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SF PERUSALS

The Drunkard
or
Down with Demon Drink!

A Melodrama

Book, music and lyrics by
Brian J. Burton

Based on the 19th century version by
W. H. Smith and "A Gentleman"

Samuel French — London
New York — Sydney — Toronto — Hollywood



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CHARACTERS

The Drunkard or **Down With Demon Drink!** was first presented at the Swan Theatre Worcester, on December 14th, 1968 with the following cast:—

Mrs Wilson	Margaret Callow
Mary Wilson	Mary Cooke
Squire Cribbs	Frank Bench
Edward Middleton	Ted Cooke
Sophia Spindle	Sonia Davis
William Dowton	Colin Russell
Agnes Dowton	Christine Wargent
Mrs Miller	Jo Kislingbury
Mrs Gates	Beryl Gough
Mrs Stevens	Diana Brooks
Sam Adams	Willie Harrell
The Landlord	Leslie G. Hill
Julia Middleton	Anne Needham
Arden Rencelaw	Tom Chester
An Officer of the Law	Luke Albarin

Villagers, etc.: Susan Townsend, Adele Head, Rosemary Ratcliffe, Adelaide Murray, Brenda Wooff, Mary Shaw, Betty Bench, Glynis Gunter, David Ryder, John Lester, Douglas Taylor, Patrick Rose, Luke Albarin.

The play was directed by Brian J. Burton
Settings designed by Tim Gowcher *and* David Perry
Stage Manager Trevor Beddoes
Lighting Chris Brazier
Costumes Shirley Goldfinch
Musical Director Noel Vine

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY (*in order of appearance*)

Mrs Wilson, a good woman, in the vale of years
Mary Wilson, the sweet heroine
Squire Cribbs, a villain of the deepest dye
Edward Middleton, the hero with a lesson to learn
Sophia Spindle, an eccentric spinster
William Dowton, a simple rustic
Agnes Dowton, his poor demented sister
Mrs Miller, a villager of three score and ten summers
Mrs Gates, a villager with a taste for gossip
Mrs Stevens, another villager with a similar taste
Sam Adams, an elderly rustic with a thirst
The Landlord, of the village inn
Julia Middleton, an innocent child
Arden Rencelaw, a noble philanthropist
An Officer of the Law
Villagers, a Clergyman, etc.
(Non-speaking parts which may be omitted or increased)

ACT I
Scene 1 Interior of a pretty cottage in Hertfordshire towards the end of the 19th century.
Scene 2 A leafy lane in the village—later the same day.
Scene 3 Interior of Miss Spindle's house—some weeks later.
Scene 4 The leafy lane—two months later.
Scene 5 Exterior of the cottage—later the same day.

ACT II
Scene 1 Miss Spindle's house—a few weeks later.
Scene 2 The leafy lane—TEN YEARS LATER.
Scene 3 The village inn—TWO YEARS LATER.
Scene 4 The leafy lane—several months later.
Scene 5 Interior of the cottage—some weeks later.

ACT III
Scene 1 A street in London—TWO YEARS LATER.
Scene 2 A wretched garret in London—the next night.
Scene 3 The London street—early the next morning.
Scene 4 The same—the next day.
Scene 5 The exterior of the cottage in the village—later the same day.

The running time of the play is 2 hours 15 minutes including the songs but excluding intervals.

SONGS

ACT I

A Mother's Love (Mrs Wilson and Mary)
Now I've Found Thee (Edward and Mary)
I'm a Charmer (Miss Spindle)
Wedding Day (The Company)

ACT II

Old Devil Temptation (William)
He Has Fallen (Cribbs)
Those Who Are Good (Julia)

ACT III

Pity a Girl (Miss Spindle)
Though He Has Left Me (Mary and Julia)
Down with Demon Drink (Edward and the Landlord)
Those Who Are Good—*Reprise* (The Company)
Curtain Call Medley (The Company)

A full music plot appears at the end of the book and cues are given throughout the text.
The full piano score is available from Samuel French Ltd.

To

THE SWAN THEATRE COMPANY

INTRODUCTION

The 'delirium tremens dramas'—as they came to be known—had their roots in England probably as the result of a series of illustrations by George Cruikshank, the original illustrator of Dickens. These were published by the artist, who was himself an ardent teetotaller, under the title of *The Drunkard's Progress*. They were dramatised and performed with considerable success both in this country and in America, where the temperance movement was gathering strength.

