inches
centimeters
Golden Thread
Colors by Munsell Color Services Lab
D50 Illuminant, 2 degree observer
Density
GretagMacbeth™ ColorChecker Color Rendition Chart

THE

MASTER OF RAVENSWOOD.

A Drama

IN THREE ACTS.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, CITY OF WASHINGTON.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS 1875 No. 109013 WASHINGTON

(*Adapted by, and the Property of,* CHARLES FECHTER.)

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1875, by CHARLES FECHTER in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

EDGAR RAVENSWOOD.
SIR WILLIAM ASHTON.
HAYSTON OF BUCKLAW.
CALEB BALDERSTONE.
CAPTAIN CRAIGENGELT.
COLONEL DOUGLAS ASHTON.
HENRY ASHTON.
RAMSAY.
NORMAN.
MURRAY.
MELVILLE.

LADY ASHTON.
LUCY ASHTON.
ALICE.
MYSIE.

THE

MASTER OF RAVENSWOOD.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A forest,* R., *a fountain gushing forth beneath a ruined Gothic screen,* L. *the cottage of* ALICE *beneath an overhanging rock, with a trim garden before it, and a bench beneath a willow, beehive, &c.*

NORMAN, *with a cross-bow on his arm, hunting as if for hares along the ground, and singing at his work.*

Nor. "The monk must arise when the matins ring,
The abbot may sleep to their chime,
But the yeoman must start when the bugles sing,
'Tis time, my hearts, 'tis time."

Enter BUCKLAW *and* CRAIGENGELT *from the back.*

Buck. It is but a wild goose chase of ours, I tell you, Craigengelt (*going down* R. H.)

Craig. Master Hayston of Bucklaw must believe the word of a gentleman. (BUCKLAW *shrugs his shoulders.*) I had sure information that he was seen to go this way. (*Goes down,* L.)

Nor. (*hunting on the ground*). Yes, here are his foot-marks. He must have passed on this track.

Craig. There! you hear, Bucklaw (*calling to* NORMAN, L. C.). Harkye! you knave, yonder! Have you seen the dark gentleman we are seeking?

Nor. No, but I can swear to the marks of his hoofs. (BUCKLAW *laughs.*)

Craig. And which way shall we take to rejoin him?

Nor. I would not advise you, my strange sir. He's an awful ugly customer.

Craig. He is fierce in temper, I know. But we are his intimate friends.

Nor. The devil you are?

Craig. We want to meet him.

Nor. A wilful man must have his way. But don't go too near, he gores fearfully.

Craig. Fellow! would you impugn our courage?

Buck. (*laughing and crossing to* L.) Hold your peace, my valiant Craigengelt. Don't you see that the ranger speaks of a fine buck?

Nor. Not exactly, your honour. But there's a breed of wild cattle in the chase here, and I see the largest and fiercest of the bulls has passed by here since morn.

Buck. You are an excellent woodsman, no doubt, my good fellow. But we are looking for a gallant cavalier, one of our friends, a young gentleman in sad-coloured attire. Have you seen any such hereabouts?

Nor. I caught a glimpse of such a man some half an hour ago not far from the walls of Ravenswood Castle, but I was not nigh enough to distinguish who he was.

Buck. It will be the man we seek. If you are for sport, my friend, good luck attend you! (*Crossing to* R. H.)

Nor. Saint Hubert hear your prayer! Good day, my gentleman!

(*Moves along, looking at the traces again, and singing.*)

"There's bucks and raes on Billiope braes,
There's a herd in Shortwood shaw,
But a lily white doe in the garden goes,
She's fairly worth them a'." (*Exit.*)

Buck. (*walking about uneasily*). What the foul fiend can detain Edgar of Ravenswood so long? He must have miscarried in his purpose.

Craig. (L.) That were a sad mischance for us, who have ventured our lives in coming thus far on such an errand.

Buck. (R.) Pshaw! You are but a craven after all Craigengelt.

Craig. Ha! But that I hold a hasty man no better than a fool, I would. (*Draws his cutlass partly.*)

Buck. Would you? Then why don't you?

Craig. (*returning his cutlass to his scabbard*). Because there is a deeper stake in our enterprise than the life of a ruined spendthrift like you.

Buck. (*laughing*). You are right there. I am what I am, thanks to the devil and you, and such like as you, who have led me to the far end of a fair estate; whilst my old grand aunt, too, from whom I have expectations, cheats me out of my heritage by perversely refusing to die. So, now, I am obliged to shift for my bread by pandering to a party, and helping to kidnap this young Edgar—this Master of Ravenswood, as he is called—for the service of the Pretender, although starving were honester, and hanging is like to be the end of it.

Craig. Ravenswood is poor, his lands are all pledged and pawned, but he has courage, talents, and penetration; and he would bring us mighty credit, and solid gain, too, by being won over to the service.

Buck. Penetration, you say! And yet he is not wise enough to escape the tricks of a kidnapper. Don't be angry, Craigengelt! You know you will not fight, so leave your hilt in peace, and tell me how you drew this Ravenswood into your confidence.

Craig. By flattering his love of vengeance, my Bucklaw. The present owner of these lands—Sir William Ashton, the Lord-Keeper, now so high in power in our troubled government of Scotland—enveloped the late Lord Ravenswood (the Master's father) in the subtlest legal toils, wrenched from him house, castle, and estates, bit by bit, until nought was left him but the one ruined tower of Wolf's Crag. Then he, Allan of Ravenswood, died, ruined, and broken-hearted, and left to his son Edgar a legacy of bitter hatred and deadly vengeance. And I have watched, and struck while Edgar's temper was red-hot with a sense of injury and wrong.

Buck. You are still obscure, my worthy Machiavel.

Craig. You don't see? On his return to his native soil, for the first time since his father's death, the Master of Ravenswood now goes to expostulate, as *he* says, with his foe, Sir William Ashton. Expostulate!! ha, ha! *I* say, that when they next meet the Master will kill Sir William Ashton! I have read it in his fiery eye. Scotland will then be too hot to hold him. The Pretender will gain a gallant soldier, and hey for France with our recruit!

Buck. If he put a bullet through the Lord-Keeper's brains I am content for one. So far so good! But no half confidences, my would-be cunning Craigengelt. I haven't studied woodcraft all my life without acquiring a quick ear and a sharp eye. I know there's more in this than the Master of Ravenswood. I had scent of your meeting with those secret envoys last night. They were no Jacobites from France.

Craig. You are a sharper fellow than I thought you, my Bucklaw. The Jacobite party in the Scottish Government have had secret information from——

Buck. Some arrant spy——

Craig. From myself.

Buck. I said so. (*Crosses to* L.)

Craig. (*suppressing his anger*). Information, I repeat, of the likely issue of this fray between young Ravenswood and the despoiler of his lands. If the Lord Keeper dies, they lose a powerful adversary—confusion must ensue in the state. Athol (who is young Edgar's kinsman, and will aid his escape) may seize the reins of power, and the Jacobite standard may be unfurled in Scotland.

Buck. Hum! I begin to understand. (*Goes up* R.)

Craig. Hush! Whom have we here? (SIR WILLIAM ASHTON *and* LUCY ASHTON *appear among the trees behind.*) By heavens! the very man. Sir William Ashton! They cannot yet have met. We must not be seen. Come, Bucklaw, come.

Buck. (*looking towards the others*). A fair girl, by my faith!

Craig. It is as much as our lives are worth to be seen. (*Exit running.*)

Buck. Run, craven, run! Hayston of Bucklaw runs not for the devil himself, much less before an angel. (*Exit leisurely after* CRAIGENGELT.)

Lucy (*advancing* L. H. *with* SIR WILLIAM). Nay, father, I must have my will. I am mistress here to-day.

Sir W. (*smiling*). Are you not always mistress over your fond father's heart, my lovely Lucy?

Lucy. Always? (*In a low voice, looking around.*) No! not when my lady mother is by. She is sole mistress of you, of me, of all of us.

Sir W. Tut, tut, child! Your mother is shrewd, clever, and full of noble ambition for the honour of our house.

Lucy. I would she had less ambition! Might we not then be happier, father?

Sir W. My simple Lucy is no judge of such grave matters. Lady Ashton does seek to extend her influence—*my* influence, I mean—by the exercise of her fine judgment. (LUCY *sighs.*) She is severe—a little severe, I own—and haughty sometimes, and resolute; but she means well, Lucy, and she has my unbounded respect—affection, I should have said.

Lucy. Father, I am wrong, perhaps. But now she is away in London with brother Douglas, I feel as though the sun shone brighter, and the air were purer to breathe—as though my heart were free and revelled in its holiday.

Sir W. Lucy, you should not utter such thoughts.

Lucy. I owned that I was wrong, did I not? (*Playfully.*) But I am mistress now, at all events, and you shall do my will, and pay a kindly visit to poor old Alice Gray. Why, she is the sibyl of all our legendary lore; and although blind, poor soul, for twenty years gone by, she can look into your very heart.

Sir W. Was she not connected in some capacity with the family of the late lords of Ravenswood?

Lucy. She was, and speaks of former days with many a sigh.

Sir W. Yes! These people eat my bread and drink my cup, and then hate me and love my enemies.

Lucy. No, you are unjust to Alice, father. She loves to speak of the Ravenswood people, because she lived under them many years; but I am sure she is grateful to *you*. Come, if you must needs be thus ceremonious, I shall bring her to see you, and you shall lose your heart to the dear old woman—you shall, for Lucy's sake.

(*Exit into cottage*, L. H.)

Sir W. (*alone*). These Ravenswoods! these Ravenswoods! Whichever way I turn I hear their name. What avails me that their ancient fortunes are now wholly mine, when still this Edgar, this last of the race, is here on Scottish soil, and my mind is never free from dread of him? Can I forget with what determined obstinacy his father fought me to the last—repulsed all compromises, assailed my character, impugned my rights? I am never safe so long as he is here. But I have him in my power now. (*Takes paper from his pocket, goes to bench*, R. H.) The information set forth in this letter shall be despatched to the Privy Council at once. "The Master of Ravenswood was heard to utter seditious language at his father's funeral. The Master of Ravenswood has been seen to consort with suspected traitors." A heavy fine may be imposed—imprisonment, perhaps. He might be attainted of treason, and his life imperilled. But no—not that; I will not touch his life. But he must be provided for. Should his kinsman Athol's faction triumph, I might lose all I have gained. He promised this boy his interest, and might make a ready tool of him for the hands of those who seek our downfall. Offer him restitution? No! The letter shall be sent by the first messenger I can find.

NORMAN, *who has entered among the trees behind during this soliloquy, sings crossing to* R. H.): "The monk must arise when the matins ring," &c. &c.

Sir W. (*turning*). Ah, the Ranger! He will serve my turn. Norman, are you going to shoot us a piece of venison?

Nor. I am. Will it please your honour to see the sport?

Sir W. Not now.

Nor. No gentles come to see it nowadays. Ah! times are sadly changed. It was not so in Lord Ravenswood's time. Young Edgar, Master of Ravenswood now, was always by when a buck was to be shot. He had a firm hand and a steady eye. Puff! down went the deer at once. Ah! times are changed indeed.

Sir W. (*aside*). Again Ravenswood! (*Aloud*). Then the Master, as you call him, is as good a shooter as the world speaks him?

Nor. I warrant you. He can strike a dollar—(and faith, never was a buck pulled down but he gave me one)—out from between my finger and thumb at four-score yards, and what more would you have of eye, hand, lead, and gunpowder?

Sir W. (*uneasily*). Oh, no more could be wished certainly. (*Aside.*) And this man is my enemy; and at any moment fate may bring me within those four-score yards. (*Aloud.*) Well, my good Norman, you shall not be baulked in your woodcraft by me. We will have a chase this very eve—a hunt by torchlight—'twas your ancient practice, I think. See that the gentles of the neighbourhood be apprised. Here is a dollar as bright as any given you by Ravenswood. (*Gives money.*)

Nor. Your honour is the bad paymaster, who pays before the work is done. (*Pockets the money carelessly.*) Ravenswood pays otherwise. Does your honour need more?

Sir W. No, my good Norman, no! Good day to you, till the chase is up. (NORMAN *going.*) One word! (*Aside.*) I must not lose a moment's time. (*Aloud.*) This letter, my good Norman, it is a matter of much weight, and if you would, summon me a trusty messenger. (LUCY ASHTON *enters from the cottage*, R., *leading* ALICE, *blind, simply but cleanly dressed, with an erect form and inspired air.*) Ah! my daughter. (*Goes down*, R. H.)

Nor. A trusty messenger your honour said.

Sir W. Not now, my good Norman—not now! By-and-by I will arrange for this.

Nor. Your honour knows best. (*Sings going.*) "There's bucks and raes, &c. (*Exit*, R. U. E.)

Lucy. Here is my father, Alice. He is come purposely to visit you.

Alice (*proudly*). He is welcome.

Sir W. (*aside*). Hum! One would think 'tis *she* does *me* the courtesy. (*Aloud.*) You have long resided on this property, my good dame?

Alice. It is nigh on sixty years since I first knew Ravenswood.

Sir W. (*aside*). Always Ravenswood! (*Aloud.*) And you are attached to the place?

Alice. It is here I have drunk the cup of joy and sorrow which Heaven destined for me. It is here that I have wept for the fallen race of Ravenswood.

Sir W. (*aside*). Again! (*Aloud.*) Doubtless you have witnessed many changes here.

Alice. My faith has taught me to endure them, and yet—and yet—I had not thought to witness the downfall of the tree which overshadowed my poor dwelling.

Sir W. Well, well, my good dame! You are right to love those who once possessed estates now mine. I respect your gratitude. We must be friends—friends. Do you hear? (*Sits* R.)

Alice. Age makes no new friendships.

