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Orberry's Edition.

(7)

THE
BEGGAR'S OPERA,

BY

John Gay.

THE ONLY EDITION EXISTING WHICH IS FAITHFULLY MARKED WITH
THE STAGE BUSINESS AND STAGE DIRECTIONS,

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatres Royal.

LONDON:

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Remarks.

THERE is scarcely any dramatic production on which the public opinion is so much divided as the BEGGAR'S OPERA. Some critics give it the most unqualified praise for its many merits, and not much less to themselves, for their well-placed admiration; while others, perhaps not very far their inferiors in acuteness, consider it as a mass of vulgar and brutal profligacy, without the least pretensions to sense, wit, or humour.

It is generally defended and admired, on the score of its being true to nature. This may, or may not be; but if the original is disgusting, what must be the copy? It is, indeed, the business of the stage to present nothing but what *is* in nature: but surely no one will therefore contend that it should bring forward *all*. Some objects are too low, some too horrible, some too ridiculous, and others again too disgusting. Even with this limitation, the rule would be still imperfect: there are fictions more pleasing, because they are more beautiful than reality; fictions which combine in one point all that is lovely, and good, and great in humanity, or in the earth which it inhabits. In their individual parts, such combinations are true, because they exhibit nothing but what is in nature; as a whole, they are false, because they shew an unalloyed, unmixed aggregate of excellence. But they afford the same pleasure to our imagination as that which we receive from the green landscape of a sunny day; they warm the heart to a conception of something better than itself, and, for the moment, shake off the earthiness of

our being. If it be allowed that there are realities not suited to the drama, and that to select is the duty of a poet, then little is to be said in favour of the piece before us. The mirth or the sorrow, the prosperity or the misfortunes of thieves and prostitutes can hardly come within the pale of selection; if they do, what is after to be excluded? *Filch*, *Peachum*, *Lockit*, and *Macheath* with his drunken train of wives and mistresses, are all in the very bottom of the lowest deep; they are the mire, the filth of society; they may, indeed, excite a laugh; but their contact is so far from being agreeable, that it is actually disgusting. This feeling may, perhaps, only be a habit; but, at least, it is a salutary one, and he has deserved little of society who has endeavoured to destroy it. After all, too, the eye does not love to dwell upon continued deformity; it looks for some redeeming loveliness to contrast with, and soften its effect. One *Filch*, or one devil, may be endured in three acts; but a drama made up of only *Filches*, or demons, is too much for common sufferance.

The characters are correctly, and, for the most part, strongly drawn, as far as they go; but such portraits are not difficult to be taken: their features are coarse and obvious, such as are too monstrous to be mistaken, and too rude to require any nicety in execution. Each character, too, seems to have but one quality of mind, and is shown to us but in one relation, which at once does away with every idea of truth; each seems to come forward to play one particular part; and so fixed are they all to this, that their one habit of mind is like their dress—the single, unchanging costume of the evening.

There are several comic situations in this piece, but not a solitary line of humour, not a gleam of wit from its beginning to its end. To many, this assertion will seem too strong; for opinions once generally admitted, become a sort of holy relic, the genuineness of which is on no account to be disputed. That which we *have* believed we would still believe, and very little mercy is shown to him who would root up the decisions of long-established prejudice. They become a part of ourselves, a sort of religious creed, to doubt which sounds like a profane and monstrous heresy: still the assertion is wholly and literally correct. That the piece succeeded in

the outset proves nothing. Without looking at all to the literary friends of Gay, whose opinions led the town—without the least reference to the political feeling of the time, which even swayed more strongly—we shall find a very ready solution of the mystery in the known caprice of audiences, which too often condemns what is excellent, and fosters that which is ridiculous. Besides the decisions of one period are contradicted by the suffrage of its successor; and the vices of the one age, are the virtues of the next. There is not, then, there cannot be, any reason why individuals should allow themselves to be led away by the suffrage of the many; the magic phrase, “the world thinks so,” is scarcely worth a thought, and is properly designated by Churchill,

“Many fools in one opinion join’d.”

To sum up the whole, the “*BEGGAR'S OPERA*” is totally subversive of the chief object of the drama—that object which has been expressed by Horace with such admirable conciseness—“*Delectando pariterque monendo.*” It can improve none but thieves and prostitutes; for it exhibits the vices of such people only; the lesson is addressed but to them. And as to the pleasure it may afford, very little of favour is to be said; the delight received from the music is not to be set to the score of the writing; and even if we were to allow all its claims of amusement, the scale would weigh heavily against it, when we consider that such amusement can only serve to degrade and brutalize the taste. Childish sights will please children, and vulgar fancies will please the vulgar; but surely we frequent the Theatre to improve and not to deteriorate our taste—to delight the nobler qualities of the mind, and not to feed its grossness and its imbecilities.

The life of Gay has been often written; and we shall content ourselves with giving a very compressed account of what is so generally understood.

JOHN GAY was born at Exeter in the year 1688. He was bred a mercer, in the Strand, which occupation he quitted as a degradation to his talents. But the pursuit of poetry, for many years, seems to have brought him neither much fame nor much profit; for

his first celebrated production, the *Fables*, did not appear until 1726. This was followed, in 1727-8, by "*The Beggar's Opera*," which at once gave him wealth and reputation. His natural indolence, and an unfortunate speculation in the South Sea Scheme, diminished his little fortune; yet it is said he died in the possession of several thousands. His death took place in 1732; and he was interred in Westminster Abbey, in that particular spot called Poets' Corner, amongst the relics and the monuments of genius.

The time this piece takes in representation is about two hours and forty-two minutes. The first act occupies the space of fifty-seven minutes—the second, sixty—the third, forty-five.—The half-price commences, generally, at a quarter after nine o'clock.

Stage Directions.

By R. H.....	is meant.....	Right Hand.
L. H.....		Left Hand.
S. E.....		Second Entrance,
U. E.....		Upper Entrance.
M. D.....		Middle Door.
D. F.....		Door in Flat.
R. H. D.....		Right Hand Door.
L. H. D.....		Left Hand Door.

Costume.

PEACHUM.

Black velvet coat; scarlet waistcoat, trimmed with broad gold lace; black breeches.

LOCKIT.

Brown camlet coat; blue silk waistcoat, and black breeches.

MACHEATH.

First dress: light mixture frock coat; stripe waistcoat; leather breeches. Second dress: blue coat; white waistcoat. Third dress: suit of black.

FILCH.

Brown coat, striped waistcoat; Nankeen breeches and gaiters.

MRS. PEACHUM.

Green satin gown.

POLLY.

White leno dress trimmed with white ribbon and lace.

LUCY.

Smart coloured gown.

LADIES.

Smart modern dresses.

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—PEACHUM'S *House.*

PEACHUM *sitting at a Table, with a large Book of Accounts before him.*

AIR.—PEACHUM.

*Through all the employments of life,
Each neighbour abuses his brother :
Whore and rogue, they call husband and wife :
All professions be-rogue one another.
The priest calls the lawyer a cheat ;
The lawyer be-knaves the divine ;
And the statesman, because he's so great,
Thinks his trade is as honest as mine.*

A lawyer is an honest employment, so is mine. Like me too, he acts in a double capacity, both against rogues, and for them; for 'tis but fitting, that we should protect and encourage cheats, since we live by them.

Enter FILCH, L.H.

Filch. Sir, Black Moll has sent word, her trial comes on in the afternoon, and she hopes you will order matters so as to bring her off.

Peach. Why, as the wench is very active and indus-

trious, you may satisfy her that I'll soften the evidence.

Filch. Tom Gag, sir, is found guilty.

Peach. A lazy dog! When I took him, the time before, I told him what he would come to, if he did not mend his hand. This is death without reprieve. I may venture to book him (*Writes*); for Tom Gag, forty pounds. Let Betty Sly know, that I'll save her from transportation, for I can get more by her staying in England.

Filch. Betty hath brought more goods to our lock this year, than any five of the gang; and, in truth, 'tis pity to lose so good a customer.

Peach. If none of the gang takes her off, she may, in the common course of business, live a twelvemonth longer. I love to let women 'scape. A good sportsman always lets the hen-partridges fly, because the breed of the game depends upon them. Besides, here the law allows us no reward: there is nothing to be got by the death of women—except our wives.

Filch. Without dispute, she is a fine woman! 'Twas to her I was obliged for my education. To say a bold word, she has trained up more young fellows to the business, than the gaming-table.

Peach. Truly, Filch, thy observation is right. We and the surgeons are more beholden to women, than all the professions besides.

AIR.—FILCH.

*'Tis woman that seduces all mankind;
By her we first were taught the wheedling arts;
Her very eyes can cheat; when most she is kind,
She tricks us of our money, with our hearts.
For her, like wolves by night, we roam for prey,
And practice every fraud to bribe her charms;
For, suits of love, like law, are won by pay,
And beauty must be fee'd into our arms.*

Peach. But make haste to Newgate, boy, and let my

friends know what I intend? for I love to make them easy, one way or another.

