

GOLD!

A DRAMA,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY CHARLES READE,

*One of the Authors of "Masks and Faces,"
&c. &c. &c.*

 The Author reserves to himself the right of Translating GOLD
into Foreign Languages.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

909X³
First Performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane,
Monday, January 10, 1853.

CHARACTERS.

GEORGE SANDFORD (<i>a Young Farmer,</i>)	} MR. DAVENPORT. <i>betrothed to Susan Merton)</i>
WILLIAM SANDFORD (<i>his Brother</i>)	
HENRY WINCHESTER, ESQ.	MR. MOORHOUSE.
ISAAC LEVI (<i>a Jew</i>)	MR. HUGHES.
ROBINSON (<i>a Thief</i>)	MR. EDWARD STIRLING.
MR. MEADOWS (<i>a Corn Factor and Money Lender</i>)	MR. HENRY WALLACK.
CRAWLEY (<i>an Attorney's Clerk</i>)	MR. H. LEE.
OLD FARMER SANDFORD	MR. CHARLES SELBY.
MR. MERTON (<i>a Yeoman</i>)	MR. GOEGH.
MR. TOOVEY (<i>a Magistrate</i>)	MR. WHITE.
JOHN SIMS (<i>a Waiter</i>)	MR. HAROLD.
FARMER'S BOY	MR. YARNOLD.
LONDON POLICEMAN	MASTER GREEN.
CONSTABLE	MR. BROMLEY.
ENSIGN HULSONE	MR. KING.
BLACK WILL (<i>a Robber</i>)	MR. CAVILL.
JEM OF THE BUSH	MR. LICKFOLD.
NATHAN (<i>a Young Jew</i>)	MR. ANDERSON.
THOMAS (<i>a Servant</i>)	MR. COOKE.
MINERS	MR. SANDERS.
SUSANNA MERTON	Messrs. KINGSTONE, BIRD, and BROOKES.
SARAH (<i>a Farm Servant</i>)	MISS FANNY Vining.
MARY McDODGHERTY (<i>an Irish Emigrant</i>)	MISS ST. CLARE.
	MRS. GRIFFITHS.

Villagers, Miners, Soldiers, &c. &c.

The Action of the Piece passes in
ENGLAND (in the Spring of 1847) during the First, Second,
and (in the Autumn of 1848) Fifth Acts—and in AUSTRALIA
during the Third and Fourth, in January, 1848.

COSTUMES OF 1847, but appropriate to the circumstances
and position of the Characters.

Time in Performance, Two Hours and a Quarter.

GOLD can only be Played by written permission of the Author, for
which, apply to C. READE, Esq., Garrick Club, King Street,
Covent Garden.

✓ X6385610

G O L D.

A C T I.

SCENE.—*Space in front of a Farm Yard, lying in a bottom—House R.H.—Barn L.H.—Railings c., and an Acclivity beyond.*

Enter MR. WINCHESTER and GEORGE SANDFORD.

GEO. Emigrate? Sir! Me leave home, and England, and the plough, to keep sheep in a desert? That will never be!

WIN. You know me, Sandford, and I know you. Go with me to Australia—stay with me for one year, and after that I'll square accounts with you for saving my life in that thundering mill-pool.

GEO. Oh! Mr. Winchester, that's an old story,—haven't you forgot that yet? (*looks down and smiles*)

WIN. Not quite. You shall have five hundred sheep, and a run for them; and we will both come home rich, and consequently respectable.

GEO. It is a handsome offer, Sir, and a kind offer, and like yourself. But transplanting one of us? Dear me, Sir, it's like taking up an oak tree, thirty years in the ground. Besides, did you ever see my cousin Susanna, Sir?

WIN. See her? Why, what am I looking at all church time? Miss Merton is a lovely girl!

GEO. Isn't she, Sir?

WIN. Oho! Well, that is no reason. We don't go to Australia to die,—we go to make money, and come home respectable—rich, that is. Honest industry is the game of glory now. Spades are trumps! Will you have a cigar, Farmer? (*strikes a light*)

GEO. I don't care if I do, Sir. I never got beyond a yard of clay, though, till to-day.

WIN. Then I must enlighten you. (*aside*) I won't give it up.

GEO. I say, Sir, seems to me the fire is uncommon near the chimblies here. (*looks at end of cigar, and draws a puff*—WINCHESTER laughs)

WIN. Will you show me your farming stock?

GEO. (*nods*)

WIN. Then lead the way, Farmer.

GEO. Aye, sure, Sir. After you, Sir, if you please.

Exeunt R.H.

Enter MR. MEADOWS.

MEA. And I have escaped love all these years, to dote upon a woman now! What magic is in this Susanna Merton, that I, who live for money, would pave the ground she walks upon with my gold, if she would but walk towards me. When I think that she prefers that George Sandford, I could curse all the world!—a dull dog, that could be just as happy with any other girl,—an oaf, that does not even see his rivals—does not dream that his own brother loves her—and that I love her, and will take her from both of them! A few weeks and a few mugs of ale would wash her from what little mind either of them has. But I never loved a woman before, nor ever shall again! She is my very breath! I will risk character, money, life for her! She shall be mine! If I can win her fairly, so best—if not—I will win her! I will wind like a serpent—I will spring like a tiger—but I will have her!—Ah! the constable! What is up now?

Enter CONSTABLE, and LONDON POLICEMAN in plain clothes.

CON. Master Meadows, Sir, I have news for you. Your pocket was picked last Martinmas Fair?

MEA. Yes.

CON. Should you know any of the money?

MEA. I could not swear to any but three notes of the Farnborough Bank.

CON. (*shows a note*) Is this one of them?

MEA. It is. Who passed it?

CON. George Sandford's lodger, Robinson, if that is his name,—but I suspect he is a London thief, taking an airing.

MEA. (*aside*) Here's luck! (*aloud*) Who is this?

CON. Gentleman from Bow Street, come to see if he knows him.

MEA. Is he at home?

CON. No—he is out fishing. We'll hang about the farm till he comes back, and then we'll take him.

POLICE. You had better be at hand, Sir, to identify the notes.

MEA. I will not leave the premises. Stop—be cautious! If he is an old hand, he will twig the—

POLICE. Oh! I am dark, Sir. He won't know me till I am near enough to put the darbies on.

Exeunt POLICEMAN and CONSTABLE.

MEA. Capital! This will blacken that George Sandford! He is as fond of this Robinson as a cow is of a calf. He has been warned a hundred times against the acquaintance, but he never would listen. His friend a thief! Ha, ha! Why, he'll be ready to fly the village for shame, for he is as proud as Lucifer at bottom. I have worked a spoke in George Sandford's wheel. He told me he should be here to-day.—Ah! who is this? That old Jew! I know what he comes for.

Enter Isaac Levi.

—Well, Mr. Levi—if it is about that house you are in, you may keep your breath to cool your porridge.

LEVI. Mr. Meadows, I have lived there twenty years. I pay a fair rent; but if you think any one would give more, you shall lose nothing by me. I will pay a little more,—and you know your rent is secure.

MEA. I do.

LEVI. Thank you, Sir. Well, then——

MEA. Well, then, next Lady Day you turn out bag and baggage!

LEVI. Nay, Sir, hear me, for you are younger than I. When the hair on this white head was brown, I travelled in the East—I sojourned in Madras and Benares, in Bagdad, Ispahan, Mecca, and Bassora, and found no rest. When my hair began to turn grey, I traded in Petersburgh, and Rome, and Paris, in Vienna and Lisbon, and other Western cities. I was driven to and fro in Europe, and, like my nation, found no rest. I came to this little town, where least of all I thought to pitch my tent for life. But here, Sir, the God of my fathers gave me my wife, and here he took her to himself again.

MEA. (*roughly*) What the deuce is all this to me, man?

LEVI. Much, Sir, if you are what men say—for men speak well of you. Be patient, and hear me. In the house you have bought, two children were born to me, and died from me; and there my Leah died also;—and there, at times, in the silent hours, I seem to hear their voices and their feet. In another house I shall never hear them—I shall be quite alone. Have pity on me, Sir, an aged and a lonely man! Tear me not from the shadows of my dead! (*pause*) Let me prevail with you.

MEA. No!

LEVI. No? Then you must be an enemy of Isaac Levi.

MEA. Yes!

LEVI. Ha! What have I done for this?

MEA. You lend money.

LEVI. A little, Sir, now and then—a very little.

MEA. A great deal! You have no money in hand when the security is bad; but when the security is good, no person has ever found the bottom of Isaac Levi's purse. Well, what you do on the sly, I do on the sly, old sixty per cent.

LEVI. The world is wide enough for us both, good Sir.

MEA. It is. Go where you like; for the little town of Farnborough is not wide enough for me and any man that works my business for his own pocket.

LEVI. This is not enmity, Sir—it is but a matter of profit and loss, trust me.

MEA. I'd trust you as far as I could fling a bull by the tail! You gave me your history—here's mine. I have always put my foot on whatever thing and whatever man has stood in my path. I was poor—I am rich,—and that is my policy.

LEVI. It is a frail policy. Some man will be sure to put his foot on you, sooner or later.

MEA. What! do ye threaten me?

LEVI. No, Sir. I but tell you what these old eyes have seen in every nation, and read in books that never lie. No man can defy his kind. The strong man is sure to find one as strong, and more skilful—the cunning man, one as adroit, and stronger than himself. Be advised, then. Do not trample on one of my people. Nations and men that oppress us, never thrive. Let me rather have to bless you. An old man's blessing is gold. See these grey hairs,—my sorrows have been as many as they are. His share of the curse that is upon his tribe, has fallen on Isaac Levi. I have been driven to and fro, like a leaf, many years; and now I long for rest. Let me rest in my little tent, till I rest for ever. Oh! let me die where those I have loved have died, and there let me be buried!

MEA. If you like to hang yourself before next Lady Day, I give you leave; but after Lady Day, no more Jewish dogs shall die in my house, or be buried in my garden.

LEVI. (*giving way to his pent-up wrath*) Irreverent cur! d'ye rail on the afflicted of heaven? I spit upon ye, and I curse ye! Be accursed! (*throws his hands up*) Whatever is the secret wish of your black heart, heaven wither it! Ha ah! you wince already!—all men have secret wishes. May all the good luck you have be wormwood, for want of that—that—that! May you be near it—close to it—upon it—burn for it—and lose it! May it sport with your soul——

Re-enter GEORGE SANDFORD, with the air of one attracted by the speaker.

—till you feel Gehenna upon earth!

MEA. I'll smash your viper's tongue! (*aims a blow at LEVI with his stick*)

GEO. (*coolly parries it*) Not if I know it! You are joking, Master Meadows. Why, the man is twice your age, and nothing in his hand but his fist. (*to LEVI*) Who are you, old man—and what do you want?

MEA. He insults me because I won't have him for a tenant. Who is he? A villainous old Jew!

LEVI. Yes, young man, I am Isaac Levi, a Jew! (*to MEADOWS*) D'ye call yourself a heathen? Ye lie, ye cur! The heathen were not without their starlight from heaven, they respected sorrow and grey hairs.

MEA. You shall smart for this! I'll show you what my religion is!

GEO. Now don't be so aggravating, old man. And you, Master Meadows, should know how to make light of an old man's tongue,—it is like a woman's—it is all he has got to hit with. Leastways, you mustn't lift hand to him on my premises, or you'll have to settle with me first, and I don't think that will suit your book.

LEVI. He ?—he dares not ! See—see ! he doesn't look you in the face. Any man that has read men from East to West, can see "lion" in your eye, young man, and "cowardly wolf" in his !

MEA. (*trembling with rage*) Lady-Day, Master Isaac—Lady-Day !

GEO. Lady-Day ? Confound Lady-Day, and every day of the sort ! There, don't you be so spiteful, old man. Why, if he isn't all of a tremble ! (*calls*) Sarah !

Enter SARAH, meeting him.

—Take the old man in, and give him the best that is going, and his mug and his pipe ; (*whispers*) and don't go lumping down the chine under his nose, like a thoughtless lass as y're.

LEVI. I must not eat with you ; but I thank you, young man. I will go in and compose myself, for passion is unseemly at my years. (*stops suddenly at door*) Peace be under this roof, and comfort and love follow me into this dwelling !

GEO. Thank ye kindly ! There—go in, and forget all your troubles awhile by my fireside, my poor old man.

LEVI. (*after a struggle, gives him his hand*) Isaac Levi is your friend !

He casts a long glance of hatred at MEADOWS, and exits into house—GEORGE looks after him.

MEA. (*aside*) One more down to your account, George Sandford !

Exit L.H.

GEO. Old man's words seem to knock against my brain. Master Meadows— Gone—eh ? That man has everybody's good word—parson's and all ; but somehow I never thought he was the right stuff, and now I'm sure.—Oh ! here's Bill at last.

Enter WILLIAM SANDFORD.

—Better late than never.

WIL. I couldn't get away before. Here's the money for the sheep—thirteen pound ten. No offer for the cow—Jem's driving her home.

GEO. Well, and the money—the eighty pounds ?

WIL. I haven't got it. Here's your draft—the Bank wouldn't take it.

