

DOROTHY VERNON
OF HADDON HALL

A ROMANTIC COMEDY DRAMA FOUNDED ON
CHARLES MAJOR'S NOVEL OF THE SAME NAME

PERFORMED IN LONDON AS
DOROTHY O' THE HALL

BY

PAUL KESTER

Edited by David Trutt

DOROTHY VERNON OF HADDON HALL
BY PAUL KESTER, 1903.

INTRODUCTION	Page 3
CHARACTERS	Page 4
ACT I THE TERRACE, HADDON HALL	Page 5
ACT II DOROTHY'S ROOM, HADDON HALL	Page 29
ACT III THE WATCH TOWER ROOM, RUTLAND CASTLE	Page 47
ACT IV THE TERRACE, HADDON HALL	Page 58
STAGE SETS FOR DOROTHY'S ROOM AND THE TERRACE	Page 70

ACT I	DERBYSHIRE, 1560'S
ACT II	THREE WEEKS AFTER END OF ACT I
ACT III	ONE HOUR AFTER END OF ACT II
ACT IV	ONE HOUR AFTER END OF ACT III

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American author Charles Major produced the all-time best-selling story of the Dorothy Vernon / John Manners romance with his 1902 novel *Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall*. American playwright Paul Kester adapted the story for his play of the same name.

The play *Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall* opened on December 14, 1903 at the New York Theatre for forty performances. Bertha Galland was twenty seven when she first played the eighteen year old Dorothy Vernon.

The following is from a New York newspaper, written shortly after the opening. It would tend to explain why the play was renamed *Dorothy o' the Hall* when Fred Terry (as John Manners) and his wife Julia Neilson (as Dorothy Vernon) opened the play in London in 1906.

“Fred Zimmerman received from the office of the Lord Chamberlain, in London, a notice that he would not be allowed to produce *Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall* anywhere in England. The Lord Chamberlain is the British official censor of the stage, and he thinks, apparently, that some of the acts throw a too lurid light on royalty.

“The story of the play deals with the doings and misdoings of Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots, and various of their followers. Though the play has already be performed once in England, in order to be copyrighted, the Lord Chamberlain’s reader of plays evidently let it go through without paying much attention to its ‘faults.’

“Since Mr. Zimmerman has now disposed of the English rights to Fred Terry and Julia Neilson, he cares very little what action the Lord Chamberlain may take. Mr. Terry and Miss Neilson will have to suffer if it cannot be put on.”

Messrs. Major and Kester took many liberties with the original story and with historical accuracy. Most notable is that Dorothy was eighteen in 1563 and Mary Queen of Scots fled from Scotland to England in 1568; however, in the play both events occur within weeks of each other. Also, neither Queen has been historically linked to Haddon Hall.

Kester sharply etches a strong Dorothy, fearless John, and autocratic Sir George. It is a Haddon Hall tale of adventure and intrigue which will keep the reader guessing as to the outcome, which is quite dissimilar from the other versions.

HADDON HALL

SIR GEORGE VERNON, *King of the Peak.*

DOROTHY VERNON, *Sir George's daughter.*

SIR MALCOLM VERNON, *Dorothy's cousin.*

LADY VERNON, *Sir Malcolm's mother, (a widow, not Sir George's wife).*

JENNIE FAXTON, *Dorothy's Maid.*

WILL DAWSON, *A Retainer.*

MARK, *The Butcher.*

BESS, *The Cook.*

RUTLAND CASTLE

THE EARL OF RUTLAND.

SIR JOHN MANNERS, *Lord Rutland's Son.*

PERKIN, *A Dwarf, Jester to Lord Rutland.*

GREGORY, *A Servant.*

NOBILITY

ELIZABETH TUDOR, *Queen of England.*

MARY STUART, *Queen of Scotland.*

WILLIAM CECIL, *Lord Burleigh.*

SIR WILLIAM ST. LOE, *Captain of the Yeoman Guard.*

VARIOUS

VILLAGERS.

MEN-AT-ARMS.

SERVANTS.

The Scene shows a terrace and garden shut in by the range of Haddon Hall, and by a high garden wall. Steps lead down from the shallow terrace to the garden. At the head of these steps is an entrance to the building through Eagle Tower. Another flight of shallow steps leads down. Back from these steps, in the wall of the building, is DOROTHY'S door, heavily overgrown with ivy and roses. The terrace wall ends in the stone pillar of a high strong gate of wrought iron.

The scene is flooded with bright sunlight. Before the gate stands BESS, the cook, with a great ladle in her hand. With her are some kitchen WOMEN and WILL DAWSON, a retainer. From the distance come shouts and laughter, music, and voices singing.

VOICES. (*Offstage*) Come to the green! Come to the green! Long live Sir George Vernon! Long live the King of the Peak! Long live Mistress Dorothy! God save Sir George! God save our Lady! Come to the green! Come to the green!

BESS. Sir George has sent an ox for them to roast!

DAWSON. Aye, and six casks of ale!

BESS. Would God I were among them and not kept at home basting fat fowls and roasting good venison for this Sir Malcolm Vernon we have never seen.

DAWSON. 'Tis the third time of coming he has set.

BESS. Nay, were I Mistress Dorothy, I would not be betrothed to any man, cousin or kinsman, on his mother's word. For my part I'd have sight and speech of him ere I were bound.

DAWSON. Peace, Cook. One of our lady's rank may not be free to pick and choose,—she must e'en wed like princes, to build up her house.

BESS. Is not her father rich enough? And who is he who woos her? A broken gamester, and Queen Mary's fool.

DAWSON. Queen Mary be shut up a prisoner in her own kingdom now.

BESS. Ah,—aye, and so Sir Penniless Out-of-Favour must needs come into England to make good his suit to our young Mistress Dorothy.

DAWSON. She is the richest heiress in all Derbyshire.

BESS. Aye. Or all England as I wot.

(As they speak the shouts and laughter continue in the distance. Suddenly, mingling with these, can be heard the sound of curses and angry voices.)

VOICES. (*In the distance*) A Rutland man! Down with him! Down with the knave! Sir George shall hang the rascal! Aye! Sir George shall hang the Dwarf as he has hanged his betters!

BESS. (*At gate*) Look! What's amiss? Who have they there among them? Hark!

DAWSON. They cry a Rutland man.

BESS. God help him an he be.

DAWSON. A Rutland man! Let me go out! (*Opening the gate*) I would not miss the baiting of the rat! Here's Jennie Faxton! She can tell! I'm for the green! (*As he speaks, exit WILL DAWSON off beyond the gate.*)

(*The shouts come nearer. JENNIE FAXTON, a pretty village girl in holiday attire, appears in the gate.*)

JENNIE. (*Pausing breathlessly*) Where is Sir George? A Rutland man is taken! Let Sir George come quickly else he will come too late.

BESS. Nay,—see! They drag their prize across the footbridge. He will be roughly dealt with.

JENNIE. 'Tis Perkin. My Lord Rutland's dwarf—he that was Queen Mary's jester.

BESS. What brings him here to Haddon Hall? Comes he to mock Sir George's dignity upon our mistress' holiday?

JENNIE. They say he bears a letter from Lord Rutland to Sir George.

BESS. What's in the letter? What does Rutland write? God's my life, I'd stop his writing. He that hath been our bitterest foe these fifteen years. I'd cook his goose, would I! (*As she speaks she swings the great ladle in her hand. The VOICES sound nearer.*)

JENNIE. (*Covering her face with her hands, runs downstage.*) I will not look.

(*As she speaks, LADY VERNON enters from the door beneath the Eagle Tower. She pauses on the terrace. She is a woman of middle age, richly dressed.*)

LADY VERNON. How now! What brings this hooting rabble up the hill? Does my son come? Beshrew me, if they thus receive their master that shall be, it will go hard with them when his day comes to rule in Haddon Hall.

BESS. (*Aside*) Master already. Ha! We shall see days an this Sir Malcolm favour her.

LADY VERNON. Is my son at hand?

BESS. Nay, lady. 'Tis not Sir Malcolm come to claim his bride. 'Tis Rutland's dwarf, who brings a letter to Sir George.

(*As she speaks, SIR GEORGE VERNON enters from the Hall. He is a hale, jovial, ruddy man, with red hair turning grey.*)

SIR GEORGE. What! Is Sir Malcolm come at last? The laggard shall be welcome, lady, for your sake. Where is my daughter? Where is Dorothy? Let her be summoned. Doll!—I say! Come out and give your cousin greeting. Come out and see my choice for ye.

LADY VERNON. 'Tis not my son. It is some insult Rutland puts upon us. Some message from your enemy.

BESS. (*And those at gate*) A Rutland man is taken!

SIR GEORGE. How say you? What—A Rutland man?

(*The VILLAGERS enter, swarming about the gate,—men and women in holiday attire. In their midst—held by MARK, the butcher, and WILL DAWSON—is PERKIN, deformed but richly dressed, half in court costume, half in motley, his bauble in his hand, a letter in his belt. As they enter the men handle him roughly.*)

MARK. (*To others*) Here be Sir George. What say ye? Shall I clip his ears?

PERKIN. (*Struggling with his captors*) Awa', ye clouts! Dinna ye ken the respect ye owe to my fool's cap? Awa'! Sir George, I charge ye see me not ill used, for I am sent by those that shall hold ye to a strict account if harm befall me!

SIR GEORGE. (*To MARK, DAWSON, and men about PERKIN*) Let the knave go!

MARK and VILLAGERS. He is a Rutland man.

PERKIN. Why, and it please you, I am sent to claim the hand of Mistress Dorothy in marriage for Sir John Manners, my Lord Rutland's son, according to the bond ye made with him upon the day that she was christened, eighteen years ago. Or, if ye refuse her to him, to demand for this Sir John the forfeiture—a thousand crowns in gold, and two broad manors, according to the covenant.

SIR GEORGE. How? What? My Lord of Rutland still dares to claim my daughter for his son! Now, by God's death,—no man shall put this insult on me and escape! (*Striding to PERKIN, who shrinks back*) You dog, you mermet—weasel—rat! Is this from Rutland's lips, or have you ventured here upon your own fool's errand? Speak!

PERKIN. (*Cowering back*) Nay—From my Lord Rutland's lips, and from his hand, under his seal. His son shall follow me to claim my lady or the forfeit lands,—'Tis in the letter.

MARK. (*Taking the letter from PERKIN and holding it up*) The letter! See—the letter!

SIR GEORGE. My Lord of Rutland knows full well that it is death for any of his house to bait me here. Has he forgot I hanged two of his men that were found poaching on my lands? Their bones bleach now in gallows field. Your motley only saves your neck. A rope! Hang him head downward until Manners comes to set him free. I warrant he shall hang till doomsday an he wait for him! I give the knave to you!

PERKIN. (*Struggling with MARK and WILL DAWSON*) Ye durst not harm me.

MARK. Nay—We will hang ye high enough!

PERKIN. Hold off your hands! Ye shall account to him who follows me!

DAWSON *and ALL*. Hear him! Your braggart master dares not on his life make good his boast and follow you.

PERKIN. (*Derisively*) What—not for your lady's sake? Not for your Mistress Dorothy? Is the tale true? Do you confess it, all of you? Is she so ill to look upon that no man will adventure for her—and ye must e'en send into Scotland to buy a landless gamester for her mate?—one who has never spied her—yet who lags—

LADY VERNON. My son a landless gamester—

PERKIN. (*As he struggles*) Aye—We know right well what kept Sir Malcolm near the Queen of Scots—

SIR GEORGE. Silence him!

PERKIN. Hold off your hands, or ye shall feel my dirk! Ye think my master will not come? What—not for your lady's beauty? Her red hair? Let her use dye to dim it to a less vermilion hue; maydew to cure her freckles; gloves for her coarse hands—a mask to hide her features— Be she ill visaged as her sire, the shrew of Haddon,—ye have my word for it, Sir John will come. He follows me. (*As he speaks he has backed toward the gate to escape. He turns to fly, but is seized by MARK, who wrenches the dagger from his hand. It falls beside the gate.*)

SIR GEORGE. To gibbet field with him! Let him be hanged in earnest! He shall die!

PERKIN. (*As he is disarmed*) Die—nay, nay! Ye will not harm me! I have made the Queen of Scots laugh till she cried, and I am dear to my Lord of Rutland and Sir John. They will avenge me. For Mistress Dorothy's fair name—release me—let me go—ye break my back—

MARK. I do but straighten it, that ye shall hang more seemly from the gallows tree!

PERKIN. (*As they would drag him off*) Sir George! My Lady! Help me—
God—Ye are not earnest— Then Mistress Dorothy! Dorothy Vernon! An ye be
woman, come forth and save me! Dorothy Vernon—Mistress Dorothy—

(*As he speaks, DOROTHY'S door at the head of the steps is opened and
DOROTHY VERNON enters. She is a young girl of eighteen, dressed richly but
simply, with masses of golden hair worn under her jeweled cap. She pauses in the
doorway amid the flowers and vines.*)

DOROTHY. Who calls me? Is my cousin come?

PERKIN. Nay—But one who claims you for your first betrothed! This letter is
my warrant! Save me!

SIR GEORGE. You shall not hide behind a petticoat. Go—hang him!

DOROTHY. (*Advancing to the top of the steps*) Nay, Father. (*To men about
PERKIN*) Hold—have done—let him alone! (*Then, as the men fall back a little*)
Who is this man? Is this some masker's jest to lure me to the green? 'Tis well
conceived, yet I will have none roughly used even in sport upon my holiday. (*She
draws the flowers toward her, and looks through them down on PERKIN.*) I know
your errand sir. You bring me some lover's message from my cousin. Does he
come indeed? Speak—have no fear—speak, mask!

PERKIN. Nay, lady, dinna ye see I wear no mask save this mis-shapen seal God
set upon me at my birth?

DOROTHY. No mask? (*Shrinking away, then descending the steps*) Nay, was
this earnest that I saw? None here shall do you ill against my word. Who sends
you, sir?

PERKIN. One who should be your husband!

DOROTHY. And who should that be, sir, unless my tardy cousin whom I have
not seen? Oh—do you bring his portrait? Nay, you do—you do—I die to see it.
I have heard him drawn, seen him in words, painted in sighs, sketched to a
syllable, all by his lady mother. I could e'en draw him to that scale, with every
virtue, beauty and accomplishment,—aye—point his beard for him, curl his
mustache, lay his first scar upon his cheek, throw back his shoulders and advance
his leg, stand him upon the canvas large as life, the prince-liest Vernon of them
all,—by hearsay—and a mother's eyes—and yet, oh—could I have him sketched
less studiously to please—with some poor human faults so match my own, the
portrait would content me just as well. You have a portrait of him, sir?

PERKIN. I bring no portrait of Sir Malcolm, lady, though I might draw him to a different guise.

DOROTHY. No portrait? But sure, the letter in your hand,—that is from him. My first love letter—nay—I will not be denied. Why was I ever taught to read unless for this? The letter, sir—the letter. I die to know how he makes love.

SIR GEORGE. Put by the letter, girl—you shall not read.

DOROTHY. (*The letter in her hand*) Nay, by your leave, sir, but I will. I'll have my way, sir, as I sometimes so. (*To LADY VERNON*) No doubt he sends excuses and again delays. (*To others*) Bear witness to my scholarship. (*She opens the letter and begins to read*) "To Sir George Vernon, greeting—" (*Looking up*) To you. 'Tis monstrous. Not one "good cousin" or "fair mistress," nay, not one—and I had set my heart on being courted gallantly, and with some proper ardour!—and it comes to this,—a letter to my father!

SIR GEORGE. I say—you shall not read—

DOROTHY. (*Darting up the steps, and holding out the letter as she reads like a herald*) "To Sir George Vernon, greeting. These to remind him of our written covenant, by which it was agreed his daughter and sole heiress, Dorothy, should wed my son and heir, John Manners." How's this? (*She reads on in a changed voice*) "When he should claim her on her eighteenth birthday." Why—that's today! "If Sir George refuse her to him, or give her to another, he is pledged to forfeit those two of his thirty manors in Derbyshire lying nearest the Rutland lands, together with a thousand crowns in gold, unto John Manners in default of Dorothy. Now to this end, and to make good this bond, I send my messenger with this demand, under my hand and seal, and to announce the coming of my son, John Manners, on this day to ask the Lady Dorothy for wife, or failing her, to claim the forfeiture."

SIR GEORGE. Let all take heed, my daughter is affianced to her cousin. This Rutland knows, and Manners, and all Derbyshire. And yet they dare to urge this long-forgotten covenant drawn ere the child could lisp her name or Manners speak beyond a dozen words. Let Rutland's son set foot upon my lands,—he shall be welcome—by God's soul, he shall. As for this fine ambassador—(*Turning to PERKIN*)—see that he goes not hence to Rutland with his ears.

DOROTHY. (*As the men seize PERKIN*) Father—his cap protects him. Our quarrel is with Rutland, not his fool!

SIR GEORGE. He goes not back to Rutland with this tale—

DOROTHY. Then let me keep him here—He will beguile the time—And said he not he knew our kinsman at the Scottish court?

SIR GEORGE. (*To PERKIN*) If I spare your ears, will you stay here at Haddon?

PERKIN. That will I—until my lady weds Sir John, and takes me back to Rutland whence I came.

DOROTHY. What? To Rutland? I? Think you I will be held by an old bargain made ere I could lisp my name and was yet damp with christening, and this Sir John was busy with the croup and measles and the whooping-cough? Nay, Father, frown not. 'Tis a jest, and like to cost them more than us. Hang Manners an he come—I care not, only give me this little fool. (*Aside to PERKIN*) Hold your tongue and you would wear your head to bed with you to-night. Vex not my father now.

