

A
TALE
OF
MYSTERY,

A MELO-DRAME:

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY THOMAS HOLCROFT.

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TO

MUZIO CLEMENTI.

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WHAT greater honor can an author render himself than to inform the world he has a friend, who is at once a man of acknowledged genius, and tried virtue? In behalf of your genius, your musical compositions bear ample testimony; and of your virtue I have received proofs so indubitable that, while I have life, they never can be forgotten. Should my name be fortunate enough to reach posterity, how many will reflect, with a pleasing sigh, on the felicity of a man who was the contemporary and intimate of CLEMENTI. May this consoling hope be realised: may we stand recorded friends, in still more enlightened and therefore still more happy ages!

T. HOLCROFT.

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THERE are few pleasures so great, or so pure, as that of being able, by a well told tale, to fix the attention, rouse the passions, and hold the faculties in anxious and impatient suspense. This pleasure is increased in proportion as the Spectators of a Drama, or the Readers of a Narrative, are known to be numerous. When multitudes agree in sentiment, and sympathise in feeling, when they pronounce with equal fervor, and applaud with unanimous warmth, the enjoyment of such general praise becomes intoxicating. In the Drama, forgetting how many Claimants there are, who must divide among them the merit that is due to the whole, the Poet is but too apt to attribute to himself effects, which are the result of a great combination of talents.

Had not the applause bestowed by the Public on the following Piece been uncommon, such a train of

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thoughts would scarcely have occurred. Ready, however, as an Author may be to think too highly of himself, I hope this error, in the present instance, has not been egregious. I cannot forget the aid I received from the French Drama, from which the principal incidents, many of the thoughts, and much of the manner of telling the story, are derived. I exerted myself to select and unite masterly sketches, that were capable of forming an excellent picture; and the attempt has not failed.

I can as little overlook the Performers, the Composer of the Music, the Scenery, and the Dances: all which, in representation, have so essentially contributed to success. I acknowledge their respective aid with pleasure. The performers, especially, have displayed uncommon brilliancy of talent: but, however grateful my thoughts, I dare not venture to mention individuals, lest the persons not named should think themselves neglected. Beside, in order to be just, he that praises must examine and discriminate; and this is not the place for a dissertation on the dramatic Art. I, therefore, can but repeat my sincere tribute of commendation to all, and

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thankfully avow the efficacy of the support I have received.

I should be tempted to say something of the nature, powers, and scenic effects of the Melo-Drame; but that my thoughts must necessarily be given with too much brevity and haste. Other Dramatic writers will certainly produce these effects in a much more mature and perfect state; and of the pleasures they yield I shall be happy to partake.

Dramatis Personæ.

<i>Bonano</i>	MR. MURRAY.
<i>Romaldi</i>	MR. H. JOHNSTON.
<i>Francisco</i>	MR. FARLEY.
<i>Stephano</i>	MR. BRUNTON.
<i>Montano</i>	MR. CLERMONT.
<i>Michelli</i>	MR. BLANCHARD.
<i>Mateoglio</i>	MR. CORY.
<i>Piero</i>	MR. SIMMONS.
<i>Exenat</i>	MR. BEVERLY.
<i>First Gardener</i>	MR. ABBOT.
<i>Second Gardener</i>	MR. TROEMAN.

Peasants, Musicians, Dancers.

<i>Selina</i>	MRS. GIBBS.
<i>Fiametta</i>	MRS. MATTOCKS.

The Music by DR. BUSBY.

*The Dances by MESSRS. BOLOGNA, jun. DUBOIS, and
BYRNE.*

The Scenery by MESSRS. PHILLIPS and LUPINO.

The Dresses by MR. DICK and MRS. EGAN.

A

TALE OF MYSTERY.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A hall in the house of Bonamo, with two side doors, and folding doors in the back scene: a table, pen, ink, and paper, chairs, &c. Music, to express discontent and alarm.*

Enter SELINA and FIAMETTA.

Selina.

YOU seem hurried, Fiametta?

Fiam. Hurried, truly! Yes, yes; and you'll be hurried too.

Sel. I?

Fiam. Fine news!

Sel. Of what kind?

Fiam. A very bad kind. The Count Romaldi—

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Sel. (*alarmed*) What of him?

Fiam. Is coming.

Sel. When?

Fiam. This evening.

Sel. Heavens! What can he want?

Fiam. Want? He wants mischief. We all know he wants you to marry his son, because you're a rich heiress.

Sel. Surely, my uncle will never consent?

Fiam. Your uncle and all Savoy fear him.

Bona. (*calling without*) Fiametta!

Fiam. I am here, sir.

Bona. But I want you here.

Fiam. Lord, sir, I am busy.

Sel. Go, run to my uncle.

Fiam. It's a shame that he should not think of marrying you to his own son; when he knows how dearly you love each other.

Sel. It is the excellence of my dear uncle's heart, that disdains the appearance of self-interest.

Fiam. So, rather than be blamed himself, he'll make you and I and every body miserable! But I'll talk to him!

Bona. (*without*) Fiametta, I say!

Fiam. Coming! (*going*). He shall hear of

it. I'm in the proper cue. He knows I'm right, and I'll not spare him.

[*Exit, talking.*]

(*Hunting-music.*)

Enter STEPHANO, *with his fowling-piece, net, and game.*

Sel. Why are you so late, Stephano? I had a thousand alarms.

Steph. Forgive me, dear Selina. The pursuit of game led me too far among the mountains.

Sel. Do you know—

Steph. What?

Sel. I almost dread to tell you. Count Romaldi is coming.

Steph. Romaldi!

Sel. I shudder, when I recollect the selfishness of his views, and the violence of his character.

Steph. Add, the wickedness of his heart.

(*Music : to express chattering contention.*)

Enter BONAMO and FIAMETTA.

Fiam. I tell you again, sir, it is uncharitable,

it is cruel, it is hard-hearted in you, to give any such orders.

