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De Wilde ad viv pinx' t

Bromius sculp

MR. HARLEY as I. U. SIGNAY.

— Yes yes—'tis she!

This little Croys— I know it by sure marks!

London. Printed for J. Bell British Library, Strand April 2. 1791.

ZARA.

A
TRAGEDY.

BY AARON HILL, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES - ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

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“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 XCI.



TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
PRINCE.

SIR,

WRITERS, *who mean no Int'rest, but their Arts;*
Of undepending Minds, and stedfast Hearts,
Disclaiming Hopes will empty Forms neglect;
Nor need PERMISSION——to address Respect.

Frank, as the manly Faith of ancient Time,
Let Truth, for once, approach the Great, in Rhyme!
Nor Public Benefit, misguided, stray,
Because a Private Wisher points its Way.

If wond'ring, here, your Greatness condescends
To ask, What's HE, who thus, uncall'd, attends?
Smile, at a Suitor, who, in Courts, untrac'd,
Pleas'd, if o'erlook'd, thus owns his humble Taste.—

Vow'd an Unenvier of the busy Great;
Too plain for Flatt'ry; and, too calm for Hate:
Hid to be Happy; who surveys, unknown,
The pow'less Cottage, and the peaceless Throne;
A silent Subject to His own Controul;
Of active passions, but unyielding Soul;

Engross'd by *NO Pursuits*, amus'd by All ;
But, deaf as Adders, to Ambition's Call :
 Too Free, for Pow'r, (or Prejudice) to WIN,
 And, safely lodging Liberty WITHIN.

Pardon, Great Prince! *th' unfashionable strain*,
 That shuns to dedicate ; nor seeks to gain :
 That (self-resigning) knows no narrow View ;
 And but for Public Blessings, courts ev'n YOU!

Late a bold Tracer of your measur'd Mind,
 (While, by the mournful SCENE, to Grief inclin'd,)
 I saw your Eloquence of Eyes confess
 Soft Sense of BELVIDERA's deep Distress,
 Prophetic thence, fore-deem'd the rising Years ;
 And hail'd a HAPPY NATION in YOUR Tears !

Oh!--nobly touch'd!--*th' inspiring Pleasure choose*,
 Snatch from the sable Wave, the sinking MUSE!
 Charming, be charm'd! the Stage's Anguish heal:
 And teach a languid People how to feel.

Then her full Soul shall TRAGIC Pow'r impart,
 And reach Three Kingdoms in their Prince's Heart !
 Lightness, disclaim'd, shall blush itself away :
 And reas'ning SENSE resume forgotten Sway.
 Love, Courage, Loyalty, Taste, Honour, Truth,
 Flash'd from the Scene, re-charm our list'ning Youth :
 And, Virtues (by YOUR Influence form'd) sustain
 The future Glories of their Founder's Reign.

*Nor let due Care of a protected Stage,
Misjudg'd Amusement, but spare Hours engage ;
Strong, serious TRUTHS, the manly Muse displays ;
And leads charm'd Reason through those flow'ry
Ways.*

*While HISTORY's cold Care but Facts inrolls,
The MUSE (persuasive) saves the pictur'd Souls !
Beyond all Egypt's GUMS, embalms Mankind :
And stamps the living Features of the Mind.*

*Time can eject the Sons of Pow'r, from Fame ;
'And He, who gains a World, may LOSE his Name.
But cherish'd Arts insure immortal Breath :
And bid their prop'd Defenders tread on Death !*

*Look back, lov'd Prince! on Age's sunk in shade !
'And feel, what DARKNESS absent Genius made!
Think on the dead Fore-fillers of your Place !
Think on the stern First-founders of your Race!
And, where lost Story sleeps in silent Night ;
Charge to their Want of Taste, their Want of LIGHT.*

*When, in your rising Grove, (no Converse nigh)
BLACK EDWARD's awful Bust demands your Eye,
Think, from what Cause blind Chronicles DEFAME
The gross-told Tow'rings of that dreadful Name!
Search him, thro' FANCY ; And SUPPOSE him shown
By the long Glories to the MUSES known :
Shining, disclos'd :—o'ertrampling Death's Controul !
And, opening, backward, All his Depth of Soul !*

Then—*breathe a conscious Sigh to mourn his Fate,*
Who form'd no Writers, like his Spirit Great!
To limn his living Thoughts—past Fame renew:
And build HIM Honours they reserve for YOU!

I am,

With profound Respect,

SIR,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most humble,

And obedient Servant,

A. HILL.

AARON HILL.

HE who can survey the recorded life of this gentleman, without exultation, must be dead to virtue; He, who is not proud of the lustre it reflects upon his species, feels nothing of the enthusiasm that warms into kindred excellence.

AARON HILL was a native of the Capital, and born in Beaufort-Buildings, Strand, on the 10th of February, 1684-5. Paternally, his exemplar was a bad one, for his father GEORGE HILL, Esq. was lavish and indiscreet, and the legal right to a property of 2000*l.* a year, which would have devolved upon him, his Father so involved as to render it of no value to the family:

THE young gentleman, however *thus* unfortunate, was well gifted other ways; he was adorned by much mental power, and promptitude that carried that power to the best account—his mind was formed for enterprize, inventive and indefatigable. He had scarcely gone through Westminster, and completed his 14th year, when he sought

after fortune in other climes, and surely with a sufficient disregard of distance, for he undertook a voyage to *Constantinople*.—His expected advancement was baffled by a mean woman as far as was pecuniary, but the advancement in the best knowledge, the *savoir vivre*, he who mix'd so much with variety of character, and possess'd the mind of AARON HILL, could not but find a commodity readily convertible into wealth.

FEW men have been more multifarious in pursuit than this—For HE made *plays*, who could also make *Beech oil*. Among his struggles after pre-eminence he sought to rival the Russians in *Potashes*—and the Highlander first ventured down the Spey upon *Floats* at the suggestion and example of HILL.—He cut down forests of timber that JOHNSON could never have discovered, and shewed the English builder, that Scottish timber was perfectly applicable to ship-building.—He was occupied at once by the cultivation of the art of acting, and that of planting, and his imagination vibrated between South Carolina and the Theatre in the Haymarket.

HILL was one of those with whom POPE commenced a war, that dishonoured his great talents

—For something, or for nothing, he made HILL dive, and arise without spot from the mud of dullness; and the retort of HILL should be remembered as the keenest characteristic of POPE's literary life.

Tuneful ALEXIS, on the Thames' fair side,
 The ladies' *play-thing*, and the muses' pride,
 With merit popular, with wit polite,
 Easy though vain, and elegant though light,
 Desiring and *deserving* others praise,
 Poorly accepts a fame he ne'er repays :
 Unborn to cherish, SNEAKINGLY APPROVES,
 And wants the soul to *spread* the worth he *loves*.

I HAVE little more to add to this mention, but that in marriage he was happy, and he deserved his happiness ;—he was studious, and his labour was not in vain ; he attracted the love of man, and it is imagined lived strictly that life which he believed most acceptable to GOD.—Active usefulness attended him till he died, this happened in 1750. The shock of the great earthquake immediately preceded a shock to him fatal.

HE died in his 65th year, and was interred in the same grave with his lady in Westminster Abbey. His dramatic pieces are the following :

<i>Elfrid</i>	—	—	1710	<i>Rinaldo</i>	—	—	1711
<i>Walking Statue</i>	—		1710	<i>Fatal Vision</i>	—		1716
<i>Trick upon Trick</i>	—			<i>Henry V.</i>	—		1723

<i>Athelwold</i>	—	1732	<i>Merlin in Love</i>	—	1759
<i>Zara</i>	—	1735	<i>Muses in Mourning</i>		1759
<i>Alzira</i>	—	1736	<i>Snake in the Grass</i>	—	1759
<i>Merope</i>	—	1749	<i>Saul</i>	—	
<i>Roman Revenge</i>	—	1753	<i>Daranes</i>	—	
<i>Insolvent</i>	—	1758	<i>Fatal Extravagance.</i>		

ZARA.

IF it were merely from the ground-work of the Piece that this Play should be estimated, much of our Admiration would abate—Religious Differences are now neither felt with that Horror, nor do they, thank Heaven, produce now the Miseries that Bigotry and Ignorance formerly originated.

BUT ZARA has other and strong Claims—from the natural delineation of the Passions. M. VOLTAIRE was the Original Author, but even his Play is an *English* one, and the French Stage grew animated by the Transfusion of the manly Energy of Shakspeare. The present is obviously an elegant liberal Translation from the ZAIRE of Voltaire, with some trivial Alterations of Names and Sentiments.

In this Piece Mrs. CIEBER made her Theatrical début in the Character of Zara.

P R E F A C E
T O T H E R E A D E R.

THE Beauties of *Nature* will be Beauties *everlastingly*.— If they are, sometimes, *eclipsed* by a Cloud of ill Accidents, they *disperse* the dark *Screen* ; and, again, become amiable.

BUT, unwilling to suppose, we are, *now*, under Influence of such a *Cloud*, with regard to *Dramatical Taste*, I thought it more decent, (and *juster*) to charge its Degeneracy to the STAGE, than to the *Genius* of the Nation.

ACCOUNTING in this Manner for the *Defect*, I have often taken Pleasure, (when turning my Search towards a *Remedy*) to consider it, as no improbable Hope, that YOUNG *Actors* and *Actresses*, beginning, *unseduced* by AFFECTED EXAMPLES, might go some Length, towards what has been said of a celebrated Writer—

“ *Who reach’d Perfection, in his first Essay.*”

IT required, methought, but the Assistance of a lively *Imagination*, joined to an easy, and natural *Power* ; with a resolute *Habitude*, to BE, for an Hour or two, the very Persons they would *seem*.—Such a *Foundation* for accomplished *Acting*, lies so open, and so clearly *in Nature*, that they, who find it at all, *must* discover it at *first* : Because, when Men are once got *out of the Road*, they, who travel the *farthest*, have but most Length of Way to ride *back* again.

YET, the Interested in Playhouses were so positive in the contrary Sentiment, that they submitted to reverence, as a *Maxim*, this extraordinary Concession, “That *Actors must be twenty Years such, before they can expect to be Masters of the Air, and Tread of the Stage.*”

Now, there is but *one* View, in Nature, wherein I was willing to admit of this Argument: I was forced to *confess*, I had seen some *particular* Stage Airs, and Stage Treads, which a Man of good Sense *might*, indeed, waste a long Life, in endeavouring to imitate, and, *at last, lose his Labour!*

HOWEVER, since an Opinion, in Opposition to these Gentlemen's, wanted Weight to make That believed *possible*, which had not, yet, been reduced into *Practice*, I took a sudden Resolution, actually to try, *Who was in the Right*, by attempting the EXPERIMENT.—This, I know, was a design, which, succeeding, would not fail to give Pleasure to the *Public*; and, which, *miscarrying*, could produce no worse Consequence, than *my* particular Mortification.

I imagined it reasonable to found a Trial, of this Nature, rather on a *New* Play, than an *Old* one: And, as it ought to be a Play of unquestionable *Merit*, it must have been Presumption, and Vanity, to have cast a Thought toward any Thing, *of my own*:—Upon the Whole, that I might keep out of the Reach either of Prejudice, or Partiality, a *Foreign* Production seemed the properest Choice; and the ZAIRE, of *Monsieur de Voltaire*, offered me every thing that Nature could do, on the Part of the *Poet*: But, I had still something to *wish*, with regard to that *other* Part of her Influence, which depended on the *Player*.

I had (of late) among the rest of the Town, been deprived of all rational Pleasure from the Theatre, by a monstrous and un-

moving *Affectation*: Which, choaking up the Avenues to *Passion*, had made *Tragedy* FORBIDDING, and HORRIBLE!

I was despairing to see a *Correction* of this Folly; when I found myself unexpectedly re-animated, by the War which the PROMPTER has proclaimed, and is now weekly waging against the *Ranters* and *Whiners* of the Theatre; after having undertaken to reduce the *Actor's lost Art*, into PRINCIPLES, with Design, by reconciling them to the touching and spirited *Medium*, to reform those *wild Copies* of Life, into some *Resemblance* at least of their *Originals*.

THUS, confirmed in my Sentiments, I ventured on the *Cast* of two *Capital Characters*, into Hands, *not disabled*, by Custom and obstinate Prejudice, from pursuing the *Plain Tract* of NATURE.

IT was easy to induce OSMAN, (as he is a Relation of my own, and *but too fond* of the Amusement,) to make Trial how far his Delight in an Art I shall never allow him to *practise*, might enable him to supply *one Part* of the Proof, that, to *imitate Nature*, we must proceed upon *Natural Principles*.

AT the same Time, it happened, that Mrs. CIBBER was fortunately inclinable to exert her inimitable Talents, in *additional Aid* of my Purpose, with View to *continue* the *Practise* of a Profession, for which her *Person*, her *Voice*, the unaffected *Sensibility* of her *Heart*, (and her *Face*, so finely disposed for *assuming* and *expressing* the PASSIONS) have so naturally qualified her.

AND, to give this bold *Novelty of Design* all its necessary Furtherance, Mr. FLEETWOOD, who professes the most generous Inclinations for *Improvement* of his troublesome Province, very willingly concurred in whatever could, on *his Part*, be of Use to the *Experiment*.

BEHOLD, in this little *Detail*, from *what Motive* I have taken upon me to throw one of the finest of *French Plays* upon the Public.—If my Expectations are not strangely *deceived*, it will be found, by the *Event*, whether our *Taste* for true Tragedy is *declined*; or the true *Art* of *acting* it *forgotten*.

FROM the *First* I can have nothing to conclude, but that my Judgment has been *weak*, and *mistaken*.

BUT, if the *Last* proves the Case, I shall flatter myself, that those Persons of Quality, from whose *imaginary Want of Discernment* some People have not *blushed* to DERIVE their *dull Qualities*, will, in Right of their *insulted Understanding*, EXACT, for the future, a warm and toilsome Exertion, of the *Strong* and the *Natural*, though at the COST of the *Lazy* and *Affected*.

THIS would awaken, at once, the *Reflection* of many, who have it in their POWER to be moving, and natural Actors; and, by effectually *convincing* them, that their present Opinion is *wrong*, bring 'em over (for their own, and the Public Advantage) to embrace and succeed by a *New* one.

SUCH a Step towards *reforming* the Theatre, would draw on, (as a Consequence) many of its *nobler Improvements*—For, where *Emotions* are keenest, the *Delight* becomes greatest; and to whatever *most charms*, we most closely *adhere*, and encourage it *most actively*.

IF, in translating this excellent Tragedy, I have regarded in some Places the *Soul*, and in others the *Letter* of the Original, *Monsieur de Voltaire*, who has made himself a very capable *Judge* both of our *Language* and *Customs*, will indulge me that Latitude; except he should, in observing some *Alterations* I have made, in his Names and his *Diction*, forget that their *Motives* are to be found in the Turn of our National *Difference*.

After what I have said of the Playhouses, it would be Injustice not to *declare*, that I exclude from the Censure of speaking or acting *unnaturally*, any one of the Persons who have been cast into ZARA.—And in particular, I must say *This* of TWO of them; that *Mr. MILWARD*, who is already a very *excellent*, and hourly rising to be an *accomplished* Actor, has a VOICE that both comprehends, and expresses, *the utmost Compass* of HARMONY.—And *Mr. CIEBER* discerningly pursued through the numberless *Extent* of his *Walks*, is an Actor of *as unlimited a Compass* of GENIUS, as ever I saw on the Stage; and is *barely* received, as he *deserves*, when the Town is *most favourable*.

PROLOGUE.

THE French, howe'er mercurial they may seem,
Extinguish half their fire, by critic phlegm:
While English Writers Nature's Freedom claim,
And warm their scenes with an ungovern'd flame:
'Tis strange that Nature never should inspire
A Racine's judgment with a Shakspeare's fire!
Howe'er to-night—(to promise much we're loth)
But—you've a chance, to have a taste of both.
From English plays, Zara's French author fir'd,
Confess'd his muse beyond herself, inspir'd;
From rack'd Othello's rage he rais'd his style,
And snatch'd the brand that lights this tragic pile:
Zara's success his utmost hopes outflew,
And a twice twentieth weeping audience drew.
As for our English friend, he leaves to you,
Whate'er may seem to his performance due;
No views of gain his hopes or fears engage,
He gives a child of leisure to the stage;
Willing to try, if yet, forsaken Nature,
Can charm, with any one remember'd feature.
Thus far, the author speaks—but now, the player,
With trembling Heart, prefers his humble prayer.
To-night, the greatest venture of my life,
Is lost or sav'd, as YOU receive—a wife:

*If time, you think, may ripen her to merit,
With gentle smiles, support her wav'ring spirit.
Zara in France, at once an actress rais'd,
Warm'd into skill, by being kindly prais'd :
O! could such wonders here from favour flow,
How would our Zara's heart with transport glow!
But she, alas! by juster fears oppress'd,
Begs but your bare endurance, at the best,
Her unskill'd tongue would simple Nature speak,
Nor dares her bounds, for false applauses break.
Amidst a thousand faults, her best pretence
To please——is unpresuming innocence.
When a chaste heart's distress your grief demands,
One silent tear outweighs a thousand hands,
If she conveys the pleasing passions RIGHT,
Guard and support her, this decisive night ;
If she MISTAKES—or, finds her strength too small,
Let interposing pity——break her fall.
In you it rests, to save her, or destroy,
If she draws tears from You, I weep—for JOY.*



Dramatis Personae. *

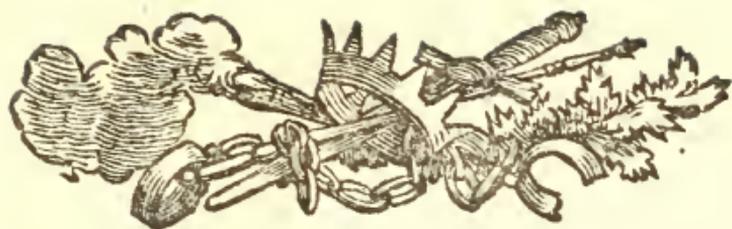
DRURY-LANE.

		<i>Men.</i>
OSMAN, Sultan of Jerusalem,	- - -	Mr. Kemble.
LUSIGNAN, last of the blood of the Christian kings of Jerusalem,	- - - -	Mr. Bensley.
NERESTAN, } French officers,	- - -	Mr. Barrymore.
CHATILLON, }	- - -	Mr. Aickin.
ORASMIN, Minister to the Sultan,	- -	Mr. Packer.
MELIDOR, an officer of the Seraglio,	- -	Mr. Phillimore.
		<i>Women.</i>
ZARA, }	Slaves to the Sultan,	Miss Kemble.
SELIMA, }		Mrs. Ward.

COVENT-GARDEN.

		<i>Men.</i>
OSMAN, Sultan of Jerusalem,	- - -	Mr. Wroughton.
LUSIGNAN, last of the blood of the Christian kings of Jerusalem,	- - - -	Mr. Henderson.
NERESTAN, } French officers,	- - -	Mr. Davies.
CHATILLON, }	- - -	Mr. Hall.
ORASMIN, Minister to the Sultan,	- -	Mr. Fearon.
MELIDOR, an officer of the Seraglio,	- -	Mr. Thompson.
		<i>Women.</i>
ZARA, }	Slaves to the Sultan,	Mrs. Pope.
SELIMA, }		Mrs. Inchbald.

* These were the *Dramatis Personae* the last time of performing this Piece.



ZARA.

ACT I. SCENE I.

ZARA and SELIMA.

Selima.

IT moves my wonder, young and beauteous Zara,
Whence these new sentiments inspire your heart !
Your peace of mind increases with your charms ;
Tears now no longer shade your eyes soft lustre :
You meditate no more those happy climes
To which Nerestan will return to guide you.
You talk no more of that gay nation now,
Where men adore their wives, and woman's power
Draws rev'rence from a polish'd people's softness :
Their husbands' equals, and their lovers' queens !
Free without scandal ; wise without restraint ;
“ Their virtue due to nature, not to fear.”
Why have you ceas'd to wish this happy change ?
A barr'd seraglio !—sad, unsocial life !
Scorn'd, and a slave ! All this has lost its terror ;
And Syria rivals, now, the banks of Seine !

Zar. Joys which we do not know, we do not wish.

My fate's bound in by Sion's sacred wall :
 Clos'd from my infancy within this palace,
 Custom has learnt, from time, the power to please.
 I claim no share in the remoter world, 21
 The sultan's property, his will my law ;
 Unknowing all but him, his power, his fame ;
 To live his subject is my only hope,
 All else, an empty dream.—

Sel. Have you forgot
 Absent Nerestan then? whose gen'rous friendship
 So nobly vow'd redemption from your chains!
 How oft have you admir'd his dauntless soul !
 Osman, his conqu'ror, by his courage charm'd,
 Trusted his faith, and on his word releas'd him :
 Tho' not return'd in time—we yet expect him.
 Nor had his noble journey other motive,
 Than to procure our ransom.—And is this,
 This dear, warm hope, become an idle dream ?

Zar. Since after two long years he not returns,
 'Tis plain his promise stretch'd beyond his power.
 A stranger and a slave, unknown, like him,
 Proposing much, means little ;—talks and vows,
 Delighted with a prospect of escape :— 40
 He promis'd to redeem ten Christians more,
 And free us all from slavery !—I own
 I once admir'd the unprofitable zeal,
 But now it charms no longer.—

Sel. What if yet,
 He, faithful should return, and hold his vow ;
 Would you not, then—

Zar. No matter—Time is past,
And every thing is chang'd—

Sel. But, whence comes this?

Zar. Go—'twere too much to tell thee Zara's fate:
The sultan's secrets, all, are sacred here:
But my fond heart delights to mix with thine.
Some three months past, when thou, and other slaves,
Were forc'd to quit fair Jordan's flow'ry bank;
Heav'n, to cut short the anguish of my days,
Rais'd me to comfort by a pow'rful hand:
This mighty Osman!—

Sel. What of him?

Zar. This sultan,

60

This conqueror of the Christians, loves—

Sel. Whom?

Zar. Zara!—

Thou blushest, and I guess thy thoughts accuse me:
But, know me better—'twas unjust suspicion.
All emperor as he is, I cannot stoop
To honours, that bring shame and baseness with 'em:
Reason and pride, those props of modesty,
Sustain my guarded heart, and strengthen virtue;
“ Rather than sink to infamy, let chains
“ Embrace me with a joy, such loye denies:”
No—I shall now astonish thee;—his greatness
Submits to own a pure and honest flame.
Among the shining crowds, which live to please him,
His whole regard is fix'd on me alone:
He offers marriage; and its rites now wait
To crown me empress of this eastern world.

Sel. Your virtue and your charms deserve it all :
 My heart is not surpris'd, but struck to hear it.
 If to be empress can complete your happiness, 80
 I rank myself, with joy, among your slaves.

Zar. Be still my equal—and enjoy my blessings ;
 For, thou partaking, they will bless me more.

Sel. Alas ! but Heaven ! will it permit this marriage ?

Will not this grandeur, falsely call'd a bliss,
 Plant bitterness, and root it in your heart ?
 Have you forgot you are of Christian blood ?

Zar. Ah me ! What hast thou said, why wouldst thou thus

Recall my wav'ring thoughts ? How know I, what,
 Or whence I am ? Heaven kept it hid in darkness,
 Conceal'd me from myself, and from my blood.

Sel. Nerestan, who was born a Christian, here,
 Asserts, that you, like him, had Christian parents ;
 Besides—that cross, which, from your infant years
 Has been preserv'd, was found upon your bosom,
 As if design'd by Heaven, a pledge of faith
 Due to the God you purpose to forsake !

Zar. Can my fond heart, on such a feeble proof,
 Embrace a faith, abhorr'd by him I love ?
 I see too plainly custom forms us all ; 100
 Our thoughts, our morals, our most fix'd belief,
 Are consequences of our place of birth :
 Born beyond Ganges, I had been a Pagan,
 In France a Christian, I am here a Saracen :
 'Tis but instruction, all ! Our parents' hand

Writes on our heart the first faint characters,
 Which time, re-tracing, deepens into strength,
 That nothing can efface, but death or Heaven!—
 Thou wer't not made a pris'ner in this place,
 'Till after reason, borrowing force from years,
 Had lent its lustre to enlighten faith :—
 For me, who in my cradle was their slave,
 Thy Christian doctrines were too lately taught me :
 Yet, far from having lost the rev'rence due,
 This cross, as often as it meets my eye,
 Strikes thro' my heart a kind of awful fear !
 I honour, from my soul, the Christian laws,
 Those laws, which, softening nature by humanity,
 Melt nations into brotherhood ;—no doubt
 Christians are happy ; and 'tis just to love them. 120

Sel. Why have you, then, declar'd yourself their foe?
 Why will you join your hand with this proud Osman's?
 Who owes his triumph to the Christians' ruin !

Zar. Ah!—who could slight the offer of his heart?
 Nay ;—for I mean to tell thee all my weakness ;
 Perhaps I had, ere now, profess'd thy faith,
 But Osman lov'd me—and I've lost it all :—
 I think on none but Osman—my pleas'd heart,
 Fill'd with the blessing, to be lov'd by him,
 Wants room for other happiness. “ Place thou
 “ Before thy eyes, his merit and his fame,
 “ His youth, yet blooming but in manhood's dawn ;
 “ How many conquer'd kings have swell'd his pow'r !
 “ Think, too, how lovely ! how his brow becomes
 “ This wreath of early glories !” —Oh, my friend !

I talk not of a sceptre, which he gives me :
 No—to be charm'd with that were thanks too humble !
 Offensive tribute, and too poor for love !
 'Twas Osman won my heart, not Osman's crown :
 I love not in him aught besides himself. 140
 Thou think'st, perhaps, that these are starts of passion:
 But, had the will of Heav'n less bent to bless him,
 Doom'd Osman to my chains, and me to fill
 The throne that Osman sits on—ruin and wretchedness
 Catch and consume my wishes, but I would—
 To raise me to myself, descend to him.

“ *Sel.* Hark ! the wish'd music sounds—'Tis he—
 he comes— [Exit Selima.

“ *Zar.* My heart prevented him, and found him
 near :

“ Absent two whole long days, the slow-pac'd hour

“ At last is come, and gives him to my wishes !”

[A grand march.

*Enter OSMAN, reading a paper, which he re-delivers to
 ORASMIN; with Attendants.*

Osm. Wait my return—or, should there be a cause
 That may require my presence, do not fear
 To enter; ever mindful, that my own

[Exit Oras. &c.

Follows my people's happiness.—At length,
 Cares have releas'd my heart—to love and Zara.

Zar. 'Twas not in cruel absence, to deprive me
 Of your imperial image—every where
 You reign triumphant: memory supplies

Reflexion with your power; and you, like Heaven,
Are always present—and are always gracious. 160

Osm. The Sultans, my great ancestors, bequeath'd
Their empire to me, but their taste they gave not;
Their laws, their lives, their loves, delight not me;
I know our prophet smiles on an'rous wishes,
And opens a wide field to vast desire;
I know, that at my will I might possess;
That, wasting tenderness in wild profusion,
I might look down to my surrounded feet,
And bless contending beauties. I might speak,
Serenely slothful, from within my palace,
And bid my pleasure be my people's law.
But, sweet as softness is, its end is cruel;
I can look round, and count a hundred kings,
Unconquer'd by themselves, and slaves to others:
Hence was Jerusalem to Christians lost;
“ But Heaven, to blast that unbelieving race,
“ Taught me to be a king, by thinking like one.”
Hence from the distant Euxine to the Nile,
The trumpet's voice has wak'd the world to war;
Yet, amidst arms and death, thy power has reach'd
me; 180

For thou disdain'st, like me, a languid love;
Glory and Zara join—and charm together.

Zar. I hear at once, with blushes and with joy,
This passion, so unlike your country's customs.

Osm. Passion, like mine, disdains my country's cus-
toms;
The jealousy, the faintness, the distrust,

The proud, superior coldness of the east.
 I know to love you, Zara, with esteem;
 To trust your virtue, and to court your soul.
 Nobly confiding, I unveil my heart,
 And dare inform you, that, 'tis all your own:
 My joys must all be yours; only my cares
 Shall lie conceal'd within—and reach not Zara.

Zar. Oblig'd by this excess of tenderness,
 How low, how wretched was the lot of Zara!
 Too poor with aught, but thanks, to pay such blessings!

Osm. Not so—I love—and would be lov'd again;
 Let me confess it, I possess a soul,
 That what it wishes, wishes ardently.
 I should believe you hated, had you power 200
 To love with moderation: 'tis my aim,
 In every thing, to reach supreme perfection.
 If, with an equal flame, I touch your heart,
 Marriage attends your smile—But know, 'twill make
 Me wretched, if it makes not Zara happy.

Zar. Ah, sir! if such a heart as gen'rous Osman's
 Can, from my will, submit to take its bliss,
 What mortal ever was decreed so happy!
 Pardon the pride, with which I own my joy;
 Thus wholly to possess the man I love!
 To know, and to confess his will my fate!
 To be the happy work of his dear hands!
 To be—

Enter ORASMIN.

Osm. Already interrupted! What?
 Who?—Whence?

Oras. This moment, sir, there is arriv'd
That Christian slave, who, licens'd on his faith,
Went hence to France—and, now return'd, prays au-
dience.

Zar. [*Aside.*] Oh, Heaven! 199

Osm. Admit him—What?—Why comes he not?

Oras. He waits without. No Christian dares ap-
proach

This place, long sacred to the Sultan's privacies.

Osm. Go—bring him with thee—monarchs, like the
sun,

Shine but in vain, unwarming, if unseen;
With forms and rev'rence, let the great approach us;
Not the unhappy;—every place alike,
Gives the distress'd a privilege to enter.—[*Exit Oras.*
I think with horror on these dreadful maxims,
Which harden kings insensibly to tyrants.

Re-enter ORASMIN with NERESTAN.

Ner. Imperial Sultan! honour'd, ev'n by foes!
See me return'd, regardful of my vow,
And punctual to discharge a Christian's duty.
I bring the ransom of the captive Zara,
Fair Selima, the partner of her fortune,
And of ten Christian captives, pris'ners here.
You promis'd, Sultan, if I should return,
To grant their rated liberty:—Behold,
I am return'd, and they are yours no more.
I would have stretch'd my purpose to myself,
But fortune has deny'd it;—my poor all

Suffic'd no further, and a noble poverty
 Is now my whole possession.—I redeem
 The promis'd Christians; for I taught 'em hope:
 But, for myself, I come again your slave,
 To wait the fuller hand of future charity.

Osm. Christian! I must confess thy courage charms
 me?

But let thy pride be taught, it treads too high,
 When it presumes to climb above my mercy.
 Go ransomless thyself, and carry back
 Their unaccepted ransoms, join'd with gifts,
 Fit to reward thy purpose; instead of ten,
 Demand a hundred Christians; they are thine:
 Take 'em, and bid 'em teach their haughty country,
 They left some virtue among Saracens.—
 Be Lusignan alone excepted—He
 Who boasts the blood of kings, and dares lay claim
 To my Jerusalem—that claim, his guilt!
 “Such is the law of states; had I been vanquish'd,
 “Thus had he said of me.” I mourn his lot,
 Who must in fetters, lost to day-light, pine, 260
 And sigh away old age in grief and pain.
 For Zara—but to name her as a captive,
 Were to dishonour language;—she's a prize
 Above thy purchase:—all the Christian realms,
 With all their kings to guide 'em, would unite
 In vain, to force her from me—Go, retire—
Ner. For Zara's ransom, with her own consent,
 I had your royal word. For Lusignan—
 Unhappy, poor, old man—

Osm. Was I not heard ?

Have I not told thee, Christian, all my will ?

What if I prais'd thee!—This presumptuous virtue,

Compelling my esteem, provokes my pride ;

Be gone—and when to-morrow's sun shall rise

On my dominions, be not found—too near me.

[*Exit Nerestan.*]

Zar. [*Aside.*] Assist him, Heaven !

Osm. Zara, retire a moment—

Assume, throughout my palace, sovereign empire,

While I give orders to prepare the pomp

That waits to crown thee mistress of my throne. 280

[*Leads her out, and returns.*]

Orasmin ! didst thou mark th' imperious siave ?

What could he mean ?—he sigh'd—and, as he went,

Turn'd and look'd back at Zara!—didst thou mark it ?

Oras. Alas ! my sovereign master ! let not jealousy
Strike high enough to reach your noble heart.

Osm. Jealousy, said'st thou ? I disdain it :—No !

Distrust is poor ; and a misplac'd suspicion

Invites and justifies the falsehood fear'd.—

Yet, as I love with warmth—so, I could hate !

But Zara is above disguise and art :—

“ My love is stronger, nobler, than my power.”

Jealous!—I was not jealous!—If I was,

I am not—no—my heart—but, let us drown

Remembrance of the word, and of the image ;

My heart is fill'd with a diviner flame.—

Go, and prepare for the approaching nuptials.

“ Zara to careful empire joins delight.”

I must allot one hour to thoughts of state,
Then, all the smiling day is love and Zara's.

[Exit Orasmin.

Monarchs, by forms of pompous misery press'd, go
In proud, unsocial misery, unblest'd,
Wou'd, but for love's soft influence, curse their
throne,

And, among crowded millions, live alone. [Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

NERESTAN, CHATILLON.

Chatillon.

MATCHLESS Nerestan! generous and great!
You, who have broke the chains of hopeless slaves!
"You, Christian saviour! by a Saviour sent!"
Appear, be known, enjoy your due delight;
The grateful weepers wait to clasp your knees,
They throng to kiss the happy hand that sav'd 'em:
Indulge the kind impatience of their eyes,
And, at their head, command their hearts for ever.

Ner. Illustrious Chatillon! this praise o'erwhelms
me;

What have I done beyond a Christian's duty;
Beyond what you would, in my place, have done?

Chat. True—it is every honest Christian's duty;
Nay, 'tis the blessing of such minds as ours,

For others' good to sacrifice our own.—
 Yet, happy they, to whom Heav'n grants the power,
 To execute, like you, that duty's call!
 For us—the relicks of abandon'd war,
 Forgot in France, and, in Jerusalem,
 Left to grow old in fetters,—Osman's father
 Consign'd us to the gloom of a damp dungeon, 20
 Where, but for you, we must have groan'd out life,
 And native France have bless'd our eyes no more.

Ner. The will of gracious Heav'n, that soften'd
 Osman,

Inspir'd me for your sakes :—But, with our joy,
 Flows, mix'd, a bitter sadness—I had hop'd
 To save from their perversion, a young beauty,
 Who, in her infant innocence, with me,
 Was made a slave by cruel Noradin ;
 When, sprinkling Syria with the blood of Christians,
 Cæsarea's walls saw Lusignan surpriz'd,
 And the proud crescent rise in bloody triumph.
 From this seraglio having young escap'd,
 Fate, three years since, restor'd me to my chains ;
 Then, sent to Paris on my plighted faith,
 I flatter'd my fond hope with vain resolves,
 To guide the lovely Zara to that court
 Where Lewis has establish'd virtue's throne :
 But Osman will detain her—yet, not Osman ;
 Zara herself forgets she is a Christian,
 And loves the tyrant Sultan !—Let that pass ; 40
 I mourn a disappointment still more cruel ;
 The prop of all our Christian hope is lost !

Chat. Dispose me at your will—I am your own.

Ner. Oh, Sir, great Lusignan, so long their captive,

That last of an heroic race of kings!

That warrior, whose past fame has fill'd the world!

Osman refuses to my sighs for ever!

Chat. Nay, then we have been all redeem'd in vain;

Perish that soldier who would quit his chains,

And leave his noble chief behind in fetters.

Alas! you know him not as I have known him;

Thank Heav'n, that plac'd your birth so far remov'd

From those detested days of blood and woe:

But I, less happy, was condemned to see

Thy walls, Jerusalem, beat down—and all

Our pious fathers' labours lost in ruins!

Heav'n! had you seen the very temple rifled!

The sacred sepulchre itself profan'd!

Fathers with children mingled, flame together!

And our last king, oppress'd with age and arms, 60

Murder'd, and bleeding o'er his murder'd sons!

Then Lusignan, sole remnant of his race,

Rallying our fated few amidst the flames,

Fearless, beneath the crush of falling towers,

The conqu'rors and the conquer'd, groans and death!

Dreadful—and, waving in his hand his sword,

Red with the blood of infidels, cry'd out,

This way, ye faithful Christians! follow me.—

Ner. How full of glory was that brave retreat!

Chat. 'Twas Heav'n, no doubt, that sav'd and led
him on;

Pointed his path, and march'd our guardian guide :
 We reach'd Cæsarea—there the general voice
 Chose Lusignan, thenceforth to give us laws ;
 Alas ! 'twas vain—Cæsarea could not stand
 When Sion's self was fallen!—we were betray'd ;
 And Lusignan condemn'd, to length of life,
 In chains, in damps, and darkness, and despair :
 “ Yet great, amidst his miseries, he look'd,
 “ As if he could not feel his fate himself,
 “ But as it reach'd his followers. And shall we, 80
 “ For whom our gen'rous leader suffer'd this,
 “ Be vilely safe, and dare be bless'd without him ?”
Ner. Oh ! I should hate the liberty he shar'd not.

I knew too well the miseries you describe,
 For I was born amidst them. Chains and death,
 Cæsarea lost, and Saracens triumphant,
 Were the first objects which my eyes e'er look'd on.
 Hurried, an infant, among other infants,
 Snatch'd from the bosoms of their bleeding mothers,
 A temple sav'd us, till the slaughter ceas'd ;
 Then were we sent to this ill-fated city,
 Here, in the palace of our former kings,
 To learn, from Saracens, their hated faith,
 And be completely wretched.—Zara, too,
 Shar'd this captivity ; we both grew up
 So near each other, that a tender friendship
 Endear'd her to my wishes : My fond heart—
 Pardon its weakness, bids to see her lost,
 And, for a barb'rous tyrant, quit her God !

Chat. Such is the Saracens', too fatal, policy! 100

Watchful seducers, still, of infant weakness :

“ Happy that you so young escap'd their hands !”

But let us think—May not this Zara's int'rest,
Loving the Sultan, and by him belov'd,

For Lusignan procure some softer sentence ?

“ The wise and just, with innocence, may draw

“ Their own advantage from the guilt of others.”

Ner. How shall I gain admission to her presence ?
Osman has banish'd me—but that's a trifle ;

Will the seraglio's portals open to me ?

Or, could I find that easy to my hopes,

What prospect of success from an apostate ?

On whom I cannot look without disdain ;

“ And who will read her shame upon my brow.”

The hardest trial of a generous mind

Is, to court favours from a hand it scorns.

Chat. Think it is Lusignan we seek to serve.

Ner. Well—it shall be attempted—Hark ! who's
this ?

Are my eyes false ; or, is it really she ?

Enter ZARA.

Zar. Start not, my worthy friend ! I come to seek
you ;

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The Sultan has permitted it ; fear nothing :—

But to confirm my heart which trembles near you,
Soften that angry air, nor look reproach ;

Why should we fear each other, both mistaking ?

Associates from our birth, one prison held us,

One friendship taught affliction to be calm,

'Till Heav'n thought fit to favour your escape,
 And call you to the fields of happier France ;
 Thence, once again, it was my lot to find you
 A pris'ner here ; where, hid amongst a crowd
 Of undistinguish'd slaves, with less restraint,
 I shar'd your frequent converse ;——
 It pleas'd your pity, shall I say your friendship ?
 Or rather, shall I call it generous charity ?
 To form that noble purpose, to redeem
 Distressful Zara—you procur'd my ransom,
 And with a greatness that out-soar'd a crown,
 Return'd yourself a slave, to give me freedom ;
 But Heav'n has cast our fate for different climes :
 Here, in Jerusalem, I fix for ever ;
 Yet, among all the shine that marks my fortune,
 I shall with frequent tears remember yours ;
 Your goodness will for ever sooth my heart,
 And keep your image still a dweller there :
 Warm'd by your great example to protect
 That faith, that lifts humanity so high,
 I'll be a mother to distressful Christians.

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Ner. How!—You protect the Christians ! you, who
 can

Abjure their saving truth, and coldly see
 Great Lusignan, their chief, die slow in chains !

Zar. To bring him freedom you behold me here ;
 You will this moment meet his eyes in joy.

Chat. Shall I then live to bless that happy hour ?

Ner. Can Christians owe so dear a gift to Zara ?

Zar. Hopeless I gathered courage to intreat

The Sultan for his liberty—amaz'd,
 So soon to gain the happiness I wish'd!
 See where they bring the good old chief grown dim
 With age, by pain and sorrows hasten'd on!

Chat. How is my heart dissolv'd with sudden joy!

‘ *Zar.* I long to view his venerable face,

“ But tears, I know not why, eclipse my sight.

“ I feel, methinks, redoubled pity for him ;

“ But, I, alas! myself have been a slave ;

“ And when we pity woes which we have felt,

“ 'Tis but a partial virtue !

“ *Ner.* Amazement!—Whence this greatness in an
 infidel !”

Enter LUSIGNAN led in by two Guards.

Lus. Where am I? From the dungeon's depth
 what voice

Has call'd me to revisit long-lost day?

Am I with Christians?—I am weak—forgive me,

And guide my trembling steps. I'm full of years;

My miseries have worn me more than age.

Am I in truth at liberty?

[*Seating himself.*]

Chat. You are;

And every Christian's grief takes end with yours.

Lus. O, light! O, dearer far than light, that voice!

Chatillon, is it you? my fellow martyr!

And shall our wretchedness, indeed, have end?

In what place are we now!—my feeble eyes,

Disus'd to day-light, long in vain to find you. 180

Chat. This was the palace of your royal fathers :

'Tis now the son of Noradin's seraglio.

Zar. The master of this place—the mighty Osman,
Distinguishes, and loves to cherish virtue.

This gen'rous Frenchman, yet a stranger to you,
Drawn from his native soil, from peace and rest,
Brought the vow'd ransoms of ten Christian slaves,
Himself contented to remain a captive :

But Osman, charm'd by greatness like his own,
To equal what he lov'd, has giv'n him you.

Lus. So gen'rous France inspires her social sons !

They have been ever dear and useful to me—

Would I were nearer to him—— Noble Sir,

[*Nerestan approaches.*

How have I merited, that you for me

Should pass such distant seas, to bring me blessings,

And hazard your own safety for my sake ?

Ner. My name, Sir, is Nerestan ; born in Syria,

I wore the chains of slavery from my birth ;

Till quitting the proud crescent for the court 200

Where warlike Lewis reigns, beneath his eye

I learnt the trade of arms :—the rank I held

Was but the kind distinction which he gave me,

To tempt my courage to deserve regard.

Your sight, unhappy prince, would charm his eye ;

That best and greatest monarch will behold

With grief and joy those venerable wounds,

And print embraces where your fetters bound you.

All Paris will revere the cross's martyr ;

“ Paris, the refuge still of ruin'd kings !”

Lus. Alas ! in times long past, I've seen its glory :

When Philip the victorious liv'd, I fought
 A-breast with Montmorency and Melun,
 D'Estaing, De Neile, and the far-famous Courcy;—
 Names which were then the praise and dread of war!
 But what have I to do at Paris now?

I stand upon the brink of the cold grave;
 That way my journey lies—to find, I hope,
 The King of Kings, and ask the recompence
 For all my woes, long-suffer'd for his sake—

You gen'rous witnesses of my last hour, 220
 While I yet live, assist my humble prayers,
 And join the resignation of my soul.

Nerestan! Chatillon!—and you, fair mourner!
 Whose tears do honour to an old man's sorrows!
 Pity a father, the unhappiest sure
 That ever felt the hand of angry heaven!

My eyes, though dying, still can furnish tears;
 Half my long life they flow'd, and still will flow!
 A daughter and three sons, my heart's proud hopes,
 Were all torn from me in their tend'rest years—
 My friend Chatillon knows, and can remember—

Chat. Would I were able to forget your woe.

Lus. Thou wert a pris'ner with me in Cæsarea,
 And there beheld'st my wife and two dear sons
 Perish in flames.

Chat. A captive and in fetters,
 I could not help 'em.

Lus. I know thou could'st not—
 Oh, 'twas a dreadful scene! these eyes beheld it—
 Husband and father, helpless I beheld it.—

Deny'd the mournful privilege to die !
 Oh, my poor children ! whom I now deplore ;
 If ye are saints in Heav'n, as sure ye are,
 Look with an eye of pity on that brother,
 That sister whom you left !—If I have yet,
 Or son or daughter :—for in early chains,
 Far from their lost an unassisting father,
 I heard that they were sent, with numbers more,
 To this seraglio ; hence to be dispers'd
 In nameless remnants o'er the east, and spread
 Our Christian miseries round a faithless world.

Chat. 'Twas true,—For in the horrors of that day,
 I snatch'd your infant daughter from her cradle ;
 “ But finding ev'ry hope of flight was vain,
 “ Scarce had I sprinkled, from a public fountain,
 “ Those sacred drops which wash the soul from sin,”
 When from my bleeding arms, fierce Saracens
 Forc'd the lost innocent, who smiling lay,
 And pointed, playful, at the swarthy spoilers !
 With her, your youngest, then your only son, 260
 Whose little life had reach'd the fourth sad year,
 And just giv'n sense to feel his own misfortunes,
 Was order'd to this city.

Ner. I, too, hither,
 Just at that fatal age, from lost Cæsarea,
 Came in that crowd of undistinguish'd Christians.—

Lus. You !—came you thence ?—Alas ! who knows
 but you
 Might heretofore have seen my two poor children.

[*Looking up.*] Hah, Madam! that small ornament you wear,

Its form a stranger to this country's fashion,
How long has it been yours?

Zar. From my first birth, Sir—

Ah, what! you seem surpriz'd!—why should this
move you?

Lus. Would you confide it to my trembling hands?

Zar. To what new wonders am I now reserv'd?

Oh, Sir! what mean you?

Lus. Providence and Heaven!

Oh, failing eyes, deceive ye not my hope?

Can this be possible?—Yes, yes—'tis she!

This little cross—I know it, by sure marks! 280

Oh! take me, Heav'n! while I can die with joy—

Zar. Oh, do not, Sir, distract me!—rising thoughts,
And hopes, and fears, o'erwhelm me!

Lus. Tell me, yet,

Has it remain'd for ever in your hands?

What—both brought captives from Cæsarea hither?

Zar. Both, both—

“ Oh, heaven! have I then found a father? ”;

Lus. Their voice! their looks!

The living images of their dear mother!

O God! who see'st my tears, and know'st my thoughts

Do not forsake me at this dawn of hope — 2

Strengthen my heart, too feeble for this joy.

Madam! Nerestan!—Help me, Chatillon! [*Rising.*

Nerestan, hast thou on thy breast a scar,

Which ere Cæsarea fell, from a fierce hand,
Surprizing us by night, my child receiv'd?

Ner. Bless'd hand!—I bear it,—Sir, the mark is
there!

Lus. Merciful heaven!

Ner. [*Kneeling.*] Oh, Sir!—Oh, Zara, kneel.—

Zar. [*Kneeling.*] My father!—Oh!—

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Lus. Oh, my lost children!

Both. Oh!

Lus. My son! my daughter! lost in embracing you,
I would now die, lest this should prove a dream.

Chat. How touch'd is my glad heart, to see their
joy!

Lus. They shall not tear you from my arms—my
children!

Again, I find you—dear in wretchedness:

Oh, my brave son—and thou, my nameless daughter!

Now dissipate all doubt, remove all dread,

Has Heaven, that gives me back my children—giv'n
'em,

Such as I lost 'em?—Come they Christians to me?

One weeps and one declines a conscious eye!

Your silence speaks—too well I understand it.

Zar. I cannot, Sir deceive you—Osman's laws
Were mine—and Osman is not Christian.—

Lus. Her words are thunder bursting on my head;

Wert not for thee, my son, I now should die;

Full sixty years I fought the Christian's cause,

Saw their doom'd temple fall, their pow'r destroy'd:

Twenty, a captive, in a dungeon's depth,

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Yet never for myself my tears sought Heaven;
 All for my children rose my fruitless prayers:
 Yet, what avails a father's wretched joy?
 I have a daughter gain'd, and Heav'n an enemy.
 Oh, my misguided daughter—lose not thy faith,
 Reclaim thy birthright—think upon the blood
 Of twenty Christian kings, that fills thy veins;
 'Tis heroes' blood—the blood of saints and martyrs!
 What would thy mother feel, to see thee thus!
 She, and thy murder'd brothers!—think, they call
 thee?

Think that thou seest 'em stretch their bloody arms,
 And weep to win thee from their murd'rer's bosom.
 Ev'n in the place where thou betray'st thy God,
 He dy'd, my child, to save thee.—“ Turn thy eyes,
 “ And see; for thou art near his sacred sepulchre;
 “ Thou canst not move a step, but where he trod!”
 Thou tremblest—Oh! admit me to thy soul;
 Kill not thy aged, thy afflicted father;
 “ Take not thus soon, again, the life thou gav'st him:”
 Shame not thy mother—nor renounce thy God.—
 'Tis past—Repentance dawns in thy sweet eyes;
 I see bright truth descending to thy heart,
 And now, my long-lost child is found for ever.

“ *Ner.* Oh, doubly blest! a sister, and a soul,
 “ To be redeem'd together!”

Zar. Oh, my father!

Dear author of my life! inform me, teach me,
 What should my duty do?

Lus. By one short word,

To dry up all my tears, and make life welcome,
Say thou art a Christian——

Zar. Sir—I am a Christian.

Lus. Receive her, gracious Heaven! and bless her
for it.

Enter ORASMIN.

Oras. Madam, the Sultan order'd me to tell you,
That he expects you instant quit this place,
And bid your last farewell to these vile Christians.
You, captive Frenchmen, follow me; for you,
It is my task to answer.——

Chat. Still new miseries! 360

How cautious man should be, to say, I'm happy!

Lus. These are the times, my friends, to try our
firmness,

Our Christian firmness.——

Zar. Alas, sir! Oh!

Lus. Oh, you!—I dare not name you!

Farewell—but, come what may, be sure remember

You keep the fatal secret! for the rest,

Leave all to Heaven——be faithful, and be blest.

[*Excunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

OSMAN and ORASMIN.

Osman.

ORASMIN, this alarm was false and groundless;
Lewis no longer turns his arms on me;

The French, grown weary by a length of woes,
Wish not at once to quit their fruitful plains,
And famish on Arabia's desert sands.

Their ships, 'tis true, have spread the Syrian seas :
And Lewis, hovering o'er the coast of Cyprus,
Alarms the fears of Asia—But I've learnt,
That steering wide from our unmenac'd ports,
He points his thunder at th' Egyptian shore.

There let him war, and waste my enemies ;
Their mutual conflict will but fix my throne.—
Release those Christians—I restore their freedom ;
'Twill please their master, nor can weaken me :

Transport 'em at my cost, to find their king ;
I wish to have him know me : carry thither
This Lusignan, whom, tell him, I restore,
Because I cannot fear his fame in arms ;
But love him for his virtue and his blood.

Tell him, my father, having conquer'd twice, 20
Condemn'd him to perpetual chains ; but I
Have set him free, that I might triumph more.

Oras. The Christians gain an army in his name.

Osm. I cannot fear a sound.—

Oras. But, sir——should Lewis——

Osm. Tell Lewis and the world—it shall be so :

Zara propos'd it, and my heart approves :
Thy statesman's reason is too dull for love !

“ Why wilt thou force me to confess it all ?

“ Tho' I to Lewis send back Lusignan,

“ I give him but to Zara—I have griev'd her ;

“ And ow'd her the atonement of this joy.

“ Thy false advices, which but now misled
 “ My anger, to confine those helpless Christians,
 “ Gave her a pain; I feel for her and me?”

But I talk on, and waste the smiling moments.

For one long hour I yet defer my nuptials;

“ But, ’tis not lost, that hour! ’twill be all hers!”

She would employ it in a conference

With that Nerestan, whom thou know’st——that
 Christian!

Oras. And have you, sir, indulged that strange de-
 sire?

Osm. What mean’st thou? They were infant slaves
 together;

Friends should part kind, who are to meet no more.

When Zara asks, I will refuse her nothing:

Restraint was never made for those we love.

Down with those rigours of the proud seraglio;

I hate its laws—where blind austerity

Sinks virtue to necessity.—My blood

Disclaims your Asian jealousy;—I hold

The fierce, free plainness of my Scythian ancestors,

Their open confidence, their honest hate,

Their love unfearing, and their anger told.

Go—the good Christian waits—conduct him to her;

Zara expects thee—What she wills, obey.

[*Exit Osman.*]

Oras. Ho! Christian! enter——wait a moment here.

Enter NERESTAN.

Zara will soon approach—I go to find her.

[*Exit Oras.*]

Ner. In what a state, in what a place, I leave her?
Oh, faith! Oh, father! Oh, my poor lost sister!
She's here——

Enter ZARA.

Thank Heaven, it is not, then, unlawful
To see you, yet once more, my lovely sister!
Not all so happy!——We, who met but now,
Shall never meet again——for Lusignan——
We shall be orphans still, and want a father.

Zar. Forbid it Heaven!

Ner. His last sad hour's at hand——
That flow of joy, which follow'd our discovery,
Too strong and sudden for his age's weakness,
Wasting his spirits, dry'd the source of life,
And nature yields him up to time's demand.
Shall he not die in peace?—Oh! let no doubt
Disturb his parting moments with distrust;
Let me, when I return to close his eyes,
Compose his mind's impatience too, and tell him,
You are confirm'd a Christian!——

Zar. Oh! may his soul enjoy, in earth and heaven,
Eternal rest! nor let one thought, one sigh,
One bold complaint of mine recall his cares!
But you have injur'd me, who still can doubt.——
What! am I not your sister? and shall you
Refuse me credit? You suppose me light;
You, who should judge my honour by your own,
Shall you distrust a truth I dar'd avow,
And stamp apostate on a sister's heart!

Ner. Ah! do not misconceive me!—if I err'd,
 Affection, not distrust, misled my fear;
 Your will may be a Christian, yet, not you;
 There is a sacred mark—a sign of faith,
 A pledge of promise, that must firm your claim;
 Wash you from guilt, and open Heaven before you.
 Swear, swear by all the woes we all have borne,
 By all the martyr'd saints, who call you daughter,
 That you consent, this day, to seal our faith,
 By that mysterious rite which waits your call.

Zar. I swear by Heaven, and all its holy host,
 Its saints, its martyrs, its attesting angels,
 And the dread presence of its living author,
 To have no faith but yours;—to die a Christian!
 Now, tell me what this mystic faith requires.

Ner. To hate the happiness of Osman's throne,
 And love that God, who, thro' his maze of woes,
 Has brought us all, unhoping, thus together.
 For me—I am a soldier, uninstructed,
 Nor daring to instruct, tho' strong in faith:
 But I will bring th' ambassador of Heaven,
 To clear your views, and lift you to your God!
 Be it your task to gain admission for him.—
 But where? from whom?—Oh! thou immortal Power!
 Whence can we hope it, in this curs'd seraglio?
 Who is this slave of Osman? Yes, this slave!
 Does she not boast the blood of twenty kings?
 Is not her race the same with that of Lewis?
 Is she not Lusignan's unhappy daughter?
 A Christian, and my sister?—yet a slave!

A willing slave!—I dare not speak more plainly.

Zar. Cruel! go on—Alas! you do not know me!
At once, a stranger to my secret fate,
My pains, my fears, my wishes, and my power:
I am—I will be Christian—will receive
This holy priest, with his mysterious blessing;
I will not do nor suffer aught unworthy
Myself, my father, or my father's race.—
But, tell me—nor be tender on this point,—
What punishment your Christian laws decree,
For an unhappy wretch, who, to herself
Unknown, and all abandon'd by the world,
Lost and enslav'd, has, in her sov'reign master,
Found a protector, generous as great,
Has touch'd his heart, and giv'n him all her own?

Ner. The punishment of such a slave should be
Death in this world—and pain in that to come.

Zar. I am that slave—strike here—and save my
shame.

Ner. Destruction to my hopes!—Can it be you?

Zar. It is—Ador'd by Osman, I adore him:
This hour the nuptial rites will make us one.

Ner. What! marry Osman!—Let the world grow
dark,

That the extinguish'd sun may hide thy shame!
Could it be thus, it were no crime to kill thee.

Zar. Strike, strike—I love him—yes, by Heav'n, I
love him.

Ner. Death is thy due—but not thy due from me:
Yet, were the honour of our house no bar—

My father's fame, and the too gentle laws
 Of that religion which thou hast disgrac'd——
 Did not the God thou quitt'st hold back my arm——
 Not there—I could not there—but, by my soul,
 I would rush, desp'rate, to the Sultan's breast,
 And plunge my sword in his proud heart who damns
 thee.

Oh! shame! shame! shame! at such a time as this!
 When Lewis! that awak'ner of the world,
 Beneath the lifted cross makes Egypt pale,
 And draws the sword of Heaven to spread our faith!
 Now to submit to see my sister doom'd
 A bosom slave to him whose tyrant heart
 But measures glory by the Christian's woe.
 Yes—I will dare acquaint our father with it;
 Departing Lusignan may live so long,
 As just to hear thy shame, and die to 'scape it.

