

OUR
OLD HOUSE AT HOME.

A Domestic Drama.

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

THOMAS BLAKE,

AUTHOR OF

*Life as it is, Wapping Old Stairs, Lonely Man of the Ocean,
Spanking Legacy, Land and Sea, Poverty, Poor Dog Tray,
Cattle Stealers, Edith Emerson, Glen Girl, False
Light, Bridge of Kehl, Drawn for the Militia,
Recluse of Messina, Life Boat, &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

First Performed at Sadler's Wells Theatre.

Characters.

VINCENT MIDDLETON (<i>of Middleton Hall</i>)	MR. ELVIN.	
GREENLAND (<i>a Farmer</i>)	MR. H. MARSTON.	
MICHAEL WRIGHT	MR. H. HALL.	
MAT MAYBUSH	MR. J. W. COLLIER.	
GEORGE RUTLEY	MR. J. B. HILL.	
JEMMY JENKINS	MR. RICHARDSON.	
DARK DAVY (<i>a vagabond</i>)	MR. DRY.	
FANNY GREENLAND	} (<i>the Farmer's Daughters</i>)	} MRS. E. HONNER.
SOPHIA GREENLAND		
BECKY WIGGLES (<i>a Maid of All-work</i>)	MRS. R. BARNETT.	
MABEL (<i>a Gipsy</i>)	MISS RICHARDSON.	

A lapse of Five Years between the Acts.

COSTUMES—That of the Present Day.

Scenery and Properties.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Exterior of a neat Farm, covered with jessamines, R. 2 E. ; beyond which set Barns; on R., a fenced Garden with wicket gate; gates across back; in the distance, the open country; time sunrise, a rainbow in the horizon. (1)

SCENE II.—Landscape. 1st Grooves. (2)

SCENE III.—Interior of the Farm; practicable door and window; old-fashioned bureau. (3)

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Handsome Apartment. 2nd Grooves; Side Pieces with doors. (4)

SCENE II.—Landscape. 1st Grooves. (5)

SCENE III.—Set Landscape, at sunset; in the distance the Village; a rustic stile, c.; two set trees, practicable; whalebone bushes, with two entranees; bank half-breast high runs across the stage; on R. behind bank, Gipsy's Tent and fire. (6)

SCENE IV.—Neat Room in the King's Head; practicable door. (7)

SCENE V.—Same as Scene III. (Moonlight.)

(1) Whip to smack; blank letter for Greenland. Nosegay for Fanny.

(2) Pocket book, letter (colored paper), purse, whip, stick, two guineas in purse.

(3) An old-fashioned bureau, small key for Fanny, bunch of small keys for Greenland, two chairs discovered when scene opens.

(4) Handsome covered chairs, silver snuff box, valentine, pistol to fire, a picklock (opens it), staff and picklocks for Officers.

(5) Pattens, bundle, box, bells at wing, L.

(6) Gipsies' stick-fire, bludgeon and knife for Davy, certificate for Mabel; pistol to fire behind flats.

(7) Bludgeon and pistol discovered. Will for George.

*This Piece, and all Dramas written by the late Mr. Blake, are the
Property of Thomas Hailes Lacy.*

OUR OLD HOUSE AT HOME.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Exterior of the Briar's Farm (the whole stage.)—On the R. Farm House, beyond which are Barns with Gates.—On the L. is a fenced Garden, with small Gate.—At the back, the entrance to the Farm; in the distance is seen the open Country.—Time, sunrise.—A Rainbow in the horizon.—At the rising of the curtain the sound of the mail is heard, and the crack of a whip, which is broken by the notes of a Lark singing.*

Enter SOPHY GREENLAND from the Farm, R. 2 R.

SOPHY. Well, George was right, he said the thunderstorm last night would bring a lovely morning, and what can be more beautiful? the air is fresh and pure, and the earth is brightened by the rising sun. This is a happy home; all are content, and labour seems delight.

Enter MAT MAYBUSH, L.

Heyday, Matthew! what ails you?

MAT. I doan't know, Miss Sophy, I be a strange lad.

SOPHY. Indeed!

MAT. Yes, I bean't like another mortal being; I think I'm an evil spirit as they calls it; I'm not myself, abroad or at home, at work or at play, awake or asleep,—nothing pleases me, I'm always a grumbling!

SOPHY. And yet you used to be so cheerful, so willing, so obliging!

MAT. (*sighing*) Ah! I didn't know trouble then. You'd hardly believe it, when Aunt Margery died and they told me of it, I was hard at work, I blubbers a bit, and then I sets to a whistling, and they called me an nat'ral pig, but I didn't mind 'em, for Aunt Margery left me in her will a matter of seven pound ten,—so I thought I was a made man, but I warn't.

SOPHY. Why you were rich, Matthew!

MAT. Oh yes, I wur independent enough for a while, but I warn't long afore I wur as poor as a church mouse!

SOPHY. How came that to pass?

MAT. Ah! (*sighing*) She has a power to answer for!

SOPHY. Whom?

MAT. Becky Wiggles;—You'd hardly believe me, Miss Sophy, that lass turned me topsy-turvy, she ruined me quite !

SOPHY. (*smiling*) You don't say so ?

MAT. Yes I do,—I took to playing at all fours, and 'dulging in luxuries!

SOPHY. Indeed!

MAT. Yes, drat me! I wouldn't be content with fourpenny, but I must swill sixpenny ale,—I wore my Sunday clothes while money lasted, and I wore 'em out, I was mortal extravagant,—was a regular dash,—chaps won my money, and Becky laughed at me; so I opens my eyes, and I says to myself, " Mat," says I, " whoahy, it's time to stop," and sure enough it wur, for Margery's seven pound wur all gone, and I'd nought left but seven shilling, so I turns to work again, and all goes on pretty fairly till——

SOPHY. Till what?

MAT. Bob Baggs the post-boy comes up to Becky Wiggles and claps in her hand a letter;—Lard, if you'd only ha' seen she jump for joy! I thought the wench wur going to strikes ! I couldn't make it out no how soever, when she says to I, " Matty," says she, " look at that there!"

SOPHY. And what was it?

MAT. She ca'ad it a *Wollytine*—it wur a queer-looking affair! I'll be shot if there warn't a heart a'most as big as a bullock's, with two thingumbobs stuck through it just so, (*crossing his fingers*) and a lot o' varses—she said they wur beautiful, and cum'd all way fra' Lunnun from Jemmy Jenkins, and then she falls too a giggling again ! Ah ! says I, I only wish Mr. Jemmy Jenkins wur here, I'd larrup he well wi' cart whip,—I'd gi' him a lesson for his *wollytines* !

SOPHY. Ha, ha, ha!

MAT. (*staring*) She be tittering at me too ! They calls women the soft sex, I'll be shot if they arn't as hard as a horse-shoe! (*aloud*) Now I want to ax thee a question, Miss Sophy, if thee'lt be good enough to answer it!

SOPHY. What is it ?

MAT. (*displaying himself*) Don't you think me a passonable chap?

SOPHY. Very so!

MAT. (*snapping his fingers*) Then that for Madam Becky, she arn't no judge howsomever ! I knowed as much myself, I can see it—bless you, when I looks in the polished pewter platter—we don't want a looking-glass at home. Only wait till thou see'st me in my spic-span new frock, and highlows without hob-nails, and then you'll say some'at indeed. I'll make up my mind I'll treat Becky wi' 'difference, drat me if I don't! Eh!—oh, lard, here be measter coming ! Do'ee be good-natured, Miss Sophy; doant'ee say you seed me, and I'll take all your letters to George Rutley, and say nothing to nobody.

Music.—He runs off through centre gates at back, as GREENLAND enters from the farm house, R. 3 E.

GREENLAND. (*with a letter in his hand*) Yes, Michael, it is the act of an honest man,—he has taken a step that reflects on him credit; I cannot deny him his wish, though the granting it bring sorrow and regret, for I shall miss my careful housewife sorely; my blooming girl, my tender helpmate! when thou art gone I shall feel thy mother's loss more keenly! (*puts up the letter*) Ah! Sophy, girl, ever on the watch, ever busy about the farm,—thou'rt a good girl, a right good girl! Kiss me! Bless thee, lass—I ought to be, and I am proud of thee! Where's Fanny?

SOPHY. In her paradise of sweets, as she terms it. Ever since Squire Middleton sent old Graft with the exotics from the Manor Grounds, early and late, her thought, her very heart, seems set upon them. Why do you look so sorrowful, my father?

GREEN. I'll tell thee, Sophy, for thou art prudent. I like not these gifts—these beauteous flowers, though they may adorn her little garden, may be the innocent means to corrupt a heart pure as the buds themselves. Fanny is young and childish, too prone to flattery, loves not her plain, her happy home, prizes not the smiles of her sister or her father.

SOPHY. Dear father, I must not hear you say so! Indeed, you wrong her! She is all heart—for I have witnessed when you chid and left her presence, she would cry bitterly, and would often say to me, " Sister, you are a happy girl, our father loves you, never scolds nor is angry with you; tell me your secret, I will strive to learn it?"

GREEN. (*affected*) Did she—did she? It is a father's fond affection feeds this harshness—it is the outpouring of a heart, perhaps too sensitive to fear. Since thy mother died, the world has thriven with; but what is worldly wealth, my girl, weighed against the riches of the heart! I'd rather be a beggar, wending my weary way through the world, with my pure and innocent children around me, than the richest man that ever stepped, and they were severed from their home—the home to which they are ever welcome, their father's heart.

SOPHY. Fear not for Fanny, father, I would stake my life upon her duty.

GREEN. And so would I; but I have seen and proved mankind—have awoke to sense of injury—have known deceit—allurement—(and there are many snares for the unwary) the young mind needs the maturer hand of age to guide it safely through this busy world: Fanny is artless, and a cunning flatterer might easily mislead her. (*FANNY sings without, L. 2 E.*) Hark!

