

THE  
FIELD OF  
FORTY FOOTSTEPS.

A DRAMA,

IN THREE  ACTS.

BY  
PERCY FARREN,

*Author of "The, Young King," &c. &c. &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,  
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,  
LONDON.

*First Performed at the Tottenham Street Theatre.*

## Characters.

		Surrey, 1832.
Sir ARTHUR MATCHLOWE		Mr. BALLS.
GEOFFREY MATCHLOWE		Mr. C. HILL.
SIR NICHOLAS VERE		Mr. DIBDIN PITT.
GOLIAH BAREBONES		Mr. ROGERS.
PETER PIPKIN		Mr. VALE.
GENERAL FAIRFAX		Mr. G. ALMAR.
JONATHAN HOMESPUN		Mr. TILBURY.
HENRY ( <i>Duke of Gloucester</i> )		Miss BODEN.
SERGEANT		Mr. LEE.
CORPORAL		Mr. BANNISTER.
<i>Soldiers, &amp;c.</i>		
LADY VERE		Mrs. YOUNG.
FRANCES		Mrs. WILKINSON.
ROSE DOWNRIGHT		Miss VINCENT.
MABEL DONAVAN		Mrs. VALE.
SUSAN HOMESPUN		Miss JORDAN.
EGYPTIAN WOMAN		Miss NICHOL.

## Costumes.

FAIRFAX—Buff coat, corslet, trunk breeches, high black boots, gauntlets, close-cut hair, moustache, steel helmet of the time.

SIR ARTHUR—Handsome cavalier suit, long hair, slouched hat and feather, ruff, boots and spurs, breastplate.

PRINCE HENRY—Plain velvet tunic, dark stockings, cap.

GEOFFREY—Dark tunic coat, steel breastplate, trunk breeches black boots, close-cut hair, plain high-crowned felt hat.

SIR NICHOLAS—Doublet, trunks, and cloak, grey silk hose, buff shoes, grey hair.

PETER—*1st.* Long black gown and steeple-crowned hat. *2nd.* Neat livery shape, boots.

GOLIAH—Black tight shape, steel gorget, black cropped wig, high steeple-crowned hat.

CLERGYMAN—White gown, grey hair.

JONATHAN—Peasant's woollen suit.

LADY VERE—Black velvet open dress, caul cap, white beads.

FRANCES—*1st.* Light satin dress of the time. *2nd.* Thick veil. *3rd.* White satin bridal dress, &c.

ROSE—Black velvet body, red stuff petticoat, apron.

MABEL—Grey stuff dress, apron, caul cap.

UNKNOWN FEMALE—Dark robes, pale face, and dishevelled hair.

SUSAN— Plain stuff dress.

THE  
FIELD OF FORTY FOOTSTEPS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in a house of mean appearance in St. Giles's.—Door, R.C.—A recess concealed by a curtain, L.C.—Fire-place, R.—Table, chairs, lamp on table.*

MABEL *discovered, looking at an hour glass.*

MABEL. The last sand has run, and yet he comes not. I trust no danger has befallen him : yet Arthur Matchlowe, once known, would be worth a hundred broad pieces to the knaves who had the luck to catch him. Hark!—No!—perhaps it was the young stranger called, yet I left him sleeping soundly. Poor child ! he seems but sickly ! I wonder who he is ?—some one, no doubt, very dear to my lord : aye, and of consequence, too, or I should not have been charged so strictly to keep watch over him. Heaven knows his troubles have begun early !

SERGEANT. (*knocking without*) Open, in the name of the Commonwealth !

MABEL. If he comes now he's lost ! Who's there ?

SERG. Open quickly, or we force the door.

MABEL. Well, I suppose the Commonwealth will not give me a new one if you do. (*opens the door*)

*Enter* SERGEANT, CORPORAL, *and* SOLDIERS.

—Hoity toity ! how long has it been law for people's doors to be broken, when every brawling fellow bids them open in the name of the Commonwealth ? Now, what do you and the Commonwealth want with Mabel Donovan ?

SERG. We have authority.

MABEL. Yes, or your manners would not have gained you admission.

SERG. Why is your light burning at this unseasonable hour?

MABEL. I cry you mercy! things have come to a pretty pass in England, when an old woman can't go to bed with a candle burning, without the Commonwealth sending an officer to clap an extinguisher on it.

SERG. Answer!—why is that light burning when the midnight bell has tolled?

MABEL. My child is sick. Will that answer suffice?

SERG. Why, I don't know but it will. It's a mother's duty to attend her child—Giles Hawthorn is not the man to prevent it—but the malignant, Arthur Matchlowe, has been seen in the neighbourhood, and a hundred pounds is a great quickener to a poor man's vigilance. Where does that door lead to? (*pointing to door L.H.*)

MABEL. To the rear of the house. Stay, it is seldom used, and the hinges are stiff. Let me get the light.

*She opens door—ARTHUR enters in cloak—She blows out the light as he appears.*

—Plague on the wind, it has extinguished the light. I'll go and rekindle it.

*As she goes to fire, ARTHUR retreats stealthily behind the curtain.*

—Now, all is right—you may venture down.

SERG. (*taking light*) See if any one be lurking in the passage.

*Exit SOLDIER, and presently returns, D.L.*

—Hast thou more outlets to thy dwelling?

MABEL. None. Shall I draw these bed curtains? Yet I must forewarn you my boy's fever is pestilential, and all but his mother have left the house in fear.

SERG. Oh, don't trouble yourself! we're quite satisfied; you're a good subject, no doubt—we will report you so. Good night, or rather good morning, old lady.

*Exeunt SOLDIERS, D.R.C.—MABEL closes the door.*

ARTHUR. (*advances L.H.*) A timely retreat, my valiant night-watch. Now, trusty Mabel, what of thy charge?

MABEL. He takes on mightily at your not returning at the appointed time—'twas with difficulty I prevented his going forth to seek you. I should have let him, but from thy caution I dreaded danger, though what danger I know not.

ARTHUR. Then thus far learn, good Mabel: better that this rebellious city became a second Golgotha, than the life of that fair boy should be perilled. Now, by the royal martyr's soul, these crop-eared knaves would indeed have a full glut of vengeance, did hemp or iron bind his tender limbs. Sooner than see that day, my own dagger should—Pshaw! I prate like a half-mad brawler! not like one charged with a serious and dangerous trust. But now tell me of my dear Frances—hast thou seen her? is she well? speaks she of me?

MABEL. She has been ill, both in health and spirits, during your absence on the continent. Sad changes have happened—your estate has been estreated as they call it, and her father, Sir Nicolas Vere, has bought it of the government.

ARTHUR. But he's a loyal subject and an honest man, although his late city habits have taught him caution; and he will, no doubt, restore it to one who is the accepted husband of his child.

MABEL. I have my doubts. Whoever rules, Sir Nicholas will keep his own, and as much of other people's as he can, depend on't. Leave the old scrivener alone for that! He's in favour with the usurper, lends money to the Round-heads, and they do say your brother Geoffrey is go-between in the matter.

ARTHUR. Brother! Never shall my lips exchange with him such words of kindred. What! shall the high pure blood within the veins of Arthur Matchlowe stoop to claim brotherhood with a regicide and apostate? As my father's acknowledged, though unlawful son, I had not shunned him; but the heart which breaks alike its faith to earth and heaven, meets no responsive throb within a true man's breast—the hand which struck a monarch's life should only grasp a traitor's sword to guard a traitor's head!

MABEL. The worst news is yet to come. Whether Sir Nicolas Vere likes your brother Geoffrey, I know not; but

he is an artful, wily-spoken man, and pays court alike to daughter as to father—'tis said he aspires to fill thy place there, too.

ARTHUR. What, my Frances—my affianced bride join faith with him? What ho! my horse! this instant will I confront him!

MABEL. And doom thyself to the scaffold! What's to become of the poor boy?—must his blood flow also?

ARTHUR. His blood!—thanks good Mabel, for recalling me to my duty. His blood! the best of that has been already shed;—the best in English veins should gladly stream to save one precious drop of his. Marvel not, good Mabel, I further dare not trust thee—remember, that boy to me is life,—need I say more? I must commune with the boy—call him forth.

MABEL. This secret chamber has answered well our purpose; it needs a cunning eye to discover it. (*raises trap*)

HENRY *appears*.

ARTHUR. Henry! Henry!

HENRY. My preserver!

ARTHUR. My precious sacred charge!

HENRY. Where hast thou been, Arthur? I feared thy care of me had brought thee into trouble. The dame has been very good, yet still I missed you. To pass the time I tried to sing the gay old tunes I remembered in other days, but the thought of where and with whom, then came across my mind, and tears choked the notes ere my trembling lips could breathe them.

