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THE
WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY
COLLECTION
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MRS. EDWARD MORRIS

THE
DISOWNED;

OR
THE PRODIGALS

A PLAY,

IN THREE ACTS.

BY RICHARD PENN. SMITH.

Author of *The Deceased*, *Eighteen January*, *A Week at a Village*,
Queen's College, *Switzerland*, &c. &c.

As performed at the Chamberlain's Theatre, London, &c.

PHILADELPHIA: PUBLISHED BY
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.,

1850.
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A PLAY,

IN THREE ACTS.

BY RICHARD PENN SMITH,

Author of the Deformed, Eighth of January, A Wife at a Venture,
Quite Correct, Sentinel, &c. &c.

As performed at the Chestnut street Theatre--Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA EDITION.

C. ALEXANDER, PR.

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PREFACE.

The play of the *Disowned* is founded upon a French drama, entitled *Le Caissier*, by Monsieur Jouslin.— Many liberties have been taken with the original, in adapting it to the American stage, especially in the last act, where Bertrand kills his sister. In the French piece Amelia retires to a convent, and Bertrand is taken into custody, the same hardened wretch as he appears in the earlier scenes. The termination was without a climax, leaving a painful sensation on the mind of the spectator—for Amelia is still alive, and the man to whom she is so devotedly attached is given in marriage to another. Besides, a blemish is unnecessarily thrown upon the moral character of Amelia, which diminishes the interest awakened by her situation. The result proved the alterations to be judicious; and the powerful acting of Mr. ROWBOTHAM, after the death of Amelia, never failed to rivet the attention, and elicit the unqualified applause of the audience. Indeed, to the able manner in which this gentleman sustained the character of Bertrand, is the piece indebted, in a great degree, for its flattering success; and to the performers generally the author tenders his acknowledgments for the zeal and ability displayed in bringing his drama upon the stage. The *Disowned* was first produced at the Baltimore Theatre, March 26, 1829.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DUVAL, (a banker,).....	Mr. HATHWELL.
GUSTAVUS ST. FELIX, (his cashier,).....	SOUTHWELL.
ST. FELIX, (Gustavus' uncle,).....	JEFFERSON.
MALFORD, (a clerk in the banking house,).....	WEMYSS.
BERTRAND,.....	ROWBOTHAM.
ANDREW, (a servant,).....	MURRAY.
NOTARY,.....	MCDONALD.
AMELIA, (in love with Gustavus,).....	Mrs. DARLEY.
PAULINE, (Duval's daughter,).....	ROWBOTHAM.
MADAM MERCUR,.....	Miss HATHWELL.
JUSTINE, (Amelia's maid,).....	KERR.

[Soldiers. Guests, Servants.]

THE DISOWNED;

OR,

THE PRODIGALS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The interior of a Banking-house. At the rising of the curtain ANDREW discovered, placing tables and chairs in order. BERTRAND shabbily dressed, sitting, reading a newspaper.

And. Curse that fellow, he 's a perfect sticking plaster. He appears to have taken root. I wonder what the deuce he can want.

Ber. Harkce, young man.

And. (*Aside.*) Young man! pretty familiar! well, sir.

Ber. I have been cooling my heels here for half an hour, and begin to grow a little impatient.

And. I have already told you, sir, that Mr. Malfort doesn't lodge here.

Ber. I know you have, but here he transacts his business, and this is therefore the most likely place to meet with him. Since I must wait, hand me another paper.

And. (*Aside.*) Here 's assurance!

Ber. I like to see what is passing in the world. I say, young man.

And. Eternal questioner. (*Aside.*)

Ber. You have lived here for some time, have you not?

And. Five or six years.

Ber. Right. An industrious shrewd lad, I'll warrant me, with an eye to the main chance. How stands Mr. Malfort with the old chap?

And. Old chap!

Ber. The banker here; Mr. Duval, I mean.

And. He is the old chap's right hand man.

Ber. So.—The house is staunch—no want of funds, I suppose?

And. What can the fellow mean? (*Aside.*)

Ber. Well, these bankers are happy fellows indeed! Why was not my lot cast among them instead of—no matter. (*Raising his voice impatiently.*) The devil! am I to be kept waiting here all day, for a—I say, young man.

And. What, again!

Ber. What is the hour? I have forgotten my watch.

And. Forgotten!—It is half-past nine. [*Looking at his watch.*]

Ber. So late! Is it possible! [*Advances to look at the watch.*]

And. (*Returning it to his job.*) I go by the town clock.

Ber. I have it—my old resource. [*Takes tobacco and pipe from his pocket.*]

And. (*Aside.*) A pipe! surely he has 'nt the impudence to smoke here.

Ber. (*To himself, cleaning his pipe.*) Yes, this is my only resource when my spirits are depressed, and for-

tune frowns. Within this little tube I find solace, rational reflection, philosophy—yes, true philosophy, at five sous an ounce. [*Produces a tinder box and strikes fire.*] But, unfortunately, philosophy is but a ragged virtue, and no longer passes current in the world. [*Going to light his pipe.*

And. Stay, sir, do you know what you are doing?

Ber. Yes; lighting my pipe to be sure.

And. What an impudent rascal it is!

Enter MALFORT.—R. H.

And. Here is a person has been waiting a long time to see you, sir.

Mal. Mel (*Aside—recognizing Bertrand, who takes off his hat and salutes him very respectfully.*) What do I see? Bertrand! (*Authoritatively.*) Your business, fellow? Leave us Andrew.

And. I'll have an eye upon that fellow for I don't half like him. [*Exit. L. H.*

Ber. So, since he is gone I may reserve my respect for another occasion. (*Puts on his hat and extends his hand to MALFORT.*) Well, Malfort, my worthy fellow, how do you do?

Mal. Well. But how is this! Bertrand in such a dress.

Ber. Times have changed with me. Once we were equals—partners in iniquity, but now you are at the top of fortune's wheel, and I at the bottom. Well, no matter; so it is—you wrote that you wished to see me, and here I am. Shall we withdraw?

Mal. No; there are persons in attendance, and I would not—

Ber. Be seen with me. I understand. Well, there is no disputing it; we are not exactly birds of the same feather, though we do flock together. (*Touching MALFORT's coat.*) Can we confer here?

Mal. Yes; Mr. Duval is engaged, and we are not likely to be interrupted for some time.

Ber. Well, to business. Despatch is my motto.

Mal. When I first knew you, Bertrand, about ten years ago, you were a handsome spirited young fellow, with some property.

Ber. Yes; my patrimony. The cash then jingled merrily, and merrily did I dance to the tune. But do not speak of those times; the recollection always makes me melancholy.

Mal. Since then, I have lost sight of you.

Ber. Like enough; I wanted to see a little of the world, and travelled. What is a man without experience?

Mal. And you appear to have paid for yours. By accident I encountered you last week; when, struck with the misery of your appearance, you recollect I promised to render you a service.

Ber. For old acquaintance sake. 'Twas friendly.

Mal. Something now presents itself.

Ber. I am glad of it. Bread and water may suffice to keep body and soul together, but I am a gentleman-born and bred, and would live, not merely exist. To business, then. What would you have of me?

Mal. I wish to employ you in an office which relates to me alone. I have need of one on whom I can safely depend, and I believe I can count upon you.

Ber. Certainly. My word of honor; besides, if it is my interest.

Mal. The recompense shall be liberal.

Ber. Enough. To the point. I like brevity.

Mal. Though I am one of the principal members of a large banking house; live extravagantly and appear rich, you must know, Bertrand, that I am worth——

Ber. Nothing. Therein we resemble each other. The sprigs of nobility are not now as easily pigeoned as they were ten years ago. Go on.

Mal. Though involved, I hope soon to extricate myself from my critical situation. Mr. Duval has a lovely daughter, whose dowry will be great. She is beautiful as an angel—amiable——

Ber. (*Interrupting him.*) You have said enough.—Never mind her personal charms. You wander from the point.

Mal. I was about to propose myself as a suitor, when a friend of Mr. Duval, a Mr. St. Felix, a rich citizen of Havre, sent his nephew to be cashier of this establishment. I was not backward in perceiving that a marriage was contemplated, and that Miss Pauline, Duval's daughter, did not regard young St. Felix with indifference.

Ber. Human nature—there's no calculating on it.

Mal. Our unsophisticated cashier, on arriving at Paris, of course, stood in need of a mentor, and I was chosen as the most proper person to teach him the principles of civilization.

Ber. And, under your tuition, he doubtless made rapid progress.

Mal. So I flatter myself. In less than two months he dissipated more than his yearly salary.

Ber. A lad of spirit. I should be proud of his acquaintance.

Mal. That was but half the service I rendered him. As I perceived he was struck with Miss Duval's charms, I introduced him to a female as remarkable for her beauty as the splendor in which she lives. She is called Madam de Courcy, the widow of a colonel.

Ber. De Courcy! The widow of a colonel. Right, I am all attention. Go on.

Mal. As I anticipated, he soon forgot Pauline, and became enamoured of the widow. Happy only in her presence, his evenings and leisure hours were passed with her. During his delirium, I managed to introduce into the same house, agents of mine, who fleeced him of large sums of money, which his situation enabled him to procure, and now he stands indebted to this establishment upwards of twenty thousand francs.

Ber. The devil! In less than a year, such a sum.—Malfort, I bow respectfully to the superiority of your genius. [Taking off his hat.

Mal. I have done well, but must still do better. The crisis approaches. The young profligate's uncle arrived yesterday, and a marriage is evidently on foot.

Ber. Why not then disclose at once his extravagance and passion for the widow?

Mal. That would be unwise. I am considered his sincere friend, and it is still my interest to strengthen that idea. Besides, a disclosure at this time, would not eventuate in any good to me; his follies would be forgiven after temporary displeasure, and my aim frustrated. I must, in short, involve him deeper in debt, and, if possible, hasten his alliance with the widow,

which has been delayed, alone, by dread of his uncle's anger.

Ber. Then she loves this St. Felix?

Mal. Deeply—desperately. I wish to place some one near her who will render me an account of all that passes between them, and upon you I have thrown my eyes, as being a fit person for the office.

Ber. I am flattered at the preference. The very thing for me—a gentleman born and bred.