Lucy. Do not say that, Alice.

Sir W. I will see what can be done to improve your position.

Alice. You mean well, no doubt, my lord. But I have all I want, and more I cannot accept at your hands.

Sir W. You reject my good will?

Alice. No! I am grateful for it. I would I could repay you better than by the words now rising to my tongue.

Sir W. Woman, what do you mean?

Alice. I would warn you. Sir William Ashton, heed my warning well! You have driven matters hard with

Ravenswood. It is a fierce race, and there is danger in desperate men.

Sir W. Tush! It is the law that has driven matters hard; not I.

Alice. Desperate men will by times take the law into their own hands.

Lucy. Oh, Alice!

Sir W. (*alarmed*). Am I to understand from what you tell me that I have reason to dread personal violence from the Master of Ravenswood?

Alice. Heaven forbid that I should say so! Edgar is a brave and noble youth. But know you not the device of his house? The words are graven on your gates—the words are graven in your halls: "I BIDE MY TIME." Edgar is a Ravenswood, and mark me, Sir William Ashton! as a Ravenswood he bides his time. Beware of him!

Sir W. (*aside*). She harps aright upon my fears. (*Aloud.*) But, woman, the Master of Ravenswood is a man of honour.

Alice. And that honour he would avenge.

Sir W. He will not dare to avenge imaginary wrongs.

Alice. A Ravenswood fail in daring! You are not of the house, Sir William Ashton. (*Crossing to fountain.*)

Sir W. Enough of this! Lucy, we had best be gone.

Alice. One word more, my lord. My eyes can no longer see that spring. But my ears hear the trickling of the brook, my forehead feels the freshness of its water. (*Sitting on bench near fountain.*) That spring was tinged of yore with blood shed by a Ravenswood's passionate hand. Since those days the Mermaiden's Fountain has always proved fatal to the race. It is fatal to all who lord it in the Ravenswood Halls. Drink of it not—touch it not—approach not its very brink! Shun it as you would shun an evil destiny.

Lucy. She makes me shudder.

(*Crosses here and sits on bench,* R. H.)

Sir W. Woman! What do you mean?

Alice. Sir William Ashton, you have spoken me fair. In return I have warned you of your danger.

Sir W. With a raven's croak! Come, Lucy, come. Why are you dreaming there, my child? Your hand is cold. This woman has frightened you! Come!

Lucy (*shaking off her terror*). She meant well, my father.

Alice. I meant well.

Lucy. Good-bye, Alice! I know you love me.

(LUCY *breaks from her father and runs to* ALICE. *She takes the old woman's hand, almost kneeling before her.* ALICE *kisses her on the forehead.* LUCY *follows* SIR WILLIAM, *who leads her away, visibly impressed with fear.*)

Alice. Could I but weave the web of fate, so that no harm should touch that sweet girl! (*Rising, crosses to* R.) But there was a cold dark mist around her. (*She pauses in thought.*) Whence comes her danger? (*Another pause.*) That was a strange thought in my brain. (*She feels her way to her cottage, locks the door, and then moves with her staff towards* L. C., *behind the spring.*) Yes, this is the way the Master must surely come.

Enter BUCKLAW *and* CRAIGENGELT. CRAIGENGELT *looks round with fear.*

Buck. They are gone!

Craig. What's that figure there?

(*Points to* ALICE. ALICE *starts at the sound; stops and listens.* BUCKLAW *puts his finger to his lips. Both stand quietly.* ALICE *listens for a moment, then, hearing no further noise, pursues her way.*)

Alice (*going*). Yes, I feel it. The Master is coming, and he comes this way. (*Exit in front of the spring,* L. H.)

Buck. (R.). The Master coming, said the old dame? But the Master does *not* come, and we are cooling our heels here in vain.

Craig. (L.). Should he fail us, we may get into a confounded scrape. We had better look to our horses.

Buck. I thought the Master was a bolder fellow than to lose such a fine occasion of ridding himself of a foe.

(*Sits* R.)

Craig. 'Tis rank cowardice.

Buck. You ought to know; for you have a good taste of the quality yourself.

Craig. (*angry*). Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw!

Buck. Peace, man, keep your acting for those who are not behind the scenes as I am (*laughs*). (*Cries of terror without.*) Hah, what was that? Look out Craigengelt

Craig. I—I—I haven't got my sight clear *just* now. I can't—should they be cries of pursuit, we had better take to our heels,

Buck. Pshaw! you are as easily scared as a wild goose.

Craig. You'll bear me witness *I* didn't set the Master on. (*Cries without.*)

Buck. (*who has gone up*). Hollo! 'tis one of the wild cattle, of which that fellow spoke, pursuing Sir William Ashton and that lovely girl! The Lord Keeper lost! and Ravenswood's work is done by a mad bull.

Craig. Good Lord! the beast may come this way. (*Trembles. A shot without.*) Ah!

(*He falls with his face to the ground.*)

Enter EDGAR RAVENSWOOD *hastily with a gun in his hand.*

Edg. (C.). Dead!

Buck. (R).. Dead?

Craig. (L.). Dead!!

Buck. You have killed him! Hurrah! There is an end of the Lord Keeper. (SIR WILLIAM ASHTON *staggers in* R. U. E., *bearing* LUCY, *who has fainted*). Good Heavens, 'tis he! alive.

(*Hides himself behind a tree.* SIR WILLIAM ASHTON *lays* LUCY *down near the spring. He then runs to the cottage, knocks at the door, amd tries to open it.*)

Sir William (*sees* EDGAR). Ah! it is you, sir, who shot down the infuriated animal at that moment of deadly peril; you who have saved my life—far more, who have saved the life of my beloved daughter! Words are poor to express my heartfelt thanks. But she—she is still

fainting. I must seek assistance to convey her home. Will her generous protector watch by her side while I—(EDGAR *bows*)—again my thanks! I will return immediately. (*Hurries out*, R.)

(EDGAR *takes* LUCY *in his arms so as to reach the water of the spring, which he scoops up with his hands, and sprinkles on her forehead.*)

Buck. (*advancing*). What have you done?

Edg. (*occupied with* LUCY). Nothing.

Buck. I had not expected this forbearance at the hand of the Master of Ravenswood.

Edg. (*as before*). What Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw expected, is of scant importance to me.

Craig. (*looking up*). And here we have been risking our necks on your behalf; and you desert your friends.

Edg. Friends! (*Laughs scornfully.*)

Craig. After all the trouble, expense, and danger, *we* have incurred!

Edg. For your trouble, I am sorry. For your expense, here take my purse, and pay yourself according to your conscience.

(*He takes out a purse, and flings it on the ground, still occupied with* LUCY.)

Buck. (*to* CRAIGENGELT, *who clutches at the purse*). Your fingers seem to itch for that same piece of network, Craigengelt. But if they venture to close upon it, I'll chop them off with my whinger. As for the Master of Ravenswood, I have had a little more of his insolence than I can well digest, and——

Edg. (*occupied with* LUCY). She breathes more deeply. She opens her eyes.

Buck. Hum! I abstain, as a gentleman, from settling affairs of this nature before a lady. But I know the road to Wolf's Crag; and the Master of Ravenswood shall not escape me. Let him beware of that. (*Exit hastily.*)

Craig. (*vapouring*). No! the Master of Ravenswood shall not escape us—(*aside*)—and why his money should, devil fetch me, if I can see.

(*Looks after* BUCKLAW, *then at* EDGAR, *snatches up the purse, and exit hastily.*)

Lucy (*opening her eyes and shuddering*). That terrible animal! My father! my father! Where is my father?

Edg. Sir William is safe—perfectly safe; he will be here instantly. Do not make yourself anxious on his account. Fate has singularly preserved him.

Lucy. Oh, sir, it must have been you who, under Heaven, preserved both him and me!

Edg. It may be that Heaven has this day protected him through a guardian angel. (*Looking at her.*)

Lucy. Oh, believe me, sir, he will be grateful—eternally grateful—if you will only permit him to pay you his thanks, and to know your name.

Edg. Sir William Ashton will know my name quite soon enough, madam, for any pleasure it is likely to afford him.

Lucy. Oh, you mistake him—you do not know him. (*Rising up.*) Ah, see he is here.

Enter SIR WILLIAM *with* HENRY ASHTON, NORMAN, *and other Foresters, shortly after old* ALICE.

Hen. (*running in*). Lucy! My dear Lucy! You are safe—you are well. Oh, my poor, dear sister!

Sir W. My child; you are recovered?

Hen. If I had only had that wild bull within reach of my cross-bow!

Sir W. Fortunately, my forward boy, this gentleman was within shot.

Lucy. And saved your father, Henry, and your sister.

Hen. (*running to* EDGAR, L.C.). What a fine fellow you are, sir; give me your hand.

(*He looks* EDGAR *in the face and recoils before him.*)

Sir W. Why do you not thank our preserver, Henry?

Hen. (*creeping to his sister*). I am afraid.

Sir W. 'Tis not your wont, goose, to be so shy.

Hen. (*hiding behind* LUCY, *and whispering to her*). He is so dreadfully like the weird old picture of Sir Malise

Ravenswood in the hall! What if he is come to say in a hollow voice, "I bide my time"? (LUCY *shudders also.*)

Sir W. Let me assure this gentleman of the gratitude of the Lord Keeper for the greatest service which one man ever rendered to another. He will, I am sure, permit me to request——

Edg. Request nothing of me, my lord. I am the Master of Ravenswood. (*Bows to* LUCY, *and exit* L.)

Sir W. The Master of Ravenswood. Hasten after him. Stop him, Norman! Let me speak to him for a single moment! (*Exit* NORMAN *and Hunters* L. U. E.) He had me in his grasp, and yet he spared me; he even saved my life! I see other means to disarm his wrath, and hold him in my power. (*To* NORMAN, *who returns. Two Hunters remain on platform behind fountain.*) How now—what did he say?

Nor. He just said he wouldn't come back.

Sir W. He said more, sir. I insist on knowing what it was.

Nor. If you will have it, you must. Tell Sir William Ashton, he said, then, that the next time he and I foregather, he'll not be so blithe of our meeting as our parting.

(*Exit, with* HENRY L. *Enter* ALICE.)

Sir W. (*to himself*). The letter to the Privy Council shall not go. (*Tears the letter in half, and puts it up again.*)

Lucy (*going to* ALICE). Alice. He, your old Master's son, Edgar of Ravenswood. I have seen him. He has saved my life.

Alice. (*taking her in her arms*). She is cold as death. There is water on her cheek—water on her neck—water from the fatal spring, that once ran red. Ah, woe!

TABLEAU. THE SCENE CLOSES.

SCENE II.—*Exterior of the Tower of Wolf's Crag Ramparts. The old Tower* R. *A low practicable gate with wicket. A narrow window with light.*

BUCKLAW *enters, walking up and down as if waiting.*

Buck. Humph! 'tis desolate enough, this same dilapidated tower of Wolf's Crag! A pretty nest to house a proud bird of such ancient plumage! Poor devil!—pshaw! I am not here to pity him! He has treated us most scurvily —foully insulted us. And if I failed to have satisfaction for the injury, I should have no better blood in my veins than Craigengelt has. He tarries long. And the night air is biting cold on this same dreary crag. But he *must* come; he has no other hole for shelter.

Enter EDGAR RAVENSWOOD. *He starts with some surprise on seeing* BUCKLAW.

Edg. You here, sir! You do me honour.

Buck. That remains to be seen, Master of Ravenswood. I am no Craigengelt, whose life is too precious to risk. I am Frank Hayston of Bucklaw: and no man injures me by word, deed, sign, or look; but he must render me an account of it.

Edg. (*calmly*). I have no quarrel with you, sir; and I desire none. Our roads homeward, as well as our roads through life, lie in different directions. There is no occasion for our crossing each other.

Buck. By Heaven! but I say there is, sir! If you did not insult me just now, you insulted my companion, and no man shall insult my companion while he is in my company.

Edg. You should choose your company better, sir, or you are like to have much work in your capacity of their champion. Go home, sir. Sleep, and have more reason in your wrath to-morrow.

Buck. You have mistaken your man, Master. High airs shall not carry it off thus. Unless you retract your insult,

or name a place of meeting, you must here undergo both the hard word and the hard blow. (*Gesture.*)

Edg. (*calmly*). Neither will be necessary. I have done what I could to avoid an affair with you. If you are serious, this place will serve as well as any other.

Buck. I always thought you were a pretty man. I should be sorry to report you otherwise.

Edg. You shall have no reason, sir.

(*Both draw.* BUCKLAW *fights with evident irritation,* EDGAR *with the utmost coolness. At length,* BUCKLAW, *in his angry haste, slips and falls.* EDGAR *has his sword on* BUCKLAW'S *breast.*)

Edg. Take your life, sir, and mend it if you can.

Buck. (*rising slowly*). It will be but a cobbled piece of work, I fear, Master. I thank you for my life. There is my hand. I bear you no ill will, either for my bad luck, or your better swordsmanship.

Edg. (*after a pause, giving his hand*). Bucklaw, you are a generous fellow, and I have done you wrong and I am sorry for it.

Buck. (*cheerfully*). This is more than I expected of you, Master. Men say you are slow to retract your own expressions.

Edg. Men say right—when I have well considered them.

Buck. I would fain ask you a question, Master. What, in the name of old Satan, could have made a man like you, who stand so high on your reputation, draw together with such a rogue as Craigengelt and such a—scapegrace as folks call Bucklaw?

Edg. Simply because I was desperate; and I sought desperate associates.

Buck. What, then, made you break off with us?

Edg. I have changed my mind and renounced my enterprise—at all events for the present.

