

THE
LONDON THEATRE.

A COLLECTION OF THE
Most celebrated Dramatic Pieces.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,
OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.



VOLUME III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WHITTINGHAM AND ARLISS,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1815.

C A T O.

A Tragedy.

BY JOSEPH ADDISON, ESQ.

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Author of several Dramatic Pieces: and

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CATO,

ONE of the first of our dramatic poems (as it is justly termed by the editor of the *Biographia Dramatica*), was produced at Drury Lane in 1713, and performed eighteen nights successively; at that time considered a very successful run, particularly for a tragedy. Dr. Johnson, Mr. Pope, Sir Richard Steele, Dr. Garth, Dennis, and other able critics have stamped this tragedy as a British classic; and a succession of audiences for a century have proved that it has deserved

“Golden opinions from all sorts of people.”

It is highly honourable to the British stage and the taste of the British metropolis, that no play is more attractive, or has been more perfectly represented than is this tragedy (one hundred years from its first appearance); while Kemble, heading his “little senate,” has so arranged its forms, costume, and character, that the true manners of the ancient Romans are no where with so much propriety exemplified as in the theatre.



PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR. POPE.

To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
To raise the genius, and to mend the heart,
To make mankind in conscious virtue bold,
Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold:
For this the tragic muse first trod the stage;
Commanding tears to stream through every age;
Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
And foes to virtue wonder'd how they wept.
Our author shuns by vulgar springs to move
The hero's glory, or the virgin's love;
In pitying love we but our weakness show,
And wild ambition well deserves its woe.
Here tears shall flow from a more gen'rous cause,
Such tears as patriots shed for dying laws:
He bids your breasts with ancient ardour rise,
And calls forth Roman drops from British eyes.
Virtue confess'd in human shape he draws,
What Plato thought, and godlike Cato was:
No common object to your sight displays,
But what with pleasure heav'n itself surveys;
A brave man struggling in the storms of fate,
And greatly falling in a falling state!
While Cato gives his little senate laws,
What bosom beats not in his country's cause?
Who sees him act, but envies ev'ry deed?
Who hears him groan, and does not wish to bleed?
Ev'n when proud Cæsar, 'midst triumphal cars,
The spoils of nations, and the pomp of wars,
Ignobly vain, and impotently great,
Show'd Rome her Cato's figure drawn in state;
As her dead father's rev'rend image past,
The pomp was darken'd and the day o'ercast,
The triumph ceas'd—tears gush'd from ev'ry eye,
The world's great victor pass'd unheeded by:
Her last good man dejected Rome ador'd,
And honour'd Cæsar's, less than Cato's sword.

Britons attend: Be worth like this approv'd,
And show you have the virtue to be mov'd.
With honest scorn the first fam'd Cato view'd
Rome learning arts from Greece, whom she subdu'd;
Our scenes precariously subsist too long
On French translation, and Italian song:
Dare to have sense yourselves; assert the stage;
Be justly warm'd with your own native rage:
Such plays alone should please a British ear,
As Cato's self had not disdain'd to hear.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	<i>As originally acted.</i>	<i>Covent Garden, 1814.</i>
<i>Cato</i>	Mr. Booth:	Mr. Kemble.
<i>Portius</i>	Mr. Powell.	Mr. Abbott.
<i>Marcus</i>	Mr. Ryan.	Mr. Hamerton.
<i>Sempronius</i>	Mr. Mills.	Mr. Barrymore.
<i>Juba</i>	Mr. Wilks.	Mr. Conway.
<i>Syphax</i>	Mr. Cibber.	Mr. Egerton.
<i>Lucius</i>	Mr. Keen.	Mr. Murray.
<i>Decius</i>	Mr. Bowman.	Mr. Creswell.
<i>Junius</i>		Mr. King.
<i>Lucia</i>	Mrs. Cibber.	Miss S. Booth.
<i>Marcia</i>	Mrs. Mills.	Mrs. Egerton.

Mutineers, Guards, &c.

SCENE, — The Governor's Palace in Utica.

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. *A Hall.*

Enter PORTIUS and MARCUS.

Por. **T**HE dawn is overcast, the morning low'rs,
And heavily in clouds brings on the day,
The great, th' important day, big with the fate
Of Cato and of Rome—our father's death
Would fill up all the guilt of civil war,
And close the scene of blood. Already Cæsar
Has ravag'd more than half the globe, and sees
Mankind grown thin by his destructive sword:
Should he go further, numbers would be wanting
To form new battles, and support his crimes.
Ye gods, what havoc does ambition make
Among your works!

Marc. Thy steady temper, Portius,
Can look on guilt, rebellion, fraud, and Cæsar,
In the calm lights of mild philosophy;
I'm tortur'd, e'en to madness, when I think
On the proud victor: ev'ry time he's nam'd
Pharalia rises to my view!—I see

Th' insulting tyrant, prancing o'er the field,
 Strew'd with Rome's citizens, and drench'd in slaughter;
 His horses hoofs wet with patrician blood!
 Oh, Portius! is not there some chosen curse,
 Some hidden thunder in the stores of heav'n,
 Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man
 Who owes his greatness to his country's ruin?

Por. Believe me, Marcus, 'tis an impious greatness,
 And mix'd with too much horror to be envied:
 How does the lustre of our father's actions,
 Through the dark cloud of ills that cover him,
 Break out, and burn with more triumphant brightness!
 His sufferings shine, and spread a glory round him;
 Greatly unfortunate, he fights the cause
 Of honour, virtue, liberty, and Rome.

Marc. Who knows not this? But what can Cato do
 Against a world, a base, degenerate world,
 That courts the yoke; and bows the neck to Cæsar?
 Pent up in Utica, he vainly forms
 A poor epitome of Roman greatness,
 And, cover'd with Numidian guards, directs
 A feeble army, and an empty senate,
 Remnants of mighty battles fought in vain.
 By heav'n, such virtues, join'd with such success,
 Distracts my very soul! our father's fortune
 Would almost tempt us to renounce his precepts.

Por. Remember what our father oft has told us:
 The ways of heav'n are dark and intricate;
 Puzzled in mazes, and perplex'd with errors,
 Our understanding traces them in vain,
 Lost and bewilder'd in the fruitless search;
 Nor sees with how much art the windings run,
 Nor where the regular confusion ends.

Marc. These are suggestions of a mind at ease:—
 Oh, Portius, didst thou taste but half the griefs
 That wring my soul, thou couldst not talk thus coldly.
 Passion unpitied, and successful love,
 Plant daggers in my heart, and aggravate
 My other griefs.—Were but my Lucia kind——

Por. Thou seest not that thy brother is thy rival;

But I must hide it, for I know thy temper. [*Aside.*
Now, Marcus, now thy virtue's on the proof,
Put forth thy utmost strength, work every nerve,
And call up all thy father in thy soul:
To quell the tyrant love, and guard thy heart
On this weak side, where most our nature fails,
Would be a conquest worthy Cato's son.

Marc. Alas, the counsel which I cannot take,
Instead of healing, but upbraids my weakness.
Love is not to be reason'd down, or lost
In high ambition and a thirst of greatness;
'Tis second life, that grows into the soul,
Warms every vein, and beats in every pulse:
I feel it here: my resolution melts—

Por. Behold young Juba, the Numidian prince,
With how much care he forms himself to glory,
And breaks the fierceness of his native temper,
To copy out our father's bright example.
He loves our sister Marcia, greatly loves her;
His eyes, his looks, his actions, all betray it;
But still the smother'd fondness burns within him:
When most it swells, and labours for a vent,
The sense of honour, and desire of fame,
Drive the big passion back into his heart.
What, shall an African, shall Juba's heir
Reproach great Cato's son, and show the world
A virtue wanting in a Roman soul?

Marc. Portius, no more! your words leave stings
behind them.

Whene'er did Juba, or did Portius, show
A virtue that has cast me at a distance,
And thrown me out in the pursuits of honour?

Por. Oh, Marcus! did I know the way to ease
Thy troubled heart, and mitigate thy pains,
Marcus, believe me, I could die to do it.

Marc. Thou best of brothers, and thou best of friends!
Pardon a weak, distemper'd soul, that swells
With sudden gusts, and sinks as soon in calms,
The sport of passions. But Sempronius comes:
He must not find this softness hanging on me. [*Exit.*

Enter SEMPRONIUS.

Sem. Conspiracies no sooner should be form'd
Than executed. What means Portius here?
I like not that cold youth. I must dissemble,
And speak a language foreign to my heart. [*Aside.*
Good morrow, Portius; let us once embrace,
Once more embrace, while yet we both are free.
To-morrow, should we thus express our friendship,
Each might receive a slave into his arms.
This sun, perhaps, this morning sun's the last,
That e'er shall rise on Roman liberty.

Por. My father has this morning call'd together
To this poor hall, his little Roman senate
(The leavings of Pharsalia), to consult
If he can yet oppose the mighty torrent
That bears down Rome and all her gods before it,
Or must at length give up the world to Cæsar.

Sem. Not all the pomp and majesty of Rome
Can raise her senate more than Cato's presence.
His virtues render our assembly awful,
They strike with something like religious fear,
And make ev'n Cæsar tremble at the head
Of armies flush'd with conquest. Oh, my Portius!
Could I but call that wondrous man my father,
Would but thy sister Marcia be propitious
To thy friend's vows, I might be blest indeed!

Por. Alas, Sempronius! wouldst thou talk of love
To Marcia, whilst her father's life's in danger?
Thou might'st as well court the pale, trembling vestal,
When she beholds the holy flame expiring.

Sem. The more I see the wonders of thy race,
The more I'm charm'd. Thou must take heed, my
Portius;

The world has all its eyes on Cato's son;
Thy father's merit sets thee up to view,
And shows thee in the fairest point of light,
To make thy virtues or thy faults conspicuous.

Por. Well dost thou seem to check my ling'ring here
On this important hour—I'll straight away,
And while the fathers of the senate meet

In close debate, to weigh th' events of war,
 I'll animate the soldiers' drooping courage
 With love of freedom, and contempt of life;
 I'll thunder in their ears their country's cause,
 And try to rouse up all that's Roman in them.
 'Tis not in mortals to command success,
 But we'll do more, Sempronius; we'll deserve it.

[Exit.

Sem. Curse on the stripling! how he apes his sire!
 Ambitiously sententious—But I wonder
 Old Syphax comes not; his Numidian genius
 Is well dispos'd to mischief, were he prompt
 And eager on it; but he must be spurr'd,
 And ev'ry moment quicken'd to the course.
 Cato has us'd me ill; he has refus'd
 His daughter Marcia to my ardent vows.
 Besides, his baffled arms and ruin'd cause,
 Are bars to my ambition. Cæsar's favour,
 That show'rs down greatness on his friends, will raise me
 To Rome's first honours. If I give up Cato,
 I claim, in my reward, his captive daughter.
 But Syphax comes——

Enter SYPHAX.

Syph. Sempronius, all is ready;
 I've sounded my Numidians, man by man,
 And find them ripe for a revolt: they all
 Complain aloud of Cato's discipline,
 And wait but the command to change their master.

Sem. Believe me, Syphax, there's no time to waste:
 Ev'n while we speak, our conqueror comes on,
 And gathers ground upon us ev'ry moment.
 Alas! thou know'st not Cæsar's active soul,
 With what a dreadful course he rushes on
 From war to war. In vain has nature form'd
 Mountains and oceans to oppose his passage;
 He bounds o'er all;
 One day more
 Will set the victor thund'ring at our gates.
 But, tell me, hast thou yet drawn o'er young Juba?

That still would recommend thee more to Cæsar,
And challenge better terms.

Syph. Alas! he's lost!

He's lost, Sempronius; all his thoughts are full
Of Cato's virtues—But I'll try once more
(For ev'ry instant I expect him here),
If yet I can subdue those stubborn principles
Of faith and honour, and I know not what,
That have corrupted his Numidian temper,
And struck th' infection into all his soul.

Sem. Be sure to press upon him ev'ry motive.
Juba's surrender, since his father's death,
Would give up Afric into Cæsar's hands,
And make him lord of half the burning zone.

Syph. But is it true, Sempronius, that your senate
Is call'd together? Gods! thou must be cautious;
Cato has piercing eyes, and will discern
Our frauds, unless they're cover'd thick with art.

Sem. Let me alone, good Syphax, I'll conceal
My thoughts in passion ('tis the surest way);
I'll bellow out for Rome, and for my country,
And month at Cæsar, till I shake the senate.
Your cold hypocrisy's a stale device,
A worn-out trick: wouldst thou be thought in earnest,
Clothe thy feign'd zeal in rage, in fire, in fury!

Syph. In troth, thou'rt able to instruct grey hairs,
And teach the wily African deceit.

Sem. Once more be sure to try thy skill on Juba.
Meanwhile I'll hasten to my Roman soldiers,
Inflame the mutiny, and, underhand,
Blow up their discontents, till they break out
Unlook'd for, and discharge themselves on Cato.
Remember, Syphax, we must work in haste;
Oh, think what anxious moments pass between
The birth of plots, and their last fatal periods!
Oh, 'tis a dreadful interval of time,
Fill'd up with horror all, and big with death!
Destruction hangs on ev'ry word we speak,
On every thought, till the concluding stroke
Determines all, and closes our design.

[*Exit.*]

Syph. I'll try if yet I can reduce to reason
This headstrong youth, and make him spurn at Cato.
The time is short; Cæsar comes rushing on us—
But hold! young Juba sees me, and approaches!

Enter JUBA.

Juba. Syphax, I joy to meet thee thus alone.
I have observ'd of late thy looks are fall'n,
O'ercast with gloomy cares and discontent;
Then tell me, Syphax, I conjure thee, tell me,
What are the thoughts that knit thy brow in frowns,
And turn thine eye thus coldly on thy prince?

Syph. 'Tis not my talent to conceal my thoughts,
Or carry smiles and sunshine in my face,
When discontent sits heavy at my heart;
I have not yet so much the Roman in me.

Juba. Why dost thou cast out such ungen'rous terms
Against the lords and sov'reigns of the world?
Dost thou not see mankind fall down before them,
And own the force of their superior virtue?

Syph. Gods! where's the worth that sets these people
up

Above your own Numidia's tawny sons?
Do they with tougher sinews bend the bow?
Or flies the jav'lin swifter to its mark,
Launch'd from the vigour of a Roman arm?
Who like our active African instructs
The fiery steed, and trains him to his hand?
Or guides in troops th' embattled elephant
Laden with war? These, these are arts, my prince,
In which your Zama does not stoop to Rome.

Juba. These all are virtues of a meaner rank:
Perfections that are plac'd in bones and nerves.
A Roman soul is bent on higher views.
To make man mild, and sociable to man;
To cultivate the wild, licentious savage,
And break our fierce barbarians into men.
Turn up thy eyes to Cato;
There may'st thou see to what a godlike height
The Roman virtues lift up mortal man.

While good, and just, and anxious for his friends,
 He's still severely bent against himself;
 And when his fortune sets before him all
 The pomps and pleasures that his soul can wish,
 His rigid virtue will accept of none.

Syph. Believe me, prince, there's not an African
 That traverses our vast Numidian deserts
 In quest of prey, and lives upon his bow,
 But better practises those boasted virtues.
 Coarse are his meals, the fortune of the chase;
 Amidst the running stream he slakes his thirst;
 Toils all the day, and at th' approach of night,
 On the first friendly bank he throws him down,
 Or rests his head upon a rock till morn;
 Then rises fresh, pursues his wonted game;
 And if the following day he chance to find
 A new repast, or an untasted spring,
 Blesses his stars, and thinks it luxury.

Juba. Thy prejudices, Syphax, won't discern
 What virtues grow from ignorance and choice,
 Nor how the hero differs from the brute.
 Where shall we find the man that bears affliction,
 Great and majestic in his griefs, like Cato?
 How does he rise against a load of woes,
 And thank the gods that threw the weight upon him!

Syph. 'Tis pride, rank pride, and haughtiness of soul;
 I think the Romans call it stoicism.

Had not your royal father thought so highly
 Of Roman virtue, and of Cato's cause,
 He had not fall'n by a slave's hand inglorious;
 Nor would his slaughter'd armies now have lain
 On Afric's sands, disfigur'd with their wounds,
 To gorge the wolves and vultures of Numidia.

Juba. Why dost thou call my sorrows up afresh?
 My father's name brings tears into my eyes.

Syph. Oh, that you'd profit by your father's ills!

Juba. What wouldst thou have me do?

Syph. Abandon Cato.

Juba. Syphax, I should be more than twice an orphan,
 By such a loss.

Syph. Ay, there's the tie that binds you!
You long to call him father. Marcia's charms
Work in your heart unseen, and plead for Cato.
No wonder you are deaf to all I say.

Juba. Syphax, your zeal becomes importunate;
I've hitherto permitted it to rave,
And talk at large; but learn to keep it in,
Lest it should take more freedom than I'll give it.

Syph. Sir, your great father never us'd me thus.
Alas, he's dead! but can you e'er forget
The tender sorrows,
And repeated blessings,

Which you drew from him in your last farewell?
The good old king, at parting, wrung my hand
(His eyes brimful of tears), then, sighing, cry'd,
Pr'ythee be careful of my son!—His grief
Swell'd up so high, he could not utter more.

Juba. Alas! thy story melts away my soul!
That best of fathers! how shall I discharge
The gratitude and duty that I owe him?

Syph. By laying up his counsels in your heart.

Juba. His counsels bade me yield to thy direction.

Syph. Alas! my prince, I'd guide you to your safety.

Juba. I do believe thou wouldst; but tell me how.

Syph. Fly from the fate that follows Cæsar's foes.

Juba. My father scorn'd to do it.

Syph. And therefore died.

Juba. Better to die ten thousand thousand deaths,
Than wound my honour.

Syph. Rather say your love.

Juba. Syphax, I've promis'd to preserve my temper.
Why wilt thou urge me to confess a flame
I long have stifled, and would fain conceal?

Syph. Believe me, prince, though hard to conquer
love,

'Tis easy to divert and break its force.

Absence might cure it, or a second mistress

Light up another flame, and put out this.

The glowing dames of Zama's royal-court

Have faces flush'd with more exalted charms;

Were you with these, my prince, you'd soon forget
The pale, unripen'd beauties of the north.

Juba. 'Tis not a set of features, or complexion,
The tincture of a skin, that I admire:

Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover,
Fades in his eye, and palls upon the sense.
The virtuous Marcia tow'rs above her sex:
True, she is fair, (oh, how divinely fair!)
But still the lovely maid improves her charms
With inward greatness, unaffected wisdom,
And sanctity of manners; Cato's soul
Shines out in ev'ry thing she acts or speaks,
While winning mildness and attractive smiles
Dwell in her looks, and with becoming grace,
Soften the rigour of her father's virtue.

Syph. How does your tongue grow wanton in her
praise!

But, on my knees, I beg you would consider—

Juba. Ha! Syphax, is't not she?—She moves this way;
And with her Lucia, Lucius's fair daughter.
My heart beats thick—I pr'ythee, Syphax, leave me.

Syph. Ten thousand curses fasten on them both!
Now will the woman, with a single glance,
Undo what I've been lab'ring all this while. [Exit.

Enter MARCIA and LUCIA.

Juba. Hail, charming maid! how does thy beauty
smooth

The face of war, and make ev'n horror smile!
At sight of thee my heart shakes off its sorrows;
I feel a dawn of joy break in upon me,
And for awhile forget th' approach of Cæsar.

Marcia. I should be griev'd, young prince, to think
my presence

Unbent your thoughts, and slacken'd them to arms,
While, warm with slaughter, our victorious foe
Threatens aloud, and calls you to the field.

Juba. Oh, Marcia, let me hope thy kind concerns
And gentle wishes follow me to battle!
The thought will give new vigour to my arm,

And strength and weight to my descending sword,
And drive it in a tempest on the foe.

Marcia. My pray'rs and wishes always shall attend
The friends of Rome, the glorious cause of virtue,
And men approv'd of by the gods and Cato.

Juba. That Juba may deserve thy pious cares,
I'll gaze for ever on thy godlike father,
Transplanting, one by one, into my life,
His bright perfections, till I shine like him.

Marcia. My father never, at a time like this,
Would lay on his great soul in words, and waste
Such precious moments.

Juba. Thy reproofs are just,
Thou virtuous maid; I'll hasten to my troops,
And fire their languid souls with Cato's virtue.
If e'er I lead them to the field, when all
The war shall stand rang'd in its just array,
And dreadful pomp, then will I think on thee.
Oh, lovely maid! then will I think on thee;
And in the shock of charging hosts, remember
What glorious deeds should grace the man, who hopes
For Marcia's love. [Exit.

Lucia. Marcia, you're too severe:
How could you chide the young, good-natur'd prince,
And drive him from you with so stern an air;
A prince that loves, and dotes on you to death?

Marcia. How, Lucia! wouldst thou have me sink
away
In pleasing dreams, and lose myself in love,
When ev'ry moment Cato's life's at stake?

Lucia. Why have I not this constancy of mind,
Who have so many griefs to try its force?
Sure, nature form'd me of her softest mould,
Enfeebled all my soul with tender passions,
And sunk me ev'n below my own weak sex:
Pity and love, by turns, oppress my heart.

Marcia. Lucia, disburden all thy cares on me,
And let me share thy most retir'd distress.
Tell me, who raises up this conflict in thee?

Lucia. I need not blush to name them, when I tell thee
They're Marcia's brothers, and the sons of Cato.

Marcia. But tell me whose address thou favour'st
most?

I long to know, and yet I dread to hear it.

Lucia. Suppose 'twere Portius, could you blame my
choice?—

Oh, Portius, thou hast stol'n away my soul!
Marcus is over warm; his fond complaints
Have so much earnestness and passion in them,
I hear him with a secret kind of horror,
And tremble at his vehemence of temper.

Marcia. Alas, poor youth!
How will thy coldness raise
Tempests and storms in his afflicted bosom!
I dread the consequence.

Lucia. You seem to plead
Against your brother Portius.

Marcia. Lucia, no;
Had Portius been the unsuccessful lover,
The same compassion would have fall'n on him.

Lucia. Portius himself oft falls in tears before me,
As if he mourn'd his rival's ill success;
Then bids me hide the motions of my heart,
Nor show which way it turns. So much he fears
The sad effect that it will have on Marcus.
Was ever virgin love distress'd like mine.

Marcia. Let us not, Lucia, aggravate our sorrows,
But to the gods submit th' event of things.
Our lives, discolour'd with our present woes,
May still grow bright, and smile with happier hours.

So the pure, limpid stream, when foul with stains
Of rushing torrents, and descending rains,
Works itself clear, and, as it runs, refines,
Till, by degrees, the floating mirror shines,
Reflects each flow'r that on the border grows,
And a new heav'n in its fair bosom shows. [Exit.

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. *The Senate-house.*

Flourish. SEMPRONIUS, LUCIUS, and Senators discovered.

Sem. Rome still survives in this assembled senate.
Let us remember we are Cato's friends,
And act like men who claim that glorious title.

[*Trumpets.*

Luc. Hark! he comes.

Trumpets. Enter CATO, PORTIUS, and MARCUS.

Cato. Fathers, we once again are met in council;
Cæsar's approach has summon'd us together,
And Rome attends her fate from our resolves.
How shall we treat this bold, aspiring man?
Success still follows him, and backs his crimes;
Pharsalia gave him Rome, Egypt has since
Receiv'd his yoke, and the whole Nile is Cæsar's.
Why should I mention Juba's overthrow,
And Scipio's death? Numidia's burning sands
Still smoke with blood. 'Tis time we should decrees

What course to take. Our foe advances on us,
 And envies us ev'n Libya's sultry deserts.
 Fathers, pronounce your thoughts: are they still fix'd
 To hold it out, and fight it to the last?
 Or are your hearts subdu'd at length, and wrought,
 By time and ill success, to a submission?
 Sempronius, speak.

Sem. My voice is still for war.

Gods! can a Roman senate long debate
 Which of the two to choose, slav'ry or death?
 No; let us rise at once, gird on our swords,
 And, at the head of our remaining troops,
 Attack the foe, break through the thick array
 Of his throng'd legions, and charge home upon him.
 Perhaps some arm, more lucky than the rest,
 May reach his heart, and free the world from bondage.
 Rise, fathers, rise! 'tis Rome demands your help;
 Rise, and revenge her slaughter'd citizens,
 Or share their fate;—
 To battle!

Great Pompey's shade complains that we are slow;
 And Scipio's ghost walks unreveng'd amongst us.

Cato. Let not a torrent of impetuous zeal
 Transport thee thus beyond the bounds of reason;
 True fortitude is seen in great exploits,
 That justice warrants, and that wisdom guides;
 All else is tow'ring frenzy and distraction.
 Lucius, we next would know what's your opinion.

Luc. My thoughts, I must confess, are turn'd on peace.
 Already have we shown our love to Rome,
 Now let us show submission to the gods.
 We took up arms, not to revenge ourselves,
 But free the commonwealth; when this end fails,
 Arms have no further use. Our country's cause,
 That drew our swords, now wrests them from our hands,
 And bids us not delight in Roman blood,
 Unprofitably shed. What men could do,
 Is done already: heav'n and earth will witness,
 If Rome must fall, that we are innocent.

Cato. Let us appear nor rash nor diffident;

Immod'rate valour swells into a fault ;
 And fear, admitted into public councils,
 Betrays like treason. Let us shun them both.
 Fathers, I cannot see that our affairs
 Are grown thus desp'rate : we have bulwarks round us ;
 Within our walls are troops inur'd to toil
 In Afric's heat, and season'd to the sun ;
 Numidia's spacious kingdom lies behind us,
 Ready to rise at its young prince's call.
 While there is hope, do not distrust the gods ;
 But wait at least till Cæsar's near approach
 Force us to yield. 'Twill never be too late
 To sue for chains, and own a conqueror.
 Why should Rome fall a moment ere her time ?
 No, let us draw her term of freedom out
 In its full length, and spin it to the last,
 So shall we gain still one day's liberty :
 And let me perish, but, in Cato's judgment,
 A day, an hour, of virtuous liberty,
 Is worth a whole eternity in bondage.

Enter JUNIUS.

Mar. Fathers, e'en now a herald is arriv'd
 From Cæsar's camp, and with him comes old Decius,
 The Roman knight : he carries in his looks
 Impatience, and demands to speak with Cato.

Cato. By your permission, fathers—bid him enter.

[*Exit Junius.*]

Decius was once my friend, but other prospects
 Have loos'd those ties, and bound him fast to Cæsar.
 His message may determine our resolves.

Enter DECIVS.

Dec. Cæsar sends health to Cato—

Cato. Could he send it

To Cato's slaughter'd friends, it would be welcome.
 Are not your orders to address the senate ?

Dec. My business is with Cato ; Cæsar sees
 The straits to which you're driv'n ; and, as he knows
 Cato's high worth, is anxious for your life.

Cato. My life is grafted on the fate of Rome.
 Would he save Cato, bid him spare his country.
 Tell your dictator this; and tell him, Cato
 Disdains a life which he has power to offer.

Dec. Rome and her senators submit to Cæsar;
 Her gen'als and her consuls are no more,
 Who check'd his conquests, and deny'd his triumphs.
 Why will not Cato be this Cæsar's friend?

Cato. These very reasons thou hast urg'd forbid it.

Dec. Cæsar is well acquainted with your virtues,
 And therefore sets this value on your life.
 Let him but know the price of Cato's friendship,
 And name your terms.

Cato. Bid him disband his legions,
 Restore the commonwealth to liberty,
 Submit his actions to the public censure,
 And stand the judgment of a Roman senate.
 Bid him do this, and Cato is his friend.

Dec. Cato, the world talks loudly of your wisdom——

Cato. Nay, more; though Cato's voice was ne'er
 employ'd
 To clear the guilty, and to varnish crimes,
 Myself will mount the rostrum in his favour,
 And strive to gain his pardon from the people.

Dec. A style like this becomes a conqueror.

Cato. Decius, a style like this becomes a Roman.

Dec. What is a Roman, that is Cæsar's foe?

Cato. Greater than Cæsar: he's a friend to virtue.

Dec. Consider, Cato, you're in Utica,
 And at the head of your own little senate:
 You don't now thunder in the capital,
 With all the mouths of Rome to second you.

Cato. Let him consider that, who drives us hither.
 'Tis Cæsar's sword has made Rome's senate little,
 And thinn'd its ranks. Alas! thy dazzled eye
 Beholds this man in a false, glaring light,
 Which conquest and success have thrown upon him;
 Didst thou but view him right, thou'dst see him black
 With murder, treason, sacrilege, and crimes,
 That strike my soul with horror but to name them.

I know thou look'st on me as on a wretch
Beset with ills, and cover'd with misfortunes;
But, by the gods I swear, millions of worlds
Should never buy me to be like that Cæsar.

Dec. Does Cato send this answer back to Cæsar,
For all his gen'rous cares and proffer'd friendship?

Cato. His cares for me are insolent and vain:
Presumptuous man! the gods take care of Cato.
Would Cæsar show the greatness of his soul,
Bid him employ his care for these my friends,
And make good use of his ill-gotten pow'r,
By shelt'ring men much better than himself.

Dec. Your high, unconquer'd heart makes you forget
You are a man. You rush on your destruction.
But I have done. When I relate hereafter
The tale of this unhappy embassy,
All Rome will be in tears. [Exit, attended.

Sem. Cato, we thank thee.

The mighty genius of immortal Rome
Speaks in thy voice; thy soul breathes liberty.
Cæsar will shrink to hear the words thou utter'st,
And shudder in the midst of all his conquests.

Luc. The senate owns its gratitude to Cato,
Who with so great a soul consults its safety,
And guards our lives, while he neglects his own.

Sem. Sempronius gives no thanks on this account.
Lucius seems fond of life; but what is life?
'Tis not to stalk about, and draw fresh air
From time to time, or gaze upon the sun;
'Tis to be free. When liberty is gone,
Life grows insipid, and has lost its relish.
Oh, could my dying hand but lodge a sword
In Cæsar's bosom, and revenge my country,
By heav'n, I could enjoy the pangs of death,
And smile in agony!

Luc. Others perhaps
May serve their country with as warm a zeal,
Though 'tis not kindled into so much rage.

Sem. This sober conduct is a mighty virtue
In lukewarm patriots.

Cato. Comè, no more, Sempronius;
All here are friends to Rome, and to each other.
Let us not weaken still the weaker side
By our divisions.

Sem. Cato, my resentments
Are sacrific'd to Rome—I stand reprov'd.

Cato. Fathers, 'tis time you come to a resolve.

Luc. Cato, we all go into your opinion:
Cæsar's behaviour has convinc'd the senate,
We ought to hold it out till terms arrive.

Sem. We ought to hold it out till death; but, Cato,
My private voice is drown'd amidst the senate's.

Cato. Then let us rise, my friends, and strive to fill
This little interval, this pause of life

(While yet our liberty and fates are doubtful)
With resolution, friendship, Roman bravery,
And all the virtues we can crowd into it;
That heav'n may say, it ought to be prolong'd.

Fathers, farewell—The young Numidian prince
Comes forward, and expects to know our counsels.

[*Exeunt Senators.*]

Enter JUBA.

Juba, the Roman senate has resolv'd,
Till time give better prospects, still to keep
The sword unsleath'd, and turn its edge on Cæsar.

Juba. The resolution fits a Roman senate.

But, Cato, lend me for awhile thy patience,
And condescend to hear a young man speak.
My father, when, some days before his death,
He order'd me to march for Utica,

(Alas! I thought not then his death so near!)

Wept o'er me, press'd me in his aged arms;
And, as his griefs gave way, My son, said he,
Whatever fortune shall befall thy father,

Be Cato's friend; he'll train thee up to great
And virtuous deeds; do but observe him well,
Thou'lt shun misfortunes, or thou'lt learn to bear them.

Cato. Juba, thy father was a worthy prince,
And merited, alas! a better fate;
But heav'n thought otherwise.

Juba. My father's fate,
In spite of all the fortitude that shines
Before my face in Cato's great example,
Subdues my soul, and fills my eyes with tears.

Cato. It is an honest sorrow, and becomes thee.

Juba. His virtues drew respect from foreign climes :
The kings of Afric sought him for their friend ;
Kings far remote, that rule, as fame reports,
Behind the hidden sources of the Nile,
In distant worlds, on t'other side the sun ;
Oft have their black ambassadors appear'd,
Loaden with gifts, and fill'd the courts of Zama.

Cato. I am no stranger to thy father's greatness.

Juba. I do not mean to boast his power and greatness,
But point out new alliances to Cato.
Had we not better leave this Utica,
To arm Numidia in our cause, and court
Th' assistance of my father's powerful friends?
Did they know Cato, our remotest kings
Would pour embattled multitudes about him ;
Their swarthy hosts would darken all our plains,
Doubling the native horror of the war,
And making death more grim.

Cato. And canst thou think
Cato will fly before the sword of Cæsar!
Reduc'd, like Hannibal, to seek relief
From court to court, and wander up and down
A vagabond in Afric?

Juba. Cato, perhaps
I'm too officious ; but my forward cares
Would fain preserve a life of so much value.
My heart is wounded, when I see such virtue
Afflicted by the weight of such misfortunes.

Cato. Thy nobleness of soul obliges me.
But know, young prince, that valour soars above
What the world calls misfortune and affliction.
These are not ills ; else would they never fall
On heav'n's first fav'rites, and the best of men.
The gods, in hountry, work up storms about us,
That give mankind occasion to exert

Their hidden strength, and throw out into practice
 Virtues which shun the day, and lie conceal'd
 In the smooth seasons and the calms of life.

Juba. I'm charm'd whene'er thou talk'st; I pant for
 virtue;

And all my soul endeavours at perfection.

Cato. Dost thou love watchings, abstinence, and toil,
 Laborious virtues all? Learn them from Cato:
 Success and fortune must thou learn from Cæsar.

Juba. The best good fortune that can fall on Juba,
 The whole success at which my heart aspires,
 Depends on Cato.

Cato. What does Juba say?

Thy words confound me.

Juba. I would fain retract them.

Give them me back again: they aim'd at nothing.

Cato. Tell me thy wish, young prince; make not my
 ear

A stranger to thy thoughts.

Juba. Oh! they're extravagant;

Still let me hide them.

Cato. What can Juba ask,

That Cato will refuse?

Juba. I fear to name it.

Marcia—inherits all her father's virtues.

Cato. What wouldst thou say?

Juba. Cato, thou hast a daughter.

Cato. Adieu, young prince; I would not hear a word
 Should lessen thee in my esteem. Remember
 The hand of fate is over us, and heav'n
 Exacts severity from all our thoughts.
 It is not now a time to talk of aught
 But chains, or conquest; liberty, or death. [Exit.

Enter SYPHAX.

Syph. How's this, my prince? What, cover'd with
 confusion?

You look as if yon stern philosopher
 Had just now chid you.

Juba. Syphax, I'm undone!

Syph. I know it well.

Juba. Cato thinks meanly of me.

Syph. And so will all mankind.

Juba. I've open'd to him

The weakness of my soul, my love for Marcia.

Syph. Cato's a proper person to intrust
A love tale with!

Juba. Oh, I could pierce my heart,
My foolish heart!

Syph. Alas, my prince, how are you chang'd of late!
I've known young Juba rise before the sun,
To beat the thicket, where the tiger slept,
Or seek the lion in his dreadful haunts.

I've seen you,
Ev'n in the Libyan dog-days, hunt him down,
Then charge him close,
And, stooping from your horse,
Rivet the panting savage to the ground.

Juba. Pr'ythee, no more.

Syph. How would the old king smile,
To see you weigh the paws, when tipp'd with gold,
And throw the shaggy spoils about your shoulders!

Juba. Syphax, this old man's talk, though honey flow'd
In ev'ry word, would now lose all its sweetness.
Cato's displeas'd, and Marcia lost for ever.

Syph. Young prince, I yet could give you good advice;
Marcia might still be yours.

Juba. As how, dear Syphax?

Syph. Juba commands Numidia's hardy troops,
Mounted on steeds unus'd to the restraint
Of curbs or bits, and fleetier than the winds:
Give but the word, we snatch this damsel up,
And bear her off.

Juba. Can such dishonest thoughts
Rise up in man! Wouldst thou seduce my youth
To do an act that would destroy mine honour?

Syph. Gods, I could tear my hair to hear you talk!
Honour's a fine imaginary notion,
That draws in raw and experienc'd men
To real mischiefs, while they hunt a shadow.

Juba. Wouldst thou degrade thy prince into a ruffian ?

Syph. The boasted ancestors of these great men,
Whose virtues you admire, were all such ruffians.
This dread of nations, this almighty Rome,
That comprehends in her wide empire's bounds
All under heav'n, was founded on a rape ;
Your Scipios, Cæsars, Pompeys, and your Catos
(The gods on earth), are all the spurious blood
Of violated maids, of ravish'd Sabines.

Juba. Syphax, I fear that hoary head of thine
Abounds too much in our Numidian wiles.

Syph. Indeed, my prince, you want to know the world.

Juba. If knowledge of the world makes men per-
fidious,

May Juba ever live in ignorance!

Syph. Go, go ; you're young.

Juba. Gods, must I tamely bear
This arrogance unanswer'd ! thou'rt a traitor,
A false old traitor.

Syph. I have gone too far.

[*Aside.*

Juba. Cato shall know the baseness of thy soul.

Syph. I must appease this storm, or perish in it.

[*Aside.*

Young prince, behold these locks, that are grown white
Beneath a helmet in your father's battles.

Juba. Those locks shall ne'er protect thy insolence.

Syph. Must one rash word, the infirmity of age,
Throw down the merit of my better years ?
This the reward of a whole life of service!—

Curse on the boy ! how steadily he hears me ! [*Aside.*

Juba. Is it because the throne of my forefathers
Still stands unfill'd, and that Numidia's crown
Hangs doubtful yet whose head it shall enclose,
Thou thus presum'st to treat thy prince with scorn ?

Syph. Why will you rive my heart with such expres-
sions ?

Does not old Syphax follow you to war !
What are his aims ? to shed the slow remains,
His last poor ebb of blood in your defence ?

Juba. Syphax, no more ! I would not hear you talk.

Syph. Not hear me talk! what, when my faith to Juba,
My royal master's son, is call'd in question?
My prince may strike me dead, and I'll be dumb;
But whilst I live I must not hold my tongue,
And languish out old age in his displeasure.

Juba. Thou know'st the way too well into my heart.
I do believe thee loyal to thy prince.

Syph. What greater instance can I give? I've offer'd
To do an action which my soul abhors,
And gain you whom you love, at any price.

Juba. What's this thy motive? I have been too hasty.

Syph. And 'tis for this my prince has call'd me traitor.

Juba. Sure thou mistak'st; I did not call thee so.

Syph. You did indeed, my prince, you call'd me traitor.
Nay, further, threaten'd you'd complain to Cato.
Of what, my prince, would you complain to Cato?
That Syphax loves you, and would sacrifice
His life, nay more, his honour, in your service?

Juba. Syphax, I know thou lov'st me; but indeed
Thy zeal for Juba carried thee too far.
Honour's a sacred tie, the law of kings,
The noble mind's distinguishing perfection,
That aids and strengthens virtue where it meets her,
And imitates her actions where she is not:
It ought not to be sported with.

Syph. Believe me, prince, you make old Syphax weep
To hear you talk—but 'tis with tears of joy.
If e'er your father's crown adorn your brows,
Numidia will be blest by Cato's lectures.

Juba. Syphax, thy hand; we'll mutually forget
The warmth of youth, and frowardness of age:
Thy prince esteems thy worth, and loves thy person.
If e'er the sceptre come into my hand,
Syphax shall stand the second in my kingdom.

Syph. Why will you o'erwhelm my age with kindness?
My joys grow burdensome, I shan't support it.

Juba. Syphax, farewell. I'll hence, and try to find
Some blest occasion, that may set me right
In Cato's thoughts. I'd rather have that man
Approve my deeds, than worlds for my admirers. [Exit.

Syph. Young men soon give, and soon forget affronts ;
 Old age is slow in both—A false old traitor !—
 These words, rash boy, may chance to cost thee dear.
 My heart had still some foolish fondness for thee,
 But hence, 'tis gone ! I give it to the winds :
 Cæsar, I'm wholly thine.—

Enter SEMPRONIUS.

All hail, Sempronius !
 Well, Cato's senate is resolv'd to wait
 The fury of a siege, before it yields.

Sem. Syphax, we both were on the verge of fate ;
 Lucius declar'd for peace, and terms were offer'd
 To Cato, by a messenger from Cæsar.

Syph. But how stands Cato ?

Sem. Thou hast seen mount Atlas :
 Whilst storms and tempests thunder on its brows,
 And oceans break their billows at its feet,
 It stands unmov'd, and glories in its height :
 Such is that haughty man ; his tow'ring soul,
 'Midst all the shocks and injuries of fortune,
 Rises superior, and looks down on Cæsar.

Syph. But what's this messenger ?

Sem. I've practis'd with him,
 And found a means to let the victor know,
 That Syphax and Sempronius are his friends.
 But let me now examine in my turn ;
 Is Juba fix'd ?

Syph. Yes—but it is to Cato.

I've tried the force of ev'ry reason on him,
 Sooth'd and caress'd ; been angry, sooth'd again ;
 Laid safety, life, and interest in his sight ;
 But all are vain, he scorns them all for Cato.

Sem. Well, 'tis no matter ; we shall do without him.
 Syphax, I now may hope, thou hast forsook
 Thy Juba's cause, and wishest Marcia mine.

Syph. May she be thine as fast as thou wouldst have her.
 But are thy troops prepar'd for a revolt ?
 Does the sedition catch from man to man,
 And run among the ranks ?

Sem. All, all is ready ;
The factious leaders are our friends, that spread
Murmurs and discontents among the soldiers ;
They count their toilsome marches, long fatigues,
Unusual fastings, and will bear no more
This medley of philosophy and war.
Within an hour they'll storm the senate-house.

Seph. Meanwhile I'll draw up my Numidian troops
Within the square, to exercise their arms,
And, as I see occasion, favour thee.
I laugh to see how your unshaken Cato
Will look aghast, while unforeseen destruction
Pours in upon him thus from every side.

So, where our wide Numidian wastes extend,
Sudden th' impetuous hurricanes descend,
Wheel through th' air, in circling eddies play,
Tear up the sands, and sweep whole plains away.
The helpless traveller, with wild surprise,
Sees the dry desert all around him rise,
And, smother'd in the dusty whirlwind, dies.

}
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. *The Palace.*

Enter MARCUS and PORTIUS.

Marc. Thanks to my stars, I have not rang'd about
The wilds of life, ere I could find a friend ;
Nature first pointed out my Portius to me,
And early taught me, by her secret force,
To love thy person, ere I knew thy merit,
'Till what was instinct, grew up into friendship.

Por. Marcus, the friendships of the world are oft
Confed'racies in vice, or leagues of pleasure ;
Ours has severest virtue for its basis,
And such a friendship ends not but with life.

Marc. Portius, thou know'st my soul in all its weak-
ness ;
Then, pr'ythee, spare me on its tender side ;
Indulge me but in love, my other passions
Shall rise and fall by virtue's nicest rules.

Por. When love's well win'd, 'tis not a fault to love.
The strong, the brave, the virtuous, and the wise,
Sink in the soft captivity together.

Marc. Alas, thou talk'st like one that never felt
Th' impatient throbs and longings of a soul,
That pants and reaches after distant good!
A lover does not live by vulgar time:
Believe me, Portius, in my Lucia's absence
Life hangs upon me, and becomes a burden;
And yet, when I behold the charming maid,
I'm ten times more undone; while hope, and fear,
And grief, and rage, and love, rise up at once,
And with variety of pain distract me.

Por. What can thy Portius do to give thee help?

Marc. Portius, thou oft enjoy'st the fair one's presence;
Thou undertake my cause, and plead it to her
With all the strength and heat of eloquence
Fraternal love and friendship can inspire.
Tell her thy brother languishes to death,
And fades away, and withers in his bloom;
That he forgets his sleep, and loathes his food,
That youth, and health, and war, are joyless to him;
Describe his anxious days, and restless nights,
And all the torments that thou see'st me suffer.

Por. Marcus, I beg thee give me not an office
That suits with me so ill. Thou know'st my temper.

Marc. Wilt thou behold me sinking in my woes,
And wilt thou not reach out a friendly arm,
To raise me from amidst this plunge of sorrows? -

Por. Marcus, thou canst not ask what I'd refuse;
But here, believe me, I've a thousand reasons—

Marc. I know thou'lt say my passion's out of season,
That Cato's great example and misfortunes
Should both conspire to drive it from my thoughts.
But what's all this to one that loves like me?
O Portius, Portius, from my soul I wish
Thou didst but know thyself what 'tis to love!
Then wouldst thou pity and assist thy brother.

Por. What should I do? If I disclose my passion,
Our friendship's at an end; if I conceal it,
The world will call me false to friend and brother.

[*Aside.*

Marc. But see, where Lucia, at her wonted hour,

Amid the cool of yon high marble arch,
 Enjoys the noon-day breeze! Observe her, Portius;
 That face, that shape, those eyes, that heav'n of beauty!
 Observe her well, and blame me if thou canst.

Por. She sees us, and advances—

Marc. I'll withdraw,

And leave you for awhile. Remember, Portius,
 Thy brother's life depends upon thy tongue. [Exit.

Enter LUCIA.

Lucia. Did not I see your brother Marcus here?
 Why did he fly the place, and shun my presence?

Por. Oh, Lucia, language is too faint to show
 His rage of love; it preys upon his life;
 He pines, he sickens, he despairs, he dies!

Lucia. How wilt thou guard thy honour, in the shock
 Of love and friendship? Think betimes, my Portius,
 Think how the nuptial tie, that might ensure
 Our mutual bliss, would raise to such a height
 Thy brother's griefs, as might perhaps destroy him.

Por. Alas, poor youth! What dost thou think, my
 Lucia?

His gen'rous, open, undesigning heart
 Has begg'd his rival to solicit for him!
 Then do not strike him dead with a denial.

Lucia. No, Portius, no; I see thy sister's tears,
 Thy father's anguish, and thy brother's death,
 In the pursuit of our ill-fated loves:
 And, Portius, here I swear, to heav'n I swear,
 To heav'n, and all the powers that judge mankind,
 Never to mix my plighted hands with thine,
 While such a cloud of mischief hangs upon us;
 But to forget our loves, and drive thee out
 From all my thoughts—as far as I am able.

Por. What hast thou said?—I'm thunderstruck—recall
 Those hasty words, or I am lost for ever.

Lucia. Has not the vow already pass'd my lips?
 The gods have heard it, and 'tis seal'd in heav'n.
 May all the vengeance that was ever pour'd
 On perjur'd heads o'erwhelm me if I break it!

Por. Fix'd in astonishment, I gaze upon thee,
Like one just blasted by a stroke from heav'n,
Who pants for breath, and stiffens, yet alive,
In dreadful looks; a monument of wrath!

Lucia. Think, Portius, think thou see'st thy dying
brother

Stabb'd at his heart, and all besmear'd with blood,
Storming at heav'n and thee! Thy awful sire
Sternly demands the cause, th' accursed cause
That robs him of his son:—farewell, my Portius!
Farewell, though death is in the word—for ever!

Por. Thou must not go; my soul still hovers o'er thee,
And can't get loose.

Lucia. If the firm Portius shake
To bear of parting, think what Lucia suffers!

Por. 'Tis true, unruffled and serene, I've met
The common accidents of life; but here
Such an unlook'd-for storm of ills falls on me,
It beats down all my strength, I cannot bear it.
We must not part.

Lucia. What dost thou say? Not part!
Hast thou forgot the vow that I have made?
Are not there heavens, and gods, that thunder o'er us?
But see, thy brother Marcius bends this way;
I sicken at the sight. Once more, farewell,
Farewell, and know thou wrong'st me, if thou think'st,
Ever was love, or ever grief, like mine. [Exit.

Enter MARCUS.

Marc. Portius, what hopes? How stands she? am I
doom'd
To life or death?

Por. What wouldst thou have me say?

Marc. Thy downcast looks, and thy disorder'd
thoughts,
Tell me my fate. I ask not the success
My cause has found.

Por. I'm griev'd I undertook it.

Marc. What, does the barbarous maid insult my heart,
My aching heart, and triumph in my pains?

Por. Away, you're too suspicious in your griefs;
 Lucia, though sworn never to think of love,
 Compassionates your pains, and pities you.

Marc. Compassionates my pains, and pities me!
 What is compassion when 'tis void of love?
 Fool that I was to choose so cold a friend
 To urge my cause!—Compassionates my pains!
 Pr'ythee what art, what rhet'ric didst thou use
 To gain this mighty boon?—She pities me!
 To one that asks the warm returns of love,
 Compassion's cruelty, 'tis scorn, 'tis death——

Por. Marcus, no more; have I deserv'd this treatment?

Marc. What have I said? Oh, Portius, oh forgive me!
 A soul, exasperate in ills, falls out
 With every thing—its friend, itself—but, hah!

[*Shouts and Trumpets.*]

What means that shout, big with the sounds of war?
 What new alarm? [Shouts and Trumpets repeated.]

Por. A second, louder yet,
 Swells in the wind, and comes more full upon us.

Marc. Oh, for some glorious cause to fall in battle!
 Lucia, thou hast undone me: thy disdain
 Has broke my heart: 'tis death must give me ease.

Por. Quick, let us hence. Who knows if Cato's life
 Stands sure? Oh, Marcus, I am warm'd; my heart
 Leaps at the trumpet's voice, and burns for glory.

[*Exeunt. Trumpets and shouting.*]

SCENE II. *Before the Senate-house.*

Enter SEMPRONIUS, with the Leaders of the Mutiny.

Sem. At length the winds are rais'd, the storm blows
 high!

Be it your care, my friends, to keep it up
 In all its fury, and direct it right,
 Till it has spent itself on Cato's head.

Mean while, I'll herd among his friends, and seem
 One of the number, that, whate'er arrive,
 My friends and fellow-soldiers may be safe.

[*Exit.*]

1 *Lead.* We are all safe; Sempronius is our friend.

But, hark, Cato enters. Bear up boldly to him; ^{[Trumpets.}
 Be sure you beat him down, and bind him fast;
 This day will end our toils.
 Fear nothing, for Sempronius is our friend.

Trumpets. Re-enter SEMPRONIUS, with CATO, LUCIUS,
 PORTIUS, MARCUS, and Guards.

Cato. Where are those bold, intrepid sons of war,
 That greatly turn their backs upon the foe,
 And to their general send a brave defiance?

Sem. Curse on their dastard souls, they stand aston-
 ish'd! ^{[Aside.}

Cato. Perfidious men! And will you thus dishonour
 Your past exploits, and sully all your wars?

Why could not Cato fall
 Without your guilt? Behold, ungrateful men,
 Behold my bosom naked to your swords,
 And let the man that's injur'd strike the blow.
 Which of you all suspects that he is wrong'd,
 Or thinks he suffers greater ills than Cato?

Am I distinguish'd from you but by toils,
 Superior toils, and heavier weight of cares?
 Painful pre-eminence!

Sem. Confusion to the villains! all is lost! ^{[Aside.}

Cato. Hence, worthless men! hence! and complain to
 Cæsar,

You could not undergo the toil of war,
 Nor bear the hardships that your leader bore.

Luc. See, Cato, see the unhappy men! they weep!
 Fear and remorse, and sorrow for their crime,
 Appear in ev'ry look, and plead for mercy.

Cato. Learn to be honest men, give up your leaders,
 And pardon shall descend on all the rest.

Sem. Cato, commit these wretches to my care;
 First let them each be broken on the rack,
 Then, with what life remains, impal'd, and left
 To writhe at leisure, round the bloody stake;

There let them hang, and taint the southern wind.
The partners of their crime will learn obedience.

Cato. Forbear, Sempronius!—see they suffer death,
But in their deaths remember they are men;
Lucius, the base, degen'rate age requires
Severity.

When by just vengeance guilty mortals perish,
The gods behold the punishment with pleasure,
And lay th' uplifted thunderbolt aside.

Sem. Cato, I execute thy will with pleasure.

Cato. Mean while, we'll sacrifice to liberty.
Remember, O my friends! the laws, the rights,
The gen'rous plan of power deliver'd down
From age to age by your renown'd forefathers
(So dearly bought, the price of so much blood):
Oh, let it never perish in your hands!
But piously transmit it to your children.
Do thou, great liberty, inspire our souls,
And make our lives in thy possession happy,
Or our deaths glorious in thy just defence.

[*Exeunt Cato, &c.*]

1 *Lead.* Sempronius, you have acted like yourself.
One would have thought you had been half in earnest.

Sem. Villain, stand off; base, grov'ling, worthless
wretches,
Mongrels in faction, poor faint-hearted traitors!

2 *Lead.* Nay, now you carry it too far, Sempronius!
Throw off the mask, there are none here but friends.

Sem. Know, villains, when such paltry slaves presume
To mix in treason, if the plot succeeds,
They're thrown neglected by; but, if it fails,
They're sure to die like dogs, as you shall do.
Here, take these factious monsters, drag them forth
To sudden death.

1 *Lead.* Nay, since it comes to this—

Sem. Dispatch them quick, but first pluck out their
tongues,
Lest with their dying breath they sow sedition.

[*Exeunt Guards, with the Leaders of the Mutiny.*]

Enter SYPHAX.

Syph. Our first design, my friend, has prov'd abortive ;
Still there remains an after-game to play ;
My troops are mounted ;
Let but Sempronius lead us in our flight,
We'll force the gate where Marcus keeps his guard,
And hew down all that would oppose our passage.
A day will bring us into Cæsar's camp.

Sem. Confusion! I have fail'd of half my purpose:
Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind!

Syph. How! will Sempronius turn a woman's slave?

Sem. Think not thy friend can ever feel the soft
Unmanly warmth and tenderness of love.
Syphax, I long to clasp that haughty maid,
And bend her stubborn virtue to my passion:
When I have gone thus far, I'd cast her off.

Syph. What hinders, then, but that thou find her out,
And hurry her away by manly force?

Sem. But how to gain admission? For access
Is giv'n to none but Juba and her brothers.

Syph. Thou shalt have Juba's dress and Juba's guards ;
The doors will open, when Numidia's prince
Seems to appear before the slaves that watch them.

Sem. Heav'ns, what a thought is there! Marcia's my
own!

How will my bosom swell with anxious joy,
When I behold her struggling in my arms,
With glowing beauty, and disorder'd charms,
While fear and anger, with alternate grace,
Pant in her breast, and vary in her face!
So Pluto seiz'd off Proserpine, convey'd
To hell's tremendous gloom th' affrighted maid ;
'There grimly smil'd, pleas'd with the beauteous prize,
Nor envy'd Jove his sunshine and his skies. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. A Chamber.

Enter LUCIA and MARCIA.

Lucia. Now tell me, Marcia, tell me from thy soul,
If thou believ'st 'tis possible for woman
To suffer greater ills than Lucia suffers?

Marcia. Oh, Lucia, Lucia, might my big swoln heart
Vent all its griefs, and give a loose to sorrow,
Marcia could answer thee in sighs, keep pace
With all thy woes, and count out tear for tear.

Lucia. I know thou'rt doom'd alike to be belov'd
By Juba, and thy father's friend, Sempronius:
But which of these has pow'r to charm like Portius?

Marcia. Still I must beg thee not to name Sempronius.
Lucia, I like not that loud, boist'rous man.
Juba, to all the brav'ry of a hero,
Adds softest love and sweetness: he, I own,
Might make indeed the proudest woman happy.

Lucia. But should this father give you to Sempronius?

Marcia. I dare not think he will: but if he should—
Why wilt thou add to all the griefs I suffer,

Imaginary ills, and fancied tortures?
 I hear the sound of feet! They march this way!
 Let us retire, and try if we can drown
 Each softer thought in sense of present danger:
 When love once pleads admission to our hearts,
 In spite of all the virtues we can boast,
 The woman that deliberates is lost. *{Exeunt.*

Enter SEMPRONIUS, dressed like JUBA, with Numidian Guards.

Sem. The deer is lodg'd, I've track'd her to her covert.

Be sure you mind the word, and, when I give it,
 Rush in at once, and seize upon your prey.
 How will the young Numidian rave to see
 His mistress lost! If aught could glad my soul,
 Beyond th' enjoyment of so bright a prize,
 'T would be to torture that young, gay barbarian.
 —But hark! what noise! Death to my hopes! 'tis he,
 'Tis Juba's self! there is but one way left—
 He must be murder'd, and a passage cut
 Through those his guards.

Enter JUBA, with Guards.

Juba. What do I see? Who's this that dares usurp
 The guards and habits of Numidia's prince?

Sem. One that was born to scourge thy arrogance,
 Presumptuous youth!

Juba. What can this mean? Sempronius!

Sem. My sword shall answer thee. Have at thy heart.

Juba. Nay, then, beware thy own, proud, barbarous
 man. *[They fight; Sempronius falls.*

Sem. Curse on my stars! Am I then doom'd to fall
 By a boy's hand, disfigur'd in a vile
 Numidian dress, and for a worthless woman?
 Gods, I'm distracted! this my close of life!
 Oh, for a peal of thunder, that would make
 Earth, sea, and air, and heav'n, and Cato tremble!

Juba. With what a spring his furious soul broke loose, *[Dies.*

And left the limbs still quiv'ring on the ground!
 Hence let us carry off those slaves to Cato,
 That we may there at length unravel all
 This dark design, this mystery of fate.

[*Exit Juba; his Guards taking those of Sempronius
 as Prisoners.*]

Enter LUCIA and MARCIA.

Lucia. Sure 'twas the clash of swords; my troubled
 Is so cast down, and sunk amidst its sorrows, [heart
 It throbs with fear, and aches at ev'ry sound:
 Oh, Marcia, should thy brothers, for my sake—
 I die away with horror at the thought!

Marcia. See, Lucia, see! here's blood! here's blood
 and murder!

Ha! a Numidian! Heav'n preserve the prince!
 The face lies muffled up within the garment,
 But, ah! death to my sight! a diadem,
 And royal robes! O gods! 'tis he, 'tis he!
 Juba lies dead before us!

Lucia. Now, Marcia, now call up to thy assistance
 Thy wonted strength and constancy of mind;
 Thou canst not put it to a greater trial.

Marcia. Lucia, look there, and wonder at my patience;
 Have I not cause to rave, and beat my breast,
 To rend my heart with grief, and run distracted?

Lucia. What can I think, or say, to give thee comfort?

Marcia. Talk not of comfort; 'tis for lighter ills:
 Behold a sight that strikes all comfort dead.

Enter JUBA, unperceived.

I will indulge my sorrows, and give way
 To all the pangs and fury of despair;
 That man, that best of men deserv'd it from me.

Juba. What do I hear? and was the false Sempronius
 That best of men? Oh, had I fall'n like him,
 And could have been thus mourn'd, I had been happy.

Marcia. 'Tis not in fate to ease my tortur'd breast.
 Oh, he was all made up of love and charms! [*Aside.*]

Whatever maid could wish, or man admire:
 Delight of ev'ry eye; when he appear'd,
 A secret pleasure gladden'd all that saw him.
 Oh, Juba, Juba!

Juba. What means that voice? Did she not call on
 Juba? [*Aside.*

Marcia. He's dead, and never knew how much I
 lov'd him;

Lucia, who knows but his poor, bleeding heart,
 Amidst its agonies, remember'd Marcia,
 And the last words he utter'd call'd me cruel!
 Alas! he knew not, hapless youth, he knew not
 Marcia's whole soul was full of love and Juba!

Juba. Where am I? Do I live? or am indeed
 What Marcia thinks? All is Elysium round me!

Marcia. Ye dear remains of the most lov'd of men,
 Nor modesty nor virtue here forbid
 A last embrace, while thus——

Juba. See, Marcia, see, [*Throwing himself before her.*
 The happy Juba lives! he lives to catch
 That dear embrace, and to return it too
 With mutual warmth and eagerness of love.

Marcia. With pleasure and amaze I stand trans-
 If thou art Juba, who lies there? [*ported!*

Juba. A wretch,
 Disguis'd like Juba on a curs'd design.
 I could not bear

To leave thee in the neighbourhood of death,
 But flew, in all the haste of love, to find thee;
 I found thee weeping, and confess this once,
 Am rapt with joy, to see my Marcia's tears.

Marcia. I've been surpris'd in an unguarded hour,
 But must not now go back; the love, that lay
 Half-smother'd in my breast, has broke through all
 Its weak restraints, and burns in its full lustre.
 I cannot, if I would, conceal it from thee.

Juba. My joy, my best belov'd, my only wish!
 How shall I speak the transport of my soul?

Marcia. Lucia, thy arm. Lead to my apartment.

Oh, prince! I blush to think what I have said,
 But fate has wrested the confession from me;
 Go on, and prosper in the paths of honour.
 Thy virtue will excuse my passion for thee,
 And make the gods propitious to our love.

[*Exeunt Marcia and Lucia.*]

Juba. I am so blest, I fear 'tis all a dream.
 Fortune, thou now hast made amends for all
 Thy past unkindness: I absolve my stars.
 What though Numidia add her conquer'd towns
 And provinces to swell the victor's triumph,
 Juba will never at his fate repine:
 Let Cæsar have the world, if Marcia's mine. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

Before the Palace. A March at a Distance.

Enter CATO and LUCIUS.

Luc. I stand astonish'd! What, the bold Sempronius,
 That still broke foremost through the crowd of patriots,
 As with a hurricane of zeal transported,
 And virtuous ev'n to madness—

Cato. Trust me, Lucius,
 Our civil discords have produc'd such crimes,
 Such monstrous crimes, I am surpris'd at nothing.
 —Oh, Lucius, I am sick of this bad world!
 The daylight and the sun grow painful to me.

Enter PORTIUS.

But see where Portius comes: what means this haste?
 Why are thy looks thus chang'd?

Por. My heart is griev'd:
 I bring such news as will afflict my father.

Cato. Has Cæsar shed more Roman blood?

Por. Not so.
 The traitor Syphax, as within the square
 He exercis'd his troops, the signal giv'n,
 Flew off at once with his Numidian horse
 To the south gate, where Marcus holds the watch;
 I saw, and call'd to stop him, but in vain:

He toss'd his arm aloft, and proudly told me,
He would not stay and perish like Sempronius.

Cato. Perfidious man! But haste, my son, and see
Thy brother Marcus acts a Roman's part.

[*Exit Portius.*]

—Lucius, the torrent bears too hard upon me:
Justice gives way to force: the conquer'd world
Is Cæsar's! Cato has no business in it.

Luc. While pride, oppression, and injustice reign,
The world will still demand her Cato's presence.
In pity to mankind submit to Cæsar,
And reconcile thy mighty soul to life.

Cato. Would Lucius have me live to swell the number
Of Cæsar's slaves, or by a base submission
Give up the cause of Rome, and own a tyrant?

Luc. The victor never will impose on Cato
Ungen'rous terms. His enemies confess
The virtues of humanity are Cæsar's.

Cato. Curse on his virtues! they've undone his country.
Such popular humanity is treason——
But see young Juba; the good youth appears,
Full of the guilt of his perfidious subjects!

Luc. Alas, poor prince! his fate deserves compassion.

Enter JUBA.

Juba. I blush, and am confounded to appear
Before thy presence, Cato.

Cato. What's thy crime?

Juba. I'm a Numidian.

Cato. And a brave one too. Thou hast a Roman soul.

Juba. Hast thou not heard of my false countrymen?

Cato. Alas, young prince!

Falsehood and fraud shoot up in ev'ry soil,
The product of all climes—Rome has its Cæsars.

Juba. 'Tis gen'rous thus to comfort the distress'd.

Cato. 'Tis just to give applause where 'tis deserv'd:
Thy virtue, prince, has stood the test of fortune,
Like purest gold, that, tortur'd in the furnace,
Comes out more bright, and brings forth all its weight.

Enter PORTIUS.

Por. Misfortune on misfortune! grief on grief!
My brother Marcus——

Cato. Ha! what has he done?
Has he forsook his post? Has he giv'n way?
Did he look tamely on, and let them pass?

Por. Scarce had I left my father, but I met him
Borne on the shields of his surviving soldiers,
Breathless and pale, and cover'd o'er with wounds.
Long, at the head of his few faithful friends,
He stood the shock of a whole host of foes,
Till, obstinately brave, and bent on death,
Oppress'd with multitudes, he greatly fell.

Cato. I'm satisfy'd.

Por. Nor did he fall, before
His sword had pierc'd through the false heart of Syphax.
Yonder he lies. I saw the hoary traitor
Grin in the pangs of death, and bite the ground.

Cato. Thanks to the gods, my boy has done his duty.
—Portius, when I am dead, be sure you place
His urn near mine.

Por. Long may they keep asunder!

Luc. Oh, Cato, arm thy soul with all its patience;
See where the corpse of thy dead son approaches!
The citizens and senators, alarm'd,
Have gather'd round it, and attend it weeping.

Dead March. CATO meets the Corpse. LUCIUS, Senators, Guards, &c. attending.

Cato. Welcome, my son! Here lay him down, my
friends,
Full in my sight, that I may view at leisure
The bloody corse, and count those glorious wounds.
—How beautiful is death, when earn'd by virtue!
Who would not be that youth? What pity is it
That we can die but once to serve our country!
—Why sits this sadness on your brows, my friends?
I should have blush'd if Cato's house had stood
Secure, and flourish'd in a civil war.
Portius, behold thy brother, and remember

Thy life is not thy own when Rome demands it.
 When Rome demands; but Rome is now no more.
 Oh, liberty! oh, virtue! oh, my country!

Juba. Behold that upright man! Rome fills his eyes
 With tears, that flow'd not o'er his own dear son.

[*Aside.*

Cato. Whate'er the Roman virtue has subdu'd,
 The sun's whole course, the day and year, are Cæsar's:
 For him the self-devoted Decii died,
 The Fabii fell, and the great Scipios conquer'd:
 Ev'n Pompey fought for Cæsar. Oh, my friends,
 How is the toil of fate, the work of ages,
 The Roman empire, fall'n! Oh, curs'd ambition!
 Fall'n into Cæsar's hands! Our great forefathers
 Had left him nought to conquer but his country.

Juba. While Cato lives, Cæsar will blush to see
 Mankind enslav'd, and be asham'd of empire.

Cato. Cæsar asham'd! Has he not seen Pharsalia?

Luc. 'Tis time thou save thyself and us.

Cato. Lose not a thought on me; I'm out of danger:
 Heav'n will not leave me in the victor's hand.

Cæsar shall never say, he conquer'd Cato.

But oh, my friends! your safety fills my heart
 With anxious thoughts; a thousand secret terrors
 Rise in my soul. How shall I save my friends?

'Tis now, O Cæsar, I begin to fear thee!

Luc. Cæsar has mercy, if we ask it of him.

Cato. Then ask it, I conjure you; let him know
 Whate'er was done against him, Cato did it.

Add, if you please, that I request it of him—

That I myself, with tears, request it of him—

The virtue of my friends may pass unpunish'd.

Juba, my heart is troubled for thy sake.

Should I advise thee to regain Numidia,

Or seek the conqueror?—

Juba. If I forsake thee

Whilst I have life, may heav'n abandon *Juba*!

Cato. Thy virtues, prince, if I foresee aright,
 Will one day make thee great; at Rome, hereafter,
 'Twill be no crime to have been Cato's friend.

Portius, draw near: my son, thou oft hast seen
 Thy sire engag'd in a corrupted state,
 Wrestling with vice and faction: now thou seest me
 Spent, overpower'd, despairing of success;
 Let me advise thee to retreat betimes
 To thy paternal seat, the Sabine field;
 Where the great Censor toil'd with his own hands,
 And all our frugal ancestors were bless'd
 In humble virtues, and a rural life;
 There live retir'd, pray for the peace of Rome;
 Content thyself to be obscurely good.
 When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,
 The post of honour is a private station.

Por. I hope my father does not recommend
 A life to Portius that he scorns himself.

Cato. Farewell, my friends! If there be any of you,
 Who dare not trust the victor's clemency,
 Know there are ships prepar'd, by my command,
 That shall convey you to the wish'd-for port.
 Is there aught else, my friends, I can do for you?
 The conqueror draws near. Once more, farewell!
 If e'er we meet hereafter, we shall meet
 In happier climes, and on a safer shore,
 Where Cæsar never shall approach us more.

[*Pointing to his dead Son.*
 There the brave youth, with love of virtue fir'd,
 Who greatly in his country's cause expir'd,
 Shall know he conquer'd. The firm patriot there,
 Who made the welfare of mankind his care,
 Though still by faction, vice, and fortune cross,
 Shall find the gen'rous labour was not lost.

[*Dead March. Exeunt in funeral Procession.*

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I. *A Chamber.*

CATO solus, sitting in a thoughtful Posture; in his Hand, Plato's Book on the Immortality of the Soul. A drawn Sword on the Table, by him.

Cato. It must be so—Plato thou reason'st well—
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heav'n itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
Eternity! thou pleasing, dreadful thought!
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass?
The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me:
But shadows, clouds, and darkness, rest upon it.
Here will I hold. If there's a power above us
(And that there is, all nature cries aloud

Through all her works), he must delight in virtue ;
 And that which he delights in must be happy.
 But when, or where?—this world was made for Cæsar :
 I'm weary of conjectures—this must end them.

[Laying his Hand on his Sword.]

Thus am I doubly arm'd : my death and life,
 My bane and antidote, are both before me.
 This in a moment brings me to an end ;
 But this informs me I shall never die.
 The soul, secur'd in her existence, smiles
 At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
 The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
 Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,
 But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
 Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
 The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.
 What means this heaviness that hangs upon me?
 'This lethargy that creeps through all my senses?
 Nature, oppress'd and barrass'd out with care,
 Sinks down to rest. This once I'll favour her,
 That my awaken'd soul may take her flight,
 Renew'd in all her strength, and fresh with life,
 An off'ring fit for heav'n. Let guilt or fear
 Disturb man's rest, Cato knows neither of them,
 Indiff'rent in his choice to sleep or die.

Enter PORTIUS.

But, ha! who's this? my son! Why this intrusion?
 Were not my orders that I would be private?
 Why am I disobey'd?

Por. Alas, my father!

What means this sword, this instrument of death?
 Let me convey it hence.

Cato. Rash youth, forbear!

Por. Oh, let the pray'rs, th' entreaties of your
 friends,

Their tears, their common danger, wrest it from you!

Cato. Wouldst thou betray me? Wouldst thou give
 me up

A slave, a captive, into Cæsar's hands?

Retire, and learn obedience to a father,
Or know, young man—

Por. Look not thus sternly on me;
You know, I'd rather die than disobey you.

Cato. 'Tis well! again I'm master of myself.
Now, Caesar, let thy troops beset our gates,
And bar each avenue; thy gath'ring fleets
O'erspread the sea, and stop up ev'ry port;
Cato shall open to himself a passage,
And mock thy hopes.—

Por. [*Kneeling*] Oh, sir! forgive your son,
Whose grief hangs heavy on him. Oh, my father!
How am I sure it is not the last time
I e'er shall call you so? Be not displeas'd,
Oh, be not angry with me whilst I weep,
And, in the anguish of my heart, beseech you
To quit the dreadful purpose of your soul!

Cato. Thou hast been ever good and dutiful.

[*Embracing him.*]

Weep not, my son, all will be well again;
The righteous gods, whom I have sought to please,
Will succour Cato, and preserve his children.

Por. Your words give comfort to my drooping heart.

Cato. Portius, thou may'st rely upon my conduct:
Thy father will not act what misbecomes him.
But go, my son, and see if aught be wanting
Among thy father's friends; see them embark'd,
And tell me if the winds and seas befriend them.
My soul is quite weigh'd down with care, and asks
The soft refreshment of a moment's sleep.

Por. My thoughts are more at ease, my heart revives—

[*Exit Cato.*]

Enter MARCIA.

Oh, Marcia! Oh, my sister, still there's hope
Our father will not cast away a life
So needful to us all, and to his country.
He is retir'd to rest, and seems to cherish
Thoughts full of peace.—He has dispatch'd me hence
With orders that bespeak a mind compos'd,

And studious for the safety of his friends.

Marcia, take care that none disturb his slumbers.

[Exit.

Marcia. Oh, ye immortal powers, that guard the just,
Watch round his couch and soften his repose,
Banish his sorrows, and becalm his soul
With easy dreams; remember all his virtues,
And show mankind that goodness is your care!

Enter LUCIA.

Lucia. Where is your father, Marcia, where is Cato?

Marcia. Lucia, speak low, he is retir'd to rest.

Lucia, I feel a gentle dawning hope

Rise in my soul—We shall be happy still.

Lucia. Alas, I tremble when I think on Cato!

In every view, in every thought I tremble!

Cato is stern and awful as a god;

He knows not how to wink at human frailty,

Or pardon weakness, that he never felt.

Marcia. Though stern and awful to the foes of Rome,

He is all goodness, Lucia, always mild;

Compassionate and gentle to his friends;

Fill'd with domestic tenderness, the best,

The kindest father; I have ever found him

Easy and good, and bounteous to my wishes.

Lucia. 'Tis his consent alone can make us blest.

But who knows Cato's thoughts?

Who knows how yet he may dispose of Portius,

Or how he has determin'd of thyself?

Marcia. Let him but live, commit the rest to heav'n.

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Sweet are the slumbers of the virtuous man!

Oh, Marcia, I have seen thy godlike father;

Some power invisible supports his soul,

And bears it up in all its wonted greatness.

A kind, refreshing sleep is fall'n upon him:

I saw him stretch'd at ease; his fancy lost

In pleasing dreams; as I drew near his couch,

He smil'd, and cried, Cæsar, thou canst not hurt me.

Marcia. His mind still labours with some dreadful thought.

Enter JUBA.

Juba. Lucius, the horsemen are return'd from viewing
The number, strength, and posture of our foes,
Who now encamp within a short hour's march;
On the high point of yon bright western tower
We ken them from afar; the setting sun
Plays on their shining arms and burnish'd helmets,
And covers all the field with gleams of fire.

Luc. Marcia, 'tis time we should awake thy father.
Cæsar is still dispos'd to give us terms,
And waits at distance till he hears from Cato.

Enter PORTIUS.

Portius, thy looks speak somewhat of importance.
What tidings dost thou bring? Methinks I see
Unusual gladness sparkle in thy eyes.

Por. As I was hasting to the port, where now
My father's friends, impatient for a passage,
Accuse the ling'ring winds, a sail arriv'd
From Pompey's son, who, through the realms of Spain,
Calls out for vengeance on his father's death,
And rouses the whole nation up to arms.
Were Cato at their head, once more might Rome
Assert her rights, and claim her liberty.

[*A groan is heard.*
But, hark! what means that groan?—Oh, give me way,
And let me fly into my father's presence! [*Exit.*]

Luc. Cato, amidst his slumbers, thinks on Rome,
And, in the wild disorder of his soul,
Mourns o'er his country.—Ha! a second groan—
Heav'n guard us all!

Mar. Alas, 'tis not the voice
Of one who sleeps; 'tis agonizing pain—
'Tis death is in that sound—

Re-enter PORTIUS.

Por. Oh, sight of woe!

Oh, Marcia, what we fear'd is come to pass!
Cato has fall'n upon his sword——

Luc. Oh, Portius,
Hide all the horrors of thy mournful tale,
And let us guess the rest.

Por. I've rais'd him up,
And plac'd him in his chair; where, pale and faint,
He gasps for breath, and as his life flows from him,
Demands to see his friends. His servants, weeping,
Obsequious to his order, bear him hither!——

Mar. Oh, heav'n! assist me in this dreadful hour,
To pay the last sad duties to my father!

CATO brought on in a Chair.

Juba. These are thy triumphs, thy exploits, O Cæsar!

Luc. Now is Rome fall'n indeed!

Cato. Here set me down——

Portius, come near me—Are my friends embark'd?
Can any thing be thought of for their service?

Whilst I yet live, let me not live in vain——

Oh, Lucius, art thou here?—Thou art too good——

Let this our friendship live between our children—

Make Portius happy in thy daughter Lucia.

Marcia, my daughter——

Oh, bend me forward!——Juba loves thee, Marcia.

A senator of Rome, while Rome surviv'd,

Would not have match'd his daughter with a king—

But Cæsar's arms have thrown down all distinction——

I'm sick to death——Oh, when shall I get loose

From this vain world, th' abode of guilt and sorrow!

And yet, methinks, a beam of light breaks in

On my departing soul. Alas, I fear

I've been too hasty!——Oh, ye powers, that search

The heart of man, and weigh his inmost thoughts,

If I have done amiss, impute it not——

The best may err, but you are good, and——Oh!——

[*Dies.*

Por. There fled the greatest soul that ever warm'd
A Roman breast:—Oh, Cato! oh, my friend!

They will shall be religiously observ'd.
 But let us bear this awful corpse to Cæsar,
 And lay it in his sight, that it may stand
 A fence betwixt us and the victor's wrath :
 Cato, though dead, shall still protect his friends.

From hence, let fierce contending nations know,
 What dire effects from civil discord flow :
 'Tis this that shakes our country with alarms,
 And gives up Rome a prey to Roman arms ;
 Produces fraud, and cruelty, and strife,
 And robs the guilty world of Cato's life. [Exeunt.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY DR. GARTH.

WHAT odd fantastic things we women do !
 Who would not listen when young lovers woo ?
 But die a maid, yet have the choice of two !
 Ladies are often cruel to their cost :
 To give you pain, themselves they punish most.
 Vows of virginity should well be weigh'd ;
 Too oft they're cancell'd, though in convents made.
 Would you revenge such rash resolves—you may
 Be spiteful—and believe the thing we say,
 We hate you when you're easily said nay.
 How needless, if you knew us, were your fears !
 Let love have eyes, and beauty will have ears.
 Our hearts are form'd as you yourselves would choose,
 Too proud to ask, too humble to refuse :
 We give to merit, and to wealth we sell ;
 He sighs with most success that settles well.
 The woes of wedlock with the joys we mix :
 'Tis best repenting in a coach and six.
 Blame not our conduct, since we but pursue
 Those lively lessons we have learnt from you.

Your breasts no more the fire of beauty warms,
But wicked wealth usurps the power of charms,
What pains to get the gaudy things you hate,
To swell in show, and be a wretch in state.
At plays you ogle, at the ring you bow;
E'en churches are no sanctuaries now:
There golden idols all your vows receive,
She is no goddess that has nought to give.
Oh, may once more the happy age appear,
When words were artless, and the thoughts sincere:
When gold and grandeur were unenvy'd things,
And courts less coveted than groves and springs:
Love then shall only mourn when truth complains,
And constancy feel transport in its chains:
Sighs with success their own soft anguish tell,
And eyes shall utter what the lips conceal:
Virtue again to its bright station climb,
And beauty fear no enemy but time;
The fair shall listen to desert alone,
And every Lucia find a Cato's son.

THE
COUNT OF NARBONNE.

A Tragedy.

BY ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,

OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.



Printed at the Chiswick Press,
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1815.



THE COUNT OF NARBONNE

WAS the last dramatic production of Mr. Jephson, and is pronounced by able critics to be his best. Its first appearance was at Covent Garden Theatre in 1780; when its success was much heightened by the fine acting of Henderson, and the introduction of the present Mrs. S. Kemble, then Miss Satchell, whose youth, beauty, and talent, gave an irresistible interest to the character of *Adelaide*.

It will easily be discovered that this play is a close imitation of Lord Orford's celebrated romance, the **CASTLE OF OTRANTO**.

PROLOGUE.

Of all who strive to please the public ear,
Most bold is he who dares attempt it here:
Where four tribunals, a tremendous show,
Plain folk above, and finer folk below,
All sit to try an anxious author's cause,
Each by its own, and all by diff'rent laws.
This beauteous circle, friends to polish'd verse,
Admires soft sentiments in language terse;
While the stern pit all ornament disdains,
And loves deep pathos, and sublimer strains.
The middle order, free from critic pride,
Take genuine nature for their faithful guide;
At ears and eyes they drink the full delight,
And judge but as they feel of wrong and right:
While those above them, honest souls! delight in
Processions, bustle, trumpets, drums, and fighting.
Hard as it is, we think our play to-night
Has something fit for ev'ry appetite.
For tender souls are tender griefs prepar'd,

[To the Boxes.

And scenes of direr woe for breasts more hard;

[To the Pit.

By interesting your passions, we must try

[To the middle Gallery.

To bribe the heart while we defraud the eye;
And though no trumpets sound, nor drums will rattle,
You, friends, shall hear of a most desp'rate battle.

[To the upper Gallery.

Thus provident for all, we trust you'll own,
Our poet's zeal may for some faults atone.
In this, at least, he hopes you'll all agree,
To shield him from the critic's treachery;
Who, with sly rules upon your judgment stealing,
Would set your pride against your honest feeling;
Would shame the gen'rous drops that swell your eyes,
And teach you your own virtues to despise.

Permit me, ere I go, one short relation,
And just three words by way of application.
A home-spun country squire, who took his stand
To see a dext'rous juggler's sleight of hand,
Was thus accosted by an envious wight,
Who sought to hurt the artist from pure spite :
" Sir, for these tricks I'll presently expose them ;
" There's nothing in't, I'll show you how he does them."
How think you the proposal was receiv'd ?
" No," says the squire, " I pay to be deceiv'd."
Thus wit, which favour'd authors would condemn,
Mean nothing kind to you, but spleen to them ;
Then still mistrust, whate'er he may profess,
The friend who strives to make your pleasure less.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

*As originally acted. Covent Garden, 1807**

<i>Count of Narbonne</i>	Mr. Wroughton.	Mr. Kemble.
<i>Austin</i>	Mr. Henderson.	Mr. Pope.
<i>Theodore</i>	Mr. Lewis.	Mr. C. Kemble.
<i>Fabian</i>	Mr. Thompson.	Mr. Murray.
<i>Renchild</i>		Mr. Jefferies.
<i>Tybalt</i>		Mr. Thompson.
		Mr. Brown.
		Mr. Grant.
<i>Knights</i>		Mr. Heath.
		Mr. Holland.
		Mr. Louis.
		Mr. Reeves.
<i>Officers.</i>	{ Mr. Ledger.	
	{ Mr. Painter.	
<i>Countess</i>	Miss Younge.	Mrs. Siddons.
<i>Adelaide</i>	Miss Satchell.	Miss Norton.
<i>Jaqueline.</i>	Mrs. Platt.	Miss Waddy.
		Mrs. Bologna.
<i>Ladies</i>		Mrs. J. Bologna.
		Miss Cox.
		Mrs. Follett.

Attendants, &c.

SCENE—NARBONNE Castle, and the Monastery of
St. Nicholas, adjoining to the Castle.

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. A Hall.

Enter the COUNT of NARBONNE, *speaking to an Officer ; followed by* FABIAN. . .

Count. NOT to be found! Is this your faithful service?

How could she pass unseen? By hell, 'tis false!
Thou hast betray'd me.

Offi. Noble sir, my duty—

Count. Your fraud, your negligence—away, reply not.

Find her within this hour; else, by my life,
The gates of Narbonne shall be clos'd against thee.
Then make the world thy country. [*Exit Officer.*
Fabian, stay!

Misfortunes fall so thick upon my head,
They will not give me time to think—to breathe.

Fab. Heav'n knows, I wish your peace; but am to learn

What grief more fresh than my young lord's decease,
A sorrow but of three days past, can move you.

Count. O bitter memory!—gone, gone for ever!
The pillar of my house, my only son!

Fab. 'Twas terrible indeed.

Count. Ay, was it not?

And then the manner of it! think on that.
Disease, that robb'd me of two infant sons,
Approaching slow, bade me prepare to lose them;
I saw my lilies drooping; and, accustom'd
To see them dying, bore to see them dead:
But oh, my Edmund!—Thou remember'st, Fabian,
How blithe he went to seek the forest's sport?

Fab. 'Would I could not remember!

Count. That curs'd barb

(My fatal gift), that dash'd him down the cliff,
Seem'd proud of his gay burden.—Breathless, mangled,
They bore him back to me. Foud man! I hop'd
This day his happy match with Isabel
Had made our line perpetual; and, this day,
The unfruitful grave receives him. Yes, 'tis fate!
That dreadful denunciation 'gainst my house
No prudence can avert, nor pray'rs can soften.

Fab. Think not on that; some visionary's dream.
What house, what family could e'er know peace,
If such enthusiasts' ravings were believ'd,
And frenzy deem'd an insight of the future?
But may I dare to ask, is it of moment
To stir your anger thus, that Isabel
Has left the castle?

Count. Of the deepest moment:

My best hope hangs on her; some future time
I may instruct thee why.—These cares unhinge me;
Just now, a herald from her angry father
Left me this dire election—to resign
My titles, and this ample seigniory
(Worthy a monarch's envy), or to meet him,
And try my right by arms. But pr'ythee tell
(Nor let a fear to wound thy master's pride
Restrain thy licens'd speech), hast thou e'er heard
My father Raymond—(cast not down thine eye)—
By any indirect or bloody means,

Procur'd that instrument, Alphonso's will,
That made him heir to Narbonne?

Fab. My best lord,
At all times would I fain withhold from you
Intelligence unwelcome, but most now.

At seasons such as this, a friendly tongue
Should utter words like balm; but what you ask——

Count. I ask to be inform'd of. Hast thou known
me

From childhood up to man, and canst thou fear
I am so weak of soul, like a thin reed,
To bend and stagger at each puny blast?
No, when the tempest rages round my head,
I give my branches wider to the air,
And strike my root more deeply.—To thy tale:
Away with palliatives and compliments—
Speak plainly.

Fab. Plainly then, my lord, I have heard
What, for the little breath I have to draw,
I would not, to the black extent of rumour,
Give credit to.—But you command me speak——

Count. Thy pauses torture me.—Can I hear worse
Than this black scroll contains? this challenge here,
From Isabella's father, haughty Godfrey?
In broad and unambiguous words he tells me,
My father was a murderer, and forg'd
Alphonso's testament.

Fab. From Palestine
That tale crept hither; where, foul slander says,
The good Alphonso, not, as we believe,
Died of a fever, but a venom'd draught,
Your father, his companion of the cross,
Did with his own hand mingle; his hand too,
Assisted by some cunning practisers,
Model'd that deed, which, barring Godfrey's right,
And other claims from kindred, nam'd count Raymond
Lord of these fair possessions.

Count. Ha! I have it;
'Tis Godfrey's calumny; he has coin'd this lie;
And his late visit to the Holy Land,

No doubt, has furnish'd likelihood of proof,
To give his fiction colour.

Fab. Sure, 'tis so.

Count. He too has forg'd this idle prophecy
(To shake me with false terrors), this prediction,
Which, but to think of, us'd to freeze my veins;
"That no descendant from my father's loins,
Should live to see a grandson; nor heaven's wrath
Cease to afflict us, till Alphonso's heir
Succeeded to his just inheritance."
Hence superstition mines my tottering state,
Loosens my vassals' faith, and turns their tears,
Which else would fall for my calamities,
To gloomy pause, and gaping reverence:
While all my woes, to their perverted sense,
Seem but the marvellous accomplishment
Of revelation, out of nature's course.

Fab. Reason must so interpret. Good, my lord,
What answer was return'd to Godfrey's challenge?

Count. Defiance.

Fab. Heaven defend you!

Count. Heaven defend me!

I hope it will, and this right arm to boot.
But hark! I hear a noise.—Perhaps my people
Have found the fugitive.—Haste! bid them enter.

[*Exit Fabian.*]

She ey'd me with abhorrence; at the sound
Of love, of marriage, fled indignant from me.
Yet must I win her: should she meet my wish,
Godfrey would prop the right he strives to shake;
Securing thus to his fair daughter's issue,
All that now hangs on the sword's doubtful point.

Re-enter Officer.

Now, what tidings?

Where is the lady?

Offi. We have search'd in vain
The castle round; left not an aisle or vault
Unvisited.

Count. Damnation!

Offi. Near the cloister,
From whence, by the flat door's descent, a passage
Beneath the ground leads onward to the convent,
We heard the echo of a falling weight,
And sought it by the sound.

Count. Well, and what then?

Offi. The unsettled dust left us no room to doubt
The door had just been rais'd.

Count. She has escap'd,
And by confed'racy: to force that bar,
Without more aid, had baffled twice her strength.
Go on.

Offi. We enter'd; with resistance bold

Enter THEODORE, borne in by FABIAN and Attendants.

This peasant push'd us backward from the spot.
My arm was rais'd to smite him, but respect
For something in his aspect check'd the blow.
He, chiding, parleying by turns, gave time
For whosoever had descended there
(The lady doubtless) to elude our search:
The rest himself will tell.

Count. [To Theodore] Ha! what art thou?

Theo. It seems, thy prisoner: disengage me first
From their rude grasp, and I may tell thee more.

Count. Unhand him. I should know thee; I have seen
Features like thine. Answer me, wert thou found
As these men say?

Theo. I was.

Count. And what thy purpose?

Theo. Chance brought me there.

Count. And did chance lead thee, too,
To aid a fugitive?

Theo. They saw not that.

Count. They saw it not! How! could her delicate
Weak, soft, and yielding to the gentlest touch,
Sustain that pond'rous mass? No; those tough arms,
Thy force, assisted; else, thou young dissembler—

Theo. She had been seiz'd, and by compulsion brought
Where I stand now.

Count. Thou dost avow it then,
Boast it even to my face, audacious stripling!
Such insolence, and these coarse rustic weeds,
Are contradictions. Answer me, who art thou?

Theo. Less than I should be; more than what I seem.

Count. Hence with this saucy ambiguity.
What is thy name, thy country? That mean habit,
Which should teach humbleness, speaks thy condition.

Theo. My name is Theodore; my country, France;
My habit little suited to my mind,
Less to my birth, yet fit for my condition.

Count. O, thou art then some young adventurer,
Some roving knight, a hero in disguise,
Who, scorning forms of vulgar ceremony,
No leave obtain'd, waiting no invitation,
Enters our castles, wanders o'er our halls,
'To succour dames distress'd, or pilfer gold.

Theo. There is a source of reverence for thee here,
Forbids me, though provok'd, retort thy taunts.

Count. If I endure this more, I shall grow vile
Even to my hinds—

Theo. Hold, let me stop thy wrath.
I see thy quivering lip, thy fiery eye,
Fore-run a storm of passion. To prevent thee
From terms too harsh perhaps for thee to offer,
Or me to hear (poor as I seem) with honour,
I will cut short thy interrogatories,
And on this theme give thee the full extent
Of all I know, or thou canst wish to learn.

Count. Do it.

Theo. Without a view to thwart thy purpose
(Be what it might), was I within thy walls.
In a dim passage of the castle aisles,
Musing alone, I heard a hasty tread,
And breath drawn short, like one in fear of peril.
A lady enter'd; fair she seem'd, and young,
Guiding her timorous footsteps by a lamp;
"The lord, the tyrant of this place," she cried,
"For a detested purpose follows me;
Aid me, good youth:" then pointing to the ground,

“That door,” she added, “leads to sanctuary.”
I seiz’d an iron hold, and, while I tugg’d
To heave the unwilling weight, I learn’d her title.

Count. The lady Isabel?

Theo. The same. A gleam,
Shot from their torches who pursued her track,
Prevented more; she hasten’d to the cave,
And vanish’d from my sight.

Count. And did no awe,
No fear of him she call’d this castle’s lord,
Its tyrant, chill thee?

Theo. Awe, nor fear, I know not,
And trust shall never; for I know not guilt.

Count. Then thou, it seems, art master here, not I;
Thou canst control my projects, blast my schemes,
And turn to empty air my power in Narbonne.
Nay, should my daughter choose to fly my castle,
Against my bidding, guards and bolts were vain:
This frize-clad champion, gallant Theodore,
Would lend his ready arm, and mock my caution.

Theo. Thy daughter! O, I were indeed too bless’d,
Could I but live to render her a service!

Count. My daughter would, I hope, disdain thy service.

Theo. Wherefore am I to blame? What I have done,
Were it to do again, again I’d do it.
And may this arm drop palsied by my side,
When its cold sinews shrink to aid affliction!