Mal. I heard her mention the other day that she was in want of some trusty person, in the character of steward; you came to my mind, and I immediately wrote to you. I will give you a letter of recommendation; (*Goes to the table and writes.*) and flatter myself my name will be sufficient. Remember, be diligent, faithful, and, above all, secret.

Ber. Doubt me not; I have a keen eye, and know the world; I have travelled. But the reward.

Mal. Shall, as I told you, be great.

Ber. I am not over particular in such matters, but, since you have a pen in your hand, I prefer plain black and white. Memories are treacherous; words, unsubstantial. 'Tis my humour.

Mal. To insure your fidelity I will indulge it then. (*Writes.*) Here; by this I promise to pay you, on my marriage with Pauline, twenty thousand francs. Will that satisfy you?

Ber. Perfectly. (*Reading the paper.*) Right. This now will undergo no change, but speak the same thing till doomsday, while mere words are constantly liable to be perverted and misunderstood.

Mal. (*Aside.*) I have been too hasty. Stay, give me that paper again.

Ber. (*Coolly putting it up.*) That's not necessary. I am perfectly satisfied as it is.

Mal. Hush! some one comes. 'Tis Gustavus; be on your guard. [*Bertrand assumes a respectful air.*]

Enter GUSTAVUS.—L. H.

Gus. Ah! I have found you my dear Malfort at last. I have been looking for you every where.

Mal. Good day, good day, my friend.—By your leave; I am yours in an instant. (*Giving letter to Bertrand.*) Take this, sir, and I trust you will find it serviceable.—No thanks, no thanks, one is always happy in obliging honest people. So, my dear sir, do not stay any longer, for I have already intruded on your time.

Ber. I shall never forget your kindness. (*Eyeing Gustavus as he goes out.*) A promising lad that, and, though he has been pretty well plucked, it may be worth while to pick him closer yet. [*Exit. L. H.*]

Gus. My friend, who is that man? his aspect—

Mal. Is that of misery—but he merits a better lot. I have interested myself for him, and recommended him to Madam de Courcy, as a person to whom she may entrust the offices of her household. She requires such a person, and this man will be found capable and trustworthy, and, above all, very happy with so sweet a lady.

Gus. Who could be otherwise than happy in her presence! Beloved Amelia!—But, Malfort, I have hastened to see you, for I am drawn to the verge of despair. You know not what has happened. Never was the assistance of your friendship more necessary to me

than at this moment. A terrible misfortune menaces me; and, without your aid, I am lost forever.

Mal. Lost! you amaze me! What dreadful thing has occurred?

Gus. You know my imprudence; my guilt. Yes, call it by that name! the sums I have squandered at gaming. Oh, fool! madman! villain! Judge of my despair; this day Mr. Duval requires from me an exhibit of my accounts.

Mal. How! can he suspect! he cannot know!

Gus. I think not—nay, I am sure he does not know of my extravagance: he spoke to me so mildly that I should wrong him in supposing it. But, Malfort, my friend, can you imagine my horror, when, on making up my accounts I found there was a deficiency of—

Mal. Some hundreds, I suppose. A trifle!

Gus. No, no; thousands—thousands.—Disgrace, shame, ruin and dishonor now await me.

Mal. Be comforted; there are few conditions so deplorable but that they may be relieved. Hope.

Gus. (*Starting from him.*) Hope! name it not. It has been my ruin. 'Twas hope that induced me to risk fresh sums in order to regain what I had lost. No, no, there is no hope, no comfort for me—nought but shame, lasting and consuming shame.

Mal. Trust me there is room for much to be done. A few days since I gave into your hands bills of different capitalists. Some of them—most of them are nearly due. I will make use of all my efforts to have them cashed.

Gus. Ah! my dear friend, I fear you but divert me with a shadow.

Mal. Come, come, be more confident in me. Remember that the night is darkest as the day approaches, and, indeed, your situation appears to me more happy than ever. Though you have debts, your marriage with Pauline will enable you to liquidate them all.

Gus. What say you! I marry Pauline! think you I will abandon Amelia? No; rather let my uncle desert me; rather let me become the scorn and scoff of the world, ere I commit an act of such damning treachery.

Mal. However, your union with Miss Duval appears decided.

Gus. No; no one has yet explained my situation with Amelia, and I hope——

Mal. What can you hope from such an explanation?

Gus. Alas! Malfort, I am ignorant myself, but this I know, that there is no power on earth shall separate me from Amelia.

Mal. You have scarcely an instant left to decide, it is therefore well that you have resolved. What if your uncle commands you to espouse Miss Duval, you will not hesitate to refuse?

Gus. Oh! Malfort, it is that refusal tortures me.—How shall I dare to announce it to him, what pretext can I offer? I cannot speak of Amelia; and if he discovers my passion, I know so well the severity of his disposition, that he never will pardon me. All my hopes of fortune depend upon him, and deprived of his friendship I shall be without resources; how then shall I extinguish my debts; how shall I be able to conceal my shame and dishonour from the world?

Mal. See—now you are giving yourself up to des-

pondency again. Compose yourself, St. Felix, your uncle, approaches.

Gus. My uncle—at such a time.

Enter ST. FELIX.—L. H.

St. Felix. Ah! this looks well; at your post by times. I like this—industry and activity are the certain guides to fortune. But, nephew, is not this the gentleman of whom you have written to me so often; Mr. Malfort?

Gus. The same, sir; my best friend.

St. Felix. And mine, of course, if you will permit so old a man to be classed among the number of your friends.

Mal. You do me great honour, sir.

St. Felix. By St. Anthony I am delighted in knowing you. Do you know, sir, I am under great obligations to you?

Mal. To me, sir?

St. Felix. Yes, yes, to you, yourself. My friend, Duval, has told me all. You have been the guide and mentor of my nephew here; every one speaks in his praise, and what is it owing to but your counsel and example. Don't go to disclaim it, but if ever you should stand in need of a friend, remember John Ambrose St. Felix.

Mal. Your civility confuses me.

St. Felix. Tut, tut, sir, call it friendship, pure friendship. I am a plain, blunt man; put me to the proof and you shall judge of the sincerity of my esteem. But, od's so, I am forgetting myself; business must be attended to. If your presence is required elsewhere,

Mr. Malfort, don't let the silly chatter of an old man detain you. Make no ceremony with me.

Mal. Since you permit me, sir, I must bid you good day for the present. (*Aside.*) An embarrassing interview. (*To GUSTAVUS.*) Keep up your spirits and count upon my prudence. [*Exit.*—L. H.]

St. Felix. Now, that young man pleases me amazingly. He possesses one of these prepossessing figures that strike at first sight. I should have known him any where for a candid, honest man. A look is sufficient for me; I read the character at once, and was never yet deceived in a physiognomy. But to leave him—I came to speak to you, Gustavus, of an affair that interests you nearly.

Gus. To me, sir! What is he going to say? I tremble. (*Aside.*)

St. Felix. When your father died he left nothing but some poems, comedies and stories, which the world called very fine, but which were to you not worth a sou. My poor brother was a worthy man—but that mania for writing played the very devil with his income. I thank my stars I had no such genius, and never composed any thing more poetical than a bill of lading, or letter of instructions. I need not tell you that I made an ample fortune by such compositions.

Gus. My dear sir, whither does this tend?

St. Felix. Zounds, boy, don't interrupt me; can't you let me tell my story my own way. You were brought to me a friendless orphan. The sight of you set my tears flowing afresh for the memory of my poor brother. He was my only brother. You perceived my tears, and, though but an infant, wept from sympathy. I caught you in my arms, and while striving to kiss off

your tears, mingled my own with them. You clung to me as if sensible of my feelings at that moment. This child, I sobbed, has his father's heart; he shall be the consolation of my old days; for his sake I will never marry. I will be every thing to him—father, monitor, friend. I have kept my word, and with pride I declare, my honourable boy, you have never given me reason to repent of my resolution.

Gus. Oh! Heaven! my benefactor! How shall I speak?

St. Felix. Enough, enough my boy. I see you now a prudent, upright and accomplished man—just what my hopes anticipated; and since you are the pride and joy of my declining years, it is but just that I should strive to make some recompense. I have been thinking—but tell me candidly, what do you think of Mr. Duval's daughter?

Gus. Heavens—what a question to put to me!—
(*Aside.*)

St. Felix. Do you not believe that she will render that man truly happy who may possess her as a wife?

Gus. Doubtless; certainly—Miss Duval possesses all the accomplishments, all the virtues that can impart a charm to the female character.

St. Felix. That is to say, you would ask no better in marriage?

Gus. My uncle—I know——

St. Felix. Well, well—why don't you speak out;—Be plain, and say at once, you love Pauline.

Gus. Believe me, I am fully sensible—I feel—

St. Felix. Yes, yes, it is all clear enough; this embarrassment declares what you are too sheepish to ut-

ter. Make your mind easy; the business is settled;—she shall be your wife.

Gus. My wife! oh! Amelia!

St. Felix. Yes, my boy, yes; I have just left Mr. Duval, who agrees to the marriage, and gives with his daughter a liberal portion; that portion I will double on your part. But mark you, Gustavus, if, instead of being an industrious citizen, and making yourself honored and esteemed, you imitate those young men of pleasure, who glory in their dissipation; drink, gamble, keep mistresses and ruin their families—I love you much, Gustavus, more than any thing on earth—you might break my heart by such a course of conduct, but I would never forgive you! never!

Gus. I am silenced. (*Aside.*)

St. Felix. But I have no fear of that nature. Come, you no doubt are anxious to salute your intended.—Come, follow me, and I will break the ice for you—you sheepish fellow.

Gus. No, no, not just now—an important affair—your pardon, sir, I am forced to leave you. [*Going.*]

St. Felix. How!—stay, stay—at such a time you may surely steal a moment. See, here comes Mr. Duval and his daughter:

Gus: Then I must begone, indeed;—'tis absolutely necessary—torture, torture. [*Rushes out—L. H.*]

Enter MR. DUVAL and PAULINE.—R. H.

St. Felix. Ha! ha! ha! In my young days I would as soon have thought of facing a cannon ready charged, as of flying away from a petticoat. Ah! my friend, and you my pretty niece, that is to be! Lips, by your

leave. Nay, don't blush, you'll find that I shall do them less harm than my nephew. Ha! ha!

