THE

WILL AND THE WAY;

OR, THE

MYSTERIES OF CARROW ABBEY.

A Romantic Drama,

IN THREE ACTS.

(Founded on the popular Work of the same name by J. F. Smith, Esq.)

BY

W. R. WALDRON,

AUTHOR OF

Lizzie Leigh, Look on the Bright Side, &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

THEATRICAL PUBLISHER.

LONDON.
First performed at the Theatre Royal, Leeds, (under the management of Mr. W. R. Waldron), on the 19th of April, 1860—THE

WILL AND THE WAY;
OR, THE MYSTERIES OF CARROW ABBEY.

Characters.

SIR WILLIAM MOWBRAY ........................................... (the Rector of Carrow Abbey) ........................................... Mr. Macarte.

COLONEL MOWBRAY ........................................... (his Brother—a Governor) ........................................... Mr. Thompson.

WALTER MOWBRAY ........................................... (his Son—a Man of Honour) ........................................... Mr. Wray.

MEERAN HAFEZ ........................................... (a young Indian Prince attached to Ellen de Vere) ........................................... Mr. C. Setton.

(PARSON ASHTON) ........................................... (supposed to be a Mr. Henry) ........................................... Mr. Stewart.

HENRY ASHTON ........................................... (a young Pupil, supposed Nephew of Parson Ashton) ........................................... Mr. Young.

OLD MARTIN ........................................... (a Groom in the service of Sir William, known as Old Fidelity) ........................................... Mr. Walsby.

JOE BEANS ........................................... (supposed to have a soft head, but a true heart to guide it) ........................................... Mr. H. Dudley.

RED RALPH ........................................... (a Farmer’s Boy) ........................................... Mr. L. McGowen.

PARSON TWINETEXT ........................................... (the Warrener—a Man of Crime) ........................................... Mr. Scott.

WILL SIDELER ........................................... (the Wronged One) ........................................... Mr. Hamilton.

DAME ASHTON ........................................... (a Ward to Sir William) ........................................... Mrs. Macarte.

ELLEN DE VERE ........................................... (a Maid of Honour) ........................................... Miss Scott.

ZARAH ........................................... (the Apothecary, or Indian Nurse) ........................................... Miss Campbell.

SUSAN MAYDAY ........................................... (Mrs. C. Setton).
Programme of the Scenery, &c.

ACT I.—LIBRARY OF CARRROW ABBEY.

Sir William and his son Ward—A Peasant's courage and a Noble's gratitude.

FIRST LOVE!
"To feel as when the heart's warm thought,
In every glance was truly spoken;
When woman's faith could not be bought,
Or for the lust of gold be broken."

THE COMPACT!
Story of a bewitched husband's wrongs. The Promise! "Where there is a will, heaven will surely point out the way." Rural killing and coaxing. The Man of Crime and the Man of Mystery. Ware Hawk, the old House Dog keeps careful watch.

THE LAWN.

Disclosure of the secret of Meenan Maugrove's birth.

T H E C H A L L E N G E ! T H E P O T I O N !
"The arm that never failed, may fail him now."

T H E D U E L !
The House Dog discovers the secret of the Man of Mystery. Departure of the Khan. Arrival of the Warrener.
THE PRICE OF BLOOD! THE PANEL!
Secret depository of the will, the jewels, and the heir-looms of the family. Old Fidelity resolves to watch till morning.

THE MIDNIGHT MURDER!
Terrific struggle between the Assassin and Old Fidelity! The Second Victim!

ABDUCTION OF ELLEN DE VERE! ESCAPE OF THE MURDERER!

ACT II.—THE CHURCH YARD AT CARROW.
The poor Idiot! Joe Beans in time to save time. The Warning!

INTERIOR OF CROMWELL HOUSE.
The Warriner's project thwarted by Red Ralph. "A blackbird in a trap—hullo!"

EXTERIOR OF THE FARM.
Return of Henry Ashton to England—his despair at the loss of Ellen.

OLD FIDELITY'S VISION.
Returning reason. The Murderer and his Victim face to face. "Blood will have blood!" Committal of the Warriner to Norwich Castle for the Murder of Sir William Mowbray. "If I am to die, I will not die alone!"
Accusation of Meeran Hafiz! The Mortlake Parson and Joe Beans. Red Ralph smells a rat.

THE ABBEY.
Preparations for the forced Nuptials. The poor forlorn girl alone in the villain's power.

STARTLING AND UNEXPECTED SUCCOUR!

ACT III.—CARR OW ABBEY.
Return of the wronged lady to her lonely home.

PROMISE OF OLD FIDELITY.
Colonel Moorby claims his Ward. The plot thickens. The Farmer and his Wife. Interview between Henry and the Khan. Mystery on mystery.

BELFRY OF CARR OW
The last interview. THE BUREAU! The Spectre of the Warrner! THE BLACK EBONY BOX!

THE LIBRARY.
Attempted burglary. The house dog shows his teeth. The fatal shot. Laying a ghost. The hour and the man. The Mystery explained.

THE ALONE BLOOMS AT LAST.
The Heir of Carrow restored to the Land of his fathers. Union of the Lovers.

DEATH OF OLD FIDELITY!
"Requiescat in pace."
Costumes.

SIR WILLIAM MOWBRAY.—Modern suit of black.

COLONEL MOWBRAY.—Modern walking dress.

WALTER MOWBRAY.—Ibid.

MEERAN HAFEZ.—Frogged coat, white vest, pantaloons, Hessian boots, and fez.

KHAN—Oriental costume. 2nd dress: Surtout, Hessian boots, and pantaloons.

FARMER ASHTON.—Top boots, breeches, and old-fashioned coat.

HENRY ASHTON.—Modern walking suit.

OLD MARTIN.—Livery coat, striped waistcoat, breeches, top boots, hat with gold band. 2nd dress: Morning gown, breeches, and stockings.

JOE BEANS.—English yeoman’s dress.

RED RALPH.—Velveteen breeches, stockings, hob-nail boots, and red hair.

WILL SIDELER.—Velveteen coat, red waistcoat, long gaiters, and slouched hat.

LADY MOWBRAY.—Black.

DAME ASHTON. Old English dress.

ELLEN.—1st dress: Riding habit. 2nd dress: Modern.

ZARAH.—Oriental white dress and shawl drapery.

SUSAN.—Old English village dress.
THE
WILL AND THE WAY.

ACT 1.

SCENE FIRST.—The Library at Carrow Abbey (4th grooves)—wide fire place and massive chimney piece, R.—over the chimney piece a large oaken panel, covered with the arms of the Mowbrays—a shield, with a hind engrailed, surmounted by a bull's head erased, in one of the quarterings a bloody hand—large arm-chair, table, old-fashioned furniture.

SIR WILLIAM MOWBRAY discovered seated, R., ELLEN DE VERE seated on a small ottoman at his feet.

ELLEN. Uncle, dear uncle, you will not drive me from you? You will let me love you, uncle, will you not?

SIR W. Drive you from me, poor nestless bird! where should thy home be but with me? Where should thy young heart, in its sorrows, turn for sympathy, if not to mine? It is broken, Ellen, broken by the unkindness of the world; but it still retains enough of love to shelter thee.

ELLEN. My dear uncle!

SIR W. When my poor sister—the only being who ever loved me—died in India, and left thee, her only child, to my protection! I felt that my heart, which had lain dormant for years, was once more human.

ELLEN. Ah! my dear uncle, how shall I thank you for your kindness to the poor orphan girl, who has found some one once more to love her.

SIR W. Dear child! but you seem flurried, Ellen!

ELLEN. It is not much, Sir William, a slight accident.

SIR W. An accident!

ELLEN. Riding in the park to-day upon the favourite horse, old Martin, the groom, broke in for me, the high-spirited animal dashed through the gate and galloped across the broad common towards the gravel pits—one plunge more must have been fatal to both, when a youth sprang from behind a furze bush and
stood directly between the steed and the precipice. Thanks to his heroic courage I was saved.

SIR W. Did you learn the name of your preserver?

ELLEN. Yes; it is Henry Ashton.

SIR W. The nephew of a tenant of mine, a young man of whom Dr. Orme speaks highly. I must lose no time in thanking him for the service he has rendered you.

ELLEN. I anticipated your desire, Sir William, and requested him to accompany me to the Abbey. He waits for me to introduce him.

(ELLEN goes to door, L., and re-enters with HENRY ASHTOK)

SIR W. (rises) Young man, I thank you; in preserving the life of this young lady you have conferred a favour upon me which time can never obliterate. Ask from me what service you will that is in my power to grant. My good friend, the worthy Dr. Orme, speaks warmly of you.

HENRY. He is my benefactor—my instructor, friend; I owe him much.

SIR W. I have heard him speak of you frequently, and can readily believe that you merit his commendations.

HENRY. Such an opinion from Sir William Mowbray, I fear, will make me vain.

SIR W. Can I assist you?

HENRY. Pardon me, Sir William, and do not deem me ungrateful that I decline your offer, but I have long since decided on carrying out my career alone.

SIR W. Although you reject me as a patron, you may at least accept me as a friend. (offers hand)

HENRY. (respectfully raises SIR WILLIAM'S hand to his lips) That is a title, Sir William, I shall value above all others fortune could bestow on me.

SIR W. (to ELLEN) My child, you need repose. Suffer me to summon my housekeeper, Mrs. Jarmy. (rings bell) Mr. Ashton will excuse you; to-morrow you will have an opportunity of again thanking him for his care of you. Mr. Ashton, the doors of Carrow Abbey will be ever open to receive you.

(HENRY bows)

Enter MRS. JARMY and ZARAH, L.

SIR W. Mrs. Jarmy, conduct Miss de Vere to her chamber, and show her such respect as becomes your master's niece, and the future mistress of Carrow.

MRS. J. You shall be obeyed, Sir William. Madam, I shall have much pleasure in attending upon you—I dressed your great grandmother, Lady Margaret.

ELLEN. Madam, I thank you, but I am always waited on by
my faithful Hindoo, who is ever on the watch for her young mistress.

ZARAH. And, unlike all European nurses, is content to lie at
the bed's foot of that mistress, a stranger to sleep herself till
she whom she loves has first refreshed herself.

MRS. J. What, does miss sleep with a black woman in her
chamber? It would frighten me out of my wits?

ELLEN. Believe me, madam, I am much indebted to this
good soul for the kind manner in which she has waited upon
me from the hour of my birth.

ZARAH. And will continue to do so to the hour of my death.

(Music—ELLEN kneels to SIR WILLIAM and receives his
blessing—she gives her hand to HENRY, who respectfully
raises it to his lips—ZARAH looks searchingly at HENRY
as she leads off ELLEN, door L.)

SIR W. Mr. Ashton, if I have not been demonstrative in my
thanks, you must attribute my seeming coldness to the life of
seclusion I have lived for so many years; but from this night
I hope to date a lengthened intimacy.

HENRY. Sir William, this is our first meeting, and may
probably be our last. In a few days I shall leave Carrow
possibly for ever.

SIR W. How; have you resolved on leaving England?

HENRY. Not England, but my home.

SIR W. May I enquire the cause?

HENRY. Yes, blame me, spurn me as you will for my pre-
sumptuous passion, I would rather endure it than have the
reproach of having deceived you by further concealment, of
accepting of your noble hospitality, and feel myself a degraded
thing—unworthy alike of your pity and esteem. Since the
hour I saw Miss De Vere, on her first arrival at Carrow,
I felt that I loved her. Circumstances have served to increase
my passion, and given me the introduction I so yearned for.
Sir William, you know my secret!

SIR W. I dare not listen to my feelings—to the promptings
of my heart, by holding out a hope which can never be
realized. I owe a duty to my dead sister's memory—Ellen
can never—

HENRY. Oh! speak not yet! I do not ask your consent, I
implore only your forbearance. The world has so many paths
of honour; I cannot fail with such sweet light to guide me.

