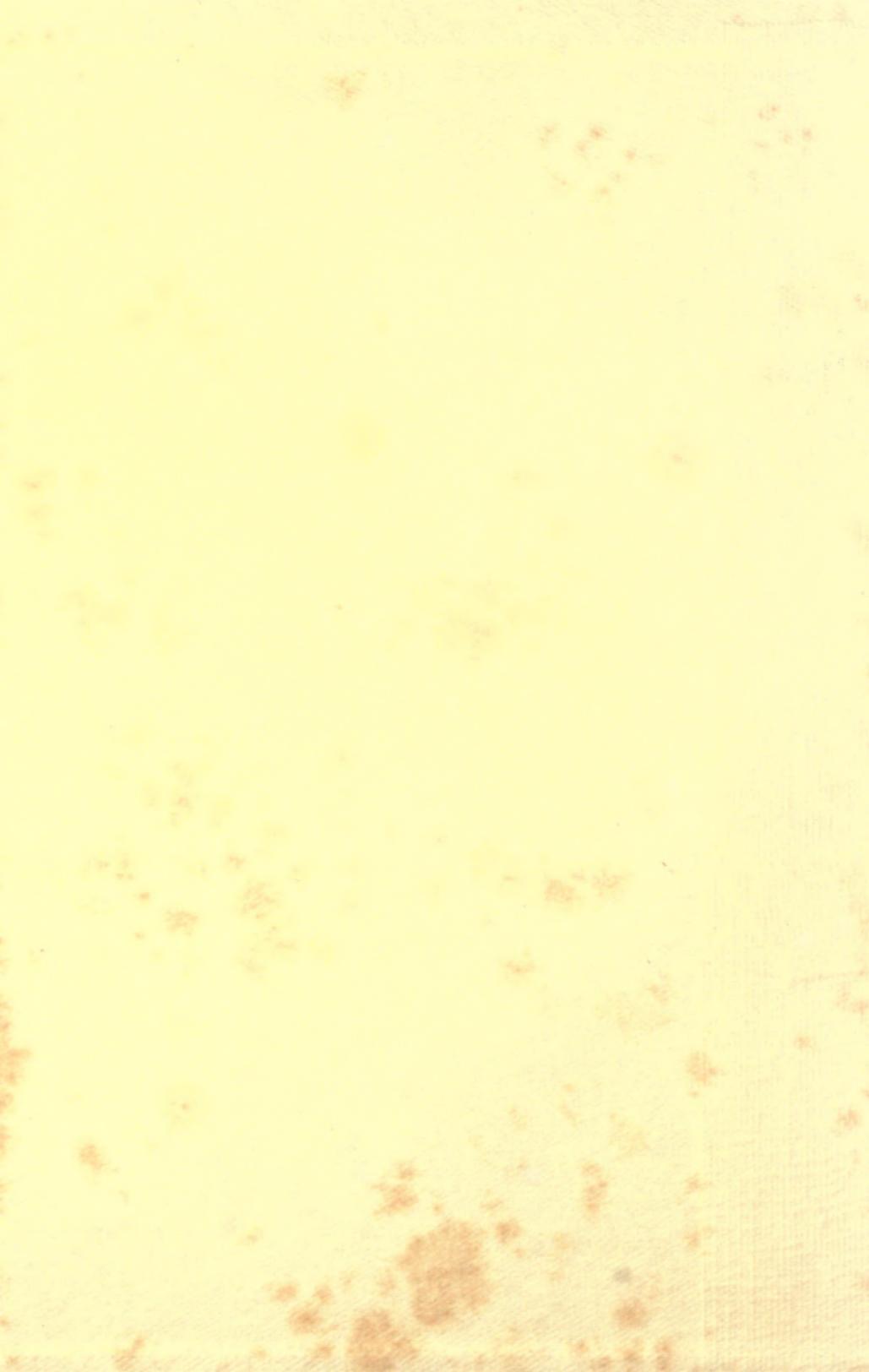
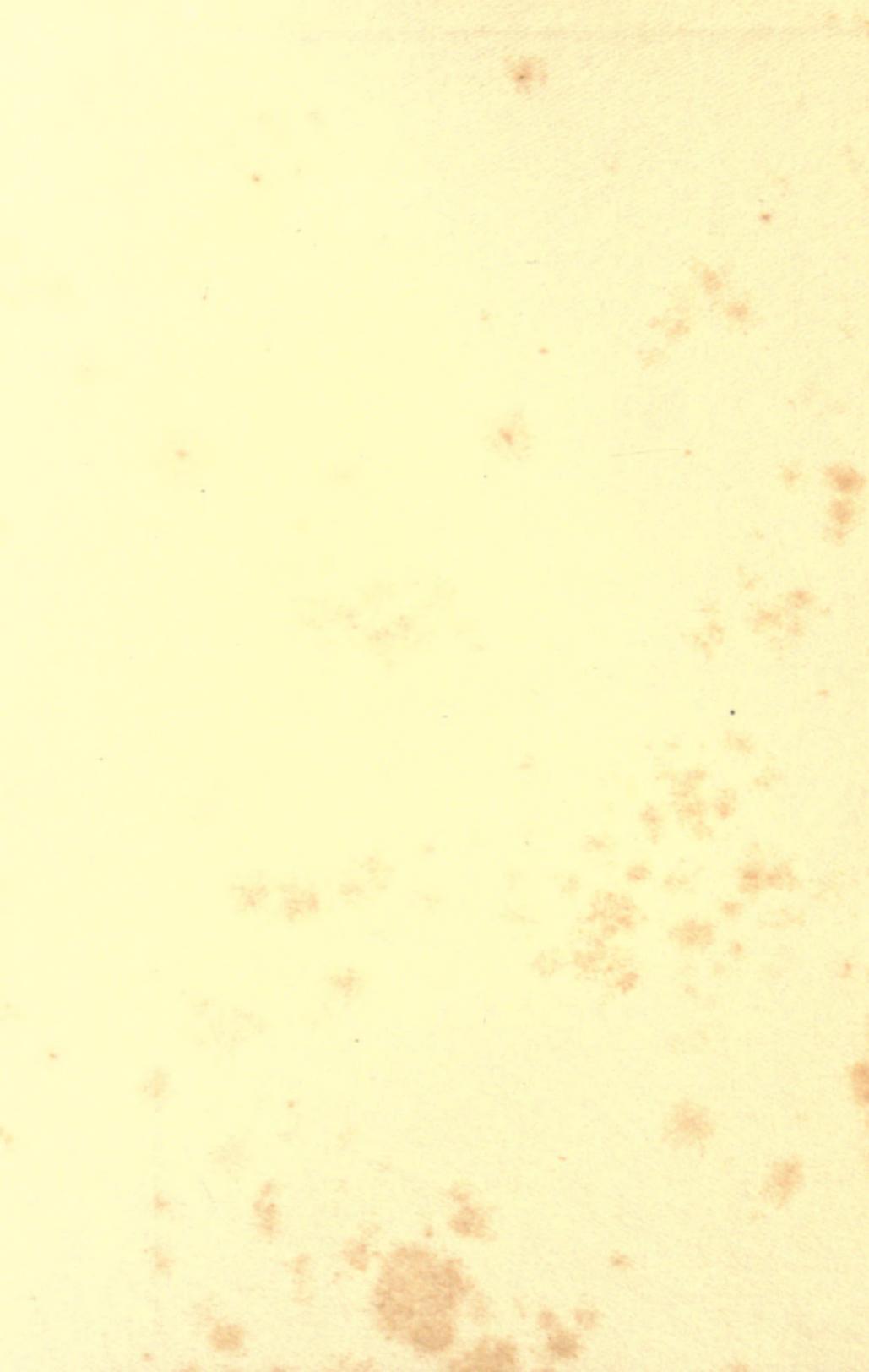


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PETE

A DRAMA

In Four Acts.

BY

HALL CAINE

AND

LOUIS N. PARKER

LONDON: COLLIER AND CO.
MCMVIII

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THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

PETE QUILLIAM
PHILIP CHRISTIAN
ROSS CHRISTIAN
CÆSAR CREGEEN
WILLIAM
DR. MYLECHREEST
POSTMAN KELLY
BLACK TOM
JONAIQUE JELLY
CONSTABLE NIPLIGHTLY

NANCY
MARY
GRANNIE
MEG
SARAH
KATE CREGEEN

SCENE—*Isle of Man.* TIME—*The Present.*

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P E T E

THE FIRST ACT

SCENE.—A large, low-pitched room in the MANX FAIRY—very quaint and picturesque. Heavy beams support the ceiling; the walls are panelled. On them are prints of sporting subjects, ships, etc., and daguerreotypes. Commencing left, front, there is a door (C) opening into the tap-room. Then a wide, low partition of square panes of glass in thick frames, through which a little of the tap-room can be seen. There is a wooden ledge on each side of this partition, and in the middle of it is a sliding panel through which pots of ale, etc., can be passed. The top corner of the room is cut off, and in it there is a door (B) up three steps, opening into a dark panelled passage. At the back is a dresser full of china and pewter. The greater part of the back is occupied by a deeply-recessed casemented window, with a shelf below it which is full of bright flowers in pots. One section of the window is open (outwards). Below the shelf is a wide, cushioned window-seat. Along the top of the window recess runs a smart cotton valance, about 18in. deep. On the wall at the back between the window and the right-angle are fowling

pieces and other guns, etc. The angle at the back, on the right, corresponding with the opposite angle, is entirely occupied with a great deep fireplace or chimney, in which there is a big wood fire, with a large kettle hanging over it, and all sorts of old-fashioned iron and brass utensils disposed all about it. There is a shelf above the chimney with china and a clock. Lower down on the right is the heavy entrance door (A) with stout iron lock and bolts. This opens inward and upward, showing an orchard in full bloom outside. Beyond the great window at the back is a view of undulating country, with the sea shimmering in the far distance. There is a great armchair above the fireplace. An oak table, well up centre, with several chairs. Within the room the light is cool and not too strong, but outside there is a blaze of sunshine.

When the curtain rises there is the noise of MEN talking loudly in the tap-room. NANCY comes through door (B), hurries to the partition, and quickly closes the sliding panel.

NANCY.

The noise them men make! Shameful!

(Now MARY, a fish-girl, passes outside the great window, crying "Herrings! Fresh Herrings!" NANCY crosses to the open casement, and puts one knee on the window seat.)

NANCY.

Early about, Mary!

MARY.

Ay, Nancy woman. When the sun's up I'm up with it. The old women don't think the fish fresh when they've done jumping. Anything for you this morning?

NANCY.

Thank ye kindly, no. Good luck to ye, Mary.

MARY.

How's Miss Kate?

NANCY.

Charming surely. Why not?

MARY.

'Tis well known she's had news of her sweetheart's death. I feared she might be grieving.

NANCY.

So she is. In reason. But 'tis five years since she saw him.

MARY.

But never to see him again! There! 'twould stick in my throat.

NANCY.

Who says it doesn't? She was terrible fond of Pete when he left.

MARY.

Time works wonders, eh? Ay, ay! They should ha' married when he went, and gone out together.

NANCY.

And she a widow by now! And Pete without a penny at him! Plain you don't know her father, Mary. Why, he'd a' killed her.

MARY.

Me not know Master Cæsar Cregeen? When I sit under the man at Ebenezer every Lord's Day that is! A good man too—but hard. Well, poor Pete lying on Afric's burning strand!

NANCY.

We're none so sure, neither. Who believes a telegram? He may come back wi' bags o' gold yet, same as he said he would.

MARY.

They never do, never. Dead once, dead always. Well, I must cry my fish, if I don't want to cry 'em stinking. Morning, Nancy woman!

NANCY.

Morning, Mary!

MARY.

(Passing out) Herrings! Fresh herrings!

NANCY.

(Coming away from the window.) Ay, handling dead things makes her talk o' death.

(Knock at door A.)

Come in!

(*The door A is opened wide, and enter KELLY, the Postman.*)

POSTMAN.

Only me, Miss Nancy.

NANCY.

And what might bring you this side o' the house, Postman Kelly, when taproom's t'other?

POSTMAN.

A sense of duty, Miss—nought but a sense of duty and public sarvice.

NANCY.

You don't never mean to say you've brought a letter?

POSTMAN.

Ay, but I have though. (*Showing it.*) Here 'tis.

NANCY.

A letter for *this* house! Bless me! what's happened? Who's it for?

POSTMAN.

For Master Cæsar Cregeen, of the MANX FAIRY, and no other.

NANCY.

Where from?

POSTMAN.

That's what Postmaster an' I had words about. For the stamp's ob-obliterated, and the postmark no man can make head or tail of. France, says he. And Africa, says I.

NANCY.

Africa! Hand it over, quick!

POSTMAN.

(Holding it back.) For Mr. Cæsar Cregeen—that's plain—and no other.

NANCY.

(Impatiently.) Oh! *(She hurries to the partition and opens the slide.)* Master Cæsar! Master Cæsar!

CÆSAR.

(Comes to other side of partition.) Why this tumult, woman?

NANCY.

(Excitedly.) Here's a letter from Pete Quilliam.
(CÆSAR disappears.)

NANCY.

Gough! A letter from the dead! *(Goes to door R.)* Miss Cregeen! Grannie! A letter from Pete!
(Enter CÆSAR, door C.)

CÆSAR.

Now, now, what is this?

NANCY.

A letter from Pete, and old Kelly won't give it up.

POSTMAN.

A sense of duty, Mr. Cregeen. Into your hands willingly. And it's a hot walk, and dry, and dusty——

CÆSAR.

(*To Nancy.*) Give him what he wants.

(*NANCY goes to partition, where the POTMAN hands her a pewter through the slide, which she hands to POSTMAN.*)

CÆSAR.

My glasses—my glasses! (*Hunts for them.*) Foolish woman! A letter from Pete, indeed! How can that be, when he's dead?

NANCY.

Shall I run and fetch Kate?

CÆSAR.

Nothing of the sort. Bide where you be. What use raising her hopes, only to dash them again? Where is she now?

NANCY.

In her room upstairs.

CÆSAR.

Good, good. Let her stay there. My glasses! (*Calls through partition.*) Jonaique Jelly!

(Enter JONAIQUE JELLY, followed by BLACK TOM and CONSTABLE NIPLIGHTLY.)

JONAIQUE.

Here I am, Mr. Cregeen.

CÆSAR.

(*Severely.*) I didn't call you, Black Tom. Nor you, Constable Niplightly; but since you're here, I cannot find my glasses. (*To JONAIQUE.*) You're ready at handwriting. Read this. (*Gives him the letter.*)

JONAIQUE.

How can I, when 'tisin't open?

CÆSAR.

Open it, man!

TOM.

(*Gruffly.*) A letter! I misdoubt 'em. I had one once—from Her Majesty Queen Victoria—and all it brought me was forty shillings or a month.

(*Enter GRANNIE, door B.*)

GRANNIE.

What is it at all, at all? Having me down them stairs wi' my bad leg!

CÆSAR.

A letter for me, mother. Sit, woman, sit, and don't get unaisy.

GRANNIE.

Bad newses, I'm fearing. Nobody never writes good news now. But sit I will.

CÆSAR.

(*To JONAIQUE.*) Are you ready?

JONAIQUE.

I'm getting used to the hand.

TOM.

A clane pipe first, to ponder it by—and isn't there a croppa of rum handy?

CÆSAR.

(*Sternly.*) This is no time for feasting; but for prayer and searching.

CONSTABLE.

I'll put up a word or two.

CÆSAR.

Constable Niplightly, don't be too ready to show your gift. 'Tis Satan's wiles. Now, Jonaique!

JONAIQUE.

(*Reading with difficulty.*) " Respected sir—— "

CÆSAR.

Not from Pete, then! And I said as much!

GRANNIE.

And I said it was bad newses!

JONAIQUE.

(Reading.) "Respected sir,—With pain and sorrow I write these few lines to tell you of Pete Quilliam——"

GRANNIE.

(Rocking herself.) Aw, boy veen! Boy veen!

CÆSAR.

Let him read, mother, let the man read for all.

JONAIQUE.

(Reading.) "He made good money out here in the diamond mines at Kimberley—yet he was never for taking joy in it——"

CÆSAR.

I told him so. "More money, more care," I said.

TOM.

But you sent him to fetch it.

CÆSAR.

I did not!

TOM.

You said he couldn't marry without it.

CÆSAR.

That was my duty. You do your duty, as I've done mine, before you speak, Black Tom. (*To JONAIQUE.*) Go on.

JONAIQUE.

(*Reading.*) " Yet he was never for taking joy in it, but talking and talking, and scheming for ever for coming home—— "

GRANNIE.

Ah, it was a show, the way the lad was fond of home! Aw, boy veen, boy veen!

CÆSAR.

Is the boy's chest come yet?

JONAIQUE.

There's something about it here, if people would let a man get on. (*Reads.*) " He had packed his chest for going, when four blacklegs made off with a new chum's bag of diamonds, and Pete after them with twenty Kaffirs—— "

CÆSAR.

(*Impatiently.*) Ay, ay! Always bull-necked!

JONAIQUE.

(*Reading.*) " That was four months ago; and a fortnight since eight of the Kaffirs came back—— "

ALL.

Aw dear! The black heathen! Lord a' massy!
Hush! Hush!

(Meanwhile NANCY has brought KATE down through door B., and they stand unperceived in the corner.)

JONAIQUE.

(Reading.) "They'd overtook the blacklegs, and the big man of the gang cocked his piece at Peter. 'You'd better go back the way you came.' 'Not immajetly,' said Peter, and stretched him——"

(Movement.)

JONAIQUE.

(Reading.) "Then there was smoke, like a smithy on hooping day, and Pete shouting mortal, 'Oh, oh! All's up! I'm done! Home and tell, boys! Oh! oh!'——"

(Moans from EVERYBODY.)

KATE.

Poor Pete! Oh, poor Pete!
(NANCY comforts her.)

GRANNIE.

Kate—Kirry—come to me, dearie.

(KATE crosses to her, and sinks on her knees by the old woman.)

CÆSAR.

(Solcmnly.) "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy. When I fall I shall rise. Selah!"

ALL.

(Solemnly.) Selah!

