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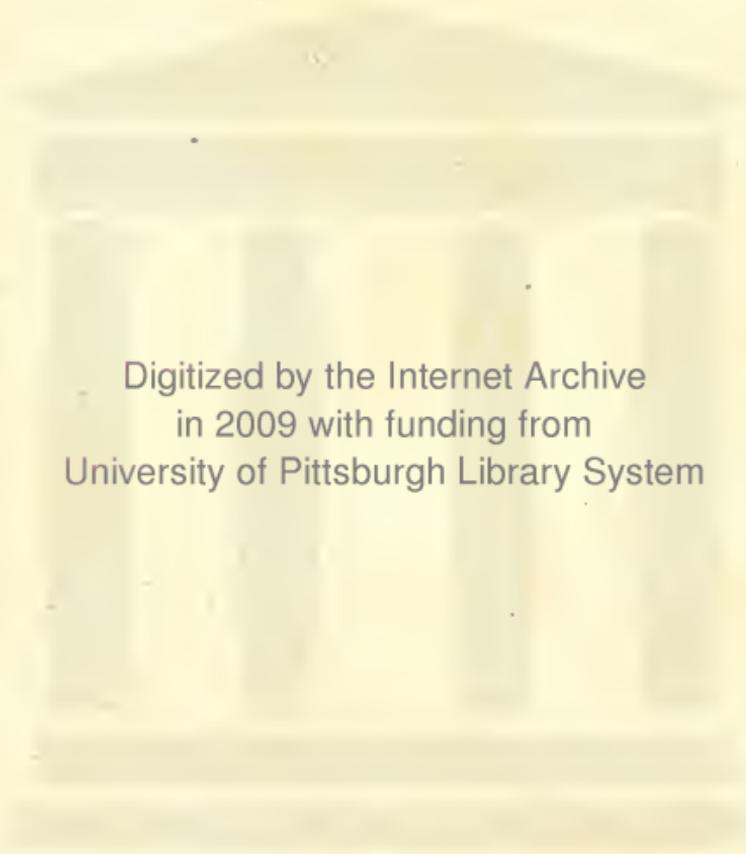
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Hamilton, del.

Thornhill's sculp.

MRS. SIDDONS as CLEONE.

— Hear his voice.
 And this way he directs his hated Steps.

CLEONE.

WILLIAM & MARY DARLINGTON
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A

TRAGEDY,

BY MR. R. DODSLEY.

- ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, IN COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

“The lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.”

LONDON :

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of
JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

M DCC XCII.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE,
EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

MY LORD,

ENCOURAGED by the favourable opinion of many among the most ingenious of my friends, but particularly animated by your Lordship's approbation, I ventured to bring this Play on the Stage, even after it had been refused where I first intended it should appear. As the reception it met with from the Public hath amply justified your Lordship's sentiments concerning it, permit me to take this opportunity of presenting it to You, as an unfeigned testimony of the respect I bear for your Lordship's distinguished merit, and as a grateful, though unequal return, for the many favours, which it is my pride to own, I have received from your hands. For I do not mean, my Lord, in this address, to offend your delicacy by a needless panegyric upon Your character, which will be deliver'd down with admiration to latest posterity, but to do

the highest honour to my own, by thus publishing to the world, that I have not been thought unworthy the favour and patronage of the Earl of Chesterfield.

I am,

my Lord,

with great Respect,

your Lordship's

most obliged and

obedient humble Servant,

R. DODSLEY.

PREFACE
TO THE THIRD EDITION.

AN imperfect hint towards the Fable of the following Tragedy, was taken from the Legend of St. Genevieve written originally in French, and translated into English about an hundred years ago by Sir William Lower. The first sketch of it, consisting then of Three Acts only, was shewn to Mr. Pope two or three years before his death, who inform'd me that in his very early youth, he had attempted a Tragedy on the same subject, which he afterwards destroy'd; and he advised me to extend my plan to Five Acts.

It lay by me, however, for some years, before I pursu'd it; discourag'd by the apprehension of failing in the attempt: but happening at last to discover a method of altering and extending it, I resum'd my design; and as leisure from my other avocations permitted, have brought it to its present state.

I cannot omit this opportunity of repeating my acknowledgments to the Public for the continuance of their candid reception to these imperfect scenes. The Performers also are entitled to my thanks, for their diligent application to their respective parts, and for their just and forcible manner of representing them.

I have endeavoured in this third † edition to avail myself of every material objection that hath come to my knowledge, as far

† Printed in 1759.

as I could do so without totally altering the fable; not indeed with the vain hope of producing at last a faultless piece, but in order to render it in some degree less unworthy of that indulgence with which it has been honour'd. I have only to add, that if it should be acted another season, I could wish it might be studied from the present copy, as I hope it is not only more correct, but somewhat improved.

CLEONE.

THIS Play, the production of one of the greatest protectors of letters in others, and a man of no mean powers himself, is built in part upon the old French legend of ST. GENEVIEVE.

DODSLEY offered it to GARRICK, but the manager declined it for a cause to him sufficient—it contained no character expressly suited to his own great powers.

To the other house, therefore, it was taken, and in 1758 acted with universal applause. Miss BEL-LAMY sustained the trying character of the principal, and in the conclusive scenes of maternal agony over her murdered child harrowed the hearts of the audience with powers then at their height, and by many conceived of the highest excellence.

The whole of this Drama is chastely written; with no aim after decorative pomp, or figurative anguish. NATURE presides over the whole, and dictates through a tender mind every sentiment of CLEONE.

The distress is perhaps too horrible for female minds to bear;—the maternal feelings are those which vibrate with the greatest keenness of sensation.

PROLOGUE.

By WILLIAM MELMOTH, Esq.

Spoken by Mr. Ross.

*'T WAS once the mode inglorious war to wage
With each bold bard that durst attempt the stage,
And Prologues were but preludes to engage.
Then mourn'd the Muse not story'd woes alone,
Condemn'd to weep, with tears unfeign'd, her own.
Past are those hostile days : and wits no more
One undistinguished fate with fools deplore.
No more the Muse laments her long-felt wrongs,
From the rude licence of tumultuous tongues :
In peace each bard prefers his doubtful claim,
And as he merits, meets, or misses, Fame.
'Twas thus in Greece (when Greece fair science blest,
And Heav'n-born arts their chosen land possess)
Th' assembled people sate with decent pride,
Patient to hear, and skilful to decide ;
Less forward far to censure than to praise,
Unwillingly refus'd the rival Bays.
Yes ; they whom candour and true taste inspire,
Blame not with half the passion they admire ;
Each little blemish with regret descry,
But mark the beauties with a raptur'd eye.
Yet modest fears invade our Author's breast,
With Attic lore, or Latian, all unblest ;*

PROLOGUE.

*Deny'd by Fate through classic fields to stray,
Where bloom those wreaths which never know decay :
Where arts new force from kindred arts acquire,
And poets catch from poets genial fire .
Not thus he boasts the breast humane to prove,
And touch those springs which generous passions move,
To melt the soul by scenes of fabled woe,
And bid the tear for fancy'd sorrows flow ;
Far humbler paths he treads in quest of fame,
And trusts to Nature what from Nature came.*

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

SIFROY, a general officer,	-	-	-	Mr. Rofs.
BEAUFORT senior, father of Cleone,	-	-	-	Mr. Ridout.
BEAUFORT junior, her brother,	-	-	-	Mr. Dyer.
PAULET, the friend of Sifroy,	-	-	-	Mr. Clarke.
GLANVILLE, a near relation,	-	-	-	Mr. Sparks.
RAGOZIN, a servant corrupted by Glanville,	-	-	-	Mr. Anderson.

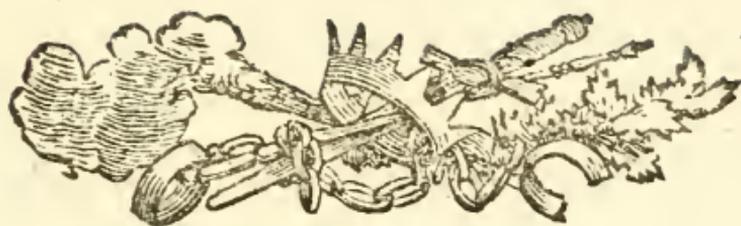
Women.

CLEONE, the wife of Sifroy,	-	-	-	Mrs. Bellamy.
ISABELLA, her companion,	-	-	-	Mrs. Elmy.
A CHILD about five years old.				

Officers of Justice, Servants, &c.

SCENE, Sifroy's House, and an adjoining Wood.

TIME, that of the Action.



CLEONE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Room in SIFROY'S House. Enter GLANVILLE and ISABELLA.

Glanville.

WHAT means this diffidence, this idle fear?
Have I not given thee proof my heart is thine?
Proof that I mean to sanctify our joys
By sacred wedlock? Why then doubt my truth?
Why hesitate, why tremble thus to join
In deeds, which justice and my love to thee
Alone inspire? If we are one, our hopes,
Our views, our interests ought to be the same.
And canst thou tamely see this proud Sifroy
Triumphant lord it o'er my baffled rights?
Those late acquir'd demesnes, by partial hand
Consign'd to him, in equity are mine.

Isab. The story oft I've heard: yet sure Sifroy
Hath every legal title to that wealth

By will bequeath'd ; and childless should he die,
The whole were thine. Wait then till time—

Glan. Art thou,
My Isabella, thou an advocate
For him whose hand, with felon-arts, with-holds
Those treasures which I covet but for thee ?
Where is thy plighted faith ?—thy vows ?—thy truth ?

Isab. Forbear reproach !—O Glanville, love to thee
Hath robb'd me of my truth—seduc'd me on
From step to step, till virtue quite forsook me.
False if I am, 'tis to myself, not thee ;
Thou hast my heart, and thou shalt guide my will,
Obedient to thy wishes.

Glan. Hear me then—
This curst Sifroy stands in my fortune's way ;
I must remove him.—Well I know his weakness—
His fiery temper favours my design,
And aids the plot that works his own undoing.
Yet whilst far off remov'd, he leads our troops,
The nation's doughty chief, he stands secure,
Beyond the reach of my avenging hand.
But this will force him home—I have convey'd,
By Ragozin his servant, whom I sent
On other business, letters which disclose
His wife's amour with Paulet.

Isab. Ah! tho' me
Thou hast convinc'd, and I believe her false,
Think'st thou Sifroy will credit the report ?
Will not remembrance of her seeming truth,

Her artful modesty, and acted fondness,
Secure the easy confidence of love?

Glan. I know it ought not. Weak must be the man
Who builds his hopes on such deceitful ground.
Paulet is young, not destitute of passion;
Her husband absent, they are oft together:
Then she hath charms to warm the coldest breast,
Melt the most rigid virtue into love,
And tempt the firmest friendship to be frail.
All this I've urg'd, join'd with such circumstance,
Such strong presumptive proof, as cannot fail
To shake the firm foundations of his trust.
This once accomplish'd, his own violence
And heated rage, will urge him to commit
Some desperate act, and plunge him into ruin.

Isab. But grant thou should'st succeed, what will
 ensue?

Suppose him dead, doth he not leave an heir,
An infant son, that will prevent thy claim?

Glan. That bar were easily remov'd.—But soft,
Who's here? 'Tis Ragozin return'd.

Enter RAGOZIN.

Glan. What news,

Dear Ragozin? How did Sifroy receive
My letters? Speak—My vast impatience would
Know all at once.—What does his rage intend?

Rag. All you could wish. A whirlwind is but weak
To the wild storm that agitates his breast.
At first indeed he doubted—swore 'twas false—

Impossible—But as he read, his looks
 Grew fierce; pale horror trembled on his cheek;
 O she is vile!—It must, it must be so—
 Glanville is just, is good, and scorns to wrong her—
 I know his friendship, know his honest heart—
 Then falling, sobb'd in speechless agony.

Glan. Good, very good!—I knew 'twould gall—
 proceed.

Rag. His smother'd grief at length burst forth in
 rage.

He started from the floor—he drew his sword—
 And fixing it with violence in my grasp—
 Plunge this, he cry'd, O plunge it in the heart
 Of that vile traitor, Paulet!—Yet forbear—
 That exquisite revenge my own right hand
 Demands, nor will I give it to another!
 This said—push'd on by rage, he to her sire
 Dispatch'd a letter, opening to him all
 Her crime, and his dishonour. This to you.

[*Gives a letter.*]

Glan. How eagerly he runs into the toils,
 Which I have planted for his own destruction!—
 Dear Ragozin, success shall double all
 My promises; and now we are embark'd,
 We must proceed, whatever storms arise.

Isab. But read the letter.

[*Glanville opens the letter and reads.*]

“ Tho' thou hast stabb'd me to the heart, I cannot
 “ but thank thy goodness for the tender regard thou
 “ hast shewn to my honour. The traitor Paulet shall

“ die by my own hand : that righteous vengeance must
 “ be mine. Mean time, forbid the villain’s entrance
 “ to my house. As to her who was once my wife, let
 “ her go to her father’s, to whom I have written ;
 “ leaving it to him to vindicate her virtue, or conceal
 “ her shame. I am in too much confusion to add more.

“ SIFROY.”

This is enough—by Heaven ! I sought no more.

It is the point at which my wishes aim’d.

The death of Paulet must include his own ;

Justice will take that life my injuries seek,

Nor shall suspicion cast one glance on me.

But does he purpose soon to leave the army,

Or let his vengeance sleep ?

Rag. All wild he raves,

That honour should forbid to quit his charge.

Yet what resolves the tumult in his breast

May urge, is hard to say.

Glan. We must prepare

For his arrival ; well I know his rage

Will burst all bounds of prudence. Thou, my friend,

(For from the hour which shall complete our business,

Thy servitude shall cease) be diligent

To watch all accidents, and well improve

Whatever chance may rise.

Rag. Trust to my care.

[*Exit.*

Glan. Now, Isabella ! now th’ important hour

To prove my truth, arises to my wish.

No longer shalt thou live the humble friend

Of this Cleone, but, her equal born,
Shalt rise by me to grace an equal sphere.

Isab. Her equal born I am—nor can my heart
A keener pang than base dependence feel.
Yet weak by nature, and in fear for thee,
I tremble for th' event.—O should'st thou fail—

Glan. To me, my Isabella, trust the proof
Of her conceal'd amour. I know full well
Her modesty is mere disguise, assum'd
To cheat the world; but it deceives not me.
I shall unveil her latent wickedness,
And on her midnight revels pour the day.

Isab. Scarce can my heart give credit—

Glan. Thou, alas,
Art blinded by the semblance she displays
Of truth and innocence; but I explore
Her inmost soul, and in her secret thoughts
Read wantonness. Believe me, this gay youth,
Mask'd in the guise of friendship to Sifroy,
Is her vile paramour. But I forget;
Tell Ragozin, my love, to wait without;
This business asks dispatch, and I may want
His useful aid.

Isab. I go; but still my heart
Beats anxious, lest the truth of thy suspicions
Should fail of proof. [Exit Isabella.]

Glan. Fear nothing, I'm secure.—
Fond, easy fool! whom for my use alone,
Not pleasure, I've ensnar'd; thou little dream'st,
That fir'd with fair Cleone's heaven of charms,

I burn for their enjoyment. There, there too,
 Did this Sifroy, this happy hated rival,
 Defeat the first warm hopes that fir'd my bosom.
 I mark'd her beauties rising in their bloom,
 And purpos'd for myself the rip'ning sweetness;
 But ere my hand could reach the tempting fruit,
 'Twas ravish'd from its eager grasp. And, oh!
 Would fate at last permit me to prevail,
 Vengeance were satisfy'd. I will attend her;
 And urge my suit, tho' oft repuls'd, once more.
 If she's obdurate still, my slighted love
 Converts to hatred: I will then exert
 The power which her deluded lord hath given,
 Drive her this instant hence, and in her flight,
 To glut my great revenge, she too shall fall. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Changes to another Room. Enter CLEONE, and a Servant.

Cle. Paulet! my husband's friend! give him admittance;

His friendship sympathizes with my love,
 Cheers me by talking of my absent lord,
 And sooths my heart with hopes of his return.

Enter PAULET.

Pau. Still do these low'ring clouds of sorrow shade
 Cleone's brow, and sadden all her hours?

Cle. Ah Paulet! have I not just cause to mourn?

Three tedious years have past since these sad eyes
Beheld my dear Sifroy : and the stern brow
Of horrid war still frowns upon my hopes.

Pau. The fate of war, 'tis true, hath long detain'd
My noble friend from your fond arms and mine :
But his redoubted sword by this last stroke
Must soon reduce the foe to sue for peace.
The gallant chief who led the barbarous host,
And was himself their soul, is fallen in battle,
Slain by the valiant hand of your Sifroy.

Cle. To me, alas, his courage seems no virtue :
Dead to all joy, but what his safety gives,
To every hope, but that of his return,
I dread the danger which his valour seeks,
And tremble at his glory. O good Heaven !
Restore him soon to these unhappy arms,
Or much I fear, they'll never more enfold him.

Pau. What means Cleone ? No new danger can
Affright you for my friend. I fear your breast
Beats with the dread of some impending ill,
Threatening yourself. Now, by the love that binds
My heart to your Sifroy, let me entreat,
If my assistance can avail you aught,
That, to the utmost hazard of my life,
You will command my service.

Cle. Kind Heaven, I thank thee ! My Sifroy hath yet
One faithful friend. O Paulet—but to thee,
The many virtues that adorn the mind
Of my lov'd lord, and made me once so blest,
'Twere needless to display. In mine alone

His happiness was plac'd ; no grief, no care
 Came ever near my bosom ; not a pain
 But what his tenderness partaking, sooth'd.
 All day with fondness would he gaze upon me,
 And to my listening heart repeat such things,
 As only love like his knew how to feel.

O my Sifroy ! when, when wilt thou return ?
 Alas, thou know'st not to what bold attempts
 Thy unsuspecting virtue has betray'd me !

Pau. What danger thus alarms Cleone's fear ?

Cle. I am asham'd to think, and blush to say,
 That in my husband's absence this poor form,
 These eyes, or any feature should retain
 The power to please—but Glanville well you know—

Pau. Sure you suspect not him of base designs !
 He wears the semblance of much worth and honour.

Cle. So to the eye the speckled serpent wears
 A shining beauteous form ; but deep within,
 Foul stings and deadly poisons lurk unseen.
 O Paulet, this smooth serpent hath so crept
 Into the bosom of Sifroy, so wound
 Himself about my love's unguarded heart,
 That he believes him harmless as a dove.

Pau. Good Heaven, if thou abhorr'st deceit, why
 suffer
 A villain's face to wear the look of virtue ?
 Who would have thought his loose desires had flown
 So high a pitch ?—Have you imparted aught
 Of his attempts to Isabella ?

Cle. No.

Pau. I had suspicion his designs were there.

Cle. I've thought so too : nay have some cause to fear
That she's his wife. This hath restrain'd my tongue.

Pau. 'Tis well if she deserve your tenderness.
But say, Cleone, let me know the means,
Which this most impious man, this trusted friend,
Hath taken to betray—

Cle. I hear his voice ;
And this way he directs his hated steps.
Retire into that room—he seldom fails
To hint his bold desires. Your self perhaps
May thence detect him, and by open shame
Deter him from persisting. [*Paulet goes into the room.*]

Enter GLANVILLE.

Glan. I greet you, lady, with important news ;
The Saracens are beaten—yet Sifroy,
Coldly neglectful of your blooming charms,
Pursues a remnant of the flying foe
To strong Avignon's walls, where shelter'd safe,
The hardy troops may bear a tedious siege.
Why then, Cleone, should you still resist
The soft entreaties of my warm desire ?
Methinks the man but ill deserves your truth,
Who leaves the sweet Elysium of your arms
To tread the dangerous fields of horrid war.

Cle. And what, O Glanville, what dost thou deserve ?
Thou, who with treachery repay'st the trust
Of sacred friendship ? Thou, who but to quench

A loose desire, a lawless passion's rage,
Would'st banish truth and honour from thy breast?

Glan. Honour!—What's honour? A vain phantom
rais'd

To fright the weak from tasting those delights,
Which Nature's voice, that law supreme, allows.
Be wise, and laugh at all its idle threats.
Besides, with me your fame would be secure,
Discretion guards my name from censure's tongue.

Cle. And dost thou call hypocrisy, discretion?
Say'st thou that vice is wisdom? Glanville, hear me.
With thee, thou say'st, my fame would be secure;
Unsully'd by the world. It might. Yet know,
Tho' hid beneath the center of the earth,
Remov'd from envy's eye, and slander's tongue,
Nay from the view of Heaven itself conceal'd,
Still would I shun the very thought of guilt,
Nor wound my secret conscience with reproach.

Glan. Romantic all! Come, come, why were you
form'd

So tempting fair; why grac'd with ev'ry charm,
With eyes that languish, limbs that move with grace—
Why were these beauties given you, but to soothe
The sweet, the strong sensations they excite?
Why were you made so beauteous, yet so coy?

[*Offers to embrace her, she puts him by with disdain.*]

Cle. Base hypocrite! why rather wert thou suffer'd
Beneath fair virtue's mien to hide a heart
So vile? Why this, good Heaven! But dost thou think
Thy foul devices shall be still conceal'd?

Sifroy shall know thee ; thy detested crime
Shall stand reveal'd in all its horrid form.

Glan. Is love a crime ? O ask your feeling heart—
[*Paulet bursts from the room.*]

Pau. Villain, desist !

Glan. Ha ! Paulet here !—'Tis well :
He is her minion then ! 'Tis as I guess'd ;
My letters to Sifroy traduc'd them not. [Aside.]

Pau. Vile hypocrite !—what ! lurk such warm desires
Beneath that sober mask of sanctity ?
Is this the firm undoubted honesty,
In which Sifroy confiding, sleeps secure ?

Glan. And is it fit that thou should'st lecture vice ?
Thou who, even here, this moment wert conceal'd,
The favorite object of lewd privacy ?
Should'st thou declaim against the rich repast,
Thy gluttonous appetite alone enjoys
To all the heights of luxury ?—Sweet lady !
Who now shall stand reveal'd before Sifroy ?
But I have long, long known your intercourse,
Nor wanted clearer proof to speak your crimes.

[*Going.*]

Cle. O heaven and earth !

Pau. Stay, monster ! by high Heaven,
Thy life shall answer this vile calumny.

Glan. Dream not I fear !—thy threatenings I despise.
Soon I'll return, to thine and her confusion.

[*Exit Glanville.*]

Cle. What have I done ? unhappy rash concealment !
This may, alas ! give colour to his charge.

Pau. He dares not wrong you with the least surmise,

The slightest imputation on your fame !
Nor would the world believe him. Your fair deeds,
The constant tenor of your virtuous life,
Would triumph o'er th' audacious tale.

Cle. Ah, Paulet !

The sting of slander strikes her venom deep.
An envious world with joy devours the tale,
That stains with infamy a spotless name.
Yet what's the vain opinion of the world !
To keep one voice, one single heart's esteem,
Is all my wish. If my Sifroy but think——

Pau. Wound not your peace with vain ungrounded fears.

My friend is noble, knows your virtues well ;
Nor will he suffer jealousy to shake
His generous mind with doubt. And for that wretch,
This arm shall give him chastisement.

Cle. Ah ! no ;

I fear the chastisement of Glanville's guilt
May loose the tongue of censure on my innocence.
And can I bear, now, in my husband's absence,
The whisper'd falsehood of malicious tales,
That cast a doubt on his Cleone's truth ?
O rather leave his punishment to Heaven !
At least defer it till my lord's return.

Pau. And shall the man I love return, and find
A villain unchastis'd, who in my sight

Presumptuous dar'd to wound his honour!
It must not, shall not be.

Re-enter GLANVILLE with RAGOZIN.

Glan. Mark me, young Sir,
'Tis with authority that I forbid
Your entrance in this house. Sifroy, convinc'd
Of all your secret crimes with that vile wanton,
Spurns from his door the falsehood he disdains.

Cle. Let me not hear it! I! am I a wanton?
Does my dear lord think his Cleone vile?

Glan. He knows it well.

Pau. Villain, 'tis false! He scorns
So mean a thought.

Glan. To silence every doubt,
See his own hand.

Pau. [*Shewing the letter to Ragozin.*] Say, whence is
this? who brought it?

Rag. I brought it from my master.

Glan. Look upon it.

[*Cleone and Paulet look over it.*]

Cle. Am I then banish'd from my husband's house?
Branded with infamy!—was once his wife!
Unkind Sifroy! am I not still thy wife?
Indeed thy faithful wife! and when thou know'st,
As know thou wilt, how falsely I'm accus'd,
This cruel sentence sure will pierce thy heart.

Pau. Amazement strikes me dumb!—This impious
scroll
Is forg'd. Sifroy, tho' rash, is noble, just,

And good. Too good, too noble to permit
So mean a thought to harbour in his breast.

Cle. No: 'tis his hand—his seal. And can I bear
Suspicion! Ah! Sifroy, didst thou not know
My heart incapable—

Pau. Licentious wretch!

At what fell mischief has thy malice aim'd?

Glan. At thine and her detection, which at length
I have accomplish'd.

Pau. Impudent and vain!

Think'st thou Cleone's virtue, her fair truth,
Can suffer taint from thy unhallow'd breath?
Were they not proof but now against thy arts?

Glan. Mistaken man! To gain one personal proof
Of her incontinence, that feign'd attempt
Was made; all other proof I had before.

And why I fail'd thou know'st;
Who in her private chamber close conceal'd,
Mad'st it imprudent she should then comply.

Cle. Detested slanderer! I despise thy baseness;
Disdain reply; and trust in Heaven's high hand
To dash thy bold designs. [Exit Cleone,

Pau. [Whispering.] Observe me, Sir—
This insult on the honour of my friend
Must be chastis'd. At morning's earliest dawn,
In the close vale, behind the castle's wall,
Prepare to meet me arm'd.

Glan. Be well assur'd

I will not fail.

[Exit Paulet.

Yet stay—let Prudence guide me—

Courage, what is't?—'tis folly's boisterous rashness,
And draws its owner into hourly dangers.

I hold it safer he were met to-night. [*Aside.*]

Thou see'st, my Ragozin, we are embark'd
Upon a troubled sea: our safeties now
Depend on boldly stemming every wave,
That might o'erwhelm our hopes. Paulet must die—
He's dangerous, and not only may defeat
Our enterprise, but bring our lives in hazard.

Rag. Shall we not frustrate thus your first design,
To make the law subservient to your aims
Against the life and fortunes of Sifroy?

Glan. Leave that to me. Sifroy, full well I know,
Will soon arrive. Thou, when the gloom of night
Shall cast a veil upon the deeds of men,
Trace Paulet's steps, and in his bosom plunge
Thy dagger's point: thus shall thy care prevent
His future babbling; and to prove the deed
Upon Sifroy, be mine.

Rag. He dies this night.

Glan. Let thy first blow make sure his death,
So shall no noise detect thee. Hither strait
Convey his corpse, which secretly interr'd
Within the garden's bound, prevents discovery,
'Till I shall spring the mine of their destruction.

Rag. He shall not live an hour. [*Exit Ragozin.*]

Glan. Hence, hence remorse!

I must not, will not feel thy scorpion sting.
Yet hell is in my breast, and all its fiends
Distract my resolutions.—I am plung'd

In blood, and must wade thro': no safety now
 But on the farther shore. Come then, revenge,
 Ambition come, and disappointed love;
 Be you my dread companions: steel, O steel
 My heart with triple firmness, nerve my arm
 With tenfold strength, and guide it to achieve
 The deeds of terror which yourselves inspir'd.

ACT II. SCENE I.

*A Room in SIFROY'S House. GLANVILLE and
 ISABELLA.*

Glanville.

SURE the dark hand of death ere this hath clos'd
 The prying eyes of Paulet, and secur'd
 Our bold attempt from danger. But hast thou,
 Free from suspicion, to Cleone's hand
 Convey'd the letter, forg'd against myself,
 Pressing her instant flight, and branding me
 With black designs against her life?

Isab. I have;

Pretending 'twas receiv'd from hands unknown.
 But lurks no danger here! Will not this letter,
 Discover'd after death, thy guilt betray?

Glan. There am I guarded too. The deed once done,
 A deep enormous cavern in the wood
 Receives her body, and for ever hides.
 But she perus'd, thou say'st, the letter—Well—

How wrought it?—Say—this moment will she fly?
Success in this, and all shall be our own.

Isab. Silent she paus'd—and read it o'er and o'er.
Then lifting up her eyes—Forgive him, Heaven!
Was all she said. But soon her rising fear
Resolv'd on quick escape. Suspicion too,
That all her servants are by thee corrupted,
Prompts her to fly alone, save with her child,
The young Sifroy, whom clasping to her breast,
And bathing with a flood of tears, she means,
Safe from thy snares, to shelter with her father.

Glan. Just as I hop'd—Beneath the friendly gloom
Of Baden wood, whose unfrequented shades
They needs must pass to reach her father's house,
I have contriv'd, and now ordain their fall.
Kindly she plans her scheme, as tho' herself
Were my accomplice.

Isab. As we parted, tears
Gush'd from her eyes—she closely press'd my hand,
And hesitating cry'd—O Isabella!
If 'tis not now too late, beware of Glanville.
I scarce could hold from weeping.

Glan. Fool! root out
That weakness, which unfits th' aspiring soul
For great designs. But hush! who's here?

Enter RAGOZIN.

Glan. Say, quickly—
Is our first work achiev'd?

Rag. Successfully.

With two bold ruffians, whose assisting hands
 Were hir'd to make the business sure, I trac'd
 His steps with care; and in the darksome path
 Which leads beside the ruin'd abby's wall,
 With furious onset suddenly attack'd him.
 Instant he drew, and in my arm oblique
 Fix'd a slight wound; but my associates soon
 Perform'd their office; and betwixt them borne,
 I left him to an hasty burial, where
 You first directed.

Glan. We are then secure
 From his detection; and may now advance
 With greater safety. O my Ragozin,
 But one step more remains, to plant our feet
 On this Sifroy's possessions; and methinks
 Kind opportunity now points the path
 Which leads us to our wish.

Rag. Propose the means.

Glan. This hour Cleone with her infant boy,
 Borrowing faint courage from the moon's pale beam,
 Prepares to seek the mansion of her father.
 Thou know'st the neighbouring wood through which
 they pass.

Rag. I know each path and every brake.

Glan. There hid

In secret ambush, thou must intercept
 Her journey.

Rag. And direct her to the world
 Unknown.

Glan. Thou read'st my meaning right. Go thou.

To hasten her departure, and to keep [To Isabella.
Her fears awake.

Isab. Already she believes
Her life depends upon her instant flight.

[*Exit Isabella.*

Glan. And haply ours. Each moment that she lives
Grows dangerous now; and should she reach her
father,

All may be lost. Let therefore no delay
Hang on thy foot-steps: terror wings her flight:
Our danger calls at least for equal speed.

Rag. They 'scape me not. I know the private path
They needs must tread thro' Baden's lonesome wood,
And death shall meet them in the dreary gloom.

Glan. Meantime, soon as she leaves her house, I raise,
From whispering tongues, a probable report,
That she with Paulet seeks some foreign shore.
This will confirm her guilt, and shelter us
From all suspicion.

Rag. True; both gone at once
Will give an air of truth so plausible——

Glan. Hark! hush!

Rag. Who is it?

Glan. 'Tis Cleone's voice!

This way she comes—we must not now be seen.

Fly to thy post, and think on thy reward. [*Exeunt.*

Enter CLEONE with her Child.

Cle. No Paulet to be found! Misfortune sure
Prevents his friendship; and I dare not wait

For his assistance. Friendless and alone
I wander forth, Heaven my sole guide, and truth
My sole support. But come, my little love,
Thou wilt not leave me.

Child. No, indeed I won't!

I'll love you, and go with you every where,
If you will let me.

Cle. My sweet innocent!

Thou shalt go with me. I've no comfort left
But thee. I had—I had a husband once,
And thou a father.—But we're now cast out
From his protection, banish'd from his love.

Child. Why won't he love us? Sure I've heard you
say,

You lov'd him dearly.

Cle. O my bursting heart!

His innocence will kill me. So I do,
My angel, and I hope you'll love him too.

Child. Yes, so I will, if he'll love you: and can't
I make him love you?

Cle. Yes, my dear; for how

Could he withstand that sweet persuasive look
Of infant innocence!

Child. O then he shall,

If ever I do see him, he shall love you.

Cle. My best, my only friend! and wilt thou plead
Thy poor wrong'd mother's cause?

Enter ISABELLA.

Isab. Dear Madam, haste! why thus delay your flight,
When dangers rise around?

Cle. Indeed, my steps
Will linger, Isabella.—O 'tis hard—
Alas, thou canst not tell how hard it is—
To leave a husband's house so dearly lov'd!
Yet go I must—my life is here unsafe.
Pardon, good Heaven, the guilt of those who seek it!
I fear not death: yet fain methinks would live
To clear my truth to my unkind Sifroy.

Isab. O doubt not, Madam, he will find the truth,
And banish from his breast this strange suspicion.
But haste, dear lady, wing your steps with haste,
Lest death should intercept—

Cle. And must I go?
Adieu, dear mansion of my happiest years!
Adieu, sweet shades! each well-known bower, adieu!
Where I have hung whole days upon his words,
And never thought the tender moments long—
All, all my hopes of future peace, farewell!

[Throws herself on her knees.]

But, O great Power! who bending from thy throne
Look'st down with pitying eyes on erring man,
Whom weakness blinds, and passions lead astray,
Impute not to Sifroy this cruel wrong!
O heal his bosom, wounded by the darts
Of lying slander, and restore to him

That peace, which I must never more regain. [*Rises.*
 Come, my dear love, Heaven will, I trust, protect
 And guide our wandering steps! Yet stay—who knows,
 Perhaps my father too, if slander's voice
 Hath reach'd his ear, may chide me from his door,
 Or spurn me from his feet!—My sickening heart
 Dies in me at that thought! Yet surely he
 Will hear me speak! A parent sure, will not
 Reject his child unheard!

Isab. He surely will not. Whence these groundless
 fears?

Cle. Indeed I am to blame, to doubt his goodness.
 Farewell, my friend!—And oh, when thou shalt see
 My still belov'd Sifroy; say, I forgive him—
 Say I but live to clear my truth to him;
 Then hope to lay my sorrows in the grave,
 And that my wrongs, lest they should wound his peace,
 May be forgotten. [*Exit Cleone, with her Child.*

Isab. Gracious Heaven! her grief
 Strikes thro' my heart! Her truth, her innocence
 Are surely wrong'd.—O wherefore did I yield
 My virtue to this man? Unhappy hour!
 But 'tis too late!—Nor dare I now relent.

Enter GLANVILLE.

Glan. The gate is clos'd against her, never more
 (If right I read her doom) to give her entrance.
 Thus far, my Isabella, our designs
 Glide smoothly on. The hand of prudence is
 To me the hand of Providence.

Isab. Alas!

How blind, how impotent is human prudence!
I wish, and hope indeed, that screen'd beneath
The shades of night, which hide these darker deeds,
We too may lie conceal'd: but ah, my hopes
Are dash'd with fear, lest Heaven's all-piercing eye,
That marks our covert guilt, should flash detection.

Glan. [*Sternly.*] If thy vain fears betray us not,
we're safe.

Observe me well.—Had I the least surmise,
That struck by conscience, or by phantoms awed,
Thou now would'st shrink--and leave me, or betray--
By all the terrors that would shake my soul
To perpetrate the deed, thou too should'st fall!

Isab. And canst thou then suspect, that after all
I've done to prove my love, I should betray thee?
O Glanville! thou art yet, it seems, to learn,
That in her fears tho' weak, a woman's love
Inspires her soul to dare beyond her sex.

Glan. Forgive me, Isabella, I suspect
Thee not; this raging fever in my brain
Distracts my reason. But no more—I know
Thee faithful, and will hence be calm.

Isab. Indeed my heart has been so wholly thine,
That ev'n its springs are temper'd to thy wish.

Glan. Think on my warmth no more. I was to
blame.

But come, my love, our chief, our earliest care
Must be to give loud rumour instant voice,
That both detected in their loose amour

Are fled together. Whisper thou the tale
 First to the servants, in whose listening ears
 Suspicions are already sown; while I
 Th' unwelcome tidings to her sire convey.

[Exit Isabella one way, and as Glanville is
 going out the other, he meets a Servant.

Serv. My lady's brother, Sir, young Beaufort, just
 Arriv'd, enquires for you, or for his sister.

Glan. Attend him in.—The letters of Sifroy
 Have reach'd their hands. My story of her flight
 Will, like a closing witness well prepar'd,
 Confirm her guilt.

Enter BEAUFORT junior.

Beauf. jun. What strange suspicion, Glanville, has
 possess'd

The bosom of Sifroy? Whence had it birth?
 Or on what ground could malice fix her stand,
 To throw the darts of slander on a name
 So guarded as Cleone's?

Glan. I could wish——

It gives me pain to speak—but I could wish
 The conduct of Cleone had not given
 So fair a mark.

Beauf. jun. So fair a mark!—What! who?
 Cleone, say'st thou!—Hath my sister given
 So fair a mark to slander?—Have a care!
 The breath that blasts her fame may raise a storm
 Not easily appeas'd.

Glan. It grieves me, Sir,
 That you compel me to disclose, what you

In bitterness of soul must hear. But she
And prudence have of late been much estrang'd.

Beauf. jun. Defame her not—Discretion crowns
her brow,

And in her modest eye sweet innocence
Smiles on detraction. Where, where is my sister?
She shall confront thy words—her look alone
Shall prove her truth, and calumny confound.

Glan. You surely know not, Sir, that she is fled—

Beauf. jun. What say'st thou? Fled!—Surprise
choaks up my words!

It cannot be! Fled! whither?—Gone! with whom?

Glan. With Paulet, Sir, Sifroy's young friend.

Beauf. jun. Impossible!

I'm on the rack! Tell, I conjure thee, tell
The whole mysterious tale. Where are they gone?

Glan. That they conceal. I only know, that both,
Soon as they found their impious love disclos'd,
With instant speed withdrew: and 'tis suppos'd
Will seek for shelter on some foreign shore.

Beauf. jun. Where then is truth, and where is
virtue fled,

Ere while her dear companions?—How, my sister,
How art thou fallen!—Thy father too—O parricide!
Had'st thou no pity on his bending age?
On his fond heart?—too feeble now to bear
So rude a shock.

Glan. Can it not be conceal'd?

Beauf. jun. That hope were vain. Himself impa-
tient comes,

From his lov'd daughter to enquire the cause
Of this opprobrious charge. And see, he's here.

Enter BEAUFORT senior.

Beauf. sen. Where is my daughter? where my in-
jur'd child?

O bring me to her! she hath yet a father,
(Thanks to the gracious powers who spar'd my life
For her protection) ready to receive
With tender arms his child, tho' rudely cast
From her rash husband's door. What mean these
tears

That trickle down thy cheek? she is not dead!

Beauf. jun. Good Heaven! what shall I say?—No,
sir—not dead—

She is not dead—but oh!—

Beauf. sen. But what? Wound not
My heart! where is she? lead me to my child—
'Tis from herself alone that I will hear
The story of her wrongs.

Beauf. jun. Alas! dear Sir,
She is not here.

Beauf. sen. Not here!

Beauf. jun. O fortify
Your heart, my dearest father, to support,
If possible, this unexpected stroke!
My sister, Sir—why must I speak her shame?
My wretched sister, yielding to the lure
Of Paulet's arts, hath left her husband's house,

Beauf. sen. Great Pow'r! then have I liv'd, alas!
too long.

This is indeed too much. I cannot bear—
But 'tis impossible!—does not thy heart,
My son, bear testimony for thy sister
Against this calumny?—What circumstance,

[To Glanville.

What proof have we of my Cleone's guilt?

Glan. Is not their disappearing both at once,
A strong presumption of their mutual guilt?

Beauf. sen. Presumption, say'st thou! Shall one
doubtful fact

Arraign a life of innocence unblam'd?
Shall I give up the virtue of my child,
My heart's sweet peace, the comfort of my age,
On weak surmises?—Sir, I must have proof,
Clear, unambiguous proof, not dark presumption.

Glan. Thus rudely urg'd, my honour bids me speak,
What else I meant in tenderness to spare.
Know then, I found the wanton youth conceal'd
In her apartments.

Beauf. sen. Thou dost then confess
Thyself my child's accuser?—but thy word
Will not suffice. Far other evidence
Must force me to believe, that truth long known,
And native modesty, could thus at once
Desert their station in Cleone's breast.

Glan. Wait then for other evidence—

With such as doubt my honour, I disdain
All further conference.

[Exit Glanville.

Beaf. jun. What can we think ?

His firm undaunted boldness fills my breast
With racking doubts, that dread to be resolv'd,
Yet this suspense is torture's keenest pang.

Beauf. sen. We must not bear it. No, my son, lead
on ;

We must be satisfy'd. Let us direct
Our steps to Paulet's habitation. There,
It seems, we must enquire. And yet my soul
Strongly impels me to suspect this Glanville ;
For can Cleone, virtue's fav'rite ward,
Thus totally be chang'd ?—If thou art fall'n—
If thy weak steps, by this bad world seduc'd,
Have devious turn'd into the paths of shame,
Never, ah ! never let me live to hear
Thy foul dishonour mention'd. If thou art
Traduc'd—and my fond heart still flatters me
With hope—then gracious Heaven ! spare yet my life,
O spare a father to redress his child !

ACT III. SCENE I.

The Area before SIFROY'S House. SIFROY alone.

Sifroy.

O DREADFUL change ! my house, my sacred home,
At sight of which my heart was wont to bound
With rapture, I now tremble to approach.

Fair mansion, where bright honour long hath dwelt
With my renown'd progenitors, how, how
At last hath vile pollution stain'd thy walls!
Yet look not down with scorn, ye shades rever'd,
On your dishonour'd son—He will not die
Till just revenge hath by the wanton's blood
Aton'd for this disgrace. Yet can it be?
Can my Cleone, she whose tender smile
Fed my fond heart with hourly rapture, she
On whose fair faith alone I built all hope
Of happiness—can she have kill'd my peace,
My honour? Could that angel form, which seem'd
The shrine of purity and truth, become
The seat of wantonness and perfidy?
Ye powers!—should she be wrong'd—in my own heart
How sharp a dagger hath my frenzy plung'd!
O passion-govern'd slave! what hast thou done?
Hath not thy madness from her house, unheard,
Driven out thy bosom friend?—Guiltless, perhaps—
Hell, hell is in that thought!—Thou wretch accurst,
Such thy rash fury, thy unbridled rage,
Her guilt or innocence alike to thee
Must bring distraction. But I'll know the worst.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

Changes to a Room in the House. GLANVILLE and
ISABELLA.

Glan. What dost thou say? Already is Sifroy
Arriv'd? Who saw him? when?

Isab. This moment, from
My window, by the glimmering of the moon,
I saw him pass.

Glan. He comes as I could wish.
His hot-brain'd fury well did I foresee
Would, on the wings of vengeance, swiftly urge
His homeward flight. But I am ready arm'd,
Rash fool! for thy destruction. And tho' long
Thou hast usurp'd my rights, thy death at last
Shall give me ample justice.

Isab. Ah, beware;
Nor seek his life at peril of thine own.

Glan. Trust me, my love, (tho' time too precious now
Permits not to unfold to thee my scheme)
I walk in safety, yet have in my grasp,
Secure, his hated life.—But see, he comes—
Retire. [Exit Isabella.]

Enter SIFROY.

Glan. [*Advancing to embrace him.*] My honoured
friend!—

Sif. Glanville, forbear—
And ere I join my arms with thee in friendship,

Say, I conjure thee, by that sacred tie,
 By all thou hold'st most dear on earth, by all
 Thy hopes of heaven, and dread of deepest hell—
 Hast thou not wrong'd my wife ?

Glan. Unjust Sifroy !

Hath my warm friendship thus regardful been,
 Thus jealous of thy honour, and dost thou
 Yet question mine ? Sure the united bonds
 Of friendship and of blood, are ties too strong
 To leave a doubt of my sincerity.

And soon too clearly, Sir, you will discern
 Who has been false, and who your faithful friend.

Sif. O rack me not ! let dread conviction come—
 Her strongest horrors cannot rend my heart
 With half the anguish of this torturing doubt.

Speak then—for tho' the tale should fire my brain
 To madness, I must hear. Yet, Glanville, stay—

Let me proceed with caution—my soul's peace
 Depends on this event. 'Tis said I am rash—

Bear witness ! am I so ?—Where is my wife ?
 Severe I may be, but I will be just.

I cannot, will not hear her faith arraign'd,
 Before I see her.

Glan. See her, Sir ! alas,
 Where will you see her ?

Sif. Where ? thou hast not yet
 Convey'd her to her father ?—On the wings
 Of speed I flew, still hoping to prevent
 The rash decree of unreflecting rage.

Glan. Heaven give thee patience!—O Sifroy! my heart,

Tho' thou hast wrong'd it with unkind suspicion,
Bleeds for thy injuries, for thy distress.

The wife, whom thou so tenderly hast lov'd,
Is fled with Paulet.

Sif. Fled!—How? whither? when?

Glan. This day they disappear'd, and 'tis believ'd
Intend to fly from shame, and leave the land.

Sif. Impossible!—she cannot be so chang'd—
Was she not all my heart could wish?—Take heed—
Once more I charge thee, Glanville, and my soul's
Eternal welfare rests upon thy truth—

Traduce her not! nor drive me to perdition!

For by the flames of vengeance, if I find
Thy accusation true, they shall not 'scape!

Yes, I will trace th' adulterer's private haunts,
Rush like his evil genius on their shame,

And stab the traitor in her faithless arms—

Almighty Power! whose piercing eye explores
The depths of falsehood! take not from my arm

This due revenge—nor tempt mankind to doubt

The justice of thy ways. Why this intrusion?

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My lady's father, Sir.

Sif. Her father here!

Glan. Yes, he was here before—thy letters brought
him,

And hence went forth in haste to find out Paulet.

Sif. Conduct him in.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Unhappy man! his grief,

His venerable tears will wring my heart.

Retire, good Glanville; interviews like these,

Of deep-felt mutual wo, all witness shun.

[*Exit Glanville.*]

Enter BEAUFORT Senior.

Beauf. sen. Rash man! what hast thou done?—on
what surmise

Dost thou impeach the honour of my name,

Sacred thro' many an age from ev'ry stain?

O! thou hast from thy bosom cast away

The sweetest flower that ever nature form'd.

Sif. Reproach me not—commiserate a wretch

On whom affliction lays her iron hand!

That flower, which look'd so beauteous to the sense,

Ran wild, grew ranker than a common weed.

Beauf. sen. It is not—cannot be! Have I not known,

Even from her earliest childhood known her heart?

Known it the seat of tenderness and truth?

Her thoughts were ever pure as virgin snows

From heaven descending: and that modest blush,

Display'd on her fair cheek, was virtue's guard.

She could not fall thus low—my child is wrong'd!

Ask thine own heart—recall her blameless life,

Was she not all a parent's fondest wish—

Sif. Call not to my distracted mind how good,

How bright she once appear'd. Time was indeed,

When blest in her chaste love, I fondly thought

My soul possess'd of all that earth held fair
 And amiable : but memory of past bliss
 Augments the bitter pangs of present wo !
 Is she not chang'd—fallen—lost ?

Beauf. sen. Patience, my son,
 Compose the tempest of thy grief. Just heaven
 Will doubtless soon reveal the hidden deeds
 Of guilt and shame. If thy unhappy wife
 Thus wanton in the paths of vice hath stray'd—
 I would not rashly curse my darling child—
 Yet hear me, righteous Heaven ! May infamy,
 Disease, and beggary imbitter all
 Her wretched life ! But my undoubting heart,
 In full conviction of her spotless truth,
 Acquits her of all crime.

Sif. Is it no crime,
 That listening to a vile seducer's voice,
 She leaves her husband's house—her dearest friends ?
 Flies with her paramour to foreign climes,
 A willing exile ? Damn'd adult'ress ! What,
 Are these no crimes ?

Beauf. sen. Suppress thy rage. They are :
 But is she guilty ? Art thou well inform'd
 They went together ? How doth it appear ?
 Who saw them ? Where ? Alas ! thy headlong rage
 Was too impatient to permit enquiry.

Sif. Were they not missing both ? both at one hour ?
 Say, for thou hast enquir'd ; is Paulet found ?

Beauf. sen. He is not : but my son perhaps, whom zeal
 To clear a much-lov'd sister's injur'd fame

Eager impels to strictest inquisition,
May bring some tidings.

Sif. May kind Heaven direct
His steps where lurks their covert shame from day,
And from my just revenge.

Beauf. sen. Still, still thy rage
With weak, precarious inference concludes
Their unprov'd guilt. Be calm, and answer me.
Think'st thou thy wife, if bent on loose designs,
Would madly join an infant in her flight,
To impede her steps, and aggravate her shame?

Sif. O my confusion! where, where is my child?
Alas, I had forgot the harmless innocent!
Bring to my arms the poor deserted babe!
He knows no crime, and guiltless of offence
Shall put his little hands into my breast,
And ease a father's bosom of its sorrows.

Beauf. sen. Unhappy man! that comfort is deny'd
thee.

Sif. What means my father? Speak—yet ah, take
heed!

My heart already is too deeply pierc'd,
To bear another wound—What of my child?

Beauf. sen. That he's the partner of his mother's
flight,

Should calm, not raise the tempest of thy grief—
For proves it not by consequence direct,
Some secret injury, not guilt, hath driven
My hapless daughter from her husband's roof?

Sif. What injury, what crime could love like mine

Commit against her? Was she not more dear,
More precious to my heart, than the warm flood
Which feeds its vital motion?

Beauf. sen. Ev'n that love,
If open to the tales of calumny,
Might wound her virtue with unjust suspicion.
Besides, to rashness and credulity
Shadows are dæmons, and a weak surmise
Authentic proof. Who's her accuser?

Sif. One
Whose taintless honour, and unshaken truth,
Have oft been try'd, and ever stood approv'd.
He, Sir, whose friendship, with reluctant grief,
At length disclos'd my shame, was honest Glanville:
Report from vulgar breath I had despis'd.

Beauf. sen. So may high Heaven deal mercy to my
child,
As I believe him treacherous and base.

Enter BEAUFORT Junior.

Beauf. sen. Here comes my son—What means this
look of terror?

Beauf. jun. I fear, my father, some dread mischief—
Ha!—

Is he return'd!—Now may the powers avert
This dire suspicion that strikes thro' my heart!
Tell, I conjure thee tell me—where's my sister?
Thou hast not murder'd her!

Sif. Good Heaven! what means
My brother's dreadful words? Murder my wife!

Speak, quickly speak!—My heart shrinks up with
horror!

Whence are thy apprehensions?

Beauf. sen. My dear son,
Keep not thy father on the rack of doubt,
But speak thy fears.

Beauf. jun. What fate may have befallen
My injur'd sister, Heaven and thou best know—
But Paulet, whom thy fierce revenge pursu'd,
This night is murder'd.

Sif. Ha! what say'st thou?—Paulet!
Is Paulet dead? How know'st thou he is murder'd?

Beauf. jun. In the dark path which to the cloister
leads,
His sword is found, and bloody marks appear,
That speak the deed too plain.

Sif. But where's my wife?
Was not she with him? Went they not together?

Beauf. jun. Together! no. The villain Glanville's
false!
My sister is traduc'd.

Sif. False! Glanville false!—
What!—Paulet murder'd!—and my wife traduc'd!
Rack me, ye furies! tear me joint from joint!
Your pangs are nothing—I have done a deed,
No tortures can atone! Tremendous Power!
What tempest wrapt in darkness now prepares
To burst on my devoted head? What crime
Unknown, or unrepented, points me out,
The mark distinguish'd of peculiar vengeance?

Why turns the gracious all-benignant eye
Averse from me? O guide my steps to find
Where lurks this hidden mischief—

Beauf. jun. Lurks it not
In thine own breast?

Beauf. sen. My son, forbear.

Sif. Art thou,

My brother, so unkind! Would I have stabb'd
Thy heart, when breaking with convulsive pangs
Of dreadful doubt?—But I deserve unkindness—
I was unkind, was cruel to Cleone—

Yet lead me to her arms—tho' wrong'd, abus'd,
She like offended Heaven, will still forgive.

My friend too, my best friend is murder'd! Oh,
What hand accurst hath wrought this web of wo?

Support me, mercy! 'tis too much, too much!

But let distraction come, and from my brain

Tear out the seat of memory, that I

No more may think, no more may be a wretch!

Beauf. sen. Be calm, my son. When Heaven's high
hand afflicts,

Submission best becomes us—nor let man,

The child of weakness, murmur.

Sif. O my father!

Thee too my rashness hath undone! Thou, thou

Wilt join with Heaven to curse me! but I kiss

The rod of chastisement, and in the dust

Resign'd, a prostrate suppliant, beg for mercy.

Beauf. sen. Moderate the grief

Which thus unmans thee—Rouse thee to the search

Of these dark deeds—and Heaven direct our footsteps.
Hath not suspicion whisper'd to thy heart,
That he, this Glanville, whom thy friendship trusts
With confidence intire, may yet be false ?

Sif. Till this dread hour, suspicion of his truth
Ne'er touch'd my breast—Now doubt and horror raise
Distraction in my soul.

Beauf. sen. All-gracious Power !
Look on our sorrows with a pitying eye !
My feeble heart sinks in me—But do thou
Bear up against this tide of wo : I trust,
If goodness dwell in heaven, my child is safe.
Perhaps she seeks the shelter of these arms,
And we have miss'd her in th' entangled wood.
With speed dispatch immediate messengers
Through different paths, with strictest search to trace
Cleone's steps, or find thy murder'd friend.
My son, I charge thee, see this well perform'd.

Beauf. jun. I will not fail. [Exit Beaufort jun.

Beauf. sen. Mean while let us observe
Each motion, word, and look of this fell fiend ;
So may we best detect him ; and his schemes,
Tho' gloss'd with saint-like show (if much I err not),
Will soon in all their horrors stand reveal'd. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

Changes to the Wood. Enter CLEONE and her Child.

Cle. Whence do these terrors seize my sinking heart ?

Since guilt I know not, wherefore know I fear?
 And yet these silent shadowy scenes awake
 Strange apprehensions. Guardian powers! protect
 My weakness! Hark! what noise is that?—All still.
 It was but fancy.—Yet methought the howl
 Of distant wolves broke on the ear of night,
 Doubling the desert's horror.

Child. O I'm frightened!

Why do you speak and look so strangely at me?

Cle. I will not fright my love. Come, let's go on—
 We've but a little way—Save us, ye Powers!

Enter RAGOZIN with a Dagger and a Mask on.

[Cleone flies with her Child, he follows.]

Rag. Stop—for thou fly'st in vain.

Cle. *[Within the scenes.]* Help! Mercy! Save!
 Kill not my infant! Murder! O my child!

[She retreats back to the Scene, and falls in a swoon.]

Re-enter RAGOZIN.

Rag. She too is dead!—I fear'd that blow was
 short—

But hark! what noise?—I must not be detected—
 No time to bury 'em now—be that his care.— *[Exit.]*

Cle. *[Waking from her trance.]* Where have I been?

What horrid hand hath stamp'd

This dreadful vision on my brain? O Death!

Have I not gain'd thy mansions? Am I still

In this bad world? What ails my heart? my head?

Was not my child here with me? Sure he was—

And some foul dæmon terrifies my soul
 With fears of murder. Gracious Heaven, forbid!
 Conduct my steps, kind Providence, to where
 My little wanderer strays, that I may know
 This horror in my mind is but a dream. [Exit.

SCENE IV.

*Changes to an adjoining Part of the Wood, and discovers
 the Child murder'd. Enter CLEONE.*

Cle. O fearful silence! Not a sound returns,
 Save the wild echoes of my own sad cries,
 To my affrighted ear!—My child! my child!
 Where art thou wander'd—where beyond the reach
 Of thy poor mother's voice!—Yet while above
 The God of justice dwells, I will not deem
 The bloody vision true. Heaven hath not left me—
 There truth is known, well known—and see my love!
 See, where upon the bank its weary'd limbs
 Lie stretch'd in sleep. In sleep! O agony!
 Blast not my senses with a sight like this!
 'Tis blood! 'tis death! my child, my child is murder'd!

*[Falls down by her child, kissing it and weeping. Then
 raising herself on her arm, after a dead silence,
 and looking by degrees more and more wild, she pro-
 ceeds in a distracted manner.]*

Hark! hark! lie still, my love!—For all the world
 Don't stir!—'Tis Glanville, and he'll murder us!
 Stay, stay—I'll cover thee with boughs—don't fear—

I'll call the little lambs, and they shall bring
 Their softest fleece to shelter thee from cold.
 There, there—lie close—he shall not see—no, no;
 I'll tell him 'tis an angel I have hid. [*She rises up.*
 Where is he? soft!—he's gone, he's gone, my love,
 And shall not murder thee.—Poor innocent!
 'Tis fast asleep. Well thought! I'll steal away,
 Now while he slumbers—pick wild berries for him,
 And bring a little water in my hand—
 Then, when he wakes, we'll seat us on the bank,
 And sing all night.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Room in SIFROY'S House. GLANVILLE, and
 ISABELLA.

Glanville.

BETRAY'D! by whom betray'd? By thy vain fear.
 How curs'd is he who treads on danger's path,
 Entangled with a woman! Fool! alone
 I had been safe.

Isab. Yet hear me—On my life,
 No word from me hath 'scap'd. We may perchance
 Be yet secure.

Glan. Perchance! And do our lives
 Depend on fickle chance? But speak—proceed—
 Whence are thy fears?

Isab. In close concealment hid,
 This moment I o'erheard a whisper'd scheme
 Of seizing thee.

Glan. Confusion! Can it be?

Can Ragozin, the villain, have betray'd me?

Isab. I fear he hath. Where is he?

Glan. Not return'd

From Baden wood, to ascertain the deed
That crowns our business. Were but that secure,
My tortur'd soul, torn on the rack of doubt,
Might yet feel peace. How wears the time?

Isab. Two hours

Are wanting yet to midnight.

Glan. Where's Sifroy?

Isab. With Beaufort. But perplexing doubts distract
His reason, that all power to act forsakes him.
Still farther to alarm—deep-stain'd with gore,
The sword of Paulet's found, and other marks
That speak him murder'd.

Glan. That's beyond my wish:

And tells but what I wanted to proclaim.

Isab. Proclaim! What mean'st thou? Doth it not
conduce

To our detection? Doth it not confirm
Their dark suspicions?

Glan. The short line, alas,
Of thy weak thought, in vain would sound the depth
Of my designs. But rest thee well assur'd
I have foreseen, and am prepar'd to meet
All possible events.

Isab. O grant, good Heaven—
Great God! how dreadful 'tis to be engag'd
In what we dare not pray that Heaven may prosper!

Glan. Curse on thy boding tongue! Let me not hear
 Its superstitious weakness—Hush! who comes?
 No more—'tis Ragozin—Now sleep distrust.
 First let me learn if he hath done the deed,
 If not, I am betray'd, and will awake
 In vengeance on his falsehood.

Enter RAGOZIN.

Glan. Speak, my friend—

Cleone and her child—say quickly—how disposed?

Rag. To heav'n remov'd, no longer they obstruct
 Our views on earth.

Glan. Speak plainly—are they dead?

