

MAUD'S PERIL.

A Play,

IN FOUR ACTS.

BY

WATTS PHILLIPS, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

The Dead Heart; Theodora, Actress and Empress; Camilla's
Husband, the Poor Strollers, Story of the '45; Paper Wings;
Under the Thumb, His Last Victory, Ticket of Leave,
Lost in London, Woman in Mauve, Paul's Return,
Huguenot Captain, Nobody's Child,
etc., etc.

THOMAS HAILES LACY
89, STRAND, LONDON.

THIS,
THE ONLY CORRECT EDITION OF
MAUD'S PERIL
IS DEDICATED,
WITH FEELINGS OF DEEP DISGUST,
TO
The Thief or Thieves,
WHO,
BY MEANS OF SHORTHAND,
OR OTHER
PETTY LARCENY DEVICES,
CAUSED
A MUTILATED COPY*
OF THE WORK
TO BE CIRCULATED IN AMERICA,
TO THE
DETRIMENT OF
ITS AUTHOR.

Nearly one-third of the Piece being omitted, and the remainder
garbled into nonsense by introductions of the plunderer's own.

First Performed at the Theatre Royal Adelphi, (under the management of Mr. B. Webster,) on
 Wednesday, October 23, 1867, a new drama in Four Acts, by Watts Phillips, Esq., entitled

MAUD'S PERIL

THIS DRAMA WAS SUGGESTED BY AN INCIDENT IN A STORY OF CHARLES DE BERNARD.

Entirely New Scenery, by Mr. T. Grieco and Son.

The Dresses by Miss Rayner, Mrs. Aulph and Assistants.

The Music Arranged by Mr. E. Ellis.

The Machinery by Mr. Charker.

The Appointments by Mr. T. Ireland.

Gas Arrangements by Mr. G. Bastard.

And the piece produced under the Direction of Mr. B. Webster.

SIR RALPH CHALLONER	• • • • •	MR. BILLINGTON.
GERALD GWYNN	• • • • •	MR. ASHLEY.
TOBY TAPERLOY	• • • • •	MR. G. BELMORE.
BURRELL	• • • • •	MR. C. J. SMITH.
DOCTOR	• • • • •	MR. W. H. EBURNE.
SERVANT	• • • • •	MR. BRANSCOMBE.
LADY CHALLONER	• • • • •	MISS HERBERT.
MISS SEFTON	• • • • •	MISS AMY SHERIDAN.
SUSAN TAPERLOY	• • • • •	MRS. BILLINGTON.

ACT 1.—THE WITHERED FORGET-ME-NOTS.

“ And when my heart is nigh distraught
If I but say FORGET-ME-NOT,

Hope burns again within me.”—GOETHE.

ACT 2.—MAUD'S PERIL.

“ Am I mad that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be at the root.”—TENNYSON.

ACT 3.—CHALLONER'S REVENGE!

“ But fever'd in her sleep she seems,
And pale her cheek with troubled dreams,
And mutters she in her unrest,
A name she dare not breathe by day.”—BYRON.

ACT 4.—THE VERDICT:

“ My deeds upon my head! I crave the law.”—SHAKESPEARE.

MAUD'S PERIL.



ACT I.

THE WITHERED FORGET-ME-NOTS.

And when my heart is nigh distraught
If I but say Forget-me-not,
Hope burns again within me.—GOETHE.

SCENE.—*Interior of Upper Keeper's Lodge in Sefton Park. This interior has the appearance of an exterior, owing to its opening out upon a Gothic verandah, whose supports are covered with trailing plants in flower. Beyond verandah is a magnificent view of Park scenery. In extreme distance, rising above a clump of trees, the towers of Sefton Abbey. (Tudor style) Furniture of the room rustic. Flowers &c, in pots and vases, door L. 2 E.*

SUSAN *discovered ironing, puts down iron, takes up apron and wipes her eyes.*

SUSAN. Ah ! well it's no good crying, tears never mended matters yet. I shall have to do this frilling again. I've quite taken the stiffening out. (*looks towards door*) He's been sleeping all the morning! sleep! (*sighs heavily*) how can he sleep? I've never closed my eyes all night, (*again looks nervously towards door*) If anyone saw him when he came

in! No! that danger at least is avoided. What a terrible shock it was! After eight years absence, when I had almost learned to look upon him as dead, almost hoped he was so—and *now!*

TAPER. (*from room L. 2 E.*) Hullo! Sue! Where are you? Waiter! Boots! (*door opens and a pair of boots are thrown into the kitchen*) The polish I've lost myself I like to see on my leathers. A little elbow grease, Missus, and then my breakfast! (*TAPERLOY'S head is thrust out of door*) It's rather late in the day for that domestic meal, but when a chap's just turned up from the antipodes he likes things topsy-turvy.

SUSAN. (*with a gesture as for silence*) Oh, Toby! take care.

TAPER. In course I shall—of myself to begin with. Self-preservation is the first law in nature, and I'm as hungry as a hunter, (*he comes out*) so let's have something light and digestable, sich as a fried pork chop and a noggin of rum, if you chance to have sich a pleasant tooth-tickler 'andy.

SUSAN. I've no rum—no spirits at all. I never drink them.

TAPER. Don't yer? then I shall have to drink for us both. Its a dreadful thing to have to take another person's share, but when that person's your wife, it's a dooty; so just hook it down to the Red Lion, my ribstone pippin, and come back with a bottle of the real Jamaiky pine-apple, you can hide it under your apron, becos above all things I wish a wife of mine to be respectable.

SUSAN. (*sinking down and covering face with hands*) Oh! this is dreadful!

TAPER. (*taking coal from fire and lighting his pipe*) In course it is! to have a husband come over arter so many miles of voyaging and not have a mouthful of liquor to offer him, dreadful! (*seating himself in chair and smoking*) Susan it's 'orrible! I'm beginning to be ashamed on yer.

SUSAN. (*after looking at him for a moment, advances and places her hand on his shoulder, speaking in a voice choked with emotion*) Toby! Toby why have you come back?

TAPER. (*turning upon her fiercely for a moment*) Why? (*as his eyes rest on her tearful face, his manner changes, and he laughs*) 'Cos "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." A Government apintment is a wery good thing *this* side 'o the water, but I wanted a holiday and took it.

SUSAN. But if you're discovered?

TAPER. *If* ah, if "ifs and ands were pots and pans," the world 'ud be well off for kitchen furnitur'. (*rising*

suddenly with thorough change of manner) Why, woman, who do you think 'udknow Toby Taperloy in such a disguise as this ? *(pauses and looks in a steady way at her)* except you took it into your head to betray him.

SUSAN. To betray you ? I, your wife ! Oh Toby!

TAPER. Wife ! *(seizing her hand roughly and holding it up)* Yes, here's the marriage ring sure enough, which I placed on this finger fourteen years ago. Well, you women are queer things; in your place I'd have slipped it off, just as I slipped off the iron one which was conferred upon me as an order of merit by an over grateful country, *(as she is about to speak)* There, there, no more tears ; a chap as has been a-board ship for over six months has had quite enough salt water. What can't be cured, must be endured; so do the amiable and fetch something to eat. As I ain't proud I'll clean them boots myself, *(pulls on boots while speaking, but as SUSAN goes out he springs to his feet, follows her with a quick stealthy step, and, glances off, but turns quickly and advances to oak press; the door of which he tries with his knuckles)* I saw her put something in here half an hour ago. *(tries lock)* Fast as a church and no key *(laughs quietly, and draws a small bunch of skeleton keys from his pocket)* It's the task of genius to overcome difficulties, and these are the birds *(shaking keys)* as have whistled open a stronger cage than this *(opens cupboard and then drawer, feels about for a moment and utters a cry of delight)* Ah There's the nest egg ! *(counting money)* One, two, three, four, five ; five suv'rins and why, what's this ? A crooked sixpence with a bit of s'iled ribbon ! *(after examining it for a moment and coming a few paces down stage)* Think o' that now ! the crooked sixpence as I giv to Sue sixteen years ago. It makes a feller feel quite uncomfortable like, *(with a momentary emotion)* Poor gal, poor gal! *(with as sudden change back to his old manner)* What rum creeturs women are ! She keeps the love token *(dangling the ribbon in right hand)* while I *(jingling sovereigns in left)* sticks to the substantial, *(pockets the money)* I'll leave her the sixpence, *(puts it back in drawer, shuts door and returns to table just as SUSAN enters with meat and bread on tray—going to table)* Beef, bread and beer ! simple fare, but I've supported sinking natur on less, and now *(throwing himself back on chair and speaking with his mouth full)* for a little confidential chat between man and wife you know; what's been going on since I've been away ?

SUSAN. *(who is standing some little distance from him, L. as if she feared him; speaks as one awakening from, a reverie)* Going on!

TAPER. Why the world hasn't stood still, I suppose? How's Colonel Sefton?

SUSAN. Dead!

TAPER. You don't mean that? And Miss Maud Sefton, your foster sister, what's become of she?

SUSAN. (*curtly*) Miss Maud Sefton exists no longer-----

TAPER. What, has she gone and died too? (*eating tranquilly*) You surprise me!

SUSAN. Miss Maud is now Lady Challoner-----

TAPER. Married to that old skinflint? that proud old hunk? she, the prettiest flower that—damme! it beats cockfighting! (*rising and coming down stage*) Marry him!

SUSAN. (*sighs*) It was one of those marriages where the estates are closer together than the hearts.

TAPER. I see; well, a man forgets a mort o' things in eight years time—but I've not forgotten Sir Ralph—no, nor what I owe to him.

SUSAN. He held half the Sefton estates in bond, and took poor Miss Maud as the security—she saved her father from ruin—my poor master! he went on his knees to her there, (*indicating spot where TOBY is standing*, that very spot you're standing on—and she gave in, poor dear!

TAPER. I don't see as how she's to be pitied—marrying the richest man in the county.

SUSAN. (*carried away in spite of herself*) Oh! it wasn't that, Toby, but she'd given her heart, and promised her hand to Mr. Gerald Gwynn.

TAPER. I know, young Gwynn of Graythorpe—I taught him how to handle his first gun when he was a boy, and he got me out of many a scrape, like the fine-hearted young gentleman that he was—but go on about Miss Maud.

SUSAN. You remember, Toby, she used to walk in her sleep? (*TOBY nods*) Well, Mr. Gwynn saved her life in one of her fits of sleep-walking, over by the great chalk cutting in the park—from that time they were always together, but the colonel thought them too young to marry, so Mr. Gerald went to the Crimea with his regiment where he died.

TAPER. (*starting violently*) Died?

SUSAN. And the news of his death nearly broke my darling's heart.

TAPER. (*bursting into uproarious laughter*) Ha, ha, ha! Well, I've had many queer travelling companions but I never did consort with ghosts afore.

SUSAN. What do you mean?

TAPER. Mean? ha, ha! Why, that I left Mr. Gerald

Gwynn, of Graythorpe, last night, long after midnight, a-turning into the Red Lion, (*chuckling*) I don't set up for a model of voracity but *you* ought to know his handwriting, (*holding up letter*) for accordin' to him he's corresponded with you very often.

SUSAN. (*breathlessly*) Did he know you ?