SIR W. It would be wiser, while yet the wound is green, to
attempt the cure. Time works wonders with the heart.

HENRY. Not when 'tis broken. But you have never loved.

SIR W. Not loved! Boy, the flame which idiots picture as
a spark from heaven, hath burnt within my heart until the
shrine is ashes; yet still it burns. Prayer cannot quench, nor
reason assuage its pangs—madness hath striven with it, and been defeated by its strong agonies. The lover, sundered from the object of his passion, in absence may find some relief, some verdant spot within his breast which life’s sunbeams rest upon. But, oh heaven! what blessed ray can cheer, or sweet oblivion lull, the deep agony of that torn heart which loves and is betrayed? (sinks in chair, R.)

HENRY. Forgive me! ah, forgive me!

(SIR WILLIAM rises, and leading HENRY to R., draws curtain which conceals a half-length picture of a lady and her infant)

SIR W. (with forced calmness) I do not preach the endurance which I do not practise. You there behold the life-like semblance of all I once possessed—all that the world has robbed me of—wife, child, honour. The woman I loved deserted me—branded me, heart and brain, with the nameless, the undying shame—made me the scoff of worldlings and fools—and then, to complete the wreck her falsehood made, deprived me of my child, the pride of my heart, and dearer than its life-blood—the heir of my name and fortune! doomed me to linger on, a wretched solitary man, and die alone—no filial hand to smooth the parting scene.

HENRY. Sir William, pardon the question—for worlds I would not pain you—but my motive is stronger than curiosity. Have you never discovered any clue to your lost son?

SIR W. Never.

HENRY. His age?

SIR W. Eighteen. I traced the mother and her companion as far as Rome; there the fever of my heart mounted to my brain; for weeks I was unconscious of all around me. When I recovered it was too late—the false wife and friend had fled from an injured husband’s vengeance; and from that hour to this I have never obtained the least clue to their retreat, or the fate of my lost boy.

HENRY. I will find him. Heart and soul I devote myself to the enterprise. I have longed, pined, for an object for my restless energies—at length I have discovered one. Yes, Sir William, you shall yet embrace the son you mourn, if human courage and perseverance can accomplish it!

SIR W. Generous boy! restore to me my son, and if Ellen’s heart remains unchanged, my blessing shall not be wanting to your happiness.

(ZAHRAT appears at door L., listening—she glides cautiously round behind screen, L.C.)

HENRY. For such a recompence I will encounter every peril. I will set forth to-morrow.

SIR W. Not so, you must have time for preparation; I will,
moreover, obtain for you an appointment, which will bestow, influence and rank upon you, and so aid your plans. To- morrow I will arrange all, and now farewell.

HENRY. Sir William, I will wait upon you in the morning, and doubt not the success of my enterprise; for where there is a will, heaven will surely point the way!

(Music—Sir William shakes hands with Henry, who exits L.)

SIR W. (gazing on the picture, R.) My poor lost boy—left to the care of strangers; no father's love to watch the tender plant, to train his mind, and pluck from it the baneful weeds which passion sows in the fairest soil—oh! shall I e'er again behold thee? Grant, merciful heaven, that I may fold thee to this withered heart ere I descend into the silent grave.

(draws curtain over picture and exit door L.—Music—Zarah steals cautiously forward)

ZARAH. The dreamer—the dotard! He would bestow his niece's hand upon this nameless churl, and she, she loves him—I have read it in her eyes. The note of the wounded dove is mute; the song which makes glad the wood is from the bird which has not felt the hunter's cruel aim. What can it end in? Death, perchance to one; misery to both. My child, the wife of a peasant! when the noblest blood of India woos her to be his bride! Never! never! No, Ellen, like the young eaglet, thou must mate thee with thy kind, or pine in single solitude. Now for Meeran, he must know the worst at once.

Exit door L.

SCENE SECOND.—Front Landscape—lively music.

Enter Joe Beans and Susan, L.

JOE. Dang it, Sue, I could jump out o' my skin for joy. So you truly love me—real right down 'arnest love, eh?

SUSAN. Oh! Joe, I'm afraid I've done very wrong to make such a confession; but you teased me so, what could a poor girl do?

JOE. She might do a worse thing, Sue, than tell one true, honest-hearted lad that she loved him. And when are we to be wed?

SUSAN. La! Joe, you're in such a hurry.

JOE. Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day, as my grandmother used to say; so make up thee mind, lass—when is it to be?

SUSAN. Whenever you like, Joe.

JOE. That's hearty. Then we'll say next Sunday three weeks; we'll put up the askings at once, and here's to seal the bargain. (kisses her)
Enter Meeean Hafez, followed by the Khan, R. 1 E.

Meeran. Now, have you seen the Ayah?

Khan. Yes.

Meeran. What says she? Has Ellen forgotten me? Does she give me hope?

Khan. Hope is the staff of life, the light of youth as well as age—both would be dark without it.

Meeran. Let me hear the worst. I have a heart capable of bearing the heaviest blow which fortune can inflict.

Khan. Far be it from me to be the bearer of such intelligence. Zarah, since her residence in England, has become fanciful; the solitude of her present life, added to her passionate desire of returning to India, has filled her mind with shadows which she has taken for realities.

Meeran. Proceed.

Khan. The life of her charge, it appears, has been preserved by the active courage of a youth, the nephew of a farmer on her uncle’s estate. The baronet has invited him to the abbey. Ellen is grateful, and the Ayah has mistaken gratitude for love.

Meeran. Have you heard the name of this young peasant?

Khan. Henry Ashton.

Joe. (aside) Master Harry's name. I'll listen.

Meeran. I must see him.

Khan. What would you do?

Meeran. Crush him as I would a serpent that had stung me! This Henry Ashton and I cannot breathe the same air—his breath would taint it—his glance, like that of the basilisk, would wither my heart! Let him beware of me.

Khan. Meeran, beware! Remember you are now in England, where justice is equally distributed to the poor as well as to the rich—the peasant and the peer alike are dealt with. Should you attempt the life of this young man, neither your mother’s noble rank, nor your great wealth could save you from the vengeance of the laws.

Meeran. I care not; I will remove him from my path, for I feel that the same land must not contain the lover of Ellen and myself!

Exit, L. 1 E.

Khan. Oh, heaven! how inscrutable are thy ways, that I should be brought to revisit this spot—selected to oppose this unoffending youth! How to preserve him from Meeran’s fury? Though lands, though seas lie between us and the scenes of our early guilt, retributive justice still pursues us; or even should
we through life escape it, it awaits us at the grave. Meeran, I will rather cross thy unworthy purposes than aid them! No injury from this hand shall ever reach the youth. *(going, L.)*

*Enter MARTIN, suddenly, L., the KHAN starts, averts his face, and hurries off.* R. 1 E.

MARTIN. I have seen that face before—I know it, I am sure. If I could only hear him speak—where is it I have known that man?

JOE. (L.) Now, Martin, what art muttering about, man?

MARTIN. That is my secret. You saw that man who left the spot so suddenly?

JOE. Of course, I did—he they call the Khan; he came from Ingy with the young nabob, Meeran Hafez. By the way, I believe that chap means no good to Master Harry; but if he attempts to harm him, let him look out—that's all!

MARTIN. The old watch dog will give the alarm should danger threaten. I'll keep an eye upon him. *Exit MARTIN, R.*

JOE. I believe Old Martin knows more of the Ingy chap and his friend than he cares to mention; but let them beware of JoeBeans if they attempt to injure Henry Ashton! *Exit, L.*

**SCENE THIRD.—The Park and Grounds of Carrow Abbey.**

*Enter COLONEL MOWBRAY and MEERAN, R. 2 E.*

MEERAN. Colonel Mowbray, your vices made you my creature, my very slave. Since the hour—fatal for you, when I detected you fleecing me with false dice, your doom was sealed; either exposure and ruin, or implicit obedience to my will. It is time we understood each other.

COLONEL. What is your purpose?

MEERAN. I love Ellen de Vere.

COLONEL. My niece!

MEERAN. Love her passionately, madly. She is the life-praise of my heart, the idol of its shrine! To woo her I have left my native land; to win her I am prepared to brave all difficulties—wrestle with death, should the cold spectre cross the path which leads me to her arms!—you must assist me.

COLONEL. If you forget Sir William Mowbray is her guardian—he alone can dispose of her hand.

MEERAN. A dreamer!

COLONEL. Beware how you awake that dreamer. In his youth, my brother was an unrivalled swordsman, the best shot and most daring rider of the day; gifted with energies which time may have impaired, but not, destroyed—generous, open and confiding in his nature—those he loved might lead him with a silken thread, whilst a giant could not turn him from his way.
MEERAN. Pity that such a life should have been wrecked. How did his enemies contrive to reach him?

COLONEL. Through his affections—there was no other way. I presume that you are acquainted with my niece?

MEERAN. I was the companion of her childhood.

COLONEL. And she loves you?

MEERAN. Once she did—or, at least, the feeling was near akin to love; but absence, like the chilling breath of winter, came and nipped my budding hopes ere they bloomed. I have a rival.

COLONEL. A rival! Where, in the name of Fortune and her hundred caprices has Ellen found a lover? There are few visitors admitted at Carrow Abbey, I suspect.

MEERAN. A young man, a rustic, a base-born hind, who saved her life; one Henry Ashton, the nephew of a tenant on Sir William Mowbray's lands.

COLONEL. (starts) What! my niece—the heiress of General De Vere—degrade the blood of her mother by listening to the suit of the nephew of her uncle's tenant? Impossible! but, if so, I am with you heart and head—you may command me.

MEERAN. The day which makes me the husband of Ellen shall not only restore to you the terrible proof of your dishonour, but see you rich. Your niece's fortune, or, at least, a sum equivalent to it, shall be yours.

COLONEL. Agreed—consider her as already yours. Yonder is Ellen and Sir William; I will introduce you to the Baronet at once.

Exeunt, R. U. E.

Enter HENRY ASHTON, with letters, L. I. E.

HENRY. This Meeran Hafez is the son of Richard Musgrove who, with his widowed mother, once resided at my uncle's farm, dependant on his bounty, who went to India and married a wealthy bride. These letters, written by Richard Musgrove in India to my uncle, Mathew Ashton, prove the fact beyond dispute. I will make no use of this evidence unless in self-defence. This Meeran Hafez has branded me as a low-born peasant; and, as honest Joe informs me, has threatened me with violence. I am not ungenerous enough to take advantage, even of an enemy, but if he seeks to degrade me in the eyes of her I love, I can at least prove that I am in birth more than the equal of Meeran Musgrove.

Re-enter COLONEL MOWBRAY, SIR WILLIAM, ELLEN, and MEERAN HAFEZ, R. U. E.

COLONEL. (r. c. to SIR WILLIAM, c.) I could not resist the desire of embracing my niece; my young Indian friend here was Ellen's playmate in her childhood.
MEERAN. (R., to ELLEN) Am I quite forgotten?
ELLEN. (L. C.) Forgotten; how can you be so unjust? We have passed too many happy hours with my dear parents in India. I can never forget those whom they loved, or who have been kind to me.

SIR W. Gentlemen, allow me to present Mr. Henry Ashton, who so nobly risked his own life to preserve that of Miss De Vere. (HENRY and the COLONEL bow coldly)

MEERAN. (pointedly) The friends of Miss Vere cannot too warmly express their sense of obligation. I should be delighted to prove to this young person how deeply I appreciate his services. (aside to COLONEL) I hate this upstart peasant.

COLONEL. (aside to MEERAN) And I too. My brother evidently favours him—Ellen treats him as her equal.

SIR W. Ellen, my love, we had better return to the house, the walks are damp.

ELLEN. Willingly, uncle. Henry, will not you accompany us?