Duval. How is this—I do not see Gustavus! I thought to have found him here.

Pau. And I also. (*Aside.*)

St. Felix. He this instant left me—some affair of moment. You know his zeal and activity.

Duval. I have proved both; but, have you broached the subject?

St. Felix. Certainly. Just as I anticipated. A glance at a man is enough for me:—he is delighted, enchanted; and, I may safely say, that he loves your daughter more than Mark Antony ever loved Cleopatra.

Pau. What happiness! (*Aside.*)

Duval. Well, my daughter, you hear—you know our wishes; but your father will never influence your choice. Is it not true that you love Gustavus?

Pau. My dear father, you know——

St. Felix. That delicacy forbids such a confession, you would say, my dear. 'Tis clear enough, Duval; we will strengthen our old friendship by this union, and make but one family. Ha! won't that be charming. [*In an under tone to DUVAL.*] But have you seen to the contract?

Duval. Well thought of. Pauline, my love, excuse us for a moment.

St. Felix. Don't speak; I know what you would say; the business we are about carries its own excuse. Ha! ha! do I not read your thoughts, my pretty little niece?

[*Exeunt*—L. H.]

Pau. Is it then true! Gustavus loves me, and I am happy! I have secretly accused him of coldness and

indifference, but I have wronged him; his reserve was discretion; his silence, respect. Oh! heavens, he is here.

Enter GUSTAVUS, without perceiving PAULINE—L. H.

Gus. They have gone out, and now I will have an opportunity to—— What do I see, Pauline! Your pardon, Miss Duval; I was not aware—I intrude—perhaps—[*About to retire.*]

Pau. Nay, sir, 'tis I who ought to apologize. This is not my place; my father conducted me hither and has just left me for an instant.

Gus. [*Regarding her.*] How beautiful! what a figure! I once admired it much, and now feel that Amelia alone can be preferred to her.

Pau. Did you speak, sir?

Gus. No—yes—that is, Miss—your pardon—my thoughts were wandering.

Pau. Wandering at such a time. (*Aside.*) Adieu, Mr. St. Felix. (*Returning.*) Oh! I forgot; my father has been looking for you, sir.

Gus. For me?—Can he have proposed the match to her? (*Aside.*)

Pau. He, as well as your uncle, would speak to you.

Gus. Yes, 'tis evident, and it would be villainous in me to deceive her. Miss Duval.

Pau. Sir!

Gus. Since chance has procured me this opportunity of speaking without a witness—— I——

Pau. He is going to declare himself.

Gus. Permit me to make a confession.

Pau. A confession. (*Aside.*)

Gus. A confession which will cost me much to make; but which your happiness renders necessary.

Pau. (*Aside.*) What a singular tone for a declaration—so serious. Well, sir?

Gus. I believe it my duty to confess—

Pau. (*Aside.*) That he loves me—how slow he is.

Gus. But promise to keep what I am about to disclose, a secret for some days.

Pau. You may rely on my discretion—speak, speak, sir.

Gus. I will, Miss Duval; to you I am now going to open my whole soul—to unfold the——

And. (*Without.*) You will find young Mr. St. Felix in the office, Mr. Malfort.

Gus. (*Aside.*) Joy, joy, it is Malfort with the money. (*To PAULINE.*) Your pardon, Miss Duval, if you will permit we will resume the subject at our next interview.

Pau. No apology is necessary, Mr. St. Felix. How provoking. [*Exit—B. H.*]

MALFORT enters—L. H.

Gus. Well, well my friend, what news?

Mal. (*Affecting sadness.*) Discouraging; even I, myself, St. Felix, begin to despair.

Gus. How! have you had no success?

Mal. Impossible to procure any money.

Gus. Impossible! and you bring me——

Mal. Nothing. Every body refuses to discount the bills. True, your name was affixed to them, but your great losses at play have become known, and they sneered at the sight of your name.

Gus. Ruin, disgrace—unutterable despair.

Mal. Think not I have left untried any means: I strove to tempt them with a large premium; I offered twenty, thirty, fifty per cent., with my own security, but all was useless. We are interrupted. Ha! St. Felix; stand not thus lost in stuper—awake! some one comes; assume a cheerful countenance.

Gus. A cheerful countenance, while the mind is on the rack!

Enter DUVAL, ST. FELIX and ANDREW, followed by a notary—L. H.

Duval. You are returned in good time, Gustavus. (*To Andrew.*) Inform Miss Duval that she is wanted here immediately.

St. Felix. Immediately; you understand.

And. Yes, sir. [*Exit—R. H.*]

Duval. Well, Gustavus, have you made out the statement I desired of you?

Gus. The statement! yes—yes sir.

Duval. Let me see it.

Gus. I will bring it, sir. (*Aside.*) My fate draws nigh. [*Exit—R. H.*]

Duval. Before we proceed to sign and seal, my friend, it is necessary that you should know the state of my affairs.

St. Felix. 'Tis useless—your word is sufficient.

Duval. No, no—I wish you to see and judge for yourself.

Mal. You have business, gentlemen—I will retire.

Duval. For what? Are you not of the establishment? Stay, my dear Malfort, I pray you.

Re-enter GUSTAVUS—R. H.

Duval. Well, Gustavus, the account.

Gus. 'Tis here. (*Trembling as he presents it.*)—

Oh! Heaven, give me courage lest I betray myself.

Duval. Ha! how is this? you seem agitated.

Mal. (Aside.) You would say he had reason if you knew all.

St. Felix. Excessive joy; nothing more; I could see it with half an eye—but, since you will have it so, let me see the account.

Duval. [*Showing a paper.*] See, it is right to a sou. In bonds, mortgages, notes, and in cash; total, two million three hundred and thirty thousand francs; of which Gustavus has now under his care, sixty-six thousand two hundred francs.

Mal. (Aside.) That is not quite so plain, old gentleman:

St. Felix. Yes, yes, I see it is all right, much to the credit of my nephew; but let us leave these affairs and speak of the marriage, for here is Pauline.

Enter PAULINE—R. H.

Pau. and Gus. together. Of marriage!

St. Felix. Yes, my turtle doves. [*Takes both by the hand.*] The contract is drawn, and here is the notary. Nothing is wanting but the signatures.

Duval. [*Placing a port folio on the table.*] Here are three hundred thousand francs which I give to my daughter.

St. Felix. And here is double that for my nephew's marriage portion. Come, preliminaries being settled, let us sign the treaty of commerce and amity.

Gus. (*Aside.*) Dreadful alternative! I must either abandon Amelia, or proclaim my dishonour. (*Aside.*)

Pau. What ought I to think of this agitation.— (*Aside.*)

Duval. [*Taking PAULINE by the hand.*] Come my child, complete my happiness and your own.

Pau. [*Approaching the table, but looking at GUSTAVUS.*] My happiness! alas! I fear I have deceived myself. (*Aside.*)

Mal. If he signs, I am lost. (*Aside.*)

Gus. (*Aside.*) Pardon, beloved Amelia! To save my honor I sacrifice myself and you.

[*PAULINE signs.*]

St. Felix. Come on my boy; why do you hesitate? it is your turn.

Gus. I am ready. [*He approaches the table and takes the pen from PAULINE, and as he is going to sign—*

Enter ANDREW—L. H.

And. [*To GUSTAVUS.*] Mr. St. Felix, a draft has just been presented for payment for sixty-thousand francs.

Mal. [*Who had manifested anxiety for some time.*] Then I am safe!

St. Felix. The devil! A pretty smart sum that at a short notice.

Duval. [*Looking at the draft.*] From the house of Wright & Hay, London; it is good; Gustavus give out the amount.

Gus. (*Aside.*) 'Tis done! I am lost!

Duval. You have funds sufficient?

Gus. Yes--yes--yes.

St. Felix. Then, why in the devil's name don't you pay it! [*Passionately.*]

Dural. [*Aside to GUSTAVUS.*] This hesitation--this trouble depicted in your countenance! Young man you have abused my confidence! Speak; is it even so? [*Hastily takes a number of notes from his portfolio and gives them to ANDREW.*] Count out sixty thousand francs.

St. Felix. Wretch! could I ever have supposed this? Shame pursue you.

Gus. Cursed be the hour that I looked upon a card! A gambler! O! that I had never been born! A gambler. A curse upon society; a disgrace to the human race. Fallen, O! idiot, and by Lucifer's own vicegerent on earth! Respected, beloved, affluent and happy in friends;--what more on earth could I desire! Heaven's choicest blessings were showered upon me, and yet I was mad enough to listen to the seductive fiend, and, in very wantonness, to stake reputation, happiness, honor--all upon the color of a card, or the turn of a die. O! that heaven would launch its exterminating bolt on this devoted head, and terminate at once, my infamy and despair. [*Tableau.*]

[*Curtain falls.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An apartment in AMELIA'S house. AMELIA and Madam MERCŒUR discovered. AMELIA arranging her hair at a glass.

Ame. Tell me, Madam Mercœur, how do I look to day?

Mer. Charminglly indeed, Amelia.

Ame. How does this dress become me?

Mer. It suits both your shape and complexion to a miracle.

Ame. My glass tells a different story. Do you think Mr. St. Felix will be pleased with it?

Mer. If he has any taste, he will, for indeed every body must admire it.

Ame. Thou flatterer! I care not for the admiration of the crowd, if I only appear to advantage in his eyes. Dear Gustavus! The arrival of his uncle has robbed me of him for these two days past! but this evening my ball takes place; all the world will be here, and he promised to attend. I shall then be so happy! but how long will that happiness last!

Mer. Until you have been married six months, I dare say--It would be unreasonable to expect it longer.

Ame. Married! O, my friend, you forget that his uncle is in Paris.

Mer. Do you apprehend that he will be an obstacle to your union?

Ame. I do, indeed.

Mer. But, should he not, marriage at best is but a

hazardous experiment, and happiness may be wrecked when least expected.

Ame. Yes; happiness may be wrecked when least expected.

Mer. Why do you sigh?

