

The Drunkard (1844)

W.H. Smith

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

'O, star of strength! I see thee stand
And smile upon my pain;
Thou beckonest with thy mailed hand
And I am strong again.'—LONGFELLOW.

'There is a tide in the affairs of men,' &c.

Right! worthy Willie Shakspeare, perfectly right—there is a tide, not only in the affairs of men, but in the casualties of the Drama also, that bears the fortunate object to success, provided the opportunity is not neglected. There could not have been a better time chosen for the production of this most successful and Domestic Drama, than the season it was first performed at the Boston Museum. No unprejudiced person will attempt to deny that it was the cause of much good, and materially aided the Temperance movement it was meant to advocate. In the representation it was a powerful and living picture, and all that saw it, felt it, for IT WAS TRUE. No one who had not seen it would feel inclined, from the mere reading, to believe the very powerful effect produced.

The action of the play located in our own city and vicinity—the scenery mostly local views, excellent—the arrangements admirable, while the acting in some instances was not to be surpassed, and throughout each character above mediocrity, all served to aid in the triumphant success that was awarded it on its first representation. Mr. Smith's personation of Edward, evidently the result of accurate and laborious study, and deep knowledge of human frailty, was at times terribly real, particularly the scene of *delirium tremens*, which though far short of the horrors of that dreadful malady, and appearing, to those unacquainted with the disease to be overstepping the bounds of nature, was true to the letter, and universally acknowledged to be the most natural, effective acting ever seen in this city. In this scene, and those depicting the distress of the family, it was no uncommon thing to see scores of men and women in the audience weeping like children, while at the next moment their faces would radiate with smiles at the quaint humor of Bill Dowton, or the pompous peculiarities of Miss Spindle.

Many inquiries have been made as to the authorship of the *Drunkard* and as rumor has named a dozen or more persons, some of whom have never troubled themselves to deny their identity in regard to connexion with the subject, we give the following facts which, if of any importance to any but those immediately concerned, are simply as follows. "The proprietor of the Museum, ever ready to take the tide on its flood in any matter of general interest, conceiving that a Drama might aid the cause of Temperance, and prove highly productive to his establishment, engaged a gentleman of known and appreciated literary acquirements to undertake the task.

Unfortunately his production, though eminently worthy of the gentleman and scholar, was from want of theatrical experience, merely a story in dialogue, entirely deficient in stage tact and dramatic effect. Under these circumstances, the manuscript was placed

in the hands of Mr. W. H. Smith, with the request that he would finish and prepare it for the stage. That gentleman revised what was written, altering what he considered ineffective, and introducing the entire under-plot, together with the last scene of the second act, and the entire of the third, fourth, and fifth parts. No claim is laid to originality of invention in the character of Cribbs, Agnes, or any other part in the piece. The object was no so much to prepare an original, as an effective drama.

The piece was produced under the direction of Mr. Smith, in the winter of 1844, and performed that season for upwards of one hundred and forty times, and is by all acknowledged to be the most successful play ever acted in Boston."

Cast of Characters.

Original Cast

Boston Museum, 1844.

*American Museum, N.Y.,
1850.*

<i>Edward Middleton....</i>	Mr. W. H. Smith.	Mr. Goodall.
<i>Lawyer Cribbs....</i>	" G. H. Wyatt.	" Wemyss.
<i>William Downton....</i>	" C. W. Hunt.	" Weaver.
<i>Farmer Gates....</i>	" C. H. Saunders.	" Grosvenor.
<i>Farmer Stevens....</i>	" G. Howard.	" Bleeker.
<i>Old Johnson....</i>	" G. E. Locke.	" G. Clarke.
<i>Sam....</i>	" S. Adams.	" Williams.
<i>First Loafer....</i>	" J. Adams.	" Jones.
<i>Second Loafer....</i>	" Thompson.	" Stafford
<i>Mr. Rencelaw....</i>	" G. C. Germon.	" Harrison.
<i>Landlord....</i>	" Harris.	" Roberts.
<i>Bar Keeper....</i>	" Willard.	" Smith.
<i>Watchman....</i>	" Coad.	
<i>Mary Wilson....</i>	Mrs. G. C. Germon.	Mrs. Rogers.
<i>Agnes Downton, a Maniac....</i>	" Thoman.	Miss Keogh.
<i>Mrs. Wilson....</i>	" Woodward.	Mrs. Deering.
<i>Patience....</i>	" C. W. Hunt.	Miss Randolph.

Julia...

Miss A. Phillips.

" Albertini.

Villagers, Loafers, Watchmen, &c.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*.

RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; R. C. *Right of Center*; L. C. *Left of Centre*.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Interior of a pretty rural cottage.—Flowers, paintings, &c. Everything exhibits refined taste, and elegant simplicity.—Table, with bible and arm chair, R. MARY seated by table,—L.*

Mrs. W.

It was in that corner, Mary, where your poor father breathed his last—this chair is indeed dear to me, for it was in this he sat the very day before he died. Oh, how he loved this calm retreat, and often in his last illness he rejoiced that the companion of his youth would close his eyes in these rural shades, and be laid in yon little nook beside him; but now—

Mary.

Dear mother. It is true, this sweet cottage is most dear to us. But we are not the proprietors. Old Mr. Middleton never troubled us much. But as our late worthy landlord is no more, it is generally believed that our dear cottage will be sold. We cannot censure his son for that.

Mrs. W.

No; the young must be provided for, and willingly would I bow with resignation to that great power that loveth while it chasteneth; but when I think that you, my beloved child, will be left exposed to the thousand temptations of life a penniless orphan. [*A knock C.D.*] Hark! who knocks! Dry your tears, my darling. Come in.

Enter LAWYER CRIBBS C.D.—*comes down C.*

Good morning, sir. Mary, my child, a chair.

Cribbs.

[*Sitting, L. C.*] Good morning, Mrs. Wilson; good morning, my dear young lady. A sad calamity has befallen the neighborhood, my good Mrs. Wilson.

Mrs. W.

Many a poor person, I fear, will have reason to think so, sir.

Cribbs.

Yes, yes. You are right. Ah! he was a good man, that Mr. Middleton. I knew him well. He placed great confidence in my advice.

Mary.

Was he not very rich once, Mr. Cribbs?

Cribbs.

Yes, yes; when the times were good, but bad speculations, unlucky investments, false friends—alas! alas! we have all our ups and downs, my dear madam!

Mrs. W.

Ah! Mr. Cribbs, I perceive you are a man, who—

Cribbs.

Has a heart to feel for the unfortunate. True, madam, it is the character I have attained, though I am not the man to boast. Have you any prospect of—that is—have you provided—

Mary.

It is true then, too true, the cottage and garden will be sold?

Cribbs.

Why, what can the young man do, my dear? A gay young man like him. Fond of the world, given somewhat to excess, no doubt. But pardon me, my dear Miss Mary; I would not call up a blush on the cheek of modesty. But you know, the extravagance, that is, the folly—

Mrs. W.

All, sir. I understand you—very much unlike his father I would say.

Cribbs.

I place great confidence in your prudence, Mrs. Wilson. I wish the young man well, with all my heart. Heaven knows I have cause to do so for his honored father's sake. [*Puts a handkerchief to his eyes.*]

Mrs. W.

Come, come, Mr. Cribbs, he is better off. It is impiety to mourn a good man's

death. His end was that of a Christian.

Cribbs.

Judge, then, of the interest which I take in the last remaining scion of that honored stock. But, madam, Edward Middleton. He is yet young, and—

Mrs. W.

I think he is not more than twenty. I recollect him when a lad, a bright, blue-eyed boy, with flaxen hair, tall of his age.

Cribbs.

Twenty-three last July, madam; that is his age precisely—he is giddy, wild, and reckless. As the good man says, "when I was a child, I thought as a child." [*A pause.—Cribbs looks round the room.*] Well, madam, business is business. I am a plain man, Mrs. Wilson, and sometimes called too blunt—and—and—

Mary.

You mean to say that we must leave the cottage, sir.

Cribbs.

[*Pretending feeling.*] No, not *yet*, my dear young lady—I would say it is best to be prepared, and as Edward is sudden in all his movements, and as my entreaties would never change him—why, if you could find a place before he moves in the matter, it might save you from much inconvenience, that's all.

Mrs. W.

You impose on us a severe task, my dear sir.

Cribbs.

Bear up, my dear madam, bear up. If I may be so officious, I would try Boston—at the Intelligence Offices there, any healthy young woman, like your daughter, can obtain a profitable situation—think of it, think of it, my good madam. I will see you again soon, and now, heaven bless you.

[*Exit, C.D., and off L.—Mrs. Wilson and Mary look for a moment at each other, and then embrace.*]

Mrs. W.

Well, comfort, my daughter, comfort. It is a good thing to have a friend in the hour of trouble. This Mr. Cribbs appears to be a very feeling man; but before taking his advice, we would do well to make our proposed trial of this young man, Edward Middleton. You have the money in your purse?

Mary.

It is all here, mother. Thirty dollars—the sum we have saved to purchase fuel for the winter.

Mrs. W.

That will partially pay the rent score. When this young man finds we are disposed to deal fairly with him, he may relent. You turn pale, Mary; what ails my child?

Mary.

Dear mother, it is nothing; it will soon be over—it must be done. I fear this young man. He has been described so wild, so reckless. I feel a sad foreboding—

Mrs. W.

Fear not, Mary; call him to the door. Refuse to enter the house—give him the money, and tell him your sad story. He must, from family and association at least, have the manners of a gentleman—and however wild a youth may be, when abroad among his associates, no gentleman ever insulted a friendless and unprotected woman.

Mary.

You give me courage, dear mother. I should indeed be an unnatural child, if—
[*Aside.*]—yet I am agitated. Oh, why do I tremble thus? [*Puts on a village bonnet, &c.*]

Mrs. W.

[*Kisses her.*] Go forth, my child—go as the dove flew from the ark of old, and if thou shouldst fail in finding the olive branch of peace, return, and seek comfort where thou shalt surely find it—in the bosom of thy fond and widowed mother.
[*Exit R.D., and Mary, C.D.*]

SCENE II.—*Front and cut woods in C.*

Enter LAWYER CRIBBS, L.

Cribbs.

Well, that interview of mock sympathy and charity is over, and I flatter myself pretty well acted too, ha! ha! Yes, the widow and her child must quit the cottage—I'm resolved. First for the wrongs I years ago endured from old

Wilson; and secondly, it suits my own interests; and in all cases, between myself and others, I consider the last clause as a clincher. Ha! here comes the girl—I must watch closely here. [*Retires, L.S.E.*]

MARY *enters, fearful and hesitating, L.*

Mary.

I have now nearly reached the old mansion house. In a few moments I shall see the young man, this dissipated collegian. Oh! my poor mother must be deceived! Such a man can have no pity for the children of poverty, misfortune's supplicants for shelter beneath the roof of his cottage—oh, my poor mother, little do you know the sufferings that—ha! a gentleman approaches. My fears tell me this is the man I seek. Shall I ever have courage to speak to him? I will pause till he has reached the house. [*Retires gathering flowers, R.*]

Enter EDWARD MIDDLETON, R. S. E., and CRIBBS, L. S. E. meeting.

Cribbs.

Good day, good day, son of my old friend! I have been looking for you.

Edward.

Mr. Cribbs, your most obedient; any friends of my father are always welcome.

Cribbs.

Well said, nobly said. I see your father before me, when I look on you.

Edward.

You were enquiring for me, Mr. Cribbs?

Cribbs.

I was. I wished to see you with regard to the cottage and lands adjoining. I have an opportunity of selling them. When last we talked upon this subject—

Edward.

I was then ignorant that a poor widow—[*Mary at back, C., listening.*]—and her only daughter—

Cribbs.

Who are in arrears for rent—

Edward.

Had lived there many years—that my father highly esteemed them—to turn them forth upon the world in the present condition of the old lady—

Cribbs.

Which old lady has a claim upon the Alms House. [*Mary shudders.*]

Edward.

In short, Mr. Cribbs, I cannot think of depriving them of a home, dear to them as the apple of their eyes—to send them forth from the flowers which they have reared, the vines which they have trained in their course—a place endeared to them by tender domestic recollections, and past remembrances of purity and religion.

Cribbs.

Oh! all that and more—the fences which they have neglected; the garden gate off the hinges; the limbs of the old birch tree broken down for firewood; the back windows ornamented with an old hat—

Edward.

Cease, Mr. Cribbs; all this has been explained; my foster-brother, William, has told me the whole story. The trees were broken down by idle school-boys, and with regard to an old hat in the window, why, it was the hat of a man; can as much be said of yours, Mr. Cribbs?

Cribbs.

You are pleased to be pleasant, to-day, sir. Good morning, sir; good morning. [*Exit, L., muttering.*]

Edward.

I'm sorry I offended the old man. After all he was the friend of the family; though it is strange, my poor father almost always took his advice, and was invariably unfortunate when he did so.

Re-enter CRIBBS, L.

Cribbs.

Good morning again; beg pardon, sir. I now understand you better. You are right; the daughter—fine girl, eh! sparkling eyes, eh! dimples, roguish glances! Ah, when I was young, eh, ha? Well, never mind; you have seen her, eh?

Edward.

Never; explain yourself, Mr. Cribbs.

Cribbs.