Rag. Both dead.

Glan. Swear, swear to this! And by all hope
 Of that reward which urg'd thee to the deed,
 Swear thou hast not betray'd me!

Rag. Whence arise
 These base suspicions? I disdain that crime!
 Tho' branded with the name of an assassin,
 I am not yet so mean as to betray.

Glan. Distraction!—may I trust thee?

Rag. As thou wilt.

Glan. [*Pausing.*] It must be so—we still are safe:
 and this

Pretence of strong suspicion is no more
 Than subtil artifice, contriv'd to draw
 Th'unwary to confession.

Rag. 'Tis no more.

Glan. Nor will I more than with a just contempt

Regard it. All our deeds of blood are done.
What now remains, the law shall execute.

Rag. What's thy intent?

Glan. The thrust thus aim'd at me,
Shall deeply pierce Sifroy's unguarded bosom.
Thy aid once more, as witness to his threats.

Rag. Freely I would, but safety now requires
That I abscond. The stipulated sum,
Forgive me therefore, if I claim this night.

Glan. 'Tis thine. But hark!—retire—I hear his
step—

One moment wait—at his return, 'tis thine.

Rag. [*Aside.*] Curs'd chance! Were I possess'd of
my reward,

Who would might wait thee now—nor will I more
Than some short moments rest unsatisfied. [*Exit.*]

Enter SIFROY.

Sif. [*Not seeing Glanville.*] O happiness! thou frail,
thou fading flower,

Whose culture mocks all human toil, farewell!
But I, blind madman! by the roots have pluck'd
Thy sweetness from my bosom. My dear love!
Where wanders now thy wrong'd, thy helpless virtue?
On what cold stone reclines thy drooping head,
While trickling tears call thy Sifroy inhuman?
Deluded wretch! why did my greedy ear
Catch the rank poison of suspicion's breath,
And to my tortur'd brain convey distraction?

Glan. [*Advancing to him.*] Are thus my faithful services repaid?

Are the plain truths my undisguising heart
In friendship told, already deem'd no more
Than vile suggestions of designing falsehood?

Sif. Villain, they are!—Thou know'st them false
as hell!

Where is my wife?—O traitor! thou hast plung'd
My soul into perdition!

Glan. Rather say,
That he who led astray the willing wife,
Thy folly doats on—he—

Sif. Blasphemer! stop
Thy impious tongue! The breast of that dear saint
Enshrines a soul as spotless as her form.
Said'st thou not, slanderer! that my love was fled
With Paulet?

Glan. True: I did.

Sif. Art thou not sure
That this is false? Hast thou no dreadful cause
To know it cannot be?

Glan. None. Thou, perhaps,
Whose bloody errand I indeed have heard
Already is accomplish'd—thou, 'tis true,
May'st know that they are parted: 'twas the deed
Thou flew'st thus swiftly to perform. But how
Doth that impeach the truth of her elopement?
That thou hast murder'd him, acquits not her.

Sif. That I have murder'd!—I!—Pernicious
wretch!

What dark design, by blackest fiends inspir'd,
 Lurks in thy treacherous soul? Tremendous Power!
 Have I then sinn'd beyond all hope of mercy?
 Must the deep phial of thy vengeance, pour'd
 On my devoted head, be pour'd from him?
 But all thy ways are just! To him I gave
 That credit which I ow'd my injur'd love—
 He now, by thy supreme decree, stands forth
 The avenger of my crime.

Enter BEAUFORT senior, Officers, &c.

Beauf. sen. Seize there your victim.

Glan. What means this outrage?—Upon what pretence—

Beauf. sen. The bloody hand of murder points out thee.

To strong suspicion. Turn'st thou pale?—O wretch!
 Thy guilt drinks up thy blood.

Glan. Not guilt, but rage!

Who dares accuse me?

Beauf. sen. I. Where's Paulet? where
 My daughter? who thou basely said'st were fled
 Together?

Glan. That his poinard found the way
 To part their steps, impeaches not my truth.

Beauf. sen. His poinard!

Glan. His. I should have scorn'd to charge
 The man, whose honour I think deeply wrong'd;
 But my own life attempted thus, demands
 That truth should rise to light. Cam'st thou not here,

Driven by the fury of a dire revenge ?

What other motive urg'd thy desperate haste ?

Sif. Insidious slave ! hast thou insnar'd my soul
By treacherous arts ?—Hast thou with falsehood vile
Inflam'd this hapless breast ?—And would'st thou now
Infer my guilt, from my provok'd resentment ?

Glan. Lean'd I on feeble inference—I would ask,
What cause have I to seek this Paulet's blood ?

'Twas not my wife, my daughter, he seduc'd !

How has he injur'd me ? But I reject

These trivial pleas—I build on certain proof.

Beauf. sen. What proof ?

Glan. The strongest—his own hand and seal
Fixt to the firm resolve, that he alone

[*Shewing the letter.*

Would do the righteous deed—for so his rage
Calls Paulet's murder.

Beauf. sen. Ha ! What can I think !

Unhappy man ! and hast thou to the crime
Of rash suspicion, added that of murder ?

Sif. My father, hear thy son ; I plead not for
My life, but justice.—That I am a wretch,
Groaning beneath the weight of Heaven's just ire—
That snared and caught in meditated wiles,
I banish'd from my house a guiltless wife—
That burning with revenge, I flew to quench
My wrath in Paulet's blood—all this I own.
But by the sacred eye of Providence !
That views each human step, and still detects

The murderer's deed; of this imputed crime
My heart is ignorant, my hands are clear.

Beauf. sen. I wish thee innocent—

Glan. Have then my words

No weight? and is his own attesting hand
No proof against him? Is her secret flight
An accident? No more—O partial man!
To hide thy daughter's shame, thou seek'st my life.
But I appeal from thee to public justice.

Beauf. sen. To that thou art consign'd: and may the
hand

Of strict enquiry drag to open day
All secret guilt, tho' shame indelible
Should brand a daughter nearest to my heart.
Heaven aid my search! I seek not blood, but truth.
Guard safe your prisoner to the magistrate,
I'll follow you. The justice thou demand'st,
Thou shalt not want.

Glan. 'Tis well: I ask no more.

Let Ragozin, let Isabella too
Attend the magistrate—on them I call
To clear my slander'd name.

Beauf. sen. It shall be so.

Take them this instant to your strictest care.
Thou too, Sifroy, be ready to attend.

Sif. O think not I will leave him, till full proof
Condemn him or acquit.

Beauf. sen. The cause demands it.

[*Exeunt Officers with Glanville guarded.*]

Sif. Whence has the miscreant this unusual firmness?
Can guilt be free from terror?

Beauf. sen. No, my son:
And thro' the mask of smooth hypocrisy,
Methinks I see conceal'd a trembling heart.
If he be true, my daughter must be false:
If he be guiltless, who hath murder'd Paulet?

Sif. There, there, thank Heaven! my hands are
innocent.

But, oh, my love!—Conduct me where she strays
Forlorn and comfortless! Alas, who knows—
Her tender heart perhaps this moment breaks
With my unkindness! Wretch! what hast thou lost!

Enter BEAUFORT junior.

Beauf. jun. Thy soul's sweet peace!—Never, no
never more

To be regain'd!—Shame, anguish, and despair
Shall haunt thy future hours! Severe remorse
Shall strike his vulture talons thro' thy heart,
And rend thy vital threads.

Beauf. sen. What means my son?

Sif. My brother!—If I may conjure thee yet
By that dear name.—

Beauf. jun. Thou may'st not—I disclaim it.

Sif. Why dost thou still alarm my shuddering soul
With rising terrors?

Beauf. sen. My dear son, relieve
Thy father from this dread suspense!

Beauf. jun. O Sir! how shall I speak! or in what
words

Unfold the horrors of this night?—My sister—
Lost to her wretched self—thro' dreary wilds
Wanders distracted—void of reason's light
To guide her devious feet.

Beauf. sen. Support me, Heaven!
Then every hope is fled!—Thy will be done!—
Where is my child? Where was she found?

Beauf. jun. Alas!
Of soul too delicate, too soft to bear
Unjust reproach, and undeserved shame,
Distraction seiz'd her in the gloom of night,
As passing thro' the wood she sought the arms
Of a protecting father.

Sif. Do I live?
Is such a wretch permitted still to breathe?
Why opens not this earth? Why sleeps above
The lightning's vengeful blast? Is Heaven unjust?
Or am I still reserv'd for deeper wo?
I hope not mercy—that were impious—
Pour then on my bare head, ye ministers
Of wrath! your hottest vengeance—

Beauf. jun. Stop—forbear—
Nor imprecate that vengeance, which unseen
Already hangs o'er thy devoted life.
Thou know'st not yet the measure of thy wo.
Thy child, thy lovely babe, a bloody corse,
Lies breathless by his frantic mother's side—
Much to be fear'd, by her own hand destroy'd,
When reason in her brain had lost dominion.

Sif. My child too gone!—Then misery is complete—
O my torn heart!—Is there in heaven no pity?

None, none for me! The wrongs of all I lov'd
 To heaven ascending, bar th' eternal gates,
 And close the ear of mercy 'gainst my prayer.
 But fate's last bolt is thrown, and I am curst
 Beyond all power to sharpen torture's pang.
 Yes, I am scorn'd, abandon'd, and cast out
 By heaven and earth!—I must not call thee father—
 I have undone thee, robb'd thee of the name:
 And now, myself am childless, and undone.

Beauf. sen. Forbear, my son, to aggravate thy grief,
 Already too severe. Kind Providence
 May yet restore, and harmonize her mind.

Sif. May Heaven pour blessings on thy reverend head
 For that sweet hope! but say, where shall I see her?—
 How bear the dreadful sight!

Beauf. jun. Dreadful indeed!

On the cold earth they found her laid: her head,
 Supported on her arm, hung o'er her child,
 The image of pale grief, lamenting innocence.
 Sometimes she speaks fond words, and seems to smile
 On the dead babe as 'twere alive.—Now, like
 The melancholy bird of night, she pours
 A soft and melting strain, as if to soothe
 Its slumbers: and now clasps it to her breast,
 Cries Glanville is not here—fear not, my love,
 He shall not come—Then wildly throws her eyes
 Around, and in the tenderest accent calls
 Aloud on thee, to save her from dishonour!

Sif. Haste, let us haste—distracted thus, she grows

Still dearer, still more precious to my soul!

O let me soothe her sorrows into peace.

Beauf. sen. Stay—calls she frequently on Glanville's name?

Beauf. jun. So they report who found her.

Beauf. sen. Left they her

Alone?

Beauf. jun. No: but all arts to court her thence were vain.

Beauf. sen. Thither with speed this moment let us fly.
Let Glanville too attend. From the wild words
Of madness and delirium, he who struck
From darkness light—may call discovery forth,
To guide our footsteps.

Beauf. jun. Just is your resolve,
And I will follow you—but have receiv'd
Intelligence of Paulet that imports us.

Sif. Of Paulet! of my friend! What may it be?

Beauf. jun. As yet I'm ignorant.

Beauf. sen. To gain us light,

Be no means left untry'd. [Exit *Beauf. jun.*

Sif. But haste, we linger.

Yet whither can I fly? where seek for peace?

In its most tender vein my heart is wounded!

Had I been smote in any other part,

I could have borne with firmness; but in thee,

My wrong'd, my ruin'd love, I bleed to death.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

The Wood. CLEONE is discovered sitting by her dead child; over whom she hath form'd a little bower of shrubs and branches of trees. She seems very busy in picking little sprigs from a bough in her hand.

Cleone sings.

SWEETER than the damask rose

Was his lovely breast;

There, O let me there repose,

Sigh, sigh, and sink to rest.

Did I not love him? who can say I did not?
My heart was in his bosom, but he tore
It out, and cast it from him—Yet I lov'd—
And he more lovely seem'd to that fond heart,
Than the bright cherub sailing on the skirts
Of yonder cloud, th' inhabitant of heaven.

Enter SIFROY, BEAUFORT Senior, ISABELLA,
GLANVILLE, RAGOZIN, *Officers, &c.*

Beauf. sen. This is the place—And see my hapless
child!

Why, gracious Heaven! why have I liv'd to feel
This dreadful moment? Soft I pray ye tread—
And let us well observe her speech and action.

Sif. Have I done this!—and do I live!—My heart

Drops blood! but to thy guidance I will bend,
And in forc'd silence smother killing grief.

Glan. [*Aside.*] Did'st thou not tell me, villain, she
was dead?

Rag. [*Aside.*] I was deceiv'd—by Heav'n, I thought
her so.

Glan. [*Aside.*] May hell reward thee.

Beauf. sen. Stay—she rises—hush!

Cle. Soft! soft! he stirs—

O, I have wak'd him—I have wak'd my child!
And when false Glanville knows it, he again
Will murder him.

Beauf. sen. Mark that!

Glan. And are the words

Of incoherent madness to convict me?

Sif. They are the voice of Heaven, detecting murder!
Yes, villain! thy infernal aim appears.

Cle. No, no; all still—As undisturb'd he sleeps
As the stolen infant rock'd in th' eagle's nest.
I'll call the red-breast, and the nightingale,
Their pious bills once cover'd little babes,
And sung their dying dirge. Again, sweet birds!
Again pour forth your melancholy notes,
And soothe once more that innocence ye love.

Sif. On that enchanting voice, how my fond heart
Hath hung with rapture!—now too deeply pierc'd
I die upon the sound. [*He advances towards her.*]

My dearest love,

Behold thy own Sifroy, return'd to calm
Thy griefs! and pour into thy wounded mind
The healing balm of tenderness!

Cle. [*Frighted and trembling.*] Sweet Heaven,
Protect me! O, if you have pity, save
My infant!—Cast away that bloody steel!
And on my knees I'll kiss the gentle hand
That spar'd my child!—Glanville shall never know
But we are dead—In this lone wood we'll live,
And I no more will seek my husband's house.
And yet I never wrong'd him! never indeed!

Sif. I know thou didst not—Look upon me, love!
Dost thou not know me? I am thy Sifroy—
Thy husband—Do not break my heart—O speak!
That look will kill me!

Beauf. sen. My dear child! Look up—
Look on thy father! Am I too forgotten?
Is every filial trace in thy poor brain
Defac'd—She knows us not!—May Heaven, my son,
Lend thee its best support! For me—my days
Are few; nor can my sorrows date be long
Protracted.

Sif. Say not so! Must I become
The murderer of all I hold most dear?

Cle. Yes—yes—a husband once—a father too
I had—but lost, quite lost—deep in my brain
Bury'd they lie—In heaps of rolling sand—
I cannot find them.

Sif. O heart-rending grief!
How is that fair, that amiable mind,
Disjointed, blasted by the fatal rage
Of one rash moment! [*She goes to her child, he follows.*
Let sweet pity veil

The horrors of this scene from every eye !
My child ! my child ! hide, hide me from that sight !

[Turns away.]

Cle. Stay, stay——for you are good, and will not
hurt

My lamb. Alas, you weep—why should you weep ?
I am his mother, yet I cannot weep.

Have you more pity than a mother feels ?

But I shall weep no more——my heart is cold.

Sif. [Falling on his knees.] O mitigate thy wrath,
good Heaven ! Thou know'st

My weakness—lay not on thy creature more

Than he can bear : Restore her, O restore !

But if it must not be—if I am doom'd

To stand a dreadful warning to deter

Frail man from sudden rage—Almighty Power,

Then take, in mercy take, this wretched life !

[As he rises, Isabella comes forward and throws her-
self at his feet.]

Isab. Hear, hear me, Sir ; my very heart is pierc'd !
And my shock'd soul, beneath a load of guilt,
Sinks down in terrors unsupportable.

'Tis Heaven impels me to reveal the crimes,

In which a fatal passion has involv'd me.

Protect me, save me from his desperate rage !

[Glanville suddenly pulls out a short dagger which he
had conceal'd in his bosom ; and attempts to stab her :
one of the Officers wrenches it from him.]

Beauf. sen. Ha ! seize the dagger !

Sif. Hold thy murderous hand !

Rag. [*Aside.*] All is betray'd—for me no safety now,
But sudden flight. [*He endeavours to withdraw.*]

Sif. Stop—seize—detain that slave!

Th' attempt to fly bespeaks him an accomplice.

[*He is seized by the Officers.*]

Isab. [*To Glanville.*] Tremble, O wretch!—Thou
seest that Heaven is just,

Nor suffers even ourselves to hide our deeds.

To death I yield—nor hope, nor wish for life—

Permit me to reveal some dreadful truths,

And I shall die content. Thy hapless wife,

Chaste as the purest angel of the sky,

By Glanville is traduc'd—by him betray'd.

Paulet is murder'd—and by his device,

The lovely child. Seduc'd by his vile arts,

And by the flattering hopes of wealth ensnar'd,

Distracting thought! I have destroy'd my soul.

Beauf. sen. Why, why so far from virtue didst thou
stray,

That to compassionate thy wretched fate,

Almost is criminal?

[*To Glanville.*] But canst thou bear—

Can thy hard heart support this dreadful scene?

Glan. I know the worst, and am prepar'd to meet it.

That wretch hath seal'd my death. And had I but

Aveng'd her timorous perfidy—the rest

I'd leave to fate; and neither should lament

My own, nor pity yours.

Sif. Inhuman savage!

But justice shall exert her keenest scourge,

And wake to terror thy unfeeling heart.
 Guard them to safe confinement.—Killing sight!
 Behold that piteous object!—Her dumb grief
 Speaks to my heart unutterable wo!
 Horror is in her silence—[*He goes to her*] My dear love!
 Look, look upon me! Let these tears prevail,
 And with thy reason, wake thy pity too.

Cle. Again you weep—But had you lost a wife,
 As I a husband, you might weep indeed!
 Or had you lost so sweet a boy as mine,
 'Twould break your heart!

Sif. Her words are pointed steel!
 Have I not lost a wife?—lost a sweet boy?
 Indeed I have!—Myself too murder'd them!

Cle. That was unkind—Why did you so?—But
 hush!

Let no one talk of murder—I was kill'd—
 My husband murder'd me—but I forgave him.

Sif. I cannot, cannot bear!—O torture! torture!

Beauf. sen. Collect thyself, and with the humble eye
 Of patient hope, look up to Heaven resign'd.

Sif. Hope! where is hope!—Alas, no hope for me!
 On downy pinions, lo! to heaven she flies—
 To realms of bliss—where I must never come!
 Terrors are mine—and from the depths below,
 Despair looks out and beckons me to sink!

Beauf. sen. Assuage thy grief! call reason to thy aid,
 Perhaps we yet may save her precious life;
 At least delay not, by some gentle means,
 To soothe her to return.

Sif. May soft persuasion dwell upon thy lips!
But ah, can tears or arguments avail,
When reason marks not?

Enter BEAUFORT junior.

Beauf. jun. Where, where is my sister?

Beauf. sen. Alas! the melancholy sight will pierce
Thy inmost soul!—But do not yet disturb her.
Distraction o'er her memory hangs a cloud,
That hides us from her.

Sif. My dearest brother! can thy heart receive
The wretch, who robb'd it of a sister's love?

Beauf. jun. I do forgive thee all—Alas, my brother!

Most basely wert thou wrong'd. But truth is found—
Paulet, tho' wounded, yet escap'd with life.

Sif. Then Heaven is just--But tell me, how escap'd--

Beauf. jun. Thou shalt know all—But stay! my
sister speaks—

Cle. [*Coming forward.*] O who hath done it!—who
hath done this deed

Of death?—My child is murder'd—my sweet babe
Bereft of life!—Thou Glanville! thou art he!
Remorseless fiend! destroy a child! an infant!—
Monster, forbear!—See, see the little heart
Bleeds on his dagger's point!

[*Looking down to the earth.*]

Eut lo! the furies!—the black fiends of hell
Have seiz'd the murderer! look; they tear his heart—
That heart which had no pity! Hark; he shrieks—

His eye-balls glare—his teeth together gnash
 In bitterness of anguish:—while the fiends
 Scream in his frightened ear—*Thou shalt not murder!*

Beauf. sen. What dreadful visions terrify her brain!
 To interrupt her must relieve.—Speak to her.

Sif. My dearest love!—cast but one look upon us!

Cle. [*Looking up to heaven.*] Is that my infant?—

Whither do ye bear

My bleeding babe? Not yet. O mount not yet,
 Ye sons of light, but take me on your wings,
 With my sweet innocent—I come! I come!

[*Her father and brother take hold of her.*

Yet hold; where is my husband—my Sifroy?

Will not he follow? Will he quite forsake

His poor lost wife?—O tell him I was true! [*Swoons.*

Beauf. sen. Alas, she faints!—I fear the hand of
 death

Is falling on her. Gently bear her up.

Sif. O God! my heart—

My heart-strings break!—Did not her dying words
 Dwell on my name? Did not her latest sigh
 Breathe tenderness for me?—for me, the wretch,
 Whose rash suspicion, whose intemperate rage,
 Abandon'd her to shame!—Hah! gracious Heaven!
 Does she not move? Does not returning light
 Dawn in her feeble eye? Her opening lips
 Breathe the sweet hope of life!

Cle. Where have I been?

What dreadful dreams have floated in my brain!

Beauf. sen. How fares my child?

Cle. O faint! exceeding faint!

My father!—my dear father!—Do I wake?

And am I, am I in a father's arms?

My brother too—O happy!

Beauf. jun. My dear sister!

Sif. Transporting rapture! Will my love return
To life? to reason too? indulgent Power!

Cle. What sound, what well-known voice is that I
hear!

Support me, raise me to his long-lost arms!

It is my husband! my Sifroy! my love!

Alas, too faint—I never more shall rise.

Sif. Ah! do not wound me, do not pierce my heart
With any thought so dreadful! Art thou given
In mockery only to my longing arms?

Raise up thy head, my love! lean on my breast,
And whisper to my soul thou wilt not die.

Cle. How thy sweet accents soothe the pangs of death!
Witness ye angels! thus in thy dear arms
To die, my faithful love, and spotless truth
Confirm'd, was all my wish! Where is my father?
Let me but take his blessings up to heaven,
And I shall go with confidence!

Beauf. sen. My child—

My darling child!—May that pure bliss, just heaven
Bestows upon departed saints, be thine!

Cle. Farewell, my brother! comfort and support
Our father's feeble age—To heal his grief
Will give thy sister's dying moments ease.

Sif. Talk not of death!—We must not, must not
part!

Good Heaven! her dying agonies approach!

Cle. The keenest pang of death, is that I feel

For thy surviving wo.—Adieu, my love!

I do entreat thee with my last, last breath,

Restrain thy tears—nor let me grieve to think

Thou feel'st a pain I cannot live to cure.

Sif. Might'st thou but live, how light were every
pain

Fate could inflict!

Cle. It will not be!—I faint—

My spirits fail—farewell—receive me, Heaven. [*Dies.*]

Sif. She's gone!—for ever gone!—Those lovely
eyes

Are clos'd in death—no more to look on me!

My fate is fix'd, and in this tortur'd breast

Anguish—remorse—despair—must ever dwell.

Beauf. sen. Offended power! at length with pitying
eyes

Look on our misery! Cut short this thread,

That links my soul too long to wretched life!

And let mankind, taught by his hapless fate,

Learn one great truth, experience finds too late;

That dreadful ills from rash resentment flow,

And sudden passions end in lasting wo.

[*Exeunt.*]

EPILOGUE,
By WILLIAM SHENSTONE, Esq.

Spoken by Mrs. BELLAMY.

*WELL, Ladies—so much for the Tragic stile—
And now, the custom is—to make you smile.*

“ To make us smile, I hear Flippanta say,

“ Yes—we have smil'd indeed—thro' half the play :

“ We always laugh when Bards, demure and sly,

“ Bestow such mighty pains—to make us cry.

“ And truly, to bring sorrow to a crisis,

“ Mad-folks, and murder'd babes are—shrewd devices.

“ The Captain gone three years—and then to blame

“ The vestal conduct of his virtuous dame !—

“ What French, what English bride would think it treason,

“ When thus accus'd—to give the brute some reason ?

“ Out of my house—this night, forsooth—depart !

“ A modern wife had said—With all my heart :

“ But think not, haughty Sir, I'll go alone !

“ Order your coach—conduct me safe to town—

“ Give me my jewels—wardrobe—and my maid—

“ And pray take care my pin-money be paid :

“ Else know, I wield a pen—and, for his glory,

“ My dear's domestic feats may shine in story !

“ Then for the Child—the tale was truly sad—
 “ But who for such a bantling would run mad?
 “ What wife, at midnight hour inclin’d to roam,
 “ Would fondly drag her little chit from home?
 “ What has a mother with her child to do?
 “ Dear brats—the Nursery’s the place for you!”

Such are the strains of many a modish Fair!
 Yet memoirs—not of modern growth—declare
 The time has been, when modesty and truth
 Were deem’d additions to the charms of youth;
 Ere, in the dice-box, ladies found delight;
 Or swoon’d, for lack of cards, on Sunday-night;
 When women hid their necks, and veil’d their faces,
 Nor romp’d, nor rak’d, nor star’d, at public places:
 Nor took the airs of Amazons—for graces!
 When plain domestic virtues were the mode;
 And wives ne’er dreamt of happiness abroad,
 But cheer’d their offspring, skunn’d fantastic airs;
 And, with the joys of wedlock, mixt the cares.

Such modes are past—yet sure they merit praise;
 For marriage triumph’d in those wassel days:
 No virgin sigh’d in vain; no fears arose,
 Lest holy wars should cause a dearth of beaux:
 By chaste decorum, each, affection gain’d;
 By faith and fondness, what she won, maintain’d.

'Tis yours, ye fair! to mend a thoughtless age,
That scorns the press, the pulpit, and the stage!
To yield frail husbands no pretence to stray:
(Men will be rakes, if women lead the way).
To soothe—But truce with these preceptive lays;
The Muse, who, dazzled with your ancient praise,
On present worth, and modern beauty tramples,
Must own, she ne'er could boast more bright examples*.

* Addressing the Boxes.





De Wilde pinxt

Longy fecit

M^{rs} SIDDONS as ISABELLA.

*This ring was the first present of my love
To Biron, my first husband.*

London. Printed by J. Bell, British Library, Strand. MDCCLXXII.

ISABELLA;

OR,

THE FATAL MARRIAGE.

A

TRAGEDY,

ALTERED FROM

SOUTHERN.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

* The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of

JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,

Bookseller to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

MDCCKCII.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THOUGH the mixed drama of the last age, called Tragi-Comedy, has been generally condemned by the critics, and not without reason; yet it has been found to succeed on the stage: both the comic and tragic scenes have been applauded by the audience, without any particular exceptions: nor has it been observed, that the effect of either was less forcible, than it would have been, if they had not succeeded each other in the entertainment of the same night. The tragic part of this play has been always esteemed extremely natural and interesting; and it would probably, like some others, have produced its full effect, notwithstanding the intervention of the comic scenes that are intermixed with it: the editor, therefore, would not have thought of removing them, if they had not been exceptionable in themselves, not only as indelicate, but as immoral; for this reason he has suffered so much of the characters of the Porter and the Nurse to remain, as is not liable to this objection. He is, however, to account, not only for what he has taken away, but for what he has added. It will easily be comprehended, that the leaving out something made it absolutely necessary that something should be supplied; and the public will be the more easily reconciled to this necessity, when they are acquainted that the additions are very inconsiderable, and that the editor has done his utmost to render them of a pieces with the rest. Several lines of the original, particularly in the part of Isabella, are printed, though they are omitted in the representation. Many things please in the reading, which may have little or no effect upon the stage. When

the passions are violent, and the speeches long, the performers must either spare their powers, or shorten their speeches. Mrs. Cibber chose the latter; by which she has been able to exert that force and expression which has been so strongly felt, and so sincerely applauded.

ISABELLA.

THIS play is built upon the agonies of a mind of keen sensibility, when known to have wedded a second husband while the first is living.

The power of SOUTHERN is the power of nature. No author, since Shakspeare, possesses so sure a clue to all the labyrinths of the heart. His language is never tumid nor declamatory. What is to be spoken, therefore, at all times continues the impression, and the charm is unabating to the last.

Of a play to which the wonderful powers of Mrs. SIDDONS have so lately given its utmost force, the recollection of her exquisite performance will be the best eulogy of the author, who could thus furnish the scenes best adapted to her talents.

Dramatis Personae.

DRURY - LANE.

Men.

COUNT BALDWIN, father to Biron and Carlos	Mr. Packer.
BIRON, married to Isabella, supposed dead	- Mr. Kemble.
CARLOS, his younger brother	- - - - - Mr. Barrymore.
VILLEROY, in love with Isabella, marries her	Mr. Palmer.
SAMPSON, Porter to Count Baldwin,	- - Mr. Phillimore.
<i>A Child of Isabella's</i> by Biron	- - - Master Harlowe.
BELLFORD, a friend of Biron's	- - - Mr. R. Palmer.
PEDRO, a friend to Carlos	- - - Mr. Alfred.

Women.

ISABELLA, married to Biron and Villeroy	- Mrs. Siddons.
Nurse to Biron	- - - - - Mrs. Booth.

Officers, Servants, Men and Women.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

COUNT BALDWIN, father to Biron and Carlos	Mr. Hull.
BIRON, married to Isabella, supposed dead	- Mr. Holman.
CARLOS, his younger brother	- - - - - Mr. Harley.
VILLEROY, in love with Isabella, marries her	Mr. Farren.
SAMPSON, porter to Count Baldwin	- - Mr. Cubitt.
<i>A Child of Isabella's</i> , by Biron	- - - Miss Standen.
BELLFORD, a friend of Biron's	- - - Mr. Davies.
PEDRO, a friend to Carlos	- - - Mr. Thompson.

Women.

ISABELLA, married to Biron and Villeroy	- Mrs. Esten.
Nurse to Biron	- - - - - Mrs. Pitt.

Officers, Servants, Men and Women.

SCENE, Brussels.



ISABELLA;

OR,

THE FATAL MARRIAGE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

*Before Count BALDWIN'S House. Enter VILLEROY
and CARLOS.*

Carlos.

THIS constancy of yours will establish an immortal reputation among the women.

Vil. If it would establish me with Isabella——

Car. Follow her, follow her: Troy town was won at last.

Vil. I have follow'd her these seven years, and now but live in hopes.

Car. But live in hopes! Why, hope is the ready road, the lover's baiting-place; and, for aught you know, but one stage short of the possession of your mistress.

Vil. But my hopes, I fear, are more of my own making than hers; and proceed rather from my wishes, than any encouragement she has given me.

Car. That I can't tell: the sex is very various: there are no certain measures to be prescrib'd or follow'd, in making our approaches to the women. All that we have to do, I think, is to attempt 'em in the weakest part. Press them but hard, and they will all fall under the necessity of a surrender at last. That favour comes at once; and sometimes when we least expect it.

Vil. I shall be glad to find it so.

Car. You will find it so. Every place is to be taken, that is not to be reliev'd: she must comply.

Vil. I'm going to visit her.

Car. What interest a brother-in-law can have with her, depend upon.

Vil. I know your interest, and I thank you.

Car. You are prevented; see, the mourner comes; She weeps, as seven years were seven hours; So fresh, unfading, is the memory Of my poor brother's, Biron's, death: I leave you to your opportunity. [Exit Vil.]

Tho' I have taken care to root her from our house,
I would transplant her into Villeroy's——
There is an evil fate that waits upon her,
To which, I wish him wedded—Only him:
His upstart family, with haughty brow,
(Tho' Villeroy and myself are seeming friends)
Looks down upon our house; his sister too,
Whose hand I ask'd, and was with scorn refus'd,
Lives in my breast, and fires me to revenge.——
They bend this way——

Perhaps, at last, she seeks my father's doors;
 They shall be shut, and be prepar'd to give
 The beggar and her brat a cold reception.
 That boy's an adder in my path—they come,
 I'll stand apart, and watch their motions. [*Retires.*]

Enter VILLEROY, with ISABELLA and her little Son.

Isa. Why do you follow me? you know I am
 A bankrupt every way; too far engag'd
 Ever to make return: I own you have been
 More than a brother to me, my friend;
 And, at a time when friends are found no more,
 A friend to my misfortunes.

Vil. I must be always your friend.

Isa. I have known, and found you
 Truly my friend; and would I could be yours;
 But the unfortunate cannot be friends:
 "Fate watches the first motion of the soul,
 "To disappoint our wishes; if we pray
 "For blessings, they prove curses in the end,
 "To ruin all about us." Pray be gone,
 Take warning, and be happy.

Vil. Happiness!

There's none for me without you: "Riches, name,
 "Health, fame, distinction, place, and quality,
 "Are the incumbrances of groaning life,
 "To make it but more tedious without you."
 What serve the goods of fortune for? To raise
 My hopes, that you at last will share them with me.
 "Long life itself, the universal prayer,

“ And heav’n’s reward of well-deservers here,
 “ Would prove a plague to me; to see you always,
 “ And never see you mine! still to desire,
 “ And never to enjoy!”

Isa. I must not hear you.

Vil. Thus, at this awful distance, I have serv’d
 A seven year’s bondage—Do I call it bondage,
 When I can never wish to be redeem’d?
 No, let me rather linger out a life
 Of expectation, that you may be mine,
 Than be restor’d to the indifference
 Of seeing you, without this pleasing pain:
 I’ve lost myself, and never would be found,
 But in these arms.

Isa. Oh, I have heard all this!

—But must no more—the charmer is no more:
 My buried husband rises in the face
 Of my dear boy, and chides me for my stay:
 Canst thou forgive me, child?

Child. Why, have you done a fault? You cry as if
 you had. Indeed now, I’ve done nothing to offend
 you: but if you kiss me, and look so very sad upon
 me, I shall cry too.

Isa. My little angel, no, you must not cry;
 Sorrow will overtake thy steps too soon:
 I should not hasten it.

Vil. What can I say!

The arguments that make against my hopes
 Prevail upon my heart, and fix me more;
 “ Those pious tears you hourly throw away

“ Upon the grave, have all their quick’ning charms,
 “ And more engage my love, to make you mine :”
 When yet a virgin, free, and undispos’d,
 I lov’d, but saw you only with my eyes ;
 I could not reach the beauties of your soul :
 I have since liv’d in contemplation,
 And long experience of your growing goodness :
 What then was passion, is my judgment now,
 Thro’ all the several changes of your life,
 Confirm’d and settled in adoring you.

Isa. Nay, then I must be gone. If you’re my
 friend,

If you regard my little interest,
 No more of this ; you see, I grant you all
 That friendship will allow : be still my friend ;
 That’s all I can receive, or have to give.
 I’m going to my father ; he needs not an excuse
 To use me ill : pray leave me to the trial.

Vil. I’m only born to be what you would have me,
 The creature of your power, and must obey ;
 In every thing obey you. I am going :
 But all good fortune go along with you.

[*Exit.*

Isa. I shall need all your wishes——
 Lock’d ! and fast !

[*Knocks.*

Where is the charity that us’d to stand
 In our forefathers’ hospitable days
 At great men’s doors, ready for our wants,
 Like the good angel of the family,
 With open arms taking the needy in,

To feed and clothe, to comfort and relieve 'em ?
Now even their gates are shut against their poor.

[*She knocks again.*]

Enter SAMPSON *to her.*

Samp. Well, what's to do now, I trow ? You knock as loud as if you were invited ; and that's more than I heard of ; but I can tell you, you may look twice about you for a welcome in a great man's family before you find it, unless you bring it along with you.

Isa. I hope I bring my welcome along with me : Is your lord at home ?
Count Baldwin lives here still ?

Samp. Ay, ay, Count Baldwin does live here ; and I am his porter : but what's that to the purpose, good woman, of my lord's being at home ?

Isa. Why, don't you know me, friend ?

Samp. Not I, not I, mistress ; I may have seen you before, or so ; but men of employment must forget their acquaintance ; especially such as we are never to be the better for.

[*Going to shut the door, Nurse enters, having overheard him.*]

Nurse. Handsomer words would become you, and mend your manners, Sampson : do you know who you prate to ?

Isa. I'm glad you know me, nurse.

Nurse. Marry, heav'n forbid, madam, that I should ever forget you, or my little jewel : pray go in—[*Isa-*

bella goes in with her Child.] Now my blessing go along with you wherever you go, or whatever you are about. Fie, Sampson, how couldst thou be such a Saracen? A Turk would have been a better Christian, than to have done so barbarously by so good a lady.

Samp. Why look you, nurse, I know you of old: by your good-will you would have a finger in every body's pie: but mark the end on't; if I am called to account about it, I know what I have to say.

Nurse. Marry come up here; say your pleasure, and spare not. Refuse his eldest son's widow, and poor child, the comfort of seeing him? She does not trouble him so often.

Samp. Not that I am against it, nurse: but we are but servants, you know: we must have no likings, but our lord's; and must do as we are ordered.

Nurse. Nay, that's true, Sampson.

Samp. Besides, what I did was all for the best
 "I have no ill will to the young lady, as a body may
 "say, upon my own account; only that I hear she is
 "poor; and indeed I naturally hate your decay'd
 "gentry: they expect as much waiting upon as when
 "they had money in their pockets, and were able to
 "consider us for the trouble.

Nurse. Why, that is a grievance indeed in great
 "families, where the gifts, at good times, are better
 "than the wages. It would do well to be reformed."

Samp. But what is the business, nurse? You have been in the family before I came into the world: what's the reason, pray, that this daughter-in-law,

who has so good a report in every body's mouth, is so little set by, by my lord?

Nurse. Why, I tell you, Sampson, more or less: I'll tell the truth, that's my way, you know, without adding or diminishing.

Samp. Ay, marry, nurse.

Nurse. My lord's eldest son, Biron by name, the son of his bosom, and the son that he would have lov'd best, if he had as many as King Pyramus of Troy

“*Samp.* How! King Pyramus of Troy! Why, how many had he?”

“*Nurse.* Why, the ballad sings he had fifty sons; but no matter for that.” This Biron, as I was saying, was a lovely sweet gentleman, and, indeed, nobody could blame his father for loving him: he was a son for the king of Spain; God bless him, for I was his nurse. But now I come to the point, Sampson; this Biron, without asking the advice of his friends, hand over head, as young men will have their vagaries, not having the fear of his father before his eyes, as I may say, wilfully marries this Isabella.

Samp. How, wilfully! he should have had her consent, methinks.

Nurse. No, wilfully marries her; and, which was worse, after she had settled all her fortune upon a nunnery, which she broke out of to run away with him. They say they had the church's forgiveness, but I had rather it had been his father's.

Samp. Why, in good truth, “these nunneries, I see no good they do. I think the young lady was

“in the right to run away from a nunnery:” and I think our young master was not in the wrong but in marrying without a portion.

Nurse. That was the quarrel, I believe, Sampson: upon this, my old lord would never see him; disinherited him; took his younger brother, Carlos, into favour, whom he never car'd for before; and at last forc'd Biron to go to the siege of Candy, where he was killed.

Samp. Alack-a day, poor gentleman.

Nurse. For which my old lord hates her, as if she had been the cause of his going thither.

Samp. Alas, alas, poor lady! she has suffered for it: she has liv'd a great while a widow.

Nurse. A great while indeed, for a young woman, Sampson.

Samp. Gad so! here they come; I won't venture to be seen.

Enter Count BALDWIN, followed by ISABELLA and her Child.

C. Bald. Whoever of your friends directed you, Misguided, and abus'd you—There's your way; I can afford to shew you out again; What could you expect from me?

Isa. Oh, I have nothing to expect on earth! But misery is very apt to talk: I thought I might be heard.

C. Bald. What can you say? Is there in eloquence, can there be in words

A recompensing pow'r, a remedy,
 A reparation of the injuries,
 The great calamities, that you have brought
 On me, and mine? You have destroy'd those hopes
 I fondly rais'd, through my declining life,
 To rest my age upon; and most undone me.

Isa. I have undone myself too.

C. Bald. Speak it again;

Say still you are undone, and I will hear you,
 With pleasure hear you.

Isa. Would my ruin please you?

C. Bald. Beyond all other pleasures.

Isa. Then you are pleas'd—for I am most undone.

C. Bald. I pray'd but for revenge, and Heav'n has
 heard,

And sent it to my wishes: these grey hairs
 Would have gone down in sorrow to the grave,
 Which you have dug for me, without the thought,
 The thought of leaving you more wretched here.

Isa. Indeed I am most wretched—"When I lost
 " My husband——

" *C. Bald.* Would he had never been;

" Or never had been yours.

" *Isa.* I then believ'd

" The measure of my sorrow then was full:

" But every moment of my growing days

" Makes room for woes, and adds them to the sum."

I lost with Biron all the joys of life:

But now its last supporting means are gone,

All the kind helps that Heav'n in pity rais'd,

In charitable pity to our wants,
 At last have left us: now bereft of all,
 But this last trial of a cruel father,
 To save us both from sinking. Oh, my child!
 Kneel with me, knock at nature in his heart:
 Let the resemblance of a once-lov'd son
 Speak in this little one, who never wrong'd you,
 And plead the fatherless and widow's cause.
 Oh, if you ever hope to be forgiven,
 As you will need to be forgiven too,
 Forget our faults, that Heaven may pardon yours!

C. Bald. How dare you mention Heav'n! Call to
 mind

Your perjur'd vows; your plighted, broken faith
 To Heav'n, and all things holy: were you not
 Devoted, wedded to a life recluse,
 The sacred habit on, profess'd and sworn,
 A votary for ever? Can you think
 The sacrilegious wretch, that robs the shrine,
 Is thunder proof?

Isa. There, there, began my woes.

“ Let women all take warning at my fate;
 “ Never resolve, or think they can be safe,
 “ Within the reach and tongue of tempting men.”

Oh! had I never seen my Biron's face,
 Had he not tempted me I had not fall'n,
 But still continued innocent and free
 Of a bad world, which only he had pow'r
 To reconcile, and make me try again.

C. Bald. Your own inconstancy, “your graceless thoughts,

“Debauch’d and” reconcil’d you to the world :

He had no hand to bring you back again,

But what you gave him. Circe, you prevail’d

Upon his honest mind, transforming him

From virtue, and himself, into what shapes

You had occasion for ; and what he did

Was first inspir’d by you. “A cloister was

“Too narrow for the work you had in hand :

“Your business was more general ; the whole world

“To be the scene : therefore you spread your charms

“To catch his soul, to be the instrument,

“The wicked instrument of your cursed flight.

“Not that you valued him ; for any one,

“Who could have serv’d the turn, had been as welcome.”

Isa. Oh ! I have sins to Heav’n, but none to him.

C. Bald. Had my wretched son

Marry’d a beggar’s bastard ; taken her

Out of her rags, and made her of my blood,

The mischief might have ceas’d, and ended there.

But bringing you into a family,

Entails a curse upon the name and house

That takes you in : the only part of me

That did receive you, perish’d for his crime.

’Tis a defiance to offended Heav’n

Barely to pity you : your sins pursue you :

“The heaviest judgments that can fall upon you,

“Are your just lot, and but prepare your doom :

“ Expect ’em, and despair——Sirrah, rogue,
 “ How durst thou disobey me !” [To the Porter.

Isa. Not for myself——for I am past the hopes
 Of being heard——but for this innocent——
 And then I never will disturb you more.

C. Bald. I almost pity the unhappy child :
 But being yours——

Isa. Look on him as your son’s ;
 And let his part in him answer for mine.
 Oh, save, defend him, save him from the wrongs
 That fall upon the poor !

C. Bald. It touches me——
 And I will save him——But to keep him safe ;
 Never come near him more.

Isa. What ! take him from me !
 No, we must never part : ’tis the last hold
 Of comfort I have left ; and when he fails,
 All goes along with him : Oh ! “ could you be
 “ The tyrant to divorce life from my life ?”
 I live but in my child.

No, let me pray in vain, and beg my bread
 From door to door, to feed his daily wants,
 Rather than always lose him.

C. Bald. Then have your child, and feed him with
 your prayer.

You, rascal, slave, what do I keep you for ?
 How came this woman in ?

Samp. Why indeed, my lord, I did as good as tell
 her, before, my thoughts upon the matter——

C. Bald. Did you so, sir ? Now then tell her mine ;

Tell her, I sent you to her. [*Thrusts him towards her.*
There's one more to provide for.

Samp. Good, my lord, what I did was in perfect obedience to the old nurse there. I told her what it would come to.

C. Bald. What! this was a plot upon me. And you too, beldam, were you in the conspiracy? Begone, go all together; "I have provided you an equipage, now set up when you please. She's old enough to do you service; I have none for her. "The wide world lies before you: begone:" take any road but this to beg or starve in—"I shall be glad to hear of you:" but never, never see me more—
[*He drives 'em off before him.*

Isa. Then Heav'n have mercy on me!

[*Exit with her Child, followed by Sampson and Nurse.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Continues. Enter VILLEROY and CARLOS, meeting.

Villeroy.

My friend, I fear to ask—but Isabella—
The lovely widow's tears, her orphan's cries,
Thy father must feel for them—No, I read,
I read their cold reception in thine eyes—
Thou pitiest them—tho' Baldwin—but I spare him
For Carlos' sake; thou art no son of his.
There needs not this to endear thee more to me.

[*Exit*

Car. My Villeroy, the fatherless, the widow,
 Are terms not understood within these gates——
 You must forgive him; sir, he thinks this woman
 Is Biron's fate, that hurried him to death——
 I must not think on't, lest my friendship stagger.
 My friend's, my sister's mutual advantage
 Have reconcil'd my bosom to its task.

Vil. Advantage! think not I intend to raise
 An interest from Isabella's wrongs.
 Your father may have interested ends
 In her undoing; but my heart has none:
 Her happiness must be my interest,
 And that I would restore.

Car. Why so I mean.
 These hardships that my father lays upon her,
 I'm sorry for; and wish I could prevent;
 But he will have his way.
 Since there's no hope from her prosperity, her
 change of fortune may alter the condition of her
 thoughts, and make for you.

Vil. She is above her fortune.

Car. Try her again. Women commonly love ac-
 cording to the circumstances they are in.

Vil. Common women may.

“*Car.* Since you are not accessory to the injustice,
 “you may be persuaded to take the advantage of
 “other people's crimes.”

“*Vil.* I must despise all those advantages,
 “That indirectly can advance my love.”
 No, though I live but in the hopes of her,

And languish for th' enjoyment of those hopes ;
 I'd rather pine in a consuming want
 Of what I wish, than have the blessing mine,
 From any reason but consenting love.

Oh ! let me never have it to remember,

I could betray her coldly to comply :

When a clear gen'rous choice bestows her on me,

I know to value the unequal'd gift :

I would not have it, but to value it.

Car. Take your own way ; remember what I offer'd came from a friend.

Vil. I understand it so. I'll serve her for herself, without the thought of a reward. [Exit.]

Car. Agree that point between you. If you marry her any way, you do my business.

I know him—What his gen'rous soul intends

Ripens my plots——I'll first to Isabella.——

I must keep up appearances with her too. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

ISABELLA's House. Enter ISABELLA and Nurse :

ISABELLA's little Son at play upon the Floor.

Isa. Sooner, or later, all things pass away,
 And are no more. The beggar and the king,
 With equal steps, tread forward to their end :
 The reconciling grave swallows distinction first, that
 made us foes,

“ Though they appear of different natures now,

“ They meet at last ;”

Then all alike lie down in peace together.

When will that hour of peace arrive for me ?

In heav'n I shall find it——not in heav'n,

If my old tyrant father can dispose

Of things above——but, there, his interest

May be as poor as mine, and want a friend

As much as I do here.

[Weeping.

Nurse. Good madam, be comforted.

Isa. Do I deserve to be this outcast wretch ;

Abandon'd thus, and lost ? But 'tis my lot,

The will of Heav'n, and I must not complain :

I will not for myself : let me bear all

The violence of your wrath ; but spare my child :

Let not my sins be visited on him :

They are ; they must ; a general ruin falls

On every thing about me : thou art lost,

Poor nurse, by being near me.

Nurse. I can work, or beg, to do you service,

Isa. Could I forget

What I have been, I might the better bear

What I am destin'd to : I'm not the first

That have been wretched : but to think how much

I have been happier !——Wild hurrying thoughts

Start every way from my distracted soul,

To find out hope, and only meet despair.

What answer have I ?

Enter SAMPSON.

Samp. Why truly, very little to the purpose : like a

Jew as he is, he says you have had more already than the jewels are worth: he wishes you would rather think of redeeming 'em, than expect any more money upon 'em. [Exit Sampson.]

Isa. 'Tis very well——

So :—Poverty at home, and debts abroad !
 My present fortune bad ; my hopes yet worse !
 What will become of me ?
 This ring is all I have left of value now :
 'Twas given me by my husband : his first gift
 Upon our marriage : I've always kept it,
 With my best care, the treasure next my life :
 And now but part with it to support life,
 Which only can be dearer. Take it, Nurse,
 'Twill stop the cries of hunger for a time ;
 " Provide us bread, and bring a short reprieve,
 " To put off the bad day of beggary,
 " That will come on too soon." Take care of it :
 Manage it as the last remaining friend
 That would relieve us. [Exit Nurse.] Heav'n can only
 tell

Where we shall find another——My dear boy !
 The labour of his birth was lighter to me
 Than of my fondness now ; my fears for him
 Are more, than in that hour of hovering death,
 They could be for myself——He minds me not,
 His little sports have taken up his thoughts :
 Oh, may they never feel the pangs of mine.
 Thinking will make me mad : why must I think,
 When no thought brings me comfort ?

Nurse returns.

Nurse. Oh, madam! you are utterly ruin'd and undone; your creditors of all kinds are come in upon you: they have mustered up a regiment of rogues, that are come to plunder your house, and seize upon all you have in the world; they are below. What will you do, madam?

Isa. Do! nothing; no, for I am born to suffer.

Enter CARLOS to her.

Car. Oh, sister! can I call you by that name, And be the son of this inhuman man, Inveterate to your ruin? Do not think I am a-kin to his barbarity: I must abhor my father's usage of you; And from my bleeding honest heart must pity, Pity your lost condition. Can you think Of any way that I may serve you in? But what enrages most my sense of grief, My sorrow for your wrongs, is, that my father, Fore-knowing well the storm that was to fall, Has order'd me not to appear for you.

Isa. I thank your pity; my poor husband fell For disobeying him, do not you stay To venture his displeasure too for me.

Car. You must resolve on something—— [Exit.

Isa. Let my fate Determine for me; I shall be prepar'd, The worst that can befall me, is to die: [A noise.

" When once it comes to that, it matters not
 " Which way 'tis brought about: whether I starve,
 " Or hang, or drown, the end is still the same ;
 " Plagues, poison, famine, are but several names
 " Of the same thing, and all conclude in death.
 " —But sudden death! Oh, for a sudden death,
 " To cheat my persecutors of their hopes,
 " Th' expected pleasure of beholding me
 " Long in my pains, ling'ring in misery.
 " It will not be, that is deny'd me too."
 Hark, they are coming; let the torrent roar:
 It can but overwhelm me in its fall ;
 And life and death are now alike to me.

[*Exeunt, the Nurse leading, the Child.*]

SCENE III.

Opens, and shews CARLOS and VILLEROY with the Officers.

Vil. No farther violence——

The debt in all is but four thousand crowns :
 Were it ten times the sum, I think you know
 My fortune very well can answer it.

You have my word for this : I'll see you paid.

Off. That's as much as we can desire: so we have
 the money, no matter whence it comes.

Vil. To-morrow you shall have it.

Car. Thus far all's well——

Enter ISABELLA, and Nurse with the Child.

And now my sister comes to crown the work. [*Aside.*]

Isa. Where are the raving blood-hounds, that pursue
In a full cry, gaping to swallow me ?

I meet your rage, and come to be devour'd :

Say, which way are you to dispose of me ?

To dungeons, darkness, death !

Car. Have patience.

Isa. Patience !

Off. You'll excuse us, we are but in our office :

Debts must be paid.

Isa. My death will pay you all. [*Distractedly.*]

Off. While there is law to be had, people will have
their own.

Vil. 'Tis very fit they should ; but pray be gone.

To-morrow certainly—— [*Exeunt Officers.*]

Isa. What of to-morrow ?

“ Am I then the sport,

“ The game of fortune, and her laughing fools ?

“ The common spectacle, to be expos'd

“ From day to day, and baited for the mirth

“ Of the lewd rabble ?” Must I be reserv'd

For fresh afflictions ?

Vil. For long happiness

Of life, I hope.

Isa. There is no hope for me.

The load grows light, when we resolve to bear :

I'm ready for my trial.

Car. Pray be calm,
And know your friends.

Isa. My friends! Have I a friend?

Car. A faithful friend; in your extremest need.
Villeroy came in to save you——

Isa. Save me! How?

Car. By satisfying all your creditors.

Isa. Which way? For what?

Vil. Let me be understood,
And then condemn me: you have given me leave
To be your friend; and in that only name
I now appear before you. I could wish
There had been no occasion of a friend,
Because I know you hate to be oblig'd;
And still more loth to be oblig'd by me.

Isa. 'Twas that I would avoid——

[*Aside.*

Vil. I'm most unhappy that my services
Can be suspected to design upon you;
I have no farther ends than to redeem you
From fortune's wrongs; to shew myself at last,
What I have long profess'd to be, your friend:
Allow me that; and to convince you more,
That I intend only your interest,
Forgive what I have done, and in amends
(If that can make you any, that can please you)
I'll tear myself for ever from my hopes,
Stifle this flaming passion in my soul,
“That has so long broke out to trouble you,”
And mention my unlucky love no more.

Isa. This generosity will ruin me.

[*Aside.*

Vil. Nay, if the blessing of my looking on you
Disturbs your peace, I will do all I can
To keep away, and never see you more.

Car. You must not go.

Vil. Could Isabella speak

Those few short words, I should be rooted here,
And never move but upon her commands.

Car. Speak to him, sister; do not throw away
A fortune that invites you to be happy.

In your extremity he begs your love;

And has deserv'd it nobly. Think upon

Your lost condition, helpless and alone.

Tho' now you have a friend, the time must come

That you will want one; him you may secure

To be a friend, a father, husband to you.

Isa. A husband!

Car. You have discharg'd your duty to the dead,

And to the living; 'tis a wilfulness

Not to give way to your necessities,

That force you to this marriage.

Nur. What must become of this poor innocence?

[*To the Child.*

Car. He wants a father to protect his youth,

And rear him up to virtue: you must bear

The future blame, and answer to the world,

When you refuse the easy honest means

Of taking care of him.

“*Nur.* Of him and me,

“ And every one that must depend upon you;

“ Unless you please now to provide for us,
 “ We must all perish.”

Car. Nor would I press you—

Isa. Do not think I need

Your reasons, to confirm my gratitude ;
 I have a soul that's truly sensible
 Of your great worth, and busy to contrive, [To *Vil.*
 If possible, to make you a return.

Vil. Oh! easily possible!

Isa. It cannot be your way : my pleasures are
 Bury'd, and cold in my dead husband's grave ;
 And I should wrong the truth, myself, and you,
 To say that I can ever love again.
 I owe this declaration to myself :
 But as a proof that I owe all to you,
 If after what I have said, you can resolve
 To think me worth your love—Where am I going ?
 You cannot think it ; 'tis impossible.

Vil. Impossible !

Isa. You should not ask me now, nor should I grant ;
 I am so much oblig'd, that to consent
 Wou'd want a name to recommend the gift :
 'Twou'd shew me poor, indebted, and compell'd,
 Designing, mercenary ; and I know
 You would not wish to think I could be bought.

Vil. Be bought ! where is the price that can pretend
 To bargain for you ? Not in fortune's power.
 The joys of heav'n and love must be bestow'd ;
 They are not to be sold, and cannot be deserv'd.

Isa. Some other time I'll hear you on this subject.

Vil. Nay, then there is no time fit for me.

[*Following her.*

Since you consent to hear me, hear me now ;
That you may grant : you are above
The little forms which circumscribe your sex ;
We differ but in time, let that be mine.

Isa. You think fit

To get the better of me, and you shall ;
Since you will have it so—I will be yours.

Vil. I take you at your word.

Isa. I give you all—

My hand ; and would I had a heart to give :
But if it ever can return again,
'Tis wholly yours.

Vil. Oh, ecstasy of joy !

Leave that to me. If all my services,
“ If prosperous days, and kind indulging nights ;”
If all that man can fondly say or do,
Can beget love, love shall be born again.
Oh, Carlos ! now my friend, and brother too :
And, Nurse, I have eternal thanks for thee.
Send for the priest— [Nurse goes out in haste.
This night you must be mine.
Let me command in this, and all my life
Shall be devoted to you.

Isa. On your word,

Never to press me to put off these weeds,
Which best become my melancholy thoughts,
You shall command me.

Vil. Witness, Heaven and earth

Against my soul, when I do any thing
To give you a disquiet.

Car. I long to wish you joy.

Vil. You'll be a witness of my happiness?

Car. For once I'll be my sister's father,
And give her to you.

Vil. Next, my Isabella,

Be near my heart: I am for ever yours.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

*Count BALDWIN's House. Enter Count BALDWIN and
CARLOS.*

Count Baldwin.

MARRIED to Villeroy, say'st thou?

Car. Yes, my lord.

Last night the priest perform'd his holy office,
And made 'em one.

C. Bald. Misfortune join 'em!

And may her violated vows pull down
A lasting curse, a constancy of sorrow
On both their heads— "I have not yet forgot
"Thy slighted passion, the refus'd alliance;
"But having her, we are reveng'd at full.
"Heav'n will pursue her still, and Villeroy
"Share the judgments she calls down."

Car. Soon he'll hate her;

Tho' warm and violent in his raptures now;

When full enjoyment palls his sicken'd sense,
 And reason with satiety returns,
 Her cold constrain'd acceptance of his hand
 Will gall his pride, which (tho' of late o'erpower'd
 By stronger passions) will, as they grow weak,
 Rise in full force, and pour its vengeance on her.

C. Bald. Now, Carlos, take example to thy aid;
 Let Biron's disobedience, and the curse
 He took into his bosom, prove a warning,
 A monitor to thee, to keep thy duty
 Firm and unshaken.

Car. May those rankling wounds
 Which Biron's disobedience gave my father,
 Be heal'd by me.

C. Bald. With tears I thank thee, Carlos—
 And may'st thou ever feel those inward joys,
 Thy duty gives thy father—but, my son,
 We must not let resentment choke our justice;
 'Tis fit that Villeroy know he has no claim
 From me, in right of Isabella——Biron,
 (Whose name brings tears) when wedded to this wo-
 man,

By me abandon'd, sunk the little fortune
 His uncle left, in vanity and fondness:
 I am possess'd of those your brother's papers,
 Which now are Villeroy's, and should aught remain,
 In justice it is his; from me to him
 You shall convey them——follow me, and take 'em.

[Exit C. Baldwin.]

Car. Yes, I will take 'em; but ere I part with 'em,

I will be sure my interest will not suffer
 By these his high, refin'd, fantastic notions
 Of equity and right—What a paradox
 Is man ! My father here, who boasts his honour,
 And even but now was warm in praise of justice,
 Can steel his heart against the widow's tears,
 And infant's wants ; the widow and the infant
 Of Biron ; of his son, his fav'rite son.

'Tis ever thus weak minds, who court opinion,
 And dead to virtuous feeling, hide their wants
 In pompous affectation—Now to Villeroy—
 Ere this his friends, for he is much belov'd,
 Crowd to his house, and with their nuptial songs
 Awake the wedded pair : I'll join the throng,
 And in my face, at least, bear joy and friendship.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

*A Ball in VILLEROY's House. A Band of Music, with
 the Friends of VILLEROY.*

Enter a Servant.