Ame. That question proves that you are not yet acquainted with my early history. A few years ago I lived in a provincial town, and devoted myself to soothing the afflictions of my aged father, caused by the conduct of a profligate and disobedient son. It was there colonel De Courcy first saw me. He was young and accomplished. He loved me and our union soon followed; on which event, we immediately set out for Paris. I imagined myself the happiest of women, but I had soon cause to know myself the most wretched. My husband was wealthy, but extravagant. He launched into all the dissipation of the metropolis. Indifference and neglect followed—neglect from the man I adored. We had not been married a year when he fell in a duel, and I was left alone in the world, a young and inexperienced widow, with the remnant of his fortune. I still continued to live in the splendour into which he had introduced me, when Mr. Malfort, who was a friend of my husband's, made me acquainted with Mr. St. Felix. He became dear to me, and I have found in him a defender and a friend.

Mer. And I cordially hope, Amelia, that before long he may have a legal title to the appellation.

Enter JUSTINE—R. H.

Jus. There is a man in waiting, madam, miserable enough in his appearance, who desires to see you.

Ame. What can he want? if charity, give him a trifle and let him begone.

Jus. He says he comes from Mr. Malfort.

Ame. From Mr. Malfort! O, then I will see him myself. Show him in. [*Exit JUSTINE—R. H.*] This Malfort I do not like, yet I dare not say to St. Felix what I think of him, he has such a blind and unlimited confidence in the man.

Mer. As you are engaged I will take my leave for the present.

Ame. But you will remember my ball this evening.

Mer. Never fear, I shall not forget it.

[*Exit—L. H.*]

Enter JUSTINE and BERTRAND—R. H.

Jus. Madam, he is here.

Ame. Well, sir, you desired to see me.

Ber. [*Assuming a gentlemanly air.*] A thousand pardons, madam, for the liberty I have taken; but Mr. Malfort sent—— [*Presenting letter.*] This letter will explain, madam, if you will condescend to peruse it.— (*Aside.*) 'Tis singular—that figure—those features—I cannot be deceived—if it should be she!

Ame. [*After reading—aside.*] He gives him a good character, but his appearance displeases me.

Ber. (*Aside.*) The more I examine the more am I convinced that it can be no other.

Ame. Are you the person mentioned in this letter?

Ber. The same.

Ame. Well, I will see Mr. Malfort in the course of the day, and give you an answer to-morrow.

Ber. That's as much as a dismissal, which won't

suit me. (*Aside.*) Would you allow me to say two words to you, madam?

Ame. To me!

Ber. Yes! and alone, if you please.

Ame. (*Half aside.*) A singular request! I know not whether I ought.

Ber. (*Aside.*) She hesitates. Mr. Malfort charged me——

Ame. Mr. Malfort.—(*To JUSTINE.*) Leave us, Justine, but do not be far off.

Jus. I will not. Be composed, madam.

[*Exit—R. II.*]

Ame. Well, sir, what commands has Mr. Malfort for me?

Ber. In faith, madam, none that I am charged with. It was only a pretext of mine to catch you alone.

Ame. A pretext! What is it you intend? [*Alarmed.*]

Ber. Nay, be not frightened. I intend no injury. It was out of pure regard for you, I assure you. Look at me well, my angel, and I believe you will discover that we are not entirely unacquainted.

Ame. [*With increased alarm.*] I have not the slightest knowledge of you, sir.

Ber. By my soul that is strange now; but I do not wonder! It has been many years since we parted, and it requires sharp eyes to detect, in such a garb, a gentleman born and bred. But we will know each other better before we separate.

Ame. Your words, sir, are inexplicable—your absence is necessary. Who waits there?

[*Going to ring a bell.*]

Ber.—[*Seizing her by the arm.*] Stay—you are not

tired of my company already? Answer me, for I must know! Are you not from Normandy?

Ame. I am.

Ber. From Montagne?

Ame. It is true.

Ber. Your family name is Gremont?

Ame. Yes, yes! You have known my family?

Ber. Intimately!—So, there's no mistake. I also knew your brother! You have, or had one.

Ame. Yes; poor Charles.

Ber. Poor Charles! A disowned reprobate. A vagabond.

Ame. Insolence! this to me!

Ber. So the world pronounced him, but, if you prefer it, we will call him a noble spirited fellow; I have no objection.

Ame. Alas! Were you well acquainted with him?

Ber. No one knew him better.

Ame. This language is extraordinary.

Ber. It may be so, but still it is true to the letter—Look at me well! Amelia, behold the disowned!

Ame. Ah! yes, yes, I know you now. Charles!—My brother! [*Throws herself into his arms.*]

Ber. This now is what may be called pure sisterly love; the force of natural affection. You are not too proud to own me.

Ame. How often have I thought of you, Charles—but in what a state do I find you.

Ber. A little the worse for the wear, I must confess. My affairs are not in a very flourishing condition, but, with you, it is otherwise, and as becomes a brother, I rejoice at it.

Ame. I never will abandon you

Ber. Certainly not; don't think of such a thing.

Ame. But where have you been; what have you been doing since you left our father's roof?

Ber. Many things--I first enlisted for a soldier, but not liking that mode of life, deserted; was pursued, taken, and would have been shot, but for the friendship of a comrade, who effected my escape. Without a sou in my pocket, I came to the metropolis, and was soon initiated into the art and mystery of living here. I became an agent for a gambling house; a genteel affair; but as I was too knowing for the principal, we separated. Being out of regular employment, I now found myself one day in favour and the next kicked out of doors. Thus I lived for some years, when, all at once, our father died and I became possessed of my patrimony.

Ame. Alas! our poor father!

Ber. Ah! poor man, that's exactly what I say.

Ame. He died, Charles, without pardoning you.

Ber. And without leaving me sufficient to allay the poignancy of my grief. But, fifty thousand francs was something, and I mourned not while they lasted.-- Those were glorious days; but human joys are fleeting. In about a year, what with wine, women and play, my money vanished. To support my mode of living I had recourse to certain hazardous speculations, which becoming public, I was introduced into a court of justice. The judges differed in opinion with me with regard to the legality of my conduct, and, as they had it all their own way, I was sentenced to the galleys.

Ame. [*Starting from him.*] Horror!

Ber. I have finished; and, since I am here, my pretty sister, we'll forget past sorrows! I'll be your pro-

lector and we'll never part. There are but two of us remaining, Amelia, and 'twould be a sin to part.

Ame. I will provide for your wants, Charles, but, after what you have disclosed, you must conceive——

Ber. I conceive nothing.

Ame. You cannot think, my brother, that, without injury to my reputation, I could acknowledge you to the world.

Ber. Ha! Does the wind set in from that quarter? then to prepare for the storm. Behold me! (*Sitting.*) Here I am securely anchored, and here I will remain. Blow on; come forth philosophy.

[*Takes out his pipe.*]

Ame. Gracious heavens! What would you?

Ber. Live, and live well; 'tis natural; besides, I was born and bred to it. [*Fixing his pipe.*]

Ame. Would you ruin me?

Ber. That is your affair, not mine.

Ame. Think of my situation! I am upon the point of marriage; if I avow you as my brother, the secret of your desperate life would be known; then would St. Felix!—Could he unite himself to the sister of such a character?

Ber. Humph! Now you speak like a sensible girl, you'll find that I am not unreasonable; I have the means of arranging matters; I came hither to be the domestic of Madam Dé Courcy, and, in that capacity we will merge the brother for the present.

Ame. I cannot suffer you to submit to such degradation.

Ber. True, I am a gentleman; but make your choice. Either proclaim me as your brother, or suffer me to enter your service. Oh! you prefer the latter.

Well, I submit; but I must provide a proper suit of clothes, and it has been so long since I saw my tailor, that I rather suspect I have no credit with him.

Ame. Well, since you will have it so, here is money.

Ber. Gold! Ravishing sight! 'Tis a long while since I looked upon these tempting portraits. Three louis! It will do for the present. Now to consider what dress? Oh, no matter, I can employ it more advantageously than in dress, and any thing will do for a valet-de-chambre.

Enter JUSTINE, running—R. H.

Jus. Mr. St. Felix, madam.

Ame. St. Felix?

Ber. My brother-in law. An introduction is not necessary, at present, I presume?

Ame. Do not forget——

Ber. My part? Never fear; I have seen the world and know how to conduct myself.

[Exit with JUSTINE—L. H.]

Enter GUSTAVUS, in great trouble—R. H.

Gus. *[Throwing himself in a chair.]* Amelia! dear Amelia!

Ame. Here, here my beloved! What has happened? This agitation——

Gus. Is that of despair! the deepest; the most hopeless!

Ame. Heavens! What terrible presentiment!—Your absence for two days; the arrival of your uncle! Gustavus, do you come to tell me that we must part!

Gus. No, no! I fear not that excess of misery! but, if you knew all the horror of my situation, could you ask to remain with me?

Ame. You alarm me! In the name of heaven speak! Hesitate not to tell me all.

Gus. Learn, then, the dreadful truth! When we first met, Amelia, my name was untarnished; my heart was pure, and it adored you! I was the heir of unbounded wealth, and I believed that you would be the happiest of wives! It was a momentary dream of enchantment, but I have now awakened to the fearful reality. You see me, discarded, destitute! without resources, without hope!

Ame. Unfortunate Gustavus! But if you have the courage to support your misfortune, I shall be happier than ever, for it will be the means of proving that it is you alone that I love.

Gus. Unexampled generosity! But when you shall know all, will you still preserve your love?

Ame. All!

Gus. Yes; branded, spurned, dishonored.

Ame. Oh! no, no, no, not dishonored! any thing but that—You did not say dishonored?

Gus. I burn with shame while I avow it. I have betrayed the confidence of the worthy man who entrusted me with his concerns. Well may you start and recoil from the touch of the hand that robbed him.—God knows, unwillingly, unintentionally. I was mad! mad. My uncle has disowned me! he knows all! I am disinherited—cursed, and have nothing left me but the contempt and scorn of the world. Now, my Amelia, can you still love a wretch so lost as I am?

Ame. You are culpable, and I could blame you;

but it is for me to sooth and not to censure. Were you a thousand times more guilty, I might expire with grief, but not cease to love you.

Gus. How can I ever repay such devoted affection! still you cast me not off, still you cherish me in your heart, though my guilt has rendered me so contemptible in your eyes.