Zar. Stay—my too angry brother—stay—perhaps,
 Zara has resolution great as thine:
 'Tis cruel—and unkind!—Thy words are crimes;
 My weakness but misfortune! Dost thou suffer;
 I suffer more;—Oh! would to Heaven this blood
 Of twenty boasted kings would stop at once,
 And stagnate in my heart!—It then no more
 Would rush in boiling fevers thro' my veins,
 And ev'ry trembling drop be fill'd with Osman.
 How has he lov'd me! how has he oblig'd me!
 I owe thee to him! What has he not done,
 To justify his boundless pow'r of charming?
 For me, he softens the severe decrees

Of his own faith ;—and is it just that mine
Should bid me hate him, but because he loves me ?
No——I will be a Christian——but preserve
My gratitude as sacred as my faith ;
If I have death to fear for Osman's sake,
It must be from his coldness, not his love.

Ner. I must at once condemn and pity thee ;
“ I cannot point thee out which way to go,
“ But Providence will lend its light to guide thee.
“ That sacred rite, which thou shalt now receive,
“ Will strengthen and support thy feeble heart,
“ To live an innocent, or die a martyr :”
Here, then, begin performance of thy vow ;
Here, in the trembling horrors of thy soul,
Promise thy king, thy father, and thy God,
Not to accomplish these detested nuptials,
Till first the rev'rend priest has clear'd your eyes,
Taught you to know, and giv'n you claim to Heav'n.
Promise me this——

Zar. So, bless me, Heav'n ! I do.——
Go—hasten the good priest, I will expect him ;
But first return—cheer my expiring father,
Tell him I am, and will be all he wishes me :
Tell him, to give him life 'twere joy to die.

Ner. I go—Farewel—farewel, unhappy sister !
[*Exit Nerestan.*]

Zar. I am alone—and now be just, my heart !
And tell me, wilt thou dare betray thy God ?
What am I ? What am I about to be ?
Daughter of Lusignan—or wife to Osman ?

Am I a lover most, or most a Christian ?
 “ Wou’d Selima were come ! and yet ’tis just,
 “ All friends should fly her who forsakes herself.”
 What shall I do ?—What heart has strength to bear
 These double weights of duty ?—Help me, Heav’n !
 To thy hard laws I render up my soul :
 But, Oh ! demand it back—for now ’tis Osman’s.

Enter OSMAN.

Osm. Shine out, appear, be found, my lovely Zara !
 Impatient eyes attend—the rites expect thee ;
 And my devoted heart no longer brooks
 This distance from its soft’ner !—“ all the lamps
 “ Of nuptial love are lighted, and burn pure,
 “ As if they drew their brightness from thy blushes :
 “ The holy mosque is fill’d with fragrant fumes,
 “ Which emulate the sweetness of thy breathing :
 “ My prostrate people all confirm my choice,
 “ And send their souls to heaven in prayers for blessings.

“ Thy envious rivals, conscious of thy right,
 “ Approve superior charms, and join to praise thee ;
 “ The throne that waits thee, seems to shine more
 richly,

“ As all its gems, with animated lustre,
 “ Fear’d to look dim beneath the eyes of Zara !”
 Come, my slow love ! the ceremonies wait thee ;
 Come, and begin from this dear hour my triumph.

Zar. Oh, what a wretch am I ! Oh, grief ! Oh,
 love !

“ *Osm.* Come——come——

“ *Zar.* Where shall I hide my blushes?

“ *Osm.* Blushes——here, in my bosom, hide ’em.

“ *Zar.* My lord!”

Osm. Nay, Zara—give me thy hand, and come——

Zar. Instruct me, Heaven!

What I should say—Alas! I cannot speak.

Osm. Away——this modest, sweet reluctant trifling
But doubles my desires, and thy own beauties.

Zar. Ah, me!

Osm. Nay—but thou should’st not be too cruel.

Zar. I can no longer bear it—Oh, my lord—

Osm. Ha!——“ What?—whence?—how?”——

Zar. My lord! my sov’reign!

Heav’n knows this marriage would have been a bliss
Above my humble hopes!—yet, witness love!
Not from the grandeur of your throne, that bliss,
But from the pride of calling Osman mine.

“ Would you had been no emperor! and I
“ Possess’d of power and charms deserving you!

“ That, slighting Asia’s thrones, I might alone

“ Have left a proffer’d world, to follow you

“ Through deserts, uninhabited by men,

“ And bless’d with ample room for peace and love:”

But, as it is——these Christians——

Osm. Christians! What!

How start two images into thy thoughts,
So distant——as the Christians and my love!

Zar. That good old Christian, rev’reud Lusignan,
Now dying, ends his life and woes together.

Osm. Well! let him die—What has thy heart to feel,
Thus pressing, and thus tender, from the death
Of an old wretched Christian?—Thank our pro-
phet,

Thou art no Christian!—Educated here,
Thy happy youth was taught our better faith:
Sweet as thy pity shines, 'tis now mis-tim'd.
What! tho' an aged suff'rer dies unhappy,
Why should his foreign fate disturb our joys?

Zar. Sir, if you love me, and would have me think
That I am truly dear—

Osm. Heaven! if I love!

Zar. Permit me—

Osm. What?

Zar. To desire—

Osm. Speak out.

Zar. The nuptial rites

May be deferr'd till—

Osm. What!—Is that the voice

Of Zara?

Zar. Oh, I cannot bear his frown!

Osm. Of Zara!

Zar. It is dreadful to my heart,

To give you but a seeming cause for anger;
Pardon my grief—Alas! I cannot bear it;
There is a painful terror in your eye
That pierces to my soul—hid from your sight
I go to make a moment's truce with tears,
And gather force to speak of my despair.

[Exit disordered.]

Osm. I stand immoveable, like senseless marble ;
 Horror had frozen my suspended tongue ;
 And an astonish'd silence robb'd my will
 Of power to tell her that she shock'd my soul !
 Spoke she to me ?—Sure I misunderstood her !
 Cou'd it be me she left ?—What have I seen !

Enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin, what a change is here !—She's gone,
 And I permitted it, I know not how.

Oras. Perhaps you but accuse the charming fault
 Of innocence, too modest oft in love.

Osm. But why, and whence those tears ?—those
 looks ! that flight !

That grief, so strongly stamp'd on every feature ?
 If it has been that Frenchman !—What a thought !
 How low, how horrid a suspicion that !

“ The dreadful flash at once gives light and kills me ;

“ My too bold confidence repell'd my caution—

“ An infidel ! a slave !—a heart like mine

“ Reduc'd to suffer from so vile a rival !”

But tell me, did'st thou mark 'em at their parting ?

Did'st thou observe the language of their eyes ?

Hide nothing from me—Is my love betray'd ?

Tell me my whole disgrace : nay, if thou tremblest,
 I hear thy pity speak, though thou art silent.

Oras. I tremble at the pangs I see you suffer.

Let not your angry apprehension urge

Your faithful slave to irritate your anguish ;

I did, 'tis true, observe some parting tears ;

But they were tears of charity and grief :
 I cannot think there was a cause deserving
 This agony of passion——

Osm. Why no——I thank thee——

Orasmin, thou art wise ! It cou'd not be
 That I should stand expos'd to such an insult.
 Thou know'st, had Zara meant me the offence,
 She wants not wisdom to have hid it better :
 How rightly didst thou judge !—Zara shall know it,
 And thank thy honest service——After all,
 Might she not have some cause for tears, which I
 Claim no concern in—but the grief it gives her ?
 What an unlikely fear—from a poor slave,
 Who goes to-morrow, and, no doubt, who wishes,
 Nay, who resolves to see these climes no more.

Oras. Why did you, Sir, against our country's
 custom,

Indulge him with a second leave to come ?
 He said, he should return once more to see her.

Osm. Return ! the traitor ! he return !—Dares he
 Presume to press a second interview ?

Would he be seen again ?——He shall be seen ;
 But dead.—I'll punish the audacious slave,
 To teach the faithless fair to feel my anger.

Be still, my transports ; violence is blind :
 I know my heart at once is fierce and weak ;

“ I feel that I descend below myself ;

“ Zara can never justly be suspected ;

“ Her sweetness was not formed to cover treason :

“ Yet, Osman must not stoop to woman's follies ;

“ Their tears, complaints, regrets, and reconcile-
ments,

“ With all their light, capricious roll of changes,

“ Are arts too vulgar to be tried on me.

“ It would become me better to resume

“ The empire of my will.” Rather than fall

Beneath myself, I must, how dear soe'er

It costs me, rise—till I look down on Zara!—

Away—but mark me—these seraglio doors,

Against all Christians be they henceforth shut,

Close as the dark retreats of silent death.

[Exit Orasmin.

What have I done, just Heav'n! thy rage to move,

That thou shouldst sink me down, so low to love?

[Exit.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ZARA, SELIMA.

Selima.

AH, Madam! how at once I grieve your fate,
And how admire your virtue!—Heaven permits,
And Heaven will give you strength, to bear misfor-
tune;

To break these chains, so strong and yet so dear.

Zar. Oh, that I could support the fatal struggle!

Sel. Th' Eternal aids your weakness, sees your will,
Directs your purpose, and rewards your sorrows.

Zar. Never had wretch more cause to hope he does.

Sel. What! tho' you here no more behold your father?

There is a Father to be found above,
Who can restore that father to his daughter.

Zar. But I have planted pain in Osman's bosom;
He loves me, even to death! and I reward him
With anguish and despair.—How base! how cruel!
But I deserv'd him not; I should have been
Too happy, and the hand of Heav'n repell'd me.

Sel. What! will you then regret the glorious loss,
And hazard thus a vict'ry bravely won?

Zar. Inhuman vict'ry!——thou dost not know
This love so pow'rful, this sole joy of life, 20
This first, best hope of earthly happiness,
Is yet less pow'rful in my heart than Heaven!
To him who made that heart I offer it;
There, there, I sacrifice my bleeding passion;
I pour before him ev'ry guilty tear;
I beg him to efface the fond impression,
And fill with his own image all my soul:
But, while I weep and sigh, repent and pray,
Remembrance brings the object of my love,
And ev'ry light illusion floats before him.
I see, I hear him, and again he charms!
Fills my glad soul, and shines 'twixt me and Heav'n!
Oh, all ye royal ancestors! Oh, father!
Mother! You Christians, and the Christians' God!
You who deprive me of this gen'rous lover!
If you permit me not to live for him,

Let me not live at all, and I am bless'd :

“ Let me die innocent ; let his dear hand

“ Close the sad eyes of her he stoop'd to love,

“ And I acquit my fate, and ask no more. 40

“ But he forgives me not——regardless now,

“ Whether, or how I live, or when I die.

“ He quits me, scorns me——and I yet live on,

“ And talk of death as distant.”——

Sel. Ah ! despair not ;

Trust your eternal helper, and be happy.

Zar. Why——what has Osman done, that he too
should not ?

Has Heaven so nobly form'd his heart to hate it ?

Gen'rous and just, beneficent and brave,

Where he but Christian——What can man be more ?

I wish, methinks, this rev'rend priest was come

To free me from these doubts, which shake my soul :

Yet know not why I should not dare to hope,

That Heav'n, whose mercy all confess and feel,

Will pardon and approve th' alliance wish'd :

Perhaps it seats me on the throne of Syria,

To tax my pow'r for these good Christians' comfort.

Thou know'st the mighty Saladine, who first

Conquer'd this empire from my father's race,

Who, like my Osman charm'd th' admiring world,

Drew breath, tho' Syrian, from a Christian mother.

Sel. What mean you, madam ! Ah ! you do not see——

Zar. Yes, yes—I see it all ; I am not blind :

I see my country and my race condemn me ;

I see, that spite of all, I still love Osman.

What if I now go throw me at his feet,
And tell him there sincerely what I am?

Sel. Consider—that might cost your brother's life,
Expose the Christians, and betray you all.

Zar. You do not know the noble heart of Osman.

Sel. I know him the protector of a faith,
Sworn enemy to ours;—The more he loves,
The less will he permit you to profess
Opinions which he hates: to-night the priest,
In private introduc'd, attends you here;
You promis'd him admission——

Zar. Would I had not!

I promis'd, too, to keep this fatal secret;
My father's urg'd command requir'd it of me;
I must obey, all dangerous as it is;
Compell'd to silence, Osman is enrag'd,
Suspicion follows, and I lose his love.

80

Enter OSMAN.

Osm. Madam! there was a time when my charm'd
heart

Made it a virtue to be lost in love;
When, without blushing, I indulg'd my flame,
And every day still made you dearer to me.
You taught me, madam, to believe my love
Reward'd and return'd—nor was that hope,
Methinks, too bold for reason. Emperors
Who choose to sigh devoted at the feet
Of beauties, whom the world conceive their slaves,
Have fortune's claim, at least, to sure success:
But 'twere prophane to think of power in love.

Dear as my passion makes you, I decline
 Possession of her charms, whose heart's another's.
 You will not find me a weak, jealous lover,
 By coarse reproaches, giving pain to you,
 And shaming my own greatness—wounded deeply,
 Yet shunning and disdaining low complaint,
 I come——to tell you——

100

Zar. Give my trembling heart
 A moment's respite——

Osm. “ I hat unwilling coldness
 “ Is the just prize of your capricious lightness;
 “ Your ready arts may spare the fruitless pains
 “ Of colouring deceit with fair pretences;
 “ I would not wish to hear your slight excuses;
 “ I cherish ignorance, to save my blushes.”

Osman in every trial shall remember
 That he is emperor.——Whate'er I suffer,
 'Tis due to honour that I give up you,
 And to my injur'd bosom take despair,
 Rather than shamefully possess you sighing,
 Convinc'd those sighs were never meant for me—
 Go, madam—you are free—from Osman's pow'r—
 Expect no wrongs, but see his face no more.

Zar. At last, 'tis come—the fear'd, the murd'ring
 moment

Is come——and I am curs'd by earth and heaven!

[*Throws herself on the ground.*]

If it is true that I am lov'd no more——

120

If you——

Osm. It is too true, my fame requires it;
 It is too true, that I unwilling leave you:

That I at once renounce you and adore—
Zara!—you weep!

Zar. If I am doom'd to loose you,
If I must wander o'er an empty world,
Unloving and unlov'd—Oh! yet, do justice
To the afflicted——do not wrong me doubly:
Punish me, if 'tis needful to your peace,
But say not, I deserv'd it—“ This, at least,
“ Believe——for not the greatness of your soul
“ Is truth more pure and sacred——no regret
“ Can touch my bleeding heart, for I have lost
“ The rank of her you raise to share your throne.
“ I know I never ought to have been there;
“ My fate and my defects require I lose you.”
But ah! my heart was never known to Osman.
May Heav'n that punishes for ever hate me,
If I regret the loss of aught but you.

Osm. Rise—“ rise, this means not love?” 140

“ *Zar.* Strike——Strike me, Heaven!”

Osm. What! is it love to force yourself to wound
The heart you wish to gladden? But I find
Lovers least know themselves; for I believ'd,
That I had taken back the power I gave you;
Yet see!—you did but weep, and have resum'd me!
Proud as I am——I must confess, one wish
Evades my power——the blessing to forget you.
Zara—thy tears were form'd to teach disdain,
That softness can disarm it.——'Tis decreed.
I must for ever love—but from what cause,
If thy consenting heart partakes my fires,

Art thou reluctant to a blessing meant me?
 Speak! "Is it levity——or, is it fear?
 "Fear of a power that, but for blessing thee,
 "Had, without joy, been painful."——Is it artifice?
 Oh! spare the needless pains——Art was not made
 For Zara.——Art, however innocent,
 Looks like deceiving——I abhorr'd it ever.

Zar. Alas! I have no art; not even enough 160
 To hide this love, and this distress you give me.

Osm. New riddles! Speak with plainness to my soul;
 What canst thou mean?

Zar. I have no power to speak it.

Osm. Is it some secret dangerous to my state?
 Is it some Christian plot grown ripe against me?

Zar. Lives there a wretch so vile as to betray you!
 Osman is bless'd beyond the reach of fear:
 Fears and misfortunes threaten only Zara.

Osm. Why threaten Zara?

Zar. Permit me, at your feet,
 Thus trembling, to beseech a favour from you.

Osm. A favour! Oh, you guide the will of Osman.

Zar. Ah! would to Heav'n our duties were united,
 "Firm as our thoughts and wishes!" But this day;
 But this one sad, unhappy day, permit me,
 Alone, and far-divided from your eye,
 To cover my distress, lest you, too tender,
 Should see and share it with me—from to-morrow,
 I will not have a thought conceal'd from you. 180

"*Osm.* What strange disquiet, from what stranger
 cause!

"*Zar.* If I am really bless'd with Osman's love,

“ He will not then refuse this humble prayer.”

Osm. If it must be, it must.—Be pleas'd, my will
Takes purpose from your wishes; and consent
Depends not on my choice, but your decree:
Go——but remember how he loves, who thus
Finds a delight in pain, because you give it.

Zar. It gives me more than pain to make you feel it.

Osm. And——can you, Zara, leave me?

Zar. Alas! my lord! [Exit Zara.

Osm. [Alone.] It should be yet, methinks, too soon
to fly me!

Too soon, as yet, to wrong my easy faith.
The more I think, the less I can conceive,
What hidden cause should raise such strange despair!
Now, when her hopes have wings, and every wish
Is courted to be lively!—When I love,
And joy and empire press her to their bosom;
“ When not alone belov'd, but ev'n a lover: 199
“ Professing and accepting; bless'd and blessing;
“ To see her eyes, through tears, shine mystic love!
“ 'Tis madness! and I were unworthy power,
“ To suffer longer the capricious insult!”
Yet, was I blameless?—No—I was too rash;
I have felt jealousy, and spoke it to her;
I have distrusted her—and still she loves:
Gen'rous atonement that! “ and 'tis my duty
“ To expiate, by a length of soft indulgence,
“ The transports of a rage, which still was love.
“ Henceforth, I never will suspect her false;
“ Nature's plain power of charming dwells about her,

“ And innocence gives force to ev’ry word.

“ I owe full confidence to all she looks,

“ For in her eye shines truth, and ev’ry beam

“ Shoots confirmation round her.”—I remark’d,

Ev’n while she wept, her soul a thousand times

Sprung to her lips, and long’d to leap to mine,

With honest, ardent utt’rance of her love.——

Who can possess a heart so low, so base,

To look such tenderness, and yet have none? 220

Enter MELIDOR with ORASMIN.

Mel. This letter, great disposer of the world!

Address’d to Zara, and in private brought,

Your faithful guards this moment intercepted,

And humbly offer to your sovereign eye.

Osm. Come nearer, give it me.—To Zara!—Rise.

Bring it with speed——Shame on your flattering
distance——

[Advancing, and snatching the letter.]

Be honest—and approach me like a subject

Who serves the prince, yet not forgets the man.

Mel. One of the Christian slaves, whom late your
bounty

Releas’d from bondage, sought with heedful guile,

Unnotic’d to deliver it.——Discover’d

He waits, in chains, his doom from your decree.

Osm. Leave me! I tremble, as if something fatal

Were meant me from this letter——should I read it?

Oras. Who knows but it contains some happy truth
That may remove all doubts, and calm your heart?

“ Be strait confronted with her—Stay—I will,
 “ I will—I know not what!”——Would I were
 dead!

Would I had dy’d, unconscious of this shame!

Oras. Never did prince receive so bold a wrong,

Osm. See here detected this infernal secret!

This fountain of her tears, which my weak heart
 Mistook for marks of tenderness and pain!

Why! what a reach has woman to deceive!

Under how fine a veil of grief and fear

Did she propose retirement ’till to-morrow!

And I, blind dotard! gave the fool’s consent,

Sooth’d her, and suffer’d her to go!—— She parted,

Dissolv’d in tears; and parted to betray me!

“ *Oras.* Reflection serves but to confirm her guilt.

“ At length resume yourself; awaken thought;

“ Assert your greatness; and resolve like Osman.

“ *Osm.* Nerestan, too—Was this the boasted honour

“ Of that proud Christian, whom Jerusalem 280

“ Grew loud in praising! whose half envy’d virtue

“ I wonder’d at myself; and felt disdain

“ To be but equal to a Christian’s greatness!

“ And does he thank me thus; base infidel!

“ Honest, pretending, pious, praying villain?

“ Yet Zara is a thousand times more base,

“ More hypocrite, than he? A slave! a wretch!

“ So low, so lost, that even the vilest labours,

“ In which he lay condemn’d, could never sink him

“ Beneath his native infamy——Did she not know

“ What I have done, what suffer’d—for her sake?”

Oras. Could you, my gracious lord ! forgive my
zeal,

You would——

Osm. I know it—thou art right—I'll see her—
I'll tax her in thy presence ;—I'll upbraid her——
I'll let her learn—Go—find, and bring her to me.

“ *Oras.* Alas, my lord ! disorder'd as you are,
“ What can you wish to say ?

“ *Osm.* I know not, now—
“ But I resolve to see her—lest she think 300
“ Her falsehood has, perhaps, the power to grieve
me.

Oras. Believe me, sir, your threat'nings, your
complaints,
What will they all produce, but Zara's tears
To quench this fancy'd anger ! Your lost heart,
Seduc'd against itself, will search but reasons
To justify the guilt, which gives it pain :
Rather conceal from Zara this discovery ;
And let some trusty slave convey the letter,
Reclos'd to her own hand—then shall you learn,
Spite of her frauds, disguise, and artifice,
The firmness, or abasement of her soul.

Osm. Thy counsel charms me ! We'll about it now.
“ 'Twill be some recompence, at least, to see
“ Her blushes when detected.——

“ *Oras.* Oh, my lord !
“ I doubt you in the trial——for your heart.——
“ *Osm.* Distrust me not—my love, indeed, is weak,
“ But honour and disdain more strong than Zara.”

Here, take this fatal letter—chuse a slave
 Whom yet she never saw, and who retains 320
 His tried fidelity—Dispatch—begone——

[Exit Orasmin.

Now, whither shall I turn my eyes and steps,
 The surest way to shun her : and give time
 For this discovering trial?——Heav'n! she's here!

Enter ZARA.

So, Madam! fortune will befriend my cause,
 And free me from your fetters.—You are met
 Most aptly, to dispel a new-ris'n doubt,
 That claims the finest of your arts to gloss it.
 Unhappy each by other, it is time
 To end our mutual pain, that both may rest :
 You want not generosity, but love ;
 My pride forgotten, my obtruded throne,
 My favours, cares, respect, and tenderness,
 Touching your gratitude, provok'd regard ;
 'Till, by a length of benefits besieg'd,
 Your heart submitted, and you thought 'twas love :
 But you deceiv'd yourself and injur'd me.
 There is, I'm told, an object more deserving
 Your love than Osman——I would know his name :
 Be just, nor trifle with my anger : tell me 340
 Now, while expiring pity struggles faint ;
 While I have yet, perhaps, the pow'r to pardon :
 Give up the bold invader of my claim,
 And let him die to save thee. Thou art known ;
 Think and resolve—While I yet speak, renounce him;

While yet the thunder rolls suspended, stay it;
 Let thy voice charm me, and recall my soul,
 That turns averse, and dwells no more on Zara.

Zar. Can it be Osman speaks, and speaks to Zara?
 Learn, cruel? learn, that this afflicted heart,
 This heart which Heav'n delights to prove by tor-
 tures,

Did it not love, has pride and power to shun you.

“ Alas! you will not know me! What have I

“ To fear, but that unhappy love you question?

“ That love which only could outweigh the shame

“ I feel, while I descend to weep my wrongs.”

I know not whether Heav'n, that frowns upon me,

Has destin'd my unhappy days for yours;

But, be my fate or bless'd or curs'd, I swear

By honour, dearer ev'n than life or love, 360

Could Zara be but mistress of herself,

She would, with cold regard, look down on kings,

And, you alone excepted, fly 'em all.

“ Would you learn more, and open all my heart?

“ Know then, that, spite of this renew'd injustice,

“ I do not—cannot wish to love you less:

“ That, long before you look'd so low as Zara

“ She gave her heart to Osman; yours, before

“ Your benefits had bought her, or your eye

“ Had thrown distinction round her; never had,

“ Nor ever will acknowledge other lover:”—

And to this sacred truth, attesting Heaven,

I call thy dreadful notice! If my heart

Deserves reproach, 'tis for, but not from Osman.

Osm. “What! does she yet presume to swear sincerity!”

Oh, boldness of unblushing perjury!
Had I not seen; had I not read such proof
Of her light falsehood as extinguish'd doubt,
I could not be a man, and not believe her.

Zar. Alas, my lord! what cruel fears have seiz'd
you? 380

What harsh, mysterious words were those I heard?

Osm. What fears should Osman feel, since Zara
loves him?

Zar. I cannot live and answer to your voice
In that reproachful tone; your angry eye
Trembles with fury while you talk of love.

Osm. Since Zara loves him!

Zar. Is it possible
Osman should disbelieve it?—Again, again
Your late-repent'd violence returns—
Alas! what killing frowns you dart against me!
Can it be kind? Can it be just to doubt me?

Osm. No! I can doubt no longer—You may retire.
[Exit Zara.]

Re-enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin, she's perfidious, even beyond
Her sex's undiscover'd power of seeming;
“She's at the topmost point of shameless artifice;
“An empress at deceiving! Soft and easy,
“Destroying like a plague, in calm tranquility:
“She's innocent she swears—so is the fire;

“ It shines in harmless distance, bright and pleasing,
 “ Consuming nothing till it first embraces.” 400

Say; hast thou chosen a slave?—Is he instructed?

Haste to detect her vileness and my wrongs.

Oras. Punctual I have obey'd your whole command :

But have you arm'd, my lord, your injur'd heart,
 With coldness and indifference! Can you hear,
 All painless and unmov'd the false one's shame?

Osm. Orasmin, I adore her more than ever.

Oras. My lord! my emperor! forbid it, Heaven!

Osm. I have discern'd a gleam of distant hope;

“ This hateful Christian, the light growth of France,
 “ Proud, young, vain, amorous, conceited, rash,
 “ Has misconceiv'd some charitable glance,
 “ And judg'd it love in Zara: he alone,
 “ Then, has offended me. Is it her fault,
 “ If those she charms are indiscreet and daring?
 “ Zara, perhaps, expected not this letter;
 “ And I, with rashness groundless as its writer's,
 “ Took fire at my own fancy, and have wrong'd her.”

Now hear me with attention—Soon as night
 Has thrown her welcome shadows o'er the palace;
 When this Nerestan, this ungrateful Christian, 421
 Shall lurk in expectation near our walls,
 Be watchful that our guards surprize and seize him;
 Then, bound in fetters and o'erwhelm'd with shame,
 Conduct the daring traitor to my presence:—
 But, above all, be sure you hurt not Zara;
 Mindful to what supreme excess I love. [*Exit Oras.*

On this last trial all my hopes depend ;
 Prophet, for once thy kind assistance lend,
 Dispel the doubts that rack my anxious breast,
 If Zara's innocent, thy Osman's blest. [Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

ZARA and SELIMA.

Zara.

SOOTH me no longer, with this vain desire ;
 To a recluse like me, who dares henceforth
 Presume admission !——the seraglio's shut——
 Barr'd and impassable——as death to time !
 My brother ne'er must hope to see me more :——
 How now ! what unknown slave accosts us here ?

Enter MELIDOR.

Mel. This letter, trusted to my hands, receive,
 In secret witness I am wholly yours.

[Zara reads the letter.]

Sel. [*Aside.*] Thou everlasting ruler of the world !
 Shed thy wish'd mercy on our hopeless tears ;
 Redeem us from the hands of hated infidels,
 And save my princess from the breast of Osman.

Zar. I wish, my friend, the comfort of your counsel.

Sel. Retire—you shall be call'd—wait near—Go,
 leave us. [Exit Mel.]

Zar. Read this, and tell me what I ought to answer :
 For I would gladly hear my brother's voice.

Sel. Say rather you would hear the voice of Heav'n.
'Tis not your brother calls you, but your God.

Zar. I know it, nor resist his awful will;
Thou knowst that I have bound my soul by oath; 20
But can I—ought I—to engage myself,
My brother, and the Christians, in this danger?

Sel. 'Tis not their danger that alarms your fears;
Your love speaks loudest to your shrinking soul;
“ I know your heart of strength to hazard all,
“ But it has let in traitors, who surrender
“ On poor pretence of safety:—Learn at least,
“ To understand the weakness that deceives you:
“ You tremble to offend your haughty lover,
“ Whom wrongs and outrage but endear the more;
“ Yes—you are blind to Osman's cruel nature,
“ That Tartar's fierceness, that obscures his boun-
ties;”

This tyger, savage in his tenderness,
Courts with contempt, and threatens amidst softness;
Yet, cannot your neglected heart efface
His fated, fix'd impression!

Zar. What reproach
Can I with justice make him?—I, indeed,
Have given him cause to hate me!—
Was not his throne, was not his temple ready? 40
Did he not court his slave to be a queen,
And have not I declin'd it?—I who ought
To tremble, conscious of affronted power!
Have not I triumph'd o'er his pride and love?
Seen him submit his own high will to mine,

And sacrifice his wishes to my weakness ?

Sel. Talk we no more of this unhappy passion :
What resolution will your virtue take ?

Zar. All things combine to sink me to despair :
From the seraglio death alone will free me.
I long to see the Christians' happy climes ;
Yet in the moment, while I form that prayer,
I sigh a secret wish to languish here.
How sad a state is mine ! my restless soul
All ign'rant what to do, or what to wish ?
My only perfect sense is that of pain.

Oh, guardian Heav'n ! protect my brother's life,
For I will meet him, and fulfil his prayer :
Then, when from Solyma's unfriendly walls,
His absence shall unbind his sister's tongue,
Osman shall learn the secret of my birth,
My faith unshaken, and my deathless love ;
He will approve my choice, and pity me.
I'll send my brother word he may expect me.
Call in the faithful slave—God of my fathers !

60

[*Exit Selima.*

Let thy hand save me, and thy will direct.

Enter SELIMA and MELIDOR.

Go—tell the Christian who intrusted thee,
That Zara's heart is fix'd, nor shrinks at danger ;
And that my faithful friend will, at the hour,
Expect, and introduce him to his wish.

Away—the Sultan comes ; he must not find us.

[*Exeunt Zara and Selima.*

Enter OSMAN and ORASMIN.

Osm. Swifter, ye hours, move on; my fury glows
Impatient, and would push the wheels of time.
How now! What message dost thou bring? Speak
boldly—

What answer gave she to the letter sent her?

Mel. She blush'd and trembl'd, and grew pale, and
paus'd.

Then blush'd, and read it; and again grew pale;
And wept, and smil'd, and doubted, and resolv'd:
For after all this race of varied passions,
When she had sent me out, and call'd me back, 80
Tell him (she cry'd) who has intrusted thee,
That Zara's heart is fix'd, nor shrinks at danger;
And that my faithful friend will, at the hour,
Expect, and introduce him to his wish.

Osm. Enough—begone—I have no ear for more.—
[*To the slave.*

Leave me, thou too, Orasmin.—Leave me, life,
[*To Orasmin*

For ev'ry mortal aspect moves my hate:
Leave me to my distraction——“ I grow mad,
“ And cannot bear the visage of a friend.
“ Leave me to rage, despair, and shame, and wrongs;
“ Leave me to seek myself—and shun mankind.”
[*Exit Orasmin.*

Who am I?—Heav'n! Who am I? What resolve I?
Zara! Nerestan! sound these words like names
Decreed to join?—Why pause I?—Perish Zara——

Would I could tear her image from my heart :—
 “ ’Twere happier not to live at all, than live
 “ Her scorn, the sport of an ungrateful false one!
 “ And sink the sov’reign in a woman’s property.”

Re-enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin!—Friend! return, I cannot bear
 This absence from thy reason: ’twas unkind, 100
 ’Twas cruel to obey me, thus distress’d,
 And wanting pow’r to think, when I had lost thee.
 How goes the hour? Has he appear’d, this rival?
 Perish the shameful sound—This villain Christian!
 Has he appear’d below?

Oras. Silent and dark,
 Th’ unbreathing world is hush’d, as if it heard,
 And listened to your scrowls.

Osm. Oh, treach’rous night!
 Thou lend’st thy ready veil to ev’ry treason,
 And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade.

“ Orasmin, prophet, reason, truth, and love!
 “ After such length of benefits, to wrong me!
 “ How have I over-rated, how mistaken,
 “ The merit of her beauty!—Did I not
 “ Forget I was a monarch? Did I remember
 “ That Zara was a slave?—I gave up all;
 “ Gave up tranquility, distinction, pride,
 “ And fell the shameful victim of my love!

“ *Oras.* Sir, Sovereign, Sultan, my Imperial Master!
 “ Reflect on your own greatness, 121
 “ The distant provocation.”

Osm. Hark! Heardst thou nothing?

Oras. My lord!

Osm. A voice, like dying groans!

Oras. I listen, but can hear nothing.

Osm. Again!—look out—he comes——

Oras. Nor tread of mortal foot—nor voice I hear:

The still seraglio lies, profoundly plung'd

In death-like silence! nothing stirs.—The air

Is soft, as infant sleep, no breathing wing

Steals through the shadows, to awaken night.

Osm. Horrors a thousand times more dark than
these,

Benight my suff'ring soul——Thou dost not know

To what excess of tenderness I lov'd her:

I knew no happiness, but what she gave me,

Nor could have felt a mis'ry but for her!

Pity this weakness——mine are tears, Orasmin,

That fall not oft, nor lightly.—

Oras. Tears!——Oh, Heaven!

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“*Osm.* The first which ever yet unmann'd my
eyes!

“ Oh! pity Zara——pity me——Orasmin,

“ These but forerun the tears of destin'd blood.”

Oras. Oh, my unhappy lord!—I tremble for you—

Osm. Do—tremble at my sufferings, at my love;

At my revenge too, tremble——for 'tis due,

And will not be deluded.

Oras. Hark! I hear

The steps of men, along the neighb'ring wall!

Osm. Fly—seize him——'tis Nerestan! Wait no chains,

But drag him down to my impatient eye.

[Exit Orasmin.]

Enter ZARA and SELIMA, in the dark.

Zar. Where art thou, Selima? Give me thy hand.
It is so dark, I tremble as I step,
With fears and startings, never felt till now!

Osm. Damnation! 'tis her voice! the well-known
sound,

That has so often charm'd me into baseness!

“ Oh, the perfidious hypocrite!—she goes

“ To meet th' inviting infidel!—now, now,”

[Drawing a dagger.]

Revenge, stand firm, and intercept his wishes;—

Revenge! On whom?—No matter—Earth and

Heaven

160

Would blush, should I forbear: now—Zara, now!

[Drops the Dagger.]

I must not, cannot strike, the starting steel,

Unwilling, flies my hand, and shuns to wound her.

Zar. This is the private path—come nearer, lead
me——

Are we not notic'd, thinkst thou?

Sel. Fear not, madam;

It cannot now be long, ere we shall meet him.

Osm. That word has given me back my ebbing
rage—

[Recovers the dagger.]

Zar. I walk in terror, and my heart forebodes.

Who's there?—Nerestan! Is it you?—O welcome—

Osm. [*Stabbing her.*] This to thy heart——'Tis not
the traitor meets thee,
'Tis the betray'd—who writes it in thy blood.

Zar. Oh, gracious Heaven! receive my parting
soul,

And take thy trembling servant to thy mercy——

[*Dies.*

Osm. Soul!—then revenge has reach'd thee—I will
now

Haste from this fatal place—I cannot leave her!
Whom did I strike? Was this the act of love?
Swallow me, earth!—She's silent—Zara's dead!
And should I live to see returning day, 79
'Twill shew me but her blood!—shew me left joyless,
In a wide, empty world, with nothing round me,
But penitence and pain—And yet, 'twas just:—
Hark!—Destiny has sent her lover to me,
To fill my vengeance, and restore my joy.

Enter ORASMIN with NERESTAN.

Approach, thou wretch! thou more than curs'd! come
near——

Thou who, in gratitude for freedom gain'd,
Hast giv'n me miseries beyond thy own!
Thou heart of hero with a traitor's soul!
“Go—reap thy due reward, prepare to suffer,
“Whate'er inventive malice can inflict,
“To make thee feel thy death, and perish slow.”
Are my commands obey'd?

Oras. All is prepar'd. -

Osm. Thy wanton eyes look round, in search of her
Whose love, descending to a slave like thee,
From my dishonour'd hand receiv'd her doom.
See! where she lies——

Ner. Oh, fatal, rash mistake!

Osm. Dost thou behold her, slave?

Ner. Unhappy sister!

200

Osm. Sister!——Didst thou say sister? If thou
didst,

Bless me with deafness, Heaven!

Ner. Tyrant! I did——

She was my sister——All that now is left thee,
Dispatch——From my distracted heart drain next
The remnant of the royal Christian blood:

Old Lusignan, expiring in my arms,

Sent his too wretched son, with his last blessing,

To his now murder'd daughter!——

Would I had seen the bleeding innocent!

I would have liv'd to speak to her in death;

Would have awaken'd in her languid heart,

A livelier sense of her abandon'd God:

That God, who left by her, forsook her too,

And gave the poor lost sufferer to thy rage.

Osm. Thy sister!——Lusignan her father——Selima!
Can this be true?——and have I wrong'd thee, Zara?

Sel. Thy love was all the cloud, 'twixt her and
Heav'n!

Osm. Be dumb——for thou art base, to add distraction

To my already more than bleeding heart.

220

And was thy love sincere?—What then remains?

Ner. Why should a tyrant hesitate on murder!
 There now remains but mine, of all the blood
 Which, through thy father's cruel reign and thine,
 Has never ceas'd to stream on Syria's sands.
 Restore a wretch to his unhappy race;
 Nor hope that torments, after such a scene,
 Can force one feeble groan to feast thy anger.
 I waste my fruitless words in empty air;
 The tyrant, o'er the bleeding wound he made,
 Hangs his unmoving eye, and heeds not me.

Osm. Oh, Zara!——

Oras. Alas, my lord, return—whither would grief
 Transport your gen'rous heart?——This Christian
 dog——

Osm. Take off his fetters, and observe my will:
 To him, and all his friends, give instant liberty:
 Pour a profusion of the richest gifts
 On these unhappy Christians; and when heap'd
 With vary'd benefits, and charg'd with riches,
 Give 'em safe conduct to the nearest port. 240

Oras. But, Sir——

Osm. Reply not, but obey.——
 Fly—nor dispute thy master's last command,
 Thy prince, who orders—and thy friend, who loves
 thee!

Go—lose no time—farewell—begone—and thou!
 Unhappy warrior—yet less lost than I——
 Haste from our bloody land—and to thy own,
 Convey this poor, pale object of my rage.

Thy king, and all his Christians, when they hear
 Thy miseries, shall mourn 'em with their tears;
 But, if thou tell'st 'em mine, and tell'st 'em truly,
 They who shall hate my crime, shall pity me.
 Take, too, this poniard with thee, which my hand
 Has stain'd with blood far dearer than my own;
 Tell 'em—with this I murder'd her I lov'd;
 The noblest and most virtuous among women!
 The soul of innocence, and pride of truth:
 Tell 'em I laid my empire at her feet:
 Tell 'em I plung'd my dagger in her blood;
 Tell 'em, I so ador'd—and thus reveng'd her. 260

[Stabs himself.

Rev'rence this hero—and conduct him safe. [Dies.

Ner. Direct me, great inspirer of the soul!
 How should I act, how judge in this distress?
 Amazing grandeur! and detested rage!
 Ev'n I, amidst my tears, admire this foe,
 And mourn his death, who liv'd to give me woe.

[Exeunt omnes.





The truth, said, feebly
 M^{rs} ABINGTON as WIDOW BELMOTR.
 Wh. bless with temper, whose unclouded ray,
 Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day.

London. Printed for J. Bell in Pall Mall, Strand, April 24, 1791.

THE
WAY TO KEEP HIM.

A
COMEDY,
By ARTHUR MURPHY, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,
AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

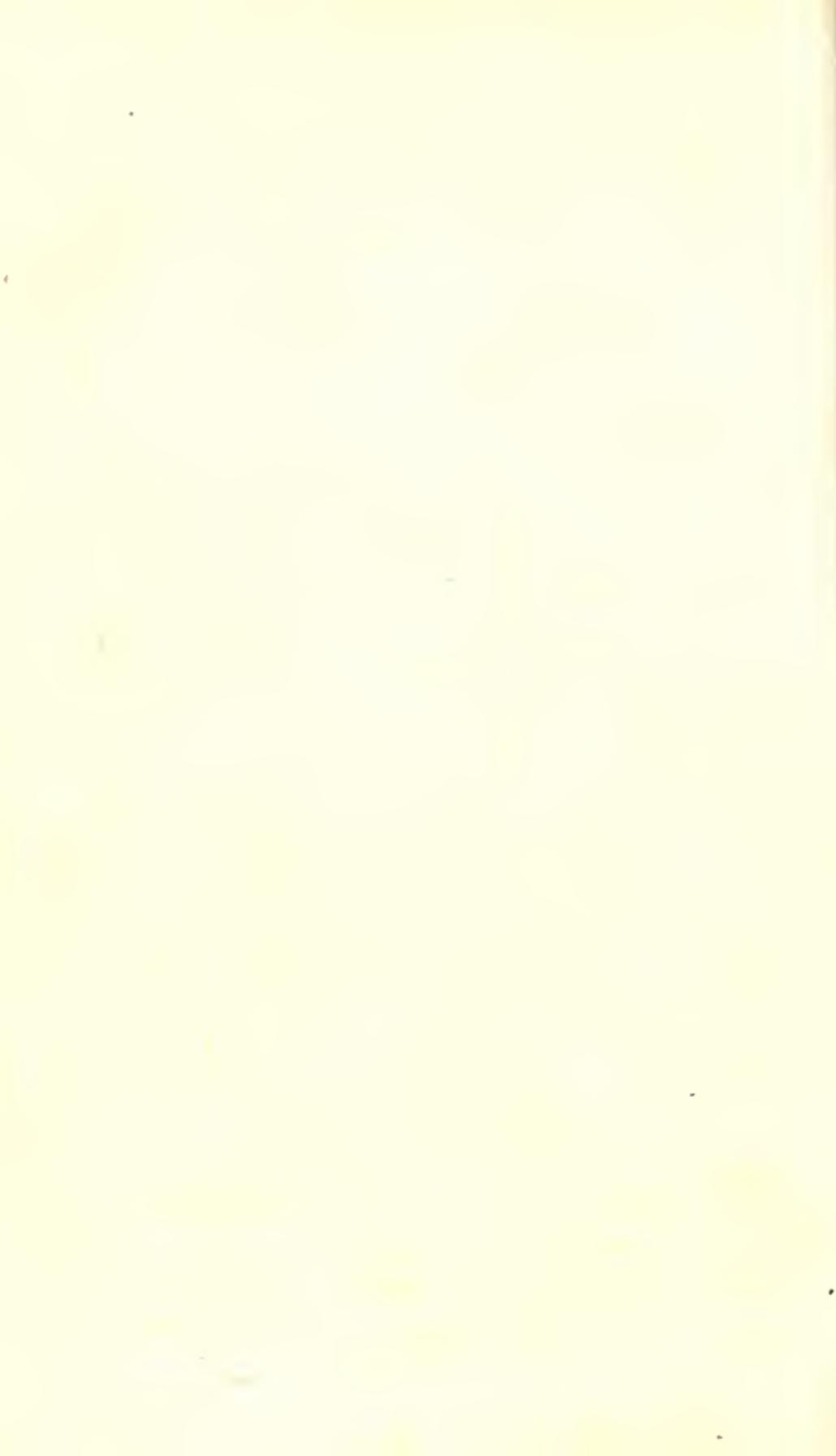
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MDCCXCII.



TO
MRS. ABINGTON.

MADAM,

YOU will be surprised, at this distance of time, and in this public manner, to receive an answer to a very polite letter, which you addressed to me in the course of the last summer at Yarmouth. In a strain of vivacity, which always belongs to you, you invite me to write again for the Stage. You tell me, that having gone through the Comedies of THE WAY TO KEEP HIM, ALL IN THE WRONG, and THREE WEEKS AFTER MARRIAGE, you now want more from the same hand. I am not bound, you say, by my resolution, signified in a Prologue about ten years ago, to take my leave of the Dramatic Muse. At the perjuries of poets, as well as lovers, Jove laughs; and the public, you think, will be ready to give me a general release from the promise. All this is very flattering. If the following Scenes, at the end of five and twenty years, still continue to be a part of the public amusement, I know to what cause I am to ascribe it. Those graces of action, with which you adorn whatever you undertake, have given to the Piece a degree of brilliancy, and even novelty, as

often as you have repeated it. I am not unmindful of the Performers who first obtained for the Author the favour of the Town: a GARRICK, a YATES, a CIBBER, united their abilities; and who can forget Mrs. CLIVE? They have all passed away, and the COMEDY might have passed with them, if you had not so frequently placed it in a conspicuous light.

The truth is, without such talents as yours, all that the Poet writes is a dead letter. He designs for representation, but it is the Performer that gives to the draught, however justly traced, a form, a spirit, a countenance, and a mind. All this you have done for the WIDOW BELLMOUR; and that excellence in your art, which you are known to possess, can, no doubt, lend the same animation to any new character. But alas! I have none to offer. That tinder in the Poet's mind, which, as Doctor YOUNG says, takes fire from every spark, I have not found, even though you have endeavoured to kindle the flame. Could I write, as you can act, I should be proud to obey your commands: but after a long disuse, how shall I recover the train of thinking necessary for plot, humour, incident, and character?

In the place of novelty, permit me to request that The Way to Keep Him may be inscribed to you. You are intitled to it, Madam; for your talents have made the Play your own. A Dedication, I grant,

at this period of time, comes rather late ; but being called upon for a new edition, I have retouched the dialogue, and perhaps so reformed the whole, that, in its present state, it may be deemed less unworthy of your acceptance. It is, therefore, my wish, that this Address may in future attend the Comedy, to remain (as long as such a thing can remain) a tribute due to the GENIUS OF MRS. ABINGTON, and a mark of that esteem, with which I subscribe myself,

Madam,

Your real admirer,

And most obedient Servant,

ARTHUR MURPHY.

Lincoln's-Inn,
25th Nov. 1785.

PROLOGUE.

*WHEN first the haughty critic's dreadful rage,
With Gothic fury, over-ran the stage,
Then Prologues rose, and strove with varied art
To gain the soft accesses to the heart.
Thro' all the tuneful tribe th' infection flew,
And each Great Genius—his petition drew ;
In formâ pauperis address'd the Pit,
With all the gay antithesis of wit.
Their sacred art poor poets own'd a crime ;
They sigh'd in simile, they bow'd in rhyme.
For charity they all were forc'd to beg ;
And every Prologue was "a wooden leg."*

*Next these a hardy, manly race appear'd,
Who knew no dulness, and no critics fear'd.
From Nature's store each curious tint they drew,
Then boldly held the piece to public view :
"Lo! here, exact proportion! just design!
"The bold relief! and the unerring line!
"Mark in soft union how the colours strike!
"This, Sirs, you will, or this you ought to like."
They bid defiance to the foes of wit,
"Scatter'd like ratsbane up and down the Pit."*

*Such Prologues were of yore;—our bard to-night
Disdains a false compassion to excite :
Nor too secure your judgment would oppose ;
He packs no jury, AND HE DREADS NO FOES.
To govern here no party can expect ;
An audience will preserve its own respect.*

*To catch the foibles, that misguide the fair,
From trifles spring, and end in lasting care,
Our author aims ; nor this alone he tries,
But as fresh objects, and new manners rise,
He bids his canvass glow with various dyes ;
Where sense and folly mix in dubious strife,
Alternate rise, and struggle into life.
Judge if with art the mimic strokes he blend ;
If amicab'y light and shade contend ;
The mental features if he trace with skill ;
See the Piece first, then damn it if you will.*

Dramatis Personae.

DRURY - LANE.

Men.

LOVEMORE,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Wroughton.
SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. King.
SIR BRILLIANT FASHION,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Dodd.
WILLIAM, <i>servant to Lovemore,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. R. Palmer.
SIDEBOARD, <i>servant to Sir Bashful,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Burton.
POMPEY, <i>a black servant,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Miss Gaudry.
JOHN,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Phillimore.

Women.

Mrs. LOVEMORE,	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Ward.
The Widow BELLMOUR,	-	-	-	-	-	Miss Farren.
Lady CONSTANT,	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Kemble.
MUSLIN, <i>maid to Mrs. Lovemore,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Miss Pope.
MIGNIONET, <i>maid to Mrs. Bellmour,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Miss Tidswell.
FURNISH, <i>maid to Lady Constant,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Miss Heard.

SCENE, London.



THE
WAY TO KEEP HIM.

ACT I. SCENE I.

*An Apartment in LOVEMORE'S House. WILLIAM and
SIDEBOARD discovered at a Game of Cards.*

William.

A PLAGUE go with it! I have turned out my game:
Is forty-seven good?

Side. Equal.

Will. Confound the cards! tierce to a queen?

Side. Equal.

Will. There again! ruined, stock and block: no-
thing can save me. I don't believe there is a footman
in England plays with worse luck than myself. Four
aces are fourteen.

Side. That's hard, cruel by Jupiter! Aces against
me every time.

Will. Four aces are fourteen: fifteen. [Plays.

Side. There's your equality.

Will. Very well : I turned out my point. Sixteen ;
[Plays.] seventeen. [Plays.]

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. There's a couple of you, indeed ! You are so fond of the vices of your betters, that you are scarce out of your beds, but you must imitate them and their profligate ways. Set you up forsooth !

Will. Pr'ythee be quiet, woman, do. Eighteen.
[Plays.]

Mus. Upon my word !—With your usual ease, Mr. Coxcomb.

Will. Manners, Mrs. Muslin : you see Mr. Sideboard here ; he is just come on a message from Sir Bashful Constant. Have some respect for a stranger, Nineteen, clubs. [Plays.]

Mus. It would become Mr. Sideboard to go back with his answer, and it would become you to send my lady word——

Will. Command your tongue, Mrs. Muslin : you'll put me out. What shall I play ?—He will go back with his answer in good time. Let his master wait till it suits our conveniency. Nineteen, clubs : where shall I go now ?

Mus. Have done with your folly, Mr. Impertinent. My lady desires to know——

Will. I tell you, woman, my master and I desire to have nothing to do with you and your lady. Twenty, diamonds. [Plays.]

Mus. But I tell you, Mr. Brazen, that my lady de-

sires to know at what hour your master came home last night, and how he does this morning?

Will. Ridiculous! Don't disturb us with that nonsense now; you see I am not at leisure. I and my master are resolved to be teased no more by you; and so, Mrs. Go-between, you may return as you came. What the devil shall I play? We will have nothing to do with you, I tell you.

Mus. You'll have nothing to do with us? But you shall have to do with us, or I'll know the reason why. [*She snatches the cards from him, and throws them about.*]

Will. Death and fury! this meddling woman has destroyed my whole game. A man might as well be married, as be treated in this fashion.

Side. I shall score you for this, Mr. William: I was sure of the cards, and that would have made me up.

Will. No you'll score nothing for this. You win too much of me. I am a very pretty annuity to you.

Side. Annuity, say you? I lose a fortune to you in the course of the year. How could you, Mrs. Muslin, behave in this sort to persons of our dignity?

Mus. Decamp with your dignity; take your answer to your master: turn upon your rogue's heel, and rid the house.

Side. I shan't dispute with you. I hate wrangling: I leave that to lawyers and married people; they have nothing else to do. Mr. William, I shall let Sir Bashful know that Mr. Lovemore will be at home for him. When you come to our house, I'll give you your re-

venge. We can have a snug party there, and I promise you a glass of choice Champaigne: it happens to be a good batch; Sir Bashfull gets none of it: I keep it for my own friends. *Au revoir.* [Exit.]

Will. [To Muslin.] You see what mischief you have made.

Mus. Truce with your foolery; and now, sir, be so obliging as to send my lady an answer to her questions: How and when your rakehelly master came home last night?

Will. I'll tell you one thing, Mrs. Muslin; you and my master will be the death of me at last. In the name of charity, what do you both take me for? Whatever appearances may be, I am but of mortal mould; nothing supernatural about me.

Mus. Upon my word, Mr. Powder-Puff!

Will. I have not, indeed; and flesh and blood, let me tell you, can't hold it always at this rate. I can't be for ever a slave to Mr. Lovemore's eternal frolics, and to your second-hand airs.

Mus. Second-hand airs!

Will. Yes, second-hand airs! you take them at your ladies' toilets with their cast gowns, and so you descend to us with them.—And then on the other hand, there's my master!—Because he chooses to live upon the principal of his health, and so run out his whole stock as fast as he can, he must have my company with him in his devil's dance to the other world! Never at home till three, four, five, six in the morning.

Mus. Ay, a vile ungrateful man! always ranging

abroad, and no regard for a wife that dotes upon him. And your love for me is all of a piece. I have no patience with you both; a couple of false, perfidious, abandoned profligates!

Will. Hey! where is your tongue running? My master, as the world goes, is a good sort of a civil kind of a husband; and I, heaven help me! a poor simpleton of a constant, amorous puppy, who bears with all the whims of my little tyrant here. Come and kiss me, you jade, come and kiss me.

Mus. Paws off, Cæsar. Don't think to make me your dupe. I know when you go with him to this new lady, this Bath acquaintance; and I know you are as false as my master, and give all my dues to your Mrs. Mignonet there.

Will. Hush! not a word of that. I am ruined, pressed, and sent on board a tender directly, if you blab that I trusted you with that secret.—But to charge me with falsehood!—injustice and ingratitude!—My master, to be sure, does drink an agreeable dish of tea with the widow. He has been there every evening this month past. How long things are to be in this train, heaven only knows. But he does visit there, and I attend him. I ask my master, Sir, says I, what time will you please to want me? He fixes the hour, and I strut by Mrs. Mignonet, without so much as tipping her a single glance. She stands wattering at the mouth, and 'a pretty fellow that,' says she: Ay, gaze on, say I, gaze on: I know what you

would be at : you would be glad to have me : but sour grapes, my dear ; and so home I come, to cherish my own lovely little wanton : you know I do, and after toying with thee, I fly back to my master, later indeed than he appoints, but always too soon for him. He is loth to part : he lingers and dangles, and I stand cooling my heels. Oh ! to the devil I pitch such a life.

Mus. Why don't you strive to reclaim the vile man ?

Will. Softly ; not so fast. I have my talent to be sure ; yes, I must acknowledge some talent. But can you suppose that I have power to turn the drift of his inclinations ? Can I give him a new taste, and lead him as I please ? And to whom ? To his wife ? Ridiculous ! A wife has no attraction now ; the spring of the passions flies back ; it won't do.

Mus. Fine talking ! and you admire yourself for it, don't you ? Can you proceed, sir ?

Will. I tell you a wife is out of date : the time was, but that's all over ; a wife is a drug now ; mere tar-water, with every virtue under heaven, but nobody takes it.

Mus. Have done, or I'll print these ten nails upon your rogue's face.

Will. Come and kiss me, I say.

Mus. A fiddlestick for your kisses, while you encourage your master to open rebellion against the best of wives.

Will. I tell you 'tis all her own fault. Why does not she study to please him as you do me. Come and throw your arms about my neck.

Mus. As I used to do, Mr. Impudence?

Will. Then I must force you to your own good. [*Kisses her.*] Pregnant with delight! egad, if my master was not in the next room—— [*Bell rings.*]

Mus. Hush! my lady's bell: how long has he been up?

Will. He has been up—[*Kisses her.*] 'Sdeath! you have set me all on fire. [*Kisses her.*]

Mus. There, there; have done now; the bell rings again. What must I say? When did he come home?

Will. He came home—[*Kisses her.*]—he came home at five this morning; damned himself for a blockhead; [*Kisses.*] went to bed in a surly humour; was tired of himself and every body else. [*Bell rings, he kisses her.*] And he is now in tip-toe spirits with Sir Brilliant Fashion in that room yonder.

Mus. Sir Brilliant Fashion? I wish my lady would mind what he says to her—You great bear! you have given me such a flush in my face! [*Takes a pocket looking-glass.*] I look pretty well, I think. There [*Kisses him.*] have done and let me be gone. [*Exit.*]

Will. There goes high and low life contrasted in one person. She has not dived to the bottom of my master's secrets; that's one good thing. What she knows, she'll blab. We shall hear of this widow from Bath: but the plot lies deeper than they are aware of.

Inquire they will; and let 'em, say I; their answer will do 'em no good. ' Mr. Lovemore visit the widow ' Bellmour?' We know ' no such person.' That's what they'll get for their pains. Their puzzle will be greater than ever, and they may sit down to chew the cud of disappointed malice.—Hush! my master and Sir Brilliant: I'll take care of a single rogue, and get me out of their way. [Exit.

Enter LOVEMORE *and* Sir BRILLIANT.

Love. My dear Sir Brilliant, I must both pity and laugh at you. Thou art metamorphosed into the most whimsical being!

Sir Brill. If your raillery diverts you, go on with it. This is always the case: apply for sober advice, and your friend plays you off with a joke.

Love. Sober advice! very far gone indeed. There is no such thing as talking soberly to the tribe of lovers. That eternal absence of mind that possesses you all! There is no society with you. I was damnable company myself, when I was one of the pining herd: but a dose of matrimony has cooled me pretty handsomely; and here comes *repetatur haustus*.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady sends her compliments, and begs to know how you do this morning.

Love [*Aside to Sir Brill.*] The novelty of the compliment is enlivening—It is the devil to be teased in this manner.—What did you say, child?

Mus. My lady hopes you find yourself well this morning.

Love. Ay, your lady:—give her my compliments, and tell her—and tell her I hope she is well, and—
[*Yawns.*]

Mus. She begs you won't think of going out without seeing her.

