

ALLINGHAM, WILLIAM

ASHBY MANOR



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PRICE ONE SHILLING

ASHBY MANOR

A PLAY

BY

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM



London :

DAVID STOTT, 370, OXFORD STREET.

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ASHBY MANOR

BY WILLIAM ABBINGHAM

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ONE SHILLING

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NEW WORKS

BY WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

1. *Evil May-Day, &c.*

2. *Ashby Manor, a Play.*

3. *Brambleberries.* [SHORTLY.]

One Shilling each.

DAVID STOTT, 370, OXFORD STREET, LONDON.

ASHBY MANOR

A PLAY

IN TWO ACTS

BY

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM



London :

DAVID STOTT, 370, OXFORD STREET.

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ASHBY MANOR

IN TWO VOLS.

BY
WILLIAM ALLINGHAM



DAVID SMITH AND SONS, PRINTERS,
LONDON AND BIRMINGHAM.

London: 1871.

To
MY WIFE

THIS little Play was written (several years ago), to be acted, if the fates should ever prove so kind. Practical familiarity with the stage is a most important qualification for a dramatist, the present writer is well aware ; and must humbly own that he has it not. All he can say is, he has seen many plays, and always had a wish to try his hand.

But it is easier to write a Play than to find a Manager who will read it ; and so the would-be Dramatist prints his piece to get it out of his mind,—wherein several other inventions are fluttering, far better than this, and really worth the attention of Managers. Even the present specimen might perhaps in good hands give an audience pleasure.

If insisted on for scene-shifting reasons it could be divided into four so-called Acts of one scene each. The action is in two.

ACT I.—*June 14, 1645.*

SCENE 1.—Stable yard of Ashby Manor House,
Northamptonshire.
(Sunlight.)

SCENE 2.—Room in the Manor House.
(Daylight.)

ACT II.—*A day in September, same year.*

SCENE 1.—Anteroom in the Manor House, opening
on a Terrace, with harvest view.
(Warm evening light.)

SCENE 2.—Fine old Room or Gallery in the same,
with pictures, armour, &c.
(Dusk, and afterwards candles.)

PERSONS.

BASIL RADCLYFFE (about 50), Colonel of Horse for the Parliament under General Ireton.

CHARLTON RADCLYFFE, his nephew (about 28, handsome, but gloomy and ill-tempered), Captain in the same Regiment.

GEORGE FORTESCUE, afterwards LORD LYNDORE (about 24), Royalist Cavalry Officer, under Prince Rupert.

TOM TRIVET, his servant, an honest Devonshire lad, a trooper in the same Regiment.

CORPORAL GROME (a sleek rascal), in Captain Radclyffe's troop.

SIR THOMAS CHENERY (dignified elderly man), Commissioner of the Parliament.

MR. JOHN CHAD, lawyer, his Secretary (keen lawyer, with rigid features).

CORNET JEBB, Parliamentarian (self-conceited).

JERRY, a youth. Old CROOKES, an aged servitor.

MISTRESS RADCLYFFE (a beautiful woman of 40 or 42), wife of the Colonel.

NAOMI RADCLYFFE (about 20), their only child.

PRUDENCE, a waiting-woman.

JERUSHA, a dairymaid.

Other servants. Troopers.



ASHBY MANOR.

[*Before the curtain rises, military music or overture, with drums and trumpet : a march and battle-piece (including "Prince Rupert's March"), dying off at last, and ending with two trumpet-calls ; the second more distant, replying to the other. N.B.—All the Music with this Play ought to be English, of the 16th and 17th centuries.*]

THE PROLOGUE.

(Spoken before the Curtain.)

A trembling Author—use him kindly, pray !—
Presents to you to-night his first essay.
'Tis all his own, words, characters, and plot ;
But all is nothing, if it please you not.
Then *try* to like it ; half the battle's there !
And you, fair Ladies, O be more than fair
In this, be generous to him ; recognize
His good intentions with indulgent eyes ;

B

And though he cannot picture womanhood
 A thousandth part as richly as he would
 If love and reverence might suffice,—with aid
 Of sympathy, he'll show you, less afraid,
 An English Daughter and an English Wife,
 Toss'd on the angry waves of civil strife,
 Yet never losing heart, when England fought
 Against herself, and for herself, distraught
 Yet full of reason, wisely mad, and sent
 For either party, King and Parliament,
 Most precious lives into the bloody field,
 Most honest men on both sides. Can you yield
 Your thought on fancy's wings to float away
 To Charles's time, a bygone summer day
 At Naseby?—Now the roar of fight is done;
 The curtain rises; and our scene's begun.

[Exit.



ACT I.—SCENE I.

Afternoon of June 14, 1645. Stable yard of Ashby Manor-house, Northamptonshire; half-timbered Elizabethan out-buildings; roofs and chimneys of the Manor-house rising beyond. Large gate, and practicable Wicket, R. Stable with practicable door, L.

Enter cautiously, opening the wicket, a young Cavalier (with helmet, cuirass and gorget, sword, riding boots, &c.) and his Servant, a trooper (without sword). They look soiled and tired. Cavalier's right arm tied up with a red sash, as wounded.

George Fortescue. All seems quiet here.

Tom Trivet. Good luck 'twas unbolted, zir.

G. F. Make it fast. A friendly house, think you?

[Tom bolts wicket.

Tom. That's to prove, zir. An they be king's volk, better for we. If not, we must hide zome-where an' slink out i th' dimmet. Wish we could borrow a dark ne'at vrom Christmas next!

[Looks round about.

G. F. How far are we from Naseby village?

Tom. Zome dree mile, zir, a' 'ood zay.

G. F. Hiding and slinking are not much to my taste, Tom.

Tom. They bean't Devonsheer tricks, your honour!—but luck's again us, and the Roundheads after us.

G. F. Confound them!

Tom. 'Oss, voot and dragoons ! Zimmeth these New-Noddle men can vight, zir?—London 'prentices and jitch-like, we was told.

G. F. Ha, they can fight ! But, Tom,—this letter for his Highness the Prince of Wales, which his Majesty's own hand gave into mine : it must be delivered at all risks.

Tom. Could we a' kept out o' thik last unlucky scrimmage, we should a' bin well on our wa-y to Exeter by now. O zweet Devonsheer ! (*G. F. touches his wounded arm.*) Your honour's arm paineth ?

G. F. Not very much. Here, Tom, shift my swordbelt to 'tother side.

Tom. (*Doing it.*) Would your honour vight left-handed ?

G. F. Sooner than be taken by a clown with a hayfork.

Tom. Fegs, a'd 's lieve not veace hayfork at the present minnit ! My weepion 's gone : a'll tek' theasamy in case o' need. (*Picks up an axe for chopping wood.*) Zomebody's a comin'.—In, zir, vor God's sake !

[*They hide behind an outhouse, L.*]

Enter JERUSHA (2nd entrance L) as from milking, with two pails. She sets them down and shakes her head.

J. The very cows, poor things, are frighted out o' their wits, and no wonder. It bean't 'alf a proper milking, and th' noise o' them great guns is enow to

turn sower what there is o't. It do turn my blood into buttermilk !

Enter PRUDENCE as from house (centre).

J. O Prue !

P. O Jerusha !

J. Ah, you may well say so !

P. What times we live in !

J. I wish we'd been a-born in other times !

P. So do I !—ah, Jerusha woman, our fathers and mothers lived and died in their beds ; not like this wicked Civil War !

J. I see no civility in't. Master away fighting ; John and Timothy and Jenkyn away fighting, and our five best horses, and ne'er a man left but Gaffer Crookes, and Jerry, and our young lady's pet mare.

P. And mistress in her room there (*points towards house*) praying, praying, as well as she can for them roaring cannon bullets all the marning. Be they done at last, think you ?

J. I've heerd none these two hours.

P. Thank goodness for that !—And the dear young mistress, talking cheerful to everybody, wi' her eyes full of tears.—If our folk on'y gets safe back, all 's well.

J. May the Lord guard them !

P. Maybe they're all murdered !

J. O dear !

P. Lying stiff and bloody in the grass—

J. Don't talk so !

P. Or crying out for someone to gi'e 'em a drink o' water.

[*Shots heard.*

Both. Oh ! oh ! [*They weep. Enter JERRY, a youth, breathless.*

Jerry. News ! news !

P. What is it, Jerry ? Where hast been ? Speak !

Jer. News, great news ! A've bin at th' great foight !

J. You !

Jer. Ay, me, and a've run all th' way back.

P. *That's* true, I warrant.

Jer. Not till the King and his foine gentry ran away first. We've a-bait 'em, girls, we've a-bait em ! Victory ! The Ironsides for ever !

J. How was it ?

P. Is master safe ?

J. And Jenkyn ?

P. And Timothy ?

J. And all ?

P. Didst see them ?

J. Come they straight back ?

P. Is anybody killed ?

J. Or wounded ?

[*They put these questions quickly ; JERRY turns from one to the other.*

P. Spaik out, man !

J. Quick !

Jer. There's another question you've not asked me.

J. What's that ?

Jer. If I be hungry and thirsty. Get me a quart of ale, and then—

P. Run, Jerusha ! (*She goes.*) You shall ha' some cold roast pork too. But say, Jerry, is anyone hurt ?

[*JERUSHA returns with ale.*

J. O is anyone hurt ?

Jer. Many a one. (*Drinks.*) But none of our house. Leastwise, I hopes not.

P. You hopes not !—Did you see master ?

Jer. No.

J. Or Jenkyn, or Timothy ?

Jer. Ay.

J. Lord be praised ! When come they back ?

Jer. Hm—hm—

P. Answer, stupid !

Jer. Not a word more, stupid as I am, till I sees my mistress. But this much a'll tell ye—

Both. Yes !

Jer. I've awful things to tell—

Both. Ah !

Jer. But not to you. (*Female voice heard calling from house.*) I'm too long here ! (*Runs off (C), they follow, crying out "Jerry ! Jerry !"*)

Re-enter (L) Cavalier and Tom.

Tom. Tha'd a dale o' chatter, but I coodn' hear what 'twas 'bout. How vare you, zir ?

G. F. Well enough—considering.

Tom. Zems to me, your honour, we be all ruined, vrom King down.

G. F. Not so bad as that, Tom : we'll turn tables on the Roundheads yet.

Tom. Ah, zir, we've a-zung to thik tune long while !—and we 'ave a be-at 'em too, but tha' doozen' zem to mind it—not bein' men of honour, like.

G. F. Certainly when our side's beaten, we feel it.

Tom. (*Rubbing his shoulder.*) Zartinly we doos ! We be on raight zide, measter George, bean't us ?

G. F. I hope so, Tom. Hush, sirrah ! draw in hither. [*They approach a door, near front, L, Tom peeps through hole in door.*]

Tom. A stable, an' a hoss in't. Well, a hoss han't no politics—there ! (*Opens door ; they stand in doorway.*) Soho boy ! woa then ! Theer's a smock-frock and ould hat a-hanging up, might be o' use.

G. F. And a bridle with a knot of orange-tawny ribbon :—A puritan household—hm.—Yet for the present we must lie in the frying-pan rather than jump into the fire. Here's the King's Majesty's letter : where best to hide it ?

Tom. Your honour's boot.

G. F. First place people search.

Tom. Your hat might—

G. F. Fly away any moment.

Tom. The bandage. [*Points to wounded arm.*]

G. F. Hm, 'twill need dressing, and who will the chirurgeon be ?

Tom. God knows it ought a been a-looked-to ere now. Could I tie theas letter under your honour's

hair ? No one 'ood catch a glimpse o't. (*Action in accordance.—Shouts outside.*) What's that ? Zome-one at gate ?

G. F. (*Listens.*) They're passing on. They're gone by. No, Tom, (*takes out his purse*) I'll put it here.

Tom. Very first place, I should zay, to be ransackt.

G. F. By Goring's men or Wilmot's ; as well fall in with a gang of highwaymen. The Roundheads are no pickpockets.

Tom. (*Listening, and pointing thumb over shoulder into stable, whispers.*) Zir, a noise within.

G. F. (*Looks.*) Only the rightful tenant twitching his halter. See how much is in it.

[*Hands purse to Tom.*]

Tom. Sixteen jacōbuses, and zilver to boot, zir.

G. F. Clap the silver in thy poke—so ! Hand me out six gold pieces—so ! (*Pockets them.*) Among the remainder (*takes purse*) this cypher must lie folded small,—with which make thou all speed to his Royal Highness at Exeter or elsewhere, should Fortune my foe force me to give the charge to thee. Suppose us taken, and they consent to enlarge thee, as is often done with those of lesser note, I toss thee this purse to clear wages and so forth, and thou must put it up and vanish without delay.

Tom. 'Thout the smallest delay, zir. But I trusts as 'ow your honour 'ill do your own arrands.

G. F. You'll find your way to Devon ?

Tom. Like a carrier-pigeon to 's cote, zir. But soft! zomebody's a-comin'.

G. F. Stand in!

[*Draws sword with left hand. TOM takes up the axe. They go into stable, softly shutting the door after them.*]

Enter from house (C) NAOMI RADCLIFFE.

Naomi. I must look after poor Lightfoot myself; with things in this confusion they might forget to feed her. Jerry!—O where is this foolish groom? Jerry! (*Opens stable door.*) Lightfoot then! Wo-ho, lass!

[*Makes a step forward and sees the intruders; steps backward in alarm her eyes fixed on the doorway, at which now appear FORTESCUE and TOM behind him. The former sheathes his sword and salutes her respectfully.*]

G. F. Madam—

N. (*Quickly and with dignity.*) What are you, sir?

G. F. A wounded man, madam, and it may be a prisoner.

N. A prisoner?

G. F. At your mercy, madam, if you choose to give us up.

N. Who is this other man?

G. F. My servant, madam.

Tom. Only Tom Trivet, mistress, late of North Devon, where he would fain be again.

N. And *your* name, sir?

G. F. George Fortescue, madam.

N. You are of the King's army. (*Aside.*) Is nobody coming?

G. F. Yes, madam.

Tom. —While he had one.

N. My father by affection and honour is bound to the other side, and his household and neighbours are staunch for the Parliament.

Tom. (*Whispers.*) Shall I vling my cloak o'er her head?

G. F. (*Indignantly, but in undertone.*) Silence!—Madam—(*makes as though he would come forward.*)

N. Sir, move not hand or foot, I caution you! Will you force me to raise my voice? (*Aside.*) Would I could hear anyone stirring!

G. F. We would not, madam, offend you in the least particular.

N. Do you yield yourself?

G. F. Pardon me, madam; that I will not do, save in extremity.

N. There is no harbour for you here. You must surrender (*he makes a negative gesture*) or else—(*Aside.*) There's not a soul left about the house!

