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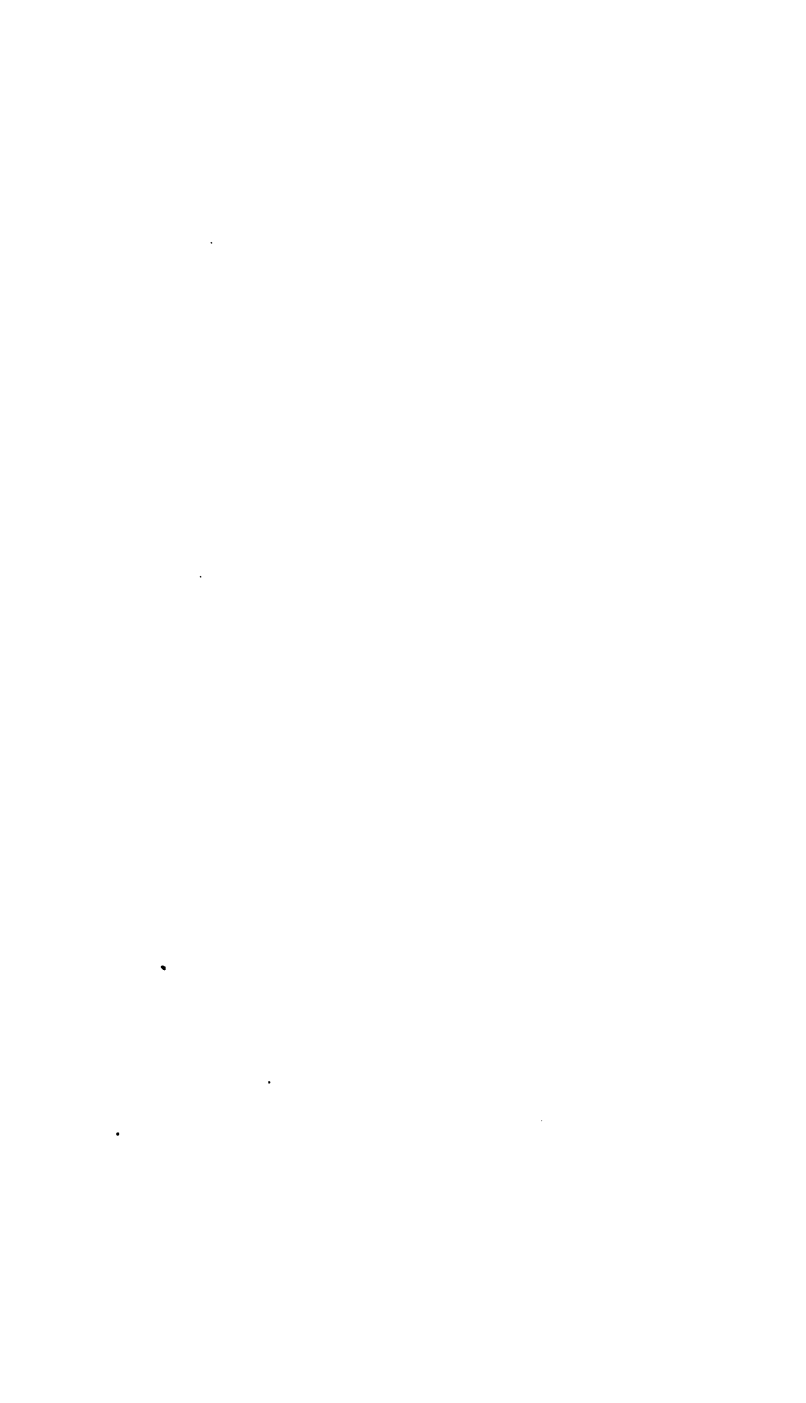


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THE
POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

V O L. III.

D U B L I N :

PRINTED BY WILLIAM PORTER,

FOR MESSRS. MONCRIEFFE, JENKIN, BURNET, WILSON,
BURTON, WHITE, BEATTY, BYRNE, CASH,
AND MC. KENZIE.

—♦—♦—♦—♦—♦—
M, DCC, LXXXV.

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

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1950

P L A Y S
O F
T H R E E A C T S ;
W R I T T E N F O R A
P R I V A T E T H E A T R E .

VOL. III.

B



T O

HER GRACE THE DUTCHESS OF

DEVONSHIRE.

*Non perch' io creda bisognar miei carmi
A chi se ne fa copia da se stessa ;
Ma sol per soddisfare a questo mio
Cha ho d'onorarla di ledar disio.*

ARIOSTO, Canto xxxvii.

THE Great and Fair, in every age and clime,
Receive free homage from the Sons of Rhyme :
Bend, ye ambitious Bards, at Grandeur's shrine !
Be Power your patron ! Wit and Beauty mine !—
To thee whom elegance has taught to please
By serious dignity, or sportive ease ;
Whom Virtue hails, at Pleasure's festive rites,
Chaste Arbiter of Art's refin'd delights :
To thee, fair DEVON ! I breathe this votive strain ;
Nor dread th' averted ear of proud Disdain :

For O, if music has not blest my lyre,
 A lovelier spirit of th' ætherial choir,
 Joy-breathing Gratitude, that hallow'd guest,
 Who fires with heavenly zeal the human breast,
 Bids my weak voice her swelling note prolong,
 And consecrate to thee her tributary song.

WHEN first my anxious Muse's fav'rite child,
 Her young SERENA, artless, simple, wild,
 Presum'd from privacy's safe scenes to fly,
 And met in giddy haste the public eye;
 Thy generous praise her trembling youth sustain'd,
 The smile she dar'd not ask, from thee she gain'd;
 And found a guardian in the gracious DEVON,
 Kind as the regent of her fancied heaven.—
 The flatter'd Muse, whose offspring thou hast blest,
 In the fond pride that rules a parent's breast,
 Presents thus boldly to thy kind embrace
 This little group of her succeeding race.
 Blest! if thy pathos true to Nature's law,
 From thy soft bosom they may haply draw
 Those tender sighs, that eloquently shew
 The virtues of the heart from whence they flow!
 Blest! if by foibles humorously hit,
 In the light scenes that aim at comic wit,
 They turn thy pensive charms to mirthful grace,
 And wake the sprightly sweetness of thy face!

WHILE

DEDICATION. ▼

WHILE thus the proud Enthusiast would aspire
 To change thy beauties with her changing lyre ;
 Much as she wants the talent and the right,
 To shew thy various charms in varied light,
 O might the Muse, intruding on thy bower,
 From her fair Patron catch the magic power
 Frequent to meet the public eye, and still
 That fickle eye with fond amazement fill !
 Let her, if this vain wish is lost in air,
 Breathe from her grateful heart a happier prayer !
 Howe'er her different fables may give birth
 To fancied woe, and visionary mirth ;
^{And} all thy griefs belong to Fiction's reign,
 And wound ^{the} only with a pleasing pain !
 May thy light spirit, on ^{the} sea of life,
 Elude the rocks of care, the guns of strife,
 And safely, as the never-sinking buoy,
 Float on th' unebbing flood of real joy !

EARTHAM,
 January 29, 1784.

W. HAYLEY.

P R E F A C E.

AS the following Plays were intended only for a private theatre, I have been tempted by that circumstance to introduce a kind of novelty in our language, by writing three comedies in rhyme, tho' the Comic Muse of our country has been long accustomed to express herself in prose, and her custom has the sanction of settled precept and successful example. The Antiquarian, indeed, may remind me that Gammer Gurton's Needle, one of the earliest of our old plays, with other comic productions of that rude period, was written in rhyme; and possibly some fastidious enemies of that Gothic
B 4 jingle,

jingle, as they affect to call it, may consider the present Publication as nothing more than a relapse into the most barbarous mode of dramatic composition.

FOR the boldness of an attempt, which has no modern precedent to plead in its behalf, some apology may be due to the Public.

IN the first place, I beg it may not be supposed, that by writing a comedy in rhyme, I mean to convey an indirect censure on the contrary practice. No one can prize more highly than I do the many excellent comedies in prose, with which our language is enriched. I am very far from entertaining a wish to overturn the ceremonial which the Comic Muse of England has established; but I hope to find our country as much a friend to toleration in the forms of literature, as in those of religion. The
 custom

P R E F A C E. ix

custom of other enlightened nations, both ancient and modern, may be pleaded on this occasion in behalf of verse. Aristophanes, in his play of the Clouds, seems to pride himself on his poetry. Ariosto having written two comedies in prose, converted them both into metre at a maturer period of his life; and Moliere, the unrivalled master of the French comic theatre, who has written admirably both in prose and rhyme, is, I think, most admirable, and most truly comic, when he adheres to the latter.

To the author who attempts a comedy in English rhyme, our language seems to offer an advantage, which the French poet did not enjoy. The Comic Muse of France has chiefly confined herself to that structure of verse, which belongs equally to her Tragic Sister. In the poetry of our nation, this particular

x P R E F A C E.

measure is appropriated to sportive subjects, and though hitherto not used in Comedy, it possesses to an English ear a very comic vivacity. That it is highly calculated for poems of wit and humour, we have a striking proof in that most exquisite production the Bath Guide. How far it may succeed through the varied scenes of English play, experiments only can determine. As some readers, on the first sight of a comedy in rhyme, may hastily suppose that the fashion and the materials of the works are borrowed from the Theatre of France, I think it proper to declare, in justice to the writers of that country, that they are by no means answerable for any defects which may be found in these dramatic performances. I am not conscious of having borrowed a single character or situation from any comic writer whatsoever, either foreign or domestic.—The first of the three comedies

dies contained in the present Publication, was founded on a real anecdote related to me by an intimate friend, who, concealing the names of the parties, mentioned their ludicrous adventure as a new and tempting subject for the Comic Muse.—The plan of the second arose in the mind of its author, from his remarking the various effects of Connoisseurship in different characters. An attachment to the fine arts, which is allowed to refine and strengthen the virtues of a manly and a generous spirit, has, perhaps a peculiar tendency not only to shew, but to increase the narrowness of a vain and feeble mind; and if such a tendency exists, it is the province of a comic writer to counteract and correct it.—The aim of the third comedy in this collection is to laugh at two distinct species of affectation, very prevalent in our age and country ;

country; the affectation of refined sentiment, and the affectation of pompous and pedantic expression.—I protest however against personal application: and, to guard against it, let me declare, that this ridicule is levelled, not at the great and respectable Veteran in the field of literature, whose phrases may sometimes be borrowed by a character in the play; but at the nameless and servile herd of his awkward imitators.—Vigor and originality of thought give a sanction to the pomp and peculiarity of his language. If singularities of style are united with genius and moral excellence, they are properly regarded with a partial respect; but when these singularities are preposterously copied, and seem to prevail as a fashion, they become, I apprehend, very fair subjects of sportive satire.

WHEN

WHEN I reflect what long and established prejudice a rhyming play must encounter—when I remember that even Dryden himself, the most able advocate, and the greatest master of rhyme in our language, has expressly condemned the use of it in comedy—I am alarmed at the hardness of my attempt; but when I recollect that time, the most infallible test of literary opinion, has fully shewn the mistake of that immortal Poet, in recommending the use of rhyme in English Tragedy, I am inclined to hope that he might be equally mistaken in supposing it utterly unsuited to our Comic Muse. It may be urged, indeed, with great truth, that a comedy in rhyme, cannot be so close a copy of Nature as a comedy in prose, the latter adhering to the very language of common life. But from a sister-art we may borrow, at least a plausible argument in favour of Poetry, on the present occasion.

sion. The great master, who has de-
 scanted so happily on the principles of
 Painting, observes with great propriety,
 in one of his discourses, that “ we are
 “ not always pleased with the most
 “ absolute possible resemblance of an
 “ imitation to its original object: cases
 “ may exist, in which such a resem-
 “ blance may be even disagreeable. I
 “ shall only observe, that the effect of
 “ figures in wax-work, though certain-
 “ ly a more exact representation than
 “ can be given by painting or sculp-
 “ ture, is a sufficient proof that the
 “ pleasure we receive from imitation
 “ is not increased merely in proportion
 “ as it approaches to minute and de-
 “ tailed reality: we are pleased, on the
 “ contrary, by seeing ends answered
 “ by seeming inadequate means*.”—
 On these principles, which perhaps are

* Sir Joshua Reynolds’ Discourse of December 1782.

equally

equally just in the two kindred arts, a comedy in rhyme may be still more entertaining than a comedy, of equal merit in other points, which confines itself to prose; and a critic who exclaims against the unnatural effect of a rhyming dialogue, may as justly censure a portrait on canvass, because it is not so exact a copy of life, as an image of coloured wax. In both cases, the artist, whether painter or poet, may be justly called a true and pleasing copier of Nature, if he preserves as high a degree of resemblance, as his mode of imitation will admit, and embellishes his work with the attractive and almost indispensable graces of ease, spirit, and freedom.

It is said by Voltaire of theatrical composition in general, “Tous les genres sont bons hors le genre ennuyeux.” If the present comedies fall not within the class which that lively writer has so
justly

xvi P R E F A C E.

justly proscribed, the Author may be allowed to hope, that his liberal and enlightened readers will look with indulgence on a publication, which arose from his wish to introduce a striking, and he trusts not a blameable, variety into the amusements of English literature.

