

THE
DUMB MAN OF MANCHESTER 

A Melo-Drama,

IN

TWO ACTS

BY

B. F. RAYNER,

AUTHOR OF

"The Plague and Fire of London," &c., &c., &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET,
STRAND,
LONDON.

DUMB MAN OF MANCHESTER.

First performed at Astley's Amphitheatre.

CHARACTERS.

Cast in 1838.

Lord Chief Justice Mr. DILLON.
Mr. Palmerston, *a barrister* Mr. C. WILLIAMS.
Edward Wilton, *nephew to Mrs. Wilton* Mr. ELLIOTT.
Tom, *the Dumb Orphan, brother to Jane* Mr. DUCROW.
Crispin Welter, *master of the Golden Boot Shoe*
Shop Mr. H. WIDDICOMB.
Constable.
Gaolers, Men, Women, Children of the factory, Guards &c., &c.
Mrs. Wilton, *widow of a rich manufacturer* Mrs. GOMERSAL.
Jane Wilton, *wife of Edward Wilton* Mrs. SHEPHERD.
Patty, *a milk maid* MISS JULIAN.

Peasants, etc., etc.

Time—Present Scene—London and Manchester.

COSTUMES.

CHIEF JUSTICE.—Black suit, judge's robe and wig.
PALMERSTON.—Blacksuit.
WILTON.—*First dress*, shabby and tattered suit; *2nd dress*, suit of black.
TOM.—Neat shooting coat, light waistcoat, breeches, grey stockings and half boots.
Mrs. WILTON.—Dark silk dress and cap.
JANE.—Neat cotton dress, apron and cap.
PATTY.—Brown stuff dress, light apron, shawl, straw bonnet, half boots.

THE
D U M B M A N O F M A N C H E S T E R .



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A walk of lime trees, backed by a manufactory of Manchester; two dwarf wall pieces, R. and L. in fourth grooves; two set trees, R. and L.; the entrance to Mrs. Wilton's dwelling, with practicable balcony and window, R. 3 E.; a stone garden seat, R.*

Lively music. As curtain rises the bell rings, and a number of MEN, WOMEN, and CHILDREN come from factory.

LIVELY CHORUS.

Sweetly sounds the bell that calls us all from labour
To take a cheerful meal with some kind friend or neighbour;
'Tis holiday, my friends, make merry on the way,
And greet our kindest mistress upon her natal day.

Go off, L. U. E.

*Enter CRISPIN WELTER, with a pair of shoes, followed by
PATTY, carrying a milk pail, from C.*

WELTER. At it again, eh, Miss Patty? This is your story day after day. Is it to be always thus?

PATTY. Take my word for it, it is. I'll be at your heels day after day, week after week, till you've stuck to your promise of marrying me.

WELTER. And a pretty race you shall have of it, I can tell you

PATTY. Did you promise to marry me, yes or no?

WELTER. Yes, I promised you when I liked you--when I thought you mild, good, and industrious, but now I know you giddy, dissipated and that you dance reels with the

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men of the factory; I formally depose you. Madam Patty, I have the honour to wish you a very good day. (*going to ring at the gate, R. H., PATTY runs and pulls the tail of his coat.*)

PATTY. Don't think you'll get off in that manner.

WELTER. Let go; don't you see I'm taking home a pair of shoes for the respectable Mrs. Wilton, proprietress of this flourishing factory? and she's waiting for me.

PATTY. Oh, that's the reason you turn up your nose at me.

WELTER. Do you mean to insinuate that I'm a wooer of the rich manufacturer? No such wonder if I were. Crispin Welter, of the Golden Boot, Manchester, might pretend—(*going to the house.*)

PATTY. (*pulling him back.*) Nonsense. None of your flummery; 'tis not the mistress, but the servant that you are hankering after.

WELTER. Servant! when will you learn manners? Miss Jane is more of a lady's companion than a servant.

PATTY. A fine companion, truly—a companion of all work.

WELTER. She was engaged as such, 'tis true; but Mrs. Wilton soon perceived her qualities and virtue were far too great for a menial, so she made a friend of her—a friend, Miss Patty! (*going—she stops him.*)

PATTY. A fine friend, indeed, to run of all her dirty errands!—'twas but yesterday she came to our farm for the milk.

WELTER. Then it was a dirty errand, I'll warrant. But what have you to say, you titular milkmaid, to a factory where they drink nothing but ale and beer? Go, go back to your cows, and leave me to my bride!

PATTY. I shan't go, nor shall you, Mr. Welter. I knew it was this Miss Jane that made you so proud. And pray who and what is she? Nobody knows, except that she is trying to wheedle the old lady out of her property, that of right belongs to her nephew, Mr. Edward Wilton, her—

WELTER. Hold your milkmaid's clack, and respect pure virtue. In the first place, young Mr. Wilton died in America, of the yellow fever—

PATTY. Who's to prove that? Besides, he had a wife and son, and he's the rightful heir, then—and not this girl, then—

WELTER. Will you hold your milkmaid's clack?

PATTY. I shan't hold my clack. I see through your pranks. You think this Miss Jane will have Mrs. Wilton's property, and so you think to marry her; but you shan't. You are mine, and never will I yield my right while I have breath!

WELTER. Oh, how cruelly you must adore me!

PATTY. Not I, indeed; I hate the sight of you. But I'm determined to have you, because I can't get anybody else.

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WELTER. How grateful I ought to be for the preference!

PATTY. Besides, where could you meet with a better match? There's my dairy—and—

WELTER. I cannot bear milk, it curdles on my stomach; so I once more make you my best bow.

PATTY. You wretch! here's conduct!

(Music, lively. He is going to house; PATTY holds him by the coat.)

Enter from the house, R., MRS. WILTON and JANE.

MRS. W. Oh, it is you, Mr. Welter; I've been expecting you this morning.

WELTER. Madam, I beg you will not impute the fault to me. The Golden Boot is the most punctual house in town, especially in its attendance on the ladies. But our customers are so numerous—*(looking significantly at PATTY.)*

MRS. W. Pray who may have been the customers that detained you?

WELTER. *(aside to PATTY.)* Stand to it, through mud and mire. *(to himself.)* Should the amiable Miss Jane suspect she has a rival in my heart—

PATTY. Yes, ma'am, 'twas I who detained Mr. Welter. We had a dish of gossip together, because he's so agreeable—

WELTER. *(aside.)* Oh, what a plumper!

MRS. W. You, Patty, are late also.

PATTY. I have been here some time, madam; but I met Mr. Welter, and I was saying to him—

WELTER. Hold your milkmaid's tongue! Madam, I perceive you are going out. I'll return presently, and try on your shoes—my masterpiece, I assure you.

PATTY. *(aside.)* Yes, and I shall return too.

MRS. W. Jane, put Mr. Welter's masterpiece on the table in my room.

JANE. Give them to me, Mr. Welter.

WELTER. *(giving them.)* Take them, angelic creature! *(aside to her.)* Have you reflected on my proposal?

JANE. You shall have an answer presently.

PATTY. *(contemptuously.)* You may as well take my milk at the same time, Miss Jane! *(giving it.)*

JANE. Thank you, Miss Patty!

Exit into house, with shoes and milk.

WELTER. Now I call that unassuming with dignity. This is my time. I'll be off on the sly. *(runs off, C. and L.)*

PATTY. Ah! it won't do, you monster! Run as fast as you please, I'll be after you. *(takes up her pail, and runs off C. and L.)*

Re-enter JANE, from house.