(HENRY is crossing to offer his arm to Miss De Vere, when MEERAN steps before him—MARTIN and JOE BEANS appear at back, L. U. E.)

MEERAN. Back! back, sir! Miss De Vere does not require the assistance of a groom!

HENRY. Am I to understand that Mr. Meeran Musgrove applies the term 'groom' to me?

MEERAN. To whom else should I apply it?

HENRY. You hear him, gentlemen; you hear the son of Richard Musgrove, whose father was a menial about the lands of Carrow, and was supported by the charity of my uncle, honest Farmer Ashton; whose bounty enabled him to proceed to India in search of fortune, which, it seems, he found by marriage with a wealthy native bride.

MEERAN. Liar, 'tis false as hell!

MARTIN. (down L.) No, it isn't, it's true as heaven. I knew your father well—and grandfather, too, for the matter of that. We were both brought up in the stables together, he lost his place through dishonesty, and died. Then it was that Matthew Ashton sheltered his son and widow.

HENRY. His own letters prove it. (shews letters) Here is one in which he speaks of his obligations to my uncle, and here another, in which he announces his marriage with the Begum of Grunloire, and his intention of making a remittance to England, to repay the debt contracted by himself and widowed mother.

MARTIN. Which he forgot to pay.

SIR W. (to MEERAN) Farewell, sir, and if I decline for the future the honour of your visits to Carrow Abbey, it arises from no prejudice connected with your birth, or your grand-
father's delinquencies, but that you have thought proper wantonly to insult one who is justly dear to me, and violated those laws of courtesy and delicacy which are the safeguard of society. You have been severely but justly punished.

(MEERAN. Farewell, dreamer, visionary! Ellen shall be mine, though heaven and earth oppose it! You have unchained a demon in my heart—a cunning spirit in my brain. My rival has not triumphed yet.

HENRY. Boaster, vain, empty boaster! Plot as you will, I shall not fear you. I am of that race, before which, wherever they tread the soil, the cunning Asiatic, and the ferocious African alike recede. We meet at last upon equal ground. The nephew of Matthew Ashton is at least the peer of the grandson of the dishonest Musgrove.

MEERAN. Insolent villain! (MEERAN makes a step towards HENRY—JOE BEANS steps forward before HENRY in boxing attitude—COLONEL MOWBRAY restrains MEERAN—closed in on the picture)

SCENE FOURTH.—Chamber in Bungalow Hall (1st grooves).

Enter MEERAN and the KHAN, r.

MEERAN. You have heard it all?
KHAN. All.
MEERAN. And knew it?
KHAN. Everything. Your father had no secrets from me; if I kept it from you, it was to spare your pride a pang which I thought it useless to inflict.

MEERAN. Would it had come from any hand save his? I could have borne it then—and in her presence too!
KHAN. What do you intend to do?
MEERAN. Kill him!—and yet what will it avail? His mocking eyes will follow me in the glances of others—his taunting words in the whispers of the world. I shall feel the blow after the hand that struck it is in the grave. Send Colonel Mowbray to me.
KHAN. Is he to be your second?
MEERAN. Yes.
KHAN. You will meet him in a duel, then?
MEERAN. Such is my intention.
KHAN. What if he should refuse?
MEERAN. Spit on him in her presence—trample him like a cur beneath my feet. But no, he will meet me—I shall not have the satisfaction of despising him, even in the grave.
KHAN. Can nothing but his life appease you?
MEERAN. Nothing. I will hit him in the heart, man—in the heart, where he has wounded me. I will look into his
expiring eyes, and read the agony which youth feels at quitting the world, when all life's hopes are brightest.

KHAN. But Ellen?

MEERAN. She will forget him? Ashton in the grave, old memories and the feelings of other days will return. She is my existence—the life-pulse of my heart—it cannot live without her. Lose no time—send the Colonel to me—I will see to my pistols—let me have coffee in my room.

KHAN. I will prepare it for you myself.

MEERAN. His lips will breathe no more words of love and hope into the ears of Ellen, or heap scorn upon me. This arm never failed me yet.

Exit, L.

KHAN. I would preserve the lives of both. His aim is deadly, and without some timely interference the meeting would prove fatal to Henry. If I can only render his aim unsteady, the arm that never failed him yet, may fail him now.

Exit, h.

SCENE FIFTH.—The Common (3rd grooves).

Enter JOE BEAN, L. U. E., carrying a gun.

JOE. This be the spot; I overheard it all; that murderous Ingy chap and the Colonel made the appointment. Dash my buttons, if they raise a hand against young Master Harry, I'll blow 'em all to the devil.

Enter MARTIN, L. 2 E.

MARTIN. Hallo, Joe! what are you straining your neck like a gander for? Looking out for game?—poaching again, eh?

JOE. It be very queer game, Martin. But don'tee be angry, Martin, don'tee be angry. My heart be troubled, so heavy loike!

MARTIN. Thy stomach, man, thy stomach. The dame's dumplings have disagreed with thee.

JOE. No, they ain't. I tell thee, it be the heart. There be some ill about to happen to Master Harry! I am sure there be. He left us just now, so sad and sorrowful, as if he wor never going to see us again.

MARTIN. Very possibly not. He is going to fight a duel.

JOE. What may that be?

MARTIN. Why a fight with pistols, to be sure—he and this Indian, Meeran.

JOE. And they shoot at each other?

MARTIN. Yes.

JOE. And kill each other?

MARTIN. Exactly.

JOE. And that they call fighting, eh? Why, I ha' fought
many a fair and honest stand-up fight—English fashion, and generally managed to win at third round: that be manly, and shows a chap’s pluck; but to shoot at one, and then in cold blood murder and slaughter each other like savages! Well, well!—give me muscle and sinew afore them murdering weapons! But, mark my words, if anything happens wrong to Master Harry, some of ’em shall suffer for it!

MARTIN. Why, what wouldst thee do?

JOE. Shoot ’im like a carrion crow, were he the finest gentleman in the land, if he harmed Master Harry.

MARTIN. Thee mustn’t do that, Joe! thee mustn’t do that.

JOE. But I wooll, or my name’s not Joe Beans!

MARTIN. Joe, that’s a nice gun.

JOE. Bean’t it?

MARTIN. Heavy I should think in the stock.

JOE. Not a bit—feel it. (hands gun to MARTIN)

MARTIN (raises gun) No more it is.

JOE. Mind what thee be at—it be loaded wi’ ball.

MARTIN. Is it?

JOE. And I ain’t got another charge.

MARTIN. So much the better, (fires gun in the air and hands it back to JOE)

JOE. What hast thee done?

MARTIN. My duty! Thee heart, Joe, is better than thee head. Now that thee canst do no mischief, I will help thee to look for Harry Ashton. We are strange creatures—I that care for no living things would risk my old life rather than any harm should happen to him.

JOE. Wouldst thou? Hang me, but thee bee’st an honest fellow after all, but cunning as an old fox. I forgive thee the trick of the gun—may be it wor for the best, though I can still knock ’em down with the butt end or’t.

MARTIN. Step aside; they are here. (they retire, L. U. E.)

Enter MEERAN, the KHAN, and COLONEL MOWBRAY, L. 2 E.

COLONEL. We are the first upon the ground. Perhaps the young fellow may not make his appearance; I have known many parties extremely courageous with their tongue, fail at the moment of action. But good heavens, Meeran, what is the matter? You appear ill.

MEERAN. It is nothing—an attack of fever, that’s all. My hand will grow steadier soon, the sight of my antagonist will restore my strength.

KHAN. (aside) Perhaps not.

COLONEL. We will give him ten minutes, (looks at watch) the usual grace, and then withdraw from the ground; we shall be in time for dinner. By Jove! they are here!
Enter Henry Ashton and Walter Mowbray, L. 1 E.

Henry. I trust we have not kept you waiting?

Colonel. There is nothing to complain of—scarcely two minutes behind the time. Your friend and I will measure the ground. (Colonel and Walter measure the ground—Colonel takes pistols from Kahn, offers the choice to Henry and presents the other to Meeran—aside to Meeran) Heavens! how your hand trembles. You are in a burning fever—you are not fit to meet him. Let this duel be set aside.

Meeran. No, I will meet him. I am ready.

Khan. (r., aside) The potion I administered works upon him.

Meeran. Ready!

Walter. Heaven bless you, Harry. Should anything occur there will be more than one heart to mourn you—there will be a friend to avenge you.

Henry. I cannot thank you as I ought—this is no time for professions. If I fall my last thoughts will be of you and Ellen—friendship and love, the light of my existence, will mourn me at its close.

Colonel. Take your places, gentlemen; when I drop my handkerchief, fire! (Henry, L. U. E., and Meeran, R. 1 E., take their ground—the Colonel drops handkerchief, both fire at the same moment—Meeran falls) Hit by heavens! (raises Meeran's head on his knee)

Henry. Is he dangerously hurt? Can I assist? (approaching Meeran)

Khan. (kneeling by Meeran) Back! back! You have shed the noblest blood of India, and I feel that I have aided you.

Martin. (rushes forward) Ha! ha! I know thee now. (closed in on the picture)

Scene Sixth.—A Landscape—1st grooves.

Enter Martin, L.

Martin. Ha! ha! I know him at last! I thought I should get the snaffle on him. He spoke English, did this pretended Khan. I thought my old eyes were not so dim as not to recognise faces long absent; I haven't forgotten five-and-twenty years ago, when I wrestled with and threw him down by the quarry, and I haven't forgotten that the Captain is as great a villain as himself. Martin, on you depends the safety of the family. I have grown grey in the service of Sir William Mowbray, and the old house dog will rest content in his narrow grave if the passer-by points to the green mound and says, "There lies Old Fidelity, faithful in the service of his master to the last!"
Enter HENRY and JOE, L.

JOB. Lor', Master Harry, it do warm my heart to see thee safe and whole out of the clutches of those fine gentlefolks, who think no more o' shooting people than I do of popping at a rabbit. I am glad that thee hit 'un.

HENRY. Martin! Martin!—you have made a discovery?

MARTIN. Humph!

HENRY. The Khan evidently knew you.

MARTIN. How know you that?

HENRY. I read it in his confusion. Besides, I know you to be one of those cautious fellows who think twice before they speak once.

MARTIN. As I intend to do now. I am too old a fox to be trapped, Master Harry, if the snare be ever so much covered with honey; I've lost my sweet tooth—it won't do.

HENRY. But one word, Martin.

MARTIN. No, no; when the time comes I will speak—not till then.

HENRY. What time do you allude to? I am convinced that you have discovered who that mysterious Khan really is?

MARTIN. And suppose I have, Master Harry?

HENRY. You surely cannot intend to keep the knowledge to yourself?

MARTIN. I have kept many things to myself, which few ever suspected that I knew of. It's a good plan, a wise plan, and prevents mischief. Strange events are coming to pass in the ancient house of the Mowbrays.

HENRY. Strange events!—I do not understand you.

MARTIN. Of course you do not, or I should have held my tongue. I've heard moanings in the old abbey, night after night; the horses are restless in the stables, just as they were before Sir William's uncle died—only to think, that I should have been chosen to assist in these events.

HENRY. You, Martin?

MARTIN. What is the name of that plant which grows in the court-yard of the abbey?

HENRY. The American Aloe, Martin.

MARTIN. I am like that aloe—I shall put forth one flower from my gratitude before this old stem rots and is forgotten.

HENRY. And what flower may that be?

MARTIN. A service to the noble race whose bread I have so long eaten. I should not die happy if I had not done something to requite them. But question me no more, for till the hour arrives the grave is not more mute than Martin. Exit, R.

JOE. (crossing to R.) The cantankerous old toad! I'll make him speak plain.
HENRY (stops him) It would be useless to attempt it. If he has made up his mind to silence it would be vain to urge him to speak; besides, I have a service for you.