THE

THE
HAPPY PRESCRIPTION,
OR, THE
LADY RELIEVED FROM HER LOVERS:
A COMEDY, IN RHYME.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

SIR NICHOLAS ODDFISH,
SAPPHIC,
DECISIVE,
MORLEY,
COLONEL FELIX,
JONATHAN, Servant to MORLEY;

SELINA, Neice to SIR NICHOLAS,
MRS. FELIX, her Cousin, and Wife to the Colonel,
JENNY, Servant to SELINA.

Servants of SIR NICHOLAS, &c.

SCENE *the Country Mansion of the ODDFISH Family.*

THE
HAPPY PRESCRIPTION.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

Enter Sir Nicholas in debate with Mrs. Felix and Selina.

MRS. FELIX.

WHAT a strange declaration!—it gives me the
spleen;
But 'tis what good Sir Nicholas never can mean.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Not mean it, fair Lady!—by Jupiter, yes!
And my project you 'll see will be crown'd with success;
I am joyous myself, and 'tis ever my plan
To give those I love all the joy that I can.

Mrs.

4 THE HAPPY PRESCRIPTON:

MRS. FELIX.

We own it—but joy is like diet, dear Cousin,
 One palate mayn't relish what pleases a dozen;
 Nor will I allow that my appetite's vicious,
 If perchance I don't like, what you think most delicious.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Some dainty distinctions!—but can I believe
 That a woman ^{at the wedding of Eve,} whose heart (tho' most coyly held) might be carried)
 Did not fervently wish to be speedily married
 Not to wound your nice ears with the name of detraction
 Which youth renders lovely, and nature inspires,
 Your sex, from its weakness, demands a defender,
 Whom pride and affection make watchful and tender;
 And if my fair Coz is no hypocrite grown,
 The truth of my maxims you'll honestly own;
 While the wars from your arms the brave Colonel detain,
 Is the want of a husband the source of no pain?

MRS. FELIX.

There, indeed, you have touch'd me a little too near,
 My Soldier, you know, to my soul is most dear,
 I own—and my frankness you never will blame,
 I'd purchase his presence with ought but his fame.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well said, thou dear, honest, and warm-hearted wife;
 For thy truth may good angels still watch o'er his life,
 And while others the rough field of slaughter are treading,
 Send him home full of glory, to dance at our wedding!
 For a wedding we'll have to enliven us all,
 And Hymen's bright altar shall warm the old hall.
 For my Niece ere I die, tis my wish to provide,
 And ere two months are past I *will* see her a bride.

I'm

I'm resolv'd—and you know that my neighbours all say,
Sir Nicholas Oddfish will have his own way.

MRS. FELIX.

Selina, dear Sir, wants no other protection,
While her life glides in peace by your gentle direction.
She thinks, and I own, I approve her remark,
In conjugal cares 'tis too soon to embark :
Her bosom untouch'd by Love's dangerous dart,
Fate has not yet shewn her the man of her heart.

SIR NICHOLAS.

The man of her heart!—these nonsensical fancies
You light-headed females pick out of romances.
That I am no tyrant you know very well,
So Cousin don't teach my good Niece to rebel !
I am no greedy guardian, who thinks it his duty
On the altar of Plutus to sacrifice beauty ;
Whose venal barbarity, justly abhorr'd,
Ties a lovely young girl to an old crippled lord,
And basely, to gain either rank or estate,
Makes her swear she will love, what she cannot but hate.
From such a protector Heaven guard my dear Niece !
I wish her to wed that her joys may increase ;
And the deuce must be in the strange girl! who discovers
No man to her mind in such plenty of lovers.
To no very great length will my cruelty run,
If from twenty admirers I bid her chuse one.

MRS. FELIX.

But why, dear Sir Nicholas, why in such haste?

SIR NICHOLAS.

'Tis thus that my projects are ever disgrac'd
With the false names of hurry and precipitation,
Because I abhor filly procrastination ;

That

6 THE HAPPY PRESCRIPTION:

That thief of delight, who deludes all our senses,
Who cheats us for ever with idle pretences,
By whom, like the dog in the fable, betray'd,
We let go the substance to snap at the shade.
To seize present Time is the true Art of Life ;
'Tis Time who now cries, make Selina a Wife !
The season is come, I've so long wish'd to see
From the moment I dandled her first on my knee :
She, you know, to my care was bequeath'd by my Brothe
And having this Child, I ne'er wish'd for another :
Thro' life I have kept myself single for her ;
Her interest, her joy, to my own I prefer.

SELINA.

Your kindness, dear Sir, I can never repay.

SIR NICHOLAS.

In truth, my dear damsel, you easily may ;
I demand no return so enormously great ;
I ask but a Boy to possess my estate.

SELINA.

Lord, Uncle, how come such odd thoughts in your head

MRS. FELIX.

From his heart, I assure you—'tis pleasantly said ;
A fair stipulation—both parties agreed,
The compact, I trust, in due time will succeed ;
But patience, dear Knight, you will have your desire,
Nor wait very long for a young little 'Squire.

SIR NICHOLAS.

The cold stream of Patience ne'er creeps in my veins,
But the wish my heart forms my quick spirit attains.
I'm none of your chill atmospherical wretches,
Whose affections are subject to starts and to catches ;

Whol

Whose wish, like a weather-cock, veering about,
 Now turns towards hope, and now changes to doubt :
 No, mine, like the needle without variation,
 Only looks to one point, and that point's Consummation.
 I want to behold this young Urchin arise,
 Before I have lost or my legs or my eyes,
 That I may enjoy all his little vagaries,
 As the changeable season of infancy varies.
 I long to be moulding his heart and his spirit,
 To shew him the fields he is born to inherit ;
 Lead him round our rich woods, while my limbs are yet
 limber,
 And tell the young rogue, how I've nurs'd up his timber ;
 That when the worn thread of my life is untwisted,
 He long may remember that I have existed :
 And when my old frame in our monument rests,
 As he walks by my grave with a few worthy guests,
 He thus to some warm-hearted friend may address him,
 Here lies my odd, honest, old Uncle—God bless him !

MRS. FELIX.

Thank Heaven, dear Cousin, your hale constitution
 Shews not the least sign of a near dissolution.

SELINA.

To make your life happy, whate'er the condition,
 Has been, my dear Uncle, my highest ambition ;
 To fulfil every wish that your fancy can frame,
 Still is, as it ought to be, ever my aim :
 But if by your voice I am doom'd to the altar,
 With terror and pain my weak accents must falter,
 Unless my kind stars a new lover should send me,
 Unlike all the swains who now deign to attend me.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Nice wench ! do you want the whole world to adore you ?
 Would you have all the men of the earth rang'd before you ?

For

For thanks to your charms, and to fortune's kind bounty,
 You may rank in your train all the youth of our county,
 And chuse whom you will; if the man has but worth,
 And is nearly your equal in wealth and in birth,
 I give my consent—you are free from restriction;
 But I will not be plagu'd with perverse contradiction.
 I will see you wed without any delay:
 Your two fittest lovers are coming to-day;
 Young Sapphic, whose verses delight all the fair,
 And Dicky Decisive, Sir Jacob's next heir:
 Both young and both wealthy, both comely and clever,
 To gain you, no doubt, each will warmly endeavour;
 For they come for a month, by my own invitation,
 On purpose to sound my dear girl's inclination:
 I have said to them both, and no man can speak fairer,
 Let him, who can please her most, win her and wear her.

SELINA, *aside to Mrs. Felix.*

Good angels defend me!

MRS. FELIX.

I see nothing frightful:
 Our month with such guests must be very delightful:
 When Sapphic's soft verses incline us to dose,
 Dick will keep us awake with satirical prose.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Don't cross me, I say! nor mislead my good Niece!
 By Jove, if she thwarts me with any caprice,
 Like a certain old justice I'll ring up my maids,
 And marry the first of the frank-hearted jades;
 For perverse contradiction I never will bear,
 But provide for myself a more dutiful heir.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear Cousin, in spite of his worship's decision,
 You cannot be certain of such a provision:
 Attempts of that nature are subject to fail.

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

My designs you shall see, Madam, always prevail :
 For if this nice Gipsy, by your machination,
 Declines every offer, to give me vexation,
 Like my late jolly neighbour, Sir Timothy Trickum
 Who vindictively married the frail Molly Quickum,
 I'll make sure of the matter, and chuse me a wife,
 With an heir ready plac'd on the threshold of life :
 For, as I have said, tho' a foe to restriction,
 I never will suffer perverse contradiction.
 You now know my mind, which no mask ever covers,
 So farewell, and prepare to receive your two lovers.

[Exit.

MRS. FELIX.

Go thy way, thou strange mixture of sense and of blind-
 ness!

A model at once of oppression and kindness.
 Thy will, thou odd compound of goodness and whim,
 Is a stream, against which it is treason to swim ;
 Yet we must cross the current—

SELINA.

Dear Cousin say how !

Direct opposition he will not allow :
 What can you devise as a plan of prevention ?
 How divert his keen spirit from this new intention ?
 I had much rather die than be ever united
 To one of the lovers, that he has invited :
 My heart has a thorough aversion to both :
 Yet to make him unhappy I'm equally loth ;
 When I think what I owe to his tender protection,
 The worst of all ills is to lose his affection.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear Girl, your warm gratitude gives you new charms :
 'Tis an amiable fear, which your bosom alarms,

And I from your Uncle's quick humour would screen
you,

Not loosen the bands of affection between you.
He merits your love, and you know he has mine ;
Yet we somehow must baffle his hasty design,
Nor suffer his whim thus to make you a Wife,
To repent the rash business the rest of his life.
Take courage ! kind Chance may assist us—

SELINA.

I doubt it,
Yet Heaven knows how we shall manage without it ;
For when his heart's set on a favourite scheme,
His ardor and haste, as you know, are extreme,
Like a medicine ill-tim'd opposition is vain,
And inflames the disorder 'twas meant to restrain.

MRS. FELIX.

In his fevers indeed there is no intermission :
And thanks, gentle Coz ; to your soft disposition !
So sweet and compliant your temper has been,
You have taught him to think contradiction a sin ;
And here all around him confirm that belief,
His vassals all bow to the nod of their chief.
Here shut from the world in this rural dominion,
No mortal opposes his will or opinion ;
And thus he is spoil'd—Politicians all say,
Human nature's not fashion'd for absolute sway.

SELINA.

'Tis true, tho' the world, as you say, think him odd,
In this sphere he is held a diminutive god :
And when I behold how his fortune is spent,
In suppressing vexation, and spreading content ;

When

When I hear all the poor his kind bounty expressing,
 And thoroughly know how he merits their blessing,
 My feelings with theirs in his eulogy join,
 And confess, that his nature is truly divine.

MRS. FELIX.

Thou excellent Girl ! if such fondness and zeal
 For a warm-hearted, whimsical Uncle you feel,
 With what fine sensations your bosom will glow,
 What tender attachment your temper will shew,
 When your fortunate lord Love and Hymen invest
 With higher dominion o'er that gentle breast !
 But tell me, dear Cousin—be honest—declare,
 Has no young secret swain-form'd an interest there ?
 I suspect—but don't let my suspicion affright you,
 Tho' the good Knight's rare virtues amuse and delight
 you,
 From this gloomy old hall you would wish to get free,
 Had not Cupid preserv'd you from feeling *ennui* ;
 Come tell me the name of the favourite youth :
 I am sure I guess right.

SELINA.

No, in sad sober truth
 I never have seen in the course of my life,
 A mortal to whom I should chuse to be wife.

MRS. FELIX.

Ye stars, what a pity !—I wish I could learn
 That my Colonel from India would shortly return,
 Both for your sake and mine ; for our present distress
 He would speedily turn into joyous success ;
 As his regiment must some young hero afford,
 Who might throw at your feet both himself and his
 sword.
 What say you, my dear, to a soldier ?—

Enter Jenny.

JENNY.

Oh! Madam,

Here's young Mr. Sapphic—I vow, if I had them,
I'd give fifty pounds had you seen how politely
He beg'd me to tie a sweet nosegay up tightly,
Which is jolted to pieces—well, he's a sweet beau ;
And now with his pencil he's writing below,
I believe 'tis a posy, he writes it so neatly,
And I'm fure 'tis fine verse, Ma'am it founded so sweetly.

MRS. FELIX.

Oh charming! his vows will be very sublime,
And I trust we shall hear his proposals in rhyme.

SELINA.

How can you, dear Cousin, so cruelly jest in
A business you know I am really distressed in?
I shall certainly forfeit my Uncle's protection,
For I never can wed where I feel no affection.
Do help me.

MRS. FELIX.

Good Girl, this perplexity smother,
And think your two lovers will banish each other:
There's much to be hop'd from our present affairs.

JENNY.

O, Ma'am, Mr. Sapphic is coming up stairs.

(Aside as she goes out.)

I am mightily pleas'd with this marrying plan,
And I hope in my spirit that he'll be the man. [Exit.

Enter Sapphic.

SAPPHIC.

Fair Ladies, the moments have seem'd to be hours,
While I stop'd in your hall to adjust a few flowers:

For

For the season, I am told, they're uncommonly fine,
But I still wish the tribute more worthy the shrine.