Filch. When a gentleman is long kept in suspense, penitence may break his spirit ever after. Besides, certainty gives a man a good air upon his trial, and makes him risk another, without fear or scruple. But I'll away, for 'tis a pleasure to be a messenger of comfort to friends in affliction. [Exit L.H.]

Peach. But it is now high time to look about me, for a decent execution against next sessions. I hate a lazy rogue, by whom one can get nothing till he is hanged. A register of the gang, (*Reading*) *Crook-finger'd Jack*—*a year and a half in the service*—let me see, how much the stock owes to his industry: One, two, three, four, five gold watches, and seven silver ones. A mighty clean handed fellow! sixteen snuff-boxes, five of them true gold, six dozen of handkerchiefs, four silver-hilted swords, half-a-dozen of shirts, three tie perriwigs, and a piece of broadcloth. Considering these are only the fruits of his leisure hours, I don't know a prettier fellow; for no man alive hath a more engaging presence of mind upon the road.—*Wat Dreary, alias brown Will*—an irregular dog; who hath an underhand way of disposing of his goods; I'll try him only for a sessions or two longer, upon his good behaviour.—*Harry Paddington*—a poor petty-larceny rascal, without the least genius! that fellow, though he were to live these six months, will never come to the gallows with any credit.—*Slippery Sam*—he goes off the next sessions; for the villain hath the impudence to have views of following his trade as a tailor, which he calls an honest employment.—*Mat-o'the-Mint*—listed not above a month ago; a promising, sturdy fellow, and diligent in his way; somewhat too bold and hasty, and may raise good contributions on the public, if he does not cut himself short by murder.—*Tom Tipple*—a guzzling, soaking sot, who is always too drunk to stand himself, or to make others stand: a cart is absolutely necessary for him.—*Robin of Bagshot, alias Gordon, alias Bluff Bob, alias Carbuncle, alias Bob Booty*—

Enter MRS. PEACHUM, R.H.

Mrs. P. What of Bob Booty, husband? I hope nothing bad hath betided him.—You know, my dear, he's a favourite customer of mine—'twas he made me a present of this ring

Peach. I have set his name down in the black list, that's all, my dear; he spends his life among women, and, as soon as his money is gone, one or other of the ladies will hang him for the reward, and there's forty pounds lost to us for ever!

Mrs. P. You know, my dear, I never meddle in matters of death; I always leave those affairs to you. Women, indeed, are bitter bad judges in these cases; for they are so partial to the brave, that they think every man handsome, who is going to the camp or the gallows. But really, husband, you should not be too hard-hearted, for you never had a finer, braver set of men than at present. We have not had a murder among them all these seven months; and truly, my dear, that is a great blessing.

Peach. What a dickens is the woman always whimpering about murder for? No gentleman is ever looked upon the worse for killing a man in his own defence; and if business cannot be carried on without it, what would you have a gentleman do? so, my dear, have done upon this subject. Was captain Macheath here, this morning, for the bank-notes he left with you last week?

Mrs. P. Yes my dear; and though the bank hath stopped payment, he was so cheerful, and so agreeable! Sure, there is not a finer gentleman upon the road than the captain! if he comes from Bagshot, at any reasonable hour, he hath promised to make one this evening, with Polly, me, and Bob Booty, at a party at quadrille. Pray, my dear, is the captain rich?

Peach. The captain keeps too good company ever to grow rich. Marybone and the chocolate-houses are his undoing. The man that proposes to get money by play,

should have the education of a fine gentleman, and be trained up to it from his youth.

Mrs. P. Really, I am sorry, upon Polly's account, the captain hath not more discretion. What business hath he to keep company with lords and gentlemen? he should leave them to prey upon one another.

Peach. Upon Polly's account! what a plague doth the woman mean?—Upon Polly's account!

Mrs. P. Captain Macheath is very fond of the girl.

Peach. And what then?

Mrs. P. If I have any skill in the ways of women, I am sure Polly thinks him a very pretty man.

Peach. And what then? you would not be so mad as to have the wench marry him! Gamesters and highway-men are, generally, very good to their mistresses, but they are very devils to their wives.

Mrs. P. But if Polly should be in love, how should we help her, or how can she help herself?—Poor girl, I'm in the utmost concern about her!

Peach. Look ye, wife, a handsome wench, in our way of business, is as profitable as at the bar of a Temple coffee-house, who looks upon it as her livelihood, to grant every liberty but one. My daughter to me should be like a court lady to a minister of state, a key to the whole gang. Married! if the affair is not already done, I'll terrify her from it, by the example of our neighbours.

Mrs. P. Mayhap, my dear, you may injure the poor girl: she loves to imitate the fine ladies, and she may only allow the captain liberties, in the view of interest.

Peach. But 'tis your duty, my dear to warn the girl against her ruin and to instruct her how to make the most of her beauty. I'll go to her this moment, and sift her. In the mean time, wife, rip out the coronets and marks of these dozen of cambric handkerchiefs, for I can dispose of them this afternoon to a chap in the city. [Exit, L.H.]

Mrs. P. Neyer was a man more out of the way in an argument than my husband. Why must our Polly, forsooth, differ from her sex, and love only her husband?

and why must Polly's marriage, contrary to all observation, make her the less followed by other men? All men are thieves in love, and like a woman the better for being another's property.

Enter FILCH, L.H.

Mrs. P. Come hither, Filch.—I am as fond of this child, as though my mind misgave me he were my own. He hath as fine a hand at picking a pocket as a woman, and is as nimble-fingered as a juggler. If an unlucky session does not cut the rope of thy life, I pronounce, boy thou wilt be a great man in history. Where was your post last night, my boy?

Filch. I plied at the opera, madam; and considering 'twas neither dark nor rainy, so that there was no great hurry in getting chairs and coaches, made a tolerable hand on't—These seven handkerchiefs, madam.

Mrs. P. Coloured ones, I see. They are of sure sale from our warehouse at Redriff, among the seamen.

Filch. And this snuff-box.

Mrs. P. Set in gold! a pretty encouragement this to a young beginner!

Filch. I had a fair tug at a charming gold watch. Plague take the tailors, for making the fobs so deep and narrow!—it stuck by the way, and I was forced to make my escape under a coach. Really, madam, I fear I shall be cut off in the flower of my youth, so that every now and then, since I was pumped, I have thoughts of taking up and going to sea.

Mrs. P. You should go to Hockley-in-the-hole, and to Marybone, child, to learn valour; these are the schools that have bred so many brave men. I thought, boy, by this time, thou hadst lost fear as well as shame. Poor lad! how little does he know yet of the Old Bailey! For the first fact, I'll insure thee from being hanged: and going to sea, Filch, will come time enough upon a sentence of transportation. But, hark you, my lad don't tell me a lie; for you know I hate a liar.—

Do you know of any thing that hath passed between captain Macheath and our Polly?

Filch. I beg you, madam, don't ask me: for I must either tell a lie to you, or to miss Polly; for I promised her I would not tell.

Mrs. P. But when the honour of our family is concerned.

Filch. I shall lead a sad life with miss Polly, if ever she comes to know I told you. Besides, I would not willingly forfeit my own honour, by betraying any body.

Mrs. P. Yonder comes my husband and Polly. Come, Filch, you shall go with me into my own room, and tell me the whole story. I'll give thee a glass of a most delicious cordial that I keep for my own drinking.

[*Exeunt, R.H.*

Enter PEACHUM and POLLY, L.H.

Polly. I know as well as any of the fine ladies how to make the most of myself, and of my man too. A woman knows how to be mercenary, though she hath never been in a court or at an assembly. We have it in our natures, papa. If I allow captain Macheath some trifling liberties, I have this watch and other visible marks of his favour to show for it. A girl who cannot grant some things, and refuse what is most material, will make but a poor hand of her beauty, and soon be thrown upon the common.

AIR.—POLLY.

*Virgins are like the fair flow'r in its lustre,
Which in the garden enamels the ground;
Near it the bees in play flutter and cluster,
And gaudy butterflies frolic around:
But when once pluck'd 'tis no longer alluring,
To Covent-Garden 'tis sent (as yet sweet),
There fades, and shrinks, and grows past all en-
during,
Rots, stinks, and dies, and is trod under feet.*

Peach. You know, Polly, I am not against your toying and trifling with a customer, in the way of business, or to get out a secret or so; but if I find out that you have played the fool, and are married, you jade you, I'll cut your throat, hussy. Now, you know my mind.

Enter MRS. PEACHUM, in a very great passion, R.H.

AIR.

*Our Polly is a sad slut! nor heeds what we have
taught her,
I wonder any man alive will ever rear a daughter!
For she must have both hoods and gowns, and hoops
to swell her pride,
With scarfs and stays, and gloves and lace, and she
will have men beside;
And when she's dress'd with care and cost, all tempt-
ing, fine, and gay,
As men should serve a cucumber, she flings herself
away.*

You baggage! you hussy! you inconsiderate jade! had you been hanged it would not have vexed me; for that might have been your misfortune; but to do such a mad thing by choice!—The wench is married, husband.

