast is clear; here we may confer in safety. Thou dost then enter fully into all my designs, Will?

WILL. Have I not told thee so; if thou art afraid to trust me, why say so at once, and there's an end of the business.

OLIVER. No, no, Will; thou dost not understand me. I place every confidence in thee, since thou hast abandoned Sampson Brayling and the other gipsies, whom I have cause to fear. As I was telling thee, the excitement which this affair of the old Miser has caused in the feelings of Constance Welborn, has induced Sir Milford to postpone our marriage to an indefinite period; in the meantime I'm resolved not to be idle. The treasured wealth of Jasper Scrimpe is a tempting booty. He has it now in his house; one bold effort and 'tis mine.

WILL. Aye, and that without much difficulty, Master Oliver, that is, if thou dost not object to reward me handsomely for the assistance I am willing to render thee.

OLIVER. Fear not, thou shalt be rewarded to thine heart's content.

WILL. Enough! then the task is easy. I have procured keys that I know will open the doors of Scrimpe's house, and when once we have effected an entrance, our success is certain.

OLIVER. It is to-night, then—

WILL. We will accomplish the business.

OLIVER. Be it so; there is no occasion for delay. But hark!—some one comes. 'Tis Constance; she comes this way; away, Will—I will meet thee in an hour.

WILL. Remember!

Exit, L., OLIVER retires back.

Enter CONSTANCE, R.

CON. How torturing is the suspense. Oh, Evelyn, where art thou, and what is the fate which is yet in store for thee?

Enter ABIGAIL, from house, L.

ABIG. Oh, my dear young lady, I'm so glad I've found thee. I and my dear Timothy were walking near the wilderness, at the end of the old road, when we met Sampson Brayling, the gipsey, who gave me this letter for you, and told me to make all haste to deliver it to you.

OLIVER. (*aside*) Ah!

CONS. (*taking letter*) Ah! this may remove my doubts and fears. Leave me, Abigail! *Exit ABIGAIL, L.* My hand trembles—my hand trembles, and my heart throbs at double its wonted pace. (*reads*) "Thy lover is in safety. Meet me to-morrow morning at day-break, in the Wilderness, and I will conduct thee to him.—Brayling." Oh, merciful Providence, I thank thee! I will not fail to be there!

OLIVER. (*aside*) No, more will I, thou mayest depend on't. (CONSTANCE observes him)

CONS. Oliver Dalton, here?

OLIVER. Yes, sweet Constance, and sincerely it grieves me to see thee so sad.

CONS. Hold, sir. Thy sympathy is mockery to me, and I decline it. Good night! *Exit, L.*

OLIVER. Hump! freezingly cold, certainly. No matter, proud damsel; methinks thou wilt soon have reason to alter thy tone. I have heard that which gratifies me. In a few hours Evelyn Heartwell shall be again a prisoner, and then my vengeance will be accomplished. I triumph. Now to meet my worthy colleague, Black Will. *Exit at gate.*

SCENE III.—*Room in the Grange.*

Enter TIMOTHY and ABIGAIL, L.

TIM. Oh, what a very scrumptious thing turtle soup is; and that here jiggered hare; as for the gooseberry pasty, I fancy I've played old gooseberry with it. Abigail, what a happy man I am to be sure, to be permitted to pay my devours to you.

ABIG. Ah, Timothy, so you say; but you men are such deceivers, that we poor, weak little creatures of women, cannot believe one half that you promise us. Oh, Timothy, if you do not keep your word, I shall certainly break my heart, and that's all about it.

TIM. I will break my neck first! But, is it at all possible that thou canst look at me, Abigail, a perfect picture of hinnocence, as I am, and doubt the sincerity, the honour, the integrity, and the magnanimity of Timothy Tapcan? Human nature revolts at the bare idea. No, Abigail, thou hast feasted me on jiggered hare, and that has made a lasting impression on my heart. Thou hast luxuriated my inward man on turtle soup, and that has strengthened my love. Thou hast treated me to gooseberry pasty, and never will I make a gooseberry fool of thee. All that I have promised thee, I will solemnly and faithfully perform.

ABIG. You will get the wedding ring without delay?

TIM. Yes, dear.

ABIG. And the furniture?

TIM. Yes, my sweetheart, not forgetting the new bedstead.

ABIG. And the banns?

TIM. Yes, yes, my adorable.

ABIG. Then—then you and I, Timothy, will at last make one?

TIM. Make one, my angel? I shall be much disappointed if we do not make a dozen at least.

