

MARTHA WILLIS

THE SERVANT MAID

AN ORIGINAL DOMESTIC DRAMA

IN

TWO ACTS.

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

AUTHOR OF

*Black Eye'd Susan—The Rent Day—The Prisoner of War—Doves
in a Cage—The Schoolfellows—Time Works Wonders,
&c. &c. &c*



THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND,
(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market).
LONDON.

ADDRESS TO MARTHA WILLIS.

It is the object of the present drama to display, in the most forcible and striking point of view, the temptations which in this metropolis assail the young and inexperienced on their first outset in life—temptations which, if yielded to, inevitably conduct their victim to wretchedness and shame. It being the peculiar province of the Stage to "hold the mirror up to nature"—to deter by example, and to warn by precept—it is trusted that the present drama, which abounds in strong and highly-wrought pictures of real life—which contains characters whose originals are to be met with in almost every street in London, will be found not only worthy of the attention of those to whose situations in the world it more immediately applies but also interesting to those patrons of the theatre who are desirous of finding in a drama skilful combination of powerful, yet naturally wrought incidents, and vivid portraitures of men and manners as they really are. One of the greatest geniuses of modern times has said, "Truth is strange—stranger than fiction." This great metropolis teems with persons and events, which, considered with reference to their dramatic capabilities, beggar invention—every knave has his mystery, every dupe his sorrow, every street its romance of real life. It is these scenes of every-day experience—it is these characters which are met in our hourly paths—that will be found in the present drama, but so displayed and grouped, that, whilst they gain an animation and a strength from contrast, they sacrifice no jot of their identity or nature; they lose nothing, save their original grossness. In the drama, vice is anatomised, in order to be shunned and hated—not robed in specious finery, to lure and destroy.

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*First Performed at the Royal Pavilion Theatre,
 On Easter Monday, April 4th 1831.*

Walter Speed, <i>alias</i> Nat Fell, <i>Highwayman and Gambler, former Lover of Martha Willis</i>	. Mr. FREER.
Harry Melville, <i>a Man of Fortune the dupe of Speed.</i>	. Mr. STERLING.
<i>(From the Hastings Theatre.)</i>	
Shoulder, <i>Porter of the "Spread Eagle" Coach Office.</i>	. Mr. HADAWAY.
Hitch, <i>a Broker.</i>	. Mr. SHOARD.
Nunky Gruel, <i>a Pawnbroker, miserly and hypocritical.</i>	. Mr. BUCKINGHAM.
Scarlet, <i>Guard of the Derby Highflyer, Suitor to the Maid Servant</i>	. Mr. FARRELL.
Slug, <i>Son of Joannah the Gypsey, one of a Gang of Thieves.</i>	. Mr. HESLOP.
Roger, <i>Shopman to Nunky Gruel.</i>	. Mr. CHAPINO.
Officer.	. Mr. CRESSALL.
Gaoler.	. Mr. WILSON.
Thieves, Officers, &c.	
Martha Willis, <i>the Maid Servant</i>	. Mrs. T. HILL.
Miss Clereland.....	Miss FANNY PARTRIDGE.
<i>(Her First Appearance at this Theatre.) Who will introduce the "Merry Mountain Horn," and the Duet with Miss Jackson, "In the Merry Month of May."</i>	
Joannah, <i>the Gypsey</i>	Mrs. GASKELL.
<i>(From the Brighton and Worthing Theatres—her First Appearance here)</i>	
The "Spread Eagle."—Arrival of the Maid Servant to a Place in London.	
Mr. Cleveland's Kitchen.—Another visit from the Gypsey.—The Gambler's Quarrel—Flight of Walter Speed—Picture in the Kitchen—Discovery of the Highwayman—Generosity of Scarlet—Burglars in the House—Apprehension of Martha Willis.	
The Miser's Den.—His awful fate; a warning to usurers.	
The Prison.—The Mother and Son—Martha condemned—Devotion of Speed—The impressive Denouement.	

MARTHA WILLIS.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Interior of the Spread Eagle, Gracechurch Street.*

Enter SLUG, R., looking cautiously into the coach yard, L.

SLUG. That's the Derby coach—and well filled, too. Plague on that widow ! I did but put my hand into her pocket, and she screamed as though her dead husband had come back again. Since then, I have been too popular here at the Spread Eagle. Who's there? Tom Scarlet, the Guard. Shall I run? No! trap's the word!

Enter SCARLET, L.

Servant, Master Scarlet.

SCAR. Why, what do you do here?

SLUG. Taking the air, Master Scarlet, taking the air.

SCAR. Taking the air ! Humph! is that all ? Wouldn't you like to take a watch or a pocket-book also ?

SLUG. Really, Mr. Scarlet, I—

SCAR. Come, come, we know your last trick—the lady passenger from Derby.

SCAR. I protest, as I'm a gentleman, I did but offer her my hand to—

SCAR. Your hand! and even so, do you think wern't that enough to alarm her ?

SLUG. Why?

SCAR. Why? I'll tell you; your hand has been so often held up at the Old Bailey, that wherever it appears, folks know there's a rogue at the end of it.

SLUG. Sir, if you proceed, I shall call for an explanation.

SCAR. And if you *don't* proceed, I shall call for an officer. One word, and good day to you; you're a trim, likely spark, and I never could bear to think of a young fellow being fed, dressed,

and taught for five-and-twenty years, only at last to give a job to the hangman. So take a friend's opinion; a shilling honestly got, is worth ten pound, with the fear of Newgate ; and I dare say you like your ease and your sleep—Give up your present trade, and you may go to bed without the fear of being roused at eight o'clock in the morning.

SLUG. I thank you for your advice, but bless you, 'tis all thrown away upon me—for I'm reformed altogether; it was only yesterday that I took a situation in a lawyer's office.

SCAR. Reformed, eh ? and what's become of your friend, Nat Fell?

SLUG. My friend ? Why, didn't he and two others stop your coach on the Derby road ?

SCAR. Yes ! and if my blunderbuss hadn't missed fire, he'd have had lead enough in his head for an alderman. So you've dissolved partnership, have you ?

SLUG. I tell you, Master Scarlet, he was never a friend of mine ; you see, he was new from the country, and a fine dashing fellow with money in his pocket, when I first knew him—then he went to gaming houses, and then—

SCAR. I know—it is but a handsbreadth from a dice box to a pistol. Gambler and pickpocket! why they back one another like the head and tail of a pennypiece ! toss, and 'tis a chance which comes uppermost. And so Nat Fell—

SLUG. Ay, that's his name here, though when he's at home at Chesterfield, he's called Walter Speed. Well, he I tell you has gone bad enough—but as for me, I'm a respectable professional man—I'm a lawyer, and an honest man.

SCAR. Ay, that is, you only rob, according to act of parliament. Well, good day.

SLUG. Good day. Master Scarlet you'll take nothing ?

SCAR. No, and I'll see you don't.

SLUG. Ha ! you will have your jest. But good day to you! You're a fine, open, worthy, (*aside.*) sneaking, pettifogging rascal.

Exit R.

SCAR. Turned honest! then black's turned to white.

Enter SHOULDER, carrying a box from the coach yard, L.

Hallo Shoulder, what have you there ?

SHOUL. Why that young woman's box; here it is you see. (*reads card at top.*) "Martha Willis, Passenger—" I say master guard, you're a sly dog.

SCAR. What do you mean ?

SHOUL. Why, I hear you kept Martha Willis quite snug all the way up.

SCAR. Pshaw ! Arn't I guard, and arn't all things entrusted to my care ?

SHOUL. To be sure. But I say Tom, if they be, you arn't expected to ride with your arms round 'em. Oh, I have heard how the passengers laughed about it. You guards are pretty fellows; there was you all the way up, making love to Martha Willis with your key bugle.

SCAR. Why what are you aiming at?

SHOUL. Don't deny it—you were as musical as a nightingale all along the road—you squeezed her arm and then played, " Will you come to the bower?" winked at her, and then struck up, " Had I a heart for falsehood framed," trod upon her toe and straightway flourished off with " Meet me by moonlight alone," and " Love was once a little boy." Oh, you guards are sad chaps.

SCAR. Stay there, Will. I tell you, Martha is a good girl, the darling of our village—all the folks there, love her like their own child. Why, I have had her weight in bank notes given to my care, and less fuss about it than the people made when they entrusted me with Martha Willis. So do you hear, no more talk on that matter.

SHOUL. Hey day! your face is as red as your coat. No offence, I hope. I supposed you'd only been playing "I have been roaming," or, " I'd be a butterfly," or some such single gentleman tune, to the girl; if I thought you'd seriously strike up " Haste to the wedding,"—

SCAR. What then?

Snout. Why, then—I'm the last man to joke with another on his coming misfortunes.

SCAR. Go on with that box towards Mr. Cleveland's—that's where Martha is going to her place.

SHOUL. Mr. Cleveland's. (*aside.*) I shall mind my manners, and get asked to the holydays, and Christmas parties. You won't be long ? because I've to go to the London Hospital to see my fellow porter, Dick Tarleton, who broke his arm.

SCAR. Ay, how is poor Dick ?

SHOUL. He'd be very well, only you see he hasn't his regular kind of food—poor Dick, he has a delicate stomach, and can't bear butcher's meat.

SCAR. Why, how's that ?

SHOUL. You see, he has been so long used to deliver out the game from the coach offices, that some how or other he has got quite a love for it.