SOPHY. She is here!

FANNY passes from the garden through the little gate, L. 2 E.

FANNY. See, Sophy, see! they match the rainbow's brightness! are they not beautiful? I've cut them from the stem before their sweetness faded—I've brought them for—(*seeing GREENLAND, and timidly handing the flowers*) father!

GREEN. For me! artless child, I'll wear them for my Fanny's sake. (*taking the flowers*) Their colours are bright and varied;

these glittering hues would soon perish before a warm sun, but here is one that would not die so speedily, it is a briar—a thorn! what made you pluck it ?

FANNY. To prop their tender stems.

GREEN. Fit emblem of the world's way—these flowers are like to young girl's life: in her early home, she blooms fresh and beautiful—the days pass on, and the gazer views with delight the charming flower, then comes a longing to possess it; 'tis plucked, worn awhile, and prized there, shortly it droops and needs a prop, (of thorns she finds abundance) at length it withers, and its bloom flies—had it remained in its humble soil, it had not died so soon.

FANNY. (*timidly*) I do not understand you, father.

GREEN. I will be plain with thee, Fanny, 'tis fit I should be so: the young squire is not welcome here to me, his motives are not prompted by honor, his presents and flowers are but lures to win a flower, to me more precious—that flower is thee, Fanny.

FANNY. I understand you now, dearly understand you! Father, you shall have no cause to prompt these fears—no flower, the Squire's gift shall live. (*going, SOPHY stays her*) Do not stay me Sophy, no act or deed of mine *can* please my father—this one perhaps may.

GREEN. Headstrong girl! to whom the counsel of a parent sounds unwelcome—what would avail the destruction of those plants if the giver found a welcome here ? I forbid your meetings. You may deem me harsh, Frances, I speak for your welfare; you do not know how terribly harsh a father can be when urged by disobedience. We'll drop that theme—nay more—we will not speak of it again ; you are not unmindful of your duty, and I feel assured will ne'er betray it—There, I'm not angry. George Rutley will be here to-day, from London; 'twill not be long ere will come a happy day for one, though not perhaps to me.

FANNY. What day, father ?

GREEN. Thy sisters bridal day. He asks my consent to wed her: he is worthy, honest, and beloved—the blood mounts in thy face, Soph, and that's a tell-tale) I have no plea to refuse him but one—

SOPHY. Ah!

GREEN. 'Tis a selfish lurking round my heart tells me I can **ill** spare my girl. (*places his hands upon her shoulders, and looks at her with affection*)

FANNY. (*aside*) Happy Sophy, thou hast all a father's love, thou art fortune's favourite child! although I sorrow I will not envy thee.

GREEN. (to SOPHY) Thou wilt have another hearth to cheer with thy smile of good nature, who shall give such welcome to your father ? (*crosses to FANNY and taking her hand*) The little gad-fly here? hold up thy eyes, girl—ere thy sister leaves us, she must teach thee the housewife's duty, the heart is warm and willing, and she will not have a dullard for her pupil.

FANNY. Ah, father, I would strive night and day to see you happy—to win your smile, such a smile as beamed but now upon me. The Squire shall come no more—I will forget I ever knew

him ; unheeded shall be the flowers that bring him when absent to my memory, my home shall be my father's hearth, my only thought his happiness!

GREEN. Bless you ! (*kisses her forehead*) But come, girls, come to your household duty—look to the maids within, I'll see to the men without; see the sun has risen high, and unless I'm by, there will be idlers in the five acre field ! Our farm shortly will be the abode of jollity, what with Sophy's wedding and the sports of the harvest home ! Good morning, girls, good morning.

Music.—Exit through gate at back.

SOPHY. Kind, generous father, it will grieve me much to be separated from thee—Fanny will win his heart, he will have no other to share it!

FANNY. I'd hate thee if I deemed you thought so ! this is the first ungenerous reflection I ever heard from you, and it grieves me ! Our father's love has been ever yours; far, far more than mine; often, how very often had I cause to think so, and still I murmured not—I shed tears but no eye saw them, I was a lone unheeded thing, his voice seldom welcomed, or his smile cheered me, they were all thine, and yet I envied thee not; you were ever his confidant, his adviser—what was I ? a worthless being, to whom a kindness were a condescension—do not weep, dear Sophy, our father will love you ever, the little I shall steal will not beggar you much ! (*embraces her*) Your heart will awaken to another and a new love—the love of a husband, Sophy, perhaps to innocents, who soon will strip my father of his share!

SOPHY. Oh, never! if heaven wills it so, I should love them dearly, but nature would be dead when I forgot my father, he who has been throughout my life so good, so very good !

FANNY. Come, we'll talk no more of that—and thou art to become a bride—(how sweet the title) there thou art again chosen by fortune—no George Rutley comes to me to stroll on summer nights or chat before the winter's fire—no, George Rutley comes on Sabbath mornings to beau me to the village church—no, George Rutley whispers fond things in my ear—no, George Rutley at the casement steals the loving kiss—

SOPHY. Fa  :

FANNY. It's true—I've seen and heard it oftentimes, and something whispered to my heart, that Sophy was created to be loved.

SOPHY. And so art thou, dear Fanny, there liveth none so humble on the earth but owns some love: but you mistake, you own a father's, a sisters fondest, firmest love; and for a beau, I know of one who'd fain find favour in your eyes.

FANNY. Cold, cold must be his love, whose heart owned not the courage to reveal it! Tell me who it is.

SOPHY. Michael Wright.

FANNY. Michael Wright! You're jesting, surely!

SOPHY. Believe me, no.

FANNY. What, Michael Wright! the modest Michael Wright! he who stammers in his speech, and never looks you in the face— if you meet him in a morning's walk, a natural good morrow steals

to your lip. (*imitating*) " Aye aye, miss, foine for young wheat!" then should the sky look lowering, and you tell him it is dull—" Yeaz, yeaz, bad fore the hay, but charming for the tares !" No, no, Michael Wright must seek for another love, he's no fit swain for Fanny Greenland.

SOPHY. Why, he's a farmer's son, our equal, Fanny—an honest industrious young man, with a good heart, and he will, I'm sure, make you happy.

FANNY. That he never will.

SOPHY. Be not so hasty in your conclusion—he will, I'm sure he will, though you may not like him now, he'll be your husband and I shall live to see it!

FANNY. Trifler!

Enter, MAT through gate at back.

SOPHY. What's the matter?

MAT. Mischiefs the matter—Becky Wiggles is the matter—there she is as impudent as a turkey-cock, sitting a top o' the stile waiting for Bob Baggs, the pot-boy with the answer to the wollytine in her hand—if I was to knock little Bob Baggs down and take the letter, would that be robbing the mail? if it aint, I'm hanged if I don't!

SOPHY. You'll be hanged if you do!

MAT. Becky Wiggles! Becky Wiggles! you see how near she's brought me to an untimely end! Oh, that precious wollytine!

FANNY. Valentine you mean, Matthew.

MAT. Well, didn't I say wollytine? If I didn't, you blame Becky Wiggles and not me—what do they mean by a wollytine?

FANNY. Valentine —

MAT. Well, I said wollintine!

FANNY. 'Tis a day of the year, (the 14th of February) when they say the first unmarried person you meet you are destined to wed—it is a day on which lovers send their tokens.

MAT. What anything in the shape of a large heart, stuck thro, cris-me-cross so? (*crosses his fingers*)

FANNY. Yes, that's a lover's heart pierced by Cupid's darts—but why do you ask me? I know nothing of valentines, of Cupid's and darts!

MAT. Don't you? Heigho! I wish I didn't—I smell a rat—Wollytine's day the 14th of February, that is six months ago—pheugh I'm a cake, it aint no wollytine at all, she's a trying to make me jealous—Ha, ha, ha! but she won't though—I'm so thankful, Miss Fanny, you've made me so happy. (*going*) Odd-zooks! I was almost forgetting—that's no wonder for I am almost beside myself for joy—Miss Fanny, mum! there's somebody waiting for you near the copse.

FANNY. Whom?

MAT. Young Squire, he bid me tell 'ee—

SOPHY. Fanny—

FANNY. I need no remembrance, dear Sophy—Matthew, you say I've made you happy.

MAT. Happy ! I could jump out of my skin for joy !

FANNY. If you would make me so, return to the Squire, tell him you have not seen me—say I am absent, ill—say anything, only prevent his coming here.

MAT. I wool—I wool—bless you, leave me alone for a bit of a lie! *Music till end of scene.—Runs off through gate at back.*

FANNY. Father, I do not disobey you, said I not—" My home shall be my father's hearth, my only thought his happiness !" It shall—it shall—Come, Sophy, come ! *they go into the house, R.*

SCENE II.—A Copse or Landscape. (1st grooves.)

Enter SQUIRE MIDDLETON, hastily, L.

SQUIRE. 'Sdeath! what an age my rustic beauty tarries, each moment seems a life to the expectant lover's heart—Lover! psha, I'm getting sentimental, and yet 'twere falsehood to deny the term—Dear Fanny, why did not fate design thee for a higher state? why did it place the obstacle of birth between me and bliss? Psha! that can be surmounted, and yet to wrong her innocent confidence—on the eve of marriage as I am with another, possessing a hundred-fold more riches, but still a beggar compared to her in charms! Duty tells me I ought to break this ill-placed affection, but my heart rebels against it—Eh, here comes my rustic rival!

Enter MICHAEL WRIGHT, R. 1 E.