Bona. And I tell you they shall be obeyed. Have not I a right to do as I please in my own house?

Fiam. No, sir; you have no right to do wrong anywhere.

Steph. What is the dispute, sir?

Fiam. He has ordered me to turn the poor Francisco out of doors; because, forsooth, the house is not large enough to hold this count Ronaldi.

Sei. Think, my dear uncle, how grateful and kind is his heart!

Steph. And that he is a man of misfortune.

Bona. Folly and misfortune are twins: nobody can tell one from the other. He has got footing here, and you seem all determined he shall keep it.

Sei. Fown, I am interested in his favour. His manners are so mild!

Steph. His eye so expressive!

Sei. His behaviour so proper!

Fiam. I'll be bound, he is of genteel parentage!

Bona. Who told you so?

Fiam. Not he, himself, for certain; because poor creature he is dumb. But only observe his sorrowful looks. What it is I don't know, but there is something on his mind so—

Bona. You are a fool!

Fiam. Fool, or not, I have served you faithfully these three-and-twenty years; so you may turn me out of doors at last, if you please.

Bona. I?

Fiam. Yes; for, if you turn Francisco out, I'll never enter them again.

Bona. You certainly know more, concerning this man?

Fiam. Since it must be told, I do.

Bona. Then speak.

Fiam. It is quite a tragedy!

Bona. Indeed! Let us hear.

Fiam. It is now seven or eight years ago, when, you having sent me to Chambery, I was coming home. It was almost dark; every thing was still; I was winding along the dale, and the rocks were all as it were turning black. Of a sudden, I heard cries! A man was murdering! I shook from head to foot! Presently, the cries died away; and I beheld two bloody men, with their daggers in their hands, stealing off under

the stage at the foot of the mill. I stood like a stone: for I was frightened out of my wits! So I thought I heard groans; and, *afraid* as I was, I had the sense to think they must come from the poor murdered creature. So I listened, and followed my ears, and presently I saw this very man—

Sir Francisco?

Flem. Welching in his blood! To be sure I screamed and called loud enough: for, what could I do by myself? So presently my cries *was* heard; and honest Michelli the miller, with his man, came running.

Bow. I now remember the tale. The poor man recovered; and every body praised Michelli.

Flem. So they ought; he is an honest good soul! What then, Sir, can you suppose I thought, when, about a week ago, I again saw Francisco's *upturned* standing before me; making signs, that he was famished with hunger and thirst. I knew him at once; and he soon bethought himself of me. If you had seen his clasped hands, and his thankful looks, and his dumb notes, and his signs of joy, at having found me!—While I have a morsel, he shall never want. I'll hire

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him a cottage ; I'll wait upon him ; I'll work for him : so turn him out of doors, if you have the heart.

Steph. Fiametta, you wrong my father.

Bona. I'll hear his story from himself.

Fiam. He can't speak.

Bona. But he can write.

Fiam. I warrant him. I'm sure he's a gentleman.

Bona. Bring him here : if he prove himself an honest man, I am his friend.

Fiam. I know that, or you should be no master of mine.

[*Exit.*

Steph. His kind attentions to Selina are singular.

Sel. Every morning, I find him waiting for me with fresh gathered flowers ; which he offers with such modest yet affectionate looks !

FIAMETTA returns with FRANCISCO ; the latter poor in appearance, but clean ; with a reserved placid and dignified air.

Bona. Come near, friend. You understand his gestures, Fiametta ; so stay where you are.

Fiam. I intend it.

Bona. (*to himself*) He has a manly form !

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a benevolent eye! (*aloud*) Sit down, Sir. Leave us, my children.

(*Francisco suddenly rises, as Stephano and Selina offer to go, brings them back, and intreats they may remain.*)

Bona. Since he desires it, stay. — There is pen, ink, and paper: when you cannot answer by signs, write; but be strict to the truth.

Fran. (*with dignity points to heaven and his heart.*)

Bona. Who are you?

(*Francisco writes; and Stephano, standing behind him, takes up the paper and reads the answers.*)

Fran. "A noble Roman!"

Bona. Your family?—

Fran. (*gives a sudden sign of forbear! and writes*) "Must not be known."

Bona. Why?

Fran. "It is disgraced."

Bona. By you?

Fran. (*gesticulates.*)

Fiam. (*interpreting*) No, no, no!

Bona. Who made you dumb?

Fran. "The Algerines."

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Bona. How came you in their power?

Fran. "By treachery."

Bona. Do you know the traitors?

Fran. (*gesticulates*).

Fiam. (*eagerly*) He does! he does!

Bona. Who are they?

Fran. "The same who stabbed me among the rocks." (*A general expression of horror.*)

Bona. Name them.

Fran. (*gesticulates violently, denoting painful recollection; then writes*) "Never!"

Bona. Are they known by me?

Fiam. (*interpreting*) They are! They are!

Bona. Are they rich?

Fran. "Rich and powerful."

Bona. Astonishing! Your refusal to name them gives strange suspicions. I must know more: tell me all, or quit my house.

(*Music to express pain and disorder.*)

Enter PIERO.

Pier. Count Romaldi, Sir.

Fran. (*starts up, struck with alarm*).

Steph. So soon!

Bona. Shew him up.

Pier. He's here. (*Similar music.*)

ROMALDI suddenly enters, as Francisco is attempting to pass the door: they start back at the sight of each other. Romaldi recovers himself; and Francisco, in an agony of mind, leaves the room.)

Bona. What is all this!—Where is he gone?
—Call him back, Fiametta!

[*Exeunt Fiametta and Stephano; both regarding Romaldi with dislike.*]

Rom. (*with forced ease*) At length, my good friend, I am here. I have long promised myself the pleasure of seeing you. Your hand. How hearty you look! And your lovely niece! Her father's picture!

Bona. Rather her mother's.

Rom. My son will adore her. In two days I expect him here. I have serious business to communicate.

