

THE
WRITING ON THE WALL!

AMelo-drama.

IN THREE ACTS.

THOMAS AND J. M. MORTON,

Members of the Dramatic Authors Society.

AUTHORS OF " ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD," ETC.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

*First Performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket,
Monday, August 9th, 1852.*

CHARACTERS.

SIR PHILIP ELTON..... Mr. WORRELL.
EVERHARD ELTON (*under the assumed
name of Tobias, the Blind Man*)..... Mr. O. SMITH.
HARLOWE..... Mr. PARSELLE.
FERGUSSON TROTTER, ESQ., of Picca-
dilly, London..... Mr. WRIGHT.
RICHARD OLIVER..... Mr. EMERY.
FARMER HARROWELL..... Mr. CULLENFORD.
JACKY..... Mr. LINDON.
BOB SMITHERS (Wandering Minstrel)..... Mr. P. BEDFORD.
GAMMON..... Mr. HONEY.
WALKER.....)small Farmers..... Mr. C.J. SMITH.
SLASHER (*Village Barber*)..... Mr. SAUNDERS.
JOSEPH..... Mr. WAYE.
CLODDY..... Mr. BRAITHWAITE.
LADY ELTON..... Mrs. LEIGH MURRAY.
MARGARET..... Miss ELLEN CHAPLIN.
CARLOTTA SMITHERINI *alias* LOTTY
SMITHERS..... Miss WOOLGAR.
NANCY..... Miss TURNER.
MRS. SLASHER..... Miss PENSON.

Model Farm Men, Women, Peasants, &c.

Time in Representation.—Two hours and a half.

With the exception of two or three contemporary allusions, the period is discretionary.

COSTUMES.

SIR PHILIP ELTON.—Black body coat, light vest, and trowsers.

HARLOWE.—Black frock coat, trowsers, and vest.

F. TROTTER, Esq.—*First dress*, grey coat, light vest, and trowsers, light wig. *Second dress*, a blue checked suit, white hat. *Third dress*, blue cloth coat, light coloured silk vest, striped trowsers, drab hat.

TOBIAS.—Long dark coat, red vest, drab trowsers, slouched white hat
RICHARD OLIVER.—*First dress*, black body coat, drab breeches, and gaiters. *Second dress*, dark frock coat, white cord breeches, top boots, light vest.

FARMER HARROWELL.—Light brown coat, gilt buttons, white vest, drab breeches, black low-crowned hat, top boots.

JACKY.—Short smock frock, corded trousers, black hat.

BOB SMITHERS.—Brown cord breeches and gaiters, light vest, dark frock coat, white hat.

WALKER.—Dark smock frock, long leather gaiters, black hat.

GAMMON.—Cord breeches, red vest, plaid coat, leather gaiters.

SLASHER.—Blue body coat, buff vest, drab trousers, and black hat.

JOSEPH.—Black coat, white vest, black breeches.

CLODDY.—Short smock frock, drab breeches, flowered vest, blue stockings, drab hat.

THE MODEL FARM MEN.—White short smock frocks, red cloth breeches, blue stockings, ankle boots, white straw hats. "*Model Farm*" on the breast.

MARGARET.—*First dress*, white spotted muslin dress, pink silk slip, pink bonnet. *Second dress*, plain white muslin dress.

CARLOTTA SMITHERINI.—*First dress*, green silk petticoat, green velvet paletot, straw bonnet. *Second dress*, brown cotton petticoat, blue cotton jacket, check apron, white cap. *Third Dress*—pink cotton gown, white apron. *Fourth dress*, handsome blue cloth habit, black riding hat, and feather.

LADY ELTON.—Blue silk dress, white lace bonnet, and mantle.

NANCY.—Green stuff dress, white apron with bib, on which is painted "*Model Farm*," white cap.

PEASANTS.—Dresses as usual.

SERVANTS.—Blue coats and breeches, and red vest.

NEW SCENERY.—ACT I.

THE VILLAGE OF PENMORE

With National School and Village Ale House.

BARONIAL APARTMENT IN ELTON HALL

ACT II.

PARLOUR IN HARROWELL'S FARM

Exterior of ELTON HALL and Park.

ACT III.

MODEL FARM & RUSTIC DANCE

A HOVEL IN SPRINGFIELD WOOD.

THE OLD OAK CHAMBER OF ELTON HALL,

AND THE DENOUEMENT OF

THE WRITING ON THE WALL!

THE WRITING ON THE WALL.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Open space in Village, on one side a post inscribed, "To Penzance," R. 1 E.; SLASHER, the Barber's Slurp, R. 3 E.; front of handsome School, inscribed "Penmoor School of Industry" L. 1 E.; Public House with out-door tables, benches, &c, L. 3 E.; front of HARROWELL'S Farm house; PEASANTS drinking before Public House; on bench in front of SLASHER'S Shop several others seated. At the extremities of this bench sit GAMMON WALKER; SLASHER is shaving GAMMON, and Mrs. SLASHER, WALKER ; CLODDY and another between them, rubbing their chins with lather, and awaiting their turn.*

GAM. I tell'ee thee'st robbed me.

WAL. Thee'st cheated me I tell'ee.

GAM. Thee'st cribbed a good yard and a half o' land.

WAL. I've been done out of zix voot o' ground.

GAM. Who's done thee ?

WAL. Thee!

GAM. (*starting up*) Me ? (*sitting down*)

WAL. (*starting up*) Thee ! (*sitting down*) (SLASHER and WIFE

GAM. (*starting up*) Me ? (*sitting down*) *pulling them down*)

WAL. (*starting up*) Thee ! (*sitting down*)

SLASH. My dear Mr. Gammon, I think it right to tell you that if you don't sit still I shall cut your throat.

MRS. S. Mr. Walker, I shall certainly take a slice off your nose. I'm sure I shall.

SLASH. What's the matter atwixt ye both?

GAM. What's the matter ? why, Walker's been a cribbing of my land this three year and more, and now his clover runs bang into my woats.

WAL. No such thing; Gammon's been grawdally working into my field, and now his woats stands smack among my clover—I'll go to law.

GAM. And so will I.

CLOD. Stuff and nonsense! buy a penn'orth o' law, and pay a zhilling for it? noa, noa; tell'ee what now, zuppose you name a arbitraitor apiece, and let them zettle it znuq and pleasant like.

SLASH. Well said. Master Cloddy; and look, hero come fust the two men for your turn, Mr. Oliver and Farmer Harrowell,

WAL. I don't mind if I do—Thomas Harrowell be my man.

MRS. S. Thomas Harrowell's the kindest heart in the parish.

GAM. And Richard Oliver be my man.

SLASH. Richard Oliver's the longest purse in the county, but folks do say—hush, he's here! Now, Master Cloddy, sit you down.

(SLASHER, MRS. S., CLODDY, and others retire a little.)

Enter OLIVER and HARROWELL, from farm house, L.

OLIV. Then we may consider the business settled, master Harrowell

—I take off your hands the lease off Springfield farm.

HAR. Why truly, Mr. Oliver, my will lies all the other way, but I'm not half the man I was, so give me something near the average profit of Springfield, and the lease is yours.

WAL. Zarvent, Mr. Harrowell. (*with a box*)

GAM. Zame to you, Mr. Oliver.

WAL. I've got a bit of favour to. (*to Harrowell, L*)

GAM. (*to Oliver, R*) You can do me a small zarvice.

HAR. A favor? speak my friend.

OLI. Service? I've no time to throw away; what do you want?

GAM. Well then, Walker here and I'ze had a bit of a row.

WAL. About a bit of a vield; and so Gammon and I wants you two to stand arbitraitors.

BOTH. And now what d'ye zay?

OLIV. I zay you're both wrong.

WAL. How d'ye make that out?

OLIV. Wrong to waste time in wrangling when the dispute is so easily settled. Go to my mine; select a pickaxe a piece, and fall to work upon each other. He who gets his brains knocked out is provided for—let the other take the land. (*crosses to R.*)

GAM. A pickaxe! (*aside*) Noa, noa, my head don't mind a crack or zo, but he ain't no match for a pickaxe.

OLIV. I can suggest nothing simpler or more to the pound. (*retires to bench where he examines papers*)

WAL. Nothing more to the point, eh? To my thinking the point of a pickaxe be too much to the point. Come, Master Harrowell, what zay you?

HAR. Neighbours, there's but one way to make you friends and honest men; Middle Acre the field about the possession of which you quarrel, belongs to Lady Elton, and you know it. Give back the property, and peace will be restored between you, and with your conscience into the bargain.

OLIV. (*impatiently coming forward*) Well said, upright Master Harrowell! Neighbours, be grateful! ha. ha! He's given you the morals of the matter, now for a bit of common sense, (*crosses to C.*) If this Lady Elton fancies herself injured, hasn't she a Steward to detect her victim, and a herd of hungry lawyers to marry him, body and soul?

HAR. Not the least bit o' doubt on it.

OLIV. Hasn't she a son too? the pious and discreet Sir Philip? Is he not at this devoted mother's side as often as the charms of dioe-

pockets suggest repentance and replenishment ? You are a

man of morals, Master Harrowell--there's a stripling now after your own heart.

HAR. Mr. Oliver, whatever cause you may have to hate a family the rest of the world loves, let me- advise a little caution in expressing it, otherwise thy reports afloat may be taken for true.

Oliv. (quiet) What reports, good Master Harrowell ?

HAR. Why it has been observed, that the growth of your property has been in exact proportion to the loss of theirs--that the young lady of Elton Hall is very fair, and that one cause of your hostility to the Elton family is their insensibility to the advantage of regilding with your gold the dusty arms of their ancient baronetcy.

OLIV. My gold is much better employed ; and my hatred is at least honest, because open. I hate the Eltons because—but my hatred owns responsibility to no man: I hate them--because I hate them.

TOBIAS'S voice heard without, C.E.R. Poor blind : Poor blind!

JAC. This way, Father Tobias, this way.

GAM. Here be poor blind Toby.

OLIV. Come Master Harrowell, let's in and talk of matters better worth our notice--the sale of Springfield.

HAR. I follow you. *Exit with OLIVER into farm house, L.H.*

Enter JACKY, C.E.R., leading TOBIAS.

JAC. Another step or two, old gentleman, and there you are.

TOB. How far have we got?

JAC. Close to the schoolhouse. there's all sorts of grand doings a

doing here to-day— here's'to be Lady Elton—and here's to be Miss Margaret—and here's to be a sight of gentlefolks from Penzance-- are here's your friend young doctor Harlowe--
TOB. Heaven bless him.

JAC. So, if you stand at the school door, you'll be sure to get a hatfull of copper, and perhaps a bit of silver or two. If you're above taking silver, you may give it me. (*looking L.U.E.*) Oh, I say, here come the gentlefolk with her ladyship at the head of 'em.
GAM. Let's stand aside, and show 'em we can do the genteel and pratty.

Enter LADY ELTON, accompanied by numerous Friends, and followed by Livery Servants, L. PEASANTS take hats off, and shout as she enters.

LADY E. Thank you, my good friends, one and all. (*to GAMMON*)

Ah, farmer, I am glad to see you; I hope the crops are thriving.

GAM. Why, if truth must be zpoke, the craps do look uncommon queer, my lady—the poor things be half drouded. If there be a cloud in all the County o'Cornwall, dong him, he's sure to find out my yarn.

WAL. (*aside*) That be Gammon all over.

LADY E. And you, farmer Walker, what say you? This constant rain of your neighbour's, will at leant benefit your pasture lands.

WAL. Rain, my lady, I can't never get a zhower. Zometimes a cloud do come zailing up, but dong him he do zail off again, and I ben't never the better for a drop, (*bowing*)

GAM. (*aside*) That be reg'lar Walker, that be. And then I've got a rogue of a neighbour, (*grinning at WALKER*)

WAL. ZO'VEI. (*grinning at GAMMON*)

LADY E. I have not been misinformed then; you are on bad terms, and on condition that I hear no more of your differences, I intend to give you half an acre of land a-piece, in the centre of your two farms,—in short I give you Middle Acre rent free.

GAM. (*aside to WALKER over the, left*) Walker !

WAL. (*aside to GAMMON, hand to nose*) Gammon.

Enter MARGARET, L., a Livery Servant behind, HARLOWE a few paces in the rear.

LADY E. Ah ! my dear child.

MAR. Dear Mamma, you must forgive me if I am late : I accidentally met Mr. Harlowe—and—he followed me—and he is here.

LADY E. (*advances to HARLOWE*) Good day, Mr. Harlowe. Pray let us see you at the Hall—let us see you frequently. My son, Sir Philip, is expected to-day: I am impatient to introduce you to each other.

HARL. To neglect your ladyship's invitation would be to add ingratitude to discourtesy. I shall have the honour of paying my respects at Elton Hall this afternoon, (*school bell rings*)

LACY E. The bell summons us to the business of the day, and the visitors are already assembled. Come, Margaret. Pray follow, us, Mr. Harlowe. *Exit into School, R., with MARGARET and Company.* PEASANTS *bow.* TOBIAS *stands at door with hat off,*

TOB. Poor blind ! Poor blind!

MAR. (*whispers in passing*) Await me here, good Tobias, I've got a little present for you. *Exit.* R.

HARL. (*looking after her*) In vain I fly her. In vain I reproach myself with the recollection that she is a daughter of the proud house of Elton—that to think of her is madness ! Her very mother frustrates my resolution, and forbids me to avoid her (*following meets TOBIAS*) Ah, my poor old friend! Come in with me and rest. This is a house of charity. No claim, alas, is greater than your own. Lean on my arm; I'll lead you to a seat. (*giving arm*)

TOB. Beloved boy (*checking himself*) Forgive me, sir, my thanks are stronger than my wits, (*going off*) Thank you kindly, sir thank you kindly. (*enter School, R. supported by HARLOWE*)

PEASANTS *come forward.*

GAM. Well, though zhe did come Walker over us wi' her half a acre apiece, zhe be a good sort o' ooman that Lady Elton.

WAL. Zhe be all right about the back-bone, though zhe did Gammon us about Middle Acre. Long life to her ladyzhip! (*all hurrah*)

Enter OLIVER and HARROWELL from farm, L., they advance after hearing the preceding.

HAR. That's as it should be.

GAM. I'll have another upon the strength of it. Hip, hip, hurrah,
(OLIVER. *slaps him on shoulder violently*)

OLIVER. Neighbours, I begin to feel respect for you. A woman makes two fools of you, and you are grateful for the favour: soft words have strange power on soft heads.

WAL. Mr. Oliver, say what you will. Let a man be manly, but he be a man still,—and when it comes to two ladies like them—a young creature that don't know what bad means, and a poor widow that ain't been zeen to smile, poor thing, zince her husband, Sir Walter, died—murdered

OLIV. Murdered by his own brother! Truly an exemplary family!

HAR. By his own" brother—that was never rightly proved. He was condemned because appearances condemned him. When old Sir Richard Elton died—the grandfather of our present baronet, Sir Philip—he crowned his animosity towards his younger son, Everhard, by a formal act of disinheritance: the proud vindictive father, resenting with his dying breath Everhard's unalterable attachment to a young peasant girl of Penzance, the beautiful Rachel Willis, (OLIVER *smiles significantly*) and leaving to the elder son, Walter, our young master's father, not only the entailed estates, but every farthing of the natural patrimony of his discarded brother.