MICH. Yes, I'll take thy advice, George Rutley, and who knows but I may be as lucky as thou be—I'll ax Greenland to gi' me his daughter for a wife—I never could find the heart to tell her how dearly I love her, she be so rattlesome and fly-away like, but her sister Sophy guessed as much, and when she jested me I couldn't for my soul deny it—and why should a man deny that which be his pride? Yes, I'll do it, I'll put question to Farmer. (*going, meets the Squire*) Eh, the Squire! Sarvent, Squire!

SQUIRE. Ah, Michael! what, going to be married, eh?

MICH (*aside*) Eh, surely he didn't overhear me. Why yes, yes, Squire—I hope—I be.

SQUIRE. I give you joy.

MICH. Thank'ee, squire, time enough for that when I ha' found the bride.

SQUIRE. Eh? found the bride! 'tis strange to publish the banns without the spinster's name—at church surely I heard the name of Michael Wright among the candidates for matrimonial happiness!

MICH. Na, you didn't—I wish 'ee did—there's no such luck as yet—you might ha' heard the name o' Wright, but then it warn' Michael, but Peter, cousin Peter—Ah, he's a happy lad—he's going to be tacked to Bessy Brown, she's a good and a tidy lass, and I'm sure from the bottom of my heart I wish 'em happy.

SQUIRE. Peter was it? I thought it sounded very much like Michael—How is it, Michael, that your cousin is more successful with our village beauties than yourself?

MICH. Oh, drat him, it's all along o' his feace!

SQUIRE. His face! surely that can't befriend him much, for to say truth, he's in the acceptance of the word ill-favoured.

MICH. So I've often told him, he's as ugly as sin compared wi' I: but what's the use of a pretty feace if thee ha'na some brass in it? I tell him his feace 'ud look parson out 'o his tithes at any time, and I'll be whipped if it wouldn't!

SQUIRE. (*aside*) 'Sdeath! can that lout have delivered my message, or what mischance prevents her coming?—perhaps she has observed Michael and wishes his absence—good, day Michael.
(*aloud and looking off anxiously.*)

MICH. Good day, Squire—Eh, what the dickens be he straining his neck as long as a gander's for I wonder?—he be waiting for somebody that's certain—I'll make believe to go, creep round by the bank, and ha' a peep at him from behind bushes.

SQUIRE. (*half aside*) No trace of her yet!

MICH. *Her!* he said her—then it's a petticoat as sure as nine-pence! They do say he ha' cast an eye on Fanny, woe be to him if he has a thought o' wrong towards her, altho' he be a Squire, that shouldn't save him; dang me if I wouldn't break his neck like a 'bacca-pipe—Dutiful good-day, Squire. (*aside*) If it be Fanny Greenland, d—me, but I'll spoil his poaching! (*aloud*) My sarvice to you, Squire. *Bows and goes off, L. 1 E.*

SQUIRE. The lout has gone at last—the village gossips say that he aspires to the hand of Fanny, the charming, timid Fanny—No, no, young Plough-and-Harrow, my blooming rose must not be worn by thee—Death and the devil! I'm losing all patience—Ah, my Mercury returns, but Venus is not his partner.

Enter MAT, breathless, R. 1 E.

MAT. Pheugh! ain't I made smart haste?

SQUIRE. Haste, you snail! Tell me did you see her?

MAT. Yes.

SQUIRE. And what said she?


MAT. What did she say? I'm ashamed to tell you, it's so unlike a lady!

SQUIRE. Out with it.

MAT. You'll excuse me.

SQUIRE. I will not, sirrah—what said she?

MAT. Oh, well if you wish, she said—"there were my betters not far a-field and I might go to the devil!"

SQUIRE. What, Fanny Gree—d?

MAT. No, Becky Wiggles?

SQUIRE. Curse Becky Wiggles!

MAT. Moreover, she said—

SQUIRE. Fanny?

MAT. Na, Becky?

SQUIRE. (*shaking his whip*) You rascal, if you don't instantly discharge your mission, I'll—

MAT. Will you though; I say is that the way you usually pay

the postman? (*aside*) He be but a snipe of a fellow arter all!
(*aloud*) I say, Squire, if I may be so bold, just for fun like, or if thee
likest it better, I'll wroastle thee for a mug o' ale—come on!

SQUIRE. Plebeian! What of Fanny?

MAT. Ecod, how troubled thee beest about her—aye, its natural,
just like me and Becky Wiggles!

SQUIRE. Idiot!

MAT. Na I bean't, bless you I can tell how many beans make
five!

SQUIRE. I lose all patience! Mat, tell your story straight-forward
and I'll give you a guinea.

MAT. Will 'ee? say it again!

SQUIRE. I repeat it. (*shewing it*)

MAT. Lard, a gouden guinea—tip him over, Squire, and I'll tell 'ee
all—(SQUIRE *gives it*) Why you see, first and foremost I meets you
here—

SQUIRE. Never mind that.

MAT. Oh, but I did, or how could I do the job tidily, and you
says to me—"Mat," says you, "Mat,"—you were very familiar
Squire?

SQUIRE. Psha!

MAT. "Mat," says you, "do thou go down to the Briars and
watch a 'tunity to speak to Miss Fanny Greenland all alone wi
nobody by but herself?

SQUIRE. You did—

MAT. Not, I didn't—but stop a bit, I must tell my story my own
way.

SQUIRE. Do so and speedily—make haste!

MAT. Didn't I make haste?—"So I was to tell Miss Greenfield,
Squire (that be you) were waiting to speak wi' her at the end o'
the copse"

SQUIRE. That's correct.

MAT. I'm ashamed of thee, it be unmannerly to interrupt—so
you see I hadn't got further on the road than the stile, and sure
enough there she wur!

SQUIRE. What Fanny?

MAT. No, Becky Wiggles, but we won't mind her now, I didn't
much, so I kept on telling over the message in my mind for fear
I might forget—then I came to the Briar's shed, she'd got a letter
in her hand—

SQUIRE. For me?

MAT. Na, for Jemmy Jenkins?

SQUIRE. Psha!

MAT. Lard, lard, how the petticoats do bother a body! Well I
came to Greenland's farm and there she was—

SQUIRE. Ah!

MAT. Miss Soph and Fa—(*aside*) I'm bothered—how shal I
twist un round?

SQUIRE. Sophy and Fanny!

MAT. Yes, no—that is—(*aside*) What the dickens can he want
with a farmer's daughter? I'll tell him the truth and then perhaps

he won't mislist the lass any more. (*aloud*) Yes there they were. Sophy and Fanny; so what does I do first, but I up and tells 'em all about Becky Wiggles and her wolly tine; then she said Wollytine's Day be in February, and this be August, so it couldn't be a wollytine at all you see, and I wur quite pleased; then says I to Miss Fanny—

SQUIRE. To Fanny—go on.

MAT. Yes, says I, "Miss, (*whispers*) there be somebody waiting for you down at the copse." (*mysteriously*) "Whom?" says she (in a whisper) "Young Squire," says I—Mum!

SQUIRE. Good fellow! Well, what reply!

MAT. So says she, "The Squire!"

SQUIRE. She was delighted.

MAT. No she warn't:—"Tell the squire," says she, and I never seed her look so black afore in all my born days—"tell him," says she—(*imitating*)—just so—"tell him, friend Matthew," says she—and then her eyes twinkled so pretty—"tell him," say she, "that I be going out to take tea this arternoon—tell him I am absent—I'm ill—I've got a hollow stump, and I be going to have him lugged out in a crack, and arter that," says she, "I have a nasty toad of a corn, and I'll have him cut at the same time."

SQUIRE. (*aside*) There is some meaning in this—she never could send so confused a reply; perhaps accident prevents her coming, and she has given an evasive answer to this lout to avoid suspicion. It is well I am prepared, (*takes out pocket-book and produces letter*) if she has scruples this will remove them all. Matthew!

MAT. (*aside*) Eh, Matthew!—not Mat—here is something particular to do! (*aloud*) Squire!

SQUIRE. Return to the Briars Farm, contrive to see Miss Fanny Greenland alone—mind alone—and unobserved give her this letter, I feel assured some unforeseen circumstance prevents her coming, and when done meet me on the lawn of the hall, and another guinea shall be yours.

MAT. What another! Huzza, huzza! that be the sort o' work—two guineas! I'll ha' a new pair o' buckskins—long life to the Squire—I'll gi' the letter, and be back in no time.

Exit, R. 1 E.

SQUIRE. Yes, it must be so, I surmise Fanny would never send so rude an answer, at all hazards that letter will bring her to the appointed spot. Yes, Fanny, thy image is graven here, and the world has no charm unless thou share it with me!

Exit L. 1 E.

MICHAEL *looks from behind the bushes.*

MICHAEL. Mighty foine! Share it with thee—I'll take care she don't though! As to that fetch-and-carry fellow, Mat, I ha' a crow to pluck wi' he. Ah, Fanny! where be thy heart? thou canst smile upon the deceiver, yet scorn to welcome him that means thee honestly. But I'll never despair though—she be young, and girls be always dazzled with fine clothes and flowery speeches—I'll

seek her feyther and tell him all—No, no, time enough, my first care must be if I can to prevent their meeting. Ah, Squire, thee mayst be a cute 'un, but thee hast only another to out-wit beside me, and that's Old Nick ! Drat thee, I'll watch thee well!

Exit L. 1 E.

SCENE III.—*The Interior of Greenland's Farm. A window one side practicable; an old-fashioned bureau.*

Enter FANNY, L.

FANNY. Happy Sophy! thou art content with the husband of thy choice—thou art blessed by a father's sanction, and your lot in life will be happy—when will the prospect of such a day dawn on me ? Thou hast no ambition—no yearning beyond thy humble state, while I—Fate was a juggler when she gave the farmer a second child—she was meant for a blessing, but cast in a higher mould, endowed with a heart above the dull drudgery of a farm or the love of green fields. No, fancy ever pictured the bustle of the gay world—of routs, of balls, the scene of bright variety—why do I think of them ? I but deceive myself—they were never meant for me, and yet Middleton has often sworn that I should see them yet, as his wife; and yet my father would crush the prospects of his child! Ah, fear not my father, your daughter knows her duty and never will forget it—anything but his wife she will never become, and he has called heaven to witness, I believed him—I believe him still!

