

THE 
LOST CHILD.

An Original Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

W. E. SUTER, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF

The Pirates of the Savannah, Idiot of the Mountain, Syren of Paris
Angel of Midnight, Old House on the Bridge, Outlaw of the
Adriatic, Sarah's Young Man, A Quiet Family, John
Wopps, Rifle Volunteer, Brother Bill and Me,
Highwayman's Holiday, Accusing
Spirit, &c., &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND, LONDON.

THE LOST CHILD.

First performed at the Royal Lyceum Theatre (under the management of Mr. Fechter), on Saturday the 26th day of December, 1863.

Characters.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM JONES (*Merchant Service*) Mr. GORDEN.
MR. WILLIAM JONES (*a Tallow Chandler*) Mr. H. WIDDICOMB.
TOM CHAFFINCH Mr. J. H. SHORE.
ALFRED STEDILAD Mr. F. CHARLES.
BURRELL (*Proprietor of an Hotel*)..... Mr. COLLET.
JAMES..... (*his Waiter*)..... Mr. MORELAND.

MRS. CAPTAIN WILLIAM JONES Mrs. H. LEE.
MRS. WILLIAM JONES..... Miss HENRODE.
MATILDA MEETON Miss P. LECLERCQ.
MARTHA HIGH (*Mrs. Captain Jones's Nursemaid*)..... Miss FOSTER.
BETTY MARTIN (*Mrs. William Jones's Nursemaid*)..... Miss LAVENNE.

Scene:—THE SEA SIDE.

COSTUMES OF THE DAY.

(Mr. Lacy's List)

THE
LOST CHILD.

SCENE.—*Garden of a Sea-side Hotel at----, the house supposed to be on an eminence fronting the sea, the back of it visible, R. c. ; door of entrance, R.; and, R. and C, a view of the sea; vessels sailing; bathing machines, &c, in the distance; garden chairs and small tables scattered about the gardens, which is tastefully laid out*

Enter BURRELL and JAMES, from hotel.

BURR. James, James, I am afraid you won't do for me.

JAMES. And I expect your place *will* do for me; I'm bothered out of my life.

BURR. Recollect, I have taken you only on trial.

JAMES. And a hard trial it is for me—calling here, and bawling there, as if a fellow could be everywhere.

BURR. Certainly; and at the same time, too. This is the sea-side season, and my hotel is crowded to the roof; and no wonder, for the comfort in my establishment is enormous—all who visit me say that.

JAMES. Most of 'em says the charges is.

BURR. Certainly; I don't want riff-raff at my hotel; and then look there—this is but the back of my hotel—what elegant retirement, what delicious gardens for a promenade, with a magnificent view of the majestic ocean.

JAMES. That's what you says in your bills and advertisements.

BURR. And can I do better than repeat such glowing language? Now away with you, and be sharp—don't let me have any more complaints of your inattention.

JAMES. I am not inattentive, I am bothered, I tell you—half a dozen bells ringing and seven or eight people calling all together would confuse a prime minister; then, as I don't know who wants me, I run to 'em all, one after the other, and I must say that very few of 'em behave civil to me.

BURR. Lady Duggins came to me just now in a fury—she says you rushed like a maniac into her room, when she was in a state of deshabelle.

JAMES. I don't know what state you call it, but I know she'd got her wig off.

BETTY MARTIN, *carrying a baby*, and MARTHA HIGH *wheeling a perambulator with two little girls in it*, enter, talking together, L. 3 E.

BURR. (*as they pass across*) Well, my dears—giving the children a little air, and yourselves a little exercise, eh ?

MARTHA, and BETTY. Yes, Mr. Burrell.

BURR. That's right, the sea breeze is strengthening.

JAMES. Makes me awful hungry!

BURR. Silence, James!—Remarkably pretty children !

JAMES. SO is the misses !

MARTHA, (*turning her nose up at JAMES*) Impetent fellar!

BETTY, (*turning her nose up at JAMES*) Persuming puppy!

Exeunt with children, R. 3 E.

BURR. HOW dare you take such a liberty!

JAMES. I'm as good as they are—they are only servants.

BURR. Why, you----- Be off with you, directly, or-----
(*driving JAMES, who, running to door, comes full butt against TOM CHAFFINCH,—JAMES staggers back, roaring out and putting his hands to his face*)

CHAFFINCH *advances, followed by ALFRED STEDILAD, R.*

TOM. What a clumsy trick!

JAMES. Shameful!

BURR. YOU rascal!—get out of my sight-----

JAMES. I do believe he has made my nose bleed, (*goes into hotel, feeling his nose and looking at his hand*)

BURR. Allow me to apologize for him ?