GEO. They wouldn't take it ? Ay, our credit's down—the whole town knows our rent is overdue. What's to be done ? I suppose you know money must be got some way.

WIL. Ask a loan of a neighbour.

GEO. Oh, Bill, to ask a loan of a neighbour, and be denied—it is bitterer than death ! You can do it.

WIL. I ? Am I master here ? The farm is not farmed my way, nor ever was. Give me the plough handle, and I'll cut the furrow, George.

GEO. No doubt—no doubt! You'd like to draw the land dry with potatoes, and have fourscore hogs snoring in the farmyard. You want to be Elder Brother. Well, kill me, for that is the only way to it.

WIL. So be it, George! You got us into the mud, *Elder Brother*—you get us out of the mire.

GEO. (*in a subdued tone*) Who shall I ask?

WIL. Uncle Merton, or Meadows the corn-factor,—it would not be much to either of them.

GEO. Show my empty pockets to Susanna's father? Oh, Will!—And I've just offended Meadows a bit,—besides, he's a hard man—a man that never knew trouble or ill luck. They are like flints, all that sort.

WIL. I'll ask him, if you will try uncle—the first that meets his man to begin.

GEO. That is fair—I agree. You're in luck, Bill, here's your man.

Exit hastily.

WIL. Confound it!

Re-enter MEADOWS.

—I didn't know you were here, Sir—I wanted to speak to you.

MEA. I am at your service, Mr. William.

WIL. Well, Sir, George and I are a little short, just at present—it is only for a time—and *George says* he would take it very kind if you could lend us a hundred pounds, just to help us over the stile.

MEA. My dear boy, I should be delighted—and, if you had only asked me yesterday, I could have done it—but my business drinks a deal of money, and I laid out all my *loose cash* yesterday, and sha'n't have any coming in this three months. But of course it is of no consequence—another time. Good morning.

Exit.

Re-enter GEORGE.

GEO. Will!

WIL. He says he has no money loose.

GEO. He is a liar! He paid £1500 into the bank last week, and you know it—didn't you tell him so?

WIL. No—what use? A man that lies to avoid lending won't be driven to lend.

GEO. You don't play fair—you could have got it from Meadows, but you want to drive me against my sweetheart's father. You are false, my lad.

WIL. You are the only man that ever said so—and you dared not, if you weren't my brother.

GEO. I'd say a deal more, if it wasn't for that bit of ill luck.

WIL. Well, show your courage to Uncle Henry, for here he is.

Enter MR. MERTON.

—Uncle, George wants to speak to you.

Exit.

MERTON. That is lucky, for I want to speak to George.

GEO. (*aside*) Who would have thought of his being here?

MERTON. George, you are threshing out new wheat.

GEO. (*looking down*) Yes.

MERTON. That is a bad look-out—a farmer has no business to go to his barn-door for rent.

GEO. Where is he to go, then?—to the church-door, and ask for a miracle?

MERTON. No—to his ship-fold, to be sure.

GEO. You can do that—you have grass, and water, and everything to hand.

MERTON. And so must you do it, or you won't die a farmer. Now, George, I must speak to you seriously. You are a fine lad, and I like you very well, but I love my own daughter better. I have seen a pretty while how things are going here, and, if she marries you, she will have to keep you—instead of you, her. You are too much of a man, I hope, to eat a woman's bread; and, if you are not, I am man enough to keep the girl from it.

GEO. These are hard words to bear. Is this from Susan, as well as you?

MERTON. Susan's an obedient daughter, what I say *she'll* stand to; and I hope you know better, George, than tempt her to disobey me—you won't succeed, I can tell you.

GEO. Enough said, enough said—I've no need to tempt any girl.

MERTON. (*aside*) That's off my mind. Good morning, George.

Exit.

GEO. Good morning, *uncle!* My mother took him out of the dirt, or he'd not have a ship-fold to brag of—the ungrateful old thief!

Re-enter WILLIAM.

—Oh, my heart! my heart!

WIL. Well, will he lend it you?

GEO. I never asked him.

WIL. You never asked him!

GEO. Bill, he begun upon me at once—he sees we're going down-hill—and he as good as bade me not speak to Susan any more.

WIL. Well, it was your business to own the truth, and ask him to help us over the stile.

GEO. (*aside*) They are all against me. (*aloud*) You want to let me down lower than I would let that Carlo, dog of yours. You're no brother of mine.

WIL. (*sulkily*) A bargain's a bargain! I asked Meadows, and he said na—you fell talking with uncle about Susan, and never put the question to him at all. Who is false—eh?

GEO. If you call me false I'll knock your ugly head off, Sulky Bill!

WIL. You're false! and a fool into the bargain, Bragging George!

GEO. What! you will have it, then?

WIL. If you can give it me.

GEO. Well, if it is to be, I'll give you something to put you on your mettle. The best man shall farm "Bix Bottom," and the second-best shall be a servant on it—for I'm sick of this.

WIL. So am I! and have been this two years.

They shake hands, and then begin to spar—After a feint or two, GEORGE suddenly drops his hands, saying “Susan!” looks very sheepish—WILLIAM puts his hands in his pockets, and looks uneasy also.

Enter rapidly SUSANNA MERTON—she stands between WILLIAM and GEORGE.

SUSAN. What is this? (*a pause*)

GEO. William, there, shewing me a trick he learned at the fair—that is all, Susan.

SUSAN. That is a falsehood, George! You were fighting, you two boys, I saw your eyes flash. Oh, fie, fie! and now you tell me a falsehood to make me despise, as well as dread, you.

They both hang their heads.

SUSAN. Brothers fighting in a Christian land, within a stone's throw of a church where brotherly love is preached as a debt we owe to stangers, let alone our own blood?

WIL. Yes, it is a sin, so I ask your pardon, Susanna.

SUSAN. Oh, it wasn't your fault, I'll be bound. (*to GEORGE*) What a ruffian you must be, to shed your brother's blood!

GEO. La, Susan, I wasn't going to shed the beggar's blood—I was only going to give him a hiding for his impudence.

WIL. (*calmly*) Or take one for your own.

SUSAN. That is more likely. Take his hand this instant.

GEO. Well, why not? (*deprecatingly*) Don't be in such a passion, Susan, about nothing. (*they take hands*)

SUSAN. Now, you stay so, whilst I speak a word to you. You ought both to go on your knees, and thank Providence, that sent me here to prevent so great a crime—there. (*pause*) Your character must change greatly, George Sandford, before I trust myself to live in a house of yours.

GEO. Ah!—it is always poor George, that does *all* the wrong.

SUSAN. Oh!—I could scold William too, if you think I am as much interested in his conduct as yours.

GEO. No, no!—don't scold anybody but me, Susan! I deserve it most. I'll tell you, Susan, and then, perhaps, you'll forgive me;—and Bill, I ask your pardon.

WIL. (*sulkily*) No more about it, George, if you please.

GEO. Susan!—you don't know all I have to bear—my heart is sore. Uncle twitted me this morning with my ill luck, and almost bade me speak to you no more; and that is why, when William came at me, on the top of such a blow, it was more than I could bear; and, Susan, Uncle said you would stand to whatever he said.

SUSAN. George! I am sorry my father was so unkind.

GEO. Thank ye, Susan, kindly;—that is the first drop of dew that has fallen on me to-day.

SUSAN. But obedience to parents is a great duty, and I hope I shall never disobey my father.

GEO. (*testily*) Oh! I don't want any girl to be kind to me that doesn't love me. I am so unlucky, it wouldn't be worth while, you know.

SUSAN. (*sharply*) Well, I don't think it would be worth any girl's while, till your character and temper undergo a change.

GEO. Enough said!—I have no friend upon earth. (*turns up stage*) I am in everybody's way here.

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Enter ROBINSON.

ROB. (*entering*) Everybody is, in this country. For the fiftieth time, will you come to California, young gentleman, and make your fortune?

SUSAN. You have been there, and did not make yours.

ROB. I beg your pardon, Miss, I made it, or how could I have spent it.

WIL. Ay!—they say what comes by the wind goes by the water.

ROB. Alluding to the dust!

SUSAN. Gold dust especially!

ROB. That is not bad for Berkshire; but the ladies are sharp in every latitude. Miss Merton, a crop of gold does not come by the wind any more than a crop of wheat;—gold takes harder digging than ever you knew horses and oxen perspire for you, Sandford No. 2.

SUSAN. That is true. Do you hear that, Sandford No. 1? (*aside*) Sulky fellow.

WIL. Did you ever see a horse mow an acre of grass or oats?

ROB. Well! don't brag; he'll eat all you can mow, and never say a word about it.

They all laugh except GEORGE, who leans upon something, thoughtfully and sorrowfully. SUSAN glances uneasily towards him.

ROB. Well, my lad, you should have seen our shirts in California after a day's digging; if you had kept them in the river a week they wouldn't have been half as wet, and never a washerwoman nearer than two thousand miles.

WIL. Pheugh!

ROB. Who do you think did our washing, Miss Merton?

SUSAN. I suppose the mountain torrents, Mr. Robinson.

ROB. Ha, ha! No, Miss. China!

WIL. China? Why, that's—

SUSAN. Pooh! He means he washed them himself, in a punch-bowl.

ROB. Ha, ha!—good again. When the ladies do come out, it's dazzling. Well, I'll tell you, Miss. The little boys in California wanted two shillings a shirt for washing—so we sent them to China in ships. She did 'em for fourpence. We sent them Monday morning, just as we do here,—only, instead of Saturday, we got 'em back Saturday three weeks.

SUSAN. Two shillings a shirt? Why, they make them, and wash them, and sell them for that here.

ROB. Very much to their credit—over the left. Well, you see, Miss—I'll explain to you—Are you attending to me, Sandford No. 1.?

GEO. Ay—I hear you, whether I will or no.

ROB. What is the matter with him?

SUSAN. Oh! he is cross, that is all,—never mind him.

ROB. Well, young lady, work is rewarded in California—here it is snubbed. This very morning, I heard one of your clodhoppers say, "The Squire is a good gentleman—he often gives me a day's work." —*Gives* me a day's work! I should think it was the clodhopper *gave* the gentleman the day's work, and the gentleman gave him a shilling, and made five by it.

WIL. (*scratches his head*)

ROB. Ay—try and rake that idea into your upper soil, Sandford No. 2.—And that is the reason I invite my friend George to take his muscle, wind, pluck, backbone, and self out of this miserable country, and come where the best man has a chance to win.

SUSAN. It is very interfering of you.

ROB. Oh! I'll bring him back again. Come, George. England is the spot, if you happen to be married to a duke's daughter—and got fifty thousand a year—and two houses—and a coach—and a curriicle—and a Brougham—and ten brace of pointers—and a telescope, so big, that the stars have to move for *it*, instead of *it* for the stars—and no end of pretty housemaids—and a butler, with a poultice round his neck like a bishop's, and whiskers like a mop-head—and green peas all the year round—and a pew in the church, warmed with boiling Eau de Cologne—and a piano-forte in every blessed room in the house! But this Island is the Dead Sea to a poor man. Open one eye, George. This hole you are in is all poor, hungry, arable land, without a blade of grass,—you can't work it.

GEO. (*wincing*)

ROB. Cut it. Steal, beg, or borrow five hundred pounds. Carry out a cargo of pea-jackets and fourpenny bits, to swap for gold dust—a few tools, a stout heart, and a light pair of—oh no! “their name is never heard”—and we'll soon fill both pockets with yellow, George, in California!

GEO. A crust of bread in England, before buffalo beef in California. I could not live among all those thieves and butchers that are settled on that land like crows on a dead horse.

SUSAN. (*smiles triumphantly*) Do you think, because George grumbles all day, he would leave Bix? You don't know them. A good growl is better than a bad dinner to an English farmer—isn't it, George?

GEO. So they say that never farmed.

SUSAN. (*aside*) Poor George!

ROB. You see, Miss, George is an honest lad. Now, I adore honesty—it's foolish of me, but I can't help it—and that's why I can't bear to go and make my fortune, and leave you breaking your heart against the worst farm in the worst country a man can be flung away in. (*gives GEORGE his hand*)

GEO. And I like you, my lad, and thank you kindly for your good will. (*aside*) Strange that so many should sing me the same tune.

Enter SARAH from house.

SARAH. I wish you would come in to dinner, if you are coming at all.

Exit into house.

SUSAN. I want to speak to George first.

Exeunt WILLIAM and ROBINSON.

—That is a very bad acquaintance for you, I'm sure.

GEO. Why, what is wrong about him? He has been here three months, and never gave any offence.

SUSAN. Father says he has no business or trade, and he is not a gentleman—so he must be a rogue of some sort.

GEO. Uncle is not my friend. Robinson is my friend—that is his fault. A rogue?—he is the only creature that has spoken kind words to me to-day. Oh! I saw how bitter you looked at him for taking my hand.

SUSAN. You are a fool, George! You don't know how to read a woman, nor her words, nor her looks either. (*going*)

GEO. Forgive me, Susan! My heart feels like lead. Something is going to happen you or me. I hope it is me—not you.

SUSAN. George! don't be foolish—you will make me very angry with you.