MATTHEW *puts his head in R. D. F.*

MAT. Hist, Miss Fanny !

FANNY. Who is there ?

MAT. Nobody, only I, Mat Maybush—mum—there's a guinea's worth ! (*presenting letter*)

FANNY. What ?

MAT. Psha! I mean it's worth a guinea to me, and I warrant when you read it you wouldn't take two; it's from the Squire!

FANNY. (*aside*) Shall I reject it? Why should I? the caprice of my father may prevent me seeing him, but it cannot be criminal to hear that he is well and happy.

MAT. There that's between he, you and I, nobody by; I'll be off to the Hall. Who'll say I didn't manage that clever? that's because Becky Wiggles warn't sitting a top o' the stile. Good bye, Miss Fanny, I must hurry back, or I shall miss the fun at the harvest home. Good bye. *Exit from the door.*

FANNY. My hand trembles, I dread, yet wish to read it—let me be careful—no eye observes me. (*looks round and then breaks the seal*) Yes, 'tis his hand, on coloured paper too, how unlike to any here. (*reads*) " My own dear Fanny, I have prepared this letter in case accident should prevent me the happiness of your presence at the appointed spot—you already know the fate that threatens me, it is in your power alone to prevent it—pity me, Fanny, let

B

not the avarice of my father for ever blight my peace, if as you have often said you love me, prove it now—the Rev. Mr. Mortimer waits at the Hall with a special license to make me the happiest of men; it is in your power by refusal to render me the most wretched deny me and obedience to my father's will hurries me to London, to unite my destiny to a being I must ever loathe. Your's ever, Vincent." How shall I act? how decide?—no friend, no adviser—divided passions are warring in my soul—the home of infancy, the sister, father, the partners of my early life bid me stay; but there is a voice that soundeth sweeter far, it is his, my first, my only love, he invites me to a higher and a happier fate! Why should I not fly to meet its round of joy? but that sorrow kills that joy, for I hear a father's bitter sigh, I see a fond girl's tear I—sigh not, father—weep not, sister—Fanny will dwell here for ever (*glancing at the letter*) "It is in your power to render me most wretched!" In my power, Vincent? Oh, happy, doubly happy be each moment of your life, shall ever be my prayer (*reading*) "to unite my destiny to a being I must ever loathe!" For me, for me, he would brave his father's anger! and yet I fear to meet mine, and by delay consign to misery the heart that loves me! What says he—the minister is at the Hall to make me his for ever! I cannot pause—No father's fear—no sister's caprice must stay me. Yes, Vincent, I will be thine—I will preserve this precious paper to the latest hour of my life! (*hastily puts it in and locks the bureau*) Yes, dear Vincent, you have called heaven to witness your truth, and ungenerous would be my heart to doubt it—when united we will return and smiles of joy shall welcome Fanny as the Squire's bride!

Music.—Hastily snatching her hat from the wall and hurrying towards the door, opens it, and SOPHY stands before her.

SOPHY. Why, Fanny, whither are you going?

FANNY. I—I—I am faint—the evening is hot and sultry—my heart throbs, and my brain burns—I want air—air—(*falls in her sister's arms*)

SOPHY. Fanny, dear Fanny, what wildness is this? her eyes are streaming with tears! Cheer, cheer thee, dear sister! (*FANNY bursts into flood of tears and falls on SOPHY'S neck*) You will be better soon—tears lighten the heart—come, you brighten—that's right, that's brave now—Fanny, I am unworthy your love, tell me what has occasioned this.

FANNY. (*aside*) What shall I say? I cannot, dare not, trust her! (*aloud*) This solitude—this setting gloom—for see the sun has sunk below the trees, all is death-like still—I am not used to be alone, and sad and dull thoughts will come at times even to the happiest. Fancy conjured up a thousand forms, fear was resting on my heart, you came, dear Sophy, and I joy, for fear has fled.

SOPHY. The air will revive you—I will be your companion—come.

FANNY. No, no, it is not needed—see my father comes, with him, one to thee most dear; by our love, Sophy, do not mention what has passed. I will return speedily to share the sports that

will gladden all. (*aside*) Now, Vincent, I fly to save you from the fate you deem so wretched! *Exit, D. F.*

SOPHY. Strange, romantic girl! I do not wonder at her melancholy, for this is a dreary abode when the twilight sets—but here comes George and my father to kill its gloom.

Music.—*Enter* GREENLAND and GEORGE RUTLEY, L. 2 E.

GREEN. Here is your treasure, George—so good, so dutiful a child cannot fail to ensure you happiness; there is a lurking round my heart that would fain prompt me to deny her to thee, but heaven forbid that my selfishness should be the bar between the hearts that love sincerely. (*crosses to C.*) Take her, George, she will be to you what she has ever been to me—a blessing!

GEORGE. Ah, sir, you need not extol her virtues, my heart has long known and prized them; do not blush, Sophy, the cheek may crimson at untruth, but should never colour at the praise that is just.

GREEN. Come, come, no more compliments, we have other and more pleasing work, it is to make happy those honest hearts whose toil doth fill the merchants' granary—this is the last day of harvest, and it has been a bright one, Heaven ever keep it so for the sake of the poor and needy—Sophy, order Joe and Robert to bring hither the barrel of ale I told them—this night we devote to glee. *Exit SOPHY, door in F.*

George, (*laughing*) you doubtless wonder at my precaution, but among the lads there are some dry souls, and I would fain keep the head cool that the heels may be light.

GEORGE. A wise resolve, sir.

GREEN. From this casement we may enjoy their rustic sports—good servants should always find good masters; and the wheat no sooner springs from the earth than the rogues talk of this day, as the end of their labour as one of the happiest of their lives—the blessing of heaven has been with me, George, I have gained respect, competence, and I trust not undeservedly. (*Music heard without*)

GEORGE. Do they not assemble early, sir?

GREEN. No, the day is past, they are anxious for the dance. (*going to the window*) Joe, see that all be happy at the supper in the barn. (*the music stops*) Well, I was about to tell you, the world has thriven with me, a brief time since I purchased the lease of the Gap Farm, your name shall be transferred to it instead of mine, I cannot give you a better proof how I estimate your industry, than in bestowing it as a portion for my Sophy, and perhaps her children, you young dog! (*heartily and giving him a nudge, goes to the bureau*) I have it here, but in which drawer I placed it, hang me if I can tell! (*he produces keys from his pocket, and opens the drawer in which FANNY has deposited the letter*) No, it's not in this one—What's this? (*producing letter and reading*) "To Miss Frances Greenland."—on gaudy paper too—be still, my heart—Hell! wake not a father's fears—What ails my sight?—my frame, every nerve doth tremble. (*hastily opens the letter, reads with violent and*

trembling emotion, at last overpowered by his feelings, sinks in a chair, and dropping the letter, covers his eyes with his hands)

GEORGE. Good Heaven! Mr. Greenland! this emotion. (GREENLAND *points without looking at the letter, GEORGE picks it up—reads*) "My own dear Fanny," signed "Vincent Middleton." The libertine! (*Music and laughter heard*)

The RUSTICS enter, door in F.

GREEN. (*rising violently*) Stop, stop—I say the voice of melody, near misery's dwelling is mockery to nature.

Re-enter SOPHY, D. F.

SOPHY. Father, dear father, why do you speak so harshly, what is it moves you thus?

GREEN. That which would move a flint!—my happy home, my little cottage of content, thy peace, thy charm has fled for ever; it is childish to see an old man weep, but these are not tears of sorrow, but of anger, deep and rooted anger! Where is she, tell me? swift as the lightning be thy speech! Where is she?

SOPHY. Whom, Fanny?

GREEN. Aye, Fanny! (*bitterly*) the object of all my care, the only being on the earth that ever planted in my heart a fear—where is she?

SOPHY. She was here but now, she will return speedily, she said as much.

Enter MICHAEL WRIGHT, at door.

MICHAEL. She told thee falsely, she will return no more!

OMNES. No more!

MICHAEL. No, I'm sorry to say—

GREEN. Out with it man! why dost falter in thy tale? what stays thy speech? there are none here but her own blood, her own friends! (*fiercely*) What art sorry for?

MICHAEL. Fanny has fled to London with Squire Middleton!

OMNES. Pursue! pursue!

MICHAEL. 'Tis useless, the chaise flew like the wind!

GREEN. Stir not a step, let her go, base, vile ingrate as she is! Heart, hold firm, burst not yet—the wayward thoughtless child; emblem of innocence, as I thought her; and she was innocent as the light of Heaven till he, that villain, poisoned her pure mind, dazzled her weak sight! But my revenge is yet to come. I'll have it, I'll have it ere I die! I'll hunt him o'er the limits of the earth! (*crosses.*) Stir not a step, breathe not a sound to stay her! Let her go, and with her her father's—

SOPHY. (*screams*) Ah! do not—do not curse her!

Music.—GREENLAND has lifted his hands to invoke the curse, SOPHY catches them and holds them down—he staggers to a chair—SOPHY kneeling places her arms on the knees of her father, and looks imploringly in his eyes, which he covers with his hands.—The RUSTICS with MICHAEL, all look on with sorrow.

TABLEAU.—END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Handsome Apartment in the House of Vincent Middleton, in Grosvenor Square.*

Music.—JEMMY JENKINS, a Dandy and a half of a livery servant enters L. 1 E. followed by BECKY WIGGLES.

BECKY. He, he, he, Jemmy !