TOM. Don't trouble yourself, I am not in the least hurt. I am unfortunate though to-day. An hour ago, I broke a tumbler, and now I have nearly smashed a waiter.

BURR. We always charge for breakages.

TOM. Very well, put them both down in the bill.

BURR. The waiter is of no consequence, but the tumbler-----

TOM. There, there, that will do, Barrel.

BURR. I beg your pardon, Burrell. My name is Burrell, but you always will-----

TOM. Ah! to be sure, Burrell! but considering your occupation, you ought to be barrel—moreover, you look like a barrel!

BURR. Ah ! yes, the sea air, the sea air! such elegant retirement, such delicious gardens for a-----

TOM. Promenade. I have read all about it. Good morning, Barrel!

BURR. Burrell! (*aside*) I don't like that man.

Exit into hotel. ALFRED has been, and is still looking off, L.

TOM. My good fellow, you will stare your eyes out of your head. Can you not behold the adorable object?

ALFRED. NO ! yet it is always that way she bends her steps; and her mamma assured me-----

TOM. Oh! her mamma—ah! it is a pity, I think, that you have not a mamma to look after *you*. I bring you down with me to this place for a companion, and no sooner do' we arrive than you fall in love with a young lady staying at the hotel. Never knew such shameful conduct in my life !

ALFRED. The ideal of which I had so often dreamed.

TOM. Yes, you were always a dreamy sort of a customer—always too moral to be lively, and now! my dear fellow, anything so dreary and stupid as you have become since falling in love with Miss Merton, it is impossible to imagine !

ALFRED. My happiness is at stake, and levity on such an occasion-----

TOM. To judge by the wry faces you make, one would fancy that happiness was a dose of physic.

ALFRED. Oh, Tom !—that I could persuade you to follow my example.

TOM. And fall in love ?

ALFRED. (L. c) Yes.

TOM. (R. C.) Well, so I do—three or four times every day of my life!

ALF; ED. Shocking! Be assured, Tom, that marriage, with the woman whom we love, is the best guarantee of our happiness, the only safeguard for our morals—

TOM. Rum-ti-tum-ti-tiddle-um!

ALFRED. And that a virtuous wife-----

TOM. IS a young man's best companion ! Your sermon is as old as the hills —

Enter MARTHA and BETTY, R. 3, E., with CHILDREN, as before.

your discourse a dreary waste (*seeing girls*) but luckily, here are two green spots. How d'ye do, my darlings ?—Martha High, you are the prettiest girl I ever saw. (*she smirks*)

BETTY, (*aside, huffy*) Well, I'm sure !

TOM. Except Betty Martin. (BETTY *smirks*)

MARTHA, [*huffy*] Oh, indeed!

TOM. And which of you is the most charming it is impossible to say—different in style, but equal in beauty.

BETTY, (*aside to MARTHA*) A pleasant young gentleman, isn't he?

MARTHA. Very! *They go off, L. 3 E., with CHILDREN.*

ALFRED. Tom! Tom! your levity—your immorality!

TOM. My dear boy, if you are really as good as you appear to be, this earth is not your proper sphere.

Enter MATILDA MERTON, L. 3 E.

ALFRED, (C.) Ah! dear Matilda-----

TOM. (R.) Miss Merton, your swain has been favouring me with another lecture.

MATIL. (C.) Ah, Mr. Chaffinch, I wish I could see you staid and quiet as my Alfred.

TOM. My friend Stedilad is rather too staid; and I am always suspicious of men who at his years are so very quiet.

MATIL. Then you are just like my mamma—she thinks that Alfred is rather too moral.

TOM. Your mamma is a sensible woman.

MATIL. And that young men should be a little gay.

TOM. A most estimable woman !

MATIL. But I think gravity is best for all ages. Mamma objects to Alfred, that he already looks like a married man, and the father of a family.

TOM. Well, perhaps his looks do him but justice.

MATIL. Mr. Chaffinch!

ALFRED. Tom!

MATIL. Do you assert that ?

TOM. NO. no, I don't assert—I merely-----

MATIL. Good heavens ?

ALFRED. I beg that you will not jest on-----

MATIL. Are you certain it is but a jest ? My mamma has great discernment, and men are fearfully treacherous!

TOM. (R.) I agree with your mamma. He certainly does look like a married man, and the father of at least one lovely infant!

MATIL. (to TOM) YOU know more than you say. I entreat you, Mr. Chaffinch-----

ALFRED. My dear Matilda!-----

MATIL. Don't speak to me, sir. This is very suspicious; mamma may be right. This matter must be cleared up !