Sel. (*to her uncle*) Permit me to retire, sir.

Bona. (*tenderly*) Go, my child; go.

Sel. (*aside*) Grant, oh merciful heaven, I may not fall the sacrifice of avarice! [*Exit.*]

Bona. And now your pleasure, count?

Rom. Nay, I imagine, you can guess my

errand. You know my friendship for my son ; who, let me tell you, is your great admirer. The care you have bestowed upon your niece, her education, mind, and manners, and the faithful guardian you have been, both of her wealth and person, well deserve praise.

Bona. If I have done my duty, I am greatly fortunate.

Rom. She is a lovely young lady ; and you are not ignorant of my son's passion : to which your duty toward your niece must make you a friend. I therefore come, with open frankness, to propose their union.

Bona. And I, with equal candor, must tell you, I can give no answer.

Rom. (*haughtily affecting surprise*) No answer !

Bona. Your rank and wealth make the proposal flattering : but there is a question still more serious.

Rom. (*in the same tone*) What can that be ?

Bona. One which my niece only can resolve.

Rom. Inexperience like hers should have no opinion.

Bona. How, my lord ! Drag the bride, by force, to that solemn altar, where, in the face

of heaven, she is to declare her choice is free?

Rom. Mere ceremonies!

Bona. Ceremonies! Bethink yourself; lest marriage become a farce, libertinism a thing to laugh at, and adultery itself a finable offence!

Rom. Ay, ay: you are a moralist; a conscientious man. Your son is reported to have designs on Selina.

Bona. My lord!

Rom. No anger: I speak as a friend. Her fortune is tempting: but you disdain to be influenced. The wealth and rank of our family —

Bona. Surpass mine. True; still my niece, I say, must be consulted.

Rom. Indeed! (*sternly*) Then my alliance, it seems, is refused?

Bona. By no means: I have neither the right to refuse nor to accept. If Selina —

Re-enter SELINA with a letter.

Sel. (*presenting it to Bona.*) From the unfortunate Francisco.

Rom. What, that strange fellow I met as I came in?

Sel. (*aside*) He knows his name!

Rom. I forgot to ask you how he got admittance here?

Sel. (*with marked displeasure*) I should hope, my Lord, there would always be some charitable door open to the unfortunate!

Rom. (*with courteous resentment*) I addressed your uncle, lovely lady.

Bona. When you came he was relating his adventures, which have been strange.

Rom. (*retaining himself*) And are you, my friend, simple enough to believe such tales?

Sel. What tales, my lord?

Bona. The proofs are convincing! The mutilation he has suffered; the wounds he received, not a league from hence; the ——

Rom. (*alarmed*) Did he name ——?

Bona. Who? The monsters that gave them?
—No; but they are not unknown to him.

Rom. That—that is fortunate.

Bona. I was amazed to learn ——

Rom. What?

Bona. That they are rich and powerful. But I forget: the story can have no interest for you.

Rom. (*eagerly*) You mistake: I — (*recol-*

lecting himself) my feelings are as keen as yours.

Bona. But what has he written? (*offers to open the letter*)

Rom. If you will take my advice, you will not read. Doubtless, he has more complaints, more tales, more favors to request. Be kind and hospitable; but do not be a dupe.

Bona. Of which, I own, there is danger.

Rom. (*seizing the letter which Bonamo carelessly holds*) Then let me guard you against it.

Ser. (*after continually watching and suspecting Romaldi, snatches the letter back; while he, remarking her suspicions, is confused*) This letter, my lord, was given in charge to me: I promised to bring an answer; and I respectfully intreat my uncle will read it.

Bona. Well, well. (*reads*) "Friend of humanity, Should I remain, the peace of your family might be disturbed. I therefore go; but earnestly intreat you will neither think me capable of falsehood nor ingratitude—Wherever I am, my wishes and my heart will be here.—Farewel." He shall not go.

Rom. Why not? He owns the peace of your family may be disturbed.

Bona. Fly, Selina; tell him I require, I request, him to sleep here to-night, that I may speak with him to-morrow.

Rom. (*aside*) That must not be.

Sel. Thanks, my dear uncle! you have made me happy.

Exit, in haste. (Confused music.)

Enter PIERO.

Bona. What now, Piero?

Pier. Signor Montano is below.

Rom. (*alarmed and aside*) Montano!

Bona. I'm very glad of it, for I wanted his advice. (*to Romaldi*) The best of men!

Pier. Please to come up, sir.

Rom. With your permission, I will retire.

Enter MONTANO.

(*Music plays alarmingly, but piano when he enters and while he says*)

Mon. I beg pardon, good sir, but —

(*Music loud and discordant at the moment the eye of Montano catches the figure of Romaldi; at which Montano starts with*

terror and indignation. He then assumes the eye and attitude of menace; which Romaldi returns. The music ceases.)

Mon. Can it be possible!

Rom. (*returning his threatening looks*) Sir!

Mon. You here!

Rom. Not having the honor of your acquaintance, I know not why my presence should please or displease you.

Mon. (*after a look of stern contempt at Romaldi, and addressing Bonamo*) Good night, my friend; I will see you to-morrow.

(*Exit, suddenly.*)

(*Hurrying music, but half piano.*)

Bona. (*calling*) Nay, but signor! Signor Montano! Are the people all mad? Fiametta!

Fiam. (*without*) Sir!

Bona. Run, overtake him; and say, I must speak with him. (*Music ceases.*) Excuse me for going. (*to Romaldi.*)

Rom. Why in such haste? I have heard of this Montano: a credulous person; a relater of strange stories.

Bona. Signor Montano credulous! There is not in all Savoy a man of sounder understanding. Good night, my lord; I will send your

servant : that door leads to your bed-room. Call for whatever you want ; the house is at your command.

[Exit with looks of suspicion. Music of doubt and terror.]