GEO. And words have been said to me that will never go out of my heart. Your father has turned my blood to gall! I am all changed! I begin to hate the place where I was born!—I loved it well till to-day. And I feel as if everything was turning cold and slippery, and gliding from my hand in spite of me!

ISAAC LEVI appears at kitchen window.

SUSAN. (*uneasily*) Nonsense, George!

Re-enter WILLIAM.

WIL. Did you expect any one to look at the pigs?

GEO. No—why?

WIL. Because there are two strangers making themselves mighty busy in the yard—poking their noses into everything.

GEO. See what their business is—I know nothing about them.

Exit WILLIAM.

Re-enter MEADOWS, looking back triumphantly.

MEA. (*aside*) If I could bespeak luck to order, it could not go beyond this. (*aloud*) Good morning, Miss Merton.

SUSAN. Good morning, Mr. Meadows, you look so bright it is quite refreshing. We are all rather dull here, to-day.

Re-enter WILLIAM, very pale.

WIL. (*hesitating*) George, will you speak?

GEO. Out with it—I know it is some deadly ill luck, I've felt it coming all day—out with it.

WIL. There's a—a distress upon the farm, for rent.

GEO. A distress upon my farm?—upon my father's farm?

SUSAN. George, George! never mind—don't look so, don't look so! Can nothing be done? Where is my father?—they said he was here.

SUSAN is running out, but is met by MERTON who is re-entering.

MERTON. You had better go home, girl.

SUSAN. Oh, no, no! I have been too unkind to George already, father. (*advances towards GEORGE, but stops as MERTON speaks*)

MERTON. There—I told you how it must end, George.

SUSAN. (*turns deprecatingly on MERTON*)

GEO. (*fiercely*) What, do you come here to insult over me? I must be a long way lower than I am before I shall be as low as you were when my mother took you out of the workhouse and made a man of you!

SUSAN. George, George! stop, for pity's sake, before you say words that will separate us for ever! Father, how can you push poor George so hard?

Enter a SERVANT, L.H. 1 E., with a letter, which GEORGE takes.

SERV. You are to send an answer, if you please.

GEO. From Squire Winchester.

MERTON. What, does he write to you?

GEO. So it seems. (*reads the letter*) "George Sandford, my fine fellow, do think of it again. I have got two berths, in the ship that sails from Southampton to-morrow; you will have every comfort on the voyage—a great point—I'll do what I said for you, and, after one year, you will farm on your own account." He promised me five hundred sheep and a run for them. (*reads*) "I must have an honest man, and where can I find as honest a man as George Sandford?" Thank you, Mr. Winchester—thank you, Sir. (*he looks round on them all—reads*) "You saved my life; I can do nothing for you here, and you are doing no good—everybody says so." Everybody says so! (*reads*) "My heart is pretty stout, but home is home; and be assured that I wait with some anxiety to know whether my eyes are to look on nothing but water for the next four months, or are to be cheered by the sight of something from home—the face of a thorough bred English yeoman, and a friend, and—and—" (*falters*)

SUSAN. (*takes letter from him and reads*) "An upright, downright, honest man." And so you are, George! (*embraces him—reads*) "If the answer is favourable, a word is enough. Meet me this evening at the 'Crown' at Reading, and I will drive you to-morrow morning in Lord Tewkesbury's trap, which is gone forward for that purpose."

GEO. (*to SERVANT*) The answer is "Yes!"

Exit SERVANT, L.H. 1 E.

SUSAN. Yes ! yes !—what do you mean by yes ? He is asking you to go to Australia with him.

GEO. This gentleman respects me, if worse folk don't ; but it isn't the great bloodhounds and greyhounds that bark at misfortune's heels, it is only the village curs when all is done. This is my path—I'll pack up my clothes and go.

Exit into house, R.H.

SUSAN. Ah, father ! what have you done ?

MER. No more than my duty, girl, and I hope you will do no less than yours.

OLD S. (*without*) Wheel me out of doors into the sun.

Re-enter ROBINSON, wheeling out OLD SANFORD in a large chair.

WIL. George will forget her out there, and she him. Heaven forgive me for being glad my brother's going.

OLD S. The autumn sun is not so w-w-warm as she used to be.

ROB. What did I hear George say ?—where is he going ?

MEA. To Australia, he says.

ROB. To Australia ? He's mad !—there's no good to be done there. I wouldn't go there—

Re-enter cautiously CONSTABLE and OFFICER.

—If my passage was paid, a new suit of clothes found me, and a house provided for my reception, and the governor's gig to take me from the ship. Australia !

CONSTABLE and OFFICER take him—SUSAN, who was following GEORGE, looks back in dismay.

ROB. (*with a look of disgust*) Ugh !

POLICE. To Australia you'll go, Tom Lyon, alias Scott, alias Robinson ; and you'll have the new suit of clothes, and voyage paid, and a large house ashore made ready for your reception. (*puts handcuffs on*)

ROB. (*with dignity*) What am I to understand by this violence, from gentlemen who are perfect strangers to me ?

CONST. (*taking notes out of his pocket*) Mr. Meadows, what were the numbers of the notes you were robbed of ?

MEA. 381, 2, and 3.

CONST. 382 passed by this gentleman at the " White Lion," and the others found upon him—better leave them with the officer for the present.

ROB. (*snuffling*) Appearances are against me, Miss Merton, but my innocence will emerge all the brighter for this temporary cloud.

SUSAN. Oh ! I must go and tell George all this.

Exit.

ROB. (*drily*) Well, Jacobs, you seem pleased, and I am content I would rather have gone to California, but any place is better than England. Let chaps that never saw the world, and the heavenly countries there are in it, snivel at leaving this isle of rocks and fogs,

and taxes and nobs—the rich man's paradise—the poor man's—
I never swear, its vulgar.

Re-enter GEORGE and SUSAN.

GEO. A thief!—have I taken the hand of a thief?

ROB. It is a business like any other.

CONST. I'll go and put the horse to.

Exit.

GEO. If you have no shame, I have. I long to be gone now.
Oh! how I long to be gone from this nest of insults.

ROB. Did ever I take tythe from you, George? You have got a silver caudle cup, a heavenly old coffee pot, no end of spoons, double the weight the rogues make'em now. They are in a box, under your bed—count 'em—they are all right;—and, Miss Merton, your bracelet, the gold one, with the cameo, I could have had a hundred times. Miss Merton! ask him to shake hands with me at parting. I am so fond of him; and, perhaps, I shall never see him again.

GEO. Shake hands with you? If your hands were loose I should ram my fist down your throat. But there, you are not worth a thought, at such a time. You are a man in trouble, and so am I. I forgive you, and I pray heaven I may never see your face again. (*turns his back on ROBINSON*)

ROB. Well, Mr. Jacobs, am I to be put in the Pillory here? You should spare the feelings of an old friend—I may say a brother—for you were a thief, you know. I say, do you remember cracking the silversmith's shop in Lambeth along with Jem Salisbury, and—

POLICE. There, the gig is ready. Now it is time for us to go. (*he pushes ROBINSON out*)

Exeunt ROBINSON and POLICEMAN.

Enter a CARTER'S LAD.

LAD. Master George, Farmer Dodd says he'll drive you into Reading, if you will walk up as far as his farm. He's afraid to come down *our* hill, a says, because if a did, *his* mare 'ud kick *his* gig into toothpicks, *he* says. Oh, Master George! *I* be sorry *you* be going.

GEO. I thank him. My bag is ready in the kitchen—take it, boy—I'll follow you.

The LAD is met at the door by SARAH, who has the bag, and is putting a bottle into it; she gives it to him, puts her apron to her eyes, and stands by OLD SANDFORD—The LAD crosses scene with bag, and slowly mounts hill during the following dialogue.

SUSAN. Father, I thought it was a dream; but he is going—he is really going. Oh, have mercy on us both! Speak him fair—his spirit is so high, father!

MERTON. Susan, the lad thinks me his enemy—but I am not. My daughter shall not marry a bankrupt farmer; but you bring home a thousand pounds, George—just one thousand pounds, to show me you are not a fool—and then you shall have my daughter, and she shall have my blessing.

GEO. Your hand on that, uncle, before heaven and earth! (*takes his hand*) You give me new life.

SUSAN. But your words are sending him away from me, father.

GEO. Susan, I am to go. My path is clear. It is my only chance of winning or deserving you. But don't forget, it is for your sake I go, my darling Susan!

Re-enter ISAAC LEVI from house.

LEVI. Young man, you shall not wander forth from the home of your fathers. I have sat in your house, and watched my friend and my enemy; and these old eyes have seen deeper than yours. Enough,—you are honest—all men say so. Lo, I will lend you monies for your rent, (*sharply*) upon fair interest; and the maiden who loves you will bless me!

SUSAN. It is Mr. Levi of Farnborough! Heaven sends him! Oh yes, I bless you, Mr. Levi!—good Mr. Levi!

MEA. (*aside*) Cursed luck!—all my web undone in a moment!

(*a long pause*)

GEO. No, Susan—no, old man! I am honest, though unfortunate—and proud, though you have seen me put to shame, in my own homestead, more than once to-day. To borrow without a chance of paying, is next door to stealing—and I should never pay you. My eyes are open in spite of my heart. I can't farm “Bix Bottom” Farm with wheat at forty shillings. I have tried all I know, and I can't do it. Bill, there, is dying to try; and he shall try—and heaven speed his plough better than it has poor George's!

WIL. George! I was not thinking of the farm at all, just then,—I was thinking of when we were boys—and—played—marbles—together—upon—the tombstones! (*falters a little*)

GEO. Mr. Levi—seems you have a kindness for me,—show it to William.

LEVI. I will! A word with you, Mr. Meadows. (*hisses in his ear in a fierce whisper*) You have shown me how a Christian hates his rival in trade—I'll show you how a Jew hates his enemy!

MEA. (*with cold malice*) Lady-Day—Lady-Day!

WIL. (*aside*) George will forget her out there, and she him!

GEO. Uncle, since your last word there is no ill-will; (*bluntly*) but I can't speak my heart before you.

MER. I'll go, George. Sha'n't be said my sister's son didn't get leave to open his heart at such a time. (*goes to SUSAN*)

LEVI beckons GEORGE, who goes up to him—they whisper—

LEVI casts glances in the direction of MEADOWS, and GEORGE also, but in a half-curious, half-contemptuous manner.

MERTON. Susan, be prudent !

SUSAN. Yes, father !

MEA. (*aside*) Can the old heathen have fathomed me ? Yes—he is blowing me to George Sandford !

LEVI. (*aside*) I will go,—I care not to see his stout young heart give way at parting, as it must. Ah me ! I can pity the wanderer from home !

Exit up the hill.

MERTON. Good-bye, George, and good luck be with you !

MEA. (*uneasily*) I'll go with you, Mr. Merton.

GEO. No, Sir—stay, if you please : you are as good a witness as I could choose of what I am going to say to my brother William.

MEA. (*aside*) I wish I could sink into the earth !

Exit MERTON.

GEO. William !

WIL. (*uneasily*) George ! (*aside*) It is about the farm. Oh yes, it must be about the farm !

GEO. I've often had it on my mind to speak to you, but I was ashamed—now that's the truth. But now I am going away from her, I must unload my heart, and I will. (*to RUSTICS, who have begun to look in*) Fall back, if you please—this is a family matter. (*pause*) William !

WIL. George !

GEO. You have taken a fancy to my lass, William!!!!

WIL. (*looks up suddenly, then covers his face with his hands*)

SUSAN. George—what nonsense ! I am sure poor William——

GEORGE points to WILLIAM—SUSAN is silent and looks down ashamed.

GEO. Oh ! it isn't to reproach you, my poor lad. Who could be near her, and not warm to her ? But she *is* my lass, Bill, and no other man's. It is three years since she said the word ; and though it was my hard luck there should be some coolness between us this bitter day, she will think kindly of me when the ocean rolls between us, if no villain undermines me.

WIL. Villain !! George——

GEO. Ay ! that is why I speak, it sha'n't be a *mistake*, or a *misunderstanding*—it shall be villainy, if it is done. Speak, Susan, before these witnesses.

SUSAN. Oh ! George, you shall not go in doubt of me—we are betrothed this three years, and I glory in it ; and now I give you my word again, in the sight of heaven, and these men, William, and good Mr. Meadows, so long as you are true, I live for you—take my ring, and my promise, my own George. There was no coolness between us, dear ; you only fancied so. You don't know what fools women are—how they delight to tease the man they love, and to torment themselves. I always loved you dearly, but never as I do this day. So honest !—so proud !—so unfortunate ! I love you, I honour you. I adore you ! (*she clasps him in her arms—kisses him—he kisses her.*)

MEA. (*aside*) Hell invents this to torture me! (*writhes with passion.*)

SUSAN. (*takes out handkerchief*) I hemmed it for you. (*he wipes her eyes—she his, with the same handkerchief*)

GEO. Blessed words!—do you hear them, William?

WIL. I hear them, George.

GEO. (*to SUSAN*) Then, Susan, here's your brother. (*to WILLIAM*) Here's my life, let no man rob me of it, if one mother really bore us.

