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Transcribed from the [1828] John Cumberland edition by David Price, email [ccx074@pglaf.org](mailto:ccx074@pglaf.org)  
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## **AMBROSE GWINETT; OR, A SEA-SIDE STORY:**

**A MELO-DRAMA,**

**In Three Acts,**

**BY D. W. JERROLD,**

*Author of The Mutiny at the Nore, John Overy, The Devil's Ducat, Golden Calf,  
Bride of Ludgate, &c.*

To which are added,

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUME,—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS,  
ENTRANCES AND EXITS,—RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE  
PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE,—AND THE WHOLE OF  
THE STAGE BUSINESS,

As now performed at the

**METROPOLITAN MINOR THEATRES.**

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EMBELLISHED WITH A FINE ENGRAVING.

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**LONDON:**

JOHN CUMBERLAND, 2, CUMBERLAND TERRACE,  
CAMDEN NEW TOWN.

## **REMARKS.**

### **Ambrose Gwinett.**

p. 5

HYPERCRITICISM has presumed to find fault with this drama, which a better taste has denominated "*the serious domestic historical*," because, forsooth, it smacks of the Old Bailey!—and, when justification has been pleaded by citing *George Barnwell*, we have received the retort courteous, in the story of the witling who affected to wear glasses because Pope was near-sighted. But a much better plea may be urged than the example of a bard so moderately gifted as Lillo! "The Ravens of Orleans," "Dog of Montargis," "Family of Anglade," and numerous other public favourites, speak daggers to such hypercriticism.—Ambrose Gwinett is a strange tale and a true one; and a tale both strange and true what playwright can afford to let slip through his fingers? A murder or so may be prudently relinquished, for the season will come round again; but he cannot expect to see a man hanged and resuscitated for his especial accommodation every day in the week.

Ambrose Gwinett favoured the world with his autobiography at a period when autobiography was a rarity. He is unquestionably the only historian who has written his life after being gibbeted—drawn and quartered we leave to the autobiographers and dramatists of another generation! Egotism under such extraordinary circumstances may surely be pardoned; and if honest Ambrose dwell somewhat complacently on certain events of deep interest and wonder, he may plead a much better excuse than our modern autobiographers, who invent much and reveal little but a tedious catalogue of fictions and vanities; a charge that applies not to the startling narrative of the poor sweeper of the once insignificant village of Charing.

The story, which occurred in the reign of Queen Anne, is simple and well told. Ambrose had a tale to tell—(what autobiographer would not be half hanged to be entitled to tell a similar one?)—passing strange and pitiful; therefore, like a skilful dramatist, who depends solely on his plot, he affected no pomp of speech: of tropes and figures he knew nothing; but he knew full well that he had been hanged without a trope, and his figure brought to life again!

"I was born," says he, "of respectable parents in the city of Canterbury, where my father dealt in slops. He had but two children, a daughter and myself; and, having given me a school education, at the age of sixteen he bound me apprentice to Mr. George Roberts, an attorney in the same town, with whom I stayed four years and three quarters, to his great content and my own satisfaction.

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"My sister, having come to woman's estate, had now been married something more than a twelvemonth to one Sawyer, a seafaring man, who, having got considerable prizes, my father also giving him 200*l.* with my sister, quitted his profession, and set up a public-house near the place of his nativity, which was Deal, in the county of Kent. I had frequent invitations to pass a short time with them; and, in the autumn of 1709, having obtained my master's consent for that purpose, I left the city of Canterbury on foot, on Wednesday morning, being the 17th day of September; but, through some unavoidable delays on the road, the evening was considerably advanced before I reached Deal; and so tired was I, being unused to that way of travelling, that, had my life depended on it, I could not have gone so far as my sister's that night. At this time there were many of her majesty, Queen Anne's ships lying in the harbour, the English being then at war with the French and Spaniards; besides which, I found this was the day for holding the yearly fair, so that the town was filled to that degree, that not a bed was to be gotten for love nor money. I went seeking a lodging from house to house to no purpose; till, being quite spent, I returned to the public-house, where I had first made inquiry, desiring leave to sit by their kitchen-fire to rest myself till morning.

"The publican and his wife where I put up happened, unfortunately for me, to be acquainted with

my brother and sister; and finding by the discourse that I was a relation of theirs, and going to visit them, the landlady presently said she would endeavour to get me a bed; and, going out of the kitchen, she quickly called me into a parlour that led from it. Here I saw, sitting by the fire, a middle-aged man, in a nightgown and cap, who was reckoning money at a table. 'Uncle,' said the woman, as soon as I entered, 'this is a brother of our friend, Mrs. Sawyer; he cannot get a bed anywhere, and is tired after his journey. You are the only one that lies in this house alone: will you give him a part of your's?' To this the man answered, that she knew he had been out of order,—that he was blooded that day, and consequently a bedfellow could not be very agreeable. 'However,' said he, 'rather than the young man shall sit up, he is welcome to sleep with me.' After this, we sat some time together; when, having put his money in a canvas bag into the pocket of his nightgown, he took the candle, and I followed him up to bed."

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Having occasion to visit the garden during the night, the landlord lent him his pen-knife, that he might more easily open the door, the latch being broken. From this knife a piece of money falls, which Gwinett pockets. Returning to his room, he finds, to his great surprize, that his companion is absent. At six o'clock he rises, dresses himself hastily, and, impatient to see his sister (the reckoning being paid overnight), lets himself out at the street door.

He has not been above an hour or two with his relations, before three horsemen arrive, arrest him for robbery and murder, and he is carried back to Deal, to be dealt with accordingly.

He is taken with the knife in his possession, tried, condemned, and executed: yet, strange to say, the man yet lived; his groans were heard from the gibbet, and he was rescued from his frightful situation by his master's dairymaid. He took ship, went abroad, and encountered Collins, the supposed victim, who, it appeared, had been forced from his home by a press-gang. After enduring many perils, he returned to his native land, crippled and poor, and subsequently became sweeper of the road at Charing Cross.

Mr. Jerrold has heightened the interest of his drama by superadding the passions of love and jealousy. We have no objection to fiction when it conduces to effect; and three rounds of applause are sufficient to justify any interpolation. This piece was well acted, and brought ample receipts to the treasury of the Coburg.

D—G.

## Costume.

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AMBROSE GWINETT.—*First dress*—Short brown tunic and vest, with full trunks—hose and half boots.—*Second dress*—Tunic and long cloak—hat and feathers.

NED GRAYLING.—*First dress*—That of a Blacksmith.—*Second dress*—A short plain tunic—full trunks—hose, and a small round hat.—*Third dress*—that of a mere mendicant.

GILBERT.—*First dress*—A short close tunic—shoes and stockings.—*Second dress*—Suitable to the advanced age of the wearer.

COLLINS.—*First dress*—Short tunic.—*Second dress*—A morning gown.

LABEL.—Barber's dress—three cornered hat and cane.

WILL ASH and BLACKTHORN.—Short tunics, &c.

GEORGE.—Sailor's dress.

BOLT.—Dark tunic, &c.

OFFICER.—The usual costume.

REEF.—Blue jacket—white trowsers—straw hat.

LUCY FAIRLOVE.—*First dress*—Plain bodied gown—straw hat.—*Second dress*—A black open gown with train.

JENNY.—*First dress*—That of a peasant girl.—*Second dress*—Gown—cap—and apron.

MARY.—Peasant's dress.

*Villagers, Peasants, &c. in the usual costume.*

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## Cast of the Characters

*As sustained at the Coburg Theatre.*

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|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Ambrose Gwinett                                  | Mr. Cobham.      |
| Ned Grayling ( <i>The Prison Smith.</i> )        | Mr. Davidge.     |
| Gilbert ( <i>Waiter at the Blake's Head.</i> )   | Mr. Sloman.      |
| Collins ( <i>Landlord of the Blake's Head.</i> ) | Mr. Mortimer.    |
| Label ( <i>an Itinerant Barber Surgeon.</i> )    | Mr. E. L. Lewis. |
| George ( <i>a Smuggler condemned to Die.</i> )   | Mr. Gale.        |
| Blackthorn                                       | Mr. H. George.   |
| Will Ash   | Mr. Gann.        |
| Bolt ( <i>a Gaoler.</i> )                        | Mr. Porteus.     |
| 1st Villager                                     | Mr. J. George.   |
| 2nd Ditto  | Mr. Waters.      |
| Officer  | Mr. Worrell.     |
| Reef   | Mr. Elsgood.     |
| 1st Sailor                                       | Mr. Saunders.    |
| Lucy Fairlove                                    | Miss Watson.     |
| Jenny  | Mrs. Congreve.   |
| Mary   | Miss Boden.      |
| Child  | Master Meyers.   |

*A Lapse of Eighteen Years is supposed to have taken Place between the Second and Third Acts.*

## ACT. I.

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### SCENE I.—*View of the Country.*

*Enter GRAYLING and COLLINS. R.*

*Gray.* Softly, master Collins, softly,—come, there is life in you yet, man.

*Col.* To be thrown from a horse after my experience—

*Gray.* Oh, the best man may be thrown, and the best horse throw too; but come, you have no bones broken. Had any man but myself, Ned Grayling, shod your horse, I should have said something had been amiss with his irons—but that couldn't be.

*Col.* No matter, I can now make my way homeward: but, hark'ye, not a word about this accident, not a syllable, or I shall never be able to sit in a saddle again, without first hearing a lecture from my wife and Lucy.

*Gray.* Lucy—aye, master Collins, she has a tender heart I warrant—I could work at my forge all day in the hottest June, so that Lucy would but smile, when—

*Col.* There must be no more of this. You know I have told you more than a hundred times that Lucy cannot love you.

*Gray.* How do you know that?

*Col.* She has said so, and do you suppose she would speak any thing but truth?

*Gray.* Why, perhaps she would, and perhaps she wouldn't. I tell you, master Collins, my heart's set upon the girl—if she refuse me—why I know the end on't.—Ned Grayling, once the sober and industrious smith, will become an outcast and a vagabond.

*Col.* This is all folly—a stout able fellow turning whimperer.

*Gray.* Stout, able,—yes, I was, and might be so again; but thoughts will sometimes come across me, and I feel—I tell you once more, master Collins, my heart is set upon the girl.

*Col.* You'll get the better of this, think no more of her: nothing so easy.

*Gray.* There are some matters very, *very* easy. It is easy for you, a man well in trade, with children flourishing about you, and all the world looking with a sunny face upon you—it is easy for you to say to a man like me, "You are poor and friendless—you have placed your affections on a being, to sweeten the bitterness of your lot, to cheer and bless you on the road of life, yet she can never be yours—think no more of her," this is easy—"nothing so easy."