Rom. What am I to think ? How act ?—The arm of providence seems raised to strike !—Am I become a coward ? shall I betray, rather than defend myself ? I am not yet an idiot.
(Threatening music.)

Enter the Count's Servant, MALVOGLIO ; who observes his Master. Music ceases.

Mal. Your lordship seems disturbed ?

Rom. Francisco is here.

Mal. I saw him.

Rom. And did not your blood freeze ?

Mal. I was sorry.

Rom. For what ?

Mal. That my dagger had missed its aim.

Rom. We are in his power.

Mal. He is in ours.

Rom. What are your thoughts ?

Mal. What are yours, my lord ?

Rom. Guess them.

Mal. Executioners !

Rom. Infamy !

Mal. Racks !

Rom. Maledictions !

Mal. From all which a blow may yet deliver us.

SELINA, entering and hiding behind the door, opposite to the chamber of Romaldi, overhears them.

Rom. 'Tis a damning crime !

Mal. Were it the first.

Rom. Where is he to sleep ?

Mal. There. (*pointing to the chamber opposite to Romaldi's*)

Sel. (*behind the door*) They mean Francisco !

Rom. Obstinate fool ! Since he will stay —

Mal. He must die.

Sel. The monsters !

Rom. I heard a noise.

Mal. (*looking toward the folding-doors*)
He's coming.

Rom. Let us retire and concert—

Mal. Then, at midnight—

Rom. When he sleeps—

Mal. He'll wake no more!

[*Exeunt to the chamber of the Count.*

(*The stage dark : soft music, but expressing first pain and alarm ; then the successive feelings of the scene. FIAMETTA enters, with FRANCISCO, and a lamp ; which she places on the table. She regards him with compassion, points to his bed-room, then curtsies with kindness and respect, and retires ; he returning her kindness. He seats himself as if to write, rises, takes the lamp, looks round with apprehension, goes to the chamber-door of Romaldi, starts away with horror, recovers himself, again places the lamp on the table, and sits down to write. The door of Romaldi opens : MALVOGLIO half appears, watching Francisco ; but, as he turns, again retires.*)

Enter SELINA, who gently pulls the sleeve of Francisco : he starts ; but, seeing her, his countenance expands with pleasure.

(*Music pauses on a half close.*)

Sel. (*in a low voice*) Dare not to sleep ! I

will be on the watch ; your life is in danger !

[*Exit.*

(*Music continues tremendous.*)

Fran. (*greatly agitated draws a pair of pistols, lays them on the table, and seats himself to consider if he should write more.*)

ROMALDI and MALVOGLIO appear.

(*Music suddenly stops.*)

Rom. (*to Malvoglio*) Watch that entrance.
(*to Francisco*) Wretched fool ! Why are you here ?

(*Music ; terror, confusion, menace, command.*)

Fran. (*starts up, seizes his pistols, points them toward Romaldi and Malvoglio, and commands the former, by signs, to read the paper that lies on the table.*)

(*Music ceases.*)

Rom. (*reads*) “ Repent ; leave the house. Oblige me not to betray you. Force me not on self-defence.” Fool ! Do you pretend to command ? (*throws him a purse*) We are two. Take that and fly.

(*Music.*)

Fran. (after a look of compassionate appeal, spurns it from him ; and commands them to go).

(After which, sudden pause of music.)

Rom. (aside to Malvoglio) I know him ; he will not fire.

(*Music.* They draw their daggers ; he at first avoids them ; at length they each seize him by the arm, and are in the attitude of threatening to strike, when the shrieks of Selina, joining the music, which likewise shrieks, suddenly brings Bonamo, Stephano, and servants, through the folding-doors.)

Sel. Uncle ! Stephano ! Murder !

(*Romaldi and Malvoglio, at hearing the noise behind, quit Francisco, and feign to be standing on self-defence.*)

(*Music ceases.*)

Bona. What mean these cries ? What strange proceedings are here ?

Sel. They are horrible !

Bona. Why, my lord, are these daggers drawn against a man under my protection ?

Rom. Self-defence is a duty. Is not his pistol levelled at my breast ?

Bona. (to Francisco) Can it be?

Fran. (inclines his head).

Bona. Do you thus repay hospitality?

Sel. Sir, you are deceived: his life was threatened.

Rom. (sternly) Madam——

Sel. I fear you not! I watched, I overheard you!

Bona. Is this true?

Rom. No.

Sel. By the purity of heaven, yes! Behind that door, I heard the whole; Francisco must quit the house, or be murdered!

Rom. (to Bonamo sternly) I expect, sir, my word will not be doubted.

Bona. My lord, there is one thing of which I cannot doubt: the moment you appeared, terror was spread through my house. Men's minds are troubled at the sight of you: they seem all to avoid you. Good seldom accompanies mystery; I therefore now decidedly reply, to your proposal, that my niece cannot be the wife of your son; and must further add, you oblige me to decline the honor of your present visit.

Rom. (with threatening haughtiness) Speak the truth, old man, and own you are glad to find a pretext to colour refusal, and gratify ambition. Selina and Stephano; you want her wealth, and mean in that way to make it secure. But, beware! Dare to pursue your project and tremble at the consequences! To-morrow, before ten o'clock, send your written consent; or dread what shall be done.

(*Exeunt Romaldi and Malvoglio: appropriate music.*)

Bona. Dangerous and haughty man! But his threats are vain; my doubts are removed; Selina shall not be the victim of mean precaution, and cowardly fears. I know your wishes, children. Let us retire. (*To his servants*) Make preparations for rejoicing: early to-morrow, Stephano and Selina shall be affianced.

(*Music of sudden joy, while they kneel.*)

Steph. My kind father!

Sel. Dearest, best of guardians! (*music pauses*).

Bona. Francisco shall partake the common happiness.

Fiam. (as they are all retiring) Dear, dear !
I shan't sleep to-night.

[*Exeunt* : Bonamo expressing friendship to
all, which all return ; Francisco with joy
equal to that of the lovers. Sweet and
cheerful music, gradually dying away.