The theme proved so popular in the theatre that the list of plays written and performed in the 19th century details scores of plays with titles such as *The Drunkard's Children*, *The Drunkard's Doom*, *The Drunkard's Glass*, *The Drunkard's Warning*, *The Drunkard's Sin*, *The Drunken Cobbler*, *The Drunken News-writer*, *The Drunken Recruit*, and so on.

Many of these plays crossed the Atlantic but soon the American writers started to turn out plays of their own on the same theme. The showman P. T. Barnum had taken over the Boston Museum and opened it as a miniature world fair. He was an energetic temperance lecturer and in the winter of 1844 presented, in the lecture hall of the Museum, the first production of *The Drunkard* or *The Fallen Saved*—'a moral domestic drama of American life in five acts'.

The authorship of the play is in some doubt, but it is certain that an American actor, William Henry Smith (1806–72), was a major contributor. He had been a hard drinker who had 'signed the pledge', and his experience both in this respect and in the theatre assured a considerable degree of authenticity.

The foreword of the first published edition of the play states that 'the proprietor of the Museum engaged a gentleman of known and appreciated literary requirements to undertake the task'. It would appear, however, that the result was not acceptable as written, for the foreword goes on to say that the play, 'though eminently worthy of the gentleman and the scholar was, from want of theatrical experience, merely a story in dialogue, entirely deficient in stage tact and dramatic effect'. So the script was 'placed in the hands of Wm. H. Smith with the request that he would finish it and prepare it for the stage'. This he did; the adaptation, under his own direction and with himself playing the hero, opened in Boston where it played for 130 nights. Its success was repeated later at another Barnum Museum, in New York.

It is not impossible that Barnum himself wrote the original text and that Smith, who was engaged to direct it and act the leading role, refused to do so unless he was allowed to do some rewriting. This would not have pleased the showman and could account for why the name of the 'gentleman' was never revealed. All this is mere speculation, but what is certain is that the play was a tremendous success and has survived together with William Pratt's *Ten Nights in a Bar Room* as one of the best-known of all temperance dramas.

Productions of *The Drunkard* have been numerous but perhaps its greatest

claim to fame is that, until recently, it held the world record for the longest run of any play. It opened at the Theatre Mart in Los Angeles on July 6th, 1933, and played every night without missing a single performance for twenty years, until September 6th, 1953. The following night *The Wayward Way*, a musical version of the same play, opened at the same theatre and played alternate nights with the straight version for another six years. It came off then only because the fire authorities condemned the theatre and it was forced to close. *The Wayward Way* was presented in this country at the New Lyric, Hammersmith, on November 16th, 1964, and transferred to the Vaudeville on January 27th, 1965.

In addition to the original American publication by Samuel French, New York, there have been editions published by Lacy, Dicks, and The Bodley Head. The last, published in 1943, was the 19th century adaptation by Thomas Hales Lacy, edited by Montagu Slater.

This new version is different from all the others in that it has been adapted to enable the action of the play to take place in England. This, of course, is not just a matter of altering the locations of the scenes. Furthermore, the dialogue has been trimmed in some places and expanded in others to make the speeches and situations stronger, and much of it has been rewritten. Whole scenes have been omitted and new ones substituted where it was felt that modern audiences would find them tiresome or too full of contemporary references. Minor characters have been 'axed' and others made to 'change their sex' so that the play can be more easily cast by modern drama groups with a preponderance of women. Ten original songs in the Victorian manner have been added, as those which were without doubt performed in the original version have been lost without trace. In spite of all these alterations, however, the intention has been to provide a melodrama with the same flavour as the original but with the same sort of appeal to modern audiences that the other plays in the series have enjoyed all over the world during the past few years.

However, the plot of *The Drunkard* is much nearer to conventional melodrama than the more sensational *Maria Marten* and *Sweeney Todd*, or even *Lady Audley's Secret* and *East Lynne*. All the basic ingredients are included. There is the pure and innocent heroine who, in spite of trial and tribulation, is ever faithful and forgiving. There is the utterly ruthless and despicable villain who is inevitably defeated in the end—in Victorian morality, the wages of sin must be death. The manly hero, although allowed to stray from the path of virtue, reforms, and is re-united with his long-suffering wife. There is the comic man who is not quite as simple as he seems at first sight and who always turns up in the nick of time, no matter how unlikely the locality, to rescue the hero or heroine in distress. We have the sweet wide-eyed child, usually with long flaxen hair, who seems preoccupied with thoughts of death and of Heaven and angels. There is the eccentric spinster (often this is a clergyman or some other professional man) for comic relief and the opportunity for poking gentle fun at the nobility or upper classes, and finally there is the 'heavy' who turns up late in the play like 'deus ex machina' to put things right and deliver a protracted homily.