Buck. It must have been a rare motive that could induce a gentleman to forego his just revenge, and forego bringing down his deadliest foe. (*Gesture of shooting.*)

Edg. I deny the purpose; on my honour I had no such intention. I meant but to confront my oppressor, upbraid him with his tyranny, shake his soul within him——.

Buck. Yes, and he would have cried for help, and you would have shaken his soul out of him.

Edg. Remember the provocation! An ancient house destroyed; an affectionate father murdered. Why, in our old Scottish days, he that sat quiet under such wrongs, would have been held neither fit to back a friend nor face a foe.

Buck. Faith, Master, I am glad to see that the Devil deals as cunningly with other folks as he deals with me. Whenever I am about to commit any folly, he persuades me that it is the most necessary, gallant, gentlemanlike thing on earth. And you might have been a murder—I crave your pardon, a homicide—out of pure respect for your father's memory.

Edg. (*starts painfully after a pause*). There is more sense in your language, Bucklaw, than might have been expected from your conduct. It is past!—What is your purpose now?

Buck. Faith, I scarce can tell. Matters seem to have gone ill with us. The hue and cry is sure to be up soon; and to the best of my knowledge of my valiant Craigengelt, he will ere this have taken to horse, and away, utterly regardless of his beloved friend here present.

Edg. Bide then a while with me, here, at Wolf's Crag. There are places in the old Tower, where you might be hidden safely, were a thousand men to seek you.

Buck. You are a bold man to receive me, Master; and I were a churl not to accept.

Edg. Welcome to Wolf's Crag, then!—though, by my troth, all welcome which comes not from my heart will be a cold one. I can promise little more, in my present poverty, than the shelter of a roof. My last flask of wine was drunk at my poor father's funeral.

Buck. Ugh! You should not drink up the last flask at a dirge. There is ill luck in that.

Edg. There is ill luck in whatever belongs to me. (*Knocks loudly at the low gate.*) There (*points to the right*) sits the only male domestic that remains to the House of Ravenswood. (*Knocks again.*) Caleb! Caleb Balderstone! Open, open! (*Knocks.*) The old man must have fallen into some fit, or have departed altogether. My noise would wake the Seven Sleepers.

(CALEB BALDERSTONE *opens the wicket in the gate cautiously.*)

Cal. Master! Master of Ravenswood, is that you?

Edg. It is I, Caleb. Open the door quickly.

Cal. But is it really you in very blood and body? I would sooner face fifty devils than my master's ghost.

Edg. It is I, you old fool—in bodily shape and alive, save that I am half dead with cold.

Cal. Are you wholly sure that you are a man of mould?

Buck. Were *I* near you, my ancient friend, I would give you sufficient proof of *my* bodily condition.

Edg. (*soothingly*). Come, come! Open the gate, my good Caleb.

(CALEB *opens the door cautiously, then peeps out.*)

Cal. Is it you, my dear master? Is it you yourself?

Edg. Aye, and Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw too.

Cal. And with Bucklaw, too! (*Calling back into gate.*) Mysie, Mysie, woman! stir, for the dear life, and get the fire mended. Take the old three-legged stool, or anything that's readier, to make a blaze. (*To* EDGAR.) You would have been received as best conforms your rank, my lord, but that I little expected to see you again so soon.

Edg. I am sorry, Caleb, to put you to any shifts.

Cal. Shifts, my good lord! shifts? No, that could not be! (*Calling back.*) Mysie, kill the brood-hen, without thinking of it twice. (*Aloud to* BUCKLAW.) Not that this is our best dwelling, Bucklaw, among all the castles of the Lords of Ravenswood, but only, so to say, a place of refuge in troublous times. (*Calling back.*) Wring her wizen at once, Mysie.

Edg. (*to* BUCKLAW). Come.

Cal. (*stopping him*). Nay, my lord, it shall ne'er be said the Lord of Ravenswood was not welcomed to his halls with due respect. Where are those lazy serving loons? (*Calling back.*) Here, John! William! Saunders! (*To* BUCKLAW.) The lads are gone out or sleeping. All goes wrong when the Master is away.

Edg. We should have little chance of service were we to wait for your imaginary serving-fellows, my poor Caleb.

Cal. (*low to* EDGAR). Whist, my lord! whist, for Heaven's sake! If you don't regard your own credit, think of mine! We shall have hard work to make a decent night of it, with all the lies I can tell.

Edg. Stand back, my good Caleb. I must show in my guest myself. (*Exit with* BUCKLAW *into the gate.*)

Cal. (*trying to stop them*). I cannot think of that, my lord—I cannot think of that; and the silver plate not on the board, nor the bonny silver sconces on the walls. Oh! the boy is wilful! wilful! not to let a faithful servitor tell a few lies, and for the credit of the house. Oh, these are awful times, when an honest man's lies are choked in his gizzard! (*Exit, following* L.)

SCENE III.—*The interior of Wolf's Crag. An old dilapidated hall. Entrance door at back. At back also an opening before a grated recess, in which stands the tomb of the late* LORD RAVENSWOOD. *Doors* L. *and* R., *the latter opening on a window. An old fireplace, a large table partially covered, and in the greatest confusion. Pitchers and flagons scattered about it. Broken plate and glasses on the floor. Seats thrown down. Tapestry* L. H.

Enter EDGAR RAVENSWOOD *with* BUCKLAW, R.

Edg. Comfort, Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, I cannot provide for you, for I have it not for myself. It is long since these walls have known it. (*Looks round and sighs.*)

Buck. Although there be signs, and to spare, of ancient cheer.

Edg. Cheer. Ay, of misplaced and most miserable cheer. Here still lie the remnants of the feast, which the pride of our house deemed necessary to celebrate the funeral rights of my murdered father. Well! This room was riotous when it should have been sad. It is a just retribution that it should now be sad when I would find it—for your sake—cheerful.

Buck. No fear for me, Master. If I have a hot head, I have a merry heart.

Edg. Were I disposed to jest, I, too, could be diverted by the efforts of my poor faithful Caleb, to represent my wretched fortunes as though they still existed in their ancient splendour, and I could laugh at the faithful old rogue's expedients for the credit of the family. Sooth to say, Bucklaw, shelter and safety are all I can promise you.

Buck. Excellent matters, both! And with a mouthful of food and wine, positively all I can require to-night.

Cal. (*without*). Just make the best of it, woman—just make the best of it!

Edg. I hear the matter in discussion between Caleb and old Mysie. Poor old Balderstone is somewhat deaf, so that his asides, which he is so anxious to conceal, are generally overheard by the whole audience.

Cal. (*without*). But the old brood-hen, woman—the old brood-hen!

Mys. (*without*). She'll be as tough as leather.

Cal. Say you made a mistake. Never let the credit of the house suffer.

Buck. As tough as leather. Burr! (*Shudders.*) Well, Providence has granted me a good set of grinders.

Edg. Hush!

Enter CALEB BALDERSTONE, *followed by* MYSIE, *who bears some legs of old chairs as firewood.*

Cal. Your honours shall be entertained as best befits your rank.

Mys. (*curtseying*). Welcome back to Wolf's Crag, my lord.

Edg. Thanks, my good Mysie. Prepare your fire in yonder room, although we are scant of firewood, I perceive.

(*Exit* MYSIE, L.)

Cal. Scant of firewood! Your lordship pleases to jest. There is no lack of fuel in the halls of Ravenswood.

Buck. (*aside*). No, while there's an old three-legged stool there.

Edg. (*smiling*). Is there any chance of food, Caleb, my good friend?

Cal. Chance! chance, quotha! And in your lordship's house! Why, there's a wealth of fine poultry ready for the spit.

Buck. (*aside*). The old brood-hen. (*Aloud.*) Nay, my good fellow, if you have anything cold and a morsel of bread.

Cal. The best of bannocks; and for cold meat, all we have *is*—(*aside*)—cold enough. (*Aloud.*) Howbeit, most of the cold viands have been given to the poor. Nevertheless——

Edg. Enough, Caleb. Take this—(*produces money*)—and get what is necessary for the family.

Cal. (*aside to* EDGAR, *with pathos*). And this is all that is left?

Edg. All—for the present.

Cal. Your old serving-man would die rather than touch it. (*Aloud.*) Nay, my lord, keep back your hand. What honest man would refuse trust to Ravenswood! And there's the rents of your lordship's estates to be paid. The tenants are sadly in arrear, good lack. But I will trounce the rogues. There's money in plenty, my lord. Keep back your silver. (*Aside to* EDGAR.) It'll just do to make a show before company.

(MYSIE *has returned from the room and gone out*, R.)

Edg. Caleb, I intend to leave this country soon. I must leave it as an honest man. Pardon me, Bucklaw. This is my first return to this deserted house, since—(*pauses in*

deep emotion)—you will understand me—since my father was borne forth from the last of his ruined halls. (BUCKLAW *presses his hand.*) Thanks. That was his room.

(*Pointing* R. H. *Exit by tapestry,* L.)

Buck. Paugh! This is but dry work. I suppose, my old boy, you can contrive to find me a draught of ale?

Cal. I cannot presume just now to recommend our ale. There was an awful thunder, last week, has soured it. But such delicious water as is in the Tower well, you will seldom see, Bucklaw!

Buck. Water! Burr! But if your ale is bad, let me have a drink of wine.

Cal. Wine? We had enough wine to have floated a good ship a short time since. There was never lack of wine at Wolf's Crag But just now——

Buck. (*laughing*). There is none.

Cal. Nay, I have a good measure of the finest claret here. (*Takes the jugs aside.*) I've tilted the grounds of every butt in the old cellar; and there is about a pint: (*aloud*) here, sir. It's of the best of the best. (*Pretends to stumble and drops one jug*). Woeful mischance! if it is not all spilt! Mysie, woman, come and wipe up the good wine. But there's still a drop here. (*Offers the other jug.*) And if your honour will taste it——

Buck. Give here, man. (*Drinks, and makes a wry face.*) Bah! I should prefer the water after all.

Cal. Mysie, run to the well. Bucklaw would prefer the fine water. (*Knocking without,* R.) What is that knocking at the lower gate? If there are more visitors, we are clean ruined and undone. (*Knocking again*). They must be gentlefolks by the noise they make.

Buck. Don't you hear there is some one without?

Cal. Some *one* were ten too many. (*Calling.*) There is not a soul within.

Buck. Go to the gate, knave. (*Low thunder.*)

Cal. They are robbers, doubtless. I'll not open. Whoever they be, they'll all have mouths. (*Knocking.*)

Buck. Admit these importunate gentry. Robbers or no

robbers, the more the merrier, I say! And faith, there's not much to steal here.

Cal. (*indignant*). Not much to steal? And the rich family plate, and the jewels, and the gewgaws——

Buck. Go, I say! or those long ears of yours——

(*Gesture of cutting.*)

Cal. Oh, I shall be at my wits' ends for lies with them all! (*Exit*, R.)

Buck. Faith, I should have a sorry time of it in this dull hole without blither company. But caution, Bucklaw! The hue and cry is up like enough by this, and without being an absolute Craigengelt, it might be as well to reconnoitre.

(*Retires up, so as to be concealed by the great fireplace.*)

Enter CALEB, *alarmed*, L. H., *trying to keep back* RAMSAY, MELVILLE, *and* MURRAY, *who follow him.*

Cal. But I assure your honours that his lordship is away on a visit to his outlying castles and estates.

Ram. No matter, we will await the Master of Ravenswood's return

Cal. But when I protest to your honours, as I am a true and honest man, that the Master is absent for a week, a month, a year may be——

(*The three men turn and consult among themselves.*)

Buck. (*reconnoitring*). Whom have we here? Ramsay, Melville, Murray? Jacobites and staunch friends all. (*Advancing.*) Welcome to Wolf's Crag, gentlemen.

Ram. (*turning*). Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw!

Buck. In flesh and blood—as much as is left of them in these hard times. (*As* RAMSAY *and the others are about to speak.*) Hush! (*To* CALEB). These are friends of mine, Mr. Caleb Balderstone.

Cal. But as a true and honest man——

Buck. You'll take your truth and honesty into your bare kitchen.

Cal. Bare, quotha. There's always fire and food in plenty in the House of Ravenswood, (*Gesture of* BUCKLAW).

If they want sup or bit, there's no more than a salted herring apiece for them. Bnt I'll swear it's a holy fast in the calendar. (*Exit by tapestry*, L. H.)

Ram. How came you here, Bucklaw?

Buck. For shelter beneath the Master's roof.

Mel. And he away?

Buck. Hush! He is here. You'll get nothing out of him just now. He's gone clean daft. Renounced his vow of vengeance.

Ram. and the others. The traitor!

Buck. He has met Sir William Ashton, and instead of putting a bullet through his body has given him fair words.

Ram. Cursed mischance! We made sure that he would rid us of the Lord Keeper. By the Lord Keeper's death the Whig government in Scotland would have been overturned, and Athol might have secured the reins of power to hold them in trust for King James. And Ravenswood has thrown away so great a chance!——.

Buck. (*laughing*). For you!

Ram. And for himself too. On the Lord-Keeper's death, his estates would have been restored to him by Athol's influence, and his deed would have been applauded as an act of patriotism.

Buck. Stay! that's true. He is a glorious fellow, and I would fain do him a good turn. Suppose I acted for his advantage without his knowledge? (*To the others*). Why should not *we* rid our distracted state of this Lord Keeper? (*The envoys look at each other.*) We *could* do it.

Ram. But the risk.

(BUCKLAW *shrugs his shoulders.*)

Mel. And the means? The country is astir. There was hunting in the forest by torchlight as we came along.

Buck. So much the better. It is the Lord Keeper's chase. Let us join the hunting—cut him off from the others. I'm no woodsman not to know the trick—and then despatch him if he show a preference for so grand an exit; if not, kidnap him off to Holland in an old herring cask till affairs

are arranged to our liking. (*Thunder, wind, and rain.*) There is a storm a brewing, so much the better again. It may help us.