Love. To be sure, she has such variety every time one sees her—my head aches wofully—tell your lady—I shall be glad to see her; I'll wait on her—
[*Yawns*] tell her what you will.

Mus. A brute!—I shall let my lady know, sir. [*Exit.*]

Love. My dear Sir Brilliant, you see me an example before your eyes. Put the widow Bellmour out of your head, and let my Lord Etheridge be the victim for you.

Sir Brill. Positively no; my pride is picqued. My Lord Etheridge shall find me a more formidable rival than he imagines. By the way, how long has the noble peer been in England?

Love. His motions are unknown to me.—[*Aside.*] I don't like that question.—His lordship is in France, is not he?

Sir Brill. No; he is certainly returned. The match is to be concluded privately.—He visits her *incog.*

Love. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Oh! no; that can't be; my Lord Etheridge loves parade. I cannot help laughing. The jealousy of you lovers is for ever conjuring up phantoms to torment yourselves. My dear Sir Brilliant, wait for realities; there are enough

in life, and you may teach your fancy to be at rest, and give you no further trouble.

Sir Brill. Nay, don't let your fancy run away with you. What I tell you, is the real truth.

Love. Well, if it be true, and if Lord Etheridge is come to England to marry, do you go to France not to marry, and you will have the best of the bargain.

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. Sir Bashful Constant is in his chariot at the upper end of the street, and if your honour is at leisure, he will wait upon you.

Love. Have not I sent him word I should be at home? Let him come as soon as he will. [*Exit William.*] Another instance, Sir Brilliant, to deter you from all thoughts of matrimony.

Sir Brill. Pol hang him; he is no precedent for me. A younger brother, who lived in middling life, comes to a title and an estate on the death of a consumptive baronet; marries a woman of quality, and now carries the primitive ideas of his narrow education into high life. Don't you remember when he had chambers in Fig-tree-court, and used to saunter and lounge away his time in Temple coffee-houses? The fellow is as dull as a bill in Chancery.

Love. But he is improved since that time.

Sir Brill. Impossible; don't you see how he goes on? He knows nothing of the world; if his eyes meet yours, he blushes up to his ears, and looks suspicious, as if he imagined you have a design upon him.

Love. I can explain that part of his character. He has a mortal aversion to wit and raillery, and dreads nothing so much as being laughed at for being particular.

Sir Bril. And so, fearing to be ridiculous, he becomes substantially so every moment.

Love. Even so, and if you look at him, he shrinks back from your observation, casting a sly, slow, jealous eye all round him, like Miss Bumpkin in a country village, awkwardly endeavouring to conceal what the increase of her shape discovers to the whole parish.

Sir Bril. And then his behaviour to his lady!

Love. Why, as to that point, I don't think he hates her. His fear of ridicule may be at the bottom. He has strange notions about the dignity of a husband. There is a secret, which he would fain tell me, and yet he is shy, and he hints, and he hesitates, and then he retreats back into himself, and ends just where he began. But with all his faults, he has fits of good-nature.—There;—his chariot's at the door.

Sir Bril. Lady Constant, you mean, has fits of good-nature. Have you made any progress there?

Love. That's well from you, who are the formidable man in that quarter.

Sir Bril. Oh! no; positively, no pretence, no colour for it.

Love. Don't I know that you have made advances?

Sir Bril. Advances! I pity my Lady Constant, and——

Love. Well, that's generous—hush! I hear him

coming. Sir Brilliant, I admire your amorous charity of all things!

Enter Sir BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I have taken the liberty—but you seem to be busy, and I intrude perhaps.

Love. Oh, by no means: walk in, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Sir Brilliant, I am glad to see you.

[Bows awkwardly.]

Sir Brill. You do me honour, sir. I hope you left my lady well.

Sir Bash. I can't say, sir; I am not her physician.

Sir Brill. *[Aside.]* An absurd brute!—Lovemore, I'll just step and pay a short visit to our friend over the way.

Love. Why in such a hurry?

Sir Brill. I shall return immediately. I'll be with you before you are dressed. Sir Bashful, I kiss your hand. *[Exit.]*

Sir Bash. I am glad he is gone. I have something, Mr. Lovemore, that I want to advise with you about.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. I have had another brush with my wife.

Love. I am sorry for it, Sir Bashful.—*[Aside.]* I am perfectly glad of it.

Sir Bash. Pretty warm the quarrel was. She took it in a high tone. Sir Bashful, says she, I wonder you will disgrace yourself at this rate. You know my pin-money is not sufficient. The mercer and every body dunning me! I can't go on after this

fashion, says she, and then something about her quality.—You know, Mr. Lovemore, [*Smiling.*] she is a woman of high quality.

Love. Yes, and a very fine woman.

Sir Bash. No, no, no; not much of that—and yet—[*Looks at him and smiles.*] Do you think her a fine woman?

Love. Undoubtedly; where do you see any body that outshines her?

Sir Bash. Why to be sure—[*Smiling.*] one does not often see her eclipsed. I think she is what you may call a fine woman. She keeps good company.

Love. The very best.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; your tiptop, none else. And yet to encourage her too far were dangerous. Too complying a husband makes but a sorry figure in the eyes of the world.

Love. The world will talk, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Too fast, Mr. Lovemore. Their tongues will run on, and one does not like to give them a subject. I answered her stoutly: Madam, says I, a fig for your quality: I am master in my own house, and who do you think—[*Winks at Lovemore.*] putting myself in a passion, you know—Who do you think is to pay for your cats and your dogs, and your monkeys, and your squirrels, and your gaming debts?

Love. How could you? That was sharply said.

Sir Bash. Yes; I gave it her. But for all that I am main good-natured at the bottom.

Love. You was not in earnest then?

Sir Bash. No, no; that's the point: a man must keep up his own dignity. I'll tell you what I did.

Love. Well;—you did what's proper, I dare say.

Sir Bash. I hope you'll think so.—Don't laugh at me.—Come, I will tell you. I went to her mercer sily, and paid him the money. [Smiling.]

Love. Did you?

Sir Bash. [Looking alarmed.] Was not it right?

Love. It was elegant.

Sir Bash. I am glad you approve. I took care to save appearances. One would not have the world know it.

Love. By no means.

Sir Bash. It would make them think me too uxorious.

Love. So it would—[Aside.] I must encourage that notion. While you live, guard against being too uxorious. Though our wives deserve "our fondness," the world will laugh at us;—and hark ye, if our wives don't deserve it, they'll laugh at us the more.

Sir Bash. I know it. And so, says I, Mr. Lutestring, there's your money, but tell no body that I paid it sily.

Love. Why, that's doing a genteel thing by stratagem.—Admirably contrived!

Sir Bash. I think it was. But I have a deeper secret for you.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. I have.—May I trust you?

Love. Now there you hurt me. I feel that, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. I beg your pardon. I know you are my friend. I have great confidence in you. You must know—look ye, Mr. Lovemore—you must know—

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady desires to know if you choose a dish of tea this morning.

Love. Po! ridiculous!—tell your mistress—go about your business. [Turns her out.]

Sir Bash. I see how it is. He does not care a cherry-stone for his wife.

Love. Such impertinence!—Well, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. He does not value her a pinch of snuff.

[Aside.]

Love. Well, I am all attention.

Sir Bash. It does not signify. A foolish affair; I won't trouble you.

Love. Nay, that's unkind. It will be no trouble.

Sir Bash. Well, well, I—I—Do you think Muslin did not overhear us?

Love. Not a syllable. Come, we are safe.

Sir Bash. I don't know but—let me ask you a question first.—Have you any regard for your lady?

Love. The highest value for her. But then you know appearances—

Sir Bash. Right!—I repose it with you.—You must know, Mr. Lovemore, as I told you, I am at the bot-

tom very good-natured, and though it may be thought
—we are interrupted again.

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Brill. Lovemore, I have paid my visit.

Love. Pshaw!—this is unlucky—You are as good
as your word, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Brill. Perhaps you have business?

Sir Bash. No, no business—[*Turns to Lovemore.*]
there's no proceeding now—I was going to Sir Brill-
iant. Mr. Lovemore, I wish you a good day.

Love. Pol Pr'ythee, you shan't leave me yet.

Sir Bash. I must; I can't stay. [*Aside to Love-
more.*] Another time. Suppose you call at my house
at one o'clock.

Love. With all my heart.

Sir Bash. Do so; nobody shall interrupt us. Mr.
Lovemore, I take my leave. Sir Brilliant, I kiss your
hand. You won't forget, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. Oh! no; depend upon me.

Sir Bash. A good morning. He is the only friend
I have. [*Exit.*]

Love. Ha, ha! you broke in in the most critical
moment. He was just going to be delivered of his
secret.

Sir Brill. I beg your pardon. How could you let
me?

Love. Nay, no matter. I shall worm it out of him.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady, sir, is quite impatient.

Love. Po! for ever teasing! I'll wait upon her presently. [*Exit Muslin.*

Sir Brill. I'll step and chat with her while you dress. May I take the liberty?

Love. You know you may: no ceremony. How could you ask me such a question?—Apropos, Sir Brilliant, I want a word with you. Step with me into the study for a moment.

Sir Brill. I attend you.

Love. Poor Sir Bashful!—ha, ha!—a ridiculous unaccountable—What does he mean? [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Mrs. LOVEMORE at her Tea-Table.

Mrs. Love. This trash of tea! I don't know why I drink so much of it. Heigho!—What keeps Muslin? Surely never was an unhappy woman treated with such cruel indifference; nay, with such open, such undisguised insolence of gallantry.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mrs. Love. Well, Muslin, have you seen his prime minister?

Mus. Yes, ma'am, I have seen Mr. William. He says his master is going out, according to the old

trade, and he does not expect to see him again till to-morrow morning. Mr. Lovemore is now in the study. Sir Brilliant Fashion is with him: I heard them, as I passed by the door, laughing as loud as two actors in a comedy.

Mrs. Love. About some precious mischief, I'll be sworn, and all at my cost. Heigho!

Mus. Dear ma'am, why chagrine yourself about a vile man, that is not worth—no, as I hope for mercy, not worth a single sigh?

Mrs. Love. What can I do, Muslin?

Mus. Do, ma'am!—If I was as you, I'd do for him. If I could not cure my grief, I'd find some comfort, that's what I would.

Mrs. Love. Comfort? alas! there is none for me.

Mus. And whose fault then? Would any body but you—It provokes me to think of it—Would any but you,—young, handsome, with wit, graces, talents,—would any body, with so many accomplishments, sit at home here as melancholy as a poor servant out of place?—And all for what? For a husband! And such a husband! What do you think the world will say of you, ma'am?

Mrs. Love. I care not what they say, I am tired of the world, and the world may be tired of me, if it will. My troubles are to myself only, and I must endeavour to bear them. Who knows what patience may do? If Mr. Lovemore has any feeling left, my conduct and his own heart may one day incline him to do me justice.

Mus. But, dear ma'am, that's waiting for dead men's shoes. Incline him to do you justice!—What signifies expecting and expecting? Give me a bird in the hand. If all the women in London, who happen to be in your case, were to sit down and die of the spleen, what would become of the public places? They might turn Vauxhall to a hop-garden; make a brewhouse of Ranelagh, and let both the playhouses to a methodist-preacher. We should not have the racketting we have now. John, let the horses be put to—John, go to my Lady Trumpabout, and invite her to a small party of twenty or thirty card tables.—John, run to my Lady Catgut, and let her know I'll wait upon her ladyship to the opera.—John, run as fast as ever you can, with my compliments to Mr. Varney, and tell him it will be the death of me, if I have not a box for the new play. Lord bless you, ma'am, they rantipole it about this town, with as unconcerned looks, and as florid outsides, as if they were treated at home like so many goddesses; though every body knows possession has ungodded them all long ago, and their husbands care no more for them, no, by Jingo, no more than they care for their husbands.

Mrs. Love. At what a rate you run on!

Mus. It is enough to make a body run on. If every body thought like you, ma'am—

Mrs. Love. If every body loved like me!

Mus. A brass thimble for love, if it is not returned by love. What the deuce is here to do? Love for

love is something: but to love alone, where's the good of that? Shall I go and fix my heart upon a man, who shall despise me for that very reason? And ay, says he, 'Poor fool! I see she adores me. The woman is well enough, only she has one inconvenient circumstance about her, I am married to her, and marriage is the devil.'

Mrs. Love. Will you have done?

Mus. I have not half done, ma'am. And when the vile man goes a rogueing, he smiles impudently in your face, 'and I am going to the chocolate-house, my dear; amuse yourself in the mean time, my love.' Fye upon 'em! I know 'em all. Give me a husband that will enlarge the circle of my innocent pleasures: but a husband now-a-days is no such thing. A husband now is nothing but a scare-crow, to shew you the fruit, but touch it if you dare. The devil's in 'em, the Lord forgive me for swearing. A husband is a mere bugbear, a snap-dragon, a monster; that is to say, if one makes him so, then he is a monster indeed; and if one do not make him so, then he behaves like a monster; and of the two evils, by my troth——But here, ma'am, here comes one who can tell you all about it. Here comes Sir Brilliant: ask his advice, ma'am.

Mrs. Love. His advice?——Ask advice of the man, who has estranged Mr. Lovemore's affections from me?

Mus. Well, I protest and vow, I think Sir Brilliant a very pretty gentleman. He is the very pink of

the fashion. He dresses fashionably, lives fashionably, wins your money fashionably, loses his own fashionably, and does every thing fashionably; and then he looks so lively, and so much to say, and so never at a loss!—but here he comes.

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Brill. Mrs. Lovemore, my dear ma'am, always in a vis-a-vis party with your *suivante*?—Afford me your pardon, if I say this does a little wear the appearance of being out of humour with the world.

Mrs. Love. Far from it, Sir Brilliant. We were engaged in your panegyric.

Sir Brill. My panegyric? Then am I come most apropos to give the portrait a few finishing touches. Mr. Lovemore, as soon as he is dressed, will wait upon you: in the mean time, I can help you to some anecdotes, which will enable you to colour your canvass a little higher.

Mrs. Love. Among those anecdotes, I hope you will not omit the bright exploit of seducing Mr. Lovemore from all domestic happiness.

[*She makes a sign to Muslin to go.*]

Sir Brill. I, madam?—Let me perish if ever—

Mrs. Love. Oh! sir, I can make my observations.

Sir Brill. May fortune eternally forsake me, and beauty frown on me, if I am conscious of any plot upon earth.

Mrs. Love. Don't assert too strongly, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Brill. May I never throw a winning cast—

Mrs Love. It is in vain to deny it, sir.

Sir Brill. May I lose the next sweepstakes, if I have ever, in thought, word or deed, been accessory to his infidelity. I alienate the affections of Mr. Lovemore! Consider, madam, how would this tell in Westminster Hall? Sir Brilliant Fashion, what say you, guilty of this indictment or not guilty? Not guilty, poss. Thus issue is joined. You enter the court: but, my dear madam, veil those graces that adorn your person: abate the fire of those charms: so much beauty will corrupt the judges: give me a fair trial.

Mrs. Love. And thus you think to laugh it away.

Sir Brill. Nay, hear me out. You appear in court: you charge the whole upon me, without a syllable as to the how, when, and where: no proof positive; the prosecution ends, and I begin my defence.

Mrs. Love. And by playing these false colours you think I am to be amused?

Sir Brill. Nay, Mrs. Lovemore, I am now upon my defence. Only hear.—You will please to consider, Gentlemen of the Jury, that Mr. Lovemore is not a minor, nor I his guardian. He loves gaiety, pleasure, and enjoyment: is it my fault? He is possessed of talents and a taste for pleasure, which he knows how to gratify: can I restrain him? He knows the world, makes the most of life, and plucks the fruit that grows around him: am I to blame? This is the

whole affair.—How say you, Gentlemen of the Jury?
—Not guilty. There, you see how it is. I have cleared myself.

Mrs. Love. Brisk, lively, and like yourself, Sir Brilliant! But if you can imagine this bantering way—

Sir Brill. Acquitted by my country, ma'am; fairly acquitted.

Mrs. Love. After the very edifying counsel which you give to Mr. Lovemore, this loose strain is not in the least surprising. And, sir, your late project—

Sir Brill. My late project!

Mrs. Love. Your late project, sir. Not content with leading Mr. Lovemore into a thousand scenes of dissipation, you have introduced him lately to your mistress Bellmour. You understand me, sir.

Sir Brill. Ma'am, he does not so much as know the Widow Bellmour.

Mrs. Love. Nay, Sir Brilliant, have a care: justify it if you can, or give it a turn of wit. There is no occasion to hazard yourself too far.

Sir Brill. Falsehood I disdain, madam, and I, Sir Brilliant Fashion, declare that Mr. Lovemore is not acquainted with the Widow Bellmour. And if he was, what then? Do you know the lady?

Mrs. Love. I know her, sir? A person of that character?

Sir Brill. Oh!—I see you don't know her; but I will let you into her history.—Pray be seated—you shall know her whole history, and then judge for yourself. The Widow Bellmour, madam—

Love. [*Within.*] William, are the horses put to?
Sir Brill. We are interrupted.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Love. Very well: let the carriage be brought round directly—How do you do, my dear?—Sir Brilliant, I beg your pardon.—My love, you don't answer me: how do you do this morning?

[*With an air of cold civility.*

Mrs. Love. A little indisposed in mind: but indisposition of the mind is of no consequence: nobody pities it.

Love. I beg you pardon, Mrs. Lovemore. Indisposition of the mind—Sir Brilliant, that's a mighty pretty ring on your finger.

Sir Brill. A bauble: will you look at it?

[*Gives the ring.*

Mrs. Love. Though I have but few obligations to Sir Brilliant, I suppose I am to ascribe to him the favour of this visit, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. [*Looking at the ring and laughing.*] Now there you wrong me.—Your inquiries about my health have been very obliging this morning, and I came to return the compliment before I got out.—It is set very neatly.

[*Gives back the ring.*

Mrs. Love. Are you going out, sir?

Love. A matter of business—How I do hate business!—But business, [*Examining his ruffles*—business must be done.—Pray is there any news?—Any news, my dear?

Mrs. Love. It would be news to me, sir, if you would be kind enough to let me know whether I may expect the favour of your company at dinner to-day.

Love. It would be impertinent in me to answer such a question, for I can give no direct answer to it.—I am the slave of events; just as things happen; perhaps I may; perhaps not. But don't let me be of any inconvenience to you. Is it material where a body eats?—Have you heard what happened to me?

[*Aside to Sir Brilliant.*

Sir Brill. When and where?

Love. A word in your ear—with your permission, ma'am?

Mrs. Love. That cold, contemptuous civility, Mr. Lovemore—

Love. Po! pr'ythee now, how can you?—that is very peevish, and very ill-natured. [*Turning to Sir Brill.*] I lost every thing I played for after you went. The foreigner and he understand one another.—I beg your pardon, Mrs. Lovemore: it was only about an affair at the opera.

Mrs. Love. The opera, or any thing, is more agreeable than my company.

Love. Now there again you wrong me. [*To Sir Brilliant.*] We dine at the St. Alban's.—How can you, Mrs. Lovemore? I make it a point not to incommode you. You possibly may have some private party; and it would be unpolite in me to obstruct your schemes of pleasure. Would not it, Sir Brilliant?

Sir Brill. Oh!—Gothic to the last degree!

Love. Very true; vulgar and mechanic! [*Both stand laughing.*]

Mrs. Love. Go on; make sport for yourselves, gentlemen.

Love. Ho! ho! ho! I am sore with laughing.—If you, madam, have arranged an agreeable party, for me to be present, it would look as if we lived together like Sir Bashful Constant and his lady; who are always, like two game-cocks, ready armed to goad and spur one another. Hey! Sir Brilliant?

Sir Brill. Oh! the very thing: or like Sir Theodore Traffic at Tunbridge taking his wife under the arm in the public rooms, and ‘come along home, I tell you.’

Love. Exactly so. [*Both continue laughing.*] Odds my life! I shall be beyond my time. [*Looks at his watch.*] Any commands into the city, my dear?

Mrs. Love. Commands!—no, sir, I have no commands.

Love. I have an appointment at my banker’s, Sir Brilliant, you know old Discount?

Sir Brill. He that was in Parliament, and had the large contract?

Love. The same: *Entire Butt*, I think, was the name of his borough. Can I set you down?

Sir Brill. No, my carriage waits. I shall rattle half the town over presently.

Love. As you will. Sir Brilliant will entertain you, ma’am. *Au revoir*, my love.—Sir Brilliant, yours.—Who waits there? [*Exit singing.*]

Sir Bril. Bon voyage.—You see, madam, that I don't deprive you of his company.

Mrs. Love. Your influence is now unnecessary. It is grown habitual to him: he will drive to your Mrs. Bellmour, I suppose.

Sir Bril. Apropos; that brings us back to the little history I was going to give you of that lady. What is your charge against her? That she is amiable? Granted. Young, gay, rich, handsome, with enchanting talents, it is no wonder all the pretty fellows are on their knees to her. Her manner so entertaining! that quickness of transition from one thing to another! that round of variety! and every new attitude does so become her; and she has such a feeling heart, and with an air of giddiness so nice a conduct!

Mrs. Love. Mighty well, sir: she is a very vestal. Finish your portrait. A vestal from your school of painting must be a curiosity.—But how comes it, sir, if she is this wonder, that your honourable proposals are at an end there?

Sir Bril. Compulsion, ma'am: it is not voluntary. My Lord Etheridge is the happy man. I thought he was out of the kingdom; but his lordship is with her every evening. I can scarce gain admittance; and so all that remains for me, is to do justice to the lady, and console myself in the best way I can for the insufficiency of my pretensions.

Mrs. Love. Am I to believe all this?

Sir Bril. May the first woman I pay my addresses

to, strike me to the center with a supercilious eyebrow, if every syllable is not minutely true.—So that you see, I am not the cause of your inquietude.—There is not in the world a person, who more earnestly aspires to prove the tender esteem he bears you.—I have long panted for an opportunity—by all that's soft she listens to me! [*Aside.*]—I have long panted, ma'am, for a tender moment like this—

Mrs. Love. [*Looking gravely at him.*] Sir!

Sir Brill. I have panted with all the ardour, which charms like yours must kindle in every heart!—

Mrs. Love. [*Walks away.*] This liberty, sir—

Sir Brill. Consider, madam: we have both cause of discontent; both disappointed; both crossed in love; and the least we can do is both to join, and sweeten each other's cares.

Mrs. Love. And your friend, sir, who has just left you—

Sir Brill. He, madam, for a long time—I have seen it, with vexation seen it,—yes, he has long been false to honour, love, and you.

Mrs. Love. Sir Brilliant, I have done. You take my wrongs too much to heart, sir. [*Rings a bell.*]

“*Sir Brill.* Those eyes that tell us what the sun is made of, those hills of driven snow!”

Mrs. Love. Will nobody answer there?

Enter MUSLIN.

Sir Brill. Madam, I desist: when you are in better humour, recollect what I have said. Your adorer takes

his leave. Sir Brilliant, mind your hits, and her strait-laced virtue will surrender at last. Madam—

[*Bows respectfully; Exit.*]

Mus. As I live and breathe, ma'am, if I was as you, I would not fluster myself about it.

Mrs. Love. About what?

Mus. What signifies mincing the matter? I heard it all.

Mrs. Love. You did? did you? [Looks angrily.]

Mus. Ma'am?

Mrs. Love. Impertinence! [*Walks about.*] Oh! Mr. Lovemore!—To make his character public, and render him the topic of every tea-table throughout this town! I must avoid that.

Mus. What the deuce is here to do?—An unmannerly thing, for to go for to huff me in this manner! [Aside.]

Mrs. Love. That would only widen the breach, and instead of neglect, might call forth resentment, and settle at last into a fixed aversion: lawyers, parting, and separate maintenancel—What must be done?

Mus. What is she thinking of now?—A sulky thing, not to be more familiar with such a friend as I am.—Did you speak to me, ma'am?

Mrs. Love. It may succeed; suppose I try it, Muslin.

Mus. Ma'am. [Running to her.]

Mrs. Love. You heard Sir Brilliant say that Mr. Lovemore is not acquainted with the widow?

Mus. Lard, ma'am, he's as full of tricks as a French milliner. I know he does visit there: I know it from

William. I'll be hanged in my own garters, if he does not.

Mrs. Love. I know not what to do. Let my chair be got ready.

Mus. Your chair, ma'am!—Are you going out?

Mrs. Love. Let me hear no more questions: do as I order you. [*Exit.*

Mus. Which way is the wind now? No matter; she does not know what she'd be at. If she would but take my advice,—go abroad, visit every where, see the world, throw open her doors, give balls, assemblies, concerts; sing, dance, dress, spend all her money, run in debt, ruin her husband; there would be some sense in that: the man would stay at home then to quarrel with her. She would have enough of his company. But no; mope, mope for ever; heigho! tease, tease, Muslin, step to William; where's his master? When did he come home? How long has he been up? A fine life truly.—I love to be in the fashion, for my part. Bless me, I had like to have forgot. *Mrs. Marmalet* comes to my rout to-night. She might as well stay away: she is nothing but mere lumber. The formal thing won't play higher than shilling whist. How the devil does she think I can make a shilling party for her? There is no such a thing now-a-days: nobody plays shilling whist now, unless I was to invite the trades-people: but I shan't let myself down for *Madam Marmalet*, that I promise her. [*Exit.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

An Apartment at Sir BASHFUL CONSTANT'S. Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bashful.

DID not I hear a rap at the door? Yes, yes, I did; I am right. The carriage is just now driving away. Who answers there? Sideboard; step hither, Sideboard. I must know who it is: my wife keeps the best company in England. Hold, I must be wary. Servants love to pry into their master's secrets.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Whose carriage was that at the door?

Side. The Duchess of Hurricane, your honour.

Sir Bash. The Duchess of Hurricane? [*Walks aside and smiles.*] A woman of great rank!—what did she want?

Side. She has left this card for my lady.

Sir Bash. A card? Let me see it. [*Reads.*] *The Duchess of Hurricane presents compliments to Lady Constant. She has left the hounds and the foxes, and the brutes that gallop after them, to their own dear society for the rest of the winter. Her Grace keeps Wednesdays at Hurricane House for the rest of the winter.*—Make me thankful, here's a card from a Duchess!—what have you there?

Side. A parcel of cards, that have been left here this morning.

Sir Bash. All these in one morning? [*Looks at them.*] Why I may as well keep an inn; may as well keep the Coach and Horses in Piccadilly. [*Reads fast.*]
Lady Riot—Mrs. Allnight—The Duchess of Carmine— look ye there, another duchess! *Lady Basset—Lord Pleurisie—the Countess of Ratifie—Sir Richard Lungs—Lord Laudanum—Sir Charles Valerian—Lady Heftick—Lady Mary Gabble—* I can't bear all this, Sideboard— [*Aside and smiling.*] I can't bear the pleasure of it: all people of tip-top condition to visit my wife!

Enter FURNISH.

Sir Bash. What's the matter, Furnish?

Fur. The matter, sir?—Nothing's the matter.

Sir Bash. What are you about? Where are you going? What have you to do now?

Fur. Only to tell the chairmen they must take Black George with his flambeau with them this evening, and carry the chair to pay visits for my lady.

Sir Bash. An empty chair to pay visits!—what polite ways people of fashion have got of being intimate with each other!— [*Aside.*] Absurd as it is, I am glad to see my wife keep pace with the best of them. I laugh at it, and yet I like it.—Wounds! I shall be found out by my servants. I tell you, Sideboard, and you, Mrs. Busy Body, that your mistress leads a life of noise and hurry, and cards and dice, and va-

nity and nonsense, and I am resolved to bear it no longer.—Don't I hear her coming?

Fur. My lady is coming, sir.

Sir Bash. [*Aside and smiling.*] She looks charmingly.—Now I'll tell her roundly a piece of my mind. You shall see who commands in this house.

Enter Lady CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. [*Steals a look.*] I could almost give up the point when I look at her.—So, madam, I have had my house full of duns again to-day.

Lady Cons. Obliging creatures, to call so often. What did they want?

Sir Bash. Want!—what should they want but money?

Lady Cons. And you paid them, I suppose?

Sir Bash. You suppose!—'Sdeath, madam, what do you take me for?

Lady Cons. I took you for a husband: my brother prescribed you. But his prescription has done me no good.

Sir Bash. Nor me either: I have had a bitter pill of it.

Lady Cons. But the pill was gilded for you. My fortune, I take it, has paid off the old family mortgage on your estate.

Sir Bash. And at the rate you go on, a new mortgage will swallow up my estate.—I see you are an ungrateful woman.

Lady Cons. That is, as you keep the account.

Sir Bash. And my accounts will shew it. Day after day nothing but extravagance to gratify your vanity. Did not I go into parliament to please you? Did not I go down to the Borough of Smoke-and-Sot, and get drunk there for a whole month together? Did not I get mobbed at the George and Vulture? and pelted and horsewhipped the day before the election? And was not I obliged to steal out of the town in a rabbit-cart? And all this to be somebody, as you call it? Did not I stand up in the House to make a speech, to shew what an orator you had married? And did not I expose myself? Did I know whether I stood upon my head or my heels for half an hour together? And did not a great man from the Treasury-bench tell me never to speak again?

Lady Cons. And why not take his advice?

Sir Bash. What in the name of common sense had I to do in Parliament? My country! what's my country to me? The debts of the nation, and your gaming debts are nothing to me. I must help to pay both, must I? I can vote against taxes, and I can advertise in the Gazette to secure me from your extravagance. I have not lived in the Temple for nothing.

Fur. He slept there, and calls it studying the law.

Sir Bash. Hold you your tongue, Mrs. Pert: leave the room. Go both about your business.

[*Exeunt Furnish and Sideboard.*

[*Aside.*] I have kept it up before my servants. [*Looks at Lady Constant.*] She is a fine woman after all.

Lady Cons. Is there never to be an end of this usage,

sir? Am I to be for ever made unhappy by your humours?

Sir Bash. Humours! good sense and sound judgment, in the fine lady's dictionary, are to be called humours?

Lady Cons. And your humours are now grown insupportable.

Sir Bash. Your profusion is insupportable. At the rate you go on, how am I to find money for my next election?—If you would but talk this matter over coolly—She talks like an angel, and I wish I could say [*Aside.*] the same of myself.—What will the world think?—Only command your temper—what will they think, if I am seen to encourage your way of life?

Lady Cons. Amuse yourself that way, sir.—Avoid one error, and run into the opposite extreme.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] There; a translation from Horace! *Dum vitant stulti vitia*—She is a notable woman.

Lady Cons. Let me tell you, there is not in life a more ridiculous sight than the person who guards, with imaginary wisdom, against one giant-vice, and leaves himself open to a million of absurdities.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] I am nothing to her in argument—she has a tongue that can reason me out of my senses.—I could almost find it in my heart to tell her the whole truth.—You know, my Lady Constant, that when you want any thing in reason—

Lady Cons. Is it unreasonable to live with decency? Is it unreasonable to keep the company my rank and education have entitl'd me to? Is it unreasonable to

conform to the modes of life, when your fortune can so well afford it?

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] She is a very reasonable woman, and I wish I had but half her sense.—You know I am good-natured in the main, and if a sum of money within a moderate compass—If a brace of hundreds—[*Aside.*] why should not I make it three?—I know that you have contracted habits of life, and [*In a softened tone.*] habit, I know, is not easily conquered: and if three [*Smiling.*] hundred pounds will prevent disputes, why [*Smiling.*] as to the matter of three hundred pound——

Enter FURNISH, with a Band-box.

Fur. Your ladyship's things from the milliner's.

Sir Bash. Death and fury! this woman has overheard me. Three hundred pounds, madam! [*In a violent passion.*] let me tell you that three hundred pounds—what right have you to shovel away three hundred pounds?

Lady Cons. Why does the man fly out into such a passion?

Sir Bash. I will allow no such doings in my house. Don't I often come when my hall is besieged with a parcel of powder-monkey servants? And did not I the other day, before I could get into my own doors, entangle myself among the chairmen's poles, and was not I confined there, like a man in the stocks?

Lady Cons. Why would you be so awkward?

Sir Bash. An eternal scene of routs and drums.

Have not I seen you put the fee simple of a score of my best acres upon a single card? And have not I muttered to myself, 'if that woman was as much in love with me as she is with Pam, what an excellent wife she would make?'

Lady Cons. Pam is very obliging: why won't you strive to be as agreeable?

Sir Bash. 'Sdeath, madam, you are so fond of play, that I should not wonder to see my next child marked on the forehead with a pair royal of aces.

Fur. I am sure you deserve to be marked on the forehead with a pair of—

Sir Bash. Malapert hussey! do you meddle? Be-gone this moment. [Exit Furnish.

Lady Cons. Fy upon it, Sir Bashful! I am tired of blushing for you.

Sir Bash. I am afraid I have gone too far: she is ashamed of me. [Aside.

Lady Cons. You agreed to a separation the other day, and there remains nothing but to execute articles, and make an end of all this disquiet.

Sir Bash. A separate maintenance will go but a little way to answer the bawling of milliners, mercers, jewellers, and gaming debts.

Lady Cons. It will purchase content, and nothing can obtain that under your roof.

Sir Bash. [Aside.] I have shot my bolt too far—I fancy, my Lady Constant, that you don't know me. We might explain matters, and—'sdeath! [Aside.] I am going to blab—I say, madam, if you understood

me rightly—as to the authority of a husband, I might, perhaps, be brought to give it up, in part at least; and if nobody was the wiser, I might connive—Pol
confusion I interrupted again by that—

Enter FURNISH.

Fur. A servant from Mrs. Lovemore, madam, to know—

Sir Bash. The authority of a husband I never will give up.—

Lady Cons. A storm, a whirlwind is fitter to converse with.

Sir Bash. I will storm like a whirlwind in my own house. I have done, madam; you are an ungovernable woman—[*Aside and smiling.*] she is a charming woman, and if nobody saw it, I would let her govern me with all my heart. [Exit.

Lady Cons. Did any body ever see such behaviour?

Fur. Never; and how your ladyship bears it, I can't tell.

Lady Cons. That it should be my fate to be married to such a quicksand! What does Mrs. Lovemore say?

Fur. If your ladyship will be at home, she intends to do herself the pleasure of waiting upon you, madam.

Lady Cons. Very well; I shall be at home. Upon recollection, I want to see her. Let the servant wait: I'll write an answer. [Exit.

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Enter Sir BASHFUL and LOVE-MORE.

Sir Bash. Walk in, Mr. Lovemore, walk in. I am heartily glad to see you. This is kind.

Love. I am ready, you see, to attend the call of friendship.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, you are a friend indeed.

Love. You do me honour, Sir Bashful. And your lady, how does she do?

Sir Bash. Perfectly well: in great spirits. [*Smiling at Lovemore.*] I never saw her look better: but we have had t'other skirmish since I saw you.

Love. Another?

Sir Bash. Ay, another; and I did not bate her an ace. She is a rare one to argue. She is fit to discuss a point with any man.—Nobody like her. Wit at will. I thought I managed the dispute, and that I should soon have had her at what you call a *non-plus*. But no, no; no such thing; she can give you a sharp turn in a moment.

Love. Ay!

Sir Bash. Give her her due, I am nothing to her. I thought I had her fast, but she went round me quick as lightning; and would you believe it? [*Looks highly pleased.*] She did not leave me a word to say.

Love. Well! that was hard upon you.

Sir Bash. No, not hard at all. Those little victories I don't mind. You know I told you I had something for your private ear. Have you observed nothing odd and singular in me?

Love. Not in the least. In the whole circle of my acquaintance I know nobody so little tinged with oddity.

Sir Bash. What, have you seen nothing? [*Laughs.*] Have you remarked nothing particular in regard to my wife?

Love. Why, you don't live happy with her: but that is not a singular case.

Sir Bash. But I tell you—this must be in confidence—I am, at the bottom, a very odd fellow.

Love. You do yourself injustice, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. No, not in the least. It is too true—I am in the main a very odd fellow; I am indeed; as odd a fish as lives; and you must have seen it before now.

Love. I see it!—I am not apt to spy defects in my friends. What can this be? You are not jealous, I hope?

Sir Bash. You have not hit the right nail on the head. No, not jealous. Do her justice, I am safe as to that point. My lady has high notions of honour. No, it is not that.

Love. Not a ray of light to guide me: explain, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. [*Smiling at him.*] You could never have imagined it. But first let me shut this door.

Love. What whim has got possession of him now?

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I have great dependance upon you. I am going to make a discovery—I blush at the very thought of it. [Turns away.]

Love. Be a man, Sir Bashful; out with it at once; let me advise you.

Sir Bash. The very thing I want. The affair is—but then if he should betray me!—Mr. Lovemore, I doubt you, and yet esteem you. Some men there are, who, when a confidence is reposed in them, take occasion from thence to hold a hank over their friend, and tyrannize him all the rest of his days.

Love. O fy! this is ungenerous. True friendship is of another quality: it feels from sympathy; honour is the active principle; and the strictest secrecy is an inviolable rule.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I have no further doubt—stay; did not you hear a noise? Don't I see a shadow moving under the bottom of that door? [Goes to the door.]

Love. What has got into his head?

Sir Bash. [Looking out.] Servants have a way of listening.

Love. Rank jealousy! he has it through the very brain!

Sir Bash. No, no; all's safe. Mr. Lovemore, I will make you the depositary, the faithful depositary of a secret: let it pass from the bottom of my heart to the inmost recess of yours: there let it rest concealed from every prying eye.—My inclination—There—

I see a laugh already forming in every feature of your face.

Love. Then my face is no true index of the mind. Were you to know the agitations in which you keep me by this suspense—

Sir Bash. I believe it. To make an end at once, my inclinations are totally changed—no, not changed, but they are not what they seemed to be. Love is the passion that possesses me—I am in love, and—[*Turns from him.*] and I am ashamed of myself.

Love. Ashamed! love is a noble passion: but don't let me hear any more about it. Lady Constant will discover all, and then the blame will fall on me. If your heart revolts from her, don't let me be thought in league with you. You need not involve me in a quarrel with her ladyship.

Sir Bash. You don't take me right. You are wide, quite wide of the mark. Hear me out.

Love. No, no more. You must excuse me.

Sir Bash. You shall hear me. The object of my passion, this charming woman, whom I dote on to distraction—

Love. Your pardon; I won't hear it—[*Walks away from him.*] When her ladyship hears of his gallantry, the devil is in the dice, if the spirit of revenge does not mould her to my purposes.

Sir Bash. [*Following Lovemore.*] I say, Mr. Lovemore, this adorable creature—

Love. Keep your secret, Sir Bashful. [*Avoiding him.*]

Sir Bash. [*Following him.*] Who looks so lovely in my eyes——

Love. Well; I don't desire to know her.

Sir Bash. You do know her. [*Following him.*] This idol of my heart is my own wife.

Love. [*Stares at him.*] Your own wife?

Sir Bash. Yes, my own wife. [*Looks silly, and turns away.*] 'Tis all over with me: I am undone.

Love. This is the most unexpected discovery.

Sir Bash. Look ye there now; he laughs at me already.

Love. [*Aside.*] His wife must not know this. The grass is cut under my feet if she ever hears a word of it.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] He is struck with amazement, and does not say a word to me.

Love. [*Aside.*] I must not encourage him.—And can this be possible, Sir Bashful?—In love with your own wife?

Sir Bash. Spare my confusion. I have made myself very ridiculous. [*Looks at him, and turns away.*] I know I have.

Love. Ridiculous! Far from it. Can it be wrong to love a valuable woman? Not to feel the impressions of beauty and of merit were downright insensibility; but then we should always admire with discretion. The folly of us married men consists in letting our wives perceive the vehemence with which we love; and the consequence is, we are enslaved for the rest of our lives.—I could trust you with a secret, which,

perhaps, would keep you in countenance. Could you imagine it? I love my wife.

Sir Bash. How?

Love. I am in love with my wife.

Sir Bash. Oh! no, no;—hey! [*Looking highly pleased.*] you make me laugh. You don't love her, do you?

Love. Passionately, tenderly; with all the ardour of affection.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. Ha! ha!—I did not expect this. This is some relief. Ha! ha!—you have made me happy. And have you led the life you have done all this time, on purpose to conceal your regard from her?

Love. For that very purpose. I esteem her; I love her; but I would not have her know it.

Sir Bash. No!

Love. Upon no consideration; nor would I have the world know it.

Sir Bash. Perfectly right.

Love. To be sure. Tell your wife that you esteem her good qualities, and admire her person, she cries *viçtoria*, falls to plundering, and then you must either break her chain, or wear it in the face of the world, a laughing-stock for all your acquaintance.

Sir Bash. That is what I have always been afraid of.

Love. Not without reason. The world delights in ridicule. Do you know, if our secrets were to transpire, that we should have nothing but wit, and raillery, and fleers, and taunts flying about our ears?

Sir Bash. But I have taken good care. I have quarrelled with my lady ten times a day on purpose to cloak the affair, and prevent all suspicion.

Love. Admirable! I commend your prudence. Besides,—my Lady Constant, you know, has some youthful vigour about her; a graceful person, and an eye that inflames desire; and desire at your time of life, you know——

Sir Bash. Po! it is not for that; that is nothing. I wear admirably well, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. Do you?

Sir Bash. As young as ever: but I don't let her know it.

Love. Well! if you are discreet in that point, you are a very Machiavel!

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; I fight cunning. [Laughs.

Love. Let nothing betray you. Be upon your guard: that is my own plan exactly. You want no advice from me.

Sir Bash. Pardon me: you can assist me.—My dear brother sufferer, give me your hand. We can in a sly way be of great use to each other.

Love. As how?

Sir Bash. I'll tell you. There are some things which you know our wives expect to be done.

Love. So there are.—[Aside.] What the devil is he at now?

Sir Bash. Now if you will assist me——

Love. You may depend upon my assistance.

Sir Bash. Thus it is: my wife, you know, keeps a

power of company, and makes a great figure there. I could shew her in any company in England: I wish she could say the same of me.

Love. Why truly I wish she could.

Sir Bash. But that's out of the question. Now if you will come into my scheme—It must be a deep secret—How? Is that Sir Brilliant's voice?

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, you see what attraction you have. Lovemore, I did not expect to see you here.

Love. Nor did I expect you, Sir Brilliant. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Confusion!—This unseasonable visit—

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. And your lady, is she at home, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Her own people keep that account, sir: I know nothing of her.

Sir Bril. Nay, never talk slightly of a lady who possesses so many elegant accomplishments. She has spirit, sense, wit, and beauty.

Sir Bash. Spirit, sense, wit, and beauty! she has them all, sure enough.—Sir, I am no sworn appraiser, to take an inventory of her effects.—[*Aside.*] Hey, Lovemore!

{*Looks at him, and laughs.*

Love. [*To Sir Bashful.*] Vastly well.

Sir Bril. Is her ladyship visible this morning?

Sir Bash. Whether she is visible, or not, is no business of mine, but I know she is unintelligible this morning, and incomprehensible this morning. She

has the vapours; but your conversation, I suppose, will brighten her up for the rest of the day.

Sir Bril. Why, as it happens, I have the rarest piece of news to communicate to her. Lovemore, you know Sir Amorous la Fool?

Love. He that was Sheriff the other day? Came up with an address, and got himself knighted?

Sir Bril. The same. He declared he would live with his friends upon the same familiar footing as before, and his new dignities should make no alteration.

Sir Bash. I have seen the knight. What of him?

Sir Bril. Poor devil. He is in such a scrape!

Sir Bash. What's the matter? Bubbled at play, I suppose.

Sir Bril. Worse, much worse.

Love. He has been blackballed at one of the clubs?

Sir Bash. Or run through the body in a duel?

Sir Bril. Why that's a scrape indeed: but it is not that.

Sir Bash. What then?

Sir Bril. So unfortunate a discovery; he is fallen in love—I cannot help laughing at him.

Love. Po! fallen in love with some coquette, who plays off her airs, and makes a jest of him.

Sir Bash. A young actress may be, or an opera singer?

Sir Bril. No, you will never guess. Sir Bashful, —like a silly devil, he is fallen in love with his own wife.

Sir Bash. Fallen in love with his own wife!

[*Stares at him.*]

Sir Bril. Yes; he has made up all quarrels; his jealousy is at an end, and he is to be upon his good behaviour for the rest of his life.—Could you expect this, Lovemore?

Love. No, sir; neither I, nor my friend, Sir Bashful, expected this.

Sir Bash. It is a stroke of surprise to me.

[*Looking uneasy.*]

Sir Bril. I heard it at my Lady Betty Scandal's, and we had such a laugh: the whole company were in astonishment: whist stood still, quadrille laid down the cards, and brag was in suspense. Poor Sir Amorous! it is very ridiculous, is not it, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Very ridiculous indeed.—[*Aside.*] My own case exactly, and my friend Lovemore's too.

Sir Bril. The man is lost, undone, ruined, dead and buried.

Love. [*Laughing.*] He will never be able to shew his face after this discovery.

Sir Bril. Oh, never; 'tis all over with him. Sir Bashful, this does not divert you; you don't enjoy it.

Sir Bash. Who I?—I—I—nothing can be more pleasant, and—I—laugh as heartily as I possibly can.

[*Forcing a laugh.*]

Sir Bril. Lovemore, you remember Sir Amorous used to strut, and talk big, and truly he did not care a pinch of snuff for his wife, not he pretended to be

as much at ease as Sir Bashful about his lady, and as much his own master as you yourself, or any man of pleasure about town.

Love. I remember him: but as to Sir Bashful and myself, we know the world; we understand life.

Sir Bash. So we do; the world will never have such a story of us. Will they, Lovemore?

Love. Oh! we are free: we are out of the scrape.

Sir Brill. Sir Amorous la Fool will be a proverb. Adieu for him the side-box whisper, the soft assignation, and all the joys of freedom. He is retired with his Penelope to love one another in the country; and next winter they will come to town to hate one another.

Sir Bash. Do you think it will end so?

Sir Brill. No doubt of it. That is always the *dénouement* of modern matrimony. But I have not told you the worst of his case. Our friend, Sir Charles Wildfire, you know, was writing a comedy, and what do you think he has done? He has drawn the character of Sir Amorous, and made him the hero of the play.

Sir Bash. What, put him into a comedy?

Sir Brill. Even so: it is called 'The Amorous Husband; or, The Man in Love with his own Wife.' Oh! oh! oh! oh!

Love. We must send in time for places.

[Laughs with Sir Brilliant.

Sir Bash. Lovemore carries it with an air. [Aside.

Sir Bril. Yes, we must secure places. *Sir Bashful*, you shall be of the party.

Sir Bash. The party will be very agreeable. I shall enjoy the joke prodigiously. Ha! ha! [*Forces a laugh.*]

Love. Yes, *Sir Bashful*, we shall relish the humour.
[*Looks at him, and laughs.*]

Sir Bril. The play will have a run: the people of fashion will crowd after such a character.—I must drive to a million of places and put it about; but first, with your leave, *Sir Bashful*, I will take the liberty to give a hint of the affair to your lady. It will appear so ridiculous to her.

Sir Bash. Do you think it will?

Sir Bril. Without doubt: she has never met with any thing like it: has she, *Lovemore*!

Love. I fancy not: *Sir Bashful*, you take care of that.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; I shall never be the town-talk.—Hey, *Lovemore*!

Sir Bril. Well, I'll step and pay my respects to my *Lady Constant*. Poor *Sir Amorous*! he will have his horns added to his coat of arms in a little time. Ha! ha!
[*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. There, you see how it is. I shall get lampooned, be-rhymed, and niched into a comedy.

Love. Po! never be frightened at this. Nobody knows of your weakness but myself, and I can't betray your secret for my own sake.

Sir Bash. Very true.

Love. This discovery shews the necessity of con-

cealing our loves. We must act with caution. Give my lady no reason to suspect that you have the least regard for her.

Sir Bash. Not for the world.

Love. Keep to that.

Sir Bash. I have done her a thousand kindnesses, but all by stealth; all in a sly way.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. Oh! a multitude. I'll tell you. She has been plaguing me a long time for an addition to her jewels. She wants a diamond cross, and a better pair of diamond buckles. Madam, says I, I will have no such trumpery; but then goes I and bespeaks them of the first jeweller in town.—All under the rose. The buckles are finished: worth five hundred! She will have them this very day, without knowing from what quarter they come—I can't but laugh at the contrivance—the man that brings them will run away directly, without saying a word. [*Laughs heartily.*]

Love. Sly, sly.—You know what you are about.

Sir Bash. Ay, let me alone—[*Laughs with Love-more.*] And then, to cover the design still more, when I see her wear her baubles, I can take occasion to be as jealous as bedlam.

Love. So you can: ha! ha!—[*Aside.*] I wish he may never be jealous of me in good earnest.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. [*Looks at him, and laughs.*] I am safe, I think.

Love. [*Laughing with him.*] Perfectly safe—[*Aside.*] if it was not for his own folly.

Sir Bash. But I was telling you, Mr. Lovemore:—we can be of essential use to each other.

Love. As how, pray?

Sir Bash. Why, my lady is often in want of money. It would be ridiculous in me to supply her. Now if you will take the money from me, and pretend to lend it to her, out of friendship, you know——

Love. Nothing can be better—[*Aside.*] Here is a fellow pimping for his own horns.—I shall be glad to serve you.

Sir Bash. I am for ever obliged to you—here, here; take it now—here it is in bank-notes—one, two, three; there is three hundred—give her that, and tell her you have more at her service to-morrow or next day, if her occasions require it.

Love. My good friend, to oblige you. [*Takes the money.*] This is the rarest adventure!

Sir Bash. I'll do any thing for you in return.

Love. I shall have occasion for your friendship—that is to forgive me, if you find me out. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Lose no time; step to her now—hold, hold; Sir Brilliant is with her.

Love. I can dismiss him. Rely upon my friendship: I will make her ladyship easy for you.

Sir Bash. It will be kind of you.

Love. It shall be her own fault if I don't.

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you—well, is not this the rarest project?

Love. It is the newest way—of satisfying a man's wife!

Sir Bash. Ay! let this head of mine alone.

Love. [*Aside.*] Not if I can help it. Hush!—I hear Sir Brilliant; he is coming down stairs. I'll take this opportunity, and step to her ladyship now.

Sir Bash. Do so, do so.

Love. I am gone. [*Aside.*] Who can blame me now if I cuckold this fellow? [*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. Prosper you, prosper you, Mr. Love-more. Make me thankful: he is a true friend. I don't know what I should do without him.

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, how have you managed this?

Sir Bash. I have no art, no management. What's the matter?

Sir Bril. I don't know what you have done, but your lady laughs till she is ready to expire at what I have been telling her.

Sir Bash. And she thinks Sir Amorous la Fool an object of ridicule?

Sir Bril. She does not give credit to a single syllable of the story. A man that loves his wife would be a Phoenix indeed! Such a thing might exist formerly, but in this polished age is no where to be found. That's her opinion of the matter.

Sir Bash. [*Laughs.*] A whimsical notion of hers! and so she thinks you may go about with a lanthorn to find a man that sets any value upon his wife?

Sir Bril. You have managed to convince her of it. How the devil do you contrive to govern so fine a

woman? I know several, without her pretensions, who have long ago thrown off all restraint. You keep up your dignity.

Sir Bash. Yes, I know what I am about.

Sir Bril. You!—you are quite in the fashion.—Apropos; I fancy I shall want you to afford me your assistance. You know my Lady Charlotte Mode-love? She has a taste for the theatre: at Bell-Grove Place she has an elegant stage, where her select friends amuse themselves now and then with a representation of certain comic pieces. We shall there act the new comedy, but we apprehend some difficulty in the arrangement of the several characters. Now you shall act Sir Amorous, and——

Sir Bash. I act, sir!—I know nothing of the character.

Sir Bril. Po! say nothing of that. In time you may reach the ridiculous absurdity of it, and play it as well as another,

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Confusion! he does not suspect, I hope—divert yourselves, sir, as you may; but not at my expence I promise you.

Sir Bril. Never be so abrupt. Who knows but Lady Constant may be the happy wife, the *Cara Sposa* of the piece! and then, you in love with her, and she laughing at you for it, will give a zest to the humour, which every body will relish in the most exquisite degree.

Sir Bash. Po! this is too much. You are very pleasant, but you won't easily get me to play the fool.

Sir Brill. Well, consider of it. I shall be delighted to see my friend Sir Bashful tied to his wife's apron-string, and with a languishing look melting away in admiration of her charms. Oh, ho, ho, ho!—adieu; *a l'honneur*; good morning, Sir Bashful. [*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. I don't know what to make of all this. But there is no danger. As long as no body knows it, I may venture to love my wife. There will be no harm, while the secret is kept close as night, concealed in tenfold darkness, from the wits and scoffers of the age.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Sir Bash. Well, well;—how? what have you done?

Love. As I could wish: she is infinitely obliged to me, and will never forget the civility.

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you. I am not suspected?

Love. She has not a distant idea of you in this business. She was rather delicate at first, and hesitated, and thought it an indecorum to accept of money even from a friend. But that objection soon vanished. I told her, it is but too visible that she is unfortunately yoked with a husband, whose humour will never be softened down to the least compliance with her inclinations.

Sir Bash. That was well said, and had a good effect, I hope.

Love. I hope so too.

Sir Bash. It helps to carry on the plot, you know.

Love. Admirably ; it puts things in the train I wish.

Sir Bash. And so, to cover the design, you gave me the worst of characters ?

Love. I painted you in terrible colours.

Sir Bash. Do so always, and she will never suspect me of being privy to any civility you may shew her.

Love. I would not have you know any thing of my civility to her for the world. [*Aside.*] I have succeeded thus far. I talked a few musty sentences, such as the person who receives a civility confers the obligation, with more jargon to that purpose, and so with some reluctance she complied at last, and things are now upon the footing I would have them.—Death and fury! there comes my wife.

Sir Bash. Ay, and here comes my wife.

Love. What the devil brings her hither ?

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Now, now ; now let me see how he will cary it before Mrs. Lovemore.—Walk in, madam! walk in, Mrs. Lovemore.

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE, and Lady CONSTANT, at opposite doors.

Lady Cons. Mrs. Lovemore, to see you abroad is a novelty indeed.

Mrs. Love. As great, perhaps, as that of finding your ladyship at home. Mr. Lovemore, I did not expect to have the pleasure of meeting you.

Love. Then we are both agreeably surprised.

Sir Bash. Now mind how he behaves. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Love. I thought you were gone to your city-banker.

Love. And you find that you are mistaken. I have deferred it till the evening—[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath! to be teased in this manner.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] No, no; he won't drop the mask. [*Looks at Lady Constant.*] She has touched the cash; I can see the bank-notes sparkling in her eyes.

Mrs. Love. If you don't go into the city till the evening, may I hope for your company at dinner, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. The question is entertaining, but as it was settled this morning, I think it has lost the graces of novelty.

Sir Bash. He won't let her have the least suspicion of his regard. [*Aside.*

Lady Cons. I dare say Mr. Lovemore will dine at home, if it conduces to your happiness, ma'am; and Sir Bashful, I take it, will dine at home for the contrary reason.

Sir Bash. Madam, I will dine at home, or I will dine abroad, for what reason I please, and it is my pleasure, to give no reason for either.—Lovemore!

[*Looks at him, and smiles.*

Love. [*Aside to Sir Bashful.*] Bravo!—What a block-head it is!

Mrs. Love. As you have your chariot at the door, Mr. Lovemore, if you have no objection, I will send away my chair, and you may do me the honour of a place in your carriage.

Love. The honour will be very great to me, but—so many places to call at.—If I had known this sooner——You had better keep your chair.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Cunning! cunning! he would not be seen in his chariot with her for the world. He has more discretion than I have.

Lady Cons. Mrs. Lovemore, since you have, at last, venture'd to come abroad, I hope you will think it a change for the better. You are too domestic. I shall expect now to see you often: and apropos, I am to have a route to-morrow evening; if you will do me the honour of your company——

Sir Bash. A route to-morrow evening! you have a route every evening, I think. Learn of Mrs. Lovemore; imitate her example, and don't let me have your hurricane months all the year round in my house.—Hip! [*Aside.*] Lovemore, how do you like me?

Love. [*Aside to Sir Bashful.*] You improve upon it every time. But I am loitering here as if I had nothing to do.—My Lady Constant, I have the honour to wish your ladyship a good morning. Sir Bashful, yours—madam.

[*Bows gravely to Mrs. Lovemore, hums a tune, and exit.*]

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] He knows how to play the game. I'll try what I can do. Mrs. Lovemore, I have the honour to wish you a good morning. Madam—

[*Bows gravely to Lady Constant, hums a tune, and exit.*]

Mrs. Love. Two such husbands!

Lady Cons. As to my swain, I grant you: Mr. Lovemore is, at least, well-bred; he has an understanding, and may, in time, reflect. Sir Bashful never qualifies himself with the smallest tincture of civility.

Mrs. Love. If civility can qualify the draught, I must allow Mr. Lovemore to have a skilful hand. But there is no end to his projects. Every day opens a new scene. Another of his intrigues is come to light. I came to consult with your ladyship. I know you are acquainted with the Widow Bellmour.

Lady Cons. The Widow Bellmour! I know her perfectly well.

Mrs. Love. Not so well, perhaps, as you may imagine. She has thrown out the lure for my wild gallant, and in order to deceive me——

Lady Cons. My dear, you must be mistaken. Who tells you this?

Mrs. Love. Oh! I can trust to my intelligence. Sir Brilliant Fashion, by way of blind to me, has been this morning drawing so amiable a picture of the lady——

Lady Cons. Sir Brilliant's authority is not always the best, but in this point you may trust to him.

