

JENNY FOSTER

THE SAILOR'S CHILD

OR

THE WINTER ROBIN

IN

T W O A C T S

BY

C. H. HAZLEWOOD, Esq.

AUTHOR OF

*The Return of the Wanderer—Going to Chobham—The Marble
Bride—Who's the Victim—The Black Gondola.*

&c. &c. &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

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(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market.)

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JENNY FOSTER THE SAILOR'S CHILD.

*First produced at the Royal Britannia Saloon,
October, 1855.*

CHARACTERS.

Sternhold, a Smuggler and Adventurer ..	MR. C. PITT.
Sloppy Sam, his Companion .. .	MISS C. BORROW.
Ben Foster, a British Seaman .. .	MR. J. REYNOLDS.
Grubbleton, Landlord of Rookfield Cottages ..	MR. C. WILLIAMS.
Jack Raddipole, a Baker's Boy .. .	MR. W. H. NEWHAM.
Clincher } Press Gang Marines .. .	MR. HAWKINS.
Sharpeye } Press Gang Marines .. .	MR. CLEMENTS.
Mrs. Foster, Ben's Mother .. .	MRS. ATKINSON.
Jenny Foster, her Granddaughter, the Sailor's Child .. .	MISS E. CLAYTON.
Bessy Bluebell, a kindhearted Country Girl	Mrs. S. LANE.

SCENE.—HAMPSHIRE.

Time in representation—1 hour 10 minutes.

COSTUMES.

STERNHOLD.	Old pea-jacket, rough trousers, and sou'-wester.
SAM.	Black suit, very ragged, old hat and boots.
FOSTER.	Sailor's dress.
GRUBBLETON.	Brown coat, kerseymere breeches and gaiters.
JACK.	Journeymen baker's suit.
MRS. FOSTER.	Black merino dress, cap, grey hair.
JENNY.	Neat cotton frock, straw hat, and red cloak.
BESSY.	Smart muslin dress and apron.

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JENNY FOSTER.

A C T I.

SCENE I.—*Interior of Mrs. Foster's Cottage. Window, c., through which the distant country is seen, and snow falling. Fireplace, R.—door in flat, L.—another door R. 1 E.*

Enter GRUBBLETON, from R. D., followed by MRS. FOSTER.

MRS. F. Only a little time longer ; I mean to pay you all—every penny.

GRUB. Ah, you've been telling me the same story for the last month—how are landlords to pay the rates if tenants don't pay us our rents ?

MRS. F. True, sir, very true ; but it is the truth I have been telling you ; daily and hourly have I been expecting to see or hear from my son. It is now six years since he first went to sea ; but during that time he has never failed sending to me the moment he received his pay, until now, and I am sure there is some reason for his silence—perhaps he may be ill—perhaps—

GRUB. Perhaps *dead*—who's to pay me then ?

MRS. F. Oh, sir, be less unfeeling—have some charity in your heart.

GRUB. I never could afford to be charitable, it's too expensive. If you think I don't know what these sailors are, you're mistaken. If your son's not dead, I'll be bound he's ashore at Portsmouth, as drunk as a pig, spending his money like mad, and capering away to the tune of the "College Hornpipe," with some blackamoor or Blowsabella for his partner.

MRS. F. I see, sir, you do not know my son.

GRUB. Ah, I see you're like all mothers, think no children are like your own.

MRS. F. That is but natural—and you, sir, no doubt, think the same.

GRUB. Why, my good woman, you don't suppose I have any children, do you? No, no, I never was fool enough to marry, it's too *expensive*. What a fool a man must be to hamper himself with a wife and family, and have half a dozen mouths to feed, instead of one. No, no; I have only one person to feed, and that's myself.

MRS. F. Then I must not expect you to have much sympathy with me.

GRUB. Sympathy with you? No! I should think not—nor with anybody else—no, no, it's too expensive. I know what they mean when they talk of appealing to one's feelings—it's the direct road of appealing to one's pocket—so now you know me. What I want is my rent, and mind if it's not paid by to-morrow, I shall have to turn you out. *Exit L. c. to L.*

MRS. F. Then we have, indeed, a bitter prospect before us. Oh, my poor daughter, had you but lived, by our united industry we might have kept the wolf from the door; but you are in a better world, I trust, while poor Jenny, your child, is left to remind me that I have still a mother's part to perform by her, that I have to protect and cherish a poor girl, who, saving myself, may be said to be alone in a rough world, an unprotected orphan.

JACK RADDIPOLE. (*without, passing window, r. c.*) Baker!

MRS. F. Thank Heaven we have one kind heart who has confidence in us still. (*opens door.*) *

JACK enters, l. c., with baker's basket at his back.

JACK. Baker!

MRS. F. The same quantity to-day, if you please.

JACK. I'm precious sorry to say, ma'am, that master says I mustn't leave any more without the money; he's got three shillings and fourpence already scored against you—no more tick, ma'am, till that's paid.

MRS. F. And our last crust was eaten for breakfast, and we have no money to buy more with.

JACK. That's hard lines, ma'am—I know I used to find it so when I was out of place—one feels preciously panic-struck when they're out of pannum—so look here, ma'am, (*puts down basket and takes out quartern loaf.*) I was always called a brick, and there's another (*puts it on table.*) It's a dead man; don't be afraid of taking it, for dead men tell no tales.

MRS. F. Heaven bless you, Jack; I hope one day to be able to repay you.

JACK. Of course you do, and you will, too, but how can you keep up your pecker without peck? and I daresay little Jenny

has a tidy twist of her own, so I've brought her a twist for her tea (*puts it on table.*)

MRS. F. Thank you, Jack, thank you; I wish she was here to thank you; she's away in the fields getting fuel—gleaning the windfalls of the woods for firing.

JACK. That child's an angel in petticoats if ever there was one; when I was a printer's devil I used to read a deal about angels, and there never was a cherrybum if she isn't one.

JENNY. (*without, at the window.*) Granny, granny, open the door, I'm loaded.

Music.—MRS. FOSTER opens door, l. c., and JENNY enters dressed in red cloak and hood, with a bundle of sticks on her head.

Didn't you think I was lost?

MRS. F. Lost! Heaven forbid, child. (*helping her down with the bundle of sticks.*)

JACK. This is cold weather for your little feet to paddle about in the snow, and your shoes, too, ain't none of the best; I'd bring you a pair of mine, only your tiny little feet would be lost in 'em. And it's dangerous to put hay in 'em to stuff 'em out; I did that once when I was your age with a pair of my father's, and my calves came down to eat the hay and never went up again.

JENNY. Bless you for your kindness, Jack—you're poor like us, Jack, but you're rich in having a good heart. I saw what you brought us through the window, and when I grow to be a woman and earn plenty of money I'll pay you for your kindness with a thankful, grateful heart. Don't sigh, granny, because it won't do for us to be downhearted—I don't mind being poor if you don't, we're honest folks; we never harmed our neighbours or spoke ill of them. If all rich folks could say the same, poor people like us would be better off in the world.

MRS. F. True, Jenny; but you see we should never despair. This good lad has brought us food sufficient for to-day, at least, and who knows but by to-morrow we may have a letter from Ben?

