

BEN BOLT.

An original Drama.

IN TWO ACTS.



BY

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AUTHOR OF

*The Sailor of France, The Gipsy Farmer, Gale Breezely, Jack
Long of Texas, The Sailor's Wife, &c. &c. &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,

LONDON.

BEN BOLT.

*First Performed at the Royal Surrey Theatre,
on Tuesday, March 28th, 1854.*

Characters.

CHRISTIAN COMFORT (*a Schoolmaster*)... MR. MUNRO.
"The master so kind and so true."
IVAN IRONLINK (*a Miller*)..... MR. H. HARALD.
"Who kept time by the click of the mill."
SPARBOLT (*the Miller's Man*)..... MR. BUTLER.
COLIN (*a Rustic*)..... MR. R. GREEN.
BEN BOLT (*Master of the "Alice"*)..... MR. SHEPHERD.
"Oh! don't you remember, Ben Bolt?"
REUBEN RAGS (*a Wanderer*)..... MR. H. WIDDICOME
"This is a man all tatter'd and torn."
WILL WATCH (*of the Preventive Service*)... MR. PHELPS.
ALICE (*Daughter of Christian Comfort*)... MISS CLAYTON.
"Oh! don't you remember sweet Alice?"
MARY MOONLIGHT (*Servant at the School
House*)..... MISS E. SANDERS.
"This is a maiden all forlorn."
Smugglers, Sailors, &c.

Programme of Scenery.

ACT I.-MORNING.

"Oh! don't you remember the school, Ben Bolt,
And the master so kind and so true,
And the little nook by the clear running brook,
Where we gather'd the flowers as they grew?"

The Mill, School House, & Village Church,
ON THE BEACH OF ROCK HEAD FERRY.

ACT II.-NIGHT.

"A change comes o'er the spirit of the scene."
"The mill has gone to decay,
And quiet now reigns all around:
And the old rustic porch, with its roses so sweet,
Lies scattered and fall'n to the ground."

Dilapidated School House & Roofless Mill,
The Churchyard and "Slab of Granite so grey."

B E N B O L T .

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*On one side of the stage, and near the extreme back, is a picturesque Water Mill, with revolving wheel, beneath which is running a rapid stream; on the opposite side, R., but nearer to the audience, is a made-out neat Cottage, with built porch covered with roses; at the far back of stage is seen part of the Church and Churchyard, surrounded by a dwarf wall, within which are seen tombs, &c.; large window in church; near first entrance, L., and opposite the Cottage, an open cart shed with straw spread in it.*

As the curtain rises, day is just breaking, and a solo on the flute in the orchestra gives the idea of the singing of the lark. The sun gradually rises until its beams fall on the windows of the Church and surrounding objects; smoke rises from the chimneys of the Mill and Cottage.

Several PERSONS pass with small bundles of food as if on their way to labour, COLIN with stable fork crosses to cart shed, and as he places the pitch fork in the straw, REUBEN RAGS starts up, ragged but neat, L.

COLIN. Rags!

REUBEN. A bundle of 'em carefully tied up. I've paid every attention to the good old maxim—a stitch in time saves nine—in fact my worldly wardrobe is like a harlequin's jacket, all stitch and patch—neat, but not gaudy—spruce, but spangleless. There's a hat!

Showing hat made up with materials of both black and white beaver, in fact a compound of two old hats of different colours.

COLIN. "What?

REUBEN. A hat! You can't mistake it for anything else—does it look like a wheelbarrow, Chawbacon?

COLIN. Chawbacon! Who are you, I should like to know?

REUBEN. Should you? I am forced to admit that I am in the same position; I often ask myself who I am, and up to the present moment I've not received any satisfactory answer, but I suppose I'm somebody, or at any rate, ought to be somebody. I think I must have had a father and mother, although I don't carry in my memory the slightest remembrance of that interesting event, all I

know of the green days of my infancy is a faint recollection of a ditch and a donkey—of being kicked into one by the heels of the other, and of being picked out almost smothered in duckweed.

COLIN. I know what you are—you are a Gipse^y.

REUBEN. That's a general application as regards race and doesn't apply to an individual family—now you are a—

COLIN. Well, what am I ?

REUBEN. Well, you're an individual specimen of an extensive class famed for ploughing and pudding—'taters and turnips—cabbage and cattle—cows and corn; one of the numerous necessary horde who get their bread by raising bread for others, who generally live until they are too old for work, and then end the remnant of their days in an independent retreat their labour has provided for them—the parish workhouse.

COLIN. Well, dang'it, there's some truth in that, but we can't help it.

REUBEN. Yes you can.

COLIN. How?

REUBEN. Drink less ale and buy penny publications.

COLIN. Advice gratis, as our doctor says.

REUBEN. And valued at about as much as it fetches—nix.

COLIN. Slang !

REUBEN. No—polite language taught by adversity to assist necessity—figurative and melodious—one of the ancient tongues, so old that its origin is lost in the darkness of the past, handed down by the present.

COLIN. Ah! you're one too many for me—yet they say in our village I'm bright.

REUBEN. Yes, bright as a blacking bottle !

MARY MOONLIGHT *is heard without singing*, L. I E.

Air—BEN BOLT.

Oh, don't you remember the school, Ben Bolt,
 And the master, so kind and so true,
 And the little nook by the clear running brook,
 Where we gathered the flowers as they grew ?
 O'er that master's sweet porch may the grass never grow,
 Or the running brook never go dry,
 All the friends that I know, were my schoolmates so true,
 Who so happy could then be as I ?

COLIN. Mary !

REUBEN. Moonlight!

Enter MARY MOONLIGHT, a *smart country lass*.

MARY. What, Rags!

REUBEN. Don't turn up your nose at rags—riches are made by rags.

MARY. Turn up my nose at you! no, that I wouldn't, if you hadn't a rag to your back ; you know, Reuben, I love you.

COLIN. Almost as much as you love Ben Bolt.

MARY. Respect, sir. (*crosses, C.*) But no, why should I be ashamed to own it? Why not rather be proud of it? I do love Ben Bolt, with as pure a love as ever sister bore for brother, shall I tell you why? There, (*pointing to cottage*) there stands the home of as good a man as ever the world looked upon—our village school-master.

COLIN. Christian Comfort.

MARY. Just so—when I wandered about a careless bare-footed child with no thought but for the bright skies and the green fields, Ben, then a d— like myself, led me by the hand beneath that torch, and and asked the good man to give me that blessing, which humanizes all—knowledge.

REUBEN. And he gave it?

MARY. He did—he placed the little gipsy wanderer by the side of the child friend that brought her, and with no pay but the grateful tears of her he taught and fed, became a friend—a father to her—all this I owe to Ben, and my heart must be cold indeed, if I love not him who did so much for me.

