

ELLEN WAREHAM

THE WIFE OF TWO HUSBANDS

A DOMESTIC DRAMA

IN

TWO ACTS.

BY

W. E. BURTON, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

The Court Fool, or a King's Amusement, &c.



T H O M A S H A I L E S L A C Y,
89, STRAND,
(*Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market*)
LONDON.

ELLEN WAREHAM.

First produced, May, 1833.

CHARACTERS.

	Surrey Theatre.	Royal Pavilion
Captain Wareham, <i>a retired officer</i>	Mr. DIBDIN PIIT.	MR. SAKER.
Mr. Allenham, <i>a Clergyman</i>	Mr. MAITLAND.	Mr. CHAPMAN.
Cresford, <i>supposed dead</i>	Mr. RUMBALL.	Mr. FREER.
Algernon Hamilton	Mr. C. HILL.	Mr. RAYMOND.
Dick.....	Mr. VALE.	Mr. BURTON.
Mr. Thornhill, <i>a Magistrate</i>	Mr. YOUNG.	Mr. ANDERTON
Graham, <i>a Clerk</i>	Mr. BRAND.	Mr. H. LEWIS.
Henry Wareham.		Mr. PLUMER.
Pollard, <i>a Beadle</i>	Mr. ROGERS.	Mr. HOWARD.
Master George Cresford	Miss BRUNTON.	Miss NORMAN.
Ellen Wareham	Mrs. W. WEST.	Mrs. BROOKES.
Caroline }	Mrs. WILKINSON.	Miss GROVE.
Matilda } <i>her sisters</i>	Miss VINCENT.	Miss C. PLUMER.
Caroline Cresford	Miss CLARKE.	Miss Ross.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION—2 hours.

COSTUMES.

- CAPTAIN WAREHAM.—Plain Windsor uniform, high boots, powdered hair.
- ALLENHAM.—Suit of black.
- CRESFORD.—Blue body coat, bright buttons, dark lining, black pantaloons, Hessian boots, great coat, and travelling cap.
- HAMILTON.—Fashionable suit. Second Act.—Suit of black.
- HENRY WAREHAM.—Modern coat, white trowsers.
- THORNHILL.—Good plain suit of brown, old style, powdered hair.
- POLLARD.—Beadle's coat and hat.
- DICK.—Very short and small nankeens, long chintz waistcoat, black handkerchief, no collar, little livery jacket, much too small for him. First scene.—Groom's undress jacket.
- GRAHAM.—Old fashioned suit.
- ELLEN WAREHAM.—Extremely fashionable. *2nd dress*.—Plain muslin.
- MATILDA.—Morning dress, black apron.
- CAROLINE.—Morning dress.

ELLEN WAREHAM.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Front Chamber in Mr. Hamilton's House.*

Enter ALGERNON HAMILTON *and* MR. ALLENHAM, L.

HAMIL. And so, Allenham, you, my steady college tutor, actually intend to resign your fellowship and marry ?

ALLEN. Yes, Algernon; I am now able to support a wife — your friendship having removed my poverty, the only bar to the consummation of my long fixed hopes.

HAMIL. Friendship? Pshaw! let a man pay his debts. Besides, I serve myself—for in applying the rectory of Longbury to the service of an old friend, I secure the neighbourhood a valuable acquaintance. And you really have Captain Wareham's consent to an immediate marriage with his daughter Caroline ?

ALLEN. All is arranged. I have, therefore, requested the immediate presence of Mrs. Hamilton and yourself, that nothing may prevent the marriage taking place to-morrow.

HAMIL. Certainly—certainly. Give me your hand, Allenham ; you are about to wed the sister of my Ellen. Friend and brother, may you experience that happiness in the married state, which it has pleased Heaven to bestow on me.

ALLEN. Your lot has indeed been fortunate.

HAMIL. I believe it, my friend—the Wareham's are all angelic girls. Here have I been married a couple of years without a single cloud, or even speck, to dim the brightness of my wedded state; my lovely Ellen married in early life to a man she could not love—was compelled, after a few days acquaint-

ance, to drag the heavy chains of wedlock along the rugged path of duty, without even a common sympathy towards the person to whom her father had so unthinkingly fettered her.

ALLEN. I have heard much of Mr. Cresford—overbearing in his temper, violent in his love, jealous, mistrustful, and the victim of passions unrestrained. He must, in every way, have been the opposite to Ellen's gentle and sensitive nature.

HAMIL. I knew him not. Ellen respects his memory as the father of her children, not as an object of affection. His violence of temper caused his death. Having occasion to visit the continent on some mercantile speculation, he fell into the hands of the French—then our enemies—he was confined in the Castle of Verdun, and refusing to accept his parole, tried many mad and desperate means of escape. They failed—mental and bodily misery did their work—delirium ensued, and the worn out prisoner soon paid the debt of nature in a foreign land, and was interred by torchlight the same evening, outside the walls of the fortress.

ALLEN. This occurred, I think, some four years ago—before you had ever met with Ellen.

HAMIL. True; it was in her widow's weeds I first beheld her, and loved her from the first. But no matter now, for a husband's transports. She's mine—mine now, and till now I never knew life or love.

ALLEN. I see her coming—I'll away. I shall tell Caroline to expect you immediately. Farewell! *Exit, L.*

HAMIL. For the present, farewell. My Ellen!

Enter ELLEN, R.

ELLEN. Algernon, have you forgotten ? 'tis our wedding-day—the second we have passed in Hymen's ties, and must not be neglected.

HAMIL. Can it be happier than the last ? or can the next exceed the present in heartfelt joyousness ? Are we not happy ?

ELLEN. Too—too happy! I do not deserve to be so blest above the rest of womankind.

HAMIL. Do you fancy, Ellen, that you are the only woman whose husband loves her?

ELLEN. No, but I am the only woman in the world who is loved by you—is it not so ? I know it is, and that ensures me happiness. Life to me is now a new state of existence—not that I have ever been unhappy, but I have hitherto never experienced this flutter in my spirits—this inward dancing of

the heart. This cannot last; something must happen to mar the harmony of this exquisite delight.

HAMIL. Simpleton! do not forbode the slightest interruption. Come, come, to other thoughts. Our friend, the worthy Allenhams, wishes our presence at your father's. He is on the point of marriage with your sister; and surely Ellen will not damp the enthusiastic imaginings of her young spirit, by creating fears and faltering doubts?

ELLEN. Laugh at me, dearest Algernon, if you will. My cup of happiness is too—too full. Sounds, as of other days, are in my ears—no matter, I will drive off these phantasies, and smile responsive at your bidding. Come, come! *Exeunt, L.*

SCENE II.—*Captain Wareham's Parlour. Side Table, L. Chairs, Breakfast Urn, &c.*

CAPTAIN WAREHAM *discovered reading a Newspaper L. of table; CAROLINE seated R., and MATILDA, C.*

CAPTAIN. Caroline, this tea tastes very queer, it looks more like water bewitched than tea.

CAROL. I hope it will be good, papa—the water did boil.

CAPTAIN. (*putting milk and sugar into his tea, and then tasting it.*) Caroline, you have let the tea stand too long—you know I hate it when it gets that rough disagreeable taste.

CAROL. Shall I put in a little water, papa? it will be very easy to make it weaker.

CAPTAIN. No, there is no use in doing that, slopping it about. Give me the toast.

CAROL. Here it is, papa.

CAPTAIN. 'Tis all cold and tough—I cannot eat it.

CAROL. It has been here so long, dear papa; but you were busy with the newspaper, and I did not like to interrupt you.

CAPTAIN. You know I hate cold toast.

CAROL. Shall I ring, and order Dick to make some more?

CAPTAIN. Order more! I never can teach any of my children that people who are poor must conform to their means. One would think I was made of gold, to hear the wasteful manner in which you talk.

MATILDA. Shall I toast it afresh, papa? that will make it almost as good as new.

CAPTAIN. Be quiet, child; how you pester me—don't you see I am reading the newspaper? There is no possibility of understanding a word one reads, you all keep up such a clatter
(reads.

CAROL. Come, Matilda, it is time to practice your music lesson.

MATILDA. (*getting up.*) I never shall be able to play that horrible sonata, and Miss Paterson will be here directly.

CAPTAIN. Do let me have some little quiet in the house, Matilda. Every morning you keep up that infernal strumming on the pianoforte.

CAROL. My dear papa, how is Matilda to practice, according to your direction, an hour before Miss Paterson comes, if not of a morning ?

CAPTAIN. Nonsense? you always do the disagreeable thing.

MATILDA. Shall I ring the bell for Dick to take away—

CAPTAIN. "Why do you say, "Dick?" why not, "the servant ? " Do you wish everybody to know that I can afford to keep but one servant—and he a foot boy ? The other day, when Lady Besville called on you for a morning's ride, you brawled out for Dick to fetch your bonnet!

MATILDA. My dear papa, I ask pardon; I am such a giddy little goose. Now Caroline, here, never makes a mistake; but then she is about to be married, and that, she says, makes her steady. If I was about to be married, I should go out of my mind for joy.

Enter DICK, L., in a groom's undress jacket, with a large tray.

CAPTAIN. Dick, take away the breakfast things, and don't let me catch you eating the sugar, or drinking the cream; I saw your mouth with a white tinge round it yesterday morning.