Count. Indeed!

Theo. Indeed. Frown on.—Ask thy own heart,
Did innocence and beauty bend before thee,
Hunted and trembling, wouldst thou tamely pause,
Scanning pale counsel from deliberate fear,
And weigh each possibility of danger?
No; the instinctive nobleness of blood
Would start beyond the reach of such cold scruples,
And instant gratify its generous ardour.

Count. I must know more of this. His phrase, his look,
His steady countenance, raise something here,
Bids me beware of him. [*Aside*].—I have no time
To bandy idle words with slaves like thee.

I doubt not thy intent was mischievous;
 Booty perhaps, or blood. Till more inquiry
 Clear, or condemn him, hold him in your guard.
 Give none admittance.—Take him from my sight.

Theo. Secure in her integrity, my soul
 Casts back thy mean suspicions, and forgives thee.

[*Theodore is led out by Attendants.*]

Count. Away with him.—What means this heaviness?

My heart, that like a well trimm'd gallant bark,
 Was wont to mount the waves, and dash them off
 In ineffectual foam, now seems to crack,
 And let in each assailing tide to sink me.
 I must not yield to this dull lethargy.
 Good Fabian, hie thee to St. Nicholas's;
 Bid holy Austin straight repair to me. [*Exit Fabian.*]
 His sanctity, and reverend character,
 His pious eloquence, made engines for me,
 Might save a world of anguish to my soul,
 And smooth my unwelcome purpose to Hortensia.
 But how prevail with him?—Ambition?—No;
 The world is dead in him, and gold is trash
 To one who neither needs nor values it.
 Interest and love shall wear the guise of conscience;
 I must pretend nice scruples, which I feel not,
 And make him meditate for me with the church.
 Yet he reveres the countess; and, I fear,
 Will spy more sin, in doubts that wound her quiet,
 Than in my stifling them. But see, she comes,
 With downcast eye, and sad dejected mein.
 I will not yet disclose it.

Enter the COUNTESS.

Where's my child,
 My all of comfort now, my Adelaide?
Countess. Dear as she is, I would not have her all;
 For I should then be nothing. Time has been,
 When, after three long days of absence from you,
 You would have question'd me a thousand times,
 And bid me tell each trifle of myself;

Then, satisfied at last that all were well,
At last, unwilling turn to meaner cares.

Count. This is the nature still of womankind;
If fondness be their mood, we must cast off
All grave-complexion'd thought, and turn our souls
Quite from their tenour to wild levity;
Vary with all their honours, take their hues,
As unsubstantial Iris from the sun:
Our bosoms are their passive instruments;
Vibrate their strain, or all our notes are discord.

Countess. Oh! why this new unkindness? From thy lips
Never till now fell such ungentle words,
Nor ever less was I prepar'd to meet them.

Count. Never till now was I so urg'd, beset,
Hem'd round with perils.

Countess. Ay, but not by me.

Count. By thee, and all the world. But yesterday,
With uncontrolable and absolute sway,
I rul'd this province, was the unquestion'd lord
Of this strong castle, and its wide domains,
Stretch'd beyond sight around me; and but now,
The axe perhaps is sharp'ning, may hew down
My perish'd trunk, and give the soil I sprung from,
To cherish my proud kinsman Godfrey's roots.

Countess. Heaven guard thy life! His dreadful summons reach'd me.

This urg'd me hither. On my knees I beg
(And I have mighty reasons for my prayer),
O do not meet him on this argument:
By gentler means strive to divert his claim;
Fly this detested place, this house of horror,
And leave its gloomy grandeur to your kinsman.

Count. Rise, fearful woman! What! renounce my
birthright?

Go forth, like a poor, friendless, banish'd man,
To gnaw my heart in cold obscurity?
Thou weak adviser! Should I take thy counsel,
Thy tongue would first upbraid—thy spirit scorn me.

Countess. No, on my soul!—Is Narbonne all the world?
My country is where thou art; place is little:

The sun will shine, the earth produce its fruits,
 Cheerful and plenteously, where'er we wander.
 In humbler walks, bless'd with my child and thee,
 I'd think it Eden in some lonely vale,
 Nor heave one sigh for these proud battlements.

Count. Such flowery softness suits not matron lips.
 But thou hast mighty reasons for thy prayer:
 They should be mighty reasons, to persuade
 Their rightful lord to leave his large possessions,
 A soldier challeng'd, to decline the combat.

Countess. And are not prodigies, then, mighty reasons?
 The owl mistakes his season, in broad day
 Screaming his hideous omens; spectres glide,
 Gibbering and pointing as we pass along;
 While the deep earth's unorganized caves
 Send forth wild sounds, and clamours terrible;
 These towers shake round us, though the untroubled air
 Stagnates to lethargy:—our children perish,
 And new disasters blacken every hour.
 Blood shed unrighteously, blood unappeas'd
 (Though we are guiltless), cries, I fear, for vengeance.

Count. Blood shed unrighteously! have I shed blood?
 No; nature's common frailties set aside,
 I'll meet my audit boldly.

Countess. Mighty Lord!
 O! not on us, with justice too severe,
 Visit the sin not ours.

Count. What can this mean?
 Something thou wouldst reveal that's terrible.

Countess. Too long, alas! it has weigh'd upon my heart;
 A thousand times I have thought to tell thee all;
 But my tongue falter'd, and refus'd to wound thee.

Count. Distract me not, but speak.

Countess. I must. Your father
 Was wise, brave, politic; but mad ambition,
 (Heaven pardon him!) it prompts to desperate deeds.

Count. I scarce can breathe. Pr'ythee be quick, and
 ease me.

Countess. Your absence on the Italian embassy
 Left him, you know, alone to my fond care.

Long had some hidden grief, like a slow fire,
 Wasted his vitals;—on the bed of death,
 One object seem'd to harrow up his soul,
 The picture of Alphonso in the chamber:
 On that his eye was set.—Methinks I see him,
 His ashy hue, his grised, bristling hair,
 His palms spread wide. For ever would he cry,
 "That awful form—how terrible he frowns!
 See how he bares his livid, leprous breast,
 And points the deadly chalice!"

Count. Ha! even so!

Countess. Sometimes he'd seize my hands, and grasp
 them close,
 And strain them to his hollow, burning eyes;
 Then falter out, "I am, I am a villain!
 Mild angel, pray for me;—stir not, my child;
 It comes again;—oh, do not leave my side."
 At last, quite spent with mortal agonies,
 His soul went forth—and heaven have mercy on him!

Count. Enough! Thy tale has almost iced my blood.
 Let me not think. Hortensia, on thy duty,
 Suffer no breath like this to pass thy lips:
 I will not taint my noble father's honour,
 By vile suspicions suck'd from nature's dregs,
 And the loose ravings of distemper'd fancy.

Countess. Yet, oh, decline this challenge!

Count. That hereafter.

Mean time, prepare my daughter to receive
 A husband of my choice. Should Godfrey come
 (Strife might be so prevented), bid her try
 Her beauty's power. Stand thou but neuter, fate!
 Courage and art shall arm me for mankind. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. A Chamber.

Enter FABIAN and JAQUELINE.

Fab. No, no, it cannot be. My lord's commands
Were absolute, that none should visit him.

Jaq. What need he know it?

Fab. But perchance he should?

The study of my life has been his pleasure;
Nor will I risk his favour, to indulge
Such unavailing curiosity.

Jaq. Call it not so; I have kind counsel for him;
Which, if he follow it, may serve to speed
The hour of his deliverance, and appease
The unjustly anger'd count.

Fab. Pray be content;

I dare not do it. Have this castle's walls
Hous'd thee nine years, and art thou yet to learn
The temper of the count? Serv'd and obey'd,
There lives not one more gracious, liberal;
Offend him, and his rage is terrible;
I'd rather play with serpents. But, fair Jaqueline,

Setting aside the comeliness and grace
Of this young rustic, which I own are rare,
And baits to catch all women, pr'ythee tell,
Why are you thus solicitous to see him?

Jaq. In me, 'twere base to be indifferent:
He was my life's preserver, nay, preserv'd
A life more precious: yes, my dear young mistress!
But for his aid, the eternal sleep of death
Had clos'd the sweetest eyes that ever beam'd.
Aloof, and frighted, stood her coward train,
And saw a furious band of desperate slaves,
Inur'd to blood and rapine, bear her off.

Fab. What! when the gang of outlaw'd Thierry
Rush'd on her chariot near the wood of Zart,
Was he the unknown youth who succour'd her?
All good betide him for it.

Jaq. Yes, 'twas he.
From one tame wretch he snatch'd a half-drawn
sword,
And dealt swift vengeance on the ruffian crew.
Two at his feet stretch'd dead, the rest, amaz'd,
Fled, muttering curses, while he bore her back,
Unhurt, but by her fears.

Fab. He should be worshipp'd,
Have statues rais'd to him; for, by my life,
I think there does not breathe another like her.
It makes me young to see her lovely eyes:
Such charity! such sweet benevolence!
So fair, and yet so humble! prais'd for ever,
Nay, wonder'd at, for nature's rarest gifts,
Yet lowlier than the lowest.

Jaq. Is it strange,
Fair Adelaide and I, thus bound to him,
Are anxious for his safety? What offence
(And sure 'twas unintended) could provoke
The rigorous count thus to imprison him?

Fab. My lord was ever proud and choleric;
The youth, perhaps unus'd to menaces,
Brook'd them but ill, and darted frown for frown:
This stirr'd the count to fury. But fear nothing;

All will be well; I'll wait the meetest season,
And be his advocate.

Jaq. Mean time repair to him;
Bid him be patient; let him want no comfort,
Kind care can minister. My lady comes.
May I assure her of your favour to him?

Fab. Assure her that the man who sav'd her life,
Is dear to Fabian as his vital blood. [Exit.

Enter ADELAIDE.

Adel. I sent thee to his prison. Quickly tell me,
What says he; does he know my sorrow for him?
Does he confound me with the unfeeling crew,
Who act my father's bidding? Can his love
Pity my grief, and bear this wrong with patience?

Jaq. I strove in vain to enter. Fabian holds him,
By the count's charge, in strictest custody;
And, fearful to awake his master's wrath,
Though much unwilling, bars me from his presence.

Adel. Unkind old man! I would myself entreat him,
But fear my earnest look, these starting tears,
Might to the experience of his prying age
Reveal a secret, which in vain I strive
To hide from any own breast.

Jaq. Alas, dear lady,
Did not your tongue reveal it, your chang'd mien,
Once lighter than the airy wood-nymph's shade,
Now turn'd to pensive thought and melancholy—
Involuntary sighs—your cheek, unlike
Its wonted bloom, as is the red-vein'd rose
To the dim sweetness of the violet—
These had too soon betray'd you. But take heed;
The colour of our fate too oft is ting'd,
Mournful or bright, but from our first affections.

Adel. Foul disproportion draws down shame on
love;
But where's the crime in fair equality?
Mean birth presumes a mind uncultivate,
Left to the coarseness of its native soil,
To grow like weeds, and die like them, neglected;

But he was born my equal; lineag'd high,
And titled as our great ones.

Jaq. How easy is our faith to what we wish:
His story may be feign'd.

Adel. I'll not mistrust him.
Since the bless'd hour that brought him first to save me,
How often have I listen'd to the tale!

Gallant, generous youth!
Thy sport, misfortune, from his infant years!—
Wilt thou pursue him still?

Jaq. Indeed, 'tis hard.

Adel. But, oh, the pang, that these ungrateful walls
Should be his prison! Here, if I were aught,
His presence should have made it festival;
These gates, untouch'd, had leap'd to give him entrance,
And songs of joy made glad the way before him.
Instead of this, think what has been his welcome!
Dragg'd by rude hands before a furious judge,
Insulted, menac'd, like the vilest slave,
And doom'd, unheard, to ignominious bondage.

Jaq. Your father knew not of his service to you?

Adel. No, his indignant soul disdain'd to tell it.
Great spirits, conscious of their inborn worth,
Scorn by demand to force the praise they merit;
They feel a flame beyond their brightest deeds,
And leave the weak to note them, and to wonder.

Jaq. Suppress these strong emotions. The count's eye
Is quick to find offence. Should he suspect
This unpermitted passion, 'twould draw down
More speedy vengeance on the helpless youth,
Turning your fatal fondness to his ruin.

Adel. Indeed I want thy counsel. Yet, oh, leave me!
Find if my gold, my gems, can ransom him.
Had I the world, it should be his as freely.

Jaq. Trust to my care. The countess comes to seek
you;

Her eye is this way bent. Conceal this grief;
All may be lost if you betray such weakness. [Exit.

Adel. O love! thy sway makes me unnatural.
The tears, which should bedew the grave, yet green,

Of a dear brother, turning from their source,
Forget his death, and fall for Theodore.

Enter the COUNTESS.

Countess. Come near, my love! When thou art from
my side,

Methinks I wander like some gloomy ghost,
Who, doom'd to tread alone a dreary round,
Remembers the lost things that made life precious,
Yet sees no end of cheerless solitude.

Adel. We have known too much of sorrow; yet,
'twere wise

To turn our thoughts from what mischance has ravish'd,
And rest on what it leaves. My father's love——

Countess. Was mine, but is no more. 'Tis past, 'tis gone.
That ray, at least, I hop'd would never set,
My guide, my light, through fortune's blackest shades :
It was my dear reserve, my secret treasure ;
I stor'd it up, as misers hoard their gold,
Sure counterpoise for life's severest ills :
Vain was my hope; for love's soft sympathy,
He pays me back harsh words, unkind reproof,
And looks that stab with coldness.

Adel. Oh, most cruel!

And, were he not my father, I could rail ;
Call him unworthy of thy wondrous virtues ;
Blind, and unthankful for the greatest blessing
Heaven's ever-bounteous hand could shower upon him.

Countess. No, Adelaide, we must subdue such thoughts :
Obedience is thy duty, patience mine.

Just now, with stern and peremptory briefness,
He bade me seek my daughter, and dispose her
To wed, by his direction.

Adel. The saints forbid!

To wed by his direction! Wed with whom?

Countess. I know not whom. He counsels with himself.

Adel. I hope he cannot mean it.

Countess. 'Twas his order.

Adel. O madam! on my knees——

Countess. What would my child?

Why are thy hands thus rais'd? Why stream thine eyes?
 Why flutters thus thy bosom? Adelaide,
 Speak to me! tell me, wherefore art thou thus?

Adel. Surprise and grief—I cannot, cannot speak.

Countess. If 'tis a pain to speak, I would not urge thee.
 But can my Adelaide fear aught from me?
 Am I so harsh?

Adel. Oh no! the kindest, best!

But would you save me from the stroke of death,
 If you would not behold your daughter, stretch'd
 A poor pale corse, and breathless at your feet,
 Oh step between me and this cruel mandate!

Countess. But this is strange!—I hear your father's step.
 He must not see you thus: retire this moment.
 I'll come to you anon.

Adel. Yet, ere I go,

O make the interest of my heart your own;
 Nor, like a senseless, undiscerning thing,
 Incapable of choice, nor worth the question,
 Suffer this hasty transfer of your child:
 Plead for me strongly, kneel, pray, weep for me;
 And angels lend your tongue the power to move him!

[*Exit.*

Countess. What can this mean, this ecstasy of passion?
 Can such reluctance, such emotions, spring
 From the mere nicety of maiden fear?
 The source is in her heart; I dread to trace it.
 Must then a parent's mild authority
 Be turn'd a cruel engine, to inflict
 Wounds on the gentle bosom of my child?
 And am I doom'd to register each day
 But by some new distraction?—Edmund! Edmund!
 In apprehending worse even than thy loss,
 My sense, confus'd, rests on no single grief;
 For that were ease to this eternal pulse,
 Which, throbbing here, says blacker fates must follow.

Enter the COUNT of NARBONNE and AUSTIN, meeting.

Count. Welcome, thrice welcome! By our holy
 mother,

My house seems hallow'd, when thou enter'st it.
 Tranquillity and peace dwell ever round thee;
 That robe of innocent white is thy soul's emblem,
 Made visible in unstain'd purity.
 Once more thy hand.

Aust. My daily task has been,
 So to subdue the frailties we inherit,
 That my fair estimation might go forth,
 Nothing for pride, but to an end more righteous:
 For not the solemn trappings of our state,
 Tiaras, mitres, nor the pontiff's robe,
 Can give such grave authority to priesthood,
 As one good deed of grace and charity.

Count. We deem none worthier. But to thy errand!

Aust. I come commission'd from fair Isabel.

Count. To me, or to the countess?

Aust. Thus, to both.

For your fair courtesy, and entertainment,
 She rests your thankful debtor. You, dear lady,
 And her sweet friend, the gentle Adelaide,
 Have such a holy place in all her thoughts,
 That 'twere irreverence to waste her sense
 In wordy compliment.

Countess. Alas! where is she?

Till now I scarce had power to think of her;
 But 'tis the mournful privilege of grief,
 To stand excus'd from kind observances,
 Which else, neglected, might be deem'd offence.

Aust. She dwells in sanctuary at St. Nicholas's.
 Why she took refuge there——

Count. Retire, Hortensia.

I would have private conference with Austin,
 No second ear must witness.

Countess. May I not,
 By this good man, solicit her return?

Count. Another time; it suits not now.—Retire.

[Exit Countess.]

You come commission'd from fair Isabel?

Aust. I come commission'd from a greater power,
 The judge of thee, and Isabel, and all.

The offer of your hand in marriage to her,
With your propos'd divorce from that good lady,
That honour'd, injur'd lady you sent hence,
She has disclos'd to me.

Count. Which you approve not:
So speaks the frowning prelude of your brow.

Aust. Approve not! Did I not protest against it,
With the bold fervour of enkindled zeal,
I were the pander of a love like incest,
Betrayed of my trust, my function's shame,
And thy eternal soul's worst enemy.

Count. Yet let not zeal, good man, devour thy reason;
Hear first, and then determine. Well you know
My hope of heirs has perish'd with my son;
Since now full sev'nteen years, th' unfruitful curse
Has fall'n upon Hortensia. Are these signs,
(Tremendous signs, that startle nature's order!)
Graves casting up their sleepers, earth convuls'd,
Meteors that glare, my children's timeless deaths,
Obscure to thee alone?—I have found the cause.
There is no crime our holy church abhors,
Not one high heav'n more strongly interdicts,
Thau that commixture, by the marriage rite,
Of blood too near, as mine is to Hortensia.

Aust. Too near of blood! oh, specious mockery!
Where have these doubts been buried twenty years?
Why wake they now? And am I closetted
To sanction them? Take back your hasty words,
That call'd me wise or virtuous; while you offer
Such shallow fictions to insult my sense,
And strive to win me to a villain's office.

Count. The virtue of our churchmen, like our wives,
Should be obedient meekness. Proud resistance,
Banding high looks, a port erect and bold,
Are from the canon of your order, priest.
Learn this (for here will I be teacher, Austin):
Our temp'ral blood must not be stirr'd thus rudely:
A front that taunts, a scanning, scurfy brow,
Are silent menaces, and blows unstruck.

Aust. Not so, my lord; mine is no priestly pride:

When I put off the habit of the world,
 I had lost all that made it dear to me,
 And shook off, to my best, its heat and passions.
 But can I hold in horror this ill deed,
 And dress my brow in false, approving smiles?
 No: could I carry lightning in my eye,
 Or roll a voice like thunder in your ears,
 So should I suit my utterance to my thoughts,
 And act as fits my sacred ministry.

Count. O father! did you know the conflict here,
 How love and conscience are at war within me,
 Most sure you would not treat my grief thus harshly.
 I call the saints to witness, were I master,
 To wive the perfect model of my wish,
 For virtue and all female loveliness,
 I would not rove to an ideal form,
 But beg of heav'n another like Hortensia.—
 Yet we must part.

Aust. And think you to excuse
 A meditated wrong to excellence,
 By giving it acknowledgment and praise?
 Rather pretend insensibility;
 Feign that thou dost not see like other men;
 So may abhorrence be exchange'd for wonder,
 Or men from cursing fall to pity thee.

Count. You strive in vain; no pow'r on earth can
 shake me.

I grant my present purpose seems severe;
 Yet are there means to smooth severity,
 Which you, and only you, can best apply.

Aust. Oh no! the means hang there, there by your
 side:

Enwring your fingers in her flowing hair,
 And with that weapon drink her heart's best blood;
 So shall you kill her, but not cruelly,
 Compar'd to this delib'rate, ling'ring murder.

Count. Away with this perverseness! Get thee to her;
 Tell her my heart is hers; here, deep engrav'd,
 In characters indelible, shall rest
 The sense of her perfections. Why I leave her

Is not from cloy'd or fickle appetite
 (For infinite is still her pow'r to charm),
 But heav'n will have it so.

Aust. Oh, name not heav'n!

'Tis too profane abuse.

Count. Win her consent

(I know thy sway is boundless o'er her will),

Then join my hand to blooming Isabel.

Thus will you do to all most worthy service;

The curse, averted thus, shall pass from Narbonne;

My house again may flourish; and proud Godfrey,

Who now disputes, will ratify my title,

Pleas'd with the rich succession to his heirs.

Aust. Has passion drown'd all sense, all memory?

She was affianc'd to your son, young Edmund.

Count. She never lov'd my son. Our importunity

Won her consent, but not her heart, to Edmund.

Aust. Did not that speak her soul pre-occupied?

Some undivulg'd and deep-felt preference?

Count. Ha! thou hast rous'd a thought: this Theodore!

(Dull that I was not to perceive it sooner!)

He is her paramour! by heav'n, she loves him!

Her coldness to my son, her few tears for him,

Her flight, this peasant's aiding her; all, all,

Make it unquestionable;—but he dies.

Aust. Astonishment! What does thy frenzy mean?

Count. I thank thee, priest! thou serv'st me 'gainst thy will.

That slave is in my pow'r. Come, follow me.

Thou shalt behold the minion's heart torn out;

Then to his mistress bear the trembling present.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. A Hall.

Enter ADELAIDE, followed by JAQUELINE.

Jaq. Where do you fly? Heav'ns! have you lost all sense?

Adel. Oh, would I had; for then I should not feel; But I have sense enough to know I'm wretched, To see the full extent of misery, Yet not enough to teach me how to bear it.

Jaq. I did not think your gentleness of nature Could rise to such extremes.

Adel. Am I not tame?

What are these tears, this wild, dishevell'd hair?
Are these fit signs for such despair as mine?
Women will weep for trifles, baubles, nothing;
For very frowardness will weep as I do:
A spirit rightly touch'd would pierce the air,
Call down invisible legions to his aid,
Kindle the elements.—But all is calm;
No thunder rolls, no warning voice is heard,
To tell my frantic father this black deed
Will sink him down to infinite perdition.

Jaq. Rest satisfied he cannot be so cruel
(Rash as he is) to shed the innocent blood
Of a defenceless, unoffending youth.

Adel. He cannot be so cruel? Earth and heav'n!
Did I not see the dreadful preparations?
The slaves, who tremble at my father's nod,
Pale and confounded, dress the fatal block?
But I will fly, fall prostrate at his feet;
If nature is not quite extinguish'd in him,
My pray'rs, my tears, my anguish, sure will move him.

Jaq. Move him indeed! but to redoubled fury:
He dooms him dead for loving Isabel;
Think, will it quench the fever of his rage,
To find he durst aspire to charm his daughter?

Adel. Did I hear right? for loving Isabel?
I knew not that before. Does he then love her?

Jaq. Nothing I heard distinctly; wild confusion
Runs through the castle: ev'ry busy fool,
All ignorant alike, tells diff'rent tales.

Adel. Away, it cannot be. I know his truth.
Oh! I despise myself, that for a moment
(Pardon me, love!) could suffer mean suspicion
Usurp the seat of gen'rous confidence.
Think all alike unjust, my Theodore,
When ev'n thy Adelaide could join to wrong thee!

Jaq. Yet be advis'd—

Adel. Oh, leave me to my grief.
To whom shall I complain? He but preserv'd
My life a little space, to make me feel
Th' extremes of joy and sorrow. Ere we met,
My heart was calm as the unconscious babe.

Enter FABIAN.

Fab. Madam, my lord comes this way, and commands
To clear these chambers; what he meditates
'Tis fit indeed were private. My old age
Has liv'd too long, to see my master's shame.

Adel. His shame, eternal shame! Oh, more than cruel!
How shall I smother it? Fabian, what means he?
My father—him I speak of—this young stranger—

Fab. My heart is rent in pieces! Deaf to reason,
He hears no counsel but from cruelty.

Good Austin intercedes and weeps in vain.

Jaq. There's comfort yet, if he is by his side.

Look up, dear lady! Ha! that dying paleness—

Adel. It is too much—Oh, Jaqueline!

Jaq. She faints;

Her gentle spirits could endure no more.

Ha! paler still! Fabian, thy arm; support her.

She stirs not yet.

Fab. Soft, bear her gently in.

[*Exeunt, carrying Adelaide.*]

SCENE II.

Enter the COUNT of NARBONNE, followed by AUSTIN.

Aust. I do believe thee very barbarous;
Nay, fear thy reason touch'd; for such wild thoughts,
Such bloody purposes, could ne'er proceed
From any sober judgment;—yet thy heart
Will sure recoil at this.

Count. Why, think so still;
Think me both ruffian-like, and lunatic;
One proof at least I'll give of temperate reason—
Not to be baited from my fix'd design
By a monk's ban or whining intercession.

Aust. Thou canst not mean to do it?

Count. Trust thine eyes.
Thy balt! bring forth the pris'ner; bid my marshal
Prepare an axe. The ceremony's short;
One stroke, and all is past. Before he die,
He shall have leave to thank your godliness
For speeding him so soon from this bad world.

Aust. Where is the right, the law, by which you
doom him?

Count. My will's the law.

Aust. A venerable law!
The law by which the tiger tears the lamb,
And kites devour the dove. A lord of France,
Dress'd in a little delegated sway,

Strikes at his sovereign's face, while he profanes
His functions, trusted for the gen'ral good.

Count. I answer not to thee.

Aust. Answer to heav'n.

When call'd to audit in that sacred court,
Will that supremacy accept thy plea,

"I did commit foul murder, for I might?"

Count. Soar not too high; talk of the things of earth,
I'll give thee ear. Has not thy penitent,
Young Isabel, disclos'd her passion to thee?

Aust. Never.

Count. Just now, her coldness to my son,
You said, bespoke her heart pre-occupied.
The frail and fair make you their oracles;
Pent in your close confessionals you sit,
Bending your rev'rend ears to am'rous secrets.

Aust. Scoffer, no more! stop thy licentious tongue;
Turn inward to thy bosom, and reflect—

Count. That is, be fool'd. Yet will I grant his life
On one condition.

Aust. Name it.

Count. Join my hand
To Isabel.

Aust. Not for the world.

Count. He dies.

Enter THEODORE, guarded.

Come near, thou wretch! When call'd before me first,
With most unwonted patience I endur'd
Thy bold avowal of the wrong thou didst me;
A wrong so great, that, but for foolish pity,
Thy life that instant should have made atonement;
But now, convicted of a greater crime,
Mercy is quench'd: therefore prepare to die.

Theo. I was a captive long 'mongst infidels,
Whom falsely I deem'd savage, since I find
Ev'n Tunis and Algiers, those nests of ruffians,
Might teach civility to polish'd France,
If life depends but on a tyrant's frown.

Count. Out with thy holy trumpery, priest! delay
not;

Or, if he trusts in Mahomet, and scorns thee,
Away with him this instant.

Aust. Hold, I charge you!

Theo. The turban'd misbeliever makes some show
Of justice, in his deadly processes ;
Nor drinks the sabre blood thus wantonly,
Where men are valued less than nobler beasts.—
Of what am I accus'd ?

Count. Of insolence ;
Of bold, presumptuous love, that dares aspire
To mix the vileness of thy sordid lees
With the rich current of a baron's blood.

Aust. My heart is touch'd for him.—Much-injur'd
youth,
Suppress awhile this swelling indignation ;
Plead for thy life.

Theo. I will not meanly plead ;
Nor, were my neck bow'd to his bloody block,
If love's my crime, would I disown my love.

Count. Then, by my soul, thou diest!

Theo. And let me die:
With my last breath I'll bless her. My spirit, free
From earth's encumb'ring clogs, shall soar above thee.
Anxious, as once in life, I'll hover round her,
Teach her new courage to sustain this blow,
And guard her, tyrant! from thy cruelty.

Count. Ha! give me way!

Aust. Why, this is madness, youth :
You but inflame the rage you should appease.

Theo. He thinks me vile. 'Tis true indeed I seem
so :

But though these humble weeds obscure my outside,
I have a soul disdains his contumely ;
A guiltless spirit that provokes no wrong,
Nor from a monarch would endure it, offer'd :
Uninjur'd, lamb-like ; but a lion, rous'd.
Know too, injurious lord, here stands before thee
The equal of thy birth.

Count. Away, base clod!
Obey me slaves.—What, all amaz'd with lies?

Aust. Yet hear him, Narbonne: that ingenuous face

Looks not a lie. Thou saidst thou wert a captive—
Turn not away; we are not all like him.

Theo. My story's brief. My mother and myself
(I then an infant), in my father's absence,
Were on our frontiers seiz'd by Saraoens.

Count. A likely tale! a well-devis'd imposture!
Who will believe thee?

Aust. Go on, say all.

Theo. To the fierce bashaw, Hamet,
That scourge and terror of the Christian coasts,
Were we made slaves at Tunis.

Aust. Ha! at Tunis?
Seiz'd with thy mother? Lives she, gentle youth?

Theo. Ah, no, dear saint! fate ended soon her woes,
In pity ended! On her dying couch,
She pray'd for blessings on me.

Aust. Be thou blessed!

O fail not, nature, but support this conflict!
'Tis not delusion sure. It must be he.—
But one thing more; did she not tell thee too,
Thy wretched father's name?

Theo. The lord of Clarinsal.
Why dost thou look so eagerly upon me?
If yet he lives, and thou know'st Clarinsal,
Tell him my tale.

Aust. Mysterious Providence!

Count. What's this? the old man trembles and turns
pale. [*Aside.*

Theo. He will not let his offspring's timeless ghost
Walk unappeas'd; but on this cruel head
Exact full vengeance for his slaughter'd son.

Aust. O Giver of all good! Eternal Lord!
Am I so bless'd, at last, to see my son?

Theo. Let me be deaf for ever, if my ears
Deceive me now! Did he not say his son?

Aust. I did, I did! let this, and this, convince thee,
I am that Clarinsal, I am thy father.

Count. Why works this foolish moisture to my eyes?
Down, nature! what hast thou to do with vengeance?

[*Aside.*

Theo. Ob, sir! thus bending, let me clasp your knees;—

Now, in this precious moment, pay at once
The long, long debt of a lost son's affection.

Count. Destruction seize them both! Must I behold
Their transports, ne'er perhaps again to know
A son's obedience, or a father's fondness? [*Aside.*]

Aust. Dear boy! what miracle preserv'd thee thus,
To give thee back to France?

Theo. No miracle,
But common chance. A warlike bark of Spain
Bore down, and seiz'd our vessel, as we rov'd
Intent on spoil (for many times, alas!
Was I compell'd to join their hated league,
And strike with infidels). My country known,
The courteous captain sent me to the shore;
Where vain were my fond hopes to find my father;
'Twas desolation all; a few poor swains
Told me, the rumour ran he had renounc'd
A hated world, and here, in Languedoc,
Devoted his remains of life to heav'n.

Aust. They told thee truth; and heav'n shall have
my pray'rs,
My soul pour'd out in endless gratitude,
For this unhop'd, immeasurable blessing.

Count. Thus far, fond man! I have listen'd to the tale;
And think it, as it is, a gross contrivance,
A trick, devis'd to cheat my credulous reason,
And thaw me to a woman's milkiness.

Aust. And art thou so unskill'd in nature's language,
Still to mistrust us? Could our tongues deceive,
Credit, what ne'er was feign'd, the genuine heart:
Believe these pangs, these tears of joy and anguish.

Count. Or true, or false, to me it matters not.
I see thou hast an int'rest in his life,
And by that link I hold thee. Wouldst thou save him
(Thou know'st already what my soul is set on),
Teach thy proud heart compliance with my will:
If not—but now no more.—Hear all, and mark me—
Keep special guard that none, but by my order,

Pass from the castle. By my hopes of heav'n,
His head goes off who dares to disobey me!
Farewell!—if he be dear to thee, remember. [Exit.

Aust. If he be dear to me! my vital blood!
Image of her my soul delighted in,
Again she lives in thee! Yes, 'twas that voice,
That kindred look, rais'd such strong instinct here,
And kindled all my bosom at thy danger.

Theo. But must we bear to be thus tamely coop'd
By such insulting, petty despotism?
I look to my unguarded side in vain;
Had I a sword—

Aust. Think not of vengeance now;
A mightier arm than thine prepares it for him.
Pass but a little space, we shall behold him
The object of our pity, not our anger.
Yes, he must suffer; my rapt soul foresees it;
Empires shall sink, the pond'rons globe of earth
Crumble to dust, the sun and stars be quench'd!
But O, Eternal Father! of thy will,
To the last letter, all shall be accomplish'd.

Theo. So let it be! but if his pride must fall,
Ye saints, who watch o'er loveliness and virtue,
Confound not with his crimes her innocence!
Make him alone the victim; but with blessings,
Bright and distinguish'd, crown his beauteous daughter,
The charming Adelaide, my heart's first passion!

Aust. Oh, most disastrous love! My son, my son,
Thy words are poniards here. Alas! I thought
(So thought the tyrant, and for that he rag'd)
The vows exchang'd 'tween Isabel and thee,
Thwarted the issue of his wild designs.

Theo. I knew not Isabel, beyond a moment
Pass'd in surprise and haste.

Aust. O, had malignant fortune toil'd to blast him,
Thus had she snar'd him in this fatal passion!—
And does young Adelaide return thy love?

Theo. Bless'd pow'rs, she does! How can you frown
and hear it?
Her gen'rous soul, first touch'd by gratitude,

Soon own'd a kinder, warmer sympathy.
Soft as the fanning of a turtle's plumes,
The sweet confession met my enraptur'd ears.

Aust. What can I do?—Come near, my Theodore;
Dost thou believe my affection?

Theo. Can I doubt it?

Aust. Think what my bosom suffers, when I tell thee,
It must not, cannot be.

Theo. My love for Adelaide!

Aust. Deem it delicious poison; dash it from thee:
Thy bane is in the cup.

Theo. O bid me rather

Tear out my throbbing heart; I'd think it mercy,
To this unjust, this cruel interdiction.

That proud, unfeeling Narbonne, from his lips
Well might such words have fallen;—but thou, my
father——

Aust. And fond, as ever own'd that tender name.
Not I, my son, not I prevent this union,
To me 'tis bitterness to cross thy wish;
But nature, fate, and heav'n, all, all forbid it.
We must withdraw where heav'n alone can hear us:
Then must thou stretch thy soul's best faculties,
Call ev'ry manly principle to steel thee,
And, to confirm thy name, secure thy honour,
Make one great sacrifice of love to justice. [Exeunt.]

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. *A Chamber.*

ADELAIDE discovered.

Adel. Woe treads on woe.—Thy life, my Theodore,
Thy threaten'd life, snatch'd from th' impending stroke,
Just gave a moment's respite to my heart;
And now a mother's grief, with pangs more keen,
Wakes ev'ry throbbing sense, and quite o'erwhelms me.
Her soul wrapp'd up in his, to talk thus to her!
Divorce her, leave her, wed with Isabel,
And call on heav'n to sanctify the outrage!
How could my father's bosom meditate
What savage tongues would falter ev'n to speak?
But see, he comes——

Enter AUSTIN and JAQUELINE.

O let me bend to thank you;
In this extreme distress, from you alone
(For my poor heart is vain) can she hope comfort.

Aust. How heard she the ill tidings? I had hopes

His cooler reason would subdue the thought ;
 And heav'n, in pity to her gentle virtues,
 Might spare her knowing how he meant to wrong them.

Jaq. The rumour of the castle reach'd her first ;
 But his own lips confirm'd the barb'rous secret.
 Sternly but now he enter'd her apartment,
 And, stamping, frown'd her women from her presence !
 After a little while they had pass'd together,
 His visage flush'd with rage and mingled shame,
 He burst into the chamber where we waited,
 Bade us return, and give our lady aid ;
 Then, covering his face with both his hands,
 Went forth like one half-craz'd.

Adel. Oh good, kind father !
 There is a charm in holy eloquence
 (If words can medicine a pang like this)
 Perhaps may sooth her. Sighs and trickling tears,
 Are all my love can give. As I kneel by her,
 She gazes on me, clasps me to her bosom,
 Cries out, " My child ! my child ! " then, rising quick,
 Severely lifts her streaming eyes to heav'n,
 Laughs wildly, and half sounds my father's name ;
 Till, quite o'erpower'd, she sinks from my embrace,
 While, like the grasp of death, convulsious shake her.

Aust. Remorseless man ! this wound would reach her
 heart,
 And when she falls, his last, best prop falls with her.
 And see, the beauteous mourner moves this way :
 Time has but little injur'd that fair fabric ;
 But cruelty's hard stroke, more fell than time,
 Works at the base, and shakes it to the centre.

Enter the COUNTESS.

Countess. Will then these dreadful sounds ne'er leave
 my ears ?
 " Our marriage was accurs'd ; too long we have liv'd
 In bonds forbid ; think me no more thy husband ;
 Th' avenging bolt, for that incestuous name,
 Falls on my house, and spreads the ruin wide."
 These were his words.

Adel. Oh, ponder them no more!
Lo! where the blessed minister of peace,
He whose mild counsels went to charm your care,
Is kindly come to cheer your drooping soul.
And see, the good man weeps.

Countess. What! weep for me?

Aust. Ay, tears of blood from my heart's inmost core,
And count them drops of water from my eyes,
Could they but wash out from your memory
The deep affliction you now labour with.

Countess. Then still there is some pity left in man:
I judg'd you all by him, and so I wrong'd you.
I would have told my story to the sea,
When it roar'd wildest; bid the lioness,
Robb'd of her young, look with compassion on me;
Rather than hop'd, in any form of man,
To find one drop of human gentleness.

Aust. Most honour'd lady!—

Countess. Pray you come not near me,
I am contagion all! some wicked sin,
Prodigious, unrepented sin, has stain'd me.
Father, 'twould blast thee but to hear the crimes,
This woman, who was ouce the wife of Raymond,
This curs'd, forsaken woman, here has acted.

Aust. What stand'rous tongue dare thus profane
your virtue?

Madam, I know you well; and, by my order,
Each day, each hour, of your unspotted life
Might give as fair a lesson to the world,
As churchmen's tongues can preach, or saints could
practise.

Countess. He charges me with all.—Thou, poor Hor-
tensia!

What guilt, prepost'rous guilt, is thine to answer!

Adel. In mercy wound not thus your daughter's soul.

Aust. A villain or a madman might say this.

Countess. What shall I call him? He, who was my
husband;

My child, thy father;—he'll disclaim thee too.
But let him cast off all the ties of nature,

Abandon us to grief and misery,
 Still will I wander with thee o'er the world:
 I will not wish my reason may forsake me,
 Nor sweet oblivious dullness steep my sense,
 While thy soft age may want a mother's care,
 A mother's tenderness, to wake and guard thee.

Adel. And if the love of your dear Adelaide,
 Her rev'rence, duty, endless gratitude
 For all your angel goodness, now can move you,
 Oh, for my sake (lest quite you break my heart),
 Wear but a little outside show of comfort;
 Awhile pretend it, though you feel it not,
 And I will bless you for deceiving me.

Countess. I know 'tis weakness—folly, to be mov'd
 thus:

And these, I hope, are my last tears for him,
 Alas, I little knew, deluded wretch!
 His riotous fancy glow'd with Isabel;
 That not a thought of me possess'd his mind,
 But coldness and aversion; how to shun me,
 And turn me forth a friendless wanderer.

Aust. Lady, for your peace,
 Think conscience is the deepest source of anguish:
 A bosom free, like yours, has life's best sunshine;
 'Tis the warm blaze in the poor herdsman's hut,
 That, when the storm howls o'er his humble thatch,
 Brightens his clay-built walls, and cheers his soul.

Countess. O father, reason is for mod'rate sorrows,
 For wounds which time has balm'd; but mine are fresh,
 All bleeding fresh, and pain beyond my patience.
 Ungrateful! cruel! how have I deserv'd it?
 Thou tough, tough heart, break for my ease at once!

Aust. I scarce, methinks, can weigh him with himself;
 Vexations strange have fall'n on him of late,
 And his distemper'd fancy drives him on
 To rash designs, where disappointment mads him.

Countess. Ah no! his wit is settled and most subtle;
 Pride and wild blood are his distemper, father.
 But here I bid farewell to grief and fondness:
 Let him go kneel, and sigh to Isabel;

And may he as obdurate find her heart,
As his has been to me.

Aust. Why, that's well said;—

'Tis better thus, than with consuming sorrow
To feed on your own life. Give anger scope:
Time then, at length, will blunt this killing sense;
And peace, he ne'er must know again, be yours.

Countess. I was a woman full of tenderness;
I am a woman, stung by injuries.
Narbonne was once my husband—my protector;
He was—what was he not?—He is my tyrant;
The unnatural tyrant of a heart that lov'd him.
With cool, delib'rate baseness, he forsakes me;
With scorn as stedfast shall my soul repay it.

Aust. You know the imminent danger threatens him,
From Godfrey's fearful claim?

Countess. Too well I know it;
A fearful claim indeed!

Aust. To-morrow's sun
Will see him at these gates; but trust my faith,
No violence shall reach you. The rash count
(Lost to himself) by force detains me here.
Vain is his force:—our holy sanctuary,
Whate'er betide, shall give your virtue shelter;
And peace, and piety alone, approach you.

Countess. Oh, that the friendly bosom of the earth
Would close on me for ever!

Aust. These ill thoughts
Must not be cherish'd. That all-righteous Pow'r,
Whose hand inflicts, knows to reward our patience:
Farewell! command me ever as your servant,
And take the poor man's all, my pray'rs and blessing.

[*Exit.*

Adel. Will you not strive to rest? Alas! 'tis long,
Since you have slept. I'll lead you to your couch;
And gently touch my lute, to wake some strain,
May aid your slumbers.

Countess. My sweet comforter!
I feel not quite forlorn, when thou art near me.

Adel. Lean on my arm.

Countess. No, I will in alone,
 My sense is now unapt for harmony.
 But go thou to Alphonso's holy shrine;
 There, with thy innocent hands devoutly rais'd,
 Implore his sainted spirit to receive
 Thy humble supplications, and to avert
 From thy dear head the still impending wrath,
 For one black deed, that threatens all thy race. [*Exit.*]

Adel. For thee my pray'rs shall rise, not for myself,
 And ev'ry kindred saint will bend to hear me.
 But oh, my flutt'ring breast!—'Tis Theodore!
 How sad and earnestly he views that paper!
 It turns him pale. Beshrew the envious paper!
 Why should it steal the colour from that cheek,
 Which danger ne'er could blanch? He sees me not.
 I'll wait; and should sad thoughts disturb his quiet,
 If love has pow'r, with love's soft breath dispel them.
 [*Exit.*]

Enter THEODORE, with a Paper.

Theo. My importunity at last has conquer'd:
 Weeping, my father gave, and bade me read it.
 "'Tis there," he cried, "the myst'ry of thy birth;
 "There view thy long divorce from Adelaide."
 Why should I read it? Why, with rav'nous haste,
 Gorge down my bane? The worst is yet conceal'd;
 Then wherefore eager for my own destruction?
 Inquire a secret which, when known, must sink me?
 My eye starts back from it; my heart stands still;
 And ev'ry pulse and motion of my blood,
 With prohibition strong as sense can utter,
 Cries out "Beware!"—But does my sight deceive?
 Is it not she? Up, up, you black contents:
 A brighter object meets my ravish'd eyes.
 Now let the present moment, love, be thine!
 For ill, come when it may, must come untimely.

Re-enter ADELAIDE.

Adel. Am I not here unwish'd for?

Theo. My best angel!

Were seas between us, thou art still where I am.

I bear thy precious image ever round me,
As pious men the relics they adore.
Scarce durst I hope to be so blest to see thee,
But could not wish a joy beyond thy presence.

Adel. O Theodore! what wondrous turns of fortune
Have giv'n thee back to a dear parent's arms?
And spite of all the horrors which surround me,
And worse, each black, eventful moment threatens,
My bosom glows with rapture at the thought
Thou wilt at last be bless'd.

Theo. But one way only
Can I be bless'd. On thee depends my fate.
Lord Raymond, harsh and haughty as he is,
And adverse to my father's rigid virtue,
When he shall hear our pure unspotted vows,
Will yield thee to my wishes;—but, curs'd stars!
How shall I speak it?

Adel. What?

Theo. That holy man,
That Clarinval, whom I am bound to honour,
Perversely bids me think of thee no more.

Adel. Alas! in what have I offended him?

Theo. Not so; he owns thy virtues, and admires them.
But with a solemn earnestness that kills me,
He urges some mysterious, dreadful cause,
Must sunder us for ever.

Adel. Oh, then fly me!

I am not worth his frown. Be gone this moment;
Leave me to weep my mournful destiny,
And find some fairer, happier maid, to bless thee.

Theo. Fairer than thee! Oh, heav'n's! the delicate
hand

Of nature, in her daintiest mood, ne'er fashion'd
Beauty so rare. Love's roseate deity,
Fresh from his mother's kiss, breath'd o'er thy mould
That soft, ambrosial hue.—Fairer than thee!
'Twere blasphemy in any tongue but thine,
So to disparage thy unmatch'd perfections.

Adel. No, Theodore, I dare not bear thee longer;
Perhaps indeed there is some fatal cause.

Theo. There is not, cannot be. 'Tis but his pride,
Stung by resentment 'gainst thy furious father.

Adel. Ah no; he is too gen'rous, just, and good,
To hate me for th' offences of my father.

But find the cause. At good Alphonso's tomb
I go to offer up my orisons;

There bring me comfort, and dispel my fears;
Or teach me (oh, hard thought!) to bear our parting.

[*Exit.*

Theo. She's gone; and now, firm fortitude, support
me!

For here I read my sentence, life or death.

[*Takes out the Paper, and reads.*

*Thou art the grandson of the good Alphonso,
And Narbonne's rightful lord.—Ha! is it so?
Then has this boist'rous Raymond dar'd insult me,
Where I alone should rule:—yet not by that
Am I condemn'd to lose her. Thou damn'd scroll!
I fear thou hast worse poison for my eyes.*

*Long were the champions, bound for Palestine
(Thy grandsire then their chief), by adverse winds
Detain'd in Naples; where he saw and lov'd,
And wedded secretly Vicenza's daughter;
For, till the holy warfare should be clos'd,
They deem'd it wise to keep the rite conceal'd.
The issue of that marriage was thy mother;
But the same hour that gave her to the world,
For ever clos'd the fair one's eyes who bare her.
Foul treason next cut short thy grandsire's thread;
Poison'd he fell—*

THEODORE pauses, and *AUSTIN*, who has been some
Time behind, advances.

Aust. By Raymond's felon father;
Who, adding fraud to murder, forg'd a will,
Devising to himself and his descendants,
Thy rights, thy titles, thy inheritance.

Theo. Then I am lost.

Aust. Now think, unkind young man,
Was it for naught I warn'd thee to take heed,

And smother in its birth this dang'rous passion?
 Th' Almighty arm, red for thy grandsire's murder,
 Year after year has terribly been stretch'd
 O'er all the land, but most this guilty race.

Theo. The murderer was guilty, not his race.

Aust. Great crimes, like this, have lengthen'd punishments.

Why speak the fates by signs and prodigies?
 Why one by one falls this devoted line,
 Accomplishing the dreadful prophecy,
 That none should live t' enjoy the fruits of blood?
 But wave this argument.—Thou wilt be call'd
 To prove thy right,
 By combat with the count.

Theo. In arms I'll meet him;

To-morrow, now.—

Aust. And, reeking with his blood,
 Offer the hand which shed it to his daughter?

Theo. Ha!

Aust. Does it shake thee?—Come, my Theodore,
 Let not a gust of love-sick inclination
 Root, like a sweeping whirlwind, from thy soul
 All the fair growth of noble thoughts and virtue,
 Thy mother planted in thy early youth;
 Oh, rashly tread not down the promis'd harvest,
 They toil'd to rear to the full height of honour!

Theo. Would I had liv'd obscure in penury,
 Rather than thus!—Distraction!—Adelaide!

Re-enter ADELAIDE.

Adel. Oh, whither shall I fly?

Theo. What means my love?

Why thus disturb'd?

Adel. The castle is beset;

The superstitious, fierce, inconstant people,
 Madder than storms, with weapons caught in haste,
 Menace my father's life; rage, and revile him;
 Call him the heir of murd'rous usurpation;
 And swear they'll own no rightful lord but Godfrey.

Aust. Blind wretches! I will hence, and try my
power

To allay the tumult. Follow me, my son! [Exit.

Adel. Go not defenceless thus; think on thy safety:
See yonder porch open to the armoury;
There coats of mailed proof, falchions, and casques,
And all the glittering implements of war,
Stand terribly arrang'd.

Theo. Heavens! 'twas what I wish'd.
Yes, Adelaide, I go to fight for him:
Thy father shall not fall ingloriously;
But, when he sees this arm strike at his foes,
Shall own, thy Theodore deserv'd his daughter.

[Exit.

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I. *A Hall.*

Enter the COUNT of NARBONNE, FABIAN, AUSTIN,
and Attendants, with Prisoners.

Count. Hence to a dungeon with those mutinous slaves;
There let them prate of prophecies and visions;
And when coarse fare and stripes bring back their senses,
Perhaps I may relent, and turn them loose
To new offences, and fresh chastisement.

[Exeunt Officers, &c.]

Fab. You bleed, my lord!

Count. A scratch—death! to be bay'd
By mongrels! curs! They yelp'd, and show'd their fangs,
Growl'd too, as they would bite. But was't not poor,
Unlike the generous strain of Godfrey's lineage,
To stir the rabble up in nobles' quarrels,
And bribe my hinds and vassals to assault me.

Aust. They were not stirr'd by Godfrey.

Count. Who then stirr'd them?
Thyself, perhaps. Was't thou? And yet I wrong thee;

Thou didst preach peace; and straight they crouch'd
and shrunk,

More tam'd by the persuasion of thy tongue,
Than losing the hot drops my steel drew from them.

Aust. I might perhaps have look'd for better thanks,
Than taunts to pay my service—but no matter.—
My son, too, serv'd thee nobly; he bestrode thee,
And drove those peasants back, whose staves and
clubs,

But for his aid, had shiver'd that stout frame:
But both, too well accusom'd to thy transports,
Nor ask, nor hope thy courtesy.

Count. Your pardon!

I knew my life was sav'd, but not by whom;
I wish'd it not, yet thank him. I was down,
Stunn'd in the inglorious broil; and nought remember,
More than the shame of such a paltry danger.
Where is he?

Aust. Here.

[Theodore advances from the back of the Stage.]

Count. *[Starting]* Ha! angels shelter me!

Theo. Why starts he thus?

Count. Are miracles renew'd?

Art thou not ris'n from the mould'ring grave?
And in the awful majesty of death,
'Gaingst nature, and the course of mortal thought,
Assum'at the likeness of a living form,
To blast my soul with horror?

Theo. Does he rave?

Or means he thus to mock me?

Count. Answer me!

Speak, some of you, who have the power to speak;
Is it not he?

Fab. Who, good my lord?

Count. Alphonso.

His form, his arms, his air, his very frown.
Lord of these confines, speak—declare thy pleasure.

Theo. Dost thou not know me then?

Count. Ha! Theodore?

This sameness, not resemblance, is past faith.

All statues, pictures, or the likeness kept
By memory, of the good Alphonso living,
Are faint and shadowy traces to this image!

Fab. Hear me, my lord, so shall the wonder cease.—
The very arms he wears, were once Alphonso's.
He found them in the stores, and brac'd them on,
To assist you in your danger.

Count. 'Tis most strange.
I strive, but cannot conquer this amazement:
I try to take them off; yet still my eyes
Again are drawn as if by magic on him.

Aust. Hear you, my son? [*Apart to Theodore.*]

Theo. Yes, and it wakes within me
Sensations new till now.

Aust. To-morrow's light
Will show him wonders greater. [*Apart*]—Sir, it pleas'd
you

(Wherefore you best can tell), to make us here
Your prisoners; but the alarm of danger
Threw wide your gates, and freed us. We return'd
To give you safeguard.—May we now depart?

Count. Ay, to the confines of the furthest earth;
For here thy sight unhinges Raymond's soul.
Be hid, where air or light may never find thee;
And bury too that phantom.

[*Exit Count, with his Attendants.*]

Theo. Insolence!
Too proud to thank our kindness! yet, what horror
Shook all his frame, when thus I stood before him!

Aust. The statue of thy grandsire
(The very figure as thou stood'st before him,
Arm'd just as thou art), seem'd to move and live;
That breathing marble, which the people's love
Rear'd near his tomb, within our convent's walls.
Anon I'll lead thee to it.

Theo. Let me bence,
To shake these trappings off.

Aust. Wear them, and mark me.
Ere night thy kinsman, Godfrey, will be master
Of all thy story:—

He is brave and just,
 And will support thy claim. Should proof and reason
 Fail with the usurper, thou must try thy sword
 (And heaven will strike for thee) in combat with him.
 The conscious flash of this thy grandsire's mail,
 Worse than the horrors of the fabled Gorgon,
 That curdled blood to stone, will shrink his sinews,
 And cast the wither'd boaster at thy feet.

Theo. Grant it, ye powers! but not to shed his blood:
 The father of my Adelaide, that name——

Aust. Is dearer far than mine;—my words are air;
 My counsels pass unmark'd. But come, my son!
 To-night my cell must house thee. Let me show thee
 The humble mansion of thy lonely father,
 Proud once, and prosperous; where I've wept, and pray'd,
 And, lost in cold oblivion of the world,
 Twice nine long years; thy mother and thyself,
 And God, were all my thoughts.

Theo. Ay, to the convent!
 For there my love, my Adelaide, expects me.

[*Aside.* *Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another Apartment in the Castle.*

Enter the COUNT of NARBONNE and FABIAN.

Count. By hell, this legend of Alphonso's death
 Hourly gains ground.

Fab. They talk of naught besides;
 And their craz'd notions are so full of wonder,
 There's scarce a common passage of the times,
 But straight their folly makes it ominous.

Count. Fame, that, like water, widens from its source,
 Thus often swells, and spreads a shallow falsehood.
 At first a twilight tale of village terror,
 The hair of boors and beldams bristled at it;
 (Such bloodless fancies wake to nought but fear:)
 Then, heard with grave derision by the wise,
 And, from contempt, unsearch'd and unrefuted,
 It pass'd upon the laziness of faith,
 Like many a lie, gross, and impossible.

Fab. A lie believ'd, may in the end, my lord,
Prove fatal as a written gospel truth.

Therefore—

Count. Take heed ; and ere the lightning strike,
Fly from the sulphurous clouds.—I am not dull ;
For, bright as ruddy meteors through the sky,
The thought flames here, shall light me to my safety.
Fabian, away ! Send hither to me straight,
Renchild and *Thybal*. [*Exit Fabian*] They are young
and fearless.

Thy flight, ungrateful *Isabel*, compels me
To this rude course. I would have all with kindness ;
Nor stain the snow-white flower of my true love
With spots of violence. But it must be so.
This lordly priest, this *Clarinsal*, or *Austin*,
Like a true churchman, by his calling tainted,
Prates conscience ; and in craft abets earl *Godfrey*,
That *Isabel* may wed his upstart son.
Let Rome dart all her lightnings at my head,
Till her grey pontiff singe in his own fires :
Spite of their rage, I'll force the sanctuary,
And bear her off this night beyond their power ;
My bride, if she consents ; if not, my hostage.

Enter Two Officers.

Come hither, sirs. Take twenty of your fellows ;
Post ten at the great gate of *Nicholas* ;
The rest, by two's, guard every avenue
Leads from the convent to the plain or castle.
Charge them (and as their lives shall answer it)
That none but of my train pass out, or enter.

1 Off. We will, my lord, about it instantly.

Count. Temper your zeal, and know your orders first.
Take care they spill no blood :—no violence,
More than resisting who would force a passage :
The holy drones may buzz, but have no stings.
I mean to take a bauble from the church,
A reverend thief stole from me. Near the altar
(That place commands the centre of the aisle)
Keep you your watch. If you espy a woman

(There can be only she), speed to me straight;
 You'll find my station near Alphonso's porch.
 Be swift as winds, and meet me presently. [Exit.

SCENE III. *The inside of a Convent, with Aisles and Gothic Arches; part of an Altar appearing on one side; the Statue of Alphonso in Armour in the centre. Other Statues and Monuments also appearing.*

ADELAIDE veiled, rising from her Knees before the Statue of Alphonso.

Adel. Alas! 'tis mockery to pray as I do.
 Thoughts fit for heaven, should rise on seraphs wings,
 Unclogg'd with aught of earth; but mine hang here;
 Beginning, ending all in Theodore.
 Why comes he not? 'Tis torture for th' unbles'd,
 To suffer such suspense as my heart aches with.
 What can it be—this secret, dreadful cause,
 This shaft unseen, that's wing'd against our love?
 Perhaps—I know not what.—At yonder shrine
 Bending, I'll seal my irrevocable vow:
 Hear, and record it, choirs of saints and angels!
 If I am doom'd to sigh for him in vain,
 No second flame shall ever enter here;
 But, faithful to thy fond, thy first impression,
 Turn thou, my breast, to every sense of joy,
 Cold as the pale-ey'd marbles which surround me.
 [She withdraws.

Enter AUSTIN and THEODORE.

Aust. Look round, my son! This consecrated place
 Contains the untimely ashes of thy grandsire.
 With all the impious mockery of grief,
 Here were they laid by the dire hand which sped him.
 There stands his statue; were a glass before thee,
 So would it give thee back thy outward self.

Theo. And may the power which fashion'd thus my
 outside,
 With all his nobler ornaments of virtue
 Sustain my soul! till generous emulation

Raise me, by deeds, to equal his renown,
And—

Aust. To avenge him. Not by treachery,
But, casting off all thoughts of idle love,
Of love ill-match'd, unhappy, ominous,—
To keep the memory of his wrongs; do justice
To his great name, and prove the blood you spring from.

Theo. Oh, were the bold possessor of my rights
A legion arm'd, the terrors of his sword
Resistless as the flash that strikes from heaven,
Undaunted would I meet him. His proud crest
Should feel the dint of no unpractis'd edge.
But, while my arm assails her father's life,
The unnatural wound returns to my own breast,
And conquest loses Adelaide for ever.

Aust. The barbarous deed of Raymond's father lost
her.

Theo. Pierce not my soul thus. Can you love your
son—

And coldly tell me,
Without one tear unmov'd thus, I must lose her?
But where, where is she? [*Looking out*] Heavenly innocence!

See, the dear saint kneels at the altars' foot;
See, her white hands with fervent clasps are rais'd;
Perhaps for me. Have you a heart, my father,
And bid me bear to lose her?—Hold me not—
I come, I fly, my life, my all! to join thee. [*Exit.*]

Aust. Return, return, rash boy!—Pernicious chance!
One glance from her will quite destroy my work,
And leave me but my sorrow for my labour. [*Exit.*]

Enter the COUNT of NARBONNE.

Count. Am I turn'd coward, that my tottering knees
Knock as I tread the pavement?—'Tis the place;
The sombrous horror of these long-drawn aisles.
My footsteps are beat back by naught but echo,
Struck from the caverns of the vaulted dead;
Yet now it seem'd as if a host pursued me,
The breath that makes my words, sounds thunder-like.

Sure 'twas a deep-fetch'd groan.—No;—hark, again!
Then 'tis the language of the tombs; and see!—

[Pointing to the Statue of Alphonso.

Like their great monarch, he stands rais'd above them.
Who's there?

Enter Two Officers.

1 *Offi.* My lord, where are you?

Count. Here—speak, man!

Why do you shake thus? Death! your bloodless cheeks
Send fear into me. You, sir, what's the matter?

2 *Offi.* We have found the lady.

Count. My good fellows, where?

1 *Offi.* Here, from this spot, you may yourself be-
hold her;

Her face is towards the altar.

Count. [Looking out] Blasts upon me!

Wither my eyes for ever!—Ay, 'tis she;
Austin with Theodore; he joins their hands:—
Destruction seize them! O dull, tardy fool!
My love and my ambition both defeated!

A marriage in my sight! Come forth! come forth!

[Draws a Dagger.

Arise, grim vengeance, and wash out my shame!

Ill-fated girl! a bloody Hymen waits thee!

[Rushes out.

1 *Offi.* His face is black with rage—his eyes flash
fire;

I do not like this service.

2 *Offi.* No, nor I.

1 *Offi.* Heard you that shriek?—It thunders. By my
soul,

I feel as if my blood were froze within me.

Speak to me. See he comes.

[Officers retire.

*Re-enter the COUNT of NARBONNE, with a bloody
Dagger.*

Count. The deed is done.

Hark, the deep thunder rolls. I hail the sign;
It tells me, in loud greetings, I'm reveng'd.

Re-enter THEODORE, with his Sword drawn.

Theo. Where, where's the assassin?

Count. Boy, the avenger's here.

Behold, this dagger smokes with her heart's blood!
That thou stand'st there to brave me, thank that mail,
Or, traitor, thou hadst felt me.—But 'tis done.

Theo. Oh, monstrous! monstrous!

Count. Triumph now o'er Narbonne;
Boast, how a stripling and a monk deceiv'd
The easy count; but, if thou lov'st thy bride,
Take that, and use it nobly. [*Throws down the Dagger.*]

Theo. 'Gainst thy heart,
Barbarian, would I use it: but look there;
There are ten thousand daggers.

Aust. [*Without*] Ring out the alarm;
Fly all; bring aid, if possible, to save her.

Re-enter ADELAIDE, wounded and supported by AUSTIN; THEODORE advances to her, and assists in supporting and bringing her forward. Some of the COUNT'S Attendants enter from the Castle, with lighted Torches.

Count. Ha! lightning shiver me!

Adel. My lord! my father!

Oh, bear me to his feet.

Aust. Thou man of blood,
Past utterance lost, see what thy rage has done!

Count. Ruin! despair! my child! my Adelaide!
Art thou the innocent victim of my fury?

Adel. I am, indeed. I know not my offence;
Yet sure 'twas great, when my life answers it.
Will you forgive me now?

Count. Oh, misery!

Had I unnumber'd lives, I'd give them all,
To lengthen thine an hour. What frenzy seiz'd me?
That veil, the glimmering light, my rage, deceiv'd me.
Unnatural wound! detested parricide!—
Good youth, in pity strike this monster dead!

Adel. Listen not to his ravings. [*To Theodore.*]
Alas, my Theodore!

I struggle for a little gasp of breath;
 Draw it with pain; and sure, in this last moment,
 You will observe me.—

Live, I charge you:

Forget me not, but love my memory.

If I was ever dear to thee, my father

(Those tears declare I was), will you not hear me,
 And grant one wish to your expiring child?

Count. Speak, tell me quickly, thou dear suffering
 angel!

Adel. Be gentle to my mother; her kind nature
 Has suffer'd much; she will need all your care:
 Forsake her not; and may the All-merciful
 Look down with pity on this fatal error;
 Bless you—and—oh—

[*Dies.*]

Count. She dies in prayer for me;
 Prays for me, while her life streams from my stroke.
 What prayers can rise for such a wretch as I am?
 Seize me, ye fiends! rouse all your stings and torments!
 See hell grows darker as I stalk before them.

Theo. [*After looking some time at Adelaide's Body*] 'Tis
 my black destiny has murder'd thee.

Stand off. [*They hold him*] I will not live.

This load of being is intolerable;

And, in a happier world my soul shall join her.

[*Rushes out.*]

Aust. Observe, and keep him from all means of death.

Enter the COUNTESS, FABIAN, and other Attendants.

Countess. Whence were those cries? what meant that
 fearful bell?

Who shall withhold me? I will not return.

Is there a horror I am stranger to?

Aust. There is; and so beyond all mortal patience,
 I can but wish you stripp'd of sense and thought,
 That it may pass without destroying you.

Countess. What is it? speak.

Aust. [*Looking towards the Body*] Turn not your
 eyes that way,

For there, alas—

Countess. O Lord of earth and heaven!
Is it not she? my daughter, pale and bleeding!
She's cold, stark cold:—can you not speak to me?
Which of you have done this?

Count. 'Twas ease till now;
Fall, fall, thick darkness, hide me from that face!

Aust. Rise, madam, 'tis in vain.—Heaven comfort her!

Countess. Shall I not strive to warm her in my breast?
She is my all; I have nothing left but her.

You cannot force me from her. Adelaide!

My child, my lovely child! thy mother calls thee.
She hears me not—she's dead!—Oh, God! I know thee—
Tell me, while I have sense, for my brain burns;
Tell me—yet what avails it? I'll not curse—
There is a power to punish.

Count. Look on me!
Thou hadst much cause to think my nature cruel;
I wrong'd thee sore, and this was my last deed.

Countess. Was thine? thy deed? Oh, execrable monster!

Oh, greatly worthy of thy blood-stain'd sire!

A murderer he, and thou a parricide!

Why did thy barbarous hand refrain from me?

I was the hated bar to thy ambition!

A stab like this had set thee free for ever;

Sav'd thee from shame, upbraiding, perjuries;

But she—this innocent—what had she done?

Count. I thank thee. I was fool enough, or coward,
To think of life one moment, to atone
By deep repentance for the wrongs I did thee.

But hateful to myself, hated by thee,

By heaven abandon'd, and the plague of earth,

This, this remains, and all are satisfied. [*Stabs himself.*

Forgive me, if 'tis possible—but—oh— [*Dies.*

Countess. [*After looking some time distractedly*] Where
am I? Ruin, and pale death surround me.

I was a wife; there gasping lies my husband!

A mother too; there breathless lies my child!

Look down, oh heaven! look down with pity on me!—

I know this place;

I'll kneel once more. Hear me, great God of Nature!
For this one boon let me not beg in vain;
Oh, do not mock me with the hopes of death;
These pangs, these struggles, let them be my last;
Release thy poor, afflicted, suffering creature;
Take me from misery, too sharp to bear,
And join me to my child!

[*Falls on the Body of Adelaide.*

Aust. Heaven comfort thee!—

Hard was your lot, you lovely innocents;
But palms, eternal palms, above shall crown you.
For this rash man—yet mercy's infinite.
You stand amaz'd. Know, this disastrous scene,
Ending the fatal race, concludes your sorrows.
To-morrow meet me round this sacred shrine;
Then shall you hear at full a tale of wonder;
The rightful lord of Narbonne shall be own'd;
And heaven in all its ways be justified. [*Curtain falls.*

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY EDMOND MALONE, ESQ.

*Spoken at the original Exhibition of this Tragedy at
Covent Garden Theatre, by MISS YOUNGE.*

OF all the laws by tyrant custom made,
The hardest sure on dramatists are laid.
No easy task, in this enlighten'd time,
It is with art "to build the lofty rhyme;"
To choose a fable nor too old nor new;
To keep each character distinctly true;
The subtle plot with happy skill combine,
And chain attention to the nervous line;
With weighty, clashing int'rests to perplex,
Through five long acts—each person—of each sex;
And then at last, by dagger or by bowl,
"To freeze the blood, and harrow up the soul."
All this achiev'd, the bard at ease carouses,
And dreams of laurels and o'erflowing houses.
Alas, poor man! his work is done but half;—
He has made you cry—but he must make you laugh;
And the same engine, like the fabled steel,
Must serve at once to wound you and to heal.

Our bard "of this had ta'en too little care,"
And by a friend besought me to appear.
"Madam," he said, "so oft you've grac'd the scene,
An injur'd princess, or a weeping queen;
So oft been us'd to die in anguish bitter,
And then start up—to make the audience titter,
That doubtless you know best what is in vogue,
And can yourself invent an epilogue;
You can supply our author's tardy quill,
And gild the surface of his tragic pill;
Your ready wit a recipe can bring,
For this capricious, serio-comic thing."

A recipe for epilogues!—"Why not?
Have you each vaunting chronicle forgot?"

Have we not recipes each day, each hour,
 To give to mortal man immortal power?
 To give the ungraceful, timid speaker, breath,
 And save his quivering eloquence from death?
 Have we not now a geometric school,
 To teach the cross-legg'd youth—to snip by rule?
 When arts like these each moment meet your eyes,
 Why should receipts for epilogues surprise?"

Well, sir, I'll try—I first advance with simper,
 (Forgotten quite my tragic state and whimper)—
 "Ladies, to-night my fate was surely hard:
 What could possess our inconsiderate hard,
 A wife to banish—that his miss might wed,
 When *modern* priests allow them both one bed."
 Thus I'll begin;—But it will never do,
 Unless some recent anecdotes ensue.
 Has no frail dame been caught behind a screen?
 No panting virgin flown to Gretna-green?—
 Have we no news of Digby—or the Dutch?—
 At some rich Nabob can't I have a touch?
 Or the fam'd quack, who but for duns terrestrial,
 Had gain'd the Indies by his *bed celestial*?
 "Bravo, miss Younge; the thought my friend will bless;
 This modish medley must ensure success."

Won by this smooth-tongued flatterer, I've dar'd
 To do what ev'n our fluent author fear'd.
 If I succeed to-night, the trade I'll follow,
 And dedicate my leisure to Apollo:
 Before my house a board shall straight be hung,
 With—*Epilogues made here by Dr. Younge*;
 Nor will I, like my brethren, take a fee;
 Your hands and smiles are wealth enough for me.

THE
COUNTRY GIRL.

A Comedy.

ALTERED FROM WYCHERLEY,
BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,

OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.



Printed at the Chiswick Press,

BY C. WHITTINGHAM;

FOR WHITTINGHAM AND ARLISS, PATERNOSTER
ROW, LONDON.

1816.



THE COUNTRY GIRL

Is an alteration from Wycherley's comedy of *THE COUNTRY WIFE*; first by Mr. Lee in 1765, afterwards by Mr. Garrick, and since by several; who have very properly expunged many offensive passages.

The authors of the *Biographia Dramatica* say that "Shakspeare himself has been mutilated, therefore Wycherley cannot complain." We think that Shakspeare has too often been mutilated without any consequent benefit; but every curtailment of a comedy like this, must have been (to use an Hibernianism) a great addition to it.—To Mrs. Jordan's unrivalled excellence it was principally owing that *THE COUNTRY GIRL* kept the stage. A lady is yet living, of the name of Brown, who was also very excellent in the part; and critics of the present day have so lately decided on the rival claims of Mrs. Alsop and Mrs. Mardyn, that any opinion of ours would be superfluous.



PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR. HART.

Poets, like outgell'd bullies, never do
At first or second blow submit to you;
But will provoke you still, and ne'er have done
Till you are weary first with laying on.
The late so baffled scribbler of this day,
Though he stands trembling, bids me boldly say,
What we before most plays are us'd to do
(For poets, out of fear, first draw on you);
In a fierce prologue, the still pit defy,
And ere you speak, like Kastil, give the lie:
But though our Bayes's battles oft I've fought,
And with bruise'd knuckles their dear conquests bought;
Nay, never yet fear'd odds upon the stage,
In prologue dare not hector with the age;
But would take quarter from your saving hands,
Though Bayes within all yielding countermands;
Says you confed'rate wits no quarter give,
Therefore his play shan't ask your leave to live.—
Well, let the vain, rash fop, by huffing so,
Think to obtain the better terms of you;
But we, the actors, humbly will submit,
Now, and at any time, to a full pit;
Nay, often we anticipate your rage,
And murder poets for you on our stage:
We set no guards upon our tiring-room;
But when with flying colours there you come,
We patiently, you see, give up to you
Our poets, virgins, nay, our matrons too.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

		<i>As originally acted.</i>	<i>Drury Lane, 1790.</i>
<i>Moody</i>	Mr. Hart.		Mr. Wroughton.
<i>Harcourt</i>	Mr. Kynaston.		Mr. Barrymore.
<i>Sparkish</i>	Mr. Haynes.		Mr. Dodd.
<i>Belville</i>	Mr. Lydal.		Mr. Bannister.
<i>William</i>			Mr. Spencer.
<i>Countryman</i>			Mr. Jones.
<i>John</i>			Mr. Alfred.
—			
<i>Miss Peggy</i>	Mrs. Bowlol.		Mrs. Jordan.
<i>Alithea</i>	Mrs. James.		Mrs. Ward.
<i>Lucy</i>	Mrs. Cory.		Mrs. Wilson.

		1816.	
		<i>Drury Lane.</i>	<i>Covent Garden.</i>
<i>Moody</i>	Mr. Bartley.		Mr. Fawcett.
<i>Harcourt</i>	Mr. Wallack.		Mr. Barrymore.
<i>Sparkish</i>	Mr. S. Penley.		Mr. Farley.
<i>Belville</i>	Mr. Barnard.		Mr. Hamerton.
<i>William</i>	Mr. Maddooks.		Mr. Menage.
<i>Countryman</i>	Mr. Minton.		Mr. Howell.
<i>John</i>	Mr. Coveney.		Mr. W. Chapman.
—			
<i>Miss Peggy</i>	Mrs. Mardyn.		Mrs. Alsop.
<i>Alithea</i>	Mrs. Orger.		Miss Matthews.
<i>Lucy</i>	Miss Tidswell.		Mrs. Gibbs.

SCENE—LONDON.

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. HARCOURT'S Lodgings.

HARCOURT and BELVILLE discovered sitting.

Har. HA, ha, ha! and so you are in love, nephew; not reasonably and gallantly, as a young gentleman ought, but sighingly, miserably so; not content to be ankle-deep, you have sous'd over head and ears—ha, Dick?

Bel. I am pretty much in that condition, indeed, uncle.

Har. Nay, never blush at it: when I was of your age I was asham'd too; but three years at college, and half a one at Paris, methinks should have cured you of that unfashionable weakness—modesty.

Bel. Could I have released myself from that, I had perhaps been at this instant happy in the possession of what I must despair now ever to obtain—Heigho!

Har. Ha, ha, ha! very foolish indeed.

Bel. Don't laugh at me, uncle; I am foolish, I know; but, like other fools, I deserve to be pitied.

Har. Pr'ythee don't talk of pity; how can I help you? for this country girl of yours is certainly married.

Bel. No, no—I won't believe it; she is not married, nor she shan't be, if I can help it.

Har. Well said, modesty; with such a spirit you can help yourself, Dick, without my assistance.

Bel. But you must encourage and advise me too, or I shall never make any thing of it.

Har. Provided the girl is not married; for I never encourage young men to covet their neighbours' wives.

Bel. My heart assures me, that she is not married.

Har. O, to be sure, your heart is much to be relied upon; but to convince you that I have a fellow-feeling of your distress, and that I am as nearly allied to you in misfortunes as in relationship, you must know——

Bel. What, uncle? you alarm me!

Har. That I am in love too.

Bel. Indeed!

Har. Miserably in love.

Bel. That's charming.

Har. And my mistress is just going to be married to another.

Bel. Better and better.

Har. I knew my fellow-sufferings would please you; but now prepare for the wonderful wonder-of-wonders!

Bel. Well!

Har. My mistress is in the same house with yours.

Bel. What, are you in love with Peggy too?

[*Rising from his Chair.*]

Har. Well said, jealousy. No, no, set your heart at rest; your Peggy is too young, and too simple for me. I must have one a little more knowing, a little better bred, just old enough to see the difference between me and a coxcomb, spirit enough to break from a brother's engagements, and choose for herself.

Bel. You don't mean Alithea, who is to be married to Mr. Sparkish?

Har. Can't I be in love with a lady that is going to be married to another, as well as you, sir?

Bel. But Sparkish is your friend?

Har. Pr'ythee don't call him my friend; he can be nobody's friend, not even his own.—He would thrust himself into my acquaintance, would introduce me to his mistress, though I have told him again and again that I was in love with her; which, instead of ridding me of him, has made him only ten times more troublesome, and me really in love. He should suffer for his self-sufficiency.

Bel. 'Tis a conceited puppy!—And what success with the lady?

Har. No great hopes; and yet if I could defer the marriage a few days, I should not despair; her honour, I am confident, is her only attachment to my rival: she can't like Sparkish; and if I can work upon his credulity, a credulity which even popery would be ashamed of, I may yet have the chance of throwing sixes upon the dice to save me.

Bel. Nothing can save me.

Har. No, not if you whine and sigh, when you should be exerting every thing that is man about you. I have sent Sparkish, who is admitted at all hours in the house, to know how the land lies for you, and if she is not married already.

Bel. How cruel you are—you raise me up with one hand, and then knock me down with the other.

Har. Well, well, she shan't be married. [*Knocking at the Door*] This is Sparkish, I suppose: don't drop the least hint of your passion to him; if you do, you may as well advertise it in the public papers.

Bel. I'll be careful.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. An odd sort of a person, from the country, I believe, who calls himself Moody, wants to see you, sir; but as I did not know him, I said you were not at home, but would return directly; "And so will I too," said he, very short and surly! and away he went mumbling to himself.

Har. Very well, Will; I'll see him when he comes.

[Exit Servant] Moody call to see me!—He has something more in his head than making me a visit; 'tis to complain of you, I suppose.

Bel. How can he know me?

Har. We must suppose the worst, and be prepared for him; tell me all you know of this ward of his, this Peggy—Peggy what's her name?

Bel. Thrift, Thrift, uncle.

Har. Ay, ay, sir Thomas Thrift's daughter, of Hampshire; and left very young, under the guardianship of my old companion and acquaintance, Jack Moody.

Bel. Your companion!—he's old enough to be your father.

Har. Thank you, nephew—he has greatly the advantage of me in years, as well as wisdom. When I first launched from the university, into this ocean of London, he was the greatest rake in it; I knew him well for near two years, but all of a sudden he took a freak (a very prudent one) of retiring wholly into the country.

Bel. There he gain'd such an ascendancy over the odd disposition of his neighbour, sir Thomas, that he left him sole guardian to his daughter; who forfeits half her fortune, if she does not marry with his consent—there's the devil, uncle.

Har. And are you so young, so foolish, and so much in love that you would take her with half her value? ha, nephew?

Bel. I'll take her with any thing—with nothing.

Har. What! such an unaccomplish'd, awkward, silly creature? he has scarce taught her to write; she has seen nobody to converse with, but the country people about 'em; so she can do nothing but dangle her arms, look gawky, turn her toes in, and talk broad Hampshire.

Bel. Don't abuse her sweet simplicity; had you but heard her talk, as I have done, from the garden-wall in the country, by moon-light—

Har. Romeo and Juliet, I protest, ha, ha, ha! "Arise fair sun, and kill the envions—" ha, ha, ha! How often have you seen this fair Capulet?

Bel. I saw her three times in the country, and spoke

to her twice; I have leap'd an orchard wall, like Romeo, to come at her; played the balcony scene; from an old summer-house in the garden; and if I lose her, I will find out an apothecary, and play the tomb scene too.

Har. Well said, Dick!—this spirit must produce something; but has the old dragon ever caught you sighing at her?

Bel. Never in the country; he saw me yesterday kissing my hand to her, from the new tavern window that looks upon the back of his house, and immediately drove her from it, and fastened up the window-shutters.

Spark. [*Without*] Very well, Will, I'll go up to 'em.

Har. I hear Sparkish coming up; take care of what I told you; not a word of Peggy; hear his intelligence, and make use of it, without seeming to mind it.

Bel. Mum, mum, uncle.

Enter SPARKISH.

Spark. O, my dear Harcourt, I shall die with laughing; I have such news for thee—ha, ha, ha!—What, your nephew too, and a little dumpish, or so; you have been giving him a lecture upon economy. I suppose—you, who never had any, can best describe the evils that arise from the want of it. I never mind my own affairs, not I—"The gods take care of Cato."—I hear, Mr. Belville, you have got a pretty snug house, with a bow-window that looks into the Park, and a back-door that goes out into it. Very convenient, and well-imagined—no young handsome fellow should be without one—you may be always ready there, like a spider in his web, to seize upon stray'd women of quality.

Har. As you used to do—you vain fellow you; pr'ythee don't teach my nephew your abandoned tricks; he is a modest young man, and you must not spoil him.

Spark. May be so; but his modesty has done some mischief at our house—my surly, jealous brother-in-law saw that modest young gentleman casting a wishful eye at his forbidden fruit, from the new tavern window.

Bel. You mistake the person, Mr. Sparkish; I don't know what young lady you mean.

Har. Explain yourself, Sparkish, you must mistake; Dick has never seen the girl.

Spark. I don't say he has; I only tell you what Moody says. Besides, he went to the tavern himself, and enquired of the waiter who dined in the back room, No. 4? and they told him it was Mr. Belville, your nephew; that's all I know of the matter, or desire to know of it, faith.

Har. He kiss'd his hand, indeed, to your lady, Alithea, and is more in love with her than you are, and very near as much as I am; so look about you, such a youth may be dangerous.

Spark. The more danger the more honour: I defy you both—win her and wear her if you can—Dolus an virtus in love as well as in war—though you must be expeditious, faith; for I believe, if I don't change my mind, I shall marry her to-morrow, or the day after.—Have you no honest clergyman, Harcourt, no fellow-collegian to recommend me, to do the business?

Har. Nothing ever, sure, was so lucky. [*Aside.*] Why, faith, I have, Sparkish; my brother, a twin-brother, Ned Harcourt, will be in town to-day, and proud to attend your commands.—I am a very generous rival, you see, to lend you my brother to marry the woman I love!

Spark. And so am I too, to let your brother come so near us—but Ned shall be the man; poor Alithea grows impatient; I can't put off the evil day any longer. I fancy the brute, her brother, has a mind to marry his country idiot at the same time.

Bel. How, country idiot, sir?

Har. Hold your tongue. [*Apart to Belville.*] I thought he had been married already.

Spark. No, no, he's not married, that's the joke of it.

Bel. No, no, he is not married.

Har. Hold your tongue— [*Elbowing Belville.*]

Spark. Not he—I have the finest story to tell you—by-the-by, he intends calling upon you, for he ask'd me where you lived, to complain of modesty there. He pick'd up an old raking acquaintance of his as we came

along together, Will Frankly, who saw him with his girl, skulking and muffled up, at the play last night; he plagu'd him much about matrimony, and his being ashamed to show himself; swore he was in love with his wife, and intended to cuckold him. "Do you?" cried Moody, folding his arms, and scowling with his eyes thus—"You must have more wit than you used to have; besides, if you have as much as you think you have, I shall be out of your reach, and this profligate metropolis, in less than a week."—Moody would fain have got rid of him, but the other held him by the sleeve, so I left 'em; rejoiced most luxuriously to see the poor devil tormented.

Bel. I thought you said, just now, that he was not married; is not that a contradiction, sir?

[*Harcourt still makes signs to Belville.*]

Spark. Why, it is a kind of one; but considering your modesty, and the ignorance of the young lady, you are pretty tolerably inquisitive, methinks; ha, Harcourt! ha, ha, ha!

Har. Pooh, pooh! don't talk to that boy, tell me all you know.

Spark. You must know, my booby of a brother-in-law hath brought up this ward of his (a good fortune let me tell you), as he coops up and fattens his chickens for his own eating; he is plaguy jealous of her, and was very sorry that he could not marry her in the country, without coming up to town; which he could not do on account of some writings or other; so what does my gentleman? he persuades the poor silly girl, by breaking a sixpence, or some nonsense or another, that they are to all intents married in heaven; but that the laws require the signing of articles, and the church service to complete their union: so he has made her call him husband, and bud, which she constantly does; and he calls her wife, and gives out she is married, that she may not look after younger fellows, nor younger fellows after her, egad; ha, ha, ha! and all won't do.

Bel. Thank you, sir. What heavenly news, uncle!

[*Aside.*]

Har. What an idiot you are, nephew! [*Apart*] And so then you make but one trouble of it, and are both to be tack'd together the same day?

Spark. No, no, he can't be married this week; he damns the lawyers for keeping him in town;—besides, I am out of favour; and he is continually snarling at me, and abusing me for not being jealous. [*Knocking at the Door*] There he is—I must not be seen with you, for he'll suspect something; I'll go with your nephew to his house, and we'll wait for you, and make a visit to my wife that is to be, and perhaps we shall show young modesty here a sight of Peggy too.

Re-enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's the strange odd sort of a gentleman come again, and I have shown him into the fore-parlour.

Spark. That must be Moody! Well said, Will; an odd sort of a strange gentlemen indeed; we'll step into the next room till he comes into this, and then you may have him all to yourself—much good may do you. [*Going*] Remember that he is married, or he'll suspect me of betraying him. [*Exeunt Sparkish and Belville.*]

Har. Show him up, Will. [*Exit Servant*] Now must I prepare myself to see a very strange, though a very natural metamorphosis; a once high-spirited, handsome, well-dress'd, raking prodigal of the town, sunk into a surly, suspicious, economical, country sloven.

Enter MOODY.

Moody. Mr. Harcourt, your humble servant: have you forgot me?

Har. What, my old friend, Jack Moody! by thy long absence from the town, the grumness of thy countenance, and the slovenliness of thy habit, I should give thee joy—you are certainly married.

Moody. My long stay in the country will excuse my dress, and I have a suit at law that brings me up to town, and puts me out of humour; besides, I must give Sparkish ten thousand pounds to-morrow to take my sister off my hands.

Har. Your sister is very much obliged to you: being so much older than you, you have taken upon you the authority of a father, and have engaged her to a coxcomb.

Moody. I have, and to oblige her: nothing but coxcombs or debauchees are the favourites now-a-days; and a coxcomb is rather the more innocent animal of the two.

Har. She has sense and taste, and can't like him; so you must answer for the consequences.

Moody. When she is out of my hands, her husband must look to consequences. He's a fashionable fool, and will cut his horns kindly.

Har. And what is to secure your worship from consequences?—I did not expect marriage from such a rake—one that knew the town so well; fie, fie, Jack.

Moody. I'll tell you my security—I have married no London wife.

Har. That's all one; that grave circumspection in marrying a country wife, is like refusing a deceitful, pamper'd, Smithfield jade, to go and be cheated by a friend in the country.

Moody. I wish the devil had both him and his simile.

[*Aside.*

Har. Well, never grumble about it, what's done can't be undone. Is your wife handsome and young?

Moody. She has little beauty but her youth, nothing to brag of but her health, and no attraction but her modesty—wholesome, homely, and housewifely—that's all.

Har. You talk as like a grazier as you look, Jack. Why did you not bring her to town before, to be taught something?

Moody. Which something I might repent as long as I live.

Har. But pr'ythee, why wouldst thou marry her, if she be ugly, ill-bred, and silly? She must be rich then?

Moody. As rich as if she had the wealth of the mogul. She'll not ruin her husband, like a London baggage, with a million of vices she never heard of: then, because she's ugly, she's the likelier to be my own; and being ill-bred, she'll hate conversation; and since silly and

innocent, will not know the difference between me and you; that is, between a man of thirty, and one of forty.

Har. Fifty to my knowledge. [*Moody turns off, and grumbles*].—But see how you and I differ, Jack—wit to me is more necessary than beauty; I think no young woman ugly that has it, and no handsome woman agreeable without it.

Moody. 'Tis my maxim—He's a fool that marries; but he's a greater that does not marry a fool.—I know the town, Mr. Harcourt; and my wife shall be virtuous in spite of you or your nephew.

Har. My nephew!—poor sheepish lad, he runs away from every woman he sees; he saw your sister Alithea at the opera, and was much smitten with her; he always toasts her, and hates the very name of Sparkish. I'll bring him to your house, and you shall see what a formidable Tarquin he is.

Moody. I have no curiosity, so give yourself no trouble.—You have heard of a wolf in sheep's clothing; and I have seen your innocent nephew kissing his hands at my windows.

Har. At your sister, I suppose; not at her unless he was tipsy. How can you, Jack, be so outrageously suspicious? Sparkish has promised to introduce him to his mistress.

Moody. Sparkish is a fool, and may be what I'll take care not to be.—I confess my visit to you, Mr. Harcourt, was partly for old acquaintance sake, but chiefly to desire your nephew to confine his gallantries to the tavern, and not send 'em in looks, signs, or tokens, on the other side of the way. I keep no brothel; so pray tell your nephew. [*Going.*]

Har. Nay, pr'ythee, Jack, leave me in better humour. Well, I'll tell him; ha, ha, ha! Poor Dick, how he'll stare. This will give him a reputation, and the girls won't laugh at him any longer. Shall we dine together at the tavern, and send for my nephew to chide him for his gallantry? Ha, ha, ha! we shall have fine sport.

Moody. I am not to be laugh'd out of my senses, Mr. Harcourt.—I was once a modest young gentle-

man myself; and I never have been half so mischievous before or since, as I was in that state of innocence.— And so, old friend, make no ceremony with me; I have much business, and you have much pleasure, and therefore, as I hate forms, I will excuse your returning my visit, or sending your nephew to satisfy me of his modesty— ad so your servant. [Exit.

Har. Ha, ha, ha! poor Jack! what a life of suspicion does he lead! I pity the poor fellow, though he ought and will suffer for his folly—Folly!—'tis treason, murder, sacrilege! When persons of a certain age will indulge their false, ungenerous appetites, at the expense of a young creature's happiness, dame Nature will revenge herself upon them, for thwarting her most heavenly will and pleasure. [Exit.

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. *A Chamber in MOODY'S House.*

Enter PEGGY and ALITHEA.

Peggy. Pray, sister, where are the best fields and woods to walk in in London?

Ali. A pretty question! Why, sister, Vauxhall, Kensington Gardens, and St. James's Park, are the most frequented.

Peggy. Pray, sister, tell me why my bud looks so grum here in town, and keeps me up so close, and won't let me go a walking, nor let me wear my best gown yesterday?

Ali. O, he's jealous, sister?

Peggy. Jealous! what's that?

Ali. He's afraid you should love another man.

Peggy. How should he be afraid of my loving another man, when he will not let me see any but himself?

Ali. Did he not carry you yesterday to a play?

Peggy. Ay; but we sat amongst ugly people: he would not let me come near the gentry, who sat under us, so that I could see 'em. He told me none but naughty

women sat there; but I would have ventured for all that.

Ali. But how did you like the play?

Peggy. Indeed I was weary of the play; but I liked hugely the actors; they are the goodliest, properest men, sister.

Ali. O, but you must not like the actors, sister.

Peggy. Ay, how should I help it, sister? Pray, sister, when my guardian comes in, will you ask leave for me to go a walking?

Ali. A walking! ha, ha, ha! Lord, a country gentlewoman's pleasure is the drudgery of a foot-post; and she requires as much airing as her husband's horses. [*Aside*] But here comes my brother; I'll ask him, though I'm sure he'll not grant it.

Enter MOODY.

Peggy. O my dear, dear bud, welcome home; why dost thou look so fropish? who has nanger'd thee?

Moody. You're a fool. [*Peggy goes aside, and cries.*

Ali. Faith, and so she is, for crying for no fault; poor tender creature!

Moody. What, you would have her as impudent as yourself; as arrant a girlflirt, a gadder, a magpie; and, to say all, a mere notorious town woman!

Ali. Brother, you are my only censurer; and the honour of your family will sooner suffer in your wife that is to be, than in me, though I take the innocent liberty of the town!

Moody. Hark you, mistress! do not talk so before my wife: the innocent liberty of the town!

Ali. Pray, what ill people frequent my lodgings? I keep no company with any woman of scandalous reputation.

Moody. No, you keep the men of scandalous reputation company.

Ali. Would you not have me civil? answer 'em at public places? walk with 'em when they join me in the Park, Kensington Gardens, or Vauxhall?

Moody. Hold, hold; do not teach my wife where the

men are to be found; I believe she's the worse for your town documents already. I bid you keep her in ignorance, as I do.

Peggy. Indeed, be not angry with her, bud, she will tell me nothing of the town, though I ask her a thousand times a day.