COLIN *retires up stage.*

REUBEN. And you have remained with the old gentleman and his daughter ever since, proving your gratitude by dusting out cupboards and sweeping down cobwebs.

COLIN. (*down L.*) That's more than you've done.

REUBEN. Oh, I confess the case—I have been ungrateful—I determined to see the world, so starting with nothing but my natural—

MARY. Impudence.

REUBEN. Well, I didn't forget to pack up a little of the last-named article in my travelling trunk.

COLIN. A travelling trunk!—a cotton handkerchief, containing a-

REUBEN. Calico shirt and a worsted night cap.

MARY. Reuben!

REUBEN. Oh, a fact—I like to be particular.

COLIN. You must have been, in your linen.

REUBEN. Oh, I had a change.

COLIN. A change?

REUBEN. Yes—two towels and a dickey.

MARY. Ah, change has been your ruin, you're so fond of roving—"A rolling stone gathers no moss."

REUBEN. Well, give me the rolling, and those that like may gather the moss.

Enter CHRISTIAN COMFORT, R., and as he enters, COLIN sticks the fork in a truss of straw and exit with it, R.

REUBEN. Good morning, sir. (to CHRISTIAN)

CHRIS. (*crosses, C.*) Every morning is good to a grateful heart, he who in health, looks upon the gifts that Providence has gathered round him, must feel the good that's daily given—have you come back to dwell amongst us, Reuben?

REUBEN. For a time, sir.

CHRIS. For some time, I hope, Reuben ; believe me, there's no place like home.

REUBEN. If Captain Cook had thought so, sir, we should have known nothing of Owhyhee and New Zealand.

CHRIS. Ah boy, we rarely want excuses to colour the wishes of our hearts ; there is one thing I am proud to say, that if in your wandering you have not gathered wisdom, you have at any rate avoided vice.

REUBEN. You compliment, sir.

CHRIS. No!

REUBEN. After the example I learnt from you, if I ran out of the course, I must have been a bad one, seeing so much goodness, so much——

CHRIS. Ah, now you are going to compliment.

REUBEN. No !

BEN BOLT. (*heard without—a very distant hail*)

CHRIS. That voice!

REUBEN. I know it, 'tis Ben Bolt's.

MARY. Can it be ever taken for any one else's.

BEN. (*without*) On board the Alice, a-hoy !

MARY. (*goes to back, imitating BEN*) What strange craft ?

BEN. (*without*) Strange craft be——

MARY. No swearing, shipmate. (*still imitating*)

REUBEN. No, no swearing; there are many bad habits, but that's a damned bad habit.

CHRIS. Reuben!

REUBEN. Oh, I wish I hadn't spoke.

Music—BEN enters from back, L. U. E.; ALICE from cottage, R.;

REUBEN crosses as BEN enters and by chance places himself between BEN and ALICE; BEN bonnets him and hurls him round, he falls in the arms of MARY as BEN catches ALICE in his arms, kissing her.

REUBEN. Oh, it's no use, I can't resist it. (*kissing MARY*)

MARY. (L.) Nor can I—take that. (*slapping his face*)

BEN. (C.) Bless your bright toplights, they are the pilot stars at the mast-head of my happiness. Captain of such a cargo of loveliness, I ought to be the happiest dog alive.

REUBEN. (L. C.) Oh ! (*groaning*)

BEN. Hollo! what's the matter with you, mate ?

REUBEN. It's a way I have—a sort of joyous exclamation when I behold the happiness of those I respect; it's my joy.

BEN. Is it—well, I shouldn't have thought so by the sound of it. Well, Alice, my lass, I've cast adrift the cable of care; my small little sloop floats upon the waters of the bay, as trim and as beautiful as the dear girl whose name she bears. Servant, Master Comfort, or I should rather hail " Father," shouldn't I?—for if all goes fair, to-day sees the splicing of Ben Bolt and his pretty Alice.

ALICE. (*sinking her head on his shoulder*) Oh, Ben !

REUBEN. (*sinking his head on MARY'S shoulder*) Oh, Mary!

MARY. Go along, do?"  (pushing him away)

Exeunt both into cottage.

CHRIS. If ever father gave child with the assurance and prospect of a happy future, I do mine. I've known you, Ben, from careless infancy to manhood's riper days ; known yours, for the manly heart and noble spirit that makes the man, whate'er his station, noble is the noblest. My blessings on you both!

BEN. Oh, sir, in giving me Alice, you freight my heart with such a cargo of blessings that its weight seems almost to founder the hull that bears it. When in humbleness and poverty, I worked the reckoning to gain the prize I look upon, the thought of this moment was the bright light that drove the dark clouds of doubt and fear far away, amidst the broken waters in my wake; and when the storm came, and the loud tempest sent its raging waters round the devoted bark, and pale faces with sinking hearts looked upon the doom that threatened, there came to me a whisper of hope—a thought of Alice—and my heart grew firm as the planks I stood on! I flew to my duty, and clinging to the quivering mast that bent like a reed before the fierce hurricane, gathered the torn and shattered canvas until it lay furled and snug as the babe pressed to its mother's breast, and when the storm passed and the lull came, and the bold vessel careered on her homeward course, every wave that broke beneath our way, foam-crested, seemed to bear upon its glassy surface the name of her I loved.

ALICE. Oh, what a terrible life to lead—braving death and danger hourly. I shall never hear the wind blow without thinking it brings danger to mine or sorrow to me.

BEN. Nonsense, my girl; it isn't every capful of wind capsizes a craft; stout hearts and strong timbers weather out the roughest gale; besides, my lass, I've given up long voyages; luck has squared the sails for me, I've made money enough to buy a craft of my own, and yonder she floats, every timber of her as fresh and as firm as your own heart, my dearest Alice.

CHRIS. Have you insured her?

BEN. No, but I will—I've only just paid for her and brought her round the point from the builder's—here's a letter to the underwriters ; you slip your cable, will you, father—put the direction on it, and ship it off to the agents ?

CHRIS. I will, boy.

Exit into cottage.

ALICE. Ben—when we are—are——

BEN. Spliced, my lass—out with it—don't be ashamed; I could carry on all day long, counting the knots that happiness has in store for me.

ALICE. Well, then, when we are——

BEN. Spliced!

ALICE. You shall go no more voyages without me.

BEN. What? lord love you—you don't mean that, do you? What swing hammocks afloat and ashore ? my dear girl, you shall have a cabin fit for a sea queen. In fair weather, we'll walk the deck together, and I'll spin you yarns of the wonders of the waters

and the treasures of the deep; and when the moon dances in her brightness upon the rippling waves, casting her shadows upon sheet bolt, and spar, until they glitter like silver in her light—I'll heave the lead of love, and you shall log how deeply you're fathomed in a husband's heart.