Peach. Married! the captain is a bold man, and will risk anything for money: to be sure he believes her a fortune. Do you think your mother and I should have lived comfortably so long together if ever we had been married, baggage?

Mrs. P. I knew she was always a proud slut, and now the wench hath played the fool and married, because, forsooth, she would do like the gentry! Can you support the expense of a husband, hussy, in gaming and drinking? have you money enough to carry on the daily quarrels of man and wife about who shall squander most. If you must be married, could you introduce nobody into our family but a highwayman? Why, you foolish jade, thou wilt be as ill used and as much neglected as if thou hadst married a lord!

Peach. Let not your anger, my dear, break through the rules of decency; for the captain looks upon himself, in the military capacity, as a gentleman by his profession. Besides what he hath already, I know he is in a fair way of getting or of dying; and both these ways, let me tell you, are most excellent chances for a wife. Tell me hussy, are you ruined or no?

Mrs. P. With Polly's fortune she might very well have gone off to a person of distinction: yes, that you might, you pouting slut.

Peach. What! is the wench dumb? speak, or I'll make you plead by squeezing out an answer from you. Are you really bound wife to him, or are you only upon liking. (*Pinches her.*)

Polly. Oh! (*Screaming.*)

Mrs. P. How the mother is to be pitied who hath handsome daughters! Locks, bolts, bars, and lectures of morality, are nothing to them; they break through them all; they have as much pleasure in cheating a father and mother, as in cheating at cards.

Peach. Why, Polly, I shall soon know if you are married, by Macheath's keeping from our house.

(*Polly crosses to the centre.*)

AIR.—POLLY.

*Can love be controll'd by advice?
Will cupid our mothers obey?
Though my heart were as frozen as ice,
At his flame 'twould have melted away.
When he kiss'd me, so sweetly he press'd,
'Twas so sweet that I must have complied,
So I thought it both safest and best,
To marry for fear you should chide.*

Mrs. P. Then all the hopes of our family are gone for ever and ever!

Peach. And Macheath may hang his father and mother-in-law, in hopes to get into their daughter's fortune.

Polly. I did not marry him (as 'tis the fashion), coolly and deliberately, for honour or money—but I love him.

Mrs. P. Love him! worse and worse! I thought the girl had been better bred. Oh husband! husband! (*Crosses to centre,*) her folly makes me mad! my head swims! I'm distracted! I can't support myself—Oh! (*Faints in a chair.*)

Peach. See, wench, to what a condition you have reduced your poor mother! A glass of cordial this instant! How the poor woman takes it to heart! (*Polly goes out and returns with it, R.H.*) Ah, hussy! now this is the only comfort your mother has left.

Polly. Give her another glass, sir; my mamma drinks double the quantity whenever she is in this way. This, you see, fetches her.

Mrs. P. The girl shows such readiness, and so much concern, that I almost could find in my heart to forgive her.

AIR.

O Polly, you might have toy'd and kiss'd:

By keeping men off, you keep them on.

Polly. But he so teased me,
And he so pleased me,
What I did you must have done.

Mrs. P. Not with a highwayman—you sorry slut.

Peach. A word with you, wife. 'Tis no new thing for a wench to take a man without consent of parents. You know 'tis the frailty of woman, my dear.

Mrs. P. Yes, indeed, the sex is frail; but the first time a woman is frail, she should be somewhat nice methinks, for then or never is her time to make her fortune: after that she hath nothing to do but to guard herself from being found out, and she may do what she pleases.

Peach. Make yourself a little easy; I have a thought shall soon set all matters again to rights. (*Crosses to*

Polly.) Why so melancholy, Polly? since what is done cannot be undone, we must endeavour to make the best of it. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Mrs. P. Well, Polly, as far as one woman can forgive another, I forgive thee.—Your father is too fond of you, hussy. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Polly. Then all my sorrows are at an end.

Mrs. P. A mighty likely speech, in troth, for a wench who is just married!

AIR.—POLLY.

*I like a ship in storms was toss'd,
Yet afraid to put into land,
For seized in the port, the vessel's lost
Whose treasure is contraband.*

*The waves are laid,
My duty's paid;
O joy beyond expression!
Thus safe ashore,
I ask no more;
My all's in my possession.*

Peach. I hear customers in t'other room; go talk with them, Polly; but come again as soon as they are gone.—But hark ye, child, if 'tis the gentleman who was here yesterday about the repeating watch, say you can't get intelligence of it till to-morrow, for I lent it to Sukey Straddle to make a figure with to-night at a tavern in Drury-lane. If t'other gentleman calls for the silver-hilted sword, you know Beetle-browed Jemmy hath it on, and he doth not come from Tunbridge till Tuesday night, so that it cannot be had till then. (*Exit Polly, L.H.*) Dear wife, be a little pacified; don't let your passion run away with your senses: Polly, I grant you, hath done a rash thing.

Mrs. P. If she had had only an intrigue with the fellow, why the very best families have excused and huddled up a frailty of that sort. 'Tis marriage, husband, that makes it a blemish.

Peach. But money, wife, is the true fuller's-earth for reputations; there is not a spot or stain but what it can take out. I tell you, wife, I can make this match turn to our advantage.

Mrs. P. I am very sensible, husband, that captain Macheath is worth money, but I am in doubt whether he hath not two or three wives already, and then, if he should die in a session or two, Polly's dower would come into dispute.

Peach. That, indeed, is a point which ought to be considered. The lawyers are bitter enemies to those in our way; they don't care that any body should get a clandestine livelihood but themselves.

Enter POLLY, L.H.

Polly. 'Twas only Nimming Ned: he brought in a damask window-curtain, a hoop-petticoat, a pair of silver candlesticks, a perriwig, and one silk stocking, from the fire that happened last night.

Peach. There is not a fellow that is cleverer in his way, and saves more goods out of the fire, than Ned. But now, Polly, to your affair; for matters must not be as they are. You are married then, it seems?

Polly. Yes, sir.

Peach. And how do you propose to live, child?

Polly. Like other women, sir, upon the industry of my husband.

Mrs. P. What! is the wench turned fool! a highwayman's wife, like a soldier's, hath as little of his pay as of his company.

Peach. And had not you the common views of a gentlewoman in your marriage, Polly?

Polly. I don't know what you mean, sir.

Peach. Of a jointure, and of being a widow.

Polly. But I love him sir: how then could I have thoughts of parting with him?

Peach. Parting with him! why that is the whole scheme and intention of all marriage articles. The comfortable estate of widowhood is the only hope that

keeps up a wife's spirits. Where is the woman who would scruple to be a wife, if she had it in her power to be a widow whenever she pleased? If you have any views of this sort, Polly, I shall think the match not so very unreasonable.

Polly. How I dread to hear your advice! yet I must beg you to explain yourself.

Peach. Secure what he hath got, have him 'peach'd the next sessions, and then at once you are made a rich widow.

Polly. What! murder the man I love! the blood runs cold at my heart at the very thought of it!

Peach. Fie, Polly! what hath murder to do in the affair? Since the thing sooner or later must happen, I dare say that the captain himself would like that we should get the reward for his death sooner than a stranger. Why, Polly, the captain knows that as 'tis his employment to rob, so 'tis ours' to take robbers; every man in his business: so that there is no malice in the case.

Mrs. P. To have him 'peach'd is the only thing could ever make me forgive her.

AIR.—POLLY.

*Oh ponder well! be not severe;
So save a wretched wife:
For on the rope that hangs my dear,
Depends poor Polly's life.*

Mrs. P. But your duty to your parents, hussy, obliges you to hang him. What would many a wife give for such an opportunity!

Polly. What is a jointure, what is widowhood, to me? I know my heart; I cannot survive him. Thus, sir, it will happen to your poor Polly.

Mrs. P. What! is the fool in love in earnest then? I hate thee for being particular. Why, wench, thou art a shame to thy very sex.

Polly. But hear me, mother—if you ever loved—

Mrs. P. Those cursed play-books she reads have been her ruin! One word more, hussy, and I shall knock your brains out, if you have any.

Peach. Keep out of the way, Polly, for fear of mischief, and consider of what is proposed to you.

Mrs. P. Away, hussy. Hang your husband, and be dutiful. (*Exit Polly, L.H.*) The thing, husband, must and shall be done. If she will not know her duty, we know ours'.

Peach. But really, my dear, it grieves one's heart to take off a great man. When I consider his personal bravery, his fine stratagems, how much we have already got by him, and how much more we may get, methinks I can't find in my heart to have a hand in his death: I wish you could have made Polly undertake it.

Mrs. P. But in case of necessity—our own lives are in danger.

Peach. Then, indeed, we must comply with the customs of the world, and make gratitude give way to interest—he shall be taken off.

Mrs. P. I'll undertake to manage Polly.

