

THE
CHILD STEALER.

A Drama,

IN FOUR PARTS.

ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

W. E. SUTER,

AUTHOR OF

The Pirate of the Savannah, Idiot of the Mountain, Syren of Paris,
Angel of Midnight, Old House on the Bridge, Outlaw of the Adriatic,
Sarah's Young Man, A Quiet Family, John Wopps, Rifle Volunteer,
Brother Bill and Me, Highwayman's Holiday, "Wanted,
a Young Lady," Accusing Spirit, First Love, Our New
Man, Rocambole, Fan-fan the Tulip, Two
Gentlemen in a Fix. &c. &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

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THE
CHILD STEALER!

Characters.

Birmingham,
April 16th, 1886.

PROLOGUE.

LORD CHESTERTON (*a Gambler*) ... Mr. A. DAMPIER. JOE SIMPSON ... (*a Thief*) ... Mr. LOUIS NANTON.
 JOHN SEYMOUR (*a Mechanic*) ... Mr. W. MOWBRAY. DANIEL RUTHERFORD (*a Sailor*) ... Mr. MILO BLYDE.
 JONATHAN POYNTER (*a Policeman*) ... Mr. SOL SMITH. POLICEMAN X Y Z ... Mr. W. HARDMAN.
 SAILORS, POLICEMEN, &c., &c.
 JANE RUTHERFORD ... (the Child Stealer) ... Mrs. MACREADY.

(A lapse of Fifteen Years is supposed to take place.)

THE DRAMA.

LORD CHESTERTON (*a Gambler*) ... Mr. A. DAMPIER. SILAS HOOKER ... (*a Thief*) ... Mr. E. STABLEY.
 LIEUTENANT SYDNEY WESTON, R.N. SNATCHER ... Mr. ROBINSON.
 Mr. H. G. CLIFFORD. JAMES ... (*a Domestic*) ... Mr. RIDDLE.
 JOE SIMPSON ... (*a returned Transport*) HARDUN ... Mr. WOOD.
 Mr. LOUIS NANTON. SNIPPER ... Mr. WILSON.
 JONATHAN POYNTER (*a Policeman*) ... Mr. SOL SMITH. JANE RUTHERFORD ... Mrs. MACREADY.
 NOBBY NIBBLE (*his Nephew—a Pickpocket*) LADY MARIAN CHESTERTON Miss BELLA MORTIMER.
 Mr. EDMUND EDMUNDS. MISS TITTLINDA TOUCHEMUP ... Miss WILLIAMS.
 ARTHUR (*a Friend of Lieutenant Weston's*) Mr. CONWAY. MRS. SNAPPER ... Miss EDEN.

Policemen, Peegars, Thieves, Mob, &c., &c., by numerous Assemblages

PROLOGUE.
HOME OF THE CHILD STEALER.

The search for evidence, and a poor excuse for Crime—A tempting offer, and a Man of Mystery.

THE CHILD STEALER AND HER ACCOMPLICE!

The Sailor's return—The Stolen Child, and a fatal mistake!

THE CRIMINAL'S ARREST AND THE MOTHER'S DESPAIR!

Fifteen years elapse between the Prologue and the First Act.

ACT I.

BAR OF A LONDON TAVERN.

An unworthy member of a Policeman's family, and taking advantage of an Uncle's weakness—The Child Stealer at liberty after

FIFTEEN YEARS PENAL SERVITUDE!

Lover's Vows! Repentance and Devotion—The Noble and the Convict—A Tale of Mystery—A Marriage of Infamy
A well-remembered voice—An accident, and a recognition.

LORD CHESTERTON'S MANSION.

A vain appeal.

A Mother Stealing away her own Daughter!

A WRETCHED GARRET, AND DIREST POVERTY!

Nimble fingers and a charitable hand—A capture, but no proof—Hunger—A tender Landlady—Traacherous hope!

CREMORNE GARDENS.

A Policeman's temptations—Nobby Nibble and his Young Woman—Wanted, a watch and chain—A fair exchange and no robbery.

A CONVICT AT CREMORNE.

Business before Pleasure.

THE RIVALS AND THE QUARREL.—A LIFE IN DANGER.—MIRTH AND MISERY.

ACT III.

THE THIEVES CELLAR,

HOUSE OF CALL FOR THIEVES AND CADGERS.

The Trap and the River. Joe Simpson's Treachery, and terrible fall of Sydney Weston through the Murder Trap!

Nobby is determined to have a watch and chain—The Captive and an unexpected encounter!

JANE RUTHERFORD'S HEROISM.

The Separation.

THE DEAD ALIVE!

Nobby gets his watch and chain. The Convict's Fate. The Child Stealer's stonement.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER!

[Mr. Lacy's Second List.]

THE CHILD STEALER.



PROLOGUE.

SCENE.— *A poor Apartment; door in C.; doors R. and L.; R. 2 E. a cradle; table L.; two wooden chairs, an old chest of drawers, R. of C. door; L. of door, fireplace—two candles, not lighted, on mantelpiece.*

A POLICEMAN looks cautiously in at C. door.

POLICE. It's all right; there's nobody here. Come along, Poynter.

He advances, and POYNTER enters, door C.

POYNTER. Just you go and hunt over that room. (POLICEMAN *goes off, R.*) I'll have a look here, (*goes to and rummages drawers*)

POLICEMAN *re-enters.*

POLICE. There's nothing there ; no letter nor nothing.

POYNTER. People don't write to one another, Tom, about such matters as we are hunting up. And 'tain't likely as Mrs. Rutherford would write, I think, 'cause she has never learnt how to do it.

POLICE. We've got a tough job in hand.

POYNTER. Yes, Tom; she's as cunnin' as a fly, and we spiders shan't easy coax her into our web.

POLICE. Here's an empty cradle.

POYNTER. That proves nothing. Mrs. Rutherford would tell you that the cradle belongs to her own baby, which is at nurse,—which is true, Tom,—and that she expects every day to have the infant home again.

JOHN SEYMOUR *appears at C. door and stops, undecided.*

POYNTER. Come in, sir; don't be afraid.

SEYMOUR. I am seeking a Mrs. Rutherford, and was told—

POYNTER. You're quite right. This is her place.

SEYMOUR, (*aside*) Poor Jane ! What poverty !

POYNTER. You are acquainted, then, with Mrs. Rutherford?

SEYMOUR. We were children together.

POYNTER. Then I hope that you have growed up a more moral member of society than she has.

SEYMOUR. What do you mean ?

POYNTER. We suspect her of child-stealing. That's what we means.

SEYMOUR. Suspect her! Jane !

POYNTER. I don't know how many children have been stolen within the last few months. The poor babies are sold to the street tumblers or to beggars, or goodness knows what becomes of them.

SEYMOUR. It is impossible that Jane would be guilty of so atrocious a crime, and you can have no proof.

POYNTER. NO, not yet. I wish we had. But she's guilty. In the first place, she's on intimate terms with a notorious thief that I want to get hold of—one Joe Simpson; and in the next place, them as has once started on the wrong road don't seem to fancy turning back again.

POLICE. That's a good sound bit of morality, Jonathan.

POYNTER. Yes, I think it is, Thomas. And I can give a case in p'int. I've got a nevey, my sister's son, about four years old. His father's name is Nibble—a very unfortnit name to be born to; and my nevey, being such a fine child, was christened Nobby; and I would ask anybody as knows what human nature is, if any boy could ever come to good as was called Nobby Nibble ?

POLICE. I'm afraid as it's a unpossibility, Mr. Poynter.

POYNTER. It is, Tom; for, in consequence of having such a name, my nevey, when he was only two years old stole his nuss's night cap, right off her head. He did, indeed !

POLICE. It's a awful beginning of life, Jonathan.

POYNTER. Yes, Tom, my nevey is percocious in crime; for when only two years and a half old he prigged a lobster off a costermonger's barrer.

POLICE. Wuss and wuss !

POYNTER. Yes; and we should never have found that robbery out if eating o' the lobster hadn't made him poorly.

POLICE. Perhaps it wasn't a very good un ?

POYNTER. No, Tom; it was rather gone—as a judgment on him.

POLICE. It's a hard case, Jonathan.

POYNTER. Yes; it's a blue look out for a proud-spirited policeman, ain't it, Tom.

POLICE. Perhaps he may reform as he grows older.

POYNTER. I hope he may, but I'm afraid he won't; but I do all I can to encourage him to lead a virtuous life. There ain't a day passes that I don't give him a jolly good walloping. *(hootings without; all go up)*

SEYMOUE. What is that?

POYNTER. (*looking off*) Some women standing at their doors and hooting at Mrs. Rutherford.

Music; JANE RUTHERFORD enters hurriedly, door in C., poorly dressed, hair in disorder.

JANE. Ah, wretches, (*returns to door and shakes her fist without*) Old hags, you are all mad; Ah! some day I will make you sorry for this.

POYNTER. What's the matter, Mrs. Rutherford.

JANE. HOW should I know what is the matter with the screeching idiots? I think you had better see that people are not insulted in the streets instead of coming to their houses to rummage their drawers and turn all the things topsy-turvy. (*closing drawers*) What do you expect to find, I should like to know?

POYNTER. I don't choose to answer that question, so I shall wish you good morning, Mrs. Rutherford. Come along, Tom.

Exeunt.

JANE. (*now seeing Seymour*) Eh? who may you be, sir?

SEYMOUR. (*advancing*) Have you forgotten me, Jane?

JANE. Why, I declare, 'tis John Seymour! What a long time since I have seen you.

SEYMOUR. Yes; but having to come to London to-day, I made up my mind to give you a call, and so obtained your address from your child's nurse.

JANE. (*eagerly*) You have seen my darling little Jessie?

SEYMOUR. Yes, and found her in most excellent health.

JANE. The woman who has the care of her is a distant relation of my own, or else I shouldn't have let my little Jessie go from me all the way to Southsea Common—she is just fifteen months old now, and she was only six when she went away from me, and had such great black eyes, and beautiful light hair—the darling—but soon now I shall have her back with me again, never more to leave me, oh, no—oh, no!

SEYMOUR. I have brought you a lock of her hair, Jane.

JANE, (*snatching it*) Oh, thank you, John—thank you, (*she gazes fondly on the lock of hair, with difficulty restraining her tears*) her hair—dear little angel! (*pressing hair to her lips*)

SEYMOUR, (*aside—observing JANE, R.*) No; it is impossible!

(*aloud*) Jane, do you know what those men have told me?

JANE. No.

SEYMOUR. Pardon me for repeating it to you, but they accuse you of having stolen poor little children, and of having sold them to wretches who make hideous profit of their helpless childishness.

JANE. (*troubled*) Policemen are always inventing something or other!

SEYMOUR. Swear to me that that they have spoken falsely !

JANE. (*laughing*) Why, of course they have! I'll swear that fast enough !

SEYMOUR. (*taking her hands*) Swear it to me by the life of your child! and you know that should you blaspheme your little daughter would die. (JANE *withdraws her hands*) Why, Jane, do you not take the oath ?

JANE. Because there are already plenty of angels in heaven, and I wish to keep my Jessie to myself.

SEYMOUR. Unhappy woman! they spoke truly then.

JANE. Why should such a fuss be made about it ? One would think that I had killed somebody—had committed a murder!

SEYMOUR. But, to rob parents of their children.

JANE. I know nothing of the parents ! I will speak truthfully to you, John, because we have known each other almost since we were born, and I am certain that you will not betray me ! Well, I want to grow rich, not for myself, but for Jessie! I don't mean that she should walk barefoot in the snow, as I had to do in my childhood. I don't mean that she should be compelled to beg of passers-by, as was the case with me ; and having myself known in my young days what it was to be hungry and athirst, I am resolved to shield her from such misery ; what care I for others' children ! Let mothers weep and go mad, what matters it to me! my daughter is the whole world to me—it is my daughter's happiness that I desire, and to secure that, I would give my life, my soul—do you comprehend ? Well! surely I may purchase it with the tears of other mothers.