Exit, R. 1 E.—TOM CHAFFINCH laughs.

ALFRED. See what your idle jesting has done !

TOM. I merely wished to prove to you that you are not quite invulnerable, with all your moral armour !

ALFRED *bounces off after* MATILDA, R. 1 E., TOM CHAFFINCH *follows him, laughing.*—MRS. WILLIAM JONES, and MRS.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM JONES *enter from hotel.*

MRS. J. A delightful morning, is it not, Mrs. Jones?

MRS. CAPT. Yes, Mrs. Jones, beautiful!

MRS. J. *(laughing)* How oddly it sounds when I call you

Mrs. Jones, and you return the compliment to me. And how curious that two of that name should be staying at the same hotel!

MRS. CAPT. Very! It was the similarity of name which first attracted me towards you.

MRS. J. And it was that which caused me to seek your friendship.

JONES, (*entering from hotel*) Now, ladies, are you ready ? (*looking round*) But where is the baby—my little William—the infant destined to perpetuate the name of Jones—the idol of his father—where is he ?

MRS. J. Don't make a bother, William, he is safe enough; Betty Martin is taking him for a walk.

JONES, (C.) But he can't walk; he can do wonders for a child only six months old, but he can't walk at present. I have no doubt that if allowed he would try, but he mustn't—it would make him bandy—and to see my only son and heir with a pair of legs you might trundle a wheelbarrow through, would break my heart.

MRS. CAPT. (*laughing*) Really, Mr. Jones, you make more fuss every day of your life with your one little boy than my captain does with his two little girls, when he returns after a long voyage.

JONES. FUSS, Mrs. Jones.! don't call a father's devoted affection a fuss! I was burn with a love of offspring—from my very earliest infancy, longed to be a father.

MRS. J. (*laughing*) Oh, you silly man !

JONES. And to compare your two girls with my one boy! You will excuse me, but that is simply ridiculous ; for what are girls? mere females! while a boy—ah! one day he will be a man—a dignity to which no female has ever yet attained.

MRS. CAPT. (*laughing*) I suppose not.

MRS. J. YOU are too demonstrative, William; you cannot love baby more than I do, but if I were always raving about him as you are-----

JONES. Ah, how I envy you ! You are permitted to wash and dress him—from you he receives the maternal nourishment — that felicity is denied to me.

MRS. CAPT. Doating on him so, where would be your fortitude should you lose him? (*JONES starts violently*)

MRS. J. Oh, pray, do not talk of that.

JONES. Lose him ! Ah, true. I must keep a constant watch, or the gipsies may steal him ; I must look after Betty Martin, or she may drop him down an area, or—oh ! I am so glad there are no coal pits in this neighbourhood—but where is he? (*going up and looking about*) Where is my youthful William ?

MRS. J. (*to* MRS. CAPT. JONES) And BO your husband is about to return ?

MRS. CAPT. Yes; either this evening or to-morrow the captain will certainly be here.

MRS. J. After so long an absence how happy you must be.

JONES, (*advancing, c.*) I don't see him. (*to his wife*) You are certain he is safe ?

MRS. CAPT. (*to* MRS. JONES) I did not expect the Captain so soon, or should not have left my home—fortunately, however, he knows that every summer I come hither, so-----

JONES, (*to* MRS. CAPT. JONES) Do you know, when I first learned that your husband's names were both like mine, I thought it very singular—two Joneses in the same house was sufficiently startling, but that they should both be christened William—wonderful!

MRS. CAPT. Yes, rather strange.

JONES. And when I heard that he was a sailor, gone on a long voyage, I thought perhaps he was a distant relation; then afterwards I felt certain it was not so, because he's a captain in the merchant service, and I am a tallow chandler.

MRS. CAPT. NO—none of my husband's family were ever in trade.

JONES. And there's none of my family that wasn't. Every man must follow the business he is born to—men are like candles, they vary a good deal, both in shape and material, of all prices and all sorts, from the purest wax, four to a pound, down to the commonest tallow, run into twelves and sixteens.

MRS. J. Do leave the shop at home!

JONES. I wouldn't if I could help it, I'd have it always with me—I am proud of it. I am not one of those fellows who swagger about at the sea-side, and while spending their money in enjoyment, are ashamed to own the trade by which they earned it!—no, I say boldly to everybody, " Here I am, look at me, I'm a tallow chandler, and I've brought my wife down here for a dip."

Enter BETTY and MARTHA, L. 3 E., *with children as before.*

JONES, (*rushing up and snatching the child from* BETTY'S *arms*) Ah! my boy, my boy—my sweet William—come to your father's heart! (*hugging the child*)

MRS. CAPT. (*to* NURSEMAIDS) We are going for a stroll on the beach—shall not be long.