TAPER. (*lifting red wig as he speaks*) Know *me!* with such a nob thatch as this ? (*changing accent*) I toold him that I wur your coosin as had just coom fro' grass in Lincolnshire. "Give that," says he, "to Susan Taperloy for Miss Maud," "I wull," says I, "and tell her," says he, "I'll come myself for the answer." (SUSAN *grasps at letter, he holds her off with another and startling change of manner, entirely dropping country accent*) Come, none o' that nonsense ! I'm beginning to see which way the wind blows, and shall trim my sails accordin'. (*the tramp of a horse's feet is heard off stage as he is speaking, then a groom in handsome livery appears behind, leading horse across and offstage L., at same time LADY CHALLONER, in riding habit, whip in hand, enters lodge from R.*)

MAUD. (*speaking as she enters*) Take the mare home, John, I shall wait here till Sir Ralph returns, which won't be for this half hour, as they have some nasty cross country work before them, (*as MAUD enters, TAPERLOY retires unobserved to back, SUSAN remains near table*) Ah, Susan ! I'm back already, you see. The hounds threw off at Crossly Heath, and I followed them as far as Dunlop Mead, where Atalanta went lame, so I turned, and rode her home through the Woodlands, (*taking off hat and gloves, which with whip, she throws on table*) Give me a basin of milk, there's a dear, good Susan.

SUSAN. (*with a certain confusion*) Yes, my lady.

MAUD. Ah ! I see, you are not alone.

SUSAN. It's my-----(*she stops.*)

TAPER. (*coming down stage quickly, but with loutish gesture and country accent*) I be Susan's cousin—Sammlle Gregson, a Lincolnshire lad, at your ladyship's service—times being bad wi' us down theer, Susan has promised to find I something in the field or gardening line.

MAUD. (*kindly*) I will see that Susan's cousin is placed at once—and will speak to the house steward on my return. (*crosses stage and arranges hair before glass, as SUSAN goes quickly up to TAPERLOY, whw has drawn the letter out of his pocket.*)

SUSAN. (*indicating door*) Go !

TAPER. And this letter for (*emphasising*) Miss Maud ?
(*SUSAN snatches letter out of his hand, replying to his fierce look with one almost as fierce.*)

SUSAN. Have a care! I will not answer for your safety if you cross me in this. Go !

TAPER. But some money, old gal!

SUSAN. I have told you before—I have none.

TAPER. None ! well, p'raps you speak the truth, (*draws out money he has taken from purse, clinks it and goes up stage with a chuckling laugh at her face of alarmed astonishment as she recognises the purse, winking at her with intense significance, but, as MAUD turns, drops into country dialect and manner, singing as he exits R. u. E.*)

For I'm a Linco-sheer lad,
I've left my mammy and dad,
And the gal I lov'd behind me !

MAUD. (*who has turned glass, and is regarding SUSAN in some surprise*) What did that man say ? a letter for Miss Maud Sefton! Maud Sefton! there is some mistake. (*advancing and pointing to letter, which SUSAN has not had time to conceal*) Let me see it!

SUSAN. (R. C.) My dear lady ! my dear child—indeed I dare not!

MAUD. Dare not! what can be addressed to Maud Sefton that Lady Challoner should not hear ?

SUSAN. Much—if-----

MAUD. If what?

SUSAN. Maud! my child—for I have ever looked upon you as such—I hold in my hand a message—a message from the dead ?

MAUD. The dead ?

SUSAN. Gerald—Gerald Gwynn.

MAUD. (*springing forward*) Give me that letter !

SUSAN. (*recoiling*) No! (*tears it in pieces, as MAUD recoils in surprise, SUSAN sinks on her knees and grasps her dress*) Maud—the truth—the dreadful truth—so long hidden from you by your father and myself—must at last be spoken—Gerald Gwynn lives !

MAUD. Lives!!!

SUSAN. I lied—we all lied, when we told you he was dead—but it was for your good—your good, my own darling ! and to save your father from-----

MAUD. (*as speaking to herself, and holding her hands to her temples as if in pain*) Lives! Gerald! Gerald alive ? Oh, impossible!

SUSAN. We all believed the announcement of his death in the papers until it was too late—to—to----- (MAUD, by a sudden movement seizes her, and gazes earnestly into her face, a rivetted, yet wild and eager gaze) Oh! my dear, dear mistress! do not look at me so! all was done for the best! I could not bear to see your father's grief—I could not bear to see the Sefton estates pass away from you. Forgive me! it was all done for love of you, darling, for love of you!

MAUD. (with sudden, and startling energy, thrusting SUSAN from her) Forgive you! never! Woman—woman—you have broken my heart!

SUSAN. (rising with an imploring gesture) Oh! do not speak so-----

MAUD. (with increasing passion) You've wrecked my life! Yes—my life! You've wrecked and destroyed my happiness, for as long as ever I live upon this earth!

SUSAN. (endeavours to detain her as she moves up stage) Oh! but listen!

MAUD. No! (releasing riding habit from SUSAN'S clutch) No! I've listened too long—I loved Gerald Gwynn, and you knew it! oh! you could not help but know it! yet, knowing it, you leagued with those who swept away my only hope of happiness in the world.

SUSAN. (imploringly) Your father knew of it—it was done for the best—for the best.

MAUD. (speaking more to herself than to SUSAN, her hand raised to her head, and in a low, heart-weary tone) When first they told me he was dead, a terrible longing possessed me to go down to the deep flowing river, and end the misery I felt to be enshrouding me. Ah! why did I hesitate? why—why?

SUSAN. (endeavouring to take her hand) Have patience, my own darling!

MAUD. (almost fiercely) For what? to endure a sorrow that only death can end?

SUSAN. Forgive me! oh, forgive me!

MAUD. No! (she thrusts SUSAN aside with such violence that the other staggers back against table, and sweeps up stage, but recoils with a cry as GERALD GWYNN appears on threshold from R. He springs towards her with extended arms, and a joyous cry, but MAUD L. recedes as from a phantom, with a look of stony despair.)

GERALD. Maud! Maud! my love! my life! (he stops suddenly as he sees her stony look) Can it be that you have not received my letter? I've frightened you—is it not so?

Oh! but if you knew, Maud, how I have looked forward to this day. Nay, let me look on that sweet face which-----
(trying tenderly to turn her towards him, while doing so, he gets one of her hands in his, which he kisses passionately)
 Ah! I was wrong to come upon you so suddenly—I should have remembered how joy sometimes deals a blow as terrible as grief! *(MAUD raises her head slightly, and speaks in a low, hoarse voice, and as with a great effort.)*

MAUD. Why are you here? *(he recoils, dropping her hand with a startled cry. MAUD hiding her face in her hands with a sob)* Where have you been?

GERALD. Been! *(coming a step nearer, and almost fiercely as if a sort of suspicion were dawning upon him)* Been! and you ask me that! Been! I have been stricken down with fever in a Russian prison, amidst a wild Tartar horde, bereft for long, long months of every hope but one—the hope of once more seeing you!

MAUD. *(slightly turning towards him, but without raising her eyes)* All said that you were dead—all. Ah! Gerald! Gerald! you can never know how bitterly I have mourned for you!

GERALD. *(with effort at gaiety)* But now, darling, all such mourning is over. Fortune has smiled upon me in every way, and I am here—here at your feet—unchanged in all but suffering, *(as he sinks at her feet and endeavours to take her hand, MAUD rises with a hurried gesture of alarm, thrusting him from her.)*

MAUD. You must not! Go, Gerald! I implore you go! *(she retires still further from him, as he rises with a stifled cry to his feet.)*

GERALD. And this is my welcome home! *(with burst of passionate feeling)* Can it be that you love me no longer, Maud? What can have changed you thus? No answer! yet why should you speak? words are unnecessary, *(bitterly)* and the love which I, fool that I was, believed eternal, has vanished like other dreams. Be it so! but, as you were my first love so shall you be my last. At your feet have I cast all—all that I had of talent—of passion—of enthusiasm—of hope—as Raleigh cast his mantle at the feet of his Queen, and now, what remains? the soil of a careless footprint, *(strikes breast)* Never—never to be effaced.

MAUD. *(in a low voice)* Oh, misery! cruel! cruel!

GERALD. *(drawing from his breast a few withered flowers, tied with a faded ribbon)* 'Tis now eighteen months since when we parted, you placed in my hand this little bunch

of flowers—forget-me-nots. You do not recognise them ! true, they are withered, but they have been moistened often with tears and stained, as you see, with blood! I had never thought to kneel to mortal man, but I prayed my savage captors to leave me these—they knew not the value of the prize I claimed, and so they left the flowers to rest upon my heart.

MAUD. (*half fainting, leans for support against chair*) Oh ! my heart will break !

GERALD. Speak, Maud ! are these withered flowers after all but the sad emblem of my equally faded hopes ? (*a sound of horns, as of the hunt returning, heard at R. U. E.*)

MAUD. (*throwing out her arms wildly*) Give me air! Susan! Gerald ! in pity ! I am fainting ! I am dying ! (*she staggers as falling, GERALD catches her in his arms, as SUSAN, who has been standing up stage, looking off, enters from verandah, and comes down with frightened gesture.*)

SUSAN. (R.) Sir Ralph Challoner !

MAUD. (*recovering herself by a powerful effort, and with a cry*) My husband!

GERALD. Husband ! (*as he releases her, he falls heavily on a chair near the wall like one shot. As the noise of horns, and sound of voices shouting and laughing come nearer, he gazes at MAUD for a moment as one thunder-struck, then with a burst of indignant emotion, he tears from his breast the withered forget-me-nots.*)

GERALD. Oh! you false heart! If ever man trusted woman I trusted you—Maud Sefton.

SUSAN. (*interposing*) In mercy, Mr. Gwynn !

GERALD. (*placing her aside, advances upon the sinking, almost crouching figure of MAUD*) Farewell! (*throws the withered flowers over her, and moves up stage, then pauses, and with utter change of manner, comes down again*) Forgive ! oh! forgive me, Maud ! I know not what I say—I know not what I do ! (*MAUD X 's sobbing to R.*) One word ! one word!

MAUD. (*raising her head, and speaking with effort, but still without looking at him*) You have already uttered it. Farewell! (*she sinks fainting into SUSAN'S arms. GERALD GWYNN looks at her for a moment, then with a gesture of despair, rushes off at L. door which SUSAN has opened and points to. He has scarcely done so when the stage behind it filled by a merry crowd of huntsmen. SIR RALPH CHALLONER, an elderly man, over sixty years of age, in centre. SIR RALPH comes down stage. MAUD rises with supreme effort, and advances to meet him, she takes his arm, and passes up stage,*

hut with faltering steps, and swaying figure—SUSAN watching her with nervous alarm—TAPERLOY appears and crossing quickly, picks up the fragments of the torn letter which SUSAN has left upon the ground, as drop falls.)

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT II.

"MAUD'S PERIL."

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit ?
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be at the root."

TENNYSON.

SCENE. — *An old Gothic sitting-room in Sefton Abbey. The walls ornamented with worm-eaten, tapestry and family portraits. Large chimney piece of carved oak, ascending to ceiling L. of c., in centre of which, is emblazoned in faded colours the escutcheon of the Seftons. At back centre a large window opening out upon the country hut with the appearance of being a considerable height from the ground. A door R. 1.E., conducting to Lady Challoner's apartment—ditto, folding doors placed at angles L. 2 E. Time: Night. A storm threatening. TOBY TAPERLOY is discovered packing a valise — SUSAN removing refreshments from, a side table—down stage, R., SIR RALPH CHALLONER is seated at small table, looking over accounts and papers by light of a shaded lamp. MR. BURRELL, Sir RALPH'S farm bailiff, stands respectfully near table, his back towards TAPERLOY and SUSAN, as waiting SIR RALPH'S orders. TAPERLOY still retains his red wig, has a sleek, almost puritanical look, and wears a half livery, more of the stable than the house.*

TAPER. *(rising from his knees, and catching SUSAN by the dress)* Sue! *(aside, and pointing to a full glass of sherry which is on the tray she is removing)* Susy ! my pet lamb ! are you forgettin' you're got such a treasure as a husband. *(taking a glass, and drinking rapidly, then pocketing the remainder of cake)* Wilful waste makes woeful want! and so I can't abear to see good things throwed away !