SIR GEORGE. (*To DAWSON*) Take the knave in, and hark ye, jester, if you attempt escape it shall go hard with you!

PERKIN. Indeed, I'll serve my lady faithfully, for her ain sake, and for the sake of him who yet may be her wedded lord.

(*Exit PERKIN, led off by DAWSON. Exit BESS, JENNIE FAXTON, MARK, and VILLAGERS. SIR GEORGE, LADY VERNON and DOROTHY remain alone. The shouts and songs are heard again from the green.*)

DOROTHY. (*Who has followed up to the gate, turns back to SIR GEORGE*) Tell me of this new suitor, Father,—this Sir John. Was ever lady yet so ardently beset by two such tardy swains. Here have I grown from girlhood up, with not a lover at my beck, and suddenly am I presented with a choice of mates. First stays my kinsman far away, safe in his Scottish highlands with his Queen, his virtues and his claims dinned in my ears from morn till noon, from noon till night—a weary litany!

LADY VERNON. How says she? What—shall she affront me to my very face? How now, Sir George? I am but a plain woman, widow of him who was your cousin—living upon your bounty, it is true—yet shall she make a mock of me? I but repeat his parts,—I say that he is virtuous, that he is tall, and strong, and wears a man's beard on his chin.

DOROTHY. A beard! Indeed—how says she,—does he so? Faith, for my part, I care not if he wear ten beards and he will stay in Scotland. What care I? I am content with him who sends a fool to ask for me. (*She holds out PERKIN'S letter*) He is as like to win me as my lady is—

LADY VERNON. Indeed! Indeed!

DOROTHY. This one at least has not arrayed me thrice in holiday attire, set my hair beating pit-a-pat,—and then not come. Madame, I have been eager thrice with welcoming speeches for your son—I say that I will learn no more. Between you, I am made a jest and laughing stock. As heaven hears me, if they stood together here before me now, your son or this Sir John—(*Shaking the letter*)—son of our bitterest enemy, neither my father here nor I could make a choice of them—say which was which—Which Vernon and which Manners. Why—'tis monstrous, a blind man's choice—(*To SIR GEORGE*) How say you, sir? Which one is dark or fair? Which evil or which well to look upon? Which stormy of disposition—as you are—or sweet of temper—as I am? Sir Malcolm wears a beard—why not Sir John? What say you, Madame, if he shaved it off? How should we know him then? (*To SIR GEORGE*) I say—what should we do if he has shaved his beard? Do not the fashions change? Speak sir! Stare not so open-mouthed at me. I say I like not either candidate,—and least like I this laggard cousin—by my lady's leave—he is too confident of me. For my part, I will none of him. You hear me? There's an end of it!

LADY VERNON. Vixen! An she be wed, I know a husband that shall beat his wife and have the law and gospel on his side.

DOROTHY. Beat me! (*To SIR GEORGE*) You hear her? If he lay hand on me, the gospel shall not save him, nor the law. Beat me?

(*As she speaks, JENNIE FAXTON re-enters through the gate.*)

JENNIE. My lady—Mistress Dorothy, they call for you upon the green. 'Tis the betrothal feast.

DOROTHY. (*Mounting the terrace steps*) It is no feast of mine. I will not go. I'll have no part in it. Beat me— I vow, if Sir John Manners win me not to-day, I'll live and die as sour a spinster as our Queen.

SIR GEORGE. (*Furiously*) You wed with Manners? You?

DOROTHY. Aye—sir, with him or any man save this man of your choice.

LADY VERNON. (*Aside to SIR GEORGE*) Leave her to me. She does but vex herself because Sir Malcolm is not come. (*To DOROTHY*) 'Tis said this Manners is but ill to look upon,—a brutish fellow, one who makes his suit to every castle wench; herds with the grooms and stableboys, making your name a very byword and a jest among his followers. He who speaks most ill of you is the most favored. He has sworn he would not wed you—derided your beauty by his messenger, mocked at the colour of your hair, counseled that you use dye to dim it to a less vermillion hue.

DOROTHY. (*Pausing on the terrace*) My hair—vermillion! Says he so?

LADY VERNON. Aye—and maydew [dew gathered on May-day morning] for your freckles, gloves for your coarse hands, a mask to hide your face. (*To SIR GEORGE and JENNIE*) Hath he not called her shrew of Haddon?

SIR GEORGE. Aye—so said his messenger.

DOROTHY. Shrew! Said he so? Shrew? That of me—of me—who all day long endure your tempers with a smile and am unruffled always, mild and calm? As I stand here! Shrew, said he—shrew? (*She gives a little scream.*)

LADY VERNON. (*To DOROTHY*) Now will you have this man?

DOROTHY. I'll have him hanged!

LADY VERNON. Now will you mock my son? An honest gentleman fallen in fortunes, it may be—but virtuous and full of manly parts.

DOROTHY. Faugh! Fie! Peace—peace, cousin—peace, I say. You do not speed his suit. This Manners, wretch that I know him—monster that he is—he keeps his troth with me—he claims me—knowing me red-haired, and freckled, with rough hands—they may yet serve to box his ears—while your son, who has heard naught but good reports of me, unfreckled by a fault, he makes delays and shifts, as one who thinks to make a better bargain yet by holding off. By God's soul, I say John Manners shall not be refused for one who does not come at all!

SIR GEORGE. Peace, hussy! Hold your tongue!

DOROTHY. That will I, and right gladly—when I've done. Whose husband are you choosing, sir—yours, sir, or mine? A pretty sort of choice, indeed, to give me first for husband but a babe in arms, and then, forsooth, to better matters—I am made over with my lands and dower to this Sir Malcolm Penniless I never saw,—and care not if I ever see—who send his lady mother here to praise his beard, and fatten on us—aye, as all can see that she hath done.

LADY VERNON. (*Furiously*) I—fatten on you? I? Sir Malcolm Penniless!

DOROTHY. Have I no eyes to please—no wishes of my own—no choice? I have. And you shall know it ere the day be done. To me John Manners is as good a name as Malcolm Vernon. It is as old—as honorable. John! Sir Jack! Sir Johnnie! I'll wed him an I choose.

SIR GEORGE. Have done, I say! I am beside myself!

DOROTHY. Why should you want son? Can I not ride with you—fence with you—curse with you—storm with you—break a horse, fly a hawk, train a hound, sleep through the sermon of a Sunday—aye, and snore as loudly as you can, if I am minded? Can I not vex and tease you all day long? What more could any son do for you sir?

SIR GEORGE. God's life! 'Tis not a son I want,—it is a grandson,—and one of my own name. It is for this that I have fixed upon Sir Malcolm Vernon for your mate.

DOROTHY. (*Stamping her foot*) I say I will not have him! Do you hear? I will not—will not—will not!

SIR GEORGE. Was ever father cursed with such a wench?

LADY VERNON. My son shall tame her,—fear him not!

DOROTHY. Tame me? Nay, let him come and try it at his cost! For you sir—trade with them,—sell your lands,—barter and buy and deal in what you will,—but bargain for me not again. I am not broken to run double with a clod,—and I am done with love! (*She tears PERKIN'S letter and scatters the fragments as she sweeps up to the gate.*) Come, Jennie,—to the green! (*Exit DOROTHY VERNON, followed by JENNIE FAXTON, through the gate.*)

LADY VERNON. (*Shaking with fury*) The jade! The wicked jade! Let her take Manners and go hang! Shall my son mate with such a wench? Faugh! Fie! Did you not hear her? I will not fatten on her,—I'll not abide it! Faugh,—fie—at my age—at my time of life—to my grey hairs! I, that have been a mother to her and lost flesh and shrunk to this, slaving to keep the house— Sir Malcolm Penniless!

SIR GEORGE. Nay, heed her not. And to say truth, she has some justice on her side. I have not seen Sir Malcolm.

LADY VERNON. (*Turning on him*) Nay—put the blame upon me. Did I urge the match? Were you not set upon it from the first? And now that he's at hand and comes to claim her,—now, you shift and change and shilly shally for her whims.

SIR GEORGE. By heaven, I will not! She shall be your son's an he have legs to stand upon—and will to have her.

LADY VERNON. I say I care not! Faugh and fie—forsooth!

SIR GEORGE. She is but vexed at his delays! And mind you, lady, there will be no richer heiress in the land than my Doll when I be laid at peace in Bakewell Church. I'm like to have no peace this side my monument!

LADY VERNON. Let them put horses in the coach, and I will go a little way and meet him. It would be kinder to him an I turned him back! I fatten—I, who grow a very shadow with the plague of her!

SIR GEORGE. All shall be ordered for your setting out.

LADY VERNON. (*Pausing on terrace*) Think you this braggart son of Rutland's dares to make good his boast and cap this insult by his presence here?

SIR GEORGE. Nay,—Yet an he came, I should know how to deal with him.

LADY VERNON. Faugh—fie—to me—at my age,—at my time of life—faugh, fie! (*Exit LADY VERNON and SIR GEORGE into Haddon Hall.*)

(*As they exit, PERKIN is seen to steal onstage. He crouches forward, watching the doors and windows of the hall, hiding close to the terrace, slinking toward the gate. At the foot of the upper flight of steps he sees the dagger MARK had wrenched from him. He stoops and picks it up.*)

PERKIN. My dirk! They shall not stop me,—I must warn Sir John— (*Pausing and listening at the gate*) Who's there upon the path? They mun gie me room or pay the cost of hindering me! (*As he speaks MANNERS enters at the gate. He is a handsome, gallant fellow, young, and very richly dressed. PERKIN, looking up in his face*) Sir John! (*He drops upon his knees before MANNERS, who pauses in the gateway.*)

MANNERS. Nay, Perkin, on my life,—my own ambassador—to greet me with a threat! Have you espoused the Vernon cause against me, too? Hath red-haired Mistress Dorothy cajoled you? Is our jest played out?

PERKIN. (*Still crouching on his knee at MANNERS' feet*) Sir John! I didna ken you would be here so soon!

MANNERS. (*Advancing*) Nay—you know I am no laggard lover. Is Mistress Dorothy at home? Where is Sir George? Now, by my faith, 'tis but a cool, indifferent hospitality they urge upon the punctual bridegroom at this Haddon Hall. I had thought to have a different greeting. Not a dog set on me,—not a head to break! Naught to stay me until I reach my lady's garden. Have they my father's letter? 'Tis no easy task to find a husband for the shrew of Haddon. They say that all her father's lands are not enough to buy a mate for her,—that e'en Sir Malcolm Vernon came, saw her, and then fled back to Scotland swearing that he would die a bachelor. Aye, faith, before this jest is ended 'tis like to cost my father two manors and a thousand crowns,—for an Mistress Dorothy abide the bargain, I will not,—and we are caught in our own snare.

PERKIN. Nay, nay—I ken ye have been put upon, abused—no doubt by those who have an interest here. Sir Malcolm's mother spreads these tales to keep her for her son. The lady's beautiful.

MANNERS. What say you? Are you mad? She—beautiful?

PERKIN. Aye, that—and ready—fearless—kind—I tell you, sir, had she been otherwise I had swung now from yonder oak, and you had my bat's ears on a skewer,—'Twas her word alone that saved me from a felon's death.

MANNERS. From death—death, say you?

PERKIN. Aye! We must begone ere you are seen! Sir George has sworn that you shall hang if you are taken here! This place—fair as it seems,—is death to you!

MANNERS. Tush! Is she beautiful indeed? How looks she—is she tall or short? An she be fair, Sir Malcolm Vernon and I may yet be at each other's throats for her.

PERKIN. (*Following MANNERS as he crosses*) You must not stay! They would have hanged me but for her!

MANNERS. Hanged you! By heaven, I will forgive Sir George his manors, and his thousand crowns, but not the usage he has put on you.

PERKIN. Stay not to beard Sir George!

MANNERS. Nay, but I will! I'll beard him here in his own garden with his household by! The churl!—and I will thank the lady for her courtesy, aye,—and ask her pardon for our jest, since she has saved you from their ruffian hands!

PERKIN. No—no, though she is kind, yet she is high of pride and temper as her sire!

MANNERS. And yet you say she is beautiful?

PERKIN. Aye, as Mary Stuart in her first youth was beautiful.

MANNERS. Then she is mine!

PERKIN. To see her since this day's insult were as fatal as to see Sir George.

MANNERS. And would you counsel me, after my father's boasting letter, to fly without one glimpse of this divinity? No, Perkin, no!

PERKIN. (*At gate*) She is returning!

MANNERS. Good! She comes alone?

PERKIN. (*At gate looking offstage*) Some women of the village come with her.

MANNERS. (*Putting PERKIN aside, and looking from gate*) Nay, now, how fair she is,—how graciously she bears herself! Where is your pride and temper now? Why have they so maligned her to me? Perkin, I'll speak with her!

PERKIN. 'Tis death,—wearing the name you do!

MANNERS. See how she loiters on the path, casting so many backward glances.

PERKIN. 'Tis for Sir Malcolm Vernon that she looks.

MANNERS. Happy Sir Malcolm that is so waited for! 'Tis said she has never seen him, knows him alone by hearsay! Perkin, what harm to press our jest on to some pretty issue? Nay, I'll stay, and let her think I am her cousin Malcolm come to woo. What say you? Will she not pay me with a kiss? It were no more than she should render me in recompense for all our broken vows!

PERKIN. Go—go! Carry the jest no further as you love your life!

MANNERS. Go. And prove myself an empty braggart in those eyes? Go now?

PERKIN. Stay, then, if stay you will, but do not speak! I'll get her in,—and you can yet escape. They're here!

(As he speaks, MANNERS hides behind the bushes. PERKIN disappears offstage and DOROTHY is seen beyond the gate with JENNIE FAXTON and BESS.)

DOROTHY. *(At the gate)* Nay,—it is false—Sir Malcolm has not come! You do but plague me! Which of you saw him?

JENNIE and BESS. I! And I!

DOROTHY. He came alone? Across this footbridge? By this path?

BESS. Aye, as I be a sinner, here he stood.

DOROTHY. *(Pausing in the gate)* Here? And if he did, might it not have been John Manners, come to keep his boast,—and not my Cousin Malcolm that you saw?

JENNIE. Nay—it was Sir Malcolm, that I'll swear—

BESS. And I!

DOROTHY. And handsome, said you? Young and gallant,—well to look upon?

BESS. Oh, aye—a very prince!

DOROTHY. A prince? Nay—begone, both of you! 'Tis false, I know! Go, Jennie Faxton, seek my father out. Ask if Sir Malcolm Vernon is within. Say not I sent you. Do not seem to care. The laggard! I care not if he comes or stays—I only seek my father's pleasure! Look you, Bess cook, let naught be burnt. See that the plates are clean, and that we have French wine. We must be civil to him. I mean not to abide my father's choice! Be quick—I die to know if it were really he you saw upon the footbridge! *(BESS exits. DOROTHY pulls JENNIE back by the apron string.)* Stay ye a little! What said Bess? Gallant, young, and gaily dressed—a very lover to his leg?

JENNIE. Aye, lady, aye!

DOROTHY. No doubt he bears himself becomingly, looks fairly to her country eyes,—is young, well dighted [dressed],—yet for me,—you know me, Jennie, I am not taken quickly by an outward show. I am right slow to be acquainted even with my kin. I do not kiss with uncles and with cousins,—not at once. Oh, run and see if he is really come, and if the stair be free that I can reach my chamber and a looking glass! (*Exit JENNIE FAXTON, laughing, into the Hall. DOROTHY runs up the steps, looks shyly in at the windows.*) Not there! (*As she peers in*) Nor there. Oh, come, sir, come! He is a very tortoise, nay, a snail of lovers. Does he come on crutches? Must I seek him out and say, “Here am I that shall be wife to you!”

MANNERS. (*Advancing to the foot of terrace steps and leaning upon the balustrade as he looks up at her*) Nay, it is I who have come seeking you,—I that shall be your husband, Mistress Dorothy.

DOROTHY. (*Startled by his voice, she turns, sees him, looks down upon him from the terrace*) Cousin! Sir Malcolm! (*Smiling*) Nay, shame upon you for an eavesdropper! (*She looks upon him with deepening approval in her eyes*) Sir Laggard, are you come at last?

MANNERS. Am I still welcome though I come so late? (*He kisses the hand she has extended.*)

DOROTHY. It is my father, sir, must welcome you. Your lady mother is gone lumbering northward in the great coach to bring you in.

MANNERS. I came not by the northern road, but by the east, passing near Rutland Castle.

DOROTHY. Then you have missed her. We thought to see you earlier. Nay,—(*Turning to PERKIN, who has entered*) Is this indeed Sir Malcolm whom you knew in Scotland?

PERKIN. This is Sir Malcolm, by my head! (*Aside*) And like to cost my head.

DOROTHY. But I had thought him fair—with Vernon hair, like mine,—not dark, nor smooth of cheek—

MANNERS. If it offend you—

DOROTHY. Nay, it offends me not! A gentleman may shave his beard. I do not take offense so easily, nor do I love my red hair over much.

MANNERS. (*Gazing at her with admiration*) How beautiful it is.

DOROTHY. (*Abashed a little by his boldness*) You have seen my father, sir? (*She moves as if to lead him into the Hall.*)

MANNERS. (*Protesting*) Am I to have my little moment cut so short? Let Perkin find him.

DOROTHY. Aye, go find him. Say my cousin is arrived. Yet, an Sir George be occupied, leave him alone. (*Innocently to MANNERS*) He sometimes sleeps about this time of day.