GAM. The hard-hearted old varmint!

HAR. Soon afterwards, one night—one awful night—though five-and-twenty years have passed away, I recollect it well—Sir Walter Elton was found murdered in his study. Richard Oliver, do you recollect that night?

OLIV. (*slightly moved*) I do, 'twas a rough night.

HAR. A few resentful words uttered by young Everhard, when he learnt his disinheritance, together with a letter in his handwriting found on the dead man's person, asking an interview with his brother in the very room, and at the *very* hour of the murder, were held conclusive evidence against him: but I who

knew his noble nature—I alone proclaimed, and still proclaim him innocent.

OLIV. (*Vehemently*) Pshaw! None so blind to guilt as those that won't see. Your precous Everhard was at least no fool—with skill and cunning that would do honour to the Newgate calendar he broke his prison, and cheating the gallows of its due, died in quieter infamy abroad, leaving a name behind—as black to this hour as brother's blood can make it.

(SMITHERS' *voice heard without*, U. E. L.)

CLOD. Here be Bob Smithers the viddler, come back from Launceston races.

SMITHERS *sings a snatch, winding up with no small shake; then enters with fiddle*, U. E. L.

OMNES. Bravo, Bobby!

BOB. Ah, my lads, how's all of you ? individually and collectively, how is you all?

JAC. Well, what news, Bob, from Launceston races ?

SMITH (c.) Launceston races! Launceston races is a disgrace to human natur! A wretched sprinkling or gentility, and not a greenhorn to be found among 'em! Dice, thimblorig, and lucky-bag went for nothing ! Blue-bottte police had it all their own way, and left Smithers & Co. no room for their genius. I tell you what, if magistrates don't mind what they're got at, races ill tumble down to something respectable, and then no gentleman 'll be seen there. Ah, Mr. Harrowell, my service to you, Mr. Harrowell. (*sees OLIVER*) Well, I declare," if there ain't Squire Oliver. Humble servant to you, Squire Oliver, (*bowing low*)

OLIV. (R.) I have no time to listen to this foolery. Harrowell, I must step to the post-office, (*looking at watch*) I expect letters—letters worth ten times their weight in gold. Recollect, in less than half an hour we meet on this spot again.

Exeunt OLIVER, U. E. R. and HARROWELL, U. E. L.

SMITH. Now then, my lads, call for what you like. Recollect I stand treat.

GAM. Oh, oh, Bob stand treat!—whoever heard the loike of that?

SMITH. Bless you, I've given up keeping empty pockets—I say, boys (*shaking purse*) open your musical eyes, and be edified with the sound of the chink!

WAL. Nobody never lived genteeler upon nothing at all than Bob Smithers.

SMITH. Nothing at all ? Look at Paganinny here (*points to fiddle*) Is Paganinny nothing? Think of thimblorig—d'ye call thimblorig nothing? But I'm a going to retire from public life I'm a going to live in the busum of my family. My lovely niece is a coming back *this* very day from the great metropopolous to conduct my home department.

CLOD. What Lotty Smithers, as went up to London three year ago and more?

SMITH. Yes, *sir*. Miss SMITHERS—not Lotty, if you please—is returning to the home of her ancestors, with hundreds of pounds in her pocket; and her beloved uncle, Roberto—that's me—means to put down thousands to her hundreds; from which fact you may infer, that the last descendants of the Smitherses means to come it strong.

GAM. Put down thousands to her hundreds ? You? Go it, Bobby,—oh, oh ! (*all laugh. The bell rings; TOBIAS appears at school house door and takes station near it. VISITORS flock out, surrounding LADY ELTON and MARGARET ; HARLOWE follows at a distance; PEASANTS disperse, some sit at ale hotter table, &c*)

LADY E. The results of the day are gratifying beyond expression. (*to her guests*) Thanks, my kind friends, for your liberal help to these poor children. Recollect we part not here. I hope to find my son, Sir Philip, awaiting me at the Hall, and in the evening our doors will open wide to receive you. (*curtseys round to all*) come, Margaret.

TOB, (*behind*) Poorblind—poor blind!

MAR. Dear mother, let me first speak to poor Tobias there,

LADY E. Go, my dearest child, go.

MAR. (*drops gift into his hat*) There, poor old man, and may it comfort you.

HARL. (*on the other side of TOBIAS*) Take this trifle too, my good old friend.

TOB. Thanks, gentle lady—thanks, generous sir. (*taking their hands*) I know these charitable hands, and well I may; blessings on you both, my children! Morning and night your names are blended, in the blind man's prayers! (*he instinctively joins their hands on his breast; MARGARET looks down; HARLOWE betrays strong emotion*)

LADY E. I await you, Margaret.

MAR. (*disengages herself, and rapidly*) I am here, mother,

LADY E. I will not take leave, Mr. Harlowe, we meet again so soon. (*HARLOWE bows low and separately to both LADIES; MARGARET curtseys, they exeunt, L. U. E., HARLOWE, R.*)

Re-enter OLIVER, L. E. R, and HARROWELL, C. E. L.; OLIVER'S manner express great exultation.

HAR. Welcome, Oliver; I have got my papers.

OLIV. (*holding up a packet*) And I have got my papers—each a precious gem! See here. I hold them in my gripe, and with them Elton Hall, and all its proud possessors.

HAR. What do you mean?

OLIV. I mean business—nothing more. I have business with Lady Elton, where is she?—gone! (*looks, L. H.*) She has taken the private path I see—I'll follow her; and, though her sycophants, in livery and out of livery, stood twenty deep around her, face to face I'll tell her that my day of vengeance and of triumph's come.

HAR. (*stopping him*) Hold, Oliver! If you have claims to serve a purpose of revenge, go, meet Sir Philip, who is at this moment at the Hall.

OLIV. I'll not be tutored how to take what the law given me. Make way, Harrowell. Let me pass I say! (*they struggle; at this moment SMITHERS, who has been watching the scene, gets between them*)

SMITH. Heyday! quarrelling! Mr. Harrowell you're wrong—you

must be wrong, cause the worthy Squire Oliver is always right; state the case properly and he always listens to reason. Suppose I try and put it to him strong. (*aside to OLIVER*) Oliver, you mustn't follow Lady Elton.

OLIV. Must not?

SMITH. If you like it better, shall not. You must take the high road to the Hall (*pointing*) there it lies.

OLIV. This language fellow—

SMITH. Is plain and to the point.

OLIV. What if I answer with a blow?

SMITH. If that's your answer, this is mine——(*whispers*)

OLIV, (*starting*) SMITHERS, are you mad?

SMITH. No, I'm come to my senses; if you're in yours, obey me.

OLIV. You shall repent this, Smithers. (*assuming perfect quiet*) On reflection, Harrowell, I see you're right; my business is with the son—not the mother. I'll see Sir Philip—good morrow.

Exit, L.

SMITH. I follow, sir. I really can't let the Squire go alone, he is so werry fond of me

Exit, L.

HAR- 'Tis strange! His iron resolution bent by the breath of that vagabond! Strange suspicions wake in me—where shall I find counsel--help--?

TOB. (*behind*) Poor blind man—poor blind man!

HAR. He here too? the very being so awfully associated in my thoughts -with Oliver! Is he sent as a confirming sign? (*aloud*) Ah, Master Tobias, you look weary; wait into my parlour, I want to speak on matters that concern you for justice concerns as ail—it is the sacred prayer of every honest heart-

TOB. (*with dignity, pointing upwards*) And the hope, Harrowell, even of the blind man. (HARROWELL, *surveys him keenly. Scene closes in.*)

SCENE II.—*Handsome Room in Elton Hall, oak carvings, arms on panels.*

Enter SIR PHILIP ELTON and JOSEPH, R.

SIR P. You're not mistaken, my good old friend! 'Tis I, your young master, let me rather say your young playmates, hole, hearty, and happy, (*aside*) Happy!

JOS. Ah, Sir Philip, my good mistress will be beside herself with joy.

SIR P. Joy! My poor mother! Did she but know— (*aloud*) But where's my friend and companion, Fergusson? Oh, here he comes,

Enter FERGUSSON TROTTER, R., his dress dirty and disordered.

TROT. This is perfect! This is delicious! There's nothing of this kind in Piccadilly! The old hall—the drawbridge—the court yard—the moat full of frogs croaking in front—the avenue full of rooks cawing behind! Oh, those rooks, those precious black minstrels! We've had scores of Ethiopian serenaders in Piccadilly, but never did I hear darkies sing in that style—never!

SIR P. I am glad you like the first glance of Elton Hall, Ferguson; but what has happened to your coat?

TROT. Bless you, my coat and I have had an adventure already—of course we delight in adventures—if we didn't, we shouldn't have left Piccadilly. Well then—just now I distinctly heard the squeak of a pig; bearing the squeak, I naturally ran to the spot where the squeak came from—the farm yard behind the hall—there I found a superb family, thirteen to the litter: I entered the sty, took up a youngster—a splendid specimen—as tight as a drum—and was admiring the pig baby, when the pig mother, without even asking what I meant by it, ran between my legs, carried me three times round the sty on her back, without a

saddle, and finished the performance by suddenly making a dead stop, and throwing me head over heels into her victuals—the cleanest thing you ever saw—I mean the Summerset, not the victuals—ha, ha, ha ! (*rubbing his clothes.*)

SIR P. Ha, ha! You must forgive her, my dear Fergusson: maternal anxiety is strong--ha, ha!

TROT. Forgive her? I love her! I've set my affections on that female pig—she shall be the pig mother of my Model Farm.

SIR P.. Your Model Farm? You a farmer? Have you had any experience in that line?

TROT. None, but what I've picked up in Piccadilly—but that's all in my favour. I'm going on a plan of my own ; and I feel persuaded that I shall have the best wheat and clover in the County of Cornwall, because at this moment I'm not quite sure that I know what *from* clover.

SIR P. I confess you surprise me.

TROT. Surprise you ? My dear sir, I mean to surprise all Europe ! The fact is, for sometime past, I've felt an intimate conviction that I was born to be a Philanthropist—consequently, I felt myself called on to leave Picadilly, and restore the whole human race to a state of innocence-- to reach 'em how to have nothing, in short, to go about much in the state of Adam and Eve in the picture books.

SIR P. And what are your plans ?

TROT. Well, I mean to start with a Model Farm—I couldn't conveniently get a Model Farm in Piccadilly—so I came here for one. I am determined to have the yellowest freckles I can find : I've made up my mind to have my hair cropt to the roots: I've ordered a straw hat a yard and a half wide in the brim, and six pair of shoes three inches thick in the sole: and I mean to eat nothing but beer, and drink nothing but beans and bacon.

SIR P. Ha, ha, ha ! I admire your spirit. My estate here is large;

perhaps we can accomodate your experiment, my dear Trotter and this brings me to the subject of my sisters happiness—you recollect the overtures I made to you in London on this subject.

TROT. I don't object to the idea—the pastoral doesn't exclude the matrimonial: Adam had his Eve, Trotter requires his Mrs. Trotter; but there's a good deal to be considered: I require a wife of very peculiar qualification. In the first place, Mrs. Trotter must have no education, no taste, no accomplishments; in short, Mrs. Trotter must know nothing. There was no woman answering that description in Piccadilly; that's why I came to choose a Mrs. Trotter here.

SIR P. Well, as regards ignorance of fashionable life, at least, my sister is likely to answer your ideas of perfection.

MAR. (*heard without, L.*) Philip arrived ! Where is he ?

SIR P. But judge for yourself—she is here.

Enter MARGARET, L., she rushes into PHILIP'S arms.

MAR. Dear, dear Philip ! Welcome, dearly welcome! (*returns and meets LADY ELTON, L.*) Mother, he is here—Philip is here at last.

LADY E. Philip ! (*attempts to speak, bursts into tears, and falls on his neck*)

SIR P. My beloved mother!

LADY E. My son my dear son, what have I not suffered? *my letters* unanswered—painful reports——

SIR P. Come, come, 'tis a bright hour that unites us ; cloud it not with recollections of the past; I am in your arms again; am come to share Margaret's filial duties. My sweet sister——

TROT. (*looking at MARGARET, aside*) She's too sweet by many degrees. There's a deal too much of Piccadilly about her.

SIR P. Allow me to present my travelling companion and friend, Mr. Fergusson Trotter——

TROT. Of Piccadilly, London, ma'am! (*bowing to both.*)

LADY E. During your stay in Cornwall, I trust you will make Elton Hall your home, Mr.—Mr.——

TROT. Trotter, of Piccadilly, London, ma'am.

LADY E. I fear, Mr, Trotter, you will find our house but dull after the gay variety of London.

MAR. Nay, we shall not be dull, mother, now that Philip is returned;

I mean to make the old house smile, aye, and even dance and sing, to welcome back its master.

TROT. (*aside*) Make an old house dance and sing! Come, I like that; there's some promise about that—the observation is so remarkably stupid!

MAR. In the first place, we must have music: my new instrument has come just in time. (*SIR P. shows annoyance.*)

TROT. (*aside*) An instrument? Some Cornish instrument I dare say: perhaps the pan pipes or the Jew's harp. So, ma'am, you're a musician, eh ?

SIR P. (*annoyed*) A musician I Oh yes, a musician—by courtesy.

LADY E. Nay, Philip, you will be surprised at her proficiency. Her voice, too, is the sweetest organ I ever listened to,

TROT (*aside*) Listen to an organ! I've heard organs enough in Piccadilly—this won't do: this isn't the sort of material I want.

SIR P. (*aside*) My dear mother, you must know that my friend Trotter is a zealous agriculturist, and has experimental schemes in view, which I have premised, if possible, to supply a fair field for.

TROT. A fair field ? My dear madam, I must have lots of fair field: but first I want to pick a sort of steward: a kind of a factotum: and I want a man singularly qualified.

LADY E. I understand—an honest, active, intelligent man.

TROT. Oh dear no, that won't do at all; I don't object to honesty; I'm not prejudice against activity; but intelligence won't do at all—a decidedly stupid fellow's the man for me.

LADY E. (*smiling*) Well, sir, whatever your plans may be, I am sure you cannot do better than consult the tenant of Springfield Farm. The farm house is at the extremity of the park: if you will offer me your arm I shall be happy to point it out to you.

TROT. Thanks, my dear madam: I'll see this fat farmer at once: for of course he is fat: all farmers are. *Au revoir*, my dear

Elton, (*crosses to Miss E.*) Your servant, miss: I shall have the honour of talking to you at dinner, (*aside*) She won't do at all; as I said before, she ain't at all the sort of material I want. (*offers arm to LADY E.*) Madam——

Exeunt TROTTER and LADY E., R.

SIR P. (*aside*) I'm glad to be alone with her. I'll at once disclose this stifling secret, and prepare her for the marriage, (*aloud*) Margaret, come hither: you and I must have some conversation. (*taking her Hand*) Misfortune, Margaret, is a bitter draught, but the drop, bitter beyond bitterness, is the task of passing the cup to the lips of those we love—lips such as thine, my sister.