The play is full of rhetoric and one word is rarely used where a dozen can be employed. Oddly enough, although it is doubtful if the porter-swilling, gin-tippling audience understood one word of the verbose speeches, providing that they didn't occur too frequently they were every bit as popular and exciting as a good murder. Above all else, virtue was triumphant. It had to be; this was a strongly-held Victorian belief from which no melodramatist dared to deviate even had he wished to do so. If a present-day audience will accept this as truth for the duration of the performance they will be able to enter into it with the same artless and innocent pleasure as the audience of a hundred years ago most certainly did.

BRIAN J. BURTON

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(See also page ii)

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Music 1: Overture

ACT I

SCENE 1

The interior of a pretty cottage in a village in Hertfordshire about thirty miles from London

The year is 1880 (*or any other year in the 19th century in which you may decide to set the play*)

The setting of this scene (*in common with all the others in the play*) *is as simple as possible. Only the bare essentials of furniture and stage properties are used. All entrances, throughout the play, are either from left or right. Full-stage settings alternate with front stage scenes to enable the simple changes to be made*

The setting of this scene consists of a backing set against back traverse curtains. On this backing is painted a window and the view through it as well as the curtains and pictures, etc. (*See Production Notes at end of book*)

There is a table left centre stage on which is a family bible and an aspidistra. There are chairs to the right and left of the table and an armchair DRC. Mrs Wilson, a woman in her late sixties, is seated in the armchair and her daughter Mary is seated left of the table working at an embroidery frame

Music 2: Heroine Theme 'A' (softly)

Mrs Wilson (*breathing a deep sigh*) Ah me, what is to become of us?

Mary Hush, Mother! Do not distress yourself so.

Mrs Wilson How can I fail to do so? It was here in this very room that your poor, dear father breathed his last. This very chair is indeed dear to me for it was in this he sat the very day before he left the cares of this mortal world behind him for ever.

Mary Dear, dear Father.

Mrs Wilson (*rising and moving US of table*) Oh, how he loved this calm retreat, this dear cottage which has been our happy home for so many years of bliss. Many times, during his last terrible illness, he rejoiced that when her earthly days were o'er, the dear companion of his years would close her eyes in these rural shades and be laid in yon little nook beside him, (*she sighs and sits in the armchair R*) but now . . .

Music 2 ends

Mary (*putting her embroidery on the table*) Dear Mother, 'tis true. This sweet cottage is most dear to us, but we are but the tenants. Our worthy landlord, old Mr Middleton troubled us but little, but now he is no more. It is rumoured abroad that our little home is to be sold. But we cannot censure his son for that.

Mrs Wilson No; the young must be provided for. For my own part, I willingly would bow with resignation to Heaven which loveth while it chasteneth. But when I think that you, my beloved, my only child, will be exposed to the thousand temptations of life as a penniless orphan, then I begin to fear that . . .

There is a knock, off L

Hark! (*She rises*) What was that?

There is another knock

Ah, a knock! (*Calling*) Who is it? (*To Mary*) Dry your tears, my darling. We must not let our visitor observe us weeping. (*Calling*) Come in.

Music 3: Villain Theme (briefly)

Squire Cribbs enters L. He is a man in his sixties, dressed in the traditional costume of the villains of melodrama

Mrs Wilson Good morning, sir. Mary, my child, a chair for the Squire.

Mary moves her chair DL for the Squire and crosses to in front of the table. Mrs Wilson sits in the armchair

Cribbs Good morning, Mrs Wilson. Good morning, my dear young lady.

Mary curtsies and then sits in the chair right of the table

Mary Good morning, sir.

Cribbs (*sitting*) No doubt you have heard the dreadful news.

Mrs Wilson Indeed yes.

Cribbs 'Tis a sad calamity that has befallen the village, my good Mrs Wilson.

Mrs Wilson There's many a poor person, I fear, will have reason to think so, sir.

Cribbs You are right. He was a good man, that Mr Middleton. Many's the time he came to me for the benefit of my legal advice. He placed great confidence in it. I am proud to have been of service to him. He was my very dear friend.