SCAR. Ha, ha! Poor Dick.

SHOUL. (*drawing a partridge from each of his sleeves.*) There's a brace of little partridges. (*takes a brace of pheasants from his*

jacket pocket.) A brace of tolerable pheasants, and—(*unbuttons his waistcoat and shews a hare, hung by the legs, round his neck.*) and a little leveret. I'm going to smuggle them in to him—they only spoil if kept in the office—and I dare say nobody will call for 'em—I shouldn't wonder if some of these had been shot by a duke or a lord. Bless the gentlefolks, how kind they are to shoot game for us poor people, and not let us take the trouble to kill it ourselves. Ha, I see the lass, Master Scarlet, and she looks as fresh as the countryfied flowers in Covent Garden ; I'll walk first, and you can talk and follow—I say, the bugle. Oh, you're a sly rogue ! Well, I'm going. *Exit, R.*

SCAR. Here comes Martha! hang it if I hadn't sworn never to marry—but what of that, when I was of that mind I didn't think it possible there could be such a girl as Martha Willis in the whole world. Mrs. Scarlet! yes, it must be so. Bless her, how beautiful she'll look, making breakfast of a morning.

Enter MARTHA, L., carrying a handbox and a birdcage in a handkerchief.

MARTHA. Dear me, this is a place. Well I never—

SCAR. Come, my lass, it's getting late.

MARTHA. Yes, Mr. Scarlet, but this is such a fine town, I can't keep my head still.

SCAR. Oh, you'll soon be used to it. Now, my dear, shall we walk ? for, you know, I promised your uncle and aunt not to let you go out of my sight till I saw you safely at Mr. Cleveland's, and I must keep my word.

MARTHA. Yes, and you've been so kind to me all up the road, I shall never forget it.

SCAR. And then, Martha, when I've seen you safe in Brunswick Square, I've nothing more to do than say good bye for good and all.

MARTHA. Oh, no! you'll sometimes call and see me.

SCAR. Why, there can be no harm in that, can there? and good bye are melancholy words, especially (*taking her hand.*) between friends, eh, Martha? Well, I'll come sometimes, and—Did you ever see a play ?

MARTHA. Only once, in Farmer Gosling's barn. I should like to see Jane Shore and George Barnwell.

SCAR. So you shall, and we'll go together—and, who knows, Martha, if in a longer acquaintance—I say, who knows what may happen? But come, let us push on. Why, what have you got there ? Surely, it isn't a bird ?

MARTHA. It is, though. I had it from the nest; it was given me by one who was once my friend. I have had it for three long years.

SCAR. As I'm living—a starling! So it was the present of a friend?

MARTHA. Yes—I have taught it his name.

SCAR. *His* name! his! (*aside.*) Bad news for you, this, Master Tom! Why, my lass, they won't let you keep starlings in service.

MARTHA. So they told me, before I came away, and I tried to leave it behind me; twice I left the cage, and the poor thing, as though it knew my thoughts, cried after me. I ran to the door—I couldn't pass it—my heart beat, the tears came to my eyes—I flew back again, and here it is.

SCAR. (*aside.*) If she loves a bird after this fashion, what wouldn't she do for a husband?

MARTHA. Surely, he'll not be so unkind as to deny—

SCAR. No, no, I dare say not; and, if they do, they may be good housekeepers but only tolerable Christians. Come along. Stay, I've a letter here, to give from Tom Kinner, our late waiter, to the barmaid, and then we'll trudge. Now, don't stir a step—for London, my lass, to a g country girl, is more dangerous than the orchard grounds of Squire Leanskin—there's spring guns, man, child, and woman traps in every corner.
Exit into coach yard, L.

MARTHA. And this is London! I don't know how it is, but in everybody I expect to meet Walter Speed. On the coach, every one I saw seemed as if 'twas he. 'Tis three years since I saw him—since he left the village, and his friends have heard nothing of him. Nothing but what I know cannot be true—for Walter, my Walter—though he has forgotten me—turn dishonest! Oh! they spoke falsely of him.

Enter JOANNAH, R.

JOAN. (*aside.*) A pretty lass, this, and new to the town. A good day, my pretty maiden.

MARTHA. A good day, mother.

JOAN. Are you looking for any one, dearest, or have you lost your way. Blessings on your heart! You almost make me cry.

MARTHA. Cry! for what?

JOAN. That sweet face of yours. I had a daughter, as like you as are two carnations; but she's in heaven, rest her soul! Whither are you going, love?

MARTHA. To service—with Mr. Cleveland, in Brunswick Square.

JOAN. Service! Well, to think how this world runs. Service! If there's a merchant's wife, or a fine madam among

them all, riding in their own carriages, that can compare with you, may I be burnt for a sinner! Brunswick Square ?

MARTHA. Yes, at Mr. Cleveland's.

JOAN. Well, well, child, thou dost not know what the stars may have in store for thee. I'm an old woman, and have seen strange things. Three girls have I seen, with not half thy looks, come to service in town, and, in four years, they were all Lady Mayor's ladies, with lace that width upon their caps—aud watches studded with diamonds at their sides—but they followed my advice.

MARTHA. What! all made fine ladies, and yet leave you poor?

JOAN. Ah! it's a wicked world, child. Folks, when they get up, kick down the ladder. I had vowed never to give advice again, but thou art so like my Jemima, that if thou wilt follow me—here, give me these bundles.

MARTHA. No, no, I must not! I am waiting here for a friend.

JOAN. Friend! my dear babe, you don't know the deceits of London—I do—come—

Re-enter SCARLET, at back, L.

Come with me, and I'll introduce you to one of my friends—one of my most intimate friends. (*takes her box in her L. hand.*)

SCAR. (*comes down L. side, and snatches her box from JOAN.*) No you won't! One of your friends? Beelzebub—old Mother Daredevil.

JOAN. Saucy fellow—how dare you ?

SCAR. Do you answer ? If you don't vanish, like a witch on a broomstick, as you've forgotten the goodness of a woman, I shall forget you wear the form of one.

JOAN. Well, well, I am a very old woman.

SCAR. Yes, that's some comfort—there's the less time left you to do mischief in. Pooh! I don't mind your looks, though they're as black as your heart. Troop! hobble home! fall down on your knees, and pray for some minutes the devil may forget you. Pack! you hag of mischief. Pack!

Exit JOANNAH, R., muttering.

MARTHA. Who is that person ?

SCAR. No angel, depend upon it. Now, Martha, we'll walk. Shoulder has gone on with your box. I'll take this. (*offers to take the cage—she hesitates.*) Well, this one, then, (*taking band-box.*) of course you don't like to trust the bird with a stranger, because he calls *his* name—isn't it so, eh ?

MARTHA. No, no, but—

SCAR. No matter, my lass; put your arm through mine,

and, as I said before, Martha— (*aside.*) bless her, what a pretty rogue she is—who knows, on a further acquaintance, what may happen ? And as for names, it may be that your bird may be taught to say Tom Scarlet's name, just as well as another's. *Exeunt, R.*

SCENE II.—*A Street. (2nd grooves.)*

Enter MELVILLE and NUNKY GRUEL, L.

MEL. No doubt your preaching is excellent, Mr. Gruel; but at present I want money, and not moral extracts; good shining guineas, and not scraps from Epictetus.

GRUEL. I mean well, Mr. Melville.

MEL. I dare say you do; your tongue is tipped with wisdom, (*aside.*) and your fingers with tiger's claws.

GRUEL. Very likely. Now you frolicsome young gentlemen borrow money of me—

MEL. At one hundred and fifty per cent.

GRUEL. I didn't speak of the interest. This is a land of commerce, and men must be paid for their ventures. I dare say you think I'm glad to see you—no such thing—I was a father myself.

MEL. Yes, and you sent your son to sea (*aside.*)—because he ate too hearty dinners at home.

GRUEL. I often advance money with tears in my eyes.

MEL. Then why advance it at all ?

GRUEL. What is a man to do, when you offer such good security ? I weep for the rising generation.

MEL. A most industrious usurer—you weep and play at the same time. Why, you're a social land rat, and fleece under white colours.

GRUEL. Rat—fleece—colours— Mr. Melville!

MEL. The sea pirate openly robs, under the black flag with death's head and cross bones; but you, a whimpering, whining buccaneer, your banner is a white handkerchief, the whole duty of man, and a prayer-book.

GRUEL. Ah, Mr. Melville, you will have your joke, and you're a good customer; but about the money ?

MEL. I must have five hundred pounds—the per centage ?

GRUEL. Money is scarce; as I'm a Christian, it must be one hundred and twenty-five per cent.

MEL. Even so—I will call at seven to-night.

GRUEL. At seven !—don't you know to night is Wednesday ?

MEL. Well, what of that?

GRUEL. Heaven pardon you!—shan't I be at the chapel at the back of my house ?

MEL. Sinner that I am, I *had* forgotten it. At six, then, and see you do not fail, for I am to meet Ned Bellender, who has promised me revenge. When last we played, he won every coin.

GRUEL. Ah, Mr. Melville, take an old man's advice, don't game to-night, but come with me to hear the pious Abram Tattertext, for the sake of your precious soul. Well, well, I must pray for you, for as my precious grandmother, who is in heaven, used to say—

MEL. Never mind your grandmother—see you count out the gold.

GRUEL. I will; but you know the per centage ?—I shall be ready. Heaven turn your heart—I shall be ready.