JENNY. Oh, granny, if you only knew how happy you make me, as long as I hear you speak hopeful words, and keep a trusting heart. I look forward to the day when we shall sit around the old chimney corner with father by our side and spend our happy evenings all the merrier while looking on the clouds which darkened our morning of sorrow.

JACK. Good luck to you, I hope you may; for to see honest people like you done brown in the oven of ill luck, and then

scraped with the rasp of misfortune, it's enough to make a chap with any heart at all sing out—baker!

Exit, D. F. L. C. to L., wiping away a tear.

JENNY. Poor fellow—how kind of him to feel for us! if it were not for him, granny, our cupboard would have been empty. I've heard you say, granny, that a kind action is never lost, and if so, may the blessings of a poor child, for his gift, hover o'er his head—light him onward to hope, and endow him with courage to meet life's trials and sorrows in the thorny path of trouble and temptation the poor must ever tread.

MRS. F. Bless you, Jenny bird, bless you—may thy generous heart ne'er know a chill—thy sunny nature be ruffled by a cloud—may the bright rays of fortune break through the mist of your early griefs, and reveal a happy smiling future. (*knock at cottage door.*) Who's there?

BESSY BLUEBELL. (*without, passing window, from R.*) It's only me—Bessy Bluebell.

JENNY. (*opens door.*) Bessy! Oh, Bessy, come in—come in.

Music—Enter BESSY BLUEBELL, door L. C. from R.

BESSY. Jenny, my daisy, how do you do? There—give me a kiss. (*kisses her.*) Well, how does the world use you, Mrs. Foster?

MRS. F. But sadly, Bessy.

BESSY. Sorry to hear it, but don't despair because things look dark to-day. Look forward with hope to-morrow.

JENNY. So I say, Bessy; I'm making haste to be a woman as fast as ever I can, on purpose to keep up old granny's heart; we're not quite conquered by misfortune yet, and although I'm afraid we're going down the hill of adversity, I still cherish a hope, Bessy, we may meet fortune coming up with something in store for us. I'm sure we shall—I'm certain there's something in the corner of Fate's lucky bag yet to be shaken out of us. For have I not read that a kind and bounteous Providence ever looks with love and regard on the good and innocent with a watchful eye, and only waits its own good time to reward and cherish? (*scene lighter behind, and the snow ceases to fall.*)

BESS. Oh! bless that child. I must have a kiss, that I must. (*kisses her.*) You know I'm almost as poor as you are; but there's such sunshine in your words—they make me feel, as we all should, that we ought to look on life's brightest side, with honest hearts and willing minds.

MRS. F. Happy, smiling youth and hope, may the world's sorrows touch you lightly.

JENNY. (*going to window.*) And see, as if we had really created a little sunshine of our own, it has left off snowing, and looks quite cheerful to what it did.

BESSY. To be sure—look always on the sunny side, and you'll soon see old care packing off. I see the baker's been, so let me set your tea things. I'll take some of the sticks to make the kettle boil—you should keep the wood in the shed outside—wood goes further when it's kept out of doors, they say—though to be sure some of ours went three miles one night and never came back again. (*puts kettle on fire and sticks under it, sits on a stool and blows the fire.*)

JENNY. (*aside.*) Poor Bessy, it will pain her to know our poverty; she shan't know we are so badly off. Thank you, Bessy, that will do. Perhaps your father has come home by this time, and may want his tea.

BESSY. Not he; and if he does, he's such a good soul, that he'll say he don't, if he knows I've been here cheering you up. Now, I'll set the tea things. (*goes to cupboard.*) The water will boil by that time. (*gets tea-board, dusts it with her apron, and sets tea table.*) Where's the tea? Where's your three-and-nine-penny congou, with a bit of green in it.

JENNY. (*aside to MRS. FOSTER.*) Tell her, grandmother, I don't like.

MRS. F. Alas, Bessy, I am sorry to say so to you, but tea has been a stranger to us for the last week.

BESSY. And you never said a word to me about it, when we've a whole quarter of a pound at home; a pretty grandmother you are. Where's the tea pot?

(*takes it off the table, and runs off, D. F. L. C. to R.*

JENNY. No, no, Bessy. She's gone. She's too good natured, and almost as poor as we are. Oh, grandmother, if father shouldn't come back, what will become of us? (*weeping.*)

MRS. F. Heaven only knows, my darling.

JENNY. But he will, I know he will come back; so we won't be cast down, will we? No, no, we'll keep up our hearts, we'll—we'll—(*bursting into tears, and throwing herself into MRS. FOSTER's arms.*) Oh, granny—granny!

MRS. F. My poor Jenny—my poor Jenny!

Enter BESSY, with tea-pot, D. in F. from R. U. E.

BESSY. Hollo, come I say, none o' that—I don't allow it. If you don't leave off, I shall begin in a minute, and if I do, I shall keep on for a mouth.

MRS. F. It's over now, Bessy, it's over now.

JENNY. Yes, yes, it's all over; it was only Nature knocking at our hearts to see if we were at home.

MRS. F. You are too kind to us, Bessy; I'm sure you can't afford to give anything away.

BESSY. Oh, bother about affording; it isn't those that can

afford it that gives the most. I've seen poor people help one another too often not to know that.

MRS. F. We may never have it in our power to repay you.

BESSY. Never mind that; why when my heart goes bumpity bump, bump, I feel certain I'm paid, and with interest, too, because I know I've done what I ought, and I feel all the better for it.

JENNY. You are my own kind Bessy, and I love you like a sister for this. (*kisses her.*)

MRS. F. (*to BESSY.*) Good and kind girl, my blessing rest upon you.

BESSY. (*looking about on table.*) What—no sugar—no butter! Oh, Mrs. Foster, where do you expect to go to?—when you know you've only to ask, and what we have is yours. We've got a whole quarter of a pound of the best salt butter, and half a pound of the best moist sugar, in our cupboard; and I know if they could speak, they'd say that they would be only too happy to be eaten up in your service. (*going D. F.*) Mind the kettle don't boil over. *Exit hastily, D. F. to R. U. E.*

JENNY. Granny, I can't bear to see Bessy depriving herself of food to bestow it on us. No, no—(*putting on her cloak and hat.*) Grandmother, I'll go to Rookfield.

MRS. F. Is the child mad, to think of going to Rookfield such weather as this?

JENNY. I must, granny, I must; to-morrow we shall not have bread to eat.

MRS. F. And how will you seek your bread, my poor Jenny?

JENNY. I'll tell the gentlefolks as they pass by that I have a grandmother at home who is old and poor, and we are almost without food, they must listen to me, for are they not Christian people, and is it not their duty to help their fellow creatures?

MRS. F. Ah, Jenny, I am simple enough in the ways of the world, yet on that point I am wiser than you. I know but little of life, but I have seen that the Christianity of most rich folks is too often like the working man's best garment, worn only on Sundays. No, no, they would never listen to you, Jenny bird.

JENNY. Why not, grandma, when I tell them that you are old and poor, and on the brink of starving.

MRS. F. Does it snow now, Jenny?