SEYMOUR. Think how your husband will suffer when he shall know ? I heard yesterday, at Portsmouth, that the arrival of his vessel was almost hourly expected.

JANE. (*indifferently*) Yes, this is about the time I may expect his return.

SEYMOUR. Well?

JANE. He is but a common sailor, and I have already obtained far more money for my Jessie than he will bring home with him.

SEYMOUR. But your money is accursed.

JANE. Well, let me be myself accursed, if I can make my daughter rich.

SEYMOUR. (*going*) Oh, horrible !

JANE. You are going to denounce me?

SEYMOUR. No, no, the memory of past days will not let me do that. *Exit, door C.*

JANE. Yes, money—I have some here—here, (*opens a concealed place in the wall*) Bank notes ! But somebody may discover this place, and rob me—I will carry them about me, that will be safest. (*puts notes in her pocket*) My husband is a sailor, (*while speaking she kisses the lock of hair*) and sailors are sure, sooner or later, to perish in some shipwreck, and of what use could he be to little Jessie when he was drowned ? No, no, it is for me to lay by money for my daughter, and I will have it!

LORD CHESTERTON *appears suddenly at door C., cloaked and masked.*

LORD C. I am here to offer money to you.

JANE. Who are you ? what would you with me ? Money! you bring me money ?

LORD C. Yes; but you must earn it.

JANE. In what way ?

LORD C. (*after having looked around*) I am about to tell you—I know of what you are suspected.

JANE. (*quickly*) They are mad—they charge me falsely!

LORD C. SO much the worse! for if an hour hence, I should quit London carrying with me a little girl about a year old, there would be a fortune for you.

JANE. A fortune ?

LORD C. TWO thousand pounds.

JANE. (*dazzled*) Two thousand pounds !

LORD C. In an hour my carriage will be before your door—I will return, whatever comes of it.

JOE SIMPSON *enters door C.—his hands in his pockets, and smoking a cigar.*

JOE. Good morning, Mrs. Rutherford !

JANE. Good morning!

JOE. (*aside, attentively observing LORD CHESTERTON*) Well, I'm blest, if this ain't droll.

LORD C. (*to JANE*) You have perfectly understood me ?

JANE. Yes.

LORD C. In an hour.

JANE. Yes, in an hour. *Exit LORD CHESTERTON, door C.*

JOE. Who may that individual happen to be? I didn't know that people walked about now-a-days in that fashion. What's up, Mrs. Rutherford ?

JANE. What is that to you ?

JOE. Oh, now, I say, my dear friend, don't be cranky.

JANE. Your friend !

JOE. Well, my partner, if you like that better. The firm of Rutherford & Co.—the Co. kept carefully out of sight. (*throw-*

ing away his cigar) What a beastly weed! For the future I shall engage a vessel and import my own cigars, direct from Havannah—on credit!

JANE. (*reflecting*) A fortune! Yes! But the police are watching me, and I—I dare not.

JOE. Naturally I am an aristocrat. I was born to be the proprietor of a palace, never to walk on anything but the finest Turkey carpets, and, in short, to revel in all the luxuries of life. (*producing pocket-comb and arranging his hair*) You'd hardly believe it, Mrs. Rutherford, but this morning the cobbler that I have so long honoured with my patronage refused to sole and heel my boots unless he had the money first. Did you ever know such infamous conduct in all your life, Mrs. Rutherford? (*she pays no attention—he shouts*) Mrs. Rutherford!

JANE. (*starting from her reflections*) Well, what do you want?

JOE. Everything; and especially, and with the least possible delay, a new pair of boots, unless I can have my present crabshells repaired and made to look better than new. (JANE *has sunk again into thought—he shouts*) Mrs. Rutherford!

JANE. Well?

JOE. What did that man in the cloak want with you? I think I know him.

JANE. You know him?

JOE. Yes, I'm sure I've seen him before, on a certain occasion, that I'll tell you about some other time. Have you got a drop of gin in the house?

JANE. (*pointing to mantelpiece*) Yes, there.

JOE. (*taking bottle and two glasses*) To be obliged to wait upon myself! Isn't it humiliating! A citizen of a free country, and here I am without a single slavey! It makes me blush for human nature! Will you have a drop, Mrs. R.?

JANE. No.

JOE. Well, here's luck, then. (*it grows gradually dark*) You are wrong, Mrs. Rutherford, not to admit me to your confidence; for if your muffled-up gentleman is the man I take him to be, and I am sure he is, he would be a good spec for us both.

JANE. (*approaching him*) Well, Joe, what would you say if I were to put you in the way to pick up thirty pounds?

JOE. I should think it a very pleasant road to travel.

JANE. You see Poynter and the others are watching me so closely that I can't myself-----

JOE. Oh! that's it! A kinchen to prig, eh?

JANE. Yes, a child about a year old.

JOE. For our friend in the cloak?

JANE. Yes.

JOE. (*aside*) It's him then. Here's a bit of luck!

JANE. The gentleman will return here in three quarters of an hour.

JOE. I know where to get what we want.

JANE. Indeed?

JOE. Yes; a few doors off I just now saw a bit of a girl nursing a fine little child—on a doorstep—and the girl told me the baby's mother was gone out washing, and wouldn't be home till late.

JANE. Good, good!

JOE. I'll just send the little nursemaid on an errand, and then----(*going up*)

JANE. (*pointing to R. door*) No—stay; come this way.

JOE. Ah, true. But, I forgot—is it to be a girl or a boy?

JANE. A girl.

JOE. Quite necessary to know that, eh? and how old, did you say?

JANE. About a twelvemonth.

JOE. All right. In about ten minutes I shall have procured the article in question, and earned my thirty pounds. (*stopping and looking at MRS. RUTHERFORD*) Why, how queer you look! What is the matter with you?

JANE. I know not. A sudden, and as though a warning pang at my heart.

JOE. What a rummy idea! Come along, Mrs. R.

They go off door, R.

DANIEL RUTHERFORD, *carrying a child well wrapped up, enters door, C., followed by two other SAILORS.*

DAN. It's got dark, but I know this is the house. Has anybody got a match?

1ST SAILOR. I have.

DAN. Then see if you can't light the gas. (*SAILOR with lucifer match lights one of the candles*)

DAN. (*looking at child*) Isn't she something like a sailor's daughter! Sleeps like a top—just as if she was rocked in a hammock.

SAILOR. That was a capital notion of yours, Daniel.

DAN. Wasn't it. No sooner ashore at Portsmouth than I am off to Southsea Common. I take little Jessie away from the nurse and bring her up to London with me, so that my return may not be the only agreeable surprise to Jane.

SAILOR. I reckon your wife will be fine and pleased.

DAN. I rather expect so. (*looking at child*) Don't she sleep sound? Ah! and here's the cradle all ready for her. (*placing child in cradle*) there you are. (*giving cradle a gentle rock or two*) By-bye, my beauty!

SAILOR. Hush, Daniel! I think I hear somebody coming.

DAN. Jane, as a matter of course. Here, I say; we'll leave baby here, all alone, and let my missus find her there. Won't that be prime ?

SAILORS. Yes, to be sure ; that's it.

DAN. And here's a bottle of some sort of tippie. We can amuse ourselves with that for a few minutes; come along, boys. *(he takes the lighted candle and bottle, one of the SAILORS the two glasses, and all go off door, L.)*

Music—JANE enters door, R.

JANE. What a miserable night, and bitterly cold! *(lights candle)* Joe Simpson has secured the child by this time ! I saw him enter the house and then came away! I fancied that I heard a policeman's step moving towards where I stood! What's that ? *(listening)* It was like the breathing of some one asleep, *(looking about, she sees the child sleeping in the cradle)* The child! already! well, certainly, Joe has lost no time. *(noise of carriage heard)* He has soon and easily earned his thirty pounds. *(a knock at door, C.—JANE goes to and opens it — LORD C. appears, still cloaked and masked)*

LORD C. Well?

JANE. We have succeeded, *(taking the sleeping child from cradle, and giving it to him)* There is the child.

LORD C. *(placing child beneath his cloak, and giving JANE a handful of bank-notes)* And there is your money. *(JANE darts upon and clutches the money, and LORD C. disappears with child—music—noise of carriage leaving heard)*

JANE. *(wild with joy)* Now, my little Jessie is rich—oh, yes, rich, rich ! *(music—she kneels, and feverishly counts the bank-notes—DANIEL enters door L., quietly, and advances to his wife, and touches her on the shoulder, she turns, sees him, and terrified hastily conceals notes)* Is it you, Daniel ?

DAN. And ain't you going to give me a buss ?

JANE. Oh, yes. *(she embraces him)* And so you are returned. I knew, of course, that your vessel was expected home.

DAN. Yes, here I am, Jane. But I thought you should see her first, just for a minute or two, because-----

JANE. See who first, Daniel ?

DAN. Why—but where is she ? where have you put her ?

JANE. Of whom, or what, are you talking, Daniel?

DAN. Why of our little Jessie. I just now laid her there—in that cradle. *(JANE looks fixedly at him)* Yes, I have brought the little darling with me, and I put her in that cradle—sleeping like a little angel.

JANE. *(uttering a terrible cry)* Ah!

DAN. What is the matter with you ?

JANE. Oh! I have sold her—I have sold her—I have sold her!

DAN. What do you say ?

JANE. Yes, a whole fortune was offered to me, by a man—two thousand pounds if- -if I would give to him—a child; then, I sent Joe Simpson, and—and I thought the infant sleeping there was the child that he had stolen, and then, when the man returned, it was but this moment—(as *if mad*) Oh! I have sold my child—I have sold my child.

DAN. Miserable wretch! (*music—he snatches up a small hatchet which is near fire-place, and is rushing to strike JANE with it, when JOHN SEYMOUR enters door, C., and arrests his arm; the two SAILORS enter door, L.—tableau*)

JANE. Let me recover her first, Daniel, and you shall kill me after.

DAN. But that man, who was he ?

JANE. I know not—I know not! I saw not his face. He was masked, but he spoke to me, and I should recognize his voice. Yes, yes! Rest easy. I shall find little Jessie again! Yes, I shall find her! (*hurrying off, has reached C. door, when she is met by POYNTER, who enters*)

POYNTER. Jane Rutherford, you are my prisoner!

JANE. I! What for?

POYNTER. You will soon know.

JOE SIMPSON *is brought on handcuffed, C. door, by two POLICEMEN.—JANE recoils.*

POYNTER. This fellow was taken at the very moment he had possessed himself of a poor woman's child, and he has confessed, Mrs. Rutherford, that you were his accomplice.

JOE. (*coolly*) We are in for ten penn'orth at least, Mrs.

Rutherford; I am quite sure of that.

JANE. No, no! My daughter! I must find my daughter !

Let me pass—let me pass! (*attempting to escape, she finds herself surrounded; then she goes to DANIEL, who turns from her; despairingly*) Oh, pity me, heaven! pity and pardon me! (*bursts into a passion of tears, sinks on her knees, and raises her hands to Heaven.—Tableau*)

END OF PROLOGUE.

Fifteen Years are supposed to elapse between the Prologue and First Act.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.—*The Bar of a Tavern; door in C., opening on to street; door L.; tables and benches.*

People discovered seated, drinking and smoking; amongst them NOBBY NIBBLE ; JONATHAN POYNTER enters door, C., goes to the different tables, and at last sees NOBBY.

POYNTER. So, I have found you here again, have I! Oh, you depraved monster! you serpent of abomination!

NOBBY. (*seated, R.*) Are you talking to me, uncle, or to this other gentleman? (*pointing to shabby fellow he is drinking with*)

POYNTER. I tell you what, nevey,—you are a shame and disgrace to your sex.

NOBBY. What a nuisance uncles are! They are never satisfied.

POYNTER. Satisfied! Satisfied with such a—such a-----

NOBBY. I say, uncle, you're getting red in the gills. If you don't mind you'll break a blood-vessel. (*general laugh*)

POYNTER. Do you try to earn an honest living?