MAR. Philip, you terrify me.

SIR P. Yet I must do it. Know then, Margaret, my abode in London has been fatal to me—fatal to us all. I have lost a sum of money that I dare not even name beneath this roof.

MAR. (*shrinking.*) A gambler, Philip! Oh, my poor mother!

SIR P. The debt I owe is held by four or five chief creditors: money-lending harpies, under whose experienced knavery it has rapidly doubled—yet, perhaps, they may grant me time. Listen, Margaret, you are now a woman—accomplished—beautiful-(*hesitating*)—suppose, and what more probable, that a wealthy marriage should present-itself?

MAR. (*withdrawing*) Brother!

SIR P. For instance—my London friend here, is an excellent fellow, good natured enough to place his ample fortune at the disposal of her he loved, (*significantly*) At such a moment you can appreciate that circumstance——

MAR. I understand you, Philip, and thus I answer:—For your sake and my mother's, I would exchange my loveless heart for fortune, if that fortune would save you; but a man like that—without one bond of sympathy between us—that is impossible!

SIR P. (*angrily*) Margaret! (*aside*) This emotion—my mind misgives me! (*taking her hand*) Margaret, does this disinclination to one arise from inclination to another? Come, I have told you all my inmost secrets; I have a double claim to yours.

MAR. Secrets? I have no secrets.

SIR P. Indeed! your heart then is free—you love no one?

MAR. Love, brother?

Enter JOSEPH, R.

JOS. (*announcing*) Mr. Charles Harlowe.

MAR. (*starts violently*) Ah!

SIR P. (*aside*) That name agitates her.

Enter HARLOWE, who advances and bows to MARGARET, who curtsies in great agitation.

SIR P. (*watching them*) So—so

Enter LADY ELTON, R., who goes to HARLOWE.

LADY E. Mr. Harlowe (*taking his hand*) allow me to present you to my son, Sir Philip Elton. Philip, to the indefatigable care of

this gentleman we owe, I believe, your sister's life; it was, however, not merely to express our united acknowledgments, but to discharge a direct debt, that I requested your presence at the Hall. (*taking out and presenting a pocket book*)

HARL. (*declining*) Madam, I entreat——

SIR P. (*coldly, but strictly polite*) I beg your pardon, sir: it is the custom of my family to pay for the professional services we require. It was in your capacity of physician that you were called here, it is in that capacity only you are here at this moment.

HARL.- Sir!

LADY E. Philip !

SIR P. Permit me, madam, (*takes purse from LADY E.*) Take your due, sir (*pointedly*) or your refusal will be liable to misconstruction. (*he puts purse in HARLOWE'S hand— HARLOWE motionless.*)

MAR. (*aside*) Poor Harlowe!

SIR P. Family affairs require our presence. Lady Elton, we will, if you please pass to your apartments. Good day, sir. (*LADY E, goes and shakes HARLOWE cordially by the hand, MARGARET about to do the same, is intercepted by SIR P.*) Mr. Harlowe will excuse farther ceremony, (*he points to door, MARGARET exits, followed by SIR P. and LADY ELTON, L.*)

HARL. (*aside*) Does he guess *my* feelings, and by his offensive manner mean me to understand he does ? 'Twas her softening presence helped me to control myself. But take his gold—the produce of his scorn ? Never! (*puts purse on table, and turning sees MARGARET, who advances stealthily*) Miss Elton !

MARG. A few words, Mr. Harlowe; forgive my brother, you know not what he suffers, I beseech you take your due. (*presenting purse, he refuses*) for my sake, take it. (*he takes it eagerly*) My mother bids me say she feels for you—I too, feel for you—deeply.

HARL. Miss Elton!

MAR. (*unable to speak*) Farewell, Mr. Harlowe.

HARL. One moment, Miss Elton. Under a sense of duty—of painful duty—I am about to leave Penmoor; before we part, Miss Elton, if I might dare solicit——(*a pause; in strong emotion she gives her hand: he kneels and kisses it; at this moment OLIVER opens C. D. and sees them, but is unseen. MARGARET hastens away, but turns at wing and exclaims hastily*)

MAR. Do not leave Penmoor.

Exit, L.

HARL. (*following her*) Margaret—(*meets OLIVER, who enters followed by JOSEPH, C.*)

OLIVER. I tell you I want to see your master.

JOS. Sir Philip will not be disturbed.

OLIVER. I will see him. My name is Richard Oliver, you look strong enough to carry it up stairs—go! (*Exit JOSEPH L.—sarcastically*) the young doctor here seems *permitted* to speak persuasive English to the sister; 'tis hard if the brother won't allow me ten minutes' vulgar tongue, (to HARL.) Excuse interruption, young gentleman, but other folks have *pressing* affairs on *hand* as well as you, and my business——

HARL. Your business no wise concerns me. Good morning. *Exit, R.*

OLIV. Your most obsequious servant. Together! Then my suspicions are correct—they love each other ! You fly high, youngster, but if I'm not mistaken, I shall clip your pinions. (*looking round; a pause*) So, once more I stand beneath the roof of Elton Hall! When I crossed this threshold, twenty-five years ago, (*low*) with only half-accomplished vengeance, I swore I would return its master, and I have kept my vow! (*looking round*) Every door and stair, closet and casement, is stamped in fire on my memory! 'Twas on this very spot we stood my father and myself—when he came to beg the proud Sir Walter's mercy, and through that door (*points*) the proud Sir Walter stepped to meet us. I think I see him now—(*turns and sees SIR PHILIP standing in the doorway, L. he starts violently*) Powers above! What's that? (*Sir P. advances*) His living image !

SIR P. Are you the person wishing to see Sir Philip Elton?

OLIV. (*collecting himself*) I am.

SIR P. Mr. Richard Oliver.

OLIV. Richard Oliver.

SIR P. I believe, Mr. Oliver, I am in your debt. Something for agricultural stock supplied to my steward ; something more for the professions of hatred with which I understand you publicly compliment my family.

OLIV. It is very possible, Sir Philip,—I dislike great houses in general, and yours in particular; indeed, were its walls levelled with the ground, and I saw my cattle grazing among the ruins, I confess—with all respect—it would afford me very lively satisfaction (*bowing*)

SIR P. I will tell you why. Because in front of the gateway, Sir Walter Elton, as magistrate of this county, once paraded in the pillory a contumacious smuggler and poacher, and consequently—thief. That man was, I believe, your father.

OLIV. (*violently*) And the lawless tyrant, who took upon himself the offices of Judge, Jury, Witness, Prosecutor, and Persecutor, was, I believe, your father, (*bowing*) Your descent, Sir Philip, reconciles me to my own. To business if you please.

SIR P. Right, (*takes out pocket-book*) I find your name here upon my steward's book. Two hundred-and-fifty pounds, (*hands notes*) There is the money.

OLIV. (*takes out pocket-book*) And there is my receipt.

SIR P. And now, I believe, your business is at an end.

OLIV. Not quite, Sir Philip,—as I am here, we may as well settle another trilling matter: your acceptance for £5000 in favour of John Hardman, of Cornhill, London. (*takes out paper from book*)

SIR P. (*Starting*) John Hardman ? I recollect. The sum is considerable : but though I sold, at a day's notice, land worth ten times the amount, I'll do it to redeem that instrument.

OLIV. Spoken like a gentleman ! but pray be careful to leave land enough to defray a second note of hand for £7,350—due, as it happens, this very morning.

SIR P. Am I awake?

OLIV. I hope so: for I must next call your attention to a somewhat

heavy order on your bankers, with the singular expression "No Assets" distinctly traced across it. We now come nearer home, Sir Philip. Here is a mortgage for £27,000 of certain large and fertile farms at Penmoor—a part and parcel of Elton Manor. I need not analyse some half dozen other interesting slips of paper here, for I am seriously apprehensive that the sale of Elton Hall itself, with park, timber, stock, pleasure grounds and gardens, will scarcely satisfy what I have already had the *pleasure* to detail. (*bowing*)

SIR P. I see it all—this is a plot—a course of secret treachery!

OLIV. (*smiling quietly*) Treachery ! A harsh word, Sir Philip, and for what? I trust the honourable name of Elton-honourable, at least, till it was yours: I place my fortune under the safeguard of your honesty: (*pointing to papers*) My faith turns this heap of Refuse; into Gold, and you call that, Treachery! (*with quiet sarcasm*) If punctuality as a man of honour is too much to expect from you, Sir Philip, you might surely shew some trace of the manners of a Gentleman.

SIR P. Enough of raillery and insult, sir. Be pleased to recollect you are in my house (*puts his hat on*) Tell me, in a word, what do you demand from its master ?

OLIV. (*puts his hat on, and meets SIR Philip face to face*) £59,000.

SIR P. And what if I cannot pay you ?

OLIV. Then I must try to get the money from the house, if I can't from the master. (*goes to window and waves his handkerchief*)

LADY E. (*without, L.*) Philip! Philip! Where is Sir Philip ?

SIR P. My mother's voice! Begone, sir, begone this moment, or I call my grooms to turn you out of doors.

OLIV. (*bowing*) Your gratification would be great, but transient; to-morrow I shall return the favour, (*retires to back, but lingers at door*)

MARGARET *rushes in L.*

MAR. Philip! Philip ! Men calling themselves Sheriffs officers are below—from them my mother has learnt everything.

Enter LADY ELTON, papers in her hand, L.

LADY E. Sheriffs officers in possession of Elton Hall!—the beloved home of twenty generations!—my dear boy driven from his inheritance!—my helpless girl a beggar! Oh, no! no! heaven has too much mercy !—I cannot—will not live to see it! (*about to fall, PHILIP catches her, she faints*)

MAR. Mother ! mother! Philip, what she says is true—it will kill her, Philip!

SIR P. What's to be done ?—my courage, my very reason is forsaking me.

MAR. Wait here ! Watch over our mother—leave her not one instant ! (*takes hat and scarf*)

SIR P. Whither go you ?

MAR. Brother! a, tiger has struck his fangs into our mother's heart I—I'll seek the tiger—in his den! (*rushes out, R.*)

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Interior of Springfield Farm House; doors C. and L.; window L. flat.*

HARROWELL *seated, writing in an old account book,*

HAR. (*throwing down pen and rising*) There—there's my last entry in the old book, my last sigh for my old home, and now Master Richard Oliver may take possession of Springfield as soon as he pleases.

Enter SMITHERS, C. down R.

Ah, well Smithers?

SMITH. My respected friend, Mr. Oliver, is waiting for his respected friend, Mr. Harrowell, in the little back room of little lawyer Screw's little office; and what's more, Mr. Oliver seems somewhat impatient.

HAR. To take possession of his new property, eh?—well, be it so, come along, (*putting on his hat*)

SMITH. With your permission, I'll stop where I am.

HAR. My permission? You forget that I'm no longer master here—I suppose you wish to be the first to welcome the new owner of Springfield, eh?

SMITH. Yes, Master Harrowell, that's about it (*HARROWELL, goes out at c.*) and at the same time to settle accounts with the new owner of Springfield; the score has been running up for the small trifle of five and twenty years, but settling day has come at last, and as awkward one it will be for you, Master Richard Oliver, if you don't shell out handsome as becomes a man of honour—besides, I want the money; my niece, Lotty, is on her way home from London, and I naturally wish to celebrate the event in a style worthy of the Smitherses! Let me read her letter again. (*taking out letter and reading*) "Dear Uncle Bob, it is now three years since I left my native village at your particular request"—my particular request! I'm ashamed to say, I turned her out of my house with my blessing on her head, and one and-fourpence in her pocket, and setting her face towards London told her to walk quietly on till she got there. "Go, my beloved child," said I, "Go where glory waits thee! and when you have made your fortune—then, but not till then, remember me!"—(*reading again*) "At your particular request—and not having since read any account of your execution, which has rather surprised me"—playful trifler!—"I presume you are still alive and kicking! I, therefore, write to inform you that I am about to return to the bosom of my family"—that's me, I'm the bosom, of her family!—(*reading again*) "I shall be with you almost as soon as my letter——"

LOTTY, putting her head in at C.

LOT. And here I am. (*runs in*)

SMITH. Lotty!

LOT. Uncle Bob!

SMITH. Come to your uncle's arms ! (*they embrace*)

LOT. Bless those fat round rosy checks, and that dear little snub nose tipped with red—how happy I am to see 'em again !

SMITH. Not more than they are—my feelings, are considerably too many for me !

LOT. Oh, don't be pathetic, there's a good soul—it don't become you.

SMITH. Don't it?—then I wont; and now, of course, I'm all anxiety to know--

LOT. What has become of me for the last three years? Then I'll tell you. (*seats herself, SMITHERS does the same, LOTTY sits sideways on her chair as if on horseback*) My story begins from that memorable day when I left your hospitable roof, and set my face towards London. (*moving up and down on her chair as if on horseback*)

SMITH. If not an impertenant question, may I ask why you are bobbing up and down in that extraordinary way for?

LOT. It's a habit I've got, that's all—but that's part of my story. Well, I hadn't accomplished more than three miles out of the three hundred I had before me, when I suddenly saw something lying in the middle of the road—it was a poster !

SMITH. A poster ! (*aside*) She mean's a post-horse—poor beast!

LOT. I picked it up and opened it.

SMITH. You picked up a post-horse and opened it ?

LOT. Pshaw! but I forget, you're not learned in these matters—a poster means a bill of the play on a large scale. However, let me jog on. (*moving up and down again on her chair*)

SMITH. Lotty, my dear, if you only knew how that sort of Saint Vitus's dance fidgets me—(*imitating her*)

LOT. You wont let me still a moment.

SMITH. You don't mean to say that's your notion of sitting still? (*imitating again*)

LOT. There! (*jumping up*) Now are you satisfied? Let me see—where was I ?

SMITH. Why you'd just picked up a post-horse and opened it—I mean a poster!

LOT. Exactly! I opened it, and in one moment devoured its contents.

SMITH. (*aside*) Poor soul, how hungry she must have been! (*aloud*) And what were its contents ?

LOT. I think I see them now, in red letters an inch and a half long—"Jenkins's Colossal and Unrivalled National Equestrian Establishment" with its extensive stud of highly-trained steeds—male and female equestrians—splendid carriages—gigantic elephants—diminutive ponies—talented monkeys—and swift-footed ostriches—on its way to a neighbouring town, with the intention of astonishing the natives on the following day; from that moment, Uncle Bob, a change came over me and I determined to pass the remainder of my days on the back of a horse ! Yes—I felt that I was born to become one of the brightest ornaments of the limited circle I was destined to go round and round in ! Full of the enthusiasm of the moment I set off at the

top of my speed in the direction of the aforesaid town, and reached it just in time to witness Jenkins's triumphal entry, dressed as a Roman emperor and driving sixteen in hand. I presented myself before him at the public house where he alighted, and begged he'd give me a trial—he consented, and named the following morning. I was punctual—a horse was brought into the arena—Kicking Billy they called him—in one instant I was on his back, in another I was over his head—on again—off again—and so on for a good hour and three quarters; still I persevered, till at last Kicking Billy hadn't a kick left in him! Jenkins was in raptures, and I was engaged; in two days I could stand on a horse's back without holding the reins; in six I could go round the circle on one leg at full gallop; in less than a fortnight I could jump through a hoop; and before the month was up I had made such extraordinary progress, that Jenkins insisted on my immediately becoming a foreigner--

SMITH. A foreigner? Why?