WIL. Never! S'help me God! She's my sister, from this minute—no more, no less; and may the red blight fall upon my heart and arm, if I, or any man, rob you of her. A man? Sooner than a hundred men should take her from you, while I am here, I'd die at their feet a hundred times.

GEO. I believe you! I trust you! I thank you! (*throws his arm round WILLIAM's neck for a single moment*) And now I'm strong enough to go, and I'll go. (*goes up to OLD SANDFORD*)

MEA. (*aside*) Curse his cunning, to set his rivals by the ears! who'd have thought he had the brains? Oh!—torment me how you will, you must go at last. (*he chuckles ferociously, but he is pale with jealousy**)

GEO. Grandfather! I am going a long journey, and mayhap will never see you again—speak a word to me.

SUSAN. Grandfather!—speak to George—poor George is going into a far country.

OLD S. (*shakes his head*)

GEO. Not a word! I wanted him to say heaven bless you, but no! Carlo—poor Carlo—you and I shall never go after the partridges again,—the dog shows more understanding than the Christian. Good bye, Carlo! Good bye, churchyard, where my mother lies! Good bye, little village church, where I went to church, man and boy! There will be no church bells Susan, where I am going—no Sunday bells to mind me of my soul and home.

BELLS ring in the distance.

—(*starts*) Are they mocking me?

WIL. No, no!—it is Tom Clarke and Esther Borgherst married to-day.

GEO. Why, they have only kept company a year, and they are married to-day; and Susan and I have kept company three years, and Tom and Esther are married to-day; and what are George and Susan doing to-day? Oh! what shall I do? What shall I do?

SUSAN. (*throwing herself into his arms*) My pride is all gone. Oh! George, don't go—have pity on us both, and don't go. (*they weep silently*)

MEA. (*aside*) I have made them love one another ten times more. I am in torture. (*he draws a knife out of his bosom, but replaces it*)

GEO. Shame upon me; my own Susan, if I don't go I lose you, or make you a bad daughter. Heaven's hand is pushing me, I've

* Meadows must be pale in the course of this scene, by those stage means that are commonly reserved for sudden displays of terror—this is very important to the scene.—C. R.

felt it all day, I'm cold as ice, but I'll go. William, help me, you see I have no more manhood than a girl.

WIL. My poor lass, put your hand in mine, and pray to heaven as I must.

GEO. Heaven bless you, Will! Oh! you don't know what this is to me—may you never know!

Air, "*Home, Sweet Home,*" played very piano in Orchestra.—Bless all the village, from the oldest man in it down to William King's little girl that was born yesterday! Oh! I must turn my back, or how can I ever leave you? Good bye! good bye! (*kisses Susan, runs out, and trudges stoutly up the hill, but his handkerchief is pressed to his eyes*)

SUSAN. Brother, my heart is broken—my heart is broken!

WIL. Bob, loose the dog. (*takes her forehead gently to his bosom—She sinks gradually—He beckons SARAH and supports her firmly*)

MEA. (during the above business—aside) Curses on the creation! I am sick with torture—and yet—(*in a hoarse whisper*)—she shall be mine!

TABLEAU.—*DOG runs across the scene after GEORGE—SARAH with apron to her eyes, WILLIAM, and SUSAN, L.H.—MEADOWS, R.H.—VILLAGERS, R.H. and L.H., waving hats, handkerchiefs, &c.—SUSAN, not allowed to sink to the ground, but her senses beginning to fail her as the Act Drop descends.*

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE—*A small study in the House of MEADOWS—Doors R. and L.—Secret door L.—Table, with pens, ink, paper, &c., and two chairs, C.*

MEA. and CRAWLEY discovered.

MEA. All right, I see. Well, take him to-day. (*looks over papers*) Judgment and all correct. Endorse the bill,—I must not be suspected in it.

CRAW. (*goes to table and writes*)

MEA. Old Merton been for more money?

CRAW. Yes—yesterday. I made difficulties, as instructed. Is to come to-morrow.

MEA. He shall have another thousand.

CRAW. That makes two thousand five hundred. Why, his whole stock won't cover it. I can't understand it—it is too deep for me, Mr. Meadows. What is the old gentleman doing with it?

MEA. Throwing it away in speculations, that are placed before him in bright colours, by one who means to ruin him—

CRAW. Ah !

MEA. And do him no harm.

CRAW. How far is it to the bottom of the sea, Sir, if you please ? I am sure you know.

MEA. It is a long way from the bottom of you to the bottom of the sea. You always speak of me as if we were enemies ?

CRAW. Make a point, Sir ! I call you all the rogues and usurers—

MEA. The world calls me close-fisted,—do you find me so ?

CRAW. Liberal as running water ! How long is it to last, Sir ?

MEA. How far dare you go with me ?

CRAW. As far as your purse extends, Sir,—only, I should not like to do anything that was too bad.

MEA. What do you mean by too bad ?

CRAW. Punishable by law, Sir.

MEA. Dare you physic a few hogs for me ?

CRAW. Physic hogs ?

MEA. This Will Sandford has bought two score hogs, and, like a fool, he has paid half his rent and half his hogs,—stands upon two weak legs, instead of one strong one. I must trip up both his legs. Hogs must die !

CRAW. Oh ! don't say so, Mr. Meadows. Where shall you and I go to, some day, if we are found out ?

MEA. Price of the job is one hundred guineas ! (*goes to table, opens drawer, and takes out a bottle*)

CRAW. One hundred guineas ?

MEA. This will do their business. Put it in your pocket.

CRAW. Mercy on us ! I'd rather not. No, no—you keep it till the prescription is required for use,—use ! Where shall we all go to ? (*whispers*) What is it ?

MEA. Oil !

CRAW. Oh ! if it is only oil—— (*stretches out his hand for the bottle*)

MEA. Croton oil !

CRAW. (*recoils*) Ugh ! that is worse than oil of vitriol.

MEA. (*returning bottle to drawer*) Price of the job is one hundred guineas ! If you don't do it for that, I shall do it for nothing.

CRAW. One hundred guineas ! There—there will be a fall in pork one of these dark nights. Mr. Meadows, I admire you, Sir—I am grateful to you—and I respect you ; but I wish I had never known you.

MEA. Do you tell me that, who have raised you from a dunghill ?

CRAW. Not exactly a dunghill, Sir—I was clerk in a small country attorney's office.

MEA. And five hundred pounds worth nothing ? (*showing him bills*)

CRAW. Ah, Sir ! you're like the affectionate young lady—you keep the autographs of all your friends. Well, Sir, you raised me—but now you are raising my character, and it frightens me. You see,

Sir, I was only a little blackguard, but you'll promote me to be a great villain. But there—if I was so ungrateful as to desert you—

MEA. I'd crush the life out of you, as I would a blind worm or an adder!

CRAW. That's about it, I believe, Sir. I don't see your game,—but isn't Mr. Levi, some way, on the other side?

MEA. He is, confound him!

CRAW. He'll beat us, Sir! I've a great respect for Mr. Levi—he is as cunning as a fox.

MEA. He is; but I have measured cunning with a fox, Crawley.

CRAW. You have, Sir?—that must have been a tight match.

MEA. The fox died!—Croton oil is strong. Doctors give it to their friends, now-a-days,—it is a fashion, like stays. I keep it for my enemies!

CRAW. If you give 'em that, you won't have any but friends left, Sir! One hundred guineas? Where shall we all go to?

MEA. What! have you set up a conscience?

CRAW. Yes, Sir!—it runs at night. I shouldn't care if there was no dark; but I do have such frightful dreams at night. If it was only George Sandford instead of Will—

MEA. Why?

CRAW. That George Sandford put an affront upon me.

MEA. Ay!—did he? What did he do?

CRAW. He called me a pettyfogger!

MEA. Is that all?

CRAW. No!—he discharged me from visiting his premises!

MEA. Oh! Is that it?

CRAW. No!—he threatened to horsewhip me next time I was there!

MEA. Oh! Is that where the shoe pinches?

CRAW. No!—taint, but he altered his mind, and did horsewhip me, then and there—curse him!

MEA. Ah, ha! Crawley, you can gratify two passions at once. Just now you wanted to see the bottom of me—you shall!

CRAW. Oh! Mr. Meadows, that is too far for the naked eye to see.

MEA. Not when it suits my book. (*looks down and hesitates a moment*) Crawley!—I love the sweetheart of that man who horsewhipped you.

CRAW. *You love a woman!*

MEA. With all my heart, and soul, and brain! I love with more force than such as you can hate.

CRAW. The deuce you do, Sir? Well, I *was* in the dark till now. Oh!—it is beautiful going down into the deep, deep, sea, like this.

MEA. Nobody is to suffer but George Sandford. Will's hogs must die, and he must lie in prison. He shall be paid for it—money will balance all troubles but those of the heart. I'll ruin old Merton—I'll set him on his legs again. Crawley, I am worth sixty thousand pounds, what is ten thousand pounds to me, if it helps me to Susanna Merton? The day I marry her, I return you your bills, five hundred pounds, and set you up in any honest business you like. No more

shuffling. (*hurriedly*) Let heaven consent to my being happy in this way, and I'll do heaven's in everything else. (*walks about*)

CRAW. That is fair. I knew you were a great man, Sir, but I had no idea you were such a good one. My conscience is clear, now—it is to be all right in the end.

MEA. Of course! (*gloomily*) Crawley, I am trying to cheat the devil—I fear no man can do that. (*walks thoughtfully*)

CRAW. We don't know till we try, Sir. I don't mind taking charge of the bottle, Mr. Meadows. A hundred guineas, you said?

MEA. I did, and do! Go—don't waste so much time talking. Here are your documents. Have you got the officer?

CRAW. He is in the public-house close by. Shall I take him anywhere, or—or follow him to a quiet place?

MEA. Follow him to the devil! But take him man. Here's some one coming—quick!

Exit CRAWLEY by the secret door.

Enter SUSANNA MERTON, R.H.

—Ha! (*astonished*) Am I so happy as to receive you for once in my own house, Miss Merton?

SUSAN. For a moment, Mr. Meadows. I am going to Mr. Levi, so I came to you first.

MEA. To Mr. Levi? What for? But come into a better room than this.

SUSAN. No, no!—it was only to say a few words that I called. Mr. Meadow, I am sure you are a good man, so let me persuade you out of this bitter feeling towards Mr. Levi. You are both my friends. I am going into the town to speak to him as well as you. He is worse than you, but then he has more excuse than you—he has never been taught that it is wicked not to forgive our enemies. You know it, but don't practice it.

MEA. Human nature is very revengeful; I wish I had oftener a lesson from you—you would charm away that unchristian spirit which I deplore, but find it so hard to resist. Your voice, and your face, make me feel at peace with all the world, Susanna—Miss Merton!

SUSAN. Why not Susanna?

MEA. Well, Susanna, is a very inviting name.

SUSAN. It is not reckoned so, Mr. Meadows. (*smiles*)

MEA. It is a name for every thing that is good and gentle, and lovely—

Enter WILLIAM SANDFORD, speaking as he enters.

WIL. Susan! I came to look for you; was told you went in here.

SUSAN. This is my watch dog—he is always at my heels.

WIL. The sheep find the shepherd's dog in their way, but they are all the safer for him.

SUSAN. Well, I'm sure. (*angrily*)

MEA. That's hardly respectful to Miss Merton, and in my house.

WIL. Who respects her more than I?—but sheep are no match for wolves when the dog is away—so the dog's here! Susan, you remember

poor George's last words to me. Well, I keep my eye upon all schemers, and that man is a schemer—(*they both laugh at him*)—but, sooner than any harm shall come of it, I'll twist as good a man's neck as ever schemed in Jack Meadows' shoes!

SUSAN. Are you mad, William? Exposing me, and affronting dear, good Mr. Meadows in his own house!

MEA. I forgive him, because I admire his zeal for you—only I'm sorry he has not as good an opinion of me as his brother had.

Enter a SERVANT, R.H.D.

SERV. Mr. Crawley, Sir!

MEA. (*aside*) Good! (*aloud*) Mr. Crawley? What Crawley?

Enter MR. CRAWLEY and OFFICER.

—To what do I owe a visit from *you*, Sir?

CRAW. I beg your pardon, Sir, but we've business with this gentleman. I arrest *you*, Sir, on this judgment.

OFFICER. (*takes WILLIAM*)

SUSAN. Oh! oh! Mr. Meadows—

WIL. Take me away, and let me hide my head!

SUSAN. (*puts her arm round WILLIAM'S neck*) Oh, my poor William!

MEA. And what business have you, Mr. Crawley, my known enemy, to come into my house and arrest my guests?

ISAAC LEVI *glides in, and seats himself behind the principal group.*

CRAW. I beg your pardon, Mr. Meadows, I beg your pardon, Sir, but ask the young man if he wouldn't rather be taken here than in the market-place.

WIL. Oh, yes—here! thank you for taking me here!

LEVI. (*seated*) Fools! (*they all turn and look at Levi*) These were stale tricks before England was a nation. Who is the plaintiff?

CRAW. Hem! Mr.—

MEA. (*looks at him*)

CRAW. My—myself, Sir.