MEL. At six, then, and now to visit Eliza. Remember, I shall be with you. *Exit R.*

GRUEL. Well, the sooner he has spent his money, the sooner he will turn from sin—if I make him a beggar, I shall make him a saint. Who's there ?—that reprobate, Walter Speed; he's getting too well known—I must stay his visits.

Enter WALTER SPEED, L.

SPEED. *Soho,* there, you Prince of Pawnbrokers! Master Gruel!—good Nunky Gruel! (*he pretends not to hear.*) Why, then, Usurer, Scratch-farthing, Cent-per-cent, Drain-purse— (*GRUEL is going but stops.*) I've hit upon your name at last.

GRUEL. Well, young man ?

SPEED. Come, not so coldly, you and I must—

GRUEL. No, I will not give you a farthing.

SPEED. Give, who asked you to give ? Did an angel ask a guinea, you'd not give, unless he left his wings for good security.

GRUEL. Impious youth!—Heaven pardon you.

SPEED. Come, leave off praying, and take money.

GRUEL. Hah! (*holding  at his hands.*)

SPEED. Why, now you *like* yourself. But a minute, and you were full of pious groans—pull the string, and behold the usurer, the moner lender —

GRUEL. I know not why I take more insolence from you than any one besides.

SPEED. I'll tell you *why*, because you make more by me than any one else; the guinea jingles, and what care you for

hard words ; look here—(*producing jewels.*) Ha, ha! why they make your eyes glisten like two will-o'-the wisps, and your shrivelled skin moves upon your hard face like rippling water. I say, with all your solemn thoughts, it's better to look at these than whitened bones, grave rooms, and coffin plates.

GRUEL. I pray you talk not so ; I'm old, and my blood is none of the warmest.

SPEED. Well, then, give me the gold to-night; I'll call at seven.

GRUEL. You know it's Wednesday, I cannot wait till that hour.

SPEED. I cannot come before; return the jewels, I must seek elsewhere.

GRUEL. Well, for once I'll stay, and have prayers at home. But, good sir, be cautious—let none see you come to my house; for since you stopped the Derby coach your person is known, and if—

SPEED. Fear not you, that business is forgotten ; fail not to leave the money, for I meet my new friend, Melville, to-night—

GRUEL. What, are you Mr. Bellender?

SPEED. How know you that?

GRUEL. Walter Speed, Nat Fell, Mr. Bellender—why, how many names have you ?

SPEED. As many as you have consciences—one for every working day, and two for Sundays. Enough, you will find the money.

GRUEL. I will; but do not walk with me. Should we be seen together—you are a prudent man, you know, and—

SPEED. No, no, 'tis you who are the *prudent* man. I am a wretch, an outcast, and a gamester; I walk with the traps about my heels, and sleep with the halter round my neck—but you, a snug, *prudent* man, you pay the church rates punctually, and cheat in a safe and quiet way, will have, when you die, a funeral sermon, sounding of virtue that you never knew, and a tombstone, registering meek, Christian goodness that you never thought of—this, as a prudent man, will be *your* fortune—for mine— But thought takes refuge in desperation. Go, prepare the money.

GRUEL. I'm going. When you come, knock softly like this. (*claps hands.*) Be cautious, for your own sake, I pray you, good youth. Be cautious—be cautious. *Exit R.*

SPEED. For my own sake—true! for now there may be none else to care about me. My mother, does she still live ? I dare not seek to know—for three years I have been an alien to her; and Martha, my poor Martha, the fond and simple hearted girl, she may have met another who— No, false ungrateful as I have been, she still must think of me. Away with such

thoughts now, they do but torture ! The dice—the dice must
silence them. *Exit L.*

SCENE III.—*Brunswick Square. (1st grooves.)*

Enter MISS CLEVELAND and MELVILLE, L.

MISS C. 'Tis well you met me, for I was about to devote the whole morning to a round of gossips.

MEL. 'Tis, indeed, good fortune that robs me not what which alone makes time supportable, in rendering me unconscious of its flight.

MISS C. Now that's very pretty, indeed. Is it from the last new novel ?—or is it really a phrase of your own workmanship ?

MEL. Oh! my own, I assure you.

MISS C. I thought so, 'twas so vastly common place; unless you immediately soar into heroics, I shall instantly leave you ; I am weary of plain, dull matter of fact.

MEL. Charming Eliza—see, I have brought for your acceptance what may prove my own condemnation. (*gives her a ring.*)

MISS C. What's this? a ring I declare, and in it a watch. Very pretty, and what have we here ? Verses too ! (*reads.*)

" E'en as the hand glid'er the dial's face,
Yet leaves no mark it's constant rounds to trace,
By time untouched may'st thou for aye appear
And triumph still o'er each succeeding year."

MEL. Allow me to—(*places it on her finger.*)

MISS C. See now, 'tis large enough, as Shakspeare says, " for an alderman's thumb ring." You choose for a lady! fie upon you.

MEL. (*aside.*) What a blockhead ! I must have been thinking of a curtain ring, that's plain. Suffer me to amend my error—it shall be sent straight to the jeweller's. Permit me, dearest Eliza, to hope that this poor bauble be but the forerunner of a ring more precious.

MISS C. There now, I know what you were going to say! that will do; I can't hear a word more—good morning—good morning.

MEL. But suffer me to accompany—

MISS C. Not a step, not a single step. (*going, turns and holds out her hand.*) Melville!

MEL. My dearest girl! (*runs to her.*)

Exeunt, R.

SCENE IV.—*The Kitchen in the House of Mr. Cleveland. A practicable area, with practicable steps, R. U. E., leading into the street, is seen through a large window, C. Door, L.C., which opens outwards to L.*

MARTHA *discovered on her knees, arranging the things in her box.*

MARTHA. Oh dear! I was so unhappy when I came away, I was afraid I had left half my things behind me; but I think I have brought them all; there's my best stuff gown, (*taking them out.*) my four cotton ones, and my white aprons for Sundays, and here are  the ballads, " Crazy Jane," " The Dusty-Miller," " Sheep Sheering," and " Blue-eyed Mary," and there's the Charm for the Tooth Ache, and there's " The Babes in the Wood," and " Lady Godiva," and my grandmother's wedding ring, and the needle case Ralph Thomas would give me, and there's the dream book, and Dr. Watts, and my sampler when I was a little girl. Oh, those were happy days ! and here's the picture of our church and village, that Mr. Carmine painted for me, and told me always to keep it by me, and—but where are the ribbons ? Ah, if I've left them behind me! where are the ribbons? (*tumbles everything out of the box, at last finds a bunch of blue ribbons, she holds them to her bosom.*) Oh, I was so frightened! I'd rather have left everything but the ribbons; they were the first things that Walter gave me. Ah, Walter ! dear Walter ! but he has forgotten me—he never thinks of me ; they make me blind, I cannot look at them. (*hides them in her bosom.*)

JOANNAH *appears in area, from R.*

JOAN. Is anybody at home ?

MARTHA. (*rising.*) Who calls?

JOAN. A good-day to you again, my dear child.

MARTHA. 'Tis she who—

JOAN. Let me in, I want to talk to you; 'tis something of consequence.

MARTHA. (*opens door, L. C.*) Now, mother, what have you to say to me ?

JOAN. Patience, love, patience. (*looks about*) Well, it's a nice place, but if it were twenty times better, 'twould not be good enough for you. What, you've been sorting out your things, I see. (*approaches box.*)

MARTHA. I thought I had forgotten something. Now I must put them all away again. (*puts back everything but picture.*)

JOAN. What have you there, darling?

MARTHA. A picture.

JOAN. Why, 'tis a pretty place.

MARTHA. I thought so.


MARTHA B

JOAN. What place is it, child ?

MARTHA. A view of my own village. (*points to it with emotion.*) There is the church, there the sheep walk, then in that little spot between the oaks, my own home, and there—(*bursts into tears.*) the porch where— Oh, Walter, Walter, those were happy days!

JOAN. It makes you cry—let me keep it for you till—

MARTHA. (*taking it from her.*) No! when it was given to me I promised I never would part with it; I promised that I should always be before me, that I might not if I would, forget the dear home and friends I had left behind me ; here it shall remain, (*hangs it up on wing, R. 2 E.*) it will ease my heart sometimes to look at it.

JOAN. And who is this Walter, my dear?

MARTHA. A young man of our village. Everybody said we were to be married—but he—he went to London, and I—I have never heard of him—to be sure he had too much learning for me.

JOAN. What! then he was rich and great?

MARTHA. No, but his friends were once, and some of them gave him a schooling; and—but never mind—I have forgotten him—he gave me that bird. (*pointing to cage on table, R.*)

JOAN. That's right, forget him—there are plenty of rich husbands in London, my lass. I shall see thee ride in a coach and four, and hear thee called, " my lady," I shall.

(*large bell rings, SHOULDER is seen in the street, looking through the area railings.*)

MARTHA. There, I'm wanted.

(*runs up the steps, and opens the area gate, JOANNAH steals several silver spoons off dresser, L., and hides them under her cloak.*)

MARTHA and SHOULDER descend the steps, and enter, L. C.

SHOUL. You see, I promised Scarlet as he was kept, and could not come himself, that I'd call and ask you; the play is acted on Monday night, and—Is this a friend of yours, my lass ?

JOAN. Good bye—you're busy ; I'll call again. (*going.*)

SHOUL. Don't let me break up company—I dare say you came to give Martha some good advice.