JOE. Have you though? I'd lay down my life to serve you, Master Harry.

HENRY. Joe, return instantly to the farm and inform my uncle and aunt of my safety; they must also prepare for my departure—I must leave Carrow to-morrow.

JOE. Leave Carrow? Lor'!—where be thee going, Master Harry?

HENRY. Abroad. I have undertaken a sacred duty—to discover, if possible, the lost son of Sir William Mowbray, and I must set forth at once.

JOE. If thee goes to furrin parts I mun go too.

HENRY. YOU!

JOE. Sure—warn't we boys together? didn't we always go shooting wild fowl together, and snaring rabbits in the old warren? What should I do here and you away?

HENRY. You forget Susan, Joe.

JOE. NO, I don't. Susan mun wait till we both come back together.

HENRY. NO, no, my good fellow; you can better serve me by remaining here and watching over the welfare of those I love. Remember, Ellen will need a protector.

JOE. That's true. I suppose I mun remain then.

HENRY. That's right, Joe. You don't know how much it is in your power to serve me.

JOE. Be it though?

HENRY. Which I shall never be able to repay.

JOE. Don't 'ee talk of paying I, Master Harry; didn't 'ee teach I to read and write? and when anything went wrong and farmer were angry wi' I, hadn't 'ee always a kind word to make my peace? Pay!—there be something here thee canst never pay I for! (places hand on his breast.—HARRY grasps JOE'S hand, and they exeunt, L.)

SCENE SEVENTH.—Divan, fitted up in the Eastern style. MEERAN discovered reclining on a musnud, smoking a Persian hookah. A HINDOO BOY seated at his feet.—The KHAN standing in the opening of the curtains at back.

KHAN. You will no longer grant me your confidence?

MEERAN. NO; leave me.

KHAN. Meeran Hafez, I was your father's friend, he had no secrets from me. For his sake I have watched over, guarded, protected you. I have a hundred times exposed my life for you as if it were a worthless trifle, and now, because I will not assist your unworthy inclinations towards this youth, I am
deprived of your confidence—despised! I leave you, Meeran, but bar not your way to heaven and happiness by deeds of blood. (retires, c.)

MEERAN. (to BOY) Send Colonel Mowbray to me.

Exit BOY, R. 2 E.

Action alone can cool the fever of my brain. Shall I tamely see the flower I covet snatched by another's hand? Never—never!

Enter COLONEL MOWBRAY, R. 2 E.

COLONEL. I bring you tidings. Henry Ashton departs for Italy to-day. Zarah has sent word that Sir William Ashton has made his will. My brother may have left his niece, in the event of his death, to the guardianship of the Chancellor, or given his formal consent to her marriage with Henry Ashton. In either case you must abandon the hope of calling her yours.

MEERAN. Abandon—abandon it! Never! I am prepared to brave all risks—to scoff at dangers! What is the first step to be achieved?

COLONEL. Obtain possession of the will. That once secured, in the event of my brother's death, I become the guardian of Ellen, with absolute right to dispose of her hand and person.

MEERAN. Enough; I understand you. I expect here shortly the ready means to work our purpose. Hark, a footstep! it is he! (claps his hands thrice as WILL Sidelere enters, R. 2 E.—to COLONEL) Leave us; I must speak with this man alone; there must be no witness to the words which pass between us.

COLONEL. No apologies, my dear young friend. He is a man upon whose fidelity you may rely. I know him to be as trust-worthy as he is resolute.

Exit, R. 2 E.

The KHAN enters, C.

MEERAN. (to KHAN) I did not send for you.

KHAN. I know you did not, therefore I came uninvited, because I would not quit you without that one word—farewell.

MEERAN. Wherefore do you quit me?

KHAN. Because you are no longer worthy of my friendship. You have formed ties with this wretch, (points to Sidelere) with whom it is pollution to breathe the same air. I doubt not but you contemplate with him foul and cowardly midnight murder.

MEERAN. Would you betray me?

KHAN. I may destroy, but betray never! Yet reflect, ere it be too late! I leave you now, but we shall meet again; could it be to meet no more it might be better for you, but we shall meet again—it will be a fearful hour for us both! Beware, Meeran Hafez, and farewell.

Exit, c.

MEERAN. (to Sidelere) You can be faithful?
WILL. To those who trust me.
MEERAN. And love gold?
WILL. Show me the poor man who does not;—without it liberty becomes bondage; it is the rod which enables the few to govern the many. Earth groans beneath its fetters. It is a task-master, and mankind its slaves.
MEERAN. Right! You have no great lore, I believe, for this Sir William Mowbray?
WILL. I hate him! The mad fool has been my persecutor through life. First, he dismissed me from my place of keeper—now as warrener; but I shall not die till I have been revenged on him. The dream, the hope of it has haunted me too many years for that. The oppressor and the oppressed become equal when the one has no further tyranny to inflict, and the other no injustice to endure.
MEERAN. How so?
WILL. There is no longer any fear between them.
MEERAN. The death of your former master, then, would not grieve you?
WILL. About as much as that of a serpent who had stung me.
MEERAN. Name your price.
WILL. Two hundred pounds.
MEERAN. It shall be yours.
WILL. There is one thing more that I require.
MEERAN. Name it.
WILL. My old place as keeper on the lands of Carrow. Colonel Mowbray, I'm sure, will not refuse a request from you.
MEERAN. Be it so. The place shall be yours.
WILL. And the gold?
MEERAN. Shall be counted down to the last piece when you have earned it. Have you still the means of obtaining admission to the Abbey?
WILL. Leave it to me; I have so long contemplated the thing you wish, that I have calculated every chance.
MEERAN. And why did you not accomplish it?
WILL. I lacked two motives—the last outrage and the reward. You have supplied the one—Sir William Mowbray the other. There will shortly be news to stir the country far and near.
MEERAN. I may rely on you?
WILL. I'll do it! were the grave at my feet, and the hangman at my side.
KAHN. (outside, c.) Murderer!
(WILL SIDEKER starts—closed in on picture)
SCENE EIGHT.—Plantation—2nd grooves.

Enter the KHAN, L. H.

KHAN. I am glad to have quitted Meeran, and for ever—since he has stooped to plunge his soul in crime. Could I by any means apprise Sir William of his danger, without betraying Meeran, I would do so. (looks l.) Here comes the villain!

Enter WILL SIDELER, L. 1 E.

(to SIDELER) Stop! my patron has paid you well for your service.

WILL. That be my secret—perhaps I may find some clue to yours. I've heard how, when your young master was wounded, you suddenly found an English tongue in your head—before, you could only speak your own outlandish lingo. I hold a great many secrets that the world little dreams of.

KHAN. Indeed! In that case you will act wisely to keep them to yourself.

WILL. Why so?

KHAN. Because if you crossed my path I would set my heel upon you with as little remorse as I would a viper in my way.

WILL. And how wouldst thee do it? It strikes me that I have an arm as strong as yours, an eye as quick, a hand as firm. Wilt try it?

KHAN. I should neither move arm nor hand to crush thee, but simply go to the nearest magistrate and state that five-and-twenty years ago, Will Sideler was seen walking on the river's bank one moonlight night with a fond foolish girl, who had trusted him and been deceived.

WILL. (starts) Devil!

KHAN. And that he returned alone. I should direct them to dig in the ruins of the old abbey—

WILL. (falls on his knees) I know that I have fallen into the hands of the fiend. Although my ears be clove with the sound, I dare thee to pronounce the name of—

KHAN. Mary Franklin. Villain, your career will end, as it began, in blood.

WILL. (springs up) Will it? Thee shalt not live to see it. (strikes the KHAN on the head with his stick—as his arm is raised the second time to strike, the KHAN seizes the stick and wrests it from WILL SIDELER, who then draws a knife, and forcing the KHAN over his knee, raises the knife to stab him) Fool! thee knowest too much and too little of Will Sideler—his secret will soon be safe—dead men never prate.
Enter HENRY ASHTON and JOE BEANS, L.—HENRY strikes SIDELER down, and assists the KHAN to rise—SIDELER raises his knife to strike HENRY, when JOE fells him with his stick.

JOE. Dang thee for a black sheep, Will Sideler, I shall live to see thee hanged yet.

Exeunt HENRY ASHTON supporting the KHAN, and JOE BEANS, L.

WILL. (rises slowly) If I be hanged it will be for paying thee off, Joe Beans, for that blow.

Exit SIDELER, R.

SCENE NINTH.—The Library, as before.

SIR WILLIAM MOWBRAY and OLD MARTIN are seen coming from secret passage at the back of the wide fireplace, which closes after them.—Music.

SIR W. And after the years that I have lived here, not to be aware of this secret contrivance!

MARTIN. I have heard your honour’s grandfather say that in Cromwell’s time, not only the family plate, but the title deeds of the estate, were concealed there. He little thought when he confided the means of obtaining access to them to me, that his descendant would ever require the use of it.

SIR W. Have you ever revealed the secret to any one?

MARTIN. Never, Sir William, never!

SIR W. Martin, I have selected you as the oldest servant of my house, and Dr. Orme, a true and valued friend, to whom I intend to confide the secret, to be the guardians of my last will, to be produced only in the event of accident or crime causing the disappearance of the one in the hands of my solicitors.

MARTIN. I understand you, Sir William.

SIR W. The deeds which are in the casket, as well as my testament, are to remain there, secure from every search, unless it should please heaven to restore my son.

MARTIN. And heaven will restore him, my honoured master. The noblest tree of the line of Mowbray will not fall without leaving a sapling to supply its place! Old as I am, I shall live to see it—perhaps, to help it. I can’t see for what other reason heaven has permitted me to eat your bread, and live so long. I must have been intended for some use or other—some service to the family who have been such generous masters to me.

SIR W. That moment has arrived, even if the debt had not long since been cancelled by your fidelity and services. There remains this casket—can you find a separate place of concealment for this?

MARTIN. A dozen, if you require them, Sir William. Press upwards the bloody hand in the quartering of that shield. (points to arms over chimney-piece)
(Sir William presses the spring, which discloses a secret recess, in which he places the casket, reclosing the panel)

Sir W. That casket must never be disclosed but to my son. Martin, you have rendered a service to your master's house which time alone can unravel the importance of.

(scream outside, L.—Ellen rushes on, L. U. E., followed by Zarah with lamp—throws herself on her uncle's breast)

Ellen. You are safe! thank heaven, dear uncle, you are safe!

Sir W. Safe? What has alarmed you, my love?

Ellen. As I crossed the picture gallery, I distinctly saw a dark figure crouching in one corner; I encountered two fierce and fiend-like eyes glaring upon me! I saw him crouching like a tiger waiting for his spring! Uncle, dear uncle, summon the household, let the house be searched; I am certain there is some enemy concealed within the Abbey.

Sir W. Tis strange! I have but one enemy in the world, and he is far from England. Imagination must have played you false.

Zarah. It is even so. A vague terror, nothing more—or one of the household, perhaps.

Ellen. It was not one of the household.

Martin. And she knows it. If evil befalls, she will have a hand in it.

Zarah. And what evil should befall the child which drew its nurture from my breast? and from me, her nurse—her mother? The love of the ayah is not like the service of the cold, pale-blooded children of Europe—a thing to be bought and sold, or changed—it begins with the first cry of the infant committed to her care, and expires only with the last sigh upon its grave.

Sir W. You are wrong, Martin; why should Zarah wish evil to my house?

Martin. Perhaps Miss Ellen will pardon an old man's curiosity if I ask her a few questions? Was the crouching figure you noted near the old Japan cabinet?

Ellen. It was.

Martin. And did you hear any noise?

Ellen. Yes; my attention was first drawn to the spot by something like the clicking of a pistol, or the sudden release of a spring.

Martin. I guessed it—I knew it!

Sir W. You believe, then, that some one was concealed in the gallery?

Martin. I am certain of it, Sir William.