DICK. It's werry little I has to eat and drink, Captain ; but nobody can never say o' me, I takes nothing that an't a belonging to me, Captain. (*putting breakfast things on the tray.*)

CAPTAIN. Don't chatter so, sir; and for the future, let me hear less of that word, " Captain "—call me, " Sir."

DICK. Yes, captain, I will.

CAPTAIN. Dick, you're an honest lad, and, I think, mean well, but you're a very great fool.

DICK. Yes, captain.

CAPTAIN. I don't want everybody to know that you're my only servant. When I ring the bell, and order you to tell Thomas, or James, or anybody else to do anything, do it yourself, and say nothing about it—not stand and grin at me, as if you knew there was nobody else in the house.

DICK. Nor more there an't, you know, captain, I'm your footman, gardener, scullery maid, groom and walley.

CAPTAIN. You were left me a legacy, in the field of battle, by your brave father, who had been many years my orderly. I promised him to take care of you, and I don't like to part

with you; but you're a cursed bore—you think of nothing but eating and drinking.

DICK. Why, captain, I may think about them, for I werry seldom do either. Nothing but work, work, work. I cleans knives and waits at table, digs in the garden, pipe-clays your belts, boils the taters, and polishes your boots. I walks out behind the young ladies, powders your wig, washes the dishes, cleans the gig, rubs down the pony, and answers the door. I lights the fires, cleans the windows, runs on errands, washes the poodle, brushes your regimentals, looks arter the cat, and blows up the charwoman; and, as if this wasn't enough to do, I goes to church three times o' Sundays, and you gives me two hours drill twice a week, to teach me my exercise.

CAPTAIN. Why, you catamaran! do you want to be brought up in idleness ? To the right face, you scoundrel, and fetch home the hay and corn I ordered last week.

MATILDA. La, dear papa, I thought he was to help me pot the geraniums; there won't be one fit for the summer if he don't.

DICK. I ought to go and dig some taters up out of the garden, or there won't be none for dinner.

CAROL. Nonsense, Dick ; put on your livery coat, and walk out with me. I have some purchases to make for the family provision.

DICK. Yes, Miss Caroline; I likes to walk out wi' you, 'cause I looks so smart in my jacket and gold-bound hat; and you're so dashing, Miss Caroline—the men stares at you, and the girls stare at me. (*going—comes back.*) Captain, there's no blacking, and werry little coals. Don't forget to recollect that I telled you about the pony being werry ill, and that he wants a new pair of shoes. *Exit, with tray, L.*

CAPTAIN. Nothing but wants, wants, wants! and the crowning curse is the want of money. Oh, the misery of a large family and half-pay.

MATILDA. Then why endure it, dear papa ? Sister Ellen, who loves you dearly, has married well—she would be but too happy in preventing these painful scenes.

CAPTAIN. Do you think I could be dependent on my child ? No, no! I have struggled woefully and wearily; have brought you up, a thoughtless merry group, who smiled four hours away, and knew not the wretchedness I endured. The world, too, was ignorant; my honour, my feelings have not been outraged by the sneers of the vulgar, or the pity of the proud. I have spent my fortune freely in the service of my country; I am now dependent upon its gratitude—but I have earned it, and claim it as my due.

CAROL. And is not your daughter's gratitude equally your due, dear papa ?

CAPTAIN. Let me hear no more, child—if I have done my duty, you have all fulfilled yours nobly, truly. But ask me not to live in miserable dependence. You will all leave me in Ellen has twice been married, now you, Caroline, are about to marry Mr. Allenham—what is to become of me ? how can a man see to all the details of the household, and the boys, and everything ?

CAROL. Why, papa, you always said I was a bad house-keeper. You will do all the better without me, I dare say.

CAPTAIN. No, no, I shan't. You have been a good girl, Caroline, and I shall not be able to do at all without you. You will all marry, and I shall be left alone in my old age.

MATILDA. Why, papa, I have heard you regret a hundred times that Caroline did not marry. You have reproached her with suffering her sister Ellen to be married twice before her ; and said that it preyed upon your mind to think we were unprovided for; and that if we were but married you should be quite happy.

CAROL. In the mean time, my dear papa, Matilda can take my place. She is seventeen now, and I was not older when my poor mother died.

CAPTAIN. Ah, but she is not so steady as you were; and I cannot manage you, Matilda, as I can Caroline.

MATILDA. Well, then, I'll manage *you*, papa, and that will be much the best. I am so glad that Caroline is going to marry that dear good Mr. Allenham, that I shall not mind casting up those abominable housekeeping bills; but you must not scold me as you do Caroline—I shall never bear it as she has done.

Enter DICK, L., in livery.

DICK. Here's Mister Allenham below stairs.

CAROL. Dolt! why don't you show him up ?

DICK. He won't come.

CAROL. Why not ?

DICK. He says he can't come up without a coach.

CAPTAIN. What does the idiot mean ? a coach !

DICK. Yes, I heard him tell the coachman to drive up.

CAPTAIN. What coachman ?

DICK. Mr. Hamilton's. They're all a-coming up the lawn. Mrs. Hamilton's as fine as a general. Coachman be all lace, with a cocked hat.

CAPTAIN. Run down, and be ready to announce them.

DICK. Yes, captain.

CAPTAIN. March, you dog. *Exit DICK, L., marching.*

CAROL. Dear me—Allenham, and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton! Don't let you sister see this room in such a litter, Matilda, dear. Take off your apron—hide this breakfast cloth under the sofa. How do I look? The room is all confusion with your lesson books. (*they put the room to rights.*)

CAPTAIN. Caroline, Mr. Hamilton will like some lunch—how does our larder stand?

CAROL. We haven't a bit of anything in the house.

CAPTAIN. I thought that I told you always to keep cold beef for an accidental visitor. Do you wish the world to think me poor or inhospitable? You always do the disagreeable thing.

CAROL. Dear papa, you grumbled at the amount of last week's bill.

CAPTAIN. Of course; do you think I am made of money? Where is the cold beef we had last week for the Jenkinson's luncheon?

CAROL. Dick finished it for his yesterday's dinner.

CAPTAIN. Confound Dick! he finishes everything. What's to be done? I must ask them to lunch, or they will think it so strange. It will never do to send them away hungry from your house.

Enter DICK, L.

DICK. Parson Allenham, and young missus, and her husband.

CAPTAIN. There's an announcement! Curse you—get to your garden work; it's all you're fit for.

DICK. Be I to dig the 'taters up now, captain?

CAPTAIN. Dig anything—your own grave, if you like—only don't bother me.

DICK. Dig my own grave! what shall I be asked to do next?

Bows in the others, and exit, L.

Enter ALLENHAM, and MR. and MRS. HAMILTON, L.—ALLENHAM goes to CAROLINE.

ELLEN. Ah, my dearest father! how well you look. (*kisses him.*) Caroline—Matilda—each fresh day displays some new improvement in your appearance. Are the inward graces as zealously cultivated?

CAPTAIN. We have no fault to find with the little madcaps, Ellen, my love.

MATILDA. Then I wish you wouldn't grumble at me so much as you do, papa! (*the LADIES go up.*)

CAPTAIN. Well, Hamilton, my dear boy! here is your friend Allenham about to follow your example. Marriage, sir, marriage. He who has rivetted so many, sighs now for the fetters himself.

HAMIL. And why not, my dear sir? with such an instance

of perfect happiness before him, in the same family, he would indeed be to blame were he not to take the good the gods provide him.

CAPTAIN. Well, well—I've no fault to find with my girls.

ELLEN. I'm glad to hear you say that, papa, for I have a favour to ask, and you can't refuse your *good* little girl. This is my wedding-day, and the last one of poor Carry's liberty. We have much to say to each other—let us all go to our house together, and do you grace our table with your honoured presence. Nay, don't look so seriously—you are too much at home.

MATILDA. That we are, Ellen, dear! mope, mope, till we snarl at one another for amusement. Oh, dear papa, let us go to Mr. Hamilton's, and have a run about his large rooms, a romp in his park, or a dear delightful rummage in the library; and you can play at chess with Mr. Hamilton; and James and William can swing me, or row me about on the canal, and Mr. Allenham and Caroline can talk so nice, and so sentimental in the willow walk. Do, dear papa, it will be so delightful!

CAPTAIN. Well, well, madcap—so be it.

MATILDA. Oh, there's a dear old daddy! (*kisses him.*) And now, Ellen, come into our room; you must see Caroline's new wedding dress—and I've such a love of a bonnet to show you.

CAROL. Ay, do, Ellen.

ELLEN. Come along then, girls. I shan't be long, Algernon. Can you spare your Carry for a little while, Sir. Allenham? Bye-bye, we shall soon be back. *Exit with CAROLINE, D. in F.*

MATILDA. What a shame it is that I have not either husband or beau! nobody cares about me, except the old gentleman. Bye-bye, papa, I shall soon be back.

(*imitating ELLEN—exit D. in F.*)

HAMIL. I am very glad you have accepted our invitation, my dear sir. Ellen has been dull—very dull all this morning. A strong presentiment of evil hangs upon her mind, and your presence, with the lively prattle of her sisters, will doubtless drive all *ennui* from her mind.

CAPTAIN. I hope so—I'm sure. But odso, gents, what say you to some lunch—you must feel hungry after your drive?