JENNY. No, it's quite fine, and I shall walk so fast, I shall be sure not to feel the cold.

MRS. F. You shall go to Rookfield—Heaven will protect my darling. Fetch me that box from under the window.

(*JENNY goes to table under the window, and brings work box to MRS. FOSTER, who unlocks it.*)

JENNY. Oh, how good of you to let me go.

MRS. F. Not to beg, my child—no, no—you shall not do that. I've something here will keep us a few days longer, and who knows by that time—but no, (*wipes away a tear.*) better to say nothing of *him*, my poor son! your mother and your child will see you no more till we meet in Heaven. (*gives JENNY a wedding ring from box, and wrapping it in paper.*) Take that to the pawnshop at Rookfield, and ask them to lend six shillings on it. I know I needn't tell you not to lose it, or to bring the money back safe, for well I know your little feet will trudge carefully and safely home with all the speed and joy of a good little angel on a mission of love.

JENNY. That's right, grandma, that smile of hope which lights up your dear old face reflects itself in rays of joy on mine. (*embraces her.*) Just see how soon I'll be back; it's only four miles, and when the heart's light the heels are always lighter—by the time Bessy and you have had a little chat, and warmed your good old heart with a cup of tea, you'll see me skipping back over the threshold of the door, as happy as a little queen.

MRS. F. Good, brave girl.

JENNY. Brave! I believe you, granny, brave as a little bird who flies o'er the bleak moor to his mate—carroling forth notes of joy in being the bearer of succour and comfort to the helpless and weak.

SONG.—AIR,—“Jockey to the fair.”

When snowdrops white, hang on each tree,

And frosted gems adorn the plain.

Poor Robin Redbreast then we see,

Close to our window pane.

With plaintive chirp his little throat,

Will warble forth his modest note,

To tell us winter's cold and drear,

And hedge and tree from leaves are clear,

But still he food must seek.

And timid come, to bear each crumb,

Home in his little beak.

What joy, that I can be to you

A help and blessing in your need,

Tho' young and weak, yet kind and true,

In word as well as deed.

To prove my love, I'll quickly go,

Tho' cold the moor and deep the snow,

And speed me back to granny dear,
 To hush each sigh, kiss off each tear,
 And look for hope above,
 Tho' dark our lot we're ne'er forgot.
 By one whose name is love ! *Exit, D. F. L. C. to L.*

MRS. F. Heaven speed thee on thy journey, poor child ; and it will—I know it will—for innocence and love like hers must find a way to the hearts of all on earth, and find protection from all good angels above.

Enter BESSY, D. F. from R. U. E., with things in basket, and flour bag.

BESSY. Now we shall be all to rights in a pig's whisper. (*puts things on table.*) I'm going to make you some cakes for tea, I've brought the flour ; don't be afraid, I didn't buy it, it's what I got by gleaning last harvest. Hollo ! where's Jenny ?

MRS. F. She'll be here directly, she's only gone to a neighbours for me.

BESSY. Lor, now, why didn't you let me go ? her poor little feet will be perished.

MRS. S. She'll soon be back, Bessy, never fear.

BESSY. Now, I've a great mind to scold you. Why didn't you let me go instead of her ?

MRS. F. Why, to tell you the truth, Bessy, I had a particular reason for sending Jenny.

BESSY. Still you might have sent for me—because I could have given her a pick-a-back all the way there and back again, and perhaps have saved her little toes from being frost-bitten, bless 'em. (*knock at cottage door.*) That's her, I'll be bound. Come in, my little angel. (*opens door.*)

Enter GRUBBLETON, door L. C. from L.

Oh, I've made a mistake, it's more like one of the other sort.

(*points down.*)

GRUB. Now, Mrs. Foster, here I am, you see.

MRS. F. Oh, sir, why do you come here again ? At least, you might have waited until to-morrow, as you said.

GRUB. To-morrow never comes ; besides, I've altered my mind. I'm wide awake. You knew I was coming to-morrow for your rent, and you might have shot the moon to-night. No, no, I'm not to be done.

MRS. F. (c.) Mr. Grubbleton—as a man—

BESSY. (R.) A man ! He isn't a man—he's a petrification.

GRUB. (L.) I can afford to be called names, but I can't afford to lose my rent.

MRS. F. You will not lose it—I assure you, sir, you will not.
 GRUB. Bah! you can't assure me—I'll have the money or the money's worth. (*going to cottage door.*) Come in friends.

Enter Two BROKER'S MEN, door L. C. from L. U. E.

BESSY. And you call these your friends, eh? Well you're worthy of such company. Do you really mean to say that you'll seize the poor woman's goods.

GRUB. What's the poor woman to me? I shall be as poor as her, if I've many tenants like her. (*to MEN.*) Take down the goods. (*they advance.*)

BESSY. (*confronting them.*) Ah, you'd better; I'll take you down if you do.

GRUB. Don't mind her, I'll seize every stick, put down every atom—I'll take all I can see.

BESSY. (*throwing handfull of flour in his eyes.*) Do you see that!

(*GRUBBLETON retreats to corner, the MEN both advance c. to seize BESSY, who keeps them off by pelting them with flour —closed in by —*

SCENE II.—Road near the Common. (2nd grooves.)

Enter STERNHOLD and SLOPPY SAM, L.

STERN. Well, Sammy, things look very queer with us.

SAM. Werry queer, they couldn't werry well look queerer.

STERN. Neither money nor tick.

SAM. It's enough to give a little chap like me the tic-doloroo.

STERN. I should like to raise the wind somehow.

SAM. Should you? Vell then I'm precious glad you can't, the vind is too high already, for the ruined state of my wardrobe—I'm bless'd if the vind don't blow in at this here hole at the top of my hat, and comes out at that 'ere hole at the bottom of my shoe.

STERN. And not a drop to be got anyhow to wet our whistles with.

SAM. Not a thimblefull—I haven't been drunk this fortnight, and I feel I'm a disgrace to society. I feels as watery as a tater.

STERN. Ah, for a wonder! you're always as dry as a lime kiln.

SAM. I can't help that; it's my mother's fault—she weaned me on salt fish!

JENNY. (*singing without L.*) To prove my love, I'll quickly go,
 Tho' cold the moor and deep the snow,
 And speed me back to granny dear,
 To hush each sigh, wipe off each tear,
 And look for hope above.
 Tho' dark our lot we're not forgot
 By one whose name is love.

SAM. Vell I'm blow'd, there's a woice for a vindy day.

STERN. (*looks off.*) It's a gal crossing the moor such a day as this.

SAM. Going to school, I dare say, in such veather as this, too, vouldn't I have play'd the vag if I'd been her.

Music.—They retire.

Enter JENNY, L.

JENNY. I've nearly reached the second mile stone, and I'm all in a glow with my walk. I shall reach Rookfield in no time, and return to granny before she thinks I've got there; by going across the moor I shall at least save half a mile.

(*going R. meets SAM and STERNHOLD.*

STERN. (R.) Hold hard, where are you going?

SAM. (L.) Is yer off to school, my little *hangel*? where's your bread and butter?

JENNY. (C.) I have none, sir.