[*Bowing and presenting them to Selina.*]

SELINA.

Mr. Sapphic is always extremely polite :
These roses, indeed, are a wonderful sight :
You are far better florists than we are.

MRS. FELIX.

My dear,

Mr. Sapphic has magic to make them appear,
And Flora is brib'd by the songs he composes
To produce for her poet extempore roses ;
Into this early bloom all her plants are bewitch'd :
But you do not observe how the gift is enrich'd,
Here's a border of verse, if my eyes don't deceive me.

SELINA, *aside to Mrs. Felix.*

Dear Cousin, you'll read it.—I pray you relieve me ;
I shall blush like a fool at each civil expression.

MRS. FELIX, *aside to Selina, taking the paper.*

Now with emphasis just and with proper discretion.

(*Mrs. Felix reads.*)

“ Ye happy flowers, give and receive perfume
“ As on Selina's fragrant breast ye bloom :
“ From earth, tho' not arrang'd in order nice,
“ Ye are transplanted into Paradise ;
“ If on that spot ye languish into death,
“ 'Twill be from envy of her sweeter breath.”

'Tis a delicate compliment, tender and pretty,
What original spirit ! how graceful and witty !

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am, you're too good to find any thing in it,
'Tis a mere hasty trifle—the work of a minute :

14 THE HAPPY PRESCRIPTION:

On the anvil I had not a moment to hammer,
And I fear, in my haste I have sinn'd against grammar.

MRS. FELIX.

All slight imperfections I never regard
When I meet with such vigor of thought in a bard,
With a fancy so brilliant—

SAPPHIC.

O! Ma'am, you're too kind;
But candor's the test of an amiable mind.
I wish that your taste all our Critics might guide,
To soften that rigor with which they decide.

MRS. FELIX.

From Critics, dear Sir, you have little to fear.
If Mr. Decisive himself had been here,
He must have been charm'd with this sweet *jeu d'esprit*,
Which, as he is coming to-day, he shall see.
I am eager to hear how his wit will applaud it:
To conceal it would be of due praise to defraud it.

SAPPHIC.

In Mercy's name, Ladies, I beg your protection,
Preserve my poor rhymes from Decisive's inspection;
Consider how hasty—

MRS. FELIX.

Say rather how sprightly—

SAPPHIC.

Compos'd in a moment—

MRS. FELIX.

Produc'd so politely!

SAPPHIC.

He'll cut them to atoms!

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear Sir, he's your friend,
 And I thought he had seen all the poems you pen'd :
 I was told that to him your long works you rehearse—
 Does Mr. Decifive himself write in verse ?

SAPPHIC.

I wish from my soul that he did now and then ;
 But he uses the pen-knife much more than the pen,
 And too freely has slash'd all who write in the nation,
 To give them an opening for retaliation.
 My old friend Decifive has honour and wit ;
 To the latter indeed, he makes most things submit ;
 And thinks it fair sport, as a friend or a foe,
 To knock down a Bard by a flaming *bon mot*.
 To your sex indeed his chief failings I trace ;
 For the fair-ones so flatter'd his figure and face,
 That too early he ceas'd the chaste Muses to follow,
 And being Adonis, would not be Apollo.

MRS. FELIX.

Yet he has much fancy.

SAPPHIC.

O, Madam, no doubt,
 And genius that study would soon have brought out.
 Had his thoughts been less turn'd to his legs and his
 looks,
 Ere this he'd have written some excellent books :
 'Tis pity such parts should thro' indolence fall ;
 But he never composes, and reads not at all.

SELINA.

Not read, Mr. Sapphic ! you surely mistake ;
 Your friend cannot be an illiterate rake :

Our neighbours, who lately from London came down,
Declare, that his word forms the taste of the town!

SAPPHIC.

Dear Madam, the business is easily done;
He judges all authors, but never reads one.

MRS. FELIX.

I'm sure he must own this *impromptu* is sweet,
And I vow he shall read it—

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am, I intreat,
I conjure you to spare me, this earnest petition
I know you will grant me—

MRS. FELIX,

On this one condition,
That for six lines suppress'd you indulge me with
twenty:
Come, shew us your pocket-book—there you have
plenty
Of tender poetical squibs for the Fair.

SAPPHIC, *taking out his pocket-book.*

Dear Ma'am here is nothing.

MRS. FELIX.

A volume, I swear,
O, charming! well, now you're an excellent man;
Tis stuff'd like a pincushion—

SAPPHIC.

Yes, Ma'am—with bran.

MRS. FELIX.

Fie, fie, you're too modest, and murder my meaning;
What a harvest is here! yet I ask but a gleanings:

It

It would not be fair to feize all the collection,
Tho' all is most certainly worthy inspection.
Indulge us, dear Sir: come, I'll take no refusal.

SAPPHIC.

Indeed, Ma'am, here's nothing that's fit for perusal.

MRS. FELIX.

There are fifty fine things, and one can't chuse amiss.

SAPPHIC, *taking out a paper.*

Here's one new little song—

MRS. FELIX.

Well then, let me have this.

SAPPHIC, *after giving a paper.*

They all are so jumbled, I fear I am wrong;
I meant to have shewn you a new little song,
Which was written last week on the ball at our races,
Where I heard the Miss Trotters compar'd to the Graces;
I could not help saying, 'twas very profane,
It was taking the name of the Graces in vain.

MRS. FELIX *reads.*

“*On seeing Selina and Jenny near each other in
“ the garden.”*”

SAPPHIC.

O mercy, dear Madam, you must not read those!
A stanza unfinished.—

MRS. FELIX.

How sweetly it flows!

Selina, pray hear it.

SELINA, *aside to MRS. FELIX.*

Dear Cousin enough!

How can you delight in this horrible stuff!

Mrs. FELIX reads.

“ Tho’ each in the same garden blows,
 “ The poet must be crazy,
 “ Who, when invited by the rose,
 “ Can stoop to pick the daisy,”

SELINA, *aside to Mrs. FELIX.*

If you love me, dear Cousin, assist me, I pray,
 To end all this nonsense, and get him away.—
 Pray, Sir, when you came, was my Uncle below ?

SAPPHIC.

He’s abroad, Ma’am, your servant inform’d me—

SELINA.

O No!

You have heard he is building a temple to Pan,
 And we hope that your taste may embellish the plan :
 At the end of the walk, in his favourite grove,
 Where there formerly stood an old ruin’d alcove,
 You’ll find him ; and as ’tis an art you are skill’d in,
 T will please him to know what you think of the building.

Mrs. FELIX.

Aye do, Mr. Sapphic, inspect what is done,
 For the workmen all blunder’d when first they begun :
 Your opinion I’m sure will oblige the good Knight.

SELINA.

An inscription, he once said, he wish’d you to write.

SAPPHIC.

Dear Madam !—the hint is delightful, I vow ;
 To the God of Arcadia I hasten to bow :
 I shall find the good Knight in the midst of the dome ;
 I am heartily glad that he is not from home.

We

We shall surely compose something clever between us,
And the Muse will compose by the order of Venus.

[*Bows tenderly to Selina, and Exit.*]

SELINA.

How could you so praise that impertinent creature?
And praise him without discomposing a feature!—
I could not have thought, before this conversation,
That your frankness could turn into such adulation.

MRS. FELIX.

The World, my dear Child, is to you quite unknown;
When you see it you 'll find such discourse is the *ton*;
Fine folks in high life learn to praise with great glee
Such persons and things as they sicken to see.
To me your best thanks for my speeches are due—
By thus flattering the Poet, I surely serve you;
He will now play the Sky-lark instead of the Dove,
And stun me with songs, while you're saved from his
love.

Enter Jenny.

JENNY.

Dear Ma'am, now I hope Mr. Sapphic's quite blest,
For he flies thro' the walks like a bird to his nest.—
He's a sweet pretty gentleman.

MRS. FELIX, *aside to Selina.*

This, if I shew it,
Will soon banish Jenny's regard for the poet:
Jenny, see what your friend Mr. Sapphic has written.

JENNY.

Dear Ma'am, with his verses I always am smitten.
(*Having read the stanza.*)

A Daisy indeed! to be sure I am neat,
But tho' I'm a servant I hope I am sweet.

When

When he makes my young Mistress a Rose or a Lilly,
 He might turn me at least to a Daffy-down-dilly.
 But a Daisy, forsooth! with no fragrance at all!
 I'll cross him for this—

SELINA.

What's that noise in the hall?

JENNY.

As sure as I live 'tis your other gay Spark,
 For I saw a new chaise driving into the park—
 I'll see, Ma'am.

(Aside going out.)

I'll shew this fine Poet a trick—
 A Daisy! that no one but children will pick. [Exit.

MRS. FELIX.

This simile Jenny I see cannot swallow,
 And her anger may ruin this son of Apollo;
 For in courtship this maxim is often display'd,
 He has half lost the Mistress who loses the Maid.

Enter Decisive.

DECISIVE.

Alone, my dear Ladies!—they told me below,
 Our friend Sapphic was here, your poetical Beau;
 I was almost afraid that my sudden intrusion
 Might check the rich stream of some lyric effusion.

(To Selina)

I'm happy to see you so lovely to day;
 But I hope I've not frighted your Poet away.

SELINA.

O no—Mr. Sapphic had bid us adieu—

Mrs.

MRS. FELIX.

And not without saying some fine things of you :
He declares, that with those brilliant parts you possess,
'Tis a sin you ne'er send any work to the press.

DECISIVE.

Good Sapphic !—In truth 'tis his comfort to think
The whole duty of man lies in spilling of ink ;
And at Paradise gate his large volumes of metre
Will I hope be allow'd a fair pass by Saint Peter.

MRS. FELIX.

Then the Saint must be free from your critical spirit,
For I know you have little esteem for their merit ;
You're a rigorous judge, and to poets terrific.

DECISIVE.

I wish my friend's muse was not quite so prolific :
But in rhymes when a child I have heard he would
 squeak,
And so proved a poet before he could speak ;
On his death-bed, I doubt not, he'll still think of verse,
And groan out a rhyme to his doctor or nurse.

MRS. FELIX.

I fancy your favourite reading is prose ;
Here's a new set of travels, pray have you read those ?

DECISIVE, *taking the book.*

This author is lucky to meet with a buyer :
A traveller's but a soft word for a liar.
Such works may please those who have ne'er been abroad,
But men, who have travell'd, perceive all the fraud,

MRS. FELIX.

Is the work so deceitful ! it seems you have read it ?

DECISIVE.

DECISIVE.

Not a syllable, Madam—

MRS. FELIX.

Pray who then has said it?

DECISIVE.

Not a soul that I know—but such books are a trade,
And I perfectly know how those volumes are made.

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis a work, I am told, that has great reputation
Both for wit and for truth—

DECISIVE.

We're a credulous nation—

MRS. FELIX.

Pray what kind of books are your favourite study?

DECISIVE.

I find modern works only make the brain muddy,
As my friends grew by reading more awkward than wise,
And ruin'd their persons and clouded their eyes;
I have wisely resolv'd not to read any more,
Since each living author is turn'd to a bore.

MRS. FELIX.

How can you so waste all your bright mental powers?
'Tis pity you men have not such works as ours—
What d'ye say to my knotting?

(Takes out her work.)

DECISIVE.

Your box wants a hinge.
And I'll give you a much better pattern for fringe;
I brought it from France.

Mrs.

MRS. FELIX.

Now I see, my good friend,
 ere is no kind of work which your skill cannot mend :
 all arts you possess a distinguishing head,
 on building a temple to knotting a thread.

DECISIVE.

scrapos of a temple—pray has the good Knight
 is'd his altar to Pan?—he had fix'd on the site.
 the structure begun?—I have not seen his plan—

MRS. FELIX.

ten hasten and pay your devotions to Pan.
 Nicholas now in his vestibule stands,
 to guide all his workmen and quicken their hands ;
 and Sapphic is gone to attend the good Knight,
 and try what inscription his genius can write.

DECISIVE.

or Pan! by the Graces thou'rt left in the lurch ;
 thy temple will look like a trim parish church,
 with Sapphic's inscriptions, like scraps of the Bible
 t up, as the Church-wardens say, in a *libel*.

MRS. FELIX.

eed we much fear so—pray haste to inspect it,
 and exert all your exquisite taste to correct it.

DECISIVE.

t'am I'll do what I can, for it puts me in wrath
 to see a fine temple disgrac'd by a Goth. [Exit.

MRS. FELIX.

ell, my dear, your two Lovers, like true men of
 fashion,
 do not pester you much with the heat of their passion :

You'll

You'll be quite at your ease—thanks to Pan and the
Muse!

Enter Jenny, hastily.

JENNY.

News! news! my dear Ladies, most excellent news!

SELINA.

The girl is quite wild!

MRS. FELIX.

What transports you so, Jenny?

JENNY.

I've news for you, Madam, that's well worth a guinea:
I have news from the Colonel—

MRS. FELIX.

A letter! Where is it?

JENNY.

No, Ma'am, here's a stranger arrived on a visit,
And he comes from the place where the Colonel is fight-
ing.

MRS. FELIX.

And with letters for me?

JENNY.