MRS. W. My good Jane, Mr. Welter is over head and ears in love with you.

JANE. He has offered me marriage.

MRS. W. Really. You have not accepted him, I presume?

JANE. No; never will I forsake you, madam.

MRS. W. Though the master of the Golden Boot be rich, he is no match for you.

JANE. I am poor and portionless.

MRS. W. You are my friend, yet I fear you have not been explicit with me. You are wrong, Jane; you have been here but six months, and I already love you as a daughter.

JANE. Think you I do not partake your generous affection? All my hope is, that I may merit it.

MRS. W. Who can deserve it better? I would give half my fortune to have about me a just and worthy man—such a one, for example, as you would choose for a husband.

JANE. (*sorrowfully.*) A husband?

Mrs. Yes, a woman needs a protector. By the bye, have you seen Mr. Palmerston this morning? He cannot have forgotten the day?

JANE. No fear of that; yet he is late.

MRS. W. His reputation as a lawyer is unblemished. Your marriage would give me infinite pleasure; and it should be my care that you went not to the altar a portionless bride.

JANE. Honour would forbid me to accept your liberality while your nephew lived.

MRS. W. Never again name my nephew. Doubtless you will accuse me of injustice towards him. Hear what has been his conduct, then judge if I can countenance him. Edward Wilton is the son of my youngest sister, and became our adopted son. My husband placed him with an artist; but he loved not work, and made taverns the scenes of his nightly revels. His uncle paid his debts, and brought him here, with a view to his reformation. Vain hope! Ere he had been long with us, a sum of money, which had been set apart to pay the workmen, was *stolen* by him. Now, tell me, Jane, if it be in my power to pardon him?

JANE. I am overcome with surprise and sorrow.

MRS. W. But, see, who comes hither?

JANE. (*looking off.*) My brother, the dumb orphan, whom you lately admitted among your workmen—

MRS. W. And with whose conduct the foremen are so well satisfied. But why have you not previously acknowledged your relationship?

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JANE. Lest he should receive too much indulgence. I wish him to be a good and industrious workman.

MRS. W. You are, perhaps, right. Industry is the foundation of every virtue.

(Lively pastoral music, in country dance style.)

Enter TOM (the DUMB MAN), C. from L., with a bouquet of flowers; advances respectfully to MRS. WILTON, and explains that the WORKMEN are coming in procession.

MRS. W. I do not understand his mute language. What would he say?

JANE. *(to MRS. WILTON.)* That your workmen are coming in procession. *(to TOM.)* For what?

(Music. TOM expresses that they would request MRS. WILTON'S permission and presence at a christening.)

JANE. *(explaining.)* To request your presence at the christening of one of the workmen's children.

MRS. W. With pleasure. I shall receive them here, But I think you told me your brother was not always dumb?

JANE. Relate to the lady in what manner your misfortune occurred to you.

(Music—rustic air, to commence with pipe. TOM, by a series of picturesque representations, relates that at the age of ten years he was tending sheep on the mountain; (change.) while asleep one escapes; he follows it, and falls into a deep ravine; (start drum.) catching branch as he fell, he hung by the hands until he was released, and that the fright deprived him of the faculty of speech.)

MRS. W. If I understand him right, terror deprived him of the power of utterance?

JANE. Yes, madam; while tending his flocks, some of them strayed and fell over a precipice. He pursued them.

MRS. W. Poor youth!

JANE. Mr. Palmerston is coming this way, madam.

MRS. W. I am glad of it. Go, my boy, and tell your comrades there will be no work to-day; but they may dance on the lawn before my house. *(TOM smiles.)* Strange that I quite forget that he is dumb.

JANE. I will make your commands known to him.

(Music, lively. TOM shows that he can dance as well as the others, and then retires to the bench, R. H.)

Enter MR. PALMERSTON, 1 E. L. H.

MRS. W. Good morrow, Mr. Palmerston; already from the court?

MR. P. Yes, madam; and I am happy in having recovered

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your money. This packet contains bank notes to the amount of one thousand pounds.

MRS. W. (*pointing to TOM.*) Observe ! not so loud.

MR. P. Your pardon, madam; I did not see the boy.

MRS. W. We should never tempt the poor. Money is a powerful demon. Jane, place these notes in the escrutoire in my room; to-morrow I will remit them to my banker's.

(*Music. JANE takes the money into house, making signs to TOM to retire. He obeys, and exits, C. As she is going off, MR. PALMERSTON gives her a letter, which MRS. WILTON perceives.*)

MRS. W. (*aside.*) I am right; they love each other. Now, Mr. Palmerston, we will go and see the workmen made happy.

MR. P. I attend you, madam, with pleasure.

(*Music. Exeunt, C. and R.*)

Re-enter JANE from house, R., with letter.

JANE. (*looking round.*) I am alone; now for my letter. (*reads.*) " Madam,—All my endeavours to trace out your husband have been vain. The Consul of the United States has answered that a man named Edward Wilton, an artist, made his appearance in New York about two years ago, but, after contracting numerous debts, departed hurriedly for the Brazils." What can have become of him ? Ah! perhaps lost to me!

Hurried music. Enter TOM, in haste, C. from L.

JANE. What now, brother ?

(*Light music. TOM points off, showing that a poor mendicant is there requesting alms; expresses his gesture, gait, and person.*)

JANE. A mendicant! Give him this, (*gives money.*) I must go now to the farm to order provisions for the week.

(*Music. Exit JANE, R. I E. TOM signs to mendicant to come on.*)

Enter EDWARD WILTON, in tattered dress and staff, through gates, C. from L.

EDWARD (*aside.*) 'Tis she! 'tis Jane, my wife!

(*TOM takes his hand, and puts in money JANE gave him.*) Thank you, my boy, thank you! Heaven reward your charity! Is this the house of Mrs. Wilton ? (*TOM signs " Yes. "*) Does she reside in it alone ?

(*Music. TOM signifies that the lady he saw go out and an old housekeeper are inmates.*)

EDWARD. (*aside.*) Jane and an old housekeeper. (*aloud.*) No lodger, then?

(TOM signifies "No.")

EDWARD (*aside.*) No; that's good!

(*Music.* TOM expresses surprise at his questions, and goes off, L.H.U.E., regarding him with much suspicion, and that he will watch him. EDWARD sits on bench.

EDWARD. Now for a moment's rest; my journey has been long. So here I am at Manchester, after five years' absence, in front of the house that ought one day to be mine—near the presence of that aunt whose only heir I am. They think me beyond the seas; but I am here, and will find means to raise a brilliant independence, which will shelter me from the humiliation I have so long endured. Yes, my hour of fortune has arrived—a rich mansion or a dungeon shall be mine! Let the mistress of that dwelling, who forced me to become what I am, beware of my approach. (*looking off, R.*) Ah! my wife! Now must I vaunt of love—of my repentance. Women are sensitive, and well do I know how to play upon their feelings. 'Tis my lucky star that sends her hither.

Enter JANE, R. H. I E.

JANE. This mendicant still here! what can he want? My friend, I advise you to go. Should you need relief at any future time—

EDWARD. Do you not know me, Jane?

JANE. Ah! what do I hear? My name?

EDWARD. I am much altered then.

JANE. Heavens! that voice!