MANNERS. (*Earnestly*) I would not have him wakened for the world.

DOROTHY. Why, since you urge it, I will own I do not like to have him waked too soon,—One at my father's age needs humouring. (*Aside to PERKIN*) Look that you find him not too soon!

PERKIN. (*To DOROTHY*) Dinna ye fear—

MANNERS. (*To PERKIN as he passes*) Give me a moment here alone—warn me if they approach— (*Exit PERKIN as he steps into Hall.*)

DOROTHY. (*As PERKIN exits*) You are not like your mother, cousin,—nor like the Vernons— Nor like report hath pictured you.

MANNERS. Indeed! Nor are you as I thought you were.

DOROTHY. (*Pulling a flower as she turns away*) I fear I do not please you.

MANNERS. Nay, all too well for my own happiness. I will confess it—I was so ignorant of my good, I would have lost you to another—yielded my claim. But now I see you. I've a different mind. Shall I find any favor in your eyes? Are you content to let the bargain stand that those who loved us made for us?

DOROTHY. (*Shyly*) Indeed, I scarcely know of what you speak. What keeps my father? I will find him, sir.

MANNERS. (*Eagerly as she turns away*) Stay but a moment. Are you glad I came? Look, Dorothy—

DOROTHY. (*With a little gasp of joy, as she hears her name*) I thought mayhap that you had left your heart far to the north of Derbyshire, since you delayed so long.

MANNERS. Nay,—it was as free as air unit I say you. (*Eagerly*) Tell me that I have not come too late.

DOROTHY. I will confess I was a little vexed—not angered—nay, not angered—(*Shaking her head depreciatingly*)—just a little vexed—and so I said I'd wed young Manners, my Lord Rutland's son!

MANNERS. You said that you'd wed Manners?

DOROTHY. Aye,—to save my father's lands and gold—I cared not for the fellow—

MANNERS. And yet you said that you would wed him—

DOROTHY. I was so vexed at your delays, I said I'd take him if you came not soon,—and meant it, too.

MANNERS. What said your father?

DOROTHY. He swears none but a Vernon shall rule at Haddon after him.

MANNERS. I care not who may rule at Haddon after him,—I only seek you for yourself. How may I win his favor?

DOROTHY. If you would please him, swear to carry on our feud against Lord Rutland and his son,—there is no way to win my father like to that.

MANNERS. I will hate Manners an you hate him,—and any wrong he does to you shall be a wrong to me, and I'll avenge it—even on myself. I'll teach him to set as high a value on the name of Vernon as your father sets—and if he will not, he shall be no friend to me! (*As he speaks, PERKIN runs onstage.*)

PERKIN. (*Aside to MANNERS*) Sir George is here! Dinna ye tarry till your death—

MANNERS. Sir George!

DOROTHY. Father—Father—good news! Sir Malcolm Vernon's come at last! (*As she speaks, SIR GEORGE re-enters.*)

SIR GEORGE. How, Doll? Sir Malcolm here? (*To PERKIN*) Go, knave, find those who shall follow and inform his mother. (*As he surveys MANNERS*) How say you, Doll? Have I not chosen well? How—is he a blind man's choice? Why,—he outruns his very mother's praise of him. By my faith, cousin, I am well pleased with you, since all delays are past and you are here. Say, Doll, speak. Do you like the rogue? Is he not measured to a lady's taste? Nay, blush not—lift your head. By heaven, you are a pretty pair,—I shall be glad to see you in the church!

DOROTHY. Peace, Father, peace! I will not hear you, sir—I will go in, indeed I will—

SIR GEORGE. (*Looking at MANNERS*) How! He hath no hair of Vernon's, yet he hath the Vernon front—the leg—the shape. He hath my uncle's very nose,—my grandsire's eye—and something of my look at twenty,—not my girth,—I do not see his mother in him.

DOROTHY. (*Aside*) Thank God for the omission!

SIR GEORGE. Your hand again! This is the very image of a proper lad! (*To PERKIN*) What, still gaping? The is not he whose errand brought you—yet he is liable to be your master an you bide with us. Begone!

PERKIN. Aye—instantly. (*Aside*) When did a falsehood ever prosper so?
(*Exit PERKIN*)

SIR GEORGE. (*Turning to DOROTHY*) Do you approve him, Doll? Am I a fool for choosing? Say you so? Will you have Manners now? I wot my Lord of Rutland might take half my lands ere you would part with Cousin Malcolm.

DOROTHY. Father—for shame—

SIR GEORGE. (*Looking at them admiringly*) The handsomest bride and groom in Derbyshire! (*To DOROTHY*) Will you yet contradict my pleasure—stamp your foot—and say me nay,—as you have done, in all things since you could lisp a contradiction?

DOROTHY. Nay, sir, have done! What will my cousin think of me? (*Stamping her foot as her father laughs. To MANNERS*) If I have any faults, believe me, sir, they are not native to me, but forced upon me by my bringing up.

SIR GEORGE. (*Laughing*) Since she was three, Sir Malcolm, she could storm me down. A very tempest, sir, at six!

DOROTHY. Storm, sir, storm—I? A tempest—I—at six? I that was ruled in everything—(*Beginning to scream a little*)—and dared not raise my voice in my defense? (*As she sees that MANNERS is laughing at her too*) You do me foul wrong in my cousin's eyes,—I'll not be laughed at by you, sir,—nor you—(*Stamping her foot and turning upon MANNERS*) Have done this instant! Nay, then—I'll go in. (*Wiping her eyes*) Cousin, farewell,—I do release you from your troth.

MANNERS. Nay, Dorothy,—for I will call you so,—you shall not part with me upon such terms. What,—tears? Your father jested. One may see he dotes on you.

DOROTHY. (*Wiping her eyes*) Do not believe it. He ever loved to tease and vex me into tempers,—and then laugh at me.

SIR GEORGE. Nay, Doll; I'll vex you not. Come back! Say once for all—are you content? And will you go to church with him?

DOROTHY. (*Shyly glancing at MANNERS*) Aye,—if the sermon be not two hours long.

SIR GEORGE. Not to hear sermons. But to wed with him!

DOROTHY. (*Hanging her head*) When did I ever contradict you, sir,—or cross your will? I ever did prefer obedience.

SIR GEORGE. You hear her? Ha, you might have heard a different tale an hour ago. But this I'm bent upon: your eldest boy shall be named George for me,—and let hell roast me if I ever clip his heritage of two good manors and a thousand crowns for Rutland's covenant! Love him, Doll—have him, Doll—wed him, Doll! The lad pleases me,—you shall be his or no man's.

MANNERS. Aye, that she shall be,—give me your word for it.

SIR GEORGE. She shall be yours or no man's—that I swear. You hear me? Yours,—else I die foresworn.

MANNERS. It is a pledge that I will hold you to. She shall be mine,—my oath upon it.

SIR GEORGE. And mine upon it. And my hand. (*As they clasp hands,—to DOROTHY*) Come, girl, come, seal the bargain. You were kissing ere I came.

DOROTHY. Fie—for shame—what will our cousin think?

SIR GEORGE. We be plain country folk— Hold up your head. There's naught to fear.

DOROTHY. I will not do it sir,—I say I will not!

SIR GEORGE. His beard is not so rough that it will scratch you. Come—to it, boy! Bred up a page at the French Court and fear to kiss? See! Doll hangs no further back than half an arm's length—

DOROTHY. I do—I do—I do resist, sir!

SIR GEORGE. Believe her not! She'll give it cousinly and like a sweetheart. 'Tis a first lover's kiss, lad,—and rare and sweet, I warrant you.

MANNERS. Are you content to have it so?

DOROTHY. I will be governed by my father's will.

MANNERS. Nay. If you were free to choose,—unpromised—unbetrothed—would your choice still fall upon me?

SIR GEORGE. Why, this is like a marriage.

MANNERS. Aye—so it is—and I for my part am content it bind me all my days. Speak, Dorothy—

DOROTHY. I am content.

MANNERS. No more?

DOROTHY. A little more—maybe—

MANNERS. Speak, then, deny me not—

DOROTHY. Whether it is I am content because you are my kinsman—or for my father's promise—or for yourself—I do not know. How should I, in an hour?

MANNERS. But you will love me.— Tell me, Dorothy?

DOROTHY. I would my father gave some better gift to you.

MANNERS. He has no treasure like to this. If you can love me, and will abide my fortunes,—seal now our covenant,—or break the bond forever and be free—

DOROTHY. Nay, Father, turn your face away. I cannot bear your eyes upon me—
(To MANNERS) Of my free will and choice, I seal the covenant. *(She kisses him.)*

MANNERS. *(Clasping her in his arms, as her lips touch his)* My Dorothy!

(As he speaks, a distant horn is heard. PERKIN runs onstage, crouching by MANNERS, as DOROTHY turns to SIR GEORGE and goes upstage with him, clinging to him, hiding her face upon his breast.)

DOROTHY. *(As she clings to SIR GEORGE)* Father—Father—

PERKIN. *(Aside to MANNERS)* The horn—dinna ye hear? I know it well—that call—it is Sir Malcolm Vernon winding a blast across the valley as he comes.

MANNERS. Sir Malcolm Vernon—I had forgot he lived.

PERKIN. Begone—begone—

MANNERS. Not yet—there's time!

SIR GEORGE. *(Unheeding the horn)* We'll see the day. We'll have the wedding soon. *(He laughs)* A blind man's choice,—eh, Doll? A very man's match making? *(Laughing)* This time you will be governed by my will,—this time you have no choice—no eyes to please— Nay, I will not have your cousin fooled by you. She has a will, Sir Malcolm, and a way,—a temper, too. She was not broken to run double with a clod—

DOROTHY. *(Stopping his lips with a little scream)* I said not so—I said it not— Nay—

SIR GEORGE. Thank God. You are obedient at last!
(Exit SIR GEORGE into the Hall.)

PERKIN. *(With MANNERS downstage)* Delay no more—you will be recognized. Think of the jest that that you have played upon them,—exchanged your vows with the affianced wife of him who even now is at the very gates. Go—go!

MANNERS. *(Aside to PERKIN, as he looks at DOROTHY)* What! Leave her now—leave her to him? I will maintain my right, and hold her father to his oath. But first she shall know who and what I am! Keep watch—warn me if Lady Vernon or Sir Malcolm come.

(Exit PERKIN. As MANNERS has spoken, DOROTHY stands on the terrace steps, pouts—smiles—believes herself forgotten—pulls a flower—tears off the petals—tosses her head—looks at MANNERS—looks down, feigns to enter the Hall—hums a snatch of song—begins to count the petals of a daisy in silence, shyly looking across at MANNERS. As she turns away, coming to the last petal of the flower, he has crossed and is standing behind her at the foot of the balustrade; puts his arms about her from behind.)

MANNERS. (In a half whisper as she plucks off the last petal.) He loves thee!

DOROTHY. (Nestling backward in his arms) Shall I believe the flower?

MANNERS. I would stake my life upon its truth. But how shall I be assured? If I might put you to a test, would you endure it? Would your love endure? Were I like Rutland's son, had I been he? How should my suit have prospered then?

DOROTHY. You—like John Manners? Nay, do not wrong yourself.

MANNERS. Were I John Manners, could you love me then? If I were Rutland's son—and come to claim my forfeit acres and my thousand crowns—come in derision—but to vex you in your holiday, had I come shielded by Sir Malcolm's name, to see how well or ill report spoke of you,—to take a merry tale back with me to the Court,—if in my place John Manners, self-confessed, stood here and held you in his arms, how, lady, would you deal with him?

DOROTHY. If he were very like you?

MANNERS. Aye—my counterpart.

DOROTHY. I could not then be very vexed with him—

MANNERS. You would forgive him?

DOROTHY. Perhaps—if he were very like you.

MANNERS. Then you shall hear the truth. I am not Malcolm Vernon. I, who hold you so—I am John Manners—whom you hate so well.

DOROTHY. (Still in his arms, but turning her face to his) Vex me no more with talk of him— (As she speaks, the horn is heard again.)

MANNERS. You hear the horn? That is the real Sir Malcolm at your father's gate. I have but worn his name a little while to mask a jest—a jest that turns to earnest!

DOROTHY. Nay— (She releases herself and draws a little away from him) Nay, you are not Malcolm Vernon? You are John Manners?

MANNERS. I am John Manners, Rutland's son!

DOROTHY. Son of our bitterest enemy? Then this—a jest? All but a jest—?

MANNERS. Dorothy!

DOROTHY. Silence, sir,—not by another word will I be wronged!

MANNERS. Your love—

DOROTHY. My love? 'Twas but my lips that spoke. 'Twas but that duty taught me.

MANNERS. I'll not believe it—nay—I'll not—

DOROTHY. Stay, then, and I will give you proof. Stay,—and you shall see me greet my cousin with the same words—vows—kisses—all I gave to you.

MANNERS. Your pledge— Your father's oath! You're mine!

DOROTHY. Yours? Aye—to go hence and laugh at—to make a tale at court—a story at the tavern,—how I was cozened and so quickly won. Even Sir Malcolm's kisses were not kept from you. (*As she speaks, she locks the gate, holding the key in her hand.*) I tell you, sir, I will not be the laughing stock of Derbyshire. You have done this—and think that I, a Vernon, and Sir George's daughter, will throw wide the gate and bid you pass in peace?

MANNERS. What will you do?

DOROTHY. Call my father—give you up to him. He shall avenge this insult as he made his oath.

MANNERS. Call him! Though I came shielded by your cousin's name, I throw aside that mantle willingly. And never while I live will I release you from the vows you made, unless your own lips tell me that you hate me. Then you are free.

DOROTHY. Free? Then I take back my vow—For as God hears me, sir, I hate you from my heart! Father! This way—this way!

SIR MALCOLM. (*Heard offstage*) Bring me to where the impostor is! Confront me with him! On my life, I shall know how to deal with him!

(*As he speaks, SIR GEORGE VERNON enters with SIR MALCOLM VERNON, a man older than MANNERS, red-haired, bold and handsome, yet sinister. Following them, WILL DAWSON, MARK, PERKIN, and three MEN-AT-ARMS.*)

SIR GEORGE. (*As he enters*) How, Doll? How, sir? Here is another Malcolm. Which may we believe?

SIR MALCOLM. (*Seeing MANNERS*) Is yonder fellow he who steals my name?

SIR GEORGE. Hold, sir—put up your sword. (*To DAWSON and MARK*) Lay hold upon him! Keep him back. (*As he speaks, DOROTHY stands silent. MANNERS stands proudly confronting SIR MALCOLM. The MEN-AT-ARMS stand about SIR MALCOLM, keeping him back.*)

SIR GEORGE. (*To MANNERS*) Speak, sir. Ye be not both Sir Malcolms! By God's death, if you are an impostor who has stolen here, kissed and claimed my daughter, heard her vows, played this knave's trick upon us,—I'll know you are some lackey sent by Rutland, and as God hears me, you shall hang for it! (*To men*) Lay hold on him!

DOROTHY. Stay, Father! Patience a little. (*Slowly advancing between MANNERS and SIR GEORGE, checking MANNERS as he would speak. She looks at MALCOLM, then at MANNERS, then slowly at her father*) My life upon it,—if this not be Sir Malcolm Vernon,—ask the dwarf!

SIR GEORGE. (*Turning to PERKIN*) You knew Sir Malcolm well in Scotland, which is he? Speak—on your life?

PERKIN. (*Pointing to MANNERS*) This is Sir Malcolm—on my life.

SIR MALCOLM. (*Trying to break from his captors*) Knave! You lie!

DOROTHY. (*Pointing to SIR MALCOLM*) May not this be John Manners come in jest, to put this insult on us?

SIR GEORGE. Manners? True. 'Tis likelier he than any man. And yet— (*Looking at MALCOLM*) he has the Vernon red,—the Vernon look—

DOROTHY. Nay,—would you give our look to every man? Are we so common, sir, that Rutland's lackey, or his son shall strut before us in our very guise? You gave Sir Malcolm here the Vernon front—the leg—the shape—your uncle's nose—your grandsire's eye, and something of your look at twenty,—not your girth. Nay, will you ask them back to make a Vernon of this newcomer? Believe me, he is not our kinsman. This is he. (*She lays her hand on MANNERS' arm.*)

SIR MALCOLM. Who is it speaks against me? Is this Dorothy?

SIR GEORGE. (*To DAWSON and others*) Take him within.

DOROTHY. But use him well. My Lady Vernon shall make choice of them, which is her son. Till she is come, let me walk with my cousin here.

SIR GEORGE. I'll see him safe bestowed. It shall go hard with him an he account not for this masquerade. Take him within.

SIR MALCOLM. (*To MANNERS*) This shall be answered for!

(*Exit SIR GEORGE and SIR MALCOLM, led off by DAWSON, MARK and MEN-AT-ARMS. MANNERS, PERKIN and DOROTHY are left alone.*)

MANNERS. (*Catching DOROTHY in his arms*) My love—my Dorothy!

DOROTHY. (*As she clings to him*) Fly—fly— Oh, God, I would not have you die for this! They will return—you will be taken—go!

MANNERS. Why have you spared me,—denying your father his revenge?
Putting this wrong upon your kinsman?

DOROTHY. I know not—only begone—I beg of you! 'Tis death to stay!

MANNERS. I set no value on my life unless I know that it is dear to you,—that you forgive my coming in this guise.

DOROTHY. I do—yes, yes! 'Tis all forgiven—I love you! But we meet no more!

MANNERS. Meet no more!