Ame. Dishonored! Oh! St. Felix! that was unkind! But there may be a means to repair all.

Gus. A means!

Ame. Yes, and I am happy in having it in my power to be the instrument. [*She goes to the secretary and takes out a pocket book.*] Here are twenty thousand francs, the residue of my fortune. Take it; take it, Gustavus; go, save your honor.

Gus. Amelia! My heart is full! I was not prepared for this. You have made a very child of me.

[*Falls in tears on her neck.*]

Ame. Beloved St. Felix! take it! fly; lose no time in redeeming your honor.

Gus. 'Tis useless; this sum is insufficient.

Ame. Well, then, my furniture, my jewels, my diamonds, may double it perhaps. Take them, sell them, and return to your uncle and implore his pardon.

Gus. Amelia, I have adored you, but never knew you till this moment. But I will not permit the sacrifice! I am not so base as to abuse your love and expose you to privation and misery.

Ame. Think not of that. If you are wretched can I be happy? In the name of heaven do not refuse me. Your honor and reputation are at stake—ought you, can you then hesitate?

Gus. I never will consent.

Enter MALFORD—R. H.

Ame. Ah! Malford.

Gus. [*Running to him.*] Welcome, welcome, my friend. Aid me to resist the generosity of Amelia.—She knows my misfortune, and, to repair it, she would relinquish every thing she has in the world and devote herself to the most abject misery.

Mal. (*Aside.*) Confusion! I must interfere here.

Ame. I think, sir, that so far from blaming, you will, on the contrary, approve of any steps which may save your friend.

Mal. This interest for my unfortunate friend, madam, touches me sensibly—fills me with wonder and admiration; but, unfortunately, your noble interposition will now be useless.

Ame. How so, sir?

Mal. I have just left your uncle, Gustavus, who is now more than ever enraged against you.

Gus. From what motive?

Mal. By some unlucky chance he has heard of your intimacy here.

Gus. Is it possible! What has he heard?

Mal. I am ignorant; but this I know: Some secret enemy has circulated scandalous reports which have made a terrible impression on his mind. He accuses madam De Courcy, alone, as being the cause of your fault, and upon her he pours out the vials of his wrath and indignation. In a word, your love now is your greatest crime in his eyes.

Ame. You hear, Gustavus.

Gus. This is to the heart! But let not his injus ic

distress you, Amelia. A terrible fate threatens us, and we must rather escape from, than encounter it.—My uncle is implacable, and he has the power to overwhelm us. I fear even him who once loved me most. I now consent to your proposal—sell all, and let us abandon this spot forever.

Ame. Fly!

Gus. Yes; to some foreign land for refuge: The money will suffice for a time. I will labor diligently, and, be assured, heaven will second my endeavours.—Some day, perhaps, I shall be able to acquit myself of the debt which has caused my shame. If we are not rich, we shall, at least, be together. There is much in that, Amelia.

Ame. Much! every thing!

Gus. Then, without regret, you consent to follow me?

Ame. Throughout the world—to the end of life:

Gus. God give you strength. To night then we will depart.

Mal. (*Aside.*) To night! that must not be.

Gus. Malfort, you say nothing. Do you disapprove?

Mal. No, no; certainly not. On the contrary I admire the courage with which you support this reverse of fortune. That you should go, I see the necessity; but to night is what I blame.

Gus. Why not to night?

Mal. Your precipitate departure would soon become known, and your uncle would follow your steps and employ the most rigorous measures to terminate your flight. You know his character.

Gus. What then would you suggest?

Mal. Not to hazard any thing. Receive your friends to night in your customary way. Assume even a satisfied air, and to-morrow you may quit Paris without the least suspicion having been created of your design.

Gus. Malfort advises well.

Mal. No thanks St. Felix; I esteem myself too happy in having it in my power to serve you. Nay, no more sadness. Recollect how much depends on your conduct.

Gus. Come Amelia. To-night we will live for others; to-morrow exist for ourselves alone.

[*Exeunt AMELIA and GUSTAVUS—L. H.*]

Mal. No; I will not let them depart. It is not yet time. His passion cannot long exist in this state of mental agony, and he would return to solicit the pardon of his uncle, and I fear he would obtain it. Duval has evinced much indulgence, Pauline much love; they will finish by calming the enraged St. Felix, and I shall have been at useless pains. It is necessary to strike a decisive blow, and blast forever all hope of reconciliation. This flight of theirs perplexes me. How shall I prevent it? Let me see! I have it. These twenty thousand francs are their only resource. If they are deprived of that they must remain. My emissaries are among the company, I'll instruct them, and I need not doubt the result. [Exit—L. H.]

SCENE II.

A Saloon furnished in the first style of Parisian taste. Folding doors in flat. Near the front card tables. Music. Several ladies and gentlemen discovered, some at play. AMELIA and GUSTAVUS. A dance is commenced. MALFORT enters. After surveying the company, motions to one of the guests, who approaches him.

Mal. [*Low to the guest.*] Have you obeyed my instructions? Are you sure of your cards?

The Guest. Perfectly.

Mal. There is your man; invite him to play.

[*Pointing to GUSTAVUS.*]

Guest. Mr. St. Felix, I owe you a game, if you are disposed to have your revenge.

Mal. [*Low to GUSTAVUS.*] Do not refuse to play, chance may be favourable, and before an hour you may be able to re-pay Mr. Duval.

Gus. If I dare but hope for that.

Mal. Fortune does not always frown. Trust to her once more.

Guest. Well, Mr. St. Felix, do you accept my challenge, or must I look elsewhere?—

Gus. I am yours, sir. -

Ame. [*Who has been observing him.*] He is going to play. I tremble for him; but I may prevent him. [*As she approaches GUSTAVUS, who has seated himself at a table, MALFORT stops her.*]

Mal. I hope, madam, you will do me the honour to become my partner at a game of whist.

Ame. No, sir; I cannot.—

Mal. [*Still restraining her.*] Nay, I'll listen to no refusal. You who usually take so much interest in

the game, and are so admirable a player! You consent, do you not?

Ame. Since you insist, sir.—(*Aside.*) He has the twenty thousand francs about him; can he have forgotten? Will he risk?—[*The dance is continued. GUSTAVUS is on the right at a card table. AMELIA, with MALFORT and two others, is engaged at whist on the left. GUSTAVUS suddenly rises and throws the cards on the table. The dance ceases.*

Gus. Damnation! Ten thousand francs lost.

Ame. Gracious heavens! Ten thousand francs!

Mal. You have had ill luck, St. Felix, but courage, fortune must turn.

Ame. Play no more, Gustavus; risk no more.

Gus. 'Tis impossible that ill luck should always pursue me. Double or quits. [*He places ten bank bills on the table.*]

Ame. Are you mad, Gustavus?

Mal. [*Interposing.*] You forget, madam, where you are. We are observed.

Ame. If he should lose what will become of us!

Mal. Proceed with the dance. [*The dance continues. AMELIA throws herself on a chair in the greatest agitation.*]

Mal. [*Overlooking the players.*] Capital hands.—Both equal. As interesting a game as ever I witnessed.

Ame. Fatal imprudence!

Mal. The game is the king's.

Guest. 'Tis mine then. See! [*Holding up the cards.*

Ame. We are lost.

Gus. The money is yours, sir.—Ruin!—O! Amelia!

St. Felix. [*Without.*] He is here; I know he is, and will speak to him.

Gus. My uncle's voice.

Ame. Your uncle!

[*Retires to the back of the stage.*]

Enter ST. FELIX, c. d. through a crowd of servants, who attempt to oppose his entrance.

St. Felix. Let me pass wretches. I will enter—
[*Perceiving GUSTAVUS.*] O! Sir, I have found you at last, have I? And is it here you come in the midst of dissipation to drown the reproaches of conscience.—
[*AMELIA speaks to the guests and they retire.*]

Gus. It can be of little importance to you, sir, where I conceal myself, as you have already driven me from your presence, and told me that I am no longer any thing to you.

St. Felix. Still I will force you from the abyss on which you stand in spite of yourself. I see now the cause of your infamy. This Madam De Courcy; this intriguing wanton who has set her snares for your unsuspecting youth.

Ame. To what insult and humiliation am I exposed.

St. Felix. And you are she, then, madam! I am glad of this opportunity of expressing to you the extent of my indignation.

Gus. Hold, sir, hold! Some monster has calumniated her to you. So far from meriting your reproaches, she is worthy of your esteem.

St. Felix. My esteem! She, who has consummated your ruin.

Gus. You wrong her; cruelly wrong her, and shall yet acknowledge it. Even now she has sacrificed to me all her possessions to save my honour and regain your good opinion.

St. Felix. She calculates well. She knew you were too generous to accept her offer, and merely wished to impose on you by an appearance of virtue, to make you completely her victim.

Ame. Can you think me capable.—[*Bursting into tears.*] Am I not sufficiently wretched;—must more be added:—

Gus. In the name of heaven, sir, restrain this language, lest unmindful of your age, and the kindred ties which unite us——I——

St. Felix. Ha! You would intimidate me.—I have come to make one last effort to save you. Reflect; for your answer decides your fate. Notwithstanding your conduct I can forgive. Mr. Duval pardons you, and his daughter is still disposed to give you her hand. Happiness, fortune and reputation, can yet be retrieved, but you must instantly quit this house, and renounce forever a connection that has dishonoured you, and will sooner or later bring you to ruin.

Ame. Do not hesitate, Gustavus. Accept his generous offer—accept it I conjure you.

Gus. What! Can you, Amelia—you!—advise me to such a step?

Ame. Yes. Without me, wealth and honour attend you; but with me disgrace and wretchedness. Fate has placed an insurmountable barrier between us.—Follow your uncle, and leave me to myself.

Gus. Never!

St. Felix. Wretch! this before me!

Gus. And more—that I may the better preserve that injured one from your violence, I will this instant conduct her to the altar that she may have a husband's protection.

St. Felix. Your wife! Will you thus dishonour your family? But I will find a way to separate you in spite of your frenzy. This night a convent's walls shall enclose her.

Ame. Oh! Heaven!

Gus. Dare you commit such an outrage!