If you have not seen her, you will, you know, eh! I understand. Traps for wild fowl; mother and daughter grateful; love-passion; free access to the cottage at all

hours.

Edward.

Cribbs, do you know this girl has no father?

Cribbs.

That's it; a very wild flower growing on the open heath.

Edward.

Have you forgotten that this poor girl has not a brother?

Cribbs.

A garden without a fence, not a stake standing. You have nothing to do but step into it.

Edward.

Old man! I respect your grey hairs. I knew an old man once, peace to his ashes, whose hair was as grey as yours; but beneath that aged breast there beat a heart, pure as the first throbs of childhood. He was as old as you—he was more aged; his limbs tottered as yours do not—I let you go in peace. But had that old man heard you utter such foul sentences to his son; had he heard you tell me to enter, like a wolf, this fold of innocence, and tear from her mother's arms the hope of her old age, he would have forgotten the winters that have dried the pith within his aged limbs, seized you by the throat, and dashed you prostrate to the earth, as too foul a carcass to walk erect and mock the name of man. [*Crosses, L.*

Cribbs.

But, Mr. Middleton, sir—

Edward.

Leave me, old man; begone; your hot lascivious breath cannot mingle with the sweet odor of these essenced wild flowers. Your raven voice will not harmonize with the warblings of these heavenly songsters, pouring forth their praises to that Almighty power, who looks with horror on your brutal crime. [*Crosses, R., Mary rushes forward, C., and kneels.*

Mary.

The blessings of the widow and fatherless be upon thee, may they accompany thy voice to Heaven's tribunal, not to cry for vengeance, but plead for pardon on this wretched man.

Cribbs.

Ha! The widow's daughter! Mr. Middleton, you mistake me. I—I cannot

endure a woman's tears. I—poor child! [*Aside.*] I'll be terribly revenged for this.
[*Exit Cribbs, L. S. E.*]

Edward.

This, then, is the widow's child, nurtured in the wilderness. She knows not the cold forms of the fashionable miscalled world. Cribbs, too, gone; a tale of scandal—I'll overtake the rascal, and at least give no color to his base fabrications. [*Crossing, and going, L.*]

Mary.

(*R.*) Stay, sir, I pray you. I have an errand for you. This is part of the rent, which— [*Holding out money.*]

Edward.

Nay, then, you have not overheard my discourse with the old man, who has just left us. I have told him—

Mary.

That we should still remain in the cottage. Oh, sir! is that a reason we should withhold from you these dues? now paid with double pleasure, since we recognize a benefactor in our creditor—take this, I entreat, 'tis but a portion of the debt; but be assured, the remainder shall be paid as soon as busy, willing hands can earn it.

Edward.

Nay, nay, dear girl; keep it as a portion of your dowry.

Mary.

Sir!

Edward.

If you have overheard the dialogue that I just held with that old man, you must know that I sometimes speak very plain.

Mary.

[*Apprehensively.*] Yes, sir.

Edward.

I have spoken plainly to him: shall I now speak plainly to you?

Mary.

Alas, sir! It is not our fault that the fences are broken down. When my poor father lived, it was not so. But since—

Edward.

When that vile old man spoke to me of your charms, I heeded him not. There are plenty of pretty girls in this section of the country; but I have since discovered what I had before heard, something more than the ordinary beauty which he described. A charm that he is incapable of appreciating. The charm of mental excellence, noble sentiment, filial piety. These are the beauties that render you conspicuous above all the maidens I have seen. These are the charms which bind captive the hearts of men. I speak plainly, for I speak honestly, and when I ask you to keep that money as a portion of your dowry, need I say into whose hands I would like to have it fall at last.

Mary.

[*Droops her head during the above.*] To affect—to affect not to understand you, sir, would be an idle return for kindness such as yours, and yet—

Edward.

I sometimes walk down in the vicinity of your cottage, and—

Mary.

Should I see you go by without stopping—why, then—

Edward.

Then what, dear Mary?

Mary.

Then I should suppose you had forgotten where we lived.

Edward.

Thanks! [*Kisses her hand.*] Ah! little did I think when I thought of selling that dear old cottage, that it should be regarded as a casket, invaluable for the jewel it contained. [*Leads her off, L. U. E.*]

SCENE III.—*Interior of Miss Spindle's dwelling house. Toilette table, looking glass, essence bottles.—All denotes vulgar wealth, devoid of elegance or taste.—*

MISS SPINDLE *discovered at toilette table, R.*

Miss S.

The attractions of the fair sex are *synonymous*. True, old *Bonus* is the destroyer of female charms; but as my beautiful poet, Natty P. says, in his sublime epistle to

Lucinda Octavia Pauline, "Age cannot wither me, nor custom stale my infinite *vacuity*." But time is money, then money is time, and we bring back, by the aid of money, the times of youth. I value my beauty at fifty dollars a year, as that is about the sum it costs me for keeping it in repair year by year. Well, say that my beauty is repaired in this way, year by year; well, what then! I have heard a gentleman say that a pair of boots when repaired and foxed, were better than they were when new. Why should it not be so with our charms? Certainly, they last longer in this way. We can have red cheeks at seventy, and, thanks to the dentist, good teeth at any time of life. Woman was made for love. They suppose that my heart is unsusceptible of the tender passion. But the heart can be regulated by money, too. I buy all the affecting novels, and all the terrible romances, and read them till my heart has become soft as maiden wax, to receive the impression of that cherished image I adore. Ah! as true as I live, there goes his foster brother, William, by the window. Hem, William!

[*Taps at window, C.—William sings without, L.*

"When I was a young and roving boy,
Where fancy led me I did wander,
Sweet Caroline was all my joy,
But I missed the goose and hit the gander."

Enter WILLIAM DOWTON, L.

William.

Good day, Miss Spindle.

Miss S.

You heard my rap, William?

William.

As much as ever, Miss Spindle. Such fingers as yours don't make noise like the fist of a butcher.

Miss S.

My hand is small, William, but I did not suppose that you had noticed it.

William.

I only noticed it by the lightness of your tap. So, I supposed you must be very light fingered.

Miss S.

Pray, sit down, William; take a chair, don't be bashful; you're too modest.

William.

It's a failing I've got, Miss Spindle. I'm so modest I always go to bed without a candle. [*Both sit, C.*]

Miss S.

(R. C.) Shall I tell you what I have thought, William?

William.

(L. C.) Why, that's just as you agree to with yourself. I don't care much about it, one way or t'other.

Miss S.

You were singing as you came in, William. I suppose you know I sometimes invoke the help of Polyhymnia.

William.

Why, I don't know as to the help of Polyhym-him-nina, but if you want good *help*, you can't do better than hire Polly Striker, old Farmer Jone's wife's daughter, by her first husband.

Miss S.

You don't understand the heathen mythology, William.

William.

Why, I hear Parson Roundtext talk sometimes of the poor benighted heathens; but I am free to say, that I can't come anything in regard to their conchology, as you call it. Will you have some shell-barks, or chestnuts, Miss Spindle?

Miss S.

No, William. But this is what I have thought. William there are two sorts of men.

William.

Oh yes, Miss Spindle, long ones and short ones, like cigars. Sometimes the short ones are the best smoking, too.

Miss S.

You mistake my meaning, William. Some are warm and susceptible of the charms of women.

William.

Warm, oh, yes. Florida boys, and Carolina niggers, eh?

Miss S.

While others are *cold* and apparently insensible to our beauties—

William.

Oh, yes. Newfoundlanders, Canada fellows, and Blue noses.

Miss S.

Now William, *dear* William, this is the confession I would confide in your generous secrecy. I have a trembling affection, and then, a warm, yet modest flame.

William.

Trembling affection, warm flame, why, the old girl's got the fever and ague.

Miss S.

And how to combat with this dear, yet relentless foe.

William.

Put your feet into warm water, and wood ashes, take two quarts of boiling hot arb tea. Cover yourself with four thick blankets, and six Canada comforters, take a good perspicacity, and you'll be well in the morning.

Miss S.

Sir!

William.

That's old Ma'am Brown's recipe for fever and ague, and I never yet found it fail.

Miss S.

Fever and ague! You mistake me, William, I have an ardent passion.

William.

Don't be in a passion, Miss Spindle, it's bad for your complaint.

Miss S.

You will not understand. I have a passion for one.

William.

For one! Well, it's lucky it's only one.

Miss S.

Can you not fancy who that one is? He lives in your house.

William.

Well, I'm darned, Miss Spindle, it's either me or Mr. Middleton.

Miss S.

I never can bestow my hand without my heart, William—

William.

Why, I think myself they ought to be included in the same bill of sale.

Miss S.

Ah! William, have you ever read the "Children of the Abbey"?

William.

No, Miss Spindle, but I've read the "Babes of the Wood."

Miss S.

I have read all the Romantics of the day. I have just finished Mr. Cooper's Trapper.

William.

Oh! I dare say she understands trap, but she don't come the trapper over my foster brother this year.

Miss S.

He understands little of the refinements of the civilized circular. I must try something else. How do you like my green dress? How does it become me?

William.

Beautiful! It matches very well indeed, marm.

Miss S.

Matches with what, William?

William.

With your eyes, ma'rm.

Miss S.

It becomes my complexion, William.

William.

It's a beautiful match—like a span of grey horses.

Miss S.

Does your master fancy green, William?

William.

Oh, yes, ma'rm. He loves it fine, I tell you.

Miss S.

But in what respect? How did you find out?

William.

In respect of drinking, ma'rm.

Miss S.

Drinking!

William.

Yes. He always tells the cook to make green tea.

Miss S.

Well, William, how about the cottage? When are you going to turn out those Wilsons?

William.

The girl will be out of that place soon, depend on that, mar'm.

Miss S.

I'm glad to hear it. I never could endure those Wilsons, and it's a duty when one knows that respectable people like your master are injured, to speak out. I know they haven't paid their rent, and do you know that girl was seen getting into a chaise with a young man, when she ought to have been at work, and she

did not return till nine o'clock at night, William, for I took the pains to put on my hood and cloak and look for myself—though it was raining awful.

William.

That was the time you cotched the fever, the fever and the ague, ma'rm. Well, good-bye.

Miss S.

Are you going, William?

William.

Yes, ma'rm. I shall be wanted to hum. You take care of your precious health, ma'rm. Keep your feet warm, and your head cool; your mouth shut and your heart open, and you'll soon have good health, good conscience, and stand well on your pins, ma'rm. Good morning, ma'rm.

"To reap, to sow, to plough and mow,
And be a farmer's boy, and be a farmer's boy

[Exit William, L.]

Miss S.

The vulgar creature! But what could I expect? He ought to know that American ladies ought never to have any pins. But I am certain for all this, Edward, dear Edward, is dying for me—as the poet, Dr. Lardner, says: "He lets concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on the damask curtains of—his—cheek"—damask bud. I'm quite sure it's something about bud. Yes, I am convinced, my charms as yet are undecayed, and even when old age comes on, the charm of refined education, will still remain—as the immortal Chelsea Beach Poet has it:

"You may break, you may ruin the vase, if you will,
The scent of roses will cling round it still."

[Exit, affectedly, R.]

SCENE IV.—*Landscape View.*

Enter PATIENCE BRAYTON, SAM EVANS, OLD JOHNSON. *Male and female villagers, R. U. E.—Music.*

Patience.

Come, there's young men enough, let's have a ring-play.

All.

Yes, a ring-play. A ring-play! fall in here.

Sam.

Come, darnation, who'll go inside?

Patience.

Go in yourself, Sam.

Sam.

Well, I'm agreed. Go on.

[They form a circle and revolve round the young man, singing.]

"I am a rich widow, I live all alone,
I have but one son, and he is my own.
Go, son, go, son, go choose you one,
Go choose a good one, or else choose none."

[Sam choose one of the girls.—She enters the ring. He kisses her, and the ring goes round.]

"Now, you are married you must obey
What you have heard your parents say
Now you are married you must prove true
As you see other's do, so do you."

[The ring goes round.—Patience, who is in the ring, chooses Old Johnson.]

Patience.

Mercy on me, what have I done?
I've married the father instead of the son
His legs are crooked, and ill put on.
They're all laughing at my old man

[A general laugh.]

Sam.

Come, girls, you forget 'tis almost time for Mary Wilson's wedding.

Patience.

(R.C.) Well, now, ain't we forgetting how proud she must be, going to marry a college bred.

Johnson.

(L.C.) She'll be none the better for that. Larning don't buy the child a new frock.

Sam.

Well, let's have a dance, and be off at once.

All.

Yes. Partners. A dance! A dance! [*A village dance, and exit, L.*]

Enter LAWYER CRIBBS, L.

Cribbs.

Thus ends my prudent endeavors to get rid of those Wilsons. But, young Middleton, there is yet some hope of him. He is at present annoyed at my well intended advice, but that shall not part us easily. I will do him some unexpected favor, worm myself into his good graces, invite him to the village bar-room, and if he falls, then, ha! ha! I shall see them begging their bread yet. The wife on her bended knees to me, praying for a morsel of food for her starving children—it will be revenge, revenge! Here comes his foster brother, William. I'll wheedle him—try the ground before I put my foot on it.

Enter WILLIAM DOWTON, *whistling*, L.

William.

Lawyer Cribbs, have you seen my poor, little, half-witted sister Agnes, eh?