1 Fr. Where's your master, my good friend ?

Ser. Within, sir,

Preparing for the welcome of his friends.

1 Fr. Acquaint him we are here : yet stay,
 The voice of music gently shall surprise him,
 And breathe our salutations to his ear.

Strike up the strain to Villeroy's happiness,
To Isabella's—But he's here already.

Enter VILLEROY.

Vil. My friends, let me embrace you :
Welcome all——

What means this preparation ? [*Seeing the Mus*

1 *Fr.* A slight token
Of our best wishes for your growing happiness——
You must permit our friendship——

Vil. You oblige me——

1 *Fr.* But your lovely bride,
That wonder of her sex, she must appear,
And add new brightness to this happy morning.

Vil. She is not yet prepar'd ; and let her will,
My worthiest friend, determine her behaviour ;
To win, and not to force her disposition,
Has been my seven year's task. She will anon
Speak welcome to you all. The music stays.

[*Villeroy and his Friends seat themselves.*]

EPITHALAMIUM.

AIR.

Woman. Let all, let all be gay,
 Begin the rapt'rous lay ;
Let mirth, let mirth and joy,
Each happy hour employ
Of this fair bridal day.

Man. Ye love-wing'd hours, your flight,
Your downy flight prepare,
Bring ev'ry soft delight
To sooth the brave and fair.

Hail, happy pair, thus in each other blest;
Be ever free from care, of ev'ry joy possess'd!

Vil. I thank you for the proof of your affection:
I am so much transported with the thoughts
Of what I am, I know not what I do.
My Isabella!—but possessing her,
Who would not lose himself?—You'll pardon me—
Oh! there was nothing wanting to my soul,
But the kind wishes of my loving friends—
“But our collation waits;” where's Carlos now?
Methinks I am but half myself without him.

2 Fr. This is wonderful! Married a night and a day, and yet in raptures.

Vil. Oh! when you all get wives, and such as mine,
(If such another woman can be found)
You will rave too, dote on the dear content,
And prattle in their praise out of all bounds.
“I cannot speak my bliss! 'Tis in my head,
‘Tis in my heart, and takes up all my soul—
‘The labour of my fancy. You'll pardon me;
‘About some twelve months hence I may begin
‘To speak plain sense—Walk in and honour me.”

Enter ISABELLA.

My Isabella! Oh, the joy of my heart,

That I have leave at last to call you mine !

“ When I give up that title to the charms

“ Of any other wish, be nothing mine : ”

But let me look upon you, view you well.

This is a welcome gallantry indeed !

I durst not ask, but it was kind to grant,

Just at this time : dispensing with your dress

Upon this second day to greet our friends.

Isa. Black might be ominous ;

I would not bring ill luck along with me.

Vil. Oh ! if your melancholy thoughts could change

With shifting of your dress—Time has done cures

Incredible this way, and may again.

Isa. I could have wish'd, if you had thought it fit,

Our marriage had not been so public.

Vil. Do not you grudge me my excess of love ;

That was a cause it could not be conceal'd :

Besides, 'twould injure the opinion

I have of my good fortune, having you ;

And lessen it in other peoples' thoughts,

“ Busy on such occasions to enquire,

“ Had it been private.”

Isa. I have no more to say.

Enter CARLOS.

Vil. My Carlos too, who came in to the support

Of our bad fortune, has an honest right,

In better times, to share the good with us.

Car. I come to claim that right, to share your joy ;

To wish you joy; and find it in myself;
 " For a friend's happiness reflects a warmth,
 " A kindly comfort, into every heart
 " That is not envious.

Vil. " He must be a friend,
 " Who is not envious of a happiness
 " So absolute as mine; but if you are
 " (As I have reason to believe you are)
 " Concern'd for my well-being, there's the cause;
 " Thank her for what I am, and what must be."

[*Music flourish.*]

I see you mean a second entertainment.
 My dearest Isabella, you must hear
 The raptures of my friends; from thee they spring;
 Thy virtues have diffus'd themselves around,
 And made them all as happy as myself.

Isa. I feel their favours with a grateful heart,
 And willingly comply.

RECITATIVE.

Take the gifts the gods intend ye;
 Grateful meet the proffer'd joy:
 Truth and honour shall attend ye;
 Charms that ne'er can change or cloy.

DUETTO.

Man. Oh, the raptures of possessing,
 Taking beauty to thy arms!

Woman. Oh the joy, the lasting blessing,
 When with virtue beauty charms!

Man. Purer flames shall gently warm ye ;

Woman. Love and honour both shall charm thee.

Both. Oh the raptures of, &c. &c.

CHORUS.

Far from hence be care and strife,

Far the pang that tortures life :

May the circling minutes prove

One sweet round of peace and love !

Car. 'Tis fine, indeed !

You'll take my advice another time, sister.

Vil. What have you done ? A rising smile

Stole from her thoughts, just red'ning on her cheek,

And you have dash'd it.

Car. I'm sorry for't.

Vil. My friends, you will forgive me, when I own,

I must prefer her peace to all the world.

Come, Isabella, let us lead the way :

Within we'll speak our welcome to our friends,

And crown the happy festival with joy. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A Room. Enter SAMPSON and Nurse.

Samp. Ay, marry, nurse, here's a master indeed !
He'll double our wages for us ! If he comes on as
fast with my lady, as he does with his servants, we
are all in the way to be well pleased.

Nurse. He's in a rare humour; if she be in as good
a one——

Samp. If she be, marry, we may e'en say, they have
begot it upon one another.

Nurse. Well; why don't you go back again to your
old count? You thought your throat cut, I warrant
you, to be turn'd out of a nobleman's service.

Samp. For the future, I will never serve in a house
where the master or mistress of it lie single: they are
out of humour with every body when they are not
pleas'd themselves. Now, this matrimony makes
every thing go well. There's mirth and money stir-
ring about when those matters go as they should do.

Nurse. Indeed, this matrimony, Sampson——

Samp. Ah, nurse! this matrimony is a very good
thing——but, what, now my lady is married, I hope
we shall have company come to the house: there's
something always coming from one gentleman or
other upon those occasions, if my lady loves com-
pany. This feasting looks well, Nurse.

Nurse. Odso, my master! we must not be seen.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter VILLEROY with a Letter, and ISABELLA.

Vil. I must away this moment—see his letter,
Sign'd by himself: alas! he could no more;
My brother's desperate, and cannot die
In peace, but in my arms.

Isa. So suddenly!

Vil. Suddenly taken, on the road to Brussels,

To do us honour, love; unfortunate!
Thus to be torn from thee, and all those charms,
Tho' cold to me and dead.

Isa. I'm sorry for the cause.

Vil. Oh! could I think,
Could I persuade myself that your concern
For me, or for my absence, were the spring,
The fountain of these melancholy thoughts,
My heart would dance, spite of the sad occasion,
And be a gay companion in my journey;
But——

Enter CARLOS from Supper.

My good Carlos, why have you left my friends?

Car. They are departed home.

They saw some sudden melancholy news
Had stolen the lively colour from your cheek——
You had withdrawn, the bride, alarm'd, had fol-
low'd:

Mere ceremony had been constraint; and this
Good-natur'd rudeness——

Vil. Was the more obliging,

There, Carlos, is the cause. [Gives the letter.]

Car. Unlucky accident!

Th' Archbishop of Malines, your worthy brother——
With him to-night! Sister, will you permit it?

Vil. It must be so.

Isa. You hear it must be so.

Vil. Oh, that it must!

Car. To leave your bride so soon!

Vil. But having the possession of my love,
I am the better able to support
My absence, in the hopes of my return.

Car. Your stay will be but short ?

Vil. It will seem long !

The longer that my Isabella sighs :
I shall be jealous of this rival, grief,
“ That you indulge and fondle in my absence.”
It takes so full possession of thy heart,
There is not room enough for mighty love.

Enter Servant, and bows.

My horses wait : farewell, my love ! You, Carlos,
Will act a brother's part, 'till I return,
And be the guardian here. All, all I have
That's dear to me, I give up to your care.

Car. And I receive her as a friend and brother.

Vil. Nay, stir not, love ! for the night air is cold,
And the dews fall—Here be our end of parting ;
Carlos will see me to my horse. [*Exit with Carlos.*]

Isa. Oh, may thy brother better all thy hopes !
Adieu.

“ A sudden melancholy bakes my blood !

“ Forgive me, Villeroy——I do not find

“ That cheerful gratitude thy service asks :

“ Yet, if I know my heart, and sure I do,

“ 'Tis not averse from honest obligation.

“ I'll to my chamber, and to bed ; my mind,

“ My harass'd mind, is weary.”

[*Exit.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Street. Enter BIRON and BELFORD, just arrived.

Biron.

THE longest day will have an end ; we are got home at last.

Bel. We have got our legs at liberty ; and liberty is home wherever we go ; though mine lies most in England.

Bir. Pray let me call this yours : for what I can command in Brussels, you shall find your own. I have a father here, who, perhaps, after seven years absence, and costing him nothing in my travels, may be glad to see me. You know my story—How does my disguise become me ?

Bel. Just as you would have it ; 'tis natural, and will conceal you.

Bir. To-morrow you shall be sure to find me here, as early as you please. This is the house, you have observed the street.

Bel. I warrant you ; I ha'n't many visits to make before I come to you.

Bir. To-night I have some affairs that will oblige me to be in private.

Bel. A good bed is the privatest affair that I desire to be engaged in to-night ; your directions will carry me to my lodgings.

[*Exit.*

Bir. Good night, my friend.

[*Knocks.*

The long-expected moment is arriv'd !
 And if all here is well, my past sorrows
 Will only heighten my excess of joy ;
 And nothing will remain to wish or hope for !

[Knocks again.]

Enter SAMPSON.

Samp. Who's there ? What would you have ?

Bir. Is your lady at home, friend ?

Samp. Why, truly, friend, it is my employment to answer impertinent questions : but for my lady's being at home, or no, that's just as my lady pleases.

Bir. But how shall I know whether it pleases her or no ?

Samp. Why, if you'll take my word for it, you may carry your errand back again ; she never pleases to see any body at this time of night that she does not know ; and by your dress and appearance I am sure you must be a stranger to her.

Bir. But I have business ; and you don't know how that may please her.

Samp. Nay, if you have business, she is the best judge whether your business will please her or no ; therefore I will proceed in my office, and know of my lady whether or no she is pleas'd to be at home, or no——

[Going.]

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Who's that you are so busy withal ? Me-thinks you might have found out an answer in fewer

words; but, Sampson, you love to hear yourself prate sometimes, as well as your betters, that I must say for you. Let me come to him. Who would you speak with, stranger?

Bir. With you, mistress, if you could help me to speak to your lady.

Nurse. Yes, sir, I can help you in a civil way: but can nobody do your business but my lady?

Bir. Not so well; but if you carry her this ring, she'll know my business better.

Nurse. There's no love-letter in it, I hope; you look like a civil gentleman. In an honest way, I may bring you an answer. [Exit.

Bir. My old nurse, only a little older! "They say the tongue grows always: mercy on me! then hers is seven years longer since I left her." Yet there's something in these servants' folly pleases me; the cautious conduct of the family appears, and speaks in their impertinence. Well, mistress——

Nurse returns.

Nurse. I have deliver'd your ring, sir! pray Heav'n you bring no bad news along with you.

Bir. Quite contrary, I hope.

Nurse. Nay, I hope so too; but my lady was very much surpris'd when I gave it her. Sir, I am but a servant, as a body may say; but if you'll walk in, that I may shut the doors, for we keep very orderly hours, I can show you into the parlour, and help

you to an answer, perhaps as soon as those that are wiser. [Exit.

Bir. I'll follow you——
 Now all my spirits hurry to my heart,
 And every sense has taken the alarm
 At this approaching interview!
 Heav'ns! how I tremble! [Exit into the house.

SCENE II.

A Chamber. Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. I've heard of witches, magic spells, and charms,
 That have made nature start from her old course:
 The sun has been eclips'd, the moon drawn down
 From her career, still paler, and subdu'd
 To the abuses of this under world!
 Now I believe all possible. This ring,
 This little ring, with necromantic force,
 Has rais'd the ghost of pleasure to my fears:
 Conjur'd the sense of honour, and of love,
 Into such shapes, they fright me from myself!
 I dare not think of them——

“I'll call you when I want you.” [Servant goes out.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Madam, the gentleman's below.

Isa. I had forgot, pray let me speak with him.

[Exit Nurse.

This ring was the first present of my love

To Biron, my first husband ; I must blush
 To think I have a second. Biron dy'd
 (Still to my loss) at Candy ; there's my hope.
 Oh, do I live to hope that he dy'd there !
 It must be so : he's dead, and this ring left
 By his last breath, to some known faithful friend,
 To bring me back again ;

[Biron introduc'd—Nurse retires.

That's all I have to trust to——
 My fears were woman's——I have view'd him all :
 And let me, let me say it to myself,
 I live again, and rise but from his tomb.

Bir. Have you forgot me quite ?

Isa. Forgot you !

Bir. Then farewell my disguise, and my misfor-
 tunes.

My Isabella !

[He goes to her ; she shrieks, and falls in a swoon.

Isa. Ha !

Bir. Oh ! come again :

Thy Biron summons thee to life and love ;
 “ Once I had charms to wake thee : ”
 Thy once lov'd, ever-loving husband calls——
 Thy Biron speaks to thee.

Isa. My husband ! Biron ?

Bir. Excess of love and joy, for my return,
 Has overpower'd her——I was to blame
 To take thy sex's softness unprepar'd :
 But sinking thus, thus dying in my arms,

This ecstasy has made my welcome more
 Than words could say: words may be counterfeit,
 False-coin'd, and current only from the tongue,
 Without the mind; but passion's in the soul,
 And always speaks the heart.

Isa. Where have I been? Why do you keep him
 from me?

I know his voice: my life upon the wing,
 Hears the soft lure that brings me back again;
 'Tis he himself, my Biron, the dear man!
 My true-lov'd husband! Do I hold you fast,
 Never to part again? "Can I believe it?
 "Nothing but you could work so great a change,
 "There's more than life itself in dying here."
 If I must fall, death's welcome in these arms.

Bir. Live ever in these arms.

Isa. But pardon me,

Excuse the wild disorder of my soul:
 The joy, the strange surprising joy of seeing you,
 Of seeing you again, distracted me——

Bir. Thou everlasting goodness!

Isa. Answer me:

What hand of Providence has brought you back
 To your own home again? O, satisfy
 Th' impatience of my heart: I long to know
 The story of your sufferings. "You would think
 "Your pleasures sufferings, so long remov'd
 "From Isabella's love." But tell me all,
 For every thought confounds me.

Bir. My best life ; at leisure, all.

Isa. We thought you dead ; kill'd at the siege of Candy.

Bir. There I fell among the dead ;

But hopes of life reviving from my wounds,

I was preserv'd but to be made a slave :

I often writ to my hard father, but never had

An answer ; I writ to thee too——

Isa. What a world of wo

Had been prevented but in hearing from you !

Bir. Alas ! thou could'st not help me.

Isa. You do not know how much I could ha' done ;

At least, I'm sure I could have suffer'd all :

I would have sold myself to slavery,

Without redemption ; giv'n up my child,

The dearest part of me, to basest wants——

Bir. My little boy !

Isa. My life, but to have heard

You were alive—which now too late I find. [*Aside.*]

Bir. No more, my love, complaining of the past,

We lose the present joy. 'Tis over price

Of all my pains, that thus we meet again——

I have a thousand things to say to thee——

Isa. Wou'd I were past the hearing. [*Aside.*]

Bir. How does my child, my boy, my father, too ?

I hear he's living still.

Isa. Well both, both well ;

And may he prove a father to your hopes,

Though we have found him none.

Bir. Come, no more tears.

Isa. Seven long years of sorrow for your loss,
Have mourn'd with me——

Bir. And all my days behind
Shall be employ'd in a kind recompence
For thy afflictions.—Can't I see my boy?

Isa. He's gone to bed : I'll have him brought to you.

Bir. To-morrow I shall see him ; I want rest
Myself, after this weary pilgrimage.

Isa. Alas ! what shall I get for you ?

Bir. Nothing but rest, my love ! To night I would
not

Be known, if possible, to your family :
I see my Nurse is with you ; her welcome
Wou'd be tedious at this time ;
To-morrow will do better.

Isa. I'll dispose of her, and order every thing
As you wou'd have it. [*Exit*

Bir. Grant me but life, good Heav'n, and give the
means,

To make this wondrous goodness some amends :
And let me then forget her, if I can !
O ! she deserves of me much more, than I
Can lose for her, though I again cou'd venture
A father, and his fortune, for her love !
You wretched fathers, blind as fortune all !
Not to perceive that such a woman's worth
Weighs down the portions you provide your sons :
What is your trash, what all your heaps of gold,
Compar'd to this, my heart-felt happiness ?

[*Bursts into tears.*]

What has she, in my absence, undergone?
I must not think of that; it drives me back
Upon myself, the fatal cause of all.

ISABELLA *returns.*

Isa. I have obey'd your pleasure;
Every thing is ready for you.

Bir. I can want nothing here; possessing thee,
All my desires are carry'd to their aim
Of happiness; there's no room for a wish,
But to continue still this blessing to me:
I know the way, my love, "I shall sleep sound."

Isa. Shall I attend you?

Bir. By no means;

I've been so long a slave to others pride,
To learn, at least, to wait upon myself;

You'll make haste after——

[*Goes in.*]

Isa. I'll but say my prayers, and follow you—
My prayers! no, I must never pray again.

Prayers have their blessings to reward our hopes,
But I have nothing left to hope for more.

What Heav'n cou'd give, I have enjoy'd; but now
The baneful planet rises on my fate,

And what's to come, is a long line of wo,

Yet I may shorten it——

I promis'd him to follow—him!

Is he without a name? Biron; my husband,

To follow him to bed——my husband! ha!

What then is Villeroy? But yesterday

That very bed receiv'd him for its lord,

" Yet a warm witness of my broken vows."

Oh; Biron, hadst thou come but one day sooner,
 I would have follow'd thee through beggary,
 Through all the chances of this weary life :
 Wander'd the many ways of wretchedness
 With thee, to find a hospitable grave ;
 For that's the only bed that's left me now. [*Weeping.*
 —What's to be done—for something must be done.
 Two husbands! yet not one! By both enjoy'd,
 And yet a wife to neither! Hold my brain—
 " This is to live in common! Very beasts,
 " That welcome all they meet, make just such wives.
 " My reputation! Oh, 'twas all was left me!
 " The virtuous pride of an uncensur'd life;
 " Which the dividing tongues of Biron's wrongs,
 " And Villeroy's resentments, tear asunder,
 " To gorge the throats of the blaspheming rabble.
 " This is the best of what can come to-morrow,
 " Besides old Baldwin's triumph in my ruin :
 " I cannot bear it——
 " Therefore no morrow:" Ha! a lucky thought
 Works the right way to rid me of 'em all ;
 All the reproaches, infamies, and scorns,
 That every tongue and finger will find for me.
 Let the just horror of my apprehensions
 But keep me warm——no matter what can come:
 'Tis but a blow—yet I will see him first—
 Have a last look to heighten my despair,
 And then to rest for ever.——

BIRON meets her.

Bir. Despair and rest for ever! Isabella!
 These words are far from thy condition!
 And be they ever so. I heard thy voice,
 And could not bear thy absence: come, my love!
 You have staid long, there's nothing, nothing sure
 Now to despair of in succeeding fate.

Isa. I am contented to be miserable,
 But not this way: I've been too long abus'd,
 And can believe no more.

Let me sleep on to be deceiv'd no more.

Bir. Look up, my love, I never did deceive thee,
 Nor never can; believe thyself, thy eyes
 That first inflam'd, and lit me to my love,
 Those stars, that still must guide me to my joys—

Isa. And me to my undoing: I look round
 And find no path, but leading to the grave.

Bir. I cannot understand thee.

“*Isa.* My good friends above,
 “ I thank 'em, have at last found out a way
 “ To make my fortune perfect; having you
 “ I need no more; my fate is finish'd here.”

“*Bir.* Both our ill-fates, I hope.”

“*Isa.* Hope is a lying, fawning flatterer,
 “ That shews the fair side only of our fortunes,
 “ To cheat us easier into our fall;
 “ A trusted friend, who only can betray you;
 “ Never believe him more.”—If marriages

Are made in heav'n, they should be happier :
Why was I made this wretch ?

Bir. Has marriage made thee wretched ?

Isa. Miserable, beyond the reach of comfort.

Bir. Do I live to hear thee say so ?

Isa. Why ! what did I say ?

Bir. That I have made thee miserable.

Isa. No : you are my only earthly happiness ;
And my false tongue bely'd my honest heart,
If it said otherwise.

Bir. And yet you said,
Your marriage made you miserable.

Isa. I know not what I said :
I've said too much, unless I could speak all.

Bir. Thy words are wild ; my eyes, my ears, my
heart,
Were all so full of thee, so much employ'd
In wonder of thy charms, I could not find it ;
Now I perceive it plain——

Isa. You'll tell no body—— [Distractedly.]

Bir. Thou art not well.

Isa. Indeed I am not ; I knew that before ;
But where's the remedy ?

Bir. Rest will relieve thy cares : come, come, no
more ;

I'll banish sorrow from thee.

Isa. Banish first the cause.

Bir. Heav'n knows how willingly.

Isa. You are the only cause.

Bir. Am I the cause ? the cause of thy misfortunes

Isa. The fatal innocent cause of all my woes.

Bir. Is this my welcome home ? This the reward
Of all my miseries, long labours, pains,
And pining wants of wretched slavery,
Which I've out-liv'd, only in hopes of thee :
Am I thus paid at last for deathless love,
And call'd the cause of thy misfortunes now ?

Isa. Enquire no more ; 'twill be explain'd too soon.
[*She's going off.*

Bir. What! Canst thou leave me too ? [*He stays her.*

Isa. Pray let me go :

For both our sakes, permit me——

Bir. Rack me not with imaginations
Of things impossible——Thou canst not mean
What thou hast said—Yet something she must mean.
—'Twas madness all—Compose thyself, my love !
The fit is past ; all may be well again :
Let us to bed.

Isa. To bed ! You've rais'd the storm
Will sever us for ever. Oh, Biron !
“ While I have life, still I must call you mine :
“ I know I am, and always was, unworthy
“ To be the happy partner of your love ;
“ And now must never, never share it more.
“ But oh ! if ever I was dear to you,
“ As sometimes you have thought me,” on my knees,
(The last time I shall care to be believ'd)
I beg you, beg to think me innocent ;
Clear of all crimes, that thus can banish me
From this world's comforts, in my losing you.

“ *Bir.* Where will this end ?

“ *Isa.* The rugged hand of fate has got between
“ Our meeting hearts, and thrusts them from their
joys :”

Since we must part——

Bir. Nothing shall ever part us.

“ *Isa.* Parting’s the least that is set down for me :
“ Heav’n has decreed, and we must suffer all.

“ *Bir.* I know thee innocent : I know myself so :
“ Indeed we both have been unfortunate ;
“ But sure misfortunes ne’er were faults in love.”

Isa. Oh ! there’s a fatal story to be told ;
Be deaf to that, as heav’n has been to me !

“ And rot the tongue that shall reveal my
shame :”

When thou shalt hear how much thou hast been
wrong’d,

How wilt thou curse thy fond believing heart,
Tear me from the warm bosom of thy love,
And throw me like a pois’nous weed away :

“ Can I bear that ? Bear to be curst and torn,

“ And thrown out of thy family and name,

“ Like a disease ?” Can I bear this from thee ?

“ I never can :” No, all things have their end.

When I am dead, forgive and pity me. [Exit.

Bir. Stay, my Isabella——

What can she mean ? These doubtings will dis-
tract me :

Some hidden mischief soon will burst to light ;

I cannot bear it—I must be satisfied—

'Tis she, my wife, must clear this darkness to me.

She shall—if the sad tale at last must come!

She is my fate, and best can speak my doom.

[Exit.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter BIRON, Nurse following him.

Biron.

I KNOW enough: th' important question
Of life or death, fearful to be resolv'd,
Is clear'd to me: I see where it must end;
And need enquire no more—Pray, let me have
Pen, ink, and paper; I must write a-while,
And then I'll try to rest—to rest for ever!

[Exit Nurse.

Poor Isabeila! now I know the cause,
'The cause of thy distress, and cannot wonder
That it has turn'd thy brain. If I look back
Upon thy loss, it will distract me too.
Oh, any curse but this might be remov'd!
But 'twas the rancorous malignity
Of all ill stars combin'd, of heav'n and fate—
Hold, hold my impious tongue—Alas! I rave:
Why do I tax the stars, or heav'n, or fate?
They are all innocent of driving us
Into despair; they have not urg'd my doom;

My father and my brother are my fates,
 That drive me to my ruin. They knew well
 I was alive. Too well they knew how dear
 My Isabella——Oh, my wife no more !
 How dear her love was to me——Yet they stood,
 With a malicious silent joy, stood by,
 And saw her give up all my happiness,
 The treasure of her beauty to another ;
 “ Stood by, and saw her marry'd to another : ”
 Oh, cruel father ! and unnatural brother !
 “ Shall I not tell you that you have undone me ? ”
 I have but to accuse you of my wrongs,
 And then to fall forgotten——Sleep or death
 Sits heavy on me, and benumbs my pains :
 Either is welcome ; but the hand of death
 Works always sure, and best can close my eyes.

[Exit Biron.

Enter Nurse and SAMPSON.

Nurse. Here's strange things towards, Sampson :
 what will be the end of 'em, do you think ?

Samp. Nay, marry, Nurse, I can't see so far ; but
 the law, I believe, is on Biron, the first husband's
 side.

Nurse. Yes ; no question, he has the law on his side.

Samp. For I have heard, the law says, a woman
 must be a widow, all out seven years, before she can
 marry again, according to law.

Nurse. Ay, so it does ; and our lady has not been
 a widow all together seven years.

Samp. Why then, Nurse, mark my words, and say I told you so: the man must have his wife again, and all will do well.

Nurse. But if our master, Villeroy, comes back again——

Samp. Why, if he does, he is not the first man that has had his wife taken from him.

Nurse. For fear of the worst, will you go to the old count, desire him to come as soon as he can; there may be mischief, and he is able to prevent it.

Samp. Now you say something; now I take you, Nurse; that will do well, indeed: mischief should be prevented; a little thing will make a quarrel, when there's a woman in the way. I'll about it instantly.—

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Draws, shows BIRON asleep on a Couch. Enter
ISABELLA.

Isa. Asleep so soon! Oh, happy! happy thou,
Who thus can sleep! I never shall sleep more——
If then to sleep be to be happy, he
Who sleeps the longest, is the happiest;
Death is the longest sleep—Oh, have a care!
Mischief will thrive apace. Never wake more.

[*To Biron.*]

If thou didst ever love thy Isabella,
To-morrow must be doomsday to thy peace.

—The sight of him disarms ev'n death itself.
 —The starting transport of new quick'ning life
 Gives just such hopes ; and pleasure grows again
 With looking on him—Let me look my last—
 But is a look enough for parting love !
 Sure I may take a kiss—Where am I going !
 Help, help me, Villeroy !—Mountains and seas
 Divide your love, never to meet my shame.

*[Throws herself upon the Floor ; after a short Pause,
 she raises herself upon her Elbow.]*

What will this battle of the brain do with me !
 This little ball, this ravag'd province, long
 Cannot maintain—The globe of earth wants room
 And food for such a war—I find I'm going—
 Famine, plagues, and flames,
 Wide waste and desolation, do your work
 Upon the world, and then devour yourselves.
 —The scene shifts fast—*[She rises.]* and now 'tis
 better with me ;

Conflicting passions have at last unhing'd
 The great machine! the soul itself seems chang'd !
 Oh, 'tis a happy revolution here !

“ The reas'ning faculties are all depos'd ;
 “ Judgment, and understanding, common-sense,
 “ Driv'n out as traitors to the public peace.
 “ Now I'm reveng'd upon my memory,
 “ Her seat dug up, where all the images
 “ Of a long mis-spent life, were rising still,
 “ To glare a sad reflection of my crimes,
 “ And stab a conscience thro' 'em ! You are safe,

“ You monitors of mischief! What a change!

“ Better and better still! This is the infant state

“ Of innocence, before the birth of care.

“ My thoughts are smooth as the Elysian plains,

“ Without a rub: the drowsy falling streams

“ Invite me to their slumbers.

“ Would I were landed there—” [*Sinks into a Chair.*

What noise was that? A knocking at the gate!

It may be Villeroy——No matter who.

Bir. Come, Isabella, come.——

Isa. Hark! I'm call'd!

Bir. You stay too long from me.

Isa. A man's voice! in my bed! How came he there?

Nothing but villany in this bad world; [*Rises.*

“ Coveting neighbours goods, or neighbours wives:”

Here's physic for your fever.

[*Draws a dagger, and goes backward to the couch.*

“ Breathing a vein is the old remedy.”

If husbands go to heav'n,

Where do they go that send 'em?—This to try——

[*Just going to stab him, he rises, she knows him, and shrieks.*]

What do I see!

Bir. Isabella, arm'd!

Isa. Against my husband's life!

“ Who, but the wretch, most reprobate to grace,

“ Despair e'er hardened for damnation,

“ Could think of such a deed—Murder my husband!”

Bir. Thou didst not think it.

Isa. Madness has brought me to the gates of hell,
And there has left me. “ Oh, the frightful change
“ Of my distractions! Or is this interval
“ Of reason but to aggravate my woes,
“ To drive the horror back with greater force
“ Upon my soul, and fix me mad for ever?”

Bir. Why dost thou fly me so?

Isa. I cannot bear his sight; distraction, come,
Possess me all, and take me to thyself!
Shake off thy chains, and hasten to my aid;
Thou art my only cure—Like other friends,
“ He will not come to my necessities;
“ Then I must go to find the tyrant out;
“ Which is the nearest way?” [Running out.

Bir. Poor Isabella, she's not in a condition
To give me any comfort, if she could:
Lost to herself—as quickly I shall be
To all the world—Horrors come fast around me;
My mind is overcast—the gath'ring clouds
Darken the prospect—I approach the brink,
And soon must leap the precipice! Oh, Heav'n!
While yet my senses are my own; thus kneeling,
Let me implore thy mercies on my wife:
Release her from her pangs; and if my reason,
O'erwhelm'd with miseries, sink before the tem-
pest,

Pardon those crimes despair may bring upon me.

[Rises.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Sir, there's somebody at the door must needs speak with you ; he won't tell his name.

Bir. I come to him. [*Exit Nurse.*]
'Tis Eelford, I suppose ; he little knows
Of what has happened here ; I wanted him,
Must employ his friendship, and then—— [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

The Street. Enter CARLOS with three Ruffians.

Car. A younger brother ! I was one too long,
Not to prevent my being so again.
We must be sudden. Younger brothers are
But lawful bastards of another name,
Thrust out of their nobility of birth
And family, and tainted into trades.
Shall I be one of them—Bow, and retire,
To make more room for the unwieldy heir
To play the fool in ? No——
But how shall I prevent it ?—Biron comes
To take possession of my father's love—
Would that were all ; there's a birth-right too
That he will seize. Besides, if Biron lives,
He will unfold some practices, which I
Cannot well answer—therefore he shall die ;
'This night must be dispos'd of : I have means
That will not fail my purpose.—Here he comes.

Enter BIRON.

Bir. Ha! am I beset! I live but to revenge me.

[*They surround him, fighting; Villeroy enters with two Servants; they rescue him; Carlos and his Party fly.*

Vil. How are you, sir? Mortally hurt, I fear.

Take care, and lead him in.

Bir. I thank you for the goodness, sir; tho' 'tis
Bestow'd upon a very wretch; and death,
Tho' from a villain's hand, had been to me
An act of kindness, and the height of mercy—
But I thank you, sir. [He is led in.

SCENE IV.

The Inside of the House. Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. Murder my husband! Oh! I must not dare
To think of living on; my desperate hand
In a mad rage may offer it again.
Stab me any where but there. Here's room enough
In my own breast, to act the fury in,
The proper scene of mischief. "Villeroy comes;
"Villeroy and Biron come! Oh! hide me from 'em—
"They rack, they tear; let 'em carve out my limbs,
"Divide my body to their equal claims!
"My soul is only Biron's; that is free,
"And thus I strike for him and liberty."

[*Going to stab herself, Villeroy runs in and prevents her, by taking the Dagger from her.*

Vil. Angels defend and save thee!
Attempt thy precious life! "the treasury
"Of nature's sweets! life of my little world!"
Lay violent hands upon thy innocent self!

Isa. Swear I am innocent, and I'll believe you.
What would you have with me? Pray let me go.

"—Are you there, sir? You are the very man

"Have done all this—You would have made

"Me believe you married me; but the fool

"Was wiser, I thank you: 'tis not all gospel

"You men preach upon that subject."

Vil. Dost thou not know me, love?

Isa. O yes: very well.

[*Staring on him.*]

You are the widow's comforter; "that marries

"Any woman when her husband's out of the way:

"But I'll never, never take your word again.

Vil. "I am thy loving husband."

'Tis *Villeroy*, thy husband.

Isa. I have none; no husband——

[*Weeping.*]

Never had but one, and he dy'd at Candy,

"Did he not? I'm sure you told me so; you,

"Or somebody, with just such a lying look,

"As you have now." Speak, did he not die there?

Vil. He did, my life.

Isa. But swear it, quickly swear,

BIRON enters bloody, and leaning upon his Sword.

Before that screaming evidence appears,

In bloody proof against me——

[*She seeing Biron swoons into a Chair; Vil. helps her.*]

Vil. Help there! Nurse, where are you?
Ha! I am distracted too!

[*Going to call for help, sees Biron.*

Biron alive!

Bir. The only wretch on earth that must not live.

Vil. Biron or Villeroy must not, that's decreed.

Bir. You've sav'd me from the hands of murderers:
Would you had not, for life's my greatest plague—
And then, of all the world, you are the man
I would not be oblig'd to—Isabella!

I came to fall before thee: I had dy'd

Happy not to have found your Villeroy here:

A long farewell, and a last parting kiss. [*Kisses her.*

Vil. A kiss! confusion! it must be your last.

[*Draws.*

Bir. I know it must—Here I give up that death
You but delay'd: since what is past has been
The work of fate, thus we must finish it.

Thrust home, be sure.

[*Faints.*

Vil. Alas! he faints: some help there.

Bir. 'Tis all in vain, my sorrows soon will end—
Oh, Villeroy! let a dying wretch entreat you
To take this letter to my father. My Isabella!
Couldst thou but hear me, my last words should bless
thee.

I cannot, tho' in death, bequeath her to thee. [*To Vil.*

But I could hope my boy, my little one,

Might find a father in thee—Oh, I faint—

I can no more—Hear me, Heav'n! Oh! support

My wife, my Isabella—Bless my child!

And take a poor unhappy—

[*Dies.*

Vil. He's gone—Let what will be the consequence,
I'll give it him. I have involv'd myself,
And would be clear'd; that must be thought on now.
My care of her is lost in wild amaze. [*Going to Isa.*
“Are you all dead within there? Where, where
are you?”

Good Nurse take care of her; I'll bring you more help.

[*Exit.*

Isabella comes to herself.

Isa. Where have I been?—Methinks I stand upon
The brink of life, ready to shoot the gulph
That lies between me and the realms of rest:
But still detain'd, I cannot pass the strait;
Deny'd to live, and yet I must not die:
Doom'd to come back, like a complaining ghost,
To my unbury'd body—Here it lies—
[*Throws herself by Biron's body.*
My body, soul, and life. A little dust,
To cover our cold limbs in the dark grave—
There, there we shall sleep safe and sound together.

Enter VILLEROY with Servants.

Vil. Poor wretch; upon the ground! She's not
herself:

Remove her from the body.

[*Servants going to raise her.*

Isa. Never, never—

You have divorc'd us once, but shall no more—
Help, help me, Biron?—Ha!—bloody and dead!
Oh, murder! murder! you have done this deed—

Vengeance and murder! bury us together—
Do any thing but part us.

Vil. Gently, gently raise her.

She must be forc'd away.

[She drags the Body after her; they get her into their Arms, and carry her off.]

Isa. Oh, they tear me! Cut off my hands——

Let me leave something with him——

They'll clasp him fast——

Oh, cruel, cruel men!

This you must answer one day.

Vil. Good Nurse, take care of her.

[Nurse follows her.]

Send for all helps: all, all that I am worth,

Shall cheaply buy her peace of mind again.

“Be sure you do,

[To a Servant.]

“Just as I order'd you.” The storm grows louder.—

[Knocking at the door.]

I am prepar'd for it. Now let them in.

Enter Count BALDWIN, CARLOS, BELFORD, Friends, with Servants.

C. Bald. Oh, do I live to this unhappy day!

Where is my wretched son?

Car. Where is my brother?

[They see him, and gather about the Body.]

Vil. I hope in heav'n.

Car. Canst thou pity!

Wish him in heav'n, when thou hast done a deed,

That must for ever cut thee from the hopes
Of ever coming there.

Vil. I do not blame you—

You have a brother's right to be concern'd
For his untimely death.

Car. Untimely death, indeed!

Vil. But yet you must not say, I was the cause.

Car. Not you the cause! Why, who should murder
him?

We do not ask you to accuse yourself;
But I must say that you have murder'd him;
And will say nothing else, till justice draws
Upon our side, at the loud call of blood,
To execute so foul a murderer.

Bel. Poor Biron! Is this thy welcome home!

Friend. Rise, sir; there is a comfort in revenge,
Which is left you. [To C. Bald.]

Car. Take the body hence. [Biron carried off.]

C. Bald. What could provoke you?

Vil. Nothing could provoke me
To a base murder, which, I find, you think
Me guilty of. I know my innocence;
My servants too can witness that I drew
My sword in his defence, to rescue him.

Bel. Let the servants be call'd.

Fr. Let's hear what they can say.

Car. What they can say! Why, what should ser-
vants say?

They're his accomplices, his instruments,
And will not charge themselves. If they could do

A murder for his service, they can lie,
 Lie nimbly, and swear hard to bring him off.
 You say you drew your sword in his defence:
 Who were his enemies? Did he need defence?
 Had he wrong'd any one? Could he have cause
 To apprehend a danger, but from you?
 And yet you rescu'd him!—No, no, he came
 Unseasonably (that was all his crime)
 Unluckily to interrupt your sport:
 You were new marry'd—marry'd to his wife;
 And therefore you, and she, and all of you,
 (For all of you I must believe concern'd)
 Combin'd to murder him out of the way.

Bel. If it is so——

Car. It can be only so.

Fr. Indeed it has a face——

Car. As black as hell.

C. Bald. The law will do me justice: send for the
 magistrate.

Car. I'll go myself for him—— [Exit.

Vil. These strong presumptions, I must own, in-
 deed,

Are violent against me; but I have
 A witness, and on this side heav'n too.

——Open that door.

[Door opens, and Pedro is brought forward by Vil-
 leroy's Servants.

Here's one can tell you all.

Ped. All, all; save me but from the rack, I'll con-
 fess all.

Vil. You and your accomplices design'd
To murder Biron?—Speak.

Ped. We did.

Vil. Did you engage upon your private wrongs,
Or were employ'd?

Ped. He never did us wrong.

Vil. You were set on then?

Ped. We were set on.

Vil. What do you know of me?

Ped. Nothing, nothing:

You sav'd his life, and have discover'd me.

Vil. He has acquitted me.

If you would be resolv'd of any thing,
He stands upon his answer.

Bel. Who set you on to act this horrid deed?

C. Bald. I'll know the villain; give me quick his
name,

Or I will tear it from thy bleeding heart.

Ped. I will confess.

C. Bald. Do then.

Ped. It was my master, Carlos, your own son.

C. Bald. Oh, monstrous! monstrous! most un-
natural!

Bel. Did he employ you to murder his own brother?

Ped. He did; and he was with us when 'twas done.

C. Bald. If this be true, this horrid, horrid tale,
It is but just upon me: Biron's wrongs
Must be reveng'd; and I the cause of all.

Fr. What will you do with him?

C. Bald. Take him a-part—

I know too much.

[*Pedro goes in.*]

Vil. I had forgot—Your wretched, dying son

Gave me this letter for you. [*Gives it to Baldwin.*]

I dare deliver it. It speaks of me,

I pray to have it read.

C. Bald. You know the hand.

Bel. I know 'tis Biron's hand.

C. Bald. Pray read it. [*Belford reads the Letter.*]

“ SIR,

“ I find I am come only to lay my death at your door. I am now going out of the world ; but cannot forgive you, nor my brother Carlos, for not hindering my poor wife Isabella from marrying with Villeroy ; when you both knew, from so many letters, that I was alive.—

BIRON.”

Vil. How !—Did you know it then ?

C. Bald. Amazement, all !

Enter CARLOS, with Officers.

Oh, Carlos ! are you come ? Your brother here,
Here, in a wretched letter, lays his death
To you and me—Have you done any thing
To hasten his sad end ?

Car. Bless me, sir, I do any thing ! Who, I ?

C. Bald. He talks of letters that were sent to us.
I never heard of any—Did you know
He was alive ?

Car. Alive! Heav'n knows, not I.

C. Bald. Had you no news of him, from a report,
Or letter, never?

Car. Never, never I.

Bel. That's strange, indeed: I know he often writ
To lay before you the conditions [To *C. Bald.*
Of his hard slavery: and more I know,
That he had several answers to his letters.
He said, they came from you; you are his brother.

Car. Never from me.

Bel. That will appear.

The letters, I believe, are still about him;
For some of 'em I saw but yesterday.

C. Bald. What did those answers say?

Bel. I cannot speak to the particulars;
But I remember well, the sum of 'em
Was much the same, and all agreed,
That there was nothing to be hop'd from you:
That 'twas your barbarous resolution
To let him perish there.——

C. Bald. Oh, Carlos! Carlos! hadst thou been a
brother——

Car. This is a plot upon me. I never knew
He was in slavery, or was alive,
Or heard of him, before this fatal hour.

Bel. There, sir, I must confront you.
He sent you a letter, to my knowledge, last night;
And you sent him word you would come to him——
I fear you came too soon.

C. Bald. 'Tis all too plain.—

Bring out that wretch before him. [*Pedro produced.*]

Car. Ha! Pedro there!—Then I am caught, indeed.

Bel. You start at sight of him ;
He has confess'd the bloody deed.

Car. Well then, he has confess'd,
And I must answer it.

Bel. Is there no more ?

Car. Why!—what would you have more ? I know
the worst,

And I expect it.

C. Bald. Why hast thou done all this ?

Car. Why, that which damns most men has ruin'd
me ;

The making of my fortune. Biron stood
Between me and your favour : while he liv'd,
I had not that ; hardly was thought a son,
And not at all a-kin to your estate.

I could not bear a younger brother's lot,
To live depending upon courtesy——

Had you provided for me like a father,
I had been still a brother.

C. Bald. 'Tis too true ;

I never lov'd thee, as I should have done :
It was my sin, and I am punish'd for't.

Oh! never may distinction rise again
In families ; let parents be the same
To all their children ; common in their care,

And in their love of 'em—I am unhappy,
For loving one too well.

Vil. You knew your brother liv'd ; why did you
take

Such pains to marry me to Isabella ?

Car. I had my reasons for't——

Vil. More than I thought you had.

Car. But one was this——

I knew my brother lov'd his wife so well,
That if he ever should come home again,
He could not long outlive the loss of her.

Bel. If you rely'd on that, why did you kill him?

Car. To make all sure. Now, you are answer'd
all.

Where must I go ? I am tired of your questions.

C. Bald. I leave the judge to tell thee what thou
art ;

A father cannot find a name for thee.

But parricide is highest treason, sure,

To sacred nature's law ; and must be so,

So sentenc'd in thy crimes. Take him away—

The violent remedy is found at last,

That drives thee out, thou poison of my blood,

Infected long, and only foul in thee. [*Carlos led off.*]

Grant me, sweet Heav'n! the patience to go thro'

The torment of my cure—Here, here begins

The operation—Alas! she's mad.

Enter ISABELLA distracted, held by her Women; her Hair dishevell'd; her little Son running in before, being afraid of her.

Vil. My Isabella! poor unhappy wretch!

What can I say to her?

Isa. Nothing, nothing; 'tis a babbling world——

I'll hear no more on't. When does the court sit?

“I'll not be bought—What! to sell innocent blood!”

You look like one of the pale judges here;

Minos, or Radamanth, or Æacus—

I have heard of you.

I have a cause to try, an honest one;

Will you not hear it? Then I must appeal

To the bright throne—Call down the heav'nly powers

To witness how you use me.

Wom. Help, help, we cannot hold her.

Vil. You but enrage her more.”

C. Bald. Pray, give her way; she'll hurt nobody.

Isa. What have you done with him? He was here
but now;

I saw him here. Oh, Biron, Biron! where,

Where have they hid thee from me? He is gone——

But here's a little flaming cherubim——

Child. Oh, save me, save me! [*Running to Bald.*

Isa. The Mercury of Heav'n, with silver wings,
Impt for the flight, to overtake his ghost,

And bring him back again.

Child. I fear she'll kill me.

C. Bald. She will not hurt thee. [*She flings away.*

Isa. Will nothing do? I did not hope to find
Justice on earth; 'tis not in Heav'n neither.

Biron has watch'd his opportunity——

Softly; he steals it from the sleeping gods,

And sends it thus——

[*Stabs herself.*]

Now, now I laugh at you, defy you all,

You tyrant-murderers.

Vil. Call, call for help——Oh, Heav'n! this was
too much.

C. Bald. Oh, thou most injur'd innocence! Yet
live,

Live but to witness for me to the world,

How much I do repent me of the wrongs,

Th' unnatural wrongs, which I have heap'd on thee,

And have pull'd down this judgment on us all.

Vil. Oh, speak, speak but a word of comfort to
me!

C. Bald. If the most tender father's care and love
Of thee, and thy poor child, can make amends——

Oh, yet look up and live!

Isa. Where is that little wretch? [*They raise her.*]
I die in peace, to leave him to your care.

I have a wretched mother's legacy,

A dying kiss——pray let me give it him,

My blessing; that, that's all I have to leave thee.

Oh, may thy father's virtues live in thee,

And all his wrongs be buried in my grave! [*Dies.*]

Vil. She's gone, and all my joys of life with her.

“Where are your officers of justice now?”

“Seize, bind me, drag me to the bloody bar.”

" Accuse, condemn me ; let the sentence reach
 " My hated life——No matter how it comes ;
 " I'll think it just, and thank you as it falls.
 " Self-murder is deny'd me ; else how soon
 " Could I be past the pain of my remembrance !
 " But I must live, grow grey with ling'ring grief,
 " To die at last in telling this sad tale."

C. Bald. Poor wretched orphan of most wretched
 parents !

" 'Scaping the storm, thou'rt thrown upon a rock,
 " To perish there." The very rocks would melt,
 Soften their nature, sure, to foster thee ;
 I find it by myself : my flinty heart,
 That barren rock, on which thy father starv'd,
 Opens its springs of nourishment to thee.
 There's not a vein but shall run milk for thee.
 Oh, had I pardon'd my poor Biron's fault,
 His first, his only fault—this had not been !

*To erring youth there's some compassion due ;
 But while with rigour you their crimes pursue,
 What's their misfortune, is a crime for you.
 Hence, learn offending children to forgive :
 Leave punishment to Heav'n—'tis Heav'n's prerogative.*







Do with pins!

Thornthwaite sculpsit

M^{rs} ROCK as M^{rs} T. P. A.

Indeed, my friend, you are too ugly for me; this I am not handsome myself. I love to play with those that are.

SHE WOU'D AND SHE WOU'D NOT,

OR,

THE KIND IMPOSTOR.

A

COMEDY,

By COLLEY CIBBER, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

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MDCXCII.



TO THE
MOST ILLUSTRIOUS
JAMES,
DUKE OF ORMOND.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

OUR late happy news from *Vigo* had so general an influence on the minds of the people, that it's no wonder this play had a favourable reception, when the cheerfulness and good humour of the town inclined 'em to encourage every thing that carried the least pretence to divert 'em: but the best part of its fortune is, that its appearing first this season has given it a sort of title to your Grace's protection, by being at the same time (among many other acknowledgments) the instrument of the stage's general thanks for the prosperous days we promise ourselves, from the consequence of so glorious an action; an action which, considered with the native greatness of your mind, will easily persuade us, that the only reason to suppose the ancient heroes greater than the moderns is, that they had better poets to record 'em; but, from your Grace's conduct this summer, we are convinced that their poetry may now outlive their greatness; and if modesty would suffer truth to speak, she'd plainly say, what they did, fell as short of you, as what you did, exceeds what they have greatly said; that they wrote as boldly as the English fight; and you lead them with the same spirit that the ancients wrote.

The nation's public and solemn praise to Heaven, and that under their represented thanks in parliament to you, the universal joy, and the deafening acclamations that echoed your return, were strong confessions of a benefit received beyond their power to repay; and to oblige beyond that power is truly great and glorious. But providence has fixed you in so eminent a degree of honour and of fortune, that nothing but the glory of the action can reward it. The unfeigned and growing wishes you have planted in the people's hearts, are a sincere acknowledgment that's never paid but when great actions like your own deserve it, which have been so frequent in the dangerous and delightful service of your country, that you at last have warmed their gratitude into a cordial love; for 'tis hard to say that we were more pleased with our victory than that the Duke of Ormond brought it us. But I forget myself; the pleasure of the subject had almost made me insensible of the danger of offending. If I were speaking to the world only, I have said too little; but while your grace is my reader, I know the severity of your virtue won't easily forgive me unless I let the subject fall, and immediately conclude myself,

May it please your Grace,

Your Grace's most devoted,

Most obliged,

And most obedient Servant,

C. CIBBER.

SHE WOU'D AND SHE WOU'D NOT.

COLLEY CIBBER seems to have been fond of the intrigue which he found, or could more probably frame, in Spanish plots.—They produce bustle and a croud of incidents, which carry off flimsy sentiments and weak diction. BEAUMONT and FLETCHER seem to have led this Spanish fashion among our dramatists, and all the derived magic of their poetic powers sleeps whenever they indulge in these busy *novel* plays.

The present drama is from the *Trapanner trabanned*; it is lively, whimsical, and very pleasant—it acts better than it reads.—Often performed, the public need not be told, that there might be a little prurient dialogue suppressed, without much injury to the author's moral character, or the excellence of the play.

PROLOGUE.

*CRITICS! tho' plays without your smiles subsist,
Yet this was writ to reach you gen'rous taste,
And not in stern contempt of any other guest.
Our humble author thinks a play should be,
Tho' ty'd to rules, like a good sermon, free
From pride, and stoop to each capacity.
Tho' he dares not, like some, depend alone
Upon a single character new shewn;
Or only things well said, to draw the town.
Such plays, like looser beauties, may have pow'r
To please, and sport away a wanton hour;
But wit and humour, with a just design,
Charm, as when beauty, sense, and virtue join.
Such was his just attempt, though 'tis confess
He's only vain enough t' have done his best;
For rules are but the posts that mark the course,
Which way the rider should direct his horse:
He that mistakes his ground is eas'ly beat,
Tho' he that runs it true mayn't do the feat;
For 'tis the straining genius that must win the heat.
O'er chokejade to the ditch a jade may lead,
But the true proof of Pegasus's breed,
Is when the last aët turns the lands with Dimple's speed,
View then, in short, the method that he takes:
His plot and persons he from nature makes,
Who for no bribe of jest he willingly forsakes:*

*His wit, if any, mingles with his blot,
Which should on no temptation be forgot :
His action's in the time of acting done,
No more than from the curtain, up and down :
While the first music plays he moves his scene
A little space, but never shifts again.*

*From his design no person can be spar'd,
Or speeches lopt, unless the whole be marr'd.
No scenes of talk for talking's sake are shown,
Where most abruptly, when their chat is done,
Actors go off because the poet——cann't go on.
His first act offers something to be done,
And all the rest but lead that action on ;
Which, when pursuing scenes i' th' end discover,
The game's run down, of course the pley is over.
Thus much he thought 'twas requisite to say,
(For all here are not critics born) that they
Who only us'd to like, might learn to taste a play.*

*But now he flies for refuge to the fair,
Whom he must own the ablest judges here.
Since all the springs of his design but move
From beauty's cruelty subdu'd by love ;
E'en they, whose hearts are yet untouch'd, must know,
In the same case, sure, what their own wou'd do :
You best should judge of love, since love is born of you.*

Dramatis Personaz.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

DON MANUEL, father to Rosara,	-	-	Mr. Edwin.
DON PHILIP, slighted by Hypolita,	-	-	Mr. Wroughton.
DON LOUIS, nephew to Don Manuel,	-	-	Mr. Booth.
OCTAVIO, in love with Rosara,	-	-	Mr. Davies.
TRAPPANTI, a cast servant of Don Philip's,	-	-	} Mr. Lewis.
SOTO, servant to Don Philip,	-	-	

Women.

HYPOLITA, secretly in love with Don Philip,	-	-	} Mrs. Bates.
ROSARA, in love with Octavio,	-	-	
FLORA, confidant to Hypolita,	-	-	Mrs. Martyr.
VILETTA, woman to Rosara,	-	-	Mrs. Wilson.

Host, Alguazil, and Servants.

SCENE, Madrid.



SHE WOU'D AND SHE WOU'D NOT.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Inn in Madrid. Enter TRAPPANTI alone, talking to himself.

INDEED, my friend Trappanti, thou'rt in a very thin condition; thou hast neither master, meat, nor money: not but, couldst thou part with that unappeaseable itch of eating too, thou hast all the ragged virtues that were requisite to set up an ancient philosopher: contempt and poverty, kicks, thumps, and thinking, thou hast endured with the best of them; but—when fortune turns thee up to hard fasting, that is to say, positively not eating at all, I perceive thou art a downright dunce, with the same stomach and no more philosophy than a hound upon horse-flesh—Fasting's the devil!—Let me see—this I take it is the most frequented inn about Madrid, and if a keen guest or two should drop in now—Hark!

Host. [Within.] Take care of the gentlemen's horses there; see them well rubbed and littered.

Trap. Just alighted! if they do but stay to eat now! Impudence assist me. Ha! a couple of pretty young sparks, faith!

Enter HYPOLITA and FLORA in Mens' Habits, a Servant with a Portmanteau.

Trap. Welcome to Madrid, sir; welcome, sir.

Flo. Sir, your servant.

Serv. Have the horses pleased your honour?

Hyp. Very well indeed, friend. Pr'ythee, set down the portmanteau, and see that the poor creatures want nothing: they have performed well, and deserve our care.

Trap. I'll take care of that, sir. Here, ostler!

[*Exeunt Trap. and Servant.*]

Flo. And pray, madam, what do I deserve that have lost the use of limbs to keep pace with you? 'Sheart! you whipped and spurred like a fox-hunter: it's a sign you had a lover in view: I'm sure my shoulders ache as if I had carried my horse on them.

Hyp. Poor-Flora! thou art fatigued indeed; but I shall find a way to thank thee for't.

Flo. Thank me, quotha! Egad, I sha'n't be able to sit this fortnight. Well, I'm glad our journey's at an end however: and now, madam, pray what do you propose will be the end of our journey?

Hyp. Why, now, I hope the end of my wishes—Don Philip, I need not tell you how far he is in my heart.

Flo. No, your sweet usage of him told me that

long enough ago; but now, it seems, you think fit to confess it: and what is it you love him for, pray?

Hyp. His manner of bearing that usage.

Flo. Ah, dear pride! how we love to have it tickled! But he does not bear it, you see, for he's coming post to Madrid to marry another woman; nay, one he never saw.

Hyp. An unknown face can't have very far engaged him.

Flo. How came he to be engaged to her at all?

Hyp. Why, I engaged him.

Flo. To another!

Hyp. To my whole sex rather than own I loved him.

Flo. Ah, done like a woman of courage!

Hyp. I could not bear the thought of parting with my power; besides, he took me at such an advantage, and pressed me so home to a surrender, I could have torn him piece-meal.

Flo. Ay, I warrant you, an insolent—agreeable puppy. “Well, but to leave impertinence, madam, pray how came you to squabble with him?”

“*Hyp.* I'll tell thee, Flora: you know Don Philip wants no charms that can recommend a lover; in birth and quality I confess him my superior; and it is the thought of that has been a constant thorn upon my wishes. I never saw him in the humblest posture, but still I fancied he secretly presumed his rank and fortune might deserve me: this always stung my pride, and made me overact

“ it: nay, sometimes when his sufferings have almost
 “ drawn tears into my eyes, I have turned the sub-
 “ ject with some trivial talk, or hummed a spiteful
 “ tune, though I believe his heart was breaking.

“ *Flo.* A very tender principle, truly.

“ *Hyp.* Well, I don't know, it was in my nature.
 “ But to proceed—this and worse usage continued a
 “ long time; at last, despairing of my heart, he then
 “ resolved to do a violence on his own, by consenting
 “ to his father's commands of marrying a lady of
 “ considerable fortune here in Madrid. The match
 “ is concluded, articles are sealed, and the day is
 “ fixed for his journey. Now the night before he set
 “ out, he came to take his leave of me, in hopes, I
 “ suppose, I would have staid him. I need not tell
 “ you my confusion at the news; and though I could
 “ have given my soul to have deferred it, yet finding
 “ him, unless I bade him stay, resolved upon the
 “ marriage, I (from the pure spirit of contradiction)
 “ swore to myself I would not bid him do it, so called
 “ for my veil, and told him I was in haste, begged
 “ his pardon, your servant, and so whipped to
 “ prayers.

“ *Flo.* Well said again; that was a clincher. Ah,
 “ had not you better been at confession?

“ *Hyp.* Why, really, I might have saved a long
 “ journey by it. To be short, when I came from
 “ church, Don Philip had left this letter at home for
 “ me, without requiring an answer—Read it—

“ *Flo.* [*Reads.*] ‘Your usage has made me justly

“despair of you, and now any change must better
 “my condition; at least, it has reduced me to the
 “necessity of trying the last remedy, marriage with
 “another; if it prove ineffectual, I only wish you
 “may at some hours remember how little cause I
 “have given you to have made me for ever mise-
 “rable.

PHILIP.

“Poor gentleman! very hard, by my conscience!
 “Indeed, madam, this was carrying the jest a little
 “too far.

“*Hyp.* Ah, by many a long mile, Flora; but what
 “would you have a woman do when her hand’s in it?”

“*Flo.* “Nay, the truth on it is, we never know the
 “difference between enough and a surfeit;” but
 love be praised, your proud stomach’s come down
 for it.

Hyp. Indeed, ’tis not altogether so high as it was.
 In a word, his last letter set me at my wit’s end, and
 when I came to myself, you may remember you
 thought me bewitched; for I immediately called for
 my boots and breeches, a straddle we got, and so
 rode after him.

Flo. Why truly, madam, as to your wits, I have
 not much altered my opinion of them, for I can’t
 see what you propose by it.

Hyp. My whole design, Flora, lies in this port-
 manteau and these breeches.

Flo. A notable design, no doubt; but pray let’s
 hear it.

Hyp. Why, I do propose to be twice married between them.

Flo. How! twice?

Hyp. By the help of the portmanteau I intend to marry myself to Don Philip's new mistress, and then—I'll put off my breeches, and marry him.