DOROTHY. I am my cousin's promised wife. He comes to hold my father to his pledge.

MANNERS. You shall be my wife to me—or never wife to any man! Swear that they shall not force you to become his wife!

DOROTHY. If I swear it, will you go?

MANNERS. Yes. If you swear it!

DOROTHY. Then I swear it! Go!

MANNERS. My love, my Dorothy!

SIR GEORGE. (*Heard offstage*) I'll have full vengeance on the Rutland dog!

DOROTHY. Hark! My father—

LADY VERNON. (*Heard offstage*) My son! My Malcolm!

DOROTHY. 'Tis Lady Vernon's voice! The gate!

PERKIN. (*At gate*) 'Tis locked!

DOROTHY. Nay—by the house—that door! (*Pointing to the door by which she entered first*) I'll hold them here till you have time to save yourself! (*She rushes up the terrace steps to the door*) This way!

MANNERS. (*On terrace by door, turning to catch her in his arms*) Send to me by Perkin. Love, be true—farewell!

(*Exit MANNERS and PERKIN into Hall. DOROTHY runs to the foot of steps and turns to face SIR GEORGE, who enters from the Tower door, followed by SIR MALCOLM, LADY VERNON, DAWSON, MARK, BESS, JENNIE, and MEN-AT ARMS.*)

LADY VERNON. (*Clinging to SIR MALCOLM*) Where is the knave?

SIR MALCOLM. (*His drawn sword in his hand*) Unhand me, Mother! Kinsman, let me deal with him!

SIR GEORGE. Where is the impostor? Give him up!

DOROTHY. (*Confronting them as she stands before the gate*) What, sir? An impostor with the Vernon front—the leg—the shape? What! With your uncle's very nose—your grandsire's eye—and something of your look at twenty,—not your girth— (*She laughs.*)

SIR GEORGE. How—what—you mock me, girl?

DOROTHY. Fie, sir—may not Sir Malcolm stray a little, an we call him back? Who is this gentleman?

LADY VERNON. My son—you brazen baggage! He that shall be your husband.

DOROTHY. And beat his wife? And have the law and gospel on his side?

SIR GEORGE. S' death! Do you mock Sir Malcolm to his very face? See to the gate!

DAWSON. 'Tis locked!

SIR GEORGE. (*To DOROTHY*) The key—you have it, girl—the key! Stand from the gate! His name—the path he took—speak! (*He shakes the gate with rage*) Speak—or the butcher here shall flog you till you bleed! His name—the key!

DOROTHY. Yonder it lies. (*Flinging the key over the gate, then stripping off her bodice, standing before the gate, offering her shoulder*) You'll know his name when I am wedded to him! Come—let the butcher do his work! The lash!

ACT I CURTAIN

Three weeks have elapsed. The Scene shows a very rich interior, the walls paneled in dark wood and hung with tapestry. There is a great bow window with diamond-paned glass. A seat runs round the window. To the left of this window is a small but massive door. There is another door leading to DOROTHY'S sleeping room. To the right of the window is a third door leading to the corridor. A table stands in the center with chairs about it. Downstage a great chest stands against the wall. The room is simply but richly furnished.

Beyond the window is seen the garden. Ivy and roses follow the lines of stonework that divide the windows and against the glass.

It is afternoon. As the curtain rises the door leading to the corridor is open and PERKIN runs in with laughter and a tinkle of his jester's bells. The door is closed after him.

PERKIN. My lady. Mistress Dorothy. (*He runs across to the door leading to the sleeping room, knocking upon it*) My lady. It is I—Perkin. George relents and bids me say you may come out and have the freedom of the house—upon conditions. Open! Open! (*Whispering*) I have news! Good news! (*As he speaks, the door is opened cautiously.*)

DOROTHY. (*Appearing in the doorway*) Perkin! How did you pass my jailor? Am I to have my liberty again? Is the Queen come? I heard no trumpet. Does my father yield? Oh, Perkin, do you bring me food—I die of hunger! Naught but bread and water have I tasted in three days! They think to starve me into this marriage with Sir Malcolm—but they know me not. Perkin! What had they cooking on the spits as you passed by? Monsters! To prison me within the very sniffing of the roasts, and not a morsel! Tell me. What's upon the fire?

PERKIN. A great array of roasting poultry.

DOROTHY. Poultry! I knew it. Hunger has made me very keen of scent.

PERKIN. And venison, and lamb—a whole beef—a wild boar—and hams and sausages.

DOROTHY. Sausage? Sausage, say you? That I have ever loved and had my fill of! Yes, yes, I smell them too! Go on! Go on!

PERKIN. And strings of pheasants— And in the pantry—

DOROTHY. Yes—in the pantry?

PERKIN. Mutton pies, and pastries—

DOROTHY. Pastries! And tarts? Tarts, say you? Nay—they were not gooseberry?

PERKIN. As I stand here a Christian, Madam, under oath, I saw at least a score of them.

DOROTHY. A score! Oh! Could I set my teeth in one! Go, go on!

PERKIN. And there were mighty puddings, bulging with plums and currants.

DOROTHY. Puddings!

PERKIN. All baking and boiling against the coming of Elizabeth.

DOROTHY. And Lady Vernon—was she there?

PERKIN. Aye, tasting of this and that—and saying, more spice here—and here a little salt—

DOROTHY. (*With a little scream*) Tasting, say you! Tasting, smacking her lips upon our cakes and ale, while she beguiles my father into starving me! Me—that was wont to sit at table a whole hour and had as good an appetite as hers! I pray the gout may plague her all her days! What else had they preparing for the Queen?

PERKIN. I marked some noble cakes—

DOROTHY. Cakes!

PERKIN. Aye,—as big about as barrels—and one was set to cool that Bess had fashioned with her greatest skill.

DOROTHY. To place before Elizabeth?

PERKIN. Nay—to place before you, lady, at tomorrow's feast.

DOROTHY. Before me—at the feast—

PERKIN. Dinna ye ken? A bridal cake—to grace your marriage feast.

DOROTHY. A bridal cake—my marriage feast—Perkin! You mean—

PERKIN. Have they not told you? To-morrow is the day they set that you shall wed Sir Malcolm. All the guests are bid—the county asked—the Queen herself will see it.

DOROTHY. I will refuse him if they drag me to the church! To-morrow! Oh, Perkin, is there no news of John? Has he not yet returned from Scotland? Has he forgot me? Am I forsaken for this Mary Stuart he would save? What is her fate to this—to wed a man I hate? What news?

PERKIN. Why, now you pause for breath, maybe you'll listen to a word.

DOROTHY. Listen! I! I—that have stood stock still in perfect silence, waiting for your tale! Hanging but on your words! I—that could talk whole days and weeks, telling of my ill usage at their hands—but I am silent—and what comes of it?

PERKIN. God's mercy, lady! (*Running to corridor door and listening, then running back*) What say you to a letter?

DOROTHY. A letter, Perkin? Have you one? From John? It is from John?

PERKIN. Nay. Can no man write in England but Sir John?

DOROTHY. It is from him! I know it is!

PERKIN. (*Eluding her about the table*) I said it not. I said a letter.

DOROTHY. (*Pursuing him about the table*) Oh! Give it me! Tease me no more! Give it me! I'll have it! My letter, sir! My letter! (*PERKIN dives beneath the table. DOROTHY seizing PERKIN by the ear as he peers from beneath the table.*) Yield, sir!

PERKIN. Release me!

DOROTHY. The letter first. (*Kissing the letter*) Where found you this?

PERKIN. (*Rubbing his ear*) At the old trysting place, hid in the wall by Bowling gate.

DOROTHY. (*She opens the letter and reads*) "To one most well beloved whose name I dare not write—greetings—from him who loves her best." My John. My John. "I am this day returned from Scotland with her I went to bring thence into England." The Queen of Scots—

PERKIN. Thank God, my royal mistress is released!

DOROTHY. (*She reads on*) "I have learned that you are kept a prisoner in your father's house, and that your wedding day is set, and all you suffer for your love of me. If this comes to your hand by Perkin, charge him to meet me at our trysting place, and you shall be delivered to the arms of him who holds you dearest." (*DOROTHY drawing back PERKIN'S head by his ear*) I care not for their tails or flourishings—and yet I do not hold them plain. See—he has put three darlings and six sweethearts—

PERKIN. I can count but four. Four sweethearts are not many.

DOROTHY. Nay, were you taught to count so ill at school. And see—'tis signed "From one who loves thee best." (*She kisses the letter*) Oh, Perkin, he may be now at Bowling gate! Go—see if he is there! (*Looking at letter*) 'Twas written yesterday.

PERKIN. Nay, fear not. I broke the seal and read the letter.

DOROTHY. You dared!

PERKIN. And so was at the gate betimes.

DOROTHY. You dear! You saw him, Perkin?

PERKIN. Nay. I said not so.

DOROTHY. You saw him? Oh! How looks he, and what said he?

PERKIN. We talked of politics—and of the weather.

DOROTHY. (*With a little scream*) The weather! What of me?

PERKIN. From politics we passed to foreign travel and theology.

DOROTHY. Theology! What said Sir John of me—me—me? Of me who dies of hunger here because I'll have no other for my lord! Had he no word for me? Nay—I'll pull your ears until you give your budget up!

PERKIN. I would as lief Sir George's Butcher cut them off as you should have them, roots and all. What would you say if you might speak with him?

DOROTHY. Speak with him! Perkin! Will he come near the house—to-night—to speak with me?

PERKIN. Maybe.

DOROTHY. Oh! John—to see him! Hear him—to whisper down to him a little of my love—but yet, he must not come—the peril is too great. (*As she runs to the window, PERKIN goes quickly to the small door on the left and knocks sharply upon the panel.*)

PERKIN. (*In a whisper*) Sir John!

DOROTHY. (*Turning back at the sound of the knock*) Who's there? Does Lady Vernon come? (*As she speaks a soft tap is heard on the further side of the door. In a whisper to PERKIN*) Who's there? Who shares your lodgings?

PERKIN. (*Tapping softly as the knock is repeated*) 'Sh! Sir John!

DOROTHY. Sir John!

PERKIN. Did I not say you might have speech with him?

DOROTHY. John Manners!

PERKIN. Hush! Soft! Come hither to the door. I brought him by the tangled garden—secretly—and he hath lain in hiding in my lodging all the day.

DOROTHY. John! (*She runs to the door, putting her cheek against the panel*) John! Are you there? And can you hear my voice? Speak, John! 'Tis I—your Dorothy.

MANNERS. (*Heard beyond the door*) Sweetheart! Are you alone?

DOROTHY. (*Her cheek against the panel*) Perkin is here. (*To PERKIN*) It is his voice— Oh, Perkin!

MANNERS. (*From beyond*) I'll force the door.

PERKIN. (*Calling through*) Nay, nay, 'tis iron-ribbed! The sound of it would rouse the household. Patience. We will find a means. My Lady Vernon keeps the keys.

DOROTHY. Oh, John—and you are there so near to me! Why have the rats been busy everywhere and gnawed no little gateway for my love?

PERKIN. (*Listening*) Hush! Come from the door.

DOROTHY. (*Speaking through the door*) Wait—I will come again.

PERKIN. Quick! They are here.

(*As she speaks she leaves the door, advancing as LADY VERNON enters through the corridor door. At her girdle she carries a bunch of keys. She is very richly dressed, and wears a ruff. SIR GEORGE follows her in with SIR MALCOLM VERNON, both richly dressed and wearing great ruffs. JENNIE FAXTON follows them in.*)

LADY VERNON. (*As she enters*) Here is the stubborn jade! You see that I have kept her safe.

DOROTHY. (*Aside to PERKIN*) The keys!

PERKIN. (*Aside to DOROTHY*) I mark them. Dinna fear.

SIR GEORGE. (*As he enters*) How, Doll? Have you grown tame at last? Will you hear reason now? There's better fare in Haddon Hall than bread and water. Say what you will eat, and Jennie Faxton and Bess Cook shall see you served.

DOROTHY. Eat? I will eat everything!

SIR GEORGE. Go, Jennie. See your mistress served. Let Bess herself bring up the bridal cake. (*Exit JENNIE FAXTON.*)

SIR GEORGE. (*To DOROTHY*) Your wedding is to-morrow. Sign but this marriage contract, and then eat your fill.

DOROTHY. (*Drawing back*) Nay, sir! I will not buy my freedom at your price.

SIR GEORGE. (*To LADY VERNON*) How, stubborn yet? Let them bring in the food. I will be patient with her. The Queen of Scotland has escaped, has crossed the Border, and now hides in England waiting the moment when her friends will rise, dethrone Elizabeth, and place the crown of England on her head. (*As he speaks, DOROTHY and PERKIN look at each other and at the door hiding MANNERS. SIR MALCOLM notes the expression.*)

DOROTHY. What has the Queen of Scots to do with me?

SIR GEORGE. 'Tis known Sir Malcolm was her friend.

LADY VERNON. (*Hastily*) Nay—a mere platonic friend! Oh, nothing more—upon my soul, no more! My son is virtuous, and strong against temptation.

SIR MALCOLM. Mother, have done!

SIR GEORGE. While Mary Stuart threatens our Queen, Her friends stand in great peril of arrest—and heads will fall. But as my son-in-law, Sir Malcolm would be safe.

SIR MALCOLM. (*Advancing to DOROTHY*) To-morrow is our wedding day.

DOROTHY. It may be yours, sir, and it may be mine—but ours it is not. That I'll swear.

LADY VERNON. How? Hoity, toity! These be merry words. Still will and will not. Who hath heard the like? Is this her duty to her father—to shame and cross and plague him so? And make his neighbors hold him light as one who cannot rule his house? Beshrew me, I would take a stick to her! (*As she speaks JENNIE FAXTON re-enters with a tray of food, steaming hot.*)

JENNIE. Bess Cook will bring the bride's cake, sir.

SIR GEORGE. Come, Doll, come! Break your fast. Be friends. (*To LADY VERNON.*) She will be better tempered when she dines. Come and sit down. (*To SIR MALCOLM.*) When she is full she will be merry. We Vernons are the very devil for our food. If I be hungry, I could do a murder, and she favors me. Come, Doll—sit down.

DOROTHY. (*Viewing the table*) My appetite is like to be my sternest foe. (*As JENNIE spreads out the dishes.*) Take not the covers from the food! No, no! I'll not look at it.

SIR GEORGE. Come, Doll. To-morrow my authority is done. Obey me now. Sit down and eat. To-morrow you will be a wedded wife and I shall sit all day alone.

DOROTHY. (*Thinking of MANNERS and her flight with him*) Nay, shall you miss me? Nay, you care not for me. You will be glad when I am gone and none can tease and vex you as I do. I ever loved you, sir,—I did indeed. (*She buries her head in his breast.*)

SIR GEORGE. Tears, Doll? Why, now, I snuffle and am salty too. Do we agree at last?

DOROTHY. I cannot leave you, Father,—nay—I cannot— (*Sees chicken on table over his shoulder. As she flings her arms about him, takes a drumstick.*)

LADY VERNON. (*Aside to SIR GEORGE*) Urge the contract. She will sign it now.

DOROTHY. (*Eating drumstick over his shoulder*) When I am gone, you will forgive me, sir,—say you forgive whate'er I do.

SIR GEORGE. Aye, Doll, an you be married 'tis your husband's business,—none of mine. There, sit and eat—and here's the pen to sign the marriage contract as you said you would—

DOROTHY. (*Looking up*) I said not so.

SIR GEORGE. (*Angrily*) I say, this contract shall be signed.

DOROTHY. Signed. I care not. Let Jennie Faxton here write down her name—or Bess Cook make her mark.

SIR GEORGE. Sign. Or you shall not eat. I'll starve this humor out of you.

DOROTHY. (*Flinging down the drumstick that she was raising to her lips*) Starve, say you? Starve? So be it. Take the food away.

SIR GEORGE. Sign this indenture. Sign and gorge.

DOROTHY. May it be damned! I will not sign. Take this temptation from my sight. You will not? (*As SIR GEORGE signs to Jennie not to move*) Then I will. A fowl. See how she flies again. (*As she speaks she lifts a dish with a chicken in it and hurls it through the open window.*) The pastie next. The pudding. Now the tarts. (*As she speaks she hurls the dishes through the open window.*)

SIR GEORGE. (*Dancing with rage*) The window! Stop her. By God's death. I'll not endure it.

DOROTHY. (*As LADY VERNON shuts the window*) The mutton pie. (*She flings it crashing through the glass.*)

BESS. (*Enters proudly bearing the bridal cake*) Here, Mistress, be your bridal cake. (*PERKIN takes the cake from BESS and brings it to DOROTHY.*)

DOROTHY. My bridal cake! The dogs shall eat it! Wretch! (*She seizes the cake from PERKIN and hurls it at BESS'S head, then catches up the marriage contract and flings it at LADY VERNON.*)

LADY VERNON. The jade. The wicked jade.

PERKIN. (*Aside as he snatches the keys from LADY VERNON'S girdle, unnoticed in the excitement.*) The keys.

SIR GEORGE. (*Purple with rage—gasping for breath*) Vixen! Hussey! I will imprison you! The dungeon! Manacles! She will yet be the death of me!

(*In the midst of the wild confusion, a blast of trumpets is heard and martial music in the distance. All listen.*)

SIR MALCOLM. The Queen!

ALL. (*Running to window*) The Queen!

WILL DAWSON. (*Enters as they speak*) Sir George, the Queen approaches.

(In the distance voices are heard shouting, "Long live Elizabeth, God save the Queen. Long live Elizabeth. Long live Elizabeth.")