Sir W. But how could he obtain admission?

Martin. Come with me and I will shew you.

Sir W. Be it so. I do not wish needlessly to alarm the household.
Exeunt Sir William, Martin, and Ellen, L. door—Zarah lingers behind—a secret panel, L., opens, and Will Sidelers appears)

WILL. Hist! Zarah!

Zarah. You here! know you not that you are discovered?

WILL. No matter.

Zarah. That an alarm is given?

WILL. I know where to hide myself. Had I been certain the girl had seen me, I would have strangled her!

Zarah. Poo! it was my foster-child, who is dearer to him you serve than all his gold! Away! as you value your life!

(Will Sidelers re-enters the secret recess—Sir William, Martin and Ellen return, door L.)

Sir W. The intruder, if one there was, has returned by the way he came; yet it is strange: I thought, Martin, that the secrets of the place were known only to you?

Martin. (aside to Sir William) I thought so, too, Sir William, but he who revealed them to me may have revealed them to one other.

Sir W. And that other—

Martin. Will Sidelers, the warrener.

Ellen. Dear uncle, will you not arouse the household?

Sir W. Unnecessary, my child, there is no immediate danger.

Martin. Fear not, Miss Ellen, Sir William is quite safe, now that I know the danger; they must be clever to baffle me.

Sir W. Good night, my child, it grows late—believe me, your fears will be dissipated in the morning.

Ellen. Heaven grant it! (music—takes an affectionate leave of Sir William, and retires with Zarah, door L.)

Martin. I will watch at the door like a sentinel all night. (kisses Sir William’s hand and exits, door L.)

Sir W. (alone) Sad anticipations of evil haunt me. I cannot shake them off: I have striven against them in vain; they are sympathies and warnings we cannot account for. For several days the presentiment has oppressed me. I may not live to witness the happiness of those I love, but if the dead are permitted to revisit earth, my spirit shall watch over it and share it.

(Music—Sir William sits on R. of table and reads—the secret panel, L., is cautiously opened, and Will Sidelers creeps out stealthily—he lays a heavy bludgeon on chair. L., and creeps round to the back of Sir William’s chair—Sir William rises, and taking book from book-case, reseats himself—Will Sidelers opens a large knife and stabs Sir William, who expires without a groan—music changes—the panel, L., is burst open and Old Martin rushes in—he encounters Will Sidelers, a
desperate struggle ensues, which is terminated by WILL SIDELEER striking OLD MARTIN on the head with the bludgeon—OLD MARTIN falls—WILL SIDELEER escapes at panel, which he closes after him—scream outside—ELLEN rushes on, door L, followed by ZARAH, MRS. JARMY and the domestics, with lights)

ELLEN. My uncle is murdered! (falls senseless—tableau)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST.—Carrow Churchyard—gate and stile, L.—tombs, R. and L.

OLD MARTIN discovered seated on grave, L. c.—his appearance that of an idiot—a wreath of flowers round his head, and wild flowers in his hand—JOE BEANS and FARMER ASHTON discovered, R.—Music.

FARMER. It be all useless; the body only lives—the brain and heart be dead.

JOE. Poor old Martin. Since the night of Sir William's death, his reason be quite gone; the wound he received upon his head turned his brain, and he will sit for hours here in the churchyard, listening to the music of the bells, or gathering wild flowers to deck his poor old master's grave. Sometimes he seems to know us, but it is only for a moment, and he relapses into apathy.

FARMER. Hush! I think he observes us now.

MARTIN. Joe—honest Joe—see, I am gathering flowers for his grave—his—my good kind master who was murdered by—by—ah! my poor head be weak. The cunning fox seeks his lair—hark forward! tantivy!—see, old master runs him down! Hark! at the thunder—what a dreadful night we shall have—just such a night as when he died. Yes, yes, these shall deck his grave—the grave of the best and kindest of masters.

JOE. Poor fellow, his whole thoughts be occupied with the events of that terrible night.

MARTIN. Hark! do you not hear the bells?—they ring in commemoration of his bounty—tinkle, tinkle, tinkle—I love to hear the bells; they make my old heart grow glad with their merry peal—no, no, there is no joy for me until his murderer be in the hangman's grasp. My brain burns—I see him always before me—the secret panel—the will! the will! (falls on the grave)

JOE. Mark my words—the murderer will yet be found. If I could lay my hands on him, I wouldn't wait for the law or judge
FARMER. Why, what wouldst thee do, Joe?

JOE. Crack his loins across my knee with as little remorse as thee wouldst break the neck of a rabbit, though perhaps it might not be the wisest plan; it wor' too good for such a villain. Noa, he deserves to hang—to see the thousands and thousands of faces turned in scorn towards him as he mounts the scaffold—to hear the death-bell numbering the few remaining minutes of his existence—feel the grasp of the hangman upon his throat—the pressure of the cord—and, as the cap is pulled down over his despairing eyes, and the world, with its light and sunshine, its green fields and flowers, shut from his gaze for ever—see only the pale features of his victim, ready to accuse him at the judgment-seat of heaven. That would be the murderer's fitting punishment.

FARMER. Well, well, let's hope such will be his doom at last.

JOE. Look, who be that crossing the meadow towards the churchyard? What brings Will Sideler here?

FARMER. No good. To my certain knowledge he has not entered a church for many a year—prayer is denied to his heart and lips. It must be a sad thing when both are closed.

JOE. Quick! stoop! Do not let him see you! I will creep behind the stone. (they conceal themselves, R.)

Enter Will Sideler over stile, L. U. E.—Martin slowly rises, and perceiving Will Sideler, starts to his feet, extends his right hand, pointing at him, utters low incoherent sounds, and with a wild cry, falls upon the ground.

WILL. What be the fool gibbering at? What dost thee mean?—I owe thee a long account, and I have a good mind to pay thee! Pshaw!—they say he's mad, but very harmless—I wish he was dead—I have always been afraid of that man—I have heard that he wears a silver plate under his cap, to cover that portion of the skull which is fractured, and that the slightest blow, or even pressure of the bone would cause his instant death!—I'll do it! I'll do it!

(Will Sideler kneels over Old Martin, when Joe seizes him and hurls him round to R.)

JOE. What would 'ee do—commit a murder?

WILL. Murder?

JOE. Aye, murder! Thee don't look as if it would have been the first! What does 'ee want with the poor old man?

WILL. Nothing. (rising slowly) I only thought I'd just see where he wor hurt loike.

JOE. Humph!—may be.

WILL. May be!—it is! What else should I want wi 'im?
JOE. Thee know'st, and I guess there be One that knows better than either of us.

WILL. And who be that? (JOE points above) This be all folly—nonsense! Why should I harm the old fool?

JOE. Ask thee conscience.

WILL. Haven't got one.

FARMER. (down, L.) That be true at any rate; I can answer for that, Master Will, and so can all who know thee.

WILL. But I have a character, which is not to be taken away—so look to it, Joe.

JOE. Taken away!—the man that takes thy character away will be the best friend thee hast ever had.

WILL. Why so?

JOE. It may give thee a chance of getting a new one, or leaving thee without any, and no character is better than a bad one; but I don't want to bandy words with thee. Look 'ee, Will Sideler, there be evil thoughts in thee head, and malice in thee heart against poor old Martin! Why, no one can tell, but it will be all found out one day! If harm befalls the old man, look to it! and if ever I catch thee within a dozen yards of the cottage where he resides, or prowling about the churchyard again, as sure as my name is Joe Beans, I'll not leave a whole bone in thee rascally skin!

WILL. And I warn thee not to carry a gun upon the lands of Carrow, or as sure as my name is Will Sideler, I'll shoot thee as I would a poacher's cur. Thee knowest I am the man to keep my word. This day's work has to be paid for yet.

Exit, R. 1 E.

JOE. It be my belief that he meant no good to Martin.

FARMER. It be mine, too, but heaven can only read the truth. It is an old quarrel between them; I remember it well.

JOE. A quarrel?

FARMER. Yes; they had a dispute—a fight many years ago, about a pretty girl who was supposed to have been made away with—one Mary Franklin, who lies buried by the north porch. Sideler drew his knife upon the old man; he was head keeper then, and Sir William discharged him for it. He afterwards appointed him warrener, just to keep him from starving. What beest thinking of, Joe?

JOE. Nothing. I can't make it clear; I wish Master Harry wor back—it be almost too much for my poor head! But I must get the old man home, and it be a hard matter to get him to leave the churchyard. Martin! Martin! (MARTIN looks up, meets JOE'S gaze and smiles, then stoops to gather more flowers)

Poor old man! It be my believe he will one day come to his senses yet! It will be a dark tale he has to tell, if ever that
should happen! Time will shew! Time will shew! Ah! I have it—the flowers!

(JOE picks some flowers and strews them in MARTIN'S way, who follows him to gather them up, when they reach the L.—MARTIN sinks his head weeping on JOE'S shoulder, and is led off; L., by JOE and FARMER)

SCENE SECOND.—Apartment in Mortlake House; door R. in flat; window, c.; large glass, L., in panel.

Enter ELLEN (in mourning), attended by SUSAN, R. 1

ELLEN: (goes to window) Would he were here! Ah, how would his presence sustain me! The Colonel's manner is kind to me, and the dear good rector's affectionate and gentle: but they cannot fill the void my bereavement has left. No, Henry—your love alone can reconcile me to life!

SUSAN: Don't despond, miss; depend on't, as soon as Master Harry hears of your bereavement, he will lose no time in coming home; and Joe promised Master Harry, before he went away, that he would watch over you, and protect you from danger, miss, as if you were his own sister; and Joe induced me to come and be your waiting maid, because I am faithful, and you can trust your life to me; and although you are a prisoner—

ELLEN: A prisoner?

SUSAN: What else can you call it? when you are not allowed to stir out beyond the grounds of this old house, which is little better than a prison, and jealously guarded by the Indian Zarah, who all honest people hate the sight of, and all your old faithful servants removed from you?

ELLEN: Alas! it is true. I have no one but you, my good girl, in whom I can confide; how grateful I am for your services.

SUSAN: Don't speak so, miss; either I or Joe would risk our lives for you. Now don'tee be vexed, miss, if I should be bold or insolent to you before certain people—don't send me away, miss—it will be only play-acting like, and would be the likeliest way to induce them to suffer me to remain near you.

ELLEN: I understand you, my good girl; if they suspected that you were really attached to me, they would not suffer you to continue in the house.

SUSAN: That's it, miss, exactly.

ELLEN: I shall not take offence, be assured, knowing your motive. I am going to my chamber, Susan, and do not wish to be intruded on by any but yourself.

SUSAN: Poor young lady! I wish Master Harry would come back and marry her; and Joe and I would be wed at the same time.
Enter WILL SIDELER, L. 1 E.

WILL. Good morning, my pretty lass! this old house does not appear half so dull since I have seen you.

SUSAN. You will see but little of me; my time is generally passed with my young lady.

WILL. We can relieve you of that part of your duty; besides we shall be excellent friends, especially at night, when the hours are dark and long, and the wind wails and cries like a human being through the corridors and halls of this old mansion; we shall be glad of each other's society then. I hate the night.

SUSAN. Perhaps it reminds you of your evil deeds.

WILL. What deeds, fool, what deeds? (raises his hand)

SUSAN. We will see what the Colonel will say to this.

WILL. The Colonel, left last night for London. With the exception of the Ayah, you and I are the only persons in the house. The keys are in my possession. (shews bunch of keys)

SUSAN. (half aside) A prisoner, at the mercy of this wretch.

WILL. So come here, my little linnet—come and kiss me, do you hear?—come, or I'll make you!

(SUSAN screams—the door, k., opens, and RED RALPH enters and comes down, c.)

RALPH. He! he! he!

WILL. Who in the fiend's name are you?

RALPH. Eh?

WILL. Who are you, I say?