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*Col.* Farewell, good fellow, I meant not to insult or offend you. If you can obtain my niece's

consent, why, to prove that I love honesty, for its own sake, I'll give you whatever help my means afford. If, however, the girl refuses, strive to forget her. Believe me, there is scarcely a more pitiable object than a man following with spaniel-like humility, the woman who despises him.

[Exit L.]

*Gray.* Despises!—did she ever say,—no! no! she couldn't, yet when I met her last, though she uttered not a sound, her eyes looked hate—as they flashed upon me, I felt humbled—a wretch! a very worm.

*Enter GILBERT R. (singing.) "A merry little plough Boy."*

*Gil.* Well, now master's gone out, I think I have a little time to see my Jenny—master and mistress have no compassion for us lovers—always work, work; they think once a week is quite enough for lovers to see one another, and unfortunately my fellow servant is in love as well as I am; and being obliged to keep house, I could only get out once a fortnight, if it wasn't for Lucy.

*Gray. (starting.)* Lucy! who said any thing about Lucy?

*Gil.* I did! It's a good Christian name, isn't it? and no treason in it.

*Gray.* No, no, but you startled me.

*Gil.* I should like to know what right a man has to be startled when I say Lucy—why one would think you were married, and it was the name of your wife.

*Gray.* Lucy my wife, no, no.

*Gil.* No, I should think not indeed.

*Gray.* And why should you think? but I'm wrong to be so passionate—think no more of it, good Gilbert.

*Gil.* A cool way of settling matters: you first fly at a man like a dragon—make his heart jump like a tennis ball—and then say, think nothing of it, good Gilbert.

*Gray.* I confess I am very foolish.

*Gil.* Oh, spare your confession: people will judge for themselves.

*Gray. (aside.)* I am almost ashamed to do it, yet I will.

*Gil.* Why, what's the matter? you are looking at me as if, like a highwayman, you were considering which pocket I carried my money in.

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*Gray.* Pray, good Gilbert, tell me, do you know whether Miss Lucy has any admirers?

*Gil.* Admirers! to be sure she has.

*Gray.* She has!

*Gil.* Hundreds—don't the whole town admire her? don't all our customers say pretty things to her? don't I admire her? and hav'n't I seen you looking at her?

*Gray.* Looking at her!—how?

*Gil.* How, why like a dog that had once been well kicked, and was afraid of being known a second time.

*Gray.* Villain! do you make mirth of my sufferings? am I sport for fools? answer my question, or I'll shake your soul out on the wind—tell me—

*Gil.* If the fox had never ventured where he had no business, he'd have kept his tail.

*Gray.* What mean you?

*Gil.* If you had minded your own affairs, you'd not have lost your temper.

*Gray.* Answer—

*Gil.* Not a word; if you are inclined to ask questions, a little farther on there's a finger post—when you have read one side, you know you can walk round to the other.

*Gray.* I shall but make my agitation the more apparent. Never till this moment did I feel the fulness of my passion. Come, rouse man, stand no longer like a coward, eying the game, but take the dice, and at one bold throw, decide your fate.

[Exit L.]

*Gil.* Aye, it's all no use, master Grayling; Lucy Fairlove is no match for you. No, no, if I mistake not there's another, smoother faced young man has been asking if any body's at home at the heart of Lucy—but mum—I'm sworn to secrecy,—and now for Jenny! dear me, I've been loitering so long, and have so much to say to her—then I've so much to do—for the Judges are coming down to-morrow to make a clear place of the prison—and then there's—but stop, whilst I am running to Jenny, I can think of these matters by the way.

## SCENE II.—Wood.

*Enter* AMBROSE GWINETT. (*running.*) L.

*Gwin.* I've distanced them—but i'faith I've had to run for it.—No, no, fair gentlemen, I hope yet to have many a blithe day ashore—high winds, roaring seas, and the middle-watch have no relish for Gwinett—make a sailor of me, what, and leave Lucy Fairlove?—I've hurt my wrist in the struggle with one of the gang—(*takes his handkerchief, which is stained with blood, from around his arm.*) It is but a scratch—if I bind it up again it may excite the alarm of Lucy—no, Time is the best surgeon, and to him I trust it. (*puts the handkerchief in his pocket.*) Eh! who have we here? by all my hopes, Lucy herself.

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*Enter* LUCY FAIRLOVE. R.

*Lucy.* Ambrose.

*Gwin.* Come, this is kind of you—nay, it is more than I deserve.

*Lucy.* What is kind or more than you deserve?

*Gwin.* Why coming to meet me through this lone road!

*Lucy.* Meet you—what vanity—not I indeed, I was merely taking my morning's walk, thinking of—of—

*Gwin.* Come, come, confess it.

*Lucy.* Well then I do confess, I wished to meet you, to tell you that—

*Gwin.* You have spoken to your uncle?

*Lucy.* On the contrary—to desire you to defer—

*Gwin.* Why, do you fear a refusal? Why should he refuse—have I not every prospect—will not my character—

*Lucy.* Yes, more than satisfy him, but—

*Gwin.* Or perhaps Lucy there is another whom you would prefer to make this proposal.

*Lucy.* This is unkind—you do not believe so.

*Gwin.* Well, be it as you will: I believe nought but truth, but innocence in Lucy Fairlove, and by this kiss—

GRAYLING *looking from wing.* R.

*Gray.* Hem! holloa! there.

*Gwin.* How now—what want you?

*Gray.* Want! (*aside.*) Oh! Lucy, Lucy! nothing.

*Gwin.* Then wherefore did you call?

*Gray.* Because it pleased me: a man may use his own lungs I trow.

*Lucy.* (*aside.*) Alas! I fear some violence.

*Gwin.* Aye and his own legs, they cannot do him better service than by removing him from where he is not wanted.

*Gray.* (*Coming between them, folding his arms, and looking doggedly at Gwinett.*) Now I sha'n't go.

*Gwin.* Would you quarrel, fellow?

*Gray.* Aye—yes—come will you fight with me?

*Lucy.* (*Interposing.*) For heaven's sake! subdue this rashness—Gwinett—Grayling—good kind Master Grayling—

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*Gray.* Good kind Master Grayling—you speak falsely Lucy Fairlove—

*Gwin.* Falsely?

*Gray.* Aye, Falsely! she thinks me neither good nor kind—but I see how it is—I have thought so a long time, (*after eying Gwinett and Lucy with extreme malice.*) I see how it is—ha! ha! ha! (*Laughing sarcastically.*)

*Gwin.* Fellow, look not with such devilish malice but give your venom utterance.

*Gray.* Venom—aye—the right word, venom,—and yet who'd have thought we should have found it where all looked so purely.

*Gwin.* Wretch! would you say—

*Gray.* Nothing—nothing—where we have facts what need of words? the artless timid Lucy, she who moves about the town with closed lips and downcast eyes—who flutters and blushes at a stranger's look—can steal into a wood—oh! shame—shame.

*Gwin.* Shame! villain! but no, to infamy so black as this, the best return is the silent loathing of contempt.

*Gray.* What! would you go with him, Lucy?

*Lucy.* Grayling, never again, in town or field, under my uncle's roof, or beneath the open sky, that you have so lately made a witness to your infamy, dare to pronounce my name; there is a poison festering in your lips, and all that passes through is tainting—your words fall like a blight upon the best and purest—to be named by you, is to be scandalised—once whilst I turned from, I pitied you—you are now become the lowest, the most abject of created things—the libeller, the hateful heartless libeller of an innocent woman. Farewell, if you can never more be happy, at least strive to be good.

[*Exit with Gwinett.* L.]

*Gray.* Lucy, Lucy, upon my knees—I meant not what I said—'twas passion—madness—eh, what—now she takes him by the arm—they're gone—I feel as if I had drunk a draught of poison—never sound her name again? yes, and I deserve it—I am a wretch!—a ruffian,—to breathe a blight over so fair a flower. I feel as if all the world,—the sky, the fields, the bright sun were passing from me, and I stood fettered in a dark and loathsome den—my heart is numbed, and my brain palsied.

*Enter REEF and SAILORS.* R.]

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*Reef.* A plague take these woods, I see no good in 'em—there's no looking out a head the length of a bow sprit; I know he run down here.

1 *Sail.* That's what I said at first, and if you had taken my advice we should have come here without staying beating about the bushes like a parcel of harriers.

*Reef.* He was a smart clean fellow, and would have done credit to the captain's gig.—Eh! who have we here?—come, one man is as good as another, and this fellow seems a strong one.

*Gray.* How now!—what would you?

*Reef.* What would we?—why, what do you think of topping your boom—pulling your halyards taut, and turning sailor?

*Gray.* Sailor!

*Reef.* Aye—why you look as surprised as if we wanted to make you port admiral at once.

*Gray.* Turn sailor?

*Reef.* Sailor—what's the use of turning the word over so with your tongue—I said sailor—it's a useless gentility with us to ask you—because if you don't like us, I can tell you we have taken a very great liking to you.

*Gray.* With all my heart—Lucy is gone for ever—this place is hateful to me—amid the perils of the ocean, I may find my best relief—come.

*Reef.* That's right my hearty—come, scud away—eh, what have you brought yourself up with a round turn for?

*Gray.* Then I leave my rival to the undisturbed possession of—oh, the thought is withering—no, no, I cannot.

*Reef.* Cannot! we're not to be put off, and by a landsman—so come, there's one fellow already has outsailed us, piloting among these breakers,—one follow this morning—

*Gray.* This morning—what kind of man?

*Reef.* Why, to say the truth, messmate, he was a trim taut-rigged craft, and a devilish deal better looking than you are.

*Gray.* And he escaped from you?

*Reef.* Yes, but that's more than we intend to let you do, so come.

*Gray.* Oh it will be a sweet revenge—one moment—how stands your pocket?

*Reef.* Why not a shot in the locker.

*Gray.* Here. (*takes out a purse.*)

*Reef.* Eh! how did you come by all that? you hav'nt run a pistol against a traveller's head, eh?

*Gray.* These are the savings of a life of toil—I had hoarded them up for a far different purpose—but so that they buy me revenge—

*Reef.* Aye, that's a bad commodity; for when people are inclined to purchase, they'll do it at any

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rate; but I say, no foul tricks you know.

*Gray.* You say one man escaped you this morning, now I'll lead you to him; moreover, if you secure him, this purse shall be your reward.

*Reef.* Shall it! we are the boys; and what's more, we don't mind giving you your discharge into the bargain.

*Gray.* Come on then; follow me into the town, and when the night comes on, I'll find means to throw your victim into your hands; bear him away with as little noise as possible.

*Reef.* Oh, never fear—if he attempts to hallo, we'll put a stopper in his mouth to spoil his music.

*Gray.* 'Tis well—thus I shall be revenged—Lucy, if you are resolved to hate, at least you shall have ample reason for it.