SAM. (*aside.*) Vouldn't I have boned it if she had.

STERN. What brings you out such a day as this?

JENNY. I'm going to Rookfield, sir, on an errand for my grandmother.

SAM. For gin of course; *my* grandmother used to send me for it. Where's the bottle?

JENNY. You are mistaken, sir, I am going to obtain money if I can, to purchase food for my poor granny, whom I love so dearly, that I'd go twice the distance if it were for her comfort and happiness.

SAM. Now that just shows you the difference there is in grandmothers—I'd have run a mile at any time to have got out of the vay of mine—'cause why! she used to bone the werry shoes on my feet to pawn for gin and snuff.

STERN. (*to JENNY.*) What's that you've got in your hand?

JENNY. I can't tell you, sir, indeed I can't.

SAM. Then tell *me*, and I vont say a vord about it, upon my honour I vont.

JENNY. Perhaps not, sir, but I'm in a hurry to make haste and get back. (*going R., STERNHOLD stops her.*

STERN. Hold hard, let's see what you've got wrapped up in that paper; it will be the worse for you if you don't

JENNY. Oh, sir, as you are men, you wouldn't think of harming a poor girl.

SAM. Didn't your *parients* always horder you to do as you vas bid? werry well, then, do as that good gen'elman axes you.

JENNY. You are bad men ; I know you are—thieves perhaps—oh, what shall I do? what shall I do? and granny waiting so patiently at home for me. (*weeping*.)

SAM. Oh, you naughty, obstinate girl, to cry because that good gen'elman only wants to look vot you've got in your hand, vhy don't you show him?

JENNY. I will not, nor you either, though you are stronger than I am, you shall crush this hand before it shall open at your bidding.

STERN. Drop it, minx! (*seizes her hand, and attempts to force it open*.)

JENNY. Oh, sir, have mercy, pray have mercy. Help! help!

BEN FOSTER. (*without, L.*) Messmates ahoy.

STERN. Some one coming ; devil take him for spoiling us.

SAM. (*looking off, L.*) Vot for—it's a sailor man, he's been drinking. Send that gall off, and let's dewote our ideas to this covey, ve shall find him the most *profitablest*, I know.

STERN. (*throwing JENNY round to R.*) Cut off, and thank this lucky chance for saving you, for if you'd have resisted a little longer, I'd have wrung your neck as soon as look at you.

(*joins SAM and looks off, L.*)

JENNY. They will murder this man if they cannot rob him—I must, I will stay and warn him. (*hides R.*)

Enter BEN FOSTER, singing, L.

BEN. Then sling the flowing bowl,
Our hopes arise, 'tis the girls we prize,
Shall bless each jovial soul.

Then the can, boys, bring, let us drink and sing,
While the foaming billows roll.

Messmates ahoy ! why don't you throw out answering signals when you're hailed by a craft who's beating about in a fog, without knowing where he's steering.

STERN. (*who is down, R. with SAM.*) What! a mate in distress?

BEN. Not altogether in distress, old rusty mug, cause as how you see I can't well be that ways inclined, seeing as how I've got three years pay in the locker.

SAM. (*aside to STERNHOLD.*) Oh blessed mother of the mint, do you hear that?

BEN. And I haven't been in these parts for many a day, and the snow's queered my latitude, and the last bowl of punch I had at Portsmouth has somehow or other muddled my brain box.

STERN. We'll set you to rights, mate ; I live close handy, and if you'll step inside my house for a minute or two while I warm myself a bit, I'll see you right on your road with a deal of pleasure.

BEN. Will you, though ; lord, how one may be deceived in a man's figure head ! when I first clapped eyes on you, I said to myself, if ever a rogue was written in a man's phizmahogany, that 'ere man has it written in his.

STERN. The devil you did ?

BEN. But you mustn't mind me ; I'm a plain going straight sailing craft, I am—there's more pitch and tar than soft soap about me, I can tell you.

JENNY. (*aside.*) Poor fellow ; they will rob him, and perhaps murder him. How can I put him on his guard ?

SAM. It does one's blessed peepers good to look at a real Jack tar, like you is ; I vos destined for the sea service, but I'm afeared I always had a mortal horror of vater. (L.)

BEN. And soap, too, I should think, by the cloudy state of your figure head ; but lord love you, don't stand spinning yarns here, for my pins are getting as stiff as the main mast ; just convey me to your caboose, and we'll have just one can of grog together, and no more, to drink to our better acquaintance.

SAM. Hear, hear ! may we meet more numerous, but never less respectable.

BEN. Hang your respectability—give me honesty, all fair and above board.

SAM. (*aside.*) If I'd stuck to honesty, what should I have done for my board ?

STERN. Follow me, friend, and I'll put you in the right way. (*aside and showing knife.*) Ay, and *out* of the way, too, if we can't pluck you without.

BEN. Bear a hand, black bristles. (*slaps SAM on shoulder.*) Let's hook and eye ourselves together.

(*taking their arms and going off with them R., singing "For we are the boys," &c.*

JENNY. (*watching them off.*) He goes to his death, unless I can warn him. Oh, what shall I do to save him ! and I too, have a father, who may some day return and perhaps fall into hands like these, then how dearly should I love those who could avert danger from him, as it may be in my power to do from

this poor man. I will—I will try to save him, and yet granny—how anxious the poor old soul will be at my staying; kind Providence! oh, teach me which way to act for the best. Courage, Jenny, courage! something whispers to me that I ought not to leave this poor sailor to the mercy of those villains. No, I will not—no, I will do what I ought, let what will come of it.

Music.—Exit, R.

SCENE III.—*Interior of Sternhold's House. A loft in centre, with ladder beneath, door in flat L., table and old chairs, old fashioned fireplace and settle, R.*

STERNHOLD, BEN, and SAM SLOPPY enter singing as before D. E.

STERN. This is my humble shed, messmate.

BEN. Is it now. (*looks round.*) Well they say in the old song, that young love once dwelt in an humble shed. I wonder if it was such a ricketty old consarn as this? 'cause if it was I don't wonder at him opening the window and flying away.

STERN. 'Tisn't always the look of the house that's to be depended on, it's what's in it.

BEN. That's true, messmate, for d'y'e see here's a case in pint (*pulls out purse.*) Here's an old purse that my poor old mother netted for me when I first went to sea—look at the outside of it, why it's so worn and discoloured by being always in my pocket, that it would puzzle a sea lawyer to take his davy as to the original colour on it, but just look at the yellow boys shining through the chinks. I mean to bear all sail to old mother's cottage when I've treated you as I said I would, and there I shall see the old lady sitting by the fire wiping away the tears that are rolling down her dear old nose, and washing the windows of her barnacles, and heaving a whole cargo of sighs and groans for her dear Ben, as she always calls me; well, in I sails like a three decker, and giving a thundering cheer, enough to shake off the very tiles from aloft, I shall say, throwing this here purse into her lap "How's my dear Mary?"—that's my wife, mates—"How's my dear little Jenny?"—that's my child, mates; and then I shall say—damme if I know what I shall say, for I'm jiggered if the salt water ain't running over at the scuppers and choking me. Here, (*throws sovereign on table.*) fetch me some grog, for I'm blessed if I arn't getting hove down in the port of moloncholly.