LOT. Because, he said, as long as I remained an Englishwoman, I should never become an accomplished equestrian. And Jenkins was right, too—for I no sooner dropped "Miss Lotty Smithers," for "Mademoiselle Carlotta Smitherini," than, from a mere outsider in public favour, I became first favourite in a twinkling

SMITH. "Carlotta Smitherini!" What a mouthful! I think I'll call myself Smitherini: Bob Smitherini! No—not Bob—Bobini Smitherini! Well, Lotty—I mean, Carlotta—what followed?

LOT. An offer of marriage from every bachelor in the establishment—from Jenkins himself down to the clown in the ring.

SMITH. Which you declined.

LOT. As fast as they came in. I might, perhaps, have taken compassion on Jenkins; but, as he, had got two wives already, I didn't like to encumber him! So I left his company and joined another establishment, equally colossal—from which I was tempted by an offer of an engagement at the London Hippodrome--

SMITH. Hippo—what?

LOT. Hippodrome! What we call a Circus, in English; but they make a foreigner of that, too, and call it a Hippodrome.

SMITH. And there you made a sensation, no doubt?

LOT. No—if I had been an ostrich, perhaps I might: but, as that could not be effected without considerable difficulty, I took my last gallop round the ring, jumped through my last hoop, made my last curtsey, and, shaking the sawdust from my feet, sent in my resignation—and here I am once again in the dear old village, with dear old uncle Bob, for the remainder of my existence.

SMITH. What!—give up your profession?

LOT. Yes: Carlotta Smitherini, the accomplished equestrian, descends from her high horse, and becomes Lotty Smithers, the country wench again! You'll set me up in a donkey, a couple of panniers, and a pair of hob-nail shoes, won't you, uncle Bob?

SMITH. Donkey! Lotty Smithers, you shall drive your own horse

and cart, and marry the first nobleman that asks you. Hob-nail shoes ! You shall wear nothing but top boots!

LOT. Ha, ha! Thank'ee, uncle Bob, but first let me pay my debts. *(takes out purse)* There's eighteen-pence—the one-and-fourpence you lent me three years ago, and twopence interest.

SMITH. Eighteen-pence ?—pooh! *(contemptuously)* this for your paltry eighteen-pence ! *(about to toss it from him, looks at it, and puts it into his pocket)* Lotty Smithers, *(mysteriously)* what would you say, if I was to throw a thousand golden sovereigns into your lap ?

LOT. I should say—" Uncle Bob, how did you come by them ?

SMITH. No questions—but run home to the cottage as fast as you can, and wait till I come. There's the key of the door.

LOT. Then off I go, for I'm so anxious to get rid of all this finery, and put on my old things again.

SMITH. You'll find 'em in your box, just as you left 'em—I give you honour, I haven't put 'em on.

LOT. Well, good-bye, uncle. I'll just run and shake hands with 'all my old friends, *(going—stops)*. Not a word about the— *(imitating the action of an equestrian in the arena)* you understand. Say I've been making shirts for Moses and Son for the last three years, and have saved enough to live upon. Ha, ha ! good-bye, old fellow. Gee-up ! *(goes cantering round the Stage, and out at C.D.)*

(Shouts without) Hoorah for Mr. Oliver—three cheers for the new Master of Springfield !

SMITH. Here he comes. Now, then, to business.

OLIVER. *(without)* Thank'ee, friends, for your hearty welcome. *(cheers repeated)*

Enter OLIVER, C.

SMITH. Springfield welcomes Squire Oliver, and so does Bob Smithers. Come forth, my little Paganinny, and strike up, " See the Conquering Hero comes!" *(plays two or three bars)*

OLIV. *(impatiently)* Enough !

SMITH. And so the Squire has got a new farm—eh ? Another addition to his herrydittery estate. Why, at this rate, the Squire will soon be Lord of the Manor of Cornwall.

OLIV. *(impatient)* In one word, what do you want ?

SMITH. In one word—halves !

OLIV. Halves—of what ?

SMITH. Of all the lands, goods, and chattels of the aforesaid Squire Oliver. I only want what belongs to me—and what belongs to me I'll have.

OLIV. And pray what does belong to you ?

SMITH. I see I must try and stretch your memory a bit: I must stretch it back five and twenty years, when you and I was young coves, reg'lar hoppithoys—idle hands both on us—dry throats both on us—anything but gentlemen both on us. I wasn't good for much, and you was perfectly good for nothing.

OLIV. And so you come here to tell me this, do you ?

SMITH. Ah, 'tis such a pleasure to look backwards upon the days o' hinnocence! Well, then, one day, Dick Oliver—Desperate Dick was the name he went by then—well, Desperate Dick, comes to Bob Smithers, and says to him, " Bob," says he, " I've got a glorious job on hand—will you make one?" There was something in Dick's eye that made Bob's breath come and go double quiet—but that day Bob was very thirsty and a *leetle* drunk——

OLIV. You accepted the offer !

SMITH. I did, and the same night, just as the church clock struck twelve, we jumped over the wall of Elton Park—cut our way through the great window of the Hall—crept up the private staircase to Sir Walter's study, and ten minutes afterwards——

OLIV. Hush!

SMITH, (*low*) Ten minutes afterwards, there was one soul less in the world, and—one murderer more !

OLIV. One ? Our crime was equal.

SMITH. Not by no means. I came to there everything—but not to kill nothing. You took the killing and thieving, too, all to yourself. You struck the blow—you carried off the precious box, meant for his brother Everhard—in bank notes, gold and jewels, worth a good five and twenty thousand--

OLIV. Liar and fool!

SMITH. Now, Dick, what's the good of indulging in them there solilikies? Let's stick to business. Well, then, all this time, this twenty year and more, you keeps the money, and I keeps nothing but my temper. But, did you think I meant to stand it for ever and ever. No, no—a professor of thimbleric ain't quite a flat.

OLIV. Why didn't you speak before ?

SMITH. I'll tell you—'cause I said to myself, "Bob," says I, "if you get hold of money, a lump of money all at once I knows

you, Bob, you'll botch the business; you'll get drunk and blab: but Dick's a different man; Dick's a deep'un: he'll find the way to bring the money out, bit by bit, and nobody be surprised." And so it happened ; for now twenty thousand has turned into a hundred thousand pounds, and Desperate Dick into Squire Oliver!

OLIV. A hundred thousand pounds !—ha, ha, ha!

SMITH. YOU may laugh; you can afford luxuries: but the luxury of luxuries is got to come, Dick. You've got to enjoy the luxury of saying to Smithers, "Smithers, beloved Smithers, here's half of everything I've got in the world!"

OLIV. And what if I refuse ?

SMITH. No—Dick knows better !

OLIV. A threat ? You know——(significantly) I have a knack of teaching a man silence——

SMITH. By putting him to sleep! Bless your kind heart, I knows it; but dead or alive, my poor dear friend, I should be too much for you. Listen, I've managed to scrape together five-and-forty pounds, and in course I've made my last will and testament.

OLIV. Well?

SMITH. Which last will and testament is at this present moment in

the hands of the family attorney of the house of Smitherses—to be by him carried, in case of my *sudden decease*, to the nearest county magistrate, who for that purpose I've appointed my executioner. I there lays claim to one half of the realities and personalities of Richard Oliver of Penmoor, and I hexplains with all the interesting partikilers, *how* and *why* it comes to me by Sir Walter Elton's—death.

OLIVE. You've put that in writing ?

SMITH. Every word of it. So I now says in the friendliest of ways—Dick, fork out half, or I'll hang you like a dog !

JAC. (*without, c.*) This way, sir.

SM.TH. Hush! Here's somebody a coming.

OLIV. (*low*) Smithers, take care of yourself.

JAC. (*without, C.*) This way, my noble gentleman.

Enter JACKY, C, *showing the way to* TROTTER.

Mind the step, my noble gentleman, or you might fall down and crack your crown.

TROT, I wish you'd mind your own business, sir. How do you know I shouldn't like to fell down and crack my crows, sir? I came down to these parts to do as the people in these parts do, and if the people in these parts are remarkable for falling down and cracking their crowns, I shan't be happy till I crack mine.

JAC. This is Springfield Farm, my noble gentleman, and here's Mr. Oliver as owns it.

TROT! Oh, here's Mr. Oliver as owns it, is it ?

JAC. No, my noble gentleman, that's Bob Smithers as plays on the fiddle. (*runs out at C.*)

SMITH. Yes, your honour.

TROT. Well, Mr. Smithers, I came down to these parts to do as the people in these parts do—and if the people in these parts are remarkable for playing on the fiddle, I shan't be happy 'till I can fiddle too. (*to OLIVER*) Mr, Oliver, I presume—

OLIV. (*bluntly*) Richard Oliver, at your service.

SMITH. Ah, sir, he's the best farmer in this 'ere country all to bits—if you don't believe me, just look at his turnips,

TROT. I'm sure it will gratify me exceedingly to look at his turnips; and I may as well take a peep at his carrots at the same time.

SMITH. And as for his heart, it is by several degrees too big for his body.

TROT. You don't say so ! It must be quite a curiosity! (*to OLIVER*) It would give me intense pleasure to be present when you're opened, sir!

SMITH. Why, sir, just as you come in he was a thanking o' me for a little bit of a service I did him a little time ago: and he says he shan't know a moment's comfort till I accept the half of everything he's got in the world. (*with intention*)

OLIV. (*furious*) Hold your cursed tongue ! (*to TROT.*) I beg your pardon sir.

TROT. Don't apologise, air: if the people in these parts are famous

for using profane language, I shan't be comfortable till I can swear like the best of 'em—pray go on, sir !

SMITH. You See, sir, the great Oliver does not wish any one to know how nobly he's a behaving of hisself—but I'll publish it to all the world.

TROT. Do, and I'll tell everybody else. Every man, woman, and child for twenty miles round, shall know the vast amount of milk of human kindness) that flows in that man's bosom! But now to business—you must know, Mr. Oliver, I wish to become an extensive landowner, for the philanthropic purpose of establishing a Model Farm.

OLIV. A Model Farm? What's that?

TROT. Well, I can't exactly tell you what it is, because I don't exactly know myself; but my notion is it's a sort of a--in

short, something between Snigg's End and the Agapemone!

Yes, and haying a matter of twenty thousand pounds to spare——

SMITH. Twenty thousand pounds? (to OLIVER) I think we can accommodate the gentleman with a portion of our landed property—eh, my generous benefactor?

OLIV. (to TROTTER) We will speak of this another time—I am somewhat indisposed.

TROT. Well, you look rather cadaverous—perhaps your milk of human kindness has turned soar on your stomach——

OLIV. (to SMITHERS) Follow me!

SMITH. To the world's end and furder, my generous benefactor!

OLIV. Scoundrel! (*hurries out at C, obsequiously followed by SMITH.*)

TROT. (*enthusiastically*) Go, virtuous couple, and may you be happy!

Enter LOTTY at C, in the coarse, costume of a country girl.

LOT. (*turning round as she enters and looking at herself*) How funny I do feel in my old clothes to be sure—they are so loose and comfortable ! I hope I shan't slip out of 'em, though.

TROT. (*seeing her*) A young woman ! One of the female natives—all ignorance and innocence, I'll be bound—rather superior to the style of thing one sees in Piccadilly !

LOT. (*seeing TROT., aside*) A stranger and a cockney, or I don't know one when I see one.

TROT. (*aside*) I'd speak to her, only I'm afraid she'd take to her legs like a timid fawn!

LOT. (*aside*) I hope he never saw me jump through a hoop at the Hippodrome— I'll see if I can remember any of the true Cornish brogue (*to TROT.*) Zarvent, zur. (*bobs and curtseys*)

TROT. How d'ye do, my good girl ?

LOT. I be purely, thank'ee, ZUR. (*in very broad dialect*)

TROT. You're poorly are you ? I'm very sorry to hear it.

LOT. (*with a very loud laugh*) Ha, ha, ha! What a zilly chap you be ! " Purely " be Cornish for " quite well."

TROT. She calls me a silly chap ! Now this is just the kind of thing I like ! And how old are you, my dear?

LOT. Can't zay for zartain—but I be'nt as old as mother.

TROT. (*aside*) There's another delicious bit of nature! (*aloud*) So you've got a mother have you?

LOT. Ees, and a father too—only he be dead!

TROT. (*aside*) Ha, ha! I shall become seriously attached to this young woman presently, I'm sure I shall (*aloud*) And do you belong to this farm, my dear?

LOT. Ees, I be cowboy!

TROT. (*aside*) She says she's a cowboy!—ha, ha! (*aloud*) So you milk the cows do you? Happy animals!

LOT. Ees, they be happy enough 'cept when their calves be taken from 'em, and then they bellow more than enough, poor beasties!

TROT. Oh, they bellow do they?

LOT. In course they do; wouldn't your mother bellow if her calf was taken from her?

TROT. (*aside*) Her calf! She means me! That settles it. (*aloud*) listen to me, my dear, I'm a bachelor--

LOT. Zo be I, zur!

TROT. I can't resist her brutal ignorance any longer I (*aloud*) Do you know you're the first woman that ever made an impression on me?

LOT. (*aside*) He's getting rather too tender. (*aloud*) Zo be you, sir!

TROT. Ha, ha!—that's delicious again! But I say, perhaps you've got a sweetheart already?

LOT. Bless you, a dozen on 'em! First there be Dick Brown the carpenter, then there be Sam Jones the sawyer, and then there be David Smith the undertaker, and—

TROT. (*enthusiastically*) And then there be Fergusson Trotter the gentleman—that's me—yes, lovely one, and here at your feet I swear—(*about to kneel*)

OLIVE. (*without, C.*) This is, indeed, an unexpected honor, Miss Elton.

TROT. Miss Elton! Come along, sylph-lite damsel, come along, I say.

LOT. But, zur—

TROT. Exactly! Now go along, my fond one—my dark-eyed one—go along, I say. (*pushes LOTTY out, L., and follows her, as OLIVER enters at C, hat in hand, and introducing MARGARET*)

MAR. (*at she advances staggers and leans on a chair; OLIVER is about to assist her; she suddenly recovers herself, and motions him not to approach her.*) Tis nothing, sir.

OLIV. (*bowing coldly*) May I know the motive of Miss Elton's presence beneath the humble roof of Richard Oliver?

MAR. Oh, sir, my poor mother has learnt the dreadful truth: she knows her son to be a ruined man, and you his exasperated creditor; and that if to-morrow my brother's debt to you is not discharged, you threaten to sell the fair lands of Elton Manor to the highest bidder. Oh, sir, I plead for a mother's life—let not a daughter's prayer rise to your heart in vain! Give my brother time,

OLIV. I am resolved to enforce my rights.