Mary It is rumoured that he was very rich at one time, Mr Cribbs.

Cribbs 'Tis true—when the times were good. But bad speculations, unlucky investments, false friends accounted for every penny that he had. (*Rising*) He died without a halfpenny to pass on to his son. Alas, alas! We all have our ups and downs, my dear madam.

Mrs Wilson Ah, Squire, I perceive you are a man, who——

Cribbs Has a heart to feel for the unfortunate. True, true, madam. It is

the character I have attained, though far be it from me to boast. Now, the main reason for my visit is to enquire about your future welfare.

Mrs Wilson You are most kind, Squire.

Cribbs Not at all—not at all. (*Moving DS slightly; aside*) Little does she know the true purpose of my visit. Ha! Ha! (*Aloud*) Tell me, my dear Mrs Wilson, have you any prospect of—that is to say—have you provided—

Mary (*rising and moving DS*) It is true then—too true. The cottage and the garden will be sold?

Cribbs Why, what can the young man do, my dear? A giddy young man like him—fond of the world and given somewhat to excess, and without any sort of inheritance from his late lamented father. (*Moving L of Mary*) But pardon me, my dear Miss Mary, I would not call up a blush on the cheek of modesty. But you know, the extravagance, that is the folly—

Mrs Wilson Alas, sir, yes. I would say he is very much unlike his poor, dear departed father.

Cribbs Do not misunderstand me. I wish the young man well, with all my heart. Heaven knows I have cause to do so for his honoured father's sake. (*He brings out a handkerchief and puts it to his eyes with a great deal of show*)

Mrs Wilson Come, come, Mr Cribbs. He is better off. We must not mourn the death of a good man. It would be impiety. His end was that of a Christian!

Cribbs (*blowing his nose violently*) You are right, Mrs Wilson. Judge then of the interest which I take in the last remaining scion of that honoured stock. (*Aside*) 'Tis fortunate she does not know the true reason for my interest. (*Aloud*) But, madam, Edward Middleton—he is yet young and—

Mrs Wilson He cannot be more than twenty. I recollect him when a lad—a bright, blue-eyed boy with flaxen hair, tall for his age.

Cribbs Twenty-three last July, madam; that is his age to the day. But he is giddy, wild and reckless. (*A pause. He looks round the room, and moves to front of chair L.*) Well, madam, business is business. I am a plain man, Mrs Wilson, and sometimes called too blunt—and—

Mary Then we must leave the cottage, sir?

Cribbs (*pretending feeling*) No—no—not *yet*, my dear young lady. But it might be best to be prepared. Edward is inclined to be impulsive and once he has made up his mind, no power in Heaven or earth would change him from his course. I know that if I were to go down before him on bended knees, all my entreaties on your behalf would be of no avail. It might be prudent to look around for another place before he moves in the matter. It might save you from much inconvenience.

Mrs Wilson You impose upon us a severe task, my dear sir.

Cribbs Bear up, my dear madam—bear up. If I may be so officious, I would suggest that you try Hitchin. (*He moves to L of Mary*) Any healthy young woman, like your daughter, can obtain a profitable situation there. Think of it, my good madam. I will see you again before very long. (*He moves to exit L and turns*) And now Heaven bless you.

Mary (*moving to Mrs Wilson*) Mother, Mother—what is to become of us?
Mrs Wilson (*rising and putting her arm round Mary*) My child, my poor, poor child.

Music 4: Villain Theme

Cribbs (*by the exit; aside*) Well—that interview of mock sympathy and charity is over, and I flatter myself pretty well acted too. Ha! Ha! Yes, the widow and her child must quit the cottage—I'm resolved. First for the wrongs I years ago endured from old Mr Wilson and secondly, it suits my own interests—and this is what matters above all other considerations. Now for the next stage in my plot. I will seek out young Middleton and give him the benefit of my 'advice'. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Squire Cribbs exits L and Music 4 ends