RALPH. He! he! he! I be Remnant's boy, and looks arter the cows. Who be thee?

WILL. How did you gain admittance here?

RALPH. Can't ye see? (holds up rusty key, which SIDELER snatches from him) He! he! he! who be that young woman?

WILL. How dare you, a stranger, enter here?

RALPH. I beant no stranger! I know'd the house ever since I wor no older than Brindle Bet's last calf. Mother lived here in old lady's time, he! he!

WILL. Out of my path, fool! (SIDELER seises RALPH by the throat, and backs him off at door R. in flat—he locks door and returns to SUSAN) NOW, my pretty one, you don't escape me! (seizes her)

SUSAN. Ruffian! let me go!

WILL. Not till I've had a kiss.

SUSAN. Help! help!

Enter ZARAH, R. 1 E., and interposes between SUSAN and SIDELER, raising her dagger threateningly.

ZARAH. Back, man! back, on your life!
WILL. What now?
ZARAH. Fool!— miserable fool!— is it for this that your employer has bought you body and soul— paid you for your services with gold which might have gained a Brahmin's faith?
WILL. She is a spy.
ZARAH. She is a woman.
WILL. And what do you call the one upstairs? Is she less fair, less young, less delicate, less helpless? I but follow the example of him we both serve.
ZARAH. You cannot judge my motives.
WILL. Nor you mine. It is not that I care so much for the girl, as the hatred I feel towards her lover, who struck me, spurned, insulted— more, who threatened me. I swore at the time to be avenged upon him, and shall keep my promise; so you had better leave the wench with me, and attend to your own charge in the chamber above.
SUSAN. Save me from him! I have no hope but you.
ZARAH. I will not fail you, although I have little cause to love you, for you have supplanted me in the love of my foster child! Back! ruffian, back! lay but a finger on her and I will slay thee as I would a cub from the jungle, or a reptile that had crossed my path.
SIDELEER goes off slowly. L. 1 E.
ZARAH. (to SUSAN) Wait here a moment, girl, I will fetch a lamp and conduct you to your chamber.
Exit, R.—door in flat. R. C, opens.
Re-enter RED RALPH.
SUSAN. (alarmed) Who's there?
RALPH. It be only I. He thought he'd locked me out, but I ha' gotten another key! (holds up key) He! he! he! I loike thee or I wouldn't have come back. If thee loiked I could let 'ee out.
SUSAN. I cannot leave.
RALPH. Why not? Does 'ee loike the old man who wor tussling wi' thee?
SUSAN. Like him? I fear his presence more than anything on earth.
RALPH. If I wor thee I'd cotch him.
SUSAN. What do you mean?
RALPH. Trap him, as I do the birds; Cromwell House be a rare old cage. I don't mind if I shew 'ee, for speaking kind to me. I thought I could be of use to 'ee, and so I came back; and I'll come again if you want me. (raises trap, c.) This be my trap— and yours if you loike to cotch him!
SUSAN. Hark! some one comes — you will be caught!
RALPH. (closes trap) No I don't; I know a dozen ways to be
off without their catching me. This be a queer old place, I
can come in and go out as I loike, and no one the wiser,
he! he! he!

Enter ZARAH, R., with lamp—RALPH turns and sees her.
The devil! the devil! (backs towards window, c, and falls
through—ZARAH conducts SUSAN off, R. 1 E,—after a pause
RED RALPH looks in at window) Young 'oman! young 'oman!
She be gone! The old house and I may keep company
1 E.—after a pause together. I be mortal hungry, I'll see if I can find a bone to
pick. (goes off, R., and returns with large bone—sits at table
facing glass, L. C.) He! he! he! I can eat and look at mysen,
1 E.—all the while. I bean't a bad looking chap!

Enter WILL SIDELE, L. 1 E.

WILL. The devil! he here again?
RALPH. He! he! he!
WILL. I'll cut his throat! (he draws his knife, crosses to R.,
and advances cautiously behind RALPH, who seeing the figure
of the Warrener reflected in the glass, darts under the table, and
stands defiantly with the table between himself and SIDELE)
RALPH. He! he! what does he want wi' me?
WILL. What are you doing here? If I were not one of the
best-natured fellows in the world, I should send you to prison
for breaking into the house.
RALPH. Thee dare not!
WILL. Dare not!
RALPH. Noa, dare not!
WILL. And why so?
RALPH. 'Cos I'd tell Squire Justice of the pretty lady that
wor prisoner here, and how they tried to serve out the maid,
and all about the black woman that frightened me so.
WILL. Indeed!
RALPH. Ees, indeed! thee best nation 'cute—but I am
'cutter. He! he! I heard old lawyer say he should live to see
thee hanged.
WILL. Hanged! What should I be hanged for?
RALPH. I don't know—murder most likely.
WILL. Murder?
RALPH. Ees—thée has committed more nor one I reckon.
Does 'ee think I didn't see the knife in thee hand as thee crept
like a thief—or summut worse—behind me?
WILL. Come here! you can't escape, I have trapped too
many such vermin in my time, to be baffled by such as you.
(in his endeavour to reach RALPH, SIDELE overturns the table
which is between them)
RALPH. I beant caught yet.
(runs off, L. 1 E., pursued by SIDELER—RALPH re-enters, L. 2 E., suddenly opens the trap and holds chair over the opening to conceal it)

SIDELER re-enters L. 2 E.

WILL. I've got you now. (darts at RALPH, and falls through the trap)
RALPH. Trapped! I ha' trapped 'un, at last. A bird in a trap—hallo! (closes and dances over trap—scene closes in)

SCENE THIRD.—Exterior of Farmer Ashton's Farm.

Enter FARMER ASHTON, DAME ASHTON and JOE BEANS, R. 1 E.

FARMER A. Joe, lad, thee brings good news—I'm sure thee does.
JOE. Loikely, loikely. I guess I be the pleasantest visitor thee hast seen for many a long day.
DAME A. Thee brings us news of Harry. I be sure of it.
Thee hast had a letter, Joe?
JOE. NO.
FARMER. NO! What be it then?
JOE. I be almost afraid to tell you.
DAME. No ill news, I hope?
JOE. NO—it be good news.
FARMER. Harry be coming home?
JOE. NO—he be come.
BOTH. Returned!

HENRY ASHTON enters, L.—he is warmly welcomed by the FARMER and the DAME.

DAME. (kissing HENRY) Harry! dear Harry!
FARMER. Heaveu bless thee, boy!—thee beest welcome back.
HENRY. My more than parents!
DAME A. Thee wilt not leave us again, Harry? Home be home, be it ever so humble; though Farmer Ashton and I have scarcely found it home without thee.
HENRY. I have had enough of foreign travel. I shall never again willingly quit England, I assure you.
FARMER A. Thank heaven for that.
DAME A. Thee beest pale, thin and worn, Harry! Do tell us what has happened.
HENRY. It is a long story—I have encountered many perils:
Meeran Hafez tracked my course, and bribed a villain to murder me; but I have escaped the snare, and have returned
to punish the dastard cowardice of Meeran Hafez. But tell me, I conjure you, of Ellen, my Ellen.

JOE. Since Sir William's death, his brother, Colonel Mowbray, has assumed the right of guardianship over her, and confined her at Mortlake Manor House, where she is exposed to the persecutions of this Meeran Hafez.

HENRY. Alone!—defenceless!—what dangers is she not exposed to.

JOE. NO, not alone. I induced my Susan to accompany Miss de Vere as her attendant, and as a kind of protector; but I have not seen or heard from the poor wench since she went into that grim-looking place they call Cromwell House. I fear, Master Harry, you and I be a couple of undone spinsters.

HENRY. But I will wrest her from the villain's power. Lady Mowbray, the much wronged wife of Sir William Mowbray, returned with me to England, and may claim guardianship over her niece, Miss de Vere. She bears with her the proofs of her innocence, of the guilt of Colonel Mowbray, who invented a vile plot to separate her from her husband, Sir William, who was induced to believe that she had fled from him. She has returned to justify herself, and punish her base traducers.

FARMER A. Lady Mowbray returned to us!—then Carrow will see its golden days once more! But her lost son?

HENRY. The child was separated from her by treachery, and she is ignorant of its existence even; all my efforts to discover any clue of him were unsuccessful, but doubt not that heaven will direct the search.

Enter the KHAN, L.

KHAN. It has directed it.
HENRY. What mean you?
KHAN. That strange and mysterious events are about to be revealed. You would discover the niece of Sir William Mowbray?
HENRY. I would give my life to do so.
KHAN. It needs not so costly a sacrifice; delay only your purpose, and curb your impatience a few short hours. You gaze upon me as if you thought I could deceive you?
HENRY. No, no, I will confide in you.
KHAN. You shall have no reason to regret the confidence. Meanwhile, as you would see justice done upon the murderer of your benefactor, accompany me to the hall.
HENRY. Mean you the assassin of Sir William?
KHAN. A man has been apprehended on suspicion of the crime. Come, come, doubt me not, but follow me!

They exeunt, L. 1 E
SCENE FOURTH.—The Library at Carrow.

DR. ORME, seated at head of table, R.—H. ASHTON, the KHAN, FARMER ASHTON, DAME, JOE BEANS, RED RALPH, and numerous DOMESTICS discovered.

Dr. O. The experiment is worth the trial. I have directed that poor old Martin be brought blindfold into this apartment, where the murder took place, and then the bandage removed from his eyes. He will probably recognise the place, and returning reason may lead him to point out the murderer.

JOE. Here comes Old Fidelity.

MARTIN is lead on by two DOMESTICS, L. 3 E.

MARTIN. All dark, no moon, no moon! (they place him in chair, L., and remove the bandage from his eyes)

KHAN. Listen, and mark every word he utters.

MARTIN. Ah, the library! the library!—my master!—my dear, honoured master!

(KVision First—a part of the back Scene becomes transparent, representing the Library and the figure of SIR WILLIAM MOWBRAY discovered reading)

HENRY. He fancies he sees him.

KHAN. His imagination wanders.

(Vision the Second represents WILL SIDELER in the act of stabbing SIR WILLIAM, afterwards escaping by the panel)

MARTIN. The murderer! behold! our dear master is slain!

See, see, the assassin escapes! the panel—the panel! Help, help! (MARTIN starts up from the chair, and in action goes through the whole of the struggle with WILL SIDELER, as represented in the First Act—when he falls he is raised by HENRY and JOE BEANS, who place him in arm chair, R. of table)

JOE. Poor old Martin! But what meant he by the panel?

HENRY. I never heard of such a contrivance existing here.

JOE. Loikely, loikely; but there be no harm in searching. (sounds the walls with his stick) It do sound mortal hollow here. Lend us a hand, Master Harry. (with the assistance of HENRY, JOE forces the panel, L., open, the one used by SIDELER in the First Act) The old man wor right. Now to penetrate this rat-hole.

JOE and HENRY enter the panel.

MARTIN. Where am I?

KHAN. Safe with your friends.

MARTIN. Ah, I know ye now! old Martin knows you.

Re-enter HENRY and JOE, from panel, the former carrying a wallet and knife.

HENRY. Here are the proofs—this wallet and this blood-stained knife.

JOE. Both of which belonged to the Warrener.
DR. O. We will investigate this business at once. Officers, bring in your prisoner.

OFFICERS enter, L. E., with WILL SIDELER in custody—SERVANTS and several MAGISTRATES follow—the MAGISTRATES take their seats at the table, R.

DR. O. William Sideler, you are brought before us to answer the accusation of murder—cruel and deliberate murder—perpetrated upon the person of your late master, Sir William Mowbray. It is my duty to warn you that any statement you may choose to make will be taken down in writing, and used as evidence against you on your trial.

WILL. I have nothing to state, but I am innocent. This is an idle accusation, trumped up against me by a madman and my enemies.

DR. O. Whom do you consider your enemies?