JEMMY. (*speaking affectedly with a strong lisp*) Webecca, don't be wediculous! Jemmy! don't say Jemmy ! In the squares, they call me Mr. James—call me Mr. James, Miss Webecca!

BECKY. Oh, come none o' thee nonsense, Jemmy, I ax pardon, thee winna be offended Mr. James,—dost remember the day thou wast breeched ? I does—Mother let me paper my hair that very day ! Gracious o' marcy, there be no pleasurement in thee eyes lad, but wi' old acquaintances, the will for the deed a' the world over ! (*JEMMY laughs, and affectedly takes snuff*) Ah, that be right lad !

JEMMY. Lad! Horseshoes and Assafœtida! What willing star pwedominated to bring this little cweeter to the wealms of the gay ?

BECKY. What bee'st thee chattering about, Jemmy?—Mr. James I mean—Drat it, who ha' soaped thee scull, Jemmy ? I didn't observe it afore ! (*JEMMY reels and flops into a chair*) Have you any brown paper or a bottle o' vinegar? the lad be bad! Here you sarving girls, Jemmy—I mean Mr. James be sick!—burnt paper, or a drop of brandy!

JEMMY. Burnt paper! Ugh, ugh ! Eau de Cologne!

BECKY. Cologne! who's he?

JEMMY. (*rising*) I must wesign—I can't stand this—I'll tell her so! (*aloud*) Miss Webecca!

BECKY. Come none o' thee flummery,—thee used to call I Beck or Becky arter a day's plough or harrowing—Jemmy what ha' thee done wi' the highlows, unclé made thee ?

JEMMY. Highlows! I'm sinking, and I can't suppwess it! (*taking snuff affectedly*)

BECKY. (*knocking the box from his hand*) Don't be poking that filthy stuff up thee nose, you aint parson o' the parish at home, by and bye I'll see thee taking it wi' a spoon from thy waistcoat pocket. (*picking up box*) Solid silver, as I'm a vargin! Jemmy, what a queer chap you be! long ago in our own village you used to say, Becky, beautiful Beck, gi' us a buss, lass! and thee'd not ask, but take it. (*wiping her lips*) I'd kiss thee for old 'quaintance, Jemmy.

JEMMY. Quaintance ! Woses and lilies for the remembwance of gween fields. I'll taste the nectar of thy wuby lips, Miss Webecca.

BECKY. None o' thee fooling!

JEMMY. Becky, Beck—

BECKY. Ah ! I knows my name and I an't imprudent,—there's nobody bye, you may take a buss! (*he kisses her*) Come now, sit thee down lad, and I'll tell 'ee all about it! Squire Middleton, (bless his old heart!) told I, if I wished to come to Lunnun, I should have a sarvice wi' his son, and I ha' got it, Jemmy! Jemmy, dear Jemmy!

the poor girl's heart ha' found a resting place,—it is here, Jemmy, wi' her first, her only love!

JEMMY. Ulloah! What would Miss Wachel Woberts, my lady's maid say? (*mustering courage*) I'll be fwank and fwee—Miss Webecca, that is, I mean Becky Wiggles, you see—at least I do,—there is a wespectable lady, one Miss Wachel Woberts, to whom I have paid my devoirs, and although the limitude of a gentleman's gentleman's banns would not permit a special license, we have adopted the wegular course of being united by banns.

BECKY. I don't understand!—Oh yes, I do,—you're a deceiver—I a'nt unpacked my boxes yet—I o'nt live here! They told me at home I should be happy, but I shan't, for I've lost my lad's love! I arn't ashamed to own it, for that that is honest has no fear—Mat Maybush said as much!

JEMMY. Mat May bush! the wuffian!

BECKY. No, Jemmy,—Mat is simple, but he's an honest man! he said soft things to a young lass, and she had no ears to heed them! Good bye, I'll go home again, I'll never breathe a word but where 'tis welcome. Gi' me the green banns, and the heart that is honest! Let me tell you, Jemmy—mister James, I mean—I've thirteen and four-pence left yet,—there's the waggon, sir, though it goes slowly, it comes at last to an end, and in that end there's a husband! I 'ont say good-bye, you deceiver, you—you—you— Banns! Miss Rachel Roberts indeed! When you hear again of me I'm Mrs. Matthew Maybush! I'm a weak woman, but I'm a desperate one—only I left my pattens down stairs, I could knock you on the head, so I could, Mister Jemmy!

Exit in a rage, L. 1 E.

JEMMY. 'Pon my vewacity, but the gal has spiwit! I'm in extatics! Weally I didn't weckon the twansfer of Mr. James Jenkin's love and wegard would have passed off so well! A wustic like that, who is positively as wusty as a horse's shoe over a barn door, to aspire to me is wemarkably widiculous in the extweme! Now lovely Wachel Woberts, I'm all your own!

BECKY hastily returns, L.

BECKY. You see I hanna gone yet, Mister Jemmy, I be come back to tell 'ee a bit of my mind!

JEMMY. Miss Webecca, don't distwess yourself!

BECKY. Distress myself! What about thee, thee ugly toad! Not I! Dos't know what this is? (*shows valentine*)

JEMMY. Yes, a thingamy—a—a—a—

BECKY. No, it beant a thingamerry, hor a ha—ha—ha— It's a *wallingtine* from Mr. Jemmy Jenkins in Lunnun to Becky Wiggles in the country,—I come back to gi' it thee, and likewise to tell 'ee not to be 'dressing any more o' thee rubbish to Becky Wiggles, for Becky Wiggles 'ont be Becky Wiggles any more than three weeks, and a day or so, for I'll make Mat go to clerk and publish banns afore I sit down at home, and if ever thee comes wi' young squire down to our parts, doant 'ee be chatting any o' thee flummery, or

squeezing my hand as thee used to do, or thee 'lt stand a good chance o' getting thee jacket warmed by Mat's whip ! Oh, I don't want anything to remind me o' thee, thee viper—there's thee wallingtime, send it to Miss Wachel Woberts,—he, he, he ! (*mocking him and making a wryface, walks indignantly off, L.*)

JEMMY. What a fortunate escape! I'd a gweat mind to have made her a splendid offer of pwotection, and a gawwet in the neighbourhood of our square, but I'm glad I didn't! Dem it, James, you're a martyr to mowality, you pwodigal, you are!

Exit, L.

FANNY *enters from C., splendidly attired.*

FANNY. The ormolu dial has chimed two,—I'm getting a very sluggard, have varied nature, and turned the night to day, and yet my heart wearies at these busy scenes the world misterm the gay and joyous, and oft I feel a lingering o'er me for the village green, and the sunlit fields of golden grain, and the happy smiling faces who were partners in my childhood's sports. Let me not think of bye-gone days, such thoughts are unfitting the wife of Vincent Middleton !

JEMMY JENKINS *returns, L. 1 E.*

JEMMY. Pardon me, my lady, for this intwusion, but the man below wejects all refusal. I told him master was from home, and he expresses a wish for an interview with your ladyship!

FANNY. Is he a nameless man ? Who is he, and whither comes he ?

JEMMY. He says his name is Michael Wright, and he comes from Middleton Hall!

FANNY. Show him up!

JEMMY. Here, my lady ?

FANNY. Here, and without a moment's loss of time !

JEMMY. Most assuredly, my lady! (*aside and going*) She'll never wub off the wust of her wustic ideas ! *Exit L. 1 E.*

FANNY. And Michael Wright has come to the gay city! What associations come with the name of Michael Wright!—my village swain— my ruddy Adonis in the summer stroll—my gossip by the winter fire in the dear old house at home !

JENKINS *bows on* MICHAEL WRIGHT, L., *and after several congees retires, L.*—MICHAEL *bursts into a loud hearty laugh, but stops suddenly on seeing* FANNY.

MICHAEL. Oh, I ax pardon!

FANNY. What, Michael! and how dost do, Michael?

MICHAEL. Oh, I'm lovely, thank 'ee, hope you be the same? Why I be shot if I'd hardly know thee decked out in thee fal-lals. Lord, lord, they be mortal smart surely, but how deadly pale thee dost look ; there be roses twisted in thy tresses, but Lunnun smoke ha' killed the prettiest one that used to live upon thy cheek! (*FANNY sighs*) Why don't thee smile as thee didst at home ? Lord, I be so overjoyed to see thee I could almost cry!—Gi 's thee hand, lass—(*sheepishly*)—I ax pardon—Miss—Missus—Madam—

FANNY. (*giving her hand*) There, Michael! 'tis the grasp of your old friend, from my heart I'm glad to see you, Michael!—Come, sit down, and we'll talk of old times and of friends, and the dear old house at home!

MICHAEL. Oh, bless those blue eyes—I—I—(*affected*) There's a heart throbbing here at the mention of your words, for they wake up memory of times that be gone and past, and the heart must be as still as death can make it ere it can forget—thee think'st sometimes then of the old stile, the beech grove, and the— Oh, madam, you make me a child again! (*passes his hand across his eyes*)

FANNY. Oh, blessed be the days of our childhood, for they were days of innocence—without guile—without care! Ours was the realm of a fairy land, and happiness was king. Come then, playmate of my young days—my girlhood's beau—the boy who strove to win a girl's love,—tell me of those scenes of our walks in the beautiful glade, on the sweet summer nights,—'twas there a maiden heard your tale of love, aye, and heeded it *then*, Michael! but Time is a mighty master, and works many changes—Middleton came and Michael—

MICHAEL. Poor Michael was forgotten!

FANNY. Not so! he was always regarded as a friend, as brother! I'm in the green fields again, where the air breathed heavenly pure—it was a joy I ne'er can hope to taste here in this peopled city. Come, Michael, be quick, tell me of my father, my stern father! I can almost, (*seeing you*) fancy him before me,—tell me of Sophy,—of the old man—of the old house at home!