Ram. (*after consulting the others*). We'll try the chance.

Buck. Bravo! I'll do the Master a good turn in spite of himself (*ranting*):

> "When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay,
> 'Tis love commands, and glory leads the way."

(*Enter* CALEB.) Tell your Master, honest Caleb, if he misses me, that I am gone to repay the life I owe him.

(*Exit*, L. H., *with* RAMSAY, MELVILLE, *and* MURRAY. CALEB *follows them with alarmed gestures. At the same moment enter* EDGAR *from* L. *Storm begins to be heard without.*)

Edg. My sentiments towards Sir William Ashton are neither those of a feudal enemy nor of a true Christian. I cannot forgive him in the last character. I cannot follow out my vengeance in the first. Am I making a base composition between resentment against the father and some feeling of affection for the daughter? Is this all why I have just now cursed myself in my unquiet wandering between the pale moonlight and the red wood-fire? And yet—why may he not be better than I have thought him? And why may not his daughter?—But O, Lucy Ashton, Lucy Ashton! I must think of thee no more! (*Knocking at door in back.*) What is that? Visitors at this hour? (*Looking round*). And Bucklaw gone? Caleb! (*Enter* CALEB BALDERSTONE, L.). There are people knocking at the postern-gate.

Cal. Let them knock. We should be clean daft to admit more company. What would become of the credit of the house?

Edg. The credit of the house demands that it should be as hospitable as in its poverty it can be. (*Wind.*) The weather is foul without. (*Thunder.*) Hark! Open! Stay—where is Bucklaw?

Cal. Gone to repay the life he owes you, were his words.

Edg. Strange words! (*Knocking against door.*) Open without parley.

(CALEB *goes up unwillingly to open the door at back.* SIR WILLIAM ASHTON *and* LUCY *appear without* SIR WILLIAM *shrouds himself with his cloak*—LUCY *wearing a hunting mask of the period.* EDGAR, *at the sight of them, struts painfully. Storm and lightning.*)

Sir W. (*advancing with evident embarrassment and some alarm*). The storm must be our apology for this untimely intrusion on the Master of Ravenswood. By some untoward accident we have been cut off from the hunt.

Edg. (R. C.) Apologies are needless, sir. All that the unfortunate Tower of Wolf's Crag can afford is at the service of—of—(*pause*)—is freely at your service.

(*The others bow.*)

Cal. He's daft—clean daft! But the family shall lose no credit by his madness. (*Advancing.*) If I can serve up some slight refection for the lady—a glass of Tokay, or of old sack——

Edg. No more of this, pray, Caleb.

Cal. Nay; but if the lady should desire some nonsense of sweet things, or comfits——

Edg. Cease! Cease!

Cal. (*low to him*). Hold your tongue, for Heaven's sake, sir. If it's my pleasure to hazard my soul in telling lies for the honour of the family, it is no business of yours.

(*Exit,* R., *in obedience to an angry gesture from* EDGAR. *Pause of embarrassment.*)

Edg. (R.) You have nothing to fear, sir! This roof retains the means of giving protection, though not welcome. May I know who has thus highy honoured my poor dwelling? (*Pause.*) I perceive that Sir William Ashton is unwilling to announce himself in the Tower of Wolf's Crag.

Sir W. (L., *dropping his cloak*). I am obliged to you, Master of Ravenwood, for breaking the ice at once, when circumstances—unhappy circumstances—rendered self-introduction painful.

Edg. I am not, then, to consider the honour of this visit as purely accidental?

Sir W. It is an honour I have eagerly desired, but might never have obtained, save for the accident of the storm. My daughter and I are alike grateful for this opportunity of thanking the brave gentleman to whom she owes her life, and I mine. Lucy (*leading her towards* EDGAR), lay aside your mask, and thank the Master openly.

Lucy. If he will condescend to accept my thanks.

(*Unmasking.*)

(EDGAR, *after a struggle, advances and kisses her hand; as he does so, a flash of lightning followed by a heavy clap of thunder. All start.* EDGAR *looks up as if awe-stricken, and drops her hand.*)

Sir W. (*crossing to* EDGAR, *and clasps his hand*). Master of Ravenswood, I hope you understand the Christian law too well to have suffered the sun to set upon your anger; you will not refuse to hear my justification?

Lucy (*eagerly*). Oh, no, sir; you will not refuse to hear my father.

Edg. Madam!

Lucy. By my gratitude I beseech you!

Edg. I—I cannot resist your voice—I—I cannot resist your eyes. Sir William Ashton—(*gently disengaging his hand*)—even here—even under *this* roof—my wrath shall not survive the sun. (*Calling.*) Mysie!—(MYSIE *appears,* R.)—accompany Miss Ashton to that room, where she may rest in greater comfort.

(EDGAR *conducts* LUCY *to door,* L, *and is about to kiss her hand, but refrains.* LUCY *exit,* L. (*with* MYSIE) *looking back on* EDGAR. *All this very slowly.*)

Sir W. (*aside, watching them*). The hook is fixed. We will not strain the line too soon. Reserved, the privilege of slipping it loose, if we do not find the fish worth landing.

Edg. (*returning to him slowly and subdued*). I could have wished, my lord, that reference to the past should have

been made between us two, anywhere, rather than in the place of my father's death.

Sir W. (*putting cloak and hat down*). And I, too. The reference might have been very different, and great distress of mind might have been spared to your late father and to me (though my personal feelings are far less to the purpose here than his), if I had earnestly solicited an interview with him within these walls. (*Sits* L. *of table.*)

Edg. It is just to acknowledge that I have heard my father say you did propose it.

Sir W. I ought to have intreated and besought it, then he would have understood, as I beseech you to understand that on many points between us I only ascertained my rights at law, without the least intention of pressing them beyond the verge of equity.

Edg. My lord, what the law has given you, or has yet to give you, take. My father accepted, and I will accept, nothing from you as a favour.

Sir W. Favour! No, no, no. A right may be good in law, and yet a man of honour may not care to press it.

Edg. I am sorry for it, my lord.

Sir W. You speak like a young counsellor. Your spirit goes before your wit. Believe me, there are many things still to be settled between us on the most liberal principles. And, trust me, I am no foe to you, Master. Rash words, and two associates of yours have laid you under suspicion. You might have been denounced to the Privy Council.

Edg. It seems impossible that you can be in earnest?

Sir W. Innocence is very confident, and sometimes presumptuously so, though excusably. See! (*Giving him the letter to the Privy Council.*) Here is the Information to the Council. Judge for yourself. I have withheld it.

Edg. (*after examining the papers, takes his hand cordially and respectfully*). My lord—my friend. I ask your pardon for the injustice I have done you. Whilst I believed you to be my enemy, you were the protector of my person, and the vindicator of my character.

Sir W. (*calling*). Lucy! (LUCY *re-enters*, R. H.)

Edg. Miss Ashton, I have wronged your father, and you see me on my knee entreating his forgiveness.

Lucy (*weeping*). O joy, joy!

Sir W. Nay, dry your eyes, dear Lucy. Why should you weep because the Master is a generous and gallant soldier, while your father—though a lawyer—is discovered to be a fair and honourable man?

(*Noise without and violent knocking.*)

Edg. What may this mean?

Enter CALEB *hurriedly*, R., *and* MYSIE *fastens door*, L. U. E.

Cal. A party of men without, demanding my Lord Keeper.

Sir W. (*alarmed*). Treachery!

Lucy. Danger threatening my father!

Edg. Beneath my roof he is safe, if my heart's blood can protect him. (*Noise again.*)

Cal. (*up behind*). They are breaking down the door, and those carpenter boors have never mended it. The Lord Keeper's people are dispersed in the neighbourhood seeking him. Mysie! run up the tower, woman! and sound the alarm bell! Ne'er spare your old heels or your old breath.

(*Exit* MYSIE, R.)

Edg. Yes, the signal may be heard by some of your retinue. But heard or not heard, no one shall defend you within these walls but I. (*Rushes up.*)

Lucy. Oh, stay, sir, stay! Rush not upon death.

Edg. Sweet girl, fear nothing!

(*As* EDGAR *goes up*, LUCY *clings to her father, the door at back is burst open with a crash, and* BUCKLAW, RAMSAY, MURRAY, MELVILLE *rush in. Alarm bell above.*)

Buck. and the others. The Lord Keeper—we want the Lord Keeper! Ah! he is here. We have got him.

Edg. (*throwing himself before them*). Dogs! If a drop of Sir William Ashton's blood be shed upon this hearth of mine, the blood of every one of you shall stain it red for ever!

Buck. Master! are you mad? We are banded together for your sake.

Edg. Perish the thought! Back! or you die.

(BUCKLAW *advances. After a pass or two* EDGAR *grapples with him, and flings him to the ground. As the Envoys advance with drawn swords, shouts and lights without,* RAMSAY, MELVILLE, *and* MURRAY *fly by,* R.)

Buck. Ravenswood, I have more than repaid the life I owed you. Henceforth you owe *me* a life.

(*Follows,* R. *others.*)

(*Gentlefolks from the hunt, huntsmen, &c., stream in behind.* SIR WILLIAM ASHTON *is hanging over the chair into which* LUCY *has fallen.*)

Sir W. Master of Ravenswood, you have twice saved me. Will my preserver honour the walls of Ravenswood Castle by coming there in trust and friendship as my guest?

Edg. (*looks at* LUCY, *then bows in acquiescence. Aside*). Oh! spirit of my father! If thou canst look down upon her, thou wilt forgive me!

Cal. (*apart*). Ravenswood and Ashton hand-in-hand! Deeper and deeper falls the shadow on the house!

TABLEAU. CURTAIN.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Forest.* (*Same as Act I., Scene I.*) CALEB BALDERSTONE *wandering up and down sadly.*

Cal. I am an old madman, may be; I would I were so sure I am. 'Twould be a comfort to me. Ravenswood a guest in the dwelling of his father's bitterest foe! It can be for no good, unless, indeed, he's gone to win that sweet young lassie as his bride, with the castle and proud lands of Ravenswood as her bounden dowry. Yet, then, that awesome prophecy! I cannot drive it from my poor old head, thump it as I will! I must have speech with my young lord. That ranger loon who took my message to the Master tarries long. Ah! he returns at last, the snail-faced fellow. (*Enter* NORMAN.) Say! will he come?

Nor. He follows close upon my footsteps.

Cal. Heaven be praised!

Nor. You seem in a sorry plight. (*Exit.*)

Cal. Never you mind *me*. Ah! if *my* plight were all.

Enter EDGAR RAVENSWOOD, R.

Edg. Now, my good Caleb, why this strange message—this urgent demand to have speech with me at once?

Cal. Oh! Mr. Edgar, I am your servant, and it ill-becomes me to speak. But I am an old domestic, have served your father and your grandsire.

Edg. And what of all this, my trusty Caleb? To what tends this mysterious prologue?

Cal. My lord, my lord! this is no jesting matter. It is for the credit of the family that I open my mouth, and for your weal.

Edg. Once more, what would you say?

Cal. What your own conscience tells you. It is not for

your dead father's son to be neighbouring and consorting with your dead father's enemies.

Edg. No more! (*Crosses to* L.)

Cal. Nay! it is my duty to speak, and speak I must. If it be for an alliance with that sweet winsome creature, to get you back your own again—well, there might then be some credit to our house; but——

Edg. (*laughing constrainedly*). Why, now, you go further than I do, Caleb. You marry me into a family that you will not allow me to visit. How is this? (CALEB *sighs deeply.*) And you look as pale as death besides. (*Sits* L. C.)

Cal. Oh, sir! There is an ancient prophecy touching your house. Its words will prove too true if you tarry in Ravenswood this day. I have never repeated the lines to living mortal.

Edg. Truce to your nonsense, and let me hear the doggerel.

Cal. "When the last Lord of Ravenswood to Ravenswood shall ride
To woo a dead maiden to be his bride,
He shall find his last bed in the Kelpies' Flow
And his name shall be lost for evermo'e."

Edg. I know the Kelpies' Flow well enough, if you mean the quicksand at the foot of Wolf's Crag; but I shall never make my bed there, and I do not go to Ravenswood to seek a bride, dead or alive. (*Rises. Sees* LUCY ASHTON, L.) Lucy! No more of this, Caleb. Now, as you value my esteem, old man, go, go! There, I would not be harsh. (*Holds out his hand.* CALEB *exit, after kissing the hand with reverence.*)

Enter LUCY *and* HENRY, L.

Hen. (*who holds a cross-bow*). How fractious you are, Lucy! You won't come with me to the stable to see my new pony. And now, forsooth, I am not to leave you to shoot a bit of game with Norman!

Lucy. Did not father tell you to bide near me?

Hen. Yes. Father is as cross as you are; but when mamma comes home she'll claw up both your mittens.

Lucy. Hush your impertinence, you forward boy!

Hen. See; here is the Master. You won't need me now.

Lucy (*low to him*). Don't leave me Henry. (*Aside.*) Now less than ever.

Hen. (*aside*). Only let me spy Norman, and won't I be off, though! (*Goes up.*)

Edg. It is a pleasant chance that brings me to Miss Ashton in her rambles.

Lucy (*bows embarrassed.*) And yet I feel it must be a pain to you, sir, to visit scenes—so altered now.

Edg. The sympathy of Miss Ashton would be a requital for heavier misfortunes than mine.

Lucy (*as before*). I cannot suppose that any poor feeling on my part could have such weight.

Edg. And yet Lucy—Miss Ashton! (*Checks himself.*) (*Aside.*) What would I do—speak words of love to Ashton's daughter?