ALICE. And in foul weather, Ben ?

BEN. Oh, we won't have any foul weather ! and if we do, it will but make us better love the fair that's sure to follow.

ALICE. Don't fear me, Ben: be fate or fortune what they may I'll never shrink to share it with the man I love.

BEN. You're an angel!

ALICE. I'm a woman, Ben !

BEN. Well, they're all angels, ain't they ? at any rate they ought to be; for where beauty builds the figure-head, evil passions should never hull beneath.

ALICE. I've another reason—you'll say a foolish one—why I should not remain here while you are at sea. Ivan Ironlink—

BEN. The miller? (*pointing to mill, L. U. E.*)

ALICE. The same!

BEN. I don't like the lubber, nobody knows anything about him.

ALICE. My father says—some years back, he came and settled here; but from where, no one can tell—bought the mill—

BEN. Where he's harboured ever since—like a rat in the hold of a West India trader—sulky with the sweets that are stowed around him.

ALICE. He made my father an offer for my hand, of course was rejected; and though polite and neighbourly, I never look upon his face, and mark the dark cold smile that gathers there, without a shrinking, and a thought of mischief.

BEN. Mischief! I should like to catch him at it. Mischief—I'd mischief him ! I'd serve him as Billy Blowhard served the Flushing skipper—start him end for end—tie him up in a double reef-knot—and then send him home to his disconsolate parents to get him out of the hank.

Enter IVAN IRONLINK from mill, dressed as a miller, his face dark and swarthy, his general bearing gloomy and marked.

The very gentleman I was contemplating a pleasant treat for—I say, mate !

ALICE. (*aside to BEN*) Ben !

BEN. I know ! I know, my lass, he hasn't shown his teeth yet—I'll lay on my oars and look for his bite. (*aside to ALICE*)

IRON. (L.) A fair day to you, Miss Alice!

BEN. Foul weather wishing fair days is like a dead calm to a voyage-paid coaster—neither welcome nor pleasant.

IRON. Give me credit for good  hes!

BEN. (*crossing, C.*) No, I won't, because you don't look as if you meant it—there's a shifting tack in your eyes, veering and chopping about like the short shoal water that ends in breakers; to coil it up, I don't like you, mate.

IRON. I'm very careless about your likings—I neither value nor

court your friendship, nor were my words addressed to you, but to my fair neighbour there.

BEN. Hold hard, mate, let me put you square a bit, as regards the lass that's moored alongside me—she's the point I steered for from life's earliest rating; our hearts grappled ere one strand upon love's cable was known to us—but love grew with us as we grew—a few hours makes her my wife—I've got her consent, I've got her father's, I've got my own, and I shan't ask yours; so if you've anything to say to her, you'll say it to me, and the chances are, you'll get an answer rough or smooth, as the question may be.

IRON. Well, I should have thought words of good feeling and congratulation could never be construed into offence or evil meaning, I've no reason to wish ill to either her or you.

BEN. Oh, neither her nor I care a rope's end, for your good word, or your bad one.

IRON. I am sure I wish you both well, can there be harm in that?

BEN. Certainly not, if you mean it.

IRON. I do mean it.

BEN. Then here's my hand, mate, and my heart's in it—I'd rather sail in convoy with good fellowship, than keep a look a-head for a secret enemy—don't let us have any misunderstanding, because Alice prefers me—we can't be all born good-looking—it was in my fate to be launched with a beautiful figure-head, yours, to be turned out in the rough, and though you've been some years in the world, time hasn't holy-stoned the sharp edges of your cast-iron mug; but don't despair, some things improve by keeping—whoknows, in a year or two you may become good-looking.

ALICE (L.) Believe me, to see you friends is more pleasing than to think you enemies—'tis often that a generous rival, becomes a firm and steady friend—that Mr. Ironlink may prove so, I sincerely hope.

IRON. (R.) Don't doubt it.

ALICE. I will not, and to prove it, I ask you in friendly heart to join our wedding guests, and by your presence cement a friendship that time may ripen—you'll not refuse—I ask it in mine and my husband's name.

IRON. Refuse, no, 'twill pleasure me to see your happiness, and although it may cost me a pang to look upon the prize I could not gain, there shall be no envy in the pang, no heart shall more rejoice to see your joy than mine.

BEN. Well said, mate—you're like a fog that comes before a fair weather breeze, whose darkness is forgotten in the brightness that follows! Look! Alice, my lass, look! there stands the village church; astern of it, dwells the parson under hatches. I've got the ring. Time will turn the wheel until it logs the hour that makes me master of the charming Alice!

REUBEN appears at cottage door, and rings bell,

BEN. What's up, mate?

REUBEN. Breakfast!

BEN. I'm with you. Will you take a berth alongside our mahogany, sir—I need not say how welcome you'll be !

IRON. No, I've business in the mill; I'll join you when the other guests arrive.

BEN.  aye, sir, all right—now bear a hand for the breakfast lanyards. Come along, Alice.

BEN and ALICE enter cottage—IRONLINK goes off to mill

Enter MARY, from cottage.

MARY. (R.) Reuben!

REUBEN. (L.) Here am I—rough and ready like a rat-catcher dog!

MARY. Now do you know what you've got to do ?

REUBEN. I've so many things to do, that I've forgotten them half.

MARY. Oh, what a head you've got!

REUBEN. Yes, I flatter myself the heading of the affair is highly tasty and respectable; it isn't every day you look upon so well-finished a frontispiece.

MARY. You're to wait at table.

REUBEN. I don't like *waiting* at table, I'd rather begin at once.

MARY. Will you listen ?

REUBEN. All day long to you, as the honey-bee hangs on the flower that gathers sweets.

MARY. And bears a sting.

REUBEN. Don't mention it.

MARY. Then you are to set the bells a-ringing.

REUBEN. Like winking.

MARY. Uncork the bottles—decant the wine—fill the glasses.

REUBEN. And empty them too, with any gentleman in the company; and when I get upon the table—

MARY. Take care you don't get under it.

REUBEN. Despise me if I do; an honest friend, a cheerful glass and a true-hearted wife, are heaven's gifts—to soften the mortal's thorny path in life's rough road,

MARY. You talk like a saint!

REUBEN. And you look like an angel!

MARY. Ah, that's what all the men say.

REUBEN. Well then, what everybody says, must be true. Oh, if you'd only marry me.

MARY. So I will!

REUBEN. When?

MARY. When you're settled !

REUBEN. Marry me, and that'll settle me.