NOBBY. (*rising*) I should be ashamed of myself if I did. I was born to be a gentleman, 'cause I was always so jolly lazy.

POYNTER. You are nothing better than a thief—a pick-pocket!

NOBBY. Mind what you're saying, uncle, or else I'll bring an action against you. It's your profession, I suppose, that makes you think everybody is a thief. Certainly I know how to use my fingers, but, 'pon my honour, I never steals nothing. (*picks POYNTER'S pocket of his handkerchief*)

POYNTER. I know better; and I only wish I could catch you at it, wouldn't I lock you up, that's all.

NOBBY. Quod your nephew? What an unnatural uncle! (*steals POYNTER'S snuff box*)

POYNTER. What a disgrace for an honest policeman to have for a nephew one of the biggest rogues in London.

NOBBY. 'Tis rather comical, ain't it? Here, uncle, take a pinch of snuff to settle your nerves.

POYNTER. Why that's my snuff box! where did you find it?

NOBBY. In your pocket.

POYNTER. (*snatching box*) I feel as if I could cry.

NOBBY. Here's your handkerchief then.

POYNTER. Oh, you rascal!

NOBBY. You should mind your pockets, uncle. You, as a policeman, ought to know there's a great many thieves about.

POYNTER. (*enraged*) Do you want to bring down your uncle's curse upon your head?

NOBBY. Certainly not. I know I am a bad lot, because while a fellow is young he must amuse himself somehow or other; but I'm a dutiful nephew, and I should like to see anybody try on any tricks with my respectable uncle while I am by. (*looking round*) Some of you just come and pitch into my uncle, will you? I only wish somebody would split your head open, and break your leg and your arm, that you might see how I'd serve them.

POYNTER. (*affected*) Yes, Nobby, you are a dreadful rascal, but you are a good fellow, I know that.

NOBBY. Yes, uncle, so I am. I suppose you're going to stand a drop of something, ain't you, uncle?

POYNTER. Well, I don't mind, Nobby.

NOBBY. I knew you would.

POYNTER. (*aside*) I think I shall be able to make something of him, after all. (*they go over and sit at table, L., after bringing gin and water from bar—music*)

Enter SYDNEY WESTON, ARTHUR and GEORGE, D. C., all three in naval costume.

ARTHUR. (*dragging in* SYDNEY) I tell you I can go no further without refreshment—I am parched with thirst.

GEORGE. And so am I. (*at bar*) Pale ale!

SYDNEY. But could not you have found a more quiet house?

ARTHUR. Whatever is the matter with you, Sydney? what makes you look so wretched? Have you been gambling and lost all your money? if so my purse is at your service.

GEORGE. Or are you troubled with the rheumatism?

ARTHUR. Or are you in love? (*SYDNEY turns away*) Yes, that's it.

GEORGE. Pooh, that's nothing; I have been in love a hundred and fifty times.

ARTHUR. I have never been out of love myself.

Music —JANE RUTHERFORD appears, clinging to door C., pale and haggard, with difficulty she drags herself forward, and goes to two MEN who are seated on bench, conversing.

JANE. Charity, in the name of heaven, charity!

1ST MAN. Go away—don't bother!

2ND MAN. If I was the landlord, I wouldn't have a parcel of cadgers coming to my bar.

JANE. (*aside*) Am I then to perish with hunger? (*she totters and sinks on to bench*)

NOBBY. Oh, here's a woman a-going to faint—give her some brandy.

1ST MAN. Don't do anything of the sort! I recollect her now; she's had fifteen years' penal servitude—a policeman

pointed her out to me—her time was up only yesterday.
(SYDNEY *brings brandy from bar, and thrusts NOBBY and MAN aside*)

SYDNEY. Brutes!

NOBBY. Holloa! I say-----

SYDNEY. (*putting glass to JANE'S lips*) Here, poor woman.

JANE. (*recovering*) Oh, thank you, sir—how good you are !

POYNTER. (*aside*) 'Tis Jane Rutherford !

MAN. (to NOBBY) I say, I ain't going to stand being pushed about, if you are.

NOBBY. But I ain't—I'll soon take the conceit out of him.

MAN. No, not you—I shall!

NOBBY. No, you leave him to me, I'm a better man than you are—I can fight a bit, I can. Here, I say, you Mr. Sailor-officer !

SYDNEY. Well, rascal ?

NOBBY. Oh, am I? (*squaring*) Just let's have a round, and I'll soon polish you off!

POYNTER. If you're not quiet, I'll take you into custody.

NOBBY. YOU keep quiet, and I'll show you how I handle my fists. (*squaring*) Now, look out, you sir ! I'm going to give you such a spank on the eye. (*hits out at SYDNEY, who wards off the blow, then, seizing NOBBY by the collar, shakes him and hurls him away—NOBBY falls—all laugh, and SYDNEY and his two friends go off, C.—CUSTOMERS disperse and exeunt—NOBBY sits up—his nose bleeding*)

POYNTER. That serves you right, you vagabond.

NOBBY. Ain't he strong ? Where is he ?

POYNTER. He's gone, you rascal.

NOBBY. (*rising*) I'm glad of it, for I've had quite enough of him. I shall go and put my nose under the pump. *Exit, door, L.*

POYNTER. That damaged organ may be of great service to him—in a moral point of view. (*going to JANE*) Well, Mrs. Rutherford ?

JANE. My name! you know me ?

POYNTER. And have you forgotten me ?

JANE. Mr. Poynter!

POYNTER. You seem to have had a hard fifteen years of it.

JANE. Yes—I have been very guilty, and very terrible has been my punishment. Released yesterday, all last night I wandered about the streets of London.

POYNTER. You have heard nothing of your daughter ?

JANE. No ; I have lived only that I might recover her—but for that sustaining hope long since I should have killed myself.

POYNTER. You know, of course, that your husband is dead?

JANE. Yes—poor Daniel.

POYNTER. And that Joe Simpson-----

JANE. What of him ?

POYNTER. Well, he had ten years, and when his time was out, went off to America, and I should hope that the Yankees have hanged him long before this.

JANE. *(to herself)* Fifteen years, and every year, an age. I counted months, days, hours—and at last, heaven be thanked, am returned—I now may seek my poor Jessie.

POYNTER. Mrs. Rutherford—the stranger that took your child away was masked, if I remember right.

JANE. Yes.

POYNTER. Well, then, how do you-----

JANE. He spoke to me. *(repeating)* " If an hour hence I should quit London, carrying with me a little girl about a year old, there would be a fortune for you—two thousand pounds; in an hour my carriage will be before your door." It's fifteen years since I listened to those execrable words, and they are now ringing in my ear as plainly as though it was but yesterday they were spoken. Fifteen years, and I still hear that voice; after having chastised, crushed, annihilated me, heaven in its mercy, gives me the one ray of hope to light me on my way, that I may find my daughter. *(voices without)* "Stop him—stop him!"

POYNTER.*(going up)* Is it my nephew they're after, I wonder?

Enter a MAN, C.

MAN. A horse had run away—but he's arrested now.

POYNTER. It's me that ought to have arrested him, considering that I am a policeman.

Music; SYDNEY enters, C., bearing MARIAN fainting in his arms; JANE brings chair; SYDNEY places MARIAN in it.

JANE. Poor young lady!

SYDNEY. 'Tis nothing—she is reviving. I seized the horse's bridle, and received Lady Marian in my arms.

MARIAN.*(reviving)* Sydney ! is it to you—to you that I owe my life ?

SYDNEY. Marian!

MARIAN. I know not what it was that frightened my horse, but how wildly he galloped. I turned my head to call my father, but he was far behind me; then I believed that I was lost, and but for you, Sydney—oh ! I am so happy to owe you my life. *(giving her hand to him)*

SYDNEY. *(softly)* Dear Marian !

JANE. *(listening eagerly)* How beautiful she is—dark eyes and light hair, like Jessie!

MARIAN. (*seeing Jane*) Goodness, Sydney! do look how that poor woman's eyes are fixed upon me.

JANE. Pray, do not mind, young lady— it can do you no harm that I look at you, while it is to me a consolation.

MARIAN. (*surprised*) What say you? Who are you?

JANE. A mother who, beholding you, cannot forbear to think upon her daughter.

MARIAN. (*interested*) Ah! you have a daughter?

JANE. Alas! I no longer possess her. They have deprived me of her; she has been stolen from me.

MARIAN. (*with emotion*) Stolen!

JANE. Yes; but I will seek her, and it shall go hard-----

MARIAN. Poor woman! (*offering JANE pieces of gold which she has taken from portmonnaie*) Accept these; they are to assist you in the recovery of your child.

JANE. (*devouring MARIAN with her eyes*) My child!—yes, yes; I will find her.

MARIAN. And I will pray to heaven for you.

JANE. Yes, (*greatly moved*) pray, pray for me. Heaven will not be deaf to the prayers of an angel!

LORD CHESTERTON *appears, C., with SERVANT.*

MARIAN. (*running to him*) I am here, father. Do not be alarmed; I am not killed.

LORD C. What a mad girl you are, to terrify me in such a way! (*JANE, who was walking away, stops and starts on hearing LORD C'S. voice*)

JANE. Ah!

LORD C. You shall not again ride that unruly beast. He shall be sold within an hour for anything that he will bring. (*JANE'S emotion increases as she listens*)

JANE. (*aside, as if mad*) An hour!—within an hour! Ah, the same voice! the same voice!

LORD C. Come, let us quit this tavern.

MARIAN. But, father, you have not yet thanked my preserver.

LORD C. Your preserver?

MARIAN. Your thanks are due to Mr. Sydney Weston that your daughter now is living.

LORD C. (*aside*) He, again. (*aloud, and bowing coldly*) I am grateful to you, Mr. Weston.

MARIAN. (*reproachfully*) How coldly you say that, my lord; and to Sydney, your nephew, and the friend of my childhood.

LORD C. (*impatiently*) Come, Marian, let us return home. (*MARIAN gives her hand to SYDNEY—LORD C. draws her from him, and leads her off, C.—JANE'S eyes fixed on MARIAN to the last, and SYDNEY, as if taking a sudden resolution, follows them*)

JANE. (*going to POYNTER*) Tell me—who is that man ?

POYNTER. What man ? which man ?

JANE. He, whom that young girl called father.

POYNTER. Oh, that is Lord Chesterton.

JANE. Lord Chesterton ? Indeed!

POYNTER. Yes. I must go and see what my nephew is doing with his nose all this time. *Exit, C.*

JANE. Ah, 'tis in vain that he calls her Marian ! she is Jessie—she is my daughter! *Music—goes slowly and thoughtfully off, C.*

SCENE SECOND.—*Handsome Apartment. Large door, C., with steps leading down to garden ; door, R. ; door, L.; fireplace, R.; elegantly furnished.*

Enter MARIAN and SYDNEY WESTON, door L.

SYDNEY. Your father will, no doubt, presently rejoin you here—I have but a few moments, Marian, to converse with you, and you will not drive me from you ?

MARIAN. Oh, Sydney, what have I done that you should speak thus cruelly to me ? Am I responsible for the wrongs you have suffered from my father ? If he has banished you from his hearth, have I not still preserved for you your place within my heart ?

SYDNEY. Forgive me, Marian; but entering this house so full of remembrances, in which my youth revelled in such happy dreams—breathing the air of that sweet and joyous past! Oh, I feel as though my heart would break! (*sinks on to chair*)

MARIAN. Poor Sydney!

SYDNEY. To-day, I could not forbear to follow you—an invincible force urged me to enter here as for a last farewell, for it seems to me that I am about to lose you— and I have but you in all the world.

MARIAN. And am I not also entirely alone ? Have I not to suffer my father's indifference ? and by my mother's death was I not rendered doubly an orphan ? Sydney, I have sworn to you that I would be your wife—and that oath I have not forgotten. Let us love each other, and wait and hope—heaven is with those who truly love.

SYDNEY. (*covering her hand with kisses*) Oh, dear Marian!