(Enter ROSS CHRISTIAN through door A, which was left open. He stops short on seeing the solemn group.)

ROSS.

A prayer meeting? Sorry to interrupt.

CÆSAR.

(Sternly.) Silence, Ross Christian! Silence, sir! in the presence of the dead.

ROSS.

(Coming further in and looking round; hushed, but still half mocking.) I beg your pardon—where?

CÆSAR.

Go on, Jonaique. The chest.

ROSS.

(Enquiringly to BLACK TOM and the MEN, quickly.) Pete?

(They nod assent.)

JONAIQUE.

(Reading.) “ Respected sir—I must close now. I sent you a cable directly on receipt of the news—— ”

CÆSAR.

I had it—we had it.

JONAIQUE.

“ We are strapping the chest of the deceased, which you will find well worth unstrapping; being full of deeds, shares, and things even more solid, with which he had meant to end his days in comfort—— ”

MEN.

(*Awed.*) Diamonds!

JONAIQUE.

“ The chest goes by the steamer ‘ Johannesburg,’ leaving Capetown Wednesday fortnight.”

ROSS.

The ‘ Johannesburg ’? Why, she’s just putting into the harbour on her way to Liverpool!
(*Movement—excitement.*)

CÆSAR.

(*Fussing.*) Say you so? I’ll meet her at the quay—out of respect for the dead, you know!

ROSS.

And his chest!

CONSTABLE.

And my duty’s there too!

TOM.

I’ll come along. There’s drinks to be got when a ship comes in.

POSTMAN.

Ay, and there'll be a mail maybe. More letters!
But a sense of duty——

(The MEN clumsily salute GRANNIE and KATE, and go out A.)

GRANNIE.

I'm all of a tremble. Take me upstairs, Nancy.
Aw, to think I can't use me own legs!

(NANCY and KATE help her out of the chair and lead her to door B., where KATE leaves her and stares listlessly out of the window.)

CÆSAR.

(Finding his stick, his hat and his gloves; to Ross.) You're home again from London, sir? Great doings yonder, they're telling me. The New Theology and what not! Taking sin out of the Bible is knocking the tailboard out of a man's religion, eh?

ROSS.

Don't know much about that, Cæsar.

CÆSAR.

Glad to hear it, though I doubt whether you attach the right meaning. But *(severely)* the old theology is good enough for us in this island, Mr. Ross Christian; the old theology—the old heaven—yes, sir, and the old hell!

ROSS.

(Laughing.) And I don't know much about that either.

CÆSAR.

You will, sir. You will in time.

Ross.

Come, I say!

CÆSAR.

Ay, ay, you're having your fling, no doubt; and hell seems a long way off. But it's under your feet, Mr. Christian. Seek the path of righteousness, young man, as your cousin does, and take warning.

Ross.

(With a sneer.) My cousin Philip?

CÆSAR.

That worthy gentleman. Follow him. It will be hard for you—harder than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle; but grace has worked greater miracles. Follow Philip Christian.

(KATE has turned and is listening with strained attention.)

Ross.

Why, Mr. Cregeen, you'll be forgiving sins next.

CÆSAR.

Not me, sir.

Ross.

Forgiving sins and giving absolution, and the people will make a Pope of you. Pope Cæsar! They'll be paying you Peter's pence.

CÆSAR.

Well, well, the laughter of fools is as the crackling of thorns. I'll fetch the chest.

Ross.

That's it. Peter's pence!

CÆSAR.

(At the door A.) But follow Philip Christian. Watch him. He'll be judge in this island yet; and the people shall call him blessed.

(Exit A.)

(KATE'S face shows great distress and she moves forward a pace or two.)

Ross.

(Slyly.) What's the matter, Kitty?

KATE.

(Coming down.) Is Philip really to be the Judge—the Deemster? Is there talk of it?

Ross.

More than talk, my dear, now the Deemstership is vacant. Wasn't his father Deemster before him and his grandfather before *him*; and isn't he the model young man of the island?

KATE.

(Lost in thought.) Yes—I see—I see.

ROSS.

Mean to say he never told you he aspired to the vacant place?

(She pays no attention.)

Kate!

KATE.

(Starting out of her reverie.) Eh? What? Told me? *(On her guard.)* Why should he tell me?

ROSS.

(With a smile.) And you such—such bosom friends!

KATE.

That was Pete's wish.

ROSS.

Yes. Pete was always a simpleton.

KATE.

(Flushing.) What do you mean?

ROSS.

And now that Pete is dead—

KATE.

(Mechanically; she is not thinking of PETE.)
Poor Pete!

ROSS.

(Laughing.) Well, I must say you bear his loss well.

KATE.

(*Coming to herself.*) Oh, I'm sorry for him. Truly, truly I'm sorry. He was so good, so brave, such a *man*. But I was little more than a child when he went away. Why, it's five years ago. And hardly ever a line came from him in all that time.

Ross.

You scarcely remember him? Quite natural. (*With easy familiarity.*) And what are you going to do now, Kitty?

KATE.

(*Puzzled.*) Do? What should I do?

Ross.

(*Deliberately.*) With Pete dead and Philip on the road to greatness—what are you going to do?

KATE.

What has Philip to do with it?

Ross.

(*Motioning with both hands.*) Pete's gone that way—and Philip's going that; and you're left standing where you were. You'll be mighty lonely, won't you?

(*KATE stands staring at him with the dawn of a new fear in her face.*)

'Pon my soul, when I think of the hundreds of pretty girls on this island, fretting their lives out, with never so much as a likely young fellow within

a hundred miles—when I see them, standing alone—as you are—and think of the times they *could* have——

KATE.

(*Scornfully.*) What sort of times, Mr. Ross?

Ross.

(*Getting nearer.*) Kitty, it used to be Ross without the “Mr.”

KATE.

(*Whisking away.*) Did it? I used to climb apple trees once.

Ross.

You mean you’ve grown up?

KATE.

I’ve been trying to.

Ross.

And a rippin’ job you’ve made of it. (*Nearer.*) Kitty, d’you know why I’ve come back?

KATE.

I know why you came back last time—and the time before that—to get money out of your father. I dare say the same errand——

Ross.

Partly. One must live. But that’s not all. I’ve come back because I couldn’t stay away.

KATE.

(*Busy at the dresser.*) Didn't know you were so fond of the Island.

Ross.

I'm fond of somebody *in* the Island.

KATE.

(*With a toss.*) Poor girl!

Ross.

Drop raggin', Kitty. You know whom I mean. If you'd only come! (*Powerless to express the glory of it.*) Lord!—I'm in the swim. Right *in* it Good Lord! when I think of you now, and think what you might be—the freedom—the liberty—the——

KATE.

(*Very quietly.*) We've had this before, haven't we, Mr. Ross? It's the same old story, isn't it? I was angry last time; and the time before I was humbled and ashamed. What do you see in me that makes it possible for you to speak to me so? I'm not angry this time; I'm not ashamed—I'm not even surprised——

Ross.

Ah! we're getting on then!

KATE.

Yes, we are getting on. I think I should be surprised if you spoke differently. I know I should

be angry. But I can laugh at you now, Mr. Ross, because I know you, and know it's your natural way of talking. You can't help it any more than a peacock can help screeching.

Ross.

(Pressing in on her.) Here, I say! I say!

KATE.

(Avoiding him and gradually letting her anger pierce through. She works towards door C.) Men like you are among the mysteries of creation. Yes, you are. Like snakes, and insects and stinging flies. Nobody can understand what you were made for or why you are here. You must fulfil *some* useful purpose, I suppose, but nobody has ever discovered it. All you can think of is how to destroy—destroy beauty—destroy goodness—destroy happy and foolish girls. *(Drawing herself up.)* Well, you don't destroy me, Mr. Ross Christian—not me, if I know it.

Ross.

(White with anger.) Because I don't wrap it up in flowers, eh, Miss Kate? Because I don't wait for moonlight and soft music, eh? Because I don't walk with you in lonely places, late at night, when no one knows? Is that the way? What? Won't you tell me? *(He catches her sleeve just as she is at door C.)*

(She sees PHILIP CHRISTIAN in door A.)

Won't you tell me my good cousin Philip's way?

KATE.

(Wrenching herself away and going out through C. with a look of alarm.) Let me go! Let me go!
(Exit.)

(Ross turns and finds himself facing PHILIP.)

Ross.

(Swaggering.) Hulloo, Philip—talk of the devil——

PHILIP.

(Gravely.) What have you said to Miss Cregeen to frighten her away?

Ross.

Nothing. You know what women are. Cats, my boy—pretty, gentle, spiteful pussies! They'll take anything at one moment—purring and licking your hand—and the next moment their backs are up and they are spitting at you like fiends.

PHILIP.

Ross, I think it better to warn you aī once——

Ross.

Oh, don't ride the high horse with me, Philip. And don't stand looking at me like a judge on the bench. You're not Deemster yet, though I suppose you're on the way to it. There, I'm an unselfish chap, and I wish you luck, my boy. Father thought *I* was in the running, thought perhaps I should put my shoulder out for your high bailiff-

ships and bumbailiffships, and the Lord knows what. Take 'em, my boy, with my blessing. Only—mind the girl!

PHILIP.

(*Angrily.*) Ross!

Ross.

Oh, she's a nice girl. Splendid! Fiery! Passionate!—all that sort of thing. But, look out! She's too good to waste herself on any of the local omadhauns, and she'll play the devil with you.

PHILIP.

How dare you?

Ross.

Oh, come *off* it! I can see through a brick wall as well as most people. I'm only warning you. There are lots of girls like this all over the place. They are foredoomed. Just too good and not quite good enough. Beautiful, clever, intelligent, but—a man can't marry 'em—not permanently, at least—unless——

PHILIP.

Unless what?

Ross.

He's prepared to go under.

PHILIP.

Rubbish! (*Hotly.*)

Ross.

Is it? Wait a bit and we may see! Meantime, tell me—(*Close to PHILIP*)—would you like to see

Kitty marry some clodhopper like your old pal Pete?

(PHILIP *winces.*)

PHILIP.

Pete may have been a plain man, but he was a splendid fellow.

Ross.

Oh, you prig! "A splendid fellow!" Of course he was! Nature's own nobleman, no doubt. But what does a girl like Kate care for that? She wants—she wants—(*Is going to say "you," but stops short*)—quite another sort of man altogether. And she can't have him, because he's not such a fool as to commit social suicide—to lose every chance in life for the sake of the girl.

PHILIP.

That will do. I see what you are driving at. But I'll ask you to understand you are mistaken. When Pete Quilliam left home five years ago he asked me to take care of Kate—put her in my charge, I may say—and now——

Ross.

(*Bursting into peals of laughter.*) Lord! Good Lord!

PHILIP.

What are you laughing at?

Ross.

Never more amused in my life. He goes an' puts her in your charge, does he? Oh, my sainted aunt!

Expects the poor wolf not to like mutton! (*Laughs again uncontrollably.*)

PHILIP.

Ross!

Ross.

Oh, you make me tired! (*At partition.*) You can come back, Kitty—I'm off. (*Crossing to A.*) So long.

(*Exit A.*)

PHILIP.

(*Standing with clenched fists.*) Grrh!

(*PHILIP turns and meets KATE, who enters C.*)

Did you hear him?

KATE.

Has he vexed you, Philip?

PHILIP.

You should have sent him about his business long ago. It tortures me to see that gad-fly buzzing about you.

KATE.

Well—he's gone—we're alone—and you haven't yet kissed me.

PHILIP.

(*Evading her last remark.*) Kate, Kate, I've got something dreadful to tell you.

KATE.

(*Fondling him.*) But I know—I know what it is, dearest.

PHILIP.

(*Astonished.*) You know?

KATE.

Yes. Kelly the Post brought the letter a while ago.

PHILIP.

You know, yet you can be so calm?

KATE.

Why, it's only confirmation of the telegram.

PHILIP.

The telegram? (*He produces a telegram out of his pocket.*) I don't understand. What was the letter that came a while ago?

KATE.

From one of Pete's friends at Kimberley, giving an account of his death. Oh, I'm not heartless, Philip; I was very fond of Pete—but fondness and love are far apart—whereas you and I——(*she tries to put her arms about PHILIP.*)

PHILIP.

(*Retreating.*) Good God! You *don't* know then!

KATE.

(*Amazed.*) What—what is it I don't know, Philip?

PHILIP.

How am I to tell you?

KATE.

Don't be afraid—I won't cry out—I promise you I won't!

PHILIP.

You remember what you said when we first heard of Pete's death?

KATE.

(*With quick understanding.*) Philip! You don't mean that Pete—that Pete is *not* dead!

PHILIP.

Hush! Try to be calm!

KATE.

Tell me! Tell me!

PHILIP.

I ought to have waited. I ought not to have believed so easily, but God forgive me. . . . I *wanted* to believe! (*Tries to give her the telegram.*) Look!

KATE.

(*Waving the telegram aside, as being unnecessary, and speaking very simply.*) I am glad Pete is living—

PHILIP.

But he's here! Here in the Island! He's landing now! Before long he'll be in this house——

KATE.

Well, why not? I am very glad—since he's alive—and the rumour was unfounded——

PHILIP.

(Astounded.) Kate! This comes on us like a thunderbolt! Yet you say you are glad!

KATE.

(Clinging to him.) My darling, do you love me?

PHILIP.

You know I love you—but——

KATE.

(Prettily putting her face against his.) Then there is no thunderbolt in the sky for you and me.

PHILIP.

Kate—your faith—your trust—your indifference to everything except our love—God!—what a miracle a woman is! But—but—we must not live in a fool's paradise any longer. You—you promised yourself to Pete——

KATE.

But that was when I was a child, dear. It was only a half promise, even then; and I didn't know

what I was doing. What did I know about love? (*Closer.*) You taught me that, Philip—you—you!

PHILIP.

And now he is coming home to claim you—oh, Kate!

KATE.

(*Calmly.*) Philip, you only see this from a man's point of view, dear. You only see it from *your* point of view *now*—how you'd feel *now* if somebody were coming to take me from you. But Pete will be reasonable. I was a young girl then, a mere child—a totally different person from the grown woman I am to-day. The child can't love anybody—not to say *love*. How then can she bind the woman by promises? It was not I who promised . . . it was my little sister. . . . She had no right to promise, and no man would dream—

PHILIP.

Pete has been dreaming all these years.

KATE.

No, no—he'll understand. What's the use? I do not love him. I love you!

PHILIP.

He left you in my charge. I promised to take care of you—swore it—and, good God! what have I done?

KATE.

We couldn't help it. Love was too strong for us.

PHILIP.

He is coming home with faith in my loyalty. How can I tell him I've broken my trust?

KATE.

Lay the blame on me. Say I made love to you. That was so, wasn't it? After all, it's not so very awful, Philip—I'm not the first girl who promised herself to one man and married another.

PHILIP.

Oh God, what can I tell him?

KATE.

Tell him the truth, dear—the simple truth. Tell him I was a child when he went away, and I grew, and we tried to be loyal and faithful, but we loved each other, and there was no help for it.

PHILIP.

If I tell him the truth I shall die of shame.

(KATE starts away at the word "shame.")
(Moving restlessly.) Oh, there's no way out of this miserable tangle. Whether I lie or tell the truth, I shall stain my soul for ever!

KATE.

(With a dawn of fear.) Philip!

PHILIP.

What an escape we've had, too. We might have been married—when he came back! Thank Heaven we've escaped that, at all events!

(KATE shapes the word "escaped" with her lips soundlessly.)

If we had been, I should never know one moment's peace. Pete would have been a ghost between us always! No, no, no! Our love would fail us, Kate—the sense of our guilt would kill it! Oh, horrible, horrible!

(He covers his face with his hands.)

KATE.

(Drawing his hands from his face, with new earnestness.) Philip, Philip—what is at the back of your mind? Do you mean we cannot marry now? Philip, speak! Speak!

PHILIP.

We cannot! We dare not! Don't you see——?

KATE.

Is *that* what you came to tell me? No, no! You are only trying me, testing me, dear. You want to make sure of me—to know that his return makes no difference. Oh, darling, what *could* make any difference now?—now that—think! You must know! (As she sees his haggard face.) Philip! Do you *mean* it?

PHILIP.

(*Hoarsely.*) It is the truth.

KATE.

(*Very sadly.*) No, Philip, or if it is the truth, it is not the whole truth. Philip, when Ross Christian told me just now you were on the road to the Deemstership, a black thought went through my heart. A woman has strange insights, you know. I tried to drive it out; but it's there still. You are climbing. You see the summit, but you can't reach it with me about your neck. That's what it is, Philip—that's what it is.

PHILIP.

Kate, I have never said a word about——

KATE.

Oh, what words are necessary—between *us*? You and I *can't* lie to each other, because our thoughts are naked.

(*PHILIP moves.*)

Don't, dear. It's useless. (*With passion.*) Only, why didn't you leave me alone? Why did you let me love you? And when I loved you, why did you give me hope? I knew I was a poor, ignorant thing; but you said the man could draw the woman up to him if he loved her enough: if he loved her more than all the world. Now you find you don't! It's the world itself you love—promotion, ambition—and Pete's only an excuse. (*With sudden revulsion.*) No, no, no! I'm cruel! I didn't mean

that! You've done nothing. It was all my own fault—my own vanity, my pride in you! Forgive me, Philip—kiss me, and forgive me. (*In his arms.*) Oh, Philip—Philip—you are mine—just as I am yours. We *can't* give each other up—we *can't*—it would be horrible—it would be a sin! Don't you remember . . . husband!

PHILIP.

(*Starting away.*) Oh, God! That is the worst of all!

KATE.

What do you mean?

PHILIP.

My poor child—don't you see? Don't you see—I cannot marry you——

KATE.

Cannot?

PHILIP.

Cannot. Say what you will—try to stifle my conscience as you will——

(*Movement from KATE.*)

Pete is in the way—and now you cannot marry him—because you can never forget.

KATE.

I don't want to forget.

PHILIP.

And therefore we must go through the world alone—separate and alone—that is our punishment, Kate—our relentless punishment——

KATE.