ARTHUR. My poor bereaved one!

HENRY. Then I stopped, and my dreams presented a gay bustling crowd of plumed helmets and clanking spurs,—the music swelled, and the banners waved—the trumpets sounded, and the knights rushed by. Methought in passing them their steeds had nearly thrust me down: I cried out "Father! father! save me from these men!" The shock awoke me. I stretched forth my hands, but no protecting grasp met mine—I strained my eyes, but all was black, dark, and silent. 'Twas then I felt, oh! deeply felt, I had no father now to shield me. What an ungrateful wretched boy I am! how could I for a moment

forget your kindness to me, or the many our ruin has made fatherless, too ?

ARTHUR. Courage, courage! all will yet go well. Tomorrow I depart for Worcestershire : spite of all their rewards and vigilance some true men will accompany me—I have prepared a safe retreat, where you must await the issue of the coming fight. Should it be prosperous, concealment will then be needless—if not, a retreat in France is all arranged, and I will myself bear thee to it, if I live; and rest assured, dear youth, the last of the Matchlowes will not sink nor yield, while he has a sword to cleave a rebel's helm, and breath to shout " God save the king!"

MABEL. You must be gone—day breaks, and some early stirrers are already in the streets.

ARTHUR. Now, dear sacred youth, heaven guard and speed thee !

HENRY. Farewell! farewell! although I weep, don't think I'm faint-hearted—remember me to my brother Charles ; tell him——But why give words to thee to speak of what is good, loving, and devoted ? I will pray for all your safeties.

Music.—*He kneels*—SIR ARTHUR *reverently removes his hat—Tableau, and closed in.*

SCENE II.—*Room in Matchlowe House.*

*Enter* SIR NICHOLAS, R.H.

SIR NICH. 'Tis of no use to think any longer about it! such a state of things cannot longer last—England cannot have two kings, more than a body can have two heads—the balance of power won't permit it. What, double lords, double commons! short commons, more likely. Cromwell and the Rump in England—Charles and the Crown in Scotland. I declare it's quite a toss up, heads or tails, which wins. One thing, however, is certain, I won't lose : only show me who's to govern, and there's not a more zealous subject in the land; but to imagine because the people took a fancy to the King's head that I should run the risk of losing mine—'tis ridiculous even to suppose

it—the balance of power will never last if such things are permitted. My own family, too, are enough to destroy a domestic equilibrium. My lady wife, she's for the Round-heads—all married women are fond of the levelling system. My daughter is for the Cavaliers, because when the King was in power, I gave consent to her marrying Sir Arthur Matchlowe, the son of my old friend. What of that? he's a proscribed man now;—how could I, with any degree of decency, marry her to-day and hang her husband to-morrow? which I might, perhaps, be forced to do if the Rumps keep their seats. I'm a knight now, thanks to the King and my money-bags, and I hope he may win, with all my heart; but I had rather be Nicholas Vere with a head than *Sir* Nicholas without.

*Enter ROSE DOWNRIGHT, L.H.*

—Now, what's the matter with you?

ROSE. Oh, Sir, such news! I knew it would come—I had such a dream last night.

SIR NICH. Plague on the girl! she's always dreaming! When she sleeps she dreams, when she wakes she dreams—she dreams even whilst she's talking.

ROSE. Only think, Sir! I dreamt I was at sea, and a fine tall ship was sailing towards me—that betokens relief from a distant country, so says my dream book—and what do you think, Sir? the first news I heard this morning was, "He's come! he's come! he's in England!"

SIR NICH. Who's come?—who's in England?

ROSE. The King,—he's marching to Worcester. The whole country has risen. God save the King!

SIR NICH. Hush, hush! Be as loyal as you please, only don't make so great a noise about it. I don't want to raise the people, though the King does. What packet is that?

ROSE. A despatch,—such a pretty fellow brought it, with such a tasty love-lock behind his ear.

SIR NICH. Aye, he may have something else hanging behind his ear, if he stays here much longer. (*reads*) "To our well-beloved and trusty servant, the noble Sir Nicholas Vere." Ods, bless me! A letter from His Majesty, and in his own royal hand too. "Our cause is prosperous."

Well, I always thought it would be. "Our standard crowded." To be sure it is. "We expect from thy well-known loyalty, to see thee and all thy followers with all speed at Worcester." Humph! "Till then, heaven take thee to its holy keeping, Signed, your King and friend, Charles Stuart." Ah! if heaven will only keep me till I march to Worcester, I shall live till the days of Methuselah, and without fear of starvation too.

ROSE. Well, Sir?

SIR NICH. Well?

ROSE. Shall I send Dunstan, Sir, to give orders for your march?

SIR NICH. All in good time, child. Your lady, my wife, Lady Vere, is not expected until to-morrow. It is meet I take her advice. You are no judge in matters of policy, Rose. The balance of power—do you know what the balance of power means?

ROSE. No, Sir.

SIR NICH. Why, in domestic matters it requires the wife in one scale, the husband in the other—equal weight.

ROSE. If that be the balance of power, we all know which side is likely to weigh heaviest. But consider, if the King should march without opposition (and I know he will, for I dreamt it, and my dreams always come true) you'll lose his favour for ever.

SIR NICH. Why, you must know, friend Rose, I honour King Charles as much as you do; but as for fighting for him, that's a different thing. He shall have all my good wishes for him.

ROSE. Shall he? then down with the Roundheads, and God save the King!

SIR NICH. Down with the Roundheads, and God save the— (*sees GOLIAH*) Parliament!

*Enter GOLIAH BAREBONES, L.H.*

GOLIAH. Peace under this roof! I bring thee missives from that steadfast one in the faith, Geoffrey Machlowe.

SIR NICH. A worthy friend—a worthy man. (*aside*) The biggest rogue unhung! (*reads*) "To the pious lamb in the chosen flock of the faithful, Nicholas Vere, greeting."

ROSE. (R.) Do you ever dream of rats, Sir? a sure sign of

enemies, if they come in at the door—so says my dream book.

SIR NICH. Hold your nonsense, do—I'm on matters of state. (*reads*) "The malignant Charles Stuart troubleth the land again—the sword is drawn, and all must contribute with purse and person to the general strength. The Parliament have given thee thy choice, to march to Worcester with thy followers, or send a thousand gold pieces to our coffers, for which the bond of the state will be given for payment. In Committee—Geoffrey Matchlowe, Secretary." A pretty situation for a straightforward man to be in ! I knew they meant to fleece me. March, I can't and I won't; and money—I wish my lady were here—she's in better marching order than I am; for, if her legs wagged as fast as her tongue, I would wager on her going twenty miles an hour without stopping. One comfort is, these things can't last. Tarry, friend, whilst I answer these missives from the Parliament. Rose, see that this good and faithful servant be provided for in the buttery—he and his message both are welcome. (*aside*) Pity he didn't break his neck in bringing it. You're right, Rose, the fellow looks like a rat.

*Exit R.H.*

ROSE. I'll tell you what, Giles Jolter, or Goliah Barebones, as you now call yourself, the sooner you show this house your back the better. Why does your master come here, turning up the whites of his eyes, and twiddling his hypocritical thumbs at my lady. I suppose he thinks he can win her as he does her city mother-in-law or the weathercock old gentleman her father. But it won't do, mind—she's too good for him ! mind, I tell you so—I, Rose Downright!

GOL. Rose Downright, thou art a naughty and irreverent maiden. Thy mouth is sweet and fresh to look upon as a fountain in the desert, but thy words flow from it like water which is impure : yea, verily, like water defiled with mud. This dwelling is a goodly mansion—here are loaves to eat, and wine to cheer the fainting spirits. My employer and worldly master is as the cedar of Lebanon, comely and straight to look upon—so also is his man Goliah.

ROSE. Man! Why, thou animated tub of butter!—  
thou a man? Here's a pretty specimen of a man!

GOLIAH. Wilt thou cleave unto me, and be, as it were,  
bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh?—yea, wilt thou  
not, damsel?

ROSE. Nay, will I not, Goliah. (*imitating*) I don't want  
my comely flesh and blood to be skin and bone yet, I assure  
you.

*A knock, L.H.*

GOLIAH. Who smiteth at the portal?

PETER PIPKIN. (*without*) An old friend in the flesh,  
who seeketh Goliah Barebones.

ROSE. Dost thou hear Goliah? the old one has come  
for thee; and, as people are judged by their company,  
I'm off, lest I be taken for one of the chosen.

*Enter PETER PIPKIN, L.H., disguised as a Roundhead.*

PETER. Tarry, maiden.