HAMIL. No, no, no!

ALLEN. Why, n^o ear sir, I have no objection, certainly; a smack or so will be acceptable.

CAPTAIN. I knew it—I knew it. (*aside.*) What am I to do now? We will have it up in a moment. (*rings bell*) Sit down my friends, sit down. Why does not Caroline come—what am I to do?

Enter DICK, in his shirt sleeves, red night cap, and blue apron, with a shovel, L. HAMILTON and ALLENHAM sit at back, reading.

Here Dick, tell—that's a pretty figure, certainly, to come up when anyone's here.

DICK. I've been digging up the 'taters out of the garden; and you told me always to take off my livery when I did any dirty work, for fear I should spoil it.

CAPTAIN. Hold your tongue, you fiend! (*aside.*) Dick, bring up lunch. (*aloud.*)

DICK. What?

CAPTAIN. Lunch—you understand—a tray, cold chicken, Madeira, and Stilton.

DICK. That would be a pretty sight to me ! where be it to come from ?

CAPTAIN. (*aside.*) Silence, hound—I will follow you down stairs—go. (*aloud.*) And Dick, a bottle of the best ale—you know where to find it.

DICK. I wish I did, I wouldn't have drunk that rot-gut small beer so long.

CAPTAIN. Abscond, mongrel! put on your coat and hat, and wait for me below.

DICK. Ees! oh, how hungry master's talk about the cold chicken has made me, to be sure. *Exit, L.*

HAMIL. My dear captain, why all this fuss ? we must immediately return, and therefore—

CAPTAIN. Fuss ! nonsense—merely a morsel of such cold things as we have in the house—a bachelor's larder you know. By-the-bye, Allenham, have you seen that new pamphlet on the Poor Laws?—it places the question in a very original light. Excuse me for a moment, I will fetch it you. (*aside.*) Now to provide lunch from the adjoining hotel; the consequent curse of bad housekeeping, narrow income, and fashionable friends. *he is about to exit when*

DICK enters, L.

DICK. Here's a packet of letters and papers by the post, and Mr. Hamilton's coachman says he'll be d—d if he drinks our sour small beer—it ain't fit for no gentleman; so I have promised him a bottle of that excellent ale you were talking about, and a bit of Stilton as a relish to it.

CAPTAIN. Dick, some of these days I shall be hung for your murder.

DICK. Lord, master, if ever that does take place, I'll come and see the last of you.

CAPTAIN. I shall go mad—leave the room,

DICK. Werry well—the coachman wants some negus, and a couple of Hawannah cigars. Footman calls my livery jacket a strait waistcoat; his livery is something like a livery—he's as fine as a drum-major, and looks much better than you when you have got on your regimentals. *Exit, L.*

CAPTAIN. Folks call me passionate and ill-tempered, and yet I endure all this. I'll pack off that rascal, and endure it no more. What have we here ? A letter for you, my dear sir—(*gives it to HAMILTON.*) one from my son, too, marked "Haste." By your leave. (*opens the letter.*) Not a word, but a letter enclosed for Mrs. Cresford, directed to her former residence in London. Mr. Hamilton! (*calls him down.*)

HAMIL. My dear sir! I have a letter which commands our immediate departure; business of the utmost importance to attend to.

CAPTAIN. Certainly.

HAMIL. Allenham, may I trouble you to hurry the ladies, and see that the carriage is ready. *Exit ALLENHAM, D. in F.*

CAPTAIN. See, my dear sir, here, too, is a letter claiming some attention, directed to our Ellen in the name of her first husband, and addressed to the house in London in which she had formerly resided. Shall we present it to her to-day ? 'twill serve to damp her spirits, be assured.

HAMIL. No matter—there is "Speed" written upon the envelope, and we betray her confidence in withholding the contents.

Enter ALLENHAM, CAROLINE, MATILDA, and ELLEN, D. in F.

ELLEN. How ! in close converse! what mighty matter can possibly have lugged those two solid heads of families in such awful consultation ? Come, come, no mysteries, or even business to-day—this is my holyday, and I expressly forbid even a serious look. This day, if possible, shall be happier than the happiest we have ever passed together.

MATILDA. Then do pray let others be happy as well as you. Are we to wait all day, or are we to go at all ? There's Ellen and her husband here—Carry and her sweetheart there—father strutting up and down like a great turkey-cock, and nobody to speak to poor me at all.

HAMIL. Come, then, let us start. Ellen, dear, here is a letter from some one abroad, which has just been forwarded to your father ; it is directed in your name—doubtless, a begging letter, or on some other unimportant subject.

ELLEN. Heavens! a foreign post mark! "Mrs. Cresford!"

MATILDA. La, do pray put it away! Thank goodness you have done with that grumpy, horrid name, long ago.

ELLEN. Hush, Matilda—do not speak so of Mr. Cresford. He was very fond of me, and I should be unworthy of my present happiness, were I mean enough to do anything the least disrespectful to his memory; as we suppose, it is from some of his late companions in misery and confinement, for the purpose of requiring assistance, Mr. Hamilton, I am sure will be the very first to join me in granting their request.

HAMIL. Undoubtedly, my dear Ellen; and happy am I to observe the honest delicacy of your opinions; but let the seal be sacred for to-day—this is your holyday, you know, and you must not give us the first example of business.

CAROL. No, no, I will prevent that. Papa, the carriage is at the door; it will comfortably hold you, and Matilda, and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton—I will follow after with Mr. Allenham, in the pony gig.

CAPTAIN. Pshaw ! stuff! you know that the groom has taken the pony to be shod. Caroline, you can accompany your sister and Matilda, and I will follow in a hack chaise.

MATILDA. A hack! la, papa, do let me ride in the carriage—I may never have one of my own to ride in—will you? Thank you, I know you will. There, Mr. Allenham, papa wants you to ride with him in the hack chaise.

ELLEN. I will soon settle this. Algernon, lead the way with Miss Matilda.

HAMILTON *and* MATILDA *exeunt*, L.

Papa, take Caroline's arm, and stop that interesting chat.

CAPTAIN *and* CAROLINE *exeunt*, L.

Mr. Allenham, oblige me; and now—one moment—I have forgot something of importance—I will rejoin you in a few moments.

ALLENHAM *bows and exits* L.

This letter, it haunts my very soul. My former name always makes me shudder—I cannot tell why, and have often reproached myself with the feeling as unkind and as ungrateful towards the memory of him who is gone. There are many post marks—Gratz, Vienna, Dresden, Magdeburg, Hamburg—not one of Verdun, where he died. Perhaps 'tis from some faithful friend, some fellow prisoner, who watched the flickering lamp of life expire within the dungeon's gloom—with an account of his dying behests, which, from some cause, have never been delivered before. I have not yet the courage to break the seal. There is something horrifying in thus receiving the dying injunction of one husband—one who had loved me, too, so passionately—in reading the ebullition of his vehement affection now that I am the wife of another, 'tis as though he were about to speak to me from the grave. How many direc-

tions ! it is difficult to trace the original. Merciful powers—this writing! 'tis like that hand which is on  so familiar to me—and yet it is impossible! how fooliah, when 'tis so utterly impossible! No, no, no, no, no, I cannot be mistaken—it must be his writing! his, whom I dare not name. Despair, I defy thee—I must know the worst! (*opens the letter.*) There is the name—that name ! (*reads.*) " Gratz—My own Ellen, my beloved wife." Ah !

(*she shrieks, and, gasping for breath, falls into a chair, in endeavouring to reach the door.*)

CAROLINE. (*without*) Papa and Matilda are gone, Ellen, and we are waiting for you.

Enter HAMILTON and CAROLINE, L.

HAMIL. Ellen, my love, why this delay ? Heavens! what accident—

CAROL. (*raising her up.*) Sister Ellen! what can have happened ?

ELLEN. (*hysterically.*) Where is he? Algernon—alone. I have a word of death to speak. Sister, we must be alone.

HAMIL. Oblige her, Caroline. Be within call, but leave us.

Exit CAROLINE, L.

ELLEN. (*watches her out.*) He is alive—he is alive! I am not your wife, Algernon, I am not your wife.

(*throws herself into his arms, and convulsively clasps her arms around his neck.*)

HAMIL. Ellen, dearest Ellen, my own gentle Ellen, are you raving? You must be ill. What is the matter? you really frighten me.

ELLEN. Look there, Algernon—there! (*pointing to letter.*) I have only read the first line, and would to Heaven I had died. Dearest, dearest Algernon, I love you better than anything else in the whole world—better, ten thousands times better than myself; words cannot express the thousandth part of the love I feel for you, and *it is all a crime !* Look there—read that!

(*pressing her hand against her eyes.*)

HAMIL. (*reading.*) Merciful heavens! (*a pause.*) May it not be a forgery ? are you sure it is his hand ?

ELLEN. Bless thee for the thought! (*snatches the letter.*) No, no, no—too well, too well do I know that writing! But why was I not written to before ? why was this cruel deception practised on me ? He was reported dead—Colonel Eversham saw his funeral—no letters for four years! Algernon, read—for I cannot; everything swims before me. Let me know how these fatal accidents have happened. Read, before my senses wander—before this coming madness fixes my brain!