ACT II.

Joyful Music.

SCENE *a beautiful garden and pleasure grounds; with garlands, festoons, love devices, and every preparation for a marriage festival.*

First and Second Gardeners. PIERO and his companions; all busy.

Pier. Come, come; bestir yourselves! The company will soon be here.

First Gard. Well; let them come: all is ready.

Pier. It has a nice look, by my fackins!

First Gard. I believe it has! thanks to me.

Pier. Thanks to you!

Second Gard. And me.

Pier. And you? Here's impudence! I say it is thanks to me.

F. and S. Gard. You, indeed!

Pier. Why, surely, you'll not have the face to pretend to deny my incapacity?

F. Gard. Yours?

S. Gard. Yours?

Pier. Mine! mine!

Enter STEPHANO.

Steph. What is the matter, my honest friends?

F. Gard. Why, here's Mr. Piero pretends to dispute his claim to all that has been done.

S. Gard. Yes; and says every thing is owing to his incapacity.

F. Gard. Now I maintain the incapacity was all my own. (*To Steph.*) Saving and excepting yours, sir.

S. Gard. And mine.

F. Gard. Seeing you gave the first orders.

Pier. But *was'nt* they given to me, sir? Did'nt you say to me, Piero, says you —

Steph. (*interrupting*) Ay, ay; each man has done his part: all is excellent, and I thank you kindly. Are the villagers invited?

Pier. Invited! They no sooner heard of the wedding than they were half out of their wits! There will be such dancing and sporting! Then the music! Little Nanine, with her hurdy-gurdy;

her brother, with the tabor and pipe; the blind fidler, the lame piper, I and my jew's harp! such a band!

Steph. Bravo! Order every thing for the best.

Pier. But who is to order? Please to tell me that, sir?

Steph. Why, you.

Pier. There! (*To his companions*) Mind! I am to order! Mark that!

Steph. You shall be major-domo for the day.

Pier. You hear. I am to be—do—drum-major for the day!

Steph. Selina is coming. To your posts.

[*Music.*

(*They hurry each to his garland, and conceal themselves by the trees and bushes.*)

Enter BONAMO, SELINA, and FIAMETTA.

[*Music ceases.*

Bona. (*Looking round*) Vastly well, upon my word!

Sel. (*tenderly*) I fear, Stephano, you have slept but little?

Bona. (*gaily*) Sleep indeed! He had something better to think of. Come, come; we'll

breakfast here in the bower. Order it, Fiametta.

Fiam. Directly, sir. (*She goes, and returns with the servants; aiding them to arrange the breakfast table.*)

Bona. How reviving to age is the happiness of the young! And yet—(*sighs*)—thou hast long been an orphan, Selina: it has more than doubled thy fortune; which was great at my brother's sudden death. Would thou hadst less wealth, or I more!

Sel. And why, my dear uncle?

Bona. Evil tongues—this Romaldi——

Steph. Forget him.

Sel. Would that were possible! his menace—before ten o'clock—oh! that the hour were over!

Bona. Come, come; we'll not disturb our hearts with fears. To breakfast, and then to the notary. I forgot Francisco; why is he not here?

Sel. Shall I bring him?

Bona. Do you go, Fiametta.

Fiam. Most willingly.

Bona. Come, sit down. (*They seat themselves. Sweet music, Piero peeps from behind*

a shrub. Stephano gives a gentle clap with his hands, and the peasants all rise from their hiding-places, and suspend their garlands, in a picturesque group, over Bonamo, Selina, and Stephano.) [Music ceases.

Pier. What say you to that, now?

Bona. Charming! charming!

Pier. I hope I am not made a major for nothing?

Bona. (To FRANCISCO, who enters with FIAMETTA) Come, sir, please to take your seat.

Pier. (To Steph.) Shall the sports begin?

Steph. (Gives an affirmative sign).

Pier. Here! dancers! pipers! strummers! thrummers! to your places. This bench is for the band of music—mount.

(Here the dancing, which should be of the gay, comic, and grotesque kind; with droll attitudes, gesticulations, and bounds, in imitation of the mountaineers, the goats they keep, &c. that is, the humorous dancing of the Italian peasants. In the midst of the rejoicing the clock strikes; the dancing suddenly ceases; the changing music inspires alarm and dismay.)

Enter MALVOGLIO.

He stops in the middle of the stage: the company start up; Francisco, Stephano, Selina, and Bonamo, all with more or less terror. The peasants, alarmed and watching: the whole, during a short pause, forming a picture.

Malvoglio then presents a letter to Bonamo, with a malignant assurance, and turns away, gratified by the consternation he has occasioned: with which audacious air, and feeling, he retires. While Bonamo opens the letter and reads with great agitation, the music expresses confusion and pain of thought; then ceases.

Bona. Oh, shame! dishonour! treachery!

Steph. My father!—

Sel. My uncle!

Fiam. What treachery!

Fran. (Attitude of despair).

Bona. No more of love or marriage! no more of sports, rejoicing, and mirth.

Steph. Good Heavens!

Sel. My guardian! my friend! my uncle!

Bona. (Repelling her) I am not your uncle.

Sel. Sir!

Steph. Not?

Bona. She is the child of crime! of adultery. (*A general stupefaction: the despair of Francisco at its height.*)

Steph. 'Tis malice, my father!

Bona. Read.

Steph. The calumny of Romaldi!

Bona. (*Seriously*) Read.

Steph. (*Reads*) "Selina is not your brother's daughter. To prove I speak nothing but the truth, I send you the certificate of her baptism."

Bona. 'Tis here—authenticated. Once more read.

Steph. (*Reads*) "May the 11th, 1584, at ten o'clock this evening was baptized Selina Bianchi, the daughter of Francisco Bianchi."

Fran. (*Utters a cry, and falls on the seat*).

Sel. Is it possible! my father!