G. F. Or else?

N. Go through that gate, by which you have entered. I will not hinder you.

G. F. That were to be made prisoners immediately.

N. You must choose, and quickly. (*Aside.*) I cannot hold up much longer!

G. F. Hear me one moment, madam. You perhaps have some who are dear to you engaged in the war. (*NAOMI sighs; he watches her face.*) They also may be in peril—wounded—in need of compassion.

N. What would you ask, sir?

G. F. That you suffer us to rest in the corner of this stable until dusk, and then glide off like ghosts or shadows, if we have luck enough.

N. I know not if I may rightly do this.

G. F. Ask your own heart, which I am sure is not without pity for the unfortunate.

N. Are you much hurt, sir?

G. F. Not much, I thank you, lady.

Tom. Enow, by George, for one turn!

G. F. A little surgery will set all right.

Tom. Heaven zend it may!

N. I would we could help you better. Is there a bullet in your arm, Sir?

G. F. A pistol bullet, fair lady,—from one of our own men too, by Jupiter!

N. Your own men?—traitors?

G. F. Not so.

N. How then could it chance?

G. F. Will you care to hear? The battle well-nigh over, in a sudden encounter of two bodies of horse, I rode across one of our men's pistols, just as he gave fire, and down I came.

Tom. But your honour doesn't tell all. He rode forward thus hastily, madam, to zave a Round-head Officer (begging your pardon) in bad case enow, dismounted, tangled wi' his wounded hoss, his steel cap off; but still he wa-ived his sword and shouted to 's men. You lizzen, lady?

N. I do indeed.

Tom. Well—two of our troopers in vury o' battle rides at 'en vull butt—my measter here roars to hold hard—no use, not the laist—spurs in at zame instant, jist in time to zave th' oul' fella and catch a bullet in's own sword-arm.

N. Doth the wound bleed?

G. F. Not now, madam. Tom here, tho' he had a fall in the same melée, bandaged me cleverly.

Tom. Lord be praised I weren't far off.

N. And this officer whose life you saved?

G. F. Both sides drew off—I saw or heard no more of him.

N. 'Twas a good deed, sir; and on this, if no other argument, I'll make bold to give you harbour till evening. You can lock this door inside, and I will take order that none troubles you. You shall have meat and drink, and the wicket unbolted for your exit—at what hour?

G. F. At eleven, madam, so please you.

N. At eleven. Take this key. And now, fare you well, and may God keep you both.

G. F. Farewell, madam—my heart thanks you, and while it beats, your kind and sweet compassion

shall never be forgotten. One word more—may I crave your name?

N. Naomi Radclyffe.

G. F. Once heard and for ever; no need to write it down. Madam, farewell!

[She bows and moves away; he says in undertone:

Fain had I sued for leave to kiss her hand;
But that were too much daring. What are all
The beauties of the Court compared with her?

[She glances round.

Farewell!—and she is gone, perhaps for ever.

[Loud knocking and calling heard at the gate; a body of Parliament troopers are wanting to come in. FORTESCUE and TOM at stable door listening. NAOMI, almost off, turns and comes back hastily.

N. In, and lock the door!

G. F. But—

N. In at once! *[They go in; clamour at gate increases.*

Voices outside. Hillo within!—Open quickly!—Open to the Parliament!—Burst it in, without more parley!

N. Hold! Who is there?

Voice. Do you speak at last? Open to General Fairfax's men, and speedily.

N. Your name, sir?

Voice. Captain Radclyffe, in command of a party of horse.

N. Charlton's voice. (*Opens wicket.*) This way, cousin. The great gate is fast, and I cannot undo it.

Enter Captain CHARLTON RADCLYFFE.

Charlton. Ha—you, Cousin Naomi! Where are all your folk?

N. None here, through the confusions of the time and hour. I'm sorry you have had to wait. (*Earnestly*) What news bring you, cousin?

Ch. Victory, cousin, is our news—and a great one. You have seen none of the fugitives, I suppose?

N. I have not been abroad to-day. Have you any news of my father?

Ch. I am expecting it, and good, please Heaven, at every instant. Have you been long in the stable-yard?

N. Not long. I but came to see that my mare starve not in the general disorder. Where is my father?

Ch. I know not precisely where; we were separated. But with your leave, cousin. (*Calls.*) Corporal Grome! Attention! The men I name will dismount and come in here; nearest left-hand men to hold the horses. The rest keep their posts. Hardy!

Hardy. Here, sir!

[Soldiers answer and step through wicket in turn.

Ch. Hezekiah Wood!

Here, sir.

Carstairs !

Here, sir.

Freeman !

Here, sir.

Watch-and-Pray Dobson !

Here, sir.

Form line—steady !

N. (Anxiously.) Intend you quartering with us to-night, cousin ?

Ch. We may trouble you, cousin. Room here for a score of men and horses, and goodwill, I know. How doth mine honoured aunt ? I ought to have asked sooner. We'll take up no quarters till her good leave be granted.

N. My mother is ill at ease, as you may well guess. But cousin, cousin, will you not say if you know aught of my father ? Is some dreadful thing hid behind this curtain of silence ?

Ch. No, in good sooth, cousin. We rode separate ways. I am now, understand, in hot pursuit of certain fugitives of the King's army, especially one young man of rank, of Rupert's regiment, suspected as bearer of a despatch for the malignants in the West. He, with one that by description is his servant, must be in some hiding-place not far off, and it seemed better that I should search here than a stranger. So with your leave, fair cousin, we'll lose no more time, knowing you will rejoice as much as any if these sons of Belial can be seized. Now, men, bustle round, search the stables and outhouses !

Find the rats ! Our terriers watch outside, if they slip through.

Enter Servants—PRUDENCE, JERUSHA, JERRY, OLD CROOKES—who talk confusedly to each other.

Mercy on us !—Heaven protect us !—What do they in our place ?—Here's our young lady !—How is't, madam ?

[The soldiers search the stable-yard.]

N. (To CHARLTON.) You are certain my Father is safe ?

Ch. As sure as trusty information can make me. But, Naomi,—

N. (Alarmed.) What ?

Ch. You have never asked a word touching your cousin's well-being.

N. Cousin—what cousin ?

Ch. (Bowing.) Your servant—now and always.

N. Nay, cousin, I see thee safe and well.

Ch. I might be wounded, for all that—but I am not ; or have escaped by a hair's-breadth,—which I did ; but you care not.

N. I am glad you are safe.

Ch. I thank you. *[The soldiers come to door of small stable and try it.]*

Trooper. This is locked.

N. That is where my mare is lodged.

Ch. Where's the key ?

N. You'll frighten Lightfoot ; she's mettlesome and nervous.

Ch. Nay, we'll take measures with her. Let me have the key.

N. I have it not.

Ch. (To Servants.) One of you find it—quick!

Servants. 'Tis not with me!

—I know not where 'tis!

—Do'st know, Jerry?

—Not I, good sooth!

Ch. (To NAOMI.) Can you not think where it may be?

N. What need your men go in there? Is't not enough that it is my stable and that it is locked?

J. Could one get through keyhole—save a witch?

Ch. (In undertone to NAOMI.) Your pardon, Naomi, but I have strictest orders to search this place thoroughly. Why tease me thus? 'Tis no time for thine old girlish tricks.

N. I gave them up long ago, I hope, cousin.

Corporal Grome. (Coming forward.) The men have searched all round, sir, and stand idle.

Ch. Prise open the door with as little force as will serve.

Corporal. (To CHARLTON.) Sir, the prudent man, saith Solomon, looketh well to his going. Let us use caution.

[The men are ranged on each side of door with swords drawn. CHARLTON draws pistol from his belt and looks to the priming. Two soldiers force the door open. A pause.]

Ch. Corporal Grome—Hezekiah Wood—guard the door. The rest go in. *[Men go into stable.]*

Ch. 'Twill not take long to search.

Grome. (Looking in.) There's a loft, sir.

[The soldiers re-appear.]

Ch. Well?

Soldier. Nothing, sir, but a trim little bay nag.

Another. (Rubbing his leg.) Gave me a taste of her hoof, and beshrew her!

J. She used you properly!

Naomi. Prudence, ask my mother to come hither at once, but alarm her not; say there's no ill news.

Ch. You tried the loft too?

Soldier. Ay, sir; there's nobody.

J. (Aside to PRUDENCE.) If there had a-been somebody, he were true idiot not to find the little window at back.

Soldier (who has been looking round corner). Sir, there's a little window at the back, unbolted, and footmarks in the midden without.

Ch. Attention! Corporal, see that the men outside are on the alert. Hardy, Watch-and-Pray Dobson, stay with me; the rest, off, search every cranny!

[After a pause, GEORGE FORTESCUE is brought in, disarmed and angry.]

G. F. Stand off, fellows! you have my sword.

Ch. Made he resistance?

Corporal. So far as a hurt man could.

[FORTESCUE groans involuntarily.]

Ch. What ails you, sir ?

N. See you not he is wounded !

G. F. My arm is somewhat painful, sir.

Ch. Press not on him. Who are you, sir ?

G. F. I do not choose to answer.

Ch. Then I'll tell you,—George Fortescue, second son of the late Lord Lyndore, of the County of Devon ; and now on a secret errand of treasonable purport.

G. F. (*Scornfully.*) Treasonable !

Ch. Ay, sir. The King being in the hands of evil counsellors and Popish traitors who misadvise him, against the true interests of Crown and Kingdom.

G. F. Pshaw, sir, one has heard this stuff too often !

N. (*To JERUSA.*) Is my mother coming, think you ?

(*Apart.*)
J. Prudence would lose no time, madam.
N. May Heaven help us !
Ch. What say you, Naomi ?
N. Nothing.

Corporal. (*Sententiously, after clearing his throat.*) We have our warrant ; yea, the Gospel light shineth amongst us in our inward parts ; we fight against the Antichrist, and all Popish, prelatical, malignant men !

Hezekiah Wood. (*With a strong twang.*) Wherefore the Lord will save us from the curse of Meroz, who would not help the Lord against the mighty.

Corporal. Silence in the ranks !

Ch. Enough, both of you ! (*To FORTESCUE.*) We defend the true rights of the Nation and the King.

G. F. I'll tell you what you are—a swarm of fools, Set on by cunning and malicious knaves ! Helping a rebel rabble parliament To wreck the ancient fabric of this realm, Because a stone or two is out of place ; To break the Crown, which caps and keeps together Th' ascending cone of dignities and duties, And let all rush to ruin !

Ch. Come, no more, sir !

J. (*To NAOMI.*) He speaks foinely, don't he ?

N. Alas ! how will this end ?

G. F. Soldiers ! your sires were honest folk, content To fear God, honour the King, and live in peace And plenty with each other. Are you wiser ? England flung topsy-turvy, will that serve you ?

Ch. Peace, you were best !

G. F. Rogues flourish in such times, not honest men,

And by and by, when retribution comes, You all will feel it, and your children too !

Ch. (*Drawing a pistol.*) Silence him !

[*Soldiers surround FORTESCUE.*]

N. Merciful Heaven !

G. F. (*Stepping free of them for a moment.*) Come, friends ! your lawful King will pardon you, Who's for King Charles ?

Ch. (*Cocking and presenting pistol.*) Nay, if you will not.

N. (*Shrieks and rushes forward.*) Do not fire !
He's weaponless and wounded.

Ch. This is no business for thee, Naomi Radclyffe.

Enter Mistress RADCLYFFE.

N. It is for *her*. O mother, thou art come at last !

Mistr. R. Charlton Radclyffe !—nephew !—what may this mean ?

Ch. My humble service to you, gracious aunt.

Mistr. R. What of my husband ? Know you where Colonel Radclyffe is, and how ?

Ch. For the present, no, madam ; but I am momentarily expecting news.

Mistr. R. Poor comfort !

Ch. No cause for dread, my dear aunt. But pardon, gracious madam, my duty waits. Corporal, look to your prisoner. See that he makes away with no paper. He must be searched.

G. F. (*Aside.*) You are too late !

Ch. If he talks again—the gag !

N. Mother, you will save him ?

Mistr. R. Your prisoner—permit me. Sir, who and what are you ?

G. F. My name is Fortescue, madam.

Mistr. R. And your baptized name ?

G. F. George, madam.

Mistr. R. George Fortescue,—are you of Devon ?

G. F. That is my county, madam.

Mistr. R. Son of the good Lord Lyndore ?

G. F. You know my father's name ?

N. (*To her mother.*) O madam ! you know this gentleman's kin ? You will plead for him ?

Mistr. R. I knew your mother, sir, when both of us were girls, and loved her. Yes, Naomi ; you have heard me speak of Philippa Chenies of Moreton,—that was she. I am very sorry, sir, trust me, to see you in my house on such unhappy terms. Nephew, I will be warrant for your prisoner's safe keeping.

N. This will certainly suffice you ?

Ch. Good, my aunt and cousin, I may not lose sight of him. He has most likely papers of consequence about him.

G. F. None, upon my honour, sir.

N. You do not doubt his word ?

Mistr. R. Come, come, nephew, let him be brought in. Am not I Colonel Radclyffe's wife ? I'll have a chamber made ready. Come with me, Prudence. Naomi, look to Mr. Fortescue meanwhile.

[Exit Mistress RADCLYFFE.]

N. Charlton, you will yield to my mother in this ?

Ch. I must not, Naomi.

N. Nay—surely . . .

Enter three troopers, bringing TOM a prisoner, disguised in a smock frock and old hat.

Ch. Who's here ?

Trooper. We took this fellow, sir, in the mown meadow hard by, squatting in the hedge like a hare.

Ch. What is he ?

Trooper. A countryman he says. (*Snatches TOM's hat off.*) You, sir, speak up for yourself !

Tom. (Hesitatingly.) Plaise your honour, I'm a poor innocent lad—

Jerry. (Coming forward.) You're a rogue, a rogue, that's what you are! Why he's a-got my owd frock on, and that there 'at's my 'at and norne else's!

Ch. Uncase him!

[They pull smock over TOM's ears and show him in military dress.]

Tom. (Sulkily.) Dowl! don't pull a chap to pieces!

Ch. (Meanwhile, in undertone to NAOMI.) Naomi, how came they in thy stable?

N. By their own act.

Ch. Wholly?

Trooper. (Snatching a purse out of TOM's pocket.) Look 'ee here!

Tom. What, are ye cutpurses too?

G. F. (To CHARLTON.) Your pardon, sir; this I own is my man, who hath in vain attempted to escape, and the purse is mine.

Tom. The purse is my master's.

Ch. Take it, sir. *(Is handing it to FORTESCUE, when GROME interposes.)*

Grome. With favour, Captain—the counsels of the wicked are deceit.