SUSAN. *(half raising voice)* Oh, Toby!

TAPER. Take care, you fool! my name's Samuel Gregson, and—*(with utter change of manner into that of a country lout as BURRELL turns a little towards them, but still with a hidden*

meaning which SUSAN understands) Take keer missus—a leetle more an' ye'd ha' 'oopset the whole consarn, it wur lucky I had my eye on you ! (SUSAN, *with head bent, exits rapidly, door L.*)

CHAL. (*looking up, and speaking in a cold hard voice—brusque and decisive*) Your accounts are all correct, Mr. Burrell. (*pointing to papers*) All these want renewals of lease ?

BUR. Thorough good tenants, Sir Ralph.

CHAL. Umph! are they aware that I stand for the county ?

BUR. Quite aware, Sir Ralph. (*with emphasis*) Quite.

CHAL. Well, as long as that matter's understood, you can grant the renewals, (*as he rises, he draws a handsome gold snuff-box, ornamented with diamonds, from his pocket, which he opens slowly, as reflecting, a proceeding which brings TOBY TAPERLOY to his legs, his eyes being caught by the glitter of the box.*)

TAPER. (*aside*) Phew ! a snuff-box ! (*with meaning*) one that's not to be sneezed at.

CHAL. (*to BURRELL*) It's past 10 o'clock, and to catch the up train I must be at the station within the hour, (*turning so sharply on TAPERLOY, who is still gazing at the box, that the latter starts and nearly tumbles back over portmanteau*) Gregson, see if the carriage is ready, (*puts back snuff-box into pocket of his overcoat.*)

TAPER. (*yokel dialect*) Ye-e-s, Sir Ralph, (*aside, as he goes out, dropping dialect*) that would be a slice o' luck for somebody! (*nearly running against door jamb*) them di'monds hurts my eyesight. (*Exit door, L.*)

BUR. (*respectfully*) I hope, Sir Ralph, you'll not forget the house steward's and head gardener's complaints. The matter really looks serious.

CHAL. (*carelessly*) Ah! you mean those pilferings both in and out of the Abbey—I'll get a fellow sent down from Scotland-yard—a two-legged ferret trained to the business—he'll draw the rascals from their holes in no time. (*moving a little up stage, and then speaking to SUSAN, who enters 2nd door L.*) Did her ladyship mention to you, what time she would return ?

SUSAN. For certain before your departure, Sir Ralph.

CHAL. (*speaking aloud, but to himself*) Very kind, but I trust she won't be so foolish as to break up Lady Hampton's party on my account; but that's just like women they never reflect, (*coming a little down stage*) How many votes did you say Hampton could command, Burrell ?

BUR. (*obsequiously*) Thirteen! the baker's dozen, Sir Ralph.

CHAL. (*aside, and crossing to table*) A fish worth catching! If Maud would be little less of a simpleton, we are sure of these thirteen free and independent electors. Hampton's a fool, and therefore governed by his wife! Bah! (*crossing to chimney piece*) Where's that fellow Gregson got to? (*pulls bell sharply, the rope comes off in his hand*) Curse the things! (*throwing it down*) this wing of the Abbey's a complete ruin!

BUR. (*apologetically*) Not been opened for three years, Sir Ralph.

CHAL. And when will the masons be out of the other part of the building?

BUB. Within the week.

CHAL. That's what the architect said a month ago—however, as long as all's completed before our election dinner we must be contented. By the way, how is it Mr. Gwynn of Graythorpe didn't show at our last gathering? He returned from Baden a week ago—I suppose he received an invitation?

BUR. (*with momentary hesitation*) No, Sir Ralph.

CHAL. (*very sharply*) No! and why not? (*he has again drawn out snuff-box, just as TAPERLOT enters L., the latter stands at door again fascinated, eyes open, mouth pursed up.*)

BUR. It was my lady who erased his name from the list.

CHAL. (*with half contemptuous laugh*) I see! I see! Mr. Gwynn has the reputation of being a fast man—a *roué*, and certainly within the last twelvemonths, he has made himself that reputation both at Baden and Paris, but her ladyship's fastidiousness must not interfere with business, (*closing box with a snap which makes TAPERLOY start.*)

TAPER. (*aside*) Ah! (*he gives a sigh of relief as CHALLONER replaces box in pocket*) It is too much for my nerves! (*he crosses and begins to strap up portmanteau.*)

CHAL. Mr. Gwynn is now a landowner, and has too much influence to be overlooked.

SUSAN. (*re-entering L. door*) Her ladyship has returned, Sir Ralph.

CHAL. Very good! (*turning to BURRELL*) I will speak to her about this Mr. Gwynn.

SUSAN. (*aside*) Gerald Gwynn! (*with a gesture of alarm, which she represses upon a look from TAPERLOT, who rises, shouldered portmanteau and passes out, standing aside only*)

to give place to MAUD, who enters L. D., accompanied by her cousin, Miss SEFTON. MAUD languidly gives her opera cloak, fan, &c. to SUSAN, and advancing down stage, returns the careless salutation of CHALLONER, and sinks on sofa, leaning her head back with half closed eyes, as if tired and weary—she has a bouquet in her hand.)

Miss S. (*gaily*) So, Sir Ralph, we're in time to again say good bye.

CHAL. You're very kind to make such haste for me.

Miss S. Oh ! I deserve no thanks. I should have flirted all night without giving you a thought, but Maud hurried me away—she'd a headache, or a heartache or something.

CHAL. She has never been well since the fainting fit she had in Susan's cottage, (*to MAUD*) Are you not well, Maud ? you look pale!

MAUD. A headache, that's all—I hate these state dinner-parties ! the heat of Lady Hampton's rooms was stifling.

CHAL. Pooh! pooh! you're full of fancies. It's the storm that's threatening, (*sound of storm getting up, &c.*) We shall have a rough night.

MAUD. Then why not postpone your journey till to-morrow?

CHAL. Nonsense—railways are independent of wind and weather, (*crossing to Miss SEFTON*) I'm sorry, Kate, that Maud's indisposition should have stopped you in your career of conquest.

Miss S. Now don't, there's a good creature, don't! I've had enough of compliments—you men feed us on nothing but sugar, as if we were birds in a cage.

CHAL. I hope some admirer may offer you a golden one.

Miss S. To keep me a prisoner, eh ?

CHAL. With the prettiest fetter in the world—a ring.

Miss S. (*laughing*) And the hardest to break. Thank you, I value my liberty too much.

CHAL. Take care, Kate, coquettes are like weathercocks, they only become steady when they grow rusty. By the way, who did you meet at Lady Hampton's ?

Miss S. Oh ! the usual gathering—half-a-dozen somebodies and a score or two of nobodies—among the former a most charming person who really was (*with a simper*) most attentive to me, though dear Maud, for some reason I cannot understand, seems to have taken to him a most invincible dislike.

CHAL. (*who is looking at watch*) And who is this " most charming " person ?

Miss S. Mr. Gwynn, of Graythorpe, who-----

CHAL. (*eagerly*) The very man I was thinking of, and wished to speak to you both about, (*turning to MAUD*) What reason can you have for disliking Mr. Gwynn?

MAUD. (*bending over bouquet*) Mr. Gwynn's reputation is scarcely -----

CHAL. Tut, tut, tut, Mr. Gwynn is young, clever, and much sought after. In youth it is hard to resist temptation, though his only faults, as far as I can hear, have been an over strong attachment to the race-course and the gaming-table; Burrell, however, tells me he has come down to Graythorpe to sow his wild oats, and reform. (*harshly, as MAUD averts her face*) You will please to send an invitation to Mr. Gwynn for our state dinner on my return, (*he is turning with some irritability of manner up stage, when a gust of wind forces open the windows with such violence that the doors, L. U. E., burst open also, and there is a noise as of the brass knob or handle of latter falling to floor, Miss SEFTON, who has seated herself on sofa, rises with a scream.*)

Miss S. What's that?

CHAL. (*sharply*) Nothing! the whole place is out of repair, that's all. Shut that window, Gregson. (*as TAPERLOY shuts window at back, C, SUSAN picks up handle of door, R.*)

SUSAN. The handle has broken off, I think—no, (*fitting it on door again*) the screw only is loose.

BURRELL. The locksmiths take this part of the abbey to-morrow.

MAUD. (*kindly*) Oh! the inconvenience is a slight one.

Miss S. (*crossing down stage*) Not, my dear Maud, if you had any return of your old sleep-walking propensities, with all this scaffolding about, and the height these rooms are from the ground—ugh! to go walking about in a dream! I tremble to think of it.

MAUD. (*half laughing*) There is no cause on my account, I gave over that bad habit long ago.

Enter SERVANT, in livery, L. door.

SERV. The carriage is waiting, Sir Ralph. (*exits L.*)

CHAL. I'm afraid I shall get a touch of the storm before I reach the station, get me my rough overcoat, (*to TAPERLOY*) this is too light a one. (*he has taken, off paletot while speaking and flung it on sofa.*)

TAPER. (*aside, as he exits L.*) And he's left the snuff-box in the pocket!

MAUD. (*as CHALLONER kisses her coldly on forehead*) I still think you had better have postponed your journey till the morning.

CHAL. And so miss my London agent ? again, that's just like you women, (*to TAPERLOY, who has re-entered L. with the thicker overcoat and adjusted it on Sir RALPH*) Come with me, I've some things to put into the carriage. Good night, Kate! (*they shake hands.*)

Miss S. Pleasant journey.

CHAL. (*near door, L.*) Now fellow! (*to TAPERLOY*) look sharp! (*with laugh as he goes out L.*) If you can!

TAPER. (*aside, as waking from a reverie*) If I can! I'll prove myself a little sharper nor you think or my name's not—what the devil is it ?

CHAL. (*just outside door*) Gregson!

TAPER. Ah! that's it. (*changing into dialect*) Cooming, Sir Ralph, (*aside as he exits L., still casting glance at coat*) The box is there ! It's a temptin' o' providence, that it is. (*MAUD still standing by chimney-piece has again taken up bouquet, from which, with a distrait air, she is pulling the flowers, and dropping them at her feet, suddenly a billet falls to the ground, she starts violently, at same moment, Miss SEFTON, who is examining the curds on table, looks up.*)

Miss S. (*at table, takes up card*) Why, Maud dear, I see Mr. Gwynn has already made a call at the abbey.

MAUD. (*confused*) Possibly ! I did not see him.

Miss S. Ah! you were from home, (*as Miss SEFTON drops card into basket, MAUD stoops hurriedly and picks up letter.*)

MAUD. (*aside*) Can he have dared to write? (*she conceals letter hurriedly as Miss SEFTON rises slowly from table*) He has ! (*she crosses to sofa R. and sinks upon it, her manner much agitated.*)

Miss S. Really, dear Maud, I can't understand your aversion for that charming Mr. Gwynn, nor the distant—pardon me, dear, but I had almost said, the rude manner in which, at Lady Hampton's you received his every attempt at politeness.