Cribbs.

No, William, my honest fellow, I have not. I want to speak to you a moment.

William.

[*Crossing, R.*] What does old Razor Chops want with me, I wonder. Well, lawyer, what is it?

Cribbs.

You seem to be in a hurry. They keep you moving, I see.

William.

There are pretty busy times, sir. Mr. Edward is going to be married—that's a dose. [*Aside.*] Senna and salts.

Cribbs.

Yes, yes, ahem! Glad to hear it.

William.

Yes, I thought you seemed pleased. [*Aside.*] Looks as sour as Sam Jones, when he swallowed vinegar for sweet cider.

Cribbs.

I am a friend to early marriages, although I never was married myself. Give my best respects to Mr. Edward.

William.

Sir?

Cribbs.

William, I suppose I leave it to your ingenuity to get me an invitation to the wedding, eh? And here's a half dollar to drink my health.

William.

No, I thank you, lawyer, I don't want your money.

Cribbs.

Oh, very well; no offence meant, you know. Let's step into the tavern, and take a horn to the happiness of the young couple.

William.

Lawyer Cribbs, or Squire, as they call you, it's my opinion, when your uncle Belzebub wants to bribe an honest fellow to do a bad action, he'd better hire a pettifogging bad lawyer to tempt him, with a counterfeit dollar in one hand, and a bottle of rum in the other. [*Exit William, R.*]

Cribbs.

Ah, ah! You're a cunning scoundrel, but I'll fix you yet. [*Agnes sings without, L.*]
"Brake and fern and cypress dell,
Where the slippery adder crawls

Cribbs.

Here comes that crazy sister of his. She knows too much for my happiness. Will the creature never die? Her voice haunts me like the spectre of the youth that was engaged to her, for my own purposes I ruined, I triumphed over him—he fell—dies in a drunken fit, and she went crazy. Why don't the Alms House keep such brats at home?

Enter AGNES, deranged, L.

Agnes.

"Brake and fern and cypress dell,
Where the slippery adder crawls.

Where the grassy waters well,
By the old moss-covered walls."
For the old man has his grey locks, and the young girl her fantasies.
"Upon the heather, when the weather
Is as wild as May,
So they prance as they dance
And we'll all be gay."
But they poured too much red water in his glass. The lawyer is a fine man, ha,
ha! he lives in the brick house yonder. But the will. Ah, ha, ha! The will—

Cribbs.

[*Angrily.*] Go home, Agnes, go home.

Agnes.

Home! I saw a little wren yesterday. I had passed her nest often. I had counted the eggs, they were so pretty—beautiful, so beautiful—rough Robin of the mill came this morning and stole them. The little bird went to her nest, and looked in—they were gone. She chirruped mournfully and flew away. *She won't go home any more.*

Cribbs.

Agnes, who let you out? You distress the neighborhood with your muttering and singing. [*Threatening.*] I'll have you taken care of.

Agnes.

There's to be a wedding in the village. I saw a coffin carried in full of bridal cake.
"And the bride was red with weeping,
Cypress in her hair."
Can you tell why they cry at weddings? Is it for joy? I used to weep when I was joyful. You never weep, old man. I should have been married, but my wedding dress was mildewed, so we put off the marriage till another day. They'll make a new dress for me. They say he won't come again to me, and then the will, ha, ha, old man, the will.

Cribbs.

Ha, confusion! Get you gone, or thus— *Seizes her and raises cane, William enters rapidly, R., and throws him round to R. corner*

William.

(L. C.) Why, you tarnation old black varmint! Strike my little, helpless, half-crazed sister! If it was not for your grey hairs, I'd break every bone in your black beetle body. If all I have heard be true, you'll have to account for—

Cribbs.

[*Rising, R.*] You'll rue this, young man, if there's any law in the land. A plain case of assault and battery. I'll put you in jail. Predicaments, premunires, fifa's and fieri facias. I'll put you between stone walls. [*Exit, blustering, R.*]

William.

Put me between stone walls! If you'd have been put between two posts with a cross-beam long ago, you'd had your due, old land-shark. You stay here, darling Agnes, till I come back. Fiery faces, and predicaments! If I can get you near enough to a horse-pond, I'll cool your fiery face, I'll warrant. [*Exit, R.*]

AGNES, *scattering flowers and singing.*

"They lived down in the valley,
Their house was painted red,
And every day the robin came
To pick the crumbs of bread."

But the grass does not wither when they die. I will sit down till I hear the bells that are far off, for then, I think of his words. Who says he did not love me? It was a good character he wanted of the parson. A girl out of place, is like an old man out of his grave. [*Bells chime piano.*] They won't ask me to their merry-makings, now, though I washed my best calico in the brook.

"Walk up young man, there's a lady here,
With jewels in her hair."

[*Suddenly clasps her hands and screams.*] Water, water! hear him, oh, hear him cry for water; quick! he'll turn cold again! his lips are blue; water, water! [*Exit, frantically, R.*]

SCENE V.—*Exterior of a beautiful cottage, L., Vines, entwined roses, &c.—The extreme of rural tranquil beauty.—Rustic table, with fruit, cake, &c., &c., L. Rustic chairs and benches.*

Enter procession, R. U. E., of villagers.—EDWARD, MARY, MRS. WILSON,—Bridesman and Bridesmaid, &c., &c., —Bells ringing.—They enter, come down, R., to front, cross and up stage on L., singing chorus.

Hail, hail! happy pair!
Bells are ringing, sweet birds singing
Bright roses bringing—flowers flinging
Peace, purity, and happiness

Edward.

(L. C.) Dearest Mary, ah, now indeed my own; words are too poor, too weak to express the joy, the happiness that agitates my heart. Ah, dear, dear wife, may each propitious day that dawns upon thy future life, but add another flower to the rosy garland that now encircles thee.

Mary.

(L.) Thanks, Edward, my own loved husband, thy benison is echoed from my inmost heart. Ah, neighbor Johnson, many thanks for your kind remembrance of your pupils. My dear friends, your children, too, are here.

Johnson.

(R.) Yes, my dear Mary, your happiness sheds its genial rays around old and young. Young man I was a witness at your father's wedding. May your life be like his—an existence marked by probity and honor, and your death as tranquil. Mrs. Wilson, I remember your sweet daughter, when but a child of nine years, and that seems only yesterday.

Mary.

Dear Patience, I am glad to see you too, and who is this, your brother? [*Points to Sam, L. corner.*]

Patience.

(L.) No. An acquaintance, that—

Sam.

Yes. An acquaintance that—

Mary.

Oh, yes, I understand.

Mrs. W.

My dearest children, the blessing of a bereaved heart, rest, like the dews of heaven, upon you. Come, neighbors, this is a festival of joy. Be happy, I entreat.

William.

Well, if there's anyone happier than Bill Dowton, I should like to know it, that's all. Come, lads and lasses, sing, dance, and be merry. [*Dance—tableau.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A chamber in Miss Spindle's house.—*

LAWYER CRIBBS *and* MISS SPINDLE *discovered, seated, C.*

Cribbs.

(L.) Be explicit, my dear madam; this is a most serious affair: breach of promise, marriage promise. How my heart bleeds for you, dear young lady,

suffering virtue. But tell me the particulars.

Miss S.

(R.) Oh, sir, why will you cause me to narrow up my feelings; my bleeding heart, by the recital of my afflictions. I have "let concealment like a" caterpillar on a button-wood, feed on my cambric cheek—and—[*Aside.*] I can't remember the rest of it.

Cribbs.

Alas, poor lady! pray go on.

Miss S.

The first of our acquaintance was down at a corn-husking. Not that I make a practice of attending such vulgar places, Squire, but—

Cribbs.

Oh, certainly not—certainly not.

Miss S.

Well, I was over-persuaded. I set up and stripped the dry coatings from the yellow corn—only two years—I husked no more, Squire.

Cribbs.

Indeed, indeed! two ears—you are certain it was but two ears? It is best to be particular. We shall make out a *prima faciæ* case.

Miss S.

Well, I got hold of a red ear, it was the last I husked. I think it was a red ear; so I was obliged to be kissed. Oh, Squire, think of my mortification, when I was told that such was the invariable rule—the custom at a husking.

Cribbs.

[*With energy.*] Your sufferings must have been intolerable.

Miss S.

Oh, sir, you know how to feel for delicate timidity. A big coarse young man, Bill Bullus, rose up to snatch the fragrance from my unwilling cheek—

Cribbs.

[*Groans.*] Oh!

Miss S.

I put up my kerchief—it was a cambric, a fine cambric, Squire Cribbs, and said I had a choice in those things—looking at Edward, whom I took to be a gentleman, you know. He took the hint immediately. Bullus fell back appalled at my manner, and Edward—oh, sir! spare my blushes.

Cribbs.

I understand—he—yes. I understand.

Miss S.

He did it, sir. I felt the pressure of his warm lip upon—

Cribbs.

Your cheek, of course.

Miss S.

Oh, no, no, sir. It was said, by my friend, the Chelsea Beach Bard, that from my lips he stole ambrosical blisses.

Cribbs.

Enormous! but go on.

Miss S.

You may judge what was my confusion.

Cribbs.

Certainly, Miss Spindle.

Miss S.

The ear of corn was not more red than was my burnished cheek.

Cribbs.

I do not know, my dear young lady, but you might make out a case for assault and battery.

Miss S.

It was very rude for a college-bred. Well, after that he bowed to me as we were coming out of church.

Cribbs.

Aha! the evidence comes in. Have you got proof of that, most injured fair one?

Miss S.

Oh, sir, no proof would be required. I trust that a person of my respectability need bring no proof of what they know. Well, after that I was agoing down to Mr. Simmons', and lo, a cow stood in the road. I must pass within twenty feet of the ferocious animal if I continued my route; providentially, at the very instant, Edward came down the road that turns up by Wollcott's mill. He saw my strait. He saw that I stood trembling like some fragile flower tossed by the winds of heaven. Like Sir William Wallace flying to the rescue of the Greeks, he came, panting on the wings of love. He rushed like an armed castle to the side of the cow, and she wheeled about like the great leviathan of the deep, and trotted down towards the school-house.

Cribbs.

I can imagine your feelings, Miss Spindle—a delicate young lady in imminent danger. But he did no more than any man would have done.

Miss S.

Well, sir, you may judge what were the feelings of my palpitating heart, tender as it always was—

Cribbs.

Have any letters passed between you?

Miss S.

Oh, yes, yes; five or six, sir.

Cribbs.

We've got him there, aha! If Miss Spindle would be so condescending as just to show me one of those letters.

Miss S.

He's got them all in his possession.

Cribbs.

Unfortunate! horrible! How did he obtain possession of those letters?

Miss S.

Oh! I sent them—sometimes by one person, sometimes by another.

Cribbs.

How, madam? *His* letters, I mean—how did he get—

Miss S.

Oh, sir, mark his ingratitude. I sent him half a dozen—

Cribbs.

[*Discouraged.*] Oh! I understand. The correspondence was all on one side, then?

Miss S.

Not one letter did he write to me. Ah! sir, think of it; all my tenderness, all my devotion. Oh! my breaking heart.

Cribbs.

[*Aside.*] Oh! humbug! Well, good day, Miss Spindle. I have a pressing engagement, and—

Miss S.

Well, but, lawyer Cribbs, what is your advice? How ought I to proceed?

Cribbs.

Get your friends to send you to the insane hospital, and place you among the incurable, as the most fusty, idiotic old maid that ever knit stockings. [*Exit hastily, R.*]

Miss S.

Spirit of Lucretia Borgia! Polish pattern of purity—was there ever such a Yankee hedgehog! [*Exit angrily, R.*]

SCENE II.—*A Landscape.*

Enter WILLIAM DOWTON, R., FARMER GATES, *and* FARMER STEVENS, *meeting.*

Gates.

(C.) Good day, good day. Mr. Edward was not at church last sabbath.

Stevens.

I heard tell where he was in the afternoon.

Gates.

Aye, Stevens, you told me. Well, well, I'm right sorry. We used to consider Mr.

Edward a promising young man, and when we seed him get married and settle among us, we thought to have a respectable man like his father for a neighbor, and that like him, he'd go to the general court one of these days. I earnestly hope he han't agoing to stick to these bad ways.

William.

(R.) I don't exactly know what you mean, Farmer Gates. Mr. Middleton is about the same free kind-hearted fellow that he ever was, it appears to me. No longer ago than this blessed morning, he says to me, Bill, says he, your birth-day comes this day week, go to Ned Grogran's, the tailor, next the post office, and get yourself measured for a new suit of clothes at my expense. Now if I that lives with him, and sees everything he does, think well of him, I don't know as other folks need be so very perpendicular about it.

Stevens.

Well, well, I'll tell you what I have heard; you know Squire Cribbs?

William.

In course I does.

Stevens.

Well, he says that if your foster brother doesn't attend a little more to his own interest—

William.

He'll do it for him, I suppose! Now, Mr. Stevens, I'll tell you what I think of that sly old fox, Squire Cribbs. He takes to wickedness just as natural as young ducks take to water. I think, really, if Mr. Edward's soul was put in a great box, that seven thousand such souls as that black beetle's wouldn't fill up the chinks—the spare room around the edges.

Gates.