Fran. (*Opens his arms, and Selina falls on his neck*).

Steph. Amazement!

Bona. Sinful man! Not satisfied with having dishonoured my brother, after claiming my pity, would you aid in making me contract a most shameful alliance? Begone! you and the offspring of your guilt.

Steph. Selina is innocent.

Fran. (*Confirms it.*)

Bona. Her father is—a wretch! Once more begone.

Fran. (*During this dialogue had held his daughter in his arms; he now rises with a sense of injury, and is leading her away.*)

Bona. Hold, miserable man, (*To himself*) Houseless—penniless—without bread—without asylum—must she perish because her father has been wicked? (*To Francisco*) Take this purse, conceal your shame, and, when 'tis empty, let me know your hiding-place.

Fran. (*Expresses gratitude, but rejects the purse.*)

Sel. (*With affection*) Spare your benefits, sir, till you think we deserve them.

Bona. Poor Selina!

Steph. (*Eagerly*) What say you, sir?

Bona. Nothing—let them begone.

Sel. Stephano! farewell.

Steph. She shall not go! or—I will follow.

Bona. And forsake your father! ungrateful boy! (*To Fran.*) Begone, I say. Let me never see you more. (*To the Peasants*) Confine that frantic youth. (*Violent distracted music.*)

STEPHANO *endeavours to force his way to*
SELINA: FIAMETTA *passionately embraces*
her; and by gesture reproaches BONAMO, who
persists, yet is tormented by doubt.

STEPHANO *escapes, and suddenly hurries SELINA*
forward, to detain her: after violent efforts,
they are again forced asunder; and, as they
are retiring on opposite sides, with struggles
and passion, the Scene closes.

SCENE. *The house of BONAMO.*

BONAMO, STEPHANO, *brought on by the Peasants;*
who then leave the room.

Bona. Disobedient, senseless boy!

Steph. *(exhausted)* Selina! Give me back
Selina, or take my life!

Bona. Forbear these complaints.

Steph. She is the woman I love.

Bona. Dare you——

Steph. None but she shall be my wife.

Bona. Your wife!

Steph. To the world's end I'll follow her!

Bona. And quit your father? Now, when age
and infirmity bend him to the grave?

Steph. We will return to claim your blessing.

Bona. Stephano! I have loved you like a father; beware of my malediction.

Steph. When a father's malediction is unjust, heaven is deaf.

Enter FIAMETTA, retaining her anger.

Fiam. Very well! It's all very right! But you will see how it will end!

Bona. (to Steph.) I no longer wonder Count Romaldi should advise me to drive such a wretch from my house.

Fiam. Count Romaldi is himself a wretch.

Bona. Fiametta!—

Fiam. (overcome by her passion) I say it again: a vile wicked wretch! and has written—

Bona. (imperiously) The truth. The certificate is incontestible.

Fiam. I would not for all the world be guilty of your sins.

Bona. Woman!

Fiam. I don't care for you. I loved you this morning; I would have lost my life for you: but you are grown wicked.

Bona. Will you be silent?

Fiam. Is it not wickedness to turn a sweet innocent helpless young creature out of doors;

one who has behaved with such tenderness; and leave her at last to starve? Oh, it is abominable!

Bona. Once more, hold your tongue.

Fiam. I won't! I can't! Poor Stephano! And do you think he'll forbear to love her? If he did, I should hate him! But he'll make his escape. You may hold him to-day, but he'll be gone to-morrow. He'll overtake and find his dear forlorn Selina; and they will marry, and live in poverty: but they will work, and eat their morsel with a good conscience; while you will turn from your dainties with an aching heart!

Bona. For the last time, I warn you—

Fiam. I know the worst: I have worked for you all the prime of my youth; and now you'll serve me as you have served the innocent wretched Selina; you'll turn me out of doors. Do it! But I'll not go till I've said out my say: so, I tell you again, you are a hard hearted uncle, an unfeeling father, and an unjust master! Every body will shun you! You will dwindle out a life of misery, and no body will pity you; because you don't deserve pity. So now I'll go, as soon as you please.

Enter SIGNOR MONTANO, hastily.

FIAMETTA and STEPHANO *eagerly attentive.*

Mon. What is it I have just heard, my friend?
Have you driven away your niece?

Bona. She is not my niece.

Mon. 'Tis true.

Fiam. How?

Mon. But where did you learn that?

Bona. From these papers.

Mon. Who sent them?

Bona. Count Romaldi.

Mon. Count Romaldi, is—a villain.

Fiam. There! There!

Steph. You hear, Sir!

Fiam. I hope I shall be believed another time.

Bona. (*greatly interested*) Silence, woman!—
By a man like you, such an accusation cannot
be made without sufficient proofs.

Mon. You shall have them. Be attentive.

Fiam. I wont breathe! A word shan't escape
my lips.

[*They press round Montano.*

Mon. Eight years ago, before I had the honour to know you, returning one evening after

visiting my friends, I was leisurely ascending the rock of Arpennaz.

Fiam. So, so! The rock of Arpennaz! You hear! But I'll not say a word.

Mon. Two men, wild in their looks, and smeared with blood, passed hastily by me, with every appearance of guilt impressed upon their countenances.

Fiam. The very same! Eight years ago! The rock of Arpennaz! The—

Bona. Silence!

Fiam. I'll not say a word. Tell all, Sir; I am dumb.

Mon. They had not gone a hundred paces before he, who appeared the master, staggered and fell. I hastened to him: he bled much, and I and his servant supported him to my house. They said they had been attacked by banditti, yet their torn clothes, a deep bite, which the master had on the back of his hand, and other hurts appearing to be given by an unarmed man, made me doubt. Their embarrassment increased suspicion; which was confirmed next day by Michelli, the honest miller of Arpennaz; who, the evening before, near the spot from which I saw these men ascend,

had succoured a poor wretch, dreadfully cut and mangled.