Mrs. Love. But when you have heard all the circumstances——

Lady Cons. Depend upon it, you are wrong. I know the Widow Bellmour. Her turn of character, and way of thinking——

Mrs. Love. Excuse me, madam. You decide without hearing me.

Lady Cons. All scandal, take my word for it. However, let me hear your story. We'll adjourn to my dressing-room, if you will; and I promise to confute all you can say.—I would have you know the Widow Bellmour: you will be in love with her.—My dear madam, have not you a tinge of jealousy?—Beware of that malady. If you see things through that medium, I shall give you up.

*That jaundice of the mind, whose colours strike
On friend and foe, and paint them all alike.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

An Apartment at the Widow BELLMOUR'S: several Chairs, a Toilette, a Book-Case, and a Harpsichord, disposed up and down.

Mignonet. [*Putting things in order.*]

I DON'T well know what to make of this same Lord Etheridge. He is coming here again to-day, I suppose: all this neatness, and all this care must be for him.—Well, it does not signify: [*Arranging the chairs.*] there is a pleasure in obeying Madam Bellmour. She is a sweet lady, that's the truth of it.—'Twere a pity if any of these men, with their deceitful arts, should draw her into a snare.—But she knows them all. They must rise early who can outwit her. [*Settling the toilette.*]

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR, reading.

*Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day;
She who can own a sister's charms, and hear
Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear;
That never answers till a husband cools,
And if she rules him, never shews she rules.*

Sensible, elegant Pope!

*Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most, when she obeys.*

[Seems to read on.]

Mign. Lord love my mistress! always so charming, so gay, and so happy!

Mrs. Bell. These exquisite characters of women! they are a sort of painter's gallery, where one sees the portraits of all one's acquaintance, and sometimes we see our own features too. Mignonet, put this book in its place.

Mign. Yes, ma'am; and there's your toilette looks as elegant as hands can make it.

Mrs. Bell. Does it? I think it does. You have some taste. Apropos, where is my new song?——Oh! here it is: I must make myself mistress of it. *[Plays upon the harpsichord, and sings a little.]* I believe I have conquered it. *[Rises, and goes to her toilette.]* This hair is always tormenting me, always in disorder: this lock must be for ever gadding out of its place. I must and will subdue it.—Do you know, Mignonet, that this

is a pretty song? It was writ by my Lord Etheridge. My lord has a turn. [*Sings a little.*] I must be perfect before he comes. [*Hums the tune.*] Do you know that I think my lord is one of those men who may be endured?

Mign. Yes, ma'am, I know you think so.

Mrs. Bell. Do you?

Mign. And if I have any skill, ma'am, you are not without a little partiality for his lordship.

Mrs. Bell. Really? Then you think I like him, perhaps. Do you think I like him? I don't well know how that is. Like him! no, not absolutely: it is not decided: and yet I don't know, if I had a mind to humour myself, and to give way a little to inclination, there is something here in my heart that would be busy, I believe.—The man has a softness of manner, a turn of wit, and does not want sentiment. Can I call it sentiment? Yes, I think I may. He has sentiment; and then he knows the manners, the usage of the world, and he points out the ridicule of things with so much humour!

Mign. You'll be caught, ma'am, I see that.—To be sure, my lord has a quality-air, and can make himself agreeable. But what of that? You know but very little of him. Is a man's character known in three or four weeks time? [*Mrs. Bellmour hums a tune.*] Do, my dear madam, mind what I say: I am at times very considerate. I make my remarks, and I see very plainly——Lord, ma'am, what am I doing? I am talking to you for your own good, and you are

all in the air, and no more mind me, no, no more than if I was nothing at all.

Mrs. Bell. [*Continues humming a tune.*] You talk wonderfully well upon the subject; but as I know how the cards lie, and can play the best of the game; and as I have a song to amuse me, one is inclined to give musical nonsense the preference.

Mign. I assure you, ma'am, I am not one of those servants, that bargain for their mistress's inclinations: but you are going to take a leap in the dark. What does my Lord Etheridge mean, with his chair always brought into the hall, and the curtains close about his ears? Why does not he come like himself, and not care who sees him. There's some mystery at the bottom, I'll be sworn there is; and so you'll find at last. — Dear heart, ma'am, if you are determined not to listen, what signifies my living with you? At this rate, I am of no service to you.

Mrs. Bell. There;—I have conquered my song.— [*Runs to her glass.*] How do I look to-day? The eyes do well enough, I think.—And so, Mignonet, you imagine I shall play the fool, and marry my Lord Etheridge?

Mign. You have it through the very heart of you: I see that.

Mrs. Bell. Do you?—I don't know what to say to it. Poor Sir Brilliant Fashion! if I prefer his rival, what will become of him?—I won't think about it.

Enter POMPEY.

Mrs. Bell. What's the matter, Pompey?

Pom. A lady in a chair desires to know if your ladyship is at home?

Mrs. Bell. Has the lady no name?

Pom. Yes; I fancies she has, ma'am; but she did not tell it.

Mrs. Bell. How awkward!—well, shew the lady up stairs.

Mign. Had not you better receive her in the drawing-room, ma'am? I have not half done my business here.

Mrs. Bell. Oh! you have done very well. There will be less formality here. I dare say it is some intimate acquaintance, though that foolish boy does not recollect her name. Here she comes. I don't know her.

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Mrs. Love. [*Disconcerted.*] I beg pardon for this intrusion.

Mrs. Bell. Pray walk in, ma'am. Mignionet, reach a chair. [*Mrs. Lovemore crosses the stage, and they salute each other with an air of distant civility.*]

Mrs. Love. I am afraid this visit from one who has not the honour of knowing you—

Mrs. Bell. Oh, make no apology, ma'am.—Mignionet, you may withdraw. [*Exit Mignionet.*]

Mrs. Love. It may appear extraordinary that a stran-

ger thus intrudes upon you;—but a particular circumstance determined me to take this liberty. I hope you will excuse the freedom.

Mrs. Bell. You do me honour, ma'am: pray no excuses. A particular circumstance, you say?

Mrs. Love. I shall appear, perhaps, very ridiculous, and, indeed, I am afraid I have done the most absurd thing! but a lady of your acquaintance—you know my Lady Constant, ma'am?

Mrs. Bell. Extremely well.

Mrs. Love. She has given you such an amiable character for benevolence and a certain elegant way of thinking, entirely your own, that I flatter myself, if it is in your power, you will be generous enough to afford me your assistance.

Mrs. Bell. Lady Constant is very obliging. Make a trial of me, ma'am, and if I can be of any use——

Mrs. Love. I fear I shall ask you a strange question:—are you acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Lovemore?

Mrs. Bell. Lovemore? No such name on my list.—Lovemore? No:—I recollect no such person. The circle of my acquaintance is small: I am almost a stranger in town.

Mrs. Love. That makes an end, ma'am. I beg your pardon. I have given you an unnecessary trouble.
[Going.]

Mrs. Bell. [Aside.] Mighty odd this! her manner is interesting.—You have given me no trouble, but my

curiosity is excited. [*Takes her by the hand.*] I beg you will keep your chair. Pray be seated.—What can this mean? [*Aside.*] Will you be so good as to inform me who the gentleman is?

Mrs. Love. The story will be uninteresting to you, and to me it is painful. My grievances—[*Puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*]

Mrs. Bell. [*Aside.*] Her grief affects me. [*Looks at her till she has recovered herself.*] I would not importune too much—

Mrs. Love. You have such an air of frankness and generosity, that I will open myself without reserve: I have the tenderest regard for Mr. Lovemore: I have been married to him these two years. I admired his understanding, his sensibility, and his spirit. My heart was his; I loved him with unbounded passion. I thought the flame was mutual, and you may believe I was happy. But of late, there is such a revolution in his temper! I know not what to make of it. I am doomed to be unhappy.

Mrs. Bell. Perhaps not: you may still have much in your power.

Mrs. Love. My power is at an end. Instead of the looks of affection, and the expressions of tenderness, with which he used to meet me, it is nothing now but cold, averted, superficial civility; while abroad he runs on in a wild career of pleasure, and to my deep affliction, has attached himself entirely to another object.

Mrs. Bell. And if I had known Mr. Lovemore, do

you imagine that my advice or persuasion would avail you any thing?

Mrs. Love. I had such a fancy. [*Aside.*] What can I think of her.

Mrs. Bell. You are much mistaken. In these cases friends may interpose, but what can they do? They recommend a wife to the good will, the honour, and generosity of her husband. But when a woman, who should be esteemed and loved, is recommended as an object of compassion, she is humbled indeed: it is all over with her. A wife should recommend herself by the graces of her person, and the variety of her talents. Men will prove false, and if there is nothing in your complaint but mere gallantry on his side, I protest I do not see that your case is so very bad.

Mrs. Love. Can it be worse, ma'am?

Mrs. Bell. A great deal.—If his affections, instead of being alienated, had been extinguished, what would be the consequence?—A downright, sullen, habitual insensibility. From that lethargy of affection a man is not easily recalled. In all Love's bill of mortality there is not a more fatal disorder. But this is not the case with Mr. Lovemore: by your account, he still has sentiment; and where there is sentiment, there is room to hope for an alteration.—But where the heart has lost its feeling, you have the pain of finding yourself neglected; and for what? The man has grown stupid, and to the warm beams of wit and beauty, as impenetrable as an ice-house.

Mrs. Love. That is not my complaint. I have to do

with one, who is too susceptible of impressions from every beautiful object that comes in his way.

Mrs. Bell. Why, so much the better. A new idea strikes his fancy. He is inconstant, but after wavering and fluttering, he may settle at last.

Mrs. Love. How light she makes of it! she apologizes for him! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Bell. And, perhaps, the fault is on the woman's side—

Mrs. Love. The virtue of my conduct, madam—

Mrs. Bell. Oh! I would have laid my life you would be at that work. But virtue is not the question at present. I suppose virtue; that is always understood. The fault I mean, is the want of due attention to the art of pleasing. It is there that most women fail. In these times, virtue may be its own reward. Virtue alone cannot please the taste of the age. It is *la belle nature*, virtue embellished by the advantages of art, that men expect now-a-days. That is the whole affair: I would not make myself uneasy, ma'am.

Mrs. Love. Not uneasy, when his indifference does not diminish my regard for him! Not uneasy, when the man I dote upon, no longer fixes his happiness at home!

Mrs. Bell. Give me leave to speak my mind freely. I have observed, when the fiend jealousy is roused, that women lay out a wonderful deal of anxiety and vexation to no account; when, perhaps, if the truth were known, they should be angry with themselves instead of their husbands.

Mrs. Love. Angry with myself, madam! Calumny can lay nothing to my charge.

Mrs. Bell. There again now! that is the folly of us all.

Mrs. Love. And after being married so long, and behaving all the time with such an equality!

Mrs. Bell. Ay, that equality is the rock so many split upon. The men will change. Excuse my freedom. They are so immersed in luxury, that they must have eternal variety in their happiness.

Mrs. Love. She justifies him! [Aside.

Mrs. Bell. Your case may not be desperate: I would venture to lay a pot of coffee, that the person who now rivals you in your husband's affections, does it without your good qualities, and even without your beauty, by the mere force of agreeable talents, and some skill in the art of pleasing.

Mrs. Love. I am afraid that compliment——

Mrs. Bell. If I judge right, you are entitled to it. Let me ask you: Do you know this formidable rival?

Mrs. Love. There, I own, I am puzzled.

Mrs. Bell. What sort of woman is she?

Mrs. Love. Formidable indeed! She has been described to me as one of charming and rare accomplishments.

Mrs. Bell. Never throw up the cards for all that. Take my advice, ma'am.—You seem to have qualities that may dispute your husband's heart with any body; but the exertion of those amiable qualities, I fear, may be suppressed. Excuse my frank-

ness. You should counteract your rival by the very arts which she employs against you. I know a lady now in your very situation: and what does she do? She consumes herself with unceasing jealousy; whereas, if she would exert but half the pains she uses in teasing herself, to vie with the person who has won her husband from her; to vie with her, I say, in the art of pleasing—for there it is a woman's pride should be piqued—Would she do that, take my word for it, victory would declare in her favour. You are not without attractions; give them their energy, and you conquer.

Mrs. Love. Do you think so, ma'am?

Mrs. Bell. Think so! I am sure of it. You must exert yourself. It is the wife's business to bait the hook for her husband with variety. Virtue alone, by her own native charms, would do, if the men were perfect. But it is otherwise, and since vice can assume allurements, why should not truth and innocence have additional ornaments also?

Mrs. Love. I find Sir Brilliant told me truth. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Bell. Give me leave, ma'am: I have been married, and am a little in the secret. To win a heart is easy; to keep it is the difficulty. After the fatal words 'for better, for worse,' women relax into indolence, and while they are guilty of no infidelity, they think every thing safe. But they are mistaken: a great deal is wanting; an address, a vivacity, a desire to please; the agreeable contrast; the sense that pleases, the folly that charms—A

favourite poet, PRIOR, has expressed it with delicacy.

*Above the fix'd and settled rules
Of vice and virtue in the schools,
The better part should set before 'em
A grace, a manner, a decorum.*

Mrs. Love. But when the natural temper——

Mrs. Bell. Oh! the natural temper must be forced. Home must be made a place of pleasure to the husband. How is that to be done? That equality, which you talk of, is a sameness that palls and wearies. A wife should throw infinite variety into her manner. She should, as it were, multiply herself, and be, as it were, sundry different women on different occasions. The tender, the affectionate, the witty, the silent, all in their turns, all shifting the scene, and she succeeding to herself as quick as lightning. And this I take to be the whole mystery; the way to keep a man.—But I beg your pardon. I go on too fast; you will think me the giddiest creature.

Mrs. Love. Quite the reverse, ma'am; you are very obliging!——

Mrs. Bell. I have tired myself and you too.—But pray, may I now enquire, who was so kind as to intimate that I am acquainted with Mr. Lovemore?

Mrs. Love. It was a mere mistake. I have given you a great deal of trouble. You will excuse my frankness: I had heard that his visits were frequent here.

Mrs. Bell. His visits frequent here! My Lady Constant could not tell you so?

Mrs. Love. She told me quite the contrary. She knows your amiable qualities, and does you justice.

Mrs. Bell. The accident is lucky! it has procured me the honour of your acquaintance. And I suppose you imagined that I had robbed you of Mr. Lovemore's heart?—Scandal will be buzzing about. I can laugh at every thing of that sort. [*A rap at the door.*] Oh! Heavens! some troublesome visit.—

[*Rings a bell.*]

Enter MIGNIONET.

Mrs. Bell. I am not at home. Go, and give an answer.

Mign. It is Lord Etheridge, ma'am: he is coming up stairs. The servants did not know you had changed your mind.

Mrs. Bell. Was ever any thing so cross? Tell his lordship I have company; I am busy; I am not well; any thing, don't let him come in. Make haste, dispatch: I won't see him.

Mrs. Love. I beg I may not hinder you: I shall take my leave.

Mrs. Bell. By no means. Our conversation grows interesting. I positively will not see my lord.

Mrs. Love. I can't agree to that. You must see his lordship. I can step into another room.

Mrs. Bell. Will you be so good?—You will find something to amuse you in that cabinet. [*Points to a*

door in the back scene.] We must talk farther. My lord sha'nt stay long.

Mrs. Love. Nay, but if you stand upon ceremony—

Mrs. Bell. Very well: I'll contrive it. This is a lover of mine. A lover and a husband are the same thing. Perhaps it will divert you to hear how I manage him. I hear him on the stairs. Make haste: Mignonet, shew the way.

[Mrs. Love. and Mignonet go out at the back scene.

Mrs. Bell. Let me see how I look to receive him.

[Runs to her glass.

Enter LOVEMORE, with a Star and Garter, as Lord ETHERIDGE.

Love. *A heav'nly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears,
Repairs her smiles——*

Mrs. Bell. Repairs her smiles, my lord! You are satirical this morning. Pray, my lord, are my features out of repair, like an old house in the country, that wants a tenant?

Love. Nay, now you wrest my words from their visible intention. You can't suppose that I impute to such perfect beauty the least want of repair, whatever may be the case, ma'am, with regard to the want of a tenant.

Mrs. Bell. Oh! then your opinion is, that I want a tenant. And perhaps you think I am going to put up a bill to signify to all passers-by, that here is a mansion to be let, enquire of the Widow Bellmour.

I like your notion; I don't think it would be a bad scheme. Shall I try it?

Love. A palace needs no such invitation. Its natural beauty attracts admiring eyes. But who can bid up to the price? The person who is able to do it——

Mrs. Bell. Will be happy; I know that is what you are going to say. But he must do homage for it: and then I will let it to none but a single gentleman. Do you know any body whom these conditions will suit?

Love. Those conditions, ma'am——[*Aside.*] What the devil does she mean? I am not detected, I hope.——To be sure, ma'am, those conditions——And——none but single gentlemen will presume to——

Mrs. Bell. And then it must be a lease for life. But that will never do; nobody will be troubled with it. I shall never get it off my hands: do you think I shall, my lord?

Love. There must be very little taste left, if you have not a number of bidders. You know the ambition of my heart; you know I am devoted to you, upon any terms, even though it were to be bought with life.

Mrs. Bell. Heavens! what a dying swain you are! And does your lordship mean to be guilty of matrimony? Lord! what a question have I asked? To be sure, I am the giddiest creature. My lord, don't you think me a strange madcap?

Love. A vein of wit, like yours, that springs at

once from vivacity and sentiment, serves to exalt your beauty, and give animation to every charm.

Mrs. Bell. Upon my word, you have said it finely! But you are in the right, my lord. Your pensive melancholy beauty is the most insipid thing in nature. And yet we often see features without a mind; and the owner of them sits in the room with you, like a mere vegetable, for an hour together, till, at last, she is incited to the violent exertion of, ‘Yes, sir’ — ‘I fancy not, ma’am,’ and then a matter of fact conversation! ‘Miss Beverly is going to be married to Captain Shoulder-knot—My Lord Mortgage has had another tumble at hazard—Sir Harry Wilding has lost his election—They say short aprons are coming into fashion.’

Love. Oh! a matter of fact conversation is insupportable.

Mrs. Bell. But you meet with nothing else. All in great spirits about nothing, and not an idea among them. Go to Ranelagh, or to what public place you will, it is just the same. A lady comes up to you; ‘How charmingly you look!—But, my dear m’em, did you hear what happened to us the other night? We were going home from the opera—you know my aunt Roly-Poly; it was her coach. There was she and Lady Betty Fidget—What a sweet blonde! How do you do, my dear? [*Curtsying as to another going by.*] My Lady Betty is quite recovered; we were all frightened about her; but Doctor Snake-root was

called in; no, not Doctor Snake-root, Doctor Bolus; and so he altered the course of the medicines, and so my Lady Betty is purely now.—Well, there was she, and my aunt, and Sir George Bragwell—a pretty man Sir George—finest teeth in the world—Your ladyship's most obedient—[*Curtysying.*] We expected you last night, but you did not come.—He! he! he!—and so there was Sir George and the rest of us; and so, turning the corner of Bond-street, the brute of a coachman—I humbly thank your grace [*Curtysies.*]—the brute of a coachman overturned us, and so my aunt Roly-Poly was frightened out of her wits; and Lady Betty has had her nerves again. Only think! such accidents!—I am glad to see you look so well; *a l'honneur;*' he! he! he!

Love. Ho! ho! you paint to the life. I see her moving before me in all her airs.

Mrs. Bell. With this conversation their whole stock is exhausted, and away they run to cards. Quadrille has murdered wit!

Love. Ay, and beauty too. Cards are the worst enemies to a complexion: the small-pox is not so bad. The passions throw themselves into every feature: I have seen the countenance of an angel changed, in a moment, to absolute deformity: the little loves and graces that sparkled in the eye, bloomed in the cheek, and smiled about the mouth, all wing their flight, and leave the face, which they before adorned, a prey to grief, to anger, malice, and fury, and the whole train of fretful passions.

Mrs. Bell. And the language of the passions is sometimes heard upon those occasions.

Love. Very true, ma'am; and if, by chance, they do bridle and hold in a little, the struggle they undergo is the most ridiculous sight in nature. I have seen a huge oath quivering on the pale lip of a reigning toast for half an hour together, and an uplifted eye accusing the gods for the loss of an odd trick. And then, at last, the whole room in a Babel of sounds. 'My lord, you flung away the game.—Sir George, why did not you rough the spade?—Captain Hazard, why did not you lead through the honours?—Ma'am, it was not the play—Pardon me, sir—but ma'am,—but sir—I would not play with you for straws; don't you know what Hoyle says?—If A and B are partners against C and D, and the game nine all, A and B have won three tricks, and C and D four tricks; C leads his suit, D puts up the king, then returns the suit; A passes, C puts up the queen, and B trumps it;' and so A and B, and C and D are bandied about; they attack, they defend, and all is jargon and confusion, wrangling, noise, and nonsense; and high life, and polite conversation.——
Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Bell. Ho! ho! the pencil of Hogarth could not do it better. And yet one is dragged to these places. One must play sometimes. We must let our friends pick our pockets now and then, or they drop our acquaintance. Do you ever play, my lord?

Love. Play, ma'am?—[*Aside.*] What does she

mean? I must play the hypocrite to the end of the chapter.—Play?—Now and then, as you say, one must, to oblige, and from necessity; but from taste, or inclination, no; I never touch a card.

Mrs. Bell. Oh! very true; I forgot. You dedicate your time to the muses; a downright rhyming peer. Do you know, my lord, that I am charmed with your song?

Love. Are you?

Mrs. Bell. Absolutely; and I really think you would make an admirable Vauxhall poet.

Love. Nay, now you flatter me.

Mrs. Bell. No, as I live; it is very pretty. And do you know that I can sing it already? Come, you shall hear how I murder it. I have no voice to-day, but you shall hear me. [Sings.

*Attend, all ye fair, and I'll tell you the art,
To bind ev'ry fancy with ease in your chains;
To hold in soft fetters the conjugal heart,
And banish from HYMEN his doubts and his pains.*

*When Juno was deck'd with the Cestus of Love,
At first she was handsome; she charming became:
With skill the soft passions it taught her to move,
To kindle at once, and to keep up the flame.*

*'Tis this gives the eyes all their magic and fire,
The voice-melting accents; impassions the kiss;
Confers the sweet smile, that awakens desire,
And plants round the fair each incentive to bliss.*

*Thence flows the gay chat, more than reason that charms ;
The eloquent blush, that can beauty improve ;
The fond sigh, the fond vow, the soft touch that alarms ;
The tender disdain, the renewal of love.*

*Ye fair, 'take the Cestus, and practise its power :
The mind unaccomplish'd, mere features are vain ;
With wit, with good humour, enliven each hour,
And the loves, and the graces, shall walk in your train.*

Love. My poetry is infinitely obliged to you. It grows into sense as you sing it. Your voice, like the Cestus of Venus, bestows a grace upon every thing.

Mrs. Bell. Oh! fulsome; I sing horridly. [*Goes to the glass.*] How do I look?—Don't tell me, my lord: you are studying a compliment, but I am resolved to mortify you; I won't hear it.—Well! have you thought of any thing? Let it pass; 'tis too late now. Pray, my lord, how came you to choose so grave a subject as connubial happiness?

Love. Close and particular that question! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Bell. Juno! Hymen! doubts and pains! one would almost swear that you have a wife at home who sat for the picture.

Love. Ma'am, the——[*Embarrassed.*] The compliment——you are only laughing at me——the subject, from every day's experience——[*Aside.*] Does she suspect me?——the subject is common——Bachelors' wives, you know——ha! ha!——And when

you inspire the thought; when you are the bright original, it is no wonder that the copy——

Mrs. Bell. Horrid! going to harp on the old string. Odious solicitations! I hate all proposals. I am not in the humour. You must release me now: your visit is rather long. I have indulged you a great while. And besides, were I to listen to your vows, what would become of poor Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Love. Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Mrs. Bell. Do you know him?

Love. I know whom you mean. I have seen him; but that's all. He lives with a strange set, and does not move in my sphere. If he is a friend of yours, I have no more to say.

Mrs. Bell. Is there any thing to say against him?

Love. Nay, I have no knowledge of the gentleman. They who know him best, don't rate him high. A sort of current coin that passes in this town. You will do well to beware of counterfeits.

Mrs. Bell. But this is very alarming——

Enter MIGNIONET, in a violent Hurry.

Mign. My dear madam, I am frightened out of my senses. The poor lady——where are the hartshorn drops?

Love. The lady! what lady?

Mign. Never stand asking what lady. She has fainted away all on a sudden: she is now in strong hysterics; give me the drops.

Mrs. Bell. I must run to her assistance. Adieu, my lord. I shall be at home in the evening. Mignionet, step this way. Your lordship will excuse me: I shall expect to see you. Come, Mignionet, make haste; make haste. [*Exit with Mignionet.*]

Love. I hope the lady has not overheard me. What a villain am I to carry on this scheme against so much beauty, innocence, and merit! And to wear this badge of honour for the darkest purposes! And then my friend, Sir Brilliant, will it be fair to supplant him?—Pr'ythee, be quiet, my dear conscience! none of your meddling: don't interrupt a gentleman in his pleasures. Don't you know, my good friend, that love has no respect for persons, but soars above all laws of honour and of friendship? No reflection; have her I must, and that quickly too, or she will discover all. Besides, this is my wife's fault: why does not she make home agreeable? I am willing to be happy; I could be constant to her, but she is not formed for happiness. What the devil is Madam Fortune about now?—[*Sir Brilliant sings within.*] Sir Brilliant, by all that's infamous. Confusion! no place to hide me? no escape? The door is locked. Mignionet, Mignionet, open the door.

Mign. [*Within.*] You must not come in here.

Love. What shall I do? This star, and this ribbon will bring me to disgrace. Away with this tell-tale evidence. [*Takes off the ribbon.*] Go, thou blushing devil, and hide thyself for ever.

[*Puts it in his pocket.*]

Enter Sir BRILLIANT, singing.

Sir Brill. Mrs. Bellmour, I have such a story for you.—How!—Lovemore?

Love. Your slave, Sir Brilliant, your slave.

[Hiding the star with his hat.

Sir Brill. I did not think you had been acquainted here.

Love. You are right. I came in quest of you. I saw the lady. I was drawn hither by mere curiosity. We have had some conversation; and I made it subservient to your purposes. I have been giving a great character of you.

Sir Brill. You are always at the service of your friends. But what's the matter? what are you fumbling about?

[Pulls the hat.

Love. 'Sdeath I have care: don't touch me.

[Puts his handkerchief to his breast.

Sir Brill. What the devil is the matter?

Love. Oh! keep off—*[Aside.]* Here's a business.—Taken in the old way: let me pass—I have had a fling at Lord Etheridge: he will be out of favour with the widow: I have done you that good.—Racks and torments, my old complaint!

[Wanting to pass him.

Sir Brill. What complaint? You had better sit own.

Love. No, no; air, the air. I must have a surgeon. A stroke of a tennis-ball! My Lord Rackett's unlucky left-hand. Let me pass. There is some-

thing forming here. [*Passes him.*] To be caught is the devil. [*Aside.*] Don't mention my name. You will counteract all I have said.—Oh! torture, torture! —I will explain to you another time. Sir Brilliant, yours. I have served your interest—Oh! there is certainly something forming. [*Exit.*]

Sir Brill. What does all this mean?—So, so, Mrs. Lovemore's suspicions are well founded.—The widow has her private visits, I see. Yes, yes; there is something forming here.

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR.

So; here she comes. The whole shall be explained. I hope, ma'am, that I don't interrupt you with any piquet-friend.

Mrs. Bell. You are always a torment: what brings you hither?

Sir Brill. There are times, ma'am, when a visit—

Mrs. Bell. Is unseasonable, and yours is so now. How can you tease me?

Sir Brill. I thought as much.—There are some things that may require to be discussed between us.

Mrs. Bell. Reserve them all for another time. I can't hear you now. You must leave me. There is a lady taken ill in the next room.

Sir Brill. And here has been a gentleman taken ill in this room.

Mrs. Bell. How troublesome! you must be gone. Do you dispute my will and pleasure?—Fly this moment.

Sir Brill. But ma'am—Nay, if you insist upon it—
[Goes.]

Mrs. Bell. But, sir!—I will be absolute: you must leave me. [Puts him out.] There, and now I'll make sure of the door.

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE, leaning on MIGNIONET.

Mign. This way, madam: here is more air in this room.

Mrs. Bell. How do you find yourself? Pray sit down.

Mrs. Love. My spirits were too weak. I could not support it any longer; such a scene of perfidy!

Mrs. Bell. You astonish me: what perfidy?

Mrs. Love. Perfidy of the blackest dye; I told you that you were acquainted with my husband?

Mrs. Bell. Acquainted with your husband!

[Angrily.]

Mrs. Love. A moment's patience—Yes, madam, you are acquainted with him.—The base man, who went hence but now——

Mrs. Bell. Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Mrs. Love. No; your Lord Etheridge, as he calls himself——

Mrs. Bell. Lord Etheridge? What of him, pray?

Mrs. Love. False, dissembling man! he is my husband, ma'am: not Lord Etheridge, but plain Mr. Lovemore; my Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs. Bell. And has he been base enough to assume a title to ensnare me to my undoing?

Mign. [*Going.*] Well, for certain, I believe the devil's in me: I always thought him a sly one. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Love. To see him carrying on this dark design, —to see the man whom I have ever esteemed and loved, —the man whom I must still love, —esteem him, I fear, I never can, —to see him before my face with that artful treachery! it was too much for sensibility like mine; I felt the shock too severely, and I sunk under it.

Mrs. Bell. I am ready to sink this moment with amazement. I saw him, for the first time, at old Mrs. Loveit's. She introduced him to me. The appointment was of her own making.

Mrs. Love. You know Mrs. Loveit's character, I suppose.

Mrs. Bell. The practised veteran! — Could I suspect that a woman, in her style of life, would lend herself to a vile stratagem against my honour? That she would join in a conspiracy against her own sex? — Mr. Lovemore shall never enter these doors again — I am obliged to you, ma'am, for this visit; to me a providential incident. I am sorry for your share in it. The discovery secures my peace and happiness; to you it is a fatal conviction, a proof unanswerable against the person to whom you are joined for life.

Mrs. Love. After this discovery, it cannot be for life. I am resolved not to pass another day under his roof.

Mrs. Bell. Hold, hold: no sudden resolutions. Consider a little: passion is a bad adviser. This may take a turn for your advantage.

Mrs. Love. That can never be: I am lost beyond redemption.

Mrs. Bell. Don't decide too rashly. Come, come, the man who has certain qualities, is worth thinking about, before one throws the hideous thing away for ever. Mr. Lovemore is a traitor; but is not he still amiable? And besides, you have heard his sentiments. That song points at something. Perhaps you are a little to blame. He did not write upon such a subject, without a cause to suggest it. We will talk over this matter coolly. You have saved me, and I must return the obligation. You shall stay dinner with me.

Mrs. Love. Excuse me. Mr. Lovemore may possibly go home. He shall hear of his guilt, while the sense of it pierces here, and wounds me to the quick.

Mrs. Bell. Now there you are wrong: take my advice first. I will lay such a plan as may ensure him yours for ever. Come, come, you must not leave me yet. [*Takes her hand.*] Answer me one question: don't you still think he has qualities that do in some sort apologize for his vices?

Mrs. Love. I don't know what to think of it: I hope he has.

Mrs. Bell. Very well then. I have lost a lover; you may gain one. Your conduct upon this occasion may reform him; and let me tell you that the man, who

has it in his power to atone for his faults, should not be entirely despised.—Let the wife exert herself; let her try her powers of pleasing, and take my word for it,

The wild gallant no more abroad will roam,

But find his lov'd variety at home.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

An Apartment in LOVEMORE'S House. Mr. and Mrs. LOVEMORE at Table after Dinner: Servants taking Things out of the Room.

Lovemore. [Filling a glass.]

I WONDER you are not tired of the same eternal topic.

[*Sipping his wine.*]

Mrs. Love. If I make it an eternal topic, it is for your own good, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I know I have your good wishes, and you have mine. All our absent friends, Mrs. Lovemore.

[*Drinks.*]

Mrs. Love. If you would but wish well to yourself, sir, I should be happy.—But in the way you go on, your health must be ruined; day is night, and night day; your substance squandered; your constitution destroyed; and your family quite neglected.

Love. Family neglected! you see I dined at home, and this is my reward for it.

Mrs. Love. You dined at home, sir, because something abroad has disconcerted you. You went, I suppose, after I saw you at Lady Constant's, to your old haunt, your friend, Mrs. Loveit——

Love. Mrs. Loveit! ha! ha! I dropt her acquaintance long ago. No, my love, I drove into the city, and spent the rest of the morning upon business. I had long accounts to settle with old Discount, the banker.

Mrs. Love. And that to be sure engrossed all your time. Business must be minded. Did you find him at home?

Love. It was by his own appointment. I went to his house directly after I parted from you. I have been no where else. Matters of account always fatigue me.

Mrs. Love. I would not be too inquisitive, sir.

Love. Oh! no; you never are. I staid at the banker's the rest of the time; and I came straight from his house to have the pleasure of dining with you. [*Fills a glass of wine.*]

Mrs. Love. Were there any sincerity in that declaration, I should be happy. A tavern life has hitherto been your delight. I wonder what delight you can find in such an eternal round of gaming, riot, and dissipation. Will you answer me one question?

Love. With great pleasure,—[*Aside.*—]—if it is not inconvenient.

Mrs. Love. Lay your hand on your heart, and tell me,——Have I deserved this usage?

Love. My humble service to you, my love.

[*Drinks.*

Mrs. Love. I am sure I have never been deficient in any one point of the duty I owe you. You won my heart, and I gave it freely.

Love. [*Going to sleep.*] It is very true.

Mrs. Love. Your interest has been mine. I have known no pleasure unconnected with your happiness. Diversions, show, and pomp, have had no allurements for me.

Love. [*Dropping asleep.*] Yes,—you are right—just as you please——

Mrs. Love. Had I been inclined to follow the example of other women, your fortune would have felt it before now. You might have been thousands out of pocket; but your interest has been the object of my attention; and your convenience——

Love. [*Turns his chair from her.*] You reason very——you reason admir—ably——admir—ably——al—ways——al—always——gay——and——enter—entertaining——

[*Going to sleep.*

Mrs. Love. Marriage is generally considered as an introduction to the great scene of the world. I thought it a retreat to less noisy and serener pleasures. What is called polite company [*He falls fast asleep.*] was not my taste. You was lavish in expence; I was, therefore, an œconomist. From the moment marriage made me yours, the pleasure arising from your com-

pany—There! fast asleep! Agreeable company indeed!—This is ever his way. [*She rises.*] Unfeeling man!—It is too plain that I am grown his aversion. Mr. Lovemore! [*Looking at him*] you little think what a scene, this day has brought to light.—And yet he hopes with falsehood to varnish and disguise his treachery. How mean the subterfuge! shall I rouse him now, and tax him with his guilt? My heart is too full: reproach will only tend to exasperate, and perhaps make him irreconcilable. The pride that can stoop to low and wretched artifice, but ill can brook detection. Let him rest for the present. The widow Bellmour's experiment may answer better.—I will try it, at least.—Oh! Mr. Lovemore, you will break my heart. [*Looks at him, and exits.*]

Love. [*Talking in his sleep.*] I do listen—I am not asleep. [*Sleeps and nods.*] You are very right;—always right—I am only thinking a little. No—no—no—
[*Mutters indistinctly.*] It was not two o'clock—in bed—in bed by twelve—Sir Bashful is an oaf—The widow Bellmour—[*Sleeps, and his head rolls about.*]—What's the matter? [*Waking.*] I beg your pardon; I was beginning to nod. What did you say, my dear? [*Leans on the table, without looking about.*] One cannot always, you know—[*Turns about.*] 'Sdeath! she is gone! Oh! fast asleep. This is ever the way when one dines at home. Let me shake it off. [*Rises.*] What's o'clock?—No amusement in this house; what shall I do? The widow?—I must not venture in that

quarter. My evil genius, Sir Brilliant, will be busy there. Is any body in the way? I must sally out. My dear Venus, favour your votary this afternoon:

——— *Your best arms employ,*

All wing'd with pleasure, and all tipt with joy [Exit.

SCENE II.

Changes to Sir BASHFUL's. Enter Lady CONSTANT and FURNISH.

Lady Cons. Who brought this letter?

Fur. A servant of Mrs. Lovemore's: he waits an answer.

Lady Cons. My compliments to Mrs. Lovemore, and I shall wait upon her.

Fur. Yes, ma'am. [Going.]

Lady Cons. And hark ye, Furnish;—have the things been carried to Sir Brilliant, as I ordered?

Fur. I have obeyed your ladyship's commands. The steward went himself. Mr. Pounce, your ladyship knows, is a trusty body. You may depend upon his care.

Lady Cons. Go, and send Mrs. Lovemore her answer. She may depend upon my being with her in time. [Exit Furnish.] What can Mrs. Lovemore want? [Reads.] '*Ladyship's company to a card-party; but cards are the least part of my object. I have something of higher moment in view, and the presence of my friends is absolutely necessary.*' There is some my

this. What does she mean? I shall go, and then the scene will clear up: those diamond buckles embarrass me more than Mrs. Lovemore's unintelligible letter. Diamond buckles to me! From what quarter? Who could send them? Nobody but Sir Brilliant. I am right in my conclusion: they came from him. Who could take the liberty but a person of his cast? A presuming man! But I have mortified his vanity. Before this time, he has found his diamonds thrown back upon his hands, with the disdain which such confidence deserves.—But if I have made a mistake!—Oh! no; no danger. Has not Sir Brilliant made overtures to me? Has not he declared himself? He sees Sir Bashful's behaviour, and his vanity plumes itself upon that circumstance. To give me my revenge against a crazy and insufferable husband, he would fain induce me to ruin myself with a coxcomb. Besides; he heard the whole of Sir Bashful's dispute about diamonds and trinkets: the thing is clear; it was Sir Brilliant sent them; and by that stratagem he hopes to bribe me into compliance.—That bait will never take; though here comes one, who, I am sure, deserves to be treated without a grain of ceremony.

Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Here she is. Now let me see whether she will take any notice of the present I sent her. She has reason to be in good humour, I think.—Your servant, madam.

Lady Cons. Your address is polite, sir.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Still proud and obstinate!—Has any thing happened to disturb the harmony of your temper?

Lady Cons. Considering what little discord you make, it is a wonder that my temper is not always in tune.

Sir Bash. If you never gave me cause, madam——

Lady Cons. Oh! for mercy's sake, truce with altercation. I am tired out with the eternal violence of your temper. Those frequent starts of passion hurry me out of my senses: and those unaccountable whims, that hold such constant possession of you——

Sir Bash. Whims, madam?—Not to comply with you in every thing, is a whim, truly. Must I yield to the exorbitant demands of your extravagance? When you laid close siege to me for diamond baubles, and I know not what, was that a whim of mine? Did I take that fancy into my head without cause, and without sufficient foundation?

Lady Cons. Well, we have exhausted the subject. Have not you told me a thousand times that there is no living with me? I agree to it. And have not I returned the compliment? We have nothing new to say; and now, all that remains, is to let the lawyer reduce to writing our mutual opinions, and so we may part with the pleasure of giving each other a most woful character.

Sir Bash. [*Aside*] The buckles have had no effect. Stubborn! she has received them, and won't own it.

Lady Cons. A dash of your pen, sir, at the foot of certain articles now preparing, will make us both easy.

[*Going.*]

Sir Bash. If we don't live happily, it is your own fault.

Lady Cons. That is very odd.

Sir Bash. If you would control your passion for play—

Lady Cons. Quite threadbare!

Sir Bash. I have still a regard for you.

Lady Cons. Worn-out to frippery!—I can't hear any more. The law will dress it up in new language for us, and that will end our differences. [Exit.]

Sir Bash. [*Alone.*] I must unburthen my heart: there is no time to be lost. I love her; I admire her; she inflames my tenderest passions, and raises such a conflict here in my very heart, I cannot any longer conceal the secret from her. I'll go and tell her all this moment.—But then that meddling fiend, her maid, will be there: po! I can turn her out of the room: but then the jade will suspect something. Her ladyship may be alone: I'll send to know where she is. Who is there? Sideboard—

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Go and tell your lady that— [Pauses.]

Side. Did your honour want me?

Sir Bash. No matter; it does not signify.—[*Aside.*] I shall never be able to tell her my mind: a glance of her eye, and my own confusion, will undo all.

Side. I thought your honour called.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] A thought comes across me; I'll write her a letter. Yes, yes, a letter will do the business. Sideboard, draw that table this way—Reach me a chair.

Side. There, your honour.

Sir Bash. Do you stay while I write a letter. You shall carry it for me. [*Sits down to write.*]

Side. Yes, sir. I hope he has an intrigue upon his hands. A servant thrives under a master that has his private amusements. Love on, say I, if you are so given; it will bring grist to my mill.

Sir Bash. [*Writing.*] This will surprise her. Warm, passionate, and tender! and yet it does not come up to what I feel.

Side. What is he at?—I may as well read the newspaper. [*Takes it out of his pocket.*] What, in the name of wonder, is all this?—Ha, ha! [*Bursts into a loud laugh.*] I never heard the like of this before. Oh, ho, ho, ho!

Sir Bash. What does the scoundrel mean?

[*Stares at him.*]

Side. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing.

Sir Bash. Does the villain suspect me? [*Rises.*] Hark ye, sirrah, if ever I find that you dare listen at any door in my house—

Side. Sir!

Sir Bash. Confess the truth: have not you been listening to my conversation with Mr. Lovemore this morning?

Side. Who, I, sir? I would not be guilty of such a thing: I never did the like in all my days.

Sir Bash. What was you laughing at?

Side. A foolish thing in the newspaper, sir, that's all. I'll read it to your honour. [*Reads.*] We hear that a new comedy is now in rehearsal, and will speedily be performed, intitled, *The Amorous Husband; or, The Man in Love with his own Wife.*

Sir Bash. And what do you see to laugh at?

Side. See, sir? I have lived in a great many families, and never heard of the like before.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] There, there, there!—I shall be the butt of my own servants.—Sirrah, leave the room. And let me never hear that you have the trick of listening in my house.

Side. No, sir—The Man in Love with his own Wife! [*Exit laughing.*]

Sir Bash. What does the varlet mean?—No matter—I have finished my letter, and it shall be sent this moment.—But then, if I should get into a comedy? Po! no more scruples. I'll seal it directly—Sideboard—

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. [*Sealing the letter.*] I have opened my heart to her. What do you bring your hat and stick for?

Side. To go out with your honour's letter.

Sir Bash. You have not far to go. Take this, and let nobody see you.

Side. I warrant me, your honour. [Exit.

Sir Bash. I feel much lighter now. A load is taken off my heart.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. What do you come back for?

Side. A word or two, by way of direction, if you please, sir.

Sir Bash. Blockhead! give it to me—[*Aside.*] If I direct it, he finds me out.—Go about your business: I have no occasion for you: leave the room.

Side. Very well, sir.—Does he think to manage his own intrigues? If he takes my commission out of my hands, I shall give him warning. The vices of our masters are all the vails a poor servant has left.

[Exit.

Sir Bash. What must be done?—Mr. Lovemore could conduct this business for me. He is a man of address, and knows all the approaches to a woman's heart. That fellow Sideboard coming again?—No, no; this is lucky. Mr. Lovemore, I am glad to see you.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Love. A second visit, you see, in one day; entirely on the score of friendship.

Sir Bash. And I thank you for it; heartily thank you.

Love. I broke away from the company at the St.

Alban's on purpose to attend you. Well, I have made your lady easier in her mind, have not I?

Sir Bash. We don't hit it at all, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. No!

Sir Bash. I think she has been rather worse since you spoke to her.

Love. A good symptom that. [Aside.]

Sir Bash. She has received the diamond buckles. They were delivered to her maid sealed up, and the man never staid to be asked a question. I saw them in her own hand; but not a syllable escaped her. She was not in the least softened, obstinate as a mule!

Love. The manner of conveying your presents was not well judged. Why did you not make me the bearer?

Sir Bash. I wish I had. She talks of parting; and so, to avoid coming to extremities, I have even thought of telling her the whole truth at once.

Love. How? acquaint her with your passion?

Sir Bash. Ay, and trust to her honour. I could not venture to speak; I should blush, and falter, and look silly; and so I have writ a letter to her. Here it is, signed and sealed, but not directed. I got into a puzzle about that. Servants, you know, are always putting their own construction upon things.

Love. No doubt: and then your secret flies all over the town.

Sir Bash. That's what alarmed me. You shall write the superscription, and send it to her.

Love. No, that won't do. Give her a letter under your hand? I'll speak to her for you: let me try how her pulse beats.

Sir Bash. But a letter may draw an answer from her, and then you know [*Smiling at him.*] I shall have it under her hand.

Love. I don't like this hurry: we had better take time to consider of it.

Sir Bash. No, I can't defer the business of my heart a single moment. It burns like a fever here. Sit down, and write the direction; I'll step and send the servant. He shall carry it, as if it were a letter from yourself.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Side. Sir Brilliant Fashion is below, sir.

Love. What brings him? He will only interrupt us. Go and talk to him, Sir Bashful; hear what he has to say; amuse him; any thing, rather than let him come up.

Sir Bash. I am gone: he shan't molest you.

[*Exit with* Sideboard.

Love. Fly, make haste; and don't let him know that I am here.—A lucky accident this; I have gained time by it. All matters were in a right train, and he himself levelling the road for me, and now this letter blows me up into the air at once. Some unlucky planet rules to-day. First the Widow Bellmour; a hair-breadth 'scape I had of it, and now almost ruined here! What in the name of wonder has he writ to

her?—Friendship and wafer, by your leave.—But will that be delicate?—Po! honour has always a great deal to preach upon these occasions; but then the business of my love!—Very true; the passions need but say a word, and their business is done. [*Opens the letter and reads.*] This must never reach her. I'll write a letter from myself. [*Sits down, writes, and starts up*] I hear li'm coming: no; all safe. [*Writes.*] This will do:—vastly well. Her husband's inhumanity! Ay, mention that.—The diamonds may be a present from me: yes, I'll venture it—There, there; that will do—Long adored—Ay—sweetest revenge.—Ay—Eternal admirer—Lovemore.—Now, now let me see it.—Admirable! this will do the business. [*Seals the letter,*

Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Well, have you sent it?

Love. Not yet: I am writing the direction.

Sir Bash. And where is that blockhead?—Sideboard!

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Numskull, why don't you wait?—Mr. Lovemore wants you.

Love. Step and deliver this to your lady, and, if she pleases, I will wait upon her.

Sir Bash. Charming!—Take it up stairs directly.

Side. Up stairs, sir? My lady is in the next room.

Sir Bash. Take it to her; make haste; begone.

[Exit Sideboard.] I hope this will succeed: I shall be for ever obliged to you, and so will her ladyship.

Love. I hope she will, and I shall be proud to serve her.

Sir Bash. You are very good. She won't prove ungrateful, I dare answer for her.—I should like to see how she receives the letter.—The door is conveniently open.—I will have a peep. Ay, there; there she sits.

Love. Where, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Hush, no noise.—There, do you see her? She has the letter in her hand—This is a critical moment: I am all over in a tremble.

Love. Silence; not a word. She opens it.—[*Aside.*] Now, my dear Cupid, befriend me now, and your altar shall smoke with incense.

Sir Bash. She colours!

Love. I like that rising blush: a soft and tender token.

Sir Bash. She turns pale.

Love. The natural working of the passions.

Sir Bash. And now she reddens again.—What is she at now?—There, she has torn the letter in two:—I am a lost, an undone man. [Walks away.]

Love. She has flung it away with indignation: I am undone too. [Aside, and walks away from the door.]

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, you see what it is all come to.

Love. I am sorry to see so haughty a spirit.

Sir Bash. An arrogant, ungrateful woman! to make such a return to so kind a letter!

Love. Ay, so kind a letter!

Sir Bash. Did you ever see such an insolent scorn?

Love. I never was so disappointed in all my life.

Sir Bash. A letter full of the tenderest protestations!

Love. Yes; an unreserved declaration of love!

Sir Bash. Made with the greatest frankness; throwing myself at her very feet.

Love. Did she once smile? was there the faintest gleam of approbation in her countenance?

Sir Bash. She repaid it all with scorn, with pride, contempt, and insolence. I cannot bear this; despised, spurned, and treated like a puppy.

Love. There it stings——like a puppy, indeed!

Sir Bash. Is there a thing in nature so mortifying to the pride of man, as to find oneself rejected and despised by a fine woman, who is conscious of her power, and triumphs in her cruelty?

Love. It is the most damnable circumstance!——

Sir Bash. My dear Mr. Lovemore, I am obliged to you for taking this matter so much to heart.

Love. I take it more to heart than you are aware of.

Sir Bash. This is mortifying; enough to make one ashamed all the rest of one's life.

Love. I did not expect this sullen ill-humour.

Sir Bash. Did you ever know so obstinate, so un-complying a temper?

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, I forgot to tell you——

Love. He again! he hunts me up and down, as the vice did the devil, with a dagger of lath, in the old comedy. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Hey!—what's the matter?—You seem both out of humour: what does this mean? Have you quarrelled?

Sir Bash. No, sir, no quarrel:—Why would my booby servant let him in again? [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Strike me stupid, but you look very queer upon it.—Lovemore is borrowing money, I suppose: Sir Bashful is driving a hard bargain, and you can't agree about the premium. Sir Bashful, let my friend Lovemore have the money.

Sir Bash. Money!—what does he mean?

Sir Bril. Both out of humour, I see: well, as you will. You have no reason to be in harmony with yourselves; my stars shine with a kinder aspect. Here, here, behold a treasury of love. I came back on purpose to shew it to you. [*Takes a shagreen case out of his pocket.*] See what a present I have received; a magnificent pair of diamond buckles, by all that's amiable.

Love. How?

Sir Bash. [*Walking up to him.*] A pair of diamond buckles!

Sir Bril. How such a present should be sent to me is more than I can explain at present. Perhaps my

friend, Lovemore, gained some intelligence in the quarter where I surpris'd him to-day, on a visit which I little suspected.

Love. That was to serve you : I know nothing of this business.

Sir Bril. The pain in your side, I hope, is better.

Love. Po ! this is only to distract your attention, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. So I suppose. And was this a present to you ?

Sir Bril. A present, sir. The consequence of having some tolerable phrase, a person, and a due degree of attention to the service of the ladies.—Don't you envy me, Sir Bashful ?

Sir Bash. I can't but say I do —[*Turns to Lovemore.*] My buckles, by all that's false in woman !

Love. Take no notice.—[*Walks aside.*] Has he supplanted me here too, as well as with the widow ?

Sir Bril. What's the matter with you both ?——
Burning with envy !

Sir Bash. And I suppose an elegant epistle, or a well-penned billet-doux, accompanied this token of the lady's affection.

Sir Bril. That would have been an agreeable addition, but it is still to come. Too many favours at once might overwhelm a body. A country-looking fellow, as my people tell me, left this, curiously sealed up, at my house : he would not say from whence he came : I should know that in time, was all they could get from him, and I am now panting

to learn from whence this mighty success has attended me. Sir Bashful, I came, saw, and conquered. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Bash. But may not this be from some lady, who imagines that you sent it, and therefore chooses to reject your present?

Sir Bril. Oh, no; that cannot be the case. A little knowledge of the world would soon convince you that ladies do not usually reject presents from the man who has the good fortune to please by his manner, his taste for dress, and a certain *je ne sçai quoi* in his person and conversation.

Sir Bash. So I believe.—[*Walks aside.*] What say you to this, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. She would not have torn a letter from him.

Sir Bril. No, Sir Bashful; a present from me would not have been returned back upon my hands.

Sir Bash. I dare say not.—[*To Lovemore.*] I suppose she will give him my three hundred pounds into the bargain.

Love. After this, I shall wonder at nothing.

Sir Bril. What mortified countenances they both put on! [*Looks at them, and laughs.*]

Sir Bash. [*Walking up to Sir Brilliant.*] And I suppose you expect to have this lady?

Sir Bril. No doubt of it. This is the forerunner, I think. Hey, Lovemore?—Sir Bashful, this it is to be in luck. Ha! ha! [*Laughs at them both.*]

Love. and Sir Bash. [*Both forcing a laugh.*] Ha! ha!

Sir Bril. You both seem strangely picqued.— Lovemore, what makes you so uneasy?

Love. You flatter yourself, and you wrong me—I
—I— [Walks away.]

Sir Bash. He is a true friend: he is uneasy on my account. [Aside, and looking at Lovemore.]

Sir Brill. And, Sir Bashful, something has dashed your spirits. Do you repine at my success?

Sir Bash. I can't but say I do, sir.

Sir Brill. Oh! very well; you are not disposed to be good company. *A l'honneur*, gentlemen: finish your money matters. Lovemore, where do you spend the evening?

Love. A good evening to you, Sir Brilliant: I am engaged. Business with Sir Bashful, you see—

Sir Brill. Well, don't let me be of inconvenience to you. Fare ye well, gentlemen. Thou dear pledge of love [Looking at the buckles], thus let me clasp thee to my heart.—Sir Bashful, your servant. [Exit.]

Sir Bash. What think you now, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. All unaccountable, sir.

Sir Bash. By all that's false, I am gulled, cheated, and imposed upon. I am deceived, and dubbed a rank cuckold. It is too clear: she has given him the buckles, and I suppose my bank-notes have taken the same course.—Diamond buckles, and three hundred pounds, for Sir Brilliant! A reward for his merit!

Love. He is the favourite, and I have been working for him all this time.

Sir Bash. I now see through all her artifices. My resolution is fixed. If I can but get ocular demon-

stration of her guilt; if I can but get the means of proving to the whole world that she is vile enough to cuckold me, I shall then be happy.

Love. Why that will be some consolation!

Sir Bash. So it will: kind Heaven grant me that at least; make it plain that she dishonours me, and I am amply revenged.—Hark! I hear her coming. She shall know all I think, and all I feel. I have done with her for ever.

Love. [*Aside.*] Let me fly the impending storm. If I stay, detection and disgrace pursue me.—Sir Bashful, I am sorry to see matters take this turn. I have done all in my power, and since there is no room to hope for success, I take my leave, and wish you a good night.

Sir Bash. No, no; you shall not leave me in this distress. You shall hear me tell her her own, and be a witness of our separation. [*Holding him.*

Love. Excuse me: after what has passed, I shall never be able to endure the sight of her. Fare you well; I must be gone; good night, Sir Bashful.

[*Struggling to go.*

Sir Bash. You are my best friend: I cannot part with you. [*Stands between him and the door.*] Stay and hear what she has to say for herself; you will see what a turn she will give to the business.

Love. [*Aside.*] What turn shall I give it?—Confusion! here she comes: I must weather the storm.

Enter Lady CONSTANT.

Lady Cons. After this behaviour, Mr. Lovemore, I am surprised, sir, that you can think of staying a moment longer in this house.

Love. Madam, I—'sdeath! I have no invention to assist me at a pinch. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore is my friend, madam, and I desire he will stay in my house as long as he pleases.—Hey, Lovemore! [*Looks at him, and smiles.*]

Love. [*Aside.*] All must out, I fear.

Lady Cons. Your friend, Sir Bashful!—And do you authorise him to take this unbecoming liberty? Have you given him permission to send me a letter, so extravagant in the very terms of it?

Love. [*Aside.*] Ay, now 'tis coming, and impudence itself has not a word to say.

Sir Bash. I desired him to send that letter, madam.

Love. Sir Bashful desired me, ma'am.

[*Bowing respectfully.*]

Sir Bash. I desired him.

Love. All at his request, ma'am.

Lady Cons. And am I to be made your sport?—I wonder, Mr. Lovemore, that you would condescend to make yourself a party in so poor a plot. Do you presume upon a trifling mark of civility, which you persuaded me to accept of this morning? Do you come disguised under a mask of friendship to help this gentleman in his design against my honour, and my happiness?

Love. [*Aside.*] Fairly caught, and nothing can bring me off—

Sir Bash. A mask of friendship!—He is a true friend, madam; he sees how ill I am treated, and let me tell you, there is not a word of truth in that letter.

Love. Not a syllable of truth, ma'am—[*Aside.*] This will do: his own nonsense will save me.

Sir Bash. It was all done to try you, madam.

Love. Nothing more, ma'am: merely to try you.

Sir Bash. By way of experiment only: just to see how you would behave upon it.

Love. Nothing else was intended; all to try you, ma'am.

Lady Cons. You have been both notably employed. The exploit is worthy of you. Your snare is spread for a woman, and if you had succeeded, the fame of so bright an action would add mightily to two such illustrious characters.

Sir Bash. A snare spread for her! Mark that, Mr. Lovemore: she calls it ensnaring.

Love. Ensnared to her own good. [*To Sir Bashful.*] —He has pleaded admirably for me. [*Aside.*]

Lady Cons. As to you, Sir Bashful, I have long ago ceased to wonder at your conduct: you have lost the power of surprising me; but when Mr. Lovemore becomes an accomplice in so mean a plot—

Sir Bash. I am in no plot, madam, and no body wants to ensnare you; do we, Lovemore?

Love. Sir Bashful knows that no harm was intended.

Sir Bash. Yes, I am in the secret, and my friend Lovemore meant no harm.

Love. If the letter had succeeded, Sir Bashful knows there would have been no ill consequence.

Sir Bash. No harm in nature; but I now see how things are; and since your ladyship will listen to nothing for your own good, it is too plain, from all that has passed between us, that our tempers are by no means fitted for each other, and I am ready to part whenever you please: nay, I will part.