STERN. (*aside to SAM.*) Propose punch, it will give us more time.

SAM. (*to BEN.*) What do you say to a bowl of punch, or a can of egg flip, that's the stuff for trousers.

BEN. (*sits at table r.*) Just as you like, my lad, so as you look smart.

SAM. (*takes up money.*) I'll go and fetch the things to make it with. (*aside.*) I mean to make a trifle out of this lot.

Exit, d. f.

BEN. And what way, messmate, may I ask, do you earn a living?

STERN. I'm a fancier in the general line.

BEN. Are you now?

STERN. Yes; I'm not above doing anything, so long as it's honest, of course.

BEN. Of course, who could look at you and think otherwise.

Enter JENNY, cautiously, d. f.

JENNY. Thank Heaven, no harm has happened to him yet, may I profit by the delay in trying to save an honest man from the snares of the wicked. (*conceals herself, r.*)

BEN. But still mate, it strikes me you wouldn't mind running a keg or two of moonshine ashore if you happened to diskiver there was a chance of so doing, eh, my lad?

STERN. I say nothing, but I leave you to guess my feelings on that point.

BEN. Bad luck lately, then, as you happen to have none stowed away.

STERN. Precious bad—the coastguard smells a rat.

BEN. And keeps a weather eye open, eh?

STERN. I don't think they close a peeper night or day, not even to wink.

Enter SAM with bottles and lemons, followed by BESSY, d. f.

SAM. We've no room to give anybody shelter, I tell you—what if it does snow again; can ve help it? certainly not.

(*places things on table.*)

STERN. (*seeing BESSY, c.*) Hello! who are you?

BESSY. My name's Bessy Bluebell, and as it's snowing again so thick that you can't see the path, I asked this nice-looking young man if he'd allow me to wait here a minute or two to see if it would leave off in a short time.

BEN. (*rising.*) Why in course he will, we all will—we're werry much obliged to the snow storm for sending such a pretty little craft as you into harbour.

STERN. (*aside.*) The devil take this girl, she'll be in the way. (*to SAM who is on his L.*) What did you bring her here for? Couldn't you see any ditch to push her in as you came along?

SAM. Now how could I when I vos so loaded?

BEN. Now, my lass, bring yourself to an anchor on my knee.
(taking her round the waist and scratching his hand with pins in Bessy's dress.) Oh, the pins, how they scratches. (R.)

BESSY. (holding out a pin to him.) Keep your distance or I'll stab you to the heart like a cockchafer. (R. C.)

BEN. There, I gives in ; I strikes my colours to your marlin spike ; I admires pluck in emergencies, and no one can't say as you don't come up to the scratch.

JENNY. (aside.) Could I but catch Bessy's eye, to endeavour to make her understand the treachery of those villains.

(at back, R.)

BEN. But there, never mind, I knows how to take a joke, specially from a woman. Now then, you ugly man's child, (crosses to SAM.) where's my change out of the sovereign ?

SAM. Out of the sovereign ! come, I like that—out of the half sovereign, you mean.

BEN. What do you mean by half sovereign ?

SAM. Perhaps you think it was a whole un—but it was only a half un, why I could swear to it.

BESSY. (to BEN.) Of course he could, sir ; don't he look as if he could swear to anything ?

BEN. Well, maybe he's right—I didn't take particular notice on it ; now then, the Mr. Purser's clerk, where's the change ?

SAM. Oh, the change ! I'd forgotten the change ; I never should have thought of it if you hadn't have reminded me.

BEN. I thought not.

SAM. I'll reckon it up for you, Mr. Sailor ; let's see, there's a pint of rum, that's five shillings—

BEN. The devil it is !

SAM. Why in course it is—it's the werry best, it's double distilled Jamaica pine apple.

BESSY. (to BEN.) Besides, you forget, sir. (looking at SAM.) It's had to pay duty.

SAM. That's vere it is—then there's half a pint of gin, that's eighteen pence, and half a pint of brandy is half a crown, that's nine shillings, and two lemons at a penny a piece is another shilling, nine and one is ten, and there's the money as clear as daylight.

BEN. Well I 'spose it's right, I never was good at overhauling your cyphering figures.

STERN. That's right, mate, that's right.

BESSY. Oh, yes, it's quite right, errors excepted. (looking at SAM.)

BEN. I don't like anything but fair and above board ; I don't mind spending a pound on any man—but I doesn't like to be cheated out of a farden.

SAM. That's my disposition, exactly.

BESSY. (*seeing JENNY, who is making signs to her.*) Ha!

STERN. (*who has been looking out at the door, advances, c.*) Now, then, what's the matter with you?

BESSY. I didn't say a word, sir, it was my teeth chattering with cold. (*aside.*) There's mischief in those men's faces—Jenny here, too! and imploring me to be silent!

SAM. (*going to fireplace, and bringing down saucepan.*) Our saucepan will do for a punchbowl.

BEN. And while you're mixing it, I'll turn on your hammock, there.

(*pointing to loft in c. and taking off his jacket, which he throws on the back of chair.*)

SAM. Don't leave any money in your clothes down here, sir, 'cause we're all honest people about here, and couldn't live with any stain upon our characters.

BEN. (*going up stage.*) Belay your lingo, no fear of that, 'cause d'ye see I'm my own banker. (*taking purse from his breast, and showing it.*)

STERN. (*aside, going up ladder.*) All right, I see where he keeps it. Follow me, mate, I'll show you where you can lie down.

SAM. Nothing like being your own banker; I mean to open a British Bank some day.

BESSY. (*aside.*) No doubt you do, as soon as you can get a crowbar.

BEN. (*following STERNHOLD up ladder.*) Don't forget to hail me when the punch is served out.

SAM. (*aside.*) Oh, we'll punch you, when you're asleep, my covey. Mind how you tumble, sir; I'll hold the ladder.

(*Music.—Holds the ladder with his back to the AUDIENCE—*
JENNY comes cautiously down to BESSY.)

BESSY. (*in a whisper.*) Jenny!

JENNY. (*in the same tone.*) Hasten to get assistance; the poor man above will be murdered for the sake of the money he has about him—don't ask me to go with you, for a feeling I cannot master chains me to this spot—I may save a fellow-creature's life—it is my destiny to stay.

STERN. (*to BEN, who lies down on the bed above.*) Now we'll leave you—you'll sleep sound enough, I warrant. (*aside as he descends, showing knife.*) As sound as the grave. (JENNY has concealed herself as before.)

BESSY. Oh dear—oh dear! I shake like a jelly in a go-cart. After they've settled the sailor's account, I shall be stuck on the file.

STERN. (*aside to SAM.*) I wish we could get that girl out of the way; I wonder if she suspects.

BESSY. I'm much obliged to you for your kindness, gentlemen, and I'll go now if you please. (*going D. F.*)

STERN. (*placing himself before door.*) Hollo! you're in a devil of a hurry. (*seizes her by the wrist, and eyes her searchingly.*) Do you know anything of us?

BESSY. Why of course I do.