Duet.—To the tune of "The Dusty Miller," or "Stony Batter."

TIM. Take it not amiss,

If I've a wish to settle;

So, dearest, crown my bliss,

For I'm a man of mettle.

ABIG. Your taste, Tim, you display,

I'm sure by your selection!

So only name the day,

And I've not the least objection.

BOTH. Hey! for wedlock's joys!

Too long have I tarried;

No care its bliss alloys,

I must and will be married.

ABIG. I've five pounds to begin,

And soon shall get more I know;

TIM. As I'm a man of tin,

I must have lots of rhino!

You shall be my love,

ABIG. You my only darling;

TIM. You I'll ne'er reprove,

ABIG. At you I'll ne'er be snarling.

BOTH. Hey, &c.

ABIG. To make a happy home,

It e'er shall be my hobby;

You'll never wish to roam?

TIM. No, I'll do the thing that's nobby.

ABIG. How blest will be my lot,

The envy of old tabbies;

TIM. But, there's one thing you've forgot,—

ABIG. (speaking) And what's that, Tim?

TIM. Why, I mean the blessed babbies.

BOTH. Hey, &c.

Dance off, R.

SCENE IV.—Chamber in the Miser's House. Practicable door, c.; iron safe in wall, r.; couch, l.; chair, table, and lamp burning on table; lights down.

Music—JASPER discovered counting money; turns from it with emotion—pause. Goes to safe, unlocks it, and places cash box in it; gazes anxiously; evinces repugnance; closes the door of safe, leaving the key in the lock, and returns to his seat.

JASPER. Not to-night—not to-night! No, I will not look upon my hoarded riches—my heart is sad, and my brain distracted. When will this torment cease? Never! never! My doom is sealed; Jasper Scrimpe, thou art accursed of heaven and man. (*pause—JASPER evinces the greatest emotion, looks timidly round, then staggers to couch*) All's still—my eyes are heavy—I—I will again try to sleep, and gain a short respite from the misery and anguish of my feelings.

Music—Lies down on couch, and gradually sinks to sleep; door slowly and cautiously opens, and WILL appears with lighted torch, and gazes eagerly around the room. Enters, walks to couch, and observes MISER.

WILL. (*in undertone and going to door*) All's safe—this way, this way!

Enter OLIVER, cautiously at door.—Music ceases.

OLIVER. Hist, hist, Will, where are we?

WILL. In the Miser's chamber, where he doubtless keeps his gold. See, he sleeps.

OLIVER. Ah!—tis well. Now to business.

WILL. (*drawing dagger and approaching bed*) Aye! and this for better security. (*Chord—Is about to stab MISER, when OLIVER prevents him*)

OLIVER. Hold! Shed not the old man's blood.

WILL. Bah! Why these cowardly scruples?

OLIVER. He sleeps soundly—there is no necessity for the crime. Now to discover where he keeps his gold.

WILL. (*reconnnoitres—observes safe*) Ah, that safe! 'tis doubtless there, and see, the key is in the lock—this is fortunate!

Music—They advance to safe; JASPER moves and moans in his sleep. WILL starts, and is again about to rush upon him, but is prevented by OLIVER, he reluctantly submits. They go to safe and remove cash box from it, but in the hurry let it fall; the MISER is aroused, and starts alarmed from couch, discovers them—Chord.

JASPER. (*wildly*) Villains! Robbers! My gold! (*struggles desperately with OLIVER who still prevents WILL from stabbing him*)

OLIVER. Old man, resistance is in vain, thine ill-gotten gold is mine—off! off! (*struggle, OLIVER shakes JASPER off and fells him senseless*) We have succeeded; the money is ours! Quick—quick!

Music—exit OLIVER and WILL hastily, at door with box—pause—a red glare is seen, and which increases till end of Scene—TOBY, R., half undressed.

TOBY. Oh, the old house is in flames! I was dreaming that I was indulging in a beautiful hot supper; but this is far too hot for my stomach. Ah! the safe open—the cash box gone! (*tumbles over JASPER*) And here's my master insensible, if not dead. Oh, here's terrible work! Master, dear kind master, arouse! Oh, help, help! (*raises him*)

JASPER. (*wildly*) My money—my money! the wretches, they have plundered me of the hard hoardings of a life. Where's my gold? Where's the gold?

TOBY. Do you not see, dear master, the house is on fire? If you would save your life, oh, quick—quick!

Music—confused noise without, conflagration increases, enter SAMPSON and GIPSIES, D. in F.