Peach. And I'll prepare matters for the Old Bailey.
[*Exeunt Peachum, L.H. and Mrs. Peachum, R.H.*]

Enter POLLY, L.H.

Polly. Now I'm a wretch indeed!—Methinks I see him already in the cart, sweeter and more lovely than the nosegay in his hand!—I hear the crowd extolling his resolution and intrepidity!—I see him at the tree! the whole circle are in tears!—What then will become of Polly?—As yet I may inform him of their design, and aid him in his escape.—It shall be so.—But then he flies, absents himself, and I bar myself from his dear, dear conversation! that too will distract me.—If he keeps out of the way, my papa and mamma may in time relent, and we may be happy—If he stays he is hanged, and then he is lost for ever!—He intended to lie con-

cealed in my room till the dusk of the evening. If they are abroad, I'll this instant let him out, lest some accident should prevent him. (*Knocks at the door.*)

Enter MACHEATH.

DUET.

Mac. *Pretty Polly, say,
 When I was away,
 Did your fancy never stray
 To some newer lover?*

Polly. *Without disguise,
 Heaving sighs,
 Doting eyes,
 My constant heart discover.
 Fondly let me loll!*

Mac. *O pretty, pretty Poll!*

Polly. And are you as fond of me as ever, my dear?

Mac. Suspect my honour, my courage, suspect any thing but my love.—May my pistols miss fire, and my mare slip her shoulder while I am pursued, if ever I forsake thee!

Polly. Nay, my dear, I have no reason to doubt you, for I find, in the romance you lent me, none of the great heroes were false in love.

AIR.—MACHEATH.

*My heart was so free,
It roved like the bee,
Till Polly my passion requited;
I sipt each flower,
I changed ev'ry hour,
But here ev'ry flow'r is united.*

Polly. Were you sentenced to transportation, sure, my dear, you could not leave me behind you—could you?

Mac. Is there any power, any force, that could tear me from thee? You might sooner tear a pension out of the hands of a courtier, a fee from a lawyer, a pretty woman from a looking glass, or any woman from quadrille—But to tear me from thee is impossible!

DUET.

Mac. *Were I laid on Greenland's coast,
And in my arms embraced my lass,
Warm amidst eternal frost,
Too soon the half year's night would pass.*

Polly. *Were I sold on Indian soil,
Soon as the burning day was closed,
I could mock the sultry toil,
When on my charmer's breast reposed.*

Mac. *And I would love you all the day,*

Polly. *Every night would kiss and play,*

Mac. *If with me you'd fondly stray,*

Polly. *Over the hills and far away.*

Polly. Yes, I would go with thee. But oh!—how shall I speak it? I must be torn from thee! We must part!

Mac. How! part!

Polly. We must, we must!—My papa and mamma are set against thy life: they now, even now, are in search after thee: they are preparing evidence against thee; thy life depends upon a moment!

Mac. My hand, my heart, my dear, is so rivetted to thine, that I cannot unloose my hold!

Polly. But my papa may intercept thee, and then I should lose the very glimmering of hope. A few weeks, perhaps, may reconcile us all. Shall thy Polly hear from thee?

Mac. Must I then go?

Polly. And will not absence change your love?

Mac. If you doubt it, let me stay—and be hanged.

Polly. Oh, how I fear! how I tremble!—Go—but, when safety will give you leave, you will be sure to see me again; for, till then, Polly is wretched.

DUET.

Mac. *The miser thus a shilling sees,
Which he's obliged to pay;
With sighs resigns it by degrees,
And fears 'tis gone for aye.*

Polly. *The boy thus, when his sparrow's flown,
The bird in silence eyes;
But soon as out of sight 'tis gone,
Whines, whimpers, sobs, and cries.
[Exeunt Polly, R.H. and Macheath, L.H.]*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Tavern near Newgate.*

JEMMY TWITCHER, CROOK-FINGER'D JACK, WAT DREARY, ROBIN OF BAGSHOT, NIMMING NED, HARRY PADDINGTON, MAT-O'THE-MINT, BEN BUDGE, and the rest of the Gang, at the Table, with Wine, Brandy, and Tobacco.

Ben. But pr'ythee, Mat, what is become of thy brother Tom? I have not seen him since my return from transportation.

Mat. Poor brother Tom had an accident, this time twelvemonth, and so clever made a fellow he was, I could not save him from these stealing rascals, the sur-

geons; and now, poor man, he is among the otamies, at Surgeon's-hall.

Ben. So, it seems, his time was come.

Jemmy. But the present time is ours', and nobody alive hath more. Why are the laws levelled at us? are we more dishonest than the rest of mankind? What we win, gentlemen, is our own, by the law of arms, and the right of conquest.

Jack. Where shall we find such another set of practical philosophers, who, to a man, are above the fear of death?

Wat. Sound men and true!

Robin. Of tried courage, and indefatigable industry!

Ned. Who is there here that would not die for his friend?

Harry. Who is there here that would betray him for his interest?

Mat. Show me a gang of courtiers that can say as much. (*All laugh.*)

Ben. We are for a just partition of the world; for every man has a right to enjoy life.

Mat. We retrench the superfluities of mankind. The world is avaricious, and I hate avarice. A covetous fellow, like a jackdaw, steals what he was never made to enjoy, for the sake of hiding it. These are the robbers of mankind; for money was made for the free-hearted and generous: and where is the injury of taking from another what he hath not the heart to make use of? (*All laugh.*)

Jemmy. Our several stations for the day are fixed. Good luck attend us all! Fill the glasses!

AIR.—MAT.

*Fill ev'ry glass, for wine inspires us,
And fires us,*

With courage, love, and joy.

Women and wine should life employ;

Is there aught else on earth desirous?

Chorus. *Fill ev'ry glass, &c.*

Enter MACHEATH.

Mac. Gentlemen, well met ; my heart hath been with you this hour, but an unexpected affair hath detained me. No ceremony, I beg you !

Mat. We were just breaking up, to go upon duty. Am I to have the honour of taking the air with you, sir, this evening, upon the Heath ? I drink a dram, now and then, with the stage-coachman, in the way of friendship and intelligence ; and I know that, about this time, there will be passengers upon the western road, who are worth speaking with.

Mac. I was to have been of that party—but—

Mat. But what, sir ?

Mac. Is there any one that suspects my courage ?

Mat. We have all been witnesses of it.

Mac. My honour and truth to the gang ?

Mat. I'll be answerable for it.

Mac. In the division of our booty, have I ever shown the least marks of avarice or injustice ?

Mat. By these questions, something seems to have ruffled you. Are any of us suspected ?

Mac. I have a fixed confidence, gentlemen, in you all, as men of honour, and as such I value and respect you. Peachum is a man that is useful to us.

Mat. Is he about to play us any foul play ? I'll shoot him through the head.

All. And I.

Mac. I beg you, gentlemen, act with conduct and discretion. A pistol is your last resort.

Mat. He knows nothing of this meeting.

Mac. Business cannot go on without him : he is a man who knows the world, and is a necessary agent to us. We have had a slight difference, and, till it is accommodated, I shall be obliged to keep out of his way. Any private dispute of mine shall be of no ill consequence to my friends. You must continue to act under his direction ; for the moment we break loose from him, our gang is ruined.

Mat. He is, to us, of great convenience.

Mac. Make him believe I have quitted the gang.

All. How?

Mac. Which I can never do but with life. At our private quarters I will continue to meet you. A week, or so, will probably reconcile us.

Mat. Your instructions shall be observed. 'Tis now high time for us to repair to our several duties; so, till the evening, at our quarters in Moorfields, we bid you farewell.

Mac. I shall wish myself with you. Success attend you.
(*Sits down melancholy at the Table.*)

AIR AND CHORUS.—M. F-O'THE-MINT AND GANG.

*Let us take the road ;
Hark! I hear the sound of coaches,
The hour of attack approaches,
To your arms, brave boys, and load.
See the ball I hold!
Let the chemists toil like asses,
Our fire their fire surpasses,
And turns all our lead to gold.*

(*The Gang, ranged in the Front of the Stage, load their Pistols, and stick them under their Girdles; then go off, singing the first Part in Chorus, R.H.*)

Mac. What a fool is a fond wench! Polly is most confoundedly bit. I love the sex; and a man who loves money might as well be contented with one guinea, as I with one woman. The town, perhaps, hath been as much obliged to me for recruiting it with free-hearted ladies, as to any recruiting officer in the army. If it were not for us and the other gentlemen of the sword, Drury-lane would be uninhabited.

AIR.—MACHEATH.

*If the heart of a man is depress'd with cares,
The mist is dispell'd when a woman appears;*

*Like the notes of a fiddle, she sweetly, sweetly,
Raises the spirits, and charms our ears.*

*Roses and lilies her cheeks disclose,
But her ripe lips are more sweet than those ;*

*Press her,
Caress her,
With blisses,
Her kisses*

Dissolve us in pleasure and soft repose.

I must have women—there is nothing unbends the mind like them : money is not so strong a cordial for the time—Drawer !