Moody. Then you are very inquisitive to know, I find.

Peggy. Not I indeed, dear; I hate London: our place-house in the country is worth a thousand of't; would I were there again!

Moody. So you shall, I warrant. But were you not talking of plays and players when I came in? You are her encourager in such discourses. [*To Alithea.*

Peggy. No, indeed, dear; she chid me just now for liking the player-men.

Moody. Nay, if she is so innocent as to own to me her liking them, there is no harm in't. [*Aside*] Come, my poor rogue, but thou likest none better than me?

Peggy. Yes, indeed, but I do; the player-men are finer folks.

Moody. But you love none better than me?

Peggy. You are my own dear bud, and I know you; I hate strangers.

Moody. Ay, my dear, you must love me only; and not be like the naughty town women, who only hate their husbands, and love every man else; love plays, visits, fine coaches, fine clothes, fiddles, balls, treats, and so lead a wicked town life.

Peggy. Nay, if to enjoy all these things be a town life, London is not so bad a place, dear.

Moody. How! if you love me you must hate London.

Peggy. But, bud, do the town women love the player-men too?

Moody. Ay, I warrant you.

Peggy. Ay, I warrant you.

Moody. Why, you do not, I hope?

Peggy. No, no, bud; but why have we no player-men in the country?

Moody. Ha! Mrs. Minx, ask me no more to go to a play.

Peggy. Nay, why, love? I did not care for going; but when you forbid me, you make me as it were desire it. Pray let me go to a play, dear?

Moody. Hold your peace; I won't.

Peggy. Why, love?

Moody. Why, I'll tell you.

Peggy. Pray why, dear?

Moody. First, you like the actors; and the gallants may like you.

Peggy. What, a homely country girl? No, bud, nobody will like me.

Moody. I tell you yes, they may.

Peggy. No, no, you jest—I won't believe you; I will go.

Moody. I tell you then, that one of the most raking fellows in town, who saw you there, told me he was in love with you.

Peggy. Indeed! who, who, pray, who wast?

Moody. I've gone too far, and slipt before I was aware. How overjoy'd she is! [*Aside.*]

Peggy. Was it any Hampshire gallant? any of our neighbours?—'Promise you I am beholden to him.

Moody. I promise you, you lie; for he would but ruin you, as he has done hundreds.

Peggy. Ay, but if he loves me, why should he ruin me? answer me to that. Methinks he should not; I would do him no harm.

Ali. Ha, ha, ha!

Moody. 'Tis very well; but I'll keep him from doing you any harm, or me either. But here comes company; get you in, get you in.

Peggy. But pray, husband, is he a pretty gentleman that loves me?

Moody. In, baggage, in. [*Thrusts her in, and shuts the Door*] What, all the libertines of the town brought to my lodging by this easy coxcomb! 'Sdeath, I'll not suffer it.

Enter SPARKISH, HARCOURT, and BELVILLE.

Spark. Here, Belville, do you approve my choice? Dear little rogue, I told you I'd bring you acquainted with all my friends, the wits. [*To Alithea.*

Moody. Ay, they shall know her as well as you yourself will, I warrant you. [*Aside.*

Spark. This is one of those, my pretty rogue, that are to dance at your wedding to-morrow; and one you must make welcome; for he's modest. [*Belville salutes Alithea*] Harcourt makes himself welcome, and has not the same foible, though of the same family.

Har. You are too obliging, Sparkish.

Moody. And so he is indeed. The fop's horns will as naturally sprout upon his brows as mushrooms upon dunghills. [*Aside.*

Har. This, Mr. Moody, is my nephew you mentioned to me. I would bring him with me; for a sight of him will be sufficient, without poppy or mandagora, to restore you to your rest.

Bel. I am sorry, sir, that any mistake or imprudence of mine should have given you any uneasiness; it was not so intended, I assure you, sir.

Moody. It may be so, sir, but not the less criminal for that.—My wife, sir, must not be smirk'd and nodded at from tavern windows. I am a good shot, young gentleman, and don't suffer magpies to come near my cherries.

Bel. Was it your wife, sir?

Moody. What's that to you, sir? Suppose it were my grandmother?

Bel. I would not dare to offend her.—Permit me to say a word in private to you. [*Exeunt Moody and Bel.*

Spark. Now old surly is gone, tell me, Harcourt, if thou likest her as well as ever.—My dear, don't look down; I should hate to have a wife of mine out of countenance at any thing.

Ali. For shame, Mr. Sparkish!

Spark. Tell me, I say, Harcourt, how dost like her? Thou hast stared upon her enough to resolve me.

Har. So infinitely well that I could wish I had a mistress too, that might differ from her in nothing but her love and engagement to you.

Ali. Sir, Mr. Sparkish has often told me that his acquaintance were all wits and railers; and now I find it.

Spark. No, by the universe, madam, he does not rally now; you may believe him. I do assure you he is the honestest, worthiest, true-hearted gentleman; a man of such perfect honour, he would say nothing to a lady he does not mean.

Har. Sir, you are so beyond expectation obliging, that—

Spark. Nay, 'egad, I am sure you do admire her extremely; I see it in your eyes.—He does admire you, madam; he has told me so a thousand and a thousand times; have you not, Harcourt? You do admire her, by the world, you do—don't you?

Har. Yes, above the world, or the most glorious part of it, her whole sex; and till now I never thought I should have envied you or any man about to marry; but you have the best excuse to marry I ever knew.

Ali. Nay, now, sir, I am satisfied you are of the society of the wits and railers, since you cannot spare your friend, even when he is most civil to you; but the surest sign is, you are an enemy to marriage, the common but of every railer.

Har. Truly, madam, I was never any enemy to marriage till now, because marriage was never an enemy to me before.

Ali. But why, sir, is marriage an enemy to you now? Because it robs you of your friend here? for you look upon a friend married as one gone into a monastery, that is dead to the world.

Har. 'Tis indeed because you marry him: I see, madam, you can guess my meaning.—I do confess heartily and openly, I wish it were in my power to break the match; by heavens, I would.

Spark. Poor Frank!

Ali. Would you be so unkind to me?

Har. No, no, 'tis not because I would be unkind to you.

Spark. Poor Frank! No, 'egad, 'tis only his kindness to me.

Ali. Great kindness to you indeed!—Insensible! Let a man make love to his mistress to his face. [*Aside.*]

Spark. Come, dear Frank, for all my wife there, that shall be, thou shalt enjoy me sometimes, dear rogue.—By my honour, we men of wit condole for our deceased brother in marriage, as much as for one dead in earnest. I think that was prettily said of me, ha, Harcourt?—Pr'ythee, Frank, dost think my wife, that shall be, there, a fine person?

Har. I could gaze upon her till I became as blind as you are.

Spark. How as I am? how?

Har. Because you are a lover; and true lovers are blind.

Spark. True, true; but by the world she has wit too, as well as beauty. Go, go with her into a corner, and try if she has wit; talk to her any thing, she's bashful before me—take her into a corner.

[*Harcourt courts Alithea aside.*]

Re-enter MOODY.

Moody. How, sir! If you are not concerned for the honour of a wife, I am for that of a sister.—Be a pander to your own wife, bring men to her, let 'em make love before your face, thrust 'em into a corner together, then leave 'em in private! Is this your town wit and conduct?

Spark. Ha, ha, ha! a silly, wise rogue would make one laugh more than a stark fool, ha, ha, ha! I shall burst. Nay, you shall not disturb 'em; I'll vex thee, by the world. What have you done with Belville?

[*Struggles with Moody to keep him from Harcourt and Alithea.*]

Moody. Shown him the way out of my house, as you should to that gentleman.

Spark. Nay, but pr'ythee let me reason with thee.

[*Talks apart with Moody.*]

Ali. The writings are drawn, sir, settlements made: 'tis too late, sir, and past all revocation.

Har. Then so is my death.

Ali. I would not be unjust to him.

Har. Then why to me so?

Ali. I have no obligations to you.

Har. My love.

Ali. I had this before.

Har. You never had it; he wants, you see, jealousy, the only infallible sign of it.

Ali. Love proceeds from esteem: he cannot distrust my virtue; besides, he loves me, or he would not marry me.

Har. Marrying you is no more a sign of his love, than bribing your woman, that he may marry you, is a sign of his generosity. But if you take marriage for a sign of love, take it from me immediately.

Ali. No, now you have put a scruple in my head.—But in short, sir, to end our dispute, I must marry him; my reputation would suffer in the world else.

Har. No; if you do marry him, with your pardon, madam, your reputation must suffer in the world.

Ali. Nay, now you are rude, sir.—Mr. Sparkish, pray come hither, your friend here is very troublesome, and very loving.

Har. Hold, hold. [*Aside to Alithea.*

Moody. D'ye hear that, senseless puppy?

Spark. Why, d'ye think I'll seem jealous, like a country bumkin?

Moody. No, rather be dishonour'd, like a credulous driveller.

Har. Madam, you would not have been so little generous as to have told him?

Ali. Yes, since you could be so little generous as to wrong him.

Har. Wrong him! no man can do it; he's beneath an injury; a bubble, a coward, a senseless idiot; a wretch so contemptible to all the world but you, that—

Ali. Hold, do not rail at him; for since he is like to be my husband, I am resolved to like him: nay, I think I am obliged to tell him you are not his friend.—Mr. Sparkish! Mr. Sparkish!

Spark. What, what?—Now, dear rogue, has she not wit?

Har. Not so much as I thought, and hoped she had.

Ali. Mr. Sparkish, do you bring people to rail at you? [Surlily.]

Har. Madam!

Spark. How? no; but if he does rail at me, 'tis but in jest, I warrant: what we wits do for one another, and never take any notice of it.

Ali. He spoke so scurrilously of you, I had no patience to hear him.

Moody. And he was in the right on't.

Ali. Besides, he has been making love to me.

Moody. And I told the fool so.

Har. True, damn'd, tell-tale woman. [Aside.]

Spark. Pshaw! to show his parts; we wits rail and make love often, but to show our parts: as we have no affections, so we have no malice; we—

Moody. Did you ever hear such an ass?

Ali. He said you were a wretch, below an injury.

Spark. Pshaw!

Ali. A common bubble.

Spark. Pshaw!

Ali. A coward.

Spark. Pshaw, pshaw!

Ali. A senseless, drivelling idiot.

Moody. True, true, true; all true.

Spark. How! did he disparage my parts? Nay then, my honour's concerned. I can't put up that. Brother, help me to kill him. [Offers to draw.]

Ali. Hold! hold!

Moody. If Harcourt would but kill Sparkish, and run away with my sister, I should be rid of three plagues at once. [Aside.]

Ali. Indeed, to tell the truth, the gentleman said, after all, that what he spoke was but out of friendship to you.

Spark. How! say I am a fool, that is no wit, out of friendship to me?

Ali. Yes, to try whether I was concern'd enough for

you; and made love to me only to be satisfied of my virtue, for your sake.

Har. Kind, however!

[*Aside.*

Spark. Nay, if it were so, my dear rogue, I ask thee pardon; but why would not you tell me so, 'faith?

Har. Because I did not think on't, 'faith.

Spark. Come, Belville is gone away: Harcourt, let's be gone to the new play; come, madam.

Ali. I will not go, if you intend to leave me alone in the box, and run all about the house, as you used to do.

Spark. Pshaw! I'll leave Harcourt with you in the box, to entertain you, and that's as good. If I sat in the box, I should be thought no critic. I must run about, my dear, and abuse the author.—Come, away. Harcourt, lead her down. B'ye, brother.

[*Exeunt Harcourt, Sparkish, and Alithea.*

Moody. B'ye, driveller. Well, go thy ways, for the flower of the true town fops; such as spend their estates before they come to 'em, and are cucksolds before they're married. But let me go look to my freehold.

Enter a Countryman.

Country. Master, your worship's servant. Here is the lawyer, counsellor gentleman, with a green bag full of papers, come again, and would be glad to speak to you.

Moody. Now here's some other damn'd impediment, which the law has thrown in our way. I shall never marry the girl, nor get clear of the smoke and wickedness of this cursed town. [*Aside*] Where is he?

Country. He's below in a coach, with three other lawyers, counsellor gentlemen. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another Chamber.*

Enter PEGGY and LUCY.

Lucy. What ails you, miss Peggy? you are grown quite melancholy.

Peggy. Would it not make any one melancholy to

see your mistress Alithea go every day flitting about abroad to plays and assemblies, and I know not what, whilst I must stay at home, like a poor, lonely, sullen bird in a cage?

Lucy. Dear miss Peggy, I thought you chose to be confined: I imagined that you had been bred so young to the cage, that you had no pleasure in flying about, and hopping in the open air, as other young ladies, who go a little wild about this town.

Peggy. Nay, I confess I was quiet enough, till somebody told me what pure lives the London ladies lead, with their dancing meetings, and junketings, and dress'd every day in their best gowns; and I warrant you play at nine-pins every day in the week, so they do.

Lucy. To be sure, miss, you will lead a better life when join'd in holy wedlock with your sweet-temper'd guardian, the cheerful Mr. Moody.

Peggy. I can't lead a worse, that's one good thing; but I must make the best of a bad market, for I can't marry nobody else.

Lucy. How so, miss? that's very strange.

Peggy. Why we have a contraction to one another; so we are as good as married, you know.

Lucy. I know it! Heaven forbid, miss.

Peggy. Heigho!

Lucy. Don't sigh, miss Peggy; if that young gentleman, who was here just now, would take pity on me, I'd throw such a contract as yours behind the fire.

Peggy. Lord bless us, how you talk!

Lucy. Young Mr. Belville would make you talk otherwise, if you knew him.

Peggy. Mr. Belville!—Where is he?—When did you see him?—You have undone me, Lucy; where was he? did he say any thing?

Lucy. Say any thing!—very little indeed; he's quite distracted, poor young creature! He was talking with your guardian just now.

Peggy. The deuce he was!—but where was it, and when was it?

Lucy. In this house, five minutes ago, when your guardian turn'd you into your chamber, for fear of your being seen.

Peggy. I knew something was the matter, I was in such a fluster. But what did he say to my bud?

Lucy. What do you call him bud for? Bud means husband, and he is not your husband yet, and I hope never will be; and if he was my husband I'd hnd him, a surly, unreasonable beast.

Peggy. I'd call him any names, to keep him in good humour; if he'd let me marry any body else (which I can't do), I'd call him husband as long as he lived. But what said Mr. Belville to him?

Lucy. I don't know what he said to him, but I'll tell you what he said to me, with a sigh, and his hand upon his breast, as he went out of the door—"If you ever were in love, young gentlewoman (meaning me), and can pity a most faithful lover, tell the dear object of my affections——"

Peggy. Meaning me, Lucy?

Lucy. Yes, you, to be sure. "Tell the dear object of my affections, I live but upon the hopes that she is not married; and when those hopes leave me, she knows the rest;" then he cast up his eyes thus—gnash'd his teeth—struck his forehead—would have spoke again, but could not—fetch'd a deep sigh, and vanish'd.

Peggy. That is really very fine; I am sure it makes my heart sink within me, and brings tears into my eyes! O, he's a charming sweet—But hush, hush, I hear my husband!

Lucy. Don't call him husband. Go into the Park this evening, if you can.

Peggy. Mum, mum.

Enter MOODY.

Moody. Come, what's here to do; you are putting the town pleasures in her head, and setting her a longing.

Lucy. Yes, after nine-pins; you suffer none to give her those longings but yourself.

Moody. Come, Mrs. Flippant, good precepts are lost

when bad examples are still before us: the liberty your mistress takes abroad makes her hanker after it, and out of humour at home. Poor wretch! she desired not to come to London; I would bring her.

Lucy. O yes, you sargeit her with pleasures.

Moody. She has been this fortnight in town, and never desired, till this afternoon, to go abroad.

Lucy. Was she not at the play yesterday?

Moody. Yes, but she never ask'd me: I was myself the cause of her going.

Lucy. Then if she ask you again, you are the cause of her asking, and not my mistress.

Moody. Well, next week I shall be rid of you all, rid of this town, and my dreadful apprehensions. Come, be not melancholy, for thou shalt go into the country very soon, dearest.

Peggy. Pish! what d'ye tell me of the country for?

Moody. How's this? what, flout at the country?

Peggy. Let me alone, I am not well.

Moody. O, if that be all—what ails my dearest?

Peggy. Truly, I don't know; but I have not been well since you told me there was a gallant at the play in love with me.

Moody. Ha!

Lucy. That's my mistress too.

Moody. Nay, if you are not well, but are so concern'd because a raking fellow chanced to lie, and say he liked you, you'll make me sick too.

Peggy. Of what sickness?

Moody. O, of that which is worse than the plague, jealousy.

Peggy. Pish, you jeer: I'm sure there's no such disease in your receipt-book at home.

Moody. No, you never met with it, poor innocent.

Peggy. Well, but pray, bud, let's go to a play to-night.

Moody. No, no; no more plays. But why are you so eager to see a play?

Peggy. Faith, dear, not that I care one pin for their talk there; but I like to look upon the player-men,

and would see, if I could, the gallant you say loves me; that's all, dear bud.

Moody. Is that all, dear bud?

Lucy. This proceeds from my mistress's example.

Peggy. Let's go abroad, however, dear bud, if we don't go to the play.

Moody. Come, have a little patience, and thou shalt go into the country next week.

Peggy. Therefore I would first see some sights to tell my neighbours of: nay, I will go abroad, that's once.

Moody. What, you have put this into her head?

[*To Lucy.*

Lucy. Heaven defend me, what suspicions! somebody has put more things into your head than you ought to have.

Moody. Your tongue runs too glibly, madam; and you have lived too long with a London lady, to be a proper companion for innocence. I am not over-fond of your mistress.

Lucy. There's no love lost between us.

Moody. You admitted those gentlemen into the house, when I said I would not be at home; and there was the young fellow too who behaved so indecent to my wife at the tavern window.

Lucy. Because you would not let him see your handsome wife out of your lodgings.

Peggy. Why, O Lord, did the gentleman come hither to see me indeed?

Moody. No, no. You are not the cause of that damn'd question too?

[*To Lucy.*

Peggy. Come, pray, bud, let's go abroad before 'tis late; for I will go, that's flat and plain—only into the Park.

Moody. So! the obstinacy already of the town wife; and I must, while she's here, humour her like one. [*Aside*]
—How shall we do, that she may not be seen or known?

Lucy. Muffle her up with a bonnet and cloak, and I'll go with her to avoid suspicion.

Moody. No, no, I am obliged to you for your kindness, but she shan't stir without me.

Lucy. What will you do then?

Peggy. What, shall we go? I am sick with staying at home: if I don't walk in the Park, I'll do nothing that I am bid for a week—I won't be mop'd.

Lucy. O she has a charming spirit! I could stand your friend now, and would, if you had ever a civil word to give me. [To *Moody*.

Moody. I'll give thee a better thing, I'll give thee a guinea for thy good advice, if I like it; and I can have the best of the college for the same money.

Lucy. I despise a bribe: when I am your friend, it shall be without fee or reward.

Peggy. Don't be long then, for I will go out.

Lucy. The tailor brought home last night the clothes you intend for a present to your godson in the country.

Peggy. You must not tell that, *Lucy*.

Lucy. But I will, madam. When you were with your lawyers last night, miss *Peggy*, to divert me and herself, put 'em on, and they fitted her to a hair.

Moody. Thank you, thank you, *Lucy*, 'tis the luckiest thought! Go this moment, *Peggy*, into your chamber, and put 'em on again—and you shall walk with me into the Park, as my godson. Well thought of, *Lucy*; I shall love you for ever for this.

Peggy. And so shall I too, *Lucy*: I'll put 'em on directly. [Going] Suppose, bud, I must keep on my petticoats, for fear of showing my legs?

Moody. No, no, you fool, never mind your legs.

[*Exeunt*.

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. *The Park.*

Enter BELVILLE and HARCOURT.

Bel. And the moment Moody left me, I took an opportunity of conveying some tender sentiments through Lucy to miss Peggy; and here I am, in expectation of seeing my country goddess.

Har. And so to blind Moody, and take him off the scent of your passion for this girl, and at the same time to give me an opportunity with Sparkish's mistress (and of which I have made the most), you hinted to him with a grave melancholy face that you were dying for his sister—Gad-a-mercy, nephew! I will back thy modesty against any other in the three kingdoms: it will do, Dick.

Bel. What could I do, uncle?—It was my last stake, and I play'd for a great deal.

Har. You mistake me, Dick; I don't say you could do better, I only can't account for your modesty's doing so much: you have done such wonders, that I, who am rather bold than sheepish, have not yet ceased

wondering at you. But do you think that you imposed upon him?

Bel. Faith, I can't say; he said very little, grumbled much, shook his head, and showed me the door.—But what success have you had with Alithea?

Har. Just enough to have a glimmering of hope, without having light enough to see an inch before my nose.—This day will produce something; Alithea is a woman of great honour, and will sacrifice her happiness to it, unless Sparkish's absurdity stands my friend, and does every thing that the fates ought to do for me.

Bel. Yonder comes the prince of coxcombs, and if your mistress and mine should, by chance, be tripping this way, this fellow will spoil sport; let us avoid him—you can't cheat him before his face.

Har. But I can though, thanks to my wit, and his want of it.

Bel. But you cannot come near his mistress but in his company.

Har. Still the better for me, nephew, for fools are most easily cheated, when they themselves are accessories; and he is to be bubbled of his mistress, or of his money (the common mistress), by keeping him company.

Enter SPARKISH.

Spark. Who's that that is to be bubbled? faith, let me snack; I han't met with a bubble since Christmas. 'Gad, I think bubbles are like their brother woodcocks, go out with the cold weather.

Har. He did not hear all, I hope. [*Apart to Bel.*

Spark Come, you bubbling rogues, you, where do we sup? O Harcourt, my mistress tells me you have made love, fierce love to her last night, all the play long; ha, ha, ha! but I—

Har. I make love to her?

Spark. Nay, I forgive thee, and I know her; but I am sure I know myself.

Bel. Do you, sir? Then you are the wisest man in the world, and I honour you as such. [*Bows.*

Spark. O, your servant, sir; you are at your raillery, are you? You can't oblige me more; I'm your man: he'll meet with his match. Ha! Harcourt! did not you hear me laugh prodigiously at the play last night?

Har. Yes, and was very much disturb'd at it. You put the actors and audience into confusion, and all your friends out of countenance.

Spark. So much the better; I love confusion, and to see folks out of countenance; I was in tip-top spirits, faith, and said a thousand good things.

Bel. But I thought you had gone to plays to laugh at the poet's good things, and not at your own.

Spark. Your servant, sir: no, I thank you. 'Gad, I go to a play as to a country treat: I carry my own wine to one, and my own wit to t'other, or else I'm sure I should not be merry at either: and the reason why we are so often louder than the players is, because we hate authors damnably.

Bel. But why should you hate the poor rogues? you have too much wit, and despise writing, I'm sure.

Spark. O yes, I despise writing; but women, women, that make men do all foolish things, make 'em write songs too. Every body does it; 'tis e'en as common with lovers, as playing with faus: and you can no more help rhyming to your Phillis, than drinking to your Phillis.

Har. But the poets damn'd your songs, did they?

Spark. Damn the poets: they turn'd them into burlesque as they call it: that burlesque is a hocus-pocus trick they have got, which, by the virtue of hiccus-doccus, topsy-turvy, they make a clever witty thing absolute nonsense! Do you know, Harcourt, that they ridiculed my last song? "Twang, twang," the best I ever wrote.

Har. That may be, and be very easily ridiculed for all that.

Bel. Favour me with it, sir; I never heard it.

Spark. What, and have all the Park about us?

Har. Which you'll not dislike; and so, pr'ythee, begin.

Spark. I never am ask'd twice, and so have at you.

SONG.

Tell me not of the roses and lilies
 Which tinge the fair cheek of your Phillis;
 Tell me not of the dimples and eyes,
 For which silly Corydon dies.
 Let all whining lovers go hang;
 My heart would you hit,
 Tip your arrow with wit,
 And it comes to my heart with a twang, twang,
 And it comes to my heart with a twang.

[*At the end of the Song Harcourt and Belville steal away from Sparkish, and leave him singing; he sinks his Voice by degrees at the surprise of their being gone.*]

Re-enter HARCOURT and BELVILLE.

What the deuce did you go away for?

Har. Your mistress is coming.

Spark. The devil she is! O hide, hide me from her.

[*Hides behind Harcourt.*]

Har. She sees you.

Spark. But I will not see her; for I'm engag'd, and at this instant.

[*Looking at his Watch.*]

Har. Pray first take me, and reconcile me to her.

Spark. Another time; faith, it is the lady, and one cannot make excpuses to a woman.

Bel. You have need of 'em, I believe.

Spark. Pshaw, pr'ythee hide me.

Enter MOODY, PEGGY in Boy's Clothes, and ALITHEA.

Har. Your servant, Mr. Moody.

Moody. Come along.

[*To Peggy.*]

Peggy. Lau! what a sweet delightful place this is!

Moody. Come along, I say; don't stare about you so; you'll betray yourself.

[*Exit Moody, pulling Peggy, Alithea following.*]

Har. He does not know us.

Bel. Or he won't know us.

Spark. So much the better.

[*Exit Bel. after them.*]

Har. Who is that pretty youth with him, Sparkish?

Spark. Some relation of Peggy's, I suppose; for he is something like her in face and gawkiness.

Re-enter BELVILLE.

Bel. By all my hopes, uncle, Peggy in boy's clothes. I am all over agitation.

[*Apart to Harcourt.*

Har. Be quiet, or you'll spoil all. They return.— Alithea has seen you, Sparkish, and will be angry if you don't go to her: besides, I would fain be reconciled to her, which none but you can do, my dear friend.

Spark. Well, that's a better reason, dear friend: I would not go near her now for her's or my own sake; but I can deny you nothing; for though I have known thee a great while, never go, if I do not love thee as well as a new acquaintance.

Har. I am obliged to you, indeed, my dear friend: I would be well with her, only to be well with thee still; for these ties to wives usually dissolve all ties to friends.

Spark. But they shan't though. Come along.

[*They retire.*

Re-enter MOODY, PEGGY, and ALITHEA.

Moody. Sister, if you will not go, we must leave you. [*To Alithea*] The fool, her gallant, and she will muster up all the young sauterers of this place. What a swarm of cuokolds and cuckold-makers are here! I begin to be uneasy. [*Aside*] Come, let's be gone, Peggy.

Peggy. Don't you believe that; I han't half my belly-full of sights yet.

Moody. Then walk this way.

Peggy. Lord, what a power of fine folks are here. And Mr. Belville, as I hope to be married. [*Aside.*

Moody. Come along; what are you muttering at?

Peggy. There's the young gentleman there, you were so angry about, that's in love with me.

Moody. No, no; he's a daugler after your sister, or pretends to be; but they are all bad alike. Come along, I say.

[*Moody pulls Peggy away. Exeunt Peggy and Moody, Belville following. Sparkish, Harcourt, and Alithea come forward.*

Spark. Come, dear madam, for my sake you shall be reconciled to him.

Ali. For your sake I hate him.

Har. That's something too cruel, madam, to hate me for his sake.

Spark. Ay, indeed, madam, too cruel to me, to hate my friend for my sake.

Ali. I hate him because he is your enemy; and you ought to hate him too, for making love to me, if you love me.

Spark. That's a good one! I hate a man for loving you! If he did love you, 'tis but what he can't help; and 'tis your fault, not his, if he admires you.

Ali. Is it for your honour, or mine, to suffer a man to make love to me, who am to marry you to-morrow?

Har. But why, dearest madam, will you be more concerned for his honour than he is himself? Let his honour alone, for my sake and his. He has no honour.

Spark. How's that?

Har. But what my dear friend can guard himself?

Spark. O ho—that's right again.

Ali. You astonish me, sir, with want of jealousy.

Spark. And you make me giddy, madam, with your jealousy and fears, and virtue and honour. 'Gad, I see virtue makes a woman as troublesome as a little reading or learning.

Har. Come, madam, you see you strive in vain to make him jealous of me: my dear friend is the kindest creature in the world to me.

Spark. Poor fellow!

Har. But his kindness only is not enough for me, without your favour, your good opinion, dear madam: 'tis that must perfect my happiness. Good gentleman, he believes all I say: 'would you would do so!—Jealous of me! I would not wrong him nor you for the world.

Spark. Look you there: hear him, hear him, and not walk away so; come back again.

[Alithea walks carelessly to and fro.]

Har. I love you, madam, so—

Spark. How's that? nay, now you begin to go too far indeed.

Har. So much, I confess, I say I love you, that I would not have you miserable, and cast yourself away upon so unworthy and inconsiderable a thing as what you see here.

[Claps his Hand on his Breast, and points to Sparkish.

Spark. No, faith, I believe thou wouldst not; now his meaning is plain; but I knew before thou wouldst not wrong me nor her.

Har. No, no, heavens forbid the glory of her sex should fall so low as into the embraces of such a contemptible wretch, the least of mankind—my dear friend here—I injure him.

Ali. Very well. [Embraces Sparkish.

Spark. No, no, dear friend, I knew it: madam, you see he will rather wrong himself than me in giving himself such names.

Ali. Do not you understand him yet?

Spark. Come, come, you shall stay till he has saluted you.

Re-enter MOODY and PEGGY. BELVILLE at a Distance.

Moody. What, invite your wife to kiss men? Monstrous! Are you not ashamed?

Spark. Are you not ashamed that I should have more confidence in the chastity of your family than you have? You must not teach me: I am a man of honour, sir, though I am frank and free; I am frank, sir—

Moody. Very frank, sir, to share your wife with your friends.—You seem to be angry, and yet won't go.

[To Alithea.

Ali. No impertinence shall drive me away.

Moody. Because you like it.—But you ought to blush at exposing your wife as you do. [To Sparkish.

Spark. What then? It may be I have a pleasure in't, as I have to show fine clothes at a playhouse the first day, and count money before poor rogues.

Moody. He that shows his wife or money, will be in danger of having them borrowed sometimes.

Spark. I love to be envied, and would not marry a wife that I alone could love. Loving alone is as dull as eating alone; and so good night, for I must to

Whitehall.—Madam, I hope you are now reconciled to my friend; and so I wish you a good night, madam, and sleep if you can; for to-morrow, you know, I must visit you early with a canonical gentleman. Good night, dear Harcourt—remember to send your brother.

[Exit.

Har. You may depend upon me.—Madam, I hope you will not refuse my visit to-morrow, if it should be earlier, with a canonical gentleman, than Mr. Sparkish?

Moody. This gentlewoman is yet under my care, therefore you must yet forbear your freedom with her.

Har. Must, sir?

Moody. Yes, sir, she is my sister.

Har. 'Tis well she is, sir; for I must be her servant, sir.—Madam—

Moody. Come away, sister; we had been gone if it had not been for you, and so avoided these lowd rake-hells, who seem to haunt us.

Har. I see a little time in the country makes a man turn wild and unsociable, and only fit to converse with his horses, dogs, and his herds.

Moody. I have business, sir, and must mind it: your business is pleasure; therefore you and I must go different ways.

Har. Well, you may go on; but this pretty young gentleman [*Takes hold of Peggy*] shall stay with us; for I suppose his business is the same with ours, pleasure.

Moody. 'Sdeath, he knows her, she carries it so silly; yet if he does not, I should be more silly to discover it first. [*Aside*] Come, come.

Har. Had you not rather stay with us? [*To Peggy*] Pr'ythee who is this pretty young fellow? [*To Moody*.

Moody. One to whom I am guardian.—I wish I could keep her out of your hands. [*Aside*.

Har. Who is he? I never saw any thing so pretty in all my life.

Moody. Pahaw, do not look upon him so much; he's a poor, bashful youth; you'll put him out of countenance. [*Offers to take her away*.

Har. Here, nephew, let me introduce this young gentleman to your acquaintance. You are very like, and

of the same age, and should know one another. Salute him, Dick, à la Française. [*Belville kisses her.*]

Moody. I hate French fashions. Men kiss one another. [*Endeavours to take hold of her.*]

Peggy. I am out of my wits. [*Aside*] What do you kiss me for? I am no woman.

Har. But you are ten times handsomer.

Peggy. Nay, now you jeer one; and pray don't jeer me.

Har. Kiss him again, Dick.

Moody. No, no, no;—come away, come away.

[*To Peggy.*]

Har. Why, what haste you are in! Why won't you let me talk with him?

Moody. Because you'll debauch him; he's yet young and innocent.—How she gazes upon him! The devil! [*Aside*] Come, pray let him go; I cannot stay fooling any longer; I tell you my wife stays supper for us.

Har. Does she? Come then, we'll all go sup with her.

Moody. No, no; now I think on't, having staid so long for us, I warrant she's gone to bed.—I wish she and I were well out of your hands. [*Aside.*]

Har. Well then, if she be gone to bed, I wish her and you a good night. But pray, young gentleman, present my humble service to her.

Peggy. Thank you heartily, sir. [*Bows.*]

Moody. 'Sdeath, she will discover herself yet in spite of me. [*Aside.*]

Bel. And mine too, sir.

Peggy. That I will indeed. [*Bows.*]

Har. Pray give her this kiss for me. [*Kisses Peggy.*]

Moody. O heavens! what do I suffer! [*Aside.*]

Bel. And this for me. [*Kisses Peggy.*]

Peggy. Thank you, sir.

[*Courtesies. Belville and Harcourt laugh, and exeunt.*]

Moody. O the idiot!—Now 'tis out. Ten thousand cankers gnaw away their lips! [*Aside*] Come, come, driveller. [*Moody, Peggy, and Alithea go out and return*] So they are gone at last.—Sister, stay with Peggy,

till I find my servant. Don't let her stir an inch; I'll be back directly. [Exit.

Re-enter HARCOURT and BELVILLE.

Har. What, not gone yet?—Nephew, show the young gentleman Rosamond's pond, while I speak another word to this lady.

[*Exeunt* Belville and Peggy; *Alitheia* and *Harcourt* struggle.]

Ali. My brother will go distracted.

Re-enter MOODY.

Moody. Where? how?—What's become of—gone!—whither?

Ali. In the next walk only, brother.

Moody. Only—only—where—where? [Exit.

Har. What's the matter with him? Why so much concerned?—But, dearest madam—

Re-enter MOODY.

Moody. Gone, gone—not to be found—quite gone—ten thousand plagues go with 'em!—Which way went they?

Ali. But in t'other walk, brother.

Moody. T'other walk! t'other devil. Where are they, I say?

Ali. You are too abusive, brother.

Moody. You know where they are, you infamous wretch, eternal shame of your family; which you do not dishonour enough yourself, you think, but you must help her to do it too, thou legion of—

Ali. Good brother—

Moody. Damn'd, damn'd sister! [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *Another Part of the PARK.*

Enter BELVILLE and PEGGY.

Bel. No disguise could conceal you from my heart: I pretended not to know you, that I might deceive the dragon that continually watches over you; but now he's asleep, let us fly from misery to happiness.

Peggy. Indeed, Mr. Belville, as well as I like you, I can't think of going away with you so; and as much as

I hate my guardian, I must take leave of him a little handsomely, or he will kill me, so he will.

Bel. But, dear miss Peggy, think of your situation; if we don't make the best use of this opportunity, we never may have another.

Peggy. Ay but, Mr. Belville, I am as good as married already; my guardian has contracted me, and there wants nothing but church ceremony to make us one: I call him husband, and he calls me wife already: he made me do so: and we had been married in church long ago, if the writings could have been finished.

Bel. That's his deceit, my sweet creature.—He pretends to have married you, for fear of your liking any body else.—You have a right to choose for yourself; and there is no law in heaven or earth that binds you before marriage to a man you cannot like.

Peggy. I'fack, no more I believe it does: sister Alithea's maid has told me as much. She's a very sensible girl.

Bel. You are in the very jaws of perdition, and nothing but running away can avoid it; the law will finish your chains to-morrow, and the church will rivet them the day after.—Let us secure our happiness by escape, and love and fortune will do the rest for us.

Peggy. These are fine sayings, to be sure, Mr. Belville; but how shall we get my fortune out of bud's clutches? We must be a little cunning; 'tis worth trying for. We can at any time run away without it.

Bel. I see by your fears, my dear Peggy, that you live in awe of this brutal guardian; and if he has you once more in his possession, both you and your fortune are secured to him for ever.

Peggy. Ay, but it shan't though; I thank him for that.

Bel. If you marry without his consent, he can but seize upon half your fortune.—The other half, and a younger brother's fortune, with a treasure of love, are your own.—Take it, my sweetest Peggy, and this moment, or we shall be divided for ever.

[*Kneels and presses her Hand.*

Peggy. I'fackins, but we won't.—Your fine talk has bewitched me.

Bel. 'Tis you have bewitch'd me, thou dear, enchanting, sweet simplicity!—Let us fly with the wings of love to my house there, and we shall be safe for ever.

Peggy. And so we will then.—There, squeeze my hand again.—Now run away with me; and if my guardy follows us, the devil take the hindmost, I say. [*Going.*]

Enter MOODY hastily, and meets them.

Moody. O! there's my stray'd sheep, and the wolf again in sheep's clothing!—Now I have recovered her, I shall come to my senses again. [*Aside*] Where have you been, you puppy?

Peggy. Been, bud?—We have been hunting all over the Park to find you.

Bel. From one end to t'other, sir. [*Confusedly.*]

Moody. But not where I was to be found, you young devil you!—Why did you start when you saw me?

Peggy. I'm always frighten'd when I see you; and if I did not love you so well, I should run away from you; so I should. [*Pouts.*]

Moody. But I'll take care you don't.

Peggy. This gentleman has a favour to beg of you, bud? [*Belville makes Signs of Dislike.*]

Moody. I am not in the humour to grant favours to young gentlemen, though you may. What have you been doing with this young lady—gentleman, I would say?

Peggy. Fie, bud, you have told all.

Bel. I have been as civil as I could to the young stranger; and if you'll permit me, I will take the trouble off your hands, and show the young spark Rosamond's pond; for he has not seen it yet.—Come, pretty youth, will you go with me? [*Goes to her.*]

Peggy. As my guardian pleases.

Moody. No, no, it does not please me. Whatever I think he ought to see, I shall show him myself. You may visit Rosamond's pond, if you will; and the bottom of it, if you will.—And so, sir, your servant.

[*Exit Moody, with Peggy under his Arm. Belville a contrary Way.*]

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. MOODY'S House.

Enter LUCY and ALITHEA.

Ali. Hold your peace.

Lucy. Nay, madam, I will ask you the reason why you would banish poor Mr. Harcourt for ever from your sight? how could you be so hard-hearted?

Ali. 'Twas because I was not hard-hearted.

Lucy. No, no; 'twas stark love and kindness, I warrant.

Ali. It was so; I would see him no more, because I love him.

Lucy. Hey-day! a very pretty reason.

Ali. You do not understand me.

Lucy. I wish you may yourself.

Ali. I was engaged to marry, you see, another man, whom my justice will not suffer me to deceive or injure.

Lucy. Can there be a greater cheat or wrong done to a man, than to give him your person without your heart? I should make a conscience of it.

Ali. Hold your tongue.

Lucy. That you know I can't do, madam; and upon this occasion, I will talk for ever. What, give yourself away to one, that poor I, your maid, would not accept of.

Ali. How, Lucy?

Lucy. I would not, upon my honour, madam. 'Tis never too late to repent. Take a man, and give up your coxcomb, I say.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Sparkish, with company, madam, attends you below.

Ali. I will wait upon 'em. [*Exit Servant*] My heart begins to fail me, but I must go through with it.—Go with me, Lucy. [*Exit.*]

Lucy. Not I indeed, madam.—If you will leap the precipice, you shall fall by yourself. What excellent advice have I thrown away!—So I'll e'en take it where it will be more welcome.—Miss Peggy is bent upon mischief against her guardian, and she can't have a better privy-counsellor than myself.—I must be busy one way or another. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *Another Chamber in MOODY'S House.*

Enter MOODY and PEGGY.

Moody. I saw him kiss your hand, before you saw me.—'This pretence of liking my sister was all a blind—the young abandon'd hypocrite! [*Aside*] Tell me, I say—for I know he likes you, and was hurrying you to his house—tell me, I say—

Peggy. Lord, han't I told it a hundred times over?

Moody. I would try if, in the repetition of the ungrateful tale, I could find her altering it in the least circumstance; for if her story is false, she is so too.— [*Aside*] Come, how was't, baggage?

Peggy. Lord, what pleasure you take to hear it sure!

Moody. No, you take more in telling it, I find; but speak, how was't? No lies: I saw him kiss you; he kiss'd you before my face.

Peggy. Nay, you need not be so angry with him neither; for, to say truth, he has the sweetest breath I ever knew.

Moody. The devil!—You were satisfied with it then, and would do it again?

Peggy. Not unless he should force me.

Moody. Force you, changeling?

Peggy. If I had struggled too much, you know, he would have known I had been a woman; so I was quiet, for fear of being found out.

Moody. If you had been in petticoats, you would have knock'd him down?

Peggy. With what, bud?—I could not help myself; besides, he did it so modestly, and blush'd so, that I almost thought him a girl in men's clothes, and upon his mummery too as well as me; and if so, there was no harm done, you know.

Moody. This is worse and worse. So 'tis plain she loves him, yet she has not love enough to make her conceal it from me; but the sight of him will increase her aversion for me, and love for him; and that love instruct her how to deceive me, and satisfy him, all idiot as she is. Love, 'twas he gave women first their craft, their art of deluding. I must strangle that little monster whilst I can deal with him. [*Aside*] Go, fetch pen, ink, and paper, out of the next room.

Peggy. Yes, I will, bud.

Moody. Go then.

Peggy. I'm going.

Moody. Why don't you go then?

Peggy. Lord, I'm going.

[*Exit.*

Moody. This young fellow loves her, and she loves him; the rest is all hypocrisy.—How the young modest villain endeavoured to deceive me! But I'll crush this mischief in the shell.—Why should women have more invention in love than men? It can only be because they have more desire, more soliciting passions, more of the devil.

Re-enter PEGGY, with Pen, Ink, and Paper.

Come, mix, sit down and write.

Peggy. Ay, dear, dear bud; but I can't do't very well.

Moody. I wish you could not at all.

Peggy. But what should I write for?

Moody. I'll have you write a letter to this young man.

Peggy. O Lord; to the young gentleman a letter?

Moody. Yes, to the young gentleman.

Peggy. Lord, you do but jeer; sure you jest.

Moody. I am not so merry. Come, sit down, and write as I bid you.

Peggy. What, do you think I am a fool?

Moody. She's afraid I would not dictate my love to him, therefore she's unwilling. [*Aside*] But you had best begin.

Peggy. Indeed and indeed but I won't, so I won't.

Moody. Why?

Peggy. Because he's in town. You may send for him here, if you will.

Moody. Very well, you would have him brought to you? Is it come to this? I say take the pen and ink, and write, or you'll provoke me.

Peggy. Lord, what do you make a fool of me for?—Don't I know that letters are never writ but from the country to London, and from Loudon into the country? Now he's in town, and I'm in town too; therefore I can't write to him, you know.

Moody. So, I'm glad it's no worse; she is innocent enough yet. [*Aside*] Yes, you may, when your husband bids, write letters to people that are in town.

Peggy. O, may I so? then I am satisfied.

Moody. Come, begin—Sir—

[*Dictates.*]

Peggy. Shan't I say dear sir? You know one says always something more than bare, sir, up in a corner.

Moody. Write as I bid you, or I will write something with this penknife in your face.

Peggy. Sir—

[*Writes.*]

Moody. Though I suffered last night your nauceous, loath'd kisses and embraces—Write!

Peggy. Nay, why should I say so? you know I told you he had a sweet breath.

Moody. Write!

Peggy. Let me put out loath'd.

Moody. Write, I say.

Peggy. Well then.

[Writes.

Moody. Let me see what you have writ. [Reads]

Though I suffered last night your kisses and embraces
—Thou impudent creature, where is nauseous and
loath'd?

Peggy. I can't abide to write such filthy words.

Moody. Once more write as I'd have you, or I will
spoil your writing with this; I will stab out those eyes
that cause my mischief. [Holds up the Penknife.

Peggy. O Lord, I will.

[Writes.

Moody. So—so—let's see now:—though I suffered
last night your nauseous loath'd kisses and embraces—
go on—yet I would not have you presume that you
shall ever repeat them—so— [Peggy writes.

Peggy. I have writ it.

Moody. O then—I then conceal'd myself from your
knowledge, to avoid your insolencies— [Peggy writes.

Peggy. To avoid—

Moody. Your insolencies—

Peggy. Your insolencies.

[Writes.

Moody. The same reason, now I am out of your
hands—

Peggy. So—

[Writes.

Moody. Makes me own to you my unfortunate—though
innocent frolic, in being in boy's clothes. [Peggy writes.

Peggy. So—

Moody. That you may for evermore—

Peggy. Evermore?

Moody. Evermore cease to pursue her who hates and
detests you— [Peggy writes.

Peggy. So—

[Sighs.

Moody. What do you sigh for?—detests you—as
much as she loves her husband and her humour—

Peggy. I vow, husband, he'll ne'er believe I should
write such a letter. [Writes.

Moody. What, he'd expect a kinder one from you?
Come, now your name only.

Peggy. What, shan't I say—your most faithful humble servant till death?

Moody. No, tormenting fiend. [*Peggy writes*]—Her style, I find, would be very soft. [*Aside*] Come, wrap it up now, whilst I go fetch wax and a candle, and write on the outside—*For Mr. Belville.* [*Exit.*]

Peggy. [*Writes*] *For Mr. Belville.*—So—I am glad he is gone—Hark, I hear a noise.

Moody. [*Within*] Well, well, but can't you call again—Well, walk in then.

Peggy. [*Goes to the Door*] I'fack there's folks with him—

Moody. [*Within*] Very well—if he must see me, I'll come to him.

Peggy. That's pure; now I may think a little—Why should I send dear Mr. Belville such a letter?—Can one have no shift? ah, a London woman would have had a hundred presently.—Stay—what if I should write a letter, and wrap it up like this, and write upon it too?—Ay, but then my guardian would see't—I don't know what to do—But yet y'vads I'll try, so I will—for I will not send this letter to poor Mr. Belville, come what will on't. [*Writes, and repeats what she writes*]—Dear, dear, dear, sweet Mr. Belville—so—My guardian would have me send you a base, rude letter, but I won't—so—and would have me say I hate you—but I won't—there—for I'm sure if you and I were in the country at cards together—so—I could not help treading on your toe under the table—so pray keep at home, for I shall be with you as soon as I can—so no more at present from one who am, dear, dear, poor dear Mr. Belville, your loving friend till death do us part, MARGARET THRIFT.—So—now wrap it up just like t'other—so—now write—*For Mr. Belville.*—But, oh! what shall I do with it? for here comes my guardian. [*Puts it in her Bosom.*]

Re-enter MOODY, with a Candle and Sealing-wax.

Moody. I have been detained by a sparkish coxcomb, who pretended to visit me; but I fear 'twas to my wife. [*Aside*] What, have you done?

Peggy. Ay, ay, bud, just now.

Moody. Let's see't; what d'ye tremble for?—

[*He opens and reads the first Letter.*

Peggy. So, I had been finely serv'd if I had giv'n him this. [*Aside.*

Moody. Come, where's the wax and seal?

Peggy. Lord, what shall I do? [*Aside*] Pray let me see't. Lord, you think I cannot seal a letter; I will do't, so I will.

[*Snatches the Letter from him, changes it for the other, seals it, and delivers it to him.*

Moody. Nay, I believe you will learn that and other things too, which I would not have you.

Peggy. So, han't I done it curiously? I think I have—there's my letter going to Mr. Belville, since he'll needs have me send letters to folks. [*Aside.*

Moody. 'Tis very well; but I warrant you would not have it go now?

Peggy. Yes, indeed, but I would, bud, now.

Moody. Well, you are a good girl then. Come, let me lock you up in your chamber till I come back; and be sure you come not within three strides of the window when I am gone, for I have a spy in the street. [*Puts her into the Chamber*] At least 'tis fit she thinks so; if we do not cheat women, they'll cheat us.—Now I have secur'd all within, I'll deal with the foe without, with false intelligence. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. BELVILLE'S Lodgings.

Enter LUCY and BELVILLE.

Lucy. I run great risks, to be sure, to serve the young lady and you, sir; but I know you are a gentleman of honour, and would scorn to betray a friend who means you well, and is above being mercenary.

Bel. As you are not mercenary, Mrs. Lucy, I ought to be the more generous; give me leave to present you with this trifle; [*Gives her a Ring*] not as a reward for your services, but as a small token of friendship.

Lucy. Though I scorn to be bribed in any cause, yet

I am proud to accept it as a mark of your regard, and as such shall keep it for your sake—and now to business.

Bel. But has the dear creature resolved?

Lucy. Has she: why she will run away and marry you, in spite of your teeth, the first moment she can break prison; so you, in your turn, must take care not to have your qualms: I have known several bold gentlemen not able to draw their swords, when a challenge has come too quick upon 'em.

Bel. I assure you, Mrs. Lucy, that I am no bully in love; and Miss Peggy will meet with her match, come when she will.

Lucy. Ay, so you all say; but talking does no business. Stay at home till you hear from us.

Bel. Blessings on thee, Lucy, for the thought.

Moody. [Without] But I must and will see him, let him have what company he will.

Lucy. As I hope to be married, Mr. Belville, I hear Mr. Moody's voice. Where shall I hide myself?—if he sees me we are all undone.

Bel. This is our cursed luck again. What the devil can he want here? Get into this closet till he is gone. [Puts Lucy into the Closet] Don't you stir, Lucy. I must put the best face upon the matter. Now for it.

[Takes a Book, and reads.

Enter MOODY.

Moody. You will excuse me, sir, for breaking through forms, and your servant's entreaties, to have the honour—but you are alone, sir—your fellow told me below, that you were with company.

Bel. Yes, sir, the best company. [Shows his Book] When I converse with my betters, I choose to have 'em alone.

Moody. And I chose to interrupt your conversation! the business of my errand must plead my excuse.

Bel. You shall be always welcome to me; but you seem ruffled, sir. What brings you hither, and so seemingly out of humour?

Moody. Your impertinency—I beg pardon—your modesty I mean.

Bel. My impertinency!

Moody. Your impertinency!

Bel. Sir, from the peculiarity of your character, and your intimacy with my uncle, I shall allow you great privileges; but you must consider youth has its privileges too; and as I have not the honour of your acquaintance, I am not obliged to bear with your ill humours, or your ill manners.

Moody. They who wrong me, young man, must bear with both: and if you had not made too free with me, I should have taken no liberties with you.

Bel. I could have wished, sir, to have found you a little more civil, the first time I have the honour of a visit from you.

Moody. If that is all you want, young gentleman, you will find me very civil indeed! There, sir, read that, and let your modesty declare whether I want either kindness or civility. Look you there, sir.

[Gives him a Letter.

Bel. What is it?

Moody. Only a love-letter, sir; and from my wife.

Bel. How, is it from your wife?—hum and hum.

[Reads.

Moody. Even from my wife, sir; am not I wondrous kind and civil to you now too? But you'll not think her so.

Bel. Ha! is this a trick of his or hers?

[Aside.

Moody. The gentleman's surpris'd, I find! What, you expected a kinder letter!

Bel. No, faith, not I; how could I?

Moody. Yes, yes, I'm sure you did; a man so young and well made as you are, must needs be disappointed, if the women declare not their passion at the first sight or opportunity.

Bel. But what should this mean? It seems he knows not what the letter contains.

[Aside.

Moody. Come, ne'er wonder at it so much.

Bel. Faith, I can't help it.

Moody. Now, I think, I have deserv'd your infinite friendship and kindness; and have show'd myself sufficiently an obliging kind friend and husband; am I not so, to bring a letter from my wife to her gallant?

Bel. Ay, indeed, you are the most obliging kind friend and husband in the world; ha, ha, ha! Pray, however, present my humble service to her, and tell her I will obey her letter to a tittle, and fulfil her desires, be what they will, or with what difficulty soever I do't: and you shall be no more jealous of me, I warrant her and you.

Moody. Well then, fare you well, and play with any mau's honour but mine; kiss any man's wife but mine, and welcome—so, Mr. Modesty, your servant. [*Going.*]

Enter SPARKISH, meeting him.

Spark. So, brother-in-law that was to have been, I have follow'd you from home to Belville's; I have strange news for you.

Moody. What, are you wiser than you were this morning?

Spark. Faith, I don't know but I am, for I have lost your sister, and I shan't eat half an ounce the less at dinner for it; there's philosophy for you.

Moody. Insensibility, you mean. I hope you don't mean to use my sister ill, sir?

Spark. No, sir, she has used me ill; she's in her tantrums; I have had a narrow escape, sir.

Moody. If thou art endow'd with the smallest portion of understanding, explain this riddle.

Bel. Ay, ay, pr'ythee, Sparkish, condescend to be intelligible.

Spark. Why, you must know—we had settled to be married—it is the same thing to me whether I am married or not—I have no particular fancy one way or another, and so I told your sister; off or on, 'tis the same thing to me; but the thing was fix'd, you know—You and my aunt brought it about; I had no hand in it. And, to show you that I was as willing to marry your sister as any other woman, I suffered the law to

tie me up to hard terms; and the church would have finish'd me still to harder—but she was taken with her tantrums!

Moody. Damn your tantrums, come to the point.

Spark. Your sister took an aversion to the parson, Frank Harcourt's brother—abused him like a pick-pocket, and swore 'twas Harcourt himself.

Moody. And so it was, for I saw him.

Spark. Why, you are as mad as your sister; I tell you it was Ned, Frank's twin brother.

Moody. What, Frank told you so?

Spark. Ay, and Ned too; they were both in a story.

Moody. What an incorrigible fellow!—Come, come, I must be gone.

Spark. Nay, nay, you shall hear my story out—She walk'd up within pistol-shot of the church, then twirl'd round upon her heel, call'd me every name she could think of; and when she had exhausted her imagination, and tired her tongue (no easy matter let me tell you), she call'd her chair, sent her footman to buy a monkey before my face, then bid me good morrow with a sneer, and left us with our mouths open in the middle of a hundred people, who were all laughing at us! If these are not tantrums, I don't know what are.

Moody. Ha, ha, ha! I thank thee, Sparkish, from my soul; 'tis a most exquisite story; I have not had such a laugh for this half year. Thou art a most ridiculous puppy, and I am infinitely obliged to thee; ha, ha, ha!

[*Erit.*]

Spark. Did you ever hear the like, Belville?

Bel. O yes; how is it possible to hear such a foolish story, and see thy foolish face, and not laugh at 'em? ha, ha, ha!

[*Lucy in the Closet laughs.*]

Spark. Hey-day! what's that? What, have you raised a devil in the closet to make up a laughing chorus at me? I must take a peep—

[*Going to the Closet.*]

Bel. Indeed but you must not.

Spark. It was a woman's voice.

Bel. So much the better for me.

Spark. Pr'ythee introduce me.

Bel. Though you take a pleasure in exposing your ladies, I choose to conceal mine; so, my dear Sparkish, lest the lady should be sick by too long a confinement, and laughing heartily at you, I must entreat you to withdraw. Pr'ythee excuse me, I must laugh—ha, ha, ha, ha!

Spark. Do you know that I begin to be angry, Belville?

Bel. I can't help that—ha, ha, ha!

Spark. My character's at stake; I shall be thought a damn'd silly fellow; I will call Alithea to an account directly. [Exit.

Bel. Ha, ha, ha!

Lucy. [Peeping out] Ha, ha, ha, ha! O dear, sir, let me have my laugh out, or I shall hurst. What an adventure. [Comes out, and Laughs.

Bel. My sweet Peggy has sent me the kindest letter—and by the dragon himself; there's a spirit for you!

Lucy. There's simplicity for you! Show me a tow-bred girl with half the genius—Send you a love-letter, and by a jealous guardian too! ha, ha, ha! 'Tis too much—too much—Ha, ha, ha!—Well, Mr. Belville! the world goes as it should do—my mistress will exchange her fool for a wit; Miss Peggy her brute for a pretty young fellow; I shall dance at two weddings; be well rewarded by both parties; get a husband myself; and be as happy as the best of you; and so your humble servant. [Exit.

Bel. Success attend you, Lucy. [Exit,

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I. MOODY'S House.

PEGGY discovered alone, leaning on her Elbow on a Table, with Pen, Ink, and Paper.

Peggy. Well, 'tis e'en so; I have got the London disease they call love; I am sick of my guardian, and dying for Mr. Belville! I have heard this distemper call'd a fever, but methinks it is like an ague; for when I think of my guardian, I tremble, and am so cold; but when I think of my gallant, dear Mr. Belville, my hot fit comes, and I am all in a fever indeed. Ah! poor Mr. Belville! Well, I will not stay here; therefore I'll make an end of my letter to him, which shall be a finer letter than my last, because I have studied it like any thing. Oh! sick, sick!

Enter MOODY, who seeing her Writing, steals softly behind her, and looking over her Shoulder, snatches the Paper from her.

Moody. What, writing more letters?

Peggy. O Lord, bud! why d'ye fright me so?

[*She offers to run out; he stops her, and reads.*]

Moody. How's this! nay, you shall not stir, madam.

[*Reads*] Dear, dear Mr. Belville—Very well, I have laught you to write letters to good purpose—but let's see't—First, I am to beg your pardon for my boldness in writing to you, which I'd have you to know I would not have done, had you not said first you loved me so extremely; which, if you do, you will never suffer me to be another man's, who I loath, nauseate, and detest;—Now you can write these filthy words. But what follows?—therefore I hope you will speedily find some way to free me from this unfortunate match, which was never, I assure you, of my choice; but I'm afraid 'tis already too far gone; however, if you love me as I do you, you will try what you can do; you must help me away before to-morrow, or else, alas! I shall be for ever out of your reach, for I can defer no longer our—our—what is to follow our?—speak, what?—our journey into the country, I suppose.—Oh, woman! damn'd woman! and love, damn'd love! their old lempster; for this is one of his miracles; in a moment he can make those blind that could see, and those see that were blind; those dumb that could speak, and those prattle who were dumb before.—But make an end of your letter, and then I'll make an end of you thus, and all my plagues together. [*Draws his Sword.*]

Peggy. O Lord! O Lord! you are such a passionate man, bud!

Moody. Come, take the pen, and make an end of the letter, just as you intended; if you are false in a tittle I shall soon perceive it, and punish you with this as you deserve. [*Lays his Hand on his Sword*]—Write what was to follow—let's see—You must make haste and help me away before to-morrow, or else I shall be for ever out of your reach, for I can defer no longer our—what follows our?—

[*Peggy takes the Pen, and writes.*]

Peggy. Must all out then, bud?—Look you there then.

Moody. Let's see—for I can defer no longer our wedding—Your slighted ALITHEA.—What's the meaning of this? my sister's name to't? speak; unridle.

Peggy. Yes, indeed, bud.

Moody. But why her name to't? speak—speak, I say.

Peggy. Ay, but you'll tell her again; if you would not tell her again—

Moody. I will not; I am stunn'd; my head turns round. Speak.

Peggy. Won't you tell her indeed, and indeed?

Moody. No; speak, I say.

Peggy. She'll be angry with me; but I would rather she should be angry with me than you, bud. And to tell the truth, 'twas she made me write the letter, and taught me what I should write.

Moody. Ha!—I thought the style was somewhat better than her own. [*Aside*] Could she come to you to teach you, since I had look'd you up alone?

Peggy. Oh, through the key-hole, bud.

Moody. But why should she make you write a letter for her to him, since she can write herself?

Peggy. Why she said because—

Moody. Because what—because—

Peggy. Why because, bud—

Moody. Because what, I say?

Peggy. Because, lest Mr. Belville, as he was so young, should be inconstant, and refuse her; or be vain afterwards, and show the letter, she might disown it, the hand not being hers.

Moody. Belville again!—Am I to be deceiv'd again with that young hypocrite?

Peggy. You have deceiv'd yourself, bud; you have indeed. I have kept the secret for my sister's sake, as long as I could—but you must know it—and shall know it too. [*Cries.*]

Moody. Dry your eyes.

Peggy. You always thought he was hankering after me—Good law! he's dying for Alithea, and Alithea for

him: they have had private meetings; and he was making love to her before yesterday, from the tavern window, when you thought it was me. I would have discovered all, but she made me swear to deceive you; and so I have finely; have not I, bud?

Moody. Why did you write that foolish letter to him then, and make me more foolish to carry it?

Peggy. To carry on the joke, bud—to oblige them?

Moody. And will nothing serve her but that great baby?—he's too young for her to marry.

Peggy. Why do you marry me then?—'Tis the same thing, bud.

Moody. No, no, 'tis quite different. How innocent she is! [*Aside*]—But hark you, madam, your sister went out this morning, and I have not seen her within since.

Peggy. Alack-a-day, she has been crying all day above, it seems, in a corner.

Moody. Where is she? let me speak with her.

Peggy. O Lord! then she'll discover all. [*Aside*]—Pray hold, bud; what, d'ye mean to discover me? she'll know I have told you then. Pray, bud, let me talk with her first.

Moody. I must speak with her to know whether Belville ever made her any promise, and whether she will be married to Sparkish or no.

Peggy. Pray, dear bud, don't till I have spoken with her, and told her that I have told you all; for she'll kill me else.

Moody. Go then, and bid her come to me.

Peggy. Yes, yes, bud.

Moody. Let me see—

Peggy. I have just got time to know of Lucy, who first set me to work, what lie I shall tell next; for I am e'en at my wits end. [*Aside and exit.*]

Moody. Well, I resolve it, Belville shall have her: I'd rather give him my sister than lend him my wife; and such an alliance will prevent his pretensions to my wife, sure: I'll make him of kin to her, and then he won't care for her.

Re-enter PEGGY.

Peggy. O Lord, bud, I told you what anger you would make me with my sister.

Moody. Won't she come?

Peggy. No, she won't, she's ashamed to look you in the face; she'll go directly to Mr. Belville, she says. Pray let her have her way, bud—she won't be pacified if you don't—and will never forgive me. For my part, bud, I believe, but don't tell any body, they have broken a piece of silver between 'em—or have contracted one another, as we have done, you know, which is the next thing to being married.

Moody. Pooh! you fool—she ashamed of talking with me about Belville, because I made the match for her with Sparkish! But Sparkish is a fool, and I have no objection to Belville's family or fortune—tell her so.

Peggy. I will, bud.

[*Going.*

Moody. Stay, stay, Peggy, let her have her own way; she shall go to Belville herself, and I'll follow her—that will be best—let her have her whim.

Peggy. You're in the right, bud; for they have certainly had a quarrel, by her crying and hanging her head so: I'll be hang'd if her eyes an't swell'd out of her head, she's in such a piteous taking.

Moody. Belville shan't use her ill, I'll take care of that; if he has made her a promise, he shall keep to it: but she had better go first—I will follow her at a distance, that she may have no interruption; and I will wait in the Park before I see them, that they may come to a reconciliation before I come upon 'em.

Peggy. Law, bud, how wise you are!—I wish I had half your wisdom; you see every thing at once. Stand a one side then—there, a little further that way.

Moody. And so I will; she shan't see me till I break in upon her at Belville's.

Peggy. Now for it.

[*Erit.*

Moody. My case is something better; for suppose

the worst—should Belville use her ill—I had rather fight him for not marrying my sister, than for debauching my wife, for I will make her mine absolutely to-morrow; and of the two, I had rather find my sister too forward than my wife: I expected no other from her free education, as she calls it, and her passion for the town. Well, wife and sister are names which make us expect love and duty, pleasure and comfort; but we find 'em plagues and torments, and are equally, though differently, troublesome to their keeper. But here she comes. [Steps on one Side.]

Re-enter PEGGY, dressed like ALITHEA; and as she passes over the Stage, seems to sigh, sob, and wipe her Eyes.

Peggy. Heigho! [Exit.]

Moody. [Comes forward] There the poor devil goes, sighing and sobbing, a woeful example of the fatal consequences of a town education; but I am bound in duty, as well as inclination, to do my utmost to save her—but first I'll secure my own property.—[Opens the Door and calls]—Peggy! Peggy! my dear!—I will return as soon as possible—do you hear me? Why don't you answer? You may read in the book I bought you till I come back.—As the Jew says in the play, "Fast bind, fast find." [Locks the Door] This is the best, and only security for female affections. [Exit.]

SCENE II. *The PARK, before BELVILLE'S House.*

Enter SPARKISH, fuddled.

Spark. If I can but meet with her, or any body that belongs to her, they will find me a match for 'em. When a man has wit, and a great deal of it, Champagne gives it a double edge, and nothing can withstand it—'tis a lighted match to gunpowder.—I was right to consult my friends, and they all agree with Moody, that I make a damn'd ridiculous figure, as

matters stand at present. I'll consult Belville—this is his house—he's my friend too—and no fool—It shall be so. Damn it, I must not be ridiculous. [*Going to the Door, sees Peggy coming*] Hold! hold! if the Champagne does not hurt my eye-sight, while it sharpens my wit, the enemy is marching up this way.—Come on, madam Alithea; now for a smart fire; and then let's see who will be ridiculous.

Enter PEGGY.

Peggy. Dear me, I begin to tremble; there is Mr. Sparkish, and I can't get to Mr. Belville's house without passing by him. He sees me, and will discover me; he seems in liquor too.—Bless me!

Spark. O ho! she stands at bay a little; she don't much relish the engagement. The first blow is half the battle. I'll be a little figurative with her. [*Aside. Approaches her*] I find, madam, you like a solo better than a duet. You need not have been walking alone this evening, if you had been wiser yesterday.—What, nothing to say for yourself?—Repentance, I suppose, makes you as awkward and as foolish as the poor country girl your brother has look'd up in Pall-mall.

Peggy. I'm frighten'd out of my wits.

[*Tries to pass by him.*]

Spark. Not a step further shall you go till you give me an account of your behaviour, and make me reparation for being ridiculous.—What, dumb still! Then if you won't by fair means, I must squeeze you to a confession. [*As he goes to seize her, she slips by him; but he catches hold of her before she reaches Belville's Door*] Not quite so fast, if you please.—Come, come, let me see your modest face, and hear your soft tongue, or I shall be tempted to use you ill.

Enter MOODY.

Moody. Hands off, you ruffian! How dare you use a lady, and my sister, in this manner?

[*Takes her from Sparkish.*]

Spark. She's my property, sir; transferred to me by you; and though I would give her up to any body for a dirty sword-knot, yet I won't be bullied out of my right, though it is not worth that.—

[*Snaps his Fingers.*]

Moody. There's a fellow to be a husband!—You are justified in despising him and flying from him. I'll defend you with my purse and my sword.—Knock at that door, and let me speak to Belville. [*Peggy knocks at the Door; when the Footman opens it she runs in*]—Is your master at home, friend?

Foot. Yes, sir.

Moody. Tell him then that I have rescued that lady from this gentleman, and that by her desire, and my consent, she flies to him for protection; if he can get a parson, let him marry her this minute; tell him so, and shut the door. [*Exit Footman*] And now, sir, if your wine has given you courage, you had better show it upon this occasion; for you are still damn'd ridiculous.

Spark. Did you ever hear the like?—Lookye, Mr. Moody, we are in the Park, and to draw a sword is an offence to the court; so you may vapour as long as you please. A woman of so little taste is not worth fighting for; she's not worth my sword! But if you'll fight me to-morrow morning for diversion, I am your man.

Moody. Relinquish your title in the lady to Belville peaceably, and you may sleep in a whole skin.

Spark. Belville! he would not have your sister with the fortune of a nabob; no, no, his mouth waters at your country tit-bit at home; much good may it do him.

Moody. And you think so, puppy—ha, ha, ha!

Spark. Yes, I do, mastiff—ha, ha, ha!

Moody. Then thy folly is complete—ha, ha, ha!

Spark. Thine will be so, when thou hast married thy country innocent—ha, ha, ha!

[*They laugh at each other.*]

Re-enter HARCOURT.

Spark. What, my boy Harcourt!

Moody. What brings you here, sir?

Har. I follow'd you to Belville's to present a near relation of yours, and a nearer one of mine, to you.

[*Exit.*]

Spark. What's the matter now?

Re-enter HARCOURT, with ALITHEA.

Har. Give me leave, gentlemen, without offence to either, to present Mrs. Harcourt to you!

Spark. Alithea! your wife!—Mr. Moody, are you in the clouds too?

Moody. If I am not in a dream, I am the most miserable walking dog that ever run mad with his misfortunes and astonishment!

Har. Why so, Jack? Can you object to my happiness, when this gentleman was unworthy of it?

[*Moody walks about in a rage.*]

Spark. This is very fine, very fine indeed!—Where's your story about Belville now, squire Moody? Pr'ythee don't chafe, and stare, and stride, and beat thy head, like a mad tragedy poet—but out with thy tropes and figures.

Moody. Zounds! I can't bear it.

[*Goes hastily to Belville's Door, and knocks hard.*]

Alithea. Dear brother, what's the matter?

Moody. The devil's the matter! the devil and women together. [*Knocks again*] I'll break the door down, if they won't answer.

[*Knocks again.*]

Footman appears in the Balcony.

Foot. What would your honour please to have?

Moody. Your master, rascal.

Foot. He is obeying your commands, sir; and the moment he has finished, he will do himself the pleasure to wait on you.

Moody. You sneering villain you, if your master does not produce that she devil, who is now with him,

and who with a face of innocence, has cheated and undone me, I'll set fire to his house. [*Exit Footman.*]

Spark. 'Gad so! now I begin to smoke the business. Well said, simplicity, rural simplicity! 'Egad! if thou hast trick'd Cerberus here, I shall be so ravish'd that I will give this couple a wedding dinner. Pray, Mr. Moody, who's damn'd ridiculous now?

Moody. [*Going to Sparkish*] Look ye, sir—don't grin, for if you dare to show your teeth at my misfortunes, I'll dash 'em down your impudent throat, you jackanapes.

Spark. [*Quite calm*] Very fine, saith—but I have no weapons to butt with a mad bull, so you may toss and roar by yourself, if you please.

Enter BELVILLE, in the Balcony.

Bel. What does my good friend want with me?

Moody. Are you a villain, or are you not?

Bel. I have obey'd your commands, sir.

Moody. What have you done with the girl, sir?

Bel. Made her my wife, as you desired.

Spark. Very true, I am your witness—

Moody. She's my wife, and I demand her.

Enter PEGGY in the Balcony.

Peggy. No, but I an't though, bud.—What's the matter, dear, are you angry with me?

Moody. How dare you look me in the face, cockatrice?

Peggy. How dare you look me in the face, bud? Have you not given me to another, when you ought to have married me yourself? Have not you pretended to be married to me, when you knew in your conscience you was not? And have you not been shilly-shally for a long time? So that if I had not married dear Mr. Belville, I should not have married at all—so I should not. [*Belville and Peggy retire from the Balcony.*]

Spark. Extremely pleasant, saith; ha, ha, ha!

Moody. I am stupified with shame, rage, and astonishment—my fate has o'ercome me—I can struggle no

more with it. [*Sighs*] What is left me?—I cannot bear to look, or be looked upon—I will hurry down to my old house, take a twelvemonths provision into it—cut down my drawbridge, run wild about my garden, which shall grow as wild as myself—then will I curse the world, and every individual in it—and when my rage and spirits fail me, I will be found dead among the nettles and thistles, a woeful example of the baseness and treachery of one sex, and of the falsehood, lying, perjury, deceit, impudence, and damnation of the other. [*Exit.*]

Spark. Very droll, and extravagantly comic, I must confess; ha, ha, ha!

Re-enter BELVILLE and PEGGY.

*Lookye, Belville, I wish you joy with all my heart—you have got the prize, and perhaps have caught a tartar—that's no business of mine—If you want evidence for Mr. Moody's giving his consent to your marriage, I shall be ready. I bear no ill will to that pair: I wish you happy; [*To Alithea and Harcourt*—though I'm sure they'll be miserable—and so your humble servant. [*Exit.*]*

Peggy. I hope you forgive me, Alithea, for playing your brother this trick; indeed I should have only made him and myself miserable, had we married together.

Ali. Then 'tis much better as it is. But I am yet in the dark how this matter has been brought about; how your innocence, my dear, has outwitted his worldly wisdom.

Peggy. I am sure I'll do any thing to please my bud, but marry him. [*Exeunt.*]

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY PEGGY.

BUT you, good gentry, what say you to this?
You are to judge me—have I done amiss?
I've reasons will convince you all, and strong ones;
Except old folks, who hanker after young ones;
Bud was so passionate, and grown so thrifty,
'Twas a sad life—and then, he was near fifty!
I'm but nineteen—my husband too is young,
So soft, so gentle, such a winning tongue! }
Have I, pray ladies, speak, done very wrong?
As for poor bud, 'twas honest to deceive him!
More virtuous sure to cheat him than to grieve him.
Great folks, I know, will call me simple slut;
“Marry for love,” they cry, “the country put!”
Marriage with them's a fashion—soon grows cool:
But I'm for loving always, like a fool.
With half my fortune I would rather part,
Than be all fiery, with an aching heart.
For these strange awkward notions don't abuse me;
And, as I know no better, pray excuse me.

THE
CONSTANT COUPLE;

OR,
A TRIP TO THE JUBILEE.

A Comedy.

BY FARQUHAR.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,
BY THOMAS DIBDIN,
Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.



Printed at the Chiswick Press,
BY C. WHITTINGHAM;
FOR SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES, PATERNOSTER
ROW, LONDON.

1818.



THE CONSTANT COUPLE

WAS first acted at Drury Lane Theatre, A. D. 1700, and experienced a reception of the most flattering and decided kind; nor has its popularity by any means diminished on subsequent representations. The character of *Sir Harry Wildair* has afforded to many eminent performers of each sex, the means of displaying their talents to great advantage. It was supposed the author had meant *Sir Harry* as his own portrait, which was also imagined with respect to *Captain Plume* in the **RECRUITING OFFICER**, but both ideas have been pronounced erroneous.—Mr. Wilkes was the original *Sir Harry*; Mr. Woodward, Mr. Lewis, Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Achmet, Mrs. Goodall, *cum multis aliis*, have also gained credit in the part.

PROLOGUE.

POETS will think nothing so checks their fury
As wits, oits, beaux, and women for their jury.
Our spark's half dead to think what medley's come,
With blended judgments to pronounce his doom.

'Tis all false fear; for in a mingled pit,
Why, what your grave don thinks but dully writ,
His neighbour i'th' great wig may take for wit.
Some authors court the few, the wise, if any;
Our youth's content, if he can reach the many,
Who go with much like ends to church and play,
Not to observe what priests or poets say,
No! no! your thoughts, like theirs, lie quite another
way.

The ladies safe may smile, for here's no slander,
No smut, no lewd tongu'd beau, nor double entendre,
'Tis true, he has a spark just come from *France*,
But then so far from beau—why he talks sense!
Like coin oft carry'd out, but—seldom brought from
thence.

There's yet a gang to whom our spark submits,
Your elbow shaking fool, that lives by's wits,
That's only witty though, just as he lives, by fits.
Who, lion-like, through bailiffs, scours away,
Hunts, in the face, a dinner all the day,
At night with empty bowels grumbles o'er the play.
And now the modish 'prentice he implores,
Who, with his master's cash, stol'n out of doors,
Employs it on a brace of—honourable whores:
While their good bulky mother, pleas'd, sits by,
Bawd regent of the bubble gallery.
Next to our mounted friends, we humbly move,
Who all your side-box tricks are much above,
And never fail to pay us with your love.
Ah friends! poor *Dorset* garden house is gone;
Our merry meetings there are all undone:

Quite lost to us, sure for some strange misdeeds,
That strong dog *Samson's* pull'd it o'er our heads,
Snaps rope like thread ; but when his fortune's told him :
He'll hear perhaps of rope will one day hold him :
At least, I hope, that our good-natur'd town,
Will find a way to pull his prices down.

Well, that's all! now, gentlemen, for the play,
On second thoughts, I've but two words to say ;
Such as it is for your delight design'd,
Hear it, read, try, judge, and speak as you find.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

<i>As originally acted.</i>		<i>Drury Lane, 1791.</i>
<i>Sir Harry Wildair</i>	Mr. Wilkes.	Mrs. Jordan.
<i>Colonel Standard</i>	Mr. Powel.	Mr. Wroughton.
<i>Vizard</i>	Mr. Mills.	Mr. Whitfield.
<i>Alderman Smug-</i>	} Mr. Johnson.	Mr. Parsons.
<i>gler</i>		
<i>Clincher</i>	Mr. Pinkishman.	Mr. Bannister, jun.
<i>Clincher, Jun.</i>	Mr. Bullock.	Mr. Suett.
<i>Dicky</i>	Mr. Norris.	Mr. Burton.
<i>Tom Errand</i>	Mr. Haines.	Mr. Hollingsworth.
<i>Constable</i>		Mr. Alfred.
<i>Servants</i>		{ Messieurs Lyons, } Spencer, & Webb.
<i>Lurewell</i>	Mrs. Verbruggen.	Mrs. Ward.
<i>Lady Darling</i>	Mrs. Powell.	Mrs. Booth.
<i>Angelica</i>	Mrs. Rogers.	Mrs. Kemble.
<i>Parley</i>	Mrs. Moor.	Mrs. Williamses.
<i>Errand's Wife</i>		Mrs. Heard.
<i>Mob, Servants, &c.</i>		

	<i>Covent Garden.</i>	<i>Haymarket.</i>
<i>Sir Harry Wildair</i>	Mrs. Achmet.	Mrs. Goodall.
<i>Colonel Standard</i>	Mr. Farren.	Mr. Williamson.
<i>Vizard</i>	Mr. Macready.	Mr. Iliff.
<i>Alderman Smuggler</i>	Mr. Quick.	Mr. Moss.
<i>Clincher</i>	Mr. Ryder.	Mr. Bannister, Jun.
<i>Clincher, Jun.</i>	Mr. Blanchard.	Mr. R. Palmer.
<i>Dicky</i>	Mr. C. Powell.	Mr. Burton.
<i>Tom Errand</i>	Mr. Cubitt.	Mr. Chapman.
<i>Constable</i>	Mr. Thompson.	Mr. Johnson.
<i>Servants</i>		
<i>Lurewell</i>	Miss Chapman.	Mrs. Rivers.
<i>Lady Darling</i>	Mrs. Platt.	
<i>Angelica</i>	Mrs. Mountain.	Mrs. Brookes.
<i>Parley</i>	Miss Stuart.	Mrs. Edwards.
<i>Errand's Wife</i>		
<i>Mob, Servants, &c.</i>		

SCENE—LONDON.

ACT, THE FIRST.



SCENE I. *The Park.*

Enter VIZARD with a Letter, a Servant following him.

Viz. ANGELICA send it back unopen'd! say you?

Serv. As you see, sir,

Viz. The pride of these virtuous women is more insufferable than the immodesty of prostitutes—after all my encouragement to slight me thus!

Serv. She said, sir, that imagining your morals sincere, she gave you access to her conversation; but that your late behaviour in her company has convinced her, that your love and religion are both hypocrisy, and that she believes your letter, like yourself, fair on the outside, foul within; so sent it back unopened.

Viz. I'll be revenged the very first opportunity—saw you the old lady Darling, her mother?

Serv. Yes, sir; and she was pleased to say much in your commendation.

Viz. That's my cue; [*Aside*] Run to the lady Lurewell's, and know of her maid, whether her ladyship

will be at home this evening. Her beauty is sufficient cure for Angelica's scorn.

[Exit Servant. Vizard pulls out a Book, reads and walks about.

Enter SMUGGLER.

Smug. Ay, there's a pattern for the young men o'th' times—at his meditation so early; some book of pious ejaculations, I'm sure.

Viz. This Hoyle is an excellent fellow! [Aside] O uncle Smuggler! to find you at this end o'th' town is a miracle.

Smug. I have seen a miracle this morning indeed, cousin Vizard!

Viz. What is it, pray, sir?

Smug. A man at his devotions so near the court—I'm very glad, boy, that you keep your sanctity untainted in this infectious place; the very air of this park is heathenish, and every man's breath I meet scents of atheism.

Viz. Surely, sir, some great concern must bring you to this unsanctified end of the town.

Smug. A very unsanctified concern truly, cousin.

Viz. What is it?

Smug. A law-suit, boy—shall I tell you?—My ship the Swan is newly arrived from St. Sebastian, laden with Portugal wines: now the impudent rogue of a tide-waiter has the face to affirm it is French wines in Spanish casks, and has indicted me upon the statute—O conscience! conscience! these tide-waiters and surveyors plague us more with their French wines, than the war did with French privateers—Ay, there's another plague of the nation—

Enter COLONEL STANDARD.

A red coat and cockade.

Viz. Colonel Standard, I'm your humble servant.

Stand. May be uot, sir:

Viz. Why so?

Stand. Because—I'm disbanded.

Viz. How! broke?

Stand. This very morning, in Hyde-park, my brave regiment, a thousand men that looked like lions yesterday, were scattered, and looked as poor and simple as the herd of deer that grazed beside 'em.

Smug. Tal, al, deral [*Singing*] I'll have a bonfire this night as high as the monument.

Stand. A bonfire! thou dry, withered, ill-nature; had not those brave fellows' swords defended you, your house had been a bonfire ere this about your ears— Did we not venture our lives, sir?

Smug. And did we not pay for your lives, sir?— Venture your lives! I'm sure we ventured our money, and that's life and soul to me—Sir, we'll maintain you no longer.

Stand. Then your wives shall, old Actæon. There are five and thirty strapping officers gone this morning to live upon free quarter in the city.

Smug. O Lord! O Lord! I shall have a son within these nine months, born with a half-pike in his hand,

—Sir, you are—

Stand. What, sir?

Smug. Sir, I say that you are—

Stand. What, sir?

Smug. Disbanded, sir, that's all—I see my lawyer yonder. [*Erit.*]

Viz. Sir, I am very sorry for your misfortune.

Stand. Why so? I don't come to borrow money of you; if you're my friend, meet me this evening at the Shakspeare. I'll drink a health to my king, prosperity to my country, and away for Hungary to-morrow morning.

Viz. What! you won't leave us?

Stand. What! a soldier stay here, to look like an old pair of colours in Westminster-hall, ragged and rusty! no, no—I met yesterday a broken lieutenant, he was ashamed to own that he wanted a dinner, but begged ten shillings of me to buy a new scabbard for his sword.

Viz. Oh, but you have good friends, colonel!

Stand. Oh, very good friends! my father's a lord, and my elder brother a beau; mighty good friends indeed!

Viz. But your country may perhaps want your sword again.

Stand. Nay, for that matter, let but a single drum beat up for volunteers between Ludgate and Charing-cross, and I shall undoubtedly hear it at the walls of Buda.

Viz. Come, come, colonel, there are ways of making your fortune at home—make your addresses to the fair; you're a man of honour and courage.

Stand. Ay, my courage is like to do me wondrous service with the fair: this pretty cross cut over my eye will attract a duchess—I warrant 'twill be a mighty grace to my ogling—had I used the stratagem of a certain brother colonel of mine, I might succeed.

Viz. What was it, pray?

Stand. Why, to save his pretty face for the women, he always turned his back upon the enemy—he was a man of honour for the ladies.

Viz. Come, come, the loves of Mars and Venus will never fail: you must get a mistress.

Stand. Pr'ythee, no more on't—you have awakoned a thought, from which, and the kingdom, I would have stol'n away at once.—To be plain, I have a mistress.

Viz. And she's cruel?

Stand. No.

Viz. Her parents prevent your happiness?

Stand. Nor that.

Viz. Then she has no fortune?

Stand. A large one: beauty to tempt all mankind, and virtue to beat off their assaults. O Vizard! such a creature! [*Sir Harry Wildair sings without*] Hey-day! who the devil have we here?

Viz. The joy of the play-house, and life of the park; air Harry Wildair! newly come from Paris.

Stand. Sir Harry Wildair! did not he make a campaign in Flanders some three or four years ago?

Viz. The same.

Stand. Why, he behaved himself very bravely.

Viz. Why not? Dost think bravery and gaiety are inconsistent? He's a gentleman of most happy circumstances, born to a plentiful estate; has had a genteel and easy education, free from the rigidness of teachers, and pedantry of schools. His florid constitution being never ruffled by misfortune, nor stinted in its pleasures, has rendered him entertaining to others, and easy to himself.—Turning all passion into gaiety of humour, by which he chooses rather to rejoice with his friends, than be hated by any; as you shall see.

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir H. Ha, Vizard!

Viz. Sir Harry!

Sir H. Who thought to find you out of the Rubrick so long? I thought thy hypocrisy had been wedded to a pulpit-cushion long ago.—Sir, if I mistake not your face, your name is Standard.

Stand. Sir Harry, I'm your humble servant.

Sir H. Come, gentlemen, the news, the news o'th town, for I'm just arrived.

Viz. Why, in the city end o'th' town we're playing the knave to get estates.

Stand. And in the court-end playing the fool, in spending 'em.

Sir H. Just so in Paris. I'm glad we're grown so modish.

Viz. We are so reformed, that gallantry is taken for vice.

Stand. And hypocrisy for religion.

Sir H. *A la mode de Paris* again. But this is trifling; tell me news, gentlemen. What lord has lately broke his fortune at Brooks's, or his heart at New-market for the loss of a race? What wife has been lately suing in Doctors' Commons for alimony? or, what daughter run away with her father's valet? What beau gave the noblest ball, or had the finest coach on the birth-day? I want news, gentlemen.

Stand. 'Faith, sir, these are no news at all.

Viz. But, sir Harry, we heard that you designed to make the tour of Italy; what brought you back so soon?

Sir H. That which brought you into the world, and may perhaps carry you out of it; a woman.

Stand. What! quit the pleasures of travel for a woman!

Sir H. Ay, colonel, for such a woman! I had rather see her *ruelle* than the palace of *Louis le Grand*: there's more glory in her smile, than in the jubilee at Rome; and I would rather kiss her hand than the pope's toe.

Viz. You, colonel, have been very lavish in the beauty and virtue of your mistress; and sir Harry here has been no less eloquent in the praise of his. Now will I lay you both ten guineas apiece, that neither of them is so pretty, so witty, or so virtuous, as mine.

Stand. 'Tis done.

Sir H. I'll double the stakes—But, gentlemen, now I think on't, how shall we be resolved? For I know not where my mistress may be found; she left Paris about a month before me, and I had an account—

Stand. How, sir! left Paris about a month before you?

Sir H. Yes, sir, and I had an account that she lodged somewhere in St. James's.

Viz. How! somewhere in St. James's, say you?

Sir H. Ay, sir, but I know not where, and perhaps mayn't find her this fortnight.

Stand. Her name, pray, sir Harry?

Viz. Ay, ay, her name; perhaps we know her.

Sir H. Her name! ay,—she has the softest, whitest hand that e'er was made of flesh and blood; her lips so balmy sweet—

Stand. But her name I want, sir.

Sir H. Then her eyes, Vizard!

Stand. Pshaw! sir Harry, her name or nothing.

Sir H. Then if you must have it, she's call'd the lady—But then her foot, gentlemen; she dances to a miracle. She does dance devilish well indeed.—Vizard, you have certainly lost your wager.

Viz. Why, you have certainly lost your senses; we

shall never discover the picture, unless you subscribe the name.

Sir H. Then her name is Lurewell.

Stand. 'Sdeath, my mistress!

[*Aside.*

Viz. My mistress, by Jupiter!

[*Aside.*

Sir H. Do you know her, gentlemen?

Stand. I have seen her, sir.

Sir H. Canst tell where she lodges? Tell me, dear colonel.

Stand. Your humble servant, sir. [Exit.

Sir H. Nay, hold, colonel; I'll follow you, and will know. [Runs out.

Viz. The lady Lurewell his mistress! he loves her; but she loves me.—But he's a baronet, and I plain Vizard; he has a coach and six, and I walk on foot; I was bred in London, and he in Paris.—That very circumstance has murdered me—then some stratagem must be laid to divert his pretensions.

Re-enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir H. Pr'ythee, Dick, what makes the colonel so out of humour?

Viz. Because he's out of pay, I suppose.

Sir H. 'Slife, that's true; I was beginning to mistrust some rivalry in the case.

Viz. And suppose there were, you know the colonel can fight, sir Harry.

Sir H. Fight! pshaw; but he can't dance; ha! he contend for a woman, Vizard! 'slife, man, if ladies were to be gained by sword and pistol only, what the devil should all we beaux do?

Viz. I'll try him farther. [*Aside*] But would not you, air Harry, fight for this woman you so much admire?

Sir H. Fight! let me consider. I love her—that's true;—but then I love honest sir Harry Wildair better. The lady Lurewell is divinely charming—right—but then a thrust i'the guts, or a Middlesex jury, is as ugly as the devil.

Viz. Ay, sir Harry, 'twere dangerous to be tried by a parcel of greasy, grumbling, bartering boobies, who

would hang you, purely because you are a gentleman.

Sir H. But no more of her. Pr'ythee, Vizard, can't you recommend a friend to a pretty mistress by the by, till I can find my own? You have store, I'm sure; you cunning poaching dogs make surer game, than we that hunt open and fair. Pr'ythee now, good Vizard.

Viz. Let me consider a little.—Now love and revenge inspire my politics!

[*Aside. Pauses whilst Str Harry walks singing.*]

Sir H. Phaw! thou'rt as long studying for a new mistress, as—

Viz. I design a charming girl for you; you'll therefore bear a little expectation.

Sir H. Ha! say'st thou, dear Vizard?

Viz. A girl of sixteen! Sir Harry.

Sir H. Now sixteen thousand blessings light on thee.

Viz. Pretty and witty.

Sir H. Ay, ay, but her name, Vizard.

Viz. Her name! yes,—she has the softest, whitest hand that e'er was made of flesh and blood; her lips so balmy sweet—

Sir H. Well, well; but where shall I find her, man?

Viz. Find her!—but then her foot, sir Harry; she dances to a miracle.

Sir H. Pr'ythee, don't distract me.

Viz. Well then, you must know, that this lady is the greatest beauty in town; her name's Angelica; she that passes for her mother is very commode, and called the lady Darling; she goes for a baronet's lady (no disparagement to your honour, sir Harry), I assure you.

Sir H. Pshaw! hang my honour; but what street, what house?

Viz. Not so fast, sir Harry; you must have my passport for your admittance, and you'll find my recommendation in a line or two will procure you very civil entertainment; I suppose twenty or thirty pieces handsomely placed, will gain the point.

Sir H. Thou dearest friend to a man in necessity.—

Here, sirrah, order my coach about to St. James's; I'll walk across the park. [To his Servant.

Enter CLINCHER, Senior.

Clin. sen. Here, sirrah, order my coach about to St. James's, I'll walk across the park too—Mr. Vizard, your most devoted—Sir, [To Sir H.] I admire the mode of your dress-knot; [methinks it very emphatically carries an air of travel in it; your sword-knot too is most ornamentally modish, and bears a foreign mien.

Gentlemen, my brother is just arriv'd in town; So that being upon the wing to kiss his hands, I hope you'll pardon the abrupt departure of, Gentlemen, your most devoted, and most faithful humble servant. [Exit.

Sir H. Pr'ythee, dost know him?

Viz. Know him! Why, 'tis Clincher, who was apprentice to my uncle Smuggler, the merchant in the city.

Sir H. What makes him so gay?

Viz. Why, he's in mourning.

Sir H. In mourning!

Viz. Yes, for his father. The kind old man in Hertfordshire t'other day broke his neck a fox-hunting; the son upon the news has broke his indentures, whipped from behind the counter into the side-box, and now talks of nothing but wines, intrigues, plays, fashions, and going to the jubilee.

Sir H. Ha, ha, ha! how many pounds of mareschal must the fellow use in sweetening himself from the smell of hops and tobacco?—But now for Angelica, that's her name: we'll to the coffee-house, where you shall write my passport. *Allons.* [Exit.

SCENE II. LADY LUREWELL'S Lodgings.

Enter LUREWELL and PARLEY.

