

**GERALDINE MAYNARD; OR,
THE ABDUCTION. A TALE OF
THE DAYS OF SHAKESPEARE,
IN THREE VOLUMES. VOL. II**

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Geraldine Maynard; Or, The Abduction. A Tale of the Days of Shakespeare, In Three Volumes.
Vol. II by Henry Curling

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HENRY CURLING

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GERALDINE MAYNARD;

OR,

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A TALE OF THE DAYS OF SHAKSPEARE.

BY CAPTAIN CURLING,

AUTHOR OF "THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE," "JOHN OF ENGLAND,"
"SHAKSPEARE, THE LOVER, THE POET," &c. &c.

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GERALDINE MAYNARD,

OR

THE ABDUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

SUCH tavern brawls in Elizabeth's reign were oftentimes of nightly occurrence, and were not unfrequently the origin of more serious riots, in which the 'prentices became mixed up with the town gallants, and the sheriff himself "with a most monstrous watch," was fain to turn out and quell the disturbance. In the present instance more than one person was killed, and several were wounded and injured.

The absence of the hostess of the tavern,

and also the want of the presiding genius of the room, had helped to make the brawl grow to the dimensions it had done ; so that when the player-poet in the early morning, after a night of watching and anxiety, entered the room and beheld the signs of the riot, he was sufficiently surprised.

His absence, as we have seen, had been enforced by the nature of the duties he felt himself called upon to perform. Rookwood's escape on a board a vessel had to be effected on that night or not at all, and this with some little difficulty he had managed.

The officers of justice had tracked the fugitive nearly as far as Blackfriars, and lost all further trace of him after he had crossed the river.

The great difficulty was to get Rookwood to leave the house in which Geraldine lay, so deeply did he feel for her misfortune in being wounded in his cause, and so impressed was he with her devotion in his service. Nay, it

was only when Shakspeare had clearly shewn him that if he was captured in his lodgings, such an event would involve all concerned in his own ruin, that Rookwood could at last be prevailed to go on board a small vessel which lay near Greenwich, and which was bound for the New World. Indeed, the poet had to use all his eloquence to persuade the exile to depart.

"All places that the eye of Heaven visits,
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens :
Teach thy necessity to reason thus ;
There is no virtue like necessity.
Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honour,
And not the Queen exil'd thee ; or suppose
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air,
And thou art flying to a fresher clime.

* * * *

Come, come, I'll bring thee on thy way,
Had I thy youth and cause I would not stay."

And thus Shakspeare, after leaving Geraldine in charge of mine hostess of the tavern for the night, had conveyed Rookwood in

safety to the boat which was to convey him to his ship, and then returned after leaving the tavern, to watch over his charge.

As he did so, he found to his great joy that Geraldine was at least no worse, and as she still slept, he carried the half starved Leech with him to the tavern, in order to procure him some refreshment ; for he determined the old man should not leave his patient all that day if he could detain him. Indeed he had with his piercing, keen and penetrating eye, discovered a gem of the first water in this old practitioner, so neglected, so poverty-stricken, so starved and so wan.

He found that he was far beyond the age in which he lived, and whilst others of his craft had been spending their time uselessly in hunting after the Philosopher's Stone, the Elixir of Life, and all such chimeras, this man had made the human frame and chemistry his study, and was a most profound scholar and practitioner.

At dawn, therefore, the poet and his new friend, the Leech, entered the common room of the tavern, and the poet called for breakfast.

"Buy food, and get thyself in flesh," he said, as he put another gold piece in the hand of the apothecary.

"But I have monies here, good master," said the Starveling, bringing out his purse; "monies which you generously gave me last night."

"Keep that for further need then," said the poet. "Nay, I will give thee more, much more, if you do your best to save that 'fair excellence' from death."

"Certes, I will try and do my best, good youth," returned the apothecary; "but such wounds are followed by dangerous consequences at times. Present danger is, I trust, over, albeit the stab hath caused much loss of blood. Fever and lock-jaw is what we have to dread now, consequences that too often

follow the treatment of my brother practitioners, and which treatment I altogether eschew."

"I trust thee in all things," said Shakspeare; "and now for the next hour I must be absent, as I have to visit the theatre. Meanwhile remain where you are till I return."