(With a harsh laugh.) Our punishment! What punishment is that to you? You have the world before you—with work and success—and honours and riches. Your days will be full—and you will lie down tired at night and sleep! But I? What is there for me? What is there in my day but a longing for night? What is there in the night but tears? Our punishment? When you turn your back upon me, and walk down the hill, you walk into the busy world, where men are waiting for your counsels—where every one of your moments will be full of good deeds, so that, before you have gone three paces, I shall be a mere memory of a pleasant episode in your life——

(At a movement from PHILIP.)

Oh! to-morrow, or a year hence—what does it matter? But I? What have I got? Man! Man! You give me nothing. You take everything from me—my hope, my love, my life—and you say: “Stand still in the desert: a pillar of salt—feed on your own bitterness!” And you talk about *our* punishment! *(She works up to door B.)*

PHILIP.

Kate! Kate! I am humbled! I am ashamed! Tell me what to do!

KATE.

If I have wronged you, and you still love me, tell him the truth—the truth—the truth!

(Exit B.)

(Enter CÆSAR A, very excited—he leaves the door open.)

CÆSAR.

Mr. Christian! For God's sake—where's Kate?

(Business. Before PHILIP can answer PETE QUILLIAM has burst in, followed at a respectful distance by POSTMAN KELLY, BLACK TOM, the CONSTABLE, and a MOTLEY RABBLE. The latter at first stay outside the door, peering in curiously, but gradually edge their way in.)

PETE.

Stand aside, Cæsar! Dont' stop me! Kate!

(He comes face to face with PHILIP, joyously.)

Philip! You, Philip! *(Seizes his hands and giving him no chance to speak.)* My gough! the very same old Philip! Ah, hold tight! My friend, when I was a boy: my friend when I was a slip of a lad—and not thinking mane to be my friend now I'm a man. You are to be made Deemster, they're telling me? Time enough, too. You'll be giving jip to some of them aristocracks. But *(laughing)* don't look so frightened, Phil! It's me! It's the living Pete. Lord, don't stare as if I was a dead man come from his grave, though that's what you think I am!

PHILIP.

(*Hoarsely.*) No, Pete, I—I had your telegram!

PETE.

(*Imitating him.*) You had my telegram! This precise old Philip! And the old voice! And you came here to warn Kate? (*Eagerly.*) Where is she? Where is she?

PHILIP.

Give her time, Pete—give her a little time.

PETE.

Lord bless me, and haven't I given her five mortal years?

(*PHILIP winces.*)

There, there! I'm an unreasonable omadhaun! But if you know how I've waited, man——

(*He sees GRANNIE brought down by CÆSAR and NANCY.*)

Grannie! Eh! Grannie!

GRANNIE.

(*Quavering.*) Goodness me! It's his own voice, anyway!

PETE.

(*With the old woman in his arms.*) It's himself, too, Grannie! It's himself! (*To Nancy.*)

(*NANCY is exclaiming "PETE! PETE!" and almost dancing round him.*)

All right, Nancy! You next. Give Grannie a chance; she's got no time to lose.

GRANNIE.

Aw dear! Aw dear! Pete it is—for sure! Let me sit down, though.

PETE.

(Leading her tenderly to the big chair.) Easy does it, Grannie, easy does it! *There* you are! Now, Nancy! *(Hug.)* You haven't been fasting much—what?

NANCY.

(Kissing him loudly on both cheeks.) There's for remembering me! *(Boxing his ears.)* And there's for your sauce!

TOM.

Where do I come in?

NANCY.

(Boxing his ears.) There!

PETE.

(Wandering about the room.) Lord sakes! the same place still! There's the clock on the shelf, with the scratch on its face, and the big finger broke at the joint—and the lath—and the peek—and the whip—you've had it new corded, though.

CÆSAR.

Mercy! How the boy remembers!

GRANNIE.

Sure, he's had nothing else to do!

PETE.

And the slowrey—and the kettle—and the poker—my gracious! the very poker! And that's the stool she was sitting on in the fireplace in front of the turf closet! And to think there's been half the world between us since I was here before!

GRANNIE.

She's a woman now, boy!

PETE.

(Brought up suddenly by this astonishing statement.) Bless my soul! Grown, is she? Think o' that, now!

PHILIP.

(Tentatively.) Pete, she was a child when you left her—a mere child!

PETE.

(Heartily.) And you've watched her grow! You've watched her for me! *(Taking his hand.)* Good ould Phil!

TOM.

She's the smartest young woman in the island, too.

PETE.

(Slapping him on the back.) And you're a good judge, eh, Tom? But when am I going to see her? When? When?

CÆSAR.

She's shy. That's what's the matter! (*At door B.*) Kate! Kate!

KATE.

(*Voice off—clear and firm.*) Yes, father!

(*PHILIP starts. PETE stands transfixed—he stands L. front facing door C. He commands silence.*)

PETE.

Stop! Stand back, all of you! Stand *back!* Let me face her. Give me breath! My gough! This doesn't happen twice in a man's life.

(*PHILIP involuntarily moves one pace towards door A.*)

PETE.

(*Holding up his hand.*) Don't move, Phil! Who should be here, if not you? (*Very solemnly.*) Mr. Cregeen, speak the good word! (*To the CROWD.*) And hush—hush!

CÆSAR.

(*Very impressively.*) This is the Lord's doing . . . and it is marvellous in our sight!

(*An appreciable pause of intense expectancy. KATE appears in door B.*)

PETE.

(*Hushed.*) Kate!

KATE.

(*Instinctively making for her father with limbs which will hardly support her.*) Father!

(But PETE has rushed across and seized her, and is impetuously covering her with kisses.)

PETE.

(Shouting.) No, no! It's I am father and mother to you now, Kate—and husband and lover and slave—and all!

PHILIP.

(Who has moved to the left with great effort, as though he were going to make confession.) Pete!

PETE.

(Who is holding KATE in his right arm, stretches out his left hand and grasps PHILIP'S right—they are now in the centre of the stage.) Ah—here's my other hand! My wife—and my brother! Ah, Phil, don't think I love you less because I love her more—what? An ould song, is it? Right you are! *(Shaking PHILIP'S hand.)* The one man I could trust! And see how he's looked after her! I left her a child—and he's made a queen of her.

(KATE sways.)

(Anxiously.) Why, what's the matter? Kate! Kate *(He supports her.)*

GRANNIE.

Set her down, boy—Can't you see you're frightening the life out of her wi' joy?

PETE.

(Setting KATE in a chair.) Kate!

KATE.

(Dully.) Yes—yes—I shall be all right soon.

PETE.

Are you sure—are you sure now?

CÆSAR.

(Taking PETE away.) Let her get accustomed to you—she was but a child—talk a bit—tell her how you were saved. . . .

(KATE sits so that her eyes can remain fixed on PHILIP throughout the next speech. She is up stage left—he, down stage R., half-turned away from the spectators—CÆSAR down stage R. The others along L. wall and by fireplace. The narrative, which is all acted by PETE, is interrupted by little cries of “Glory!” “Aw, think o’ that!” “God bless me soull” etc., etc.)

PETE.

Love saved me! And you can’t kiss a man who loves a girl same as I love Kirry. No, you can’t, though, else I should ha’ been dead long ago: soon after I got out yonder. There’s little in the life to keep you alive: it’s sweat, and break your heart. And so ’twould ha’ been with me, but my heart was so full of her. The way I was loving that girl out there was just shocking! What odds to me how hard the work was, when she was before my eyes all the time whispering: “Win me, boy, suffer and win me!” How could I give up, when I knew she was here, waiting and waiting so faithful and true!

Men go out there and dig and delve and die and find nothing, because there's no one to love 'em—no one to point to the diamonds—but I! Hah! she showed me! She showed me! Then, at last, just as I'd finished, and was ready to come home, the freebooters came along and robbed my chum. Nobody dared go after 'em—being bloody-minded scoundrels, who'd shoot you as soon as look—and a damn sight sooner! Well, says I, it's no business o' mine! I'm for the ship and the shore where my girl's waiting. But, no, sir—I couldn't do it! How would she ha' welcomed me, if I'd left a job like that undone? What! She so true to me—and me false to my chum? So out I went after the varmints, and got knocked over for my pains—not before I'd grabbed the diamonds, though! And when I lay on the veldt, so full of bullet-holes you could see through me whichever way you looked. Die, says I? Rats! I says. Is that what my Kate's waiting for? What 'ud she think of me if I came home in a packing-case? Not me! I should be ashamed o' myself doing any such thing. Get out, says I. A man's not much good if his wife's a widow, says I! So I scraped together the little bits o' life there were in me, and crawled and crope till I crope back to something like life—love helping me! Aw yes, love helping me all the time! So, Kirry, it was you saved me, sure enough. Live, you cried! Hang on, boy! Don't give in! Come home, Pete—I'll not decaive ye, boy! I'm waiting for ye, faithful and true! And here I am, sound in wind and limb—and rich, too, and happy beyond words—thanks to you, Kirry! thanks to you! (*He falls at her knees.*)

(Emotion among the Bystanders—KATE is sobbing violently.)

GRANNIE.

She can't a-bear it—Lord bless the boy! Whether he opens his mouth or keeps it shut, he breaks her heart wi' happiness.

CÆSAR.

(Taking PETE'S arm.) Come and see the home place, Pete, and give her time to gather her wits. *(Very sympathetically—with one hand on KATE'S shoulder.)* Ah, Kate, sorrow may endure for a night—but joy cometh in the morning.

PETE.

I'm a great, rough, hulking, blithering idiot. *(To PHILIP.)* Phil, my lad, she's used to you—you stay with her—talk to her—you know how. Quiet her—soothe her!

CÆSAR.

(To NANCY.) Nancy, my lass this is an occasion for rejoicing. *(With one hand he indicates the neighbours—with the other the tap-room.)*

NANCY.

So 'tis, master—I'll see to that!
(Bustles out C.)

PETE.

Get outside—all of you! *(Genially thrusting the neighbours out A.)* Give her air—and give her

time! Hang about a bit—and then come and drink our healths.

(The NEIGHBOURS, with approving cries—go out A.)

PETE.

(To GRANNIE in the big chair.) Come on, Grannie.

GRANNIE.

Well, well—me trapsin' all over the house wi' my bad leg!

PETE.

(Almost carrying her.) Ay! and ye'll dance at my wedding with both legs yet!

(CÆSAR has already gone out B. PETE half-carries GRANNIE out B.)

(A pause.)

KATE.

(With a cold, hard voice.) Well?

PHILIP.

(Who has sunk into a chair, with his head in his hands.) Horrible! Horrible!

KATE.

You haven't told him?

PHILIP.

How could I? You saw him! you heard him! How could I?

KATE.

When are you going to?

PHILIP.

I can't! I can't! What could I say?

KATE.

Say you are my *husband*. (*Last word in a whisper.*)

PHILIP.

Kate!

KATE.

(*Rising.*) Are you not? In the sight of God—
are you not?

PHILIP.

God help me! I can't! I can't!

(*NANCY bustles in C. with mugs.*)

NANCY.

Here's the right stuff for 'em! (*Puts tray on table and crosses to door A., where she calls.*)
Postman Kelly! Come in, come in! all of you!
(*She turns to KATE.*) Are you feeling better,
dearie?

(*The NEIGHBOURS come in A.*)

KATE.

(*Strongly—with her eyes fixed on PHILIP.*) Yes,
I'm better, Nancy! Oh! much better!

NANCY.

(*Crossing to door B.*) Good for you! (*Calls.*)
Cap'n Pete! Come along! She's herself again—
the darling!

(*PHILIP moves.*)

KATE.

(*Imperatively.*) Don't go, Philip. (*With a
touch of scorn.*) Don't run away—stay and watch!

PHILIP.

(*Frightened.*) Watch—what?

KATE.

(*Nodding at him, with a smile full of mystery.*)
Aha! you are afraid!

(*PHILIP draws himself up, prepared for the
worst.*)

(*Re-enter PETE, CÆSAR, and GRANNIE, B.*)

PETE.

Are you really strong, Kitty?

KATE.

Yes! I am strong! I am well!

(*NANCY has distributed the mugs, etc.*)

CÆSAR.

Friends and neighbours—the dead has come to
life. My daughter, who was sitting alone and

mourning as a dove, has found her mate—Capt'n Peter Quilliam. We thank the good Lord for his merciful deliverance. We wish you all happiness, Peter—with length of days and goodly increase. (*Drinks.*)

ALL.

(*Raising their mugs.*) Petel! Here's to you, Capt'n Pete! Your very good health, Pete—long life and happiness, Petel!

PETE.

Phil—Why, where's your glass, Phil? Nancy, Mr. Philip's glass . . .

NANCY.

There now! I'd ha' sworn I gave him one. (*She finds it on the table where PHILIP had set it down, untouched, and gives it to him.*)

PETE.

(*Forcing PHILIP to stand on one side of him, while KATE stands on the other.*) Us three: Kate, Phil—and me, we must drink together. Well, now, Master Cæsar and friends all—I'm no hand at speechifying and all that—but I'm glad I'm alive—I give you my word, and what's more, I'm the happiest man alive this day—and so I ought to be. And, as for a toast and a sentiment—why what's in my heart must come to my lips—and here it is—as I've drunk it many's the time out yonder on the

veldt—"Here's to the girl I love the best—God bless her!"

(Cheers.)

Now, Kate!

KATE.

(Wildly, turning to him.) Here's the man I love the best! God bless him!

(Great cheers.)

CURTAIN.

THE SECOND ACT

SCENE.—*The living room in Pete's house. On the right a deeply-recessed fireplace, with wood fire. Dresser above it. At the back two low windows; above them an oak gallery runs along the whole wall; above the gallery two other low windows. The gallery leads to a door (R), and the steps leading up to it are on the left. Left front, a larger door opening into an orchard. The staircase ought to be clearly seen from top to bottom. For this purpose I think it best to put it at back, with the window at side. Door on left. Fireplace on right. Drum on stage down prompt side.*

At the rise of the curtain NANCY is in the gallery looking out of one of the windows; below, in the room, MEG, a little, gawky maid-servant, is taking cakes and jugs of ale, tumblers, etc., out through door (A).

NANCY.

Bustle now! Here they come! The master and the mistress, and Doctor Mylechreest and Master Cregeen, and the neighbours all, like a reg'lar comet's tail, behind them.

MEG.

And the baby, Miss Nancy?

NANCY.

Oh, they've put the baby in a tree to get cool, for sure.

MEG.

(Quite believing it.) Goodness!

NANCY.

You daft thing! Where should the blessed baby be, but at the head of the procession? *(Comes down stairs.)*

MEG.

Came a month before his time, didn't he?

NANCY.

An' you'll go a month before your's, if you're not careful.

MEG.

I didn't mean nothin', Miss Nancy.

NANCY.

Then, don't you say nothin', but get on with your work, woman. *(She open door A.)* Welcome to the new master, God bless him!

(PETE appears first.)

PETE.

(He speaks gravely.) Quiet a minute, Nancy.

NANCY.

(Alarmed.) Eh? What's wrong?

(PETE turns to KATE, who is carrying the baby, and whom he helps in, and across to the chair by the fire.)

PETE.

Pluck up, Kate, pluck up! Here we are! Lean heavier. My gough! but you went through that splendid! (To NANCY.) Shove that chair up, Nancy. (To KATE.) There, now, there, there! Now you're all right. Let Nancy take the baby, Kate.

KATE.

No, no!

(NANCY takes off KATE's hat and cloak.)

PETE.

All right, all right. Only he mustn't tire you. Even he mustn't do that.

(CÆSAR and DOCTOR MYLECHREEST have entered, helping in GRANNIE. POSTMAN KELLY and others are seen looking in from outside.)

Wasn't he grand? Did you hear the way he yelled? Gough! but there's a pair of bellows to him. There! you're fine now. Doctor, come and feel her pulse. (With a signal to the DOCTOR.) I go bail you've never felt a stronger one. Not in this island, anyway.

(The DOCTOR crosses to KATE.)

(At door A.) Now, boys and girls, don't crowd. Let the mother rest five minutes. I'm not turning ye away; but she's tired. She'll welcome you herself in five minutes.

VOICES.

(*Outside.*) Ay, ay, Cap'n Pete. Don't you hurry, Cap'n—etc., etc.

PETE.

(*Quietly to Nancy.*) I had to hould her up in church, the bogh——

GRANNIE.

Eh! she's all right. They're always that way first time; first wedding and first christening.

(*CÆSAR has crossed to KATE and is stroking her brow. The DOCTOR leaves her.*)

CÆSAR.

My brave daughter! My brave daughter!

PETE.

(*To DOCTOR.*) Tell me she's well, Doctor. Tell me there's nothing serious the matter.

DOCTOR.

Nerves, my dear sir—nothing but nerves.

PETE.

Nerves? What's that at all?

DOCTOR.

(*Laughing.*) I think you'd have some difficulty in understanding; but woman suffers many things that 'man is spared.

PETE.

(*Earnestly.*) God bless me sowl!

DOCTOR.

All she wants is quiet and cheerful company.

PETE.

I give her that, don't I? (*Thinks it over, and adds, with a touch of discouragement.*) Try to, anyway.

DOCTOR.

She hasn't been quite herself for some months, has she?

PETE.

Not since our marriage, Doctor. Up and down. Laughing at nothing, crying at nothing—nothing I could make out at all.

DOCTOR.

Nerves, you see. Young mothers often suffer from it. Always entertain. She wants company. Have people about her who are bright and witty. If that doesn't answer, let her have a little change.

PETE.

(*Startled.*) Eh?

DOCTOR.

Send her away for a bit.

PETE.

(*Amazed.*) Out of the Island?

DOCTOR.

Why not? She'll come back another woman.

PETE.

I'll put up with the same one, Doctor. (*Crosses to KATE.*)

CÆSAR.

(*Coming to DOCTOR.*) Out of the Island, ye say? What for? I've been on the Island sixty-seven years, and look at me.

DOCTOR.

(*Eyeing him professionally.*) Yes—very interesting.

CÆSAR.

I don't believe in earthly medicines, Doctor. My physician is—— (*He points upwards.*)

DOCTOR.

(*Tapping him on the chest with his forefinger.*) Tell you what; call him in, then.

CÆSAR.

(*Startled.*) Eh? What d'ye mean?