St. Felix. I have here an order from the minister of police. [*Producing paper.*]

Gus. Obtained by calumny and falsehood. By what right, sir, do you persecute us thus? I will protect her at the hazard of my life.—Think then, sir, before you proceed, of the consequences of your tyranny.

St. Felix. Abandoned boy! All hope of reclaiming you is vanished, and I now swear, by the honour you have betrayed, to leave you to your fate. One day you will deeply atone for this ingratitude. I forbid you ever to mention me as your relation, and for me—I have no longer a nephew. [*Exit—c. d.*]

Gus. And I no longer an uncle.

Ame. What an awful scene. I sink with emotion.—His insults—his menaces.—

Gus. [*Supporting her.*] Mere words. He will not dare to execute his threats, for he knows, be your fate what it may, I will share it with you. Courage, Amelia.

Enter JUSTINE.

Jus. Madam.

Ame. What would you girl?

Jus. I come to receive your orders. All the company is departed.

Gus. And Mr. Malfort also.

Jus. He went, sir, immediately on the appearance of your uncle.

Ame. What a reverse! All the world flies from us; and, to add to our misery, we are forced to remain exposed to humiliation.

Gus. And I alone am to blame. Had it not been for my cursed infatuation—the means of escape——

Ame. Do not mention it.—I meant not that Gustavus.

Enter BERTRAND hastily.

Ber. Quick, quick, madam, there is not a moment to be lost. Instantly fly.

Gus. Fly! From what motive?

Ber. Several men have beset the house, who enquire for Madam De Courcy.

Ame. For me! is it possible!

Gus. Can my uncle have done this!

Ber. One of them, an old acquaintance,—I have my friends in every station,—assured me positively that they had orders to secure your person.

Ame. Arrest me! our fate is accomplished. I am lost.

Gus. Amelia.

Ber. By flight alone you can hope for safety. I have discovered a passage which leads into the adjoining house, and by that way you may gain the street. Haste, haste, every moment is precious.

Ame. But where shall we find refuge for the night?

Ber. I have a small furnished apartment whither I will conduct you. No delay. Go prepare your jewels; in the mean time I will stand sentinel, and warn you in case of danger. [*AMELIA and GUSTAVUS enter the apartment on the right.*] If it were not for me, these inexperienced young ones would run into the wolf's mouth, but the burnt cat knows the fire, so I will reconnoitre. [*Going out.*]

Enter MALFORT.—C. E. L. H.

Mal. Whither are you going, Bertrand?

Ber. To take an observation. These men without would arrest my sister.

Mal. Your sister, did you say! Is Madam De Courcy your sister?

Ber. Why, I am her brother, and she's not ashamed to own me, a gentleman born and bred.—But stop, gens-d'armes are not likely to be asleep. [*Looks out of the window.*]

Mal. Amelia his sister! this circumstance favours my schemes. Bertrand, for his own interest, will now more warily second my projects.

Ber. They are on the look out.

Mal. The situation of your sister is desperate.

Ber. Bad enough. Poor thing's approaching my level.

Mal. Would you render her an important service?

Ber. Certainly. She is my sister you know. Natural affection and all that. O, I remember the old story; I have read it a hundred times in books of morality.

Mal. Right. Besides, if it leads you on to fortune—

Ber. Virtue should be rewarded. Say no more.—
What's to be done?

Mal. I will explain hereafter. Come to me to-night. Caution is necessary. You must not be seen in the house of Mr. Duval. Here, take this key, it will serve to open the garden gate; once in, you know the way to my apartments. At ten, let me see you, but take care that you are not discovered.

Ber. Make yourself easy on that score; I am too well used to such adventures. At ten precisely.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The vestibule of Mr. Duval's house. In the flat a large glazed door which opens into the court. On the right an elegant practicable stair case; on the same side, nearer the front, a door of a small apartment. On the left, a door leading to another room. A statue at the foot of the stair-case. A suspended lamp illuminates the court, at the bottom of which, on one side, is a pavillion, and on the other a porter's lodge. In the middle a playing fountain.

Enter MALFORT conducting GUSTAVUS—L. H. ANDREW at the threshold of the apartment on the left, unnoticed, watches them.

Mal. [Opening the door on the right.] So far we have entered unperceived.—Go to my chamber, St.

Felix, and leave me to prepare your uncle for an interview.

And. (*Aside.*) What's in the wind now I wonder?

Gus. I have followed your advice, Malfort, in coming hither, but I am certain the step is useless. My uncle is so much irritated against me, that if he consents to see me it will be only to load me with reproaches.

And. The old gentleman is violently enraged against you, that's the truth of it. (*Aside.*)

Mal. Believe me your case is not so desperate. Tomorrow all will be well. There, go in, go in, and be careful not to leave your concealment till I come back.

Gus. [*Pressing his hand.*] I will do nothing rashly, my friend. [*Enters the chamber.—R. H.*]

And. So; he's shut up in that chamber. There's a secret worth knowing.

[*Andrew disappears.—L. H.*]

Mal. All goes on well. His fate is sealed, and if my designs are well executed, I shall soon enjoy the rich reward I aim at. Where can Bertrand loiter at such a time.

Ber. [*Appears in the court, opens the glass door, with precaution.*] Malfort.

Mal. Ah!—is it you, Bertrand?

Ber. Give the word; advance or retreat?

Mal. All's safe. Enter.

Ber. [*Coming forward.*] Well, here I am; punctual to a moment, you see. It is the life and soul of business.

Mal. Are you sure no one has seen you?

Ber. No one, on the honour of a gentleman. I understand the system of precaution. But to business.

You want my services, and you are to make my fortune. What is it I am to do?

Mal. Be not in such haste. You naturally count upon your sister's marriage with Gustavus to advance your own interests.

Ber. Exactly. To levy contributions on my fine brother-in-law; that's my plan.

Mal. In the present state of affairs your profits, it is probable, would be but small.

Ber. How so?

Mal. Young hopeful's expectations rest solely with his uncle, who to-morrow intends to will his property to another branch of his family.

Ber. The devil! Will he play us such a trick? That's illiberal.

Mal. He is firmly resolved, in which case Amelia's husband will not be worth a sou.

Ber. Then I must forbid the ban. We wish no poor devils in our family.

Mal. And, on the other hand, Pauline loves him still; and, as he possesses nothing, it is to be feared——

Ber. He will abandon my sister and pounce upon her and her dowry. Quite natural. The way of the world.

Mal. You then must perceive, if the uncle execute his project, our schemes fall to the ground.

Ber. You talk like a sensible man. Something must be done, and immediately.

Mal. To-morrow it is that he signs the fatal instrument that involves us all. *To-morrow* he signs.

Ber. I hear.—I understand you perfectly. To-morrow he disinherits my brother-in-law.

Mal. Yes; but if by chance one of those unexpected accidents——

Ber. An attack of apoplexy for instance—a sudden death—I understand.—Then all would be snug. Will you take a whiff? [*Offering his pipe.*]

Mal. Excuse me. But he is hearty and like to live long.

Ber. O, rot his constitution! that spoils all again. Let me reflect. There is a way——

Mal. (*Aside.*) He comes to it.

Ber. You had better take a whiff.

Mal. I do not smoke.

Ber. I do. Smoking always tends to clear my ideas, and make me philosophical. I have it already as clear as noon day.

Mal. Out with it.

Ber. Since this troublesome fellow has no disposition to depart quietly, suppose we just assist chance a little.

Mal. You would——

Ber. Certainly. It will be the surest way to prevent his making a new will, you know.

Mal. True; but I would not propose——

Ber. You! who could suppose such a thing; but if the execution does not present many risks——

Mal. I will answer for the success; but mark, I do not advise.

Ber. No, no, it is only a supposition; a continuation of the metaphor. I understand your feelings perfectly. I have studied metaphysics among rogues, and know more than those who declaim in colleges.

Mal. Mr. St. Felix lodges in that pavilion you see there in the court.

Ber. Good. In case of accidents a retreat may be covered by the garden. In such campaigns I always think of a retreat. It is a principle in our tactics.

Mal. He is now with Mr. Duval, and will retire to rest towards eleven o'clock. Hark, I hear footsteps.

Ber. I must file off then. Which way captain?

Mal. Quick, up the staircase—I'll join you presently.

Ber. I'll finish my pipe in the meantime. [*Goes up the stairs and disappears.*]

Enter ANDREW from door on L. H.

And. You here still, Mr. Malfort?

Mal. What is wanted, Andrew?

And. Miss Duval desires to speak to you, sir.

Mal. With me, at this hour! What can she possibly want. I will go to her.

And. That's unnecessary, sir, she is here. [*Going to door on the left.*] Mr. Malfort is here, miss.

Enter PAULINE—L. H. D.

Mal. To what happy chance, Miss Duval, am I indebted for this interview?

Pau. The step I have taken, Mr. Malfort, may indeed surprise you; but I trust, when my business is known, no apology will be necessary. Tell me, is it true that Gustavus is here?

Mal. Gustavus, Miss Duval! Who could have told you so?

And. I did, sir. I saw him enter with you and mentioned it to Miss Pauline to oblige her.

Pau. Yes; notwithstanding his errors, I would re-

concile him with his uncle if possible; and I have strong hopes of success. But an interview is necessary.

Mal. How, miss, would you see him after what has occurred?

Pau. Friendship is indulgent.—The moments are precious. You will allow me. Mr. Malfort.

Mal. Certainly, if you desire it. Cursed mischance, but I will yet frustrate their plans. [*Aside, as he knocks at the door of the apartment on the R.*]

Pau. Andrew retire.

And. Poor Mr. St. Felix, I am certain he is very sorry for what he has done. [*Exit centre.*]

Enter GUSTAVUS—R. H.

Gus. Well, my friend, what news do you bring?—
[*MALFORT points to PAULINE.*] What do I see, Miss Duval!

Pau. Yes, Mr. St. Felix,—I commiserate your lot, and come to endeavour to assuage your anguish.

Gus. You, Miss Duval, after my conduct towards you—you bring consolation to such a wretch as I am!

Pau. Nay, speak not of that—your uncle has vowed never to pardon you, and I would make him retract. Hear my plan. He will soon retire to his apartment, and when alone, Gustavus, we will present ourselves before him—he cannot resist our tears and prayers—he must—he will forgive you.