MAUD. (*coldly, and with hauteur as SUSAN re-enters L.*) We are not mistresses either of our antipathies or our affection—and I must beg you, Kate, to speak no more to me of Mr. Gwynn.

Miss S. (*very gaily*) There! there! don't be angry. I don't want to interfere with your likes or dislikes, (*at glass*) Plague take this provoking curl! it's as obstinate as you are, Maud, I can never coax it to do as I like, (*kissing*

her affectionately) I will borrow Susan from you for half an hour to arrange my hair, for my maid is so afraid of a flash of lightning that I shall find her in hysterics by this time.

MAUD. (*rising*) I shan't require you, Susan, till the morning.

SUSAN. But your ladyship-----(*advancing affectionately.*)

MAUD. (*with slight wave of hand*) I have some letters to write—I can undress myself. Good night, dear Kate! (*rising, and very kindly*) Good night, Susan!

SUSAN. (*as she follows Miss SEFTON*) Good night, my lady! (*they exeunt L., doors dosing behind them.*)

MAUD. (*who has moved up stage, while saying " Good night," comes quickly down—her manner is totally changed—the tone of forced calmness has disappeared, and with an agitation she no longer endeavours to conceal, she leans against table as for support—storm without*) Alone! at last! had they stayed but a minute longer my strength would have failed me. To think that he should dare to write! (*taking out note while she speaks*) He must have placed the note in the bouquet as it lay beside me on the table. Oh! love which others find so sweet, how cruelly you have made me suffer! He wished that I could know his suffering—his—(*bitterly*) Ah! had he no thought of mine? I told him never to cross the threshold of this house, and yet—(*tearing open note*) What has he written? (*glancing at letter*) That he must speak to me! that he will—(*crumpling letter in hand angrily*) It is a persecution that must and shall end! (*noise as of wind increasing, MAUD, who has let her face sink into her hands, looks up with a sort of growing alarm*) This wind frightens me! I wish I had told Susan to return! (*rising quickly, and taking up lamp from table*) I will just put aside some of these ornaments and then go to my aunt's room, (*crossing to door R. 1 E.*) The wind shakes this portion of the Abbey as though it would shake it to pieces, (*violent gust of wind*) I dare not sleep here to-night! (*as she passes into chamber R., the tapestry is moved aside—R. u. E. at back, and from a small concealed door GERALD GWYNN appears. He stands for a moment irresolute on the threshold, then moves slowly into room, dropping tapestry behind him, but without closing the little hidden door—he wears dark overcoat which he loosens from his shoulders as he enters, and throws off entirely as he speaks. He is in evening costume—his face is very pale and, worn as from mental suffering.*)

GERALD. (*looking about him as he comes down stage*) If my

information was correct, these are the rooms she occupies while the other portion of the Abbey is under repair. (*moves towards table*) It is difficult to see anything in this dim light. Ah ! here is the wreath she wore, and this the lace I last saw upon her shoulders, (*he presses it to his lips*) I think I shall go mad ! (*bitterly, and throwing down scarf*) Nay, I am mad! What else but madness could bring me here ? What, but the very desperation of my love! She avoids me! shrinks from me ! and—and— (*bitterly, and with a wild sort of triumph*) I am here! ! (*moving a little up stage, and glancing at tapestry which still remains a little open, showing where he entered*) It is years ago since I discovered this private passage from the gardens—she must have forgotten it long ago, while I----- (*pauses, and presses hand to head*) I feel like the villain that I am! (*he moves quickly back into the shadow as MAUD divested of her jewels, but still in her dinner dress, re-enters with lamp, R., and crosses slowly to table. The noise of storm without increases gradually.*)

MAUD. I can't tell why my heart beats so—I am not used to be so timid, (*there is a flash of lightning seen through crevices of shutters, it is followed by the roll of distant thunder—MAUD, who has rested lamp on table, turns in alarm and becomes conscious of the presence of GERALD GWYNN, who, moving down stage, now stands pale and irresolute within some paces of her*)

GERALD. (*C. in a low voice*) Maud !

MAUD. (*R. C. recoiling*) Gerald ! Mr. Gwynn! here !

GERALD. Have I not said that I *must* speak to you ?

MAUD. By what means have you entered this house ?

GERALD. (*pointing to tapestry at back and half-hidden door*) Have you forgotten our old hiding-place, the passage to the gardens ?

MAUD. (*who continues to recoil before his slow and hesitating advance*) Mr. Gwynn (*with emphasis*) your conduct fills me with horror.

GERALD. Horror!

MAUD. (*gradually recovering her self-possession*) Yes, with more than horror, with scorn and indignation. *You* love me ! (*disdainfully*) *You never* loved !—never !

GERALD. (*impetuously*) Demand a proof—any proof!

MAUD. I demand but one: leave me, and leave me at once!

GERALD. (*imploringly*) Maud!

MAUD. (*with dignity*) Sir, I am Lady Challoner—Lady-Ralph Challoner.

GERALD. (*bitterly*) To Lady Challoner, then, I speak. (*with change of manner*) No, I cannot speak thus to you. For months and months I have longed for this moment—months of misery, of torture, of despair, (*advancing and looking at her intently*) But *your* eye has lost some of its brightness, and there are lines in your face that show strangely in one so young. You have suffered also.

MAUD. (*very coldly, but with an effort*) Never so much as at this moment, (*with change of tone as he retreats a step, his manner still full of an imploring gentleness*)

GERALD. Call it what you will—think of me as you will—but if you only knew how I have suffered !

MAUD. (*bitterly*) You ? How *you* have suffered !

GERALD. From the time we met and parted in Susan's cottage, my life has been like that storm which is raging without, a turbulent darkness, broken only by lurid flashes of light, more terrible than the gloom they disperse. I sought everywhere a refuge from (*he hesitates*) from *you*. Fool that I was ! as if, having known you, forgetfulness were possible.

MAUD. Enough ! enough ! tell me, Mr. Gwynn, *why* you are here ?

GERALD. (*with a wild excitement*) To say here—in this house—in your own room, that I cannot live without you—to repeat that your presence is as necessary to my happiness as air is to my existence. I have come because I love you—to kneel thus at your feet and implore your pity, and your pardon.

MAUD. (*retreating as he kneels and leaning against chair for support*) Oh, reflect!

GERALD. I cannot reflect. I can but *feel*, (*still kneeling, covers face with hands*)

MAUD. (*with an effort, and struggling with her emotion*) You say you love me, and (*with powerful effort to cheek agitation*) I believe you—but I have learnt in this world love is made up of sacrifice—and the sacrifice I now demand you will make for me ?

GERALD. (*who has risen to his feet, approaching her eagerly*) Any sacrifice.

MAUD. (*with much tenderness*) Quit Graythorpe—and at once!

GERALD. Quit Graythorpe ?

MAUD. (*with a sob, and averting face*) Never to return ! You have a future-----

GERALD. (*impetuously*) I have no future—but in you !

MAUD. (*in a scarcely audible voice*) Leave me ! in mercy
e he!

GERALD. Have you forgotten the time, Maud—when I, a mere boy, first saw you during one of my midnight rambles, passing like some apparition, whiter than the moonbeams which seemed to cling to you as you walked—I remember my alarm, my awe, when I approached and discovered that you were asleep. You had reached the very edge of the deep chalk cutting, when I threw my arms about you, and you were saved! *(after a pause, and regarding MAUD, who has sunk in chair, with intense tenderness)* Saved!—while I—was lost.

MAUD. Lost?

GERALD. For, as your dear eyes opened, my heart had opened also, a new life circulated in my veins—and—*(passionately)* I loved!

MAUD. *(who has listened with unconscious eagerness, starts to her feet)* Hush! Leave me!

GERALD. Maud! Maud! your marriage was a sacrifice—your heart was mine! You never loved Ralph Challoner. Do you believe in destiny? *(with increasing passion, as she shrinks away from him in alarm)* Maud, you are my fate, and come what may, I close my eyes and meet it—blindly.

MAUD. *(with sudden energy, and in a tone of disdainful command)* Back, sir, back! You have entered my husband's house like a thief in the night—but from those very memories you have conjured up, you cannot, you dare not, touch that house's honour!

GERALD. Maud, hear me!

MAUD. No! I will not trust myself to hear you. My place in future is by my husband's side, for I fear you, Gerald Gwynn, I fear you!

GERALD. Fear!

MAUD. *(with an increasing and almost hysterical rapidity)* I will throw myself at my husband's feet, and I will tell him all—all! That a man loved me before I married him—that I believed that man dead, but that he has returned and follows me like my shadow—that my heart fails me in his presence, for I also loved him. *(movement on part of GERALD)* Yes, out of my very weakness I will pluck strength to say: "Husband! friend! come to my aid and save me from this man!" *(she pauses exhausted, and with flashing eyes and heaving bosom, rests for support against table)*

GERALD. *(after a pause, sadly)* You hate me, then?

MAUD. Love cannot live with fear.

GERALD. *(moving up stage)* Farewell, Maud! I am

indeed no longer worthy of your love. Better—better had I died upon that dreary Crimean field, where death at least was associated with *honour*, (*he has moved quite up stage and statute near door which is half seen through the parted tapestry, casting one last look upon MAUD who has sunk slowly on chair, her face averted, and bathed in tears. As he says the word "honour," which he does with sad emphasis, a violent gust of wind suddenly bursts open the window shutters and window, the door at back shuts with a bang, while the door R. 2 E. is also forced open by the gust and then slams to—the handle of last door heard to fall on the outside. A flash of lightning, followed by the rumble of distant thunder. As MAUD starts with an alarmed cry to her feet the lamp goes out, leaving the stage in more than partial darkness, the only light coming from the now open window, through which a lurid and disturbed sky is visible.*)

GERALD. (*up stage, trying door*) The wind has shut the door, and the key is on the other side.

MAUD. (*now intensely alarmed*) I will ring the bell, Susan will answer it—and — (*X ing stage, and with a cry*) The bell-rope is broken, (*moving up stage to D. H.*) I will go to Susan myself, I can trust her. Ah ! (*with another cry—all this is very rapid*) The handle has fallen!

GEKALD. (*in X ing strikes foot against something on ground, which he picks up*) It is here, (*endeavouring to fit it to door*) Impossible, the screw has fallen out on the other side !

MAUD. (*clasping hands excitedly*) Gerald, you cannot, you must not remain here !

GERALD. *No*, no, this other door, (R.) This one leads to-----

MAUD. (*throwing herself before him*) To my chamber.

GERALD. There is still the window.

MAUD. (*with a joyous cry*) Ah, the window !

GERALD. (*as they go up stage the storm increases*) The descent cannot be difficult!

MAUD. (*arrived at window, recoils*) Not difficult !the height turns me giddy !

GERALD. (*looking from window*) But I see a ledge below, and the lattice-work mounts nearly to the window.

MAUD. (*places hand to eyes as he prepares to descend*) Oh, this is dreadful.