MAR. Say rather to gratify your hate. Your enmity to our unhappy family is, alas, no secret. Report ascribes it to an act of severity

—injustice if you will—committed by my father against yours,
(*OLIVER starts*) They are now both in the grave—yours died in
his peaceful bed, but mine——

OLIV. (*agitated*) Yes—yes—I know—I've heard—a fearful deed !
Let us speak of something else. (*calm and self-possessed*) Miss
Elton, listen to me ; you have come, or been sent here, to appeal
to my generosity; candour compels me to confess that I am
incapable of generosity, and that what you call Virtue, is with
me mere matter of calculation. With this understanding
Miss Elton, who knows but we may come to terms.

MAR. I understand you, sir; your clemency is only to be purchased?

OLIV. Precisely.

MAR. Purchased! and we are ruined——

OLIV. Utterly! One word from me, and your proud brother
becomes the inmate of a debtor's jail—your mother a houseless
wanderer.

MAR. But you cannot, you will not speak that word?

OLIV. (*with increasing passion*) Margaret Elton, the fate of those
you love is in your hands; you, alone, can arrest the arm that I
have raised to crush them.

MAR. I? (*alarmed*)

OLIV. You! But pause ere you decide, for your answer makes me
a man or devil—Margaret Elton, will you be my wife ?

MAR. (*with sudden start of horror, then recovering herself and
motioning him aside*) Stand aside, sir, while the daughter of Sir
Walter Elton leaves the roof of her father's servant. (*moves
towards door*)

OLIV. (*with difficulty checking his rage, and with an assumed coldness
of manner*) Remember ! A mother's life——

MAR. Would be dearly purchased by a daughter's degradation.
(*going*)

OLIV. One moment—in half an hour I shall present myself at Elton
Hall—give then, your final answer.

MAR. Take it now, sir. As the brother's creditor his doors must
needs be open to you—as the sister's suitor her heart is shut
against you for ever. *Exit, C. D.*

OLIV. Gone? Well, so much the better. I thank her for her
hatred: I wanted that to revive my own. I'll supplicate no
more: no, proud beauty—as its master only I'll enter Elton Hall
—your hearth and home shall go like refuse to the highest
bidder—I'll have Penzance stuck white with hand bills—" Elton
Hall for Sale by Auction"——

Enter SMITHERS, C.

SMITH. (R.H.) Elton Hall for sale by auction? No, no, Oliver,
you don't mean that.

OLIV. (L. H.) Perhaps not—but as sure as to-morrow's sun gives
light to do it by, so sure shall Elton Hall be sold to-morrow.

SMITH. You'll change your mind.

OLIV. Do you think so?

SMITH. I'm sure of it, my poor dear friend.

OLIV. Why?

SMITH. I'll tell you why (*sits—looking round and low*) If you ever let a human foot in the room where Sir Walter Elton—died—look to your neck, Oliver

OLIV. Another idle threat—speak out—I laugh at you

SMITH. Oh, no, you don't I told you before, and I tell you now again—there's terrible proof again you, Oliver, and in the very room where—it was done !

OLIV. Go on, I say—go on

SMITH. Muster up your pluck, Dick—for you'll want it all Listen ! (*looking round*) When the dead man was found next morning, I took care to be among the first that broke into the room my knees knocked together as I entered and I could hardly fetch a breath Fancy, then, how I felt, when, casting my eyes upon the wall I saw——

OLIV. Saw—what? (*agitated*)

SMITH. Hush! When you and I got off the night before, Sir Walter still breathed—

OLIV. (*staggering*) Ah!

SMITH. And before he died Dick, upon the wall close where he was found he had contrived to write--

OLIV. Write! Write! A man drowned in his own blood—write?

SMITH. 'Twas all the easier, Dick, for (*looking round*) with that *very blood* he had contrived to daub great, staring, crimson letters! they looked on fire, Dick ! and there upon the wall stood these four words— 'RICHARD OLIVER MY MURDERER !'

OLIV. (*shrieking*) What? No—no—I *wont* believe it. You want to frighten me, Smithers. Others, you say, where with you in the room how was it no one *else* saw this raw head apparition ? —Smithers's hobgoblin? ha ha, ha !

SMITH. You may well ask how it was nobody else saw it I'll tell you An old oak screen stood near—a thundering slab of oak that took six dandy footmen to set it where it was Desperation is a strong backed ruffian, Dick and whilst the rest, half crazed with fright, were busy with the body I shoved the lumping screen bang again the wall. The dead man was borne off—locks creaked—bolts rattled—and the room of death was closed—but blood stains are lasting, Dick, and the *writing is still upon the wall.*

OLIV. (*bewildered*) What's to be done ?

SMITH. What's *not* to be done is easier said. Sell Elton Hall—open that room—and you slip the noose round your own neck

OLIV. (*after a pause, assuming determination*) I see—I see my peril, Smithers I've had a knock down blow, but I'm up again, *clenching fist*) and still a match for fate. The Hall must not

leave my hands I have a plan, a glorious plan to make all snug Come with me and I'll tell you all (*coaxing*) Smithers, my good friend, Smithers—how much I owe you !

SMITH. Halves that's all!

OLIV. Halves? Ah! exactly so——

SMITH. It must be *exactly* halves, I can tell you

OLIV. And so it shall. You know the tumble-down hovel in Springfield Wood. Beggar, thief, or flog would not take shelter in it. There the precious jewels lie untouched and unsuspected. Follow! me: we'll begin with the jewels.

SMITH. So we will; and I say, if there's a Koh-i-noor got in amongst 'em, we'll toss for the koh-i-noor--heads I win, and tails I don't lose. Come along. *Exeunt C.*

SCENE II.—*An Ornamental Lawn and Shrubbery—Elton Hall in the lack ground, R.; an old Elizabethian Mansion, a flight of three or four stones steps, n. 3 E. leading up to the Entrance Hall. MARGARET seated on a garden bench. LADY ELTON standing at her side. SIR PHILIP leaning against a tree at side, and watching them.*

LADY E. Margaret, my dear child, this calmness is unnatural Philip!

SIR P. (*advancing, and in a sombre tone*) Mother!

LADY E. Speak to Margaret; tell her Sir Walter Elton's son will welcome poverty, beggary itself, rather than see his sister the bride of Richard Oliver.

SIR P. (*bitterly*) In other words, Madam, rather let ruin overwhelm and crush us—rather let my aged mother and fair sister beg their dependent bread, and invoke the curse of heaven on me—the guilty son—the guilty brother!

MAR. Oh, Philip! Philip!

LADY E. Margaret, your brother and I will leave you; you shall at least be unfettered in your decision (*cross to R.*)

SIR P, (*aside to MAR.*) Margaret, I ask no consideration for myself—I deserve none: but our mother—think, Margaret, of her (*joins LADY ELTON, and they mount the flight of steps into the house*)

MAR. What's to be done? Have I no one to counsel me? No one to curb and guide the desperate thoughts that are urging me to madness? (*hiding her face in her hands*)

Enter HARLOWE. L.

HARL. Miss Elton—why this emotion—these tears?

MAR. I shall be better soon: oh! Mr. Harlowe, I have much to tell you. Listen: listen calmly, that my resolution may not fail me. There is a man—a fearful man—hard of heart and inflexible of purpose, who holds with a grasp of iron the fortunes of our family.

HARL. Indeed! his name? (*OLIVER slowly enters, U.E.L. at back and leaning against one of the pillars of the portico, listens to them*)

MAR. Be patient: to this man I went and begged his mercy—

HARL. And he was inexorable—?

MAR. No—he was merciful—most merciful—ha—ha—(*laughing hysterically*) Harlowe—(*timidly*) Charles—I must be his wife, or see my mother die! (*Wringing her hands*)

HARL. (*with strong emotions*) Is it possible?

MAR. (*vehemently*) Give me strength—strength to meet with us faltering lip the bitter cup of misery set before me.

HARL. And what, what would would have me do ?

MAR. Say to me, if you can—Margaret—be that man's wife.

HARL. (*giving way to his passion*) No—'tis beyond man's power!

Oh, Margaret, it is no secret now reveal; you have long read it in my doating eye—my trembling tongue. I love you, Margaret; long *have* loved you—loved you so blindly, I could not, would not see a barrier between us, even more fatal than your own misfortunes.

MAR. What mean you?

HARL. That the name I bear is not my father's --

MAR. Ah!

HARL. I never knew a father's care—even my mother, never disclosed his name: she died when I was still young, and I was brought to this village, where I was received by Farmer Harrowell; who, for reasons he would never divulge, changed my maternal name of Willis to that of Harlowe. An annuity regularly remitted, doubtless by my father, afforded me a liberal education; and, after a few years spent in London, I returned here to practice the profession I had chosen. (*she gives him her hand*) This is all I can tell you of myself—more than I would have told; but that what moves the unfeeling scorn of others, will draw compassion from your gentle breast—(*overcome by her feelings she lays her head, weeping, on his shoulder, at this moment OLIVER raises his hand and rings the bell, which has a deep startling sound*)

MAR. (*starts, turns and sees OLIVER; grasps HARLOWE'S arm, and looking towards OLIVER, then in a hurried under tone to HARLOWE*) See, yonder man—'tis he—he comes to claim me—save me— (*clinging to HARLOWE*)

HARL. Ha! Richard Oliver! (*about to break from MARGARET, who prevents him*)

JOSEPH *appears at the door of the house.*

JOS. Who rings?

OUT. 'Tis I, Master Joseph.

JOS. Pray choose a more fitting hour for business, Master Oliver: Sir Philip will not be disturbed so late.

OLIVE. So you said, when I called this morning, and yet he came: try again—tell him I am here, and *must* see him. (*in a loud and authoritative tone*)

SIR PHILIP *appears at doorway,*

SIR P. Who is it that disputes Sir Philip Elton's right to dispose of his own time? (*seeing OLIVER*) Ah, Mr. Oliver. (*with an assumption of graciousness*) You are welcome—most welcome.

OLIV. (to JOSEPH) You hear, sirrah ? Your noble master has set you a lesson in civility; go, get it by heart, and see you practice it when next we meet. (*JOSEPH ENTERS house*) Sir Philip, your humble servant—(*seeing LADY ELTON, who enters from door, R.*) And your lady mother, too! this is, indeed, a gracious condescension--

SIR PHILIP, LADY ELTON, and OLIVER advance. MARGARET runs to her mother, who embraces her.

SIR P. (*seeing HARLOWE*) You here again, sir? (*angrily threatening*) Pray is the honour of this second visit meant for me?

OLIV. Patience, Sir Philip, give the young man time, and who knows but he'll muster confidence enough to own to her brother's face, a close clandestine meeting with your sister.

SIR P. My sister? (*furiously*) Mr. Harlowe, I demand an instant explanation. Remember, it is as my sister's legal guardian that I now address you.

HARL. (*meeting him face to face*) Before you claim a guardian's right, be pleased to reflect, sir, how you have discharged a guardian's duty. It is as the guardian of your sister's honour that you suffer that man (*pointing to OLIVER*) to disgrace her with his addresses? Is it as the guardian of your sister's happiness, that you purchase your personal liberty by sacrificing every present joy and future hope of her pure and self-denying heart? or is it, I ask, as the guardian even of your own pride and honour, that you insult me?—insult me not because I love her, but because I cannot buy, pay for her, at the price your profligacy sets upon your father's child?

SIR P. (R. C.) This insolence to me?

OLIV. (*interposing, c.*) Again I ask your patience, Sir Philip: and permit me to divert your attention to a matter relating to the recovery of your property to a very large amount. (*to LADY E.*) Pardon me, madam, if, in my zeal to serve you, I am compelled to touch a painful string of memory—(*bowing low*. MARGARET soothes her mother, who starts, strongly affected) at the time of your father's a—death—

SIR P. Murder, sir! We shrink not from the word—why should you?

OLIV. True. At the time of your father's—(*again hesitates*) death,—a considerable amount in gold and jewels was, I believe, abstracted by (*hesitating*) the assassin—whose flight to a foreign land was, as I have *been told*, so rapid, he could not well have taken his plunder with him; the property may, therefore, still remain where it was first concealed.

SIR P. But the villain was soon afterwards reported dead abroad, and the secret of its disposal must have perished with him.

OLIV. 'Tis scarcely probable; indeed I *have heard* that, in some remote part of the country, there lived a woman whom he loved—his wife, or mistress, He had a child, too (*looking at HARLOWE*), a son I think they told me. Is it to be believed that he would leave him and her to beggary, when he could give them wealth?

SIR P. There may be much in this.

OLIV. The mother died, as I've been informed; but if the murderer's secret had been told to her, she, dying, would scarce have failed to disclose it to her son.

SIR P. (*eagerly*) And he? 'twere most important to discover him, and yet most difficult.

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OLIV. True—most difficult. (*suddenly, as if an idea had occurred to him*) Stay—might not the mother's name afford some clue ?

SIR P. (*eagerly*) The best—the only one. Do you know her name ?

OLIV. Yes; she was called (*pausing, and fixing his eye on HARLOWE*)

RACHEL— (*HARLOWE starts, and raise his eye to OLIVER, who meets his gaze; and in a louder and sterner tone*) Rachel Willis !

HARL. (*L. turns aside, and in a suppressed tone of astonishment and agony*) My mother!

MAR. (*R. utters a suppressed shriek, and throws herself upon LADY ELTON'S bosom*) That name ! His mother!

SIR P. (*crosses to Margaret, R.*) Margaret, why this agitation at an abandoned woman's name?

HARL. (*starting forward, and addressing SIR PHILIP*) Hold, sir! dare not to couple that woman's name, even with a thought of evil. Look to others for the murderer's plunder, not to her; her early death was but release from poverty and ceaseless suffering; for her child's coarse food was earned by her toil and moistened by her tears.

SIR P. (*sarcastically*) Remorse has its tears, sir.

HARL. (*furiously*) Beware! or I will resent this outrage.

SIR P. Outrage? Upon whom? Upon the paramour of my father's murderer?

HARL. No ! upon *my Mother!* (*with a violent burst of passion*)

SIR P. Ah! (*about to rush upon HARLOWE, but is checked by OLIVER, while LADY ELTON clasps MARGARET closer to her, and looks with horror at HARLOWE*)

OLIV. (*with a look of quiet triumph at HARLOWE, who stands with his face buried in his hands, then turns to MARGARET, and emphatically*) Miss Elton, I now await your final answer. (*SIR PHILIP and LADY ELTON anxiously watch MARGARET; HARLOWE also raises his eyes and fixes them upon her, MARGARET, after a struggle with herself, extends her hand to OLIVER, but without looking at hm. OLIVER takes her hand, and smiles triumphantly at HARLOWE*)

HARL. (*passionately*) Lost! lost! lost! (*rushes out, L.*)

OLIV. (*about to press his lips to MARGARET'S hand, she shudders, and is about to withdraw it; he gently drops her hand, then, in a low tone to her*) You shrink from my touch; it is not thus a bride should greet her bridegroom; (*in a still deeper and measured tone*) it is not thus *my* bride must greet *me*. Beware ! add not to the utter ruin of your family the deep disgrace of loving one whose father's hand was red with the blood of——

MAR. No! no! I am yours—yours, (*quickly, and again giving her hand to OLIVER*)

OLIV. (*refusing it*) Thus then let me seal the compact (*aloud, and frankly to SIR PHILIP*) Sir Philip, we have both much to forget and forgive. I trust I cease to be your creditor only to become your friend. Here is my hand, (*offering hand*)

SIR P. (*L.*) And here, sir, is mine.