ROSE. Another rat.

PETER. I bring crumbs of comfort to all sojourners of  
this dwelling (*crosses and aside*) and am Peter.

ROSE. Peter!

PETER. (*aside*) Hush! only you second what I say.  
(*aloud*) Thou lookest on me with an eye of doubt and  
wonder. I am Simon—yea, verily: dost thou not know  
me, Goliah?—Simon Fitwell, one who, in the days of  
wretchedness, did with a small instrument of steel called  
a needle, and a twisted thread hanging thereto, stick to-  
gether those nether garments men call small clothes.

GOLIAH. Verily, Simon, I know thee not—thou shalt  
never put stitch in mine, Fitwell.

ROSE. I think I recollect the youth—an idle dog he was,  
too: he had the reputation of being the greatest fool in  
the parish.

PETER. Yea, the maidens did call me Simple Simon.  
Thou know'st this ring, Goliah? Master's orders to thee  
were instantly to return, whilst I remained to take back the  
answer to the missives thou wert charged with. Art thou  
content to go?

GOLIAH. I am not content to go; but go I must—first to the buttery to refresh my inward man, for verily my spirit waxeth faint. Rose, wilt thou depart also ?

ROSE. I am going to my lady, so farewell, Goliah.

GOLIAH. Farewell, damsel—Rose of Sharon, farewell!

*Exit R.H.*

PETER. To the devil with thee, thou puritanical hypocrite ! And now, my blooming Rose, my Rose without a thorn, how fares it with thee ? Egad ! I have been so long estranged from the lips of a woman, that if I haven't a taste now I shall famish in the midst of plenty. (*kisses her*)

ROSE. Hold, hold ! Nonsense, nonsense ! Tell me of your master, what has he been doing ? Where has he been ? Where is he going ?

PETER. I have a notion, wench, that if words would wear out lips, yours would be as thin as a rose leaf; but to answer categorically, he has been playing at hide-and-seek, and bo-peep ; he has been thinking of nothing but thy mistress and King Charles. I, of nothing but thee and how to get a dinner; he is going to Worcester to crack the skulls of the Roundheads, and I must remain at home to help to raise recruits;—for your last query, my fair catechiser, this letter to your lady must answer.

ROSE. And do you mean to say that all the time you have been away, it has not been out of sight out of mind.

PETER. Say! I'll swear it. I've thought of thee by day—I've dreamt of thee by night.

ROSE. No, did you though! What did you dream about ?

PETER. Why, about a Rose to be sure. I dream't of you.

ROSE. Did you dream it in summer or winter ? If a man dreams of roses in the summer, his sweetheart will be faithful; and if a maid dreams of roses in the winter it's a sure sign she'll be married in summer—so says my dream-book. I hope I shall dream of roses to-night.

PETER. One kiss, Rose, just to bind the bargain. (*kisses her.*)

*Enter* GOLIAH, R.H.

GOLIAH. Ah! a wolf in sheep's clothing! Verily, I will assail thee. (*draws*)

PETER. What, an unarmed man? No matter.

*They struggle—PETER gets sword from GOLIAH, who falls.*

—The mighty are fallen. Shall I cut off Goliah's head with his own weapon?

GOLIAH. Help, help!

*Enter* FRANCES, R.H.

FRANCES. What tumult is this? Is it befitting, Rose, that thou art found amidst the strife of serving men?

ROSE. No, my lady, but it is as much befitting, that I don't suffer myself to be kissed by every fellow who choseth;—it's very well you came in, or that wolf in sheep's clothing, that Goliah—he behaved in a manner I should blush to repeat. Who would have thought it? for a little man he has the greatest impudence I ever saw.

GOLIAH. Abomination!

ROSE. Aye, indeed you are an abomination. He came here, Madam, with letters to your father from Geoffrey Matchlowe; he has long been looking at me with those little pig's eyes of his, but to-day he wanted to salute me. I knew I should be cursed, crossed, or kissed by a fool, by my nose itching this morning. Well, he seizes me round the waist, when this young man who, I must say, is a very well-behaved young man for a Puritan, came in: Goliah flew at him like a tiger—drew forth his weapon, and would have done him some injury, but the sword was wrested from his grasp, and I bawled out. This is the whole and full truth, my lady.

GOLIAH. 'Tis a lie, and of the devil's prompting.

FRANCES. This conduct must not go unpunished. Thy master shall be informed, and when he again sends missives to me, let it not be by such a messenger.

GOLIAH. Right, lady, my master *shall* be informed at *varr*.

PETER. And that thou may'st not forget any thing by

the way, take this to quicken thy recollection. Avaunt Goliah! the hand of David is upon thee!

*Drives GOLIAH off, L.H.*

FRANCES. Thou art too free, both of speech and act young man. What is thy business? If with my father deliver it and tarry not.

PETER. No, lady, my business is with you, and you alone. Don't you know me, I'm Peter. (*throws off gown*)

FRANCES. Ah! speak! thy master—is he safe?—is he well? All other interrogations hang upon one blissful yes!

PETER. Why then, yes! my lady. Never did I say yes so willingly, and never shall again till Rose there asks me to marry her. Doubtless, Madam, you are surprised to see me tricked out and dressed in this garb; but when the devil hold court in *propria persona*, a man to be in the fashion must wear his colours. Here is a letter, Madam—it smells, perhaps, a little of sulphur, from being so long in this puritan's pocket.

FRANCES. (*reads*) Say to thy lord I will not fail in this and all things else, and now begone, lest observation should be busy. This for thy pains, though too little for thy fidelity. (*gives purse*)

PETER. Pardon me, Madam, my fidelity is indeed above a price; and, for my pains, gold is such a scarce commodity, that my master (like other Cavaliers) has been contented with a note of hand, and why should not I? (*kisses ROSE*) Lady, excuse my wildness; my head generally may be a little maddish, but I can answer for its steadiness in a point of duty, and more especially when that duty is to a female.

*Exit L.H.*

FRANCES. This night, then, shall I again behold him. Listen, Rose, and partake my joy—for well does thy true constancy deserve such trust. (*reads*) "Once more then for a few brief moments, my dear Frances, it is permitted me to see thee. To-morrow with the earliest dawn must I proceed to Worcester to conquer or perish, for never will I call Cromwell master. I know not if a proscribed man may openly set foot beneath that roof which once he called his own, therefore, if thy courage fail not, meet me with thy

trusty servant, Rose, this night at twelve (for earlier would to me be dangerous), in that room styled the Wizard's Chamber. A secret panel, known only to myself, will give me entrance.—Arthur."

ROSE. What, Madam, in the Wizard's Chamber ? Not for the world! I never go near that room but I dream of the wizard at night; and to dream of the old one betokens mischief—so says my dream-book. I have no objection to meet anything in the shape of man, but as to ghosts——

FRANCES. Fear not, Rose ; it is not permitted that mortal strength be tasked beyond a mortal's bearing. In darkness or in light the same supporting hand will guide us. But I ask not of thy love more than 'tis willing to perform. I can go alone.

ROSE. Alone, my lady?—that I am sure you shall not. What, do you suppose that Rose Downright, whose mother nursed you, and who has been to you as your very shadow, will leave you when danger threatens ? I go with you, lady, and if two women be not a match for Old Nick himself, I'll doff my petticoat, and wear gentleman's clothes for the rest of my life.

*Exeunt, R.H.*

SCENE III.—*The Wizard's Chamber—A large picture, before which is a curtain drawn—A sliding panel, L.C.*

*The panel opens, and SIR ARTHUR appears.*

ARTHUR. Thus far have I advanced in safety, and once more I stand within my father's halls, yet not in such trim as a courtly knight would seize upon his birthright, but rather like the midnight robber, who steals the means his wants require, and then as warily departs. Well, be it so! man's fortune, like his fame, must change, and when the lightning strikes, who can point out the tree destined to fall ? Hark! a soft step breaks upon the stillness of the hour—harbinger of the only bliss this weary heart for months has known.

*Enter FRANCES, L.D.*

FRANCES. Arthur! dear Arthur! (*embraces him*)

ARTHUR. Frances ! my own worshipped Frances ! dost thou grieve, love, that I am returned to thee in safety ?

FRANCES. Oh no ! not grieve, and yet I weep : but falls there not from woman's eye a tear so easing to the heart, as that which hails the safe return of him that heart has chosen. Dost thou in sooth come back, my own dear Arthur ?

ARTHUR. No, love, for that indeed were poor and paltry I return to thee a thousand times more fond.

FRANCES. Thou art pale and thinner, Arthur, than when we parted, and thy brow wears now a settled shade of care. It was not so in earlier and brighter days.