MICHAEL. Why, there be tears in your eyes, dry them, do'ee! I never saw thee weep till now,—thee feyther be well!

FANNY. Bless you! Heaven's blessing be on him and you! Oh, how I have longed to hear those words!—have written often to him,—but I had angered, disobeyed, aye, deceived him! I was a fool to expect forgiveness; but though I fled my home, on many a sleepless night, my thought, my heart was resting there! And how is Sophy? Is she well? Is she happy?

MICHAEL. Well, and happy as the day be long!

FANNY. That her day of joy may never know an end, is her sister's earnest prayer! Now of thyself, Michael,—art wedded yet?

MICHAEL. No, I'm thinking I be cut out for an old bachelor,—I an't courageous enough to say soft things to lasses.

FANNY. I remember when you were! You might have won a wife, but for your boyish shyness? You had no rival *then*, Michael. You told one tale, and told no more, *he* came and—But we will not talk of that. What is it brings thee up to town?

MICHAEL. Old Squire be ill, a'most dying!

FANNY. The good old man! Heaven avert that calamity, it would make my husband wretched!

MICHAEL. (*halfaside*) Husband!

FANNY. Michael Wright, why do you echo that word? Is he not my husband? Lives there a breath to throw a blight upon that holy tie? Why fall your eyes to the earth, Michael? Speak—has scandal fell upon the name of one you call your friend? Hast

lost thy power of speech, Michael? Speak! there is a meaning in your silence! a horror in your looks! Speak! speak! or I shall sink at your feet! Speak—speak! (*hoarsely*)

MICHAEL. Well, if I must, they do say young squire 'ticed thee from thee home to the Hall,—that his friend Mortimer, who were once a minister, had been stripped of his gown, and the ceremony be not binding! (FANNY *sinks in a chair*) Don't, don't take on so,—I and many believe they belied you.

FANNY. Bless you, for so much charity! Oh, it was bravely done to stab a weak woman's fame, and no voice near her to tell the tale—to breathe poisonous words, which, when they fell upon the ear, must penetrate to the heart, and bow it down to rise no more! But there's a mighty prop whose name is Truth to hold it firm, guileless and unsullied. Middleton comes,—you shall hear it from his lips,—you shall hear him *swear* in the face of Heaven, even in thought they've wronged me! Retire but for a moment. (MICHAEL *retires through door*, R. 2 E., *she pointing the way*) I wonder not now at my father's, sister's silence,—it was not natural they could own a blackened wretch like me!

Enter MIDDLETON, L. 1 E.

Middleton! Vincent! What means this haste,—that frenzied look of horror,—tell me—tell me!

MIDDLETON. There is scarcely time—there is danger and death in this delay! My prodigality has proved my bane—it has stripped our boy of his inheritance, it has robbed his father of his fair name! the world will soon know him as the ruined child of one who ruined many!

FANNY. What madness is this? What is it you mean?

MIDDLETON. Extravagance has led to crime! (*noise without*) There is not a moment left—the law's agents are on my footsteps—hide me, hide me—save me from ignominy, save me from death! (*noise again*) 'Tis flight alone can save me!

 *Rushes through door, C., and bars it from within.*

FANNY. Has ~~me~~ bolt of misery fallen on us all! Crime! My poor desolate boy!—the beggared child of him who beggared many! What rushes through my brain!—he is a *forger*!

Enter OFFICERS, L.

1ST OFFICER. Aye, madam! and our prisoner—

FANNY. (*almost sinking—endeavours to rally herself*) Whom—whom is it you seek, gentlemen?

1ST OFFICER. Him of whom you were speaking,—Vincent Middleton, the forger.

FANNY. (*rushing to the C. door, and standing before it*) You shall not pass to seek him!

1ST OFFICER. 'Twere needless that way,—the house is surrounded and escape impossible.

FANNY. Lost, lost! (*supporting herself by a chair*)

1ST OFFICER. Ah, here is a door, and locked too—if not opened in a moment I will force it.

Music till end of scene.—At this moment the report of a pistol is heard from within, and MICHAEL WRIGHT opens the door. C.

MICHAEL. What want ye?

1ST OFFICER. Vincent Middleton, accused of forgery, he must answer it!

MICHAEL. He *has* answered it—he has died by his own hand!

Music.—FANNY utters a piercing shriek, and falls senseless—Tableau—Scene closes.

SCENE II.—*A Front Landscape.*

Enter MAT MAYBUSH, R. 1 E.

MAT. I'll be weighed no more—I've lost a pound and a half of my corporal flesh—the old women say it's unlucky, and egad I believe 'em! They tell me I'm not fit for a soger, or shoot me if I wouldn't go for one—Lard, if I was, perhaps I might be shot some o' these days—I don't know what to do, and there's nobody to tell me—Becky's gone to Lunnon, I'll make up my mind to follow her, who knows how luck may turn out—Mr. Jemmy Jenkins got a place I'm told thro' the Lunnon newspapers, I seed a few o' them once and there's plenty o' vartisements in 'em—plenty who "wants a young man to look arter a horse and chay, or drive a light cart," the dickens is in it if I can't drive either, when I have drev a team and a waggon ever since I wur the height of a horse's collar! (*waggon bells heard—looking out*) Why I beant walking in my sleep, be I? it's impossible, it can't be she! I'll be whipped if it beant though—there's Big Benjamin handing her out o' the tail of the waggon. There's no occasion to go to Lunnon now, Becky's come home again: I'll run and carry her bandboxes—Hurrah! hurrah! I be so gladsome, I'll have a buss, if I get a scratch for my pains.

Music—runs off L., and re-enters, carrying bandboxes and a small trunk, followed by BECKY WIGGLES.

Tol de rol! so thee be'st come whoam again! Ain't I mortal glad!

BECKY. And so be I too; that nasty waggon wur so long, I thought I should never see home again.

MAT. But what wonderment brings thee back so soon?

BECKY. Jemmy's parfidy, and my dislike o' Lunnon smoke.

MAT. But what ha' Jemmy been arter?

BECKY. Oh, the monstrous feller! he's got a Rachel!

MAT. Who be he?

BECKY. What an oaf thee be'st, surely. He? she you mean.

MAT. O, yes, I know! I understand 'ee; I didn't go to old Saul Smartem's, the schoolmaster, for nothing. Bless you, he used to gay, "He, masculine gander—She, feminine gander!" I was the

brightest scholar in the whole school. But tell us about the feminine gander, do 'ee.

BECKY. Well, up I goes to young squire's grand house, in Lunnon, and I axed to see Jemmy; and so I did, but I hardly knew un again. His head wur all soaped over, like a cauliflower—a mortal fine livery coat, and, you'd hardly believe it, he wore silk stockings and dancing pumps.

MAT. No.

BECKY. Yes.

MAT. The world's turned upside down !

BECKY. If the world bean't, Jemmy be, quite mis-mogrified—I stared at un, you may be sure, just for all the world like a stuck pig !

MAT. I dare say you did, I should mysen.

BECKY. You may be sure I was right glad to see un, but it warn't long afore he turned as cool as a cowcumber. " Ulloa, my man," says I, for I wur getting tiffed, " come, none o' thee Lunnon tricks; I be come to know if thee do mean to keep thee word, and make I Missis Jemmy Jenkins?" Then he hummed and he ha'd, and he strutted and stammered, and said he wur up to the eyelids in love wi' Miss Rachel Roberts, my lady's maid—just as if I warn't as good as my lady's maid, or what not—'fegs, it's lucky for he I hadn't these pattens in my hand, or I'd ha' given him summat to remember his parjury!

MAT. Surely, surely, and sarved him right! (*aside*) Ha, ha!

BECKY. So said I, Mr. Jemmy, but he didn't like being called Jemmy; and I to 'dress him as *Mister* James ! Ha, ha, ha !

MAT. Ho, ho, ho! that wur conceited enough !

BECKY. Ho, he's eaten up wi' it—gi'es himself such comical airs, and takes snuff by handfuls out o' box made o' pure silver!

MAT. No !

BECKY. Yes!

MAT. The nasty beast!

BECKY. So I begins to be quite 'gusted wi' him, and I says, says I, Mister James, thou'rt a wiper!—no better nor no worse! Don't you go for to think I vally thee a brass farden; thee'rt welcome to marry my lady's maid, I arn't yet on my last legs—*am* I, Matty ? (*looking coaxingly at him*)

MAT. No, that thee beant! (*kisses her*)

BECKY. That's a comfort.

MAT. If thee lik'st it, I'll gi' thee a dozen!

BECKY. No, says I to Jemmy, I'm not on my last legs, and that's a comfort! in our parts there's an honest lad named Mat Maybush—

MAT. Surely!

BECKY. And better looking than ever trod in your shoes !

MAT. Surely, I always said that!

BECKY. And he'll make me his wife !

MAT. Surely, surely, I always said *that* too, and so I will—come that must ha' dashed him a bit!

BECKY. Not a mite ; so says he, you're welcome to the ruffian !

MAT. Ruffian ! the saucy warmin—I'd ruffian him if I had un

here ; but I be main glad thee told un, thee weren't on thee last legs, that were capital! Ho, ho, ho !

BECKY. Weren't it? Ha, ha, ha ! So, says I moresomever, Mr. Jemmy, says, I, I'll be married like the first lady in the land, by license. I was right, weren't I, Mat ? for I knowed thee'd a summat snug in the saving bank.

MAT. Not a farden !

BECKY. Why thee hasn't been and spent thy fortune, Mat ?

MAT. No, I draw'd 'un out, I ha' gotten 'un here. (*touching his pocket*) I wur goin' to Lunnon, to look out for a sarvice or a wife, or summat o' the sort, but I shan't ha' the trouble now. Gi's another buss, lass, thou shalt be married like a lady, if it be only to please I, and spite Mr. Jemmy Jenkins ! I'll take lumber, lass—come thee wa^own to parson at once! Ho, ho, ho! I shan't be a batcheldor^ong, that's for sartin ! Tol, de, rol, lol!