OLIV. (*to LADY E.*) Dear Lady Elton, how can I ever express my thanks? (*crosses to R.*)

LADY E. You owe *me* none, sir. (*coldly*)

MAR. (to LADY E., *wildly*) Mother, let us in; (*shivering*) the evening air blows damp and chill. (OLIVER *advances as if to offer his arm*: MARGARET, *with alarm, and in a hurried manner*) Mother, your arm—(*grasping LADY ELTON'S arm; then turning to OLIVER, and in a kind tone*) Your pardon, sir; I would be alone with my mother, (*aside, and in an affectionate tone to PHILIP*) Brother, are you satisfied?

SIR P. (*aside to her, and affectionately*) Dear sister, may heaven shower its blessings on your life !

MAR. (*aside to him*) I ask but one, Philip—an early death !

(MARGARET and LADY ELTON *enter the house. As soon as they have gone out, a sudden reflected blaze of light is seen at side, and distant shouts heard. SIR PHILIP and OLIVER exchange looks of surprise.—Enter HARROWELL and one or two VILLAGERS. U.E.L.*)

HAR. Sir Philip, welcome—a hundred times welcome back to Elton Hall.

SIR P. Thanks, *my* good friend ; but explain, what mean those shouts ?

HAR. The Villagers of Penmoor are celebrating, after their rustic fashion, the return of their young master.

SIR P. Then let their shouts rise higher yet, to proclaim their young mistress's marriage.

HAR. Marriage ? (*aside*) Dare I hope young Mr. Harlowe— (*loud*) Sir Philip, I know but one man within twenty miles of Penmoor who is worthy of such a treasure.

OLIV. Nay, friend Harrowell, you flatter me.

HAR. (*after a long glare of astonishment and alarm*) You—you ? Impossible!

OLIV. (*quietly to SIR P.*) SIR Philip, our good friend, Harrowell, seems somewhat incredulous.

SIR P. (*hastily*) 'Sdeath, sir, my sister chooses of her own free will; and she weds with Richard Oliver. Call all my servants hither; we keep open house to night, and bid a hearty welcome to one and all. Come, sir. (*to OLIVER: they enter the house together*)

HAR. (*quickly, and aside to villagers*) My lads, I've work for you. Seek for Tobias, the blind old man— yon know him well. You, hasten to the village—I'll to his cottage on the heath. I *must* see him—lose not a moment. Quick—Away !

Exeunt severally—HARROWELL R., VILLAGERS L.

HARLOWE *enters* L. U. E, *struggling with* TOBIAS, *who endeavours to restrain him.*

HARL. Unhand me, old man : I'm desperate.

TOB. I know it. Your hand trembles, and your voice is choked with passion. (*still grappling with fern*) What would you do?

HARL. I know not—care not—the maddening words are still hissing in my ear—the murderer of Sir Walter Elton was *my father* !

TOB. (*violently*) A foul LIE; and he who uttered it, as foul a villain! who—who was he ?

- HARL. He who now stands beneath Sir Philip Elton's roof, as the accepted husband of his sister—Richard Oliver ! (TOBIAS starts violently: HARLOWE grasps his arm, and looks towards the door, which opens, and OLIVER appears)
- OLIV. (turning towards house) Good night, Sir Philip; tell my fair bride I shall count the dull hours till we meet again.
- HARL. (breaking from TOBIAS, who keeps aloof, and meeting OLIVER, as he descends the steps) Hold !
- OLIV. (quietly, and smiling) Ah! our young philosopher, again ! What may you want with me, sir?
- HARL. In one word—to brand you, with the name and shame of a liar!
- OLIV. (puts his hand within his coat—pauses—then significantly) The weather looks stormy.—Good night
- HARL. Coward ! this for my outraged mother—from her insulted son! (strikes OLIVER—they grapple. OLIVER, who is almost overpowered, draws a knife) A knife! What? a common stabber, too?
- OLIV. This is my answer, (attacks him)
- TOB. A knife? my boy in peril, and no other way—Perish, then, my secret ! (throws away his hat. OLIVER, overpowered by HARLOWE, is thrown violently to the ground: TOBIAS raises his staff to strike him)
- HARL. (catching TOBIAS' arm) Hold! What would you do, old man? (Tableau)

ACT III.

SCENE I.—An extensive Farm Yard, occupying the entire Stage. Part of the Farm House seen, L. the appearance of which is cockney-fied: very smart and neatly painted, light green railings round it, door and blinds of the same colour; a low wall crossing at back of Stage, surmounted by iron railings also of light green: in c, a wooden solid gate; beyond the gate and wall, the fields are seen, &c; a well, R. C., with apparatus for drawing water: on the opposite side of the Farm House, a barn also new and very smartly painted, R; a new plough, cart, and other implements of agriculture; pigeon houses; a large poet, bell suspended to it; a very smart sty, R. U. E., placard on it, " You are requested not to touch the Pig;" another large placard hanging near wall against the gate, framed and glazed, and headed " Rules and Regulations of Model Farm" in large letters; trusses of straw and hay in a row across the Stage, upon which JACKY and several other LABOURERS are lying asleep, their rakes, pitchforks, &c., by their sides; JACKY and the other LABOURERS are dressed in the uniform of Trotter's Model Farm ;--namely, very broad-brimmed straw hats, long flannel jackets, scarlet fustian breeches, blue worsted stockings;

in large black letters on the front of their jackets are the words "MODEL FARM;" the dresses are quite new, &c. Everything connected with the scene, must have the appearance of extreme neatness, smartness, and cleanliness.

TROT. (*without*) It's no use talking to me. (*Enters from 2 E. L. he is dressed in the uniform of the Model Farm, comes a hayfork, and has a glass stuck in his eye, he is followed by SERVANT WOMAN*) I repeat, it's no use talking to me! My Model Farm is conducted upon purely philanthropic principles, and if my cows don't choose to be milked, they shan't be milked.

WOMAN. But, master, you might clear £10 a month by the butter.

TROT. Don't *butter* me, if you please ! Do you suppose I am going to allow a modest delicate creature like a cow to be taken liberties with, if she doesn't like it?—and for the sake of a few pounds of butter ? Certainly not I how would you like it ? that's the way to put it—you'd object to it, you know you would. I won't have any cow, or any other animal milked that expresses the slightest objection to the operation. So, once more, go along with you, do. (*Exit WOMAN into house, L. TROTTER surveys the scene with an air of intense satisfaction*) This is what I call the *ne-plus-ultra* of human enjoyment: (*leaning his arm on the top of the hayfork*) I say to myself, Fergusson Trotter, this is your work! (*turning the hayfork downwards and leaning on it, runs the prongs into his foot*) this Model Farm will hand your name down to an admiring posterity, as the benefactor of your species.

GAMMON and WALKER appear from R. U. E. ; they enter through gate at back.

GAM. (R., *advancing and scraping a bow*) Zarvent, zur.

TROT. (*imitating his bow*) Same to you, sir.

GAM. I be Gammon, zur.

WAL. (L.) And I be Walker, zur.

TROT. Any relation to Hookey?

WAL. Not exactly, zur: but if I might be so bold, I think it be high time your sheep were sheared.

TROT. Sheared! What have their wool cut off? Certainly not, sir. How would you like to have *your* wool cut off, sir?—have you ever considered how you'd feel without your wool, sir?—that's the way to put it, sir.

WAL. Well, you know best, zur.

TROT. Of course I do.

GAM. No offence I hope, zur: but I do hope your honour don't mean for to encourage the breed of foxes.

TROT. I mean to encourage the breed of everything, sir! my system is to increase and multiply ; I mean to begin multiplying myself! I won't have a single labourer on my estate that is single, and what's more, if he doesn't have at least one child every year, I'll discharge him ; if he has *two*, I'll double his wages! But where are my fine active fellows ? I don't see my fine active fellows. (*using his eye-glass*) Yes I do; I do declare, my fine active fellows;

are all fast asleep, (putting himself into an attitude) What ho, my merry men ! *(louder)* I repeat my merry men, What ho!

JAC. AND OTHERS. *(yawning and stretching)* Well? we were only sleeping a bit, zur.

TROT. Then suppose, just to vary the thing, that you get up a bit, and work a bit: *(men rise lazily)* let me see—the first thing on the Cards *(looking with eye-glass at a paper which he takes from his pocket)* is to get that model wheat into that model barn. *(digs his fork into one of the sheaves of wheat)* One—two—three—and up she comes: *(trying to raise it)* I repeat—one—two—three—But up she comes—no she doesn't !

OMNES. Ha, ha, ha! *(they go and are about to remove the sheaves with their forks, when the clock strikes one—they suddenly stop)*

TROT. Well, my merry men, why don't you go on with your one—two—three—and up she comes ?

JAC. It be one o'clock, sur—dinner time.

TROT. *(annoyed)* Dinner time ? Let me see, this is Tuesday—what's the bill of fare?

JAC. Beefsteaks and suetty puddings.

TROT. Suetty puddings again ? Of course you're at liberty to eat what you like, my merry men; but I'm damn'd if you shall have any more suetty puddings for a month to come. So go along, and make haste back to work.

JAC. Work—what directly after dinner? Your honour forgets Article V. of your honour's rules and regulations for regulating your honor's Model Farm, *(pointing to the Regulations)*

TROT. *(looking down the rules with his eye-glass)* Here we have it. *(reading)* " ARTICLE V—One hour's recreation after meals is necessary to recruit the strength, and assist the digestion of the labourer"—very true, I quite forgot your digestions; so go along to your puddings; and perhaps Messrs, Gammon and Walker will pick a bit too?

GAM. Thank'ee, sur: I've a litte matter o" business—

WAL. And so have I, zur.

TROT. Never mind, business will keep, suetty puddings won't ! go you'd better come back presently; now go along, my merry men, *(JACKY, WALKER, GAMMON, &C., run into Farm-house)* Now then—it won't do for me to be idle: let me see, what shall I do first? I think I'll thrash a bit—it's many a day since I've had a good thrashing—now then, which is the wheat ? Here it is—no, this is barley—no it isn't, it's oats!—it can't be peas—perhaps it's beans—never mind, here goes ! *(takes down a flail, which is hanging against the barn door, tucks up his shirt sleeves, and begins thrashing; this is ad lib. of course; hitting his head with the flail, &c.—stops suddenly)* I don't see the fun of this: it strikes me very forcibly that instead of thrashing the corn, I've been thrashing myself. I do believe my merry men have forgot to feed that pig to-day; now I happen to take a warm interest in that pig—I'm determined that Trotter's pigs shall be as familiar in people's mouths as pig's Trotters *(goes to the mashtub near the sty which he stirs round and round with his flail, then dips a*

pail into the tub which he raises over the side of the sty and pours into the trough, leaning very much over, and nearly falling into the sty) There! (noise of cocks crowing hearty Holloa, what's that? (looking off) Those two cocks fighting again: (shouting) I'll have no quarrelling on my Model Farm, so leave off fighting directly: do you here me, you cocks? Oh, you won't, won't you?—very well, (takes a pitchfork in one hand and a hay rake in the other, and runs off at side—immediately a loud and ferocious bark of a dog heard—loud cries from TROTTER of " Help," " Murder" &c., heard. TROTTER is seen to run across from L. to R., without his hat, followed by a dog—he runs in again from door of farmhouse, and rushes across into the barn, followed by the dog. TROTTER then appears at the door of loft, over the barn door, and shouts " Help," &c.)

GAMMON and WALKER run in from Farm-house.

GAM. What's the matter now? I'm almost sure I heard Mr. Trotter a hollaring.

TROT. (*from left*) You're quite right!—you *did* hear Mr. Trotter a hollaring!

GAM. Anything happened, zur?

TROT. Yes, there's been a slight difference of opinion between me and the dog—

GAM. What, old Growler? Ah, zur, he be something like a dog.

TROT. Ecod, I think he's more tike a Bengal tiger; perhaps you'll be good enough to shut the barn door, Mr. Gammon. (GAMMON closes door of barn) Thank'ee, Mr. Gammon: perhaps you'll accommodate me with a ladder, Mr. Walker (Walker places ladder for TROTTER.) I'm obliged to you, Mr. Walker. (TROTTER gets on ladder with some difficulty, and comes down with a run)-

GAM. (R.) Now, zur, for our little matter o' bussiness. (*feeling in his coat and waistcoat pockets, and diving his hands into his breeches pockets, at last takes off his hat and takes out a paper, which he opens, smoothing it down on his thigh: TROTTER watching him with silent astonishment*) It's about the little farm-yard o' mine, zur, which you've tricked up so smart and fine for your Model Farm: perhaps you'd like to buy it, zur?

TROT. (c.) Of course I should, Gammon: how much shall we say. Gammon?- a hundred pounds Gammon?

GAM. A hundred pounds, zur? Lor, I don't mean to rob'ee, zur: I'd be glad to zee the halt on't, zur.

TROT. Then we'll say £50, Gammon! Have you got such a thing as a drop of ink about you, Gammon?

GAM. Ees sir; and a pen too! (going through the same process of diving into all his pockets, intently watched by TROTTER)

TROT. (*dipping the- pen into the ink-bottle, which GAMMON holds*) Now, then, for my name (*about to sign*)

GAM. Beg pardon, zur; hut perhaps you might object to a bid of a condition I've in the paper, zur.

TROT. Condition? What is it, Gammon?

GAM. No great matter, zur; it be only, that I may come for a drop of water out o' that well, when I wants it.

TROT. Certainly, Gammon ! so there's my name I (*signing the paper*) and here's the money, (*giving GAMMON money, which he takes out of his pocket-book*)

GAM. Thank'ee, zur! (*touches his hat, and retires*)

TROT. (*aloud to WALKER*) Now, Mr. Walker, what's your business ?

WAL. (L.) Why, zur, it be about that little bit o' land o' mine on t' other side of the hedge there, (*pointing to back of stage*) Thistle Meadow, as we calls it—perhaps you 'd like to buy it?

TROT. Of course I should; especially as that bit o' land of yours stands plump in the middle of *my* bit of land. So what shall we say for Thistle Meadow?

WAL. Here be the paper, zur ; fill it up as ye loike!

TROT. No, Walker! I insist on your putting your own price on your own property. Walker.

WAL. (*angrily*) I tell 'ee I won't ! (*in a pathetic tone*) If ye don't name your own price for Thistle Meadow, I shall take it as very unkind o' ye, zur. (*making a wryface, and beginning to blubber*) I shall, indeed!