Flo. Now I begin to take ye: but pray, what's in the portmanteau, and how came you by it?

Hyp. I hired one to steal it from his servant at the last inn we lay at in Toledo. In it are jewels of value, presents to my bride, good gold store, settlements, and credential letters, to certify that the bearer (which I intend to be myself) is Don Philip, only son and heir of Don Fernando de las Torres, now residing at Seville, whence we came.

Flo. A very smart undertaking, by my troth! And pray, madam, what part am I to act?

Hyp. My woman still; when I can't lie for myself, you are to do it for me in the person of a cousin-german.

Flo. And my name is to be——

Hyp. Don Guzman, Diego, Mendez, or what you please: be your own godfather.

Flo. 'Egad, I begin to like it mightily; this may prove a very pleasant adventure, if we can but come off without fighting, which, by the way, I don't easily perceive we shall; for, to be sure, Don Philip will make the devil to do with us when he finds himself here before he comes hither.

Hyp. Oh, let me alone to give him satisfaction.

Flo. I'm afraid it must be alone if you do give him satisfaction; for my part, I can push no more than I can swim.

Hyp. But can you bully upon occasion?

Flo. I can scold when my blood's up.

Hyp. That's the same thing: bullying would be scolding in petticoats.

Flo. Say ye so? Why then, don, look to yourself; if I don't give you as good as you bring, I'll be content to wear breeches as long as I live, though I lose the end of my sex by it. Well, madam, now you have opened the plot, pray when is the play to begin?

Hyp. I hope to have it all over in less than four hours: we'll just refresh ourselves with what the house affords, comb out our wigs, and wait upon my father-in-law——How now! what would this fellow have?——

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Trap. Servant, gentlemen; I have taken nice care of your nags; good cattle they are, by my troth! right and sound, I warrant them; they deserve care, and they have had it, and shall have it if they stay in this house.——I always stand by, sir, see them rubbed down with my own eyes——Catch me trusting an ostler, I'll give you leave to fill for me, and drink for me too.

Flo. I have seen this fellow somewhere.

Trap. Hey-day! what, no cloth laid! was ever such attendance! Hey, house! tapster! landlord! hey! [*Knocks*] What was it you bespoke, gentlemen?

Hyp. Really, sir, I ask your pardon, I have almost forgot you.

Trap. Psha! dear sir, never talk of it; I live here hard by—I have a lodging—I can't call it a lodging neither—that is, I have a——Sometimes I am here, and sometimes I am there; and so, here and there one makes shift, you know.—Hey! will these people never come? [*Knocks.*]

Hyp. You give a very good account of yourself, sir.

Trap. Oh, nothing at all, sir. Lord, sir—was it fish or flesh, sir?

Flo. Really, sir, we have bespoke nothing yet.

Trap. Nothing! for shame! it's a sign you are young travellers. You don't know this house, sir; why, they'll let you starve if you don't stir and call, and that like thunder too.—Hey! [*Knocks.*]

Hyp. Ha! you eat here sometimes I presume, sir?

Trap. Umph!—Ay, sir, that's as it happens—I seldom eat at home indeed—things are generally, you know, so out of order there that—Did you hear any fresh news upon the road, sir?

Hyp. Only, sir, that the King of France lost a great horse-match upon the Alps t'other day.

Trap. Ha! a very odd place for a horse-race—but the King of France may do any thing—Did you come that way, gentlemen? or—Hey! [*Knocks.*]

Enter Host.

Host. Did you call, gentleman?

Trap. Yes, and bawl too, sir. Here the gentlemen are almost famished, and nobody comes near 'em. What have you in the house now that will be ready presently?

Host. You may have what you please, sir:

Hyp. Can you get us a partridge?

Host. Sir, we have no partridges; but we'll get you what you please in a moment. We have a very good neck of mutton, sir; if you please it shall be clapped down in a moment.

Hyp. Have you no pigeons or chickens?

Host. Truly, sir, we have no fowl in the house at present; if you please you may have any thing else in a moment.

Hyp. Then, pr'ythee, get us some young rabbits.

Host. Upon my word, sir, rabbits are so scarce they are not to be had for money.

Flo. Have you any fish?

Host. Fish, sir! I drest yesterday the finest dish that ever came upon a table; I am sorry we have none left, sir; but if you please you may have any thing else in a moment.

Trap. Pox on thee! hast thou nothing but any thing else in the house?

Host. Very good mutton, sir.

Hyp. Pr'ythee get us a breast then.

Host. Breast! don't you love the neck, sir?

Hyp. Have ye nothing in the house but the neck?

Host. Really, sir, we don't use to be so unprovided, but at present we have nothing else left.

Trap. Faith, sir, I don't know but a nothing else may be very good meat when any thing else is not to be had.

Hyp. Then, pr'ythee, friend, let's have thy neck of mutton before that is gone too.

Trap. Sir, he shall lay it down this minute; I'll see it done, gentlemen, I'll wait upon ye presently; for a minute I must beg your pardon, and leave to lay the cloth myself.

Hyp. By no means, sir.

Trap. No ceremony, dear sir! Indeed I'll do it.

[*Exeunt Host and Trap.*]

Hyp. What can this familiar puppy be?

Flo. With much ado I have recollected his face. Don't you remember, madam, about two or three years ago Don Philip had a trusty servant, called Trappanti, that used now and then to slip a note into your hand as you came from church?

Hyp. Is this he that Philip turned away for saying I was as proud as a beauty, and homely enough to be good humoured?

Flo. The very same I assure ye; only, as you see, starving has altered his air a little.

Hyp. Poor fellow! I am concerned for him. What makes him so far from Seville?

Flo. I am afraid all places are alike to him.

Hyp. I have a great mind to take him into my service; his assurance may be useful as my case stands.

Flo. You would not tell him who you are?

Hyp. There's no occasion for it—I'll talk with him.

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Trap. Your dinner's upon the spit, gentlemen, and the cloth is laid in the best room—Are you not for a whet, sir? What wine? what wine? hey!

Flo. We give you trouble, sir.

Trap. Not in the least, sir—Hey! [*Knocks.*]

Enter Host.

Host. D'ye call, gentlemen?

Hyp. Ay; what wine have ye?

Host. What sort you please, sir.

Flo. Sir, will you please to name it? [*To Trap.*]

Trap. Nay, pray, sir.

Hyp. No ceremony, dear sir! upon my word you shall.

Trap. Upon my soul you'll make me leave ye, gentlemen.

Hyp. Come, come, no words. Pr'ythee, you shall.

Trap. Psha! but why this among friends, now? Here—have ye any right Galicia?

Host. The best in Spain, I warrant it.

Trap. Let's taste it; if it be good, set us out half a dozen bottles for dinner.

Host. Yes, sir. [*Exit. Host.*]

Flo. Who says this fellow's a starving now? On my conscience, the rogue has more impudence than a lover at midnight.

Hyp. Hang, him, 'tis inoffensive; I'll humour him
—Pray, sir, (for I find we are like to be better acquainted, therefore I hope you won't take my question ill)——

Trap. Oh, dear sir!

Hyp. What profession may you be of?

Trap. Profession, sir—I—I—'Ods me? here's the wine.

Enter Host.

Come, fill out—hold—let me taste it first—Ye block-head, would ye have the gentleman drink before he knows whether it be good or not? [*Drinks.*]—Yes, 'twill do—Give me the bottle, I'll fill myself. Now, sir, is not that a glass of right wine?

Hyp. Extremely good, indeed—But, sir, as to my question.

Trap. I'm afraid, sir, that mutton won't be enough for us all.

Hyp. Oh, pray sir, bespeak what you please.

Trap. Sir, your most humble servant—Here, master! pr'ythee, get us a—ha! ay, get us a dozen of poached eggs, a dozen, d'ye hear—just to—pop down a little.

Host. Yes, sir.

[*Going.*]

Trap. Friend—let there be a little slice of bacon to every one of them.

Hyp. But, sir——

Trap. 'Ods! I had like to have forgot—here a—Sancho, Sancho! Ay, is not your name Sancho?

Host. Diego, sir.

Trap. Oh, ay, Diego; that's true indeed, Diego. Umph!

Hyp. I must e'en let him alone; there's no putting in a word till his mouth's full.

Trap. Come, here's to thee, Diego—[*Drinks and fills again.*] That I should forget thy name, though.

Host. No great harm, sir.

Trap. Diego, ha! a very pretty name, faith—I think you are married, are you not, Diego?

Host. Ay, ay, sir.

Trap. Ha! how many children?

Host. Nine girls and a boy, sir.

Trap. Ha! nine girls—Come, here's to thee again, Diego—Nine girls! a stirring woman, I dare say; a good housewife, ha, Diego?

Host. Pretty well, sir.

Trap. Makes all her pickles herself, I warrant ye—Does she do olives well?

Host. Will you be pleased to taste 'em, sir?

Trap. Taste 'em! hum! pr'ythee let's have a plate, Diego.

Host. Yes, sir.

Hyp. And our dinner as soon as you please, sir: when it's ready, call us.

Host. Yes, sir. [Exit Host.]

Hyp. But, sir, I was asking you of your profession.

Trap. Profession! really, sir, I don't use to profess much: I am a plain dealing sort of a man: if I say I'll serve a gentleman, he may depend upon me.

Flo. Have you ever serv'd, sir?

Trap. Not these two last campaigns.

Hyp. How so?

Trap. Some words with my superior officer; I was a little too free in speaking my mind to him.

Hyp. Don't you think of serving again, sir?

Trap. If a good post fall in my way.

Hyp. I believe I could help you—Pray, sir, when you served last did you take pay or wages?

Trap. Pay, sir!—Yes, sir, I was paid, cleared, subsistence and arrears to a farthing.

Hyp. And our late commander's name was—

Trap. Don Philip de las Torres.

Hyp. Of Seville?

Trap. Of Seville.

Hyp. Sir, your most humble servant. You need not be curious, for I am sure you don't know me, though I do you and your condition, which I dare promise you I'll mend upon our better acquaintance: and your first step to deserve it is to answer me honestly to a few questions. Keep your assurance still; it may do me service; I shall like you better for it. Come, here's to encourage you. [*Gives him money.*]

Trap. Sir, my humble service to you.

Hyp. Well said.

Flo. Nay, I'll pass my word he sha'n't dwindle into modesty.

Trap. I never heard a gentleman talk better in my life. I have seen such sort of a face before; but where—I don't know, nor I don't care. It's your glass, sir.

Hyp. "Grammercy! here, cousin. [*Drinks to Flora.*]"

Come now, what made Don Philip turn you out of his service? why did you leave him?

Trap. 'Twas time, I think; his wits had left him—the man was mad.

Hyp. Mad!

Trap. Ay, stark mad——in love.

Hyp. In love! how pray?

Trap. Very deep—up to the ears—over head——drowned by this time—he would in——I would have had him stopped when he was up to the middle.

Hyp. What was she he was in love with?

Trap. The devil.

Hyp. So, now for a very ugly likeness of my own face. [*Aside.*] What sort of a devil?

Trap. The damning sort——a woman.

Hyp. Had she no name?

Trap. Her Christian name was Donna Hypolita, but her proper name was Shittlecock.

Flo. How d'ye like that? [*Aside to Hyp.*]

Hyp. Pretty well. [*Aside to Flo.*] Was she handsome:

Trap. Umph——so, so.

Flo. How d'ye like that? [*To Hyp.*]

Hyp. Umph——so, so. [*To Flo.*] Had she wit?

Trap. Sometimes.

Hyp. Good humour?

Trap. Very seldom.

Hyp. Proud?

Trap. Ever.

Hyp. Was she honest?

Trap. Very proud.

Hyp. What, had she no good qualities?

Trap. Faith, I don't remember them.

Hyp. Ha! d'ye think she loved him?

Trap. If she did, 'twas as the cobbler loved his wife.

Hyp. How's that?

Trap. Why, he beat her thrice a day, and told his neighbours he loved her ne'er the worse, but he was resolved she should never know it.

Hyp. Did she use him so very ill?

Trap. Like a jade.

Flo. How d'ye do now? [To Hyp.]

Hyp. I don't know—methinks, I—But sure; what, was she not handsome, say ye?

Trap. A devilish tongue.

Hyp. Was she ugly?

Flo. Ay, say that at your peril. [Aside.]

Hyp. What was she? how did she look?

Trap. Look! why faith the woman looked very well when she had a blush in her face.

Hyp. Did she often blush?

Trap. I never saw her.

Hyp. Never saw her! had she no charm? what made him love her?

Trap. Really, I can't tell.

Flo. How d'ye like the picture, madam? [Aside.]

Hyp. Oh, oh, extremely well! the rogue has put me into a cold sweat. I am as humble as an offending lover.

Enter Host.

Host. Gentlemen, your dinner's upon the table.

[Exit Host.]

Hyp. That's well. Come, sir; at dinner I'll give you farther instructions how you may serve yourself and me.

Trap Come, sir. *[To Flora.]*

Flo. Nay, dear sir! no ceremony.

Trap. Sir, your very humble servant.

[As they are going, Hyp. stops them.]

Hyp. Come back; here's one I don't care should see me.

Trap. Sir, the dinner will be cold.

Hyp. Do you eat it hot then; we are not hungry.

Trap. Sir, your humble servant again. *[Exit Trap.]*

Flo. You seem concerned; who is it?

Hyp. My brother Octavio, as I live!—Come this way. *[They retire.]*

Enter OCTAVIO and a Servant.

Oct. Jasper, run immediately to Rosara's woman; tell her I am just come to town; slip that note into her hand, and stay for an answer.

Flo. 'Tis he.

Re-enter Host, conducting DON PHILIP.

Host. Here, sir, please to walk this way.

Flo. And Don Philip, by Jupiter!

D. Ph. When my servant comes, send him to me immediately.

Host. Yes, sir.

Hyp. Nay, then, it is time for us to make ready—

Alons!

[*Exeunt Hyp. and Flo.*

Oth. Don Philip!

D. Ph. Dear Oclavio!

Oth. What lucky point of the compass could blow us to one another so?

D. Ph. Faith a wind very contrary to my inclination; but the worst, I see, blows some good. I am overjoyed to see you.—But what makes you so far from the army?

“*Oth.* Who thought to have found you so far from Seville?”

“*D. Ph.* What do you do at Madrid?”

Oth. Oh, friend, such an unfortunate occasion, and yet such a lucky discovery! such a mixture of joy and torment, no poor dog upon earth was ever plagued with.

D. Ph. Unriddle, pray.

Oth. Don't you remember, about six months ago, I wrote you word of a dear, delicious, sprightly creature that I had bombarded for a whole summer to no purpose?

D. Ph. I remember.

Oth. That same silly, stubborn, charming angel now capitulates.

D. Ph. Then she's taken.

Oth. I can't tell that; for you must know her perfidious father, contrary to his treaty with me, and her inclination, is going to—

D. Ph. Marry her to another——

Os. Of a better estate than mine, it seems. She tells me here, he is within a day's march of her, begs me to come upon the spur to her relief; and, if I don't arrive too late, confesses she loves me well enough to open the gates, and let me enter the town before him. There's her express, read it.——

HYPOLITA, FLORA, and TRAPPANTI appear in the
Balcony.

Hyp. Hark! they are talking of a mistress—let us observe.

Flo. Trappanti, there's your old master.

Trap. Ay, I know him again; but I may chance to tell him, he did not know a good servant when he had him.

D. Ph. [*Reads.*] 'My father has concluded a match for me with one I never saw, and intends in two days to perfect it: the gentleman is expected every hour. In the mean time, if you know any friend that has a better title to me, advise him forthwith to put in his claim. I am almost out of my senses, which you will easily believe when I tell you, if such a one should make haste, I sha'n't have time to refuse him any thing.'

Hyp. How is this?

D. Phil. No name?

Os. She never would trust it in a letter.

Flo. If this should be Don Philip's mistress?

Trap. Sir, you may take my word it is: I know the lady, and what the neighbours say of her.

Hyp. This was a lucky discovery—but hush.

D. Ph. What will you do in this case?

Oct. That I don't yet know: "I am half distracted;" I have just sent my servant to tell her I am come to town, and beg an opportunity to speak with her; I long to see her; I warrant the poor fool will be so soft and so humble, now she's in a fright.

D. Ph. What will you propose at your meeting her?

Oct. I don't know; may-be another meeting; at least it will come to a kind look, a kiss, good bye, and a sigh—Ah, if I can but persuade her to run away with me!

D. Ph. Consider——

Oct. Ah, so I do! What pleasure 'twould be, to have her steal out of her bed in a sweet moonshiny night; to hear her come pat, pat, pat, along in her slippers, with nothing but a thin silk night-gown loose about her, and in this tempting dress, to have her jump into my arms, breathless with fear; "her panting bosom close to mine, then to stifle her with kisses, and curl myself about her smooth warm limbs, that breathe an healing odour from their pores, enough to make the senses ake, or fancy mad."

D. Ph. Octavio, I envy thee; thou art the happiest man in thy temper——

Oct. And thou art the most altered I ever knew. Pr'ythee, what makes thee so much upon the hum-drum? Well, are my sister and you come to a right understanding yet? When do you marry?

Hyp. So, now I shall have my picture by another hand.

D. Ph. My condition, Octavio, is very much like your mistress's; she is going to marry the man she never saw, and I the woman.

Oct. 'Sdeath, you make me tremble! I hope 'tis not my mistress.

D. Ph. Thy mistress! that were an idle fear; Madrid's a wide place—or if it were, (she loving you) my friendship and my honour would oblige me to desist.

Oct. That's generous indeed: but still you amaze me! Are you quite broke off with my sister? I hope she has given you no reason to forget her.

Hyp. Now I tremble.

D. Ph. The most severe that ever beauty printed in the heart of man; a coldness unaccountable to sense.

Oct. Psha, dissembled.

Hyp. Ha!

D. Ph. I can't think it; lovers are soon flattered into hope; but she appeared to me indifferent to so near a point, that she has ruined me without the trouble of resolving it.

Flo. Well, men are fools.

Os. And by this time she's in fits for your leaving her; 'tis her nature; I know her from her bib and baby: I remember, at five years old, the vixen has fasted three days together, in pure spite to her governess.

Hyp. So!

Os. Nothing could ever, in appearance, make her pleased or angry; always too proud to be obliged, too high to be affronted, and thought nothing so low as to seem fond of revenge: she had a stomach that could digest every thing but humility.

Hyp. Good lack, Mr. Wit!

Os. Yet, with all this, I have sometimes seen her good-natured, generous, and tender.

Hyp. There the rogue was civil again.

D. Ph. I have thought so too. [Sighing.]

Hyp. How can he speak of me with so much generosity?

Os. For all her usage of you, I'll be racked if she did not love you,

D. Ph. I rather think she hated me: however, now 'tis past, and I must endeavour to think no more of her.

Hyp. Now I begin to hate myself.

Os. Then you are determined to marry this other lady?

D. Ph. That's my business to Madrid.

Trap. Which shall be done to your hand.

D. Ph. Besides, I am now obliged by contract.

Oct. Then, (though she be my sister) may some jealous, old, ill-natured dog revenge your quarrel to her.

Hyp. Thank you, sir.

D. Ph. Come, forget it.

Hyp. Come, we have seen enough of the enemy's motions, to know 'tis time for us to decamp.

[*Excunt Hyp. Flo. and Trap.*]

Oct. With all my heart; let's go in and drink your new mistress's health. When do you visit her?

D. Ph. I intended it immediately, but an unlucky accident has hindered me: one of my servants fell sick upon the road, so that I am forced to make shift with one, and he is the most negligent, sottish rogue in nature; has left my portmanteau, where all my writings and letters of concern are, behind him at the last town we lay at, so that I can't properly visit the lady or her father, till I am able to assure them who I am.

Oct. Why don't you go back yourself to see for them?

D. Ph. I have sent my servant, for I am really tired: I was loath to appear so much concerned for them, lest the rascal should think it worth his while to run away with them.

Enter Servant to OCTAVIO.

Oct. How now?

Serv. Here's an answer, sir. [Gives a letter.]

Oth. [*To D. Ph.*] My dear friend, I beg a thousand pardons; I must leave you this minute; the kind creature has sent for me. I am a soldier, you know, and orders must be obeyed; when I come off o' duty I'll immediately wait upon you.

D. Ph. You'll find me hear, or here of me. Adieu.
Here, house! *[Exit Oth.*

Enter Host.

Pr'ythee, see if my servant be come yet.

Host. I believe he is, sir; is he not in blue?

D. Ph. Ay, where is the sot?

Host. Just refreshing himself with a glass at the gate.

D. Ph. Pray, tell the gentleman I'd speak with him.—*[Exit Host.]* In all the necessaries of life, there is not a greater plague than servants. Hey, Soto!

Enter SOTO drunk.

Sot. Did you please to—such!—call, sir?

D. Ph. What's the reason, blockhead, I must always wait upon you thus?

Sot. Sir, I did not know any thing of it. I—I—came as soon as you se—se—se—sent for me.

D. Ph. And why not without sending, sir? Did you think I expected no answer to the business I sent you about?

Sot. Yes, sir—I did think you would be willing—that is—to have an account—so I staid to take a glass

at the door, because I would not be out of the way—huh!

D. Ph. You are drunk, rascal!—Where's the portmanteau?

Sot. Sir, I am here—if you please I'll give you the whole account how the matter is—huh!

D. Ph. My mind misgives me—speak, villain!—
[*Strikes him.*]

Sot. I will, sir, as soon as I can put my words into an intelligible order: I ar'n't running away, sir.

D. Ph. To the point, sirrah.

Sot. Not of your sword, dear sir!

D. Ph. Sirrah, be brief, or I'll murder you: where's the portmanteau?

Sot. Sir, as I hope to breathe, I made all the strictest search in the world, and drank at every house upon the road going and coming, and asked about it; and so at last, as I was coming within a mile of the town here, I found then—

D. Ph. What?

Sot. That it must certainly be lost.

D. Ph. Dog! d'ye think this must satisfy me?

[*Beats him.*]

Sot. Lord, sir, you won't hear reason—Are you sure you ha'n't it about you?—If I know any thing of it I wish I may be burnt!

D. Ph. Villain! your life can't make me satisfaction.

Sot. No, sir, that's hard—a man's life can't—for my part—I—I—

D. Ph. Why do I vent my rage against a sot, a clod of earth? I should accuse myself for trusting him.

Sot. Sir—I had rather—bought a portmanteau out of my own pocket than have had such a life about it.

D. Ph. Be dumb!

Sot. Ahuh! Yes.

D. Ph. If this rascal had stole it, sure he would not have ventured to come back again.—I am confounded! Neither 'Don Manuel nor his daughter know me, nor any of his family. If I should not visit him till I can receive fresh letters from my father, he'll in the mean time think himself affronted by my neglect.—What shall I do?—Suppose I go and tell him my misfortune, and beg his patience till we can hear again from Seville. I must think. Hey, sot!

[*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter HYPOLITA, FLORA, and TRAPPANTI.

Trap. Hold, sir, let me touch up your foretop a little.

Hyp. “So! my gloves.”—Well, Trappanti, you know your business, and if I marry the lady, you know my promise too.

Trap. Sir, I shall remember them both—'Odso! I had like to have forgot—Here, house! a bason and wash-ball—I've a razor about me. Hey! [*Knocks.*]

Hyp. What's the matter?

Trap. Sir, you are not shaved.

Hyp. Shaved!

Trap. Ever while you live, sir, go with a smooth chin to your mistress. Hey! [*Knocks.*]

Hyp. This puppy does so plague me with his impertinence, I shall laugh out and discover myself.

Trap. Why, Diego!

Hyp. Psha! pr'ythee don't stand fooling, we're in haste.

Flo. Ay, ay, shave another time.

Trap. Nay, what you please, sir; your beard is not much, you may wear it to-day.

[*Taking her by the chin.*]

Flo. Ay, and to-morrow too: pray, sir, will you see the coach ready, and put in the things.

Trap. Sir, I'll see the coach ready, and put in the things. [*Exit Trap.*]

Flo. Come, madam, courage! Now, let's do something for the honour of our sex, give a proof of our parts, and tell mankind we can contrive, fatigue, bustle, and bring about as well as the best of them.

Hyp. Well said, Flora: for the honour of our sex be it then, and let the grave dons think themselves as wise as they please; but Nature knows there goes more wit to the management of some amours, than the hardest point in politics;

Therefore to men th' affair of state's confin'd,

Wisely to us the state of love's assign'd,

As love's the weightier bus'ness of mankind. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

Don MANUEL's House. Enter ROSARA and VILETTA.

Viletta.

HEAR reason.

Ros. Talk of Octavio then.

Vil. How do you know but the gentlemen your father designs you for may prove as pretty a fellow as he? If you should happen to like him as well, would not that do your business as well?

Ros. Do you expect Octavio should thank you for this?

Vil. The gentleman is no fool.

Ros. He'll hate any one that is not a friend to his love.

Vil. Hang them, say I: but can't one quench the thirst without jumping into the river? Is there no difference between cooling and drowning? Octavio's now in a very good post—keep him there—I know the man; he understands the business he is in to a hair; but, faith, you'll spoil him; he's too pretty a fellow, and too poor a one for an husband.

Ros. Poor! he has enough.

Vil. That's the most he has.

Ros. 'Twill do our business.

Vil. But when you have no portion (which I'm afraid you won't have with him) he'll soon have

enough of you, and how will your business be done then, pray?

Ros. Psha! you talk like a fool.

Vil. Come, come, if Octavio must be the man, I say let Don Philip be the husband.

Ros. I tell you, fool, I'll have no man but an husband, and no husband but Octavio: when you find I am weary of him, I'll give you leave to talk to me of somebody else.

Vil. In vain, I see—I have done, madam—one must have time to be wise: but, in the mean while, what do ye resolve? positively not to marry Don Philip?

Ros. I don't know what I shall do till I see Octavio. When did he say he would be here?

Vil. Oh! I dare not tell you, madam.

Ros. Why?

Vil. I am bribed to the contrary.

Ros. By whom?

Vil. Octavio; he just now sent me this lovely piece of gold not to tell you what time he would be here.

Ros. Nay then, Viletta, here are two pieces that are twice as lovely; tell me, when shall I see him?

Vil. Umph! these are lovely pieces indeed.

[Smiling.]

Ros. When, Viletta?

Vil. Have you no more of them, madam?

Ros. Psha! there, take purse and all; will that content thee?

Vil. Oh, dear madam! I should be unconscionable to desire more; but really I was willing to have them all first. [*Curtseying.*]

Ros. When will he come?

Vil. Why, the poor gentleman has been hankering about the house this quarter of an hour; but I did not observe, madam, you were willing to see him till you had convinced me by so plain a proof.

Ros. Where's my father?

Vil. Fast asleep in the great chair.

Ros. Fetch him in then before he wakes.

Vil. Let him wake, his habit will protect him.

Ros. His habit!

Vil. Ay, madam, he's turned friar to come at you: if your father surprises us, I have a lie ready to back him.—Hist, Octavio! you may enter.

Enter OCTAVIO, in a Friar's Habit.

OS. After a thousand frights and fears, do I live to see my dear Rosara once again, and kind?

Ros. What shall we do, Octavio?

[*Looking kindly on him.*]

OS. Kind creature! Do! why, as lovers should do; what nobody can undo; let's run away this minute, tie ourselves fast in the church-knot, and defy fathers and mothers.

Ros. And fortunes too?

OS. Psha! we shall have it one day: they must leave their money behind them.

Ros. Suppose you first try my father's good-nature? You know he once encouraged your addresses.

Ost. First, let's be fast married: perhaps he may be good-natured when he can't help it: "if we should try him now, 'twill but set more upon his guard against us: since we are listed under Love," don't let us serve in a separate garrison. Come, come, stand to your arms, whip a suit of night-clothes into your pocket, and let's march off in a body together.

Ros. Ah! my father!

Ost. Dead!

Vil. To your function.

Enter Don MANUEL.

D. Man. Viletta!

Vil. Sir.

D. Man. Where's my daughter?

Vil. Hist! don't disturb her.

D. Man. Disturb her! Why, what's the matter?

Vil. She's at confession, sir.

D. Man. Confession! I don't like that; a young woman ought to have no sins at all.

Vil. Ah! dear sir, there's no living without them.

D. Man. She's now at years of discretion.

Vil. There's the danger, sir; she's just of the tasting age: one has really no relish of a sin till fifteen.

D. Man. Ah! then the jades have swinging stomachs. I find her aversion to the marriage I have

proposed her has put her upon disobedient thoughts: there can be no confession without guilt.

Vil. Nor no pardon, sir, without confession.

D. Man. Fiddle faddle! I won't have her seem wicked. - Hussy, you shall confess for her; I'll have her send her sins by you; you know 'em, I'm sure; but I'll know what the friar has got out of her—— Save you, father.

Old. Bless you, son.

D. Man. How now! What's become of Father Benedict? Why is not he here?

Vil. Sir, he is not well; and so desired this gentleman, his brother here, to officiate for him.

D. Man. He seems very young for a confessor.

Vil. Ay, sir; he has not been long at it.

Old. Nor don't desire to be long in it: I wish I understand it well enough to make a fool of my old don here. [*Aside.*

D. Man. Well, sir, how do you find the pulse of iniquity beat there? What sort of sin has she most stomach to?

Old. Why truly, sir, we have all frailties, and your daughter has had most powerful temptations.

D. Man. Nay, the devil has been very busy with her these two days.

Old. She has told me a most lamentable story.

D. Man. Ten to one but this lamentable story proves a most damnable lie.

Old. Indeed, son; I find by her confession that you

are much to blame for your tyrannical government of her.

D. Man. Hey-day! what, has the jade been inventing sins for me, and confessing them instead of her own? Let me come—she shall be locked up till she repents them too.

Oct. Son, forbear; this is now a corroboration of your guilt: this is inhuman.

D. Man. Sir, I have done; but pray, if you please, let's come to the point: what are these terrible cruelties that this tender lady accuses me of?

Oct. Nay, sir, mistake her not: she did not with any malicious design expose your faults, but as her own depended on them; her frailties were the consequence of your cruelty.

D. Man. Let's have them both antecedent and consequent.

Oct. Why, she confessed her first maiden innocent affection had long been settled upon a young gentleman, whose love to her you once encouraged, and after their most solemn vows of mutual faith, you have most barbarously broke in upon her hopes; and to the utter ruin of her peace, contracted her to a man she never saw.

D. Man. Very good! I see no harm in all this.

Oct. Methinks the welfare of a daughter, sir, might be of weight enough to make you serious.

D. Man. Serious! so I am, sir. What a devil! must I needs be melancholy, because I have got her a good husband?

Os. Her melancholy may tell you, sir, she can't think him a good one.

D. Man. Sir, I understand thinking better than she, and I'll make her take my word.

Os. What have you to object against the man she likes?

D. Man. The man I like.

Os. Suppose the unhappy youth she loves should throw himself distracted at your feet, and try to melt you into pity.

D. Man. Ay! that if he can.

Os. You would not, sir, refuse to hear him.

D. Man. Sir, I shall not refuse him any thing that I am sure will signify nothing.

Os. Were you one moment to reflect upon the pangs which separated lovers feel, were Nature dead in you, that thought might wake her.

D. Man. Sir, when I am asked to do a thing I have not a mind to do, my nature sleeps like a top.

Os. Then I must tell you, sir, this obstinacy obliges me, as a churchman, to put you in mind of your duty, and to let you know too you ought to pay more reverence to our order.

D. Man. Sir, I am not afraid of the sin of marrying my daughter to the best advantage; and so, if you please, father, you may walk home again—when any thing lies upon my conscience, I'll send for you.

Os. Nay, then 'tis time to claim a lover's right, and to tell you, sir, the man that dares to ask Rosara from me is a villain.

[*Throws off his disguise.*]

Vil. So! here will be fine work! [*Aside.*

D. Man. Octavio! the devil!

Oct. You'll find me one, unless you do me speedy justice: since not the bonds of honour, nature, nor submissive reason can oblige you, I am reduced to take a surer, shorter way, and force you to be just. I leave you, sir, to think on't. [*Walks about angrily.*

D. Man. Ah! here's a confessor! ah! that jade of mine!—and that other jade of my jade's!—Here has been rare doings!—Well! it sha'n't hold long; madam shall be noosed to-morrow morning—Ha! Sir's in a great passion here, but it won't do—those long strides, don, will never bring you the sooner to your mistress.—Rosara! step into that closet, and fetch my spectacles off o' the table there. Tum! tum!

[*Sings.*

Vil. I don't like the old gentleman's looks. [*Aside.*

Ros. This obstinacy of yours, my dear father, you shall find runs in the family.

[*Exit Rosara, and Don Man. locks her in.*

D. Man. Tum! dum! dum! [*Sings.*

Oct. Sir, I would advise you, as your nearest friend, to defer this marriage for three days.

D. Man. Tum! dum! dum!

Vil. Sir, you have locked my mistress in. [*Pertly.*

D. Man. Tum! dum! dum!

Vil. If you please to lend me the key, sir, I'll let her out.

D. Man. Tum! dum! dum!

Os. You might afford me at least, as I am a gentleman, a civil answer, sir.

D. Man. Why then, in one word, sir, you shall not marry my daughter; and, as you are a gentleman, I'm sure you won't think it good manners to stay in my house, when I submissively beg of you to walk out.

Os. You are the father of my mistress, and something, sir, too old to answer as you ought this wrong, therefore I'll look for reputation where I can with honour take it; and since you have obliged me to leave your house, I'll watch it carefully; I'll know who dares enter it. This, sir, be sure of, the man that offers at Rosara's love shall have one virtue, courage at least; I'll be his proof of that, and ere he steps before me, force him to deserve her. [*Exit Oct.*]

D. Man. Ah! poor fellow! he's mad now, and does not know what he would be at.—But, however, 'twill be no harm to provide against him—Who waits there?

Enter a Servant.

Run you for an alguazil, and bid your fellows arm themselves; I expect mischief at my door immediately: if Octavio offers any disturbance, knock him down, and bring him before me. [*Exit Serv.*]

Vil. Hist! don't I hear my mistress's voice?

Ros. [*Within*] Viletta!

Vil. Here, here, madam—Bless me! what's this?

[*Viletta listens at the closet door, and Rosara thrusts a billet to her through the key-hole.*]

Ha! a billet—to Octavio—a—hem.

[*Puts it into her bosom.*]

D. Man. How now, hussy? What are you fumbling about that door for?

Vil. Nothing, sir; I was only peeping to see if my mistress had done prayers yet.

D. Man. Oh! she had as good let them alone, for she shall never come out till she has stomach enough to fall to upon the man I have provided for her. But hark you, Mrs. Modesty, was it you, pray, that let in that able comforter for my babe of grace there?

Vil. Yes, sir, I let him in. [*Pertly.*]

D. Man. Did you so?—Ha! then if you please, madam,—I'll let you go out—go—go—get a sheet of brown paper, pack up your things, and let me never see that damn'd ugly face of thine as long as I live.

Vil. Bless me! Sir, you are in a strange humour, that you won't know when a servant does as she should do.

D. Man. Thou art strangely impudent.

Vil. Only the farthest from it in the world, sir.

D. Man. Then I am strangely mistaken; didst not thou own just now thou lett'st him in?

Vil. Yes—but 'twas in disguise—for I did not design you should see him, because I know you did not care my mistress should see him.

D. Man. Ha!

Vil. And I knew, at the same time, she had a mind to see him.

D. Man. Ha!

Vil. And you know, sir, that the sin of loving him had laid upon her conscience a great while; so I

thought it high time she should come to a thorough confession.

D. Man. Ha!

Vil. So upon this, sir, as you see—I—I—I let him in, that's all.

D. Man. Nay, if it be so as thou sayest, he was a proper confessor indeed.

Vil. Ay, sir, for you know this was not a spiritual father's business.

D. Man. No, no, this matter was utterly carnal.

Vil. Well, sir, and judge you now if my mistress is not beholden to me?

D. Man. Oh! extremely; but you'll go to hell, my dear, for all this, though, perhaps, you'll choose that place: I think you never much cared for your husband's company; and if I don't mistake, you sent him to Heaven in the old road. Hark! what noise is that?

[*Noise without.*]

“*Vil.* So, Octavio's pushing his fortune—he'll have a wife or a halter, that's positive—I'll go see.”

[*Exit Viletta.*]

Enter a Servant hastily.

D. Man. How now?

Serv. O, sir, Octavio has set upon a couple of gentlemen just as they were alighting out of a coach at the door; one of them, I believe, is he that is to marry my young mistress; I heard them name her name; I'm afraid there will be mischief, sir: there they are, all at it, helter skelter.

D. Man. Run into the hall, take down my back, breast, and head-piece; call an officer; raise the

neighbours; give me my great gun; I'll shoot him out of the garret window. [*Exit Don Manuel.*]

Enter HYPOLITA and FLORA, *putting up their Swords,*
OCTAVIO *in the Alguazil's Hands,* and TRAPPANTI.

Hyp. Bring him along—This is such an insolence! damn it! at this rate no gentleman can walk the streets.

Flo. I suppose, sir, your business was more with our pockets than our persons. Are our things safe?

Trap. Ay, sir, I secured them as soon as ever I saw his sword out; I guessed his design, and scowered off with the portmanteau.

Hyp. I'll know now who set you on, sir.

Oct. Pr'ythee, young man, don't be troublesome, but thank the rascal, that knocked me down, for your escape.

Hyp. Sir, I'd have you know if you had not been knocked down, I should have owed my escape to the same arm you would have owed the reward for your insolence. Pray, sir, what are you? who knows you?

Oct. I'm glad, at least, to find it is not Don Philip that's my rival. [*Aside.*]

Serv. Sir, my master knows the gentleman very well; he belongs to the army.

Hyp. Then, sir, if you'd have me use you like a gentleman, I desire your meaning of those familiar questions you asked me at the coach side.

Oct. Faith, young gentleman, I'll be very short: I love the lady you are to marry, and if you don't quit

your pretences in two hours, it will entail perpetual danger upon you and your family.

Hyp. Sir, if you please, the danger's equal—for rot me, if I am not as fond of cutting your throat as you can be of mine.

Os. If I were out of these gentlemens' hands, on my word, sir, you should not want an opportunity.

Hyp. O, sir! these gentlemen shall protect neither of us; my friend and I'll be your bail from them.

Flo. Ay, sir, we'll bail you; and if you please, sir, bring your friend, I'm his. Damn me! what, d'ye think you have boys to deal with?

Os. Sir, I ask your pardon, and shall desire to kiss your hands about an hour hence at—— [Whispers.]

Flo. Very well, sir, we'll meet you.

Hyp. Release the gentleman.

Serv. Sir, we dare not without my master's order. Here he is, sir.

Enter Don MANUEL.

D. Man. How 'now, bully confessor? What! in limbo?

Hyp. Sir, Don Ferdinando de las Torres, whom I am proud to call my father, commanded me to deliver this into the hands of his most dear and worthy friend, Don Manuel Grimaldi, and at the same time gave me assurance of a kind reception.

D. Man. Sir, you are thrice welcome; let me embrace ye. I'm overjoy'd to see you—Your friend, sir?

Hyp. Don Pedro Velada, my near relation, who has done me the honour of his company from Se-

ville, sir, to assist at the solemnity of his friend's happiness.

D. Man. Sir, you are welcome; I shall be proud to know you.

Flo. You do me honour, sir.

D. Man. I hope you are not hurt, gentlemen.

Hyp. Not at all, sir; thanks to a little skill in the sword.

D. Man. I am glad of it; however, give me leave to interrupt our business for a moment, till I have done you justice on the person that offered you this insolence at my gate.

Hyp. Your pardon, sir; I understand he is a gentleman, and beg you would not let my honour suffer, by receiving a lame reparation from the law.

D. Man. A pretty mettled fellow, faith—I must not let him fight though. [*Aside.*] But, sir, you don't know, perhaps, how deeply this man is your enemy?

Hyp. Sir, I know more of his spleen and folly than you imagine, which, if you please to discharge him, I'll acquaint you with.

D. Man. Discharge him! Pray consider, sir——

[*They seem to talk.*]

Enter VILETTA, and slips a Note into OCTAVIO's Hand.

Vil. Send your answer to me. [*Exit Vil.*]

OEt. [*Aside.*] Now for a beam of hope in a tempest.
[*Reads.*] 'I charge you don't hazard my ruin and your own by the madness of a quarrel: the closet

window where I am is but a step to the ground : be at the back-door of the garden exactly at the close of the evening, where you will certainly find one that may put you in the best way of getting rid of a rival.' Dear, kind creature ! Now if my little don's fit of honour does but hold out to bail me, I am the happiest dog in the universe.

D. Man. Well, sir, since I find your honour is dipt so deep in the matter—here—release the gentleman.

Flo. So, sir, you have your freedom ; you may depend upon us.

Hyp. You will find us punctual.——Sir, your servant.

Oct. So, now I have a very handsome occasion to put off the tilt too. Gentlemen, I ask your pardon ; I begin to be a little sensible of the rashness I committed ; and I confess your manner of treating me has been so very much like men of honour, that I think myself obliged, from the same principle, to assure ye, that though I love Rosara equal to my life, yet no consideration shall persuade me to be a rude enemy, even to my rival. I thank you for my freedom, and am your humble servant. [*Exit Oct.*]

Hyp. Your servant, sir——I think we released my brother very handsomely ; but I ha'n't done with him. [*Aside to Flora.*]

D. Man. What can this sudden turn of civility mean ? I'm afraid 'tis but a cloak to some new roguery he has in his head.

Hyp. I don't know how old it may be, but my ser-

vant here has discovered a piece of villany of his that exceeds any other he can be capable of.

D. Man. Is it possible? Why would you let him go then?

Hyp. Because I'm sure it can do me no harm, sir.

D. Man. Pray, be plain, sir; what is it?

Hyp. This fellow can inform you—for to say truth, he's much better at a lie. [Aside.

D. Man. Come hither, friend; pray, what is this business?

Hyp. Ay, what was that you overheard between Octavio and another gentleman at the inn where we alighted?

Trap. Why, sir, as I was unbuckling my portman-teau in the yard there, I observed Octavio and another spark very familiar with your honour's name; upon which, sir, I pricked up the ears of my curiosity, and took in all their discourse.

D. Man. Pray, who was that other spark, friend?

Trap. A brother rake, sir; a damn'd sly-looking fellow.

D. Man. So.

Hlo. How familiarly the rogue treats his old master! [Aside.

Hyp. Poor Don Philip! [Aside.

Trap. Says one of them, says he, No, damn him, the old rogue (meaning you, sir) will never let you have her by fair means; however, says Octavio, I'll try soft words; but if those won't do, bully him, says t'other.

D. Man. Ah, poor dog! but that would not do neither, sir; he has tried them both to-day to no purpose.

Trap. Say you so, sir! then you'll find what I say is all of a piece. Well, and if neither of these will do, says he, you must e'en tilt the young prig, your rival, (meaning you then, sir.) [To Hyp.

D. Man. Ha, ha! that, I perceive, my spark did not greatly care for.

Trap. No, sir; that he found was catching a Tartar. 'Sbud! my master fought like a lion, sir.

Hyp. Truly I did not spare him.

Flo. No, faith—after he was knocked down. [*Aside.*

Trap. But now, sir, comes the cream of the roguery.

Hyp. Pray observe, sir.

Trap. Well, says Slylooks, and if all these fail, I have a rare trick in my head that will certainly defer the marriage for three or four days at least, and in that time the devil's in't if you don't find an opportunity to run away with her.

D. Man. Would you so, Mr. Dog; but he'll be hanged.

Hyp. O, sir, you'll find we were mighty fortunate in this discovery.

D. Man. Pray, sir, let's hear: what was this trick to be, friend?

Trap. Why, sir, to alarm you that my master was an impostor, and that Slylooks was the true Don Philip, sent by his father from Seville to marry your

daughter; upon which (says he) the old put (meaning you again, sir,) will be so bamboozled, that—

D. Man. But pray, sir, how did young Mr. Coxcomb conclude that the old put was to believe all this? Had they no sham proofs that they proposed to bamboozle me with, as you call it?

Trap. You shall hear, sir; (the plot was pretty well laid too) I'll pretend, says he, that the rascal, your rival, (meaning you then, sir,) has robbed me of my portmanteau, where I had put up all my jewels, money, and letters of recommendation from my father: we are neither of us known in Madrid, says he, so that a little impudence and a grave face will certainly set those two dogs a snarling, while you run away with the bone. That's all, sir.

D. Man. Impudent rogue!

Hyp. What think ye, sir? Was not this business pretty handsomely laid?

Flo. Faith, it might have wrought a very ridiculous consequence.

D. Man. Why, truly, if we had not been forearmed by this discovery, for aught I know, Mr. Dog might have ran away with the bone Indeed; but, if you please, sir, since these ingenious gentlemen are so pert upon the matter, we'll e'en let them see, that you and I have wit enough to do our business, and e'en clap up the wedding to-morrow morning.

Hyp. Sir, you are too obliging—But will your daughter, think ye, be prevailed with?

D. Man. Sir, I'll prepare her this minute—It's pity methinks we released that bully tho'——

Hyp. Not at all, sir; I don't suppose he can have the impudence to pursue his design; or if he should, sir,——now we know him beforehand.

D. Man. Nay, that's true as you say,—but therefore, methinks, I'd have him come: I love mightily to laugh in my sleeve at an impudent rogue when I'm sure he can do me no harm. Udsflesh! if he comes, the dog sha'n't know whether I believe him or not—I'll try if the old put can bamboozle him or no.

Hyp. Egad, sir, you're in the right on't; knock him down with his own weapon.

Trap. And when he's down I have a trick to keep him so.

Flo. The devil's in it if we don't maul this rascal among us.

D. Man. A son of a whore——I am sorry we let him go so soon, faith."

Flo. We might as well have held him a little.

Hyp. Really, sir, upon second thoughts, I wish we had—His excusing the challenge so abruptly, makes me fancy he is in hopes of carrying his point some other way——Did not you observe your daughter's woman whisper him?

D. Man. Humh!

Flo. They seemed very busy, that's certain.

Hyp. I can't say about what—but it will be worth our while to be upon our guard.

D. Man. I am alarmed.

Hyp. Where is your daughter at this time?

D. Man. I think she's pretty safe—but I'll go make her sure.

Flo. "'Twill be no harm to look about ye, sir." Where's her woman?

D. Man. I'll be upon her presently—she shall be searched for intelligence—You'll excuse me, gentlemen.

Hyp. Sir, the occasion presses you.

D. Man. If I find all safe, I'll return immediately, and then, if you please, we'll run over some old stories of my good friend Fernando—Your servant.

[*Exit. Don Man.*

Hyp. Sir, your most humble servant—Trappanti, thou art a rare fellow; thou hast an admirable face, and when thou diest, I'll have thy whole statue cast all in the same metal.

Flo. 'Twere pity the rogue was not bred to the law.

Trap. So 'tis indeed, sir—A man should not praise himself; but if I had been bred to the gown, I dare venture to say I become a lie as well as any man that wears it.

Hyp. Nay, now thou art modest—But, sirrah, we have more work for ye: you must get in with the servants, attack the lady's woman; there, there's ammunition, rogue! [*Gives him money.*] Now try if you can make a breach into the secrets of the family.

Trap. Ah, sir, I warrant you—I could never yet meet with a woman that was this sort of pistol-proof

—I have known a handful of these do more than a barrel of gunpowder: the French charge all their cannon with 'em; the only weapon in the world, sir. I remember my old master's father used to say the best thing in the Greek grammar was—*Arguriois lonchasy machou, kai panta crateseis.* [*Exit Trap.*]

Hyp. Well, dear Flora, let me kiss thee: thou hast done thy part to a miracle.

Flo. Egad, I think so: didn't I bear up briskly? Now if Don Philip should come while my blood's up, let him look to himself.

Hyp. We shall find him a little tough, I believe: for, poor gentleman! he is like to meet with a very odd reception from his father-in-law.

Flo. Nay, we have done his business there, I believe.

Hyp. How glibly the old gentleman swallowed Trappanti's lie!

Flo. And how rarely the rogue told it!

Hyp. And how soon it worked with him! for if you please, says he, we'll let him see that we have wit enough to do our business, and clap up the wedding to-morrow morning.

Flo. Ah, we have it all the way—Well, what must we do next.

Hyp. Why, now for the lady—I'll be a little brisk upon her, and then——

Flo. Victoria!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Continued. Enter VILETTA hastily, DON MANUEL and TRAPPANTI behind observing her.

Viletta.

So, with much ado I have given the old don the slip; he has dangled with me through every room in the house, high and low, up stairs and down, as close to my tail as a great boy hankering after one of his mother's maids. Well—now we will see what Monsieur Octavio says. — [Takes a letter from her bosom.

Trap. Hist! there she is, and alone. When the devil has any thing to do with a woman, sir, that's his time to take her. Stand close.

D: Man. Ah, he's at work already—There's a letter.

Trap. Leave her to me, sir, I'll read it.

Vil. Hah, two pistoles!—Well, I'll say that for him, the man knows his business; his letters always come post-paid.

[While she is reading, Trappanti steals behind, and looks over her shoulder.]

'Dear Viletta, convey the enclosed immediately to your mistress, and as you prize my life, use all possible means to keep the old gentleman from the closet till you are sure she is safe out of the window. Your real friend.'

Trap. Octavio!

[Reading.

Vil. Ah! [*Shrieking.*

Trap. Madam, your ladyship's most humble servant.

Vil. You're very impertinent, methinks, to look over other people's letters.

Trap. Why—I never read a letter in my life without looking it over.

Vil. I don't know any business you had to look upon this.

Trap. There's the thing—your not knowing that has put you into this passion.

Vil. You may chance to have your bones broke, Mr. Coxcomb.

Trap. Sweet Honeycomb! don't be so waspish; or if I keep your counsel, d'ye see, I don't know why my bones mayn't keep their places; but if I peach, whose bones will pay for it then?

Vil. Ha! the fool says true; I had better wheedle him. [*Aside.*

Trap. My dear queen! don't be frightened—I come as a friend; now be serious.

Vil. Well, what would you have!

Trap. Don't you love money above any thing in the world—except one.

Vil. I except nothing.

Trap. Very good—and pray, how many letters do you expect to be paid for when Octavio has married your mistress, and has no occasion to write to her? Look you, child, though you are of counsel for him, use him like a true lawyer; make difficulties where

there are none, that he may see you where he needs not. Dispatch is out of practice? delay makes long bills: stick to it; once get him his cause, there's no more advice to be paid for.

Vil. What do you mean?

Trap. Why, that for the same reason I have no mind to put an end to my own fees by marrying my master: while they are lovers they will always have occasion for a confidant and a pimp; but when they marry—*serviteur*—good night vails; our harvest is over. What d'ye think of me now?

Vil. Why—I like what you say very well; but I don't know, my friend, to me—that same face of your's looks like the title-page to a whole volume of roguery—What is it you drive at?

Trap. Money, money, money. Don't you let your mistress marry Octavio: I'll do my best to hinder my master. Let you and I lay our heads together to keep them asunder, and so make a penny of them all three.

Vil. Look you, seignior, I'll meet you half way, and confess to you I had made a rough draught of this project myself: but say I should agree with you to go on upon't, what security can you give me for performance of articles?

Trap. More than bond or judgment—my person in custody.

Vil. Ah, that won't do.

Trap. No, my love! why, there's many a sweet bit in't—taste it. [*Offering to kiss her, she puts him away.*]

Vil. No.

Trap. Faith, you must give me one.

Vil. Indeed, my friend, you are too ugly for me; though I am not handsome myself, I love to play with those that are.

Trap. And yet, methinks, an honest fellow of my size and complexion, in a careless posture, playing the fool thus with his money.

[*Tosses a purse, she catches it, and he kisses her.*]

Vil. Psha! Well, if I must, come then—to see how a woman may be deceived at first sight of a man.

Trap. Nay, then, take a second thought of me, child. [Again.]

D. Man. Hah!—this is laying their heads together indeed. [Behind.]

Vil. Well, now get you gone; I have a letter to give to my mistress. Slip into the garden—I'll come t'ye presently.

Trap. Is't from Orazio?

Vil. Psha! begone, I say. [Snatches the letter.]

Trap. Hist! [Trappanti beckons Don Manuel, who goes softly behind.]

Vil. Madam! madam! ah!

D. Man. Now, strumpet, give me the other letter, or I'll murder you. [Draws.]

Vil. Ah lud! oh lud!—there! [Squeaking.]

D. Man. Now we shall see what my gentleman would be at—[Reads.]—‘My dear angel!’—Ha! soft and impudent!—‘Depend upon me at the garden-door by seven this evening: pity my impatience, and

believe you can never come too soon to the arms of your
OCTAVIA.

Ah! now would this rampant rogue make no more of debauching my gentlewoman, than the gentlewoman would of him, if he were to debauch her.—Hold—let's see; what does he say here—um—um!

[Reads to himself.]

Vil. What a sot was I to believe this old fool durst do me any harm! but a fright's the devil.—Would I had my letters again—though 'tis no great matter: or, as my friend Trappanti says, delaying Octavio's business is doing my own.

D. Man. *[Reading.]*—Um—um! sure she is safe out of the window. Oh, there the mine is to be sprung then.—The gentleman makes a warm siege on't in troth, and one would think was in a fair way of carrying the place, while he has such an admirable spy in the middle of the town.—Now, were I to act like a true Spaniard, I ought to rip up this jade for more intelligence; but I'll be wise; a bribe and a lie will do my business a great deal better.—Now, gentlewoman, what do ye think in your conscience I ought to do to ye?

Vil. What I think in my conscience you'll not do to me—make a friend of me—You see, sir, I dare be an enemy.

D. Man. Nay, thou dost not want courage, I'll say that for thee: but is it possible any thing can make thee honest?

Vil. What do you suppose would make me otherwise ?

D. Man. Money.

Vil. You have nick'd it.

D. Man. And would the same sum make thee surely one as t'other ?

Vil. That I can't say neither ; one must be heavier than t'other, or else the scale can't turn.

D. Man. Say it be so, would that turn thee into my interest ?

Vil. The very minute you turn into mine, sir : judge yourself—here stands Octavio with a letter, and two pieces to give it to my mistress—there stand you with a hem ! and four pieces—where would the letter go, d'ye think ?

D. Man. There needs no more—I'm convinced and will trust thee—there's to encourage thee beforehand, and when thou bringest me a letter of Octavio's, I'll double the sum.

Vil. Sir, I'll do it—and will take care he shall write presently. [*Aside.*]

D. Man. Now, as you expect I should believe you, begone, and take no notice of what I have discovered.

Vil. I am dumb, sir—— [*Exit Vil.*]

D. Man. So, this was done like a wise general : and now I have taken the counterscarp there may be some hopes of making the town capitulate.—Rosara!

[*Unlocks the closet.*]

Enter ROSARA.

Ros. Did you call me, sir?

D. Man. Ay, child. Come, be cheerful; what I have to say to you I'm sure ought to make you so.

Ros. He has certainly made some discovery; Viletta did not cry out for nothing—What shall I do—dissemble? [Aside.

D. Man. In one word, set your heart at rest, for you shall marry Don Philip this very evening.

Ros. That's but short warning for the gentleman as well as myself, for I don't know that we ever saw one another. How are you sure he will like me?

D. Man. Oh, as for that matter, he shall see you presently; and I have made it his interest to like you—but if you are still positively resolved upon Octavio, I'll make but few words—pull off your clothes, and go to him.

Ros. My clothes, sir!

D. Man. Ay, for the gentleman sha'n't have a rag with you.

Ros. I am not in haste to be starved, sir.

D. Man. Then let me see you put on your best airs, and receive Don Philip as you should do.

Ros. When do you expect him, sir?

D. Man. Expect him, sir!—he has been here this hour—I only staid to get you out of the sullens.—He's none of your hum-drums—all life and mettle! 'Odzooks, he has the courage of a cock! a duel's but

a dance to him : he has been at sa ! sa !—sa, for you already.

Ros. Well, sir, I sha'n't be afraid of his courage, since I see you are resolved he shall be the man.—He shall find me a woman, sir, let him win me and wear me as soon as you please.

D. Man. Ah, now thou art my own girl ! hold but in this humour one quarter of an hour, and I'll toss the t'other bushel of doubloons into thy portion.—Here, bid a—Come, I'll fetch him myself—She's in a rare cue 'faith ! ah, if he does but nick her now.

[*Exit Don Man.*]

Ros. Now I have but one card to play—if that don't hit, my hopes are crushed indeed : if this young spark be not a downright coxcomb, I may have a trick to turn all yet.—Dear fortune ! give him but common sense, I'll make it impossible for him to like me—Here they come— [Walks carelessly and sings.

I'll rove and I'll range—

Enter Don MANUEL and HYPOLITA.

“ *Hyp.* *I'll love and I'll change—* [Sings with her.

“ *D. Man.* Ah, he has her, he has her !”

Hyp. Madam, I kiss your ladyship's hands : I find by your gaiety you are no stranger to my business. Perhaps you expected I should have come in with a grave bow and a long speech, but my affairs are in a little more haste ; therefore, if you please, madam, we'll cut the work short ; be thoroughly intimate at

the first sight, and see one another's humours in a quarter of an hour, as well as if we had been weary of them this twelvemonth.

D. Man. Ah!

Ros. Troth, sir, I think you are very much in the right: The sooner I see you, the sooner I shall know whether I like you or not.

Hyp. Psha! as for that matter, you'll find me a very fashionable husband; I sha'n't expect my wife to be over fond of me.

Ros. But I love to be in the fashion too, sir, in taking the man I have a mind to.

Hyp. Say you so? why, then, take me as soon as you please.

Ros. I only stay for my mind, sir: as soon as ever that comes to me, upon my word I'm ready to wait upon you,

Hyp. Well, madam, a quarter of an hour shall break no squares.—Sir, if you'll find an occasion to leave us alone, I see we shall come to a right understanding presently.

D. Man. I'll do it, sir. Well, child, speak in thy conscience, is not he a pretty fellow?

Ros. The gentleman's very well, sir, but methinks he is a little too young for a husband.

D. Man. Young! a fiddle! you'll find him old enough for a wife, I warrant ye. Sir, I must beg your pardon for a moment: but if you please, in the mea time, I'll leave you my daughter, and so pray make your best of her.

[Exit *D. Man.*]

Hyp. I thank ye, sir. [*Hyp. stands some time mute, looks carelessly at Rosara, and she smiles as in contempt of him.*] Why, now, methinks, madam, you had as good put on a real smile, for I am doomed to be the happy man, you see.

Ros. So my father says, sir.

Hyp. I'll take his word.

Ros. A bold man—but he'll break it.

Hyp. He won't.

Ros. He must.

Hyp. Whether he will or no?

Ros. He can't help it now.

Hyp. How so, pray?

Ros. Because he has promised you, you shall marry me; and he has always promised me, I should marry the man I could love.

Hyp. Ay—that is, he would oblige you to love the man you should marry.

Ros. The man that I marry will be sure of my love; but for the man that marries me—mercy on him!

Hyp. No matter for that, I'll marry you.

Ros. Come, I don't believe you are so ill-natured.

Hyp. Why, dost thou not like me, child?

Ros. Um—No.

Hyp. What's the matter?

Ros. The old fault.

Hyp. What?

Ros. I don't like you.

Hyp. Is that all?

Ros. No.

Hyp. That's hard——the rest.

Ros. That you won't like.