EDWARD. My wife! my Jane! (*throws off hat.*)

JANE. Edward! (*they rush into each other's arms.*)

EDWARD. My Jane, do I again behold you?

JANE. It is, it is my husband—the father of my child! Now am I happy!

EDWARD. Yes, I am returned. But moderate these transports; we may be observed.

JANE. Oh, heavens! in what an abject state do I behold you!

EDWARD. Hush! a word may ruin me. I am an outlaw!

JANE. An outlaw! What have you done?

EDWARD. You shall know all my woes—all my cruel persecutions since our separation—the misery that, for five years, has devoured my existence.

JANE. Oh, conceal nothing. I ought to reproach you; but my heart will say, hush! for you still love me.

EDWARD. (*with feigned tenderness.*) My dearest Jane! (*embrace.*)

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Enter WELTER at back, C. from L.

WELTER. (*starting.*) Oh, don't disturb yourselves; take your time over it.

EDWARD } Ah!
& JAKE. }

WELTER. If it is for that gentleman's sake you refuse my hand, madam, allow me to compliment you on your taste!

JANE. A poor creature, who was fainting from want, and I supported him.

WELTER. If you only supported him, that's another thing; but it looked very like an embrace. However, it was only an act of kindness, so I shall now renew my proposal of marriage. I am all impatience! (*kneels.*)

Enter PATTY, C. from L.

PATTY. To marry me? (*slaps WELTER on back.*)

WELTER. The devil!

PATTY. To disturb you, I suppose?

WELTER. You do.

PATTY. I don't care. I'll follow you everywhere, till you say, "Patty, I've promised to take you for my spouse, and I'll be as good as my word."

WELTER. What, do you mean to say, I promised you?

PATTY. What, have you the audacity to deny it?

WELTER. What, marry milkmaid?

PATTY. A milkmaid is as good as a maid-of-all-work.

WELTER. Will you hold your tongue?

PATTY. No, I won't! (*they go up stage quarrelling.*)

EDWARD. To-night, then, you will give me an asylum in my aunt's house?

JANE. I shall procure you the key of the garden: you can then, by the assistance of a ladder, attain my chamber.

EDWARD. For this key will I presently return—but not a word of my arrival. (*speaks as mendicant.*) For your kindness, heaven bless you, lady! (*WALTER and PATTY advance.*)

JANE. Go, my friend—go. (*aside.*) Return quickly.

EDWARD. (*aside.*) I will conceal myself: ere long, my Jane, we shall be free from restraint. *Exit, 1 E. L. H.*

WELTER. (*to JANE.*) Miss Jane, do you know if my shoes—

JANE. No, no—you must call again.

WELTER. (*tenderly.*) Yes, dearest, I will.

PATTY. Very pretty. (*aside.*) An appointment before my very face. But I'll return, too.

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WELTER. I'll just take a turn round, and come back by the garden, just to spite my she-vampire.

PATTY. (*pulling him.*) Will you ? Then I'll follow you, and if you tire me out of my patience, the whole world shall know of your infamous conduct to me—I'll tell them.

WELTER. Will you be quiet ?

PATTY. I won't!

WELTER. You won't?

PATTY. *I won't!*

WELTER. Then I'll be off. (*runs out at gate, C. and L.*)

PATTY. And I after you. *Exit after WELTER.*

JANE. (*musings.*) Why this mystery? why should his appearance be kept a secret ? what if I prepare my kind benefactress for his unexpected return ? She is good, and despite her anger, she loves Edward; but should I not succeed, whither; would his rage lead ? No, no—'twere better I were silent.

Music.—Enter TOM, L. U. E., introducing a CONSTABLE; looks round—makes signs that the mendicant is gone.

CONSTABLE. What does the dumb lad mean? I inquired of him if a vagabond had passed this way, and he brings me here to find nobody but you.

JANE. You are in search of some one, then ?

CONSTABLE. A deserter from the marines.

JANE. (*aside.*) My husband. (*aloud.*) No—I have seen no such person here.

CONSTABLE. I understood this lad that he had seen such a person as this described in the warrant.

(Music.—TOM makes signs that he had, and tries to make JANE recollect the beggar; she will not understand him; he multiplies his gestures, and stamps with rage at finding he cannot make her comprehend.

JANE. I tell you, sir, I have seen no such person here. Doubtless he whom you pursue is a malefactor.

CONSTABLE. Ay, and a deserter into the bargain.

(TOM, having looked off where EDWARD made his exit. L. 1 E., returns triumphantly, and taking CONSTABLE by the hand, signs him to look off.

CONSTABLE. Ah ! the dumb boy has got eyes, if he wants a tongue. There goes a vagrant, sure enough—but no, it's not my man. So here goes for a search warrant. Good day to you.

Exit, L. 1 E.

JANE. Tom, you have done wrong. Why set a constable in search of an unfortunate, and no doubt, an innocent man ?

(Music.—TOM explains that he had a suspicious appearance, and thought him a thief.

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JANE. You should never do an ill turn, especially to the poor, who are objects of pity.

(Music.—TOM, struck with these words, kneels to her for pardon.)

JANE. Let it not happen again, or I shall be very angry with you, brother. Rise—I forgive you.

(Music.—TOM rises joyfully, and embraces her.)

Enter WELTER, suddenly, C. from L.

WELTER. Here's a go! The second time to-day—this is rather too much. I'm horrified!

JANE. I do not understand you, sir.

WELTER. Nor do I understand you. 'Tis hideous to reject an established tradesman for a thing of imperfection—reject such a figure as I am!

(Music.—TOM in a rage at the observation, flies and knocks Walter's hat over his eyes, and runs off with JANE, R.)

PATTY enters, C., as he is groping about and exclaiming—

WELTER. YOU dumb devil—you shall pay for this!

PATTY. Hey! what are you about now, with your head buried in the crown of your hat? *(trying to pull the hat off his eyes.)*

WALTER. *(struggling.)* I tell you you shall not leave me.

PATTY. Now then, open your eyes.

WELTER. *(lifting his hat.)* Patty!

PATTY. Yes—Patty!

WELTER. The devil! *(runs off wildly, C.)*

(Music till end of Act.)

PATTY. Ah! *(screaming.)* Devil! I'll devil you—I'll warrant you! *(runs off after him.)*

(Shouts and rejoicing without, through which is heard the church bells.)

Enter MRS. WILTON conducted by MR. PALMERSTON. MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN of the factory; a WOMAN carrying an infant in her arms—all dressed in their holiday suits, forming a sort of rude procession in honour of a christening. Super BEGGARS, FIDDLER, MAN with tambourine, drunken FACTORYMAN, ragged WOMAN, BOY with his shirt hanging out

MRS. W. Here, then, let all make merry in honour of the christening of this beautiful child. Proceed, my children, with your mirth—and, Tom, reward the workmen.

(Music.—TOM here introduces the WORKMEN, with their

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WIVES and CHILDREN, each receiving according to their deserts. After one or two are paid, ragged BOY and WOMAN are introduced. TOM explains the FATHER is a drunkard; then some are sleepy—some lazy. A drunken MAN led by his WIFE, with a black eye—TOM explains to MRS. WILTON that he beat his WIFE, and struck her there with his fist. TOM crosses him out of the books, and pays the wife, and some of the MEN bundle him off. MEN bring on barrels of ale, mugs, and serve it out.