Madam, that I'm not right in;
For I run from his man when I got half my story;
But the Colonel, he says, is all riches and glory.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear girl that's enough; through my life I shall feel
Due regard for thy warm and affectionate zeal.
But where is this Stranger?

JENNY.

JENNY.

Just walk'd to my Master.
His poor man has met with a cruel disaster;
He was wounded in battle.

SELINA.

Pray treat him with care.—
Your joy, my dear Cousin, I heartily share.

MRS. FELIX.

His Stranger's a jewel for you from the East;
He's a Captain, I hope, my dear Jenny, at least.

JENNY.

O, Madam! my fancy supposed him so too;
But we're both in the wrong, and for Miss he won't do,
For I learnt from his man he is only a Doctor.

MRS. FELIX.

For Jane, how the difference of title has shock'd her!
For my part I can't find by my reason or feeling,
That the art of destroying excels that of healing:
We may equally love the professors of both.

JENNY.

That Miss tho' should marry a Doctor I am loth.

MRS. FELIX.

Come, my dear, let us meet 'em—I can't rest above—
How slowly fly letters from hands that we love!

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

Enter Jenny and Jonathan.

JENNY.

COME, dear Mr. Jonathan, tell me the whole:
An account of a battle I love to my soul;
There is nothing on earth I so truly delight in,
As to hear a brave Soldier discourse about fighting.—
So the Colonel was wounded you say near the wall:
Whereabouts was the shot? Did he instantly fall?

JONATHAN.

No; recoiling a little he rush'd on again,
And fought like a lion, made fiercer by pain;
Tho' a cursed keen arrow an Indian let fly,
Pierc'd the bone of his cheek just below the right eye.
'Twas a horrible wound! but it could not appall him.

JENNY.

O mercy! that such a hard fate should befall him.
Alas! I'm afraid that his fine manly face
Must have lost by the scar all its spirit and grace.
Does he look very hideous?

JONATHAN.

No; thanks to my Master,
You can hardly perceive that he e'er wore a plaister.
There never was known a more wonderful cure;
But kind Heaven assists my good Master I'm sure;
Without

Without it the skill of no mortal could save
 The many brave lads he has kept from the grave.
 You would weep with delight to behold him surrounded
 With a hundred fine fellows once horribly wounded ;
 Who with thanks for their lives are still eager to greet him.
 And hail him with blessings whenever they meet him.

JENNY.

God reward him, say I, for the good he has done ;
 And of those he has sav'd I'm glad you are one.

JONATHAN.

Aye, twice he preserv'd me when all thought me dead,
 And once brought me off at the risque of his head.
 It was not his business to mix in the strife,
 And some thought him mad when he ventur'd his life
 To bring off a poor mangled soldier like me ;
 But I've still a heart left in this trunk that you see,
 Which loves the brave spirit who snatch'd me from death,
 And will serve him, I hope, till my very last breath.

JENNY.

Your scenes of hard service I hope are all over ;
 It is now fairly time you should both live in clover.
 Your Master, I trust, has brought home as much trea-
 sure
 As will make him a parliament-man at his pleasure ;
 And to recompence you for the wound in your arm,
 Perhaps he will buy you a snug little farm.

JONATHAN.

When a Gentleman comes from the East, my good girl,
 You all think he is loaded with diamonds and pearl ;
 You fancy his treasure too great to be told,
 And suppose he possesses a mountain of gold.

A few

A few daring blades, by a bold kind of stealth,
 Have indeed from the Indies brought home so much
 wealth,
 That with all their keen senses they ne'er could employ
 it,
 And have dy'd from the want of a heart to enjoy it :
 But some hundred brave lads, whom gay youth led to
 enter
 That promising region of hope and adventure,
 Have toil'd many years in those rich-burning climes,
 With small share of their wealth, and with none of their
 crimes.

Now my Master and I both belong to this tribe ;
 Not a single Nabob have we kill'd for a bribe ;
 And to tell you a truth, which I hope you'll not doubt,
 We're as poor and as honest as when we set out.

JENNY.

What! your Master still poor in so thriving a trade !
 And with patients so rich has he never been paid
 For the wounds he has heal'd ?

JONATHAN.

Yes, my dear, for his fees
 I know he has touch'd many thousand rupees ;
 But the sight of distress he could never endure ;
 What he took from the rich he bestow'd on the poor.

JENNY.

Well, Heaven will pay him, no doubt, in due season.
 But what brings him home ?—I would fain know the
 reason

Why he leaves that rich land in the bloom of his life :
 I suppose from the want of a cherry-cheek'd wife ?
 They say those black wenches are sad nasty creatures,
 And tho' they've fine shapes they have horrible features.
 Does he want a white sweet-heart ? or has he a Black ?

JONATHAN.

JONATHAN.

'Tis indeed a white woman that brings us both back :
 But alas ; 'tis an old one—my Master, it seems,
 Has a fond simple mother that's troubled with dreams,
 And he, like a tender and soft hearted youth,
 Resigns his fine prospect, and comes home forsooth
 Because the old dame has express'd her desires
 To see him in England before she expires :
 And egad since he's come she will live long enough,
 For she seems to be made of good durable stuff.

JENNY.

Well, now I shall love him a hundred times more
 Than I did for the stories you told me before.
 God bless the kind soul ! who behaves to his mother
 As if he well knew he could ne'er have another ;
 And were he my son I could not live without him ;
 I could stay here all day while you're talking about
 him.—

But 'tis time to be gone ; we must both disappear,
 For the Colonel's sweet Wife and your Master are here.

JONATHAN.

Stop, I must peep at her ;—she's as bright as the day !

JENNY.

And her heart is as good as her spirit is gay—
 Come I'll shew you our walks—we may get out this
 way.

[*Exeunt.*]*Enter Mrs. Felix and Morley.*

MRS. FELIX.

Dear excellent Friend, since I owe to your worth
 The safety of what I most value on earth,
 With those it loves best my heart yields you a place,
 And I clasp your kind hand with a sister's embrace.

To

30 THE HAPPY PRESCRIPTION :

To judge of the man whom such service endears
 I want not the tardy acquaintance of years,
 But in strong tho' quick ties, that no chances can sever,
 In an instant he seizes my friendship for ever :
 And had I much less obligation to you,
 My regard and esteem I should still think your due,
 From the picture my Felix has drawn of your mind.

MORLEY.

His warm soul to his friends is most partially kind :
 But such as I am I most truly am yours ;
 Your goodness my grateful attachment ensures,
 And my heart with proud transport your friendship em-
 braces.

Tho' I ne'er gaz'd before on your personal graces,
 I've beguil'd some long weeks of hard wearisome duty
 With frequent discourse on your virtues and beauty ;
 And I own for the Colonel it rais'd my esteem,
 To mark with what pleasure he dwelt on the theme.

MRS. FELIX.

You're an excellent creature to sooth a fond wife,
 Who regards her Lord's love hardly less than his life ;
 But since you've replied with good humour so steady
 To the ten thousand questions I've ask'd you already,
 I'll spare you to day, and if 'tis in my power
 Mention Felix's name only once in an hour.
 That my thoughts to the Indies no longer may roam,
 Let me talk to you now about matters at home ;
 Your counsel may make our perplexity less,
 And finish our odd tragi-comic distress.
 First tell me, and speak without any disguise,
 (Tho' I fancy I read all your thoughts in your eyes)
 What d'ye think of my Cousin ?

MORLEY.

MORLEY.

Her graces indeed
 The glowing description of Felix exceed ;
 Tho' in praising her, oft he with pleasure has smil'd
 Like a father describing his favourite child.
 For my part, I think she is lavishly blest
 With those beauties by which the pure mind is express'd,
 That her heart is with truth and with tenderness warm,
 That sweet sensibility shines in her form ;
 A form, on which no man his eye ever turn'd
 Without feeling his breast in her welfare concern'd.
 'Tis the lot of such graces, wherever they dwell,
 None can see their soft mistress and not wish her well.

MRS. FELIX.

Very gallantly said, and the praise is her due—
 But how came her Lovers so well known to you ?

MORLEY.

Her Lovers !—dear Madam, I hope you're in jest—
 Or if by their vows your sweet Friend is address'd,
 Heaven grant, for the peace of her delicate mind,
 That her hand may be never to either resign'd !

MRS. FELIX.

From my soul I assure you I join in your prayer ;
 But whence does it spring ?

MORLEY.

I will freely declare,
 Tho' they're both men of fortune, fair birth, and good
 name,
 With figures that set some young nymphs in a flame ;
 Tho' at each, many ladies are ready to catch
 At what the world calls, a most excellent match ;
 Yet, if I have read your fair Cousin aright,
 A bosom so tender, a spirit so bright,

Must

32 THE HAPPY PRESCRIPTION :

Must be wretched with such a companion for life,
As each of these Lovers would prove to his Wife.

MRS. FELIX.

You are right; but their characters where could you
know?

MORLEY.

I knew them at college a few years ago,
Before, by a whimsical odd sort of fate,
And some family losses, too long to relate,
In Europe my views of prosperity ceas'd,
And chance sent me forth to my friends in the East.

MRS. FELIX.

Pray what sort of youths were these two modish men?

MORLEY.

You now find them both what they seem'd to me then;
Two characters form'd like most young men of fashion,
Whose cold selfish pride is their sovereign passion:
In each, tho' they're men of opposite turn,
The same heart-freezing vanity still you discern.
To indulge that dear vanity, each still displays
All the force of his mind, tho' in different ways.
Thence, in spinning weak verse Sapphic's toil never ends,
And Decisive ne'er stops in deriding his friends;
Each equally fancies no nymph can resist
His lips, which he thinks all the Graces have kiss'd.

MRS. FELIX.

Perfect knowledge of both your just picture has shown!—
The warmth of these Lovers diverts me I own.
Of conquest each seems to himself very clear,
And feels from his rivals no diffident fear.
'Tis easy to see from their satisfied air,
Each loves his own person much more than the Fair.

By

But my poor gentle Coz wishes both at a distance ;
 And I want to contrive, by your friendly assistance,
 To relieve her, and quietly send them from hence
 Without the Knight's knowledge.

MORLEY.

As neither wants sense,
 Can't the Lady pronounce their dismission at once,
 Which none can mistake but an impudent dunce ?

MRS. FELIX.

This measure seems easy indeed at first view ;
 But alas ! 'tis a measure we dare not pursue.
 Our warm-hearted, whimsical, positive Knight,
 Allows not to woman this natural right ;
 And hence my young Friend, in a pitiful case,
 Knows not how to reject what she ne'er can embrace ;
 For nothing her Uncle's resentment would smother,
 Should she banish one suitor, and not take the other.

MORLEY.

Then indeed I am griev'd for the Lady's distress ;
 But how can I aid her ?

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis hard, I confess,
 To a sudden retreat this bold Pair to oblige,
 And make two such Heroes abandon a siege ;
 Yet I wish we could do it—and when they recede,
 The departure of both must appear their own deed.

MORLEY, *after a pause*.

Well—my friendship for you has suggested a scheme.

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis a service our hearts will for ever esteem.
 But what is your project ?

MORLEY.

Don't question me what,
 Left you think me a fool for too simple a plot :
 'Tis simple, and yet I would venture my life
 It will drive from these Beaus all the thoughts of a Wife ;
 And if my scheme prospers, with joy I'll confess
 What a whimsical trifle produc'd our success.

MRS. FELIX.

Well, keep your own secret, if silence is best ;
 Tho' a woman, for once I'll in ignorance rest.—
 Here comes our friend Sapphic—he seems in a flurry.

MORLEY.

His step shews indeed a poetical hurry,
 And we shall be call'd in as Gossips, fair neighbour,
 For by the Bard's bustle his Muse is in labour.

Enter Sapphic.

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am! may I ask you for paper and ink,
 Lest a fresh *jeu d'esprit* in oblivion should sink ?
 For when my free fancy has brought forth my verse,
 My treacherous memory proves a bad nurse.

MRS. FELIX.

O pray! for your Muse let us rear her young chit,
 For the bantling no doubt must have spirit and wit ;
 At a cradle to hold it, I beg you'll take that,

(giving him a paper.)

And your Friend here will aid you in dressing the Brat ;
 At a rite so important I merit no place,
 And I beg to withdraw while you're washing its face.

[Exit.

SAPPHIC.

SAPPHIC.

That's a charming gay Creature—luxuriant and young—
 But I've lost half a stanza—the deuce take her tongue;—
 Let me see—let me see if I can't recollect it.—
 'Tis done;—and now, Morley, pray hear or inspect it.

MORLEY.

The Poet himself his own verse should recite.

SAPPHIC.

You're a sensible fellow—your maxim is right.

(Reads.)

“ Thy old Arcadia, Pan, resign,

“ For this more rich retreat:

“ A fairer nymph here decks thy shrine;

“ Be this thy fav'rite feat.”

Well, my Friend, won't this bring the old God out of
 Greece?

MORLEY.

Aye, and make good Sir Nicholas give you his Niece.

SAPPHIC.

Yes,, I fancy this stanza will make the Girl mine.

MORLEY.

What Poet can wish for a prize more divine?
 I give you much joy on your conquest, my Friend;
 Yet the eyes of regret on your nuptials I bend,
 And grieve in reflecting, that conjugal joy
 Your poetical harvest of Fame must destroy.