Hyp. I'll stand it——try me.

Ros. Why then, in short, I like another :—another man, sir, has got into my head, and has made such work there, you'll never be able to set me to rights as long as you live.—What d'ye think of me now, sir? Won't this serve for a reason why you should not marry me?

Hyp. Um—the reason is a pretty smart sort of a reason, truly: but it won't do.—To be short with ye, madam, I have reason to believe I shall be disinherited if I don't marry you.

Ros. And what have you reason to believe you shall be, if you do marry me?

Hyp. In the Spanish fashion, I suppose, jealous to a degree.

Ros. You may be in the English fashion, and something else to a degree.

Hyp. Oh, if I have not courage enough to prevent that, madam, let the world think me in the English city fashion, content to a degree. Now, here in Spain, child, we have such things as back rooms, barred windows, hard fare, poison, daggers, bolts, chains, and so forth.

Ros. Ay, sir and there are such things as bribes, plots, shams, letters, lies, walls, ladders, keys, confidants, and so forth.

Hyp. Hey! a very complete regiment indeed! what a world of service might these do in a quarter of an hour, with a woman's courage at the head of them! Really, madam, your dress and humour have the prettiest loose French air, something so quality, that let me die, madam, I believe in a month, I should be apt to poison ye.

Ros. So, it takes! [*Aside.*] And let me die, sir, I believe I should be apt to deserve it of ye.

Hyp. I shall certainly do it.

Ros. It must be in my breakfast then—for I should certainly run away before the wedding dinner came up.

“*Hyp.* That's over-acted; but I'll startle her.

“ [*Aside.*] Then I must tell you, madam, a Spanish husband may be provoked as well as a wife.

“*Ros.* My life on't, his revenge is not half so sweet; and if she's provoked, 'tis a thousand to one but she licks her lips before she's nailed in her coffin.

“*Hyp.* You are very gay, madam.

“*Ros.* I see nothing to fright me, sir, for I cannot believe you'll marry me now—I have told you my humour; if you like it you have a good stomach.

“*Hyp.* Why, truly, you may probably lie a little heavy upon it, but I can better digest you than poverty: as for your inclination, I'll keep your body honest however; that shall be locked up; and if you don't love me then—I'll stab you.

“ *Ros.* With what? your words? it must be those
 “ you say after the priest then—You’ll be able to do
 “ very little that will reach my heart, I assure ye.

“ *Hyp.* Well, well, madam, you need not give
 “ yourself half this trouble; I am heartily convinced
 “ you will make the damned’st wife that ever poor
 “ dog of a husband wished at the devil: but really,
 “ madam, you are very unfortunate, for notwith-
 “ standing all the mighty pains you have taken, you
 “ have met with a positive coxcomb, that’s still just
 “ fool and stout enough to marry you.

“ *Ros.* ’Twill be a proof of your courage indeed.

“ *Hyp.* Madam, you rally very well, ’tis confessed;
 “ but now, if you please, we’ll be a little serious.

“ *Ros.* I think I am.—What does he mean. [*Aside.*”

Hyp. Come, come, this humour is as much affected
 as my own: I could no more bear the qualities you
 say you have, than I know you are guilty of them:
 your pretty arts in striving to avoid, have charmed
 me. “ Had you been precisely coy, or over-modest,
 “ your virtue then might have been suspected: your
 “ shewing me what a man of sense should hate, con-
 “ vinces me you know too what he ought to love;
 “ and she that’s once so well acquainted with the
 “ charms of virtue never can forsake it. I both ad-
 “ mire and love you now; you have made what only
 “ was my interest my happiness.” At my first view
 I woo’d you only to secure a sordid fortune, which
 now I overjoyed could part with, nay, with my

life, with any thing, to purchase your unrivalled heart.

Ros. Now I am plunged indeed. [*Aside.*] Well, sir, I own you have discovered me; and since you have obliged me to be serious, I now, from my sincerity, protest my heart's already given, from whence no power nor interest shall recall it.

Hyp. I hate my interest, and would owe no power or title but to love.

Ros. If, as you say, you think I find a charm in virtue, you'll know too there's a charm in constancy. You ought to scorn me should I flatter you with hope, since now you are assured I must be false before I can be your's. If what I have said seems cold, or too neglectful of your merit, call it not ingratitude or scorn, but faith unmoved and justice to the man I love.

Hyp. Death! I have fooled away my hopes; she
“ must consent, and soon, or yet I'm lost. [*Aside.*”

Ros. He seems a little thoughtful; if he has ho-
“ nour there may yet be hopes. [*Aside.*”

Hyp. “ It must—it can be only so; that way I
“ make her sure, and serve my brother too. [*Aside.*”
Well, madam, to let you see I'm a friend to love, though love's an enemy to me, give me but a seeming proof that Octavio is the undisputed master of your heart, and I'll forego the power your father's obligations give me, and throw my hopes into his arms with you.

Ros. Sir, you confound me with this goodness. A

proof! is it possible? will that content ye? Command me to what proof you please; or if you'll trust to my sincerity, let these tears of joy convince you. Here, on my knees, by all my hopes of peace, I swear—

Hyp. Hold I swear never to make a husband but Octavio.

Ros. I swear, and Heaven befriend me as I keep this vow inviolate.

Hyp. Rise, madam, and now receive a secret which I need not charge you to be careful of, since as well your quiet as my own depends upon it. A little common prudence between us, in all probability, before night, may make us happy in our separate wishes.

Ros. What mean you, sir? sure you are some angel sent to my deliverance.

Hyp. Truly, madam, I have been often told so; but, like most angels of my kind, there is a mortal man in the world who I have a great mind should know that I am—but woman.

Ros. A woman! are not you Don Philip?

Hyp. His shadow, madam, no more; I just run before him—nay, and after him too.

“*Ros.* I am confounded—a woman!

“*Hyp.* As arrant a woman from top to toe as ever man run mad for.

“*Ros.* Nay, then you are an angel.

“*Hyp.* Perhaps you'll think me little a kin to one “at least.” Octavio, madam, your lover, is my brother; my name Hypolita; my story you shall know at leisure.

Ros. Hypolita! nay, then, from what you've said, and what I have heard Octavio say of you, I guess your story: but this was so extravagant a thought.

Hyp. That's true, madam, it—it—it was a little round about indeed; I might have found a nearer way to Don Philip; but these men are such testy things, they can never stay one's time; always in haste, just as they please; now we are to look kind, then grave; now soft, then sincere—"Fiddlestick! when may be a woman has a new suit of knots on her head—so if we happen not to be in their humour, forsooth, then we coquette, and are proud and vain, and then they are to turn fools, and tell us so; then one pouts and t'other huffs;" and so you see there is such a plague that—I don't know—one does not care to be rid of them neither.

Ros. A very generous confession!

Hyp. Well, madam, now you know me thoroughly; I hope you'll think me as fit for a husband as another woman.

Ros. Then I must marry ye?

Hyp. Ay, and speedily too, for I expect Don Philip every moment, and if we don't look about us, he will be apt to forbid the banns.

Ros. If he comes, what shall we do?

Hyp. I am provided for him—Here comes your father—"he's secure." Come, put on a dumb, consenting air, and leave the rest to me.

Ros. Well, this getting the better of my wise papa won't be the least part of my satisfaction.

Enter Don MANUEL.

D. Man. So, son, how does the battle go now? Have you cannonaded stoutly? Does she cry quarter?

Hyp. My dear father! let me embrace your knees; my life's too poor to make you a return—you have given me an empire, sir; I would not change to be Grand Signior.

D. Man. Ah, rogue! he has done it, he has done it; he has her! ha! is't not so, my little champion?

Hyp. Victoria, sir! the town's my own. Look here! and here, sir! thus have I been plundering this half hour; and thus, and thus, and thus, till my lips ache again. [*Kisses her.*]

D. Man. Ah, give me the great chair—I can't bear my joy—you rampant rogue! could not ye give the poor girl a quarter of an hour's warning?

Hyp. My charmer! [*Embracing Rosara.*]

D. Man. Ah, my cares are over!

Hyp. Oh, I told you, sir,—hearts and towns are never too strong for a surprise.

D. Man. Pr'ythee, be quiet, I hate the sight of ye—Rosara! come hither, you wicked thing, come hither, I say.

Ros. I am glad to see you so well pleased, sir.

D. Man. Oh, I cannot live—I can't live it; it pours upon me like a torrent; I am as full as a bumper—it runs over at my eyes; I shall choke—Answer me two questions, and kill me outright.

Ros. Any thing that will make you more pleased, sir.

D. Man. Are you positively resolved to marry this gentleman?

Ros. Sir, I am convinced 'tis the first match that can make me happy.

D. Man. I am the miserablest dog alive—and I warrant you are willing to marry him to-morrow morning if I should ask you?

Ros. Sooner, sir, if you think it necessary.

D. Man. Oh, this malicious jade has a mind to destroy me all at once—Ye cursed toad! how did you do to get in with her so? [To Hyp.]

Ros. Come, sir, take heart, your joy won't be always so troublesome.

D. Man. You lie, hussy, I shall be plagued with it as long as I live.

Hyp. You must not live above two hours then.

[*Aside.*]

D. Man. I warrant this raking rogue will get her with child too—I shall have a young squab Spaniard upon my lap, that will so grandpapa me!—Well, what want you, gloomy face?

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's a gentleman desires to speak with you; he says he comes from Seville.

D. Man. From Seville! Ha! pr'ythee, let him go thither again—tell him, I am a little busy about being overjoyed.

Hyp. My life on't, sir, this must be the fellow that my servant told you of, employed by Octavio.

D. Man. Very likely.

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Trap. Sir, sir—News, news!

D. Man. Ay, this fellow has a good merry face now—I like him. Well, what dost thou say, lad?—
—But hold, sirrah! has any body told thee how it is with me?

Trap. Sir.

D. Man. Do you know, puppy, that I am ready to cry?

Trap. Cry, sir! for what?

D. Man. Joy! joy! you whelp; my cares are over; madam's to marry your master, sirrah, and I am as wet with joy as if I had been thrown into a sea full of good-luck.—Why don't you cry, dog?

Trap. Uh! Well, sir, I do—But now, if you please, let me tell you my business.

D. Man. Well, what's the matter, sirrah?

Trap. Nay, no great matter, sir, only—Slylooks is come, that's all.

D. Man. Slylooks! what, the bamboozler! ha, ha!

Trap. He, sir, he.

D. Man. I'm glad of it, faith—now I shall have a little diversion to moderate my joy—I'll wait on the gentleman myself—Don't you be out of the way, son; I'll be with ye presently—Oh my jaws! this fit will carry me off. Ye dear toad! good-by'e. [*Exit.*]

Hyp. Ha, ha, ha! the old gentleman's as merry as

a fiddle; how he'll start when a string snaps in the middle of his tune!

Ros. At least, we shall make him change it, I believe.

Hyp. That we shall: and here comes one that's to play upon him.

Enter FLORA hastily.

Flo. Don Philip, where are you? I must needs speak with ye. Begging your ladyship's pardon, madam. [*Whispers Hyp.*] Stand to your arms; the enemy's at the gate, faith: but I've just thought of a sure card to win the lady into our party.

Ros. Who can this youth be she is so familiar with? he must certainly know her business here, and she is reduced to trust him. What odd things we women are! never to know our own minds. How very humble now has her pride made her!

Hyp. [*To Flo.*] I like your advice so well, that to tell you the truth, I have made bold to take it before you gave it me.

Flo. Is it possible?

Hyp. Come, I'll introduce ye.

Flo. Then the business is done.

Hyp. Madam, if your ladyship pleases. [*To Ros.*]

Ros. Is this gentleman your friend, sir?

Hyp. This friend, madam, is my gentlewoman, at your service.

Ros. Gentlewoman! What, are we all going into breeches then?

Flo. That used to be my post, madam, when I wore a needle; but now I have got a sword by my side, I shall be proud to be your ladyship's humble servant.

Ros. Troth, I think it's a pity you should either of you ever part with your swords: I never saw a prettier couple of adroit cavaliers in my life.

Flo. Egad, I don't know how it is, madam, but methinks these breeches give me such a mettled air, I can't help fancying but that I left my sex at home in my petticoats.

Hyp. Why, faith, for ought I know; hadst thou been born to breeches instead of a *fille de chambre*, fortune might have made thee a *beau garçon* at the head of a regiment—But hush! there's Don Philip and the old gentleman: we must not be seen yet. If you please to retire, madam, I'll tell you how we intend to deal with them.

Ros. With all my heart—Come, ladies—Gentlemen; I beg your pardon. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Continues. Enter Don MANUEL and Don PHILIP.

Don Manuel.

WELL, sir; and so you were robbed of your portmanteau, you say, at Toledo, in which were all your letters and writings relating to your marriage with my daughter, and that's the reason you are come without them.

D. Ph. "I thought, sir, you might reasonably take
 "it ill I should have lain a week or two in town,
 "without paying you my duty:" I was not robbed
 of the regard I owe my father's friend; that, sir, I
 have brought with me, and 'twould have been ill
 manners not to have paid it at my first arrival.

D. Man. Ah, how smooth the spark is! [*Aside.*]—
 Well, sir, I am pretty considerably glad to see you;
 but I hope you'll excuse me if, in a matter of this
 consequence, I seem a little cautious.

D. Ph. Sir, I sha'n't propose any immediate pro-
 gress in my affair till you receive fresh advice from
 my father; in the mean time, I shall think myself ob-
 liged by the bare freedom of your house, and such
 entertainment as you'd at least afford a common
 stranger.

D. Man. Impudent rogue! the freedom of my
 house! yes, that he may be always at hand to secure
 the main chance for my friend Octavio—But now
 I'll have a touch of the bamboozle with him. [*Aside.*]
 —Look ye, sir, while I see nothing to contradict
 what you say you are, d'ye see, you shall find me a
 gentleman.

D. Ph. So my father told me, sir,

D. Man. But then, on the other hand, d'ye see, a
 man's honesty is not always written in his face; and
 (begging your pardon) if you should prove a damn'd
 rogue now, d'ye see.

D. Ph. Sir, I can't in reason take any thing ill
 that proceeds only from your caution.

D. Man. Civil rascal! [*Aside.*] No, no, as you say, I hope you won't take it ill neither; for how do I know, you know, but what you tell me (begging your pardon again, sir,) may be all a lie!

D. Ph. Another man, indeed, might say the same to you; but I shall take it kindly, sir, if you suppose me a villain no oftener than you have occasion to suspect me.

D. Man. Sir, you speak like a man of honour, it is confessed; but (begging your pardon again, sir,) so may a rascal too sometimes.

D. Ph. But a man of honour, sir, can never speak like a rascal.

D. Man. Why, then, with your honour's leave, sir, is there nobody here in Madrid that knows you?

D. Ph. Sir, I never saw Madrid till within these two hours, though there is a gentleman in town that knew me intimately at Seville; I met him by accident at the inn where I alighted; he's known here; if it will give you any present satisfaction, I believe I could easily produce him to vouch for me.

D. Man. At the inn, say ye, did you meet this gentleman? What's his name, pray?

D. Ph. Octavio Cruzado.

D. Man. Ha, my bully confessor! this agrees word for word with honest Trappanti's intelligence—
[*Aside.*]—Well, sir, and pray what does he give you for this job?

D. Ph. Job, sir!

D. Man. Ay, that is, do you undertake it out of good fellowship, or are you to have a sort of fellow-feeling in the matter?

D. Ph. Sir, if you believe me to be the son of Don Fernando, I must tell ye, your manner of receiving me is what you ought not to suppose can please him, or I can thank you for; if you think me an impostor, I'll ease you of the trouble of suspecting me, and leave your house till I can bring better proofs who I am.

D. Man. Do so, friend; and in the mean time, d'ye see, pray give my humble service to the politician, and tell him, that to your certain knowledge the old fellow, the old rogue, and the old put, d'ye see, knows how to bamboozle as well as himself.

D. Ph. Politician! and bamboozle! Pray, sir, let me understand you, that I may know how to answer you.

D. Man. Come, come, don't be discouraged, friend—sometimes, you know, the strongest wits must fail. You have an admirable head, it is confessed, with as able a face to it as ever stuck upon two shoulders; but who the devil can help ill luck? for it happens at this time, d'ye see, that it won't do.

D. Ph. Won't do, sir?

D. Man. Nay, if you won't understand me now, here comes an honest fellow that will speak you point blank to the matter.

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Come hither, friend; dost thou know this gentleman?

Trap. Bless me, sir! is it you? Sir, this is my old master I lived with at Seville.

D. Ph. I remember thee; thy name's Trappanti; thou wert my servant when I first went to travel.

Trap. Ay, sir, and about twenty months after you came home too.

D. Ph. You see, sir, this fellow knows me.

D. Man. Oh, I never questioned it in the least, sir! Pr'ythee, what's this worthy gentleman's name, friend?

Trap. Sir, your honour has heard me talk of him a thousand times; his name, sir, his name is Guzman: his father, sir, old Don Guzman, is the most eminent lawyer in Seville, was the very person that drew up the settlement and articles of my master's marriage with your honour's-daughter: this gentleman knows all the particulars as well as if he had drawn them up himself: but, sir, I hope there's no mistake in them that may defer the marriage.

D. Ph. Confusion!

D. Man. Now, sir, what sort of answer d'ye think fit to make me?

D. Ph. Now, sir, that I'm obliged in honour not to leave your house till I at least have seen the villain that calls himself Don Philip, that has robbed me of my portmanteau, and would you, sir, of your honour and your daughter——As for this rascal——

Trap. Sir, I demand protection.

[Runs behind Don Manuel.

D. Man. Hold, sir; since you are so brisk, and in my own house too, call your master, friend: you'll find we have swords within can match you.

Trap. Ay, sir, I may chance to send you one will take down your courage. [Exit Trappanti.]

D. Ph. I ask your pardon, sir: I must confess the villany I saw designed against my father's friend had transported me beyond good manners; but be assured, sir, use me henceforward as you please, I will detect it though I lose my life. Nothing shall affront me now till I have proved myself your friend indeed, and Don Fernando's son.

D. Man. Nay, look ye, sir, I will be very civil too—I won't say a word—you shall e'en squabble it out by yourselves; not but at the same time thou art to me the merriest fellow that ever I saw in my life.

Enter HYPOLITA, FLORA, and TRAPPANTI.

Hyp. Who's this that dares usurp my name, and calls himself Don Philip de las Torres?

D. Ph. Ha! this is a young competitor indeed!

[Aside.]

Flo. Is this the gentleman, sir?

D. Man. Yes, yes, that's he: ha, ha!

D. Ph. Yes, sir, I'm the man who but this morning lost that name upon the road; I'm informed an impudent young rascal has picked it out of some writings in the portmanteau he robbed me of, and has brought it hither before me. D'ye know any such, sir?

Flo. The fellow really does it very well, sir.

D. Man. Oh, to a miracle! [*Aside.*

D. Ph. Pr'ythee, friend, how long dost thou expect thy impudence will keep thee out of gaol? Could not the coxcomb that put thee upon this inform thee too that this gentleman was a magistrate?

D. Man. Well said, my little champion.

D. Ph. Now, in my opinion, child, that might as well put thee in mind of thy own condition; for suppose thy wit and impudence should so far succeed as to let thee ruin this gentleman's family, by really marrying his daughter, thou canst not but know 'tis impossible thou shouldst enjoy her long; a very few days must unavoidably discover thee: in the meantime, if thou wilt spare me the trouble of exposing thee, and generously confess thy roguery, thus far I'll forgive thee; but if thou still proceedest upon his credulity to a marriage with the lady, don't flatter thyself that all her fortune shall buy off my evidence, for I'm bound in honour as well as law to hang thee for the robbery.

Hyp. Sir, you are extremely kind.

Flo. Very civil, egad.

Hyp. But may not I presume, my dear friend! this wheedle was offered as a trial of this gentleman's credulity? Ha, ha ha!

D. Man. Indeed, my friend, 'tis a very shallow one. Canst thou think I'm such a sot as to believe that if he knew 'twere in thy power to hang him, he would not have run away at the first sight of thee?

Trap. Ay, sir, he must be a dull rogue indeed that would not run away from a halter. Ha, ha, ha!

[*All laugh.*]

D. Ph. Sir, I ask your pardon; I begin now to be a little sensible of my folly—I perceive this gentleman has done his business with you effectually: however, sir, the duty I owe my father obliges me not to leave your cause, though I'll leave your house immediately: when you see me next, you'll know Don Philip from a rascal.

D. Man. Ah, 'twill be the same thing if I know a rascal from Don Philip! But if you please, sir, never give yourself any further trouble in this business; for what you have done, d'ye see, is so far from interrupting my daughter's marriage, that, with this gentleman's leave, I'm resolved to finish it this very hour; so that when you see your friend the politician, you must tell him you had cursed luck; that's all. Ha, ha, ha!

D. Ph. Very well, sir, I may have better when I see you next.

Hyp. Look ye, sir, since your undertaking (though you designed it otherwise) has promoted my happiness, thus far I pass it by; though I question if a man that stoops to do such base injuries dares defend them with his sword: however, now at least you're warned; but be assured, your next attempt——

D. Ph. Will startle you, my spark. I'm afraid you'll be a little humbler when you are handcuffed. Though you won't take my word against him, sir,

perhaps another magistrate may my oath, which, because I see his marriage is in haste, I am obliged to make immediately. If he can outface the law too, I shall be content to be the coxcomb then you think me.

[Exit D. Phil.

D. Man. Ah, poor fellow! he's resolved to carry it off with a good face however. Ha, ha!

Trap. Ay, sir, that's all he has for't, indeed.

Hyp. Trappanti, follow him, and do as I directed.

[Aside to Trap.

Trap. I warrant ye, sir.

[Exit Trap.

D. Man. Ha! my little champion, let me kiss thee; thou hast carried the day like a hero. Man nor woman, nothing can stand before thee. I'll make thee monarch of my daughter immediately.

Hyp. That's the ladies, sir.

D. Man. Well said, my lad—Ah, my heart's going to dance again!—Pr'ythee let's in before it gets me better of me, and give the bride an account of thy victory.

Hyp. Sir, if you please to prepare the way, I'll march after you in form, and lay my laurels at her feet like a conqueror.

D. Man. Sayest thou so, my little soldier? Why then, I'll send for the priest, and thou shalt be married in triumph.

[Exit D. Man.

Hyp. Now, Flora.

Flo. Ay, now, madam, who says we are not politicians? I'd tain see any turn of state managed with

half this dexterity. But pray, what is Trappanti detached for?

Hyp. Only to interrupt the motions of the enemy, girl, till we are safe in our trenches; for should Don Philip chance to rally upon us with an Alguazil and a warrant, before I am fast tied to the lady, we may be routed for all this.

Flo. Trappanti knows his business I hope.

Hyp. You'll see presently—But hush! here comes my brother: poor gentleman! he's upon thorns to; I have made Rosara write him a most provoking letter.

Flo. Nay, you have an admirable genius to mischief. But what has poor Octavio done to you, that he must be plagued too?

Hyp. Well, dear Flora, don't chide; indeed this shall be the last day of my reign. Come, now let's in, keep up the old Don's humour, and laugh at him.

Flo. Ay, there, with all my heart. [*Exeunt.*

Enter OCTAVIO with a letter, and VILETTA.

Oct. Rosara false! distraction!

Vil. Nay, don't be in such a passion.

Oct. Confess it too! so changed within an hour!

Vil. Ah, dear sir, if you had but seen how the young gentleman laid about him, you'd ha' wondered how she held out so long.

Oct. Death! 'tis impossible!

Vil. Common, sir, common. I have known a prouder lady as nimble as she.—What will you lay, that before the moon changes she is not false to your rival?

Os. Don't torture me, Viletta.

Vil. Come, sir, take heart; my life on't you'll be the happy man at last.

Os. Thou art mad. Does she not tell me here, in her letter, she has herself consented to marry another? nay, does not she insult me too with a—yet loves me better than the person she's to marry.

Vil. Insult! is that the best you can make on't? Ah, you men have such heads!

Os. What dost thou mean?

Vil. Sir, to be free with you, my mistress is grown wise at last; my advice, I perceive, begins to work with her, and your business is done.

Os. What was thy advice?

Vil. Why, to give the post of husband to your rival, and put you in for a deputy. You know the business of the place, sir, if you mind it: by the help of a few good stars and a little moonshine, there's many a fair perquisite may fall in your way.

Os. Thou ravest, Viletta; 'tis impossible she can fall so low.

Vil. Ah, sir, you can't think how love will humble a body.

Os. I'll believe nothing ill of her, till her own mouth confesses it: she can never own this letter: she can't but know I should stay but with you.

proaches? therefore, dear Viletta! ease me of my torments; go this moment, and tell her I'm upon the rack till I speak with her.

Vil. Sir, I dare not for the world? the old gentleman's with her; he'll knock my brains out.

Ott. I'll protect thee with my life.

Vil. Sir, I would not venture to do it for—for—for—yes, I would for a pistole.

Ott. Confound her—There, there 'tis: dear Viletta, be my friend this time, and I'll be thine for ever.

Vil. Now, sir, you deserve a friend. [*Exit Vil.*]

Ott. Sure this letter must be but artifice, a humour to try how far my love can bear—and yet methinks she can't but know the impudence of my young rival, and her father's importunity, are too pressing to allow her any time to fool away: and if she were really false, she could not take a pride in confessing it. Death! I know not what to think: the sex is all a riddle, and we are the fools that crack our brains to expound them.

Re-enter VILETTA.

Now, dear Viletta!

Vil. Sir, she begs your pardon; they have just sent for the priest; but they will be glad to see you about an hour hence, as soon as the wedding's over.

Ott. Viletta!

Vil. Sir, she says, in short, she can't possibly speak with you now, for she is just going to be married.

Oa. Death! daggers! blood! confusion! and ten thousand furies!

Vil. Heyday! what's all this for?

Oa. My brains are turned, Viletta.

Vil. Ay, by my troth, so one would think, if one could but believe you had any at all: if you have three grains, I'm sure you can't but know her compliance with this match must give her a little liberty; and can you suppose she'd desire to see you an hour hence, if she did not design to make use of it?

Oa. Use of it! death! when the wedding's over?

Vil. Dear sir, but the bedding won't be over, and I presume that's the ceremony you have a mind to be master of.

Oa. Don't flatter me, Viletta.

Vil. Faith, sir, I'll be very plain: you are to me the dullest person I ever saw in my life; but if you have a mind, I'll tell her you won't come.

Oa. No, don't say so, Viletta.

Vil. Then, pray, sir, do as she bids you; don't stay here to spoil your own sport; you'll have the old gentleman come thundering down upon ye by and by, and then we shall have ye at your ten thousand furies again.—Hist! here's company; good-bye to ye.

[Exit Vil.]

Oa. How now, what's the meaning of this?"

Enter Don PHILIP, his Sword drawn, and TRAPPANTI.

D. Ph. Come, sir, there's no retreating now; this you must justify.

Trap. Sir, I will, and a great deal more; but, pray, sir, give me leave to recover my courage—I protest the keen looks of that instrument have quite frightened it away. Pray, put it up, sir.

D. Ph. Nay, to let thee see I had rather be thy friend than enemy, I'll bribe thee to be honest. Discharge thy conscience like a man, and I'll engage to make these five ten pieces.

Enter a Servant.

Trap. Sir, your business will be done effectually.

D. Ph. Here, friend, will ye tell your master I desire to speak with him?

Os. Don Philip!

D. Ph. O Octavio! this is fortunate indeed!—the only place in the world I would have wished to have found you in.

Os. What's the matter?

D. Ph. You'll see presently.—But, pr'ythee, how stands your affair with your mistress?

Os. The devil take me if I can tell ye—I don't know what to make of her; about an hour ago she was for scaling walls to come at me; and this minute—whip, she's going to marry the stranger I told you of; nay, confesses too it is with her own consent; and yet begs by all means to see me as soon as her wedding's over.—Is not it very pretty?

Re-enter a Servant.

D. Ph. Something gay indeed.

Serv. Sir, my master will wait on you presently.

Oct. But the plague on't is, my love cannot bear this jesting.—Well, now, how stands your affair? have you seen your mistress yet?

D. Ph. No, I can't get admittance to her.

Oct. How so?

D. Ph. When I came to pay my duty here to the old gentleman——

Oct. Here!

D. Ph. Ay, I found an impudent young rascal here before me, that had taken my name upon him, robbed me of my portmanteau, and by virtue of some papers there, knew all my concerns to a title: he has told a plausible tale to her father, faced him down that I'm an impostor, and if I don't this minute prevent him, is going to marry the lady.

Oct. Death and hell! [*Aside.*] What sort of fellow was this rascal?

D. Ph. A little pert coxcomb: by his impudence and dress I guess him to be some French page.

“*Oct.* A white wig, red coat——”

“*D. Ph.* Right; the very picture of the little Englishman we knew at Paris.”

Oct. Confusion! my friend at last my rival too——
Yet hold—my rival is my friend; he owns he has not seen her yet—— [*Aside.*]

D. Ph. You seem concerned.

Oct. Undone for ever, unless dear Philip's still my friend.

D. Ph. What's the matter?

Oct. Be generous, and tell me, have I ever yet
 “deserved your friendship?”

D. Ph. I hope my actions have confessed it.”

Oct. Forgive my fears, and since 'tis impossible
 you can feel the pain of loving her you are engaged
 to marry, not having (as you own) yet ever seen her,
 let me conjure you, by all the ties of honour, friend-
 ship, and pity, never to attempt her more.

D. Ph. You amaze me!

Oct. 'Tis the same dear creature I so passionately
 dote on.

D. Ph. Is it possible? Nay then; be easy in thy
 thoughts, Octavio; and now I dare confess the folly
 of my own: I'm not sorry thou art my rival here.
 In spite of all my weak philosophy, I must own the
 secret wishes of my soul are still Hypolita's.—I know
 not why, but “yet methinks the unaccountable re-
 pulses I have met with here, look like an omen of
 “some new though far distant hope of her.”—I
 can't help thinking that my fortune still resolves,
 spite of her cruelty, to make me one day happy.

Oct. Quit but Rosara, I'll engage she shall be
 yours.

D. Ph. Not only that, but will assist you with my
 life to gain her: I shall easily excuse myself to my
 father for not marrying the mistress of my dearest
 friend.

Oct. Dear Philip, let me embrace you.—But how
 shall we manage the rascal of an impostor? Suppose
 you run immediately and swear the robbery against
 him?

D. Ph. I was just going about it, but accidentally meeting with this fellow, has luckily prevented me, who, you must know, has been chief engineer in the contrivance against me, but between threats, bribes, and promises, has confessed the whole roguery, and is now ready to swear it against him: so because I understand the spark is very near his marriage, I thought this would be the best and soonest way to detect him.

Oct. That's right; the least delay might have lost all: besides, I am here to strengthen his evidence, for I can swear that you are the true Don Philip.

D. Ph. Right.

Trap. Sir, with humble submission, that will be quite wrong.

Oct. Why so?

Trap. Because, sir, the old gentleman is substantially convinced, that 'tis you who have put Don Philip upon laying this pretended claim to his daughter, purely to defer the marriage, that in the mean time you might get an opportunity to run away with her; for which reason, sir, you'll find your evidence will but fly in your face, and hasten the match with your rival.

D. Ph. Ha! There's reason in that—All your endeavours will but confirm his jealousy of me.

Oct. What would you have me do?

Trap. Don't appear at the trial, sir.

D. Ph. By no means; rather wait a little in the

street: be within call, and leave the management to me.

Ost. Be careful, dear Philip.

D. Ph. I always used to be more fortunate in serving my friend than myself.

Ost. But hark ye, here lives an Alguazil at the next house; suppose I should send him to you to secure the spark in the mean time?

D. Ph. Do so: we must not lose a moment.

Ost. I won't stir from the door.

D. Ph. You'll soon hear of me: away. [*Exit Ost.*]

Trap. So, now I have divided the enemy, there can be no great danger if it should come to a battle—*Basta!* here comes our party.

D. Ph. Stand aside till I call for you. [*Trap. retires.*]

Enter Don MANUEL.

D. Man. Well, sir, what service have you to command me now, pray?

D. Ph. Now, sir, I hope my credit will stand a little fairer with you: all I beg is but your patient hearing.

D. Man. Well, sir, you shall have it.—“But then I must beg one favour of you too, which is, to make the business as short as you can: for to tell you the truth, I am not very willing to have any farther trouble about it.

“*D. Ph.* Sir, If I don't now convince you of your error, believe and use me like a villain; in the

“mean time, sir, I hope you’ll think of a proper
 “punishment for the merry gentleman that hath im-
 “posed upon you.

“*D. Man.* With all my heart; I’ll leave him to
 “thy mercy.”—Here he comes; bring him to trial
 as soon as you please.

Enter FLORA and HYPOLITA.

Flo. Sol Trappanti has succeeded; he’s come with-
 out the officers. [To Hyp.

Hyp. Hearing, sir, you were below, I did not care
 to disturb the family, by putting the officers to
 the trouble of a needless search: let me see your
 warrant; I’m ready to obey it.

D. Man. Ay, where’s your officer?

Flo. I thought to have seen him march in state,
 with an Alguazil before him.

D. Ph. I was afraid, sir, upon second thoughts,
 your business would not stay for a warrant, though
 ’tis possible I may provide for you, for I think this
 gentleman’s a magistrate: in the mean time—O!
 here, I have prevailed with an Alguazil to wait upon
 ye.

Enter Alguazil.

Alg. Did you send for me, sir?

D. Ph. Ay, secure that gentleman.

D. Man. Hold, hold, sir; all things in order: this
 gentleman is yet my guest; let me be first acquainted
 with his crime, and then I shall better know how he

deserves to be treated; and that we may have no hard words upon one another, if you please, sir, let me first talk with you in private. [*They whisper.*]

Hyp. Undone! that fool Trappanti, or that villain, I know not which, has at least mistaken or betrayed me! Ruined past redemption!

Flo. Our affairs, methinks, begin to look with a very indifferent face.—Ha! the old Don seems surprised—I don't like that—What shall we do?

Hyp. I am at my wit's end. [*Aside.*]

Flo. Then we must either confess or to gaol, that's positive.

Hyp. I'll rather starve there than be discovered. Should he at last marry with Rosara, the very shame of this attempt would kill me."

Flo. Death! what d'ye mean? that hanging look were enough to confirm a suspicion: bear up, for shame.

Hyp. Impossible! I am dash'd, confounded: if thou hast any courage left, shew it quickly. Go, speak before my fears betray me. [*Aside.*]

D. Man. If you can make this appear by any witness, sir, I confess 'twill surprise me indeed.

Flo. Ay, sir, if you have any witnesses, we desire you'd produce them.

D. Ph. Sir, I have a witness at your service, and a substantial one.—Hey! Trappanti!

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Now, sir, what think ye?

Hyp. Ha! the rogue winks——then there's life again. [*Aside.*] Is this your witness, sir?

D. Ph. Yes, sir; this poor fellow at last, it seems, happens to be honest enough to confess himself a rogue, and your accomplice.

Hyp. Ha, ha!

D. Ph. Ha, ha! you are very merry, sir.

D. Man. Nay, there's a jest between ye, that's certain—But come, friend, what say you to the business? have ye any proof to offer upon oath that this gentleman is the true Don Philip, and consequently this other an impostor?

D. Ph. Speak boldly.

Trap. Ay, sir; but shall I come to no harm if I do speak?

D. Man. Let it be the truth and I'll protect thee.

Trap. Are you sure I shall be safe, sir?

D. Man. I'll give you my word of honour: speak boldly to the question.

Trap. Well, sir, since I must speak, then, in the first place, I desire your honour would be pleased to command the officer to secure that gentleman.

D. Man. How, friend!

D. Ph. Secure me, rascal!

Trap. Sir, if I can't be protected I shall never be able to speak.

D. Man. I warrant thee—What is it you say, friend?

Trap. Sir, as I was just now crossing the street, this gentleman, with a sneer in his face, takes me by the hands, claps five pistoles in my palm, (here they

are) shuts my fist close upon 'em, my dear friend, says he, you must do me a piece of service; upon which, sir, I bows me him to the ground, and desired him to open his case.

D. Ph. What means the rascal?

D. Man. Sir, I am as much amazed as you; but pray let's hear him, that we may know his meaning.

Trap. So, sir, upon this he runs me over a long story of a sham and a flam he had just contrived, he said, to defer my master's marriage only for two days.

D. Ph. Confusion!

Flo. Nay, pray, sir, let's hear the evidence.

Trap. Upon the close of the matter, sir, I found at last, by his eloquence, that the whole business depended upon my bearing a little false witness against my master.

Hyp. Oh, ho!

Trap. Upon this, sir, I began to demur: sir, says I, this business will never hold water; don't let me undertake it; I must beg your pardon; gave him the negative shrug, and was for sneaking off with the fees in my pocket.

D. Man. Very well!

D. Ph. Villain!

Flo. and Hyp. Ha, ha, ha!

Trap. Upon this, sir, he catches me fast hold by the collar, whips out his poker, claps it within half an inch of my guts; now, dog! says he, you shall do it, or within two hours stink upon the dunghill you came from.

D. Ph. Sir, if there be any faith in mortal man—

D. Man. Nay, nay, nay, one at a time; you shall be heard presently. Go on, friend.

Trap. Having me at this advantage, sir, I began to think my wit would do me more service than my courage, so prudently pretended, out of fear, to comply with his threats, and swallow the perjury; but now, sir, being under protection, and at liberty of conscience, I have honesty enough, you see, to tell you the whole truth of the matter.

D. Man. Ay this is evidence indeed!

Om. Ha, ha, ha!

D. Ph. Dog! villain! did not you confess to me that this gentleman picked you up not three hours ago at the same inn where I alighted? that he had owned his stealing my portmanteau at Toledo? that if he succeeded to marry the lady you were to have a considerable sum for your pains, and these two were to share the rest of her fortune between them?

Trap. O lud! O lud! Sir, as I hope to die in my bed, these are the very words; he threatened to stab me if I would not swear against my master—I told him at first, sir, I was not fit for his business; I was never good at a lie in my life.

Alg. Nay, sir, I saw this gentleman's sword at his breast out of my window.

Trap. Look ye there, sir!

D. Ph. Damnation!

Om. Ha, ha, ha!

D. Man. Really, my friend, thou art almost turned

fool in this business: if thou hadst prevailed upon this wretch to perjure himself, couldst thou think I should not have detected him? But, poor man! you were a little hard put to it indeed; any shift was better than none it seems: you knew 'twould not be long to the wedding. You may go, friend.

[Exit Alguazil.]

Flo. Ha, ha!

D. Ph. Sir, by my eternal hopes of peace and happiness, you're imposed on. "If you proceed thus rashly, your daughter is inevitably ruined. If what I have said be not true in fact, as hell or he is false, may Heaven brand me with the severest marks of perjury." Defer the marriage but an hour.

D. Man. Ay, and in half that time, I suppose, you are in hopes to defer it for altogether.

D. Ph. Perdition seize me if I have any hope or thought but that of serving you.

D. Man. Nay, now thou art a downright distracted man—Dost thou expect I should take thy bare word, when here were two honest fellows that have just proved thee in a lie to thy face?

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, the priest is come.

D. Man. Is he so? then, sir, if you please, since you see you can do me no farther service, I believe it may be time for you to go — Come, son, now let's wait upon the bride, and put an end to this gentleman's trouble altogether.

[Exit Don Manuel.]

Hyp. Sir, I'll wait on ye.

D. Ph. Confusion! I've undone my friend.

[*Walks about.*]

Flo. [*Aside.*] Trappanti! rogue, this was a master-piece.

Trap. [*Aside.*] Sir, I believe it won't be mended in haste.

[*Exeunt Flo. and Trap.*]

Hyp. Sir.

D. Ph. Hal alone! If I were not prevented now—Well, sir.

Hyp. I suppose you don't think the favours you have designed me are to be put up without satisfaction, therefore I shall expect to see you early tomorrow near the Prado, with your sword in your hand; in the mean time, sir, I'm a little more in haste to be the lady's humble servant than yours.

[*Going.*]

D. Ph. Hold, sir!—you and I can't part upon such easy terms.

Hyp. Sir!

D. Ph. You are not so near the lady, sir, perhaps as you imagine.

[*D. Phil. locks the door.*]

Hyp. What d'ye mean?

D. Ph. Speak softly.

Hyp. Hal.

D. Ph. Come, sir—draw.

Hyp. My ruin has now caught me: “my plots are yet unripe for execution; I must not, dare not, let him know me till I am sure at least he cannot be another's”——This was the very spite of fortune

D. Ph. Come, sir, my time's but short.

Hyp. And mine's too precious to be lost on any thing but love; besides, this is no proper place.

D. Ph. O! we'll make shift with it.

Hyp. To-morrow, sir, I shall find a better.

D. Ph. No, now, sir, if you please—Draw, villain! or expect such usage as I'm sure Don Philip would not bear.

Hyp. A lover, sir, may bear any thing to make sure of his mistress—You know it is not fear that—

D. Ph. No evasions, sir; either this moment confess your villany, your name and fortune, or expect no mercy.

Hyp. Nay, then—within there!

D. Ph. Move but a step, or dare to raise thy voice beyond a whisper, this minute is thy last.

[Seizes her, and holds his sword to her breast.]

Hyp. Sir! *[Trembling.]*

D. Ph. Villain! be quick, confess, or—

Hyp. Hold, sir—I own I dare not fight with you.

D. Ph. No, I see thou art too poor a villain—therefore be speedy, as thou hopest I'll spare thy life.

Hyp. Give me but a moment's respite, sir.

D. Ph. Dog, do you trifle?"

Hyp. Nay, then, sir—Mercy, mercy!

[Throws herself at his feet.]

And since I must confess, have pity on my youth, have pity on my love!

D. Ph. Thy love! what art thou, spark?

Hyp. Unless your generous compassion spares me,

sure the most wretched youth that ever felt the pangs and torments of a successful passion.

“ *D. Ph.* Art thou indeed a lover then?—tell me thy condition.

“ *Hyp.* Sir, I confess my fortune's much inferior to my pretences in this lady, though indeed I'm born a gentleman; and, bating this attempt against you, which, even the last extremities of a ruined love have forced me to, ne'er yet was guilty of a deed or thought that could debase my birth: but if you knew the torments I have borne from her disdainful pride, the anxious days, the long-watched winter nights I have endured, to gain of her perhaps at last a cold relentless look, indeed you'd pity me: my heart was so entirely subdued the more she slighted me the more I loved, and as my pains increased, grew farther from cure. Her beauty struck me with that submissive awe, that when I dared to speak, my words and looks were softer than an infant's blushes; but all these pangs of my persisting passion still were vain; nor showers of tears, nor storms of sighs, could melt or move the frozen hardness of her dead compassion!

“ *D. Ph.* How very near my condition! [*Aside.*

“ *Hyp.* But yet so subtle is the flame of love, spite of her cruelty, I nourished still a secret living hope, till hearing, sir, at last she was designed your bride, despair compelled me to this bold attempt of persuading you. Her father knew not me or my unhappy love; I knew too you ne'er had seen her

“face, and therefore hoped, when I should offer to
 “repair with twice the worth the value, sir, I robbed
 “you of, begging thus low for your forgiveness; I
 “say, I hoped at least your generous heart, if ever it
 “was touched like mine, would pity my distress, and
 “pardon the necessitated wrong.

“*D. Ph.* Is't possible? hast thou then loved to
 “this unfortunate degree?

“*Hyp.* Unfortunate indeed if you are still my ri-
 “val, sir; but were you not, I'm sure you'd pity
 “me.”

D. Ph. Nay, then, I must forgive thee. [*Raising
 her.*] for I have known too well the misery not to pity
 —any thing in love.

“*Hyp.* Have you, sir, been unhappy there?

“*D. Ph.* Oh! thou hast probed a wound that
 “time or art can never heal.

“*Hyp.* O joyful sound!—[*Aside.*] Cherish that ge-
 “nerous thought, and hope from my success your
 “mistress or your fate may make you blest like me.”

D. Ph. Yet, hold—nor flatter thy fond hopes too
 far; for though I pity and forgive thee, yet I am bound
 in honour to assist thy love no farther than the justice
 of thy cause permits.

Hyp. What mean you, sir?

D. Ph. You must deter your marriage with this
 lady

“*Hyp.* Defer it! Sir, I hope it is not her you love!

“*D. Ph.* I have a nearest friend that is beloved
 “and loves her with an equal flame to yours; to him

“ my friendship will oblige me to be just, and yet in
 “ pity of thy fortune thus far I’ll be a friend to thee;
 “ give up thy title to the lady’s breath, and if her
 “ choice pronounces thee the man, I here assure thee
 “ on my honour to resign my claim, and not more
 “ partial to my friend than thee, promote thy happi-
 “ ness.

“ *Hyp.* Alas, sir! this is no relief, but certain ruin.
 “ I am too well assured she loves your friend.

“ *D. Ph.* Then you confess his claim the fairer:
 “ her loving him is a proof that he deserves her; if
 “ so, you are bound in honour to resign her.

“ *Hyp.* Alas, sir! women have fantastic tastes, that
 “ love they know not what, and hate they know not
 “ why; else, sir, why are you unfortunate?

“ *D. Ph.* I am unfortunate, but would rather die
 “ so than owe my happiness to any help but an en-
 “ during love.

“ *Hyp.* But, sir, I have endured, you see, in vain—

“ *D. Ph.* If thou’dst not have me think thy story
 “ false, thy soft pretence of love a cheat to melt me
 “ into pity, and invade my justice, yield; submit thy
 “ passion to its merit, and own I have proposed thee
 “ like a friend.”

Hyp. Sir, on my knees——

D. Ph. Expect no more from me; either comply
 this moment, or my sword shall force thee.

Hyp. Consider, sir——

D. Ph. Nay, then discover quick, tell me thy name
 and family.

Hyp. Hold, sir.

D. Ph. Speak, or thou diest. [*A noise at the door.*

Hyp. Sir, I will—Hal they are entering—O! for a moment's courage! Come on, sir!

[*She breaks from him, and draws, retiring till Don Manuel, Flora, and Trappanti, with Servants, rush in, and part them.*

D. Man. Knock him down.

"*Flo.* Part them.

"*Hyp.* Away, rascal! [*To Trap, who holds her.*

"*Trap.* Hold, sir, dear sir! hold; you have given him enough.

"*Hyp.* Dog! let me go, or I'll cut away thy hold.

"*D. Man.* Nay, dear son! hold, we'll find a better way to punish him.

"*Hyp.* Pray, sir, give me way—a villain, to assault me in the very moment of my happiness!

[*Struggling.*

"*D. Ph.* By Heaven, sir, he this moment has confessed his villany, and begged my pardon upon his knees.

"*Hyp.* D'ye hear him, sir; I beg you let me go; this is beyond bearing.

"*D. Ph.* Thou liest, villain! 'tis thy fear that holds thee."

Hyp. Ah! let me go, I say.

"*Trap.* Help, ho! I'm not able to hold him."

D. Man. Force him out of the room there; call an officer; in the mean time secure him in the cellar.

D. Ph. Hear me but one word, sir.

D. Man. Stop his mouth—Out with him.

[*They hurry him off.*]

—Come, dear son! be pacified.

Hyp. A villain!

[*Walking in a heat.*]

Flo. Why should he be concerned, now he's secure? such a rascal would but contaminate the sword of a man of honour.

D. Man. Ay, son, leave him to me and the law."

Hyp. I am sorry, sir, such a fellow should have it in his power to disturb me—But—

Enter ROSARA.

D. Man. Look; here's my daughter in a fright to see for you.

Hyp. Then I'm composed again—[*Runs to Rosara.*]

Ros. I heard fighting here; I hope you are not wounded, sir?

Hyp. I have no wound but what the priest can heal.

D. Man. Ay! well said, my little champion!

Hyp. Oh, madam, I have such a terrible escape to tell you.

Ros. Truly I began to be afraid I should lose my little husband.

Hyp. Husband, quotha! Get me but once safe out of these breeches, if ever I wear them again—

D. Man. Come, come, children, the priest stays for us.

Hyp. Sir, we wait on you.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.*Continues. Enter TRAPPANTI.**Trappanti.*

WHAT in the name of roguery can this new master of mine be? he's either a fool or bewitched, that's positive.—First he gives me fifty pieces for helping him to marry the lady, and as soon as the wedding is over, claps me twenty more into the other hand to help him to get rid of her—Nay, not only that, but gives me a strict charge to observe his directions in being evidence against him as an impostor, to refund all the lies I have told in his service; to sweep him clear out of my conscience, and now to swear the robbery against him. What the bottom of this can be, I must confess, does a little puzzle my wit—There's but one way in the world I can solve it—He must certainly have some reason to hang himself that he's ashamed to own, and so was resolved first to be married, that his friends might not wonder at the occasion. But here he comes, with his noose in his hand.

Enter HYPOLITA and ROSARA.

Hyp. Trappanti, go to Don Pedro; he has business with you.

Trap. Yes, sir.

[*Exit Trap.*

Ros. Who's Don Pedro, pray.

Hyp. Flora, madam; he knows her yet by no other name.

Ros. Well, if Don Philip does not think you deserve him, I am afraid he won't find another woman that will have him in haste.—But this last escape of yours was such a masterpiece!

Hyp. Nay, I confess, between fear and shame, I would have given my life for a ducat.

Ros. Though I wonder, when you perceived him so sensibly touched with his old passion, how you had patience to conceal yourself any longer.

Hyp. Indeed I could not easily have resisted it, but that I knew, if I had been discovered before my marriage with you, your father, to be sure, would have insisted then upon his contract with him, which I did not know how far Don Philip might be carried in point of honour to keep; I knew too his refusing it would but the more incense the old gentleman against my brother's happiness with you; and I found myself obliged, in gratitude, not to build my own upon the ruin of yours.

Ros. This is an obligation I never could deserve.

Hyp. Your assistance, madam, in my affair has overpaid it."

Ros. What's become of Don Philip? I hope you have not kept him prisoner all this while?

Hyp. Oh, he'll be released presently; Flora has her orders.—Where's your father, madam?

Ros. I saw him go towards his closet; I believe

he's gone to fetch you part of my fortune—he seemed in mighty good humour.

Hyp. We must be sure to keep it up as high as we can, that he may be the more stunned when he falls.

Ros. With all my heart: methinks I am possessed with the very spirit of disobedience—Now could I, in the humour I am in, consent to any mischief that would but heartily plague my old gentleman, “for daring to be better than his word to Octavio.”

Hyp. And if we don't plague him—But here he comes.

Enter Don MANUEL.

D. Man. Ah, my little conqueror! let me embrace thee!—That ever I should live to see this day!—this most triumphant day! this day of all days in my life!

Hyp. Ay, and of my life too, sir. [*Embracing him.*]

D. Man. Ay, my cares are over—now I have nothing to do but to think of the other world, for I've done all my business in this; got as many children as I could, and now I'm grown old, have set a young couple to work that will do it better.

Hyp. I warrant ye, sir, you'll soon see whether your daughter has married a man or no.

D. Man. Ah, well said! and that you may never be out of humour with your business, look you here, children, I have brought you some baubles that will

make you merry as long as you live; twelve thousand pistoles are the least value of them; the rest of your fortune shall be paid in the best Barbary gold to-morrow morning.

Hyp. Ay, sir, this is speaking like a father! this is encouragement indeed!

D. Man. Much good may do thy heart and soul with them—and Heaven bless you together!—I have had a great deal of care and trouble to bring it about, children, but thank my stars 'tis over—'tis over now—now I may sleep with my doors open, and never have my slumbers broken with the fear of rogues and rivals.

Ros. Don't interrupt him, and see how far his humour will carry him. [To *Hyp.*

D. Man. But there is no joy lasting in this world; we must all die, when we have done our best, sooner or later; old or young, prince or peasant, high or low, kings, lords, and—common whores, must die! nothing certain; we are forced to buy one comfort with the loss of another. Now I have married my child, I have lost my companion—I have parted with my girl—her heart's gone another way now—She'll forget her old father—I shall never have her wake me more, like a cheerful lark, with her pretty songs in a morning—I shall have nobody to chat at dinner with me now, or take up a godly book, and read me to sleep in an afternoon. Ah! these comforts are all gone now. [Weeps.]

Hyp. How very near the extreme of one part of it

to another! Now he is tired with joy till he is downright melancholy.

Ros. What's the matter, sir?

D. Man. Ay, my child! now it comes to the test, methinks I don't know how to part with thee.

Ros. Oh, sir! we shall be better friends than ever.

D. Man. Uh, uh! shall we? wilt thou come and see the old man now and then? Well, Heaven bless thee! give me a kiss—I must kiss thee at parting: be a good girl, use thy husband well, make an obedient wife, and I shall die contented.

Hyp. Die, sir! Come, come, you have a great while to live—Hang these melancholy thoughts! they are the worst company in the world at a wedding—Consider, sir, we are young; if you would oblige us, let us have a little life and mirth, a jubilee to-day at least: stir your servants; call in your neighbours; let me see your whole family mad for joy, sir.

D. Man. Ha! shall we! shall we be merry then?

Hyp. Merry, sir! ay, as beggars at a feast. What! shall a dull Spanish custom tell me, when I am the happiest man in the kingdom, I sha'n't be as mad as I have a mind to? Let me see the face of nothing to-day but revels, friends, feasts, and music, sir.

D. Man. Ah! thou shalt have thy humour—thou shalt have thy humour! Hey, within there! rogues! dogs! slaves! where are my rascals? Ah, my joy flows again—I can't bear it.

Enter several Servants.

Serv. Did you call, sir?

D. Man. Call, sir! ay, sir. What's the reason you are not all out of your wits, sir!—don't you know that your young mistress is married, scoundrels?

1st. Serv. Yes, sir; and we are all ready to be mad as soon as your honour will please to give any distracted orders.

Hyp. You see, sir, they only want a little encouragement.

D. Man. Ah, there shall be nothing wanting this day, if I were sure to beg for it all my life after—Here, sirrah, cook! look into the Roman history, see what Mark Antony had for supper when Cleopatra first treated him *cher entiere*: rogue, let me have a repast that will be six times as expensive and provoking—Go.

2d. Serv. It shall be done, sir.

D. Man. And, d'ye hear? one of you step to Monsieur Vendevin, the king's butler, for the same wine that his majesty reserves for his own drinking; tell him he shall have his price for it.

1st. Serv. How much will you please to have, sir?

D. Man. Too much, sir; I'll have every thing on the outside of enough to day. Go you, sirrah, run to the theatre, and detach me a regiment of fiddlers, and singers, and dancers; and you, sir, to my nephew, Don Louis, give my service, and bring all his family along with him.

Hyp. Ay, sir, this is as it should be; now it begins to look like a wedding.

D. Man. Ah, we'll make all the hair in the world stand an end at our joy.

Hyp. Here comes Flora—Now, madam, observe your cue.

Enter FLORA.

Flo. Your servant gentlemen—I need not wish you joy—You have it I see—Don Philip, I must needs speak with you.

Hyp. Psha! Pr'ythee don't plague me with business at such a time as this.

Flo. My business won't be deferred, sir.

Hyp. Sir!

Flo. I suppose you guess it, sir; and I must tell you, I take it ill it was not done before.

Hyp. What d'ye mean?

Flo. Your ear, sir.

[*They whisper.*]

D. Man. What's the matter now, trow?

Ros. The gentleman seems very free, methinks.

D. Man. Troth, I don't like it.

Ros. Don't disturb them, sir—We shall know all presently.

Hyp. But what have you done with Don Philip?

Flo. I drew the servants out of the way while he made his escape; I saw him very busy in the street with Octavio and another gentleman; Trappanti dogged them, and brings me word they just now went into the Corrigidore's in the next street—therefore what we do, we must do quickly. Come, come, put on your fighting face, and I'll be with them presently.

[*Aside.*]

Hyp. [*Aloud.*] Sir, I have offered you very fair; if you don't think so, I have married the lady, and take your course.

Flo. Sir, our contract was a full third; a third part's my right, and I'll have it, sir.

D. Man. Hey!

Hyp. Then I must tell you, sir, since you are pleased to call it your right, you shall not have it.

Flo. Not, sir!

Hyp. No, sir!—Look ye, don't put on your pert airs to me—'gad I shall use you very scurvily.

Flo. Use me!—You little son of a whore, draw.

Hyp. Oh, sir, I am for you.

[*They fight, and D. Man. interposes.*]

Ros. Ah, help! murder! [*Runs out.*]

D. Man. Within there! help! murder!—Why, gentlemen, are ye mad? pray, put up.

Hyp. A rascal!

D. Man. Friends and quarrel? for shame!

Flo. Friends! I scorn his friendship; and since he does not know how to use a gentleman, I'll do a public piece of justice, and use him like a villain.

Hyp. Let me go.

D. Man. Better words, sir. [*To Flo.*]

Flo. Why, sir, do ye take this fellow for Don Philip?

D. Man. What do ye mean, sir?

Flo. That he has cheated me as well as you—but I'll have my revenge immediately. [*Exit Flo.*]

[*Hyp. walks about, and D. Man. stares.*]

D. Man. Hey! what's all this?—what is it—my heart misgives me.

Hyp. Hey! who waits there? Here you! [*To a servant.*] bid my servant run, and hire me a coach and four horses immediately.

Serv. Yes, sir.

[*Exit Serv.*]

D. Man. A coach!

Enter VILETTA.

Vil. Sir, sir! bless me! what's the matter, sir? are you not well?

D. Man. Yes, yes—I am—that is—hah!

Vil. I have brought you a letter, sir.

D. Man. What business can he have for a coach?

Vil. I have brought you a letter, sir, from Octavio.

D. Man. To me?

Vil. No, sir, to my mistress—he charged me to deliver it immediately, for he said it concerned her life and fortune.

D. Man. How! let's see it—There's what I promised thee—begone. What can this be now! [*Reads.*]

'The person whom your father ignorantly designs you to marry, is a known cheat, and an impostor; the true Don Philip, who is my intimate friend, will immediately appear with the Corrigidore, and fresh evidence against him. I thought this advice, though from one you hate, would be well received, if it came time enough to prevent your ruin. OCTAVIO.'

Oh, my heart! this letter was not designed to fall

into my hands—I am affrighted—I dare not think on't.

Re-enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, your man is not within.

Hyp. Careless rascal, to be out of the way when my life's at stake—Pr'ythee, do thou go and see if thou canst get me any post-horses.

D. Man. Post horses!

Enter ROSARA.

Ros. Oh, dear sir, what was the matter?

D. Man. Hey!—

Ros. What made them quarrel, sir?

D. Man. Child!—

Ros. What was it about, sir?—You look concerned.

D. Man. Concerned!

Ros. I hope you are not hurt, sir. [*To Hyp. who minds her not.*]—What's the matter with him, sir? he won't speak to me.

[*To D. Man.*

D. Man. A—speak!—a—go to him again—try what fair words will do, and see if you can pick out the meaning of all this.

Ros. Dear sir! what's the matter? [*To Hyp.*

D. Man. Ay, sir, pray what's the matter?

Hyp. I'm a little vexed at my servant's being out of the way, and the insolence of this other rascal.

D. Man. But what occasion have you for post-horses, sir?

Hyp. Something happens a little cross, sir.

D. Man. Pray, what is it ?

Hyp. I'll tell you another time, sir.

D. Man. Another time, sir !—pray, satisfy me now.

Hyp. Lord, sir ! when you see a man out of humour.