STERN. Ha! (*raising his knife.*)

BESSY. I—I know you're two very civil gentlemen, to allow me to stay here under shelter, and I'm very much obliged to you.

STERN. Is that all you know?

BESSY. Why, what *should* I know?

STERN. Nothing—nothing. (*letting her hand go.*)

BESSY. That's just what I *do* know, and not an atom more.

STERN. (*looking from cottage door.*) It seems fine, now, the sky is clearing.

BESSY. So it is, sir! the setting sun makes it look like a dish of fried eggs and bacon.

STERN. Away, home, and not a word, mind, of whom you've seen here.

BESSY. I won't say a word. (*aside as she goes out.*) What a pity I wont.

Exit, D. F.

SAM. (*taking pair of pistols from table drawer and placing them on table.*) Here are the poppers.

STERN. (*aside to SAM and bringing him forward.*) We shan't want them. (*showing knife.*) This makes no noise.

SAM. (*trembling.*) But suppose he resists?

BEN. Suppose he does—we're two to one. Hark! don't you hear how he's snoring? I'll be bound he's not seen the inside of a bed these two nights; I know what your sailors are after a long cruise, they sleep as fast as rocks. (*taking up jacket.*) I wonder who he is? (*reading name in jacket.*) "Benjamin Foster."

JENNY. (*aside.*) My father!

STERN. (*looking round at SAM.*) What do you say?

SAM. I didn't say anything.

STERN. You did; you said something about your father.

SAM. How could I? vy, I never had one! it must have been the sailor chap above, beating about in the land of dreams.

(JENNY advances to the table, takes pistols from it, and retreats under ladder.)

STERN. Now's our time, then, stick to me.

SAM. Like a blister.

(*Music.—They cautiously approach ladder, and JENNY confronts them with pistols.*)

JENNY. Stand back, villains! Father—father! Help—help! You will be murdered!

STERN. Dash the young imp's brains out.

(SAM advances on her, she fires pistol and he falls, STERNHOLD goes to seize her, she fires and misses him, they both seize her.

BEN. (waking up.) Hollo, mates, what's the row?

JENNY. (struggling with them.) They will murder me, father, they will kill me.

(BEN rushes down ladder and strikes them down, JENNY clinging to him—picture.

BEN. Speak, girl, who are you?

JENNY. Jenny Foster—your own dear child.

BEN. My child! Why you couple of double distilled d—d swabs—I see your drift now, and I'll hang you both as high as the masthead.

STERN. You've got to take us first, and we are two to one; stick to me, Sam.

(Music.—They cross round stage to R. to attack him with their knives, and as their backs are turned to door in flat—BESSY enters and knocks down STERNHOLD with birch broom—JACK RADDIPOLE enters at the same time, and throws a quartern loaf at SAM, which knocks him down—SAM rises and is knocked down by the bread JACK continues to throw from his basket—BESSY continues beating STERNHOLD with broom. JENNY clinging to BEN, exclaims—"You are saved, father! you are saved!"—Tableau.

END OF ACT I.

A C T I I .

SCENE I.—Churchyard by Moonlight, and distant Landscape. Tombstone, l. c., on which is inscribed, "Sacred to the Memory of Mary Foster," other tombstones R. and L.

Enter BEN, r. u. e., carrying JENNY in his arms.

BEN. Come, come—rouse up, Jenny, my angel, you're safe now, and in your father's arms.

JENNY. (reviving.) Safe do you say! and in my father's arms! I knew, I felt that it was Providence that led me to follow your steps, and my reward is here, my reward is here.

(embracing him.)

BEN. And when I leave you again, may I be set adrift in a butter tub, without rudder or compass ; you my Jenny, let me take a good long observation of you ; why when I went away you were no higher than my knee, and here you are all a blowing and a growing with a regular taut and trim little lass, as handsome as the figurehead of a heavenly angel of happiness. But I've got such a coil of questions to launch out, that splice my old shoes if I know how to begin, but there's one tossing about in my bosom which can't be kept down no how. How's my dear Mary, your mother.

JENNY. (*pointing to tombstone*) Read that, father, read that.

BEN. (*crossing and reading it.*) Dead ! no, no—I can't be reading the right words ; my top lights must be queer. (*rubbing his eyes.*) Dead ! what my Mary—my—my—(*falling on grave.*) This is too much for me ; I—I can't stand against it—my tears must flow or they'll choke me. (*weeping.*)

JENNY. Mother strove to bear up like a trusting hopeful parent as she was, but when three years had passed away, and every day that rose in hope would set in disappointment—then the burning sorrow sank slowly into her heart, the chain of love and constancy was broken, the rose fell from its stem, it withered and it died.

BEN. But I did write, Jenny, although they told me that uncertain and long would be the day before I could hope they would arrive, but still I sent, knowing that a word from me would shed a joy round the old hearth at home—and cheer you all up till Providence spared me to return. I have returned, and this is my welcome—this my recompense. (*weeping.*)

JENNY. Don't give way, father, don't give away—granny and I have cried for weeks together, but we have learnt to know that mother is in a better world, where justice is done to all—where the poor beggar takes his place by the side of kings—where our reward goes not by rank but by goodness ; where we learn that our mission on this earth was not scorn and oppression to those beneath us, not indifference to suffering virtue, nor contempt for struggling poverty, but to cherish our fellow-creatures in one great bond of love, to feel another's woes, to dry misfortune's tears, and lead with gentle hand the erring back to innocence.

BEN. And my poor old mother—

JENNY. Thank Heaven, father, she bears up better than one would think.

BEN. Sustained and comforted by you, my angel, I am sure of it.

JENNY. I do what I can, father, for her, for may I not one

day be as old as she is. But she has been sadly pinched by want of late ; and the good and generous, like she is, feel their poverty the deeper, because they are made to know that in the eyes of some folks there is no crime so great as being poor.

BEN. Oh, Ben—Ben, you swab, this is your fault ; this comes of leaving home and friends for a wandering life, when your true place was home, and your mother and wife your care. But why abroad such a day as this, my darling ?

JENNY. Because, father, I had resolved to go forth to seek work, or if need be even to beg, rather than see granny want ; but she forbade me to ask charity of any one, and I promised I would not. The good old soul had given me this to procure food with—(*showing paper with ring in it.*) my poor dead mother's wedding ring.

BEN. (*taking it, and pressing it to his lips.*) My poor Mary, my poor Mary ! How well do I remember the morn, that happy smiling wedding morn, that I placed it on her finger. Then, full of youthful hope, we looked forward to a happy voyage o'er life's troubled waters, we launched our bark with confidence, nor dreamt that storms would wreck our worldly hopes, and death summon to his gloomy shore, so young, the happy bride that hung upon the arm of him who now stands here a broken-hearted wanderer. (*weeping.*)

JENNY. No, no, father, say not so ; think of your poor mother, who needs all our care and kindness.

BEN. True, Jenny, true, I'd forgotten her. It ain't for me to stand here piping my eye, when I should be comforting her.