JANE suddenly enters from R.

JANE. Edward appears not—my anxiety is dreadful.

MRS W. Now, Tom, show your skill in arranging the dance.

(TOM arranges the WORKMEN; JANE takes her seat in the balcony beside MRS. WILTON, as EDWARD appears, L. U. E.

JANE. (*aside.*) Ah, he is there! How can I descend to give him the key of the garden?

EDWARD. (*aside at back.*) There's the unfeeling woman who repels me—who rolls in gold, while I—

MRS. W. (*seeing him!*) Jane, who is that poor man yonder? He is not one of our workmen.

JANE. No, madam. (*aside.*) She does not know him.

MRS. W. Doubtless some poor fellow in search of employment, who envies the happiness of my workmen. Go give him this—all must be happy to-day.

JANE. (*aside.*) Here is my pretence found then.

(*Music.—She descends from the balcony as the dance begins, and goes to EDWARD—gives him the key and a note, and returns;—Lancashire dance of eight in clogs.*

SCENE H—Streets in Manchester.

Enter WELTER, L., running.

WELTER. A pretty race I've had of it, to escape that vampire, Patty. She haunts me everywhere—ding-dong in my ears, "Marry me!" I suppose I must marry her, to save her the trouble of asking me so many times, and to spite Miss Jane. Patty must love me, or she would not follow me so.

Enter PATTY, L., running.

PATTY. So, sir, I've caught you again? Are you going mad?

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WELTER. Not yet—but I soon shall be, if things go on so ; I'm on the right road for it. They are gone, and you are come to replace them.

PATTY. Who are gone ?

WELTER. He and she together.

PATTY. He and she—why the man's cracked! Now, recollect yourself—and let me see if I can get any sense out of you.

WELTER. I'll have my revenge.

PATTY. Are you willing to marry me ?

WELTER. Are you willing to have me ?

PATTY. Why, haven't I been insisting that you shall marry me for *the* last three months?

WELTER. I'll make only one consideration, that all the town shaft know the conduct of Miss Jane: that she cannot look at a man but she must jump upon his back.

PATTY. Oh, I've seen her embrace Tom twenty times.

WELTER. So have I, with my own eyes—seeing's believing. If her mistress knew it, Patty—

PATTY. She shall know it; I'll unmask her.

WELTER. Patty, I shall adore you.

PATTY. Marry me first—you may adore me as much as you please afterwards.

WELTER. Yes, I will—I'll marry you.

PATTY. Then we'll be married directly.

WELTER. Why, it must be asked three times in church.

PATTY. Oh, no, I've taken care we should not wait so long. I've saved my money and bought a license. (*produces it.*)

WELTER. Well, but I must go and buy a ring; you can't be married without a ring.

PATTY. I've got it already—here it is.

WELTER. But there's no parson ready to marry us now; we must wait till to-morrow.

PATTY. No, no—there will be no waiting. I knew I should get you in the mind, and so I told the parson and clerk to be in waiting. I've invited all my friends and acquaintances; here they come, and we must be married now.

WELTER. On lord, oh lord! then there's no hope! (*fiddles without.*)

Enter a number of LADS and LASSES, R.

PATTY. Here we are, my good neighbours; I told you I should be married to-day. Here's the bridegroom, and I'm the bride; so come along, my dear Mr. Welter! come along, neighbours.

(*Lively music. She takes him by the arm, and forces him off reluctantly, as the LADS and LASSES follow dancing, R.*)

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SCENE III.—*A saloon in Mrs. Wilton's house; practicable window and balcony, backed by moonlight scene; curtains to window; doors, R. H. and L. H; chairs; lamp burning on table; lights half down.*

JANE *discovered, looking out of window.*

JANE. All is quiet—the night is lovely. I tremble lest my poor Edward should be observed, or arrive before the house is closed. To admit my husband into the house of his aunt is no more than natural; yet she is so good, so kind to me, that I shrink at the idea of betraying her confidence. To-morrow she shall know all. (*listens.*) I hear nothing. The ladder I placed against the chestnut tree still remains. Ah! Mrs. Wilton and Mr. Palmerston come. Heaven watch over my Edward!

Enter MRS. WILTON and MR. PALMERSTON, R.

MRS. W. Jane, close the window, and bring me the green portfolio, which you will find in my *escrutoire*. (*gives the key.*)

JANE. Yes, madam. (*takes light, and enters L. D.*)

MRS. W. Mr. Palmerston, the conversation I wished to have with you relates to the happiness of Jane. I have been generous all day, and I wish to end it as I began. I

MR. P. You excite my curiosity, madam.

MRS. W. In a few moments you shall know all. By the bye, on quitting us you dined with the judge: what said he of my successful lawsuit?

MR. P. That justice was with you, and the money strictly due. But what engrossed my principal attention was the details of a murder at Dieppe, a singular circumstance connected with which may probably lead to the discovery of the assassin.

MRS. W. Indeed; what may that be?

MR. P. That in the hand of the victim was found the portrait of a woman, apparently snatched from the murderer in the death struggle. This portrait had been suspended from his neck by a hair chain, and will be exhibited in a few days at the justice hall.

MRS. W. I feel much curiosity to see it, and Jane shall accompany me thither.

Enter JANE, L. door.

JANE. There, madam, is the portfolio. (*gives it with the key.*)

MRS. W. Now, be seated. What I have to say concerns you both. (*They take seats. MRS. WILTON takes a paper from portfolio, and places it on the table.*) You, Jane, are my adopted

daughter. You are my friend—have ever displayed towards me the affections of a son. Here is my will : you are the sole inheritors of my Wealth.

JANE. Is it possible ?

MR. P. How, madam ?

MRS. W. On condition that you marry my adopted daughter Jane. Seek no longer to deceive me; I know you love each other. This will accomplish all I wish. I repeat, 'tis a condition of my will—the entreaty of a second mother. Here it is; examine it yourself. (*gives him the will to read.*) Well, is it valid ?

MR. P. Perfectly so, madam ; but not for me.

JANE. (*aside.*) Generous woman !

MRS. W. How ! what you—

MR. P. Think you, madam, that I would accept of such a gift ? Your whole fortune, which belongs to your nephew, Mr. Edward Wilton !

MRS. W. Never !

MR. P. To his wife—to his son.

MRS. W. I tell you, never ! I cannot forget the dying words of his uncle—

MR. P. Madam, let not my name appear in your will, as you value my life—my character. It will be said I took advantage of your generosity to rob your nephew, his wife, his child, of their lawful inheritance. Thus am I compelled to destroy it. (*tears the will.*) And I hope ere long to reveal to you the insurmountable obstacle that renders our union impossible. Good night, madam. Good night, Miss Jane. *Exit D. R. H.*

MRS. W. Was anything so contrary ? An insurmountable obstacle ! Jane, I should grieve to think you capable of deceiving me. Mr. Palmerston wrote to you this morning ?

JANE. He did, madam; but not on the motive that dictated your generous intentions.

MRS. W. Still, you have some secret from me ?

JANE. Ah ! madam, happen what may, to-morrow—to-morrow this secret shall be yours. (*knock at door, R. H.*)

MRS. W. Do not open the door.

JANE. Perhaps the porter. Is it you, Lawrence ?

MRS. W. No answer ! (*knock again.*)

JANE. (*at door.*) Is it you, Lawrence?—speak !

MRS. W. Still silent !