Lady Cons. And that is the only point in which we can agree, sir.

Sir Bash. Had the letter been sent from another quarter, it would have met with a better reception: we know where your smiles are bestowed.

Lady Cons. Deal in calumny, sir; give free scope to malice; I disdain your insinuations.

Sir Bash. The fact is too clear, and reproaches are now too late. This is the last of our conversing together; and you may take this by the way, you are not to believe one syllable of that letter.

Love. There is not a syllable of it deserves the least credit, ma'am.

Sir Bash. It was all a mere joke, madam: was not it, Lovemore?—And as to your being a fine woman, and as to any passion that any body has conceived for you, there was no such thing; you can witness for me, Lovemore: cann't you?

Lady Cons. Oh! you are witnesses for one another.

Love. Sir Bashful knows the fairness of my inten-

mons, and I know his.—[*Aside.*] He has acquitted me better than I expected, thanks to his absurdity.

Lady Cons. Go on, and aggravate your ill usage, gentlemen.

Sir Bash. It was all a bam, madam, a scene we thought proper to act. Let us laugh at her.

[*Goes up to Lovemore.*

Love. With all my heart—[*Aside.*] A silly block-head! I can't help laughing at him.

[*Laughing heartily.*

Sir Bash. [*Laughing with him.*] Ha! ha! ha!—all a bam; nothing else; a contrivance to make sport for ourselves—hey, Lovemore?

Lady Cons. This usage is insupportable. I shall not stay for an explanation. Two such worthy confederates!—Is my chair ready there? You may depend, sir, that this is the last time you will see me in this house. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. Agreed; a bargain; with all my heart. Lovemore, I have managed this well.

Love. Charmingly managed! I did not think you had so much spirit.

Sir Bash. I have found her out. The intrigue is too plain. She and Sir Brilliant are both detected.

Love. I never suspected that Sir Brilliant was the happy man. I wish I had succeeded, had it been only to mortify his vanity.

Sir Bash. And so do I: I wish it too: but never own the letter: deny it to the last.

Love. You may depend upon my secrecy.

Sir Bash. I am for ever obliged to you. A foolish woman! how she stands in her own light!

Love. Truly I think she does. But since I have no interest with her ladyship, I shall now sound a retreat, and leave matters to your own discretion. Success attend you. [*Going.*]

Sir Bash. You must not forsake me in this distress.

Love. Had your lady proved tractable, I should not have cared how long I had staid. But since things are come to this pass, I shall now go and see what kind of reception I am to meet with from Mrs. Lovemore.

Sir Bash. Don't let her know that you have a regard for her.

Love. Oh! no; I see the consequence.—[*Aside.*] Well off this time; and, Madam Fortune, if I trust you again, you shall play me what prank you please. Sir Bashful, yours. [*Going.*]

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you. And, hark ye, if I can serve you with your lady——

Love. I am much obliged to you: but I shall endeavour to go on, without giving you the trouble of assisting me. And, do you hear? assure my Lady Constant, that I meant nothing but to serve your interest. [*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. Rely upon my management. I can acquit you.—My Lady Constant! Lady Constant!—Let me chase her from my thoughts: can I do it? Rage, fury, love—no more of love! I am glad she tore the letter. Odsso! yonder it lies. It is only torn in two, and she may still piece the fragments together. I'll

pick up the letter this moment : it shall never appear in evidence against me. As to Sir Brilliant, his motions shall be watched ; I know how to proceed with madam, and if I can but prove the fact, every body will say that I am ill used by her. [Exit.

ACT V. SCENE I.

An Apartment at Mr. LOVEMORE'S. Enter Mrs. LOVE-MORE, elegantly dressed; MUSLIN following her.

Muslin.

WHY, to be sure, ma'am, it is so for certain, and you are very much in the right of it.

Mrs. Love. I fancy I am : I see the folly of my former conduct. I am determin'd never to let my spirits sink into a melancholy state again.

Mus. Why, that's the very thing, ma'am ; the very thing I have been always preaching up to you. Did not I always say, see company, ma'am, take your pleasure, and never break your heart for any man ? This is what I always said.

Mrs. Love. And you have said enough : spare yourself the trouble now.

Mus. I always said so. And what did the world say ? Heavens bless her for a sweet woman ! and a plague go with him for an inhuman, barbarous, bloody—murdering brute.

Mrs. Love. Well, truce with your impertinence; your tongue runs on at such a rate.

Mus. Nay, don't be angry: they did say so indeed. But, dear heart, how every body will be overjoy'd when they find you have pluck'd up a little! As for me, it gives me new life, to have so much company in the house, and such a racketting at the door with coaches and chairs, enough to hurry a body out of one's wits. Lard, this is another thing, and you look quite like another thing, ma'am, and that dress quite becomes you. I suppose, ma'am, you will never wear your negligee again. It is not fit for you indeed, ma'am. It might pass very well with some folks, ma'am, but the like of you——

Mrs. Love. Will you never have done? Go and see who is coming up stairs.

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Mrs. Love. Mrs. Bellmour, I revive at the sight of you. Muslin, do you step, and do as I ordered you.

Mus. What the deuce can she be at now? [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Bell. You see I am punctual to my time.— Well, I admire your dress of all things. It's mighty pretty.

Mrs. Love. I am glad you like it. But, under all this appearance of gaiety, I have at the bottom but an aching heart.

Mrs. Bell. Be ruled by me, and I'll answer for the event. Why really, now you look just as you should do.—Why neglect so fine a figure?

Mrs. Love. You are so obliging!

Mrs. Bell. And so true — What was beautiful before, is now heightened by the additional ornaments of dress; and if you will but animate and inspire the whole with those graces of the mind which I am sure you possess, the impression cannot fail of being effectual upon all beholders; even upon the depraved mind of Mr. Lovemore. — You have not seen him since, have you?

Mrs. Love. He dined at home, but was soon upon the wing to his usual haunts.

Mrs. Bell. If he does but come home time enough, depend upon it my plot will take. And have you got together a good deal of company?

Mrs. Love. Yes, a tolerable party.

Mrs. Bell. That's right: shew him that you will consult your own pleasure.

Mrs. Love. Apropos, as soon as I came home I received a letter from Sir Brilliant, in a style of warmth and tenderness that would astonish you. He begs to see me again, and has something particular to communicate. I left it in my dressing-room; you shall see it by-and-by: I took your advice, and sent him word he might come. The lure brought him hither immediately: he makes no doubt of his success with me.

Mrs. Bell. Well! two such friends as Sir Brilliant and Mr. Lovemore, I believe, never existed!

Mrs. Love. Their falsehood to each other is unparelleled. I left Sir Brilliant at the card-table: as soon

as he can disengage himself, he will quit his company in pursuit of me. I forgot to tell you, my Lady Constant is here.

Mrs. Bell. Is she?

Mrs. Love. She is, and has been making the strangest discovery: Mr. Lovemore has had a design there too!

Mrs. Bell. Oh! I don't doubt him: but the more proof we have the better.

Mrs. Love. There is sufficient proof: you must know, ma'am—[*A rap at the door.*] As I live and breathe, I believe this is Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs. Bell. If it is, every thing goes on as I could wish.

Mrs. Love. I hear his voice, it is he. How my heart beats!

Mrs. Bell. Courage, and the day's our own. He must not see me yet: where shall I run?

Mrs. Love. In there, ma'am. Make haste; I hear his step on the stairs.

Mrs. Bell. Success attend you. I am gone.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Love. I am frightened out of my senses. What the event may be I fear to think; but I must go through with it.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Mrs. Love. You are welcome home, sir.

Love. Mrs. Lovemore, your servant. [*Without looking at her.*]

Mrs. Love. It is somewhat rare to see you at home so early.

Love. I said I should come home, did not I? I always like to be as good as my word.—What could the widow mean by this usage? to make an appointment, and break it thus abruptly! [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Love. He seems to muse upon it. [*Aside.*]

Love. [*Aside.*] She does not mean to do so treacherous a thing as to jilt me? Oh, Lord! I am wonderfully tired. [*Yawns, and sinks into an armed chair.*]

Mrs. Love. Are you indisposed, my dear?

Love. No, my love; I thank you, I am very well;—a little fatigued only, with joiting over the stones all the way into the city this morning. I have paid a few visits this afternoon.—Confoundedly tired.—Where's William?

Mrs. Love. Do you want any thing?

Love. Only my cap and slippers. I am not in spirits, I think. [*Yawns.*]

Mrs. Love. You are never in spirits at home, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I beg your pardon: I never am any where more cheerful. [*Stretching his arms.*] I wish I may die if I an't very happy at home,——very [*Yawns.*] very happy!

Mrs. Love. I can hear otherwise. I am informed that Mr. Lovemore is the promoter of mirth and good humour wherever he goes.

Love. Oh! no, you over-rate me; upon my soul you do.

Mrs. Love. I can hear, sir, that no person's company is so acceptable to the ladies; that your wit inspires every thing: you have your compliment for one, your smile for another, a whisper for a third, and so on, sir: you divide your favours, and are every where, but at home, all whim, vivacity, and spirit.

Love. Ho! ho! [*Laughing.*] how can you talk so? I swear I can't help laughing at the fancy. All whim, vivacity, and spirit! I shall burst my sides. How can you banter one so?—I divide my favours too!—Oh, heavens! I can't stand this raillery: such a description of me!—I that am rather saturnine, of a serious cast, and inclined to be pensive! I can't help laughing at the oddity of the conceit.—
Oh Lord! Oh Lord!

[*Laughs.*]

Mrs. Love. Just as you please, sir. I see that I am ever to be treated with indifference. [*Walks across the stage.*]

Love. [*Rises, and walks a contrary way.*] I can't put this widow Bellmour out of my head. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Love. If I had done any thing to provoke this usage, this cold, determined contempt— [*Walking.*]

Love. I wish I had done with that business entirely; but my desires are kindled, and must be satisfied. [*Aside.*]

[*They walk for some time silently by each other.*]

Mrs. Love. What part of my conduct gives you offence, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. Still harping upon that ungrateful string!—

but pr'ythee don't set me a laughing again.—Offence!—nothing gives me offence, child!—you know I am very fond—[*Yawns and walks.*]—I like you of all things, and think you a most admirable wife;—prudent, managing,—careless of your own person, and very attentive to mine;—not much addicted to pleasure,—grave, retired, and domestic; you govern your house, pay the tradesmen's bills, [*Yawns.*] scold the servants, and love your husband:—upon my soul, a very good wife!—as good a sort of a wife [*Yawns.*] as a body might wish to have.—Where's William? I must go to bed.

Mrs. Love. To bed so early! Had not you better join the company?

Love. I shan't go out to-night.

Mrs. Love. But I mean the company in the dining-room.

Love. Company in the dining-room! [*Stares at her.*]

Mrs. Love. Yes: I invited them to a rout.

Love. A rout in my house!—and you dressed out too!—What is all this?

Mrs. Love. You have no objection, I hope.

Love. Objection!—No, I like company, you know, of all things; I'll go and join them: who are they all?

Mrs. Love. You know 'em all; and there's your friend, Sir Brilliant.

Love. Is he there? I shall be glad to see him. But, pray, how comes all this about?

Mrs. Love. I intend to see company often.

Love. Do you?

Mrs. Love. Ay, and not look tamely on, while you revel luxuriously in a course of pleasure. I shall pursue my own plan of diversion.

Love. Do so ma'am: the change in your temper will not be disagreeable.

Mrs. Love. And so I shall, sir, I assure you. Adieu to melancholy, and welcome pleasure, wit, and gaiety.

[*She walks about and sings.*]

Love. What the devil has come over her? And what in the name of wonder does all this mean?

Mrs. Love. Mean, sir!—It means, it means—how can you ask me what it means?—Well, to be sure, the sobriety of that question!—Do you think a woman of spirit can have leisure to tell her meaning, when she is all air, alertness, rapture, and enjoyment.

Love. She is mad!—Stark mad!

Mrs. Love. You're mistaken, sir,—not mad, but in spirits, that's all. Am I too flighty for you?—Perhaps I am: you are of a saturnine disposition, inclined to think a little or so. Well, don't let me interrupt you; don't let me be of any inconvenience. That would be the unpolitest thing; a married couple to be interfering and encroaching on each other's pleasures! Oh, hideous! it would be Gothic to the last degree. Ha, ha, ha!

Love. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Ha, ha!—Ma'am, you—ha, ha! you are perfectly right.

Mrs. Love. Nay, but I don't like that laugh now: I positively don't like it. Can't you laugh out as you

were used to do? For my part, I'm determined to do nothing else all the rest of my life.

Love. This is the most astonishing thing! Ma'am, I don't rightly comprehend——

Mrs. Love. Oh Lud! oh Lud!—with that important face! Well, but come! what don't you comprehend?

Love. There is something in this treatment that I don't so well——

Mrs. Love. Oh! are you there, sir! How quickly they, who have no sensibility for the peace and happiness of others, can feel for themselves, Mr. Lovemore!—But that's a grave reflection, and I hate reflection.

Love. What has she got into her head? This sudden change, Mrs. Lovemore, let me tell you——

Mrs. Love. Nay, don't be frightened: there is no harm in innocent mirth, I hope: never look so grave upon it. I assure you, sir, that though, on your part, you seem determined to offer constant indignities to your wife, and though the laws of retaliation would in some sort exculpate her, if, when provoked to the utmost, exasperated beyond all enduring, she should, in her turn, make him know what it is to receive an injury in the tenderest point——

Love. Madam!

[*Angrily.*]

Mrs. Love. Well, well, don't be alarmed. I shan't retaliate: my own honour will secure you there; you may depend upon it.—Will you come and play a game at cards? Well, do as you like; you won't

come? No, no, I see you won't—What say you to a bit of supper with us?—Nor that neither?—Follow your inclinations: it is not material what a body eats, you know; the company expects me; adieu, Mr. Lovemore, yours, yours. *[Exit singing.]*

Love. This is a frolic I never saw her in before!—Laugh all the rest of my life!—laws of retaliation!—an injury in the tenderest point!—the company expects me,—adieu! yours, yours!—*[Mimicking her.]* What the devil is all this? Some of her female friends have been tampering with her. So, so: I must begin to look a little sharp after madam. I'll go this moment into the card-room, and watch whom she whispers with, whom she ogles with, and every circumstance that can lead to— *[Going.]*

Enter MUSLIN in a hurry.

Mus. Madam, madam,—here's your letter; I would not for all the world that my master—

Love. What, is she mad too? What's the matter, woman?

Mus. Nothing, sir,—nothing: I wanted a word with my lady, that's all, sir.

Love. You would not for the world that your master—What was you going to say?—what paper's that?

Mus. Paper, sir!

Love. Paper, sir! Let me see it.

Mus. Lord, sir! how can you ask a body for such a thing? It's a letter to me, sir, a letter from the

country; a letter from my sister, sir. She bids me to buy her a *shiver de frize* cap, and a sixteenth in the lottery; and tells me of a number she dreamt of, that's all, sir: I'll put it up.

Love. Let me look at it. Give it me this moment.

[*Reads.*] To Mrs. Lovemore!—Brilliant Fashion. This is a letter from the country, is it?

Mus. That, sir—that is—no, sir,—no;—that's not sister's letter.—If you will give me that back, sir, I'll shew you the right one.

Love. Where did you get this?

Mus. Sir!

Love. Where did you get it?—Tell me truth.

Mus. Dear heart, you fright a body so—in the parlour, sir—I found it there.

Love. Very well!—leave the room.

Mus. The devil fetch it, I was never so out in my politics in all my days. [*Exit.*]

Love. A pretty epistle truly! [*Reads.*] 'When you command me, my dearest Mrs. Lovemore, never to touch again upon the subject of love, you command an impossibility. You excite the flame, and forbid it to burn. Permit me once more to throw myself on my knees, and implore your compassion.'—Compassion, with a vengeance on him!—'Think you see me now with tender, melting, supplicating eyes, languishing at your feet.'—Very well, sir—'Can you find it in your heart to persist in cruelty?—Grant me but access to you once more, and, in addition to what I already said this morning, I will urge such

motives.'—Urge motives, will ye?—'as will convince you, that you should no longer hesitate in gratitude, to reward him, who here makes a vow of eternal constancy and love.

BRILLIANT FASHION.'

So! so! so! your very humble servant, Sir Brilliant Fashion!—This is your friendship for me, is it?—You are mighty kind indeed, sir,—but I thank you as much as if you had really done me the favour: and, Mrs. Lovemore, I'm your humble servant too. She intends to laugh all the rest of her life! This letter will change her note. Yonder she comes along the gallery, and Sir Brilliant in full chase of her. They come this way. Could I but detect them both now! I'll step aside, and who knows but the devil may tempt them to their undoing. A polite husband I am: there's the coast clear for you, madam. [*Exit.*]

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE and Sir BRILLIANT.

Mrs. Love. I have already told you my mind, Sir Brilliant. Your civility is odious; your compliments fulsome; and your solicitations insulting.—I must make use of harsh language, sir: you provoke it.

Sir Brill. Not retiring to solitude and discontent again, I hope, madam! Have a care, my dear Mrs. Lovemore, of a relapse.

Mrs. Love. No danger, sir: don't be too solicitous about me. Why leave the company! Let me entreat you to return, sir.

Sir Brill. By Heaven, there is more rapture in being

one moment *vis-a-vis* with you, than in the company of a whole drawing-room of beauties. Round you are melting pleasures, tender transports, youthful loves, and blooming graces, all unfelt, neglected, and despised, by a tasteless, cold, unimpassioned husband, while they might be all so much better employed to the purposes of ecstasy and bliss.

Mrs. Love. I am amazed, sir, at this liberty.—What action of my life has authorized this assurance?—I desire, sir, you will desist. Were I not afraid of the ill consequences that might follow, I should not hesitate a moment to acquaint Mr. Lovemore with your whole behaviour.

Sir Bril. She won't tell her husband!—A charming creature, and blessings on her for so convenient a hint. She yields, by all my hopes!—What shall I say to overwhelm her senses in a flood of nonsense?

[*Aside.*

*Go my heart's envoys, tender sighs make haste,—
Still drink delicious poisons from thy eye,—
Raptures and paradise
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be press'd.*

[Forcing her all this time.

Enter Mr. LOVEMORE.

Love. Hell and distraction! this is too much.

Sir Bril. What the devil's the matter now? [*Kneels down to buckle his shoe.*] This confounded buckle is always plaguing me. Lovemore! I rejoice to see thee.

[*Looking at each other.*

Love. And have you the confidence to look me in the face?

Sir Brill. I was telling your lady, here, of the most whimsical adventure——

Love. Don't add the meanness of falsehood to the black attempt of invading the happiness of your friend. I did imagine, sir, from the long intercourse that has subsisted between us, that you might have had delicacy enough, feeling enough, honour enough, sir, not to meditate an injury like this.

Sir Brill. Ay, it's all over, I am detected. [*Aside.* Mr. Lovemore, I feel that I have been wrong, and will not attempt a vindication of myself. We have been friends hitherto, and if begging your pardon for this rashness will any ways atone——

Love. No, sir, nothing can atone. The provocation you have given me would justify my drawing upon you this instant, did not that lady, and this roof, protect you.

Sir Brill. Harsh language to a friend——

Love. Friend, Sir Brilliant!

Sir Brill. If you will but hear me——

Love. Sir, I insist; I won't hear a word.

Sir Brill. I declare upon my honour——

Love. Honour! for shame, Sir Brilliant: honour and friendship are sacred words, and you profane them both.

Sir Brill. If imploring forgiveness of that lady——

Love. That lady!—I desire you will never speak to that lady.

Sir Brill. Can you command a moment's patience?

Love. Sir, I am out of all patience: this must be settled between us: I have done for the present.

Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Did not I hear loud words among you? I certainly did. What are you quarrelling about?

Love. Read that, Sir Bashful. [*Gives him Sir Brilliant's letter.*] Read that, and judge if I have not cause—

[*Sir Bashful reads to himself.*]

Sir Brill. Hear but what I have to say—

Love. No, sir, no; we shall find a fitter time. As for you, madam, I am satisfied with your conduct. I was indeed a little alarmed, but I have been a witness of your behaviour, and I am above harbouring low suspicions.

Sir Bash. Upon my word, Mr. Lovemore, this is carrying the jest too far.

Love. It is the basest action a gentleman can be guilty of; and to a person who never injured him, still more criminal.

Sir Bash. Why so I think. Sir Brilliant, [*To him aside.*] here, take this letter, and read it to him, his own letter to my wife.

Sir Brill. Let me see it—

[*Takes the letter.*]

Sir Bash. 'Tis indeed, as you say, the vilest action a gentleman can be guilty of.

Love. An unparalleled breach of friendship.

Sir Brill. Not altogether so unparalleled: I believe

it will not be found without a precedent—as for example—

[Reads.

To my Lady CONSTANT——

‘Why should I conceal, my dear madam, that your charms have awaken’d my tenderest passion?’

Love. Confusion!—my letter—

[Aside.

Sir Bril. [Reading.] *‘I long have loved you, long adored. Could I but flatter myself’—*

[Lovemore walks about uneasy; Sir Brilliant follows him.

Sir Bash. There, Mr. Lovemore, the basest treachery!

Sir Bril. [Reads.] *‘Could I but flatter myself with the least kind return.’*

Love. Confusion! let me seize the letter out of his hand.

[Snatches it from him.

Sir Bash. An unparalleled breach of friendship, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. All a forgery, sir; all a forgery.

Sir Bash. That I deny; it is the very identical letter my lady threw away with such indignation. She tore it in two, and I have pieced it together.

Love. A mere contrivance to varnish his guilt.

Sir Bril. Ha, ha! my dear Lovemore, we know one another. Have not you been at the same work with the Widow Bellmour?

Love. The Widow Bellmour!—If I spoke to her, it was to serve you, sir.

Sir Bril. Are you sure of that?

Love. Po! I won't stay a moment longer among ye. I'll go into another room to avoid ye all. I know little or nothing of the Widow Bellmour, sir.

[*Opens the door.*]

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Hell and destruction!—what fiend is conjured up here? Zoons! let me make my escape out of the house. [*Runs to the opposite door.*]

Mrs. Love. I'll secure this pass: you must not go, my dear.

Love. 'Sdeath, madam, give me way.

Mrs. Love. Nay, don't be in such a hurry: I want to introduce an acquaintance of mine to you.

Love. I desire, madam——

Mrs. Bell. My Lord, my Lord Etheridge; I am heartily glad to see your lordship. [*Taking hold of him.*]

Mrs. Love. Do, my dear, let me introduce this lady to you. [*Turning him to her.*]

Love. Here's the devil and all to do! [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Bell. My lord, this is the most fortunate encounter.

Love. I wish I was fifty miles off. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Love. Mrs. Bellmour, give me leave to introduce Mr. Lovemore to you. [*Turning him to her.*]

Mrs. Bell. No, my dear ma'am, let me introduce Lord Etheridge to you. [*Pulling him.*] My Lord—

Sir Brill. In the name of wonder, what is all this?

Sir Bash. This is another of his intrigues blown up.

Mrs. Love. My dear ma'am, you are mistaken: this is my husband.

Mrs. Bell. Pardon me, ma'am, 'tis my Lord Etheridge.

Mrs. Love. My dear, how can you be so ill-bred in your own house?—*Mrs. Bellmour*,—this is Mr. Lovemore.

Love. Are you going to toss me in a blanket, madam?—call up the rest of your people, if you are.

Mrs. Bell. Pshaw! pr'ythee now, my lord, leave off your humours. *Mrs. Lovemore*, this is my Lord Etheridge, a lover of mine, who has made proposals of marriage to me.

Love. Confusion! let me get rid of these two furies. [*Breaks away from them.*]

Sir Bash. He has been tampering with her too, has he?

Mrs. Bell. [*Follows him.*] My lord, I say! my Lord Etheridge! won't your lordship know me?

Love. This is the most damnable accident! [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Bell. I hope your lordship has not forgot your appointment at my house this evening.

Love. I deserve all this. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Bell. Pray, my lord, what have I done, that you treat me with this coldness? Come, come, you shall have a wife: I will take compassion on you.

Love. Damnation! I can't stand it. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. Murder will out: murder will out.

Mrs. Bell. Come, cheer up, my lord: what the

deuce, your dress is altered! what's become of the star and ribband? And so the gay, the florid, the *magnifique* Lord Etheridge dwindles down into plain Mr. Lovemore, the married man! Mr. Lovemore, your most obedient, very humble servant, sir.

Love. I can't bear to feel myself in so ridiculous a circumstance. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. He has been passing himself for a lord, has he?

Mrs. Bell. I beg my compliments to your friend Mrs. Loveit: I am much obliged to you both for your very honourable designs. [*Curtseying to him.*

Love. I was never so ashamed in all my life!

Sir Bril. So, so, so, all his pains were to hide the star from me. This discovery is a perfect cordial to my dejected spirits.

Mrs. Bell. Mrs. Lovemore, I cannot sufficiently acknowledge the providence that directed you to pay me a visit, though I was wholly unknown to you; and I shall henceforth consider you as my deliverer.

Love. So! it was she that fainted away in the closet, and be damn'd to her jealousy. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. By all that's whimsical, an odd sort of an adventure this! My lord, [*Advances to him.*] my lord, my Lord Etheridge, as the man says in the play, 'Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.'

Love. Now he comes upon me.—Oh! I'm in a fine situation. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. My lord, I hope that ugly pain in your lordship's side is abated.

Love. Absurd, and ridiculous.

[*Aside.*

Sir Brill. There is nothing forming there, I hope, my lord.

Love. I shall come to an explanation with you, sir.

Sir Brill. The tennis-ball from Lord Racket's unlucky left hand.

Love. No more at present, Sir Brilliant. I leave you now to yourselves, and—[*Goes to the door in the back scene.*]—'sdeath, another fiend! I am beset by them.

Enter Lady CONSTANT.

No way to escape?—[*Attempts both stage doors, and is prevented.*]

Lady Cons. Mr. Lovemore, it is the luckiest thing in the world that you are come home.

Love. Ay, it is all over—all must come to light.

Lady Cons. I have lost every rubber; quite broke; four by honours against me every time. Do, Mr. Lovemore, lend me another hundred.

Love. I would give an hundred pounds you were all in Lapland.

[*Aside.*

Lady Cons. Mrs. Lovemore, let me tell you, you are married to the falsest man; he has deceived me strangely.

Mrs. Love. I begin to feel for him, and to pity his uneasiness.

Mrs. Bell. Never talk of pity; let him be probed to the quick.

Sir Bash. The case is pretty plain, I think, now, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Brill. Pretty plain, upon my soul! Ha! ha!

Love. I'll turn the tables upon Sir Bashful, for all this—[*Takes Sir Bashful's letter out of his pocket.*]—where is the mighty harm now in this letter?

Sir Bash. Where's the harm?

Love. [*Reads.*] 'I cannot, my dearest life, any longer behold——'

Sir Bash. Shame and confusion! I am undone.

[*Aside.*

Love. Hear this, Sir Bashful—'The manifold vexations, of which, through a false prejudice, I am myself the occasion.'

Lady Cons. What is all this?

Sir Bash. I am a lost man.

[*Aside.*

Love. Mind, Sir Bashful.—'I am therefore resolved, after many conflicts with myself, to throw off the mask, and frankly own a passion, which the fear of falling into ridicule has, in appearance, suppressed.'

Sir Bash. 'Sdeath! I'll hear no more of it.

[*Snatches at the letter.*

Love. No, sir; I resign it here, where it was directed; and with it, these notes which Sir Bashful gave me for your use.

Lady Cons. It is his hand sure enough.

Love. Yes, madam, and those are his sentiments, which he explained to me more at large.

Lady Cons. [*Reads.*] 'Accept the presents which I myself have sent you; money, attendance, equipage, and every thing else you shall command; and, in return, I shall only

entreat you to conceal from the world that you have raised a flame in this heart, which will ever show me,

Your admirer,

And your truly affectionate husband,

BASHFUL CONSTANT.

All. Ha! ha!—

Sir Bril. So, so, so! he has been in love with his wife all this time, has he? Sir Bashful, will you go and see the new comedy with me?

Sir Bash. I shall blush through the world all the rest of my life. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. Lovemore, don't you think it a base thing to invade the happiness of a friend? or to do him a clandestine wrong? or to injure him with the woman he loves?

Love. To cut the matter short with you, sir, we have been traitors to each other; a couple of unprincipled, unreflecting profligates.

Sir Bril. Profligates?

Love. Ay! both! we are pretty fellows indeed!

Mrs. Bell. I am glad to find you are awakened to a sense of your error.

Love. I am, madam, and am frank enough to own it. I am above attempting to disguise my feelings, when I am conscious they are on the side of truth and honour. With the sincerest remorse I ask your pardon.—I should ask pardon of my Lady Constant too, but the fact is, Sir Bashful threw the whole affair in my way; and, when a husband will be ashamed of

loving a valuable woman, he must not be surprised, if other people take her case into consideration, and love her for him.

Sir Bril. Why, faith, that does in some sort make his apology.

Sir Bash. Sir Bashful! Sir Bashful! thou art ruined.

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Bell. Well, sir, upon certain terms, I don't know but I may sign and seal your pardon.

Love. Terms!—what terms?

Mrs. Bell. That you make due expiation of your guilt to that lady. [Pointing to *Mrs. Lovemore.*

Love. That lady, ma'am!—That lady has no reason to complain.

Mrs. Love. No reason to complain, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. No, madam, none; for whatever may have been my imprudences, they have had their source in your conduct.

Mrs. Love. In my conduct, sir?

Love. In your conduct:—I here declare before this company, and I am above misrepresenting the matter; I here declare, that no man in England could be better inclined to domestic happiness, if you, madam, on your part, had been willing to make home agreeable.

Mrs. Love. There, I confess, he touches me.

[*Aside.*

Love. You could take pains enough before marriage; you could put forth all your charms; practise

all your arts, and make your features please by rule; for ever changing; running an eternal round of variety; and all this to win my affections: but when you had won them, you did not think them worth your keeping; never dressed, pensive, silent, melancholy; and the only entertainment in my house was the dear pleasure of a dull conjugal *tête-à-tête*; and all this insipidity, because you think the sole merit of a wife consists in her virtue: a fine way of amusing a husband, truly!

Sir Bril. Upon my soul, and so it is— [*Laughing.*]

Mrs. Love. Sir, I must own there is too much truth in what you say. This lady has opened my eyes, and convinced me there was a mistake in my former conduct.

Love. Come, come, you need say no more. I forgive you; I forgive.

Mrs. Love. Forgive! I like that air of confidence, when you know that, on my side, it is, at worst, an error in judgment; whereas, on yours——

Mrs. Bell. Po! po! never stand disputing: you know each other's faults and virtues: you have nothing to do but to mend the former, and enjoy the latter. There, there, kiss and friends. There, Mrs. Lovemore, take your reclaimed libertine to your arms.

Love. 'Tis in your power, madam, to make a reclaimed libertine of me indeed.

Mrs. Love. From this moment it shall be our mutual study to please each other.

Love. A match with all my heart. I shall hereafter be ashamed only of my follies, but never ashamed of owning that I sincerely love you.

Sir Bash. Shan't you be ashamed?

Love. Never, sir.

Sir Bash. And will you keep me in countenance?

Love. I will.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. I now forgive you all. My Lady Constant, I own the letter, I own the sentiments of it; [*Embraces her.*] and from this moment I take you to my heart.—Lovemore, zookers! you have made a man of me. Sir Brilliant, come; produce the buckles.

Lady Cons. If you hold in this humour, Sir Bashful, our quarrels are at an end.

Sir Brill. And now, I suppose, I must make restitution here— [*Gives Lady Constant the buckles.*]

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, make restitution. Lovemore! this is the consequence of his having some tolerable phrase, and a person, Mr. Lovemore! ha! ha!—

Sir Brill. Why, I own the laugh is against me. With all my heart; I am glad to see my friends happy at last. Lovemore, may I presume to hope for pardon at that lady's hands? [*Points to Mrs. Lovemore.*]

Love. My dear confederate in vice, your pardon is granted. Two sad libertines we have been. But come, give us your hand: we have used each other scurvily: for the future we will endeavour to atone for the errors of our past misconduct.

Sir Bril. Agreed; we will henceforward behave like men, who have not forgot the obligations of truth and honour.

Love. And now I congratulate the whole company, that this business has had so happy a tendency to convince each of us of our folly.

Mrs. Bell. Pray, sir, don't draw me into a share of your folly.

Love. Come, come, my dear ma'am, you are not without your share of it. This will teach you, for the future, to be content with one lover at a time, without listening to a fellow you know nothing of, because he assumes a title, and spreads a fair report of himself.

Mrs. Bell. The reproof is just, I grant it.

Love. Come, let us join the company cheerfully, keep our own secrets, and not make ourselves the town-talk.

Sir Bash. Ay, ay; let us keep the secret.

Love. What, returning to your fears again? you will put me out of countenance, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. I have done.

Love. When your conduct is fair and upright, never be afraid of ridicule. Real honour and generous affection may bid defiance to all the small wits in the kingdom. In my opinion, were the business of this day to go abroad into the world, it might prove a very useful lesson: the men would see how their passions may carry them into the danger of wounding the bo-

som of a friend: and the ladies would learn, that, after the marriage rites are performed, they ought not to suffer their powers of pleasing to languish away, but should still remember to sacrifice to the Graces.

To win a man, when all your pains succeed,

The WAY TO KEEP HIM is a task indeed.

[Exeunt omnes.]

SONG FOR MRS. CIBBER,

IN THE WAY TO KEEP HIM.

Written at the Revival of the Play, by Mr. GARRICK.

*YE fair married dames, who so often deplore,
That a lover once blest, is a lover no more,
Attend to my counsel, nor blush to be taught,
That prudence must cherish what beauty has caught.*

*The bloom of your cheek, and the glance of your eye,
Your roses and lilies, may make the men sigh :
But roses, and lilies, and sighs pass away,
And passion will die, as your beauties decay.*

*Use the man that you wed like your fav'rite guittar,
Tho' music in both, they are both apt to jar ;
How tuneful and soft from a delicate touch,
Not handled too roughly, nor play'd on too much.*

*The sparrow and linnet will feed from your hand,
Grow tame by your kindness, and come at command :
Exert with your husband the same happy skill,
For hearts, like young birds, may be tam'd to your will.*

*Be gay and good-humour'd, complying and kind,
Turn the chief of your care from your face to your mind ;
'Tis there that a wife may her conquests improve,
And Hymen shall rivet the fetters of love.*



De Wilde pinis!

Lacey sculp.

MISS BARCLAY as OLIVIA.

*— I'm but too much the Cause
of your suspicions: — —*

London. Printed for J. Bell British Library, Strand, Sept^r 8. 1792.

THE
GOOD NATURED MAN.

A
COMEDY,
BY DR. GOLDSMITH.

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.

M DCC XCII.

P R E F A C E.

WHEN I undertook to write a comedy, I confess I was strongly prepossessed in favour of the poets of the last age, and strove to imitate them. The term, *genteel comedy*, was then unknown amongst us, and little more was desired by an audience, than nature and humour, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous. The author of the following scenes never imagined that more would be expected of him, and therefore to delineate character has been his principal aim. Those who know any thing of composition, are sensible, that in pursuing humour, it will sometimes lead us into the recesses of the mean; I was even tempted to look for it in the master of a sponging-house: but in deference to the public taste, grown of late, perhaps, too delicate; the scene of the bailiffs was re-trenched in the representation. In deference also to the judgment of a few friends, who think in a particular way, the scene is here restored. The author submits it to the reader in his closet; and hopes that too much refinement will not banish humour and character from ours, as it has already done from the French theatre. Indeed the French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humour and *Moliere* from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too.

Upon the whole, the Author returns his thanks to the public for the favourable reception which *The Good Natured Man* has met with: and to Mr. Colman in particular, for his kindness to it. It may not also be improper to assure any, who shall hereafter write for the theatre, that merit, or supposed merit, will ever be a sufficient passport to his protection.

THE GOOD NATURED MAN.

THIS Comedy, which was, like the RIVALS, nearly driven from the Stage at its first representation, is a very strong proof of rich comic talents in the late Dr. GOLDSMITH, from which a good taste in the age might have elicited humour that would have *lived*;—but KELLY had flattered it up to a pitch of *False Delicacy*, from whose nauseous fastidiousness it could not descend to welcome the just delineations of varied life.

Upon this play two authors have built similar character and incident—CROAKER certainly suggested old RUEFUL, and the scene wherein CROAKER brings his son LEONTINE to court Miss RICHLAND, clearly gave Mr. SHERIDAN the example to bring on Sir ANTHONY ABSOLUTE and *his* son to address LYDIA LANGUISH. The reception of GOLDSMITH's play was a striking lesson, however, to the modern CONGREVE, who, in compliance with the sentiment that was in vogue, adorned the RIVALS with those exquisite scenes of polite passion between FALKLAND and JULIA, which we know the Stage cannot equal.

Disclaiming the refinement of the moderns, GOLDSMITH, however, has here produced a fine, strong, diverting play, to which JOHNSON contributed an excellent Prologue, wherein the election sentiments of one of his political pamphlets are very neatly versified.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY DR. JOHNSON.

Spoken by Mr. BENSLEY.

*P*REST by the load of life, the weary mind
Surveys the general toil of human kind;
With cool submission joins the labouring train,
And social sorrow loses half its pain:
Our anxious Bard, without complaint, may share
This bustling season's epidemic care.
Like Cæsar's pilot, dignify'd by fate,
Tost in one common storm with all the great;
Distrest alike, the statesman and the wit,
When one a borough courts, and one the pit.
The busy candidates for power and fame,
Have hopes, and fears, and wishes, just the same;
Disabled both to combat, or to fly,
Must hear all taunts, and hear without reply.
Uncheck'd on both, loud rabbles vent their rage,
As mongrels bay the lion in a cage.
Th' offended burgess hoards his angry tale,
For that blest year when all that vote may rail;
Their schemes of spite the poet's foes dismiss,
Till that glad night, when all that hate may hiss.
This day the powder'd curls and golden coat,
Says swelling Crispin, begg'd a cobbler's vote.

*This night, our wit, the pert apprentice cries,
Lies at my feet, i hiss him, and he dies.
The great, 'tis true, can charm th' electing tribe ;
The bard may supplicate, but cannot bribe:
Yet judg'd by those, whose voices ne'er were sold,
He feels no want of ill-persuading gold ;
But confident of praise, if praise be due,
Trusts without fear, to merit, and to you.*

B ij

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

Mr. HONEYWOOD,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Farren.
CROAKER,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Edwin.
LOFTY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Lewis.
Sir WILLIAM HONEYWOOD,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Hull.
LEONTINE,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Macready.
JARVIS,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Fearon.
Butler,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Blanchard.
Bailiff,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Ryder.
DUBARDIEU,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Wewitzer.
Postboy,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Rock.

Women.

Miss RICHLAND,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Merry.
OLIVIA,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Inchbald.
Mrs. CROAKER,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Webb.
GARNET,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Rock.
Landlady,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Platt.

SCENE, *London.*



THE GOOD NATURED MAN.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Apartment in Young HONEYWOOD's House. Enter Sir WILLIAM HONEYWOOD and JARVIS.

Sir William.

GOOD Jarvis, make no apologies for this honest bluntness. Fidelity, like yours, is the best excuse for every freedom.

Jar. I can't help being blunt, and being very angry too, when I hear you talk of disinheriting so good, so worthy a young gentleman as your nephew, my master. All the world loves him.

Sir Will. Say rather, that he loves all the world; that is his fault.

Jar. I'm sure there is no part of it more dear to him than you are, tho' he has not seen you since he was a child.

Sir Will. What signifies his affection to me, or how can I be proud of a place in a heart where every sharper and coxcomb find an easy entrance?

Jar. I grant you that he's rather too good natur'd; that he's too much every man's man; that he laughs this minute with one, and cries the next with another; but whose instructions may he thank for all this?

Sir Will. Not mine, sure? My letters to him during my employment in Italy, taught him only that philosophy which might prevent, not defend his errors.

Jar. Faith, begging your honour's pardon, I'm sorry they taught him any philosophy at all; it has only serv'd to spoil him. This same philosophy is a good horse in the stable, but an errant jade on a journey. For my own part, whenever I hear him mention the name on't, I'm always sure he's going to play the fool.

Sir Will. Don't let us ascribe his faults to his philosophy, I entreat you. No, Jarvis, his good nature arises rather from his fears of offending the importunate, than his desire of making the deserving happy.

Jar. What it rises from, I don't know. But, to be sure, every body has it, that asks it.

Sir Will. Ay, or that does not ask it. I have been now for some time a concealed spectator of his follies, and find them as boundless as his dissipation.

Jar. And yet, faith, he has some fine name or other for them all. He calls his extravagance, generosity; and his trusting every body, universal benevolence. It was but last week he went security for a fellow whose face he scarce knew, and that he call'd an act

of exalted mu—mu—munificence; ay, that was the name he gave it.

Sir Will. And upon that I proceed, as my last effort, tho' with very little hopes to reclaim him. That very fellow has just absconded, and I have taken up the security. Now, my intention is to involve him in fictitious distress, before he has plunged himself into real calamity. To arrest him for that very debt, to clap an officer upon him, and then let him see which of his friends will come to his relief.

Jar. Well, if I could but any way see him thoroughly vexed, every groan of his would be music to me; yet faith, I believe it impossible. I have tried to fret him myself every morning these three years; but, instead of being angry, he sits as calmly to hear me scold, as he does to his hair-dresser.

Sir Will. We must try him once more, however, and I'll go this instant to put my scheme into execution; and I don't despair of succeeding, as, by your means, I can have frequent opportunities of being about him, without being known. What a pity it is, *Jarvis*, that any man's good will to others should produce so much neglect of himself, as to require correction. Yet, we must touch his weaknesses with a delicate hand. There are some faults so nearly allied to excellence, that we can scarce weed out the vice without eradicating the virtue. [Exit.

Jar. Well, go thy ways, *Sir William Honeywood*. It is not without reason that the world allows thee to be the best of men. But here comes his hopeful de-

phew ; the strange good natur'd, foolish, open heart-ed—And yet, all his faults are such that one loves him still the better for them.

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Hon. Well, Jarvis, what messages from my friends this morning ?

Jar. You have no friends.

Hon. Well ; from my acquaintance then ?

Jar. [*Pulling out bills.*] A few of our usual cards of compliment, that's all. This bill from your tailor ; this from your mercer ; and this from the little broker in Crooked-lane. He says he has been at a great deal of trouble to get back the money you borrowed.

Hon. That I don't know ; but I'm sure we were at a great deal of trouble in getting him to lend it.

Jar. He has lost all patience.

Hon. Then he has lost a very good thing.

Jar. There's that ten guineas you were sending to the poor gentleman and his children in the Fleet. I believe that would stop his mouth, for a while at least.

Hon. Ay, Jarvis, but what will fill their mouths in the mean time ? Must I be cruel because he happens to be importunate ; and, to relieve his avarice, leave them to insupportable distress ?

Jar. 'Sdeath ! sir, the question now is how to relieve yourself. Yourself—hav'nt I reason to be out of my senses, when I see things going at sixes and sevens ?

Hon. Whatever reason you may have for being out of your senses, I hope you'll allow that I'm not quite unreasonable for continuing in mine.

Jar. You're the only man alive in your present situation that could do so—Every thing upon the waste. There's Miss Richland and her fine fortune gone already, and upon the point of being given to your rival.

Hon. I'm no man's rival.

Jar. Your uncle in Italy preparing to disinherit you; your own fortune almost spent; and nothing but pressing creditors, false friends, and a pack of drunken servants that your kindness has made unfit for any other family.

Hon. Then they have the more occasion for being in mine.

Jar. So! What will you have done with him that I caught stealing your plate in the pantry? In the fact; I caught him in the fact.

Hon. In the fact! If so, I really think that we should pay him his wages, and turn him off.

Jar. He shall be turn'd off at Tyburn, the dog; we'll hang him, if it be only to frighten the rest of the family.

Hon. No, Jarvis: it's enough that we have lost what he has stolen, let us not add to it the loss of a fellow creature!

Jar. Very fine; well, here was the footman just now, to complain of the butler; he says he does most work, and ought to have most wages.

Hon. That's but just; tho' perhaps here comes the butler to complain of the footman.

Jar. Ay, it's the way with them all, from the scullion to the privy-counsellor. If they have a bad master they keep quarrelling with him; if they have a good master, they keep quarrelling with one another.

Enter Butler, drunk.

But. Sir, I'll not stay in the family with Jonathan; you must part with him, or part with me, that's the ex—ex—exposition of the matter, sir.

Hon. Full and explicit enough.—But what's his fault, good Philip?

But. Sir, he's given to drinking, sir, and I shall have my morals corrupted, by keeping such company.

Hon. Ha, ha! he has such a diverting way——

Jar. O, quite amusing.

But. I find my wines a going, sir; and liquors don't go without mouths, sir; I hate a drunkard, sir.

Hon. Well, well, Philip, I'll hear you upon that another time, so go to bed now.

Jar. To bed! Let him go to the devil.

But. Begging your honour's pardon, and begging your pardon, master Jarvis, I'll not go to bed, nor to the devil neither. I have enough to do to mind my cellar. I forgot, your honour, Mr. Croaker is below. I came on purpose to tell you.

Hon. Why didn't you shew him up, blockhead?

But. Shew him up, sir? With all my heart, sir. Up or down, all's one to me. [Exit.

Jar. Ay, we have one or other of that family in this house from morning till night. He comes on the old affair, I suppose. The match between his son, that's just returned from Paris, and Miss Richland, the young lady he's guardian to.

Hon. Perhaps so. Mr. Croaker, knowing my friendship for the young lady, has got it into his head, that I can persuade her to what I please.

Jar. Ah! if you lov'd yourself but half as well as she loves you, we should soon see a marriage that would set all things to rights again.

Hon. Love me! Sure, Jarvis, you dream. No, no; her intimacy with me never amounted to more than friendship—mere friendship. That she is the most lovely woman that ever warm'd the human heart with desire, I own. But never let me harbour a thought of making her unhappy, by a connection with one so unworthy her merits as I am. No, Jarvis, it shall be my study to serve her, even in spite of my wishes; and to secure her happiness, tho' it destroys my own.

Jar. Was ever the like! I want patience.

Hon. Besides, Jarvis, tho' I could obtain Miss Richland's consent, do you think I could succeed with her guardian, or Mrs. Croaker his wife; who, tho' both very fine in their way, are yet a little opposite in their dispositions, you know.

Jar. Opposite enough, Heaven knows; the very

reverse of each other; she all laugh and no joke; he always complaining, and never sorrowful; a fretful poor soul that has a new distress for every hour in the four and twenty——

Hon. Hush, hush, he's coming up, he'll hear you.

Jar. One whose voice is a passing bell——

Hon. Well, well, go, do.

Jar. A raven that bodes nothing but mischief; a coffin and cross bones; a bundle of rue; a sprig of deadly night shade; a—[*Honeywood stopping his mouth at last, pushes him off.* . . . [Exit Jarvis.

Hon. I must own my old monitor is not entirely wrong. There is something in my friend Croaker's conversation that quite depresses me. His very mirth is an antidote to all gaiety, and his appearance has a stronger effect on my spirits than an undertaker's shop.——Mr. Croaker, this is such a satisfaction——

Enter CROAKER.

Croak. A pleasant morning to Mr. Honeywood, and many of them.——How is this!——You look most shockingly to day, my dear friend. I hope this weather does not affect your spirits. To be sure, if this weather continues——I say nothing——But God send we be all better this day three months.

Hon. I heartily concur in the wish, tho' I own not in your apprehensions.

Croak. May be not! Indeed what signifies what weather we have in a country going to ruin like

ours? Taxes rising, and trade falling. Money flying out of the kingdom, and Jesuits swarming into it. I know at this time no less than an hundred and twenty-seven Jesuits between Charing-Cross and Temple-Bar.

Hon. The Jesuits will scarce pervert you or me, I should hope.

Croak. May be not. Indeed what signifies whom they pervert in a country that has scarce any religion to lose? I am only afraid for our wives and daughters.

Hon. I have no apprehensions for the ladies, I assure you.

Croak. May be not. Indeed, what signifies whether they be perverted or no? The women in my time were good for something. I have seen a lady drest from top to toe in her own manufactures formerly. But now-a-days the devil a thing of their own manufactures about them, except their faces.

Hon. But, however these faults may be practised abroad, you don't find them at home, either with Mrs. Croaker, Olivia, or Miss Richland.

Croak. The best of them will never be canoniz'd for a saint when she's dead.—By the bye, my dear friend, I don't find this match between Miss Richland and my son much relish'd, either by one side or t'other.

Hon. I thought otherwise.

Croak. Ah, Mr. Honeywood, a little of your fine serious advice to the young lady might go far: I

know she has a very exalted opinion of your understanding.

Hon. But would not that be usurping an authority that more properly belongs to yourself.

Croak. My dear friend, you know but little of my authority at home. People think, indeed, because they see me come out in a morning thus, with a pleasant face, and to make my friends merry, that all's well within. But I have cares that would break a heart of stone. My wife has so encroach'd upon every one of my privileges, that I am now no more than a mere lodger in my own house.

Hon. But a little spirit exerted on your side might perhaps restore your authority.

Croak. No, tho' I had the spirit of a lion! I do rouse sometimes. But what then! Always haggling and haggling. A man is tired of getting the better before his wife is tired of losing the victory.

Hon. It's a melancholy consideration indeed, that our chief comforts often produce our greatest anxieties, and that an increase of our possessions is but an inlet to new disquietudes.

Croak. Ah, my dear friend, these were the very words of poor Dick Doleful to me not a week before he made away with himself.—Indeed, Mr. Honeywood, I never see you but you put me in mind of poor—Dick. Ah, there was merit neglected for you! and so true a friend; we lov'd each other for thirty years, and yet he never asked me to lend him a single farthing.

Hon. Pray what could induce him to commit so rash an action at last?

Croak. I don't know, some people were malicious enough to say it was keeping company with me; because we us'd to meet now and then and open our hearts to each other. To be sure I lov'd to hear him talk, and he lov'd to hear me talk; poor dear Dick. He us'd to say that Croaker rhim'd to joker; and so we us'd to laugh—Poor Dick. [*Going to cry.*]

Hon. His fate affects me.

Croak. Ay, he grew sick of this miserable life, where we do nothing but eat and grow hungry, dress and undress, get up and lie down; while reason, that should watch like a nurse by our side, takes us fast asleep as we do.

Hon. To say truth, if we compare that part of life which is to come, by that which we have past, the prospect is hideous.

Croak. Life at the greatest and best is but a froward child, that must be humour'd and coax'd a little till it falls asleep, and then all the care is over.

Hon. Very true, sir, nothing can exceed the vanity of our existence, but the folly of our pursuits. We wept when we came into the world, and every day tells us why.

Croak. Ah, my dear friend, it is a perfect satisfaction to be miserable with you. My son Leontine sha'n't lose the benefit of such fine conversation. I'll just step home for him. I am willing to shew him so much seriousness in one scarce older than himself—And

what if I bring my last letter to the Gazetteer on the increase and progress of earthquakes? It will amuse us I promise you. I there prove how the late earthquake is coming round to pay us another visit from London to Lisbon, from Lisbon to the Canary Islands, from the Canary Islands to Palmyra, from Palmyra to Constantinople, and so from Constantinople back to London again. [Exit.]

Hon. Poor Croaker! His situation deserves the utmost pity. I shall scarce recover my spirits these three days. Sure to live upon such terms is worse than death itself. And yet, when I consider my own situation, a broken fortune, an hopeless passion, friends in distress; the wish but not the power to serve them—— [Pausing and sighing.]

Enter Butler.

But. More company below, sir; Mrs. Croaker and Miss Richland; shall I shew them up? But they're shewing up themselves? [Exit.]

Enter Mrs. CROAKER and Miss RICHLAND.

Miss Rich. You're always in such spirits.

Mrs. Croak. We have just come, my dear Honeywood, from the auction.—There was the old deaf dowager, as usual, bidding like a fury against herself.—And then so curious in antiques! herself the most genuine piece of antiquity in the whole collection.

Hon. Excuse me, ladies, if some uneasiness from

friendship makes me unfit to share in this good humour : I know you'll pardon me.

Mrs. Croak. I vow he seems as melancholy as if he had taken a dose of my husband this morning. Well, if Richland here can pardon you, I must.

Miss Rich. You would seem to insinuate, madam, that I have particular reasons for being dispos'd to refuse it.

Mrs. Croak. Whatever I insinuate, my dear, don't be so ready to wish an explanation.

Miss Rich. I own I should be sorry, Mr. Honeywood's long friendship and mine should be misunderstood.

Hon. There's no answering for others, madam. But I hope you'll never find me presuming to offer more than the most delicate friendship may readily allow.

Miss Rich. And I shall be prouder of such a tribute from you than the most passionate professions from others.

Hon. My own sentiments, madam : friendship is a disinterested commerce between equals ; love, an abject intercourse between tyrants and slaves.

Miss Rich. And, without a compliment, I know none more disinterested or more capable of friendship than Mr. Honeywood.

Mrs. Croak. And indeed I know nobody that has more friends, at least among the ladies. Miss Fruzz, Miss Odbody, and Miss Winterbottom, praise him in

all companies. As for Miss Biddy Bundle, she's his professed admirer.

Miss Rich. Indeed! an admirer! I did not know, sir, you were such a favourite there. But is she seriously so handsome? Is she the mighty thing talk'd of?

Hon. The town, madam, seldom begins to praise a lady's beauty till she's beginning to lose it.

[Smiling.]

Mrs. Croak. But she's resolved never to lose it, it seems. For as her natural face decays, her skill improves in making the artificial one. Well, nothing diverts me more than one of those fine old dressy things, who thinks to conceal her age, by every where exposing her person; sticking herself up in the front of a side-box; trailing thro' a minuet at Almack's; and then, in the public gardens; looking for all the world like one of the painted ruins of the place.

Hon. Every age has its admirers, ladies. While you, perhaps, are trading among the warmer climates of youth, there ought to be some to carry on an useful commerce in the frozen latitudes beyond fifty.

Miss Rich. But then the mortifications they must suffer before they can be fitted out for traffic. I have seen one of them fret an whole morning at her hair-dresser, when all the fault was her face.

Hon. And ye* I'll engage has carried that face at last to a very good market. This good natur'd town,

madam, has husbands, like spectacles, to fit every age, from fifteen to fourscore.

Mrs. Croak. Well, you're a dear good-natur'd creature. But you know you're engaged with us this morning upon a strolling party. I want to shew Olivia the town, and the things; I believe I shall have business for you for the whole day.

Hon. I am sorry, madam, I have an appointment with Mr. Croaker, which it is impossible to put off.

Mrs. Croak. What! with my husband! Then I'm resolved to take no refusal. Nay, I protest you must. You know I never laugh so much as with you.

Hon. Why, if I must, I must. I'll swear you have put me into such spirits. Well, do you find jest, and I'll find laugh, I promise you. We'll wait for the chariot in the next room. [Exeunt.]

Enter LEONTINE and OLIVIA.

Leont. There they go, thoughtless and happy: my dearest Olivia, what would I give to see you capable of sharing in their amusements, and as cheerful as they are.

Oliv. How, my Leontine, how can I be cheerful, when I have so many terrors to oppress me? The fear of being detected by this family, and the apprehensions of a censuring world when I must be detected——

Leont. The world! my love, what can it say? At worst it can only say that, being compelled by a mercenary guardian to embrace a life you disliked, you

formed a resolution of flying with the man of your choice; that you confided in his honour, and took refuge in my father's house; the only one where yours could remain without censure.

Oliv. But consider, Leontine, your disobedience and my indiscretion: your being sent to France to bring home a sister; and, instead of a sister, bringing home——

Leont. One dearer than a thousand sisters. One that I am convinc'd will be equally dear to the rest of the family, when she comes to be known.

Oliv. And that, I fear, will shortly be.

Leont. Impossible, 'till we ourselves think proper to make the discovery. My sister, you know, has been with her aunt, at Lyons, since she was a child, and you find every creature in the family takes you for her.

Oliv. But mayn't she write, mayn't her aunt write?

Leont. Her aunt scarce ever writes, and all my sister's letters are directed to me.

Oliv. But won't your refusing Miss Richland, for whom you know the old gentleman intends you, create a suspicion?

Leont. There, there's my master-stroke. I have resolved not to refuse her; nay, an hour hence I have consented to go with my father to make her an offer of my heart and fortune.

Oliv. Your heart and fortune!

Leont. Don't be alarm'd, my dearest. Can Olivia think so meanly of my honour, or my love, as to

suppose I could ever hope for happiness from any but her? No, my Olivia, neither the force, nor, permit me to add, the delicacy of my passion, leave any room to suspect me. I only offer Miss Richland an heart I am convinc'd she will refuse; as I am confident that, without knowing it, her affections are fixed upon Mr Honeywood.

Oliv. Mr. Honeywood! You'll excuse my apprehensions; but when your merits come to be put in the balance——

Leont. You view them with too much partiality. However, by making this offer, I shew a seeming compliance with my father's commands; and perhaps, upon her refusal, I may have his consent to choose for myself.

Oliv. Well, I submit. And yet, my Leontine, I own I shall envy her even your pretended addresses. I consider every look, every expression of your esteem, as due only to me. This is toly, perhaps: I allow it; but it is natural to suppose that merit, which has made an impression on ones own heart, may be powerful over that of another.