Ch. Thy meaning?

Grome. Let the purse be opened; yea, let the secrets thereof be brought to light.

[CHARLTON opens purse and finds paper, which he unfolds and examines.]

Ch. Cypher. It must to head-quarters at once, with both prisoners.

N. You will wait till my mother returns?

Ch. Not another instant!

[Troopers seize FORTESCUE roughly; he pushes them aside; CHARLTON steps forward.]

Will you not go quietly?

G. F. (Staggering.) Your pardon, sir, . . . I was wrong, I own, . . . but . . .

[He faints; TOM rushes forward and raises him; NAOMI helps; CHARLTON comes near and looks at FORTESCUE; says contemptuously—]

Ch. Pshaw, this is nothing! Remove him!

[NAOMI turns to CHARLTON.]

N. Charlton Radclyffe, stand back, and your men too! We will not suffer this—not for fifty Parliaments! The son of my mother's old friend—wounded—worn out—dying perhaps! If you lay hands on him you must on me too. This is my father's house—my mother will be answerable for him before God and man—and stir he shall not, till he hath been duly cared for and is fit to move!

[The soldiers look at each other; CHARLTON undetermined and much vexed.]

Ch. Is it thus you speak, Naomi?

N. Even thus! Here *(to servants)* see to the gentleman; *(Tom helps)* lift him, gently—now in!

Ch. (Coming close to her.) One word, Naomi!

N. (Pushing past him.) Not one! Be tender with his hurt arm. He revives, I think. Sir, you are with friends, and shall want for no care Ashby Manor can give you.

Ch. (To soldiers.) Follow, but hold back a little.
 [FORTESCUE is supported towards the house.

Enter Mistress RADCLYFFE (C) meeting them.

Mistr. R. All is ready.

Ch. He shall not stay in this house!

END OF SCENE I.

SCENE II.

A Room in the Manor House, panelled; with sober, ancient furniture.

Enter Mistress RADCLYFFE speaking.

Mistr. R. Prudence!

Enter PRUDENCE.

Let him on no excuse be disturbed.

P. No, Madam. [Exit.

Mistr. R. (Alone.) My private grief comes back—
 grows worse each hour,

Ah, dreadful days! when fellow-countrymen,

Companions, neighbours, friends, stand opposite,
 With deadly and implacable resolve
 To deluge English soil with English blood!
 Thou God of Battles! be my husband's guard!
 His cause is Thy cause: Thou wilt keep Thy chosen.
 —And if he should be slain? Good men have fall'n,
 [Sits down.

Ay, many a new-made widow now in England,
 And many an orphan. Daughter! what were we
 In this rude world without thy father's face?
 Basil, come back to us! come back to us!
 He hears not. Shall we ever have again
 The sweet old quiet times? One other week
 Brings round the longest day: O month of June!—
 That golden June in my dear Devon once!
 The honeysuckle-scented summer nights,
 Warm stars and whispering wind among the leaves,
 More loud than lovers' voices,—yet we miss'd
 No word each other spoke. How well I knew
 His horse's gallop on the little bridge
 And up the lane; then came the light, quick step,
 The tender word, and I was in his arms.
 My Sweetheart! One of such a constant mind
 As when my flush of youth and beauty waned
 His fondness but increased; in England's realm
 No woman warmer loved, no wife more honour'd;
 And now—his life flung out into the whirl
 Of a bloody tempest, scattering death and torture!
 [Starts up.
 O senseless fool! weak wailing coward! [Rings a bell.

Enter woman.

Quick!

Is there a horse left? Someone saddle him,
This moment—ay, for me—haste, haste, I say!
I'll follow.

[Exit woman, bewildered.]

Enter NAOMI.

N. Whither go you, dearest mother?

Mistr. R. To the Battle-field.

N. The Battle-field! What to do there?

Mistr. R. Search for him.

N. What fear you? 'Tis impossible! His men,
who love him, General Fairfax who honours him,
would never— O, mother, news may come at any
moment!

Mistr. R. I must go.

N. If he himself returned and found us gone.

Mistr. R. You are not wont to disobey me,
Naomi,—I thought you loved your father.

N. O dearest mother, we will go together!
You are right—and walk if need be.

*[Raises her mother and supports her
towards the door (L).]*

Come, sweet mother, we'll soon get ready.

Enter servant woman (L).

Servant. Master Charlton, madam, craves leave
to speak with you.

Mistr. R. Let him enter.

*[Servant bows, goes out, and returns,
showing in CHARLTON. (L)]*

Mistr. R. Have you news?

Ch. None, madam, I—

Mistr. R. (*Not noticing his intention to speak on.*)
We have been distant, nephew, for some years.
Let the storm press us closer. I am heartily sorry
to give you so poor a welcome. And now urgent
business calls us from home immediately.

Ch. From home, madam,—on such a day as
this!—and whither?

N. To the battle-field.

Ch. Mere madness to think of it! the country
swarming with wild, disorderly soldiers, fevered with
victory, furious with defeat,—

Mistr. R. God will protect us.

Ch. Madam, you must not think of this. I will
not, with all respect, suffer it.

Mistr. R. How say you?

N. Not suffer!—Sir, you presume somewhat far
on your relationship—or is it your military rank
makes you an intermeddler?

Ch. (*Smiling.*) Be satisfied, fair cousin; I under-
stand these matters; and once for all—it may not
be.

N. Will you stay us by force?

Ch. You will not put me to it. I act but for
your good, believe it.

*[Mistress RADCLIFFE sinks into a
chair exhausted.]*

N. Poor mother! (*Turns to CHARLTON.*) You
saw nothing of my father after mid-day?

Ch. Nothing, fair cousin, but I doubt not he is safe.

Mistr. R. (*Rousing herself.*) Why say you so ?

Ch. Well (*hesitating*), 'tis a little strange, perhaps, we should not have heard ere this.

Mistr. R. Strange, indeed ! Charlton, you believe he's killed ! I see it in your face. O nephew, nephew, you should not have left the field before you knew of your uncle's fate. You loved him not—you were ever cold-hearted !

Ch. Nay, madam—

N. Mother, mother ! [*Mistress R. collects herself.*]

Ch. Madam, I came to say a word, with your permission, touching my prisoner, Lord Lyndore.

Mistr. R. George Fortescue, you mean ; Lord Lyndore is his elder brother.

Ch. Was, madam. This is a time of sudden heritages. *He*, I have just learnt, lies cold on Naseby field ; and my prisoner is Lord Lyndore, a man of consequence, head of his family : besides which, he is bearer from the King of private orders for the West. His arm is now bandaged they tell me. I must carry him to General Fairfax.

N. He is not fit to travel.

Ch. Did you dress his arm ?

N. I gave my help. The bullet is still in, and he cannot ride.

Ch. We'll tie him on.

Mistr. R. Nephew, you *must not* use this young man harshly.

Ch. Aunt, he shall be used as well as haste and these rough times allow.

N. Charlton, you will not drag him off ?

Ch. By no means, fair cousin ; but he must come quietly, and without more delay. Your pardon, madam—(*going*).

Mistr. R. Stop, Charlton ! I have pledged my word for his safe custody. Let him stay for the present in our keeping.

Ch. I may not, aunt ; and the more because you *are* my aunt, to make myself suspect of favour. Pray you, say no more. I humbly take my leave. Farewell. Farewell, sweet cousin. (*Aside to her.*) I would speak with you on a grave business before I go—a few words.

N. (*Aside to him.*) I'll see my mother in, and return hither. (*Aloud.*) Come, mother, you were best lie down awhile.

Mistr. R. My head whirls. I know not what to do.

N. Lean on me, mother. [*Exeunt together* (R).

[*CHARLTON stays, opens door* (L),
and whistles, not loud.

Enter GROME.

Ch. Shut the door. Thou rememberest where and when chance first threw thee in my way ?—and why I have taken thee into the regiment at no small risk ?

Grome. Very well, sir.

Ch. Never forget it. I have more work for thee. Play me fair, it shall profit thee well. Go about to trick me, and—thou knowest what I am.

Grome. Ay, sir, ever since—

Ch. (*Interrupting.*) And what thou art.

Grome. (*Hesitatingly.*) I, sir?—(*then humbly*) Verily, sir, you may trust me; I am your dog; my hopes and aims follow humbly at heel of yours.

Ch. My uncle may be among the slain.

Grome. I'm sure on't. That would change your honour's plans?

Ch. Help them on. Who saw him fall?

Grome. Three several men told me.

Ch. (*Chiefly to himself.*) There has not been time to sort the dead. The messengers may come at any moment with this news. And then how stand I? What shall I be then?

Grome. Lifted, sir, I humbly hope, as on the wings of the morning, out of the valley of debt and despondency.

Ch. Pshaw!—He was a good man, so all say. Somewhat jealous of me as I thought, after Providence decreed the death of my young cousin, and left me heir presumptive.

Grome. A fine estate, sir.

Ch. A small thing. In any case I shall make excuse to leave thee behind me here. Thou wilt watch how things go,—and be *safer* here, for the present.

Grome. (*Murmurs.*) Your honour is too kind to me.

Ch. This inheritance would scarce clear my credit. I shall win the larger stake—and thou shalt profit. But remember, 'tis a dangerous game.

Grome. I'll do my little part, sir, I hope.

[*Sound of door shutting in corridor.*]

Ch. Some one comes. Go—but wait within call.

Grome. I will, sir.

Ch. And let the men be ready.

Grome. Yes, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Ch. I trust him, with a pistol to his ear. He dares not budge, and somebody must help: So far he has fetch'd and carried very neatly.

How often little Naomi and I
Play'd hide and seek in these old corridors!
Pest on these family quarrels! Was't my fault
My baby cousin died? Now is the time
To make all round and smooth. She's hot of temper,
But readily appeased; and, for the rest,
A woman,—ay, the fairest in seven shires!
I am, or shall be, and perhaps I am
Lord of this manor. Naomi and my aunt
Will sorely need protection; who but I
Through natural duty should afford it them?
But not a word of love—beware of that!—
Until my plans are riper—

Enter NAOMI.

Ah, sweet cousin!

N. What would you, cousin? I have but a moment to stay.

Ch. Time was, Naomi, you were ready enough to keep me company by the hour, play, run, read, whisper with me,—kiss me too.

N. When we were children.

Ch. Is there no memory of kindness left? Cousin, I would crave your friendly ear for some discourse that much concerns us both.

N. I listen; but I must pray you to be brief.

Ch. Your father—

N. What would you tell me?

Ch. Nay, nothing more than hath been told already. But this time may be a fit one, among close kin as we are, to recon the map and roadbook of our family life: no future but must continue the past.

N. What aim you at?

Ch. This. You know, doubtless, fair cousin, that I am next heir to this estate. And you cannot but have heard also of my grandfather's dying wish, that should your father have no son to inherit, you, his only daughter, and myself, when years were ripe, might if possible be wedded.

N. I have heard this,—but never liked it.

Ch. Would that were otherwise! But if't be so, So be it. Yet remember, at the least, I am your cousin; and if changeful fortune Bring such a need, a lamentable need, This house, dear Naomi, will still be yours— Your mother's—in all dignity and honour.

N. How mean you?

Ch. Ashby Manor is your home,
Whatever happens.

N. Were my father gone,—
Is that your meaning?

Ch. (*With pauses.*) Yes, dear Naomi.—
You know me not, indeed you know me not.—
Will you not speak?—Is not the offer worth
A word of answer?—

N. (*Absently.*) O, I thank you, cousin,
I thank you—but my thoughts were elsewhere.

Ch. And you accept? Say merely you accept.
N. Charlton, my mother and myself would leave
This house for ever, were my father gone!

Ch. But wherefore?—why should this be, Naomi?
We used to live in kindlier confidence—
'Twas chance that sunder'd us, not wrath or reason.
Will you not let me even be your friend?
And whither would my aunt go? Into Devon?
I pray you, answer me.

N. You speak as though
My father were already lost to us.

Ch. Naomi, in sad truth, I fear he is.
N. You fear that? Do you know it?—But you
fear it?

O Heaven have pity!

Ch. Naomi—
N. No more!

Ch. Nay, go not!—hear me!—say you hate me
not?

What have I done that you should use me thus?

N. Cousin, I hate not, and did never hate you. Again I thank you. Pray you, let me pass.

Ch. Naomi—I loveth thee! dost thou hear? I love thee, Love none but thee—have loved thee all these years—Have set my heart and soul on winning thee!—Why should I have no chance to win thy love? Am I not manly enough to look upon? Hast ever heard them call me coward?—Nay You do me wrong by this cold cruel bearing! Will you not speak—not even listen to me?

[*She turns away.*]

You must!—you shall not go yet!

[*Seizes her arm: she shrieks.*]

Enter LYNDORE, *without armour or sword, his arm bandaged.*

Lyn. Stand back, sir! what do you with this lady?

Ch. How, sir, come you here?

Lyn. For this lady's protection, if she need it.

Ch. She needs it not.

Lyn. I will not take your word for that. Madam, forgive me; I heard your voice raised as in sudden fear.

Ch. Where were your sentries?

Lyn. (*Not heeding him.*) Nay, you shrieked.

Ch. I'll trounce the careless knaves!

N. (*To* LYNDORE.) I truly thank you, sir. Something told hastily by my cousin startled me and made me cry aloud; but all is now settled.

Ch. (*To* LYNDORE.) My Lord Lyndore, back to ward!

Lyn. Jackanapes!

Ch. Insolent! [*Half draws his sword.*]

N. (*To* CHARLTON.) Upon a wounded man! Hold, for shame! (*To* LYNDORE.) I pray you!

Ch. (*To* LYNDORE.) Know me better, Lord Lyndore. I am master here; nay, doubly, triply master. I am this lady's cousin—

Lyn. But not her master.

Ch. After Colonel Radclyffe, I am head of this family; and further, in present command of a troop of—

Lyn. Rascal rebels!

Ch. No more words! [*Opens door and calls*]
Grome!

Grome. (*Without.*) Here, sir.

Ch. Where are your men?

Grome. This way, men. [*GROME and soldiers enter.*]

Ch. Take your prisoner, and look better to him. Prepare to mount immediately. Strap him to Carstairs if needful. Ready!

[*Soldiers surround Lord LYNDORE. Enter*
Mistress RADCLYFFE and servants.]

N. O mother!

Mistr. R. Nephew, will you do yourself and our house this dishonour?

Ch. Dishonour?—He must go, madam aunt,—your pardon, but he must.

N. Madam, will you suffer it?

Servant-woman. Truly, 'twill be his death!

Ch. Men, remove the prisoner!

Mistr. R. Stir not, I command you !

Ch. On !