GERALD. Do not be alarmed. Indeed, there is no danger. I can aid myself by the curtain, (*he runs the curtains along the rod, and gathering them in his hand, tests them*) Have no fear for me, Maud, and remember, whatever happens, I loved you to the last, (*prepares to descend—music*)

MAUD. Stay ! you must not—it is death! (*He throws his leg over the window-sill, and is about to descend, when a flash of lightning again illuminates scene, followed by a roll of thunder—this time us over the house. As the roll of thunder dies away, a great crash is heard as of a shutter torn away, of falling tiles and breaking glass. GERALD GWYNN swings himself up by curtain, and falls, nearly fainting, half in and half out of window, his head falling back against side of window. A vivid flash of lightning, which seems to envelope the two figures. Thunder. MAUD, who has sunk on her knees, springs to her feet with a cry, and in utter forgetfulness of all but his danger, springs forward and encircles him with her arms, thus saving him from falling*)

MAUD. (*with natural burst of feeling*) Gerald! Gerald! you shall not kill yourself for me! (*He still, as one half stunned, regains room—but rests close to window, leaning against wall*)

GERALD. Maud, I must not stay (*with effort*) the punishment, as the folly, shall be mine, (*as he again mounts to window she detains him*)

MAUD. (*coming down stage, she pauses for a moment, her face turned towards GERALD GWYNN*) Good night! (*as she utters these words the door L. opens and TOBY TAPERLOY carrying a lantern glides stealthily in*)

TAPER. (*aside, as he enters*) He's left the coat, and in the coat's the snuff-box, (*he is moving rapidly up stage when he comes face to face with MAUD as she turns c.*)

TAPER. (*recoiling*) Ah! (*in extreme alarm*) Lady Chal-loner!

MAUD. Gregson ! (*drawing herself up with great hauteur*) Your *business* here, fellow ?

TAPER. (*in great confusion*) My business, my lady, my business ! (*his eyes suddenly resting on GERALD GWYNN*) My business (*as struck with a sudden idea*) and his! (*triumphantly, and holding lantern so that its light falls upon GWYNN'S face and figure*) and his !

Tableau and

DROP FALLS VERY RAPIDLY.

ACT THIRD.

CHALLONER'S REVENGE.

But lever'd in her sleep she seems,
 And pale her cheek with troubled dreams,
 And mutters she in her unrest
 A name she dare not breathe by day.—BYRON.

SCENE.—*A magnificent and modern-looking room in Sefton Abbey, two-thirds of stage at back consisting of French windows opening into Sefton Park, at the commencement of scene these windows are hidden by curtains—L. c. entrance to a sort of library cutting off angle—down stage R. an arched entrance to what is apparently a suit of rooms brilliantly lighted—door 1 E. and 2 L. E., ditto R.—the scene is lighted by handsome candelabra held by bronze figures on pedestals. SUSAN at table L. preparing tea and coffee, which servants in handsome liveries carry out on salvers, passing into the other apartments through arched entrance, R.*

SUSAN. *(as servants pass out, pauses in her occupation, comes a little down stage, and glancing into rooms R. from which come the loud clinking of glasses and bursts of noisy laughter)* Sir Ralph and his electioneering friends are enjoying themselves, and somewhat noisily too. It is well my lady kept her room, especially as Mr. Gwynn was compelled to accept Sir Ralph's invitation. My poor dear lady, however she may strive to hide it from herself, however she may fight against the thought, she still loves Gerald Gwynn—loves him with a breaking heart, *(as she raises apron to her eyes, MR. BURRELL, in evening dress, enters from archway R., he holds cup of tea in his hand, stirring it as he X's stage. Noise in room R. and clattering of cups and glasses continues)*

BUR. *(coming behind SUSAN, unperceived)* What, crying Mrs. Taperloy, that's a bad sign—a bad sign! and *(as SUSAN turns)* I think I know the cause.

SUSAN. You—you know the cause, Mr. Burrell?

BUR. *(with bluff sympathy)* That cousin of yours, Sam Gregson! It's little more than a year since he first came to Sefton, and was engaged by me at your recommendation, and every month the fellow has been growing more

idle and impertinent. He's a ne'er-do-well, I'm sure. Take my advice, Mrs. Taperloy, and have nothing to do with him.

SUSAN. (*sadly*) Blood's thicker than water, Mr. Burrell! It's hard to turn one's back on a relation.

BUR. But you've suffered enough, my poor dame, with one bad connection to make any scruples at turning off another.

SUSAN. (*hopefully*) But since you've removed him from the house, and given him employment as under-gardener, you've found some improvement?

BUR. (*shaking head*) He's at the Red Lion from morning to night. How the fellow gets money to pay for what he drinks I can't imagine. Shake him off, Mrs. T., shake him off, or things will end badly, (*moves up stage to tea-table and places more sugar in his cup*)

SUSAN. (*aside*) Shake him off! Ah, if he only knew the truth!

BUR. (*who has placed tea-cup on table*) So Mr. Gwynn's stay among us is but a short one?

SUSAN. A short one?

BUR. He sells Graythorpe and quits England.

SUSAN. (*with a joy she can scarcely restrain*) Quits England!

BUR. He leaves for London to-morrow. Here he comes. (*significantly*) A cup of your tea will do him good. Sir Ralph has passed the bottle freely, (*stands a little up stage as GERALD GWYNN enters R., he appears to be excited with wine and greets BURRELL with exaggerated cordiality*)

GERALD. What, Burrell, shirk the wine glass for the tea-cup? I'm ashamed of you—we're all ashamed of you. There's Sir Ralph calling for you in the other room.

BUR. (*with fussy readiness*) I will rejoin Sir Ralph directly; but at my age, Mr. Gwynn, a man is a bit of a philosopher, and-----

GERALD. (*laughing*) Should imitate the wisest—a jolly fellow called Epicurus, who considered happiness to be the only good, and pleasure the only means to attain it. (*rattling of glasses within*) The party is breaking up, and Sir Ralph grows impatient. (*BURRELL exits hastily R.—as he passes out, GERALD'S manner undergoes an entire change, he X's quickly to SUSAN and lays his hand on her arm*) Susan, you have heard that I quit Sefton to-morrow. Tell me, why does Lady Challoner still keep her room?

SUSAN. Since the great storm of last week her health has suffered much. She cannot rest, but often rises in the

ately recoils, shrouding her eyes, with a cry which causes CHALLONER to look up and start to his feet with intense surprise.)

MAUD. The lightning! what a flash! it almost blinded me! and now the thunder! listen! *(she leans forward as listening intently, then starts back, her hands pressed to her ears)* You must not go! No, you must not!

CHAL. *(in a low voice of surprise)* Maud! my wife! *(he has advanced towards her, but as he looks her in face, recoils in wonder)* She sleeps! *(coming nearer and peering curiously into her face)* She is walking in her sleep! *(he is about to place his hand gently on her arm, when, with an impatient gesture, she speaks again.)*

MAUD. Quick! open the shutters! Why are you so slow? I am lost if you remain here till daylight. Let me help you! quick! Ah! thank heaven my husband is not here! *(she opens window and discovers a magnificent sweep of park scenery irradiated by a soft moonlight, as she stands the silver beams fall over her face and figure.)*

CHAL. *(who, with a gesture almost of terror, has shrunk out of the light)* Her brain is wandering! She is mad!

MAUD. *(with passionate action)* Stay! you risk your life! You must not attempt it! the trellis will not bear your weight—and yet—and yet, if you are found here at this hour, I am lost!!!

CHAL. *(aside, R. of c.)* It is I who must be mad, or dreaming! Yes, this is some hideous dream! *(aloud, but in a stifled voice)* Maud! *(MAUD, at first sound of his voice, turns slightly as listening—c shudder as of extreme terror seems to thrill her from head to foot, and she clasps her hands convulsively to her breast.)*

MAUD. It was my husband's voice! Hush! he would kill me if he found you here! *(as motioning some one to silence)* Hush!

CHAL. *(who has again crouched back into the shadow)* Great heaven!

MAUD. *(with a sigh of relief)* It was the wind! This terrible night has filled me full of fancies—I tremble, but it is with fear, not cold. Oh! to fear thus is worse than death! *(the above is accompanied with most effective dramatic action, the working of her features painting each change of idea, terror, by degrees, gives place to a brighter look—a look of gratitude and relief.)*

CHAL. *(aside)* This is no madness! *(with passionate gesture, but in subdued voice, as he advances out of the shadow)* His name! as yet she has not mentioned his name.

MAUD. Farewell! farewell! Ah! your letter! I dare not keep it—I am afraid of it! I am afraid of all things! of the world ! of my husband ! of myself! and, most of all, of you.

CHAL. (*aside, between his clenched teeth*) The name ! she has not said his name!

MAUD. (*turning in direction of voice but without waking from her sleep*) Feel how my hand trembles! and, but for the noise this storm makes, you would hear how my heart beats. Go! we shall have daylight soon! here is your letter ! and write to me no more—do you hear ? no more. (*she extends hand which CHALLONER seizes, and takes from, it a crumpled paper, which, with a gleam of fierce triumph, he thrusts into his breast. MAUD, with a sad, sweet smile*) Good night! (*she leans a little forward as looking over a balcony, then with a wave of the hand as bidding adieu—moves down stage.*)

CHAL. (*aside*) Damnation ! she has spoken no name ! (*he makes a quick movement, placing himself between her and the window, in doing so he upsets a small table, which falls with a crash.*)

MAUD. (*half down stage, turns with a scream*) He has fallen !!! The lattice has given way beneath his weight! Gerald! Gerald Gwynn! (*she rushes towards window, but is caught in CHALLONER'S arms—without recognising him she struggles for a moment as to reach the window.*)

CHAL. (*in a soothing voice, but without releasing her*) Fear nothing, Maud! it is I! (*with a cold emphasis*) I, your husband! (*at sound of his voice, she starts, and awakens with a cry—he releases her, and she looks vaguely around her with a sort of speechless astonishment which deepens into fear, CHALLONER regards her with stony calmness.*)

MAUD. What has happened ? (*pressing hands to head*) My temples throb so ! How is it that I am here ?

CHAL. (*very calmly, and pointing to door, R.*) By that door—you have had a return of one of your old attacks and have been walking in your sleep.

MAUD. (*with the same wild look of doubt and fear*) In my sleep—in my sleep! (*with a quick, alarmed movement*) What have I said ?

CHAL. (*with an icy brevity, and forcing a smile*) Nothing! a few unconnected words, perhaps—but, when I spoke you awoke at once, (*he has lighted a small hand-lamp on side table*) Retire to your room and I will send Susan to you. You are not well, Maud, your cheek is flushed with fever.

(as he places the small lamp in her hand) And your hand trembles.

MAUD. (with a great effort) Indeed you are in error—see. (she walks with a tolerably firm step to door, but as she reaches it, totters and places her unoccupied hand against the doorpost for support, but as CHALLONER moves quickly towards her, draws herself erect, forcing a smile, and says, as he opens door) Good night! (she exits R. 1 2

CHAL. (stands for a moment, tears the letter from his breast and coming down stage, reads) " I leave Sefton to-morrow to seek another home; I know not, I care not where. By the memory of our love, Maud, I entreat you to see me once more. To-night, at twelve, pass from your room into the park, I will be waiting beneath the great oak that faces your window—you will come—yes, Maud, I know you will come—it is a last adieu! " (crushes up the letter) All is explained now ! the coldness ! the tears ! all ! all ! (stretching out his clenched and trembling hands) I am old—old and feeble! but I will kill him—yes, I will kill this man with out pity or remorse! But the means ! the means ! (as he leans against chair overcome by the very intensity of his passion, TOBY TAPERLOY, slightly the worse for liquor, is seen L., crossing stage outside windows. TOBY singing)

" When I was bound apprentice
In famous Lincolnsheer,
Full well I served my master,
For more than seven year;
Till I took up to poaching,.
As you shall quickly hear,
Oh! it's my delight on a shiny night
In the season of the year."