JOAN. I should be a sinner were I to give her any other.

SHOUL. Why you look a saffron coloured angel, in a drab cloak, a nice motherly, kind, old creature—one who knows all the wickedness about town, and can warn a young woman—(*she is trying to edge off, stops her.*) Can tell her not to let people into the kitchen she don't know ; for instance now, a motherly sort of a woman might come to an inexperienced country girl, with a soft story about fortune-telling, and all that, and

supposing any silver plate was about, she might hide it in her cloak, and how being caught in this manner, she might—(*seizes her, and gives a shaking, the spoons drop, she falls on her knees.*) Ah, you've finished my story for me.

JOAN. Mercy! mercy !

SHOUL. Up and out, you devil's bird!

MARTHA. Don't hurt her!

SHOUL. Up and out, I say ! (*thrusting her before him.*)

JOAN. Oh! don't hurt a poor old woman, who hasn't tasted food these two days!

MARTHA. Good friend—

SHOUL. Out, out, you old witch! you old harridan! Out, out!

Forces JOANNAH up steps—MARTHA looks out with emotion, picks up spoons, counts them, and, overcome, throws herself in a chair, burying her head in her apron.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the House of Nunky Gruel, meanly furnished. Arm chair, R. C.—table, R.—books lying open, some tracts, and money bags on table. A door to open, L. C.*

GRUEL *discovered, seated in arm chair at table.*

GRUEL. So, so, I have given money to both fools, and they may now go, to fight like dogs for a bone. I gave them good advice, too, that cost me nothing, and I knew they would not heed it. Hark! I hear them singing at the chapel—but I'm a sinner, a vile sinner!—(*counts money.*) a reprobate!—twenty-five—a hardened transgressor!—thirty—a worm in the face of heaven!—forty ; but there is hope!—forty-five—blessed be the thought there is hope !—there is—(*looks about the table, then violently exclaims.*) Damnation! where are the two pounds that—(*moves candlestick.*) Oh, here! I'm so hasty, I must mortify and humble myself; there—(*ties up bags.*) All right; I'll just put them at the back of my library. (*opens a door in flat, R. C., on which is painted the backs of books.—Puts in the money, then sits and counts with his fingers.*) 'Tis exactly one hundred and twenty per cent.! a fair profit, and now, I'll read a chapter. (*a knock at the door, L. C.*) Somebody else. (*rises and goes to door.*) Who do you want ?

HITCH. (*without.*) I want you, Mr. Gruel?

GRUEL. I can't be disturbed; come again.

HITCH. Why, I've come about the job.

GRUEL. What job?—I'm at my devotion.

HITCH. Why, the seizure of old Joannah's things for the rent.

GRUEL. Business must be minded, come in. (*opens door hastily.*)

Enter HITCH, L. C.

Won't she pay?

HITCH. (L.) She says she can't.

GRUEL. (C.) She's a false woman—a vile creature.

HITCH. Why, to say truth, Mr. Gruel, she hasn't brought your house into credit with the parish; it has been twice indicted.

GRUEL. I know it; but she always paid her rent till now. I looked over her infamy in her punctuality ; people must live somewhere—even snakes live. I'll pray for her soul—but I must have my rent. What does she say ?

HITCH. She says you are too hard upon her ; that she and her son, Tom Slug, as he's called, have been good customers to you—

GRUEL. Well, and whilst they were good customers, I treated them with respect, proper to a tradesman. As for her son, I have not seen him for this month. Seize, seize !

HITCH. She says that she must lie in the street.

GRUEL. Well, 'tis a starlight night, and she may contemplate the heavenly bodies. There—(*takes paper from table.*) there's a tract, give her that—it may turn her to repentance.

HITCH. You are resolved ?

GRUEL. I must have my money; besides, I've another tenant for the house. No more words; go send her packing, and give me the key—go. *Exit HITCH, L. C.,—GRUEL fastens the door.* Now—(*sits.*) now let me finish my reading. (*a knock.*) The evil one has sure some more for me. Who's there?

SLUG. (*without, L. C.*) A friend.

GRUEL. I want no friends.

SLUG. An enemy, then.

GRUEL. An enemy!—then you are on the best side of the door. Why did they let you up ?

SLUG. Because they could not keep me down. You know my name—'tis Tom Slug. I shall knock twice more ; if you don't open the door, I'll split the panel with the butt end of my pistols, or send a brace of bullets through it. (*knocks.*) Once—(*knocks.*)—twice—

(*GRUEL runs to door, which is burst open and knocks him down.—SLUG stands over him with pistol.*)

GRUEL. Ruffian! murderer! think of your soul.

SLUG. Master Gruel, many the time have you had me under your thumb; this, now, might settle all accounts, and make one pawnbroker the less. (*presents.*)

GRUEL. What your friend—your old friend ?

SLUG. Friend? blood-sucker, horse-leech! Get up, I'll not stain your floor this time. (GRUEL *rises.*) So, I met Hitch—you are going to turn my old mother into the street?

GRUEL. No, no! 'twas a mistake; the broker shall be recalled.

SLUG. The debt is five pounds—I'll pay the money.

GRUEL. Oh, worthy son—happy mother to have such a child!

SLUG. (*takes a watch enveloped in a handkerchief stained with blood.*) There's my evening's work.

GRUEL. A watch—and stained with blood?

SLUG. No matter, it has not hurt the works of the watch, so the article isn't spoiled for your trade. That watch is worth ten pounds.

GRUEL. Eight.

SLUG. Ten; 'tis jewelled in six holes.

GRUEL. Eight pound is the full value, as I'm a Christian; shall I take my oath ?

SLUG. No, 'twould be only wasting time. Give me three pounds and the receipt.

GRUEL. I have no money here; they shall give it you when you get down stairs.

SLUG. Well, the receipt, then.

GRUEL. Goodness me, I have no stamp.

SLUG. No matter for a stamp, any bit of paper will serve.

GRUEL. No, if you were to inform there would be a penalty.

SLUG. And do you think I'd—

GRUEL. 'Tis not well to throw temptation in a sinner's path ; in such a case I would not trust myself. For, as my blessed grandmother, who is in heaven, used to say—

SLUG. In heaven, is she ?

GRUEL. Of a surety.

SLUG. Then there's no hope of your meeting her again. And yet, if books could help you there, you have a chance. (*going to R. C., and reads the backs of the books.*) " The Pilgrim's Progress," " Lives of the Saints," " Festivals and Feasts," " Holy Living and Dying." Ha, ha ! let's look at—

GRUEL. (*stops him.*) No, no! I suffer no one to touch them but myself; if you wish to read—

SLUG. Read! Not I! I'll just take two or three leaves for wadding for my pistols.

GRUEL. Unheard of sacrilege.

SLUG. It may be ; it seems you read holy books as a blind

to your villanies ! Now where's the difference between us ? Between you, who use a sacred leaf to hide shopkeeping knavery, and one who'd ram it next a bullet for the highway ? Have you seen Walter Speed, of late ?

GRUEL. No, I know nought of him.

SLUG. Humph! He has turned fine gentleman, and forgets his old friends; we know his haunt though, and he must bleed, or he'll not get over the Derby job so easily. Come, these three pounds—and as for the receipt, send it to my mother in the morning. No tricks, you know.

GRUEL. She shall have it; you're an affectionate son, and will repay all a mother's care.

SLUG. Care ! yes, pretty care she's taken of me; but she is my mother and mustn't be turned into the street. Be punctual.

GRUEL. (*urging him to the door.*) Yes, yes!

SLUG. The money.

GRUEL. Yes. (*calling.*) Roger, give this honest man three pounds. *Exit SLUG, L. C.*

(GRUEL *slams to and bars the door.*) He's gone. The watch is worth twenty guineas, every farthing; I'll sell it to one of the East India Captains to-morrow, and so 'twill be out of the way. (*sits.*) Now I'll finish my chapter, 'tis but twenty verses. Heigho! (*yawns.*) 'Tis but twenty—(*falling asleep.*) Roger, you must pass off that bad half-crown on a young customer ;—I can only lend five shillings—Amen—These spoons are two, three, and six verses!—my blessed grandmother!—this flannel petticoat is—the long metre!—we are all sinners—d—n the mice—sinners, mice, saints, rats. (*falls asleep, and scene closes.*)

SCENE II.—*A Street in the Vicinity of St. James's. Lights down.*

Enter SPEED, L.

SPEED. Lost—lost! My last farthing vanished. Surely some devil was at his side! How to repair this ?—he is here, and my money yet upon him ; he follows me as though to mock my ill fortune. Shall I?—no! yet the temptation is great.

Enter MELVILLE, L.

So—you were in a hurry to leave the room.

MEL. Ay, the time began to hang heavily.

SPEED. It scarcely ought to have done so with you.

MEL. Well, *your* fortune another time.

SPEED. This during the whole of the game was still your cry. (*aside.*) If I can fasten a quarrel on him now. I'm to be no more deceived—I have heard—

MEL. What, sir?

SPEED. Reports, but too confirmatory of my own suspicions; you are a villain.

MEL. You are a loser! Your ill-fortune should make me forget your insolence. (*going, R.*)

SPEED. We do not part so easily—stay ! You do not leave me thus. 'Tis impossible I could have lost every cast!—nay, I plainly saw the eyes of those around me—they looked and laughed at me for a dupe.