JONES. Noble scion of the house of Jones!—behold his aristocratic air—see, already, how proudly he turns his nose up at everybody.

MRS. J. (*taking child from him and kissing it*) He can't

help it, the little dear—can't help it, can 'oo, if 'oo is so like 'oo father?

JONES, (*energetically*) There never was such a beautiful child! (MRS. J. *gives child to BETTY MARTIN*) I look at him and I see my own portrait when I was six months old—allow me, ladies I (*giving an arm to each of them*) Ah! it shall be my care to mould him—he shall become one of the lights of the world! blessed angel! Look at us—father and son!—and we are as like each other as a pair of patent paraffines! (*struts off, arm-in-arm with the two ladies, L. u. E.*)

MARTHA. It's quite sickening to hear a man go on so about a bit of a baby!

BETTY. YOU needn't say nothing against the baby, Marther 'igh—I'm sure he's a nice little fellow, bless him ! and the poor child can't help it if his father makes a fool of himself.

MARTHA. Well, I'd sooner be nussmaid to Mrs. Captain Jones—as everybody calls her, to extinguish her from the other—than I'd live with your Mrs. Jones.

BETTY. I does pretty much as I like; there can't be a nicer woman than Mrs. William Jones.

MARTHA. Mrs. Captain Jones is, I think ; besides, it wouldn't suit me, when I was out with a baby, to have my master trotting at my heels.

BETTY. HOW do you know what your master may turn out, when you sees him ?

MARTHA, (*wheeling away perambulator*) And I shouldn't like always to be lugging about a great baby—spilin' my figger!

BETTY. 'Tain't so bad as pushing about a scamberlator, all day long! (MARTHA *goes off with perambulator, R. 3 E.*) Marther 'igh's such a stuck-up gal! (*is following her*)

CAPTAIN WILLIAM JONES *enters, hastily, L. 2 E.*

CAPT. Young woman—avast heaving!—come back! Do you happen to know anything about her ? Can you tell me if she is in the house there ?

BETTY. Who, for goodness' sake ?

CAPT. MRS. Jones?

BETTY. Mrs. Jones ! do you mean ?

CAPT. I mean Mrs. William Jones, you female lubber!

BETTY. Oh! she's gone to take a walk on the beach.

CAPT. (*hitching up his trousers*) Shiver my timbers! Are you quite certain ?

BETTY. Of course I am, and I think I ought to know considering as I'm Mrs. William Jones's servant.

CAPT. YOU are, are you ?—then if I were she I wouldn't let you carry other people's children about !

BETTY. What do you mean by other people's children ? This is Mrs. William Jones's own little boy.

CAPT. *(surprised)* Ah ! it's strange she didn't tell me that—
(looking at child) What's he christened ?

BETTY. William!

CAPT. Good! good ! But, I say, though, he's very little of his age, ain't he?

BETTY. What! Do you know how old he is ?

CAPT. Of course I do—getting on for a year and a half.

BETTY, *(laughing)* A year and a half indeed! —why he's but six months old.

CAPT. *(starting back aghast)* Six months !

BETTY. Yes, yesterday was his monthly birthday, and a fine boy he is too. *(aside)* What a queer man !

Exit, carrying the Child, R. 3 E.

CAPT. Six months! and I've been gone over two years!—to say the least of it, it's a suspicious circumstance; while her husband, a true British sailor, has been working with all his might, ploughing the main!—Oh! sky-scrapers and stunsails! *(hitching up his trousers)* Shiver my timbers!

BURRELL. *(entering from hotel)* A new arrival! *(bowing)* What can I do for you, sir ?

CAPT. Something to drink directly !

BURR. Yes, sir ; what would you like ?

CAPT. Half a gallon of brandy.

BURR, *(starting)* How much ?

CAPT. *(hitching up his trousers)* Yes, make it a gallon, and then I'll save you a drop. Steer away, crowd all sail! *(seising BURRELL)* Shiver my timbers! *(rushes off, dragging BURRELL with him into hotel)*

BETTY MARTIN and MARTHA enter, with the CHILDREN, R.

BETTY. Ah ! he isn't here now! I assure you, Martha, my love, I never met with such a strange man in all my life.

MARTHA, (R. C.) Whoever could he be ?