(LUCY *has drawn away in embarrassment. At the same moment enter* ALICE *from cottage.* LUCY *moves towards her, as if relieved by her presence.*)

Alice. I hear your step, Miss Ashton; but the gentleman who attends you is not my lord, your father.

(EDGAR *walks up and down stage quickly.*)

Lucy. Why should you think so, Alice?

Alice. The hearing of the blind is sharpened by the slightest sounds. The pace of age is timid and cautious, the step beside you is the hasty and determined step of youth. Could I give credit for so strange a thought, I should say it is the step of a Ravenswood.

Edg. (*advancing*). I am indeed the son of your old master, Alice.

Alice (*with almost a scream of surprise*). You? You? The Master of Ravenswood in this place, and thus accompanied? I cannot believe it. Let me pass my old hand over your face, that my touch may bear witness to my ears. (EDGAR *sits on the bench.* ALICE *touches his features with a trembling hand.*) It is indeed the face as well as the

voice of Ravenswood! Master, what do you in the enemy's domain, and in company with his child?

Lucy (*expostulating*). Alice! The Master is on a visit to my father.

Alice. Ravenswood a guest in Ashton's house! But the ways of Heaven are not like our ways, and its judgments are brought about by means beyond our fathoming. Hearken! young man. Your fathers were implacable, but they were honourable foes! They sought not to ruin their enemies under the mask of hospitality. Why do your steps move in the same path—your voice sound in the same chord and tune as Lucy Ashton's? Young man! if you cherish a revenge, unworthy of your name——

Edg. (*sternly*). Be silent, woman! Is it the devil that prompts you? This lady has not on earth a surer friend.

Alice (*in altered tone*). And is this even so? Then Heaven help you both!

Lucy (*going up to* ALICE). Forbear, my good Alice! Such strange mysterious words would almost make one think you——

Alice. Think what, Lucy Ashton?

Hen. (*who has crept up to* EDGAR *during the last words, whispering to him*). Why, that she is a witch who ought to be bound at the stake.

Alice. What's that you say? Untoward boy! That I am a witch who ought to suffer like other murdered wretches! (*Rises and comes down.*)

Hen. (*as before*). Hear to that now! and me whispering lower than a wren cheeps.

Alice (*excited*). If the usurer, and the oppressor, and the remover of ancient landmarks, and the subverter of ancient houses, were to be burned at the same stake with me, I should cry, "Light the fire, in Heaven's name!"

Lucy. This is dreadful! I have never seen her thus. Come with me, Henry. She would doubtless speak with the Master alone. (*Goes up to back with* HENRY. *Exit.*)

Alice. Edgar Ravenswood! It is just that a stranger should be offended with my speech; but are *you*, too, angry with me for my love?

Edg. I am not angry, Alice; surprised only, at suspicions as unfounded as offensive.

Alice. Truth is ever offensive; but unfounded?—no.

Edg. I tell you, dame, most groundless.

Alice. Then the world has changed its wont. When did a Ravenswood seek the house of his enemy, but with the purpose of revenge? And hither are *you* come, Edgar Ravenswood, either in fatal anger, or in still more fatal love.

Edg. (*embarrassed*). In neither. No!

Alice. You hesitate! And it is for this you tarry by the Mermaid's Well, the spring so fatal to the race of Ravenswood, and never so likely to verify its prediction as this day. (*Sits* L. C.)

Edg. You drive me to madness, Alice, by these foolish fancies.

Alice. My thoughts are my own; and my inward vision sees more clearly than ever saw my outward eyes. (*Reaches out her hand.* EDGAR *goes to her.*) Are you prepared to sit the lowest at the board, once your father's own: to live on the despoiler's bounty? Master of Ravenswood, I am the oldest servant of your house, but I would rather see you shrouded and coffined.

Edg. I will think on what you have said, Alice. You mean truly and faithfully by me, though you urge your privilege somewhat too far. Farewell. If Heaven affords me better means, I may still contribute to your comfort.

(*Tries to place a piece of gold in hand of* ALICE.)

Alice. Gold to repay my love? No! (*In repelling the gold* ALICE *causes the piece to fall.* EDGAR *is about to stoop for it.*) Let it remain, and look on it. That piece of gold is an emblem of her you love! She is as precious, I grant; but you must stoop, even to abasement, before you can win her. (*Rises.*)

Edg. Alice, there is more in this than you would have me know. You are no fool to start at shadows, like old Caleb Balderstone. Tell me distinctly where my danger lies, if danger there should be around me. (*Comes down.*)

Edg. (*aside.*) I cannot leave her thus. In courtesy I should apprize her of my departure from the castle.

(*Moves towards* LUCY.)

Lucy (*embarrassed*). I love this spot. The bubbling murmur of the clear fountain, the waving of the trees, the profusion of grass and wild flowers make it like a scene of romance to me. I think I have heard, too, that it is connected with the legendary lore I love so well?

Edg. It has been thought a fatal spot to our house, and I may well term it so; for it was here I first saw Miss Ashton, and it is here I must take my leave of her for ever.

Lucy (*startled*). Take leave! Let me hope, Master, that having won your friendship hardly, we shall not lose it lightly.

Edg. Lose it, Miss Ashton! No, wherever my fortune calls me—whatever she inflicts upon me—it is your friend, your friend for life who acts and suffers; but there is a fate on me, and I must go or I shall add the ruin of others to my own.

Lucy (*placing her hand on his cloak*). No, no; you must not part from us. My father is powerful. Do not go till you see what his gratitude will do for you. He is already labouring in your behalf. (*Coming down.*)

Edg. It may be as you believe; but to my own exertions, and not to your father's power, Miss Ashton, I must own success. A sword and a cloak, a bold heart, and a determined hand must be my aids in life. Farewell! (LUCY *bursts into tears.* EDGAR *takes her hand.*) Forgive me! I am too rude—too rough, too intractable—to deal with one so soft and gentle as you. Forget that ever so stern a vision crossed your path of life! Let me pursue mine! I can meet no worse misfortune now than that which takes me from your side. (LUCY *still weeps.*) Her tears have fallen on my hand; her tears fall heavy on my heart, Miss Ashton. Lucy, now more than ever must I wrench myself away. Honour commands me! (LUCY *looks up inquiring.*) Yes, honour; for—for—the words *will* gush forth in spite of better reason; for I love you, Lucy!

Edg. (*aside.*) I cannot leave her thus. In courtesy I should apprize her of my departure from the castle.
(*Moves towards* LUCY.)

Lucy (*embarrassed*). I love this spot. The bubbling murmur of the clear fountain, the waving of the trees, the profusion of grass and wild flowers make it like a scene of romance to me. I think I have heard, too, that it is connected with the legendary lore I love so well?

Edg. It has been thought a fatal spot to our house, and I may well term it so; for it was here I first saw Miss Ashton, and it is here I must take my leave of her for ever.

Lucy (*startled*). Take leave! Let me hope, Master, that having won your friendship hardly, we shall not lose it lightly.

Edg. Lose it, Miss Ashton! No, wherever my fortune calls me—whatever she inflicts upon me—it is your friend, your friend for life who acts and suffers; but there is a fate on me, and I must go or I shall add the ruin of others to my own.

Lucy (*placing her hand on his cloak*). No, no; you must not part from us. My father is powerful. Do not go till you see what his gratitude will do for you. He is already labouring in your behalf. (*Coming down.*)

Edg. It may be as you believe; but to my own exertions, and not to your father's power, Miss Ashton, I must own success. A sword and a cloak, a bold heart, and a determined hand must be my aids in life. Farewell! (LUCY *bursts into tears.* EDGAR *takes her hand.*) Forgive me! I am too rude—too rough, too intractable—to deal with one so soft and gentle as you. Forget that ever so stern a vision crossed your path of life! Let me pursue mine! I can meet no worse misfortune now than that which takes me from your side. (LUCY *still weeps.*) Her tears have fallen on my hand; her tears fall heavy on my heart, Miss Ashton. Lucy, now more than ever must I wrench myself away. Honour commands me! (LUCY *looks up inquiring.*) Yes, honour; for—for—the words *will* gush forth in spite of better reason; for I love you, Lucy!

Lucy (*with deep emotion*). He loves me!

Edg. (*kneeling*). Yes! I love you, Lucy, and must tear myself away.

Lucy. When I too—when I—when I love you, Edgar?
(*Hides her face in her hands.*)

Edg. (*flinging himself down again*). O! Rapture! rapture!

Lucy (*without looking up*). And you go from me?

Edg. No! No, Lucy. Come what may, I am thine—heart and soul; come what may, I will not leave thee now! I will never leave thee now!

Lucy (*low*). I am thine also—heart and soul!

Edg. Then, here in the face of Heaven, my beloved one, I pledge thee my faith and truth; here in the face of Heaven I swear to love thee through all dangers and reverses—thee and only thee as long as life shall last.

Lucy. As my heart is thine, so too are my faith and truth. I swear as long as life shall last!

Edg. (*holds her in his arms and kisses her*). Have not your own dear lips assured me of your love? What were vows to weigh in the balance with those precious words? (*Gesture of* LUCY). All vows—all symbols, are unneeded by hearts that love like ours. Yet stay! This piece of gold was deemed an emblem of yourself—and yet how feeble to express thy peerless worth! It shall be shared between us. (*They break the piece of gold together.*) This half shall never leave my bosom.

Lucy (*taking the other.*) And never shall this half leave my bosom until you, Edgar Ravenswood, ask me to resign it to you. And while I wear it never shall that heart acknowledge any other, other love than yours, or any other lord than you.

Edg. Death alone shall change us.

Lucy (*falling on his neck*). Death alone!

(*They embrace. At the same moment a raven, shot by an arrow, falls on* LUCY *from a tree above.* LUCY *screams in terror and clings to* EDGAR. HENRY ASHTON *runs in joyously with his crossbow.*)

Hen. (*laughing*). Ah! ah! my pretty pair! I knew that I should startle you!

Edg. You have terrified your sister—and see!

(LUCY *shudders*)

Hen. And don't sulk me. 'Twas such a good shot!

Edg. How will you answer to me, Mr. Henry? Know you not that the ravens are all under the protection of the Lords of Ravenswood, and that to kill one in their presence is such ill luck that it deserves the stab?

Hen. That's what Norman said, and he said he never saw a raven sit still so near living folk. And so I crept on, and on, till I was within three score yards of him, and then whiz went the bolt, and—there he lies.

Enter SIR WILLIAM ASHTON *with an open letter in his hand followed by* NORMAN, *foresters, and servants.*

Sir W. It is well, that I find you all. You have lingered too long abroad. Lucy! Henry! return to the castle at once! I have just received a letter from Lady Ashton. Your mother will reach home shortly, with your brother Douglas, I know not how soon.

(*Goes up to give orders to the servants.*)

Lucy (*terrified*). My mother.

Hen. My mother! Good-bye *my* pleasant holidays.

Edg. (*going to* LUCY.) What does this sudden terror mean? What have you to fear, my Lucy?

Lucy (*holding his hand and looking in his face*). What ever may betide, beloved, I am yours to death!

Edg. I ask to know no more.

TABLEAU. CURTAIN DROPS TO RISE IMMEDIATELY.

SCENE. II.—*Rich Picture Gallery in* BUCKLAW'S *Residence.*

Enter CAPTAIN CRAIGENGELT *with a valet.*

Craig. Tell your Master, fellow, that it his intimate friend, Captain Craigengelt, who wishes to see him. Why

do you linger, and stare at me, scoundrel? Fly rascal, fly! and announce Captain Craig-en-gelt. (*Exit valet.*) Faith! the fellow might well gaff at me with all his eyes. The truth is, I am in a state of most woeful dilapidation. But I am not the man of parts I know myself to be, if Bucklaw does not repair the errors of Dame Fortune. His great aunt dead! peace to her old ashes! Her fortune in his hands and Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, Lord of the broad acres of Girninghame! I were a sorry player, could I not shuffle the old cards so as to win the trick with him. Aye, and use him, as an instrument, too, in my vengeance on that saucy fellow Ravenswood. Never while I have life shall I forget or forgive that proud villain's scorn.

(*Enter* BUCKLAW. *He is wholly altered in appearance: large wig, small elegant moustaches, and wears a rich dressing gown*).

Buck. So it is you, Craigengelt! You have keen scent for an old acquaintance, when fortune gives him a smart flavour.

Craig. Why—whom have we here?

Buck. What! You would scarcely have known me. Eh? The snake has thrown off his old skin, man, in the sun of prosperity.

Craig. You look like a true gentlemen as you always did, my Bucklaw, but——

Buck. I may have had my reasons for wiping out all traces of the Bucklaw of old. We were too deep, both of us, in treasonable plots, and affairs less honourable still, man, not to put another face upon the matter now, as far as possible.

Craig. So no more "thing over the water" for you.

Buck. I should be grieved to put my late lamented aunt's fair lands and tenements in jeopardy.

Craig. I won't gainsay you, my boy.

Buck. You had better not, or you would have to seek your game far afield from Girninghame. And as

well as I know you, you are too cunning a sportsman for that.

Craig. Capot me, if I have any wish to do so.

Buck. The only plot I have in my head now is a noosing plot. Nay, never flinch at the word "noose," man. I am not going to put either of our necks in a halter.

Craig. A marrying matter, then!

Buck. Aye! a marriage, man! Why grew the rubies on thy cheeks so pale? You shall always have a trencher and a glass at my household board, my faithful Craigengelt, had all the petticoats in Scotland sworn the contrary.

Craig. Aye! so you say *now.* But when those cursed women have a finger in the pie——

Buck. Phew! Am I the boy to put my head into leading strings? The only question is, will you be useful to me?

Craig. Useful, and to thee, my lad of lands, for whom I would tramp barefoot through the world?

Buck. You have only to ride some thirty miles or so.