ARTHUR. The world has hardly used me, Frances, and even with the thought of thee bitterness is mingled. I little dreamt, when roving in solitary despair beneath the sky of Italy, deeming the bright stars as emblems of our future destiny, that this hand, once sworn to me, would be joined with my bitterest enemy, Geoffrey Matchlowe.

FRANCES. Do I deserve this, Arthur? Is it because the man finds favour in my mother's eye, and thus set the busy tongue of rumour prattling, that I should be doubted ? Now, hear me, Arthur. This paper contains a contract to be yours, when friends consent and happier times shall render such union blest. Receive it as a welcome pledge of my truth. This little cross, the earliest gift of love, be witness to the sincerity with which I pledge it; and while this cross is worn near my heart, ne'er, Arthur, shall that heart acknowledge another's love.

*Enter Rose L.D.*

ROSE. Madam, the half-hour has past.

FRANCES. So soon! Is it even so? then must we part. Shall I not again see thee love ere you leave me ?

ARTHUR. Impossible! With the earliest dawn I speed for Worcester Frances, to gain a kingdom for my royal master or a grave for myself. Farewell, dearest Frances, farewell! (*they embrace*)

*Exeunt FRANCES and ROSE, L.D.*

—The air of this chamber breathes of melancholy—I feel my senses quite oppressed. This old chair does not pro-

mise much for repose, but it may afford some rest to limbs weary as mine. Frances! dear Frances! (*sleeps*)

*Enter ROSE, L.D.*

ROSE. Why, how forgetful these lovers are! My lady has sent me with a message which certainly would take a good ten minutes to deliver. To be sure she knows my tongue is none of the slickest. Sir Arthur! Sir Arthur! he sleeps, and soundly, too. I wonder what he's dreaming about. I've a great mind to wake and ask him, but no, poor gentleman, he's a long way to ride to-morrow, so I'll e'en go back and tell my lady. Ah! what do I see? A lamp in the corridor? It moves this way. I'll put out this at any rate, and watch.

*She extinguishes her lamp and hides behind chimney—  
GOLIAH puts his head in cautiously, then beckons on  
GEOFFREY, L.D.*

GOLIAH. 'Tis as I informed you—I overheard this meeting mentioned, and see, there is Sir Arthur.

GEOF. Why should I not stab him? but no—let us alarm the family.

GOLIAH. And so get the reward for his apprehension.  
*Exeunt, L.D.*

ROSE. (*coming forward*) Merciful heaven! then his life's in danger. I knew there was something wrong when that little rat came in. He must be roused. Awake, Sir Arthur!

ARTHUR. Who calls?

ROSE. Your safety is threatened—be composed, and trust to me. La, Sir, what were you dreaming of just now? Away with you, and let me see if I can't play the Cavalier. That way, Sir.

*Exit SIR ARTHUR through panel—ROSE muffles herself in cloak, and sits in chair—Enter GEOFFREY, GOLIAH, SIR NICHOLAS, and SERVANTS with lights,  
L.D.*

GEOF. You perceive, Sir, a clandestine interview with Miss Vere! My man overheard the appointment.

18. THE FIELD OF FORTY FOOTSTEPS. [ACT II.

SIR NICH. (*aside*) I wish his ears had been nailed to the pillory for his pains. I must be in a passion, I suppose. (*aloud*) Seize him!

ROSE. Villains, stand off! I'll never be taken alive! (*discovers herself*) Ha, ha, ha!

GEOF. There is some trick in this. He was here, but whither has he gone?

GOLIAH. Where's my reward, Sir?

PETER *puts out his head from panel*—GOLIAH *sees him*—ROSE *throws cloak over him*.

ROSE. Ah, my little rat! the cat has clawed you at last!

GEOF. Follow me—he can't escape!

*They rush towards panel, which they begin to force as the Drop descends.*

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Exterior of a Cottage—Light burning in the window.*

*Enter* SIR ARTHUR, *supporting* HENRY, R.H.U.E.

ARTHUR. Come, cheerily, cheerily, my brave boy! 'tis but a short mile to the sea-coast—a boat lies there prepared, and a few hours sail lands us in France.

HENRY. 'Tis not that my heart is faint when my spirit bids me on, but my feeble limbs refuse the bidding. Here, then, lay me down, kind Arthur—I can but die, and better that I breathe my last looking on the pale cold moon, which seems to weep for us, than on the scowling faces of unfeeling rebels.

ARTHUR. Die? No, heaven forefend, my Prince! But in truth, the chances seem against us. Cromwell now reigns securely. But come, lean on me—I have only one arm for you, for the bullet of a rascally Roundhead has wounded

this; but the circulation of my heart seems all the warmer for this blood-letting.

HENRY. Have with you, then, Arthur—'tis not far, you say—have with you. (*falls exhausted*)

ARTHUR. Poor child, nature can do no more. What's to be done? The night grows darker, and the rising wind foretells a storm. Is there no succour? Ha! a cottage! and, by good luck, a light: friend or foe, no matter.

*Places HENRY on bank—knocks at door—SUSAN opens casement.*

SUSAN. Who's there ?

ARTHUR. A woman ! then 'tis a friend.

SUSAN. Who are you, and what do you want at this late hour?

ARTHUR. We are strangers and sufferers—the titles to an Englishman's hospitality. Our wants are, repose and food; for which you shall be liberally rewarded.

SUSAN. My father is not yet gone to rest; tarry, and I'll call him. (*goes down*) Father, father!

ARTHUR. When did woman ever close her heart against compassion's soft appeal?

*Enter JONATHAN HOMESPUN, from cottage, R.H.*

JONATH. Now, friend, what are you? What's your business in this wood? Where did you come from? what's your name, and where are you going ?

ARTHUR. My worthy friend, if you had only worked to day half as hard as I have, the first opening of your mouth would have been for something to stop it in the shape of a good rasher of bacon and a jug of foaming ale. I have the means of payment.

JONATH. Egad! you shall have both, I'll warrant upon cheap terms, too, for I like your frankness. No offence, Sir, but you appear a Cavalier by your bearing—all the better for that. I served the young King's father myself—heaven rest his soul!

HENRY *comes forward and takes JONATHAN'S hand.*  
—Hollo! why, here's a young campaigner, indeed ! Come

in, and welcome these crop-eared Roundheads have left us poor people but little, yet that little you shall share.

*(Distant march heard)*

—The Parliament troops! they are sure to be here—you must not come in now—they are marching to the coast and will only take a passing mug. In there, behind the copse! the boy will be safe with me.

JONATHAN *and* HENRY *enter cottage*, ARTHUR *retires behind copse*, R.H.—*Enter SERGEANT and SOLDIERS* L.U.E.

SERG. Halt! Corporal Huggins, thou art right—the malcontent we observed in flight, with that young imp of darkness in his company, turned into this wood.

CORP. They may have sheltered me,—I know this cottage of old, Jonathan Homerspur lives here; he keeps a good cask of ale, and cares not who tastes it, so that the liquor be paid for.

SERG. And has, moreover, a comely daughter, the sight of whose black eyes and lips is a pleasant sight after a long day's march.

CORP. Hollo ! Jonathan ! a jug of ale!

*Enter SUSAN with ale—goes to SERGEANT.*

SERG. Comrades, search the house! what, Susan, not married yet ?

*SOLDIERS exit into house*

—You shall give me a kiss to keep your lips in order. *(Attempts to kiss her—she screams.)*

JONATH. Stand off! or a good cudgel shall teach you Sir Soldier that the person of a poor man's daughter should be as free from insult as the first lady's in the land.

SERG. Come, I don't want to quarrel—bring out some more ale, and I'll kiss that at any rate.

*SOLDIERS enters with HENRY.*

—What have you found ?

CORP. This boy!

*JONATHAN brings ale.*

SERG. Why, that's the boy that we saw with the run-

away Cavalier. A pretty child i'faith—are you fond of a drop of ale? Come, you shall have the cream of the jug, boy. Drink this toast—"Confusion to Charles Stuart and down with the Cavaliers."

HENRY *throws down jug.*

-What's this? You shall pay for this, imp of Satan. Corporal give the word! Do you hesitate! Obey, or I shall report you.

*They place him against a tree, R.*

-Now, where's your comrade the Cavalier!

HENRY. I'll not tell you.

SERG. Then, by the head of Oliver, they shall fire, if you do not tell me the third time of asking.

JONATH. You will not surely be guilty of such a damning deed.

SUSAN. Mercy, I conjure you.

SERG. Silence!—wilt answer?

HENRY. No.

SERG. Wilt answer?

HENRY. No.

SERG. Wilt answer?

HENRY. No.