JENNY. We'll seek this spot again, father, when you are more calm. Every sabbath morn I visit poor mother's grave, to deck it over with flowers, and pray for a happier fate in this world than hers, who bloomed but to wither, whose star of hope sank in gloom, obscured by the dark clouds of misfortune and despair.

BEN. True, poor child ; but there is one still whose declining burden of life we can lighten, and anchor safely in the port of comfort. Poor mother, I have at least you and Jenny left me, come. (*going L.*)

Enter BESSY and JACK, R. U. E.

BESSY. Avast there, and bring to, as you sailors say—don't go without us—let's sail in convoy. Splice the mainbrace together with our moon-rakers and door-scrappers—sky-scrapers, I mean—flying at our beam ends, and our anchor nailed to the mast. There's a bit of nautical sea lingo for you. (c.)

JACK. (R.) Bravo, Bessy, you've a heart as soft as a sponge

cake, which rises at the call of distress like a lump of dough in our oven, and—

BESSY. (*putting her hand over his mouth.*) Shut the door of your oven till further orders.

JENNY. Dear Bessy, if it hadn't been for you and Jack, what would have been our fate?

BESSY. Why, you'd have been sent to that undiscovered country from which no traveller gets a return ticket.

BEN. (*crossing to her.*) Give us your hand, my lass—what a pity it is there ain't promotion for such as you.

BESSY. I only wish there was, and they'd make me First Lord of the Admiralty; I wouldn't send a fleet to sea to float about like ducks and drakes in a millpond—not I, but let our brave sailors go in and win, as they used to do.

BEN. Ay, ay, my lass, well said; but do you and Jack, there—I like the name of Jack, it smells of pitch and tar—just bear down to the old woman's cottage and break the news of my arrival in as smooth sailing a manner as you can, in case I should bring her up with a round turn when she claps eyes on me!

JENNY. Do, Bessy, you are our dearest and best friend in all times, and the best girl in the world.

JACK. So she is, Jenny, and although I'm a baker, I would not give her up to be Master of the Rolls.

BESSY. Now, Jack, leave all the talking to me, I know how to do it best.

JACK. I see I must hold my tongue, or I shall get one in the bread basket.

JENNY. Hasten, Bessy, and cheer up old granny, and say that we're on the road home to her as fast as the wings of love will bear us.

BESSY. Come along, Jack, coil up your bowsprit, shiver your mainmast, reef your canvas in the wind's eye, and make all sail for old Dame Foster—yoho!

Exeunt BESSY and JACK, L. 1 E.

BEN. Lord love that girl, she's more of a man than I am, after all.

JENNY. That's right, father—I'm glad to see you smile again. Let us hasten home, and to-morrow we will again visit this spot with thankful, chastened hearts, and offer up a prayer for your safe return o'er the grave of poor mother who was not fated to behold the day that gave you back to us as true and constant as when you first turned sailor.

Exeunt L. 1 E.

SCENE II.—*Wintry Landscape. (2nd grooves.)*

Enter BESSY and JACK, l. h.

BESSY. Come along, Jack, isn't it pleasant to go on an errand that gives happiness to those we love.

JACK. Delicious! It makes the crust of my heart rise like a mince pie in a hot oven.

BESSY. You've a heart, Jack; I don't believe you ever took the taters from under the poor people's meat on a Sunday.

JACK. Not I—my heart's full weight with a bit over on the top.

BESSY. I believe you, Jack, you're the flower of your business, and one of the best bred young men in the neighbourhood.

JACK. And you're a crummy little turnover twisted round my heart, and done brown in the oven of my affections.

BESSY. And who knows but some day we may have a little baker's shop of our own.

JACK. And draw a batch of young uns on our own account.

BESSY. Jack, Jack, you are looking too far into the flour sack. Don't reckon your chickens before they're hatched.

JACK. Very true, Bessy, never begin to make a pudding till you've got the flour.

BESSY. Castles in the air, and built of penny loaves.

JACK. Bread won't rise until there's something to light the oven fire with.

BESSY. A roll in the bin of misfortune may make a man turn crusty.

JACK. No one pays duty for the corn on their toes.

BESSY. But a good heart, Jack, is like a good customer, it pays you with interest for your labour, and encourages you to lay in a fresh stock.

JACK. But what a careless baker I am, to stand here talking to my sweetheart, while my customers are waiting for their bread for tea; why I deserve to have to toddle to 'em as fast as I can, and sing out with all my might—"baker."

Exit JACK, r.

BESSY. (*calling after him.*) Don't forget to call at Mrs. Foster's as you go along. But I'm sure he won't, for Jack's made of the best bread, full weight, and no lead under the scale.

Exit, r. h.

Enter STERNHOLD and SAM, l. h.—SAM'S nose is bleeding

SAM. If ever I see that baker chap in our street by himself, me and about a dozen of our pals will drop on him, and give him the *awfullest* towelling he ever did have. That sailor's got

safe into port now, while I'm left to reflect how I like my claret being drawn.

STERN. We'll nab him yet—I know where to drop on him in another way. I remember the fellow now, and where he lives, I'd forgotten his features ; it seems he has been to sea the last half dozen years, and now thinks to remain ashore at his ease. I'll see all about that.

SAM Good luck to you, I wish you would, a cove vot can hit as hard as he can, ought to be found full employment in whopping his country's enemy.

STERN. And so he shall ; I've been speaking to two of the pressgang in the neighbourhood—they're to meet me here—see that no one is about while I give the signal. (*goes r. and gives a low whistle.*)

Enter CLINCHER and SHARPEYE, R. H.

CLINCH. Here we are, mate.

STERN. I want you to do that little business for me to-night.

CLINCH. I'll do your business for you, never fear.

STERN. The service wants men, I believe.

SHARP. Yes, we want *two* men especially.

STERN. Then I'll put you in the way of getting them.

CLINCH. I'm sure you will.

SAM. (*touching his hand.*) You won't forget us, will you ?

(*crossing to them.*)

SHARP. You may depend upon that.

SAM. Success to industry ; they say it always prospers.

STERN. Are you and your men ready now ?

SHARP. We're always ready—my name's Sharpeye, I never lose sight of my man.

CLINCH. And mine's Clincher, I hold werry tight.

SAM. You certainly couldn't have met with more business-like men than we are, nor with men more suitable for a job on the quiet than you are.

STERN. Follow me, and I'll put you on the scent.

SAM. Now, isn't it touching to see four—what do you call the word ? honest, ah ! that's it—to see four honest men like us uniting to serve their country ?

SHARP. I've merely to remark that my name's Sharpeye.

CLINCH. And mine Clincher.

Stern. Come on, then.

(*Music.—They Exeunt, r.*)

SCENE III.—*Same as Act I, Scene I.—The Interior of Mrs. Foster's Cottage. The snow is seen falling without.*

MRS. FOSTER discovered looking from the window.

MRS. F. Thicker and faster falls the snow, and no Jenny—no sky, no horizon, no object, on which to rest the eye, but all one waste of snow which hurts the eye to gaze upon. I must go forth to meet her, she must have sank down overpowered by the cold. Oh, to die upon that lonely moor, to sit helplessly down and find a tomb in the melting snow-drift. Heaven aid you, my darling child. I will seek you and perish by your side.