Gus. How shall I ever repay you for this zeal in the cause of a poor unfortunate!

Pau. Be happy, and sometimes think of Pauline. To live in your memory is all I ask. Since I cannot

obtain your love, give me at least your friendship.— You will not refuse me that.

Gus. Refuse you! O! no, no. Your kindness has left an impression on my mind too powerful to be effaced. Never shall the recollection of this hour be forgotten. In friendship, at least, generous woman, I will be faithful.

Mal. Hark! some one comes. If St. Felix is seen, our plan will be frustrated.

Pau. Mr. Malfort is right. We must separate. Retire, retire, Gustavus.

Gus. I obey. [*MALFORT conducts him to the door.*]
[*Exit GUSTAVUS.*]

Mal. Miss Duval, it is necessary that I leave you for a moment. I have some business to transact with your father. I will return and join my feeble efforts with yours for our unfortunate friend.

[*Exit L. H. D.*]

ANDREW enters through the glass door from the court.

And. Miss Duval, here is a note which a female without prayed me to give into your own hands in private.

Pau. In private! What can be the meaning of this secrecy? [*She takes the note and reads.*] “An unfortunate female prays that Miss Duval will allow her a moment’s interview, as she regards the welfare of Mr. St. Felix.” The welfare of St. Felix. Who can it be? Andrew, where is this female?

And. She awaits your answer, miss.

Pau. Admit her. [*Exit ANDREW—C. D.*] This is very strange. Who can this female be? And what can she have to say to me? If it is she whom Gustavus—but then why address herself to me?

Enter ANDREW and AMELIA from the court.—C. D.

Pau. [After returning AMELIA'S salutation.] You wished to speak to me, madam. Will you enter.— [Pointing to the door of the apartment.—L. H.]

Ame. If you please I will remain here. But I would prefer——[Looking towards ANDREW.]

Pau. Andrew, leave us.—You seem, madam, to be much interested in the happiness of Mr. St. Felix.

Ame. Yes, very much. More so, perhaps, than even yourself.

Pau. More than I! This is strange language. Deign, madam, to be more explicit.

Ame. You see before you one who has brought confusion into this family—sorrow to your heart! Yes, madam, I am that Amelia, that wretched being, for whom Gustavus has made such a fearful sacrifice.

Pau. Gracious heavens! What then means this mysterious visit to me?

Ame. I came to beseech you, madam, to speak in my name to Mr. St. Felix—the uncle of Gustavus. Should I present myself before him, he would not listen to me; but to you he will attend. Say to him, madam, that she who has been the innocent—yes innocent cause of the misfortunes of Gustavus, would this day make atonement by the sacrifice of her own happiness. Say to him, that I will fly from him whom I love more than life, and never return if he will restore to his favour his unfortunate nephew.

Pau. Would you then renounce him?

Ame. The sacrifice is dreadful, but my determination is made, and nothing on earth shall change it.

Let Mr. St. Felix dispose of me as he will. Let him designate the land to which he would have me exiled, where I may conceal my tears and brood over my sorrows alone, and I here vow that the asylum he may choose shall be the place where I will terminate my days.

Pau. Have you well reflected, madam, on this step. Your resolution——

Ame. Is irrevocable. I now view with horror the abyss to which my fatal love has conducted Gustavus, but there is yet time to save him, and I will not hesitate. This instant I will go. He will not know the place of my retreat. Yes—I here pronounce a last, an eternal farewell! Poor Gustavus! you will not doubt my love; you, at least, will do me justice!

Pau. Magnanimous woman! Believe me, madam, I am not insensible to your anguish.

BERTRAND appears on the top of the stairs. He stops on seeing *PAULINE* and *AMELIA*.

Ber. Ha! I must be cautious—some one is below.

Ame. Ah! madam, you know not what a balm the hope of saving Gustavus has brought to my wounded spirit. I feel I shall be less unhappy.

Ber. How is this! My sister!

Ame. But I would not abuse your indulgence any longer. Madam, farewell! Soon I hope that his—his smiles may drive sorrow from your bosom; but, in the midst of your happiness, deign sometimes to recall to your mind the wretched *Amelia*.

Pau. [*Throwing herself into her arms.*] Oh! never, never will I forget you.

Ame. Generous *Pauline*.

Pau. Farewell, farewell, madam. I hasten to Mr. St. Felix and my father. You will soon learn that I am worthy of the confidence you have reposed in me.

[*Exit precipitately—L. H.*

Ame. Yes, she will be happy, while all the pangs of hopeless misery are mine. [*As she is retiring, BERTRAND descends and places himself in her way.*]

Ber. Stay an instant. Be not in such haste.

Ame. My brother! You here?

Ber. Exactly. Say, did I understand you right!—You would renounce St. Felix.

Ame. I would. His happiness has rendered a separation indispensable.

Ber. His happiness! What have you to do with his happiness? Consult your own.

Ame. Honour and duty impel me to the step.

Ber. Honour and duty! Pshaw you are a fool. What the devil have you to do with honour or duty in the present emergency?

Ame. Never were my circumstances more desperate than at present.

Ber. Affairs are bad enough, it is true, but not so desperate as you imagine. To-morrow Gustavus will be rich, rolling in wealth, and he shall marry you. Start not. I promise it, and have already taken such steps as will enable me to fulfil my promise.

Ame. I know not how it is, but your words and looks make me tremble! What do you here at this hour?

Ber. Business. Ay, and of moment too.

Ame. Answer me. I must know.

Ber. Well then—the old uncle is the sole obstacle to your union; is he not?

Ame. Ah! Go on.

Ber. Well—after he has retired to his apartment— You understand. An old man more or less in the world is of little consequence.

Ame. Hold, hold, murderous wretch, you freeze my blood with horror. [*Shrinking from him.*]

Ber. And is this all the thanks I receive.

Ame. Away, away, the sight of you is dreadful to me.

Ber. Lower, lower, weak fool, would you betray me?

Ame. Ay, if you do not at once renounce your murderous designs. Follow me out of this house, or instantly I rush into the street, and by my cries arouse the neighbourhood. Begone, begone, I say.

Ber. Ha!—I will find a way to silence your upbraidings. Despite of yourself I will serve you.— [*He draws a dagger, and seizes her by the arm. She falls; he holds the weapon over her.*] Behold! Swear not to divulge my purpose, or I strike.

Ame. Hold, hold, my brother. 'Tis not for myself that I would stay your hand. I am miserable and would meet the blow with gladness; but to prevent crime, the shedding of innocent blood I intercede.

Ber. Your words are useless. Swear, or die! Swear!

Ame. Never!

Ber. On your head, not on mine, then, be your death. You die. [*She clings to him. During the struggle BERTRAND is startled by a noise.*]—R. H.— Confusion, I am foiled. [*He darts through the glass door into the court.*]

Enter GUSTAVUS from door on right.

Gus. What voice was that? Amelia!—No; I was not deceived; it is Amelia.

Ame. St. Felix! Beloved St. Felix! [*Falling into his arms.*]

Gus. How is it, Amelia, that I see you here! Are you not aware of the danger that threatens you?

Ame. For your sake I have braved all; for your sake I would encounter twice as great.

Gus. You are agitated. I never saw you look thus before. Explain the meaning of this.

Ame. 'Tis the agitation of horror. My blood curdles at the avowal, but it must be made, or my silence will render me the accomplice of an assassin.

Gus. An assassin! What dark meaning is hidden in your words? Collect yourself, Amelia, and for pity's sake recall what you have said.

Ame. Yes; you must know all. Frightful as the truth is, I dare not conceal it from you. Gustavus, the life of your uncle is threatened.

Gus. Great God! how know you this?

Ame. The assassin now lays in wait for him; the dagger is already drawn, and as soon as your uncle enters his apartment, it will be sheathed in his bosom.

Gus. Horrible! are you mad?

Ame. No, not mad; not yet, not yet, St. Felix, though I have experienced enough to drive me mad.—My heart and brain are rent.—Be satisfied with saving your uncle's life, but say not who warned you of his danger, or you will consign to the scaffold a wretch——

Gus. What is this I hear! Amelia pleading for the midnight murderer!

Ame. Yes; spurn me, Gustavus, for that murderer is my——brother.

Gus. Your brother!

Ame. That Bertrand, who was admitted into my house—I have the misfortune to be his sister.—‘To forward our union, he would remove your uncle.—Now would you denounce him, and cast on my memory eternal opprobrium?’

Gus. I expose you to shame! I who would give my life to spare you a single tear! Can you doubt my love?

Ame. Your love, Gustavus? Cease to cherish it, for it only leads to inevitable ruin. My voice falters while I declare to you,—this is the last time we shall ever meet on earth.

Gus. You cannot mean it.

Ame. My resolution is taken; for your sake I fly from you, and honour demands that you make a sacrifice of feeling.

Gus. What language to hear from your lips, Amelia.

Ame. Yes, Gustavus, it is to your honour that I appeal. Blush for your love for me! My brother—Heaven has given him that title—My brother, is ready to imbrue his hands in blood. Dare you then, Gustavus, take, as the partner of your fate, the sister of a man, whose shame and guilt must bring odium on all connected with him?

Gus. Cruel Amelia, to awaken a thought like that.

Ame. Dwell on it; never let it be absent from your mind, until your fatal love for me is no longer remem-

bered. I see my words have not been unavailing!—Reason resumes her empire. You know your duty and will yet fulfil it; I go to fulfil mine. Farewell! farewell! Gustavus be happy, and I shall be recompensed.

[Retiring.]

Gus. Stay, stay! what would you do! Would you leave me? Would you fly from me? Shall we never meet again?

Ame. I trust we shall, but never on earth. My vow is registered and shall not be broken.

Gus. Then hear mine. I swear to follow your steps throughout the world—never will I lose sight of you. Our fates shall be the same.

Ame. Follow me! Do you forget your uncle?

Gus. My uncle!

Ame. Who is there but you to defend his life? Follow me and he dies.