HAMIL. (*reads.*) "You must have been astonished at not hearing from me the result of the desperate escape from Verdun, of which I informed you. I succeeded in getting out of that horrible dungeon disguised as one of the mourners at my own funeral. (*she shudders.*) According to the plan I hinted at in my letter by Maitland, and which he promised to describe to you more fully when he reached England."

ELLEN. Maitland! I have seen no Maitland—have had no letter! Merciful Providence ! for what am I reserved ?

HAMIL. (*still reading.*) " I escaped into Germany, and was almost immediately seized as a spy, and cast into a prison at this place, Gratz, where for four years I have endured that mental anguish, such as man hath seldom survived. I have been debarred the use of pen, ink, and paper—have been treated as a madman, and passed months of wretchedness in the chains and straw of a maniac's dungeon. The new governor is my friend; I have forwarded a petition to the emperor, and daily expect my liberty. My love, my Ellen, my adored—"

ELLEN. No more, no more ! I cannot bear those words of love from one so long thought in his tomb. It cannot be true—it is a dream! Tell me so, Algernon, my own Algernon, my husband, tell me so—speak!

(*throws herself on her knees, with clasped hands, and looking beseechingly in his face.*)

HAMIL. We can fly, Ellen. (*raising her from the ground and whispering.*) There are other lands than this; there are countries where we can be beyond the reach of British laws; where we may live free from the trammels of human institutions, but bound by the most sacred ties—our own vows of eternal constancy, which surely have been registered above.

ELLEN. Live with you as your mistress? never, Algernon—never! any anguish is preferable to having you cease to respect me; but I am your wife. (*in a low sepulchral tone.*) No law can force me to live with him again—no law can be so cruel as to separate us ; we were married in a church—no one forbade the banns—no one answered the awful adjuration—" Let him now speak or ever after hold his peace." Yes, yes, we must be lawfully married—we are, are we not? say so, my own Algernon—my husband. (*winding round him and looking up in his face.*) I am your wife—your wedded wife—am I not, dearest?

HAMIL. You are my own, Ellen—my life, my love ; the joy of my heart—without you life would be intolerable.

ELLEN. I am your wife, dearest! Say so, in pity say so.

HAMIL. Yes, yes, you are—in spite of ordinances human or divine—

ELLEN. No, no, no! if you speak so, I am not your wife.

HAMIL. Dearest Ellen!

ELLEN. Do not touch me, Algernon—it is a crime ! you say yourself I am his wife, and he is coming home ! We must not live together, though it breaks my heart to say so. We must part, Algernon, and instantly, until this dreadful mystery is cleared up. (*crosses to R.*)

HAMIL. Instantly ? oh, Ellen, there is still hope.

ELLEN. None for me.

HAMIL. Must I go to-day ?

ELLEN. Now, this moment, if you value my peace, and the little remains of honour I may yet hope to preserve.

HAMIL. This is hard—this is cruel! I will obey.

ELLEN. Farewell, Algernon ! I dare not trust myself to look at you. In happier hours we may meet again.

(*unable to continue.*)

HAMIL. Are we thus to part? (*a pause.*) Are we thus to part? impossible! Ellen! my love! my wife! (*snatches her to his bosom and kisses her fervently.*) Farewell! *Exit L.*

ELLEN. He is gone—for ever gone! no more to glad my eyes, no more to warm me with his smiles, no more to hear the pleasing music of that tongue that first enticed my hear to love, no more—agony of death ! what, what now am I ? Alone! claimed as a bride by him I never loved; by him, whose name I cannot bring myself to speak ; whose death I have for years believed, and now to— Madness is in the thought! Oh, Algernon, my love, my life ! take me to your arms, and hide me from myself.

Enter HAMILTON, L., suddenly, followed by CAROLINE.

HAMIL. Ellen! (*ELLEN shrieks wildly, and rushes into his arms.*)

ELLEN. Ah, you are not gone for ever—thank Heaven, not for ever.

HAMIL. Compose yourself, dearest Ellen ; I would not leave you without assistance. Your sister Caroline is here, and knows the story of our grief.

ELLEN. My father—I must see my father! Algernon, we must not be together. In your presence I feel a wicked, guilty wretch. You must leave me, or I think I shall die now at your feet.

HAMIL. I will do so—but will you not give me your hand ? that dear hand which, after all, was pledged to me at the altar. (*taking her hand.*) It was I who placed that ring upon your finger, Ellen; you then swore to me eternal fidelity—can anything cancel that vow ?

ELLEN. Horrible! horrible! Algernon, you drive me mad ! nothing *can* cancel that dreadful vow. I swore it first to him—to him that rises from the grave to force me to keep that dreadful vow. I swore it first to him, not you, whom now I love! to him I swore that fatal vow!

(*wildly seizing HAMILTON—she glares upon him, and hysterical sobs choke her utterance—she falls into CAROLINE'S arms and—*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Counting House of Cresford's Firm. (3rd grooves.) Books, &c.—D. C. in F.*

HENRY WAREHAM *discovered at table*, R. H.

HENRY. By the most untoward, most horrible of chances, Cresford is still alive, has made a claim upon the firm, and promises ocular proof of his identity; by the advice of the senior partners, the news will be carefully concealed until the proof is positive. They may indulge in their habitual and characteristic caution, but to me the writing and manner of his letter are incontrovertibly sufficient. Poor Ellen is also well convinced—I have here an answer to his letter, which she has entrusted to my care. Dearest sister, for what miseries are you reserved?

Enter GRAHAM, L.

GRAHAM. A stranger, who declines giving his name, wishes for some private conversation with you.

HENRY. Ah, so soon. Admit him instantly—and Graham, be cautious that we are not interrupted.

GRAHAM *introduces CRESFORD, L. D., bows and exit.* CRESFORD *fastens door after him.*

CRESFORD. Are you Henry Wareham ?

HENRY. Heavens, Cresford ! Is it, indeed, yourself?

CRESFORD. Where is my wife? (*in a choked tone of defiance.*)

HENRY. Ellen is with her father.

CRESFORD. Why was she not here to receive her husband ?

HENRY. Here is a letter, Cresford, which she desired me to give to you; it will explain all.

CRESFORD. (*fiercely.*) Then what I have heard is true—your virtuous sister thought I was safe in an Austrian dungeon, and she has given loose to her profligate fancies, under the specious veil of marriage! Well done, you sanctified hypocrite. Ha, ha, ha!

HENRY. Cresford, this excitement is unnatural—your eyes glare with the fire of madness. Read this letter, and though you may be miserable, you will not be so angry.

CRESFORD. So, because I loved her with mad idolotry—because my passion for her has driven me to acts of desperation—has driven me to set at nought my life—my safety, you think I am such a besotted fool, that three lines, traced by her hand, are to turn the whole current of my feelings ; that she can persuade me quietly to yield her to the arms of my rival. (*in a deeper tone.*) You neither of you know me, or half of what I have gone through.

HENRY. Cresford, all I implore of you is, that you will read my sister's letter. We all believed you dead—the partners in the firm all believed it.

CRESFORD. It was their interest to do so—what has become of my property ? Why am I not the leading partner in the firm?

HENRY. The affairs of your partnership were wound up, on your reported death, and your share paid over to your supposed widow.

CRESFORD. To Ellen ? that she might revel in adultery with the darling of her soul, while I, her husband, the father of her children, the winner of her first affection— No, no, she never loved me! she feared me—trembled beneath my burning gaze of admiration, but never loved me !—but her letter—ay, her letter! Oh, how have I longed—fiercely, desperately longed to see anything belonging to her; and now—(*places his hand upon his eyes.*)

HENRY. Calm yourself; read what my sister has written, and see the dreadful situation your unhappy deceit has placed her in.

(CRESFORD *looks scowlingly at him, and then reads—his face gradually assumes a tender aspect.*)

CRESFORD. " Her heart bleeds for the pain she causes me "— " she knows it to be a cruel return for all the fidelity which I have shewn her." True, most true. " Maitland never brought the letter you had written." My curses on him—my blasting, stinging curse on him, and his!—Yet he may have perished,

while endeavouring to bear those struggles through which I have passed—if so, I care not how soon I share his fate. " Upon the receipt of your letter, Mr. Hamilton left me, and I have not seen him since." Henry, is this true? (*vehemently laying his hand on HENRY'S arm.*) Did she part from that man at once?

HENRY. Indeed, she did, and has not seen him since.

CRESFORD. Did she love him? (*a pause.*) Did she love him? answer me that.

HENRY. (*hesitatingly.*) They seemed to live comfortably together whenever I have seen them.

CRESFORD. Madness! distraction! Did they love each other?

HENRY. I have always been in the office, and therefore saw but little of them.

CRESFORD. I must see her myself—I must know the truth. (*reads again.*) " Resignation ! " There is no use in preaching that to me—she might as well attempt to chain the ocean. There is her signature—that name, which, when first traced by her lovely hand, I thought the signature to my eternal happiness. Oh! that I could forget all that has gone before—that I could annihilate all the preceding words, and preserve nothing but the last: " Your wife, Ellen Cresford." I must see her once again, and then—Heaven knows what will become of me.

He hurries out L. D., HENRY following.

SCENE II—*Captain Wareham's House. (2nd grooves.)*

Enter MATILDA, supporting ELLEN, R.