Craig. A thousand, and call them a flea's leap. I'll cause saddle my horse directly.

Buck. Better stay till you know where you are to go, and what you are to do. The matter's this: An old kinswoman, who had no eyes to see me when the shade of poverty was on me, has been sharp-sighted enough when the sun of prosperity shone on me. 'Tis she who has proposed this match.

Craig. Curse all such double-faced jades! Here's your true friend through good report and evil report.

Buck. Who deserted me when the hue and cry was out against me, not so long ago? Oh! Don't deny it man! You have a sneaking kindness for me, I know——

Craig. I love you.

Buck. —and I have no better counsellor just now.

Craig. But this match?

Buck. What say you to Miss Lucy Ashton, my boy?

Craig. Miss Ashton! Why, the report is rife that the old Whig, her father, is about to throw her away on that rag of pride and beggary, the Master of Ravenswood.

Buck. That's not quite so clear! True, the accursed fellow is a devilish deal prettier man than I am.

Craig. He! a black visaged loon! In a woman's eyes there's nothing like a stout, middle-sized, jolly fellow.

Buck. O plague on thee! Thou woulds't say as much if I were hunchbacked. But as to Ravenswood, should he come in my way again let him look to himself.

Craig. You shall pink him. my boy of mettle!

Buck. I will pink him, Craigengelt, in a mortal place. I can win the girl from him: win her I will!

Craig. Win her? s'blood! You shall win her, my King of Trumps! You shall pique, repique, and capot him.

Buck. Prithee, stop thy gambling cant, and listen if thou canst. I have seen the girl and like her. At first I sent the notion of the meddling woman to the devil, then laughed at the conceit, then began to like it; I must send a confidential person with letters to meet Lady Ashton, and just anticipate her return home to Ravenswood.

Craig. And I am that confidential person.

Buck. Any knave could carry letters; you will have a little more to do. Inform Lady Ashton of Ravenswood's reception in her husband's house, and that there have been love passages between him and her daughter; let her know that Athol, his kinsman, pursues the lawsuit against the Ashtons, to recover the lands for Ravenswood; insinuate that Bucklaw is the only man to restore their fortunes, should the intrigues of Athol win the day; dwell on the political influence of my estates in the county; touch closely on her hate, her pride, her greed, her haughty scorn; and she will wind father and daughter round her little finger, like a hank of flax.

Craig. I will do it all, and I will lie like a trooper.

Buck. I don't doubt it, most capable Craigengelt. But harkye! you are going into the society of ladies of rank; you must forget your blackguard oaths and swaggering airs.

Craig. Phew! The women like a plain, blunt, honest soldier.

Buck. Not too honest, and not too much of the soldier.

Nay! never frown; you serve my turn, Craigengelt; your boots and doublet are somewhat greasy for a lady's bower, you must make a better figure, and here's to pay all charges. (*Gives him money.*)

Craig. (*pretending to refuse, but pocketing the money*). No, Bucklaw, no. Not money, Bucklaw. 'Pon my soul, you use me ill, man. Well—to serve you, there!

Buck. Now away! See that you put spurs to Lady Ashton's movements.

Craig. I'll dash them up to the rowel-heads. She shall speed home in a gallop, like a cow chased by a whole nest of hornets, with her tail twisted over her back like a corkscrew.

Buck. (*laughing*). Spare her ladyship the comparison! Away!

(*Exeunt* BUCKLAW *and* CRAIGENGELT *severally.*)

SCENE III.—*Hall in the Castle of Ravenswood. Grand entrance at back. Servants arranging and preparing the hall as if for a reception, and bristling backwards and forwards.*

Enter HENRY ASHTON.

Hen. Stir yourselves, you lazy loons, you, or my lady mother will stir you to some purpose when she reaches the castle. She has the trick of it, as you know to your cost (*Servants hurry out.*) I thought my mother's name would make them fly! Faith! I talk bravely to them, but there's not much bravery in my heart. No more games for me. No more shots with Norman. Nothing but that stupid Latin. I wonder who the confounded villain was who invented Latin?

Enter EDGAR OF RAVENSWOOD *and* LUCY ASHTON.

Lucy. Henry! Is she yet in sight?

Hen. Not yet, that I have heard.

Lucy. I tremble with apprehension.

Hen. And no wonder. For though I am one of the bolder sex, I am shaking in my shoes myself. (*Low to her.*)

Hearkye, Lucy! I'll go and look out from the tower, and when I see her carriage I'll come and apprise you at once. You'll like a few words alone with the Master, I know. Nay! never blush. He's a brave fellow, and worthy of you. (*Presses her hand.*) There! Courage! Courage! (*Going.*)

Edg. (*to* LUCY, *who hangs her head and clasps her hands. Gaily.*) Lucy! One would think some terrible monster approached the castle walls. You all seem paralysed with fear.

Lucy (*almost breathless*). You do not know my mother. Oh! what will she say?

Edg. Say?

Lucy. When she sees you in this place.

Edg. (*proudly*). My stay here has been too long, if her displeasure at my presence is like to be so formidable.

Lucy. No, Edgar! Dear Edgar! be gentle with my weakness!

Edg. You are too childishly afraid of Lady Ashton. She is a woman of family—a lady of fashion—a person who must know the world, and what is due to her husband and her husband's guests. It is natural you should be timid in disclosing an engagement made without your mother's sanction; but look up proudly and boldly in her face. You are not ashamed, my dearest, of the choice you have made?

Lucy. Ashamed? O Edgar No! no! no!

Edg. Then raise your eyes, my love, and raise your heart.

Lucy. My father!

Enter SIR WILLIAM ASHTON.

Sir W. (*pale and agitated*). So you are here, Lucy—and with——

Edg. With your guest, Sir William Ashton.

Sir W. A guest. I am happy—proud—to have received my good young friend. Whatever may happen now, you will still be my friend, will you not?

Edg. The doubt you imply is a strange one.

Sir W. Old hatred and revenge are laid aside for ever,

you know. The evil spirits we have dismissed, are never to come between us again Master, eh?

Edg. I am not wont to change my resolution, Sir William.

Sir W. No! no! I know it. But Lady Ashton will shortly be here.

Edg. I will await Lady Ashton's arrival, and have the honour of presenting my respects. (*Aside.*) Sense, spirit, and expression, seem to have left him at his wife's approach! If they give me reason to think myself an unwelcome guest, my visit is soon abridged.

(*Bows haughtily to* SIR WILLIAM *and exit.* LUCY *follows him as if deprecating his manner.*)

Sir W. (*watching them*). They love each other. Well, is not this the end and aim of my striving? It is as my policy; a wise, a steady, clear-sighted policy! What objection can Lady Ashton make? What could any woman desire more for her daughter than an alliance with a man, noble, brave, well gifted, highly connected, sure to float whenever the tide sets his way; strong exactly where we are weak, in pedigree and ancient title; an alliance which would legitimate our possession of these estates, and for ever set at rest outstanding, dangerous claims? No clever, reasonable woman could object to my policy. And Lady Ashton is clever—clever, yes, but reasonable? Well, after all I have *promised* nothing. (*Noise without.*)

(HENRY ASHTON *runs in followed by* LUCY.)

Hen. Mother is come! She is at the gate!

(*The doors behind are thrown open. Servants enter, in evident trepidation, and arrange themselves on either side with formal state.* LADY ASHTON *enters, accompanied by* COLONEL DOUGLAS ASHTON, *and* CAPTAIN CRAIGENGELT, *in fresh rich costume.* LUCY *and* HENRY *advance to welcome her. She thrusts them aside without receiving their embrace, and comes down to* SIR WILLIAM ASHTON. *The subsequent dialogue, concentrated tone.*)

Lady A. (*haughtily and sternly, with an under-current of violent anger*). My Lord, I am not greatly surprised at the connexions you have been pleased to form during my absence. They are in conformity with your own birth and breeding.

Sir W. My dear Lady Ashton, my dear Eleanor, listen to reason, and I will convince you that I have acted with all the regard due to the dignity and interest of our family.

Lady A. (*with scorn*). With the interest of *your* family, may be, not with the dignity of mine.

Sir W. What is it that displeases you, Lady Ashton?

Lady A. Ask your own conscience, Sir William. What has prompted you to be a renegade to your party, your political opinions, and your house, and, for ought I know, to be on the point of marrying your daughter to a beggarly Jacobite bankrupt and our inveterate foe?

Sir W. What in the name of common sense and common civility do you desire, madam? Can I turn out of my house a gentleman, who not long since saved my daughter's life and my own.

Lady A. Saved your life! I have heard of that story! The Lord Keeper was scared by a dun cow, and takes the young fellow who killed her for a Guy of Warwick. Any butcher may soon have a claim on your hospitality.

(*Crosses to table, sits* L. *of it.*)

Sir W. Lady Ashton, this is intolerable! What would you have me do?

Lady A. Go down and make your apology to Ravenswood, that the presence of Captain Craigengelt and the expected arrival of Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, render it impossible for you to offer him a lodging on the estate. Take your resolution, and if Ravenswood does not quit the house, I will!

Sir W. I tell you frankly, madam, if you will insult a man of the Master's quality under your own roof I cannot prevent you. But I will not be an agent in such a proceeding.

Lady A. You will not?

Sir W. No, by Heaven! madam. Drop his acquaintance by degrees—I won't say no—that's feasible; but bid him leave my house is what I will not consent to.

Lady A. Then the task of supporting the honour of the family will fall on me, as it often has done before. (*Enter* EDGAR RAVENSWOOD.) Where is this so-called Master of Ravenswood?

Edg. (*proudly*). He is here, Lady Ashton.

Lady A. So, I need then, Mr. Edgar Ravenswood, but few words, in which to tell you that you have basely abused the hospitality of this roof and (*with contempt*) Sir William Ashton's weakness, in making the attempt privately to secure the affections of this young and inexperienced girl.

Edg. Madam!

Lady A. You seem to have forgotten, sir, of what blood Miss Lucy Ashton is descended on her mother's side.

Edg. (*striving to control himself*). I have not forgotten your descent, madam, nor that the Ravenswoods have thrice intermarried with the house of Douglas. A Douglas in nature, as in name, Lady Ashton should bear a generous heart, and should forget old feuds and banished hatreds.

Lady A. A Douglas never swerves, sir, nor has a Ravenswood the right to speak of former ties when the honours of that family, such as they were, were forfeited in the person of that arch traitor, the late Lord. (*Crosses to* L.)

Edg. You must have forgotten that the late Lord, whose memory you outrage, was my father, madam. The Ravenswoods are ever true to honour and to faith. The name is pure and stainless. The House of Ravenswood never stooped to time-serving and truckling.

Lady A. Nor the house of Douglas, sir.

Col. (*advancing*). If my father permits this insolence, I am a soldier, and I will not. Mr. Edgar Ravenswood, I am Colonel Ashton, and you will please render an account of your conduct and bearing here to me.

Edg. Colonel Ashton, I am bound to endure much from you. Before you I stand as an unarmed man. I cannot take your hint.

Craig. I knew as much. The fellow is an arrant coward.

Edg. (*running on* CRAIGENGELT *fiercely*). I would drag *you* out at the door and fling you down the stairs, but that my hands would be dishonoured by touching the carcase of so vile a hound. (CRAIGENGELT *recoils behind the other.*)

Col. Have you more to say to me, sir?

Edg. Colonel Ashton, I have no more to say to you than that I here refuse to raise my hand against the brother of the lady to whom I am bound by most sacred obligations for life!

Lady A. (*sitting* L. C. *to* SIR WILLIAM). You hear, sir. This is your doing.

Sir W. I vow I have promised nothing, promised nothing! (*Sitting* R.)

Edg. True, Sir William Ashton. You have never promised me your daughter's hand, but you have looked on approvingly while she gave me her pure and priceless heart. I will not track your policy; I will not unravel your intrigues. They are less than the passing air to me. Your daughter is the whole universe to me. I tell you all, we are solemnly bound together. I tell you all that the tie between us can be severed by nothing but our own free will. Lucy Ashton is my affianced bride!

Col. (*his hand on his sword*). This is past endurance.

(*During the above* LUCY *has hurriedly written at a table with a paper in her hand. She now throws herself before her brother.*)

Lucy. Douglas Ashton, hold your hand, or slay your sister! Edgar, take my written word. I have sworn, my love, to keep it! (*Gives him the paper.*)

Lady A. (*rises*). Degenerate girl! My will has destined you for another!

Lucy (*cowering*). For another! O mother, have mercy, have mercy! (*Kneels to her.*)

Edg. (*on the threshold*). Lucy! Remember!

TABLEAU. CURTAIN.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Hall in the Castle of Ravenswood. (Same as Scene III., Act II.)*

BUCKLAW, *seated moodily, and* CRAIGENGELT.

Craig. May I be double distanced if I ever saw a man with less of the air of a bridegroom! Cut me out of feather if you have not more the look of a fellow condemned to be hanged!

Buck. You've studied for that part long enough, you ought to know the look. But why should I be merry, man, when I am sad, and devilish sad too?

Craig. Capot me if I can comprehend you! You are on the point of winning the game on which you staked so heavily, and you are as sulky as a bear that has lost its whelps.

Buck. Yes, I am too far forward to leap back now.

Craig. Leap back! Leap back! Why, will not the girl's fortune——?

Buck. The young lady's, if you please, sir.

Craig. Well, will not Miss Ashton's fortune weigh with the best? Do not mother, brother, and father, all desire to see the match concluded?

Buck. Yes! because the mother has her own devil's schemes to serve—because the brother thinks to carry the county by my interest—and because the father sees me the next best match, when he can no longer barter his child to save the Ravenswood estates, which—now that Athol is in power—Parliament threaten to wrench out of his clutches. The precious trio!