MARY. I don't know that; sometimes it's only the woman that gets settled; there are brutes who are cowards enough to illuse the woman who trusts them.

REUBEN. Ah, I'd have such fellows tried by a jury of old women and punished by a committee of young ones.

MARY. I should like to be on the committee !

REUBEN. So you shall be, if ever I forget myself.

Duet.

REUBEN. " When lasses and lads get away from their dads,
 How changed is the life they try,
 When every He looks out for a She,
 And lovers are standing by;
 When every Bill may get his Jill,
 And every Jack his Joan,
 And through life may trip it, trip it,
 Trip it—trip it, up and down."

(*spoken*) Love is a lottery, and marriage, like coach-horses, go best in couples.

Fol de rol lol, &c.

MARY. " Whenever you marry, soon you get sorry
 When poverty hasn't a pound,
 Hearts 'll be sinking when no money's chinking,
 And love soon fall to the ground.
 Advice I give to each fond lass—
 Say " No " to every man.
 And curtsey, curtsey, curtsey,
 Curtsey—curtsey to the grass.

REUBEN. (*spoken*) No, means yes.

MARY. But I mean it, I say plainly, yes—when you've a coin in your pocket and a crust in your cupboard.

REUBEN. Ah, you're a——

MARY. A what?

REUBEN. Why a———Fol de rol lol, &c.

REUBEN. One kiss, dear Mary.

MARY. No, quite contrary,
 Such conduct sure would be.

REUBEN. No harm in that, a kiss so pat,
 Should be a bachelor's fee.
 Were you to give me kisses three,

MARY. You'd want as many more.

REUBEN. Yes—I'd thank you for your kindness—kindness,
 If you'd make it half a score.

Fol de rol lol, &c.

REUBEN. Then come let us marry.

MARY. No! longer we'll tarry,
 For patience a virtue must be ;

We'd better be single, than misery mingle.

REUBEN. Well then, for the present we're free;

MARY. Well, there's my hand—a bargain sealing.

REUBEN. On your lips, dear girl.

MARY. No, that would be stealing—stealing
 The kisses you asked before.

Fol de rol lol, &c.

Exeunt.

Enter from mill, IVAN IRONLINK and SPARBOLT.

IRON. (R.) He's on board, you say?

SPAR. (L.) Yes, concealed in the hold, and when the crew have left to dance at the skipper's wedding, there'll only be a boy on board, and we shall easily get rid of him—and then good night the pretty Alice!

IRON. That's well—don't be seen. (*shouts are heard without, the church bells ring a peal*) The crew and guests!—away with you.

SPARBOLT *goes off behind mill, as a party of SAILORS enter, L. U. E with VILLAGE LASSES, the SAILORS have white favours and come shouting—BEN, ALICE, and CHRISTIAN COMFORT enter from cottage, dressed for the bridal.*

SAILOR. Three cheers for the Captain! (*the SAILORS give three cheers*)

Enter REUBEN, with large favour and two cans of smoking grog—MARY with tray of drinking cups.

REUBEN. And a little one in for his wife. (*the SAILORS repeat the cheers*) Here, bite your names in this (*giving grog*) and if you don't like it, you are not the men I take you for—right racy rum—luscious lemons—lovely loaf sugar—everything strong but the water, and that's only weakened by boiling—Here, stop, stop! are you all loaded? now then, fire away when I give the word—make ready—"The Bride and Bridegroom"—fire!

OMNES. (*they all drink*) Long life to the bride and bridegroom.

BEN. I know and feel I am at the flood-tide of joy and happiness—may you all feel as I now do, when you cast anchor in the bay of matrimony, may you light upon a craft as fair and true as the trim frigate that clings in confidence to him who loves her, dearer than his life; so here, messmates, let me give you a toast—"Health, happiness and true-hearted wives to you all."

(*SAILORS shout—the church bells ring—the VILLAGE LASSES throw flowers before ALICE and BEN*)

REUBEN. (*from church door*) His reverence won't be here for these ten minutes, so Mr. Benjamin Bolt you've just got time to give us one of your sentimental yarns.

BEN. Why, Reuben, you look as jolly as Rollicking Rowlover, the skipper of the Roun'about Brig I sailed on board of, bound for the Bermudas. My dear eyes, he was the chap to carry on—it was grog morning, noon and night with him. He kept his log on the head of a rum puncheon—slept and kept his dog watches with his mouth upon the vent peg, and wouldn't trade for any freight that wasn't cargoed with rum, sugar, lemons, and hot water; he pickled his junk in rum—soaked his biscuit in rum—rum'd his coffee—rum'd his tea—took his plum duff with rum sauce—swore as he lived by rum, he'd die by rum, and so he did, for he was found one morning's watch with his head down and his heels up, in an empty twelve-gallon hogshead.

REUBEN. Why who'd drank the rum ?

BEN. Why the skipper had, every mortal drop of it—then turned sulky and died because there wasn't more of it.

REUBEN. What twelve gallons of rum ?

BEN. Yes, he'd take that every day after tea, and think nothing of it—well, you see it was scarcely daylight when we found him, and one of the crew took a light to look in his pocket for the ship's papers, when, my eyes, the moment the candle came alongside him, off he went over the sides in a blue flame, leaving nothing behind him but the nails of his shoes, them I suppose the rum couldn't touch—but what say you to a rattling dance ? Alice and I will foot it away as merry as a ship's crew when the boatswain pipes for pay-day.

General Dance—at the end COLIN rushes on, L.

COLIN. Oh, Mr. Bolt! Mr. Bolt!

BEN. Why what's the matter, mate ?—you look as white as a storm-bleached mainsail.

COLIN. Your sloop—

BEN. What of her?

COLIN. She's on fire!

BEN. Quick ! to the boats! we may save her yet !

COLIN. Every boat on the beach is staved ; there's been malice in it, for she's on fire in different parts of her. (*a loud explosion is heard—all look in L. direction.*)

BEN. What's that ?

SAILOR rushes on, L. U. E.

SAILOR. There's not a timber of your sloop left. Had you gun-powder on board ?

BEN. Not an ounce, as I'm a living man!

SAILOR. Then some devil's put it on board for you; that last report scattered to the broad waters every timber of your trim-built sloop.

BEN. Wrecked in sight of port! The savings of years scattered on the waste of waters—hard lines—hard lines. Who could have done this ? In word or deed, I never injured man ; I can't speak what I think, but I feel the time will come, when I shall know the actor of this deed. (*ALICE falls on her father's shoulder*) Don't droop, Alice, don't droop, it's only putting off our happiness for a longer day; it shall go hard but I'll earn a sloop again, and win my pretty Alice—spite of the secret foe that for the present founders the happiness of Ben Bolt and the bright-eyed lass that loves him.