JASPER. (*alarmed*) Ah, thou here? My doom—my doom is at hand!

SAM This is no time for words. This way! this way!

JASPER. (*wildly*) My gold—my gold! I will not go without my gold!

Music—struggles with SAMPSON and GIPSIES, who force him off at back.

SCENE V.—*Street in Shoreditch. Reflection of the fire.*

Music.—Enter OLIVER and WILL, hurriedly, L.

OLIVER. This affair will cause the greatest excitement. Even now the whole neighbourhood is alarmed!

WILL. And what matters it? The Miser's gold is thine, and methinks that should satisfy thee.

OLIVER. Aye, but it was rash of thee to fire the poor wretch's hovel.

WILL. There thou and I differ in opinion, Master Oliver. But come, let's away, our tarrying here might be fraught with danger.

OLIVER. Away then! *Music—exit, R.*

Enter SAMPSON and GIPSIES, L., forcing on JASPER and TOBY.

TOBY. Oh, dear! oh, dear! What will become of us now?

JASPER. (*wildly*) See how the fierce flames mount into the sky, like fiery serpents, each portending the future awful doom of the wretched old man, Jasper Scrimpe! What have I now to wish to live for? They have robbed me of all, and I am a beggar! Oh, let me die! Let me die!

SAM. Pshaw! no more of this nonsense.

JASPER. Whither wouldst thou take me?

SAM. (*ironically*) It will gratify thee to know, I dare say. First then thou must with me to my encampment in the Wilderness, after that, to a place thou knowest full well.

JASPER. (*eagerly*) Where, oh, where?

SAM. The old house on the borders of Hampstead Heath.

JASPER. (*with horror*) The old house! the scene of my former crime—oh, no, no, no! Thou canst not have doomed me to a trial so dreadful. Kill me, kill me on the spot, or take me back to perish in the flames, but do not—oh, do not force me again to cross the threshhold of that frightful scene of bloodshed!

SAM. There is no time to waste in words, should we be surprised here all is lost!

JASPER. (*struggling*) Mercy;—Mercy!—not there!—not there!

SAM. (*to Gipsies*) Away with him !

Music—Gipsies force JASPER and TOBY off, r. followed by SAM.

SCENE VI.—*Gothic Apartment in the old Hall. Loft window descending to the floor, r.—open, and commanding view of Hampstead Heath, and distant Village, by sunrise.*

Enter MATTHEW SMELTON, r.

MAT. Master Reuben Grangeforth, as he calls himself, has not yet quitted his chamber : but 'tis early, and I must not reproach him with sluggishness. Poor fellow, I fear the many troubles that beset his mind do not allow him much repose.

Enter EVELYN, l.

EVELYN. Did I not hear some one ring ?

MAT. (*faltering*) Ye—yes—no—that is—

EVELYN. Why this hesitation ?—is there anything to fear ? Speak ! —

MAT. Fear !—no,—Providence forbid ; but I have a surprise for thee, only thou must be calm. Sampson Brayling has been here.

EVELYN. Ah ! at this early hour, and gone without seeing me ? This is strange.

MAT. Business compelled him to do so. He will return in an hour ; in the mean time I have one to introduce to thee, Reuben, whose society will doubtless compensate for his absence.

EVELYN. What mean you ?

MAT. Nay, now, be calm, be calm, and thou shalt presently see.

Exit, r.

EVELYN. This old man trifles with me, and yet the throbings of my heart tell me that—

Music.—Enter CONSTANCE, r.

EVELYN. (*embrace*) Dear Constance ; do I once more press thy adored form to my throbbing heart, and gaze in reality upon those beauteous features, which, sleeping or waking, have never for an instant been absent from my distracted imagination ! Oh, the joy, yet anguish of my bosom on this occasion ! Speak to me, dear Constance, let me again listen to the fond tones of thy voice, which are as heavenly music to my ravished senses.

CONS. Oh, Evelyn ! what can I say ? How find language sufficiently powerful to give utterance to the feelings that at present rend my heart ? And to see thee thus ; and to know the fearful difficulties by which thou art surrounded ! Oh, with what tenfold severity does it increase my agony !

EVELYN. Be calm, my Constance, and endeavour to support all that cruel fate may yet have in store for us with that fortitude, resignation, and heroism which has hitherto so nobly distinguished you.

CONS. But you are stigmatized as a villain, Evelyn, execrated and condemned by the more uncharitable of mankind, when I know

you to be innocent; scouted from society,—compelled to conceal yourself from your fellow-creatures, and hunted even to the death, as if you were some blood-stained wretch, who merited the most terrible retribution that outraged heaven could inflict upon you. And think you that I can calmly, patiently endure these agonizing thoughts?—Oh, I shall surely go mad!