MARIAN. This very day—immediately, I will speak to my father, he cannot wish to see me miserable, and will consent; besides, have you not this very morning, saved my life ? Oh, I know not wherefore, but an almost infinite hope is at my heart, and it seems to me that our trials are approaching their termination. Hark ! (*agitated*) I hear his voice—he must **not find** us together! **Go that way.** (*pointing to garden*) **But**

return this evening at nine o'clock, and I shall then have, I trust, some news for you.

SYDNEY. Oh, if thus it should be !

MARIAN. Away ! my father is here !

(Music—SYDNEY kisses MARIAN'S hand, and hurries off, C., down steps, disappearing in garden)

Enter LORD CHESTERTON, *door L., followed by* JAMES.

LORD C. That will do ; you have received my orders.

JAMES. Yes, my lord ; but—I beg your ladyship's pardon—*(to MARIAN)* a woman has come to offer herself for the situation of waiting-maid, which yesterday became vacant.

LORD C. Has she any testimonials as to character ?

JAMES. No, my lord; but she appears honest and unfortunate.

MARIAN. *(interested)* Indeed.

JAMES. This situation, she says, is her only resource—her only hope.

MARIAN. Poor woman.

LORD C. Pah! if one was obliged to give shelter to every mendicant-----

MARIAN. *(pleadingly)* Father !

LORD C. Well, see this woman, and if she suits you, I shall not interfere. *(sits, L.)*

MARIAN. Thank you, father. *(to JAMES)* I will see her.

Exit JAMES, *door L.*

LORD C. *(aside, gloomily)* Another two thousand pounds gone in a single rubber! Always the same infernal luck.

MARIAN. You look as if something had vexed you, father.

LORD C. *(sharply)* Nonsense! Why should you suppose that ?

MARIAN. *(timidly)* No, I—I merely feared that-----

LORD C. *(more calmly)* You are quite mistaken, Marian; I have not, on any subject, the slightest cause for annoyance.

MARIAN. I am delighted to hear it, for I have this evening an entreaty and an avowal to make to you.

LORD C. An avowal?

MARIAN. You would long since have received it, but that your severity and coldness sealed my tongue.

LORD C. Is that intended for a reproach ?

MARIAN. No, father, it is an excuse.

LORD C. Well, what is the question ? let me hear.

MARIAN. It is a matter on which depends the happiness of my life.

LORD C. *(slightly ironical)* Ah, I see, some romantic passion—a boarding school girl's idyll, whose hero calls himself, I have no doubt, Sydney Weston.

MARIAN. Yes, father.

LORD C. Yes, I understand—hunting an heiress.

MARIAN. You wrong him, my lord. No soul more noble—no heart more generous—and to-day, in saving me, has he not proved-----

LORD C. Briefly, you would ask of me-----

MARIAN. To ratify my heart's choice—to consent to our marriage.

LORD C. (*hesitatingly*) A mere naval officer, and a younger son, without patrimony.

MARIAN. Was he not my mother's only relative ? Besides, I am rich enough for two. Shall I not have for dowry the fortune that was left to me by Lady Chesterton ?

LORD C. (*aside, starting*) The fortune of----- (*aloud*) I have just remembered a very important matter. Ring the bell, Marian.

MARIAN. You have not answered me, father.

LORD C. Some other time, but now I-----

Enter JAMES, door, C.

JAMES. Come along, my good woman.

Enter JANE RUTHERFORD, plainly and neatly dressed; she stands hesitating near door.

LORD C. What now ? What is it you want ?

MARIAN. 'Tis the woman of whom James just now told us.

JAMES. Yes, my lady.

JANE (*aside, motionless, agitated, and in a kind of extacy, gazing on MARIAN*) 'Tis she—my Jessie—my dear, dear daughter! I again behold her ! I am again near her !

LORD C. (*rudely to JANE*) Well ? Why are you standing there ? Why do you not approach ?

JANE (*trembling*) Yes, my lord; yes—I-----

MARIAN. (*gently*) How you tremble!

JANE. Pray, forgive me, I am so troubled. The emotion, you understand, on thus, for the first time-----

LORD C. (*aside*) That face appears familiar to me.

MARIAN. (*regarding her more attentively*) I cannot be mistaken. You are she whom I saw awhile since at-----

JANE. Yes, at that tavern. (*aside*) She remembers me! dear angel!

LORD C. (*aside*) The tavern! 'Tis there, then, that I have seen her.

JANE. Seeing that you were so good and charitable, I, after your departure, thought to myself how happily I could pass my days beside you; then I made inquiries and learned that you required a waiting-woman. With the money you had given me I purchased more suitable attire, and am come to

you, hoping that you will not refuse my services, and that Heaven will be so merciful to me as to permit that I may live near you!

MARIAN. (*interested*) Oh, yes; certainly. You remain with me—that is decided.

JANE. (*aside*) Thanks, gracious heaven!

LORD C. (*aside*) This emotion is strange!

MARIAN. Now, father, if you please, we will take a walk together in the garden.

LORD C. Yes, I comprehend; you would speak to me again of Sydney Weston.

JANE. (*aside, near door, L.*) Sydney Weston! (*listens attentively*)

LORD C. You hope to gain the cause you are soliciting?

MARIAN. (*entreating*) Father!

JANE. (*aside*) Poor child! she loves him!

MARIAN. Why refuse a consent which would render me so happy?

JANE. (*aside, angrily*) Refuse!

LORD C. I do not exactly refuse, but I require time for reflection, and then we shall see.

JANE. (*aside*) That is well. Oh, I would see them both happy!

LORD C. (*seeing JANE*) How! you are still here! Listening, perhaps!

JANE. (*excusing herself*) My lord, I-----

MARIAN. (*at back*) Are you not coming, father?

LORD C. (*going up*) Well, since you will have it so. (*aside, looking at JANE*) I must know who is this woman. (*goes off, C., with MARIAN, who smilingly waves her hand to JANE—JANE goes to door, C., and looks after MARIAN*)

JANE. My daughter! my beautiful Jessie! my adored child! (*stopping overwhelmed*) And never to be to her but as a stranger, a servant! to renounce her love—her caresses, (*weeping*) and that sweet joy of hearing her call me—moth—(*drying her tears*) Renounce all that! But wherefore? After all, she is my child—my own flesh and blood! (*with savage energy*) Shall I be silent—leave her to this lord—this false father, who cannot, who does not, love her? whilst I—I----- (*reflecting*) But should he refuse to restore her to me? Well! if he should, there are judges. To them I will appeal, and they will listen—will believe me—there is no mistaking the accents of a mother—they will give me back my child. (*happily convinced*) Yes, yes, they will restore her to me! (*looking around her, and after a long pause*) What should I have to offer her in the place of those comforts, those luxuries to which she has been accustomed? Privations, misery!—And that young man who

loves her, would he wed her should he learn that I am her mother? I should condemn her to regrets and to despair—should cause her tears to flow. Oh! I must be silent—must preserve my secret! I will be satisfied with beholding her, with watching over her, and in witnessing her happiness. Yes, I shall see her walk and smile, shall hear her speak! And who knows, she may come to like me, and make of me the confidant of her little secrets. And perhaps, on some great occasion, I may find an excuse for taking her in my arms, and may embrace and kiss her. Oh, what a happy moment would that be!

LORD C. (*entering, c.*) You are still here.

JANE (*entering, door h.*) This, my lord, is the gentleman who has asked to be allowed to speak with you.

Enter JOE SIMPSON, *door L., dressed well and in good taste.*

JOE. Sorry to intrude, my lord.

JANE (*aside, stupefied*) Simpson!

LORD C. (*to JAMES and JANE*) Leave us!

JAMES *goes off, door R.* JANE *follows slowly, her eyes fixed on SIMPSON.*

LORD C. You have desired to speak with me?

JOE. Yes, my lord, and on a very important matter.

LORD C. (*points to chair, both sit*) But, in the first place, be good enough, sir, to inform me who you are?

JOE. Oh, it isn't a question of what I am, but of what I wish to be.

LORD C. (*surprised*) Sir?

JOE. (*boldly and imperturbably*) Over my past career, which has been anything but easy and pleasant, I will draw a discreet veil. I have often hurt myself against the asperities of life, and have had what is called a stormy youth-----

LORD C. (*striving to interrupt*) But, sir-----

JOE. Pray, allow me to proceed. I have resolved to clothe myself with a new skin. I am ambitious, my lord; aspire to honour and consideration—at no time of life are we without our little weaknesses. (LORD C. *displays impatience*) To attain that end, I have an idea of making a brilliant marriage, of contracting a rich alliance. In a word, I am here to ask of you the hand of your daughter, Lady Marian Chesterton.

LORD C. (*indignantly*) What, sir! are you mad? Give my daughter, Lady Marian Chesterton, to you!

JOE. Exactly! I have not properly explained myself; (*rising, and firmly*) I ask of you the child whom you purchased from Mrs. Jane Rutherford.

LORD C. (*bounding from his chair*) What is it that you dare to say?

JOE. (*quietly*) I have proof.

LORD C. Proof! You?

JOE. (*sitting again, very calmly*) One night, fifteen years ago—I was then twenty years of age. (LORD C. *sinks again into his chair and listens*) Ah! I have secured your attention. (*resuming his recital*) I found myself in Chesterton Park.

LORD C. (*troubled*) Chesterton Park!

JOE. One of your estates—I did a little poaching in those days—what could I do—a man must live you know! and besides, I was always fond of game. Well, that night, I was on the hunt for a few of your hares—was lying in ambush, when, suddenly, I heard steps in the park; lest I should be discovered, I squatted behind a bush, and then I saw a man approach who was carrying something beneath his cloak.

LORD C. (*aside*) Oh, heaven!

JOE. With a spade, he dug a hole in the ground, and there deposited the object that he had brought, a sort of coffer. The moon was shining brilliantly at that moment, and I was able to distinguish that man's features; it was you, my lord.

LORD C. (*endeavouring to contain his emotion*) I?

JOE. Yourself; no sort of mistake about it, my lord. Having finished your work, away you went. Then, by a very natural curiosity, I wished to know what that mysterious coffer contained. I imagined it was gold. I easily removed the earth which you had so recently stirred. I raised the lid, and to my great surprise, I found—is it necessary, my lord, that I should tell you what I found?

LORD C. (*quickly, and looking round him in alarm*) No, there is no occasion.

JOE. I reclosed the coffer, and replaced it in the hole, which you had dug for it, and, a precaution which you had neglected, I cut a mark on the tree at the foot of which it was buried, so that, even now, I could easily find that grave, a thing which, probably, to you, would be impossible.

LORD C. (*aside*) True—that is true.

JOE. That secret, I had a presentiment, would some day be of service to me; and I was not mistaken, for on the following day I saw in Jane Rutherford's house a man, cloaked and masked, but whose gait and manner it appeared to me that I knew; and when I had learned that that gentleman had come to purchase a child, I had no longer a single doubt.

LORD C. (*aside*) He knows all!

JOE. It needed no great intelligence to comprehend that you wished to replace the child which death had removed. I sought for information and learned that Lord Chesterton had dissipated at the gaming table almost every shilling of his personal fortune, and his wife's large dowry would, at her

death, revert to Sydney Weston if there were no surviving child of that marriage. Now, Lady Chesterton was just dead, her only daughter had, after a few days, followed her, and the dowry was about to escape you, unless by a substitution you could cause it to be believed that that child still existed. At once I settled on my plan. I had patience, suffered years to roll by—for it was necessary to my purposes that the young girl should be of a marriageable age. And now that that long expected moment has arrived, now that my dreams of ambition and of fortune may at length become realities, I am here to ask in marriage the hand of Lady Marian Chesterton.

LORD C. (*haughtily*) And should I brave your audacity? should I refuse?

JOE. Your lordship would make a great fool of yourself.

LORD C. Sir!