WILL. Joe Beans and that young man. (points to HENRY)

DR. O. And the madman?

WILL. Martin the groom. From boys we were enemies—we both loved the same girl. It was my quarrel with him which drove me from my service with—with—

HENRY. Your victim. No wonder that his name falters on your tongue! His image will stand beside you at the hour of death, and accuse you at the judgment seat of heaven!

DR. O. (to WILL S IDELER) You are well acquainted with Carrow Abbey?

WILL. Yes.

DR. O. Are you aware of any secret passages or entrances to the house or apartments?

WILL. NO.

DR. O. How came this wallet, then, which twenty witnesses can prove to have been yours, to be found in a vaulted chamber at the end of a passage or recess opening from the library—the scene of the murder?

WILL. I know not how it came there, but it is my firm belief my enemies placed it there to blacken me.

DR. O. Whom do you mean by your enemies?

WILL. Henry Ashton and Joe Beans.

JOE. It's a lie—a wicked odious lie, and will not serve thee, Will Sideler. Till the night I accompanied poor old Martin and the sexton I wor' never at Abbey twice in my life—once when a boy, and once since. Thee wor' always a bad revengeful man, but I never had concern or quarrel with thee; I would not raise my hand against a dog unless he deserved it, much less a fellow creature.

(DOCTOR ORME rises and takes his seat by the side of MARTIN)

DR. O. (to MARTIN) Martin, I believe no one is better acquainted with the secret passages of the old house than yourself.
MARTIN. None, except one man.

DR. ORME. His name?

MARTIN. Will Sideler. His father was an old servant of the Mowbrays, and shewed him, when a boy, the entrances to most of them, but not all—thank heaven, not all.

DR. O. YOU had reason to believe that the house would be robbed—what did you do in consequence?

MARTIN. Watched night after night, as the old house-dog watches the house of those who feed and shelter him. It was all I could do to prove my fidelity, for I am old—very old.

DR. O. And what took place on the night of the murder?

MARTIN. I was walking in the picture gallery, from which there is a passage known only to myself and Will Sideler, which communicates with the library, when I heard the peculiar click of a spring. I placed my ear to the panel and heard a deep groan—oh! how my heart echoed it. I rushed forward—the door at the end of the recess was closed—my hand trembled so, I couldn't find the spring. I peeped through the crevices and saw my master—my good, kind, suffering master—the poor man's friend—whom all who knew him loved and revered—seated in his chair; a man with his ruffian hand twisted in Sir William's hair—the knife reeking with Sir William's blood still in his grasp—oh, heaven! my brain went round and round.

DR. O. Did you behold the murderer's face?

MARTIN. As distinctly as I now see yours.

DR. O. And recognized it?

MARTIN. I knew him before I saw his features, for we had eaten the same master's bread for years together.

DR. O. His name?

MARTIN. Will Sideler, the Warrener.

(MARTIN rises and stretches forth his right hand, pointing at WILL SIDELER—Picture—MARTIN falls exhausted in chair)

WILL. It is a lie!—I was never at the Abbey!—It was through you that I lost my place in Sir William's family. You have hated and persecuted me for years.

DR. O. (to MARTIN) Do you feel sufficiently strong to relate what followed the murder?

MARTIN. I forced open the door—I know not how, but I did force it. Although too late to save my noble master, I hoped at least to avenge him. There was a struggle—I felt his assassin's breath upon my face. I—I can't recollect anything further—I suppose I must have received some hurt.

DR. ORME (to WILL SIDELER) Prisoner, you stand fully committed to Norwich Castle for the murder of your late master, Sir William Mowbray.

WILL. Well then, if I must hang, I'll hang in company; there be a greater villain than I in the job?

DR. O. His name?
WILL. Meeran Hafez.
OMNES. Meeran Hafez!
WILL. Meeran Hafez!—I was poor, and he tempted me with his cursed gold!

DR. O. What motive?
JOE. What motive—I'll tell 'ee. He loves Miss Ellen, who doesn't love him. He and Colonel Mowbray have carried her off to Cromwell House, and keeps her a prisoner. It's my belief he wouldn't stick at murder, or worse—if anything can be worse, to gain his purpose.

DR. O. Enough—make out a warrant for the apprehension of Meeran Hafez. Officers, remove your prisoner!

WILL. At least, I'll have revenge! (breaks from OFFICERS, and is rushing on MARTIN, when JOE BEANS drags him back.—HENRY standing before MARTIN.—WILL SIDERER is forced upon his knees and handcuffed by the OFFICERS)

WILL. Curses! curses light upon you all! (tableau)

END OF ACT SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE FIRST.—Chapel in Cromwell House.—Altar, c, doors R. and L.

MEERAN HAFEZ discovered seated on couch, R.

MEERAN. She cannot now escape me! she must be mine—the crown, the reward of so many hopes and sufferings! Vainly would the pale-faced race pass between me and my desire! She was created to be mine—fate shall not disappoint me! I would rend her from the arms of death, and battle with the grisly king, armed with all his terrors!

Enter COLONEL MOWBRAY, door, R.

COLONEL. Joy, joy—we have succeeded. Our private application to the Chancellor has succeeded; and I am invested with an order to take possession of my ward. There must be no failure this time, and, if possible, no violence—but what an air, man, for a bridegroom!

MEERAN. I shall forget everything in the arms of Ellen—the vessel is already engaged which is to convey us to India. I will not again risk the treasure for which I have toiled and sinned by an hour's delay. Is the parson ready?

COLONEL. I have brought him with me. Zarah is conducting Ellen here, therefore I will leave you together for a few minutes.

(Zarah leads in Ellen, door, R., and then retires, door R., with COLONEL MOWBRAY—MEERAN approaches ELLEN, who recoils from him with a shudder)
MEERAN. Am I then become so hateful to you, Ellen, that you shrink from me as from the cobra's fangs, from which I once preserved you? What have I done to be cast thus like a pariah from your heart?

ELLEN. You have clouded my whole existence—passed like a fearful shadow between me and happiness. I repeat it. Question your own heart!

MEERAN. It would be useless—for not a pulse which animates it, a thought which dwells there, exists but for your happiness! I love you, Ellen, with the soul's idolatry—the heart's deep worship! Think of our early days—of my mother's love for you—of the home which you possessed in her heart and mine!—reflect, that it depends on you whether I become a demon or a man!

ELLEN. I am the betrothed wife of another!

MEERAN. You shall be all I have dreamed of still!

ELLEN. Never! There is a sea of blood between us—an untimely grave—a voice, whose accents would appal even your hardened spirit—to forbid such a sacrilegious marriage!

MEERAN. Whose voice?

ELLEN. My uncle's!—my good, kind, generous, murdered uncle's! I cannot shake the conviction from my soul that you are no stranger to his death! If for a moment I escape from it, it returns with redoubled force, and haunts me like a shadow!

MEERAN. You forget that I was wounded, and suffering on a bed of pain at the time you name——

ELLEN. Your mind was not inactive!

MEERAN. That I am a stranger in the land. How should I procure the means—the instrument for such a crime?

ELLEN. Here, as in India, gold will procure the ready tool to work the evil will. I had doubted, but you have convinced me—fatally convinced me—that my suspicions have not wronged you. Your cheek is pale! Where is the indignant blush—the burst of outraged nature—wounded pride—insulted innocence—which once would have repelled the doubt of Meeran's honour? (MEERAN attempts to clasp her hand) Touch me not! Your hand is red with the life-blood of my second parent! and I—and I the cause. Had he not loved the orphan Ellen with a father's fondness—watched over her with a father's care—this crime would not have been! (sinks on couch, weeping)

MEERAN. Hear me, Ellen. (approaching her)

ELLEN. There is pollution in your touch! Heaven forgive me! that I once loved this man like a brother.

MEERAN. You have wronged me, Ellen—foully and cruelly wronged me—by this charge. Summon me before your judges, relate all that your enemies have whispered in your ears poisoning your heart against me.

ELLEN. No! it is not there that I shall accuse you.
MEERAN. Where, then?

ELLEN. There! (points upwards) There, where the secrets of all hearts are known! There, where no subterfuge can avail! Man's justice may fail to reach you, but that of heaven never will!

MEERAN. This is mere phantasy! you are destined to be mine; I have risked all—dared all to obtain you; and now, when the hour has arrived which is to crown my hopes, shall I madly dash it aside? Never! No power on earth shall snatch you from me now!

ELLEN. (rises) I have heard your resolution, Meeran; now hear mine. Were Henry Ashton dead, were his memory no more to this sad heart than the recollection of our childhood's friendship, before I would consent to link my destiny with yours—to call you husband—the grave should be my bridal bed—the shroud my marriage robe.

MEERAN. Be it so. Though the grave prove your bridal bed—the shroud your nuptial robe—still you should be mine. I swore it when I left the shores of India for this accursed land. I have knelt and sued—for what? To be despised. I have seen the love of a hind preferred to mine, and yet I trusted that time and devotion might win you. I will trust no more! this hour shall crown my triumph and place an eternal barrier between my worthless rival and myself.

Re-enter COLONEL MOWBRAY and TWINETEXT, door R.

COLONEL. We trifle time. Is the bride ready?

MEERAN. Proceed with the ceremony. (TWINETEXT opens his book) I will answer—for the consequences, (approaches ELLEN to take her hand—ELLEN suddenly snatches a dagger from his girdle)

ELLEN. Lessen the distance between us but a step—nay, a hair's breadth, and heaven have mercy on my dying soul! I am mad with terror—cruelty has driven me so, and heaven will pardon a poor orphan girl, who, frantic, desperate, wrought beyond patience or reason can endure, escapes from arms of pollution unto death!

MEERAN. I care not though I snatched thee from the grave, where, ere now, thy vagrant lover lies, both cold and motionless.

(MEERAN clasps ELLEN, who shrieks—the door, L., is burst open, and HENRY ASHTON enters, followed by the KHAN, JOE BEANS, RED RALPH, FARMER ASHTON, and OFFICERS—HENRY hurls MEERAN, R., snatching ELLEN to his breast)

HENRY. Liar! I am here to crush thee!

MEERAN. My vengeance shall be quenched in blood. (springs upon HENRY ASHTON with dagger—HENRY wrests dagger from him, and seizes him by the throat)
HENRY. Dog!—cold-blooded, remorseless, pitiless, cowardly assassin! (throws MEERAN from him) The hangman's hand can best achieve the rest!

MEERAN. What mean you?
HENRY. These men bear a warrant against him for murder!
MEERAN. Murder!—whose?
HENRY. Whose but Sir William Mowbray's! Will Sideler, your accomplice, has confessed all.

(MEERAN is handcuffed—they go off, leaving MEERAN—
the door, L. C, is heard to lock)

MEERAN. This ends my dream of life, love, ambition! The career of usefulness and honour—all that men prize—wrecked, for ever wrecked on the mad sea of passion! Do I regret the past? No—let fools or cowards, who fear to grapple with their destiny, regret—it is the most useless feeling of the heart—with me it shall be the last! I am of iron nerve and mould! I will meet the phantom death face to face, nor shrink at its ghastly terrors! Meet it—but not as my enemies expect! No!—Meeran Hafez will have an executioner no less illustrious than himself!

Enter JOE BEANS, conducting ZARAH, door, L. C.

JOE. (to ZARAH) You may speak with him for five minutes, but no longer.

ZARAH. Tis all I ask.

Exit JOE, L. door in flat.

MEERAN. Zarah, come you to witness my degradation?—to report to Ellen and my rival the despair and impotent regrets of Meeran Hafez?

ZARAH. NO, Meeran, no—judge me not so harshly! Think you Zarah could survive the loss of him she nurtured? No, I come Meeran, to die with you.

MEERAN. To die! to die with me! Zarah, repeat those words, for they imply the death of both—the throwing off this coil of flesh—disappointing the scaffold of its prey—my enemies of their triumph.