MEL. And what have I to do with this ? you staked and lost—'twas your ill-luck—had you won, the ill-fortune had been mine. I thought I played with a man, and not with a whimpering school boy.

SPEED. Were not the cards packed ?

MEL. Ask the knaves among them.

SPEED. Were not the dice loaded ?

MEL. A hammer would have solved that question.

SPEED. Scoundrel!

MEL. What! But no matter, to-morrow I will satisfy you.

(*going.*)

SPEED. No, this instant, and on this spot. (*draws his sword.*) What, will no words move you? Will blows then! (*strikes him—MELVILLE seizes his throat.*)

MEL. Ruffian, you have raised some fiend within me—I feel him working my fingers at your throat, my heart swells at your starting eye, and the devil within me cries for blood. (*a pause.*) No—hence—begone! (*casts him off.*)

SPEED. Villain! (*passes furiously at him—MELVILLE draws aud defends himself—SPEED stabs him.*)

MEL. (*falls.*) Wretched man! Heaven take my soul and pardon thee.

SPEED. He dies—and I'm revenged! My gold—'tis mine again. (*rifles his pockets.*) Ha! this ring too. (*puts it on his finger—MELVILLE groans.*) Yet what a weight is on my brain. Now am I a wretch for ever. My feet are lead and hold me fast—fire dances before my eyes!—what's here? (*looks at purse.*) The dead man's gold—for this I sought him—for this I murdered him! to my wild fancy it looks a part of his bleeding flesh! I—I cannot bear it with me. (*dashes it beside the body.*) Ha! some one is here! If I linger here, I'm lost! But whither—whither fly, for conscience is with me still. *Rushes off, R.*

Enter SHOULDER, L.

SHOUL. Well if ever I go to the play with sweethearts again, unless as principal, my name's not Shoulder. There have I been with Tom Scarlet and Martha Willis, to see George Barnwell, and not a word could I get out of either of them ;

Tom's gone to see the lass home. Ah, to my mind it's of no use for him ; she seems to have left her heart among the wood-pigeons, and blackberry bushes in the country. It's now eleven o'clock—I'll go and finish the evening at the "Blue Lion," and get home soberly by three ; I hope I shan't dream of that play—of the uncle being on the ground, and—(*stumbles over MELVILLE.*) Eh, what have we here? I shouldn't wonder if this isn't one of the player folks, who has overheard me, and wants to frighten—

MEL. (*faintly, and raising himself.*) Villain !

SHOUL. Villain! somebody has been earning that name to a certainty. Blood! and here's a purse, too!

MEL. The robber has doubtless dropt it in his flight.

SHOUL. Help, there! let me assist you to a surgeon.

(*raises him.*)

MEL. 'Tis no use! lead me to a coach—then drive me to Mr. Cleveland's, Brunswick Square; let me die there—I will reward you! Oh, Eliza ! (*sinks on his shoulder.*)

SHOUL. Cheer up, cheer up! Help! so!—gently!

Supports him off, L.

SCENE III—*The Kitchen at Mr. Cleveland's. Moonlight.*

MARTHA and SCARLET *discovered seated at table, R. C.*

MARTHA. Really now, Mr. Scarlet, it's getting late.

SCAR. Not so late, Martha. (*pulls out watch and lays it on table.*) Though, to be sure, time goes heavily in company we don't like.

MARTHA. I didn't mean that—I should be very ungrateful if I did.

SCAR. Don't talk about gratitude, Martha, can't you find a warmer word ? But I see how it is—you don't like me—you were silent all the time at the play—and kept looking about as if you expected to meet somebody there.

MARTHA. Indeed, Mr. Scarlet—

SCAR. There again—Mr. Scarlet!

MARTHA. What should I say, then?

SCAR. Oh, it isn't for me to teach you! I—I—Martha, must speak my mind, and there's an end of it; from the first time I saw you, I felt as I never felt before— and though I travelled  pad hundreds of times, the way never seemed so short, or so pleasant to me—I have some few pounds honestly got; I am a bit rough, but I mean well, and if a young woman could be brought to love me, I may say it without boast, Tom Scarlet's not the man to make her sorry for her choice.

MARTHA. I am sure you are not.

SCAR. Why, that's well said; and then, you know—what a picture. (*pulls his chair to her's.*) After all's over for the day—and guards, you know, are only out every other night—all the children are in bed—the husband taking his pipe by the fire, and the wife mending the young one's clothes, or some such matter, with her face shining through the tobacco smoke, as happy and as rosy as the morning sun through the mist, and—Then you know we—

MARTHA. We! Mr. Scarlet?

SCAR. To be sure! Why, Martha, you don't think I was drawing pictures for any one else? but come, tell me, now, is there no hope for me? Are you still so fond of the giver of that bird there? (*at this moment SPEED is seen to rapidly descend the area steps, but seeing persons in the kitchen, he recoils.*) Can you remember him after he has forgotten you for three years. No you can't, at least, you won't, and when you forget him you'll promise to think of me—promise me this Martha.

MARTHA. This I do promise you.

SCAR. Well, you can say no more, and with that promise you'll send me home to dream of all sorts of happiness—good night—one kiss—well, if you won't—but you'll shake hands—there, good night, and remember your promise.

(*as he opens door, SPEED hides behind it, MARTHA follows*

SCARLET, *shaking hands with him, he goes up area steps, and off.*

MARTHA. My promise! oh, yes, when I do forget him. (*bell rings.*) There's my master's bell, and Robert's out. What can he want now? Heigho! I can hardly look at that picture and not wish myself in the country again. *Exit R.*

Enter SPEED, door L. C.

SPEED. The gate was open—I have escaped them—escaped, fool! where am I? all is hushed. Is there no closet—no recess where I could creep till— No, no, I will again to the street—that, though desperate, is the safest course. I am now a hunted murderer! 'tis written on my face. As I rushed along I thought each passenger stared at me as I never saw before. Oh, my dear mother—my once happy home! (*sees picture, R. 2 E.*) Home! oh, Heavens—'tis there—there the very church—the green fields where I have played when a child—the trees that I have climbed. No, it cannot be—my brain is sick, and shapes the phantom—'tis there again—the finger, sure, of some angel tracing on the wall that lovely scene, that I may repent and save myself. I fear to put forth my hand lest the view should fade away—like light to shadow—(*tears picture from the wall.*) I grasp it—'tis no illusion! When last I saw this spot (*looking*

at the picture.) I was happy, honest; now I cannot look upon its painted semblance but my cheek is scorched and my eye is dimmed. (*the Starling in the cage, L., calls "Walter! "Walter!"*) My name! 'tis plain that spirits beset and mock me. Or is it—for guilt makes superstition—my victim's voice still calling at mine ear. (*the bird calls again.*) Again it calls my name—no other sound being half so hideous. I cannot stir, the sweat rolls down my limbs as though life was gushing forth at every pore. (*stands absorbed in horror, gazing at picture.*)

MARTHA *re-enters, R.*

MARTHA. I thought I heard—Walter! (*sees SPEED, shrieks and falls into his arms.*)

SPEED. (*half stupefied.*) 'Tis she—my misery is complete.

MARTHA. Walter, dear Walter—to meet you here—but why did you startle me so? Why not let me know you were coming?

SPEED. I did not hope to see you here—but you called my name before you entered?

MARTHA. No!

SPEED. My name was called.

(*the Bird calls again—"Walter!" "Walter!"*)

SPEED. There! there! your lips move not—you hear it?

MARTHA. Do not talk and look so wildly—'tis only my poor bird.

SPEED. Bird!

MARTHA. Yes! do you not remember, just before you left us you gave me a young starling? I have kept it, taught it, and could not leave it behind me—I have been here only two days.

SPEED. I remember—bless you, my poor girl! May all happiness await you.

MARTHA. Oh, I have so much to tell you. (*takes up picture.*) See, here is our village!

SPEED. I *have* seen it.

MARTHA. Look, Walter, see.

SPEED. (*in anguish.*) I cannot look, my eyes are filled with blood. Martha, yet a word—if dead, let your silence tell me so—say it not, for if so, 'tis I have killed her. My—my mother! (*they look at each other.*) Heaven hath foreseen the ill and spared her—I bless its mercies.

MARTHA. You never wrote to us, Walter.

SPEED. No, but (*fearfully.*) I suppose you sometimes heard of me?

(*here SLUG and Two THIEVES are seen to descend the area*)

steps—they enter at the door which SPEED left open, and glide off, R.

MARTHA. Yes, but none of us believed what we heard—yet you seem changed.

SPEED. I am changed—farewell.

MARTHA. You will not go—at least, you will come again to see me—I mean—I—I—(*throws herself upon his neck.*) Oh, Walter, this is not kind.

SPEED. Farewell—I must leave you—yesterday we might have—but now 'tis too late.

MARTHA. Too late ! what ? no, it cannot be—tell me—say—has another?—pity me and tell me.

SPEED. Martha, I have been thoughtless—guilty, yet none shall fill your place in this miserable heart.

MARTHA. Why may we not be happy then ?

SPEED. Martha, this is the last time we look upon each other. I thank the chance, for 'twas a blessed mercy to a dying wretch that brought me here ; 'tis my purpose to leave this country, and for ever—let this (*putting on her finger Melville's ring.*) be our parting token.

MARTHA. You will not leave me—if you love me take me with you ; I care not where I go, if along with you—I know nothing of the world, but I know there can be nothing terrible if you are there.