SIR GEORGE. The Queen! Come to the gates! *(Turning to DOROTHY, shaking his clenched hand at her)* She shall be dealt with. By God's soul, she shall! I will have order in my house! *(The trumpets and shouts sound nearer.)* The jade!

(Exit SIR GEORGE, LADY VERNON, SIR MALCOLM, and DAWSON with JENNIE FAXTON and BESS. As they exit, DOROTHY follows up, closing the door, leaning against it, and listening to be sure they are gone.)

DOROTHY. They're gone! Perkin, the key! *(She snatches up a piece of the bridal cake as she turns from the door, takes one bite, and holds the rest clutched in her hand, speaking with her mouth full of cake)* My love! My love!

PERKIN. *(Running to small door, unlocks and opens it)* Sir John. *(As he speaks, MANNERS enters. He is booted and spurred.)*

DOROTHY. *(In his arms)* Oh, John, my Jack! My Johnnie! Oh, love, are you come again?

MANNERS. My Dorothy!

DOROTHY. *(Looking over her shoulder at PERKIN, about to kiss MANNERS)* Go, Perkin—watch outside.

MANNERS. Nay, whistle two horses from the paddock, saddle them, and have them waiting for us at our trysting place.

DOROTHY. Two horses? Saddled? At our trysting place? Oh, love—I know how great the peril is—I will not keep you here, yet— Oh, begone not quite so soon. How can I part with you?

MANNERS. Part with me? Nay, talk no more of parting. I come to take you from this place.

DOROTHY. To take me with you—

MANNERS. Aye—to be my wife!

DOROTHY. Your wife—to-day? So soon?

PERKIN. I'll have the horses at the gate. And wait your coming there.

DOROTHY. I cannot go—so soon—part with my father now in anger.

MANNERS. To-morrow you would be Sir Malcolm's bride—we can delay no more.

DOROTHY. *(In his arms)* True, I will go with you, John, to-day!

(Exit PERKIN, closing the small door after him.)

MANNERS. (*As he holds DOROTHY in his arms*) What, tears? Why do you weep?

DOROTHY. Because I am so happy—and I was so jealous—

MANNERS. (*Looking about*) Jealous of whom? You could not doubt me, Dorothy? (*As he speaks, the trumpets and music and shouts are heard below, "The Queen! The Queen!"*)

DOROTHY. Come to the window. The Queen is at the door. Nay—her hair is redder than mine is. See how my father kneels before her. And see her ladies and the yeoman guards. Who are the gentlemen with her?

MANNERS. (*Looking out the window*) That is Lord Burleigh, her great Minister of State. And that, Sir William St. Loe, Captain of the Guards. I do not see Sir Malcolm Vernon anywhere.

DOROTHY. He was a friend of Mary Stuart and so hides his head till he is made my father's son-in-law.

MANNERS. That shall he never be.

(*As he speaks, SIR MALCOLM VERNON enters the room. DAWSON is seen behind him. As he sees DOROTHY and MANNERS he draws back. DAWSON pauses in the doorway.*)

SIR MALCOLM. (*As he enters*) Madame, the Queen has summoned you— (*He pauses. seeing MANNERS, whose back is turned to him. They do not hear him, listening to the cheers without and to the trumpets. Aside, as he draws back*) God! We have the knave at last! (*He looks to the small door.*) The keys. I see the dwarf's hand here. (*He moves silently backward to DAWSON, whispering*) Go, and make fast that door. (*Pointing to small door*) Tell no one. Do not warn Sir George until we have him caged and fast. Go! Go!

(*Exit DAWSON. SIR MALCOLM stands half concealed, watching MANNERS and DOROTHY.*)

MANNERS. (*Still in the window*) We must be gone at once, while they think only of the Queen.

SIR MALCOLM. (*Aside*) Begone—

DOROTHY. (*To MANNERS*) And will your father make me welcome? Are you very sure?

MANNERS. He waits to welcome you at Rutland Castle now.

SIR MALCOLM. (*Aside*) At Rutland— Then 'tis John Manners—Rutland's son!

DOROTHY. (*Looking from the window*) They will be gay to-night, but I'll be with you—far away—and we will part no more.

MANNERS. For but a day or two—while I conduct the Queen of Scotland to the coast.

SIR MALCOLM. (*Aside*) The Queen of Scotland! He is lost indeed!
(*Exit SIR MALCOLM.*)

DOROTHY. The Queen of Scotland? (*Turning from the window into the room*) Nay, then I will not go. I'll not be left behind to mope at Rutland. (*As she speaks, she opens the big chest downstage, kneeling before it and searching in it, drawing out her cloak with its huge ruff, her gloves, reticule, and so on.*) I say I will not go at all. I'm glad, sir, that you spoke in time, while I can yet turn back. (*She begins to put on the cloak.*)

MANNERS. (*In protest*) Nay, Dorothy—

DOROTHY. (*Pulling on her glove*) No. I'll not go. 'Tis said this Mary Stuart seeks our throne—is come to stir her friends to rise against our Queen, and heads will fall for it—and then she is so beautiful that no man can resist her. Why did you ever bring her here to plague me so? Think not I mean you shall go back to her alone.

MANNERS. Nay, love,—be generous. My honor and my life are staked upon the safety of this exiled Queen. 'Twas at my father's wish she came to seek protection from Elizabeth. But ere I brought her I pledged my knightly word that only when she said the hour had come—of her free will—should she be yielded to Elizabeth. Until she bids me speak, even the order of my Queen would not unseal my lips to her betrayal. If they have used me, it shall be upon the terms of honor—not of treachery. If you can trust me—come with me.

DOROTHY. (*Going to him with outstretched hands.*) Forgive me, John. Just help me put my cloak on, John. I will go gladly, John—and please, you might just fasten it. (*He fastens the cloak under her chin, kisses her.*) Oh, John!

MANNERS. My spur. (*He half kneels, half sits in the great chair by the fireplace to adjust his spur.*)

DOROTHY. (*Kneeling before him*) Nay, John, let me do this. Deny me not. Let me do penance for my fault. You think me quick of temper—as I am—but I'm not quarrelsome. Say that you do not think me quarrelsome?

(As she speaks the door to the corridor is opened. She springs up, standing before the chair in which MANNERS is seated, facing the corridor door. As she sees SIR GEORGE VERNON enter she sinks back upon the chair, completely covering MANNERS with her great cloak and skirt.)

SIR GEORGE. *(As he enters)* Still prinking [dressing]? Did not Sir Malcolm say the Queen commands your presence?

DOROTHY. Sir Malcolm, Father? I have not seen Sir Malcolm.

SIR GEORGE. I bade him summon you.

DOROTHY. Say to Her Majesty I come at once.

SIR GEORGE. I warn you. Make no more delays, or I will send those that shall bring you down.

(Exit SIR GEORGE. As he exits, MANNERS half rises from the chair, gathering DOROTHY from his lap into his arms. She turns faintly in his arms, lying her head upon his shoulder, her arms about his neck, her lips trembling in a pathetic laugh.)

DOROTHY. Oh, John, thank god my cloak was in the latest fashion.

MANNERS. *(Crossing to small door)* We must be gone ere they return. *(He pauses, his hand upon the lock, turns to her)* Dorothy!

DOROTHY. *(Startled)* What is it?

MANNERS. The door is fast, Did he not say he sent Sir Malcolm here? *(Putting his weight against the door)* 'Tis barred upon the other side.

DOROTHY. Barred! *(She listens at the door)* Hush!

MANNERS. What do you hear?

DOROTHY. Some one is there—I hear them whispering!

MANNERS. Nay, do not tremble. There is naught to fear. *(Crossing to corridor door)* This way—

DOROTHY. *(Holding him back)* Hark! They come that way. It is a trap—and you are caught in it. *(As she speaks she bars the corridor door.)*

MANNERS. Sir George and I must meet again—there could not be a better hour!

DOROTHY. No, no! *(Drawing him to door of sleeping room)* The curtain there! Be silent! *(As she speaks, knocking is heard upon the corridor door.)*

SIR GEORGE. *(Heard offstage)* Open! Open, I say!

DOROTHY. Aye—patience. Yes—I come. *(To MANNERS)* Hush! *(To the others)* I come—I come! *(MANNERS conceals himself behind the tapestry.)*

DOROTHY *flings off her cloak, crosses and unbars the corridor door.* What is it? Is the house on fire?

SIR GEORGE. (*As he enters with drawn sword*) Where is he?

LADY VERNON. (*As she enters*) The shameless wanton! Her door made fast while she receives her lover here! Out on the baggage!

SIR MALCOLM. (*Entering with drawn sword*) This time we have him! He shall not escape! (*Pointing to small door*) This was the way the varlet came! (*As he speaks, he opens the door and DAWSON enters, followed by MARK and MEN-AT-ARMS. To MARK*) he has not passed this way.

MARK. (*A great meat cleaver in his hand*) He has not on my life,—or we had dealt with him! (*In the corridor door comes JENNIE FAXTON, BESS and SERVANTS.*)

SIR GEORGE. (*Looking about the room*) Shall he escape us twice? (*To DOROTHY*) Speak, girl!

DAWSON. I heard them whispering at the door.

SIR GEORGE. Speak, girl!

SIR MALCOLM. I saw her with him at the window there.

SIR GEORGE. Speak, girl! (*He raises his sword hilt to strike DOROTHY, when MANNERS springs from behind the tapestry, confronting him.*)

MANNERS. Hold, Sir George! I—

(*As he speaks he catches the heavy blow SIR GEORGE had aimed at DOROTHY upon his forehead and falls insensible at DOROTHY'S feet. As he falls DOROTHY throws herself upon him, covering his body with her own, lifting his head in her arms.*)

SIR GEORGE. Who is this man?

SIR MALCOLM. (*Advancing, his drawn sword in his hand*) John Manners, Rutland's son!

SIR GEORGE. (*Staring at him with hate*) Rutland's son! He dies. Take him away.

LADY VERNON. The Queen!

(*As she speaks, ELIZABETH enters. With her come LORD BURLEIGH, SIR WILLIAM ST. LOE, GUARDS and LADIES. All draw back, making way for ELIZABETH.*)

ELIZABETH. (*Advancing*) Nay, what is this? How comes this bloodshed? Who is he? How—Sir George, you rule with a high hand at Haddon Hall. We hold the peace and law too dear to have it broken at your pleasure. Put up your swords. (*As they hesitate*) Put up your swords, I say. Who is this man? (*Advancing and looking down at MANNERS as he lies insensible in DOROTHY'S arms.*)

SIR GEORGE. 'Tis Rutland's son. Come to dishonor my daughter! He dies for it!

ELIZABETH. (*Gently to DOROTHY*) Speak, girl. (*A pause*) Speak, do you confess your guilt? (*To ST. LOE*) See if he lives.

ST. LOE. (*Bending above MANNERS*) He lives.

DOROTHY. (*Lifting her head*) Thank God!

SIR GEORGE. (*As DOROTHY bends above MANNERS kissing him*) Enough! Take him below.

ELIZABETH. Patience a little. (*To SIR GEORGE*) I am wont to order. He is Rutland's son, Knight by our hand. Ye harm him not without just cause.

SIR GEORGE. Were his suit honorable had he urged it so? May it please Your Grace, I stand upon the justness of my cause, and I demand his life!

ELIZABETH. (*To DOROTHY*) What was his purpose when he entered here?

DOROTHY. To take me with him as his wife.

SIR MALCOLM. (*Scornfully*) His wife. (*As he sees ELIZABETH hesitates, he advances boldly*) 'Twas all in vengeance on Sir George. Think you the Queen of Scotland would brook this girl a rival in her love?

ELIZABETH *and* ALL. The Queen of Scotland!

ELIZABETH. What has the Queen of Scots to do with this?

SIR MALCOLM. She is in England. Brought hither by this traitor.

ELIZABETH. Brought here—by him?

SIR MALCOLM. 'Twas he contrived her rescue and her flight—and now conceals her in some safe retreat until her friends can rise and place the crown of England on her brow.

ELIZABETH. (*Striding forward*) How say you? Have a care! The Queen of Scots is cousin to us,—of our father's blood. Ye link her name with words that run with peril and the block.

SIR MALCOLM. My head upon it if Manners brought her not to England—conceals her now—and means to share the throne with her. May not his love, that gains him entrance here, be an assassin's pretext to speed the blow that shall lay England in the dust, at Mary Stuart's feet?

ELIZABETH. No more. I'll hear no more. Your head shall answer an you make not good your charge. Be warned. Ye shall not trifle with us for your own revenge. (*To SIR GEORGE*) An but the hundredth part of this be true, I give him up to you to deal with as you will. If he hath plotted with the Queen of Scots—he dies!

DOROTHY. Dies! No, no! He meant no harm. He plots no treason. 'Twas at his father's wish she came—to seek protection at your hands.

SIR MALCOLM. You hear her. She confesses it.

BURLEIGH. Let all begone but those who know of this. Let some keep guard beyond the doors. This is a matter which touches the safety of the State and of the Queen's most precious person.

(As he speaks all exit but SIR GEORGE, SIR MALCOLM, LADY VERNON, ELIZABETH, ST. LOE, and DOROTHY, who still kneels by MANNERS' side.)

SIR MALCOLM. *(As the doors are closed)* You asked me, Madame, for some proof. You heard the girl.

DOROTHY. He told me nothing.

SIR MALCOLM. She seeks to shield him.

ELIZABETH. It shall not long avail her. He shall speak before he dies. If he be slow of tongue and stubborn as his race, I warrant some at Haddon have skill to make him eloquent.

DOROTHY. *(With horror)* You will not torture him!

BURLEIGH. Her Majesty must know where Mary Stuart lies to-night. Speak, girl.

DOROTHY. My Lord, I do not know.

ELIZABETH. Fie! She speaks falsely.

BURLEIGH. Madame, while we parley here, the Queen of Scotland may escape. *(Pointing to MANNERS)* Let him be taken, roused by any means,—questioned, and if he will not speak, bind him upon the rack.

DOROTHY. *(Clinging to MANNERS)* The rack! No! No!

ELIZABETH. *(Watching DOROTHY intently)* You might have spared him this if you had known where Mary Stuart is concealed. Call in the Guard.

DOROTHY. No, no! You shall not torture him! There is one way.

ELIZABETH. What way?

DOROTHY. Not torture—and not death.

ELIZABETH. How then?

DOROTHY. *(As she leans above MANNERS)* He would answer to my questioning.

ELIZABETH. *(To BURLEIGH)* The girl speaks well. *(To DOROTHY)* What would you purchase of us? What is your price?

DOROTHY. His life. That he may go in safety as he came. *(To ELIZABETH in a changed voice)* If I shall learn the Queen of Scotland's hiding place, have I your promise that he shall go free?

SIR GEORGE. He shall not quit my house alive.

ELIZABETH. Nay—by your leave he shall. I like her argument. I know his stubborn race. I would not see him on the rack. The blame of this may be elsewhere. (*She turns to DOROTHY*) My royal word upon it, girl. He shall pass safely from this place if you can coax from him the hiding place of Mary Stuart.

BURLEIGH. But if she warn him—

ELIZABETH. If she attempt it, he dies upon the spot.

ST. LOE. (*Leaning above MANNERS*) He is recovering.

ELIZABETH. Look that the Guards be on all sides. Now, lady, try your skill.

(*As she speaks, ST. LOE, ELIZABETH and BURLEIGH and all conceal themselves behind the tapestry that hangs in part across the door to the sleeping room. The scene has darkened to twilight. The first rays of the moonlight fall through the window upon MANNERS' face.*)

DOROTHY. John—my love—you hear me now?

MANNERS. (*In a whisper as she lifts his head upon her breast*) Dorothy—I thought— Am I at Rutland?

DOROTHY. Nay, you are here at Haddon, with my arms about you—here, with my cheek pressed close to yours.

MANNERS. Your father and Sir Malcolm—I remember. Where are they?

DOROTHY. They are gone. Stir not. Lie still a little in my arms. Nay, are you hurt—and must I hurt you a little more. I cannot go with you to-night.

MANNERS. (*Rising*) I will not go alone!

DOROTHY. You must not stay. The Queen of Scots— Her fate hangs on your safety.

MANNERS. Aye, so it may.

DOROTHY. (*Turning her face from him*) Is she—is she well hidden? Is she near or far?

MANNERS. She is concealed beneath my father's roof.

DOROTHY. At Rutland Castle?

MANNERS. Aye,—at Rutland. She is known only as the Lady Blanche.

DOROTHY. At Rutland, say you? As the Lady Blanche?

MANNERS. (*Moving to exit*) Come with me, Dorothy!

DOROTHY. I cannot go.

MANNERS. (*Pausing*) Yet I am free to pass?

DOROTHY. Yes—you are free.

MANNERS. (*Pausing*) Dorothy, what price have you paid them for my life?

DOROTHY. (*Hesitating*) Your life—

MANNERS. (*Sternly*) Aye,—it was in your father's power. Their price! Speak, Dorothy.

DOROTHY. (*Her face averted*) I swore I would renounce you if they let you pass—

MANNERS. (*Fiercely*) Renounce me! And more! Did you not swear to wed Sir Malcolm?

DOROTHY. No, I never gave them such a vow. Go! Go!

MANNERS. Have you told me all?

DOROTHY. Yes—yes, all, all! Find Perkin. Let him go with you! My life and safety rest in yours— Go—go!

MANNERS. I will return. I will not yield you—not for fifty oaths. To-morrow you shall be my wife!