SERG. Make ready—present!—

ARTHUR (*rushing down*) Cowards, forbear!

SERG. I knew it would do—if a leaden storm brings from the trees such fruit our fortunes will soon be made. Yield thee, Cavalier.

ARTHUR. Who commands this post?

SERG. Sir Thomas Fairfax.

ARTHUR. That is fortunate—the General knows me well, and the rank I bear. In his name, I demand all courtesy to myself and this child. Now lead on.

*Exeunt, L.—JONATHAN and SUSAN into house.*

## SCENE II.—A Tent.

*Enter FAIRFAX and OFFICER, R.*

FAIR. Dispatch those packets instantly. Has any news arrived?

OFFICER. None, General. The Sergeant of the outpost is here.

*Enter* SERGEANT, L.H.

SERG. General, the party I command have, in the pursuit of stragglers, captured a young Cavalier and a boy whom he calls his brother. He claims acquaintance with you, General, and is pressing to be introduced.

FAIR. Admit him instantly!

OFFICER *conducts* ARTHUR *and* HENRY *on*, L.H.

—Your business? Soldiers, retire out of hearing.

*Exit* SOLDIERS, L.H.

—Now, Sir, speak, and briefly.

ARTHUR. The high character borne by Sir Thomas Fairfax, even with his enemies, has induced me to seek this private conference.

FAIR. My time, Sir Cavalier, is precious. Your business? who are you?

ARTHUR. An implacable, though conquered enemy.

FAIR. Your name?

ARTHUR. Sir Arthur Matchlowe.

FAIR. Is it possible? are you Sir Arthur Matchlowe? the chosen friend and trusty counsellor of Charles Stuart?

ARTHUR. The devoted servant and loyal subject of King Charles the Second. If I remember rightly, you, Sir Thomas, and my late father, swore alike fealty to his murdered sire.

FAIR. Young man, it is not befitting our relative situations, to bandy words with each other, such as these.

ARTHUR. It is always befitting for an honest man to speak the truth, Sir Thomas.

FAIR. Most rightly spoken. Now then to prove your doctrine—you have called that boy your brother, is he so?

ARTHUR. General, this boy is not my brother, yet he is dearer to me than if the same mother had borne us both; he is the desolate child of a murdered sire—the helpless brother of an exiled King. Look on him, Sir Thomas, and if your eye can keep his steadiness, and your k its colour, in the presence of Henry Stuart of Gloster, you have stronger nerves than I can covet the possession of.

FAIR. Sir Arthur, did my blood flow as intemperately as yours, your words would not have escaped a punishment, but I admire your zeal, much as I think it mistaken;—but now for the performance of what I consider my duty. A son of the late ruler of the realm is now within my power—say am I not by the right of war, the master of this boy's fate?

ARTHUR. Tis e'en so.

FAIR. To remove his father from the place of power he filled unworthily, I drew the sword. The object is accomplished—but they who destroy the vine should cast off the tendrils also, lest they, in time, grow up and bear unwholesome fruit. Guards, look to your prisoner!

ARTHUR. Great heaven! you cannot be so base as harm his sacred life? Beware, Sir Thomas!—'tis not given to man to read the heart of man; by his actions only is he judged, and so deep and damning were the crime, if this orphan's safety be but for an hour perilled by those who made him one, that living, the double murderer would be cursed; and dead, history would brand them with a name their latest posterity would loathe to bear.

FAIR. History, Sir Arthur, will speak of me as I deserve. But our conference must end. Sir, to your especial charge I confide these persons; look to them well—let them be conducted under a strong escort to their place of destination, and then—*go free*. No reply—Soldiers, do your duty!

*Exeunt* FAIRFAX, R.H.—SIR ARTHUR *and others*, L.H.

SCENE III.—*St. Giles' Fields.*

*Enter* GEOFFREY, L.H.

GEOF. It works even with my fondest wish. The high-spirited Frances herself begins to feel the torments that a slight from those we love inflicts. What, three letters unacknowledged, and from the constant Arthur, too? I see by her very looks the woman's roused within her. Poor girl! she little dreams the sweet responses to her honied lines, have by these hands been given to the flames—thanks to her mother's intercepting aid. Pride may now achieve

for me what I have hitherto despaired of obtaining. Her weathercock father changes with each wind that blows. I have frightened him with a charge of secret correspondence with young Charles Stuart, now in France ; and at the bare thought of sequestration, he would not merely part with child, but wife, too, if required. Now, thou man of faith Goliah Barebones, what bring'st thou here ?

*Enter GOLIAH, R.H.*

GOLIAH. Be not a scoffer, I pray.

GEOF. No more of this hypocrisy—to me at least. The cast being won, no matter who knew the loading of the dice. You remember from whence I took you ?—a little paltry shed in St. Giles', where you dragged out a miserable existence by selling herrings, pack-thread, and brick-dust.

GOLIAH. Yea, treacle, molasses, salt, butter, and brimstone.

GEOF. Well, I took you under my employ, and taught you how in these stormy times hypocrisy was the ladder by which to mount: from the very lowest step did I begin—my younger, and legitimate brother, was the favourite of the family, and my temerity was laughed at when I dared to think myself my brother's equal. I never forgave the laugh ! and now thanks to the times, I am in the council of state—he an exiled beggar. Didn't I make a man of thee ; and that carcass, which was lank as one of thine own herrings, is now round and comely. I am not ungrateful—what more can I do for thee, thou trusty, faithful knave ?

GOLIAH. Man's days are few—the bowels of my affection do yearn towards a maiden who has found favour in mine eyes. I would make her my spouse, so that she might cling around me as the ivy clingeth to the oak.

GEOF. Is the damsel willing ?

GOLIAH. She sayeth nay—but all damsels say nay, when first asked such a question ; but the pretty Rose—the hand-maid of Frances Vere (for 'tis she I mean), doth look for a man of substance. Thou hast a small tenement called the Briars, worth twenty pounds a year—'tis there I would repose for life; and, if thou wilt bestow the deeds on me, I will woo her with the parchments in my hands.

GEOF. Come, come, Mr. Giles Jolter, you have already been well paid for your labours. Don't play the extortioner : what is in reason I will do—this I will not.

GOLIAH. Umph! then this letter as directed from the Lady Frances Vere, goeth to Arthur Matchlowe, now sojourning in France.

GEOF. Not for twenty Briars ! I see through this. The mother hath wisely kept back all her letters of late, for Frances is too dutiful to write without her knowledge. Now, I suppose, her suspicions are aroused, and the post-man is of her own seeking, Where got you this ?

GOLIAH. A kinsman of Rose's who was entrusted with it did fall in my way, he loveth the extract of malt and hops called beer, his head is weak, and the wit is soon out. Although a little barrel, I can hold a goodly modicum of beer. We did drink together, and I stole it.

GEOF. Thou art the best of thieves—give it.

GOLIAH. The Briars.

GEOF. The deeds shall be thine to-morrow.

GOLIAH. Take it, thou wilt not break thy word, for thou durst not, and now my conscience is appeased I will go to dinner.

*Exit, R.H.*

GEOF. So much for a second-hand scoundrel! here trips the beautiful Rose: if she be assailable I may learn from her the state of her mistress's feelings.

*Enter ROSE, L.C.*

—Whither so fast, Mistress Rose ?

ROSE. About my business. I suppose you are going about yours ?

GEOF. Not without having a few words of conference with you first. You seem a discreet young maiden.

ROSE. Seem! I am one, Sir.

GEOF. Aye, and a very comely one withal to look upon.

ROSE. So I am told, Sir—I thought you Puritan gentlemen never flattered

GEOF. Nor I do my speech, like my garb, is plain. Take this broad piece. (*gives her money*)

ROSE. (*taking it*) Yes, Sir.

GEOF. And buy thee a top-knot, girl.

ROSE. I never wear them, Sir.

GEOF. (*aside*) Is this chit knave or fool? I'll try her a little further. (*aloud*) Dost never dream of a husband Rose?

ROSE. Yes, Sir—sometimes twice in a night.

GEOF. I have a person in my employ who seeks to own that title; Goliah Barebones—he is a man of substance.

ROSE. Yes, he is a podgy little fellow. I hate podgy little fellows.

GEOF. (*aside*) Poor Goliah with the Briars, I'm afraid, stands but little chance here. (*aloud*) And now, Rose, may I ask in what light your mistress regards me? Could I but through your means obtain her favour, my purse holds many more such pieces as that I gave you.

ROSE. My mistress thinks of you, Sir, exactly as I do.

GEOF. And what is that?

ROSE. Shall I not anger you by telling, Sir?

GEOF. You may not please—but you shall not anger me.