JANE. (*looking through keyhole.*) Ah ! 'tis my brother !

MRS. W. Open the door. Poor fellow, he had good reason for not answering. Open the door.

(*JANE opens door—TOM rushes in, agitated, and looks round wildly.*)

Sc. 3. THE DUMB MAN OF MANCHESTER. 17

JANE. What is the matter, brother?

(Music, marked hurry, with pauses. TOM expresses that he saw a man sharpening a knife on the stone of the fountain. They do not comprehend him.)

MRS. W. What does he mean?

JANE. I am endeavouring to make out. Of whom were you speaking?

(Music. TOM expresses in rapid pantomime as before hand finishes by a terrible gesture of stabbing some one.)

MRS. W. Good heavens! he speaks of some one sharpening a knife on a stone! The boy has roused my slumbering fears!

JANE. *(aside.)* Can he mean Edward? Impossible! *(to TOM.)* You are a foolish boy, and little better than a coward.

(TOM, indignant at this, becomes more positive; and relates that he saw the mendicant, who suddenly disappeared behind the garden wall.)

JANE. Madam, he knows not what he says. Travellers need a weapon of defence. As to the poor man you relieved this morning, he is known to Mr. Palmerston; I will answer for him as for myself.

MRS. W. Enough; you may go on. *(to TOM.)*

(Music. TOM throws himself at her feet, implores her to keep him near her, and he will protect his mistress and his sister.)

MRS. W. What would he now?

JANE. To pass the night here, to protect you! How absurd!

MRS. W. I do not think so, as we are out of the reach of alarm. Let your brother sleep in the attic above.

JANE. Now I hope you are satisfied. Come, let me show you to your chamber, where you're to sleep for the night.

(TOM thanks MRS. WILTON—kisses her hand. JANE takes a light, and shows him off R. door.)

MRS. W. I am weary, and sleep quite overcomes me. *(she sits down. EDWARD appears in the balcony, standing in the moonlight.)* I do not feel as usual this evening. There appears to be—

(EDWARD, seeing his aunt, makes a gesture signifying his impatience, and quickly retires. MRS. WILTON, hearing a noise, suddenly starts up, as JANE enters, R. D.)

MRS. W. Eh! what was that?

JANE. 'Tis me, madam.

MRS. W. I was near sleeping, but will now retire to my chamber. Lock my door as usual, and take the key.

JANE. I shall keep it constantly by me.

MRS. W. Do not forget to wake me early. Good night, Jane; I long for to-morrow, to know your secret, Come, daughter, embrace me.

18 THE DUMB MAN OF MANCHESTER. Act 1.

(*They embrace—JANE conducts her to the door of her chamber, L. H., locks the door, and takes the key.*)

JANE. At last I am alone. All is prepared for my Edward's reception. (*goes R. H., and brings on a basket containing a supper for two, which she places on the table.*) Delightful hope! I shall be again reunited with my husband and my child! But tomorrow she shall know all.

EDWARD. (*below, at back.*) Jane! Jane!

JANE. Ah! tis he! (*she flies to the window.*) You may come!

EDWARD *enters.*

EDWARD. Are we alone?

JANE. Yes; your aunt has retired to her chamber, and my brother sleeps above.

EDWARD. Your brother?

JANE. The dumb boy, who was absent from the farm at the time we were married, and whom you have never seen.

EDWARD. You have not told him or Mr. Palmerston?

JANE. You forbid me to tell any one—even the generous Mr. Palmerston.

EDWARD. Think you I can be the dupe of a lawyer's hypocrisy?

JANE. He is noble and generous. If you wish for proof, behold—(*pointing to the torn pieces of the will.*)

EDWARD. Ah! what is that, Jane?

JANE. A will Mr. Palmerston has torn; because it was made in his favour, he will not accept it.

EDWARD. She is a pitiless woman, to whom I owe my five years of dreadful suffering. Yes, to her I owe the misery of my life and yours.

JANE. Be calm; our destiny will change. Come, I have prepared a repast for you. Fear not we shall be disturbed. You are thoughtful—you tremble.

EDWARD. Who? I? (*aside.*) Courage! (*changing tone.*) Come, come, Jane, sit and drink. (*they sit.*)

JANE. I'll drink with you, Edward. To your happy return! (*they drink.*)

EDWARD. To our reunion! (*drinks.*) This is the first moment I have enjoyed, since our separation, free from care.

JANE. Your aunt, who knows me not as your wife, and who I am sure, in spite of her oath, will forgive you—

EDWARD. She hates me! Call to mind all her refusals before I left you. 'Twas her avarice that drove me hence—the hardness of her heart that made me a thief!

JANE! Ah!

EDWARD. A man must live.

Sc. 3. THE DUMB MAN OF MANCHESTER. 19

JANE. 'Twere better to die !

EDWARD. I—die of poverty! of hunger! No! Judge if I ought not to be weary of the destiny that pursues me—hear me. On leaving you I passed over to the United States, where I hoped to have enriched myself by my labour; but a French artist, less skilful than myself, had settled at New York, and I was unknown, and neglected. I went to the Brazils: there jealousy raised me up persecutors. I was charged with forging notes on the Lisbon banks—imprisoned—fettered—condemned! I was chained to a companion in misfortune, an Italian—we were determined on gaining our liberty—and escaped by striking down the guard.

JANE. (*starting with horror.*) What—you murdered the man?

EDWARD. Would you have had me murdered, on a scaffold? Well, well, we set out for Spain, and, at Cadiz, opened a gaming house for foreigners; but he who had been my brother—my best friend—who during a year had shared my sufferings—and one day was to have partook of my fortune, infamously abandoned me, and carried off the treasure that I only had amassed, and I became a beggar. Despair then settled on my heart. Thus ruined and wretched, I returned to my long deserted home.

JANE. Fear not, I will dispel your melancholy—all may yet be well—your aunt is good.

EDWARD. Ay, the richest woman in Manchester.

JANE. Heaven preserve her life.

EDWARD. Enough, enough! Pardon me, I'm bewildered. Come, my Jane, let me behold your face. Ah, you are still as lovely as when I first beheld you.

JANE. Have you not kept my portrait, which I gave you, with a chain of my own hair?

EDWARD. (*tremulously.*) Your portrait—your portrait!

JANE. Have you lost it? You do not answer.

EDWARD. With pain—I confess I no longer have it. The wretch that robbed me of all—

JANE. Robbed you of that? Ah, I told you to wear it round your neck by the chain woven of my own hair. Yours I have still preserved—it is in my chamber.

EDWARD. IS that your chamber? It was formerly my aunt's.

JANE. It was—but now she sleeps there. (*door L. H.*)

EDWARD. Alone?

JANE. Always.

EDWARD. She cannot surprise us?

JANE. No—she is fastened in.

EDWARD. Fastened in?

JANE. Under lock and key—look! (*shows key.*) Every night she is my prisoner.

EDWARD. (*listens attentively and becomes thoughtful.*) Hush! I hear a step in that room.

JANE. You fancy so.

EDWARD. I am sure of it—I hear footsteps.

JANE. I'll be convinced of that.

(*Music.—She goes towards Mrs. Wilton's door. As she turns, he suddenly takes a phial from his pocket, and pours some of its contents into her glass. Music, piano.—She returns.*)

You are wrong—she sleeps profoundly.