Enter DRAWER, R.H.D.

Is the porter gone for all the ladies, according to my directions ?

Drawer. I expect him back every minute : but you know, sir, you sent him as far as Hockley-in-the-hole for three of the ladies ; for one in Vinegar-yard, and for the rest of them, somewhere about Lewkner's-lane. Sure some of them are below, for I hear the bar bell. As they come, I will shew them up. Coming ! coming. [*Exit.*]

Enter MRS. COAXER, DOLLY TRULL, MRS. VIXEN, BETTY DOXY, JENNY DIVER, MRS. SLAMMEKIN, SUKEY TAWDRY, and MOLLY BRAZEN, R.H.

Mac. Dear Mrs. Coaxer, you are welcome ! you look charmingly to-day : I hope you don't want the repairs of quality, and lay on paint.—Dolly Trull ! kiss me, you slut ! you are always so taken up with stealing hearts, that you don't allow yourself time to steal any thing else.—Ah Dolly ! thou wilt ever be a coquette.—Mrs. Vixen, I'm your's ! I always loved a woman of wit and spirit ; they make charming mistresses, but plaguy wives.—Betty Doxy ! come hither, hussy : do you drink as hard as ever ? you had better stick to good wholesome beer ; for in troth, Betty, strong waters will, in

time, ruin your constitution: you should leave those to your betters.—What, and my pretty Jenny Diver too! as prim and demure as ever! there is not any prude, though ever so high bred, hath a more sanctified look, with a more mischievous heart: ah, thou art a dear, artful hypocrite!—Mrs. Slammerkin! as careless and genteel as ever! all you fine ladies, who know your own beauty, affect an undress.—But see here's Sukey Tawdry come to contradict what I was saying.—Molly Brazen! (*She kisses him.*) That's well done! I love a free-hearted wench: thou hast a most agreeable assurance, girl, and art as willing as a turtle.

AIR AND CHORUS.—MACHEATH AND LADIES.

*Youth's the season made for joys,
Love is then our duty;
She alone who that employs,
Well deserves her beauty.
Let's be gay,
While we may,
Beauty's a flower despised in decay.*

Chorus. Youth's the season &c.

*Let us drink and sport to-day,
Ours' is not to-morrow;
Love with youth flies swift away,
Age is nought but sorrow.
Dance and sing,
Time's on the wing,
Life never knows the return of spring.*

Chorus. Let us drink, &c.

Mac. Now, pray, ladies, take your places. Here, drawer, bring us more wine. If any of the ladies choose gin, I hope they will be so free as to call for it.

Jenny. You look as if you meant me. Wine is strong enough for me. Indeed, sir, I never drink strong waters but when I have the cholic.

Mac. Just the excuse of the fine ladies! why a lady of quality is never without the cholic. I hope, Mrs. Coaxer, you have had good success of late in your visits among the mercers.

Mrs. C. We have so many interlopers; yet, with industry, one may still have a little picking.—If any woman hath more art than another, to be sure 'tis Jenny Diver.

Mac. Have done with your compliments, ladies, and drink about. You are not so fond of me, Jenny, as you used to be.

Jenny. 'Tis not convenient, sir, to shew my fondness among so many rivals. 'Tis your own choice, and not the warmth of my inclination, that will determine you.—But, to be sure, sir, with so much good fortune as you have had upon the road, you must be grown immensely rich.

Mac. The road, indeed, hath done me justice, but the gaming-table hath been my ruin.

Jenny. A man of courage should never put any thing to the risk but his life. These are the tools of a man of honour: cards and dice are only fit for cowardly cheats, who prey upon their friends.

(She takes up his pistol; Sukey Tawdry takes up the other.)

Sukey. This, sir, is fitter for your hand. Besides your loss of money, 'tis a loss to the ladies. How fond could I be of you! but, before company, 'tis ill bred.

Mac. Wanton hussies!

Jenny. I must, and will, have a kiss, to give my wine a zest.

(They take him about the Neck, and make signs to Peachum and Constables, who rush in upon him, R.H.)

Peach. I seize you, sir, as my prisoner.

Mac. Was this well done, Jenny?—Women are decoy ducks; who can trust them? jades, jilts, furies.

Peach. Your case, Mr. Macheath, is not particular. The greatest heroes have been ruined by women.—But, to do them justice, I must own they are a pretty sort

of creatures, if we could trust them. You must now, sir, take your leave of the ladies; and, if they have a mind to make you a visit, they will be sure to find you at home. This gentleman, ladies, lodges in Newgate. Constables, wait upon the captain to his lodgings.

AIR.—MACHEATH.

*At the tree I shall suffer with pleasure,
At the tree I shall suffer with pleasure;
Let me go where I will,
In all kinds of ill,
I shall find no such furies as these are.*

[Exit Macheath, guarded with Peachum and Constables, R.H.D.]

Mrs. V. (R.H.) Look ye, Mrs. Jenny, though Mr. Peachum may have made a private bargain with you and Sukey Tawdry, for betraying the captain, as we were all assisting we ought all to share alike. *[Exit, R.H.D.]*

Jenny. As far as a bowl of punch, or a treat, I believe Mrs. Sukey will join me—as for any thing else, ladies, you cannot, in conscience, expect it.

Mrs. S. Dear madam!

(Offering the pass to Mrs. Vixen.)

Mrs. V. I wouldn't for the world.

Mrs. S. Nay—thus I must stay all night.

Mrs. V. Since you command me—

Mrs. S. (After having given way to Mrs. Vixen, pushes her from the door.) Let your betters go before you. *[Exeunt, R.H.D.]*

SCENE II.—Newgate.

Enter LOCKIT, MACHEATH, and Constables, L.H.

Lockit. Noble captain, you are welcome! you have not been a lodger of mine this year and a half. You

know the custom, sir ; garnish, captain, garnish.—Hand me down those fetters there. (*Noise of chains behind.*)

Mac. Those, Mr. Lockit, seem to be the heaviest of the whole set. With your leave, I should like the further pair better.

Lockit. Look ye, captain, we know what is fittest for our prisoners. When a gentleman uses me with civility, I always do the best I can to please him.—Hand them down, I say. We have them of all prices, from one guinea to ten ; and 'tis fitting every gentleman should please himself.

Mac. I understand you, sir. (*Gives Money.*) The fees here are so many, and so exorbitant, that few fortunes can bear the expense of getting off handsomely, or of dying like a gentleman.

Lockit. Those, I see, will fit the captain better.—Take down the further pair.—

Enter Turnkey with the chains, R.H.

Lockit. Do but examine them, sir—Never was better work—How genteelly they are made!—They will sit as easy as a glove, and the nicest man in England might not be ashamed to wear them. (*He puts on the chains.*) If I had the best gentleman in the land in my custody, I could not equip him more handsomely. And so, sir—I now leave you to your private meditations. [*Exeunt Lockit and Turnkey, L.H.*]

AIR.—MACHEATH.

*Man may escape from rope and gun,
Nay, some have outlived the doctor's pill;
Who takes a woman must be undone,
That basilisk is sure to kill.
The fly, that sips treacle, is lost in the sweets,
So he that tastes woman, woman, woman,
He, that tastes woman, ruin meets.*

To what a woeful plight have I brought myself! Here must I (all day long, till I am hanged) be confident to hear the reproaches of a wench, who lays her ruin at my door—I am in the custody of her father; and, to be sure, if he knows of the matter, I shall have a fine time on't betwixt this and my execution.—But I promised the wench marriage.—What signifies a promise to a woman? does not man, in marriage itself, promise a hundred things that he never means to perform? Do all we can, women will believe us; for they look upon a promise as an excuse for following their own inclinations.—But here comes Lucy, and I cannot get from her—'would I were deaf!

Enter LUCY, through the arch.

Lucy. You base man, you!—how can you look me in the face, after what hath past between us?—Oh, Mac-heath! thou hast robbed me of my quiet—to see thee tortured would give me pleasure.

AIR.—LUCY.

*Thus, when a good housewife sees a rat
In her trap in the morning taken,
With pleasure her heart goes pit-a-pat,
In revenge for her loss of bacon.
Then she throws him
To the dog or cat,
To be worried, crush'd, and shaken.*

Mac. Have you no tenderness, my dear Lucy! to see your husband in these circumstances?

Lucy. A husband!

Mac. In every respect but the form; and that, my dear, may be said over us at any time.—Friends should not insist upon ceremonies. From a man of honour, his word is as good as his bond.

Lucy. It is the pleasure of all you fine men to insult the women you have ruined.

Mac. The very first opportunity, my dear (but have patience), you shall be my wife in whatever manner you please.

Lucy. Insinuating monster! And so you think I know nothing of the affair of miss Polly Peachum?—I could tear thy eyes out.

Mac. Sure, Lucy, you can't be such a fool as to be jealous of Polly.

Lucy. Are you not married to her, you brute, you?