Craig. But the young lady herself? You doted on her when she would have none of you: and now she consents

to have you, you are for jibbing. The very devil's in you for not knowing your own mind.

Buck. (*springing up and walking about.*) I know my mind well enough: I don't understand the cause of Miss Ashton's sudden change.

Craig. What need you care for the cause, since the change is in your favour?

Buck. For aught I know, all your fine ladies may be as capricious as the winds and seas! But there's something far too sudden in all this. I'll be bound that the lady mother knows every machine for breaking in the human mind: and there are as many of them as bits for young colts.

Craig. Were it not so, how the deuce should we ever get women into training!

Buck. (*stopping and leaning on the back of a chair*). That's true, Craigengelt. But there's the Master of Ravenswood still in the way. Do you suppose he'll give up Miss Ashton's engagement? For it seems that a written contract has been passed between them.

Craig. Why should he refuse to give it up? When he desires to marry another woman, and she desires to marry another man?

Buck. Do you seriously believe that he is going to marry that foreign lady we have heard so much of?

Craig. You yourself were told of all the preparations for their bridal.

Buck. Aye! aye! I was *told*, but all that I was *told* may be a tissue of arrant lies. That's possible! Nobody knows how possible better than you do, Craigie! By Jove! I am not sure that the whole story may not have been concocted by yourself. You are bad enough for it.

Craig. (*smiling*). Humph; at least you'll believe Colonel Douglas Ashton, who heard Athol say that his young kinsman, Edgar Ravenswood, was about to do better for himself than give his father's lands for the pale-cheeked daughter of a broken-down fanatic, and that Bucklaw was welcome to the wearing of Ravenswood's old shoes.

Buck. (*bursting into a rage*). Did he say so? By

Heavens! If I had heard him I would have torn his tongue out of his scurrilous throat! Meanwhile, I have expressed my wish to have a conference with the young lady; and her mother has consented, on condition that she shall be present at the interview.

Craig. Nothing like an old woman as Love's interpreter!

Buck. It is an awkward job! I wish it were well ended. I am no lady's man, and I scarcely know how to talk to my intended.

Craig. Take a Dutchman's courage if your heart fail you. (*Gesture of drink.*)

Enter LADY ASHTON, *leading* LUCY.

Buck. Hush! Leave us, Craigengelt.

(CRAIGENGELT *bows with a swaggering air to the ladies, and exit.*)

Lady A. My daughter, Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, is most happy, as you see, to comply with your demand.

(LUCY *hangs her head.* LADY ASHTON *motions her to a chair, and takes her seat at a little distance at table,* R.)

Buck. (*aside*). I can't say that I see the happiness. (*Sighs deeply.*)

Lady A. You desired to speak with Miss Ashton.

Buck. I did. (*Fidgetting and embarrassed.*) I don't know much about the formalities and courtesies; but—but—when two people's hearts are engaged—I mean their hands—why—a — a — pleasant understanding perhaps.—You understand me, I am sure.

Lady A. (*in a tone of affected softness*). Lucy, my dear, remember! Have you heard what Mr. Bucklaw was saying?

Lucy (*starting*). Yes, madam. No—my lady, I beg pardon; I did not hear.

Lady A. You need not blush, my love, and still less need you look so pale and frightened. We know that maidens' ears must be slow in receiving gentlemen's language. But you must remember Mr. Hayston speaks on a subject on which you have long since agreed to give him a favourable

hearing (*more sternly*), and you know that your father and I have set our hearts upon an event so extremely desirable.

(LUCY *looks around her with terror and wildness, but does not speak.*)

Buck. (*who has been pacing up and down, coming to* LUCY'S *chair*). I believe I have been a confounded fool, Miss Ashton. As yet, I have tried to speak to you as, they say, young ladies like to be talked to, and I don't think you comprehend what I have been saying. No wonder; for hang me, if I understand it myself. But, once for all, your father and mother like what is proposed; and if you can take a plain honest fellow for your husband, who will never cross you in anything you have a mind to, I will place you at the head of the best establishment in the three Lothians. And now, since I have mustered up courage to make a plain proposal, I would fain hear Miss Ashton, from her own lips, give me a plain answer.

Lady A. (*rises and crosses to* C.) My dear Bucklaw, let me spare Lucy's bashfulness. I will tell you in her presence that she has already consented to be guided by her father and me (*to Lucy*), and me, in this matter. (*Again affecting softness.*) Lucy, my dearest love, speak for yourself. Is is not as I say?

Lucy (*tremulous and low*). I *have* promised to obey you, but on one condition (*Rises.*)

Lady A. (*turning to* BUCKLAW). She means, she expects an answer to her demand made upon that man, now in foreign countries (wherever he may be) for restitution of the engagement in which he had the art to involve her. You will not, I am sure, my dear friend, deem it wrong that she should feel much delicacy on this head. Indeed, it concerns us all.

Buck. Perfectly right. Quite fair. (*Half murmuring, half speaking.*) "It is best to be off wi' the old love before you be on wi' the new." But I thought you might have had an answer six times told from Ravenswood. Hang me! if I haven't a mind to go myself and fetch one, if Miss Ashton would honour me with the commission.

Lady A. (*interposing hastily*). By no means. We have had the utmost difficulty in preventing Douglas (for whom it would be more proper) from taking such a step with this desperate man. Sir William thinks—indeed so do we all—that as this unworthy person has returned no answer to her letters, silence must, in this as in other cases, be held to give consent to the annulling of the contract. My darling Lucy herself ought so to think.

Lucy (*with sudden energy*). Madam, urge me no further. If this unhappy engagement be restored, dispose of me as you will. Till then, what you require would be a sin in the sight of Heaven and man!

Lady A. But my love, if this man remains obstinately silent——

Lucy. He will not be silent. It is six weeks since I sent him, by a sure hand, a double of my former letter.

Lady A. (*bursting out*). You have not—you could not—you durst not. (*Aside.*) And I, who was sure every missive had been intercepted and suppressed! (*Aloud in a wheedling manner.*) My dearest Lucy, how could you think of such a thing? (*Sits* c.)

Buck. No matter! I respect Miss Ashton for her sentiments, and only wish I had been her messenger.

Lady A. (*ironically*). And, pray, how long, Miss Ashton, are we to await the return of this fairy courier, since you have distrusted our humble couriers of flesh and blood?

Lucy. I have numbered weeks, days, hours, minutes. His answer will arrive to day—(*to herself*)—unless indeed he should be dead.

Lady A. The day is already at its close, and——

Lucy (*to* BUCKLAW). Oh, sir, will *you* entreat my mother, until the last hours be past, to forbear on this subject? (LADY A. *rises.*)

Buck. I make it my particular entreaty to your lady mother. As I am a gentleman, dearer than ever though this marriage is to me, I would renounce it, rather than give you one moment's pain.

(LUCY *looks up as if to speak.*)

Lady A. Mr. Hayston cannot for a moment suppose——

Buck. Miss Ashton must not be hurried, madam, nor distressed with further importunity.

Lucy (*to* BUCKLAW). Oh! sir, you are generous.

Buck. As for that, madam, I am no more than a plain fellow, who would willingly make you happy, would you permit him. For the present, I shall take my leave. (*Bows to the ladies. Aside.*) Well over. Thank my stars!

(*Exit*, R.)

Lady A. (*walking up and down angrily. To herself*). I have been outwitted. I watched their letters burn, and smiled to think that, with them, were consumed their last hopes, and my last risk of failure. And now I find that she despatched her own secret messenger. (*Turning sternly upon* LUCY.) Lucy!

Lucy (*sadly*). Have you not promised, madam?

Lady A. To expostulate no more? I have. I throw expostulation to the winds. I *command* now. I command you to obey. Have we not learned, from true and certain sources, that this perjured miscreant, this Master of Ravenswood, is on the eve of marriage with a foreign lady of fortune and distinction?

Lucy. I must hear it from his own lips.

Lady A. Madness! Has he not left your letters unanswered? Has he not despised you—cheated—jilted you?

Lucy. I must know it from his own lips.

Lady A. Have you no woman's pride, if you have no pride of family? But at least you have my commands, and you *shall* submit yourself to them. This evening you will sign and seal your marriage contract with Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw. To-night your bridal!

(*Goes to table, sits* C.)

Lucy. Ah! (*Enter* SIR WILLIAM ASHTON; *with a sudden burst of energy.*) Father! father! (*Crosses to him*, L. *He sits on stool*, L.C.) *You* love me. My last hope is in you, You will not desert me (*Kneeling to him.*)

Sir W. Desert you, my child! It is your happiness I seek.

Lucy. Then you will not condemn me to this misery.

Sir W. Misery! You mistake, Lucy.

Lucy. You will not—you cannot—*you!* It was you who brought him to this place. It was you who encouraged our love.

Sir W. Encouraged—no, no! I did not encourage——

Lucy. Yes, for you saw our two hearts clung together. O, father spare me—save me!

Sir W. Lucy! You wring my heart. If I could even now——

Lady A. Sir William!

Sir W. (*quailing before her imperious manner*). You exaggerate, Lucy. Listen to reason! (LUCY *rises, and hides her face in her hands in despair.*) We are threatened with utter ruin. The adverse party is at the head of the government; Athol, in the plenitude of his mistaken power, urges the Scottish parliament to reverse the judgments by which Ravenswood's estates fell into our hands; your marriage with Bucklaw is the only sure hope left us of the maintenance of our prospects and position. You would not plunge us into ruin, by this foolish persistence in a mere girlish whim? There! there! dry those tears. I knew you would listen to reason. (*She rises.*)

Lucy (*aside*). O, he is pitiless, pitiless!

Sir W. This supposed contract or engagement cannot be sustained by any law, civil, municipal, or canon. Come, come. You will not grieve our hearts any more. Will you, my child? (*Rises and crosses to* R., *and sits in chair.*)

Lucy. I will say no more. (*Aside.*) My last hope is shipwrecked! (*Sits* L. H. *on stool.*)

Enter HENRY ASHTON, R. H., *laughing, with a branch of willow in his hand.*

Hen. Here, Lucy, I have brought you a branch of willow. It is just arrived from foreign parts for your especial wearing.

Lucy (*with reproach*). You, too! You, too! (*Then*

bursting into tears and clinging to HENRY'S *neck.*) Poor boy! You speak but what they tell you.

Hen. (*moved*). Dear Lucy! There! the foul fiend fetch me, if I bring any more such messages. It was brother Douglas who sent me. He told me that your head was turned by mad romances. You'll forgive me, Lucy? (LUCY *kisses him frantically.*) There! you smile again! You will be glad once more.

Lucy. There is little more can happen to make me either glad or sorry in this world. (HENRY *goes up and off*, R. H.) It is decreed that every living creature I most love should leave me to those by whom I am most beset. No word or sign from Edgar! Alone and uncounselled, I involved myself in this sad pass! Alone and uncounselled, I cannot extricate myself, and I must die.

(*Ladies and gentlemen enter* R. U. E., *and are received as guests by* SIR WILLIAM *and* LADY ASHTON. HENRY *returns with them.* COLONEL DOUGLAS ASHTON, BUCKLAW, CRAIGENGELT, BIDETHEBENT, *a clergyman, lawyer with parchment deeds, which are spread upon a table. Servants, retainers, &c.* SIR WILLIAM *goes up to head of table.*)

Lady A. (*rising at table* R. H.) You all know the nature of this solemn occasion on which we are here assembled. We will proceed at once to the signature of the marriage contract between my daughter, Miss Lucy Ashton, and Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw.

Buck. (*pointing to* LUCY). But, madam——

Lady A. My daughter, sir, is ready.

Buck. (*approaching* LUCY). Miss Ashton! You consent, then, to my wishes? (LUCY *shudders and looks at him wildly.*) Lady Ashton has assured me.

Lucy (*wildly*). My mother, my good lady mother! (BUCKLAW *bows and goes up.*) The hour is come. The hour is come! To sign and seal. To do and die! No rescue—no hope. The cold steals over me. My soul freezes within me.

(*Remains as if petrified.* SIR WILLIAM ASHTON *signs*

the contract, then COLONEL DOUGLAS ASHTON, *then* BUCKLAW. *In the novel* BUCKLAW *wipes the pen on* CRAIGENGELT'S *cravat.*)

Lady A. Now, Lucy, dearest love. It is your turn.

(LUCY *never stirs.*)

Col. (*advancing*). Miss Lucy Ashton! Do you hear your mother's words?

(LADY ASHTON *restrains him.*)

Sir W. (*standing* R. H.) My child, we await your signature.

Lady A. (*coming to* LUCY: *low to her*). All eyes are upon you.

(LADY ASHTON *leads* LUCY, *who moves likes an automaton, to the* R. *of* R.H. *table, The lawyer places the pen in her hand.* LUCY *staggers as if about to fall,* BIDETHEBENT *supports her.*)

Lady A. (*placing* LUCY'S *hand upon the paper*). Sign there!

(LUCY *traces some letters with the pen. At the same moment a noise is heard, and some confusion among the servants at the door without.*)

Lucy (*dropping the pen*). Hark! Hush!

Edg. (*without*). Stand back! Clear the way!

Lucy (*darting forward*). Edgar! He's come at last! He's come at last!

(*She makes a movement towards the door, then looks back upon her signature, utters a subdued scream, and falls fainting into a chair. Enter* EDGAR RAVENSWOOD *by centre door, thrusting back the servant, and stands on the threshold. His dress is travel-stained and disordered, his locks dishevelled. A silence of stupor, at first, among all.*)

Lady A. I demand to know the cause of this unauthorised intrusion!

Col. That is a question, madam, which I have the best right to ask, and I request the Master of Ravenswood to follow me.

Buck. (*breaking in*). No man on earth shall usurp my right to demand an explanation from the Master.