MATILDA. My dear sister, I am so glad to see you have left off crying. Oh, these men, what trouble they bring upon us poor females. We are all our youth trying to catch one, and then, ten to one he's not worth having when he is caught; but Mr. Hamilton ought not to have left you.

ELLEN. I wished it—breathe not a word against him—he is the most perfect, the most faultless of human beings. I always thought my happiness with him too great to last, and it has proved so. May Heaven, in its mercy, protect and bless him.

MATILDA. Ah, you were always a gentle forgiving creature; but if *he*—you know who I mean, does return, how will he behave himself—what will he do ? In common justice, he cannot visit upon you the consequences of his own rash imposture.

ELLEN. Ah, my dear, you were too young when he went to France, to know the full violence of his character, the vehemence of his ungoverned passions.

(a violent knocking without, L

CRESFORD. (*without, L.*) Shew me to your mistress, boy—to Mrs. Cresford, instantly.

ELLEN. Ah! that dreaded voice—he comes! Matilda, leave me, but be near at hand. *Exit MATILDA, R. 2 E.*

CRESFORD. To Mrs. Cresford—I must instantly see her.

Enter CRESFORD, L., ELLEN stands transfixed.

CRESFORD. (*a pause.*) Once more then, we have met. How I have longed for this moment, which now proves one of torture ; but I was resolved to see you again. Yes, if Heaven and hell had conspired against me, I would have gazed upon that face again. (*ELLEN covers her face with her hands—CRESFORD forcibly removes them.*) Not so; I will look upon those features. It was to gaze upon them I practised the imposture by which I escaped from my prison. It was to gaze on them that I preserved my life, though treated as a spy, a prisoner, and a maniac.

ELLEN. My conscience acquits me of having done anything wrong, although I am aware I have cast a blight over the fate of all those whose happiness I would willingly die to secure.

CRESFORD. Ellen, do you love me still ? Have you thought of me in absence ? Have you wept for me ? Is your heart faithful?

ELLEN. I love you from the bottom of my heart.

CRESFORD. Do you love me, Ellen ? (*taking her hand.*) I love you—love you with more adour, more burning, maddening fervour than when I first bore you in your maiden bloom from the house of your childhood. Do you love me ?

ELLEN. Had I known you to be living, no length of absence, no human power, no imaginable circumstances should have shaken my adherence to my maiden vow of constancy.

CRESFORD. Do you love me ?

ELLEN. You must feel that, although this second marriage is null and void, and that in the eye of the law I am still your wife ; an eternal barrier is placed between yourself and me.

CRESFORD. Speak! I must—I will be answered!

ELLEN. No ! My whole heart and soul are Algernon's.

(*ELLEN says this with much impassioned effort, and then sinks, sobbing, upon her knees.*)

CRESFORD. And do I live to hear you avow your guilt ? Shameless, abandoned creature: you, whom I have worshipped! Now, now, my brain will madden ! (*striking his forehead with his clenched hands.*)

Enter CAPTAIN WAREHAM, R. H.—he raises ELLEN.

CAPTAIN. Mr. Cresford, what means this violence ?

CRESFORD. Captain Wareham, you see a man who claims his wife—his, by the law of the land, his—I conclude you will not interfere with the exercise with my right, as a free born Englishman!

CAPTAIN. Surely, Mr. Cresford, this is not the manner in which an Englishman and a gentleman would enforce his rights.

CRESFORD. I am almost mad, sir! my heart is bursting! I have been taunted by that woman with her love for another man; but I will be avenged! If I am miserable, those who have made me so shall not be happy. I will avail myself of all the power the law can grant, and bring that faithless woman, who has caused me to be the wretch I am, to open and to public shame!

Rushes out L. H.—CAPTAIN WAREHAM *supporting* ELLEN

A pause.—Enter MATILDA *followed by* DICK, R. 2 E.

DICK. Lawks a daisy, Miss Matilda, it can't be! Come to life again—four years dead, and now come to life again!

MATILDA. Yes, Dick, but that's not the worst—he is come here to claim his wife.

DICK. But he marn't have her, he'd no business to go and die, and be buried in them there outlandish parts. It was *his* doing, warn't it miss ? his wife didn't *make* him die, and he must put up wi' the consequences.

MATILDA. But he did not die, you see; it was only a stratagem.

DICK. Then he'd no business to be buried, miss. He was buried ; Colonel Eversham said he saw him buried—and when a man's buried, he ought to lie still, and be quiet.

MATILDA. No, no, Dick; the colonel saw the sham funeral, and was deceived like many others. It was by this deception that Mr. Cresford made his escape.

DICK. A man ought not to be allowed to walk at his own funeral—to follow himself to the grave, and then fly into a rage because people won't believe he is alive.

MATILDA. Poor Ellen! 'twas indeed a most unhappy deception.

DICK. How do we know he's not a Vampyre ?

MATILDA. There is little doubt as to his identification.

DICK. His what, miss ?

MATILDA. His identification.

DICK. Oh, he's brought that safe home wi' him, has he ? I'm glad o' that, though I don't know what it is; but I do say he's no right to ask for his wife again. Look'ee here, miss, put a

case: my old grandmother, when she died, left my daddy a good chandler's shop, and £15—well he soon spent the money, sold the chandler's shop for more, and spent that. "What a s'prizing puzzling case it would be, if my grandmother was to come to me some morning, and say:—" Dick, I bean't dead, I wants my chandler's shop."

MATILDA. Dick, dick, papa's quite right—you are a very great fool.

DICK. But I be right, though, now ; and if he's got a bit of honour in him, he ought to be ashamed to say that he is alive, seeing how things be—it's obtaining wives under false pretences.

Enter CAPTAIN WAREHAM, R. H.

CAPTAIN. You here, Dick, chattering. Have you nothing to do down stairs ?

DICK. Ecod, captain, I've so many things to do, that I didn't know which to begin with, and so I thought I'd let 'em be a bit, and do nothing for a little while.

CAPTAIN. (R.) What smash was that I heard a while ago?

DICK. (C.) The great glass globe in the drawing-room.

CAPTAIN. The devil! Who broke it ?

DICK. I did.

CAPTAIN. Scoundrel! plague of my life ! (*seizes him.*)

DICK. I've got my best livery on, and you'll tear it, you know, and you can't afford to buy me another.

CAPTAIN. (*letting him go.*) Ah, you are very considerate.

DICK. So I am; it was that made me break the globe. You told me not to let the cat steal any more o' the fishes wi' the golden jackets on ; she had already nibbled two—hooked 'em wi' her paw like. Well, I caught her standing up so, with her tail cocked quite upright fishing for the third, so I throws the great bronze inkstand at her, and capsized her primo.

MATILDA. (L.) And the globe too, I suppose ?

DICK. In course.

CAPTAIN. Very well, very well, indeed.

DICK. Oh, that bean't half.

MATILDA. No?

DICK. No ! trying to get out of my way, pussy upset two o' them there flower glasses off the chimley shelf, right over miss'es grand *pee-anny*; spilt 'em all over the pictur' book as lay open, and then, wanting to bolt out o' window, she broke that there great large china jar.

CAPTAIN. She did ?

DICK. Yes ! I took up the broom, and charged her at the point o' the baynet. I hunted her about as much as ever I

could to get her out o' the room, but she wur like a bad shilling, she wouldn't go.

CAPTAIN. And you have broken all these things ?

DICK. No! the cat did—isn't she a smasher?

CAPTAIN. Matilda, my love, take him away, or I shall murder the thick-headed rascal!

MATILDA. Run away, Dick!

DICK. Run, miss! Captain says it bean't millentary to run, but I'll retreat. Hold him tight, miss; be kind enough to see the enemy don't charge me in the rear.

Exit, marching and singing, L.

MATILDA. Dear papa, as you and Dick don't seem likely to agree, send him down to Longbury; sister Caroline, and Mr. Allenham would be glad of him to assist on the farm.

CAPTAIN. No, no; curse the scoundrel, I can't part with him—he knows all my little ways, and if he is stupid, he's very honest.

MATILDA. Besides, papa, if he did not put you into a passion now and then, you would have nothing to excite you—it does you good, rouses you, and gives you such a colour.

CAPTAIN. I want nothing to excite me now, Matilda—your poor sister's situation is sufficiently exciting—Cresford has left her in great agitation, and vows the bitterest revenge. Heaven only knows what he intends to do.

Exit, R.

MATILDA. A pretty uproar, truly, about a husband, more or lees. They are scarcely worth a moment's trouble. I'm afraid men and women never *agree*—quarrel or wrangle, scold and jangle, and yet for all that, they will run after one another.

SONG.—MATILDA.

Oh, that magical circlet of gold,
'Tis the padlock to Hymen's sheep-fold;
The *prize ring* of love, and the maiden's pretence,
Who wishes her heart well secur'd in *ring fence*.
The day-dream of old and the *Night Thoughts* of Young,
The dance place of fairies when vespers have rung—
Yes ! 'tis the ring.

Young Cupid's ringreader in wounding our hearts,
At *all in the ring* he aims his sharp darts;
But his ringlets of love, and butterfly wings,
Are not so admired as the sight of his *rings*.
The *Ring in Hyde Park*; with its grandeur and pride,
Must not be compared to the *ring* of the bride.
Yes! 'tis the Ring.