(*BEN looks with meaning toward IRONLINK*)

A picture of sorrow is formed as the drop descends to the air of " Ben Bolt."

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The same Scene as First Act. The mill-wheel broken and stopped, the Cottage much dilapidated, porch broken, and the withered roses spread about in confusion, the whole appearance of the scene that of neglect and desolation.—Moonlight.*

As the curtain rises, from the orchestra is played a movement imitating the hoot of the owl; an owl is seen to fly from the mill to the spire of the church and pass behind it; a pause—and then the air of "Ben Bolt" is played.

IRONLINK *is seen to enter from a portion of the wall of the mill, which revolves on the principle of a secret panel—he looks cautiously round and then closes the entrance.*

IRON. Burrowing like a rat don't suit my constitution ; I like the open air and the bright warm sun, not prowling about like an owl in the moonlight; I've had no luck after that affair of Bolt's. I've been a marked man ever since the burning of the sloop—although they couldn't prove it against me, they were satisfied in their own minds that it was done through my means, and every neighbour and customer cut me ; the mill went to decay—not that I care much for that, for thanks to my other profession, the loss of trade won't destroy my worldly prospects—but I've been even with them ; and if Bolt should ever come back from his cruisings, he'll find desolate home and a cold-hearted welcome, and have me to thank for both. None of the village for a moment think I'm living in the very heart of them—they give me credit for being far away; no no, I'm among them yet, and trust to make more mischief. There's no one stirring—I'll to the beach and plant the signal.

Goes cautiously off, L. U. E. The air of Ben Bolt is renewed and REUBEN enters with a large quantity of driftwood on his shoulders, R. U. E.

REUBEN. Porter's work done and small parcels carefully delivered. This is the reward of industry—I work hard and am half starved when I led an idle life, I was well paid and well fed for doing nothing—now it's quite the reverse, I do everything and get nothing for it. Mary—Mary! (*knocking at door of cottage*)

MARY. (*within*) Is that you, Reuben ?

REUBEN. Yes, my love!

MARY. (*within*) Stop, till I've put  baby to bed; it's very cross, poor little thing—it's cutting it's teeth.

REUBEN. I'm sorry for that, for if we go on in this way, he won't have much practice for his teeth when he gets them.

Enter MARY from cottage.

MARY. Oh, husband, you look tired and fagged—where have you been?

REUBEN. Down to the beach, looking out for squalls, after last night's storm; a vessel went ashore on the head rock, and with the rising tide she broke up.

MARY. And the crew ?

REUBEN. 'Tis feared have all perished! some of our neighbours were lucky and picked up trifles worth having—I've had my usual luck, that's the only trifle I've picked up! (*pointing to drift wood*)

MARY. Do you call that a trifle?

REUBEN. In value, though not in weight. Never mind, my dear, it will be a valuable adjunct to our domestic circle, it will do to keep the pot a-boiling.

MARY. Ah, Reuben, Reuben, times have changed with us since the death of our friend! Ah, poor Alice! her loss broke her father's heart; and then such a fate for the poor girl—drowned in the sight of her own home—for when the ferry boat upset, her hat and cloak was found in the stream by the old mill yonder.

REUBEN. But the strangest part of the story is, that the body was never recovered!

MARY. Not at all strange! the receding tide doubtless bore it out to sea; the old gentleman to his dying day had but one opinion, and that was of the certain death of his daughter—or why did he erect a granite slab to her memory in the old churchyard?

REUBEN. Oh, Mary, my dear, don't talk of churchyards. What have you got for supper?

MARY. Nothing!

REUBEN. Well, let's have some of that then!

MARY. At any rate, very little.

REUBEN. Well, lately, we've not been accustomed to much, so I'll take a little of your little, and live in hopes to make the little more. We ought to do better—we try hard for it—we are freeholders, thanks to the old gentleman's bounty, who, when he died, left us his personal estate, cottage, copy books, canes, and cabbage garden.

MARY. The cabbages flourish!—

REUBEN. Much better than we do. I'm sure it isn't for the want of trying, for I've turned my hand to almost everything, but everything seemed to slip through my fingers. I do verily believe, if I was to turn butcher, people would cease to eat meat, and vegetable diet become general.

MARY. Aye, we've been very unlucky since our marriage, we get nothing round us—

REUBEN. But children, and they come as fast as our misfortunes.

MARY. They are blessings.

REUBEN. Real blessings to mothers.

MARY. The dears!

REUBEN. There's no denying the expense.

MARY. Do you regret the expense?

REUBEN. Certainly not, I shouldn't regret it if it was double, it's not a regret, it's a fear I have.

MARY. Fear?

REUBEN. Yes, that we shall have more mouths than food to put in them.

MARY. Well, never mind, Reuben; Time, they say, will mend everything.

REUBEN. Will it? Well then, I wish it would try its hand on my shoes. I ought to have gone to sea with Ben.

MARY. I couldn't part with you then, as we were just married.

REUBEN. Ah, you wouldn't so much mind it now.

MARY. Not for a week or two—but Ben Bolt's been away four years, and were you to leave me for two years, I should fancy—

REUBEN. Yourself a widow, and look out for another Reuben; but come along, wife, let us take in the wood and make a good fire—here, here's a good log to begin with. (*takes from the wood, part of the head gear of a boat, on which is written, "Antelope"*) Holla what's this? "Antelope,"—why that's the name of the ship in which Ben went out, as first mate, when he left the village, after the loss of his sloop—

MARY. That was burnt, by Ironlink, if I'm a living woman—although he managed to avoid the law, he couldn't save himself from a wise Providence, who, in its own good time, punished the wretch—look at the roofless house, the broken wheel, himself a wanderer—are not these certain signs of a judgment upon him?

REUBEN. My mind misgives me; if it should be the ship, the chances are, that poor Ben, like his promised bride, has found a grave in the bosom of his native waters. (*"Ben Bolt" is played as MARY and REUBEN enter cottage, bearing the board and looking upon it in sorrow*) Poor Ben, poor Ben!

Enter IRONLINK, L. U. E.

IRON. I've planted the signal, and when the moon goes down the lugger can launch her boats and run her cargo in safety to my mill, and that's about the last place the authorities would look for as a depot for contraband articles. I'm playing a safe game—another run or two and I'm a made man, and then I'll really quit the neighbourhood, and in a distant land, under an assumed name, all remembrance of Ironlink, the smuggling miller, will be buried in oblivion. I wonder what this is I picked up on the beach. (*takes out an old-fashioned pocket book, opens it*) Notes! ten, twenty! fifty, hundreds—why it's a fortune, near upon a thousand pounds. Who the devil could this have belonged to? Is there any name? What, Ben Bolt!—ha, ha! then he must have gone down in last night's storm, and the waves have washed into my hands the property he has accumulated for the benefit of his heirs. Well, I'll take care of it for'em. This settles the business; to-night sees me off; Levi, the Jew dealer, will buy the stock of silks and lace, now in the mill, and clear all at his own venture—and then good-bye to this part of the world for ever, I trust.