D. Man. Sir, it may be I'm as much out of humour as you ; and I must tell ye I don't like your behaviour, and I'm resolved to be satisfied.

Hyp. Sir, what is it you'd have ? [*Peevishly.*]

D. Man. Look ye, sir—in short—I—I have received a letter.

Hyp. Well, sir.

D. Man. I wish it may be well, sir.

Hyp. Bless me, sir ! what's the matter with you ?

D. Man. Matter, sir !—in troth, I'm almost afraid and ashamed to tell ye—but if you must needs know—there's the matter, sir. [*Gives the letter.*]

Enter Don LOUIS.

D. Lou. Uncle, I am your humble servant.

D. Man. I am glad to see you, nephew.

D. Lou. I received your invitation, and am come to pay my duty ; but here I met with the most surprising news.

D. Man. Pray, what is it ?

D. Lou. Why, first your servant told me my young cousin was to be married to-day, to Don Philip de las Torres ; and just as I was entering your doors who should I meet but Don Philip, with the Corrigi-

dore and several witnesses, to prove, it seems, that the person whom you were just going to marry my cousin to, has usurped his name, betrayed you, robbed him, and is in short a rank impostor!

Hyp. So, now it's come home to him.

D. Man. Dear nephew! don't torture me. Are ye sure you know Don Philip when you see him?

D. Lou. Know him, sir! were we not school-fellows, fellow-collegians, and fellow-travellers?

D. Man. But are you sure you may not have forgot him, neither?

D. Lou. You might as well ask me if I had not forgot you, sir.

D. Man. But one question more, and I am dumb for ever—is that he?

D. Lou. That, sir! no, nor in the least like him—But, pray, why this concern? I hope we are not come too late to prevent the marriage?

D. Man. Oh, oh, oh, oh! my poor child!

Ros. Oh! [Seems to faint.]

Enter VILETTA.

Vil. What's the matter, sir?

D. Man. Ah! look to my child.

D. Lou. Is this the villain, then, that has imposed on you?

Hyp. Sir, I'm this lady's husband, and while I'm sure that name can't be taken from me, I shall be contented with laughing at any other you or your party dare give me.

D. Man. Oh!

D. Lou. Nay then, within there!—such a villain ought to be made an example.

Enter Corrigidore and Officers, with DON PHILIP, OCTAVIO, FLORA, and TRAPPANTI.

Oh gentlemen, we're undone! all comes too late! my poor cousin's married the impostor!

D. Ph. How!

OA. Confusion!

D. Man. Oh, oh!

D. Ph. That's the person, sir, and I demand your justice.

OA. And I.

Flo. And all of us.

D. Man. Will my cares never be over?

Cor. Well, gentlemen, let me rightly understand what 'tis you charge him with, and I'll commit him immediately—First, sir, you say these gentlemen all know you to be the true Don Philip?

D. Lou. That, sir, I presume, my oath will prove.

OA. Or mine.

Flo. And mine.

Trap. Ay, and mine too, sir.

D. Man. Where shall I hide this shameful head?

Flo. And for the robbery, that I can prove upon him; he confessed to me at Toledo he stole this gentleman's portmanteau there to carry on his design upon this lady, and agreed to give me a third part of her fortune for my assistance, which he refusing

to pay as soon as the marriage was over, I thought myself obliged in honour to discover him.

Hyp. Well, gentlemen, you may insult me if you please; but I presume you'll hardly be able to prove that I'm not married to the lady, or have not the best part of her fortune in my pocket; so do your worst; I own my ingenuity, and am proud on't.

D. Man. Ingenuity, abandoned villain!—But, sir, before you send him to gaol I desire he may return the jewels I gave him as part of my daughter's portion.

Cor. That can't be, sir—since he has married the lady her fortune's lawfully his. All we can do is to prosecute him for robbing this gentleman.

D. Man. Oh that ever I was born!

Hyp. Return the jewels, sir! If you don't pay me the rest of her fortune to-morrow morning you may chance to go to gaol before me.

D. Man. Oh that I were buried! will my cares never be over?

Hyp. They are pretty near, it, sir; you can't have much more to trouble you.

Cor. Come, sir, if you please, I must desire to take your affidavit in writing. [*Goes to the table with Flora.*]

D. Ph. Now, sir, you see what your own rashness has brought ye to. “How shall I be stared at when I give an account of this to my father, or your friends in Seville; you'll be the public jest; your understanding or your folly will be the mirth of every table.”

D. Man. Pray forbear, sir.

Hyp. Keep it up, madam. [*Aside to Ros.*]

Ros. Oh, sir! how wretched have you made me! Is this the care you have taken of me for my blind obedience to your commands? this my reward for filial duty?

D. Man. Ah, my poor child!

Ros. But I deserve it all for ever listening to your barbarous proposal, when my conscience might have told me my vows and person, in justice and honour, were the wronged Octavio's.

D. Man. Oh, oh!

Os. Can she repent her falsehood then at last? Is't possible? then I'm wounded too! Oh, my poor undone Rosara! [*Goes to her.*] Ungrateful! cruel! perjured man! "how canst thou bear to see the light
"after this heap of ruin thou hast raised, by tearing
"thus asunder the most solemn vows of plighted
"love?"

D. Man. Oh, don't insult me; I deserve the worst you can say—I'm a miserable wretch, and I repent me.

"*Os.* Repent! canst thou believe whole years of
"sorrow will atone thy crime? no; groan on, sigh
"and weep away thy life to come, and when the stings
"and horrors of thy conscience have laid thy tortured
"body in the grave—then, then—as thou dost me,
"when it is too late, I'll pity thee."

Vil. So! here's the lady in tears, the lover in rage, the old gentleman out of his senses, most of the com-

pany distracted, and the bridegroom in a fair way to be hanged—the merriest wedding that ever I saw in my life. [To Hyp.

Cor. Well, sir, have you any thing to say before I make your warrant?

Hyp. A word or two, and I obey ye, sir.—Gentlemen, I have reflected on the folly of my action, and foresee the disquiets I am like to undergo in being this lady's husband; therefore, as I own myself the author of all this seeming ruin and confusion, so I am willing (desiring first the officers may withdraw) to offer something to the general quiet.

Off. What can this mean?

D. Ph. Psha! some new contrivance—Let's begone.

D. Lou. Stay a moment; it can be no harm to hear him—Sir, will you oblige us?

Cor. Wait without— [Exeunt Officers.

Vil. What's to be done now, trow?

Trap. Some smart thing I warrant ye: the little gentleman hath a notable head, faith!

Flo. Nay, gentlemen, thus much I know of him, that if you can but persuade him to be honest, 'tis still in his power to make you all amends, and in my opinion 'tis high time he should propose it.

D. Man. Ay, 'tis time he were hanged, indeed, for I know no other amends he can make us.

Hyp. Then I must tell you, sir, I owe you no reparation; the injuries which you complain of, your sordid avarice and breach of promise here have justly

brought upon you.—“ Had you, as you were obliged,
 “ in conscience and in nature, first given your daugh-
 “ ter with your heart, she had now been honourably
 “ happy, and, if any, I the only miserable person
 “ here.

“ *D. Lou.* He talks reason.

“ *D. Ph.* I don't think him in the wrong there,
 “ indeed.”

Hyp. Therefore, sir, if you are injured you may
 thank yourself for it.

D. Man. Nay, dear sir—I do confess my blindness,
 and could heartily wish your eyes or mine had dropped
 out of our heads before ever we saw one another.

Hyp. Well, sir, (however little you have deserved
 it) yet, for your daughter's sake, if you'll oblige your-
 self by signing this paper to keep your first promise,
 and give her with her full fortune to this gentleman,
 I'm still content, on that condition, to disannul my
 own pretences, and resign her.

“ *Oct.* Ha! what says he?

“ *D. Lou.* This is strange!”

D. Man. Sir, I don't know how to answer you, for
 I can never believe you'll have good nature enough
 to hang yourself out of the way to make room for
 him.

Hyp. Then, sir, to let you see I have not only an
 honest meaning but an immediate power to make good
 my word, I first renounce all title to her fortune;
 these jewels which I received from you I give him

free possession of; and now, sir, the rest of her fortune you owe him with her person.

“*Os.* I am all amazement!

“*D. Lou.* What can this end in?

“*D. Ph.* I am surprised, indeed!”

D. Man. This is unaccountable, I must confess—
But still, sir, if you disannul your pretences, how you'll persuade that gentleman, to whom I am obliged to contract, to part with his——

D. Ph. That, sir, shall be no let; I am too well acquainted with the virtue of my friend's title to entertain a thought that can disturb it.

Hyp. “Then my fears are over.” [*Aside.*] Now, sir, it only stops at you,

D. Man. Well, sir, I see the paper is only conditional, and since the general welfare is concerned I won't refuse to lend you my helping hand to it; but if you should not make your words good, sir, I hope you won't take it ill if a man should poison you?

D. Ph. And, sir, let me too warn you how you execute this promise; your flattery and dissembled penitence has deceived me once already, which makes me, I confess, a little slow in my belief; therefore, take heed, expect no second mercy; for, be assured of this, I never can forgive a villain.

Hyp. If I am proved one spare me not—I ask but this—Use me as you find me.

D. Ph. That you may depend on.

D. Man. There, sir. [*Gives Hyp. the writing signed Ros.* Now I tremble for her.

[*Aside.*

Hyp. And now, Don Philip, I confess you are the only injured person here.

D. Ph. I know not that—do my friend right and I shall easily forgive thee.

Hyp. His pardon, with his thanks, I am sure I shall deserve; but how shall I forgive myself? Is there in nature left a means that can repair the shameful slights, the insults, and the long disquiets you have known from love?

D. Ph. Let me understand thee.

Hyp. Examine well your heart; and if the fierce resentment of its wrongs has not extinguished quite the usual soft compassion there, revive at least one spark, in pity of my woman's weakness.

“*D. Man.* How! a woman!

“*D. Ph.* Whither wouldst thou carry me?

“*Hyp.* Not but I know you generous as the heart
“of Love; yet let me doubt if even this low sub-
“mission can deserve your pardon—Don't look on
“me: I cannot bear that you should know me yet.”

—The extravagant attempt I have this day run through, to meet you thus justly, may subject me to your contempt and scorn, unless the same forgiving goodness that used to overlook the failings of Hypolita prove still my friend, and soften all with the excuse of love.

“*Os.* My sister! Oh, Rosara! Philip!”

[*All seem amazed.*

D. Ph. Oh, stop this vast effusion of my transported thoughts! “ere my offending wishes break

“their prison through my eyes, and surfeit on for-
 “bidden hopes again: or if my tears are false, if
 “your relenting heart is touched at last in pity of my
 “enduring love, be kind at once, speak on, and
 “awake me to the joy, while I have sense to hear
 “you.

Hyp. “Nay, then I am subdued indeed! Is it
 “possible, ’spite of my follies, still your generous
 “heart can love? ’Tis so! your eyes confess it, and
 “my fears are dead.—Why then should I blush, to
 “let at once the honest fullness of my heart gush
 “forth?”

Oh, Philip! Hypolita is—yours for ever.

[*They advance slowly, and at last rush into one
 anothers arms.*]

D. Ph. “Oh, ecstasy! distracting joy!—Do I then
 “live to call you mine? Is there an end at last of
 “my repeated pangs, my sighs, my torments, and
 “my rejected vows? is it possible—is it she?—Oh,
 “let me view thee thus with aching eyes, and feed
 “my eager sense upon the transport of thy love
 “confessed! What, kind! and yet,” *it is, it is*
 Hypolita! and yet ’tis she! I know her by the busy
 pulses at my heart, which only love like mine can
 feel, and she alone can give. [*Eagerly embracing her.*]

“*Hyp.* Now, Philip, you may insult our sex’s
 “pride, for I confess you have subdued it all in me;
 “I plead no merit but my knowing yours: I own the
 “weakness of my boasted power, and now am only
 “proud of my humility.

“ *D. Ph.* Oh, never! never shall thy empire
 “ cease! 'Tis not in thy power to give thy power
 “ away: this last surprise of generous love has
 “ bound me to thy heart, a poor indebted wretch for
 “ ever.

“ *Hyp.* No more; the rest the priest should say—
 “ But now our joys grow rude—Here are our friends
 “ that must be happy too.

“ *D. Ph.* Louis! Octavio! my brother now! oh,
 “ forgive the hurry of a transported heart.”

D. Man. A woman! and Octavio's sister!

“ *Oct.* That heart that does not feel, as 'twere its
 “ own, a joy like this ne'er yet confessed the power
 “ of friendship nor of love.” [*Embracing him.*]

D. Man. Have I then been pleased, and plagued,
 and frighted out of my wits by a woman all this
 while? Odsbud! she is a notable contriver! Stand
 clear, ho! for if I have not a fair brush at her lips,
 nay, if she does not give me the hearty smack too,
 odswinds and thunder! she is not the good humoured
 girl I took her for.

Hyp. Come, sir, I won't baulk your good humour.
 [*He kisses her.*] And now I have a favour to beg of
 you: you remember your promise; only your bles-
 sing here, sir. [*Octavio and Rosara kneel.*]

D. Man. Ah, I can deny thee nothing; and since
 I find thou art not fit for my girl's business thyself,
 Odzooks! it shall never be done out of the family—
 and so, children, Heaven bless you together!—Come,
 I'll give you her hand myself, you know the way to

her heart; and as soon as the priest has said grace, he shall toss you the rest of her body into the bargain.—And now my cares are over again.

Oct. We'll study to deserve your love, sir.—Oh, Rosara!

Ros. Now, Octavio, do you believe I loved you better than the person I was to marry?

Oct. Kind creature! you were in her secret then?

Ros. I was, and she in mine.

Oct. Sister! what words can thank you?

Hyp. Any that tell me of Octavio's happiness.

D. Ph. My friend successful too! then my joys are double.—But how this generous attempt was started first; how it has been pursued, and carried with this kind surprise at last, gives me wonder equal to my joy.

Hyp. Here is one that at more leisure shall inform you all: she was ever a friend to your love, has had a hearty share in the fatigue, and now I am bound in honour to give her part of the garland too.

D. Ph. How! she!

Flo. Trusty Flora, sir, at your service. I have had many a battle with my lady upon your account; but I always told her we should do her business at last.

D. Man. Another metamorphosis! Brave girls, faith! 'Odzooks! we shall have them make campaigns shortly!

D. Ph. "Take this as earnest of my thanks;" in Seville I'll provide for thee.

Hyp. Nay, here's another accomplice too, confe-

derate I can't say, for honest Trappanti did not know but that I was as great a rogue as himself.

Trap. It's a folly to lie; I did not indeed, madam—But the world cannot say I have been a rogue to your ladyship—and if you had not parted with your money——

Hyp. Thou hadst not parted with thy honesty.

Trap. Right, madam; but how should a poor naked fellow resist when he had so many pistoles held against him. [*Shews money.*]

D. Man. Ay, ay, well said, lad.

Vil. La! a tempting bate indeed! Let him offer to marry me again if he dares. [*Aside.*]

D. Ph. Well, Trappanti, thou hast been serviceable however, and I'll think of thee.

Os. Nay, I am his debtor too.

Trap. Ah, there's a very easy way, gentlemen, to reward me; and since you partly owe your happiness to my roguery, I should be very proud to owe mine only to your generosity.

Os. As how, pray?

Trap. Why, sir, I find by my constitution that it is as natural to be in love as an hungry, and that I ha'n't a jot less stomach than the best of my betters; and though I have often thought a wife but dining every day upon the same dish, yet methinks it's better than no dinner at all: and, for my part, I had rather have no stomach to my meat than no meat to my stomach: upon which consideration, gentlemen and ladies, I desire you'll use your interest with Madona here—— to let me dine at her ordinary.

D. Man. A pleasant rogue, faith! 'Odzooks! the jade shall have him. Come, hussy, he's an ingenious person.

Vil. Sir, I don't understand his stuff; when he speaks plain, I know what to say to him.

Trap. Why then, in plain terms, let me a lease of your tenement—marry me.

Vil. Ay, now you say something—I was afraid, by what you said in the garden, you had only a mind to be a wicked tenant at will.

Trap. No, no, child, I have no mind to be turned out at a quarter's warning.

Vil. Well, there's my hand—and now meet me as soon as you will with a canonical lawyer, and I'll give you possession of the rest of the premises.

D. Man. 'Odzooks! and well thought of; I'll send for one presently. Hear you, sirrah, run to Father Benedict again, tell him his work don't hold here, his last marriage is dropped to pieces, but now we have got better tackle, he must come and stitch two or three fresh couple together as fast as he can.

“ *Enter Servant.*

“ *Serv.* Sir, the music's come.

“ *D. Man.* Ah, they could never take us in a better time—let them enter—Ladies, and sons and daughters, for I think you are all akin to me now, will you be pleased to sit? [*After the Entertainment.*

“ *D. Man.* Come, gentlemen, now our collation waits.

“ Enter Servant.

“ Serv. Sir, the priest's come.”

“ D. Man. That's well; we'll dispatch him presently.”

D. Ph. Now, my Hypolita,

*Let our example teach mankind to love,
From thine the fair their favours may improve;
To the quick pains you give our joys we owe,
Till those we feel these we can never know.
But warn'd with honest hope from my success,
Ev'n in the height of all its miseries,
Oh, never let a virtuous mind despair,
For constant hearts are Loves peculiar care.*

[Exeunt Omnes.]

EPILOGUE.

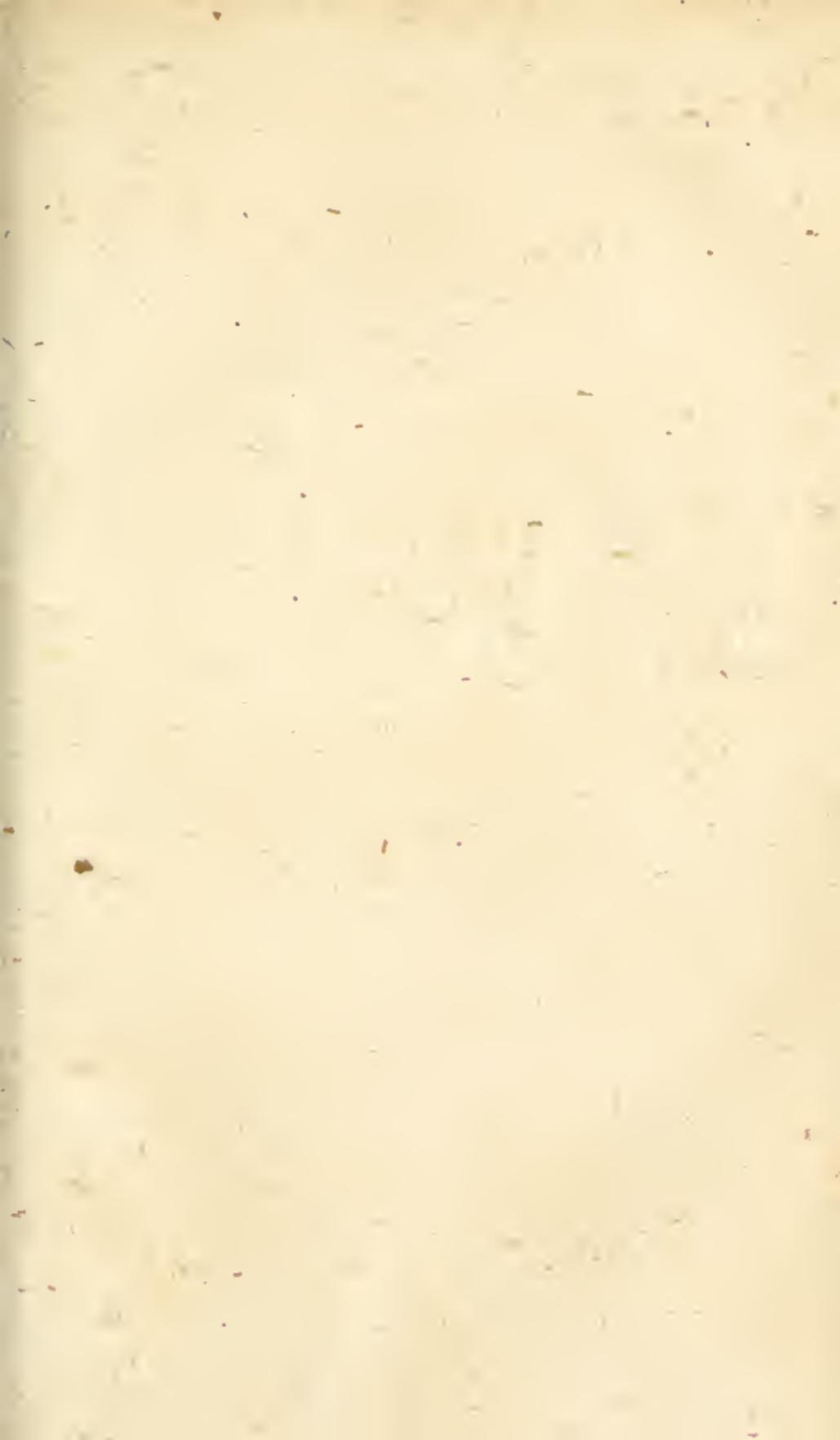
'*MONGST* all the rules the Ancients had in vogue,
We find no mention of an Epilogue,
Which plainly shows they're innovations, brought
Since rules, design, and nature, were forgot;
The custom therefore our next Play shall break,
But now a joyful motive bids us speak;
For while our arms return with conquest home,
While children prattle *Vigo* and the boom,
Is't fit the mouth of all mankind, the Stage, be dumb?
While the proud Spaniards read old annals o'er,
And on the leaves in lazy safety pore,
Essex and *Raleigh* thunder on their shore;
Again their Donships start and mend their speed,
With the same fear of their forefathers dead.
While *Amadis de Gaul* laments in vain,
And wishes his young *Quixote* out of Spain:
While foreign forts are but beheld and seiz'd,
While English hearts tumultuously are pleas'd,
Shall we, whose sole subsistence purely flows
From minds in joy or undisturb'd repose,
Shall we behold each face with pleasure glow,
Unthankful to the arms that made them so?
Shall we not say——
Old English honour now revives again
Mem'rably fatal to the pride of Spain,

But hold——

*While Anne repeats the vengeance of Eliza's reign!
For to the glorious conduct sure that drew
A Senate's grateful vote our adoration's due;
From that alone all other thanks are poor,
Tho' old triumphing Romans ask'd no more,
And Rome indeed gave all within its power.
But your superior stars, that know too well
You English heroes should old Rome's excel,
To crown your arms beyond the bribes of spoil
Rais'd English beauty to reward your toil:
Tho' seiz'd of all the rifled world had lost
So fair a circle [To the Boxes] Rome could never
boast.*

*Proceed, auspicious Chiefs! inflame the war,
Pursue your conquest, and possess the fair,
That ages may record of them and you
They only could inspire what you alone could do.*

THE END.







De Wilde pinx!

Levey sculpsit.

*M^{rs} ESTEN as LADY FLUTTER,
Then I'll stay to vex you.*

London. Printed for J. Bell British Library Strand March 30. 1793.

THE DISCOVERY.

A

COMEDY,

By Mrs. FRANCES SHERIDAN.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

“ The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.”

LONDON :

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JOHN BELL, *British-Library, STRAND,*
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MDCCXCII.



THE DISCOVERY

WAS the work of Mrs. FRANCES SHERIDAN, an author of very exquisite talents, from which, no doubt, in some measure, are derived the abilities, yet more extraordinary, of her son. Indeed this family has been remarkable for very great genius in most of its branches.

The DISCOVERY is rather a novel than a comedy—it has no incident that can surprise, and the dialogue is languid, and the sentences loose—they have none of the terse manner so necessary for the stage.

Yet talents like those of the author, applied even to a pursuit unfavourable for their exertion, leave some stamp of their value. The design of that “maiden “man at arms,” Sir ANTHONY BRANVILLE, who treats a woman like a divinity, is excellent:—

*Ling'ring, he loves, from listless day to day,
And puffs his flame of sentiment away.*

The FLUTTERS are also well imagined, and worked up with more comic effect than the rest of the comedy.

PROLOGUE.

*A Female culprit at your bar appears,
Not destitute of hope, nor free from fears.
Her utmost crime she's ready to confess,
A simple trespass—neither more nor less;
For, truant-like, she rambled out of bounds,
And dar'd to venture on poetic grounds.*

*The fault is deem'd high treason by the men,
Those lordly tyrants who usurp the pen!
Then try the vile monopoly to hide
With flattering arts,—“ You, ladies, have beside
“ So many ways to conquer—sure, 'tis fit
“ You leave to us that dangerous weapon, wit!”
For women, like state criminals, they think,
Should be debarr'd the use of pen and ink.*

*Our author, who disclaims such partial laws,
To her own sex appeals to judge her cause.
She pleads old magna charta on her side,
That British subjects by their peers be try'd.*

*Ladies, to you she dedicates her lays,
Assert your right to censure or to praise;
Nor doubt a sentence by such lips decreed,
Firm as the laws of Persian or of Mede:
Boldly your will in open court declare,
And let the men dispute it if they dare!*

*Our humble scenes no charms of art can boast,
But simple nature, and plain sense at most :
Perhaps some character—a moral too—
And, what is stranger still—the story's new :
No borrow'd thoughts throughout the piece are shewn,
But what our author writes is all her own.*

*By no sly hint, or incident, she tries
To bid on modest cheeks the blush arise :
The loosest thoughts our decent scenes suggest,
Virtue herself might harbour in her breast ;
And where our harmless satire vents its spleen,
The soberest prude may laugh without a screen.
But not to mirth alone we claim your ear,
Some tender scenes demand the melting tear ;
The comic dame, her different powers to prove,
Gives you the dear variety you love ;
Sometimes assumes her graver sister's art,
Borrows her form, and tries to touch the heart.
But fancy's pictures float upon the brain,
And short-liv'd o'er the heart is passion's reign ;
Till judgement stamp her sanction on the whole,
And sink th' impression deep into the soul.*

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

Lord MEDWAY, - - - - - Mr. Aickin.
Sir ANTHONY BRANVILLE, - - - Mr. Henderson.
Sir HARRY FLUTTER, - - - - - Mr. Lewis.
Colonel MEDWAY, *son to Lord Medway,* Mr. Wroughton.

Women.

Lady MEDWAY, - - - - - Mrs. Webb.
Lady FLUTTER, *niece to Sir Anthony,* Mrs. Abington,
Mrs. KNIGHTLY, *a young Widow,* - Mrs. Mattocks.
Miss RICHLY, *her sister,* - - - - - Mrs. S. Kemble.
LOUISA, *daughter to Lord Medway,* - Miss Morris.



THE DISCOVERY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Library. Lord MEDWAY reading at a Table. Enter Lady MEDWAY.

Lord Medway.

How's this, madam? pursue me into my study? my sanctuary? I thought this place, at least, was to be considered by your ladyship as inviolable.

Lady Med. I hope I don't interrupt you, my dear.

Lord Med. I should be glad, Lady Medway, that we remember'd our respective bounds; I never intrude at your tea-table, or toilet; and I desire my hours of retirement may be held as sacred by you.

Lady Med. I beg your pardon, my lord, but indeed you have made me so exceedingly unhappy, by this sudden resolution you have taken, in regard to marrying your daughter, that I can find rest no where.

“ *Lord Med.* And so you are come, like the evil
“ spirit, to take possession of me, in order to make

“ me as restless as yourself. I am really extremely
 “ obliged to your ladyship; but you must know,
 “ ma’am, I am of so strange a disposition, that I have
 “ an absolute dislike to the being made uneasy;
 “ and therefore shall take it as a favour, if you will
 “ either at once cheerfully acquiesce in what I have
 “ determined, or else go, and display your plaintive
 “ eloquence to some one better disposed to sympa-
 “ thise with you than I am.

“ *Lady Med.* My lord, you know your will has ever
 “ been a law to me; but I beg of you to consider the
 “ cruelty of forcing young people to marry against
 “ their inclinations.”

Lord Med. Madam, I did not expect this idle oppo-
 sition from you, especially when you know my mo-
 tives to this marriage.

Lady Med. My lord, you have not yet explained
 them to me; I can only guess at large.

Lord Med. You know I am harrassed with debts,
 and I now tell you, I don’t know where to raise five
 hundred pounds more, if it would save me from per-
 dition; and pray, let me ask your ladyship, do you
 know any one besides Sir Anthony Branville, who
 will take your daughter without a fortune? for I nei-
 ther am, nor probably ever shall be, able to give her
 one.

Lady Med. But Louisa is very young, my lord;
 why need we be so precipitate? Besides, if this match
 between Mrs. Knightly and your son should take

place, it will then be in your power to provide for your daughter.

Lord Med. Right woman!—a hint is but just started, and you pursue, run it down, and seize it at once. I have not yet proposed the thing to my son. Perhaps he may not like the lady when I do; and I presume you will think his inclinations as proper to be consulted as those of the young lady his sister.

Lady Med. Certainly, my lord.

Lord Med. Oh, no doubt on't; love-matches against the world! "All you ladies, in this particular, are very ready to adhere to that Christian precept, of doing as you would be done by:" and so I suppose, you, out of your maternal fondness, would recommend it to me to let miss please herself in the choice of a husband, as her mama did before her.

Lady Med. That reproach from you, my lord, is not kind—but I do not desire you to let her please herself in choosing one she likes, only do not force her to take one she hates.

Lord Med. Has she told you that she hates Sir Anthony?

Lady Med. Not in express words; but the repugnance she shews—

Lord Med. Perhaps she loves some one else.

Lady Med. To tell you the truth, my lord, I believe she does.

Lord Med. And she has made you the confidant of her tender passion.

Lady Med. I extorted something like a confession of this sort from her.'

Lord Med. And pray, who may be the happy man?

Lady Med. Young Branville, Sir Anthony's nephew, who is now on his travels, and is expected every day home.

Lord Med. A forward little gipsey—"This is the
 "curse of marrying early, to have our children tug-
 "ging at our purse-strings, at a time when we have
 "as quick a relish for the joys of life as they have,
 "and ten times a better capacity for pursuing them."
 —Look'ye, madam, I cannot give her a shilling; Sir
 Anthony is ready to take her as she is; and if they
 should have a family, is able to provide liberally for
 them all. On the contrary, if she follows her own
 soft inclinations, in marrying Mr. Branville, I suppose,
 in three or four years, I should have the pleasure of
 seeing myself a grand papa to two or three pretty lit-
 tle beggars, who, between their mother's vanity, and
 their father's poverty, may happen to continue so all
 their lives.

Lady Med. But, my lord, as Sir Anthony has sent
 his nephew abroad at his own expence, it looks as if
 he meant to do something handsome for him: be-
 sides, he is his uncle's heir, in case he should die with-
 out children by marriage.

Lord Med. And so you think you can keep him in
 a state of celibacy, by refusing him your daughter
 —Oh fye, Lady Medway, I never heard you argue
 so weakly. Sir Anthony is not yet past the prime of
 life; besides, he has owned to me that it was his be-
 ing discarded by Mrs. Knightly, which made him re-
 solve, at once in a sort of pique, to marry the first girl

that fell in his way; birth and reputation being all the fortune he desired with her. A man thus circumstanced is very little likely to continue a bachelor—No, no; I'll take him in the humour, and secure him while I may.

Lady Med. Before it be too late, my lord, let me once more beseech you to reflect on the misery of a married life, where on either side love or esteem is wanting. Have we not a glaring instance of this in the house with us, in Sir Harry Flutter and his wife? are they not as wretched a pair as ever met in wedlock, perpetually quarrelling! I own, I almost repent my invitation to them, and wish them fairly back again in the country.

Lord Med. That must not be. [*Aside.*] You have made a very unlucky choice in your example, ma'am; a foolish boy, and a giddy girl, that know not either of them what they would be at. He married the wife his mother chose for him, to get rid of his tutor; and she took the husband her wise father provided for her, to escape from a boarding-school. What can be expected from two such simpletons? He, proud of the authority of a husband, exercises it from the same principle, and with pretty much the same capacity, that children shew with regard to poor little animals that are in their power, in teasing and controlling them; and this he thinks makes him look manly.

Lady Med. So I imagine, for I have heard him say, he does no more than other husbands.

Lord Med. She, on the other hand, fancies the prerogatives of a wife consist in contradicting and opposing him; and this, I presume, she thinks is doing like other wives; but my life for it, when they know a little more of the world, they will be very happy.

Lady Med. Never in each other, I am afraid, my lord.

“*Lord Med.* And pray, ma’am, let me ask you, what
“mighty felicity have you enjoyed, in being married
“to the man of your choice?”

“*Lady Med.* This is a strange question, my lord!
“I never complained of my lot; but if I have not
“been completely happy, it is not owing to any fault
“of mine.

“*Lord Med.* It may be mine for aught I know—
“but I only mention it, to shew you that love is not
“such an almighty deity, as to confer happiness
“without certain ingredients besides, that I could
“name.

“*Lady Med.* My lord, where it is reciprocal, there
“wants not much besides.

“*Lord Med.* Be sure you preach that wise doctrine
“to your daughter; it will become your prudence,
“and no doubt will be extremely agreeable to her
“pretty romantic notions.”—But, pr’ythee, let us
have done with the subject at once. One circumstance
more, however, I shall acquaint you with; if the marriage
between Medway and this lady should be accomplished,
I have other purposes to appropriate her fortune to,
than buying a husband for your daughter

—But this is only in speculation—the thing may never happen—for nothing but the last extremity should compel me to urge my son against his inclination. In regard to Louisa, in two words, I will be obeyed: do me the favour to tell her as much. I shall see her presently, and expect such an answer from her, as her duty shall dictate.

Lady Med. My lord, it is an displeasing task you have assign'd me, but I will obey you. [Exit.

Lord Med. [Looking after her.] That you have always done, so much praise I will allow you—but I am out of humour with every thing. If this boy should dislike the match, I am undone at once; and I fear, from some hints I have lately received, I shall find an obstacle in the way which will not easily be removed—“’Sdeath! what a thing it is to have po-
“ verty staring a man in the face, and no way to keep
“ the horrid spectre from laying hold on you!—No
“ way but one; it all depends on Medway’s filial
“ duty”——A thousand vexations crowd upon me to-
gether—’Tis a pretty time for a man to think of in-
triguing! and yet the blooming beauty of that little
madcap, with all her childishness about her, has
caught such hold on me, that I must have her—Oh,
with what alacrity now could I pursue the chace, if
my thoughts were a little more disengaged!——She
has been complaining to my wife of her husband’s ill
usage of her; and he, I suppose, will come to me
presently, to take a lesson, as he calls it, to enable

him to use her worse——he sha'n't want my assistance——and here he comes to receive it.

SCENE II.

Enter Sir HARRY FLUTTER.

Sir H. Flut. Oh, my dear lord.

Lord Med. Why you seem out of breath, Sir Harry; what is the matter?

Sir H. Flut. Upon my soul, my lord, I have been so stunn'd this morning; with the din of conjugal interrogatories, that I am quite bated——do let me lounge a little on this couch of yours.

Lord Med. What, I suppose you were playing the rogue last night.

Sir H. Flut. No, faith, only at the tavern. I was at home before three o'clock, and yet my wife was such an unreasonable little devil, as to ask me forty questions about my staying out so late.

Lord Med. It's the way of them all——but I hope you are too well acquainted with your own prerogative, to give her any satisfaction on those accounts.

Sir H. Flut. Satisfaction [oh, catch me at that, and sacrifice me——no, no——But pray now, my lord, how would you behave on such an occasion? for I should be very glad to find that my conduct squared with yours.

Lord Med. Why——not roughly——you know that is not my way——it is not manly; besides, it would at

once provoke, and justify your wife in her resentment.—But there is a sort of sneering, ironical treatment, that I never knew fail of nettling a woman to the quick; and the best of it is, the thing won't bear repetition; for let them deliver your very words, without the tone and air accompanying them, and there shall not appear the least harm in them.

Sir H. Flut. Ay, that, that's the secret I want to come at; that's the true art of tormenting, and what of all the talents your lordship possesses, I envy you for the most—Heavens, how I have seen my lady swell, and tears start into her eyes, when, devil take me, if I thought you were not in perfect good humour all the while—Now I am rather petulant, flash, flash, flash, as quick as lightning, till I put myself into a confounded passion, when I only meant to vex her—Though I think I was rather temperate too, this morning.

Lord Med. How was it; let's hear?

Sir H. Flut. Why, I came home at three o'clock, as I told you, a little tipsey too, by the bye; but what was that to her, you know; for I am always good-humoured in my cups. To bed I crept, as softly as a mouse, for I had no more thoughts of quarrelling with her then, than I have now with your lordship—La, says she, with a great heavy sigh, it is a sad thing that one must be disturbed in this manner; and on she went, mutter, mutter, mutter, for a quarter of an hour; I all the while lying as quiet as a lamb, without making her a word of an answer; at

last, quite tired of her perpetual buzzing in my ear, pr'ythee be quiet, Mrs. Wasp, says I, and let me sleep (I was not thoroughly awake when I spoke). Do so, Mr. Drone, grumbled she, and gave a great founce. I said no more, for in two minutes I was as fast as a top. Just now, when I came down to breakfast, she was seated at the tea-table all alone, and ~~looked~~ so neat, and so cool, and so pretty, that e'gad, not thinking of what had passed, I was going to give her a kiss; when up she toss'd her demure little face, you were a pretty fellow last night, Sir Harry, says she. So I am every night, I hope, ma'am, says I, making her a very low bow. Was not that something in your manner, my lord?

Lord Med. Oh, very well, very well——

Sir H. Flut. Pray where were you till that unconscionable hour? says she. At the tavern, drinking, says I, very civilly. And who was with you, sir? Oh, thought I, I'll match you for your enquiries; I nam'd your lordship, and half a dozen more wild fellows (whom, by the way, I had not so much as seen), and two or three girls of the town, added I, whistling, and looking another way——

Lord Med. That was rather a little, though but a little, too much.

Sir H. Flut. Down she slapp'd her cup and saucer; if this be the case, Sir Harry (half sobbing), I shall desire a separate bed. That's as I please, madam, sticking my hand in my side, and looking her full in the face. No, it shall be as I please, sir——it sha'n't,

madam; it shall, sir; and it sha'nt and it shall, and it shall and it sha'n't, was bandied backwards and forwards, till we were both out of breath with passion. At last she said something to provoke me; I don't know what it was, but I answer'd her a little tartly. You would not have said it, I believe—I'd give the world for your command of temper—but it slipp'd out, faith——

Lord Med. What was it?

Sir H. Flut. Why, I said (for she vexed me cursedly), I said—faith, I think I—as good as told her she ly'd.

Lord Med. Oh, fye!

Sir H. Flut. She burst out a crying, I kick'd down the tea-table, and away I scamper'd up to you lordship, to receive advice and consolation.

Lord Med. Why, really, Sir Harry, I pity you; to be ty'd to such a little termagant is the devil; but 'tis the fortune of wedlock. One thing I have always observed; the more a husband submits, the more a wife tyrannizes. 'Twas my own case at first; but I was soon obliged to alter my course, and by exerting myself a little, I brought Lady Medway to be as well-behaved, I think, as any woman of quality in town.

Sir H. Flut. So she is, upon my word, my lord; I'd change with you with all my heart, if my lady were a little younger. Duce take me, but I wish we were like the Spartans; I assure you, if their laws were in force here, my wife should be at your service, and I dare say I should be as welcome to yours.

Lord Med. Oh, undoubtedly, Sir Harry!

Sir H. Flut. The women would like it vastly——
your wife and mine I mean.

Lord Med. How do you know that?

Sir H. Flut. Why I know mine does not care six-pence for me, and I suppose it may be pretty much the same with yours, and with all of them for that matter.

Lord Med. That doesn't follow—But how do you intend to act with regard to Lady Flutter? I suppose this little breach will be made up like all the rest.

Sir H. Flut. Not by me, I assure you, my lord; I don't intend to speak to her to-day; and when I do, she shall ask my pardon before I forgive her.

Lord Med. Poh, that's children's play, fall out, and then pray, pray, kiss and be friends. No, Sir Harry, if you would shew yourself a man, and a husband, let her see that you despise her little girlish petulance, by taking no farther notice of it. Now, were I in your case, I'd behave just as if nothing at all had happened. If she pouts, smile; and ask her how she likes your new sword-knot, or the point in your ruffles, or any other idle question. You know she must give you an answer. If it be a peevish one, laugh in her face, take up your hat, and wish her a good morning; if, on the contrary, she speaks with good-humour, seem not to hear her, but walk about the room, repeating verses. Then, as if you had not observed her before, Did you speak to me, Lady Flutter? but without waiting for her reply, slide out of

the room, humming a tune—Now all this, you see, where she to relate it, will not have the appearance of ill treatment; and yet, my life for yours, it humbles her more than all the blustering airs you could put on.

Sir H. Flut. I am sure you are right, my lord. The case is plain; but the difficulty is in executing the thing properly, I am so warm in my temper. Oh, what would I give for your glorious cool sneer of contempt!—I'll try for it positively; and, 'egad, I'll now go to her and make the experiment; and so, my lord, adieu for the present, and thanks for this lesson.

Lord Med. Sir Harry! do you dine at home to-day?

Sir H. Flut. I don't know how that may be till I have reconnoitred; your lordship, I know, does not—and I hate to dine alone with the women.

Lord Med. Oh, I shall certainly be at home soon after dinner, for I shall long to know on what terms you and my lady may be by that time.

Sir H. Flut. Oh, Heaven knows—we may be at cuffs by that time, perhaps; but I shall be in the way.

[*Exit Sir Harry.*]

Lord Med. If he follows my advice, I think she must hate him heartily—and then I step in as her comforter—But I have other business to mind at present—so many projects on foot without a certainty of accomplishing one of them——Zounds, if I had not the firmness of a Stoic, I should beat my own brains out.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Changes to a Chamber. Enter Lady MEDWAY and LOUISA.

Lady Med. My dear, it afflicts me as much as it does you; but you know your papa is absolute; I wish, therefore, you would endeavour to reconcile yourself to Sir Anthony.

Lou. Indeed, madam, it is impossible! If my heart were ever so much at liberty, it never could endure that forbidden man.

Lady Med. But, child, you are too much governed by fancy;—though he is not quite in the bloom of youth, yet he is far from being disagreeable. What is it you so much dislike in him?

Lou. Dear madam! sure the pomp and strange turn of his phrases, and the solemnity of his manner, is almost ridiculous.

Lady Med. He is rather formal, I allow you.

Lou. And then his notions of love so extravagant, his address so romantic, nothing but flames and raptures in his mouth, and, according to my brother's account of him, he has no more real warmth than a marble statue.

Lady Med. You find he loved Mrs. Knightly.

Lou. His peculiarities diverted her, madam, and she indulged him in them—I am told he used to sigh at her feet for half a day, and if he committed the smallest fault, she would impose a penance on

him, which Sir Anthony always received as a mark of favour.

Lady Med. I am sorry, my dear, it is not more agreeable to you; for I am commissioned to tell you, positively, you must accept of him for a husband.

Lou. But, madam, he has never spoken a word to me on the subject—I have seen him but a few times, and—in short, I can't bear him.

Lady Med. Shall I tell your papa what you say? he, no doubt, will be perfectly satisfied with this determination.

Lou. Dear madam! sure you will not. Save me from my papa's anger; you know I dare not open my heart to him. You (except in your maternal tenderness) are more like a companion to me than a parent. The authority of the mother is melted down in the kindness of the friend; my papa's severity had else been insupportable.

Lady Med. Louisa, you are not to give so harsh a name to your father's solicitude for your happiness. He is not to be shaken in his resolution. I have already exerted my utmost influence over him, and that I am sorry to say is less, much less, than it ought to be.—Hist!—I hear your father's voice below; he is coming up to you. I beg, my dear, you will let him see by your obedience, that my interposition has had its proper effect. I'll give you the opportunity to talk to him alone.

Lou. Dear madam, don't leave me—my papa is so stern.

Lady Med. I go to avoid ungrateful appeals from him. Consent with a good grace, Louisa, for 'tis certain you have no choice left. [*Exit Lady Medway.*]

Lou. Heavens, what will become of me!

[*She stands musing.*]

SCENE IV.

Lord MEDWAY enters, steps at the door, and looks at her, she not observing him.

Lord Med. [*Repeating affectedly.*]

On every hill, in every grove,

Along the margin of each stream,

Dear conscious scenes of former love—

I mourn, and Damon is my theme.

What is your pretty tender heart ruminating upon? your Damon, I suppose—were not you thinking of Mr. Branville?

Lou. No, my lord.

Lord Med. I believe you don't tell truth, my lady—look up, girl—Ah, Louisa, Louisa, that conscious blush! but 'tis well you have the grace to be ashamed.

Lou. My lord, if I do blush, I am not conscious of any cause, unless the fear of offending you.

Lord Med. Pretty innocent!—all obedience too, I warrant. I hate hypocrisy from my very soul; you know that you are a rebel in the bottom of your heart. Speak honestly now, would not you run away with Branville this very night, if it were in your power?

Lou. My lord, I—I—

Lord Med. My lord, I—I—, speak out, mistress.

Lou. If I had your permission, my lord, I own I should be—inclined to prefer him to—any other.

Lord Med. Thou prevaricating monkey—dissemblers too from the very egg. And without my permission, miss; what answer does your modesty and filial piety suggest to that?

Lou. That without it, I will never marry any one.

Lord Med. I don't believe one syllable of that; but I take you at your word; and now I tell you that you never shall have it to marry *him*—How does your love-sick heart relish that?

Lou. My lord, I am resigned to your pleasure.

[*She curtsies and offers to go, he bows and lets her walk to the door.*]

Lord Med. Now, ma'am—walk back if you please—for I have not done with you yet. [*She comes back.*]

“—Whither were you swimming with that sweet languishing air, like an Arcadian princess?

“*Lou.* I was going to my chamber, my lord, if you had not forbid it.

“*Lord Med.* Forbid! fie, what an ungentle word to use towards a heroine in romance! There are some surly fathers, indeed, who take those liberties with their children; but I, who know breeding better, only intreat; and therefore, ma'am, beg the favour of your company a little longer; if a mind dignified by the noble passion of love, can condescend to the admonitions of a parent.—” What does the feel

hang her head for? Sit down there—What, you are going to faint, I hope—Oh, I d—i—e! I *ex-pire*—Branville, take my last adieu—Here, Betty, some hartshorn for the despairing nymph, quickly—your lady is dying for love.—So, so, so, the sluice is let out at last.—

So lillies look surcharg'd with morning dew!

You really look very pretty when you cry, Louisa, I had a mind to see how it would become you.

Lou. Indeed, my lord, you are too hard upon me.

Lord Med. How now, mistress! how dare you speak thus? What do you call a hardship? Love makes some timorous animals bold, they say; it makes women so with a vengeance.

Lou. My lord, I beg your permission to withdraw.

Lord Med. Stay where you are, madam.—When I condescend to talk with you, methinks you ought to know, 'tis your duty to attend to what I have to say. You know my mind already in regard to young Branville.—“Ay, sigh on—fie, fie, do those glowing aspirations become a young lady educated as you have been? Your mother, I am sure, has always set you a good example. I was no pattern for you to follow.”—But observe what I say; I forbid you to think, but even to think, of Branville. That is the first, and perhaps the hardest part of my command. The next is, that you resolve immediately to accept of Sir Anthony for your husband. And now, miss, you may, if you please, retire to your chamber, and, in plaintive strains, either in verse or prose,

bemoan your hard fate; and be sure you complain to your waiting-woman what a tyrant you have to your father.—Go, get you gone. [*Exit Louisa.*] This is the plague of having daughters; no sooner out of their leading-strings than in love, forsooth.

SCENE V.

Enter Colonel MEDWAY.

Oh, George, I am glad you are come; that foolish girl has ruffled me so, I want relief from my own thoughts.

Col. Med. I met my sister in tears——I hope, my lord, she has done nothing to disoblige you.

Lord Med. Oh, a mere trifle—only confessed a passion for a fellow not worth sixpence, but what depends on the caprice of a relation, and, like a prudent as well as dutiful child, has shewn a thorough dislike of her father's choice.

Col. Med. My lord, she will consider better of it; I am sure my sister will willingly obey you in every thing.

Lord Med. To what purpose is a father's solicitude for the welfare of his children, if a perverse silly girl will counteract all his projects?—You, Medway, have ever shewn yourself an affectionate, as well as an obedient son, to a parent who confesses himself, with regard to you, not one of the most provident—I wish I could make you amends.

Col. Med. My lord, the tenderness you have always shewn me, deserved every return I could make you.—I wish for no other amends but to see you easy in your mind and in your circumstances.

Lord Med. That's well said! but I expected as much from you. Suppose, now, that it were in your power to make me easy in both, and at the same time effectually to serve yourself.

Col. Med. I wish it were, my lord, you should see my readiness to embrace the opportunity—But I am afraid there is nothing now in my power.

Lord Med. Oh, you are mistaken, there are ways and means to retrieve all; and it was on this subject I wanted to talk with you—There is a certain lady of fortune, son—What! droop at the very mention of her? that's an ill omen.

Col. Med. My lord, I doubt my fortune never can be mended by those means.

Lord Med. No! Suppose the widow Knightly, with a real estate of three thousand a year, and a personal one of fifty thousand pounds, should have taken a fancy to you, would not that be a means?—You blush; perhaps you are already acquainted with the lady's passion.

Col. Med. My lord, I am glad to see you so pleasant.

Lord Med. I am serious, I assure you—Why, is there any thing so extraordinary in a woman's falling in love with a handsome young fellow?

Col. Med. My lord, if the lady has really done me

that honour, 'tis more than I deserve; for I never made the least advances.

Lord Med. Well; but how do you like her?

Col. Med. She is genteel, I think—I really never examined her features.

Lord Med. That's strange! Why, you visit her sometimes, I find.

Col. Med. I go to her house, my lord; but 'tis her younger sister whom I visit.

Lord Med. Humph—What sort of a damsel is she?

Col. Med. A most angelic creature.

Lord Med. Ayl then it seems you have examined her features?

Col. Med. My lord, I have known her long. Miss Richly, who, as well as her sister, was born abroad, was sent hither some years since for her education, and I became acquainted with her in the house of a friend of mine, with whom she lived. Mrs. Knightly, who had married an English merchant, was then settled at Lisbon, and knew but little of her sister till lately; when, having lost her husband, she came to England, and took the young lady under her own care.

Lord Med. So! I perceive you know their history.

Col. Med. I do, my lord. Poor Miss Richly's part of it is a melancholy one; for her father was so partial to his eldest daughter, that he left her by much the greatest portion of his estate; and what the youngest had to her share, she had the misfortune to

lose, by the breaking of a merchant, in whose hands her money lay.

Lord Med. You are better informed than I am, I find.—Well, but what do you think of Mrs. Knightly?

Col. Med. Think, my lord! I really don't know what to think. The lady is very deserving, but——

Lord Med. But! Oh those damned buts! Am I to be butted by you all, one after the other? There's your mother first, to be sure she is very ready to acquiesce in every thing that I approve, but she thinks it hard a young creature should have any force put on her inclinations, though it be for her own good—Then, Miss Louisa—she is all obedience and submission—but, alas! she has given away her heart already—And you, you too are perfectly disposed to oblige me; but you will choose for yourself, I presume, notwithstanding.

Col. Med. My lord, you really distress me, by entertaining the least doubt of that reverence I ever have borne towards you, and ever will bear; but in a case like this (pardon me, my lord,) I cannot at once give up all that I have now left, or can claim a right in the disposal of, my honour and my love—I own I love Miss Richly, have loved her long; and if virtue, beauty, and unaffected innocence, deserve a heart, my lord, she has a claim to mine, and is, I confess, entire mistress of it; yet I wish the evil (since it is one) had stopped there—but—

Lord Med. But what?

Col. Med. My lord, she loves me too.

Lord Med. I am sorry for it—Oh, son, son, a pretty face will not redeem our acres.

Col. Med. I never till now lamented her want of fortune, which I knew indeed from the beginning; but still hoped that I might one day be in a condition to support her as her own merit and my rank required. I even flattered myself that I should obtain your consent.

Lord Med. What! to marry a beggar, Medway?

Col. Med. I beg, my lord, you will not use so harsh a word. She is worthy of higher, much higher dignity, than ever I could raise her to.—What is a title, my lord, stripped as I am of every thing besides?

Lord Med. That reproach is ungenerous, Medway; but I have deserved it.

Col. Med. Forgive me, my lord, I meant it not as such.

Lord Med. If you had, I could forgive it—but we will say no more on the subject. I will not urge you on so tender a point.

Col. Med. My lord, I thank you.

Lord Med. Answer me but one question: are you under a promise to marry Miss Richly?

Col. Med. No, my lord, her generosity would not suffer her to let me bind myself by any other tie than that of inclination, as I insisted on her being free.

Lord Med. That's well—Then I do not see how your honour is so much concerned; as for your love, when I was of your age, Medway, I had so many

loves, that it was hard to tell which of them had the best claim.

Col. Med. My lord, you were so kind as to promise you would insist no farther on the subject.

Lord Med. Well, well, I have done—I'll detain you no longer. Some business calls me out at present; I shall see you in the evening.

Col. Med. My lord, I'll attend you. [*Bows, and exit.*]

Lord Med. The firmness of this young man's virtue awes me. I know in point of interest with regard to himself at least, it will be impossible to prevail on him to think of this marriage—and the obligations he has already laid me under, will not suffer me to make, on my own account, so severe a trial of the tenderness and generosity of his heart—Let it go; I'll think no more of it. [*Exit.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Dressing-Room. Sir HARRY FLUTTER, as just dressed, a Servant attending.

Sir H. Flutter.

Is your lady come in, can you tell?

Serv. My lady did not go out at all, sir.

Sir H. Flut, Not at all! Why, I understood she dined abroad.

Serv. No, sir; I believe she only ordered Mrs. Betty to say so for an excuse, because she had no mind to come down to dinner.

Sir H. Flut. Was that all?—Then do you step to her, and tell her I desire to speak with her—On very particular business, tell her. [*Exit Servant.*] Now to put my lesson in practice—If I can but hit on the manner—I'll pretend not to see her at first—But if she should not come now—'egad, that would disconcert the whole plan—Yes, faith, here she is; her curiosity, nothing else I am sure, has brought her.

Enter Lady FLUTTER, with Knetting in her Hand.

Lady Flut. [*Sullenly.*] What do you want with me, Sir Harry?

Sir H. Flut. I want with you, Lady Flutter! I never wanted any thing with you in my life, that I know of.

Lady Flut. Why, didn't you send for me this minute, and say you had particular business? I should not have been so ready to come else, I assure you.

Sir H. Flut. [*Aside.*] 'Egad, I believe I am wrong at setting out; it should have all been done as if by chance. What shall I say to her now!—How do you like this suit of clothes, my dear? Don't you think it very elegant?

Lady Flut. Was that all the business you had with me? [*She offers to go.*]

Sir H. Flut. Ma'am, I insist on your not going till you answer my question, just how you please now, civilly or uncivilly; I am prepared for either, I can tell you.

Lady Flut. And so, Sir Harry, I suppose you think,

with those airs, to carry off your behaviour to me this morning, do you ?

Sir H. Flut. *Ye gods, ye gave to me a wife,
Out of your grace and favour.*

[He walks about.]

Lady Flut. But I can tell you, sir, I won't bear such treatment, to be drawn off and on like your glove.

Sir H. Flut. Are you speaking to me, ma'am ?

Lady Flut. To whom else should I speak ?

Sir H. Flut. I protest I did not know you were in the room, child.

Lady Flut. Oh ridiculous affectation——Child ! I'll assure you.

Sir H. Flut. [*Aside.*] Oh now it begins to work, if I can but keep cool.

*But if your providence divine
For greater bliss design her,
To obey your will, at any time,
I am ready to resign her.*

Lady Flut. Absurd !

Sir H. Flut. [*Going up close to her.*] To resign her, to resign her.

Lady Flut. [*Pushing him from her.*] Stupid !

Sir H. Flut. Ay, madam !

Lady Flut. Ay, indeed, sir.

Sir H. Flut. Retire to your chamber, madam, directly, instantly ; and let me inform you, once for all, that you are not to take the liberty of coming into my dressing-room——A man's serious hours are not to be broke in upon by female impertinence.

Lady Flut. A man's? Ha, ha, ha!—

Sir H. Flut. Those flippan't airs don't become you in the least, ma'am; but I don't think a silly girl worth my serious resentment—Retire with your trumpery work—I choose to be alone.

Lady Flut. Then I'll stay to vex you.

Sir H. Flut. Then, ma'am, I must teach you the obedience that is due to the commands of a husband.

Lady Flut. A husband! Oh gracious, defend me from such a husband—A battledore and shuttlecock would be fitter for you than a wife, I fancy.

Sir H. Flut. And let me tell your pertness, a doll would be properer for you than a husband—there's for you, miss.

Lady Flut. You'll be a boy all your life, Sir Harry.

Sir H. Flut. And you'll be a fool all your life, Lady Snap.

Lady Flut. I shall be the fitter company for you, then.

Sir H. Flut. Tchou, tchou, tchou. [*Jeering her.*]

Lady Flut. You are vastly polite, sir—Did you ever see Lord Medway behave thus to his lady?

Sir H. Flut. And did you ever see Lady Medway behave thus to her lord, if you go to that? Rat me but a man had better be a galley-slave, than married to a simpleton that ought to be sewing her sampler.

Lady Flut. And I'll swear a woman had better be a ballad-singer, than joined to a Jack-a-dandy, that ought to have a satchel at his back.

Sir H. Flut. Devil take me, but I have a good mind

to break every bit of the china you bought this morning.

Lady Flut. Do, do, do, and make taws of them to play with.

Sir H. Flut. A provoking, impertinent little——

Lady Flut. How dare you call me names, sir? I won't be called names, I'll tell my papa of this, so I will.

Sir H. Flut. Pretty baby, laugh and cry——

Enter Lord MEDWAY.

For shame, wipe your eyes, don't let him see you thus.

[*Aside to Lady Flut.*

Lady Flut. I don't care who sees me; I'll bear it no longer. I'll write to my papa to send for me—— I'll go to my uncle Branville's this very night.

Lord Med. Lady Flutter! I am sorry to see you in tears, madam, I did not know you had been at home——Sir Harry, I ask your pardon, perhaps I intrude——no afflicting news, I hope.

Sir H. Flut. News! no, no, there is nothing new in the case, I assure you, my lord.

Lord Med. Then, Sir Harry, I am afraid you are in fault here.

Lady Flut. [*Sobbing.*] Indeed, my lord, he is always in fault.

Sir H. Flut. If your lordship will take her word for it.

Lord Med. I should be glad to mediate between

you, but I really don't know how, unless I were informed of your cause of quarrel.

Sir H. Flut. I'll tell you, my lord——

Lady Flut. No, I'll tell him, sir——

Sir H. Flut. Look'e there now.

Lady Flut. He sent for me, my lord——

Sir H. Flut. Not I, indeed, my lord.

Lady Flut. I say you did, Sir Harry, on purpose to tease me, and talk nonsense to me——

Lord Med. Oh, fye, Sir Harry, could you find no better entertainment for your lady, than talking nonsense?—This is a sad account. [*Aside to him.*]

Sir H. Flut. Faith, my lord, a man must unbend sometimes, and indulge in a little foolery—Life would be tedious else.