But the bachelor, scorning dear Cupid,
Lives dog-like, unmeaning and stupid;
He *rings up* his housekeeper, orders his tea,
She *rings* in his ear while she makes his bohea ;
Remorse *wrings his heart*, and he doggedly goes,
Through life, like a pig, with a *ring* through his nose.
Yes! 'tis the Ring.

Exit MATILDA, L.

SCENE III—*Mr. Thornhill, the Magistrate's Room of
business. (4th grooves.)*

MR. THORNHILL *in his chair*, C., WILL POLLARD, *the Beadle*, L.

THORN. Poor old Margery, she has suffered much. I would make the order for her maintenance larger, if I dare; but I am already in sad disgrace with the Board, for my extravagance, as they call it.

POLLARD. Ah, bless your worship, you've the true English gentleman's feelings about the poor creatures on your estate. If every magistrate would trouble their heads a little more about the feelings of the poor, we shouldn't have half so much crime in the country.

Enter CRESFORD, L.

CRESFORD. I would speak privately with Mr. Thornhill on business of much importance.

THORN. Pollard, wait below, and as the morning is cold, get a little home-brewed—I dare say I shall not be long engaged.
(coming forward.)

POLLARD. The real old English gentleman, every bit on him.
Exit, R.

CRESFORD. You, sir, are a magistrate—I come to you for justice. You see before you a man who has been deeply injured in his honour, his affections, and his rights as a man, a husband, and a father.

THORN. *(offering chair.)* Pray be seated, sir; I shall be but too happy to lend any assistance in my power—be calm, and state the circumstances of your case.

CRESFORD. I am calm, sir; if you knew all, you would wonder at my calmness. I have been some years abroad, and on my return, find the wife I adored, married to another. I now demand a warrant for bigamy against Ellen, the daughter of Captain Wareham.

THORN. Am I speaking to Mr. Cresford? *(he bows.)* Yours is a most painful case, indeed. I have heard, from report,

under what circumstances your wife's second marriage took place, and if all be true, you surely cannot think of carrying matters to such an extremity.

CRESFORD. I come to you for justice, not advice. I simply demand the honest performance of your duty ; you are not to counsel, but to act. I have evidence—deep damning evidence of both the marriages, and require her immediate apprehension. Let the officer drag her into open shame, and see if she can look her injured husband in the face.

THORN. 'Tis revenge, not justice you require ; and though I do so most unwillingly, I have no choice but to grant the warrant. (*goes to table and fills up a paper—CRESFORD goes up.*) But to prevent unnecessary pain, I will see to its execution myself. (*rings.*)

Re-enter POLLARD, R.

Pollard, step over to Captain Wareham, ask to speak to him alone, request him to bring Mrs. Cresford over here directly, on a little business; if he insists on knowing why, show him this warrant, and tell him that he may depend upon the examination being as privately and delicately managed as possible.

CRESFORD. It shall not be private. My wrongs, and her infamy shall be blazed all over the world.

POLLARD. Mrs. Cresford, sir ?—Mrs. Hamilton, you mean; pretty Miss Ellen that was. (*CRESFORD writhes.*) What, be you going to take the law of such a good creature as that ? Why, everybody loves her—adores her ; there bean't a man in the village, old or young, as wouldn't lay down his life for her. Take back your paper, sir; I'll not be the bearer o' such a thing against her; so get somebody else.

CRESFORD. You cannot help yourself, sir—you must execute a magistrate's warrant.

POLLARD. (R.) I be'ant bound to do such a thing as this, be I your worship ?

THORN. (C.) I don't see how you can refuse—besides, Pollard, you may be serving the poor lady ; it appears the thing must be done, and you may speak kinder to her than anybody else.

POLLARD. There's something in that, too. (*scratches his head.*) What will they say at the club ?—and how my wife will worret about it! but though I be going to take her up, if anybody says a word agen' her hang me if I don't knock him down.

CRESFORD. You think me violent—severe?—perhaps I am. You cannot judge my sufferings, unless you have loved as I have. I worshipped her as the Persians of old worshipped the sun ; she was everything to me, the world was centred in my

Ellen—*my* Ellen—I thought her mine, then. I have escaped from my dungeon—I have returned—I came to my home—no one knew me ! I asked for my wife—I received no answer; I inquired for my children—they were at Mr. Hamilton's, for that is his name—that is the name of the man who has robbed me of my wife—my wedded, lawful wife.

THORN. But did not the lady believe you dead ?

CRESFORD. Sir, it was convenient for her to believe in my death; convenient for my partners in trade to divide the profits of my business—very convenient for her brother to be admitted to a share; but, ha, ha! they have all revelled in my spoils; they thought me safe in my dungeon—but I am here—I am alive—they cannot prove me dead ! I will wrest my wife, my children, my property from the spoiler's grasp. Ha, ha, ha !

THORN. Have you and Mrs. Cresford had an interview since your return ?

CRESFORD. I saw her! and could have forgotten everything in the rapture of that moment; but she told me—I scarce can speak it—that her whole heart and soul were his—my rival's.

THORN. Poor woman!

CRESFORD. And is it she whom you pity? Friend and foe-stranger—wife of my bosom—all leagued against me. Am I doomed to be scorned and hated by the whole human race ? But I will have revenge, if I cannot have sympathy—I will be feared if I cannot be loved.

Enter POLLARD, R.

POLLARD. Captain Wareham and his daughter, your worship.

THORN. Very well; place chairs, and request their appearance. (POLLARD *places chairs, and exit R.*—CRESFORD *seats himself at table, L.*—POLLARD, *re-enters with CAPTAIN WAREHAM and ELLEN, R.*) Captain Wareham, it grieves me much to see you here on this very disagreeable business. Pray be seated, and your amiable daughter.

CAPTAIN. Mr. Thornhill, your character as a magistrate and a gentleman, makes any apology unnecessary. You have a duty to perform—unpleasant, I have no doubt—but it is fortunate for us that we have fallen into your hands, considering who we have to deal with.

ELLEN. Father, is *he* there ?—keep close to me. Oh, how I dread to meet those eyes again.

THORN. I believe I must now desire Mr. Cresford to go through the form of his deposition. (CRESFORD *approaches the table, gazes on ELLEN in triumph, and takes up the book.*) I regret, madam, to state, that you must, for a moment, remove your veil, that the complainant may identify you.

(*she slowly raises her veil, and turns her face towards CRESFORD, but does not raise her eyes—he advances a step nearer—she instinctively shrinks behind her father, and replaces her veil.*)

CRESFORD. I charge that woman, Ellen Cresford, with inter-marriage with another man—her former husband being still alive.

THORN. (*to ELLEN.*) Have you anything you would wish to say?

ELLEN. What am I to do ? What is this to lead to ?

CAPTAIN. I scarcely know, my child. You have nothing to do but to answer the truth. Your conduct has been irreproachable—you have nothing to blush for.

THORN. Has the defendant anything to urge ?

ELLEN. (*in a faint voice.*) Nothing.

THORN. Then we had better bring this unpleasant interview to a speedy close.

CAPTAIN. (*rising.*) I cannot allow this cruel and unjust statement to be made, without simply mentioning the circumstances under which my daughter's second marriage was contracted. Mr. Cresford chose to publish an account of his own death—to enact his own funeral. Colonel Eversham stated that he had seen him carried to the grave—his relations mourned him dead. Two years and two months afterwards, my daughter contracted a second marriage. Should any man in justice, in honour prosecute such a case ?

THORN. Certainly not. Do you wish me to proceed, sir ? It is yet time to pause. If I once make out the commitment, you will be bound over to prosecute, and no longer at liberty to retract.

CRESFORD. I know it, sir. It *is* my intention to prosecute, with all the rigour of the law.

THORN. Madam, my duty is a painful one, but I must sign your committal.

ELLEN. (*throwing back her veil*) Oh, father! father! am I to be taken to a prison ? Impossible! he cannot mean it.

THORN. My dear madam, I will instantly depart for a neighbouring magistrate—the presence of two justices being necessary to receive bail. You shall wait our arrival here, or at your father's house; Captain Wareham can give us bail for your appearance at the ensuing assizes. *Exit, R.*

ELLEN. Oh! this is too cruel! Drag me before the eyes of the whole country, blazon our misery and our shame to the world—bring upon us the mockery of the coarse, unfeeling crowd—he cannot wish thus to disgrace the mother of his children.

CRESFORD. My children! ay, where are they? My children! let me see them. Captain Wareham, a desperate man demands to see his babes.

CAPTAIN. Certainly, Mr. Cresford, in one moment. They are at my house, over the way. Pollard, my good man, fetch Master and Miss Cresford from my house, will you? The sight of them may calm him, and at least can do no harm.

Exit POLLARD, R.

ELLEN. Why, why is this? Charles, what would you have me do? What have I done to deserve this? (*bursting into tears.*)

CRESFORD. What have you done? Have you not blasted my happiness, broken my heart, and maddened my brain? and she asks me what she has done. (*goes up with a wild and fearful laugh.*)

ELLEN. Oh, my father, bear with him—he is mad—he knows not what he says—'tis I have done it; and I am to be tried, father—tried at the bar, like a common malefactor! I never, never thought of this!

Enter POLLARD with the CHILDREN, GEORGE and CAROLINE, R.