LEVI. What is the amount of your debt?

CRAW. Eighty-nine, thirteen, four.

LEVI. Here is the money—give me the bills.

CRAW. Would you like a stamped receipt, Mr. Levi?

LEVI. No, foolish man!—are not these sufficient vouchers?

MEA. And you, Sir, who, like this Crawley, are my enemy—

CRAW. Well, I'm going, Sir—I'm going. (*aside*) Ugh!

Exeunt CRAWLEY and OFFICER.

MEA. Is it decent to affront me in my own house?

LEVI. It is not your house! It belongs to Abraham Lewis, who has bought it by my advice. I came to demand the title-deeds.

MEA. Ha!—and my mortgage on it?

LEVI. Paid by Abraham into the proper hands, with the interest. The property is being conveyed to Lewis. He will let you stay till Lady-Day—then out you go! A tooth for a tooth!

SUSAN. Oh! Mr. Levi, you have forgot my last lesson.

MEA. Well, may he enjoy it! (*to Susan*) Is that better?

SUSAN. That does you credit, good Mr. Meadows!

MEA. (*with a cunning smile—to Levi*) And I suppose I shall have to go into the one you vacate at Lady-Day?

LEVI. (*aside*) Solomon teach me to outwit this dog!

SUSAN. William, go home and mind your hogs—the sheep can take care of herself. Well—is he going?

WIL. Yes, Susan, dear—after you.

SUSAN. Your wife will have her own way—if she can get it. Good bye, Mr. Meadows—William and I have both been less than just to you. Mr. Levi, you must show me this battle-field—this house, and let me sit at your feet once more, and hear some more charming tales of the wonderful lands you have travelled, the sights you have seen, the perils you have passed, and if you really love me—

LEVI. I love you, maiden! Who loves you not?

SUSAN. (*tenderly*) Then you will show me where Leah used to sit and work, and where Rachel and Sarah loved to play.

LEVI. Ah me! yes, sweet-voiced, pure-hearted maid! I would not show another this, but I will show thee.

SUSAN. And you will listen to all that *I* shall say?

LEVI. Surely I shall listen, for your voice is to my ear like the wind that sighs at evening among the cedars of Lebanon, and the night-wave on Galilee's shore!

SUSAN. 'Tis but a woman's frail voice, father—but with it, I can speak you words more beautiful than Lebanon's cedars or Galilee's shore, words that made the stars brighter, and the sons of the morning rejoice. I will not tell you whence I had them, but you will say, surely they never came from earth—selfish, cruel, vindictive earth—surely they came from heaven, these words that drop on man's hot passions like the dew, and speak of trespasses forgiven, and peace and good-will among men.

MEADOWS is softened for a moment, and puts his hand to his eyes, which WILLIAM notices—LEVI's fierceness is also subdued.

LEVI. (*quietly but firmly*) Susanna, I love thee!—bitterness fades from my heart at thy voice, but experience remains. When I wander forth at Lady Day others shall watch over her. I will say no more to-day. Come, Susanna—a goodly name—it comes to thee from the depised people. (*to William*) I am your creditor—be punctual with the interest—no more is required till better days, my son. Come, then, like peace to my dwelling. Susanna.

SUSAN. (*waves them adieu*)

LEVI. I had a sister of thy name, my child.

Exeunt Levi and Susan.

WIL. (*aside*) A tear in that hard man's eye! (*aloud*) Mr. Meadows, if I have done you wrong I beg your pardon—there is my hand, any way.

MEA. (*gives his hand mechanically*)

WIL. (*aside*) No!—his hand lay in mine like a stone. He is a villain, and as deep as the ocean!

Exit.

MEA. That angel is my only refuge—I must wade through dirt, and fire, and crime, ere I can win her. No—I see too many crimes a-head. I must tear this passion from my heart! I'll leave the country—yes; that will save us all—it will save us all. (*moves away*)

Re-enter SUSAN hastily.

SUSAN. Oh, William! What, is he gone? A letter, Mr. Meadows—a letter from Australia. George has been ill, poor fellow! and who do you think nursed him when the rest neglected him? That unfortunate man, Robinson. He had a ticket-of-leave for good conduct, it seems—and he is so fond of George—Ah! well, we must not be too hard; we don't know what we are ourselves till we are tempted—do we, Mr. Meadows?

MEA. Miss Merton!

SUSAN. Do you know where William is? Oh!—I am so happy.

Exit.

MEA. (*violently*) This is too much—from this moment I never will look back or falter! Crawley! I must have a drop of wine—my heart is staggered.

Re-enter CRAWLEY.

—I'll be with you in a minute.

Exit.

CRAW. I did not think there was a greater man on earth than Mr. Meadows; but the world is wide. Mr. Levi is a greater man—a much greater: he was down upon us like a hammer—his Jew's eye goes through our little schemes like a gimlet. “Fools!” says he—and he looked it—“these dodges were used up in our family,” says he, “before England was a nation.” He despises me and Meadows—that makes me respect him, somehow, I can't account for it.

Re-enter MEADOWS, in feverish state, with bottle and glasses.

MEA. Will Sandford, and old Levi, are in one boat, Crawley—drink. Your health, Crawley.

CRAW. Same to you, Sir.

MEA. Drink, you dog—a pair against a couple—you must sail in my boat. The day John and Susan Meadows walk out of church man and wife meet me at the porch, and I'll put a thousand pound note into your hand.

CRAW. A thousand pound note!—this is earnest;—tell me your whole plan, that I may not cross you by accident.

MEA. (*rapidly, with sudden fire and energy*) Post-office, here, is under my thumb. So, no more letters faom George to Susan;—a

letter from Australia to me, in which, among pork, tallow, grains, and all that, hint that George Sandford is making up to a girl, with money, out there.

CRAW. You run him down to her.

MEA. (*rapidly*) Not such a fool!—she'd hate me. I shall always praise him; only the fact will be drawn out of me. I buy all Will's engagements—his hogs die, he can't pay—Isaac Levi away—Will goes to the stone jug—course clear—we stick in the spurs—drink! I make somebody hang jail over old Meriton's head—Susan is piqued with George, and thinks him false. Her father in tears, I step in—I ask him for his daughter—offer to pay my father-in-law's debts, and start him afresh.

CRAW. Beautiful, beautiful!

MEA. I own to Susan that I always loved her, but hid it for conscience so long as I thought George was true. She will be mine!

CRAW. She will! by George.

MEA. And she will be happy.

CRAW. Can't see it!

MEA. A man that marries a virtuous woman, and loves her, must be a fool, if he can't make her love him whether she will or no. They can't resist our stronger wills, except by flight. Stay here, and I'll set you *your* task in this business.

Exit rapidly.

CRAW. (*pours out himself a glass of wine*) What a fool I was to think there was as great a man in the world as Mr. Meadows—a good man—a great man—a respectable man—an invincible man. (*with enthusiasm*) I'll follow him to the gal— Ugh! No! there I'll leave him. (*drinks*)

Re-enter MEADOWS, very pale.

MEA. Crawley

CRAW. Ugh! Sir!

MEA. George Sandford must not come back with a thousand pounds or all my plans will fail.

CRAW. No! he mustn't, but suppose he will insist upon coming back with two thousand?

MEA. (*slowly and sternly.*) Then he mustn't come back at all.

CRAW. (*aside*) Ugh! Where shall we all go to?

MEA. Take that, it contains your instructions; and this—it is a check-book.

CRAW. No!—is it though?

MEA. You will draw on me fifty pounds at a time—every month, if necessary.

CRAW. Shall I though, Sir? Well, I will!

MEA. You are going a long journey.

CRAW. Am I, Sir?

MEA. You are not afraid of the sea, and the wind—are you?

CRAW. (*drinking*) The sea be hanged, and the wind be blowed. When I see your talent and energy before my eyes, Sir, and hold your cheque-book in my hand, there is but one thing on earth I fear——

MEA. And what is that?

CRAW. The law, Sir, the law.

MEA. Then don't get found out.

CRAW. Not if I know it. I'm ready—when shall I start?

MEA. To-morrow.

CRAW. (*putting instructions and cheque-book in his pocket*) Today, if you like, Sir! (*cheerfully*) Where am I to go to, Sir?—where am I to go to?

MEA. (*with stern meaning*) To Australia!

CRAW. Oh! (*drops wine-glass and breaks it, looks up with horror into MEADOWS' face*)

MUSIC as the Drop descends.

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE—*A rocky and barren Pass in New South Wales—Bank L.C.*

BLACK WILL, JEM, and Two MEN discovered on the watch, with wild countenances.

BLACK W. Here are two of the six coming back—they have given their companions the slip.

1st MAN. Remember our oath, pals!

2nd MAN. Nonsense! dozens pass this way, and are none the wiser.

BLACK W. Yes, with their noses in the air—but that yellow jacket is a notice-taking fellow; his eyes are for ever on the ground—on the rocks—in the gullies. He has been in the same oven with us.

2nd MAN. Not likely!—but, if it is so, there are no two ways! (*touches knife*) A secret is no secret when all the world knows it!

BLACK W. They are coming this way. (*sternly*) You had better have stayed with your pals. Before they turn the rocks, let us hide and watch them.

JEM. Ay, ay, that is it—into the cave behind the rock.

They glide off, R.H. 2 E.

Enter GEORGE SANDFORD and ROBINSON over rocks, L.H. 2 E.

ROB. Hallo! where have they slipped off to?

GEO. They are gone away.

ROB. Vanished, you mean—into the bowels of the earth. I don't like gentlemen that vanish into the bowels of the earth in that way.

Take my stick. (*gives him a long stick with large iron ferrule at the end of it*)

GEO. What, bushrangers again? You suspect everybody.

ROB. This is a country where a man owes his safety to himself—not his neighbour.

GEO. Then why do you give me your weapon?

ROB. I haven't! I carry my sting out of sight, like a bumble-bee.

GEO. (*sits down and takes out bread*)

ROB. George, how far have you got towards your thousands pounds?

GEO. Oh, Tom, I shall never make it!—no market within reach—that's what beats me. To be forced to boil down two hundred sheep into tallow, and sell them for the price of a wild duck! I have left my Susan, and I've lost her!

ROB. So much for the farming lay! Now, listen to me. When I woke this morning, I thought I was in California.

GEO. Dreaming?

ROB. No—wide awake! You could not tell these hills from the golden range of California. When you look into them the materials are the very same—granite, mica, and quartz.

GEO. Show me some of these rocks.

ROB. Well, here are two of them. Here's granite, and this is quartz. They are the home of the gold—and that is where the heavy gold is found; and the gold dust has all been there one time, long before a man ever stood upon the earth, but water has washed and scattered it like seed.

GEO. Drop gold, do, and tell me what this is. (*gives him a small fossil shell*)

ROB. Where on earth did you find this?

GEO. Hard by. What is it?

ROB. It is a pale old joey.

GEO. You don't say so! Looks like a shell.

ROB. He bids me drop gold, and then goes and shows me a sign of gold that never failed us.

GEO. How can this thing be a sign of gold?

ROB. It is so! Where the pale old joeys are found amongst mica, quartz, and granite, there is gold. I can't tell you why. The laws of gold puzzle all the world. George, we stand upon gold!

GEO. Tom, if there's as much gold lying on the ground of Australia as would make me a wedding-ring, I'm a Dutchman! Are you coming home?

ROB. No, I am not. Here's an unknown country, with all the signs of gold. Prejudice is for babies—experience for men. Stay and try down this gully.

GEO. No, I sha'n't.

ROB. I will, then.

GEO. You'll have all the better chance for not having unlucky George alongside of you. (*going; stops, R.C., and makes a cut at something growing on rock*) Turn your back on me as I did on you in England.

ROB. Never! I'd rather not find gold than part with honesty. There—I'm coming.

GEO. You'll never thrive alongside of me. If I want rain, comes drought—if I want sun, look for a deluge—if there's money to be made by a thing, I'm out of it—to be lost, I'm in it—if I loved a vixen, she'd drop into my arms like a medlar—I love an angel, I shall never have her—never! From a game of marbles to the game of life and love, I never had a grain of luck like other people! (*strikes a large stone violently with his stick—a piece of quartz flies off*)

ROB. Oh!

GEO. What, have I hurt you, Tom?

ROB. Yes!—you've hurt me!

GEO. My luck again. (*crosses towards ROBINSON*)

ROB. No! it's my luck this time—don't you grumble for all the world though you are a farmer. (*hobbles to seat*)

GEO. Why, you're soft, Tom—it was no bigger than a bean.

ROB. If I am soft, I know what is hard.

GEO. No! here it is. Oh, la!—no wonder it hurt you poor fellow; why, it's as heavy as lead. Is this quartz or what?

ROB. Oh! yes, yes, its quartz. What did you say? No! quartz is not heavy by itself, but it is sharp though. (*rubs his ankle*)

GEO. Isn't it heavy? You try it. (*throws it—ROBINSON catches it*)

ROB. It is heavy! (*almost screaming*) Gold! before I look at it. Gold, gold!

GEO. What makes you think so?

ROB. I don't think, I know;—what, but the king of metals, could make this rubbish weigh so? Gold! (*turns it round and inspects it*) Ah! it is nearly all gold on this side. See!