JOE. Should you refuse, on leaving here I conduct a couple of police officers to your park, I cause the ground to be stirred, and there, at the foot of the tree which I alone know, would be found the skeleton of a little girl—the veritable Lady Marian; and if my testimony should be found insufficient, it would be assisted by that of Jane Rutherford.

LORD C. That woman has been condemned to penal servitude—is perhaps dead.

JOE. Oh, no; she has served her time—has returned, and is now, as I know, in London.

LORD C. (*aside*) Malediction!

JOE. And a long term of penal servitude would be your lot, my lord, if you should make me now your foe; and judging from my own experience, I don't think, my lord, that penal servitude would particularly well agree with you.

LORD C. (*overwhelmed*) I am in your power, and must resign myself to accept your conditions.

JOE. I think it's about the best thing you could do.

LORD C. (*aside*) And after all, Marian is not my daughter.

JOE. I shall obtain a licence, and this very evening the marriage must take place.

LORD C. But her heart is not free—there is one whom she loves.

JOE. Yes, I know—her cousin, Sydney Weston. But I am not of a jealous disposition. Ta-ta, for the present, my lord. (*going, stops*) Oh, I had almost forgotten to tell you that for the present I call myself Sir Lionel Mortimer—it sounds well, doesn't it. Ta-ta, my lord. *Exit, door L.*

LORD C. (*overpowered*) There is no help for it! my fortune—my safety, exact this marriage.

JANE. (*dashing on door, R.--pale and threatening*) And I tell you, my lord, that Lady Marian shall not be so sacrificed.

LORD C. How dare you speak thus to me ?

JANE. Because I am her mother.

LORD C. (*astounded*) Jane Rutherford !

JANE. Yes; look at me well—ah! you recognise me, my lord. I had resigned myself never to hear the sweet name of mother uttered by her lips—to see her rich and happy, could have been to her but as a servant, but you would sacrifice her to an infamous wretch—would tear her from him whom she loves—would coolly consummate her misery and her shame. Oh! I will speak! You know not then what kind of man is he who has just quitted you? He is a thief, a returned convict. (LORD C. *turns away*) You may believe me; that man and I were condemned together.

LORD C. Well, hark ye! I confess it! You are Jane Rutherford, and Marian is indeed your daughter; but what proof can you furnish of that ?

JANE. What proof?

LORD C. You would not be believed.

JANE. Oh! she would believe me—she would believe me!

LORD C. Of what weight would be the testimony of a woman whom justice had degraded ? In a struggle with me you would be utterly crushed. Beware, Jane Rutherford ! you sold that child to me, sold to me your daughter.

JANE. Yes, I am a miserable wretch—have touched the accursed gold—even still it burns in my hand. I have been punished by men—have been chastised by heaven, but by expiation I have earned the right to walk again erect before men—by repentance have gained courage once more to raise my head towards heaven. Jessie, my daughter, that treasure of beauty and of innocence become the wife of a returned convict! (*laughing wildly*) Ha, ha, ha! Do you not know then that I will go to Chesterton Park—yes, heaven will conduct me, and I will find the true Marian in her tomb, and will say to the judges, " See here, take the dead, and restore to me the living! Give me back my daughter!"

LORD C. Begone ! I defy you—quit my house.

JANE. Yes, but I will not go alone. (*calling*) Jessie—my child—my daughter—come to me, Jessie !

LORD C. (*frantically*) Oh ! I am lost! (*rings violently*)

Enter several SERVANTS, R. and L.

Thrust that mad woman forth!

JANE. Mad, am I!

LORD C. Obey me, I say—thrust her forth !

JANE. Ah! coward ! (SERVANTS *seize her—she dashes them away—advances threateningly to* LORD C.) Beware, Lord Chesterton, beware! You drive me forth, but soon I shall

return to thunder at your door! (*hurries off door, L.—SERVANTS follow her—music*)

MARIAN. (*entering C.—aside*) What noise was that I heard ! (*aloud*) Father, what has happened ?

LORD C. Marian ! call to your aid all your submission—all your courage.

MARIAN. Oh, you terrify me ! What is it, my lord, you are about to tell me ?

LORD C. Reasons more powerful than my will compel me to dispose of you—of your hand.

MARIAN. (*terrified*) A marriage !

LORD C. A marriage on which depends the honour of our family !

MARIAN. Oh!

LORD C. Your refusal would be my destruction ; and I have so strongly relied on your devotion that I have engaged my word.

MARIAN. (*bursting into tears*) Oh! father, father!

LORD C. This very evening your union----- it must be so !

MARIAN. (*with clasped hands*) In the name of heaven !

LORD C. (*in great agitation*) I command ! There is no help for it, and you must obey! (*rushes off, door, R.*)

MARIAN. Oh! unhappy girl! unhappy girl!

Enter SYDNEY, C.

SYDNEY. Marian!

MARIAN. (*half-shrieking*) Ah !

SYDNEY. (*advancing*) Marian, Lord Chesterton was with you ! Oh, speak quickly! Give me a ray of hope! One word from you is life or death to me !

MARIAN. (*weeping*) There is no happiness for us in this 'world, Sydney! This very evening I must become the wife of another!

SYDNEY. Heavens!

MARIAN. Do not overwhelm me, Sydney; deprive me not of all courage ! Go—forget me!

SYDNEY. And you consent ?

MARIAN. The—the honour of—of our family-----

SYDNEY. But your oath ! that oath which but now and here you swore to me!

MARIAN. Forget it! It must be so !

SYDNEY. Oh, now I comprehend—and I was mad to believe in your promises or your love !

MARIAN. (*still weeping*) 'Tis my father commands !

SYDNEY. Obey him, then. (*bitterly*) Go, Lady Marian; contract the alliance has been proposed to you ! Farewell!

MARIAN. Sydney!

SYDNEY. Farewell, Lady Marian—and for ever! (*hurries off, C.*)

MARIAN. Stay, Sydney, stay! (*tottering*) Oh, this is more than my heart can bear! Strength abandons me—I feel as though I were about to die ! (*music—she sinks senseless onto a couch, R.*)

Enter JANE, door, L., sees, and with a cry hurries to and kneels beside MARIAN.

JANE. Jessie! Jessie! Senseless! inanimate! They would kill her, but they shall not! She is mine—my treasure—and I will bear her from them ! (*raising MARIAN in her arms*) Why not ? Formerly I have stolen the children of others—surely now I may steal from them my own daughter ! (*she darts off, carrying MARIAN, C., down steps, disappearing in garden—music*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST.—*A Garret; a window C., rather high up; curtains, supposed of a bed, R. C. in flat; door, forward, L. 1 E.; an arm chair R., beside it a stool, and near it a deal table, on which is a small work basket; two straw-bottomed chairs L., and an old chest of drawers—music.*

JANE RUTHERFORD is discovered standing near drawers;
MARIAN, pensively, near window ; both are pale and haggard, and are dressed as in last Act, but their clothes are now old and worn.

JANE. (*after having silently contemplated MARIAN*) Jessie, darling, of what are you thinking ?

MARIAN. Oh, nothing, mother—nothing.

JANE. (*smiling, mournfully*) Ah, you say that in order that you may not grieve me; but I know well what are your thoughts—you are regretting that-----

MARIAN. (*quickly*) No, no, mother, you are mistaken; what should I regret while I am with you who so love me—who are so good, so devoted to me ? (*sits in arm chair*)

JANE. No, you do not complain, because you are an angel—you endure all—privation, misery, with saint-like resignation. 'Tis now a month since I brought you and have concealed you in this wretched garret, and not one complaining word have your lips yet murmured; and 'tis that which fills me with

desolation, for, believe me, I would rather be made to endure your reproaches. (*sits on stool near MARIAN*)

MARIAN. Reproaches to you? Oh, mother!

JANE. It relieves me to complain.

MARIAN. But, I assure you, mother-----

JANE. Poor child! (*taking her hands*) How cold your hands are. (*she chafes and kisses them*)

MARIAN. Do not despair, mother, heaven will have pity on us.

JANE. (*rising*) The last of our feeble resources exhausted! (*looking round*) Nothing left—nothing!

MARIAN. (*with assumed cheerfulness*) Oh, we shall at last obtain employment.

JANE. But in the meantime?

MARIAN. Our landlady will not, I daresay, refuse a little longer credit.

JANE. (*aside*) If she knew that this very morning that woman has threatened to drive us forth. (*aloud*) Employment! I am almost afraid to seek it, lest those who no doubt are watching for us should discover our dwelling. Yesterday evening, when leaving a warehouse at which I had hoped to obtain work, I had reason to believe that I was followed.

MARIAN. Oh, heaven!

JANE. What will soon become of us? Oh, if only for myself how little should I care! I am so accustomed to misery; but you, who have been reared amidst wealth and luxury—who have lacked nothing, and who now—(*despairingly*) Oh, Jessie! there are moments, when looking into your poor pale and wasted face, I almost resolve to-----

MARIAN. To do what, mother?

JANE. Well, to—to return to that lord from whom I have wrested you, and to say to him, "Take her back—I restore her to you, that she may live—that she may live!"

MARIAN. (*rising, and running to her*) Separate! no, mother—never—never! (*they embrace*)

JANE. (*with a joyful exclamation*) Ah! you love me then?

MARIAN. Oh, I loved you before I knew I was your daughter—from the first moment that I beheld you, have felt my heart melting with an undefinable tenderness—love you!

JANE. (*again embracing her*) Oh, how consoling—how consoling!

MARIAN. And you have thought to return me to him who would constrain my heart! to a man, who, for fifteen years, has kept me from you—for he did steal me from you, did he not, mother—you have told me so?

JANE. (*confused*) Yes—yes—stolen when an infant from your cradle whilst I was unavoidably absent.

MARIAN. (*taking her hand*) Well, then, come what may of poverty and privation, now that we are again united, we will never again be sundered !

JANE. (*embracing her*) Dear child ! you reanimate me with hope and courage! (*going towards door*)

MARIAN. You quit me ? Where are you going, mother ?

JANE. To see our landlady—to entreat from her a few days delay, and then again to a warehouse where I have been partly promised employment. I shall not be long away, darling.

Hurries off, door L.

MARIAN. Poor mother! I affect calmness and resignation that I may not afflict her, and I conceal from her a portion of my sorrow—poor Sydney! what has become of him ? (*sits in the arm chair, and takes from basket on table a small piece of embroidery*) Nothing have I heard of him since our separation—he believes, no doubt, that I am married, and accuses me of all that he is made to suffer—oh! that thought breaks my heart! and then, misery, hunger—I—I feel exhausted. (*the embroidery drops from her hand—her voice grows gradually weaker*) A drowsiness which I cannot conquer has taken possession of me. (*half asleep*) Sydney—dear Sydney!

(Music.—she is presently entirely asleep—a short pause—the window at back is gently opened and NOBBY NIBBLE appears without on the roof)

NOBBY. (*putting his head in at window*) I saw the peelers a-watching me in the street, that's all through my uncle—there can't be even a shilling lost in all London, but I am suspected of having found it. (*looking about, and not seeing MARIAN*) Nobody—not even a harmless, necessary cat. (*enters*) Perhaps I may be able to fill my pockets with a few light articles. (*advances cautiously, and stops upon seeing MARIAN*) Eh ? a gal asleep! (*looks about him—goes to and opens drawers*) Why, they are all empty! the people are awful poor, and ain't got nothing, and I am a man of too much feeling to take anything under such distressing circumstances. (*approaching and looking at MARIAN*) Poor gal! how pale she is—she doesn't look as if she had had a shoulder of mutton for dinner to-day. Blest if I don't leave her a few shillings—a good action always meets with its reward, and I shall be able to prig a pound from somebody else. (*puts money on table—starting*) Eh? there's somebody at the door! (*bolts towards window, and is half through, when POYNTER, who has run on, door L., seizes one of his legs*)

POYNTER. I've got you, you rascal!

NOBBY. Oh, it's you, is it! How are you, uncle ?

POYNTER. (*still holding him by leg*) You can't deny it this time.