[*Exit with Sailors.* L.]

### SCENE III.—*A Room in the Blake's Head.*

*Enter LABEL.* L.]

*Label.* Well, now let me see, where's my next point of destination? ah, Dover. Thus I go through the country, and by both my trades of barber and doctor, contrive to look at the bright side of life, and lay by a little for the snows of old age. Had bad business here at Deal: all the people so plaguily healthy—not a tooth to be drawn—not a vein to be opened; the landlord here, master Collins, has been my only customer—the only man for whom I have had occasion to draw lancet. Now it's very odd why he should be so secret about it—all to prevent alarming his wife he says,—good tender man.

*Enter GILBERT.* R.]

*Gil.* What, master Label, ah! bad work for you—all hearty as oaks—not a pulse to be felt in all Deal.

*Label.* Ah, I can't think how that is.

*Gil.* Can't you? I'll tell you—we've no doctors with us; no body but you, and you'll never do any harm, because—

*Label.* Because—because what?

*Gil.* Why we all know you, and there's few will give you the chance; who do you think would employ a doctor who goes about calling at peoples' houses to mend their constitutions, as tinkers call for old kettles.

*Label.* Ah, that's it, humble merit may trudge its shoes off, and never finger a fee, whilst swaggering impudence bounces out of a carriage, and all he touches turns to gold. Farewell, good Gilbert, farewell—I'm off for Dover.

*Gil.* What! to night?

*Label.* Yes, directly.

*Gil.* Why you must pass through the church-yard.

*Label.* What of that?

*Gil.* Nothing, only if ever you had any patients, I thought you might have felt some qualms in taking that road.

*Label.* Ever had any patients, I'll whisper a secret in your ear; I've had one in this house! Now what do you think of that? What follows now?

*Gil.* What follows now? why the grave-digger, I'm afraid; I say, I wonder you didn't add the trade of undertaker to that of doctor.

*Label.* Why?

*Gil.* Why! how nicely you could make one business play into the other: when called in to a patient, as soon as you had prescribed for him, you know, you might have begun to measure him for his coffin.

*Label.* Ah, you're a droll fellow, but we won't quarrel; I dare say you think me very dull now, but bless you I'm not, when I'm roused I can be devilish droll—very witty indeed.

*Gil.* Aye, your wit is, I suppose, like your medicine—it must be well shaken before it's fit to be administered; now how many of your jokes generally go to a dose?

*Label.* No, no, it won't do, I'm not to be drawn out now—I've no time to be comical, I must away for Dover this instant.

*Gil.* A word with you, the sharks are out to-night.

*Label.* The sharks?



*Gil.* Aye, the blue-jackets, the press-gang—now you'd be invaluable to them; take my word, if they see you, you are a lost man.

*Label.* Never fear me, the blue-jackets, bless you, if they were to catch hold of me, I should run off and leave a can of flip in their hands; now what do you think of that?

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*Gil.* Why I think of the two, the flip would be far the most desirable; but if you will go, why, a good night to you, and a happy escape.

*Label.* All the same thanks to you for your intelligence; press me, bless you they'd sooner take my physic than me; no, no, I'm a privileged man—good-night, good-night.

[*Exit R.*

*Gil.* That fellow has killed more people than ever I saw; how he looks his trade, whenever I behold him, he appears to me like a long-necked pint bottle of rheubarb, to be taken at three draughts; but I must put all thing, to rights—here's my master and Miss Lucy will be here in a minute; the house is full of customers, and it threatens to be a boisterous night.

*Enter REEF, disguised in a large great coat. L.*

*Reef.* I say young man, (*Gilbert starts.*) why what are you starting at?

*Gil.* Nothing—only at first I didn't know whether it was a man or a bear.

*Reef.* Indeed—and which do you think it is now?

*Gil.* Why, upon my word, it's a very nice distinction: I can't judge very well, so I'll take you at your own word.

*Reef.* I've a little business here with a gentleman: do you know one Mr. Gwinett?

*Gil.* Gwinett! what, Ambrose Gwinett?

*Reef.* The same.

*Gil.* Know him!—I believe I do—a very fine, noble spirited,—

*Reef.* Aye, that's enough; I want to see him—he's in he house.

*Gil.* No, indeed.

*Reef.* Would you tell me a lie now?

*Gil.* Yes I would, if I thought it would answer any right purpose; I tell you he's not in the house—and pray who are you?

*Reef.* Who am I? why—I'm—I'm—an honest man.

*Gil.* Aye, that's so general a character; couldn't you descend a little to particulars?

*Reef.* I've a letter to Mr. Gwinett—it's of great consequence.

*Gil.* Who does it come from?

*Reef.* The writer!

*Gil.* Now it strikes me that this letter contains some mischief.

*Reef.* Why?

*Gil.* Because it's brought by so black-looking a postman.

*Reef.* Will you deliver it? if as you say he's not here when he comes?

*Gil.* Deliver it? why I don't mind, but if you've any tricks you know.

*Reef.* Tricks, you lubber, give him the letter, and no more palaver. (*going.*)

*Gil.* Here—(*Reef returns.*) No—no matter—I thought you had left your civility behind you.

*Reef.* Umph!

[*Exit. R.*

*Gil.* I warrant me, that's a fellow that never passes a rope maker's shop without feeling a crick in the neck.

*Enter LUCY. L.*

*Lucy.* Oh, Gilbert!

*Gil.* How now, Miss Lucy, you seem a little frightened or so?

*Lucy.* Oh, no—not frightened, only hurried a little—is my uncle in the house?

*Gil.* Oh, yes—and has been asking for you these dozen times,—here by-the-by is a letter for—but mum—here comes master.

Col. Well, Lucy child, where hast been all day, I havn't caught a glance of you since last night—what have you got there, Gilbert?

Gil. Where, sir?

Col. Why, there in your hand—that letter.

Gil. Oh—aye—it is a letter.

Col. For me?

Gil. No, sir—it's for master Ambrose Gwinett.

Col. Give it to me—I expect him here to-night.

Lucy. Expect master Ambrose here to-night, uncle?

Col. Aye, standing at the door just now, his uncle told me that he expected him at Deal to-day, but being compelled to be from home until to-morrow, he had left word that master Ambrose should put up here, and asked me to make room for him.

Gil. What here, master? why there's not a corner—not a single corner to receive the visit of a cat—the house is full to the very chimney pots.

Col. Aye, as it is but for once, we must contrive—let me see—as we have no other room, master Ambrose can take part of mine—so bustle Gilbert, bustle, and see to it.

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Gil. Yes, sir, yes.—(Aside.) I'm sorry master's got that letter though; it was an ugly postman that brought it, and it can't be good.

[Exit. L.

Col. Now, Lucy, that we are together, I would wish to have some talk with you. You know, girl, I love you, as though you were my own, and were sorrow or mischance to light upon you, I think 'twould go nigh to break my heart. Now answer me with candour—you know Grayling—honest Ned Grayling? why, what do you turn so pale at?

Lucy. Oh! uncle, I beseech you, name him not.

Col. Tut—tut—this is all idle and girlish—the man loves you, Lucy.

Lucy. Loves me!

Col. Aye; Ned is not so sprightly and trim a lad as many, but he hath that which makes all in a husband, girl—he has a sound heart and a noble spirit.

Lucy. Possibly—I do not know.

Col. But you do know, and so does all the town know; come, be just to him if you cannot love him; but for my part, I see not what should prevent you becoming his wife.

Lucy. His wife? oh, uncle, if you have the least love—the least regard for me, speak no more upon this theme—at least for the present. I will explain all to-morrow, will prove to you that my aversion is not the result of idle caprice, but of feelings which you yourself must sanction. In the mean while be assured I would rather go down into my grave, than wed with such a man as Grayling.

Col. Eh! why—what's all this?—Grayling has not—if he has—

Lucy. No, no, it is I who am to blame, for speaking thus strongly—wait, dearest uncle—wait till to-morrow.

Col. Well, as it is not long, and the time will be slept out, I will,—but take heed, Lucy, and let not a foolish distaste prejudice you against a worthy and honourable man.

Enter AMBROSE GWINETT and GILBERT. L.

Gwin. Your servant, master Collins—I must I find be your tenant for the night.

Col. And shall be welcome, sir; come, Lucy, Gilbert, stir, and prepare supper; there's a rough night coming on I fear, and you might fare worse, master Ambrose, than as guest at the Blake's Head—here, by the way, is a letter for you.

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[Whilst Gwinett is reading the letter, the supper-table is arranged, and Collins sits down and begins counting some money.

Gwin. This is a most mysterious assignation. (Reads.) "If you are a man, you will not fail to give me a meeting at twelve outside the house, I have to unfold a plot to you which concerns not you alone.—Your's, a Friend." (Whilst Gilbert and Lucy are off for provisions.) Master Collins, I may rise to-morrow morning 'ere any of your good people are stirring, you will therefore not be surprised to find me gone.

Col. But why so early?

*Gwin.* A little appointment—I shall return to breakfast.

*Col.* Then go out by the back gate; but stop, as the latch is broken in the inside, you had better take this knife (*giving Gwinett a clasp-knife.*) to lift it; we shall wait breakfast until your return.

[*Collins, Gwinett, and Lucy, seat themselves at table.—Grayling enters, takes a chair, and placing it between Lucy and Gwinett, sits down.*]

*Col.* How now, master Grayling, you have mistaken the room.

*Gray.* Mistaken—how so? isn't this the Blake's Head?

*Col.* That may be; but this is my private apartment.

*Gray.* Private! than what does he here—Gilbert, some ale.

*Gwin.* (*aside.*) The very ruffian I encountered in the wood.

*Gray.* (*to Gwinett.*) What are you looking at man? I shall pay my score—aye, every farthing o't, though I may not dress so trimly as some folks.

*Col.* Grayling, will you quit the room?

*Gray.* No!

*Col.* Then expect to lose—

*Gray.* Lose! and what can I lose? hasn't he all that I could lose?

*Col.* What do you mean?

*Gray.* Ask Lucy—the wood, Lucy, the wood.

*Gwin.* Wretch! dare you beneath her uncle's roof—

*Gray.* Dare I? you have among you awakened the wolf within my heart, and beware how it snaps.

*Col.* This is needless; good Grayling leave us.

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*Gray.* Good, and you think I am to be hushed with fair words like a child, whilst he, that thief, for he has stolen from me all that made life happy, whilst he bears away Lucy and leaves and broken hearted.

*Col.* He bear away Lucy—you are deceived.

*Gray.* No, you are deceived, old man—you are deceived; but let to-morrow shew, I'll not 'cumber your room, master Collins; I leave it to more gay visitors than Ned Grayling; I leave it till to-morrow—good-night—good-night, gay master Gwinett,—a pleasant night's rest—ha! ha! ha!