SPEED. When I was happy, you should have been my wife.

MARTHA. And shall I not if you are unhappy ? yes, for you will need me more. Do not leave me, Walter.

SPEED. It cannot be, you will wed some happy man that's worthy of your fondness. (*SCARLET is seen descending the area steps.*) I have forfeited all claims upon you—all loving thoughts—all tender recollections. (*retires up stage.*)

MARTHA. (*following.*) Walter !

SPEED. Farewell, for ever! (*is confronted at door by SCARLET.*)

SCAR. Ha! the robber that stopped the "Derby!" Surrender. (*draws pistol—SPEED retreats to L.*)

MARTHA. (*rushing between them.*) Oh, do not—do not kill him.

SCAR. (C.) Will he surrender?

SPEED. Never!

SCAR. Then I fire.

MARTHA. (L.C.) No, no, you will not!

SCAR. Not! what is he to me ?

MARTHA. Nothing ; and for that you'll spare his life. Say he was shot or taken, or—oh, my heart—say that he was dead—would it make you happier ? would you sleep the sounder or wake the more refreshed? Could you feel more content when you had sent a fellow-creature to his grave ?

SCAR. All this is nothing—I'm resolved.

MARTHA. We have known each other since we were babes. (*gradually gets down to SPEED.*) We have loved, have long been absent. He is my joy, my heart, my life. Then kill him, but (*throws her arms round SPEED'S neck, covering him from SCARLET.*) kill us both together.

SCAR. (*after a pause, returns pistol to his pocket.*) Fear nothing, he is saved. He is a robber, but you—(*with emotion.*) you love him ! Had he taken my last farthing and you'd been before him, he'd have been safe for me. (*takes watch from table.*) This is what I returned for. Now, Martha Willis—good bye, for the last time. Reform your husband, and though I much doubt him, may he deserve your kindness—may you be happy, but as for poor Tom Scarlet, he knows his fortune, 'tis bachelor for life. Farewell! (*MARTHA and SPEED look doubtfully at each, other.*) What, do you think I'd give the alarm ? Martha, you might have trusted me.

MARTHA. I do trust you.

SCAR. Then let him go first.

SPEED. Friend, I owe you—

SCAR. Nothing—the debt is to *her* account.

SPEED. Farewell; if possible you shall hear from me again, if not—farewell for ever. *Rushes off, L. C., and up area steps.*

SCAR. (*watching him.*) Now he darts down the square—now he turns the corner—he's safe, and now, Martha, I suppose I may go—you don't wish to keep me ? Well, good bye, my lass, and bless you. (*goes up steps.*)

MARTHA. (*throws herself into a chair.*) Oh, Walter, and have I found you but for this ? A robber—he was so good—so gentle—and he has left me—left me for ever. (*weeps.*) Never—never shall I be happy again. (*large bell rings.*) A carriage ; then it is miss has come from the opera. What! (*going to window.*) Lights, and a crowd of men. Oh, should they have taken him.

MELVILLE *is carried down steps and into kitchen by OFFICERS, who place him in chair, C.—SHOULDER follows.*

SHOUL. Now, Martha, where is Miss Cleveland ? where is she ? What's the matter, girl ? you are pale and trembling.

MARTHA. But what gentleman is that ?

SHOUL. 'Tis Mr. Melville—where's Miss Cleveland ?

MARTHA. She is not yet returned from the opera. Hark ! there is her carriage. (*bell rings.*)

MARTHA *goes off, R., followed by OFFICERS.*

SHOUL. You had better, sir, have remained at the surgeon's.

MEL. No, no—I cannot die in peace till I see her.

Enter Miss CLEVELAND and MARTHA, R. 1 E.

MISS C. Melville ! and wounded.

MEL. I am dying.

MISS C. What wretch has done the deed?

MEL. A villain for plunder—he robbed me—I faint.

OFFICERS. (*without, R.*) Bring them down.

MISS C. What noise is that ? Who are these men ?

Enter OFFICERS, R., with SLUG and Two THIEVES.

OFFICER. Some gentlemen, here, whom we have disturbed. When they heard the coach, they were slipping away with the spoil. Answer, how came you here ?

SLUG. (R.) Why, we dogged one of our companions, a sweetheart of the maid there.

SHOUL. (L.) Martha ! Impossible !

MISS C. Answer, Martha, has any one been with you ? Answer, I beseech you. (*takes her hand, and sees the ring on MARTHA'S finger.*) Ha! as I live—the ring—the watch that Melville—

MARTHA. (L. C.) I'm innocent!

(MISS CLEVELAND *has drawn the ring from MARTHA'S finger, and shows it to MELVILLE.*)

MEL. 'Tis what the villain, with other valuables, robbed me of.

OFFICER. (*going to MARTHA.*) Ha! then you're an accomplice.

MARTHA. I'm innocent! (*falls on her knees—picture.*)

END OF ACT II.

A C T III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Nunky Gruel's. Clothes, bales, and articles of every description lying about—a large iron chest, R.—door, L.*

SPEED rises from amongst a heap of clothes.

SPEED. Yet he comes not; worn and famished have I for three days, lain in doubt and misery. My heart sinks at every footstep. If he refuse to aid me, and 'tis desperation only made

MARTH

me seek him, then what remains ? Death—a hateful and an ignominious death. (*looks round—goes up and snatches a dirk from one of the compartments.*) No, this at least shall be my friend. (*the key is heard in lock of door.*) Mercy! mercy, sweet Heaven, to a suffering wretch, and send him here. (*retires and covers himself in the heap.*)

Euler GRUEL and ROGER, who is old, and half starved, with a light, from door, L., with several pieces of plate.

GRUEL. Gently, Roger, gently ; a stumble might knock the cup from your hand, and bruise the chasing ; there, put them down—I'll place them in the iron chest—I think this must be the last of his lordship's plate.

ROGER. I think so, sir, for we've had some thousands of ounces.

GRUEL. All melted at cards—all gone at Ace, King, and Queen. Ha! the sinfulness of the times. There—leave me, I shall be here some time.

ROGER. What answer to Lady Spendthrift?—Have you forgotten sir ? You know she pawned her diamonds last month—and her husband knows nothing of the circumstance.

GRUEL. Shame upon her disobedience. Well?

ROGER. She begs you'll lend them to her to-night.

GRUEL. To-night!

ROGER. Yes. Their majesties and all the court are going to the play. She must be there, and she can't go without her diamonds.

GRUEL. To the play! say I won't send them. I *won't* for the sake of her precious soul. Send my diamonds to a play! How do I know the devil mayn't flyaway with them—I won't. Stop—tell Hitch the broker o and seize on old Joannah's things for the rent. (*aside.*) T^was lucky I didn't give a receipt—she has no proof 'twas paid.

ROGER. Seize, sir? Why, I heard Slug, her son, say that he'd paid the money.

GRUEL. Say ! and what wouldn't he say? A thief and a housebreaker—but he's in Newgate, that's one comfort—he and all his gang will swing.

ROGER. Ha! That last job at Mr. Cleveland's did their business. Martha Willis, too, the servant maid—they say 'twill go hard with her ; do you think she's guilty, sir ?

GRUEL. No doubt in league with all the villains. Besides, wasn't stolen property found in her possession? the ring belonging to Mr. Melville, poor gentleman ?

ROGER. True. That's black against her; as for Mr. Melville, he's fast recovering. (*SPEED raises his hands in thanks-*

giving.) Of course you've heard that Slug has peached Walter Speed for stopping the Derby ? There's a reward of fifty pounds for him.

GRUEL. (*rubbing his hands.*) A reward! 'twould be a rare work—and a good Christian act to take the knave.

ROGER. Why he has been a good customer, master.

GRUEL. Interest, Roger, shouldn't stand in the way of morality. But they'll go, no doubt, for the report is made, and Master Slug, his three friends, and Martha Willis, are all to die. (*SPEED endeavours to repress his emotion.*) I thought I heard a groan.

ROGER. It couldn't be ; a rat perhaps, or—

GRUEL. Very likely, yet it made my blood chill, and sinner that I am, I've left my prayer book in my other coat pocket; there, go and send Hitch about his errand. Go, I'll be down bye-and-bye.

Exit ROGER, L. door.

(*GRUEL shuts the door, takes out bunch of keys.*) Now to look into my gold and silver mine. (*unlocks and opens chest, R.*) They may talk of the moon and the sun, but what are their lights to the light of these ? Why here are all things—Heaven be praised! from a thimble to a salver ; why, here are enough wedding rings to make a chain round St. Paul's—I warrant me they that own them put them on in a merrier mood than they took them off. Now to stow away his lordship's plate. (*puts it in the chest.*) s lordship ! Humph !—a lord without gold or silver is marvelously like a peacock without his feathers—his lordship is—

(*SPEED has crawled forward, and fallen at the feet of GRUEL, he turns round with his lamp, sees him, and exclaims—*" A ghost! a ghost! "

SPEED. (R. C.) Mercy—mercy!

GRUEL. (R.) What are you ?

SPEED. A miserable wretch, who perishes if you refuse to succour him.

GRUEL. Walter Speed, there's money laid upon your head.

SPEED. Do not think it—let not the d——d temptation enter your soul—it does, I see it sparkling in your eyes, for they are fiend-like—wrestle with the thought—repress and conquer it—you have gold enough there ; (*pointing to chest*) why seek for more within this felon blood ?