Dances, drops boxes, &c, and exit with BECKY, R.

SCENE III.—*A picturesque set Landscape, at sunset. In the extreme distance the Village; in the centre of the Stage is a rustic stile, supposed to be the communication from the high road to the fields, being a short cut to the village—trees on each side of the stile, forming a narrow lane on each side—a bank half-breast high, so that the action may be seen on either side—the rays of the sun are strongly reflected on the meandering stream; on the opposite side is a gipsy-fire, the rays of which contrast with the set of the sun.*

FANNY GREENLAND, *in widow's weeds, discovered.*

FANNY. Yes, there stands my birth-place, the dear old house I once called home! What evil star prompted me to desert it? Father! stem, unrelenting father! thy misguided, wretched child gazes on the abode that shelters thee, and trembles, for she dares not return to that once happy dwelling ; she would die in its porch, and death would be bliss compared with thy harsh look, and the sound of thy voice teeming with curses! Oh, I have merited that curse, but I must not hear it from thy lips ! No, no, heaven in its mercy, will spare me that dreadful trial! Fool! what do I here then ? It was to gaze once more on this spot, and hear from some strange rustic, that all I have are well and happy.

Enter MICHAEL, R. 2 E., leading young VINCENT.

MICHAEL. There be thy mother, boy ; go kiss her, and doant'ee sob no more.

VINCENT. Dear mamma! (*runs to her*)

FANNY. My bright, my blooming boy! (*embracing him*) Why there are tears in his blue eyes—silly child to weep, there, your mother will kiss the tear-drops dry. (*kisses him*) Yes, dear image of my first, my lost love, thou hast no birth-right but thy mother's heart—that will be thine while she tarries on the earth—born to splendid competence and stripped of it by thy prodigal parent! Tell me, when you with your playmates seek the village church-

yard to pluck the wild flower, or gambol o'er the graves of those who sleep there, should you mark a rude mound without a stone to tell the dead one's name, many a voice will tell you who it is—they'll speak of your lonely state, your blighted fortune ! Oh, do not then in the bitterness of your beggared hope lift your young hands to curse her!

VINCENT. Whom, dear mother ?

FANNY. Your wretched, guilty mother !

VINCENT. Ah, never, never !

FANNY. My own, my dearest—(*sobs over the child*)

MICHAEL. I be shot if I can stand this, if they go on at this rate I shall blubber like a bull. Doantee, doantee, Miss—Madam, I mean, it's too cutting for human nature to stand up against! It's all very well for women and babbies, but it's so unmannerly to catch a great hulk of a fellow like I a snivelling ! (*wipes away a tear*)

FANNY. There, there—go, go—I'll shed no tear—I'll breathe no sigh for that which is hopeless now—Go, go.

MICHAEL. Bless'ee doantee stay long Miss—Madam I mean—I shall be eat up wi'a million fears! Ah, I ax pardon, but if thee knew how anxious my heart were when thou art absent, thee wouldn't stay a minute. Now brighten up and be brisk, thee need'st summit to strengthen thee, so I'll order a snack o' supper, summat warm and comfortable, and bless'ee doant'ee let it get cold, come along, young Squire.

Exit with the BOY, R.

FANNY. (*bitterly*) Squire, indeed ! that title died with thy father. Poor beggared innocent! But I must be brief, I will not vex that honest heart by unnecessary delay; a few moments to contemplate this scene ere I leave it to see it no more : there is the old stile where we so oft have met! Fly these thoughts of the dead, let me dwell only on the living ! I would give half of my wretched life, could I but see my sister here alone ; her beautiful eyes might flash with anger, but how dear the ray that would follow it—the tone of her voice—the fond profession of her sweet love ! What form is that which breaks through the gloom ?—some one comes at last to tell of those whom my heart longs so to hear.

DARK DAVY *sings without, L.*

The bird has flown to its nest in the tree,
So come, pretty maiden, and ramble with me,
The sun it will sink, and the stars beam bright,
The time for love's song is the still hour of night!
Come, come, pretty maiden, come, come.

FANNY. I have heard that song—that voice, before. Ah! I remember now, 'tis David, that wild and reckless man : he comes by the path to the village inn; I will not meet him—these bushes will conceal me till he passes.

Music—Enters a practicable bush by the side of the stile.

Enter DARK DAVY, L. 2 E.

DAVY. (*singing*) "Come, come, pretty maiden with me!" It's a matter of astonishment to me, the sweet notes of my voice or my prepossessing appearance don't win any of the pretty faces in these parts! Ah, it's an abominable prejudice they've taken agin a young youth, and all for what I'd like to know? Cos once on a time they took it in their wise heads to clap me in the county jail, only for indulging in a little innocent pastime—snaring a few dozen hares, and popping at a partridge or so!—it's what I call a burning shame! (*shouting*) Hallo! Old Mother Devildom! are you asleep still! I can hear the old pot biling over—shake your feathers, you lazy Old Warmint, do!—I wants my supper.

MABEL rises from behind the fire.

MABEL. That is not all you want—it's not the hour yet—our brothers are abroad—vermin, did you say? I could hang you, vermin as I am!

DAVY. (*hoarsely*) Hang! Ho, ho, ho!

MABEL. Aye, laugh on, your note will change ere the next day dawns, when you will be shut from the light, and the limbs that are free now, to-morrow will be fettered!

DAVY. Why you old witch, what shall I do to *arn* the darbies!

MABEL. A dark deed—a deed, that if performed will place the hangman's noose around you!—wait but a moment and I'll tell you what you would do—come nearer to the stile and I'll breathe it in your ear—(*he doggedly approaches the bank by the stile*) you would do a deed of darkness—a deed of robbery and murder?

FANNY. (*partly appearing from behind the bush*) Almighty powers, what am I doomed to hear?

DAVY. (*starting*) What's that?

MABEL. The echo of your trembling heart, the inward voice that none but the guilty ever hear!—does the vermin speak true?

DAVY. How in the name of the devil, did the old hag learn that secret?—I must win her over to my plan. (*aloud*) Hollo! Mabel, my sweetest, cross the stile and I'll let you into our secret, I would be gallant enough to come to you only I'm waiting for one that mustn't be missed. (*looks off, L.*)

FANNY. (*looking out*) What horrid secret am I doomed to hear?—perhaps heaven ordains me to be the instrument to save the doomed being, whose death is planning in yon villain's thought—I will listen, nor stir, not even breathe! (*closes the bushes, as MABEL crosses the stile*)

MABEL. Dos't watch thy fellow's coming?

DAVY. Aye, Mabel.—a plague on the snail, where tarries he?

MABEL. Despair not—he will be here full soon to aid thee in thy hellish work.

DAVY. Why, Mabel, how uncommon unfeminine you are getting surely—how unlike the expression of one of the *fair* sex.

MABEL. Fair! do not jeer me, I court not flattery, I love best

the truth. My skin is dyed by the hot sun and curling smoke of the wood fire, but I thank the great Master all is fair and pure within! (*laying her hand on her heart*) Would I could say as much for those, destiny forces me to mingle with.

DAVY. Come, no preaching, you say you know my purpose?

MABEL. Know it! aye, as well as if 'twere breathed from your own lip—I'll tell it, and you shall own I speak the truth.—A good and just man did you (as you deemed it) an injury—

DAVY. True, from which I never freed myself—he blackened my name, all who were honest shunned me—he made me what I am—a wandering vagabond! but we shall be even soon—very soon!

MABEL. Thoud'st take his life?

DAVY. No, I seek not that, I only covet the means that sweetens it—his gold!

MABEL. Do not deny it—there is *One* that hears you, who reads your inmost heart and knows the truth! Oh, banish that black thought, let not the curse of the orphan and the needy follow you—Oh, spare the life that exists alone for acts of love and charity—let him pass freely with his gold, he treasures it to make his children happy, to help the aged and the poor who cannot help themselves!

DAVY. I tell you again I seek not his life—be silent and hear me, I'll not deceive thee Mabel, hang it, don't look so doubtingly—to-night he meets at the King's Head a young farmer, who wishes to buy the lease of his farm, he has thriven in the world, and would buy a better to bestow on his daughter, her husband, and their children—

MABEL. And you would make them homeless! must your hate fall on the innocents who never harmed you? Shame on thee if thou art man! David, this deed must not, *shall* not be done:

DAVY. Peace, woman, I have sworn it! (*hoarsely*) deeply sworn it by the ashes of the mother, whose heart was broken by the miseries *he* heaped upon her son! Yes, mother! the outcast owes your memory a love that the whole world can never destroy! Mabel, you bring to my sight her wan face, the sunken eyes I saw floating in tears; the cold, clammy touch of death as her wasted hand pressed that of her truant son. I have never shed a single tear since I stood beside her pauper grave. Hear me, and be dumb! By the soul of the mother who loved me, the gold of Greenland shall be mine!—aye, and if fate wills it, his blood—his blood! (*fiercely*. FANNY utters a loud scream within the bush. *Tableau*) Whence that sound? (*Music—a laugh heard without*) Ah! there are men approaching. Plunge through the thicket, Mabel—down into the dell, and hide till they have passed us.

Music. MABEL and DAVY rush into the thicket, as FANNY emerges from another portion of it.

FANNY. Blessed be the hour I returned to the home of my father! (*falls on her knees*) Heaven hath sent me back to save him. Joy, joy, joy! Ha, ha, ha! It will gain me his love—a far dearer treasure, his pardon—his pardon! Ha, ha, ha!

Enter several PEASANTS, R.

If you are men—if you are fathers, husbands—if you own parents that are dear to you, do not stay to question me—guide my footsteps to an inn called the King's Head; there's a life depending on your speed!