EVELYN. For mercy's sake do not talk thus, dear Constance, for it drives me to distraction to hear you, and will destroy that manly fortitude and firm reliance upon the merciful interposition of Providence which has hitherto sustained me in the midst of my manifold and almost unparalleled troubles. To know that you still remain faithful to me; that your heart still beats with the fond emotions of love towards me, affords me every consolation, and reanimates my hopes, and full well am I convinced that neither time nor circumstances can alter the sentiments of your heart.

OLIVER glides past the window, and CONSTANCE observes him.

CONS. (clinging to EVELYN, and fronting to window) Ah!—see!—Surely we are watched.

EVELYN. Nay, nay,—'twas only thine imagination which deceived thee.

CONS. Ah, no; but now my eyes rested on the form of a man, as he stole hastily past the window; and—

(confused noise without)

MATTHEW enters alarmed, R.

MAT. I fear you are betrayed!—Soldiers led on by Oliver Dalton, Sir Milford, and others approach the house.

EVELYN. Is there no escape?

(noise increases)

MAT. 'Tis too late!—They have forced the outer doors,—and see!

Music—OLIVER, SIR MILFORD, and SOLDIERS enter, R.

OLIVER. (pointing to EVELYN) Behold your prisoner!—Seize him!

EVELYN. Oh, villain!—villain!

Music—SOLDIERS seize EVELYN. CONSTANCE clings to him.

Tableau, and Scene closes.

SCENE. VII.—*Drop Landscape.*

Enter MATHEW SMELTON hastily, L.

MAT. Oh, dear! here's a misfortune! here's a terrible piece of business! poor Evelyn again in the hands of his enemies; and what will become of me for harbouring him? I shall certainly be hanged! I—I—

Music—*Enter SAMPSON, R.*

SAM. How now, old man? Why dost thou stand there trembling? What brings thee hither?

MAT. Oh, Master Brayling, here's a calamity!—here's a disaster!

SAM. Quick!—explain thyself!

MAT. Oh, yes I will, as soon as I can. Poor Evelyn is made prisoner by Oliver and Soldiers, and is now being conveyed before the magistrate.

SAM. Ah! is it indeed so? Then the eventful crisis has arrived; the Miser's fearful secret of years must be revealed; the innocent restored to their rights; and the guilty brought to punishment.

MAT. What mean you?

SAM. This is no time for explanation; there is not a moment to be lost—follow me! Now, Oliver Dalton, thy guilty career is drawing to a close; thy doom is sealed.

Music—Exit hurriedly, followed by MAT., L.

SCENE VIII.—Spacious Saloon in the Mansion of Sir Thomas Overton, arranged as a Hall of Justice. SIR THOMAS, SIR MILFORD, and CLERKS seated at table, c., OLIVER, R.

Music—EVELYN conducted in by SOLDIERS, L.; confronts OLIVER boldly, CONSTANCE clinging to EVELYN.

SIR M. (*advancing, l.*) Begone, Constance, this is no place for thee.

CONS. Pardon me, sir; far be the thought of disobedience from me; but surely you would not deprive an unfortunate man of any witness who may be able to adduce facts to prove his innocence? Such a witness I am; permit me then I implore you to remain.

SIR M. Be it so; but calm your feelings and suffer them not to interrupt the course of justice.

SIR THOMAS. With what is the prisoner, Evelyn Heartwell, charged?

OLIVER. I accuse him of the robbery and attempted murder of the late Jasper Scrimpe the Miser, who perished in the fire last night.

EVELYN. (*firmly*) I am innocent, that you shameless ruffian, (*pointing to OLIVER*) know full well.

SIR THOMAS. Prisoner, more temperate language will better become you in your present situation. Master Oliver Dalton, state what you know of the facts.

OLIVER. I will, Sir Thomas. On the night of the robbery of the deceased, I was wandering near the Lover's Walk, when by the pale light of the moon, I beheld two figures in advance of me. My suspicions being excited, I watched them narrowly and soon distinguished their persons. In the first I discovered the Miser, and stealthily following him was the prisoner. I watched them enter the Lover's Walk and pursued them thither, but before I could prevent it, I saw Evelyn Heartwell go behind the deceased and stab him. Alarmed I fled and aroused Sir Milford, and the other persons who accompanied me to the spot, and apprehended the prisoner with his unfortunate victim still in his arms.