SAPPHIC.

What the deuce do you mean?

MORLEY.

To those great works adieu
 Which the world now expects with impatience from you.

The Poet when blest can no more be sublime,
And a chill matrimonial must strike thro' his rhyme.

SAPPHIC.

You're mistaken, dear Doctor—connubial delight
Will give a new zest to each poem I write ;
And you'll see such productions!—

MORLEY.

'Tis true, now and then
Polemics by marriage have quicken'd their pen.
A Dutch Critic I know, by the aid of his Wife,
Made a book and a child every year of his life.
But total seclusion from Venus and Bacchus,
Is, you know, to the Bard recommended by Flaccus.
'Tis a work that your country will take great delight in :
But consider, my Friend, when you're deep in heroics,
As Poets have not all the patience of Stoics,
How you'll grieve to be check'd in the flow of your
verse,
By a young squalling child and an old scolding nurse ;
E'en the qualms of your Lady may drive from your
brain
Fine thoughts that you ne'er can recover again ;
Reflect how you'll feel, with such hopes of succeeding,
If your Muse should miscarry because your Wife's breed-
ing.

SAPPHIC.

Egad, in that case I should think my fate heard.

MORLEY.

I myself have beheld an unfortunate Bard,
Who his nails for a rhyme unsuccessfully bit,
When family cares had extinguish'd his wit.
With many who sing in the Muse's full choir,
It would do them no mischief to muffle their lyre ;

But

But for you, whom the Nine, with a tender preface,
Are prepar'd to proclaim the first Bard of our age ;
For you, who of Taste are the favourite theme—

SAPPHIC.

Yes, I think I stand high in the public esteem.—

MORLEY.

For you, I should grieve if domestic delight
On your fair rising laurels should fall as a blight.
'Tis the pride of great minds whom the Muses inflame,
To sacrifice joy on the altar of Fame ;
Your passion's renown—of this Girl are you fonder ?—
On this delicate point I must leave you to ponder ;
Consider it, while I attend the old Knight. [Exit.

SAPPHIC alone (after a pause.)

By Jove, I believe my friend Morley is right.
Thou, Fame, art my Mistress ; to win thee I sing.
This Girl, tho' she's handsome, is but a dull thing.
'Tis clear, whensoever I a poem rehearse,
That she has no relish for elegant verse.—
Her fortune indeed would be rather convenient,
But the glorious to me is before the expedient.
Egad I'd quit Venus herself, if I knew
That the system of Morley was certainly true.
I don't think the Girl to Decisive inclin'd ;
But here comes her Maid, who may tell me her mind.

(Enter Jenny.)

My good little Jenny, you're trusty and true,
And your Mistress, I know, tells her secrets to you.
What you know, to a friend you may safely impart,
And give me a perfect account of her heart :
Pray how do I stand in your Lady's regard ?

JENNY.

Now's my time to be even with this faucy Bard. (*aside.*)
 To be sure, Sir, the taste of my Lady is odd,
 But poetry moves her no more than a clod.

SAPPHIC.

What! no relish for rhyme!—Does she never repeat
 The soft little sonnets I've laid at her feet?

JENNY.

Ah, Sir! would my Mistress were once of my mind,
 (For I read all the verses of yours that I find)
 But my Lady's so cruel she thwarts my desire,
 And to hide them from me throws them into the fire.

SAPPHIC.

She's a fool—she's a fool (*aside*)—I should have a fine
 life,
 With such a prosaic dull jade of a wife.

JENNY.

But, my good Sir, I hope you will not be dejected,
 I could tell you by whom all your wit is respected.
 There's a heart upon which you have made such im-
 pression—
 But I must not betray her by my indiscretion.

SAPPHIC.

Whom d'ye mean, my good Jenny? come, tell me, my
 dear.

JENNY.

You would make a bad use of the secret I fear.—
 Now I hope I shall lead the Bard into a scrape, (*aside.*)
 For he bites like a Gudgeon, and cannot escape.

SAPPHIC.

SAPPHIC.

Come, 'say who's in love with me—if she is fair,
I'll not leave the dear creature, I vow, to despair.

JENNY.

O lud ! I protest she is coming this way ;
But I did not intend her regard to betray.
I must fly—but I beg that you'll not be too free. [*Exit.*

SAPPHIC.

Madam Felix !—I thought she was partial to me.

Enter Mrs Felix.

MRS. FELIX.

May I enter without incommoding the Muse ?

SAPPHIC.

By a question like this your own charms you abuse.
Those eyes, my dear Madam, were form'd, I profess,
To inspirit a Poet, and not to depress ;
From your presence he surely must catch inspiration.

MRS. FELIX.

A very poetical fine salutation !
But I seriously beg, if you're busy with rhyme,
That you will not allow me to take up your time.
As I'm not Selina, you're free from restriction,
And may tell me plain truths, unembellish'd with fiction,

SAPPHIC.

Then I swear, my dear Creature, I swear by this hand,
That I feel as I touch it my genius expand ;
That your lips—O by Jove ! he's a madman or booby,
Who roves to the Indies for diamond or ruby ;
And each vein in my heart his strange folly condemns,
Who leaves these more bright and more exquisite gems.

Sweet Fair! let me keep, while their richness I praise,
The cold damp of neglect from o'erclouding their rays.

*(While Mr. Sapphic kisses Mrs. Felix with great
vehemence, Jenny enters unperceived.)*

JENNY.

O ho!—have I caught you; impertinent Poet!
This is more than I hop'd for—my Master shall know it.

[Exit.

MRS. FELIX.

Good God! Mr. Sapphic, what frantic illusion
Has produc'd this ridiculous scene of confusion?
All Poets are Quixotes in love, I am told;
And the truth of the adage in you I behold.
As the Knight once mistook an old mill for a giant,
Your sense as disorder'd, your fancy as pliant,
Takes me for my Cousin—your love's ebullition
I only can pardon on this supposition.
I fain would suppose that no insult was meant,
Nor believe you could think, what I ought to resent.

SAPPHIC.

O! talk not of anger with lips that inspire
The strongest sensation of rapturous fire,
That with love's sweet convulsions shake every nerve:
O! think not that I your resentment deserve;
Because my warm heart, thus engross'd by your charms,
Is ambitious of filling these dear empty arms.
No, let me while basking beneath your bright eye,
The place of a thankless deserter supply;
And in this melting breast kindle ecstasy's flame,
Which Nature design'd for so glowing a frame.

MRS. FELIX.

Away, Sir! and since in your fondling infanity
You reject the excuse which I form'd for your vanity,
My threats must inform you—

SAPPHIC.

SAPPHIC.

O! frown not, sweet Creature ;
Let not wrath spoil the charm of thy every feature.

MRS. FELIX.

Regain you your sense—from my wrath you are free,
Which should not be rais'd by a being like thee ;
Begone then!—my pardon in vain you'll implore,
If you dare on this subject to breathe a word more.

SAPPHIC.

Words, indeed, my warm fair one, by Nature's confes-
sion,
For the love that I feel, are no proper expression :
The soul's fond intent in soft murmurs should swell,
And kisses explain what no language can tell.
Ye Gods, how luxuriant !

MRS. FELIX.

Away! quit my arm !
Or my cries in an instant the house shall alarm.

SAPPHIC.

Provoking sweet Creature!—indulge my fond passion ;
Come, come, don't I know you're a woman of fashion ?
Your coyness, I've heard, you can sometimes give over ;
And I'm sure you're too wise to be true to a rover.
Besides, I have learnt, that with partial regard
You have cast a kind eye on your ill-treated Bard.

MRS. FELIX.

Away! thou vain coxcomb! nor, base as thou art,
Insult the bright Lord of so loyal a heart ;
Begone!—I abhor thee—my person release!—

SIR NICHOLAS, *entering*.

Is it thus, my young Sir, you pay court to my Niece !

SAPPHIC.

Confusion ! What devil has sent the old Knight ?

SIR NICHOLAS.

How dare you, pert Stripling, almost in my sight
To insult a chaste Female that's under my roof?—
But since of your baseness you give me such proof,
You shall feel it repaid by a proper correction.

SAPPHIC (*aside.*)

Deuce take this perverse and unlucky detection :
I wish I had wisely, as Morley had taught me,
Renounc'd that jade Venus before he thus caught me.
What excuse can I make him ?—(*To Sir Nicholas*) My
 dear worthy Sir,
Tho' I now seem most justly your wrath to incur,
Yet as you grow cool, your opinion will vary,
You will not resent such an idle vagary,
A mere romping frolic—

SIR NICHOLAS.

A frolic, d'ye say !

Then a frolic of mine shall your frolic repay.
Call our Servants to punish this frolicsome Spark,
They shall drag him across the new pond in the park.

SAPPHIC (*aside.*)

'Tis what he can't mean—yet his countenance such is,
I wish from my soul I was out of his clutches.—

(*To Sir Nicholas.*)

Dear Sir, I assure you, I'm griev'd beyond measure
That I thus have awaken'd your furious displeasure,
When calmer—

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

Young Man, I am not in a fury,
 A sentence more just never came from a jury ;
 Such frolics as yours have Old England disgrac'd :
 In High Life let them flourish as Fashion and Taste.
 To those wanton young fellows I am not severe,
 Who attack the loose Wife of a vain gambling Peer.
 My Lady whose Lord wastes at Hazard the night,
 May plead to more generous pleasures some right ;
 I care not how each keeps their conjugal oath,
 Since honour and peace must be strangers to both.
 But when a brave Soldier, pure Glory's true son,
 Ennobled with laurels laboriously won ;
 When risking in far distant climates his life,
 To his Country he leaves a fair innocent Wife ;
 Accurst be the man, who, to Friendship unjust,
 Fails to guard as his soul this most delicate trust ;
 Or to punish those Fops who insult her chaste beauty,
 And invite her to swerve from her honour and duty.
 Of the doom that I think to such Libertines due,
 I will give to the world an example in you.
 Our old English discipline, Ducking, by name,
 Shall atone for your outrage, by quenching your flame.
 Here ! William and John—

MRS. FELIX.

For my sake, I intreat
 That you will not, dear Sir, this rough vengeance com-
 plet.

SIR NICHOLAS.

By Jupiter, Cousin, to make him less fond,
 He shall croak out his love to the frogs of our pond.—
 Here, William ! tell Jack after Stephen to skip,
 And tell the old Huntsman to come with his whip,
 Then wait all together around the hall door.

SAPPHO.

THE HAPPY PRESCRIPTION:

SAPPIC.

O mercy, dear Sir! I your mercy implore.
You will not destroy me?

SIR NICHOLAS.

No, only correct,
And teach you a brave Soldier's Wife to respect.

MRS. FELIX.

Yet think, my dear Cousin, yet think, for my sake,
What a noise this ridiculous matter will make.
You know that my Felix's nature is such,
He don't wish his Wife to be talk'd of too much;
His honour and quiet let us make our care,
And bury in silence this foolish affair:
Perhaps in my manners too easy and gay,
My levity led the young Poet astray.

SIR NICHOLAS.

No, no! my good Creature, you must not arraign
Your innocent self in a business so plain:
Besides, his offence by this plea cannot sink,
For they are the worst of all puppies that think
Each woman's a wanton who is not precise,
And that cheerfulness must be the herald of vice.

MRS. FELIX.

Howe'er this may be—as he's now all repentance,
I earnestly beg a repeal of your sentence.

SAPPIC.

Dear Ma'am I adore you for this intercession;
And I trust the good Knight will forgive my transgression.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well, Sir, as beyond your desert you're befriended,
By that virtue which you have so grossly offended,

You

A COMEDY, IN RHYME. 45

You are free to depart ; but remember, young Swain,
That you ne'er touch the Wife of a Soldier again.

SAPPIC.

If I do, may I die by the wind of a ball !
Heaven blefs you, good Folks, and this fociable hall !
Since my amorous folly your friendship thus lofes,
My amours fhall henceforth be confin'd to the Mufes.

[Exit.]

MRS. FELIX.

I thank you, dear Sir, and rejoice in my heart
That in fafety you've fuffer'd this Youth to depart.

SIR NICHOLAS.

By Jupiter, Coz, I had cool'd your warm Poet,
Had I not been afraid all our neighbours might know it,
And make you the fubject of fuch converfation
As I think your nice Colonel would hear with vexation.
Then, fince for your fake I have let the Bard go,
Come and aid me to fettle all matters below :
That my anxious cares in her comfort may ceafe,
I'm refolv'd young Decifive fhall marry my Niece.

END OF THE SECOND ACT..

ACT

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

Enter Mrs. Felix and Selina.

MRS. FELIX.

WELL, my dear, what d'ye think of our medical
Friend
Whom the letters of Felix so highly commend?
If my gratitude does not my judgment mislead,
He's the man in the world who with you might succeed ;
Tho' gentle, yet manly, tho' bashful, polite.
Are you not half in love ?

SELINA.

Yes, indeed, at first sight !—
His service to you on my heart is engrav'd,
And I love him, I own, for the life he has sav'd.
To win me perhaps he might not find it hard,
So esteem'd as he is by the friends I regard ;
But I fancy such thoughts will not enter his brain :
And for my part, instead of attracting a Swain,
I only shall think, as they heartily vex me,
Of escaping from those who already perplex me.