Give us your hand. Bill, my man, lawyer Cribbs bears but a middling character hereabout. He has got a prodigious sight of larning, and 'tis not for the likes of me to pretend to decide between you; but I'll be darned if I don't like the man that stands up for him whose bread he eats; and so, Bill, any time you want a drink of cider, just call up our way, and you shall have what you can drink, if it's a gallon. [*Exit, R.*]

Stevens.

Well, well, William, after all neighbor Gates has said, I fear the young man's in a dangerous way—spending his Sabbaths going about the country from one tavern to another. I don't say that he does take too much liquor—but there's a great many that has began that way. [*Exit, R.*]

William.

[*Rather serious.*] Well, good-bye to you, and thank'ye. I don't think Mr. Edward drinks any too much—at least I hope not. For my part I wish he'd never seen anything stronger than milk or green tea. I wish I hadn't seen them two fellers, they've just made me feel as bad as ever, when I thought I was getting well over it, and beginning to see daylight again. What, dear Mr. Edward, with such a sweet lamb of a wife, and the prettiest little girl that ever drew breath—oh, no, it's nothing. I won't borrow trouble—he just took part of a bowl of punch with a friend at the Flying Horse—but that's no more than the parson himself might do, and there's Deacon Whit-leather, he never sits down to dinner without a stiff horn of something to wash it down. Well, now, I think it's better let alone altogether—for if a man doesn't put his hand in the fire, he runs a better chance of not burning his fingers. [*Exit, R.*]

SCENE III.—*A Country Bar-Room.—Old-fashioned gun hung up.—Cup notices, &c., &c.—STEVENS, the Drover seated at table.—Several loafers.—Landlord behind Bar at L. attending.—Decanters filled with different liquors, on bar.—Stools, benches, &c., &c.*

Stevens.

[*Seated, R. C.*] Well, I don't know, Mr. Landlord, them are 'counts we have about Queen Victory, amounts to just about as much as the frogs and mice.

Landlord.

Oh, that's Pope; we've got the book in the house now—the battle of frogs and mice.

2d Loafer.

Landlord, will you just score up another three-center—I feel deuced bad.

Landlord.

No, thank'ye, Sam; rub off old sores, and then—

Enter EDWARD MIDDLETON, dress rather shabby, from door, R.—All look at him; he walks up to the bar.

Edward.

Give me some brandy. [*Drinks*] How much, landlord!

Landlord.

A six-pence, sir. This is something 'sperior; a bottle I keep for those who are willing to pay a little more—are you quite well, sir?

Edward.

Well, well, quite well, I thank you—this is good, landlord, another glass.

Enter CRIBBS, R. D.

Cribbs.

Ha! Mr. Middleton, you here! He! he! he! Well, come, that's a good one. First time I was ever here except on business—dare say you can say the same. Well, this is fine. Now, my young friend, since we have met each other, we'll honor the house.

Landlord.

Squire, how are you; glad to see you. [*Shakes hand across the bar.*] What's it to be, gentlemen. The same, Mr. Middleton?

Edward.

Oh! I must be excused; you know I just drank.

"Cribbs.

Well, well, I'll leave it to him. Landlord, how long is it since I've seen you?

"Landlord.

Why, Squire, it must be full ten years ago; you remember the day Si Morton had his raising? the day I saw you digging in the woods.

"Cribbs.

[*Starts violently.*] Go on, go on—nothing but the cramp. I'm subject to it.

"Landlord.

Well, Squire, I've never seed you since then."

Cribbs.

Well, come, let's drink; come, Edward.

Landlord.

Oh, take a little more, Mr. Middleton—the Squire wouldn't advise you to what wasn't right.

Edward.

Well, I—

Cribbs.

Well, come, here's whiskey—good whiskey.

Edward.

I believe I drank—

Landlord.

Mr. Middleton drank brandy before.

Cribbs.

Not half so healthy as good whiskey.

Edward.

Oh, whiskey be it. It can't be stronger than the other was. [*Stevens looks up and shakes his head.*]

Edward.

[*Drinks.*] Well, this is pleasant, ha! ha! this goes to the right place, eh, Cribbs. Is this Irish whiskey?

Landlord.

Yes, sir; pure Innishowen.

Edward.

Well, the Irish are a noble people, ain't they, Cribbs? [*Slightly intoxicated.*] Friend Cribbs, I think I may call you. I never doubted it.

Cribbs.

Never!

Edward.

Oh! I might have suspected; but "suspicion's but at best a coward's virtue;" the sober second thought—

Cribbs.

Oh, exactly. [*Shaking his hand earnestly.*]

Edward.

I have a heart, Cribbs—[*Getting tipsy.*] I have a heart; landlord, more whiskey; come gentlemen, come one, come all. Landlord!

Landlord.

In one minute, sir.

Edward.

Landlord, give them all anything they want, come—a bumper—here's the health of my old friend Cribbs. [*Drinks it off.*]

Cribbs.

[*Throwing away his liquor unseen.*] Well, here goes.

Edward.

Landlord! landlord.

Landlord.

Sir?

Edward.

I have a heart, Cribbs. We know how to do the handsome thing, landlord. [*Cribbs slyly fills Edward's glass.*]

Landlord.

Don't we? It takes us, sir.

Edward.

[*Drinks.*] Well, I think, landlord, a little spirit hurts no man.

Landlord.

Oh, no, sir; no—does him good.

Edward.

I have a heart, Squibbs—a heart, my old boy; come, let's have another horn.— [*1st loafer falls asleep on bench R. against partition.*]—Come, boys, trot up, I'll pay.

2d Loafer.

Well, I don't want to hurt the house.

3d Loafer.

Oh, no—musn't hurt the house. [*Walking up to bar.*]

Stevens.

Come, don't you hear the news? [*Strikes 1st loafer with whip, and he falls on ground.*]

1st Loafer.

Well—[*Lazily.*]—I don't want to hurt the house. [*Tumbles against the wall.*]

Landlord.

You will hurt the house, if you butt off the plastering at that rate.

Edward.

A bumper—well, in the absence of Burgundy, whiskey will do, eh, old Ribbs—[*Hitting Cribbs.*]—why don't you join us, old sulky. [*To Stevens.*]

Stevens.

I drink when I'm dry, and what I drink I pay for.

Edward.

—You're saucy, old fellow.

Stevens.

Do you think I'm a sponge, to put my hands into another man's pocket? Go away, you make a fool of yourself.

Edward.

A fool! say that again, and I'll knock you down—a fool!

Stevens.

[*Rising.*] I want nothing to say to you—be off—you're drunk.

Edward.

[*Strikes him.*] Death and fury! drunk!

Stevens.

Take that, then—[*Cribbs and others sneak off—struggle—Stevens hits him down with whip.*]—Landlord, you see I was not to blame for this. [*Exit Stevens, R. D.*]

Landlord.

Well, he's got in any how—serve him right, quarrelsome young fool. House was quiet enough till he came in disturbing honest people. This is too bad. How to get this fellow home? He lives two miles from here, at least.

Enter WILLIAM DOWTON, R. D.

William.

Mr. Middleton—where is he? Lord ha' mercy! what is this? Speak! [*Seizes Landlord.*] If you have done this, I'll tear our your cursed windpipe, old heathen.

Landlord.

In my own house? Let go my throat.

William.

Who did this.

Landlord.

Let go; it wasn't me, it was drover Stevens.

William.

[*Throws him off, kneels by Middleton.*] Blood on his forehead—Mr. Edward, speak to me, oh, speak—his poor wife—poor old sick Mrs. Wilson, too.

Edward.

[*Reviving.*] What is this? what's been the matter here?

William.

Don't you know me, sir? It's William, sir; poor Bill, come to help you home. Sam Stanhope told me you were in a row at the tavern, sir.

Edward.

Oh, yes, I remember; where are they all? where's Cribbs? where's Cribbs?

William.

Cribbs! was he with him?

Landlord.

Why, yes, I guess the Squire was here a short spell. Well, you can walk, sir, can't you?

Edward.

Walk, yes, I can walk—what's the matter with my head? Blood? I must have fallen against the corner of the bench.

Landlord.

Don't you remember Mr. Stevens?

Edward.

I don't know what you mean by Stevens; what the devil have I been about?

Landlord.

Why, Stevens said you were drunk, and you hit him, and he knocked you down with his whip-handle.

William.

And if I get a hold of Mr. Stevens, I'll make him smell something nastier than peaches, or my name's not Bill. Come, sir, come home.

Edward.

Drunk! fighting! Oh, shame, shame!

William.

Lean on me, Mr. Edward. You go sand your sugar, and water your bad brandy, old corkscrew! His poor wife!

Edward.

Hush, William, hush.

William.

Pray give me pardon, sir; oh, I wish I had died before I had seen this.

Edward.

Drunk, fighting—my wife, my children! Oh, agony! agony! [*Exit, leaning on William, L. D.—Landlord retires behind bar.*]

SCENE IV.—*Landscape view.*
Enter CRIBBS, L.

Cribbs.

So far the scheme works admirably. I know his nature well. He has tasted, and will not stop now short of madness or oblivion. I mostly fear his wife, she will have great influence over him. Ah, who's this, Bill Dowton? Where then is Middleton? [*Retires, L.*]

Enter WILLIAM DOWTON, L.

William.

Well, I don't know but he's right; poor fellow, if he were to appear before his wife, without her being warned, it might frighten her to death, poor thing, and as he says, the walk alone may do him good, and sober him a bit. The old woman takes on most cruel, too, and she is so very, very ill. Here he comes. I guess he'll follow me. I'll hasten on, for if he sees me, he'll be angry, and swear I'm watching him. That old serpent Cribbs, he'd better keep out of my track. I'd think no more of wringing his old neck, than I would twisting a tough Thanksgiving turkey. [*Exit, threatening, R.*]

Cribbs.

[*Advancing cautiously.*] I'm much obliged to you, most valiant Billy Dowton. I shall hold myself *non est inventus*, I promise you; here comes Edward. Caution, caution. [*Retires, L.*]

Enter EDWARD, L.

Edward.

Is this to be the issue of my life? Oh, must I ever yield to the fell tempter, and bending like a weak bulrush to the blast, still bow my manhood lower than the brute? Why, surely I have eyes to see, hands to work with, feet to walk, and brain to think, yet the best gifts of Heaven I abuse, lay aside her bounties, and with my own hand, willingly put out the light of reason. I recollect my mother said, my dear, dying mother, they were the last words I ever heard her utter—"whoever lifts his fallen brother is greater far, than the conqueror of the world." Oh how my poor brain burns! my hand trembles! my knees shake beneath me! I cannot, will not appear before them thus; a little, a very little will revive and strengthen me. No one sees; William must be there ere *this*. Now, for my hiding place. Oh! the arch cunning of the drunkard! [*Goes to tree R., and from the hollow draws forth a bottle; looks round and drinks. Cribbs behind exulting.*] So, so! it relieves! it strengthens! oh, glorious liquor! Why did I rail against thee? Ha, ha! [*Drinks and draws bottle.*] All gone! all! [*Throws the bottle away.*] Of what use the casket when the jewels gone? Ha, ha! I can face them, now. [*Turns and meets Cribbs.*] He here! Confusion.

Cribbs.

(L.) Why, Middleton! Edward, my dear friend, what means this?

Edward.

(R.) Tempter! begone! Pretend not ignorance! Were you not there when that vile fray occurred? Did you not desert me?

Cribbs.

As I am a living man, I know not what you mean. Business called me out. I left you jovial and merry, with your friends.

Edward.

Friends! Ha! ha! the drunkard's friends! Well, well, you may speak truth;—my brain wanders;—I'll go home!—Oh, misery! Would I were dead.

Cribbs.

Come, come; a young man like you should not think of dying. I am old enough to be your father, and I don't dream of such a thing.

Edward.

You are a single man, Cribbs. You don't know what it is to see your little patrimony wasted away;—to feel that you are the cause of sufferings you would die to alleviate.

Cribbs.

Pooh, pooh! Suffering—your cottage is worth full five hundred dollars. It was but yesterday Farmer Anson was inquiring how much it could be bought for.

Edward.

Bought for! Cribbs—

Cribbs.

Well, Edward, well.

Edward.

You see yon smoke curling up among the trees?

Cribbs.

Yes, Edward. It rises from your own cottage.

Edward.

You know who built that cottage, Cribbs?

Cribbs.

Your father built it. I recollect the day. It was—

Edward.

It was the very day I was born that yon cottage was first inhabited. You know

who lives there now?

Cribbs.

Yes. You do.

Edward.

No one else, Cribbs?

Cribbs.

Your family, to be sure—

Edward.

And you counsel me to sell it!—to take the warm nest from that mourning bird and her young, to strip them of all that remains of hope or comfort, to make them wanderers in the wide world, and for what? To put a little pelf into my leprous hands, and then squander it for rum. [*Crosses, R.*

Cribbs.

You don't understand me, Edward. I am your sincere friend; believe me, come—

Edward.

Leave me, leave me—

Cribbs.

Why, where would you go thus, Edward?

Edward.

Home! Home!—to my sorrowing wife—her dying mother, and my poor, poor child. [*Crosses, L.*

Cribbs.

But not thus, Edward, not thus. Come to my house, my people are all out. We'll go in the back way,—no one will see you. Wash your face, and I'll give you a little—something to refresh you. I'll take care it shall not hurt you. Come, now, come.