SIR THOMAS. (*to EVELYN*) What have you to say in reply to this?

EVELYN. By all my hopes I am innocent, and every word that

Oliver Dalton has spoken is false—false as his heart is black and treacherous.

SIR M. Evelyn Heartwell, the deceased in my presence accused you; moreover, on your person was found this pocket book, which is inscribed with the name of Jasper Scrimpe; how came it in your possession?

EVELYN. The poor old man gave it to me not more than two hours before the perpetration of the crime. He gave it to release me from my pecuniary difficulties, and think you that I could be the heartless monster to rob the poor grey-headed old man of life?

SIR THOMAS. This tale does not appear probable. The miserly habits of the deceased are well known, and it is not at all likely that he would bestow so large a sum of money as that contained in the pocket-book upon one who was almost a stranger to him. The dagger too, stained with the old man's blood bears your initials on the handle.

EVELYN. That dagger is mine! I lost it on the day of my quarrel with Oliver, at the Old Tankard.

SIR THOMAS. That too, is most improbable. But why were you lurking at such an unseasonable hour in the Lover's Walk? (*pause*)

SIR M. Why do you not reply?

EVELYN. Pardon me, Sir Milford; any other question I will answer;—but that I dare not.

OLIVER. You see, sir, he condemns himself, he cannot answer that question.

CONS. Oliver Dalton, 'tis false! 'Tis Evelyn's regard for me that alone makes him hesitate to reply. Pardon me, Sir Milford, if, in disclosing the truth, I reveal my only act of disobedience. You had commanded me to forget Evelyn Heartwell,—to see him no more; but who shall fetter woman's love?—I could not bear to see him quit his native land, perhaps for ever, without one parting interview; and I therefore sent him a note, appointing to meet me at ten o'clock in the Lover's Walk,—and it was on that errand he was found on the fatal spot at the time mentioned.

SIR THOMAS. Still the facts in evidence are so convincing of his guilt, that I feel it my duty to condemn him.

OLIVER. (*aside*) I triumph!

SAMPSON BRAYLING, (*entering, R. 1 E. and confronting him.*)
Aye, villain! but it will not be for long!

OLIVER. Confusion!—Sampson Brayling!

SAM. Aye, I, Sampson Brayling, the Gipsy!—thy former associate!—I accuse thee of the robbery and attempted murder of Jasper Scrimpe!

OLIVER. (*aside*) Lost!—Lost!

SAM. Evelyn Heartwell is innocent. Jasper Scrimpe was robbed by Luke Stanton. Myself and my comrades witnessed the deed.

SIR THOMAS. Can this be true?—Who then is Luke Stanton?

SAM. (*triumphantly*) Behold him in this man who has passed himself off to Sir Milford as Oliver Dalton; and now hear me, Luke Stanton, if thou hast got a heart at all I will pierce it. Know that

Jasper Scrimpe was thine uncle, and the youth thou wouldest bring to the scaffold, thine own brother!

EVELYN. (l. with emotion) Merciful powers!

OLIVER. (r. aside) Can this be?

SIR THOMAS. Be explicit,—have you spoken the truth?

SAM. (r. c.) I swear it. The real name of the miser was Gerald Aubrey. His sister was married to Sir William Wilmot, of the Old Hall on Hampstead Heath.

SIR M. Sir William Wilmot?—I knew him well;—he disappeared in a most mysterious manner, and was never heard of afterwards.

SAM. 'Tis true;—Jasper Scrimpe, as he calls himself, coveted his wealth; for that he murdered him; but still his two infant sons were in the way to his ambitious views, and he resolved to destroy them also. At that time I was a poor, wretched, and miserable man;—he sought me out, and by the offer of a large reward, prevailed upon me to rid him of the boys. They were given to my care; but when I gazed upon their looks of innocence, my heart recoiled from the dreadful crime, and, instead of consigning them to death, one I left at the door of Master Heartwell, of the White Farm at Hogsden; the other I kept myself; and soon after joining my present companions, brought him up as Luke Stanton, the old Gipsy's son. The first of these boys is Evelyn Heartwell, and the other his base slanderer, Oliver Dalton!

OLIVER. Surely you will not believe this ridiculous tale?

SAM. Hear me, Sir Thomas: Gerald Aubrey never enjoyed his ill-gotten wealth; he fled his native land till years had passed away, when he returned, and, assuming the name of Jasper Scrimpe, became the miserable, sordid wretch, that brought upon him the scorn and hatred of mankind.