CHAL. (who listens for a moment, then as struck by an idea) I seek revenge, and the very instrument is offered to my hand, (with a rapid movement up stage, he tears open one of the glass doors, and almost before the other is aware of his presence, has clutched TAPERLOY by the arm and drawn him into the room, he then recloses the door and comes down stage L of C, standing with his hand resting on table on which is the shaded lamp. TAPERLOY remains somewhat up stage in a state of intense bewilderment. He is now dressed like a sort of under gardener, shawl vest, neckerchief with long ends, and loose, patched corduroy trousers; there is a badly arranged, unconditioned look about him) Come nearer. fellow, nearer still. Did anyone see you enter the park ?

TAPER. (*with loutish air and dialect*) Naabody, (*hic*) as I know on, Sir Ralph.

CHAL. You have been in my employ twelvemonths !

TAPER. (*hesitating*) About twelve months !

CHAL. Your name is----- (*taking paper from table.*)

TAPER, (*quickly*) Gregson ! Sam'el Gregson as-----

CHAL. (*consulting paper and in hard, stern, quick voice*) Your name is Tobias Taperloy—eight years ago you were engaged in an affray with gamekeepers, you escaped, by a fortunate accident, the extremest penalty of the law, and were sentenced to transportation for life—I have it on the best authority—that of the police.

TAPER. (R., *with utter change of manner, from the rustic lout to the alert, keen, and desperate rascal he really is*) The police ! then Susan's sold me !

CHAL. (L.) No one has sold you, your own folly awakened suspicion, and suspicion created inquiry. To-morrow, unless I step in between you and those upon your track, you will be in jail, Mr. Taperloy. (TAPERLOY, *with all his evil faculties aroused, looks at CHALLONER for a moment in silence, crumpling up nervously the felt hat he holds in his hands, then suddenly advances a few steps as having formed a resolution.*)

TAPER. You're right, guv'nor, I'm the man as you've got set down there, but (*looking stealthily about him, and then full in CuALLONER's face*) it wasn't to give me up, that you've picked out such a time as this to tell me of it!

CHAL. Your liberty is in my hands-----

TAPER. (*sharp and quick*) Call it life ! for I couldn't stand another turn in the colonies.

CHAL. Your life, then—what price, now, would you pay to redeem it ?

TAPER. Price!

CHAL. What would you do ?

TAPER, (*after a pause of steady scrutiny*) Anything !

CHAL. (*who has approached close to him, looks nervously round, then lowers his voice*) Suppose that in place of delivering you over to justice, I furnished you with the means of escape—what would you say to such a proposition ?

TAPER. The first thing I'd say, would be " Toby, my boy, you're in luck !" and the next thing "what's your little game ? " It must be high play for such a stake.

CHAL. (*in a low, concentrated voice, and fixing his gleaming eyes nervously on the face of the other*) Whatever that work may be, would you do it ?

TAPER. That depends, (*taking an easy pose and with increasing effrontery of manner*) Before closing a bargain it's necessary to know of what it consists.

CHAL. (*in a whisper*) Suppose it—of the gravest character.

TAPER. (*with a grin*) Something after the fashion of the gamekeeper's, eh?

CHAL. (*after a pause and without looking at the other*) Yes.

TAPER. (*calmly*) I guessed as much.

CHAL. (*who has moved a little up stage, nervously glancing at the calm moonlighted scene at back, turns and again comes down*) Are you strong ?

TAPER. (*stretching out arm*) Could puzzle an ox with a blow!

CHAL. (*grasping the outstretched arm with sudden burst of passion*) Kill him ! and half my fortune shall be yours!

TAPER. (*astonished by the other's burst of rage*) Him! but who ?

CHAL. Gwynn! Gwynn of Graythorpe! (*TAPERLOY startled, staggers back with a low whistle*) Are you afraid ?

TAPER. (*slowly recovering himself, speaking in aside*) Phew ! I see it all now—another case of night poaching!

CHAL. (*in a choked voice, and adverting face*) I have reason to believe-----

TAPER. (*with a laugh*) Oh! you may make certain sure of it—I myself let him out!

CHAL. (*turning on him like a flash*) Out! from where?

TAPER. Lady Maud's boudoir!

CHAL. (*seizing him by the throat*) Rascal! you dare-----

TAPER. (*with a momentary fierceness shakes himself loose from the passionate old man's grasp, and seizes his wrist with a grip of iron*) You asked if I was strong just now! (*releasing him with a laugh*) Do that again and I'll give you a proof of it.

CHAL. (*in a sort of confused and nearly humble manner*) I was wrong ! I was wrong! it is not upon such as you my revenge must fall, (*with change of manner*) You run no danger.

TAPER. How so?

CHAL. My steward complains of frequent robberies both within and without the abbey. (*TAPERLOY starts*) I have already directed that any stranger caught trespassing after a certain hour shall be treated as a thief, and-----

TAPER. I see. (*laughs*) It's murder made easy.

CHAL. (*aside and recoiling from him*) This ruffian makes

me tremble! (*with a revulsion of feeling*) I have changed my mind, and-----

TAPER. (*coarsely*) Will leave the young people to themselves! (CHALLONER, *who has moved a little up stage, again turns fiercely, but pauses as the clock on chimney-piece strikes twelve.*)

CHAL. (*aside, and with a gasp*) He is there! *there!* at the rendezvous! (*aloud, and coming quickly down stage*) Are you armed?

TAPER. (*hesitating*) Why y-e-s ! a—a little.

CHAL. (*pointing at back*) The man is there! in the park, close by the private gardens, beneath the great oak, that-----

TAPER. (*significantly*) Faces her ladyship's windows.

CHAL. You shall have-----

TAPER. Something on account, eh?

CHAL. (*angrily*) Do you doubt my honor, fellow?

TAPER. In such exceedingly delicate matters I doubt everybody.

CHAL. (*greatly excited*) You shall have money, I have plenty in my bureau! (*moving up stage towards library door*)

TAPER. (*with avaricious quickness*) No paper! no flimsies ! no tracing of notes or stopping of numbers, but ready rhino, hard and clinking.

CHAL. (*with feverish agitation*) Have no fear. I drew a large sum from my banker's this morning for election expenses. (*pointing to clock*) There is no time to be lost. For the remaining sum I will write out an order on my agents in New York, payable on your arrival, (*exits into library L. 3 E. with lamp, which he has taken from table*)

TAPER. (*down stage*) The election money, that should be a large sum. (*moving slowly up stage, pausing*) He's opening a drawer, and (*sucking in breath and with movement of fingers*) Ah, that's the music I like, (*while speaking he creeps backwards and nearer to the entrance of library, from which the faint chink of money is heard. He halts as he reaches a point near enough to see into the inner room, and stands as fitted by the fascination of what he sees, his eyes sparkling, his lips moving, his fingers twitching, a picture of hesitation and avarice. A faint light from the library falls upon and partially illuminates his face and figure*) Why. the drawer's full, (*puffing out and draining in breath*) I never saw so many canary birds in all my life. (TAPERLOY looks furtively around him, glances off at bark, then creeps nearer and nearer to the library door, till the faint light from

the lamp falls upon his working face) No one saw me come in, no one need see me go out. I've a fair start before me. *(he takes the long straggling ends of the loose coloured neckerchief he wears and wipes forehead and mouth in a hurried nervous way, then with a start)* He's shuttin' the drawer after taking out a handful. Only a miserable handful, that's like *his* meanness! *(with a quick movement up stage, he stands close to door, his head bent forwards, his neck stretched out. He plunges his hand into trousers pocket and draws out a clasp knife, which he opens slowly behind his hack and with a click)* Damn it! it's more powerful than me. I can't stand it. *(with a wild gesture, half covering his eyes with his raised arm, he passes into the library with the leap of a wild cat, as he disappears the door down stage is opened R. 1 E., and MAUD enters, R. 1 E.)*

MAUD. The letter, I cannot find it, but I must—but I must, *(she is moving up stage when there is a loud cry from the inner room and the sound of a struggle—the lamp within room is extinguished)*

CHAL. *(from within)* Help! help! help! *(the first cry is very loud, but the last dies away in a groan, then TAPERLOY reappears on, threshold of room, he stumbles forward and saves himself from falling by grasping doorposts with both hands, a movement which causes the knife to be jerked from his grasp on to the floor)*

TAPER. *(still in same bent attitude, so that his face is hidden from MAUD, speaks in a hoarse, changed voice)* The knife ! I've dropped the knife ! *(MAUD utters a low cry of horror and sinks fainting upon sofa R., so falling that she is behind it, only her head, bust, and one arm resting among and half lost in the lace covering)*

TAPER. *(starting up)* What cry was that? Steps upon the gravel! *(turns towards window)* and coming this way! Caught, like a rat in a trap ! *(he is about to make a rush for door L. when the figure of a man is perceptible moving on the outside of the window—TAPERLOY, with lightning quickness conceals himself behind curtain L. c., as another low but distinct cry is heard from the library. The glass doors are dashed open with a crash, and GERALD GWYNN springs into the room, from, c. window.)*

GERALD. I knew it was from this room the cries proceeded. *(as he moves across stage strikes foot against something which he picks up)* A knife!

CHAL. *(within, faintly)* Help!

GERALD. Sir Ralph's voice! What has happened? *(he passes into library, L. 3 E., and as he does to TAPERLOY comes as quickly from behind curtain)*

TAPER. What I shan't stop to explain! (*confusion of voices and hurried footsteps as of several people heard off scene, doors 1 and 2 E. u.*)

TAPER. The whole house is alarmed, I must run for it! (*he disappears through the open windows, c.—he has scarcely gone 'ere GERALD GWYNN appears on threshold of library, supporting the now inanimate form of CHALLONER—at same moment, and as GWYNN advances a little down stage, the doors are thrown open and Miss SEFTON, SUSAN, and SERVANTS, male and female, appear, some of the former armed, while MR. BURRELL, a pistol in his hand, enters through arch way, followed by some hastily dressed men servants — GERALD GWYNN places CHALLONER on a chair, c.—Tableau.*)

GERALD. (*pointing to open windows at back while he still supports SIR RALPH*) Pursue the murderer, some of you. Sir Ralph Challoner has been assassinated! (*movement of horror, while some of the servants exeunt hurriedly at back—BURRELL and others group about GERALD and SIR RALPH*)

BUR. He is dead!

GERALD. No, his heart beats! And see, his eyes are opening.

CHAL. (*with an effort, and shrinking from GERALD, at same time thrusting him back*) Touch me not! touch me not!

GERALD. (*L., astounded*) Sir Ralph!

CHAL. (*with culminating excitement*) This is the man who would have robbed Ralph Challoner! (*raising himself by a tremendous effort and pointing to GERALD GWYNN*) There stands the assassin, Gerald Gwynn, of Graythorpe, arrest him, some of you! (*during the above, MAUD has slowly, and in a vague uncertain way raised, herself from her reclining position on floor. She approaches, unobserved in the general pre-occupation, the central group, and it is only when, CHALLONER'S accusation readies her ears, that, for a moment, her senses seem to return to her*)

BUR. Mr. Gwynne! an assassin!

MAUD. (*R. C. stepping between*) 'Tis false!

CHAL. (*fixing his glittering eyes upon her face*) 'Tis true! There stands my murderer! (*his finger still points at GERALD GWYNN, but his eyes in their fierce triumph see only MAUD, who stands like a statue of horror, a wild, glazed look settling in her eyes. As the act drop descends on Tableau, CHALLONER'S head falls back slowly on BURRELL'S shoulder. Background filled up by domestics in undress, and extreme background by ditto with lights, such as lanterns, torches, &c.*)

ACT IV.