[*Exit L.*]

*Lucy.* Dear uncle, is not this sufficient excuse for my aversion.

*Col.* No matter, we'll talk more of this to-morrow. Go to your chamber, girl. (*Music.—Lucy goes off. R.*) and now, sir, we will to ours.

[*Music.—Exeunt R.*]

#### SCENE IV.—*Another Room in the Blake's Head.*

*Enter GILBERT, with lamp. R.*

*Gil.* Well, I've looked all through the house, fastened the doors, hung up the keys, and now have nothing to do but to go and sleep until called up by the cock. Well I never saw love make so much alteration in any poor mortal as in master Grayling—he used to be a quiet, plain spoken civil fellow—but now he comes into a house like a hurricane. I wonder what that letter was about, it bothers me strangely—well, no matter—I'll now go to bed—I'll go across the stable yard to my loft, and sleep so fast that I'll get ten hours into six.

[*Exit L.*]

*Enter COLLINS from C.D. in flat.*

*Col.* A plague take that doctor, he has bound my arm up rarely—scarcely had I got into bed, than the bandage falling off, the blood gushed freshly from the wound; if I can reach Gilbert, he will assist me to stop it—or stay, had I not better return to master Gwinett, who as yet knows nothing of the matter? no, I'll even make my way to Gilbert, and then to bed again.

[*Exit L.*]

*Enter GWINETT, from door in flat.*

*Gwin.* I have armed myself—and am determined to meet the appointment; if there be any foul play intended, they will find me prepared, if not, the precaution is still a reasonable one—the latch is broken, said the landlord, the knife however will stead me.

[Collins cries without, "Murder! murder! within—Lucy! Gilbert! murder! murder!"—Lucy screams without, and rushes through door in flat, then runs on exclaiming

Lucy. Oh, heaven! my uncle's murdered!

*Servants and others run on.* R.

Omnēs. What say you, murdered! where?—how?—

Lucy. I know not—hearing his cries, I rushed into his room—he was not there, but his bed was steeped in blood.

*Enter GRAYLING and GILBERT.* L.

Gray. What cries are these? master Collins murdered! where is Gwinett?

Lucy. Alas! oh, heaven—he is—

Gray. Ah! let search be made.

*Enter GWINETT.* R.

Gray. He is the assassin.

Gwin. Villain! (*rushes at Grayling—they struggle; Grayling wrenches a knife from Gwinett's grasp; his coat flies open, and the handkerchief stained with blood, falls out.*)

Gray. Ah! this knife—

Lucy. It is my uncle's—

Gray. Your uncle's—behold the murderer!

[Gwinett stands petrified with horror, Lucy shrieks and turns away from him; Gilbert picks up the handkerchief stained with blood, and holds it at one side of Gwinett, whilst Grayling on the other, points to the knife with looks of mingled detestation and revenge.—Characters form themselves at back, &c.—End of Act I.

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—*Outside view of the Sessions' House.*

*Enter GILBERT and JENNY.* L.

Gil. Come along, Jenny, come along; it will be all over in a few minutes.

Jenny. Oh what a shocking thing! Master Gwinett tried for murder—I'd lay my life he's innocent.

Gil. Why I don't know what to think: matters stand very strong against him—but then he looks as freshly, and speaks as calmly—no he can't be guilty—and yet the knife—and my master's bed filled with blood—and then where is my poor master—every search has been made for the body, and all in vain—if Gwinett be guilty—

*Enter GRAYLING from Sessions' House.* L.

Gray. If he be guilty—who can doubt his guilt?

Gil. Those, master Grayling, who do not let their hate stand in the light of their clear judgment. This is, I warrant me, a rare day of triumph for you.

Gray. Aye, and ought to be to every honest man! 'tis for rogues to be sad, when rogues are caught.

Gil. I dare say now you think this will serve your turn with Miss Lucy.

Gray. Perhaps I do, and what then?

Gil. What then! why then you overcount your profits: take my simple word for it, she hates you! hates you as much as she loves—

Gray. Her uncle's murderer, eh? are not those the words? with all my heart, I would rather have the deadly hate of Lucy Fairlove, than the softest pity of Lucy Gwinett. Oh! I thought there was a world of mischief under the smooth face of the assassin—had he struck for a deep revenge I could have pardoned him, for it might have been my own fate—but to murder a man for gold! for a few pieces of shining dross—'tis a crime to feel one touch of pity for so base a miscreant.

Gil. Bless me—'tis all like a dream—'twas but yesterday, and we were all as happy as the best.

Gray. Aye, it was but yesterday when the gay trim master Ambrose scorned and contemned me!

but yesterday, and Lucy hung upon his arm! and to-day—ha! ha! ha!—I stood against him at the fatal bar; as I passed, his brow blackened, and his lips worked—his eyes shot the lightnings of hate upon me—at that moment my heart beat with a wild delight, and I smiled to see how the criminal shrunk as I told the tale that damn'd him—to see him recoil as though every word I uttered fell like a withering fire upon his guilty heart. (*A scream is heard from the Sessions' House.*) Ah! the trial is ended. (*A neighbour comes from Sessions' House, Grayling runs to him.*) say—the prisoner—

*Neigh.* Guilty.

*Gray.* And no hopes of mercy?

*Neigh.* None.

*Gray.* Ha! ha! ha!

*Music.—Enter Neighbours from the Court with Officers guarding* GWINETT. L.

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*Gwin.* Good people, there are I see many among you whose tears bespeak that you think me guiltless—may my soul never reach yon happy sphere, if by the remotest thought it ever yearned for blood:—circumstances—damning circumstances have betrayed me:—I condemn not my judges—farewell, for the few hours I dwell among men, let me have your prayers; and when no more, let me, I pray, live in your charitable thoughts. When time (for I feel it one day will) shall reveal my innocence—should ought remain of this poor frame, let it I beseech you, lie next my mother's grave, and in my epitaph cleanse my memory from the festering stain of blood—farewell,—Lucy!

*Lucy.* (*rushing on & falling into his arms.*) Ambrose—

*Offi.* (*aside to Grayling.*) Grayling, you, as smith for the prison, must measure the culprit for his fetters.

*Gray.* Measure?

*Offi.* Aye! it is the sentence of the court that the prisoner be hung in chains.

*Gray.* Indeed!

*Offi.* The office is doubtless an ungrateful one; being a fellow townsman you needs must feel for him.

*Gray.* No—no—yes—yes—but duty you know, Sir, (*seeing Lucy still in Gwinett's arms.*) but if they stand leave-taking all day, I shall have no time to finish the work. (*Officer motions Gwinett.*)

*Gwin.* I attend you, Sir, farewell Lucy—heaven bless and protect you. (*Rushes off followed by officers, &c.* p. s.)

*Lucy.* Gone, to prison—death—no they cannot, dare not fulfil the dreadful sentence—he is innocent! innocent as the speechless babe—the whole town believes him guiltless—they will petition for him, and if there be mercy upon earth he must yet be saved—(*seeing Grayling.*)—Grayling! oh Grayling—your evidence has betrayed him—but for you he had escaped—whilst you spoke—whilst at every word you uttered my blood ran cold as ice, I prayed (heaven pardon me) prayed that you might be stricken dumb; but he, even he who stood pale and withered at the bar must have felt far above you as man above a worm.

*Gray.* I spoke the truth, the truth of facts.

*Lucy.* Yes, but urged with malice, wholly devilish—but oh Grayling—all shall be forgiven—all forgotten—strive but with me to awaken mercy in the hearts of his judges—strive but—ah no—I see in that stone-like eye and sullen lip, that the corse of Ambrose (his corse! my heart will burst) that to you his death knell would be music, for then you would no longer fear his marriage chimes.

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*Gray.* I meddle not with the course of law, Lucy Fairlove.

*Lucy.* Hard-hearted man—but you carry with you your own torment, a blighted conscience—alas, why do I stand raving to this heartless being—the time wears on—to-morrow—oh! what a world of agony is in that word, let me still pronounce it, that I may ceaselessly labour in the cause of misery—but if relentless law demands its victim, the grave! the grave! be then my place of rest.

[*Exit.* R.]

*Gray.* Oh Lucy!—what a wretch am I, to stand like a heartless monster unmoved by every touch of pity—it was not once so—once—but my nature's changed, all feelings, save one, are withered; love has turned to hate, a deep and settled hate, I feel it craving for its prey! now to let it feed and triumph on my rival's pains!

[*Exit.* R.]

## SCENE II.—*A view of the country.*

*Enter* LABEL. L.

*Label.* So far safe; egad Gilbert's advice was not altogether unnecessary, for I've had to keep up

a running account for these five miles—eh—what a crowd of people are coming here.

*Enter 1st. VILLAGER. R.*

why my friend, you seem in haste.

*1st. Vil.* Haste! yes, I would'n't lose the sight for the world.

*Label.* Sight! what sight?

*1st. Vil.* What, don't you know? (*looks at him contemptuously,*) then my service to you.

[*Exit. L.*

*Label.* This is highway politeness, and to a man of my profession—eh!—thank heaven, here comes one of the other sex—it's hard if I don't get an answer now.

*Enter MARY ROSELY. R.*

Well my pretty maid, are you going to see the sight?

*Mary.* The sight! oh bless you, Sir,—no, not for the world.

*Label.* What then you have no curiosity?

*Mary.* Curiosity, Sir,—do you know what sight it is?

*Label.* No, will you tell me?

*Mary.* Why, Sir; it's—it's—it's (*sobbing.*) oh such a good young man.

*Label.* A good young man, is that such a sight among you?

*Mary.* Oh no Sir—not that—and yet there was nobody but loved him.

*Label.* Nobody but loved him—i'faith if they've all such pretty faces as you, he must have had a fine time of it—but what's the matter with him—is he going to be married—is he dying—or dead?

*Mary.* No, Sir, not yet.

*Label.* Well, then, never take on so—he'll get over it.

*Mary.* Oh no, Sir, he's sure to die—the judges have said so.

*Label.* The judges—what the doctors! ah my dear, I know, by myself, that the doctors are frequently no great judges—what's his complaint?

*Mary.* Complaint, Sir, why they say he's murdered a man.

*Label.* Murdered a man! that's a fatal disease with a vengeance.

*Mary.* But it's false, Sir, a wicked falsehood—he murder—why, Sir, he was the best, the kindest young man in all these parts—there was nobody but loved poor Ambrose—

*Label.* Ambrose! why you don't mean Ambrose Gwinett?

*Mary.* Oh yes, Sir, that's his name.

*Label.* And who do they say he's murdered?

*Mary.* Master Collins.