Lure. Parley, my pocket-book—let me see—Madrid, Venice, Paris, London!—Ay, London! they may talk what they will of the hot countries, but I find love

most fruitful under this climate—in a month's space have I gained—let me see, *imprimis*, colonel Standard.

Par. And how will your ladyship manage him?

Lure. As all soldiers should be managed; he shall serve me till I gain my ends, then I'll disband him.

Par. But he loves you, madam.

Lure. Therefore I scorn him; I hate all that don't love me, and slight all that do. My unwary innocence was wronged by faithless man; but now—let me survey my captives. The colonel leads the van; next Mr. Vizard, he courts me out of the practice of piety, therefore is a hypocrite; then Clincher, he adores me with orangerée, and is consequently a fool; then my old merchant, alderman Smuggler, he's a compound of both;—out of which medley of lovers, if I don't make good diversion—what d'ye think, Parley?

Par. I can't be persuaded though, madam, but that you really loved sir Harry Wildair in Paris.

Lure. Of all the lovers I ever had, he was my greatest plague, for I could never make him uneasy: I left him involved in a duel upon my account: I long to know whether the fop be killed or not. O Lord! no sooner talk of killing, but the soldier is conjured up.

Enter COLONEL STANDARD.

You're upon hard duty, colonel, to serve your king, your country, and a mistress too.

Stand. I once, madam, hoped the honour of defending you from all injuries, through a title to your lovely person, but now my love must attend my fortune. My commission, madam, was my passport to the fair; 'twas once the life of honour, but now its winding-sheet, and with it must my love be buried.

Par. What! disbanded, colonel?

Stand. Yes, Mrs. Parley.

Par. Faugh, the nauseous fellow! poverty in his looks already.

[*Aside.*

Lure. His misfortune troubles me.

Stand. I'll choose, madam, rather to destroy my passion by absence abroad, than have it starved at home.

Lure. I'm sorry, sir, you have so mean an opinion of my affection, as to imagine it founded upon your fortune. And to convince you of your mistake, here I vow by all that's sacred, I own the same affection now as before. Let it suffice, my fortune is considerable.

Stand. No, madam, no; I'll never be a charge to her I love! the man that sells himself for gold, is the worst of prostitutes.

Lure. Now were he any other creature but a man, I could love him. [*Aside.*]

Stand. This only last request I make, that no title recommend a fool, no office introduce a knave, nor coat a coward, to my place in your affections; so farewell my country, and adieu my love. [*Exit.*]

Lure. Now the devil take thee for being so honourable. Here, Parley, call him back. [*Exit Parley*] I shall lose half my diversion else. Now for a trial of skill.

Re-enter PARLEY and COLONEL STANDARD.

Sir, I hope you'll pardon my curiosity: when do you take your journey?

Stand. To-morrow morning early, madam.

Lure. So suddenly! which way are you design'd to travel?

Stand. That I can't yet resolve on.

Lure. Pray, sir, tell me; pray, sir; I entreat you; why are you so obstinate?

Stand. Why are you so curious, madam?

Lure. Because——

Stand. What?

Lure. Because I, I——

Stand. Because what! madam?—Pray tell me.

Lure. Because I design to follow you. [*Crying.*]

Stand. Follow me! by all that's great, I ne'er was proud before. Follow me! What! expose thee to the hazards of a camp——Rather I'll stay, and here bear the contempt of fools, and worst of fortune.

Lure. You need not, shall not; my estate for both is sufficient.

Stand. Thy estate! no, I'll turn a knave, and purchase one myself; I'll cringe to the proud man I undermine, and fawn on him that I would bite to death; I'll tip my tongue with flattery, and smooth my face with smiles; I'll turn informer, office broker, nay coward, to be great, and sacrifice it all to thee, my generous fair.

Lure. And I'll dissemble, lie, swear, jilt, any thing, but I'll reward thy love, and recompense thy noble passion.

Stand. Sir Harry, ha, ha, ha! poor sir Harry, ha, ha, ha! rather kiss her hand, than the pope's toe, ha, ha, ha!

Lure. What sir Harry, colonel? What sir Harry?

Stand. Sir Harry Wildair, madam.

Lure. What! is he come over?

Stand. Ay, and he told me—but I don't believe a syllable on't.

Lure. What did he tell you?

Stand. Only called you his mistress, and pretending to be extravagant in your commendation, would vainly insinuate the praise of his own judgment and good fortune in a choice——

Lure. How easily is the vanity of fops tickled by our sex!

Stand. Why, your sex is the vanity of fops. |

Lure. On my conscience, I believe so. This gentleman, because he danced well, I pitched on for a partner at a ball in Paris, and ever since he has so persecuted me with letters, songs, dances, serenading, flattery, foppery, and noise, that I was forced to fly the kingdom——and I warrant you, he made you jealous.

Stand. Faith, madam, I was a little uneasy.

Lure. You shall have a plentiful revenge; I'll send him back all his foolish letters, songs and verses, and you yourself shall carry 'em; 'twill afford you opportunity of triumphing, and free me from his further impertinence; for of all men he's my aversion. I'll run and fetch them instantly.—— [Exit.

Stand. Dear madam, a rare project! How shall I bait him like Actæon with his own dogs?—Well, Mrs.

Parley, it is ordered by act of parliament, that you receive no more pieces, Mrs. Parley.—

Par. 'Tis provided by the same act, that you send no more messages, good colonel; you must not pretend to send any more letters, unless you can pay the postage.

Stand. Come, come, don't be mercenary; take example by your lady, be honourable.

Par. Alack-a-day, sir! it shows as ridiculous and haughty for us to imitate our betters in their honour, as in their finery; leave honour to nobility that can support it: we poor folks, colonel, have no pretence to't. [Exit.

Stand. 'Tis one of the greatest curses of poverty, to be the jest of chambermaids!

Re-enter LUREWELL.

Lure. Here's the packet, colonel; the whole magazine of love's artillery. [Gives him the Packet.

Stand. Which since I have gained, I will turn upon the enemy. Madam, I'll bring you the news of my victory this evening. Poor sir Harry, ha, ha, ha!

[Exeunt.

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. CLINCHER, Junior's Lodgings.

Enter CLINCHER, Junior, reading a Letter, DICKY following.

Clin. jun. [Reads] Dear Brother,—I will see you presently; I have sent this lad to wait on you; he can instruct you in the fashions of the town; I am your affectionate brother, CLINCHER.—Very well, and what's your name, sir?

Dicky. My name is Dicky, sir.

Clin. jun. Dicky!

Dicky. Ay, Dicky, sir.

Clin. jun. Very well, a pretty name! And what can you do, Mr. Dicky?

Dicky. Why, sir, I can dress hair, and carry a billet-doux.

Clin. jun. A billet-doux, pray, what's that?

Dicky. Why, a billet-doux is a kind of penny-post letter.

Enter CLINCHER, Senior.

Clin. sen. Brother, you're welcome to Londou.

Clin. jun. I thought, brother, you owed so much to the memory of my father, as to wear mourning for his death.

Clin. sen. Why, so I do, fool; I wear this because I have the estate, and you wear that because you have not the estate. You have cause to mourn indeed, brother. Well, brother, I'm glad to see you, fare you well. [*Going.*]

Clin. jun. Stay, stay, brother; where are you going?

Clin. sen. How natural it is for a country booby to ask impertinent questions. Harkye, sir, is not my father dead?

Clin. jun. Ay, ay, to my sorrow.

Clin. sen. No matter for that, he's dead; and am not I a young extravagant English heir?

Clin. jun. Very right, sir.

Clin. sen. Why then, sir, you may be sure that I am going to the jubilee, sir.

Clin. jun. Jubilee! What's that?

Clin. sen. Jubilee. Why the jubilee is—faith, I don't know what it is: do you know, Dicky?

Dicky. Why, the jubilee is the same thing with our lord mayor's day in the city; there will be pageants, and squibs, and raree shows, and all that, sir.

Clin. jun. And must you go so soon, brother?

Clin. sen. Yes, sir, for I must stay a month in Amsterdam, to study poetry.

Clin. jun. Then I suppose, brother, you travel through Muscovy to learn fashions, don't you, brother?

Clin. sen. Brother! Pr'ythee, Robin, don't call me brother; sir will do every jot as well.

Clin. jun. O Jupiter Ammon! why so?

Clin. sen. Because people will imagine that you have a spite at me.—But have you seen your cousin Angelica yet?

Clin. jun. No: my dancing-master has not been with me yet. How shall I salute them, brother?

Clin. sen. Pshaw! that's easy; 'tis only two scrapes, a kiss, and your humble servant. I'll tell you more when I come from the jubilee. Come along. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. LADY DARLING'S House.

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR with a Letter.

Sir H. Well, if this paper-kite flies sure, I'm secure of my game—humph! The prettiest *bordel* I have seen; a very stately genteel one. [*Footmen cross the Stage*] Hey-day! equipage too!—'Sdeath, I'm afraid I've mistaken the house.

Enter LADY DARLING.

No, this must be the old lady, by her gravity.

Darl. Your business, pray, sir?

Sir H. Pleasure, madam.

Darl. Then, sir, you have no business here.

Sir H. This letter, madam, will inform you farther; Mr. Vizard sent it, with his humble service to your ladyship.

Darl. How does my cousin, sir?

Sir H. Ay, her cousin too; that's right procreass again.

Darl. [*Reads*] Madam,—Earnest inclination to serve
—Sir Harry—Madam—Court my cousin—
Gentleman fortune—Your ladyship's most humble
servant, VIZARD.—Sir, your fortune and quality are
sufficient to recommend you any where; but what goes
farther with me, is the reoommendation of so sober
and pious a young gentleman as my cousin Vizard.

Sir H. A right sanctified old lady, o'my word.

Darl. Sir Harry, your conversation with Mr. Vizard argues you a gentleman, free from the loose and vicious carriage of the town; I'll therefore call my daughter.

[*Exit.*]

Sir H. She dresses up a sin so religiously, that the devil would hardly know it of his making.

Enter ANGELICA.

Sir H. O all ye powers of love! An angel! 'Sdeath, what money have I got in my pocket! I can't offer her less than twenty guineas—and by Jupiter she's worth a hundred!

Angel. 'Tis he. The very same! And his person as agreeable as his character of good humour—pray heaven his silence proceed from respect.

Sir H. How innocent she looks! How would that modesty adorn virtue, when it makes even vice look so charming!—By heaven there's such a commanding innocence in her looks, that I dare not ask the question.

Angel. Now all the charms of real love and feigned indifference assist me to engage his heart, for mine is lost already.

Sir H. Madam—I, I—I cannot speak to her—but she's a woman, and I will—madam, in short, I, I—O hypocrisy, hypocrisy, what a charming sin art thou!

Angel. He is caught; now to secure my conquest—I thought, sir, you had some business to communicate.

Sir H. Business to communicate! How nicely she words it! Yes, madam, I have a little business to communicate. Don't you love singing birds, madam?

Angel. That's an odd question for a lover—Yes, sir.

Sir H. Why then, madam, here is a nest of the prettiest goldfinches that ever chirped in a cage; twenty young ones, I assure you, madam.

Angel. Twenty young ones! what then, sir?

Sir H. Why then, madam, there are—twenty young ones—'Slife, I think twenty is pretty fair.

Angel. He's mad, sure—sir Harry, when you have learned more wit and manners, you shall be welcome here again. [Exit.

Sir H. Wit and manners! Egad, now I conceive there is a great deal of wit and manners in twenty guineas—I'm sure 'tis all the wit and manners I have about me at present. What shall I do?

Enter CLINCHER, Junior, and DICKY.

What the devil's here? Another cousin, I warrant ye! Hark'e, sir, can you lend me ten or a dozen guineas instantly? I'll pay you fifteen for them in three hours, upon my honour.

Clin. jun. These London sparks are plaguy impudent! 'This fellow, by his assurance, can be no less than a courtier.

Dicky. He's rather a courtier by his borrowing.

Clin. jun. Faith, sir, I ha'n't above five guineas about me.

Sir H. What business have you here then, sir? For to my knowledge twenty won't be sufficient.

Clin. jun. Sufficient! For what, sir?

Sir H. What, sir! Why, for that, sir; what the devil should it be, sir? I know your business, notwithstanding all your gravity, sir.

Clin. jun. My business! Why my cousin lives here.

Sir H. I know your cousin does live here, and Vizard's cousin, and every body's cousin—Hark'e, sir, I shall return immediately, and if you offer to touch her till I come back, I shall out your throat, rascal. [*Exit.*]

Clin. jun. Why the man's mad, sure!

Dicky. Mad, sir, ay; why he's a beau.

Clin. jun. A beau! What's that? Are all madmen beaux?

Dicky. No, sir; but most beaux are madmen. But now for your cousin: remember your three scrapes, a kiss, and your humble servant. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *The Street.*

Enter SIR HARRY, COLONEL STANDARD following.

Stand. Sir Harry, sir Harry!

Sir H. I'm in haste, colonel; besides, if you're in no better humour than when I parted with you in the park this morning, your company won't be very agreeable.

Stand. You're a happy man, sir Harry, who are never out of humour: can nothing move your gall, sir Harry?

Sir H. Nothing but impossibilities, which are the same as nothing.

Stand. What impossibilities?

Sir H. The resurrection of my father to disinherit me, or an act of parliament against wenching. A man of eight thousand pounds *per annum* to be vex'd! No, no; anger and spleen are companions for younger brothers.

Stand. Suppose one abused you behind your back.

Sir H. Why, then would I abuse him behind his back; so we're even.

Stand. But suppose you had lost a mistress.

Sir H. Why, then I would get another.

Stand. But suppose you were discarded by the woman you love.

Sir H. Colonel, my love is neither romantically honourable, nor meanly mercenary; 'tis only a pitch of gratitude; while she loves me, I love her; when she desists, the obligation's void.

Stand. But if the lady Lurewell (only suppose it) had discarded you—I say, only suppose it—and had sent your discharge by me.

Sir H. Pshaw! that's another impossibility.

Stand. Are you sure of that?

Sir H. Why, 'twere a solecism in nature. She dances with me, sings with me, plays with me, swears with me; in short, we are as like one another as a couple of guineas.

Stand. Now that I have raised you to the highest pinnacle of vanity, will I give you so mortifying a fall, as shall dash your hopes to pieces—I pray your honour to peruse these papers. [*Gives him the Packet.*]

Sir H. What is't, the muster-roll of your regiment, colonel?

Stand. No, no, 'tis a list of your forces in your last love campaign; and, for your comfort, all disbanded.

Sir H. Pr'ythee, good metaphorical colonel, what d'ye mean?

Stand. Read, sir, read; these are the sybil's leaves that will unfold your destiny.

Sir H. So it be not a false deed to cheat me of my estate, what care I?—[*Opening the Packet*] hump! my hand! To the lady Lurewell—To the lady Lurewell—To the lady Lurewell.—What the devil hast thou been tampering with, to conjure up these spirits?

Stand. A certain familiar of your acquaintance, sir. Read, read.

Sir H. [*Reads*]—*Madam, my passion—so natural—your beauty contending force of charms—mankind—eternal admirer, WILDAIR!*—I ne'er was ashamed of my name before.

Stand. What, sir Harry Wildair out of humour! ha, ha, ha! Poor sir Harry; more glory in her smile than in the jubilee at Rome, ha, ha, ha! But then her foot, sir Harry, she dances to a miracle! ha, ha, ha! Fie, sir Harry, a man of your parts write letters not worth keeping! What say'st thou, my dear knight errant? ha, ha, ha! you may seek adventures now indeed.

Sir H. [*Sings*] No, no, let her wander, &c.

Stand. You are jilted to some tune, sir; blown up with false music, that's all.

Sir H. Now, why should I be angry that a woman is a woman? Since inconstancy and falsehood are grounded in their natures, how can they help it?

Stand. Then they must be grounded in your nature, for she's a rib of you, sir Harry.

Sir H. Here's a copy of verses too; I must turn poet in the devil's name—stay—'Sdeath, what's here? This is her hand—O the charming characters! *My dear Wildair.* [*Reads*] That's I egad! *this huff bluff colonel*—that's he—*is the rarest fool in nature*—the devil he is!—*and as such have I used him*—with all my heart, faith—*I had no better way of letting you know that I lodged in St. James's.* LUREWELL.—Colonel, I am your most humble servant.

Stand. Hold, sir, you sha'n't go yet; I ha'n't delivered half my message.

Sir H. Upon my faith but you have, colonel.

Stand. Well, well, own your spleen; out with it, I know you're like to burst.

Sir H. I am so, egad! ha, ha, ha!

[*Laugh and point at one another.*]

Stand. Ay, with all my heart, ha, ha! Well, well, that's forced, sir Harry.

Sir H. I was never better pleased in all my life, by Jupiter.

Stand. Well, sir Harry, 'tis prudence to hide your concern, when there's no help for't:—But to be serious now. The lady has sent you back all your papers there. I was so just as not to look upon 'em.

Sir H. I'm glad on't sir; for there were some things that I would not have you see.

Stand. All this she has done for my sake, and I desire you would decline any farther pretensions for your own sake. So, honest, good natured sir Harry, I'm your humble servant. [Exit.

Sir H. Ha, ha, ha! poor colonel! O the delight of an ingenious mistress! what a life and briskness it adds to an amour, like the loves of mighty Jove, still suing in different shapes. A legerdemain mistress, who, presto! pass! and she's vanished, then hey! in an instant in your arms again. [Going.

Enter VIZARD.

Viz. Well met, sir Harry; what news from the Island of Love?

Sir H. Faith, we make but a broken voyage by your chart; but now I am bound for another port: I told you the colonel was my rival.

Viz. The colonel! curs'd misfortune! another! [Aside.

Sir H. But the civilest in the world; he brought me word where my mistress lodges: the story's too long to tell you now, for I must fly.

Viz. What! have you given over all thoughts of Angelica?

Sir H. No, no, I'll think of her some other time. But now for the lady Lurewell; wit and beauty calls.

That mistress ne'er can pall her lover's joys,

Whose wit can whet, whene'er her beauty cloy.

Her little amorous frauds all truths excel;

And make us happy, being deceiv'd so well. [Exit.

Viz. The colonel my rival too! how shall I manage? There is but one way—him and the knight will I set a tilting, where one cuts t'other's throat, and the survivor's hanged: so there will be two rivals pretty decently disposed of. [Exit.

SCENE IV. LUREWELL'S Lodgings.

LUREWELL and PARLEY.

Lure. Has my servant brought me the money from my merchant?

Par. No, madam; he met alderman Smuggler at Charing-cross, who has promised to wait on you himself immediately.

Lure. 'Tis odd that this old rogue should pretend to love me, and at the same time cheat me of my money.

Par. 'Tis well, madam, if he don't cheat you of your estate; for you say the writings are in his hands.

Lure. But what satisfaction can I get of him? Oh! here he comes.

Enter SMUGGLER.

Mr. Alderman, your servant; have you brought me any money, sir?

Smug. Faith, madam, trading is very dead; what with paying the taxes, raising the customs, losses at sea abroad, and maintaining our wives at home, the bank is reduced very low.

Lure. Come, come, sir, these evasions won't serve your turn; I must have money, sir—I hope you don't design to cheat me.

Smug. Cheat you, madam! have a care what you say: I'm an alderman, madam! Cheat you, madam! I have been an honest citizen these five and thirty years!

Lure. An honest citizen! bear witness, Parley! I shall trap him in more lies presently.—Come, sir, though I am a woman, I can take a course.

Smug. What course, madam? You'll go to law, will ye? I can maintain a suit of law, be it right or wrong, these forty years, I am sure of that, thanks to the honest practice of the courts. But, madam, I have brought you about a hundred and fifty guineas, (a great deal of money as times go) and—

Lure. Come, give 'em me.

Smug. Ah! that hand, that hand, that pretty soft, white—I have brought it, you see; but the condition of the obligation is such, that whereas that leering eye, that pouting lip, that pretty soft hand, that—you understand me; you understand, I am sure you do, you little rogue—

Lure. Here's a villain now, so covetous, that he

would bribe me with my own money. I'll be revenged—Well, Mr. Alderman, you have such pretty winning ways, that I will, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Smug. Will you, indeed, he, he, he! my little coquette, and when? and where? and how?

Lure. 'Twill be a difficult point, sir, to secure both our honours; you must therefore be disguised, Mr. Alderman.

Smug. Pshaw! I'm disguised as I am; our sanctity is all outside, all hypocrisy.

Lure. No man is seen to come into this house after night-fall; you must therefore sneak in, when 'tis dark, in woman's clothes.

Smug. With all my heart.—I have a suit on purpose, my little coquette: I love to be disguised, I make a very handsome woman.

Enter Servant, whispers LUREWELL, and exit.

Lure. Oh! Mr. Alderman, shall I beg you to walk into the next room? here are some strangers coming up.

Smug. Buss and guinea first. [Exit.

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir H. My life, my soul, my all that heaven can give!

Lure. Death's life with thee, without thee death to live. Welcome, my dear sir Harry; I see you got my directions.

Sir H. Directions! In the most charming manner, thou dear Machiavel of intrigue.

Lure. Still brisk and airy, I find, sir Harry.

Sir H. The sight of you, madam, exalts my air, and makes joy lighten in my face.

Lure. I have a thousand questions to ask you, sir Harry. What gallantries are carrying on in the *beau monde*?

Sir H. I should ask you that question, madam, since your ladyship makes the *beau monde* wherever you come.

Lure. Ah! sir Harry, I've been almost ruined, pes-

tered to death here, by the incessant attacks of a mighty colonel; he has besieged me.

Sir H. I hope your ladyship did not surrender though.

Lure. No, no; but was forced to capitulate; but since you are come to raise the siege, we'll dance, and sing, and laugh.

Sir H. And love.

Lure. Would you marry me, sir Harry?

Sir H. Why, marriage is the devil!—But I will marry you.

Lure. Your word, sir, is not to be relied on; if a gentleman will forfeit his honour in dealings of business, we may reasonably suspect his fidelity in an amour.

Sir H. My honour in dealings of business! why, madam, I never had any business all my life.

Lure. Yes, sir Harry, I have heard a very odd story, and am sorry that a gentleman of your figure should undergo the scandal.

Sir H. Out with it, madam.

Lure. Why, the merchant, sir, that transmitted your bills of exchange to you in France, complains of some indirect and dishonourable dealings.

Sir H. Who, old Smuggler?

Lure. Ay, ay, you know him, I find.

Sir H. I have some reason, I think; why, the rogue has cheated me of above five hundred pounds within these three years.

Lure. 'Tis your business then to acquit yourself publicly; for he spreads the scandal every where.

Sir H. Acquit myself publicly!—Here, sirrah.

Enter Servant.

My coach; I'll drive instantly into the city, and cane the old villain round the Royal Exchange.

Lure. Why, he is in the house now, sir.

Sir H. What, in this house?

Lure. Ay, in the next room.

Sir H. Then, sirrah, lend me your cudgel.

[*Exit Servant.*

Lure. Sir Harry, you won't raise a disturbance in my house?

Sir H. Disturbance, madam, no, no; I'll beat him with the temper of a philosopher. Here, Mrs. Parley, show me the gentleman. *[Exit with Parley.]*

Lure. Now shall I get the old monster well beaten, and sir Harry pestered next term with bloodsheds, batteries, costs and damages, solicitors and attorneys; and if they don't teaze him out of his good humour, I'll never plot again. *[Exit.]*

SCENE V. *Another Room in the same House.*

Enter SMUGGLER.

Smug. Oh, this damn'd tide-waiter! A ship and cargo worth five thousand pounds! why, 'tis richly worth five hundred perjuries.

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir H. Dear Mr. Alderman, I'm your most devoted and humble servant.

Smug. My best friend sir Harry, you're welcome to England.

Sir H. I'll assure you, sir, there's not a man in the king's dominions I am gladder to meet, dear, dear Mr. Alderman. *[Bowling very low.]*

Smug. O lord, sir, you travellers have the most obliging ways with you.

Sir H. There is a business, Mr. Alderman, fallen out, which you may oblige me infinitely by—I am very sorry that I am forced to be troublesome; but necessity, Mr. Alderman.

Smug. Ay, sir, as you say, necessity—But upon my word, sir, I am very short of money at present, but—

Sir H. That's not the matter, sir; I'm above an obligation that way; but the business is, I'm reduced to an indispensable necessity of being obliged to you for a beating—Here, take this cane.

Smug. A beating, sir Harry! ha, ha, ha! I beat a knight baronet! an alderman turn oudgel-player! ha, ha, ha!

Sir H. Upon my word, sir, you must beat me, or I'll beat you; take your choice.

Smug. Pshaw! pshaw! you jest.

Sir H. Nay, 'tis sure as fate: so, alderman, I hope you'll pardon my curiosity. *[Strikes him.]*

Smug. Curiosity! Dence take your curiosity, sir; what d'ye mean?

Sir H. Nothing at all; I'm but in jest, sir.

Smug. O, I can take any thing in jest! but a man might imagine by the smartness of the stroke, that you were in downright earnest.

Sir H. Not in the least, sir; *[Strikes him]* not in the least, indeed, sir.

Smug. Pray, good sir, no more of your jests, for they are the bluntest jests that ever I knew.

Sir H. *[Strikes]* I heartily beg you pardon, with all my heart, sir.

Smug. Pardon, sir! well, sir, that is satisfaction enough from a gentleman: but seriously now, if you pass any more of your jests upon me, I shall grow angry.

Sir H. I humbly beg your permission to break one or two more. *[Strikes him.]*

Smug. O Lord, sir, you'll break my bones: Are you mad, sir? murder, felony, manslaughter! *[Falls down.]*

Sir H. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons; but I am absolutely compelled to't, upon my honour, sir: nothing can be more averse to my inclinations, than to jest with my honest, dear, loving, obliging friend, the alderman.

[Striking him all this while, Smuggler tumbles over and over, shakes out his Pocket-book on the floor; Lurewell enters, takes it up.]

Lure. The old rogue's pocket-book, this may be of use. *[Aside]* O lord, sir Harry's murdering the poor old man——

Smug. O dear madam, I was beaten in jest, till I am murdered in good earnest.

Lure. Well, well, I'll bring you off, seigneur—*frappez, frappez!*

Smug. O! for charity's sake, madam, rescue a poor citizen.

Lure. O you barbarous man! hold! hold! *frappez plus rudement. Frappez!* I wonder you are not ashamed. [*Holding Sir H.*] A poor reverend honest elder.—[*Helps Smuggler up*] It makes me weep to see him in this condition, poor man!—Now deuce take you, sir Harry—for not beating him harder. Well, my dear, you shall come at night, and I'll make you amends. [*Here Sir Harry takes Snuff.*]

Smug. Madam, I will have amends before I leave the place. Sir, how durst you use me thus?

Sir H. Sir?

Smug. Sir, I say that I will have satisfaction.

Sir H. With all my heart. [*Throws Snuff in his Eyes.*]

Smug. O! murder, blindness, fire! O madam, madam, get me some water! water, fire, water!

[*Exit with Lurewell.*]

Sir H. How pleasant is resenting an injury without passion! 'Tis the beauty of revenge.

Let statesmen plot, and under business groan,
And settling public quiet, lose their own;
I make the most of life, no hour mispend,
Pleasure's the mean, and pleasure is my end.
No spleen, no trouble shall my time destroy,
Life's but a span, I'll every inch enjoy. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. *The Street.*

Enter STANDARD and VIZARD.

Stand. I bring him word where she lodged! I the civillest rival in the world! 'Tis impossible.

Viz. I shall urge it no further, sir. I only thought, sir, that my character in the world might add authority to my words without so many repetitions.

Stand. Pardon me, dear *Vizard*. Our belief struggles hard before it can be brought to yield to the disadvantage of what we love.—But what said sir *Harry*?

Viz. He pitied the poor credulous colonel, laughed heartily. Flew away with all the raptures of a bridegroom, repeating these lines,

A mistress ne'er can pall her lover's joys,
Whose wit can whet, whene'er her beauty cloy.

Stand. A mistress ne'er can pall! By all my wrongs I'm made their dupe. Vengeance! *Vizard*, you must carry a note for me to sir *Harry*.

Viz. What! a challenge! I hope you don't design to fight?—

Stand. What? wear the livery of my king, and pocket an affront! 'twere an abuse to his sacred majesty; a soldier's sword, Vizard, should start of itself to redress its master's wrong.

Viz. However, sir, I think it not proper for me to carry any such message between friends.

Stand. I have ne'er a servant here; what shall I do?

Viz. There's Tom Errand, the porter, that plies at the Blue Posts, one who knows sir Harry and his haunts very well, you may send a note by him.

Stand. Here, you, friend.

Viz. I have now some business, and must take my leave; I would advise you, nevertheless, against this affair.

Stand. No whispering now, nor telling friends to prevent us. He that disappoints a man of an honourable revenge, may love him foolishly like a wife, but never value him as a friend.

Viz. Nay, the devil take him that parts you, say I.

[*Exit.*]

Enter TOM ERRAND, running.

Err. Did your honour call porter?

Stand. Is your name Tom Errand?

Err. People call me so, an't like your worship—

Stand. Do you know sir Harry Wildair?

Err. Ay, very well, sir; he's one of my best masters; many a round half-crown have I had of his worship; he's newly come home from France, sir.

Stand. Go to the next coffee-house, and wait for me.

[*Exit Errand.*] O woman, woman, how blest is man, when favoured by your smiles, and how accursed when all those smiles are found but wanton baits to sooth us to destruction!

[*Exit.*]

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR, and CLINCHER, Senior, following.

Clinch. sen. Sir, sir, sir, having some business of importance to communicate to you, I would beg your

attention to a trifling affair that I would impart to your understanding.

Sir H. What is your trifling business of importance, pray, sweet sir.

Clinch, sen. Pray, sir, are the roads deep between this and Paris?

Sir H. Why that question, sir?

Clinch, sen. Because I design to go to the jubilee, sir; I understand that you are a traveller, sir; there is an air of travel in the tie of your cravat, sir—there is, indeed, sir—I suppose, sir, you bought this lace in Flanders?

Sir H. No, sir, this lace was made in Norway.

Clinch, sen. Norway, sir!

Sir H. Yes, sir, of the shavings of deal boards.

Clinch, sen. That's very strange now, faith—lace made of the shavings of deal-boards! Egad, sir, you travellers see very strange things abroad, very incredible things abroad, indeed. Well, I'll have a cravat of the very same lace before I come home.

Sir H. But, sir, what preparations have you made for your journey?

Clinch, sen. A case of pocket pistols for the bravos—and a swimming-girdle.

Sir H. Why these, sir?

Clinch, sen. O Lord! Sir, I'll tell you—suppose us in Rome now; away goes I to some ball—for I'll be a mighty beau. Then, as I said, I go to some ball, or some bear-baiting, 'tis all one you know—then comes a fine Italian Bona Roba, and plucks me by the sleeve, signior Angle, signior Angle—she's a very fine lady, observe that—Signior Angle, says she—Signora, says I, and trips after her to the corner of a street, suppose it Russel-street here, or any other street; then you know, I must invite her to the tavern, I can do no less. There up comes her bravo; the Italian grows saucy, and I give him an English donse of the face. I can box, sir, box tightly; I was a 'prentice, sir,—but then, sir, he whips out his stiletto, and I whips out my bulldog—slaps him through, trips down stairs, turns the

corner of Russel-street again, and whips me into the ambassador's train, and there I'm as safe as a beau in a side-box.

Sir H. Is your pistol charged, sir?

Clin. sen. Only a brace of bullets, that's all, sir.

Sir H. 'Tis a very fine pistol, truly; pray let me see it.

Clin. sen. With all my heart, sir.

Sir H. Hark'e, Mr. Jubilee, can you digest a brace of bullets?

Clin. sen. O by no means in the world, sir.

Sir H. I'll try the strength of your stomach, however—sir, you're a dead man.

[*Presenting the Pistol to his Breast.*]

Clin. sen. Consider, dear sir! I am going to the jubilee; when I come home again, I am a dead man at your service.

Sir H. O very well, sir! but take heed you are not so choleric for the future.

Clin. sen. Choleric, sir! Oons! I design to shoot seven Italians a week, sir.

Sir H. Sir, you won't have provocation.

Clin. sen. Provocation, sir! Zauns, sir, I'll kill any man for treading upon my corns, and there will be a devilish throng of people there; they say that all the princes in Italy will be there.

Sir H. And all the fops and fools in Europe—But the use of your swimming-girdle, pray, sir?

Clin. sen. O Lord, sir! That's easy. Suppose the ship cast away; now, whilst other foolish people are busy at their prayers, I whip on my swimming-girdle, clap a month's provision into my pocket, and sails me away like an egg in a duck's belly.—And hark'e, sir, I have a new project in my head. Where d'ye think my swimming-girdle shall carry me upon this occasion? 'Tis a new project.

Sir H. Where, sir?

Clin. sen. To Civita Vecchia, faith and troth, and so save the charges of my passage. Well, sir, you must pardon me now, I'm going to see my mistress. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. LADY DARLING'S House.

Enter DARLING, CLINCHER, Junior, and DICKY.

Darl. This is my daughter, cousin.

Dicky. Now, sir, remember your three scrapes.

Clin. jun. [*Saluting Angelica*]—One, two, three, your humble servant. Was not that right, Dicky?

Dicky. Ay, faith, sir, but why don't you speak to her?

Clin. jun. I beg your pardon, Dicky, I know my distance. Would you have me speak to a lady at the first sight?

Dicky. Ay, sir, by all means; the first aim is the surest.

Clin. jun. Now for a good jest, to make her laugh heartily.—By Jupiter Ammon I'll go give her a kiss.

[*Goes towards her.*]

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR, interposing.

Sir H. 'Tis all to no purpose, I told you so before: your pitiful five guineas will never do—you may go, I'll outbid you.

Clin. jun. What the devil! the madman's here again.

Darl. Bless me, cousin! what d'ye mean? Affront a gentleman of his quality in my house!

Clin. jun. Quality—Why, madam, I don't know what you mean by your madmen, and your beaux, and your quality—they are all alike, I believe.

Darl. Pray, sir, walk with me into the next room.

[*Exeunt Darling and Clincher, Dicky follows.*]

Angel. Sir, if your conversation be no more agreeable than 'twas the last time, I would advise you to make your visit as short as you can.

Sir H. The offences of my last visit, madam, bore their punishment in the commission: and have made me as uneasy till I receive pardon, as your ladyship can be till I sue for it.

Angel. Sir Harry, I did not well understand the offence, and must therefore proportion it to the greatness of your apology; if you would therefore have me think it light, take no great pains in an excuse.

Sir H. How sweet must the lips be that guard that tongue! then, madam, no more of past offences, let us prepare for joys to come; let this seal my pardon. [*Kisses her Hand*] And this [*again*] initiate me to farther happiness.

Angel. Hold, sir—one question, sir Harry, and pray answer plainly—d'ye love me?

Sir H. Love you! Does fire ascend? Do hypocrites dissemble, usurers love gold, or great men flatter? Doubt these, then question that I love.

Angel. This shows your gallantry, sir, but not your love.

Sir H. View your own charms, madam, then judge my passion; your beauty ravishes my eye, your voice my ear, and your touch has thrilled my melting soul.

Angel. If your words be real, 'tis in your power to raise an equal flame in me.

Sir H. Nay, then—I seize—

Angel. Hold, sir, 'tis also possible to make me detest and scorn you worse than the most profligate of your deceiving sex.

Sir H. Ha! A very odd turn this. I hope, madam, you only affect anger, because you know your frowns are becoming.

Angel. Sir Harry, you being the best judge of your own designs, can best understand whether my anger should be real or dissembled; think what strict modesty should bear, then judge of my resentments.

Sir H. Strict modesty should bear! Why faith, madam, I believe, the strictest modesty may bear fifty guineas, and I don't believe 'twill bear one farthing more.

Angel. What d'ye mean, sir?

Sir H. Nay, madam, what do you mean? if you go to that. I think now fifty guineas is a fine offer for your strict modesty, as you call it.

Angel. 'Tis more charitable, sir Harry, to charge the impertinence of a man of your figure on his defect in understanding, than on his want of manuers. I'm afraid you're mad, sir.

Sir H. Why, madam, you're enough to make any man mad. 'Sdeath! are you not a—

Angel. What, sir?

Sir H. Why, a lady of—strict modesty, if you will have it so.

Angel. I shall never hereafter trust common report, which represented you, sir, a man of honour, wit, and breeding; for I find you very deficient in them all three. | [Exit.

Enter VIZARD.

Viz. Ah! sir Harry, have I caught you? Well, and what success?

Sir H. Success! 'tis a shame for you young fellows in town here, to let the wenches grow so saucy: I offered her fifty guineas, and she was in her airs presently, and flew away in a huff. I could have had a brace of countesses in Paris for half the money, and *je vous remercie* into the bargain.

Viz. Gone in her airs, say you! and did not you follow her?

Sir H. Whither should I follow her?

Viz. Into her bed-chamber, man; she went on purpose. You a man of gallantry, and not understand that a lady's best pleased when she puts on her airs, as you call it.

Sir H. She talked to me of strict modesty and stuff.

Viz. Certainly. Most women magnify their modesty, for the same reason that cowards boast their courage, because they have least on't. Come, come, sir Harry, when you make your next assault, encourage your spirits with brisk Burgundy: if you succeed, 'tis well; if not, you have a fair excuse for your rudeness. I'll go in, and make your peace for what's past. Oh! I had almost forgot.—Colonel Standard wants to speak with you about some business.

Sir H. I'll wait upon him presently: d'ye know where he may be found?

Viz. In the piazza of Covent-garden, about an hour hence, I promised to see him; and there you may meet

him—to have your throat cut. [*Aside*] I'll go in and intercede for you.

Sir H. But no foul play with the lady, Vizard. [*Exit.*
 Viz. No—fair play, I can assure you. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Street before LUREWELL'S Lodgings.

Enter STANDARD.

Stand. How weak is reason in disputes of love! That daring reason, which so oft pretends to question works of high Omnipotence, yet poorly truckles to our weakest passions, and yields implicit faith to foolish love, paying blind zeal to faithless women's eyes. I've heard her falsehood with such pressing proofs that I no longer should distrust it; yet still my love would baffle demonstration, and make impossibilities seem probable. [*Looks up*] Ha! that fool too! What, stoop so low as that animal?—"Tis true; women once fallen, like cowards in despair, will stick at nothing; there's no medium in their actions. They must be bright as angels, or black as fiends. But now for my revenge, I'll kick my rival before her face, curse the whole sex, and leave her. [*Goes in.*

SCENE IV. *A Dining-Room.*

Enter LUREWELL and CLINCHER, Senior.

Lure. O Lord, sir, it is my husband! What will become of you?

Clin. sen. Ah! your husband! Oh, I shall be murdered! What shall I do? Where shall I run? I'll creep into an oven; I'll climb up the chimney; I'll fly; I'll swim—I wish to the Lord I were at the jubilee now.

Lure. Can't you think of any thing, sir?

Clin. sen. Think! not I; I never could think to any purpose in my life.

Enter TOM ERRAND.

Lure. What do you want, sir?

Err. Madam, I am looking for sir Harry Wildair;

I saw him come in here this morning; and did imagine he might be here still, if he is not gone.

Lure. A lucky hit! Here, friend, change clothes with this gentleman, quickly, strip.

Clin. sen. Ay, ay, quickly strip: I'll give you half a crown to hoot. Come here; so. [*They change Clothes.*]

Lure. Now slip you [*To Clincher*] down stairs, and wait at the door till my husband be gone; and get you in there [*To the Porter*] till I call you.

[*Puts Errand in the next Room.*]

Enter STANDARD.

Oh, sir! are you come? I wonder, sir, how you have the confidence to approach me after so base a triok?

Stand. O madam! all your artifices won't avail.

Lure. Nay, sir, your artifices won't avail. I thought, sir, that I gave you caution enough against troubling me with sir Harry Wildair's company when I sent his letters back by you; yet you, forsooth, must tell him where I lodged, and expose me again to his impertinent courtship!

Stand. I expose you to his courtship!

Lure. I'll lay my life you'll deny it now. Come, come, sir; a pitiful lie is as scandalous to a red coat as an oath to a black.

Stand. You're all lies: first, your heart is false; your eyes are double; one look belies another; and then your tongue does contradict them all—madam, I see a little devil just now hammering out a lie in your pericranium.

Lure. O my conscience, he's in the right ou't. [*Aside.*]

Stand. I exposed you to the court of your fool, Clincher, too; I hope your female wiles will impose that upon me also—

Lure. Clincher! Nay now you're stark mad. I know no such person.

Stand. O woman in perfection! Not know him? 'Slife, madam, can my eyes, my piercing jealous eyes, be so deluded? Nay, madam, my nose could not mistake him; for I smelt the fop by his *putvilio* from the balcony down to the street.

Lure. The balcony! ha, ha, ha! the balcony! I'll be hanged but he has mistaken sir Harry Wildair's footman with a new French livery for a bean.

Stand. 'Sdeath, madam, did not I see him?

Lure. No, you could not see him; you're dreaming, colonel. Will you believe your eyes, now that I have rubbed them open?—Here, you friend. |

Enter ERRAND, in CLINCHER Senior's Clothes.

Stand. This is illusion all; my eyes conspire against themselves. 'Tis legerdemain.

Lure. *Legerdemain!* is that all your acknowledgment for your rude behaviour?—Oh, what a curse it is to love as I do!—Begone, sir, [*To the Porter*] to your impertinent master, and tell him I shall never be at leisure to receive any of his troublesome visits.—Send to me to know when I should be at home! [*Exit Errand*] I am sure he has made me an unfortunate woman. [*Weeps.*]

Stand. Nay, then there is no certainty in nature; and truth is only falsehood well disguised.

Lure. Sir, had not I owned my fond foolish passion, I should not have been subject to such unjust suspicions: but it is an ungrateful return. [*Weeping.*]

Stand. I hope, madam, you'll pardon me, since jealousy, that magnified my suspicion, is as much the effect of love, as my easiness in being satisfied.

Lure. Easiness in being satisfied! No, no, sir; cherish your suspicions, and feed upon your jealousy: 'tis fit meat for your squeamish stomach.

With me all women should this rule pursue:

Who think us false, should never find us true.

[*Exit in a Rage.*]

Enter CLINCHER, Senior, in the Porter's Clothes.

Clin. sen. Well, intriguing is the prettiest, pleasantest thing! How shall we laugh at the husband, when he is gone?—To make a colonel a cuckold! 'twill be rare news for the alderman.

Stand. All this sir Harry has occasioned; but he is

brave, and will afford me a just revenge.—O! this is the porter I sent the challenge by.—Well, sir, have you found him?

Clin. sen. What the devil does he mean now?

Stand. Have you given sir Harry the note, fellow?

Clin. sen. The note! what note?

Stand. The letter, blockhead, which I sent by you to sir Harry Wildair; have you seen him?

Clin. sen. O Lord! what shall I say now? Seen him? Yes, sir—no, sir.—I have, sir—I have not, sir.

Stand. The fellow's mad. Answer me directly, sirrah, or I'll break your head.

Clin. sen. I know sir Harry very well, sir; but as to the note, sir, I can't remember a word ou't: truth is, I have a very bad memory.

Stand. O sir, I'll quicken your memory. [*Strikes him.*]

Clin. sen. Zauns, sir, hold!—I did give him the note.

Stand. And what answer?

Clin. sen. I mean I did not give him the note.

Stand. What, d'ye banter, rascal? [*Strikes him again.*]

Clin. sen. Hold, sir, hold! He did send an answer.

Stand. What was't, villain?

Clin. sen. Why, he sent his service to you; truly, sir, I had forgot it: I told you that I had a very treacherous memory.

Stand. I'll engage, you shall remember me this month, rascal. [*Beats him off, and exit.*]

Re-enter CLINCHER, Senior.

Clin. sen. Ah! the devil take all intriguing, say I, and him who first invented canes.—That cursed colonel has got such a knack of beating his men, that he has left the mark of a collar of bandileers about my shoulders.

Enter LUREWELL and PARLEY.

Lure. O my poor gentleman! And was it beaten?

Clin. sen. Yes, I have been beaten. But where's my clothes? my clothes?

Lure. What, you won't leave me so soon, my dear; will ye?

Clin. sen. Will ye? If ever I peep into a colonel's tent again, may I be forced to run the gauntlet.—But my clothes, madam.

Lure. I sent the porter down stairs with them. Did not you meet him?

Clin. sen. Meet him! No, not I.

Par. No! He went out of the back-door, and is run clear away, I'm afraid.

Clin. sen. Gone, say you! and with my clothes! my fine jubilee clothes!—O, the rogue! the thief!—I'll have him hanged for murder!—But how shall I get home in this pickle?

Par. I'm afraid, sir, the colonel will be back presently, for he dines at home.

Clin. sen. Oh, then I must sneak off!

Was ever such an unfortunate beau,
To have his coat well thrash'd, and lose his coat also?

[Exit.

Par. Methinks, madam, that the injnries you have suffered by men may be very great, yet your anger should be only confined to the author of your wrongs.

Lure. The author! Alas, I know him not!

Par. Not know him!

Lure. Twelve years ago, I lived at my father's house in Oxfordshire, blest with innocence, the ornamental, but weak guard of blooming beauty. Then it happened, that three young gentlemen from the university being benighted and strangers, called at my father's. He was very glad of their company, and offered them the entertainment of his house. Two of them had a heavy, pedantic, university air; but the third!—

Par. Ah! the third, madam;—the third.

Lure. My father was so well pleased with his conversation, that he begged their company next day; they consented, and next night, Parley—he bribed my maid, with his gold, out of her honesty; and me, with his rhetoric, out of my honour.

Par. The old bait! the old bait!—I was cheated just so myself. [Aside] But had not you the wit to know his name all this while?

Lure. Alas! what wit had innocence like mine? He told me, that he was under an obligation to his companions of concealing himself then, but that he would write to me in two days, and let me know his name and quality. After all the binding oaths of constancy, I gave him a ring with this motto, *love and honour*; then we parted, but I never saw the dear deceiver more.

Par. No, nor never will, I warrant you.—But don't you still love this dear dissembler?

Lure. Most certainly: 'tis love of him that keeps my anger warm. Go, get me pen and ink; I must write to Vizard. [Exit Parley.

Fortune, this once assist me as before;

Two such machines can never work in vain,

As thy propitious wheel, and my projecting brain.

[Exit.

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. *Covent-Garden.*

SIR HARRY WILDAIR and STANDARD meeting.

Stand. I thought, sir Harry, to have met you ere this in a more convenient place; but since my wrongs were without ceremony, my revenge shall be so too. Draw, sir!

Sir H. Draw, sir! what shall I draw?

Stand. Come, come, sir, I like your facetious humour well enough; it shows courage and unconcern. I know you're brave, and therefore use you thus. Draw your sword.

Sir H. Nay, to oblige you, I will draw; but the devil take me if I fight—Perhaps, colonel, this is the prettiest blade you have seen.

Stand. I doubt not but the arm is good; and therefore think both worth my resentment. Come, sir.

Sir H. But, pr'ythee, colonel, dost think that I am such a madman, as to send my soul to the devil, and body to the worms—upon every fool's errand. [*Aside.*

Stand. I hope you're no coward, sir.

Sir H. Coward, sir! I have eight thousand pounds a year, sir.

Stand. You fought in Flanders, to my knowledge.

Sir H. Ay, for the same reason that I wore a red coat; because 'twas fashionable.

Stand. Sir, you fought a French count in Paris.

Sir H. True, sir; but there was no danger of lands, nor tenements: besides, he was a beau, like myself. Now you're a soldier, colonel, and fighting's your trade; and I think it downright madness to contend with any man in his profession.

Stand. Come, sir, no more dallying: I shall take very unseemly methods, if you don't show yourself a gentleman.

Sir H. A gentleman? Why there again now. A gentleman! I tell you once more, colonel, that I am a baronet, and have eight thousand pounds a year. I can dance, sing, ride, fence, understand the languages. Now, I can't conceive, how running you through the body should contribute one jot more to my gentility. But pray, colonel, I had forgot to ask you, what's the quarrel?

Stand. A woman, sir.

Sir H. A woman!—Take her.

Stand. Sir, my honour's concerned.

Sir H. Nay, if your honour be concerned with a woman, get it out of her hands as soon as you can. An honourable lover is the greatest slave in nature; some will say, the greatest fool. Come, come, colonel, this is something about the lady Lurewell, I warrant; I can give you satisfaction in that affair.

Stand. Do so then immediately.

Sir H. Put up your sword first; you know I dare fight: but I had much rather make you a friend than an enemy. I can assure you, this lady will prove too hard for one of your temper. You have too much honour, too much in conscience, to be a favourite with the ladies.

Stand. I am assured, sir, she never gave you any encouragement—

Sir H. A man can never hear reason with a sword in his hand. Sheath your weapon; and then if I don't satisfy you, sheath it in my bosom.

Stand. Give me but demonstration of her granting you any favour, and it is enough.

Sir H. Will you take my word?

Stand. Pardon me, sir, I cannot.

Sir H. Will you believe your own eyes?

Stand. 'Tis ten to one whether I shall or no, they have deceived me already.

Sir H. That's hard—But some means I shall devise for your satisfaction.

Wife. [*Without*] Come, away with him!

Sir H. We must fly this place, else that cluster of mob will overwhelm us. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Mob, TOM ERRAND'S Wife hurrying in CLINCHER, Senior, in ERRAND'S Clothes.

Wife. Oh, the villain, the rogue, he has murdered my husband! Ah! my poor Timothy! [*Crying.*]

Clin. sen. Dem your Timothy!—your husband has murdered me, woman; for he has carried away my fine jubilee clothes.

Wife. Ay, you cut-throat, have you not got his clothes upon your back there?—Neighbours, don't you know poor Timothy's coat and apron?

Mob. Ay, ay, it is the same.

1 *Mob.* What shall we do with him, neighbours?

2 *Mob.* We'll pull him in pieces.

1 *Mob.* No, no; then we may be hanged for murder: but we'll drown him.

Clin. sen. Ah, good people, pray don't drown me; for I never learnt to swim in all my life. Ah, this plaguy intriguing!

Mob. Away with him; away with him to the Thames.

Clin. sen. Oh, if I had but my swimming-girdle now!

Enter Constable.

Const. Hold, neighbours; I command the peace.

Wife. Oh, Mr. Constable, here's a rogue that has murdered my husband, and robbed him of his clothes!

Const. Murder and robbery! then he must be a gentleman. Hands off there; he must not be abused.— Give an account of yourself. Are you a gentleman?

Clin. sen. No, sir, I am a beau.

Const. A beau! Then you have killed nobody, I'm persuaded. How came you by these clothes, sir?

Clin. sen. You must know, sir, that walking along, sir; I don't know how, sir; I can't tell where, sir; and so the porter and I changed clothes, sir.

Const. Very well! the man speaks reason, and like a gentleman.

Wife. But pray, Mr. Constable, ask him how he changed clothes with him.

Const. Silence, woman! and don't disturb the court.— Well, sir, how did you change clothes?

Clin. sen. Why, sir, he pulled off my coat, and I drew off his: so I put on his coat, and he put on mine.

Const. Why, neighbours, I don't find that he's guilty. Search him: and if he carries no arms about him, we'll let him go.

[*They search his Pockets, and pull out his Pistols.*]

Clin. sen. O Gemini! my jubilee pistols!

Const. What, a case of pistols! Then the case is plain. Speak, what are you, sir? Whence come you, and whither go you?

Clin. sen. Sir, I came from Russell-street, and am going to the jubilee.

Wife. You shall go to the gallows, you rogue.

Const. Away with him, away with him to Newgate, straight.

Clin. sen. I shall go to the jubilee now, indeed.

[*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR and STANDARD.

Sir H. In short, colonel, 'tis all nonsense. Fight for a woman! Hard by is the lady's house; if you please, we'll wait on her together: you shall draw your sword;

I'll draw my snuff-box: you shall produce your wounds received in war; I'll relate mine by Cupid's dart: you shall swear; I'll sigh: you shall *sa, sa*, and I'll *coupée*; and if she flies not to my arms like a hawk to its perch, my dancing-master deserves to be damned.

Stand. With the generality of women, I grant you, these arts may prevail.

Sir H. Generality of women! Why there again, you're out.—But will you be convinced, if our plot succeeds?

Stand. I rely on your word and honour, sir Harry.

Sir H. Then meet me half an hour hence at the Shakespeare. You must oblige me by taking a hearty glass with me toward the fitting me out for a certain project, which this night I undertake.

Stand. I guess by the preparation, that woman's the design.

Sir H. Yes, faith.—I am taken dangerous ill with two foolish maladies, modesty and love; the first I'll cure with Burgundy, and my love by a night's lodging with the daisel. A sure remedy. *Probatum est.*

Stand. I'll certainly meet you, sir. [*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter CLINCHER, Junior, and DICKY.

Clin. jun. Ah! Dicky, this London is a sad place, a sad vicious place! I wish that I were in the country again. And this brother of mine, I'm sorry he's so great a rake. I had rather see him dead than see him thus.

Dicky. Ay, sir, he'll spend his whole estate at this same jubilee. Who d'ye think lives at this same jubilee?

Clin. jun. Who, pray?

Dicky. The pope.

Clin. jun. The devil he does! My brother go to the place where the pope dwells! He's bewitched sure!

Enter TOM ERRAND in CLINCHER Senior's Clothes.

Dicky. Indeed, I believe he is, for he's strangely altered.

Clin. jun. Altered! Why, he looks like a jesuit already.

Err. This lace will sell. What a blockhead was the fellow to trust me with his coat! If I can get cross the garden, down to the water-side, I am pretty secure. [*Aside.*

Clin. jun. Brother!—Alaw! O gemini! Are you my brother?

Dicky. I seize you in the king's name, sir.

Err. O Lord! should this prove some parliament-man now!

Clin. jun. Speak, you rogue, what are you?

Err. A poor porter, sir, and going of an errand.

Dicky. What errand? Speak, you rogue.

Err. A fool's errand, I'm afraid.

Clin. jun. Who sent you?

Err. A beau, sir.

Dicky. No, no; the rogne has murdered your brother, and stripped him of his clothes.

Clin. jun. Murdered my brother! O crimini! O my poor jubilee brother!—Stay, by Jupiter Ammon, I'm heir though. Speak, sirrah, have you killed him? Confess that you have killed him, and I'll give you half-a-crown.

Err. Who, I, sir? Alack-a-day, sir, I never killed any man, but a carrier's horse once.

Clin. jun. Then you shall certainly be hanged; but confess that you killed him, and we'll let you go.

Err. Telling the truth hangs a man, but confessing a lie can do no harm; besides, if the worst come to the worst, I can but deny it again.—Well, sir, since I must tell you, I did kill him.

Clin. jun. Here's your money, sir.—But are you sure you killed him dead?

Err. Sir, I'll swear it before any judge in England.

Dicky. But are you sure that he's dead in law?

Err. Dead in law! I can't tell whether he be dead in law; but he's dead as a door-nail, for I gave him seven knocks on the head with a hammer.

Dicky. Then you have the estate by statute. Any man that is knocked o'th' head is dead in law.

Clin. jun. But are you sure he was *compos mentis* when he was killed?

Err. I suppose he was, sir; for he told me nothing to the contrary afterwards.

Clin. jun. Hey! then I go to the jubilee.—Strip, sir, strip. By Jupiter Ammon, strip.

Dicky. Ah! don't swear, sir.

[*Puts on his Brother's Clothes.*]

Clin. jun. Swear, sir! Zoons, han't I got the estate, sir? Come, sir, now I'm in mourning for my brother.

Err. I hope you'll let me go now, sir.

Clin. jun. Yes, yes, sir; but you must do me the favour to swear positively before a magistrate, that you killed him dead, that I may enter upon the estate without any trouble. By Jupiter Ammon, all my religion's gone, since I put on these fine clothes.—Hey! call me a coach, somebody.

Err. Ay, master, let me go, and I'll call one immediately.

Clin. jun. No, no.—Dicky, carry this spark before a justice, and when he has made oath, you may discharge him: and I'll go see Angelica. [*Exeunt Dicky and Errand*] Now that I'm an elder brother, I'll court, and swear, and rant, and rake, and go to the jubilee with the best of them. †

SCENE II. LUREWELL'S House.

Enter LUREWELL and PARLEY.

Lure. Are you sure that Vizard had my letter?

Par. Yes, yes, madam; one of your ladyship's footmen gave it to him in the park, and he told the bearer, with all transports of joy, that he would be punctual to a minute.

Lure. Thus most villains some time or other are punctual to their ruin; and hypocrisy, by imposing on the world, at last deceives itself. Are all things prepared for his reception?

Par. Exactly to your ladyship's order; the alderman too is just come, dressed and cooked up for iniquity.

Lure. Then he has got woman's clothes on?

Par. Yes, madam, and has passed upon the family for your nurse.

Lure. Convey him into that closet, and put out the candles, and tell him, I'll wait on him presently.

[*As Parley goes to put out the Candles, somebody knocks.*]

Lure. This must be sir Harry: tell him I'm not to be spoke with.

Par. Sir, my lady's not to be spoke with.

Sir H. I must have that from her own mouth, mistress.

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR, singing.

Lure. 'Tis too early for serenading, sir Harry.

Sir H. Wheresoever love is, there music is proper; there's an harmonious consent in their natures, and when rightly joined, they make up the chorus of earthly happiness.

Lure. But, sir Harry, what tempest drives you here at this hour?

Sir H. No tempest, madam, but love, madam—

Lure. If this be a love token, [*Sir Harry drops a Ring, she takes it up*] your mistresses' favours hang very loose about you, sir.

Sir H. I can't justly, madam, pay your trouble of taking it up, by any thing, but desiring you to wear it.

Lure. You gentlemen have the cunningest ways of playing the fool, and are so industrious in your profuseness. Speak seriously, am I beholden to chance or design for this ring?

Sir H. To design, upon my honour.—And I hope my design will succeed. [Aside.]

Lure. Shall I be free with you, sir Harry?

Sir H. With all my heart, madam, so I may be free with you.

Lure. Then plainly, sir, I shall beg the favour to see you some other time; for at this very minute I have two lovers in the house.

Sir H. Then to be as plain, I must be gone this minute, for I must see another mistress within these two hours.

Lure. Frank and free.

Sir H. As you wish me.—Madam, your most humble servant. [Exit.]

Lure. Nothing can disturb his humour. Now for my merchant and Vizard. Parley, do as I bade you.
[Exit, and takes the Candles with her.]

PARLEY goes out, and returns, leading in *SMUGGLER*, dressed in *Woman's Clothes*.

Par. This way, Mr. Alderman.

Smug. Well, Mrs. Parley,—I'm obliged to you for this trouble; here are a couple of shillings for you.—Times are hard, very hard indeed; but next visit I'll steal a pair of silk stockings from my wife, and bring them to you.

Par. Here, sir, get into this closet, and my lady will wait on you presently.

[Puts him into the Closet, runs out, and returns with Vizard.]

Viz. Where wouldst thou lead me, my dear ambitious little pilot?

Par. You're almost in port, sir; my lady's in the closet, and will come out to you immediately.

Viz. Let me thank thee as I ought. [Kisses her.]

Par. Pshaw! who has hired me best; a couple of shillings, or a couple of kisses? [Exit.]

Viz. Propitious darkness guides the lover's steps, and night that shadows outward sense, lights up our inward joy.

Smug. [Peeping out of the Closet] Bless me! What voice is this?—My nephew's, and certainly possessed with an evil spirit; he talks as profanely as an actor possessed with a poet.

Viz. Ha! I hear a voice: madam.—My life, my happiness, where are you, madam?

Smug. Madam! he takes me for a woman too: I'll try him.—Where have you left your sanctity, Mr. Vizard?

Viz. Talk no more of that ungrateful subject—I left

it where it has only business, with daylight; 'tis needless to wear a mask in the dark.

Smug. Well, sir, but I suppose you've some other motive besides pleasure?

Viz. Yes, madam, the honestest motive in the world, interest. You must know, madam, that I have an old uncle, alderman Smuggler; you have seen him, I suppose?

Smug. Yes, yes, I have some small acquaintance with him.

Viz. 'Tis the most knavish, precise, covetous, old rogue that ever died of the gout.

Smug. Ah, the young son of a whore! [*Aside*] Well, sir, and what of him? I know him very well.

Viz. Why, madam, he has a swinging estate, which I design to purchase as a saint, and spend like a gentleman. He got it by cheating, and should lose it by deceit. And no sooner he's dead, but I'll rattle over his grave with a coach and six to inform his covetous ghost how genteelly I spend his money.

Smug. I'll prevent you, boy; for I'll have my money buried with me.

[*Aside.*

Viz. Bless me, madam! here's a light coming this way. I must fly immediately: when shall I see you again, madam?

Smug. Sooner than you expect, my dear.

Viz. Pardon me, dear madam; I would not be seen for the world. I would sooner forfeit my life, nay, my pleasure, than my reputation. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I. LADY DARLING'S House.

Enter DARLING and ANGELICA.

Darl. Daughter, since you have to deal with a man of so peculiar a temper, you must not think the general arts of love can secure him; you may, therefore, allow such a courtier some encouragement extraordinary, without reproach to your modesty.

Angel. Pray, madam, by what means were you made acquainted with his designs?

Darl. Means, child! Why, my cousin Vizard, who, I'm sure, is your sincere friend, sent him. He brought me this letter from my cousin.

[Gives her the Letter, which she opens.]

Angel. Ha, Vizard! then I'm abused in earnest.—Would sir Harry, by his instigation, fix a base affront upon me? No, I can't suspect him of so ungentle a crime.—This letter shall trace the truth. *[Aside]* My suspicions, madam, are much cleared; and I hope to satisfy your ladyship in my management, when next I see sir Harry.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, here's a gentleman below calls himself Wildair.

Darl. Conduct him up.—Daughter, I wou't doubt your discretion. [*Exit.*]

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR.

Sir H. Oh, the delights of love and Burgundy!—Madam, I have toasted your ladyship fifteen bumpers successively.

Angel. And what then, sir?

Sir H. Why then, madam, the wine has got into my head, and the Cupids into my heart; and unless, by quenching quick my flame, you kindly ease the smart, I'm a lost man, madam.

Angel. Pray consider who you are so free with, sir; a woman of condition, that can call half a dozen footmen upon occasion.

Sir H. Nay, madam, if you have a mind to toss me in a blanket, half a dozen chambermaids would do better service.—Come, come, madam, though the wine makes me lisp, yet it has taught me to speak plainer. By all the dust of my ancient progenitors, I must this night rest in your arms.

Angel. Nay then, who waits there?

Enter Footmen.

Take hold of that madman, and bind him.

Sir H. Nay, then Burgundy's the word, slaughter will ensue.—Hold! do you know, scoundrels, that I have been drinking victorious Burgundy?—Nay, then have among ye, dogs. [*Throws money among them; they scramble, and take it up. He pelting them out, shuts the door, and returns.*] Rascals, poltroons!—I have charmed the dragon, and now the fruit's my own.

Angel. O, the mercenary wretches!—This was a plot to betray me.

Sir H. I have put the whole army to flight: and now I'll take the general prisoner. [*Laying hold on her.*]

Angel. I conjure you, sir, by the sacred name of honour, by your dead father's name, and the fair reputation of your mother's chastity, that you offer not the least offence—already you have wronged me past redress.

Sir H. Thou art the most unaccountable creature.

Angel. What madness, sir Harry! what wild dream could prompt you to attempt this baseuess? View me well. The brightness of my mind, methinks, should lighten outwards, and let you see your mistake in my behaviour. I think it shines with so much innocence in my face, that it should dazzle all your vicious thoughts. Think not I am defenceless 'cause alone—your very self is guard against yourself: I'm sure, there's something generous in your soul; my words shall snatch it out, and eyes shall fire it for my own defence.

Sir H. [*Mimicking*] Tal tidum, ti dum, tal ti didi, didum. A million to one now, but the girl is just come flush from reading the Rival Queens. Egad, I'll at her in her own cant—

O, my Statira! O, my angry dear! turn thy eyes on me; Behold thy bean in buskins.

Angel. Behold me, sir; every glance from my reproaching eyes is armed with sharp resentment, and with a virtuous pride that looks dishonour dead.

Sir H. This is the first wench in heroics I ever met with. [*Aside*] Look ye, madam, as to that slender particular of your virtue, we shan't quarrel about it; you may be as virtuous as any woman in England, if you please: you may say your prayers all the time:—but pray, madam, be pleased to consider what is this same virtue that you make such a mighty noise about. Can your virtue bespeak you a front row in the boxes? No, for the players can't live upon virtue. Can your virtue keep you a coach and six? No, no; your virtuous woman walks on foot. Can your virtue hire you a pew in the church? Why, the very sexton will tell you, no. Can your virtue stake for you at piquet? No. Then, what business has a woman with virtue?—Come, come, madam, I offered you fifty guineas;—there's a

hundred.—The devil! virtuous still! Why, it is a hundred, five score, a hundred guineas.

Angel. O indignation! Were I a man, you durst not use me thus; but the mean, poor abuse you throw on me, reflects upon yourself; our sex still strikes an awe upon the brave, and only cowards dare affront a woman.

Sir H. Affront! 'Sdeath, madam!—a hundred guineas will set up a bank at basset; a hundred guineas will furnish out your lodgings with china; a hundred guineas will give you an air of quality; a hundred guineas will buy you a rich seratoir for your billet-doux, or a fine common-prayer book for your virtue; a hundred guineas will buy a hundred fine things; and fine things are for fine ladies, and fine ladies are for fine gentlemen, and fine gentlemen are—Egad, this Burgundy makes a mau speak like an angel.—Come, come, madam, take it, and put it to what use you please.

Angel. I'll use it as I would use the base unworthy giver, thus! [*Throws down the Purse, and stamps upon it.*]

Sir H. I have no mind to meddle in state affairs; but these women will make me a parliament-man spite of my teeth on purpose to bring in a bill against their extortion. She tramples under foot that deity which all the world adores.—O, the blooming pride of beautiful eighteen! Pshaw! I'll talk to her no longer; I'll make my market with the old gentlewoman, she knows business better.—[*Goes to the Door.*] Here, you friend, pray desire the old lady to walk in.—Harkye, egad, madam, I'll tell your mother.

Enter LADY DARLING.

Darl. Well, sir Harry, and how d'ye like my daughter, pray?

Sir H. Like her, madam!—Harkye, will you take it? Why, faith, madam.—Take the money, I say; or egad, all's out.

Angel. All shall out. Sir, you're a scandal to the name of gentleman.

Sir H. With all my heart, madam. In short, madam,

your daughter has used me somewhat too familiarly, though I have treated her like a woman of quality.

Angel. Hold, sir; stop your abusive tongue, too loose for modest ears to hear.—Madam, I did before suspect that his designs were base, now they're too plain. This knight, this mighty man of wit and humour, is made a tool to a knave: Vizard has sent him on a bully's errand, to affront a woman; but I scorn the abuse, and him that offered it.

Darl. How, sir! come to affront us? This is beyond sufferance!—But say, thou abusive man, what injury have you ever received from me, or mine, thus to engage you in this scandalous aspersion?

Angel. Yes, sir, what cause, what motives could induce you thus to debase yourself below your rank?

Sir H. Hey-day! now dear Roxana, and you my fair Statira! be not so very heroic in your styles; Vizard's letter may resolve you, and answer all the impertinent questions you have made me.

Darl. Angel. We appeal to that.

Sir H. And I'll stand to it. He read it to me, and the contents were pretty plain, I thought.

Angel. Here, sir, peruse it; and see how much we are injured, and you deceived.

Sir H. [*Opening the Letter*] But hold, madam; [*To Darling*] before I read, I'll make some condition: Mr. Vizard says here, that I won't scruple thirty or forty pieces; now, madam, if you have clapped in another cypher to the account, and make it three or four hundred, egad, I will not stand to't.

Angel. Now I can't tell whether disdain or anger be the most just resentment for this injury.

Darl. The letter, sir, shall answer you.

Sir H. Well then. [*Reads*] *Out of my earnest inclination to serve your ladyship, and my cousin Angelica,*—Ay, ay, the very words; I can say it by heart.—*I have sent sir Harry Wildair—to—What the devil's this?—Sent sir Harry Wildair to court my cousin!—He read to me quite a different thing.—He's a gentleman of great parts and fortune—He's a rascal!—and*

would make your daughter very happy [*Whistles*] in a husband. [*Looks foolish, and hums a Song*] Oh, poor sir Harry! what have the angry stars designed?

Angel. Now, sir, I hope you need no instigation to redress our wrongs, since even the injury points the way.

Darl. Think, sir, that our blood, for many generations, has run in the purest channel of unsullied honour.

Sir H. Ay, madam. [*Bows to her.*]

Angel. Consider what a tender flower is woman's reputation, which the least air of foul detraction blasts.

Sir H. Yes, madam. [*Bows to the other.*]

Darl. Call then to mind your rude and scandalous behaviour.

Sir H. Right, madam. [*Bows again.*]

Angel. Remember the base price you offered me.

[*Exit.*]

Sir H. Very true, madam. Was ever man so catechised?

Darl. Then think that Vizard, villain Vizard, caused all this, yet lives: that's all; farewell.

Sir H. Stay, madam, [*To Darling*] one word; is there no other way to redress your wrongs, but by fighting?

Darl. Only one, sir, which if you can think of, you may do; you know the business I entertained you for.

Sir H. I understand you, madam. [*Exit Darling*] Here am I brought to a very pretty dilemma; I must commit murder, or commit matrimony. Which is best now, a licence from Doctors' Commons, or a sentence from the Old Bailey? If I kill my man, the law hangs me: if I marry my woman, I shall hang myself.—But, damn it! cowards dare fight: I'll marry, that's the most daring action of the two. } [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Newgate.*

CLINCHER, Senior.

Clin. sen. How severe and melancholy are Newgate reflections! Last week my father died; yesterday I turned beau; to-day I am laid by the heels, and to-

morrow shall be hung by the neck.—I was agreeing with a bookseller about printing an account of my journey through France and Italy; but now the history of my travels must be through Holborn to Tyburn—*The last and dying speech of Beau Clincher, that was going to the jubilee.*—Come 'a halfpenny a-piece. A sad sound, a sad sound, faith! 'tis one way to have a man's death make a great noise in the world.

Enter TOM ERRAND.

A reprieve! a reprieve! thou dear, dear—damned rogue. Where have you been? Thou art the most welcome—Son of a whore, where's my clothes?

Err. Sir, I see where mine are; come, sir, strip, sir, strip. [*Exit struggling.*]

SCENE III. LADY DARLING'S House.

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR with Letters, Servants following.

Sir H. Here, fly all around, and bear these as directed; you to Westminster, you to St. James's, and you into the city.—Tell all my friends, a bridegroom's joy invites their presence. Look all of ye like bridegrooms also: all appear with hospitable looks, and bear a welcome in your faces.—Tell them I'm married: if any ask to whom, make no reply; but tell them that I'm married, that joy shall crown the day, and love the night. Be gone, fly.

Enter STANDARD.

A thousand welcomes, friend; my pleasure's now complete, since I can share it with my friend; brisk joy shall bound from me to you, then back again; and, like the sun, grows warmer by reflection.

Stand. You're always pleasant, sir Harry; but this transcends yourself: whence proceeds it?

Sir H. Canst thou not guess, my friend? Whence flows all earthly joy? What is the life of man, and soul of pleasure?—Woman.—What fires the heart with

transport, and the soul with raptures?—Lovely woman.—What is the master-stroke and smile of the creation, but charming virtuous woman?—When nature in the general composition, first brought woman forth, like a flushed poet, ravished with his fancy, with ecstasy it blest the fair production!—Methinks, my friend, you relish not my joy. What is the cause?

Stand. Canst thou not guess?—What is the bane of man, and scourge of life, but woman?—What is the heathenish idol man sets up, and is damned for worshipping? Treacherous woman.—What are those, whose eyes, like basilisks, shine beautiful for sure destruction, whose smiles are dangerous as the grin of fiends, but false deluding woman?—Woman! whose composition inverts humanity; their bodies heavenly, but their souls are clay.

Sir H. Come, come, colonel, this is too much. I know your wrongs received from Lurewell may excuse your resentments against her: but it is unpardonable to charge the failings of a single woman upon the whole sex. I have found one, whose virtues—

Stand. So have I, sir Harry; I have found one whose pride's above yielding to a prince; and, if lying, dissembling, perjury, and falsehood, be no breaches in a woman's honour, she's as innocent as infancy.

Sir H. Well, colonel, I find your opinion grows stronger by opposition; I shall now, therefore, wave the argument, and only beg you for this day to make a show of complaisance at least.—Here comes my charming bride.

Enter DARLING and ANGELICA.

Stand. [*Saluting Angelica*] I wish you, madam, all the joys of love and fortune.

Enter CLINCHER, Junior.

Clin. jun. Gentlemen and ladies, I'm just upon the spur, and have only a minute to take my leave.

Sir H. Whither are you bound, sir?

Clin. jun. Bound, sir! I'm going to the jubilee, sir.

Darl. Bless me, cousin! how came you by these clothes?

Clin. jun. Clothes! ha, ha, ha! the rarest jest! ha, ha, ha! I shall burst—by Jupiter Ammon, I shall burst!

Darl. What's the matter, cousin?

Clin. jun. The matter! ha, ha, ha! Why an honest porter, ha, ha, ha! has knocked out my brother's brains, ha, ha, ha!

Sir H. A very good jest, i'faith, ha, ha, ha!

Clin. jun. Ay, sir; but the jest of all is, he knocked out his brains with a hammer, and so he is as dead as a door-nail, ha, ha, ha!

Darl. And do you laugh, wretch?

Clin. jun. Laugh! ha, ha, ha! let me see ever a younger brother in England that won't laugh at such a jest.

Angel. You appeared a very sober pious gentleman some hours ago.

Clin. jun. Pshaw! I was a fool then: but now, madam, I'm a wit; I can rake now.—As for your part, madam, you might have had me once; but now, madam, if you should fall to eating chalk, or gnawing the sheets, it is none of my fault.—Now, madam, I have got an estate, and I must go to the jubilee. [*Going.*]

Enter CLINCHER, Senior, in a Blanket.

Clin. sen. Must you so, rogue, must ye! You will go to the jubilee, will you?

Clin. jun. A ghost, a ghost!—Send for the dean and chapter presently.

Clin. sen. A ghost! No, no, sirrah, I'm an elder brother, rogue.

Clin. jun. I don't care a farthing for that; I'm sure you're dead in law.

Clin. sen. Why so, sirrah; why so?

Clin. jun. Because, sir, I can get a fellow to swear he knocked out your brains.—Smell him, gentlemen, he has a deadly scent about him.

Clin. sen. Truly the apprehensions of death may have made me savour a little. O Lord, the colonel! the

apprehensions of him may make the savour worse. I'm afraid, brother, the coat is too short for you.}}

Clin. jun. It will be long enough before you get it. In short, sir, were you a ghost, or brother, or devil, I will go to the jubilee, by Jupiter Ammon. [Exit.

Stand. Go to the jubilee, go to the bear-garden,—the travel of such fools as you doubly injures our country: you expose our native follies, which ridicule us among strangers; and return fraught only with their vices, which you vend here for fashionable gallantry: a travelling fool is as dangerous as a home-bred villain—Get you to your native plough and cart, converse with animals like yourselves, sheep and oxen; men are creatures you don't understand.

Sir H. Let 'em alone, colohel, their folly will be now diverting. Come, gentlemen, we'll dispute this point some other time.

A Servant enters and whispers SIR HARRY WILDAIR.

Madam, shall I beg you to entertain the company in the next room for a moment? [To Darling.

Darl. With all my heart—Come, gentlemen.

[Exit all but Sir Harry Wildair.

Sir H. A lady to inquire for me! who can this be?

Enter LUREWELL.

O! madam, this favour is beyond my expectation, to come uninvited to dance at my wedding—What d'ye gaze at, madam?

Lure. A monster—if thou'rt married, thou'rt the most perjured wretch that e'er avouched deceit.

Sir H. Hey-day! why, madam, I'm sure I never swore to marry you: I made indeed a slight promise, upon condition of your granting me a small favour, but you would not consent, you know.

Lure. How he upbraids me with my shame.—Can you deny your binding vows when this appears a witness 'gainst your falsehood? [Shows a Ring] Methinks the motto of this sacred pledge should flash confusion in your guilty face—Read, read here the binding words

of love and honour; words not unknown to your perfidious tongue,—though utter strangers to your treacherous heart.

Sir H. What the devil is all this!—madam, I'm not at leisure for raillery at present, I have weighty affairs upon my hands; the business of pleasure, madam; any other time.— [Going.

Lure. Stay, I conjure you stay.

Sir H. Faith I can't, my bride expects me. [Exit.

Lure. Grant me some wild expressions, heavens, or I shall burst—Woman's weakness, man's falsehood, my own shame, and love's disdain, at once swell up my breast—Words, words, or I shall burst. [Going.

Enter STANDARD.

Stand. Stay, madam, if you are a perfect woman, you have confidence to outface a crime, and bear the charge of guilt without a blush.

Lure. The charge of guilt! What? making a fool of you? I've done't, and glory in the act.

Stand. Your falsehood can't be reached by malice nor by satire; 'gainst mine own eyes, I still maintained your truth. I imagined Wildair's boasting of your favours to be the pure result of his own vanity: at last he urged your taking presents of him, as a convincing proof of which you yesterday from him received that ring, which ring, that I might be sure he gave it, I lent it him for that purpose! and desire you now, madam, to restore it to the just owner.

Lure. The just owner! Answer me, did not you receive this ring about twelve years ago?

Stand. I did.

Lure. And were not you about that time entertained two nights at the house of sir Oliver Manly in Oxfordshire?

Stand. I was, I was: [Runs to her and embraces her.] The blest remembrance fires my soul with transport—I know the rest—you are the charming she, and I the happy man.

Lure. How has blind fortune stumbled on the right!

but where have you wandered since?—'twas cruel to forsake me.

Stand. To tell you the particulars of my fortune are too tedious now; my constant heart has sighed alone for thee;—nor fame, nor glory, e'er shall part us more.

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR and ANGELICA.

Oh! sir Harry, fortune has acted miracles to-day. The story's strange and tedious, but all amounts to this, that woman's mind is charming as her person, and I am made a convert too to beauty.

Sir H. I wanted only this to make my pleasure perfect.

Enter SMUGGLER.

Smug. So, gentlemen and ladies, I'm glad to find you so merry. Is my gracious nephew among ye?

Sir H. Sir, he dares not show his face among such honourable company, for your gracious nephew is——

Smug. What, sir? have a care what you say.

Sir H. A villain, sir.

Smug. With all my heart—I'll pardon you the beating me for that very word. O! sir Harry, he is as hypocritical——

Lure. As yourself, Mr. Alderman: how fares my good old nurse, pray sir?

Smug. O madam, I shall be even with you before I part with your writings and money, that I have in my hands.

Lure. A word with you, Mr. Alderman; do you know this pocket-book?

Smug. O Lord, it contains an account of all my secret practices in trading. [*Aside*] How came you by it?

Lure. Sir Harry here dusted it out of your pocket, at my house yesterday: it contains an account of some secret practices in your merchandizing——First return all my writings, then I shall consider whether I shall have your proceedings laid before the parliament or not, whose justice will never suffer your smuggling to go unpunished.

Smug. O my poor ship and cargo!

Clin. sen. Hark'e, master, you had as good come along with me to the jubilee now.

Angel. Come, Mr. Alderman, for once let a woman advise: would you be thought an honest man, banish covetousness, that worst gout of age: avarice is a poor pilfering quality of the soul, and will as certainly cheat, as a thief would steal.—Would you be thought a reformer of the times, be less severe in your censures, less rigid in your precepts, and more strict in your example.

Sir H. Right; virtue flows freer from imitation than compulsion.

In vain are musty morals taught in schools,
By rigid teachers, and as rigid rules,
Where virtue with a frowning aspect stands,
And frights the pupil from its rough commands.
But woman——

Charming women can true converts make,
We love the precepts for the teacher's sake;
Virtue in them appears so bright, so gay,
We hear with transport, and with pride obey.

[*Exeunt.*]

EPILOGUE.

Now all depart each his respective way,
To spend an evening's chat upon the play;
Some to Hippolito's; one homeward goes,
And one with loving she retires to th' Rose.
The am'rous pair, in all things frank and free,
Perhaps may save the play in number three.
The tearing spark, if Phillis ought gainsays,
Breaks th' drawer's head, kicks her, and murders Bays.
To coffee, some retreat to save their pockets;
Others, more gen'rous, damn the play at Locket's:
But there, I hope, the author's fears are vain,
Malice ne'er spoke in generous Champaign.
That poet merits an ignoble death,
Who fears to fall over a brave Monteth.
The privilege of wine we only ask,
You'll taste again, before you damn the flask.
Our author fears not you; but those he may,
Who in cold blood murder a man in tea;
'Those men of spleen, who, fond the world should know it,
Sit down, and for their two-pence damn a poet.
Their criticism's good, that we can say for't,
They understand a play—too well to pay for't.
From box to stage, from stage to box they run,
First steal the play, then damn it when they've done.
But now, to know what fate may us betide,
Among our friends in Cornhill and Cheapside,
But those, I think, have but one rule for plays;
They'll say they're good, if so the world but says.
If it should please them, and their spouses know it,
They strait inquire what kind of man's the poet.
But from side-box we dread a fearful doom,
All the good-natur'd beaux are gone to Rome.
The ladies censure I'd almost forgot,
'Then for a line or two t'engage their vote:
But that way's odd, below our author's aim,
No less than his whole play is compliment to them.

For their sakes then the play can't miss succeeding,
Though critics may want wit, they have good breeding;
They won't, I'm sure, forfeit the ladies' graces,
By showing their ill-nature to their faces;
Our business with good manners may be done,
Flatter us here, and damn us when you're gone.



THE
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OR
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A Dramatic Piece.
BY THE
RIGHT HON. R. B. SHERIDAN.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM THE LATEST REPRESENTATIONS,
BY
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1814.



THE CRITIC

Was produced at Drury Lane Theatre in 1779, and proved to be a most successful piece of ridicule against some of our modern tragedy writers. *Sir Fretful Plagiary* is supposed to be the representative of a late most respectable dramatic author, who, however, was remarkable for a few foibles and singularities which are very happily portrayed. The character of *Dangle* was also drawn for a lately deceased dramatist, not so well known as the former. The pleasantry with which both are depicted makes full amends for their severity, and raises an irresistible propensity to laugh without the slightest sacrifice of feeling or propriety.

The supposed extracts from newspapers, names of, and compliments to particular performers, with other temporary or local passages occurring in this excellent afterpiece, have been always varied to suit the times and circumstances of current representation.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

As originally performed.

<i>Dangle</i>	Mr. Dodd.
<i>Sneer</i>	Mr. Palmer.
<i>Sir Fretful Plagiary</i>	Mr. Parsons.
<i>Under Prompter</i>	Mr. Phillimore.
<i>Puff</i>	Mr. King.
<i>Mrs. Dangle</i>	Mrs. Hopkins.

Characters of the Tragedy.

<i>Lord Burleigh</i>	Mr. Moody.
<i>Governor of Tilbury Fort</i>	Mr. Wrighten.
<i>Earl of Leicester</i>	Mr. Farren.
<i>Sir Walter Raleigh</i>	Mr. Burton.
<i>Sir Christopher Hatton</i>	Mr. Waldron.
<i>Master of the Horse</i>	Mr. Kenny.
<i>Beefeater</i>	Mr. Wright.
<i>Justice</i>	Mr. Packer.
<i>Son</i>	Mr. Lamash.
<i>Constable</i>	Mr. Fawcett.
<i>Thames</i>	Mr. Gawdry.
<i>Don Ferolo Whiskerandos</i>	Mr. Bannister, jun.
<i>First Niece</i>	Miss Collet.
<i>Second Niece</i>	Miss Kirby.
<i>Justice's Lady</i>	Mrs. Johnston.
<i>Confidant</i>	Mrs. Bradshaw.
<i>Tilburina</i>	Miss Pope.

*Guards, Constables, Servants, Chorus, Drivers,
Attendants, &c. &c.*

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I.

MR. and MRS. DANGLE at Breakfast, and reading Newspapers.

Dang. [Reading] "BRUTUS to Lord North."—"Letter the second on the State of the Army."—"Pshaw! To the first L—dash D of the A—dash Y."—"Genuine Extract of a Letter from St. Kitt's."—"Coxheath Intelligence."—"It is now confidently asserted that Sir Charles Hardy."—"Pshaw!—Nothing but about the fleet and the nation!—and I hate all politics but theatrical politics.—Where's the Morning Chronicle?"

Mrs. D. Yes, that's your Gazette.

Dang. So here we have it.—"Theatrical intelligence extraordinary.—We hear there is a new tragedy in rehearsal at Drury-lane Theatre, call'd the Spanish Armada, said to be written by Mr. Puff, a gentleman well known in the theatrical world; if we may allow ourselves to give credit to the report of the performers, who, truth to say, are in general but indifferent judges, this piece abounds with the most striking and received beauties of modern composition."—So! I am very glad my friend Puff's tragedy is in such forwardness.—Mrs.

Dangle, my dear, you will be very glad to hear that Puff's tragedy—

Mrs. D. Lord, Mr. Dangle, why will you plague me about such nonsense?—Now the plays are begun I shall have no peace.—Isn't it sufficient to make yourself ridiculous by your passion for the theatre, without continually teasing me to join you? Why can't you ride your hobbyhorse without desiring to place me on a pillion behind you, Mr. Dangle?

Dang. Nay, my dear, I was only going to read—

Mrs. D. I have no patience with you!—haven't you made yourself the jest of all your acquaintance by your interference in matters where you have no business? Are not you called a theatrical Quidnunc, and a mock Mecænas to second-hand authors?

Dang. True; my power with the managers is pretty notorious; but is it no credit to have applications from all quarters for my interest?—From lords to recommend fiddlers, from ladies to get boxes, from authors to get answers, and from actors to get engagements.

Mrs. D. Yes, truly; you have contrived to get a share in all the plague and trouble of theatrical property, without the profit, or even the credit of the abuse that attends it.

Dang. I am sure, Mrs. Dangle, you are no loser by it, however; you have all the advantages of it;—mightn't you, last winter, have had the reading of the new pantomime a fortnight previous to its performance? And didn't my friend, Mr. Smatter, dedicate his last farce to you at my particular request, Mrs. Dangle?

Mrs. D. Yes; but wasn't the farce damn'd, Mr. Dangle? And to be sure it is extremely pleasant to have one's house made the molley rendezvous of all the lackeys of literature:—The very high change of trading authors and jobbing critics!

Dang. Mrs. Dangle, you will not easily persuade me that there is no credit or importance in being at the head of a band of critics, who take upon them to decide for the whole town, whose opinion and patronage all writers solicit, and whose recommendation no manager dares refuse!

Mrs. D. Ridiculous!—Both managers and authors of the least merit, laugh at your pretensions.—The public is their critic—without whose fair approbation they know no play can rest on the stage, and with whose applause they welcome such attacks as yours, and laugh at the malice of them, where they can't at the wit.

Dang. Very well, madam—very well.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Sneer, sir, to wait on you.

Dang. O, show Mr. Sneer up. [*Exit Servant*] Plague on't, now we must appear loving and affectionate, or Sneer will hitch us into a story.

Mrs. D. With all my heart; you can't be more ridiculous than you are.

Dang. You are enough to provoke—

Enter MR. SNEER.

—Ha! my dear Sneer, I am vastly glad to see you. My dear, here's Mr. Sneer. Mr. Sneer, my dear—my dear, Mr. Sneer.

Mrs. D. Good morning to you, sir.

Dang. Mrs. Dangle and I have been diverting ourselves with the papers.—Pray, Sneer, won't you go to Drury-lane Theatre the first night of Puff's tragedy?

Sneer. Yes; but I suppose one sha'n't be able to get in. But here, Dangle, I have brought you two pieces, one of which you must exert yourself to make some of the managers accept, I can tell you that, for 'tis written by a person of consequence.

Dang. So! now my plagues are beginning.

Sneer. Ay, I am glad of it, for now you'll be happy. Why, my dear Dangle, it is a pleasure to see how you enjoy your volunteer fatigue, and your solicited soliloquies.

Dang. It's a great trouble—yet, 'egad, its pleasant too.—Why, sometimes of a morning, I have a dozen people call on me at breakfast time, whose faces I never saw before, nor ever desire to see again.

Sneer. That must be very pleasant indeed!

Dang. And not a week but I receive fifty letters, and not a line in them about any business of my own.

Sneer. An amusing correspondence!

Dang. [*Reading*] "Bursts into tears, and exit."
What, is this a tragedy?

Sneer. No, that's a genteel comedy, not a translation—only taken from the French; it is written in a style which they have lately tried to run down; the true sentimental, and nothing ridiculous in it from the beginning to the end.

Mrs. D. Well, if they had kept to that, I should not have been such an enemy to the stage: there was some edification to be got from those pieces, Mr. Sneer!

Sneer. I am quite of your opinion, Mrs. Dangle; the theatre, in proper hands, might certainly be made the school of morality; but now, I am sorry to say it, people seem to go there principally for their entertainment.

Mrs. D. It would have been more to the credit of the managers to have kept it in the other line.

Sneer. Undoubtedly, madam; and hereafter perhaps to have had it recorded, that in the midst of a luxurious and dissipated age, they preserved two houses in the capital, where the conversation was always moral at least, if not entertaining!

Dang. But what have we here?—This seems a very odd—

Sneer. O, that's a comedy, on a very new plan; replete with wit and mirth, yet of a most serious moral! You see it is call'd "The Reformed Housebreaker;" where by the mere force of humour, housebreaking is put into so ridiculous a light, that if the piece has its proper run, I have no doubt but that bolts and bars will be entirely useless by the end of the season.

Dang. 'Egad, this is new indeed!

Sneer. Yes; it is written by a particular friend of mine, who has discovered that the follies and foibles of society, are subjects unworthy the notice of the comic muse, who should be taught to stoop only at the greater vices and blacker crimes of humanity—gibbetting capital offences in five acts, and pillorying petty larcenies in two.—In short, his idea is to dramatise the penal laws, and make the stage a court of ease to the Old Bailey.

Dang. It is truly moral.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir Fretful Plagiary, sir.

Dang. Beg him to walk up.—[*Exit Servant*] Now, Mrs. Dangle, sir Fretful Plagiary is an author to your own taste.

Mrs. D. I confess he is a favourite of mine, because every body else abuses him.

Sneer.—Very much to the credit of your charity, madam, if not of your judgment.

Dang. But, 'egad, he allows no merit to any author but himself, that's the truth on't—though he's my friend.

Sneer. Never.—He is as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six-and-thirty: and then the insidious humility with which he seduces you to give a free opinion on any of his works, can be exceeded only by the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations.

Dang. Very true, 'egad—though he's my friend.

Sneer. Then his affected contempt of all newspaper strictures; though, at the same time, he is the sorest man alive, and shrinks like scorched parchment from the fiery ordeal of true criticism.

Dang. There's no denying it—though he is my friend.

Sneer. You have read the tragedy he has just finished, haven't you?

Dang. O yes; he sent it to me yesterday.

Sneer. Well, and you think it execrable, don't you?

Dang. Why, between ourselves, 'egad I must own—though he's my friend—that it is one of the most—He's here [*Aside*]*—finished and most admirable perform—*

[*Sir F. without*] Mr. Sneer with him, did you say?

Enter SIR FRETFUL.

Ah, my dear friend!—'Egad, we were just speaking of your tragedy.—Admirable, sir Fretful, admirable!

Sneer. You never did any thing beyond it, sir Fretful—never in your life.

Sir F. You make me extremely happy; for without a compliment, my dear Sneer, there isn't a man in the

world whose judgment I value as I do yours—and Mr. Dangle's.

Mrs. D. They are only laughing at you, sir Fretful; for it was but just now that——

Dang. Mrs. Dangle! Ah, sir Fretful, you know Mrs. Dangle.—My friend Sneer was rallying just now—He knows how she admires you, and——

Sir F. O Lord, I ain sure Mr. Sneer has more taste and sincerity than to——A damn'd double-faced fellow!