[*The soldiers prepare to remove Lord LYNDORE, and CHARLTON to follow, when a side-door opens, and Colonel RADCLYFFE steps in. He is in military dress, soiled and without a sword. All silent and amazed for a moment or two.*

Col. R. Hey ! what's to do here ?

Mistr. R. O Basil ! (*Embracing him.*) Is it thou indeed ?

N. Father ! [*Clasps him and kisses his hands.*

Col. R. Truly, sweethearts, I am no ghost or goblin,—though fain to creep in thus.

Mistr. R. And you are safe ?

Col. R. And sound, through Heaven's mercy. Thus it was, wife : my horse shot and I prisoner, carried mounted towards Rugby, my captors were set upon by some of our side, and in the confusion I galloped off. Two or three pistol shots followed me, but no harm done,—and here I am.

Servants. { The good Heavens be praised !
God bless your honour !

Col. R. But what business is toward ? Who are these gentlemen ? Eh,—Charlton ?

Ch. Mine honoured uncle, I heartily rejoice to see you safe in your own good house.

Col. R. I thank thee as heartily, nephew. Now, explain.

Ch. I was sent hither by Colonel Hammond in

pursuit of fugitives, and have taken Lord Lyndore with a letter in cypher,—whom I am even now at point of removing to General Fairfax's quarters at Market-Harborough.

Mistr. R. (*In undertone.*) Dear husband, the gentleman is wounded and unfit to move.

Col. R. Let me see the prisoner.

[*CHARLTON motions to soldiers, who bring forward Lord LYNDORE.*

Are you Lord Lyndore ?

Lyn. So I hear, sir, to my great grief.

Col. R. You have been wounded in the fight ?

Lyn. In the arm, sir.

Col. R. (*Interested and coming near.*)

In the arm. Ha, stay ! 'twas a pistol-shot I think ?—at close quarters ?—which you received in protecting an officer of the enemy dismounted and sore beset ? Yes, yes !—I pray you, look me in the face !

Lyn. I seem to know your face, sir.

Col. R. You do ! Look again—look at me well !—Wife ! daughter ! this brave young gentleman gave me my life at peril of his own. That wound he took for me. How shall he be thanked ?

Mistr. R. With all we have and are !

N. May God bless you !

Lyn. You have already repaid me richly.

[*A scuffle at door : TOM'S voice heard—*
"Ye shan't stop me !"

Is that my man ?

Tom. (Bursting through soldiers.) 'Tis, measter George! (*kneels and kisses his hand*)—and where your honour stays I'll stay, dead or alive!

[*Soldiers make as though to take TOM.*]

Col. R. Leave him alone. He shall wait on his master.

Tom. God bless your noble honour!

Ch. (Aside.) The blue plague seize them! (*Aloud, sullenly.*) What orders, sir?

Col. R. Half of the men remain here for the present. You with the rest ride to General Fairfax, give him the paper you have taken, and say I follow quickly.

Mistr. R. Go so soon!

Col. R. Yes, dear. I came but to assure you of my safety, and must back to duty.

N. And when will you come to us again?

Col. R. Soon, darling, soon, I hope,—and to stay.

Ch. The prisoners, Colonel Radclyffe?

Col. R. I charge myself with them. Draw off half your men and mount,—farewell! Barrett!

Trooper. Here, Colonel.

Col. R. Ride for the chirurgeon, you'll find him at Hinckley Farm, bring him hither as soon as may be. Take a second horse—quick! (*To CHARLTON, who lingers.*) How now?

Ch. With your favour, sir, I conceive it my duty to carry my prisoners to the General.

Col. R. With your favour, sir, conceive it your first duty to obey your superior officer. I have not

lost my colonelcy on the road. To horse, sir, with no more delay!

Ch. I obey, sir. I meant to leave the Corporal (*indicates GROME*) with a man or two for the protection of the house.

Col. R. I will see to that.

Ch. (Going—mutter.) They shall all rue this! *She,* among the rest. [*Exit.*]

N. O Father, thank Heaven you are safe!

Mistr. R. And this gentleman, its chosen instrument!

Col. R. (To Lord LYNDORE.) My lord, I owe you an arm. Come.

Mistr. R. (As they go.) Prudence!—Martha!—the south chamber! See after them, Naomi.

N. Yes, dear mother!

[*Colonel and Mistress RADCLIFFE help Lord LYNDORE (R). NAOMI stands for a moment near door (L) watching them off with a look of joy. She clasps her hands, raises her eyes, and exclaims fervently "Thank Heaven!" then exit quickly.*]

GROME, standing stiffly as on duty, is seen watching all the proceedings; he changes his attitude and looks keenly after NAOMI while Drop falls.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

[*Large Chamber or Anteroom of the Manor House, ground floor, half sitting-room, half hall; practicable door at back, open; large Tudor windows, the casements open; giving upon a Terrace, beyond which stretches an autumnal landscape. Practicable doors, R side 1st E, L side 3rd E.*]

Music between Acts 1 and 2 of a sweet and peaceful character; founded on, or including, airs of the period; it continues after the curtain rises.

The scene is for a moment or two empty, then NAOMI and Lord LYNDORE are seen slowly passing the window in conversation, and presently enter, as from a walk: the music dying away as they come in. He wears a wide Cavalier hat with plume, and a simple but handsome dress. She has in her hand some wild flowers and ears of corn. He takes off his hat on entering. He is pale and thin, but his arm is no longer tied up.]

N. A glorious autumn day!

Lyn. The whole rich world
Basks like a mellow apple in the sun.
That corn was green when first I cross'd your bounds
A fugitive,—now, amber head to head,
Nodding and whispering as peacefully
As if no hostile camp or battle-field
Scored England's face with ugly frowns and scars.

[*Looks at corn and flowers which she holds.*]

Lady, the summer sun that ripen'd these
Beat heavily upon my fever'd brain.
How I have tried your patience! burthen'd all
Your household with my sickness!

N. Who that breathes
Could aid, and would not?—When, at last, your
fever

Sunk into heavy sleep, a vestibule
Of solemn darkness, with two opposite doors,
To life, to death, and, so God will'd, at last
The door of life unfoldéd,—what reward
For us the watchers, to see *your* sane eyes
Look out with recognition!

Lyn. Not at first.
I saw who sat and watch'd me; but it seem'd
Continuation of a dream of Heav'n.
Then flow'd assurance in, it was indeed
No visionary angel, and for once
Dream was outvied by the reality.
—Will you not rest?

[*She sits down and puts off her hat—
he sits near.*]

You saved my life,—a debt
I'm well content to owe.

N. Not so, my lord;
I shared with my dear mother and my woman,
And your own servant, duties well repaid
In this your restoration.

Lyn. Yet methinks
I am not wholly cured.

N. What ails your lordship?
Doth your head ache?

Lyn. Not so. I merely crave
A draught of that ethereal soothing medicine
Made by a subtle mixture of fine sounds,
Which, gently pour'd into one's ears, doth rock
The brain to blissful dreaming and our soul
Breathes heav'n awhile. Will you not sing one song?
This gentle servant, see, your lute, is ready—

[*Takes down a lute from the wainscot
and touches the strings.*]

Or nearly. May I venture? (*Tunes it.*) Is that
right? [*Offers it.*]

N. My skill is somewhat homely as you know;
Here's an old simple thing:

[*She preludes a little, then sings.*]

SONG.*

Wilt thou, Summer, haste away?
Yet a little longer stay.
Thou but camest yesterday—
'Tis too soon to go.
Just as we were truly friends,
All our fine communion ends;
Autumn will not make amends,—
Ah, I fear me, no!

* This might go to the air "Mad Robin,"—of which an inexact version is given in Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time*. The *jerk* in the tenth bar (which is not in the original) must be eliminated.

Leave thy hand in ours awhile;
Then at last a merry smile,
Parting sorrow to beguile,—
Since it must be so.

We will hive thee in our heart,
Where is memory's better part,
Warm and loving as thou art,
Through the winter snow.

Lyn. "O it came o'er my ear like the sweet
South!"—you know the line, I see. And your
father is familiar as any cavalier with our fine stage-
poet, who methinks outsoars all best others as much
as a king eagle the whole tribe of hawks. He should
be cavalier!

N. My father? That follows not. He is no
precisian, but in principle firmer than oak.

Lyn. Would he were loyal!

N. So he is—to England. Would Charles Stuart
were so!

Lyn. Could England do without her king?

N. Better than without truth and freedom!

Lyn. She hath had kings ever since the days of
savagery, and grown great under them.

N. And changed them when needful. The
country, my lord, exists not for the king's sake, but
the king for the country's.

Lyn. A flag of truce, dear lady!

N. You count a woman not worth argument,
my lord.

Lyn. I am humbler minded, believe me; I fear

losing all my former convictions, ere I am aware. I talked mainly to support my own courage.

N. My father and you had much discourse when he was last here.

Lyn. I long for more of it. Comes he not home again soon?

N. Very soon—perhaps to-night. And to stay—to stay! unless some pressing call should summon him again, which heaven forefend! He hath fought in every battle from Edgehill, been thrice wounded; and now needing rest and some care of his own affairs—the public stress being slackened—he hath been most honourably relieved of his charge.

Lyn. He is a brave soldier.

N. A brave man—not a *soldier*!

Lyn. How mean you, I pray?

N. He hath fought bravely in what he counts a great and just cause. So, my lord, have you. Mere *Soldiers* are the kind of men, made wolves or demons, that Tilly stormed Magdeburg with. Had not your Prince Rupert some like them? Let them go back to Germany or France and serve despotic kings—we like them not.

Lyn. (*Avoiding the subject.*) Nor I indeed. This is your father's likeness.

[*Points to picture on wall: they rise and look at it.*]

N. In his handsome youth: but I like him still better now.

Lyn. Years have enriched his manly looks. He is a wise and good man.

N. Indeed he is. Do you dispute much?

Lyn. At first I dared. But, tho' 'tis not easy to put off the opinions one was born into, I soon saw how, beyond reckoning, he encompassed me in experience, overtopt me in knowledge, outweighed me in wisdom; being most modest withal, and ever making too much of my argument.

Enter GROME, silently and unobserved. [He pretends to be looking for something, but is really spying and listening. He is in a plain dress, like a serving-man, with a trace of the soldier.]

N. Is't not pity, my lord, such men as you and he should stand at feud?—

Alas, what England hath already lost!

Lyn. I'm nothing: but indeed what gaps are made By wild and wasteful war! had Falkland fall'n By Frenchman's hand, how England would have wept!

Had Spanish bullet struck John Hampden's breast, How England like one man had mourn'd for him! But now, half England—poor divided land, A land beside itself—with frenzied shout Joys when a noble Englishman is slain.

N. True, true! and who to blame?

Lyn. Ambitious rebels!

N. No! an ambitious king—who would be more Than England will endure in any king!

Lyn. (*Shaking his head.*) The time's perplext. But who is here, I pray you ?

[*Pointing to another picture.*]

N. My uncle, Edward Clinton,—on the king's side ; Yet, strange to say ! an honest man, I think.

Lyn. I well believe it. I have heard of him, But never seen him.

N. He's at Oxford now, He sometimes writes a letter to my father, Hoping to bend him to the royal side,— Vainly enough ! [*Sees GROME and addresses him.*]

What seek you ?

Grome. A key, madam, so please you. I think it is not here. [*Exit.*]

Lyn. (*Gently.*) One other song ?

N. No more.

Lyn. In sign of peace between us.

N. Peace may there be !

Would it could overflow the land, like moonlight. But no more songs to-night. And further know You must not tarry nigh an open window When evening air grows moist.

Lyn. Why, I am well. I'm almost sorry for it.

N. But not strong, sir. I pray you now, come in ; or must I call Higher authority ?

Lyn. I yield to yours, Madam, most willingly.

[*Both going towards side door (L).*]

Would I could think I had a little of your father's favour.

N. You have, sir.

Lyn. Do you think so ?

N. I am sure of it.

He is your friend.—How autumn daylight dwindles ! Already half way to midwinter nights !

Lyn. But every season hath its own delights.

[*Exeunt together.*]

Same Place.

Enter Colonel RADCLYFFE in riding dress, looking joyful and expectant. He exclaims "Home ! home !" puts down his gloves and hat, and calls in a louder voice—

Lucy !

Enter Mistress RADCLYFFE quickly. They embrace.

My Lucy !

Mistr. R. This is like old days, my Basil ! A rough time hoards up sweets, like mountain honey. You're well ?

Col. R. And happy !—Little do they know Who deem that love is youth's particular ; The best of us must live to find what life is, And then live on, to find what's best in life.

Mistr. R. Methinks you talk pure Devonshire to-night.

Col. R. I am a poor Northampton man, no better !

E

Mistr. R. But thus you used to talk in Devonshire—
How long is that ago?

Col. R. A month or two—
A year or two—or is it twenty years?
They sometimes tell us life's a dream; but *love*—
We love each other, do we not? That's real!

Mistr. R. Thank God for it!—Sweet husband,
Naseby Fight
Is like a dream now, though but three months past.
So will this war be, one day. How goes it on?
Col. R. Badly for Charles—who moves with stately
step

And grave blind eyes, to ruin,—wiled along
By her, the black-eyed little Frenchwoman,
Their battle cry at Naseby. Could he put
Tom Wentworth's, my old schoolmate's, head again
Upon its shoulders and make use of him
To better purpose, Charles might have a chance!
'Tis idly said that on the eve of Naseby
Charles from his restless couch look'd up and saw
The ghost of him that served him—whom he murder'd—

Sadly and sternly gazing in his face.

Mistr. R. I do believe it. Now and evermore
Pale Strafford haunts his dreams!

Col. R. *He* would have proved
A dangerous weapon in a skilful hand;
But Charles could only cut himself withal,
Then fling it down and break it!

[While saying this, he lifts his sword in the scabbard with his left hand, a short way, and lets it drop again to the hilt.]

Mistr. R. You need not this!

[She unbuckles the sword and lays it on a chair.]

Col. R. Nay not to-night, I hope!—But, our young prisoner,—

What of *him*, Lucy?—Stay a little here.

Mistr. R. Most gladly: but I'll shut the case-
ments first. [Shuts them.]

Col. R. Sound man again, I hear, thanks to your nursing.

Mistr. R. His wound is heal'd, his dangerous fever cool'd.

Yes he is sound, I think, but scarcely strong.

Col. R. 'Twill soon be boot and saddle, to horse and away.

Doth he not speak of that?

Mistr. R. Yes, much of late.

And whither goes he when exchanged? To Rupert?

Col. R. Bristol way, doubtless, to the horseman prince,

No wiser than his horse, who rides through foes

And leaves his friends to ruin, a campaign

Lost for a gallop. Pity Lyndore must go!