Lady Flut. And there he went on, repeating silly verses, to shew he wanted to get rid of me.

Sir H. Flut. Mere raillery, my lord; but she does not understand it.

Lady Flut. I should not have minded that so much neither, for I could be even with him in his gibing airs, if he had not at last called me names, downright abusive names, my lord: But I'll put an end to it at once. [*She goes to the glass drying her eyes.*]

Lord Med. All wrong—all wrong—was this the advice I gave you? [*Aside to Sir Harry.*]

Sir H. Flut. My lord, you can't imagine how provoking she was.

Lady Flut. I dare say, my papa will be very ready to take me home again.

Lord Med. This must not be ; yet don't you condescend to desire her stay, I'll try to persuade her.

[*Aside to Sir Harry.*]

Sir H. Flut. Ough she's a vixen !

[*Lady Flutter rings a bell.*]

Lord Med. I'll establish your empire, I'll engage, if you will give me the opportunity of talking with her.

[*Aside to Sir Harry.*]

Sir H. Flut. Faith I wish you would, for I am almost tired of the struggle.

[*Aside to Lord Med.*]

Enter a Servant.

Lady Flut. Are my chairmen in the way ?

Serv. I'll see, madam.

Lady Flut. If they are, order them to get ready.

[*Exit Serv.*]

Lord Med. Going a visiting so soon Lady Flutter ?

Lady Flut. Only to my uncle Branville's, my lord ; it is proper to acquaint him with my design.

Lord Med. Make some excuse quickly to leave us, or all will be over.

[*Aside to Sir Harry.*]

Sir H. Flut. I will—you shall see—Bless me ! Well, I am sure-ly the most thoughtless fellow breathing.

[*Sir Harry takes out his pocket-book, and turns over the leaves.*] My lord, can you forgive my rudeness now, if I run away from you ? I must shew you the nature of my engagement though, and that, I hope, will be some apology—Wednesday, half an hour after five—you see—it's almost that already—

Lord Med. Humph !

Sir H. Flut. Perhaps, I mayn't stay long—I am very sorry to leave your lordship alone though; but you'll forgive me.

[*Exit Sir H. Flut. without looking at Lady Flut.*]

Lord Med. Leave me alone! 'Twere well if you were going to half as good company as that in which you leave me. [Half aside.]

Lady Flut. [Turning about.] What does your lordship say?

Lord Med. Nothing, ma'am, but that I can excuse Sir Harry's going, as he leaves me in such good company.

Lady Flut. Oh, my lord, I am nobody in Sir Harry's opinion; but indeed, at present, I should be but a very dull companion to any one; so I am sure your lordship will excuse me if I take my leave.

Lord Med. A quarter of an hour, I hope, ma'am, will not break in too much upon your time.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My master is gone out in your chair, madam; he said you might take the chariot; will your ladyship please to have it ordered?

Lady Flut. Gone out in my chair! See there my lord! did you ever know the like? I won't have the chariot—call me a hackney chair. [*Exit Serv.*] Pray, my lord, where is he gone? I saw he shewed you his memorandum.

Lord Med. Gone! on business, I think, of some kind.

Lady Flut. Business!—I don't know of any business that he has; I am sure it is some other engagement.

Lord Med. Oh—what am I thinking of? 'tis to the play.

Lady Flut. The play! he could not have been in such a hurry for that, 'tis too early.

Lord Med. He was to go with a party, and to call on some people by the way; that was the case.

Lady Flut. I don't much care; but I am sure that was not the thing neither; for I heard you say, it were well if he were going to half as good company, as that in which he left you.

Lord Med. And that I should certainly say, ma'am, let him be going to whom he would. But Sir Harry has a depraved taste.

Lady Flut. I don't doubt but he is going to some of his tavern-ladies. With all my heart; I don't love him well enough to be jealous of him.

Lord Med. I wish you did, for that would help on my work. [*Aside.*] Why, indeed, my dear Lady Flutter, I can't say that Sir Harry is *quite* so deserving of you, as I could wish he were. But he is a mere boy, and can't be supposed to be so sensible of your merit, as those are, who have had a little more experience in the sex.

Lady Flut. I sha'n't be long with him, that's one comfort.

Lord Med. But, my dear ma'am, consider how that will appear in the eyes of the world. Here you are

but a little while married, what must people think of a separation? Your good understanding is unquestioned, your personal accomplishments admired by all who know you; the blame then must all fall on poor Sir Harry.

Lady Flut. And so let it for me.

Lord Med. He deserves it, I confess; but, ma'am, give me leave to reason with you a little now; for I know you are a woman of sense, and capable of reasoning. Don't you think a *little* stroke of censure may possibly glance on you, for not endeavouring to bear, for a while longer at least, with his indiscretion; for every-body knows that your prudence is much superior to his, and therefore more will be expected from you.

Lady Flut. My lord, you compliment now.

Lord Med. Upon my life I don't. I am sure I have said it a thousand times, that I don't know a woman of fashion in town (a handsome one I mean, you are to take that into the account too) with half your talents.

Lady Flut. Oh, my lord.

Lord Med. Upon my word I am serious; and between ourselves, Sir Harry is thought to be but of very moderate parts, and that it was almost a sacrifice to marry you to him——But I would not say this for the world to any one but you.

Lady Flut. That is very good of you, my lord.

Lord Med. Your discretion, I am sure, will make a proper use of the hint. There are great allowances

to be made for a raw young fellow, who, like some vain and ignorant virtuoso, is possessed of a rarity, of which he neither understands the nature, nor knows the value. Oh, Lady Flutter, a beautiful and accomplished woman is a gem fit only for the cabinet of a man of sense and taste.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the chair is ready.

Lady Flut. Let it wait awhile.

Lord Med. Another sip of that sweet cordial flattery, and all the rougher passions will subside.

[*Aside.*

Lady Flut. What were you saying, my lord?

Lord Med. I believe I was saying, or at least I was thinking, that you are——

Lady Flut. What now?

Lord Med. A charming woman—taking you all together——

Lady Flut. Poh! fiddle faddle——

Lord Med. Indeed you are!

Lady Flut. Well, that is nothing to the purpose—What would you advise me to do with this foolish boy; for I would not have my discretion called in question, neither? I am sure if he had but the sense to talk to me as you have done, he might do just what he pleased with me.

Lord Med. Amiable creature!—Well, whatever you do, don't think of parting from him, for that would only be making mirth for all the spiteful old

maids in town; who have already prophesied, that miss and master would quarrel before a month was at an end, and each run home crying to their several mama's.

Lady Flut. Do the malicious creatures say so!— Well, I'll disappoint them in that—But what can I do, my lord, he is so intolerably conceited and pert.

Lord Med. Oh, don't mind him, and it will wear off by degrees. But, my dear Lady Flutter, are there not other pleasures with which a fine woman could make herself amends, for the ill-humour of her husband?

Lady Flut. Not that I know of, my lord— [*Sighs.*

Lord Med. I could name you some, if you would give me leave—

Lady Flut. You have my leave, indeed, my lord— My stars, what a charming thing good sense and good nature is! Your conversation has, I don't know how, soothed me so, that, though I am not happy, yet I don't find myself so much out of temper as I was a while ago.

Lord Med. Oh that Sir Harry and I could change situations, then would the loveliest woman in England be the happiest. [*He kisses her hand.*

Lady Flut. Lard! my lord, what's that for?

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir Anthony Branville, madam, comes to wait on your ladyship.

Lady Flut. Oh, I am glad of that—shew him up.

Lord Med. So am not I. [Aside.

Lady Flut. You know, my lord, it will save me the trouble of going to his house this evening.

Lord Med. Let me beg of you, my dear Lady Flutter, not to mention to your uncle any thing that has passed between you and Sir Harry. I'll give you many good reasons for it another time. Have I so much influence over you?

Lady Flut. Well, my lord, to oblige you, I won't.

Lord Med. Sweet condescending creature!

Lady Flut. But you must tell me what you promised.

Lord Med. Not now, my dear ma'am—some other opportunity I will tell you such things—

Enter Sir ANTHONY BRANVILLE, he bows very low to both, without speaking.

Lady Flut. Uncle, your servant.

Lord Med. Sir Anthony, your most obedient.

Sir A. Bran. My lord (without a compliment) I esteem myself extremely happy, in the agreeable hope, that I now see your lordship in perfect health.

Lord Med. I thank you, good Sir Anthony, pretty well. Heavens! what a circumlocution, to ask a man how he does! [Aside.

Sir A. Bran. And you, niece, I assure you, have a very proper proportion (as undoubtedly your merit claims) of my unfeigned esteem and good wishes; as likewise hath my worthy nephew, Sir Harry; whom

I should have been proud to have found in this good company, and deem both myself and him unfortunate in his being absent from it.

Lady Flut. Sir Harry does not think so, I believe.

[*Half aside.*

Lord Med. Hush—hush.

[*Aside to her.*

Sir A. Bran. What does my niece Flutter say?

Lady Flut. Nothing, uncle.

Sir A. Bran. Pardon me; I apprehend you had uttered something. Well, my lord, I am next to inquire (though, to say the truth, I ought, in point of good breeding, to have done it first); I am next, I say, to inquire how your excellent lady does, and the fair young lady, your daughter.

Lord Med. Both at your service, Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. May I presume to ask the Christian name of the young lady.

Lord Med. I would not have Lady Medway hear you make so emphatical a distinction, Sir Anthony; ladies you know, are always young——

Sir A. Bran. 'Tis a privilege I know they claim, my lord, and I hope you don't think me capable of such barbarism as to dispute it with them; but at the same time I imagine 'tis not possible in nature, but that the mother must be rather older than her daughter——You'll excuse my pleasantry.

Lord Med. Oh, surely, as the ladies are not by——But why do you inquire my daughter's name, Sir Anthony?

Sir A. Bran. Why, my lord, there is a pretty fa-

miliar tenderness in sometimes using the chris-ti-an name, that is truly delightful to a lover; for such, my lord, with all due deference to the lady's high deserts, I wish myself to be considered.

Lady Flut. Oh lord, oh lord, my uncle Miss Med-way's lover! I shall burst if I stay—— [*Aside.*]

Lord Med. Louisa, Sir Anthony, is her christian's name, which you are at liberty to use with as much familiar tenderness as you please.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, I have a most lively sense of the very great honour you lordship does me; and I can assure you my heart, [*sighs*] if I can with certainty venture to pronounce about any thing which is in its own nature so uncertain——

Lady Flut. Oh, now he has got into his parenthesis—— [*Aside.*]

Sir A. Bran. My heart, I say, is endeavouring to reassume that liberty, of which it has so long been deprived, for no other purpose, than that of offering itself a willing captive again to the fair Louisa's charms.

Lady Flut. Very well, uncle; I see this visit was not all intended for me; I find you have something to say to my lord, so I won't interrupt you.

Sir A. Bran. No, no, no, niece Flutter; upon my reputation, this visit was meant wholly for you, as I could not possibly divine that I should have found his lordship with you; to whom I intended to have paid my respects separately and apart.

Lord Med. Lady Flutter! I ask a thousand pardons

—We turn you out of your apartment—Sir Anthony will you do me the favour to step into my study ?

Lady Flut. No, no, indeed you sha'n't stir! I'll go and see what the ladies are doing; I fancy they think I am lost. [*Exit Lady Flutter.*]

Lord Med. Sir Anthony, I assure you I should think myself very happy in an alliance with a gentleman of your worth.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, you do me honour.

Lord Med. I have mentioned you to my daughter—

Sir A. Bran. Mentioned me, my lord !

Lord Med. Wouldn't you have had it so, Sir Anthony ?

Sir A. Bran. My lord, the profound respect I have for your lordship, makes me unwilling to animadvert on such proceedings, as you in your wisdom (which I take to be very great) have thought expedient; but I am a man, my lord, who love method.

Lord Med. Sir Anthony, I imagined it would have been agreeable to you, or it should have been very far —

Sir A. Bran. Conceive me right, Lord Medway; 'tis perfectly agreeable to me, and consonant to my wishes, to be looked on with a favourable eye by the virtuous young lady your daughter; but, my lord, to tell you sincerely (and sincerity, my lord, I hold to be a virtue), my heart is at present in a fluctuating state.

Lord Med. I am sorry then, sir, that the thing has been mentioned at all. I understood you were determined. What can the blockhead mean ? [*Aside,*]

Sir A. Bran. Good, my lord, your patience: I am determined! that is to say, my will is determined; but the will and the heart, your lordship knows, are two very different things.

Lord Med. Sir Anthony, I should be glad we understood each other at once. I apprehended Mrs. Knightly's ill usage of you, had made you give up all thoughts of her; and as you seemed determined to marry, and declared yourself an admirer of my daughter, who, I must say, (the article of fortune excepted) is, I think, as unobjectionable a wife as you could choose.

Sir A. Bran. Undoubtedly, my lord—

Lord Med. I was willing to give my consent, and thought you appeared as ready to embrace it.

Sir A. Bran. True, my lord; and so I do still, most cordially.

Lord Med. Why then, sir, what is your determination? for a young woman of family and reputation must not be trifled with.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, I believe trifling is a fault which was never yet attributed to Sir Anthony Branville—My lord, I am above the imputation—and your lordship would do well to remember, that I have the misfortune to be of a warm, not to say of an impetuous disposition.

Lord Med. Sir, I don't mean to provoke your wrath.

Sir A. Bran. You are the father of my mistress, my lord—that thought restrains my fury—But this woman (Mrs. Knightly I mean, for a woman I find she is, though I once thought her an angel;) she, I say, has not yet dismissed me in form; and till that is

done, I think myself bound in honour, not to make a tender of my heart or hand to any lady whatsoever.

Lord Med. Oh, Sir Anthony, I find you have still a hankering after the widow, and only want an opportunity to endeavour at getting into her good graces again—You would fain see her.

Sir A. Bran. By no means my lord; not for the world!—for, as I told your lordship, I would not trust my heart with such an interview.—No, no, I know the witchcraft of her beauty too well.

Lord Med. How do you mean to disengage yourself then?

Sir A. Bran. My design is to indite an epistle to her, and to request that she will, under her hand, in full and explicit terms, give me an absolute and final release from all the vows I have made her.

Lord Med. I think you are perfectly right, Sir Anthony, and act agreeably to the dictates of true honour.—I wont lose the fool if I can help it. [Aside.]

Sir A. Bran. I would fain do so, my lord.

Lord Med. I dare say you will get a full and free discharge from your sovereign lady and mistress.

Sir A. Bran. 'Tis to be so presum-ed, my lord—but as for seeing her, 'twere safer, my lord, to encounter a basilisk, I assure you.

Mrs. KNIGHTLY rushes in, a *Servant* attending her to the door. *Sir ANTHONY* starts and draws back.

Mrs. Knight. My lord, I beg your pardon; your servant told me Lady Flutter was here.

Lord Med. I am glad he made the mistake, madam, as it has given me the honour of seeing you. Go tell your lady—She was here but this minute—This is unlucky. [Aside.]

Mrs. Knight. I am quite ashamed of this, my lord; I just came to prattle half an hour with Lady Flutter, and to try if I could tempt her to the opera, and here I have broke in upon you so unawares—Bless me, Sir Anthony! is it you? I declare I did not see you. Why, you barbarian, where have you been for this month past? My lord, do you know that Sir Anthony is a lover of mine? [*Sir Anthony advances, bowing gravely.*]

Sir A. Bran. That Sir Anthony was a lover of yours, madam, he has but too fatally experienced.

Mrs. Knight. And g'n't you so still, you inconstant road?

Lora Med. Take my advice—and make your retreat as fast as you can. [Aside to Sir Anth.]

Sir A. Bran. Impossible, my lord; the magic of her eyes renders me immoveable—but I'll try.

[Aside to Lord Med.]

Mrs. Knight. What, I suppose my lord is your confidant; you see I have made him mine too.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. The ladies are all gone out together, my lord.

Lord Med. Did your lady leave word what time she would be at home?

Serv. No, my lord.

Lord Med. Oh once they are on the wing, there is no knowing when they will return—I wish she would go. [*Aside*] Will you allow me the honour of gal-lanting you to the opera, ma'am? I dare say Sir An-thony, on such an occasion, will excuse my leaving him—'Tis almost the time, I believe.

Mrs. Knight. Oh dear, my lord! too soon by an age. [*Looking at her watch.*]—I am such an impa-tient creature, I cannot endure to wait a minute for any thing, and therefore never go to any public en-tertainment till after it begins. Is not that the right way, Sir? Anthony? but I should not ask you, who are so phlegmatic, you could wait till dooms-day for any thing.

Lord Med. Come, ma'am, you are too severe on my friend Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, this is but an inconsi-derable specimen, a trifle, to what I could produce, of the severity I have received from this ungrateful fair-one.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. There is a gentleman below desires to speak with your lordship on business.

Lord Med. I'll come to him.—For Heaven's sake, ma'am, don't keep this poor lover any longer in ex-pectation, but dismiss him fairly at once, for your own honour as well as in pity to him. [*aside to Mrs.*

Knightly.] Sir Anthony, you'll excuse me for a few minutes. [Exit.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, I shall beg leave to wish your lordship a good evening—I was just going away.

Mrs. Knight. Why, sure you would not be such a clown as to leave me by myself, Sir Anthony!—I cannot go; for thinking that Lady Flutter was at home, I sent my chair to pay two or three visits.—Now, pr'ythee sit down, and say some sprightly thing to me.

Sir A. Bran. Ah, madam, my sprightly sallies were for happier days—

*When Flavia listened to my sighs,
And fann'd the amorous blaze,
That love which revel'd in my eyes
Grew wanton in her praise—*

Mrs. Knight. I protest I did not know you were so good a poet.

Sir A. Bran. The Muses, madam, are not such niggards of their favours. I have been indulged with some rapturous intercourses with those ladies, I can assure you.

Mrs. Knight. Oh fie, Sir Anthony. What—tell tales!

Sir A. Bran. No aspersions, madam—'tis very well known they are all virgins.

Mrs. Knight. Well, but now let's hear what you can say to me in prose.

Sir A. Bran. Truly, Madam, this unexpected (I

may say unhopèd for) encounter, has so disconcerted me, that though I have much to say, I am utterly at a loss where to begin.

Mrs. Knight. Why then don't begin at all, Sir Anthony; for I think you are generally more at a loss how to make an end.

“ *Sir A. Bran.* Madam, I must beg the favour of
“ being allowed a hearing; a patient one, madam;
“ for such the nature of my case requires.

“ *Mrs. Knight.* Is it a physical one, or a case of
“ conscience, Sir Anthony?

“ *Sir A. Bran.* Neither, madam. I did propose
“ to unfold my mind to you in a letter—

“ *Mrs. Knight.* But then if I should not unfold
“ your letter, Sir Anthony, which is a thing might
“ happen, in that case I should never know your
“ mind, you know.”

Sir A. Bran. If you won't hear me, madam—

Mrs. Knight. Well, well, I will hear you; but squeeze what you have to say into as small a compass as you can, my dear Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. The occasion, madam, of my giving you this trouble (if as such you are pleased to consider it) is as follows. I have courted you, madam, that is, made honourable addresses to you, for the space of six months, during which time you gave me all the encouragement——

Mrs. Knight. Encouragement! [*screams.*] Oh, all you powers of chastity defend me!—Encouragement, Sir Anthony! Of what nature, pray?

Sir A. Bran. Your pardon, madam—Consistently with modesty I mean; or such as became a virtuous lady to bestow on a passionate admirer; for such I pronounce myself to have been.

Mrs. Knight. Oh, I understand you now—Well, sir?

Sir A. Bran. For a time I was favoured with your smiles, and had reason to believe that my faithful passion would have been crowned with success. When all of a sudden, to my unutterable astonishment, the sun-shine of my hopes vanished.

Mrs. Knight. I only stepp'd behind a cloud, Sir Anthony, to play at bo peep with you.

Sir A. Bran. Oh, madam, a total eclipse, I do assure you—My visits were repulsed, my letters unanswered, and finally your doors shut against me.

Mrs. Knight. Did I do all this to poor Sir Anthony?

Sir A. Bran. You did, madam—Tyrant, you know you did. And now, madam, I would fain learn your reasons for such usage.

Mrs. Knight. Reasons—I never gave a reason for any thing I did since I was born.

Sir A. Bran. That is rather extraordinary, madam; but if you will not condescend to give me any reasons for your cruelty, all I have left to desire, or rather to demand, (pardon me the expression, madam) is now from your own lips, to receive my final doom.

Mrs. Knight. Why, I shan't marry these ten years, Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. That, madam, is an indeterminate answer. I humbly request the favour of a final one.

Mrs. Knight. Why, what are you in such a hurry for? I protest, Sir Anthony, I begin to grow jealous.

Sir A. Bran. A final answer, madam.

Mrs. Knight. I'll be hanged if I have not got a rival! Oh, faithless man! that have sworn I don't know how many times over, to be true to me till death—and I, like the rest of my easy sex, to believe you?

Sir A. Bran. Madam, let me most humbly beseech you—

Mrs. Knight. Begone, dissembler—but what could I expect from such levity as yours—

Sir A. Bran. Levity, madam! levity! I absolutely disavow the charge—pray, madam—let me implore you, for the last time (pray observe that, madam, for the last time) to grant me the favour.—[*He advances, bowing low, she flirts from him, and he catches hold of her sleeve.*]

Mrs. Knight. Bless me! Why sure, Sir Anthony, you would not offer to kiss me!

Sir A. Bran. Oh, heavens, madam, kiss you! Madam, let me take the liberty to inform you, that since I could distinguish between virtue and vice, I never took so unwarrantable a freedom with any lady upon the face of the earth.

Enter Lady FLUTTER.

Lady Flut. My goodness! what's all this about? Mrs. Knightly, my dear, what's the matter?

Mrs. Knight. I protest, my dear, your uncle is so very amorous, that it is not safe to stay alone with him.

Sir A. Bran. Madam, madam, I blush for you; humbly asking your pardon for being so free as to say so.

Mrs. Knight. Blush for yourself, Sir Anthony, you have most cause.

Lady Flut. What, in the name of wonder, is all this about?

Mrs. Knight. Oh, Lady Flutter, I am ashamed to tell you his behaviour!

Lady Flut. My uncle's behaviour, madam!

Sir A. Bran. Madam, I hope my niece Flutter has too good an opinion of the propriety of my conduct, upon all occasions, to be prejudiced by your uncharitable insinuations. And now, madam, I demand, in the presence of my niece aforesaid, that you will give me a full and formal acquittal of all my vows and promises to you.

“ *Mrs Knight.* I must take time to consider of
“ that, Sir Anthony; vows are serious things; I sup-
“ pose all yours are registered in Cupid's books.

“ *Sir A. Bran.* I insist on my release, madam.

“ *Mrs. Knight.* I don't know whether it be safe to
“ give you one, Sir Anthony; I must consult a law-
“ yer first.

“ *Sir A. Bran.* Madam, I am sorry to say, that you
“ depart extremely from that punctilious honour, as
“ well as generosity of sentiment, which is such an

“ornament to the fair part of the creation—I only
 “ask for the favour of being discharged—a favour I
 “was never refused by any lady before, I assure you,
 “niece.

“*Lady Flut.* That I dare say.” [*Aside.*] Well, I cannot for my life understand all this.

Mrs. Knight. Oh, he’s a rebel in his heart, that’s plain, and only wants a pretence to forfeit his allegiance; but I won’t give him that satisfaction.

Sir A. Bran. Then, madam, since you urge me to it, in one word, I here cancel all my vows——

Mrs. Knight. It is not in your power.

Sir A. Bran. Renounce your empire, madam——

Mrs. Knight. I defy you.

Sir A. Bran. And utterly disclaim your favour.

Mrs. Knight. Stubborn traitor!

Sir A. Bran. And now, madam, I will withdraw my person and my heart——

Mrs. Knight. Not your heart, Sir Anthony!

Sir A. Bran. Both, both, madam, I do aver it to you; and will make an offering of them where they will be more honourably, and more gratefully entertained. And so, madam, I am, with proper respect, your most obedient (though rejected) humble servant. Niece Flutter, I have the pleasure of wishing you a very good evening.

[*Exit Sir Anthony, bowing, both ladies burst out a laughing.*]

Mrs. Knight. [*Imitating his manner, looking after him; and curtsying very low.*] And I return you my

very unfeigned acknowledgments for ridding me of your most insipid solemnity, my dear Sir Anthony, Ha, ha, ha, poor soul to whom is he going to offer his Platonic adorations, do you know, my dear?

Lady Flut. Why, by what I gathered just now from the conversation between my lord and him (for it was a secret to me before) I find Miss Medway is likely to supplant you.

Mrs. Knight. Supplant me, my dear creature! why, sure you cannot suppose I had ever any serious thoughts of the poor man; humbly begging your pardon, as he says, for taking such a liberty with your uncle.

Lady Flut. I should wonder if you had, I own; I am sure nothing but his fortune could have made my lord think of him for a son-in-law.

Mrs. Knight. Does Miss Medway approve of the thing? she is a sober sort of a girl, I think.

Lady Flut. Oh, intolerably so; I hardly ever converse with her, though under the same roof. She is for ever poring over a book or a needle.—Yet I don't suppose she likes him either; I have heard it whispered that she loves my cousin Branville, who, I hear, is expected home every hour.

Mrs. Knight. If I thought so, I would keep Sir Anthony dangling this twelvemonth, out of mere compassion to the poor girl. For, notwithstanding his threats, I know he is still devoted to me.

Lady Flut. But how would that square with your views in regard to Colonel Medway?

Mrs. Knight. Oh, my sweet friend, that question has made me serious all at once. I can laugh at Sir Anthony no more; indeed I have not lately had spirits enough to be diverted with him, and, for that reason, tried to shake him off. I don't know what to think of the colonel. I came here this evening on purpose to consult you. My lord, who, I perceive, is a man of the world, and full of design, dropped some hints to me about his son, by which I find the thing would at least be very agreeable to him; yet the colonel has not been near me since. I wish I knew his sentiments.

Lady Flut. I am sure I cannot inform you. There is none of the family very communicative, but my lord; he is the best of them, that is certain.

Enter Sir HARRY FLUTTER.

Sir H. Flut. Ha, Mrs. Knightly! my adorable! I kiss your hands.

Mrs. Knight. Oh, Sir Harry, you have missed such an entertainment! Here has been Sir Anthony——

Sir H. Flut. Well, and what did' uncle parenthesis say to you?

Mrs. Knight. Oh, he has abandoned me—— I am doomed to wear the willow garland.

Sir H. Flut. Oh, you cruel devil, you—'tis you who have abandoned him, I dare say.—What, Lady Flutter! I am amazed to find you here; I thought you had abandoned me, as Mrs. Knightly says, and that by this time you had taken post for Oxfordshire,

in order to tell papa, that Sir Harry was such a naughty boy, he would not give it its way in every thing.—Mrs. Knightly, when I went out this evening, she was going to elope, absolutely bent upon running away from her husband.

Lady Flut. And you see, ma'am, the return he makes me for my good nature in not doing so. I think Sir Harry, after the provocation I received from you, if I changed my mind, you ought to be very much obliged to me.

Sir H. Flut. My dear, if the changing your mind be an obligation, I own my obligations to you on that score are innumerable.

Lady Flut. I suppose you think that witty, now.

Mrs. Knight. Pray, pray, good people, am I to be left out of the conversation?

Sir H. Flut. Oh, ma'am, my Lady Flutter is so extremely quick in her repartees, that you will find it very hard to put in a word, I assure you.

Lady Flut. And Sir Harry is so immoderately fond of hearing himself talk, that he does not desire either of us to give him any interruption, I assure you.

Sir H. Flut. Not your ladyship, I acknowledge.

Mrs. Knight. Well, I vow, Sir Harry, if you were my husband, I should hate you, for all you are such a handsome toad.

Sir H. Flut. Indeed you would not.

Mrs. Knight. Indeed I should.

Sir H. Flut. Go, you little hypocrite——

Mrs. Knight. Get you gone, you rattlepate, I don't mind what you say.—Come, Lady Flutter, will you go with me to the opera, my dear?

Lady Flut. With all my heart. Any where, rather than stay at home.

Sir H. Flut. You see, ma'am, what a happy man I am in domestic felicity! But here, Lady Flutter, you must give me leave to interpose a little of my lawful authority; and therefore I desire, if it be not too great an honour, that you will oblige me with your company at home this evening.

Lady Flut. Indeed I sha'n't, Sir Harry.

Sir H. Flut. Then, ma'am, I say, indeed you shall.

Mrs. Knight. Bless me, Sir Harry, you a'n't serious, sure! I am vastly sorry I proposed the thing at all. I won't go to the opera, for my part—I'll stay and chat with you, if you will give me leave—or—suppose we had a pool at piquet.

Sir H. Flut. By no means, ma'am. Why should you deprive yourself of your entertainment for her childishness?—I'll attend you to the opera myself.

Mrs. Knight. Indeed you sha'n't, for I won't go.

Sir H. Flut. Indeed you shall, and I'll go with you.

Mr. Knight. I vow you shall neither of you go, and so good-bye to you. [Runs out.]

Lady Flut. So, Sir Harry, you have exposed yourself prettily!

Sir H. Flut. Not in the least, my dear; I have only shewn you to advantage.

Lady Flut. It is well one of us has a little discretion.

Sir H. Flut. Meaning your wise self, I presume; but, to shew you that I have a small share too, I will enter into no farther disputes with you; but, leaving you to your agreeable contemplations, follow my charming Mrs. Knightly to the opera, who, I fancy, will prefer my company to your ladyship's. [Exit.

Lady Flut. Very well, sir!—If I am not even with you for this!—

Enter Lord MEDWAY at another Door.

Lord Med. Alone, ma'am! (I have been detained longer than I expected.) What is become of Mrs. Knightly and Sir Anthony?

Lady Flut. Both gone, my lord—My uncle broke away in resentment, never, I think, to see her more.

Lord Med. So, so!—What have you done with Lady Medway and my daughter?

Lady Flut. They are at their evening meditations, I suppose, my lord. They both came in with me, after we had made a short visit, but, according to custom, retired to my lady's dressing-room.

Lord Med. Oh, they read together every evening!—But you seem ruffled, my dear Lady Flutter; what is the matter?

Lady Flut. Sir Harry——

Lord Med. What of him?

Lady Flut. He has been here since; but so intole-

rably rude and provoking, positively there's no enduring him any longer. I should be sorry to leave your lordship's house so soon, where I have been so kindly received; but I am determin'd not to continue under the same roof with Sir Harry.

Lord Med. If your departure were to be a punishment only to Sir Harry, I should not oppose it; for I must allow, that he deserves all your resentment. But, my dear Lady Flutter, I could name another, whom you would make infinitely more unhappy by your absence.

Lady Flut. Who can that be, my lord?

Lord Med. Suppose I were to name myself?

Lady Flut. You are very obliging, my lord; I have not the least doubt of your friendship.

Lord Med. Friendship, my dear ma'am, sometimes assumes a tenderer name—When a man entertains it for a woman, young and charming as you are, what ought it then to be called?

Lady Flut. Why, friendship, to be sure—what should it be else?

Lord Med. Shall I tell you?

Lady Flut. No, I won't be told.

Lord Med. Then you guess—

Lady Flut. Not I, indeed, my lord.—

Lord Med. 'Tis love! love!—is not that a sweeter sound?

Lady Flut. 'Tis a sound with which I am very little acquainted.

[Sighs.

Lord Med. Then let me be your tutor, to teach you a science, in which Sir Harry is not worthy to instruct you.

Lady Flut. Oh, my lord, if I had met with you before I was married, and before you were married— But it is too late now——

Lord Med. You must not say so. What are marriage ties, if the hearts are not joined? 'Tis that alone which makes the union sacred.

Lady Flut. That is the chief thing, I grant.

Lord Med. Oh, it is all in all!—With regard to Lady Medway now; she is a good woman, it is true, and I esteem her as such; but there is no love in the case, so that I consider myself absolutely as a single man. 'Tis just the same with you; there has a ceremony indeed passed between you and Sir Harry; but he slights you, and you very justly despise him: so that, to all intents and purposes you are a single woman.

Lady Flut. I wish I were, I'm sure, my lord.

Lord Med. Why so you are, my dear ma'am, if you would consider the thing rightly—If I thought otherwise, though I confess I love you to adoration, I would sooner stab myself to the heart, than endeavour to win your affections.

Lady Flut. Indeed, my lord, I believe you.

Lord Med. Then, since we are equally unhappy in wedlock, what crime can there be in our mutual endeavours to console each other?

Lady Flut. I am sure I don't intend any harm:

Lord Med. Then why will you talk of leaving me? You know Sir Harry is too indifferent to be concerned at a separation; the grief, the disappointment, will all be mine.

Lady Flut. Indeed, my lord, I should be very unwilling to make you uneasy, to whom I owe so many obligations.

Lord Med. Then speak no more of parting. [*He takes her hand*] I have a thousand things to tell you. The delightful subject we are upon is inexhaustible, but I can never get you for half an hour to myself.

Lady Flut. Why, no; Sir Harry is so perpetually whiffing backwards and forwards, one cannot be alone a minute for him.

[*Lady Medway comes to the door, and steps back on seeing Lord Medway and Lady Flutter in such familiar conference.*]

Lord Med. I have thought of an expedient, which, if you will agree to, will secure us against all interruptions for the future.

Lady Flut. What is it?

Lord Med. You know Lady Lovegrove, who sat in the box with us at the play the other night (a very worthy woman.) I am sure she would be glad of your acquaintance. I'll introduce you to her, and there, you know, when you go on an evening to drink tea, I can meet you, and we can enjoy an hour's conversation without being interrupted.

Lady Flut. I protest that will do very well. But we must not let Sir Harry know a word of my ac-

quaintance with her, or may-be, some evening, he'll be for thrusting himself in.

Lord Med. By no means, he shall never be of our party. — Come, ma'am, I fancy, by this time, the ladies have done with their sober studies. — Suppose we were to join them.

Lady Flut. As you will, my lord.

Lord Med. Not a word more of parting, remember.

Lady Flut. I'll try what I can do to oblige your lordship. [Exit Lord Med. leading her out.

Lady MEDWAY comes out.

Lady Med. Oh, Lord Medway! this is beyond what I thought you capable of; but I will, if possible, prevent the destruction that you have plan'd. [Exit.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Changes to the Widow KNIGHTLY's. Enter Colonel MEDWAY and Miss RICHLY.

Colonel Medway.

I WOULD not have mentioned it at all, if I thought you could have suffered it to make so serious an impression on you.

Miss Rich. It ought not, I confess, knowing as I do the truth and generosity of your heart—and yet I cannot help being alarmed—an immense fortune, and

a fine woman, as my sister really is—the temptation is so great! that were it any one but you——

Col. Med. Indeed, my dear Clara, these fears of yours reproach, at the same time that they flatter me. Is it necessary that I should tell you, over and over again, for the thousandth time, that I never can love any woman but yourself?

Miss Rich. I do not want to be convinced—and yet I own I am pleased to hear you repeat even what you have said a thousand times; but your father's authority——I dread that.

Col. Med. Believe me, you have no reason; for, though no son was ever more observant of a father's will than I have always been of his, yet, in the particular concerns of my heart, I must be my own director. This my father knows, and I hope he will never urge me more upon the subject.

Miss Rich. But if he should?

Col. Med. Would you have me swear to you?

Miss Rich. Oh, not for the world!—I am ashamed of doubting, and yet I don't know how it is, I am full of apprehensions: the truth is, I am not very happy at home; my sister is, of late, grown cold and peevish to me—I never suspected the cause before, but it is now too plain.

Col. Med. Did she ever mention me to you?

Miss Rich. Never but in a careless way—and yet I think since your father's last visit to her, she has been in better spirits than before, though I am not used one bit the kinder.

Col. Med. You shall not long be subject to her tyranny. My father already knows the secret of my love; and I think that, notwithstanding the article of fortune weighs much with him, his regard to my happiness will even out-balance that.

Miss Rich. I wish it may——Bless me! here's my sister.

Enter Mrs. KNIGHTLY, she curtsies gravely to the Colonel.

Mrs. Knight. I thought you had been alone, Miss Richly, and came to chat with you; but I see you are engaged. [*Coolly.*]

Col. Med. I hope my being here, ma'am, will not deprive Miss Richly of the pleasure of your company.

Miss Rich. I believe, sister, we shall both think our conversation very much improved by your making a third in it.

Mrs. Knight. I don't know that—A tête-a-tête is to the full as often disagreeably interrupted, as improved by another person.

Col. Med. That, madam, I am sure, can never happen, where you make the addition.

Mrs. Knight. I should be sorry it were the ease now, I own, colonel; for, to tell you the truth, I have vanity enough to be mortified at the thoughts of being considered as an intruder.

Col. Med. Bless me, madam! I know of but one circumstance in the world, which could possibly place you in such a light.

Mrs. Knight. What is that, pray, sir?

Col. Med. Where an inferior beauty was meditating a conquest, and you stept in to snatch it from her.

Mrs. Knight. An inferior beauty—I protest, colonel, I don't well understand that—There is an appearance of gallantry in the compliment, and yet there is something a little mystical in it too. Clara, are you good at solving riddles?

Miss Rich. No, indeed, sister; you know I have a very literal understanding; besides, I think what the colonel says requires no explanation.

Mrs. Knight. Then, my dear, I won't affront you by making any application.

Miss Rich. If you should, sister, I am very ready to acknowledge my part in it; but you should consider that, by the remainder, you would draw on yourself that imputation, which, but now, you wished to avoid.

Mrs. Knight. You see, colonel, the mysterious speech you have made has the fate of all oracles, to be interpreted different ways, and, perhaps, none of them right.—Nay, I am inclined to think it bears a still nearer resemblance to them, and that you, like the priests of old, delivered what you said without any inspiration of a god.

Col. Med. There, madam, your comparison fails, for I assure you, I am at this instant under the influence of a very powerful one.

Mrs. Knight. I vow I don't believe you; do you, Clara?

Miss Rich. I never had any reason to doubt the colonel's veracity, sister.

Mrs. Knight. What, then, you think he is really in love?

Miss Rich. Don't you hear him acknowledge it?

Col. Med. Nay, madam, if you won't take my word for it, I cannot see what reason you have to believe any one's else.

Mrs. Knight. Why, no, that's true—But where a matter of faith doesn't concern one's self, infidelity, you know, can be of no great consequence one way or another.

Col. Med. That's pretty home.

[*Aside.*

Miss Rich. Very true, sister; but scepticism is a dangerous, as well as an uneasy state, in some cases.

Mrs. Knight. And a state of security, Miss Clara, the casuists in love, as well as religion, are agreed, is not always the safest. But I don't know how we fell upon this odd topic.

Miss Rich. Nor I, I am sure.

Col. Med. I don't know how we came to talk of it; but I am convinced the man must be very insensible who could avoid thinking of it in this company.

Mrs. Knight. Clara, you are a monopolist; but I will have my share in that compliment—I don't know, colonel, though, what your mistress would say if she were to hear you say so?

Miss Rich. She'd forgive him, I dare say.

Col. Med. Come, come, ladies, I see by your pursuing this subject, that you have a design of getting

my secret out of me; and, as I am sure I could not withstand your united force, I think my safest way is to make my retreat before I betray myself.

[*Bows to both, and exit.*]

Mrs. Knight. How long was the colonel here before I came in, Clara?

Miss Rich. Not above a quarter of an hour——
Pray, sister, why do you ask?

Mrs. Knight. Because it is quite astonishing to me, how a man of his vivacity can be entertained by such a piece of still-life as you are.

Miss Rich. Why, sister, it is not an infallible maxim that we most admire those who are exactly of our own disposition. I, now, for example, who am naturally grave, do, notwithstanding, admire sprightliness in other people.

Mrs. Knight. Umph, so it seems——

Miss Rich. And the colonel, though extremely lively himself, may, however, not disrelish the conversation of a serious woman.

Mrs. Knight. Indeed, Clara, you are a very conceited girl. I dare swear, if the colonel says fine things to you, you believe every word of them.

Miss Rich. Indeed, sister, I have as humble an opinion of myself as you, or any one else, can possibly have of me.

Mrs. Knight. I am very glad to hear it, child; for I own I think vanity would not be a very desirable companion in your situation.

Miss Rich. What have I done, sister, to deserve these severe taunts from you?

Mrs. Knight. Oh, Clara, if you accuse me of severity, I must tell you that you are an ungrateful girl, and I fancy we shall not continue much longer together.

“*Miss Rich.* I am not quite so destitute, madam, but that I can still be received by that friend who had the care of me from my childhood.

“*Mrs. Knight.* Very well, madam, I shall consider of it; but, perhaps, I may find out some more eligible place for you.”

Miss Rich. I see, sister, you are resolved to disapprove of every thing I say or do; my company is become irksome to you, and, for the present at least, I'll rid you of it— [Exit.

Mrs. Knight. I was very unlucky in ever taking her into my house; had it not been for that, I should never, perhaps, have seen the only man who probably could have given me a minute's uneasiness.—I am puzzled at his conduct—and yet I suspect now more than ever that they love each other.—If it be so, I shall know it too soon, for I am sure Lord Medway is thoroughly in my interests.—Yet my suspense is insupportable.—Who's there?

Enter a Maid.

Maid. Madam, your chair is ready.

Mrs. Knight. Come hither—I desire you will!

give orders to the servants, that any letters directed to my sister should be brought to me—I suspect that girl has got into a silly intrigue.

Maid. I believe, madam, miss receives letters very often; but I shall take care, for the future, that you shall have them first.

Mrs. Knight. Be sure you do.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Changes to Lord MEDWAY'S. Lady FLUTTER at her Toilet. Enter to her Lady MEDWAY.

Lady Flut. Good morning to your ladyship.

[*Looks coolly at her.*]

Lady Med. I was afraid you were not well, Lady Flutter, as you lay a-bed so long this morning.

Lady Flut. I rested ill last night, nothing more.

Lady Med. I hope I don't interrupt you, madam.

Lady Flut. Not in the least; but I vow you are so ceremonious, Lady Medway, that you will not allow me to think myself at home.

Lady Med. I should be sorry for that, madam; but you know there are times when one would not choose to be broke in upon by any one; yet, to shew you how free I make with you, I have brought my work with me, if you will let me pore a little at it.

Lady Flut. I wish she and her work were far enough. [*Aside*] Your ladyship is excessively ob-
 Eging. You and Miss Medway are such housewives,

you quite shame me—This is prodigiously pretty; who are these ruffles for?

Lady Med. My lord, to be sure—Where is Sir Harry this morning? I have not seen him yet.

Lady Flut. Dear Lady Medway, don't ask me about him, for I know nothing of him.

Lady Med. What, not of your husband, my dear! Well, well, Lady Flutter, when your young necks are a little more inured to the marriage yoke, I hope it will sit easier on you both.—This work blinds me, I'll lay it by.

Lady Flut. Oh, impossible! he grows worse and worse every day. There never was such an incorrigible, ill-natured thing in the universe.

Lady Med. Now, really, there I must differ from you; I never took Sir Harry to be ill-natured; hasty and petulant, I grant you, he is.

Lady Flut. Madam, I hope you will allow me to be the best judge.

Lady Med. You have reason to be so, I own; but a stander-by may form an opinion.

Lady Flut. I don't know what your ladyship's opinion may be; but I am sure it is the opinion of others, and some that I could name of undoubted good judgement, that there never was, since the creation, a woman so unfortunate in a husband as I am.

Lady Med. Oh, Lord Medway, what have you to answer for! [*Aside.*] I must say, Lady Flutter, that if it even were so (which, Heaven knows, is far from being the case), they are not your friends, no more

than Sir Harry's, who would endeavour to persuade you to such a belief.

Lady Flut. Bless me, ma'am! Why, isn't it visible to all the world? Doesn't all the town ring of his ridiculous behaviour, and wonder at my patience in bearing it?

Lady Med. Indeed, Lady Flutter, I believe you are mistaken. The town have something else to mind beside little domestic quarrels that no way concern them; and I dare say, nobody but your particular friends trouble their heads about it. Though, I must observe, that had both you and Sir Harry been a little less communicative, even to some of your friends, on the subject of your disagreement, it might have been happier for you."

Lady Flut. Oh, dear ma'am! I know there are some tame wives in the world, who can submit in silence to any usage; but I am not one of those, I assure you. I have not been used to controul, nor I won't be controlled, that's more.

Lady Med. Softly, dear Lady Flutter, I don't mean to offend you; I would argue with you as a friend. Pray speak lower; I would not have any of our servants hear on what subject we are discoursing.

Lady Flut. Gracious! why, every servant in the house knows how we live.

Lady Med. But, madam, don't you think your unguarded complaints without doors, and perhaps your unadvised choice of confidants within, may lead you into some inconvenience?

Lady Flut. I don't well understand your question, Lady Medway; my choice of confidants within——

Lady Med. Yes—male ones, I mean; for example now, if a young married lady should make choice of a gentleman, to whom she should open 'her heart, and let him so far into her confidence as to tell him she despises her husband, what do you think must be the consequence?

Lady Flut. What! why, I suppose he'd think—he'd imagine—I don't know what he'd think——

Lady Med. I'll tell you; he'd think, perhaps, that a liking to him had as great a share in the lady's contempt for her husband, as any real fault of the husband's.

Lady Flut. If he thought so, I could not help it; but I am sure there is no one to whom I complain will draw any such inference.

Lady Med. There is nothing but what is very natural in all this, Lady Flutter; and the gentleman, on this supposition, will think himself bound to make an offer of his love to the lady; she, perhaps, receives it——

Lady Flut. Lord, ma'am! these sre strange conclusions——What can she mean?

Lady Med. If this should be the case, what must ensue! Oh, Lady Flutter, an innocent young creature, like you, should start at the thought.

Lady Flut. Upon my word, Lady Medway, I don't understand such insinuations. If Sir Harry insults me, I am not obliged to bear it from every one.

Lady Med. I am sorry, madam, that you construe a friendly caution into an insult. I am your friend, perhaps the only one who has the power of saving you from destruction.

Lady Flut. Destruction! Madam, I could not have expected this from you, in your own house. I believe my lord would not thank you for treating me thus—but if you are tired of me, madam——

Lady Med. Oh, my dear madam! you are in a very great error, my lord is the greatest enemy you have in the world.

Lady Flut. You may happen to be mistaken in that, Lady Medway, as well as in other things.—Poor woman, she little knows—— [Aside.

Lady Med. Come, not to play at cross-purposes with you any longer, I must tell you that I am no stranger to my lord's designs on you——

Lady Flut. His designs on me!

Lady Med. Yes, madam, his cruel, his (I grieve to say) infamous designs on you. Oh, Lady Flutter, you stand on a dreadful precipice! do not reject the kind hand that would snatch you from certain ruin.

Lady Flut. This is such extraordinary language, Lady Medway, that really——I don't know what to say to it—I little imagined I should have created any jealousy when I came into your family.

Lady Med. Indeed, my dear, you intirely mistake my motive. I own there was a time when I might have been influenced by jealousy, but I have outlived it; and am not now actuated by so selfish a passion,

Pity to your inexperienced youth, friendship to your worthy parents, regard to the honour of your husband, joined to the tenderness and duty I owe my lord, are the sole motives which urge me to save you all, if possible from ruin. I know my lord makes love to you; and that you have, unwarily, been drawn in to make an assignation with him.

Lady Flut. If he has been so treacherous as to tell this!

Lady Med. He has not, I assure you; yet I am certain of the fact; I know too well the nature of his connections with Lady Lovegrove—And now, my dear, if you would escape the snare which is laid for your undoing, be advised by me, who am your true friend.

Lady Flut. I don't think I have a friend in the world.

Lady Med. You are mistaken; I am sincerely so. My lord is a man of pleasure, and is perhaps less scrupulous in affairs of gallantry, than in any other vice. Your youth and agreeable person were alone sufficient to attract him; but when superadded to this, he found you despised your husband, and made no difficulty of owing it to him, it almost amounted to an invitation.

Lady Flut. An invitation, Lady Medway! you use me very ill.

Lady Med. To a man of his cast, madam, it certainly does. Your unacquaintedness with men of intrigue makes you blind to your own danger; but indeed, Lady Flutter, there is but one step between you

and inevitable shame and misery. What do you think must be the consequence, if Sir Harry should discover that you have appointed a private place of meeting with my lord? What must he think of the nature of a correspondence thus meanly carried on by stealth? Ask your own heart if you can justify this to your husband and to your friends?

Lady Flut. Lord bless me, Lady Medway!—you terrify me—I am amazed how you came to the knowledge of this.

Lady Med. 'Tis a happiness to you, madam, that I have, if by it I can be the means of saving you.

Lady Flut. I own I was a fool for consenting; but sure, madam, you won't be so barbarous as to tell Sir Harry; it would give him such an advantage over me, I cannot bear the thoughts of it.

Lady Med. Why really, my dear, I should be sorry to be under the necessity of taking so disagreeable a step; and if I thought I could rely on your honour and discretion in your future conduct, I certainly should keep your secret.

Lady Flut. Madam, I'll quit your house directly, if that will satisfy you.

Lady Med. By no means, madam; how would you answer that to your friends, if they should inquire the reason? Here you came to town to stay the winter with me, and before a month's elapsed you quit my house!

Lady Flut. Why I can tell them that Sir Harry is so insufferable, I cannot live with him.

Lady Med. If you will be ruled by me, Lady Flutter, for one week, nay but for three days, I'll engage that Sir Harry and you shall be as happy a couple as any in England.

Lady Flut. Oh, gracious! you could as soon convert us into angels.

Lady Med. But will you promise to be guided by me, but for a little while?

Lady Flut. Oh, dear Lady Medway, I know you would recommend patience and submission, and all that; but I never can, nor never will submit to his humour.

Lady Med. Why then, madam, I shall think it my duty to write to your father immediately, and let him know the danger of your situation; “for though I
“am sure the parting you from your husband would
“afflict him, yet 'tis better he should receive you
“while you are innocent.”

Lady Flut. What is it you would have me do, madam?

Lady Med. Your task is not hard, if you are disposed to set about it. You are married to a very young man, Lady Flutter; who, though he is warm and volatile, does not want sense, and am sure is good-natured in the main.

Lady Flut. Dear Lady Medway—you are enough to turn one's brain.

Lady Med. Hear me out, madam. You, on the other hand, who have as much sense, and as much good-nature as he, are at the same time a little too

quick and impatient of contradiction. He, I will allow, is too ready to give offence; but you in your turn must grant, that you are as sudden in taking it. Now, my dear, 'tis in your power, and give me leave to tell you, 'tis your duty also to correct yours. And I'll answer for it that Sir Harry will follow your lead; for I am sure that he loves you a great deal better than my lord does, let him tell you what he pleases.

Lady Flut. I wish I could see any proofs of it.

Lady Med. Will you make the experiment?

Lady Flut. What, and give up to him?

Lady Med. Only for once, just for a trial: if he does not receive it as he ought, I will never desire you to repeat it—I think I hear his rap at the door.

Lady Flut. Well, madam, to shew you that it is not my fault that we live so uneasily, I will do as you would have me; you yourself shall be the judge; but then remember you are not to write to my papa.

Lady Med. I will not, and remember you are not to have any private conferences with my lord.

Lady Flut. Agreed.

Enter Sir HARRY FLUTTER.

Sir H. Flut. How does your ladyship do this morning? [*To Lady Medway.*] I am tired to death, I have been at my banker's, and jolting all over the detestable city.—Defend me! Why your head is dressed so barbarously, Lady Flutter, you look like ten furies; by my life, an absolute Medusa; pr'ythee who gave thee that formidable appearance, child?

Lady Flut. I am sorry you don't like it, Sir Harry; I'll not employ that Frenchman any more.

Sir H. Flut. Then I am sure you don't like it yourself; for Sir Harry's judgment has not the happiness of having any great weight with you.

Lady Flut. No, I protest I think it quite becoming and genteel.

Lady Med. Then it must be to oblige you, Sir Harry.

Sir H. Flut. Undoubtedly, ma'am, that's her study.

Lady Flut. Upon my word, Sir Harry, I would make it so, if you would let me.

Sir H. Flut. My dear! say that over again pray; it sounds vastly pretty, if it were but true.

Lady Flut. Why then seriously I would rather dress to please you than any body.

Sir H. Flut. Hark'e, Lady Flutter, irony is a mighty ticklish weapon, and you handle it very awkwardly, upon my soul; lay it by, or you'll cut your fingers.

Lady Flut. I declare and vow I am in earnest.

Sir H. Flut. Oh, dear ma'am, your most obedient—but you're a bungler, take my word for it.

Lady Med. But, Sir Harry, why should you doubt that Lady Flutter is serious?

Sir H. Flut. Why really, ma'am, because I never knew Lady Flutter serious in any thing, but her endeavours to make herself disagreeable to me.

Lady Med. In which I fancy however she has not succeeded, Sir Harry.

Lady Flut. If that be the case, then I am resolved to take another course, and try what my endeavours to please him will do.

Lady Med. What do you say to that Sir Harry?

Sir H. Flut. Say! 'gad, I don't well know what to say to it. There is something devilish pleasant in hearing her talk so, if the humour would but last.

Lady Med. Take my word for it, Sir Harry, it will be your own fault if it does not.

Sir H. Flut. Faith, ma'am, I should be glad to keep up the ball as long as I could.

Lady Flut. Indeed, indeed, Sir Harry, I will never quarrel with you again.

Sir H. Flut. Upon your honour.

Lady Flut. Upon my honour.

Sir H. Flut. Nor I with you, upon my soul—And shall we grow fond of one another.

Lady Flut. Immensely.

Sir H. Flut. Agreed—I'll never find fault with any thing you do.

Lady Flut. Nor I with any thing you say.

Sir H. Flut. I'll never contradict you.

Lady Flut. Nor I you.

Sir H. Flut. Sweet rogue!

Lady Flut. My dear Sir Harry.

[*He takes her hand and kisses it.*]

Lady Med. Well, now is not this charming? I congratulate you both on your happiness, and leave you to the enjoyment of it. [Exit *Lady Medway.*]

Sir H. Flut. Duce take me but I should think you

prodigious agreeable, if you were always in good humour.

Lady Flut. And, upon my life, I should think the same of you.

Sir H. Flut. How came we not to discover this sooner?

Lady Flut. Because we never tried to find it out. Lady Medway was the first that told me we might be happy if we pleased.

Sir H. Flut. Faith then she has more sagacity than my lord; for he was of a contrary opinion, and used to pity me of all things.

Lady Flut. For what?

Sir H. Flut. For being married to you.

Lady Flut. Really!

Sir H. Flut. Truth, upon my word.

Lady Flut. I see his treachery. [*Aside.*] Then, Sir Harry, I will convince him of his error, by making the best wife in the world, in spite of him.

Sir H. Flut. Charming creature! I shall grow too fond of you—I won't let you be so engaging, hussy—

Lady Flut. You shall tho'—

Enter Lord MEDWAY, who stops on seeing Sir HARRY.

Sir H. Flut. Pray, my lord, come in—I have a sad complaint to make to you. This is certainly the most perverse girl—

Lord Med. Oh, Sir Harry, this is the old story—I won't hear what you have to say.

Sir H. Flut. But, my lord, this is a new, a quite

spick and span new affair. She has taken such a resolution!

Lord Med. Not to part I hope!

Sir H. Flut. No, no, my lord, a much stranger thing.

Lord Med. Ay! what can that be?

Sir H. Flut. You will be amazed when I tell you—
We were disputing about it when you came in——

Lord Med. I am sorry, Sir Harry, to find you always in disputes with your lady. I wish from my heart I could compose your differences——

Sir H. Flut. Oh, she is the very spirit of contradiction, my lord.

Lady Flut. Depend upon it, Sir Harry, I'll have my own way in this.

Lord Med. And in every thing else, I'll be sworn.

[*Aside to Sir Harry.*]

Sir H. Flut. You must not.

Lady Flut. I will.

Lord Med. That's right. [*Aside to Lady Flutter.*]
What's the matter in debate?

Sir H. Flut. Why, my lord, 'tis the oddest thing in the world; she is resolved right or wrong, in spite of all I can say—to be very good—and make me love her whether I will or not—Don't you think that is monstrously provoking?

Lady Flut. And he, my lord, has taken up as unaccountable a design—of never contradicting me in any thing——Is not that as provoking?

Sir H. Flut. A'n't we a couple of fools, my lord?

Lord Med. Why really, Sir Harry—if this could be—I cannot say—I am sure I sincerely wish to see you both on good terms—and if you have found out a way—with all my heart.

[*Sir H. Flut. and Lady Flut. both burst out a laughing.*]

Lord Med. I am glad to see you so merry, my young gentry—I wish it may last, that's all.—Sir Harry, I have a word to say to you—Why, you are undone, man, if once you let her turn matters to ridicule.

[*Aside to Sir H. Flut.*]

Sir H. Flut. Oh, my lord, you are quite mistaken, all this is serious.

[*Aside to Lord Med.*]

Lady Flut. Come, I'll have no plotting.

Lord Med. Poh, poh! she will get the better of you, I see—[*Aside to Sir H. Flut.*] Let me speak to her—
Lady Flutter!—

[*Advances towards her.*]

Lady Flut. The tables are turned, my lord; I'll whisper with nobody but Sir Harry,

Lord Med. But two words—When shall we meet?

[*Aside.*]

Lady Flut. Never—[*Aside to Lord Med.*] Sir Harry, now that you intend to be very fond of me, I desire that you will grow a little jealous, and tell my lord, that he must not come into my dressing-room in a morning.

Sir H. Flut. Faith, my lord, that's true; I begin not to relish the Spartan scheme as well as I did.

Lord Med. Mighty fine! this is an extraordinary metamorphosis, if it holds—but of that I own I have some doubt.

Lady Flut. You need not fear, my lord—We have your good wishes that it should, I know.

Lord Med. That's home. [*Aside.*

Lady Flut. Come, Sir Harry, I want to go to an auction this morning; will you be so good as to give me your company?

Sir H. Flut. With all my heart, my dear, I'll attend you; and see here I received all this to-day! [*Takes out a purse which she snatches from him.*] Oh, you little plunderer! give me a kiss for it—I'll have another——

Lady Flut. Go, you extortioner!—day, day, my lord. ♦ [*They go out romping together.*

Lord Med. What can be the meaning of all this? damned little coquet—So much art at her years!—or is it owing to my wife's interposition?—Yet she knew not of my design.—Any way I am ashamed to be baffled so ridiculously—And that puppy, Sir Harry, too——

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir Anthony Branville's come to wait on your lordship.

Lord Med. Shew him into my study.—Here's another fool that don't know his own mind; but I'll fix him one way or other if I can.

SCENE II.

Changes to Lord MEDWAY's Study. Enter Sir ANTHONY BRANVILLE and Lord MEDWAY, meeting.

Lord Med. Sir Anthony, I am glad to see you; I was really in great pain for you yesterday, when I was obliged to leave you in the magic circle of Mrs. Knightly's charms: I wish you joy of your escape.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, I humbly thank you; 'tis a felicity to me, I acknowledge; for, my lord, there never was such a Syren, such a Circe!—Sylla and Charybdis (of whom we read in fable) were harmless innocents to her!—but heaven be praised, I am my own man again.—And now, my lord, I am come, agreeably to the intimation I gave you before, to make a most respectful offering of my heart, to the truly deserving and fair lady, Louisa.

Lord Med. Sir Anthony, I have already told you I shall be proud of your alliance, and my daughter, I make no doubt, is sensible of your worth!—Therefore, Sir Anthony, the shorter we make the wooing—women are slippery things—you understand me.