BETTY, (L.C, *starting*) Ah! it's just struck me that, perhaps, — *(suddenly looking off)* Oh! I declare, there's my Jack waiting yonder; he wants to see me about meeting me to-morrow night—just hold the baby for me, will you ? *(popping it into MARTHA'S arms)* Shan't be a minute ! *(runs off, L. 2 E.)*

MARTHA. Well, I'm sure! like her impudence, I think—dare say I'm going to do her work, while she is running after the chaps, *(to child)* Sit up, can't you!

Enter TOM CHAFFINCH, L.

TOM. Hey-dey, Martha! how is this—a sudden increase to your mistress's family ?

MARTHA. (L. C.) This child ain't my missuses, it belongs to—(*crosses, R., suddenly looking off—aside*)—Why, there's my Bob, talking to some other gal. (*aloud*) Just hold him a minute, will you, Mr. What's-your-name. (*dabs child into CHAFFINCH'S arms, runs off wheeling perambulator, R. 3 E.*)

TOM. Confound it! here, I say, come back—nature never intended me for a nursemaid. Oh! this won't do—I shall not stand here to be laughed at—Martha ! Martha ! hi! (*scampers off, carrying the child, R. 3. E.*)

JONES *runs on, L. U. E., stops, and fans himself with his hat.*

JONES. Phew! I'm all of a melt! While my wife and Mrs. Captain Jones were looking at a boy fishing in the sea for tittlebats or perriwinkles, or fish of some description, I stole away from them, and ran back here as fast as I could scamper. I could not endure to be so long separated from my boy ! Moreover, a terrible presentiment was weighing on my fatherly heart that, during my absence, danger menaced my darling infant! My terror will not be allayed until I once more press my William to my agitated bosom! But where is he ? Where is Betty Martin ?

BETTY, (*running on, L.*) Now, Martha, give me the—(*stopping suddenly*)—Master!

JONES, (R. C, *starting*) She hasn't got him!—my fatal presentiment did not deceive me. Oh ! prepossessing, but diabolical female—how could you have the heart to murder so much innocence and beauty—where have you hidden his lovely body ?

BETTY. Gracious! master, what are you talking about—baby is safe enough!

JONES. He is safe—you swear it ?

BETTY. Yes; I takes my solomon oath of it!

JONES. Safe!—he is safe! Oh! this revulsion (*swaying about*) causes such a convulsion—that—support me, Betsy.

BETTY, (*assisting him*) Come, master, be a man !

JONES. The man is firm, Betsy—'tis the father that is overpowered ; and never, Betsy, never, till you are yourself a father—

BETTY. What?

JONES. I don't know what I am talking about. My mind is wandering!

BETTY, (*aside*) I always thought he was cracked.

JONES. My little William is then in the hotel? sleeping the sleep of innocence.

BETTY. NO : Marther 'igh has got him.

JONES. Marther 'oo ?

BETTY. Mrs. Captain Jones's servant—Marther 'igh!

JONES. Oh! Betty Martin, are you not aware that when a father and mother confide their offspring to your care, you are expected to do duty for both of them ? and you could entrust such an awful responsibility to Marther 'igh!

BETTY. Only for a minute. I'd got the cramp in my nussing arm.

JONES. Then you should have put him on t'other arm.

BETTY. That's got the rhumatiz.

MR. W. J. Oh! shameful imposition! why didn't you say you were a cripple when we engaged you ? But go, bring hither Marther-'igh and my little William. Let me see him—let me once more hold him to my heart, and then-----

MARTHA HIGH *enters with perambulator and the two GIRLS, R.,*

JONES starts violently.

Ah! she hasn't got him! O, my presentiment! (*with a sudden bought*) Ah ! perhaps—(*runs up and looks into the perambulator*) No, he is not in here!-----(*stares at the two little GIRLS*) And neither of these girls are my boy!—ah! (*begins bundling the two little girls about*)

MARTHA. What are you about, sir ?

JONES, (*stopping and confronting her*) Silence, Martha 'igh! I'm looking to see if they're a-sitting on him.

MARTHA. Betty Martin left the child with me, and-----

JONES, (*rushing to BETTY and seizing her*) Villain—ruffian!

BETTY, (L.) Oh, please don't choke me !

JONES. Miscreant! (*dashes her away and rushes back to MARTHA*) My boy—my boy! (*violently seizing MARTHA*) Speak, sanguinary monster—where is he ?

MARTHA, (R.) Please to let me go, sir, and—and I'll tell you.

JONES, (C.) There, then, (*releasing her*) Now. (*folding his arms majestically*) I am calm—speak—where is he ?

MARTHA. I don't know.

JONES, (*rebounding violently*) Ah!

MARTHA. AS soon as Betty left me, I gave the baby to-----

JONES. TO whom ?