MRS. FELIX.

O make yourself easy, I pray, on that head ;
In the deepest disgrace the poor Poet is fled,
And I trust that the Critic will soon share his fate.
Come with me—I've a most curious tale to relate.

Let:

Let us haste—I perceive that Decisive is near,
In whose present discourse I would not interfere.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Decisive and Morley.

DECISIVE.

So while in the grove I was coolly projecting
New plans for the temple the Knight is erecting,
Our Poet, addicted to amorous sin,
Grew a little too fond of the Ladies within :
But discovery happen'd his passion to damp :
And this is the cause of his haste to decamp.

MORLEY.

The old Knight, I believe, such resentment express'd
As quicken'd the speed of his fugitive guest ;
On Terror's swift wing he is certainly flown,
And as he has retreated, the field is your own.

DECISIVE.

As a rival I had not much fear of poor Sapphic ;
Bad rhyme's current coin in most amorous traffic,
But would not pass here.

MORLEY.

I think not in your view,
As it finds such a critical touchstone in you.
The Poet's dismissal your triumph ensures,
And the prize, my good Friend, is now certainly yours ;
A prize, that we justly may call very great,
A lovely sweet Girl with a noble estate.

DECISIVE.

The Girl's very well, but knows nothing of life ;
It will cost me some pains to new model my Wife ;

But

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But I think she will gladly receive my correction;
And my wealthy old Kinsman approves the connection.
(Coughs.)

MORLEY.

You've a cough, my good Friend.

DECISIVE.

Yes, a trifling one: *Hem!*
Have you got any Indian prescription for phlegm?

MORLEY.

Believe me, that cough is no trifling affair;
It calls, I assure you, for caution and care.
With regret I point out so unpleasant a truth,
But your constitution I've known from your youth;
Your hectic appearance I see with concern,
As I know, with your frame if health takes such a turn,
The least indiscretion your life may destroy.
The slightest excess in diversion and joy;
Even those tender cares, which on life's purest plan
Must belong to the state of a Family Man,
May lead to disease from which art cannot save,
And rapidly hurry you into the grave.
'Twere better this courtship of your's should miscarry,
For you'll certainly die in six months if you marry.

DECISIVE.

Are you serious, dear Doctor?

MORLEY.

By such a sad end
I lately have lost a poor good-humour'd friend.
You remember Jack Dangle at College, no doubt;
He was just of your age, and a little more stout;
He, with other sages, left Westminster Hall
To teach English law to the slaves of Bengal.

But.

But Jack, in his new chamber-practice at least,
 Too eagerly follow'd the rules of the East.
 A bad cough ensu'd, much like yours in its sound—
 (Decisive coughs.)

Good God! I could swear 'twas poor Jack under ground,
 'Tis his tone so exactly, sepulchral and hollow!
 The system he slighted I hope you will follow.
 With pains in his breast he was sharply tormented;
 But as he at first to my guidance consented,
 Some time my strict regimen kept him alive,
 Poor Dangle once more was beginning to thrive;
 And had he some months in my plan persever'd,
 On the earth at this moment he might have appear'd;
 But chance threw a pretty white girl in his way,
 And eager for marriage, fond Jack would not stay:
 In vain I conjur'd him to wait half a year,
 And shew'd him the danger he ran very clear.
 He thought the remains of his cough but a trifle,
 And being unable his passion to stifle,
 He took his fair wife;—but, alas! the vile cough
 Encreas'd every day till it carried him off!

DECISIVE.

I don't recollect any pain in my breast,
 But I feel a strange tightness just now in my chest.

MORLEY.

How's your stomach?

DECISIVE.

I've nothing to fear on that score.

MORLEY.

Do you eat as you did?

DECISIVE.

Yes, I think rather more.

MORLEY.

MORLEY.

That ravenous hunger's the thing that I dread.
How d'ye sleep?

DECISIVE.

All the time that I pass in my bed.

MORLEY.

Indeed!—I don't like so lethargic a slumber.

DECISIVE.

Why! my Friend! of good symptoms these rank in the
number.

MORLEY.

Alas! you may call them all good if you please,
By that title you only confirm your disease;
In which tho' the patient declines very fast,
He for ever will flatter himself to the last.
Believe me, your symptoms are rather alarming,
Yet your present disorder there is not much harm in.
If you can but abstain, with a spirit resign'd,
From all that may harass your body or mind,
To a different climate I wish you'd repair,
And for one Winter breathe a less changeable air.
Spend a Christmas at Naples, and when you return
You may marry without any anxious concern.
But you're now at that critical period of life
When, in such frames as yours, nature feels an odd strife,
And, if quiet does not all her functions befriend,
The short earthly scene on a sudden will end.
On a point so important you'll pardon my freedom.

DECISIVE.

Your cautions oblige me, I feel that I need 'em,
For in truth I am growing as thin as a rabbit,
And there's something consumptive I know in my habit.

My

My Father died soon after taking a Wife,
 And cough'd out his soul when I jump'd into life :
 I suppose I am going.

MORLEY.

Take courage, my Friend ;
 On your own prudent conduct your life will depend.
 If you take but due care for two years, I'll engage
 You will stand a fair chance for a healthy old age.
 Nor would I advise you this Girl to refuse,
 A distant attachment your mind will amuse ;
 And, no doubt, for a man of your fortune and figure
 She will wait till your health has recover'd its vigour.

DECISIVE.

I can part with the Girl without feeling a chasm
 In my heart ; that will shake with no amorous spasm ;
 For, to tell you the truth, my old rich Uncle Cob
 Is more eager than I for this marrying job.
 By this scheme the old Blade is supremely delighted,
 Because two large manors may thus be united :
 But when of his park I've extended the bound,
 It will do me small good if I sink under ground ;
 And I'm not such a fool in these projects of self,
 To humour my friends and endanger myself.

MORLEY.

Indeed I'd not wed for an old Uncle's whim ;
 But here comes our Knight, I shall leave you with him,
 As I think you've some delicate points to adjust.

[Exit.

DECISIVE (*alone.*)

I'm in no haste to sleep with my Ancestor's dust.
 'Tis wiser my weak constitution to save,
 Than to marry, and so travel post to the grave.

Enter

Enter Sir Nicholas.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Come, give me your hand, and rejoice, my young
Neighbour,

You're the man that's to order the pipe and the tabor ;
And by Jove we'll all dance on so joyous a day ;
Your wedding, dear Dick, shall be speedy and gay ;
For your Rival is gone with our serious displeasure,
And I give to your wishes my young lovely Treasure—

A treasure she is, tho' the Girl is my Niece ;
Heaven grant ye long years of affection and peace !
And a fine chopping Boy ere the end of the first—
Remember that I am to see the rogue nurs'd.

Go, happy young dog, go and seal with a kiss,
And teach the old hall to re-echo your blifs.

As I know on this match what Sir Jacob intends,
And we can so well trust each other as friends,
Short contracts will answer as well as the best,
Our lawyers at leisure may finish the rest.

I know all suspense in such cases is hard,
And you shall not, I swear, from your blifs be debar'd,
While o'er acres of parchment they're crawling like snails.

DECISIVE.

Dear Sir, upon weighing in Reason's just scales
Your very great favours and my weak pretension,
I find I'm unworthy of such condescension;
And must, with regret, the high honour resign,
Which I once vainly thought might with justice be mine.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Hey-day ! what does all this formality mean ?
Why, Dick ! has the Devil possess'd you with spleen ?

Or

Or has Love made your mind thus with diffidence fore?
 False modesty ne'er was your foible before.
 You think you're unworthy!—the thought is so new,
 That I hardly can tell what to say or to do.
 If you love the good Girl full as much as you said,
 I think you have very just claims to her bed;
 But if your mind's chang'd, and you feel your love
 lighter,
 'Tis better to say so, than marry and flight her:
 And if this be the case, Sir, you have your release;
 For altho' I am eager to marry my Niece,
 Tho' I'm partial to you, yet I beg you to note,
 That I don't want to cram her down any man's throat.

DECISIVE.

I'm truly convinc'd of the Lady's perfection,
 And 't would please me, dear Sir, to preserve the con-
 nection,
 Tho' now, by particular reasons, I'm led
 To revisit the Continent once ere I wed.
 In the time of my absence I can't be exact;
 But in what form you please I will freely contract,
 In the course of two years to receive as my Wife—

SIR NICHOLAS.

Do you mean to insult me, you Puppy? Od's-life!
 Ere I'd tie my dear Girl to so filly a Fop
 For life, I'd condemn her to trundle a mop.
 And let me advise you, young man, for the future,
 To know your own mind ere you go as a suitor.

DECISIVE.

I perceive, Sir, my presence grows irksome to you,
 And you'll therefore allow me to bid you adieu.

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

Your departure, indeed, I don't wish to restrain,
And have little concern when I see you again.

[*Exit Decisive.*]

SIR NICHOLAS *alone.*

What can make this pert Puppy recede from his suit?
My fair Cousin and he have scarce had a dispute;
She would hardly affront him on purpose to vex me!—
Here she comes to explain all the points that perplex me.

Enter MRS. FELIX.

Well, Cousin, my scheme for a wedding's suspended,
The Beaux are both gone, and their courtship is ended
With an air so mysterious Decisive withdraws,
I a little suspect you're concern'd as the cause:
Confess, have you had any words with this Youth?

MRS. FELIX.

Not I, my dear Sir, on my honour and truth.
But I'm ready to own that the news you impart,
With surprize and with pleasure enlivens my heart.
I think your sweet Niece has a lucky escape:
I would almost as soon see her marry an ape
As her union with one of these Coxcombs behold;
The Bard is too warm, and the Critic too cold.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I find that they are not such Lads as I thought 'em;
The World all the worst of its fashions has taught 'em:
And the World is indeed at a very fine pass,
When such Puppies insult so attractive a Lass.
Young Fellows of fortune now think it hard duty
To pay a chaste homage to Virtue and Beauty.

But

But I'll leave these poor Fops to their own vile caprice,
 And soon find a much fitter match for my Niece.
 Other orders of men for a husband I'll search,
 And I think I can settle my Girl in the Church.

MRS. FELIX.

Lord, Cousin! I thought you detested the Cloth!

SIR NICHOLAS.

Our Rector, I own, often kindles my wrath;
 But all Parsons are not like my neighbour, old Squabble,
 Who has learnt from his geese both to hiss and to gobble.

We have in our neighbourhood three young Divines,
 And each I believe, to Selina inclines.
 Our Bishop's smart Nephew deserves a sweet Wench,
 He himself in due time may be rais'd to the Bench;
 With him I should like very well to unite her;
 And if he hereafter should rise to the Mitre,
 Then perhaps we together may bring to perfection
 A much-wanted plan for the Church's correction.

MRS. FELIX.

A very fine scheme which you'll manage, no doubt!

SIR NICHOLAS.

More wonderful things I have known brought about;
 And tho' my first plan, as you see, has miscarried,
 I'm resolv'd that my Niece shall be speedily married.
 I'll unite the good Girl to a Priest, if I'm able;
 For the young Olive Branch never fails at his table.
 There is one I prefer—but to leave the Girl free,
 I allow her to make a fair choice of the Three:

I shall

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I shall therefore invite the whole group to the hall,
And I'll now go and make her write cards to them all.

[Exit.

MRS. FELIX *alone.*

What a wonderful creature is this worthy Knight !
To make others happy is all his delight !
Yet, misled by some wild philanthropic illusion,
He's for ever involv'd in odd scenes of confusion.
'Tis well that our Critic has made his last bow,
I rejoice he's remov'd, and I long to know how.

Enter Morley.

MORLEY.

Thank my stars, my dear Ma'am, I've dispatch'd your
 commision ;
Your sweet Friend is, I hope, in a tranquil condi-
 tion :
From her two irksome Lovers she now is reliev'd.

MRS. FELIX.

And I'm dying to know how all this was atchiev'd.
Come tell me, good Creature, how could you effect
 it ?

MORLEY.

By a project so simple you'd never suspect it :
I have banish'd both Swains, by declaring a Wife
Would rob one of glory, and t'other of life.
I persuaded the Bard his poetical fame
Could never exist with a conjugal flame :
Hence he grew with your charms so licentiously free,
But forgive me this ill which I could not foresee.
Decisive, more wisely, abandons the Fair
To make his own lungs his particular care.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

What ! on such points as these have they taken your
word ?

MORLEY.

Dear Madam ! mankind credit things most absurd,
When they come from the mouth of a medical man ;
Hence Mountebanks never want skill to trepan.
The extent of our empire indeed there's no seeing,
When we act on the fears of a true selfish being.

MRS. FELIX.

How simple soever the means you've employ'd,
You have remedy'd ills by which we were annoy'd.
Having thus clear'd the scene from each troublesome
 Lover,

Can you not for the Nymph a fit Husband discover ?
You see how she's prest by her Uncle to wed,
Who ne'er quits a scheme he once takes in his head.—
Suppose her kind fancy should lean towards you,
Is your heart quite as free as I'm sure 'twould be
 true ?

Is it not pre-engag'd ?

MORLEY.