GRUEL. Ha! my servants—(*furiously.*) How came you here.

SPEED. I was fearful of pursuit—I know not why, but instinctively I ran hither—the door was open—the servant who was then at the door heard no one—a gust of air blew out the lamp—unseen I passed in—I flew up these stairs—have lain

here expecting you—lain without food, almost without hope. (*is sinking*—GRUEL *endeavours to pass to the door.*) Stay! you pass not there! famine clutches my vitals—despair has drained my heart—still the love of life is stronger yet than famine or despair. Attempt to give the alarm, and as I am a sinner you perish.

GRUEL. You will not. (*sees the dirk in his bosom.*) What glitters there ?

SPEED. Your death unless you're silent and assist me.

GRUEL. You will not murder me?

SPEED. 'Tis life against life.

GRUEL. But why seek me ?

SPEED. Why seek you? Why, who should the son in peril seek but the father ?

GRUEL. I the father.

SPEED. My second and accursed father. When I first knew you I was a happy youth ; 'twas you who drew me from the path of peace to tread the road of guilt.

GRUEL. Slanderer, 'tis false.

SPEED. What ? True, you did not say " enter that man's dwelling—drain that stranger's purse," but who when I brought the produce of my crime received me with smiles, with kindly salutations? " Make money," was your cry. I robbed—gained—cheated—you took the gain, and still your cry was " make money." What was a novelty became a habit—you schooled me, and your advice made me what I am. Now I dare not name the good man who was once my father—but you, yourself a devil, made me a fiend, and I came to you and claim you for my father.

GRUEL. Have you not leagued with a set of villains?

SPEED. If I have, who but you and such as you are, made them villains ? Enough; I had hoped to trust your heart to keep me here until a vessel might be found to bear me from England. Now it cannot be. I am proscribed—still at all risks Martha must be saved—I must have gold, too—for no chance must be lost—here is wealth. (*rushing up to chest.*)

GRUEL. (*stands before him.*) Not an ounce—not an ounce.

SPEED. Tempt me not—I am desperate.

GRUEL. I have been patient until now—you have abused—reviled me. Heaven pardon you—be content—not a penny—not a penny—you shall not.

SPEED. (*drawing dirk.*) Do you see this dirk.

GRUEL. (*furiously.*) I see only my money. ☹️

SPEED. Ere you can think a thought 'tis in you heart if
(*approaches chest.*)

GRUEL. Villain! Robber! Help! (*leaps on him.*)

SPEED. Die, then. (*stabs him, he falls—SPEED rushes to chest and takes out plate—GRUEL staggers to chest and throws off SPEED.*) Ha! this, then, shall finish it. (*stabs him again—GRUEL falls partly into the chest—SPEED advances to the body, holding the dirk over it.*) He's dead ! the miser's blood is running 'midst the gold; and this is what he laboured for, (*lifts the body into the chest*) to be a murdered corpse upon his wealth. In and rot with all your gains. (*locks chest.*) Now to my task ; here are dresses of every kind—I will disguise myself, and then to prison to Martha. Oh, Heaven ! did I ever think such words could be united ? Yonder is a garb that will suit my purpose—I must hasten to certain death; my Martha—my own true hearted Martha, shall not perish. *Exit, L.*

SCENE II.—*A View of Newgate. (1st grooves.)*

Enter SHOULDER and SCARLET, L.

SHOUL. Come, Tom, cheer up man—'tis impossible the girl can be guilty.

SCAR. That I know; but what matters my knowing it ? Guilty ! you should have seen her when sentence was passed ; she never shrieked nor groaned, nor made any noise at all, but there she stood, as quiet as— I tell you what, Will, if it goes hardly with her, I shall never look up again.

SHOUL. Well, let's hope Speed may be taken; he, I'm sure, can throw some light on the business.

SCAR. A villain ! If it hadn't been for him, Martha and I had been happy enough. (*going.*)

SHOUL. But where are you going ?

SCAR. To Mr. Melville and Mr. Cleveland to get them to sign a petition for Martha's life. You see, nobody knows her here—there was nobody to speak for her—not a soul to get up and say a good word for her. Poor Martha! poor Martha!

Enter SPEED, in a great coat and slouched hat, R.

SPEED. Martha! (*aside.*) I shall betray myself. 'Tis the guard.

SCAR. Ay, Martha! the poor thing that's to— I say, you seem from the country—she'll very soon die, poor dear—but I've a petition here for her life ; every name is something—will you sign it ?

SPEED. Sign ! oh, heaven !

SCAR. How now, friend? you tremble! Do you know her ?

SPEED. I do.

SCAR. From the same village, perhaps?

SPEED. I am. I am her uncle.

SCAR. What, then, you've heard ? and heaven bless you for coming! Her uncle!—give me your hand—this will be some comfort to her ; she's talked of you again and again. You know that villain, Speed—he has been at the bottom of all this. He once used to court Martha.

SPEED. Ay!

SCAR. But he never could love her, that's impossible.

SPEED. I've heard to the contrary. I think—I'm sure he did.

SCAR. What, love her, and leave her here to die! But there's a reward for him—fifty pounds has been offered by the Court. I have saved a trifle, and it shall go to the last farthing to whomsoever shall bring the villain to the gallows—to destroy such a rascal hundreds would be well laid out. What say you ?

SPEED. Ay! but it seems you, too, are in love with Martha; may not jealousy, in the mask of justice, mingle in your hate against Speed ?

SCAR. Don't believe it! I had him in my power once, but Martha pleaded for him, and I let him escape. Had he been a worthy honest lad, why, though I love Martha, I should have wished him all happiness with her ; as it is, if he were put before me, so that I could safely lodge him there, (*pointing to Newgate.*) why, I could die contented the minute after.

SPEED. I did you wrong to suspect you. (*taking his hand.*) Let us hope Speed may be taken—let us hope the guilty will suffer. Indeed, I have a strong presentiment that Martha will be saved.

SCAR. Have you ? why, bless you for that comfort. I suppose you are going to see the poor dear? Here, Shoulder, you go with him. I must to Mr. Cleveland's, for, though there's hope in what you say, still not a chance—no, not the shadow of a chance must be neglected. Good bye! comfort the poor thing—cheer her up. Good bye! in half an hour we'll meet again. As for that villain, Speed—Well, good bye! *Exit, R.*

SPEED. Now for my purpose! I am provided against the last ignominy—that, at least, I shall escape.

SHOUL. This way. I don't know whether you're a stranger in London—but follow me; there is Newgate. *Exit, L.*

SPEED. Though I have looked upon and shuddered at it, never before did it look so horrible. And is that the abode for the poor innocent girl ? for her, whose only fault is love and tenderness for one crime-spotted and degraded. Reckless as I have been, hardened and maddened in the round of dissipation

and infamy, Martha would sometimes rise within my thoughts, and still she'd come, mingled with objects bright and beautiful—the sunny fields, the green trees, the song of birds, my own home, and the throng of youthful friends, treading the honest path of humble life—all, all would burst upon my mind, and make me dream of happiness I long had forfeited. But now I think of her, imprisoned in these walls of flint, breathing the pestilent air of guilt and misery—faces of stony haggardness meeting her every glance, her ears assailed by clinking chains, by horrid oaths, and hideous ribaldry—to think of this, and know that 'tis for me she'd die. Whilst I am struck with wonder at her constancy, I feel degraded in my own unworthiness. But I am resolved—she must—she shall be saved!

Exit, L.

SCENE III.—*The Interior of Newgate.*

SLUG *discovered, ch^③d, R.*—JOANNAH *kneeling by him.*—
GAOLOR *in the background.*

JOAN. Answer me, my boy. You know me ?

SLUG. Yes—I wish I never had. I tell you, leave me.

JOAN. Is this treatment for a mother ?

SLUG. Mother! Yes—ha, ha, ha! Mother!

JOAN. Did I not give you life?

SLUG. Yes, and you've given me these. (*showing his chains.*)

JOAN. Oh! do not reproach me.

SLUG. Who, then, should I reproach ? You, my mother, made me what I am—almost before I could speak I was a thief—you bred me from the cradle to the gallows.

JOAN. You followed evil.

SLUG. Who showed me the way ? If the parent leads, is it a wonder if the child follows ? Life! if you have given that, ought you not also to have given honesty? When parents give life, they give a curse, if they do not teach that which makes life happy.

JOAN. Why did you not think of this before ? Why wait till now ?

SLUG. Because I had been a rogue so long and so successfully, I thought justice had forgotten me. I never reflected when I was free, but stone walls work wonders—they make the hardest of us think. I say, leave me! I am to die to-morrow, and you know, as well as I do, how unfit I am to die!

JOAN. My only child!

SLUG. And that only child you have given to the hangman.

JOAN. (*falling on her knees.*) Oh, my son, I have suffered, I

am now suffering!—do not stab my heart with your words, do not, for 'tis bleeding!

SLUG. And does not mine bleed, too, think you ?—has it not cause?

JOAN. Yes, but not like mine.

SLUG. Not!—shall I not be destroyed in the morning of my days ? Have I not sneaked and slid through all my youth, when I might have walked fearless and upright, becoming a worthy and a happy man ? Oh, that I could again begin my life ; but the wish is vain. Hence, and leave me.

JOAN. I will not till you forgive me.

SLUG. All, all but you.

JOAN. My child!