*Label.* Collins! (*aside.*) the devil; there may be some of my marks found upon him—and—and what have they done with the body?

*Mary.* That can't be found any where: it's supposed that Ambrose—no, no, not Ambrose, but the villains that did the horrid act, threw the body into the sea.

*Label.* Ah! very likely—I begin to feel very uncomfortable—well go home, my good girl, go home.

*Mary.* Home! no that I won't; I'll go and see if I can't comfort poor Miss Lucy.

[*Exit. L.*

*Label.* I'm puzzled, the body not to be found; if I go and tell all that I know—inform the judges that I bled master Collins, perhaps they may secure me, and by some little trick of the law, make me accompany master Gwinett—again, allowing I should get clear off, the tale might occasion some doubt of my skill, and so my trade would be cut up that way—no no, better as it is, let the guilty suffer, and no more said about it—it will all blow over in a week or two. That same Gwinett, for all he used to laugh and joke so gaily, had I now begin to remember a kind of hanging look—he had a strange, suspicious—but bless me when a man falls into trouble, how soon we begin to recollect all his bad qualities. I declare the whole country seems in a bustle—in the confusion I may get off without notice—'tis the wisest course, and when wisdom comes hand-in-hand with profit, he's a fool indeed that turns his back upon her.

[*Exit. R.*

*Enter BLACKTHORN and WILL ASH. L.*

*Black.* Tut tut—all trifling I tell you—all the fears of a foolish girl—come, come, Will Ash, be a man.

*Ash.* That's what I would be, master Blackthorn, but you will not let me—I would be a man, and return this same bag of money.

*Black.* And get a prison for your pains.

*Ash.* But the truth—

*Black.* The truth! it is too dangerous a commodity for us to deal in at present—we know we picked it up a few paces from the Blake's Head, doubtless dropped from Collins in his struggle with the murderers—but how are we to make that appear—our characters, Will Ash, are not altogether as clear as yonder white cloud, they are blackened a little ever since that affair with the Revenue Officers—you know we are marked men.

*Ash.* Yes, but unjustly so; I am conscious of my innocence.

*Black.* Yes, and a man may be hanged in that consciousness—be hanged as I say, and leave the consciousness of his innocence, as food and raiment for his helpless family.

*Ash.* Oh!—

*Black.* You are in no situation, Will Ash, to study niceties—when your children shriek “Bread” within your ears, is it a time for a man to be splitting hairs, and weighing grains of sand?

*Ash.* Do not, Blackthorn, do not speak thus; for in such a case it is not reason, but madness that decides.

*Black.* Even as you will, I speak for your own good.

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*Ash.* I am assured of it, and could I satisfy myself—

*Black.* Satisfy! why you may be satisfied—the men who killed Collins, doubtless did it for his gold—they were disappointed, and instead of the money going to villains and blood-shedders, it has fallen into the hands of honest men.

*Ash.* Honest—aye if we return it.

*Black.* No, then it would be fools, upon whom fortune had thrown away her favours—Collins is dead! mountains of gold could not put life—no, not even into his little finger—what good then can come of returning the bag, and what harm to the dead or to the world, by our keeping it?

*Ash.* You speak rightly, a little reasoning—

*Black.* Aye, a little reasoning as you say, does much in such matters.

*Ash.* And yet the greatest rogues may commit crimes with as fair a shew of necessity—'tis not Blackthorn—'tis not in the nature of guilt to want an excuse.

*Black.* Away with all this—will you be a man?

*Ash.* (after a moment's struggle.) I will—come what will, I'll return the gold—farewell—(Is going off, when child runs in. R.)

*Child.* Oh father! father, all is lost

*Ash.* Lost?

*Child.* Yes, our cruel landlord has seized on every thing, mother and my little sisters, Jane and Ann, all driven out, must have slept in the fields, if farmer—

*Ash.* Oh, heavens! my wife and children homeless, starving outcasts—and I no help—

*Black.* No help! yes the bag—the gold!

*Ash.* Ah!—yes!—it must, it shall be done! the husband and the parent's tugging at my heart—oh! be witness heaven! and pardon, pardon the frailties of the man in the agony of the father—come, child, your mother and your sisters, though the trial be a hard one, yet shall smile upon the oppressor.

[Exeunt. R.]

### SCENE III.—*Inside of Prison.*

*Enter* GRAYLING: *he has with him an iron rod.*

*Gray.* So now for my task; this is a day of triumph for me; I could have dressed myself as for a holyday; this Gwinett once dead who knows how time may work upon Lucy; perhaps I had rather the gang had seized and torn the lad away—but they deceived me—they took my money for the service, and have never since shewn themselves; after all it may be better as it is—Gwinett might have regained his liberty—have returned—there's no marrying with the dead—no, 'tis best—much the best.—

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*Enter* BOLT, *the Gaoler.* L.

A good-day to you, master Bolt.

*Bolt.* A good-day—you are late, master Grayling—you will have scarcely sufficient time to perform your task.

*Gray.* Oh, plenty—I have an old set of chains in hand; an hour's work will make them fit for any body—so let me at once measure the prisoner.

*Bolt.* The prisoner! do you not know that there are two to suffer?

*Gray.* Two!

*Bolt.* Aye; we have to day received an order that "mad George," as he is called, who was last Sessions convicted for shooting an Exciseman, is to suffer with poor Ambrose Gwinett.

*Gray.* Poor Ambrose Gwinett—you are mightily compassionate, master Bolt.

*Bolt.* Why, for the matter of that, if a man's a gaoler, I see no reason why his heart should be of a piece with the prison wall.

*Gray.* But is he not an assassin?—a midnight murderer?

*Bolt.* True; and yet I cannot but doubt—I do not think a man with blood upon his head, could sleep so soundly and smile so in his slumbers, as does master Gwinett; the whole country feels for him.

*Gray.* Aye, it is the fashion now-a-days—let a knave only rob an orchard, and he's whipped and cried at for a villain—let him spill blood, and it's marvellous the compassion that awaits him.

*Bolt.* Why, how now, master Grayling? once you would not have talked in this manner—you had one time a heart as tender as a girl's—I have seen you drop a tear upon the hand of a prisoner, as you have fitted the iron upon it. Methinks you are strangely changed of late.

*Gray.* I am—no matter for that—let me to my work, for time speeds on.

*Bolt.* Well, you can first begin with mad George.

*Gray.* And why not with Gwinett?—with Gwinett, I say, the murderer?

*Bolt.* He's engaged, at present, taking leave of poor Lucy Fairlove; eh! why what's the matter with you? why you start and shake as though it was you that was going to suffer.

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*Gray.* Well, well, delay no longer.

*Bolt.* (*calls without.*) Holloa! Tom, bring poor George hither. Poor fellow, he had begun to hope for pardon just as the warrant came down.

*Enter GEORGE and TURNKEY. R.*

*Geo.* Now, what further, good master Bolt?

*Bolt.* Why, there is another little ceremony—you know the sentence is—

*Geo.* Aye, I remember, to be placed as a scarecrow to my brother smugglers,—well, no matter, they'll let me, I hope, hang over the beach with the salt spray sometimes dashing upon me, and the sea-gull screaming around.

*Gray.* Give me your hand, friend; so, (*shakes hands.*) this is an ugly task of mine, but you bear no malice?

*Geo.* I never knew it when I was a free and happy man, and should never feel it in my dying hour—and to prove to you that the fear of death has not wasted my powers,—there, bend that arm before you measure it—stronger men than you, I take it, have tried in vain.—(*Grayling takes hold of George's arm, and with a slight effort, bends it.*) Ah! there was but one man who could do this—he who did it when a boy—surely you are not—yes, it is—Grayling!

*Gray.* Eh! George—George Wildrove—my earliest, my best of friends, (*they embrace.*) Oh! and to meet you now, and in such a place—and I—the wretch employed to—

*Geo.* Nay, Grayling, this is weak—your task is not a free one, 'tis, I know, imposed upon you—to the work, and whilst you measure the limbs of mad George, the felon, think not, for I would not think of him—think not of George Wildrove, the school-boy.

[*Music.—Grayling, after a struggle, advances to George—he turns up one of his sleeves, and is about to measure the arm, when his eye falls upon George's wrist. Grayling, starting back with horror.*]

No, no, not if these prison walls were turned to gold, and I by fulfilling this hateful task, might become the whole possessor, I would not do it—as I have a soul, I would not.

*Geo.* What new alarm? What holds you now?

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*Gray.* Your wrist, George.

*Geo.* Well—



*Gray.* Do you not see?

*Geo.* What?

*Gray.* That scar—in that scar I read the preservation of my life—alas! now worthless—can I forget that the knife aimed at my heart, struck there—there—

*Geo.* Oh, a schoolboy frolic, go on, good Ned.

*Gray.* Never! Oh, George, I am a wretch, a poor forlorn discarded wretch—the earth has lost its sweetness to me—I am hopeless, aimless—I had thought my heart was wholly changed to stone—I find there is one—one pulse left, that beats with gratitude, with more than early friendship.

*Bolt.* Come, master Grayling, you know there is another prisoner.

*Gray.* Ah! I had forgotten—gaoler, chains for this man, to be made an Emperor, I could not forge—if you will, say so to the governor: for the other prisoner, I'll work—oh, how I'll toil—but come a moment, George—let my heart give a short time to friendship, 'ere again 'tis yielded up to hate.

[*Exeunt Grayling and George.* L.]

*Enter* AMBROSE GWINETT. R.

*Gwin.* I feel as if within these two days, infirm old age had crept upon me—my blood is chilled, and courses through my veins with lazy coldness—my brain is stunned—my eyes discern not clearly—my very hair feels grey and blasted; alas! 'tis no wonder, I have within these few hours been hurled from a throne of earthly happiness—snatched from the regions of ideal bliss—and cast, bound, and fettered within a prison's walls—and my name—my innocent name, stamped in the book of infamy—oh! was man to contemplate at one view the evil he's to suffer, madness would seize on half his kind—but misery, day by day works on, laying at intervals such weights upon us, which, if placed at once would crush us out of life.—Ah! the gaoler!

*Bolt.* A good-day to you, master Ambrose.

*Gwin.* "Good-day" friend! let good days pass between those happy men, who freely may exchange them beneath the eye of heaven.—"Good-day" to a wretch like me! it has a sound of mockery.

*Bolt.* And yet believe me, Sir, I meant not so.

*Gwin.* I am sure you did not. It was my own waywardness that misconstrued you—I am sorry—p. 38  
pardon me, good man—and if you would yield a favour to a hapless creature, now standing on the brink of the grave, leave me—I fain would strive to look with calmness into that wormy bed wherein I soon must lie.

*Bolt.* Poor fellow, he forgets—but good master Gwinett—

*Gwin.* Well—be quick—for my minutes are counted—I must play the miser with them.