GEO. How do you know?—tisn't yellow—looks like steel.

DISTANT VOICE OF ONE OF THEIR COMPANIONS. Gold!—Go-o-old!

ROB. (*in great agitation*) D'ye hear that? The birds will carry that word I sang out just now—all mankind will be here next week. How do I know?—how do you know a sheep from a cow? How do I know?—because—(*takes out stone, and rubbing*) This is the touch stone—the blood stone—because the baser metals resist this stone; but gold comes off, and colours it like that. How do I know?

Re-enter the FOUR MEN running, with drawn knives.

—because—(*whips out and presents revolver*)—because—where there's gold there's blood!!!

MEN hesitate at sight of revolver.

—Keep cool, now. No running in among their knives. Take my hand, guard-and-guard.

MEN begin to glide round—ROBINSON, also moving, keeps them at bay with revolver—When JEM gets by bank L.C., MEN appear on rock R.H., one of whom throws a spear—JEM falls wounded in the shoulder, exclaiming “Ah!”—*Pause.*

BLACK W. Quarter!—give us quarter!

ROB. I give it 'em, boys. (*in a terrible tone*) Down on your knees, ye scoundrels—down with ye!

MEN. (*fall on their knees*)

ROB. Throw me your knives! (*they hesitate*) Throw 'em, I say!

MEN. (*throw down knives*)

ROB. Take them up, George.

GEO. (*gathers them up*)

ROB. Spread your wife, George—spread it before those men.

GEO. (*spreads handkerchief*)

ROB. Now, my fine fellows, you wanted to take something from us that didn't belong to you—our blood! So we are going to take something from you that doesn't belong to us,—we'll all share it alike, boys.

MEN. (*interchange looks*)

JEM. Captain, you are the best man, and the justest too. May I work with you?

ROB. Ay, you shall, my lad. Come!—out with the swag!—out with it, I say!

MEN. (*with rueful looks and hesitation, give gold and dust, &c.*)

ROB. Now mind, this gully belongs belongs to us!

MEN. (*groan*)

ROB. You take the other side of the creek, or we'll hang ye like wild cats!

GEO. (*tying up gold*) I see my Susan's eyes in this yellow earth!!

TABLEAU.—MEN *skulking off slowly L.H., threatened by ROBINSON—GEORGE kneeling, tying up gold—JEM tying up his arm—MEN on rock R.H., with spears poised, &c.*

END OF ACT THE THIRD.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Summer Hill Creek Diggings by the River McQuarrie.

Time, Night—Moonlight—White Tents indistinctly visible along the course of the river and upon the heights—ISAAC LEVI'S tent, L.H.—ROBINSON's cart, R.H.—Cradles, wheelbarrows, pails, tubs, pans, pumps, spades, &c., seen all over the Stage—A Crushing Machine, c.—Great number of DIGGERS discovered, lying asleep—Moon shining upon wet pinnacles of rock.

CRAWLEY and BLACK WILL discovered—CRAWLEY under an umbrella.

BLACK W. Well, and what is that?

CRAW. Hush!—speak low.

BLACK W. How can we do business if you won't say what you want done?

CRAW. I do say—I say they must never see home again with a thousand pounds.

BLACK W. Well, and how am I to prevent it?

CRAW. Oh! there must be ways. A man of your energy—your de-de-cision of character—can't you think of a—a—a way?

BLACK W. Why don't you speak out like an honest man?

CRAW. Because I sometimes think I am not one.

BLACK W. Why don't you say you want the man's throat cut, and how much you'll give?

CRAW. Ugh! I admire your character, Sir—and its energy—but I don't like your expressions.

BLACK W. Well, I'll tell you the truth. My pals and I want those two out of the way, for they are down upon us as hard as nails.

CRAW. Do ye?—then we can deal. What will you take for the job? Job! Where shall we all go to? Ugh!—I mean, for how much will you swear that they shall not go home with a lot of gold-dust?

BLACK W. For fifty pounds, I swear to rob their tent the first chance, and settle their hash the second.

CRAW. (aside) Ugh! he is dreadfully terse! (aloud) There—I've nothing to do with ferocious details—swear they sha'n't carry their gold-dust home.

BLACK W. I swear!

CRAW. There's the money—there's the fifty pounds.

LEVI. (from tent, L.H., aside) I have heard that voice before! (aloud) Nathan, come here!

CRAW. (aside) Nathan, come here! Oh, if you are awake, good bye for the present. There's two things in the world I'm afraid of—Law and Levi.

Exit, L.H.U.E.

GEORGE and ROBINSON awake—ROBINSON in cart, GEORGE on a barrel.

GEO. Tom, I hope they are getting more honest—I haven't heard a rifle or revolver all night.

ROB. Ah! you country lads sleep so sound. My police report less violence, but more sleight of hand. I'll put down larceny, George, it is a despicable trait in a gold-mine. There are some very artful dodgers come into the camp. Well, we must have a hanging-day!

GEO. You make my flesh creep!

ROB. Can't help it; if it wasn't for my police, as I call 'em, and the revolvers, you wou would never marry Susan.

GEO. Sooner than kill a man, I'd rather he should kill me.

ROB. I'm of the same opinion, only turned topsy-turvy. Who's this?

Enter JEM, L.H.U.E., with dark lantern.

JEM. Who's the cheat that's oftenest cheated?

ROB. The nubbing cheat.

JEM. Oh! it's you, Captain, is it? There's the Police Report. And now, Captain, for your kindness to me, I want to warn you—be

on your guard against that Black Will and his pals. I'm now going my round.

Exit L.

ROB. (*to GEORGE*) What are you going to do to-day?

GEO. Well, Tom, an ounce of gold-dust a-day won't take us home quick enough. I'm following your advice—I'm tracking the gold-dust coarser and coarser, and the nugget larger and larger, till I find the home of all this gold.

ROB. And I shall wash blue clay. The dust is the only safe card. Poor George!—he looks to find blocks of gold as big as his hat.

GEO. To work! Here comes the day. No more robbing and murdering for twelve hours, I hope.

Exit.

The Sun begins to rise, and displays the following scene (which ought to be a very remarkable one)—A high bank L.H.—A high bank or cliff R.C., with rocks running all round stage—Low ground, and rocks beyond, c.—The River McQuarrie winding in a valley, along the banks of which are seen countless tents of every colour, size, shape, &c.—The whole extent of stage, and also rocks occupied by the Diggers, &c., who at the beginning of this change gradually awake, take up tools and proceed to work in groups.*

Enter NATHAN from tent—he places a rough table and the paraphernalia of a gold assayer and purchaser for LEVI, who enters and seats himself at table.

MUSIC, subdued, but rising with the opening prospect—at last breaks into “Hail, smiling Morn!”

Enter MARY McDODGHERTY R.H., with a glittering lump.

MARY. There, ould gentleman, what will ye be afther giving me for that? Sure the luck's come to the right colleen at last!

LEVI. (*looking scornfully at it, without touching it*) I deal but in the precious metals!

Re-enter GEORGE triumphantly, his hands behind him.

MARY. Sure an' isn't gould a precious metal?

LEVI. Do you offer me this for gold? It is not even a metal—it is yellow mica.

* All the beautiful concomitants of that great event in Nature—Sunrise—must be attended to. Undistinguishable sounds in the distance—sparkles of dew here and there. Men seen to draw open tents and issue forth to work. Men enter at intervals—one with a tool over his shoulder, another wheeling a barrow, &c. The important part of this scene is the River in perspective—the rest ad libitum. A good effect is produced at L.H. by Children in the background, intended to represent men in the distance; but Children should not be placed in centre and foreground, or the other effect is lost. The more gradually the light breaks, the better; all that is required is that the music and the light should be progressive, and the pantomime varied by several entries. Do not let them begin to work too soon,—you will find the audience very patient, if the music is good and the business rational.—C. R.

GEO. (*showing ROBINSON a glittering mass*) Was I right or wrong? What becomes of your gold-dust now?

LEVI. Gold is four times the weight of this trash.

GEORGE puts his specimen in MARY's hand—she bursts out crying, and places it on LEVI's table, who eyes it keenly.

GEO. You see, my poor girl, yours is not heavy like—

LEVI. Iron pyrites!

GEO. Iron? What! mine? How can it be iron?

LEVI. It is iron, my son. Take this needle. Here is a scale of gold—take it up on the needle's point. Good—you can do so, because gold is a soft metal. Now try a scale of this metal,—you cannot take it up, because it is a hard metal.

Knocks mica and pyrites off table—MARY flings mica away with fury—ROBINSON pockets pyrites

ROB. Now it is my turn. (*brings gold-dust on knife*) I've washed this out of one panful of your clay—bring it to the test, Mr. Levi. Is it mica or iron?

LEVI. I'll give you a test, young man—you bring Isaac Levi a hundred weight of it, and he'll buy it of you at three pounds and six-pence the ounce.

ROB. Well, that is a test.

GEO. Well, it isn't much to brag of.

ROB. He says a pennyweight of gold, out of six gallons of clay, isn't much. I'll tell you how much it is—at this rate, a working man's income shall be just double what the Queen's Lord Treasurer gets, and he must work night as well as day.

GEO. (*suddenly*) The day is not ended yet.

Exit hastily, R.C.

ROB. Well, Mary, what is that in your hand?

MARY. Sure, an its an illigant lump o' lead I found—ye're great wid the revolver, Captain—ye'll be afferther givin me the laste pinch in life of the rale stuff for this, may be.

ROB. (*examines it*) Mr. Levi, she has found a lump of platinum—a magnificent lump—will you buy it of her?

LEVI. That will I—this is not like thy mica. (*he weighs it, and pays her two notes*) This is heavier than gold—it has other great qualities of gold besides. I give you for it eight times the value of silver—platinum is the queen of the metals.

NATHAN. (*gives LEVI a letter, he opens it*)

ROB. There, run and find a hundred weight of it.

MARY. Platinum, ye're the boy—seein' you're the queen of the metals. Captain, ye're a jewel—may ye live till the skirts of your coats knock your brains out. Here's wishin ye both all sorts of luck—good, bad, and hindifferent. Platinum for ever, and gould to the devil! (*accompanies these words with a kick*)

Exit jumping and laughing.

Enter JEM, who gives LEVI a handful of dust—he looks at it a moment.

LEVI. Whence had you this?

JEM. Out of the ground!

LEVI. False!

JEM. What do you mean by false? I saw a man lift a lot out of one hole, gave him thirty pounds, and washed this out the very first washing.

LEVI. You have been made a scoff and a jest—this dust is from Birmingham, and neither Australian or natural.

ROB. The man planted it for you.

JEM. Keep it—keep it—till I come back—I'll find him.

Exit.

ROB. What is it, Mr. Levi?

LEVI. It is prepared by one who knows the metals. Here is brass ormolu, and, I think, some gilt platinum to give it weight.

ROB. Heigh, lads! here's a new dodge. Brummagem planted on us so far off? That is hard!

MEN are collecting with angry faces.—NOISE heard.

Re-enter JEM, dragging in WALKER.

JEM. Justice—justice—and Lynch law!

OMNES. You shall have it! To the rock with him!

ROB. Stay! don't let us make a mistake—search him!

WALKER is searched, and a bag of dust found upon him.

OMNES. To the rock with him!

ROB. Stay! don't let us make a mistake—a test, Mr. Levi, a test!

LEVI. I wash my hands of you all—ye men of Belial! (*retiring*)

BLACK W. (*stopping him*) If you don't give us a test we'll fling you in along with him.

ROB. You must, Mr. Levi, this will never do—we sha'n't be safe a moment against this dodge.

LEVI. This bottle contains an acid which gold resists, but the baser metal cannot resist it—you can pour it on this man's merchandize and judge for yourselves—I wash my hands of ye all!

Exit, L.H. 1 E.

ROB. (*pours acid on false dust—smoke rises*)

OMNES. Trash! trash! To the rock with him—to the rock!

They hurry him off Stage, ascend rock R.H., and fling him off into the waters—Pause—They look at one another.

DIGGER. Can he swim?

VOICES. Hush! (*pause*)

JEM. He throws his arms up!

VOICES. Hush! (*pause*)

WALKER. Help! help!

DIGGER. He is sinking—he'll never rise again!

VOICES. Hush!

WALKER. (*faintly*) My children!—my poor Jessie!

JEM. Confound you! are you going to let the man drown like a dog before your eyes?

DIGGER. What are you doing?

JEM. Look, and you'll see. (*jumps*)

CROWD. Bravo, Jem! bravo! hurrah! hurrah!

JEM. Quick! a rope! he is choking me!

After a pause, JEM issues forth from river, carries WALKER on his back across Stage, and exit.

ROB. That was revenge, not law,—if it was right we shouldn't be so eager to undo our own work.* Ah! I railed at England when I was there, but now I wish I was safe back. I wish I was in Threadneedle Street with my gold-dust, and sixteen bluebottles within hail, I do!

Re-enter GEORGE, L.H. 1 E., agitated.

GEO. Follow me out of the camp as quick as you can—we won't go together, you'll see me ahead.