BEN BOLT. (*heard without, R. U. E.*) Ahoy!

IRON. Ha! That voice—the devil! I reckon without my host; that's a sound that brings mischief with it, if I mistake not—I must play a cunning game here.

BEN. (*heard nearer*) Ahoy!

IRON. Nearer! now to my hiding place.

IRONLINK *opens the secret door in wall and exits as BEN BOLT enters, (his appearance is rough and travel worn), R. U. E.*

BEN. Ship ahoy! Why, how's this? Still water, and not a sail

in sight. I should have liked to pick up a messmate, and overhauled the ship's papers of the past, to have known how all fared with my dear—dear Alice. For four years love and fortune has smiled upon me and to lose it all at the very harbour's mouth of home and happiness, seems the hardest knot in the tangled hank of life's log. There's the cottage; it don't somehow look so trim and ship-shape as it did—the porch is broken—the sweet flowers that twined around it, withered. Ah, well, the anxious heart that keeps the long-watch in grief and sorrow grows careless of all save the port it looks and longs for. The mill too, its roof-tree bare, its wheel broken; and all is cold and quiet as a dead calm—well, heaven forgive me if I joy at what I look upon, its owner did me deep wrong, and I must exult at the judgment that waits upon the evil-doer. But avast, I feel as if an ice-bolt was coiled around my heart—desolation here— (*pointing to cottage*) there—and all around. Has death boarded the bark of the loved one I left behind?

MARY *is heard within to sing the following verse of " Ben Bolt."*

Oh, don't you remember the wood, Ben Bolt,
Near the green sunny slope of the hill,
Where oft we have sung 'neath its wide spreading shade,
And kept time to the click of the mill ?
The mill has gone to decay, Ben Bolt,
And quiet now reigns all around;
See the old rustic porch, with its roses so sweet,
Lies scattered and fallen to the ground.

BEN *during the melody staggers to the porch, and towards the end of the song sinks on his knees, and gathering some of the withered roses, presses them to his lips.*

BEN. Her song, but not with her voice. Oh, Alice, Alice, has the lead line of hope run to its last coil and fathomed in the grave? I'll know the worst at once, I can't bear this beating about, better every timber break up upon the rock of certainty, than live in a sea of gloomy doubt. (*advancing to the door*) Christian, Christian Comfort. (*at he nears the door the song is renewed and he pauses*)

Oh, don't you remember the school, Ben Bolt,
And the master so kind and so true,
And the little nook by the clear running brook,
Where we gathered the flowers as they grew ?
O'er the schoolmaster's grave grows the grass, Ben Bolt,
(BEN *staggers from the door*)
And the running little brook is now dry ;
And of all the friends that were schoolmates then,
There remains but you Ben, and I.

BEN. Oh, how every note of the melody sounds to my heart like the boding scream of the sea bird, that tells of storm and tempest. Is there truth in the words I hear? And has the good old man made his last voyage and reached the haven of peace and rest? If so may a seaman's prayer help to hallow the turf that covers him. But Alice—Alice ! (*song renewed—BEN stands fixed as the words are sung*)

Oh, don't you remember, sweet Alice, Ben Bolt,
 Sweet Alice, with eyes hazel brown ?
 She wept with delight when you gave her a smile,
 And trembled with fear at your frown;
 In the old churchyard in the valley, Ben Bolt,
 In a corner obscure and alone,
 They have fitted a slab of granite so grey,
 And sweet Alice lies under the stone.

(BEN staggers to churchyard)

BEN. Dead—dead! No—no ! Scarce launched on life's stream
 and to founder on her first voyage—ere sun or storm had time to
 kiss her fair white canvas or bleach the brightness of her eyes. In
 the churchyard—I'll look, though Death should dwell upon the
 look; I can't see—mist and spray is gathering round me—the dark
 dead reckoning is about me—there, I've dashed it off! (*moon rises*)
 and now one look, even if it's the last on my life's log! (*the moon*
beams full on the grey granite) And there, as plain as the compass
 I read, "Alice!" Alice! Alice! (*falls on his knees and buries his*
face in his hands)

*At this moment IRONLINK appears at secret door, and at the same
 time a small party of SMUGGLERS enter with kegs and bales*

IRON. (*perceiving BEN BOLT*) A spy! secure him !

*A cloak is thrown over BEN and he is hurried off at secret entrance
 and as the stage is clear REUBEN appears in night dress with
 candle, at cottage door.*

REUBEN. Who's there? Does anybody want anything ? I thought
 I heard somebody hanging about my door. If it's a case of robbery
 and they think to pick anything up, I can tell them it's a hopeless
 affair, for there isn't even a bone left to pick, if it's any poor devil
 that wants a shelter, he shall have it; and though I've got nothing
 to give him but cabbages, he can have plenty of them, with a hearty
 welcome for a sauce! (*he advances from door of cottage*) I don't see
 anybody—I must have been mistaken, and yet I could have sworn
 while the song was singing I heard some one close to the door, the
 young one made Mary sing it, though for my part it always makes
 me melancholy by thinking of Ben and poor Alice. (*by this time*
he has reached that part of the wall of the mill near the secret entrance)
 I think we have to thank you, Mr. Miller, for all the mischief. I
 only wish I could have the pleasure of meeting him, I wouldn't
 scruple to tell him what I thought of him. I'd say— (*he uncon-*
sciously presses against the wall and it revolves with him, and he dis-
appears, but is heard to shout within) Mary! Mary !

MARY *rushes on in night dress.*

MARY. What's the matter, Reuben ? Where are you ?

REUBEN. (*within*) Here my dear; caught like a rat in a trap.

MARY. Oh ! come out!

REUBEN, I can't; but I can hear voices—I think there's something

up that shouldn't be. I must hide myself—they're coming this way! You go and rouse the village and bring it here! hush, they are coming.

Three CHILDREN rush on in their night dresses, shouting " Mother! Mother!" the biggest CHILD has the BABY in her arms, and in the confusion the scene closes.

SCENE II.—*A Vaulted Passage beneath the Mill.*

Enter IRONLINK with BEN and SMUGGLERS, L. 1 E.

IRON. Lift the covering from his face and let him look upon his friends. *(they remove the cloak)*

BEN. Ironlink !—the lubber that worked me evil in my happiest hour.

IRON. Aye, and the bitterest foe that ever crossed your path, from the moment you became my rival.