Leont. Don't, my life's treasure, don't let us make imaginary evils, when you know we have so many real ones to encounter. At worst, you know, if Miss Richland should consent, or my father refuse his pardon, it can but end in a trip to Scotland; and——

Enter CROAKER.

Croak. Where have you been, boy? I have been

seeking you. My friend Honeywood here has been saying such comfortable things. Ah! he's an example indeed. Where is he? I left him here.

Leont. Sir, I believe you may see him, and hear him too in the next room: he's preparing to go out with the ladies.

Croak. Good gracious, can I believe my eyes or my ears! I'm struck dumb with his vivacity, and stunn'd with the loudness of his laugh. Was there ever such a transformation! [*A laugh behind the scenes, Croaker mimics it.*] Ha, ha, ha! there it goes: a plague take their balderdash; yet I could expect nothing less, when my precious wife was of the party. On my conscience, I believe she could spread an horse-laugh thro' the pews of a tabernacle.

Leont. Since you find so many objections to a wife, sir, how can you be so earnest in recommending one to me?

Croak. I have told you, and tell you again, boy, that Miss Richland's fortune must not go out of the family; one may find comfort in the money, whatever one does in the wife.

Leont. But, sir, tho' in obedience to your desire I am ready to marry her, it may be possible she has no inclination to me.

Croak. I'll tell you once for all how it stands. A good part of Miss Richland's large fortune consists in a claim upon government, which my good friend, Mr. Loffy, assures me the treasury will allow. One half of this she is to forfeit, by her father's will, in

case she refuses to marry you. So, if she rejects you, we seize half her fortune; if she accepts you, we seize the whole, and a fine girl into the bargain.

Leont. But, sir, if you will but listen to reason—

Croak. Come, then, produce your reasons. I tell you I'm fix'd, determined, so now produce your reasons. When I'm determined, I always listen to reason, because it can then do no harm.

Leont. You have adged that a mutual choice was the first requisite in matrimonial happiness.

Croak. Well, and you have both of you a mutual choice. She has her choice—to marry you, or lose half her fortune; and you have your choice—to marry her, or pack out of doors without any fortune at all.

Leont. An only son, sir, might expect more indulgence.

Croak. An only father, sir, might expect more obedience; besides, has not your sister here, that never disobliged me in her life, as good a right as you? He's a sad dog. Livy, my dear, and would take all from you. But he sha'n't, I tell you he sha'n't, for you shall have your share.

Oliv. Dear sir, I wish you'd be convinced that I can never be happy in any addition to my fortune which is taken from his.

Croak. Well, well, 'tis a good child, to say no more; but come with me, and we shall see something that will give us a great deal of pleasure, I promise you; old Ruggins, the curry comb-maker, lying in state; I'm told he makes a very handsome

corpse, and becomes his coffin prodigiously. He was an intimate friend of mine, and these are friendly things we ought to do for each other. [Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE I.

CROAKER'S House. Enter Miss RICHLAND and GARNET.

Miss Richland.

OLIVIA not his sister? Olivia not Leontine's sister? You amaze me!

Garnet. No more his sister than I am; I had it all from his own servant; I can get any thing from that quarter.

Miss Rich. But how? Tell me again, Garnet.

Garnet. Why, madam, as I told you before, instead of going to Lyons to bring home his sister, who has been there with her aunt these ten years, he never went further than Paris; there he saw, and fell in love with this young lady; by the bye, of a prodigious family.

Miss Rich. And brought her home to my guardian, as his daughter?

Garnet. Yes, and daughter she will be. If he don't consent to their marriage, they talk of trying what a Scotch parson can do.

Miss Rich. Well, I own they have deceived me— And so demurely as Olivia carried it too!—Would

you believe it, Garnet, I told her all my secrets; and yet the sly cheat concealed all this from me?

Garnet. And, upon my word, madam, I don't much blame her; she was loth to trust one with her secrets that was so very bad at keeping her own.

Miss Rich. But, to add to their deceit, the young gentleman, it seems, pretends to make me serious proposals. My guardian and he are to be here presently to open the affair in form. You know I am to lose half my fortune if I refuse him.

Garnet. Yet, what can you do? For being, as you are, in love with Mr. Honeywood, madam——

Miss Rich. How! idiot; what do you mean? In love with Mr. Honeywood! Is this to provoke me?

Garnet. That is, madam, in friendship with him; I meant nothing more than friendship, as I hope to be married; nothing more.

Miss Rich. Well, no more of this! As to my guardian, and his son, they shall find me prepared to receive them; I'm resolved to accept their proposal with seeming pleasure, to mortify them by compliance, and so throw the refusal at last upon them.

Garnet. Delicious! and that will secure your whole fortune to yourself. Well, who could have thought so innocent a face could cover so much cuteness!

Miss Rich. Why, girl, I only oppose my prudence to their cunning, and practise a lesson they have taught me against themselves.

Garnet. Then you're likely not long to want em-

ployment, for here they come, and in close conference.

Enter CROAKER and LEONTINE.

Leont. Excuse me, sir, if I seem to hesitate upon the point of putting the lady so important a question.

Croak. Lord! good sir, moderate your fears; you're so plaguy shy, that one would think you had changed sexes. I tell you we must have the half or the whole. Come, let me see with what spirit you begin?—Well, why don't you? Eh! What? Well then—I must, it seems—Miss Richland, my dear, I believe you guess at our business; an affair which my son here comes to open, that nearly concerns your happiness.

Miss Rich. Sir, I should be ungrateful not to be pleased with any thing that comes recommended by you.

Croak. How, boy, could you desire a finer opening? Why don't you begin, I say? [*To Leont.*]

Leont. 'Tis true, madam; my father, madam, has some intentions—hem—of explaining an affair—which—himself—can best explain, madam.

Croak. Yes, my dear; it comes entirely from my son; it's all a request of his own, madam. And I will permit him to make the best of it.

Leont. The whole affair is only this, madam; my father has a proposal to make, which he insists none but himself shall deliver.

Croak. My mind misgives me, the fellow will never be brought on [*Aside.*] In short, madam, you see before you one that loves you ; one whose whole happiness is all in you :

Miss Rich. I never had any doubts of your regard, sir ; and I hope you can have none of my duty.

Croak. That's not the thing, my little sweeting ; my love ! No, no, another guess lover than I ; there he stands, madam ; his very looks declare the force of his passion—Call up a look, you dog—But then, had you seen him, as I have, weeping, speaking soliloquies and blank verse, sometimes melancholy, and sometimes absent—

Miss Rich. I fear, sir, he's absent now ; or such a declaration would have come more properly from himself.

Croak. Himself ! madam ; he would die before he could make such a confession ; and if he had not a channel for his passion thro' me, it would ere now have drowned his understanding.

Miss Rich. I must grant, sir, there are attractions in modest diffidence, above the force of words. A silent address, is the genuine eloquence of sincerity.

Croak. Madam, he has forgot to speak any other language ; silence is become his mother tongue.

Miss Rich. And it must be confessed, sir, it speaks very powerfully in his favour. And yet, I shall be thought too forward in making such a confession ; sha'n't I, Mr. Leontine ?

Leont. Confusion ! my reserve will undo me. But,

if modesty attracts her, impudence may disgust her. I'll try. [*Aside.*] Don't imagine from my silence, madam, that I want a due sense of the honour and happiness intended me. My father, madam, tells me, your humble servant is not totally indifferent to you. He admires you; I adore you; and when we come together, upon my soul I believe we shall be the happiest couple in all St. James's.

Miss Rich. If I could flatter myself, you thought as you speak, sir——

Leont. Doubt my sincerity, madam? By your dear self I swear. Ask the brave if they desire glory; ask cowards if they covet safety——

Croak. Well, well, no more questions about it.

Leont. Ask the sick if they long for health, ask misers if they love money, ask——

Croak. Ask a fool if he can talk nonsense! What's come over the boy? What signifies asking, when there's not a soul to give you an answer? If you would ask to the purpose, ask this lady's consent to make you happy,

Miss Rich. Why indeed, sir, his uncommon ardour almost compels me, forces me, to comply. And yet I'm afraid he'll despise a conquest gain'd with too much ease; won't you, Mr. Leontine?

Leont. Confusion! [*Aside.*] O by no means, madam, by no means. And yet, madam, you talked of force. There is nothing I would avoid so much as compulsion in a thing of this kind. No, madam, I will still be generous, and leave you at liberty to refuse.

Croak. But I tell you, sir, the lady is not at liberty. It's a match. You see she says nothing. Silence gives consent.

Leont. But, sir, she talk'd of force. Consider, sir, the cruelty of constraining her inclinations.

Croak. But I say there's no cruelty. Don't you know, blockhead, that girls have always a round-about way of saying yes before company ? So get you both gone together into the next room, and hang him that interrupts the tender explanation. Get you gone, I say ; I'll not hear a word.

Leont. But, sir, I must beg leave to insist—

Croak. Get off, you puppy, or I'll beg leave to insist upon knocking you down. Stupid whelp. But I don't wonder, the boy takes entirely after his mother.

[*Exeunt Miss Rich and Leont.*]

Enter Mrs. CROAKER.

Mrs. Croak. Mr. Croaker, I bring you something, my dear, that I believe will make you smile.

Croak. I'll hold you a guinea of that, my dear.

Mrs. Croak. A letter ; and, as I knew the hand, I ventured to open it.

Croak. And how can you expect your breaking open my letters should give me pleasure ?

Mrs. Croak. Poo, its from your sister at Lyons, and contains good news : read it.

Croak. What a Frenchified cover is here ! That sister of mine has some good qualities, but I could never teach her to fold a letter.

Mrs. Croak. Fold a fiddlestick. Read what it contains.

Croak. [*Reading.*]

‘ Dear Nick,

‘ An English gentleman, of large fortune, has for some time made private, tho’ honourable proposals to your daughter Olivia. They love each other tenderly, and I find she has consented, without letting any of the family know, to crown his addresses. As such good offers don’t come every day, your own good sense, his large fortune, and family considerations, will induce you to forgive her.

‘ Yours ever,

‘ RACHEL CROAKER.’

My daughter Olivia privately contracted to a man of large fortune! This is good news indeed.— My heart never foretold me of this. And yet, how slyly the little baggage has carried it since she came home. Not a word on’t to the old ones for the world. Yet, I thought, I saw something she wanted to conceal.

Mrs. Croak. Well, if they have concealed their amour, they sha’n’t conceal their wedding; that shall be public, I’m resolved.

Croak. I tell thee, woman, the wedding is the most foolish part of the ceremony. I can never get this woman to think of the most serious part of the nuptial engagement.

Mrs. Croak. What, would you have me think of their funeral? But come, tell me, my dear, don’t you

owe more to me than you care to confess? Would you have ever been known to Mr. Lofty, who has undertaken Miss Richland's claim at the Treasury, but for me? who was it first made him an acquaintance at Lady Shabbaroon's rout? Who got him to promise us his interest? Is not he a back-stairs favourite, one that can do what he pleases with those that do what they please? Isn't he an acquaintance that all your groaning and lamentations could never have got us?

Croak. He is a man of importance, I grant you. And yet, what amazes me is, that while he is giving away places to all the world, he can't get one for himself.

Mrs. Croak. That perhaps may be owing to his nicety. Great men are not easily satisfied.

Enter a French Servant.

Serv. An expresse from Monsieur Lofty. He vil be vait upon your honour's instrammant. He be only giving four five instruction, read two tree memorial, call upon von ambassadeur. He vil be vid you in one tree minutes.

Mrs. Croak. You see now, my dear. What an extensive department! Well, friend, let your master know, that we are extremely honoured by this honour. Was there any thing ever in a higher style of breeding! All messages among the great are now done by express.

Croak. To be sure, no man does little things with

more solemnity, or claims more respect than he. But he's in the right on't. In our bad world, respect is given, where respect is claim'd.

Mrs. Croak. Never mind the world, my dear; you were never in a pleasanter place in your life. Let us now think of receiving him with proper respect; [*A loud rapping at the door.*] and there he is by the thundering rap.

Croak. Ay, verily, there he is; as close upon the heels of his own express, as an indorsement upon the back of a bill. Well, I'll leave you to receive him, whilst I go to chide my little Olivia for intending to steal a marriage without mine or her aunt's consent. I must seem to be angry, or she too may begin to despise my authority. [*Exit.*]

Enter LOFTY, speaking to his Servant.

Lofty. And if the Venetian ambassador, or that teasing creature the marquis, should call, I'm not at home. Dam'me, I'll be pack-horse to none of them. My dear madam, I have just snatched a moment— And if the expresses to his grace be ready, let them be sent off; they're of importance. Madam, I ask a thousand pardons.

Mrs. Croak. Sir, this honour—

Lofty. And Dubardieu! if the person calls about the commission, let him know that it is made out. As for Lord Cumbercourt's stale request, it can keep cold: you understand me. Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.

Mrs. Croak. Sir, this honour———

Lofty. And, Dubardieu! If the man comes from the Cornish borough, you must do him; you must do him, I say. Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons. And if the Russian—ambassador calls: but he will scarce call to-day, I believe. And now, madam, I have just got time to express my happiness in having the honour of being permitted to profess myself your most obedient humble servant.

Mrs. Croak. Sir, the happiness and honour are all mine; and yet, I'm only robbing the public while I detain you.

Lofty. Sink the public, madam, when the fair are to be attended. Ah, could all my hours be so charmingly devoted! Sincerely, don't you pity us poor creatures in affairs? Thus it is eternally; solicited for places here, teased for pensions there, and courted every where. I know you pity me. Yes, I see you do.

Mrs. Croak. Excuse me, sir. Toils of empires pleasures are, as Waller says.

Lofty. Waller, Waller; is he of the House?

Mrs. Croak. The modern poet of that name, sir.

Lofty. Oh, a modern! We men of business despise the moderns; and as for the ancients, we have no time to read them. Poetry is a pretty thing enough for our wives and daughters; but not for us. Why now, here I stand that know nothing of books. I say, madam, I know nothing of books; and yet, I believe, upon a land-carriage fishery, a stamp-act,

or a jaghire, I can talk my two hours without feeling the want of them.

Mrs. Croak. The world is no stranger to Mr. Lofty's eminence in every capacity.

Lofty. I vow to Gad, madam, you make me blush. I'm nothing, nothing, nothing in the world; a mere obscure gentleman. To be sure, indeed, one or two of the present ministers are pleased to represent me as a formidable man. I know they are pleased to bespatter me at all their little dirty levees. Yet, upon my soul, I wonder what they see in me to treat me so! Measures, not men, have always been my mark; and I vow by all that's honourable, my resentment has never done the men, as mere men, any manner of harm—That is, as mere men.

Mrs. Croak. What importance, and yet what modesty!

Lofty. Oh, if you talk of modesty, madam! There, I own, I'm accessible to praise: modesty is my foible. It was so, the Duke of Brentford used to say of me. I love Jack Lofty, he used to say: no man a finer knowledge of things; quite a man of information; and when he speaks upon his legs, by the lord he's prodigious, he scoats them; and yet all men have their faults; too much modesty is his, says his Grace.

Mrs. Croak. And yet, I dare say, you don't want assurance when you come to solicit for your friends.

Lofty. O, there indeed I'm in bronze. Apropos, I have just been mentioning Miss Richland's case to a certain personage; we must name no names. When

I ask, I am not to be put off, madam. No, no, I take my friend by the button. A fine girl, sir; great justice in her case—A friend of mine—Borough interest.—Business must be done, Mr. Secretary. I say, Mr. Secretary, her business must be done, sir. That's my way, madam.

Mrs. Croak. Bless me! you said all this to the Secretary of State, did you?

Lofty. I did not say the Secretary, did I? Well, curse it, since you have found me out, I will not deny it. It was to the Secretary.

Mrs. Croak. This was going to the fountain head at once, not applying to the understrappers, as Mr. Honeywood would have had us.

Lofty. Honeywood! he, he! He was indeed a fine solicitor. I suppose you have heard what has just happened to him?

Mrs. Croak. Poor dear man; no accident, I hope.

Lofty. Undone, madam, that's all. His creditors have taken him into custody. A prisoner in his own house.

Mrs. Croak. A prisoner in his own house! How! At this very time! I'm quite unhappy for him.

Lofty. Why, so am I. The man, to be sure, was immensely good natur'd. But then I could never find that he had any thing in him.

Mrs. Croak. His manner, to be sure, was excessive harmless; some, indeed, thought it a little dull. For my part, I always concealed my opinion.

Lofty. It can't be concealed, madam; the man

was dull, dull as the last new comedy! A poor impracticable creature! I tried once or twice to know if he was fit for business; but he had scarce talents to be groom-porter to an orange barrow.

Mrs. Croak. How differently does Miss Richland think of him! for, I believe, with all his faults, she loves him.

Lofty. Loves him! Does she? You should cure her of that by all means. Let me see, what if she were sent to him this instant, in his present doleful situation? My life for it that works her cure. Distress is a perfect antidote to love. Suppose we join her in the next room? Miss Richland is a fine girl, has a fine fortune, and must not be thrown away. Upon my honour, madam, I have a regard for Miss Richland; and, rather than she should be thrown away, I should think it no indignity to marry her myself.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter OLIVIA and LEONTINE.

Leont. And yet, trust me, Olivia, I had every reason to expect Miss Richland's refusal, as I did every thing in my power to deserve it. Her indelicacy surprises me!

Oliv. Sure, Leontine, there's nothing so indelicate in being sensible of your merit. If so, I fear I shall be the most guilty thing alive.

Leont. But you mistake, my dear. The same attention I used to advance my merit with you, I practised to lessen it with her. What more could I do?

Oliv. Let us now rather consider what's to be done. We have both dissembled too long—I have always been asham'd—I am now quite weary of it. Sure I could never have undergone so much for any other but you.

Leont. And you shall find my gratitude equal to your kindest compliance. Tho' our friends should totally forsake us, Olivia, we can draw upon content for the deficiencies of fortune.

Oliv. Then why should we defer our scheme of humble happiness, when it is now in our power? I may be the favourite of your father, it is true; but can it ever be thought, that his present kindness to a suppos'd child, will continue to a known deceiver?

Leont. I have many reasons to believe it will. As his attachments are but few, they are lasting. His own marriage was a private one, as ours may be. Besides, I have sounded him already at a distance, and find all his answers exactly to our wish. Nay, by an expression or two that dropp'd from him, I am induc'd to think he knows of this affair.

Oliv. Indeed! But that would be an happiness too great to be expected.

Leont. However it be, I'm certain you have power over him; and am persuaded, if you inform'd him of our situation, that he would be disposed to pardon it.

Oliv. You had equal expectations, Leontine, from your last scheme with Miss Richland, which you find has succeeded most wretchedly.

Leont. And that's the best reason for trying another.

Oliv. If it must be so, I submit.

Leont. As we could wish, he comes this way. Now, my dearest Olivia, be resolute. I'll just retire within hearing, to come in at a proper time, either to share your danger, or confirm your victory. [Exit,

Enter CROAKER.

Croak. Yes, I must forgive her; and yet not too easily neither. It will be proper to keep up the decorums of resentment a little, if it be only to impress her with an idea of my authority.

Oliv. How I tremble to approach him!—Might I presume, sir—If I interrupt you——

Croak. No, child, where I have an affection it is not a little thing can interrupt me. Affections gets over little things.

Oliv. Sir, you're too kind. I'm sensible how ill I deserve this partiality. Yet Heaven knows there is nothing I would not do to gain it.

Croak. And you have but too well succeeded, you little hussy, you. With those endearing ways of yours, on my conscience, I could be brought to forgive any thing, unless it were a very great offence indeed.

Oliv. But mine is such an offence—When you know my guilt—Yes, you shall know it, tho' I feel the greatest pain in the confession.

Croak. Why then, if it be so very great a pain, you

may spare yourself the trouble, for I know every syllable of the matter before you begin.

Oliv. Indeed! Then I'm undone.

Croak. Ay, miss, you wanted to steal a match, without letting me know it, did you? But I'm not worth being consulted, I suppose, when there's to be a marriage in my own family. No, I'm to have no hand in the disposal of my own children. No, I'm nobody. I'm to be a mere article of family lumber; a piece of crack'd china to be stuck up in a corner.

Oliv. Dear sir, nothing but the dread of your authority could induce us to conceal it from you.

Croak. No, no, my consequence is no more; I'm as little minded as a dead Russian in winter, just stuck up with a pipe in his mouth till there comes a thaw—It goes to my heart to vex her.

Oliv. I was prepar'd, sir, for your anger, and despair'd of pardon, even while I presum'd to ask it. But your severity shall never abate my affection, as my punishment is but justice.

Croak. And yet you should not despair neither, Livy. We ought to hope all for the best.

Oliv. And do you permit me to hope, sir! Can I ever expect to be forgiven! But hope has too long deceiv'd me.

Croak. Why then, child, it sha'n't deceive you now, for I forgive you this very moment. I forgive you all; and now you are indeed my daughter.

Oliv. O transport! this kindness overpowers me.

Croak. I was always against severity to our children. We have been young and giddy ourselves, and we can't expect boys and girls to be old before their time.

Oliv. What generosity! But can you forget the many falsehoods, the dissimulation——

Croak. You did indeed dissemble, you urchin, you; but where's the girl that won't dissemble for an husband! My wife and I had never been married, if we had not dissembled a little before-hand.

Oliv. It shall be my future care never to put such generosity to a second trial. And as for the partner of my offence and folly, from his native honour, and the just sense he has of his duty, I can answer for him that——

Enter LEONTINE.

Leont. Permit him thus to answer for himself. [*Kneeling.*] Thus, sir, let me speak my gratitude for this unmerited forgiveness. Yes, sir, this even exceeds all your former tenderness: I now can boast the most indulgent of fathers. The life he gave, compared to this, was but a trifling blessing.

Croak. And, good sir, who sent for you, with that fine tragedy face, and flourishing manner? I don't know what we have to do with your gratitude upon this occasion.

Leont. How, sir, is it possible to be silent when so much oblig'd! Would you refuse me the pleasure of being grateful! Of adding my thanks to my Olivia's!

Of sharing in the transports that you have thus occasion'd ?

Croak. Lord, sir, we can be happy enough, without your coming in to make up the party. I don't know what's the matter with the boy all this day; he has got into such a rhodomontade manner all the morning!

Leont. But, sir, I that have so large a part in the benefit, is it not my duty to shew my joy? Is the being admitted to your favour so slight an obligation? Is the happiness of marrying my Olivia so small a blessing?

Croak. Marrying Olivia! marrying Olivia! marrying his own sister! Sure the boy is out of his senses. His own sister!

Leont. My sister!

Oliv. Sister! How have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*

Leont. Some curs'd mistake in all this, I find. [*Aside.*

Croak. What does the booby mean, or has he any meaning? Eh, what do you mean, you blockhead, you?

Leont. Mean, sir—why, sir—only when my sister is to be married, that I have the pleasure of marrying her, sir; that is, of giving her away, sir—I have made a point of it.

Croak. O, is that all. Give her away. You have made a point of it. Then you had as good make a point of first giving away yourself, as I'm going to prepare the writings between you and Miss Rich.

land this very minute. What a fuss is here about nothing! Why, what's the matter now? I thought I had made you at least as happy as you could wish.

Oliv. O yes, sir, very happy.

Croak Do you foresee any thing, child? You look as if you did. I think if any thing was to be foreseen, I have as sharp a look-out as another: and yet I foresee nothing. [Exit.

Oliv. What can it mean?

Leont. He knows something, and yet for my life I can't tell what.

Oliv. It can't be the connection between us, I'm pretty certain.

Leont. Whatever it be, my dearest, I'm resolv'd to put it out of fortune's power to repeat our mortification. I'll haste, and prepare for our journey to Scotland this very evening. My friend Honeywood has promis'd me his advice and assistance. I'll go to him, and repose our distresses on his friendly bosom: and I know so much of his honest heart, that if he can't relieve our uneasinesses, he will at least share them. [Exit.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Young HONEYWOOD's House. Bailiff, HONEYWOOD, and Follower.

Bailiff.

LOOK'E, sir, I have arrested as good men as you in my time: no disparagement of you neither. Men that would go forty guineas on a game of cribbage. I challenge the town to shew a man in more genteeler practice than myself.

Hon. Without all question, Mr. ———. I forget your name, sir?

Bail. How can you forget what you never knew? He, he, he!

Hon. May I beg leave to ask your name?

Bail. Yes, you may.

Hon. Then, pray, sir, what is your name, sir?

Bail. That I didn't promise to tell you. He, he, he! A joke breaks no bones, as we say among us that practise the law.

Hon. You may have reason for keeping it a secret, perhaps.

Bail. The law does nothing without reason. I'm asham'd to tell my name to no man, sir. If you can shew cause, as why, upon a special capus, that I should prove my name——But, come, Timothy Twitch is my name. And, now you know my name, what have you to say to that?

Hon. Nothing in the world, good Mr. Twitch, but that I have a favour to ask, that's all.

Bail. Ay, favours are more easily asked than granted, as we say among us that practise the law. I have taken an oath against granting favours. Would you have me perjure myself?

Hon. But my request will come recommended in so strong a manner, as, I believe you'll have no scruple. [*Pulling out his purse.*] The thing is only this: I believe I shall be able to discharge this trifle in two or three days at farthest; but, as I would not have the affair known for the world, I have thoughts of keeping you, and your good friend here, about me till the debt is discharged; for which, I shall be properly grateful.

Bail. Oh! that's another maxum, and altogether within my oath. For certain, if an honest man is to get any thing by a thing, there's no reason why all things should not be done in civility.

Hon. Doubtless, all trades must live, Mr. Twitch; and yours is a necessary one. [*Gives him money.*]

Bail. Oh! your honour; I hope your honour takes nothing amiss as I does, as I does nothing but my duty in so doing. I'm sure no man can say I ever give a gentleman that was a gentleman ill usage. If I saw that a gentleman was a gentleman, I have taken money not to see him for ten weeks together.

Hon. Tenderness is a virtue, Mr. Twitch.

Bail. Ay, sir, it's a perfect treasure. I love to see a gentleman with a tender heart. I don't know, but

I think I have a tender heart myself. If all that I have lost by my heart was put together, it would make a—but no matter for that.

Hon. Don't account it lost, Mr. Twitch. The ingratitude of the world can never deprive us of the conscious happiness of having acted with humanity ourselves.

Bail. Humanity, sir, is a jewel. It's better than gold. I love humanity. People may say, that we, in our way, have no humanity; but I'll shew you my humanity this moment. There's my follower here, little Flanigan, with a wife and four children, a guinea or two would be more to him than twice as much to another. Now, as I can't shew him any humanity myself, I must beg leave you'll do it for me.

Hon. I assure you, Mr. Twitch, yours is a most powerful recommendation. [*Giving money to the Follower.*]

Bail. Sir, you're a gentleman. I see you know what to do with your money. But, to business: we are to be with you here as your friends, I suppose. But set in case company comes.—Little Flanigan here, to be sure, has a good face; a very good face: but then he is a little seedy, as we say among us that practise the law. Not well in clothes. Smoke the pocket-holes.

Hon. Well, that shall be remedied without delay.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, Miss Richland is below.

Hon. How unlucky. Detain her a moment. We

must improve, my good friend, little Mr. Flanigan's appearance first. Here, let Mr. Flanigan have a suit of my clothes—quick—the brown and silver——Do you hear?

Serv. That your honour gave away to the begging gentleman that makes verses, because it was as good as new.

Hon. The white and gold then.

Serv. That, your honour, I made bold to sell, because it was good for nothing.

Hon. Well, the first that comes to hand then. The blue and gold. I believe Mr. Flanigan will look best in blue. [*Exit Flanigan.*

Bail. Rabbit me, but little Flanigan will look well in any thing. Ah, if your honour knew that bit of flesh as well as I do, you'd be perfectly in love with him. There's not a prettier scout in the four counties after a shy-cock than he. Scents like a hound; sticks like a weasel. He was master of the ceremonies to the black queen of Morocco when I took him to follow me.

Re-enter FLANIGAN.

Heh, ecod, I think he looks so well, that I don't care if I have a suit from the same place for myself.

Hon. Well, well, I hear the lady coming. Dear Mr. Twitch, I beg you'll give your friend directions not to speak. As for yourself, I know you will say nothing without being directed.

Bail. Never you fear me, I'll shew the lady that I

have something to say for myself as well as another. One man has one way of talking, and another man has another, that's all the difference between them.

Enter Miss RICHLAND and her Maid.

Miss Rich. You'll be surprised, sir, with this visit. But you know I'm yet to thank you for choosing my little library.

Hon. Thanks, madam, are unnecessary, as it was I that was obliged by your commands. Chairs here. Two of my very good friends, Mr. Twitch and Mr. Flanigan. Pray, gentlemen, sit without ceremony.

Miss Rich. Who can these odd looking men be! I fear it is as I was informed. It must be so. [*Aside.*

Bail. [*After a pause.*] Pretty weather, very pretty weather for the time of the year, madam.

Fol. Very good circuit weather in the country.

Hon. You officers are generally favourites among the ladies. My friends, madam, have been upon very disagreeable duty, I assure you. The fair should, in some measure, recompence the toil of the brave.

Miss Rich. Our officers do indeed deserve every favour. The gentlemen are in the marine service, I presume, sir?

Hon. Why, madam, they do—occasionally serve in the Fleet, madam. A dangerous service.

Miss Rich. I'm told so. And I own, it has often surprised me, that, while we have had so many in-

stances of bravery there, we have had so few of wit at home to praise it.

Hon. I grant, madam, that our poets have not written as our soldiers have fought; but, they have done all they could, and Hawke or Amherst could do no more.

Miss Rich. I'm quite displeas'd when I see a fine subject spoiled by a dull writer.

Hon. We should not be so severe against dull writers, madam. It is ten to one, but the dullest writer exceeds the most rigid French critic who presumes to despise him.

Fol. Damn the French, the *parle vous*, and all that belongs to them.

Miss Rich. Sir!

Hon. Ha, ha, ha! honest Mr. Flanigan. A true English officer, madam; he's not contented with beating the French, but he will scold them too.

Miss Rich. Yet, Mr. Honeywood, this does not convince me but that severity in criticisms is necessary. It was our first adopting the severity of French taste that has brought them in turn to taste us.

Bail. Taste us! By the lord, madam, they devour us. Give Monseers but a taste, and I'll be damn'd but they come in for a belly-full.

Miss Rich. Very extraordinary this.

Fol. But very true. What makes the bread rising, the *parle vous* that devour us. What makes the mutton fivepence a pound, the *parle vous* that eat

it up. What makes the beer three-pence halfpenny a pot——

Hon. Ah! the vulgar rogues, all will be out. Right, gentlemen, very right upon my word, and quite to the purpose. They draw a parallel, madam, between the mental taste and that of our senses. We are injur'd as much by French severity in the one, as by French rapacity in the other. That's their meaning.

Miss Rich. Tho' I don't see the force of the parallel, yet I'll own that we should sometimes pardon books, as we do our friends, that have now and then agreeable absurdities to recommend them.

Bail. That's all my eye. The king only can pardon, as the law says: for set in case——

Hon. I'm quite of your opinion, sir. I see the whole drift of your argument. Yes, certainly, our presuming to pardon any work is arrogating a power that belongs to another. If all have power to condemn, what writer can be free?

Bail. By his *habus corpus*. His *habus corpus* can set him free at any time. For set in case——

Hon. I'm obliged to you, sir, for the hint. If, madam, as my friend observes, our laws are so careful of a gentleman's person, sure we ought to be equally careful of his dearer part, his fame.

Fol. Ay, but if so be a man's nabb'd, you know——

Hon. Mr. Flanigan, if you spoke for ever, you could not improve the last observation. For my own part, I think it conclusive.

Bail. As for the matter of that, mayhap——

Hon. Nay, sir, give me leave in this instance to be positive. For where is the necessity of censuring works without genius, which must shortly sink of themselves : what is it, but aiming our unnecessary blow against a victim already under the hands of justice ?

Bail. Justice ! O, by the elevens, if you talk about justice, I think I am at home there ; for, in a course of law——

Hon. My dear Mr. Twitch, I discern what you'd be at perfectly, and I believe the lady must be sensible of the art with which it is introduced. I suppose you perceive the meaning, madam, of his course of law.

Miss Rich. I protest, sir, I do not. I perceive only that you answer one gentleman before he has finished, and the other before he has well begun.

Bail. Madam, you are a gentlewoman, and I will make the matter out. This here question is about severity and justice, and pardon, and the like of they. Now to explain the thing——

Hon. O ! curse your explanations. [*Aside.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Leontine, sir, below, desires to speak with you upon earnest business.

Hon. That's lucky. [*Aside.*] Dear madam, you'll excuse me, and my good friends here, for a few minutes. There are books, madam, to amuse you,

Come, gentlemen, you know I make no ceremony with such friends. After you, sir. Excuse me. Well, if I must. But, I know your natural politeness.

Bail. Before and behind, you know.

Fol. Ay, ay, before and behind, before and behind.

[*Exeunt Honeywood, Bailiff, and Follower.*

Miss Rich. What can all this mean, Garnet?

Garnet. Mean, madam! why, what should it mean, but what Mr. Lofty sent you here to see? These people he calls officers, are officers sure enough: sheriff's officers; bailiffs, madam.

Miss Rich. Ay, it is certainly so. Well, tho' his perplexities are far from giving me pleasure; yet, I own there's something very ridiculous in them, and a just punishment for his dissimulation.

Garnet. And so they are. But I wonder, madam, that the lawyer you just employed to pay his debts, and set him free, has not done it by this time. He ought at least to have been here before now. But lawyers are always more ready to get a man into troubles, than out of them.

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir Will. For Miss Richland to undertake setting him free, I own, was quite unexpected. It has totally unhinged my schemes to reclaim him. Yet, it gives me pleasure to find, that, among a number of worthless friendships, he has made one acquisition of real value; for there must be some softer passion

on her side that prompts this generosity. Ha! here before me: I'll endeavour to sound her affections. Madam, as I am the person that have had some demands upon the gentleman of this house, I hope you'll excuse me, if, before I enlarged him, I wanted to see yourself.

Miss Rich. The precaution was very unnecessary, sir. I suppose your wants were only such as my agent had power to satisfy.

Sir Will. Partly, madam. But I was also willing you should be fully apprized of the character of the gentleman you intended to serve.

Miss Rich. It must come, sir, with a very ill grace from you. To censure it, after what you have done, would look like malice; and to speak favourably of a character you have oppressed, would be impeaching your own. And sure, his tenderness, his humanity, his universal friendship, may atone for many faults.

Sir Will. That friendship, madam, which is exerted in too wide a sphere, becomes totally useless. Our bounty, like a drop of water, disappears when diffused too widely. They, who pretend most to this universal benevolence, are either deceivers, or dupes: men who desire to cover their private ill-nature by a pretended regard for all; or men who, reasoning themselves into false feelings, are more earnest in pursuit of splendid than of useful virtues.

Miss Rich. I am surprised, sir, to hear one who has probably been a gainer by the folly of others, so severe in his censure of it.

Sir Will. Whatever I may have gained by folly, madam, you see I am willing to prevent your losing by it.

Miss Rich. Your cares for me, sir, are unnecessary. I always suspect those services which are denied where they are wanted, and offered, perhaps, in hopes of a refusal. No, sir, my directions have been given, and I insist upon their being complied with.

Sir Will. Thou amiable woman. I can no longer contain the expressions of my gratitude: my pleasure. You see before you one who has been equally careful of his interest: one, who has for some time been a concealed spectator of his follies, and only punished, in hopes to reclaim them.—His uncle.

Miss Rich. Sir William Honeywood! You amaze me. How shall I conceal my confusion? I fear, sir, you'll think I have been too forward in my services. I confess I——

Sir Will. Don't make any apologies, madam. I only find myself unable to repay the obligation. And yet, I have been trying my interest of late to serve you. Having learnt, madam, that you had some demands upon government, I have, tho' unasked, been your solicitor there.

Miss Rich. Sir, I'm infinitely obliged to your intentions. But my guardian has employed another gentleman who assures him of success.

Sir Will. Who, the important little man that visits here! Trust me, madam, he's quite contemptible among men in power, and utterly unable to serve

you. Mr. Lofty's promises are much better known to people of fashion than his person, I assure you.

Miss Rich. How have we been deceived! As sure as can be, here he comes.

Sir Will. Does he! Remember I'm to continue unknown. My return to England has not as yet been made public. With what impudence he enters!

Enter LOFTY.

Lofty. Let the chariot—let my chariot drive off, I'll visit to his Grace's in a chair. Miss Richland here before me! Punctual, as usual, to the calls of humanity. I'm very sorry, madam, things of this kind should happen, especially to a man I have shewn every where, and carried amongst us as a particular acquaintance.

Miss Rich. I find, sir, you have the art of making the misfortunes of others your own.

Lofty. My dear madam, what can a private man like me do? One man can't do every thing; and then, I do so much in this way every day: let me see, something considerable might be done for him by subscription; it could not fail if I carried the list. I'll undertake to set down a brace of dukes, two dozen lords, and half the lower house, at my own peril.

Sir Will. And, after all, it's more than probable, sir, he might reject the offer of such powerful patronage.

Lofty. Then, madam, what can we do? You know I never make promises. In truth, I once or twice

tried to do something with him in the way of business; but, as I often told his uncle, Sir William Honeywood, the man was utterly impracticable.

Sir Will. His uncle! Then that gentleman, I suppose, is a particular friend of yours.

Lofty. Meaning me, sir?—Yes, madam, as I often said, my dear Sir William, you are sensible I would do any thing, as far as my poor interest goes, to serve your family; but what can be done? there's no procuring first rate places for ninth rate abilities.

Miss Rich. I have heard of Sir William Honeywood; he's abroad in employment; he confided in your judgment, I suppose.

Lofty. Why, yes, madam; I believe Sir William had some reason to confide in my judgment; one little reason, perhaps.

Miss Rich. Pray, sir, what was it?

Lofty. Why, madam—but let it go no further—it was I procured him his place.

Sir Will. Did you, sir?

Lofty. Either you or I, sir.

Miss Rich. This, Mr. Lofty, was very kind indeed.

Lofty. I did love him, to be sure; he had some amusing qualities; no man was fitter to be toast-master to a club, or had a better head.

Miss Rich. A better head?

Lofty. Ay, at a bottle. To be sure, he was as dull as a choice spirit; but, hang it, he was grateful, very grateful; and gratitude hides a multitude of faults.

Sir Will. He might have reason, perhaps. His place is pretty considerable, I'm told.

Lofty. A trifle, a mere trifle, among us men of business. The truth is, he wanted dignity to fill up a greater.

Sir Will. Dignity of person, do you mean, sir? I'm told he's much about my size and figure, sir.

Lofty. Ay, tall enough for a marching regiment; but then he wanted a something—a consequence of form—a kind of a—I believe the lady perceives my meaning.

Miss Rich. O perfectly; you courtiers can do any thing, I see.

Lofty. My dear madam, all this is but a mere exchange; we do greater things for one another every day. Why, as thus, now: let me suppose you the first lord of the treasury, you have an employment in you that I want; I have a place in me that you want; do me here, do you there; interest of both sides, few words, flat, done and done, and it's over.

Sir Will. A thought strikes me. [*Aside.*] Now you mention Sir William Honeywood, madam; and as he seems, sir, an acquaintance of yours; you'll be glad to hear he's arrived from Italy; I had it from a friend who knows him as well as he does me, and you may depend on my information.

Lofty. The devil he is! If I had known that, we should not have been quite so well acquainted. —

[*Aside.*

Sir Will. He is certainly returned; and as this gentleman is a friend of yours, he can be of signal service to us, by introducing me to him; there are some papers relative to your affairs, that require dispatch and his inspection.

Miss Rich. This gentleman, Mr. Lofty, is a person employed in my affairs: I know you'll serve us.

Lofty. My dear madam, I live but to serve you. Sir William shall even wait upon him, if you think proper to command it.

Sir Will. That would be quite unnecessary.

Lofty. Well, we must introduce you then. Call upon me—let me see—ay, in two days.

Sir Will. Now, or the opportunity will be lost for ever.

Lofty. Well, if it must be now, now let it be. But, damn it, that's unfortunate; my Lord Grig's curs'd Pensacola business comes on this very hour, and I'm engaged to attend—another time—

Sir Will. A short letter to Sir William will do.

Lofty. You shall have it; yet, in my opinion, a letter is a very bad way of going to work; face to face, that's my way.

Sir Will. The letter, sir, will do quite as well.

Lofty. Zounds, sir, do you pretend to direct me; direct me in the business of office? Do you know me, sir? Who am I?

Miss Rich. Dear Mr. Lofty, this request is not so much his as mine; if my commands—but you despise my power.

Lofty. Delicate creature! your commands could even controul a debate at midnight; to a power so constitutional, I am all obedience and tranquillity — He shall have a letter; where is my secretary? Du-bardieu? And yet, I protest I don't like this way of doing business. I think if I spoke first to Sir William—But you will have it so. [*Exit with Miss Rich.*]

Sir Will. Ha, ha, ha! This too is one of my nephew's hopeful associates. O vanity, thou constant deceiver, how do all thy efforts to exalt, serve but to sink us. Thy false colourings, like those employed to heighten beauty, only seem to mend that bloom which they contribute to destroy. I'm not displeas'd at this interview; exposing this fellow's impudence to the contempt it deserves, may be of use to my design; at least, if he can reflect, it will be of use to himself.

Enter JARVIS.

Sir Will. How now, Jarvis, where's your mas'er, my nephew?

Jar. At his wit's end, I believe; he's scarce gotten out of one scrape, but he's running his head into another.

Sir Will. How so?

Jar. The house has but just been cleared of the bailiffs, and now he's again engaging tooth and nail in assisting old Croaker's son to patch up a clandestine match with the young lady that passes in the house for his sister.

Sir Will. Ever busy to serve others.

Jar. Ay, any body but himself. The young couple, it seems, are just setting out for Scotland, and he supplies them with money for the journey.

Sir Will. Money: how is he able to supply others, who has scarce any for himself?

Jar. Why, there it is, he has no money, that's true; but then, as he never said no to any request in his life, he has given them a bill drawn by a friend of his upon a merchant in the city, which I am to get chang'd; for you must know that I am to go with them to Scotland myself.

Sir Will. How!

Jar. It seems the young gentleman is obliged to take a different road from his mistress, as he is to call upon an uncle of his that lives out of the way, in order to prepare a place for their reception, when they return; so they have borrowed me from my master, as the properest person to attend the young lady down.

Sir Will. To the land of matrimony! A pleasant journey, Jarvis.

Jar. Ay, but I'm only to have all the fatigues on't.

Sir Will. Well, it may be shorter, and less fatiguing, than you imagine. I know but too much of the young lady's family and connexions, whom I have seen abroad. I have also discover'd that Miss Richland is not indifferent to my thoughtless nephew; and will endeavour, tho' I fear, in vain, to establish

that connexion. But, come, the letter I wait for must be almost finish'd ; I'll let you further into my intentions, in the next room. [Exeunt.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

CROAKER's House. Enter LOFTY.

Lofty.

WELL, sure the devil's in me of late, for running my head into such defiles, as nothing but a genius like my own could draw me from. I was formerly contented to husband out my places and pensions with some degree of frugality ; but, curse it, of late I have given away the whole Court Register in less time than they could print the title page ; yet, hang it, why scruple a lie or two to come at a fine girl, when I every day tell a thousand for nothing. Ha ! Honeywood here before me. Could Miss Richland have set him at liberty ?

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Mr. Honeywood, I'm glad to see you abroad again. I find my concurrence was not necessary in your unfortunate affairs. I had put things in a train to do your business ; but it is not for me to say what I intended doing.

Hon. It was unfortunate indeed, sir. But what adds to my uneasiness is, that while you seem to be

acquainted with my misfortune, I, myself, continue still a stranger to my benefactor.

Lofty. How I not know the friend that served you ?

Hon. Cann't guess at the person.

Lofty. Enquire.

Hon. I have, but all I can learn is, that he chooses to remain concealed, and that all enquiry must be fruitless.

Lofty. Must be fruitless ?

Hon. Absolutely fruitless.

Lofty. Sure of that ?

Hon. Very sure.

Lofty. Then I'll be damn'd if you shall ever know it from me.

Hon. How, sir !

Lofty. I suppose now, Mr. Honeywood, you think my rent-roll very considerable, and that I have vast sums of money to throw away ; I know you do. The world to be sure says such things of me.

Hon. The world, by what I learn, is no stranger to your generosity. But where does this tend ?

Lofty. To nothing ; nothing in the world. The town, to be sure, when it makes such a thing as me the subject of conversation, has asserted, that I never yet patronized a man of merit.

Hon. I have heard instances to the contrary, even from yourself.

Lofty. Yes, Honeywood, and there are instances to the contrary, that you shall never hear from myself.

Hon. Ha, dear sir, permit me to ask you but one question.

Lofty. Sir, ask me no questions: I say, sir, ask me no questions; I'll be damn'd if I answer them.

Hon. I will ask no further. My friend, my benefactor, it is, it must be here, that I am indebted for freedom, for honour. Yes, thou worthiest of men, from the beginning I suspected it, but was afraid to return thanks; which, if undeserved, might seem reproaches.

Lofty. I protest I don't understand all this, Mr. Honeywood. You treat me very cavalierly. I do assure you, sir.—Blood, sir! can't a man be permitted to enjoy the luxury of his own feelings without all this parade?

Hon. Nay, do not attempt to conceal an action that adds to your honour. Your looks, your air, your manner, all confess it.

Lofty. Confess it! sir. Torture itself, sir, shall never bring me to confess it. Mr. Honeywood, I have admitted you upon terms of friendship. Don't let us fall out; make me happy, and let this be buried in oblivion. You know I hate ostentation; you know I do.—Come, come, Honeywood, you know I always lov'd to be a friend, and not a patron. I beg this may make no kind of distance between us. Come, come, you and I must be more familiar—Indeed we must.

Hon. Heavens! Can I ever repay such friendship? Is there any way? Thou best of men, can I ever return the obligation?

Lofty. A bagatelle, a mere bagatelle. But I see your heart is labouring to be grateful. You shall be grateful. It would be cruel to disappoint you.

Hon. How! Teach me the manner. Is there any way?

Lofty. From this moment you're mine. Yes, my friend, you shall know it—I'm in love.

Hon. And can I assist you?

Lofty. Nobody so well.

Hon. In what manner? I'm all impatience.

Lofty. You shall make love for me.

Hon. And to whom shall I speak in your favour?

Lofty. To a lady with whom you have great interest; I assure you. Miss Richland.

Hon. Miss Richland!

Lofty. Yes, Miss Richland. She has struck the blow up to the hilt, in my bosom, by Jupiter.

Hon. Heavens! was ever any thing more unfortunate! It is too much to be endur'd.

Lofty. Unfortunate indeed! And yet I can endure it, till you have opened the affair to her for me. Between ourselves, I think she likes me. I'm not apt to boast, but I think she does.

Hon. Indeed! But do you know the person you apply to?

Lofty. Yes, I know you are her friend and mine: that's enough. To you, therefore, I commit the success of my passion. I'll say no more, let friendship do the rest. I have only to add, that if at any time my little interest can be of service—but, hang it, I'll make

no promises—you know my interest is yours at any time. No apologies, my friend, I'll not be answered, it shall be so. [Exit.

Hon. Open, generous, unsuspecting man! He little thinks that I love her too; and with such an ardent passion!—But then it was ever but a vain and hopeless one; my torment, my persecution! What shall I do! Love, friendship, a hopeless passion, a deserving friend! Love, that has been my tormentor; a friend, that has, perhaps, distress'd himself, to serve me.—It shall be so. Yes, I will discard the fondling hope from my bosom, and exert all my influence in his favour. And yet to see her in the possession of another!—Insupportable. But then to betray a generous, trusting friend!—Worse, worse. Yes, I'm resolv'd. Let me but be the instrument of their happiness, and then quit a country, where I must for ever despair of finding my own. [Exit.

Enter OLIVIA and GARNET, who carries a Milliner's Box.

Oliv. Dear me, I wish this journey were over. No news of Jarvis, yet? I believe the old peevish creature delays purely to vex me.

Garnet. Why, to be sure, madam, I did hear him say, a little snubbing before marriage would teach you to bear it the better afterwards.

Oliv. To be gone a full hour, tho' he had only to get a bill changed in the city! How provoking!

Garnet. I'll lay my life, Mr. Leontine, that had

twice as much to do, is setting off by this time from his inn ; and here you are left behind.

Oliv. Well, let us be prepar'd for his coming, however.—Are you sure you have omitted nothing, Garnet ?

Garnet. Not a stick, madam—all's here.—Yet I wish you could take the white and silver to be married in.—It's the worst luck in the world, in any thing but white.—I knew one Bett Stubbs of our town, that was married in red ; and, as sure as eggs is eggs, the bridegroom and she had a miff before morning.

Oliv. No matter.—I'm all impatience till we are out of the house.

Garnet. Bless me, madam, I had almost forgot the wedding-ring !—The sweet little thing !—I don't think it would go on my little finger. And what if I put in a gentleman's night-cap, in case of necessity, madam ? But here's Jarvis.

Enter JARVIS.

Oliv. O, Jarvis, are you come at last ? We have been ready this half hour. Now let's be going. Let us fly !

Jar. Ay, to Jericho ; for we shall have no going to Scotland this bout, I fancy.

Oliv. How ! What's the matter ?

Jar. Money, money is the matter, madam. We have got no money. What the plague do you send

me of your fool's errand for? My master's bill upon the city is not worth a rush. Here it is; Mrs. Garnet may pin up her hair with it.

Oliv. Undone! How could Honeywood serve us so! What shall we do? Can't we go without it?

Jar. Go to Scotland without money! To Scotland without money! Lord how some people understand geography! We might as well set sail for Patagonia upon a cork-jacket.

Oliv. Such a disappointment! What a base insincere man was your master, to serve us in this manner. Is this his good-nature?

Jar. Nay, don't talk ill of my master, madam. I won't bear to hear any body talk ill of him but myself.

Garnet. Bless us! now I think on't, madam, you need not be under any uneasiness: I saw Mr. Leontine receive forty guineas from his father just before he set out, and he can't yet have left the inn. A short letter will reach him there.

Oliv. Well remember'd, Garnet; I'll write immediately.—How's this!—Bless me, my hand trembles so I can't write a word. Do you write, Garnet; and, upon second thought, it will be better from you.

Garnet. Truly, madam, I write and indite but poorly. I never was kute at my larning. But I'll do what I can to please you. Let me see. All out of my own head, I suppose?

Oliv. Whatever you please?

Garnet. [*Writing.*] Muster Croaker—Twenty guineas, madam?

Oliv. Ay, twenty will do.

Garnet. At the bar of the Talbot till call'd for.—Expedition—Will be blown up—All of a flame—Quick, dispatch—Cupid, the little God of Love—I conclude it, madam, with Cupid; I love to see a love-letter end like poetry.

Oliv. Well, well, what you please, any thing. But how shall we send it? I can trust none of the servants of this family.

Garnet. Odso, madam, Mr. Honeywood's butler is in the next room; he's a dear, sweet man; he'll do any thing for me.

Jar. Hel the dog, he'll certainly commit some blunder. He's drunk and sober ten times a day.

Oliv. No matter. Fly, Garnet; any body we can trust will do. [*Exit Garnet.*] Well, Jarvis, now we can have nothing more to interrupt us. You may take up the things, and carry them on to the inn. Have you no hands, Jarvis?

Jar. Soft and fair, young lady. You, that are going to be married, think things can never be done too fast: but we that are old, and know what we are about, must elope methodically, madam.

Oliv. Well, sure, if my indiscretions were to be done over again——

Jar. My life for it, you would do them ten times over.

Oliv. Why will you talk so? If you knew how unhappy they make me——

Jar. Very unhappy, no doubt: I was once just as unhappy when I was going to be married myself. I'll tell you a story about that——

Oliv. A story! when I'm all impatience to be away. Was there ever such a dilatory creature!——

Jar. Well, madam, if we must march, why we will march; that's all. Tho', odds bobs, we have still forgot one thing we should never travel without—a case of good razors, and a box of shaving-powder. But no matter, I believe we shall be pretty well shaved by the way. [Going.

Enter GARNET.

Garnet. Undone, undone, madam. Ah, Mr. Jarvis, you said right enough. As sure as death Mr. Honey-wood's rogue of a drunken butler dropp'd the letter before he went ten yards from the door. There's old Croaker has just pick'd it up, and is this moment reading it to himself in the hall.

Oliv. Unfortunate! We shall be discover'd.

Garnet. No, madam: don't be uneasy, he can make neither head nor tail of it. To be sure he looks as if he was broke loose from Bedlam about it, but he cann't find what it means for all that. O Lud, he is coming this way all in the horrors!

Oliv. Then let us leave the house this instant, for fear he should ask farther questions. In the mean

time, Garnet, do you write and send off just such another. [Exeunt.]

Enter CROAKER.

Croak. Death and destruction! Are all the horrors of air, fire, and water, to be levelled only at me! Am I only to be singled out for gunpowder-plots, combustibles, and conflagration!—Here it is—An incendiary letter dropp'd at my door. 'To Muster Croaker, these with speed.' Ay, ay, plain enough the direction: all in the genuine incendiary spelling, and as cramp as the devil. 'With speed.' O, confound your speed. But let me read it once more. [*Reads.*] 'Mustar Croakar as sone as yoew see this leve twenty gunnes at the bar of the Taiboot tell caled for or yowe and yower experetion will be al blown up.' Ah, but too plain. Blood and gunpowder in every line of it. Blown up! murderous dog! All blown up!—Heavens! what have I and my poor family done, to be all blown up! [*Reads.*] 'Our pockets are low, and money we must have.' Ay, there's the reason; they'll blow us up because they have got low pockets. [*Reads.*] 'It is but a short time you have to consider; for if this takes wind, the house will quickly be all of a flame.' Inhuman monsters! blow us up, and then burn us. The earthquake at Lisbon was but a bonfire to it. [*Reads.*] 'Make quick dispatch, and so no more at present. But may Cupid, the little God of Love, go with you wherever you go.' The little God of Love! Cupid, the little God of Love go with me!

Go you to the devil, you and your little Cupid together ; I'm so frightened, I scarce know whether I sit, stand, or go. Perhaps this moment I'm treading on lighted matches, blazing brimstone, and barrels of gunpowder. They are preparing to blow me up into the clouds. Murder ! We shall be all burnt in our beds ; we shall be all burnt in our beds.

Enter Miss RICHLAND.

Miss Rich. Lord, sir, what's the matter ?

Croak. Murder's the matter. We shall be all blown up in our beds before morning.

Miss Rich. I hope not, sir.

Croak. What signifies what you hope, madam, when I have a certificate of it here in my hand. Will nothing alarm my family ! Sleeping and eating, sleeping and eating is the only work from morning till night in my house. My insensible crew could sleep, tho' rock'd by an earthquake ; and fry beef steaks at a volcano.

Miss Rich. But, sir, you have alarmed them so often already, we have nothing but earthquakes, famines, plagues, and mad dogs, from year's end to year's end. You remember, sir, it is not above a month ago, you assur'd us of a conspiracy among the bakers, to poison us in our bread ; and so kept the whole family a week upon potatoes.

Croak. And potatoes were too good for them.— But why do I stand talking here with a girl, when I should be facing the enemy without ? Here, John,

Nicodemus, search the house. Look into the cellars, to see if there be any combustibles below ; and above, in the apartments, that no matches be thrown in at the windows. Let all the fires be put out, and let the engine be drawn out in the yard, to play upon the house in case of necessity. [Exit.

Miss Rich. What can he mean by all this ? Yet, why should I enquire, when he alarms us in this manner almost every day ! But Honeywood has desired an interview with me in private. What can he mean ; or, rather, what means this palpitation at his approach ! It is the first time he ever shewed any thing in his conduct that seem'd particular. Sure he cannot mean to——but he's here.

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Hon. I presum'd to solicit this interview, madam, before I left town, to be permitted——

Miss Rich. Indeed ! leaving town, sir ?——

Hon. Yes, madam ; perhaps the kingdom. I have presumed, I say, to desire the favour of this interview——in order to disclose something which our long friendship prompts. And yet my fears——

Miss Rich. His fears ! What are his fears to mine ! [Aside.] We have indeed been long acquainted, sir ; very long. If I remember, our first meeting was at the French Ambassador's.—Do you recollect how you were pleas'd to rally me upon my complexion there ?

Hon. Perfectly, madam ; I presum'd to reprove you for painting : but your warmer blushes soon

convinc'd the company, that the colouring was all from nature.

Miss Rich. And yet you only meant it, in your good natur'd way, to make me pay a compliment to myself. In the same manner you danc'd that night with the most awkward woman in company, because you saw nobody else would take her out.

Hon. Yes; and was rewarded the next night, by dancing with the finest woman in company, whom every body wish'd to take out.

Miss Rich. Well, sir, if you thought so then, I fear your judgment has since corrected the errors of a first impression. We generally shew to most advantage at first. Our sex are like poor tradesmen, that put all their best goods to be seen at the windows.

Hon. The first impression, madam, did indeed deceive me. I expected to find a woman with all the faults of conscious flattered beauty. I expected to find her vain and insolent. But every day has since taught me that it is possible to possess sense without pride, and beauty without affectation.

Miss Rich. This, sir, is a style very unusual with Mr. Honeywood; and I should be glad to know why he thus attempts to encrease that vanity, which his own lessons hath taught me to despise.

Hon. I ask pardon, madam. Yet, from our long friendship, I presumed I might have some right to offer, without offence, what you may refuse without offending.