Edg. Be patient, gentlemen. If you are as weary of your lives as I am of mine, I will find time and place for one or both of you.

Col. (*half drawing his sword*). At once!

Sir W. (*rushing between them*). My son, I command you—Bucklaw! I entreat you, to keep the peace in the name of the law.

Col. (*turning on him*). Do you take me for a dog, sir, that I should endure this insult in my father's house? He shall account to me, or I will stab him where he stands.

Buck. You shall not touch him. He once gave me life, and where he the devil come to fly away with your whole house and generation, he should have fair play.

Edg. (*gravely and sternly*). Let him who seeks danger take the fitting time when it is to be found. My mission will be soon accomplished. (*Going to* LUCY *more softly.*) Is this letter your handwriting, madam?

Lucy (*almost insensible*). Yes.

Edg. And is this engagement (*producing another paper*) also your handwriting?

Sir W. If you design, sir, to found a legal claim on that mere paper——

Edg. (*interrupting*). Sir William Ashton, I pray you, and all who hear me, not to mistake my purpose. If this young lady, of her own free will, desires the restoration of this contract, there is not a withered leaf which this autumn wind straws on the heath that is more valueless in my eyes. But I must, and I will, hear the truth from her own mouth. (*General movement.*) Murder me by numbers, you possibly may. But I am an armed man—I am a desperate man; and I will not die without an ample vengeance. (*Drawing his sword and cocking his pistols.*) Choose, if you will have this hall floated with blood, or if you will grant me the decisive interview with my affianced bride.

Lady A. (*with rage*). Never! Never shall this man speak in private with my daughter, the affianced bride of another. Go forth from this room who will, *I* remain! *I* neither fear his violence nor his weapons, though some appear more moved by them.

Bide. Add not fuel to the flame, madam. The Master of Ravenswood cannot object to your presence; and myself will tarry to turn away wrath.

Edg. You are welcome to do so, sir, and Lady Ashton also. But let all the others depart.

Col. (*passing* EDGAR *going*). Ravenswood! you shall account for this ere long!

Edg. When you please.

Buck But I have a prior claim: one of long standing, too.

Edg. Arrange it as you will. Leave me this day in peace.

Sir W. Master of Ravenswood! I have not deserved this outrage at your hands. If you will sheath your sword I can prove to your satisfaction the inutility of these proceedings.

Edg. To-morrow, sir, to-morrow. This day has its own sacred business.

(*Crosses to* L. H., BIDETHEBENT *goes* L. *up. Waves his hand to* SIR WILLIAM *to go. All exeunt but* EDGAR, LUCY, LADY ASHTON, *and* BIDETHEBENT. EDGAR *sheath's his sword and uncocks his pistols.*)

Edg. (*advancing to* LUCY *and taking off his hat*). Do you know me, Miss Ashton? I am still Edgar Ravenswood! (LUCY *shudders, but does not speak.*) I am still that Edgar Ravenswood who, for your sake, forgave—nay, clasped hands in friendship with—the oppressor and pillager of his house: the traducer and murderer of his father!

Lady A. My daughter has no occasion to dispute the identity of your person, sir. The venom of your language is sufficient to remind her that you are her house's enemy.

Edg. Be patient, madam. My answer must come from her own lips. Once more, Miss Lucy Ashton, I am that Ravenswood to whom you granted the solemn engagement you now desire to retract and cancel.

Lucy. (*stammering*). It was my mother——

Lady A. (*interrupting*). She speaks truly, it was I who, authorised alike by the laws of Heaven and man, advised her to set aside an unhappy and precipitate engagement.

Edg. (*looking at* LUCY). Are you prepared to pierce my heart for its fidelity with the very weapon which my loving confidence placed in your hands? Speak Lucy, still beloved one, speak!

(LUCY *tries to speak and is about to rise.* LADY ASHTON *presses her down in her chair.* LUCY *gasps hysterically.*)

Lady A. Master of Ravenswood, you have asked what questions you have thought fit: you see my daughter's total incapacity to answer you. I will reply for her: You desire to know whether, of her own free will, Lucy Ashton annuls the engagement into which she has been ensnared? Here is your fitting answer. (*Goes up and brings down the marriage contract with* BUCKLAW.) Here is the contract she has just subscribed in presence of this gentleman with Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw!

Edg. (*looks at the paper petrified, then*). Her signature? (*To* BIDETHEBENT.) And it was without fraud or compulsion she subscribed this deed?

Bide. I vouch it on my sacred character.

Edg. It were useless and dishonouring to waste a word in useless remonstrance or reproach. (*Sternly and scornfully to* LUCY.) There, madam, are the signed paper, and half the broken piece of gold. (*Places them before* LUCY.) There are the evidences of your first engagement. (*Choking.*) May you be more faithful to that which you have just formed! (LUCY *looks up wildly, shudders before the scornful gaze of* EDGAR, *gasps, but cannot speak.*) I must ask you, madam, to return the corresponding tokens of my ill-placed confidence.

(LUCY *looks at* EDGAR *with bewildered looks, as if not comprehending.*)

Lady A. You hear, my child?

(LUCY *seems faintly to understand, and fumbles with a ribbon round her neck with trembling hands.* LADY ASHTON *draws a little dirk she wears, cuts the ribbon, and takes the piece of gold and a written paper from* LUCY'S *bosom. These she gives to* EDGAR RAVENSWOOD *with a haughty courtesy.*)

Edg. (*starting painfully as he receives them*). And she would wear it thus—could wear it in her very bosom. Could wear it next her heart, even when—(*Breaks down almost sobbing.*) But complaint avails not. (*Wiping away tears. He strides to the fire, flings in the paper and the piece of gold and crushes them down with his foot.*) I will no longer be an intruder here! (*Going, pauses, and comes down to* LUCY.) To you, madam, I have nothing further to say than, that I pray God you may not become a world's wonder for this act of wilful and deliberate perjury. (*Going.*)

(LUCY *bursts into a fit of wild hysterical mad laughter, which is almost a scream.* SIR WILLIAM, COLONEL ASHTON, BUCKLAW, CRAIGENGELT, *and all the others hurry into the apartment.*)

Edg. (*going up and meeting the* COLONEL). Colonel Ashton! I shall be found at Wolf's Crag when your leisure serves you. (*Exit.*)

Lucy (*feeling for the ribbon*). It was the link that bound me to life. (*Singing madly.*)

The Men (*advancing*). Great Heaven!

Lady A. (*screening* LUCY, *who sits down laughing wildly*). Keep away, 'tis nothing. It will pass.

TABLEAU. SCENE CLOSES.

SCENE II.—*Exterior of chapel. Corridor. Entrance portal.*

Enter CALEB BALDERSTONE, *looking around him distractedly.*

Cal. I thought I saw my young Lord, standing by these walls of the chapel of Ravenswood. But my poor old weary eyes deceived me. Where can he be? When he came back to Wolf's Crag he was fearful to see, what with his pallid face, his distraction, and his determined silence. Hey! an awful man. Suddenly he left his chamber, saddled his horse and rode out at the gate. "When the last Lord of Ravenswood to Ravenswood shall ride." Out upon the old prophecy! Why does it come into my

wretched mind. "To woo a dead maiden to be his bride." What have we here? A train of people! (CALEB *hides behind a portion of the chapel. The bridal procession of* BUCKLAW *and* LUCY *passes along the corridor, and enters the chapel, all the* ASHTON *family, with* CRAIGENGELT, BIDETHEBENT, *Servants, Retainers, &c. When all have entered the chapel Caleb re-appears.*) A bridal train! and the bonny Lucy Ashton as the bride, as another's bride! I understand now! my dear, dear Master. He approaches with a strange dark air upon him. It would not become his faithful servitor to see him weep. Help him, Heaven! Comfort him in his great affliction! (CALEB *retires.*)

Enter EDGAR RAVENSWOOD *as if following a vision.*

Edg. (*starting suddenly*). Gone! It has led me here, and vanished! Are my senses disordered, has my misery made me mad? As clearly as I see these walls, I saw standing in my chamber in the tower, and beckoning me forth, old Alice; I took horse and followed her to the Mermaid's Well. The waters of the fountain ran red as she stopped, and turned and beckoned to me, as if to repeat her warnings. The water resumed its colour, and Alice beckoning passed into her cottage. I leaped from my horse and followed instantly. She was lying dead upon her pallet, and the solitary watcher told me she had died at the moment when I saw her at the Wolf's Crag, and had prayed with her last words that she might see me once more to renew her warning. As I turned from the bed of death, I saw another figure passing out of the door, grey, misty, and indistinct—but Lucy's—and the dress was like no dress I ever saw her wear, but like the last dress of the dead. I followed the phantom here, and on this spot it quitted me! Why should it bring me here! (*Organ plays in the chapel.*) That music! Lucy is dead too. It is her funeral.

(*Rushes towards the chapel entrance.* CALEB *flings himself before him.*)

Cal. No, no, it is no burial, but it is worse, far worse. Do not seek to see what it is! O Master come away! Hear

an old man's prayers and come away! (*Clings to* EDGAR *and tries to drag him away.* EDGAR *looks on* CALEB *as if scarcely comprehending him, then tears himself from the old man's grasp, flings him aside, and rushes into the chapel.* CALEB *follows him to the gate and looks in.*) Heavens! What will he do, rushing in among them. They are at the altar. They will tear him to pieces.

(*Tumult in the chapel.* EDGAR *rushes out bearing* LUCY *in his arms and thrusting down servants, &c., who try to stop him. He bears her hurriedly across the stage and exit.*)

Enter COLONEL ASHTON *and* BUCKLAW *from chapel, then* LADY ASHTON, SIR WILLIAM, HENRY, *and all the train.*

Col. The villain! (CALEB *flings himself before him.*)

Cal. You shall not harm him! Kill me, kill me!

Col. (*flinging him aside*). Loose your hold upon me, madman. (*To retainers.*) Fire upon Ravenswood, at the hazard of wounding or even killing my sister. Fire upon Ravenswood!

Buck. (*standing before retainers*). Let me see no man touch a trigger. It is for me to avenge my honour! Let no one come between me and Wolf's Crag.

(*Rushes out after* EDGAR.)

Lady A. He is making for his Tower by the quicksand and the Kelpies' Flow. Follow, all of you, in pursuit, but not by that dangerous way. (*To some.*) You, by the Wolf's Crag Cliffs! (*To others.*) You by the rugged path to Wolf's Crag! (*To* COLONEL *and* SIR WILLIAM, *&c.*) You with me.

(*All out, in tumult, on several sides.*)

SCENE III.—*Rocks and sea cliffs and practicable paths on either side. The Tower of Wolf's Crag on a height at a distance. The stage is at some elevation above the sea. Mist and stormy clouds. Sea rising.*

Enter EDGAR, *bearing* LUCY *in his arms.*

Edg. (*sinking with* LUCY *across his knees*). Lucy! Open your eyes. Look upon me once again! I forgive you! I love you; speak to me. Look at me!

Lucy (*opening her eyes*). Release me! Let me go! I would rather die. Release me, Bucklaw! I never will be *your* wife. My mother may kill me, but shall never marry me to you! Let me go, Bucklaw! (*She cries very piteously.*) Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, as you are a gentleman, spare a wretched girl, who is the bride of one she loves beyond all earthly things.

Edg. She loves me! She has never been false to me at heart! She has been tortured and compelled. Lucy, darling! My first and only love! It is not Bucklaw. Oh, know me, and forgive me, Lucy, my affianced and my bride!

Lucy. Edgar, come back and save me! Edgar!

(*Disappears behind rocks.*)

Edg. (*following*). Lucy, 'tis I—Edgar!

Lucy (*on rock at back*). His voice! Edgar! He's come at last. (*They embrace*). I am in your arms, and I can die happy. (*Moon gone. Waters rise.*)

Edg. You shall not die. No! no! no!

Lucy. Heaven will unite us, Edgar. Mine eyes grow dim—I see you still—but in a vision! Once more (*lifting herself up with difficulty*) once more press me to your heart! O bless!

(*He kisses her frantically. Storm continues.*)

Edg. Can this be death! They come—come to take her from me—take her! (*Kissing her*). Ah! they will never tear you from me. You are mine in life or death—in life or death

(*He takes* LUCY *in his arms, and bears her up the*

rocks on the Wolf's Crag side. BUCKLAW, *closely followed by* LADY ASHTON, *appears on the rocks, with followers.* EDGAR *retreats before them with* LUCY *in his arms. He carries her to the other rocks. A crowd of retainers appears on the rocks with torches. He springs over the rocks at back below the stage.* BUCKLAW, COLONEL ASHTON, LADY ASHTON, SIR WILLIAM, *&c., hurry down the rocks. Servants and retainers grouped on the rocks with torches).*

Lady A. Pursue them! Rescue her!

Col. (*looking over rocks behind*). They cannot be reached!

(*Noises of bodies falling in the sea*). They are lost!

Lady A. Lost! Lost!

Sir W. Help! Rescue! Help!

(*Crowds of fishermen, peasants, &c., rush in,* CALEB *among them. Cords are brought in, and lowered from the rocks. Some of the fishermen descend the precipice behind the rocks with cords. Confusion. Tumult. The sea keeps rising rapidly, and overwhelms the rock on which stand* EDGAR *with* LUCY *in his arms*).

Lady A. Save her. Rescue her!

Sir W. Too late! Too late!

(*Cowers together, hiding his face in his hands.*)

Cal. It is accomplished.

(CALEB *prays. All the peasant women and others are on their knees praying. Groups of despair. The clouds behind open: and the forms of* EDGAR *and* LUCY *are seen ascending upwards.*)

THE END.

LONDON:

C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, DUKE ST., LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS.

YA 24217
97-102156