The youth came out to please his elder brother,

Spurr'd headlong after Rupert, as a schoolboy

Follows the cock o' the school, caught up the phrases

Floating around him;—in the rights and wrongs,
 All argument of quarrel, he was blank
 As any clodpole forced to trail a pike.
 —I say he *was* so : in this dangerous sickness
 His mind hath measurably overshot
 Its former stature.

Mistr. R. He hath conn'd that book
 Of the king's letters. Would he might go home
 To Devon and be quiet ! He needs rest.

Col. R. My Lord Lyndore, being what he is, must
 needs

Procure exchange (I marvel 'tis delayed)
 Fill up his brother's place in Rupert's regiment,
 Command the troop, men from his own estate,
 Raised by his brother ; and in short must stand
 Well forward in the party of the Court.

Mistr. R. Poor boy !

Col. R. How think you ? Is his health restored ?

Mistr. R. Safe from relapse, please Heaven, but
 far from strong.

Col. R. You tended him right well.

Mistr. R. With cordial pleasure ;
 And truly all of us have learnt to love him.

Col. R. (*Pointedly.*) Doth Naomi love him ?

Mistr. R. Why ask that so sharply ?

Col. R. Come, answer, wife.

Mistr. R. Basil, in sooth, I know not.
 She hath not spoken word of it to me.

Col. R. And yet it may be so. I hope it is not !

[*They rise.*]

Mistr. R. Dear husband, look not anxious ? Have
 I done wrong ?

Col. R. She is my dearest thing on earth, but one ;
 Yet would I not withhold her from a suitor
 Carrying heaven's warrant clear to win and wear her.
 A daughter's love we only hold in trust
 Till it be claim'd,—alas ! it sometimes goes
 Into a squanderer's hand.

Mistr. R. You do not think
 He's a court gallant, who would win and wear
 A lady's favour like a knot of ribbon
 Until the fashion pass'd ? He is not such !

Col. R. A brave youth—and an honest one !

Mistr. R. He is !

Be sure of it, dear husband !—Basil, think
 How well I knew his mother, in whose kind blood
 Was no sour drop ! [*He crosses.*]

Col. R. I doubt it not, my Lucy ;
 But warily and wisely must we walk.
 This Youth's deservings are our very dangers.

—Warn Naomi,—I charge thee, Lucy, warn her
 She look on Lord Lyndore as one whose course
 Is mark'd by Providence to lead him off
 From hers at the next turning,—nor build aught
 Upon the sand-drift island of his visit !
 Being gone, he'll soon take back his former self,
 (Or so much of it as concerns with action)
 Range under Rupert's banner with flush'd cheek
 His troop of tenants, cheering their new lord,
 And—do as others do. Nay, circumstance

Is odds for most of us.—But where is *she*?
Where's Naomi, 'My Pleasantness'?

Mistr. R. Return'd
From walking with Lyndore, and resting now.

[*She sits.*]

I accept thy reasons, Basil, yet I'm sure
There's more than this. Then why not tell me more?

Col. R. I have enemies—among the Parliament.

Mistr. R. Thou enemies!

Col. R. Ay, better men have had them.

I hear, a blight hath crept upon my name,
Hints of unsoundness, nay malignancy,
Which the diseased temper of the time
Makes partly credible.

Mistr. R. Who credits it?
Such falsehoods cannot hurt thee!

Col. R. I trust not.
But no man's safe.

[*He comes close and leans on her chair.*]

And, mark this—of Lyndore too
Snake-whispers creep about into men's ears.

Mistr. R. How framed?

Col. R. Diversely, as by forkèd tongue;—
That he and I are plotting for the king;
Again, that I have drawn him from the king.

Mistr. R. You have been here but twice since he
took ill!

Col. R. (*With slow emphasis.*) That he hath linger'd
in this house, avoiding
Loyal return to duty. And, moreover,

Our daughter's name, my Lucy, hath been used
To paint these falsehoods—he, she, you, and I,
Mixt in the scandal.

Mistr. R. (*Rising.*) Wholly false!

Col. R. Most false.

Yet now thou seest, my wife, how right it is
On all sides that if Lord Lyndore can move
He part as soon as possible.

Mistr. R. I fear so!

Col. R. Find Naomi, and speak to her at once.
Tell her Lyndore is leaving Ashby Manor.

Mistr. R. When, husband?

Col. R. Say to-morrow. Go, sweet wife,
I'll tarry here a little by myself. [*Kisses her.*]
Good-bye, and not farewell,—a short good-bye!

Mistr. R. (*Going: aside.*) Heav'n grant our daughter
had such good in store
As to her mother fell!—I'd ask no more. [*Exit.*]

Col. R. (*Observes GROME in a corner of the room,
who has come in silently during the latter part of the
dialogue.*) Who's there?

Grome. (*Coming forward a little.*) Shall I pull
off your honour's boots?

Col. R. Nay, let be for the present. Thanks, my
man. Put this into my room.

[*Gives his sword to GROME, who takes
it most respectfully, and exit.*]

Col. R. (*Alone, pacing up and down.*)
Pray Heav'n she love him not!—it were a tangle
Hard to untie, and sharp to cut asunder.

I hold him dear, but dearer far my daughter ;
 And his good name, and ours, are *both* impeach'd
 More deeply every day he stops with us.
We net the rich young lord ! *He* shirks his duty,
 Lull'd in the Puritan Armida's bower !—
 —Forge a malicious lie,—ten thousand fools
 Will back it instantly, agog to show
 The vile sham-shrewdness of believing ill ;
 And in these times a lesser lie than this,
 Like the small arrow blown through Indian reed,
 May carry deadly venom !

—Lord Lyndore !

*Enter Lord LYNDORE, who runs to him and
 greets him warmly.*

Lyn. Dear Colonel Radclyffe !—let *me* play the
 host

For once, and welcome you to your own house !
 No wonder if I almost think it mine.

Col. R. Who could have better right ?

You're looking flesh and blood again, thank God.

Lyn. —And the most kind entreatment. I am
 well,

And must not longer be a burthen to you.

Col. R. Your lordship's still my prisoner ; I
 remain

Your surety with the Parliament.

Lyn. In faith

'Tis no uneasy prison—but were't other,
 I would not break parole.

Col. R. I fear it not.

But have you any news ?

Lyn. Why, very little ;

And that surprises me ; for I have writ
 To my cousin and to others, several times.

Thus much I know—Prince Rupert is at Bristol.

Col. R. Is it your lordship's wish to join him
 there ?

Lyn. (*Somewhat surprised.*) Surely : when I
 have once procured exchange.

Col. R. I wrote to you from York, of that was
 proffer'd.

Lyn. Proffer'd !—What proffer, pray you ?

Col. R. 'Twas proposed

To exchange our Colonel Hodson, held by Rupert,
 Against your lordship, when your health allow'd.

Lyn. I never saw your letter !—when was't sent ?

Col. R. A fortnight since. I look'd for your
 reply—

But sickness was excuse enough.

Lyn. Excuse !

I have had no such letter—nor my cousin
 Hath told me aught ; tho' I have written thrice
 To London, *urging* an exchange. You know him,
 Sir Geoffrey Percival ?—he's on your side
 And in the House.

Col. R. All this is very strange !

I'm glad I've come to-night. To own the truth,
 My lord, the pressure of these times is such,
 'Twere well, perhaps, no longer you delay

Your needful journey (would there were no need!)
—That is, suppose your strength allow it, fully.

Lyn. I'd start to-night if I were free to go!

But how now, Colonel Radclyffe—what's befallen?

Col. R. O never doubt, Lyndore, our love for you!
Would that the world were made so, all could live
(As in a better world we hope to do)

Unsever'd, who are friends; since, to be friends—
What other reason makes true company?
Good friends we are, good friends we shall remain,
I trust so, ever—ever—(takes his hand)

Yet we must part,

And briefly,—'tis your interest, do not doubt me.

Lyn. I trust you, and obey you. But tell me more.
Am I suspected of—

Col. R. I'll tell you all
Presently, all I know. Meanwhile, this paper

[Takes out paper.

Signed by the General in command, will act
As your releasement, leaving the exchange
To Rupert, of some prisoner held by him
Of answerable rank. It came last night

[Touches the paper.

On my responsibility. And with it

[Separates second paper from first.

A pass—yourself and servant—through our posts
Along the road to Bristol.

Lyn. I will start
To-morrow at daybreak.

Col. R. This grieves me much.

In truth it does. We shall meet at supper-time,
Or a little sooner. [Exit.

Lyn. (Agitated.) Now may the Devil—!

[Sees GROME, who has come in unob-
served, and is silently busying
himself in an obscure part of the
room.

What seek you, fellow?

Grome. Only these, my lord—I ask your lordship's
pardon. [Takes up Colonel's hat and gloves
from chair, and exit.

Lyn. (Alone.) What!

An exchange proffer'd and I not know of it!
Here lingering, tended like an ailing woman,
While Rupert and my regiment and my troop
At Bristol stand at bay! Have I been sleeping,
So that being call'd to, loudly, I heard nothing?
Nay, I am ready to go,—and have been ready
Any day since I tried to lift my arm,—
That's scarce a fortnight since! Doth Radclyffe
doubt me?

He's far too noble; but he knows past doubt
That others doubt me. Would I could start to-night!
(Slowly)—That means—take leave of Naomi—
ever.

We two are in two ships, that glide away
On opposite courses. What a thing is life!
Radclyffe hath argued with me many a time,
And more convinced me than he knows; yet now
Urges me back into the deadly ranks

Of his sworn enemies. And Naomi . . .
 Suppose, as others of my class have done,
 I changed sides, stept from one ship to the other,
 Ere driven apart?—Ay! 'left the sinking ship
 As rats will!—saved his skin, and his estate,
 The Parliament being master,—won besides
 A Beauty with an orange breast-knot?—

Win her?

She would despise me first and most of all!
 O curse of public life, to make men slaves
 Of their own repute, bid them distort themselves
 To match some picture hung in others' brains!
 Poor men are freer: who in all his realm
 So hamper'd as the King? I would to Heav'n
 I were a neatherd on my own estate
 And she a milkmaid! O base thoughts! how ill
 Becoming her deserver. I believe
 The worst they say of me perhaps is true,
 And thus an honest conscience, turning lawyer,
 Argues itself into a rogue! Dear Lady!

Enter NAOMI.

N. My lord, I hear you leave us suddenly.

Lyn. It is so, madam; hath your father told you?
 Early to-morrow,—with the break of dawn.

N. We shall be sorry to lose your company.

Lyn. I shall miss yours a thousand times a day!

N. Nay, 'twas an hour certain to come at last;
 Better without long warning. On your own part,
 We'll wish you joy.

Lyn. How joy?

N. In health restored,
 Your place in life resumed,—tho' in some things
 We would 'twere otherwise.

Lyn. (Eagerly.) How otherwise?
 What would you have me do? Speak, I beseech
 you!

N. 'Tis not my part to give your lordship counsel.

Lyn. I would it were; but tell me what you
 think;

I pray you let me know your very thoughts.

N. They are worth little, when I know so little.
 Hath not exchange been offer'd for your release?

Lyn. Your father tells me,—I knew it not before.

N. And he hath got releasement in advance
 And safeguard for your lordship, to rejoin
 Your regiment at Bristol?

Lyn. So it is.
 You know, I think, a troop in it was raised
 By my dead brother,—all of Devon men,
 From his own hills, who freely follow'd him,
 Giving their simple lives into his hand
 To use them as he pleased. They fought right well,
 Yeoman, and yeoman's son, and peasant lad;
 But Naseby Fight made havoc in their ranks,
 And slew their captain. Still, they hold together,
 "Lyndore's Troop,"—and the captainship is mine.
 They wait for *me*. Shall I not go to them?

N. How else?

Lyn. How else indeed? You see the case

Admits not of a day's, an hour's, delay !
I ought to start to-night I think !

N. (*With forced calmness.*) My lord,
We see that you must needs pursue your path.
We cannot wish the cause you fight for, well ;
But, so far as the two may be disjoin'd,
We wish *you* well, my lord, unfeignedly.
—To-morrow, did you say ?

Lyn. At earliest daylight.

N. The time is short enough, and much to fill it.
So, my lord, for the present I shall leave you.
We'll give you kind farewells before you go. [*Exit.*]

Lyn. Cold, cold, ice-cold ! How could I take as
real

The puppets of my fancy's theatre,
Myself had drest and spoke for, to amuse
The hours of slow recovery ! Many scenes
Of love they play'd, all closed in happiness.
The true scene ends but poorly. Not one spark
Of love. Humanity !—yes, womankind
Is tender-hearted, dutiful, and sweet,—
She would have nursed a hospital as kindly ;
Fool to imagine other ! and now I see
Contempt fast growing as compassion fades,
To watch me idling here. (*Pause.*)—An odious war !
But I must ride to Rupert, fight my best,
And then—some whistling bullet or swift edge
Cut bonds, and free my soul ! I thought she loved
me.
Fool !—fool !

Enter NAOMI, somewhat hastily.

N. Pardon, my lord—but one thing more
I meant to say, lest hurry leave it out—
Forget not that your sickness hath been grievous,
And new-grown health is but a tender plant.
So you will guard it prudently ? If we
Took trouble for your health, methinks we hold
Some property therein.

Lyn. And will you care
For news of me ?

N. Indeed, we'll look for it
From day to day—all of us in this house—
Most earnestly.

[*Going.*]

Lyn. (*Following a step or two.*) O Naomi ! one
word.

Now—now—before we part. It is perhaps
The very last time we're alone together ;
You'll listen to me ? Yes ?—

[*Takes her hand in both of his ; she
turns her head away and looks
sorrowful and frightened.*]

N. No, no, my lord !

Lyn. I tremble to offend you, yet I'll speak—
You know—you *must* know that I . . .

Enter Colonel RADCLYFFE, in an in-door dress.

Col. R. (*In a mild firm voice.*) Naomi !
Thy mother asks for thee ; she's in her chamber.

[*Exit NAOMI, curtsying to Lord LYNDORE,
who bows profoundly.*]

Pardon, my lord; I'm loth to be so rude,
But 'tis no common case. (*Approaches him.*) Dear
Lord Lyndore!

I'll use a freedom with you I would shun
With one less loved; for boldly let me say
I love you—since a parting hath some tinge
Of death's own frankness in it, the great parting.
So doth my wife. And further still I'll push
The time's allowance and confess to you
My daughter is most friendly in her thoughts.
—But, in addition, I must tell you this,—
There can be nothing of a closer bond
Between you.

Lyn. Oh, sir, she's dearer than my life!

Col. R. You have not told her this?