Edward.

Ought I—dare I? Oh, this deadly sickness. Is it indeed best?

Cribbs.

To be sure it is. If the neighbors see you thus—I'll take good care of you. Come, come, a little brandy,—good—good brandy.

Edward.

Well, I—I—

Cribbs.

That's right—come. [*Aside.*] He's lost. Come, my dear friend, come. [*Exeunt, L.*]

SCENE V.—*Interior of the cottage as in Act 1st.—The furniture very plain.—A want of comfort and order.—Table and two chairs, R. C.*
Enter MARY from set door, R. S. E.—Her dress plain and patched, but put on with neatness and care.—She is weeping.

Mary.

Oh, Heaven, have mercy on me!—aid me!—strengthen me! Weigh not thy poor creature down with woes beyond her strength to bear. Much I fear my suffering mother never can survive the night, and Edward comes not, and when he does arrive, how will it be? Alas, alas! my dear, lost husband! I think I could nerve myself against every thing but—Oh, misery! this agony of suspense! it is too horrible.

Enter JULIA from room, R. S. E.—She is barefooted.—Dress clean, but very poor.

Julia.

Mother! dear mother, what makes you cry? I feel so sorry when you cry—don't cry any more, dear mother.

Mary.

(*L.*) I cannot help it, dearest. Do not tell your poor father what has happened in his absence, Julia.

Julia.

No, dear mother, if you wish me not. Will it make him cry, mother? When I see you cry it makes me cry, too.

Mary.

Hush, dear one, hush! Alas, he is unhappy enough already.

Julia.

Yes. Poor father! I cried last night when father came home, and was so sick. Oh, he looked so pale, and when I kissed him for good night, his face was as hot

as fire. This morning he could not eat his breakfast, could he? What makes him sick so often, mother?

Mary.

Hush, sweet one!

Julia.

Dear grandma so sick, too. Doctor and nurse both looked so sorry. Grandma won't die to-night, will she, mother?

Mary.

Father of mercies! This is too much. [*Weeps.*] Be very quiet, Julia, I am going in to see poor grandma, [*Crossing, R.*] Oh, *Religion!* sweet solace of the wretched heart! Support me! aid me, in this dreadful trial. [*Exit into room, R. S. E.*]

Julia.

Poor, dear mother. When grandma dies, she'll go to live in heaven, for she's good. Parson Heartall told me so, and he never tells fibs, for he is good, too.

Enter WILLIAM gently, D. in F.

William.

Julia, where is your mother, darling? [*Julia puts her finger on her lip, and points to door.*]

William.

Ah, she comes.

Enter MARY, R. S. E.

How is poor Mrs. Wilson now, madam?

Mary.

Near the end of all earthly trouble, William. She lies in broken slumber. But where is my poor Edward? Have you not found him?

William.

Yes, ma'am, I found him in the ta—in the village—he had fallen, and slightly hurt his forehead; he bade me come before, so as you should not be frightened. He'll be here soon now.

Mary.

Faithful friend. I wish you had not left him. Was he—Oh, what a question for

a doating wife—was he sober, William?

William.

I must not lie, dear lady. He had been taking some liquor, but I think not much—all I hope will be well.

Edward.

[*Sings without.*] "Wine cures the gout," &c., Ha! ha!

Mary.

Oh, great Heaven! [*William rushes out, C. D. and off, L. U. E., and re-enters with Edward drunk and noisy.—William trying to soothe him, he staggers as he passes door-way.*]

Edward.

I've had a glorious time, Bill. Old Cribbs—

Mary.

(R.) Hush! dearest!

Edward.

Why should I be silent? I am not a child. I—

Mary.

My mother, Edward, my dear mother!

Edward.

[*Sinks in chair.*] Heaven's wrath on my hard heart. I—I—forgot. How is she? Poor woman; how is she?

Mary.

Worse, Edward, worse. [*Trying to hide her tears.*]

Edward.

And I in part the cause. Oh, horrid vice! Bill, I remember my father's death-bed; it was a Christian's; faith in his heart; hope in his calm, blue eye; a smile upon his lip; he had never seen his Edward drunk. Oh, had he seen it—had he seen it!

Julia.

[*Crossing to her father from R. to C.*] Father, dear father? [*Striving to kiss him.*]

Edward.

Leave me, child, leave me. I am hot enough already. [*She weeps, he kisses her.*]
Bless you, Julia, dear, bless you. Bill, do you remember the young elm tree by the
arbor in the garden?

William.

Yes, sir.

Edward.

Well, I slipped and fell against it, as I passed the gate. My father planted it on
the very day I saw the light. It has grown with my growth; I seized the axe and
felled it to the earth. Why should it flourish when I am lost forever? [*Hysterically*]
Why should it lift its head to smiling heaven while I am prostrate? Ha, ha, ha! [*A*
groan is heard, R. D.—Exit Mary.—A pause;—a shriek.]

Enter MARY.

Mary.

Edward, my mother—

Edward.

Mary!—

Mary.

She is dead!

Edward.

Horror! And I the cause? Death in the house, and I without doubt the means. I
cannot bear this; let me fly—

Mary.

[*Springing forward and clasping his neck.*] Edward, dear Edward, do not leave me. I
will work, I will slave, anything; we can live, but do not abandon me in misery;
do not desert me, Edward! love! husband!

Edward.

Call me not husband—curse me as your destroyer; loose your arms—leave me.

Mary.

No, no! do not let him go. William, hold him.

William.

[*Holding him.*] Edward, dear brother!

Julia.

[*Clinging to him.*] Father! father!

Mary.

You will be abused. No one near to aid you. Imprisoned, or something worse, Edward.

Edward.

Loose me; leave me; why fasten me down on fire? Madness is my strength; my brain is liquid flame! [*Breaks from her.—William is obliged to catch her.*] Ha! I am free. Farewell, forever. [*Rushes off, C.D.*]

Mary.

Husband! Oh, Heaven! [*Faints.*]

William.

[*Bursting into tears.*] Edward! brother!

Julia.

Father, father! [*Runs to the door and falls on the threshold.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Broadway*

Enter LAWYER CRIBBS, R.

Cribbs.

I wonder where that drunken vagrant can have wandered? Ever since he came to New York, thanks to his ravenous appetite and my industrious agency, he has been going down hill rapidly, Could I but tempt him to some overt act, well managed, I could line my own pockets and ensure his ruin. Ha! here he comes, and two of his bright companions. He looks most wretchedly. Money gone, and no honest way to raise it. He'll be glad to speak to old Cribbs now. I must watch my time. [*Retiring.*]

Enter EDWARD *and two* Loafers.

1st Loafer.

Cheer up, Ned; there's more money where the last came from.

Edward.

[*Clothes torn away and very shabby, hat the same.*] But I tell you my last cent is gone. I feel ill. I want more liquor.

1st Loafer.

Well, well, you wait round here a spell. Joe and I will take a turn down to Cross street. [*Crosses L.*] We'll make a raise, I warrant you.

Edward.

Well, be quick then; this burning thirst consumes me. [*Exit loafers, L.*]

Cribbs.

[*Advancing, L.*] Why! is that you, Mr. Middleton?

Edward.

(R.) Yes, Cribbs; what there is left of me.

Cribbs.

Why, I don't see that you are much altered: though you might be better for a stitch or two in your elbows—

Edward.

Ah, Cribbs, I have no one to care for me. I am lost; a ruined, broken-hearted man.

Cribbs.

You won't be offended, Middleton, will you? Allow me to lend you a dollar. I am not very rich you know, but you can always have a dollar or two when you want it; ask me—there! there! [*Offering it.*] Before sundown he's a few yards nearer his grave. [*Aside.*]

Edward.

[*Slowly taking it, struggling with pride and necessity.*] Thank you, Mr. Cribbs, thank'ye; you are from the village, I hardly dare ask you if you have seen *them*.

Cribbs.

Your wife and child? Oh, they are doing charmingly. Since you left, your wife has found plenty of sewing, the gentlefolks have become interested in her pretty

face, and you know she has a good education. She is as merry as a cricket, and your little girl as blooming as a rose, and brisk as a bee.

Edward.

Then Mary is happy?

Cribbs.

Happy as a lark.

Edward.

[*After a pause.*] Well, I ought to be glad of it, and since she thinks no more of me,—

Cribbs.

O yes, she thinks of you *occasionally*.

Edward.

Does she say indeed?

Cribbs.

Yes, she says she cannot but pity you. But that Heaven never send affliction without the antidote, and that, but for your brutal—hem!—your strange conduct and drunkenness—hem!—misfortune, she should never have attracted the sympathy of those kind friends, who now regard her as the pride of their circle.

Edward.

Did she really say all that?

Cribbs.

Yes, and she *pities* you. I am sure she thinks of you, and would be glad to see you—to see you become a respectable member of society.

Edward.

[*Musing.*] It is very kind of her—very—very kind! pities me! respectable! But, Cribbs, how can one become respectable, without a cent in his pocket, or a whole garment on his wretched carcase?

Cribbs.

[*Pause.*] There are more ways than one to remedy these casualties. If the world uses you ill, be revenged upon the world!

Edward.

Revenged! But how, Cribbs, how?

Cribbs.

[*Cautiously.*] Do you see this paper? 'Tis a check for five thousand dollars. You are a splendid pen-man. Write but the name of Arden Rencelaw, and you may laugh at poverty.

Edward.

What! forgery? and on whom? The princely merchant! the noble philanthropist! the poor man's friend! the orphan's benefactor! Out and out on you for a villain, and coward! I must be sunk indeed, when you dare propose such a baseness to my father's son. Wretch as I am, by the world despised, shunned and neglected by those who should save and succour me, I would sooner perish on the first dunghill—than that my dear child should blush for her father's crimes. Take back your base bribe, miscalled charity; the maddening drink that I should purchase with it, would be redolant of sin, and rendered still more poisonous by your foul hypocrisy. [*Throws down the money.*]

Cribbs.

[*Bursting with passion.*] Ah, you are warm, I see. You'll think better when,—when you find yourself starving. [*Exit, L.*]

Edward.

Has it come to this?—an object of pity to my once adored wife: no longer regarded with love—respect—but cold compassion, pity; other friends have fully made up my loss. She is flourishing, too, while I am literally starving—starving—this cold-blooded fiend, too—what's to become of me? Deserted, miserable,—but one resource. I must have liquor—ha!—my hand-kerchief,—'twill gain me a drink or two at all events. Brandy, aye, brandy! brandy! [*Rushes off, R.*]

SCENE II.—*A Street.— Stage half dark.*
Enter CRIBBS, R.

Cribbs.

Plague take the fellow; who would have thought he would have been so foolishly conscientious? I will not abandon my scheme on the house of Rencelaw though; the speculation is too good to be lost. Why! as I live, here comes that old fool, Miss Spindle.

Enter MISS SPINDLE, L., her dress a ridiculous compound of by-gone days, and present fashions.

Miss S.

Why! this New York is the most awful place to find one's way I was ever in; it's all ups and downs, ins and outs. I've been trying for two hours to find Trinity Church steeple—and I can't see it, though they tell me it's six hundred yards high.

Cribbs.

Why! angelic Miss Spindle, how *do* you do? How long have you been in the commercial emporium?

Miss S.

Oh, Squire Cribbs, how d'ye do? I don't know what you mean by the uproarium, but for certain it is the noisiest place I ever did see. But, Squire, what has become of the Middletons, can you tell?

Cribbs.

I've had my eye upon them; they're down, Miss Spindle, never to rise again; as for that vagrant, Edward—

Miss S.

Ah! Squire! what an escape I had! How fortunate that I was not ruined by the nefarious influence, the malignant coruscation of his illimitable seductions. How lucky that prim Miss Mary Wilson was subjected to his hideous arts, instead of my virgin immaculate innocence!

Cribbs.

Do you know why his wife left the village and came to New York?

Miss S.

Oh, she is low, degraded! She sank so far as to take in washing, to feed herself and child. She would sooner follow her drunken husband, and endeavor to preserve him as she said, than remain where she was.

Cribbs.

Well, well, they are down low enough now. Which way are you going, towards Broadway? Why, I'm going towards Broadway myself. Allow me the exquisite honor of beauing you,—this way perfection of sex, and adoration of ours—your arm, lovely and immaculate Miss Spindle. [*Exit together, arm in arm, L.*

Enter EDWARD and 1st and 2d Loafer, R.

1st Loafer.

To be sure I did. I swore if he didn't let me have two or three dollars, I'd tell

his old man of last night's scrape, and I soon got it to get rid of me.

2d Loafer.

Hurrah for snakes! who's afraid of fire. Come, Ned, two or three glasses will soon drive away the blue devils. Let's have some brandy.

Edward.

With all my heart. Brandy, be it. Since I am thus abandoned—deserted—the sooner I drown all remembrance of my wretchedness the better, come! Boys, brandy be it. Hurrah!

Omnes.

[*Sing.*] "Here's a health to all good lasses!" [*Exeunt, R.*

SCENE III.—*Interior of The Arbor on Broadway.—Bar with decanters, &c., R.— Table with Back-gammon Board at back, C.— Two men playing at it.—Another reading paper and smoking.—Others seated around, &c.*

Enter EDWARD and LOAFERS, R., singing—"Here's a health," &c.

Bar-keeper.