Exit, L.H.

ROB. Ay, ay—he has found something. Nathan, look to my things.

Exit, L.H. 1 E.—The THIEVES watch him.

Re-enter CRAWLEY—he and BLACK WILL come forward.

BLACK W. Now, you find Jack, and slip into their tent and clean it out—we will follow the men, and— You understand!

Exeunt BLACK WILL and THIEVES, L.H.—One THIEF glides cautiously round ROBINSON'S cart, R.H.

CRAW. No—I understand nothing. I sha'n't wait here. I wash my hands of all this. Mr. Meadows wants me in England. (*very loud*) Good bye, den of thieves—I know where you'll all go to!

Exit, R.H. 1 E.

LEVI. (*entering*) It was Crawley! Nathan, pack up all our things.

NATHAN. Yes, master. Where are we going, master?

LEVI. To England! I shall have business there before next Lady Day!

All the DIGGERS at work as scene closes in.†

* It would be better for George to enter here, and to transfer the next sentence to Robinson's exit.

† As the front scene is being played, strike Isaac Levi's tent and remove it, so that the spectator may, in the next scene, comprehend that Levi and Nathan are really gone to England before Robinson and George.

SCENE II.—*A narrow Rocky Pass—Heap of quartz stones L.H.*

Enter GEORGE, running, L.H.

GEO. How slow he is! Come on!

ROB. (*without*) How much farther?

GEO. No farther,—here!

Enter ROBINSON L.H.

ROB. Well?

GEO. D'ye see that broad vein of quartz in the rock? That is the home of the gold. Those lumps of quartz have all rolled out from there.

ROB. Did you bring me here to tell me that?

GEO. That and something else!

ROB. (*whispering*) Found something?

GEO. Yes!

ROB. Where?

GEO. In sight. I haven't moved it from where I saw it.

ROB. Hold your tongue, and let me find it. It is not on this heap—too many men have sat down there. (*peers about*)

GEO. Tom! 'tis the mind find things—not the eye; a hundred black shepherds have sat there, but they left *this* for a Berkshire farmer.

ROB. Why—Gracious heavens! Can this be? You take away my breath. It can't be gold—gold it is! You have found the wonder of the world.

GEO. What is it worth—five hundred pounds?

ROB. Five hundred!—don't ask me what it is worth—how shall we get it home? They'd murder us like rats, if they saw it. There, there!—now fling it down—throw stones upon it. Ah! George, George! it is too great a find—it will get us into trouble. (*takes out revolver*) Those thieves are upon us, and my revolver is not loaded.

Enter BLACK WILL, leading thieves.

ROB. (*pretends to conceal his revolver hurriedly*)

BLACK W. (*to MEN*) They are armed. Well, Captain, we watched you and your pal out of the camp—what luck? We noticed you did not go for nothing!

ROB. He has found a nugget—I'll sell it you. Catch (*throws iron pyrites*) We'll take two ounces of gold-dust for it!

Some of the MEN inspect it with interest—Pause.

BLACK W. Well done, Captain!—that will do for greenhorns. Now, will you allow us to turn over that heap of boulders, you were so busy at just now.

ROB. With all my heart. (*presents revolver*) But not while we are so near it, you treacherous thief. I know you—you want to settle my hash, because I am against thieving in the mine.

BLACK W. There's a little of both. I've sworn you shall die,

Captain, and I really think you've got something in that heap of boulders. Now, pals, altogether—slow at first.

They begin to glide towards ROBINSON—GEORGE stoops and picks up a quartz boulder in each hand.—MARTIAL MUSIC heard at a distance, very faintly—BLACK WILL and THIEVES hesitate.*

BLACK W. What is that?

ROB. Shall I tell you?

BLACK W. Can you?

ROB. Yes—but keep your distance. I wrote to the Governor for soldiers and police. I was to meet the Captain here.

GEO. (*waves handkerchief*)

ROB. He sees us,—and there are riflemen among them that will bring you down like squirrels, if you don't walk your chalks in good time.

BLACK W. Curse him! Pals, there's time—there's time!

1st MAN. No! Look there—look there!

runs off, followed by others, L.H. 1 E.

BLACK W. Cowards! Another day—another day!

Exit L.H. 1 E.

ROB. Thank heaven!—for heaven alone has saved our gold and our lives this day.

GEO. (*takes off his hat*) Thank heaven for leaving me the gold that takes me to England! Isn't it beautiful, Tom? (*kisses gold*) That's not because you're gold, but because you take me to Susan. It is just for all the world like a honeycomb. Oh, Tom, can't we go home now?

ROB. We'll go to-morrow morning, George. George, I deceived you,—we've got five thousand pounds' worth of gold-dust in our tent. I couldn't bear you to run from fortune so soon.

GEO. Five thousand pounds! and this—

ROB. Is worth four thousand. It is the wonder of the world—we'll show it in Sidney a shilling a head, and then we'll sail for England.

GEO. Oh, Tom!—good, kind, honest Tom—shake hands with me over it this blessed day! (*they each set a foot on the nugget, and shake hands*)

MUSIC.—Enter CAPTAIN and SOLDIERS marching, led by CLERK to GOVERNOR.

CAPT. Halt.

CLERK. Can you direct me to Summer Hill Creek?

ROB. (*takes off his hat*) You have but to follow this road bearing to the left, Sir! Sir! I am Thomas Robinson, who wrote to the Governor for the soldiers.

CLERK. Well, what can I do for you, Mr. Robinson?

* Any tune but "God save the Queen."

ROB. We have found a hundred weight of gold in one lump ; if we are seen with it we shall be robbed and murdered, Sir !

CLERK. It is my business to see you are not—step in between the men !

CAPT. Forward—quick, march !

Exit SOLDIERS—GEORGE, SOLDIERS and CAPTAIN.

ROB. Now for the short cut into the camp. (*dashes out R.H.*)

SCENE III.—*Same as Scene I.*

DIGGERS *all discovered at work—BLACK WILL and gang discovered.*

1st MAN. I wish we had let Robinson alone.

BLACK W. If you had been game, there was time to stop his gab for ever.

2nd MAN. We'd better hide.

BLACK W. I sha'n't ! we have done nothing. Ugh ! (*they retire up the stage*)

Enter ROBINSON hastily.

ROB. (*calling*) Jem ! Mr. Levi ! soldiers coming ! Down with your dust!—they'll take it and us safe to Sydney ! (*dashes into tent, R.H.*)

Enter JEM.

JEM. (*entering*) Did you call, Tom ?

ROB. Hallo ! our tent has been broken into !

JEM. Mercy on us !

ROB. They have cleared us out !

JEM. I'm sorry for it !

ROB. They have taken my very boots that cost me fifty shillings !

Re-enter ROBINSON, staggering under CARLO, stuffed—puts it down, dashes back, and re-appears with small iron box open.

—But they left the dog.

JEM. The dog ?

ROB. Yes—they hadn't the sense to take Carlo. Carlo saved our lives when he was a dog, and our gold since he has been furniture. D'ye see this, ye thieves ? (*tapping dog*)

MARCH, “God save the Queen,” and tramp of feet heard in the distance.

—And d'ye hear that, ye rascals ?—d'ye know the meaning of that agreeable little melody ?

MEN. (*all listen*)

ROB. I'll tell you. It means God, and the Queen, and Law—it means justice for the rich—(*taps CARLO*)—as well as the poor—it

means man instead of serpent, shark, and tiger—and peace and comfort instead of knife, and revolver, and lawless law.

Enter CLERK, CAPTAIN, and SOLDIERS, marching—GEORGE between them—SOLDIERS come down to front of stage.

CAPT. Halt!—front!

CLERK. (to GEORGE) You are a digger—read that. (gives him proclamation)

GEO. (reads proclamation*) “In the Queen’s name!” (CHORD) “Forasmuch as it has been represented to me, Governor of Sydney, that, by deeds of rapine and violence, the gains of honest labour are rendered insecure to her Majesty’s subjects, we have therefore sent a force of soldiers to maintain order and good rule, according to law. (*joyous murmur*) All good citizens and honest men of all nations are invited to co-operate with the Government, in their own interest, and that of all human society,—to protect person and property—to guard inviolate the sacred fruits of industry, and the laws of Great Britain and her Colonies throughout the world. God save the Queen!”

SOLDIERS present arms—*The National Anthem is played with the whole power of the band—Every person waving caps, &c., and shouting—As the Act Drop begins to descend, ROBINSON and JEM touch spring in dog, and gold-dust pours out into box—ROBINSON shakes his fist at BLACK WILL and THIEVES.—TABLEAU.*

END OF ACT THE FOURTH.

* To produce the Dramatist’s effect, the proclamation must be sustained with occasional chords, all through, until the word “world;” and the words “God save the Queen” must be played with an increase of power. The reader must go lightly over the words at first, and begin to give them a rising importance at the word “order,” and so rise till the end. The crowd of people for whose sake the proclamation is issued and read, must be taught to utter expressions of interest rising gradually in power during the reading of the proclamation. In other words, all parties concerned—the musicians, the speaker, and the actors—must work together upon the great principle of climax. This attended to, the act drop will fall with effect.

† Let the gold-dust in this instance be metal, and plenty of it—so that, the dog being held high, it may descend in a regular shower, and attract the eye.

ACT V.

SCENE.—Outside of MERTON's House, L.H.—Door and Windows practicable—Roads R. and L.—Finger-post, R.C., “To Reading.” Church Porch, R.H. 2 E.—Stone Bench.

MEADOWS discovered.

MEA. I am to win her, or why did I stop at the same inn with those two, who were coming to rob me of her? Their drink was well drugged. They won't be here till the wedding is over, and, if they do come, they will have to go back as they came. The respectable John Meadows has not turned villain for nothing. I'll go and speak to the clerk—every minute saved is gold!

Exit through porch, R.H.

Enter SUSANNA MERTON from house, L.H.

SUSAN. I must have air! They congratulate me, and make jests—heaven forgive them!—and I am to smile and laugh—I, who am suffocated with misery! Why did I consent?—I never can love this man. Oh, George! are you really false to me? The proof is too clear: no letters for eight months, and this report of his marriage to another! Put these two things together, and what doubt can there be? Where is your pride, Susanna Merton? A man is false to you, and insults your love—yet you cling to him; another man worships you, gives you all he has to give, his heart above all—his whole heart, and you scorn him. Where is your justice? And then I save my dear father from ruin. Ah! here comes Mr. Meadows. If he would but keep out of my sight, and let me think of his goodness and constancy, I could almost love him!—but the moment he comes near me—(shudders)

Re-enter MEADOWS.

MEA. Susan, dear, it is nearly time. I wish you could look into my heart, and see the happiness you bestow, then you would understand how grateful my whole life will be to you.

SUSAN. No, no, Mr. Meadows, I do not bestow lasting happiness. Oh! think better of it!—you deserve to be loved—do not tie an icicle to your warm and honest heart;—indeed we both deserve a better fate. Mr. Meadows, I can never love you!

MEA. Dear Susan, you shall take so many pleasures from me, that you will feel, at last, the support of a dear friend. No day shall pass, but wet eyes and uplifted hands shall bless Susan Meadows!

SUSAN. (*aside*) Susan Meadows! (*aloud*) You are very kind to me.
MEA. Your father will adore you; friends shall cluster round you;
I will humbly, gratefully cherish you.

SUSAN. You make me tremble at my own ungrateful nature. I
ought to go on my knees and bless you, but, heaven forgive me—
I hate you, John Meadows!*

MEA. I shall kill her, or myself! (*goes aside and hangs his head*)

SUSAN. (*aside*) Poor fellow! I have stabbed him to the heart for
loving me! (*aloud*) Forgive me! this proves the danger I am in.
My friend, you must save me, at once and for ever, from this mad
and misplaced love!

Enter MERTON from house, L.H.

MERTON. Heaven bless you, Susan, this joyful day!

SUSAN. Where are you going, father?

MERTON. Why, to the church, to be sure. I can't walk so fast as
you—my wedding-day was thirty years ago.

Exit into porch, R.

SUSAN. I shall be ready in an instant.

Exit into house.

MEA. The woman I love loathes me; in ten years, if not before,
she shall love me. The heart of John Meadows is often sick and cold,
but his will is unconquerable!

Re-enter SUSAN, with scarf and flowers.

—Take my arm, Susan; it shall never fail you,—lean on it for life.
SUSAN. It is a stout arm, and a good heart. I have full faith in
both. Let us go at once. I wish to be married to you without a
moment's delay.

Noise and Shouts without.

MEA. (*looking down*) George Sandford!

SUSAN. Why do you mention that name to me? Never let me
hear it again! I wish George Sandford stood there, that he might
see with what scorn I would pass him, leaning on your faithful arm!

GEO. (*without*) Susan!

Enter GEORGE SANDFORD and ROBINSON, L.H.U.E.

SUSAN. Ah! George—George! (*rushes into his arms*)

MEA. (*aside*) Perdition!

SUSAN. How dare you embrace me?—how dare you look at me?
(*runs to MEADOWS*) This is my safety! Let us go. Come—come!
Take me out of sight of him! Heaven have mercy on me!