DOCTOR.

Marked tendency to rheumatic arthritis——

CÆSAR.

What's that I've got? Arthur—what? Rubbish and nonsense! (*Turns away.*)

PETE.

(*To DOCTOR, indicating door A.*) Doctor, shall I send them home?

KATE.

No, no, Pete. Let them come in. I'm quite strong again now.

CÆSAR.

(*Who has come back anxiously.*) Look here, Doctor——

PETE.

(*As above.*) What do you say, Doctor?

DOCTOR.

Have them in, by all means. Cheer her up a bit.

(*PETE crosses to door A.*)

CÆSAR.

Seriously, Doctor, what do you advise?

DOCTOR.

I advise——

CÆSAR.

Yes, yes—what?

DOCTOR.

Medical advice.

CÆSAR.

(*Disgusted.*) Money-grubber!

PETE.

(*Who has opened door A.*) Come in, friends and neighbours. Come in, and welcome.

(*Enter POSTMAN KELLY, BLACK TOM, CONSTABLE NIPLIGHTLY, WILLIAM, a very old man, SARAH, his very old wife, MARY the fish-girl, and four other very pretty fish-lassies and four lads. At first they shyly keep near the door.*)

MARY.

Poor thing! But she is pale.

CONSTABLE.

(*Coming forward.*) Our duty to you, Mrs. Quilliam, and good luck to you. And Postman Kelly and I, we should a been in church, but duty prevented. Him having his letters to carry and me having to lock up Bessie Kinrade, in his Majesty's name——

CÆSAR.

Then you've taken that wicked woman?

CONSTABLE.

That we have, sir—and locked her up in Castle Rushen.

KATE.

What had she done?

CÆSAR.

Hush! The story is not for the ears of good women, my girl.

PETE.

(Protesting.) Come now, father-in-law!

CÆSAR.

Are you defending her, Pete?

PETE.

Her husband beat her, and she ran away——

CÆSAR.

But she stole the child——

PETE.

Maybe she did, but it was her child for all.

CONSTABLE.

That's kidnapping, Mr. Quilliam. If you kidnap, you're caught.

GRANNIE.

Are we going to have the christening gifts, or are we not?

POSTMAN.

Now, William, speak your piece, man.

WILLIAM.

(Feeling in his pockets.) Wheer's my salt?
(Turns to SARAH.) What have ye done wi' my christenin' gift, woman?

SARAH.

Why, you forgetful old toot, I give it ye into your hand, so I did.

WILLIAM.

(Finding a dreadful twist of paper.) Here it is. Here it is, sure enough.

TOM.

Hould on, Billyum! That's your snuff!

WILLIAM.

(Cackling.) There now! If I wasn't going to give the blessed infant an ounce of snuff! Can't spare that. *(Finds another twist.)* Here's the salt, though. *(He steps forward towards KATE.)*

PETE.

(At KATE's side.) Look, Kirry, here's the oldest man in the Island come to wish the youngest man in the Island good luck. How old are you, Billy?

WILLIAM.

The Lord knows. Some says more, some less. But a year or two one way or t'other don't make no sort o' odds. Now then, gimme the babe's hand. *(He takes the baby's hand in his right hand, and, while he speaks the saw, pours salt into it with his left hand.)*

Little fingers, open wide,
Take what God shall well provide;
Whether good or ill befall,
Here's the salt that seasons all.

Ay, and an old man's blessing with it. You're coming, and I'm going—and well, well! it's a proud man you are this day, Pete.

PETE.

That's so, Billy, and thank you kindly.

(To KATE, who sits motionless, lost in thought.)

Kate, we thank—— Never mind, dear. Here's old Sarah.

SARAH.

Eh, Mistress Kate. Well I knows your feelings, woman. But when you've had nineteen of 'em, same as me, and lost ten, the tears won't be so ready to shed. There, now! there, now! Gimme his lil fingers, the bogh millish.

Here's a thimble, old and bent,
Given with a good intent;
Bringing luck to him as bears it,
Bringing joy to her as wears it;
Makes you happy all your life,
Crowns you with a virtuous wife.

(Cackling with delight.) It's a bit early for that, but you can't begin too soon. And I don't wish him no better wife than what you've got yourself, Pete.

PETE.

You can't, mother. They don't make 'em, nor never will.

TOM.

(Coming forward shyly.) The boys and girls would like to sing the christening carol, if you're not objecting, Mr. Quilliam.

PETE.

Eh? "Mr. Quilliam!" My gough! I didn't know myself by that Sunday name. What d'ye say, Kate?

KATE.

(A little impatiently.) Let them, if they'd like to.

TOM.

Not if it's too much for the mistress, Pete.

PETE.

No, no; she says yes, so go ahead, lads. *(Quietly to KATE.)* Pluck up, Kirry; pluck up, my lass!

TOM.

We've got the wheels outside, Cap'n.

PETE.

Then bring 'em in, boys—bring 'em in.

(The four lads hurry out A, and at once return with four spinning wheels, which they place in a semi-circle. NANCY and MEG bring four stools from different parts of the room. The four girls sit and spin, while MARY stands in the middle to sing the solo; and the lads stand behind the girls.)

MARY.

(Sings.) When Christ was born in Bethlehem,

ALL.

Sing glory to the Lord!

MARY.

The children, great and small,
Crowned Him with royal diadem,
As King above them all.
The children's crown by Him was borne,
Until He bare the Crown of Thorn.

ALL.

Sing glory to the Lord!

(KATE *bends low over the babe, sobbing.*)

GRANNIE.

Aw, you should a heard *me*. I could put the
shake in. I could, though.

PETE.

(Soothingly.) There, there! Let me hould your
hand, Kirry.

MARY.

(Singing.) The little child in every land,

ALL.

Sing glory to the Lord!

MARY.

His subject is by right.
He leads it with a loving hand
To realms of glorious light.

(She advances towards the infant with hands outstretched, as in blessing.)

O pure in heart, keep thy heart pure,
And make the road to heaven sure.

ALL.

Sing glory to the Lord!

PETE.

(With folded hands and upturned face, very solemnly.) Aw yes, keep his heart as pure as his mother's, I beseech Thee, O Lord!

ALL.

(Hushed.) Amen!
(KATE breaks down.)

PETE.

Kate! Kitty! Kirry!

NANCY.

There, now, you've upset her between ye. Think she's made of cast-iron? *(To KATE.)* Give me the child, Miss Kate.

PETE.

Listen to that, now. Miss Kate! Mrs. Peter Quilliam, woman! Mrs. Capt'n Peter Quilliam! Let me lift the lil one, Kitty.

KATE.

(Almost fiercely, as if defending the child.) No, no, not you!

PETE.

(Good-humouredly, amazed.) Why not? What are you afraid of, at all at all? Can't a man hould his own child, Kirry? Give him to me, the young rascal!

NANCY.

D'ye know how to hould him?

PETE.

Hark at the woman! Do ye think it's the first christening I've ever been at? Last time I was parson myself.

(Exclamations and laughter.)

So I was. Parson Pete! And godfather and god-mother, too. And the baby was Peter Quilliam.

(Laughter.)

Peter Quilliam, I'm telling ye, and no laughing matter! It was at Kimberley. There's always a truck o' women about a compound, and one of 'em had a child, and it was the death of her, and she couldn't take rest because it hadn't been christened. There wasn't a parson for fifty miles, and it was night-time, and the woman stretched by the camp fire and sinking fast. "What's to be done?" says the men. "I'll do it," says I. And I did. One of the boys got a pannikin of water, and I dipped my hand in it. "What's the name?" says I; but the poor thing was past speaking. So I gave the

child my own name, though I didn't know the mother from Noah's Aunt. "I baptise thee, Peter Quilliam, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." Then the girl died happy, and what for shouldn't she? The words were right, and the water was right, and if the hand wasn't as clean as usual, maybe Him that's above wouldn't bother about the difference. But give me the baby, Kirry. (*He takes the baby.*)

GRANNIE.

Aisy, now, Pete—aisy!

PETE.

Is it aisy broke they are, Grannie? Aw, Kitty, the beauty it is, though! And the big! As big as my fist already. And as fat as a blue-bottle! (*Suddenly nervous.*) Nancy! I'm frightened! S'pose I was to squeeze him? Take him, quick! Quick! he's going to howl!

NANCY.

(*Taking the baby.*) So would you howl, ye clumsy omahaun, if you were held the wrong end up! (*She moves to stairs.*)

PETE.

Where are you taking him?

NANCY.

Upstairs. To his bottle, of course.

GRANNIE.

Put the tongs over the cradle, Nancy ; it's a pity to tempt the fairies. The lil people are shocking bad for changing.

(NANCY goes upstairs and through door B with the child.)

PETE.

And, Nancy!

NANCY.

(From bedroom.) What is it?

PETE.

Is that windy in the bedroom open?

NANCY.

Yes.

PETE.

Then shut it—do you want to freeze my baby?

DOCTOR.

Let it have fresh air, Pete. It will be all the better for it.

PETE.

Will it? (Calling.) Nancy, is that windy open?

NANCY.

Didn't you tell me to shut it?

PETE.

Then open it. Do you want to stifle my baby?

KATE,

Leave it to Nancy, Pete. She knows what to do.

PETE.

With ordinary babies maybe—just ordinary, common babies——

(Crash heard upstairs.)

(Runs to foot of stairs.) Is it killed?

NANCY.

Is what killed?

PETE.

My baby?

NANCY.

Baby's asleep. It was the coal-scuttle.

PETE.

(Mopping his forehead.) The coal-scuttle!
Phew!

DOCTOR.

You're too anxious, Mr. Quilliam.

PETE.

Maybe. But I'm only a beginner at babies, ye see, and they take a heap of learning.

DOCTOR.

(To the VILLAGERS.) Now, friends, we'll leave our patient alone.

POSTMAN.

Ay, ay, sir.

PETE.

Thank you. (*Shaking hands.*) Thank you, Billy! (*He presses a coin in his hand.*) A pinch of snuff, you know. Thank you, Sarah! Here's a pound o' tea. (*To the OTHERS.*) I've had a table set out under the orchard trees. Grannie will look after you. Won't you, Grannie?

GRANNIE.

Needs must—other people being so moidered about the baby. But it's a right angel you are, Pete, and God bless ye!

(*GRANNIE is helped out A.*)

PETE.

By the time you've drunk the baby's health the new Deemster will be here, boys.

TOM.

Mr. Philip Christian? Is he Deemster already then?

PETE.

The Home Secretary's nominated him, anyway.

TOM.

That's a good job done, Capt'n.

(*ALL approve and go out A. merrily.*)

CÆSAR.

Let us hope and pray he'll make as good a Deemster as his father and his grandfather before him.

PETE.

I'll go bail on that, Cæsar.

DOCTOR.

I wondered he was not with us—he was godfather. (*Crosses to KATE.*)

PETE.

Too busy to come to the christening, but he's coming to see his name-child presently.

(ROSS CHRISTIAN *has entered A. through the LADS and LASSES, etc., as they went out.*)

ROSS.

His name-child, is it?

(KATE *starts.*)

PETE.

Yes, his name-child, Mr. Ross. Whom else d'ye think I'd call my only son after?

ROSS.

Most appropriate, certainly. Not too late to congratulate the mother, I hope? (*Crosses to KATE.*)

DOCTOR.

(*Who has been talking to KATE, taking leave.*)
Now, remember. We must be cheerful. We must

eat and drink and sleep. A glass of port, now and then, will do us no harm.

PETE.

Port!

(*To MEG, who has been in and out of door A.*)
Here, Meg! (*Gives her money.*) Run into Ramsey and get the best bottle of port they've got. Take care coming back, though. If you smash it, I'll smash *you!*

MEG.

Goodness me!

(*Exit A.*)

DOCTOR.

That's all right, then! We'll soon have those white cheeks rosy again! My hat! (*Goes up stage to find it.*)

CÆSAR.

(*At PETE's side, quietly, pointing to ROSS.*)
(*ROSS is talking to KATE.*)

I don't like to see that young man in this house, Pete.

PETE.

(*Lightly.*) What's the odds—he'll make Kirry laugh a bit.

CÆSAR.

Some laughter is bitter as the waters of Marah, man. A loose liver, a transgressor, a prodigal who is bringing his father's grey head down to the grave. He should never be allowed inside a God-

fearing house. Pete, are ye blind? Haven't I told ye?

PETE.

I trust my wife, Cæsar.

CÆSAR.

Hah! Well—I've warned you. Doctor, I'm coming your way.

DOCTOR.

Past twelve o'clock, Cæsar. No free consultations in the afternoon, you know. (*As they go out A.*)

CÆSAR.

Do you stop doing good by the clock, then?

(*Exeunt.*)

PETE.

I'll see ye to the gate, gentlemen. Back soon, Kitty! Keep her cheerful, Mr. Ross!

(*Exit A.*)

ROSS.

Rather a stiff job, eh, Kate?

KATE.

What?

ROSS.

Keep you cheerful. Afraid I'm not quite the man for it. What?

KATE.

Then why do you stay?

ROSS.

I obey orders. Pete's always telling other people to keep you cheerful. First Philip, now me. Wonder why?

KATE.

He's always trying to make me happy.

ROSS.

Trying to make others make you happy. Can't do it himself, eh?

KATE.

Mr. Ross, I'm not very well nowadays——

ROSS.

Can see the change myself, Kate.

KATE.

What change?

ROSS.

The change in you, my dear. When Pete was abroad yours was the happiest face in the Island, but now——

KATE.

There is no change.

ROSS.

Isn't there? Then why have you grown so thin and pale since your marriage, Kate? To-day

even, when you ought to be happy, your eyes are red and your——

KATE.

It's your fancy—your fancy——

ROSS.

Is it? Anybody but a fool—or Pete—could see it, though. And anybody but Pete—or a fool—could guess the reason.

KATE.

There is no reason.

ROSS.

I think there is, my dear. The old, old reason. Shall I tell you what that is? You find you've married the wrong man.

KATE.

It's not true. He's a good man—a good, generous, big-hearted man—too good—oh, much too good for me!

ROSS.

Perhaps! I've seen a lot of life, Kate, and if I've learned anything, I've learnt this—that a good man—a man who is too good—is no good to live with.

KATE.

Be quiet! I won't listen to a word against him. His devotion to me——

Ross.

(Sympathetically.) I know. His devotion wears the life out of you. You're up against it every hour of the day. You mustn't do this, or say that, or think the other, for fear of seeing a pained look in his dog-like eyes. Oh, I know! I know! But you were never made for this sort of thing, Kate. You're not a speckled hen. You want life and joy and a man who can understand and appreciate you.

(KATE covers her ears.)

KATE.

Oh, leave me alone! Leave me alone!

Ross.

All this you had when Philip was looking after you——

(He comes closer to her—suggest Marguerite and Mephistopheles.)

But those days are gone, my girl! Philip is a respectable man now. Deemster-elect, you know. Good Lord alive! No more cakes and ale for Master Philip!

KATE.

(Harassed.) I don't understand a word you say.

Ross.

Of course you don't. But you will by and by. And when you do, think of me. In London! In London, Kate! Lord! the time I'd give you if you'd only make up your mind to leave that chucklehead of a Pete.

(*Re-enter PETE.*)

KATE.

Here comes that chucklehead of a Pete. Say that to him, if you dare!

PETE.

They're as merry as sandboys out there. How are you getting on here?

KATE.

I think Mr. Ross Christian has something to say to you, Pete.

PETE.

To me? What may that be, Mr. Ross?

ROSS.

(*Going up to PETE, confusedly.*) Eh, well, I was just saying, won't you come up to our house some day, when I come back, for a bit of dinner? Bring the wife. Glad to see you, you know.

PETE.

Maybe. We'll see. Some day, perhaps. Going away, are you?

ROSS.

Yes, back to London. Have to catch the night boat. Here's my London address. (*Produces card.*)

PETE.

Don't know that I'll want it, though.

ROSS.

(*Putting card on KATE's lap.*) You may. Keep it, Mrs. Quilliam. You never know. (*Going, stopping.*) By the way, there was something else I wanted to speak about.

PETE.

What was that, sir?

ROSS.

People say you've come home a rich man, Captain, and my father is a bit short of money—wants a little on mortgage—splendid security—best land in the Island, you know.

PETE.

Never do my own business, Mr. Ross.

ROSS.

No?

PETE.

Always leave it to your cousin Philip.

ROSS.

Just so. (*With a glance at KATE.*) I've noticed that.

PETE.

So, if you've anything to say, better say it to him.

ROSS.

(*Snubbed.*) Exactly.

PETE.

You'll excuse me now, sir, but the Deemster is coming soon, and, being a great friend of ours——

ROSS,

(*Sneering.*) How nice!

PETE.

What's nice, sir?

ROSS.

When the friend of the wife is the friend of the husband also.

PETE.

Just so. We're getting up a bit of a "do" for the Deemster, though, and——

ROSS.

A demonstration, eh? A procession—a band, perhaps?

PETE.

Certainly. I play the drum.

ROSS.

(*Laughing insolently.*) Ah! A difficult instrument to—er—carry, isn't it?

PETE.

Like myself there, sir; and like you, it's a pretty aisy thing to beat.

(PETE goes to open door. PHILIP enters.)
Phil! Dear old Phil! You're the very man we're wanting, and here ye are! There's Kirry! Speak to her, Phil.

ROSS.

Helloa, Phil, old man! Not seen you since that day at the "Manx Fairy." Kitty wasn't married then, and now you are to be Deemster! Funny world, eh? Things get so damnably mixed up in it!

PETE.

(Who has been rattling latch of door.) I don't see——

ROSS.

Of course you don't. Your end of the triangle never does.

PETE.

Triangle? - What triangle?

ROSS.

The everlasting triangle of husband, wife, and friend. By-bye.

(Exit door L.)

PETE.

(Closing door.) Now, what did the omathaun mean by that, I wonder?

PHILIP.

Let him go, Pete. He's not worth thinking of.

PETE.

Bad luck to him, anyway. Cæsar was right. He's only a wastrel. One of the men with a hump-backed conscience. Lots o' that sort going about now, boy! But you're Deemster at last, Phil! Judge of the Island, Kirry. Mind what you're at, girl, or the Deemster will lock you up as soon as look at ye!