Lyn. I have not dared.

Col. R. Then, I entreat you, never tell her so.

Ask not for reasons; which, at least in part,
Your mind will prompt you in; but hold this sure—
That such a marriage must not, cannot be.

Lyn. Cannot!—O let me see her—from her mouth
Receive my sentence. Grant me this at least.

Col. R. It must not be. In brief, my lord, unless
You bid my daughter farewell in the key
Of quiet friendship, no half-tone beyond,—
I'll carry your adieu. You shall not see her.

Lyn. Not see her!—not see Naomi again! . . .
Doth Mistress Radclyffe know of this?

Col. R. She doth.
I speak for her as well as for myself.

Lyn. Good God!
How little knew I how confused our path is!
I thought one merely had to step straight on
And take his fortune! Radclyffe, am I a coward?

Col. R. Let no man say so in my hearing,—else
He shall abye it.

Lyn. No! I am not that—
Unless my nerves are weaken'd. Formerly
When swords were out and horses on the fret,
Our trumpet thrill'd no nerve save to ride in
Upon the gleaming pikes and levell'd guns,
Where twenty thousand men were brave as I!

Col. R. Needless to tell me: if my life again
Hung on your courage, I should fear no scaith.

Lyn. (Excitedly.) But others deem not so. I
pass for one

Who slinks aside and leaves his men in danger.
My name is doubtless in the garrison
Hung round with sneers, a tatter'd effigy
The common soldiers hoot and spit upon;
And those of my own rank would scorch me up
With one contemptuous look if I came near (*pause*).
(*Suddenly in another tone.*)—Why should I go to
them!

Col. R. Because you must.

Lyn. You tell me so?

Col. R. Could I at such a point
In your affairs persuade you *not* to go?

Lyn. Nay, but suppose, Radclyffe,—I say sup-
pose—

A man in my place, who should find his aims,
His hopes, his purposes, his inmost thoughts,
Alter'd—

Col. R. (Perplexed and vexed.) Nay—do not tell
me this, Lyndore! [*Crosses.*]

Lyn. (With rapid and impassioned utterance.)
To whom else could I tell it? Are you not
The first man who awaken'd in my soul
(Even more by what you are than what you said)
The faculty of reason?—some true glimpse
Of what life is and ought to be, some sense
Of what we owe to others, and to Heav'n,
Some light to help me onward through the maze
And mist?—I must speak out!—
(*More quietly.*) When I came here
Three months ago, you know not what I was,—
A foolish, flashy thing, lighter than froth!
The manners of this house, grave, pure, and sweet,
The creatures it enshrines, who would be saints
Were they less kindly human,—that keen look
At all things from death's door, wherein they take
A strange new perspective,—the tranquil days
Of slow recovery, second infancy
With a man's brain and heart to breathe its air,—
O Radclyffe! I am changed, another man,
And why—

Col. R. (Much disturbed.) No more, no more!

Lyn. O speak!

Col. R. How speak?
Would thou hadst left me to my fate!—

No, no,
Forgive, I talk at random!—but indeed
I am perplex'd beyond all use of words.

Lyn. Your counsel, sir, shall be my oracle.

Col. R. (Vehemently.) It shall not!—

(*Then more mildly, collecting himself,
but with earnest expression*)

See, Lyndore,—this is no case

Where friend asks friend's advice, and there an end.
Consider what you are, and what I am,
(Plain words are best) with all eyes fix'd upon us,
Slander already busy. All at once,
You change sides—underneath my roof!—what
then?

*Lyn. (Abandoning himself for the moment to
despondency.)* I know not!—care not!

*Col. R. (Collecting himself entirely, and with
great gravity and dignity.)*

Well then, Lord Lyndore—

Since I must speak for you—I am resolved.

Lyn. (Eagerly expecting his further words.)

And I'll obey!

Col. R. Then give me your free pass—
And the release— [*He does so.*]

They're henceforth null and void.

[*Puts them into his breast pocket.*]

Lyn. But, sir!—

Col. R. I'll take upon me to make out
Another pass—for York, not Bristol.

Lyn. York?

Col. R. Our General's head-quarters ; he will take
Charge of your lordship henceforth ; and 'twere best
You start to-night. I'll write your papers now.

[Sits down to table.

Lyn. (*Aside.*) He scorns me !—I deserve it !
(*Aloud*) Colonel Radclyffe,
I thank you deeply ; and I will be ready
At eight o'clock to-night.

Col. R. For York ?

Lyn. For Bristol.

Col. R. (*Standing up.*) Here are your papers.
[Giving back the papers he had taken.

Lyn. (*Looking round.*) I must find some one
to—Ah !

[Sees GROME again in the room,
pretending to hang up a whip or
something on the wall ; GROME
turns and bows ; Lord LYNDORE
addresses him.

Where is my man ?

Grome. Gone out, my lord, I believe.

Lyn. When he returns, send him to me at once.

Grome. Yes, my lord. [Exit, bowing humbly.

Enter MISTRESS RADCLIFFE and NAOMI.

Mistr. R. (*Taking Lord LYNDORE'S hand in both
of hers.*) To-morrow morning !
It is very soon.

Lyn. Madam, I go to-night.

N. (*With sudden emotion.*) To-night !

Mistr. R. To-night !

Col. R. (*Interposing.*) There are good reasons
for it.

(*To Lord LYNDORE.*) May I request your ear, my
lord, one instant. [They go up.

N. You see he hurries off.

Mistr. R. Against his will.

N. (*Somewhat bewildered.*) It may be so :—and
you are sorry for it—

Are you not, mother ?

Mistr. R. (*With great feeling.*) If my own dear
boy

Were living, and grown up, and parting thus,
'Twere scarce more bitter !

N. Can it be to-night ?

Mistr. R. Hush, darling !

[Goes a step or two towards the men,
who are still in grave, slow con-
versation in the background.

We came to bid you to supper.

Col. R. (*Coming forward with Lord LYNDORE.*)
Thanks, my Lucy.

Mistr. R. (*Looks affectionately at Lord LYN-
DORE.*) My lord, may I have your company ?

Lyn. (*Smiling sadly.*) For the last time !
[They move to door.

Col. R. (*Tenderly to NAOMI.*) Come, daughter.
(*Going, they pause.*) You trust me, dear—even if
I make you unhappy ?

N. I trust you entirely ! *[They follow.*
[Exeunt Mistress RADCLYFFE with Lord
 LYNDORE, followed by Colonel RAD-
 CLYFFE and NAOMI. As they go, GROME
 appears, standing half concealed behind
 a tall chair, and looks after them
 knavishly, whilst scene-drop slowly
 descends.

END OF ACT II., SCENE I.

ACT II.—SCENE II.

[A fine old panelled room or gallery in the Manor House,
with pictures and armour and some rows of large books.
Practicable doors R and L. A recess near centre of
back, with a window in it and two large old pictures.
A trophy of swords on the wall, in the recess or close
to it. Old furniture—but not too much of it.

PRUDENCE discovered, finishing some settling
 of things.

P. This room wunt be left to issel self so much, now
 master's come home.

Enter TOM, hat in hand, as if just come
into house.

Tom. Zo, Prue ! I've a just got back. We can 'a

two minutes' quiet chat, can't us ? We're old friends
 like, now, Prue, bean't us ? Zimmeth a couple o'
 years, 'fegs, zince master and me took shelter here.

P. Ah dear, dear, what a day wur that ! I wur
 raight fraighted o' thee at first, measter Trivet.

Tom. Vrighted, Prue ?

P. Ah—thinks I, here's some o' the hell-babes
 under our roof at last !—the swagg'rin', swearin',
 drinkin', gamblin', roysterin',—

Tom. *(Shakes his head.)* No, no, not me !

P. Ah, some of ye.

Tom. Not me. But I were vrighted too, at
 thoughts o' biding here. Long prayers and short
 commons, thinks I. But the smell o' the dinner
 encouraged me, like ; and when I tastis your home-
 brew, "They're vellow-creatures !" I zays—and zo
 I've vound ye, Prue, I will zay.

P. O, measter's none of your hard ones.—Your
 young gentleman's as good as well now ; fever clean
 gone ; hands as cool, and pulse as quiet as mine.

Tom. Let's veel thy pulse.

P. That ain't to the purpose. He'll be for moving
 shortly. Where to ?

Tom. To Devonsheer, if I'd my wa-y. But,
 lookzee, Prue, we be what they calls Pris'ners o'
 War. I'll explain theeze matter to 'ee. *(Comes*
close.) You have us and hold us, you zee *(takes her*
hand), and wunt free us on no account whatsumd-
 ever.—*(She nods several times.)*—'Cause we be on
 wrong zide—that's to zay, raight zide,—I means,

t'other zide. You keeps hold on us, taight, taight as you please ; but still, you does us no harm ; you don't hurt us—nornabit ? [*Still holding her hand.*]

P. Oh—I used to think prisoners were allays shot or hanged, or their heads cut off, poor things !

Tom. Not 'mong Chrissen volk—'cept they 'appens to be short in temper. You keeps us pris'ners and uses us well—Don't'ee tek' awa-y thee hand—and we 'ud do zame by you (*pats her hand*), and zo theas meks war quite comfortable like, leastways to what it might be.

P. Ah, 'tis had enough business, measter Trivet. I hopes we'll see no more, on't. (*Takes her hand away.*) What sort o' place now is Devonshire ?

Tom. A lovely zweet place, that's a zure thing ! and no zweetter spot in't than our Park. I can zee't now, th' old red Hall at wood-edge, the big rocky tors on moor above, and the clear river gallopping to the zay at valley's end. I've a work'd there man and boy, vather and gramfer avore me. But you'll want to know whereabout I do bide : I've a cottage and garden. That's not much, you'll zay ; but I'm to have a pritty plat o' ground when we gets back—and do'ee know what I means to do ?

P. How should I, measter Trivet ?

Tom. —Build an offshoot to my cottage. You'll ask me, what for ? and I'll tell 'ee,—to get more room. Why more room ? zays you,—an' I'll tell 'ee—I'm thinking o' matteremōny.

P. Eh, measter Trivet, what's that ?

Tom. Gett'n married, Prudence ; nayther more nor less. (*Confidentially.*) Besides t' land, his lordship's as good as promised me gardener's place. I'se a pritty turn thic wa-y, if you'll believe me.

[PRUDENCE has been softening and inclining to him, but GROME enters behind during TOM's last speech and watches them, seen by PRUDENCE, not by TOM. Her manner changes.]

P. (*Coldly.*) Oh, very likely.

Tom. Old gardener at Lyndore's a useless old chap.

P. So let un be. I care not !

Tom. Good now, Prue, what's wrong ?

Grome. (*Comes forward smiling civilly.*) I humbly ask your pardons both for interrupting : I came to look for Tom Trivet.

Tom. (*Roughly.*) Well, now you've vound him, Paul Grome, what d'ye want wi' him ?

Grome. (*To PRUDENCE.*) My Rose of Sharon ! (*whispers*) I have somewhat to say to thee.

P. I must go. Good be with you both !

[*Runs off.*]

Grome. Good master Trivet, I would fain be thy good friend.

Tom. Thou'rt too good for me.

Grome. Alas, a worm, a worm !

Tom. Very like—but laive off squirming !—I bean't o' your wa-ys o' thinking and never shall.

Grome. (*Unctuously.*) Alas, I know thy lot hath

been cast in evil places, among the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites—

Tom. No zuch thing!

Grome. The Peruzites and the Jebusites—

Tom. Devil a bit!

Grome. And the Hivites. But the Lord may yet be pleased to open thine eyes.

Tom. Lookeedeezee, Paul Grome, my eyes mayn't want opening zo much as you think vor. I can zee there's underhand business a-going on in theas old house.

Grome. Underhand business, master Trivet! Of what nature?

Tom. Ay, tell me that! One thing I do know—I often catch thee a-sliding and a-sneaking about like a tom-cat, creeping in at this corner, vanishing round t'other,—

Grome. (*Aside.*) Damn the booby! (*Aloud.*) You are merry this evening, master Trivet.

Tom. Not particklar, Paul Grome.—You've been a long while from your regiment, ha'n't you?

Grome. (*Hastily.*) What the —! (*Quietly.*) 'Tis in garrison; and the honoured lady here, extending favour to the unworthy, hath wished my stay.

Tom. (*In undertone.*) Ay, women takes up curous notions. Thou'st wriggled into favour sure enough. (*Louder.*) Aisy times, Grome; to Rugby or Leicester twice a week wi' letter-bag—don'no' what else thou doest, more'n lob about.

Grome. (*Mutters.*) The scoundrel would pick a quarrel. (*Louder, suavely.*) Master Trivet, my lord desired to see thee the moment thou wast returned.

Tom. Ass! couldn' ye a' zaid zo? [*Hurries off.*]

Grome. (*Speaking after him.*) You appeared to be engaged, master Trivet! (*Alone.*) These fools give a deal of trouble. He must meddle with my young woman too. I'll stop that. Neither shall he miss his share of the rod in pickle.

[*During the delivery of the following words, GROME shifts his position occasionally, without noise, listening at the doors, and prying into various parts of the room.*]

What's Charlton going to do? He must be quick about it. I gave him three days' notice of the Colonel's coming home. Here's another letter for him, though never meant for him—(*takes letter from pocket and looks at it*)—but how to let him have it? He may be hovering about. Very likely. He's mighty fond of hovering about. (*Puts up letter.*) He shows me little of his schemes, the patch of light round a miner at work,—but I hold my lamp up when his back's turned.—I'll wait here till they come from supper.—Uncle and rival clapt in the Tower (not through *him*, O no!) for this pretended plot, there they lie safe enough, out of master Charlton's way;—no man living he fears like his uncle, but he cares no longer for the girl, I can see that. The Tower gates ain't easy to open from the

inside ; and when the real plot ripens, any chance breath may puff these two heads off. What an honest fellow our gallant captain is ! And Grome his accomplice ?—pooh, only a poor devil that pries and filches and makes his petty profit. What knows he of these great affairs—save by chance ? The sun-royal will never shine on Grome, save in the shape of a few jacobuses. Would I were in Holland now, and these in my pocket.

[*It has been growing dusk since GROME came in. Servants enter with tapers and light the sconces. GROME pretends to be arranging something and hangs about. Exeunt servants. GROME continues :*

—One thing fairly puzzles me !—if this young fellow rides off now, what becomes of our fine scheme ? Charlton, after all, may only show himself a clever fool, like so many more of us ! I sometimes almost wish I was honest myself ; only, it ties a man down so confoundedly !

*Re-enter Servants and set other lights on table—
Enter Colonel RADCLYFFE, and Lord LYNDORE
in riding dress, speaking.*

Col. R. —Believe it !