DOROTHY. Your wife! Ah, love, swear if we never meet again—if aught befalls you—that never in your heart will you let harbour any hate of Dorothy! If aught—

(*As she would warn MANNERS the curtains move and DOROTHY sees ELIZABETH half advancing in the gloom.*)

MANNERS. Who's there?

DOROTHY. (*Trembling*) My father sends for me. Go, go!

MANNERS. (*Whispering to her*) Courage! I'll come again! Be brave—I'll not be long. I will renounce you—(*As he holds her in his arms*)—only with my life!

DOROTHY. Go, go! Farewell, farewell! (*The last words are spoken as*

MANNERS *exits*. DOROTHY *follows to the door*. SIR MALCOLM *springs forward*.)

SIR MALCOLM. Come! We will take him at the gate!

DOROTHY. (*To ELIZABETH*) Your oath!

ELIZABETH. (*To SIR MALCOLM*) Have I not said he should pass safely from this place? My lord and gentlemen, your business is at Rutland with the Queen of Scots. She sleeps to-night my prisoner!

(*As she speaks ELIZABETH and all exit. SIR GEORGE and LADY VERNON pass DOROTHY without a look. The room is lighted only by the moonlight. DOROTHY is heard sobbing bitterly. JENNIE FAXTON enters, carrying lighted candles. Suddenly there are sounds of voices beneath the window, and a glare as of torches is seen against the backdrop.*)

JENNIE. (*Placing the candles on the table*) My lady!

DOROTHY. You—Jennie? Are they gone? I have betrayed his honor. I have betrayed the Queen of Scots!

JENNIE. (*Looking to the window*) The men-at-arms are gathering to storm Rutland Castle. They have sent to Bakewell for the Yeoman Guards!

DOROTHY. Could I warn him! Could I save the Queen? (*Rising and going to window*) Were I on my Black Beauty's back, the Queen of Scotland might escape them yet, and John be safe! If I could pass—

JENNIE. No one can pass unless 'tis I.

DOROTHY. Who's at the door?

JENNIE. Will Dawson, an it please you.

DOROTHY. Your sweetheart. Would he let me go?

JENNIE. He dare not.

DOROTHY. (*Suddenly*) Are there lights?

JENNIE. Not yet! All be so busy in the courtyard. But the moon shines in.

DOROTHY. How comes it that he did not challenge you?

JENNIE. He knew me by my cap and dress.

DOROTHY. By them alone?

JENNIE. And by the kiss he stole.

DOROTHY. Had I the garb—the night befriending me—I too might pass Will Dawson at the door, mount Black Beauty and be gone to save them or to die in daring it! (*She lays her hand on JENNIE'S arm*) Strip off your dress. Nay, you shall have a hundred like it, but to-night 'tis mine! If you have ever loved me, aid me now!

JENNIE. My cap! My bodice! And my petticoat!

DOROTHY. (*Blowing out the candles, leaving the room in darkness, save for a bar of moonlight*) 'Tis best if we are spied upon. Quick, Jennie! Off with them! To-night we will trade places, you and I, and you shall be rewarded, never fear. Help me—I'm tangled! Quick! Quick! (*JENNIE assists her, and for an instant the two white-clothed figures are seen in the bar of moonlight.*) And now your bodice and you petticoat— No, no! The bodice first! Help me to lace it. Ugh! How it pinches! Ugh! How tight it is! Don't squeeze me so! Had I not lived on bread and water it would never meet! Thank God I was abstemious and lost flesh! There! Is it fastened? Now your petticoat! Over my head with it! Your cap! I'll need that too—to hide my face! Hark! Someone is at the door! Quick—hide my dress—my room—go in!

(As she thrusts JENNIE FAXTON through the door to the sleeping room, the corridor is opened and LADY VERNON enters, a candle in her hand, followed by SIR GEORGE, booted and spurred.)

SIR GEORGE. How—is all well?

LADY VERNON. Where have the candles gone?

DOROTHY. *(Keeping her face shadowed by her cap)* My mistress took them to her room!

LADY VERNON. So! Is she there? Turn the key on her!

SIR GEORGE. Give me the key!

DOROTHY. *(Closing and locking the door to the sleeping room and giving the key to SIR GEORGE with a curtsey)* 'Tis here, sir.

LADY VERNON. I must below to see them mount.

DOROTHY. Which road do they take? *(With a curtsey.)*

SIR GEORGE. We go by Bakewell—and through Rowsley. *(To LADY VERNON)* Before the night is done, Vernon shall sate its hate on Rutland, God betide! *(Exit SIR GEORGE and LADY VERNON.)*

DOROTHY. *(As they exit)* Nay, Vernon's love shall outrun Vernon's hate—and honor outride shame! The Queen of Scots shall yet escape, and him I love go free! *(She throws wide the door to the corridor.)*

DAWSON. *(In the doorway)* A kiss, my mistress, ere you pass the gate!

DOROTHY. *(Boxing his ears with a sound report)* Aye—willingly!

VOICES. *(Without—mingling with the bugles)* To Rutland! God save the Queen! To Rutland!

(Exit DOROTHY.)

ACT II CURTAIN

One hour has elapsed. The Scene shows a vaulted Gothic room; the walls of stone are draped heavily with rich tapestries. At the center a door leads to the apartments of Mary Stuart. At the right a door leads to the castle hall. To the left of center there is a high narrow window. Beyond the window can be seen the battlements, and the distant country bathed in moonlight. The doors are massive, and are each approached by two steps. The whole effect is dark and somber.

It is night. The room is lighted dimly by candles burning upon the table and by the moonlight which falls through the window. PERKIN is discovered seated on the steps of the center door, a guitar in his hands, singing a Scottish ballad. As the song ends MARY STUART enters from her apartment, followed by LORD RUTLAND. MARY is robed in black, a long veil falls from her head dress. RUTLAND is an old man, richly dressed; in his hand he carries a folded parchment.

MARY. (*Pausing in the center doorway*) How soft the night is. Here I may put by my veil with safety. (*Pushing back the thin white veil from her forehead*) Often on such a night at Sterling Castle I have walked with Bothwell on the battlements. Little dreamed we of parting, flight, and exile then. Then I was indeed the Queen of Scotland, and my crown—which now they give in mockery to my little son—was firm upon my head. To-night I am a fugitive—Bothwell an outlaw in the Northern Isles.

RUTLAND. Touching this letter, Madame, to my Queen, will you affix your signature? (*He pauses, looking at PERKIN.*)

MARY. My lord, you may speak freely. The dwarf has ever held as dear an interest in our cause as we ourselves. Ye shall both be my counsellors.

PERKIN. Hout! Madame, would ye ask a fool to cool his heels beneath your council table?

RUTLAND. (*Sternly*) So hath she done ere this day to her cost! I pray your grace to sign this letter to Elizabeth.

MARY. (*Sitting at table and opening the letter*) What have you written?

RUTLAND. I have but urged the reasons of your flight from Scotland, together with the valid claim you have upon our sovereign, being her kinswoman.

MARY. Aye, am I that and more, for some day I shall rule in England after her, or failing me—my little son shall take his place upon the throne. I am the heir of England's crown.

RUTLAND. Madame, I pray you—I am the loyal subject of Elizabeth.

MARY. (*Looking again at the letter*) I will not trespass. You are my proven friend, and shall advise me. What else do I write to her?

RUTLAND. I have entreated for Your Majesty a safe asylum here, and men and means to place you on your throne of Scotland once again. It is made clear that of your own free will you place your cause and person in her power, and so disarm these evil rumors of plots and risings—and the aid of France—by which my royal mistress is abused—and your cause suffers—and so much more have I set down as will explain my part in serving you—for our old friendship's sake, and for my loyal wish to see Your Majesty on good terms with my Queen. This I have put down, together with the part my son has had in your deliverance from captivity.

MARY. It is well done—for I would have no ill befall you or your house.

(She signs the letter) Let it be sent to-night.

RUTLAND. 'Tis well determined.

(As they have spoken, MANNERS has entered unnoticed, has paused to listen, and now advances.)

MANNERS. Father, I brought this lady into England at your will, thinking her presence would be welcome to our Queen. I did not bring her here to yield her to our enemies.

RUTLAND. My son.

MARY. Sir John.

MANNERS. *(Bowing low to MARY)* By your leave the letter must not now be sent. Elizabeth is ill advised, surrounded by your enemies. Burleigh is with her, and St. Loe. The talk is all of plots to seat you on her throne. You can appeal to her with safety only from the shores of France.

MARY. From France? *(She turns to RUTLAND)* My lord of Rutland, you know my royal cousin's temper better than your son. Were it not wiser that I yield myself, and being fearless, prove my innocence, than that by flight, I should stand self-accused?

RUTLAND. I would counsel that you throw yourself upon her mercy. It was the Queen's wish that you should seek her aid. Elizabeth is stern, but she is just.

MANNERS. *(In protest)* Father—the peril is too great.

MARY. To-morrow we will send the letter. *(Placing the letter in a pocket of her dress)* or we will ask your guidance to the shores of France. To-night, my lord, my presence here can bring no added menace to your house. In this asylum I am safe at least.

MANNERS. *(Kneeling and kissing MARY'S hand)* Our lives shall be your surety. *(Rising)* To-morrow I will conduct you to the coast. To-night I must return to Haddon Hall.

MARY. To-night? 'Tis Mistress Dorothy that takes you. And yet to-morrow is her wedding day.

MANNERS. If she escape not ere the dawn she may be forced to wed Sir Malcolm. Ten men go with me. During the revels—or while the household sleeps—I'll find some way to set her free.

PERKIN. Sir John, I make another sword.

MANNERS. Nay, stay you here—keep watch that none shall spy upon Her Majesty.

MARY. Fear not for me. When strangers enter, see—I draw the veil before my face, and I am known but as the Lady Blanche. My prayers attend you.

MANNERS. I thank Your Majesty.

RUTLAND. With Her Majesty's permission, I will go with you to the gates.
(Exit MANNERS and LORD RUTLAND.)

MARY. (*Looking after MANNERS*) Ah, Perkin, I am grown old, methinks. Sir Malcolm Vernon quits my fortunes for the country wench—this Mistress Dorothy—and Mary Stuart's smile, that once was potent with the hearts of men, is powerless now to win this gallant boy. (*She turns to the window and looks out*) England, whose rightful Queen I am, have you no refuge for me anywhere?

PERKIN. (*Weeping*) Dinna speak so. The sun shall shine again! Ye shall yet triumph, and rule in Scotland once again.

MARY. Mayhap—mayhap. If that day ever comes I shall reward the scanty number of my faithful friends. (*She extends her hand to PERKIN to kiss.*) Acquit me to mine enemies. (*Enter LORD RUTLAND.*) Your son?

RUTLAND. He rides to Haddon by the Bakewell road. I would that he kept at home to-night. A curse upon these Vernons, root and branch.

GREGORY. (*Heard offstage*) Stop, wench!

DOROTHY. (*Heard offstage*) Who dares delay me? Where is Sir John? Where is my Lord of Rutland, or the Lady Blanche? Hinder me not! Say that I come from Haddon Hall.

MARY. (*As they hear her*) The Lady Blanche—

RUTLAND. From Haddon—

PERKIN. I should know that voice.

(*As they speak, MARY draws the veil hastily before her face. The door is opened and GREGORY, an old retainer, backs in, with other servants, resisting the entry of DOROTHY, who presses forward, still wearing JENNY FAXTON'S dress, her cap fallen back upon her shoulders, her hair dishevelled, breathless, and laying about her with her riding whip [swinging it randomly].*)

GREGORY. (*Opposing her entrance in the door*) Stop, wench! Go to the kitchen with your beggar's tale! You cannot enter above stairs.

DOROTHY. (*Bringing her whip down on his head*) The kitchen, say you? Cannot, knave? Cannot to me? Your betters, sir, had felt my whip about their ears for less.

GREGORY. Disarm her! Thrust her out!

DOROTHY. (*Laying about her*) Nay, at your peril, then! Stop me who dares! Make way! Make way!

PERKIN. God save us! 'Tis Mistress Dorothy!

DOROTHY. Perkin! (*With joy*) Where is Sir John?

PERKIN. But now set out for Haddon by the Bakewell road.

DOROTHY. (*Sinking exhausted in the chair by the table*) Gone—back to Haddon—by the Bakewell road? The Guard approaches by that way. I came by Lathkil. Oh, thank God, in time!

GREGORY. Thank God, says she? (*Rubbing his ears*) I would thank God if she had kept at home!

MARY. (*Aside to RUTLAND*) You heard? She said the Guard approaches.

RUTLAND. (*To GREGORY and Servants*) Begone and close the doors.

(*Exit GREGORY and Servants, muttering as they shake their heads. As they close the doors, LORD RUTLAND turns to PERKIN sternly.*)

RUTLAND. Who is this girl?

PERKIN. 'Tis Mistress Dorothy.

RUTLAND. What Dorothy? Who's Dorothy?

DOROTHY. What Dorothy? Who's Dorothy? It is no fault of mine that I am not Dorothy Manners, and your lordship's daughter!

RUTLAND. (*Comprehending her*) Dorothy Vernon—in this peasant's guise? We thought you were held prisoner at Haddon Hall?

DOROTHY. And so I was. But I escaped my jailors.

RUTLAND. What brought you here?

DOROTHY. God's grace and Black Beauty's legs. I needed both—for I have come pell-mell and helter-skelter cross the fields,—jumping the ditches—scratched and torn—to warn you that you are betrayed—to save you from Elizabeth.

MARY. Betrayed!

RUTLAND. Betrayed!

MARY. Who hath betrayed us to Elizabeth?

DOROTHY. I, lady! I, my lord!

MARY. You,—girl!

RUTLAND. You—who knew this secret from my son!

DOROTHY. I had no choice. It was to save his life. When he lay stunned and bleeding in my arms—what could I do? They would have tortured him. I coaxed it from him—they were hid behind the tapestries—heard all. It was the price I paid to gain his liberty. (*To MARY*) It was Sir Malcolm Vernon who first told the Queen all save your hiding place.

MARY. Sir Malcolm Vernon.

DOROTHY. He came upon us unaware. He told the Queen you sought her life—her throne.

MARY. Traitor! Hath he so soon forgot his vows—my favors—all?
(*She covers her face with her hands.*)

DOROTHY. Lose not a moment. Go—ere they are at the castle gates. Fly instantly, and Perkin—you must warn Sir John. He too must fly!

MARY. (*Pacing up and down*) Would God that I had never entered England! Let us be gone ere they can take us here.

RUTLAND. Begone? They'll track us when our flight is known. If we could quit the castle unobserved—delay pursuit—could we but throw them from the scent, aye, for one little hour!

MARY. (*At window, pointing out*) In the bright moonlight? 'Tis impossible.

DOROTHY. My lord, might not the Queen escape unnoticed as I came?

MARY. How, girl?

DOROTHY. In Jennie's dress. Look, it has served my need—why not Your Majesty's?

MARY. Fly—in your dress?

DOROTHY. 'Twill prove a better fit for you than it has done for me. In Jennie's dress you might ride by my father's very door—nay,—with the cap drawn so—(*Pulling it down over her face*)—might enter it and pass unquestioned through the Queen's own Guard, and none dispute your way.

RUTLAND. What say you? In this dress the Queen might reach the presence of Elizabeth unchallenged?

DOROTHY. Aye—it would open any door at Haddon Hall.

PERKIN. (*At door*) I hear the distant beat of hoofs.

DOROTHY. (*Running up to door*) They must have ridden on the wind who would be at the gates of Rutland now! (*As she speaks, DOROTHY and PERKIN turn to the window, listening.*)

RUTLAND. (*As he sees DOROTHY and PERKIN in the doorway, speaking in a half whisper to MARY*) You heard the girl. All is not lost.

MARY. What shall it profit me to pass these doors even in this disguise? I shall be followed—hunted down. My very flight confirming every plot they charge against me. No,—I will not fly.

RUTLAND. To stay means capture—capture still proves secrecy—and has the guilt of flight without its hope.

MARY. There is no refuge for me anywhere!

RUTLAND. You have one refuge still, if it be only at the feet of England's Queen.

MARY. My lord—I will not go a prisoner to Haddon Hall!

RUTLAND. Nay—of your own free will. While they would seek you here you shall be with Elizabeth, disprove their charges by your trust in her, and still debate your cause as Queen to Queen.

MARY. 'Tis nobly counseled—'tis a royal part—I'll go. (*Calling*) Girl! Girl! The dress!

RUTLAND. (*His finger on his lips*) Share not the secret with her—they have unsealed her lips before.

DOROTHY. (*Turning from the window*) 'Tis but one horseman. (*Beginning to unfasten her bodice*) Take my dress—and you may yet escape.

MARY. (*To RUTLAND, pausing*) If it is known that I have left the castle—some even here are base enough to point the road we take—and they will ride us down ere we can reach our refuge.

DOROTHY. Nay, fear not—none here shall have the wit to tell them you are gone. All shall believe you yet within.

RUTLAND. How may we keep them ignorant of her flight?

DOROTHY. How? Why, just as I left Jennie Faxton in my place, so shall you leave me here. I'll play the Queen of Scots as well as Jennie shall play Dorothy. And that no spies suspect your flight, I, by your leave, will wear your robes awhile—I must wear something, mustn't I?

MARY. The veil would aid you.

RUTLAND. I must go with Her Majesty.

DOROTHY. Let Perkin ride with you—he knows the country,—he will be your guide!

RUTLAND. And you will stay alone? With only men-at-arms? You do not fear?