Mac. Married! very good. The wench gives it out only to vex thee, and to ruin me in thy good opinion. 'Tis true I go to the house, I chat with the girl, I say a thousand things to her (as all gentlemen do), that mean nothing, to divert myself; and now the silly jade has set it about that I am married to her. Indeed, my dear Lucy, those violent passions may be of ill consequence to a woman in your condition.

Lucy. Come, come, captain, for all your assurance, you know that miss Polly hath put it out of your power to do me the justice you promised me.

Mac. A jealous woman believes every thing her passion suggests. To convince you of my sincerity, if we can find the ordinary, I shall have no scruples of making you my wife; and I know the consequence of having two at a time.

Lucy. That you are only to be hanged, and so get rid of them both.

Mac. I am ready, my dear Lucy! to give you satisfaction—if you think there is any in marriage.—What can a man of honour say more?

Lucy. So then it seems you are not married to miss Polly?

Mac. You know, Lucy, the girl is prodigiously conceited: no man can say a civil thing to her, but (like other fine ladies) her vanity makes her think he's her own for ever and ever.

AIR.

*The first time at the looking-glass
 The mother sets her daughter,
 The image strikes the smiling lass
 With self-love ever after.
 Each time she looks, she, fonder grown,
 Thinks every charm grows stronger ;
 But, alas, vain maid ! all eyes but your own
 Can see you are not younger.*

When women consider their own beauties, they are all alike unreasonable in their demands ; for they expect their lovers should like them as long as they like themselves.

Lucy. Yonder is my father—Perhaps this way we may light upon the ordinary, who shall try if you will be as good as your word—for I long to be made an honest woman. [*Exeunt*, R.H.

Enter PEACHUM, and LOCKIT with an Account Book, L.H.

Lock. In this last affair, brother Peachum, we are agreed. You have consented to go halves in Mac-heath.

Peach. We shall never fall out about an execution. But as to that article, pray how stands your last year's account ?

Lock. If you will run your eye over it, you'll find 'tis fairly and clearly stated.

Peach. This long arrear of the government is very hard upon us. Can it be expected that we should hang our acquaintance for nothing, when our betters will hardly save theirs' without being paid for it ? Unless the people in employment pay better, I promise them for the future I shall let other rogues live beside their own.

Lock. Perhaps, brother, they are afraid those matters may be carried too far. We are treated, too, by them with contempt, as if our profession were not reputable.

Peach. In one respect, indeed, our employment may be reckoned dishonest; because, like great statesmen, we encourage those who betray their friends.

Lock. Such language, brother, any where else might turn to your prejudice. Learn to be more guarded, I beg you.

AIR.—LOCKIT.

*When you censure the age,
Be cautious and sage,
Lest the courtiers offended should be;
If you mention vice or bribe,
'Tis so pat to all the tribe,
Each cries—That was levell'd at me.*

Peach. Here's poor Ned Clincher's name, I see: sure, brother Lockit, there was a little unfair proceeding in Ned's case; for he told me in the condemned hold, that, for value received, you had promised him a session or two longer without molestation.

Lock. Mr. Peachum—this is the first time my honour was ever called in question.

Peach. Business is at an end—if once we act dishonourably.

Lock. Who accuses me?

Peach. You are warm, brother.

Lock. He that attacks my honour, attacks my livelihood—and this usage—sir—is not to be borne.

Peach. Since you provoke me to speak—I must tell you too, that Mrs. Coaxer charges you with defrauding her of her information-money for the apprehending of curl-pated Hugh. Indeed, indeed, brother, we must punctually pay our spies, or we shall have no information.

Lock. Is this language to me, sirrah—who have saved you from the gallows, sirrah!

(*Collaring each other.*)

Peach. If I am hanged, it shall be for ridding the world of an arrant rascal.

Lock. This hand shall do the office of the halter you deserve, and throttle you—you dog!

Peach. Brother, brother—we are both in the wrong—we shall be both losers in the dispute—for you know we have it in our power to hang each other. You should not be so passionate.

Lock. Nor you so provoking.

Peach. 'Tis our mutual interest, 'tis for the interest of the world, we should agree. If I said any thing, brother, to the prejudice of your character, I ask pardon.

Lock. Brother Peachum—I can forgive as well as resent—Give me your hand; suspicion does not become a friend.

Peach. I only meant to give you occasion to justify yourself. But I must now step home, for I expect the gentleman about this snuff-box that Filch nimmed two nights ago in the park. I appointed him at this hour.

[*Exit, L.H.D.*]

Enter LUCY, R.H.

Lock. Whence come you, hussy?

Lucy. My tears might answer that question.

Lock. You have been whimpering and fondling, like a spaniel, over the fellow that hath abused you.

Lucy. One can't help love; one can't cure it. 'Tis not in my power to obey you and hate him.

Lock. Learn to bear your husband's death like a reasonable woman; 'tis not the fashion now-a-days so much as to affect sorrow upon these occasions. Act like a woman of spirit, hussy, and thank your father for what he is doing.

AIR.—LUCY.

*Is then his fate decreed, sir,
Such a man can I think of quitting?
When first we met, so moves me yet,
O see how my heart is splitting!*

Lock. Look ye, Lucy, there is no saving him—so I think you must even do like other widows—buy yourself weeds, and be cheerful.

AIR.—LOCKIT.

*You'll think, ere many days ensue,
This sentence not severe;
I hang your husband, child, 'tis true,
But with him hang your care.
Twang dillo dee.*

[*Exit, L.H.*

Enter MACHEATH, R.H.

Lucy. Though the ordinary was out of the way to-day, I hope, my dear, you will, upon the first opportunity, quiet my scruples.—Oh, sir! my father's hard heart is not to be softened, and I am in the utmost despair.

Mac. But if I could raise a small sum—would not twenty guineas, think you, move him?—Of all the arguments in the way of business, the perquisite is the most prevailing.—Money, well-timed, and properly applied, will do any thing.

Lucy. What love or money can do shall be done; for all my comfort depends upon your safety.

Enter POLLY, L.H.

Polly. Where is my dear husband?—Was a rope ever intended for this neck?—Why dost thou turn

away from me?—'tis thy Polly—'tis thy wife.

Mac. Was ever such an unfortunate rascal as I am!

Lucy. Was there ever such another villain!

Polly. Oh, Macheath! was it for this we parted? Taken! imprisoned! tried! hanged!—Cruel reflection! I'll stay with thee till death—no force shall tear thy dear wife from thee now.—What means my love?—not one kind word! not one kind look!—Think what thy Polly suffers to see thee in this condition!

Mac. I must disown her. (*Aside.*) The wench is distracted!

Lucy. Am I then bilked of my virtue? Can I have no reparation? Sure men were born to lie, and women to believe them! Oh villain! villain!

Polly. Am I not thy wife?—Thy neglect of me, thy aversion to me, too severely proves it.—Look on me—Tell me, am I not thy wife?

Lucy. Perfidious wretch!

Polly. Barbarous husband!

Lucy. Hadst thou been hanged five months ago, I had been happy.

Polly. If you had been kind to me till death, it would not have vexed me.

Lucy. Art thou, then, married to another? Hast thou two wives, monster?

Mac. If woman's tongue can cease for an answer—hear me.

Lucy. I wont.—Flesh and blood can't bear my usage!

Polly. Shall not I claim my own? Justice bids me speak.

AIR.—MACHEATH.

*How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmer away!
But while ye thus teaze me together,
To neither a word will I say;
But toll de roll, &c.*

Polly. Sure, my dear, there ought to be some preference shown to a wife—at least she may claim the appearance of it. He must be distracted with misfortunes, or he could not use me thus.

Lucy. Oh villain! villain! thou hast deceived me!—I could even inform against thee with pleasure—Not a prude wishes more heartily to have facts against her intimate acquaintance, than I now wish to have facts against thee. I would have her satisfaction, and they should all out.

DUET.—POLLY AND LUCY.

Polly. *I'm bubbled.*

Lucy. *I'm bubbled.*

Polly. *Oh, how I'm troubled!*

Lucy. *Bamboozled and bit!*

Polly. *My distresses are doubled.*

Lucy. *When you come to the tree, should the
hangman refuse,
These fingers with pleasure could fasten
the noose.*

Polly. *I'm bubbled, &c.*

Mac. Be pacified, my dear Lucy—this is all a fetch of Polly's, to make me desperate with you, in case I get off. If I am hanged, she would fain have the credit of being thought my widow. Really, Polly, this is no time for a dispute of this sort; for whenever you are talking of marriage, I am thinking of hanging.

Polly. And hast thou the heart to persist in disowning me?

Mac. And hast thou the heart to persist in persuading me that I am married? Why, Polly, dost thou seek to aggravate my misfortunes?

Lucy. Really, miss Peachum, you do but expose yourself; besides, 'tis barbarous in you to worry a gentleman in his circumstances, miss Polly.

AIR.—POLLY.