THE VERDICT.

" My deeds upon my head! I crave the law!"

SHAKESPEARE.

SCENE.—*A large and handsomely furnished room in the Black Lion Hotel, York. Large window at back, opening upon balcony and giving view of York Minster, doors R. 3 E., R. 1 E., and L. 2, E.*

MAUD discovered asleep on sofa, R. The DOCTOR, who holds her wrist, drops it gently, Miss SEFTON and SUSAN are standing looking anxiously on—SUSAN a little in the back ground.

DOCTOR. Do not disturb her. Thank Heaven she sleeps! rest alone can calm the fever of her brain. I will now see—Sir Ralph, I fear there is more danger there, (*he moves up stage to door R. 3 E.*)

MISS S. (*anxiously*) Do you think, Doctor, that Sir Ralph is still in danger? Since his arrival in York he has rallied wonderfully.

DOCTOR. A temporary excitement, but we must hope the best! the best, Miss Sefton! (*Exits R. 3 E.*)

SUSAN. (*who has crossed to couch and bent over MAUD*) My lady! (*with movement of relief as MAUD utters a deep sigh*) Her stillness frightens me!

Miss S. (*in a low voice*) Have you heard how the trial is going, Susan?

SUSAN. (*with Miss SEFTON a little down stage and speaking in a low voice*) Mr. Gwynn makes no defence—he refuses to answer Sir Ralph's accusation, even by a word.

MAUD. (*slowly raising her head*) Who spoke of Gerald Gwynn? (*rising as she speaks*) Ah! now I remember! he is dead! He died long, long ago, before I was married, though between you and me it was not wisely done to place a bridal wreath over a breaking heart!

SUSAN. (*aside*) She speaks of him, ever of him.

Miss S. (*who has approached LADY CHALLONER*) My dear Maud!

MAUD. (*quickly and with impatient movement of hand*)

Hush! (*sinking voice to whisper*) It is getting dark! Let them bring lights—I'm afraid of the dark, you know. Everything comes back to me when night sets in, and then it is I go mad. (*she raises hands and presses them against her temples.*)

SUSAN. Come with me, my lady!

MAUD. (*with change of manner into bright gay tone*) Wait! wait a moment! I'm invited to the ball—the ball where I'm to meet him, you know—but, I cannot dance in this dress, and my hair too—quick ! quick ! braid it up ! It's black as jet they say in the shade, but it shines like gold in the sun.

Miss S. (*to SUSAN*) She is worse this morning.

SUSAN. She should never have been brought here, (*touching MAUD'S arm, and speaking with compassionate respect*) Come, do come with me, my lady.

MAUD. (*turning quickly, but without recognition*) You ! who are you ? I do not know your voice, (*wearily*) It is not *the* voice, no, no, I should know that among a thousand!

Miss S. What voice, dear ?

MAUD. (*with vague movement of hand*) The voice that is ever ringing in my ears, that fearful voice and those dreadful, dreadful words ! (*with illustrative action as recalling the scene with TAPERLOY*) " The knife ! I've dropped the knife !" I hear them now as I did when—(*she pauses with a smothered cry and shudders then with an almost child-like plaintiveness*)—when the light vanished from me and I was left in darkness, (*she sinks down covering face with hands.*)

Miss S. Are you in pain, Maud ?

SUSAN. (*imploringly*) The paroxysm will soon pass—do not trouble her now. (*MAUD rises.*)

Miss S. To-night we return to Sefton Abbey.

SUSAN. To-night?

Miss S. So Sir Ralph said, we leave here immediately after Mr. Gwynn's condemnation.

MAUD. (*who has approached door R. U. S., pauses and turns as seeking to recall something to her mind*) Mr. Gwynn! (*slowly and sadly*) Mr. Gwynn ! (*sighs heavily*) Ah! it's all gone! quite gone—and I remember nothing! (*brightly and turning to SUSAN*) Nothing but my flowers, (*drawing a little bouquet of forget-me-nots from her bosom*) They are but a few withered forget-me-nots—but I tend them night and day—after I have warmed them on my heart—I water them with tears. Good night, madam, good night! (*she curtsies to Miss SEFTON, and moves up stage.*)

Miss S. (*sadly*) Do you not know me, Maud ?

MAUD. (*doubtfully, and moving hand across forehead*) I've seen you somewhere! long—long ago—(*very brightly and turning to SUSAN, who has placed her hand upon MAUD'S arm*)—but I know you! You are Susan Taperloy, my foster sister, and I love you well, but—(*putting finger on lip*)—not a word of that—for if they thought that I loved you, we should be separated and see each other no more—no more! no more! (*she passes out R. 1 E. with SUSAN. CHALLONER appears at door, R. 3. E., watching her. Miss SEFTON stops down stage for a moment to take work from couch or table.*)

CHAL. (*is much older in appearance—very pale and debilitated, no longer the scrupulous care in toilette, &c.—he is much changed and walks with feeble steps—CHALLONER pausing as he enters speaks aside as door closes behind MAUD*) She thinks of him! (*bitterly*) only of him! and yet at times I have paused and hesitated before the completion of my revenge! (*moving down stage with difficulty and pressing hand on heart*) His life! it is mine that is ebbing fast and I must make use of the little that is left me.

Miss S. (*anxiously*) Are you better, Sir Ralph ?

CHAL. No—yes—that is, much better, but leave me, Kate—I have business—I am expecting news! go! go! (*as she passes out R. 1 E., the clock strikes two*) Within an hour the jury will have returned its verdict! within an hour! Ah! (*as struck by pain he sinks feebly in chair*) That ruffian Taperloy had the power and spring of the tiger. My last accounts left him at Liverpool on the eve of embarkation. I took care that his flight should be uninterrupted.

SERVANT. (*entering L. 2 E.*) A man desires to speak with you, Sir Ralph, and-----

TAPERLOY. (*following closely on his heels, and pushing him, aside*) There that'll do, young man, Sir Ralph and I are known to each other—ain't we, Sir Ralph ? (*CHALLONER, who has recoiled as one thunder-struck before this sudden apparition, gazes at him as too bewildered to speak. He is dressed in the roughest kind of sea-faring costume, pea-jacket, no waistcoat, red flannel shirt [torn and soiled], loose trousers, which with boots are dusty and travel-stained. He wears on his head a sealskin skull cap of a light colour, with a peak descending over eyes. When he removes the cap, he shows a close cropped head, which, with his lean cadaverous face, gives him a hungry-sinister look. In this act TAPERLOY must look the convict, still lithe, and with the quick, wild cat manner, but hunted down—TAPERLOY, with assumption of*

sailor's manner) 'Tisn't the first time as we've come athwart each other, (*to SERVANT*) So up anchor and steer out, my scarlet runner. My business is private and confidential.

CHAL. (*to SERVANT, and with an effort*) You can go! (*as SERVANT, with a look of intense surprise, retires L. 2 E., TAPERLOY turns to CHALLONER and lifts cap*) Returned! he has returned!

TAPER, (*placing the bundle and stick he carries on table*) It's not my fault, 'cordin' to 'greement I should have been paddling over the Atlantic but for two circumstances.

CHAL. What circumstances?

TAPER. (*sitting partially on corner of breakfast table and swinging leg*) Fust h'accidentally opening a noosepaper. By your leave, gov'nor. (*takes up loaf while speaking, and cuts a huge slice which he butters*) I never could talk on a h'empty stomach!

CHAL. (*starting to his feet*) You rascal!

TAPER. (*eating*) Rascal! Well, I don't set up for perfecshin'; but when I read that noosepaper I was flabbergasted.

CHAL. What newspaper?

TAPER. (*laying down bread, places both hands on knees and looks into CHALLONER's face with a triumphant leer*) The one as announced Mr. Gerald Gwynn's committal for robbery, and attempted assassination of one Sir Ralph Challoner, barrow-knight. That was the fust circumstance as stopped my vy'age. (*buttering bread*) The second was—(*speaking with mouth full*)—want of money!

CHAL. What have you done with the money you robbed me of?

TAPER. (*jauntily and coming from table*) Gone! every mag of it!

CHAL. (*aghast*) And you expect more—more—and from me? What hinders me from handing you, an escaped convict, over to the police?

TAPER. (*with a wink*) Your own danger—I've got your letter to the agent at New York, signed complete. (*with a chuckle*) We're in the same boat, Guv'nor.

CHAL. (*aside and shrinking back*) Great Heaven! I never calculated upon this!

TAPER. You'll be as quiet as a rat in a trap, (*with change of manner at a gesture of CHALLONER'S*) Speak! damme! (*he strikes table with fist till the breakfast service rattles*) If you care any think about that *honour* you make such a fuss about, you'll play dummy on this matter for the remainder of both our nat'ral lives.

CHAL. I shall choke-----

TAPER. Between comrades there should be a re-cee-pris-i-osity o' feelin'. (*slapping pocket*) Do the 'andsome thing by me and you may live as snug as a pig in a gutter.

CHAL. Suppose I refuse----- ?

TAPER. Then I wolunteers my evidence, (*jerking thumb over his shoulder*) The Court's just by-----

CHAL. (*contemptuously*) You? You dare not!

TAPER. (*springing to his feet with a lithe, tiger-like bound*) Dare not! Look ye, Sir Ralph, you've yet to know what it is to be a hunted man—to be tracked from pillar to post, and chased from one to another, till a chap shies at his own shadder, and duss'nt sleep with more than one eye shut at a time, lest he should wake up in a jail. Well, that's been my life for the last three weeks.

CHAL. Why speak this to me ? (*appealingly*)

TAPER. Why not? Is there such a mighty difference, then, between you and I, Sir Ralph ? You're my superior in birth and edication—I've been a rascal all my life—a bad egg as no amount of sittin' can hatch good out of, but I'm blessed if you ain't distanced me at one bound!

CHAL. (*with bent head and glancing fearfully at the door of MAUD'S room, R.*) Silence ! You shall be satisfied—but—silence!

TAPER. (*with rapid change of manner to one of intense amiability*) Then I shuts up close as a hoyster.

CHAL. This time your passage shall be taken to New York and money given to you *when on board*, not before (*as he moves up stage, he staggers slightly, and for a moment leans against table with gesture as of pain*) My heart nearly stopped then ! (*with an effort as he gains door*) This ruffian will be my death after all. (*exits R. 3 E.*)

TAPER. (*at table*) That's about the hardest old cuss as ever I come nigh. I'm sorry, though, for young Mr. Gwynn, if only for past kindness and old 'Acquaintance sake ; but self-préservation is the fust law o' nature, and I wouldn't be ornateral on no account! (*taking up decanter*) What's this ? Gin ! (*pours out in glass and tastes with disgust*) It's water ! To think o' the taste o' some people. I never touch the nasty stuff on hydrophobic principles. (*puts down decanter and again takes up bread*) Where's the knife? (*he stumbles over chair as he moves round table, so that the knife at the moment he grasps it is jerked from his hand, and he utters a sharp, angry cry—a cry precisely similar to the one uttered by him in the third act—at same moment door D. R. 1 R. opens and MAUD appears on threshold,*

she stands as one transfixed. TAPERLOY, *without seeing her, and still stooping*) The knife! the knife! I've dropped the knife!

MAUD. *(with a wild, thrilling cry springs on him)* The voice! ! ! 'tis he! the man of that fearful night! *(she rushes forward, and as TAPERLOY stands almost stupefied with amazement, seizes him)* Robber and assassin! you have come at last to save the innocent, and answer for your crime! Do not attempt to escape! 'tis heaven's mercy that has sent you here!