POLLARD. Here be the little darlings, Captain.

CRESFORD. (*rushing forward to R.*) Ah! my children! Mine—are they not? I believed them mine, and mine they shall be! Come with me, my children, you shall not remain to be contaminated by the example of a creature who glories in her shame. (*he takes the CHILDREN, one in each hand—ELLEN flies to him and clings to his feet.*)

ELLEN. My children! spare them to me! Charles, deprive me not of my children! Husband! man! have mercy on me!

CRESFORD. (R.) Are they not mine—mine by every law of Heaven and man! You have *his* child—*his*! the fiend who robbed me of my all. Let me not see it, lest I commit a crime I may repent of; but these are mine, and go with me. Captain Wareham, I cannot leave my children in the care of the woman who loves not their father. I claim my children!

CAPTAIN. (L.) You shall have them, sir; — add not insult to oppression—suffer the mother to pass a short time with her babes, and I pledge myself to send them to you at any place you may appoint.

CRESFORD. No, no, they go with me. Children, bid your mother farewell for ever.

ELLEN. Farewell! oh, no! to lose them—lose them now, when the cares of infancy are over, and the blossoms of hope are so delightful to the eye; after all my care, to lose them—to know they will be brought up to hate me, to execrate the name of her who loves them better than her life. My darling babes, my little ones. (*endeavouring to be cheerful*) You are going to leave me. You will think of me, won't you? you will remember all that I have told you? You, George, are older than your sister; you will protect her, watch over her, will you not?

And you must both promise me to say your prayers, and never forget to pray for me, my children.

(during this speech, ELLEN ties on the children's hats.

GEORGE. No, no, mamma. But we shall see you again soon.

ELLEN. We will hope so, my loves. We shall, I trust, meet again here—or elsewhere. *(looking up.)*

GEORGE. But we are not always to remain with that pale, dark stranger, are we ?

ELLEN. He is your father, my children. You owe to him the same duty as you owe to me.

GEORGE. Our father! He is dead, mamma; I recollect we wore black frocks a long, long time, because our father was dead.

ELLEN. It was a mistake, my love; *he* is your father, and you must love him.

GEORGE. I never can love him, because he has spoken cross to my dear mamma, and made her cry.

ELLEN. We must forgive! If strangers should speak slightly of me, my darlings, my own dear, good children will not believe them—I know they will not.

CRESFORD. *(who has been leaning against the first wing, L., observing her.)* 'Tis time this mummery was over. Officer, drag your prisoner to gaol. My children, come.

ELLEN. One moment! I have not kissed them. Inhuman!—but one moment!

(CRESFORD seizes the CHILDREN, and drags them to the wing, L.—ELLEN, who has been on her knees before them, is dragged partly across the stage—he breaks away with the CHILDREN, who struggle to reach their mother, and ELLEN, with a piercing shriek, falls into the CAPTAIN'S arms.—Tableau.

SCENE IV.—*A Country Road. (1st grooves.)*

Enter DICK, L., meeting POLLARD, R.

DICK. What, Measter Pollard, be that thou a stamping about here ?

POLLARD. What Dick—how art, lad? Be'st still living wi' Captain Wareham ?

DICK. Ees; I don't think I shall ever discharge him. I've given him two or three tightish talkings to lately, and he does pratty bobbish now; things be doing better like—he keeps a housemaid now.

POLLARD. No !

DICK. Ees! and Mrs. Cresford's maid and I be a mixing up matters between us.

POLLARD. Ay, quite family like and comfortable.

DICK. 'Sprizing so. I've got a boy.

POLLARD. No !

DICK. Ees! he comes every morning, and does all the dirty work. I never cleans no boots, now, nor digs in the garden, nor washes no poodles, nor nothing that's interrogatory to my dignity ! I'm quite perfect in my drills, and master has made me his wally.

POLLARD. No!

DICK. Ees! and he's a going to buy me a pair o' top boots.

POLLARD. Why, you'll be quite a gentleman.

DICK. I tries werry hard to be one. Master always calls me Mister Dick. Mrs. Cresford's maid, whom I keeps company wi', says no one ain't never no gentleman, unless he understands music, and enjoys the luxuries of life.

POLLARD. And do you know music, and the luxuries of life?

DICK. I do. I larns to play the fife, and to chaw tobacco—that's the way to be a gentleman.

POLLARD. Give us your hand, Mister Gentleman Dick. And how does Madam Ellen seem after the trial ?

DICK. Thankee, kindly, she's pretty tollolish; she couldn't abear the thoughts of it aforehand, but since its turned out so, she's getting peart and pretty again.

POLLARD. I shall never forget that day—the day of trial—everybody wished her well.

DICK. There warn't a dry eye in the court; the old judge cried through his spectacles, and the jury did nothing but blow their noses.

POLLARD. 'Twere awfully solemn.

DICK. Only to think of a lady going to be tried in a coach and four. Lord Besville would call on her.

POLLARD. All the lords and ladies in the county came to speak wi' her. How pretty she did behave ! The jury were obliged to find her guilty, and the judge sentenced her to be fined a shilling and discharged—as much as to say she were innocent.

DICK. That was just the case wi' me at my last place. Master got a justice to ax me a few questions about some eggs what I took out of his hen roost. I were fined and discharged. Magistrate fined me—master discharged me. Just like she—merely to prove my innocence.

POLLARD. How do master captain take this business ?

DICK. Oh, the old cock's blood be quite up. He do want to fight Mr. Cresford, but Mrs. Ellen says it marn't be, 'cause he be the injured party. See, see, there he be.

POLLARD. Who—the captain ?

DICK. No, no, Mr. Cresford. He be always a hanging about

here, a trying to get one look at Mrs. Ellen, but he never does. How pale and wretched he do look; and his eyes glare just as if you could light a candle by them.

POLLARD. Ay—if he'd really a been dead, how comfortable they would all have been.

DICK. He's no right to be alive, has he ? Hush! come this way—don't let him see us. *Exeunt, R.*

Enter CRESFORD, L.

CRESFORD. Why do I prowl around the precincts of her dwelling ? Why do I not leave this hated place, and strive to drown the recollection of my sorrow ? Am I happier for having accomplished my revenge ? No! if possible, more wretched now than ever. Fool, fool, fool! what has my boasted triumph done ? Enabled her to prove how innocently she contracted the second marriage—how exemplary her conduct—how conscientious his behaviour. I have given the world an opportunity to know how little share I have in her affections—how wholly, solely they are fixed on him! Ha! 'tis he—my hated rival—the causer of my woe! he stalks this way, the proud possessor of my Ellen's love! But I have marred his bliss—have stopped his bold career of ecstasy—have made his hearth as desolate as he has rendered mine.

Enter HAMILTON, L.

(suddenly confronting him.) You know me?

HAMIL. I do, and would avoid thee. *(crosses to R.)*

CRESFORD. *(seizing him.)* You go not! I have sought this meeting—have yearned for it. I dared you to fight—you treated my defiance with disdain. We are now alone—man to man, and foot to foot. I am an obstacle to your happiness—my death will remove it. Hot, deadly hate is boiling in my bosom—your life's blood only can appease it! See, here are pistols—take your choice, and fire.

HAMIL. Are the pistols equally loaded—no advantage taken ?

CRESFORD. See—examine them yourself.

HAMIL. *(takes both pistols and fires them in the air.)* Mistaken man ! how could my blood avenge your wrongs ? Think'st thou that Ellen would respect thee more if branded with the name of murderer ? Thy life is sacred to me. I have injured—unwittingly, but deeply injured you, and shall I knowingly, increase the wrong ? Farewell! restrain your headlong passion; and be assured, that though I can't esteem—I pity you. *Exit, R.*

CRESFORD. Pity! and from thee! the spoiler of my heart's fond hopes—the blaster of my soul's imaginings ! Am I so lost? What then remains ? The grave—the only refuge for this bursting heart. *Exit, L.*

SCENE V.—*Captain Wareham's Apartment. (2nd grooves.)*

Enter ELLEN, CAPTAIN WAREHAM, and MATILDA, R.

ELLEN. No, father, no ; indeed it must not be—the law of the land has decided that I am not his wife. How dare I then receive his visits ?

CAPTAIN. Well, well, there's no harm in a man wanting to see a woman he's been married to. He wishes to bid you good bye, to see his child, and say farewell to us all before he quits us for London—whither it should seem you have unceremoniously banished him.

ELLEN. We must not be together. I, alas, am nothing now to him. If he comes here, even to say farewell, it must be in the presence of my father, as a dear and valued friend. But there must be no vain repinings—no useless or sinful hopes.

MATILDA. 'Pon my life, Ellen, you are only fit to be a nun. You mean, next week, I dare say, to lock yourself up, feed upon black bread, wear sackcloth and ashes, and see your friends only through a grated door. If I were you, I should run away, go to France, or Italy, or Switzerland, or Jericho, to get out of the way of this horrible man. Mr. Hamilton is here—pack up your clothes, take your child, and go. You were married to him, you know, after all.

ELLEN. Matilda, if Algernon's voice and Algernon's beseeching countenance, if Algernon's eyes failed to persuade me, who dare hope to influence my decision. No, my fair fame shall be tarnished by no wilful act of my own.

CAPTAIN. That is right, Ellen. Respected as you are now by everybody, I would sooner see you dead than dishonoured.