Miss Rich. Sir! I beg you'd reflect; tho', I fear, I shall scarce have any power to refuse a request of yours; yet, you may be precipitate: consider, sir.

Hon. I own my rashness; but, as I plead the cause of friendship, of one who loves—Don't be alarmed, madam—Who loves you with the most ardent passion; whose whole happiness is placed in you—

Miss Rich. I fear, sir, I shall never find whom you mean, by this description of him.

Hon. Ah, madam, it but too plainly points him out; tho' he should be too humble himself to urge his pretensions, or you too modest to understand them.

Miss Rich. Well; it would be affectation any longer to pretend ignorance; and, I will own, sir, I have long been prejudiced in his favour. It was but natural to wish to make his heart mine, as he seem'd himself ignorant of its value.

Hon. I see she always lov'd him [*Aside.*] I find, madam, you're already sensible of his worth, his passion. How happy is my friend, to be the favourite of one with such sense to distinguish merit, and such beauty to reward it.

Miss Rich. Your friend! sir. What friend?

Hon. My best friend—My friend Mr. Lofty, madam.

Miss Rich. He, sir!

Hon. Yes, he, madam. He is, indeed, what your warmest wishes might have form'd him. And to his

other qualities, he adds that of the most passionate regard for you.

Miss Rich. Amazement !—No more of this, I beg you, sir.

Hon. I see your confusion, madam, and know how to interpret it. And since I so plainly read the language of your heart, shall I make my friend happy, by communicating your sentiments ?

Miss Rich. By no means.

Hon. Excuse me ; I must ; I know you desire it.

Miss Rich. Mr. Honeywood, let me tell you, that you wrong my sentiments and yourself. When I first applied to your friendship, I expected advice and assistance ; but now, sir, I see that it is vain to expect happiness from him, who has been so bad an œconomist of his own ; and that I must disclaim his friendship, who ceases to be a friend to himself. [*Exit.*]

Hon. How is this ! she has confessed she lov'd him, and yet she seemed to part in displeasure. Can I have done any thing to reproach myself with ? No ; I believe not ; yet, after all, these things should not be done by a third person ; I should have spared her confusion. My friendship carried me a little too far.

Enter CROAKER, with the letter in his hand, and Mrs.

CROAKER.

Mrs. Croak. Hā, ha, ha ! And so, my dear, it's your supreme wish that I should be quite wretched upon this occasion ? Ha, ha.

Croak. [*Mimicking.*] Ha, ha, ha! and so, my dear, it's your supreme pleasure to give me no better consolation?

Mrs. Croak. Positively, my dear, what is this incendiary stuff and trumpery to me? Our house may travel thro' the air like the house of Loretto, for aught I care, if I'm to be miserable in it.

Croak. Would to Heaven it were converted into an house of correction for your benefit. Have we not every thing to alarm us? Perhaps, this very moment the tragedy is beginning.

Mrs. Croak. Then let us reserve our distress till the rising of the curtain, or give them the money they want, and have done with them.

Croak. Give them my money!—And pray, what right have they to my money?

Mrs. Croak. And pray, what right then have you to my good humour?

Croak. And so your good humour advises me to part with my money? Why, then, to tell your good humour a piece of my mind, I'd sooner part with my wife. Here's Mr. Honeywood, see what he'll say to it. My dear Honeywood, look at this incendiary letter dropped at my door. It will freeze you with terror; and yet lovey here can read it—can read it, and laugh.

Mrs. Croak. Yes, and so will Mr. Honeywood.

Croak. If he does, I'll suffer to be hanged the next minute in the rogue's place, that's all.

Mrs. Croak. Speak, Mr. Honeywood; is there any thing more foolish than my husband's fright upon this occasion?

Hon. It would not become me to decide, madam; but doubtless, the greatness of his terrors now, will but invite them to renew their villany another time.

Mrs. Croak. I told you, he'd be of my opinion.

Croak. How, sir! do you maintain that I should lie down under such an injury, and shew, neither by my tears or complaints, that I have something of the spirit of a man in me?

Hon. Pardon me, sir. You ought to make the loudest complaints, if you desire redress. The surer way to have redress, is to be earnest in the pursuit of it.

Croak. Ay, whose opinion is he of now?

Mrs. Croak. But don't you think that laughing off our fears is the best way.

Hon. What is the best, madam, few can say; but I'll maintain it to be a very wise way.

Croak. But we are talking of the best.—Surely the best way is to face the enemy in the field, and not wait till he plunders us in our very bed-chamber.

Hon. Why, sir, as to the best, that—that's a very wise way too.

Mrs. Croak. But can any thing be more absurd, than to double our distresses by our apprehensions, and put it in the power of every low fellow, that

can scrawl ten words of wretched spelling, to torment us ?

Hon. Without doubt, nothing more absurd.

Croak. How ! would it not be more absurd to despise the rattle till we are bit by the snake ?

Hon. Without doubt, perfectly absurd.

Croak. Then you are of my opinion ?

Hon. Entirely.

Mrs. Croak. And you reject mine ?

Hon. Heavens forbid, madam. No, sure no reasoning can be more just than yours. We ought certainly to despise malice if we cannot oppose it, and not make the incendiary's pen as fatal to our repose as the highwayman's pistol.

Mrs. Croak. O ! then you think I'm quite right ?

Hon. Perfectly right.

Croak. A plague of plagues, we can't be both right.—I ought to be sorry, or I ought to be glad.—My hat must be on my head, or my hat must be off.

Mrs. Croak. Certainly, in two opposite opinions, if one be perfectly reasonable, the other can't be perfectly right.

Hon. And why may not both be right, madam : Mr. Croaker in earnestly seeking redress, and you in waiting the event with good humour ? Pray let me see the letter again. I have it. This letter requires twenty guineas to be left at the bar of the Talbot inn. If it be indeed an incendiary letter, what if you and I, sir,

go there; and, when the writer comes to be paid his expected booty, seize him.

Croak. My dear friend, it's the very thing; the very thing.—While I walk by the door, you shall plant yourself in ambush near the bar; burst out upon the miscreant like a masqued battery; extort a confession at once, and so hang him up by surprise.

Hon. Yes; but I would not choose to exercise too much severity. It is my maxim, sir, that crimes generally punish themselves.

Croak. Well, but we may upbraid him a little, I suppose? [Ironically.]

Hon. Ay, but not punish him too rigidly.

Croak. Well, well, leave that to my own benevolence.

Hon. Well, I do: but remember that universal benevolence is the first law of nature.

[*Excunt Honeywood and Mrs. Croaker.*]

Croak. Yes; and my universal benevolence will hang the dog, if he had as many necks as a hydra. [Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

An Inn. Enter OLIVIA and JARVIS.

Olivia.

WELL, we have got safe to the inn, however. Now, if the post-chaise were ready—

Jar. The horses are just finishing their oats; and, as they are not going to be married, they choose to take their own time.

Oliv. You are for ever giving wrong motives to my impatience.

Jar. Be as impatient as you will, the horses must take their own time; besides, you don't consider, we have got no answer from our fellow-traveller yet. If we hear nothing from Mr. Leontine, we have only one way left us.

Oliv. What way?

Jar. The way home again.

Oliv. Not so. I have made a resolution to go, and nothing shall induce me to break it.

Jar. Ay, resolutions are well kept when they jump with inclination. However, I'll go hasten things without. And I'll call too at the bar to see if any thing should be left for us there. Don't be in such a plaguy hurry, madam, and we shall go the faster, I promise you. [Exit Jarvis.]

Enter Landlady.

Landl. What! Solomon; why don't you move? Pipes and tobacco for the Lamb there.—Will on body answer? To the Dolphin; quick. The Angel has been outrageous this half hour. Did your ladyship call, madam?

Oliv. No, madam.

Landl. I find, as you're for Scotland, madam—But that's no business of mine; married, or not married,

I ask no questions. To be sure, we had a sweet little couple set off from this two days ago for the same place. The gentleman, for a taylor, was, to be sure, as fine a spoken taylor as ever blew froth from a full pot. And the young lady so bashful, it was near half an hour before we could get her to finish a pint of raspberry between us.

Oliv. But this gentleman and I are not going to be married, I assure you.

Landl. May be not. That's no business of mine ; for certain, Scotch marriages seldom turn out. There was, of my own knowledge, Miss Macfag, that married her father's footman.—Alack-a-day, she and her husband soon parted, and now keep separate cellars in Hedge-lane.

Oliv. A very pretty picture of what lies before me.
[*Aside.*]

Enter LEONTINE.

Leont. My dear Olivia, my anxiety till you were out of danger was too great to be resisted. I could not help coming to see you set out, tho' it exposes us to a discovery.

Oliv. May every thing you do prove as fortunate. Indeed, Leontine, we have been most cruelly disappointed. Mr. Honeywood's bill upon the city has, it seems, been protested, and we have been utterly at a loss how to proceed.

Leont. How ! An offer of his own too. Sure, he could not mean to deceive us.

Oliv. Depend upon his sincerity; he only mistook the desire for the power of serving us. But let us think no more of it. I believe the post-chaise is ready by this.

Landl. Not quite yet: and, begging your ladyship's pardon, I don't think your ladyship quite ready for the post-chaise. The north road is a cold place, madam. I have a drop in the house of as pretty raspberry as ever was tipt over tongue. Just a thimble-full to keep the wind off your stomach. To be sure, the last couple we had here, they said it was a perfect nosegay. Ecod, I sent them both away as good natur'd—Up went the blinds, round went the wheels, and drive away post-boy, was the word.

Enter CROAKER.

Croak. Well, while my friend Honeywood is upon the post of danger at the bar, it must be my business to have an eye about me here. I think I know an incendiary's lock; for, wherever the devil makes a purchase, he never fails to set his mark. Ha! who have we here? My son and daughter! What can they be doing here!

Landl. I tell you, madam, it will do you good; I think I know by this time what's good for the north road. It's a raw night, madam.—Sir——

Leont. Not a drop more, good madam. I should now take it as a greater favour if you hasten the horses, for I am afraid to be seen myself.

Landl. That shall be done. Wha, Solomon I are you all dead there? Wha, Solomon, I say.

[*Exit bawling.*]

Oliv. Well, I dread lest an expedition begun in fear should end in repentance.—Every moment we stay increases our danger, and adds to my apprehensions.

Leont. There's no danger, trust me, my dear; there can be none: if Honeywood has acted with honour, and kept my father, as he promised, in employment till we are out of danger, nothing can interrupt our journey.

Oliv. I have no doubt of Mr. Honeywood's sincerity, and even his desires to serve us. My fears are from your father's suspicions. A mind so disposed to be alarmed without a cause, will be but too ready when there's a reason.

Leont. Why, let him, when we are out of his power. But, believe me, Olivia, you have no great reason to dread his resentment. His repining temper, as it does no manner of injury to himself, so will it never do harm to others. He only frets to keep himself employed, and scolds for his private amusement.

Oliv. I don't know that; but I'm sure, on some occasions, it makes him look most shockingly.

Croak. [*Discovering himself.*] How does he look now?—How does he look now?

Oliv. Ah!

Leont. Undone.

Croak. How do I look now? Sir, I am your very humble servant. Madam, I am yours. What, you are going off, are you? Then, first, if you please, take a word or two from me with you before you go. Tell me first where you are going? and when you have told me that, perhaps, I shall know as little as I did before.

Leont. If that be so, our answer might but increase your displeasure, without adding to your information.

Croak. I want no information from you, puppy: and you too, good madam, what answer have you got? Eh, [*A cry without, stop him.*] I think I heard a noise. My friend, Honeywood, without—has he seized the incendiary? Ah, no, for now I hear no more on't.

Leont. Honeywood without! Then, sir, it was Mr. Honeywood that directed you hither.

Croak. No, sir, it was Mr. Honeywood conducted me hither.

Leont. Is it possible?

Croak. Possible! Why, he's in the house now, sir. More anxious about me than my own son, sir.

Leont. Then, sir, he's a villain.

Croak. How, sirrah! a villain, because he takes most care of your father? I'll not bear it. I tell you I'll not bear it. Honeywood is a friend to the family, and I'll have him treated as such.

Leont. I shall study to repay his friendship as it deserves.

Croak. Ah, rogue, if you knew how earnestly he

entered into my griefs, and pointed out the means to detect them, you would love him as I do. [*A cry without, stop him.*] Fire and fury! they have seized the incendiary: they have the villain, the incendiary in view. Stop him, stop an incendiary, a murderer; stop him. [*Exit.*]

Oliv. Oh, my terrors! What can this new tumult mean?

Leont. Some new mark, I suppose, of Mr. Honeywood's sincerity. But we shall have satisfaction: he shall give me instant satisfaction.

Oliv. It must not be, my Leontine, if you value my esteem, or my happiness. Whatever be our fate, let us not add guilt to our misfortunes—Consider that our innocence will shortly be all we have left us. You must forgive him.

Leont. Forgive him! Has he not in every instance betrayed us? Forced me to borrow money from him, which appears a mere trick to delay us: promised to keep my father engaged till we were out of danger, and here brought him to the very scent of our escape?

Oliv. Don't be precipitate. We may yet be mistaken.

Enter Post-boy, dragging in JARVIS: HONEYWOOD entering soon after.

Post. Ay, master, we have him fast enough. Here is the incendiary dog. I'm entitled to the reward; I'll

take my oath I saw him ask for the money at the bar, and then run for it.

Hon. Come, bring him along. Let us see him. Let him learn to blush for his crimes [*Discovering his mistake.*] Death! what's here! Jarvis, Leontine, Olivia! What can all this mean?

Jar. Why, I'll tell you what it means: that I was an old fool, and that you are my master—that's all.

Hon. Confusion!

Leont. Yes, sir, I find you have kept your word with me. After such baseness, I wonder how you can venture to see the man you have injured.

Hon. My dear Leontine, by my life, my honour—

Leont. Peace, peace, for shame; and do not continue to aggravate baseness by hypocrisy. I know you, sir, I know you.

Hon. Why, won't you hear me! By all that's just, I knew not—

Leont. Hear you, sir! to what purpose? I now see through all your low arts; your ever complying with every opinion; your never refusing any request; your friendship as common as a prostitute's favours, and as fallacious; all these, sir, have long been contemptible to the world, and are now perfectly so to me.

Hon. Ha! contemptible to the world! That reaches me. [*Aside.*]

Leont. All the seeming sincerity of your professions I now find were only allurements to betray; and all your seeming regret for their consequences only cal-

culated to cover the cowardice of your heart. Draw, villain!

Enter CROAKER, out of Breath.

Croak. Where is the villain? Where is the incendiary? [*Seizing the Post-boy.*] Hold him fast, the dog; he has the gallows in his face. Come, you dog, confess; confess all, and hang yourself.

Post. Zounds! Master, what do you throttle me for?

Croak. [*Beating him.*] Dog, do you resist; do you resist?

Post. Zounds! Master, I'm not he; there's the man that we thought was the rogue, and turns out to be one of the company.

Croak. How!

Hon. Mr. Croaker, we have all been under a strange mistake here; I find there is nobody guilty; it was all an error; entirely an error of our own.

Croak. And I say, sir, that you're in an error; for there's guilt and double guilt, a plot, a damn'd jesuitical pestilential plot, and I must have proof of it.

Hon. Do but hear me.

Croak. What, you intend to bring 'em off, I suppose; I'll hear nothing.

Hon. Madam, you seem at least calm enough to hear reason.

Oliv. Excuse me.

Hon. Good Jarvis, let me then explain it to you.

Jar. What signifies explanations, when the thing is done?

Hon. Will nobody hear me? Was there ever such a set, so blinded by passion and prejudice! [*To the*

Post-boy.] My good friend, I believe you'll be surprised when I assure you——

Post. Sure me nothing—I'm sure of nothing but a good beating.

Croak. Come then, you, madam, if you ever hope for any favour or forgiveness, tell me sincerely all you know of this affair.

Oliv. Unhappily, sir, I'm but too much the cause of your suspicions: you see before you, sir, one that with false pretences has stept into your family to betray it: not your daughter——

Croak. Not my daughter!

Oliv. Not your daughter—but a mean deceiver—who—support me, I cannot——

Hon. Help, she's going, give her air.

Croak. Ay, ay, take the young woman to the air; I would not hurt a hair of her head, whose ever daughter she may be—not so bad as that neither.

[*Exeunt all but Croaker.*]

Croak. Yes, yes, all's out; I now see the whole affair: my son is either married, or going to be so, to this lady, whom he imposed upon me as his sister. Ay, certainly so; and yet I don't find it afflicts me so much as one might think. There's the advantage of fretting away our misfortunes beforehand, we never feel them when they come.

Enter Miss RICHLAND and Sir WILLIAM.

Sir Will. But how do you know, madam, that my nephew intends setting off from this place?

Miss Rich. My maid assured me he was come to this inn, and my own knowledge of his intending to leave the kingdom, suggested the rest. But what do I see, my guardian here before us! Who, my dear sir, could have expected meeting you here; to what accident do we owe this pleasure?

Croak. To a fool, I believe.

Miss Rich. But to what purpose did you come?

Croak. To play the fool.

Miss Rich. But with whom?

Croak. With greater fools than myself.

Miss Rich. Explain.

Croak. Why, Mr. Honeywood brought me here, to do nothing now I am here; and my son is going to be married to I don't know who that is here; so now you are as wise as I am.

Miss Rich. Married! to whom, sir?

Croak. To Olivia; my daughter, as I took her to be; but who the devil she is, or whose daughter she is, I know no more than the man in the moon.

Sir Will. Then, sir, I can inform you; and, tho' a stranger, yet you shall find me a friend to your family: it will be enough at present to assure you, that both in point of birth and fortune, the young lady is at least your son's equal. Being left by her father, Sir James Woodville—

Croak. Sir James Woodville! What, of the West?

Sir Will. Being left by him, I say, to the care of a mercenary wretch, whose only aim was to secure her fortune to himself, she was sent into France, under pre-

tence of education; and there every art was tried to fix her for life in a convent, contrary to her inclinations. Of this I was informed upon my arrival at Paris; and, as I had been once her father's friend, I did all in my power to frustrate her guardian's base intentions. I had even meditated to rescue her from his authority, when your son stepped in with more pleasing violence, gave her liberty, and you a daughter.

Croak. But I intend to have a daughter of my own choosing, sir. A young lady, sir, whose fortune, by my interest with those that have interest, will be double what my son has a right to expect. Do you know Mr. Lofty, sir?

Sir Will. Yes, sir; and know that you are deceived in him. But step this way, and I'll convince you.

[*Croaker and Sir William seem to confer.*]

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Hon. Obstinate man, still to persist in his outrage! Insulted by him, despis'd by all, I now begin to grow contemptible, even to myself. How have I sunk by too great an assiduity to please! How have I overtax'd all my abilities, lest the approbation of a single fool should escape me! But all is now over; I have survived my reputation, my fortune, my friendships; and nothing remains henceforward for me but solitude and repentance.

Miss Rich. Is it true, Mr. Honeywood, that you

are setting off, without taking leave of your friends? The report is, that you are quitting England. Can it be?

Hon. Yes, madam; and tho' I am so unhappy as to have fallen under your displeasure, yet, thank Heaven, I leave you to happiness; to one who loves you, and deserves your love; to one who has power to procure you affluence, and generosity to improve your enjoyment of it.

Miss Rich. And are you sure, sir, that the gentleman you mean is what you describe him?

Hon. I have the best assurances of it, his serving me. He does indeed deserve the highest happiness, and that is in your power to confer. As for me, weak and wavering as I have been, obliged by all, and incapable of serving any, what happiness can I find but in solitude? What hope but in being forgotten?

Miss Rich. A thousand! to live among friends that esteem you, whose happiness it will be to be permitted to oblige you.

Hon. No, madam; my resolution is fix'd. Inferiority among strangers is easy; but among those that once were equals, insupportable. Nay, to shew you how far my resolution can go, I can now speak with calmness of my former follies, my vanity, my dissipation, my weakness. I will even confess, that, among the number of my other presumptions, I had the insolence to think of loving you. Yes, madam, while I was pleading the passion of another, my hear-

was tortured with its own. But it is over, it was unworthy our friendship, and let it be forgotten.

Miss Rich. You amaze me!

Hon. But you'll forgive it, I know you will; since the confession should not have come from me even now, but to convince you of the sincerity of my intention of—never mentioning it more. [*Going.*]

Miss Rich. Stay, sir, one moment—Ha! he here—

Enter LOFTY.

Lofty. Is the coast clear? None but friends. I have followed you here with a trifling piece of intelligence: but it goes no farther, things are not yet ripe for a discovery. I have spirits working at a certain board; your affair at the Treasury will be done in less than—a thousand years. Mum!

Miss Rich. Sooner, sir, I should hope.

Lofty. Why, yes, I believe it may, if it falls into proper hands, that know where to push and where to parry; that know how the land lies—eh, Honeywood?

Miss Rich. It is fallen into yours.

Lofty. Well, to keep you no longer in suspense, your thing is done. It is done, I say—that's all. I have just had assurances from Lord Neverout, that the claim has been examined, and found admissible. *Quietus* is the word, madam.

Hon. But how! his lordship has been at Newmarket these ten days.

Lofty. Indeed! Then Sir Gilbert Goose must have been most damnably mistaken. I had it of him.

Miss Rich. He! why Sir Gilbert and his family have been in the country this month.

Lofty. This month! It must certainly be so——Sir Gilbert's letter did come to me from Newmarket, so that he must have met his lordship there; and so it came about.——I have his letter about me, I'll read it to you.—[*Taking out a large bundle.*]—That's from Paoli of Corsica, that from the Marquis of Squilachi.——Have you a mind to see a letter from Count Poniatowski, now king of Poland——Honest Pon——[*Searching.*]——O, sir, what are you here too?—I'll tell you what, honest friend, if you have not absolutely delivered my letter to Sir William Honeywood, you may return it. The thing will do without him.

Sir Will. Sir, I have delivered it, and must inform you, it was received with the most mortifying contempt.

Croak. Contempt! Mr. Lofty, what can that mean?

Lofty. Let him go on, let him go on, I say. You'll find it come to something presently.

Sir Will. Yes, Sir, I believe you'll be amazed, if, after waiting some time in the anti-chamber, after being surveyed with insolent curiosity by the passing servants, I was at last assured, that Sir William Honeywood knew no such person, and I must certainly have been imposed upon.

Lofty. Good; let me die, very good. Ha, ha, ha!

Croak. Now, for my life, I can't find out half the goodness of it.

Lofly. You can't. Ha, ha!

Croak. No, for the soul of me; I think it was as confounded a bad answer, as ever was sent from one private gentleman to another.

Lofly. And so you can't find out the force of the message? Why, I was in the house at that very time. Ha, ha! It was I that sent that very answer to my own letter. Ha, ha!

Croak. Indeed! How! Why!

Lofly. In one word, things between Sir William and me must be behind the curtain. A party has many eyes. He sides with Lord Buzzard, I side with Sir Gilbert Goose. So that unriddles the mystery.

Croak. And so it does indeed, and all my suspicions are over.

Lofly. Your suspicions!—What then you have been suspecting, you have been suspecting, have you? Mr. Croaker, you and I were friends, we are friends no longer. Never talk to me. It's over; I say, it's over.

Croak. As I hope for your favour, I did not mean to offend. It escaped me. Don't be discomposed.

Lofly. Zounds, sir, but I am discomposed, and will be discomposed. To be treated thus!—Who am I!—Was it for this I have been dreaded both by inns and outs!—Have I been libelled in the Gazetteer, and praised in St. James's; have I been chaired at Wildman's, and a speaker at Merchant Taylor's Hall;

have I had my hand to addresses, and my head in the print-shops, and talk to me of suspects!

Croak. My dear sir, be pacified. What can you have but asking pardon?

Lofty. Sir, I will not be pacified—Suspects! Who am I! To be used thus, have I paid court to men in favour to serve my friends, the lords of the Treasury, Sir William Honeywood, and the rest of the gang, and talk to me of suspects!—Who am I, I say, who am I!

Sir Will. Since, sir, you're so pressing for an answer, I'll tell you who you are. A gentleman as well acquainted with politics, as with men in power: as well acquainted with persons of fashion, as with modesty; with lords of the Treasury, as with truth; and with all, as you are with Sir William Honeywood. I am Sir William Honeywood.

[*Discovering his ensigns of the Bath.*]

Croak. Sir William Honeywood!

Hon. Astonishment! my uncle! [Aside.]

Lofty. So then my confounded genius has been all this time only leading me up to the garret, in order to fling me out of the window.

Croak. What, Mr. Importance, and are these your works? Suspect you! You, who have been dreaded by the ins and outs: you, who have had your hand to addresses, and your head stuck up in print-shops. If you were served right, you should have your head stuck up in the pillory.

Lofty. Ay, stick it where you will, for, by the

ord, it cuts but a very poor figure where it sticks at present.

Sir Will. Well, Mr. Croaker, I hope you now see how incapable this gentleman is of serving you, and how little Miss Richland has to expect from his influence.

Croak. Ay, sir, too well I see it, and I can't but say I have had some boding of it these ten days. So I'm resolved, since my son has placed his affections on a lady of moderate fortune, to be satisfied with his choice, and not run the hazard of another Mr. Lofty, in helping him to a better.

Sir Will. I approve your resolution, and here they come, to receive a confirmation of your pardon and consent.

Enter Mrs. CROAKER, JARVIS, LEONTINE, and OLIVIA.

Mrs. Croak. Where's my husband!—Come, come, lovey, you must forgive them. Jarvis here, has been to tell me the whole affair; and, I say, you must forgive them. Our own was a stolen match, you know, my dear; and we never had any reason to repent of it.

Croak. I wish we could both say so: however, this gentleman, Sir William Honeywood, has been beforehand with you, in obtaining their pardon. So, if the two poor fools have a mind to marry, I think, we can tack them together without crossing the tweed for it.

[Joining their hands.]

Leont. How blest, and unexpected! What, what

can we say to such goodness! But our future obedience shall be the best reply. And, as for this gentleman, to whom we owe——

Sir Will. Excuse me, sir, if I interrupt your thanks, as I have here an interest that calls me. [*Turning to Honeywood.*] Yes, sir, you are surprised to see me; and I own that a desire of correcting your follies led me hither. I saw, with indignation, the errors of a mind that only sought applause from others; that easiness of disposition, which, tho' inclin'd to the right, had not courage to condemn the wrong. I saw with regret those splendid errors, that still took name from some neighbouring duty. Your charity, that was but injustice; your benevolence, that was but weakness; and your friendship but credulity. I saw, with regret, great talents and extensive learning only employed to add sprightliness to error, and increase your perplexities. I saw your mind with a thousand natural charms: but the greatness of it's beauty served only to heighten my pity for it's prostitution.

Hon. Cease to upbraid me, sir; I have for some time but too strongly felt the justice of your reproaches. But there is one way still left me. Yes, sir, I have determined, this very hour, to quit for ever a place where I have made myself the voluntary slave of all; and to seek among strangers that fortitude which may give strength to the mind, and marshal all its dissipated virtues. Yet, ere I depart, permit me to solicit favour for this gentleman; who, notwithstanding what has happened, has laid me under the most signal obligations. *Mr. Lofty*——

Lofty. Mr. Honeywood, I'm resolv'd upon a reformation, as well as you. I now begin to find, that the man who first invented the art of speaking truth was a much cunninger fellow than I thought him. And to prove that I design to speak truth for the future, I must now assure you, that you owe your late enlargement to another; as, upon my soul, I had no hand in the matter. So now, if any of the company has a mind for preferment, he may take my place. I'm determin'd to resign. [*Exit.*

Hon. How have I been deceived!

Sir Will. No, sir, you have been oblig'd to a kinder, fairer friend for that favour. To Miss Richland. Would she complete our joy, and make the man she has honoured by her friendship happy in her love, I should then forget all, and be as blest as the welfare of my dearest kinsman can make me.

Miss Rich. After what is past, it would be but affectation to pretend to indifference. Yes, I will own an attachment, which, I find, was more than friendship. And if my entreaties cannot alter his resolution to quit the country; I will even try, if my hand has not power to detain him. [*Giving her hand.*

Hon. Heavens! how can I have deserved all this? How express my happiness, my gratitude! A moment, like this, overpays an age of apprehension.

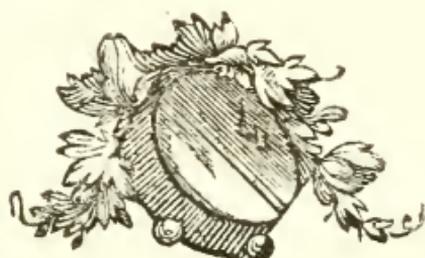
Croak. Well, now I see content in every face; but Heaven send we be all better this day three months.

Sir Will. Henceforth, nephew, learn to respect

yourself. He who seeks only for applause from without, has all his happiness in another's keeping.

Hon. Yes, sir, I now too plainly perceive my errors. My vanity, in attempting to please all, by fearing to offend any. My meanness in approving folly, lest fools should disapprove. Henceforth, therefore, it shall be my study to reserve my pity for real distress ; my friendship for true merit ; and my love for her, who first taught me what it is to be happy.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]



EPILOGUE*.

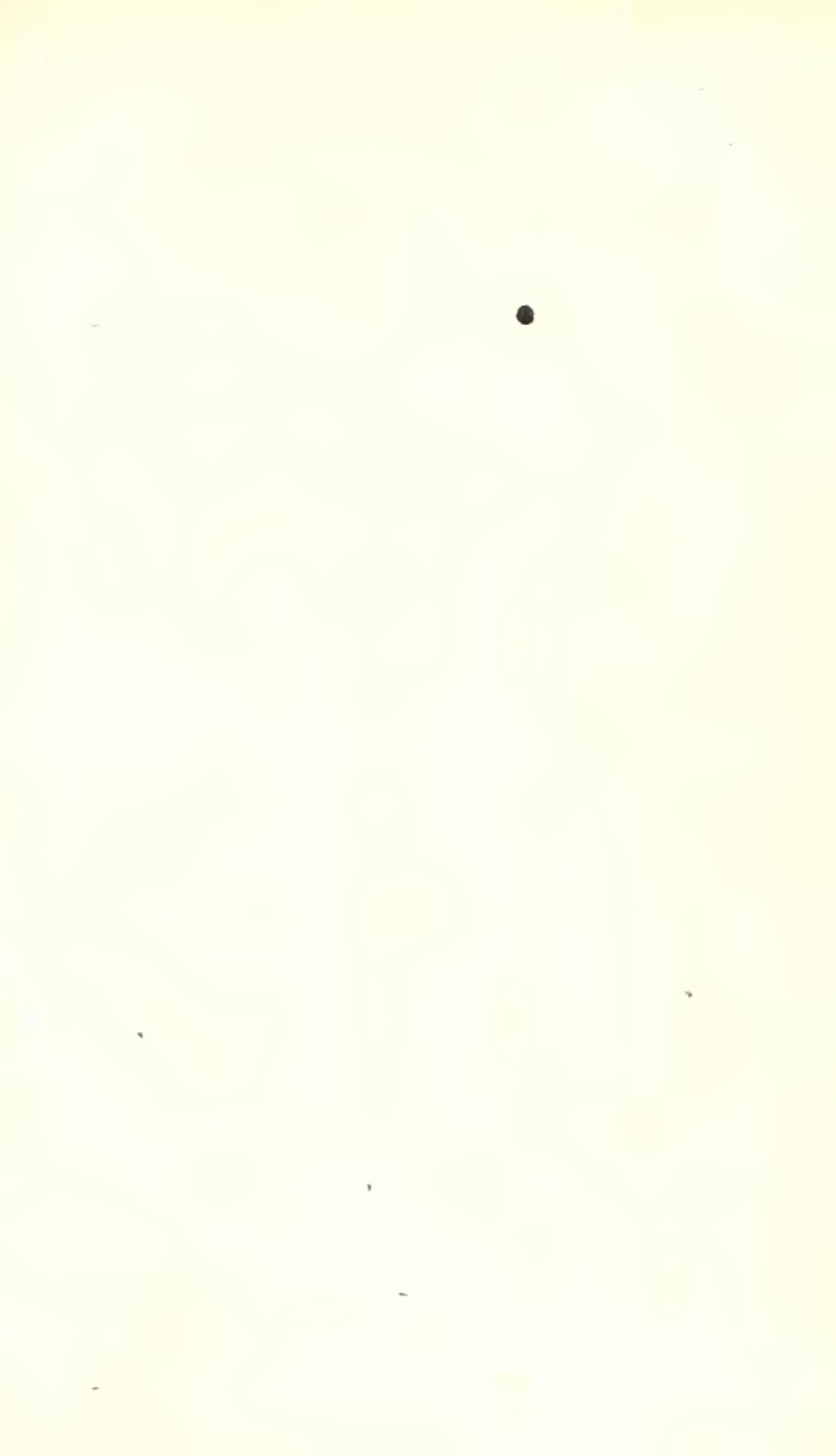
Spoken by Mrs. BULKLEY.

*AS puffing quacks some caitiff wretch procure
To swear the pill, or drop, has wrought a cure ;
Thus on the stage, our play-wrights still depend
For Epilogues and Prologues on some friend,
Who knows each art of coaxing up the town,
And make full many a bitter pill go down.
Conscious of this, our bard has gone about,
And teas'd each rhyming friend to help him out.
An Epilogue, things can't go on without it ;
It could not fail, would you but set about it.
Young man, cries one (a bard laid up in clover)
Alas, young man, my writing days are over ;
Let boys play tricks, and kick the straw, not I ;
Your brother doctor there, perhaps, may try.
What ! ! dear sir, the doctor interposes ;
What, plant my thistle, sir, among his roses !
No, no, I've other contests to maintain ;
To-night I head our troops at Warwick-lane.
Go, ask your manager—Who, me ! Your pardon ;
Those things are not our fort at Covent-Garden.*

* The Author, in expectation of an Epilogue from a friend at Oxford, deferred writing one himself till the very last hour. What is here offered, owes all its success to the graceful manner of the Actress who spoke it.

*Our author's friends, thus plac'd at happy distance,
Give him good words indeed, but no assistance.
As some unhappy wight, at some new play,
At the pit-door stands elbowing away,
While oft, with many a smile, and many a shrug,
He eyes the centre, where his friends sit snug,
His simpering friends, with pleasure in their eyes,
Sink as he sinks, and as he rises rise :
He nods, they nod ; he cringes, they grimace ;
But not a soul will budge to give him place.
Since then, unhelp'd, our bard must now conform
To 'bide the pelting of this pittiless storm,
Blame where you must, be candid where you can,
And be each critic the Good Natur'd Man.*

THE END.





D. Wilder pinx^t

Antist. Sc.

M^{rs} WHITELOCK as MARGARET

*From my breast I drew
A poignard forth and plung'd it in his heart.*

London. Printed for J. Bell British Library, Strand, Coff. Sarge.

THE EARL OF WARWICK.

A

TRAGEDY,

BY DR. FRANKLIN.

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 WALE

MDCCXCII.

THE EARL OF WARWICK.

THE present play is a translation by Dr. FRANKLIN the *Grecian*, from a tragedy written in French by M. DE LA HARPE. Paul Hiffernan, in the same year, 1767, also published a translation—We have not compared their productions.

It will be visible that the manners are not those of the period when the action passes, and that the whole play is in the *verbose* style.—The contest of insult between EDWARD and WARWICK is in great request among our juvenile declaimers.

The excellence of Mrs. YATES in *Franklin's* play secured its success—it is now, however, seldom played, sharing the fate of all French literal translations.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY GEORGE COLMAN, ESQ.

Spoken by Mr. BENSLEY.

SEVERE each poet's lot ; but sure most hard
Is the condition of the play-house bard :
Doom'd to hear all that wou'd-be critics talk,
And in the go-cart of dull rules to walk !
' Yet authors multiply,' you say. 'Tis true,
But what a numerous crop of critics too !
Scholars alone of old durst judge and write ;
But now each journalist turns stagyrite.
Quintalians in each coffee-house you meet,
And many a Longinus walks the street.

In Shakspeare's days, when his advent'rous muse,
A muse of fire ! durst each bold licence use,
Her noble ardor met no critic's phlegm,
To check wild fancy, or her flights condemn :
Ariels and Calibans, unblam'd she drew,
Or goblins, ghosts, and witches, brought to view.
If to historic truth she shap'd her verse,
A nation's annals freely she'd rehearse ;
Bring Rome's or England's story on the stage,
And run, in three short hours, through half an age.

*Our bard, all terror-struck, and fill'd with dread,
In Shakspeare's awful footsteps dares not tread;
Through the wide field of hist'ry fears to stray,
And builds upon one narrow spot his play;
Steps not from realm to realm, whole seas between,
But barely changes twice or thrice his scene:
While Shakspeare vaults on the poetic wire,
And pleas'd spectators fearfully admire,
Our bard, a critic pole between his hands,
On the tight-rope, scarce balanc'd, trembling stands;
Slowly and cautiously his way he makes,
And fears to fall at every step he takes:
While then fierce Warwick he before you brings,
That setter-up and puller-down of kings,
With British candour dissipate his fear!
An English story fits an English ear.
Though harse and crude you deem his first essay,
A second may your favours well repay:
Applause may nerve his verse, and cheer his heart,
And teach the practice of this dangerous art.*

Dramatis Personae.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

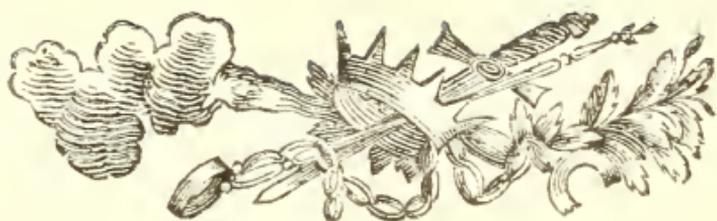
King EDWARD,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Palmer.
Earl of WARWICK,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Smith.
Earl of PEMBROKE,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Aickin.
Earl of SUFFOLK,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Packer.

Women.

MARGARET of ANJOU,	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Siddons.
Lady ELIZABETH GRAY,	-	-	-	-	-	Miss Kemble.
Lady CLIFFORD,	-	-	-	-	-	Miss Tidswell.

Officers, Attendants, Guards, &c.

SCENE, *The Palace.*



THE EARL OF WARWICK.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Palace. Enter MARGARET of ANJOU, and Lady CLIFFORD.

Lady Clifford.

THANKS! gracious Heav'n, my royal mistress smiles,
Unusual gladness sparkles in her eye,
And bids me welcome in the stranger joy
To his new mansion.

Marg. Yes, my faithful Clifford,
Fortune is weary of oppressing me :
Thro' my dark cloud of grief, a cheerful ray
Of light breaks forth, and gilds the whole horizon.

Cliff. Henry in chains, and Edward on the throne
Of Lancaster, thyself a pris'ner here,
Thy captive son torn from his mother's arms,
And in the tyrant's power ; a kingdom lost :
Amidst so many sorrows, what new hope
Hath wrought this wondrous change ?

Marg. That which alone,
 In sorrow's bitt'rest hour, can minister
 Sweet comfort to the daughters of affliction,
 And bid misfortune smile, the hope of vengeance ;
 Vengeance, benignant patron of distress,
 Thee I have oft invoked, propitious now
 Thou smil'st upon me, if I do not grasp
 The glorious opportunity, henceforth
 Indignant frown, and leave me to my fate!

Cliff. Unhappy princess! that deceiver hope
 Hath often flatter'd, and as oft betray'd thee :
 What hast thou gain'd by all its promises ?
 What's the reward of all thy toils ?

Marg. Experience——
 Yes, Clifford, I have read th' instructive volume
 Of human nature, there long since have learn'd
 The way to conquer men is by their passions ;
 Catch but the ruling foible of their hearts,
 And all their boasted virtues shrink before you.
 Edward and Warwick, those detested names,
 Too well thou know'st, united to destroy me,

Cliff. That was indeed a fatal league.

Marg. But mark me ;
 If we could break this adamant chain,
 We might again be free : this mighty warrior,
 This dread of kings, th' unconquerable Warwick,
 Is plighted to the fair Elizabeth.

Cliff. The Lady Gray, you mean, the beauteous
 widow,
 Whose husband fell in arms for Lancaster.

Marg. The same, my Clifford—Warwick long has
lov'd—

Cliff. And means to wed her.

Marg. But if I have art,
Or she ambition, that shall never be.

Cliff. Canst thou prevent it?

Marg. Yes, my Clifford, Warwick
Were a mean choice for such transcendent beauty ;
I shall provide her with a fitter husband,
A nobler far, and worthier of her charms—
Young Edward—

Cliff. Ha! the king! impossible!
Warwick, ev'n now, commission'd by the state,
To treat with Lewis, offers England's throne
To France's daughter, and e'er this, perhaps,
Hath sign'd the solemn contract.

Marg. Solemn trifles!
Mere cobweb ties—Love's a despotic tyrant,
And laughs, like other kings, at public faith,
When it opposes private happiness :
Edward is youthful, gay, and amorous ;
His soul is ever open to the lure
Of beauty, and Elizabeth hath charms
Might shake a hermit's virtue.

Cliff. Hath he seen
This peerless fair one?

Marg. Yes—by my contrivance,
When last he hunted in the forest, some,
Whom I had planted there, as if by chance
Alone directed, led him cross the lawn

To Grafton, there—ev'n as my soul had wish'd,
 The dazzling lustre of her charms surpris'd
 His unsuspecting heart——

Cliff. What follow'd ?

Marg. O !

He gaz'd and wonder'd ; for awhile his pride
 Indignant rose, and struggled with his passion,
 But love was soon victorious : and last night,
 The Earl of Suffolk, so my trusty spies
 Inform me, was dispatch'd on wings of love,
 To plead his master's cause, and offer her
 The throne of England.

Cliff. What if she refuse
 The golden bribe ?

Marg. No matter ; all I wish
 Is but to make them foes ; the gen'rous Warwick
 Is fiery, and impatient of reproof,
 He will not brook a rival in his love,
 Tho' seated on a throne ; besides, thou know'st,
 The haughty earl looks down with scorn on Edward,
 As the mere work of his all-powerful hand,
 The baby monarch of his own creation.

Cliff. Believe me, madam, Edward still reveres
 And loves him, still as conscious of the debt,
 Pays him with trust and confidence ; their souls
 Are link'd together in the strictest bonds
 Of sacred friendship.

Marg. That but serves my cause :
 Where ties are close, and interests united,
 The slightest inj'ries are severely felt ;
 Offended friendship never can forgive.

Cliff. Now the full prospect opens to my view,
I see thy distant aim, and trace the paths
Of vengeance : England soon will be a scene
Of blood and horror, discord's fatal torch
Once lit up in this devoted land,
What pow'r shall e'er extinguish it ? Alas !
I tremble at the consequence.

Marg. And I
Enjoy it :—O ! 'twill be a noble contest
Of pride 'gainst pride, oppression 'gainst oppression ;
Rise but the storm, and let the waves beat high,
The wreck may be our own : in the warm struggle,
Who knows but one or both of them may fall,
And Marg'ret rise triumphant on their ruin !
It must be so ; and see, the king approaches :
This way he passes from the council—Mark
His down cast eye, he is a stricken deer,
The arrow's in his side—he cannot 'scape :
We'll meet and speak to him.

Cliff. What mean you, madam ?

Marg. To ask him—what, I know, he will refuse ;
That gives me fair pretext to break with him,
And join the man I hate, vindictive Warwick ;
But soft, he comes——

SCENE II.

Enter King EDWARD, and an Officer.

Edw. Is Suffolk yet return'd ?

[*To an Officer.*

Offi. No, my good liege.

Edw. Go, wait and bring him to me. [Exit *Off.*
I'll to my closet. Pardon me, fair lady,
I saw you not.

Marg. Perhaps it is beneath
A conqu'ror to look down upon his slave ;
But I've a boon to ask.

Edw. Whate'er it is,
Within the limits of fair courtesy,
Which honour can bestow, I'll not refuse thee.

Marg. There was a time when Margaret of Anjou
Would not have deign'd to ask of Edward aught ;
Nor was there aught which Edward dar'd refuse her ;
But that is past, great Warwick's arm prevail'd,
And I am now your pris'ner.

Edw. Since the hour,
When fortune smil'd propitious on the cause
Of justice, and gave vict'ry to our arms,
You have been treated with all due respect,
All your condition, or your sex could claim ;
Serv'd like a queen, and lodg'd within our palace :
Is there aught more you can with reason ask,
Or I in prudence grant you ?

Marg. Give me back
The liberty I lost—restore my son,
And I may then, perhaps, be reconcil'd
To an usurper, may with-hold my vengeance,
And let thee sit unpunish'd on—my throne.

Edw. You talk too proudly, madam ; but to shew
you
I cannot fear, you have your liberty.

Letters this morning I receiv'd from France,
Have offer'd noble ransom for your person ;
Without that ransom—for the soul of Edward
Is far above the sordid lust of gold,
I grant it—from this moment you are free ;
But for your son—I cannot part with him.

Marg. I scorn your bounties, scorn your proffer'd
freedom,

What's liberty to me without my child ?
But fate will place us soon above thy reach,
Thy short-liv'd tyranny is almost past,
The storm is gath'ring round thee, and will burst
With ten-fold vengeance on thy guilty head.

Edw. I am not to be talk'd into submission,
Nor dread the menace of a clam'rous woman.

Marg. Thou may'st have cause to dread a woman's
pow'r.

The time may come—mark my prophetic word—
When wayward beauty shall repay with scorn
Thy fruitless vóws, and vindicate my wrongs :
The friend thou lean'st on, like a broken reed,
Shall pierce thy side, and fill thy soul with anguish,
Keen as the pangs I feel : York's perjur'd house
Shall sink to rise no more, and Lancaster
With added lustre re-assume the throne.
Hear this and tremble—give me back my son—
Or dread the vengeance of a desp'rate mother.

[*Exit Margaret.*]

SCENE III.

Edw. Imperious woman! but the voice of woe
Is ever clam'rous: 'tis the privilege,
The charter of affliction to complain.—
This tardy Suffolk! how I long to know,
Yet dread to hear my fate! Elizabeth,
On thee the colour of my future life
Depends, for thou alone canst make me blest,
Or curs'd for ever!—O! this cruel doubt
Is worse than all my tortures: but he comes,
Th' ambassador of love.

SCENE IV.

Enter the Earl of SUFFOLK.

Edw. What news, my Suffolk!
Shall I be happy? O! I'm on the rack
Of expectation, didst thou tell my tale
As if it were thy own, and may I hope—

Suff. My royal liege—

Edw. Good Suffolk, lay aside
The forms of dull respect, be brief, and tell me,
Speak, hast thou seen her? Will she be my queen?
Quick, tell me ev'ry circumstance, each word,
Each look, each gesture: didst thou mark them,
Suffolk?

Suff. I did, and will recount it all; last night

By your command, in secret I repair'd
To Grafton's tufted bow'r, the happy seat
Of innocence and beauty, there I found
Thy soul's best hope, the fair Elizabeth;
Ne'er did these eyes behold such sweet perfection:
I found her busy'd in the pious office
Of filial duty, tending her sick father.

Edw. That was a lucky moment, to prefer
My humble suit: touch but the tender string
Of soft compassion in the heart, and love
Will quickly vibrate to its kindred passion;
You urg'd our royal purpose, then?

Suff. I did,
With all the warmth of friendship, dwelt with pleasure
On ev'ry princely virtue that adorns
Your noble heart; she listen'd with attention,
And echo'd back your praises.

Edw. Was not that
A kind propitious omen?

Suff. Such indeed
Hoping to find it, I call'd in the pow'rs
Of flattery to my aid, and gaz'd upon her,
As if confounded by her dazzling beauties—
Conscious she smil'd; but when, at length, I spake
Of England's monarch sighing at her feet—
The crimson glow of modesty o'erspread
Her cheek, and gave new lustre to her charms:
She turn'd aside, and as she silently bow'd
Her doubtful thanks, I mark'd the pearly tear
Steal down its secret track, and from her breast

Heard a deep sigh, she struggled to conceal;
 If I have any judgment, or can trace
 The hidden feelings of a woman's heart,
 Her's is already fix'd: I fear, my liege,
 With all that England, all that thou could'st give,
 The crown would sit but heavy on her brow.

Edw. Not heavier, Suffolk, than it sits on mine:
 My throne is irksome to me; who would wish
 To be a sov'reign, when Elizabeth
 Prefers a subject?—Then th' impetuous Warwick,
 His awful virtue will chastise my weakness.
 I dread his censure, dread his keen reproaches,
 And dread them more because they will be just.
 I've promis'd Lewis to espouse his daughter,
 To strengthen our alliance: would to heaven
 I had not! if I seek this coy refuser,
 And break with France, Warwick will take th' alarm;
 If once offended, he's inexorable.

Suff. I know him well—Believe me, sir, the high
 And haughty spirit, when it meets rebuke,
 Is easiest check'd, and sinks into submission.
 Let him, my liege, who ventures to arraign
 His master's conduct, look into his own:
 There ever is a corner in the heart
 Open to folly; Warwick is not free
 From human frailties.

Edw. No: ambition fires
 His noble breast, love triumphs over mine;
 But well thou know'st, our eyes are ever open
 To other's faults, and shut against our own.

We seldom pity woes we ne'er experienc'd,
Or pardon weakness which we do not feel :
He is a hero.

Suff. Heroes are but men ;
I have some cause to think so—but of that
We'll talk another time : mean while, my liege,
I think Lord Warwick is a useful friend.

Edw. Aye, and a dangerous foe ; the people love,
To adoration love him ; if he falls
From his allegiance, crowds will follow him ;
England has long been rent by civil broils,
And fain would rest her in the arms of peace ;
Her wounds scarce clos'd, shall Edward open them,
And bid them bleed afresh ? believe me, Suffolk,
I would not be the cause of new divisions
Amongst my people, for a thousand kingdoms.

Suff. 'Tis nobly said, and may thy grateful subjects,
Revere thy virtues, and reward thy love !

Edw. O! Suffolk, did they know but half the cares
That wait on royalty, they would not grudge
Their wretched master a few private hours
Of social happiness.—If France consents,
I am undone ; and Warwick hath ere this
Enslav'd me : curse on this state policy,
That binds us thus to love at second hand !
Who knows but he may link me to a wretch ;
Wed me to folly, ignorance, and pride,
Ill-nature, sickness, or deformity ;
And when I'm chain'd to mis'ry, coldly tell me,
To sooth my grief, 'twas for the public good.

Suff. How far you have commission'd him, I know
not,

But were I worthy to advise, my liege,
I would not be the dupe of his ambition,
But follow nature's dictates, and be happy.
England has charms besides Elizabeth's,
And beauties that——

Edw. No more ; my heart is fix'd
On her alone ; find out this pow'rful rival,
I charge thee, Suffolk : yet why wish to find,
What found will make me wretched ? were he bound
In cords of tend'rest friendship round my heart,
Dearer than Warwick, dearer than thyself,
Forgive me, but I fear I should abhor him.
O think on something that may yet be done,
To win her to my heart ere Warwick comes.

Suff. I hear he is expected every hour.

Edw. Grant heav'n some friendly storm may yet
retard him.

I dread his presence here.

SCENE IV,

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My liege, the Earl
Of Warwick is arriv'd.

Edw. Ha ! when ? how ? where ?
Would he were bury'd in the rapid waves
That brought him hither ! comes he here to night ?

Mess. My liege, ere now he might have reach'd the
palace,

But that the shouting multitudes press hard

On ev'ry side, and seem to worship him. [Exit.

SCENE V.

SUFFOLK, and EDWARD.

Suff. Such adoration

But ill befits the idol that receives it.

Edw. What's to be done? I cannot, must not see
him,

Till all is fix'd: once more, my best-lov'd Suffolk,

Try the soft arts of thy persuasive tongue:

What method canst thou think on, to evade

This promis'd marriage with ambitious France?

Suff. Summon your council, lay your thoughts be-
fore them,

Meet Warwick there, and urge a sov'reign's right,

To please himself in that which should concern

Himself alone—firm Buckingham and I

Will plead your cause against the haughty Warwick,

Whom I would treat with cold civility,

And distant state, which ever angers more

Resentful spirits than the warmth of passion.

Edw. 'Tis well advis'd:—mean time, if possible,

I will compose my troubled thoughts to rest:

Suffolk, adieu: if Warwick asks for me,

I am not well—I'm hunting in the forest—

I'm busy—stay—remember what I told you,
 'Touching the earldom which I mean to give
 Her father; that may bring her to the court;
 You understand me, Suffolk—fare thee well.

SCENE VI.

Edw. Why should I dread to see the man I love—
 The man I rev'rence—Warwick is not chang'd,
 But Edward is—Suffolk, I know, abhors him—
 A fav'rite must be hated—if he urges
 This dreadful contract, I shall hate him too:
 I cannot live without Elizabeth:
 I'll think no more— if I must sacrifice
 My friendship or my love—the choice is made.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter WARWICK, speaking to an Officer.

Warwick.

'Tis well: I shall attend his highness' pleasure.

[*Comes forward.*]

Meet me i' th' council! Warwick might have claim'd
 A private audience—After all my toils,
 My perils in his service, 'tis a cold
 Unkind reception: some base whisperer,
 Some needy sycophant, perhaps, hath poison'd
 My royal master's ear—or, do I judge
 Too rashly? As my embassy concerns

The public welfare, he would honour me
 With public thanks—Elizabeth will chide me
 For this unkind delay—but honour calls,
 And duty to my king : that task perform'd,
 I haste, my love, to happiness and thee.

[Exit.

SCENE II.

The Council-Chamber. King EDWARD, Dukes of CLARENCE and BUCKINGHAM, Earls of SUFFOLK, PEMBROKE, &c.

Edw. Good Buckingham, I thank thee for thy counsel,

Nor blame thy honest warmth ; I love this freedom,
 It is the birth-right of an Englishman,
 And doth become thee : what says noble Suffolk ?

Suff. I would not cross my royal master's will ;
 But, on my soul, I think, this nuptial league
 With France prepost'rous and impolitic
 It cannot last ; we are by nature foes,
 And nought but mutual poverty and weakness
 Can ever make us friends—she wants our aid
 Against the pow'rful Burgundy, and therefore
 Throws out this lure of beauty to ensnare you,
 That purpose gain'd, she turns her arms against us.

Pemb. Why, let her : if she comes with hostile arm,
 England, thank Heav'n, is ready to receive her :
 I love my country, and revere my king,
 As much perhaps as honest Buckingham,

Or my good fearful lord of Suffolk here,
 Who knows so well, or would be thought to know,
 What France will do hereafter: yet I think,
 The faith of nations is a thing so sacred,
 It ought not to be trifled with—I hate
 As much as you th' unnatural forc'd alliance,
 And yet, my lords, if Warwick is empow'r'd,
 For so I hear he is, to treat with Lewis,
 I know not how in honour you can swerve
 From his conditions. [Shouting,
 Hark! the hero comes:
 Those shouts proclaim him near: the joyful people
 Will usher in their great deliverer
 As he deserves.

SCENE III.

Enter WARWICK.

Edw. Thrice welcome, noble Warwick,
 Welcome to all! [To Clarence, Pembroke, &c.

Suff. You've had, my lord, I fear,
 An arduous task, which few could execute.
 But Warwick, in the council and the field,
 Alike distinguish'd, and alike successful.

Edw. What says our cousin France?

Warw. By me, my liege,
 He greets you well, and hopes in closer ties
 United soon to wear a dearer name.
 At length, thank Heav'n! the iron gates of war,

Are clos'd, and peace displays her silken banners
 O'er the contending nations, ev'ry doubt
 Is now remov'd, and confidence establish'd,
 I hope, to last for ages.

Edw. Peace, my lord,
 Is ever welcome; 'tis the gift of Heav'n,
 The nurse of science, art's fair patroness,
 And merit's best protector; but if France
 Would chain us down to ignominious terms,
 Cramp our free commerce, and infringe the rights
 Of our liege subjects, England may repent
 Too late her rash credulity, and peace
 With all her blessings may be bought too dear.

Warw. The shame would then be his, who made
 the purchase.

If any doubt my faith, my honest zeal
 For thee and for my country, let him speak,
 And I will answer: punish me, just Heav'n,
 If in the task I have consulted aught
 But England's honour, and my sov'reign's glory!

Edw. Mistake me not, good Warwick, well I know
 Thy spotless truth, thy honour, and thy love;
 But glory has no farther charms for me:
 Rais'd by thy pow'rful aid to England's throne,
 I ask no more: already I am great
 As fame and fortune with their smiles can make me,
 And all I wish for now is—to be happy.

Warw. That too, my liege, hath been thy War-
 wick's care:

Happy thou shalt be if the fairest form

That ever caught a gazing lover's eye,
 Join'd to the sweetest, most engaging virtues
 Can make thee so:—Bona accepts with joy
 Thy proffer'd hand : she is indeed a gem
 Fit to adorn the brightest crown : to see
 Is to admire her ; trust me, England's self
 The seat of beauty, and the throne of love,
 Boasts not a fairer.

Edw. Beauty, good my lord,
 Is all ideal, 'tis the wayward child
 Of fancy, shifting with the changeful wind
 Of fond opinion ; what to you appears
 The model of perfection, may disgust
 My strange capricious taste.

Warw. Such charms would fix
 Inconstancy itself:—her winning virtues,
 Ev'n if her beauty fail'd, would soon subdue
 The rebel heart, and you would learn to love her.