[*Behind bar.*] The same noisy fellows that were here last night. What is it to be, gentlemen?

Edward.

Oh, brandy for me—brandy.

1st Loafer.

Give me a gin-sling—that's what killed Goliath, ha, ha, ha!

2d Loafer.

I'll have brandy. Come, old fellows tread up, and wet your whistles. I'll stand Sam, tread up. [*Edward and others after drinking dance and sing, "Dan Tucker," "Boatman Dance," &c.*

Bar-keeper.

I must civilly request, gentlemen, that you will not make so much noise; you disturb others—and we wish to keep the house quiet.

Edward.

Steady boys, steady; don't raise a row in a decent house. More brandy, young man, if you please. Come, Bill, try it again.

1st Loafer.

With all my heart, hurrah!

Edward and Loafers.

"Dance, Boatman, dance," &c. [*Laugh.*] More brandy, hurrah!

Bar-keeper.

I tell you once for all, I'll not have this noise. Stop that singing.

2d Loafer.

I shan't; we'll sing as long as we please,—give me some liquor.

Edward.

Aye, more brandy—brandy.

Bar-keeper.

Well, will you be still, then, if I give you another drink?

Edward.

Oh, certainly, certainly.

1st Loafer.

In course we will—

Bar-keeper.

Well, help yourselves. [*Hands decanters.*]

2d Loafer.

What's yours, Ned.

Edward.

Oh, brandy—here goes. [*Fills and drinks.*]

1st Loafer.

Here goes for the last.

Omnes.

[*Singing.*] "We won't go home till morning," &c.

Man.

[*At table playing checkers.*] Look here! that's my king.

2d Man.

[*At table.*] You're a liar. I have just jumped him.

1st Man.

[*At table*] I tell you, you lie. [*Regular wrangle.*

Edward and Loafers.

Go it, you cripples. [*Singing and laughing.*

Bar-keeper.

Stop that noise, I tell you. Come, get out. [*Pushing man from table—The two men fight.*

Edward and Loafers.

Go it, Charley. Hurrah, &c. [*Regular scene of confusion—Bar-room fight, &c.—Scene changes.*

SCENE IV.—*Exterior of a Bar-room on the Five Points.—Noise inside—CRIBBS enters and listens at door.*

Cribbs.

So, a regular bar-room fight. Middleton must be secured—here's the watch.

[*Enter 2d Watchman.—Exit Cribbs, L.*

EDWARD, *Watchmen and loafers enter struggling, singing, shouting, &c., &c. Exit fighting.*

Clubs are heard in all directions. First and second loafers enter clinching each other and fighting—several knock downs; square off, recognise each other.

1st Loafer.

Why, Sam, is that you?

2d Loafer.

Why, Ned, my dear fellow, is that you?

1st Loafer.

[*Who has had his hat knocked entirely over his head, crown out.*] To be sure it is; look here, you've completely caved in my best beaver.

2d Loafer.

Well, I ask your pardon. [*Exeunt arm in arm, R.*]

SCENE V.—*A wretched garret—Old table and chair with lamp burning dimly—MARY in miserable apparel, sewing on slop-work; a wretched shawl thrown over her shoulders—Child sleeping on a straw bed on the floor, R. covered in part by a miserable ragged rug.—Half a loaf of bread on the table.—The ensemble of the scene indicates want and poverty.*

Mary.

Alas, alas! It is very cold—faint with hunger—sick—heart weary with wretchedness, fatigue, and cold. [*Clock strikes one.*] One o'clock, and my work not near finished. I—they must be done to-night. These shirts I have promised to hand in to-morrow by the hour of eight. A miserable quarter of a dollar will repay my industry, and then my poor, poor child, thou shalt have food.

Julia.

[*Awakening.*] Oh, dear mother, I am so cold. [*Mary takes shawl from her shoulders and spreads it over the child.*] No, mother,—keep the shawl. You are cold, too. I will wait until morning, and I can warm myself at Mrs. Brien's fire; little Dennis told me I should, for the gingerbread I gave him. [*Goes to sleep murmuring.—Mary puts the shawl on herself, waits till the child slumbers, and then places it over Julia, and returns to work.*]

Mary.

Alas! where is he on this bitter night? In vain have I made every inquiry, and cannot gain any tidings of my poor wretched husband; no one knows him by name. Perhaps already the inmate of a prison. Ah, merciful heaven, restore to me, my Edward once again, and I will endure every ill, that can be heaped upon me. [*Looks towards child.*] Poor Julia, she sleeps soundly, she was fortunate to-day, sweet lamb, while walking in the street in search of a few shavings, she became benumbed with cold. She sat down upon some steps, when a boy moved with compassion, took from his neck a handkerchief, and placed it upon hers, *the mother of that boy is blessed.* With the few cents he slipped into her hands, she purchased a loaf of bread, she ate a part of it. [*Taking bread from table.*] And the rest is here. [*Looks eagerly at it.*] I am hungry—horribly hungry. I shall have money in the morning. [*Pause.*] No, no, my child will wake and find her treasure gone. I will not rob my darling. [*Replaces bread on table, sinks into chair, weeping.*] That I should ever *see* his child thus! for myself, I could bear, could suffer all. [*Julia awakes noiselessly, perceiving shawl, rises and places it over her mother's shoulders.*]

Julia.

Dear mother, you are cold. Ah you tried to cheat your darling.

Mary.

[*On her knees.*] Now heaven be praised. I did not eat that bread.

Julia.

Why, mother, do you sit up so late? you cry so much, and look so white—mother, do not cry. Is it because father does not come to bring us bread? we shall find father bye and bye, shan't we, mother.

Mary.

Yes, dearest—yes, with the kind aid of Him. [*Knock at the door, L.*] Who can that be? Ah, should it be Edward? [*Going to L.*]

Enter CRIBBS, she gets C.

Cribbs.

(L.) Your pardon, Mrs. Middleton, for my intrusion at this untimely hour, but friends are welcome at all times, and seasons, eh? So, so, you persist in remaining in these miserable quarters? when last I saw you, I advised a change.

Mary.

Alas! sir, you too well know my wretched reasons for remaining. But why are you here at this strange hour; Oh, tell me, know you aught of him? Have you brought tidings of my poor Edward.

Cribbs.

[*Avoiding direct answer.*] I must say your accommodations are none of the best, and must persist in it, you would do well to shift your quarters.

Mary.

Heaven help me! where would you have me go? return to the village, I will not. I must remain and find my husband.

Cribbs.

This is a strange infatuation, young woman; it is the more strange, as he has others to console him, whose soft attentions he prefers to yours.

Mary.

What mean you, sir?

Cribbs.

I mean, that there are plenty of women, not of the most respectable class, who are always ready to receive presents from wild young men like him, and are not very particular in the liberties that may be taken in exchange.

Mary.

Man, man, why dost thou degrade the form and sense the *great one* has bestowed on thee by falsehood? Gaze on the sharp features of that child, where famine has already set her seal, look on the hollow eyes, and the careworn form of the hapless being that brought her into life, then if you have the heart, further insult the helpless mother, and the wretched wife.

Cribbs.

These things I speak of, have been, and will be again, while there are wantons of one sex, and drunkards of the other.

Mary.

Sir, you slander my husband. I know this cannot be. It is because he is poor, forsaken, reviled, and friendless, that thus I follow him, thus love him still.

Cribbs.

He would laugh in his drunken ribaldry, to hear you talk thus.

Mary.

[*With proud disdain.*] Most contemptible of earth-born creatures, it is false. The only fault of my poor husband, has been intemperance, terrible, I acknowledge, but still a weakness that has assailed and prostrated the finest intellects of men who would scorn a mean and unworthy action. [*Crosses, L.*

Cribbs.

Tut, tut, you are very proud, considering—[*Looking round.*]—all circumstances. But come, I forgive you. You are young and beautiful, your husband is a vagabond. I am rich, I have a true affection for you, and with me—[*Attempts to take her hand.*

Mary.

Wretch! [*Throws him off.*] Have you not now proved yourself a slanderer, and to effect you own vile purposes. But know, despicable wretch, that my poor husband, clothed in rags, covered with mire, and lying drunk at my feet, is a being whose shoes, you are not worthy to unloose. [*Crosses, R.*

Cribbs.

Nay, then, proud beauty, you shall know my power—'tis late, you are unfriended, helpless, and thus—[*He seizes her, child screams.*

Mary.

Help! mercy! [*She struggles, crosses, R., Cribbs follows her.—William enters hastily, L., seizes Cribbs and throws him round to L., he falls*]

William.

Well, Squire, what's the lowest you'll take for your rotten carcass? Shall I turn auctioneer, and knock you down to the highest bidder? I don't know much of pernology, but I've a great notion of playing Yankee Doodle on your organ of rascality. Be off, you ugly varmint, or I'll come the engine, and set your paddles going all-fired quick.

Cribbs.

I'll be revenged, if there's law or justice.

William.

Oh, get out! You're a bad case of villany, versus modesty and chastity, printed in black letters, and bound in calf, off with you, or I'll serve a writ of ejectment on you, a posteriori to you—I learnt that much from Mr. Middleton's law books.

Cribbs.

But I say, sir—I am a man.

William.

You a man? Nature made a blunder. She had a piece of refuse garbage, she intended to form into a *hog*, made a mistake, gave it to your *shape*, and sent it into the world to be miscalled man. Get out. [*Pushes him off, L. Noise of falling down stairs. Re-enters.*] I did not like to hit him before you, but he's gone down these stairs, quicker than he wanted to, I guess.

Mary.

Kind, generous friend, how came you here so opportunely?

William.

Why, I was just going to bed, at a boarding house close by Chatham street, when I happened to mention to the landlord, a worthy man as ever broke bread, about you; he told me where you was. I thought you might be more comfortable there, and his good wife has made everything as nice and pleasant for you, as if you were her own sister. So come, Mrs. Middleton, come, Julia, dear.

Mary.

But William, my poor husband. [*Clubs, R. and L.*

William.

There's another row, well, if this New York isn't the awfulest place for noise.

Come, Mrs. Middleton, I'll find him if he's in New York, jail or no jail, watch-house or no watch-house.

Mary.

Heaven preserve my poor, dear Edward. [*Exit, L.*]

SCENE VI.—*The Five Points— Stage Dark, clubs, R. and L.—*
Enter EDWARD MIDDLETON in the custody of two watchmen, he is shouting.—
WILLIAM DOWNTON enters hastily, knocks down watchmen, rescues Edward, and they
exit, R.—Other rowdies enter, fight.—Stage clear, shouts, &c., and off, R.—
Enter CRIBBS, with coat torn half off, and dancing, fighting about stage, from L. U. E.

Cribbs.

Oh, my! Oh, good gracious! How can I get out of this scrape? I came here with the best intentions. Oh, my! to see the law put in force! Oh, dear! somebody has torn my coat tail—good gracious! Lord have mercy! I've lost my hat—no, here it is. [*Picks up dreadful shabby hat and puts it on, runs from one side to another.—Enter watchmen and mob, meeting him from R.*]

William.

[*Pointing out Cribbs to watchmen.*] That's the chap, the worst among 'em. [*They seize Cribbs.*]

Cribbs.

I'm a respectable man. [*They pick him up bodily and carry him off, R., shouting, he exclaims, "I'm a lawyer, I'm a respectable man," &c.—William follows laughing.—General confusion*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A wretched out-house or shed, supposed to be near a tavern, early morning.—*
Stage dark—EDWARD discovered lying on ground, without hat or coat, clothes torn, eyes
sunk and haggard, appearance horrible, &c., &c.

Edward.

[*Awakening.*] Where am I? I wonder if people dream after they are dead? hideous! hideous! I should like to be dead, if I could not dream—parched! parched 'tis morning, is it, or coming night, which? I wanted daylight, but now it has come, what shall I do in daylight! I was out of sight when it was dark—and seemed to be half-hidden from myself—early morning, the rosy hue of the coming sunshine, veiling from mortal sight the twinkling stars—what horrid dreams, will they return upon me, waking? Oh, for some brandy! rum! I am not so ashamed, so stricken with despair when I am drunk. Landlord, give me some brandy. What horrid place is this? Pain! dreadful pain! Heavens, how I tremble.

Brandy! brandy? [*Sinks down in agony.*]

Enter LANDLORD, with whip, R.

Landlord.

Where in nature can my horse be gone? Is there nobody up in this place?
Hollo!

Edward.

Hollo! Landlord, I say.

Landlord.

What's that? Oh! I say, have you seen my, horse? What—as I live, that scape-gallows, Middleton, how came he here? [*Aside.*] I thought he was in Sing-Sing.

Edward.

Oh! I know you, you needn't draw back—we have been acquainted before now, eh! Mr.—

Landlord.

Zounds! he knows me—yes, yes, we were acquainted once, as you say, young man; but that was in other days.

Edward.

You are the same being still—though I am changed—miserably changed—you still sell rum don't you?

Landlord.

I am called a respectable Inn-keeper, few words are best, young fellow. Have you seen a horse saddled and bridled near here?

Edward.

I've seen nothing—you are respectable, you say. You speak as if you were not the common poisoner of the whole village; am not I too, respectable?

Landlord.

[*Laughs rudely.*] Not according to present appearances. You were respectable once, and so was Lucifer—like him you have fallen past rising. You cut a pretty figure, don't you? ha! ha! what has brought you in this beastly condition, young man?