MARTHA, (*stammering*) To—to the—the gentleman that—Mr. What's-his-name.

JONES, (*dashing both hands to his head*) Horror! (*thrusting both hands into his pockets*) Here—go purchase a brace of pistols, loaded to the muzzle, and bring them here, that I may shoot you both!

BOTH GIRLS. Ah ! (*screaming*)

They run off, MARTHA with perambulator, R., BETTY, L.

JONES. My lost, my darling William! I wouldn't have sold

him for all the wealth the world contains—and Martha 'igh gave him away!—gave him away to Mr. " What's-his-name." My boy, my child, in the power of a What's-his-name ! But I will hunt him from kingdom unto kingdom—I will neither eat nor sleep till I have found my boy—I will snatch him from the power of What's-his-name, or perish in the attempt!

Rushes, frantically off, L.U. E.

TOM CHAFFINCH *enters, carrying the child, R.1.E.*

TOM. Plague take that girl! I can't find her anywhere! and every person I meet giggles at me—and no wonder, for an old bear with her cub would be more-----

Enter ALFRED, R. 1 E.

ALFRED. NOW, Tom—but what are you doing with that child in your arms ?

TOM. Don't you perceive that I am nursing it—tenderly and gracefully.

ALFRED. HOW can you act so absurdly; but I come to tell you that Matilda has consented to listen to me, and to entreat you to undo the mischief your stupid jesting has caused.

TOM. *(not heeding him)* I had no idea that nursing a baby was such precious hard work!

ALFRED. DO listen to me seriously; get rid of that child ?

TOM. Well, to oblige you, I will —there ! *(thrusts child into ALFRED'S arms)*

ALFRED. Tom, Tom!—what do you mean by this ? Take back the child !

TOM. Can't at present, but it's all right; take care of him till called for. You know which side to keep uppermost!

Rum off, laughing, L. 3 E.

ALFRED. That man was surely born for my destruction !—Poor little baby! to whom does it belong —how came Tom with it ? my heart bleeds for the poor child ! *(kissing it)*

MATILDA, *(entering, R. 1 E.)* NOW, Mr. Stedilad—*(starting and screaming)* Ah!

ALFRED, Oh, terrible situation ! Matilda-----

MATIL. Don't dare to speak to me, sir; it was the truth—you *are* a married man. Where is the mother of that poor child?

ALFRED. I assure you I don't know.

MATIL. Have you then deserted her ? Oh, what an escape I have had!

TOM enters, L. 3 E.

You see him, Mr. Chaffinch—you see him.

TOM. *(laughing)* Yes, and a pretty picture he makes.

ALFRED. (C.) Matilda, it was he-----

MATIL., (R.) Who warned me what an infamous wretch you were—for ever shall I be grateful to him.

ALFRED. Speak, Tom, clear my fame—you can and shall.

TOM. (*down L.*) I'll try, but really I am afraid that-----
(*crosses, c.*) Miss Merton, I assure you that child is not his; it was I who just now placed it in his arras.

MATIL. (R.) I see you are too noble entirely to abandon your friend, base as he is become; but pardon me, Mr. Chaffinch, the falsehood of your assertion is too transparent.

TOM. (*to ALFRED*) There, I told you so.

ALFRED, (L., *groaning*) Oh!

TOM. NOW I'll make a strong appeal for you. (*to MATILDA*)
You cannot condemn him—he is such a moral man.

MATIL. He is a wretched hypocrite!

TOM. (*to ALFRED, crosses, L.*) There, you see, it's no use.

ALFRED, (C.) Matilda, you shall behold me no more ; this hour will I quit England—and for ever! (*crosses, R.*)

MATIL. (e.) And the poor child ?

ALFRED. Smother him! (*thrusting child into MATILDA'S arms*)
Farewell! Farewell, for ever! (*rushes off, R.*)

MATIL. Good heavens! Whatever shall I do ? What will mamma say ? (*offering child*) Take him, Mr. Chaffinch?

TOM. (B., *retiring*) No, thank you; I have had too much of him already!

MATIL. What shall I do? (*calling*) Mr. Stedilad! you must not go without your child! Mr. Stedilad! (*hurries off with the child, after ALFRED, R.*)

TOM. Ha, ha, ha! These moral men do get into a mess sometimes. Ha, ha, ha!

MR. WILLIAM JONES *rushes wildly on, pale, his hair standing on end, L. U. E.*

TOM. (R.) For heaven's sake, Mr. Jones, what is the matter with you?

JONES. I am distracted!—mad—ha, ha, ha!-----

TOM. (*retreating*) Good gracious!-----

JONES. Mr. Chaffinch, you are acquainted with a great many people about here! Can you tell me where to find What 's his-name ?