ROSE. Why, then, I think it a great cruelty to press your suit upon a damsel who disdains it. My mistress's love is placed upon another—your noble brother, Sir Arthur. That should be one reason for foregoing your pretensions. You have the power to sway the destinies of her family, for Sir Nicholas is fearful of sequestration, and his lady is your sworn friend. If my mistress have you, she'll never love you, and were I Geoffrey Matchlowe instead of Rose Downright, I would send for Sir Arthur home, procure his pardon, get them married off-hand, and stand father to the bride. That's what I'd do. You asked me to speak my mind, and I've done so. I don't care whether you are pleased or not. I'm Downright by name, and I'm down-right by nature—my family have been so for generations before me, and I hope they'll remain so for ages after me. Good morning! if you're a wise man you'll take my advice—good morning, Sir. *Exit R.H.*

GEOF. She shall marry me, by heavens! and as to loving me——Psha! Frances Vere could not hate her husband. What, forego my triumph o'er a hated brother? No, I'm

not so soft a fool!—though at the price of blood I will secure revenge—the sequestration is my point—a daughter's fears will urge her to consent. Away! away!

*Exit L.*

SCENE IV.—*A Chamber.*

*Enter SIR NICHOLAS and LADY VERE, R.H.*

SIR NICH. But it's so strange, my lady, that I, of all men, should be suspected. Did I never give money to the Parliament?

LADY V. You were forced to do so.

SIR NICH. Well, who gives money without being forced, I should like to know?

LADY V. You've broken the law.

SIR NICH. Suppose I have—I never thought I should be found out; and how many in the great city break it in the same way? But what's to be done? What do you think they'll do with me?

LADY V. Hang you, perhaps.

SIR NICH. Much obliged to you. You're one of Job's comforters: you don't often say pleasant things—a civil one just now would be doubly welcome, from the novelty of it. The balance of power in this house will shortly be destroyed, I can see that.

LADY V. I am glad, Sir Nicholas, you can be so facetious. A man suspected of furnishing money, and communicating with exiled Cavaliers, has no great cause to rejoice when such a ruler as Cromwell administers the law.

SIR NICH. Why, you appear alarmed. Why then I'm afraid there's something in it. It's no trifle that frightens you. Shall I speak to Geoffrey Matchlowe? I'll send and ask him to dinner.

LADY V. What, after all your coldness to him, Sir Nicholas? If you were not my husband, and any disgrace on you reflects on me, I would not stupify myself with endeavouring to beat some idea of consistency into that pumpkin of a head of yours.

SIR NICH. Permit me, in the name of my pumpkin head, to return you thanks, and if you'll save it from harm,

either by beating or any other damages, you may let fly as many of your little ideas at it as you may think proper.

LADY V. Silence, Sir, and listen. Know Geoffrey Matchlowe is attached to your daughter—he has made his proposals to me, and I have accepted them. It was useless to mention this to you.

SIR NICH. Certainly, as I only happen to be her father.

LADY V. Her former connection with Sir Arthur is now entirely out of the question. It seems, about six months ago, she gave him a written contract to become his wife—that contract must be returned—we must insist on the point, and a letter must forthwith be dispatched to Paris where the young man now sojourns. This is the preliminary step—the next must be the gaining her consent to the union with Geoffrey Machlowe.

SIR. NICH. Why, she hates him worse than I used a forty folio brief, when I was first apprenticed to the law.

LADY V. She must like him. At any rate, marry him, the love will follow, of course.

SIR NICH. Not always, my lady! And do you think this is fair and honorable? how is the balance of power to be preserved in families if there is a preponderancy on the part of the wife? Now, I will tell you plainly, Lady Vere, if these are the sinful ways and machinations of your people of quality, damn me, if I wouldn't sooner be plain Nicholas Vere, with a brown desk in my stomach and a goose quill behind my ear, than the first nobleman in the land.

LADY V. But the balance of power?

SIR NIC. Damn the balance of power!—what's the balance of power compared with the happiness of my child?

LADY V. The only man whose influence with the Lord Protector, can save you from sequestration, is Geoffrey Matchlowe—that influence he will exert on no other condition than becoming your son-in-law.

SIR NIC. I don't care who's my son-in-law, so Frances be pleased, and I'm not a sufferer by it. Only manage those two things, and if the Emperor of Morocco presents himself, you have my free permission to accept him, concubines, beard and all.

LADY V. Hush! she comes. You must mention it to her.

*Enter FRANCES, R.H.*

SIR NICH. My dear Frances, I wish to speak with you.

FRANCES. With me, Sir?—what's your pleasure?

SIR NICH. Why, that's rather difficult to tell now, my dear child—eh! my lady—nothing pleases me, for every thing seems to go wrong. I have been hoarding and speculating, and thriving—first in a garret, and now in a palace; and because I traffic with my money upon the interest the law allows, I'm told I break the law, if I lend it to the enemies of the Commonwealth. Why should'n every man have the privilege of driving his own pigs to market in his own way? I'm like the ass with the panniers in the fable. I don't care who drives me, but it's deuced hard having half-a-dozen masters pulling you in different ways—no balance of power can support that. Now Frances, you can put all this to rights as far as I am concerned, at least, so your mother says.

FRANCES. My dear father, can I hesitate to act the physician when my skill concerns you?

SIR NICH. You mistake, child, I don't want you to turn physician—I want you to take the physic. I dare say you will make wry faces, but it is better that *you* make wry faces than *my* neck be twisted. You see my dear child, after much observation, I have come to this conclusion, that the past is not the present, and therefore in all probability—No, no; 'tis not that, but—here, my lady, do you talk to her, you're a better hand at mixing bitters than I am.

LADY V. My dear Frances, I have long forborne to speak to you about Sir Arthur Matchlowe, and I should not have done so now, but the difficulties of your father's situation render the interference imperative, and the ill conduct of the young gentleman himself compels it. A participation in Sir Arthur's fortune might give you a husband, but the price would be a father.

SIR NICH. Yes, Frances, and what a price would that be!—so much that I could never set a price upon myself.

LADY V. Reflect, child, however weak he is, and unfit to manage his own affairs, he is still your father.

SIB NICH. Yes, my dear, I'm still your father—at least,

I believe so : for the rest of my lady's speech, I must say my own affairs were never in so bad a state as since she has had them in hand.

LADY V. Independently of these considerations, let me say no man should hold the contract of a young lady and not answer her letters.

SIR NICH. (*aside*) That was a poser.

LADY V. And there is a report of Sir Arthur paying his addresses to a French lady of quality.

FRANCES. I see what is required of me, and I feel what ought to be done. Act as you please, Madam—I will not oppose your argument when my father's danger forms the subject of it.

LADY V. This contract must be demanded of Sir Arthur.

SIR NICH. Certainly—I entirely agree with my lady on this point.

FRANCES. On one point, Madam, allow me to speak. I bestowed it willingly on my part to Sir Arthur alone, and with his free will, must this pledge be returned.

LADY V. Seat yourself, my child, and write as I shall dictate:—" To Sir Arthur Matchlowe. The advice of those on whose judgment and affection I am bound to rely, directs me to require from you the restoration of a contract entered into hastily, and unfitting to be held when such an altered feeling has been manifested by you. Your silence on receipt of this, will be conclusive, and free you from the claims of—Frances Vere."——Observe, Frances, this act is voluntary. Do you repent it? If so——

FRANCES. No, no—my father is saved.

LADY V. Come, Sir Nicholas.

SIR NICH. She weeps ! Oh, my lady, I'm ashamed of you!

*Exeunt L.H.*

FRANCES. Tis his own seeking! Months of absence—letter after letter unanswered—new connexions, new hearts, first to trifle with, then to break, and he has broken mine.

*Enter ROSE, L.H.*

ROSE. I beg pardon, Madam, but I'm very uneasy in my mind, and I can hold out no longer without telling

you. I know something dreadful will happen. The morning before last (and morning dreams always come true) I thought I was in bed, and all of a sudden it changed to a beautiful green field, in the midst of which stood two turtledoves, white as snow, billing and cooing and fluttering their little wings with joy. So far so good—to dream of turtle doves betokens marriage within the month. All of a sudden the scene changed to a wet miry wilderness—the doves vanished, and you appeared struggling through the swamps. I ran to aid you, my foot slipped, and in striving to save myself I caught at a bramble—the thorns ran into my hands, and hurt me so, that I screamed out, and when I awoke, my little finger was in a gore of blood. Now, my lady—why, I don't think you've heard a word of what I've been talking about.

FRANCES. (*starting up*) On girl with thy cloak and wimple and attend me.