[*Aside.*
Dang. Yes, yes—Sneer will jest—but a better humour'd——

Sir F. O, I know——

Dang. He has a ready turn for ridicule—his wit costs him nothing.——

Sir F. No, 'egad—or I should wonder how he came by it.

[*Aside.*
Dang. But, sir Fretful, have you sent your play to the managers yet?—or can I be of any service to you?

Sir F. No, no, I thank you; I believe the piece had sufficient recommendation with it.—I thank you though—I sent it to the manager of Covent-garden Theatre this morning.

Sneer. I should have thought now, that it might have been cast (as the actors call it) better at Drury-lane.

Sir F. O lud! no—never send a play there while I live—harkye!

[*Whispers Sneer.*
Sneer. Writes himself!—I know he does—

Sir F. I say nothing—I take away from no man's merit—am hurt at no man's good fortune—I say nothing—But this I will say—through all my knowledge of life, I have observed—that there is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy!

Sneer. I believe you have reason for what you say, indeed.

Sir F. Besides—I can tell you it is not always so safe to leave a play in the hands of those who write themselves.

Sneer. What, they may steal from them, hey, my dear Plagiary?

Sir F. Steal!—to be sure they may; and, 'egad, serve your best thoughts as gipsies do stolen children, disfigure them to make 'em pass for their own.

Sneer. But your present work is a sacrifice to Melpomene, and he you know never—

Sir F. That's no security.—A dext'rous plagiarist may do any thing.—Why, sir, for ought I know, he might take out some of the best things in my tragedy, and put them into his own comedy.

Sneer. That might be done, I dare be sworn.

Sir F. And then, if such a person gives you the least hint or assistance, he is devilish apt to take the merit of the whole—

Dang. If it succeeds.

Sir F. Ay,—but with regard to this piece, I think I can hit that gentleman, for I can safely swear he never read it.

Sneer. I'll tell you how you may hurt him more—

Sir F. How?—

Sneer. Swear he wrote it.

Sir F. Plague on't now, Sneer, I shall take it ill.—I believe you want to take away my character as an author!

Sneer. Then I am sure you ought to be very much oblig'd to me.

Sir F. Hey!—Sir!

Dang. O, you know, he never means what he says.

Sir F. Sincerely then—you do like the piece?

Sneer. Wonderfully!

Sir F. But come now, there must be something that you think might be mended, bey?—Mr. Dangle, has nothing struck you?

Dang.—Why faith, it is but an ungracious thing for the most part to—

Sir F.—With most authors it is just so indeed; they are in general strangely tenacious!—But, for my part, I am never so well pleased as when a judicious critic points out any defect to me; for what is the purpose of showing a work to a friend, if you don't mean to profit by his opinion?

Sneer. Very true. Why then, though I seriously

admire the piece upon the whole, yet there is one small objection; which, if you'll give me leave, I'll mention.

Sir F. Sir, you can't oblige me more.

Sneer. I think it wants incident.

Sir F. Good God!—you surprise me!—wants incident!—

Sneer. Yes; I own I think the incidents are too few.

Sir F. Good God!—Believe me, Mr. Sneer, there is no person for whose judgment I have a more implicit deference.—But I protest to you, Mr. Sneer, I am only apprehensive that the incidents are too crowded.—My dear Dangle, how does it strike you?

Dang. Really I can't agree with my friend Sneer.—I think the plot quite sufficient; and the four first acts by many degrees the best I ever read or saw in my life. If I might venture to suggest any thing, it is that the interest rather falls off in the fifth.—

Sir F. —Rises, I believe you mean, sir.

Dang. No, I don't, upon my word.

Sir F. Yes, yes, you do, upon my soul—it certainly don't fall off, I assure you—No, no, it don't fall off.

Dang. Now, Mrs. Dangle, didn't you say it struck you in the same light?

Mrs. D. No, indeed, I did not—I did not see a fault in any part of the play from the beginning to the end.

Sir F. Upon my soul the women are the best judges after all!

Mrs. D. Or if I made any objection, I am sure it was to nothing in the piece! but that I was afraid it was, on the whole, a little too long.

Sir F. Pray, madam, do you speak as to duration of time; or do you mean that the story is tediously spun out?

Mrs. D. O lud! no.—I speak only with reference to the usual length of acting plays.

Sir F. Then I am very happy—very happy, indeed—because the play is a short play, a remarkably short play:—I should not venture to differ with a lady on a point of taste; but, on these occasions, the watch, you know, is the critic.

Mrs. D. Then, I suppose, it must have been Mr. Dangle's drawing manner of reading it to me.

Sir F. O, if Mr. Dangle read it! that's quite another affair!—But I assure you, Mrs. Dangle, the first evening you can spare me three hours and an half, I'll undertake to read you the whole from beginning to end, with the prologue and epilogue, and allow time for the music between the acts.

Mrs. D. I hope to see it on the stage next.

Dang. Well, sir Fretful, I wish you may be able to get rid as easily of the newspaper criticisms as you do of ours.—

Sir F. The newspapers!—Sir, they are the most villainous—licentious—abominable—infernal—Not that I ever read them—No—I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper.

Dang. You are quite right—for it certainly must hurt an author of delicate feelings to see the liberties they take.

Sir F. No!—quite the contrary; their abuse is, in fact, the best panegyric—I like it of all things.—An author's reputation is only in danger from their support.

Sneer. Why that's true—and that attack now on you the other day—

Sir F. —What? where?

Dang. Ay, you mean in a paper of Thursday; it was completely ill-natur'd to be sure.

Sir F. O, so much the better—Ha! ha! ha!—I wouldn't have it otherwise.

Dang. Certainly it is only to be laugh'd at; for—

Sir F. —You don't happen to recollect what the fellow said, do you?

Sneer. Pray, Dangle—Sir Fretful seems a little anxious—

Sir F. —O lud, no!—anxious,—not I,—not the least.—I—But one may as well hear, you know.

Dang. Sneer, do you recollect?—Make out something. [*Aside.*

Sneer. I will, [*To Dangle*]—Yes, yes, I remember perfectly.

Sir F. Well, and pray now—Not that it signifies—what might the gentleman say?

Sneer. Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention, or original genius whatever;

though you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

Sir F. Ha! ha! ha!—very good!

Sneer. That as to comedy you have not one-idea of your own, he believes, even in your common place-book, where stray jokes, and pilfered witticisms are kept with as much method as the ledger of the lost-and-stolen-office.

Sir F. —Ha! ha! ha!—very pleasant!

Sneer. Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to steal with taste:—But that you glean from the refuse of obscure volumes, where more judicious plagiarists have been before you; so that the body of your work is a composition of dregs and sediments—like a bad tavern's worst wine.

Sir F. Ha! ha!

Sneer. In your more serious efforts, he says, your bombast would be less intolerable, if the thoughts were ever suited to the expression; but the homeliness of the sentiment stares through the fantastic encumbrance of its fine language, like a clown in one of the new uniforms!

Sir F. Ha! ha!

Sneer. That your occasional tropes and flowers suit the general coarseness of your style, as tambour sprigs would a ground of linsey-wolsey; while your imitations of Shakspeare resemble the mimicry of Falstaff's page, and are about as near the standard of the original.

Sir F. Ha!—

Sneer. —In short, that even the finest passages you steal are of no service to you; for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating! so that they lie on the surface like lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilize!

Sir F. [*After great agitation*] —Now another person would be vex'd at this.

Sneer. Oh! but I wouldn't have told you, only to divert you.

Sir F. I know it—I am diverted,—Ha! ha! ha!—not the least invention!—Ha! ha! ha! very good!—very good!

Sneer. Yes—no genius! Ha! ha! ha!

Dang. A severe rogue! ha! ha! ha! But you are quite right, sir Fretful, never to read such nonsense.

Sir F. To be sure—for if there is any thing to one's praise, it is a foolish vanity to be gratified at it, and if it is abuse,—why one is always sure to hear of it from one damn'd good natur'd friend or another!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Puff, sir, has sent word that the last rehearsal is to be this morning, and that he'll call on you presently.

Dang. That's true—I shall certainly be at home. [*Exit Servant*] Now, sir Fretful, if you have a mind to have justice done you in the way of answer—'Egad, Mr. Puff's your man.

Sir F. Pahaw! sir, why should I wish to have it answered, when I tell you I am pleased at it?

Dang. True, I had forgot that.—But I hope you are not fretted at what Mr. Sneer—

Sir F. —Zounds! no, Mr. Dangle, don't I tell you these things never fret me in the least.

Dang. Nay, I only thought—

Sir F. —And let me tell you, Mr. Dangle, 'tis damn'd affronting in you to suppose that I am hurt, when I tell you I am not.

Sneer. But why so warm, sir Fretful?

Sir F. Gadslife! Mr. Sneer, you are as absurd as Dangle; how often must I repeat it to you, that nothing can vex me but your supposing it possible for me to mind the damn'd nonsense you have been repeating to me!—and let me tell you, if you continue to believe this, you must mean to insult me, gentlemen—and then your disrespect will affect me no more than the newspaper criticisms—and I shall treat it—with exactly the same calm indifference and philosophic contempt—and so your servant. [*Exit.*]

Sneer. Ha! ha! ha! Poor sir Fretful! Now will he go and vent his philosophy in anonymous abuse of all modern critics and authors—But, Dangle, you must get your friend Puff to take me to the rehearsal of his tragedy.

Dang. I'll answer for't, he'll thank you for desiring it.—I'faith, *Sneer*, though, I am afraid we were a little too severe on sir *Fretful*—though he is my friend.

Sneer. Why, 'tis certain, that unnecessarily to mortify the vanity of any writer, is a cruelty which mere dulness never can deserve; but where a base and personal malignity usurps the place of literary emulation, the aggressor deserves neither quarter nor pity.

Dang. That's true, 'egad?—though he's my friend!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Puff, sir!

Dang. My dear Puff!

Enter PUFF.

Puff. My dear Dangle, how is it with you?

Dang. Mr. *Sneer*, give me leave to introduce Mr. Puff to you.

Puff. Mr. *Sneer* is this? Sir, he is a gentleman whom I have long panted for the honour of knowing—a gentleman whose critical talents and transcendant judgment—

Sneer. —Dear sir—

Dang. Nay, don't be modest, *Sneer*, my friend Puff only talks to you in the style of his profession.

Sneer. His profession!

Puff. Yes, sir; I make no secret of the trade I follow—among friends and brother authors, Dangle knows I love to be frank on the subject, and to advertise myself *vivâ voce*.—I am, sir, a practitioner in panegyric, or to speak more plainly—a professor of the art of puffing, at your service—or any body else's.

Sneer. Sir, you are very obliging!—I believe, Mr. Puff, I have often admired your talents in the daily prints.

Puff. Yes, sir, I flatter myself I do as much business in that way as any six of the fraternity in town—Devilish hard work all the summer—Friend Dangle! never work'd harder!—But harkye,—the winter managers were a little sore, I believe.

Dang. No—I believe they took it all in good part.

Puff. Ay!—Then that must have been affectation in

them; for, 'egad, there were some of the attacks which there was no laughing at!

Sneer. Ay, the humorous ones—But I should think, Mr. Puff, that authors would in general be able to do this sort of work for themselves.

Puff. Why, yes—but in a clumsy way.—Besides, we look on that as an encroachment, and so take the opposite side.—I dare say now you conceive half the very civil paragraphs and advertisements you see, to be written by the parties concerned, or their friends.—No such thing—Nine out of ten, manufactured by me in the way of business.

Sneer. Indeed!—

Puff. Even the auctioneers now—the auctioneers I say, though the rogues have lately got some credit for their language—not an article of the merit their's!—take them out of their pulpits, and they are as dull as catalogues!—No, sir;—'twas I first enrich'd their style—'twas I first taught them to crowd their advertisements with panegyric superlatives, each epithet rising above the other—like the bidders in their own auction-rooms! From me they learn'd to inlay their phraseology with variegated chips of exotic metaphor: by me too their inventive faculties were called forth.—Yes, sir, by me they were instructed to clothe ideal walls with gratuitous fruits—to insinuate obsequious rivulets into visionary groves—to teach courteous shrubs to nod their approbation of the grateful soil! or on emergencies to raise upstart oaks, where there never had been an acorn; to create a delightful vicinage without the assistance of a neighbour; or fix the temple of Hygeia in the fens of Lincolnshire!

Dang. I am sure you have done them infinite service; for now, when a gentleman is ruined, he parts with his house with some credit.

Sneer. But pray, Mr. Puff, what first put you on exercising your talents in this way?

Puff. 'Egad, sir—sheer necessity—the proper parent of an art so nearly allied to invention: you must know, Mr. Sneer, that from the first time I tried my hand at

an advertisement, my success was such, that for some time after, I led a most extraordinary life indeed!

Sneer. How, pray?

Puff. Sir, I supported myself two years entirely by my misfortunes.

Sneer. By your misfortunes?

Puff. Yes, sir, assisted by long sickness, and other occasional disorders; and a very comfortable living I had of it.

Sneer. From sickness and misfortunes!

Puff. Harkye!—By advertisements——“To the charitable and humane!” and “to those whom Providence hath blessed with affluence!”

Sneer. Oh,—I understand you.

Puff. And, in truth, I deserved what I got; for I suppose never man went through such a series of calamities in the same space of time!—Sir, I was five times made a bankrupt, and reduced from a state of affluence, by a train of unavoidable misfortunes! then, sir, though a very industrious tradesman, I was twice burnt out, and lost my little all, both times!—I lived upon those fires a month.—I soon after was confined by a most excruciating disorder, and lost the use of my limbs!—That told very well; for I had the case strongly attested, and went about to collect the subscriptions myself.

Dang. 'Egad, I believe that was when you first called on me—

Puff. What—in November last?—O no!—I was, when I called on you, a close prisoner in the Marshalsea, for a debt benevolently contracted to serve a friend!—I was afterwards twice tapped for a dropsy, which declined into a very profitable consumption!—I was then reduced to—O no—then, I became a widow with six helpless children,—after having had eleven husbands pressed, and being left every time eight months gone with child, and without money to get me into an hospital!

Sneer. And you bore all with patience, I make no doubt?

Puff. Why, yes,—though I made some occasional attempts at *felo de se*; but as I did not find those rash

actions answer, I left off killing myself very soon.—Well, sir,—at last, what with bankruptcies, fires, gout, dropsies, imprisonments, and other valuable calamities, having got together a pretty handsome sum, I determined to quit a business which had always gone rather against my conscience, and in a more liberal way still to indulge my talents for fiction and embellishment, through my favourite channels of diurnal communication—and so, sir, you have my history.

Sneer. Most obligingly communicative indeed; and your confession, if published, might certainly serve the cause of true charity, by rescuing the most useful channels of appeal to benevolence from the cant of imposition.—But surely, Mr. Puff, there is no great mystery in your present profession?

Puff. Mystery! sir, I will take upon me to say the matter was never scientifically treated, nor reduced to rule before.

Sneer. Reduced to rule?

Puff. O lud, sir! you are very ignorant, I am afraid.—Yes, sir,—Puffing is of various sorts—the principal are, The Puff direct—the Puff preliminary—the Puff collateral—the Puff collusive—and the Puff oblique, or Puff by implication.—These all assume, as circumstances require, the various forms of Letter to the Editor—Occasional Anecdote—Impartial Critique—Observation from Correspondent,—or Advertisement from the Party.

Sneer. The Puff direct, I can conceive—

Puff. O yes, that's simple enough,—for instance—A new comedy or farce is to be produced at one of the theatres (though by-the-by they don't bring out half what they ought to do): the author, suppose Mr. Smatter, or Mr. Dapper—or any particular friend of mine—very well; the day before it is to be performed, I write an account of the manner in which it was received—I have the plot from the author,—and only add—Characters strongly drawn—highly coloured—hand of a master—fund of genuine humour—mine of invention—neat dialogue—attic salt! Then for the performance—Mr. Dodd was astonishingly great in the character of air

Harry! That universal and judicious actor, Mr. Palmer, perhaps never appeared to more advantage than in the colonel;—but it is not in the power of language to do justice to Mr. King!—Indeed he more than merited those repeated bursts of applause which he drew from a most brilliant and judicious audience! As to the scenery—The miraculous powers of Mr. De Louthembourg's pencil are universally acknowledged!—In short, we are at a loss which to admire most,—the unrivalled genius of the author, the great attention and liberality of the managers—the wonderful abilities of the painter, or the incredible exertions of all the performers!—

Sneer. That's pretty well indeed, sir.

Puff. O cool—quite cool—to what I sometimes do.

Sneer. And do you think there are any who are influenced by this.

Puff. O, lad! yes, sir;—the number of those who undergo the fatigue of judging for themselves is very small indeed!

Sneer. Well, sir—the Puff preliminary?

Puff. O that, sir, does well in the form of a caution.—In a matter of gallantry now—Sir Flimsy Gossimer, wishes to be well with lady Fanny Fete—He applies to me—I open trenches for him with a paragraph in the *Morning Post*.—It is recommended to the beautiful and accomplished lady F four stars F dash E to be on her guard against that dangerous character, sir F dash G; who, however pleasing and insinuating his manners may be, is certainly not remarkable for the *constancy of his attachments!*—in Italics.—Here you see, sir Flimsy Gossimer is introduced to the particular notice of lady Fanny—who perhaps never thought of him before—she finds herself publicly cautioned to avoid him, which naturally makes her desirous of seeing him;—the observation of their acquaintance causes a pretty kind of mutual embarrassment, this produces a sort of sympathy of interest—which, if sir Flimsy is unable to improve effectually, he at least gains the credit of having their names mentioned together, by a particular set, and in a particular way,—which, nine times out of ten, is the full accomplishment of modern gallantry.

Dang. 'Egad, *Sneer*, you will be quite an adept in the business.

Puff. Now, sir, the *Puff* collateral is much used as an appendage to advertisements, and may take the form of anecdote.—Yesterday as the celebrated *George Bon-Mot* was sauntering down *St. James'-street*, he met the lively lady *Mary Myrtle*, coming out of the *Park*,—"Good God, lady *Mary*, I'm surprised to meet you in a white jacket,—for I expected never to have seen you, but in a full trimmed uniform and a light-horseman's cap!"—"Heavens, *George*, where could you have learned that?"—"Why," replied the wit, "I just saw a print of you in a new publication called the *Camp Magazine*, which by-the-by is a devilish clever thing,—and is sold at *No. 3*, on the right hand of the way, two doors from the printing-office, the corner of *Ivy-lane*, *Paternoster-row*, price only one shilling!"

Sneer. Very ingenious indeed!

Puff. But the *Puff* collusive is the newest of any; for it acts in the disguise of determined hostility.—It is much used by bold booksellers and enterprising poets.—An indignant correspondent observes—that the new poem called *Beelzebub's Cotillion*, or *Proserpine's Fete Champetre*, is one of the most unjustifiable performances he ever read! The severity with which certain characters are handled is quite shocking! And as there are many descriptions in it too warmly coloured for female delicacy, the shameful avidity with which this piece is bought by all people of fashion, is a reproach on the taste of the times, and a disgrace to the delicacy of the age!—Here you see the two strongest inducements are held forth;—First, that nobody ought to read it;—and, secondly, that every body buys it; on the strength of which, the publisher boldly prints the tenth edition, before he had sold ten of the first; and then establishes it by threatening himself with the pillory, or absolutely indicting himself for scan. mag!

Dang. Ha! ha! ha!—'egad I know it is so.

Puff. As to the *Puff* oblique, or *Puff* by implication, it is too various and extensive to be illustrated by an instance; it branches into so many varieties that it is

the last principal class of the art of puffing—An art which I hope you will now agree with me, is of the highest dignity.—

Sneer. Sir, I am completely a convert both to the impertance and ingenuity of your profession; and now, sir, there is but one thing which can possibly encrease my respect for you, and that is, your permitting me to be present this morning at the rehearsal of your new tragedy—

Puff. —Hush, for heaven's sake.—My tragedy!—'Egad, Dangle, I take this very ill—you know how apprehensive I am of being known to be the author.

Dang. I'faith I would not have told—but it's in the papers, and your name at length—in the Morning Chronicle.

Puff. Ah! those damn'd editors never can keep a secret!—Well, Mr. Sneer—no doubt you will do me great honour—I shall be infinitely happy—highly flattered—

Dang. I believe it must be near the time—shall we go together?

Puff. No; it will not be yet this hour, for they are always late at that theatre: besides, I must meet you there, for I have some little matters here to send to the papers, and a few paragraphs to scribble before I go. [*Looking at Memorandums*]—Here is “a Conscientious Baker, on the Subject of the Army Bread;” and “a Detester of visible Brick-work, in favour of the new invented Stucco;” both in the style of Junius, and promised for to-morrow.—The Thames Navigation too is at a stand.—Misomud or Anti-shoal must go to work again directly.—Here too are some political memorandums I see; ay—To take Paul Jones, and get the Indiamen out of the Shannon—reinforce Byron—compel the Dutch to—so!—I must do that in the evening papers, or reserve it for the Morning Herald, for I know that I have undertaken to-morrow; besides, to establish the unanimity of the fleet in the Public Advertiser, and to shoot Charles Fox in the Morning Post.—So, 'egad, I ha'n't a moment to lose!

Dang. Well!—we'll meet in the green room.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. *The THEATRE.*

Enter DANGLE, PUFF, and SNEER, as before the Curtain.

Puff. No, no, sir; what Shakspeare says of actors may be better applied to the purpose of plays; they ought to be "the abstract and brief chronicles of the times." Therefore when history, and particularly the history of our own country, furnishes any thing like a case in point, to the time in which an author writes, if he knows his own interest, he will take advantage of it; so, sir, I call my tragedy *The Spanish Armada*; and have laid the scene before *Tilbury Fort*.

Sneer. A most happy thought, certainly!

Dang. 'Egad it was—I told you so.—But pray now, I don't understand how you have contrived to introduce any love into it.

Puff. Love!—Oh nothing so easy: for it is a received point among poets, that where history gives you a good heroic outline for a play, you may fill up with a little love at your own discretion: in doing which, nine times out of ten, you only make up a deficiency in the

private history of the times. Now I rather think I have done this with some success.

Sneer. No scandal about queen Elizabeth, I hope?

Puff. O lud! no, no.—I only suppose the governor of Tilbury Fort's daughter to be in love with the son of the Spanish admiral.

Sneer. Oh, is that all?

Dang. Excellent, i'faith! I see it at once.—But won't this appear rather improbable?

Puff. To be sure it will—but what the plague! a play is not to show occurrences that happen every day, but things just so strange, that though they never did, they might happen.

Sneer. Certainly nothing is unnatural, that is not physically impossible.

Puff. Very true—and for that matter Don Ferolo Whiskerandos—for that's the lover's name, might have been over here in the train of the Spanish ambassador; or Tilburina, for that is the lady's name, might have been in love with him, from having heard his character, or seen his picture; or from knowing that he was the last man in the world she ought to be in love with—or for any other good female reason.—However, sir, the fact is, that though she is but a knight's daughter, 'egad! she is in love like any princess!—her poor susceptible heart is swayed to and fro, by contending passions like—

Enter under Prompter.

Under Prom. Sir, the scene is set, and every thing is ready to begin, if you please.—

Puff. 'Egad; then we'll lose no time.

Under Prom. Though I believe, sir, you will find it very short, for all the performers have profited by the kind permission you granted them.

Puff. Hey! what!

Under Prom. You know, sir, you gave them leave to cut out or omit whatever they found heavy or unnecessary to the plot; and I must own they have taken very liberal advantage of your indulgence.

Puff. Well, well.—They are in general very good

judges; and I know I am luxuriant.—Now, Mr. Hopkins, as soon as you please.

Under Prom. to Music. Gentlemen, will you play a few bars of something, just to—

Puff. Ay, that's right,—for as we have the scenes and dresses, 'egad, we'll go to't, as if it was the first night's performance;—[*Exit under Prompter. Orchestra play. Then the Bell rings*] Soh! stand clear, gentlemen.—Now you know there will be a cry of down!—down!—hats off!—silence!—Then up curtain,—and let us see what our painters have done for us.

SCENE II.

The Curtain rises, and discovers TILBURY FORT.

Two Sentinels asleep.

Dang. Tilbury Fort!—very fine indeed!

Puff. Now, what do you think I open with?

Sneer. Faith, I can't guess—

Puff. A clock—

Sneer. A clock!

Puff. Hark!—[*Clock strikes*] I open with a clock striking, to beget an awful attention in the audience—it also marks the time, which is four o'clock in the morning, and saves a description of the rising sun, and a great deal about gilding the eastern hemisphere.

Dang. But, pray, are the sentinels to be asleep?

Puff. Fast as watchmen.

Sneer. Isn't that odd though at such an alarming crisis?

Puff. To be sure it is,—but smaller things must give way to a striking scene at the opening; that's a rule.—And the case is, that two great men are coming to this very spot to begin the piece; now, it is not to be supposed they would open their lips, if these fellows were watching them; so, 'egad, I must either have sent them off their posts, or set them asleep.

Sneer. O that accounts for it!—But tell us, who are these coming?—

Puff. These are they—sir Walter Raleigh, and sir Christopher Hatton.—You'll know sir Christopher, by his turning out his toes—famous you know for his dancing.

I like to preserve all the little traits of character.—
Now attend.

“Enter SIR WALTER RALEIGH and SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON.

“Sir C. True, gallant Raleigh!”—

Dang. What, they had been talking before?

Puff. O yes; all the way as they came along.—I beg pardon, gentlemen, [To the Actors] but these are particular friends of mine, whose remarks may be of great service to us.—Don't mind interrupting them whenever any thing strikes you. [To Sneer and Dangle.

“Sir C. True, gallant Raleigh!

“But O, thou champion of thy country's fame,

“There is a question which I yet must ask;

“A question, which I never ask'd before—

“What mean these mighty armaments?

“This general muster? and this throng of chiefs?”

Sneer. Pray, Mr. Puff, how came sir Christopher Hatton never to ask that question before?

Puff. What, before the play began? how the plague could he?

Dang. That's true, i'faith!

Puff. But you will hear what he thinks of the matter.

“Sir C. Alas, my noble friend——”

Puff. Sir Christopher, pray turn out your toes. Sir Christopher Hatton was famous for dancing well.

“Sir C. When I behold

“Yon tented plains in martial symmetry

“Array'd—When I count o'er yon glittering lines

“Of crested warriors,—

“When briefly all I hear or see bears stamp

“Of martial vigilance, and stern defence,

“I cannot but surmise.—Forgive me, friend,

“If the conjecture's rash——I cannot but

“Surmise——The state some danger apprehends!”

Sneer. A very cautious conjecture that.

Puff. Yes, that's his character; not to give an opinion, but on secure grounds—now then.

“Sir W. O, most accomplish'd Christopher.——”

Puff. He calls him by his Christian name, to show that they are on the most familiar terms.

- “*Sir W.* O most accomplish’d Christopher, I find
 “Thy fears are just.
 “*Sir C.* But where? whence? when? and what
 “The danger is—Methinks I fain would learn.
 “*Sir W.* You know, my friend, scarce two revolving
 suns,
 “And three revolving moons have closed their course,
 “Since haughty Philip, in despite of peace,
 “With hostile hand hath struck at England’s trade.
 “*Sir C.* I know it well.
 “*Sir W.* Philip, you know, is prond Iberia’s king!
 “*Sir C.* He is.
 “*Sir W.* —His subjects in base bigotry
 “And Catholic oppression held—while we
 “You know, the Protestant persuasion hold.
 “*Sir C.* We do.
 “*Sir W.* You know beside—his boasted armament,
 “The fam’d armada—by the pope baptized,
 “With purpose to invade these realms—
 “*Sir C.* —Is sailed,
 “Our last advices so report.
 “*Sir W.* While the Iberian admiral’s chief hope,
 “His darling son, by chance a pris’ner hath been ta’en,
 “And in this fort of Tilbury—
 “*Sir C.* —Is now
 “Confin’d.
 “*Sir W.* You also know—”
Dang. Mr. Puff, as he knows all this, why does sir
 Walter go on telling him?
Puff. But the audience are not supposed to know
 any thing of the matter, are they?
Sneer. True, but I think you manage ill: for there
 certainly appears no reason why sir Walter should be
 so communicative.
Puff. ’Egad now, that is one of the most ungrateful
 observations I ever heard—for the less inducement
 he has to tell all this, the more, I think, you ought to
 be oblig’d to him; for I am sure you’d know nothing
 of the matter without it.
Dang. That’s very true, upon my word.
Puff. But you will find he was not going on.

“ Sir C. Enough, enough—’tis plain—and I no more
“ Am in amazement lost!—”

Puff. Here, now you see, sir Christopher did not in fact ask any one question for his own information.

Sneer. No indeed :—his has been a most disinterested curiosity!

Dang. Really, I find, we are very much obliged to them both.

Puff. To be sure you are. Now then for the commander in chief, the earl of Leicester! who, you know, was no favourite but of the queen’s—We left off—“ in amazement lost!”—

“ Sir C. Am in amazement lost.—
“ But, see where noble Leicester comes! supreme
“ In honours and command.”

Sneer. But who are these with him?

Puff. O! very valiant knights; one is the governor of the fort, the other the master of the horse.—And now, I think, you shall hear some better language: I was obliged to be plain and intelligible in the first scene, because there was so much matter of fact in it; but now, i’faith, you have trope, figure, and metaphor, as plenty as noun-substantives.

“ Enter EARL of LEICESTER, the Governor, and others.

“ *Leic.* How’s this, my friends! is’t thus your new-fledg’d zeal

“ And plumed valour moulds in roosted sloth?

“ Can the quick current of a patriot heart,

“ Thus stagnate in a cold and weedy converse,

“ Or freeze in tideless inactivity?

“ No! rather let the fountain of your valour

“ Spring through each stream of enterprise,

“ Each petty channel of conducive daring;

“ Till the full torrent of your foaming wrath

“ O’erwhelm the flats of sunk hostility!

“ *Sir W.* No more! the fresh’ning breath of thy rebuke

“ Hath fill’d the swelling canvass of our souls!

“ And thus, though fate should cut the cable of

[All take Hands.

Our topmost hopes, in friendship’s closing line

"We'll grapple with despair, and if we fall,

"We'll fall in glory's wake!

"*Leic.* There spoke old England's genius!

"Then, are we all resolv'd?

"*All.* We are—all resolv'd!

"*Leic.* To conquer—or be free?

"*All.* To conquer—or be free.

"*Leic.* All?

"*All.* All."

Dang. Nem. con. 'egad!

Puff. O yes, where they do agree on the stage, their unanimity is wonderful!

"*Leic.* Then, let's embrace—and now——"

Sneer. What the plague, is he going to pray?

Puff. Yes, hush!—in great emergencies, there is nothing like a prayer!

"*Leic.* O mighty Mars!—"

Puff. Stop, my dear sir, you don't expect to find Mars there. No, sir, whenever you address the gods, always look into the one-shilling gallery.

"*Leic.* O mighty Mars!—"

Dang. But why should he pray to Mars?

Puff. Hush!

"*Leic.* O mighty Mars! if in thy homage bred,

"Each point of discipline I've still observ'd;

"Nor but by due promotion, and the right

"Of service, to the rank of major-general

"Have ris'n; assist thy votary now!

"*Gov.* Yet do not rise—hear me!

"*Master of Horse.* And me!

"*Knight.* And me!

"*Sir W.* And me!

"*Sir C.* And me!"

Puff. And me! Now, mind your hits, pray all together.

"*All.* Behold thy votaries submissive beg,

"That thou wilt deign to grant them all they ask——"

Puff. Give 'em a longer all next time.

"*All.* Assist them to accomplish all their ends,

"And sanctify whatever means they use

"To gain them!"

Sneer. A very orthodox quintetto!

Puff. Vastly well, gentlemen.—Is that well managed or not? Have you such a prayer as that on the stage?

Sneer. Not exactly.

[*Leic. to Puff*] But, sir, you hav'n't settled how we are to get off here.

Puff. You could not go off kneeling, could you?

[*Sir W. to Puff*] O no, sir! impossible!

Puff. It would have a good effect, i'faith, if you could exeunt praying!—Yes, and would vary the established mode of springing off with a glance at the pit. Just try.

Sneer. O never mind, so as you get them off, I'll answer for it the audience won't care how.

Puff. Well then, repeat the last line standing, and go off the old way.

“*All.* And sanctify whatever means we use to gain them.” [Excunt.]

Dang. Bravo! a fine exit.

Sneer. Stay a moment.— [“*The Sentinels get up.*”

“*1 Sent.* All this shall to lord Burleigh's ear.

“*2 Sent.* 'Tis meet it should.” [Excunt Sentinels.]

Dang. Hey, why I thought those fellows had been asleep?

Puff. Only a pretence, there's the art of it; they were spies of lord Burleigh's. Take care, my dear Dangle, the morning gun is going to fire.

Dang. Well, that will have a fine effect.

Puff. I think so, and helps to realize the scene.— [Cannon three times] What the plague!—three morning guns!—there never is but one!—ay, this is always the way at the theatre—give these fellows a good thing, and they never know when to have done with it. You have no more cannon to fire?

[*Prom. from within*] No, sir.

Puff. Now then, for soft music.

Sneer. Pray what's that for?

Puff. It shows that Tilburina is coming; nothing introduces you a heroine like soft music.—Here she comes.

Dang. And her confidant, I suppose?

Puff. To be sure: here they are—inconsolable to the minuet in Ariadne! [Soft Music.]

“ Enter *TILBURINA and Confidant.*

“ *Til.* Now flowers unfold their beauties to the sun,
 “ And blushing, kiss the beam he sends to wake them.
 “ The strip’d carnation, and the guarded rose,
 “ The vulgar wall-flow’r, and smart gillyflower,
 “ The polyanthus mean—the dapper daisy,
 “ Sweetwilliam, and sweet marjorum,—and all
 “ The tribe of single and of double pinks!
 “ Now too, the feather’d warblers tune their notes
 “ Around, and charm the listening grove—The lark!
 “ The linnet! ohaffinch! bullfinch! goldfinch! greenfinch!
 “ —But, oh, to me, no joy can they afford!
 “ Nor rose, nor wall-flow’r, nor smart gillyflower,
 “ Nor polyanthus mean, nor dapper daisy,
 “ Nor William sweet, nor marjoram—nor lark,
 “ Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove!”

Puff. Your white handkerchief, madam—

Til. I thought, sir, I wasn’t to use that till “ heart
 rending woe.”

Puff. O yes, madam—at “ the finches of the grove,”
 if you please.

“ *Til.*

Nor lark,

“ Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove! [*Weeps.*”

Puff. Vastly well, madam!

Dang. Vastly well, indeed!

“ *Til.* For, O too sure, heart rending woe is now
 “ The lot of wretched *Tilburina!*”

Dang. O!—’tis too much.

Sneer. Oh!—it is indeed.

“ *Con.* Be comforted, sweet lady—for who knows,
 “ But heav’n has yet some milk-white day in store.

“ *Til.* Alas, my gentle Nora,

“ Thy tender youth, as yet hath never mourn’d

“ Love’s fatal dart.

“ *Con.* But see where your stern father comes;

“ It is not meet that he should find you thus.”

Puff. Hey, what the plague! what a cut is here!—
 why, what is become of the description of her first
 meeting with Don Whiskerandos? his gallant behaviour
 in the sea-fight, and the simile of the canary bird?

Til. Indeed, sir, you’ll find they will not be miss’d.

Puff. Very well.—Very well!

Til. The cue, ma'am, if you please.

"*Con.* It is not meet that he should find you thus.

"*Til.* Thou counsel'st right, but 'tis no easy task

"For barefaced grief to wear a mask of joy.

"*Enter Governor.*

"*Gov.* How's this—in tears?—O Tilburina, shame!

"Is this a time for mandling tenderness,

"And Cupid's baby woes?—hast thou not heard

"That haughty Spain's pope-consecrated fleet

"Advances to our shores, while England's fate,

"Like a clipp'd guinea, trembles in the scale!

"*Til.* Then is the crisis of my fate at hand!

"I see the fleet's approach,—I see—"

Puff. Now pray, gentlemen, mind.—This is one of the most useful figures we tragedy writers have, by which a hero or heroine, in consideration of their being often obliged to overlook things that are on the stage, is allow'd to hear and see a number of things that are not.

Sneer. Yes—a kind of poetical second-sight!

Puff. Yes—now then, madam.

"*Til.* I see their decks

"Are clear'd!—I see the signal made!

"The line is form'd!—a cable's length asunder!

"I see the frigates station'd in the rear;

"And now I hear the thunder of the guns!

"I hear the victor's shouts—I also hear [and now

"The vanquish'd groan!—and now 'tis smoke—

"I see the loose sails shiver in the wind!

"I see—I see—what soon you'll see— [thy brain:

"*Gov.* Hold, daughter! peace! this love hath turn'd

"The Spanish fleet thou canst not see—because

"—It is not yet in sight!"

Dang. 'Egad though, the governor seems to make no allowance for this poetical figure you talk of.

Puff. No, a plain matter-of-fact man—that's his character.

"*Til.* But will you then refuse his offer?

"*Gov.* I must—I will—I can—I ought—I do.

"*Til.* His liberty is all he asks."

Sneer. All who asks, Mr. Puff? Who is—

Puff. 'Egad, sir, I can't tell—Here has been such cutting and slashing, I don't know where they have got to myself.

Til. Indeed, sir, you will find it will connect very well.

Puff. O,—if they hadn't been so devilish free with their cutting here, you would have found that Don Whiskerandos has been tampering for his liberty—and now pray observe the conoiseness with which the argument is conducted. 'Egad, the pro and con goes as smart as hits in a fencing match. It is indeed a sort of small-sword logic, which we have borrowed from the French.

"*Til.* A retreat in Spain!

"*Gov.* —Outlawry here!

"*Til.* Your daughter's prayer!

"*Gov.* —Your father's oath!

"*Til.* My lover!

"*Gov.* —My country!

"*Til.* Tilburina!

"*Gov.* —England!

"*Til.* A title!

"*Gov.* —Honour!

"*Til.* A pension!

"*Gov.* —Conscience!

"*Til.* A thousand pounds!

"*Gov.* Hah! thou hast touch'd me nearly!"

Puff. There you see—she threw in 'Tilburina, Quick, parry cart with England!—Hah! thrust in tierce a title! parried by honour.—Hah! a pension over the arm! put by by conscience.—Then flankade with a thousand pounds—and a palpable hit, 'egad!

"*Til.* Canst thou—

"Reject the suppliant, and the daughter too?

"*Gov.* No more; I would not bear thee plead in vain,

"The father softens—but the governor

"Is fix'd!

[*Erit.*

"*Til.* 'Tis well,—hence then fond hopes,—fond passion hence;

"Duty, behold I am all over thine—

"*Whisk.* [*Without*] Where is my love—my—

"*Til.* —Ha!

Whisk. [Entering] My beauteous enemy—
 “ My conquering Tilburina! How! is’t thus
 “ We meet? why are thy looks averse! what means
 “ That falling tear—that frown of boding woe?
 “ Hah! now indeed I am a prisoner!

“ Yes, now I feel the galling weight of these
 “ Disgraceful chains—which, cruel Tilburina!
 “ Thy doating captive gloried in before.—

“ But thou art false, and Whiskerandos is undone!
 “ *Til.* O no; how little dost thou know thy Tilburina!
 “ *Whisk.* Art thou then true? Be gone cares, doubts,
 “ I make you all a present to the winds; [and fears,
 “ And if the winds reject you—try the waves.”

Puff. The wind you know, is the established receiver
 of all stolen sighs, and cast-off griefs and apprehensions.

“ *Til.* Yet must we part?—stern duty seals our doom:
 “ Though here I call you conscious clouds to witness,
 “ Could I pursue the bias of my soul,
 “ All friends, all right of parents I’d disclaim,
 “ And thou, my Whiskerandos, shouldst be father
 “ And mother, brother, cousin, uncle, aunt,
 “ And friend to me!

“ *Whisk.* Omatchless excellence!—and must we part?
 “ Well, if—we must—we must—and in that case
 “ The less is said the better.”

Puff. Hey-day! here’s a cut!—What, are all the
 mutual protestations out?

Til. Now pray, sir, don’t interrupt us just here, you
 ruin our feelings.

Puff. Your feelings!—but zounds, my feelings, ma’am!

“ *Whisk.* One last embrace.—

“ *Til.* Now,—farewell, for ever.

“ *Whisk.* For ever!

“ *Til.* Ay, for ever.

[Going.]

Puff. S’death and fury!—Gadslife! Sir! Madam, if
 you go out without the parting look, you might as well
 dance out—Here, here!

Con. But pray, sir, how am I to get off here?

Puff. You, pshaw! what the devil signifies how you
 get off! edge away at the top, or where you will—
 [Pushes the Confidant off] Now, ma’am, you see—

Til. We understand you, sir.

"Ay for ever.

"Both. Oh!—[Turning back and exeunt. Scene closes.]

Dang. O charming!

Puff. Hey!—'tis pretty well, I believe—you see I don't attempt to strike out any thing new—but I take it I improve on the established modes. So now for the under plot.

Sneer. What the plague, have you another plot?

Puff. O Lord, yes—everw hile you live, have two plots to your tragedy.—The grand point in managing them, is only to let your under plot have as little connexion with your main plot as possible.—Now, Mr. Hopkins, as soon as you please.

Enter under Prompter.

Under Prom. Sir, the carpenter says it is impossible you can go to the park scene yet.

Puff. The park scene! No—I mean the description scene here, in the wood.

Under Prom. Sir, the performers have cut it out.

Puff. Cut it out?

Under Prom. Yes, sir.

Puff. What! the whole account of queen Elizabeth?

Under Prom. Yes, sir.

Puff. And the description of her horse and side-saddle?

Under Prom. Yes, sir.

Puff. So, so, this is very fine indeed! Mr. Hopkins, how the plague could you suffer this?

Hop. [From within] Sir, indeed the pruning-knife—

Puff. The pruning-knife—zounds the axe! why, here has been such lopping and topping, I shan't have the bare trunk of my play left presently.—Very well, sir—the performers must do as they please, but upon my soul, I'll print it every word.

Sneer. That I would, indeed.

Puff. So! this is a pretty dilemma, truly!—Gentlemen—you must excuse me, these fellows will never be ready, unless I go and look after them myself.

Sneer. O dear sir—these little things will happen—

Puff. To cut out this scene!—but I'll print it—'egad, I'll print it every word!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. *Before the Curtain.*

Enter PUFF, SNEER, and DANGLE.

Puff. Well, we are ready—now then for the justices.

[Curtain rises; Justices, Constables, &c. discovered.]

Sneer. This, I suppose, is a sort of senate scene?

Puff. Yes. What, gentlemen, do you mean to go at once to the discovery scene?

Just. If you please, sir.

Puff. O very well—harkye, I don't choose to say any thing more, but i'faith, they have mangled my play in a most shocking manner!

Dang. It's a great pity!

Puff. Now then, Mr. Justice, if you please.

Just. Are all the volunteers without?

Const.

They are,

Some ten in fetters, and some twenty drunk.

Just. Attends the youth, whose most opprobrious
“fame

And clear convicted crimes have stamp't him soldier?

Const. He waits your pleasure; eager to repay

"The blest reprieve that sends him to the fields
 "Of glory, there to raise his branded hand
 "In honour's cause.

"*Just.* 'Tis well——

"If 'tis your worship's pleasure, bid him enter.

"*Const.* I fly, the herald of your will.

[*Exit Constable.*"]

Puff. Quick, sir!

Sneer. But, Mr. Puff, I think not only the justice, but the clown seems to talk in as high a style as the first hero among them.

Puff. Heaven forbid they should not in a free country!—Sir, I am not for making slavish distinctions, and giving all the fine language to the upper sort of people.

Dang. That's very noble in you, indeed.

"*Enter Justice's Lady.*

"*Lady.* Forgive this interruption, good my love;
 "But, as I just now past, a pris'ner youth
 "Whom rude hands hither lead, strange bodings seiz'd
 "My fluttering heart, and to myself I said,
 "An if our Tom had liv'd, he'd surely been
 "This stripling's height!

"*Just.* Ha! sure some powerful sympathy directs
 "Us both——

"*Enter Son and Constable.*

"What is thy name?

"*Son.* My name's Tom Jenkins—alias, have I none—
 "Though orphan'd, and without a friend!

"*Just.* Thy parents?

"*Son.* My father dwelt in Rochester——and was,
 "As I have heard——a fishmonger——no more."

Puff. What, sir, do you leave out the account of your birth, parentage, and education?

Son. They have settled it so, sir, here.

Puff. Oh! oh!

"*Lady.* Had he no other name?

"*Son.*

I've seen a bill

"Of his, sign'd Tomkins, creditor.

"Just. This does indeed confirm each circumstance

"The gipsy told!—Prepare!

"Son. I do.

"Just. No orphan, nor without a friend art thou—

"I am thy father, here's thy mother, there

"Thy uncle—this thy first cousin, and those

"Are all your near relations!

"Mother. O ecstasy of bliss!

"Son. O most unlook'd for happiness!

"[*They faint alternately in each others Arms.*"]

Puff. There, you see relationship, like murder, will out.

"Just. Now let's revive—else were this joy too much!

"But come—and we'll unfold the rest within,

"And thou, my boy, must needs want rest and food.

"Hence may each orphan hope, as chance directs,

"To find a father—where he least expects! [*Exeunt.*"]

Puff. What do you think of that?

Dang. One of the finest discovery scenes I ever saw.
—Why, this under plot would have made a tragedy itself.

Sneer. Ay, or a comedy either.

Puff. And keeps quite clear, you see, of the other.

Enter Sceneman, taking away the Seats.

Puff. The scene remains, does it?

Scenem. Yes, sir.

Puff. You are to leave one chair, you know.—But it is always awkward in a tragedy, to have you fellows coming in in your playhouse liveries to remove things—I wish that could be managed better.

Enter a Beefeater.

"Beef. Perdition catch my soul but I do love thee."

Sneer. Haven't I heard that line before?

Puff. No, I fancy not—Where, pray?

Dang. Yes, I think there is something like it in Othello.

Puff. 'Gad? now you put me in mind on't, I believe there is—but that's of no consequence—all that can be

said is, that two people happened to hit on the same thought—And Shakspeare made use of it first, that's all.

Sneer. Very true.

Puff. Now, sir, your soliloquy—but speak more to the pit, if you please—the soliloquy always to the pit—that's a rule.

Beef. Though hopeless love finds comfort in despair,
"It never can endure a rival's bliss!"

"But soft—I am observ'd. [Exit Beefeater.]

Dang. That's a very short soliloquy.

Puff. Yes—but it would have been a great deal longer if he had not been observed.

Sneer. A most sentimental beefeater that, Mr. Puff.

Puff. Harkye—I would not have you be too sure he is a beefeater.

Sneer. What, a hero in disguise?

Puff. No matter—I only give you a hint—But now for my principal character—Here he comes—lord Burleigh in person! Pray, gentlemen, step this way—softly—if he is but perfect!

Enter BURLEIGH, goes slowly to a Chair and sits.

Sneer. Mr. Puff!

Puff. Hush! vastly well, sir! vastly well! a most interesting gravity!

Dang. What, isn't he to speak at all?

Puff. 'Egad, I thought you'd ask me that—yes, it is a very likely thing—that a minister in his situation, with the whole affairs of the nation on his head, should have time to talk!—but hush! or you'll put him out.

Sneer. Put him out! how the plague can that be, if he's not going to say any thing?

Puff. There's a reason! why his part is to think, and how the plague do you imagine he can think if you keep talking?

Dang. That's very true, upon my word!

[Burleigh comes forward, shakes his Head and exit.

Sneer. He is very perfect indeed—Now, pray what did he mean by that?

Puff. You don't take it?

Sneer. No; I don't, upon my soul.

Puff. Why, by that shake of the head, he gave you to understand that even though they had more justice in their cause, and wisdom in their measures—yet, if there was not a greater spirit shown on the part of the people—the country would at last fall a sacrifice to the hostile ambition of the Spanish monarchy.

Sneer. The devil!—did he mean all that by shaking his head?

Puff. Every word of it—If he shook his head as I taught him.

Sneer. O, here are some of our old acquaintance.

“*Enter HATTON and RALEIGH.*”

“*Sir C.* My niece, and your niece too!

“By heav'n! there's witchcraft in't—He could not else

“Have gain'd their hearts—But see where they approach;

“Some horrid purpose low'ring on their brows!

“*Sir W.* Let us withdraw and mark them.

“*[They withdraw.]*”

Sneer. What is all this?

Puff. Ah! here has been more pruning!—but the fact is, these two young ladies are also in love with Don Whiskerandos.—Now, gentlemen, this scene goes entirely for what we call situation and stage effect, by which the greatest applause may be obtained, without the assistance of language, sentiment, or character: pray mark!

“*Enter the two Nieces.*”

“*1 Niece.* Ellena here!

“But see the proud destroyer of my peace.

“Revenge is all the good I've left.

[Aside.

“*2 Niece.* He comes, the false disturber of my quiet.

“Now vengeance do thy worst——

[Aside.

Enter WHISKERANDOS.

“*Whisk.* O hateful liberty—if thus in vain

“I seek my *Tilburina!*

“*Both Nieces.* And ever shalt!

“ [Sir C. and Sir W. come forward] Hold! we will
“ avenge you.

“ Whisk. Hold you—or see your nieces bleed.—

“ [The two Nieces draw their two Daggers to strike Whiskerandos, the two Uncles at the instant with their two Swords drawn catch their two Nieces Arms, and turn the Points of their Swords to Whiskerandos, who immediately draws two Daggers, and holds them to the two Nieces Bosoms.]”

Puff. There's situation for you! there's an heroic group!—You see the ladies can't stab Whiskerandos—he durst not strike them for fear of their uncles—the uncles durst not kill him because of their nieces—I have them all at a dead lock!—for every one of them is afraid to let go first.

Sneer. Why, then they must stand there for ever.

Puff. So they would, if I hadn't a very fine contrivance for't—Now mind—

“ Enter Beefeater, with his Halberd.

“ Beef. In the queen's name I charge you all to drop
“ Your swords and daggers!

“ [They drop their Swords and Daggers.]”

Sneer. That is a contrivance indeed.

Puff. Ay—in the queen's name.

“ Sir C. Come niece!

“ Sir W. Come niece! [Exeunt with the two Nieces.

“ Whisk. What's he, who bids us thus renounce our
“ guard?

“ Beef. Thou must do more—renounce thy love!

“ Whisk. Thou liest—base beefeater!

“ Beef. Ha! Hell! the lie!

“ By heav'n thou'st rous'd the lion in my heart!

“ Off yeoman's habit!—base disguise! off! off!

“ [Discovers himself, by throwing off his upper Dress,
and appearing in a very fine Waucoat.

“ Am I a beefeater now?

“ Or beams my crest as terrible as when

“ In Biscay's Bay I took thy captive sloop.”

Puff. There, 'egad! he comes out to be the very cap-

tain of the privateer who had taken Whiskerandos prisoner—and was himself an old lover of Tilburina's.

Dang. Admirably manag'd indeed.

Puff. Now, stand out of their way.

"*Whisk.* I thank thee, fortune! that hast thus bestow'd
"A weapon to chastise this insolent.

"[*Takes up one of the Swords.*

"*Beef.* I take thy challenge, Spaniard, and I thank

"Thee, fortune, too!— [Takes up the other Sword.

"*Whisk.* Vengeance and Tilburina!

"*Beef.* Exactly so—

"[*They fight, and after the usual number of wounds given, Whiskerandos falls.*

"*Whisk.* O cursed parry!—that last thrust in tierce

"Was fatal!—Captain, thou hast fenced well!

"And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene

"For all eter—

"*Beef.* —nity—He would have added, but stern
"death

"Cut short his being, and the noun at once!"

Puff. O, my dear sir, you are too slow, now mind me.—Sir, shall I trouble you to die again?

"*Whisk.* And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene

"For all eter—

"*Beef.* —nity—He would have added—"

Puff. No, sir—that's not it—once more, if you please—

Whisk. I wish, sir—you would practise this without me—I can't stay dying here all night.

Puff. Very well, we'll go over it by-and-by—I must humour these gentlemen! [*Exit Whiskerandos.*

"*Beef.* Farewell—brave Spaniard! and when next—"

Puff. Dear sir, you needn't speak that speech as the body has walked off.

Beef. That's true, sir—then I'll join the fleet.

Puff. If you please. [*Exit Beefeater*] Now enter Tilburina, stark mad, in white satin.

Sneer. Why in white satin!

Puff. O Lord, sir—when a heroine goes mad, she always goes into white satin—don't she, Danglo?

Dang. Always—it's a rule.

Puff. Yes—here it is—[*Looking at the Book*] “Enter Tilburina stark mad in white satin, and her confidant stark mad in white linen.”

Enter TILBURINA and CONFIDANT mad, according to Custom.

Sneer. But what the deuce, is the confidant to be mad too?

Puff. To be sure she is: the confidant is always to do whatever her mistress does; weep when she weeps, smile when she smiles, go mad when she goes mad.—Now, madam confidant—but keep your madness in the back ground, if you please.

Til. The wind whistles—the moon rises—see
 “They have kill’d my squirrel in his cage!
 “Is this a grasshopper?—Ha! no, it is my
 “Whiskerandos—you shall not keep bim—
 “I know you have him in your pocket—
 “An oyster may be cross’d in love!—Who says
 “A whale’s a bird?—Ha! did you call my love?
 “——He’s here! He’s there!—He’s every where!
 “Ah me! He’s no where! [Exit Tilburina.]

Puff. There, do you ever desire to see any body madder than that?

Sneer. Never, while I live! And pray what becomes of her?

Puff. She is gone to throw herself into the sea, to be sure—and that brings us at once to the scene of action, and so to my catastrophe—my sea-fight, I mean.

Sneer. What, you bring that in at last?

Puff. Yes—yes—you know my play is called the Spanish Armada, otherwise, ’egad, I have no occasion for the battle at all.—Now then for my magnificence!—my battle!—my noise!—and my procession!—You are all ready?

Prom. [Within] Yes, sir.

Puff. Is the Thames drest?

Enter Thames, with two Attendants.

Thames. Here I am, sir.

Puff. Very well indeed—See, gentlemen, there's a river for you!

Sneer. But pray, who are these gentlemen in green with him.

Puff. Those?—those are his banks.

Sneer. His banks?

Puff. Yes, one crown'd with alders, and the other with a villa!—you take the allusions? but hey! what the plague! you have got both your banks on one side—Here, air, come round—Ever while you live, Thames, go between your banks. [*Bell rings*]—There, soh! now for't!—Stand aside, my dear friends!—away Thames!

[*Exit Thames between his Banks.*]

[*Flourish of Drums, Trumpets, Cannon, &c, &c.—Scene changes to the Sea—the Fleets engage—the Music plays “Britons strike Home.”—Spanish Fleet destroyed by Fire-ships, &c.—English Fleet advances—Music plays “Rule Britannia.”—The Procession of all the English Rivers and their Tributaries, with their Emblems, &c. begins with Handel's Water Music, ends with a Chorus, to the March in Judas Maccabæus.—During this Scene, Puff directs and applauds every thing—then*]

Puff. Well, pretty well—but not quite perfect—so, ladies and gentlemen, if you please, we'll rehearse this piece again to-morrow. [*Curtain drops.*]

C Y M O N.

A Dramatic Romance.

BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,

OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.



Printed at the Chiswick Press,

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1816.



CYMON.

THE present is not the only period in which the fascination of music and the splendour of scenic decoration have given currency to dramas of inferior rank. Mr. Garrick, who produced this romance at Drury Lane in 1767, seems to have been well aware of what attraction belongs to sound and show. His CHRISTMAS TALE, and some other pieces of similar description, prove that his treasurer was often the arbiter of what ought to be brought forward.

Dryden's CYMON AND IPHIGENIA gave a hint for the structure of this piece, which was acted with great success. After lying dormant a long time, it was revived about three-and-twenty years back, with uncommon magnificence, by Mr. Sheridan, while the Drury Lane company were performing at the King's Theatre; and it has very lately been again brought forward at considerable expense by the present proprietors of Covent Garden.



PROLOGUE.

FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY.

SPOKEN BY MR. KING.

I COME, obedient at my brethren's call,
From top to bottom, to salute you all ;
Warmly to wish, before our piece you view,
A happy year—to you—you—you—and you!

[*Box—Pit—1 Gall.—2 Gall.*

From you the play'rs enjoy and feel it here,
The merry *Christmas*, and the happy year

There is a good old saying—pray attend it:
As you begin the year, you'll surely end it.
Should any one this night incline to evil,
He'll play, for twelve long months, the very devil!
Should any married dame exert her tongue,
She'll sing, the *zodiac* round, the same sweet song:
And should the husband join his music too,
Why then 'tis *cat* and *dog* the whole year through.
Ye sons of *law* and *physic*, for your ease,
Be sure this day you never take your fees.
Can't you refuse?—Then the disease grows strong;
You'll have two itching palms—Lord knows how long!
Writers of news by this strange fate are bound,
'They fib to-day, and fib the whole year round.
You wits assembled here, both great and small,
Set not this night afloat your critic gall;
If you should snarl, and not incline to laughter,
What sweet companions for a twelvemonth after!
You must be muzzled for this night at least;
Our author has a right this day to feast.
He has not touch'd one bit as yet.—Remember
'Tis a long *fast*—from now to next December.
'This *holiday!* you are our *patrons* now:

[*To the upper Gallery.*

If you but grin, the critics won't bow, wow.
As for the plot, wit, humour, language—I
Beg you such trifles kindly to pass by;

The most essential part, which something means,
 As dresses, dances, sinkings, flyings, scenes—
 They'll make you stare; nay, there is such a thing,
 Will make you stare still more!—for I must sing:
 And should your taste, and ears, be over nice,
 Alas! you'll spoil my singing in a trice.
 If you should growl, my notes will alter soon;
 I can't be in, if you are out of tune!
 Permit my fears your favour to bespeak;
 My part's a strong one, and poor I but weak.

[Alluding to his late Accident.

If you but smile, I'm firm; if frown, I stumble:
 Scarce well of one, spare me a second tumble!

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

As originally acted at Drury Lane. Covent Garden, 1815.

<i>Merlin</i>	Mr. Bensley.	Mr. Egerton.
<i>Cymon</i>	Mr. Vernon.	Mr. Duraset.
<i>Dorus</i>	Mr. Parsons.	Mr. Liston.
<i>Linco</i>	Mr. King.	Mr. Fawcett.
<i>Dumon</i>	Mr. Fawcett.	Mr. Tinney.
<i>Dorilas</i>	Mr. Fox.	Mr. Norris.
<i>Hymen</i>	Mr. Giorgi.	Mr. Flexmore.
<i>Cupid</i>	Miss Rogers.	Miss Worgman.
<i>Urganda</i>	Mrs. Baddeley.	Miss Hughes.
<i>Sylvia</i>	Mrs. Arne.	Miss Stephens.
<i>Fatima</i>	Mrs. Abington.	Mrs. Gibbs.
<i>First Shepherdess</i> .	Miss Reynolds.	Miss Matthews.
<i>Second Shepherdess</i>	Miss Plym.	Miss Mac Alpine.
<i>Dorcus</i>	Mrs. Bradshaw.	Mrs. Liston.

Demons of Revenge, Knights, Shepherds, &c.

SCENE—ARCADIA.

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. URGANDA'S Palace.

Enter MERLIN and URGANDA.

Urg. **B**UT hear me, Merlin; I beseech you hear me.

Mer. Hear you! I have heard you—for years have heard your vows, your protestations.—Have you not allured my affections by every female art? and when I thought that my unalterable passion was to be rewarded for its constancy, what have you done?—Why, like mere mortal woman, in the true spirit of frailty, have given up me and my hopes—for what?—a boy; an idiot.

Urg. Even this I can bear from Merlin.

Mer. You have injured me, and must bear more.

Urg. I'll repair that injury.

Mer. Then send back your favourite Cymon to his disconsolate friends.

Urg. How can you imagine that such a poor ignorant object as Cymon is, can have any charms for me?

Mer. Ignorance, no more than profligacy, is excluded

from female favour; of this the success of rakes and fools is proof sufficient.

Urg. You mistake me, Merlin; pity for Cymon's state of mind, and friendship for his father, have induced me to endeavour at his cure.

Mer. False, prevaricating Urganda! love was your inducement. Have you not stolen the prince from his royal father, and detained him here by your power, while a hundred knights are in search after him? Does not every thing about you prove the consequence of your want of honour and faith to me? You were placed on this happy spot, to be the guardian of its peace and innocence; but now, at last, by your example, the once happy lives of the Arcadians are embittered with envy, passion, vanity, selfishness, and inconstancy;—and whom are they to curse for this change? Urganda; the lost Urganda.

Urg. I beseech you, Merlin, spare me.

Mer. Yes, I'll converse with you no more, because I will be no more deceived. I cannot hate you, though I shun you; yet, in my misery, I have this consolation, that the pangs of my jealousy are at least equalled by the torments of your fruitless passion.

Still wish and sigh, and wish again;

Love is dethron'd; revenge shall reign!

Still shall my pow'r your vile arts confound,

And Cymon's cure shall be Urganda's wound. *[Exit.*

Urg. "And Cymon's cure shall be Urganda's wound!" What mystery is couch'd in these words?—What can he mean?

Enter FATIMA, looking after MERLIN.

Fat. I'll tell you, madam, when he is out of hearing—He means mischief, and terrible mischief too; no less, I believe, than ravishing you, and cutting my tongue out. I wish we were out of his clutches.

Urg. Don't fear, Fatima.

Fat. I can't help it; he has great power, and is mischievously angry.

Urg. Here is your protection. *[Shows her Wand]*

My power is at least equal to his. [*Muses*] "And Cymon's cure shall be Urganda's wound!"

Fat. Don't trouble your head with these odd ends of verses, which were spoke in a passion; or, perhaps, for the rhyme's sake. Think a little to clear us from this old mischief-making conjurer.—What will you do, madam?

Urg. What can I do, Fatima?

Fat. You might very easily settle matters with him, if you could as easily settle 'em with yourself.

Urg. Tell me how?

Fat. Marry Merlin, and send away the young fellow. [*Urganda shakes her Head*] I thought so—but before matters grow worse, give me leave to reason a little with you, madam.

Urg. I am in love, Fatima.

[*Sighs.*]

Fat. And poor reason may stay at home—me exactly! Ay, ay, we are all alike; but with this difference, madam—your passion is surely a strange one; you have stolen away this young man, who, bating his youth and figure, has not one single circumstance to create affection about him. He is half an idiot, madam, which is no great compliment to your wisdom, your beauty, or your power.

Urg. I despise them all—for they can neither relieve my passion, nor awaken his.

Fat. Cymon is incapable of being touched with any thing; nothing gives him pleasure, but twirling his cap, and hunting butterflies: he'll make a sad lover indeed, madam.

Urg. I can wait with patience for the recovery of his understanding; it begins to dawn already.

Fat. Where, pray?

Urg. In his eyes.

Fat. Eyes! ha, ha, ha! Love has none, madam; the heart only sees, on these occasions.—Cymon was born a fool, and his eyes will never look as you would have them, take my word for it.

Urg. Don't make me despair, Fatima.

Fat. Don't lose your time then; 'tis the business of

beauty to make fools, and not cure 'em. Even I, poor I, could have made twenty fools of wise men, in half the time that you have been endeavouring to make your fool sensible.—O, 'tis a sad way of spending one's time.

Urg. Silence, Fatima; my passion is too serious to be jested with.

Fat. Far gone indeed, madam; and yonder goes the precious object of it.

Urg. He seems melancholy: what's the matter with him?

Fat. He's a fool, or he might make himself very merry among us. I'll leave you to make the most of him. [Going.]

Urg. Stay, Fatima, and help me to divert him.

Fat. A sad time, when a lady must call in help to divert her gallant!—but I'm at your service.

Enter CYMON, melancholy.

Cymon. Heigho! [Sighs.]

Fat. What's the matter, young gentleman?

Cymon. Heigho!

Urg. Are you not well, Cymon?

Cymon. Yes, I am very well.

Urg. Why do you sigh then?

Cymon. Eh! [Looks foolish.]

Fat. Do you see it in his eyes now, madam?

Urg. Pr'ythee be quiet.—What is it you want? tell me, Cymon—tell me your wishes, and you shall have 'em.

Cymon. Shall I?

Urg. Yes, indeed, Cymon.

Fat. Now for it.

Cymon. I wish—heigho!—

Urg. These sighs must mean something.

[Aside to Fatima.]

Fat. I wish you joy then; find it out, madam.

Urg. What do you sigh for? [Apart.]

Cymon. I want— [To Cymon.]

Urg. What, what, my sweet creature? [Sighs.]

[Eagerly.]

Cymon. To go away.

Fat. O la, the meaning's out.

Urg. Where would you go?

Cymon. Any where.

Urg. Had you rather go any where, than stay with me?

Cymon. I had rather go any where, than stay with any body.

Urg. Will you love me if I let you go?

Cymon. Any thing, if you'll let me go; pray let me go.

Fat. I'm out of all patience—what the deuce would you have, young gentleman? Had you one grain of understanding, or a spark of sensibility in you, you would know and feel yourself to be the happiest of mortals.

Cymon. I had rather go, for all that.

Fat. The picture of the whole sex! Oh, madam! fondness will never do; a little coquetry is the thing; I bait my hook with nothing else; and I always catch fish.

[*Aside to Urganda.*

Urg. I will show him my power, and captivate his heart through his senses.

Fat. You'll throw away your powder and shot.

INCANTATION.—URGANDA.

Hither, spirits, that aid me, hither!

Whither stays my love? ah! whither?

Alas! this heart must faithful prove,

Though still he flies Urganda's love.

[*Urganda waves her Wand, and the Stage changes to a magnificent Garden. Cupid and the Loves descend. Ballet by Loves and Zephyrs. During the Dance Cymon stares vacantly, grows inattentive, and at last falls asleep.*

Urg. Look, Fatima, nothing can affect his insensibility; and yet, what a beautiful simplicity!

Fat. Turn him out among the sheep, madam, and think of him no more; 'tis all labour in vain, as the song says, I assure you.

Urg. Cymon, Cymon! what are you dead to these entertainments?

Cymon. Dead! I hope not.

[Starts.

Urg. How can you be so unmoved?

Cymon. They tired me so, that I wished 'em a good night, and went to sleep. But where are they?

Urg. They are gone, Cymon.

Cymon. Then let me go too.

[Gets up.

Fat. The old story!

Urg. Whither would you go? Tell me, and I'll go with you, my sweet youth.

Cymon. No, I'll go by myself.

Urg. And so you shall; but where?

Cymon. Into the fields.

Urg. But is not this garden pleasanter than the fields, my palace than cottages, and my company more agreeable to you than the shepherds?

Cymon. Why, how can I tell till I try; you won't let me choose.

AIR.

You gave me last week a young linnet,
 Shut up in a fine golden cage;
 Yet how sad the poor thing was within it,
 Oh, how it did flutter and rage!
 Then he mop'd, and he pin'd,
 That his wings were confin'd,
 Till I open'd the door of his den;
 Then so merry was he,
 And because he was free,
 He came to his cage back again.

And so should I too, if you would let me go.

Urg. And would you return to me again?

Cymon. Yes, I would. I have no where else to go.

Fat. Let him have his humour; when he is not confined, and is seemingly disregarded, you may have him, and mould him as you please. 'Tis a receipt for the whole sex.

Urg. I'll follow your advice. [Exit Fatima] Well, Cymon, you shall go wherever you please, and for as long as you please.

Cymon. And shall I let my linnet out too?

Urg. And take this, Cymon, wear it for my sake, and don't forget me. [*Gives him a Nosegay*] Go, Cymon, take your companion, and be happier than I can make you.

AIR.

One adieu before you leave me,
One sigh, although that sigh deceive me;

O! let me think you true!

Cruel! thus Urganda flying,
Cruel! this fond heart denying;

One sigh, one last adieu!

Though my ardent vows be slighted,
Though my love be unrequited,

O! hide it from my view!

Let me feel not I'm forsaken,

Rather let me die mistaken,

Than breathe one last adieu.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A rural Prospect.*

Enter PHÆBE and DAPHNE.

Phæbe. What, to be left and forsaken! and see the false fellow make the same vows to another, almost before my face! I can't bear it, and I won't! O that I had the power of our enchantress yonder! I would play the devil with them all.

Daph. And yet, to do justice to Sylvia, who makes all this disturbance among you, she does not in the least encourage the shepherds, and she can't help their falling in love with her.

Phæbe. May be so, nor can I help hating and detesting her, because they do fall in love with her.

Linco. [*Singing Without*] Care flies from the lad that is merry.

Daph. Here comes the merry Linco, who never knew care or felt sorrow.—If you can bear his laughing at your griefs, or singing away his own, you may get some information from him.

Enter LINCO, singing.

Linco. What, my girls of ten thousand! I was this moment defying love and all his mischief, and you are sent in the nick by him, to try my courage; but I'm above temptation, or below it; I duck down, and all his arrows fly over me.

AIR.

Care flies from the lad that is merry,
Who's heart is as sound
And cheeks are as round,
As round, and as red as a cherry.

Phæbe. What, are you always thus?

Linco. Ay, or heaven help me! What, would you have me do as you do? walking with your arms across, thus—heighho'ing by the brook side among the willows. Oh! fie for shame, lasses! young and handsome, and sighing after one fellow a piece, when you should have a hundred in a drove, following you like—like—you shall have the simile another time.

Daph. No; pr'ythee, Linco, give it us now.

Linco. You shall have it—or, what's better, I'll tell you what you are not like—you are not like our shepherdess Sylvia—she's so cold, and so coy, that she flies from her lovers, but is never without a score of them; you are always running after the fellows, and yet are always alone; a very great difference, let me tell you—frost and fire, that's all.

Daph. Don't imagine that I am in the pining condition my poor sister is. I am as happy as she is miserable.

Linco. Good lack, I'm sorry for't.

Daph. What, sorry that I am happy?

Linco. O! no, prodigious glad.

Phæbe. That I am miserable?

Linco. No, no! prodigious sorry for that—and prodigious glad of the other.

Phæbe. Pr'ythee, be serious a little.

Linco. No; heaven forbid! If I am serious, 'tis all over with me. I must laugh at something; shall I be merry with you?

Daph. The happy shepherdess can bear to be laughed at.

Linco. Then Sylvia might take your shepherd without a sigh.

Daph. My shepherd! what does the fool mean?

Phæbe. Her shepherd! pray tell us, *Linco.* [*Eagerly.*]

Linco. 'Tis no secret, I suppose—I only met her Damon and Sylvia together just now, walking to—

Daph. What, my Damon?

Linco. Your Damon that was, and that would be Sylvia's Damon, if she would put up with him.

Daph. Her Damon! I'll make her to know—a wicked slut! a vile fellow.—Come, sister, I'm ready to go with you—we'll be revenged. If our old governor continues to cast a sheep's eye at me, I'll have her turned out of Arcadia, I warrant you; a base, mischievous—[*Exit.*]

Phæbe. This is some comfort, however, ha, ha, ha! in seeing one's sister as miserable as one's self. [*Exit.*]

Linco. Ha, ha, ha! O how the pretty sweet-tempered creatures are ruffled.

AIR.

This love puts 'em all in commotion;

For preach what you will,

They cannot be still,

No more than the wind or the ocean. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. *A rural Prospect.*

SYLVIA discovered lying upon a Bank. Enter MERLIN.

Mer. My art succeeds—which hither has convey'd,
To catch the eye of Cymon, this sweet maid.
Her charms shall clear the mists which cloud his mind,
And make him warm, and sensible, and kind;
Her yet cold heart, with passion's sighs shall move,
Melt as he melts, and give him love for love.
This magic touch shall to these flowers impart

[Touches a Nosegay in her Hand.]

A power when beauty gains, to fix the heart. [Exit.]

Enter CYMON, with his Bird.

Cymon. Away, prisoner, and make yourself merry.
[Bird flies] Ay, ay, I knew how it would be with you
—much good may it do you, Bob. What a sweet place
this is! Hills, and greens, and rocks, and trees, and
water, and sun, and birds!—Dear me, 'tis just as if I had
never seen it before! [Whistles about till he sees Sylvia,
then stops and sinks his Whistling by degrees, with a look

and attitude of astonishment] O ha! what's here?—
 'Tis something dropped from the heavens sure; and yet
 'tis like a woman too!—Bless me! is it alive? [*Sighs*]
 It can't be dead, for its cheek is as red as a rose, and
 it moves about the heart of it. I don't know what's the
 matter with me.—I wish it would wake, that I might
 see its eyes.—If it should look gentle, and smile upon
 me, I should be glad to play with it.—Ay, ay, there's
 something now in my breast that they told me of. It
 feels oddly to me; and yet I don't dislike it.

AIR.

All amaze!
 Wouder, praise;
 Here for ever could I gaze!
 A little nearer to—
 What is't I do?
 Fie, for shame; I am possess'd;
 Something creeping in my breast
 Will not let me stay or go.
 Shall I wake it? No! no! no!

I am glad I came abroad!—I have not been so pleased
 ever since I can remember. But perhaps it may be
 angry with me. I can't help it, if it is. I had rather
 see her angry with me than Urganda smile upon me.—
 Stay, stay. [*Sylvia stirs*] La, what a pretty foot it has!
 [*Retires. Sylvia raises herself from the Bank.*]

AIR.—SYLVIA.

Yet awhile, sweet sleep, deceive me,
 Fold me in thy downy arms,
 Let not care awake to grieve me,
 Lull it with thy potent charms.
 I, a turtle, doom'd to stray,
 Quitting young the parent's nest,
 Find each bird a bird of prey;
 Sorrow knows not where to rest.

[*Sylvia sees Cymon with emotion, while he gazes strongly
 on her, and retires, pulling off his Cap.*]

Syl. Who's that? [*Speaks gently and confused.*

Cymon. 'Tis I. [*Bows and hesitates.*

Syl. What's your name?

Cymon. Cymon.

Syl. What do you want, young man?

Cymon. Nothing, young woman.

Syl. What are you doing there?

Cymon. Looking at you there.—What eyes it has!
[*Aside.*

Syl. You don't intend me any harm?

Cymon. Not I indeed!—I wish you don't do me some. Art thou a fairy, pray?

Syl. No; I am a poor, harmless shepherdess.

Cymon. I don't know that; you have bewitched me, I believe. I wish you'd speak to me, and look at me, as Urganda does.

Syl. What, the enchantress? Do you belong to her?

Cymon. I had rather belong to you; I would not desire to go abroad, if I did.

Syl. Does Urganda love you?

Cymon. So she says. If I were to stay here always, I should not be called the simple Cymon.

Syl. Nor I, the hard-hearted Sylvia!

Cymon. Sylvia! Sylvia! what a sweet name! I could sound it for ever!

Syl. I shall never see you again. I wish I had not seen you now!

Cymon. If you did but wish as I do, all the enchantresses in the world could not hinder us from seeing one another.
[*Kneels and kisses her Hand.*

Syl. We shall be seen, and separated for ever! I must go.

Cymon. When shall I see you again? In half an hour?

Syl. Half an hour! that will be too soon.—No, no, it must be three-quarters of an hour.

Cymon. And where, my sweet Sylvia?

Syl. Any where, my sweet Cymon.

Cymon. In the grove, by the river there.

Syl. And you shall take this to remember it. [*Gives him the Nosegay enchanted by Merlin*] I wish it were a

kingdom, I would give it you, and a queen along with it.

Cymon. And here is one for you too; which is of no value to me, unless you will receive it—take it, my sweet Sylvia.
[Gives her Urganda's Nosegay.]

DUET.—SYLVIA and CYMON.

Syl. Take this nosegay, gentle youth;

Cymon. And you, sweet maid, take mine;

Syl. Unlike these flowers be thy fair truth:

Cymon. Unlike these flowers be thine.

These changing soon

Will soon decay,

Be sweet till noon,

Then pass away.

Fair for a time their transient charms appear;

But truth unchang'd shall bloom for ever here.

[Each pressing their Hearts. Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Before URGANDA'S Palace.

Enter URGANDA.

Urg. With what anxiety I watch his return! And how mean is that anxiety for an object so insensible! O love! is it not enough to make thy votaries despicable in others eyes? Must we also despise ourselves?

Enter FATIMA.

Well, Fatima, is he returned?

Fat. He has no feelings but those of hunger; when that pinches him he'll return to be fed, like other animals.

Urg. Indeed, Fatima, his insensibility and ingratitude astonish and distract me. Yet am I only a greater slave to my weakness, and more incapable of relief.

Fat. Why then I may as well hold my tongue; but before I would waste all the prime of my womanhood in playing such a losing game, I would—but I see you don't mind me, madam, and therefore I'll say no more—I know the consequence, and must submit.

Urg. What can I do in my situation? But see where Cymon approaches—he seems transported. Look, look, Fatima! he is kissing and embracing my nosegay; it has had the desired effect, and I am happy: we'll be invisible, that I may observe his transports.

[*Urganda waves her Wand, and retires with Fatima.*]

Enter CYMON, hugging a Nosegay.

Cymon. Oh, my dear, sweet, charming nosegay! To see thee, to smell thee, and to taste thee, [*Kisses it*] will make Urganda and her garden delightful to me.

[*Kisses it.*]

Fat. What does he say?

[*Apart.*]

Urg. Hush, hush! all transport, and about me. What a change is this!

[*Apart.*]

Cymon. With this I can want for nothing. I possess every thing with this. Oh, the dear, dear nosegay, and the dear, dear giver of it!

Urg. The dear, dear giver. Mind that, Fatima! What heavenly eloquence! Here's a change of heart and mind! Heigho!

[*Apart.*]

Fat. I'm all amazement! in a dream! But is that your nosegay?

[*Apart.*]

Urg. Mine! How can you doubt it?

[*Apart.*]

Fat. Nay, I'm near-sighted.

[*Apart.*]

Cymon. She has not a beauty that is not brought to mind by these flowers. O! I shall lose my wits with pleasure!

Fat. 'Tis pity to lose 'em the moment you have found 'em.

[*Apart.*]

Urg. O, Fatima! I never was proud of my power till this transporting moment!

[*Apart.*]

Cymon. Where shall I put it? Where shall I conceal it from every body? I'll keep it in my bosom, next my heart all the day; and at night I will put it upon my pillow, and talk to it, and sigh to it, and swear to it, and sleep by it, and kiss it for ever and ever.

AIR.

What exquisite pleasure!
This sweet treasure,
From me they shall never
Sever;

In thee, in thee,
My charmer I see:

I'll sigh, and caress thee,
I'll kiss thee, and press thee,

Thus, thus, to my bosom for ever and ever.

[*Urganda and Fatima come forward. Cymon puts the Nosegay in his Bosom, and looks confused and astonished.*

Urg. Pray, what is that you would kiss and press to your bosom for ever and ever? [Smiles.

Cymon. Nothing but—but—nothing—

Urg. What were you talking to?

Cymon. Myself, to be sure; I had nothing else to talk to.

Urg. Yes, but you have, Cymon. There is something in your bosom, next your heart.

Cymon. Yes, so there is.

Urg. What is it, Cymon? [Smiles.

Fat. Now his modesty is giving way; we shall have it at last. [Aside.

Cymon. Nothing but a nosegay.

Urg. That which I gave you? Let me see it.

Cymon. What! give a thing, and take it away again?

Urg. I would not take it away for the world.

Cymon. Nor would I give it you for a hundred worlds.

Fat. See it by all means, madam. I have my reasons.

[Aside to *Urganda.*

Urg. I must see it, Cymon, and therefore no delay. I will see it, or shut you up for ever.

Cymon. What a stir is here about nothing! Now are you satisfied?

[*He holds the Nosegay at a distance. Urganda and Fatima look at one another with surprise.*

Fat. I was right.

Urg. And I am miserable!

Cymon. Have you seen it enough?

Urg. That is not mine, Cymon.

Cymon. No—'tis mine.

Urg. Who gave it you?

Cymon. A person.

Urg. What person—male, or female?

Cymon. La! how can I tell?

Fat. Finely improved indeed! a genius! [*Aside.*

Urg. I must dissemble. [*Aside*] Lookye, Cymon, I did but sport with you; the nosegay was your own, and you had a right to give it away, or throw it away.

Cymon. Indeed, but I did not, I only gave it for this; which, as it is so much finer and sweeter, I thought would not vex you.

Urg. Heigho!

[*Aside.*

Fat. Vex her! O not in the least.—But you should not have given away her present to a vulgar creature.

Cymon. How dare you talk to me so? I would have you to know she is neither ugly nor vulgar. No, she is—

Fat. Oh, she! your humble servant, young Simplicity! La, how can you tell whether it is male or female?

[*Cymon appears confused.*

Urg. Don't mind her impertinence, Cymon; I give you leave to follow your own inclinations. I'll have him watch'd; this office be yours, my faithful Fatima.

[*Apart to Fatima. Exit Fatima.*

Cymon. Then I am happy indeed.

Urg. Cymon, I would that you could love with constancy like wine; but this you never can.

Cymon. Oh, yes, I can love.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. DORCAS'S Cottage.

SYLVIA at the Door, with *CYMON'S* Nosegay in her Hand.

Syl. The more I look upon this nosegay, the more I feel Cymon in my heart and mind. Ever since I have

seen him, I wander without knowing where, I speak without knowing to whom, and I look without knowing at what.—Now I dread to lose him, and now again I think him mine for ever!

AIR.

O why should we sorrow, who never knew sin?
 Let smiles of content show our rapture within:
 This love has so rais'd me, I now tread in air!
 He's sure sent from heav'n to lighten my care!

Each shepherdess views me with scorn and disdain;
 Each shepherd pursues me, but all is in vain:
 No more will I sorrow, no longer despair,
 He's sure sent from heaven to lighten my care!

[*Linco is seen listening.*]

Enter LINCO.

Linco. If you were as wicked, shepherdess, as you are innocent, that voice of yours would corrupt justice herself, unless she was deaf, as well as blind.

Syl. I hope you did not overhear me, *Linco*?

Linco. O but I did though; and, notwithstanding I come as the deputy of a deputy governor, to bring you before my principal for some complaints made against you by a certain shepherdess, I will stand your friend, though I lose my place for it: there are not many such friends, shepherdess.

Syl. What have I done to the shepherdesses, that they persecute me so?

Linco. You are much too handsome, which is a crime the best of 'em can't forgive you.

Syl. I'll trust myself with you, and face my enemies.

[*As they are going, Dorcas calls from the Cottage.*]

Dor. Where are you going, child? Who is that with you, *Sylvia*?

Linco. Now shall we be stopped by this good old woman, who will know all, and can scarce hear any thing.

Dor. I'll see who you have with you.

Enter DORCAS, from the House.

Linco. 'Tis I, dame, your kinsman Linco.

[Speaks loud in her Ear.

Dor. O, is it you, honest Linco? *[Takes his Hand]*
Well, what's to do now?

Linco. The governor desires to speak with Sylvia;
a friendly inquiry, that's all. *[Loud.*

Dor. For what? for what? Tell me that. I have
nothing to do with his desires, nor she neither. He is
grown very inquisitive of late about shepherdesses.
Fine doings indeed! No such doings when I was young.
If he wants to examine any body, why don't he examine
me? I'll give him an answer, let him be as inquisitive
as he pleases.

Linco. But I am your kinsman, dame; and you dare
trust me snre. *[Speaks loud at her Ear.*

Dor. Thou art the best of 'em, that I'll say for thee;
but the best of you are bad when a young woman is in
the case. I have gone through great difficulties myself,
I can assure you, in better times than these. Why
must not I go too?

Linco. We shall return to you again—before you
can get there. *[Loud.*

Syl. You may trust us, mother: my own innocence,
and Linco's goodness, will be guard enough for me.

Dor. Eh! what?

Linco. She says you may trust me with her innocence.
[Loud.

Dor. Well, well, I will then. Thou art a sweet
creature, and I love thee better than even I did my own
child. *[Kisses Sylvia]* When thou art fetched away by
him that brought thee, 'twill be a woeful day for me.—
Well, well, go thy ways with Linco. I dare trust thee
any where. I'll prepare thy diuner at thy return; and
bring my honest kinsman along with you.

Linco. We will be with you before you can make the
pot boil

Dor. Before what?

Linco. We will be with you before you can make the pot boil.

[Speaks very loud, and goes off with Sylvia.]

Dor. Heaven shield thee, for the sweetest, best creature that ever blessed old age! What a comfort she is to me! All I have to wish for in this world, is to know who thou art, who brought thee to me, and then to see thee as happy as thou hast made poor Dorcas. What can the governor want with her? I wish I had gone too. I'd have talked to him, and to the purpose. We had no such doings when I was a young woman; they never made such a fuss with me.

AIR.

When I were young, though now am old,
 The men were kind and true;
 But now they're grown so false and bold,
 What can a woman do?
 Now what can a woman do?
 For men are truly
 So unruly,
 I tremble at seventy-two!

When I were fair, though now so so,
 No hearts were given to rove;
 Our pulses beat nor fast nor slow,
 But all was faith and love.
 Now what can a woman do?
 For men are truly
 So unruly,
 I tremble at seventy-two.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV. *The Magistrate's House.*

Enter DORUS and DAPHNE.

Dorus. This way, this way, damsel. Now we are alone, I can hear your grievances; and will redress them, that I will. You have my good liking, damsel, and favour follows of course.

Daph. I want words, your honour and worship, to thank you fitly.

Dorus. Smile upon me, damsel; smile, and command me.—Your hand is whiter than ever, I protest.—You must indulge me with a chaste salute.

[*Kisses her Hand.*

Daph. La! your honour.

[*Courtesies.*

Dorus. You have charmed me, damsel, and I can deny you nothing.—Another chaste salute; 'tis a perfect cordial. [*Kisses her Hand*] Well, what shall I do with this *Sylvia*, this stranger, this baggage, that has affronted thee? I'll send her where she shall never vex thee again—an impudent, wicked— [*Kisses her Hand*] I'll send her packing this very day; this hand, this lily hand, has signed her fate. [*Kisses it.*

Enter LINCO.

Linco. No bribery and corruption, I beg of your honour.

Dorus. You are too bold, *Linco*. Do your duty, and know your distance.—Where is this vagrant, this *Sylvia*?

Linco. In the justice-chamber, waiting for your honour's commands.

Dorus. Why did not you tell me so?

Linco. I thought your honour better engaged, and that it was too much for you to try two female causes at one time.

Dorus. You thought! I won't have you think, but obey. Deputies must not think for their superiors.

Linco. Must not they? What will become of our poor country!

[*Going.*

Dorus. No more impertinence, but bring the culprit hither.

Linco. In the twinkling of your honour's eye.

[*Exit.*

Daph. I leave my griefs in your worship's hands.

Dorus. You leave 'em in my heart, damsel; where they soon shall be changed into pleasures. Wait for

me in the next room. Smile, damsel, smile upon me, and edge the sword of justice.

Re-enter LINCO, with SYLVIA.

Daph. Here she comes. See how like an innocent she looks.—But I'll be gone. I trust in your worship.—I hate the sight of her; I could tear her eyes out.

[Aside, and exit.]

Dorus. *[Gazes at Sylvia]* Hem, hem! I am told, young woman—hem, hem! that—She does not look so mischievous as I expected.

[Aside, and turning from her.]

Linco. Bear up, sweet shepherdess! your beauty and innocence will put injustice out of countenance.

[Apart to Sylvia.]

Syl. The shame of being suspected confounds me, and I can't speak.

[Apart.]

Dorus. Where is the old woman, Dorcas, they told me of? Did not I order you to bring her before me?

Linco. The good old woman is so deaf, and your reverence a little thick of hearing, I thought the business would be sooner and better done by the young woman.

Dorus. What, at your thinking again!—Young shepherdess, I hear—I hear—hem!—Her modesty pleases me. *[Aside]* What is the reason, I say—hem!—that—that I hear—She has very fine features. I protest she disarms my anger. *[Aside, and turning from her.]*

Linco. Now is your time; speak to his reverence.

[Apart to Sylvia.]

Dorus. Don't whisper the prisoner.

Syl. Prisoner! Am I a prisoner then?

Dorus. No, not absolutely a prisoner; but you are charged, damsel—hem, hem!—charged, damsel—I don't know what to say to her. *[Aside.]*

Syl. With what, your honour?

Linco. If he begins to damsel us, we have him sure.

[Aside.]

Syl. What is my crime?

Linco. A little too handsome, that's all.

Dorus. Hold your peace. Why don't you look up in my face, if you are innocent? [*Sylvia looks at Dorus with great Modesty*] I can't stand it; she has turned my anger, my justice, and my whole scheme, topsy-turvy. [*Aside*] Reach me a chair, Linco.

Linco. One sweet song, *Sylvia*, before his reverence gives sentence. [*Reaches a Chair for Dorus.*]

AIR.—SYLVIA.

From duty if the shepherd stray,
And leave his flocks to feed,
The wolf will seize the harmless prey,
And innocence will bleed. [*Kneels.*]

Dorus. I'll guard thee, and fold thee too, my lamb-kin; and they shan't hurt thee. This is a melting ditty indeed! Rise, rise, my *Sylvia*. [*Embraces her.*]

Re-enter DAPHNE. *DORUS* and she start at seeing each other.

Daph. Is your reverence taking leave of her before you drive her out of the country?

Dorus. How now? What presumption is this, to break in upon us so, and interrupt the course of justice?

Daph. May I be permitted—

Dorus. No, you may not be permitted. I'll come to you presently.

Daph. I knew the wheedling slut would spoil all. [*Aside, and exit.*]

Dorus. I'm glad she's gone.—*Linco*, you must send her away; I won't see her now.

Linco. And shall I take *Sylvia* to prison?

Dorus. No, no, no; to prison! mercy forbid! What a sin should I have committed to please that envious, jealous-pated shepherdess!—*Linco*, comfort the damsel. Dry your eyes, *Sylvia*. I will call upon you myself—and examine *Dorcus* myself—and protect you myself—and do every thing myself.—I profess she has bewitched me—I am all agitation. [*Aside*] I'll call upon you to-morrow—perhaps to-night—perhaps in half an

hour.—Take care of her, Linco.—She has bewitched me; and I shall lose my wits, if I look on her any longer.—Oh! the sweet, lovely, delightful creature!

[Aside, and exit.]

Linco. Don't whimper now, my sweet Sylvia. Justice has taken up the sword and scales again, and your rivals shall cry their eyes out. The day's our own—and here comes Dorcas. I thought she'd follow in time.—Well, she comes to celebrate our victory: but how the devil shall I make her hear the story?

Enter DORCAS.

TRIO.—DORCAS, LINCO, and SYLVIA.

Dor. Full of doubt, &c.

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. *Another Part of the Country.*

Enter FATIMA.

Fat. Truly a very pretty mischievous errand I am sent upon—I am to follow this foolish young fellow all about to find out his haunts: not so foolish neither, for he is so much improved of late, we shrewdly suspect that he must have some female to sharpen his intellects; for love, among many other strange things, can make fools of wits, and wits of fools. I saw our young partridge run before me, and take cover hereabouts; I must make no noise, for fear of alarming him; besides, I hate to disturb the poor things in pairing time.

[Looks through the Bushes.]

Enter MERLIN, unperceived.

Mer. I shall spoil your peeping, thou evil counsellor of a faithless mistress.—I must torment her a little for her good. *[Aside.]*

Fat. There they are; our fool has made no bad choice. Upon my word, a very pretty couple, and will make my poor lady's heart ache.

Mer. I shall twinge yours a little before we part.

[Aside.]

Fat. Well said, Cymon! upon your knees to her! now for my pocket-book, that I may exactly describe this rival of ours; she is much too handsome to live long; she will be either burnt alive, thrown to wild beasts, or shut up in the black tower; the greatest mercy she can have will be to let her take her choice.

[Takes out a Pocket-book.

Mer. May be so; but we will prevent the prophecy if we can. [Aside.