TOM. NO ; I have often heard of him, but I don't know him.

JONES. Then he's lost to me! Oh! madness and despair—lost to me for ever!

TOM. Who? What's-his-name?

JONES. NO! my child, my boy—my little William! Mild and docile infant; as pliant in the roughest hands as a lump of melted spermaceti! And *he is* gone, and----- oh, what a dreadful fate—no poor infant was ever made to suffer so. Betty

Martin gave him to Marther 'igh, and Marther igh gave him to What's-his-name ?

TOM. Ah! indeed ! Listen, then,—it was to me that Martha gave the child. I am What's-his-name !-----

JONES. YOU!—you are What's-his----- (*looking at him, horrified*) and he hasn't got him! where is he ? My child, my boy, my little William—say that he lives, and the blessing of a poor maniac father-----(*hysterical*) ha ! ha! ha! (*staggers, and falls into TOM CHAFFINCH'S arms.*)

TOM. Why, curse the fellow! Get up, will you! (*pushing JONES from him*)

JONES, (*faintly*) Where is he, speak; or I shall expire at your feet!

TOM. Well, I carried your heavy offspring about for a considerable time till, getting tired, I dropped him-----

JONES, (*raving*) Dropped him! Merciful goodness! Where? You did not give him to the mighty deep ?—did not cast him to the ocean wave? —

TOM. NO, no ! I simply dropped him into the arms of-----

JONES. Whom?

TOM. Stedilad!

JONES. What do you mean by steady lad ? Don't insult me in my calamity! I always was a steady lad, and a steady man ; never a screw loose till this dreadful turn unhinged my reason !

TOM. YOU misunderstand me. I mean-----

ALFRED STEDILAD *enters*, R. 2 E.

There; that is the man I gave him to!

JONES. Ah! (*crosses, c.—rushes towards ALFRED, and stops petrified*) And he hasn't got him !

ALFRED. Before I go, Mr. Chaffinch, you must account to me for-----

TOM. Come, then; it won't be a long reckoning. *Exit*, L. 1 E.

JONES, (*seizing ALFRED*) YOU don't stir; where is he? Don't keep me in this horrible suspense! Ease a father's heart, and say at once that you have slaughtered him—butcher that you are!

ALFRED, (*shaking him off*) Are you mad ?

JONES. Yes! Can you wonder ! How shall I face his adoring mother?

ALFRED. Whose mother?

JONES. My boy, my child, my little William !—only pledge, at present, of our fond connubiality ! Monster!—have you killed my boy ? Is his father an orphan ?

ALFRED. Oh! Now I see. (*cries to L.*) Miss Merton has your son !

JONES. Ah! where is she ?

ALFRED. I left her just now sitting by the fountains.

JONES. She's going to drown him—horror!

ALFRED. Ridiculous! *Exit, L. 1 E.*

JONES. Resist, William; struggle yet a little longer!
Be brave, William, be brave—your father comes to rescue you
from your impending doom ! *Totters off, R. 3 E.*

Enter MATILDA, R. 1 E., carrying the child.

MATIL. What perfidy ! what cruelty, to run away and leave
me with this ! And what will mamma say ?

BURRELL. *(entering from hotel)* Where the deuce is that
fellow, James!

MATIL. Ah, Mr. Burrell!

BURR. *(bowing)* Yes, Miss Merton. Gracious! you have
got a baby !

MATIL. Take him. *(placing CHILD in BURRELL'S arms)*

BURR. Bless me ! what am I to do with him ?

MATIL. Take him to your wife till-----

BURR. Ah! yes, to be sure; come along, baby!

Exit into hotel.

MATIL. With all this proof, I can scarcely believe in Alfred's
treachery.

JONES *staggers on, R., almost exhausted—approaches MATILDA,
starts, and panting heavily, gazes on her.*

MATIL. *(looking at him)* Good heavens !

JONES, *(despairingly)* And *she* hasn't got him !

MATIL. What means-----

JONES, *(R., sinking on his knees)* Behold me at your feet !

MATIL. *(L.)* Sir!

JONES. Overpowered by my agony, I can now only sup-
plicate ; I haven't strength left to grasp you by the throat,
and tear you limb from limb.

MATIL. *(terrified)* Ah! *(crosses, R.—about to go, he grasps
her hand)*

JONES. My boy—my child—my little William!

MATIL. *(aside)* He is a lunatic.

JONES. Say you will restore him to my dotting arms?

MATIL. *(aside)* I must not irritate him. *(aloud)* Yes, yes, let
me go, and I will bring him to you immediately.