Fiam. It's all true! 'Twas I! I myself! My cries made Michelli come! Eight years—

Bona. Again?

Fiam. I've done.

Mon. I no longer doubted I had entertained men of blood; and hastened to deliver them up to justice: but, when I returned, they had flown; having left a purse, and this letter.

Bona. (*having seen it*) 'Tis the hand of Romaldi.

Mon. Imagine my surprise and indignation, yesterday evening, when I here once more beheld the assassin! I could not disguise my emotion; and I left you with such abruptness to give immediate information. The archers are now in pursuit: I have no doubt they will soon secure him, as they already have secured his accomplice.

Steph. Malvoglio?

Mon. Yes, who has confessed—

Steph. What?

Mon. That the real name of this pretended Romaldi is Bianchi.

Bona. Just heaven! Francisco's brother!

Mon. Whose wife this wicked brother loved. Privately married, and she pregnant, Francisco put her under the protection of his friend here in Savoy.

Steph. My uncle ! His sudden death occasioned the mystery.

Mon. But the false Romaldi decoyed Francisco into the power of the Algerines, seized his estates ; and, finding he had escaped, attempted to assassinate him.

Fiam. Now are you convinced ! He would not 'peach this brother of abomination ! (*raising her clasped hands*) I told you Francisco was an angel ! but, for all you know me so well, I'm not to be believed.

Bona. You are not to be silenced.

Fiam. No ; I'm not. Francisco is an angel, Selina is an angel, Stephano is an angel : they shall be married, and all make one family ; of which, if you repent, you shall be received into the bosom.

Bona. (*slowly ; earnestly*). Pray, good woman, hold your tongue.

Fiam. Repent, then ! Repent ! (*Here the distant thunder is heard, and the rising storm perceived.*)

Bona. (to *Montano* and *Stephano*) I do repent!

Fiam. (affectionately) Then I forgive you. (sobs) I wont turn you away. You're my master again (kisses his hand and wipes her eyes).

Bona. But where shall we find *Selina*, and —?

Fiam. Oh, I know where!

Steph. (eagerly) Do you?

Fiam. Why, could you think that—(her heart full) Follow me! Only follow me.

[*Exeunt hastily.*

Thunder heard, while the Scene changes. Music.

Scene the wild mountainous country called the Nant of Arpennaz; with pines and massy rocks. A rude wooden bridge on a small height thrown from rock to rock; a rugged mill stream a little in the back ground; the miller's house on the right; a steep ascent by a narrow path to the bridge; a stone or bank to sit on, on the right-hand side.

The increasing storm of lightning, thunder, hail, and rain becomes terrible. Suitable music.

Enter ROMALDI from the rocks, disguised like a peasant, with terror; pursued as it were by heaven and earth.

Rom. Whither fly? Where shield me from pursuit, and death, and ignominy? My hour is come? The fiends that tempted now tear me. (*dreadful thunder*) The heavens shoot their fires at me! Save! Spare! Oh spare me! (*falls on the bank*).

Music, Hail, &c. continue; after a pause, he raises his head. More fearful claps of thunder are heard, and he again falls on his face. The storm gradually abates. Pause in the music. A very distant voice is heard. [Holla!] Music continues. He half rises, starts, and runs from side to side; looking and listening. Music ceases. Voice again. [Holla!]

Rom. They are after me! Some one points me out! No den, no cave, can hide me! (*looks the way he came*) I cannot return that way. I cannot. It is the place of blood! A robbed and wretched brother! 'Tis his blood, by which I am covered! Ay! There! There have

I been driven for shelter! Under those very rocks! Oh, that they would open! Cover me earth! Cover my crimes! Cover my shame!
(falls motionless again.)

Music of painful remorse; then changes to the cheerful pastorate, &c.

MICHELLI is seen coming toward the bridge, which he crosses, stopping to look round and speak; then speaks as he descends by the rugged narrow path, and then in the front of the stage.

Mich. (on the bridge) 'Tis a fearful storm! One's very heart shrinks! It makes a poor mortal think of his sins—and his danger.

Rom. (after listening) Danger!—What?—Is it me? *(listening)*

Mich. (descending) Every thunder clap seems to flash vengeance in his face!

Rom. I am known; or must be!—Shall I yield; or shall I — *(points his pistol at Michelli, then shrinks)* More murder!

Mich. (in the front of the stage) At such terrible times, a clear conscience is better than kingdoms of gold mines.

Rom. (*in hesitation, whether he shall or shall not murder*) How to act?

Mich. (*perceiving Romaldi, who conceals his pistol*) Now, friend!

Rom. Now, miller!

Mich. (*observing his agitation*) You look—

Rom. How do I look? (*fearing, and still undetermined.*)

Mich. I—What have you there?

Rom. Where?

Mich. Under your coat?

Rom. (*leaving the pistol in his inside pocket, and shewing his hands*) Nothing.

Mich. Something is the matter with you.

Rom. (*sudden emotion to shoot: restrained*)
I am tired.

Mich. Come in, then, and rest yourself.

Rom. Thank you! (*moved*) Thank you!

Mich. Whence do you come?

Rom. From—the neighbourhood of Geneva.

Mich. (*as if with meaning*) Did you pass through Sallancha?

Rom. (*alarmed*) Sallancha! Why do you ask?

Mich. You have heard of what has happened?

Rom. Where?

Mich. There! At Sallancha! One Count Romani—

Rom. What of him?

Mich. (*chiarung*) Do you know him?

Rom. I—How should a poor—

Mich. Justice is at his heels. He has escaped: but he'll be taken. The executioner will have him.

Rom. (*shudders*) Ay?

Mich. As sure as you are here.

Rom. (*aside*) All men hate me! Why should I spare him?

Mich. I saved the good Francisco.

Rom. (*gazing steadfastly at him*) You! Was it you?

Mich. I.

Rom. Then—live.

Mich. Live?