Edward.

[*Springing up.*] You! Rum! Eternal curses on you! had it not been for your infernal poison shop in our village, I had been still a man—the foul den, where you plunder the pockets of your fellow, where you deal forth death in tumblers, and from whence goes forth the blast of ruin over the land, to mildew the bright hope of youth, to fill the widow's heart with agony, to curse the orphan, to steal the glorious mind of man, to cast them from their high estate of honest pride, and make them—such as I. How looked I when first I entered your loathsome den, and how do I look now? Where are the friends of my happy youth? where is my wife? where is my child? They have cursed me; cursed me, and forsaken me!

Landlord.

Well, what brought you to my house? You had your senses then, I did not invite you, did I?

Edward.

Doth hell send forth cards of invitation for its horrid orgies. Sick and faint—make me some amends, my brain is on fire. My limbs are trembling—give me some brandy—brandy. [*Seizes him.*]

Landlord.

How can I give you brandy? my house is far from here. Let me go, vagabond!

Edward.

Nay, I beseech you—only a glass, a single glass of brandy, rum—anything—give me liquor, or I'll—

Landlord.

Villain! let go your hold!

Edward.

Brandy! I have a claim on you, a deadly claim! Brandy, brandy! or I'll throttle you. [*Choking him.*]

Landlord.

[*Struggling.*] Help, murder! I am choking! help!

Enter WILLIAM DOWTON, R.

William.

Good lord! what is this? Edward, Edward! [*Edward releases Landlord and falls, R.*]

Landlord.

You shall pay for this—villain! you shall pay for this. [*Exit, hastily*, L.]

Edward.

[*On ground in delirium.*] Here, here, friend, take it off, will you—these snakes, how they coil round me. Oh! how strong they are—there, don't kill it, no, no, don't kill it, give it brandy, poison it with rum, that will be a judicious punishment, that would be justice, ha, ha! justice! ha, ha!

William.

He does not know me.

Edward.

Hush! gently—gently, while she's asleep. I'll kiss her. She would reject me, did she know it, hush! there, heaven bless my Mary, bless her and her child—hush! if the globe turns round once more, we shall slide from its surface into eternity. Ha, ha! great idea. A boiling sea of wine, fired by the torch of fiends! ha, ha!

William.

He's quite helpless, could I but gain assistance, he cannot move to injure himself. I must venture. [*Exit, rapidly and noiselessly*, R.]

Edward.

So, so; again all's quiet—they think I cannot escape. I cheated them yesterday— 'tis a sin to steal liquor—

Enter MR. RENCELAW, R.

But no crime to purloin sleep from a druggist's store—none—none. [*Produces phial.*] Now for the universal antidote—the powerful conqueror of all earthly care—death. [*About to drink, Rencelaw seizes phial and casts it from him.*] Ha! who are you, man? what would you?

Rencelaw.

Nay, friend, take not your life, but mend it.

Edward.

Friend, you know me not. I am a fiend, the ruin of those who loved me, leave me.

Rencelaw.

I came not to upbraid, or to insult you. I am aware of all your danger, and come to save you. You have been drinking.

Edward.

That you may well know. I am dying now for liquor—and—will you give me brandy. Who are you that takes interest in an unhappy vagabond—neither my father nor my brother?

Rencelan.

I am a friend to the unfortunate. You are a man, and if a man, a brother.

Edward.

A brother! yes, but you trouble yourself without hope. I am lost, of what use can I be to you?

Rencelan.

Perhaps I can be of use to you. Are you indeed a fallen man? [*Edward looks at him, sighs and hangs his head.*] There you have the greater claim upon my compassion, my attention, my utmost endeavors to raise you once more, to the station of society from which you have fallen, "for he that lifts a fallen fellow creature from the dust, is greater than the hero who conquers a world."

Edward.

[*Starts.*] Merciful heaven! My mother's dying words! Who and what are you?

Rencelan.

I am one of those whose life and labors are passed in rescuing their fellow men from the abyss into which you have fallen. I administer the pledge of sobriety to those who would once more become an ornament to society, and a blessing to themselves and to those around them.

Edward.

That picture is too bright, it cannot be.

Rencelan.

You see before you one who for twenty years was a prey to this dreadul folly.

Edward.

Indeed! no, no; it is too late.

Rencelan.

You mistake; it is not too late. Come with me, we will restore you to society. Reject not my prayers; strength will be given you, the Father of purity smiles

upon honest endeavors. Come, my brother, enrol your name among the free, the disenthralled, and be a man again. [*Takes his hand.*]

Edward.

Merciful heaven! grant the prayer of a poor wretch be heard. [*Exeunt, R.*]

SCENE II.—*Union Square.*—*Lights up.*—*Citizens passing during the scene.*—*Children playing ball, hoops, &c.*
Enter LAWYER CRIBBS, R.

Cribbs.

Now this is a lucky escape. It's fortunate that old Sykes, the miller, was in court, who knew me, or I might have found it difficult to get out of the infernal scrape. What a dreadful night I have passed, to be sure,—what with the horrid noise of the rats, that I expected every moment would commence making a breakfast of my toes, the cold, and horrible language of my miserable and blackguard companions. I might as well have passed the crawling hours in purgatory, ugh! I'm glad it's over—catch me in such company again, that's all. Now for my design on Rencelaw and Co. I think there can be no detection, the signature is perfect. I'll get some well dressed boy to deliver the check, receive the money, and I'm off to the far West or England, soon as possible. Would I were certain of the ruin of this drunken scoundrel, and the infamy of his tiger-like wife, I should be content.

Enter BOY, L. U. E., *crossing to R.*

Where are you going so quickly, my lad?

Boy.

(R.) On an errand, sir.

Enter WILLIAM DOWTON, L. U. E.

Cribbs.

Do you want to earn half a dollar?

Boy.

With pleasure, sir, honestly

Cribbs.

Oh, of course, honestly.

William.

I doubt, that, if he rows in your boat.

Cribbs.

I am obliged to meet a gentleman on business, precisely at this hour, by the Pearl St. House, call at the Mechanics' Bank for me, deliver this check, the Teller will give you the money, come back quickly, and I'll reward you with a silver dollar.

Boy.

I'll be as quick as possible, sir, and thank you too. [*Exit hastily, R.*]

William.

I knew the old skunk had money, but I was not aware that he banked in New York. Hallo! here's Miss Spindle a twiggling the fashions; here'll be fun with the old rats. I told her half an hour ago, Cribbs was at a large party among the 'stocracy, last night.

Cribbs.

[*After putting up his wallet, sees Miss Spindle.*] Confound it! here's that foolish old maid, at such a time, too. Ah! there's no avoiding.

Enter MISS SPINDLE, L.

Miss S.

Good gracious! Mr. Cribbs, how *do* you do? I declare, how well you do look—a little dissipation improves you.

Cribbs.

What?

William.

[*Aside.*] She's beginning already. Hurrah! Go it, old gal.

Miss S.

I swow, now, I'm right glad to see you.

Cribbs.

You have all the pleasure to yourself.

William.

She'll find that out by and bye.

Miss S.

Now, don't be so snappish, Lawyer Cribbs; neighbors should be neighborly, you know. Who was it that had the pleasure to introduce you?

William.

[*Aside.*] I rather guess I went that stick of candy. [*Cribbs stares at Miss Spindle.*]

Miss S.

Now don't look so cross about it. I think you ought to feel right slick, as I do. Now do tell what kind of music had you!

William.

[*Aside.*] Plenty o' hollaring and clubs, with considerable running accompaniment.

Miss S.

Now don't look so angry, and scared. Who did play the fiddle? was it Herr Noll, Young Burke, or Ole Bull. Don't keep my curiosity on the stretch.

Cribbs.

Belzebug stretch you curiosity! What are you yelling about Herr Noll, Young Burke, and Ole Bulls for?

William.

[*Aside.*] I calculate Captain—[*Name of captain of watch.*]—played first fiddle to the overture of "Lock and Key."

Miss S.

Well I swow, I never seed sich ill-temper. Why I know New York tip-tops always have somebody first chop among the fiddlers; for cousin Jemima told me when she was at the Tabernacle, her very hair stood on eend when Herwig led the musicians with Heat-oven's sympathy.

Cribbs.

[*Aside.*] The old fool's perfectly crazy!

William.

[*Aside.*] Well, if the old chap hadn't any music, it wasn't for want of bars and staves. I reckon he got out of his notes when they let him off.

Miss S.

Now, don't be angry, Lawyer Cribbs; you know I only ask for information. Do the 'stocracy go the hull temperance principle, and give their visitors nothing but ice water.

William.

[*Aside.*] There was a big bucket and dippers, I reckon.

Cribbs.

Miss Spindle, will you only hear me?

Miss S.

Wall, ain't I listening all the time, and you won't tell me nothin'. Were there any real live lions there? Did Col. Johnson scalp a live Indian, to amuse the ladies? Did Dr. Dodds put every body into a phospheric state, when they were all dancing, and the lights went out? Did Senator D—— dance a hornpipe to please the children, and make a bowl of punch at twelve o'clock? Did— [*Out of breath.*]

William.

[*Aside.*] She'll ask him directly if the elephants played at billiards.

Cribbs.

Madam! madam! will you listen? [*Shouts out.*] In the name of confusion, what are you talking about?

Miss S.

Why, of the grand *sorrie*—the party, to be sure.

Cribbs.

I know nothing of any party; you're insane.

Miss S.

Oh, no, I ain't, neither. I was told of it by one—

Cribbs.

Told by one? who?

William.

[*Coming forward, C.*] Me, I calculate. I watched you, I guess.

Cribbs.

Watched!

William.

Guess I did—so shut up.

Cribbs.

Confusion!

William.

I say, Squire, where did you buy your new coat?

Cribbs.

Go to the devil, both of you.

William.

Where's the tail of your old one? Ha! ha! [*Exit Cribbs, R.—William follows, laughing.*]

Miss S.

Well, I swow, this is like Jedides' addle eggs. I can neither make ducks nor chickens on 'em. Well, I've got a good budget of news and scandal, any how. So I'll be off back to the village, this very day; this vile city is no safe place for romantic sensibilities and virgin purity. [*Exit, L.*]

SCENE III.—*Broadway, with a view of Barnum's Museum.*

Enter ARDEN RENCELAW, L.; crosses to R.—Bank messenger enters after him, L.

Mess.

Mr. Rencelaw, Mr. Rencelaw! I beg pardon for hurridly addressing you, but our cashier desires to know if this is your signature. [*Produces check.*]

Rencelaw.

My signature—good heavens, no!—five thousand dollars. Is it cashed?

Mess.

A young boy, sir, whom I saw just now, recognized, and sent to the bank immediately; but the cashier, Mr. Armond, arriving directly afterwards, doubted it, and I was despatched to find you.

Rencelaw.

Run to the bank directly; call for a police officer as you pass. I am rather infirm, but will soon follow; do not be flurried; our measures must be prompt, and I fear not for the result. [*Exit Messenger, L.*]

Enter WILLIAM DOWTON, R.

Ah, honest William; I have been searching for you. Edward desired to see you.

William.

Thank and bless you, sir. How is he?—where?

Rencelaw.

Comparatively well and happy, at my house. His wife and child will be here immediately; I have sent a carriage for them. Their home—their happy home—is prepared for them in the village, and have obtained almost certain information of his grandfather's will.

William.

Thank heaven! But, sir, you appear alarmed, excited.

Rencelaw.

A forgery has just been committed, in the name of our firm, upon the Mechanics' Bank.

William.

Bless me! the Mechanics' Bank? Who gave the check, sir?

Rencelaw.

A boy, William.

William.

A boy; how long ago?

Rencelaw.

Not half an hour! Why this eagerness.

William.

I—I'll tell you sir. Mr. Middleton told me that Lawyer Cribbs, when the poor fellow was in poverty and drunkenness, urged him to commit a forgery. Not half an hour since, I saw Cribbs give a boy a check, and tell him to take it to the Mechanics' Bank, receive some money, and bring it to him somewhere near the

Pearl Street House, where he would find him with a gentleman.

Rencelaw.

So, so! I see it all. Come with me to the Tombs, and secure an officer. If you should meet Middleton, do not at present mention this—come. [*Exit, R*]

William.

I'll follow you, sir, heart and hand. If I once get my grip on the old fox, he won't get easily loose, I guess. [*Exit hastily, R*].

SCENE IV.—*Room in Rencelaw's house; very handsome table, chairs, handsome books, &c.*

EDWARD MIDDLETON, C., *discovered reading—dressed, and looking well, &c.*

Edward.

[*Side of table.*] What gratitude do I not owe this generous, noble-hearted man, who, from the depths of wretchedness and horror, has restored me to the world, to myself, and to religion. Oh! what joy can equal the bright sensations of a thinking being, when redeemed from that degrading vice; his prisoned heart beats with rapture; his swelling veins bound with vigor; and with tremulous gratitude, he calls on the Supreme Being for blessings on his benefactor.

Mary.

[*Outside, R.*] Where is my dear—my loved—redeemed one.

MARY *enters with* JULIA, R.

Edward! my dear, dear husband. [*They embrace.*]

Edward.

Mary, my blessed one! My child, my darling! Bounteous heaven! accept my thanks.