GEO. Susan, what is this? What have I done?

SUSAN. What have you done? You are false to me! This eight
months you have not written to me, and you are going to be married
to another. (*she weeps*) Oh George!

* Not to be said brutally in the man's face, but with a downcast look, as a
sentiment she ought to be ashamed of.

ROB. That's news to me. Why, Miss, all his cry, day and night, has been—"Susan, Susan!" When we found the great nugget of gold, he kisses it, and says—"That's not because you're gold, but because you take me to Susan." May I whisper something to you, Miss? (*whispers to her*) Take those white gloves off,—and as for letters, I saw him send two myself, that must have reached England four and two months ago.

SUSAN. Oh, if I could believe this!

GEO. Susan, what were you doing on that man's arm?

SUSAN. They told me you were false, and I felt myself insulted—and I was in despair—and I—I—

MEA. Miss Merton and I are going to church to get married—that is why I offered her my arm.

GEO. She thought me false, and I am true. Susan! (*falteringly*) I say nothing about the vows that have passed between us; but blindfold choice is no choice. Your eyes are open now. Choose between John Meadows and George Sandford.

SUSAN. What choice can there be? The moment I saw you, I forgot there was a John Meadows in the world! Forgive me, George, if you can. (*clings to GEORGE*)

GEO. If I had found you looking well and happy beside another man, I would have forgiven you, and left home for ever. But it is plain to be seen you have suffered. So there's nothing to forgive, Susan dear! We are here to make one another happy, not torment one another about John Meadows. I don't think of him, if you don't.

Re-enter MERTON R.H.

MERTON. Ah! I was afraid of this. I heard you had come home.

GEO. Is that all my welcome? Is that the way you keep your promise, uncle?

MERTON. George, I have been an imprudent fool. I am in debt more than two thousand pounds. I am a ruined man. We heard you had changed your mind,—and Meadows will pay all for me.

GEO. Your word, uncle,—I crossed the seas on the faith of it.

MERTON. Well, I must stand to it, though it ruins me. John, if he has brought home a thousand pounds, I must give him Susan; and I will, too—it is justice. And then I'll go the workhouse, and you two be as happy as you can be, after ruining me.

SUSAN. Father!

GEO. And suppose I have brought enough with me to pay your debt, father-in-law, and a good lump beside? Tom, how much is my share?

ROB. Only six thousand pounds.

MERTON. Six thousand pounds!

GEO. No, it is not so much as that.

ROB. Yes, it is. You found the great nugget; and besides, you have more people to take care of than I have. Here they are, ninety one hundred pound flimseys, as clean and as crimp as a muslin gown new from the wash. (*opens large pocket-book, takes out a piece of cotton stuffing, he looks at it*) I never put this in.

GEO. Why, Tom ?

ROB. (*screams*) Robbed !

MEA. (*aside*) Now, it is my turn !

GEO. Robbed !

ROB. Robbed ! Oh, I saw them all safe at night; I put the book under my pillow, and there I found it in the morning.

MERTON. A London thief robbed ? I don't believe a word of it.

ROB. Robbed !—robbed ! Kill me, George, I have ruined you.

GEO. I can't speak.

MERTON. But I can speak ! George Sandford, if you are a man, leave me and my daughter in peace. If you had come home with a thousand pounds, I was ready to give you Susan, to my own ruin. Now it is your turn to show yourself the right stuff. My daughter is going to give her hand to an honest man, who will make a lady of her, and set me on my legs again. You will ruin us both. Go, leave in peace !

GEO. It is my duty to go, Susan. (*takes a step—stammers*—ROBINSON catches him) There, don't make a fuss with me—there's nothing the matter with me. Let me sit on this bench and draw my breath, and then I'll go.

MERTON. Susan, go and get your bonnet, and let us put an end to this.

SUSAN. Not unless George bids me.

MERTON. Be a man, George; be just—it is your turn now.

GEO. Susan, I am a beggar—marry whom you will !

SUSAN. Very well, George. What does it matter ; I shall be in the churchyard before another week is out.

MERTON. Susan !

SUSAN. I shall be in the churchyard before another week is out. When you bury me, remember you killed me with your eyes open.

Exit into house, L.H. 2 E.

MERTON. (*in great agitation*) These words turn my blood, Meadows. I am her father—she has been an obedient, comforting angel in my house, ever since her mother died. What is farm or money to me if I lose my child ?

MEA. Father, to-morrow we'll be in Paris—the next day among the beautiful mountains of Switzerland ! Something new and beautiful shall meet her every day for the next six months; at the end of that time, she will laugh and say, ‘Am I the woman that talked of dying for George Sandford ?’

MERTON. I was a fool ! (*they go up*)

GEO. Give me your hand, old companion, we shall go back to where we came from ! We worked hard for it, too—didn't we ?—and risked our lives as well as our toil. I shall have nothing to work for, now ! Where's William ?—where's my brother ?—has he forgotten me ?

MERTON. William is in prison for debt.

GEO. (*resigned*) William is in prison—is he ? Poor William ! But I don't seem to mind—I'm past sorrow—my heart is dried up. (*droops his head—ROBINSON weeps—they still keep hands*)

Enter MR. TOOVEY, a Magistrate, and his CLERK, L.U.E.

TOOVEY. Mr. Merton, I have come here to make some enquiries about a robbery at the "White Hart," in Reading.

MEA. Why—who told you of it, Squire?

TOOVEY. (*with rather a childish laugh*) That's my business, Mr. Meadows. Will you let me have your black mare for forty pounds? Fetch me a chair.

MEA. Yes, yes—you shall have her. But who told you of this robbery, Squire?

TOOVEY. (*smiling*) That is my business, my good friend. Now, the man who was robbed is here—is he not?

ROB. I am here, Sir.

TOOVEY. Do you suspect no one?

ROB. I have no clue. I should like to examine the people of the house—but it's no use.

GEO. No—it's no use!

TOOVEY. I brought the waiter with me,—examine him. Where is he? Oh! there he is. Come here.

Enter WAITER L.H.U.E.

ROB. Who slept in the house beside us two?

WAITER. A traveller from London—a strange gentleman and his wife,—let me see—a cousin of master's.

ROB. Is that all?

WAITER. Yes, that's all. And Mr. Meadows—he always sleeps with us, market nights.

ROB. Oh! Mr. Meadows was there, was he? Where did he sleep?

WAITER. I don't know,—that's not my business.

TOOVEY. Well, don't trouble about Mr. Meadows—he didn't take your money,—the dog has got plenty of his own—haven't you, Mr. Meadows? He, he, he!

ROB. Tell me all you saw this Meadows do last evening. Where was he, whilst we were in the public room?

WAITER. Well, Sir, he was in the bar; and I did see him do something— You mustn't be angry with me, Mr. Meadows—but I saw you drop a lump of sugar into this gentleman's brandy-and-water.

TOOVEY. Young man, you are wasting your time.

WAITER. Yes. But, Sir, it was not like any other lump of sugar,—it never got to the bottom of the glass at all, Sir.

TOOVEY. The deuce it didn't? What! did it float? You must take out a patent, Mr. Meadows. He, he, he!

MEA. (*aside*) Perdition!

WAITER. No, Sir—it melted like magic, as soon as it touched the liquor; and if I may be allowed to speak my mind, Gentlemen, I should say *that* sugar, wasn't sugar at all!

GEO. Now, hear me, Sir. Tom Robinson is the lightest sleeper ever I saw, but this morning I had to shake him half a dozen times before I could shake the sleep out of him.

ROB. And my head ached fit to split. I was drugged, Sir, and that is the man who did it!

M.E.A. Oh, fie ! oh, fie ! Mr. Toovey, I remember drugging my brandy and water, but the drug is innocent ; the doctor gives it me. Well, Sir, I looked round for my brandy and water, and it was gone. I remember that, too. No doubt the waiter had taken it to this person ; but if he got drunk, as he describes, it wasn't my drug, but the landlord's liquor. (*Toovey laughs—aside*) I must escape ! (*aloud*) Mr. Toovey, it is my luck to be in the way of these people—they are my enemies—are they not, Mr. Merton ?

MERTON. Well, to own the truth, they are.

TOOVEY. So I should say. (*aside*) The most respectable man in the parish.

M.E.A. I could laugh at this as you do, Sir, but there are reasons why this insult is very painful to me standing here. Farmer, explain to the Squire ; I'll put myself out of the way of further insolence.

MERTON. Why, you see, Squire—(*whispering*)

Meantime MEADOWS saunters slowly and carelessly to R.H., about to make his exit, when he is met by a man of Jewish physiognomy, who stops him—After a pause he tries L.H., another man, also of Jewish appearance, stops him there, saying—There is more evidence to be heard.

M.E.A. (*aside*) There is a way out by the back of the house.

About to go out L.U.E., when WILLIAM SANDFORD meets him on threshold.

WIL. You can't pass till his worship hears me ! Sir, I saw this Meadows give a packet to Crawley, at the Station, and Crawley went up by the train.

TOOVEY. Wonderful ! Why it's a conspiracy against you, Meadows.

The CLERK, who has been writing, then whispers to TOOVEY.

—Oh, very well. You must stay, Mr. Meadows, and I will hear this nonsense to the end.

He whispers with CLERK, and looks over what he has been writing—The CLERK, who is evidently his master, appears to be influencing his mind—During this, SUSAN re-enters from the house, with colour on her cheeks—she sits down by GEORGE and slips her hand into his—He looks up, and struck by the expression of her face, rises—She rises too—Her expression is so remarkable that he at once perceives some great change has taken place in their fortunes.

GEO. Why, Susan !

SUSAN. My own George ! (*they embrace*)

M.E.A. (*aside*) Ah ! what is this ? Another link to the chain I see weaving. I tremble, the strings are all around me too fine to see, too many to break. I'm in some huge spider's web.

ISAAC LEVI enters, L.H.U.E., and MEADOWS turning suddenly round, finds his face almost close to the Jew's—he looks stupefied at first, and glares at him, but after a while recoils, and trembles from head to foot.

GEO. Mr. Levi.

SUSAN. Yes—our friend.

WIL. Cheer up, George, we have been watching that *honest* fellow there for the last fortnight;—he'll find our teeth are as long as his.

Exit WILLIAM.

LEVI. This is the guilty man! In the silent watches of the night, when no human eye saw him, he must have crept to this poor exile's bedside, and robbed him of his hard-earned means. In the morning, one whom he had wronged, saw him give, with a stealthy air and look, a parcel to an accomplice, and doubtless said to him, 'Fly! glide down the iron road—neither man nor bird shall overtake you.' But know, vain man, that Providence still favours honesty—even in this uncertain life. Those discoveries of Nature's fathomless secrets, that man calls *his inventions*, are, by the will of heaven, timed, so as to guard the great balance of good and evil!

MEA. (*aside*) Ah! what is he coming to?

LEVI. Those wondrous iron roads, so favourable to Felony escaping Justice, had not been long on the earth, ere, by their side, there rose narrower, but still more wondrous, paths of iron. The road subdues the earth, but the path subdues the air. Let the thief pass the flying birds—the honest man lays his hand on those magic wires, and Justice meets the evil-doer at his journey's end; and so the fox falls, like a simple hare, into the wire-gin! (*a pause*) And so have you! Nathan! (*stamps his foot*)

CRAWLEY is brought on, L.H.U.E., by NATHAN and CONSTABLES.

MEA. Ah!

NATHAN. We found these notes upon Crawley, Sir. (*gives them to TOOVEY*)

ROB. Ours ran from No. 684 to 774.

TOOVEY. (*looking at them*) They are yours. (*gives them*)

ROB. (*nervously*) George, take care of your own. (*gives GEORGE the notes, who gives them to SUSAN*)

CRAW. Gentlemen, I had them from a person of property; how could I suspect there could be anything wrong?

MEA. (*aside*) He'll 'peach—I'm lost for ever!

TOOVEY. Why, Mr. Meadows, I must give you into custody. (*to CRAWLEY*) Sir, stay. Who did you have them from—and for what purpose?

MEA. Don't ask that poltroon, Sir, who would swear anything to save himself. I will confess all. Let me go! (*with anguish*) Let me go, I say!

CRAW. Oh, what a fool I was to take you for a great man. Mr. Levi's worth a hundred of you.

They are led out by CONSTABLES—The Church bells begin to ring—Re-enter WILLIAM from Church porch.

WIL. I've set the bells ringing, anyway.

GEO. Good William, good brother! he shall share our good fortune, shall he not, Susan?

SUSAN. That he shall. (*drying her eyes*) The dear, good, cross thing. He has got a sweetheart, George.

LEVI. Forget all troubles, sorrows, and cares. Let an old man see his friends happy before he goes.

MUSIC *very piano.*

—I have seen the lot of man from east to west: we all pass through trouble at one hour or another of life's short day, and they are the happiest whose sorrows come in the morning;—their noon-day is often the brightest, and their sun sets in peace. So may it be with you, my children! (*a pause*) (*to AUDIENCE*) And with you, our friends!

ROB. WIL. SUSAN. GEO. LEVI. TOOBY. CLERK. MERTON.

R.

L.

CURTAIN.