As in mirth's sportive folly
It pleases you thus a poor pilgrim to rally,
Your good nature I know will forgive me if I
To your pleasantry make a too serious reply.
'Tis my maxim to speak, whatsoe'er be the theme,
With a heart undisguis'd to the friends I esteem :
Had I all India's wealth, 'twould be my inclination
To offer it all to your lovely Relation.

58 THE HAPPY PRESCRIPTION:

But supposing it possible you could be willing
To unite her with one who is scarce worth a shil-
ling;

Believe me, dear Madam, my pride is too great
To wish her to stoop to my humble estate.

MRS. FELIX.

Such pride, tho' it rests upon no strong foundation,
Is noble, I own, and deserves admiration.
I call it ill-founded, because, in my mind,
If there's fortune enough for a couple when join'd,
If talents and worth are by each duly shar'd,
If in all other points they are equally pair'd,
And mutual regard mutual merit enhances,
It signifies not which supply'd their finances.

MORLEY.

Your pardon—how often when fortune's unequal,
Gay weddings produce a most turbulent sequel?
But could I once hope your sweet Cousin to gain,
How many things are there such hopes to restrain?
Suppose your dear Colonel, my most noble Friend,
Whom success to your arms may more speedily send!
Suppose, having clos'd the bright work he has plan'd,
His return from the East he should hasten by land;
Suppose him arriv'd, with what face could I meet
The man whom my heart should exultingly greet,
If he found me attempting, in spite of my station,
To wed, tho' a beggar, your wealthy Relation?

MRS. FELIX.

From these words, my dear Friend, which I almost
adore,
And a few slighter hints that escap'd you before,

I have

I have caught a quick hope, which is fraught with delight,
 That I soon shall be blest with my Felix's sight:
 I begin to suspect he's in England already;
 I perceive that you can't keep your countenance steady.
 With his usual attention his love has reflected
 How my poor foolish nerves by surprize are affected;
 And lest they should fail me beyond all revival,
 Has sent you to prepare for his wish'd-for arrival.
 Am I right in my guesses? Is he not very near?
 Could I trust my own heart, I should think Felix here.

COLONEL FELIX, *entering.*

Sweet Foreboder, behold him restor'd to your arms.

MRS. FELIX.

O my Felix! this transport o'er pays all alarms,
 Thus to see thee restor'd, and ennobled with fame!
 In what words shall affection thy welcome proclaim?

COLONEL.

My Love! my best Treasure! than glory more dear!
 The bliss of this meeting, which shines in thy tear,
 That we owe to this Friend let us never forget.

MORLEY.

My share in the transport o'er pays all the debt.—
 But, Colonel, your fondness has travell'd full speed,
 And has not allow'd me the time you agreed.

COLONEL.

I meant not, indeed, to have join'd you to-day,
 But I found Love forbade my intended delay.

MORLEY.

Well, my duty is done, now you happily meet;
 Heaven bless you together—

60 THE HAPPY PRESCRIPTION :

MRS. FELIX.

Stay, stay, I entreat;
You must not go yet ; and before you depart
I will open to Felix the scheme of my heart.

SELINA (*behind the scene.*)

Indeed, Sir, I never can write such a card.

SIR NICHOLAS (*behind the scene.*)

Then you'll forfeit at once my paternal regard !

COLONEL.

Hey-day ! in the house I much fear something's wrong,
As Sir Nicholas talks in a language so strong.

MRS. FELIX.

Does he know you are here ?

COLONEL.

No, my Dear, I think not,
Unless he the tidings from Jenny has got ;
She alone saw me come, and without much ado
Most kindly directed me where to find you.

MRS. FELIX.

They are coming this way—let's withdraw all together,
And contrive how to turn this loud storm to fair wea-
ther.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Sir Nicholas and Selina.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I insist on your writing such cards to them all !

SELINA.

Dear Uncle, I beg you'll this order recall.
You know your commands I much wish to obey ;
But reflect on this matter what people will say :
You're so eager to marry your Niece, they will swear,
That you hawk her about just like goods at a fair.

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well, my Dear, let 'em say so, and I'll say so too,
 For your simile proves what a Guardian should do.
 He who wants to dispose of a tender young maid,
 May take a good hint from the gingerbread trade :
 If he has any sense, 'twill be ever his plan
 To part with soft pastry as soon as he can ;
 For egad an old maid is like old harden'd paste,
 You may cry it about, but nobody will taste.
 Come, do as I bid you, and take up your pen.

SELINA.

Lord, Sir! it will seem very odd to these men ;
 You will make me appear in a horrible light ;
 I vow my hand shakes so, I never can write.
 Excuse me, dear Sir, from this business, pray do,
 And let me live single for ever with you.

SIR NICHOLAS.

All business where woman's concern'd, I believe,
 Must partake of the curse from our Grandmother Eve.
 All her Daughters the steps of their Parent have fol-
 low'd!
 Contradiction, the core of the apple she swallow'd,
 In their veins still fermenting new ills can produce,
 And all their blood seems Coloquintida juice.
 You froward cross Baggage ! your word should I take,
 And bid you live single five years for my sake,
 Of the barbarous Uncle you'd quickly complain,
 Who from Nature's just right a young Girl wou'd re-
 strain !

SELINA.

Indeed, Sir, I should not.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I tell you, you wou'd.
 From perverseness alone you oppose your own good.
 'Tis only to thwart me, because I desire
 To see you well settled before I expire,
 That you now with your soft hypocritical carriage,
 Affect to have no inclination to marriage.
 But you'll never contrive, tho' your tongue may be
 nimble,
 To convince me your heart is as cold as your thimble.
 I know of what stuff froward damsels are made,
 The Guardian must force you who cannot persuade.
 That you'll like a good husband, I never can doubt ;
 And married you shall be before the month's out,
 Or at least your kind Uncle no more you shall tease,
 But may e'en go to Rome and turn Nun if you please.

(SELINA *aside.*)

I have lost all the love he has shewn me for years ;
 If I strive to reply I shall burst into tears.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Come, answer me, Miss! will you scribble or not?

Enter the Colonel, Mrs. Felix, and Morley.

COLONEL.

My worthy old Friend, what can make you so hot?

SIR NICHOLAS.

Ha, Colonel!—you find me a little concern'd—
 But I'm heartily glad you are safely return'd.
 Your arrival indeed is a welcome surprize,
 Tho' before you your fame a bright harbinger flies ;
 We have heard your success, and we all triumph in it.

COLONEL.

COLONEL.

I trust I am come in a fortunate minute
 To make all your present embarrassment cease,
 For I bring a young Husband, my Friend, for your
 Niece.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Egad that's well said ; and I'm sure it's well meant ;
 And if he's like you, he shall have my consent.

COLONEL.

He has many more virtues, and just as much wealth,
 And from India brings home both his morals and health.
 Here, my Friend, is the Man.—As I owe him my life,
 I wish to present him so lovely a Wife ;
 Half my Fortune is his—here I freely declare it,
 And have only to hope that Selina may share it.
 I've regarded her long as a child of my own ;
 Nor can my affection more truly be shown,
 Than by wishing to place the dear Girl in the arms
 Of the friend whose rare virtues are worthy her charms.

MORLEY.

Dear generous Felix, I'm quite overcome,
 Thy Bounty is such, it strikes Gratitude dumb !

COLONEL.

This was ever, my Friend, my most settled intention,
 Though my very just purpose I chose not to mention,
 From the hope I should find, what I gladly embrace,
 A moment from which it may borrow some grace,
 When my gift its plain value may rise far above,
 By the aid it affords to the wishes of Love ;
 And I own, as a prophet I'm proud of my art,
 Now I see the effects of her charms on your heart.

MORLEY.

O Felix ! can I thus deprive thy free spirit
 Of wealth, the reward of heroical merit ?
 Can I the victorious Commander despoil
 Of what he has purchas'd with danger and toil ?
 Should love and delight on thy present attend,
 I could never be happy in robbing a Friend.
 No, I still must decline—

SIR NICHOLAS.

My dear Boy, say no more ;
 You're the match that I never could meet with before ;
 I have long fought in vain for an heir to my mind,
 But all my soul wish'd, in your spirit I find.
 You shall *not* rob your Friend of a single * Gold Moor,
 He can raise heirs enough to inherit his store :
 To such men as himself let him haste to give birth,
 And with twenty young Felix's garnish the earth.
 How trifling soever your fortune may be,
 From the Colonel's esteem, and the virtues I see,
 I think you as noble a match for my Niece,
 As I could, had you brought home a new golden fleece :
 I have money enough, if you're rich in affection.—
 As I always have talk'd of an equal connection,
 My neighbours, perhaps, may suppose my sight dim,
 Or mock my wife choice as a generous whim :
 Let them study with zeal, which I hope may succeed,
 Of their horses and dogs to improve the best breed ;
 A study more noble engrosses my mind,
 To preserve the first points in the breed of mankind :
 On the heart and the soul, as the first points, I dwell,
 In these, my dear Children, you match mightily well ;

* An Indian Coin.

And

And I think human nature in debt to my care,
For uniting two mortals who happily pair.

COLONEL.

Your hand, my dear Knight, it is gloriously said!

SIR NICHOLAS.

By Juno we'll put the young Couple to bed!
We'll have no dull delays.—

MRS. FELIX.

Now what say you, my Dear,
Are these orders for marriage too quick and severe?

MORLEY.

My amazement and gratitude both are extreme,
But my voice seems oppress'd in a heavenly dream;
Though your kindness is greater than language can paint,
I beg this fair hand may be free from constraint.

SIR NICHOLAS.

From constraint!—Gad, if now she affects to demur,
I can tell her my wrath she will so far incur,
She shall go to a convent for life, or at least
Be sent as a venture herself to the East.

SELINA.

My Uncle I long have obey'd, and at present
I cannot complain his commands are unpleasant:
Nay more; could he place all mankind in my view,
And bid me chuse from them, my choice would be you.

MORLEY.

To this dear declaration my life must reply,
All words are too weak—

SIR NICHOLAS.

The whole earth I defy,
 To shew me a scene more delightful than this ;
 Dear honest frank Girl, come and give me a kiss ;
 Thou'rt the creature of Nature much more than of Art,
 And I own thee again as the Child of my heart.

JONATHAN, *entering and speaking to the Colonel.*
 There are two chests for you, Sir, just come to the hall.

COLONEL.

A few Indian things for the Ladies—that's all.
 Pray, Jonathan, pay those who brought them with this.
 (*giving money.*)

MORLEY.

My brave lad must share in our general blifs.
 Here, Jonathan, if you're to marriage inclin'd,
 And can luckily meet with a girl to your mind,
 You may marry and settle, as soon as you please ;
 The Colonel has taken good care of your ease.

JONATHAN.

God blefs him, whate'er he is pleas'd to bestow !
 I think I have found a kind sweetheart below.

MRS. FELIX.

He has made choice of Jenny ;—and I will provide
 A fortune, my Friend, for your good-humour'd Bride.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Egad, they shall have my new farm on the hill,
 And raise young recruits there as fast they will.

JONATHAN.

Heaven prosper you all ! I will pray for you ever,
 And to serve my King still, as I can, I'll endeavour.

[*Exit.*
 Sit

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well said, honest Soldier;—we'll have no delay,
Go and tell the old Parson to keep in the way.

COLONEL.

Come with me, fair Cousin, examine my chests;
I long to present you a few bridal vests.

MRS. FELIX, *to* MORLEY.

As we view with delight the events of to-day,
A fair lesson, my Friend, in your fate we survey;
While, from love to an aged fond parent, with speed
From wealth's open road you most kindly recede,
Heaven sends you that fortune you nobly have fled,
And your warm filial piety here is requited;
This bright moral truth by your lot is express'd,
“ They who seek others' bliss, are by Providence blest.”

SIR NICHOLAS, *to* MORLEY.

Here, my worthy young Friend, take and cherish this
Fair,

And, trust me, you'll find her deserving your care;
For although of her sex she may have a small spice,
She'll please you ten times where she vexes you twice;
And happy the man, in this skirmishing life,
Who is able to say half as much of his Wife.



M A R C E L L A ;

A T R A G E D Y ,

O F T H R E E A C T S .

Vertical line of text on the left side of the page.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Tragedy may perhaps attract the notice of the curious reader, more by a literary anecdote relating to its subject, than by any intrinsic merit as a dramatic composition.

THE story was recommended to **YOUNG** by the Author of *Clarissa*.—The poet adopted it, and wrote a single act; but this shared the fate of his other unfinished manuscripts, and, according to the direction of his will, was committed to the flames.

THESE particulars, with a concise sketch of the story as related by **RICHARDSON**, were communicated to Mr. **THORNTON** by the poet's very liberal and amiable Son, the neighbour and the much-esteemed relation of my dear departed friend, who
wished

wished me, to build a tragedy upon this foundation.

SOME particular circumstances prevented me at that time from executing the desire of a person, who, from the integrity of his judgment, and the uncommon warmth of his friendship, had an undisputed title to influence my studies.—Other works had engaged me, and this dramatic story lay for some years neglected: but in looking over the letters of my still-valued, though lost correspondent, it struck me with new force.—As the distress, with which it abounds, is of a private nature, it appeared to me singularly calculated for my purpose of forming a drama for a domestic theatre. I have therefore, with some considerable alterations in the principal incident, raised from it a tragedy of three acts; with what success, it is now the privilege of my readers to pronounce.