EDWARD. While we enjoy these precious moments, happy in our re-union: 'tis like a new marriage. Come, Jane, may it ever continue.

JANE. (*drinks.*) Ah, why have we not our son here between us?

EDWARD. I would embrace him with all my heart, as I now embrace his mother.

JANE. We will return—see my father—my son—shall we not?—You promise?

EDWARD. I can refuse you nothing.

JAKE. This is as you were before our separation.

EDWARD. (*embraces her tenderly.*) Yes, we will go, my Jane. Well I remember our first interview, our tender caresses. I will live for you only: I will never leave you more; I swear it, my Jane, I swear it! (*during this JANE has gradually sunk from his embrace, and falls to sleep on sofa, L., he listens.*) She sleeps—she sleeps! The opiate has produced the desired effect. (*blows out candle.*) She is safe! There's not a moment to be lost. Fortune at last is mine. (*looks out of window.*) Not a soul; the whole town seems dead. (*takes the key out of Jane's pocket.*) Now is my vengeance sure!

(*Music. He assuages himself again that JANE sleeps, and that all is safe, then cautiously unlocks Mrs. Wilton's door, and enters.*)

JANE. (*dreaming.*) Edward, your aunt will pardon you—she is so good.

(*Music.—A cry is heard in Mrs Wilton's room—noise of struggling and overturning furniture, and MRS. WILTON'S cries for help. TOM, who hears the cries, throws a cord from above the balcony and descends, running about in terror; sees JANE asleep—tries to wake her—hears a scuffle in the chamber—looks, and sees EDWARD coming—conceals himself behind the sofa in terror. EDWARD rushes in with a bloody knife, and the small portfolio in his hands—takes papers out of portfolio, and throws it on the ground.*)

Sc. 3. THE DUMB MAN OF MANCHESTER, 21

EDWARD. All is over! the inheritance is mine! (*turns—sees JANE.*) But Jane lives—what shall I do? It must be so.

(*proceeds to strike JANE.*)

(*Music.—TOM rushes forward, catches him by the arm, struggles with him, and wresting the knife from him, dashes it to the ground. EDWARD wrestles with TOM, who is ultimately thrown down, and EDWARD escapes over the balcony. TOM rises and goes and shakes JANE violently as before. TOM then runs to the window, rings the alarm bell, the rope of which is attached to the balcony—his mute cries become frightful. VOICES respond below—the R. door is burst open, and all the CHARACTERS rush in. TOM points to the chamber of Mrs. Wilton. MR. PALMERSTON and others rush in; MRS. WILTON is led out, wounded and bleeding.*)

MR. P. Gracious heaven! what dreadful crime is this?

(*all crowd round with horror. TOM runs towards her—she points to TOM.*)

MRS. W. (L.) Behold—behold my assassin!

(*Falls into Mr. Palmerston's arms and expires. Music, very marked.—TOM falls on his knees and calls on Heaven to witness his innocence. The WORKMEN rush to seize him—MR. PALMERSTON interferes between them. TOM seems almost frantic, and dashes himself on the ground,—Tableau.—Drop descends slowly.*)

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

A C T I I .

SCENE I.—A grand square saloon at the Justice Ball in Manchester. On R. H. and L. H. are two Gothic windows, R. one opens to courtyard—the L. H. one into an open square where the criminals are led to execution. At back, a Gothic door—at R. U. E., a staircase descending into the prison.

TURNKEY and Two MEN are discovered, the latter are employed in erecting a temporary staircase before L. H. window.

TURNKEY. Well, is all ready?

1ST MAN. Yes, we have just finished the staircase for the poor fellow to reach the fatal platform.

22 THE DUMB MAN OF MANCHESTER. Act 2.

TURNKEY. 'Tis well—you may go; but forget not the hour of execution.
Exit MEN, C.

Enter MRS. PATTY WELTER, with a basket, C.

PATTY. Don't you know me? I'm Mrs. Patty Welter—being married just a month to Mr. Crispin Welter, of the Golden Boot, Manchester. You must know me! If you please, I'm come as usual to bring the poor dumb boy these refreshments from his sister.

TURNKEY. Alas! my dear little lady, to-day he will be in want of nothing. The execution is appointed for twelve o'clock; so I advise you to retire.

PATTY. Twelve o'clock! Oh, dear me! and his sister reckons on his pardon. Poor fellow! I am sure he is innocent—and the judge ought to know it, too, and not to say people are guilty when they are not so. Oh, I wish I was lord judge.

TURNKEY. You had better retire. (*goes off, R. H.*)

Enter WELTER, out of breath, C.

WELTER. So, Mrs. Welter, here you are at last? And you are determined I shall pass all my time in running after my lawful spouse?

PATTY. Well, I'm sure, Mr. Welter, what business have you to take that liberty. For the last month, since we have been married, you have been continually at my heels. Are you aware that it is becoming very tiresome?

WELTER. I *will* follow you, Mrs. Welter. It's your own fault. You would be my wife—and I've a right to follow my wife! Ah, you may well boast of making me pay for my past conduct.

PATTY. When a man makes a woman dance attendance on him before marriage, the woman takes advantage after the "yes" is pronounced at the altar; that's safe to happen—it's a natural consequence.

WELTER. Very fine—and what are you doing here?

PATTY. What business have you to ask such a question? But I don't mind satisfying you for once. I'm come to bring these refreshments for Tom, whom your testimony has convicted.

WELTER. Well, how could I help it? I spoke the truth, and but the truth, as the judge said.

PATTY. And then this Mr. Edward Wilton comes all at once upon us, from America, to claim his aunt's inheritance. How he wept when he found how things were. But they say he does not live on good terms with his wife.

WELTER. That's a very common case.

PATTY. And pray, Mr. Welter, what brought you here?

WELTER. Running after you. I want the key of the till to pay the poor rate.

PATTY. Then I shall pay it myself.

WELTER. But the workmen want their wages.

PATTY. Don't trouble yourself—I shall look to all the money concerns. Go home, and don't take the liberty of running after me.

WELTER. But don't you see the preparations there? I hope you will spare your sensibility such a sad spectacle.

PATTY. I shall do as I please—but here comes Mr. Palmerston.

Enter MR. PALMERSTON, C, with papers.

MR. P. Near an hour has passed away, and the Lord Chief Judge not yet returned according to his promise. Can he be induced to change his mind? If so, the hapless youth must die.

PATTY. Mr. Palmerston, your servant.

WELTER. Sir, I have the honour—

MR. P. Patty, know you if Mr. Edward Wilton will be—

PATTY. Here, sir—at the moment when her brother—

WELTER. It would be highly unbecoming.

MR. P. What's far more so Mr. Welter, is the presence in such a place of an obstinate witness, who can boast of having conducted the victim to the scaffold.

WELTER. Mr. Palmerston—Mr. Palmerston, I did my duty, sir, and my conscience acquits me.

MR. P. Unfortunate youth! but I will penetrate the dreadful mystery that now envelopes this fearful crime. Scarcely an hour remains—yet that shall suffice. Patty, go to Mrs. Edward Wilton's; tell her her duty calls her here instantly. (*knocks at the vaulted door, R.*) I will now carry a ray of consolation and hope to the dungeon of innocence.

JAILOR enters from R. door.

Show me to the cell of the prisoner.

(*Music.—JAILOR bows; MR. PALMERSTON passes before him; PATTY gives JAILOR basket, and he follows and closes the door, R. U. E.*)

WELTER. Oh, dear—Mr. Palmerston has quite upset me.