Mrs Wilson Comfort, my daughter. It is a good thing to have a friend in the hour of trouble. This Mr Cribbs appears to be a very feeling man. Nevertheless, before we take his advice, we would do well to make our proposed trial of this young man, Edward Middleton. Are you ready?
Mary Yes, Mother.
Mrs Wilson You have the money in your purse?
Mary It is all here, Mother. Thirty crowns—the sum we have saved to purchase fuel for the winter.
Mrs Wilson That will pay off part of the amount owing for rent. When this young man finds we are disposed to deal fairly with him, he may relent. You turn pale, Mary. What ails you, child?
Mary Dear Mother—'Tis nothing. It will soon be over. It must be done, but I fear this young man. He has a reputation for being wild and reckless.
Mrs Wilson Fear not, Mary—fear not. Remember what I have told you. Call him to the door. Do not enter the house—just give him the money, and tell him your sad story. He must, from family and association at least, have the manners of a gentleman—and however wild a youth may be, when abroad among his associates, no gentleman ever insulted a friendless and unprotected woman!
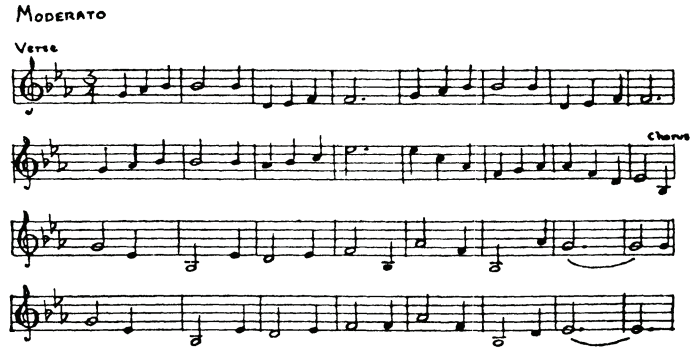
Music 5: Chords (briefly)

Mary You give me courage, dear Mother. (*Aside*) I tremble at the thought of what I needs must do. (*She goes to exit L*) Goodbye, dear Mother.

The introduction to Music 6 begins

Mrs Wilson Go forth, my child—go as the dove flew from the ark of old, and if thou shouldst fail in finding the olive branch of peace, return, and seek comfort where thou shalt surely find it—in the bosom of thy fond and widowed mother.

Music 6: A Mother's Love



Verse

Mrs Wilson

When you are lonely, when you are sad,
When times are trying, when times are bad,
There is a haven where you may rest—
Safe and contented on your mother's breast.

Mary crosses to L of Mrs Wilson who puts her arm on Mary's shoulder

Mrs Wilson
Mary } *(together)*

A mother's love will never fade.
A mother's love is true.
And you need never be afraid
For she will comfort you.

Mary breaks away to C stage

Mary When I am lonely, when I am sad,
When times are trying, when times are bad,
There is a haven where I may rest—
Safe and contented on my mother's breast.

Mrs Wilson to R of Mary—heads close together for final chorus

Mrs Wilson
Mary } *(together)*

A mother's love will never fade.
A mother's love is true.
And you need never be afraid
For she will comfort you.

At the end of the song Mary moves to exit L

Mary I go, Mother. I go.
Mrs Wilson God be with you on your mission, my child! God be with you!

Music 7: A Mother's Love into **Heroine Theme B**

Fade to Black-out

SCENE 2

A leafy lane in the village—later the same day

This is a front stage scene played against either a painted drop cloth or traverse curtains. There is a low cut-out tree profile stage right set far enough forward to enable characters to hide behind it

Mary enters R

Mary I have almost reached the residence of Mr Edward Middleton. In a few minutes, I shall see this dissipated young man. Oh, my poor mother must be deceived! How can a man such as he have pity for the children of poverty? (*Moving towards the tree*) We are but misfortune's suppliants for shelter beneath the roof of his cottage ... but who is this who approaches? 'Tis a gentleman. My fears tell me that he is the man I seek. Shall I ever have the courage to speak? I will pause till he has reached the house. (*She hides behind the tree*)

Music 7 ends

Music 8: Villain Theme (briefly)

Cribbs enters left. Edward Middleton enters right and crosses to centre. They meet CS

Cribbs Good day, son of my old friend! I have been looking for you.
Edward (*shaking hands*) Mr Cribbs, your most obedient servant. You may be sure that any friend of my father is more than welcome.
Cribbs Well said—nobly said. I see your father before me, when I look on you.
Edward And what may I have the pleasure of doing for you, Mr Cribbs?
Cribbs But a trifling matter, Mr Middleton. So trivial that I hesitate to bother you with it. Nevertheless, as your late father's legal adviser, I am obliged to do so.
Edward Yes?
Cribbs It is with regard to the cottage and the lands adjoining. When last we talked upon the subject—

Mary peeps L of the tree

Edward I was then ignorant that a poor widow and her only child—

Cribbs Who are in arrears for rent—

Edward Had lived there for many years, and that my father esteemed them most highly.