Rom. To be rewarded.

Mich. I'd have done the same for you.

Rom. Live—live!

Mich. I will, my friend, as long as I can; and when I die, I'll die with an honest heart.

Rom. Miserable wretch!

Mich. Who?

Rom. That Count Romaldi.

Mich. Why ay!—Unless he is a devil, he is miserable indeed. (*music, quick march*) He'll be taken; for, look, yonder are the archers. (*they cross the bridge*).

Rom. (*fearing Michelli knows him*) What then? Where is Romaldi?

Mich. How should I know?

Rom. (*aside*) Does he dissemble? They are here! I am lost! (*retires.*)

Music. *The Archers come forward.*

Mich. Good day, worthy Sirs.

Exempt. Honest miller, good day. We are in search of Count Romaldi, whom we are to take, dead or alive. Do you know his person?

Mich. No.

Rom. (*aside, and out of sight of the Archers*) Thanks, merciful heaven!

Exempt. (*reads*) "Five feet eight" (*Ec. the description must be that of the actor's voice, size and person: to which add*) "with a large scar on the back of the right hand."

Rom. (*thrusting his hand in his bosom*) 'Twill betray me!

Exempt. 'Twas a bite! The wretch Malvog-

lio has deposed that good Francisco is the brother of the vile Romaldi.

Mich. How!

Exempt. And that Francisco, tho' robbed, betrayed and mutilated, has endured every misery, and lived in continual dread of steel or poison, rather than bring this monster to the scaffold.

Mich. But he'll come there at last!

Exempt. We are told, he is among these mountains.

Mich. Oh, could I catch him by the collar!

Exempt. Should you meet him, beware: he's not unarmed.

Mich. There is no passing for him or you by this valley after the storm; the mountain torrents are falling. You must go back.

Exempt. Many thanks. We must lose no time.

Mich. Success to you.

(Archers reascend the hill. Music. Quick march; as when they entered.)

Rom. Death! Infamy! Is there no escaping?

Mich. The day declines, and you look—

Rom. How?

Mich. Um—I wish you looked better. Come

in; pass the evening here: recover your strength and spirits.

Rom. (*with great emotion, forgetting and holding out his hand.*) You are a worthy man.

Mich. I wish to be. (*feeling Romaldi's hand after shaking*) Zounds! What? Hey?

Rom. (*concealing his confusion*) A scar—

Mich. On the back of the right hand!

Rom. I have served. A hussar with his sabre gave the cut.

Mich. (*after considering*) Humph! It may be!

Rom. It is.

Mich. At least it *may* be:—and the innocent—

Rom. Ay! Might suffer for the guilty.

Mich. (*after looking at him*) Rather than that—I will run all risks. I am alone; my family is at the fair, and cannot be home to-night. But you are a stranger; you want protection—

Rom. (*with great emotion*) I do, indeed!

Mich. You shall have it. Come. Never shall my door be shut upon the houseless wretch.

[*Exeunt to the house.*]

Music expressing dejection. FRANCISCO and SELINA approaching the bridge, he points to the Miller's house. Cheerful Music; she testifies joy, and admiration of the Miller. They descend; he carefully guiding and aiding her. The Miller, supposed to hear a noise, comes to enquire, sees FRANCISCO, and they run into each other's arms.

Mich. Welcome! A thousand times welcome!

Sel. Ten thousand thanks to the saviour of my father.

Mich. Your father, sweet lady?

Sel. Oh yes! Discovered to me by his mortal enemy.

Mich. The monster Romaldi?

Sel. (*dejectedly*) Alas!

Mich. For your father's sake, for your own sake, welcome both.

Rom. (*half from the door*) I heard my name!

Mich. (*leading them to the door, just as Romaldi advances a step*) Come. I have a stranger —

Sel. (*seeing Romaldi, shrieks*) Ah!

Fran. (falls back and covers his eyes, with agony) [Romaldi retires.

Mich. How now?

Sel. 'Tis he!

Music of hurry, terror, &c.

FRANCISCO putting his hand toward her mouth, enjoins her silence with great eagerness. MICHELLI, by making the sign of biting his right hand, asks FRANCISCO if it be ROMALDI. FRANCISCO turns away without answering. MICHELLI denotes his conviction it is ROMALDI; and hastily ascends to cross the bridge in search of the Archers. FRANCISCO intreats him back in vain. ROMALDI, in terror, enters from the house presenting his pistol. FRANCISCO opens his breast for him to shoot, if he please. SELINA falls between them. The whole scene passes in a mysterious and rapid manner. *Music suddenly stops.*

Rom. No! Too much of your blood is upon my head! Be justly revenged: take mine!

Music continues as ROMALDI offers the pistol; which FRANCISCO throws to a distance, and

intreats him to fly by the valley.—ROMALDI signifies the impossibility, and runs distractedly from side to side: then, after FRANCISCO and SELINA's intreaties, ascends to cross the bridge. Met at the edge of the hill by an Archer: he is driven back; they struggle on the bridge. The Archer's sword taken by ROMALDI; who, again attempting flight, is again met by several Archers. ROMALDI maintains a retreating fight. FIAMETTA, BONAMO, STEPHANO, MONTANO, and Peasants follow the Archers. FRANCISCO and SELINA, in the greatest agitation, several times throw themselves between the assailants and ROMALDI. When the combatants have descended the hill, ROMALDI's foot slips, he falls, and FRANCISCO intervenes to guard his body. By this time all the principal characters are near the front. The Archers appear prepared to shoot, and strike with their sabres; when the entreaties and efforts of FRANCISCO and SELINA are renewed. The Archers forbear for a moment; and FRANCISCO shields his brother. The music ceases.

Sel. Oh, forbear! Let my father's virtues plead for my uncle's errors!

Ben. We all will intreat for mercy ; since of mercy we all have need : for his sake, and for our own, may it be freely granted !

The Curtain falls to slow and solemn music.

FINIS.