TROT. (*affected*) Walker, you have conquered: (*taking the paper, silently wrings WALKER'S hands, then suddenly throws his arms round him*) now go, virtuous Walker—go. (*WALKER retires and goes off with GAMMON, C. and R. U. E.*) I declare I don't know which of those two simple-minded rustics to admire the most—Gammon or Walker—sometimes I feel inclined to cry " Walker," at others I'm disposed to say " Gammon." (*noise of violin, accompanied with shouts and laughter, heard at back*) Holloa, what's the matter now ? (*sticking his glass in his eye, and looking off. shouts, &c., repeated; and JACKY, with other labourers, run on through gate, from L. C. E., each, with a girl under his arm—little boys and girls follow, the boys dressed in the uniform of the Model Farm; they dance once round the stage, and form in line, R.*)

JAC. Now lads and lasses, three cheers for Squire Trotter, and success to the Model Farm !

OMNES. Hip—hip—hip—hurra!

TROT. What's all this about?

JAC. Why, your honour, as we're got an hour before us, according to Article V., we're a-going to knock up a bit of a dance. (*here SMITHER'S fiddle is heard outside, playing " Speed the Plough"*)

JAC. Here's Bob !—come along, Bob !

SMITHERS, *who enters, C. from L., playing and dancing, with LOTTY under his arm. LOTTY still in the costume of a country girl, but of a smarter character*)

SMITH. (C.) Here we are, boys and girls! What is it to be, boys and girls?

OMNES. Come along, Bob. (*they all hurry up to c.gate, and surround OMNES. A dance.—A dance.*)

SMITH. Then name your tune, boys and girls, (*seeing TROTTER then aside to LOTTY*) Lotty attention; throw one of your most

expressive glances into your right eye, and cast it over your left shoulder, at yonder individual, destined to perpetuate the race of the Smitherses.

LOT. (R., *throwing a glance at TROTTER, then looks down sheepishly. Aside to SMITHERS*) Will that do?

TROT. (L., *seeing LOTTY, and returning her look with a succession of winks aside*) That fascinating female native again ! Eh!—yes!—I'm sure I've seen that gentleman before: though I can only see him behind, I'm sure I've seen him before. (*advancing to SMITHERS*) I believe I've the honour of addressing Mr. Smithers, as plays upon the fiddle,

SMITH. Yes, sir; Mr. Smithers and his fiddle stands afore you. (*taking LOTTY by the hand, aside to her*) Fix both your eyes intently on both your shoe-strings, my dear, while I present you. (*aloud*) Mr. Trotter, Esq.—Miss Charlotte Smithers, my niece.

TROT. Mr Smithers, I congratulate you on your being uncle of your neice--this exquisite cowboy and I have before--
havent we, dear?

LOT. (*staring stupidly at him*) Eh—no—ees!—Why zurely you be the zilly chap as—

SMITH, Lotty !

TROT. Don't interfere, Mr. Smithers! And now, Mr. Smithers as plays upon the fiddle—Suppose you *do* play upon the fiddle—and then, perhaps, Miss Lotty, you'll honour me with your hand in the mazy dance. (*doing a few steps and ending in an attitude*)

LOT. (*pretending not to understand him*) Zur ?

TROT. (*aside*) I forgot—she can't understand my Piccadilly language. I'll address her in her own native lingo, (*assuming a stupid, loutish manner, and in a very broad accent*) I zay lass ?

LOT. Well, Lod ?

TROT. Will thee dance wi' I ? (*knocking his feet on stage very quickly and awkwardly, nearly throwing himself down*)

LOT, Ees, I 'ool ! (*imitating TROTTER'S violent action*)

TROT. Noa?

LOT. Ees!

TROT. Then, dong it, gi' us thy hand !

LOT. Drabbit it, here it be. (*slapping her hand in TROTTER'S*)

TROT. Oh, oh, oh! (*laughing stupidly*)

LOT. He, he, he! (*laughing stupidly*)

TROT. Come along. (*LOTTY suddenly swings him round almost off his legs, and takes her place at the head of the Country Dance—SMITHERS jumps up on the top of a tub, and strikes up " Speed the Plough."*)

COUNTRY DANCE.

During which TROTTER throws the whole into confusion by not knowing the figure, gets knocked about by all, his feet trod upon, &c. yet determined to keep it up—at last he falls exhausted—they all dance round him in a ring, then dance out C. and L., SMITHERS first; the rest follow and shut the gate after them)

LOT. (*helping TROTTER up*) Ah, zur; it must do your kind heart a deal of good, to see 'em so light and happy.

TROT. *Light !* Ecod, you'd call 'em anything but light if they'd been dancing upon your corns with their hob-nail boots, (*aside*) This fascinating cowboy is precisely the sort of material I want. She shall be my model wife, and the model mother of a prodigious number of Trotters. (*aloud*) Miss Southern, don't you think we should make an uncommon pretty couple ?

LOT. (*pretending not to understand*) What d'ye say ?

TROT. (*aside*) She doesn't understand me. (*in very broad dialect*) Shall I come a sweethearting to 'ee ? thats what I zay ?

LOT. Ah! ye be making a vool o' I! (*giving him a dig with her elbow*)

TROT. Noa, I be'nt ! (*giving her another dig*)

LOT. Ees., 'ee be. ! (*another dig*)

TROT, (*with great earnestness and gesticulation*) Dang it, dom it, drat it, drabbit it, I zay I be'ant! (*about to put his arm round LOTTY'S waist Bell rings loud*) Who's that, I wonder? (*goes and opens gate. GAMMON appears outside, with a yoke across his shoulders, to which two empty pails are hanging'*)

GAM. (*entering*) Drop o' water, please zur.

TROT. Certainly, my good Gammon.

GAM. Sorry to trouble 'ee, zur but the turmits be so uncommon dry, zur. (*going to the well and lowering his bucket, and singing a snatch*) Beg pardon, zur, but I always sings as I be drawing water. (*fastening bucket on to yoke again, and going towards gate*) Thank'ee, zur.

Exit C, and R. ; singing, " It's my delight on a shiny night," &c.

TROT. Now, Miss Smithers, as I was going to say, Miss Smithers — (*another ring at gate bell*) Here's somebody else now, (*goes and opens gate. WALKER appears*)

WAL. Beg pardon, zur; but about that ere bit o' land o' mine.

TROT. Exactly. I'll speak to you presently. (*pushing him out*)

WAL. But, zur——

TROT. I repeat, virtuous Walker, I'll speak to you presently, (*pushes him out, and shuts the door*) And now Miss Smithers——

WAL. (*showing his head over the wall*) But, I zay, zur——

TROT. I'm really surprised at you, Mr. Walker, when it must be evident to you that I'm talking politics with this young woman. Go along, sir, do. (*threatening him with pitchfork, WALKER disappears*) He's gone; and now, Miss Smithers, as we are not likely to be interrupted again—(*gate bell rings again; TROTTER opens gate, and GAMMON appears with his buckets*) 'What! more water?

GAM. 'Ees, zur, sorry to trouble ee, zur; but the spinach be almost parched up,

TROT. (*annoyed*) Just now it was *turnips*, now it's *spinach*; I really wish you'd take as much liquid as you want at once, Mr. Gammon, and have done with it.

GAM. You be very kind, zur, but I means to take it not when *you* likes, but when *I* like; you've sign'd the paper, and I've got the

right, ain't I? in course I have; and, what's more, I means to use it—in course I do. (*draws water and sings.*) Thankee, zur,
Exit C. and R.

TROT. I'll have no more of this! I'll just take that infernal bell down and put it in ray pocket. So, if you'll allow me. Lotty, I'll join you presently at your worthy uncle's, Mr. Smithers's, and then resume our intersting conversation.

LOT. Then you mun look sharp.

TROT. Mun I? Why mun I?

LOT. 'Cause Uncle Bob be sure to be up at the Hall shortly—grand wedding up there to-day, ye know—Miss Margaret and Squire Oliver. Drat un, I don't like un a bit! pity when Mr. Harlowe got un down he did'nt knock his head off his shoulders; that's all the harm I wish un.

TROT. Is that all? Well it ain't much; but I say, who knows but there may be *another* grand wedding before long, (*nudging LOTTY*)

LOT. (*with pretended astonishment*) Another wedding? Lawks! who's un?

TROT. Who's un? Why our'n (*nudging her again*)

LOT. (*with pretended modesty, and giving TROTTER a violent back-hander on the chest, which makes him wince again*) Be quiet, do, ye big fool.

TROT. Ecod, if thee calls I names again, I'll gee thee a buss.

LOT, And if thee dost, I'll gee thee a clout o' the head.

TROT. No 'ee won't

LOT. 'Ees I 'ool.

TROT. There then, (*kissing her*) there be the buss.

LOT. And there be the clout o' the head, (*giving him a box of the ears*) Ha! ha! ha! (*laughing violently as TROTTER rubs his cheek*) Did I hurt 'ee? Then make haste down to Uncle Bob's, and thee shall have a buss for nothing, (*runs out of the gate, shutting it after her*)

TROT. Buss for nothing! Ecod, then, I'll be after her at once! (*opens gate and runs up against WALKER, who shuts the gate; TROTTER annoyed*)

WAL. (*quietly and touching his hat*) About that ere bit o' land o' mine, zur? (*loud ringing at bell*)

TROT. There's that confounded bell again, (*opens gate, and GAMMON comes in with his buckets, followed by a long string of LABOURERS, each carrying buckets*)

GAM. As I couldnt draw as much water as I wants myself, Zur, I have brought these here chaps to help me—so come along, lads. (*GAMMON and others begin drawing water, singing " For 'tis my delight," &c., in chorus, and very much out of tune*)

TROT. Mr. Gammon!—I can't stand this any longer I so what shall I give you to go elsewhere for your liquid: that's the way to put it?

GAM. Well, zur, gi' I another hundred pound, and I'll gi' thee this paper. (*showing paper*)

TROT. (*quietly handing GAMMON a bank-note out of his pocket-book*) There's the money, Mr. Gammon.

GAM. And there be the paper, zur. (*handing TROTTER a paper, and suppressing a titter*)

TROT. And now, Mr, Walker, I believe you said two hundred guineas for your bit o' land.

WAL. 'Ees, zur; here be the receipt for the money, signed and all.

TROT. (*taking notes out of his pocket-book, and presenting them to WALKER*) Then here is the money, (*giving, and taking receipt*)

GAM. Then all be zettled now, zur. Eh, eh, eh, !

WAL. And you be *satisfied*. Ah ! ah ! ah !

TROT. Not quite. I wish to put you in possession of a *fact*, which you're perfectly at liberty to mention: namely, that if there is a more consummate scoundrel in the county of Cornwall than the conscientious Walker, it is the virtuous Gammon !

GAM. He he he! (*laughing loud in which the*

WAL. He he he! *other labourers join*)

GAM. Anything more in my way, sir? (*taking his hat off and bowing*)

TROT. Only one observation, (*quietly picking up the flail and holding it behind his back*) It's perfectly understood, then, that you've no longer any business here—in point of fact, you're trespassing here at this moment !

GAM. Well, zur, I suppose we be !

TROT. Do you ? Then, suppose I warn you off. Take that, you scoundrels, (*giving GAMMON a violent blow over the back with the flail—the same to WALKER*)

WAL. & GAM Help ! Murder! (*rush to the gate, pursued by TROTTER, who lays about him with right and left among them all; they rush about in various directions, with their yokes and buckets, pursued by TROTTER—some make their escape over the sty, into the Barn, and at different sides, scrambling over walls, &c. &c.*)

TROT. (*flourishing his flail*) There! I've cleared the premises of the scoundrels! (*during the above, the Stage has gradually become darker, a flash of lightning is seen, followed by thunder then sudden and very violent, rain*) Holloa ! here's a storm. Good gracious, every bit of thin model wheat will be spoilt to a certainty, if it isn't got into that model barn: where the deuce are my merry men I wonder?—I must ring them in. (*runs to the post and pulls rope violently; the bell rings very loud—JACKEY and other MODEL FARM MEN appear with their heads over the wall; they all carry umbrellas over them, pipes in their mouths, and are all intoxicated and singing*) Good gracious ! what a state my merry men are in to be sure! E'cod, they're more than merry—they're drunk! (*aloud, and in a tone of authority*) Come to work directly, you sirs ! come to work directly!

JAC. Ha, ha !—dom' the work!

LABOURERS. 'Ees, dom' the work !

JAC. In course: so if there be work to do, do it yourself!

LABOURERS. 'Ees, do it thyzel! Ha, ha, ha! (*Exeunt singing in loud chorus, " It's my delight, &c,"*-

TROT. (*shouting*) Stop! come back! (*seizes rope and putting it violently, rope breaks and bell falls; the rain more violent than ever*)

This is a settler—this is a regular damper: the ungrateful vagabonds! Men that I've fed with flannel jackets and continuations ; and clothed with suetty puddings ! My mind's made Up! I'll go back to Piccadilly this very day—this very hour! I'll turn my back upon my species for ever: I cast my species off: I disown my species—damn my specieas !—damn my Model Farm—there! (*seizing up the bell and dashing it at the barn door, which is shivered; upsets the ladder; kicks the plough over; overturns the cart; seizes up the buckets, and throws them at the farm house, smashing the windows ; pulls up the supports of the pigeon houses, which fall; runs into sty, and comes out 'dragging an enormous fat pig (stuffed) by the tail; three or four little pigs (real) run out of sty; TROTTER chases them about as —Scene closes in*)

SCENE II.—*Exterior of Hovel in Springfield Wood. Rain and distant thunder.*

Enter SMITHERS, followed by OLIVER, L.

SMITH. Come along. Squire: why, Squire, you don't walk so brisk and lively as might be expected; ain't there the hovel ? (*points*) brimfull of Koh-i-noors ?—and ain't I here to take half on 'em ? why, what would you have to make you happy and comfortable ?
OLIV. What would I have? I'd have confidence, Smithers; and not be dragged here on my wedding morning, for business that might await to-morrow--let us return.

SMITH. Now, squire, I thought you'd done with all this gammon--return ? Return *yourself*, by all manner of means ; but I don't go without the Koh-i-noors—come on. (*makes for hovel*)
OLIV. (*looks at SMITHERS, and timely puts his hand in his breast—aside*) I'm strongly tempted ! (*half draws pocket pistol*)
SMITH. (*observing the action*) Heyday, Squire—a pistol ?
OLIV. Yes—Smithers—in case of interruption—that's all.
SMITH. Well, do you know, I thought of that too ; so I brought the fellow to it. (*producing a gigantic horse pistol; clock- strikes One*)
OLIV. One o'clock! and in half an hour, I meet my bride and guests—yet I cannot trust him with the jewels, (*aloud*) Smithers, my old friend, come with me to the Hall, and share my happiness.
SMITH. (*playing with horse pistol*) It won't do, Dick : I can't enjoy no happiness away from the *Koh-i-noors*.
OLIV. (*aside*) I am in his power, and he knows it. (*aloud*) Then take the key and enter: (*gives key to SMITHERS*) in the closet on the left, you'll see a heap of shavings: pull up the boards beneath it—there you'll find the jewel box—carry off the treasure to Springfield, and lock it in my cabinet: then follow me to Elton Hall, where I've business for you. I must away this instant: do your duty, Smithers. (*rushes out, R.*)
SMITH. If the contents of that there pistol of the Squire's wasn't meant to let daylight into Bob Smithers, I'm very much mistaken: but, probably, the sight of this here little popgun of

mine made him think better of it. Marry Miss Margaret?—he ? Shall I let the villain kill the *child* as he killed t h e — No, no—do my *duty*, eh, Squire? You'll find I will do my duty; but first, the jewels—(*enters shovel R. flat*)

SCENE III.—*Another part of the Wood.*

Enter TROTTER, R., dressed in an ultra-fashionable suit, with LOTTY under his arm, still in her peasant's dress; TROTTER has his umbrella up.