Cribbs That may be so, but you must not allow your heart to rule your head, young man. That is a fatal mistake that has led many a foolish man along the pathway that leads to ruin.

Edward (*turning and moving R slightly*) I could not turn them forth upon the world in the present condition of the old lady. She is ailing and may not be much longer for this world.

Cribbs Have you not heard of the workhouse?

Edward turns to Cribbs. Mary bobs up from behind the tree

Music 9: Chords

Edward The workhouse, Mr Cribbs? Certainly not! They must stay in the cottage that has been their home. How could I send them forth from the flowers which they have reared, the vines which they have trained in their course—a place endeared to them by tender domestic recollections and past remembrances of purity and happiness?

Cribbs What of the fences which they have neglected—the garden gate which is off its hinges—the branches of the old birch tree broken down for firewood—eh?

Edward (*moving to C raising his hand in protest*) Enough, Mr Cribbs, enough! I will not listen to you further. All this has been explained to me by my foster brother, William. The trees and the fences were broken down by idle school boys.

Cribbs (*crossing to Edward*) On reflection, I believe that I now understand you better. I comprehend your plan. We are both men of the world, are we not?

Edward I fail to understand you, sir.

Cribbs Well—the daughter—a fine girl, eh? Sparkling eyes, eh? (*Digging Edward in the ribs*) Dimples, eh? Roguish glances, eh? Ah, when I was young, eh? Ah, well—never mind. You have seen her, eh?

Edward I have never seen the girl. Explain yourself, Mr Cribbs.

Cribbs If you have not seen her—you will, eh? I understand. (*He takes a quick glance off stage L*) Little presents of game from the estate—mother and daughter grateful—eh? Eh? Very grateful—free access to the cottage at all hours, eh?

Edward Cribbs, you do not—you cannot mean what I—

Cribbs Why not? Why not?

Edward Cribbs—do you know that this girl has no father?

Cribbs Exactly—exactly. A very wild flower growing on the open heath.

Edward Have you forgotten that this poor girl has not a brother?

Cribbs That's it! A garden without a fence—not a stake standing. You have nothing to do but—step inside. Ha! Ha!

Edward (*catching hold of Cribbs by his lapels*) You villain, you cad, you cur! I respect your grey hairs. That is fortunate for you. (*He looses hold,*

pushes Cribbs away and takes a pace backwards) But I knew an old man once—peace to his ashes—whose hair was as grey as yours. Beneath that aged breast there beat a heart as pure as the first throbs of childhood. I let you go in peace. But had that old man heard you utter such foul sentences to his son; had he heard you tell me to enter, like a wolf, this fold of innocence, and tear from her mother's arms the hope of her old age, he would have forgotten the winters that had dried the pith within his aged limbs, seized you by the throat, and dashed you prostrate to the earth, as too foul a carcass to walk erect and mock the name of man.

Cribbs I perceive you are put out.

Edward (*moving away R*) Leave me, old man; begone! Your hot, lascivious breath cannot mingle with the sweet perfume of these wild flowers. Your raven voice will not harmonize with the warblings of these heavenly song birds which pour forth their praises to that Almighty Power, who looks with horror on your brutal crime. Begone! (*He points off L*)

Mary rushes to Edward and kneels at his feet

Mary The blessings of the widowed and fatherless be upon thee. May they accompany thy voice to Heaven's tribunal, not to cry for vengeance, but to plead for pardon for this wicked man.

Cribbs (*aside*) Ha! The widow's daughter. Now I must practice some artifice. (*Aloud*) Mr Middleton, you mistake me. I was but suggesting that you might visit these dear people to give them the benefit of your manly protection.

Mary weeps

I cannot endure a woman's tears. Poor, poor child. May heaven bless thee and protect thee. (*He moves towards the exit L*)

Music 10: Villain Theme (briefly)

(*Aside*) I'll be terribly revenged for this.

Cribbs exits

Edward (*aside*) This, then, is the widow's child. (*Aloud, turning to Mary and placing his hand on her head*) Rise, my dear and be assured of my sympathy for your mother's sorrows and of my assistance in your hour of need.