Fat. [Writes] She is of a good height, about my size, a fine shape, delicate features, charming hair, heavenly eyes, not unlike my own; with such a sweet smile! She must be burnt alive! yes, yes, she must be burnt alive.

[Merlin taps her upon the Shoulder with his Wand]

Who's there? bless me! nobody—I protest it startled me. I must finish my picture. [Writes, and Merlin waves his Wand over her Head] Now let me see what I have written.—Bless me, what's here? all the letters are as red as blood—my eyes fail me! sure I am bewitched. [Reads and trembles] Urganda has a shameful passion for Cymon; Cymon a most virtuous one for Sylvia:—as for Fatima, wild beasts, the black tower, and burning alive, are too good for her. [Drops the Book] I have not power to stir a step.—I knew what would come of affronting that devil, Merlin.

[Merlin becomes visible to her.

Mer. True, Fatima, and I am here at your call.

Fat. O most magnanimous Merlin! don't set your wit to a poor, foolish, weak woman.

Mer. Why then will a foolish weak woman set her wit to me? but we will be better friends for the future.

—Mark me, Fatima— [Holds up his Wand.

Fat. No conjuration, I beseech your worship, and you shall do any thing with me.

Mer. I want nothing of you but to hold your tongue.

Fat. Will nothing else content your fury?

Mer. Silence, babblers.

Fat. [Finds great difficulty in speaking at first] I am your own for ever, most merciful Merlin! I am your own for ever.—O, my poor tongue, I thought I never

should have wagg'd thee again. What a dreadful thing it would be to be dumb.

Mer. You see it is not in the power of Urganda to protect you, or to injure Cymon and Sylvia. I will be their protector against all her arts, though she has leagu'd herself with the demons of revenge; we have no power but what results from our virtue.

Fat. I had rather lose any thing than my speech.

Mer. As you profess yourself my friend (for, with all my art, I cannot see into a woman's mind), I will show my gratitude, and my power, by giving your tongue an additional accomplishment.

Fat. What, shall I talk more than ever?

Mer. [*Smiles*] That would be no accomplishment, Fatima: no, I mean that you should talk less. When you return to Urganda, she will be very inquisitive, and you very ready to tell her all you know.

Fat. And may I, without offence to your worship?

Mer. Silence, and mark me well—observe me truly and punctually. Every answer you give to Urganda's questions must be confined to two words, yes and no. I have done you a great favour, and you don't perceive it.

Fat. Not very clearly indeed. [*Aside.*

Mer. Beware of encroaching a single monosyllable upon my injunction; the moment another word escapes you, you are dumb for ever.

Fat. Heaven preserve me! what will become of me?

Mer. Remember what I say; as you obey or neglect me, you will be punished or rewarded. Farewell.

[*Bows*] Remember me, Fatima. [*Exit.*

Fat. What a polite devil it is; and what a woeful plight am I in! this confining my tongue to two words is much worse than being quite dumb; I had rather be atinted in any thing than in my speech. Heigho! there never sure was a tax upon the tongue before. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Enter CYMON.

Cymon. Shall I rejoice or grieve at the change my heart feels? thou hast given me eyes, ears, and under-

standing; and till they forsake me, I must be Sylvia's. Are the new pains, or the strange delights that agitate me, the greater? O love, it is thy work.

Enter SYLVIA.

She is here; but pensive! O, my Sylvia, why this drooping mien? Has not Merlin discovered all that was unknown to us? Has he not promised us his protection? What can Sylvia want, when Cymon is completely blessed?

Syl. Thy wishes are fulfilled then; take my hand, and with it a heart which, till you had touch'd, never knew, nor could even imagine, what was love.

Cymon. Transporting maid! [*Kisses her Hand.*]

AIR.—SYLVIA.

This cold flinty heart it is you who have warm'd;
You waken'd my passions, my senses have charm'd;
In vain against merit and Cymon I strove;
What's life without passion—sweet passion of love?

The spring should be warm, the young season be gay,
Her birds and her flowrets make blithsome sweet May;
Love blesses the cottage, and sings through the grove,
What's life without passion—sweet passion of love?

Cymon. Thus then I seize my treasure, will protect it with my life, and will never resign it but to heaven, who gave it me. [*Embraces her.*]

Enter DAMON and DORILAS on one side, and DORUS and his Followers on the other, who start at seeing CYMON and SYLVIA.

Damon. Here they are!

Syl. Ha! bless me!

[*Starts.*]

Dorus. Fine doings indeed!

[*Cymon and Sylvia stand amazed and ashamed.*]

Doril. Your humble servant, modest madam Sylvia!

Damon. You are much improved by your new tutor!

Dorus. But I'll send her and her tutor where they shall learn better.—I am confounded at their assurance! Why don't you speak, culprits?

Cymon. We may be ashamed without guilt; ashamed for those who have watched and surprised us.

Dorus. Did you ever hear or see such an impudent varlet?

Damon. Shall we seize them, your worship, and drag 'em to Urganda?

Dorus. Let me first speak with that damsel.

[As he approaches, Cymon puts her behind him.]

Cymon. That damsel is not to be spoken with.

Dorus. Here's impudence in perfection!—Do you know who I am, stripling?

Cymon. I know you to be one stationed by the laws to cherish innocence; but having passions that disgrace both your age and place, you neither observe the one, nor protect the other.

Dorus. I am astonish'd! What, are you the foolish young fellow I have heard so much of?

Cymon. As sure as you are the wicked old fellow I have heard so much of.

Dorus. Seize them both this instant.

Cymon. That is sooner said than done, governor.

[As they approach on both sides to separate them, he snatches a Staff from one of the Shepherds, and beats them back.]

Dorus. Fall on him, but don't kill him; for I must make an example of him.

Cymon. In this cause I am myself an army; see how the wretches stare, and cannot stir.

AIR.

Come on, come on,

A thousand to one;

I dare you to come on.

Though unpractis'd and young,

Love has made me stout and strong,

Has given me a charm,

Will not suffer me to fall;

Has steel'd my heart, and nerv'd my arm,

To guard my precious all. *[Looks at Sylvia.]*

Come on, come on, &c.

[Cymon drives off the Party of Shepherds on one side.]

Dorus and his Party surround Sylvia.

Dorus. Away with her, away with her!

Syl. Protect me, Merlin!—Cymon! Cymon! where art thou, Cymon?

Dorus. Your fool Cymon is too fond of fighting to mind his mistress; away with her to Urganda, away with her. *[They hurry her off.]*

Enter Shepherds, running across, disordered and beaten by CYMON.

Damon. 'Tis the devil of a fellow! how he has laid about him! *[Looking back. Exit.]*

Doril. There is no way but this to avoid him. *[Exit.]*

Re-enter CYMON, in confusion and out of breath.

Cymon. I have conquered, my Sylvia! Where art thou? my life, my love, my valour, my all! What, gone? torn from me? then I am conquered indeed!

[He runs off, and returns several times during the Symphony of the following Song.]

Torn from me, torn from me: which way did they take her?

To death they shall bear me,

To pieces shall tear me,

Before I'll forsake her!

Though fast bound in a spell,

By Urganda and hell,

I'll burst through their charms,

Seize my fair in my arms;

Then my valour shall prove,

No magio like virtue, like virtue and love!

SCENE III. A Palace.

Enter URGANDA and FATIMA.

Urg. Yes! No! forbear this mockery. What can it mean? I will not bear this trifling with my passion! Why don't you speak? *[Fatima shakes her Head.]* Won't you speak?

Fat. Yes.

Urg. Go on then.

Fat. No.

Urg. Will you say nothing but no?

Fat. Yes.

Urg. Distracting, treacherous *Fatima*! Have you seen my rival?

Fat. Yes.

Urg. Thanks, dear *Fatima*! Well, now go on.

Fat. No.

Urg. This is not to be borne. Was *Cymon* with her?

Fat. Yes.

Urg. Are they in love with each other?

Fat. Yes.

Urg. Where did you see my rival? [*Fatima shakes her Head*] Are you afraid of any body?

Fat. Yes.

Urg. Are you not afraid of me too?

Fat. No.

Urg. Insolence! Is my rival handsome? tell me that.

Fat. Yes.

Urg. Very handsome?

Fat. Yes, yes.

Urg. How handsome? handsomer than I, or you?

Fat. Yes—No—

Urg. I shall go distracted! Leave me. [*Hesitating.*]

Fat. Yes. [*Courtesies, and exit.*]

Urg. She has a spell upon her, or she could not do thus. *Merlin's* power has prevailed—he has enchanted her, and my love and my revenge are equally disappointed. This is the completion of my misery! *Bravura, Urganda!* Despair and shame confound me.

Enter DORUS.

Dorus. May I presume to intrude upon my sovereign's contemplations?

Urg. Dare not to approach my misery, or thou shalt share it.

Dorus. I am gone; and *Sylvia* shall go too. [*Going.*]

Urg. *Sylvia*, said you? where is she? where is she? Speak, speak; and give me life or death.

Dorus. She is without, and attends your mighty will.

Urg. Then I am a queen again!—Forgive me, *Dorus*, I knew not what I said; but now I am raised again! *Sylvia* is safe?

Dorus. Yes, and I am safe too; which is no small comfort to me, considering where I have been.

Urg. And *Cymon*—has he escaped?

Dorus. Yes, he has escaped from us; and, what is better, we have escaped from him.

Urg. Where is he?

Dorus. Breaking the bones of every shepherd he meets.

Urg. Well, no matter—I am in possession of the present object of my passion, and I will indulge it to the height of luxury. Let 'em prepare my victim instantly for death.

Dorus. For death! Is not that going too far?

Urg. Nothing is too far; she makes me suffer ten thousand deaths, and nothing but hers can appease me. [*Dorus going*] Stay, *Dorus*—I have a richer revenge: she shall be shut up in the black tower till her beauties are destroyed, and then I will present her to this ungrateful *Cymon*. Let her be brought before me, and I will feast my eyes, and ease my heart, with this devoted *Sylvia*. No reply; but obey.

Dorus. It is done.—This is going too far.

[*Aside, and exit, shrugging up his Shoulders.*]

Re-enter DORUS, with SYLVIA.

Urg. Are you the wretch, the unhappy maid, who has dared to be the rival of *Urganda*?

Syl. I am the happy maid who possess the affections of *Cymon*.

Urg. Thou vain rash creature! I will make thee fear my power, and hope for my mercy.

[*Waves her Wand, and the Scene changes to the Black Rocks.*]

Syl. I am still unmoved.

[*Smiles.*]

Urg. Thou art on the very brink of perdition, and

in a moment will be closed in a tower, where thou shalt never see Cymon, or any human being more.

Syl. While I have Cymon in my heart, I bear a charm about me, to scorn your power, or, what is more, your cruelty.

[*Music. Urganda waves her Wand, and the Black Tower appears.*]

Urg. Open the gates, and enclose her insolence for ever.

Furies enter, who seize Sylvia, and put her in the Tower.

Now let Merlin release you if he can.

[*It Thunders; the Tower sinks, and Merlin appears in the Place where the Tower sunk. All shriek, and run off, except Urganda, who is struck with Terror.*]

Mer. "Still shall my power your arts confound,
And Cymon's cure shall be Urganda's wound."

[*Urganda waves her Wand.*]

Wretched Urganda! your power is gone.

Urg. In vain I wave this wand, I feel my power is gone. Thus I destroy the small remains of my sovereignty.

Forgive my errors, and forget my name;
O drive me hence with penitence and shame;
From Merlin, Cymon, Sylvia, let me fly,
Beholding them, my shame can never die. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. *A splendid Amphitheatre.*

A grand Entrè of the Knights of the different Orders of Chivalry.

CHORUS.

Happy Arcadia still shall be
Ever happy, while virtuous and free.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY GEORGE KEATE, ESQ.

Spoken by FATIMA, who enters peeping in at the 'Stage-door.

Is the stage clear?—Bless me! I've such a dread!
It seems enchanted ground where'er I tread!

[Comes forward.

What noise was that?—Hush! 'twas a false alarm:

I'm sure there's no one here will do me harm:

Amongst you can't be found a single knight,

Who would not do an injur'd damsel right.

Well, heaven be prais'd! I'm out of magic reach,

And have once more regain'd the use of speech:

Ay, and I'll use it; for it must appear

That my poor tongue is greatly in arrear.

There's not a female born but shar'd my woe,

Tied down to *yes*, or still more hateful *no*.

No is expressive; but I must confess,

If rightly question'd, I'd use only *yes*.

In Merlin's walk this broken wand I found,

[Showing a broken Wand.

Which in two words my speaking organs bound.

Suppose upon the town I try his spell?

Ladies, don't stir—you use your tongues too well!

How tranquil every place, when, by my skill,

Folly is mute, and even *slander* still!

Old gossips speechless—*bloods* would breed no riot,

And all the tongues at *Jonathan's* lie quiet!

Each *grave profession* must now bush the wig;

Nothing to say, 'twere needless they look big!

The reverend *doctor* might the change endure;

He would sit still, and have his *sine cure*!

Nor could *great folks* much hardship undergo;

They do their business with an *ay* or *no*.

But come, I only jok'd—dismiss your fear;

Though I've the power, I will not use it here.

I'll only keep my magic as a guard,
To awe each critic who attacks our bard.
I see some malcontents their fingers biting,
Snarling, "The ancients never knew such writing.
The drama's lost! the managers exhaust us
With *op'ras*, *monkeys*, *Mab*, and *Dr. Faustus*."
Dread sirs! a word: the public taste is fickle;
All palates in their turn we strive to tickle;
Our cat'ers vary; and you'll own, at least,
It is *variety* that makes the feast.
If this fair circle smile, and the *gods* thunder,
I wish this wand may keep the critics under.

THE
DOUBLE DEALER.

A Comedy.

BY WILLIAM CONGREVE.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,

BY

THOMAS DIBDIN,

OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.



Printed at the Chiswick Press,
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1816.



THE DOUBLE DEALER

WAS the second play written by Mr. Congreve, and produced in 1694. It is here given as revised by Mr. Kemble, and last acted at Drury Lane in 1802. It has been observed, that notwithstanding "the characters are strongly drawn, the wit genuine and original, the plot finely laid, and the conduct inimitable," that the "capricious dispositions of audiences" did not encourage this play equally with others of Mr. Congreve. There are, however, radical faults in the dialogue of this comedy which will prevent its keeping the stage, while any respect is had to the proper feelings of the female part of an audience, although its wit and smartness may retain it as an occasional companion for the closet.



PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.

MOORS have this way (as story tells) to know
Whether their brats are truly got, or no:
Into the sea the new-born babe is thrown,
There, as instinct directs, to swim or drown.
A barbarous device, to try if spouse
Has kept religiously her nuptial vows.

Such are the trials poets make of plays;
Only they trust to more inconstant seas:
So does our author, this his child commit
To the tempestuous mercy of the pit,
To know if it be truly born of wit.

Critics, avaunt! for you are fish of prey,
And feed, like sharks, upon an infant play.
Be every monster of the deep away;
Let's a fair trial have, and a clear sea.

Let nature work, and do not damn too soon;
For life will struggle long ere it sink down;
And will at least rise thrice, before it drown.
Let us consider, had it been our fate
Thus hardly to be prov'd legitimate!
I will not say we'd all in danger been,
Were each to suffer for his mother's sin;
But, by my troth, I cannot avoid thinking
How nearly some good men might have 'scap'd sinking.
But, heaven be prais'd, this custom is confin'd
Alone to th' offspring of the muses kind:
Our Christian cuckolds are more bent to pity;
I know not one Moor husband in the city.
I'th' good man's arms the chopping bastard thrives,
For he thinks all his own, that is his wife's.

Whatever fate is for this play design'd,
The poet's snre he shall some comfort find:
For if his muse has play'd him false, the worst
That can befall him, is to be divorc'd;
You, husbands, judge if that be to be curs'd.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

As originally acted in 1694. Drury Lane, 1802.

<i>Lord Touchwood</i>	Mr. Kynaston.	Mr. Packer.
<i>Lord Froth . . .</i>	Mr. Bowman.	Mr. Suett.
<i>Sir Paul Pliant .</i>	Mr. Dogget.	Mr. King.
<i>Mellefont</i>	Mr. Williams.	Mr. C. Kemble.
<i>Careless</i>	Mr. Verbruggen.	Mr. Barrymore.
<i>Brisk</i>	Mr. Powell.	Mr. Bannister, jun.
<i>Saygrace</i>		Mr. Maddocks.
<i>Muskwell</i>	Mr. Betterton.	Mr. Kemble.
<i>Thomas</i>		Mr. Fisher.
<i>Timothy</i>		Master Chatterley.
 <i>Lady Touchwood</i>	 Mrs. Barry.	 Mrs. Powell.
<i>Lady Froth . . .</i>	<i>Mrs. Mountfoot.</i>	<i>Miss Pope.</i>
<i>Lady Pliant . .</i>	<i>Mrs. Leigh.</i>	<i>Miss Decamp.</i>
<i>Cynthia</i>	<i>Mrs. Bracegirdle.</i>	<i>Mrs. Young.</i>

SCENE—*A Gallery in LORD TOUCHWOOD'S House,
with Chambers adjoining.*

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. *A Gallery in LORD TOUCHWOOD'S House.*
CARELESS crosses the Stage, as just risen from Table ;
MELLEFONT following.

Mel. **N**ED, Ned, whither so fast? What, turned fincher? Why, you wo'not leave us?

Care. Where are the women? I'm weary of drinking, and begin to think them the better company.

Mel. Then thy reason staggers, and thou'rt almost tipsy.

Care. No, faith, but your fools grow noisy; and if a man must endure the noise of words without sense, I think the women have more musical voices, and become nonsense better.

Mel. Why, they are at the end of the gallery, retired to their tea and scandal. But I made a pretence to follow you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many opportunities this evening.

Care. And here's this coxcomb most critically come to interrupt you.

Enter BRISK.

Brisk. Boys, boys, lads, where are you? What, do you give ground? Mortgage for a bottle, ha? Careless, this is your trick; you're always spoiling company by leaving it.

Care. And thou art always spoiling company by coming into't.

Brisk. Pho! ha, ha, ha! I know you envy me. Spite, proud spite, by the gods, and burning envy. I'll be judged by Mellefont here, who gives and takes raillery better, you or I. Pshaw, man, when I say you spoil company by leaving it, I mean you leave nobody for the company to laugh at. I think there I was with you. Ha, Mellefont?

Mel. O'my word, Brisk, that was a home thrust: you have silenced him.

Brisk. O, my dear Mellefont, let me perish, if thou art not the soul of conversation, the very essence of wit, and spirit of wine. 'The deuce take me, if there were three good things raid, or one understood, since thy amputation from the body of our society. He! I think, that's pretty, and metaphorical enough: 'egad, I could not have said it out of thy company. Careless, ha?

Care. Hum, ay, what is't?

Brisk. O mon cœur! What is't? Nay, 'gad, I'll punish you for want of apprehension: the deuce take me, if I tell you.

Mel. No, no, haug him, he has no taste. But, dear Brisk, excuse me; I have a little business.

Care. Pr'ythee, get thee gone; thou seest we are serious.

Mel. We'll come immediately, if you'll but go in and keep up good humour and sense in the company; pr'ythee do, they'll fall asleep else.

Brisk. 'Egad, so they will. Well, I will, I will: 'gad, you shall command me from the zenith to the nadir. But, the deuce take me, if I say a good thing till you come. But pr'ythee, dear rogue, make haste; pr'ythee, make haste, I shall burst else; and yonder your uncle, my lord Touchwood, swears he'll disin-

herit you; and sir Paul Pliant threatens to disclaim you for a son-in-law; and my lord Froth won't dance at your wedding to-morrow; nor, the deuce take me, I won't write your epithalamium; and see what a condition you're like to be brought to.

Mel. Well, I'll speak but three words, and follow you.

Brisk. Enough, enough. Careless, bring your apprehension along with you. [Exit.

Care. Pert coxcomb!

Mel. Faith, 'tis a good-natured coxcomb, and has very entertaining follies; you must be more humane to him; at this juncture it will do me service. I'll tell you, I would have mirth continued this day at any rate, though patience purchase folly, and attention be paid with noise: there are times when sense may be unseasonable, as well as truth: pr'ythee, do thou wear none to-day; but allow Brisk to have wit, that thou may'st seem a fool.

Care. Why, how now? Why this extravagant proposition?

Mel. O, I would have no room for serious design, for I am jealous of a plot. I would have noise and impertineuce, to keep my lady Touchwood's head from working.

Care. I thought your fear of her had been over. Is not to-morrow appointed for your marriage with Cynthia? and her father, sir Paul Pliant, come to settle the writings this day, on purpose?

Mel. True; but you shall judge whether I have not reason to be alarmed. None, besides you and Maskwell, are acquainted with the secret of my aunt Touchwood's violent passion for me. Since my first refusal of her addresses, she has endeavoured to do me all ill offices with my uncle; yet has managed 'em with that subtilty, that to him they have borne the face of kindness; while her malice, like a dark lantern, only shone upon me where it was directed; but, whether urg'd by her despair, and the short prospect of time she saw to accomplish her designs, whether the hopes of re-

venge, or of her love, terminated in the view of this my marriage with Cynthia, I know not; but this morning she surprised me in my own chamber.

Care. Was there ever such a fury? Well, bless us! proceed. What followed?

Mel. It was long before either of us spoke; passion had tied her tongue, and amazement mine. In short, the consequence was thus; she omitted nothing that the most violent love could urge, or tender words express; which when she saw had no effect, but still I pleaded honour and nearness of blood to my uncle, then came the storm I fear'd at first; for, starting from my bedside, like a fury she flew to my sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or herself a mischief. Having disarmed her, in a gust of passion she left me, and in a resolution, confirmed by a thousand curses, not to close her eyes till they had seen my ruin.

Care. Exquisite woman! But, what the devil, does she think thou hast no more sense than to disinherit thyself? For, as I take it, this settlement upon you is with a proviso that your uncle have no children.

Mel. It is so. Well, the service you are to do me, will be a pleasure to yourself: I must get you to engage my lady Pliant all this evening, that my pious aunt may not work her to her interest: and if you chance to secure her to yourself, you may incline her to mine. She's handsome, and knows it; is very silly, and thinks she has sense; and has an old fond husband.

Care. I confess a very fair foundation for a lover to build upon.

Mel. For my lord Froth, he and his wife will be sufficiently taken up with admiring one another, and Brisk's gallantry, as they call it. I'll observe my uncle myself; and Jack Maskwell has promised me to watch my aunt narrowly, and give me notice upon any suspicion. As for sir Paul, my wise father-in-law that is to be, my dear Cynthia has such a share in his fatherly fondness, he would scarce make her a moment uneasy to have her happy hereafter.

Care. So, you have manned your works: but I wish

you may not have the weakest guard, where the enemy is strongest.

Mel. Maskwell, you mean: pr'ythee, why should you suspect him?

Care. Faith, I cannot help it: you know I never lik'd him; I am a little superstitious in physiognomy.

Mel. He has obligations of gratitude to bind him to me; his dependance upon my uncle is through my means.

Care. Upon your aunt, you mean.

Mel. My aunt?

Care. I'm mistaken if there be not a familiarity between them you do not suspect, for all her passion for you.

Mel. Pho, pho! nothing in the world but his design to do me service; and he endeavours to be well in her esteem that he may be able to effect it.

Care. Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken; but your aunt's aversion in her revenge, cannot be any way so effectually shown, as in promoting a means to disinherit you. She is handsome, and cunning, and naturally amorous: Maskwell is flesh and blood at best, and opportunities between them are frequent. His affection to you, you have confessed, is grounded upon his interest; that you have transplanted; and, should it take root in my lady, I don't see what you can expect from the fruit.

Mel. I confess the consequence is visible were your suspicions just. But see, the company is broke up: let's meet 'em.

Re-enter BRISK, with LORD TOUCHWOOD, LORD FROTH, and SIR PAUL PLIANT.

Lord T. Ont upon't, nephew; leave your father-in-law and me to maintain our ground against young people.

Mel. I beg your lordship's pardon. We were just returning—

Sir P. Where you, son? 'Gadsbud, much better as it is—Good, strange! I swear I'm almost tipsy; t'other

bottle would have been too powerful for me—as sure as can be, it would: we wanted your company; but, Mr. Brisk—where is he? I swear and vow he's a most facetious person, and the best company; and, my lord Froth, your lordship is so merry a man, he, he, he!

Lord F. O fie, sir Paul, what do you mean? Merry! O, barbarous! I'd as lieve you call'd me—fool.

Sir P. Nay, I protest and vow now 'tis true; when Mr. Brisk jokes, your lordship's laugh does so become you, he, he, he.

Lord F. Ridiculous, sir Paul! you are strangely mistaken: I find champaign is powerful. I assure you, sir Paul, I laugh at nobody's jest but my own, or a lady's, I assure you, sir Paul.

Brisk. How! how, my lord? What, affront my wit! Let me perish! do I never say any thing worthy to be laugh'd at?

Lord F. O fie, don't misapprehend me: I don't say so; for I often smile at your conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality than to laugh: 'tis such a vulgar expression of the passion! every body can laugh. Then especially to laugh at the jest of an inferior person, or when any body else of the same quality does not laugh with him: ridiculous! to be pleased with what pleases the crowd! Now, when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

Brisk. I suppose that's because you laugh at your own jests, 'egad; ha, ha, ha!

Lord F. He, he! I swear though your railery provokes me to a smile.

Brisk. Ay, my lord, it's a sign I hit you in the teeth, if you show 'em.

Lord F. He, he, he! I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

Lord T. Sir Paul, if you please we'll retire to the ladies, and drink a dish of tea to settle our heads.

Sir P. With all my heart.—Mr. Brisk, you'll come to us—or call me when you're going to joke: I'll be ready to laugh incontinently.

[*Exeunt Lord Touchwood and Sir Paul Pliant.*]

Mel. But does your lordship never see comedies?

Lord F. O yes, sometimes; but I never laugh.

Mel. No!

Lord F. Oh no—Never laugh, indeed, sir.

Care. No! why what d'ye go there for?

Lord F. To distinguish myself from the commonality, and mortify the poets; the fellows grow so conceited when any of their foolish wit prevails upon the side boxes!—I swear—he, he, he—I have often constrain'd my inclinations to laugh—he, he, he—to avoid giving them encouragement.

Mel. You are cruel to yourself, my lord, as well as malicious to them.

Lord F. I confess I did myself some violence at first; but now I think I have conquered it.

Brisk. Let me perish, my lord, but there is something very particular and novel in the humour; 'tis true, it makes against wit, and I'm sorry for some friends of mine that write; but—'egad, I love to be malicious. Nay, deuce take me, there's wit in't too; and wit must be foil'd by wit: cut a diamond with a diamond; no other way, 'egad.

Lord F. Oh, I thought you would not be long before you found out the wit.

Care. Wit! in what? Where the devil's the wit, in not laughing when a man has a mind to't?

Brisk. O Lord, why can't you find it out?—Why, there 'tis, in the not laughing.—Don't you apprehend me?—My lord, Careless is a very honest fellow; but, barkye, you understand me, somewhat heavy; a little shallow, or so. Why, I'll tell you now: suppose now you come up to me—nay, pr'ythee, Careless, be instructed—Suppose, as I was saying, you come up to me, holding your sides, and laughing as if you would—Well! I look grave, and ask the cause of this immoderate mirth: you laugh ou still, and are not able to tell me: still I look grave; not so much as smile—

Care. Smile! no; what the devil should you smile at, when you suppose I can't tell you?

Brisk. Pshaw, pshaw, pr'ythee don't interrupt me—

but I tell you, you shall tell me at last; but it shall be a great while first.

Care. Well, but pr'ythee don't let it be a great while, because I long to have it over.

Brisk. Well then, you tell me some good jest, or very witty thing, laughing all the while as if you were ready to die—and I hear it, and look thus; would not you be disappointed?

Care. No; for if it were a witty thing, I should not expect you to understand it.

Lord F. O fie, Mr. Careless; all the world allow Mr. Brisk to have wit: my wife says he has a great deal; I hope you think her a judge.

Brisk. Pho, my lord, his voice goes for nothing—I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—Take it t'other way: suppose I say a witty thing to you. [*To Careless.*

Care. Then I shall be disappointed indeed.

Mel. Let him alone, Brisk; he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

Brisk. I'm sorry for him, the deuce take me.

Mel. Shall we go to the ladies, my lord?

Lord F. With all my heart; methinks we are a solitude without 'em.

Mel. Or, what say you to another bottle of champagne?

Lord F. O, for the universe, not a drop more, I beseech you. Oh, intemperate! I have a flushing in my face already.

[*Takes out a pocket Glass, and looks in it.*

Brisk. Let me see, let me see, my lord—I broke my glass that was in the lid of my snuff-box. Hum! Deuce take me, I have encouraged a pimple here too.

[*Takes the Glass, and looks in it.*

Lord F. Then you must fortify him with a patch; my wife shall supply you. Come, gentlemen, allons.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter MASKWELL and LADY TOUCHWOOD.

Lady T. I'll hear no more.—You're false and ungrateful; come, I know you false.

Mask. I have been frail, I confess, madam, for your ladyship's service.

Lady T. That I should trust a man whom I had known betray his friend!

Mask. What friend have I betray'd? or to whom?

Lady T. Your fond friend, Mellefont, and to me; can you deny it?

Mask. I do not.

Lady T. Have you not wrong'd my lord, who has been a father to you in your wants, and given you being? Have you not wrong'd him in the highest manner?

Mask. With your ladyship's help, and for your service, as I told you before—I can't deny that neither. Any thing more, madam?

Lady T. More, audacious villain! O, what's more is most my shame.—Have you not dishonour'd me?

Mask. No, that I deny; for I never told in all my life; so that accusation's answer'd—on to the next.

Lady T. Death! do you dally with my passion? insolent devil! But have a care; provoke me not; you shall not escape my vengeance.—Calm villain! how unconcern'd he stands, confessing treachery and ingratitude! Is there a vice more black? O, I have excuses, thousands, for my faults: fire in my temper; passions in my soul, apt to every provocation; oppressed at once with love, and with despair.—But a sedate, a thinking villain, whose black blood runs temperately bad, what excuse can clear?

Mask. Will you be in temper, madam? I would not talk not to be heard. I have been a very great rogue for your sake, and you reproach me with it; I am ready to be a rogue still to do you service; and you are flinging conscience and honour in my face, to rebate my inclinations. How am I to behave myself? You know I am your creature; my life and fortune in your power; to disoblige you brings me certain ruin. Allow it, I would betray you, I would not be a traitor to myself: I don't pretend to honesty, because you know I am a rascal: but I would convince you, from the necessity, of my being firm to you.

Lady T. Necessity, impudence! Can no gratitude incline you? no obligations touch you? Were you not in the nature of a servant? and have not I, in effect, made you lord of all, of me, and of my lord? Where is that humble love, the languishing, that adoration which was once paid me, and everlastingly engaged?

Mask. Fixed, rooted in my heart, whence nothing can remove 'em; yet you—

Lady T. Yet; what yet?

Mask. Nay, misconceive me not, madam, when I say I have had a generous, and a faithful passion, which you had never favoured but through revenge and policy.

Lady T. Ha!

Mask. Look you, madam, we are alone—pray contain yourself, and hear me. You know you lov'd your nephew, when I first sigh'd for you; I quickly found it; an argument that I loved; for, with that art you veil'd your passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous eyes. This discovery made me bold, I confess it; for by it I thought you in my power: your nephew's scorn of you added to my hopes; I watched the occasion, and took you, just repulsed by him, warm at once with love and indignation; your disposition, my arguments, and happy opportunity, accomplish'd my design. How I have loved you since, words have not shown; then how should words express?

Lady T. Well, mollifying devil! and have I not met your love with forward fire?

Mask. Your zeal, I grant, was ardent, but misplaced: there was revenge in view; that woman's idol had defil'd the temple of the god, and love was made a mock-worship.—A son and heir would have edg'd young Mellefont upon the brink of ruin, and left him nought but you to catch at for prevention.

Lady T. Again, provoke me! Do you wind me like a larum, only to rouse my own still'd soul for your diversion? Confusion!

Mask. Nay, madam, I'm gone, if you relapse.—What needs this? I say nothing but what yourself, in open hours of love, have told me. Why should you deny it? Nay, how can you? Is not all this present

heat owing to the same fire? Do not you love him still? How have I this day offended you, but in not breaking off his match with Cynthia? which, ere to-morrow, shall be done, had you but patience.

Lady T. How! what said you, Maskwell?—Another caprice to unwind my temper?

Mask. No, by my love, I am your slave; the slave of all your pleasures; and will not rest till I have given you peace, would you suffer me.

Lady T. O, Maskwell, in vain do I disguise me from thee; thou knowest me; knowest the very inmost windings and recesses of my soul.—O Mellefont!—Married to-morrow!—Despair strikes me. Yet my soul knows I hate him too: let him but once be mine, and next immediate ruin seize him.

Mask. Compose yourself; you shall have your wish.—Will that please you?

Lady T. How, how? thou dear, thou precious villain, how?

Mask. You have already been tampering with my lady Pliant.

Lady T. I have: she is ready for any impression I think fit.

Mask. She must be thoroughly persuaded that Mellefont loves her.

Lady T. She is so credulous that way naturally, and likes him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can persuade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling design; for her first conversing with Mellefont will convince her of the contrary.

Mask. I know it.—I don't depend upon it; but it will prepare something else, and gain us leisure to lay a stronger plot: if I gain a little time, I shall not want contrivance.

One minute gives invention to destroy

What, to rebuild, will a whole age employ. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. *The same.*

Enter LADY FROTH and CYNTHIA.

Cyn. Indeed, madam! is it possible your ladyship could have been so much in love?

Lady F. I could not sleep; I did not sleep one wink for three weeks together.

Cyn. Prodigious! I wonder want of sleep, and so much love, and so much wit as your ladyship has, did not turn your brain.

Lady F. O, my dear Cynthia, you must not rally your friend. But really, as you say, I wonder too—But then I had a way; for, between you and I, I had whimsies and vapours; but I gave them vent.

Cyn. How pray, madam?

Lady F. O, I writ; writ abundantly.—Do you never write?

Cyn. Write! what?

Lady F. Songs, elegies, satires, encomiums, panegyrics, lampoons, plays, or heroic poems.

Cyn. O Lord, not I, madam; I'm content to be a courteous reader.

Lady F. O, inconsistent! In love, and not write! If my lord and I had been both of your temper, we had never come together.—O, bless me! what a sad thing would that have been, if my lord and I should never have met!

Cyn. Then neither my lord or you would ever have met with your match, on my conscience.

Lady F. O'my conscience, no more we should; thou say'st right; for sure my lord Froth is as fine a gentleman, and as much a man of quality!—Ah! nothing at all of the common air—I think I may say, he wants nothing but a blue ribbon and a star to make him shine the very phosphorus of our hemisphere. Do you understand those two hard words? If you don't I'll explain 'em to you.

Cyn. Yes, yes, madam, I'm not so ignorant.—At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your instructions.

[*Aside.*

Lady F. Nay, I beg your pardon; but, being derived from the Greek, I thought you might have escap'd the etymology.—But I'm the more amazed, to find you a woman of letters, and not write! Bless me, how can Mellefont believe you love him?

Cyn. Why faith, madam, he that won't take my word shall never have it under my hand.

Lady F. I vow, Mellefont's a pretty gentleman; but methinks he wants a manner.

Cyn. A manner! what's that, madam?

Lady F. Some distinguishing quality; as, for example, the bel air, or brilliant, of Mr. Brisk; the solemnity, yet complaisance, of my lord; or something of his own, that should look a little je-ne-sais quoi-ish; he is too much a mediocrity, in my mind.

Cyn. He does not, indeed, affect either pertness or formality; for which I like him: here he comes.

Lady F. And my lord with him: pray observe the difference.

Enter LORD FROTH, MELLEFONT, and BRISK.

Cyn. Impertinent creature! I could almost be angry with her now. *[Aside.*

Lady F. My lord, I have been telling Cynthia how much I have been in love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now; ah! it makes my heart leap; I vow I sigh when I think on't.—My dear lord! Ha, ha, ha! do you remember, my lord?

[Squeezes him by the Hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.

Lord F. Pleasant creature! Perfectly well. Ah! that look, ay, there it is; who could resist? 'Twas so my heart was made a captive first, and ever since it has been in love with happy slavery.

Lady F. O that tongue, that dear deceitful tongue! that charming softness in your mien and your expression!—and then your bow! Good, my lord, bow as you did when I gave you my picture. Here, suppose this my picture—*[Gives him a pocket Glass]* Pray mind my lord; ah! he bows charmingly. *[Lord Froth bows profoundly low, then kisses the Glass]* Nay, my lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now.

Lord F. I saw myself there, and kissed it for your sake.

Lady F. Ah! gallantry to the last degree. Mr. Brisk, you're a judge; was ever any thing so well bred as my lord?

Brisk. Never any thing—but your ladyship, let me perish.

Lady F. O, prettily turned again! let me die but you have a great deal of wit.—Mr. Mellefont, don't you think Mr. Brisk has a world of wit?

Mel. O yes, madam.

Brisk. O dear, madam.

Lady F. An infinite deal.

Brisk. O heavens, madam—

Lady F. More wit than any body.

Brisk. I'm everlastingly your humble servant, deuce take me, madam.

Lord F. Don't you think us a happy couple? [*To Cyn.*

Cyn. I vow, my lord, I think you are the happiest couple in the world; for you're not only happy in one another, and when you are together, but happy in yourselves, and by yourselves.

Lord F. I hope Mellefont will make a good husband too.

Cyn. 'Tis my interest to believe he will, my lord.

Lord F. D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my wife? I'm afraid not.

Cyn. I believe he'll love me better.

Lord F. Heavens! that can never be: but why do you think so?

Cyn. Because he has not so much reason to be fond of himself.

Lord F. O, your humble servant for that, dear madam. Well, Mellefont, you'll be a happy creature.

Mel. Ay, my lord, I shall have the same reason for my happiness that your lordship has, I shall think myself happy.

Lord F. Ah, that's all.

Brisk. Your ladyship is in the right; [*To Lady Froth*] but, 'egad, I'm wholly turned into satire. I confess I write but seldom; but when I do—keen iambics, 'egad.—But my lord was telling me, your ladyship has made an essay toward an heroic poem.

Lady F. Did my lord tell you? Yes, I vow, and the subject is my lord's love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare swear you won't guess—The Syllabub, ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Because my lord's title's Froth, 'egad, ha, ha, ha!—deuce take me, very apropos and surprising, ha, ha, ha!

Lady F. Hey, ay, is not it? And then I call my lord Spumoso; and myself—what d'ye think I call myself?

Brisk. Lactilla, may be—'gad, I cannot tell.

Lady F. Biddy, that's all; just my own name.

Brisk. Biddy! 'egad, very pretty—deuce take me, if your ladyship has not the art of surprising the most

naturally in the world. I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the poem.

Lady F. O, you must be my confidant; I must ask your advice.

Brisk. I'm your humble servant, let me perish. I presume your ladyship has read Bossu?

Lady F. O yes; and Rapin, and Daoier upon Aristotle and Horace. My lord, you must not be jealous, I'm communicating all to Mr. Brisk.

Lord F. No, no, I'll allow Mr. Brisk. Have you nothing about you to show him, my dear?

Lady F. Yes, I believe I have. Mr. Brisk, come, will you go into the next room? and there I'll show you what I have. [Exit with Brisk.]

Lord F. I'll walk a turn in the garden, and come to you. [Exit.]

Mel. You're thoughtful, Cynthia.

Cyn. I'm thinking that though marriage makes man and wife one flesh, it leaves 'em still two fools; and they become more conspicuous by setting off one another.

Mel. That's only when two fools meet, and their follies are opposed.

Cyn. Nay, I have known two wits meet, and by the opposition of their wit, render themselves as ridiculous as fools. Matrimony is a hazardous game to engage in. What think you of drawing stakes, and giving over in time?

Mel. No, hang't, that's not endeavouring to win, because it's possible we may lose; since we have shuffled and out, let's e'en turn up trump now.

Cyn. Then I find it's like cards; if either of us have a good hand, it is an accident of fortune.

Mel. No, marriage is rather like a game at bowls; fortune indeed makes the match, and the two nearest, and sometimes the two furthest are together; but the game depends entirely upon judgment.

Cyn. Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

Mel. Not at all; only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment.

Enter SIR PAUL and LADY PLIANT.

Sir P. 'Gadsbud! I am provoked into a fermentation, as my lady Froth says. Was ever the like read of in story?

Lady P. Sir Paul, have patience, let me alone to rattle him up.

Sir P. 'Pray your ladyship, give me leave to be angry; I'll rattle him up, I warrant you; I'll teach him, with a certiorari, to make love to my wife.

Lady P. You teach him! I'll teach him myself; so pray, sir Paul, hold you contented.

Sir P. Hold yourself contented, my lady Pliant; I find passion coming upon me even to desperation, and I cannot submit as formerly, therefore give way.

Lady P. How now? will you be pleased to retire, and—

Sir P. No, marry, will I not be pleased; I am pleased to be angry, that's my pleasure at this time.

Mel. What can this mean?

Lady P. 'Gads my life, the man's distracted. Why, how now, who are you? What am I? Slidikins, can't I govern you? What did I marry you for? Am I not to be absolute and uncontrolable? Is it fit a woman of my spirit and conduct should be contradicted in a matter of this concern?

Sir P. It concerns me, and only me; besides, I'm not to be governed at all times. When I am in tranquillity, my lady Pliant shall command sir Paul; but when I'm provoked to fury, I cannot incorporate with patience and reason; as soon may tigers match with tigers, lambs with lambs, and every creature couple with its foe, as the poet says.

Lady P. He's hot-headed still! 'Tis in vain to talk to you; but remember I have a curtain-lecture for you, you disobedient, headstrong brute.

Sir P. No, 'tis because I won't be headstrong, because I won't be a brute, and have my head fortified,

that I am thus exasperated. But I will protect my honour: and yonder is the violator of my fame.

Lady P. 'Tis my honour that is concerned, and the violation was intended to me. Your honour! you have none! but what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please; therefore don't provoke me.

Sir P. Hum, 'gadsbud, she says true. [*Aside*] Well, my lady, march on; I will fight under you then: I am convinced, as far as passion will permit.

[*Sir Paul and Lady Pliant come up to Mellefont.*]

Lady P. Inhuman and treacherous—

Sir P. Thou serpent and first tempter of woman-kind—

Cyn. Bless me! Sir—madam—what mean you?

Sir P. Thy, Thy, come away, Thy; touch him not; come hither, girl; go not near him, there's nothing but deceit about him; snakes are in his looks, and the crocodile of Nilus is in his wicked appetite; he would devour thy fortune, and starve thee alive.

Lady P. Dishonourable, impudent creature!

Mel. For heaven's sake, madam, to whom do you direct this language?

Lady P. Have I behaved myself with all the decorum and nicety befitting the person of sir Paul's wife; have I preserved my honour as it were in a snow-house; have I, I say, preserved myself like a fair sheet of paper, for you to make a blot upon?

Sir P. And she shall make a simile with any woman in England.

Mel. I am so amazed, I know not what to say.

Sir P. Do you think my daughter—this pretty creature—'Gadsbud, she's a wife for a cherubim!—Do you think her fit for nothing but to be a stalking-horse, to stand before you while you take aim at my wife? 'Gadsbud, I was never angry before in my life, and I'll never be appeased again.

Mel. Confusion! this is my aunt; such malice can be engendered no where else. [*Aside.*]

Lady P. Sir Paul, take Cynthia from his sight; leave

me to strike him with the remorse of his intended crime.

Cyn. Pray, sir, stay; hear him; I dare affirm he's innocent.

Sir P. Innocent! Why, harkye; come hither, Thy, harkye, I had it from his aunt, my sister Touchwood. 'Gadsbud, he does not care a farthing for any thing of thee, but thy portion; why he's in love with my wife; he would have tantalized thee, and dishonour'd thy poor father, and that would certainly have broke my heart. I'm sure, if ever I should have horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly; I should die of 'em, like any child that was cutting his teeth—I should indeed, Thy, therefore come away; but Providence has prevented all, therefore come away when I bid you.

Cyn. I must obey.

[Exit with Sir Paul.

Lady P. O, such a thing! the impiety of it startles me; to wrong so good, so fair a creature, and one that loves you tenderly: 'tis a barbarity of barbarities, and nothing could be guilty of it—

Mel. But the greatest villain imagination can form, I grant it; and next to the villainy of such a fact, is the villainy of aspersing me with the guilt. How? which way was I to wrong her? for yet I understand you not.

Lady P. Why, 'gads my life, cousin Mellefont, you cannot be so peremptory as to deny it, when I tax you with it to your face; for, now sir Paul's gone, you are corum nobus.

Mel. By heaven, I love her more than life, or—

Lady P. Fiddle, faddle, don't tell me of this and that, and every thing in the world; but give me mathe-macular demonstration, answer me directly. But I have not patience. Oh! the impiety of it, as I was saying, and the unparalleled wickedness! O merciful father! how could you think to reverse nature so, to make the daughter the means of procuring the mother!

Mel. The daughter procure the mother!

Lady P. Ay; for though I am not Cynthia's own mother, I am her father's wife; and that's near enough to make it incest.

Mel. O my precious aunt, and the devil in conjunction!
[*Aside.*

Lady P. O reflect upon the horror of that, and then the guilt of deceiving every body; marrying the daughter, only to dishonour the father; and then seducing me—

Mel. Where am I? is it day? and am I awake? Madam—

Lady P. And nobody knows how circumstances may happen together. To my thinking now, I could resist the strongest temptation; but yet I know 'tis impossible for me to know whether I could or no; there's no certainty in the things of this life.

Mel. Madam, pray give me leave to ask you one question.

Lady P. O Lord, ask me the question! I'll swear I'll refuse it; I swear I'll deny it, therefore don't ask me; nay, you shan't ask me; I swear I'll deny it. O gemini, you have brought all the blood into my face; I warrant, I am as red as a turkey-cock. O fie, cousin Mellefont!

Mel. Nay, madam, hear me—

Lady P. Hear you? No, no: I'll deny you first, and hear you afterwards; for one does not know how one's mind may change upon hearing. Hearing is one of the senses, and all the senses are fallible; I won't trust my honour, I assure you; my honour is infallible and un-come-at-ible.

Mel. For heaven's sake, madam—

Lady P. O name it no more.—Bless me, how can you talk of heaven, and have so much wickedness in your heart? May be, you don't think it a sin—they say some of you gentlemen don't think it a sin—Indeed, if I did not think it a sin—But still my honour, if it were no sin—But then, to marry my daughter, for the conveniency of frequent opportunities—I'll never consent to that; as sure as can be, I'll break the match.

Mel. Death and amazement! Madam, upon my knees—

Lady P. Nay, nay, rise up: come, you shall see my good nature. I know love is powerful, and nobody can

help his passion: 'tis not your fault, nor I swear it is not mine. How can I help it, if I have charms? And how can you help it, if you are made a captive? O Lord, here's somebody coming; I dare not stay. Well, you must consider of your crime, and strive as much as can be against it—strive, be sure: but don't be melancholy, don't despair: but never think that I'll grant you any thing—O Lord, no: but be sure you lay aside all thoughts of the marriage; for though I know you don't love Cynthia, only as a blind for your passion to me, yet it will make me jealous—O Lord, what did I say? Jealous! no, no, I can't be jealous; for I must not love you—therefore don't hope—but don't despair neither. O, they're coming, I must fly. [Exit.

Mel. [After a Pause] So then, spite of my care and foresight, I am caught, caught in my security: yet this was but a shallow artifice, unworthy of my machiavilian aunt: there must be more behind: destruction follows hard, if not presently prevented.

Enter MASKWELL.

Maskwell, welcome! Thy presence is a view of land appearing to my shipwrecked hopes: the witch has raised the storm, and her ministers have done their work; you see the vessels are parted.

Mask. I know it: I met sir Paul towing away Cynthia. Come, trouble not your head, I'll join you together ere to-morrow morning, or drown between you in the attempt.

Mel. There's comfort in a hand stretch'd out to one that's sinking, though never so far off.

Mask. No sinking, nor no danger. Come, cheer up; why, you don't know that, while I plead for you, your aunt has given me a retaining fee; nay, I am your greatest enemy, and she does but journey-work under me.

Mel. Ha! how's this?

Mask. What d'ye think of my being employed in the execution of all her plots? Ha, ha, ha! Nay, it's true: I have undertaken to break the match: I have

undertaken to make your uncle disinherit you ; to get you turn'd out of doors, and to—Ha, ha, ha!—I can't tell you for laughing—O she has opened her heart to me—I'm to turn you a grazing, and to—Ha, ha, ha! marry Cynthia myself; there's a plot for you.

Mel. Ha! O see, I see my rising sun! Light breaks through clouds upon me, and I shall live in day.—O, my Maskwell, how shall I thank or praise thee! thou hast outwitted woman. But tell me, how couldst thou thus get into her confidence, ha—how? But was it her contrivance to persuade my lady Pliant to this extravagant belief?

Mask. It was; and, to tell you the truth, I encouraged it for your diversion: though it made you a little uneasy for the present, yet the reflection of it must needs be entertaining. I warrant she was very violent at first.

Mel. Ha, ha, ha! Ay, a very fury.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha! I know her temper. Well, you must know then that all my contrivances were but bubbles; till at last I pretended to have been long secretly in love with Cynthia; that did my business; that convinced your aunt I might be trusted; since it was as much my interest as hers to break the match: then she thought my jealousy might qualify me to assist her in her revenge; and, in short, in that belief, told me the secrets of her heart. At length we made this agreement: if I accomplish her designs (as I told you before), she has engaged to put Cynthia, with all her fortune, into my power.

Mel. She is most gracious in her favour.—Well, and, dear Jack, how hast thou contrived?

Mask. I would not have you stay to hear it now; for I don't know but she may come this way. I am to meet her anon; after that I'll tell you the whole matter. Be here in this gallery an hour hence: by that time, I imagine, our consultation may be over.

Mel. I will. Till then, success attend thee. [Exit.

Mask. Till then, success will attend me; for when I meet you, I meet the only obstacle to my fortune.—

Cynthia, let thy beauty gild my crimes; and whatsoever I commit of treachery or deceit shall be imputed to me as a merit.—Treachery! what treachery? Love cancels all the bonds of friendship, and sets men right upon their first foundations. Duty to kings, piety to parents, gratitude to benefactors, and fidelity to friends, are different and particular ties: but the name of rival cuts 'em all asunder, and is a general acquittance. Rival is equal; and love, like death, a universal leveller of mankind.—Ha! but is there not such a thing as honesty? Yes, and whosoever has it about him bears an enemy in his breast; for your honest man, as I take it, is that nice, scrupulous, conscientious person, who will cheat nobody but himself: such another coxcomb as your wise man, who is too hard for all the world, and will be made a fool of by nobody but himself.—Ha, ha, ha! Well, for wisdom and honesty, give me cunning and hypocrisy! Oh, 'tis such a pleasure to angle for fair-faced fools! 'Then that hungry gudgeon, credulity, will bite at any thing.—Why, let me see: I have the same face, the same words and accents, when I speak what I do think, and when I speak what I do not think; the very same: and dear dissimulation is the only art not to be known from nature.

Why will mankind be fools, and be deceiv'd?

And why are friends and lovers' oaths believ'd?

When each, who searches strictly his own mind,

May so much fraud and power of baseness find.

[Exit.

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. *The same.*

Enter LORD and LADY TOUCHWOOD.

Lady T. My lord, can you blame my brother Pliant, if he refuse his daughter upon this provocation? The contract's void by this unheard-of impiety.

Lord T. I don't believe it true; he has better principles—pho, 'tis nonsense. Come, come, I know my lady Pliant: 'tis not the first time she has mistaken respect for love, and made sir Paul jealous of the civility of an undesigning person, the better to bespeak his security in her unfeigned pleasures.

Lady T. You censure hardly, my lord: my sister's honour is very well known.

Lord T. Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little trick wrought by some pitiful contriver, envious of my nephew's merit.

Lady T. Nay, my lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so; but that will require some time; for, in such a case as this, demonstration is necessary.

Lord T. There should have been demonstration of the contrary too, before it had been believed.

Lady T. So I suppose there was.

Lord T. How? where? when?

Lady T. That I can't tell; nay, I don't say there was; I am willing to believe as favourably of my nephew as I can.

Lord T. I don't know that. [*Half aside.*]

Lady T. How? Don't you believe that, say you, my lord?

Lord T. No, I don't say so. I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his defence.

Lady T. His defence? Bless me, would you have me defend an ill thing?

Lord T. You believe it then?

Lady T. I don't know; I am very unwilling to speak my thoughts in any thing that may be to my cousin's disadvantage; besides, I find, my lord, you are prepared to receive an ill impression from any opinion of mine, which is not consenting with your own; but since I am like to be suspected in the end, and 'tis a pain any longer to dissemble, I own it to you: in short, I do believe it; nay, and can believe any thing worse, if it were laid to his charge.—Don't ask me my reasons, my lord; for they are not fit to be told you.

Lord T. I'm amazed! Here must be something more than ordinary in this. [*Aside*] Not fit to be told me, madam? You can have no interests wherein I am not concerned; and consequently the same reasons ought to be convincing to me, which create your satisfaction or disquiet.

Lady T. But those which cause my disquiet, I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good, my lord, don't press me.

Lord T. Don't oblige me to press you.

Lady T. Whatever it was, 'tis past; and that is better to be unknown, which cannot be prevented; therefore let me beg of you to rest satisfied.

Lord T. When you have told me I will.

Lady T. You won't.

Lord T. By my life, my dear, I will.

Lady T. What if you can't?

Lord T. How? Then I must know; nay, I will: no more trifling—I charge you tell me—by all our mutual peace to come, upon your duty—

Lady T. Nay, my lord, you need say no more, to make me lay my heart before you; but don't be thus transported; compose yourself: it is not of concern, to make you lose one minute's temper. 'Tis not indeed, my dear. O Lord, I wish I had not told you any thing.—Indeed, my lord, you have frightened me. Nay, look pleased, I'll tell you.

Lord T. Well, well.

Lady T. Nay, but will you be calm? Indeed it's nothing but—

Lord T. But what?

Lady T. But will you promise me not to be angry?—nay, you must—not to be angry with Mellefont?—I dare swear he's sorry; and, were it to do again, would not—

Lord T. Sorry for what? 'Death, you rack me with delay.

Lady T. Nay, no great matter, only—well, I have your promise—pho, why nothing, only your nephew had a mind to amuse himself sometimes with a little gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any thing seriously; but methought it looked oddly.

Lord T. Confusion! what do I hear?

Lady T. Or, may be, he thought he was not enough akin to me upon your account, and had a mind to create a nearer relation on his own; a lover, you know, my lord—ha, ha, ha!—Well, but that's all. Now you have it.—Well, remember your promise, my lord; and don't take any notice of it to him.

Lord T. No, no, no.

Lady T. Nay, I swear you must not—a little harmless mirth—only misplaced, that's all.—But if it were more, 'tis over now, and all's well. For my part, I have forgot it; and so has he, I hope; for I have not heard any thing from him these two days.

Lord T. These two days! Is it so fresh?—Unnatural villain! I'll have him stripped, and turned naked out of my doors this moment, and let him rot and perish!

Lady T. O, my lord, you'll ruin me, if you take such public notice of it; it will be a town-talk: consider your own and my honour.—Stay, I told you you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

Lord T. Before I've done, I will be satisfied. Ungrateful monster! How long—

Lady T. Lord, I don't know: I wish my lips had grown together when I told you. Almost a twelve-month—nay, I won't tell you any more, till you are yourself. Pray, my lord, don't let the company see you in this disorder: yet I confess I can't blame you; for I think I was never so surprised in my life. Who would have thought my nephew could have so misconstrued my kindness?—But will you go into your closet, and recover your temper? I'll make an excuse of sudden business to the company, and come to you. Pray, good, dear my lord, let me beg you do now: I'll come immediately, and tell you all. Will you, my lord?

Lord T. I will. I am mute with wonder.

Lady T. Well, hat go now; here's somebody coming.

Lord T. Well, I go. You won't stay; for I would hear more of this.

Lady T. I'll follow instantly. [*Exit Lord Touchwood.*]

Enter MASKWELL.

So!

Mask. This was a masterpiece, and did not need my help; though I stood ready for a cue to come in, and confirm all, had there been occasion.

Lady T. Have you seen Mellefont?

Mask. I have; and am to meet him here about this time.

Lady T. How does he bear his disappointment?

Mask. Secure in my assistance, he seemed not much afflicted, but rather laughed at the shallow artifice, which so little time must of necessity discover: yet he is apprehensive of some further design of yours, and

has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your plot; yet I would have you use caution and expedition.

Lady T. Expedition indeed; for all we do must be performed in the remaining part of this evening, and before the company break up, lest my lord should cool, and have an opportunity to talk with him privately: my lord must not see him again.

Mask. By no means; therefore you must aggravate my lord's displeasure to a degree that will admit of no conference with him.—What think you of mentioning me?

Lady T. How?

Mask. To my lord, as having been privy to Mellefont's design upon you, but still using my utmost endeavours to dissuade him: though my friendship and love to him has made me conceal it, yet you may say I threatened the next time he attempted any thing of that kind, to discover it to my lord.

Lady T. To what end is this?

Mask. It will confirm my lord's opinion of my honour and honesty, and create in him a new confidence in me, which (should this design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming of another plot that I have in my head—to cheat you, as well as the rest. [*Aside.*

Lady T. I'll do it.

Mask. You had best go to my lord, keep him as long as you can in his closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please: your guests are so engaged in their own follies and intrigues, they'll miss neither of you.

Lady T. When shall we meet?—At eight this evening in my chamber; there rejoice at our success, and toy away an hour in mirth.

Mask. I will not fail. [*Exit Lady Touchwood*] I know what she means well enough. I have lost all appetite to her; yet she's a fine woman, and I loved her once; but I don't know, the case is altered; what was my pleasure is become my duty; and I am as indifferent to her now, as if I were her husband. Should

she smokes my design upon Cynthia, I were in a fine pickle. She has a penetrating head, and knows how to interpret a coldness the right way; therefore I must dissemble ardour and ecstasy, that's resolved. How easily and pleasantly is that dissembled before fruition! Plague on't, that a man can't drink without quenching his thirst.—Ha! yonder comes Mellefont, thoughtful. Let me think: meet her at eight—hum—ha! I have it. If I can speak to my lord before, I will deceive 'em all, and yet secure myself. 'Twas a lucky thought! Well, this double dealing is a jewel.—Here he comes—now for me.

Enter MELLEFONT, musing.—MASKWELL, pretending not to see him, walks by him, and speaks, as it were, to himself.

Mercy on us! what will the wickedness of this world come to!

Mel. How now, Jack? What, so full of contemplation that you run over?

Mask. I'm glad you're come, for I could not contain myself any longer; and was just going to give vent to a secret, which nobody but you ought to drink down.—Your aunt's just gone from hence.

Mel. And having trusted thee with the secrets of her soul, thou art villanously bent to discover 'em all to me, ha?

Mask. I'm afraid my frailty leans that way; but I don't know whether I can in honour discover all.

Mel. All, all, man. What, you may in honour betray her as far as she betrays herself. No tragical design upon my person, I hope?

Mask. No, but it's a comical design upon mine.

Mel. What dost thou mean?

Mask. Listen, and be dumb: we have been bargaining about the rate of your ruin—

Mel. Like any two guardians to an orphan heiress.—Well.

Mask. And whereas pleasure is generally paid with

mischief, what mischief I shall do is to be paid with pleasure.

Mel. So when you've swallowed the potion, you sweeten your mouth with a plum?

Mask. You are merry, sir; but I shall probe your constitution: in short, the price of your banishment is to be paid with the person of——

Mel. Of Cynthia, and her fortune.—Why, you forget, you told me this before.

Mask. No, no; so far you are right; and I am, as an earnest of that bargain, to have full and free possession of the person of—your aunt.

Mel. Ha!—Pho! you trifle.

Mask. By this light, I'm serious, all raillery apart. I knew 'twould stun you. This evening, at eight, she will receive me in her bed-chamber.

Mel. Hell and the devil! is she abandoned of all grace?—Why, the woman is possessed.

Mask. Well, will you go in my stead?

Mel. Into a hot furnace sooner.

Mask. No you would not; it would not be so convenient, as I can order matters.

Mel. What d'ye mean?

Mask. Mean! not to disappoint the lady, I assure you.—Ha, ha, ha! how gravely he looks.—Come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only thing that Providence could have contrived to make me capable of serving you, either to my inclination or your own necessity.

Mel. How, how, for heaven's sake, dear Maskwell?

Mask. Why thus: I'll go according to appointment; you shall have notice, at the critical minute, to come and surprise your aunt and me together. Counterfeit a rage against me, and I'll make my escape through the private passage from her chamber, which I'll take care to leave open. 'Twill be hard if then you can't bring her to any conditions; for this discovery will disarm her of all defence, and leave her entirely at your mercy: nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

Mel. Let me adore thee, my better genius! I think it is not in the power of fate now to disappoint my hopes—my hopes? my certainty!

Mask. Well, I'll meet you here, within a quarter of eight, and give you notice.

Mel. Good fortune ever go with thee!

[*Exit Maskwell.*]

Enter CARELESS.

Care. Mellefont, get out o'the way.—My lady Pliant's coming, and I shall never succeed while thou art in sight, though she begins to tack about; but I made love a great while to no purpose.

Mel. Why, what's the matter? She's convinced that I don't care for her.

Care. I can't get an answer from her, that does not begin with her honour, or her virtue, or some such cant. Then she has told me the whole history of sir Paul's nine years' courtship; how he has lain for whole nights together upon the stairs, before her chamber-door; and that the first favour he received from her, was a piece of an old scarlet petticoat for a stomacher; which, since the day of his marriage, he has, out of a piece of gallantry, converted into a night-cap; and wears it still, with much solemnity, on his anniversary wedding-night.

Mel. You are very great with him. I wonder he never told you his grievances: he will, I warrant you.

Care. Excessively foolish!—But that which gives me most hopes of her, is her telling me of the many temptations she has resisted.

Mel. Nay, then you have her; for a woman's bragging to a man that she has overcome temptations, is an argument that they were weakly offered, and a challenge to him to engage her more irresistibly.—Here she comes with sir Paul. I'll leave you. Ply her close, and by-and-by clap a billet-doux into her hand; for a woman never thinks a man truly in love with her, till he has been fool enough to think of her out of her sight, and to lose so much time as to write to her. [*Exit.*]

Enter SIR PAUL and LADY PLIANT.

Sir P. Shan't we disturb your meditation, Mr. Careless? you would be private?

Care. You bring that along with you, sir Paul, that shall be always welcome to my privacy.

Sir P. O, sweet sir, you load your humble servants, both me and my wife, with continual favours.

Lady P. Sir Paul, what a phrase was there! You will be making answers, and taking that upon you which ought to lie upon me: that you should have so little breeding, to think Mr. Careless did not apply himself to me. Pray what have you to entertain any body's privacy? I swear and declare, in the face of the world, I'm ready to blush for your ignorance.

Sir P. I acquiesce, my lady; but don't snub so loud.

[*Apart.*

Lady P. Mr. Careless, if a person that is wholly illiterate might be supposed to be capable of being qualified to make a suitable return to those obligations, which you are pleased to confer upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualified in all those circumstances, I'm sure I should rather attempt it than any thing in the world; [*Courtesies*] for, I'm sure, there's nothing in the world that I would rather. [*Courtesies*] But I know Mr. Careless is so great a critic, and so fine a gentleman, that it is impossible for me——

Care. O heavens, madam! you confound me.

Sir P. 'Gadsbud, she's a fine person.

Lady P. O Lord, sir, pardon me, we women have not those advantages: I know my own imperfections; but, at the same time, you must give me leave to declare in the face of the world, that nobody is more sensible of favours and things; for, with the reserve of my honour, I assure you, Mr. Careless, I don't know any thing in the world I would refuse to a person so meritorious.—You'll pardon my want of expression.

Care. O, your ladyship is abounding in all excellence, particularly that of phrase.

Lady P. You are so obliging, sir.

Care. Your ladyship is so charming.

Sir P. So, now, now; now, my lady.

Lady P. So well bred.

Care. So surprising.

Lady P. So well dressed, so bonne mine, so eloquent, so unaffected, so easy, so free, so particular, so agreeable—

Sir P. Ay, so, so, there.

Care. O Lord, I beseech you, madam, don't—

Lady P. So gay, so graceful, so good teeth, so fine shape, so fine limbs, so fine linen; and I don't doubt but you have a very good skin, sir.

Care. For heaven's sake, madam—I'm quite out of countenance.

Sir P. And my lady's quite out of breath, or else you should hear.—'Gadsbud, you may talk of my lady Froth—

Care. O fie, fie; not to be nam'd of a day. My lady Froth is very well in her accomplishments, but it is when my lady Pliant is not thought of; if that can ever be.

Lady P. O, you overcome me—that is so excessive.

Sir P. Nay, I swear and vow, that was pretty.

Care. O, sir Paul, you are the happiest man alive. Such a lady! that is the envy of her sex, and the admiration of ours.

Sir P. Your bumble servant.—I am, I thank heaven, in a fine way of living, as I may say, peacefully and happily; and, I think, need not envy any of my neighbours, blessed be Providence!—Ay, truly, Mr. Careless, my lady is a great blessing; a fine, discreet, well-spoken woman, as you shall see, if it becomes me to say so; and we live very comfortably together: she is a little hasty sometimes, and so am I; but mine is soon over; and then I'm so sorry. O, Mr. Careless, if it were not for one thing—

Enter TIMOTHY, with a Letter, and offers it to SIR PAUL PLIANT.

'Gadso, 'gadsbud—Tim, carry it to my lady; you should have carried it to my lady first.

Tim. 'Tis directed to your worship.

Sir P. Well, well, my lady reads all letters first.

Lady P. How often have you been told of that, you jackanapes?

Sir P. Child, do so no more; d'ye hear, Tim?

Tim. No, and please you. [Exit.

Sir P. A humour of my wife's—you know, women have little fancies. But, as I was telling you, Mr. Careless, if it were not for one thing, I should think myself the happiest man in the world; indeed, that touches me near, very near.

Care. What can that be, sir Paul?

Sir P. Why I have, I thank heaven, a very plentiful fortune, a good estate in the country, some houses in town, and some money, a pretty tolerable personal estate; and it is a great grief to me, indeed it is, Mr. Careless, that I have not a son to inherit this.—'Tis true, I have a daughter; and a fine dutiful child she is, though I say it—blessed be Providence, I may say; for indeed, Mr. Careless, I am mightily beholding to Providence—a poor unworthy sinner!—But if I had a son—ah, that's my affliction, and my only affliction; indeed, I cannot refrain from tears when it comes in my mind.

[Cries.

Care. Why, methinks that might be easily remedied—my lady's a fine likely woman.

Sir P. Oh, a fine likely woman as you shall see in a summer's day—indeed she is, Mr. Careless, in all respects.

Care. And I should not have taken you to have been so old—

Sir P. Alas, that's not it, Mr. Careless; ah! that's not it; no, no, you shoot wide of the mark a mile, indeed you do; that's not it, Mr. Careless; no, no, that's not it.

Care. No! what can be the matter then?

Sir P. You'll scarcely believe me, when I shall tell you.—Why, my lady is so nice—I am her husband, as I may say, though far unworthy of that honour; yet I am her husband; but, alas-a-day, I have no more

familiarity with her person, as to that matter, than with my own mother; no indeed.

Care. Alas-a-day, this is a lamentable story; 'tis an injury to the world; my lady must be told on't; she must, i'faith, sir Paul.

Sir P. Ah! would to heaven you would, Mr. Careless; you are mightily in her favour.

Care. I warrant you;—what! we must have a son some way or other.

Sir P. Indeed I should be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, Mr. Careless.

Lady P. Sir Paul, it's from your steward; here's a return of six hundred pounds; you may take fifty of it for your next half year. *[Gives him the Letter.]*

Enter LORD FROTH and CYNTHIA.

Sir P. How does my girl? Come hither to thy father—poor lamb, thou'rt melancholy.

Lord F. Heaven's, sir Paul! you amaze me, of all things in the world—You are never pleased but when we are all upon the broad grin; all laugh, and no company: ah, then 'tis such a sight to see some teeth—Sure you're a great admirer of my lady Whifler, Mr. Sneer, and sir Lawrence Load, and that gang.

Sir P. I vow and swear she's a very merry woman; but I think she laughs a little too much.

Lord F. Merry! O Lord, what a character that is of a woman of quality!—You have been at my lady Whifler's upon her day, madam? *[To Cynthia.]*

Cyn. Yes, my lord.—I must humour this fool.

[Aside.]

Lord F. Well, and how? he! What is your sense of the conversation there?

Cyn. O, most ridiculous! a perpetual concert of laughing without any harmony; for sure, my lord, to laugh out of time is as disagreeable as to sing out of time, or out of tune.

Lord F. He, he, he! right; and then, my lady Whifler is so ready, she always comes in three bars too

soon: and then what do they laugh at? For, you know, laughing without a jest, is as impertinent, he! as, as—

Cyn. As dancing without a fiddle.

Lord F. Just, 'ifaith—that was at my tongue's end.

Cyn. But that cannot be properly said of them; for, I think, they are all in good nature with the world, and only laugh at one another; and, you must allow, they have all jests in their persons, though they have none in their conversation.

Lord F. True, as I'm a person of honour: for heaven's sake, let us sacrifice 'em to mirth a little.

Re-enter TIMOTHY, and whispers SIR PAUL PLIANT.

Sir P. 'Gadso—Wife, wife; my lady Pliant, I have a word—

Lady P. I'm busy, sir Paul; I wonder at your impertinence.

Care. Sir Paul, hearkye, I'm reasoning the matter, you know.—Madam, if your ladyship pleases, we'll discourse of this in the next room.

[Exit, with Lady Pliant.]

Sir P. O ho, I wish you good success; I wish you good success!—Boy, tell my lady, when she has done, I would speak with her below. *[Exeunt.]*

Enter LADY FROTH and BRISK.

Lady F. Then you think that episode between Susan the dairy-maid, and our coachman, is not amiss? you know, I may suppose the dairy in town, as well as in the country.

Brisk. Incomparable, let me perish.—But then, being an heroic poem, had not you better call him a charioteer? Charioteer sounds great; besides, your ladyship's coachman having a red face, and you comparing him to the sun—and, you know, the sun is called heaven's charioteer.

Lady F. Oh, infinitely better; I'm extremely beholding to you for the hint. Stay, we'll read over those half a score lines again. *[Pulls out a Paper]* Let me

see here—you know what goes before—the comparison, you know. [Reads.

*For as the sun shines ev'ry day,
So of our coachman I may say—*

Brisk. I'm afraid that simile won't do in wet weather, because you say the sun shines every day.

Lady F. No, for the sun it won't; but it will do for the coachman; for, you know, there's most occasion for a coach in wet weather.

Brisk. Right, right, that saves all.

Lady F. Then, I don't say the sun shines all the day; but, that he peeps now and then: yet he does shine all the day too, you know, though we don't see him.

Brisk. Right; but the vulgar will never comprehend that.

Lady F. Well, you shall hear—Let me see. [Reads.

*For as the sun shines ev'ry day,
So of our coachman I may say,
He shows his drunken fiery face,
Just as the sun does, more or less.*

Brisk. That's right; all's well, all's well—more or less.

Lady F. [Reads] *And when at night his labour's done,
Then too, like heaven's charioteer, the sun—*

Ay, charioteer does better. [Reads.

*Into the dairy he descends,
And there his whipping and his driving ends;
There he's secure from danger of a bilk,
His fare is paid him, and he sets in milk.*

For Susan, you know, is Thetis, and so—

Brisk. Incomparable well and proper, 'egad; but I have one exception to make—Don't you think bilk (I know it's good rhyme); but don't you think bilk and fare too like a hackney-coachman?

Lady F. I swear and vow I'm afraid so; and yet our Jehu was a hackney-coachman when my lord took him.

Brisk. Was he? I'm answered, if Jehu was a hackney-coachman—You may put that into the marginal

notes though, to prevent criticism: only mark it with a small asterism, and say, Jehu was formerly a hackney coachman.

Lady F. I will. You'd oblige me extremely to write notes to the whole poem.

Brisk. With all my heart and soul; and proud of the vast honour, let me perish.

Lord F. Ho, he, he! My dear, have you done? Won't you join with us? we were laughing at my lady Whifler, and Mr. Sneer.

Lady F. Ay, my dear, were you? O, filthy Mr. Sneer! he's a nauseous figure, a most fulsamic fop, pho! He spent two days together in going about Covent-garden to suit the lining of his coach with his complexion.

Lord F. O, silly! yet his aunt is as fond of him, as if she had brought the ape into the world herself.

Brisk. Who, my lady Toothless? O, she's a mortifying spectacle; she's always chewing the cud, like an old ewe.

Cyn. Fie, Mr. Brisk; 'tis oringoes for her cough.

Lady F. Then she's always ready to laugh when Sneer offers to speak; and sits in expectation of his no jest, with her mouth open.

Brisk. Like an oyster at low ebb, 'egad. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady F. Then that t'other great strapping lady; I can't hit of her name; the old fat fool that paints so exorbitantly.

Brisk. I know whom you mean; but dence take me, I can't hit of her name neither. Paints, d'ye say? why she lays it on with a trowel; then she has a great beard that bristles through it, and makes her look as if she were plastered with lime and hair, let me perish.

Lady F. O, you made a song upon her, Mr. Brisk.

Brisk. He! 'egad, so I did. My Lord can sing it. 'Tis not a song, neither: it's a sort of an epigram, or rather an epigrammatic sonnet; I don't know what to call it, but it's satire. Sing it, my lord.

SONG.—LORD FROTH.

Ancient Phillis has young graces,
 'Tis a strange thing, but a true one;
 Shall I tell you how?
 She herself makes her own faces,
 And each morning wears a new one;
 Where's the wonder now?

Brisk. Short, but there's salt in it; my way of writing, 'egad.

Enter THOMAS.

Lady F. How now?

Tho. Your ladyship's chair is come.

Lady F. Is nurse and the child in it?

Tho. Yes, madam.

[*Exit.*

Lady F. O the dear creature! let's go see it.

Lord F. I swear, my dear, you'll spoil that child with sending it to and again so often; this is the seventh time the chair has gone for her to-day.

Lady F. O law, I swear it's but the sixth, and I han't seen her these two hours. The poor dear creature! I swear, my lord, you don't love poor little Sapho. Come, my dear Cynthia; Mr. Brisk, we'll go see Sapho, though my lord won't.

Cyn. I'll wait upon your ladyship.

Brisk. Pray, madam, how old is lady Sapho?

Lord F. Three quarters; but I swear she has a world of wit, and can sing a tune already. My lord, won't you go? won't you? what, not to see Sapho? Pray, my lord, come see little Saph. I knew you could not stay.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. *The same.*

Enter MELLEFONT and CYNTHIA.

Cyn. I heard him loud as I came by the closet-door, and my lady with him: but she seemed to moderate his passion.

Mel. Ay, as gentle breezes moderate a fire; but I shall counterwork her spells.

Cyn. It's impossible; she'll cast beyond you still. I'll lay my life it will never be a match.

Mel. What?

Cyn. Between you and me.

Mel. Why so? I don't know why we should not steal out of the house this moment, and marry one another without consideration or the fear of repentance. Hang fortune, portion, settlements, and jointures.

Cyn. Ay, ay, what have we to do with them? You know we marry for love.

Mel. Love, love, downright, very villanous love.

Cyn. Here then, I give you my promise, in spite of

duty, any temptation of wealth, your inconstancy, or my own inclination to change——

Mel. To run most wilfully and unreasonably away with me this moiment, and be married.

Cyn. Hold——never to marry any body else.

Mel. That's but a kind of negative consent. Why, you won't balk the frolic?

Cyn. If you had not been so assured of your own conduct, I would not. But 'tis but reasonable that, since I consent to like a man without the vile consideration of money, he should give me a very evident demonstration of his wit: therefore let me see you undermine my lady Touchwood, as you boasted, and force her to give her consent, and then——

Mel. I'll do't.

Cyn. And I'll do't.

Mel. This very next ensuing hour of eight o'clock is the last minute of her reign, unless the devil assist her in propria persona.

Cyn. Well, if the devil should assist her, and your plot miscarry.

Mel. Ay, what am I to trust to then?

Cyn. Why, if you give me very clear demonstration that it was the devil, I'll allow for irresistible odds. Here's my mother-in-law, and your friend Careless: I would not have 'em see us together yet. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter CARELESS and LADY PLIANT.

Lady P. I swear, Mr. Careless, you are very alluring, and say so many fine things, and nothing is so moving to me as a fine thing. Well, I must do you this justice, and declare in the face of the world, never any body gained so far upon me as yourself; with blushes I must own it, you have shaken, as I may say, the very foundation of my honour. Well, sure if I escape your importunities, I shall value myself as long as I live, I swear.

Care. And despise me.

[*Sighing.*]

Lady P. The last of any man in the world, by my purity; now you make me swear. O gratitude, forbid

that I should ever be wanting in a respectful acknowledgment of an entire resignation of all my best wishes, for the person and parts of so accomplished a person, whose merit challenges much more I'm sure than my illiterate praises can description.

Care. Ah, heavens, madam, you ruin me with kindness! Your charming tongue pursues the victory of your eyes, while at your feet your poor adorer dies.

[*In a whining Tone.*]

Lady P. Ah! very fine.

Care. Ah, why are you so fair, so bewitching fair? O let me grow to the ground here, and feast upon that hand! O let me press it to my heart, my trembling heart! the nimble movement shall instruct your pulse, and teach it to alarm desire. [*Still whining*] I'm almost at the end of my cant, if she does not yield quickly.

[*Aside.*]

Lady P. O that's so passionate and fine, I cannot hear it. I am not safe if I stay, and must leave you.

Care. And must you leave me? Rather let me languish out a wretched life, and breathe my soul beneath your feet. I must say the same thing over again, and can't help it.

[*Aside.*]

Lady P. I swear, I'm ready to languish too. O my honour! whither is it going? I protest you have given me the palpitation of the heart.

Care. Can you be so cruel?

Lady P. O rise, I beseech you; say no more till you rise. Why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported, I did not see it. Well, to show you how far you have gained upon me, I assure you, if sir Paul should die, of all mankind there's none I'd sooner make my second choice.

Care. O heaven! I can't outlive this night without your favour. I feel my spirits faint, a general dampness overspreads my face, a cold deadly dew already vents through all my pores, and will to-morrow wash me for ever from your sight, and drown me in my tomb.

Lady P. O, you have conquer'd; sweet, melting,

moving sir, you have conquered. What heart of marble can refrain to weep, and yield to such sad sayings?

[Cries.

Care. I thank heaven they are the saddest that I ever said. [Aside] Oh!

Lady P. Oh! I yield myself all up to your uncontrollable embraces. Say, thou dear dying man, when, where, and how? Ah, there's sir Paul.

Care. 'Slife, yonder's sir Paul; but if he were not come, I'm so transported I cannot speak. This note will inform you. [Gives her a Note, and exit.

Re-enter CYNTHIA, with SIR PAUL PLIANT.

Sir P. Thou art my tender lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt; but endeavour to forget this Mellefont.

Cyn. I would obey you to my power, sir; but, if I have not him, I have sworn never to marry.

Sir P. Never to marry! Heaven's forbid! must I neither have sons nor grandsons? must the family of the Pliants be utterly extinct for want of issue male? Oh, impiety! but did you swear? did that sweet creature swear, ha? How durst you swear without my consent, ha? 'Gadsbud, who am I?

Cyn. Pray don't be angry, sir; when I swore I had your consent; and therefore I swore.

Sir P. Why then the revoking my consent does annul or make of non effect your oath: so you may unswear it again; the law will allow it.

Cyn. Ay, but my conscience never will.

Sir P. 'Gadsbud, no matter for that; conscience and law never go together; you must not expect that.

Lady P. Ay, but sir Paul, I conceive, if she has sworn, d'ye mark me? if she has once sworn, it is most unchristian, inhuman, and obscene that she should break it. I'll make up the match again, because Mr. Careless said it would oblige him. [Aside.

Sir P. Does your ladyship conceive so? Why I was of that opinion once too. Nay, if your ladyship conceives so, I'm of that opinion again; but I can neither find my lord nor my lady, to know what they intend.

Lady P. I am satisfied that my cousin Mellefont has been much wronged.

Cyn. I'm amazed to find her of our side, for I'm sure she loved him. [*Aside*

Lady P. I know my lady Touchwood has no kindness for him; and besides I have been informed by Mr. Careless, that Mellefont had never any thing more than a profound respect. That he has owned himself to be my admirer, 'tis true; but he was never so presumptuous to entertain any dishonourable notions of things; so that if this be made plain, I don't see how my daughter can in conscience, or honour, or any thing in the world—

Sir P. Indeed if this be made plain, as my lady your mother says, child—

Lady P. Plain! I was informed of it by Mr. Careless; and I assure you Mr. Careless is a person—that has a most extraordinary respect and honour for you, sir Paul.

Cyn. And for your ladyship too, I believe; or else you had not changed sides so soon. [*Aside*] Now I begin to find it.

Sir P. I am much obliged to Mr. Careless really; he is a person that I have a great value for, not only for that, but because he has a great veneration for your ladyship.

Lady P. O law, no indeed, sir Paul; 'tis upon your account.

Sir P. No, I protest and vow I have no title to his esteem, but in having the honour to appertain in some measure to your ladyship, that's all.

Lady P. O law, now, I swear and declare, it shan't be so; you're too modest, sir Paul.

Sir P. It becomes me, when there is any comparison made between—

Lady P. O fie, fie, sir Paul, you'll put me out of countenance. Your very obedient and affectionate wife, that's all, and highly honoured in that title.

Sir P. 'Gadsbud, I am transported! Give me leave to kiss your ladyship's little finger.

Lady P. My lip indeed, sir Paul; I swear you shall.

[*He kisses her, and bows very low.*]

Sir P. I humbly thank your ladyship; I don't know whether I fly on ground, or walk in air. 'Gadsbud, she was never thus before. Well, I must own myself the most beholder to Mr. Careless; as sure as can be this is all his doing, something that he has said; well, 'tis a rare thing to have an ingenious friend. Well, your ladyship is of opinion that the match may go forward?

Lady P. By all means. Mr. Careless has satisfied me of the matter.

Sir P. Well, why then, lamb, you may keep your oath: but have a care of making rash vows. Come hither to me, and kiss papa.

Lady P. I swear and declare, I am in such a twitter to read Mr. Careless's letter, that I can't forbear any longer; but though I may read all letters first by prerogative, yet I'll be sure to be unsuspected this time. [*Aside*] Sir Paul.

Sir P. Did your ladyship call?

Lady P. Nay, not to interrupt you, my dear. Ouly lend me your letter which you had from your steward to-day: I would look upon the account again, and may be increase your allowance.

Sir P. There it is, madam. Do you want a pen and ink?

[*Bows and gives the Letter.*]

Lady P. No, no, nothing else, I thank you, sir Paul. So now I can read my own letter under the cover of his.

[*Aside.*]

Sir P. Ho! and shall I have a grandson, a brave chopping boy, to perpetuate the line of the Pliants? I'll settle a thousand pounds a year upon the rogne as soon as ever he looks me in the face, I will. 'Gadsbud, I hope the young cherub will be like me: I would fain have some resemblance of myself in my posterity. Ha, Thy, shouldn't you wish he was like his grand-papa?

Cyn. I'm glad to see you so merry, sir.

Sir P. Merry! 'gadsbud, I'm serious: I'll give thee five hundred pounds for every feature of him that re-

sembles me. Ah, this eye, this left eye! a thousand pounds for this left eye: this has done execution in its time, girl. Why thou hast my leer, hussy; just thy father's leer—Let it be transmitted to the young rogue by the help of imagination. Why, 'tis the mark of our family, Thy: our house is distinguished by a languishing eye, as the house of Austria is by a thick lip.

Lady P. O, dear Mr. Careless! I swear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charmed me as much as I have charmed him; and so I'll tell him in the wardrobe, when 'tis dark. O crimine! I hope sir Paul has not seen both letters. [*Aside. Puts up the wrong Letter, and gives him her own*] Sir Paul, here's your letter: to-morrow morning I'll settle accounts to your advantage.

Sir P. I humbly thank your ladyship.

Lady P. So, now I'll retire, and study a complimentary rebuke to Mr. Careless, for the pathetic tender of his regards; but it shall not be too severe neither.

[*Aside, and exit.*]

Enter BRISK.

Brisk. Sir Paul, 'gadsbud, you're an uncivil person, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

Sir P. O law, what's the matter now? I hope you are not angry, Mr. Brisk?

Brisk. Deuce take me, I believe you intend to marry your daughter yourself; you're always brooding over her like an old hen, as if she were not well hatched, 'egad, he!

Sir P. Good, strange! Mr. Brisk is such a merry facetious person; he, he, he. No, no, I have done with her, I have done with her now.

Brisk. The fiddles have stayed this hour in the hall, and my lord Froth wants a partner; we can never begin without her.

Sir P. Go, go, child; go, get you gone, and dance and be merry; I'll come and look at you by-and-by. [*Exit Cynthia*] Where's my son Mellefont?

Brisk. I'll send him to them; I know where he is; and, sir Paul, will you send Careless into the hall, if you meet him?

Sir P. I will, I will; I'll go and look for him on purpose. [Exit.]

Brisk. So, now they are all gone, and I have an opportunity to practise.—Ah! my dear lady Froth! she's a most engaging creature, if she were not so fond of that damn'd coxcomby lord of hers; and yet I am forc'd to allow him wit too, to keep in with him. No matter; she's a woman of parts, and, 'egad, parts will carry her. She said she would follow me into the gallery. Now, to make my approaches—Hem, hem! Ah! ma— [*Bows*] dam!—Plague on't, why should I disparage my parts by thinking what to say? None but dull rogues think: witty men, like rich fellows, are always ready for all expenses; while your blockheads, like poor needy scoundrels, are forc'd to examine their stock, and forecast the charges of the day. Here she comes; I'll seem not to see her, and try to win her with a new airy invention of my own, hem! [*Sings, walking about.*]

Enter LADY FROTH.

I'm sick with love, ha, ha, ha! pr'ythee come cure me—*I'm sick with, &c.*—O, ye powers! O, my lady Froth, my lady Froth, my lady Froth! Heigho, break heart! Gods, I thank you.

[*Stands musing with his Arms across.*]

Lady F. O heaven's, Mr. Brisk! what's the matter?

Brisk. My lady Froth! your ladyship's most humble servant.—The matter, madam? nothing, madam; nothing at all, 'egad: I was fallen into the most agreeable amusement in the whole province of contemplation, that's all.—I'll seem to conceal my passion, and that will look like respect. [*Aside.*]

Lady F. Bless me, why did you call out upon me so loud?

Brisk. O Lord! I, madam? I beseech your ladyship, when?

Lady F. Just now, as I came in. Bless me, why don't you know it?

Brisk. Not I, let me perish; but did I? strange! I confess your ladyship was in my thoughts; and I was in a sort of dream, that did in a manner represent a very pleasing object to my imagination: but—but did I indeed?—To see how love and murder will out! But did I really name my lady Froth?

Lady F. Three times aloud, as I love letters. But did you talk of love?—O, Parnassus! who would have thought Mr. Brisk could have been in love? ha, ha, ha! O heaven's, I thought you could have no mistress but the nine muses.

Brisk. No more I have, 'egad, for I adore 'em all in your ladyship. Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenetic or airy upon't; the deuce take me, if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry, that your ladyship has made the discovery.

Lady F. O be merry, by all means.—Prince Volscius in love! Ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. O, barbarous, to turn me into ridicule! yet, ha, ha, ha, the deuce take me, I can't help laughing myself, ha, ha, ha! yet, by heaven's, I have a violent passion for your ladyship, seriously.

Lady F. Seriously? ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Seriously, ha, ha, ha! 'Gad, I have, for all I laugh.

Lady F. Ha, ha, ha! What d'ye think I laugh at? ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Me, 'egad; ha, ha!

Lady F. No; the deuce take me if I don't laugh at myself; for, hang me, if I have not a violent passion for Mr. Brisk; ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Seriously?

Lady F. Seriously; ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. That's well enough, let me perish; ha, ha, ha! O, miraculous! what a happy discovery! Ah, my dear charming lady Froth.

Lady F. Oh, my adored Mr. Brisk! [*They embrace.*]

Enter LORD FROTH.

Lord F. The company are all ready.—How now?

Brisk. Zoons, madam, there's my lord. [*Apart to her.*]

Lady F. Take no notice; but observe me. [*Aside*]
Now cast off, and meet me at the lower end of the room,
and then join hands again. I could teach my lord this
dance purely; but I vow, Mr. Brisk, I can't tell how
to come so near any other man.—Oh, here's my lord;
now you shall see me do it with him.

[*They pretend to practise part of a Country Dance.*]

Lord F. Oh, I see there's no harm yet; but I don't
like this familiarity. [*Aside.*]

Lady F. Shall you and I do our close dance, to show
Mr. Brisk? [*To Lord Froth.*]

Lord F. No, my dear, do it with him.

Lady F. I'll do it with him, my lord, when you are
out of the way.

Brisk. That's good, 'egad, that's good; deuce take
me, I can hardly hold laughing in his face. [*Aside.*]

Lord F. Any other time, my dear; or we'll dance it
below.

Lady F. With all my heart.

Brisk. Come, my lord, I'll wait on you.—My charm-
ing witty angel! [*Apart to Lady Froth.*]

Lady F. We shall have whispering time enough, you
know, since we are partners. [*Apart, and exeunt.*]

Re-enter LADY PLIANT and CARELESS.

Lady P. O, Mr. Careless, Mr. Careless, I'm ruin'd,
I'm undone.

Care. What's the matter, madam?

Lady P. O the unluckiest accident! I'm afraid I
shan't live to tell it you.

Care. Heaven forbid! What is it?

Lady P. I'm in such a fright; the strangest quandary
and premonire! I'm all over in a universal agitation.—
O, your letter, your letter! By an unfortunate mistake,
I have given sir Paul your letter instead of his own.

Care. That was unlucky.

Lady P. O, yonder he comes reading of it; step in here, and advise me quickly, before he sees. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter SIR PAUL PLIANT, with the Letter.

Sir P. O Providence, what a conspiracy have I discovered;—but let me see to make an end on't. [*Reads*] Hum—*After supper in the wardrobe by the gallery.* If sir Paul should surprise us, I have a commission from him, to treat with you about the very matter of fact—Matter of fact! very pretty; it seems then I'm conducting to my own dishonour: why this is the very traitorous position of taking up arms by my authority against my person! Well, let me see. [*Reads*] Till then I languish in expectation of my adored charmer.—*Dying* NED CARELESS.—'Gadsbud, would that were matter of fact too! Die and be damn'd, for a Judas Maccabeus, and Iscariot both. O friendship! what art thou but a name! Henceforward let no man take a friend into the bosom of his family; for if he does—O, we know what will follow, from the example of sir Paul Pliant, and his bosom friend, Ned Careless. Have I for this been pinion'd night after night for three years past? Have I approached the marriage bed with reverence, as to a sacred shrine, and must I now find it polluted by foreign iniquity? O, my lady Pliant, you were chaste as ice; but you are melted now, and false as water! But Providence has been constant to me in discovering this conspiracy; still I am beholden to Providence: if it were not for Providence, sure, poor sir Paul, thy heart would break.

Re-enter LADY PLIANT.

Lady P. So, sir, I see you have read the letter.—Well, now, sir Paul, what do you think of your friend Careless? Has he been treacherous? or did you give his insolence a license to make trial of your wife's suspected virtue? D'ye see here? [*Snatches the Letter as in anger*] Look, read it!—'Gad's my life, if I thought it were so, I would this moment renounce all communication with you. Ungrateful monster! He? is it so?