PHILIP.

Only Deemster-elect, Pete. I have still to be sworn in. (*With a shudder.*)

PETE

And when will that be?

PHILIP.

A week hence—in Castle Rushen, you know.

PETE.

Gough bless me! Full state, eh? All the nobs around ye, and you top dog! Well, ye deserve it, and as sure as my name's Peter Quilliam, Kate and I will be there to see. We'll take the baby—eh, dear?

KATE.

(*Nervously.*) No, no. I cannot go. It's impossible.

PETE.

All right, dearie. Don't worry. (*Aside to PHILIP.*) Bit off to-day. Doctor's been looking at her. Nothing wrong—only nerves. Got to be kept

cheerful, and you're the very man to do it. You won't drop us, now you're Deemster, Phil?

PHILIP.

You know that, Pete. I've 'brought—I've brought my christening present. (*Produces case holding a silver cup.*)

PETE.

(*Taking cup.*) Kate! Look at it! Isn't it a beauty? Litle Phil will keep it as long as he lives—the gift of his godfather and the best man in the Island, bar none.

(*MARY puts her head in at door A.*)

MARY.

Capt'n Pete!

PETE.

Hulloa!

MARY.

They want ye in the road—quick!

PETE.

(*With a wink.*) All right! I'm coming.

KATE.

(*Afraid of being left alone with PHILIP.*) Where are you going, Pete?

PETE.

(*Aside, to KATE.*) Hush, woman! A secret!
(*Aloud.*) The boys are wanting a bit of practice

with the band, so I'm going to the barn to join them. (*Lifting drum on to his shoulders.*) There's a drum for you, now! No snickerty bit of a kettle-drum, but something a man can beat. (*Is going to beat drum; when he suddenly remembers the baby, and looks round.*) Oh, murder! To think of me forgetting that baby asleep upstairs! Stay with Kirry while I'm in the barn, Phil. Cheer her up. It's you to do it, boy. S'long.

(*Exit with drum L.*)

PHILIP.

What's the matter, Kate? Are you unhappy?

KATE.

Can't you see? His love is killing me. I can't bear it. I can't! I can't! He never speaks to me but he tortures me. He never touches me but he stings me like a scorpion. If he would only ill-use me—strike me—beat me—I could bear it—I could live. But this worship—this perfect, unselfish love—— Oh! oh! oh!

PHILIP.

Be calm, Kate, be calm!

KATE.

Calm? Calm here? Here in this house? His house? How can I? The very walls seem to crush me! The very air seems to stifle me!

PHILIP.

I know! I feel it myself, Kate. But what are we to do?

KATE.

You mean—what am I to do?

PHILIP.

Yes, it's as bad for you as it is for me, Kate.

KATE.

No worse?

PHILIP.

Yes, perhaps even worse. Oh, Kate, Kate, why did you marry him?

KATE.

I snatched at happiness and plucked—remorse.

PHILIP.

You'll outlive all that, though. God grant we may both outlive it—but the regret—the lasting, undying regret!

KATE.

There's something I fear more than that, Philip, more than Pete, more than anything else in the world.

PHILIP.

What?

KATE.

Myself!

PHILIP.

Yourself? Why?

KATE.

Because—because I am learning to love the man I have married—and wronged. How can I help it? How can I help it? Yet it drives me mad! It drives me mad!

PHILIP.

You are thinking of me, perhaps—of the dear, sweet days——

KATE.

No, I am not thinking of you, Philip. I'm thinking——

PHILIP.

Of what, Kate?

KATE.

The child!

PHILIP.

The child?

KATE.

Oh, why didn't I die when my baby came?

PHILIP.

What are you saying? For your child's sake you must bear all and live.

KATE.

But it's the child that is killing me. Yet you never knew—never guessed——

PHILIP.

Guessed what, Kate?

KATE.

When I entreated you to be true to the promise you made me—the promise to marry me——

PHILIP.

Well? Well?

KATE.

You wouldn't understand me, then.

PHILIP.

(Rising in horror.) Understand you——
(Dead silence for a moment. They look into each other's faces.)

KATE.

Do you understand me—now?
(Band outside heard playing "Home, Sweet Home.")

PHILIP.

But this is a mistake—imagination—hysteria——

KATE.

It's God's truth, Philip.

PHILIP.

Oh, God! Oh, God!

KATE.

I wonder everybody hasn't seen it in the child's face. I wonder all the world hasn't seen it! I wish it had! Then it would be all over—all over at last.

PHILIP.

Hush! For heaven's sake, don't talk so wildly.

KATE.

(*Rises.*) Wildly! What talk is there that can give words to what is going on—(*beating her breast*)—here? Night and day—every hour—every moment—a sledge-hammer is beating in my brain. A voice, like the last trump, is sounding in my ears: Liar! Thief! You have stolen a good man's love, an honest man's name. You have betrayed his trust: you have brought shame into his house; you *are* shame! You—you—you!

PHILIP.

Kate, what are you going to do?

KATE.

Do? What do you suppose I'm going to do? Do you think I can go on living here?

PHILIP.

(*With horror.*) You don't mean that you are going to——

KATE.

Oh, don't be afraid. I'm not going to kill myself—yet. I thought of that, too, this morning,

when I crossed the river, coming home from church. It would soon be over *there*, I thought. No more trouble, no more dreams, no more waking in the night with his peaceful breathing by my side and the voice out of the darkness crying——

PHILIP.

Kate!

KATE.

No. I haven't courage enough for that.

PHILIP.

What then? What?

KATE.

I'm going away. (*She sees his fears, and changes her tone to one of cold indifference.*) After all, it's no concern of yours, is it? What I am going to do only concerns me—the woman. What has Philip Christian, the Deemster, to do with that? Philip Christian, the lover—ah, that was a different matter. He could lie in the sunshine and gather the roses. But the Deemster! What can the Deemster have to do with the doings of—of a disgraced and out-cast wife?

PHILIP.

I deserve all your scorn, but I beg—I pray—think of the torture I shall suffer——

KATE.

Think of the torture I *am* suffering! But what have you to fear? Nothing at all. You can sleep

sound and wake happy. The woman's burden is for me—alone!

(PETE bursts in at door. Cheering outside.)

PETE.

Did you hear us, Phil? Did you hear me on the drum? The boys are here to take you home in procession, and they're wanting you to make a speech to them.

PHILIP.

I can't speak to them.

PETE.

But you must.

PHILIP.

Not to-day, at all events.

PETE.

You must, man veen, you must. Here, come along, now—come to the door.

(He hustles PHILIP out of the door, remaining inside himself. A great cheer outside.)

PHILIP.

(Outside.) Friends, and fellow-townsmen—
(Shouts of "Hear! Hear!")

PETE.

(At KATE'S side.) That's good. That'll fetch 'em.

PHILIP.

(*Outside.*) You can never know how much your kind congratulations have moved me——

(*Cheers, and cries: "You deserve it all, sir!"*)

Yet I cannot say whether in my heart of hearts I feel more pride than shame—pride at the honour that has been done me, shame at my own unworthiness.

PETE.

"Unworthiness"—do ye hear that, Kirry?

PHILIP.

God only knows the frailties and infirmities, the weaknesses and sins that each of us hide in our hearts——

PETE.

Eh? What's that? Is he off his head, Kate?

PHILIP.

But I'll try to do my duty for the honour of the place I fill, and if it should ever appear that your confidence has been misplaced—if I should seem to be untrue to the oath I am so soon to take—a wrongdoer—not a righter of the wronged—remember, fellow-countrymen, remember, I beseech you, that much as you may be suffering then, I shall be suffering more.

(*Confused murmurs outside, cries of "No, no," etc.*)

PETE.

The wrong tack, Phil! The wind's out of your sails, boy! Where's that drum? I must lift this up a bit. (*Going out, crying.*) Three cheers for the new Deemster, my lads!

(*Great cheering.*)

On to your shoulders with him, boys! Now then, Jonaique Jelly! "See the Conquering Hero."

(*Big bang of the drum. Band plays "Conquering Hero," and gradually dies away.*)

NANCY is seen on top of stairs holding the baby.)

NANCY.

My gracious mercy! Whatever's the matter?

KATE.

Has the noise waked baby?

NANCY.

He was making a fine to-do, ma'am. (*To Baby.*)
'There, there—was 'em naughty men?

KATE.

Bring him down.

NANCY.

(*Coming down steps.*) But what was the band for?

KATE.

They're seeing the Deemster home, Nancy.

NANCY.

Seeing him home, are they? (*Hands the Baby to her. She puts it in the cradle.*) Here, ma'am! (*Hands her a bottle.*) And here's fresh milk. There'll be a grand sight in the town, I'm thinking. I wonder now——

KATE.

(*Busy with the baby.*) What, Nancy?

NANCY.

I wonder would you let me go and see the "do," ma'am?

KATE.

Why, of course, Nancy, if you want to.

NANCY:

Shan't be gone more'n quarter of an hour, ma'am.

KATE.

No need to hurry back, Nancy—I'll see to baby.

NANCY.

Thank you, ma'am! For the master's sake you'd do that, if you wouldn't for your own. The way that man dotes on that child, it's shocking! If anything happened to it, he'd just break his heart, I do believe. (*She puts the shawl she's wearing over her head.*) There! I've seen Mr. Philip grow up and I love him! Everybody loves Mr. Philip,

don't they, ma'am? (*Opening door.*) Listen! I know what that is—(*sings*)—"See, see, the conquering——" Oh, my!

(*Exit NANCY, as if marching to tune.*)

KATE.

(*Suddenly active. Finds her hat and cloak, which she took off when she came in—comes to cradle.*) Oh, baby, baby, we must go. We're strangers in this house, dearie—strangers and robbers. Your mother's heart's breaking, baby, and she'll die if she stays here and hears him saying loving things, and sees him looking at her with his great, trusting eyes. (*Bends low over cradle.*) Baby—he's making your mother love him—and that's what drives her away. How can she lie to the man she loves? (*Lifts the baby out.*) Oh, come, come! We must go! We must go! (*Stands in the middle of the room and looks about her.*) Good-bye! How empty—how desolate and empty! What a home for him to come back to! Well! It'll be no emptier than when I'm here. (*Looks at the cradle.*) That will break his heart. The empty cradle will break his heart. What shall I do? (*With an agonised conflict.*) Baby—can I give you to him? Must I? Must I give my child? My own child? Yes! Then, perhaps, I shall have atoned. Perhaps God will give me a little peace. My baby! My little Philip! I'll leave you with him. He cannot live without one of us. Good-bye! (*Kisses child.*) I may never see you again. You will grow up and never see your mother—never know she loved you!

(Band heard far off playing again "Home, Sweet Home.")

(She carries the baby back and lays it in the cradle. She kisses it, shaken with dreadful sobs. Then she dashes her tears aside and rises, takes off a ring, a little necklace and bracelet, and lays them on the table.) His, not mine! (Is about to take off her wedding ring.) And this—"With this ring I thee wed." No, no, not that! (She turns back to cradle, kneels by it, kisses child.) Good-bye, darling! One more kiss! Good-bye! Good-bye!

(She totters towards the door; opens it, looks back—rushes back and kisses the child frantically. Then dashes out, closing the door after her.)

(Pause. The clock is heard ticking. It strikes the half hour. Ticks again.)

(PETE bursts in, singing "See the Conquering Hero.")

PETE.

You should have seen 'em in the market-place, Kate! Poor Philip was mortal uncomfortable, though! Four of us had him on our shoulders and we laughed so much we nearly let him drop. I wish you'd—hulloa! (Calls.) Kate! Katie! Gone out? Kirry! (Sees baby.) Why, Lord bless me, if there isn't the Emperor! Where's your mother, old chap? She *can't* have gone out; she could hardly stand. (Calls again.) Ka-ate! Peggy! No—I sent Peggy for the port—Nancy! What's the matter with the house, anyway? (Slight shudder.) It feels as if—(Dashes upstairs and opens door B.) Kitty—is anything—(Is stopped short. Looks

over the railing, speaking with fear.) Nancy!
(From where he stands in the gallery he sees the ring and bracelet lying on the table. He is fascinated, and stares long at them.) What's that? What's that, glittering on the table? What's that glittering? *(He comes down the stairs and to the table, takes up ring and the bracelet and looks at them without understanding.)* Her ring—her bracelet—money—all she had—everything I gave her—Kirry! Kitty! Kate! *(Looks round.)* Her cloak's gone! Her hat, too! *(Calls again, hoarsely.)* Kate! Kate!

(Suddenly the whistle of a passing train is heard.)

(He looks up.) Gone!—my God, gone! My Kirry's gone! *(He makes a dash for the door.)*

(Enter NANCY.)

PETE.

Kirry, is that you?

NANCY.

No, it's only me, Capt'n.

PETE.

'Then where's—where's—— *(Stops suddenly.)*

NANCY.

Where's what? The mistress? I left her here. Lord-a-massy, the white you're looking! Has anything happened? Is the mistress ill? Where has she gone to?

PETE.

Where should she be gone to? The father's, of course.

NANCY.

She couldn't—she was that tired.

PETE.

But she has—I tell ye she has—say another word and I'll—I'll kill ye.

NANCY.

Goodness me! You needn't speak like that. I wouldn't say nothing against Kate Cregeen—I've known her since she was a girl, and I love the very——

PETE.

Then run—run round to the father's and fetch her back. She's hysterical—she's gone out without knowing it—run, girl, run!

NANCY.

(Indicating cradle.) But——

PETE.

(Pushing her out.) I'll see to *him!* Run!
(Exit NANCY A.)

PETE.

(At cradle.) Your mother couldn't leave you, could she, old man? No, not if she tried, she

couldn't! Nor me, neither, she's that faithful and true—not like some sorts o' women, a serpent in a poor man's heart. She's ill, boy, that's what she is—nervous and hysterical and doesn't know what she's doing. Is Nancy never coming back? I must have drink, though—I'm choking with thirst. (*Takes water from table and gulps it down.*) Here's to you, my Emperor! And your mother too, God bless her! She's gone for a breath o' fresh air—(*mechanically*)—a breath o' fresh air—a breath o' fresh— What a time that woman is, though!

(*The door opens A. He swings back, and cries.*)

Nancy!

(*Enter CÆSAR CREGEEN, and NANCY.*)

Well?

CÆSAR.

(*Excited, fierce.*) What's this Nancy says? - Kate gone?

PETE.

(*Startled.*) Cæsar! Isn't she with— (*Pulls himself up.*)

CÆSAR.

Don't you know where she's gone to?

PETE.

(*To gain time.*) Don't I know—don't I know—don't I know, you say—

CÆSAR.

Out with it, man. I see it in your face. Why

don't you speak the truth? I'm her father—I've a right to know.

(PETE is seen rapidly slipping the ring and necklace into his pocket.)

PETE.

You're her father, are ye?

CÆSAR.

She's gone—left you—and I warned you——

PETE.

Warned me, did ye?

CÆSAR.

Yes, of that loose liver, that prodigal, that profligate, Ross Christian. He has gone, too—they've gone together——

PETE.

Stop that—stop it, d'ye hear?

(Enter BLACK TOM, KELLY, the Postman, JONAIQUE JELLY, and OTHERS, audaciously.)

JONAIQUE.

What's wrong here?

TOM.

Yes, what the jeel—what's the trouble?

PETE.

Trouble? What trouble, if you please?

POSTMAN.

Your wife, man, your wife!

PETE.

My wife? What about my wife?

TOM.

Gone, isn't she? Gone by the train.

PETE.

Gone by the train, eh?

POSTMAN.

With a strange man, they're saying——

PETE.

A strange man!

TOM.

We were at the station ourselves——

PETE.

You were at the station yourselves—— Well, that's grand! That's rich!

(Breaks into wild and prolonged peal of laughter, then suddenly sobers and becomes fierce.)

And so, because you were at the station and saw my wife going by train you smelt mischief, did you? And now you come here to pry into my private affairs, you sneaking set of scandalmongers!

TOM.

Aisy, man! Aisy with the tongue! We only thought——

PETE.

You only thought—what? You thought there was another dirty meal for you here—you carrion eaters! That's it, isn't it? Well, you're wrong for once. My wife has been ill—hasn't she, Nancy?

NANCY.

Yes—yes!

PETE.

And Dr. Mylechreest ordered her a change of air—didn't he, Cæsar?

CÆSAR.

I—I—I think he did——

PETE.

You *know* he did—out of the Island for a bit, he said, and she'll come back another woman.

CÆSAR.

Well, yes, I must say—certainly——

PETE.

So I've sent her to Liverpool—sent her on a visit to my uncle—I suppose a man may send his wife to Liverpool to visit his uncle without asking the consent of all the town! And now—now that you know the truth, you can get out of my house, the

ruck of you! My wife's a good woman, d'ye hear? A good, true woman and a faithful wife, and any of you that wants to whisper a word against that had better come and do it first to me. So out of my house, you scandalmongers! Out of it, you pecking, prying, carrion crows! Out you go, you dirty, measly pig's wash, before I throw the whole boiling of you into the road! Out with you! Out! Out! (*Flings them out as curtain falls quickly.*)

CURTAIN.

THE THIRD ACT

SCENE.—*The Keep of CASTLE RUSHEN. A square enclosure open to the sky. On the R a stone staircase leads up to a landing and small door (B) in the right wall. Under the stairs is an arched recess. The back of the scene is the wall of the chapel, and in the centre of it is a quaint clock. There is a wide and heavy gate (A) left front, and a smaller postern (C) right front. The clock at the back points to two minutes to ten. (The clock is going, and must point to the time indicated in the dialogue throughout the Act.)*

(The stage is empty. There is the noise of a CROWD off L. The clock strikes ten.)

(The CAPTAIN'S voice, outside.)

CAPTAIN.

Present arms!

(Noise of rifles brought into position.)

(Voice of LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.)