MATILDA. Oh, dear me! Well, I dare say you are right—only if I had married a pretty fellow, I'd have had him to myself, and have kept him, too, though twenty other wives had claimed him from me. But I will stay, and take care of you, papa. You know you could not manage at all well without me—you would have nobody to scold you. (*playfully patting his cheek.*)

CAPTAIN. I will tell you what, Matilda, you must keep down that spirit of yours, or nobody will put you to the trial.

MATILDA. La, pa! I have several sweethearts—very nice young men, too! who would be very glad to put me to the trial; and if I am to be snubbed in this way, some day or another I shall be found guilty. (*noise of a fife, badly played, without, L.*)

CAPTAIN. There's that infernal Dickey, with that instrument of noise and horror.

MATILDA. Why, daddy, you told him the other day that he was only fit for a fifer.

CAPTAIN. He has not given us a proof that he is fit for that.

Enter DICK, L., playing a fife, wretchedly out of tune—he stops close to CAPTAIN WAREHAM, C., and delivers a letter—then wheels round, and, playing his fife again, marches out, L.

I shall never enjoy a night's rest till I have cut that rascal's throat.

MATILDA. Oh, what a vile squeaking! I will send him upon some errand, steal his fife, and pop it into the fire. *Exit R.*

Enter HAMILTON, L.

HAMIL. I must see you, Ellen—I must speak to you. Human nature cannot endure this continued restraint. Say that you love me, and, let our fate be what it may, your heart, your whole heart is mine.

ELLEN. Oh, Algernon, do not speak to me in these tender tones, they melt away my soul, and I must, I will be firm. For your sake, this scene must not again occur. Oh, Algernon, I am doomed to bring a curse on all who are connected with me! My father—I shall bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave! My name will be a lasting disgrace to my children! I have cast a blight over the dignified and prosperous career which awaited you. I have been the bane of that unhappy man, whose ungoverned, ill-fated love for me led him to practice the deceit which has worked us all such woe.

HAMIL. Say, rather, Ellen, that we are sacrificing our happiness on frivolous punctilio. In the eye of Heaven you are mine—my wife. Let us fly, then, to the uttermost parts of the earth, and there exist for each other alone.

CAPTAIN. Ellen, here is a letter from Henry—about Cresford, doubtless. Read it—read it. *(gives the letter.)*

ELLEN. *(opens it.)* Impossible! Algernon, do you!

(gives it to HAMILTON.)

HAMIL. *(reads.)* "Dear Ellen—Cresford is very ill—he is evidently dying. He has inquired for you repeatedly—your presence may calm his agitation. He refuses to keep his bed, although so weak as scarcely to be able to speak. Come instantly or it may be too late.—Your affectionate brother, Henry."

ELLEN. Yes, I will go instantly! 'Tis my duty—though, alas, I know not how he may receive me. Does he feel kindly toward me? or must I endure his reproaches? No matter—I must bear all now. Come, father—Algernon, come. *Exeunt, T.*

SCENE VI.—*Cresford's Room—doors, C. (4th grooves.)*

CRESFORD *discovered, seated in a large arm chair, his face buried in his hands—he rises up, pale and agonised—he stares cautiously around, and drinks the contents of a small phial.*

CRESFORD. 'Twill now soon be over! I am an outcast on the face of the earth ! My children shun me—my wife disowns me! It had been better, a thousand times better for me to have consumed away the remnant of my existence in a dungeon—there I had hope ; I could think of my Ellen—of my children—and fancy the time would come when I should once more know happiness with them. Oh, for those visionary days of fancied bliss ! how much better than this horrible certainty of endless misery. But I have ended it. In this world, little now is left me but retribution. I have desolated, and must atone.

Enter HENRY WAREHAM, C. D.

HENRY. According to your wish, my sister has arrived.

CRESFORD. Admit her immediately, or it may be too late.

HENRY *brings in ELLEN to L. C, he then retires up.*

(taking her hand.) So, Ellen, you are come at last—I was afraid you would not have arrived in time. I am ill—am dying! you will soon be free from me, and then— *(ELLEN averts her eyes.)* Well, well, I wished to see you once more, and to forgive you for all I have suffered on your account, and to ask forgiveness too. I ought not to have brought you to a trial—it was a bad feeling of revenge which drove me to it, and I repent it now!—but I was maddened—goaded to desperation! Ellen, tell me that you are sorry for me, and that you forgive me, as truly as I forgive you.

ELLEN. Oh, Charles, you know I do feel for you, and I have from the beginning—and forgive you, too ; ay, from the bottom of my heart.

CRESFORD. Well, I have your forgiveness and your pity—your love I never had ! Are the children come yet ? I wanted to bless them, and to bless my wife, too—for you are still my wife. Ellen, as long as I am alive, you are my wife—I am your husband!

ELLEN. Are my children coming ?

CRESFORD. Yes—I sent for them. Henry, why are they not here?

Exit HENRY, C. D. in F.
Ellen, give me your hand—no, the other. *(taking her left hand, and, selecting the ring finger, looks solemnly in her face.)* Who put that ring upon your finger ? *(a pause.)* Is that the ring I placed upon that finger ? Answer me—and answer me truly.

ELLEN. *(faintly.)* No

CRESFORD. *(dashes her hand away—she draws off the ring, and, kneeling, offers it to him.)* Take it away—destroy it ! I cannot look upon it! *(starts up, and dashes the ring upon the floor—he falls back exhausted, and gasps for breath—after a pause.)* Where is the ring I placed upon your finger ?

ELLEN. It is at home—I put it carefully away, when—

CRESFORD. Speak on—finish the sentence !

ELLEN. When—the other—was placed there!

CRESFORD. You have kept it, then ? You did not destroy it?

ELLEN. Indeed, I preserved it religiously. Are not you the father of my children ? Oh, Charles, do not thus agitate yourself—be calm—be patient; we are all frail, erring creatures—we should mutually forgive, as we hope to be forgiven. Your children will soon be here, let them not see their father thus.

CRESFORD. Speak on! your voice soothes my restless spirits! Let me look upon thee—mine eyes are darkening on the world! Let me gaze upon thy face while I can yet see!

(he looks earnestly at her for some moments, then covers his eyes, and sinks back in his chair.)

ELLEN. Charles, you are faint—let me procure assistance.

CRESFORD. No, no! 'tis useless ; the physicians will tell you I am dying with a broken heart—they are right—but nature, tough and clinging to the last, would keep me here in lingering agony; I have assisted her—have swallowed poison !

ELLEN. Help! help! Henry! father! help!

Enter HENRY, C. D. from L.

Cresford has taken poison! Fly for assistance. *Exit HENRY, C. D.*

CRESFORD. 'Tis useless now—the fiends of hell are revelling in my veins! a few more pangs, and all will then be quiet. My children! are they here ?

Enter HENRY, C. D., with the CHILDREN—he brings them down on the R. of CRESFORD.

CRESFORD. Ah, my babes—my precious babes.

(he extends his hands to them—they run past him without notice, into their mother's arms, L., who kisses them.)

CHILDREN. Ah, mamma, dear, dear mamma!

CRESFORD. *(subduing his feelings, calls to them.)* My children! *(they do not attend to him—a little harshly.)* Children!

ELLEN. *(whispers.)* Your father speaks—go to him, my loves.

CRESFORD. Kneel here, at my knee—I wish to give you my blessing—my parting blessing. *(they kneel—he blesses them—he rises and leans upon ELLEN'S shoulder.)* Ellen, I would see your father—would feel his forgiving grasp. That pang again! 'tis agony indeed—I have lived a fierce and stormy life—I would die in peace with all men. There is another, who—Do not name him—Is he here ?

ELLEN. He is—my father, and—his friend—anxiously await.

CRESFORD. Let them come in—he must not speak—I cannot bear his voice.

Exit HENRY, C.

The drug has power, indeed. Ellen, you will be happy; think kindly of me when I am gone—better than I deserve. Cherish my image in my boy, and my spirit will be appeased.

He gradually gets weak. HENRY enters, C. D., preceding CAPTAIN WAREHAM and HAMILTON—they come down R.

ELLEN. (L.) My father, and—

CRESFORD. I know—I know. Wareham, your hand. (*he grasps CAPTAIN'S hand—passes him over to ELLEN, then stretches out his hand to HAMILTON, but does not look at him.*) Yours—Do not speak—if you would exchange forgiveness, return this grasp—mine is the clutch of death. Enough—from my hands receive my Ellen (*starting up as HAMILTON moves.*) Do not embrace her till I am gone. (*eagerly.*) I cannot bear it. No, not even in the presence of my corse—'twould call me back to life. (*this burst quite weakens him—he falls back into HENRY'S arms, but does not look at HAMILTON.*) One moment, and 'tis done. My heartstrings crack—I feel the tyrant's grasp! Ellen! centre of my life—let me die gazing on thy face.

(*he looks steadily at her for a few moments—kisses her forehead, and gradually relaxing, drops upon the ground—ELLEN faints in HAMILTON'S arms—one of the CHILDREN kneels over CRESFORD'S body—the other clings to ELLEN.*)

	CHILD.	CHILD.		
HENRY.	CRESFORD.	ELLEN.	HAMIL.	CAPT.
R.				L.

CURTAIN.