*Cease your funning,
Force or cunning
Never shall my heart trepan ;
All these sallies
Are but malice,
To seduce my constant man.*

*'Tis most certain,
By their flirting,
Women oft have envy shown ;
Pleased to ruin
Others' wooing,
Never happy in their own !*

Decency, madam, methinks, might teach you to behave yourself with some reserve to the husband, while his wife is present.

Mac. But, seriously, Polly, this is carrying the joke a little too far.

Lucy. (*Crosses to centre.*) If you are determined, madam, to raise a disturbance in the prison, I shall be obliged to send for the turnkey, to show you the door. I am sorry, madam, you force me to be so ill-bred, madam.

Polly. Give me leave to tell you, madam, these forward airs don't become you in the least, madam ; and my duty, madam, obliges me to stay with my husband, madam.

AIR.

Lucy. *Why how now, madam Flirt ?
If you thus must chatter,
And are for flinging dirt,
Let's try who best can spatter,
Madam Flirt !*

Polly. *Why, how now, saucy jade?*
Sure, the wench is tipsy!
How can you see me made (To him.)
The scoff of such a gipseey?
Saucy Jade? (To her.)

Enter PEACHUM, L.H.D.

Peach. Where's my wench? Ah, hussy, hussy!—
 Come home, you slut! and when your fellow is hanged,
 hang yourself, to make your family some amends.

Polly. Dear, dear father! do not tear me from him.
 —I must speak—I have more to say to him.—Oh,
 twist thy fetters about me, that he may not haul me
 from thee!

Peach. Sure, all women are alike! if ever they com-
 mit one folly, they are sure to commit another, by
 exposing themselves.—Away—not a word more.—You
 are my prisoner, now, hussy.

AIR.—POLLY.

No pow'r on earth can e'er divide
The knot that sacred love hath tied;
When parents draw against our mind,
The truelove's knot they faster bind.
Oh, oh, ray, oh, Amborah—Oh, oh, &c.
(Holding Macheath, Peachum pulling her.)
[Exeunt Peachum and Polly. Lucy seats herself,
 L.H.

Mac. I am naturally compassionate, wife, so that I
 could not use the wench as she deserved, which made
 you, at first, suspect there was something in what she
 said.

Lucy. Indeed, my dear, I was strangely puzzled!

Mac. If that had been the case, her father would
 never have brought me into this circumstance—No,
 Lucy, I had rather die than be false to thee!

Lucy. How happy am I, if you say this from your heart! for I love thee so, that I could sooner bear to see thee hanged, than in the arms of another.

Mac. But couldst thou bear to see me hanged?

Lucy. Oh, Macheath! I could never live to see that day!

Mac. You see, Lucy, in the account of love, you are in my debt.—Make me, if possible, love thee more, and let me owe my life to thee—if you refuse to assist me, Peachum and your father will immediately put me beyond all means of escape.

Lucy. My father, I know, hath been drinking hard with the prisoners, and I fancy he is now taking his nap in his own room—if I can procure the keys, shall I go off with thee, my dear?

Mac. If we are together, 'twill be impossible to lie concealed. As soon as the search begins to be a little cool, I will send to thee; till then, my heart is thy prisoner.

Lucy. Come then, my dear husband, owe thy life to me; and though you love me not, be grateful.—But that Polly runs in my head strangely. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Mac. A moment of time may make us unhappy for ever.

AIR.—LUCY.

*I like the fox shall grieve,
Whose mate hath left her side;
Whom hounds from morn to eve,
Chase o'er the country wide.
Where can my lover hide?
Where cheat the weary pack?
If love be not his guide,
He never will come back.* [*Exeunt, R.H.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Newgate.*

Enter LUCY and LOCKIT, L.H.

Lockit. To be sure, wench, you must have been aiding and abetting to help him to this escape?

Lucy. Sir, here hath been Peachum, and his daughter Polly; and, to be sure, they know the ways of Newgate as well as if they had been born and bred in the place all their lives. Why must all your suspicion light upon me?

Lockit. Lucy, Lucy, I will have none of these shuffling answers!

Lucy. Well then, if I know any thing of him, I wish I may be burned!

Lockit. Keep your temper, Lucy, or I shall pronounce you guilty.

Lucy. Keep your's, sir—I do wish I may be burned, I do; and what can I say more to convince you?

Lockit. Did he tip handsomely?—How much did he come down with? Come, hussy, don't cheat your father, and I shall not be angry with you—Perhaps you have made a better bargain with him than I could have done—How much, my good girl?

Lucy. You know, sir, I am fond of him, and would have given money to have kept him with me.

Lockit. Ah, Lucy! thy education might have put thee more upon thy guard: for a girl, in the bar of an alehouse, is always besieged.

Lucy. If you can forgive me, sir, I will make a fair confession; for, to be sure, he hath been a most barbarous villain to me!

Lockit. And so you have let him escape, hussy—have you?

Lucy. When a woman loves, a kind look, a tender word, can persuade her to any thing, and I could ask no other bribe. Notwithstanding all he swore, I am

now fully convinced, that Polly Peachum is actually his wife—Did I let him escape, fool that I was! to go to her? Polly will wheedle herself into his money; and then Peachum will hang him, and cheat us both.

Lockit. So I am to be ruined, because, forsooth, you must be in love!—A very pretty excuse!

Lucy. I gave him his life, and that creature enjoys the sweets of it—Ungrateful Macheath!

AIR.—LUCY.

*My love is all madness and folly ;
 Alone I lie,
 Toss, tumble, and cry,
 What a happy creature is Polly !
 Was e'er such a wretch as I ?
 With rage I redden like scarlet,
 That my dear inconstant varlet,
 Stark blind to my charms,
 Is lost in the arms
 Of that jilt, that inveigling harlot !
 Stark blind to my charms,
 Is lost in the arms
 Of that jilt, that inveigling harlot !
 This, this my resentment alarms.*

Lockit. And so, after all this mischief, I must stay here to be entertained with your caterwauling, mistress Puss!—Out of my sight, wanton strumpet!—You shall fast and mortify yourself into reason, with, now and then, a little handsome discipline, to bring you to your senses.—Go!—[*Exit Lucy, L.H.*] Peachum, then, intends to outwit me in this affair, but I'll be even with him!—The dog is leaky in his liquor, so I'll ply him that way, get the secret from him, and turn this affair to my own advantage. Lucy!

Enter LUCY, L.H.

Are there any of Peachum's people now in the house?

Lucy. Filch, sir, is drinking a quartern of strong waters, in the next room, with Black Moll.

Lockit. Bid him come to me. [Exit, L.H.]

Enter FILCH, L.H.

Why, boy, thou lookest as if thou wert half starved,—like a shotten herring.—But, boy, canst thou tell me where thy master is to be found?

Filch. At his lock, sir, at the Crooked Billet.

Lockit. Very well—I have nothing more with you. (*Exit Filch, L.H.*) I'll go to him there, for I have many important affairs to settle with him, and in the way of those transactions, I'll artfully get into his secret—so that Macheath shall not remain a day longer out of my clutches. [Exit, L.H.]

Enter LUCY, L.H.

Lucy. Jealousy, rage, love, and fear, are at once tearing me to pieces. How am I weather-beaten and shattered with distress!

AIR.—LUCY.

*I'm like a skiff on the ocean tost,
Now high, now low, with each billow borne,
With her rudder broke and her anchor lost,
Deserted and all forlorn.
While thus I lie rolling and tossing all night,
That Polly lies sporting on seas of delight!
Revenge, revenge, revenge,
Shall appease my restless sprite.*

I have the ratsbane ready—But say I were to be hanged—I never could be hanged for any thing that would give me greater comfort than the poisoning that slut.

Enter FILCH, L.H.

Filch. Madam, here's Miss Polly come to wait upon you.

Lucy. Show her in.

[*Exit Filch, L.H.*

Enter POLLY, L.H.

Dear madam! your servant.—I hope you will pardon my passion when I was so happy to see you last—I was so overrun with the spleen, that I was perfectly out of myself; and really when one hath the spleen, every thing is to be excused by a friend.

AIR.—LUCY.

*When a wife's in the pout
(As she's sometimes, no doubt,
The good husband, as meek as a lamb,
Her vapours to still,
First grants her will,
And the quieting draught is a dram;
Poor man! and the quieting draught is a dram.*

—I wish all our quarrels might have so comfortable a reconciliation.

Polly. I have no excuse for my own behaviour, madam, but my misfortunes—and really, madam, I suffer too upon your account.

Lucy. But, miss Polly—in the way of friendship, will you give me leave to propose a glass of cordial to you?

Polly. Strong waters are apt to give me the headache.—I hope, madam, you will excuse me?

Lucy. Not the greatest lady in the land could have better in her closet for her own private drinking.—You seem mighty low in spirits, my dear!

Polly. I am sorry, madam, my health will not allow me to accept of your offer—I should not have left you in the rude manner I did when we met last, madam, had not my papa hauled me away so unexpectedly.—I was indeed somewhat provoked, and perhaps might use some expressions that were disrespectful—but really, madam, the captain treated me with so much contempt

and cruelty, that I deserved your pity rather than your resentment.