*Bolt.* Do you not remember the sentence?

*Gwin.* Remember?

*Bolt.* But the whole of it?

*Gwin.* The—oh, heavens, the thoughts like fire flash into my brain.—I had forgotten—there is no—no grave for me.

*Bolt.* Poor fellow, I could almost cry to look at him.

*Gwin.* Well, what does it matter; it is but in imagination—nothing more.

*Bolt.* That's right—come, look boldly on it.

*Gwin.* Where is the place, that—my heart swells as it would burst its prison—the—you understand.

*Bolt.* Why, at the corner of the meadow, just by One-Tree Farm.

*Gwin.* (*with great passion.*) What!—at—oh!—if there be one touch of mercy in my judges' hearts, I beseech (*throws himself at Bolt's feet.*) I implore you—any other spot—but there—there—

*Bolt.* And why not there, master Ambrose?

*Gwin.* Why not!—the cottage wherein I was born looks out on the place—many a summer's day, when a child, a little happy child, close by my mother's side, my hand in her's, I have wandered there picking the wild flowers springing up around us—oh! what a multitude of recollections crowd upon me—that meadow!—many a summer's night have I with my little sisters, sat waiting my father's coming—and when he turned that hedge, to see his eyes, how they kindled up, when the happy shout burst from his children's lips—ah! his eyes are now fixed closely on me—and that shout is ringing in my ears!

*Bolt.* Come, come, be more composed.

*Gwin.* There I cannot die in peace: in one brief minute I should see all the actions of my infant

life, as in a glass—there, there, I cannot die—is there no help?

*Bolt.* I'm afraid, Sir, none: the judges have quitted the town—but banish these thoughts from your mind—here comes one that needs support even whilst she strives to comfort others.

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*Enter LUCY. R.*

*Lucy.* Oh! dearest Ambrose—is there no hope?

*Gwin.* Hope, Lucy, none—my hour is at hand, and the once happy and respected Gwinett, will 'ere sunset die the death of a felon! a murderer! a murderer!—Oh, heavens! to be pointed, gazed at, executed as the inhuman, heartless assassin—the midnight bloodshedder!

*Lucy.* Bloodshedder! oh, Gwinett.

*Gwin.* But tell me, dearest Lucy, what say my fellow townsmen of the hapless Ambrose; do they all, all believe me guilty?

*Lucy.* Oh, no—some there are who, when your name is mentioned, sigh and breathe a prayer for your deliverance,—and some—

*Gwin.* Aye, there it is, they class me with those desperate wretches, who—oh, would the hour were come—I shall go mad—become a raving maniac: what a life had my imagination pictured: blessed with thee Lucy, I had hoped to travel onward, halting at the grave, an old grey headed happy man, and now, the scaffold—the executioner—can I think upon them, and not feel my heart grow palsied, my sinews fall away, and my life's breath ebb—but no, I think, and still I live to suffer.

*Lucy.* There yet remains a hope—your judges are petitioned, they may relent—then years of happiness may yet be ours.

*Gwin.* Happiness—alas, no; my very dreams are but a counterpart of my waking horrors.—Last night, harassed, I threw me down to rest—a leaden slumber fell upon me, and then I dreamt, Lucy, that thou and I had at the altar sworn a lasting faith.

*Lucy.* Did you so? Ambrose, did you so?—Oh! 'tis a happy presage: the dream was sent from heaven to bid you not despair.

*Gwin.* It was, indeed, a warning dream: hear the end. We were at the altar's foot, girt round by happy friends, and thou smilest—oh, my heart beat quickly with transporting joy, as with one hand clasping thine, I strove to place the ring upon thy finger—it fell—and ringing on the holy floor, shivered like glass into a thousand atoms—astonished, I gazed a moment on the glittering fragments,—but when I raised my head, thou wert not to be found—the place had changed—the bridal train had vanished, and in its stead, I saw surrounding thousands, who, with upturned eyes, gazed like spectres on me—I looked for the priest, and in his place stood glaring at me with a savage joy, the executioner—I strove to burst away—my arms were bound—I cast my eyes imploringly to heaven—and there above me was the beam—the fatal beam—I felt my spirit strangling in my throat, 'twas but a moment—all was dark.

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*Lucy.* Oh! heavens.

*Gwin.* Such was the forerunner of the coming horror—so will ten thousand glut their eyes upon my misery—and then the hangman—

*[Lucy, who during the former and present speech of Gwinett, has been growing gradually insensible; here shrieks out, and rushes to him.]*

*Lucy.* Oh! speak it not—think it not—my heart is broken. *(falls into his arms.)*

*Gwin.* Wretch! fool that I am, thus forgetful in my miseries to torture this sweet sufferer.

*Lucy. (recovering.)* There is then no hope—no, think not to deceive me, the terrible certainty frowns upon me, and every earthly joy fades beneath the gloom! I shall not long survive you—a short time to waste myself in tears upon your grave.

*Gwin. (aside.)* My grave!—oh madness! even this last solace is deprived me—she'll never weep o'er me—never pluck the weeds from off my tomb—but if she'd seek the corse of Gwinett—there! hung round with rattling chains, and shaking in the wind, a loathsome spectacle to all men—there she must, shuddering, say her fitful prayer.—Oh! I'm phrenzied, mad,—Lucy thus distracted, locked in each others arms, we'll seek for death. *(they embrace.)*

*[Music.—Enter BOLT and GRAYLING. R.; Grayling on seeing Gwinett and Lucy, is about to rush down upon them, when he is held back by Bolt: he at length approaches Gwinett, who, on beholding him, staggers back with horror—Grayling folds his arms and looks at Gwinett with an eye of malice.]*

*Gwin.* Wretch! monster! what do you here? come you to glut your vengeance on my dying pangs?

*Gray.* Were there no wretches—no monsters—no bloodsuckers, look you, there need no prison smiths: chains and fetters are not made for honest men.

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*Lucy.* Grayling, if e'er you felt one touch of pity, in mercy leave us, cheat me not of one moment, with—*(Lucy lifts her hands imploringly to Grayling—his eye rests upon the ring on her finger.)*

*Gray. (passionately.)* Thy husband?

*Lucy.* Aye, my husband, I swore to be his and none but his—my oath was taken when the world looked brightly on us both—the world changed, but my oath remained; and here, but an hour since, within a prison's walls, with none but hard-faced pitiless gaolers to behold our wretched nuptials; here I kept my vow—here I gave my hand to the chained, the despised, the dying Gwinett; and whilst I gave it, whilst I swore to love and honour the outcast wretched felon, I felt a stronger pride than if I'd wedded with an ermined king. (*embracing Gwinett; Grayling, who, during this speech, is become quite overpowered—by an effort rouses himself, exclaiming wildly*—

*Gray.* Tear them apart, gaoler, tear them apart, I say.

*Bolt.* For shame! for shame, master Grayling, have you no pity?

*Gray. (incoherently.)* Pity—havn't I to do my work—havn't I to measure the culprit—havn't I to—

*Gwin.* Hold! hold! she knows not—spare her.

*Gray.* Spare! and why should I spare? Hasn't she wiled, despised me? isn't she Mrs. Lucy Gwinett, the wife of the murderer, Gwinett? hasn't she spoken words that pierced me through and through? and why should I spare?—Felon, you know your sentence; come, let me measure you for the irons, that—

*Gwin.* Wretch! heartless ruffian!

[*As Grayling approaches Gwinett, he seizes the rod of iron held by Grayling, and they struggle—Gwinett throws Grayling down, and is about to strike him with the iron, when the prison bell tolls, Gwinett's arm falls paralyzed; Grayling looks at him with malicious joy; Lucy sinks on her knees, raising her hands to heaven. At this moment, a cry is set up without, "a reprieve! a reprieve!"—Officer, and neighbours enter. L. Grayling springing on his feet, tears the paper from the Officer's hand, Lucy at the same time exclaims, "A reprieve! say—for Ambrose!"*

*Offi.* No; for mad George!

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*Gray. (eagerly.)* The murderer's fate is—

*Offi.* Death!

[*The prison bell again tolls, Lucy falls to the earth, Gwinett sinks into a state of stupifaction, Grayling looks at him with an air of triumph; characters at the back lift their hands imploringly to heaven, and the Scene closes.—End of Act II.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*The Blake's Head.*

*Enter GILBERT and JENNY, as landlord and landlady. L.*

*Gil.* I tell thee, Jenny, I can't help it; ever as this day comes round, I'm melancholy, spite of reasoning.

*Jenny.* Well, well; but it's so long ago.

*Gil.* But not the less to be remembered—it is now eighteen years this very day, since poor Ambrose Gwinett died the death of a murderer!—I'm sure he was innocent—I'd lay my life on it.

*Jenny.* But there's no occasion to be so violent.

*Gil.* I tell you I can't think with calmness and speak on it. A fine open hearted youth, and see the end of it. Not one of his accusers but is come to shame. Look at Grayling—Ned Grayling the smith—don't good folks shake the head, and the little children point at him as he goes by—and then those two churls who scoffed at him, as he was on the road to death—has either of them had a good crop since?—havn't their cattle died?—their haystacks took fire—with all kinds of mischief falling on them?

*Jenny.* Yes, and poor Lucy.

*Gil.* And there again; Lucy, Gwinett's widow, though almost broken hearted—doesn't she keep a cheerful face, and look smilingly—whilst her husband's accusers are ashamed to shew their heads—I say again, I know he was innocent. I know the true murderers will some day be brought to light.

*Jenny.* I'm sure I hope they will; but in the mean time, we musn't stand talking about it, or no one will come to the Blake's Head.

*Gil.* Well, well; I leave it all to you to day, Jenny: I'm not fit to attend to the customers. Ah! good fortune has been showered upon us—little did we think of seeing ourselves owners of this house; but I'm sure I'd walk out of it with a light heart, if it's old owner, poor Robert Collins, could but

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come back to take possession of it—but that’s impossible, so we’ll talk no more of it.

*Jenny.* Well I declare this is all waste of time—we’ve the house full of customers, and here we’re standing talking as—

*Gil.* You know we used to do Jenny, some eighteen years ago; then I was waiter and ostler here, and you were dairy maid at squire—

*Jenny.* Well that’s all past, where is the use of looking back.

*Gil.* A great deal: when a man gets to the top of the hill by honest industry, I say he deserves to be taken by the neck and hurled down again, if he’s ashamed to turn about and look at the lowly road along which he once travelled.

*Jenny.* Well, I didn’t mean that.

*Gil.* No no, I know you meant no harm, Jenny—but you will talk—well I shall go and take a round.

*Jenny.* You’re going to the meadow, at One-Tree-Farm to mope yourself to death.