1ST PEASANT. (*crosses to L.*) This way.

FANNY. Heaven bless you! Father, you will be saved—your child returns to warn, to save you! Come, come!

Rushes off, followed by PEASANTS, L.

SCENE IV.—*Front Chamber in the King's Head Inn.*

Enter GREENLAND and GEORGE RUTLEY, R.

GEORGE. Dear sir, this last act of kindness almost robs me of the power to acknowledge it. Words are too weak—my wife shall thank you with tears of joy.

GREEN. No, we'll have no tears; her eye shall beam with happiness if I see that I am well repaid; and after all, for what? an act of duty—a duty dear to a fond father's heart—your prosperity, and that of your children, is the only wish left the desolate and deserted old man now.

GEORGE. Deserted, sir? Pardon me, I had forgot.

GREEN. But I never can, while I remain on the earth; remembrance can only die with me.

GEORGE. Talk not of dying, sir; you will live long to bless us.


GREEN. That blessings never ceasing may be showered on your heads, I pray heaven! But the night has set: away with you to the steward at the Hall; say (if the good old squire's health permit) in the morning we'll wait on him to tender the purchase-money and receive the lease.

GEORGE. Shall I not be your companion part of the way, sir?

GREEN. No, I should but impede your speed. Cross the five-acre field, and the little bridge by the mill-dam, it will save you at least half your distance. Be speedy—I shall be at home long before you. (*crosses to R.*)

GEORGE. I did not think of that. Doubt not my speed, sir.

Exit, L.

GREEN. Worthy, honest heart! Yes, Sophy, my best and dearest, you will guide your innocent children in the right path, and when you come to join your old father in the grave, you will descend there calm and content, knowing you have left behind a competence for them to buffet with the frowns of a harsh world. But oh! should there be a rebel in your little flock, heaven snatch it from you in its childhood; better to mourn it dead, than dishonoured like mine—The hea s one!—

FANNY: (*without*) Here, here say you?

GREEN. (*starting*) That voice! hushed be its tone—to me it's hateful! Let me begone! (*hastening, L.*)

FANNY *enters, L., and falling at his feet, bars his passage.*

Parricide! Let me pass! I will not know thee! Let me pass!

FANNY. No, you will die—fall by the murderer's hand! The crafty plotter waits to take your life! Oh, father—wronged father! heaven hath sent your penitent, heart-broken, disobedient child to save you!

GREEN. What mockery is this? Do not hope to forge a tale to impress on a heart of flint. Let me pass! (*crosses to R.*)

FANNY. 'Twill be to your grave! Oh, believe—spurn—even curse me, but for the love of life, hear me!

GREEN. I own no love of life, for you, viper, poisoned its joy! What is life to me, when I must feel its inheritance is shame?—Look at me if you can—a brief five years are past since you left me a hale and hearty man—the snows of premature old age were not then upon my head, nor was the cheek hollowed, or the heart sad—No, it was light and buoyant—Here is your work, look up and shudder at the wreck—the ruin you have made!

FANNY. I cannot meet your look of anger, for my eyes are sightless with their tears—I deceived, disobeyed you, I forfeited all, a father's and a sister's love; I, imprudent and misguided as I was, gave all to one, who is now no more!

GREEN. Dead!

FANNY. Yes, he is in the grave, and the widowed heart returns to those who propped it in its helplessness! For heaven's love spurn not the lonely and the dying, for I am dying, father! I shall not trouble you long, the earth will soon hide her, who is so much hated! (*GREENLAND passes his hand across his eyes*) A tear! Blessed, blessed drop, it hath fallen on my burning heart like the dew of heaven on the sunburnt flower! Oh, do not look so stern, let the outpourings of your heart be shed on the head of your penitent child; I never saw you weep before!

GREEN. Tears have fallen, though you saw them not! What were your father's tears to you? You were smiling in the halls of pampered pride, gay, happy, nor ever gave a thought to the sorrows of those you had deserted!

FANNY. Oh, do not think me quite so heartless! In the solitude of night, the sleepless truant, thought of her home and of those she left behind her; and when sleep blest her, dreamt that they were happy: I saw you plainly in my vision, but your dark hair had not turned so silver white, the brightness of your eye had not faded; oh, let it speak to your heart, father, as it does to mine—'twas she, Fanny, caused all this, and ask again if Fanny does not feel it!

GREEN. The unthinking mariner, who steers the rich bark upon the rocks, may sorrow for the wreck his rashness might have spared—so it is with thee. Do not cling around me—to win my pardon now is hopeless. I will commune with myself, and if my heart can grant it, in time it may be thine. *Exit hastily, L.*

FANNY. Joy, joy, joy!—ha, ha, ha! (*bursts into a flood of tears, and buries her face in her hands*) My heart is lightened of its load, for hope is dawning o'er it. Father,—(*misses him and screams*) Ah, he has gone to die—to fall by the murderous hand ere human power can save him! (*calling*) Michael!—with what speed he wends his way—Michael!—slacken thy footsteps, old man, there are pitfalls

beneath thy tread—oh, Michael, lose not a moment, or he is lost for ever!
Music—Rushes off, L.

SCENE V.—*Same as Scene III, lighted up by the moon instead of the sun.*—TABLEAU.

GREENLAND *is in the attitude of stepping over the stile*—FANNY *is clinging to his knee*—MICHAEL WRIGHT *holds DAVY by the throat to the earth*—*(a bludgeon and pistol near them, the latter is heard to fire before the Scene opens)* MABEL *is on her knees, with her hands raised aloft, in the position of prayer.*

MICHAEL. Dang thee for a wicked toad as thou art! Ah, thee mun struggle and welcome—thee mun be plaguy strong if thee slips the grip o' Michael Wright!

FANNY. Father! dear father!

DAVY. Michael Wright!—foiled again by thee!

MICHAEL. Ah, thee knows me, dost thou?—hold up thee ugly black muzzle and let's ha' a peep at thee—why I be shot if it beant poaching chap I had a tussel wi' when I wur gamekeeper at the Hall!—Oh, thee hast a hankering for thy old quarters, hast thee?—away wi' him, lads, to gaol!

Music.—To PEASANTS who enter, L.; they drag DAVY away, R.

FANNY. By the memory of my mother—by the remembrance of those days when you watched your children's helplessness—pity, pity! I grovel in the dust before you—trample on me—spurn me—I'll bear it all, let me but hear—the blessed sound of pardon!

GREEN. Do not hope to win it: my heart to all mankind else is still the same, to thee it is impenetrable. Begone! thou hast planted furrows on my cheek—cast shame upon my white hairs—almost broken the heart that would have bled to foster thee. Woman, begone, I know thee not! Seek your home in the gay world—Greenland, of the Briars Farm, knows not the paramour of Vincent Middleton.

MABEL. *(overhearing and bounding from her kneeling position)* Vincent Middleton! Oh, speak that name again—it is the herald-note that speaks of joy and bliss to come!

FANNY. Alas! 'twas Vincent Middleton who lured me from my home, who snatched me from my father's love by means of a false marriage—'twas Vincent Middleton who deceived, destroyed me.

MABEL. No, he did *not* deceive you.

GREEN. How!

FANNY. In pity prove it.

MABEL. Here, here is the proof, the hand that gave it is mouldered now. *(gives paper)*

FANNY. Speak, speak the name of him from whom you received this.

MABEL. Mortimer!

FANNY. Him! the mock priest who joined us!

MABEL. Ah, wrong not his memory—he wore the holy robe and never lost it; I beheld him die—men with the last words of life lingering on their lips, speak not falsehood!

GREEN. How came you possessed of this?

MABEL. He gave it to my care in a distant land on his deathbed—I have never heard the name of Middleton till now, though I have prayed to hear it night and day!

FANNY. The hand of Heaven is in this—Father! dear father!
(about to kneel)

GREEN. No, not at my feet, here to the heart's core—that desolate heart, that has not known a gleam of joy for many a day. *(folding her in his arms and bursts into tears)*

MICHAEL. Ha, ha, ha! Huzza ! huzza! I knew we should all be happy once again ! Tol, de rol, lol! *(twisting his hat on a stick and dancing)*

Music.—Enter MAT MAYBUSH with BECKY WIGGLES, and VILLAGERS, R.

MAT. Tol, de rol, de rol, lol! Allow me to introduce in the person o' the late Miss Becky Wiggles, the present Mrs. Matty Maybush!

MICHAEL. While I take a buss o' thy bride, run to the Inn for the young Squire—there be an old man's heart panting to fold in his arms his grandchild !

MAT. Bless'ee we've brought him with us.

(runs to the side, and returns with young VINCENT, who runs to his Mother, who places him in the arms of her Father)

MICHAEL. Heyday, who comes over the stile ?

GEORGE RUTLEY. *bounds over the stile, and assists his SOPHY to descend, who flies to her Sister's arms in tears.*

GEORGE. Ah, if tears must be shed, let them spring from joy's fountain ! Here is the will of the Old Squire of Middleton, bequeathing to the heirs male of his son, the old Hall and its vast possessions!

SOPHY. Dear Fanny, your sufferings have ended, and peace and riches wait you !

FANNY. I heed them not—for the last few moments have brought me the richest gift the world could grant—it's not the costly Hall of Middleton—it's a treasure dearer far—a father's pardon ! *(crosses to him)* Michael, *(MICHAEL comes forward to her)* I have proved thy honest heart, thy truth shall not go unrewarded—not a word, there is respect due to the memory of the dead ! Father, sister, brother, *(blessed titles)* I'll seek no more the splendid Hall—the gaudy dress—the glozing tongue of flattery—the blessing, dearest to my soul, will be the smiles that cheer the happy hearth of

OUR OLD HOUSE AT HOME!

TABLEAU & END.

Curtain.

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