DOROTHY. Fear? What, are there mice about? When you are safe, send Perkin back to my deliverance. Until he comes, none shall know the Queen of Scotland has gone forth, or follow her. My father comes with them!

RUTLAND. (*Holding out his hand to DOROTHY*) My son hath chosen better than I knew.

PERKIN. (*Advancing to RUTLAND with his sword, which he has taken from a stand of arms*) Your sword.

RUTLAND. (*Taking the sword and placing on the table*) I need no weapon. Look to the horses. Then meet us as we leave the castle by the postern gate. (*To MARY, crossing to her apartments door*) Madame, by your leave I will pass through your rooms and then return to guide you by a secret way.

DOROTHY. Quick—lady—quick!

(*Exit PERKIN to castle hall. Exit RUTLAND, DOROTHY, MARY STUART to her rooms. As they exit the moonlight shines through the window. There is a pause.*)

GREGORY. (*Speaking offstage*) What would you, sir?

SIR MALCOLM. (*Speaking offstage*) I bring a message for the Lady Blanche. (*Entering and looking about the room*) Where is Sir John?

GREGORY. (*Entering*) He has returned to Haddon.

SIR MALCOLM. (*To GREGORY*) Where is my Lord of Rutland?

GREGORY. Who is it asks for him?

SIR MALCOLM. Say that I am a friend of Scotland. I need no other title here. (*Exit GREGORY. As he exits, MALCOLM follows to door, looks out, listens, closes it, then crosses to apartments door and sees MARY'S rosary.*)

The Queen! (*In a loud whisper*) My Lady Blanche, are you within? My lady Blanche. (*Whispering*) 'Tis I—Sir Malcolm Vernon! Open—you are betrayed. (*He listens, turns from the door. Re-enter GREGORY.*) Well, fellow?

GREGORY. The page who keeps the postern says that my Lord of Rutland but now passed the gate.

SIR MALCOLM. (*Eagerly*) Was he alone?

GREGORY. The dwarf was with him, and a serving wench.

SIR MALCOLM. The dwarf—a serving wench! Go see if they return!

(*Exit GREGORY. As he exits SIR MALCOLM locks the door after him, listens a moment, then crosses to the apartments door, and knocks.*)

SIR MALCOLM. Open—open, Lady Blanche! Open if you would yet escape. Open. (*In a clear whisper*) Open. (*As he speaks the door is opened and DOROTHY re-enters in MARY STUART'S robes, the white veil drawn across her face.*)

DOROTHY. (*Pausing as she sees him*) You?

SIR MALCOLM. I come to warn Your Majesty, the Yeoman Guards are scarce a mile from Rutland. Elizabeth has sworn you shall be in her power to-night.

DOROTHY. (*Drawing back*) What brings you here? I thought to-morrow was your wedding day. What of your cousin Dorothy?

SIR MALCOLM. A curse upon her! 'Tis she who has betrayed you—out of jealousy! She knew that I had loved you in the past. I sought her only for her father's lands. I ever loved you—you alone. Trust me—and let me share your flight. Together we will reach the coast. Together we will lead an army into Scotland. You shall reign again.

DOROTHY. And you will ask for this?

SIR MALCOLM. To share the throne I win for you. Your love!

DOROTHY. Adventurer! Knowing your cousin's hate will keep you from her father's lands, you think to rise upon the broken fortunes of the Queen you have abandoned and betrayed. You come too late. The Queen of Scotland is already warned!

SIR MALCOLM. Mary, the veil! Who are you? Woman,—speak! (*DOROTHY lifts veil.*) You—Dorothy?

DOROTHY. I—Dorothy.

SIR MALCOLM. You have escaped from Haddon? And the Queen of Scots?

DOROTHY. Seek her and she would greet you as a foe. Return to Haddon if you dare. Mary already knows your treachery. Before the night is done I will denounce you to Elizabeth.

SIR MALCOLM. Then there is safety to me only when your lips are sealed. (*He turns back to apartments door and takes the key from it.*)

DOROTHY. What would you do? (*He locks the door, preventing access to apartments. Exit door to castle hall has been locked previously.*) Open the doors!

SIR MALCOLM. (*Turning to her.*) Aye, when I have made my terms with you. Swear that to-morrow you will be my wife. That when your father comes you'll say I came before them, not to aid Mary Stuart's flight, but to arrest her—swear this!

DOROTHY. (*Her hand touching LORD RUTLAND'S sword upon the table*) And if I will not swear?

SIR MALCOLM. (*Threateningly*) We are alone—Sir John is gone to Haddon—Lord Rutland is not here.

DOROTHY. The men-at-arms.

SIR MALCOLM. In the attack they will be needed at the gates. Remember—you are my affianced bride—an hour ago I found your lover in your room—and now I find you in his house at night. Even Sir George would hold me blameless if I avenged my honor with your life.

DOROTHY. (*Lifting the sword*) Your honor—wretch!

SIR MALCOLM. Put down the sword—I warn you—do not tempt me now—lest I forget your womanhood.

DOROTHY. (*The drawn sword in her hand*) I do not fear you!

SIR MALCOLM. (*Trying to wrest the weapon from her hand*) You dare not use it!

DOROTHY. You shall see!

SIR MALCOLM. (*Drawing his sword*) I will disarm you! (*As she parries his thrust*) So! You have skill! Down with your sword, I say! I will not spare you long. When I disarm you I shall make more bitter terms. Your wrist is strong, but it must weaken ere they come—and then my terms—you hear me? Mine!

DOROTHY. (*Fighting him off*) Death first!

SIR MALCOLM. Then death!

(*The fight becomes terrible, the lights are overturned and extinguished as the duel begins. The room is in darkness save for the bar of moonlight that falls through the window. Through this DOROTHY and SIR MALCOLM pass as the fight sweeps round the room. Their figures are only dimly visible, save when they are seen for an instant in this bar of light. As she passes the doors in the struggle, DOROTHY beats on them with her hands and sword, crying for help.*)

DOROTHY. Help—help!

SIR MALCOLM. Yield—yield!

DOROTHY. John! John! Help! Help!

SIR MALCOLM. (*Disarming her*) Yield! Yield! Your oath!

DOROTHY. (*As she falls, half fainting, at his feet*) Kill me—I will not swear it!

(*As she speaks the door is burst open and MANNERS enters with drawn sword, followed by MEN-AT-ARMS with torches. As he enters he strikes the sword from MALCOLM'S hand.*)

DOROTHY. (*Who is between them as SIR MALCOLM springs back*) Stay!

MANNERS. (*Thinking Dorothy, in MARY'S dress, is the QUEEN*) My—God—the Queen! (*Turning on MALCOLM.*) Then this assassin— (*As he sees his face*) Sir Malcolm Vernon! (*As he speaks a tumult is heard offstage.*)

ST. LOE. (*Heard offstage*) Open! Open, in the Queen's name! (*As the voice dies an absolute silence falls.*)

MANNERS. (*In a whisper*) St. Loe! The Guards—are come!

SIR MALCOLM. (*Breaking from the MEN-AT-ARMS who have surrounded him*) Bear witness that I give these traitors up. (*He tries to reach the window.*)

MANNERS. Seize him! Take him within! (*The MEN-AT-ARMS seize SIR MALCOLM and drag him offstage.*)

DOROTHY. (*To MANNERS.*) Fly—Save yourself!

MANNERS. Look to the gates! (*Exit all the MEN-AT-ARMS.*)

DOROTHY. (*In a whisper*) What brought you back?

MANNERS. Halfway to Haddon and we saw the road swarm with them—and like the dust before them came the word 'twas Dorothy betrayed you to Elizabeth.

DOROTHY. (*In a whisper*) 'Twas Dorothy? And you—you hate her for this treachery?

MANNERS. She knew not what she did. She meant no wrong.

DOROTHY. And you defend her? You—whose life is periled for her sake? You—John?

MANNERS. (*Seizing a torch from the wall and holding it so that the light shines full upon DOROTHY'S face*) Dorothy!

ST. LOE. (*Heard offstage*) I charge you upon pain of death, come forth and yield yourself and Mary Stuart prisoners to the Queen!

MANNERS. Where is the Queen?

DOROTHY. Gone with your father and the dwarf. We must not yield the doors till Perkin comes to tell me they are safe.

ST. LOE. (*Heard offstage*) Break down the gates!

MANNERS. If you are taken in this dress—if it is known you warned the Queen of Scots—even your life may pay for it!

DOROTHY. Perkin will come at last.

(*The door to the room is crashed in. The WOMEN of the household and the retainers swarm into the room. The broken door is set up and barred. DOROTHY has drawn the veil before her face.*)

GREGORY. (*As he rushes in*) The gates are taken!

(*In the dim light DOROTHY is seen veiled, surrounded by the frightened women of the household, and the men with their swords drawn. MANNERS stands beside her. The door is wrenched from its hinges and falls in. Upon the door—over it—and across it, swarm in the MEN-AT-ARMS and YEOMEN GUARDS, lighting the room with their flaring torches. SIR GEORGE VERNON, SIR WILLIAM ST. LOE, and MARK the butcher, follow them in.*)

ST. LOE. (*As he enters*) In the Queen's name I charge you yield yourselves my prisoners!

DOROTHY. (*Advancing proudly, checking MANNERS as he would speak*) In the name of which Queen must I yield to you? More than one, I see, hath bent the knee before the Queen of Scotland ere this hour. Hath custom changed so much—or are her fortunes ebb'd beyond the memory of lackeys? (*As she speaks she advances a step toward ST. LOE, who recoils. PERKIN, who has entered and forced his way among the MEN-AT-ARMS, advances to DOROTHY.*) Perkin!

PERKIN. They're safe!

ST. LOE. (*To MEN-AT-ARMS*) Seize them! Arrest the Queen of Scots!

(*As he speaks SIR MALCOLM VERNON enters, released by the Royal Guards.*)

SIR MALCOLM. (*Pointing to DOROTHY*) You are deceived—she is—

DOROTHY. Not Queen of Scotland—but just—Dorothy. (*As she speaks she flings back the veil.*)

ACT III CURTAIN

One hour has elapsed. The Scene is the same as in the First Act. It is night, the garden is lighted by the moonlight and by the lights which shine through the windows of Haddon Hall. Through the open door under Eagle Tower a broad flood of light streams out.

Music is heard within the building. BESS is discovered on the terrace with a group of servants, looking in at the brilliantly lighted windows.

BESS. Wist, dames,—they must not find you here, spying upon our sovereign's pleasure. Get ye gone! My lady comes!

(As the women leave the window and exit through the gate, LADY VERNON enters from the door of the Eagle Tower.)

LADY VERNON. Have they not yet returned from Rutland?

BESS. No one has passed this way since Jennie Faxton brought the stranger in.

LADY VERNON. What stranger? I saw the Queen but now, when my Lord Burleigh whispered in her ear, turn ashen as her ruff. What is amiss? And what hath Jennie Faxton with my lord, that none may enter to them and none dare speak before the Queen, who dances still, but ever with an eye upon the door where Burleigh is?

(As she speaks SIR MALCOLM VERNON enters at the gate.)

SIR MALCOLM. Mother!

LADY VERNON. *(Turning quickly)* Malcolm! Here! *(To BESS)* Go in. Say nothing till I follow you. *(Exit BESS)* The Queen of Scots?

SIR MALCOLM. *(With a backward glance toward the gate)* I am sent on before them to tell her Majesty the Queen of Scots has escaped!

LADY VERNON. Escaped! And you?

SIR MALCOLM. I was too late. She had been warned.

LADY VERNON. Warned—no, no! By whom?

SIR MALCOLM. By this accursed Dorothy!

LADY VERNON. By Dorothy! Impossible. She has not passed the door!

SIR MALCOLM. She was at Rutland when I entered, wearing the Queen of Scotland's dress.

LADY VERNON. At Rutland?

SIR MALCOLM. Ask me no more. Let me see Burleigh and the Queen. Ere Sir George comes I must regain their confidence, and close their ears against his daughter's tale, else is my head already on the block. I must see Burleigh instantly. *(As he speaks he moves toward the door.)*

LADY VERNON. Nay. None may enter to him since Jennie Faxton came. But if 'twas Dorothy who passed us in her dress—why then, who may this be that came in Jennie Faxton's dress?

SIR MALCOLM. The Queen of Scotland! God—and now with Burleigh! Knowing that I betrayed her to Elizabeth. Quick—Mother! Where are they?

LADY VERNON. (*Pointing*) That window. Yet I warn you, Burleigh will not be spied upon.

SIR MALCOLM. Nay—I must know! (*He steals to the window and looks in.*)

LADY VERNON. (*Following up*) Well—Malcolm, well?

SIR MALCOLM. (*Drawing back from the window*) It is the Queen of Scots! A horse! I must escape to France!

LADY VERNON. Nay! All's not lost! Mary Stuart ever was your friend. She'll not betray you to Elizabeth!

SIR MALCOLM. The girl has told her it was I—who, in my hate of Manners, betrayed her presence at Rutland to Elizabeth!

LADY VERNON. Then get you gone out of the land ere they can track or follow you, for you have raised up enemies on every hand.

SIR MALCOLM. I'll take the fleetest horse!

(*Exit SIR MALCOLM and LADY VERNON. ELIZABETH enters with LORD BURLEIGH from the Hall. She is magnificently dressed and blazing with jewels.*)

ELIZABETH. Well, Burleigh, well! Is it indeed the Queen of Scots? And Rutland with her? (*Pacing the garden restlessly*) Is she humble now? Tell me, am I so much the elder? So much the plainer featured? Do I still look the Queen to you who have beheld this paragon?

BURLEIGH. Madame, report hath dwelt too much upon her beauty. Yet is she fair.

ELIZABETH. She casts a spell upon you all. First Rutland and his wayward son—and now my Lord of Burleigh calls her fair. Are her crimes fair, my lord? The death of Darnley—Bothwell—and her ruined state? Shall we forget them for her beauty's sake? Urged she her claim again to be my heir?

BURLEIGH. Madame, she did. Both for herself and for her son.

ELIZABETH. My heir—forsooth! My heir! May I not wed and have a son to take my place and wear my crown when I am done with it? Am I too old to wed? Would God that I had listened to my people's prayers, and years ago had been a wife and mother!

BURLEIGH. Madame, your subjects are become your children.

ELIZABETH. Aye, I have lived for my people. To what end? To stand a barren stock in the rich harvest field. While she—this Mary Stuart—this dethroned Queen—she is the mother of a son—who rules in Scotland, and—my God—must some day rule in England after me, Burleigh. Her son, her blood, to give to England Kings! While I— Let it be so. The son, but not the mother—that I swear. [Mary's son, James, became King of England upon Elizabeth's death in 1603.]

BURLEIGH. Her fate from this hour forth rests in your hands alone.

ELIZABETH. (*In a changed voice*) She will submit her person and her cause to our protection? Said her so?

BURLEIGH. So she declares. If it so please you, she would herself make her petition to Your Majesty.

ELIZABETH. Nay, Burleigh, nay. I will not see her. I will not trust myself. There is too much I might forget, too much I might remember if we met. Let her be given in charge to my Lord of Shrewsbury. Say that her cause shall be considered, but see her I will not. 'Twould give offence in Scotland. (*Still pacing the garden*) Let her be close watched. Let Shrewsbury mark who comes and goes about her. Let her set out to-night. And bid the ladies of my chamber see her fittingly attired. Let her be shown all honor as befits her rank. 'Tis liberty alone that she shall never know again.

BURLEIGH. Madame, she is too great, too dangerous to the peace of England, to long remain a prisoner. Her end must be the block.

ELIZABETH. The block! No—Burleigh, no! At least not yet. Not for these many years. Our present course toward her is determined. 'Tis of Lord Rutland and his son that we must be resolved.

BURLEIGH. For my Lord Rutland's part, he ever hath been loyal. He urged but now in his defence that he had written a letter to Your Majesty in Mary Stuart's name which she had signed, begging your aid and clemency for her, and telling all the part he and his son have had in bringing her to England.

ELIZABETH. Brings he this letter with him?

BURLEIGH. He says it was mislaid at Rutland in the hasty flight.

ELIZABETH. Mislaid? I like not that. If he find not the letter, his head may pay for it,—aye, and his son's head.

BURLEIGH. (*Listening*) Madame, they are returning now.

(*As he speaks* SIR GEORGE VERNON *and* ST. LOE *enter, leading in* DOROTHY *and* MANNERS. PERKIN *and* MARK *the butcher follow with a few Yeoman Guards. DOROTHY leans upon MANNERS for support. He is stern and grave of aspect, but very tender to her. She is still dressed in MARY'S robes, her veil in tatters, a pathetic wreck.*)

DOROTHY. (*As she enters, not seeing* ELIZABETH) Well, we're home again. Oh, for my nightcap, and my feather bed.

ST. LOE. (*Sternly*) Soon you must answer to the Queen.

DOROTHY. I think I'd just a little rather not disturb Her Majesty to-night. Her temper may be better in the morning. I really couldn't talk to any one just now.

ELIZABETH. (*Advancing with* BURLEIGH) How, girl, my temper, say you! Must we put off the matters of our state while you repose?

ALL. The Queen.

DOROTHY. (*In despair*) Oh, dear, I thought her safe in bed!

ELIZABETH. (*To* ST. LOE) What news from Rutland?

ST. LOE. Hath not Sir Malcolm Vernon told Your Majesty?

ELIZABETH. Sir Malcolm Vernon?

SIR GEORGE. Aye, he rode ahead.

ELIZABETH. (*To Guards*) Let him be summoned. (*A Guard exits.*)

ST. LOE. Madame, the Queen of Scotland had been warned, and had already fled.