NOBBY. Hush!

POYNTER. (*lowering his voice*) Hush ! what for ? Now I've got you at last! You've been stealing here !

NOBBY. No, I've been giving. Look on that table.

POYNTER. (*going to table*) 'Tis true; there's the money. That's proof.

NOBBY. Good-bye, uncle. (*disappears—MARIAN is awakened by the noise, and sees POYNTER*)

MARIAN. (*frightened*) Ah!

POYNTER. Don't be afraid ; I'm not a thief. I take 'em up, being a persevering member of the police force.

MARIAN. But what are you doing here ?

POYNTER. Looking after my nephew, a dreadful thief, who has left that money for you.

MARIAN. (*counting money on table with innocent joy*) Eight shillings ! Oh, Heaven! in our condition 'tis a perfect fortune!

Enter JANE, door L., utterly prostrated.

JANE. (*aside*) All my efforts, all my supplications, have been in vain!

POYNTER. Eh, what! Jane Rutherford!

JANE. (*astonished*) Mr. Poynter!

MARIAN. (*joyously*) Oh, mother, look at this money!

JANE. (*to POYNTER*) Ah ! I understand. It is you who—

POYNTER. No, not me. Let me render to Nobby Nibble what is due to Nobby Nibble. No, 'tis my rogue of a nephew that—but stop, though, perhaps he has picked my pocket of—(*searching*) No, all right; and here—here's all the money I've got in my pocket. 'Tain't much, but take it. (*puts a few shillings on table*)

JANE. Oh! Mr. Poynter, are you really so good to one who-----

POYNTER. An uncle can't submit to be outdone in generosity by his nephew, particularly when the uncle is a sergeant of police and the nephew is the prince of pickpockets.

JANE. Oh, thank you, thank you !

POYNTER. But who is that young girl ?

JANE. 'Tis Jessie, my daughter. (*proudly*) Is she not beautiful!

POYNTER. Your daughter ! Go along.

JANE. Yes, whom I have recovered from the man by whom she was stolen from me.

POYNTER. (*looking more attentively at MARIAN*) Yes, from Lord Chesterton? For if I am not mistaken-----

JANE. (*quickly*) Oh, preserve for me that secret! Do not destroy me!

POYNTER. I have no orders, consequently I know nothing.

JANE. (*pressing his hand*) Thanks, thanks!

POYNTER. Nobody complains, so I know nothing—haven't got no proof. *Exit, door L.*

MARIAN. You see mother, we should never despair. (*going to table and counting money*) Oh, do but look how rich we are!

JANE. (*going to table*) Yes, we shall be able now to live some days, thanks to this money, and in the meantime I shall perhaps obtain some kind of employment.

MARIAN. Did I not tell you that better days would soon arrive ? and now, you see-----

Door, L., is dashed open, and MRS. SNAPPER enters.

JANE. (*aside*) She! already!

MRS. S. Now then, I won't wait any longer. Can you pay ?

JANE. (*aside, hesitating*) O, heaven! that money is bread, life for my daughter! (*placing herself before table*) No.

MRS. S. Well, then, you shall turn out, as sure as my name is Snapper.

JANE. (*entreating*) For mercy's sake—a little patience!

MRS. S. I have been patient too long. Come, turn out!

MARIAN. (*giving her money on table*) There is your money.

MRS. S. (*taking it*) What ?

MARIAN. You are paid—go!

MRS. S. (*counting*) Fourteen shillings out of fifteen. Ah, well! Oh! here is a letter that has just come for you. You owe me a shilling now, but I'll wait a few days for that. I'm not a hard woman. Indeed, I'm too good natured a great deal. *Exit, door L.*

JANE. (*opening letter*) Oh! what have you done ? That money was our only resource.

MARIAN. It did not belong to us, since-----

JANE. But you grow pale—you totter. (*supporting her*) Oh, heaven, have pity on us ! But this letter (*reads with increasing emotion*)—" A person who has important reasons for not seeing you at your dwelling, but who has become acquainted with your sad position and is anxious to help you----- "

MARIAN. Oh, mother!

JANE. " Hopes to see you this evening, at eight o'clock, at Cremorne Gardens." Who can it be that—?

MARIAN (*struck with an idea*) Sydney!

JANE. Yes, you are right. It must be he, who still loves you, and who desires to aid us.

MARIAN. Dear Sydney ! Oh, go, mother, go !

JANE. Quit you at such a moment ? leave you alone ? But what can I do here for you ? It is not tears you need, but bread, for since yesterday you have not tasted food. And I will not be long gone,—soon I will bring you life, happiness, perhaps.

(*reflecting*) But how enter Cremorne with these miserable vestments? Oh, I will seek—I will find means.

MARIAN. Go, mother, go!

JANE. Yes, yes. Patience and courage, Jessie. (*embracing her*) I fly to save you! (*hurries off, door L.—MARIAN goes off, R.—clear stage*)

SCENE SECOND.—*Cremorne Gardens—illuminated; tables and seats, R. and L.—Chinese billiards, & c., beneath trees, R.*

In the distance PEOPLE discovered dancing, others promenading—some seated at tables, &c.—WAITERS hurrying about. *Music—POYNTER comes forward.*

POYNTER. The music and the lights, and the liquors and the pretty women, altogether make up a combination which produces on me a most extraordinary sensation; and if I wasn't in uniform and on duty, I—I—'pon my soul, I don't know what I shouldn't do; I feel so exhilarated, so desperately frisky, that really—but stop a minute. Jonathan Poynter, remember you are policeman, and as such, the public expects to find you a moral and virtuous member of Society. But for all that, a policeman is human nature; and just now, when a little angel in a pork-pie hat and a turn-up nose winked her eye at me, I declare—oh! why am I in uniform and on duty, and why did that turn-up nose take it in its head to wink at a policeman? (*goes up, and disappears amongst people—music continues, piano*)

Enter NOBBY NIBBLE, with Miss TITILINDA TOUCHEMUP on his arm, R., both are dressed to death.

NOBBY. Now, don't be cross—it's no use coming all the way to Cremorne only to be miserable.

Miss T. Don't talk to me; I hate you, and I am ashamed of you.

NOBBY. Well! I must say, Miss Tittilinda Touchemup, that you have very little respect for my feelings.

Miss T. You are such a mean young man.

NOBBY. I should like to know what you mean by that, Tittilinda! What more could I do? You said you must come in a cab, and I called a *shoffel* directly; the fare wasn't more than eighteen pence, but to prove I ain't stingy, I gave cabby half a crown. (*aside*) Certainly the half-crown was a bad 'un, but I needn't say anything about that! (*aloud*) Then you wanted a *bokay*, and I got you a *bokay*—then you wanted a pair of gloves, and I got you a pair of gloves, ain't that being liberal? (*aside*) Certainly I prigged 'em both, but I needn't say anything about that.

Miss T. (*pointing*) "What's a pair of gloves and a bokay ? and what's a cab? Oh, you're a mean young man !

NOBBY. Come, I say, just look here, Tittilinda-----

Miss T. And I am such a nervous creature—so sensitive, that the least annoyance or disappointment always causes me to swoon—oh! and I—I do believe I—oh! I'm going—I'm going—

NOBBY. No, don't go, we've only just come.

Miss T. Oh! salts! vinegar!

NOBBY. (*supporting her, and looking about—aside*) I wonder where I can prig some salt and vinegar? (*aloud*) Oh, soul of my life, pearl of the east, scum of the ocean—don't faint! What is it you want now? Say, my lovely perfume, my Rowland's Macassar! no luxury on earth that I would not prig—purchase for you ! Will you have a glass of gin and water, Tittilinda?

Miss T. Oh, how vulgar—and how mean!

NOBBY. Well, since you decline taking any refreshment, let's go and have a dance.

Miss T. No I won't, until you have promised that I shall have a gold watch and chain.

NOBBY. A watch and chain ? (*quietly, and glancing towards GENTLEMEN passing*) Um; I daresay I may be able to pick that up for you.

Miss T. Pick it up? yes, I should think so, at any jeweller's shop.

NOBBY. Um ; you risk being done there.

Miss T. Ugh! mean young man! you are afraid they'd charge-----

NOBBY. Yes, I am, and it would be a very heavy charge too if—
Miss T. You are always ready with some paltry excuse; but I must have them, or else I have done with you for ever.

NOBBY. You shall have them, angelic Tittilinda! I give you my word and honour, tantalizing Touchemup !

Miss T. (*pleased*) Really? and when—to-morrow?

NOBBY. Perhaps this evening.

Miss T. After we leave the gardens ? But the shops will be all shut up.

NOBBY. That doesn't matter to me, for I mean that you should have them before we leave the gardens.

Miss T. Ah, I know, you have got them in your pocket.

NOBBY. No, they are not in my pocket; but presently perhaps—(*unseen by her he makes a sign of stealing watch*)

Miss T. (*jumping with joy*) Ah, now you are a nice young man, Nobby.

POYNTER. (*who has returned*) Nobby? (*hastily advancing*) Why, yes, it is my rascal of a nephew !

Miss T. His nephew ?

NOBBY. Holloa, uncle. How are you, uncle ?

Miss T. Your uncle? a common policeman—how mean !

NOBBY. He's a Serjeant, bless you! Uncle, allow me to introduce you two to one another. Mr. Jonathan Poynter—Miss Tittilinda Touchemup, a young lady of good family. You've heard of Venus, I dare say ? well, this is her daughter—sorry I can't give you any information concerning the young lady's father—that's a subject on which she ain't herself very well informed. I believe.

POYNTER. She's a beautiful young creetur!

Miss T. (*curtseying*) Oh, sir; really you are a gentleman of great taste and refinement-----

POYNTER. (*bowing*) Oh, miss!

Miss T. For a policeman !

POYNTER. (*aside*) Blow the police! I wish I wasn't in uniform.

NOBBY. Now, lovely Tittilinda.

POYNTER. Come here a minute, you rascal! (*drawing NOBBY aside*) Where did you steal these clothes, you villain ! for of course you have stolen them, you vagabond!

NOBBY. What an insult. I got them on credit, that's all.

POYNTER. Well, I can't interfere, because I have no proof.

Miss T. They're just going to begin another dance—come along, Nobby.

POYNTER. (to NOBBY) Mind what you're up to. I shall be watching you.

NOBBY. All right. Keep your bull's eye open. (NOBBY and Miss TOUCHEMUP commence whirling about; others join, and soon the dance becomes general)

POYNTER. (*at end of dance*) My nephew is a wonderful going man. If he liked he might live by his legs instead of his bands ; and shouldn't I like to have his suit of clothes !

Miss T. Oh, dear! (*fanning herself*) I am so warm.

NOBBY. We'll go and have some refreshment. Come along, uncle; I'll stand treat—(*aside*) and you shall pay !

POYNTER. He's got a noble heart after all. (*follows them off, R.*)

Music.—JOE SIMPSON appears amidst crowd, looking about.

JOE. (*advancing*) I don't see her. Will she come ? Yes, I think that note I sent will bring her. For a whole month, since she disappeared with Marian, all efforts to trace her had been useless, when, yesterday evening, I happened by the merest chance to see her in the street. I followed her like her shadow and so discovered her retreat. My first thought was to inform Lord Chesterton, but on reflection a more certain means

of attaining my purpose suggested itself to me, and for that it was necessary to get Jane Rutherford from her home. (*looking at his watch*) Nearly eight o'clock. She won't be long now. (*stops WAITER and gives him an order—Music; goes to and sits at a table, L., which is partly hidden; WAITER brings drink to him; he lights a cigar*)

Enter NOBBY, running, R.

NOBBY. (*aside*) Oh, here's a go ! I've just seen the tailor that I prigged this suit of clothes from!

JOE. (*aside*) Why, that's Nobby Nibble!

NOBBY. I was dancing with Tittilinda when suddenly I caught his great eyes boring a hole right through me. He recognized his togs—no doubt about that.

JOE. (*aside, laughing*) Nobby seems to have got into some sort of scrape.