Lucy. But since his escape, no doubt, all matters are made up again. Ah, Polly, Polly! 'tis I am the unhappy wife, and he loves you as if you were only his mistress.

Polly. Sure, madam, you cannot think me so happy as to be the object of your jealousy? A man is always afraid of a woman who loves him too well—so that I must expect to be neglected and avoided.

Lucy. Then our cases, my dear Polly, are exactly alike: both of us, indeed, have been too fond. Indeed, my dear Polly, we are both of us a cup too low; let me prevail upon you to accept of my offer.

AIR.—LUCY.

*Come, sweet lass,
Let's banish sorrow
Till to-morrow;
Come, sweet lass,
Let's take a chirping glass.
Wine can clear
The vapours of despair,
And make us light as air;
Then drink and banish care.*

I can't bear, child, to see you in such low spirits—and I must persuade you to what I know will do you good.

[*Exit, R.H.*

Polly. All this wheedling of Lucy can't be for nothing—at this time, too, when I know she hates me! The dissembling of a woman is always the forerunner of mischief. By pouring strong waters down my throat, she thinks to pump some secrets out of me—I'll be upon my guard, and wont taste a drop of her liquor, I'm resolved.

Re-enter LUCY, with strong waters, R.H.

Lucy. Come, miss Polly.

Polly. Indeed, child, you have given yourself trouble to no purpose; you must, my dear, excuse me.

Lucy. Really, miss Polly, you are as squeamishly affected about taking a cup of strong waters as a lady before company.

Polly. What do I see? Macheath again in custody! Now every glimmering of happiness is lost!

(Drops the glass of liquor on the ground.)

Enter LOCKIT, MACHEATH, PEACHUM, and Constables, R.H.

Lockit. Set your heart at rest, captain—You have neither the chance of love or money for another escape—for you are ordered to be called down upon your trial immediately.

Peach. Away, hussies! This is not a time for a man to be hampered with his wives—you see the gentleman is in chains already.

Lucy. Oh, husband, husband! my heart longed to see thee; but to see thee thus distracts me!

Polly. Will not my dear husband look upon his Polly? Why hadst thou not flown to me for protection? With me thou hadst been safe.

DUET.—POLLY AND LUCY.

Polly. *Hither, dear husband, turn your eyes!*

Lucy. *Bestow one glance to cheer me!*

Polly. *Think, with that look, thy Polly dies.*

Lucy. *Oh shun me not, but hear me!*

Polly. *'Tis Polly sues.*

Lucy. *'Tis Lucy speaks.*

Polly. *Is thus true love requited?*

Lucy. *My heart is bursting!*

Polly. *Mine, too, breaks!*

Lucy. *Must I—*

Polly. *Must I be slighted?*

Mac. What would you have me say, ladies? You see

the affair will soon be at an end, without my disobliging either of you.

Peach. But the settling of this point, captain, might prevent a lawsuit between your two ladies.

AIR.—MACHEATH.

*Which way shall I turn me? how can I decide?
Wives, the day of your death, are as fond as a bride.
One wife is too much for most husbands to hear,
But two at a time, there's no mortal can bear!
This way and that way, and which way I will,
What would comfort the one, t'other wife would take
ill!—*

Polly. But, if his own misfortunes have made him insensible to mine, a father, sure, will be more compassionate!—Dear, dear sir! sink the material evidence, and bring him off at his trial—Polly, upon her knees, begs it of you.

AIR.—POLLY.

*When my hero in court appears,
And stands arraign'd for his life,
Then think of poor Polly's tears,
For ah! poor Polly's his wife.
Like the sailor, he holds up his hand,
Distress'd on the dashing wave;
To die a dry death at land
Is as bad as a watery grave.
And alas, poor Polly!
Alack, and well-a-day!
Before I was in love,
Oh, ev'ry month was May!*

Peach. Set your heart at rest, Polly—your husband is to die to-day; therefore, if you are not already pro-

vided, 'tis high time to look about for another.—
There's comfort for you, you slut!

Lockit. We are ready, sir, to conduct you to the
Old Bailey.

AIR.—MACHEATH.

*The charge is prepared, the lawyers are met,
The judges all ranged ; a terrible show !
I go undismay'd, for death is a debt—
A debt on demand, so take what I owe.
Then farewell, my love—dear charmers, adieu !
Contented I die—'tis the better for you.
Here ends all dispute, for the rest of our lives ;
For this way, at once, I please all my wives.*

Now, gentlemen, I am ready to attend you.

[*Exeunt Peachum, Lockit, Macheath, &c. R.H.
Polly and Lucy, L.H.*

SCENE II.—*Another Part of the Prison.*

Dance of Prisoners in Fetters.

SCENE III.—*The condemned Hold.*

MACHEATH *in a melancholy Posture.*

MEDLEY.

*Oh, cruel, cruel, cruel case !
Must I suffer this disgrace !*

*Of all the friends in time of grief,
When threat'ning death looks grimmer,
Not one so sure can bring relief,
As this best friend, a brimmer. (Drinks.)*

*Since I must swing—I scorn, I scorn to wince or
whine! (Rises.)*

*But now again my spirits sink,
I'll raise them high with wine. (Drinks.)*

*But valour the stronger grows,
The stronger liquor we're drinking;
And how can we feel our woes,
When we've lost the trouble of thinking?
(Drinks.)*

*If thus a man can die,
Much bolder with brandy.
(Pours out a bumper of Brandy.)*

*So I drink off this bumper—and now I can stand
the test,
And my comrades shall see that I die as brave as
the best. (Drinks.)*

*But can I leave my pretty hussies
Without one tear or tender sigh?
Their eyes, their lips, their busses,
Recall my love—Ah! must I die?*

*Since laws were made for every degree,
To curb vice in others, as well as in me,
I wonder we ha'n't better company
Upon Tyburn tree.*

*But gold from law can take out the sting;
And if rich men, like us, were to swing,
'Twould thin the land, such numbers to string
Upon Tyburn tree.*

Enter GOALER, L.H.

Goaler. Some friends of your's, captain, desire to be admitted—I leave you together.

*Enter BEN BUDGE, MAT-O'THE-MINT, L.H. the
Goaler, searches them, and exit, L.H.*

Mac. For having broke prison, you see, gentlemen, I am ordered for immediate execution.—The sheriff's officers, I believe, are now at the door. That Jemmy Twitcher should 'peach me, I own surprised me—'Tis a plain proof that the world is all alike, and that even our gang can no more trust one another than other people; therefore, I beg you gentlemen, to look well to yourselves, for in all probability, you may live some months longer.

Mat. We are all heartily sorry, captain, for your misfortune; but 'tis what we must all come to.

Mac. Peachum and Lockit, you know, are infamous scoundrels—their lives are as much in your power, as yours' are in theirs'—Remember your dying friend—'Tis my last request—Bring those villains to the gallows before you, and I am satisfied.

Mat. We'll do it.

Re-enter GAOLER, L.H.

Gouler. Miss Polly and miss Lucy entreat a word with you. [Exit, L.H.]

Mac. Gentlemen, adieu!

[*Exeunt Ben Budge and Mat-o'the-Mint, L.H.*]

Enter LUCY and POLLY, L.H.

Mac. My dear Lucy! my dear Polly! whatsoever hath passed between us is now at an end.

TRIO.—LUCY, POLLY, and MACHEATH.

Lucy. 'Would I might be hang'd!

Polly. And I would so too!

Lucy. To be hang'd with you.

Polly. My dear, with you.

Mac. Oh, leave me to thought! I fear, I doubt!

I tremble—Idroop!—See, my courage is out!
(*Turns up the empty pot.*)

Polly. No token of love?

Mac. See my courage is out!
(Turns up the empty bottle.)

Lucy. No token of love?

Polly. Adieu!

Lucy. Farewell!

Mac. But hark! I hear the toll of the bell.

Re-enter GAOLER, L.H.

Gaoler. Four women more, captain, with a child a-piece.

Mac. Tell the sheriff's officers I am ready.

[*Exeunt, L.H.*]

Mob. (Within.) A reprieve! a reprieve!

Re-enter MACHEATH, POLLY, LUCY, &c. L.H.

Mac. Look ye, ladies we will have no controversy now—and, ladies, I hope you will give me leave to present a partner to each of you; and for this time, I take Polly for mine—and for life, you slut, for we are really married.

FINALE.

*Thus, I stand like a Turk, and his doxies around,
From all sides, their glances his passion confound:
For black, brown, and fair, his inconstancy burns,
And the different beauties subdue him by turns:
Each calls forth their charms, to provoke his desires,
Though willing to all, but with one he retires:
Then think of this maxim, and put off all sorrow,
The wretch of to-day may be happy to-morrow.*

CHORUS.

*Then think of this maxim and cast away sorrow,
The wretch of to-day may be happy to-morrow.*



Disposition of the Characters when the Curtain falls.