BEN. (L.) Rivals no longer ! Her we both contended for, keeps the drear dark watch in that port where life's anchor finds its last resting place.

IRON. Ha, ha, ha!

BEN. Brute! If I wasn't lashed and shackled by the swabs around me, I'd knock the teeth down your foul, unnatural throat, and choke the cold laugh in the heart that utters it!

IRON. Ah, you'd do great things, doubtless, but we'll not give you a chance of doing them.

BEN. Why am I seized and treated like a prisoner ? What have I done to deserve this treatment ?

IRON. Crossed my purpose—besides, by this time you have learned who and what I am, and, with that knowledge, it wouldn't be safe to let you loose.

BEN. You're no more than I ever thought you—you never looked like an honest man, your shrinking eye ever quailed before mine.

IRON. You don't know half you owe me.

BEN. Oh, I can pretty well guess it!

IRON. I burnt your sloop !

BEN. That's no news; and harkye, mate, if ever we meet, and I feel we shall, when you haven't this devil's crew around you,  take the insurance money out of your black and skulking carcass.

IRON. (R., *presenting pistol*) Another movement and I fire!

BEN. Oh, fire away, I've nothing now to live for—I should take the bullet as a mercy that robs me of the number of my mess—all that linked me to life is severed, and to be moored alongside her, would be a haven of happiness to an almost broken-hearted tar.

IRON. No ! I'll spare you.

BEN. Oh, don't give yourself so much trouble—you don't look one of the sparing sort!

IRON. Rail on, I've got that will pay back all your foul reproach—that which will turn your proud heart and bend your stubborn knee to kneel and pray to him you now revile and scorn!

BEN. Bend my knee to you! Ask the firm rock to bow and bend to the lashing waters that break in foam upon its stone-ribbed side—ask the loud gale that sweeps o'er the bending mast to stay its fury and spare the labouring bark—ask the opening billows to close their greedy mouths and save from death the sinking mariner—ask the ravenous shark to pass its prey and let the struggling swimmer reach his port of safety—when these are asked and granted, I'll bend my knee to you, but not before!

IRON. Well, time will prove. You little dream of the power I possess to break your boasting spirit. Listen—in a few hours we leave this place, and I trust for ever; you, if I do spare, we leave behind, lashed and helpless, to starve and rot; and to add to your heart's deep agony, one fleeting glimpse of happiness shall pass before your almost maddened eyes to make death more bitter.

Exit IRONLINK, R., with SMUGGLERS—leaving BEN bound

BEN. I'm laden gunwale-deep in misery, and very little more freightage will sink me; the only regret I feel is, that I am to be broken up by a lubber like that. Heaven help me, I've no wish to beat about without compass, bolt, or stay, to bind me to the land that once looked fair and green, when my poor Alice was the star I steered by—now she's gone, the cable that bound me to life is every strand of it severed. Alice, poor dear Alice, I could cry like a child, but that my bursting heart hasn't the stowage left of a single tear!

Song without—" Ben Bolt,"—a line or two of the verse " Don't you remember the school, Ben Bolt ?" is sung.

BEN. What's that? Has fancy taken a berth in my brain, does madness picture to my wandering senses the sounds and memories of the past? (*another line or two sung*) Avast! avast! in mercy hold on for a moment longer—'tis the spirit of the dear dead Alice calling on me, and I here lashed and helpless, doomed to die like a dog. No, no, I'll burst my lashings, if I perish in the struggle! (*makes a great effort and gets an arm at liberty—during this the song or melody is going on—with his knife, which is hanging round his neck, he cuts the other lashings*) Afloat—afloat! at liberty—at liberty!

During this the song has been sung piano or forte as the business has gone on—it now sounds nearer as if in adjoining room—song nearer.

Alice! Alice! let your spirit-voice cheer your broken-hearted Ben. Alice! (*a scream is heard as if from the next room*) Ah! there's sound of life in that pipe; is there no plank in this old hulk my desperate hand can rend? (*goes up*) Not one; all taut and firm the oak they grew from: ah! there's one that s as if decay was in the heart of it—I'll tear it down, even if it's top timbers fall and crush me.

Tears down three or four planks, through which ALICE darts—BEN staggers and looks upon her in doubt and wonder.

Alice. Ben !

BEN. Avast! hold hard for one moment—don't speak! let me look at you for an instant—for I feel the sound of your voice will bring  a flood of joy to my heart, that it will tear the ropes from its very ring-bolts. Alice! Alice! now speak, if you are life I look upon!

ALICE. Ben ! dear Ben !

BEN. (*rushes to her and embraces*) Hurrah ! hurrah! she lives ! the trim and taut frigate sails on life's fair stream, a bark of beauty and brightness. But how's this? the name upon the stone—who can square the yards of this mystery ?

ALICE. He who did the wrong was Ironlink—he it was that crossed our loves, and worked an evil destiny on both—drove you from your home and ruined mine; his wicked spirit formed a devilish scheme to get me in his power—o'erthrew the ferry boat and cast me in the stream, and when I struggled on the waters, snatched me from them to bear me here, where by threats he thought to bend me to his will, and force me to become his wife; heaven has saved me—you are here, Ben, and I am safe !

BEN. Yes—while there's life left, I'll never leave you!

ALICE. Oh, dear Ben, let us leave this place—take me to my home—to my father!

BEN. To your father, Alice ?

ALICE. Aye, Ben, to my father, who will bless you for his child. He loves you, Ben ; but how much deeper will be his love, when he knows that by your means, I am again restored to his arms ! Oh, how happy will he be to see me—how pleasing will be my task to dry the tears his aged eyes have shed, shed for my absence! oh, we shall be so happy, Ben!

BEN. Happy!

ALICE. Aye, happy! shall we not? I'll lead my dear father to the spots he loved—sit by his side with you, Ben, and talk to him of our coming happiness—you have seen him, Ben—wept with him at fancied death ! I know, I feel his poor heart was nearly broken! my redoubled care and love shall pay him for the past. Come, Ben, let us go, there's danger while we linger here.

BEN. Alice—I—I—I can't find the heart to tell her.

ALICE. Ben, you turn from me—my father! answer me—he lives—he's in health—tell me so. You pause—he's sick, sorrowing for me—lead me to him at once.

BEN. Alice, let me bear you from this place, harboured in my arms, no one shall take you from me.

ALICE. My father!

BEN. A few hours will give me a husband's right, and then I shall be your natural commander! your friend! your protector!

ALICE. Ben, my father!—my father! does he live ?

BEN. The best built ship will sometimes go on shore, and the stoutest built bark can't last for ever! and when we leave this life's anchorage, we leave it with the hope of cruising in that latitude where storm and tempest never come.