JONES. Ah, bless you ! *(kissing her hand)*

MRS. W. JONES *enters, L. 3 E., and starts.*

You have made me happy, *(again kissing her hand)* and the
devotion of my life, and an unlimited supply of superior candles
gratis-----

MRS. J. Villain!

(MATILDA screams and runs into hotel— JONES remains on his knees, gazing vacantly at his wife)

MRS. J. (L.) SO, it was for this you ran away and left me on the beach.

JONES, *(rising and tottering to MRS. J.)* My boy—my child—my little William!

MRS. J. *(seizing and shaking him)* Wretch!

JOKES. For the sake of our blessed infant-----

MRS. J. *(shaking him)* Libertine!

JONES. Consider a father's feelings.

She drags him off. L.

BURRELL enters from hotel, carrying the child.

BURR. My wife is in a bad temper, and says if I bring any more children to her, she'll knock 'em about my head.

CAPTAIN, *(entering from hotel)* Shiver my timbers! *(hitching up his trousers—crosses, L.)* Will she never come back? I can't contain myself—don't know what to do with myself!

BURR. Then take a walk—delicious gardens for a promenade, with a magnificent view of-----

CAPT. J. Avast heaving! I want something to occupy my distracted mind—a dawdling walk is of no use to me, I want active employment.

BURR. There, then! *(putting child into his arms.)*

CAPTAIN. What! *(BURRELL goes into hotel)* what does he mean by----- *(looking at the child and starting)* shiver my timbers, if it isn't the----- you young varment! you ought to be ashamed of yourself!

JAMES, *(entering hotel—a tray in his hands)* Master, master, where are you—where's the cold pork?

CAPT. *(throwing child on to tray)* Here!

JAMES, *(staring amazedly)* Eh!

JONES, *(tottering on, L. 3 E., and throwing himself on to a seat at table, R.)* Waiter, I faint—I die!

JAMES, *(bewildered)* Yes, sir.

JONES. Something to sustain my drooping energies.

JAMES. Yes, sir. *(rushes towards JONES, and rolls child from tray on to table before him—JONES with a loud yell starts up and stands paralyzed)*

BETTY, *(running on, L. u. E., and screaming)* Ah! they are killing the baby! *(snatches it from the table)*

JONES. *(recovering himself and rushing towards BETTY)* My boy—my child—my little William!

CAPT. *(intercepting, and seizing JONES by the throat)* Ah! your child?

MRS. J. *enters, L. U. E., and runs into hotel, followed by BETTY with the child.*

You, then, are the rascally father?

JONES. (*struggling*) No such thing; I'm the honoured parent. Vile marine sailor, release your hold, or I'll double you up like a broken six!

MRS. CAPT. J. (*entering, L. U. E.*) Good heavens!—my husband!

CAPT. Avast heaving! how about sweet William?

MRS. CAPT. J. Mrs. William Jones's little boy—what of him? (*seeing MRS. W. JONES, who enters from hotel and advances, R.*) Ah, here is Mrs. William Jones.

CAPT. Eh? is she a---- (*MRS. CAPT. W. J. nods*) What, two Joneses? (*embracing his wife*) Shiver my timbers!

MARTHA *enters with perambulator and children, R.*—TOM and ALFRED, L.—MATILDA *from hotel—the three latter converse apart.*

MRS. CAPT. W. J. See, these are our children.

CAPT. My blessed babes! (*hurries up, casts himself on his knees, throws himself across the perambulator, and embraces the children roughly*) Oh, you sweet little creeturs!

MARTHA. Don't, sir, you're a smotherin' of 'em!

CAPT. I see 'em once again! Oh, shiver my timbers!

JONES. Yes, and you'll shiver the perambulator, if you don't mind.

TOM. Yes, yes, all is well again; only as you had read me so many moral lessons, I thought myself bound in gratitude to give you one in return.

JONES. But why do I loiter here? Let me fly to my boy—my child—my little William! let me hasten to congratulate him on his hair-breadth escapes from the deadly perils that surrounded him. May no other doting parent ever know what it is to feel his bosom burning and boiling over, like a lot of hot tallow on melting day. Oh, there is no torture can equal the real spontaneous agony that I, a wretched father, endured, while searching for my poor, lost child!

	MR. W. JONES.	MRS. W. J.
	CAPTAIN.	ALFRED.
MRS. CAPT. J.		MATILDA.
MARTHA.		TOM.
R.		L.

NOTE.—Betty Martin carries a real child until her fourth entrance, when she exchanges it for a dummy, made and dressed exactly to resemble the living child.

Curtain.

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