Gus. Good Heavens! how shall I act!—Ah! my uncle comes. [*He conceals himself by the stairs. Exit AMELIA through the glass door, while MALFORT, PAULINE, DUVAL and ST. FELIX enter from the apartment on the left.*]

St. Felix. Good night, good night, my friends, I pray go no farther. Ah! Mr. Malfort, I have news for you. Do you know that Pauline, here, has received a visit from this Madam De Courcy?

Mal. Indeed!

St. Felix. Yes; she is really an extraordinary woman. She promises to renounce Gustavus and to place herself at my discretion, on condition that I pardon my nephew.

Pau. [*Having perceived GUSTAVUS, makes signs to him.*] You see, my dear sir, that every body says you

ought to forgive your nephew. You surely cannot longer, in justice, withhold your pardon.

Duval. Believe me, my friend, this extreme severity——

St. Felix. Well, well, we will see, we will see.— 'The conduct of this Madam De Courcy is, indeed, noble in the extreme. But is she sincere? That point must first be settled. This may be a preconcerted trick; an artifice to dupe me. But if I should be inclined to forgive my nephew, who can answer for his good conduct for the future?

Pau. I,——I will, sir, on my life.

St. Felix. So ready! He could not have a fairer pledge, my pretty one. But, then, to threaten his uncle—to threaten me, who have always watched over him so tenderly! The profligate!

Pau. Come, come, sir, you must think no more of the past.

St. Felix. Well, well, to-morrow my friends, to-morrow, I may be in a better humour to attend to you. Good night all.

Gus. Great God, if he dismisses them, he is lost!—

[*Rushes forward.*]

St. Felix. Gustavus!

Gus. [*Throwing himself at his feet.*] Vouchsafe to hear me.

St. Felix. Rise, sir, rise; there is no need of this humiliation. I see it plain enough. All this has been well arranged, but they deceive themselves who suppose my resentment is so easily overcome.

Gus. In the name of heaven turn not a deaf ear to my prayers. See my tears! Hear me while I ac-

knowledge my ingratitude and declare my repentance. Say, only say that you pardon me.

St. Felix. After all your faults, your insults to me, dare you cherish the hope of forgiveness? Banish the idea. You can have nothing to say to me that I wish to hear. Leave me. [*Retires. GUSTAVUS rises and endeavours to stop him, when MALFORT interferes.—BERTRAND, who has been watching ST. FELIX through the glass-door, retires as he approaches it.*

Mal. Why detain him, my friend? You have nothing to hope. Do not again expose yourself to the effects of his anger. [*Detaining him.—Exit ST. FELIX.—C. D.*

Gus. He retires! My uncle, my uncle, stay. Stay, you rush on ruin. In the name of heaven unloose your holds! Forgive my violence. [*Breaks from those who endeavour to keep him back, and precipitates himself into the court.*

Duval. What means this violence?

Mal. (*Apart.*) He will arrive too late, and the deed will be thought his, not Bertrand's. [*Several voices without. ANDREW is heard crying "murder."*

Pau. Murder!

Duval. Gustavus——can it be?

Pau. What! my father, can even you suspect?

Duval. His haste and agitation in quitting us create the worst suspicions.

Mal. This exceeds my hopes. If Bertrand escape Gustavus will be pronounced guilty. (*Aside.*)

St. Felix. [*Without.*] Run, run to the garden, the villain took that way. [*The noise continues. DUVAL and PAULINE rush into the court.*

Mal. The uncle's voice! then he has escaped.—Damnation!

Enter ST. FELIX, DUVAL, PAULINE, and AMELIA, wounded. AMELIA supported by ST. FELIX and PAULINE.

St. Felix. Yes, yes, my friends, my danger is past; I should have been assassinated, had it not been for this noble minded creature.

Mal. Amelia!

Pau. You bleed.

Amelia. To death. [*MALFORT and PAULINE support her.*]

St. Felix. When the assassin sprang upon me, she threw herself between us, and received the dagger aimed at my heart, in her own bosom.

Ame. You know me now. I am not the vile wretch that once you thought me.

St. Felix. Pardon the blindness of my passion, thou injured innocent. Angels, look down and strengthen her.

Enter GUSTAVUS—C.

Gus. Where is she? Amelia, where art thou! It is Gustavus calls you. Ah! faint and bleeding! Is it thus we meet? [*Crosses to AMELIA.*]

Ame. I did not think we e'er should meet again, but, since we do, 'tis better thus than otherwise.

Enter ANDREW running.—C.

And. Sir, sir, the assassin is secured.

Mal. All conspires against me!

[BERTRAND appears in the court, in the custody of several domestics. AMELIA turns her eyes towards him.

Ame. Ah! see! Gustavus, I was not prepared for this.

Mal. [To ST. FELIX.] The sight of this wretch, sir, will be too painful to you. Believe me, it would be better to have him conducted at once to prison.

St. Felix. No, no, I wish to learn what instigated him to this outrage. Bring him in.

Duval. Andrew, hasten to the police for a guard.

[Exit ANDREW.—C.]

Mal. I tremble at the result of the examination.

BERTRAND led in by servants, with torches.—C.

St. Felix. Wretch, approach.

Ber. What would you have of me? Ah! my sister!

Omnes. His sister!

Ber. Meddling fool, but for you all would have been well! You have received, however, a reward for your interference:

St. Felix. Ruthless murderer! Answer me, what induced you to attempt my life? I know you not!

Ber. I dare say. We have never had an opportunity of cultivating mutual acquaintance.

St. Felix. What effrontery!

Ber. Well, then, if you are dissatisfied with my answers, cease to question me and let me go.

St. Felix. Astonishing! Had you an accomplice?

Ber. I acted by orders.

Mal. Maledictions on him! Will he betray me!—
(*Aside.*)

St. Felix. Divulge the name of your accomplice and I promise—

Ber. To thank me. Such promises are easily fulfilled. But I will not name him, for he is a good fellow, and may prevent justice from acting too cavalierly with me. [*Casting his eyes towards MALFOET.*] I depend on his services.

Gus. Ah! she faints.—

Ame. 'Tis past, and I am released from a world where shame and wretchedness would pursue me to the grave. Gustavus—Pauline—Your hands—I join them—Amelia joins them, in death—be happy.—Charles, my brother, my poor guilty brother, I forgive you from my heart, and may heaven forgive you too.

[*Dies.*]

Ber. Say on, my injured sister.

Gus. She's dead! [*Bending over the body.*]

Ber. Dead! My sister dead, and by my hand!

Duval. Remove the body into the house.

Ber. Nay, let me gaze upon it. [*Approaches the body.*] Amelia! But this morning you fed, clothed and cherished the reprobate. Acknowledged him whom all mankind disowned! Protected him whom the world spurned and trampled on! And now so lowly! Reduced to this by me.—Oh! God! I have not wept since infancy, and my heart feels as if it would break in giving vent to these few bitter tears. The channels are choked up!—But other thoughts become my situation.

Duval. Well, Mr. St. Felix, since no confession can

be obtained, we had better take Mr. Malfort's advice, and send this unhappy wretch to prison.

Ber. How! Is that Mr. Malfort's advice!

Mal. (*Aside.*) Fatal imprudence!

Enter ANDREW with Soldiers headed by a Sergeant.—c.

St. Felix. Here are the guards. Take charge of your prisoner.

Ber. Hold an instant. I believe I am not the only culprit here.

Mal. (*Aside.*) I tremble!

Ber. [*Approaching MALFORT and striking him on the shoulder.*] Malfort, is this the way that you serve your friends?

Mal. Wretch—how dare you?

Ber. Look there, and ask not what I dare. [*Pointing at the body.*]

St. Felix. What insolence! Mr. Malfort, do you know this man?

And. [*Who has been scrutinizing BERTRAND, with attention.*] Yes, yes, sir; he knows him. I recollect him now. [*To MALFORT.*] Is not this the person, sir, who called on you this morning?

Mal. Yes, it is he, and I was far from believing when I extended my charity.—

Ber. Charity! Ha! ha!—Is this well, to disown your friend: your well-tryed friend, whom here, in this letter, you style your dear friend. [*Producing the letter.*] And yet, in the fulness of your friendship, you would have me sent to prison out of harm's way. Friendly, exceeding friendly!—Malfort, was this well

done towards me, who had the discretion not to betray you?

Duval. What is this I hear?

St. Felix. Can you be serious in the charge?

Ber. I am not wont to jest, old man. Yes; that smooth-skinned hypocrite is my accomplice.

Duval. Malfort! Is it possible?

Mal. I hope, my friends, you cannot think—an accusation so gross, without proof, unsubstantiated—

Ber. Softly, softly, if you please. I have fortunately one or two dumb witnesses, that yet may speak to your confusion. Behold! A garden key, which I received from him in order to gain access to this spot.

Duval. This key is yours. [*To MALFORT.*] I gave it to you myself. Mr. Malfort, I fear——

Mal. What sir, will you credit the accusations of such a wretch as this?

Ber. You still persist! Determined to the last! Right! Read this paper, sir, then judge between us. [*Handing paper to DUVAL.*]

Mal. Give it me.

[*Catching at it.*]

Ber. By your leave. [*Coolly placing it in the hand of DUVAL.*]

Duval. [*Reading.*] What 's this! "On my marriage with Miss Duval, I promise to pay to Bertrand twenty thousand francs;" signed, Malfort. His guilt is too plain. Sergeant do your duty.

Ber. Ha! ha! ha! Now, this is as it should be. It would have been cruel to have parted such dear friends.

Mal. Mr. Duval, you will repent of this violence.

Ber. [*Approaches GUSTAVUS, who is still kneeling by the body.*] Young man, look on me, and thank heaven for your preservation from a fate so deplorable as mine. Even as thou art, once-was I, the pride of my family! and, as I am now, debased and guilty, you must have become, had you continued to follow the advice of that arch devil. [*Pointing at MALFORT.*] Look on me, and tremble at the abyss of misery from which you have been dragged.—Amelia!—But death to thee is happiness; my guilt would have cursed thee in this world. [*After a violent struggle.*] I am ready, lead on to the prison.

[*Tableau curtain falls.*]

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Smith, Richard Penn
The disowned.

WESTER

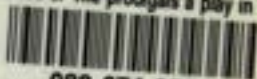
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179 cm

PS2869.S7D6 1830 c.1

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