NOBBY. He'll have me taken up, and he'll tear the clothes off me before Tittilinda and all these people, and he'll say, Where's my dummy ? for when I took the clothes away from his shop door I bolted with dummy and all!

JOE. (*observing some LADIES who pass him*) Ah! (*he rises and follows them, L.*)

NOBBY. I'd better be off at once. (*frightened*) Oh, there's a slop ! Oh, it's only uncle. (*music ceases*)

Enter POYNTER, thoughtfully, R.

POYNTER. (*aside*) I can't get that little gal's turn-up nose out of my head. (*aloud*) Holloa, Nobby, what are you doing here by yourself?

NOBBY. I was so hot, so I thought I'd just steal away for a little-----

POYNTER. (*collaring Mm*) What's that you've been stealing?

NOBBY. Only a little fresh air, uncle.

POYNTER. (*releasing him—aside*) He must always be stealing something or other. (*aloud*) What a lucky fellow you are to have such a beautiful suit of clothes !

NOBBY. (*aside*) Oh, yes, uncommon lucky !

POYNTER. It attracts the ladies' attention.

NOBBY. (*surprised*) What, uncle ?

POYNTER. I was always considered good-looking, and if, just now, I was handsomely dressed as a civilian—as you are, for instance-----

NOBBY. (*aside*) What an idea. (*aloud*) Well, uncle, I dare say we might manage that.

POYNTER. How so ?

NOBBY. You know I'm a good-natured fellow, and to oblige you, I'll lend you my suit of clothes.

POYNTER. But what would you do ?

NOBBY. I would put yours on. (*dance music, piano*)

POYNTER. My wig! (*aside*) Well, I am off duty now, and I should like to have a dance with that turn-up nose.

NOBBY. Come along, then, uncle.

Miss T. (*entering, R.*) Well, I'm sure, Mr. Nibble, to run away and leave me in the middle of a dance—and a pretty dance I've had after you. How mean !

NOBBY. (*confused*) Well, you see, Miss Touchemup-----

JOE SIMPSON *re-appears, L.*

MISS T. And the watch and chain ? I've seen nothing of them yet.

NOBBY. We'll see about that presently. Come along, uncle.

MISS T. What, are you off again ?

NOBBY. Shan't be a minute. Come along, uncle. (*drags POYNTER hastily off, L.*)

MISS T. No, no— stop!— comeback ! (*calling*) Nobby! Mr. Nibble! (*runs off after them, L.*)

JOE. (*sitting at table, as before*) It was not her. (*stage is clear now*) If after all she should not come.

[*Music, piano, and distant shouts of laughter—JANE RUTHERFORD appears at back, L., elegantly dressed; she is pale and agitated and casts scared looks around her as she advances.*]

JANE. I have arrived! A tradesman whom formerly I knew was good enough to lend me these clothes for an hour or so, and I-----

JOE. (*aside*) It is she !

JANE. Oh, this noise and gaiety! how they torture me! I am craving to return to my poor Jessie, to carry her the aid of which I have received a promise. I must plunge amidst the crowd in order that I may find----- (*going R., is met by SYDNEY*) Ah, 'tis he ! (*hurrying to him*) Oh, Mr. Weston !

JOE. (*aside*) My rival!

SYDNEY. (*surprised*) You know me ?

JANE. I was awaiting you. Have you not written to me, asking me to come hither ?

SYDNEY. I ? Certainly not.

JANE. What matters ; 'tis heaven sends you !

SYDNEY. Pardon me, but I cannot recall to my mind-----

JANE. I am that woman whom, a month ago, you so generously defended.

SYDNEY. Ah, yes; at the tavern—I recognize you now. You here !—and thus ! (*pointing to dress*)

JANE. Oh, the question is not now of me, but of her.

SYDNEY. (*starting*) Of her !

JOE. (*aside*) Infernal encounter!

JANE. Yes; of Lady Marian.

SYDNEY. Oh, pronounce not that name, which reminds me of a treachery that almost killed me, and which in noise and so-called pleasure, I am striving to forget.

JANE. You accuse the poor child, when for your sake she has sacrificed everything.

SYDNEY. How say you ?

JANE. That she might preserve to you her love, that she might continue faithful to you, Marian has quitted Lord Chesterton's house.

SYDNEY. [*joyfully*] She is still free ?

JANE. Yes, free ; and fled to escape a hateful marriage, and since that time has lain concealed with me, her companion—the confidant of her sorrows—in a miserable dwelling, enduring all the horrors of the lowest and most abject poverty.

SYDNEY. And I, wretch that I am, have been cursing her ! Come, come—conduct me to her.

JOE. (*aside, rising*) He must not be suffered again to see her!

JANE. (*grasping SYDNEY'S arm*) Yes, yes—let us hasten! (*is dragging SYDNEY away to L. u. E., when their passage is barred by SIMPSON, who has hastily advanced—music*)

JANE. (*frightened*) Simpson!

JOE. Pray excuse me, young gentleman, but you cannot go hence with this lady, for she has promised to depart with me.

SYDNEY. (*greatly surprised*) How ?

JANE. (*vehemently*) 'Tis false—believe him not! 'Tis false, I say—that man is your rival!

SYDNEY. My rival—he! Come, sir, stand aside and let us pass!

JOE. (*determinedly*) You depart not with her !

SYDNEY. (*losing patience*) What insolence—stand aside! (*thrusting him away*)

JOE. (*raising his cane*) You dare to-----

SYDNEY. (*clutching his arm*) Wretch! you shall account to me for this insult.

JOE. How, and when you please.

JANE. (*greatly agitated*) Oh, for heaven's sake-----

SYDNEY. Now, on the instant!

JOE. No thank you; I have no desire to find myself within the clutches of the police. (*giving SYDNEY a card on which he has written with a pencil*) but if, an hour hence, you will meet me there-----

SYDNEY. (*without looking at card*) I shall be there, doubt it not.

JOE. I should know you for a coward should you fail to your promise. (*aside*) I must keep them well in view. *Exit, R.*

JANE. (*looking at card in SYDNEY'S hand and starting*) Oh, go not to that place ! your life would be in danger! (*SYDNEY turns up, impatiently, without heeding her*) Oh, heaven, he does not listen to me; You know not of what that wretch is capable!

SYDNEY. (*stopping near her*) I know that he is my rival—that he has insulted me, and that I will kill him ! (*giving a portemonnaie to JANE*) Here, take this money—go, succour dear Marian, assure her of my love, that I have never loved but her, and this evening, if heaven protects me, I will hasten and rejoin you.

JANE. (*endeavouring to detain him*) But, listen to me—listen-----

SYDNEY. (*breaking from her*) I cannot! I have my love, and my honour to avenge—farewell, farewell ! (*hurries off at back, L.*)

JANE. Oh, they will kill him! Simpson would be rid of a rival! I understand his infamous purpose, and shall I suffer them brutally to slaughter the man who loves my daughter ? No, no—he slain, Jessie too would die ! But what can I do? Jessie now awaits my return to her—her anguish and her sufferings are increasing every moment—oh, what can I do—on what can I resolve ? (*going up*)

Enter POYNTER, L., dressed in Nobby's clothes, and struts about admiring himself.

POYNTER. My nephew didn't look half as well in these clothes as I do !

JANE. (*recognizing and running to him*) Mr. Poynter!

POYNTER. (*greatly surprised*) Mrs. Rutherford—you here—and dressed out like that ?

JANE. I have not time now to explain to you anything—but you can render me a great service.

POYNTER. What's that ?

Re-enter JOE SIMPSON—glides behind tuft of flowers, and listens.

JANE. Take this purse and, without losing a moment, hasten with it to my lodging, to my daughter, who is suffering, famishing-----

POYNTER. Mercy on us !

JANE. Her salvation—her life is at stake !

POYNTER. (*moved*) Poor thing! (*taking purse*) I'll go—I'll go.

JOE. How shall I contrive to prevent him ? (*aside*)

JANE. Oh, thanks, thanks ! (*aside*) And now to watch over and, if heaven aid me, save Sydney Weston *Exit, L.U.E*

POYNTER. If I could find some one dependable instead of going myself, for I don't fancy having put on these clothes for nothing.

SNIPPER *runs on, followed by WAITERS, PEOPLE, & C., R.*

SNIPPER. There he is—that's the thief!

POYNTER. (*looking amongst people that surround him*) Where? where's the thief? Where is he? I'll soon-----

SNIP. (*collaring him*) You are the thief—you!

POYNTER. Me?

Miss T. (*surprised*) No—he isn't a thief—he's a-----

SNIP. He can't deny it. (*pointing*) Those are the clothes he stole from me.

Miss T. Oh, gracious! (PEOPLE *groan at POYNTER*)

POYNTER. But I assure you-----

Enter NOBBY, as policeman, L.

NOBBY. Hold the villain tight! I know him well! (*murmurs of indignation*)

Miss T. (*aside*) Why that's Nobby.

POYNTER. You rascal! would you dare-----

NOBBY. (*imitating him*) Can't help it you know, here's proof.

POYNTER. And do you dare to-----

JOE. (*aside*) Now I'm off to pretty Marian. (*disappears*)

POYNTER. (*struggling*) If you don't let me go-----

NOBBY. I call upon everybody, in the queen's name, to assist me. Take him to the station house.

(*POYNTER is hustled and pushed about—NOBBY and Miss T. point and jeer at him, and he is carried off as a grand galop is commenced on the platform, amidst noises, shoutings and laughter*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*A Vault or Cellar, which is reached by descending some dilapidated steps, C.; a small grated window looking into the street, L. C.; a bundle of straw, R.; a large barrel and two or three stools, L.—Feebly lighted by some candles stuck in an iron chandelier.*

THIEVES and BEGGARS, male and female, discovered; most of them very ragged; some are lying on the ground, others seated on the floor, playing at cards, and three or four men seated

around the barrel, on which are bottles and glasses ; several men and one or two of the women are smoking short pipes.—Music.

CHORUS—*noisily.*

With gin, and with baccy, and beer,
In this cellar so jolly are we !
No peelers are here !
We're ready for work or a spree,
With gin, and with baccy, and beer !

Enter NOBBY NIBBLE, down steps.

NOBBY. Holloa, pretty night-birds! my beautiful bats! you set of screech owls, that haven't got a feather to fly with!

HOOKER. Come, I say, Mr. Nobby, what's the matter with you?

NOBBY. I have promised my young woman a watch and chain and haven't been able to put my hand on 'em. (*all laugh*) I suppose none of you have tumbled over anything of the sort?

HOOKER. No such luck.

SNATCHER. (*listening*) I say, what's that noise I hear down there? (*pointing*)

NOBBY. Have you lately tumbled out of the moon, that you don't know?

SNATCHER. I never was in this place afore to-night.

HOOKER. He's a friend of mine ; I interdoosed him.

NOBBY. Oh! Well, my unenlightened friend, I'll explain all about the noise under your feet. It's the Thames a-rising.

SNATCHER. Does all the Thames pass under this cellar ?

NOBBY. No, you idiot! But look here. (*goes up to wall at back*) Just here there's a spring, and when you press it hard a large trap opens, just there. (*pointing*) And when the tide is up the water flows in under the cellar, and when it goes out again carries everything out into the river along with it. If a fellow finds himself down there—my crickey!—he ought to know how to swim a bit.

HOOKER. And when the tide is out a fellow can hide down there, if any of the gentlemen in blue should be arter him.

NOBBY. Here, my friend, just come and stand on the trap a minute, and I'll give you an opportunity of judging for yourself what it's like down there at the present moment.

SNATCHER. (*retreating*) No, thank you. (*all laugh*)

NOBBY. (*coming forward*) You wouldn't be drowned, because you are safe to be hanged. It's what all we night-birds come to at last. (*all laugh*)

Song—NOBBY.

With night there comes our turn to sing,
 The flats they then succumb;
 Pickpockets then are on the wing,
 A-picking up their crumbs.
 The thief by night to work departs,
 For then it is he's right;
 With beak stretch'd out, then glides and darts
 The bird that flies by night.