Ay, I see it; a plot, upon my honour: your guilty cheeks confess it. Oh, where shall wrong'd virtue fly for reparation? I'll be divorced this instant.

Sir P. 'Gadsbud, what shall I say? this is the strangest surprise! [*Aside*] Why, I don't know any thing at all; nor I don't know whether there be any thing at all in the world or no.

Lady P. I thought I should try you, false man. I, that never dissembled in my life, yet, to make trial of you, pretended to like that monster of iniquity, Careless; and found out that contrivance, to let you see this letter, which now I find was of your own inditing, I do, heathen, I do! See my face no more; I'll be divorced presently.

Sir P. O strange, what will become of me?—I'm so amazed, and so overjoy'd, so afraid, and so sorry. But did you give me this letter on purpose? he? Did you?

Lady P. Did I? Do you doubt me, Turk, Saracen? I have a cousin that's a proctor in the Commons; I'll go to him instantly. [*Going.*]

Sir P. Hold, stay, I beseech your ladyship—I'm so overjoyed—stay, I'll confess all.

Lady P. What will you confess, Jew?

Sir P. Why now, as I hope to be saved, I had no hand in this letter. Nay, hear me, I beseech your ladyship, the devil take me now, if he did not go beyond my commission. If I desired him to do any more than speak a good word only just for me, 'gadsbud, only for poor sir Paul, I'm an Anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

Lady P. Why, is not here matter of fact?

Sir P. Ay; but by your own virtue and continency, that matter of fact is all his own doing. I confess I had a great desire to have some honours conferred upon me, which lay all in your ladyship's breast; and he being a well-spoken man, I desired him to intercede for me.

Lady P. Did you so, presumption? Oh, he comes, he comes; I cannot bear his sight. [*Exit.*]

Re-enter CARELESS.

Care. Sir Paul, I'm glad I've met with you.—'Gad, I have said all I could, but oan't prevail. Then my friendship to you has carried me a little further in this matter——

Sir P. Indeed! Well, sir——I'll dissemble with him a little.

[*Aside.*

Care. Why, faith, I have in my time known honest gentlemen abused by a pretended coyness in their wives, and I had a mind to try my lady's virtue: and when I could not prevail for you, 'gad, I pretended to be in love myself; but all in vain; she would not hear a word upon that subject: then I writ a letter to her; I don't know what effects that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you when I do; though, by this light, I believe her virtue is impregnable.

Sir P. O Providence, Providence! what discoveries are here made! Why, this is better, and more miraculous than the rest.

Care. What do you mean?

Sir P. I can't tell you, I'm so overjoyed; come along with me to my lady; I can't contain myself; come, my dear friend.

Care. So, so, so! this difficulty's over.

[*Aside, and exeunt.*

Re-enter MELLEFONT, with MASKWELL.

Mel. Maskwell, I have been looking for you; 'tis within a quarter of eight.

Mask. My lady is just gone into my lord's closet; you had best steal into her chamber before she comes, and lie concealed there; otherwise she may lock the door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprise us.

Mel. He! you say true.

Mask. You had best make haste; for, after she has made some apology to the company for her own and my lord's absence all this while, she'll retire to her chamber instantly.

Mel. I go this moment. Now, fortune, I defy thee.
[Exit.

Mask. I confess you may be allowed to be secure in your own opinion: the appearance is very fair; but I have an after-game to play that shall turn the tables; and here comes the man that I must manage.

Enter LORD TOUCHWOOD.

Lord T. Maskwell, you are the man I wish'd to meet.

Mask. I am happy to be in the way of your lordship's commands.

Lord T. I have always found you prudent and careful in any thing that has concern'd me, or my family.

Mask. I were a villain else. I am bound by duty and gratitude, and my own inclination, to be ever your lordship's servant.

Lord T. Enough; you are my friend; I know it: yet there has been a thing in your knowledge, which has concern'd me nearly, that you have concealed from me.

Mask. My lord!—

Lord T. Nay, I excuse your friendship to my unnatural nephew thus far; but I know you have been privy to his impious designs upon my wife. This evening she has told me all: her good nature conceal'd it as long as it was possible; but he perseveres so in villany, that she has told me, even you were weary of dissuading him.

Mask. I am sorry, my lord, I can't make you an answer: this is an occasion in which I would not willingly be silent.

Lord T. I know you would excuse him; and I know as well that you can't.

Mask. Indeed I was in hopes it had been a youthful heat, that might have soon boiled over; but—

Lord T. Say on.

Mask. I have nothing more to say, my lord, but to express my concern; for I think his frenzy increases daily.

Lord T. How?—Give me but proof of it, ocular

proof, that I may justify my dealing with him to the world—and share my fortunes.

Mask. O, my lord, consider that is hard: besides, time may work upon him. Then for me to do it! I have professed an everlasting friendship to him.

Lord T. He is your friend—and what am I?

Mask. I am answered.

Lord T. Fear not his displeasure; I will put you out of his, and fortune's power: and, for that thou art scrupulously honest, I will secure thy fidelity to him, and give my honour never to own any discovery that you shall make me.—Can you give me a demonstrative proof? speak.

Mask. I wish I could not. To be plain, my lord, I intended this evening to have tried all arguments to dissuade him from a design, which I suspect; and if I had not succeeded, to have informed your lordship of what I knew.

Lord T. I thank you. What is the villain's purpose?

Mask. He has owned nothing to me of late; and what I mean now is only a bare suspicion of my own.—If your lordship will meet me a quarter of an hour hence—there—in that lobby by my lady's bed-chamber, I shall be able to tell you more.

Lord T. I will.

Mask. My duty to your lordship makes me do a severe piece of justice.

Lord T. I will be secret, and reward your honesty beyond your hopes. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. LADY TOUCHWOOD'S Bed-chamber.

Enter MELLEFONT.

Mel. Pray heaven my aunt keep touch with her assig-
nation.—O, that her lord were but sweating behind this
hanging, with the expectation of what I shall see!—
Hist, she comes. Little does she think what a mine is
just ready to spring under her feet.—But to my post. [*Retires.*

Enter LADY TOUCHWOOD.

Lady T. 'Tis eight o'clock: methinks I should have found him here. Who does not prevent the hour of love, outstays the time; for, to be duly punctual, is too slow.

Enter MASKWELL.

I was accusing you of neglect.

Mask. I confess you do reproach me when I see you here before me; but 'tis fit I should be still behind-hand, still to be more and more indebted to your goodness.

Lady T. You can excuse a fault too well not to have been to blame: a ready answer shows you were prepared.

Mask. Guilt is ever at a loss, and confusion waits upon it; when innocence and bold truth are always ready for expression.

Lady T. Not in love: words are the weak support of cold indifference: love has no language to be heard.

Mask. Excess of joy has made me stupid.—Thus—

Lady T. Hold, let me lock the door first.

[Goes to the Door.

Mask. That I did suppose. 'Twas well I left the private passage open.

[Aside.

Lady T. So, that's safe.

Mask. And so may all your pleasures be, and secret as this kiss.

Mel. [Leaps out] And may all treachery be thus discovered.

Lady T. Ah!

[Shrieks.

Mel. Villain!

[Offers to draw.

Mask. Nay, then there's but one way.

[Runs out.

Mel. Say you so? Were you provided for an escape? Hold, madam, you have no more holes to your burrow. I'll stand between you and this sally-port.

Lady T. Shame, grief, and ruin haunt thee for this deceit:—O! I could rack myself, play the vulture to my own heart, and gnaw it piecemeal, for not boding to me this misfortune!

Mel. Be patient.

Lady T. Patient!

Mel. Consider I have you on the hook; you will but flounder yourself a-weary, and be nevertheless my prisoner.

Lady T. I'll hold my breath and die, but I'll be free.

Mel. O madam, have a care of dying unprepared. I doubt you have some unrepented sins that may hang heavy and retard your flight.

Lady T. What shall I do? whither shall I turn?—Hold in, my passion, and fall, fall a little, thou swelling heart! Let me have some intermission of this rage, and one minute's coolness to dissemble. [*Aside. Weeps.*]

Mel. You have been to blame. I like those tears, and hope they are of the purest kind—penitential tears.

Lady T. O, the scene was shifted quick before me; I had not time to think; I was surprised to see a monster in the glass, and now I find 'tis myself. Can you have mercy to forgive the faults I have imagined, but never put in practice?—O consider, consider how fatal you have been to me, you have already killed the quiet of this life. The love of you was the first wandering fire that e'er misled my steps; and while I had only that in view, I was betrayed into unthought-of ways of ruin.

Mel. May I believe this true?

Lady T. O, be not cruelly incredulous. How can you doubt these streaming eyes? Keep the severest eye o'er all my future conduct; and if I once relapse, let me not hope forgiveness: 'twill ever be in your power to ruin me. My lord shall sign to your desires; I will myself create your happiness, and Cynthia shall this night be your bride—do but conceal my failings, and forgive. [*Kneels.*]

Mel. Upon such terms, I will be ever yours in every honest way.

Lady T. Eternal blessings thank you!

Re-enter MASKWELL, with LORD TOUCHWOOD.

Mask. I have kept my word. He's here; but I must not be seen. [*Apart to Lord Touchwood, and exit.*]

Lady T. Ha! my lord listening; then all's my own.
[*Aside.*]

Mel. Nay, I beseech you rise.

Lady T. Never, never! I'll grow to the ground, be buried quick beneath it, e'er I'll be consenting to such a sin as incest! unnatural incest!
[*Aloud.*]

Mel. Ha!

Lady T. O cruel man! will you not let me go? I'll forgive all that's past. O heaven, you will not force me!

Lord T. Monster! dog! your life shall answer this.
[*Draws, and runs at Mellefont; is held by Lady Touchwood.*]

Lady T. O, my lord! hold, hold, for mercy's sake!

Mel. Confusion! my uncle!—O the cursed sorceress!

Lady T. Moderate your rage, good my lord! he's mad, alas! he's mad; indeed he is, my lord, and knows not what he does. See how wild he looks!

Mel. By heaven, 'twere senseless not to be mad, and see such witchcraft.

Lady T. My lord, you hear him; he talks idly.

Lord T. Hence from my sight, thou living infamy to my name! When next I see that face, I'll write villain in't with my sword's point.

Mel. Now, by my soul, I will not go till I have made known my wrongs; nay, till I have made known yours, which, if possible, are greater—though she has all the host of hell her servants.

Lady T. Alas, he raves! talks very poetry! For heaven's sake, away, my lord; he'll either tempt you to extravagance, or commit some himself.

Mel. Death and furies! will you not hear me? Why, she laughs, grins, points at you, makes you her mark of insult and derision.

[*As Lady Touchwood is going, she turns back and smiles at him.*]

Lord T. I fear he's mad indeed. Let's send Maskwell to him.

Mel. Send him to her.

Lady T. Come, come, good my lord ; my heart aches so, I shall faint if I stay.

[*Exit Lord and Lady Touchwood.*]

Mel. O, I could curse my stars, fate, and chance ; all causes and accidents of fortune in this life ! But to what purpose ? They talk of sending Maskwell to me ; I never had more need of him. But what can he do ? Imagination cannot form a fairer or more plausible design than this of his, which has miscarried. O, my precious aunt ! I shall never thrive, without I deal with the devil or another woman.

Women, like flames, have a destroying power,
Ne'er to be quench'd, till they themselves devour.

[*Exit.*]

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I.

The Gallery in LORD TOUCHWOOD'S House.

Enter LADY TOUCHWOOD and MASKWELL.

Lady T. Was't not lucky?

Mask. Lucky! fortune is your own, and 'tis her interest so to be; I believe you can control her power, and she fears it; though chance brought my lord, 'twas your own art that turn'd it to advantage.

Lady T. 'Tis true, it might have been my ruin; but yonder's my lord; I believe he's coming to find you; I'll not be seen. [Exit.

Mask. So! I durst not own my introducing my lord, though it succeeded well for her; for she would have suspected a design, which I should have been puzzled to excuse. My lord is thoughtful; I'll be so too; yet he shall know my thoughts, or think he does.

Enter LORD TOUCHWOOD.

What have I done?

Lord T. Talking to himself! [*Aside.*]

Mask. 'Twas honest; and shall I be rewarded for it? No, 'twas honest, therefore I shan't: nay, rather, therefore I ought not; for it rewards itself.

Lord T. Unequall'd virtue! [*Aside.*]

Mask. But should it be known, then I have lost a friend. He was an ill man, and I have gain'd; for half myself I lent him, and that I have recalled; so I have served myself: and what is yet better, I have served a worthy lord, to whom I owe myself.

Lord T. Excellent man! [*Aside.*]

Mask. Yet I am wretched. O, there is a secret burns within this breast, which, should it once blaze forth, would ruin all, consume my honest character, and brand me with the name of villain.

Lord T. Ha! [*Aside.*]

Mask. O, should it once be known I love fair Cynthia, all this that I have done would look like a rival's malice, false friendship to my lord, and base self interest. Let me perish first, and from this hour avoid all sight and speech; and, if I can, all thought of that pernicious beauty.

[*Seems to start at seeing Lord Touchwood.*]

Lord T. Start not!—let guilty and dishonest souls start at the revelation of their thoughts; but be thou fixed, as is thy virtue. Honest Maskwell! thy and my good genius led me hither: mine, in that I have discovered so much manly virtue; thine, in that thou shalt have due reward of all thy worth. Give me thy hand: my nephew is the alone remaining branch of all our ancient family; him I thus blow away, and constitute thee in his room, to be my heir.

Mask. Now fate forbid—

Lord T. No more; I have resolv'd. The writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be signed, and have his name inserted: yours will fill the blank as well—I will have no reply. Let me command this time, for 'tis the last in which I will assume authority: hereafter you shall rule where I have power.

Mask. I humbly would petition—

Lord T. Is't for yourself? [*Maskwell pauses*] I'll hear of nought for any body else.

Mask. Then witness, heaven, for me, this wealth and honour was not of my seeking; nor would I build my fortune on another's ruin; I had but one desire.

Lord T. Thou shalt enjoy it. If all I'm worth in wealth or interest can purchase Cynthia, she is thine. I'm sure sir Paul's consent will follow fortune; I'll quickly show him which way that is going.

Mask. You oppress me with bounty.

Lord T. I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee.

[*Exit.*]

Mask. This is prosperous indeed! Why, let him find me out a villain: settled in possession of a fair estate, and full fruition of my love, I'll bear the railings of a losing gamester. But should he find me out before! 'tis dangerous to delay. Let me think—Should my lord proceed to treat openly of my marriage with Cynthia, all will be discovered, and Mellefont can be no longer blinded. It must not be. Nay, should my lady know it—ay, then were fine work indeed! her fury would spare nothing, though she involv'd herself in ruin. No, it must be by stratagem: I must deceive Mellefont once more, and get my lord to consent to my private management. He comes opportunely. Now will I, in my old way, discover the whole and real truth of the matter to him, that he may not suspect one word on't.

No mask, like open truth, to cover lies;

As to go naked is the best disguise.

Enter MELLEFONT.

Mel. O, Maskwell, what hopes? I am confounded in a maze of thoughts, each leading into one another, and all ending in perplexity. My uncle will not see nor hear me.

Mask. No matter, sir; don't trouble your head; all's in my power.

Mel. How, for heaven's sake?

Mask. Little do you think that your aunt has kept

her word. How she wrought my lord into the dotage I know not; but he's gone to sir Paul about my marriage with Cynthia, and has appointed me his heir.

Mel. The devil he has! What's to be done?

Mask. I have it: it must be by stratagem; for it's in vain to make application to him. I think I have that in my head that cannot fail. Where's Cynthia?

Mel. In the garden.

Mask. Let us go and consult her. My life for yours
I cheat my lord. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter LORD and LADY TOUCHWOOD.

Lady T. Maskwell your heir, and marry Cynthia!

Lord T. I cannot do too much for so much merit.

Lady T. But this is a thing of too great moment to be so suddenly resolved. Why Cynthia? Why must he be married? Is there not reward enough in raising his low fortune, but he must mix his blood with mine, and wed my niece? How know you that my brother will consent, or sho? Nay, he himself, perhaps, may have affections elsewhere.

Lord T. No; I am convinced he loves her.

Lady T. Maskwell love Cynthia? Impossible.

Lord T. I tell you he confessed it to me.

Lady T. Confusion! how's this? [*Aside.*]

Lord T. His humility long stifled his passion, and his love of Mellefont would have made him still conceal it; but, by encouragement, I wrung this secret from him: and know, he's no way to be rewarded but in her. I'll defer my further proceedings in it till you have considered it; but remember how we are both indebted to him. [*Exit.*]

Lady T. Both indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all. Villain! Oh, I am wild with this surprise of treachery! it is impossible, it cannot be.—He love Cynthia! What, have I been dupe to his designs; his property only? Now I see what made him false to Mellefont. What shall I do? How shall I think? I cannot think. All my designs

are lost, my love unsated, my revenge unfinished, and fresh cause of fury from unthought-of plagues.

Enter SIR PAUL PLIANT.

Sir P. Madam—sister, my lady, sister! did you see my lady, my wife?

Lady T. O, torture!

Sir P. 'Gadsbud, I can't find her high nor low:—where can she be, think you?

Lady T. Where she's serving you as all your sex ought to be served, making you a beast. Don't you know that you're a fool, brother?

Sir P. A fool! he, he, he! you're merry—No, no, not I; I know no such matter.

Lady T. Why then you don't know half your happiness.

Sir P. That's a jest, with all my heart, faith and troth. But harkye, my lord told me something of a revolution of things; I don't know what to make on't: 'gadsbud, I must consult my wife. He talks of disinheriting his nephew, and I don't know what. Look you, sister, I must know what my girl has to trust to, or not a syllable of a wedding, 'gadsbud, to show you that I am not a fool.

Lady T. Hear me:—consent to the breaking off this marriage, and the promoting any other, without consulting me, and I'll renounce all blood, all relation, and concern with you for ever: nay, I'll be your enemy, and pursue you to destruction; I'll tear your eyes out, and tread you under my feet.

Sir P. Why, what's the matter now? Good Lord, what's all this for? Pho, here's a joke indeed.—Why, where's my wife?

Lady T. With Careless, fool! most likely.

Sir P. O, if she be with Mr. Careless 'tis well enough.

Lady T. Fool, sot, insensible ox! But remember what I said to you, or you had better see my face no more; by this light, you had. [Exit.

Sir P. You're a passionate woman, 'gadsbud; but,

to say truth, all our family are choleric; I am the only peaceable person amongst 'em. [Exit.

Re-enter MELLEFONT and MASKWELL, with CYNTHIA.

Mel. I know no other way but this he has proposed, if you have love enough to run the venture.

Cyn. I don't know whether I have love enough, but I find I have obstinacy enough to pursue whatever I have once resolved, and a true female courage to oppose any thing that resists my will, though 'twere reason itself.

Musk. That's right. Well, I'll secure the writings, and run the hazard along with you.

Cyn. But how can the coach be got ready without suspicion?

Mask. Leave it to my care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my lord's own order.

Mel. How?

Mask. Why, I intend to tell my lord the whole matter of our contrivance, that's my way.

Mel. I don't understand you.

Mask. Why, I'll tell my lord I laid this plot with you on purpose to betray you; and that which put me upon it, was the finding it impossible to gain the lady any other way but in the hopes of her marrying you.

Mel. So—

Mask. So!—why so: while you're busied in making yourself ready, I'll wheedle her into the coach, and instead of you, borrow my lord's chaplain, and so run away with her myself.

Mel. O, I conceive you: you'll tell him so.

Mask. Tell him so! ay; why you don't think I mean to do so?

Mel. No, no; ha, ha! I dare swear thou wilt not.

Mask. Therefore, for our further security, I would have you disguised like a parson, that, if my lord should have curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the

coach, but think the cheat is carried on as he would have it.

Mel. Excellent Maskwell!

Mask. Well, get yourselves ready, and meet me in half an hour, yonder in my lady's dressing-room: I'll send the chaplain to you with his robes: I have made him my own, and ordered him to meet us to-morrow morning at St. Alban's; there we will sum up this account to all our satisfaction.

Mel. Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little time we have. [Exit.]

Mask. Madam, you will be ready?

Cyn. I will be punctual to the minute. [Going.]

Mask. Stay, I have a doubt. Upon second thoughts we had better meet in the chaplain's chamber here; there is a back way into it, so that you need not come through this door, and a pair of private stairs leading down to the stables. It will be more convenient.

Cyn. I am guided by you; but Mellefont will mistake.

Mask. No, no; I'll after him immediately, and tell him. [Exit Cynthia] Why, qui vult decipi decipiat. 'Tis no fault of mine; I have told 'em in plain terms how easy 'tis for me to cheat 'em; and if they will not hear the serpent's hiss, they must be stung into experience and future caution.—Now to prepare my lord to consent to this. But first, I must instruct my little Levite; he promised me to be within at this hour. Mr. Saygrace, Mr. Saygrace!

[Goes to the Chamber-door, and knocks.]

Say. [Within] Sweet sir, I will but pen the last line of an acrostic, and be with you in the twinkling of an ejaculation, or before you can—

Mask. Nay, good Mr. Saygrace, do not prolong the time, by describing to me the shortness of your stay; rather, if you please, defer the finishing of your wit, and let us talk about our business; it shall be tithes in your way.

Enter SAYGRACE.

Say. You shall prevail; I would break off in the middle of a sermon to do you a pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater, except the business in hand. Have you provided a habit for Mellefont?

Say. I have; it is ready in my chamber; together with a clean-starched band and cuffs.

Mask. Good. Let them be carried to him. Have you stitched the gown sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waste time in putting it on?

Say. I have; the gown will not be indued without perplexity.

Mask. Meet me in half an hour, here in your own chamber. When Cynthia comes, let there be no light, and do not speak, that she may not distinguish you from Mellefont. I'll urge haste, to excuse your silence.

Say. You have no more commands?

Mask. None; your text is short.

Say. But pithy; and I will handle it with discretion.

[*Exit.*]

Mask. It will be the first you have so served.

Re-enter LORD TOUCHWOOD.

Lord T. Sure, I was born to be controlled by those I should command! my very slaves will shortly give me rules how I shall govern them!

Mask. I am concerned to see your lordship discomposed.

Lord T. Have you seen my wife lately, or disobliged her?

Mask. No, my lord. What can this mean? [*Aside.*]

Lord T. Then Mellefont has urged somebody to incense her. Something she has heard of you, which carries her beyond the bounds of patience.

Mask. This I feared. [*Aside.*] Did not your lordship tell her of the honours you designed me?

Lord T. Yes.

Mask. 'Tis that: you know my lady has a high spirit; she thinks I am unworthy.

Lord T. Unworthy! 'tis an ignorant pride in her to think so. Honesty to me is true nobility. However, 'tis my will it shall be so, and that should be convincing

to her as much as reason. I'll not be wife-ridden. Were it possible it should be done this night.

Mask. Ha! he meets my wishes. [*Aside*] Few things are impossible to willing minds.

Lord T. Instruct me how this may be done, and you shall see I want no inclination.

Mask. I had laid a small design for to-morrow (as love will be inventing), which I thought to communicate to your lordship: but it may be as well done to-night.

Lord T. Here's company: come this way, and tell me. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter CYNTHIA, with CARELESS.

Care. Is not that he, now gone out with my lord?

Cyn. I am convinced there's treachery. The confusion that I saw your father in, my lady Touchwood's passion, with what imperfectly I overheard between my lord and her, confirm me in my fears. Where's Mellefont?

Care. Here he comes.

Re-enter MELLEFONT.

Cyn. Did Maskwell tell you any thing of the chaplain's chamber?

Mel. No, my dear. Will you get ready? The things are all in my chamber; I want nothing but the habit.

Care. You are betrayed, and Maskwell is the villain I always thought him.

Cyn. When you were gone, he said his mind was changed; and bid me meet him in the chaplain's room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you notice.

Care. There's Saygrace tripping by with a bundle under his arm. He cannot be ignorant that Maskwell means to use his chamber; let's in, and examine him.

Mel. 'Tis loss of time; I cannot think him false.

[*Exeunt Careless and Mellefont,*]

Re-enter LORD TOUCHWOOD.

Cyn. My lord musing! [*Aside.*

Lord T. He has a quick invention, if this were suddenly designed. Yet, he says, he had prepared my chaplain already.

Cyn. How's this? Now I fear, indeed. [*Aside.*

Lord T. Cynthia here! Alone, fair cousin, and melancholy.

Cyn. Your lordship was thoughtful.

Lord T. My thoughts were on serious business, not worth your hearing.

Cyn. Mine were on treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

Lord T. Treachery concerning me! Pray be plain. What noise?

Mask. [*Within*] Will you not hear me?

Lady T. [*Within*] No, monster! traitor! No.

Cyn. My lady and Maskwell! This may be lucky. My lord, let me entreat you to stand behind this screen and listen; perhaps this chance will give you proof of what you never could have believed from my suspicions.
[*They retire behind the Screen.*]

Re-enter MASKWELL, and LADY TOUCHWOOD with a Dagger.

Lady T. You want but leisure to invent fresh falsehood, and sooth me to a fond belief of all your fictions: but I will stab the lie that's forming in your heart, and save a sin in pity to your soul.

Mask. Strike then, since you will have it so.

Lady T. Ha! a steady villain to the last!

Mask. Come, why do you dally with me thus?

Lady T. Thy stubborn temper shocks me, and you knew it would. This is cunning all; I know thee well; but thou shalt miss thy aim.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady T. Ha! do you mock my rage? Then this shall punish your fond rash contempt. Again smile? And

such a smile as speaks in ambiguity! Ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of that various face; O! that they were written in thy heart, that I with this might lay thee open to my sight! But then 'twill be too late to know—Thou hast, thou hast found the only way to turn my rage; too well thou knowest my jealous soul could never bear uncertainty. Speak then, and tell me! Yet are you silent? O, I am wildered in all passions! But thus my anger melts. [*Weeps*] Here, take this poniard; for my very spirits faint, and I want strength to hold it: thou hast disarm'd my soul.

[*Gives him the Dagger.*]

Mask. So, 'tis well; let your wild fury have a vent: and when you have temper tell me.

Lady T. Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

Mask. Thanks, my invention; and now I have it for you. [*Aside*] First, tell me what urged you to this violence? for your passion broke in such imperfect terms, that yet I am to learn the cause.

Lady T. My lord himself surprised me with the news, you were to marry Cynthia; that you had owned your love to him; and his indulgence would assist you to attain your ends.

Mask. I grant you, in appearance, all is true; I seem'd consenting to my lord, nay, transported with the blessing: but could you think that I, who had been happy in your lov'd embraces, could e'er be fond of an inferior slavery?—No. Yet, though I dote on each last favour more than all the rest, though I would give a limb for every look you cheaply throw away on any other object of your love, yet, so far I prize your pleasures o'er my own, that all this seeming plot that I have laid, has been to gratify your taste, and cheat the world to prove a faithful rogue to you.

Lady T. If this were true; but how can it be?

Mask. I have so contrived, that Mellefont will presently, in the chaplain's habit, wait for Cynthia in your dressing-room; but I have put the change upon her, that she may be otherwise employed. Do you muffle

yourself, and meet him in her stead. You may go privately by the back stairs, and unperceived; there you may propose to reinstate him in his uncle's favour, if he'll comply with your desires. His case is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any conditions: if not, here, take this; you may employ it better than in the heart of one, who is nothing when not yours.

[Gives her the Dagger.

Lady T. Thou canst deceive every body; nay, thou hast deceived me. But 'tis as I would wish.—Trusty villain! I could worship thee.

Mask. No more.—It wants but a few minutes of the time; and Mellefont's love will carry him there before his hour.

Lady T. I go, I fly, incomparable Maskwell! [Exit.

Mask. So! This was a pinch indeed! My invention was upon the rack, and made discovery of her last plot.—I hope Cynthia and my chaplain will be ready. I'll prepare for the expedition.

[Exit. Cynthia and Lord Touchwood come forward.

Cyn. Now, my lord!

Lord T. Astonishment binds up my rage! Villany upon villany! Heavens, what a long track of dark deceit has this discovered! I am confounded when I look back, and want a clue to guide me through the various mazes of unheard-of treachery. My wife!—Oh, torture!—my shame, my ruin!

Cyn. My lord, have patience; and be sensible how great our happiness is, that this discovery was not made too late.

Lord T. I thank you. Yet it may be still too late, if we don't presently prevent the execution of their plots.—She'll think to meet him in that dressing-room; was't not so? And Maskwell will expect you in the chaplain's chamber.—For once, I'll add my plot too.—Let us haste to find out, and inform my nephew; and do you, quickly as you can, bring all the company into this gallery.—I'll expose the traitress and the villain.

[Exeunt.

Re-enter SIR PAUL PLIANT, with LORD FROTH.

Lord F. By heavens, I have slept an age. Sir Paul, what o'clock is't? Past eight, on my conscience. My lady's is the most inviting couch, and a slumber there is the prettiest amusement!—But where's all the company?

Sir P. The company? 'Gadsbud, I don't know, my lord; but here's the strangest revolution! all turned topsy-turvy, as I hope for Providence.

Lord F. O heavens, what's the matter? Where's my wife?

Sir P. All turned topsy-turvy, as sure as a gun.

Lord F. How do you mean? My wife?

Sir P. The strangest posture of affairs!

Lord F. What, my wife?

Sir P. No, no; I mean the family.—Your lady? I saw her go into the garden with Mr. Brisk.

Lord F. How, where, when, what to do?

Sir P. I suppose they have been laying their heads together.

Lord F. How?

Sir P. Nay, only about poetry, I suppose, my lord; making couplets.

Lord F. Couplets!

Sir P. O, here they come.

Enter LADY FROTH and BRISK.

Brisk. My lord, your humble servant; sir Paul, yours.—'The finest night!

Lady F. My dear, Mr. Brisk and I have been stargazing I don't know how long.

Sir P. Does it not tire your ladyship? Are you not weary with looking up?

Lady F. O, no; I love it violently.—My dear, you're melancholy.

Lord F. No, my dear, I'm but just awake.

Lady F. Snuff some of my spirit of hartshorn.

Lord F. I've some of my own, thank you, my dear.

Lady F. Well, I swear, Mr. Brisk, you understand astronomy like an old Egyptian.

Brisk. Not comparable to your ladyship; you are the very Cynthia of the skies, and queen of stars.

Lady F. That's because I have no light, but what's by reflection from you, who are the sun.

Brisk. Madam, you have eclipsed me quite, let me perish; I can't answer that.

Lady F. No matter.—Harkye, shall you and I make an almanac together?

Brisk. With all my soul. Your ladyship has made me the man in't already, I'm so full of the wounds which you have given.

Lady F. O, finely taken! I swear now you are even with me.—O Parnassus! you have an infinite deal of wit.

Sir P. So he has, 'gadsbud! and so has your ladyship.

Re-enter CARELESS and CYNTHIA, with LADY PLIANT.

Lady P. You tell me most surprising things.—Bless me, who would ever trust a man?—O, my heart aches for fear they should be all deceitful alike.

Care. You need not fear, madam; you have charms to fix inconstancy itself.

Lady P. O dear, you make me blush.

Lord F. Come, my dear, shall we take leave of my lord and lady?

Cyn. They'll wait upon your lordship presently.

Lady F. Mr. Brisk, my coach shall set you down.

[*Lady Touchwood shrieks from within.*]

All. What's the matter?

LADY TOUCHWOOD, muffled up, runs in affrighted; followed by LORD TOUCHWOOD, dressed like a Parson, with a Dagger in his Hand.

Lady T. O, I'm betrayed.—Save me! help me!

Lord T. Now what evasion, wicked woman?

Lady T. Stand off; let me go.

[*Exit.*]

Lord T. Go, and thy own infamy pursue thee!—You stare, as you were all amazed. I don't wonder at it; but too soon you will know mine, and that woman's, shame.

[*Throws off his Gown.*]

Re-enter MELLEFONT, disguised in a Parson's Habit, with two Servants, bringing in MASKWELL.

Mel. Nay, by heaven, you shall be seen. [*To Maskwell*] Careless, your hand.—Do you hold down your head? [*To Maskwell*] Yes, I am your chaplain. Look in the face of your injured friend, thou wonder of all falsehood. [*Throws off his Disguise.*

Lord T. Are you silent, monster?

Mel. Good heavens! how I believed and loved this man! Take him hence, for he's a disease to my sight.

Lord T. Secure the manifold villain.

[*Servants take Maskwell off.*

Care. Miracle of ingratitude!

Sir P. O Providence, Providence, what discoveries are here!

Brisk. This is all very surprising, let me perish.

Lady F. You know I told you Saturn looked a little more angry than usual.

Lord T. We'll think of punishment at leisure. But let me hasten to do justice, in rewarding virtue and wronged innocence. Nephew, I hope I have your pardon, and Cynthia's.

Mel. We are your lordship's creatures.

Lord T. And be each other's comfort. Let me join your hands. Uninterrupted bliss attend you both! May circling joys tread round each happy year of your long lives!

Let secret villany from hence be warn'd,
Howe'er in private mischiefs are conceiv'd,
Torture and shame attend their open birth.
Like vipers in the breast, base treach'ry lies,
Still gnawing that whence first it did arise;
No sooner born, but the vile parent dies.

[*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. MOUNTFORD.

COULD poets but foresee how plays would take,
Then they could tell what epilogues to make;
Whether to thank or blame their audience most:
But that late knowledge does much hazard cost;
Till dice are thrown, there's nothing won nor lost.
So till the thief has stol'n, he cannot know
Whether he shall escape the law or no.
But poets run much greater hazards far,
Than they who stand their trials at the bar;
The law provides a curb for its own fury,
And suffers judges to direct the jury.
But in this court what diff'rence does appear!
For every one's both judge and jury here;
Nay, and what's worse, an executioner!
All have a right and title to some part,
Each choosing that in which he has most art.
The dreadful men of learning all confound,
Unless the fable's good, and moral sound.
The vizor-masks, that are in pit and gallery,
Approve, or damn, the repartee and rallery.
The lady critics, who are better read,
Inquire if characters are nicely bred;
If the soft things are penn'd and spoke with grace:
They judge of action too, and time, and place:
In which we do not doubt but they're discerning;
For that's a kind of *assignation learning*.
Beaux judge of dress; the willings judge of songs;
The cuckoldom, of ancient right, to cits belongs.
Poor poets thus the favour are deny'd,
Even to make exceptions, when they're try'd.
'Tis hard that they must every one admit:
Methinks I see some faces in the pit,
Which must of consequence be foes to wit.
You who can judge, to sentence may proceed;
But, though he cannot write, let him be freed
At least from their contempt who cannot read.

THE
DOUBLE GALLANT;
OR,
THE SICK LADY'S CURE.
A Comedy.
BY COLLEY CIBBER, ESQ.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,
BY
THOMAS DIBDIN,
Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.



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1817.



THE DOUBLE GALLANT

WAS originally produced at the Haymarket, in 1707; but not successfully; it having been, according to Booth, *hounded* in a most outrageous manner. In 1709, its revival was more fortunate, and it has been at different subsequent periods given with great accession of popularity. Too much of the old free-school of comedy writing, however, yet remains, and it would be found impossible to eradicate all the objectionable passages which mingle with the very essence of the play.

LOVE AT A VENTURE, by Mrs. Centlivre, and THE VISITING DAY, by Burnaby, are said to have been great helps to the author of this comedy.



PROLOGUE.

COULD those, who never try'd, conceive the sweat,
The toil requir'd, to make a play complete;
They'd pardon, or encourage, all that could
Pretend to be but tolerably good.

Plot, wit, and humour's hard to meet in one,
And yet, without 'em all—all's lamely done:
One wit, perhaps, another humour paints;
A third designs you well, but genius wants;
A fourth begins with fire—but, ah! too weak to hold
it, faints.

A modern bard, who late adorn'd the bays,
Whose muse advanc'd his fame to envy'd praise,
Was still observ'd to want his judgment most in plays.

Those, he too often found, requir'd the pain,
And stronger forces of a vigorous brain:
Nay, even alter'd plays, like old houses mended,
Cost little less than new, before they're ended;
At least, our author finds the experience true,
For equal pains have made this wholly new:
And though the name seems old, the scenes will show
That 'tis, in fact, no more the same, than now
Fam'd Chatsworth is, what 'twas some years ago.

Pardon the boldness, that a play should dare,
With works of so much wonder to compare:
But as that fabric's ancient walls or wood
Were little worth, to make this new one good;
So of this play, we hope, 'tis understood.

For though from former scenes some hints he draws,
The ground-plot's wholly chang'd from what it was:
Not but he hopes you'll find enough that's new,
In plot, in persons, wit, and humour too:
Yet what's not his, he owns in other's right,
Nor toils he now for fame, but your delight.
If that's attain'd, what matter whose the play's;
Applaud the scenes, and strip him of the praise.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	<i>Drury Lane, 1817.</i>	<i>Covent Garden, 1790.</i>
<i>Sir Solomon Sadlife</i>	Mr. Downton.	Mr. Quick.
<i>Clerimont</i>	Mr. S. Penley.	Mr. Macready.
<i>Careless</i>	Mr. Wallack.	Mr. Farren.
<i>Atall</i>	Mr. Harley.	Mr. Lewis.
<i>Old Mr. Wilful</i>	Mr. Gattie.	Mr. Cubitt.
<i>Sir Harry Atall</i>	Mr. Powell.	Mr. Thompson.
<i>Supple</i>	Mr. Carr.	Mr. Cross.
<i>Dr. Blister</i>	Mr. Hughes.	Mr. Powell.
<i>Rhubarb</i>	Mr. Coveney.	Mr. C. Powell.
<i>Finder</i>	Mr. Knight.	Mr. Bernard.
<i>Lady Dainty</i>	Mrs. Alsop.	Mrs. Matlocks.
<i>Lady Sudlife</i>	Mrs. Davison.	Mrs. Pope.
<i>Clarinda</i>	Mrs. Mardyn.	Mrs. Bernard.
<i>Sylvia</i>	Mrs. Orger.	Mrs. Merry.
<i>Wishwell</i>	Miss Kelly.	Mrs. Harlowe.
<i>Situp</i>	Miss Tidswell.	Miss Stuart.

ACT THE FIRST.



SCENE I. *The Park.*

Enter CLERIMONT and ATALL.

Cler. MR. Atall, your very humble servant.

Atall. O, Clerimont, such an adventure! I was just going to your lodgings; such a transporting accident! in short, I am now positively in love for altogether.

Cler. All the sex together, I believe.

Atall. Nay, if thou dost not believe me, and stand my friend, I am ruin'd past redemption.

Cler. Dear sir, if I stand your friend without believing you, won't that do as well? But why should you think I don't believe you? I have seen you twice in love within this fortnight; and it would be hard indeed to suppose a heart of so much mettle could not hold out a third engagement.

Atall. Then, to be serious, in one word, I am honourably in love; and, if she proves the woman I am sure she must, will positively marry her.

Cler. Marry! O degenerate virtue!

Atall. Now, will you help me?

Cler. Sir, you may depend upon me. Pray give me leave first to ask a question or two. What is this honourable lady's name?

Atall. Faith, I don't know.

Cler. What are her parents?

Atall. I can't tell.

Cler. What fortune has she?

Atall. I don't know.

Cler. Where does she live?

Atall. I can't tell.

Cler. A very concise account of the person you design to marry. Pray, sir, what is it you do know of her?

Atall. That I'll tell you. Coming yesterday from Greenwich by water, I overtook a pair of oars, whose lovely freight was one single lady, and a fellow in a handsome livery in the stern. When I came up, I had at first resolved to use the privilege of the element, and bait her with waterman's wit, till I came to the bridge; but, as soon as she saw me, she very prudently prevented my design; and, as I passed, bowed to me with an humble blush, that spoke at once such sense, so just a fear, and modesty, as put the loosest of my thoughts to rout. To be brief, her conversation was as charming as her person; both easy, unconstrained, and sprightly.

Cler. Pray, sir, how came you so well acquainted with her?

Atall. By the most fortunate misfortune sure that ever was: for, as we were shooting the bridge, her boat, by the negligence of the waterman, was overset; out jumps the footman to take care of a single rogue, and down went the poor lady to the bottom. At sight of her I plunged in, caught her in my arms, and, with much ado, supported her till my waterman pulled in to save us.

Cler. What happiness!

Atall. When she was a little recovered from her fright, she began to inquire my name, abode, and circumstances, that she might know to whom she owed

her life. Now, to tell you the truth, I durst not trust her with my real name, lest she should from thence have discovered that my father was now actually under bonds to marry me to another woman; so, faith, I even told her my name was Freeman, a Gloucestershire gentleman, of a good estate, just come to town about a chancery suit. Besides, I was unwilling any accident should let my father know of my being yet in England, lest he should find me out, and force me to marry the woman I never saw (for which, you know, he commanded me home) before I have time to prevent it.

Cler. Well, but could you not learn the lady's name all this while?

Atall. No, faith, she was inexorable to all entreaties; only told me, in general terms, that if what I vowed to her was sincere, she would give me a proof in a few days what hazards she would run to requite my services; so, after having told her where she might hear of me, I saw her into a chair, pressed her by the cold rosy fingers, kissed them warm, and parted.

Cler. What, then you are quite off with the lady, I suppose, that you made an acquaintance with in the park last week?

Atall. No, no; not so neither: one's my Juno, all pride and beauty; but this my Venus, all life, love, and softness. Now, what I beg of thee, dear Clerimont, is this: Mrs. Juno, as I told you, having done me the honour of a civil visit or two at my own lodgings, I must needs borrow thine to entertain Mrs. Venus in; for if the rival goddesses should meet and clash, you know there would be the devil to do between them.

Cler. Well, sir, my lodgings are at your service:—but you must be very private and sober, I can tell you; for my landlady's very particular; if she suspects your design, you're blown up, depend upon't.

Atall. Don't fear; I'll be as careful as a guilty conscience: but I want immediate possession; for I ex-

pect to hear from her every moment, and have already directed her to send thither. Pr'ythee, come with me.

Cler. 'Faith you must excuse me; I expect some ladies in the park that I would not miss of for an empire: but yonder's my servant, he shall conduct you.

Atall. Very good! that will do as well then; I'll send my man along with him to expect her commands, and call me if she sends: and in the mean time I'll e'en go home to my own lodgings; for, to tell you the truth, I expect a small message there from my goddess imperial. And I am not so much in love with my new bird in the bush, as to let t'other fly out of my hand for her.

Cler. And pray, sir, what name does your goddess imperial, as you call her, know you by?

Atall. Oh, sir, with her I pass for a man of arms, and am called colonel Standfast; with my new face, John Freeman, of Flatland Hall, esq.—But time flies: I must leave you.

Cler. Well, dear Atall, I'm yours—Good luck to you. [*Exit Atall.*—What a happy fellow is this, that owes his success with the women purely to his inconstancy? Here comes another too, almost as happy as he, a fellow that's wise enough to be but half in love, and make his whole life a studied idleness.

Enter CARELESS.

So, Careless! you're constant, I see, to your morning's saunter.—Well, how stand matters?—I hear strange things of thee; that, after having railed at marriage all thy life, thou hast resolved to fall into the noose at last.

Care. I don't see any great terror in the noose, as you call it, when a man's weary of liberty: the liberty of playing the fool, when one's turned of thirty, is not of much value.

Cler. Hey-day! Then you begin to have nothing in your head now, but settlements, children, and the main chance?

Care. Even so, faith; but in hopes to come at 'em

too, I am forced very often to make my way through pills, elixirs, boluses, ptisans, and gallipots.

Cler. What, is your mistress an apothecary's widow?

Care. No, but she is an apothecary's shop, and keeps as many drugs in her bed-chamber: she has her physic for every hour of the day and night—for 'tis vulgar, she says, to be a moment in rude and perfect health. Her bed lined with poppies; the black boys at the feet, that the healthy employ to bear flowers in their arms, she loads with diascordium, and other sleepy potions: her sweet bags, instead of the common and offensive smells of musk and amber, breathe nothing but the more modish and salubrious scents of hartshorn, rue, and assafœtida.

Cler. Why, at this rate, she's only fit to be the consort of Hippocrates. But, pray, what other charms has this extraordinary lady?

Care. She has one, Tom, that a man may relish without being so deep a physician.

Cler. What's that?

Care. Why, five thousand pounds a year.

Cler. No vulgar beauty, I confess, sir. But canst thou for any consideration throw thyself into this hospital, this box of physic, and lie like leaf-gold upon a pill?

Care. O, dear sir, this is not half the evil; her humour is as fantastic as her diet; nothing that is English must come near her; all her delight is in foreign impertinencies: her rooms are all of Japan or Persia, her dress Indian, and her equipage are all monsters: the coachman came over with his horses, both from Russia; Flanders are too common: the rest of her trim are a motley crowd of blacks, tawny, olives, feulamots, and pale blues: in short, she's for any thing that comes from beyond sea; her greatest monsters are those of her own country; and she's in love with nothing o' this side the line, but the apothecaries.

Cler. Apothecaries quotha! why your fine lady, for aught I see, is a perfect dose of folly and physic; in a

month's time she'll grow like an antimonial cup, and a kiss will be a d—d dose to you.

Care. But to prevent that, Tom, I design upon the wedding-day to break all her gallipots, kick the doctor down stairs, and force her, instead of physic, to take a hearty meal of a swinging rump of boiled beef and carrots; and so 'faith I have told her.

Cler. That's something familiar: are you so near man and wife?

Care. O nearer; for I sometimes plague her till she hates the very sight of me.—Well, Tom, but how stands thy own affair? Is Clarinda kind yet?

Cler. Faith I cannot say she's absolutely kind, but she's pretty near it: for she's grown so ridiculously ill-humoured to me of late, that if she keeps the same airs a week longer, I am in hopes to find as much ease from her folly, as my constancy would from her good nature.—But to be plain, I'm afraid I have some secret rival in the case; for women's vanity seldom gives them courage enough to use an old lover heartily ill, till they are first sure of a new one, that they intend to use better.

Care. What says sir Solomon? He is your friend, I presume?

Cler. Yes; at least I can make him so when I please: there is an odd five hundred pound in her fortune, that he has a great mind should stick to his fingers, when he pays in the rest on't; which I am afraid I must comply with, for she can't easily marry without his consent.—And yet she's so altered in her behaviour of late, that I scarce know what to do.—Pr'ythee take a turn and advise me.

Care. With all my heart.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. SIR SOLOMON SADLIFE'S *House.*

Enter SIR SOLOMON, and SUPPLE his Man.

Sir S. Supple, dost not thou perceive I put a great confidence in thee?—I trust thee with my bosom secrets.

Sup. Yes, sir.

Sir S. Ah, Supple! I begin to hate my wife—but be secret—

Sup. I'll never tell while I live, sir.

Sir S. Nay, then I'll trust thee further. Between thee and I, Supple, I have reason to believe my wife hates me too.

Sup. Ah, dear sir! I doubt that's no secret; for, to say the truth, my lady's bitter, young, and gamesome.

Sir S. But can she have the impudence, think'st thou, to make a cuckold of a knight? one that was dubbed by the royal sword?

Sup. Alas, sir, I warrant she has the courage of a countess; if she's once provoked, she cares not what she does in her passion; if you were ten times a knight she'd give you dub for dub, sir.

Sir S. Ah! Supple, when her blood's up, I confess she's the devil. But suppose she should resolve to give me a sample of her sex, and make me a cuckold in cool blood?

Sup. Why, if she should, sir, don't take it so to heart; cuckolds are no such monsters now-a-days: in the city, you know, sir, it's so many honest men's fortune, that no body minds it there; and at this end of the town, a cuckold has as much respect as his wife, for aught I see; for gentlemen don't know but it may be their own case another day, and so people are willing to do as they would be done by.

Sir S. And yet I do not think but my spouse is honest—and think she is not—would I were satisfied.

Sup. 'Troth, sir, I don't know what to think; but in my conscience I believe good looking after her can do her no harm.

Sir S. Right, Supple; and in order to it, I'll first demolish her visiting days. For how do I know but they may be so many private clubs for cuckoldom?

Sup. Ah, sir! your worship knows I was always against your coming to this end of the town.

Sir S. Thou wert indeed, my honest Supple: but woman! fair and faithless woman, wormed and worked

me to her wishes;—like foud Mark Antony, I let my empire moulder from my hands, and gave up all for love.—I must have a young wife, with a murrain to me—I hate her too—and yet the devil on't is, I'm still jealous of her.—Stay! let me reckon up all the fashionable virtues she has that can make a man happy. In the first place—I think her very ugly.

Sup. Ah, that's because you are married to her, sir.

Sir S. As for her expenses, no arithmetic can reach them; she's always longing for something dear and useless. To sum up all would run me mad.—The only way to put a stop to her career, must be to put off my coach, turn away her chairmen, bar up the doors, keep out all visitors; and then she'll be less expensive.

Sup. Ay, sir; for few women think it worth their while to dress for their husbands.

Sir S. Then we sha'n't be plagued with my old lady 'Tittle-tattle's howd'ye's in a morning, nor my lady Dainty's spleen, or the sudden indisposition of that grim beast, her horrible Dutch pug.

Sup. No, sir, nor the impertuence of that great fat creature, my lady Swill-tea.

Sir S. And her squinting daughter.—No, Supple, after this night, nothing in petticoats shall come within ten yards of my doors.

Sup. Nor in breeches neither.

Sir S. Only Mr. Clerimont; for I expect him to sign articles with me for the five hundred pounds he is to give me, for that ungovernable jade, my niece Clarinda.—But now to my own affairs. I'll step into the park, and see if I can meet with my hopeful spouse there. I warrant engaged in some inuocent freedom, as she calls it, as walking in a mask, to laugh at the impertuencies of fops that don't know her; but 'tis more likely, I'm afraid, a plot to intrigue with those that do. Oh, how many torments lie in the small circle of a wedding-ring.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I. CLARINDA'S Apartment.

Enter CLARINDA and SYLVIA.

Clar. Ha, ha! poor Sylvia!

Syl. Nay, pr'ythee, don't laugh at me. There's no accounting for inclination: for if there were, you know, why should it be a greater folly in me, to fall in love with a man I never saw but once in my life, than it is in you to resist an honest gentleman, whose fidelity has deserved your heart an hundred times over.

Clar. Ah, but an utter stranger, cousin, and one that, for aught you know, may be no gentleman.

Syl. That's impossible: his conversation could not be counterfeit. An elevated wit, and good breeding, have a natural lustre that's inimitable. Beside, he saved my life at the hazard of his own; so that part of what I give him, is but gratitude.

Clar. But suppose now he is married, and has three or four children?

Syl. Pshaw! pr'ythee don't tease me with so many

ill-natured objections. I tell you he is not married! I am sure he is not: for I never saw a face look more in humour in my life. Beside, he told me himself, he was a country gentleman, just come to town upon business: and I am resolved to believe him.

Clar. Well, well; I'll suppose you both as fit for one another as a couple of tallies. But, still, my dear, you know there's a surly old father's command against you: he is in articles to marry you to another: and though I know love is a notable contriver, I can't see how you'll get over that difficulty.

Syl. 'Tis a terrible one, I own; but, with a little of your assistance, dear Clarinda, I am still in hopes to bring it to an even wager, I prove as wise as my father.

Clar. Nay, you may be sure of me; you may see by the management of my own amours, I have so natural a compassion for disobedience, I sha'n't be able to refuse you any thing in distress.—There's my hand; tell me how I can serve you.

Syl. Why thus:—because I would not wholly discover myself to him at once, I have sent him a note to visit me here, as if these lodgings were my own.

Clar. Hither! to my lodging! 'Twas well I sent colonel Standfast word I should not be at home. [*Aside.*

Syl. I hope you'll pardon my freedom, since one end of my taking it too, was to have your opinion of him before I engage any farther.

Clar. Oh, it needs no apology; any thing of mine is at your service.—I am only afraid my troublesome lover, Mr. Clerimont, should happen to see him, who is of late so impertinently jealous of a rival, though from what cause I know not—not but I lie too. [*Aside.*] I say, should he see him, your country gentleman would be in danger, I can tell you.

Syl. Oh, there's no fear of that; for I have ordered him to be brought in the back way. When I have talked with him a little alone, I'll find an occasion to leave him with you; and then we'll compare our opinions of him.

Enter a Servant to CLARINDA.

Serv. Madam, my lady Sadlife. [Exit.

Syl. Pshaw! she here!

Clar. Don't be uneasy; she sha'n't disturb you: I'll take care of her.

Enter LADY SADLIFE.

Lady S. Oh, my dears, you have lost the sweetest morning, sure, that ever peeped out of the firmament. The park never was in such perfection.

Clar. 'Tis always so when your ladyship's there.

Lady S. 'Tis never so without my dear Clarinda.

Syl. How civilly we women hate one another! [*Aside.*] Was there a good deal of company, madam?

Lady S. Abundance! and the best I have seen this season: the very hour, you know, when the mob are violently hungry. Oh, the air was so inspiring! so amorous! And to complete the pleasure, I was attacked in conversation by the most charming, modest, agreeably insinuating young fellow, sure, that ever woman played the fool with.

Clar. Who was it?

Lady S. Nay, heaven knows; his face is as entirely new as his conversation. What wretches our young fellows are to him!

Syl. What sort of a person?

Lady S. Tall, straight, well-limbed, walked firm, and a look as cheerful as a May-day morning.

Syl. The picture's very like: pray heaven it is not my gentleman's!

Clar. I wish this don't prove my colonel. [*Aside.*

Syl. How came you to part with him so soon? [*Aside.*

Lady S. Oh, name it not! that eternal damper of all pleasure, my husband, sir Solomon, came into the mall in the very crisis of our conversation.—I saw him at a distance, and complained that the air grew tainted, that I was sick o'the sudden; and left him in such abruptness and confusion, as if he had been himself my husband.

Clar. A melancholy disappointment, indeed!

Lady S. Oh, 'tis a husband's nature to give them.

Enter a Servant, and whispers SYLVIA.

Syl. Desire him to walk in.—Cousin, you'll be at hand.

Clar. In the next room.—Come, madam, Sylvia has a little business: I'll show you some of the sweetest, prettiest figured china.

Lady S. My dear, I wait on you.

[Exeunt Lady Sadlife and Clarinda.]

Enter ATALL, as MR. FREEMAN.

Syl. You find, sir, I have kept my word in seeing you; 'tis all you yet have asked of me; and when I know 'tis in my power to be more obliging, there's nothing you can command in honour I shall refuse you.

Atall. This generous offer, madam, is so high an obligation, that it were almost mean in me to ask a further favour. But 'tis a lover's merit to be a miser in his wishes, and grasp at all occasions to enrich them. I own I feel your charms too sensibly prevail, but dare not give a loose to my ambitious thoughts, 'till I have passed one dreadful doubt that shakes them.

Syl. If 'tis in my power to clear it, ask me freely.

Atall. I tremble at the trial; and yet, methinks, my fears are vain: but yet, to kill or cure them once for ever, be just and tell me—are you married?

Syl. If that can make you easy, no.

Atall. 'Tis ease indeed—nor are you promised, nor your heart engaged?

Syl. That's hard to tell you: but, to be just, I own my father has engaged my person to one I never saw; and my heart I fear is inclining to one he never saw.

Atall. Oh, yet be merciful, and ease my doubt; tell me the happy man that has deserved so exquisite a blessing.

Syl. That, sir, requires some pause: first tell me why you're so inquisitive, without letting me know the condition of your own heart.

Atall. In every circumstance my heart's the same with yours; 'tis promised to one I never saw, by a commanding father, who, by my firm hopes of happiness, I am resolved to disobey, unless your cruelty prevents it.

Syl. But my disobedience would beggar me.

Atall. Banish that fear. I'm heir to a fortune will support you like yourself.—May I not know your family.

Syl. Yet you must not.

Atall. Why that nicety? Is not it in my power to inquire whose house this is when I am gone?

Syl. And be never the wiser. These lodgings are a friend's, and are only borrowed on this occasion: but to save you the trouble of any further needless questions, I will make you one proposal. I have a young lady here within, who is the only confidant of my engagements to you: on her opinion I rely; nor can you take it ill, if I take no further steps without it: 'twould be miserable indeed should we both meet beggars. I own your actions and appearance merit all you can desire; let her be as well satisfied of your pretensions and condition, and you shall find it sha'n't be a little fortune shall make me ungrateful.

Atall. So generous an offer exceeds my hopes.

Syl. Who's there?

Enter a Servant.

Desire my cousin Clarinda to walk in.

Atall. Ha! Clarinda! If it should be my Clarinda now, I'm in a sweet condition—by all that's terrible the very she!—this was finely contrived of fortune.

[*Aside.*

Enter CLARINDA.

Clar. Defend me! Colonel Standfast!—She has certainly discovered my affairs with him, and has a mind to insult me by an affected resignation of her pretensions to him.—I'll disappoint her—I won't know him.

[*Aside.*

Syl. Cousin, pray, come forward; this is the gentle-

man I am so much obliged to—sir, this lady is a relation of mine, and the person we were speaking of.

Atall. I shall be proud to be better known among any of your friends. [Salutes her.]

Clar. Sob! he takes the hint, I see, and seems not to know me neither: I know not what to think—I am confounded!—I hate both him and her.—How unconcerned he looks! Confusion! he addresses her before my face. [Aside.]

Lady S. [Peeping in] What do I see? The pleasant young fellow that talked with me in the park just now! This is the luckiest accident! I must know a little more of him. [Retires.]

Syl. Cousin, and Mr. Freeman, I think I need not make any apology—you both know the occasion of my leaving you together—in a quarter of an hour I'll wait on you again. [Exit Sylvia.]

Atall. So! I'm in a hopeful way now, faith;—but buff's the word: I'll stand it. [Aside.]

Clar. Mr. Freeman! So, my gentleman has changed his name too! How harmless he looks!—I have my senses sure, and yet the demureness of that face looks as if he had a mind to persuade me out of them. I could find in my heart to humour his assurance, and see how far he'll carry it. [Aside] Will not you please to sit, sir? [They sit.]

Atall. What the devil can this mean?—Sure she has a mind to counterface me, and not know me too—With all my heart: if her ladyship won't know me, I'm sure 'tis not my business at this time to know her. [Aside.]

Clar. Certainly that face is cannon proof. [Aside.]

Atall. Now for a formal speech, as if I had never seen her in my life before. [Aside] Madam—a-hem! Madam—l—a-hem!

Clar. Curse of that steady face. [Aside.]

Atall. I say, madam, since I am an utter stranger to you, I am afraid it will be very difficult for me to offer you more arguments than one to do me a friendship with your cousin; but if you are, as she seems to own

you, her real friend, I presume you can't give her a better proof of your being so, than pleading the cause of a sincere and humble lover, whose tender wishes never can propose to taste of peace in life without her.

Clar. Umph! I'm choked. [*Aside.*

Atall. She gave me hopes, that when I had satisfied you of my birth and fortune, you would do me the honour to let me know her name and family.

Clar. Sir, I must own you are the most perfect master of your art, that ever entered the lists of assurance.

Atall. Madam!

Clar. And I don't doubt but you'll find it a much easier task to impose upon my cousin, than me.

Atall. Impose, madam! I should be sorry any thing I have said could disoblige you into such hard thoughts of me. Sure, madam, you are under some misinformation.

Clar. I was indeed, but now my eyes are open; for, 'till this minute, I never knew that the gay colonel Standfast was the demure Mr. Freeman.

Atall. Colonel Standfast! This is extremely dark, madam.

Clar. This jest is tedious, sir——impudence grows dull, when 'tis so very extravagant.

Atall. Madam, I am a gentleman—but not yet wise enough, I find, to account for the humours of a fine lady.

Clar. Troth, sir, on second thoughts I begin to be a little better reconciled to your assurance; 'tis in some sort modesty to deny yourself; for to own your perjuries to my face, had been an insolence transcendently provoking.

Atall. Really, madam, my not being able to apprehend one word of all this, is a great inconvenience to my affair with your cousin: but if you will first do me the honour to make me acquainted with her name and family, I don't much care if I do take a little pains afterwards to come to a right understanding with you.

Clar. Come, come, since you see this assurance will

do you no good, you had better put on a simple look, and generously confess your frailties: the same slyness that deceived me first, will still find me woman enough to pardon you.

Atall. That bite won't do. [*Aside*] Sure, madam, you mistake me for some other person.

Clar. Insolent! audacious villain! I am not to have my senses then!

Atall. No.

[*Aside.*

Clar. And are you resolved to stand it to the last!

Atall. The last extremity.

[*Aside.*

Clar. Well, sir, since you are so much a stranger to colouel Standfast, I'll tell you where to find him, and tell him this from me; I hate him, scorn, detest, and loath him: I never meant him but at best for my diversion; and should he ever renew his dull addresses to me, I'll have him used as his vain insolence deserves. Now, sir, I have no more to say, and I desire you would leave the house immediately.

Atall. I would not willingly disoblige you, madam, but 'tis impossible to stir till I have seen your cousin, and cleared myself of these strange aspersions.

Clar. Don't flatter yourself, sir, with so vain a hope, for I must tell you, once for all, you've seen the last of her; and if you won't be gone, you'll oblige me to have you forced away.

Atall. I'll be even with you. [*Aside*] Well, madam, since I find nothing can prevail upon your cruelty, I'll take my leave: but as you hope for justice on the man that wrongs you, at least be faithful to your lovely friend. And when you have named to her my utmost guilt, yet paint my passion as it is, sincere. Tell her what tortures I endured in this severe exclusion from her sight, that till my innocence is clear to her, and she again receives me into mercy,

A madman's frenzy's heav'n to what I feel;

The wounds you give 'tis she alone can heal.

{*Exit.*

Clar. Most abandoned impudence! And yet I know not which vexes me most, his out-facing my senses, or

his insolent owning his passion for my cousin to my face: 'tis impossible she could put him upon this, it must be all his own; but be it as it will, by all that's woman I'll have revenge. [Exit.

Re-enter ATALL and LADY SADIIFE at the other Side.

Atall. Hey-day! is there no way down stairs here? Death! I can't find my way out! This is the oddest house——

Lady S. Here he is—I'll venture to pass by him.

[*Aside.*

Atall. Pray, madam, which is the nearest way out?

Lady S. Sir, out——a——

Atall. Oh, my stars! is't you, madam? This is fortunate indeed—I beg you'll tell me, do you live here, madam?

Lady S. Not very far off, sir: but this is no place to talk with you alone—indeed I must beg your pardon.

Atall. By all those kindling charms that fire my soul, no consequence on earth shall make me quit my hold, till you've given me some kind assurance that I shall see you again, and speedily; 'egad I'll have one out of the family at least.

Lady S. Oh, good, here's company!

Atall. Oh, do not rack me with delays, but quick, before this dear short-lived opportunity's lost, inform me where you live, or kill me: to part with this soft white hand is ten thousand daggers to my heart.

[*Kissing it eagerly.*

Lady S. Oh, lud! I am going home this minute; and if you should offer to dog my chair, I protest I——was ever such usage——lord——sure! Oh—follow me down then. [Exit.

Re-enter CLARINDA and SYLVIA.

Syl. Ha, ha, ha!

Clar. Nay, you may laugh, madam, but what I tell you is true.

Syl. Ha, ha, ha!

Clar. You don't believe then?

Syl. I do believe, that when some women are inclined to like a man, nothing more palpably discovers it, than their railing at him; ha, ha!—Your pardon, cousin; you know you laughed at me just now upon the same occasion.

Clar. The occasion's quite different, madam; I hate him. And, once more I tell you, he's a villain; you're imposed on. He's a colonel of foot, his regiment's now in Spain, and his name's Standfast.

Syl. But pray, good cousin, whence had you this intelligence of him?

Clar. From the same place that you had your false account madam, his own mouth.

Syl. What was his business with you?

Clar. Much about the same, as his business with you—love.

Syl. Love! to you!

Clar. Me, madam! Lord, what am I? Old, or a monster! Is it so prodigious that a man should like me?

Syl. No! but I'm amazed to think, if he had liked you, he should leave you so soon, for me!

Clar. For you! leave me for you! No, madam, I did not tell you that neither! ha, ha!

Syl. No! What made you so violently angry with him then? Indeed, cousin, you had better take some other fairer way; this artifice is much too weak to make me break with him. But, however, to let you see I can be still a friend; prove him to be what you say he is, and my engagements with him shall soon be over.

Clar. Look you, madam, not but I slight the tenderest of his addresses; but to convince you that my vanity was not mistaken in him, I'll write to him by the name of colonel Standfast, and do you the same by that of Freeman; and let's each appoint him to meet us at my lady Sadlife's at the same time: if these appear two different men, I think our dispute's easily at an end; if but one, and he does not own all I have said of him to your face, I'll make you a very humble curtesy, and beg your pardon.

Syl. And if he does own it, I'll make your ladyship the same reverence, and beg yours.

Enter CLERIMONT.

Clar. Pshaw! he here!

Cler. I am glad to find you in such good company, madam.

Clar. One's seldom long in good company, sir.

Cler. I am sorry mine has been so troublesome of late; but I value your ease at too high a rate, to disturb it. [Going.]

Syl. Nay, Mr. Clerimont, upon my word you sha'n't stir. Hark you. [Whispers Clerimont] Your pardon, cousin.

Clar. I must not lose him neither. [Aside] Mr. Clerimont's way is, to be severe in his construction of people's meaning.

Syl. I'll write my letter, and be with you, cousin.

[Exit.]

Cler. It was always my principle, madam, to have an humble opinion of my merit; when a woman of sense frowns upon me, I ought to think I deserve it.

Clar. But to expect to be always received with a smile, I think, is having a very extraordinary opinion of one's merit.

Cler. We differ a little as to fact, madam: for these ten days past, I have had no distinction, but a severe reservedness. You did not use to be so sparing of your good-humour; and while I see you gay to all the world but me, I can't but be a little concerned at the change.

Clar. If he has discovered the colonel now, I'm undone! he could not meet him, sure.—I must humour him a little. [Aside] Men of your sincere temper, Mr. Clerimont, I own, don't always meet with the usage they deserve: but women are giddy things; and had we no errors to answer for, the use of good-nature in a lover would be lost. Vanity is our inherent weakness: you must not chide, if we are sometimes fonder of your passions than your prudence.

Cler. This friendly condescension makes me more your slave than ever. Oh, yet be kind, and tell me, have I been tortured with a groundless jealousy?

Clar. Let your own heart be judge—but don't take it ill if I leave you now—I have some earnest business with my cousin Sylvia: but to-night, at my lady Dainty's, I'll make you amends; you'll be there.

Cler. I need not promise you.

Clar. Your servant.—Ah, how easily is poor sincerity imposed on! Now for the colonel.

[Aside and exit.]

Cler. This unexpected change of humour more stirs my jealousy than all her late severity.—I'll watch her close;

For she that from a just reproach is kind,	}
Gives more suspicion of her guilty mind,	
And throws her smiles, like dust, to strike the lover blind.	
	<i>[Exit.]</i>

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I. LADY DAINTY'S Apartment: a Table, with Phials, Gallipots, Glasses, &c.

LADY DAINTY and SITUP her Woman.

Lady D. Situp! Situp!

Sit. Madam!

Lady D. Thou art strangely slow; I told thee the hartshorn; I have the vapours to that degree!

Sit. If your ladyship would take my advice you should e'en fling your physio out of the window; if you were not in perfect health in three days, I'd be bound to be sick for you.

Lady D. Peace, goody impertinence! I tell thee, no woman of quality is, or should be, in perfect health—Huh, huh! [*Coughs faintly*] To be always in health is as vulgar as to be always in humour, and would equally betray one's want of wit and breeding:—where are the fellows?

Sit. Here, madam.

Enter two Footmen.

Lady D. Cæsar!—run to my lady Roundsides; desire to know how she rested; and tell her the violence of my cold is abated: huh, huh! Pompey, step you to my lady Killchairman's; give my service; say, I have been so embarrassed with the spleen all this morning, that I am under the greatest uncertainty in the world, whether I shall be able to stir out or no—And, d'ye hear, desire to know how my lord does, and the new monkey. [*Exeunt Footmen.*]

Sit. In my conscience, these great ladies make themselves sick to make themselves business; and are well or ill, only in ceremony to one another. [*Aside.*]

Lady D. Where's t'other fellow?

Sit. He is not returned yet, madam.

Lady D. 'Tis indeed a strange lump, not fit to carry a disease to any body. I sent him t'other day to the duchess of Diet-drink with the cholick, and the brute put it into his own tramontane language, and called it the belly-ache.

Sit. I wish your ladyship had not occasion to send for any; for my part—

Lady D. Thy part!—pr'ythee, thou wert made of the rough masculine kind; 'tis betraying our sex not to be sickly and tender. All the families I visit have something derived to them from the elegant nice state of indisposition. You see, even in the men, a genteel, as it were, stagger, or twine of the bodies; as if they were not yet confirmed enough for the rough laborious exercise of walking; nay, even most of their diseases, you see, are not profaned by the crowd: the apoplexy, the gout, and vapours, are all peculiar to the nobility.—Huh, huh! and I could almost wish, that colds were only ours;—there's something in them so genteel, so agreeably disordering—huh, huh!

Sit. That, I hope, I shall never be fit for them—Your ladyship forgot the spleen.

Lady D. Oh! my dear spleen—I grudge that even to some of us.

Sit. I knew an ironmonger's wife, in the city, that was mightily troubled with it.

Lady D. Foh! What a creature hast thou named! An ironmonger's wife have the spleen! Thou mightest as well have said her husband was a fine gentleman—— Give me something.

Sit. Will your ladyship please to take any of the steel drops? or the bolus? or the electuary? or——

Lady D. This wench will smother me with questions——hub, hub! bring any of them——These healthy sluts are so boisterous, they split one's brains: I fancy myself in an inn while she talks to me; I must have some decayed person of quality about me; for the commons of England are the strangest creatures——hub, hub!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mrs. Sylvia, madam, is come to wait on your ladyship.

Lady D. Desire her to walk in; [*Exit Servant*] let the physio alone: I'll take a little of her company; she's mighty good for the spleen.

Enter SYLVIA.

Syl. Dear lady Dainty!

Lady D. My good creature, I'm overjoyed to see you——hub, hub!

Syl. I am sorry to see your ladyship wrapt up thus; I was in hopes to have had your company to the India house.

Lady D. If any thing could tempt me abroad, 'twould be that place, and such agreeable company; but how came you, dear Sylvia, to be reconciled to any thing in an Indian house? you used to have a most barbarous inclination for our own odious manufactures.

Syl. Nay, madam, I am only going to recruit my teatable: as to the rest of their trumpery, I am as much out of humour with it as ever.

Lady D. Well, thou art a pleasant creature, thy distaste is so diverting.

Syl. And your ladyship is so expensive, that really I am not able to come into it.

Lady D. Now it is to me prodigious! how some women can muddle away their money upon housewifery, children, books, and charities, when there are so many well-bred ways, and foreign curiosities, that more elegantly require it—I have every morning the rarities of all countries brought to me, and am in love with every new thing I see.—Are the people come yet, Situp?

Sit. They have been below, madam, this half hour.

Lady D. Dispose them in the parlour, and we'll be there presently. [Exit Situp.

Syl. How can your ladyship take such pleasure in being cheated with the baubles of other countries?

Lady D. Thou art a very infidel to all finery.

Syl. And you are a very bigot—

Lady D. A person of all reason, and no complaisance.

Syl. And your ladyship all complaisance, and no reason.

Lady D. Follow me, and be converted. [Exeunt.

Re-enter SITUP; a Woman with China Ware; an Indian Man with Screens, Tea, &c.; a Birdman with a Paroquet, Monkey, &c.

Sit. Come, come into this room.

Woman. I hope your ladyship's lady won't be long in coming.

Sit. I don't care if she never comes to you.—It seems you trade with the ladies for old clothes, and give them china for their gowns and petticoats; I'm like to have a fine time on't with such creatures as you indeed!

Woman. Alas, madam, I'm but a poor woman, and am forced to do any thing to live: will your ladyship be pleased to accept of a piece of china?

Sit. Pnh! no;—I don't care.—Though I must needs say you look like an honest woman. [Looking on it.

Woman. Thank you, good madam.

Sit. Our places are like to come to a fine pass indeed, if our ladies must buy their china with our perquisites: at this rate, my lady sha'n't have an old fan, or a glove! but—

Woman. Pray, madam, take it.

Sit. No, not I; I won't have it, especially without a saucer to't. Here, take it again.

Woman. Indeed you shall accept of it.

Sit. Not I, truly—come, give it me, give it me;—here's my lady.

Re-enter LADY DAINTY and SYLVIA.

Lady D. Well, my dear, is not this a pretty sight now?

Syl. It's better than so many doctors and apothecaries, indeed.

Lady D. All trades must live, you know; and those no more than these could subsist, if the world were all wise, or healthy.

Syl. I am afraid our real diseases are but few to our imaginary, and doctors get more by the sound than the sickly.

Lady D. My dear, you are allowed to say any thing—but now I must talk with the people.—Have you got any thing new there?

Woman, Indian, and Birdm. Yes, an't please your ladyship.

Lady D. One at once—

Birdm. I have brought your ladyship the finest monkey—

Syl. What a filthy thing it is!

Lady D. Now I think he looks very humorous and agreeable—I vow, in a white perriwig, he might do mischief. Could he but talk and take snuff, there's ne'er a fop in town would go beyond him.

Syl. Most fops would go further if they did not speak; but talking, indeed, makes them very often worse company than monkies.

Lady D. Thou pretty little picture of man!—How very Indian he looks!—I could kiss the dear creature!

Syl. Ah, don't touch him! he'll bite!

Birdm. No, madam, he is the tamest you ever saw, and the least mischievous.

Lady D. Then take him away, I won't have him; for mischief is the wit of a monkey; and I would not give a farthing for one that would not break me three or four pounds worth of china in a morning. Oh, I am in love with these Indian figures!—Do but observe what an innocent natural simplicity there is in all the actions of them.

Woman. These are pagods, madam, that the Indians worship.

Lady D. So far I am an Indian.

Syl. Now to me they are all monsters.

Lady D. Profane creature!

Woman. Is your ladyship for a piece of right Flanders lace?

Lady D. Um—no; I don't care for it, now it is not prohibited.

Indian. Will your ladyship be pleased to have a pound of fine tea?

Lady D. What, filthily, odious bohea, I suppose?

Indian. No, madam; right Kappakawawa.

Lady D. Well, there's something in the very sound of that name, that makes it irresistible.—What is it a pound?

Indian. But six guineas, madam.

Lady D. How infinitely cheap! I'll buy it all—Situp, take the man in and pay him, and let the rest call again to-morrow.

Omnes. Bless your ladyship.

[*Exeunt Situp, Woman, Indian, and Birdman.*]

Lady D. Lord, how feverish I am!—the least motion does so disorder me—do but feel me.

Syl. No, really, I think you are in very good temper.

Lady D. Burning, indeed, child.

Enter Servant, Doctor, and Apothecary.

Serv. Madam, here's doctor Bolus, and the apothecary. [Exit.

Lady D. Oh, doctor, I'm glad you are come; one is not sure of a moment's life without you.

Dr. B. How did your ladyship rest, madam?

[Feels her Pulse.

Lady D. Never worse, indeed, doctor: I once fell into a little slumber, indeed, but then was disturbed by the most odious, frightful dream, that if the fright had not wakened me, I had certainly perished in my sleep with the apprehension.

Dr. B. A certain sign of a disordered brain, madam; but I'll order something that shall compose your ladyship.

Lady D. Mr. Rhubarb, I must quarrel with you. You don't disguise your medicines enough; they taste all physic.

Rhu. To alter it more might offend the operation, madam.

Lady D. I don't care what is offended, so my taste is not.

Dr. B. Hark you, Mr. Rhubarb, withdraw the medicine, rather than to make it pleasant. I'll find a reason for the want of its operation. [Apart.

Rhu. But, sir, if we don't look about us, she'll grow well upon our hands.

Dr. B. Never fear that; she's too much a woman of quality to dare to be well without her doctor's opinion.

Rhu. Sir, we have drained the whole catalogue of diseases already; there's not another left to put in her head.

Dr. B. Then I'll make her go them over again.

Enter CARELESS.

Care. So, here's the old levee, doctor and apothecary in close consultation! Now will I demolish the quack and his medicines before her face. [Aside] Mr. Rhubarb, your servant. Pray what have you got in your hand there?

Rhu. Only a julep and composing draught for my lady, sir.

Care. Have you so, sir? Pray, let me see. I'll prescribe to-day. Doctor, you may go; the lady shall take no physic at present but me.

Dr. B. Sir!

Care. Nay, if you won't believe me!

[*Breaks the Phials.*

Lady D. Ah! [*Frighted, and leaning upon Sylvia.*

Dr. B. Come away, Mr. Rhu barb; he'll certainly make her ill, and then she'll send for us again.

[*Exit, with Apothecary.*

Care. You see, madam, what pains I take to come into your favour.

Lady D. You take a very preposterous way, I can tell you, sir.

Care. I can't tell how I succeed, but I am sure I endeavour right; for I study every morning new impertinence to entertain you: for since I find nothing but dogs, doctors, and monkeys are your favourites, it is very hard if your ladyship won't admit me as one of the number.

Lady D. When I find you of an equal merit with my monkey, you shall be in the same state of favour. I confess, as a proof of your wit, you have done me as much mischief here. But you have not half pug's judgment, nor his spirit; for the creature will do a world of pleasant things, without caring whether one likes them or not.

Care. Why, truly, madam, the little gentleman, my rival, I believe, is much in the right on't: and, if you observe, I have taken as much pains of late to disoblige, as to please you.

Lady D. You succeed better in one than t'other, I can tell you, sir.

Care. I am glad on't; for if you had not me now and then to plague you, what would you do for a pretence to be chagrined, to faint, have the spleen, the vapours, and all those modish disorders that so nicely distinguish a woman of quality?

Lady D. I am perfectly confounded! Certainly there are some people too impudent for our resentment.

Care. Modesty's a starving virtue, madam, an old threadbare fashion of the last age; and would sit as oddly on a lover now, as a picked beard and mustachios.

Lady D. Most astonishing!

Care. I have tried sighing and looking silly a great while, but 'twould not do; nay, had you had as little wit as good-nature, should have proceeded to dance and sing. Tell me but how, what face or form can worship you, and behold your votary.

Lady D. Not, sir, as the Persians do the sun, with your face towards me. The best proof you can give me of your horrid devotion, is never to see me more. Come, my dear. [Exit.]

Syl. I'm amazed so much assurance should not succeed. [Exit.]

Care. All this sha'n't make me out of love with my virtue. Impudence has ever been a successful quality; and 'twould be hard, indeed, if I should be the first that did not thrive by it. [Exit.]

SCENE II. CLERIMONT'S Lodgings.

Enter ATALL, and FINDER his Man.

Atall. You are sure you know the house again?

Fin. Ah, as well as I do the upper gallery, sir.—'Tis sir Solomon Sadlife's, at the two glass lanterns, within three doors of my lord Duke's.

Atall. Very well, sir—then take this letter, inquire for my lady Sadlife's woman, and stay for an answer.

Fin. Yes, sir. [Exit.]

Atall. Well, I find 'tis as ridiculous to propose pleasure in love without variety of mistresses, as to pretend to be a keen sportsman without a good stable of horses.

Re-Enter FINDER.

Fin. Sir, here are two letters for you.

Atall. Who brought them?

Fin. A couple of footmen, and they both desire an answer.

Atall. Bid them stay, and do you make haste where I ordered you.

Fin. Yes, sir.

[*Exit.*

Atall. To Col. Standfast—that's Clarinda's hand—To Mr. Freeman—that must be my incognita. Ah, I have most mind to open this first; but if t'other malicious creature should have perverted her growing inclination to me, 'twould put my whole frame in a trembling—Hold, I'll guess my fate by degrees—this may give me a glimpse of it. [*Reads Clarinda's Letter*] Um—um—um—Ha! To meet her at my lady Sadlife's at seven o'clock to-night, and take no manner of notice of my late disowning myself to her—Something's at the bottom of all this. Now to solve the riddle. [*Reads the other Letter*] *My cousin Clarinda has told some things of you that very much alarm me; but I am willing to suspend my belief of them till I see you, which I desire may be at my lady Sadlife's at seven this evening.—The devil! the same place!—As you value the real friendship of your*

INCOGNITA.

So, now the riddle's out—the rival queens are fairly come to a reference, and one or both of them I must lose, that's positive. Hard!

Enter CLERIMONT.

Hard fortune! Now, poor impudence, what will become of thee? Oh, Clerimont, such a complication of adventures since I saw thee! such sweet hopes, fears, and unaccountable difficulties, sure never poor dog was surrounded with.

Cler. Oh, you are an industrious person! you'll get over them. But, pray, let's hear.

Atall. To begin, then, in the climax of my misfortunes:—In the first place, the private lodgings that my incognita appointed to receive me in, prove to be the individual habitation of my other mistress, whom (to complete the blunder of my ill luck) she civilly in-

roduced in person, to recommend me to her better acquaintance.

Cler. Ha, ha! Death! how could you stand them both together?

Atall. The old way—buff—I stuck like a burr to my name of Freeman, addressed my incognita before the other's face, and, with a most unmoved good-breeding, harmlessly faced her down I had never seen her in my life before.

Cler. The prettiest modesty I ever heard of! Well, but how did they discover you at last?

Atall. Why, faith, the matter's yet in suspense; and I find, by both their letters, that they don't yet well know what to think: but, to go on with my luck, you must know, they have since both appointed me, by several names, to meet them, at one and the same place, at seven o'clock this evening.

Cler. Ah!

Atall. And, lastly, to crown my fortune (as if the devil himself most triumphantly rode a-straddle upon my ruin), the fatal place of their appointment happens to be the very house of a third lady, with whom I made an acquaintance since morning, and had just before sent word I would visit near the same hour this evening.

Cler. Oh, murder! Poor Atall, thou art really fallen under the last degree of compassion.

Atall. And yet, with a little of thy assistance, in the middle of their small-shot, I don't still despair of holding my head above water.

Cler. Death! but you can't meet them both; you must lose one of them, unless you can split yourself.

Atall. Pr'ythee, don't suspect my courage or my modesty; for I'm resolved to go on, if you will stand by me.

Cler. Faith, my very curiosity would make me do that. But what can I do?

Atall. You must appear for me, upon occasion, in person.

Cler. With all my heart. What else?

Atall. I shall want a king's messenger in my interest, or rather one that can personate one.

Cler. That's easily found—But what to do?

Atall. Come along, and I'll tell you; for first I must answer their letters.

Cler. Thou art an original, faith. [Exit.

SCENE III. SIR SOLOMON'S House.

Enter SIR SOLOMON, *leading* LADY SADLIFE, and WISHWELL, *her* Woman.

Sir S. There, madam, let me have no more of these airings. No good, I am sure, can keep a woman five or six hours abroad in a morning.

Lady S. You deny me all the innocent freedoms of life.

Sir S. Ha! you have the modish cant of this end of the town, I see; intriguing, gaming, gadding, and party-quarries, with a plague to them, are innocent freedoms, forsooth!

Lady S. I don't know what you mean; I'm sure I have not one acquaintance in the world that does an ill thing.

Sir S. They must be better looked after than your ladyship then; but I'll mend my hands as fast as I can. Do you look to your reputation henceforward, and I'll take care of your person.

Lady S. You wrong my virtue with these unjust suspicions.

Sir S. Ay, it's no matter for that; better I wrong it than you. I'll secure my doors for this day at least.

[Exit.

Lady S. Oh, Wishwell! what shall I do?

Wish. What's the matter, madam?

Lady S. I expect a letter from a gentleman every minute; and if it should fall into sir Solomon's hands, I'm ruined past redemption.

Wish. He won't suspect it, madam, sure, if they are directed to me, as they used to be.

Lady S. But his jealousy's grown so violent of late,

there's no trusting to it now. If he meets it, I shall be locked up for ever.

Wish. Oh, dear madam! I vow your ladyship frights me—Why, he'll kill me for keeping counsel.

Lady S. Run to the window, quick, and watch the messenger. [*Exit Wishwell*] Ah, there's my ruin near!—I feel it. [*A knocking at the Door*] What shall I do? Be very insolent, or very humble, and cry?—I have known some women, upon these occasions, out-strut their husbands' jealousy, and make them ask pardon for finding them out. Oh, lud, here he comes!—I can't do't; my courage fails me—I must e'en stick to my handkerchief, and trust to nature.

Re-enter SIR SOLOMON, taking a Letter from FINDER.

Sir S. Sir, I shall make bold to read this letter; and if you have a mind to save your bones, there's your way out.

Fin. Oh, terrible! I sha'n't have a whole one in my skin, when I come home to my master. [*Exit.*

Lady S. I'm lost for ever! [*Aside.*

Sir S. [*Reads*] Pardon, most divine creature, the impatience of my heart,—Very well! these are her innocent freedoms! Ah, cockatrice!—which languishes for an opportunity to convince you of its sincerity;—Oh, the tender son of a whore!—which nothing could relieve, but the sweet hope of seeing you this evening.—Poor lady, whose virtue I have wronged with unjust suspicions! [*Aside.*

Lady S. I'm ready to sink with apprehension. [*Aside.*

Sir S. [*Reads*] To-night, at seven, expect your dying Strephon.—Die, and be damn'd; for I'll remove your comforter, by cutting her throat. I could find in my heart to ram his impudent letter into her windpipe—Ha! what's this!—To Mrs. Wishwell, my lady Sad-life's woman.—Ad, I'm glad of it, with all my heart! What a happy thing it is to have one's jealousy disappointed!—Now have I been cursing my poor wife for the mistaken wickedness of that trollop. 'Tis well I kept my thoughts to myself; for the virtue of a wife,

when wrongfully accused, is most unmercifully insolent. Come, I'll do a great thing; I'll kiss her, and make her amends. [*Aside*] What's the matter, my dear? Has any thing frightened you?

Lady S. Nothing but your hard usage.

Sir S. Come, come, dry thy tears; it shall be so no more. But, hark ye, I have made a discovery here—Your Wishwell, I'm afraid, is a slut; she has an intrigue.

Lady S. An intrigue! Heavens, in our family!

Sir S. Read there—I wish she be honest.

Lady S. How!—If there be the least ground to think it, sir Solomon, positively she sha'n't stay a minute in the house—Impudent creature!—have an affair with a man!

Sir S. But hold, my dear; don't let your virtue censure too severely neither.

Lady S. I shudder at the thoughts of her.

Sir S. Patience, I say—How do we know but his courtship may be honourable?

Lady S. That, indeed, requires some pause.

Wish. [*Peeping in*] So, all's safe, I see—He thinks the letter's to me—Oh, good madam! that letter was to me, the fellow says. I wonder, sir, how you could serve one so! If my sweetheart should hear you had opened it, I know he would not have me, so he would not.

Sir S. Never fear that; for if he is in love with you, he's too much a fool to value being laughed at.

Lady S. If it be yours, here, take your stuff; and next time, bid him take better care, than to send his letter so publicly.

Wish. Yes, madam. But now your ladyship has read it, I'd fain beg the honour of sir Solomon to answer it for me; for I can't write.

Lady S. Not write!

Sir S. Nay, he thinks she's above that, I suppose; for he calls her divine creature—A pretty piece of divinity, truly!—But, come, my dear; 'egad, we'll answer it for her. Here's paper—you shall do it.

Lady S. Sir Solomon! Lard, I won't write to fellows, not I.—I hope he won't take me at my word.

Sir S. Nay, you shall do it. Come, it will get her a good husband. [Aside.]

Wish. Ay, pray, good madam, do.

Sir S. Ah, how eager the jade is!

Lady S. I can't tell how to write to any body but you, my dear.

Sir S. Well, well, I'll dictate then. Come, begin.

Lady S. Lard, this is the oddest fancy!

Sir S. Come, come—Dear sir—(for we'll be as loving as he, for his ears.) [Sits to write.]

Wish. No, pray madam, begin, Dear honey, or, My dearest angel.

Lady S. Out, you fool! you must not be so fond—Dear sir, is very well. [Writes.]

Sir S. Ay, ay, so 'tis; but these young fillies are for setting out at the top of their speed. But, pr'ythee, *Wishwell*, what is thy lover; for the style of his letter may serve for a countess?

Wish. Sir, he's but a butler at present; but he's a good scollard, as you may see by his hand-writing; and in time may come to be a steward; and then we sha'n't be long without a coach, sir.

Lady S. Dear sir—What must I write next?

Sir S. Why—

[Musing.]

Wish. Hoping you are in good health, as I am at this present writing.

Sir S. You puppy, he'll laugh at you.

Wish. I'm sure my mother used to begin all her letters so.

Sir S. And thou art every inch of thee her own daughter, that I'll say for thee.

Lady S. Come, I have done it. [Reads] Dear sir, she must have very little merit that is insensible of yours.

Sir S. Very well, faith! Write all yourself.

Wish. Ay, good madam, do; that's better than mine.

But, pray, dear madam, let it end with, So I rest your dearest loving friend, till death us do part.

Lady S. This absurd slut will make me laugh out.

[*Aside.*

Sir S. But, hark you, hussy; suppose now you should be a little scornful and insolent, to show your breeding; and a little ill-natured in it, to show your wit.

Wish. Ay, sir, that is, if I designed him for my gallant; but since he is to be but my husband, I must be very good-natured and civil before I have him, and huff him, and show my wit, after.

Sir S. Here's a jade for you! [*Aside*] But why must you huff your husband, hussy?

Wish. Oh, sir, that's to give him a good opinion of my virtue! for you know, sir, a husband can't think one could be so very domineering, if one were not very honest.

Sir S. 'Sbud, this fool, on my conscience, speaks the sense of the whole sex!

[*Aside.*

Wish. Then, sir, I have been told, that a husband loves one the better, the more one hectors him; as a spaniel does, the more one beats him.

Sir S. Ha! thy husband will have a blessed time on't.

Lady S. So—I have done.

Wish. Oh, pray madam, read it!

Lady S. [*Reads*] Dear Sir—She must have very little merit that is insensible of yours; and while you continue to love, and tell me so, expect whatever you can hope from so much wit, and such unfeigned sincerity—At the hour you mention, you will be truly welcome to your passionate—

Wish. Oh, madam, it is not half kind enough! Pray, put in some more dears.

Sir S. Ay, ay, sweeten it well; let it be all syrup, with a pox to her.

Wish. Every line should have a dear sweet sir in it, so it should—he'll think I don't love him else.

Sir S. Poor moppet!

Lady S. No, no, 'tis better now—Well, what must be at the bottom, to answer Strephon?

Sir S. Pray, let her divine ladyship sign Abigail.

Wish. No, pray, madam, put down Lipsamintha.

Sir S. Lipsamiutha!

Lady S. No, come, I'll write Celia. Here, go in and seal it.

Sir S. Ay, come, I'll lend you a wafer, that he may'n't wait for your divinityship.

Wish. Pshaw! you always flout one so.

[*Exeunt Sir Solomon and Wishwell.*]

Lady S. So, this is luckily over—Well, I see, a woman should never be discouraged from coming off at the greatest plunge; for though I was half dead with the fright, yet, now I am a little recovered, I find—

That apprehension does the bliss endear;
The real danger's nothing to the fear. [Exit.]

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I. SIR SOLOMON'S.

*Enter LADY SADLIFE, ATALL, and WISHWELL;
with Lights.*

Lady S. This room, I think is pleasanter; if you please, we'll sit here, sir. Wishwell, shut the door, and take the key o'th' inside, and set chairs.

Wish. Yes, madam.

Lady S. Ah! sir, what a strange opinion you must have of me, for receiving your visits upon so slender an acquaintance.

Atall. I have a much stranger opinion, madam, of your ordering your servant to lock herself in with us.

Lady S. Oh, you would not have us wait upon ourselves!

Atall. Really, madam, I can't conceive that two lovers, alone, have much occasion for attendance.

[They sit.

Lady S. Lovers! how you talk! Can't people converse without that stuff?

Atall. Um—Yes, madam, people may; but without

a little of that stuff, conversation is generally very apt to be insipid.