ZARAH. And didst thou think that I could desert thee? They searched me, Meeran, when, by my prayers, tears and abject supplications, I prevailed upon these accursed gaolers to admit me to your sight; but they found neither steel nor drug upon my person. And, yet, I am armed—armed with a means of death as certain as the serpent's fang; the fools saw it, but knew it not. Behold! (shows ring on finger)

MEERAN. The Ourari?

ZARAH. Even so; a poison so subtle that a scratch with any point prepared with it will cause instant death.

MEERAN. Zarah, thou hast, indeed saved me from the scoffing world—my rival's triumph. The noblest blood in India must not be shed like a common felon's.
ZARAH. Never! never!
MEERAN. Then farewell, world! my spirit longs for freedom.
Now, Zarah, thine must be the office of the sacrificing priest of old—the altar is ready, and the victim willing.
ZARAH. (recoiling) My heart fails me—I cannot destroy the child I have reared, loved and honoured.
MEERAN. Would you rather see me on the scaffold?
ZARAH. Spare me.
MEERAN. In the hands of the hangman?
ZARAH. Have pity!
MEERAN. The cord—the vile degrading cord round my neck?—the gaze of the yelling mob?—my rival looking on the while?
ZARAH. Never! (with desperate energy) 'Tis past—the weakness is past, and my resolution is of steel—steel!
Re-enter JOE and RED RALPH, door in flat, l. c.—they remain up stage.
JOE. (to ZARAH) The carriage is at the door. It is time to depart.
MEERAN. (to ZARAH) Quick, Zarah, quick.
ZARAH. Farewell—but not for ever. My spirit will take its flight with thine. (ZARAH embraces MEERAN, and draws ring over his face)
RALPH. They are a long time a-hugging. I believe the black woman be conjuring.
JOE. (to ZARAH) YOU must leave the prisoner.
ZARAH. I am ready; but your prisoner has escaped you.
JOE. Escaped?
ZARAH. Ay—he is dead. (MEERAN falls lifeless from her arms)
JOE. What means this?
ZARAH. It means that he has escaped your laws—escaped your justice! The malice of his enemies will not be gratified by witnessing the degradation and the shame of the descendant of a line of princes. He is cold—cold as my heart, whose pulses cease to throb upon his breast. (ZARAH wounds herself with the ring, and falls dead on MEERAN'S breast—closed in on the picture)

SCENE SECOND.—Landscape; neighbourhood of Carroto Abbey.
(1st grooves).
Enter RED RALPH and JOE BEANS, l. 1 e.
RALPH. I tell'ee I ha' seen him.
JOE. Seen who?
RALPH. The War-ren-er!
JOE. Fancy. Ralph, fancy; he is dead as hanging can make him. The dead never return to visit us in the body.
RALPH. Don't they though! I tell'ee, Maister Beans. I ha' seen 'un, just as he wor dressed in Cromwell House, wi' his game bag on his shoulder, and broad hat drawn over his brows. I'd swear to 'un.

JOE. Did you see his face?
RALPH. Noa, noa! the sight of his old coat and hat wor enough for it! I am sure it wor he—he had gotten a box, black and silver loike, under his arm. I ha' seen it somewhere afore, thof I can't tell where. Can'ee, Maister Beans?

JOE. Thee art a sharp chap, Ralph. I feel convinced this is no ghost, but some designing villain, who has assumed the appearance of Will Sideler in order to terrify those whom he might encounter in the execution of his project. It must be Colonel Mowbray or one of his agents. His aim is to obtain the box which contains the proofs of his villainies.

RALPH. I recollect now where I seed the box, or one just loike it. Lady in black with pale face, that Master Harry helped out of carriage into hall yonder, had it in her hand. But sin' it be no ghost, I'll have a pop at 'un. Do gi' I a pistol, I know how to use it. I popped at sparrows a hundred times at Mortlake, and never missed 'un.

JOE. There is one; (gives RALPH pistol) but be careful how you use it. Now follow me cautiously to the hall—there the solution or this night's work will take place. If he attempts to harm Master Harry or Miss Ellen, shoot him, Ralph—shoot him like a dog.

RALPH. I will, Maister Beans, that I will. I should like to shoot a thief or a murderer—I never killed anything bigger nor a cat yet—I should like to know how a chap feels arter killing a man!

They exeunt, L.

SCENE THIRD.—The Library at Carrow Abbey. Night.

Enter COLONEL MOWBRAY at panel, L., disguised as the Warrener—he carries a small ebony box.

COLONEL. This disguise must secure me from recognition; and favoured by the darkness, I may, unseen, steal to the chamber of Lady Mowbray, and remove the ebony box which contains the proofs of my guilt. I have prepared a substitute to leave in its place, which will prevent its being missed.

Music—COLONEL MOWBRAY steals off, R. 1 E.—a scream immediately heard, R.—COLONEL MOWBRAY re-enters, struggling with LADY MOWBRAY.

LADY M. Who are you, and what is your purpose?

COLONEL. My purpose is to obtain that ebony box.

LADY M. Never! Kill me if you will, but never will I give up the clue to my lost child—the proofs that I am worthy to
bear the name of my murdered husband! What have I done that evil men should thus conspire against me?

COLONEL. Fool! I would have spared you, but my safeguard now requires your death!

LADY M. Colonel Mowbray—is it you? Wretch! You it was who traduced me to my husband—separated me from my child, and would now rob me of the proofs of my innocence.

COLONEL. You have sealed your fate!

(the COLONEL takes pistol from his pocket—a noise is heard at door, L.—the door is burst open and old MARTIN enters—the COLONEL turns and fires at MARTIN who falls, L.—as the COLONEL darts towards the panel, L., to make his escape, RED RALPH appears in the recess and fires at the COLONEL, who falls—RED RALPH is followed by JOE BEANS—at the same moment HENRY, FARMER ASHTON, DR. ORME, DAME, SUSAN and DOMESTICS, enter at L. door—SERVANTS with lights—JOE BEANS and HENRY raise MARTIN and place him in chair, L.)

RALPH. I ha' laid the ghost! I ha' laid the ghost!

MARTIN. (feebly) It will soon be over, Harry. Place me in Sir William's chair—I should like to die there. Master Harry, I told you once that I was like the aloe: I have as yet only put forth a bud, but something tells me that the aloe will bloom yet ere it dies.

LADY M. (to COLONEL) Pray, Colonel Mowbray, reflect upon your dangerous state—make some atonement for the crimes you have committed—do not rush into the presence of your maker with more crimes than those you have already committed upon your soul.

COLONEL. Is there no hope?

HENRY. None.

COLONEL. Save me! save me! and I will tell everything. Life! life even at the price of infamy! I dare not die!

LADY M. Walter, like you, I am dying; in a few hours, perhaps, we shall both, stand before the Judgment-seat! Something tells me that to you I owe this misery of my life, my dishonour in the eyes of the world—the loss of my dear husband's love—of my poor boy! Be generous—let me embrace the image of his father ere I die, and at the bar of heaven my prayer shall be for mercy for your crimes!

COLONEL. Never! The only consolation I have left me is, that my death will destroy the last hope of your existence!

HENRY. Monster!

COLONEL. You shall not even have the satisfaction of knowing whether your brat lives, or rots like his father in the grave!

LADY M. Have you no heart?

COLONEL. None that you can touch! The whisperings of
your fancy did not deceive you. I incited the fool, Lucas, to believe you loved him—planned with him the scheme which lured you to your ruin! I would have seen you a dishonoured, creeping, guilty thing! That failed—but at least, I leave you a childless one!
HENRY. Heaven restrains me, or I shall strike the villain dead!

COLONEL. Base-born cur!

*The Khan enters, suddenly, door, L.*

Khan. (C.) Who says that Henry Ashton is base-born? He is no base-born cur—he is the son of an honest man.

MARTIN. Philip Ashton! It is Philip Ashton! Thank heaven it will be clear at last!

Khan (to Lady M.) Lady, fear not, whatever be the resolution of that bad, bold man, his malice will be impotent to harm your peace! Your son yet lives, and will be found worthy of your love!

COLONEL. Your oath!—remember your oath!

Khan. Binds me only whilst you live; fear not, it shall be kept; a few moments more or less will matter little! If the fiends can wait, so can this injured lady!

MARTIN. Lift me up, Harry, and do not leave me; my eyes grow dim—I would look upon you to the last!—I must, I will not die till after that bad man! It will bloom yet, boy—the old aloe will put forth its long promised flower at last!

COLONEL. Remove me from this chamber—I cannot, dare not, die here!—his spectre glares upon me!—bear me hence—hence!

*(Servants support the Colonel off, R. 1 E., attended by Joe Beans)*

HENRY. Hardened to the last! As he lived, so will he die! May heaven forgive him!

*Re-enter Joe Beans, R.*

JOE. He has breathed his last!

MARTIN. I knew I should outlive the rascal!—I felt I should. All will now be bright and clear at last! Now, Philip Ashton, speak, in heaven's name—the hour has come!

Khan. My justification must accompany my explanation. Listen: at the early age of sixteen I became a soldier, and enlisted in the regiment commanded by that bold, reckless man, whose death we have just witnessed; for a slight breach of discipline I was condemned to the lash—to be tied up like a hound in the gaze of my fellow men and flogged! It was not the pain of the lash I feared, it was the disgrace! Colonel Mowbray sought me in my prison, and as the price of his mercy proposed that I should exile myself to India, taking
disclose the transaction while he lived. That child was his own nephew, his brother's son—the heir of Carrow! I resolved that his young life should be perilled by no act of mine. I took him to my brother's farm, pretending he was my son, and that his mother had died. My brother believed me, and received the boy. He stands before you! (points to HENRY) Mother, receive your son! (HENRY rashes to LADY MOWBRAY and kneels—she raises him in her embrace)

HENRY. Mother! dear, suffering mother!

LADY M. My boy! my boy! Here—here—close to this broken heart!

MARTIN. (rising with difficulty) Shout! shout! for Sir William Mowbray—the heir of Carrow! (shouts, which are taken up outside, supposed to be the assembled Tenantry)

MARTIN. Ha, ha! He is acknowledged at last. Thank heaven! he is acknowledged at last! (sinks overpowered into chair, L.)

KHAN. There is one without, Sir William, who will rejoice to share your happiness. (leads in ELLEN, door L.—ELLEN kneels to LADY MOWBRAY)

HENRY. Ellen, dear Ellen, I have found a parent!

ELLEN. And I a dear protectress—a mother!

KHAN. Let us not forget Old Fidelity! (approaches MARTIN)

Martin—Martin, don't you know me?

MARTIN. (feebly) Yes—yes—I knew you at first, Philip, in spite of your disguise; but let me be brief: there is a sacred trust I must yet discharge—where is he? Let me see him! (HENRY goes to MARTIN and takes his hand) It is my master's son; but you have neither the title deeds of the estates, the plate, nor precious heir-looms of your house?

JOE. They are lost.

MARTIN. So people think; but they are mistaken. Martin has them!—parchments, diamonds, gold—all safe! Philip—Philip Ashton, press the spring that opens the iron door that backs that fireplace—the claw of the lion—quick! (the KHAN presses spring, the iron door opens) Now enter—to the left you will find them—quick! quick! (the KHAN enters the recess and returns with parchments, box, &c.) Now place them in his hands. (the KHAN does so) So, I have obeyed my master's wish, and I can resign my trust. (sinks down, c—HENRY and JOE raise him)

HENRY. Have you no request, Martin?

MARTIN. Yes, one; bury me near my dear, dear master. I told you the aloe would bloom at last. Old Martin has paid his debt of gratitude, and can meet his master with a smile—a smile!(Music, very piano, "The Will and the Way."—MARTIN dies in the arms of HENRY—Curtain falls slowly)