*Gil.* Why perhaps I may take a turn that way—but I shall be back soon—eh! who’s this?

*Jenny.* Why it’s the servant of the rich old gentleman, from the Indies.

*Gil.* Oh!—what he in the Dolphin?

*Enter LABEL, dressed as servant. L. Jenny curtseys and Exit. L.*

*Label.* Servant, Sir,—you are the landlord.

*Gil.* Yes—hope your master slept well—I wasn’t at home last night when you put up, or I should have paid my respects:—he’s from India I hear.

*Label.* From India!—and as rich, and as liberal as an emperor.

*Gil.* You’ve been some time in his service, I suppose?

*Label.* Some twelve years.

*Gil.* Has he any friends in these parts?

*Label.* He had when he left, or rather when he was dragged from this country, some eighteen years ago.

*Gil.* Dragged from the country!

*Label.* Yes pressed—he was taken on board ship at dead of night; the vessel weighed anchor at daybreak—started for India—and there my master, what with one and another piece of luck, got his discharge: but I believe he wishes to see you.

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*Gil.* I’ll attend him directly—and then I’ll go and take my melancholy round.

*[Exit. R.]*

*Label.* Nobody knows me—no one sees the valet in the steward, the late Label, barber and doctor—and only think that I should meet with Master Collins—a man who was thought murdered—alive and flourishing in India—poor Gwinett—poor Ambrose—I have never had the courage to tell my master that sad story—he little thinks that an innocent man has been hanged on his account—somehow I wish I had told him—and yet what would have been the use; he couldn’t have brought the dead man alive again, and it would only have made him miserable. But now he can’t long escape hearing the whole tale, and then what will become of me—no matter; I must put a bright face upon the business, and trust to chances.

*[Exit. R.]*

## **SCENE II.—View of Deal—the Sea.**

*Enter GWINETT. L.—GRAYLING following, carrying portmanteau.*

*Gwin.* Unless my memory deceives me, yonder must be our path.

*Gray.* That would have been the road once—but ’tis many years since that was blocked up.

*Gwin.* I thought I could not be deceived.

*Gray.* You are no stranger then to the town?

*Gwin.* No; it is my native place—that is, I lived in it some years ago.—Have you been long here?

*Gray.* Ever since I was born.

*Gwin.* And are doubtless well acquainted with the history of most of its inhabitants.

*Gray.* Aye, history, yes, I have seen proud knaves grovelling in the dust, and poor industry raised to wealth.

*Gwin.* You, my friend, do not seem to have belonged to the fortunate class.

*Gray.* No matter for that; but, Sir, take my word, you had better not put up at the Blake's Head.

*Gwin.* And why not?

*Gray.* 'Tis full of company. The judges are now in the town to try the prisoners.

*Gwin.* Prisoners! you have, I trust, but few convictions—at least, for very great offences—for murder now, or—

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*Gray.* Murder!—no—'tis now eighteen years—eighteen years this very day since—

*Gwin.* (abstractedly.) Eighteen years—it is—it is the day.

*Gray.* Oh you remember it then.

*Gwin.* No, no; to your story.

*Gray.* I was about to say it was eighteen years since the last execution for murder happened in these parts.

*Gwin.* And the culprit's name was—

*Gray.* (*fiercely.*) Gwinett—Ambrose Gwinett—ha! ha!

*Gwin.* Were there not, if I remember rightly, some doubts of Gwinett's guilt?

*Gray.* Doubts!—There might have been among those who are touched with a demure look; but no, he was guilty—guilty of the murder—and I saw him die the death of an assassin.

*Gwin.* Pray was not part of his sentence by some means evaded?

*Gray.* It was.

*Gwin.* I have heard but a confused account of the transaction.

*Gray.* (*eagerly.*) I can tell you the whole—every word of it. He was sentenced to be hung in chains—another that was to suffer with him, was pardoned; so the murderer died alone. Never shall I forget the morning.—Though eighteen years ago, it is now as fresh in my memory as though it was the work of yesterday: I saw the last convulsive struggle of the murderer—nay, I assisted in rivetting the irons on the corse—'twas hung at the destined spot; but, when the morning came, the body was not there.

*Gwin.* Was no enquiry instituted?

*Gray.* Yes; it was supposed the relations of the murderer had stolen the body to give it burial: the murderer's uncle, and wife were examined—but after a time, no further stir was made.—Curse upon the trick, it cost me my bread.

*Gwin.* How so?

*Gray.* Why I was the prison-smith—had the irons fitted the corse, it must have been cut to pieces, 'ere it could have been removed.

*Gwin.* Gracious heavens! your name is—

*Gray.* Grayling—Ned Grayling—once a sound hearted happy man, but now—come, Sir, all the inns will be full.

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*Gwin.* (*snatching the portmanteau from him.*) Wretch! begone—you serve me not.

*Gray.* Wretch! well, granted—it is true: I am a houseless, penniless, broken-hearted wretch! I have seen every earthly happiness snatched from me—I have sunk little by little, from an honest industrious man, to the poor crawling, famishing, drunkard—I am become hateful to the world—loathsome even to myself. You will not then suffer me to be your porter?

*Gwin.* No! begone.

*Gray.* Well, 'tis all one; yet you might, I think, let a starving fellow creature earn a trifle.

*Gwin.* Starving!

*Gray.* I have scarcely broken bread these two days.

*Gwin.* Unhappy creature—here—(*gives money—Grayling offers to take portmanteau.*) no, I will not trouble you. Go, get food, and reform your way of life.

[*Exit.* L.]

*Gray.* Reform! too late—too late. Had I the will time would not let me; a few months—nay, weeks, days—and the passenger may pause at the lifeless corse of Grayling stretched in the highway. Every eye looks scorn upon me—every hand shrinks at my touch—every head's averted from me, as though a pestilence were in my glance.—Intemperance and fierce passion have brought upon me premature old age—my limbs are palsied, and my eyesight fails.—What's this, alms—alms—won by wretched supplication? well, 'twill buy me a short forgetfulness—oblivion is now my only happiness.

*Enter* BLACKTHORN *and* WILL ASH. R.

*Black.* You were wrong to let him pass you: had you but watched my motions, he could not have escaped.

*Ash.* But in the day time?

*Black.* Day time! day is night if no one sees. He's gone to the Blake's Head.

*Ash.* Aye, I never pass the door, but my heart beats and my knees tremble.

*Black.* What! hav'n't eighteen years cured you of that trick?

*Ash.* Cured me—that bag of money—that bag—'twas the first thing that turned me from the paths of honesty and grievously have I wandered since.

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*Black.* Still whining, still complaining, what good could the money do to the dead?

*Ash.* And what good has it done us? but let's not talk about it.

*Black.* That's right, and now listen to me. We must have a peep into that portmanteau.

*Ash.* Impossible!

*Black.* Not so, we'll to the Inn: where can Grayling be?

*Ash.* Not far off I warrant.

*Black.* Well, no matter, we can even do this job without him; but one lucky hit and we are made men.

*Ash.* Aye, this has been your cry year after year—luck! I think I see our luck in every tree, and in every rope.

*Black.* Well, farewell, for the present, but meet me round the lane, leading to the back part of the house.

*Ash.* Round by the lane—no, that I can't do: I must pass my wife and children's graves—I have not dared to look upon them this many a day.

*Black.* You refuse then?

*Ash.* No; I'll meet you, but for the path, that I'll chuse myself.

[Exeunt R.

### SCENE III.—*Interior of the Blake's Head.*

*Enter* LUCY *and* GILBERT. L.

*Gil.* Nay, but you must see him; I promised you should.

*Lucy.* You were wrong, good Gilbert, I cannot see him.

*Gil.* No, 'tis you are wrong, Mrs. Lucy Gwinett, how do you know but he may bring you good news?

*Lucy.* Can he make the dead live again? Good news!

*Gil.* Well, now for my sake, see the gentleman.

*Lucy.* I cannot refuse you. Heaven knows what would have been my fate, had I not found a friend—a protector in you.

*Gil.* You'll see him then? Ah I knew you'd think better of it. He's a very pleasant kind of gentleman; and asked after you so earnestly, that I'm sure he cannot mean but kind.

*Enter* GRAYLING, (*abruptly.*) L.

Well, and what do you want?

*Gray.* Aye, it's ever thus.—Do you think I bring the plague into your house, that you look so fiercely at me?

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*Gil.* I don't know, but you do!—Is there nobody here that you are ashamed to gaze upon?

*Gray.* No; I see nobody but you and Mrs. Lucy—I beg her pardon, Mrs. Lucy Gwinett.

*Gil.* Villain!

*Gray.* Thou liest—stop—there was a time, when at such a word, I'd seen thee sprawling at my feet; but now, I can't tell how it is—I cannot strike thee.

*Gil.* But I'll tell you how it is—the title's a just one—you feel it sink into your heart—and your arm is palsied; once more, leave my house.

*Gray.* And why is my money not as good as a finer customer's? why can't you take my money?

[*During this scene, Blackthorn and Ash enter behind p. s. and exeunt through door in flat. R.*

*Gil.* Why, in truth, Grayling, I'm afraid 'tis gained by too foul a business.

*Gray.* Ha! ha! the conscience of an innkeeper.

*Gil.* Grayling, leave the house; at any time I'd sooner look upon a field of blighted corn, than see you cross my threshold; but on this day, beyond all—

*Gray.* This day,—and why (*sarcastically, and looking at Lucy.*) oh, I had forgotten; yes, it is the very day—

*Lucy.* Oh! good Gilbert.

*Gil.* Stay but one moment longer, and as I am a man, I'll send thee headforemost into the street.

*Gray.* Fine words!

*Gil.* We'll try then.

(*Gilbert is rushing at Grayling, when Lucy comes between them, Gwinett enters hastily at this moment, and starts on beholding Lucy; Grayling sees Gwinett, exchanges a look of defiance with Gilbert and Lucy, and goes sullenly off. P. S.*)

*Gwin.* (*aside.*) 'Tis she! oh, heavens! all my dangers are repaid.

*Gil.* An unruly customer, Sir, that's all—I'll take care he does not disturb you. (*To Lucy.*) This is the gentleman who would speak to you.

*Lucy.* Do not leave me.

*Gil.* Nay, he has something he says to tell thee privately—I'll be within call.

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[*Exit R.*

*Gwin.* (*aside.*) Let me be calm, lest too suddenly the secret burst upon her—she knows me not—time and peril have wrought this change.

*Lucy.* You would speak to me, Sir?

*Gwin.* I would, Madam; is there no one within hearing?

*Lucy.* No one—but why such caution?

*Gwin.* 'Tis necessary for the memory of one you once loved.

*Lucy.* Whom mean you?

*Gwin.* Ambrose!