Going, D. F., meets

JACK, who enters, D. F.

JACK. Now, Mrs. Foster, where do you think you're running to in that manner, why, you're not going out such a day as this?

MRS. F. Don't stay me, I must go and seek Jenny, she is perishing—I know she is, let me pass, let me pass. (*going.*)

JACK. Don't you be so crusty, she isn't perishing, she's coming here as fast as her little trotters will carry her, and somebody's coming with her—why, what's the matter? you're turning as white as a flour sack, don't be done brown by your feelings, be a brick.

MRS. F. You don't mean to say that, that—(*bursts into tears.*) You know what I mean?

JACK. (*wiping away a tear.*) Just drop that, for I always feel as if I've a hot roll in my throat when I see a woman cry. Now, prepare yourself; don't faint away on the spot, because I don't know how to bring you to again, but just listen, like a good, crummy-hearted creature, as you are, when I tell you that I've seen Ben.

MRS. F. (*falling on her knees.*) Thank Heaven! thank Heaven! but—

JACK. I told him I'd come and tell you that he was coming, and that Bess was coming, and so they are, the whole batch will be here directly to raise the upper crust of your heart, and make your sorrows all vanish like a snowball in our Sunday oven.

MRS. F. And what a scene for him to witness, our goods on the point of being taken from us, and our hard-hearted landlord and the brokers in the next room.

JACK. Don't fret about that. Ben's loaded with guineas—the Bank of England's nothing to him.

BEN. (*without.*) Where is she? Where's mother? Bless her old eyes!

Music.—Enter BEN, JENNY, and BESSY, D. F.

MRS. F. (*embracing him.*) My son! my son! and Jenny safe! Now let me die in peace, holding my children to my heart.

BEN. Die! no, I'm blowed if you shall, I'll die myself first, a hundred times over.

BESSY. So you shall, Ben, and I'll help you. (*JACK whispers to BEN.*) No, you don't mean that! (*JACK points off, R. D.*) I'll have 'em out.

(*Music.—Runs in—a noise is heard, and GRUBBLETON and the BROKER'S MEN are bundled out by BEN, who enters after them, R. door.*)

BEN. (*giving bank note to GRUBBLETON.*) Sheer off—make a clear run of it.

GRUB. Well, but—

BEN. Will you sheer off?

GRUB. But this is a ten pound note, it's more than my demand.

BEN. Then I'll take the change out in wolloping—clear the decks. (*bonneting GRUBBLETON.*) Lend a hand, Jack. (*Music.—JACK and BEN beat GRUBBLETON and MEN off, L. C.*) Now, mother, let us bring ourselves to an anchor in the old chimney corner, and I'll open the log book of my adventure and square the reckoning as to my long silence; with a bleeding heart I learned from Jenny her mother's early fate, and until I stand clear in your eyes, free from a doubt as to my constancy to Mary, I am neither a sailor or a man.

Enter STERNHOLD, SAM, CLINCHER, SHARPEYE, and MARINES, L. C.

STERN. (*pointing to BEN.*) There's your man.

JENNY. The villains who would have murdered you, father! oh, save me, save me from them. (*clings to BEN.*)

BEN. (*R. C.*) Why, you piratical miscreants, how dare you enter an honest man's house without dreading that the roof won't fall and crush you?

STERN. (*L. C.*) All houses are the same to the pressgang when the service wants men.

BEN. Pressed!

JENNY. No, no! oh, men—men, if you have hearts like human beings, look around this humble home, and consider what you do. Here stands my father, after a hard and perilous voyage, safe once more in the arms of those Heaven has spared to welcome him, and will you make that heart desolate, will you break the hearts of those who call him son and father? No, no! I am sure you will not; for if you do, the blow falls

not alone, it strikes down a loving helpless child, a broken-hearted mother.

SAM. (l.) However painful this here may be to us ; still as patriots to our country we must do our duty.

BESSY. (c.) I wish it was my duty to pump on you, I wouldn't leave off till the Thames was dry. (*goes up.*)

MRS. F. (r.) We are doomed to misery, it is Heaven's will.

BEN. Hear me, villains ! I have served my country faithfully for six years. I have reached the home of my youth once again, and I warn you, I never will cross that threshold a living man, and leave these helpless beings once more to the mercy of a hard and grinding world. Here is my heart, let your men plant their bullets here, for I would rather die under the roof where I first saw light, than stir one inch a pressed, unwilling man.

JACK. (c.) Ben, just look here, you've got a daughter, you've got a mother—I've neither one nor t'other ; you've got to look after them, and do the best for 'em—I've nothing to leave behind me in the shape of relations. I shall be no great loss to society, anybody can cry—"baker!" (*to CLINCHER.*) So take the doughy instead of the tar, and I'll give you a half a quarten buster into the bargain.

CLINCH. (c.) No go—we want two men, and we must have 'em.

JENNY. (*clinging to BEN.*) Oh father ! father !

BESSY. (*embracing JACK.*) Oh, Jack, you're done brown this time.

STERN. (l. c.—*to CLINCHER.*) Go to work.

CLINCH. I mean to. (*slapping STERNHOLD on the shoulder.*) My name's Clincher, I hold very tight.

SHARP. (l.—*slaps SAM on shoulder, who is on his r.*) My name's Sharpeye, I never lose sight of my man.

STERN. What do you mean ?

SAM. (l. c.) What's your hobject ?

CLINCH. The service wants men, and I'll never rob an honest home while two idle scoundrels like you are at hand.

STERN. (*drawing a knife.*) Never !

CLINCH. (*placing pistol at his head.*) Lead travels quicker than steel.

SAM. (*snivelling.*) But I say, you're gammoning, arn't you ?

BESSY. (*to him.*) However painful this way be to us, still as patriots to our country we must do our duty.

CLINCH. (*to STERNHOLD.*) We wait your pleasure, sir, this company wont suit you I'm sure, it's not in your line.

SAM. (*to SHARPEYE.*) If you'll only only let me go and bid my grandmother good bye, I'll be back in ten minutes. (*going.*)

SHARP. My name's Sharpeye. Marines! (*they come down.*) Fall in. (*to STERNHOLD and SAM.*) Right about face, march!

Music.—Exeunt STERNHOLD, SAM, who bursts into a loud roar, and MARINES, followed by CLINCHER and SHARPEYE, D. F.

JENNY. You are saved, father, you are saved!

MRS. F. Yes, yes, he will never leave us more.

BEN. Never, mother, never! no more shall Jenny trudge over the bleak common to seek for food, alone and unprotected, her only sustaining hope, the poor robin, who like herself, poor and perishing with the cold, yet led her over the moor to save a father's life.

BESSY. It was no robin, but an *angel* from the skies that led her on.

JENNY. (*to AUDIENCE.*) And who should dare laugh at our belief! For are not the resolves which nobly taken, enable us to battle with the storms of life *Angels?* Ay, and *Guardian Angels*, too. So Heaven speed the Winter Robin on repeated missions.

CURTAIN.

EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R.	R. C.	C.	L. C.	L.
Right.	Right Centre.	Centre.	Left Centre.	Left.

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