Julia.

Father, dear father—you look as you did the bright sunshiny morning, I first went to school. Your voice sounds as it used when I sang the evening hymn, and you kissed and blessed me. You cry, father. Do not cry; but your tears are not such tears as mother shed, when she had no bread to give me.

Edward.

[*Kisses her.*] No, my blessed child, they are not; they are tears of repentance, Julia, but of joy.

Mary.

Oh! my beloved, my redeemed one, all my poor sufferings are as nothing weighed in a balance with my present joy.

Enter RENCELAW, R.

Respected sir, what words can express our gratification?

Rencelaw.

Pay it where 'tis justly due, to heaven! I am but the humble instrument, and in your sweet content, I am rewarded.

Julia.

[*Going to Rencelaw, R.*] I shall not forget what mother last night taught me.

Rencelaw.

What was that, sweet girl.

Julia.

In my prayers, when I have asked for a blessing for my father and mother, I pray to *Him* to bless *Arden Rencelaw* too.

Rencelaw.

Dear child. [*Kisses her.*]

Edward.

I will not wrong your generous nature, by fulsome outward gratitude, for your most noble conduct, but humbly hope, that He will give me strength to continue in the glorious path, adorned by your bright example, in the words of New England's favored poet:

"There came a change, the cloud rolled off
A light fell on my brain,
And like the passing of a dream,
That cometh not again.
The darkness of my spirit fled,
I saw the gulf before;
And shuddered at the waste behind,
And am a man once more."

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V

SCENE I.—*Village Landscape, as in Act I.—Side Cottage* L. U. E.
Enter FARMER STEVENS, R. *and* FARMER GATES, L., *meeting.*

Stevens.

Good afternoon, Mr. Gates. You've returned from Boston earlier than common to-day. Any news?—anything strange, eh!

Gates.

Why, ye-es, I guess there is. Just by the Post Office I met William Dowton; how are you, says I, and was driving slowly along, when he hailed me to stop, and—but I forgot to ask you, has Squire Cribbs been here to-day?

Stevens.

I have not seen the old knave—why do you ask so particular.

Gates.

Well, William, you know, is as honest as the sun, and he told me there were dreadful suspicions that Cribbs had committed a heavy forgery on the firm of Rencelaw and Co., and as I was already in my waggon, and had a good horse, he wished I would drive out pretty quick, and if old Cribbs were here, manage to detain him 'till Mr. Rencelaw and William arrived with the police officers—that if the sly old fox were guilty, he might be caught before he absquatulated.

Stevens.

Well, I hope, for the credit of the village, he is not guilty of bad action, though I have long know his heart was blacker than his coat. Witness his conduct to the sweetheart of Will's poor sister, Agnes. Did you tell him the glad news that her senses were restored?

Gates.

No, our hurry was so great; but his mind will be prepared for it, for good Dr. Wordworth always told him her malady was but temporary.

Gates.

Well, the poor girl has got some secret, I'm sure, and she'll not tell it to any one but William. [*Exit* R.]

Gates.

Hark? that's his voice; yes, here's William, sure enough

Enter WILLIAM, L.

Well, William, every thing is just as you directed, but no signs of the old one yet.

William.

The rascal's on his way, be sure. Bill Parkins told me he saw him passing through Kings-bridge half an hour before we came through there. I guess he's taken the upper road, to lead all pursuit out of the track. Mr. Rencelaw and the police are at the cross roads, and I rather guess we can take charge of the lower part of the village; so there's no fear of our missing him; mind you're not to say anything to Edward Middleton. Mr. Rencelaw would not have him disturbed till all is secure.

Gates.

Oh, I understand. How the whole village rejoiced when they saw him and his sweet wife return in peace and joy to the happy dwelling of their parents. Have you seen your sister, William?

William.

No, farmer, I haven't seen the poor girl yet. Nor do I wish it, till this business is all fixed.

Gates.

Ay, but she wants to see you; she has got to tell you some secret.

William.

A secret! some of her wild fantasies, I reckon, poor girl.

Gates.

William, you are mistaken; you dear sister's mind is quite restored.

William.

What! how! Don't trifle with me, farmer, I could not stand it.

Gates.

I tell you, William, she is sane, quite well, as Dr. Woodworth, said she would be.

William.

What! will she know and call me by my name again? Shall I hear her sweet voice carolling to the sun at early morning—will she take her place among the singers at the old meeting-house again? Shall I once more at evening hear her murmur the prayers our poor old mother taught her? Thank heaven! thank heaven!

Gates.

Come, William, come, rouse you, she's coming.

AGNES, *without*, R.

"They called her blue-eyed Mary,
When friends and fortune smiled."

William.

Farmer, just stand back for a moment or two; all will be right in a few minutes.
[*Exit Farmer*, R.]

Enter AGNES, *plainly but neatly dressed* R.—*Sees her brother.*

Agnes.

William! brother!

William.

My darling sister! [*Embrace.*]

Agnes.

I know you, William; I can speak to you, and hear you, dear brother.

William.

May He be praised for this.

Agnes.

William, I have much to tell you, and 'tis important that you should know it instantly. I know Edward Middleton is here, and it concerns him most. When I recovered my clear senses, William, when I remembered the meeting-house, and the old homestead, and the little dun cow I used to milk, and poor old Neptune, and could call them by their names—

William.

Bless you!

Agnes.

Strange fancies would still keep forming in my poor brain, and remembrances flit among my memory like half-forgotten dreams. But among them, clear and distinct, was that fearful day when old Cribbs would have abused me, and you, dear brother, saved me.

William.

Darn the old varmint!

Agnes.

Hush, William, the memory of that precise spot would still intrude upon me, and a vague thought that when insane I had concealed myself, and seen something hidden. Searching around carefully one day, I saw a little raised artificial hillock close beneath the hedge. I went and got a hoe from Farmer Williams' barn, and after digging near a foot below, I found—what think you, William?

William.

What, girl—what?

Agnes.

Concealed in an old tin case, the will of Edward's grandfather! confirming to his dear son the full possession of all his property. The other deed under which Cribbs had acted was a forgery—

William.

Where is it now?

Agnes.

In the house, safe locked up in mother's bureau till you returned.

Enter RENCELAW, Police Officers and Boy, hastily, L.

Rencelaw.

Friend William, Cribbs is on the upper road, coming down the hill.

Enter FARMER GATES and FARMER STEVENS, R.

William.

Farmer Gates, do you meet him here; answer any questions he may ask with seeming frankness. Sister, he is after that will, even now. Mr. Rencelaw, let us retire into the house and watch the old rascal. [*Exeunt into house, L. U. E., all except Gates.*]

Gates.

[*Alone.*] Well, I am to lie now, if he asks any questions? It's a new thing to me, and I'm afeared I can't do it, even in a good cause. Well, if I musn't tell truth

exactly, I must do as the papers say the members do in Congress, and dodge the present question.

Enter CRIBBS, L., hurriedly, evidently alarmed.—Starts at seeing Farmer, then, familiarly.

Cribbs.

Good day, farmer, good day; your folks all well?

Gates.

All sound and hearty.

Cribbs.

Any news, eh?

Gates.

Nothing particular; corn's ris a little; sauce is lower. Potatoes hold their own, and Wilkins' cow's got a calf.

Cribbs.

Been in New York lately, eh?

Gates.

Why, yes, I was in the city this morning.

Cribbs.

Did you see William Downton there, eh?

Gates.

No, not in New York. [*Aside.*] That's dodge number one.

Cribbs.

Fine afternoon, eh?

Gates.

Yes, fine day, considering.

Cribbs.

Likely to rain, eh?

Gates.

If it does, we shall have a shower, I guess. Come, black-coat didn't make much out of me this time. [*Exit into house*, L. U. E.]

Cribbs.

He's gone. No one observes me. Now then, for the will, and instant flight! If I take the lower road I shall escape all observation. Haste—haste! [*Exit*, R.]

Enter from house, WILLIAM, RENCELAW, AGNES, *Farmers, Police Officers, and Boy*

William.

There he goes by the lower road. Boy, was that the man gave you the paper.

Boy.

I'm sure of it, sir.

William.

Mr. Rencelaw, you know enough, sir, from what I have said, perfectly to understand our purpose?

Rencelaw.

Perfectly, honest William.

William.

Now, Farmer Gates, he's gone round by the lower road, evidently to get clear of being seen if possible. Now, if we cut pretty quick across Farmer Williams' pasture we are there before him, and can keep ourselves concealed.

Gates.

Certainly, William.

William.

Come along, then. Now, old Cribbs, I calculate you'll find a hornet's nest about your ears pretty almighty quick. [*Exeunt*, R.]

SCENE II.—*Front and Cut Wood*

Enter WILLIAM, RENCELAW, AGNES, *Boy, Farmers, and Police Officers*, R.

William.

All right; we're here first, now for ambuscade. All hide behind the trees. Hush! I hear a foot-step; he's coming round the barn. Close, close. [*All retire*, L.]

Enter CRIBBS *cautious and fearful*, L.

Cribbs.

All's safe—I'm certain no one has observed me.

William.

[*Aside.*] What would you like to bet?

Cribbs.

Hark! 'tis nothing. Now for the will; from this fatal evidence I shall at least be secure. [*Advances to the mound, R., and starts.*] Powers of mischief! the earth is freshly turned. [*Searches.*] The deed is gone!

Enter AGNES hastily, and down, L.—In a tone of madness.

The will is gone—the bird has flown,
The rightful heir has got his own!—ha! ha!

Cribbs.

[*Parylized and recovering.*] Ha! betrayed! ruined! Mad devil, you shall pay for this.
[*Rushes toward her.*

WILLIAM enters, catches his arm, and hold up the will.—Police-officer, who has got to R., seizes other arm, and points pistol to his head.—RENCELAW holds up forged check, and points to it.—Boy, R., pointing to Cribbs.—Farmers, R. C.—Picture.—Pause.

William.

Trapped! All day with you Squire.

Rencelaw.

Hush! William, do not oppress a poor, down-fallen fellow creature. Most unfortunate of men, sincerely do I pity you.

Cribbs.

[*Recovering—bold and obdurate.*] Will your pity save me from the punishment of my misdeeds? No! when compassion is required, I'll beg it of the proud philanthropist, Arden Rencelaw.

Rencelaw.

Unhappy wretch. What motives could you have? This world's goods were plenty with you—what tempted you into these double deeds of guilt?

Cribbs.

Revenge and avarice, the master passions of my nature. With my heart's deepest, blackest feelings, I hated the father of Edward Middleton. In early life he detected me in an act of vile atrocity, that might have cost me my life. He would not betray, but pardoned, pitied, and despised me. From that hour I hated with a feeling of intensity that has existed even beyond the grave, descending unimpaired to his noble son. By cunning means, which you would call hypocrisy, I wormed myself into the favor of the grandfather, who, in his dying hour, delivered into my hands his papers. I and an accomplice, whom I bribed, forged the false papers; the villain left the country. Fearful he should denounce me, should he return, I dared not destroy the real will; but yesterday the news reached me that he was dead. And now, one blow of evil fortune has destroyed me.

Rencelaw.

Repentance may yet avail you.

Cribbs.

Nothing. I have lived a villain—a villain let me die. [*Exit with Officers and Farmers.*]

Rencelaw.

William, tell Middleton I shall see him in a day or two; I must follow that poor man to New York.

William.

Oh, Mr. Rencelaw, what blessings can repay you.

Rencelaw.

The blessings of my own approving conscience. "The heart of the feeling man is like the noble tree, which, wounded itself, yet pours forth precious balm." When the just man quits this transitory world, the dark angel of death enshrouds him with heavenly joy, and bears his smiling spirit to the bright regions of eternal bliss. [*Exit Rencelaw, leading boy, R.*]

William.

Well, if there's a happier man in all York State than Bill Dowton, I should like to see him. My brother Edward again a man,—you, my dear sister, again restored to me—come, we'll go tell all the news; hurrah! hurrah!

[*Singing.*]

"We'll dance all night by the bright moonlight,
And go home with the girls in the morning."

LAST SCENE.—*Interior of Cottage as in Act 1st, Scene 1st. Everything denoting domestic peace and tranquil happiness.—The sun is setting over the hills at back of landscape.—*

Edward discovered near music stand, R.—Julia seated on low stool on his L.—Mary sewing at handsome work table, L.—Elegant table, R. S. E., with astral lamp, not lighted.—Bible and other books on it.—Two beautiful flower-stands, with roses, myrtles, &c., under window, L. and R.—Bird-cages on wings, L. and R.—Covers of tables, chairs, &c., all extremely neat, and in keeping.

Edward plays on flute symphony to "Home, sweet Home." Julia sings first verse.—Flute solo accompaniment.—the burthen is then taken up by chorus of villagers behind.—Orchestral accompaniments, &c.—Gradually crescendo, forte.—Villagers enter from C. gradually, grouping L. and C.—Action of recognition and good wishes, repeated quicker, and all retire with the exception of Edward, Mary, Julia, William and Agnes, singing, and becoming gradually diminuendo—Air is repeated slowly.—Julia kneels to Edward, who is at table, R., seated, in prayer.—Edward's hand on Bible, and pointing up.—Mary standing, leaning upon his chair.—William and Agnes, L. C.—Music till curtain falls.—Picture.

THE END.