

Note on the Text

This manuscript is clean with only occasional and minor corrections throughout. It therefore appears to be a fair copy made for review by the examiner of plays or perhaps originally for the manager of the Strand Theatre, Louisa Swanborough. One noticeable curiosity of the manuscript is that it was written in two different hands: one person has written the entirety of the first act and another has written the entirety of the second. Since it was common practice for playwrights to send partial scripts in for review, the first act may have been written by either Braddon herself or someone deeply involved with Braddon's writing and theatrical career at the time, such as her mother. The second act is written by an identified copyist regularly working for the Strand in 1860. The copyist, 'Chater Sripsit', may have been commissioned to copy the remainder of the manuscript either for submission for license or to accommodate changes.

In this transcription, punctuation has been retained as closely to the manuscript as possible because of its importance with respect to dramatic delivery. This has necessitated some conjecture with reference to full stops and commas as well as hyphens, underscores, en-dashes and em-dashes especially. Interestingly, in this manuscript underscores placed between words and at the end of lines seem to either indicate speeding up of pace or a sharp shift in tone or inflection while hyphens, en-dashes and em-dashes seem to indicate pauses. Less significant aspects of punctuation that have been retained for uniformity include the use of apostrophes for possession as well as contractions. In both cases apostrophes are often not used correctly by today's standards and seem to follow no uniform nineteenth-century rules of grammar. The style and spelling of speaking cues also varies wildly throughout the text. Occasionally, some of the stage directions seem to be incorrectly punctuated (eg, missing closing parenthesis or underlining). These variations have been retained and annotated.

In order to aid reading, I have very rarely added words or letters in square brackets. The abbreviation "sic" appears in square brackets after obvious spelling errors, such as "villian" on page 43. Obsolete spellings are retained unmarked.