Mary (*rising*) Thank you, sir, for your cheering kindness. But I have an errand for you. (*Holding out her purse*) This is part of the rent which——

Edward Nay, then, you have not overheard my discourse with the old man, who has just left us. I have told him——

Music 11: Heroine Theme A (softly)

Mary Sir, I cannot tell a lie. I overheard all. We are to remain in the cottage. Oh, sir, is that any reason to withhold from you your due? It is

now paid with double pleasure, since we recognize a benefactor in our creditor. Take this, I entreat—'tis but a portion of the debt, but be assured, the remainder shall be paid as soon as busy, willing hands can earn it.

Edward (*aside; moving DL*) This young girl has quite taken my breath away. She is the most charming, most delightful, most beautiful girl that I have ever had the good fortune to behold.

Music 11 ends

(*Aloud; turning to Mary*) Nay, nay, dear girl, I do not require your money. Be pleased to retain it as a portion of your dowry.

Mary Sir!

Edward If, as you say, you overheard the conversation that I just held with that old man, you must know that I sometimes speak very plainly.

Mary (*apprehensively*) Yes, sir. Alas, it is not our fault that the fences are broken down. When my poor father lived, it was not so. But since——

Edward When that vile old man spoke to me of your charms, I heeded him not. There are plenty of pretty girls in this part of Hertfordshire, but I have now discovered for myself what I had heard before—something more than ordinary beauty—a charm of mental excellence, noble sentiment, filial piety. These are the beauties that render you conspicuous above all the maidens I have ever seen. (*Moving to Mary*) I speak plainly, for I speak honestly, and when I ask you to keep that money as a portion of your dowry, need I say into whose hands I would like it to fall at last?

Mary (*with bowed head*) To affect—to affect not to understand you, sir, would be an idle return for kindness such as yours, and yet——

Edward I sometimes walk down in the vicinity of your cottage, and——

Mary Should I see you go by without stopping—why then—why then——

Edward Then what—dear, dear Mary?

Mary Then should I suppose you had forgotten where we lived.

Edward Mary, my dearest—how could I ever forget? (*Aside*) Ah, little did I think when I contemplated selling that dear cottage, that it should be regarded as a casket, invaluable for the jewel it contained. (*Aloud; turning to Mary*) Mary, my dear, I have spoken plainly. Now will I venture even further. (*He takes a step towards Mary*) Will you—(*another step*)—could you?

Mary Oh, Edward!

Edward Would you do me the great honour of becoming my wife?

Mary But, Edward, I have but met you these few moments.

Edward In reality, but a few moments, but in my dreams have I known you all my life.
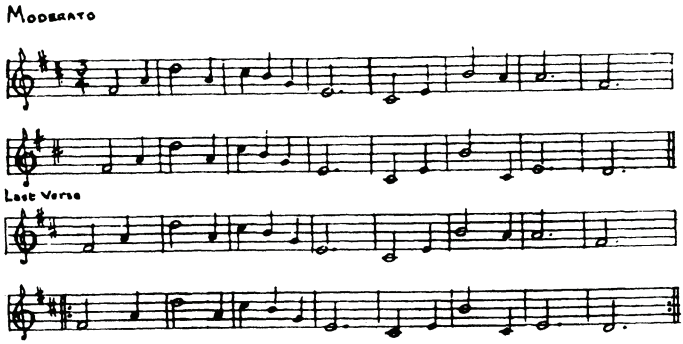
The introduction to Music 12 plays slowly

Marry me, Mary, and we will make your cottage our home, and my foster brother and his poor demented sister shall live on in mine.

Mary You overwhelm me, sir. What can I say?

Edward Say yes, say yes!

Music 12: Now I've Found Thee



Edward Now I've found thee, dearest heart
I will love thee ever,
And I vow we'll never part.
Nothing will us sever.

Mary (*turning away*)
But I scarcely know thee, sir.
Thou art nigh a stranger,
And I fear I must demur.
I might be in danger.

Edward (*to Mary, placing his hand on her shoulder*)
Oh, my love, thou must not fear.
Thou canst ever trust me.
Thou art safe with me, my dear.
I would never harm thee.

Mary (*turning to Edward*)
I believe thee, dearest love
Though I've lately met thee,
And I pray to Heaven above
Thou wilt ever love me.

Edward
Mary } (*together, holding their hands outstretched*)
Now I've found thee, dearest heart
I will love thee ever,
And I vow we'll never part.
Nothing will us sever.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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