PATTY. I'm going for Mrs. Wilton—and I desire you will not follow me about. Go home and attend to your business, or I'll have you tied to the counter of the Golden Boot. *Exit, C.*

WELTER. My adorable wife! you didn't say so before mar-

riage. Mrs. Welter—Mrs. Welter! — Eh? who's coming? Mr. Edward Wilton, as I live! When I look at him and that gallows at the window, it gives me a crick in the neck; so I'll wait no longer, but be off after my wife. *Exit by door C.*

Enter EDWARD WILTON, C, in fashionable attire (black).

EDWARD. What caprice is this of my wife, to appoint a meeting here—'tis a strange place for a conjugal reconciliation. She has sulked with me for the last month: yet she has kept my secret. I feel disposed to a reconciliation, on condition that she withholds her reproaches—her tears. I am rich—honoured; she might be the happiest of women, (*reads a note.*) "Repair, to-morrow, to the Justice Hall: I wish, I require it—Jane." 'Tis laconic—short as an imperial command: but patience—when I have bound her to my will—(*noise without.*) What now, sir?

TURNKEY *enters, R., door.*

TURNKEY. The Lord Chief Justice has arrived at the Justice Hall.

EDWARD. For what purpose?

TURNKEY. He pays an annual visit; but, this year, is earlier than usual: he wishes to examine one of the prisoners.

EDWARD. A state prisoner?

TURNKEY. No, a condemned convict. Your pardon—my duty calls me. *Exit, C. D.*

EDWARD. Can it be the brother of Jane he wishes to see? I am perhaps brought here for some fatal purpose—ha! be it so—but I am armed against them. She comes!

Enter JANE, slowly, C. D., in mourning.

You see, madam, I am here agreeably to your time; but allow me to observe that the place of rendezvous is ill-chosen.

JANE. You are here at the foot of a scaffold, sir—'tis the place of execution—no doubt reserved for you.

EDWARD. (L. C.) Madam!

JANE. I no longer fear you; if I am to expect death from you, it would be a benefaction—*for I bear your name.*

EDWARD. To the purpose—why am I summoned here?

JANE. That you may assist me in obtaining of the Lord Chief Justice pardon for my brother, whom I have sacrificed, not indeed to you—for I look on you with horror—but to my son. What would be his prospects were his father to die on a scaffold?

EDWARD. (*sneeringly.*) I am glad to hear you entertain so reasonable a thought, Jane.

Sc. 1. THE DUMB MAN OF MANCHESTER. 25

JANE. Hear me. My brother knows you not; and if he did, your name cannot be pronounced from his mouth. No suspicion hovers over you; no one saw you in Manchester. *Silence* is your safeguard—and I have kept silence, still hoping the eloquence of Mr. Palmerston would suffice to establish my brother's innocence. Alas! accident seems to have combined every circumstance to ensure his destruction. Say, how is this? for *I* cannot tell; for by the vilest treason you deprived me of my senses. Oh, 'twas infamous to take advantage of my love—the credulity of a weak woman, to murder one, too, who loved you as her son.

EDWARD. Again, madam!

JANE. 'Tis your son that saves you. But for him, I would reveal the truth. My brother is in a dungeon, sir, condemned for your crime; find some means to save him, or, by Heaven! yon scaffold shall be prepared for you.

EDWARD. (*alarmed.*) I will do as you desire. I will fall at the judge's feet, and ask his pardon: I will join my entreaties with your tears; doubt not we shall succeed. But should his pardon be obtained—promise me to forget the past, and restore me to your affections.

JANE. Never, sir, never! we must live far from each other. There is blood between us—that must separate us for ever.

EDWARD. Silence! silence! some one comes.

Enter MR. PALMERSTON, R. D.

MR. P. I have waited for you, madam. (*salutes WILTON.*) The judge has arrived.

EDWARD. Excuse me—important business—

JANE. You will return, will you not?

EDWARD. (*harshly.*) I have given my word.

MR. P. I fear, sir, you will not be able to pass. The doors of the hall are closed against everybody.

EDWARD. (*alarmed.*) Closed! (*recovering.*) And why so?

MR. P. Lest a great criminal should escape the hands of justice.

EDWARD. Good—but that concerns not me.

MR. P. The gates of the outer court remain closed till five.

EDWARD. No matter—it shall be tried. *Exit, C. D.*

JANE. Ah! my poor brother: tell me—he will not perish?

MR. P. Have you told the judge all that was necessary to save him?

JANE. I have protested his innocence.

MR. P. Should you not have done more?

JANE. What do you mean?

MR. P. The occasion demands that I should speak freely.

Is it possible that your heart, yielding to the entreaties of love in the advantage of a moment of weakness, introduced himself in spite of you, without your knowledge—perhaps *with*—You avert your countenance.

JANE. This imputation, sir, is terrible.

MR. P. Jane, to save a murderer, will you suffer your brother to ascend the scaffold? You are silent—your brother comes; I leave you with him. (*goes off, C.*)

Solemn music.—TOM enters R. door, conducted by FOUR JAILORS.

JANE. My brother!

(*She rushes to him and embraces him eagerly—both weep. TOM disengages himself, and with his handkerchief wipes away his sister's tears.*)

JANE. My brother!

(*Music, very pathetic.*—TOM expresses he thought they were leading him to execution; he adds, now that I have seen my sister, I can die content—but Heaven knows my innocence.)

JANE. You shall not die—the judge will pardon you.

(*Music, bold.*—TOM rises proudly and intimates he has no need of pardon—he is innocent. *Music, plaintive.*—He casts himself on his knees before her; he kisses her hand—then, by a sudden recollection, takes a silver ring from his finger and places it on one of hers.)

JANE. Heaven! 'tis the silver ring given him by my mother on her death bed! (*falls on her knees.*) Oh, my mother! she calls to me from the depths of her grave to save my brother. Yes, yes, my mother! I will reveal all!

(*Music.* TOM looks at her with astonishment; he seems to ask the meaning of her words; her delirium increases, and she says, "I will, mother! I will reveal all!" *Music*—TOM presses his sister to explain. She weeps in anguish, and falls at his feet—he raises and kisses her.)

JANE. My brother! (*presses him to her heart.*)

USHER. (*advances.*) Madam, the lord judge advances. I know you have a request to make. I will call you; but pass now into that hall.

JANE. I thank you, sir. (*aside.*) Edward returns not! Should he not come, his fate is sealed.

(*Music.* She throws herself into TOM'S arms; then, on a sign from the TURNKEY, goes into the hall, R. 1 E. TOM is conducted back by GAOLERS, R. 3 E.)

Enter CHIEF JUSTICE, MR. PALMERSTON, OFFICERS, GUARDS, C.

CHIEF JUS. (*to MR. PALMERSTON.*) I acknowledge, sir, your positive conviction has raised some doubts in my mind as

to the guilt of the unfortunate youth; but ere I proceed to examine the depositions, what affinity can you discover between the crime committed at Dieppe and the assassination of Mrs. Wilton?

MR. P. Suffice it, my lord, for the present, that in the portrait snatched from the murderer at Dieppe, I recognise the features of a woman well known to me in Manchester. I will produce the woman; let your lordship then judge for yourself.

CHIEF JUS. Let the dumb boy be first examined.