ROSE. Why, you're not going out at this time of night, my lady—a storm is coming on.

FRANCES. No matter—obey, obey, or leave me.

ROSE. Go on, my lady.

*Exit* FRANCES, R.H.

-I've played at follow-my-leader often in sport, now for it in real earnest. One, two, three, and away.

*Exit* R.H.

SCENE V.—*Exterior of a Rude Cottage,*

*Enter* FRANCES with a branch of yew, followed by ROSE, R.H.

ROSE. Ar'n't you tired, Madam? Do you know where you are? Heaven help us! this is the dwelling of the wild gipsy woman, who was about being taken before the witch-finders. Let us away.

FRANCES. Nay! it is here, I stop.

ROSE. Here!

FRANCES. Even here; to learn from futurity what is clouded of the present.

ROSE. Well, I like to have my fortune told in the old-fashioned way—a bright shilling and an open palm.

FRANCES. Silence ! you will need your spirits—we are unexpected comers. Now for the signal.

" Once, twice, thrice, the branch I wave,  
Open by the power you gave."

*She waves a branch of yew—The door opens, and they enter fearfully.—Thunder.*

SCENE VI.—A Dark Chamber—A large circular glass (medium), C.

An EGYPTIAN WOMAN in foreign costume, with dishevelled hair discovered, R.C.

FRSANCE and ROSE discovered, L.H.

EGYPTIAN. Observe, but speak not, or the spell's dissolved. (*waving wand*)

From the untrod realms below,  
Where the eternal fires do glow,—  
From the beds of ocean wide,  
Where the monster kraakens glide,—  
Through the earth and through the sky,  
Spirits, who read our destiny,  
In mystic vision plainly show  
Mortals' weal or mortals' woe !

*The mirror becomes illuminated, and a female like FRANCES stands before a PRIEST and GEOFFREY.*

FRANCES. No, no! never! never!

*Vision disappears.*

EGYPTIAN. From mortal lips a sound once sped  
The charm's dissolved, the vision fled.  
But once again Fate's thread untwine !  
Look at it, maid, once more he's thine.

GEOFFREY *discovered leaning on ground, as mortally wounded—ARTHUR as stabbed by GEOFFREY, supported by FRANCES, holding her hands to heaven.—Bell tolls One.*

FRANCES. No more ! no more! Heaven help me !—  
heaven help me!

*Falls in C.—ROSE kneels over her.—Tableau and*

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Servant's Hall in Matchlowe House—Window practicable; tables, chairs, &c.*

ROSE *discovered.*

ROSE. I've beat the devil's tattoo until my feet ache—what good will that do ?—it won't prevent the marriage taking place—the company are all assembled in the great hall to sign the contract. Priest, prayer-book and all—my poor mistress is dressed like a queen and looks like a ghost, she moves and speaks without knowing what she's doing. If this is a wedding, they'll never get me to say love, honour, and obey. Ever since I've lost poor Peter, I haven't thought much about the matter. What shall I do?

PETER *opens window and jumps in.*

--Ha! a man !

PETER. Three parts of one only, and those but half fed either.

ROSE. Peter ! why so—yes, it is—my dear, dear Peter I expected something particular, for my elbow itched all day yesterday. We heard you had lost your head at Worcester.

PETER. Only a slice of it (*shows patch*) ; but, Rose, if you love me, or did love me, give me something to eat. I've not broken my fast these three days, and am as hungry as one of my poor old father's buttock and flank customers.

ROSE. Aye, you may have plenty, for the wedding dinner's preparing, and there'll be eating and drinking in every room in the house.

PETER. Wedding ! whose wedding !

ROSE. Why, Frances Vere's and Geoffrey Matchlowe's to be sure.

PETER. Whose? Oh! what?—the she viper! my poor master!

ROSE. Poor master ! your black-hearted master.

PETER. What do you mean by calling my master black-hearted ?

ROSE. And what do you mean by calling my mistress a viper ?

PETER. She is a viper. Oh, my poor master, after all his sufferings to be treated so—why, even his letters were unanswered.

ROSE. He never wrote any.

PETER. He did, he did.

ROSE. Did?

PETER. Aye, don't talk to me now, but give me something to eat, and I'll tell you all about it.

ROSE. There's a nice fowl in the cupboard. Goliath had these things laid for him. He takes his supper here every night.

PETER. Lucky dog! I have gone to bed supperless this fortnight.

ROSE. (*laying the cloth*) My poor dear Peter, shall I cut it up ?

PETER. Tear it up you mean.

ROSE. It cuts a little toughish.

PETER. No matter—if it were leather I could digest it. (*sits down*)

ROSE. And now, Peter, where have you been so long without sending or writing ?

PETER. Why, my dear Rose, the fact is, I should have written, but for one good and substantial reason, I can't write, but my master wrote enough for half a dozen people, though you say his letters were never received. What a devilish tough drum-stick this fellow has.

ROSE. My mind misgives, there's some treachery on foot. A short time ago, a charge of treasonable correspondence with the Cavaliers was brought against Sir Nicholas, and they were about to sequester all his property ;—well Geoffrey Matchlowe, who is now in the Council, and

hand-and-glove with the Lord Protector, begged him off—turned Sir Nicholas in his favour, and what with your master's silence, and gratitude to the preserver of her father, my mistress was persuaded, little by little, to break with Sir Arthur and marry his brother, and she is going to be wedded to him before twelve o'clock to-night. Come, haven't you done stuffing yet ?

PETER. Only the merry-thought and two side bones, (not forgetting the Pope's nose) to pick, and I'm yours directly. I'm perishing with thirst—have you any ale, gin, or brandy, beer, rum, or wine, at hand ? I don't care what liquor it is, so that it isn't water.

ROSE. There's some wine for you, and now for your story.

PETER. It's a long one, so here goes, and by way of shortening it, let us begin with the battle of Worcester. Ah! I wish you had seen me fight e'm, Rose. I killed six with my own hand.

ROSE. Aye, and eat them afterwards.

PETER. No, but if they'd been here half an hour ago, I could. Well my poor master was desperately wounded, and I was left for dead upon the field, but I gave death the slip, and here I am. Sir Arthur had, after the battle, conveyed the young Prince Henry to the Queen in France. The day I was getting well, I met a friend in the street, who told me my master was in Paris. In another week I was after him, and went with him to join the King at the Hague; was sent here by my master, who is close behind me, and after many disguises and crosses, came here safe yesterday.

GOLIAH. (*without*) Rose ! Rose Downright!

ROSE. I'm called, you mustn't be seen here on such a day as this; bless me, I'm all of a flutter!—step into this closet. I'll return and let you out presently.

PETER. One kiss, and the bottle, and cram me any where you please—though I've been pretty well crammed within the last ten minutes.

*He goes into closet,—Exit Rose, R.H.—Enter GOLIAH, L.H., with two bottles.*

GOLIAH. The odour of the flesh pots, ascendeth in sa-

vour streams unto my nostrils. I do love a wedding, and this spreading forth of the fat of the land, doth rejoice my inward man most exceedingly. The maidens too, do skip about like young kidlings of the flock. Were I not a puritan, I   ld skip about also, but I do mortify the flesh that that   the spirit may live, therefore, will I betake me to my bed, with the slight refreshing of crammed fowl, and these two flasks of precious wine called Madeira.

*Puts one bottle on table, and goes down in front to uncork the other—PETER comes from closet and takes it off table.*

—Verily a very nosegay, fragrant to the smell, grateful to the taste. Why, where's the other ! I laid it here but now, where is it ? Damn me, it's too bad; the loss of a flask like that is enough to make a puritan swear. Some one is hidden---I'll see.

*He takes light—PETER sneezes.*

---Some one sneezeth ! a thief concealed, to rob the house and murder me. Valour should take council from discretion. *(blows out light)*

PETER. The light is out, I may escape as I came.

*Feels about—GOLIAH catches hold of his cloak—PETER unties it and fastens it to the leg of the table, then escapes through the window.*

GOLIAH. Help! I am assailed, verily. I am assailed by robbers! help!

*Enter ROSE with lamp, R.H.*

---Murder! the mansion's beleaguered!

ROSE. Yes, so it seems—by a four-legged table and a tattered cloak.

GOLIAH. Rose, this trick is thine. I know the man; he is young Matchlowe's servant—he shall be secured.

*Exit L.*

Ross. Yes, that is if you can catch him.

*Exit R.*

SCENE 2.] THE FIELD OF FORTY FOOTSTEPS. 37

SCENE II.—*Large Hall—Tables, chairs, &c.--Pens, ink, and paper on table.*

GUESTS, SIR NICHOLAS, CLERGYMAN, *and* LAWYER  
*with contract.*

SIR NIC. Welcome, welcome, my dear friends—here  
come the happy pair---wish them joy,

OMNES. Joy, joy!