Lady S. Pooh! why, we can say any thing without her hearing, you see. You are pretty hard to please, I find, sir. Some men, I believe, would think themselves well used in so free a reception as yours.

Atall. Ha! I see this is like to come to nothing this time; so I'll e'en put her out of humour, that I may get off in time to my incognita. [*Aside*] Really, madam, I can never think myself free, where my hand and my tongue are tied. [*Points to Wishwell.*

Lady S. Your conversation, I find, is very different from what it was, sir.

Atall. With submission, madam, I think it very proper for the place we are in. If you had sent for me only to sip tea, and be civil, with my hat under my arm, like a strange relation or so—

[*Sir Solomon knocks at the Door.*

Wish. Oh, heavens! my master, madam.

Sir S. [*Within*] Open the door there!

Lady S. What shall we do?

Atall. Nothing now, I'm sure.

Lady S. Open the door, and say the gentleman came to you.

Wish. Oh, lud, madam, I shall never be able to manage it at so short a warning!—We had better shut the gentleman into the closet, and say he came to nobody at all.

Lady S. In, in then, for mercy's sake, quickly, sir!

Atall. So—this is like to be a very pretty business! Oh, success and impudence, thou hast quite forsaken me!

[*Enters the Closet.*

Wish. Do you step into your bed-chamber, madam, and leave my master to me.

[*Exit Lady Sadlife. Wishwell opens the Door.*

Enter SIR SOLOMON.

Sir S. What's the reason, mistress, I am to be locked out of my wife's apartment?

Wish. My lady wanted me, sir, and I could not come any sooner.

Sir S. I'm sure I heard a man's voice. [*Aside*] Bid your lady come hither. [*Exit Wishwell*] He must be hereabouts—'tis so; all's out, all's over now: the devil has done his worst, and I am a cuckold in spite of my wisdom. 'Sbud! now an Italian would poison his wife for this, a Spaniard would stab her, and a Turk would cut off her head with a scymitar; but a poor dog of an English cuckold now can only squabble and call names—Hold, here she comes. I must smother my jealousy, that her guilt mayn't be upon its guard.

Re-enter LADY SADLIFE and WISHWELL.

Sir S. My dear, how do you do? Come hither, and kiss me.

Lady S. I did not expect you home so soon, my dear.

Sir S. Poor rogue! I don't believe you did. [*Aside*] *Wishwell*, go down; I have business with your lady.

Wish. Yes, sir. But I'll watch you; for I am afraid this good-humour has mischief at the bottom of it.

[*Aside. Retires.*]

Lady S. I scarce know whether he's jealous or not. [*Aside.*]

Sir S. Now dare not I go near that closet door, lest the murderous dog should poke a hole in my guts through the key-hole. Um—I have an old thought in my head; ay, and that will discover the whole bottom of her affair. 'Tis better to seem not to know one's dishonour, when one has not courage enough to revenge it. [*Aside.*]

Lady S. I don't like his looks, methinks. [*Aside.*]

Sir S. Odsó! what have I forgot now? Pr'ythee, my dear, step into my study, for I am so weary; and in the uppermost parcel of letters, you'll find one that I received from Yorkshire to-day, in the scrutoir: bring it down, and some paper; I will answer it while I think on't.

Lady S. If you please to lend me your key. But had you not better write in your study, my dear?

Sir S. No, no; I tell you, I'm so tired, I am not able to walk. There, make haste.

Lady S. Would all were well over! [*Aside. Exit.*]

Sir S. 'Tis so, by her eagerness to be rid of me. Well, since I find I dare not behave myself like a man of honour in this business, I'll at least act like a person of prudence and penetration; for say, should I clap a brace of slugs now in the very bowels of this rascal, it may hang me; but if it does not, it can't divorce me. No, I'll e'en put out the candles, and in a soft, gentle, woman's voice, desire the gentleman to walk about his business; and if I can get him out before my wife returns, and so, when she comes to set him at liberty, in the dark, I'll humour the cheat, till I draw her unto some casual confession of the fact; and then this injured front shall bounce upon her like a thunder-bolt.

[*Puts out the Candles.*]

Wish. [*Behind*] Say you so, sir? I'll take care my lady shall be provided for you. [*Exit.*]

Sir S. Hist, hist, sir, sir!

Re-enter ATALL, from the Closet.

Atall. Is all clear? May I venture, madam?

Sir S. Ay, ay; quick, quick! make haste before sir Solomon returns. But when shall I see you again?

Atall. Whenever you'll promise me to make a better use of an opportunity.

Sir S. Ha! then it is not all over.

Atall. Is this the door?

Sir S. Ay, ay, away. [*Exit Atall*] So, now the danger of being murdered is over, I find my courage returns; and if I catch my wife but inclining to be no better than she should be, I'm not sure that blood won't be the consequence. [*Goes into the Closet.*]

Re-enter WISHWELL.

Wish. So, my lady has her cue; and if my wise master can give her no better proofs of his penetration

than this, she'd be a greater fool than he if she should not do what she has a mind to.—Sir, sir, come, you may come out now; sir Solomon's gone.

Enter SIR SOLOMON from the Closet.

Sir S. So, now for a soft speech, to set her impudent blood in a ferment, and then let it out with my pen-knife. [*Aside*] Come, dear creature, now let's make the kindest use of our opportunity.

Wish. Not for the world. If sir Solomon should come again, I should be ruined. Pray, begone—I'll send to you to-morrow.

Sir S. Nay, now you love me not; you would not let me part else thus unsatisfied.

Wish. Now you're unkind. You know I love you, or I should not run such hazards for you.

Sir S. Fond whore! [*Aside*] But I'm afraid you love sir Solomon, and lay up all your tenderness for him.

Wish. Oh, ridiculous! How can so sad a wretch give you the least uneasy thought? I loath the very sight of him.

Sir S. Damn'd, infernal strumpet! I can bear no longer. Lights, lights, within there! [*Seizes her.*]

Enter LADY SADLIFE, with a Light.

Lady S. Oh, heavens! what's the matter? [*Sir Solomon looks astonished*] Ha! what do I see? My servant on the floor, and sir Solomon offering rudeness to her! Oh, I can't bear it! Oh! [*Falls into a Chair.*]

Sir S. What has the devil been doing here?

Lady S. This the reward of all my virtue! Oh, revenge, revenge!

Sir S. My dear, my good, virtuous, injured dear, be patient; for here has been such wicked doings—

Lady S. Oh, torture! Do you own it too? 'Tis well my love protects you. But for this wretch, this monster, this sword shall do me justice on her.

[*Runs at Wishwell with Sir Solomon's Sword.*]

Sir S. Oh, hold, my poor mistaken dear! This horrid jade, the gods can tell, is innocent for me; but she

has had, it seems, a strong dog in the closet here; which I suspecting, put myself into his place, and had almost trapped her in the very impudence of her iniquity.

Wish. [*Kneeling*] Dear madam, I hope your ladyship will pardon the liberty I took in your absence, in bringing my lover into your ladyship's chamber; but I did not think you would come home from prayers so soon; and so I was forced to hide him in that closet; but my master suspecting the business, it seems, turned him out unknown to me, and then put himself there; and so had a mind to discover whether there was any harm between us; and so, because he fancied I had been naught with him—

Sir S. Ay, my dear; and the jade was so confoundedly fond of me, that I grew out of all patience, and fell upon her like a fury.

Lady S. Horrid creature! And does she think to stay a minute in the family after such impudence?

Sir S. Hold, my dear; for if this should be the man that is to marry her, you know there may be no harm done yet.

Wish. Yes, it was he indeed, madam.

Sir S. I must not let the jade be turned away, for fear she should put it in my wife's head that I hid myself to discover her ladyship, and then the devil would not be able to live in the house with her. [*Aside.*]

Wish. Now, sir, you know what I can tell of you.

[*Aside to Sir Solomon.*]

Sir S. Mum—that's a good girl; there's a guinea for you.

[*Aside to Wishwell.*]

Lady S. Well, upon your intercession, my dear, I'll pardon her this fault. But, pray, mistress, let me hear of no more such doings. I am so disordered with this fright. I'll endeavour to compose myself.

[*Exeunt Lady Sadlife and Wishwell.*]

Sir S. Ay, do so; that's my good dear. What two blessed escapes have I had! to find myself no cuckold at last, and, which had been equally terrible, my wife not know I wrongfully suspected her!

Re-enter WISHWELL.

Wish. Sir, here's my lady Dainty come to wait upon my lady.

Sir S. I'm sorry for't, with all my heart—Why did you say she was within?

Wish. Sir, she did not ask if she was; but she's never denied to her.

Sir S. Gadso! why then, if you please to leave her ladyship to me, I'll begin with her now. [*Exit Wish.*]

Enter LADY DAINTY.

Lady D. Sir Solomon, your very humble servant.

Sir S. Yours, yours, madam.

Lady D. Where's my lady?

Sir S. Where your ladyship very seldom is—at prayers.

Enter LADY SADLIFE.

Lady S. My dear lady Dainty!

Lady D. Dear madam, I am the happiest person alive in finding your ladyship at home.

Sir S. So, now for a torrent of impertinence. [*Aside.*]

Lady S. Your ladyship does me a great deal of honour.

Lady D. I am sure I do myself a great deal of pleasure. I have made at least twenty visits to day. Oh, I'm quite dead! not but my coach is very easy—yet so much perpetual motion, you know—

Sir S. Ah, pox of your disorder!—If I had the providing your equipage, odzooks, you should rumble to your visits in a wheel-barrow. [*Aside.*]

Lady S. Was you at my lady Duchess's?

Lady D. A little while.

Lady S. Had she a great circle?

Lady D. Extreme—I was not able to bear the breath of so much company.

Lady S. You did not dine there?

Lady D. Oh, I can't touch any body's dinner but my own!—and I have almost killed myself this week,

for want of my usual glass of Tokay, after my ortolans and Muscovy duck-eggs.

Sir S. 'Sbud, if I had the feeding of you, I'd bring you, in a fortnight, to neck-beef, and a pot of plain porter. [Aside.

Lady D. Then I have been so surfeited with the sight of a hideous entertainment to-day, at my lady Cormorant's, who knows no other happiness, or way of making one welcome, than eating or drinking: for though she saw I was just fainting at her vast limbs of butcher's meat, yet the civil savage forced me to sit down, and heaped enough upon my plate to victual a fleet for an East India voyage.

Lady S. How could you bear it? Ha, ha!—Does your ladyship never go to the play?

Lady D. Hardly ever; and then not to mind the actors; for it's common to love sights. My great diversion is, in reposed posture, to turn my eyes upon the galleries, and bless myself to hear the happy savages laugh; or when an awkward citizen crowds herself in among us, 'tis an unspeakable pleasure to contemplate her airs and dress: and they never scape me; for I am as apprehensive of such a creature's coming near me, as some people are when a cat is in the room. But the play is begun, I believe; and if your ladyship has an inclination, I'll wait upon you.

Lady S. I think, madam, we can't do better; and here comes Mr. Careless most opportunely to squire us.

Sir S. Careless! I don't know him; but my wife does, and that's as well. [Aside.

Enter CARELESS.

Care. Ladies, your servant. Seeing your coach at the door, madam, made me not able to resist this opportunity to—to—you know, madam, there's no time to be lost in love. Sir Solomon, your servant.

Sir S. Oh, yours, yours, sir!—A very impudent fellow; and I'm in hopes will marry her. [Aside.

Lady D. The assurance of this creature almost

grows diverting: all one can do, can't make him the least sensible of a discouragement.

Lady S. Try what compliance will do; perhaps that may fright him.

Lady D. If it were not too dear a remedy—One would almost do any thing to get rid of his company.

Care. Which you never will, madam, till you marry me, depend upon it. Do that, and I'll trouble you no more.

Sir S. This fellow's abominable! He'll certainly have her. [*Aside.*]

Lady D. There's no depending upon your word, or else I might; for the last time I saw you, you told me then, you would trouble me no more.

Care. Ay, that's true, madam; but to keep one's word, you know, looks like a tradesman.

Sir S. Impudent rogue! But he'll have her— [*Aside.*]

Care. And is as much below a gentleman as paying one's debts.

Sir S. If he is not hanged first. [*Aside.*]

Care. Besides, madam, I considered that my absence might endanger your constitution, which is so very tender, that nothing but love can save it; and so I would e'en advise you to throw away your juleps, your cordials, and slops, and take me all at once.

Lady D. No, sir, bitter potions are not to be taken so suddenly.

Care. Oh, to choose, madam; for if you stand making of faces, and kicking against it, you'll but increase your aversion, and delay the cure. Come, come, you must be advised. [*Pressing her.*]

Lady D. What mean you, sir?

Care. To banish all your ails, and be myself your universal medicine.

Sir S. Well said! he'll have her. [*Aside.*]

Lady D. Impudent, robust man; I protest, did not I know his family, I should think his parents had not lived in chairs and coaches, but had used their limbs all their lives! Hu, hu!—but I begin to be persuaded health is a great blessing. [*Aside.*]

Care. My limbs, madam, were conveyed to me before the use of chairs and coaches; and it might lessen the dignity of my ancestors, not to use them as they did.

Lady D. Was ever such a rude understanding? to value himself upon the barbarism of his forefathers.—Indeed I have heard of kings that were bred to the plough, and, I fancy, you might descend from such a race; for you court as if you were behind one—Hub, hub, hub! To treat a woman of quality like an Exchange wench, and express your passion with your arms:—unpolished man!

Care. I was willing, madam, to take from the vulgar the only desirable thing among them, and show you how they live so healthy; for they have no other remedy.

Lady D. A very rough medicine! hub, hub!

Care. To those that never took it, it may seem so.

Lady D. Abandoned ravisher! Oh! [Struggling.

Sir S. He has her; he has her. [Aside.

Lady D. Leave the room, and see my face no more.

[Careless bows and is going.

Lady D. And, hark ye, sir, no bribe, no mediations to my woman. [Careless bows and sighs.

Lady D. Thou profligate! to hug! to clasp! to embrace and throw your robust arms about me, like a vulgar, and indelicate—Oh, I faint with apprehension of so gross an address.

[She faints, and Careless catches her.

Care. Oh, my offended fair!

Lady D. Inhuman! ravisher! Oh!

[Careless carries her off.

Sir S. He has her! she's undone! he has her!

[Exeunt Sir Solomon and Lady Sadlife.

Enter CLARINDA and SYLVIA.

Clar. Well, cousin, what do you think of your gentleman now?

Syl. I fancy, madam, that would be as proper a ques-

tion to ask you: for really I don't see any great reason to alter my opinion of him yet.

Clar. Now I could dash her at once, and show it her under his own hand that his name's Standfast, and he'll be here in a quarter of an hour. [*Aside*] I vow I don't think I ought to refuse you any service in my power; therefore if you think it worth your while not to be out of countenance when the colonel comes, I would advise you to withdraw now; for if you dare take his own word for it, he will be here in three minutes, as this may convince you. [*Gives a Letter.*]

Syl. What's here? a letter from colonel Standfast?—Really, cousin, I have nothing to say to him. Mr. Freeman's the person I'm concerned for, and I expect to see him here in a quarter of an hour.

Clar. Then you don't believe them both the same person?

Syl. Not by their hands or style, I can assure you, as this may convince you. [*Gives a Letter.*]

Clar. Ha! the hand is different indeed.—I scarce know what to think,—and yet I'm sure my eyes were not deceived.

Syl. Come, cousin, let's be a little cooler; 'tis not impossible but we may have both laughed at one another to no purpose—for I am confident they are two persons.

Clar. I can't tell that, but I'm sure here comes one of them.

Enter ATALL, as COLONEL STANDFAST.

Syl. Ha!

Atall. Hey! Bombard—There they are faith! [*Aside*] Bid the chariot set up, and call again about one or two in the morning.—You see, madam, what 'tis to give an impudent fellow the least encouragement: I'm resolved now to make a night on't with you.

Clar. I am afraid, colonel, we shall have much ado to be good company, for we are two women to one man, you see; and if we should both have a particular

fancy to have you, I doubt you'd make but bungling work on't.

Atall. I warrant you we will pass our time like gods: two ladies and one man; the prettiest set for ombre in the universe. Come, come! Cards, cards, cards! and tea, that I insist upon.

Clar. Well, sir, if my cousin will make one, I won't balk your good-humour. [*Turning Sylvia to face him.*]

Atall. Is the lady your relation, madam?—I beg the honour to be known to her.

Clar. Ob, sir, that I'm sure she can't refuse you.—Cousin, this is colonel Standfast.— [*Laughs aside*] I hope now she's convinced.

Atall. Your pardon, madam, if I am a little particular in my desire to be known to any of this lady's relations. [*Salutes.*]

Syl. You'll certainly deserve mine, sir, by being always particular to that lady.

Atall. Ob, madam!—Tall, tall.

Syl. This assurance is beyond example. [*Turns away and sings.*]

Clar. How do you do, cousin?

Syl. Beyond bearing! [*Aside.*]

Clar. [*Aside*] Now can't I find in my heart to give him one angry word for his impudence to me this morning? the pleasure of seeing my rival mortified makes me strangely good-natured.

Atall. [*Turning familiarly to Clarinda*] Upon my soul you are provokingly handsome to-day. Ay Gad! why is not it high treason for any beautiful woman to marry?

Clar. What, would you have us lead apes?

Atall. Not one of you, by all that's lovely!—Death what a hand is here?—Gad, I shall grow foolish!

Clar. Stick to your assurance, and you are in no danger.

Atall. Why then, in obedience to your commands, pr'ythee answer me sincerely one question: How long do you really design to make me dangle thus?

Clar. Why, really I can't just set you a time; but

when you are weary of your service, come to me with a sixpence and modesty, and I'll give you a discharge.

Atall. But we were talking of cards, ladies.

Clar. Cousin, what say you? Bless me! you are not well!

Syl. I shall be presently!—Pray, sir, give me leave to ask you a question?

Atall. So, now it's coming! [*Aside*] Freely, madam.

Syl. Look on me well:—have you never seen my face before?

Atall. Upon my word, madam, I can't recollect that I have.

Syl. I am satisfied.—But if I'm not deceived, I'm miserable. [*Weeps.*]

Atall. This is strange.—How her concern transports me! [*Aside.*]

Clar. Her fears have touched me, and half persuade me to revenge them. [*Aside*] Come, cousin, be easy: I see you are convinced he is the same, and now I'll prove myself a friend.

Syl. I know not what to think—my senses are confounded: their features are indeed the same; and yet there's something in their air, their dress, and manner, strangely different: but be it as it will, all right to him in presence I disclaim, and yield to you for ever.

Clar. No, cousin, believe it, both our senses cannot be deceived; he's individually the same.—I desire you would leave the house, and from this moment never see me more.

Atall. Madam! What! what is all this?

Riddle me riddle me re,

For the devil take me

For ever from thee,

If I can divine what this riddle can be.

Syl. Not moved! I'm more amazed.

Atall. Pray, madam, in the name of common sense, let me know in two words what the real meaning of your last terrible speech was; and if I don't make you a plain, honest, reasonable answer to it, be pleased the next minute to blot my name out of your table-book,

never more to be enrolled in the senseless catalogue of those vain coxcombs, that impudently hope to come into your favour.

Clar. This insolence grows tedious: what end can you propose by this assurance?

Atall. Hey-day!

Syl. Hold, cousin——one moment's patience: I'll send this minute again to Mr. Freeman, and if he does not immediately appear, the dispute will need no further argument.

Atall. Mr. Freeman! Who the devil's he? What have I to do with him?

Syl. I'll soon inform you, sir. [Going.]

Enter WISHWELL.

Wish. Madam, here's a footman mightily out of breath, says he belongs to Mr. Freeman, and desires very earnestly to speak with you.

Syl. Mr. Freeman! Pray bid him come in. [Exit Wishwell] What can this mean?

Atall. You'll see presently. [Aside.]

Re-enter WISHWELL, with FINDER.

Clar. Ha!

Syl. Come hither, friend: do you belong to Mr. Freeman?

Fin. Yes, madam; and my poor master gives his humble service to your ladyship, and begs your pardon for not waiting on you according to his promise; which he would have done, but for an unfortunate accident.

Syl. What's the matter?

Fin. As he was coming out of his lodgings to pay his duty to you, madam, a parcel of fellows set upon him, and said they had a warrant against him; and so, because the rascals began to be saucy with him, and my master knowing that he did not owe a shilling in the world, he drew to defend himself; and in the scuffle the bloody villains run one of their swords quite

through his arm ; but the best of the jest was, madam, that as soon as they got him into a house, and sent for a surgeon, he proved to be the wrong person ; for their warrant, it seems, was against a poor scoundrel, that happens, they say, to be very like him, one colonel Standfast.

Atall. Say you so, Mr. Dog?—if your master had been here I would have given him as much.

[Gives him a box on the Ear.

Fin. Oh, lord! pray, madam, save me—I did not speak a word to the gentleman—Oh, the devil! this must be the devil in the likeness of my master.

Syl. Is this gentleman so very like him, say you?

Fin. Like, madam! ay, as one box of the ear is like to another ; only I think, madam, my master's nose is a little, little higher.

Atall. Now, ladies, I presume the riddle's solved——Hark you, where is your master, rascal?

Fin. Master, rascal! Sir, my master's name's Freeman, and I'm a free-born Englishman ; and I must tell you, sir, that I don't use to take such arbitrary socks of the face from any man that does not pay me wages ; and so my master will tell you too when he comes, sir.

Syl. Will he be here then?

Fin. This minute, madam, he only stays to have his wound dressed.

Atall. I'm resolved I'll stay that minute out, if he does not come till midnight.

Fin. A pox of his mettle—when his hand's in, he makes no difference between jest and earnest, I find—If he does not pay me well for this, 'egad he shall tell the next for himself. [*Aside*] Has your ladyship any commands to my master, madam?

Syl. Yes ; pray give him my humble service, say I'm sorry for his misfortune ; and if he thinks 'twill do his wound no harm, I beg, by all means, he may be brought hither immediately.

Fin. 'Shah! his wound, madam, I know he does not value it of a rush ; for he'll have the devil and all of actions against the rogues for false imprisonment, and

smart-money—Ladies, I kiss your hands—Sir, I
 —nothing at all— [Exit.

Atall. [*Aside*] The dog has done it rarely; for a lie upon the stretch I don't know a better rascal in Europe.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Ay! now I'm sure I'm right—Is not your name colonel Standfast, sir?

Atall. Yes, sir; what then?

Off. Then you are my prisoner, sir.

Atall. Your prisoner! who the devil are you? a bailiff? I don't owe a shilling.

Off. I don't care if you don't, sir; I have a warrant against you for high treason, and I must have you away this minute.

Atall. Look you, sir, depend upon't, this is but some impertinent, malicious prosecution: you may venture to stay a quarter of an hour, I'm sure; I have some business here till then, that concerns me nearer than my life.

Clar. Have but so much patience, and I'll satisfy you for your civility.

Off. I could not stay a quarter of an hour, madam, if you'd give me five hundred pounds.

Syl. Can't you take bail, sir?

Off. Bail! no, no.

Clar. Whither must he be carried?

Off. To my house, till he's examined before the council.

Clar. Where is your house?

Off. Just by the secretary's office; every body knows Mr. Lockum the messenger—Come, sir.

Atall. I can't stir yet, indeed, sir.

[*Lays his Hand on his Sword.*

Off. Nay, look you, if you are for that play—Come in, gentlemen, away with him.

Enter Musqueteers, and force him off.

Syl. This is the strangest accident: I am extremely

sorry for the colonel's misfortune, but I am heartily glad he is not Mr. Freeman.

Clar. I'm afraid you'll find him so—I shall never change my opinion of him till I see them face to face.

Syl. Well, cousin, let them be two or one, I'm resolved to stick to Mr. Freeman; for, to tell you the truth, this last spark has too much of the confident rake in him to please me; but there is a modest sincerity in t'other's conversation that's irresistible.

Clar. For my part I'm almost tired with his impertinence either way, and could find in my heart to trouble myself no more about him; and yet, methinks, it provokes me to have a fellow outface my senses.

Syl. Nay, they are strangely alike, I own; but yet, if you observe nicely, Mr. Freeman's features are more pale and pensive than the colonel's.

Clar. When Mr. Freeman comes, I'll be closer in my observation of him.—In the mean time let me consider what I really propose by all this rout I make about him: suppose (which I can never believe) they should prove two several men at last, I don't find that I'm fool enough to think of marrying either of them; nor (whatever airs I give myself) am I yet mad enough to do worse with them—Well, since I don't design to come to a close engagement myself, then why should I not generously stand out of the way, and make room for one that would? No, I can't do that neither—I want, methinks, to convict him first of being one and the same person, and then to have him convince my cousin that he likes me better than her—Ay, that would do! and to confess my infirmity, I still find (though I don't care for this fellow) while she has assurance to nourish the least hope of getting him from me, I shall never be heartily easy till she's heartily mortified. [*Aside.*

Syl. You seem very much concerned for the colonel's misfortune, cousin.

Clar. His misfortunes seldom hold him long, as you may see; for here he comes.

Enter ATALL, as MR. FREEMAN.

Syl. Bless me!

Atall. I am sorry, madam, I could not be more punctual to your obliging commands; but the accident that prevented my coming sooner, will, I hope, now give me a pretence to a better welcome than my last; for now, madam, [*To Clar.*] your mistake's set right, I presume; and, I hope, you won't expect Mr. Freeman to answer for all the miscarriages of colonel Standfast.

Clar. Not in the least, sir: the colonel's able to answer for himself, I find! ha, ha!

Atall. Was not my servant with you, madam?

[*To Sylvia.*

Syl. Yes, yes, sir, he has told us all. [*Aside.*] And I am sorry you have paid so dear for a proof of your innocence. Come, come, I'd advise you to set your heart at rest; for what I design, you'll find, I shall come to a speedy resolution in.

Atall. Oh, generous resolution!

Clar. Well, madam, since you are so tenacious of your conquest, I hope you'll give me the same liberty: and not expect, the next time you fall a crying at the colonel's gallantry to me, that my good-nature should give you up my pretensions to him. And for you, sir, I shall only tell you, this last plot was not so closely laid, but that a woman of a very slender capacity, you'll find, has wit enough to discover it. [*Exit Clar.*

Atall. So! she's gone to the messenger's I suppose—but, poor soul, her intelligence there will be extremely small. [*Aside.*] Well, madam, I hope at last your scruples are over.

Syl. Yes, methinks there's a native honesty in your look, that tells me I am not mistaken, and may trust you with my heart.

Atall. Oh, for pity still preserve that tender thought, and save me from despair.

Enter CLERIMONT.

Cler. Ha! Freeman again! Is it possible?

Atall. How now, Clerimont, what are you surprised at?

Cler. Why to see thee almost in two places at one time; 'tis but this minute, I met the very image of thee with the mob about a coach, in the hands of a messenger, whom I had the curiosity to stop and call to, and had no other proof of his not being thee, but that the spark would not know me!

Syl. Strange! I almost think I'm really not deceived.

Cler. 'Twas certainly Clarinda I saw go out in a chair just now—it must be she—the circumstances are too strong for a mistake. [*Aside.*

Syl. Well, sir, to ease you of your fears, now I dare own to you, that mine are over. [*To Atall.*

Cler. What a coxcomb have I made myself, to serve my rival even with my own mistress? But 'tis at least some ease to know him: all I have to hope is, that he does not know the ass he has made of me—that might indeed be fatal to him. [*Aside.*

Enter SYLVIA's Maid.

Maid. Oh, madam, I'm glad I've found you: your father and I have been hunting you all the town over.

Syl. My father in town!

Maid. He waits below in the coach for you: he must needs have you come away this minute; and talks of having you married this very night to the fine gentleman he spoke to you of.

Syl. What do I hear?

Atall. If ever soft compassion touched your soul, give me a word of comfort.

Syl. You see we are observed—but yet depend upon my faith as on my life.—In the mean time, I'll use my utmost power to avoid my father's hasty will. In two hours you shall know my fortune and my family—Now, don't follow me, as you'd preserve my friendship. Come— [*Exit with Maid.*

Atall. Death! how this news alarms me! I never felt the pains of love before.

Cler. Now then to ease, or to revenge my fears—

This sudden change of your countenance, Mr. Atall, looks as if you had a mind to banter your friend into a belief of your being really in love with the lady that just now left you.

Atall. Faith, Clerimont, I have too much concern upon me at this time, to be capable of a banter.

Cler. Ha! he seems really touched, and I begin now only to fear Clarinda's conduct.—Well, sir, if it be so, I'm glad to see a convert of you; and now, in return to the little services I have done you, in helping you to carry on your affair with both these ladies at one time, give me leave to ask a favour of you—Be still sincere, and we may still be friends.

Atall. You surprise me—but use me as you find me.

Cler. Have you no acquaintance with a certain lady whom you have lately heard me own I was unfortunately in love with?

Atall. Not that I know of; I'm sure not as the lady you are in love with: but, pray, why do you ask?

Cler. Come, I'll be sincere with you too: because I have strong circumstances that convince me 'tis one of those two you have been so busy about. †

Atall. Not she you saw with me, I hope?

Cler. No; I mean the other.—But to clear the doubt at once, is her name Clarinda?

Atall. I own it is: but had I the least been warned of your pretences—

Cler. Sir, I dare believe you; and though you may have prevailed even against her honour, your ignorance of my passion for her makes you stand at least excused to me.

Atall. No; by all the solemn protestations tongue can utter, her honour is untainted yet for me; nay, even unattempted.

Cler. You own she has received your gallantries at least.

Atall. Faith, not to be vain, she has indeed taken some pains to pique her cousin about me; but since I now know your heart, put my friendship to a trial.

Cler. Only this—If I should be reduced to ask it of

you, promise to confess your imposture, and your passion to her cousin, before her face.

Atall. There's my hand,—I'll do't, to right my friend and mistress. But, dear Clerimont, you'll pardon me if I leave you here; for my poor incognita's affairs at this time are in a very critical condition.

Cler. No ceremony—I release you.

Atall. Adieu.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I.

Enter CLERIMONT and CARELESS.

Cler. And so you took the opportunity of her fainting to carry her off! Pray, how long did her fit last?

Care. Why, faith, I so honoured her affectation, that 'tis hardly over yet; for I told her, her life was in danger, and swore, if she would not let me send for a parson to marry her before she died, I'd that minute send for a shroud, and be buried alive with her in the same coffin: but, at the apprehension of so terrible a thought, she pretended to be frightened into her right senses again; and forbid me her sight for ever.—So that, in short, my impudence is almost exhausted, her affectation is as unsurmountable as another's real virtue, and I must e'en catch her that way, or die without her at last.

Cler. How do you mean?

Care. Why, if I find I can't impose upon her by humility, which I'll try, I'll even turn rival to myself in a very fantastical figure, that I'm sure she won't be

able to resist. You must know, she has of late been flattered that the Muscovite prince Alexander is dying for her, though he never spoke to her in his life.

Cler. I understand you: so you'd first venture to pique her against you, and then let her marry you in another person, to be revenged of you.

Care. One of the two ways I am pretty sure to succeed.

Cler. Extravagant enough! Pr'ythee, is sir Solomon in the next room?

Care. What, you want his assistance? Clarinda's in her airs again!

Cler. Faith, Careless, I am almost ashamed to tell you, but I must needs speak with him.

Care. Come along then. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter LADY DAINTY, LADY SADLIFE, and CARELESS.

Lady D. This rude, boisterous man, has given me a thousand disorders; the colic, the spleen, the palpitation of the heart, and convulsions all over—Huh! huh!—I must send for the doctor.

Lady S. Come, come, madam, e'en pardon him, and let him be your physician—do but observe his penitence, so humble he dares not speak to you.

Care. [*Folds his arms and sighs.*] Oh!

Lady S. How can you hear him sigh so?

Lady D. Nay, let him groan—for nothing but his pangs can ease me.

Care. [*Kneels and presents her his drawn Sword; opening his Breast.*] Be then at once most barbarously just, and take your vengeance here.

Lady D. No, I give thee life to make thee miserable; live, that my resenting eyes may kill thee every hour.

Care. Nay, then there's no relief—but this—

[*Offering at his Sword, Lady Sadlife holds him.*]

Lady S. Ah! for mercy's sake—Barbarous creature, how can you see him thus?

Lady D. Why, I did not bid him kill himself: but do you really think he would have done it?

Lady S. Certainly, if I had not prevented it.

Lady D. Strange passion! But 'tis its nature to be violent, when one makes it despair.

Lady S. Won't you speak to him?

Lady D. No, but if your—is enough concerned to be his friend, you may tell him—not that it really is so—but you may say—you believe I pity him.

Lady S. Sure love was never more ridiculous on both sides.

Enter WISHWELL.

Wish. Madam, here's a page from prince Alexander desires to give a letter into your ladyship's own hands.

Lady D. Prince Alexander! what means my heart? I come to him.

Lady S. By no means, madam, pray let him come in.

Care. Ha! Prince Alexander! nay, then I have found out the secret of this coldness, madam.

Enter Page.

Page. Madam, his royal highness prince Alexander, my master, has commanded me, on pain of death, thus [*Kneeling*] to deliver this, the burning secret of his heart.

Lady D. Where is the prince?

Page. Reposed, in private, on a mourning pallat, 'till your commands vouchsafe to raise him.

Lady S. By all means, receive him here immediately. I have the honour to be a little known to his highness.

Lady D. The favour, madam, is too great to be resisted: pray tell his highness then, the honour of the visit he designs me, makes me thankful and impatient! hah! hah!

[*Exit Page.*]

Care. Are my sufferings, madam, so soon forgot then? Was I but flattered with the hope of pity?

Lady D. The happy have whole days, and those they choose. [*Resenting.*] The unhappy have but hours, and those they lose.

[*Exit, repeating.*]

Lady S. Don't you lose a minute then.

Care. I'll warrant you—ten thousand thanks, dear madam—I'll be transformed in a second.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter CLARINDA, in a Man's habit.

Clar. So! I'm in for't now! how I shall come off I can't tell: 'twas but a bare saving game I made with Clerimont; his resentment had brought my pride to its last legs, dissembling; and if the poor man had not loved me too well, I had made but a dismal humble figure—I have used him ill, that's certain, and he may e'en thank himself for't—he would be sincere—Well, (begging my sex's pardon) we do make the silliest tyrants—we had better be reasonable; for (to do them right) we don't run half the bazard in obeying the good sense of a lover; at least, I'm reduced now to make the experiment—Here they come.

Enter SIR SOLOMON and CLERIMONT.

Sir S. What have we here? another captain? If I were sure he were a coward now, I'd kick him before he speaks—Is your business with me, sir?

Clar. If your name be sir Solomon Sadlife.

Sir S. Yes, sir, it is; and I'll maintain it as ancient as any, and related to most of the families in England.

Clar. My business will convince you, sir, that I think well of it.

Sir S. And what is your business, sir?

Clar. Why, sir—You have a pretty kinswoman, called Clarinda.

Cler. Ha!

Sir S. And what then, sir?—Such a rogue as t'other. [*Aside.*

Clar. Now, sir, I have seen her, and am in love with her.

Cler. Say you so, sir?—I may chance to cure you of it. [*Aside.*

Clar. And to back my pretensions, sir, I have a good three thousand pounds a year estate, and am, as you see, a pretty fellow into the bargain.

Sir S. She that marries you, sir, will have a choice bargain indeed.

Clar. In short, sir, I'll give you a thousand guineas to make up the match.

Sir S. Hum—— [Aside] But, sir, my niece is provided for.

Cler. That's well!

[Aside.

Sir S. But if she were not, sir, I must tell you, she is not to be caught with a smock-face and a feather, sir——And——and——let me see you an hour hence.

[Aside.

Cler. Well said, uncle! [Aside] But, sir, I'm in love with her, and positively will have her.

Sir S. Whether she likes you or no, sir?

Cler. Like me! ha, ha! I'd fain see a woman that dislikes a pretty fellow, with three thousand pounds a year, a white wig, and black eye-brows.

Cler. Hark, you, young gentleman, there must go more than all this to the gaining of that lady.

[Takes Clarinda aside!

Sir S. [Aside] A thousand guineas—that's five hundred more than I proposed to get of Mr. Clerimont——But my honour is engaged—Ay, but then here's a thousand pounds to release it—Now, shall I take the money?—It must be so—Coin will carry it.

Cler. Oh, sir, if that be all, I'll soon remove your doubts and pretensions! Come, sir, I'll try your courage.

Cler. I'm afraid you won't, young gentleman.

Cler. As young as I am, sir, you shall find I scorn to turn my back to any man.

[Exit Clarinda and Clerimont.

Sir S. Ha! they are gone to fight—with all my heart—a fair chance, at least, for a better bargain: for if the young spark should let the air into my friend Clerimont's midriff now, it may possibly cool his love too, and then there's my honour safe, and a thousand guineas snug.

[Exit.

Enter LADY DAINTY, LADY SADLIFE, and CARELESS
as PRINCE ALEXANDER.

Lady D. Your highness, sir, has done me honour in this visit.

Care. Madam——

[Salutes her.

Lady D. A captivating person!

Care. May the days be taken from my life, and added to yours, most incomparable beauty, whiter than the snow that lies throughout the year unmelted on our Russian mountains! Were it possible, madam, that so much delicacy could endure the martial roughness of our manners and our country, I cannot boast; but if a province at your feet could make you mine, that province and its master should be yours.

Lady D. Ay, here's grandeur with address!—An odious native lover, now, would have complained of the taxes, perhaps, and have haggled with one for a scanty jointure out of his horrid lead mines, in some uninhabitable mountains, about an hundred and four-score miles from unbeard-of London.

Care. I am informed, madam, there is a certain poor, distracted English fellow, that refused to quit his saucy pretensions to your all-conquering beauty, though he had heard I had myself resolved to adore you. Careless, I think they call him.

Lady D. Your highness wrongs your merit, to give yourself the least concern for one so much below your fear. But if the pain of my entire neglect can end him, pray, be easy.

Care. Madam, I'm not revengeful; make him but miserable, I'm satisfied.

Lady D. You may depend upon it.

Care. I'm in strange favour with her. [*Aside*] Please you, ladies, to make your fragrant fingers familiar with this box.

Lady D. Sweet or plain, sir?

Care. Right Mosco, madam, made of the skulls of conquered enemies.

Lady S. Gunpowder, as I live! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A Field.*

Enter CLARINDA and CLERIMONT.

Cler. Come, sir, we are far enough.

Clar. I only wish the lady were by, sir, that the

conqueror might carry her off the spot—I warrant she'd be mine.

Cler. That, my talking hero, we shall soon determine.

Clar. Not that I think her handsome, or care a rush for her.

Cler. You are very mettled, sir, to fight for a woman you don't value.

Clar. Sir, I value the reputation of a gentleman; and I don't think any young fellow ought to pretend to it, till he has talked himself into a lampoon, lost his two or three thousand pounds at play, kept his miss, and killed his man.

Cler. Very gallant, indeed, sir! but if you please to handle your sword, you'll soon go through your course.

Clar. Come on, sir—I believe I shall give your mistress a truer account of your heart than you have done. I have had her heart long enough, and now will have yours.

Cler. Ha! does she love you, then?

[*Endeavouring to draw.*]

Clar. I leave you to judge that, sir. But she has loved me so long, till I'm tired of it.

Cler. Villain, thou liest! Draw, or I'll use you as you deserve, and stab you.

Clar. Take this with you first, Clarinda will never marry him that murders me.

Cler. She may the man that vindicates her honour—therefore be quick, or I'll keep my word—I find your sword is not for doing things in haste.

Clar. It sticks to the scabbard so; I believe I did not wipe off the blood of the last man I fought with.

Cler. Come, sir, this trifling sha'n't serve your turn—Here, give me yours, and take mine.

Clar. With all my heart, sir.—Now have at you.

[*Cler. draws, and finds only a Hilt in his Hand.*]

Cler. Death! you villain, do you serve me so!

Clar. In love and war, sir, all advantages are fair: so we conquer, no matter whether by force or stratagem.—Come, quick, sir—your life or mistress.

Cler. Neither. Death! you shall have both or none! Here drive your sword; for only through this heart you reach Clarinda.

Clar. Death, sir, can you be mad enough to die for a woman that hates you?

Cler. If that were true, 'twere greater madness, then, to live.

Clar. Why, to my knowledge, sir, she has used you basely, falsely, ill, and for no reason.

Cler. No matter; no usage can be worse than the contempt of poorly, tamely parting with her. She may abuse her heart by happy infidelities; but 'tis the pride of mine to be even miserably constant.

Clar. Generous passion! You almost tempt me to resign her to you.

Cler. You cannot if you would. I would indeed have won her fairly from you with my sword; but scorn to take her as your gift. Be quick and end your insolence.

Clar. Yes, thus—Most generous Clerimont, you now, indeed, have fairly vanquished me! [*Runs to him*] My woman's follies and my shame be buried ever here.

Cler. Ha, Clarinda! Is it possible? My wonder rises with my joy!—How came you in this habit?

Clar. Now you indeed recall my blushes; but I had no other veil to hide them, while I confess'd the injuries I had done your heart, in fooling with a man I never meant on any terms to engage with. Beside, I knew, from our late parting, your fear of losing me would reduce you to comply with sir Solomon's demands, for his interest in your favour. Therefore, as you saw, I was resolved to ruin his market, by seeming to raise it; for he secretly took the offer I made him.

Cler. 'Twas generously and timely offered; for it really prevented my signing articles to him. But if you would heartily convince me that I shall never more have need of his interest, e'en let us steal to the next priest, and honestly put it out of his power ever to part us.

Clar. Why, truly, considering the trusts I have ma

you, 'twould be ridiculous now, I think, to deny you any thing: and if you should grow weary of me after such usage, I can't blame you.

Cler. Banish that fear; my flame can never waste;
For love sincere refines upon the taste. [Exeunt.]

Enter SIR SOLOMON, with old MR. WILFUL; LADY SADLIFE, and SYLVIA weeping.

Sir S. Troth, my old friend, this is a bad business indeed; you have bound yourself in a thousand pounds bond, you say, to marry your daughter to a fine gentleman; and she, in the mean time, it seems, is fallen in love with a stranger.

Wilf. Look you, sir Solomon, it does not trouble me o' this; for I'll make her do as I please, or I'll starve her.

Lady S. But, sir, your daughter tells me that the gentleman she loves is in every degree in as good circumstances as the person you design her for; and if he does not prove himself so, before to-morrow morning, she will cheerfully submit to whatever you'll impose on her.

Wilf. All sham! all sham! only to gain time. I expect my friend and his son here immediately, to demand performance of articles; and if her ladyship's nice stomach does not immediately comply with them, as I told you before, I'll starve her.

Lady S. But, consider, sir, what a perpetual discord must a forced marriage probably produce.

Wilf. Discord! pshaw, waw! One man makes as good a husband as another. A month's marriage will set all to rights, I warrant you. You know the old saying, sir Solomon, Lying together makes pigs love.

Lady S. [To Sylvia] What shall we do for you? There's no altering him. Did not your lover promise to come to your assistance?

Syl. I expect him every minute; but can't foresee from him the least hope of my redemption.—This is he.

Enter ATALL, undisguised.

Atall. My Sylvia, dry those tender eyes; for while there's life there's hope.

Lady S. Ha! is't he? but I must smother my confusion. [*Aside.*

Wilf. How now, sir! pray, who gave you commission to be so familiar with my daughter?

Atall. Your pardon, sir; but when you know me right, you'll neither think my freedom or my pretensions familiar or dishonourable.

Wilf. Why, sir, what pretensions have you to her?

Atall. Sir, I saved her life at the hazard of my own: that gave me a pretence to know her; knowing her made me love, and gratitude made her receive it.

Wilf. Ay, sir! And some very good reasons, best known to myself, make me refuse it. Now, what will you do?

Atall. I can't tell yet, sir; but if you'll do me the favour to let me know those reasons——

Wilf. Sir, I don't think myself obliged to do either; —but I'll tell you what I'll do for you: since you say you love my daughter, and she loves you, I'll put you in the nearest way to get her.

Atall. Don't flatter me, I beg you, sir.

Wilf. Not I, upon my soul, sir; for, look you, 'tis only this——get my consent, and you shall have her.

Atall. I beg your pardon, sir, for endeavouring to talk reason to you. But to return your raillery, give me leave to tell you, when any man marries her but myself, he must extremely ask my consent.

Wilf. Before George, thou art a very pretty impudent fellow; and I'm sorry I can't punish her disobedience, by throwing her away upon thee.

Atall. You'll have a great deal of plague about this business, sir; for I shall be mighty difficult to give up my pretensions to her.

Wilf. Ha! 'tis a thousand pities I can't comply with thee. Thou wilt certainly be a thriving fellow; for

thou dost really set the best face upon a bad cause, that ever I saw since I was born.

Atall. Come, sir, once more, raillery apart; suppose I prove myself of equal birth and fortune to deserve her.

Wilf. Sir, if you were eldest son to the cham of Tartary, and had the dominions of the great mogul entailed upon you and your heirs for ever, it would signify no more than the bite of my thumb. The girl's disposed of; I have matched her already, upon a thousand pounds forfeit; and faith she shall fairly run for't.

Atall. Confusion!

Syl. What will become of me?

Wilf. And if you don't think me in earnest now, here comes one that will convince you of my sincerity.

Atall. My father! Nay, then my ruin is inevitable.

Enter SIR HARRY ATALL.

Sir H. [To *Atall*] Oh, sweet sir! have I found you at last? Your very humble servant. What's the reason, pray, that you have had the assurance to be almost a fortnight in town, and never come near me, especially when I sent you word I had business of such consequence with you.

Atall. I understood your business was to marry me, sir, to a woman I never saw: and, to confess the truth, I durst not come near you, because I was, at the same time, in love with one you never saw.

Sir H. Was you so, sir? Why, then, sir, I'll find a speedy cure for your passion.

Atall. Sir, you may treat me with what severity you please; but my engagements to that lady are too powerful and fixed to let the utmost misery dissolve them.

Sir H. What does the fool mean?

Atall. That I can sooner die than part with her.

Wilf. Hey!—Why, is this your son, sir Harry?

Sir H. Hey-day!—Why, did not you know that before?

Atall. Oh, earth, and all you stars! is this the lady you designed me, sir?

Syl. Oh, fortune! is it possible?

Sir H. And is this the lady, sir, you have been making such a bustle about?

Atall. Not life, health, or happiness are half so dear to me.

Sir S. [*Joining Atall and Sylvia's Hands*] Loll, loll, lerell!

Atall. Oh, transporting joy! [*Embracing Sylvia.*

Sir H. and Wilf. Loll! loll!

[*Joining in the Tune, and dancing about them.*

Enter CLARINDA and CLERIMONT.

Clar. Save you, save you, good people—I'm glad, uncle, to hear you call so cheerfully; it looks as if you had a husband ready for me.

Sir S. Why, that I may have by to-morrow night, madam; but, in the mean time, if you please, you may wish your friends joy.

Clar. Dear Sylvia!

Syl. Clarinda!

Atall. Oh, Clerimont, such a deliverance!

Cler. Give you joy, joy, sir.

Clar. I congratulate your happiness, and am pleased our little jealousies are over; Mr. Clerimont has told me all, and cured me of curiosity for ever.

Syl. What, married?

Clar. You'll see presently. But, sir Solomon, what do you mean by to-morrow? Why, do you fancy I have any more patience than the rest of my neighbours?

Sir S. Why, truly, madam, I don't suppose you have; but I believe to-morrow will be as soon as their business can be done; by which time I expect a jolly fox-hunter from Yorkshire: and if you are resolved not to have patience till next day, why, the same parson may toss you up all four in a dish together.

Clar. A filthy fox-hunter!

Sir S. Odzooks, a mettled fellow, that will ride you from day-break to sun-set!

Clar. Ay, but this fox-hunter, sir Solomon, will come home dirty and tired as one of his hounds; he'll be always asleep before he's a-bed, and on horseback before he's awake; and here stands the fox-hunter for my money. [*Claps Clerimont on the Shoulder.*]

Sir S. How!

Cler. Even so, sir Solomon—Hark in your ear, sir—You really held your consent at so high a price, that, to give you a proof of my good husbandry, I was resolved to save charges, and e'en marry her without it.

Sir S. Hell and—

Clar. And bark you in t'other ear, sir—Because I would not have you expose your reverend age by a mistake, know, sir, I was the young spark with a smooth face and a feather, that offered you a thousand guineas for your consent, which you would have been glad to have taken.

Sir S. The devil!—If ever I traffio in women, may all the bank stocks fall when I have bought them, and rise when I have sold them.—Hey-day! what have we here? more cheats?

Cler. Not unlikely, sir; for I fancy they are married.

Enter LADY DAINTY and CARELESS.

Lady S. That they are, I can assure you—I give your highness joy, madam.

Lady D. Lard, that people of any rauk should use such vulgar salutations! though, methinks, highness has something of grandeur in the sound. But I was in hopes, good people, that confident fellow, Careless, had been among you.

Care. What say you, madam, (to divert the good company) shall we send for him by way of mortification?

Lady D. By all means; for your sake, methinks, I ought to give him full despair.

Care. Why, then, to let you see that 'tis a much easier thing to cure a fine lady of her sickly taste, than a lover of his impudence—there's Careless for you, without the least tincture of despair about him.

[*Discovers himself.*]

All. Ha, Careless!

Lady D. Abused! undone!

All. Ha, ha!

Cler. Nay, now, madam, we wish you a superior joy; for you have married a man instead of a monster.

Care. Come, come, madam; since you find you were in the power of such a cheat, you may be glad it was no greater: you might have fallen into a rascal's hands; but you know I am a gentleman, my fortune no small one, and, if your temper will give me leave, will deserve you.

Lady S. Come, e'en make the best of your fortune; for, take my word, if the cheat had not been a very agreeable one, I would never have had a hand in't.—You must pardon me, if I can't help laughing.

Lady D. Well, since it must be so, I pardon all; only one thing let me beg of you, sir; that is, your promise to wear this habit one month for my satisfaction.

Care. Oh, madam, that's a trifle! I'll lie in the sun a whole summer for an olive complexion, to oblige you.

Lady D. Well, Mr. Careless, I begin now to think better of my fortune, and look back with apprehension of the escape I have had; you have already cured my folly, and were but my health recoverable, I should think myself completely happy.

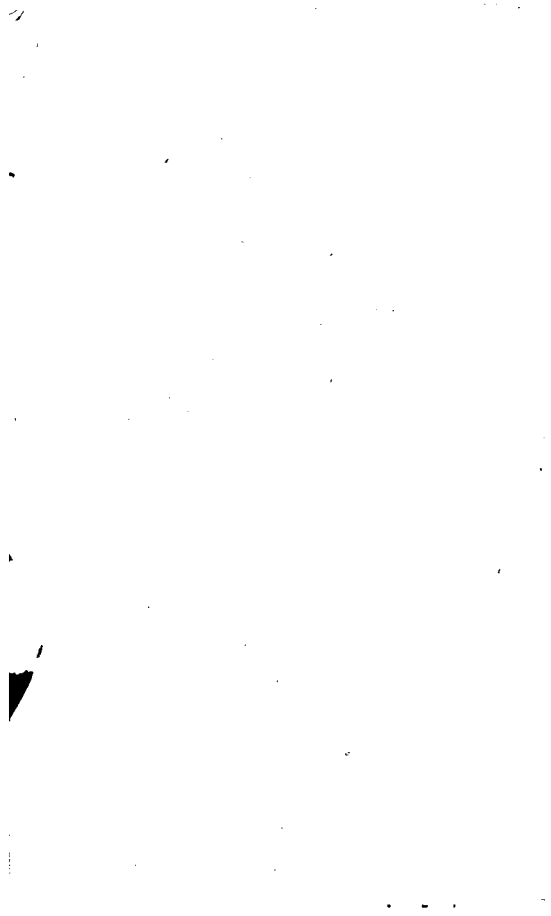
Care. For that, madam, we'll venture to save you doctor's fees;

And trust to nature: time will soon discover,
Your best physician is a favour'd lover. [*Exeunt.*]

EPILOGUE.

WELL, sirs, I know not how the play may pass,
But, in my humble sense—our bard's an ass;
For had he ever known the least of nature,
He had found his double spark a dismal creature:
To please two ladies he two forms puts on,
As if the thing in shadows could be done;
The women really two, and he, poor soul! but one. }
Had he revers'd the hint, he had done the feat, }
Had made th' impostor credibly complete; }
A single mistress might have stood the cheat. }
She might to several lovers have been kind,
Nor strain'd your faith, to think both pleas'd and blind.
Plain sense had known, the fair can love receive,
With half the pains your warmest vows can give.

But, hold!—I'm thinking I mistake the matter—
On second thoughts—The hint's but honest satire,
And only meant t' expose their modish sense,
Who think the fire of love's but impudence.
Our spark was really modest; when he found
Two female claims at once, he one disown'd;
Wisely presuming, though in ne'er such haste,
One would be found enough for him at last.
So that, to sum the whole, I think the play
Deserves the usual favours on his day;
If not, he swears he'll write the next to music,
In doggrel rhymes would make or him or you si.
His groveling sense Italian airs shall crown,
And then he's sure ev'n nonsense will go down.
But if you'd have the world suppose the stage
Not quite forsaken in this airy age,
Let your glad votes our needless fears confound,
And speak in claps as loud for sense as sound.



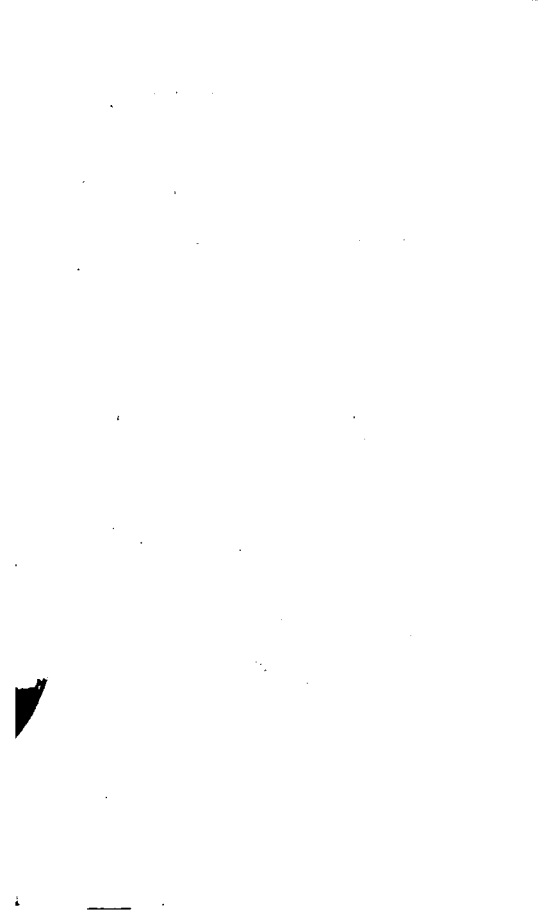
THE
DEVIL TO PAY;
OR,
THE WIVES METAMORPHOSED.
A Ballad Farce.
BY C. COFFEY, ESQ.

CORRECTLY GIVEN, FROM COPIES USED IN THE THEATRES,
BY
THOMAS DIBDIN,
OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.
Author of several Dramatic Pieces, &c.



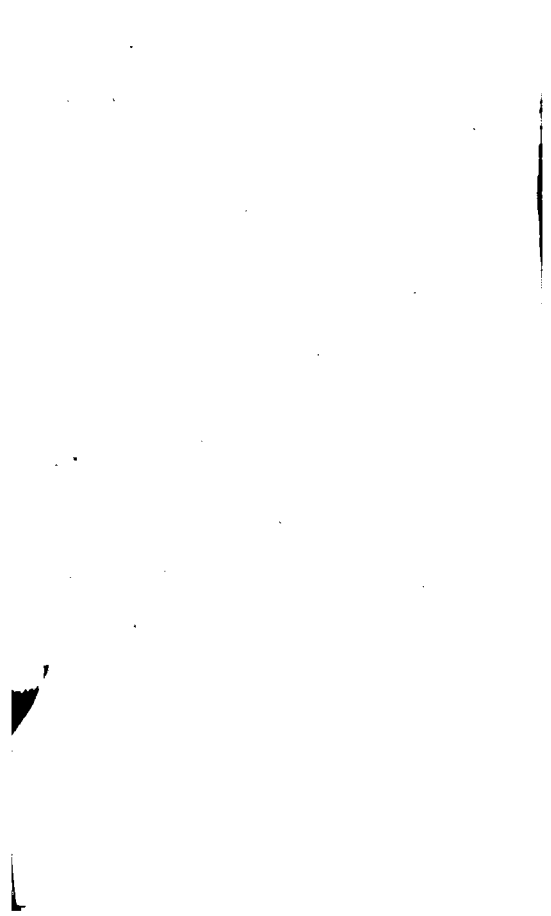
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1815.



THE DEVIL TO PAY

Was originally written in three acts by a performer of the name of Jevon, afterwards altered considerably by Messrs. Coffey and Mottley, and again cut into a single act by Theophilus Cibber. From all the above copies, it was reproduced in its present state in 1731, and published with Mr. Coffey's name as the author. The celebrated Mrs. Clive is said to owe the rise of her great reputation to her success in the part of *Nell*; and Mr. Harper, the original in *Jobson*, considerably advanced in rank and salary by his excellent performance of that character.



PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR. THEOPHILUS CIBBER.

IN ancient Greece the comic muse appear'd,
Sworn foe to vice, by virtue's friends rever'd;
Impartial she indulg'd her noble rage,
And satire was the business of the stage.
No reigning ill was from her censure free,
No sex, no age of man, and no degree;
Whoe'er by passion was, or folly, led,
The laurell'd chief, or sacerdotal head,
The pedant sophist, or imperious dame,
She lash'd the evil, nor conceal'd the name.

How hard the fate of wives in those sad times,
When saucy poets would chastise their crimes!
When each cornuting mate, each rampant jilt
Had her name branded on the stage with guilt!
Each fair may now the comic muse endure,
And join the laugh, though at herself, secure.

Link'd to a patient lord, this night behold
A wilful headstrong terwagant, and scold:
Whom, though her husband did what man could do,
The devil only could reclaim like you:
Like you whose virtues bright embellish life,
And add a blessing to the name of wife.

A merry wag, to mend vexatious brides,
These scenes begun, which shook your father's sides:
And we, obsequious to your taste, prolong
Your mirth, by courting the supplies of song:
If you approve, we our desires obtain,
And by your pleasures shall compute our gain.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

As originally acted.

Sir John Loverule	Mr. Beard.
Butler	Mr. Turbutt.
Cook	Mr. Leigh.
Footman	Mr. Gray.
Coachman	Mr. Marshall.
Jobson	Mr. Harper.
Doctor	Mr. Hill.
Lady Loverule	Mrs. Pritchard.
Lucy	Miss Brett.
Lettice	Miss Bennett.
Nell	Mrs. Clive.

—————
Drury Lane, 1812. Covent Garden, 1814.

Sir John Loverule	Mr. J. Smith.	Mr. Inledon.
Butler	Mr. Miller.	Mr. Treby.
Cook	Mr. Sparks.	Mr. King.
Footman	Mr. Evans.	Mr. Duruset.
Coachman	Mr. West.	Mr. Atkins.
Jobson	Mr. Downton.	Mr. Emery.
Doctor	Mr. Maddocks.	Mr. Chapinan.
Lady Loverule	Mrs. Harlowe.	Mrs. Gibbs.
Lucy	Mrs. Chatterley.	Mrs. Coates.
Lettice	Miss Tidswell.	Miss Cox.
Nell	Miss Mellon.	Mrs. Jordan.

Tenants and Servants.

SCENE—A Country Village.

THE DEVIL TO PAY.



SCENE I. JOBSON'S House.

Enter JOBSON and NELL.

Nell. PR'YTHEE, good Jobson, stay with me to-night, and for once make merry at home.

Job. Peace, peace, you jade, and go spin; for if I lack any thread for my stitching, I will punish you by virtue of my sovereign authority.

Nell. Ay, marry, no doubt of that, whilst you take your swing at the alehouse, spend your substance, get as drunk as a beast, and then come home like a sot, and use one like a dog.

Job. Nounz! do you prate? Why, how now, brazen-face, do you speak ill of the government? Don't you know, hussy, that I am king in my own house, and that this is treason against my majesty?

Nell. Did ever one hear such stuff? But I pray you now, Jobson, don't go to the alehouse to-night.

Job. Well, I'll humour you for once; but don't grow saucy upon't; for I am invited by sir John Loverule's butler, and am to be princely drunk with punch at the hall-place: we shall have a bowl large enough to swim in.

Nell. But they say, husband, the new lady will not suffer a stranger to enter her doors; she grudges even a draught of small beer to her own servants; and several of the tenants have come home with broken heads from her ladyship's own hands, only for smelling strong beer in the house.

Job. A plague on her for a fanatical jade! She has almost distracted the good knight. But she's now abroad, feasting with her relations, and will scarce come home to-night; and we are to have much drink, a fiddle, and merry gambols.

Nell. O, dear husband, let me go with you; we'll be as merry as the night's long.

Job. Why how now, you bold baggage! would you be carried to a company of smooth-fac'd, eating, drinking, lazy, serving-men? No, no, you jade, I'll not be a cuckold.

Nell. I'm sure they would make me welcome: you promised I should see the house; and the family has not been here before since you married and brought me home.

Job. Why, thou most audacious strumpet, dar'st thou dispute with me, thy lord and master? Get in and spin, or else my strap shall wind about thy ribs most soundly.

AIR.

He that has the best wife,
 She's the plague of his life;
 But for her who will scold and will quarrel,
 Let him cut her off short
 Of her meat and her sport,
 And ten times a day hoop her barrel, brave boys,
 And ten times a day hoop her barrel.

Nell. Well, we poor women must always be slaves, and never have any joy; but you men run and ramble at your pleasure.

Job. Why, you most pestilent baggage, will you be hoop'd? Be gone.

Nell. I must obey.

[Going.

Job. Stay; now I think on't, here's sixpence for you;

get ale and apples, stretch and puff thyself up with lamb's wool, rejoice and revel by thyself, be drunk and wallow in thy own sty, like a grumbling sow as thou art.

[Sings.]

He that has the best wife,
She's the plague of his life, &c. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II. SIR JOHN LOVERULE'S House.

Enter Butler, Cook, Footman, Coachman, LUCY,
LETTICE, &c.

But. I would the blind fiddler and our dancing neighbours were here, that we might rejoice a little, while our termagant lady is abroad: I have made a most sovereign bowl of punch.

Lucy. We had need rejoice sometimes, for our devilish new lady will never suffer it in her hearing.

Enter blind Fiddler, JOBSON, and Neighbours.

But. Weloome, welcome all; this is our wish.—Honest old acquaintance, goodman Jobson, how dost thou?

Job. By my troth, I am always sharp-set towards punch, and am now come with a firm resolution, though but a poor cobbler, to be as richly drunk as a lord: I am a true English heart, and look upon drunkenness as the best part of the liberty of the subject.

But. Come, Jobson, we'll bring out our bowl of punch in solemn procession; and then for a song to crown our happiness.

[Exeunt.]

Re-enter JOBSON, Butler, &c. with a Bowl of Punch.

A I B.

Come, jolly Bacchus, god of wine,
Crown this night with pleasure;
Let none at cares of life repine,
To destroy our pleasure:
Fill up the mighty sparkling bowl,
That every true and loyal soul
May drink and sing without control,
To support our pleasure.

Thus, mighty Bacchus, shalt thou be
 Guardian of our pleasure;
 That under thy protection we
 May enjoy new pleasure.
 And as the hours glide away,
 We'll in thy name invoke their stay,
 And sing thy praises that we may
 Live and die with pleasure.

But. The king and the royal family, in a brimmer.

AIR.

Here's a good health to the king,
 And send him a prosp'rous reign;
 O'er hills and high mountains
 We'll drink dry the fountains,
 Until the sun rises again, brave boys,
 Until the sun rises again.

Then here's to thee, my boy boon,
 And here's to thee, my boy boon;
 As we've tarry'd all day
 For to drink down the sun,
 So we'll tarry and drink down the moon, brave boys,
 So we'll tarry and drink down the moon.

Omnes. Huzza!

Enter SIR JOHN LOVERULE *and* LADY LOVERULE.

Lady L. O heaven and earth! what's here within my doors? Is hell broke loose? What troop of fiends are here? Sirrah, you impudent rascal, speak!

Sir J. For shame, my dear.—As this is a time of mirth and jollity, it has always been the custom of my house to give my servants liberty in this season, and to treat my country neighbours, that with innocent sports they may divert themselves.

Lady L. I say, meddle with your own affairs, I will govern my own house without your putting in an oar. Shall I ask you leave to correct my own servants?

Sir J. I thought, madam, this had been my house, and these my tenants and servants.

Lady L. Did I bring a fortune, to be thus abus'd and snubb'd before people? Do you call my authority in question, ungrateful man? Look to your dogs and horses abroad, but it will be my province to govern here; nor will I be controll'd by ere a hunting, hawking knight in Christendom.

AIR.—SIR JOHN LOVERULE.

Ye gods, you gave to me a wife,
Out of your grace and favour,
To be the comfort of my life,
And I was glad to have her;
But if your providence divine
For greater bliss design her,
T' obey your wills at any time,
I'm ready to resign her.

This it is to be married to a continual tempest: strife and noise, canting and hypocrisy, are eternally afloat—'Tis impossible to bear it long.

Lady L. Ye filthy scoundrels, and odious jades, I'll teach you to junket it thus, and steal my provisions; I shall be devoured, at this rate.

But. I thought, madam, we might be merry once upon a holiday.

Lady L. Holiday, you popish cur! Is one day more holy than another? And if it be, you'll be sure to get drunk upon it, you rogue. [*Beats him*] You minx, you impudent flirt, are you jigging it after an abominable fiddle?

Lucy. O lud! she has pull'd off both my ears.

Sir J. Pray, madam, consider your sex and quality: I blush for your behaviour.

Lady L. Consider your incapacity; you shall not instruct me. Who are you, thus muffled, you buzzard?
[*She beats them all; Jobson steals by.*]

Job. I am an honest, plain, psalm-singing cobbler, madam: if your ladyship would but go to church, you might hear me above all the rest there.

Lady L. I'll try thy voice here first, villain.

[*Strikes him.*]

Job. Nounz! what a plague, what a devil ails you?

Lady L. O profane wretch! wicked varlet!

Sir J. For shame! your behaviour is monstrous!

Lady L. Was ever poor lady so miserable in a brutish husband as I am? I that am so pious and so religious a woman!

Job. [*Sings*] He that has the best wife,
She's the plague of his life;

But for her that will scold and will quarrel. [*Exit.*]

Lady L. O rogue! scoundrel! villain!

Sir J. Remember modesty.

Lady L. I'll rout you all with a vengeance—I'll spoil your squeaking treble.

[*Beats the Fiddle about the blind Man's Head.*]

Fid. O murder! murder!

Sir J. Here, poor fellow, take your staff and be gone; there's money to buy you two such; that's your way. [*Exit Fiddler.*]

Lady L. Methinks you are very liberal, sir. Must my estate maintain you in your profuseness?

Sir J. Go up to your closet, pray, and compose your mind.

Lady L. O wicked man! to bid me pray.

Sir J. A man can't be completely cursed, I see, without marriage; but since there is such a thing as separate maintenance, she shall to-morrow enjoy the benefit of it. [*Knocking at the Door*] Here, where are my servants? Must they be frightened from me?—Within there—see who knocks.

Lady L. Within there—Where are my sluts? Ye drabs, ye queans—Lights there.

Re-enter Butler.

But. Sir, it is a doctor that lives ten miles off; he practises physic, and is an astrologer; your worship knows him very well; he is a cunning man, makes almanacs, and can help people to their goods again.

Enter Doctor.

Doc. Sir, I humbly beg your honour's pardon for this unseasonable intrusion; but I am benighted, and

'tis so dark that I can't possibly find my way home; and knowing your worship's hospitality, desire the favour to be harbour'd under your roof to-night.

Lady L. Out of my house, you lewd conjurer, you magician.

Doc. Here's a turn!—here's a change!—Well, if I have any art, ye shall smart for this. [*Aside.*]

Sir J. You see, friend, I am not master of my own house; therefore, to avoid any uneasiness, go down the lane about a quarter of a mile, and you'll see a cobbler's cottage; stay there a little, and I'll send my servant to conduct you to a tenant's house, where you'll be well entertain'd.

Doc. I thank you, sir; I'm your most humble servant—But as for your lady there, she shall this night feel my resentment. [*Exit.*]

Sir J. Come, madam, you and I must have some conference together.

Lady L. Yes; I will have a conference and a reformation too in this house, or I'll turn it upside down—I will. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. JOBSON'S House.

Enter NELL and the Doctor.

Nell. Pray, sir, mend your draught, if you please; you are very welcome, sir.

Doc. Thank you heartily, good woman; and to requite your civility, I'll tell you your fortune.

Nell. O, pray do, sir; I never had my fortune told me in my life.

Doc. Let me behold the lines of your face.

Nell. I'm afraid, sir, 'tis none of the cleanest; I have been about dirty work all this day.

Doc. Come, come, 'tis a good face, be not asham'd of it; you shall show it in greater places suddenly.

Nell. O dear, sir, I shall be mightily asham'd; I want decency when I come before great folks.

Doc. You must be confident, and fear nothing; there is much happiness attends you.

Nell. Oh me! this is a rare man; heaven be thank'd.

[*Aside.*

Doc. To-morrow, before the sun rise, you shall be the happiest woman in this country.

Nell. How, by to-morrow? alack-a-day, sir, how can that be?

Doc. No more shall you be troubled with a surly husband, that rails at, and straps you.

Nell. Lud! how came he to know that? he must be a conjurer! [*Aside*] Indeed my husband is somewhat rugged, and in his cups will beat me, but it is not much: he's an honest pains-taking man, and I let him have his way. Pray, sir, take t'other cup of ale.

Doc. I thank you—Believe me, to-morrow you shall be the richest woman i'th' hundred, and ride in your own coach.

Nell. O father! you jeer me.

Doc. By my art, I do not. But mark my words, be confident, and bear all out, or worse will follow.

Nell. Never fear, sir, I warrant you—O gemini! a coach.

Enter JOBSON.

Job. Where is this quean? Here, Nell! What a plague, are you drunk with your lamb's wool?

Nell. O husband! here's the rarest man—he has told me my fortune.

Job. Has he so! and planted my fortune too, a lusty pair of horns upon my head—Eh!—Is't not so?

Doc. Thy wife is a virtuous woman, and thou't be happy—

Job. Come out, you hang-dog, you juggler, you cheating, bamboozling villain; must I be cuckolded by such rogues as you are, mackmaticians, and almanac makers?

Nell. Pr'ythee peace, husband, we shall be rich, and have a coach of our own.

Job. A coach! a cart, a wheel-barrow, you jade.—By the mackin, she's drunk, bloody drunk, most confoundedly drunk—Get to bed, you strumpet.

[*Beats her.*

Nell. O mercy on us! is this a taste of my good fortune? Oh, you are the devil of a conjurer, sure enough. [Exit.

Doc. You had better not have touch'd her, you surly rogue.

Job. Out of my house, you villain.

Doc. Farewell, you paltry slave.

Job. Get out, you rogue. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV. *An open Country.*

Enter Doctor.

AIR.

Doc. My little spirits now appear,
Nadir and Abishog draw near;
The time is short, make no delay;
Then quickly haste and come away:
Nor moon nor stars afford their light,
But all is wrapp'd in gloomy night:
Both men and beast to rest incline,
And all things favour my design.

Spi. [Within] Say, master, what is to be done?

Doc. My strict commands be sure attend,
For ere this night shall have an end,
You must this cobbler's wife transform,
And to the knight's the like perform:
With all your most specific charms,
Convey each wife to diff'rent arms;
Let the delusion be so strong,
That none may know the right from wrong.

Spi. All this we will with care perform
In thunder, lightning, and a storm.

[Thunder. Exit Doctor.

SCENE V. *JOBSON'S House. The Bed in view.*

JOBSON discovered at Work.

Job. What devil has been abroad to-night? I never heard such claps of thunder in my life; I thought my little hovel would have flown away; but now all is

clear again, and a fine star-light morning it is. I'll settle myself to work. They say winter's thunder is summer's wonder.

AIR.

Of all the trades from east to west,
The cobbler's past contending,
Is like in time to prove the best,
Which every day is mending.
How great his praise, who can amend
The soles of all his neighbours;
Nor is unmindful of his end,
But to his last still labours.

Lady L. [*In Bed*]. Hey-day! what impudent ballad-singing rogue is that, who dares wake me out of my sleep? I'll have you flayed, you rascal.

Job. What a plague, does she talk in her sleep? or is she drunk still?

AIR.

In Bath a wanton wife did dwell,
As Chaucer he did write,
Who wantonly did spend her time
In many a fond delight.
All on a time so sick she was,
And she at length did die;
And then her soul at Paradise
Did knock most mightily.

Lady L. Why, villain, rascal, screech-owl, who makest a worse noise than a dog hung in the pales, or a hog in a high wind. Where are all my servants? Somebody come and hamstring this rogue. [*Knocks.*]

Job. Why, how now, you brazen quean! You must get drunk with the conjurer, must you? I'll give you money another time to spend in lamb's wool, you saucy jade, shall I?

Lady L. Monstrous! I can find no bell to ring. Where are my servants? They shall toss him in a blanket.

Job. Ay, the jade's asleep still: the conjurer told her she should keep her coach, and she is dreaming of her equipage. [*Sings.*]

I will come in spite, she said,
 Of all such churls as thee ;
 Thou art the cause of all our pain,
 Our grief and misery.
 Thou first broke the commandment,
 In honour of thy wife :
 When Adam heard her say these words,
 He ran away for life.

Lady L. Why, husband! sir John! will you suffer me to be thus insulted?

Job. Husband! sir John! what a plague has she knighted me? And my name's Zekel too; a good jest, faith.

Lady L. Ha! he's gone, he's not in the bed. Heav'n! where am I? Foh! what loathsome smells are here? Janvass sheets, and a filthy ragged curtain; a beastly rug, and a flock bed. Am I awake, or is it all a dream? What rogue is that? Sirrah! where am I? Who brought me hither? What rascal are you?

Job. This is amazing—I never heard such words from her before? If I take my strap to you I'll make you know your husband, I'll teach you better manners, you saucy drab.

Lady L. Oh, astonishing impudence! You my husband, sirrah? I'll have you hang'd, you rogue; I'm a lady. Let me know who has given me a sleeping draught, and convey'd me hither, you dirty varlet?

Job. A sleeping draught! yes, you drunken jade, you had a sleeping draught with a plague to ye. What, has not your lamb's wool done working yet?

Lady L. Where am I? Where has my villanous husband put me? Lucy! Lettice! Where are my queans?

Job. Ha, ha, ha! What, does she call her maids too? The conjurer has made her mad as well as drunk.

Lady L. He talks of conjurers; sure I am bewitched! Ha! what clothes are here? a linsey-woolsey gown, a calico hood, a red bays petticoat; I am removed from my own house by witchcraft. What must I do? What will become of me?

[Horns wind without.]

Job. Hark! the hunters and the merry horns are abroad. Why, Nell, you lazy jade, 'tis break of day to work, to work; come, and spin, you drab, or I'll tan your hide for you. What a plague must I be at work two hours before you in the morning?

Lady L. Why, sirrah, thou impudent villain, dost thou not know me, you rogue?

Job. Know you, yes I know you well enough, and I'll make you know me before I have done with you.

Lady L. I am sir John Loverule's lady; how came I here?

Job. Sir John Loverule's lady! No, Nell, not quite so bad neither; that damn'd, stingy, fanatic whore plagues every one that comes near her—the whole country curses her.

Lady L. Nay, then I'll hold no longer—you rogue, you insolent villain, I'll teach you better manners.

[Flings the Bedstaff and other things at him.]

Job. This is more than ever I saw by her, I never had an ill word from her before. Come, strap, I'll try your mettle; I'll sober you, I warrant you, quean.

[He straps her. She flies at him.]

Lady L. I'll pull your throat out; I'll tear out your eyes; I am a lady, sirrah. O murder! murder! sir John Loverule will hang you for this. Murder! murder!

Job. Come, hussy, leave fooling, and come to your spinning, or else I'll lamb you, you never were so lamb'd since you were an inch long. Take it up, you jade.

[She flings it down. He straps her.]

Lady L. Hold! hold! I'll do any thing.

Job. Oh! I thought I should bring you to yourself again.

Lady L. What shall I do? I can't spin. [Aside.]

Job. I'll into my stall; 'tis broad day now. [Works and sings] Hey-day, I think the jade's brain is turn'd. What, have you forgot to spin, hussy?

Lady L. But I have not forgot to run. I'll e'en try my feet. I shall find somebody in the town sure, that will succour me. [She runs out.]

Job. What, does she run for it?—I'll after her.

[He runs out.]

SCENE VI. SIR JOHN LOVERULE'S House.

NELL discovered in Bed.

Nell. What pleasant dreams I have had to-night! Methought I was in Paradise, upon a bed of violets and roses, and the sweetest husband by my side! Ha! bless me! where am I now? What sweets are these? No garden in the spring can equal them.—Am I on a bed?—The sheets are sarcenet, sure; no linen ever was so fine.—What a gay silken robe have I got—O heaven! I dream!—Yet, if this be a dream, I would not wish to wake again. Sure I died last night and went to heaven, and this is it.

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Now must I awake an alarm that will not lie still again till midnight at soonest; the first greeting I suppose will be jade, or slut. [*Aside*—Madam! madam!

Nell. O gemini! who's this? What dost say, sweetheart?

Lucy. Sweetheart! O lud, sweetheart! The best names I have had these three months from her, have been slut or jade. [*Aside*—What gown and ruffles will your ladyship wear to-day?

Nell. What does she mean? Ladyship! gown and ruffles!—Sure I am awake!—Oh! I remember the cunning man, now.

Lucy. Did your ladyship speak?

Nell. Ay, child; I'll wear the same I did yesterday.

Lucy. Mercy upon me!—Child!—Here's a miracle!
[*Aside.*

Enter LETTICE.

Let. Is my lady awake?—Have you had her shoe or her slipper at your head yet? [*Apart to Lucy.*

Lucy. Oh no, I'm overjoy'd: she's in the kindest humour!—Go to the bed, and speak to her—Now is your time. [*Apart to Lucetta.*

Let. Now's my time! what, to have another tooth beat out? [*Apart*] Madam.

Nell. What dost say, my dear?—O father! What would she have?

Let. What work will your ladyship please to have done to-day.

Nell. Work, child! 'tis holiday; no work to-day.

Let. Oh, mercy! Am I, or thee awake? or do we both dream?—Here's a blest change! [*Apart to Lucy.*]

Lucy. If it continues we shall be a happy family.

[*Apart to Lettice.*]

Let. Your ladyship's chocolate is ready.

Nell. Mercy on me! what's that? Some garment I suppose. [*Aside*]—Put it on then, sweetheart.

Let. Put it on, madam? I have taken it off; 'tis ready to drink.

Nell. I mean put it by; I don't care for drinking now.

Enter Cook.

Cook. Now I go like a bear to the stake, to know her scurvy ladyship's commands about dinner. How many rascally names must I be called? [*Aside.*]

Let. Oh, John Cook! you'll be out of your wits to find my lady in so sweet a temper. [*Apart to Cook.*]

Cook. What a devil are they all mad?

[*Apart to Lettice.*]

Lucy. Madam, here's the cook come about dinner.

Nell. Oh! there's a fine cook! He looks like one of your gentlefolks. [*Aside*]—Indeed, honest man, I'm very hungry now, pray get me a rasher upon the coals, a piece of milk cheese, and some white bread.

Cook. Hey! what's to do here? my head turns round. Honest man! I look'd for rogne and rascal, at least. She's strangely changed in her diet, as well as her humour. [*Aside*]—I'm afraid, madam, cheese and bacon will sit very heavy on your ladyship's stomach in a morning. If you please, madam, I'll toss you up a white fricassee of chickens in a trice, madam; or what does your ladyship think of a veal sweetbread?

Nell. Ev'n what you will, good cook.

Cook. Good cook! good cook! Ah! 'tis a sweet lady.

[*Apart.*]

Enter Butler.

Oh! kiss me, ohip, I am out of my wits—We have the kindest, sweetest lady. *[Apart to Butler.*

But. You shamming rogue, I think you are out of your wits, all of ye; the maids look merrily too.

[Apart to Cook.

Lucy. Here's the butler, madam, to know your ladyship's orders.

Nell. Oh! pray, Mr. Butler, let me have some small beer when my breakfast comes in.

But. Mr. Butler! Mr. Butler! I shall be turn'd into stone with amazement. *[Aside]* Would not your ladyship rather have a glass of Frontinac, or Monte-pulchianco.

Nell. O dear! what hard names are there; but I must not betray myself. *[Aside]*—Well, which you please, Mr. Butler!

Enter Coachman.

But. Go, get you in, and be rejoiced as I am.

[Apart to Coachman.

Coach. The cook has been making his game I know not how long. What, do you banter too? *[Apart to But.*

Lucy. Madam, the coachman.

Coach. I come to know if your ladyship goes out to-day, and which you'll have, the coach or chariot.

Nell. Good lack-a-day!—I'll ride in the coach, if you please.

Coach. The sky will fall, that's certain. *[Exit.*

Nell. I can hardly think I am awake yet. How well-pleas'd they all seem to wait upon me!—Oh, notable cunning man!—My head turns round!—I am quite giddy with my own happiness.

AIR.

Though late I was a cobbler's wife,
In cottage most obscure-a,
In plain stuff gown, and short-ear'd coif,
Hard labour did eudur-a.

The scene is chang'd, I am alter'd quite,
And from poor humble Nell-a,
I'll learn to dance, to read and write,
And from all bear the bell-a.

[Exit.

Enter SIR JOHN LOVERULE, meeting his Servants.

But. Oh, sir! here's the rarest news!

Lucy. There never was the like, sir! You'll be overjoy'd and amaz'd!

Sir J. What, are ye mad?—What's the matter with ye?—How now? here's a new face in my family!—What's the meaning of all this?

But. Oh, sir! the family's turn'd upside down! We are almost distracted; the happiest people!

Lucy. Ay, my lady, sir; my lady—

Sir J. What, is she dead?

But. Dead! heaven forbid!—O! she's the best woman; the sweetest lady!

Sir J. This is astonishing!—I must go and inquire into this wonder. If this be true, I shall rejoice indeed.

But. 'Tis true, sir, upon my honour. Long live sir John and my lady! Huzza! [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter NELL.

Nell. I well remember the cunning man warn'd me to bear all out with confidence, or worse, he said, would follow.—I am asham'd, and know not what to do with all this ceremony! I am amaz'd, and out of my senses!—I look'd in the glass, and saw a gay fine thing I knew not!—Methought my face was not at all like that I have seen at home in a piece of looking-glass fastened upon the cupboard. But great ladies, they say, have flattering glasses, that show them far unlike themselves, whilst poor folks' glasses represent them e'en just as they are.

Re-enter LUCY.

Lucy. Oh, madam! here's my master just return'd from hunting.

Re-enter SIR JOHN LOVERULE.

Nell. O gemini! this fine gentleman my husband!

Sir J. My dear, I am overjoy'd to see my family thus transported with ecstasy, which you occasion'd. [*Aside.*]

Nell. Sir, I shall always be proud to do every thing that may give you delight, or your family satisfaction.

Sir J. By heaven, I am charm'd!—Dear creature, if thou continnest thus, I had rather enjoy thee than the Indies. But can this be real?—May I believe my senses?

Nell. All that's good above can witness for me, I am in earnest. [Kneels.

Sir J. Rise, my dearest.—Now am I happy indeed.

DUET.—SIR JOHN LOVERULE and NELL.

Sir J. Was ever man possess'd of
So sweet, so kind a wife?

Nell. Dear sir, you make me proud.
Be you but kind,
And you shall find
All the good I can boast of,
Shall end but with my life.

Sir J. Give me thy lips.

Nell. First let me, dear sir, wipe em.

Sir J. Was ever so sweet a wife? [Kisses her.

Nell. Thank you, dear sir.
I vow and protest
I ne'er was so kiss'd.
Again, sir!

Sir J. Again, and again, my dearest;
O may it last for life!
What joy thus to enfold thee!

Nell. What pleasure to behold thee!
Inclin'd again to kiss!

Sir J. How ravishing the bliss!

Nell. I little thought this morning
'Twould ever come to this. [Exeunt.

Enter LADY LOVERULE.

Lady L. Here's a fine rout and rioting! You, sirrah, butler, you rogue!

But. Why, how now? Who are you?

Lady L. Impudent varlet! don't you know your lady?

But. Lady!—Here, turn this mad woman out of doors.

Lady L. You rascal—take that, sirrah.

[Flings a Glass at him.

Foot. Have a care, hussy; there's a good pump without; we shall cool your courage for you.

Lady L. You, Lucy, have you forgot me too, you minx?

Lucy. Forgot you, woman! Why, I never remember'd you; I never saw you before in my life.

Lady L. Oh, the wicked slut! I'll give you cause to remember me, I will, hussy. [*Pulls her Head-clothes off.*]

Lucy. Murder! murder! help!

Re-enter SIR JOHN LOVERULE and NELL.

Sir J. How now? What uproar's this?

Lady L. You, Lettice, you slut! won't you know me neither? [*Strikes her.*]

Let. Help! help!

Sir J. What's to do there?

But. Why, sir, here's a mad woman calls herself my lady, and is beating and cuffing us all round.

Sir J. Thou my wife? poor creature, I pity thee.—I never saw thee before. [*To Lady Loverule.*]

Lady L. Then it is in vain to expect redress from thee, thou wicked contriver of all my misery.

Nell. How am I amazed? Can that be I there, in my clothes, that have made all this disturbance? And yet I am here, to my thinking, in these fine clothes. How can this be? I am so confounded and affrighted, that I begin to wish I was with Zekel Jobson again. [*Aside.*]

Lady L. To whom shall I apply myself, or whither can I fly?—Heaven! what do I see? Is not that I yonder, in my gown and petticoat I wore yesterday? How can it be? I cannot be at two places at once.

Sir J. Poor wretch! She's stark mad.

Lady L. What, in the devil's name, was I here before I came? Let me look in the glass.—Oh, heavens! I am astonish'd! I don't know myself!—If this be I that the glass shows me, I never saw myself before.

Sir J. What incoherent madness is this?

Enter JOBSON.

Lady L. There, that's the devil in my likeness, who has robb'd me of my countenance.—He here too?

Job. Ay, hussy, and here's my strap, you quean?

Nell. O dear! I'm afraid my husband will beat me; that man on t'other side the room there.

Job. I hope your honours will pardon her, she was drinking with a conjurer last night, and has been mad ever since, and calls herself my lady Loverule.

Sir J. Poor woman! take care of her; do not hurt her; she may be cured of this.

Job. Yes, and please your worship, you shall see me cure her presently.—Hussy, do you see this?

Nell. O! pray, Zekel, don't beat me.

Sir J. What says my love? Does she infect thee with madness too?

Nell. I am not well; pray lead me in.

[*Exeunt Nell and Maids.*]

Job. I beseech your worship don't take it ill of me; she shall never trouble you more.

Sir J. Take her home, and use her kindly.

Lady L. What will become of me?

[*Exeunt Jobson and Lady Loverule.*]

Enter Footman.

Foot. Sir, the doctor who call'd here last night, desires you will give him leave to speak a word or two with you, upon very earnest business.

Sir J. What can this mean? Bring him in.

Enter Doctor.

Doc. Lo! on my knees, sir, I beg forgiveness for what I have done, and put my life into your hands.

Sir J. What mean you?

Doc. I have exercis'd my magic art upon your lady: I know you have too much honour to take away my life, since I might still have conceal'd it, had I pleased.

Sir J. You have now brought me to a glimpse of misery too great to bear. Is all my happiness then turn'd into vision only?

Doc. Sir, I beg you, fear not: if any harm comes on it, I freely give you leave to hang me.

Sir J. Inform me what you have done.

Doc. I have transform'd your lady's face so that she seems the cobbler's wife, and have charm'd her face into the likeness of my lady's: and last night, when the storm arose, my spirits convey'd them to each other's bed.

Sir J. Oh, wretch, thou hast undone me! I am fallen from the height of all my hopes, and must still be curs'd with a tempestuous wife, a fury whom I never knew quiet since I had her.

Doc. If that be all, I can continue the charm for both their lives.

Sir J. Let the event be what it will, I'll hang you, if you do not end the charm this instant.

Doc. I will, this minute, sir; and perhaps you'll find it the luckiest of your life: I can assure you your lady will prove the better for it.

Sir J. Hold, there's one material circumstance I'd know.

Doc. Your pleasure, sir?

Sir J. Perhaps the cobbler has—you understand me?

Doc. I do assure you, no; for e'er she was convey'd to his bed, the cobbler was got up to work, and he has done nought but beat her ever since; and you are like to reap the fruits of his labour. He'll be with you in a minute.—Here he comes.

Re-enter JOBSON.

Sir J. So, Jobson, where's your wife?

Job. And please your worship, she's here at the door; but indeed I thought I had lost her just now; for as she came into the hall, she fell into such a swoon, that I thought she would never come out on't again; but a tweak or two by the nose, and half a dozen straps, did the business at last.—Here, where are you, hussy?

Re-enter LADY LOVERULE.

But. [*Holds up the Candle, but lets it fall when he sees her*] O heaven and earth! is this my lady?

Job. What does he say? My wife chang'd to my lady?

Cook. Ay, I thought the other was too good for our lady.

Lady L. Sir, you are the person I have most offended; and here confess I have been the worst of wives in every thing, but that I always kept myself chaste. If you can vouchsafe once more to take me to your bosom, the remainder of my days shall joyfully be spent in duty and observance of your will.

Sir J. Rise, madam; I do forgive you; and if you are sincere in what you say, you'll make me happier than all the enjoyments in the world without you could do.

Job. What a plague! am I to lose my wife thus?

Re-enter LUCY and LETTICE.

Lucy. Oh, sir, the strangest accident has happened—it has amaz'd us!—My lady was in so great a swoon, we thought she had been dead.

Let. And when she came to herself, she proved another woman.

Job. Ha, ha, ha! a bull, a bull!

Re-enter NELL.

Nell. My head turns round; I must go home. O, Zekel, are you there?

Job. O lud! is that fine lady my wife? 'Egad, I'm afraid to come near her. What can be the meaning of this?

Sir J. This is a happy change, and I'll have it celebrated with all the joy I proclaimed for my late short-liv'd vision.

Lady L. To me 'tis the happiest day I ever knew.

Sir J. Here, Jobson, take thy fine wife.

Job. But one word, sir.—Did not your worship make a buck of me, under the rose?

Sir J. No, upon my honour, nor ever kiss'd her lips till I came from hunting; but since she has been a means of bringing about this happy change, I'll give thee five hundred pounds home with her, to buy a stock of leather.

Job. Brave boys! I'm a prince—The prince of cobblers! Come lüther and kiss me, Nell; I'll never strap thee more.

Nell. Indeed, Zekel, I have been in such a dream that I'm quite weary of it. Forsooth, madam, will you please to take your clothes, and let me have mine again.

Job. Hold your tongue, you fool, they'll serve you to go to church.

Lady L. No; thou shalt keep them, and I'll preserve thine as relics.

Job. And can your ladyship forgive my strapping your honour so very much?

Lady L. Most freely. The joy of this blessed change sets all things right again.

Sir J. Let us forget every thing that is past, and think of nothing now but joy and pleasure.

AIR.

Lady L. Let ev'ry face with smiles appear,
Be joy in ev'ry breast,
Since from a life of pain and care,
We now are truly blest.

Sir J. May no remembrance of past time
Our present pleasures soil;
Be nought but mirth and joy a crime,
And sporting all our toil.

Job. I hope you'll give me leave to speak,
If I may be so bold:
Nought but the devil, and this good strap,
Could ever tame a scold. [Exeunt.]