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

Philip Christian, you are now to take the solemn oath as Deemster of this island. Lay your hands upon this book and repeat the words of the oath after me, sentence by sentence, as I shall deliver them :

“By this book, and by the holy contents thereof, and by the wonderful works that God hath miraculously wrought in heaven and on the earth beneath in six days and seven nights, I do swear that I will, without respect or favour or friendship, love or gain, consanguinity or affinity, envy or malice, execute the laws of the isle justly betwixt our Sovereign Lord the King and his subjects within the isle, and betwixt party and party, as indifferently as the herring backbone doth lie in the midst of the fish.”

PHILIP.

This I swear, so help me God!

(Meanwhile, on the first words of the oath, KATE has entered through the little postern (C), and has been listening expressively to the oath.)

A CRY.

Three cheers for the Deemster!

(Cheers.)

(A Band strikes up the National Anthem, which is also sung.)

OFFICER'S VOICE.

Present arms! Order arms! Unfix bayonets! Slope arms! Move to the left in fours! Form fours! By the right—Quick march!

(General stir and noise of conversation outside.)

(KATE retires from the gate (A), where she had been standing, looks round bewildered for

a moment, sees the arched recess under the stairs, and rapidly gets under it.)

(Enter the LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR, *the* MAYOR OF DOUGLAS, PHILIP, *and the* CLERK OF THE COURT.)

GOVERNOR.

(Genially to PHILIP.) And now, Mr. Christian— Ah! Deemster Christian, I should say—let me be the first to congratulate you. You are the honourable son of an honourable family. The distinguished office with which you are now invested will, I am sure, receive new dignity from its present bearer. *(Offering his hand.)* I wish you, therefore, many long years of useful and distinguished activity.

PHILIP.

Thank you, my Lord.

MAYOR.

(Fussily.) Allow me, sir! *(Shakes hands.)* Proud of you! The island is proud of you! Same as it was of your father, sir, and of *his* father before him.

PHILIP.

Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I don't deserve——

MAYOR.

Yes, you do, sir; yes, you do!—and more. Sorry I cannot congratulate your good lady, yet——

GOVERNOR.

(Laughing.) Come, come, Mr. Mayor, there's plenty of time!

MAYOR.

(Laughing.) As you say, my Lord. Well, Deemster, I shall have an opportunity of saying what I think of you later on. You do not forget you are lunching with the—ah—Mayor and Corporation of Douglas at one o'clock to-day?

PHILIP.

I am looking forward to it.

MAYOR.

So are we all, sir. *(To Governor.)* Your Lordship will be there, too?

GOVERNOR.

Certainly, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR.

A proud day for me, my Lord. *(To Philip.)* Good-morning, your Honour. I leave you to your magisterial duties. One, sharp!
(Exit A.)

GOVERNOR.

Good-morning, Deemster. You have time for a little rest after a trying ordeal.

PHILIP.

Very trying. Yes. Very trying.
(*Governor exits A.*)

PHILIP.

(*Stretching his arms.*) Thank God! It's over
at last!

CLERK.

Not all over, your Honour. You hold your first
court at eleven, you know.

PHILIP.

Is there much to do?

CLERK.

Only one case, sir.

PHILIP.

What is it?

CLERK.

The case of the woman Kinrade, who stole the
child.

PHILIP.

Her own child, wasn't it?

CLERK.

Yes; but she's living away from her husband,
and, of course, he claims the custody of his off-
spring.

PHILIP.

(Wearily.) I see.

CLERK.

(Pointing up steps.) Will you go up to your room and rest, your Honour?

PHILIP.

No. It's hot and stuffy up there. I'll stay here.

CLERK.

Very well, your Honour. (Going A.)

PHILIP.

Oh, would you mind fetching my writing-case? There are some papers in it I must consult.

CLERK.

Certainly, your Honour. (Goes up the steps and into the room.)

PHILIP.

(Sinks on a seat and buries his face in his hands.)
God be merciful to me, a sinner!

(Re-enter CLERK from room upstairs with a pigskin writing folio containing pen, ink, paper, and legal documents.)

CLERK.

Is this what your Honour wanted?

PHILIP.

Yes, yes. Thank you.

CLERK.

I'll tell the constable to see you're not disturbed, sir.

PHILIP.

Thank you.

CLERK.

And I'll come and call you at eleven, your Honour.

(Exit A.)

(PHILIP sits, opens folio, takes out legal document, and examines it, but cannot fix his

attention on it.)

(KATE comes out from under the arch, stands still a moment, looking round, to make sure no one is near.)

KATE.

(Very quietly.) Philip!

PHILIP.

(Starting up.) Kate! Here! Here!

KATE.

Yes; I've come to tell you.

PHILIP.

To tell me—what?

KATE.

Then you haven't heard? I've left Pete.

PHILIP.

Good Heavens! (*Looks round in alarm.*) Then you musn't stay here—you musn't be seen here alone with——

KATE.

(*Slightly mockingly.*) You mean *you* mustn't be seen here alone with me. Don't be afraid. I heard what the Clerk said; we shall not be disturbed until eleven o'clock. That's enough for what I have to tell you.

PHILIP.

Come to my rooms to-night——

KATE.

That will be too late. It will be done before then. I shall be gone——

PHILIP.

Gone! I don't understand. When did you leave your husband?

KATE.

A week to-day.

PHILIP.

Why did you leave him?

KATE.

Do you ask me that? I left him because I couldn't live with him, and now—now I cannot live without my child.

PHILIP.

You left the child behind you?

KATE.

Yes; but I'm going back for it.

PHILIP.

To take it away?

KATE.

To take it away.

PHILIP

Without Pete's consent?

KATE.

With or without.

PHILIP:

(With horror.) But you can't!—you can't!

(Noise of scuffle outside gate A.)

Hark!

CONSTABLE'S VOICE.

(Outside.) No, Mr. Cregeen, you can't pass.

PHILIP.

(To Kate.) Your father!

CÆSAR.

Man! The Deemster *must* see me!

KATE.

(*Hushed.*) My father!

(*She tries to run away C. PHILIP stops her.*)

PHILIP.

No! You are on the brink of disaster. I must speak to you. (*Indicating door B.*) Go up there! To my room. Quick! quick!

KATE.

But——

PHILIP.

(*Imperatively.*) Go, I tell you!

(*She goes quickly up steps and through B.*)

(*PHILIP crosses to gate A and opens it.*)

What is the matter, Constable?

CONSTABLE.

Very sorry, your Honour; here's Mr. Cregeen, of Ramsey——

PHILIP.

Let him come in. (*Comes to centre.*)

CONSTABLE.

(*Speaking off.*) The Deemster will see you.

(*CÆSAR, entering—indignantly.*)

CÆSAR.

I should think so.

(Exit CONSTABLE, leaving gate open.)

(Impatiently.) Deemster! Have you heard——?

PHILIP.

Sit down, Mr. Cregeen.

CÆSAR.

I'm in no mood for sitting down, your Honour. Sorrow and shame are sitting on my hearth this day, sir. My daughter has left her husband.

PHILIP.

Do you mean——

CÆSAR.

Left him—that's what I mean, sir! Deserted her home and her offspring! You must help me, Deemster! I'm covered with confusion. The finger of scorn is lifted against me. I have tried to live a God-fearing life all my days, and now, in my old age, my child brings me to disgrace!

PHILIP.

You are putting the worst construction——

CÆSAR.

What other construction is there? How am I to serve my flock on the Lord's Day and expound

the Word? "Physician, heal thyself! Put your own house in order first!" That's what they'll say, sir.

PHILIP.

They'll not be so uncharitable.

CÆSAR.

Won't they? I know them. I know the evil heart of man, sir! And the worst of it is, it's all her husband's own doing.

PHILIP.

(Startled.) What?

CÆSAR.

I say it's all Pete's own doing. I warned him long ago—I kept on warning him.

PHILIP.

Warned him? Against what?

CÆSAR.

Against the man.

PHILIP.

(Eagerly.) What man?

CÆSAR.

What man? Do you mean you don't know, Deemster? What man but Ross Christian?

PHILIP.

(With a cry.) No, no!

CÆSAR.

He's your own cousin, and I'm sorry to say it, sir, though he hasn't an ounce of your principle in him. But it's true—it's true.

PHILIP.

(Greatly agitated.) Oh God! Oh God!

CÆSAR.

They went off in the same train, it seems. They had the decency—the cunning—not to travel together; but they were in the same train, sir. I warned Pete against the godless profligate—the loose liver, but he wouldn't listen, and now—and now, how do you suppose——? Deemster, you're not listening.

PHILIP.

(Coming to himself.) Yes—yes; what did you say?

CÆSAR.

How do you suppose Pete carries it off? By lying, sir. He goes about trying to throw dust in people's eyes. He's invented a story—that Kate has gone to stay with his uncle in Liverpool. He's invented the uncle—he's got no uncle. Worse than that—he writes letters to himself which he pretends come from Kate; he shows toys Kate has sent for the baby—he buys them himself in Douglas.

PHILIP.

Terrible—terrible!

CÆSAR.

Terrible it is, your Honour! Rank lying and deceiving and flying in the face of Providence. But if Pete is weak, I am strong! The Lord has put a sword in my hand and I mean to use it!

PHILIP.

What will you do?

CÆSAR.

Ross went about trying to borrow money on his father's lands. Well, Pete shall lend it on mortgage. Ross will squander it. Pete will foreclose; then the estate will be his, and the old man and his young cub will be flung out of the island—beggars and paupers.

PHILIP.

Pete will never do that, Cæsar.

CÆSAR.

You must make him do it, Deemster.

PHILIP.

II

CÆSAR.

You! You are the only man in the island he will listen to, and it's right—it's the Lord's own vengeance.

PHILIP.

I—I can't do that.

CÆSAR.

Deemster, will you side with the unrighteous? This is not a crime the law can punish, but will you stand by and see the guilty go unpunished?

(PHILIP *can only stare at him.*)

Will you see the man who loves you with a brother's love robbed of his wife and home? You, the Deemster, the Minister of Justice, the word of the Lord in the land?

(PETE'S *voice is heard outside.*)

PETE.

(*Outside.*) Right you are, Constable! The Deemster won't mind me.

PHILIP.

(*Under his breath, with a look of terror.*) Pete!
(*Enter PETE, pretending to be very happy.*)

PETE.

Philip! Is it here you are! Helloa, Cæsar! Come to see the installation, have ye? Couldn't get down in time myself—something to do in Douglas, and just lost the train; bad luck to it! (*Shaking PHILIP by both hands.*) So you're Deemster at last, boy—sworn in and all complete! I always knew you would be—I knew it when we were slips of lads and used to climb the rocks after the seagulls' eggs. Chums then, chums now, though I'm only an ould stick-in-the-mud myself and a common man still.

PHILIP.

You're not a common man, Pete.

PETE.

Aw, well, I'll not bemane you, Phil.

CÆSAR.

Deemster, I leave you to tell Pete what I came to say. I'll see you at home after you've talked with the Deemster, Pete.

PETE.

What's the trouble now?

CÆSAR.

I'll see you, I say, I'll see you, and may the Lord have mercy on our souls!

(Exit CÆSAR A.)

(PETE laughs.)

PETE.

Poor ould Cæsar! He's so fond of the burial sarvice that he thinks everything's a funeral. But, Phil, such news—such news, boy! You'd never guess—well, may a man smoke in here?

(PHILIP nods.)

Yes! Wonderful comforting the taste of a pipe is when a man's got big newses. Try it yourself, Phil! It'll do you a power o' good, boy, after your courts and juries and all the rest o' the

PHILIP.

Yes, but the news—?

PETE.

(Filling pipe and lighting it.) Think of me forgetting that now! A man *will* talk when he's a bit excited. Well, you've heard I've sent Kirry away to Liverpool?

(PHILIP bows.)

Yes, to my uncle there—my Uncle Joe. Grand man, Uncle Joe! Big nob, too. Lashings of money and a house like Buckingham Palace.

PHILIP.

Well?

PETE.

Well, I've had a letter from her.

PHILIP.

What?

PETE.

(Taking letter out of pocket.) Yes, though, a letter from Kirry! All the way from Liverpool! Them scandal-mongers in Ramsey were after saying, "Why doesn't your wife write to you, Pete?" But that'll shut 'em up. Read it, Phil, read it!

(PHILIP takes letter slowly, looks at envelope, then at PETE.)

PHILIP.

From Liverpool?

PETE.

From Liverpool—from Kate.

PHILIP.

From Kate?

PETE.

Read it aloud—read it aloud!

PHILIP.

(With difficulty.) “Dearest Pete,—I’m getting that much better. I am happy and comfortable. Sometimes I’m longing badly for the sight of the little one’s sweet face. No more at present.—Your own true wife.”

PETE.

Come to the P.S. Nothing like a woman for a P.S. Read the P.S., Phil.

PHILIP.

(Reading.) “Expecting to be home soon. Give my love to father and grannie and my kisses to the boy. My love to his godfather, too. He was good to me when you were in foreign parts, Pete. You never heard the half.—Your loving Kate.”

PETE.

She’s not leaving a man uneasy, you see! Thinking of everybody and a kind word for all. There was a bonnet with it, too—a bonnet for the baby. *(Brings out child’s cap.)* Look at that, Phil! Did

ye ever see such a beauty? I'll go bail that woman's been all over Liverpool to get that bonnet. She wouldn't take the first they offered her—not she! Aw, when a woman goes away she leaves her eyes behind her—ay, and her heart, too. “What'll I be getting for them that's at home?” she's thinking—and up comes a nice warm lil thing like this for the baby! The women's good, Philip! They are, though! Yes, they are! They're what they make the sovereigns of. God bless them!

(PHILIP gives a sigh.)

And now I want you to sit down and write an answer.

PHILIP.

I—write—the answer?

PETE.

Why not? It's the bull fist I have with a pen, but you write like copper-plate. Come now——

PHILIP.

Write yourself, Pete.

PETE.

Me? I'd be hours at it, while you—three scratches of a pen and the job's done! (*Laying out the pens and paper on table.*) Here you are—paper and ink and everything ready.

PHILIP.

(*Sitting reluctantly.*) My God! My God!

PETE.

Are you ready? Off we go then: "My dear Wife——"

(PHILIP *winces.*)

"Glad to get your welcome letter, darling, and the bonnet for the baby." Got that down?—"bonnet for the baby?"

PHILIP.

Go on.

PETE.

"When he's got it on his little head you'd laugh tremendous. He's straight, like a little John the Baptist in the church window." Got the "church window," Phil?

(PHILIP *nods.*)

Man alive, you're wonderful smart with the pen! "Glad to hear you're so happy and comfortable with Uncle Joe. Give the old man my best respects! The Deemster sends his love to you, and hopes——"

PHILIP.

(*Pausing.*) Am I to write that, Pete?

PETE.

Why not? "And hopes you're better for leaving home."

(PHILIP *pauses.*)

Going too fast for you, am I?

PHILIP.

(*Hoarsely.*) No, no; go on—go on!

(KATE *enters B, sees PETE, and crouches behind balustrade.*)

PETE.

“Dearest Kirry. (*He begins to be deeply moved by his own words.*) I’m missing you mortal. Worse nor at Kimberley. When I’m going to bed, ‘Where is she to-night?’ I’m saying. And when I’m getting up, ‘Where is she now?’ I’m thinking. And in the dark midnight I’m asking myself, ‘Is she asleep, I wonder?’ Come home, quick, bogh, but not before you’re well at all.” Never do to fetch her too soon, you know.

PHILIP.

(*With difficulty.*) The paper is—nearly—full.

PETE.

Ah! squeeze this in round the corner: “I’m keeping a warm nest for you here, love. There’ll be a welcome from everybody and nobody saying anything but the good and the kind. So come home soon, my true lil wife, before the foolish old heart of your husband is loosing him.” (*Blowing his nose.*) There now! I’ve caught a cold in my head, sure, there! Give me the pen. (*Signs the letter.*) There! I’ve got the envelope all ready. Stamped and all. (*Puts letter in envelope.*) There! Now—(*gravely*)—if you hear any foolish talk you can say you wrote to Kate, and you saw the envelope and the address.

PHILIP.

What should people say?

PETE.

Oh! there's fools even in the Isle of Man. Thank you! I'll be off and post this. It was real good of you, though. But that's nothing new; you're always good. I'm a lucky chap—with Kate for a wife and you for a friend. (*At gate A.*) Tell you what, though! I'll come back and see your first court. Eleven o'clock, they tell me. (*At movement from PHILIP.*) Yes, I will. I'll see you in the judgment seat for the first time, boy! And then you shall come home with me and have a bit of dinner——

PHILIP.

(*With a strident, nervous laugh.*) I can't! I'm to lunch with the Mayor and Aldermen.

PETE.

Oo-oh! the nobs! To-night then! Supper. (*Wistfully.*) You shall see lil Philip asleep in his cot. Only for him 'twould be rather lonely in the old house now. So long!—s'long!

(*Exit A.*)

(*PHILIP stands quite still, watching him off. The clock strikes the half-hour. He shudders and turns to the steps, where he sees KATE.*)

PHILIP.

Did you hear?

KATE.

Yes. Can you wonder that I have grown to love my husband—the husband who loves his wife like

that? Can you wonder that loving him I cannot live with him any longer, because I have lied to him and deceived him?

PHILIP.

Come down. (*He deliberately crosses to gate A and swings the bar across it.*)

(*She comes down the steps.*)

KATE.

Now, are you satisfied?

PHILIP.

Satisfied?

KATE.

That the child cannot live another day in my husband's house! It is robbing him, as I was robbing him—robbing him of his love, his faith, his confidence. My innocent, helpless, harmless darling! It is a lie as long as it remains in my husband's house. Therefore I must take it away.

PHILIP.

You can't, Kate—you can't!

KATE.

I must!

PHILIP.

It is impossible.

KATE.

I'll make it possible. Besides, my baby is mine

and I must go for it. I left it with my husband because I didn't want to rob him of wife and child together. - But I'm its mother, and I must have it! I must feel its soft hands—and kiss its sweet cheeks—and hold it to my breast—I must, and I shall!

PHILIP.

(*Almost threateningly.*) Kate, if you do what you are thinking of do you know what will happen?

KATE.

Oh, I don't care what happens!

PHILIP.

(*Pointing to left.*) Down that passage are the cells of Castle Rushen. Kate Kinrade is there, waiting her trial for having done precisely what *you want* to do.

KATE.

Well?