Sir A. Bran. Your lordship's insinuation, though derogatory to the honour of the fair sex (which I very greatly reverence) has, I am apprehensive, a little too much veracity in it. I have found it so to my cost:—for, would you believe it, my lord, this cruel woman (Mrs. Knightly, I mean, begging her pardon for the epithet) is the eighth lady to whom I have made sin-

cere, humble, and passionate love, within the space of these last thirteen years.

“ *Lord Med.* You surprise me, Sir Anthony; is it possible that a gentleman of your figure and accomplishments could be rejected by so many?

“ *Sir A. Bran.* I do not positively affirm, my lord, that I was rejected by them all; no, my lord, that would have been a severity not to be survived.

“ *Lord Med.* How was it then?

“ *Sir A. Bran.* Blemishes, my lord, foibles, imperfections in the fair ones, which obliged me (though reluctantly) to withdraw my heart.

“ *Lord Med.* Ho, ho! why then the fault was yours, Sir Anthony, not theirs.

“ *Sir A. Bran.* I deny that, my lord, with due submission to your better judgment, it was their fault; for the truth is, I never could get any of them to be serious. There is a levity, my lord, a kind of (if I may so call it) instability, which runs through the gentler sex (whom, nevertheless, I admire) which I assure you has thus long deterred me from wedlock.

“ *Lord Med.* Then, Sir Anthony, I find you have been peculiarly unfortunate in the ladies whom you have addressed.

“ *Sir A. Bran.* Supremely so, my lord; for, notwithstanding that they all received my devoirs most indulgently, yet I do not know how it was, in the long run, they either absolutely refused making me

“happy, or else were so extremely unguarded in their conduct, even before my face, that I thought I could not, consistently with honour, confer the title of Lady Branville on any one of them.”

Lord Med. Your lot has been a little hard, I must confess. I hope, however, that honour has been reserved by fate for my daughter. She is your ninth mistress, Sir Anthony, and that, you know, is a propitious number.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, I take the liberty of hoping so too; and that she is destined to recompence me for the disappointments and indignities I have received from the rest of womankind.

Lord Med. Why then, Sir Anthony, I suppose I may now present you to her in the character of a lover.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, I pant for that happiness.

Lord Med. I'll call her, Sir Anthony——

Sir A. Bran. As your lordship pleases——but, my lord, this widow Knightly——

Lord Med. Was there ever such a phlegmatic block-head! [*Aside.*] What of her, Sir Anthony?

Sir A. Bran. I own I loved her better than any of her predecessors in my heart.—Matters indeed had gone farther between us, for, my lord, (not to injure a lady's reputation) I must tell you a secret——I have more than once pressed her hand with these lips.

Lord Med. Really!

Sir A. Bran. Fact, upon my veracity; I hope your lordship don't think me vain: “and as she had in-

“dulged me such lengths, could I be censured for
“raising my wishes to the possession of this beauty?”

Lord Med. By no means, Sir Anthony; but then
her ill behaviour to you——

Sir A. Bran. Oh, my lord, it has blotted, and, as I
may say, totally erased her image from my breast—

Lord Med. Well, sir, I'll bring my daughter to
you, whose image, I hope, will supply hers in your
breast. [Exit.

Sir A. Bran. I hope this tender fair one will not be
too easily won—that would debase the dignity of the
passion, and deprive me of many delightful hours of
languishment.—There was a time when a lover was
allowed the pleasure of importuning his mistress, but
our modern beauties will scarce permit a man that
satisfaction. Pray Heaven, my intended bride may
not be one of those—If it should prove so, I tremble
for the consequences;——but here she comes—the
condescending nymph approaches.

Enter LOUISA, led in by Lord MEDWAY.

Lord Med. Louisa, you are no stranger to Sir An-
thony Branville's merit.

Sir A. Bran. Oh, my lord! [Bowing low.

Lord Med. That he is a gentleman of family and
fortune, of most unblemished honour, and very un-
common endowments.

Sir A. Bran. Oh, my good lord, ordinary, slight
accomplishments.

Lord Med. You are therefore to think yourself happy in being his choice preferably to any other lady. And now, Sir Anthony, I'll leave you to pursue your good fortune. [Exit Lord Medway.]

Lou. Sir, won't you please to sit?

Sir A. Bran. Miss Medway, madam—having obtained my lord your father's permission, I humbly presume to approach you in the delightful hope, that after having convinced you of the excess of my love—

Lou. I hope, Sir Anthony, you will allow me a reasonable time for this conviction!

Sir A. Bran. Madam, I should hold myself utterly abandoned if I were capable at the first onset (notwithstanding what passes here) of urging a lady on so nice a point.

Lou. I thank you, sir; but I could expect no less from a gentleman whom all the world allows to be the very pattern of decorum.

Sir A. Bran. 'Tis a character, madam, that I have always been ambitious of supporting, whatever struggles it may cost me from my natural fervor; for let me tell you, madam, a beautiful object is a dangerous enemy to decorum.

Lou. But your great prudence, Sir Anthony, leaves me no room to suspect—

Sir A. Bran. I am obliged to call it to my aid I do assure you, madam; for spite of the suggestions of passion, I by no means approve of those rash and impetuous lovers, who, without regard to the delicacy of the lady, would, (having obtained consent) as it

were rush at once into her arms, you'll pardon me, madam, for so grossly expressing my idea.

Lou. Oh, Sir Anthony, I am charmed with your notions, so refined! so generous! and I must add (though it may appear vain) so correspondent with my own.

Sir A. Bran. Madam, I am transported to hear you say so! I am at this minute in an absolute ecstasy! Will you permit me, dear madam, the rsvishing satisfaction of throwing myself at your feet?

Lou. By no means, Sir Anthony; I could not bear to see a gentleman of your dignity in so humble a posture; I will suppose it done if you please.

Sir A. Bran. I prostrate myself in imagination, I assure you, madam.

Lou. Now, Sir Anthony, as you see my papa is impatient for the honour of being related to you, and that I am bound to an implicit obedience, I am afraid, unless your prudence interposes, that we shall both be hurried into wedlock, with a precipitancy very inconsistent with propriety.

Sir A. Bran. I declare, madam, I am of your ladyship's opinion, and am almost apprehensive of the same thing——

Lou. How is this to be avoided, sir?

Sir A. Bran. Be assured, madam, I too well know what is due to virgin modesty, to proceed with that rapidity, which my lord (with whom I have not the honour of agreeing in this particular) seemeth to commend.

“*Lou.* You are very kind, Sir Anthony.

“ *Sir A. Bran.* Oh, madam, I should pay but an ill
 “ compliment to your transcending merit, if I did not
 “ think it worth sighing for a considerable time longer,
 “ I assure you.”

Lou. That’s very noble in you, Sir Anthony—
 So passionate! and yet so nice—if all lovers were but
 like you!

Sir A. Bran. The world I will presume to say
 would be the better, madam—but then I hope your
 rigours will not extend too far, my dear lady—a few
 months or so—longer than that I should be very near
 tempted to call cruel, I can tell you.

Lou. “ As my passionate lover seems so well dis-
 “ posed to wait, I may chance to escape him. [*Aside.*]
 Your extraordinary merit, Sir Anthony, will un-
 doubtedly shorten your time of probation—Mean
 while as I hinted to you before, that my papa is ra-
 ther in haste to call you son, I would not have him
 imagine that I give any delay to this union. He may
 call my duty in question, which he expects should
 keep pace with his own wishes—you apprehend me,
 sir?

“ *Sir A. Bran.* Perfectly, my dear madam, and if
 “ I may presume to interpret what you have so
 “ charmingly insinuated to my apprehension, you
 “ would have me just hint to my lord, that you are
 “ not quite averse to honouring me with your fair
 “ hand.

“ *Lou.* That I am ready to do so, if you please,
 “ Sir Anthony.

“ *Sir A. Bran.* Very good, but at the same time I shall give him to understand that I am not as yet intitled to receive that very great happiness.

“ *Lou.* To that purpose, sir, for I would not have this necessary delay appear to be of my choosing.

“ *Sir A. Bran.* You little know, madam, the violence I do myself to repress the ardor of my flames; but patience is a prime virtue in a lover, and Scipio himself never practised self-denial with more success than I have done.

“ *Lou.* I rely entirely on your discretion, Sir Anthony, to manage this affair with my papa.”

Sir A. Bran. Oh, madam, I shall convince my lord, that it is from very sublime motives I submit to postpone my felicity.

Lou. I am much obliged to you, Sir Anthony, for this generous proof of your passionate regard to me.

Sir A. Bran. You’ll find, madam, I do not love at the ordinary rate—but I must not indulge myself too long on the tender subject. I doubt it is not safe.

Lou. [*Rising.*] Sir, I won’t detain you.

Sir A. Bran. I must absolutely tear myself from you, madam, for gazing on so many charms I may grow unmindful of the danger.

Lou. Sir, I will no longer trespass on your time.

Sir A. Bran. I must fly, madam, lest I should be tempted to transgress those rigid bounds I have prescribed to myself.

Lou. Sir, you have my consent to retire.

Sir A. Bran. I am so overpowered with transport, madam, that I hold it necessary to withdraw.—

Lou. 'Tis the best way, sir.

Sir A. Bran. Dear madam, vouchsafe one gracious smile to your adorer.

Lou. Sir Anthony, your humble servant.

[*Smiles and curtsies.*]

Sir A. Bran. Madam, your most devoted—oh dawning of ecstatic bliss! [Exit.]

Lou. Ha, ha, ha! I think I may now go, and very safely assure my papa, that I am ready to take my adorer when ever he pleases—this is fortunate beyond hopes. [Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Study. Enter Lord MEDWAY alone, reading.

Lord Medway.

THERE'S nothing good or ill but by comparison—Confound your dry maxims, what are they good for? [*He throws away the book.*] Yet there is some truth in that too.—Yesterday I thought myself an unhappy man—but what am I this morning? So much worse, that when I compare the two conditions, I now think I was happy yesterday—“ My affairs are in a hopeful condition truly! Ruined in my fortune, jilted by my mistress, disobeyed by my son, insulted by my wife's superior worth; and last night (thanks to my dear indulgent stars!) to sum up all, I was

“ forced to pawn the only stake I had left, my honour : which when I shall redeem, Heaven knows.”
—All is now lost ; and if my son continues obstinately to refuse this match, I am irretrievably undone.—
“ What can these chits want ?”

“ *Enter Sir HARRY and Lady FLUTTER, arm in arm.*

“ *Sir H. Flut.* My lord, I am in the greatest surprise in the world !

“ *Lord Med.* At what, Sir Harry ?

“ *Sir H. Flut.* At something my wife here has told me !

“ *Lord Med.* Sure she has not blabbed ! [*Aside.*]
“ What is it ?

“ *Lady Flut.* Something of your lordship, I can tell you.

“ *Lord Med.* Of me, ma'am ! I hope I have done nothing, ma'am, that——that deserves censure.

“ *Sir H. Flut.* 'Egad, my lord, you have though, and very severe censure too.

“ *Lord Med.* Sir Harry, I am ready to answer any charge against me.

“ *Lady Flut.* Ha, ha, ha ! neither Sir Harry nor I come to challenge you, my lord.

“ *Sir H. Flut.* Ha, ha, ha ! faith my lord looks as grave as if he were afraid of it though.

“ *Lord Med.* Afraid of it, Sir Harry ! pray change that word for a better.

“ *Lady Flut.* I vow, my lord, you look as if you

“ had a mind to beat us both——does not he, Sir
 “ Harry ?

“ *Lord Med.* Sir Harry, I have really some serious
 “ business on my hands, and should be glad if you
 “ would dispatch what you have got to say.

“ *Sir H. Flut.* What I have to say, my lord ; why
 “ all the world have it to say, as well as I.

“ *Lord Med.* What is it, pr’ythee ?

“ *Sir H. Flut.* Why, that you are going to force
 “ Miss Medway to marry an old hero in tapestry
 “ hanging.

“ *Lord Med.* Is that all !

“ *Sir H. Flut.* All ! and enough too in conscience,
 “ I think ; why what the deuce, my lord, it is the jest
 “ of the town already, Lady Flutter and I have so
 “ laughed at the thoughts of it this morning. We
 “ call him the knight of the inflexible countenance.

“ [*Here Sir Harry and Lady Flutter burst out
 a laughing.*]

“ *Lord Med.* Oh ! I am mighty glad to see you so
 “ much of one mind.

“ *Lady Flut.* My lord, as we are intirely indebted
 “ to your good offices for that union, I am sure it must
 “ give you pleasure.

“ *Sir H. Flut.* Sarcastical gipseyl but come, we
 “ won't banter his lordship about it ; he meant us
 “ well, I believe, though he was a little out in his
 “ politics—for faith, my lord, I think she is much
 “ the better since I have given her her own way.

“ *Lord Med.* I am glad of it, sir.—Have you any
“ thing farther to offer ?

“ *Lady Flut.* Nothing but our good advice, my lord ;
“ as we have received so much from you, I think we
“ owe you some in return ; and, I am sure, if you
“ would take time, you would not think of my uncle
“ for a son-in-law.

“ *Sir H. Flut.* Oh fie, fie ! ridiculous to the last de-
“ gree.

“ *Lady Flut.* Positively, my lord, I won't give
“ consent.

“ *Lord Med.* I suppose your uncle's at age, ma'am.

“ *Lady Flut.* Oh ! he has been that these hundred
“ years.

“ *Lord Med.* Why then—excuse me, I am not at
“ present in a humour to trifle.

“ *Lady Flut.* But we are, my lord ; an't we, Sir Harry ?

“ *Sir H. Flut.* Oh eternally, my dear.

“ *Lord Med.* Be so good, then, as to enjoy it with-
“ out my participation—I am really busy.

“ *Lady Flut.* Come, Sir Harry. He's so splenetic,
“ there's no bearing him. Let's go and laugh by
“ ourselves.

“ *Sir H. Flut.* Oh there's no pleasure like it !

“ *Lady Flut.* My lord could tell us of others, I war-
“ rant ; well, don't look so cross ; we'll dance at the
“ wedding, if it must be a match.

“ *Sir H. Flut.* I dare say your uncle will have
“ jousts and tournaments ; I'll learn to handle a tar-
“ get, my lord, against the time.

“*Lady Flut.* My lord don’t think us worthy of an answer, so we will leave him to his wise reflections.

[*Exeunt laughing.*]

“*Lord Med.* A couple of impertinents.—He alarmed me at first, but I find she is too cunning to tell him all.”

Enter Colonel MEDWAY.

Col. Med. I met Sir Anthony just going to my sister, my lord; I suppose matters are in a favourable train between them.

Lord Med. He is such an out-of-the-way fellow, there is no knowing what to make of him; he has been with me, and quite tired me with his romantic absurdity; but I think it will be a match. Your sister has at last condescended to accept of him for a husband.

Col. Med. I am glad of it, my lord, since it is a thing you wished.

Lord Med. I thank you, son.

Col. Med. Something has ruffled you, my lord.

Lord Med. I have an affair, George, that lies heavy on my spirits—’Tis in your power, and I think—I hope, at least—in your inclination, to extricate me from the greatest difficulty in which I was ever yet involved.

Col. Med. My lord, you know you may command me; I am ready to hazard my life for your service, if it be any thing of that nature.

Lord Med. No, no, no; I am not so old, Medway,

as to require the assistance of your sword.—You mistake my meaning quite.

Col. Med. You seem moved, my lord—[*Lord Medway walks about*] pray explain yourself.

Lord Med. Faith, son, I am almost ashamed to tell you the distress I have brought both upon myself and you.

Col. Med. Dear, my lord, don't think of me in the case.

Lord Med. Last night, George, I lost two thousand pounds, which I was obliged to pay this morning, and my honour is engaged for almost as much more.

Col. Med. My lord, I thought you had determined never to venture on such deep play again.

Lord Med. I had so; but something happened yesterday that vexed and disconcerted me, and I went to the old set, just to amuse myself for an hour; but I don't know how it was—they drew me in for half the night.

Col. Med. My lord, I am exceedingly concerned; but what can I do now?

Lord Med. Why there's the point—I am very loth to revive a subject, that I know is disagreeable to you; but you see to what distress I am driven—there is but one way left.—You remember what we talk'd of yesterday; if my curst ill fortune had not pursued me last night, I thought never to have mentioned it to you again.

Col. Med. My lord, I flattered myself you never would.

Lord Med. I thought I should not have occasion. I had another thing in view ; but this last blow has crushed all my hopes at once.

Col. Med. Is it not practicable, my lord, to devise some other way ?

Lord Med. Oh, impossible ! I am overwhelmed with debts, and worried like a stag at bay ; but with regard to this last, for which my honour's pawned, I must be speedy in the means of payment.

Col. Med. Indeed, my lord, I am exceedingly shocked at what you tell me.

Lord Med. And is that all I am to expect from you ? Look ye, Medway, it does not become a father to entreat a son ; neither is it suitable to your age, or the character you bear in life, to be threatened, like a sniveling girl, with parental authority ; mine is impotent, for I have nothing left to bestow ; but as you would wish to prosper hereafter, save your father from disgrace, your mother (a good one she has been to you) from penury.

Col. Med. My lord, I call Heaven to witness I would give up my life to preserve you both ; but you require what is infinitely more precious !

Lord Med. Oh, fie ! fie upon it ! how like a woman this is !—Your sister, a romantic girl, could do no more than soothe me with fine speeches ; I expected a more substantial proof of filial love from you.

Col. Med. My lord, you wound me deeply by such a cruel charge. What have I not already done to shew my duty, or, what with me was much stronger,

my love for you, my lord? Have I not given up my birth-right? put it wholly in your power to alienate for ever, if you please, my family inheritance, and leave me a beggar? Is not this a substantial proof? My lord, I beg your pardon; but you have wrung my very heart.

Lord Med. And you have wrung mine—for, Medway, with equal grief and shame I speak it, I have made you a beggar; I have mortgaged the last foot of land I was possessed of in the world, and the only prospect I had of redeeming it was by this lady's fortune; that would have recovered all, and restored you to the estate of your ancestors. I thought a boyish passion might have been overcome, when such important motives for it were united, as your own interest, and the honour of your family.

Col. Med. As for my own interest, my lord, it is but a feather in the scale; and for the rest, I think my own honour (which you yourself taught me to prize) is more concerned in this event, than that of my family can possibly be.

Lord Med. You told me you were not engaged by promise to the lady.

Col. Med. I am not, my lord; but are there no ties but what the law can vindicate? Oh, my lord, you forget the lessons you have given me on other occasions!

Lord Med. Well, well—I acknowledge the justness of your reproach; but it comes like a bearded arrow from a child's lips—But I have done—I give up the

cause—Had this affair, on which I had set my heart, succeeded, I should perhaps have been happier than I desire to be.—I had this morning been laying down a plan—but no matter, it is all over—I am sorry your mother should be a sufferer with me—I have not been the kindest husband—but I did intend, after I had seen you and my daughter settled, to have retired into the country on a moderate annuity; and there, Medway, I might perhaps have led a very different life from what you have been used to see; but I must struggle with ill-fortune as well as I can—You have been a worthy son, I acknowledge it—You have done enough—You shall not charge me with making you miserable for life.

Col. Med. Oh, my lord, I wish you had kept up your resentment; I cannot bear to hear you talk in this strain.

Lord Med. Why not, man? 'tis nothing but the truth.

Col. Med. My lord, I would do any thing to prevent——

Lord Med. What? Speak, George.

Col. Med. I cann't, my lord.

Lord Med. A father's ruin, you would say—I know the tenderness of your nature, Medway, and therefore I will not urge you; your father is not such a tyrant; I have always considered you as my friend.

Col. Med. My lord, to deserve that title still, I must not see you unhappy.

“*Lord Med.* Why willingly, I think you would not

“—nor would I make you so for the world—I have
“already hurt you but too much. I will not wrong
“you every way. I deserve the ruin I have brought
“upon myself, and am content to sink under it.

“*Col. Med.* My lord, that must not be while I
“have power to help it.

“*Lord Med.* I cannot ask it, son.”

Col. Med. I’ll give up all—even my love, to save
you.

Lord Med. You cannot mean it, sure!

Col. Med. I’ll do as you would have me.

Lord Med. What! marry Mrs. Knightly?

Col. Med. I will, my lord.

Lord Med. Give me your hand—Oh, George,
what a triumph is yours!—You make me ashamed.

[*Breaks away.*]

Col. Med. My lord, since your affairs are urgent, I
will not trust to the wavering of my own heart; I
will visit her this morning; but it will be proper
first to apprise poor Miss Richly of this sudden
change.

Lord Med. By all means; but take my advice,
Medway, and do not trust yourself to see her. Write
what you have to say, for sighs and tears are infec-
tious things. But all, I hope, will soon blow over;
and when you are married, you may then have it in
your power to make her amends for the fortune she
has lost.

Col. Med. Oh, my lord, you little know the heart
of Clara, it is not in the power of riches to heal a

wounded mind! But I must not trust myself to think upon the subject; I'll write to her whilst my resolution's warm. If she lives and can forget me, 'tis all I dare to hope. [Exit.]

Lord Med. Worthy creature! it almost goes against me to let him complete this match. Yet what other resource have I left? I hope this lady may make him happier than he expects—But I must haste and write to her directly, to request that as a favour, which I am sure she will think her greatest happiness. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

Changes to Mrs. KNIGHTLY'S House. Mrs. KNIGHTLY, as just coming in, giving her Capuchin, &c. to her Maid.

Mrs. Knight. Has any one been here since I went out?

Maid. No, madam.

Mrs. Knight. Nor any letter or message?

Maid. Not that I know of, madam.

Mrs. Knight. Go and send Miss Richly to me. [Exit Maid.] What a mortifying situation am I in! to have made advances to a man, who, instead of stepping forward to receive them, shrinks back—My Lord Medway, I know, would gladly promote a union between his son and me. The backwardness on his side then, can proceed from no other cause but a pre-engagement of his heart. Yet that may be got

over; but if (as I fear) my sister loves him, I must not come to any explanation with her; for whilst I seem ignorant of it, I am not obliged to compliment her at the expence of my own quiet—I begin to wish her out of my sight.

Enter Miss RICHLY.

Have you done the work I left with you, Clara?

Miss Rich. I did not imagine you had given it to me as a task, sister—I have done nothing to it yet.

Mrs. Knight. I cannot conceive what you have got into that head of yours, child; for of late you never do any thing that I desire—I think I never saw so strange an alteration.

Miss Rich. Excuse me, sister, the alteration is in you.

Mrs. Knight. Oh, your servant, ma'am, you have learnt to contradict too—but it would become you, Clara, to remember I am your elder sister; and though there is no great difference in our years, yet I think the state you are in should teach you a little more respect to me.

Miss Rich. Indeed, sister, I do not want to be hourly reminded of that; I am sufficiently humbled already.

Mrs. Knight. Upon my word, Clara, I believe you will find humility the most useful virtue you can practise; and that you may have a better opportunity of doing so, I have thought of placing you in a sober retired family in the country; and who knows but

you may captivate some rural squire, and then you may live according to your own taste, you know.

Miss Rich. I'll tell her at once to punish her for her cruelty. [*Aside.*] Perhaps, sister, I may have it in my power to do so without captivating a rural squire——

Mrs. Knight. I am glad to hear it; but we won't talk of your visionary schemes at present. I won't let her explain herself. [*Aside.*]

Miss Rich. There is a gentleman, sister——

Mrs. Knight. Well, well, keep him to yourself; I'll hear none of your love-secrets.

Enter a Servant, and delivers a Note to Mrs. KNIGHTLY.

Serv. From my Lord Medway, madam; the servant waits for an answer.

Miss Rich. Lord Medway! what can this mean?

[*Aside.*]

Mrs. Knight. My compliments to his lordship, and shall be glad of the colonel's company. [*Exit Serv.*] You were going to say something of a gentleman, Clara, ha, ha, pray who is the gentleman? But before you tell me your secret, I'll entitle myself to the favour by making you my confidant. I have made a conquest, you must know, of which this billet informs me.

Miss Rich. A conquest, sister! I thought this note had come from Lord Medway.

Mrs. Knight. Why, so it does, and the conquest is

though not of Lord Medway, yet of one who, I hope, will be Lord Medway—I'll read you the note.

‘MADAM,

‘’Tis sometimes as great a fault to be too modest as too bold; my son is charmed with you, yet durst not tell you so. I told him that I would, and even went so far as to promise him a favourable reception. You see, madam, my credit as a man of sagacity is at stake on this occasion, and I am sure you have too much goodness to let me forfeit it. I flatter myself you will allow Colonel Medway the honour of kissing your hand. He will wait on you in half an hour, if you do not forbid him.

‘I am, madam, &c.

‘MEDWAY.

‘P. S. I hope you will be alone.’

What do you say to this, Clara? Is your lover as pretty a fellow as Colonel Medway?

Miss Rich. Oh, sister, this is too much! but I give you joy.

Mrs. Knight. What's the matter, child! Why, surely, my dear Clara, thou couldst not have any design upon the colonel! Could you suppose that a man of family, like him, would marry without a fortune to support his rank and title?

Miss Rich. I am satisfied I was mistaken, madam, and shall now be obliged to you if you will send me into the country directly.

‘*Mrs. Knight.* Why, really, my dear, I think you

“ judge right. I am sorry you have been so imprudent as to suffer any little gallantries, with which the colonel might have treated you, to take a serious hold on you ; but since it has happened so unluckily, I own I think it will be rather awkward for you to be in the house on the occasion ; for, to tell you the truth, I intend to marry him.

“ *Miss Rich.* Then, sister, I will, if you please, retire for the present to the house of my friend who brought me up, till you are at leisure to dispose of me otherwise.”

Mrs. Knight. You are perfectly right, my dear ; I am pleased at this mark of your discretion—We don't part in anger, Clara ; I shall always be your sincere friend, I assure you.

Miss Rich. I hope so, sister—I will just go and give a few directions to the servant, and then come to take my leave of you.

Mrs. Knight. You will not then be long in giving your orders, for I suppose you would not choose to meet the colonel here. Besides, you find, he desires to see me alone.

Miss Rich. I shall not interrupt you. [Exit.]

Mrs. Knight. Poor Clara! I pity you, and am sorry to build my happiness on the ruin of yours ; but I'll make you amends. I see she loves, but 'tis plain she is not beloved. Perhaps 'tis really as I said, and he has won her affections by a few compliments, meant only in *gaiete de cœur*. I hope that may be the case ; for, notwithstanding my tenderness for him, I have

delicacy enough to be unhappy, if I did not wholly possess his heart.

Enter Maid, and gives Mrs. KNIGHTLY a Letter.

Why, this is for my sister!

Maid. Madam, you ordered they should all be brought to you. [*Exit Maid.*

Mrs. Knight. Oh, I had forgot—It is of no great consequence now; but let us see who this is from—George Medway! I am almost afraid to read it, but I will know the worst. [*Reads.*

‘ Within this hour, my Clara, the faithless despicable man, who called himself your lover, will sup-
‘ plicate your sister for her hand, and with a heart
‘ long devoted, and never, never to be recalled from
‘ you, offer mean, deceitful vows to her. (Heavens!
‘ what’s this!) I know not what I write, for despair
‘ dictates to my trembling hand. Hate me, despise
‘ me, I conjure, (I wish I could do so too.) yet hear
‘ the reasons for this fatal change——”

Oh, this has given me an ague fit!

Enter Miss RICHLY.

Miss Rich. I am come now, sister, to bid you farewell. [*Mrs. Knightly rushes out of the room.*] Bless me, what can be the matter with my sister! she seems strangely agitated—she was reading a letter—it was not that which she just now shewed to me—What can it be? but I’ll not intrude to ask her; I

believe she can dispense with the ceremony of an adieu, and I can depart without one.

As she is going out, Colonel MEDWAY is shewn in by a Servant, both stop short, and look at each other.

Col. Med. I did not expect this, Clara! I thought you would have spared me the pangs of such a meeting.

Miss Rich. It was not designed, sir, believe me; yet, if you had vouchsafed to have given me but a little notice of this visit, it would have been but kind.

Col. Med. I thought my letter, distracted as it was, would at least have prevented an interview.

Miss Rich. What letter?

Col. Med. Did not you receive one from me within this half hour? It was the earliest notice I could give you.

Miss Rich. I received none; but now you mention it, I am afraid it has fallen into my sister's hands.

Col. Med. If so, then, Clara, what a monster must I appear to you? ignorant as you are of the motives of my strange conduct, which in that letter I explained at full.

Miss Rich. Indeed I am but ill prepared for such a sudden shock—yet I am willing to believe you must have had strong reasons for what you have done.

Col. Med. Can the generosity of your heart admit it as an excuse for my leaving you, that it is to save

from utter and immediate ruin, a father that I dearly love ?

Miss Rich. It can, sir, and honour you for the motive; for I am sure that nothing else could have brought about such an event; and I should little deserve that esteem which I hope you still retain for me, if I could not give up my feeble claim to your tenderness, for ties of so much more importance.

Col. Med. Oh, Clara, why did I give you up ? what have I got to compensate for your loss ?

Miss Rich. Your virtue ! the consciousness of having acted right—You have broke no oaths, no promises to me ; nay, I have often told you, I would never be yours but with your father's consent ; for, sunk as I am in fortune, I would not meanly creep into a family that rejected me. And for this reason, I would neither give, nor receive a vow ; but left you at full liberty to make a better choice, when your duty or your interest should urge you.

Col. Med. That last word, madam, carries a reproach in it, which I cannot bear from you.

Miss Rich. Do not mistake me, sir ; I have not the least suspicion, that interest has the smallest share in this action—I wish it had—for then, perhaps, I should part with you with less reluctance, than now I own I have power to do.—But we must not touch upon this string—my sister loves you, and I hope will make you happy.

Col. Med. Happy, do you say ! no, Clara, no, hap-

piness and I have shaken hands; what I have done to-day has made a wretch of me for life.

Miss Rich. Oh, sir, shew more indifference, if you would not have me repine too much at my own sad fate.

Col. Med. And what is mine then, Clara, condemned to losing what is dearer to me than life; with the superadded grief of giving up my days to one I cannot love. Your condition is not quite so wretched; you still are free, and time may incline you to bestow your heart upon some happy man.

Miss Rich. Never, never!

Col. Med. Do not say so—I had but that hope left to keep me from desperation; if I lose it, I shall forget all obligations, and give my father up to poverty and shame,

Miss Rich. No more, I beseech you, sir—you have made a noble sacrifice of your love—do not lose the merit of your filial goodness, by repenting of an act, that raises you higher even in my esteem.

Col. Med. Clara, the tears stand trembling in your eyes while you speak—pray, give them vent, for I am ashamed to weep alone. [*He turns from her.*]

Miss Rich. See, mine are dispersed already.—Collect yourself, I beg of you, you have a noble character to sustain.—

Col. Med. Oh, Clara, I am unequal to the task!—I have no fortitude left—

Miss Rich. Think of your unhappy father, sir!—let that keep up your resolution. “I grant you have a

“ difficult task; for my sister may possibly think her-
 “ self affronted, by the explanation you have made in
 “ that letter, which has fallen into her hands.

“ *Col. Med.* I hope she may!

“ *Miss Rich.* Nay, do not indulge in such a vain
 “ hope; 'tis but a surmise of mine, and may have
 “ nothing in it.—I know she suspected our attach-
 “ ment to each other, yet that did not check the pro-
 “ gress of her love.”—I am going to quit her house
 directly; and this, sir, for my own, for my sister's,
 and for your sake, is the last time we must ever
 meet!—Forget me, sir, and try—I conjure you
 try—to be happy!— [Exit.

Col. Med. Clara!—stay!—stay!—So! all's at an
 end!—and the hope I had nourished for many
 years, is vanished like a dream.—This trial was
 more than I thought I could support; but her noble
 firmness, I believe, made me ashamed to sink quite
 under the blow that parted us for ever—I wish I
 were out of this fatal house—for I am very unfit to
 act the lover's part.

Enter Lord MEDWAY.

Lord Med. How now, Medway! what's the mean-
 ing of this? alone, and with a countenance of despair!
 I bid you wear a better face. Where's Mrs. Knight-
 ly? have not you seen her yet? I thought, by this
 time, to have found you at her feet, and as I passed
 by the door, stepped in to help you to make love;
 for I know your heart is not warm in the business.

Col. Med. My lord, I am very glad you are come : you must, indeed, make love for me ; for I assure you, I am in no condition to speak for myself.

Lord Med. Why, what's the matter, man ? I suppose Miss Richly and you have been whining over one another : did not I warn you against that, George, and bid you write to her ?

Col. Med. So I did, my lord ; but, unfortunately, she did not receive my letter ; so that, by accident, we met just now, not, I assure you, with the least design on either side.

Lord Med. That was unlucky ; but how came she to miss of your letter ?

Col. Med. By a circumstance still more unlucky, for she is afraid her sister got it.

Lord Med. What a curst untoward accident, if that be so ; yet her love for you will make her overlook all this. 'Twas but a thing of course, mere gallantry. —I'll lead you to her, and turn it off.

Col. Med. I beg of you, my lord, to see her first alone ; she does not know that I am come ; the servant conducted me to this room, supposing she was here ; and lucky it was for me that it happened otherwise :—her sister's presence so disconcerted me, that I should have acquitted myself but very ill towards her.

Lord Med. But she expects you by this time ; a lover and out-stay his appointment ! for shame, George !

Col. Med. Let me beseech your lordship to dispense

with my seeing her just now ; I'll take a turn or two in the park, and endeavour to compose myself ; and if my passion for her sister should be mentioned, you, my lord, can, with a better grace than I, give it what turn you please.

Lord Med. Well—perhaps it may be better so. I own I had rather she should speak of that to me than to you.—Get you gone quickly—U'll prepare the way for you—She admits me to her toilet.

[*Exeunt different ways.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lord MEDWAY's House. Enter Lord MEDWAY.

Lord Medway.

BY what a strange fatality are all my actions governed!—Nothing that I can devise but what ends in disappointment and vexation.—Yet in this last instance, I ought to be thankful for my disappointment ; for had my design been accomplished, into what a horrid gulph should I have plunged my children. It makes my blood run cold to think of it.—I was born for destruction, and the ruins I have made myself are now come tumbling on my head. No hope left for avoiding them—no prospect before me but disgrace.—And the life of shame I have to look back on ! To think how I have abused and perverted every gift bestowed on me for a blessing !—How I sicken at my own reflections.——

Enter Colonel MEDWAY.

George! What now, George?

Col. Med. My lord, I have been endeavouring to assume such a frame of mind, as will, I hope, enable me to go through with the task in which I have engaged. I am ready now to wait on Mrs. Knightly.

Lord Med. I——did not expect you back so soon.

Col. Med. I thought, my lord, the sooner I returned, it would be the more agreeable to you, as well as respectful to the lady.

Lord Med. Can you feel nothing more than respect for that lady, son?

Col. Med. My lord, you know I cannot. My heart is given to another. I must be unhappy, yet I hope I shall not make Mrs. Knightly so.

Lord Med. Poor woman!—she is already too much so.

Col. Med. Have you had any conversation with her, my lord?

Lord Med. I have.—You cannot be her husband.

Col. Med. I am willing, my lord, if the lady will accept of me.

Lord Med. You know not what you say.—Oh, George, George!—you will start when I tell you the strange discovery I have made.

Col. Med. What is it, my lord?

Lord Med. Mrs. Knightly——she to whom I would have joined you——I find is——

Col. Med. What?

Lord Med. Oh, Medway!—my own daughter.

Col. Med. You amaze me, my lord—how did you discover it?

Lord Med. When I went so solicit for you, I found her in her closet, under great agitation, on account of the letter you had written to her sister.—I pleaded for you, but found her averse and cold.—In a little pause of discourse, I happened to cast my eyes on the picture of a lady, which hung just before me, and was struck with the resemblance of a beauty, whom, in my early days, I loved, and cruelly betrayed.

Col. Med. I remember, my lord, to have heard you speak of some such thing—a lady, who, when you made your first campaign in Portugal, gave you her love.

Lord Med. The same—I thought the injured countenance seemed to frown upon me. Surprized at the sight, I hastily demanded whose the picture was, and was told by Mrs. Knightly 'twas her mother's.

Col. Med. That must, indeed, my lord, have shocked you.

Lord Med. Oh' 'twas nothing to what I suffered after, when farther urging her to satisfy my curiosity, she told me her mother's name and family! The apparent confusion this threw me into, roused her in her turn to ask me some questions, which brought about this amazing explanation.

Col. Med. She could not know you by name, my lord, as it was since my birth you assumed that with the title of Medway.

Lord Med. True.—She had heard of me by my own family name, and asked me, with a faltering voice, whether I had not formerly been at Lisbon, and borne the name of Selby. My acknowledging that I had, threw her into agonies, from which I, with difficulty, recovered her.

Col. Med. Did you never know, my lord, that you had a daughter by that lady?

Lord Med. Oh, no, no! I was recalled to England early in my amour with her. I married soon after my return, and, thoughtless and young as I then was, never inquired after her more.

Col. Med. How then, my lord, can you be certain of this fact?

Lord Med. Oh, Medway! by too sure an evidence—The penitence and deep remorse of a dying woman! The unhappy lady confessed the secret, with all its circumstances, to this her daughter, when she was on her death-bed.

Col. Med. Mrs. Knightly, then, had passed for Mr. Richly's daughter?

Lord Med. She had; the match between him and her mother was hastily concluded by her friends, immediately after my departure. At the time of this lady's birth, Mr. Richly was absent on his affairs in the Indies; and though she came into the world in less than seven months after the marriage, yet (this circumstance being carefully concealed from him) he never doubted of her being his own.

Col. Med. Poor Clara! she then has been doubly

wronged, in being deprived of her birth-right, as well as in losing the unequal portion which her father left her.

Lord Med. That was the cause which wrung the secret from her dying mother's breast. Her deceased husband had, through a partial fondness for his supposed eldest daughter, left her such a disproportionate share of his wealth; and the mother, in divulging the secret, charged Mrs. Knightly, with her last breath, to do justice to her sister. This she herself, in the hurry of her shame, surprise, and grief, acknowledged to me.

Col. Med. I long to know, 'my lord, what resulted from this extraordinary interview.

Lord Med. Mrs. Knightly's agitations are not to be described. She wept and wrung her hands. I mixed my tears with her's; and while she fell on her knees before me, I involuntarily dropped on one of mine, and begged of her to accept of a blessing from her repentant father. She strained me to her bosom; then rising with a noble air, she made a sorrowful and silent motion with her hand that I should leave her. I did so; and hastened home, to brood over my own reflections—Oh, such reflections, such reflections, George!

Col. Med. My lord, there is something so extraordinary in this event, that it looks as if Providence itself had interposed.

Lord Med. Oh, Medway, 'tis for your sake then; I do not deserve the care of Heaven!

Col. Med. I beg, my lord, you will not entertain such desponding thoughts, but hope the best.

Lord Med. George! there's no foundation here for hope; I want that within which should support me. It is not the flashiness of wit, or vanity of superior talents that can avail me in an hour like this. I'd give them all, nay, the whole world, were I master of it, to be possessed of such a virtuous self-acquitted heart as yours.

Col. Med. Your thinking thus, my lord, makes you almost the very man you wish to be.

Lord Med. Oh, George, George! words cannot describe the anguish which I feel. I should be resigned to it, did it concern myself only, as the just punishment of a life of folly and vice; but when I think of you and of your mother, I am distracted.

Enter Lady MEDWAY.

Lady Med. My dear! [*Lord Medway turns from her.*] Medway, why do you let your father sink thus under his apprehensions?

Col. Med. Do you speak to him, madam, he wants your tenderness to soothe the troubles of his mind.

Lady Med. My dear, you have no cause to be thus affected; I come a happy messenger of joyful news to you.

Lord Med. Joyful, do you say! that would indeed surprise me.

Lady Med. Mrs. Knightly is in my chamber, my lord. We have had a long conversation. She has

told me the strange event which this day has unfolded, and begs to speak with you—shall I bring her in ?

Lord Med. Ay, pray do, my dear. [*Exit L. Med.*]

Col. Med. Reassume your spirits, my lord ; I dare promise you a happy issue to this affair.

Lord Med. I own this unexpected visit from Mrs. Knightly has a little revived me ; and the generous frankness with which she has communicated the secret to my wife, shews she has a noble and enlarged mind.

Enter Lady MEDWAY, and Mrs. KNIGHTLY.

Mrs. Knight. My lord, I thought to have found you alone. I cannot, without confusion, look up to Colonel Medway.

Lord Med. You, madam, have no cause ; but, if my son's presence creates in you any uneasiness, he shall withdraw.

Mrs. Knight. He need not, my lord ; for as he is materially concerned in what I have to say, it is fit he should be present at my explanation. I presume, sir, you are by this time no stranger to my story.

Col. Med. I think myself happy, madam, in finding I have so near and tender a claim to your regard.

Mrs. Knight. I hope to give you one still nearer, sir. I will not now apologize for the means by which I came at the knowledge of that mutual love which I find there is between my sister and you.

Lady Med. It needs no excuse, madam ; it was a

happy event, as it gave my lord the opportunity of making a discovery so fortunate for us all.

Mrs. Knight. My lord, I owe my sister a large amends for the distress I have occasioned her on more accounts than one; and you, in your turn, I think, should recompence your son for the sacrifice he was willing to make to you. Has he your permission to make Clara his bride?

Col. Med. Oh, madam, you are too, too good.

Mrs. Knight. You have but little reason, sir, to say so yet. My lord, the colonel's love for my sister ensures his happiness, and, to render her acceptable to you, I am ready to share half my fortune with her.

Lord Med. Oh, Medway, what an exalted mind is here!

Lady Med. My dear, do not keep your son suspended; he seems to check the transports that I see rising in his heart, till he has his father's sanction to his love.

Lord Med. Take, take your Clara from this excellent creature's hand, and may you both be blessed!

Mrs. Knight. No thanks, colonel—[*The Colonel advances to Mrs. Knightly.*—]—restrain your raptures till you see my sister. I have sent to desire her company here—And now, my lord, I hope I have, by this one act of justice (for it is no more) made happy the nearest and dearest relations I have on earth.

Lord Med. Son! Lady Medway! help me to praise and to acknowledge, as I ought, such unexampled goodness!

Lady Med. Oh, my dear, I want words——Medway's gratitude, you see, has stopt his utterance.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Miss Richly, madam, is below.

Mrs. Knight. My lord, and Lady Medway, will you let me have the pleasure of presenting the colonel to my sister without any other witness?

Lord and Lady Med. By all means.

Col. Med. You, madam, have the best right to dispose of me.

Mrs. Knight. Come, sir.

[She gives him her hand, and he leads her out.]

Lord Med. Oh, Lady Medway, I have not merited the benefits which are thus showered down upon me.——But it is your goodness, yours and my children's virtue, have been the care of Providence, and I am blessed but for your sakes. Yet, my dear, I have the satisfaction to assure you, that what has passed this morning, joined to some other late incidents, has so thoroughly awakened reflection in me, that from this day forward you will find me a new man.

Lady Med. My lord, if you are sensible of any thing in your conduct that you would wish to rectify, I rejoice that you have taken your resolutions from the feelings of your own heart; for it would grieve me if I thought I had even by a look reproached you.

Lord Med. You never did, madam; I acknowledge you have been the best of wives; 'tis time now that

I should in my turn study to deserve that constant and tender regard for you, which I have hitherto but too much slighted. And now, best of women, receive my hand a second time; and with it an assurance, which I could never make before, that you possess my heart intire. [They embrace.]

Lady Med. Oh, my dear, I was never truly happy till this instant.

Lord Med. You'll find my conduct as perfectly reformed as your heart can wish; assure yourself you will.

Lady Med. Pray, my dear, no more—you are now every thing that I would have you to be. I have but one wish left, which, could it be accomplished, would render me completely happy—Poor Louisa!

Lord Med. I understand you, my dear—I hear young Branville is returned.

Lady Med. He is, my lord; he arrived last night—I do not presume to mention him; but indeed she cannot be happy with Sir Anthony.

Lord Med. I would willingly gratify you in every thing; but how can I acquit myself with honour to Sir Anthony? You know he has my promise.

Lady Med. I know it, my dear; yet I am sure he is still so much in Mrs. Knightly's power, that with her assistance, I make no doubt but you could be easily disengaged from it.

Lord Med. If that could be done——

Lady Med. We shall certainly have a visit from him presently; suppose, my lord, Mrs. Knightly were to

try her influence on him when they meet, it will be a good opportunity——

Lord Med. Well, my dear,——you shall take your own way.

Enter Colonel MEDWAY, Mrs. KNIGHTLY, Miss RICHLY, and LOUISA; while Lord Medway and the Colonel talk apart. Mrs. Knightly presents her sister to Lady Medway.

Mrs. Knight. Madam, receive a sister from my hands.

Miss Rich. Oh, sister, my obligations to you——

Mrs. Knight. No more, sister; I have but acquitted myself of a duty——

Lady Med. Louisa, I have been petitioning for you once more; my lord has yielded, if he can with honour get off from his word with Sir Anthony. Dear Mrs. Knightly, with a little of your help, I am sure it could easily be done.

Mrs. Knight. Madam you may command me in any thing.

Lou. Oh, madam, a word from you, nay, a kind look, would, I am sure, recal your fugitive lover.

Mrs. Knight. I have not the vanity to think so; but since it will be agreeable to you, I'll try if I have still any interest in him.

Lady Med. This is about his time of visiting us. What if you were to try the experiment here?

Mrs. Knight. To oblige you, ladies——thus much I must tell you, I never mean to marry again; but I

know it will content Sir Anthony barely to be restored to my good graces.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir Anthony Branville is below, my lord!

Lord Med. I'll wait on him.

Lady Med. Dear my lord, suffer him to be conducted in here.

Mrs. Knight. My lord, I have a design of stealing him from Miss Medway, I assure you.

Lord Med. Oh, I see you have been plotting— Desire Sir Anthony to walk up— Louisa, on this joyful day I must not suffer you to wear a look of discontent— You owe all to this lady, and the best of mothers.

Lady Med. Louisa, you had best retire. [*Exit Louisa.*]

Enter Sir ANTHONY, bows low to Lord and Lady Medway, then looks round with surprise.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, I thought my eyes would have been blessed with the sight of my fair mistress.

Mrs. Knight. Then I find it is all over. [*Half aside.*] What, Sir Anthony, not a look! Have you quite forgot me?

Sir A. Bran. Ah, madam, that inquiry comes a little of the latest, I do assure you.

Mrs. Knight. I am sorry for it, Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, I hope your lordship is of opinion that I do not deviate from that fidelity which I owe your excellent daughter, in entering into conference with this lady.

Lord Med. By no means, sir.

Sir A. Bran. I flatter myself I am indulged with your ladyship's favourable construction on the same occasion.

Lady Med. Without doubt, Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. Colonel, I would entreat the favour of being uncensured by you likewise.

Col. Med. Oh, Sir Anthony, the laws of good breeding are not to be dispensed with.

Mrs. Knight. Sir Anthony, I am glad of the opportunity of asking your pardon, in presence of this worthy family, for any part of my behaviour which you may have taken amiss.

Sir A. Bran. Madam, I am not worthy of so great a concession; would to heaven there had never been any occasion given for it!

Mrs. Knight. I wish so too, Sir Anthony; but I find my repentance comes too late.

Sir A. Bran. Repentance! heavens, madam, do you condescend to feel any compunction on the occasion?

Mrs. Knight. I do indeed, Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. Then, madam, I apprehend it will not be so adviseable for me to abide within the reach of your influence; I think I cannot do a wiser thing than to stop my ears against your allurements.

Mrs. Knight. Not till you have first heard me, dear Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. Dear Sir Anthony! [*Aside.*] I had best depart, Lady Medway.

Lady Med. No, pray stay, good Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. There is a great peril in it, I assure your ladyship.

Col. Med. I thought your love for my sister, Sir Anthony, would be a sufficient guard against your relapsing.

Sir A. Bran. Her charms, colonel, I am ready to acknowledge should be an armour of proof; but give me leave to tell you, if there be a vulnerable part about me, this sorceress (craving her pardon for the expression) will certainly find it out.

Mrs. Knight. Sir Anthony, I confess I have been to blame in trifling with a man of your worth; yet I own I did not think you would have taken my little capricious coyness for an absolute refusal of your addresses.

Sir A. Bran. Madam, madam, take care; I am but a man; though I hope not without fortitude to sustain those trials of my virtue and my patience.

Mrs. Knight. 'Tis I, Sir Anthony, who have most need of fortitude—but go, ungrateful as you are.

Sir A. Bran. Do you hear that, my lord? Before Heaven, there never was such an enchantress since the days of Armida.

Lord Med. I am surprised, I confess, Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. Well you may, my lord—she is hung round with spells—I do aver it to you I am rooted here; I have not power to stir, my lord.

Col. Med. Bless me, Sir Anthony, that's very strange.

Sir A. Bran. [*Walks about.*] I use the word but metaphorically, colonel; I have not absolutely lost the use of my limbs, thank Heaven.

Lord Med. Then, Sir Anthony, you had better retire, before it be too late.

Mrs. Knight. Ay do, and carry that love, which was my right, to Miss Medway; but let me tell you, sir, as a punishment for your inconstancy, that her heart is already given away to another.

Sir A. Bran. 'Tis unlawful in you, madam, to slander an innocent lady's reputation.

Mrs. Knight. I speak nothing but the truth, Sir Anthony; and what is more, I know your nephew Branville is the man, and that she is equally beloved by him.

Sir A. Bran. My nephew Branville! oh, heavens, madam, what do you tell me! my lord! my Lady Medway! may I believe what this incomprehensible fair one says?

Lady Med. Sir Anthony, I must own that I believe there is an affection between your nephew, and my daughter.

Sir A. Bran. I am thunder-struck—petrified—converted into stone.

Lady Med. I think, Sir Anthony, there is nothing so extraordinary in the circumstance.

Sir A. Bran. Madam, there is such a degree of impurity, in the bare imagination of a nuptial so circumstanced, as has, I assure you, totally subverted my whole system.

Col. Med. I am sorry, Sir Anthony, you were not informed of this sooner.

Sir A. Bran. Sir, 'tis not too late to prevent my honour from being stained.

Lord Med. You must judge for yourself in this case, Sir Anthony.

Sir A. Bran. My lord, passionately as I admire the lady, I would suffer martyrdom, rather than solemnize a marriage under such inauspicious influence.

Col. Med. Sir Anthony, you are not pressed to do it.

Sir A. Bran. [*Apart to the Colonel.*] Colonel, I am not a man of a sanguinary spirit, but if such a measure is deemed necessary—I am at your service either afoot or on horseback—you understand me.

Col. Med. There is no occasion, I assure you, sir.

Sir A. Bran. I am ready—that's all—my alacrity is pretty notorious on those occasions.

Col. Med. For my part I approve of your punctilio intirely.

Sir A. Bran. I am proud of your approbation; my lord, I hope I am honoured with yours, in giving up my pretensions to the fair lady, your daughter.

Lord Med. Sir, you have my free consent.

Mrs. Knight. Then, Sir Anthony, I am sure you have too much generosity not to promote your nephew's happiness, if my lord is willing —

Lord Med. I have no objection to Mr. Branville, madam,—but Sir Anthony knows my inability to give my daughter a fortune equal to her rank—

Mrs. Knight. Oh, my lord, I am sure Sir Anthony is too noble to let the sordid consideration of money be a bar to the happiness of two faithful lovers—

Sir A. Bran. On the contrary, madam, I am charmed that my nephew has such an opportunity of shewing the generosity inherent in the family of the Branvilles, by contemning riches, in comparison of beauty.

Col. Med. Indeed, Sir Anthony, he deserves all your affection; for though I know he dotes on my sister, yet hearing that you addressed her, he resolved to give her up.

Mrs. Knight. Generous young man!

Sir A. Bran. Ah, ladies, see what delight the little sportive god takes in persecuting us true lovers!—My lord, if my nephew has your consent, I assure you, I will render him in point of fortune, worthy of the lady of his heart.

Lord Med. Sir, after an instance of such generosity, your alliance must be doubly acceptable to me.

Mrs. Knight. And now, Sir Anthony, I hope you will return to your lawful sovereign.

Sir A. Bran. Arbitress of my fate, thus I reassume my happy bondage—

[*He kneels, and takes Mrs. Knightly's hand.*]

Enter Sir HARRY and Lady FLUTTER.

Sir H. Flut. What the deuce is all this! my uncle in heroics at my widow's feet! every thing's topsyturvy, I think—My lord! Lady Medway! an explanation quickly, for Heaven's sake! Miss Medway

gave us a hint of some strange things that were going forward here—What are you all about?

Lady Flut. Dear Mrs. Knightly, I absolutely die with curiosity!

Sir H. Flut. My dear, that's a disease that will never kill you, for you have been wonderfully subject to it ever since you and I were acquainted.

Lady Flut. Pr'ythee, Sir Harry, let your tongue keep pace with your wit, and then you will not talk so fast.—Tell me, do, Mrs. Knightly.

Sir H. Flut. No, don't, Mrs. Knightly—My dear, you really put me in mind of the cat in the fable, who was metamorphosed into a fine lady; but upon the first temptation—slap—egad she was a cat again.

Lady Flut. And you put me in mind—

Lady Med. Take care, my dear, take care.

[*Draws her aside.*]

Lord Med. Beware of a relapse, Lady Flutter, you are now happy if you are inclined to continue so.

[*Aside to her.*]

Lady Flut. So, my lord! who has metamorphosed you, pray?

Lord Med. Lady Medway.

Mrs. Knight. My dear Lady Flutter, you shall know all at another opportunity. For the present, I am sure it will give you pleasure to wish the colonel and my sister joy on their happy union, to which my lord has consented. You are to congratulate Miss Medway too on her approaching nuptials with Mr. Branville.——

Sir A. Bran. And you are to felicitate me, niece Flutter, on being permitted the transcendent happiness of once more basking in the sunshine of this lady's favour.

Lord Med. And you are all to congratulate me, upon a double occasion; first, on that of being perfectly blessed in domestic joys; and next, that of seeing me a thoroughly reformed man.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE.

WHAT strange odd maggots fill an author's pate!
A female court of justice—rare conceit!
Ladies, I give you joy of your new stations,
I think you've had a trial—of your patience.
What, five long acts, and not one pleasant sally!
But grove Sir Anthony's attempt to rally——
No sprightly rendezvous, no pretty fellows,
No wife intriguing, nor no husband jealous!
If to such innovations you submit,
And swallow tame morality for wit;
If such dull rules you let a woman teach,
Her next attempt, perhaps, will be to—preach.
I told her (for it vexed me to the heart)
Madam—excuse me——I don't like my part——
'Tis out of nature—never drawn from life,
Who ever heard of such a passive wife?
To bear so much—'tis not in flesh and blood—
Such females might have liv'd before the flood.
But now the character will seem so flat,
Give me threats, tears, hysterics, and all that—
If this don't work upon my lord, I hope
You'll so contrive the plot—I may elope.
Take my advice, I think I know the town,
Without such aids your Piece will scarce go down.

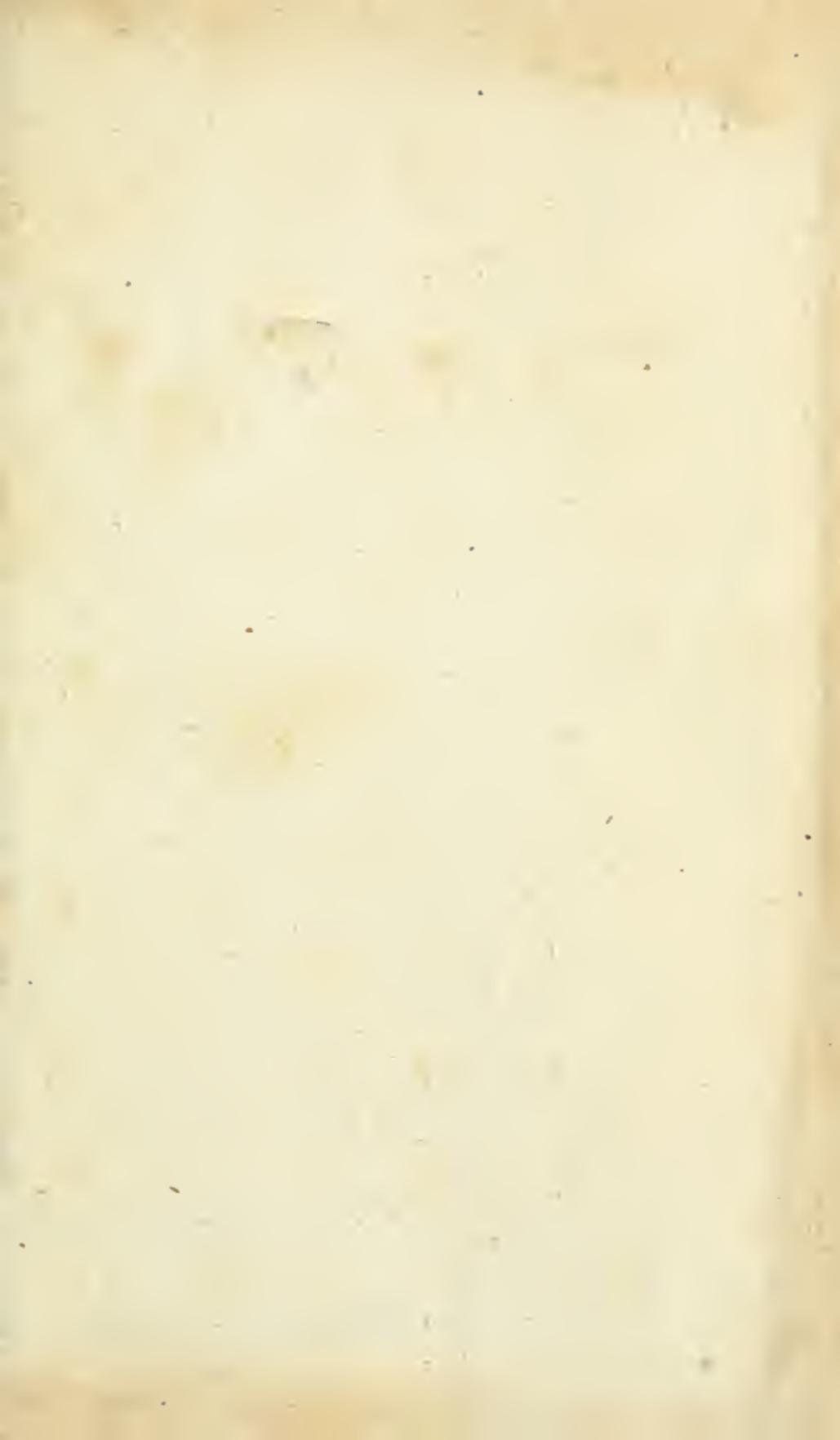
*Hold, friend, she cry'd—I think I've hit the way
To reconcile both sexes to the play;
For, while the prologue bids our own be sov' reign,
The scenes instruct the other how to govern.
A harmless plot—with credit to dismiss
The Piece—you know the ladies never hiss.
And though they should condemn it, yet the men sure
Will leave a woman's faults to women's censure.
They, prone to meekness, charity, and love,
Are always silent where they can't approve.
But if at loud applause we dare to aim,
It is the men must ratify our claim.*

THE END.











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