SIR GEORGE. My daughter's work!

ELIZABETH. So, girl, what say you for yourself?

(*Enter* LADY VERNON *unobserved by all.*)

DOROTHY. Sir Malcolm would have warned her anyway.

ELIZABETH. Sir Malcolm?

DOROTHY. Yes. He found me in her place at Rutland and ere he saw my face, offered to take me back to Scotland if I would share my crown with him.

ELIZABETH. A double traitor.

DOROTHY. Yes—of course he is—

SIR GEORGE. (*Seeing* LADY VERNON) Your son? Where is he?

ELIZABETH. Speak, woman, speak!

LADY VERNON. Your Majesty—

ST. LOE. (*To whom the Guard has re-entered and whispered aside*) Sir Malcolm Vernon has already fled.

SIR GEORGE. Gone—say you?

ELIZABETH. Let them pursue the traitor. If he set foot again in England it shall cost his head!

DOROTHY. (*To LADY VERNON*) What say you, Madame, now?

LADY VERNON. (*With hypocrisy*) The renegade! The knave! To so abuse our confidence. Fie on him! What an ungrateful son it is. Out on him! Let him go into France. I'd not have heart to show my face about the house again but for the need of me. I am not one that will forsake my post. My duty's here—and here I stay to do it. How now! Lights everywhere. I'll look that none burn down the house. My duty to Your Majesty. And you, Sir George, and gentle Dorothy. (*Bowing to each.*) A pestilence upon the careless rogues! (*Exit LADY VERNON into Hall.*)

ELIZABETH. (*To BURLEIGH*) Take Sir John in and question him. (*Aside to him*) I'll sound the girl.

DOROTHY. Oh, Lord!

MANNERS. Have courage!

DOROTHY. But I haven't any.

MANNERS. (*Whispering to her*) For my sake, Dorothy. (*To ELIZABETH*) I pray Your Majesty, since the offence is mine, let me bear all the punishment.

ELIZABETH. Go. I will speak with her.

(*Exit MANNERS, BURLEIGH, SIR GEORGE, PERKIN, and ST. LOE; MARK and Guards follow them off. As they exit ELIZABETH approaches DOROTHY.*)

ELIZABETH. Well, girl, what say you?

DOROTHY. I am Your Majesty's most loyal subject—except John.

ELIZABETH. Fie! The Queen of Scots is here. And my Lord Rutland. All is known.

DOROTHY. What! Both at Haddon! After all the pains I took to send them somewhere else?

ELIZABETH. The Queen has thrown herself upon my mercy, as you must. Tell me what part had Manners in her presence here?

DOROTHY. He only sought to serve Your Majesty. He is so loyal and so devoted—we are both Your Majesty's obedient servants.

ELIZABETH. Obedient, indeed!

DOROTHY. Well, John was, anyway. And it's my father's fault if I was never taught my duty to my elders.

ELIZABETH. Elders, say you?

DOROTHY. Oh, not Your Majesty. If John has erred it was in eagerness to serve your cause. But having pledged his knightly word to Mary Stuart, he could not speak until she gave him leave.

ELIZABETH. Were we as fair as Mary Stuart, we should not fear his faith. It seems we are but Queen of England, she the sovereign of men's hearts. (*Pacing the garden again restlessly*) And yet there have been those who swore devotion to our person—nay, who called us beautiful. Aye, I could count suitor for suitor with her, would I stoop to it. Shall I doubt them all, plain featured though she call me? A plague upon her beauty that beguiles the very flower of England to her cause. John Manners is her lover and her dupe.

DOROTHY. Nay, if I but dared to tell Your Majesty—you would admit how little cause you have to think that John could love the Queen of Scots.

ELIZABETH. (*Pausing and turning to DOROTHY contemptuously*) Vain child. You do not fear her rivalry?

DOROTHY. Not hers—so please Your Majesty.

ELIZABETH. Poor fool. If we shall fear it, shall you go unmoved?

DOROTHY. Nay, I have found a far more dangerous rival in John's heart.

ELIZABETH. Who is this rival?

DOROTHY. (*Faltering, with downcast eyes*) If I— Nay, nay—I dare not speak. 'Twould offend Your Majesty, and hurt his cause. What boots a hopeless passion? Shall he be blamed if he has fixed his eyes upon the sun?

ELIZABETH. Nay—you shall speak. I charge you, do not hesitate. Who in all England is so fair that she can vie with Mary Stuart in the hearts of men?

DOROTHY. Who in all England—save Your Majesty—

ELIZABETH. I—girl? Impossible.

DOROTHY. Alas, Your Majesty is pleased to be forgetful of your charms. Would that my John had been as blind to them.

ELIZABETH. What say you? Would you hint to us?

DOROTHY. (*Pretending to weep*) Oh, I have ruined him! Your Majesty will own I kept it back till you commanded me to speak. And I have suffered so—with jealousy—

ELIZABETH. With jealousy? Nay—nay—I will be lenient to him. Confide in me. Hath he been partial to us—think you so? He was your lover, child?

DOROTHY. 'Twas only that I seemed a little like you in his eyes.

ELIZABETH. Like me.

DOROTHY. He said my hair was like yours in some poor degree—but not so rare or beautiful in hue. He said that yours was unmatched anywhere.

ELIZABETH. Nay, foolish child. Your hair is beautiful. And spoke Sir John of aught else, child?

DOROTHY. Your eyes—

ELIZABETH. My eyes? What said he of them, if you can recall?

DOROTHY. He said that mine resembled them—a very, very little in their depth—but were not large and brilliant as Your Majesty's. Yours were so large and gentle and so just. And then your grace of form—your movement in the dance—

ELIZABETH. (*Eagerly*) Spoke he of my dancing? Are you sure?

DOROTHY. He said you were unrivaled in that exercise—a mingling of such dexterity and grace, it seemed as if you floated through the rooms—(*Taking a dancing step.*)

ELIZABETH. (*Taking a dancing step or two*) Floated, say you? Sir John hath an observing eye. I did not think that he had noted us so well.

DOROTHY. He said his looks were ever toward Your Majesty, but that you did not mark his admiration. I was jealous. Oh, I suffered so.

ELIZABETH. (*Sternly*) And yet he came to Haddon but to-day, braving your father's hate, to see you, girl!

DOROTHY. Aye, so he said. But then he knew you would be here.

ELIZABETH. He brought the Queen of Scots to England.

DOROTHY. She is like a mother to him.

ELIZABETH. A mother, say you? Is she fair?

DOROTHY. Fair? That pale, plain woman?

ELIZABETH. How say you—is she pale and plain?

DOROTHY. Aye, of a truth she is, when I compare her with Your Majesty. The people of England would never yield their young and blooming Queen for this poor lady who has passed her prime.

ELIZABETH. Nay, child, I am the elder.

DOROTHY. Your Majesty is pleased to jest. You older than the Queen of Scots! (*Shaking her head as she looks at ELIZABETH*) No one who ever saw you both could credit it. (*She weeps*) Alack! How can I ever hope to vie In John's affections with such a rival as Your Majesty!

ELIZABETH. It this be true, 'tis but a fancy that will pass. We will be stern with him and cure his foolish passion in good time. And if it is deep-rooted, then, beshrew me, with your lands and dower 'twill not be hard to find some other mate for you.

DOROTHY. Some other? Some one else? No, no—I'll not have any one but John. (*In a meek tone*) I'm sure he'd love me well if he were cured of his infatuation. And now you see that John could not be false to you—and only meant to serve Your Majesty. You will not let him suffer just for that.

(*Pretending to weep and fumbling in the pocket of her dress for a handkerchief, she draws out not only a handkerchief but a letter, which in her eagerness she does not notice. As she speaks LORD BURLEIGH re-enters from the Hall with SIR GEORGE VERNON.*)

ELIZABETH. Well, Burleigh, you have questioned Sir John?

BURLEIGH. Aye, madame, and with Sir George's counsel I have thought it well, pending his formal trial for treason, to keep him and my Lord Rutland behind bolts and bars in Bakewell jail. Thither am I sending them, under your leave.

(*As he speaks MANNERS, RUTLAND and PERKIN enter from the Hall with ST. LOE and Guards.*)

DOROTHY. (*To ELIZABETH*) Your Majesty!

ELIZABETH. (*To ST. LOE*) Stay. We will speak to them. My Lord of Rutland, what say you to this charge of treason?

RUTLAND. That we are loyal subjects of our Queen. And now abide her justice fearlessly.

ELIZABETH. Had you some proof? Had you but Mary Stuart's letter—

RUTLAND. If a search were made at Rutland—

DOROTHY. A letter—how—my lord! Your Majesty, is this the letter that you seek? (*Holding out the letter she has found in MARY'S pocket.*)

ELIZABETH. (*Taking the letter quickly*) Where found you this?

DOROTHY. 'Twas in the pocket with the handkerchief. You see? (*Holding out handkerchief*) It bears the cipher of the Queen of Scots.

RUTLAND. My very letter!

ELIZABETH. (*Opening the letter*) Look, Burleigh. Read.

DOROTHY. (*As she sees ELIZABETH and BURLEIGH intent upon the letter, turning to MANNERS, whispering to him*) John—John—as you set value on your life, take not your eyes from her. And look a little lovesick—if you can— (*Rolling up her eyes*)—and you shall be a free man in an hour.

ELIZABETH. (*Looking at the letter*) 'Tis Rutland's hand—Queen Mary's signature. And yet the boy—

DOROTHY. (*Aside to ELIZABETH*) Mark how his eyes are bent upon Your Majesty—poor John!

ELIZABETH. (*Casting a sidelong glance at MANNERS*) Nay—'tis but your fancy, foolish child. (*To ST. LOE*) Release your prisoners. And bid the Queen of Scots set out at once for Chatsworth. (*Exit ST. LOE*) My Lord of Rutland, you are free. The Jester—

DOROTHY. Nay—he only served his mistress in adversity.

ELIZABETH. Aye, child, he shall not suffer for that fault. (*She turns to MANNERS, advancing a step*) The dew is heavy on the grass.

MANNERS. (*Spreading his cloak at her feet*) Walk here, Your Majesty.

ELIZABETH. Nay—would you spoil so rich a mantle to protect our foot?

MANNERS. There lives no gentleman in England but would lay his riches at the feet of such a Queen!

ELIZABETH. God's pity. 'Tis well said. What think you, my Lord Burleigh? What does he merit at our hands. (*To SIR GEORGE*) What say you, sir, shall be his punishment—for as I take it, his shall be your daughter's too. She is not blameless in this night's business. Were it not punishment enough for both if he be exiled to Lord Rutland's Welsh estates?

DOROTHY. Exiled! John! To Wales—and I—

SIR GEORGE. Aye. Let him be banished. Let him find another wife. Let him go into Wales and wed elsewhere.

DOROTHY. Wed elsewhere! Find another wife! Another woman have him—have my John? Father, you dare propose it to my very face? Here on the spot where I was promised to him? You forget your oath. Oh, sir, I love this gentleman. He loves me. Me alone—me—do you hear? And he will never give me up! Tell them you will not, John. Tell them they shall not take me from you ever, John.

MANNERS. (*Quietly*) They shall not take you from me, Dorothy.

ELIZABETH. Ah—says he so! This is a different tale from that I heard a moment since!

DOROTHY. (*To SIR GEORGE*) Think, Father, if you refuse him to me, you must yield two manors and a thousand crowns. I know I am not worth so much. He hath the Vernon front—your grandsire's eye— Oh, keep them in the family, sir.

SIR GEORGE. (*Relenting*) We must abide the pleasure of the Queen. If she is fixed on exile—

ELIZABETH. (*Sternly*) That I am!

DOROTHY. (*Remembering*) The Queen! God save us, what a mess I've made! Exile!

ELIZABETH. Aye, girl, a year of exile shall serve perhaps to cool his blood,—and for your part and punishment, you shall not write to him—or send to him—nor shall he seek you until the year be ended to the day.

DOROTHY. What,—not see him for a year—not write to him? Not anything at all?

ELIZABETH. If he be half so fickle as he seems, he will forget you ere the month is spent. Forget him, too.

DOROTHY. Forget my John! Oh, John—and you—you will be faithful? You will not forget?

MANNERS. I will remember, Dorothy.

SIR GEORGE. (*Leading DOROTHY*) Get you to bed.

ELIZABETH. (*To MANNERS*) You will set out to-night,—the dwarf goes with you.

DOROTHY. He goes to-night—to-night?

ELIZABETH. Aye, and for your part, abide by our example and live a spinster all your days.

DOROTHY. A spinster? All my days? A spinster? I tell you, sir—you, Madame—all of you, I'll not be used so ill. A spinster! (*To SIR GEORGE*) Who then shall rule at Haddon after you? Where is your grandson now!

(*Exit DOROTHY into Hall.*)

BURLEIGH. (*As she exits*) Madame—the Queen of Scots.

ELIZABETH. I will not see her.

(*As she speaks ELIZABETH retires up the terrace, where she stands half concealed, as MARY STUART enters from the Hall, dressed in a rich dress of black. SIR WILLIAM ST. LOE enters with her, and a Guard.*)

MARY. My Lord of Burleigh, may we know where it is the pleasure of our royal cousin we should lodge?

BURLEIGH. Madame, Her Majesty desires that you should lodge under my Lord of Shrewsberry's roof at Chatsworth.

MARY. At Chatsworth (*To BURLEIGH*) Say to Her Majesty I thank her grace, and since I may not now have speech with her, let the Queen know I entered England only to seek protection at her hands. I swear I never sought the throne of England—never sought her life.

BURLEIGH. Madame, your words shall be reported to the Queen.

MARY. (*Turning to RUTLAND and MANNERS*) Thank God, I bring no ruin upon you. Whatever may befall Mary of Scotland, let all remember it was of her own will she placed her person and her cause in England's hands. It was my choice. I would no longer be a fugitive.

PERKIN. (*Crouching at her feet*) Let me go with you. I hate this cruel Queen. Nay, dinna think that once her prisoner she will throw wide the door and set you free. (*As he speaks, BURLEIGH and ST. LOE advance a step.*)

MARY. (*To PERKIN*) Hush! (*To BURLEIGH and ST. LOE*) May not one subject be loyal to me? This little fool, whose cap and bells give warrant to his tongue?

PERKIN. I would not have them spare me for my cap. Nay, let me be a man—for once a man! (*He flings off his jester's cap*) Since I may never make you laugh again, I never shall be merry any more. Let them strip off my motley. I would die for you!

MARY. (*To ST. LOE*) Your sword. (*To PERKIN, as she lays the blade on his shoulder*) You who stood beside me when Rizzio fell,—who knew me in my youth in France,—and in my sorrow,—yet are true to me—I by my last Queen's act, while I am still a sovereign and my hand hath power, I knight this faithful, gallant and true-hearted gentleman. Arise, Sir Perkin, Knight by the hand of Scotland's Queen. (*She turns to MANNERS*) I give him to your care. (*Then turning to ST. LOE*) My reign is ended. Well I know I am no longer Queen of Scotland and of France,—but Mary Stuart, the prisoner of England.

(*All bow low before her as she passes upstage. Exit MARY STUART, followed by ST. LOE and Guards, through the gate. The lights in Haddon have gone out one by one, the only light now shines through the doorway beneath the Eagle Tower. As MARY exits ELIZABETH descends the terrace steps.*)

ELIZABETH. Burleigh, I like her not. Let her be closely guarded. From this hour the safety of our throne depends on her captivity. (*She pauses, and turns to others*) Come—let us go in. 'Tis late—and we must back to London with the day. (*To MANNERS*) Get you to Wales, and thank us though you lose your love yet you may take your head with you. You have been very near to losing both by this day's enterprise.

(MANNERS bows low to ELIZABETH, clasps his father's hand as LORD RUTLAND passes him. Exit ELIZABETH, SIR GEORGE, LORD RUTLAND and LORD BURLEIGH into Haddon Hall. As they exit the last lights go out in Haddon Hall.)

PERKIN. *(After a pause)* Be comforted.

MANNERS. A year—a year!

PERKIN. Be not so downcast. We keep our heads and ye may win the lady yet.

MANNERS. Could I but say farewell to her.

PERKIN. See. 'Tis the first streak of dawn. We must begone before your royal mistress repent her of her clemency. The horses shall be at the gate. Content you, sir, your lady is not one soon to forget.

(Exit PERKIN. As he exits MANNERS casts a last look about the garden.)

MANNERS. A year—a whole year lost in losing her! *(He sighs, and turning, moves toward the gate. As he moves upstage the door from the Hall is opened cautiously, and DOROTHY enters, wearing a riding habit and hat; her whip and gauntlet gloves held in her hand. She pauses, seeing MANNERS.)*

DOROTHY. Hist! John! 'Tis I! 'Tis Dorothy!

MANNERS. *(Pausing at gate)* Dorothy!

DOROTHY. Wait! Wait! You would not go without me, would you John?

MANNERS. The Queen's command—

DOROTHY. She said I could not write to you. She did not say I could not go with you.

MANNERS. Dorothy!

DOROTHY. I'll send a letter back full of repentance, saying I was so jealous of her I knew that I must have you now or never. Ah, let me share your exile, John. And yet— Oh, John— *(Hesitating and looking back)* My father! How can I go with no farewell to him? Think you he will ever let me come again—to my old home—

MANNERS. Aye, when we bring his grandchild back with us—the gates will open then, I warrant me! Come! To horse!

DOROTHY. To horse! And we will ride away across the sweet green lanes of Derbyshire—to Paradise.

CURTAIN