PHILIP.

She will suffer shame, imprisonment, and the loss of her child.

KATE.

So you mean that—

PHILIP.

I mean that your child belongs to your husband. You cannot touch it. You are his wife, therefore your child is his.

KATE.

Is this the law?

(*PHILIP nods.*)

The Christian law?

(*PHILIP drops his head.*)

Is this what women have toiled for, loved for, suffered for, borne the pangs of childbirth for through all the countless ages—that, like beasts of burden, we should have the fruit of our love and suffering torn away from us—that we should be stripped of our offspring and cast among criminals, because we are human, because we love our children, because we are mothers? God in Heaven, is this thy Christian law? (*Sinking to her knees.*)

PHILIP.

(*Firmly, almost harshly.*) This is the law!

KATE.

(*Springing up.*) Then the law is cruel and wicked, and I will defy it! You must help me, too! That's why I came here to-day—to ask you to help me to get my child.

PHILIP.

(*Almost brutally.*) I—help you?

KATE.

Yes, you! Who else? Isn't it your duty?

PHILIP.

No; my duty would be something quite different.

KATE.

What?

PHILIP.

To commit you—if you stole the child——

KATE.

Well?

PHILIP.

To commit you to *prison!*

KATE.

You—to commit *me*—to prison?

PHILIP.

Yes!

KATE.

For stealing my own child?

PHILIP.

I couldn't help myself.

KATE.

My own child and——

PHILIP.

(*Almost inaudibly.*) No matter.

KATE.

You who came to me—wooed me—won me—
then left me when the world called to you—you
the Judge on the Bench and I the prisoner in the

cell! Is this Justice? (*With outstretched arms.*) Is there one woman in all the world who will say this is Justice? (*Fiercely.*) No; it is not Justice! It is the law made by man, not the law made by God, and if you commit me to prison and tear my child away from me you must take the consequences.

PHILIP.

(*Alarmed.*) Woman, what do you mean?

KATE.

(*Slowly, with fierce deliberation.*) I will tell the Court that my husband is not the father of my child.

PHILIP.

(*Aghast.*) You will never do that, Kate?

KATE.

I will!

PHILIP.

The Court will not believe you. It will want you bring? None!

KATE.

Yes, one—my Judge!

PHILIP.

(*Utterly broken.*) Me?

KATE.

You! Oh, I see it all as plainly as you see these walls! The crowded Court, the prying eyes. The Clerk crying, "Rise, all—rise for the Deemster

Christian!" Then myself, a poor, degraded wretch, in the dock, with my baby, my poor, innocent baby, at my breast—they couldn't tear *that* away—and then my husband in the witness-box witnessing against me. "She has stolen my child—take it away from her!" "It is *not* your child!" "You are his wife," says the Judge. "Woman, where is the witness to what you say?" And then I point to the Judge himself and cry: "Where is he? He is there!"

(She is triumphant—there is a pause.)

PHILIP.

(Coming close to her, humbly.) Kate—

KATE.

Well?

PHILIP.

You *can* do that—I don't deny it—but if you do you will ruin three lives—three good and useful lives.

KATE.

(A note of triumph in her tone.) Ah!

PHILIP.

First your own! You tell me you have begun to love your husband—that his tenderness and devotion are touching you—that the heart I have lost he has won. Well, he is waiting for you; he is keeping your home for you so that no one can whisper a word against you. His arms are open to receive

you back. Do you prefer to live a lonely, loveless life elsewhere?

KATE.

Where can I be lonelier than in Pete's house? And I shall have my child!

PHILIP.

And Pete? What will he have? He loves that child—worships it. It is the one precious thing that is left him if you go. If you take it away, or if you destroy his faith and pride in it, his big heart will break.

(KATE tosses her head defiantly.)

PHILIP.

Lastly, think of me! (*At a movement.*) Yes! I have sinned—I have sinned against you—against him—against myself—but I have suffered, too! Only the man who has sinned against a woman—wrecked her life, ruined her happiness—can know how I have suffered. But when I took my oath to-day—swearing with my lips to do equal justice between man and man as indifferently as the herring backbone doth lie in the midst of the fish—I swore in my heart that this should be as a new birth to me—a new life—that if I have sacrificed everybody hitherto to my selfish aims and ambitions, henceforward I would sacrifice myself to mercy—humanity—my work—my duty! (*He comes very close to her.*) Kate, will you make all that impossible? Will you?—will you?

KATE.

I cannot help myself—I must have my child.

(There is a moment's pause. Then comes a knocking at the gate.)

PETE.

(Outside.) Phil!— Phil!

PHILIP.

Pete's voice!

PETE.

(Outside.) Are ye there, Phil?

PHILIP.

(Taking two steps towards door and struggling to control his voice.) Yes; I'm here, Pete.

PETE.

(Outside.) The Court's crowded, and it's just on the stroke of the clock, and the Clerk's coming for ye.

PHILIP.

I'll be ready presently, Pete.

(Another momentary pause. KATE'S face shows the struggle going on within her.)

PHILIP returns to her, trembling, quivering, hoarse.)

PHILIP.

Well? Will you expose me? Yes? Do it now! Don't wait—do it now—now—and end this life of deceit and torture. Do it in the Court to-day. Tear me down from the place I have climbed to—tear

everybody down—tear the world down—end it, end it!

(The clock strikes eleven. They stand listening, PHILIP with folded arms, as a man waiting for his doom.)

(Voice of CLERK outside.)

CLERK.

(Outside.) Court ready, your Honour!

(Then KATE crosses PHILIP and goes to gate.)

PHILIP.

What are you going to do?

- KATE.

I am going to show you—a woman's *forgiveness*.

(She throws the gate open and stands at side of it. PHILIP makes an inarticulate cry of relief.)

Go—go to your new life—your duty!

CLERK.

(Outside.) All rise for the Deemster Christian!

(PHILIP totters forward, his face to the ground, half-kneels as he passes KATE, then out.)

PETE.

(Outside, in a loud voice.) Three cheers for the new Deemster!

(Frantic cheers.)

(KATE closes the gate, and, with outstretched arms, stands with her back to it.)

CURTAIN.

THE FOURTH ACT

SCENE.—*The living-room in Pete's house, as in Act II. It is night.*

(NANCY is sitting by the cradle near the fire, crooning the Christening Carol of Act II. over the Baby. There is a knock at door A.)

NANCY.

(Starts.) Eh? A knock at this time of night, and Capt'n Pete not at home? (To cradle.) We'll not answer them, will we, baby? (Sings, etc.) (A louder knock.) I suppose I must! I'll take the poker, though. You never can tell!

(Louder knock.)

Who's there?

CÆSAR'S VOICE.

Open the door, you lazy woman!

NANCY.

Who are you that's miscalling me a lazy woman?

CÆSAR.

Cæsar Cregeen, and the wind's blowing cruel.

NANCY.

Cæsar Cregeen, is it? (She opens the door.)
(Enter CÆSAR.)

CÆSAR.

Peter Quilliam is not at home?

NANCY.

Don't you see he is not?

CÆSAR.

And my daughter—do you know where she's gone to, woman?

NANCY.

To Liverpool—to his uncle's—he said so himself, didn't he?

CÆSAR.

Said so himself! The man's a liar—and a liar is an abomination before the Lord.

NANCY.

Liar yourself, Master Cregeen! A better man than Peter Quilliam never breathed the breath of life.

CÆSAR.

He's a deceiver.

NANCY.

He's an honest man.

CÆSAR.

He's no Christian.

NANCY.

Then so much the worse for Christianity.

CÆSAR.

Woman, you blaspheme.

NANCY.

No, I don't. If it takes groaning and canting and preaching about your own holiness and the sin of other people to make a Christian, then you're a good Christian yourself, Master Cæsar. But if doing all the good you can, and hurting no one, and eating your heart out to save another person pain is making a Christian, then Peter Quilliam is as good a one as steps this island from Port Erin to the Point of Ayre—present company not excepted, Master Cæsar Cregeen, Esquire!

(Enter PETE A., wearing a sad expression.)

PETE.

What's that, Nancy woman? What for are you getting up all that steam?

NANCY.

To get something off my mind that's been lying there too long, and I've got it off at last, and much better I'm feeling for it—thank the Lord! *(She bangs the candlesticks.)*

(Exit upstairs.)

CÆSAR.

The woman's a Jezebel.

PETE.

No, she's not that. A bit of a temper when she's roused, but a good woman for all.

CÆSAR.

(*Sneering.*) You're home at last, then? Middling late hours you keep now, Pete! Fond of walking and walking, eh?

PETE.

Aye, Kirry being away for a few days, and the house a bit lonely. It does a man good to tramp a bit.

CÆSAR.

(*Sneering.*) You're tramping from Castletown, aren't you, Pete?

PETE.

Castletown it was, Cæsar—seeing the Deemster sworn in, you know.

CÆSAR.

Did he talk to you this morning?

PETE.

Certainly he talked to me. Or perhaps it was myself that did most of the talking, now I come to think of it. I showed him a letter from Kate and got him to answer it.

CÆSAR.

(*Sneering.*) From Liverpool and your uncle's, I daresay.

PETE.

That's so, Cæsar, from Liverpool and Kirry.

CÆSAR.

Liverpool and Kirry—Peel and yourself, you mean, man.

PETE.

What's that you're saying, Cæsar?

CÆSAR.

I'm saying Liverpool letters don't bear the Peel postmark. The letter you showed the Deemster didn't come from Liverpool or from my daughter either. It came from Peel, where you posted it, and it was written by yourself.

PETE.

Have you done?

CÆSAR.

It was in your own handwriting, Pete Quilliam, and the parcel you said my daughter sent didn't come from Liverpool either, but from Douglas, where you bought it.

PETE.

Have you done?

CÆSAR.

Your wife is with no uncle of yours in Liverpool, because you've got no uncle either in Liverpool or anywhere else.

PETE.

Have you done?

CÆSAR.

As for your walking and walking, there isn't a corner of the island where you haven't been hunting for her—trying to find out where she is.

PETE.

Have you done, I say?

CÆSAR.

And there hasn't been an hour when you haven't been spreading your lies about sending her away for her health, while your wife has left you—

PETE.

Stop that!

CÆSAR.

Left you, I'm saying, left you because she's a backslider and a loose liver, a disgrace to my name and to me—left you for another man, another sinner like herself—

(PETE seizes him and forces him down on his knees.)

PETE.

Stop that, I tell you, or I'll be forgetting you're her father and squeezing every ha'porth of blood out of your body. What sort of a father are you, that you want to blacken the name of your daughter and my wife? *(Throwing him off.)* Get up—get up!

CÆSAR.

(Rises.) Laying hands on me, are you, Peter Quilliam? You may throttle an old man—you can't throttle the truth, though.

PETE.

I can't, Cæsar, I can't! I confess it. (*Breaking down.*) I *have* been lying to you. I *did* try to deceive you all! I did write those letters myself and walk to Peel to post them. And I did buy the baby's bonnet in Douglas and send it to myself. And I've no uncle in Liverpool or anywhere else. And your daughter has left me—and I don't know what has become of her. I only know I have tried to keep her name clean that she might come back home, and nobody have a word to say against her. But I'm done—I'm beat—my heart's broke—and God help me! (*Flings himself down and buries his head.*)

CÆSAR.

(*Standing up beside him.*) Peter Quilliam!

PETE.

Well?

CÆSAR.

Didn't the Deemster tell you anything about my scheme of vengeance?

PETE.

Vengeance?

CÆSAR.

Vengeance on the man who has ruined your home, and is bringing my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave.

PETE.

(*Raising his head.*) Who is it?

CÆSAR.

You don't know?

PETE.

(Fiercely.) Who is it? Tell me!

CÆSAR.

Ross Christian, of course!

PETE.

Ross Christian?

CÆSAR.

Who else can it be? Wasn't he here every day before she went away. Isn't he a son of Satan, a child of Beelzebub?

PETE.

God in heaven!

CÆSAR.

Yet wait. We'll see! "Vengeance is Mine," saith the Lord, but He uses His servant as the means and the way.

PETE.

What way?

CÆSAR.

Ross's father is a dying man. He is dying in debt and disgrace. The young weed has been choking the old grain. He wants money—lend it!

PETE.

Lend money to the man who——

CÆSAR.

Why not? As soon as the breath is out of the old father's body you can seize all he has and turn his son into the road. He'll starve, he'll be a beggar; he'll have neither bread to eat nor water to drink, nor a roof to cover him. "Vengeance is Mine," saith the Lord, "I will repay!"

PETE.

And Kate—what about Kate?

CÆSAR.

The Lord will punish her as she deserves, Peter.

PETE.

The Lord will do as He pleases without consulting you and me, Cæsar. You're handy at quoting the old book, and I'm not much good at the texes, but isn't it saying somewhere, "Let him that is without sin among you chuck the first stone at the sinner"? I'm not much of a saint myself, so I leave the stone-chucking to you. As for your scheme of vengeance, it may be the Lord's, but it looks a darned sight too much like the devil's for me. So I'll ask you to leave me before I forget myself again! Leave me to myself, man. It's cold company, but I prefer it to yours to-night, Cæsar.

CÆSAR.

(*Going.*) Very good! I'm not for forcing myself on anybody, Peter Quilliam. I'll go!

PETE.

Leave me! Leave me!

CÆSAR.

But we'll take counsel together to-morrow on this serious matter.

PETE.

Leave me alone—leave me alone!

CÆSAR.

(At door.) Remember, I'm advising nothing but what the law allows—mind that!

PETE.

Damn the law and you too!

(Exit CÆSAR.)

(Enter NANCY, with child.)

Oh, Nancy, Nancy! For the Lord's sake let me see the child! Let me look at something innocent and pure, for I'm choking with the dirt that man has made me swallow.

NANCY.

(Giving him the child.) Did you kick him?

PETE.

Not exactly kick, perhaps—

NANCY.

Did you swear?

PETE.

Something like it, maybe.

NANCY.

It must be a fine thing to be a man to swear at people like Cæsar Cregeen.

PETE.

Aw, the beautiful it is! The bogh millish!

NANCY.

Gently with him. He's asleep.

PETE.

Asleep, is he? The touch of him takes all the rough out of me, Nancy—all the bitter, bad thoughts! The darling! Daddy's that glad to see your sweet angel face, little 'un! He doesn't know how he could live without you now! My child—hers and my own—Kirry's child and mine! Leave him to me to-night, Nancy, and go to bed. He'll do me good—put peace in my heart, bless him!

NANCY.

But if he wakes and cries—what will you do?

PETE.

What will I do? Rock him to sleep again, of course! Or perhaps you think I'll be playing the

drum to him! The sweet little lammie! There's Kirry in every line of his little face. A bit of me, too, isn't there, Nancy?

NANCY.

I should think there is indeed!

PETE.

Yet there's something else in his little face, too! What does that look remind me of? I seem to remember something like it somewhere. I know! It's like—— *(With a cry of alarm.)* Nancy!

NANCY.

(In a fright.) What is it?

PETE.

Light me a candle.

(NANCY takes a candle off table and lights it by the fire.)

Did I ask for a candle?

NANCY.

You did that!

PETE.

For the Lord's sake, hurry up with it, then.

NANCY.

(Giving him the candle.) Here it is!

PETE.

Nancy, do you see in my baby's face——

NANCY.

What? What is it?

PETE.

(*Harshly.*) Nothing! Go off to bed at once.

NANCY.

Let me get baby's nightdress first.

PETE.

I'll do that myself. Off you go!

NANCY.

Well, it's a fine temper you're getting up all at once.

PETE.

Temper? Job had many a plague to try his temper and he kept it, but the Lord knew where he was weak, and didn't send a woman to ask him questions. Off with you!

NANCY.

I'm going! But you needn't shout the house down, anyway.

(*Exit NANCY.*)

PETE.

It's nothing—nothing but the dirty suspicions that Cæsar's been putting into my head! What things a man will think when his heart is sore! Shame on you, Pete! If you can't think better than that shut up your mind as you do your mouth, man. (*To cradle.*) Forgive me, my innocent angel—forgive your father the bad thoughts he was thinking about you! About your mammie, too—the big, blundering blockhead! Lie there, my beauty! Lie quiet till I bring your little nighty and wrap you snug in it to lie in your daddy's arms.

(The door has opened slowly and KATE has looked in. Then PETE carrying candle goes slowly upstairs into room. KATE enters softly, looks upstairs, crosses, looks off, then comes down to cradle by fire.)

KATE.

My darling! My baby! Mother has come back to you! She couldn't live without you and she's come to take you away! Hush! Don't cry! Come, my precious; You are mine and I am yours, and no power on earth shall part us again!

(She has taken the CHILD out of the cradle and is carrying it in her cloak, when PETE comes out of the room on to gallery. He has the candle in one hand and the child's night-dress over the other arm. Slowly he comes downstairs. KATE sees him and draws back into shadow.)

PETE.

(On stairs.) Who's there? Who's there?

KATE.

(Coming face to face with him.) Pete!

PETE.

(Almost sobbing with frightened joy.) Kate! Kirry! You've come back! You've come back to me, haven't you? To lil' Philip and me—you've come back to us, haven't you?

KATE.

Oh, what can I say? What can I say?

PETE.

Where have you been, Kirry?

KATE.

I can't tell you, Pete.

PETE.

Why did you leave us?

KATE.

Don't ask me.

PETE.

Was it some fault of mine, Kirry—something I said without meaning it, maybe?

KATE.

Oh, let me go away again.

PETE.

Not yet, Kirry! God knows I've been patient enough, but I'm your husband, and I've a right to know why you went away. Why was it, Kirry? Tell me—why was it?

KATE.

Don't ask me that, Pete.

PETE.

Kirry, the doctor said you were not yourself—you were hysterical—had a bit of a fever, too, and women in that state sometimes did things they didn't mean to do. Perhaps that was the way with you, Kirry, when you ran away from me. But now you're better and you've come back to lil' Phil and me—that's it, isn't it? Say it is, Kirry, say it is, and there won't be another word about it—not another word, so help me God!

KATE.

You're too good to me, Pete—far too good. Let me go—I can't bear it.

PETE.

Have you nothing else to say to me, Kirry?

KATE.