*Enter* GEOFFREY, FRANCES, *and* LADY VERE, C.

SIR NICH. Ere the ceremony takes place, some legal  
forms are to be expedited—the contract must be signed,  
son-in-law!

SIR NICHOLAS *signs, then* GEOFFREY, *and* FRANCES *is*  
*about to sign.*

ARTHUR. (*without*) Give way for your lives.

*Enter* ARTHUR, C. *from, L.*

LADY V. What is the cause of this intrusion ?

ARTHUR. It shall be quickly explained. (*takes out a*  
*letter, and going to* FRANCES) Is that your hand, Madam ?

FRANCES. (*faltering*) It is.

ARTHUR. (*taking out another*) And is this your hand ?

SIR NIC. If you design to form a legal claim upon a  
former promise of my daughter—

ARTHUR. Sir Nicholas Vere, I pray you, and all who  
hear me, not to mistake my purpose. If this young lady,  
of her own free will, desires the restoration of this contract,  
there is not a leaf that Autumn strews upon the ground that  
is so valueless to me, but I must and will hear the truth  
from her own lips ; —without this satisfaction I will not quit  
this place. Overpower me by numbers you may, but I am  
an armed man, a desperate man, and will not die without ample  
vengeance. (*produces pistols*) Choose if you will have this  
hall floated with blood, or if you will grant me the decisive  
interview with my affianced bride, which my former affec-  
tion, and the laws of heaven and of man, entitle me to  
demand.

LADY V. Never, Sir Arthur, shall you speak to my

daughter, but in the presence of me or her father. Pass from the room who will, I shall remain.

GEOF. I expected this from your justice, Lady Vere, and, therefore, in silence, trusted to it.

ARTHUR. Lady Vere, you are welcome to remain if you think proper, but let all the rest depart.

SIR NICH. Sir Arthur Matchlowe, I have not deserved that you should make this outrage in my family; but as this untoward accident has happened, you shall have your way. Friends, we will defer these nuptials until the morning.

*Exeunt all at C.D., except ARTHUR, FRANCES, and LADY VERE.*

ARTHUR. Do you know me, Miss Vere ? I am still that Arthur Matchlowe to whom those lips swore eternal fidelity—what in the fatal battle's heat made me guard a life that else was worthless? your love !—what allayed the burning heat of fever, and soothed the tortures of a wounded body? It was that cheering cordial to my sinking heart; your love ---your pledged and sacred love.

LADY V. My daughter, Sir Arthur has no reason to dispute the identity of a past promise but——

ARTHUR. I pray you be patient Madam, my answer must come from *her own lips*. Once more, Miss Vere, I am that Arthur Matchlowe to whom  you granted the solemn engagement, that you now design to retract.

FRANCES. It was—my mother !

LADY V. She speaks truly ; it *was* I who advised her to forget an unhappy and precipitate attachment. You see the total incapacity of my daughter to answer you, but I will reply for her: you have her own letter under her own hand, demanding the surrender of that contract, and here is another contract, by which she bestows her hand and heart on that worthy man, Geoffrey Matchlowe.

ARTHUR. Geoffrey Matchlowe! this is indeed undeniable evidence ! there Madam, is the written pledge of your first engagement, and of my egregious folly. (*offers paper*)

FRANCES *endeavours to take it, but is unable from emotion*—LADY VERE *does, and gives it her.*

ARTHUR. And now will I drive all thoughts of thee from

my bosom, and for ever! Farewell! and may'st thou—I pray it from my whole heart—that thou may'st not become the world's wonder for this unexampled act of perjury and falsehood !

*Exit C.*

*Pistol fired without.*

FRANCES. (*starts up and screams*) Ah ! they have murdered him!

LADY V. Frances, I conjure you.

FRANCES. Away, Madam, away ! one victim is enough.

*Rushes out, C., followed by LADY VERE.*

SCENE III.-*The Hall.*

*Enter GEOFFREY, R.H.*

GEOF. Cursed chance ! my pistol missed its aim! another hour and she had been mine—my wife, and then her love sick fancy had not dared to stray. But he must be disposed of. Goliah!

*Enter GOLIAH, L.H.*

—Most apropos ! Arthur Matchlowe is here.

GOLIAH. So is his man, Peter Pipkin, as my stomach and back can testify.

GEOF. Speed to the next magistrate, and crave assistance to arrest a renowned traitor, Sir Arthur Matchlowe, and lead the officers to meet me in St. George's Fields. Haste! life and death hang upon thy speed, Goliah.

GOLIAH. I fly.

*Exeunt GEOFFREY R., GOLIAH L.*

SCENE IV.-*St. George's Fields.*

*Enter SIR ARTHUR and PETER, L.H.*

ARTHUR. And now, my faithful servant, here must we part.

PETER. My dear master, I saw the resolution in your eye, but dared not anticipate it with my words. Kill me if you will, Sir, but do not drive me from you.

ARTHUR. You have no longer a master.

PETER. Yes, while the heir of Matchlowe lives! I am but a servant, but my earliest duty, e'en from childhood was to you; I have eaten and drank at your cost; my old mother nursed you; these eyes have watched you in sickness; these arms have fought by your side; I have lived and prospered with the fortunes of your noble house, and if I desert it whilst a timber hangs together, I wish I may be hanged for a rascal.

ARTHUR. Hie then, and prepare horses on the instant. I leave London for ever.

PETER. I shall be in the saddle in less than three minutes.

*Exit L.H.*

ARTHUR. Frances! cruel Frances! can it be possible! No, no; false as thou art, I will not curse thee!

*He is about to go off, L. 1 E., when GEOFFREY interposes from, L.U.E.*

GEOF. You pass not yet, Arthur Matchlowe, a long account has stood for years between us. The fitting time has come at last, and you must hear the items. The earliest feeling my deserted and dishonoured mother breathed into my heart, was hatred to you;—not that common hatred which chance first generates and after-circumstances bid flourish, but one which, like the poisonous upas, at once penetrates and pervades the system. The coarseness of my food, and raiment, the neglect of attendants, was all compared with thine, and all worked as stimulants to the deadly venom that coursed through my youthful veins. Even in childhood I could have stabbed you! The times became troubled; I threw myself on the waves, buoyed up by this absorbing passion of revenge and hatred: its mighty tide swept off the towering landmarks of Feudal Pride, and on its receding, I found myself your equal.

ARTHUR. I hear thee, villain!

GEOF. My hope was to possess that title and estate which but for thee, perhaps legitimately had been mine. My aim has prospered: that title, that estate, *is mine!* You loved too; I swore to cross that love, and it is done! Your mistress is my bride; willingly, so you think; but no, such change in woman's love were an every day occurrence. She

loved, she doated, yea, still she loves and doats upon you. Your letters were intercepted, and by me; hers, by her mother. Had you arrived but two days sooner, she had been yours; now she is mine, the future mother of my children, the wife of my——No, not of my affections, but my hate!

AUTHOR. Villain! oh, matchless villain! hence, lest I spum and trample on thee.

*Seizes him, hurling him round to R.—GEOFFREY falls—ARTHUR is going off, when he rises, draws a dagger, and springing upon ARTHUR stabs him in the back.*

ARTHUR. *(turning and drawing his sword)* Ha! base assassin, my flowing blood washes out the name of brother. This to thy false heart!

*Combat--GEOFFREY is slain—ARTHUR falls wounded.*

*Enter PETER, L.*

PETER. Oh! heavens! *(raises ARTHUR)*

*Enter OFFICER and SOLDIERS, R.U.E.*

OFFICER. Where is the traitor Arthur Matchlowe?

ARTHUR. Here is Sir Arthur Matchlowe—a Cavalier, no traitor, but an enemy to traitors and a loyal subject of his King—heaven bless him! *(sinks back)*

*Enter FRANCES, SIR NICHOLAS, and LADY VERE, R.H.U.E.*

FRANCES. The doom has come! I knew that it would end thus.

ARTHUR. Farewell, Frances! dear, dear Fran——*(dies)*

FRANCES. *(shrieks and falls upon the body)*

LADY V. Raise her!

*They do so--she recovers.—Bell tolls.*

FRANCES. The very hour! The magic chamber—the mystic rites—all is as was then foretold. Oh, my lord! my love! my husband! I come! thy faithful Frances follows thee to a better world! *(dies)*

CURTAIN.

*The copyright of this drama is the property of Thomas Hailes Lacy, it being assigned to him, by Mr. William Farren, the Executor and Administrator of Mr. Percy Farren.*