(MR. PALMERSTON *motions TOM to advance; he comes forward, and offers to throw himself at his lordship's feet, who raises him.*)

His appearance is far from unfavourable.

MR. P. His courage has not sunk a moment, though he knows all the horrors of his fate.

CHIEF JUS. His eye sparkles with gratitude as he listens to you. Let him repeat the manner in which he described the fatal event to his judge. (*consults the depositions.*)

(*Music. TOM eagerly signifies that he will; then, in animated pantomime, relates that he saw a man (imitating beggar) sharpening a knife on a stone; he came to warn Mrs. Wilton of her danger, who made him remain in the house.*)

CHIEF JUS. If I understand him rightly, he saw a man who had asked alms, sharpening a knife on a stone: he flew to warn Mrs. Wilton of her danger, who wished him to sleep in the attic above.

(*Music. TOM signs "Yes, yes," and continues—that at bed time he heard a noise; that he descended by a rope into the chamber, saw his sister asleep, and an ill-looking fellow come out of Mrs. Wilton's room; that he hid himself behind the sofa; the man offered to strike his sister, but he (TOM) wrested the knife from his hand; that they wrestled together; TOM was thrown down, and the man escaped through the window; that he rang the alarm bell, opened the door, when Mr. Palmerston entered; Mrs. Wilton was led from her chamber bleeding, and accused him of the murder.*)

CHIEF JUS. You further say that, while in your bed-room, you heard a cry; you descended by a rope, saw your sister sleeping, and the mendicant came from Mrs. Wilton's room with a knife in his hand; you concealed yourself; the man attempted to strike your sister; you prevented him, and he escaped through the window; you called in that gentleman. (*pointing to MR. PALMERSTON.*) Mrs. Wilton appeared, and accused you of the murder. (*TOM signifies "Yes."*) Is he certain his sister slept soundly when the assassin, as he says, entered her apartment? (*TOM signs "Yes"*) Did the ladder also belong to the premises? (*TOM signs "Yes."*)

28 THE DUMB MAN OF MANCHESTER. Act 2.

Mr. P. An important circumstance was passed over too lightly on the trial. The porter deposed that Tom entered by the front door, and that Jane borrowed the ladder. It grieves me, my lord, to cast any suspicion on Mrs. Edward Wilton; but when the life of an innocent man is in jeopardy, I owe to society my unreserved opinions. The assassin was introduced by her into her apartment, and that assassin cannot be Tom. (*Music.*)

JANE *rushes in*, R. 1 E., *and falls at* CHIEF JUSTICE'S *feet.*

JANE. Pardon, my lord! my brother is innocent.

CHIEF JUS. (*raising her.*) Rise, madam. Believe me your misfortunes—(*looking at her.*) What do I see? This woman—this portrait! (*takes out the portrait, and compares it with her in astonishment. A general surprise.*) 'Tis the same person. A ray of light breaks in upon me. Mrs. Wilton will alone remain with me.

(*Music. TOM is led off*, R. 3 E.—*the rest exit*, R. 1 E. *and C.*
A moment of silence.)

JANE. (*aside.*) Ah! what fearful ceremony is this? (*aloud.*) My lord, pardon for my brother.

CHIEF JUS. Calm yourself, madam. I am ready to hear you, and save your brother; but you must now speak the whole truth, and without reserve.

JANE. I concealed nothing. I assured the court of my brother's innocence, and yet they condemned him.

CHIEF JUS. How can you affirm his innocence? At the moment of the crime you were in a profound sleep—you saw nothing, heard nothing—yet you maintain that he is not guilty. You are silent. There is a secret behind, which you have sworn to keep concealed. Either your brother is guilty, and poured the drug into your wine, which left Mrs. Wilton to the mercy of the assassin, or some one else shared clandestinely your evening repast. (*silence.*) You cannot deny it. You are young—has no seducer found his way into your heart?

JANE. (*weeping.*) My character has ever been irreproachable.

CHIEF JUS. Did you never give away a portrait of yourself?

JANE. Never—my husband excepted—a year after our marriage.

CHIEF JUS. And your husband, nephew and heir to the victim, doubtless preserved this pledge?

JANE. No, he has not; 'twas stolen from him on his travels.

CHIEF JUS. Stolen from him!—Mrs. Wilton, I repeat to you, 'tis in your power to save your brother. Now, answer me. While under your assumed name, did your husband never appear

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at your aunt's? (*she is silent.*) On the day of the fatal event you were in conversation with a mendicant—was he not an agent of Mr. Wilton's?

JANE. My lord?

CHIEF JUS. Was it not your husband himself?—answer me. (*bell tolls.*) Do you not hear? 'Tis the signal for your brother's death?

WILTON *appears from C.*—JANE *clinging to him.*

JANE Oh, do not drive me mad! Save, O save my brother!

EDWARD. (*approaching.*) Allow me to unite my entreaties, and solicit your clemency.

CHIEF JUS. I have been expecting you, sir. You are 'Mr. Edward Wilton?

EDWARD. The same, sir.

CHIEF JUS. Who waits there?

Enter USHER, C.

Let all enter, the condemned excepted. (*Music.*)

Enter MR. PALMERSTON, SHERIFFS, TURNKEYS, R. *and* C.

CHIEF JUS. Mr. Palmerston, I am of your opinion--the dumb boy is innocent!

JANE. (*with joy.*) Ah! my brother!

EDWARD. Who is the criminal then?

CHIEF JUS. Let the Dumb Boy of Manchester answer that. Silence, I command you.

Music.—TOM *is brought in* R. 3 E. -

CHIEF JUS. (C.) Advance. Examine attentively the countenances of all present, and see if amongst them you can discover the assassin of your benefactress. (*Music.*)

(TOM *bows, and prepares to execute the order, his eye animated, his gestures raised—(people arranged on both sides of the stage)—when he comes to WILTON, R., he starts with surprise, then examines him again, and makes a convulsive noise or sign of certainty. General movement—all eyes are fixed upon him. TOM, who returns to WILTON, points him out with extended arms.*)

CHIEF JUS. That, then, is the murderer?

EDWARD. What! dare to accuse me? My conduct has ever been that of an honourable man. I protest against a charge so foul. I the murderer of my aunt! The whole town has witnessed my grief—my tears. I have ventured to solicit pardon for him who now accuses me. This is the return.

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CHIEFJUS. One word more, and I have done. Know you this portrait? (*producing it.—Chord.*)

EDWARD. Great Heaven!

CHIEFJUS. The murderer of Dieppe is the assassin of Manchester! You are our prisoner. (*general consternation.*)

EDWARD. What! perish on a scaffold! No, I will not submit to that. But blood must have blood! Jane, farewell for ever! I die, but not a felon's death! (*music.*) This to prevent it.

(*The officers run to seize him; he rushes from them to the window, L. H., exclaims, "Jane, farewell for ever!" and jumps through window. JANE, with a scream, falls fainting. TOM falls on his knees. PALMERSTON and the rest run to the window; PALMERSTON, with horror on his countenance, rushes forward.*)

MR. P. He has leaped from the window on the stones of the court yard; there, weltering in his blood, he has expiated his crime. Edward Wilton is no more!

(*During the preceding part of the scene the bell has been tolling at intervals. TOM falls on his knees, thanking Heaven for his deliverance; at the same time embracing the fainting form of his sister.*)

CURTAIN.