Nothing!

PETE.

Don't think I want to keep you against your will, Kirry. It's a poor whisp of a man who wants a woman's body if someone else has her soul.

KATE.

Oh! oh!

PETE.

You've suffered since you went away—I can see that, Kirry.

KATE.

Oh! oh!

PETE.

It's a woman's way to love the man that does her wrong. Being good to her is nothing—service is nothing—kindness is nothing—giving herself body and soul and thinking nothing what she gets for it—that's the way of a woman when she loves a man. But you loved somebody else and you couldn't love me, could you, Kirry?

KATE.

Oh! oh!

PETE.

You couldn't help it, woman! God help me, I know you couldn't help it. Love can't be guided by a rudder like a boat.

KATE.

Oh! oh! oh!

PETE.

You are my wife and God knows I love you still, but you shall be free to go where you will, Kirry.

KATE.

Let me go then——

PETE.

But before you go you must put lil' Philip back in his cradle.

KATE.

I can't.

PETE.

(Firmly.) Kate, you have robbed me of yourself, and now I've nothing in the world except that child. It's the only thing I have left to keep my brain from going mad and my heart from breaking. Put it back, woman!

KATE.

I can't! I can't!

PETE.

Put it back, I say!

KATE.

I'm its mother and I must take it with me.

PETE.

And I'm its father and it belongs to me. Put back my child.

KATE.

It is not your child!

PETE.

(Reeling backward.) Not my child? Do you mean that?

KATE.

God pity and forgive me—yes!

(Dead silence, in which PETE seems to gasp for breath.)

KATE.

Now, you know why I must take it away with me. It is robbing you of your faith and confidence. My poor innocent darling is cheating you of your love.

PETE.

No child—no wife—both gone—lil' Philip is not mine—

KATE.

You'll let me go now, Pete—will you not?—to hide my sorrow and my shame? You shall never see me again. I'll trouble you no more. Good-bye! *(Crossing.)*

PETE.

Stop! You cannot leave my house to-night.

KATE.

(Stopping.) You are my husband—if you tell me to do anything I will obey.

PETE.

Then take my—take the child and go up to your old room—the same we came home to on our wedding day. Let the lil' lammie lie on your breast to-night as it used to, you know. Maybe in the morning we'll know better what to do.

KATE.

(*Crossing.*) And you, Pete?

PETE.

(*Lighting candle.*) Don't trouble about me. I'm only a rough-and-tumble chap—I'll take care of myself somehow. Here's the candle—and here's baby's little nighty. Now go—good-night!

KATE.

(*Going slowly upstairs.*) Good-night, Pete!
(*With a breaking sob.*) God bless you!

(*KATE goes slowly upstairs with Baby.*)

(*PETE stands watching her off. Then with a great effort, stops himself from crying aloud. Goes to door, locks it, putting key in his pocket. Then to foot of stairs and falls on his knees. Rises, goes to his coat and takes pipe and pouch out of his pocket. Puts candle out with extinguisher. Crosses to fireplace, lights pipe by a spill from mantelpiece. Gets stool and sits by fire looking fixedly into the empty cradle. Then mechanically he begins to rock it. The clock strikes twelve.*)

(*Light dies out slowly. Darkness.*)

.
(*The light gradually grows again. PETE is seen sitting where we left him, but his arm is on the back of the chair and his head is buried in it; he is asleep. The sun shines into the room; birds twitter; a dog barks.*)

(*NANCY appears in the gallery, bustles down*

the stairs to door A, which she tries to unlock, but she finds the key gone. She looks round in astonishment and sees PETE.)

NANCY.

Lord-a-massy me! *(She crosses to him, touches him on the shoulder, shakes him.)* Capt'n Pete! Capt'n Pe-ter!

PETE.

(Starting awake.) Eh? What is it? *(Suddenly remembering.)* Oh! oh! oh! *(Rising.)* What's amiss, Nancy?

NANCY.

The mistress will be coming down presently.

PETE.

Did she sleep?

NANCY.

Not a wink the night through. I heard her sobbing in her room—that was how I knew she had come home so unexpected.

PETE.

Sobbing, you say?

NANCY.

Fit to break her heart—and mine too.

PETE.

My poor girl! My poor Kirry!

NANCY.

Give me the key of the door.

PETE.

Here it is!

NANCY.

You locked her in—didn't you?

PETE.

I did that, Nancy.

NANCY.

(Unlocking and opening door.) Well, you needn't. She won't run away, I'm thinking.

PETE.

Somebody else will, then, Nancy woman.
(Dragging out trunk of Act I. from under stairs.)

NANCY.

You're never thinking of going away yourself, Capt'n Pete?

PETE.

Never mind what I'm thinking of. Light the fire and make me a cup of tea, Nancy.

NANCY.

(Taking wood out of basket and splitting it with a chopper.) I will, Capt'n Pete.

PETE.

Make it strong, d'ye hear?

NANCY.

Sure! What are you doing with that old thing?

PETE.

Can't you see? Mending it, of course.

NANCY.

(Laying fire and putting light to it.) Don't do it, Capt'n Pete. Don't you go and do it. Because you've had words and made a false start, don't go and throw your happiness out of window.

PETE.

It's flown out of window without any of my doing, Nancy.

NANCY.

Then stay where you are, and it'll fly in again.

PETE.

Never!

NANCY.

Never's a long time, Capt'n Pete.

PETE.

Put on the kettle and slip away for Billy Kin nish's trap to take me to the train.

NANCY.

Won't you tell me where you're going to, then?

PETE.

(Sitting on trunk.) I'm going to London.

NANCY.

Goodness me! That wicked place! What for?

PETE.

(Fiercely.) To see a man.

NANCY.

Lord-a-massy! All that way to see a man! There's lots of 'em here, isn't there?

PETE.

(More fiercely.) A particular man.

NANCY.

You can't have such important business——

PETE.

(Still more fiercely.) We have though—him and me—very important business. So go and get the trap, woman——

NANCY.

Well, I never! *(She is going out, when she runs into CÆSAR as he enters.)*

NANCY.

Oh, it's you, is it? Up early and down late and always bringing bad luck.

CÆSAR.

Where's your master?

NANCY.

Find him!

(Exit.)

CÆSAR.

(*Seeing PETE.*) Peter Quilliam!

PETE.

(*Going on with his work at trunk.*) Well?

CÆSAR.

No doubt you're surprised at this visit after your treatment of myself last night.

PETE.

I *am* a bit surprised at it, Cæsar.

CÆSAR.

You lifted your hand to me, Mr. Quilliam.

PETE.

I did that, Cæsar.

CÆSAR.

I remember the day when if a man had lifted his hand to me I should have chopped him from crown to chin—but I'm a man of peace now, and a restraining grace preserved you.

PETE.

Wonderful the change in us as we grow wiser, Cæsar.

CÆSAR.

I wrestled in spirit for you the whole night through.

PETE.

Mortal good of you, I'm sure. I *am* feeling a bit easier inside, I think.

CÆSAR.

And this morning my reward came to me.

PETE.

Reward?

CÆSAR.

News, Peter Quilliam, great news! Your enemy is in your hand—Ross Christian has returned to the island. His father is a ruined man. The son has been a besom of fire and burnt up everything. I told you last night how to strike him. The way is ready—the time is *now!*

(Enter PHILIP CHRISTIAN, looking pale and worn.)

PETE.

(With a loud cry.) (Throwing down the chopper.)
Oh! Phil! Phil! She's back! Kirry's back!

PHILIP.

I know—I've just heard of it from Nancy.

CÆSAR.

Back, you say? My daughter?

PETE.

True enough, Cæsar, but you were so busy with the texes I had no time to tell you.

CÆSAR.

Then they must have returned together! The son of Satan! The son of Belial! Curse him! Curse him!

PHILIP.

Of whom are you speaking, Mr. Cregeen?

CÆSAR.

Of your own cousin, Deemster—of Ross Christian, the man who has humbled me and disgraced my daughter.

PHILIP.

No, no, it was not he, Cæsar.

CÆSAR.

You are too good a man yourself to think evil of others, Deemster ; but he it was and no other.

PHILIP.

No, no, I tell you, no!

CÆSAR.

I met him myself this morning, sir. I taxed him with it. He did not deny.

PHILIP.

He did not deny?

CÆSAR.

On the contrary, he laughed and jeered.

PETE.

Laughed and jeered, did he?

CÆSAR.

He did, sinner as he is—laughed and jeered as he left me on the road.

PETE.

(Picking up chopper.) Which way did he go?

CÆSAR.

Towards Ballawhaine.

PETE.

Excuse me, Phil—I think I must go towards Ballawhaine.

PHILIP.

What are you going to do, Pete?

PETE.

What would you do if you were in my place? If a man had robbed you of the love of your wife, and then come back and laughed and jeered as if it were a joke—what would you do, Deemster? Wouldn't you take an axe like this and brain him as if he were a brute?

PHILIP.

I would, Pete, I would!

PETE.

(Going.) And so will I!

PHILIP.

Do it then! Do it! The guilty man is here! I am he!

(Dead silence for a moment.)

PETE.

(Stunned.) Phil! Phil! What are you saying?

PHILIP.

It's true.

CÆSAR.

Deemster, do you mean to say it was not your cousin, but yourself——

PETE.

My friend—my chum—my brother—the man I loved and trusted more than anybody in the world!

PHILIP.

Yes, yes!

PETE.

(With frightful anger.) Scoundrel! Traitor! Hypocrite! Hound! Let me kill him! *(Makes for PHILIP.)*

CÆSAR.

(Lays hold of PETE, struggling with him.) Stop! Are you mad?

PHILIP.

Let him go! He's in the right! What he calls me I have called myself—a thousand, thousand times.

PETE.

Is that enough? Is there to be no punishment for a man like you?

PHILIP.

Punishment? Do you know what the word means, you brave, true soul? Does any man as honest as you know what it is to go through life as a liar and a cheat? Kill me, kill me!

PETE.

(To CÆSAR.) Let me alone. The lust of blood is out of me. God forbid it should ever return. *(Giving axe to CÆSAR.)* Take the cursed thing

away! Oh, Phil! Phil! The pride I had in you as a boy, the worshipping I did of you as a man! Why did you do it, Phil?

PHILIP.

It was while you were away. We heard you were dead—I loved her—I couldn't help it.

PETE.

Why didn't you marry her, then?

PHILIP.

Because I was a coward—because ambition was too strong for love—and then you came back and——

PETE.

But why did you let her marry me?

PHILIP.

Because I didn't know—I never dreamt—that the child—the child—— (*Stops.*)

(*KATE is seen coming quietly downstairs.*)

PETE.

(*Looking round at the cradle.*) I see! (*After a pause.*) Well, it's all over now, I suppose, and for the sake of the poor creature upstairs we three have got to settle what we're going to do.

CÆSAR.

Ask me to do nothing, Peter Quilliam. The Lord's hand is heavy on me this day. I thought

I was marked out for the instrument of His vengeance. But He hath kept His own counsel and darkened mine. He hath put me to scorn; He hath held me in derision. Let me go home—and pray!
(*Going.*)

PETE.

Wait! Pray and preach, too, if you please, Cæsar, but let us do a bit of practice first. Deemster!

PHILIP.

Yes?

PETE.

If I make Kate a free woman, will you marry her?

(*PHILIP is silent.*)

Will you? Why don't you answer me? Will you marry her *now*?

PHILIP.

I can't, Pete. It is impossible—utterly impossible!

PETE.

I see! She would be a disgraced woman and you would be a ruined man. Cæsar!

CÆSAR.

Well?

PETE.

If I provide for your daughter, will you take her back?

CÆSAR.

How can I? She would be a shame to me in the eyes of the congregation. I that have held up my

head with the proudest in the Tabernacle would be bowed to the dust.

PETE.

Then neither of you will take her—neither you that were her father nor you that were the cause of her shame?

(They are silent.)

Are you thinking of the child? Nobody need know anything about that. *(To DEEMSTER.)* You dare not tell. *(To CÆSAR.)* You will not, and I won't!

(They are still silent.)

Is it because she's a woman that you cannot forgive her? You would forgive a man fast enough—is it because she's a woman she must never know forgiveness? Is that your religion, Cæsar? Is that your law, Deemster?

PHILIP.

It is the world's eternal law, Pete.

CÆSAR.

Aye, the world's eternal law.

PETE.

Then damn the world's eternal law—damn it, damn it to the devil and hell! See here, you two! I'm only a plain, common fellow, I know, but if that poor soul upstairs could come to me and say "Pete, I love you now better than ever I loved the man who wronged me" I would take her back, do you hear me, I would take her back, as God is my witness, though every man and woman in the world called me a fool!

KATE.

(*With outstretched arms.*) Pete!

PETE.

(*Hardly realising her intention.*) Kate!

KATE

I love you! I love you! From the day you married me I have always loved you, without one unfaithful thought. I left you because I loved you, for I had deceived you, and your kindness was killing me. But if now that you know everything you are willing to take me back, in spite of all I have made you suffer—all the pain and shame I have (*trying to drop to her knees at his feet.*) Oh, forgive me, forgive me!

PETE.

(*Preventing her from kneeling and embracing her passionately.*) Kirry! Kirry, woman! Not another word! Not another word about it!

(*The two Men drop their heads and turn aside.*)

(*Enter NANCY.*)

NANCY.

That trap's at the door, sir.

PETE.

(*With a shout, indicating CÆSAR and PHILIP.*) Then it'll just do to carry off the gentlemen, Nancy.
(*NANCY flies upstairs.*)

CÆSAR.

Pete, you've preached me a better sermon than I ever heard from the pulpit, and the text's forgiveness.

(Goes out.)

PHILIP.

I am punished—I am ashamed!

(Goes out.)

PETE.

(Still with KATE in his arms.) It's our wedding, Kate—our diamond wedding—and it's a better diamond I have here, dear, than I ever dug up in the mines.

(NANCY comes quietly downstairs with the Baby.)

The Emperor! God bless me, the Emperor! Let me have hould of him! *(Taking Baby and bringing it down stage.)* Aw, the darling! The bogh millish! The child of my heart anyway! Do you think I could learn to unlove him? Not much!

(MARY goes by the window, crying her fish.)

MARY.

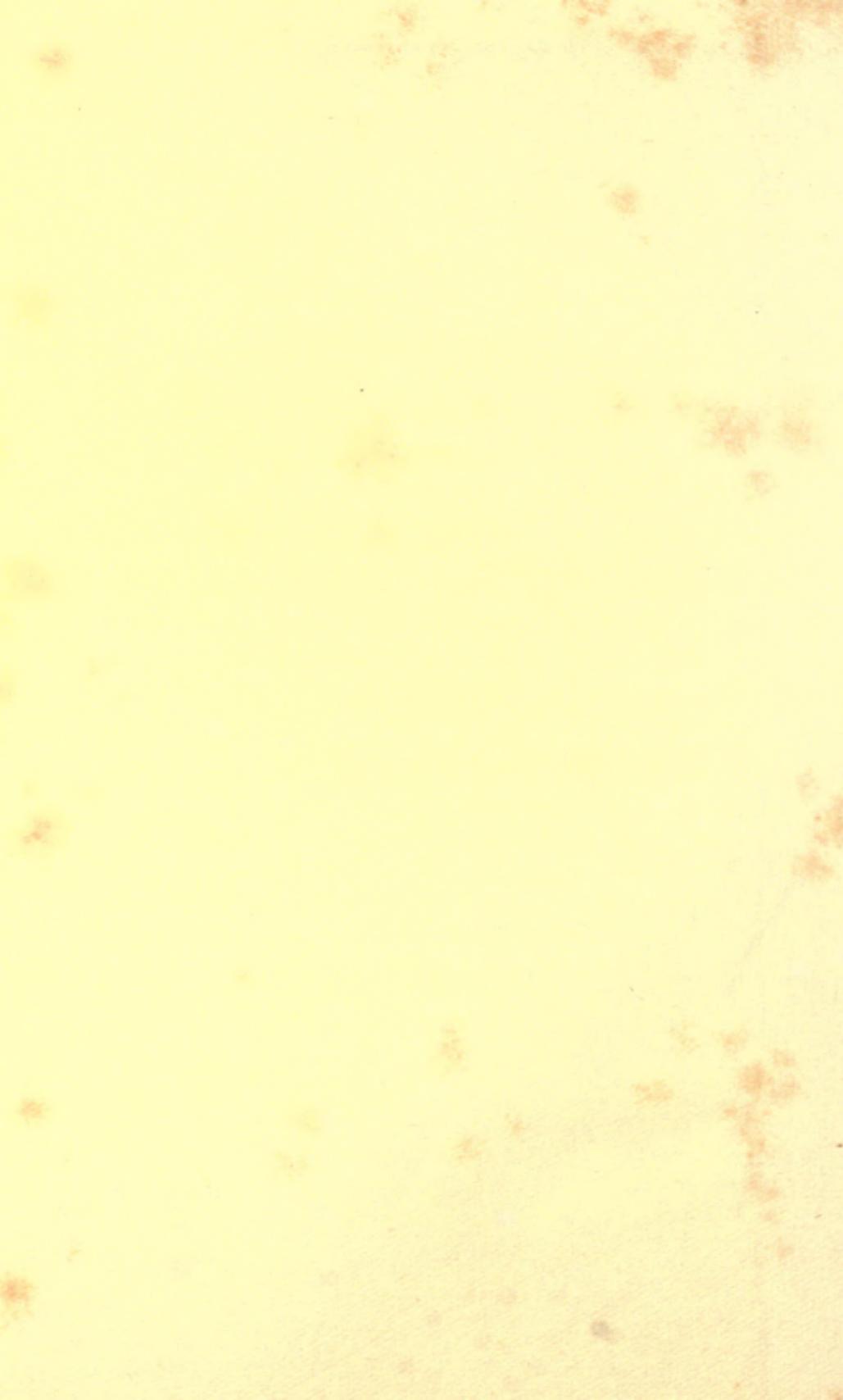
Herrings! Fresh herrings!

PETE.

A dozen of the fattest you've got for breakfast, Mary! *(Mimicking MARY'S cry.) (To the Baby.)* Fresh herrings! Fresh herrings!

CURTAIN.

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