OLIVER. Pshaw! you hear the slanderer; what proof has he of the truth of his assertions?

SAM. (producing paper) This written confession, signed by the hand of the Miser. Read, Sir Thomas and be convinced.

SIR THOMAS. (taking the paper and reading) 'Tis true!—'tis true! Oh, what a fearful tale of guilt does this reveal.

OLIVER. 'Tis a base forgery. Oh, Sir Thomas, you cannot, you will not be deceived by anything so transparent.

SIR THOMAS. I cannot doubt it. (to SAM) But this paper mentions a third child, a girl, the offspring of the ill-fated Sir William Wilmot.

SAM. True! that child too still lives, and will be produced forthwith. (to OLIVER) Villain! thou hast dared to deny thy guilt; behold it corroborated by thine own accomplice in the crime committed at the Miser's house; he was wounded in the attempt to conceal thine ill-gotten booty. (calling) What ho, Will Darkley!—come forward!

Music—WILL enters, l., wounded—Chord, OLIVER starts alarmed.

* WILL. Oliver Dalton is guilty. It was he who committed the crime in the Lover's Walk. It was himself and I who robbed the

Miser at his house, which was afterwards fired by us. The gold is secure in the hands of the officers.

OLIVER. (*fiercely*) Traitor!—ruffian! (*rushing on WILL, but is secured*)

SAM. Miscreant! Wouldst have still stronger confirmation of thy guilt?—behold! (*goes to L. 2 E., and beckons*)

The Miser is led on by GIPSIES, dying—Chord.

JASPER. (*with difficulty*) The moments of the wretched Gerald Aubrey are numbered, the hand of death is on him, the just punishment of accursed avarice is complete; I confess all the fearful facts contained in the paper produced by Sampson Brayling, and dare not—dare not hope for mercy! Oh, conscience!

Music—sinks, BRAYLING stoops over him, l., OLIVER breaks away from those who have been holding him, draws pistol, r., aims at BRAYLING, when MABEL suddenly enters from L. 2 E., receives shot, and sinks in the arms of EVELYN, c.

SAM. (*to OLIVER*) Wretched man; the measure of thy crimes is now full. Thou hast slain thine own sister!—(*Chord.*)

OLIVER. (*distractedly*) Oh, horror!

JASPER. (*starting, and crawling to MABEL*) Sister!—that name;—no—surely it cannot be!—Madness must have seized upon my brain!—Horror! horror!—’tis too true. In those features I trace the resemblance of my sister Agnes; thou, thou art her child!—and this is all the fruits of my accursed avarice!—Open earth, and hide such a monster from the sight of shuddering mankind!—My brain’s on fire!—My heart’s breaking!—I—I—ha! ha!—ha!

(*falls and dies, l.*)

MABEL. (*with difficulty*) Mabel’s career is run!—her earthly sun has set for ever;—so soon,—so prematurely after it’s rising, but my path has not been one of flowers, and death comes as a friend to deliver me from my sorrows.—(*with struggling emotion*)—Evelyn—Constance—you are worthy of each other!—Bless ye!—bless ye!—(*joins their hands*) May ye be happy years after the green turf shall have closed over the cold remains of the poor wandering Gipsy girl.

Solemn Music—She invokes a blessing. Pause, and Tableau by Characters.—OLIVER evinces malice, remorse, and fear.

EVELYN. Dear Mabel,—Sister!

MABEL. (*arousing, and with joy*) Sister! Sister! Oh, bless thee for that word, brother! It lights up the passage of the poor lonely wanderer of the forest glade, to the dreary precincts of the grave. (*pause*) But yet could I have wished to live, to mingle my heart’s fond feelings with thine, dear Evelyn. No—no—I will not murmur. Oh, that pang!—The dark curtain of death is closing on the vision of the Gipsy-girl;—yet—yet—there is light and peace, and happiness beyond. Bury me where the yew-tree’s branches wave, and the wild flowers spring. Evelyn—Constance—Brayling—bless ye, oh, bless ye!—Reproach not the

memory of poor Mabel; her only fault has been, in regarding thee, Evelyn, with all the intensity of woman's most ardent passion;—She dies in the purity of a Sister's Love!

Sinks in the arms of EVELYN. Tableau and Curtain descends to Solemn Music.

ERRATA.

Page 7, line 23 from foot, instead of "I'll have no more," *read* "I'll hear no more."

Page 8, line 7 from top, instead of "effort might secure," *read* "effort would secure."

Page 10, line 22 from foot, instead of "week will," *read* "week you will."