TROT. Come along Lotty: what a shower to be sure! However the worst is over now, (*putting down umbrella*) so let's lose no time in finding our way to Elton Hall. I'm so anxious to announce our marriage to my excellent friend, Sir Philip Elton; and then, Lotty, off we start for Piccadilly, London.

LOT. I'd rather by harf atop where I be's.

TROT. "Where I be's?" You'll excuse me, my sylphlike lass; but people in Piccadilly don't say, "Where I be's;" they say, "Wher I am's"--I mean, "Where I am." Never mind we shall be as happy as the day's long: First, there'll be our morning ride—but, of course, you can't ride?

LOT. (*forgetting herself*) Not ride! ha, ha!—sitting or standing, with or without a saddle—stirrups or no stirrups—show me the nag that can spill me, that's all—

TROT. Holloa, holloa! dovelike damsel—

LOT. (*recollecting herself*) I means, zur, I never found the donkey yet, as could throw I off.

TROT. My sweetest love, people in Piccadilly don't ride on donkeys. Well, I confess I did make a donkey of myself when I left Piccadilly for Cornwall; but I'm determined that people shall say I did one wise thing before I left Cornwall for Piccadilly: and that was, to marry you, my dear, (*taking her hand affectionately*)

LOT. (*moved—aside*) He's a good, kind, generous-hearted fellow; and let Uncle Bob say what he will, I cannot—will not deceive him. (*aloud*) Mr. Trotter —

Enter SIR PHILIP, hastily, L.

SIR. P. Ah! my dear Trotter—I've been giving orders to my tenantry for the due celebration of my sister's marriage, and am somewhat late: so you must excuse me.

TROT. I won't detain you: I was only coming to say, Good-bye—I'm off.

SIR P. Off where?

TROT. To the only place in the world worth living in—Piccadilly, London,

SIR P. But your Model Farm?

TROT. My dear sir, my Model Farm is about the most disagreeable subject of conversation you could touch on. I certainly did hope to restore the entire human race to a state of innocence--in time: but as I was unlucky enough to begin with the damn'dest set of

scoundrels under the sun, I gave 'em up in despair, considerably mingled with disgust. However, I've succeeded in *one* important particular; I've found a Mrs. Trotter! I told you I required a wife of very peculiar qualifications——

SIR P. I remember: no education: no accomplishments——

TROT. Exactly: and here she is—all innocence and ignorance.

(*taking LOTTY'S hand and presenting her to SIR PHILIP*)

SIR P. (*starting*) Eh!—yes—it must be——(*bowing to LOTTY*)
Mademoiselle——

LOT. (*aside*) Ah ! He's seen me jump through a hoop !

TROT. *Mademoiselle !* You'll excuse me, my dear friend, but you're talking damned nonsense.

SIR P. 'Pshaw !—who, that has once seen the fascinating Carlotta Smitherini, whose daring feats in the Circle have been the delight and admiration of every beholder, can ever forget those exquisite features—that finely developed form——

TROT. (*astonished*) My dear sir, that will do: you needn't go any farther. I tell you she's not an equestrian: she's a cowboy. Why don't you tell the gentleman so, my dear?

LOT. Frankly, sir, because I cannot deny one word that gentleman has stated.

TROT, Goodness, gracious! you don't mean to say you ever jumped through a hoop?

LOT. And if I have, why should I be the worse for it ?

TROT. Well, I don't know; I'm quite sure that if *I* was to attempt it, I should be very considerably the worse for it. And so *you* have deceived me, like the rest ?

LOT. Thus far only: I encouraged your flirtation with Lotty Smithers, the silly loutish country wench, because I never could resist a harmless bit of fun; but, believe me, sir, I would never have borne your name, without first revealing to you what Sir Philip Elton has unfortunately forestalled me in disclosing—I mean my previous brief, but *honourable* career as Carlotta Smitherini. I know we must now part. Despise the accomplished equestrian, if you will; but think kindly of the poor village girl whose love you sought—and gained— (*with emotion and a struggle*) Adieu, sir! *Exit, R.*

SIR P. An honest, true-hearted girl, on *my* life !

TROT. (*eagerly*) Do you think so? (*changing his tone*) But just consider—jumping through hoops—so damned undignified! (*imitating*) And in very short petticoats, too.

SIR P. On the contrary, she always wore them exceedingly long.

TROT. You're sure she wore them exceedingly long?

SIR P. Exceedingly: and her reputation was spotless.

TROT. Dear me—spotless reputation, and exceedingly long petticoats ! I think I'll go and talk to her a little. I shouldn't like her to say I behaved like a brute to her: we'll part friends, at any rate, (*during this SIR PHILIP has been pushing him towards R.*) You're sure her petticoats were exceedingly long ?

SIR P. Yes, yes! (*TROTTER pauses—then suddenly rushes off. SIR P. follows*)

SCENE IV.—*A large Room in Elton Hall; large wide door, with cross bars, rusty locks, cobwebs, bearing every mark of disuse and decay, c; other doors, R. and L. 2 E. OLIVER discovered, he carries a large stick with curved handle.*

OLIV. I've made the utmost of my time— I'm here again, and in advance it seems, both of my bride and guests: ha, ha! In truth, I'm in luck and (*low*) that accursed writing once rasped from the wall, the last link snaps 'twixt me and danger, and my fate goes merry as my marriage hell, (*looking round*) The moment is propitious: (*points*) there's the door—my sole antagonist, and (*taking up his stick—a crowbar*) here's my iron argument (*looking round*) I am alone. Let me reconnoitre. (*SIR PHILIP entering L. stops in doorway, watching him in surprise*) Tune has done its work; the lock 's rust-eaten, and the hinges scarce hang together—with the crow fixed in this crevice— (*looks up and finds SIR PHILIP close to him—he starts—a long pause*)

SIR P. Good morning, sir.

OLIV. (*rallying*) Ah! my dear Sir Philip—

SIR P. You are somewhat late—

OLIV. Yes, Sir Philip: my absence was a homage to the day; happy myself, I went to make others happy. Every man has a holiday, that he may look upon the beauty of my bride.

SIR P. You are poetic, sir.

OLIV. Under your sister's inspiration, (*looking round*) Methinks the very walls of her home should catch the spirit of festivity! and this reminds me, Sir Philip, there is, I have been told, one wing of Elton Hall, in painful contrast to the rest: by a sort of—instinct, I could wish that memorial of the past destroyed.

SIR P. And by the same instinct you have been led to the very spot. (*pointing*) There is the door. For five-and-twenty years no hand has turned that cankered bolt; no foot has trod that blood-stained floor. The very servants shudder, as they whisper the only name it goes by—"The Room of Blood;" they tell, too, a wild legend, which they all implicitly believe—that yonder door will one day fall, and, as it falls, a voice proclaim the murderer's name.

OLIV. (*starts*) Indeed!

Enter JOSEPH, hurriedly, L,

JOS. Sir Philip! Sir Philip! (*points to OLIVER*) a word to you—alone.

SIR P. Excuse me one moment, Mr. Oliver.

JOS. Your sister—dear Miss Margaret—

SIR P. (*starting*) Well—speak—

JOS. This morning she dismissed my lady, her mother, and begged to be left alone. Twelve o'clock struck, and half-past twelve, and still Miss Margaret didn't appear: we forced the door—the dear young lady was not there.

SIR P. Merciful powers! Follow me, Joseph; I'll direct the search, (*aside*) If to avoid this marriage, and (*points to OLIVER*) that man she——(*to OLIVER*) Mr. Oliver, business of moment calls me away; we meet presently, (*to JOSEPH*) TO my mother—to my mother, Joseph, (*rushes out, R. D., followed by JOSEPH*)

OLIV. That legend runs strangely in my thoughts—"Yonder door shall one day fall, and, as it falls, a voice proclaim the murderer's name!" 'Tis foolery—Yet I wish I hadn't heard it. Let the voice speak; I'll take care no ear but mine shall hear it. (*seeing SMITHERS, who enters L. H. D.*) Welcome, Smithers—but why so late?

SMITH. 'Tis a long step from that cursed hovel; and, somehow, my legs draggled after me, and a sledge-hammer here was knocking me to bits, (*touching his breast*)

OLIV. Nonsense: but the jewels: are they safe?

SMITH. (*expressively*) They are safe.

OLIV. Then we're safe also, or nearly so: one job more, and ample Wealth—and what gives zest to Wealth—Security—do you hear?—perfect Security rewards us. (*pointing*) D'you see that door, Smithers?

SMITH, I do: (*trembling*) You don't mean to say—(*OLIVER nods*) Lord, have mercy!

OLIV. We've still clear time enough, and we'll make the most of it.

SMITH, What are you going to do?

OLIV. (*seizing crowbar*) To grind to dust, those damned and damning words—the Writing on the Wall!

SMITH, You dare not—sure——

OLIV. Dare not?—look here! (*advances to door, a loud crash heard within, followed by piercing shriek, twice or thrice repeated; falls back*) What's that? (*desperately*) Ah, the legend! Spite of all the legends of Hell, I'll enter! (*he batters the door, which at last falls forward with a heavy crash; MARGARET is discovered within, in white robe and dishevelled hair; OLIVER staggers back to front of Stage; SMITHERS falls on his knees; the noise brings on SIR. PHILIP, LADY ELTON, and JOSEPH, R.; GUESTS and SERVANTS, L.*)

MAR. Richard Oliver! (*she utters the name with peculiar solemnity, and they all start in recognition of the legend*) Are you come to claim your bride? Enter then: my father's spirit is here, to join our hands.

SIR P. (R. C.) Sister!

LADY E. (R.) Margaret, beloved child, come from that dreadful chamber.

MAR. (*waves them back*) Not till I discharge my father's will. In this room of horror, I took refuge from worse horror. Here, where my father's spirit flew to heaven, I invoked his aid to save me: at that moment a large oaken screen broke through the mouldering floor, and by the beams of light that streamed in radiant floods upon the wall, he sent his answer—look! (*points*) 'tis there!—"RICHARD OLIVER MY MURDERER!"

OLIV. (*recovers and looks round*) Well, "why do you all gape and

tremble? Would you believe this He— this juggler's trick—got up by my enemies? perhaps by that love-sick lunatic herself? Where are these precious proofs? (as he rushes towards room, TOBIAS and HARLOWE enter from the interior.)

TOB. (C.) Richard Oliver, you ask for proofs--(*points to room*) Look there—there lay your dead prey—look here—here stands your living victim—the wrongfully accused, the long suffering Everhard Elton! (*movement*)

SMITH. (L.) And if that ain't enough—look here! (*produces jewel box*)

OLIV. Ah! (*rushes on SMITH*) Cowardly hound, you have betrayed me.

SMITH. No; you told me to do my duty, Dick. At last I've done it

TOB. And thereby expiate the past. (*to OLIVER*) But you—bold, bad, wretched man—what shall be said of you?

OLIV. Say this of me. (*after a pause, walking firm and erect into the midst of them*) Philip Elton, to you I speak. You broke my father's heart amongst you: I struck yours. Remorse I disclaim—penitence, feel none. Pursue me as you will: Upon the scaffold-drop I'd still defy you in this world: nor would I forgive you—in the next! (*rushes out, enters the condemned room, shrieks, staggers back, and rushes out at L.*)

SIR P. Follow and secure him.

TOB. No; spare your pains: officers of justice await him at the gate of the Hall, and he steps from this threshold to a prison.

LADYE. I am filled with awe and wonder. (*to TOBIAS*) Oh sir, how can the innocent causes of your suffering ever make atonement.

TOB. By taking to your heart my beloved boy; (*HARLOWE advances*)

LADY E. (*embracing him*) That I have long done.

SIR P. (*advancing to HARLOWE*) Kinsman, your example has reclaimed me. I here renounce vices that have spread pestilence around me. In earnest of my truth, accept the mortification of my pride. I own I've done you grievous wrong, and I humbly ask your pardon.

HARL. Sir Philip

SIR P. But here is the rich recompence of your virtues. (*leads MARGARET forward*) Take her, cousin. (*to LADYE.*) Your blessing on them, madam. (*to TOBIAS*) Yours too, sir; and when it is worthier of you both, I will then add my own. (*retiring, is stopped by MARGARET*)

MAR, Philip! (*she gradually joins PHILIP'S and HARLOWE'S hands upon her breast. The young men embrace*)

SMITH. (*brings casket to SIR P.*) Take your property, sir. I've lived ten hours of the day like a vagabond, but I've found a bit o' conscience at the eleventh. Better late, I hope, than never. (*SIR P. surprised. SMITHERS points at the box, and then significantly at the room*)

TROT. (*without, L.*) Here we are—here we are—never mind we'll announce ourselves.

TROTTER *enters with LOTTY on his arm, in a smart modern riding habit; announcing*

Mr. and Mrs. Fergusson Trotter, of Piccadilly, London: that is to say, Mr. Trotter as is, and Mrs. Trotter as is to be. Uncle Smithers, as plays upon the fiddle, embrace your nephew. Lotty, embrace everybody, and me exclusively. (*embracing her*)

SIR P. Then, my dear Trotter, what say you to a double wedding?

TROT. You want me to be married twice over? With all my heart. I should like nothing better than to be married two or three times every month for the next ten years—(*seeing LOTTY angry*) subject to Mrs. Trotter's approbation, of course.

SIR P. What say you? Let my sister's wedding and yours take place together.

TROT. Of course—then let's say this day week; or, if that's too soon, suppose we say to-morrow? All who are for tomorrow.

hold up your hands, (*holding up both his hands*. SIR PHILIP, HARLOWE, TOBIAS, HARROWELL, and SMITHERS *hold up their hands*, MARGARET and LOTTY, *after exchanging looks, slowly hold up theirs*) Carried unanimously.

LOT. (*to TROTTER*) Might I ask one favour?

TROT. A thousand.

LOT. Only one. Let us remain in dear Penmoor.

TROT. With all my heart; and I'll take to farming again. Yes—and on Philanthropic principles, too: for I'll give every man a fair day's wages for a fair day's work—and keep 'em to it—and that I take to be the most genuine Philanthropic principle going after all.

SIR P. I believe it is; like many other great men, my dear Trotter, you've learnt Wisdom by means of a good heart, (*looking round*) Let smiles go round: the cause of justice triumphs; but what an eventful history is ours!

TOB. Aye! and let it be engraven on our hearts by the finger of that Providence that never forsakes its Creation—but superintends alike the Defence of Innocence, the Doom of Guilt, and the fall of a Sparrow!

LADY E. MAR. HARL. TOB. SIR PHIL. TROT. LOT SMITH.
R. L.

Curtain.