B-r-o-o ! (*imitating the noise of wings*)

They go rattle and pat,
 Abroad and awake is the bat.

OMNES. The nice little bat. F-r-o-o !

NOBBY. By day in a fright—
 He flies boldly by night.

OMNES. He goes rattle and pat,
 Wide awake is the bat.

NOBBY. Sooner or later, 'tis too true,—
 I've often thought it odd—
 A peeler says—"Here, I want you,"
 And walks you off to quod.
 They lock you in a nasty cell,
 That's the way they bag you;
 And soon you don't feel very well—

Crick! (*imitating being hanged*)

For that's the way they scrag you.

Crack! (*as before*)

Unpleasant ending that—
 Off for a long sleep goes the bat.

OMNES. Yes, that's the way they scrag you.

NOBBY. That's the way they scrag you,
 And that's the way they bag you.

OMNES. F-r-o-o! (*imitating noise of wings*)

Unpleasant ending that—
 Off for a long sleep goes the bat.

JANE RUTHERFORD—*very miserably dressed, disguised with red hair, & c.—descends the steps.*

JANE. (*aside*) He is not here!

HOOKER. Holloa, missus, who are you ?

JANE. Who am I ?

HOOKER. Here, Nobby; here's your young woman come
 after the watch and chain. (*all laugh*)

NOBBY. No, thank you; my young woman isn't an old 'un,
 and she hasn't got golden locks.

JANE. (*aside, glancing rapidly around*) How shall I discover?-----

NOBBY. Here, I say, who are you? You can't come here without being properly introduced. We're genteel and select, we are.

JANE. I'm a friend of Mrs. O'Leary's; she'll be here presently and she'll pay my footing for me.

HOOKE. Oh, if you're a friend of Mother O'Leary's, that's all right enough.

Music—JOE SIMPSON *appears on top of steps—all go up to meet him. JANE throws herself down behind heap of straw, R. so as to be almost concealed from JOE, & C.*

OMNES. Good evening, Mr. Simpson.

JOE. (*advancing*) I have an appointment here at nine o'clock with a gentleman—a friend of mine will show him the way here. (*looking at his watch*) Ah, I am not here a minute too soon.

NOBBY. (*aside, sighing*) Ah! he's got a watch and chain, he has! (*a whistle without*)

JOE. Hush! here comes my man. Ladies and gentlemen, your fashionable style of dress might rather astonish him; so here, (*giving money*) perhaps you will be good enough to drink my health, and when I want you again, I'll call you.

OMNES. Good luck to you, Mr. Simpson. (*they go off, L.*)

(*Music*—NOBBY *following last sees SYDNEY WESTON, who appears on top of steps*)

NOBBY. (*aside*) Eh? Why, that's the young gentleman as damaged my nose! (*conceals himself behind the barrel, L.—SYDNEY descends and advances*)

SYDNEY. Now, sir, I am here.

JOE. Glad to find you are punctual.

SYDNEY. It was not likely I should fail to our appointment, for you are my rival—you have intervened to thwart my happiness. To you does Lady Marian owe the misery she has had to endure, and that thought excites my rage—inspires me with a desire to kill you.

JOE. Do not be too impatient.

JANE. (*aside*) How will this terminate?

SYDNEY. Say that you renounce the thoughts you have dared to cherish respecting Lady Marian! Swear that you will cease to persecute her!

JOE. I swear that Lady Marian shall become my wife.

SYDNEY. Never, villain, never!

(*Music*—*he seizes JOE—they struggle—JANE and NOBBY eagerly watching them—JOE shakes himself free of*

SYDNEY, *and darting up places his back against the wall, C.*)

SYDNEY. Ah ! coward, coward ! (*goes up towards JOE, and stops when a pace or two from him*) But you shall not escape me.

JOE. There you are mistaken, my friend.

(*Music—JOE presses spring in the wall—a large trap flies open, C., beneath SYDNEY'S feet, and he falls and disappears—JOE walks hastily forward—JANE at same moment rises with an exclamation of terror*)

NOBBY. (*aside*) I'll have his watch and chain for my young woman! (*leaps down after SYDNEY—trap re-closes*)

JOE. (*having seen nothing*) That is well over !

JANE. (*without red wig—advancing and confronting him*) Villain! Murderer!

JOE. (*confounded*) Jane Rutherford!

JANE. Yes ; I have seen all, and though unable to save your victim, shall at least find a way to avenge him !

JOE. I have no fear of that, for, hark ye, Mrs. Rutherford, your daughter is here, in one of these cellars, and guarded by a man to whom my will is law, and should you utter one cry, or speak one word to denounce me—she dies!

JANE. No, no, impossible—it cannot be—Jessie in your power!

JOE. Yes ; it was not Poynter, but I, myself, who hurried to your lodgings—exhausted by hunger and fatigue, your daughter was asleep, and I was prepared with means to render her slumber more profound.

JANE. (*wringing her hands*) Oh, heaven! Oh, heaven! Jessie here! But I will snatch her hence! Jessie! Jessie! (*hurrying towards L.*)

JOE. (*intercepting her*) You do not stir.

JANE. You shall not stay me, villain ! you shall not stay me!

JESSIE. (*without*) Help ! help!

JANE. Ah! 'tis her voice. Jessie! Jessie! (*dashes past JOE and meets MARIAN, who, running on L., flies into JANE'S arms. —Music*)

MARIAN. Mother! mother!

JOE. (*R., coldly*) Well, Jane, do you believe me now ?

JANE. (*pressing her arms around MARIAN*) Tremble not thus, darling; I will defend you—I will defend you !

MARIAN. Oh, how came I here, in this dreadful place? But you will save me, mother! you will save me!

JANE. Yes, yes. Do not fear. Come, darling, come. (*Music.—JANE is about to lead MARIAN towards back; JOE places himself before them and whistles; MEN hurry on, L.; JOE*

points to JANE and MARIAN; all are advancing when JANE, producing a pistol, levels it towards them) Stand back, wretches ! Stand back ! *(all retreat; JANE, dragging with her MARIAN, has reached and partly ascended steps, when she is driven back by the appearance of LORD CHESTERTON, POYNTER, and other POLICEMEN; seeing them, the THIEVES hurry off, L.)*

JOE. *(aside, as LORD C. advances)* So, he's come at last.

LORD C. I am here to demand my daughter, whom you, Jane Rutherford, have forcibly carried from me.

MARIAN. No, my lord, no! Of my own free will I followed her, for she is my mother.

JANE. You hear her—I am her mother! And you shall not tear her from me. No! you shall not. Dare you repeat, dare you say again, to her, that I am not her mother ?

LORD C. *(aside to JANE)* Shall I tell her that the mother whom she loves and honours has been made to groan beneath an infamous punishment ?

JANE. *(in a low voice)* Oh, silence, silence! for mercy's sake ! Anything, everything, rather than she should despise me!

LORD C. Well—*(raising his voice)* Confess, then, your imposture ! confess that you have audaciously deceived her !

JANE. *(aside, weeping)* Oh, heaven ! again, again to lose her.

LORD C. Speak quickly.

JANE *(with effort)* Yes—yes—I confess it.

JOE. *(joyfully)* Good!

MARIAN. What say you ?

JANE. That—that I have deceived you. No, I am not your mother! Pardon me, Lady Marian. Pardon ! pardon ! *(sinks on her knees, with clasped hands, before MARIAN)*

MARIAN. *(greatly agitated)* But wherefore have you deceived me ? Wherefore that tenderness and devotion of which you have given me so many proofs ? If not my mother, wherefore are you weeping now ?

POYNTER. Am I to take Jane Rutherford into custody, my lord ?

LORD C. No, she has confessed, and I shall not prosecute her.

POYNTER. *(aside)* I shall wait for his lordship and say a word or two more to him. There is something I can't make out in all this, and I must hunt for proof. *(goes off C. with POLICEMAN)*

LORD C. Now, Marian, let us go.

MARIAN. *(who has been imploring LORD C., and now approaches JANE)* You have been devoted to me, have succoured and protected me,—whoever you may be, I bless and shall ever love you.

JANE.(seizing MARIAN'S extended hand and covering it with kisses) Ah, they take not from me all!—her heart remains with me. (*Music—MARIAN is led off, C., by LORD C., looking to the last on JANE. JOE follows them partly up steps, and when they have disappeared hastily returns to JANE, who is still kneeling*)

JOE. You have done well to renounce your claims to Jessie, and when she is my wife, I shall allow you, now and then, to stand at a respectful distance and have a look at her.

JANE.(starting to her feet) Yours! Oh, I had forgotten that. No, no; so long as my heart shall throb, while a breath of life remains to me, I will assert my lawful claim to Jessie, and will not suffer her to know the shame and degradation of wedding with a wretch like thee !

JOE. Beware, Jane Rutherford, beware! (*drawing knife*) Swear you will be silent—that you will not seek to oppose my marriage with your daughter. Swear it, or-----

JANE. Oh, mercy ! let me live. To kill a mother that you marry with her daughter! oh, think how horrible that would be! Spare me! now that I have seen, have embraced my Jessie—I am afraid to die! Oh, have mercy on me ! pity and spare me ?

JOE. Swear, then, you will be silent, and you shall live.

JANE. No, no. I would rather pray beside my Jessie's coffin—would see her dead—than wedded to a robber and an assassin!

JOE. You have reminded me that should I suffer you to live you might bring me to the scaffold.

JANE.(breaking from him and hurrying towards steps) Help! murder, help!

JOE. (*following and dragging her back*) Curse you, die !

JANE. (*clutching his arm and grasping his throat*) Demon! even dead I will oppose your infamous intentions—will return from the tomb to place myself before my daughter, and to guard her from you ! (*Music—he frees his arm, and stabs JANE, who falls, R. He is then hurrying off, L., when he is met by SYDNEY WESTON, who enters calm and pale—JOE, with a loud exclamation, recoils terrified, and the dagger falls from his hand. At the same moment LORD CHESTERTON and MARIAN appear on steps and partly descend, POYNTER and POLICEMEN standing behind them*)

SYDNEY (L.) Coward! coward!

JANE. (*struggling to her feet, R.*) Assassin—assassin !

JOE. (*glaring at SYDNEY, C.*) Not dead—not dead !

Enter NOBBY, L.

NOBBY. No, my good friend; I took hold of his watch-chain, and fished him out! (*OTHERS have advanced*)

POYNTER. Ah, here's proof enough now—lock him up.

JOE. I have played a bold game, and luck has gone against me, that's all. Don't be uneasy, my lord ; it wouldn't do me any good to tell all I know, so I shall hold my tongue, and let them quietly finish me off. (*is taken off by POLICEMEN, L.*)

POYNTER. You are a good fellow at heart, Nobby, and I shall make something of you yet!

NOBBY. I'll never do another rascally trick as long as I live, and you shall soon have proof of that, uncle !

(*JANE has staggered and sunk on to stool near table—LORD C. and JESSIE support her*)

JANE. Oh, she is saved, she is saved! (*placing her hand on her heart*) Ah!

MARIAN. (*alarmed*) Oh, heaven !

(*Music, piano, till end—the same as at the first meeting of mother and daughter*)

JANE. It is nothing—heaven in its mercy, will permit that I shall live.

MARIAN. (*at her feet*) Yes, you will live—will remain with us—shall she not, my lord?

LORD C. Yes, Marian, yes.

MARIAN. No, you shall never quit us, for I know, am certain, that you are my-----

JANE. (*putting her hand on MARIAN'S lips*) Silence ! for your own happiness, none must know—but sometimes—when you are alone, and very softly—you will pray for me, and then you will call me-----

MARIAN. (*in low voice*) Mother, Mother!

JANE. (*exstatically, her eyes raised towards heaven*) Oh! heaven has then pardoned me ! (*she dies—tableau*)

Curtain.

MODERN COSTUMES,

Suited to the character and position of the persons represented.