Lyn. I thank thee, Radclyffe, from my heart !

Col. R. Our love runs level, dear Lyndore. Enough said. Each to his duty. I hear my wife and daughter coming : take leave at once, and briefly.

Lyn. Partings may be for ever !—I'll obey you.

Enter Mistress RADCLYFFE and NAOMI.

Col. R. Lucy, my lord Lyndore will take leave of you now. His man, he tells me, hath the horses ready, or very nearly.

Lyn. All is prepared.

Col. R. The weather holds fair, and a moon rising. He but rides to Daventry, where he will find good quarters for the night.

Mistr. R. We part with you unwillingly, my dear lord.

Lyn. I am heartily sorry to leave you, and most grateful,—both beyond all words. Farewell, dear madam ! (*Kisses her hand.*) (*To NAOMI.*) Farewell. [*Kisses her hand.*

N. God keep you, sir.

Col. R. Short parting's best ; so come with me, Lyndore.

Lyn. (Aside.) I leave a house which I may see no more. [*They move towards door (L).*

N. How far is it to Bristol, mother ?

Mistr. R. Two days' journey.

N. Who commands the besiegers ?

Mistr. R. Come, daughter.

N. Gone ! [*Hides her face on her mother's neck.*

[*Col. RADCLYFFE and Lord LYNDORE approach door (L) ; when near it, door opens and servant appears, flurried.*

Servant. So please your honours—

[*A young Cavalry Officer, of the Parliament, as just dismounted, steps before him and interrupts. Soldiers are seen behind him. The ladies come forward anxiously.*

Officer. (*A self-important person.*) Your pardon, ladies. Best speak for myself. I come here by authority.

Col. R. Who are you, sir?

Officer. Colonel Radclyffe, your servant—you will understand my duty. I am Joshua Brand-from-the-Burning Jebb, Cornet, in command of an escort of dragoons.

Col. R. Whom escort you, sir?

Cornet. Sir Thomas Chenery, Colonel Radclyffe, honourable commissioner for the Parliament; who hath especial business in this neighbourhood, and by whose orders we have made bold to visit your house.

Col. R. An unexpected honour; but you are welcome, sir.

Cornet. I must request that no one quit this room.

Lyn. How, sir!

Cornet. My Lord Lyndore, if I mistake not, (*Lord LYNDORE bows*) a prisoner of war. Under this warrant, my lord, (*shows it*) I am ordered to carry you to London with all possible despatch.

[*Signs to soldiers, two of whom place themselves beside Lord LYNDORE.*

Lyn. To London! (*All exclaim.*)

Cornet. This, Colonel Radclyffe, is my authority for thus entering your house (*shows another paper*)—most unwillingly—and further . . .

Col. R. Go on, sir.

Cornet. For arresting you.

[*Signs to soldiers; two of whom now place themselves beside the Colonel.*

Col. R. Arresting me! on what charge?

Cornet. Colonel Radclyffe, hold me excused for the present, I pray you.

Mistr. R. Basil!

Col. R. Fear nothing, Lucy. (*To his daughter.*) Good cheer, my Naomi!

N. They will not carry you away?—They cannot harm him, mother?

Mistr. R. Alas, many innocent men lie in prison on mere suspicion.

Lyn. (*To Colonel RADCLYFFE.*) You comprehend this, Radclyffe?

Col. R. The least part of it. I told you there were evil tongues at work.

Lyn. Have I brought this upon you?

[*CORNET, at back of stage, has meanwhile been quietly sending off soldiers to various parts of the house, posts two at each door of the room, and keeps three with him.*

Cornet. (*Comes down, and interposes between*

LYNDORE *and* RADCLYFFE.) Hold me excused, gentlemen! (*To* LYNDORE.) 'Twould seem your lordship is prepared for a journey.

Lyn. I was at point to start, sir.

Cornet. In-deed! Might I venture to enquire—whither?

Col. R. With your favour, sir, *I* can briefly explain this. Lord Lyndore was setting forth towards Bristol with a release and pass signed by the General,—exchange to be completed on his arrival. They were given on my responsibility.

Cornet. In-deed!

Col. R. What mean you, sir?

Cornet. Hold me excused, Colonel. Those papers are useless now—altogether useless.

N. (*To her mother, meanwhile.*) He were better in London than Bristol?

Mistr. R. I know not, child. Ill-agents are at work. Think of thy father, Naomi.

N. I do, mother, I do.

Enter TOM (L), *after a short parley with the sentries, in riding-dress, a valise in his hand.*

Tom. Zo plaise you, my lord,—

Cornet. Is this your lordship's man? With your leave— [*Tries to take valise.*]

Tom. (*Swings it away.*) Let be! let be!—Tantarabobus again!

Cornet. (*Motions to soldiers, who seize TOM—valise is taken.*) Hath your lordship papers here?

Lyn. Papers?—none of moment, certainly. Look for yourself, sir. [*Gives key.*]

Cornet. (*Examining valise.*) A packet of letters—and, among them, a paper in cypher.

Lyn. (*Looking.*) I know it not.

Tom. Roguery, I'll swear!

Cornet. (*Still looking at cypher.*) Hm, hm, yes, yes—It so happens I have the key to *this*.

[*General movement.*]

Col. R. and Lyn. What is it?

Cornet. Confirmation—full confirmation.

Lyn. Of what?

Cornet. Of a most grave charge. Lord Lyndore, Colonel Radclyffe, I must at once put you separately into close arrest. Look to them! [*To the soldiers.*]

Col. R. What charge, sir?

Cornet. The man too.

[*Lord LYNDORE, Colonel RADCLYFFE, and TOM are guarded separately.*]

Tom. Odswilderakins! 'tis the wursest piece o' business yet!

Mistr. R. My head swims.

[*Sinks into a chair.*]

Col. R. (*Soothingly.*) Lucy!

N. (*Approaching Cornet.*) Are you advised in what you do, sir? What are these gentlemen charged with?

Cornet. Your name, fair mistress, an't please you?

N. I am Colonel Radclyffe's daughter.

Cornet. (Looking at her deliberately.) Ah! you are Colonel Radclyffe's daughter.

N. (Hotly.) Ay, sir!—and if I were his son—

Mistr. R. Naomi, come to me, I pray thee.

N. (Moving towards her mother.) Is this fledgling officer to twirl Colonel Radclyffe and Lord Lyndore round his finger without reason given?

Cornet. (Touching the paper taken from valise.) Here is reason enough—more than enough.

Lyn. I never saw that paper in my life before.

Col. R. (To *Cornet*, with authority.) Say in plain words, sir, what you mean.

Cornet. Colonel Radclyffe and my Lord Lyndore, you are charged with plotting against the Parliament and the peace of the kingdom. In this paper is full confirmation of the suspected plot—fullest confirmation.

Col. R. Plot?

Cornet.—For raising the Midland Counties against Parliament, seizing certain garrisons and strong places, and reinforcing the King at Oxford.

Mistr. R. Plot? And who joins that word with Colonel Radclyffe's name?

Cornet. It hath been so joined.

N. Only by fools or knaves!

Col. R. The charge is groundless. But what next, sir?

Cornet. I await the Honourable Commissioner. Meanwhile I must put the house under strict ward, and make bold to ask for all keys. Find me pen

and paper. (*Soldier brings writing materials; Cornet writes at table.*) Remove the prisoners for the present and guard them in separate rooms.

[*Exeunt some soldiers with Col. RADCLYFFE and Lord LYNDORE. Meanwhile NAOMI (R) has given way and is weeping.*]

Mistr. R. (Consoling her.) Hush, my child, the false charges will easily be dispelled. As for Lord Lyndore, it is better he should go to London than Bristol. He is all unfit for war and hardship.

N. True, alas!—and yet he longs to go.

Mistr. R. He longs to be at Bristol with his men.

N. And rightly, rightly! so would I.—O mother, Can there be duty on the wrongful side? Are this and that side, chances in a game? Do we take sides by hazard?

Mistr. R. Not so, daughter.

Conscience must rule; the rest is in God's hand.

N. It is, and must be. If he go to London Is he in danger there?

Mistr. R. In none, I think.

N. What will befall him?

Mistr. R. Only questionings, Delays and doubts, not hard to solve at last. Daughter, I'm very glad he goes to London! Herein I see the hand of Providence. Send him to Bristol and they drive from port A shatter'd vessel into raging storm.

N. Thank God he goes not thither !

Cornet. (*Pauses in writing, looks up and addresses Mistress RADCLYFFE.*) Madam, with your favour.

[*Mistress RADCLYFFE approaches him, leaving NAOMI near the front.*

How many servants in your house ?

[*He motions her to sit, she refuses ; he then asks her questions and notes down her answers. Meanwhile—*

N. (*Soliloq.*) To Bristol?—or to London?—either way

And every way so far away from me !
 And what am I to him ? . . . O foolish girl !
 Can this be Naomi Radclyffe ? Where's my pride,
 My old composure ? Doth this feverous war
 Lay hold upon my blood, make my heart throb,
 And all swim round unsettled ? What to seize
 And steady me by grasping it I know not !
 I know his wishes have no harbour here,
 But shoot adown the wind to Bristol gates,
 And overleap the leagured city-wall
 Compass'd with fiery death. My dream last night
 Was dark and doleful ; and when he is gone
 I may not speak of him,—when he is dead
 What right have I to weep for him ? O Heaven,
 Be merciful, and teach me what to do,
 Or how to rest ! In which room is he guarded ?—
 Would he were now upon the road to London,
 Prisoner, but safe !—to Bristol is to death !

Mistr. R. (*Returning from back.*) Come now, my daughter.

[*Exeunt Mistress RADCLYFFE and NAOMI.*

Cornet. (*Finishing his writing and standing up.*) I'll have a word with Lord Lyndore. Call back his guard—(*to soldier, who goes out.*) He may desire to communicate with me in private.

Re-enter Lord LYNDORE, guarded.

Cornet. (*To soldiers.*) Wait without. (*To Lord LYNDORE, in undertone.*) Hath your lordship, per-adventure, ought to say to me ?

Lyn. Only, sir, that this paper you have found is absolutely strange to me ; as is the pretended plot whereof it treats.

Cornet. (*Drily.*) Hold me excused, my lord ! I merely wish to give you an opportunity, if there be anything to communicate.

Lyn. There is nothing, sir.

Cornet. Very well, my lord. Your escort will be ready as soon as our horses are fed—say in an hour's time. Meanwhile be good enough to rest here. This room shall be yours. I am going. Sentries, to your posts. Your servant.

Lyn. One word, sir,—as to Colonel Radclyffe—

Cornet. Hold me excused, I pray you !—Your servant. [*Exit.*

Lyn. (*Alone: restless and agitated.*) Ten minutes since it seemed a martyrdom To quit this house perforce—as now to stay.

I reckon not of this plot, if plot there be ;
 Nor of the grim reality of the Tower,
 Whose stony jaws shut fast on innocence
 As well as guilt, and let no cry escape :
 But not to be at Bristol with my men !
 My honour there with Rupert stands at risk,
 Myself being absent—" Safe enough " they'll say ;
 " He 's but one other noble renegade,
 Since fortune left the king !"—

[Pacing the room, during these words, he opens door (L) and finds a sentry; shuts it, approaches opposite door, stops, makes a gesture with his hand implying that it is useless to attempt escape and sits down sadly. Door (R) opens, someone is seen parleying in dumb-show with sentry, then NAOMI comes in hurriedly. LYNDORE, astonished, rises and makes a step or two to meet her; the sentry follows NAOMI into the room and then stands stolidly, keeping his eye upon both.]

Lyn. Naomi !

N. (*Agitated, in undertone.*) I have but a moment. Are you—would you still go to Bristol ?

Lyn. Sooner than to Heaven !

N. Ah !—In London—

Lyn. I shall be in prison, and all my slanderers at large.

N. Consider, Bristol is beleagured, and you—

Lyn. Have the more call to be there ! You do not recollect my urgency.

N. I do—most clearly. You have still your Pass ?

Lyn. Safe—here. [*Touches his breast.*]

N. Hide this, and read it when I go.

[Passes a note to him.]

Sentry. (*Advancing.*) Now, mistress.

N. Farewell !

Lyn. Farewell, dear lady !

[She goes, followed by sentry, they pass out and the door is closed. A mutual gesture of farewell before NAOMI disappears.]

Lyn. (*Reading note.*) " Right-hand picture in the recess—press the carved rose on its frame. Secret stair—stable-yard—I have released your man, and he and the horses are ready. The men below know not as yet of your arrest. Your pass will serve you. Be quick ! "

A way of escape ! at least a chance ! (*Looks round.*) With a free start 'twill be hard to overtake us. For Bristol and my men !—

[Presses on carved rose; Picture turns on vertical axis and shows a narrow stair descending in the wall. LYNDORE turns towards door where NAOMI disappeared, and says with heartfelt expression, though in undertone :

Farewell, my own sweet Naomi !

[CHARLTON RADCLIFFE meanwhile is

seen by the audience in the recess behind the picture, and on LYNDORE turning again to the opening he finds CHARLTON standing there, in riding dress, sword in hand.

Lyn. You here, sir?

[They speak in suppressed tones, but with gradually increasing anger.]

Ch. Yes, my lord, as it happens. I know the ways of this house. But mistake me not. I would not stop you. My uncle and you are arrested.—Go, my lord, and leave him to his fate. I'll make way for you.

Lyn. The charge is false and foolish.

Ch. Very likely, my lord. Go—the stair is free—I'll say nothing.

Lyn. I will not go!

Ch. You lose time, my lord. The road is still clear.

Lyn. Enough, sir! trouble me no farther.

Ch. Do you distrust me?

Lyn. Profoundly!

Ch. *(As going.)* Farewell, my lord!—*(turns to Lord LYNDORE again.)* One word more—you have play'd a noble part here!

Lyn. What mean you, sir?

Ch. *(Losing temper.)* While miching, on pretence of illness, you have striven to beguile my cousin,—

Lyn. What, sir!

Ch. —You have hurt, perhaps fatally, my uncle's

reputation;—thus outraging hospitality and trust and every principle of honour. And now you would have slunk off like a thief!

Lyn. You speak falsely and foully!

Ch. Bitter truths, my lord!

Lyn. Base lies!—for the which I hope one day to call you to account. Take this in pledge!

[Flings a riding glove (they were stuck in his belt) in CHARLTON's face.]

Ch. *(Leaps down from picture, which closes behind him, seizes Lord LYNDORE with left hand, and raises his sword menacingly.)* Scoundrel! if you had a sword!

Lyn. *(Flinging him off so that he staggers back, and snatching a sword from trophy.)* I have!