Edw. Is passion to be learn'd then ? wouldst thou
 make

A science of affection, guide the heart,
 And teach it where to fix ? impossible !
 'Tis strange philosophy. [*Rises and comes forward.*]

My lord of Warwick,
 Your zeal in England's, and in Edward's cause
 Merits our thanks ; but for the intended marriage
 With France's daughter—it may never be.

Warw. Not be ! it must : your sacred word is pass'd,
 And cannot be recall'd ; but three days since
 I sign'd the contract, and my honour's pledg'd

For the performance: Heav'ns! whilst fickle France
Is branded 'midst the nations of the earth,
For breach of public faith, shall we, my liege,
Practise ourselves the vices we condemn,
Pass o'er a rival nation's ev'ry virtue,
And imitate their perfidy alone?

Edw. You'll pardon me, my lord, I thought it part
Of a king's pow'r to have a will, to see
With his own eyes, and in life's little feast,
To cater for himself; but 'tis, it seems,
A privilege his servants can refuse him.

Warw. And so they ought—the king, who cannot
conquer
His private int'rest for the public welfare,
Knows not his duty.

Edw. Kings, my lord, are born
With passions, feelings, hearts—like other men;
Nor see I yet, why Edward's happiness
Must fall a sacrifice to Warwick's honour.

Warw. My honour, sir, is yours; my cause your
own:

Who sent me, and whose image did I bear,
The image of a great and glorious king,
Or of a weak and wav'ring boy?—henceforth,
Choose from the herd of foaming sycophants,
Some needy slave for your mock embassy's,
To do your work, and stain the name of England
With foul reproach—Edward, I blush for thee,
And for my country; from this hour, expect

From injur'd France contempt, with deep resentment
For broken faith, and enmity eternal.

Edw. Eternal be it then; for, as I prize
My inward peace, beyond the pomp of state,
And all the tinsel glare of fond ambition,
I will not wed her.—Gracious Heav'n! what am I?
The meanest peasant in my realm may choose
His rustic bride, and share with her the sweets
Of mutual friendship and domestic bliss!
Why should my happier subjects then deny me
The common rights, the privilege of nature,
And in a land of freedom thus conspire
To make their king the only slave amongst 'em?

Warw. The worst of slaves is he whom passion rules,
Uncheck'd by reason and the pow'rful voice
Of friendship, which, I fear, is heard no more
By thoughtless Edward—'tis the curse of kings
To be surrounded by a venal herd
Of flatterers, that sooth his darling vices,
And rob their master of his subjects' love.
Nay, frown not, sirs, supported as ye are,
I fear you not—which of this noble train,
These well-beloved counsellors and friends,
Assembled here to witness my disgrace,
Have urg'd you to this base, unmanly falsehood?
Shame on you all! to stain the spotless mind
Of uncorrupted youth, undo the work
Of Warwick's friendly hand, and give him back
A sov'reign so unlike the noble Edward.

Suff. My lord, we thank you for the kind suggestion,

Howe'er ill-founded, and when next we meet,
To give our voice in ought that may concern
The public weal, no doubt shall ask your leave
Ere we proceed.

Pemb. My Lord of Suffolk, speak
But for yourself; Warwick hath too much cause
To be offended: in my poor opinion,
Whate'er you courtiers think, the best support
Of England's throne are equity and truth;
Nor will I hold that man my sov'reign's friend,
Who shall exhort him to forsake his word,
And play the hypocrite: what tie shall bind
The subject to obedience, when his king,
Bankrupt in honour, gives the royal sanction
To perfidy and falsehood?

Buck. It becomes
But ill the Earl of Pembroke——

Edw. Good my lords——
Let us have no dissensions here; we met
For other purposes—some few days hence
We shall expect your counsel in affairs
Of moment—for the present urge no further
This matter—fare ye well.

[*The Council break up and disperse.*]

Edw. [*Comes up to War.*] Lord Warwick, keep
In narrower bounds that proud impetuous temper;
It may be fatal: there are private reasons——
When time befits we shall impart them to you;

Mean while—if you have friendship, love, or duty,
No more of Bona—I'm determin'd. [Exit Edw.]

SCENE IV.

Warw. So :

'Tis well, 'tis very well : I have deserv'd it ;
I've borne this callow eagle on my wing,
And now he spurns me from him : 'tis a change
I little look'd for, and sits heavy on me :
Alas ! how doubly painful is the wound,
When 'tis inflicted by the hand we love !
Cruel, ungrateful Edward !——
Ha ! who's here ?
The captive queen ! if she has ought to ask
Of me, she comes in luckless hour, for I
Am pow'rless now.

SCENE V.

Enter MARGARET of ANJOU.

Warw. Will Margaret of Anjou
Thus deign to visit her acknowledg'd foe ?

Marg. Alas ! my lord, inur'd to wretchedness
As I am, and familiar with misfortune,
I harbour no resentment ; have long since
Forgot that ever Warwick was my foe,
And only wish to prove myself his friend.

Warw. Talk not of friendship, 'tis an empty name,
And lives but in idea ; once indeed
I thought I had a friend.——

Marg. Whose name was—Edward ;
Read I aright, my lord, and am I not
A shrewd diviner ? Yes ; that down-cast eye
And gloomy aspect say I am : you look
As if the idol made by your own hands,
Had fall'n upon and crush'd you, is't not so ?

Warw. Amazement I nought escapes thy piercing
eye,
And penetrating judgment : 'tis too true,
I am a poor disgrac'd, dishonour'd slave,
Not worth thy seeking ; leave me, for the tide
Of court preferment flows another way.

Marg. The feast, perhaps, you have provided,
suits not
With Edward's nicer palate ; he disdains,
How sweet soe'er, to taste a foreign banquet,
And relishes no dainties but his own :
Am I again mistaken ?

Warw. Sure thou deal'st
With some all-knowing spirit, who imparts
Each secret purpose to thee, else how knew'st thou
That Edward had refus'd to wed the princess ?

Marg. O ! it requires no supernatural aid
To trace his actions, nor has Marg'ret trod
The paths of life with unobserving eye ;
I could have told you this long since—for know,
The choice is made, the nuptial rites prepar'd,

Which, but for your return, as unexpected
As undesired, had been, ere this, complete ;
And, as in duty bound, you then had paid
Your due obedience to our—English queen.

Warw. Determin'd, say'st thou ? Gracious Heaven !
'tis well

I am return'd.

Marg. Indeed, my lord, you came
A little out of season, 'twas unkind
To interrupt your master's happiness,
To blast so fair a passion in its bloom,
And check the rising harvest of his love.

Warw. Marg'ret, I thank thee—yes, it must be so :
His blushes, his confusion, all confirm it,
And yet I am amaz'd, astonish'd.

Marg. Wherefore ?——

Is it so strange a youthful prince should love ?
Is it so strange, a mind, unfraught with wisdom,
And lifted high with proud prosperity,
Should follow pleasure thro' the crooked paths
Of falsehood, should forsake a useless friend,
For the warm joys of animating beauty ?

Warw. No : but 'tis strange, that he who knows
how much

He ow'd to Warwick : he, who ev'ry hour
Tastes the rich stream of bounty, should forget
The fountain whence it flow'd.

Marg. Alas ! my lord,
Had you been chasten'd in affliction's school
As I have been, and taught by sad experience

To know mankind, you had not fall'n a prey
To such delusion.

Warw. Was it like a friend,
Was it like Edward to conceal his love ?
Some base, insinuating, artful woman,
With borrow'd charms, perhaps——

Marg. Hold, hold, my lord,
Be not too rash : who fights in darkness oft
May wound a bosom friend : perhaps you wrong
The best, and most accomplish'd of her sex.

Warw. Know you the lady ?

Marg. But as fame reports,
Of peerless beauty and transcendent charms,
But for her virtue——I must ask of——you——

Warw. Of me ! What virtues ? Whose ?

Marg. Elizabeth's.

Warw. Amazement ! no : it must not, it cannot be :
Elizabeth ! he could not, dare not do it !
Confusion ! I shall soon discover all. [*Aside.*

But what have I to do with Edward's choice,
Whoe'er she be, if he refuses mine ?

Marg. Dissimulation sits but ill, my lord,
On minds like yours : I am a poor weak woman,
And so, it seems, you think me ; but suppose
That same all-knowing spirit which you rais'd,
Who condescends so kindly to instruct me,
Should whisper——Warwick knows the pow'r of love
As well as Edward, that Elizabeth
Was his first wish, the idol of his soul ;
What say you ?——Might-I venture to believe it ?

Warw. Marg'ret, you might ; for 'tis in vain to hide
A thought from thee ; it might have told you too,
If it be so, there is not such a wretch
On earth as Warwick : give me but the proof——

Marg. Lord Suffolk was last night dispatch'd to
Grafton,

To offer a share in Edward's throne.

Warw. Which she refus'd : did she not, Marg'ret ?

Say

She did.

Marg. I know not that, my lord, but crowns
Are dazzling meteors in a woman's eye ;
Such strong temptations, few of us, I fear,
Have virtue to resist.

Warw. Elizabeth

Has ev'ry virtue, I'll not doubt her faith.

Marg. Edward is young and handsome.

Warw. Curses on him !

Think'st thou he knew my fond attachment there ?

Marg. O, passing well, my lord, and when 'twas
urg'd

How deeply 't would affect you, swore by Heav'n,
Imperious Warwick ne'er should be the master
Of charms like hers ; 'twas happiness, he said,
Beyond a subject's merit to deserve,
Beyond his hope to wish for or aspire to.

Warw. But for that Warwick, Edward's self had
been

A subject still—and—may be so—hereafter.

Thou smil'st at my misfortunes.

Marg. I must smile
 When I behold a subtle statesman thus
 Duped and deluded by a shallow boy,
 Sent on a fruitless errand to expose
 His country and himself—it was indeed
 A master-stroke of policy, beyond,
 One should have thought, the reach of years so green
 As Edward's, to dispatch the weeping lover,
 And seize the glorious opportunity
 Of tamp'ring with his mistress here at home.

Warw. Did Nevil, Rutland, Clifford, bleed for
 this ?

Marg. For this doth Henry languish in a dungeon,
 And wretched Marg'ret live a life of wo :
 For this you gave the crown to pious Edward,
 And thus he thanks you for his kingdom.

Warw. Crowns
 Are baubles, fit for children like himself
 To play with, I have scatter'd many of them :
 But thus to cross me in my dearest hope,
 The sweet reward of all my toils for him
 And for his country ; if I suffer it,
 If I forgive him, may I live the scorn
 Of men, a branded coward, and old age
 Without or love or rev'ence be my portion !
 Henceforth, good Marg'ret, know me for thy friend,
 We will have noble vengeance :—are there not
 Still left amongst the lazy sons of peace,
 Some busy spirits who wish well to thee,
 And to thy cause ?

Marg. There are ; resentment sleeps,
But is not dead ; beneath the hollow cover
Of loyalty, the slumb'ring ashes lie
Unheeded, Warwick's animating breath
Will quickly light them into flames again.

Warw. Then, Edward, from this moment I abjure
thee :

O, I will make thee ample recompence
For all the wrongs that I have done the house
Of Lancaster :—go, summon all thy friends ;
Be quick, good Marg'ret, haste ere I repent,
And yield my soul to perjur'd York again.
The king, I think, gives you free liberty
To range abroad.

Marg. He doth, and I will use it,
As I would ever use the gift of foes,
To his destruction.

Warw. That arch-pandar, Suffolk,
That minister of vice—but time is precious ;
To-morrow, Marg'ret, we will meet in private,
And have some further conference ; mean time
Devise, consult, use ev'ry means against
Our common foe : remember, from this hour,
Warwick's thy friend—be secret and be happy.

[*Exit.*

SCENE VI.

Marg. What easy fools these cunning statesmen are,
With all their policy, when once they fall

Into a woman's pow'r! This gallant leader,
 This blust'ring Warwick, how the hero shrunk
 And lessen'd to my sight!—Elizabeth,
 I thank thee for thy wonder-working charms;
 The time perhaps may come, when I shall stand
 Indebted to them for—the throne of England.

*Proud York beware, for Lancaster's great name
 Shall rise superior in the lists of fame:
 Fortune, that long had frown'd, shall smile at last,
 And make amends for all my sorrows past.* [Exit.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter MARGARET, CLIFFORD, and Attendants.

Margaret.

DISPATCH these letters straight; to Scotland—this
 To the French Envoy—these to th' Earl of Pembroke.

[*To a gentleman.*

Thus far, my friend, hath fortune favour'd us

[*Turning to Lady Clifford.*

Beyond our hopes: the soul of haughty Warwick
 Is all on fire, and puling Edward loves
 With most romantic ardour—O my Clifford,
 You would have smil'd to see how artfully
 I play'd upon him: flatter'd, sooth'd, provok'd,
 And wrought him to my purpose: we are link'd
 In firmest bonds of amity and love.

Cliff. Hath Warwick then so soon forgot his Edward ?

Think'st thou the frantic earl will e'er exert
His ill-directed powers to pull down
The royal structure, which himself had rais'd ?
Never.

Marg. What is there disappointed love
And unrestrain'd ambition will not do ?
I tell thee, we are sworn and cordial friends.

Cliff. Thou know'st he hates the house of Lancaster.

Marg. No matter—he has marvellous good skill
In making kings, and I—have business for him.

Cliff. And canst thou then forget the cruel wrongs,
The deep-felt inj'ries of oppressive Warwick,
To join the hand that forg'd thy husband's chains,
And robb'd thee of a crown ?

Marg. But what—my Clifford,
If the same hand that ravish'd should restore it !
'Tis a court friendship, and may last as long
As interest shall direct : I've not forgot,
No, nor forgiv'n ; I hate, abhor, detest him,
But I will use him as my instrument,
My necessary tool, I'll make him draw
His trait'rous sword, to sheath it in the breast
Of him he loves, then point it to his own :
Yes, Clifford, I have twin'd me round his heart ;
Like the fell serpent crept into his bosom,
That I might sting more surely : he shall perish ;
I keep him for the last dear precious morsel,
To crown the glorious banquet of revenge.

Cliff. 'Tis what he merits from us, yet th' attempt
Were dangerous, he is still the people's idol.

Marg. And so perhaps shall Marg'ret be ; applause
Waits on success ; the fickle multitude,

Like the light straw that floats along the stream,
Glide with the current still and follow fortune.

Our prospect brightens every hour :—the people
Are ripe for a revolt : by civil wars,
Long time inur'd to savage scenes of plunder
And desolation, they delight in war :

These English heroes, when once flesh'd with
slaughter,

Like the keen mastiff, lose not soon the track
Of vengeance, nor forget the taste of blood.

Cliff. What further succours have we to depend on,
Beside Earl Warwick's ?

Marg. O, his name alone
Will be an army to us.

Cliff. If we have it :
Resentment is a short-liv'd passion——what
If Warwick should relent, and turn again
To Edward ?

Marg. Then I have a bosom friend
That shall be ready to reward him for it ;—
But I have better hopes : without his aid ;
We are not friendless : Scotland's hardy sons
Who smile at danger, and defy the storm,
Will leave their barren mountains to defend
That liberty they love : add to the aid

Of gallant Pembroke, and the pow'rs which France
Will send to vindicate her injur'd honour :
Ere Edward can collect his force and take
The field, we shall be thirty thousand strong.

Cliff. But what becomes of the young prince ?

Marg. Aye ; there

I am indeed unhappy, O my child,
How shall I set him free ?—hear, Nature, hear
A mother's pray'r ! O guide me with thy counsel,
And teach me how to save my darling boy.
—Aye, now I have it : monitress divine,
I thank thee :—yes ; I wait but for the means
Of his escape, then fly this hated palace,
Nor will return till I can call it mine.

SCENE II.

Enter EDWARD, and SUFFOLK.

Edw. I fear, we've gone too far : th' indignant
Warwick

Ill brook'd our steady purpose ; mark'd you, Suffolk,
With what an eye of scorn he turn'd him from us,
And low'r'd defiance—that prophetic woman !
Half of her curse already is fulfill'd,
And I have lost my friend.

Suff. Some friends, perhaps,
Are better lost : you'll pardon me, my liege,
But, were it fitting, I could tell a tale
Would soon convince you—Warwick is as weak—

Edw. As Edward, thou wouldst say.

Suff. But 'twill distress

Thy noble heart too much, I dare not, sir,
Yet one day you must know it.

Edw. Then by thee

Let it be told me, Suffolk, thy kind hand
Will best administer the bitter draught :

Go on, my Suffolk, speak, I charge thee, speak.

Suff. That rival whom you wish'd me to discover—

Edw. Aye, what of him ? quick, tell me, hast thou
found

The happy traitor ? give me but to know

That I may wreak my speedy vengeance on him.

Suff. Suppose that rival were the man whom most
You lov'd, the man, perhaps, whom most you fear'd ;
Suppose 'twere—Warwick.

Edw. Ha ! it cannot be :

I would not think it for a thousand worlds—

Warwick in love with her, impossible !

Now, Suffolk, do I fear thou speak'st from envy

And jealous hatred at the noble Warwick,

Not from the love of justice or of Edward ;

Where didst thou learn this falsehood ?

Suff. From the lips

Of truth, from one whose honour and whose word

You will not question ; from—Elizabeth.

Edw. From her ! nay, then I fear—it must be so.

Suff. When last I saw her, for again I went

By your command, though hopeless of success,

With all the little eloquence that !

Was master of, I urg'd your ardent passion.
 Told her how much, how tenderly you lov'd her,
 And press'd with eagerness to know the cause
 Of her unkind refusal, till at length
 Reluctantly, with blushes she confess'd
 There was a cause ;—she thank'd you for your goodness,
 'Twas more, she said, much more than she deserv'd,
 She ever should revere her king : and if
 She had a heart to give it should be—Edward's.

Edw. So kind, and yet so cruel : well, go on.

Suff. Then told me all the story of her love,
 That Warwick long had woo'd her—that her hand
 Was promis'd ; soon as he return'd from France,
 Though once her father cruelly oppos'd it,
 They were by his consent to be united.

Edw. O never, Suffolk, may I live to see
 That dreadful hour ! designing hypocrite.
 Are these his arts, is this the friend I lov'd ?
 By heav'n ! she shall be mine ; I will assert
 A sov'reign's right, and tear her from him—what
 If he rebel—another civil war !
 'Tis terrible—O that I could shake off
 This cumbrous garb of majesty that clings
 So close around me, meet him man to man,
 And try who best deserves her ! but when kings
 Grow mad, their guiltless subjects pay the forfeit.
 Horrible thought—good Suffolk, for a while
 I would be private—therefore wait without,
 Let me have no intruders ; above all,
 Keep Warwick from my sight.—

SCENE III.*Enter WARWICK.*

Warw. Behold him here ;
 No welcome guest, it seems, unless I ask
 My lord of Suffolk's leave—there was a time
 When Warwick wanted not his aid to gain
 Admission here.

Edw. There was a time perhaps,
 When Warwick more desir'd and more—deserv'd it.

Warw. Never ; I've been a foolish faithful slave ;
 All my best years, the morning of my life,
 Hath been devoted to your service : what
 Are now the fruits ? disgrace and infamy ;
 My spotless name which never yet the breath
 Of calumny had tainted, made the mock
 For foreign fools to carp at : but 'tis fit
 Who trust in princes, should be thus rewarded.

Edw. I thought, my lord, I had full-well repay'd
 Your services with honours, wealth, and pow'r
 Unlimited : thy all-directing hand
 Guided in secret ev'ry latent wheel
 Of government, and mov'd the whole machine ;
 Warwick was all in all, and pow'rless Edward
 Stood like a cypher in a great account.

Warw. Who gave that cypher worth, and seated
 thee
 On England's throne ? thy undistinguish'd name
 Had rotted in the dust from whence it sprang,

And moulder'd in oblivion, had not Warwick
 Dug from its sordid mine the useless ore,
 And stamp'd it with a diadem. Thou know'st
 This wretched country, doom'd, perhaps, like Rome,
 To fall by its own self-destroying hand,
 Tost for so many years in the rough sea
 Of civil discord, but for me had perish'd.
 In that distressful hour I seiz'd the helm,
 Bade the rough waves subside in peace, and steer'd
 Your shatter'd vessel safe into the harbour.
 You may despise, perhaps that useless aid
 Which you no longer want; but know, proud youth,
 He who forgets a friend, deserves a foe.

Edw. Know too, reproach, for benefits receiv'd
 Pays ev'ry debt, and cancels obligation.

Warw. Why, that indeed is frugal honesty,
 A thrifty saving knowledge, when the debt
 Grows burthensome, and cannot be discharg'd,
 A sponge will wipe out all, and cost you nothing.

Edw. When you have counted o'er the num'rous
 train

Of mighty gifts your bounty lavish'd on me,
 You may remember next the inj'ries
 Which I have done you: let me know 'em all,
 And I will make you ample satisfaction.

Warw. Thou canst not; thou hast robb'd me of a
 jewel

It is not in thy pow'r to restore:
 I was the first, shall future annals say,
 That broke the sacred bond of public trust

And mutual confidence; ambassadors,
 In after times, mere instruments, perhaps,
 Of venal statesmen, shall recall my name
 To witness, that they want not an example,
 And plead my guilt, to sanctify their own.
 Amidst the herd of mercenary slaves
 That haunt your court, could none be found but
 Warwick,
 To be the shameless herald of a lye?

Edw. And wouldst thou turn the vile reproach on
 me?

If I have broke my faith, and stain'd the name
 Of England, thank thy own pernicious counsels
 That urg'd me to it, and extorted from me
 A cold consent to what my heart abhor'd.

Warw. I've been abus'd, insulted, and betray'd;
 My injur'd honour cries aloud for vengeance,
 Her wounds will never close!

Edw. These gusts of passion,
 Will but inflame them; if I have been right
 Inform'd, my lord, besides these dang'rous scars
 Of bleeding honour, you have other wounds
 As deep, tho' not so fatal: such perhaps
 As none but fair Elizabeth can cure.

Warw. Elizabeth!

Edw. Nay, start not, I have cause
 To wonder most: I little thought indeed
 When Warwick told me I might learn to love,
 He was himself so able to instruct me;
 But I've discover'd all. —————

Warw. And so have I ;
Too well I know thy breach of friendship there,
Thy fruitless base endeavours to supplant me.

Edw. I scorn it, sir—Elizabeth hath charms,
And I have equal right with you t' admire them :
Nor see I aught so godlike in the form,
So all-commanding in the name of Warwick,
That he alone should revel in the charms
Of beauty, and monopolize perfection.
I knew not of your love.

Warw. By Heav'n, 'tis false !
You knew it all, and meanly took occasion,
Whilst I was busy'd in the noble office,
Your grace thought fit to honour me withal,
To tamper with a weak unguarded woman,
To bribe her passions high, and basely steal
A treasure which your kingdom could not purchase.

Edw. How know you that ? but be it as it may,
I had a right, nor will I tamely yield
My claim to happiness, the privilege,
To choose the partner of my throne and bed :
It is a branch of my prerogative.

Warw. Prerogative !—what's that ? the boast of
tyrants :
A borrow'd jewel, glitt'ring in the crown
With specious lustre, lent but to betray,
You had it, sir, and hold it—from the people.

Edw. And therefore do I prize it ; I would guard
Their liberties, and they shall strengthen mine :
But when proud faction and her rebel crew

Insult their sov'reign, trample on his laws,
And bid defiance to his pow'r, the people
In justice to themselves, will then defend
His cause, and vindicate the rights they gave.

Warw. Go to your darling people then ; for soon,
If I mistake not, 'twill be needful ; try
Their boasted zeal, and see if one of them
Will dare to lift his arm up in your cause,
If I forbid them.

Edw. Is it so, my lord !
Then mark my words : I've been your slave too long,
And you have rul'd me with a rod of iron,
But henceforth know, proud peer, I am thy master,
And will be so : the king who delegates
His pow'r to others' hands, but ill deserves
The crown he wears.

Warw. Look well then to your own ;
It sits but loosely on your head, for know,
The man who injur'd Warwick never pass'd
Unpunish'd yet.

Edw. Nor he who threaten'd Edward—
You may repent it, sir—my guards there—seize
This traitor, and convey him to the tow'r,
There let him learn obedience.

*[Guards enter, seize Warwick, and endeavour to
disarm him.]*

Warw. Slaves, stand off :
If I must yield my sword, I'll give it him
Whom it so long has serv'd ; there's not a part
In this old faithful steel, that is not stain'd

With English blood in grateful Edward's cause.
 Give me my chains, they are the bands of friendship,
 Of a king's friendship, for his sake awhile
 I'll wear them.

Edw. Hence : away with him——

Warw. 'Tis well :

Exert your pow'r, it may not last you long ;
 For now, tho' Edward may forget his friend,
 That England will not.—Now, sir, I attend you.

[*Exit.*

Edw. Presumptuous rebel—ha ! who's here ?

SCENE IV.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My liege,
 Queen Marg'ret with the prince her son are fled ;
 In a few hours she hopes, for so we learn
 From those who have pursued her, to be join'd
 By th' Earl of Warwick, in his name it seems
 She has already rais'd three thousand men.

Edw. Warwick in league with her ! O Heav'n ! 'tis
 well

We've crush'd the serpent e'er his poison spread
 Throughout our kingdom—guard the palace gates,
 Keep double watch ; summon my troops together,—
 Where is my brother Clarence, Buckingham,
 And Pembroke ? we must check this foul rebellion.

[*Exit.*

SCENE V.

Enter the Earl of SUFFOLK.

Suff. My liege, the Duke of Clarence——

Edw. What of him ?

Suff. Hath left the court ; this moment I beheld
him

In conference with Pembroke, who, it seems,
Is Marg'ret's firmest friend : 'tis whisper'd, both
Will join the queen.

Edw. Well : 'tis no matter : I
Have deeper cause for grief, he cannot feel
A brother's falsehood, who has lost a friend,
A friend like Warwick,—Suffolk, thou behold'st me
Betray'd, deserted by the man I lov'd ;
Treated with indifference by her
Whom I ador'd, forsaken by my brother,
And threaten'd by the subjects I protect,
Oppress'd on every side : but, thou shalt see,
I have a soul superior to misfortunes.
Though rebel Clarence wrings my tortur'd heart,
And faithless Warwick braves me, we will yet
Maintain our right——come on, my friend, thou
know'st,
Without his boasted aid, I could have gain'd
The crown, without him now I will preserve it.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Tower. Enter the Earl of WARWICK.

Warwick.

MISTAKEN mortals plan delusive schemes
 Of bliss, and call futurity their own,
 Yet are not masters of a moment—this
 Was the appointed time, the very day
 Which should have join'd me to Elizabeth
 In nuptial bonds:—O cruel memory,
 Do not torment me—if there be a crime
 Of deeper dye than all the guilty train
 Of human vices, 'tis——ingratitude.
 'Tis now two years since Henry lost the crown,
 And here he is, ev'n in this very prison
 A fellow captive now : disgraceful thought !
 How will he smile to meet his conqu'ror here !
 O for that stoic apathy which lulls
 The drowsy soul to sweet forgetfulness !
 But 'twill not be :——Elizabeth, where art thou ?
 Perhaps with Edward—O that thought distracts me :
 It is, I fear, as Marg'ret said ; she's false.
 But when I look around me, can I hope
 To find one virtue left in human kind ?
 My Pembroke too ! am I so soon forgotten ?
 O no ; he comes——

SCENE II.

Enter the Earl of PEMBROKE.

Pemb. My friend !

Warw. My Pembroke, welcome :

Thee I have found most just and kind ;

But, in the darkness of adversity

The jewel friendship shines with double lustre.

Pemb. I am not of the insect train that bask
In fortune's sunshine, and when ev'ning damps
Arise, are seen no more : no, Warwick, what
I speak, I mean : you have been hardly treated.

Warw. O ! Pembroke, didst thou know but half
the wrongs

That I have suffer'd, thou wouldst pity me.

Pemb. I would do more, much more, my War-
wick : he

Who only pities but insults the wretched ;

I come with nobler views, I come to tell thee,

That I have felt thy inj'ries as my own,

And will revenge them too.

Warw. How kind thou art
To feel for Warwick !

Pemb. Ev'ry honest breast
Must feel the inj'ries that a good man suffers :
Thine is the common cause of all : adieu
To English freedom, when our liberty
Shall be dependent on a sov'reign's nod,
When years of honest service shall be paid
With infamy and chains.

Warw. I've not deserv'd them.

Pemb. Nor shalt thou wear them long: for thou
hast great

And pow'rful friends—the noble Duke of Clarence.
Behold his signet—this, my Warwick, gain'd me
Admission here—we must be secret.

Warw. Ha!

Then I am not forsaken: Clarence!

Pemb. Yes:

The gallant youth, with honest zeal, declar'd
He lov'd his brother much, but justice more.

Warw. Then, Edward, I defy thee: gen'rous
Clarence!

Thou know'st, the man who thus could treat a
friend,

Would soon forget a brother—but say, Pembroke,
How stands the Duke of Buckingham?

Pemb. Fast bound

To Edward; he and that smooth courtier Suffolk
Are the two rotten pillars that support
His tott'ring throne: but Marg'ret——

Warw. Aye: how fares

My new ally? has she escaped the tyrant?

Pemb. She has: and by some wondrous means
contriv'd

To free her captive son.

Warw. Tho' I abhor,

I must admire that enterprising woman:
Her active mind is ever on the wing
In search of fresh expedients, to recover
The crown she lost.

Pemb. Already she has rais'd
 A pow'rful army ; all the secret foes
 Of York's ambitious line rush forth in crowds,
 And join her standard : ere to-morrow's sun
 Shall dawn upon us, she will set thee free.

Warw. O! Pembroke, nothing wounds the gen'rous
 mind

So deep as obligations to a foe.
 Is there no way to liberty, my friend,
 But through the bloody paths of civil war ?

Pemb. I fear there is not.

Warw. Then it must be so :
 I could have wish'd—but freedom and revenge
 On any terms are welcome.

Pemb. Here then join we
 Our hands——

Warw. Our hearts.

Pemb. Now, Warwick, be thou firm
 In thy resolves ; let no unmanly fears,
 No foolish fond remembrance of past friendship
 Unnerve thy arm, or shake thy steady purpose.

Warw. No : by my wrongs it shall not : once, thou
 know'st,

I lov'd him but too well, and this vile prison
 Is my reward,—O give me but the use
 Of this once pow'rful arm, and thou shalt see
 How it shall punish falsehood.—Are thy forces
 Prepar'd ?

Pemb. They are, and wait but for my orders ;
 Clarence will join us soon : our first great end

Is to secure thy liberty ; that done,
We haste to seize the palace and redeem
The fair Elizabeth.

Warw. Redeem her, ha !

Is she a captive too ?

Pemb. A willing slave ;

A gay state pris'ner, left to roam at large
O'er the young monarch's palace.

Warw. Aye, my Pembroke,

That's more inviting than a prison :—O
She's false, she's false—who sent her there ?

Pemb. She came

It seems, to thank him for his royal bounties
To her good father, the new Earl of Rivers,
Who will no doubt persuade her to accept—

Warw. Of Edward's hand—distraction ! fly, my
friend,

Haste thee to Marg'ret, tell her if she hopes
For Warwick's aid, she must release him now,
Ere Edward's ill-tim'd mercy shall prevent her.

Pemb. I go : my friend, adieu ! when next we
meet,

I hope to bring thee liberty.

[*Exit.*

Warw. Farewell.

She's lost : she's gone : that base seducer Edward,
Hath wrought on her weak mind, it must be so.

SCENE III.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord,
The Lady Elizabeth.

Warw. Amazement! sure
It cannot be! admit her, sir—why, what [*Exit Mess.*
Could bring her here? Edward has sent her hither,
To see if I will crouch to him for pardon;
Be still, my jealous heart.—

SCENE IV.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Eliz. My Warwick!

Warw. 'Tis a grace I look'd not for,
That a fair fav'rite, who so late had tasted
The pleasures of a court, should condescend
To visit thus a poor abandon'd captive.

Eliz. I come to take my portion of misfortune,
To pour the balm of comfort in, and heal,
If possible, the wounds which I had made.
Too well I know I was the fatal cause
Of all thy sorrows,—but the noble Edward,
For so indeed he is——

Warw. And art thou come,
To plead the cause of him who sent me hither?

Eliz. I came to be the-messenger of peace,

To calm thy troubled soul, and give thee rest,
To teach my Warwick to forget his wrongs.

Warw. Forget my wrongs! was that thy errand
here,

To teach me low submission to a tyrant;
To ask forgiveness, kneel and deprecate
The wrath of blust'ring Edward? If thou com'st
On terms like these to bring me freedom, know
It will not be accepted: now I see
Through all your arts, by Heav'n, I'd rather lose
A thousand lives, than owe one to his bounty.

Eliz. Either my Warwick is much chang'd, and so
I fear he is, or he would never talk
Thus coldly to me, never would despise
A life so precious, if he knew how much
Elizabeth had suffer'd to preserve it.
The gallant Edward, won by my entreaties——

Warw. Entreaties! didst thou then descend so low,
As to entreat him for me?

Eliz. Hadst thou seen,
When I implor'd him to forgive my Warwick,
How kind he look'd, how his repenting heart
Heav'd with the pangs of agonizing friendship,
Thou wouldst have pity'd him.

Warw. Deceitful woman,
I see thy falsehood now, I am betray'd,
And thou art leagu'd with Edward to destroy me.
Go to your royal lover, and unite
Those only fit companions for each other,
A broken friendship, and a perjurd love:

Give up discarded Warwick, and to make
The compact firm, cement it with my blood.

Eliz. I thought the soul of Warwick far above
Such mean suspicions—Shall the man, whose truth,
Whose constancy, and love have been so long
My bright example, shall he stoop so low,
As thus to listen to an idle tale
Told by some prating courtier? if indeed
Thou couldst believe it, I should pity thee.

Warw. Where is your father, the new Earl of
Rivers?

Why sends he not his forces to our aid?

Eliz. He cannot: honour, gratitude, forbid,
That he should lift up his rebellious arm
Against his benefactor! well thou know'st,
Of late, when civil discord reign'd amongst us,
He fought with Henry, and with Henry fell:
When injur'd Edward gen'rously forgave,
Restor'd his forfeit lands, and late advanc'd him
To rank and title.

Warw. Infamy and shame;
The common nets which fearful knav'ry spreads
To catch ambition's fools: mean sordid bribes;
We know the treasure they were meant to purchase.

Eliz. Unkind suggestion! how have I deserv'd it?
Have I for this refus'd a youthful monarch,
And spurn'd his offer'd sceptre at my feet,
To be reproach'd at last by cruel Warwick?
Had I once listen'd to him I had these eyes
Been dazzled with the splendour of a court,

I need not thus have chang'd it for a dungeon.
 But since I am suspected, witness Heav'n,
 And witness Warwick to my vows I henceforth,
 Dear as thou art, I cast thee from my love ;
 Elizabeth will never wed—a traitor.

Warw. Am I awake, and did Elizabeth
 Say she would never wed her faithful Warwick ?
 Then bear me witness too, all-judging Heav'n !
 Here yield I up all visionary dreams
 Of future bliss, of liberty, or life.
 Ev'n the sweet hope of vengeance, that alone
 Sustain'd my spirit, loses all its charms ;
 I wish'd for freedom but to purchase thine :
 For life, but to enjoy it with my love,
 And she disclaims me.

Eliz. Heav'n forbid ! O Warwick,
 Let not the tide of passion thus overwhelm
 Thy reason.

Warw. Canst thou pardon me ? thou know'st
 Th' unguarded warmth, the weakness of my nature.
 I would not wrong thee, but I've been so oft,
 So cruelly deceiv'd.

Eliz. I know thou hast ;
 But never by Elizabeth.

Warw. O no !
 It is impossible that perfidy
 Should wear a form like thine. [*Looking at her.*]
 I wonder not
 That Edward lov'd, no ; when I look on thee,
 All beauteous, all enchanting as thou art :
 By Heav'n ! I think I could almost forgive him.

Eliz. Then wherefore not be reconcil'd ?

Warw. To whom ?

The author of my wrongs ? It cannot be :

Know, I have promis'd Marg'ret to destroy him.

Eliz. Destroy thy friend ! ungen'rous, cruel Warwick,

Is't not enough that thou hast triumph'd here ?

Already we have pierc'd his noble heart

With the keen pangs of disappointed love :

And wouldst thou wound his breast with added sorrows ;

Wouldst thou involve a nation in his ruin ?

Warw. Elizabeth, no more : alas ! too well

Thou know'st, there is a powerful advocate

In Warwick's breast, that pleads for perjur'd Edward.

Eliz. Cherish the soft emotion : O my Warwick !—

Warw. That angel form can never plead in vain ;

But then, my friends—where is my solemn vow

To Marg'ret, and to Pembroke ? There's the tie ;

My honour's dearer to me——

Eliz. Than thy love ;

Dearer, much dearer, than Elizabeth ?

But I have done : farewell, my lord, I see

Thy deep resentment is not to be mov'd

By my weak influence o'er thee.

[*Going.*]

Warw. Stay, I charge thee.

Eliz. What is this phantom, Honour, this proud idol

That tramples thus on every humble virtue ?

This cruel, bloody Molock, that delights

In human sacrifice ! O ! would to Heav'n

I were its only victim ! but with me,
You offer up your country and your king.

Warw. Think on my vow, think on my promise
given.

Eliz. Thy league with Marg'ret must be fatal :
grant

We should succeed, and Lancaster once more
Assume the throne ; how dear the victory,
That's purchas'd with our fellow-subjects blood !
Alas ! such triumphs make the conqu'ror weep.
But if we fail——

Warw. Impossible !

Eliz. O ! think

Betimes ! what dreadful punishments await
The vanquish'd rebel : thou, perhaps, my love,
Shalt then be doom'd on th' ignominious block
To fall inglorious ; and, when thou art gone,
Who shall defend thy poor Elizabeth ?

Warw. Alarming thought ! It staggers my firm
purpose,
And makes me half a villain.

SCENE V.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Madam, the king demands your presence, I
Have orders to convey you to the palace.

Warw. And wilt thou leave me ?

Eliz. This, my Warwick, this

Is the decisive moment, now determine,
 Accept of mercy, ere it be too late ;
 Ere hasty Edward——Shall I say thou wilt
 Return to thy obedience, and receive
 Thy pardon ? Shall I ? Speak my love.

Warw. Perhaps

I may accept it, if 'tis brought by thee.

Eliz. Then we shall meet in happiness——

Warw. Farewell !

[*Exit Eliz.*]

SCENE VI.

Warw. Now to those worst companions in affliction,
 My own sad thoughts again ; they're gloomy all,
 And, like my habitation, full of horror.
 I like not Edward's message—if he hears
 My league with Margaret, he still has pow'r
 To make me feel his rage : I have deserv'd it——

[*A trampling heard without.*]

Methought I heard a noise——this way they come,
 Perhaps it is the messenger of death——

SCENE VII.

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pemb. The messenger of vengeance——see her sword ;
 Accept it and be free. [Offers the sword.]

Warw. First let me know
 To whom I am indebted for't.

Pemb. To me.

Soon as the rumour of thy foul disgrace
Had reach'd the public ear, th' impatient people
Uncertain of thy fate, tumultuous throng'd
Around the palace, and demanded thee ;
Give us our Warwick, give us back, they cry'd,
Our hero, our deliv'rer—I stepp'd forth
And bade them, instant, if they wish'd to save
The best of men from infamy and death,
To follow me: transported they obey'd :
I led them hither : forc'd the prison gates,
And brought thee this—direct it as thou wilt.

[*Gives the sword.*]

Warw. Welcome once more, thou dearest gift of
Heav'n,

Immortal liberty ! my friend, I thank thee.
O Pembroke, wouldst thou hadst been here ! my love,
My dear Elizabeth is true.

Pemb. At least
You think so.

Warw. She has told me such sweet truths ;
Edward repents him sorely, he is griev'd
At his ingratitude.

Pemb. And well he may ;
I fear thou art betray'd : alas ! my Warwick,
Thy open, gen'rous, unsuspecting virtue,
Thinks ev'ry heart as honest as thy own.
Thou know'st not Edward—nor Elizabeth.
The kingdom is in arms, and ev'ry hour,
It is expected France will join the queen :

England will want its great protector's aid.
 Edward and Rivers have conspired to cheat
 Thy credulous ear, and who so fit to spread
 The flimsy web as thy Elizabeth,
 Their fair ambassadress ? I see thou'rt caught.

Warw. By Heav'n, it may be so : I am the sport
 Of fortune and of fraud.

Pemb. Away, my friend :

It is not now a time to think of her :
 Marg'ret, supported by thy pow'rful name,
 And join'd by Clarence, waits us at the head
 Of fifteen thousand men, who, eager all
 To crush a tyrant, and pull down oppression,
 Attend thy wish'd-for presence ; not a soldier
 Will act or move till Warwick shall direct them.
 Edward and England's fate depend on thee.

Warw. Away, my friend, I'll follow thee.

[*Exit* Pembroke,

Yet stop

A moment—let not passion hurry me
 To base dishonour—if my country calls
 For Warwick's aid, shall I not hear her voice,
 And save her ? Pembroke may have private views,
 And subtle Marg'ret too—Elizabeth !
 I must not lose thee—O ! direct me, Heav'n ! [*Exit.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Elizabeth.

THE royal pardon came too late, and Pembroke
Already has releas'd him; he is gone——

Elizabeth may never see him more.

A thousand terrors haunt me, a fond father,

A guiltless sov'reign, a distracted lover,

Fame, fortune, friends, and country, all depend

On one eventful moment—hark! the sound

Of distant groans; perhaps the king—perhaps

My Warwick bleeds. O! agonizing thought!

Great God of armies, whose all-guiding hand

Directs the fate of nations, O! look down

On thy own image, let not cruel discord

Divide their kindred souls! in pity hear,

Pour thy benignant spirit o'er their hearts,

And once more knit them in the bonds of peace!

SCENE II.

Enter SUFFOLK.

Suff. The pray'r of innocence is always heard.

Eliz Ha! Suffolk, whither hast'st thou? art thou
come——

Suff. I come to heal thy sorrows, lovely fair one,

To tell thee, Edward, and thy much-lov'd Warwick,
Once more are friends.

Eliz. Indeed! O welcome news!

M. Joy's too great for utterance: tell me, Suffolk,
How was it? Speak, is Warwick safe? O Heaven!

Suff. A moment's patience, and I'll tell thee all.

Marg'ret, thou know'st, had rais'd a pow'rful force,
That doubled Edward's troops; elate with pride,
And almost sure of victory, she urg'd

The tardy spearmen; on they rush'd, as if
Secure of conquest: the unhappy king

Stood nobly firm, and seem'd to brave his fate,
When Warwick like a guardian god appear'd:

His noble mien and all-commanding look

Struck deep attention; every eye was bent

Upon him, and an awful silence reign'd

O'er either host, he rais'd his voice on high,

And stop, he cry'd, your sacrilegious hands,

Nor touch my friend: who pierces Edward's breast,
Must pass through mine: I rais'd him to the throne,

And will support him there: to you I gave,

From you my fellow soldiers I expect him:

How'er the cruel wrongs have wounded me,

He never injur'd you, and, I—forgive him.

He spake, and instant through the gazing crowd

A murmur ran; down dropp'd their nerveless arms,

As if enchanted by some magic pow'r,

And with one voice they cry'd, long live king Edward!

Eliz. How powerful is the tongue of eloquence,
When in the cause of virtue!—well, what follow'd?

Suff. Encourag'd by the shouting soldiers, Edward
 On like a modest virgin wishing came,
 Yet fearful. Warwick with a bridegroom's speed
 To meet him flew ; into each other's arms
 They ran with speechless joy : the tender scene
 Affected ev'ry heart, and the rough soldier,
 Unused to melting sympathy, forgot
 His ruthless nature, and dissolv'd in tears.

Eliz. Sweet reconciliation ! then, Elizabeth,
 Thou didst not plead in vain ; but, say, how brook'd
 The haughty queen this unexpected change ?

Suff. Abash'd, confounded, for a while she strove
 To stem the torrent, but in vain ; then fled
 Precipitate.

Eliz. But where, O where's my Warwick ?

Suff. With a few chosen squadrons he pursues
 The disappointed Marg'ret.

Eliz. O my fears !

I know not why, but at that hateful name
 I tremble ever, my foreboding heart
 Presages something dreadful.

Suff. Do not vex
 Thy tender mind with visionary dangers.

Eliz. O ! would to Heaven that he were shelter'd
 here,
 And safe within these arms !

Suff. Be not alarm'd :
 He is the care of Heav'n, all good men love
 All bad ones fear him.

Eliz. Such superior merit

Must have a thousand foes, the constant mark
Of envy's poison'd darts.

Suff. There Suffolk feels
The keen reproach; with blushes I confess
There was a time, when, urg'd by fond ambition,
I look'd on Warwick with a jealous eye:
But this last noble deed hath won my heart,
And I am now a convert to his virtues;
But see, the king approaches.

SCENE III.

Enter King EDWARD.

Edw. Health and peace,
And happiness to fair Elizabeth!
Thou art no stranger to the joyful news;
The lustre of those speaking eyes declares it.

Eliz. Suffolk, ev'n now, hath bless'd me with the
tidings.

Edw. O! 'tis amazement all: Elizabeth,
When last we met, thou wert the suppliant, now
'Tis I must ask forgiveness, I who injur'd
The dearest, best of men; O! thou hast sav'd
Edward from shame, and England from destruction.

Eliz. Did I not say my Warwick would be just?

Edw. Thou didst, and on those beauteous lips fair
truth
And soft persuasion dwell; long time he stood
Inflexible, and deaf to friendship's voice,

Listen'd to nought but all subduing love.
 In after-times, thy name shall be enroll'd
 Amongst the great deliv'ers of their country.

Eliz. I have no title to the lavish praise
 Thy gen'rous heart bestows; I only said
 What duty prompted, and what love inspir'd;
 Indulgent Heav'n has crown'd it with success.

Edw. Thou hast done all: I am indebted to thee
 For more, much more than I can e'er repay.
 Long time, with shame, I own hath Warwick soar'd
 Above me, but I will not be outdone
 For ever by this proud aspiring rival:
 Poor as I am, there yet is one way left
 To pay the debt of gratitude I owe him,
 One great reward for such exalted virtues,
 Thyself, Elizabeth.

Eliz. What means my lord,
 My royal master?

Edw. Yes; when next we meet
 I will bestow it on him, will resign
 All my fond claim to happiness and thee;
 Tho, thy dear image ne'er can be effac'd
 From Edward's breast, tho' still I dote upon thee,
 Tho' I could hang for ever on thy beauties;
 Yet will I yield them to their rightful lord;
 Warwick has earn'd, Warwick alone deserves them.

Eliz. Would he were here to thank thee for this
 goodness!
 Know, gen'rous prince, Elizabeth has long
 Admir'd thy virtues, and could love admit

Of a divided heart, the noble Edward
Would share it with his friend.

SCENE IV.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My royal liege,
The rebels are dispers'd, queen Marg'ret's son
Was slain in the pursuit—and she——

Edw. I hope
Secur'd——

Mess. Is taken pris'ner, and will soon
Be here——

Edw. But where's Lord Warwick?

Mess. Sir—the queen——

SCENE V.

Enter MARGARET, Prisoner.

Marg. Once more I am your prisoner.

Edw. 'Twill be prudent
Henceforth to keep you so.

Marg. You dare not
Thou think'st, perhaps, that I shall sue to thee
For mercy: no; in Marg'ret of Anjou,
Thou seest the wife, and daughter of a king.
A spirit not to be subdu'd; though fall'n,
Triumphant still; and, though a prisoner, free.

For know, I bear a mind above the reach
 Of fortune or of Edward—I have lost
 All I could wish to live for in my child ;
 And gain'd what most I wish'd to gain, revenge !
 Or life or death are now indiff'rent to me.

Edw. For thy unbounded goodness, Power supreme,
 Accept our praise !

Eliz. [*Kneeling.*] Accept our humble pray'r !

Marg. Insulting piety ! the common trick
 Of hypocrites and slaves : when ye shall know
 What Marg'ret knows, ye may not be so thankful.
 Methinks 'tis pity Warwick is not here
 To join in your devotion.

Eliz. Would to Heav'n
 He were !

Marg. That monster, that perfidious slave,
 Who broke his faith to Marg'ret, and to thee ;
 Thy coward soul, unable to defend
 The treasure thou hadst stolen, could meanly stoop
 To court the traitor whom thou dar'st not punish.
 Not so the injur'd Marg'ret—she repell'd
 The wrongs she felt, and the deceiver met
 The fate he merited.

Edw. What fate ?—Ev'n now,
 Crown'd with immortal wreaths, the hero comes
 To bless his friends, and punish guilt like thine.

Marg. Proud and deluded wretches ! I look down
 With pity on you : captive as I am,
 'Tis mine to judge and punish ; be it yours
 To hear and tremble.

Edw. Ha!

Eliz. What can this mean?

Marg. If I mistake not, Warwick is your friend,
Your lover too, I think.

Eliz. My lord, my husband.

Marg. Know then, that friend, that lover, perjur'd
Warwick,
Hath not an hour to live.

Edw. What murth'rous hand——

Marg. Mine, tyrant, mine: think not I mean to
hide

The noble deed; it is my happiness,
It is my glory: thou wilt call me base,
Blood thirsty, cruel, savage, and revengeful.
But here I stand acquitted to myself,
And ev'ry feeling heart that knows my wrongs.——
To late posterity dethroned queens
And weeping mothers shall applaud my justice.

Edw. Justice, on whom?

Marg. Can Edward ask me? Who
Imprison'd Henry, robb'd me of a crown,
And plac'd it on a proud usurper's head?
Who gave his sacred promise to a queen,
And broke it? who, for which indignant Heav'n
Chastis'd him, basely murder'd my sweet boy?
Bereft of honour, fortune, husband, child,
Depriv'd of ev'ry comfort, what remain'd
For me but vengeance, what for him but death?

Edw. What hast thou done? When? Where?
Speak, murth'ress, speak.

Marg. Press'd by surrounding multitudes, and made
 A slave, they dragg'd me to the conqu'ror's tent,
 There the first horrid object I beheld,
 Was the pale corse of my poor bleeding child :
 There—as th' insulting Warwick stood, and seem'd
 To triumph o'er him—from my breast I drew
 A poniard forth, and plung'd it in his heart.
 Th' astonish'd soldiers throng'd around him, seiz'd
 And brought me here—now to your pray'rs again.

[*Elizabeth faints.*]

Edw. She faints, good Suffolk, help there, help,
 support,

Assist her.—Lead her in.

[*Exit Elizabeth.*]

If it be true,

As much I fear it is, a thousand deaths
 Were punishment too little for thy guilt :
 Thou shalt be tortur'd.

Marg. Tyrant, I defy thee ;

Thy threats appall not me : prepare your tortures,
 Let them be sharp and cruel as thyself,
 All that ingenious malice can suggest,
 Or power inflict, 'twill be my comfort still,
 They cannot be so great as those you feel.

Edw. Guards, take the monster hence, let her be
 chain'd

In some deep dungeon, dark as her own thoughts,
 There let her perish—hence, away with her.

Marg. Despair and horror visit thee—farewell—
 He comes, my triumph is complete—look there !

[*Exit.*]

SCENE VI.

Enter WARWICK, leaning on Two Soldiers.

Warw. Where is he? Lead me, lead me to my king.

Edw. My Warwick! my preserver!—she shall bleed
For this in ev'ry vein.

Warw. Think not of her,
She has no power to hurt thee! and with guilt
Like hers, 'tis punishment enough to live:
This is no time for vengeance; death comes on
With hasty strides, 'tis but a little while,
A few short moments, and we part for ever.
My friend——

Edw. I am not worthy of the name,
For I disgrac'd, dishonour'd, murder'd thee;
Edward's unkindness was the cause of all:
Canst thou forgive me?

Warw. O! may Warwick's crimes
Ne'er meet forgiveness from offended Heav'n,
If from my soul I do not pardon, love,
And honour thee!

Edw. Away, let me support him;
'Tis the last office I shall e'er perform
For thee, my Warwick——Wilt thou lean upon me,
And seal my pardon with one kind embrace?

Warw. We never hated.

Edw. But my love was blind.

Warw. And blinder my resentment.

Edw. I forgot
Thy services.

Warw. And I remember'd not
Thou wert my king—My sweet Elizabeth,
Where is she? Edward, do not keep her from me,
We are no rivals now.

Edw. Shock'd at the news
Of thy untimely fate, she sunk beneath it,
And fainted in these arms: I seiz'd th' occasion,
And bade her weeping maidens bear her hence:
This would have been a dreadful sight indeed.

Eliz. [*Without.*] I can, I will support it.

Warw. Ha! that voice—
Sure 'tis Elizabeth's!

SCENE VII.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Eliz. O! give me way,
For I must see him—O! my Warwick!

Warw. O!
This is too much, the bitterness of death
Is to be sever'd thus from those we love.

Edw. Why would you bring her here?

[*To the Attendants.*]

Warw. Elizabeth,
Be comforted.

Eliz. O no, it is my doom
Never to taste of joy or comfort more:
No; from this hateful world will I retire,
And mourn my Warwick's fate, imploring Heav'n
That I may soon wear out my little store
Of hopeless days, and join thee in the tomb.

Warw. That must not be : I've done my friend a
wrong,

And only thou canst make atonement for it.
Thy hand, Elizabeth, if e'er thou lov'st,
Observe me now—thine, Edward.—For my sake
Cherish this beauteous mourner, take her from me,
As the last present of a dying friend.

Edw. If aught could make the precious gift more
dear,

It would be, Warwick, that it came from thee.
O! I will guard her with a parent's care
From every ill, watch over and protect her ;
And when the memory of thee shall awake,
As oft it will, her poignant griefs, repel
The rising sigh, wipe off the flowing tear,
And strive to charm her to forgetfulness.

Warw. Wilt thou indeed ? Then I shall die in peace.

Eliz. Yet thou may'st live.

Warw. Impossible :—I feel

The hand of death press cold upon my heart,
And all will soon be o'er—I've liv'd to save
My falling country, to repent my crimes,
Redeem my honour, and restore my king.

Edw. Alas! my friend, the memory of thee
Will poison every bliss.

Warw. All-healing time

That closes ev'ry wound, shall pour its balm
O'er thine.—Mean while, remember Warwick's fate.
I gave my word to Margaret, and broke it ;
Heav'n is not to be mock'd, it soon o'ertakes us,
And in our crime we meet our punishment.

O, Edward! if thou hop'st that length of days,
 And fair prosperity shall crown thy wishes,
 Beware of passion and resentment—make
 Thy people's good and happiness thy own,
 Discourage faction, banish flatt'ers, keep
 Thy faith inviolate, and reign in peace.

I can no more—My love! Have mercy, Heav'n! [*Dies.*

Edw. He's gone!—

Eliz. And with him all my hopes of bliss.

Edw. Let ev'ry honour to a soldier due,
 Attend the hero to his tomb—mean while,
 Deep in the living tablet of my heart,
 Will I engrave thy words—ill'ustrious shade!
 Living thou wert my counsellor and friend,
 And dead I will remember and obey thee.

Eliz. Warwick, farewell! I shall not long survive
 thee.

Edw. I hope thou wilt—Elizabeth, remember
 His dying charge, think on thy promise giv'n.
 Thou shalt remain with me, with me lament
 Our common benefactor; we will sit
 And talk together of my Warwick's virtues,
 For I will try to emulate them all,
 And learn, by copying him, to merit thee.
 His great example shall inspire my breast
 With patriot zeal, shall teach me to subdue
 The power of faction, vanquish party rage,
 And make me, what alone I wish to be,
 The happy king of an united people. [*Excunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

Spoken by Mrs. YATES.

EXHAUSTED quite with prisons, racks, and death,
Permit me here to take a little breath!

You who have seen my actions, known their springs,

Say, are we women such insipid things?

Say, lords of the creation, mighty men!

In what have you surpass'd us, where? and when?

I come to know to whom the palm is due,

To us weak vessels, or to stronger you?

Against your conqu'ring swords, I draw—my fan,

Come on!—now parry Marg'ret, if you can.

[Sets herself in a posture of defence.

Stand up, ye boasters! [To the Pit.] don't there sneaking
sit;

Are you for Pleasure, Politics, or Wit?

The Boxes smile to see me scold the Pit.

Their turn is next—and though I will not wrong 'em,

A woful havoc there will be among 'em —

You, our best friends, [To the Pit.] love, cherish, and
respect us;

Not take our fortunes, marry, and neglect us.

You think indeed, that as you please, you rule us,

And with a strange importance often school us!

*Yet let each citizen describe a brother,
I'll tell you what you say of one another.
My neighbour leads, poor soul, a woful life,
A worthy man—but govern'd by his wife !
How, say you ? what, all silent ?—then, 'tis true :
We rule the city—Now, great sirs, to you.*

[To the Boxes.

*What is your boast ?—Would you, like me, have done,
To free a captive wife, or save a son ?
Rather than run such danger of your lives,
You'd leave your children, and lock up your wives.
When with your noblest deeds a nation rings !
You are but puppets, and we play the strings.
We plan no battles—true—but out of sight,
Crack goes the fan,—and armies halt or fight !
You have th' advantage, Ladies—wisely reap it,
And let me hint the only way to keep it.
Let men of vain ideas have their fill,
Frown, bounce, stride, strut,—while you, with happy skill,
Like anglers, use the finest silken thread ;
Give line enough—nor check the tugging head :
The fish will flounder—you with gentle hand,
And soft degrees, must bring the trout to land :
A more specific nostrum cannot be—
Probatum est—and never fails with Me.*





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