ALICE. I see it all—your looks tell me more certain than your

words—my father! my father!—dead! dead! (*falls in BEN'S arms overcome by her feelings*)

BEN Alice! Alice, my girl, look up—poor girl! poor girl the grief is too great to bear; but we mustn't linger here, I must make sail out of this devil's port before the black crew bear down upon us.

They exeunt as REUBEN enters in his night dress

REUBEN. Well, I've got into a good thing at last! if I haven't got a situation under Government, I've got a situation under ground. I'm caught in a decided human rat trap, dropped into it without the remotest idea of a nibble! Well, I'm in and I must get out. I hope my dear wife will gather the neighbours, for the sake herself and the babbies. I know there's a screw loose, and the chances are, I shall be well paid if I can tighten it. Oh, here's situation for the father of a family! Oh, how cold I do feel! this place is a regular ice well; if I stay here much longer I shall be a block of real Wenham. I have it—I've been used to making *shifts* all my life, I'll see if I can't make a *toga*, (*tears three holes in blanket, puts his head and arms through each, and struts about*) Now I'm all right! I wonder where this leads to! I musn't venture to ask, but follow my nose and keep my head out of mischief.

Exit,

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the Mill. Rather neatly furnished, cradle on one side, fireplace on the other, poker in the fire.*

SPARBOLT *discovered.*

SPAR. Well, all's square. I've packed up the bales of silk and cards of lace—everything is ready; boats on the beach, round the rock, on the bight of the bay—in an hour or so it will be high water and we on board the lugger, she can run out, and all as right as heart can wish. (*looks on cradle*) That's a *domestic* article I shall have no more need for, the last Mrs. Sparbolt left the arms of her disconsolate husband and bolted with a *marine*; well, there was one thing about her desertion that calmed my outraged feelings—she took the baby with her. Now then, to Ironlink, for further orders.

Exit,

Enter REUBEN, cautiously, R.

REUBEN. Well, where am I now? I've seen nothing living yet—oh, how cold I do feel wandering about this damp building. This seems the best room in the house, certainly the warmest I met with yet. I declare, an excellent fire; I'll take the liberty to warm my toes. (*sits by the fire*) I'll poke his fire! (*pokes the fire—at this moment a murmur of voices are heard*) Hollo! company coming! I'm afraid I shall be thought intruding; I'll be off. Hollo! they are coming just the way I want to go! Ah! there's *another* door—locked and bolted. I wish I could bolt—where the devil shall I go? (*runs about—sees cradle*) A cradle! I wonder if it will fit me—never mind, if it's a little tight I mustn't mind.

Jumps into cradle and covers himself up, as IRONLINK and SMUGGLERS enter with BEN and ALICE, L.

IRON.(L.) Do you think we keep so bad a look-out, as to let you leave until it suits our purpose. And after all I've ventured, think you'll suffer the girl to leave me?

ALICE. (to BEN) Save me! Save me!

BEN. I will, or sink with you, my lass.

IRON. Is all prepared for our departure?

SPAR. All! I've signalled the lugger, and all's ready to heave anchor the moment the boats reach her.

IRON. Then all's well; and now, sir, you must make up your mind to sail with us, and if we're overhauled with you on board us, there is not one of the crew but will swear you are the skipper of the craft you sail on board.

BEN. Psha! I laugh at a threat like that—I have those who sailed with me on board the Antelope that can tell of my whereabouts for these four years past!

IRON. And where will you seek their evidence?—from the bosom of the waters, fathoms deep? Except yourself, there isn't one of the crew saved.

BEN. A lie, mate! All were saved—passengers and crew. I shall slip my cable, mate, out of your lubberly hands before you make the port you sail for!

IRON. Tear her from his arms!—yet stay one moment, that I may tell him how complete is my triumph. You deem you've lost in the storm the fortune that you toiled for—'twas saved, and is here in my hands! 'Tis mine—the wrecker Ironlink's! I found it on the beach, washed from a bark that bore no living soul on board her—you know the law of custom makes it mine—behold it!

Holds up the pocket-book and is near the cradle—REUBEN seizes it and jumps from the cradle to the side of BEN and ALICE, seizing the red-hot poker from the fire.

REUBEN. Take it Ben, and stick to it like a brick!

IRON. Ah! down with them!

REUBEN. Oh! but look out for squalls! (*flourishing poker*)

BEN. Heaven has sent us a chance for liberty—we must make a running fight for it. Come, Alice, our case is desperate, but it's for more than life we venture.

REUBEN *whirls round the poker, the SMUGGLERS retreat, BEN and ALICE rush off, REUBEN follows, the SMUGGLERS in chase—the stage is cleared during the melee.*

SCENE IV.—*The same as first of Act—but Daybreak.*

BEN enters from Mill with ALICE on his arm.

BEN. Look up, my girl, don't droop, don't sink—we've passed through the breakers, and have made the open sea. Up, girl, up, we've left mischief astern, and there's hope for us yet!

ALICE. Oh, Ben, I feel I shall sink even here; the spirit that sustained me within, seems to forsake me now.

REUBEN *rushes on, and closing the door, places the poker through handle of it, the PURSUERS are heard battering the door.*

REUBEN. There my friends, the poker will keep them in for a bit. Come on, Ben, and the devil take the hindmost. (*crash*)

The door is burst open and the SMUGGLERS rush on at this moment
MARY *enters, with SAILORS of the Preventive Service who present at SMUGGLERS.*

PREVENTIVE OFFICER. It's useless to contend, we have taken your lugger and you are now our prisoners.

ALICE. Saved! Saved!

BEN. (*to IRONLINK*) I say, mate, you've not made a clear passage this time—your respectable firm is brought up with a round turn. My friend Reuben has done your business for you.

PREVENTIVE OFFICER. Yes, as it is to him we are indebted for the information, by his wife bringing intelligence of the smuggler haunt, his share of the forfeited stores will be a pretty considerable sum.

REUBEN. Say you so, then I shall retire from public life, and continue to cultivate my cabbages.

BEN. And thanks to you, Reuben, I've the means to make Alice happy, in the home she loves. I'll rebuild the old porch, plant fresh flowers, and if I can cast the line and find deep water, to sail with a fair breeze, fanned by your good wishes, I shall make port and cast anchor, a happy and contented Ben Bolt.

REUBEN. Don't refuse him, for the sake of _____

ALICE. Alice _____

MARY. Mary _____

REUBEN. (*bringing on the CHILDREN*) And the babbies.

Picture. Curtain falls to the air of "Ben Bolt."

Curtain.

* * *The Provincial right of performing "Ben Bolt" is the property of Thomas Hailes Lacy.*

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