[They fight: sentries rush in, and at the same moment Lord LYNDORE wounds CHARLTON, who stumbles and falls, dropping his sword. Others enter by various doors, including GROME, who puts himself forward in assisting CHARLTON.]

Grome. *(Mutters.)* What the devil has he been doing? A plotter should keep his temper.

Enter Mistress RADCLYFFE and NAOMI, and PRUDENCE.

N. *(Rushing up to LYNDORE.)* Are you hurt?

Lyn. *(Smiling joyfully.)* Unhurt!

[As she leans forward to put the

question he presses her for a moment to his breast.

Mistr. R. Charlton here!—and wounded!

[She and NAOMI and PRUDENCE kneel to help CHARLTON; the Cornet also helps; CHARLTON'S arm is bandaged with a scarf, and he is propt up.

Movement at door (L), soldiers make way and draw themselves up. Enter Sir THOMAS CHENERY, a dignified elderly man, and his Secretary, Mr. JOHN CHAD, a dry, keen-looking lawyer of about 40, who puts on spectacles occasionally but never changes feature.

Cornet. (Saluting.) The Honourable Commissioner of the Parliament.

Sir Thomas Chenery. What's this?—resistance?—Your pardon, ladies. Why, how comes Captain Radclyffe here?

Cornet. I know not, Sir Thomas. I thought he was at Leicester. Look on this, sir, I pray you.

[Shows paper taken from valise to Sir THOMAS, who consults Secretary a moment.

Sir Thomas. Where is Colonel Radclyffe?

Cornet. (Motioning to soldiers, who open a little.) There, Sir Thomas.

Col. R. (They speak as old acquaintances.) Your servant, Sir Thomas.

Sir Thomas. Yours, Colonel Radclyffe.

Col. R. My Lord Lyndore. *[Presenting him.*

Sir Thomas. Your servant, my lord. Colonel Radclyffe, I never before was unwilling to look upon your face. This is my secretary, Mr. Chad, learned in the law. Your name, Colonel Radclyffe, is given in, with my Lord Lyndore's, among the chief ones in this plot against the Parliament.

Col. R. As to the plot, Sir Thomas, I have heard of none such before this evening, and I own scarce believe in it.

Sir Thomas. A plot is certain.

Secretary. Ab-so-lute-ly.

Sir Thomas. If you can free yourself, no one will rejoice more than I. I fear I cannot choose but send you and his lordship to London. But can you explain this? *[Points to CHARLTON, who is still on the ground.*

Col. R. A pure enigma to me.

Cornet. (By CHARLTON.) 'Tis but a flesh wound, Sir Thomas. The Captain struck his head in falling and was stunned, but he recovers.

[They lift CHARLTON to a chair—while tending him and adjusting his dress, a letter falls out, GROME picks it up and conceals it.

N. (Steps forward.) What hast thou there, fellow?

Grome. Nothing, madam.

N. A letter.

Grome. No, madam.

N. Thou hast. Give it up! Here! wrench it from him. [Seizes his wrist.

Grome. Ah, mistress, wilt thou use me thus? Dost not know me?

N. Methinks I do! Let him not make away with it! [Still holds GROME.

Soldier. Yield it, without more words!

[Two or three soldiers seize GROME and take letter from him.

Grome. Do you not know your comrade?

Sir Thomas. What means this?

Secretary. (Receiving the letter from a soldier.) An odd affair! (Puts on spectacles, looks at letter.) Hm!

[Hands it to Sir THOMAS.

Sir Thomas. (Looks at it.) I'll make free in this case. (Opens and reads letter.) How got Captain Radclyffe this?

Charlton. (With an effort.) I meant not, I own, to appear in this matter—nor know I what that letter contains—but I have been looking after this plot, in the interests of the Parliament.

Mistr. R. Otherwise, playing the spy in this, thy uncle's house?

Sir Thomas. Do you charge Colonel Radclyffe and Lord Lyndore as parties to this plot?

Ch. (Hesitating.) I make no charge against them.

Grome. (Aside.) A fine tangle we are got into.

Sir Thomas. (Pointing at GROME.) Who is this man? Step forward, fellow.

Ch. A corporal in my regiment, Grome by name—left here in trust.

N. In trust!

[GROME is put forward: his sleeve pushed up by accident.

Secretary. (Puts on spectacles.) Hm—let me look at him. Turn this way. A little more in the light. With your good leave, Sir Thomas. (Sir THOMAS nods.) Your name is Grome?

Grome. Paul Grome, an't please you.

Secretary. (Calmly.) It doth not altogether please me. Methinks, friend, I have been used to know thee by other names. At the Winter Assize of the City of London four years ago I knew thee by the name of Josiah Peters, alias Jack Ludgate. Thou wast convicted of highway robbery and murder, but broke jail and escaped with two other convicts. Afterwards I had tidings of thy enlistment under the name of Harry White in Lord Wilmot's horse, and subsequent desertion from the same, with robbery.

Grome. Sir!—

Secretary. (Takes off spectacles.) Give me leave. Since then, thou hast been in Ireland, and in Holland, under various names. I will confess I looked not to have the pleasure of meeting thee to-day.

Grome. (Stammering.) Sir, you are a lawyer—Am I the man you saw four years ago?

Secretary. The very same,—only fatter; and with the same scar on your wrist. (Points: GROME

hastily covers his wrist.) Sir Thomas—

[*Speaks low.*

Sir Thomas. Cornet Jebb, you will take charge of him.

[*GROME is arrested.*

Ch. I knew nothing of all this. He hath deceived me also.

Sir Thomas. Take him away. Colonel Radclyffe, my Lord Lyndore, I must ask you to prepare for your journey.

N. O mother! there is treachery here, and we cannot find it out!—Will you let them be taken to prison?—*Sir Thomas Chenery!*

Col. R. Hush, Naomi.

[*GROME at door, in custody, is trying to speak: the soldiers forcing him out.*

N. (*Rushing to them.*) Soldiers! let that man stay!

Grome. (*To Sir THOMAS.*) One word!—Will your honour graciously permit one word?—in a contrite and humble spirit!

N. Will you not hear him?

Sir Thomas. Let him speak. (*They bring GROME back.*) What would'st thou say?

Cornet Jebb. Speak up, Jack Ludgate!

Grome. Yet why should I, unless his honour will promise me some kindness? Let it be said that mercy and truth have met together.

Sir Thomas. Come, fellow, thy neck is already forfeit. If thou hast aught worth telling, it may serve thee.

Ch. Sir Thomas, will you listen to such a man?

Grome. Relying on your honour's honourable promise, I will briefly say what can be well established by proof. This gentleman (*points to CHARLTON*) hath for some three months past been plotting (*coughs*) against his worshipful uncle, Colonel Radclyffe (*GROME bows to Colonel RADCLYFFE*), and against this honourable young nobleman, my Lord Lyndore (*GROME bows to Lord LYNDORE*). He hath spread false reports, opened letters, suppressed applications for my lord's exchange, forged papers, and, finally, caused information of treason to the Parliament to be supplied against them.

Ch. Scoundrel!

Sir Thomas. (*To GROME.*) Sayest thou? This in cypher?

Grome. He forged it (*points to CHARLTON*), and I sadly confess that, under his fear, I put it into his lordship's writing case.

[*Sir THOMAS whispers with his Secretary.*

N. (*To her mother.*) I knew not Charlton was so wicked!

Mistr. R. Seeds of good and evil flourish prodigiously under war's fiery climate.

Secretary. (*To GROME.*) You accuse Captain Radclyffe. What motives could he have?

Grome. Verily, first, to get his uncle, whom he loves not, out of his way,—along with my lord, whom he loves still less. Then, to make his own

throw for fortune,—perhaps a peerage if all went right.

Secretary. How that ?

Grome. The Midland Counties Plot is a blind.—The true plot is in Yorkshire and the North. But the true plotters are not these gentlemen, but Master Charlton Radclyffe and certain friends of his.

[*Secretary nods, and whispers to Sir THOMAS.*

Ch. (*Raising himself.*) Rogue and liar !

[*Falls back.*

Sir Thomas. (*To GROME.*) Canst prove this ?

Grome. To the last point, sir. I have been on the watch all through. He (*points to CHARLTON*) hath this long while been dealing with the King's party. I can name you many of his complotters. You will get me a pardon, Sir Thomas ?

Sir Thomas. (*To Secretary.*) What think you ?

[*They whisper.*

Grome. Let him be searched. I shall marvel if you find not proof upon him at this moment.

[*Sir THOMAS motions to Cornet JEBB, who searches CHARLTON, seated in chair, a soldier on each side holding his arms.*

Cornet. A secret pocket—Here's somewhat !

[*Pulls out a small case containing a parchment folded, which he hands to Sir THOMAS.*

Sir Thomas. (*Opens it.*) The King's signature !

Grome. He carried that key to open men's minds to him.

Sir Thomas. What say you to this, Charlton Radclyffe ? [*CHARLTON groans and shuts his eyes.* By and by you may be able to speak. Meanwhile, Colonel Radclyffe, I take upon me to relieve you from arrest (*Secretary nods*), and will add I for one never believed the charges laid against you. Suspicion will melt from your name like breath from your sword-blade.

Col. R. I thank you, Sir Thomas.

[*He joins his wife and daughter.*

Mistr. R. Husband, you are safe !

N. I knew it, father, I knew it !

Sir Thomas. For you, Lord Lyndore, I understand you have suffered no little from a wound taken in saving the life of one of our best officers. (*Bows slightly to Col. RADCLYFFE.*) I think you know nothing of this plot.

Lyn. Nothing, sir, upon my honour.

Sir Thomas. How comes Charlton Radclyffe wounded ?

Lyn. In no quarrel of my seeking.

Col. R. (*Stepping forward to CHARLTON.*) Speak, sir !

Ch. (*Furiously.*) Would I had struck him dead !

N. (*Shuddering.*) O how should any kin of ours be there !

Sir Thomas. My Lord Lyndore, it is within my power to offer you free pass to your native place,

there to live undisturbed, on promise not to move henceforth against the Parliament of England.

[All look at LYNDORE.

Lyn. I most truly thank you, Sir Thomas Chenery; but I cannot accept this offer.

Col. R. Ha!

Sir Thomas. Not accept?

[*Secretary puts on spectacles and looks at Lord LYNDORE.*

N. O mother, why doth he refuse?

Mistr. R. Alas!

Sir Thomas. What then would you do, my lord?

Lyn. Ride to Prince Rupert at Bristol.

Sir Thomas. Prince Rupert is not at Bristol.

Lyn. Not there, sir!

Sir Thomas. Bristol is ours.

Col. R. Indeed! [General movement.

Lyn. And Rupert?

Sir Thomas. On his road to Germany, perhaps. Pray read your letter, my lord. This is for you. Pardon my freedom of opening it.

[*Hands him the letter taken from GROME. Talks to Secretary, who also writes on a paper.*

Lyn. (*Takes letter.*) From my trusty old Major Lucas! (*Steps nearer Col. RADCLYFFE and his group, and reads*)—"Strange news to send—Bristol is surrendered—Rupert dismissed by the King and ordered to leave England—his regiment disbanded—your troop all scattered and the men gone home.

We heard some lies about you, but believed none. We knew well you would have been with us if you could. The fighting game's up. I shall beat my own sword into a ploughshare, and whistle behind it for better times."—My comrades did not doubt me then!—Radclyffe, thy advice?

Col. R. Your lordship's main duty now is to your own place and people, and you are free to go to them. Else, you are not free to go anywhere.

Mistr. R. Follow my husband's counsel, Lord Lyn.

Lyn. (*To NAOMI, who has fallen into a reverie.*) Do you also thus advise?

N. Your pardon—what, my lord?

Lyn. You heard Sir Thomas Chenery's offer?

N. Yes.

Lyn. Think you I should accept?

N. I do.

Lyn. Sir Thomas Chenery, your pardon,—I thankfully accept the conditions.

Sir Thomas. I am glad to hear it. (*Secretary hands him paper.*) Here is your free pass, my lord. Use it at your convenience. See to the wounded man.

Cornet. He is better. The wound is not grave.

Grome. (*To CHARLTON.*) How feel you, Captain?

Ch. Ready to choke thee, villain!

Grome. Alas, sir, you've been so, anytime this twelvemonth. (*Fingers his throat.*) Methinks I

breathe freer now. They will scarce nurse you in this house, Captain.

Sir Thomas. Look well to your prisoners, Cornet Jebb.

Cornet. We shall take them on to our night-quarters, Sir Thomas.

Sir Thomas. And send them to London as soon as may be.

Cornet. I shall, sir.

Soldier, to another. To the strong box! and afterwards—(winks).

[CHARLTON walks out with difficulty, guarded; he catches GROME's eye, scowls at him and shakes his fist.

Grome. (Pointing at Lord LYNDORE who is in familiar talk with NAOMI, and resuming his twang.) Verily, Captain, thou hast done him a good turn! Yea, thou hast been exceeding kind unto him!

[*Exeunt* CHARLTON, GROME, and some of the soldiers. Mistress RADCLYFFE sends PRUDENCE after them; TOM follows PRUDENCE closely, and, in going out, glances round to see if he is observed, then kisses her neatly, not to her discontent.

Sir Thomas. (To Col. and Mistress RADCLYFFE.) No, I thank you. I must ride further to-night, late as it is. Ladies, your humble servant! Good-night, Colonel Radclyffe!—my lord!—

[*Bows exchanged, Sir THOMAS exit deliberately* (L), soldiers preceding him; attended ceremoniously to the door by Col. and Mistress RADCLYFFE. NAOMI and LYNDORE left by themselves (R, centre). She is now seated in an old carved chair. Her manner grave and distant.

Lyn. Naomi!

N. My lord.

Lyn. You were in haste to dismiss me.

N. You were eager to depart.

Lyn. Are you still in the same mind?

N. More firmly than ever.

Lyn. How mean you?

N. Your road is clear, my lord, and you are bound to go.

Lyn. Not bound to go to-night . . . unless you bid me. If that be your wish . . . —Naomi! dost thou indeed send me away?

N. (Looks at him, then suddenly stretches out her arms.) No! [He embraces her.

[Col. and Mistress RADCLYFFE come from door L. Col. RADCLYFFE affectionately holds back his wife, and they stand a moment looking at NAOMI and Lord LYNDORE. NAOMI sees them.

N. O dearest parents!

Lyn. May I call you so?

Mistr. R. No better son could bounteous Heaven
bestow !

Col. R. Lyndore !—my Naomi !—this plighted
troth

Is welcome news to us, who love you both.
And may God grant the future of our land
Be emblem'd by this happy hand in hand !

[*Joins their hands.* *Music.*

Curtain falls slowly.



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