SLUG. There it is!—those who took me, brought me here, did their duty, I forgive them—I forgive the officers, the judge, the hangman—they do their duty, I forgive them; but that you have not done yours, I cannot forgive you.

JOAN. (*clinging to him.*) But you must, you shall! I cling to you, I implore you! I have been wicked, but do not you condemn ! I have been a wretch, but do not, my own child, lift your hand against me ! My own—my own son! (*falls.*)

SLUG. My heart swells! (*struggling with himself.*) No, no, I cannot bless her—(*GAOLER comes down.*) I cannot! Take her hence. (*crosses to L.*)

GAOLER. (*lifting her up.*) You'll say farewell to her?

SLUG. Away with her!

GAOLER. Only one word.

SLUG. No, no, away with her !—take her away !

(*GAOLER has moved her to R., SLUG turns round, and after a moment, approaches her, takes her in his arms, and exclaims, "My mother!" Music.—SLUG bears her off, followed by GAOLER, R.*)

Re-enter GAOLER followed by SPEED, R.

GAOLER. Stay here. I'll tell the girl you've come, and though 'tis against the rules, she may walk here a few minutes with you ; her uncle, eh ?

SPEED. Ay.

Exit GAOLER, L.

Thus disguised, I may take a last farewell, which otherwise had been denied me. She comes!—oh, Heaven, what a look of innocence is there! 'Tis for the guilty cheek to fall and grow sallow in a prison's gloom; the loveliness of conscious truth still triumphs in a dungeon.

Enter MARTHA, L.

MARTHA. Uncle, I am innocent—I cannot, I must not say

more. You turn from me—do not speak !—oh, look upon me—let me hear your voice!

SPEED. (*still turned from her.*) Martha!

MARTHA. You do not think me guilty?—you do not think I could so soon forget the honest lessons I have learnt ? Oh, why, why did I leave my home ?—why leave the good and happy friends that loved me ? There was truth—here, nothing but deceit; there I was at peace—here I am a wretch.

SPEED. Have you not seen Walter Speed?

MARTHA. Do not ask me! The judge, the whole court asked me that, prayed for me to answer; though I could have bought my life with a reply, I would not, I never will!

SPEED. Oh, villain!—villain!

MARTHA. Do not say so ; he has been rash and thoughtless, but I know his heart—I know it is full of truth and gentleness. Uncle, I have one request to make—will you grant it ?

SPEED. Speak.

MARTHA. After I am gone, you may perhaps see my poor Walter. Oh, if you should, tell him I died still blessing him, that I died with his name upon my lips, with a prayer that Heaven might touch his heart with repentance, and that we might meet in a better world, where there are no temptations to ensnare us, no miseries to afflict us. Do you promise?

SPEED. Fear not, unworthy as he is, all shall be known.

MARTHA. Oh, be sure you do not fail! It will be my greatest comfort when I die, and that they tell me will be soon, to know that Walter will hear that with my last breath I blessed him—to know that I felt no wish to live, since I could not live for him.

SPEED. Has he not betrayed you ?

MARTHA. No, he did not, could not mean it!

SPEED. Has he not left you to suffer for his crime ?

MARTHA. No, he cannot know it.

SPEED. Why is he not here to save you?

MARTHA. He is not in England—at least, if my prayers are heard, he is not. Uncle, he is on the seas, and oh ! may Heaven safely guide the vessel to some distant land—where he may live contentedly, and die in peace with Heaven.

SPEED. Fond girl, your prayers are vain.

MARTHA. Oh, say not so!

SPEED. He still is near you.

MARTHA. Near?

SPEED. (*turning.*) Behold!

MARTHA. (*shrieking and falling into his arms.*) Lost! lost!

Enter GAOLER, L.

GAOLER. How now ? what noise is this ?

MARTHA. (*recovering.*) 'Tis nothing—nothing, good man

GAOLER. This is an indulgence, you know—you must be quiet here.

MARTHA. I will be, believe me, very quiet. *Exit GAOLER, R.*
Fly, Walter, fly—look not on me, but fly and save yourself.

SPEED. It must not be, Martha—I am the culprit, I alone must suffer.

MARTHA. No! no! you do not mean it?

SPEED. I am a base, degraded villain, but not so great a villain as to keep a wretched life by murdering you! What, send you, innocent and throbbing with youth, to the cold and miserable grave ?

MARTHA. 'Tis not miserable. Once it had been—once it had been—once, when I thought of our early love—of all the happiness life seemed to have in store for us! Those hopes are gone! The thoughts of death are now my only consolation, the grave my only place of rest!

SPEED. You are innocent, and—

MARTHA. Therefore most fit to die. Let me, as I would have lived for you, have the sweet satisfaction of dying for you. Fly, then, fly, anywhere, so you escape. You will often think of me, think of the time when you and I were two happy children, when we have wandered for days together when joy was all we knew of life—when we loved, dearly loved, before we knew the meaning of the word.

SPEED. Martha, seek not to dissuade me; I am the culprit, 'tis I alone must suffer!

MARTHA. Alone you cannot; none who have the love of woman suffer alone. 'Tis true, you may despise my prayers. (*kneels.*) Thus kneeling at your feet, you may scorn my supplications, be blind to my tears—you may fly to death—but you will take me with you—you may perish, but one grave must hold us both. Then why cast away your life, since I must die?—here you shall stay no longer. Here!

Enter GAOLER, R.

My uncle would leave the prison—farewell! farewell!

(*turns from him with emotion and points to GAOLER to remove him.*)

SPEED. (*throwing off his disguise.*) Not so ! 'tis I who am the culprit—'tis I who am—

Enter SCARLET, SHOULDER, *and* MELVILLE, R.

SCAR. Walter Speed!

MARTHA. (*sinking in* SPEED'S *arms.*) No, no! He's lost! he's lost!

SCAR. The innocent is saved!—you shall perish.

SPEED. The innocent shall be saved—I came to perish.

SCAR. Seize him, (*to* GAOLER .) he is your prisoner.

SPEED. No, not *his* prisoner, but (*swallows the contents of a phial.*) Death's.

MEL. What have you done ?

MARTHA. All hope is lost! Then Heaven release my soul.
(*faints and is caught by* SCARLET, *who gets round to* L.

MEL. Unhappy man!

SPEED. Most unhappy, for I am a dying villain.

SCAR. Yet speak, before it is too late. Martha knew nothing of the robbery—she did not let them in—they say so, but do you say so ? That ring, too !—

SPEED. I gave her ; she knows not whence I had it—knew not of the robbery—she is innocent of crime as lisping childhood.

SCAR. To these facts you'll swear!

SPEED. Swear! am I not sliding into my grave ? Do men lie with their dying word. (*sinking upon the ground.*)

SCAR. You hear that—everybody hears it—the poor girl is innocent. Come, Martha, look upon your friends, and hear their words—you are cleared—you are innocent.

MARTHA. I see nothing, but Walter lying at my feet—hear nothing but his dying groans. Oh, his lips are changing—the light is fading from his eyes. (*kneels beside him.*) Walter! Walter! speak but one word.

SPEED. Melville, I wronged you, conspired with ruffians to rob and beggar you. Can you forgive a dying wretch ?

MEL. Oh, this rashness ! With all my heart I forgive you. Yet you might have been saved!

SPEED. Impossible ! my last crime—

MEL. Last crime! speak, and lighten your soul.

SPEED. (*gives a key.*) I cannot!—the wretched usurer—he who lent you money—let his iron chest be looked to!—no more—

SCAR. You will not die in malice towards me ?

SPEED. No, my honest fellow, Martha must be yours. You will love and cherish her; when time shall have healed her wounded heart, 'twill yearn with kindness towards you—and you will have deserved it. Bless you both! With my dying hands I join yours; as death joins, let death only separate them !

MARTHA. (*to SCARLET.*) Release me!—still am I his!

(kneels over SPEED.

SPEED. Bless you all—and let my fate warn such as would wildly venture in a sea of pleasure—which leads to guilt, to infamy and death. There is a ringing in mine ears! Is not that my mother there—in dazzling white? How red her lips are—she smiles, and holds forth her hands! I am coming, mother—I—I— (*dies.*)

(MARTHA casts herself beside the body, SCARLET stoops to raise her.—Music.—Picture.

CURTAIN.

COSTUMES.—PERIOD 1745.

MELVILLE.—Square cut coat, long waistcoat, breeches, stockings, square-toed shoes, white cravat, powder, three-cornered hat, sword.

GRUEL.—Dark suit, half bald wig, and white hair.

SPEED.—Green frock, boots, three-cornered hat, sword; hair plain.

2nd dress.—Long great coat, slouched hat.

SCARLET.—Scarlet frock and blue waistcoat, with gold lace, dark breeches, and long top boots; three-cornered hat, hair plain.

SLUG.—Old brown square cut coat, grey stockings, and shoes; three-cornered hat, hair plain.

SHOULDER.—Velveteen coat, striped waistcoat, corduroy breeches,

ROGER.—Brown suit; close grey hair.

GAOLERS, OFFICERS, AND THIEVES.—Plain dresses of the period.

MISS CLEVELAND.—Full dress of the period, open skirt, long body and short sleeves of figured satin; powder, flowers.

MARTHA.—Plain long stuff body and short sleeves, stuff petticoat, white apron, mittens, trencher cap and ribbons, cloak, and flat straw bonnet.

JOANNAH.—Grey petticoat and body, large drab cloak and hood, old flat hat, worn over a handkerchief.