TAPER. *(not resisting, and with a frightened hesitation of manner, almost as one who fears to harm the clinging woman)* Lady Maud! take away your hands, I would not hurt you, for Susan's sake I wouldn't, but loose your hands.

MAUD. Sir Ralph! husband! help!

Re-enter SIR RALPH hurriedly, R. 3 E., at same time Miss SEFTON reappears at door, R., in great alarm, both come down stage.

MAUD. *(wildly and pointing at TAPERLOY, who stands for a few seconds baffled, crouching and bewildered)* It is the man whose voice I heard that night, *(struggling with CHALLONER, who interposes)* The man—the man I say !

CHAL. *(holding her back)* You're mad! I know this man.

TAPER. *(appealingly)* You hear him ! you hear the barrow-night! he knows me!

CHAL. *(impatiently)* Go! both of you! I have business with this man. *(as he says this, he extends a paper behind back which TAPERLOY grasps)* Go! send Susan to her at once—go! go! *(Miss SEFTON, who is thoroughly alarmed, exits hurriedly R. 1 E.)*

TAPER. *(who has examined paper—aside)* Susan! I'm off! for New York *di-rect.* *(with mock politeness)* I salutes the company, *(he exits, but without closing door.)*

MAUD. Stop him! the robber! the robber! *(to SUSAN, who enters R. 1. E.)* Raise an alarm, Susan, quick ! quick! the assassin escapes! *(she is following SUSAN, who rushes off without a word L. 2 E., when CHALLONER again interposes and seizes her by the wrist.)*

CHAL. *(gasping)* You are mad, Maud! you are mad!

MAUD. *(by sudden effort wrenches away hand, and rises with dignity, her eyes rivetted searchingly on his white, and troubled face)* I am not mad! The cloud which obscured my brain and sight has passed away and I see clear—at last. You would murder Gerald Gwynn!

CHAL. Murder!

MAUD. Basely murder him, for of what value is the

miserable gift of a few lingering years to one whom you have deprived of home, station, friend? and *honour*.

CHAL. (*with burst of passion*) Woman! you would defend your----- (*as he is about to utter the word "paramour," MAUD advances a step and their eyes meet, the glance of CHALLONER quails before the high, proud, almost contemptuous gaze of MAUD.*)

MAUD. You dare not, Ralph Challoner, you dare not utter that word to me! I am your wife, and, as a wife, have kept *your* honour unsullied, your honour and *my own*.

CHAL. (*after a moment's pause, and speaking with averted face*) Enough ! enough ! the truth is known.

MAUD. The truth is not known! (*she is moving up stage, he again intercepts her*) Let me pass !

CHAL. To go where ?

MAUD. To proclaim the purpose that brought Gerald Gwynn that night to Sefton Park—it was to meet *me* he came ! By what right do you treat me thus ?

CHAL. Right!

MAUD. You took a woman without a heart. There was no deception, as you know. The casket was empty when you bought it. Gerald Gwynn was my first, my only love. (*fierce movement on part of CHALLONER*) I believed him dead, and, by marrying another, wrecked the happiness of two hearts. But the grave gave up its dead, and Gerald Gwynn re-entered Sefton Abbey as your invited guest. The danger was great, but (*very proudly*) the danger was *conquered*. It was to take a *last* farewell, he begged a meeting in the park that night—that meeting I refused!

CHAL. Refused?

MAUD. For, I was true to you, Sir Ralph Challoner. (*with much dignity*) True as Heaven !

CHAL. (*who has listened, his body bent forward, his eyes rivetted on her face speaks with a gasp—a gasp of pain*) I cannot—I dare not believe you.

MAUD. Dare not!

CHAL. No, I dare not! (*his hand over heart*)

MAUD. I have been false to no duty that I owed to you. Ah ! I cannot see you thus and not implore you to believe me. What can I say, what oath shall I take that you will believe me? You wish to be avenged—take my life—mine—it is not death I fear—but do not doubt my honour!

CHAL. (*leaning forward places hands upon her shoulders and looks into her eyes*) I believe you. To longer doubt is impossible, (*raising himself with difficulty*) Give me ink and a pen! Quick! quick! (*he grasps pen, which falls from his*

hand after he has made an effort to write) I have no strength, write, write! before it is too late! *(he thrusts pen in her hand, she commences to write, he, by a powerful effort standing erect)* "Mr. Gerald Gwynn is innocent of the charge brought against him, from a blind motive of revenge I—" *(snatching up pen which MAUD has dropped)* Why do you hesitate? *(writes quickly, but with difficulty, and signs name)* Send this to the court, *(thrusts it in her hand and urging her towards door)* Maud! Maud! it is a dying man who pleads—atonement is still possible—it is a last request—a last!

MAUD. I cannot leave you thus.

CHAL. A moment only! go! go! *(as she exits L. 2 E. he again sinks in chair as half fainting—shouts heard in extreme distance)* Too late! too late! the verdict is pronounced! *(noise increases. As CHALLONER says the last words, TOBY TAPERLOY climbs into balcony, he is in extreme disorder, and in everything, the desperate man at bay, the rascal run down)*

TAPER. *(without perceiving CHALLONER, rushes down stage to door)* No key! *(shouts outside window—he turns and sees CHALLONER, who has pushed back chair, and regards him with fear and astonishment)* The game's up, guv'nor! No sooner had I left this house than, as chance would have it, I stumble across an Australian pal now in the police, he saw through my disguise like a pane of glass. Smelt a reward, and blew the gaff directly, *(seeing SIR RALPH'S stony and impassable look)* Hide me somewhere's, pard'ner.

CHAL. I hide you!

TAPER. You'd better! Swear you havn't seen me, they'll believe you. This room must have a winder, and----- Ha! *(he recoils before MAUD, who appears in doorway L. 2. E)*

MAUD. Justice has pronounced its verdict. You shall not pass, *(commotion without and noise on stairs)*

TAPER. Caught! *(coming down stage he draws pistol from pocket)* I'll give 'em a taste o' my quality, anyhow, *(he raises pistol, at same instant CHALLONER, with all his remaining strength, springs upon him and tears the weapon from his hand)*

CHAL. Villain! it is I who arrest you! *(as POLICE OFFICERS and CROWD come surging into the room,)* Enter! enter all of you, the man you seek is here! *(the OFFICERS advance while the CROWD remains about door. By a violent effort TAPERLOY strikes pistol from CHALLONER'S hand, dives under FIRST OFFICER'S outstretched arms, but is intercepted by SECOND OFFICER, and handcuffed. He looks from one OFFICER*

to the other, shrugs his shoulders, and gives a prolonged whistle)

OFFICER. (*laughs*) I never forgets an old friend, Toby.

TAPER. (*with utter change of manner into one of easy, chaffing bravado*) And *this* is how you cements your friendships, (*holding out handcuffed wrists*) Then, as it's a lifer anyhow, I'll make a clean breast of it. It's been a hard fight between me and conscience, and now, as there's nothing to be got of silence, conscience shall have the best of it. Mr. Gerald Gwynn is innocent, (*coming down and taking c. of stage*) I'm the man who robbed Sir Ralph Challoner. (*general movement of astonishment.*)

SUSAN. (*who, with the doctor has come down stage*) You! You, Toby! Oh, don't say it—don't say it! I have hoped against hope even to the last!

TAPER. (*with a touch of tenderness kissing the hands which she has rested on his handcuffed wrists*) All right, old gal, don't cry, it's a good riddance of bad rubbish! I'm going to do the right thing after all.

CHAL. Maud, where is Lady Challoner? (*breathing heavily—he endeavours to release his throat and breast from all restraint, as one choking—[a great shout is heard in the street as at a distance]—CHALLONER, half rising*) Maud, what noise is that? Tell me—tell me! (*raising hand as directing her towards window—MAUD rises quickly and passes up stage to balcony*)

MAUD. (*speaking from balcony*) A great crowd fills the street. It breaks like a wave about the Court House—and now they fall back—and now—! (*a great shout is heard*) They toss their hats into the air! (*another shout.*)

CHAL. (*who has followed each of her movements with feverish anxiety*) Gerald Gwynn is free!—(*he makes a step or two up stage, staggers, and catches MAUD'S hands as she comes down*)—to make your future, poor child, happier than your past—it is *my wish*. Give me your hand—both hands—I cannot see you! (*he makes an effort to raise her hands to his lips, then releasing them, falls back.*)

MAUD. He has fainted! Sir Ralph! Sir Ralph! husband! (*starting to her feet*) He is dying! He is dead! (*Tableau.*)

CROWD.

OFFICERS.

DOCTOR. KATE.

TOBY.

MAUD. SIR RALPH.

SUSAN.

R.

C.

L.

CURTAIN.

COSTUMES.

SIR RALPH CHALLONER.—*Act 1st*: Fox-hunter's dress, scarlet coat, black velvet cap, white breeches, top-boots, white vest, whip. *Act 2nd*: Light overcoat over black coat, light vest and trowsers, a gold snuff-box set with brilliants; a heavy overcoat ready L., to be brought in by TOBY. *Act 3rd*: Evening dress, the snuff-box. *Act 4th*: Black coat and vest, light browsers. White hair, side whiskers. He is about sixty, hale in bearing and voice, but in *Act 4th* is weak and dying.

GERALD GWYNNE.—*Act 1st*: Black coat and hat, grey trowsers, dark gloves; a small packet as of love-letters in his breast coat pocket. *Act 2nd*: Evening dress, with hat. *Act 3rd*: Evening dress, afterwards dark-brown overcoat.

TOBY TAPERLOY.—*Act 1st*: Countryman's flaxen wig over a close-crop black; face sallow; blue shirt, old velveteen breeches with braces, heavy shoes, grey stockings, a short pipe. *Act 2nd*: Servant's dress, but not livery. *Act 3rd*: Light cutaway coat, white cravat, gaiters coming up to mid-thigh, buttoned up all the way, but one or two buttons out, black low-crowned narrow-rimmed hat; a clasp-knife to open. *Scene 4th* I Seaman's dress, pea-jacket vest and trowsers, shoes, red neckcloth, low-crowned hat; *2nd entrance*, his neckcloth is loose; in this act, his black hair is the only one worn.

BURRELL.—Neat dark suit *Act 3rd*: Full dress for dinner.

DOCTOR.—Black suit.

TOM.—A Detective, in black, hat, handcuffs in pocket of coat.

SECOND DETECTIVE.—Like Tom.

SERVANTS to CHALLONER.—Livery.

LADY CHALLONER.—*Act 1st*: Dark blue riding habit, white cuffs, black round high-crowned hat, fancy whip, gloves. *Act 2nd*: Ball dress, dark-blue satin, turned up with white, sash, jewelry, hair dressed, white gloves, bouquet to enter with; *2nd entrance*, gloves, sash and most of the jewelry removed: enters with a small hand-lamp. *Act 3rd*: Long white wrapper buttoned up from the waist to the neck, the sleeves flowing; a note in her hand when she enters. *Act 4th* The same wrapper over a blue dress; pale.

KATE SEFTON.—*Act 2nd*: Ball dress, jewelry, fan. *Act 3rd*: White dress, red Garibaldi jacket with metal buttons, hair a little disarranged. *Act 4th*: House dress.

SUSAN TAPERLOY.—*Act 1st*: Dark blue dress, collar, white apron - *Acts 2nd and 4th*: Dark house dress.

SERVANT MAIDS.—As usual.

Time in Performance—Two Hours and thirty Minutes.