*Lucy.* Oh! in mercy speak not that name—I dare not breathe it to myself; once loved—oh! this agony—you probe into a breaking heart.

*Gwin.* But not recklessly believe me.

*Lucy.* Alas, what avails this now—let the dead rest unspoken of—break not the silence of my Gwinett's grave.

*Gwin.* His grave!

*Lucy.* Oh! you wake a thousand horrors in my soul; he has no grave; they stole him from me—they robbed the widow of her last bitter consolation.

*Gwin.* Perhaps it was the deed of friends.

*Lucy.* Friends!—But to your errand, Sir, what would you say? speak it quickly, lest my reason desert me, and you talk to madness:—I was told you brought me comfort, I smiled at the word; it seems my unbelief was right.

*Gwin.* I do bring you comfort—News of your husband.

*Lucy.* Ah! perhaps, yes, I see it—you can tell me where they laid his cold remains—can lead me to his grave, where I may find a refuge too.—You weep, nay then I know your mission is one of kindness—of charity to the widow of that unhappy guiltless soul, who died a felon's death on yonder hill.

*Gwin.* I would speak of Ambrose—but, start not—he died not at the hour men think.

*Lucy.* Died not?

*Gwin.* As you loved your husband living, and weep him dead, I charge you conjure up all the firmness springing from woman's love, nor let one sound or breath escape you to publish the sad history I'm about to tell.

*Lucy.* I'm fixed as stone—should my husband rise before me, my heart might burst, but not a cry

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should escape me.

*Gwin.* Many years after, the whole world believed him dead—your husband lived. (*Lucy by a violent effort maintains her silence.*) You know 'twas thought the body had been stolen for interment.—Listen, I knew your husband—met him abroad: to me, he confided the secret of his escape; to me, he described the frightful scene—the thronging multitude—the agonies of death! The dreadful ordeal past, the ministers of justice executed the remaining part of the sentence—the body was suspended in chains. Whether it was from the inexperience of the executioner, or the hurried manner in which the sad tragedy was performed, I know not,—but your husband still lived—the fresh airs of night blew upon him, and he revived—revived and found himself hanging.—Oh! my blood thickens as I think upon the torture that was his—fortunately, the irons that supported him, hung loosely about him; by a slight effort he freed his limbs, and dropping to the earth, hastened with all speed, to another part of the coast, took ship and quitted England.

*Lucy.* (*incoherently.*) And I!—I not to know of this—unkind.

*Gwin.* Often he strove to inform you—often wrote, but ne'er received an answer,—twelve years ago he set out, resolved to dare all hazards and seek you, when he was taken by the Moors and sold for a slave—I knew him whilst a captive.

*Lucy.* And did he die in slavery—oh, your looks declare it—unhappy wretched Gwinett,—but no, happy, thrice happy, he died not on a scaffold. Did he hope you would ever see his miserable widow?

*Gwin.* He did, and gave me this locket—it contains your hair.

*Lucy.* Oh, give it me—oh, well do I remember when I saw it last, Gwinett was gazing at it with tearful eyes, when the prison bell—oh, that sound! 'tis here still—I'm sick at heart. (*Falls on Gwinett's shoulder.*)

*Gwin.* Still she knows me not—how to discover myself!—oh Lucy, what a ruin has sorrow made of thee.

*Lucy.* (*reviving.*) Ah!—what was that?—no no, I wander—yes, it is—(*recognizing him.*) oh heavens it is my husband! (*falls into his arms.*)

*Gwin.* Within there—

*Enter* JENNY. R.

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assist me to remove her—she will recover shortly—come, madam.

[*Exeunt.* R.]

*Enter* GRAYLING *cautiously.* R.

*Gray.* So! no one here—I can see nothing of Blackthorn or Will Ash—well, all the better, I may be spared some mischief—and then how to live?—live, can I call this life—a dreadful respite from day to day—hunger and disgrace dogging my steps—what do I here?—there is a charm that holds me to this spot, and spite of the taunts, the rebukes that's showered upon me, I cannot quit it, nor ever whilst Lucy is—eh! who have we here?

*Enter* BLACKTHORN *and* WILL ASH *cautiously from door in flat with Gwinett's portmanteau.*

Blackthorn!—Ash!

*Black.* (*whispering.*) Hush—not a word.

*Gray.* What have you there?

*Black.* Plunder, and good booty too I take it.

*Gray.* And what would you do with it?

*Black.* What!—that question from Grayling?—come let's away.

*Ash.* We cannot—the portmanteau will be missed, and we instantly pursued.

*Black.* Stay—is there no surer way—I have it—we'll even shake its contents a bit, and leave the trunk here—what say you, Grayling?

*Gray.* As you will—I'm fit for any work.

*Black.* Come then and assist—(*puts portmanteau on table and opens it.*) eh—he's well provided—(*takes out a pair of pistols and puts them on table.*) ah!—here's gold—(*takes out purse.*) Dos't hear it chink?—Grayling, come and assist, man.

*Gray.* (*approaching the table, and recognising portmanteau.*) Hold for your lives—you must not, shall not, touch this.

*Black.* Eh!—how does the wind blow now?—and why not I pray?

*Gray.* Anything but this—the owner this morning relieved my necessities—hundreds passed and heeded not the outcast, famishing, Grayling—he who claims this gave me alms, and bade me repent—I am a wretch, a poor houseless, despised wretch—yet villain as I am, there is some

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touch of feeling left—my hand would fall withered did I attempt to touch it.

*Black.* Ah, this may be all very well.

*Gray.* Blackthorn—Ash—dare but to lay a robber's hand on a single doit, and I'll alarm the house.

*Black.* Tush.

*Gray.* To the trial then.

*(Grayling advances to table and seizes hold of part of the contents of the portmanteau from the hand of Blackthorn—they struggle—Blackthorn regains the purse and Grayling is about to pursue him, when his eye falls upon a packet of letters that still remains in his hand—he stands petrified—Blackthorn and Ash are about to go of at the opposite wings, when Label and Gilbert come in from behind, and each taking a pistol from table, come down and prevent the escape of the robbers—Grayling in a state of agitation unmindful of every thing but the papers, which he hastily looks over.)*

*Gil.* So my brave fellows, here you are—three knaves between a parenthesis of bullets.

*Black.* Why what's the matter? it's all a mistake.

*Gil.* A mistake—yes, I suppose you intended to be a very honest fellow, but by accident are become a convicted scoundrel.

*Black.* Well,—there's the money—now we're clear.

*Gil.* Clear!—and you, Grayling, are you not ashamed?—do you not fear the gallows?

*Gray.* (*madly.*) Gallows!—no, all was lost—good name—hopes—happiness—but yet I had revenge—I hugged it to my heart—'tis gone, and Grayling has nought to live for.

*Gil.* Give me those papers.

*Gray.* Did I say revenge was gone?—no, it rages again with redoubled fury—he shall not foil me—this time his death is sure.

*Gil.* Unhappy wretch—give me those papers.

*Gray.* Millions should not buy them, till they had served my purpose—oh, it all bursts on my maddened brain—relieved—pitied by him!—

*Gil.* Grayling—yield ere your fate is certain.

*Gray.* Never!

*Gil.* Call in assistance. (*Label goes up stage and beckons on neighbours, &c. Gwinett and Lucy come on. L.*)

There, secure the prisoner.

*Gray.* Aye—secure the prisoner.

*Offi.* Which is he?

*Gil.* There—Grayling the robber.

*Gray.* No—not Grayling the robber—but, there, Gwinett the convicted murderer.

*Omnes.* Gwinett?

*Gil.* Gwinett!—Ambrose Gwinett!—it can't be.

*Gwin.* It is even so, good Gilbert—though wonderful 'tis true.

*Gil.* He's innocent—I knew he was innocent—good friends—kind neighbours—let not this be spoken of—heaven has by a miracle preserved a guiltless man—you will all be secret—no one here will tell the tale.

*Gray.* Yes—here is one.

*Gil.* You will not be that wretch.

*Lucy.* (*falling at Grayling's feet.*) Mercy! mercy!

*Gray.* Are you there, Lucy Gwinett—think of my agonies—my hopes all blighted—my affections spurned—think of my sufferings for eighteen years—look at me—can you kneel before the ruin which your scorn has made—but now, new I triumph—seize upon the murderer. (*all indicate unwillingness.*) Nay then, I will proclaim the tale throughout the town. (*Is rushing up stage, when Gilbert seizes him by the throat.*)

*Gil.* You stir not a foot—if a murderer must be hanged, it shall be for strangling such a serpent.

*Grayling and Gilbert struggle, Grayling throws Gilbert from him, and with the rest of the characters following, rushes up the stage. As he is about to exit at back, the folding doors fly open, and Collins, an old grey-headed man, presents himself at the entrance; a general exclamation of "Collins" from all the characters who recoil in amazement.*

*Gray.* See—his ghost, the ghost of the victim rises from the grave to claim the murderer—I am revenged—I triumph—ha! ha! ha!

*(falls exhausted.)*

*Col.* My friends. Lucy.

*Lucy.* My uncle!

*Gwin.* He lives! he lives! the world beholds me innocent! beholds me free from the stain of blood!

*Gil.* Master—oh! day of wonders!—the dead come back.

*Col.* Wonders, indeed! Gwinett, 'tis but within this past half hour, I have heard the story of your sufferings.

*Gil.* But tell me, master, how is this? dead! and not dead, and—

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*Col.* Another time; it is a tedious story, the night you thought me killed, I had left my chamber to procure assistance to staunch a wound—scarcely had I crossed the threshold, than I was seized by a press-gang, and hurried—but see to yon unhappy man.

*(They raise Grayling, who is dying; his face is pale, his eyes set, and his lips and hands stained as though he had burst a blood-vessel.)*

*Gray.* *(seeing Collins.)* There still—not gone yet?

*Col.* How fares it now, Grayling?

*Gray.* And speaks—lives—then Gwinett, Gwinett the husband of Lucy—my Lucy, for I loved her first—is no murderer.

*Lucy.* Grayling.

*Gray.* Oh! Lucy, that voice, my heart leaps to it—leaps to it as it did—but all's past; Lucy, you will not curse me when I'm dead—there are those who will—but let them—you will not: the earth is sliding from beneath my feet—my eyes are dark—what are these?—tears—Lucy's tears!—I am happy.

*[Sinks backward.]*

## DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

|             |       |           |          |          |      |
|-------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------|------|
| Neighbours. |       | Collins.  |          | Label.   |      |
| Blackthorn. | Lucy. | Grayling. | Gilbert. | Gwinett. | Ash. |
| R.]         |       |           | [L.      |          |      |

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AMBROSE GWINETT; OR, A SEA-SIDE STORY: A MELO-DRAMA, IN THREE ACTS \*\*\*

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