I WILL not attempt to influence their decision by any arguments in its behalf; but let me be allowed to close this short Preface with a little poetical acknowledgment to the two literary illustrious friends, who first marked the story for the tragic Muse, and from whom it has accidentally descended to me.

SONNET.

S O N N E T.

BLEST Authors! with whose fame the world
 has rung,
 Immortal minds, of philanthropic mold!
 Pathetic RICHARDSON! sublimer YOUNG!
 To you let me inscribe the leaves, that hold
 A theme, ye once consulted to unfold!
 Fairer its fortune, had not death's despite
 Torn from the silenc'd bard this tale half-told!
 O could I blend those beams, whose sep'rate light
 Forms each a glory round your rival brows,
 Sublimity and Pathos! effluence bright
 Of highest genius!—but in vain such vows:
 Yet in the reach of emulation's flight
 One eminence ye share:—be that my end!
 Teach me to rank with you, as Virtue's friend!

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

GOVERNOR of BARCELONA,

MENDOZA,

LUPERCIO,

HERNANDEZ,

LOPEZ,

MARCELLA.

SERVANTS, &c.

SCENE *the Governor's Castle in* BARCELONA.

M A R C E L L A.

A C T I.

S C E N E I. *The Governor's Castle.*

Lupercio and Marcella.

MARCELLA.

LET ardent friendship be the bond between us,
But O subdue this inauspicious love,
And chace it from thy breast!

LUPERCIO.

Impossible!

Think, cruel monitor, thro' what long years
My heart has cherish'd an encreasing passion,
Till it is grown a portion of my being,
Which I can ne'er relinquish but with life!

MARCELLA.

MARCELLA.

I know, that from our days of infancy
 Thy vows have had the sanction of my father;
 And from the period when he first became
 The governor of this fair city, he
 Has lean'd towards thee with anxious hope
 To call thee by the tender name of son:
 Nor can the world reprove his generous wishes,
 For Barcelona's walls contain no youth
 Of nobler blood, or higher estimation.

LUPERCIO.

Lovely encomiast! sure the songs of seraphs,
 And all the wondrous harmonies of Heaven,
 Can never strike more sweetly on the soul,
 Than the frank praise of those angelic lips.

MARCELLA.

I should despise my own uncandid heart,
 If it refus'd that tribute of applause
 Which selfish pride, and jealous envy pay
 To thy acknowledged merit—Yes! Lupercio,
 I own, thy rank, and thy accomplish'd youth,
 Might justly challenge a return of fondness
 From the most haughty of our flatter'd sex;
 Yet trust me, and I speak the words of friendship,
 'Twere wiser in thee, even could my tongue
 Pronounce the free compliance 'thou entreatest,
 To turn thy partial eyes from cold Marcella,
 And for thy wife solicit me no more.

LUPERCIO.

Mock not my senses with such admonition
 As reason must revolt from! Wouldst thou say
 To the poor wretch, who after many a step

O'er

O'er Afric's burning sands, half dead with drought,
 Holds in his parch'd and eager hand at last
 The liquid blessing, that he long has pin'd for ;
 Then wouldst thou say, that wisdom bids him dash
 The salutary treasure from his tongue,
 And perish by the thirst that wastes his being ?
 Such, and more cruel is thy counsel now,
 That would induce me to renounce thy charms,
 E'en in these moments, when thy father's friendship
 Had fill'd my soul with panting expectation
 To hear thy heavenly voice declare me happy.

MARCELLA.

I know my father's hopes ; and by his worth
 I swear, my heart oft wishes for the power
 Most fondly to fulfil them.

LUPERCIO.

Ha ! what bar,
 What secret bar, from quick-ey'd Love conceal'd,
 Has envious fortune rais'd to thwart our union ?
 You say, that you regard me as your friend ;
 Then honour me with friendship's dearest claim,
 Unbounded confidence !—unfold your heart !—
 If, to cut off the promise of my bliss,
 If there is aught of unknown fondness there,
 Which fears a father's eye, confide in me !
 And though against myself—

MARCELLA.

Ingenuous youth !
 Your mind is noble, but you little know
 Marcella's heart, above all low disguise,
 Proud of its truth, nor patient of controul.

LUPERCIO.

LUPERCIO.

Pardon the fond surmise of fearful love !
 If thy soft breast is free from predilection.
 What other bar ?—and yet there may be other ;
 Nature perhaps has curs'd me with defects
 Offensive to thy sight ; some natural blemish
 Of mind, or feature, which thy delicate sense
 Tries to endure, but cannot.

MARCELLA.

No ! by Heaven !
 Except the noble stranger, whom we saw
 At mass this morning, and whose signal graces
 Drew from us both observance of his person,
 My eyes ne'er gaz'd upon a comelier youth :
 And reason tells me, that I ought to love thee :
 But my heart shrinks perversely from her voice.
 Oft have I try'd to bend my wayward spirit
 To crown thy constant vows, and bless my father ;
 Yet ever as my soul pursues that thought,
 A secret tremor in my bosom bids me
 Recoil from thy embraces, whispering there,
 That I was only born to be thy bane.

LUPERCIO.

Thou ! thou my bane !—Thou art my life's support ;
 As dear, and as essential to my being,
 As the blest radiance of the sun to nature.
 These are the airy fears of virgin softness,
 Most apt to harbour in the loveliest minds.
 Banish the visionary dread, and give
 Thy lighten'd heart to all the joys that court thee ;
 Thy father's prayers, the vows of all our friends
 Will shed propitious lustre on our union :
 Hymen can never light his genial flame

With

With happier auspices ; but were they dark
 And hideous as the sick man's feverish dreams ;
 Wert thou, instead of noble Garcia's heiress,
 The child of want, and penury thy dower,
 I still should pant as fondly for thy hand !
 Still in thy wondrous charms and lovely virtues
 Think all the blessings of the earth compriz'd.

MARCELLA.

I know thee generous to a fond extreme :
 It has subdu'd my waywardness of temper,
 And, spite of the reluctance that I feel
 To speak the important words, I will be thine.

LUPERCIO.

Blest be that sound ! it is an angel's voice,
 Freeing the spirit of a tortur'd martyr,
 And opening to his view the heaven he figh'd for.

MARCELLA.

And yet I fear—

LUPERCIO.

Wound not enraptur'd love
 With vain distrust ! but name the blisful day,
 When my fond heart—

MARCELLA.

I said, I will be thine :
 Do not with cruel importunity,
 Now press me farther ! As I frankly told thee,
 My soul, I know not why, is out of tune ;
 Give me a little time to regulate
 The strange emotion of my mind, and try
 To meet thee, as I wish, without these terrors.

LUPERCIO.

LUPERCIO.

Thou dear directress of my fate ! thy will
 Shall ever sway the conduct of my life,
 Howe'er it thwart me.—Yet, I pray thee, name
 Some period, on which hope may dwell, to sooth
 The restless interval ! or kindly give me
 Some pledge of thy dear promise !

MARCELLA.

Take this ring,
 Of curious workmanship, near Tunis found,
 And given my father by a noble Moor ;
 The wife of Afrubal, you know the figure,
 Plunging amidst the flames, in which she perished !
 Wear this a month, then claim me as your bride !
 But if you value me, preserve the jewel ;
 For if you lose this symbol of my faith,
 Your negligence may lead me to retract
 A promise, so reluctantly pronounc'd.

LUPERCIO.

Rest here, thou radiant harbinger of bliss ;
 Trust me, my love, and by thyself I swear,
 Than sooner shall my soul and body part,
 That this dear gem be wrested from the finger
 Where now it shines—O let me kiss the hand
 Which has enrich'd me with a pledge so precious ;
 And let my lips thus ratify our compact !

(While he is kissing her hand.)

Enter the Governor, Hernandez, and a female Attendant.

GOVERNOR.

Why, this is well : I like this pleasing shew
 Of mutual tendernefs—She has relented,
 And will be your's, Lupercio ?

LUPERCIO.

LUPERCIO.

Yes, my father,

I now call you by that valued title ;
 My blissful doom has pass'd those lovely lips,
 And she is now irrevocably mine.

GOVERNOR.

May every blessing my paternal prayers
 Can ask of Heaven, descend upon you both !
 Thy free consent delights me : and thou art
 My age's comfort.

MARCELLA.

When I cease to be so,
 May life forsake me !—'twill have lost all value.

GOVERNOR.

My tender child, I thank thee : but thou lead'st me
 Wide of my present aim.—With thee, Lupercio,
 I must on business of the state awhile
 Hold private converse : I'll release thee soon
 To the soft object of thy tender'r thoughts.
 Meantime, my daughter, as the hour of vespers
 Now summons you, pray for us, and implore
 Your Guardian Saint to make your nuptials happy.
 Your servants wait you—Go !—on your return
 You'll find us in the castle, and at leisure
 To dedicate the hours to love and joy.—
 Now mark me, thou brave youth.
 (*Retires to the farther part of the stage with Lupercio.*)

MARCELLA.

Hernandez, you may rest at home—you know
 'Tis not your duty to attend on me,
 As I have oft inform'd you.—It is strange

My father suffers his old foolish steward
To pester me with such officious service.

HERNANDEZ.

Dear lady, do not frown—I have no joy
But to gaze on you, wheresoe'er you go,
And follow like your shadow.—Would my shape
Were half so graceful!—then I think your eyes
Could never view me with an angry glance.

MARCELLA.

Hence, faucy vassal!—Howsoe'er my father
Use thy preposterous passion for his mirth,
It shall not thus insult me.—Hence! I bid thee
For ever shun my presence.

[Drops her glove.]

HERNANDEZ (*presenting the glove.*)

But kind chance
Is more my friend; and makes me still your servant.

MARCELLA.

Away! fantastic insolence! begone!
I will not feed thy vanity, by wearing
Aught which thy touch has sullied. Isabel,
Take it, and draw its fellow from my arm!
Bring other gloves, and follow me to vespers.

[Exeunt Marcella and her attendant.]

HERNANDEZ.

Insulting fair! I yet may find a moment
To triumph o'er thy scorn.

*The Governor and Lupercio advance from the end of
the stage.*

GOVERNOR.

How now, Hernandez!
What! has your mistress chid you from her presence?

I am

I am indeed to blame, to treat so long
Your fooleries with levity and laughter.
Henceforth, in this my young and noble friend
You must respect a husband's dignity,
And dare to wound my daughter's dignity,
With founds of amorous dotage.

LUPERCIO.

Good Hernandez,
You know the infirmity of Spanish husbands ;
And you're so studied in your lady's temper,
I may regard you as a dangerous rival.

HERNANDEZ.

I stand corrected.—(*Aside.*) Curse his happy stars !
And curse his proud and thinly veil'd contempt !
Howe'er deformity may make my figure
The butt of his derision, I've a spirit,
In which this fair limb'd youth may feel a rival
More dangerous than his vanity believes. [*Exit.*]

GOVERNOR.

That faithful servant is depriv'd of sense
By the absurdest passion that e'er triumph'd
O'er manly reason : he was justly noted
For the best qualities that grace his station,
Intelligence and duty, till my daughter
Advanc'd to womanhood ; but from that period,
E'en in proportion as her beauties ripen'd,
His faculties have seem'd upon the wane.
I have too lightly sported with his frenzy,
Which call'd for harsher discipline.

LUPERCIO.

O! no,
I feel he is entitled to compassion ;
Marcella has those fascinating charms,

F 2

Which

Which may intoxicate the sobereſt mind,
Till all its ſenſes reel.—I cannot wonder
Age and deformity forget their nature
By living in her ſight, and only feel
That ſhe has beauty which inflames to madneſs.

GOVERNOR.

She may indeed (with pride the father ſpeaks it)
Be number'd with the lovelieſt of her ſex.
With joy, brave youth, but with an anxious joy,
I give her to thy guard.

LUPERCIO. .

Doubt not my love!

GOVERNOR.

Truſt me, I do not: but anxiety
Is the high tax, which fond affection pays
For all its pleaſure; and parental hearts,
As thou may'ſt prove hereafter, pay it double.
Beſides, my daughter, lovely as ſhe is,
Has qualities that claim the niceſt care.

LUPERCIO.

She has a generous pride, which to her ſoul
Gives awful beauty, and proclaims it free
From all that poor and petty artifice,
Which manly arrogance preſumes to think
Inherent in her ſex.

GOVERNOR.

You know, Lupercio,

She is the only child that ever nature
Enrich'd me with; my tenderneſs, diſdaining
The rigid cuſtoms of her ſex and country,
Has rear'd her with a freedom little known
To Spaniſh fair-ones; for I wiſh'd to make her,

No

Not the cag'd vassal of parental power,
 But truth and nature's chaste and free disciple.
 Her early temper join'd with my affection
 To fix me in this conduct; for, believe me,
 Her mind is like the element of fire;
 Treat it with gentle caution, it will shine
 The radiant minister of joy and comfort;
 But close confinement, or a blind neglect,
 May rouse its perilous energies to spread
 Unthought-of scenes of misery and terror.

LUPERCIO.

Trust me, I never will prophane her virtue
 With abject jealousy and harsh constraint.

GOVERNOR.

On this nice topic, in our hours of leisure,
 We'll speak more largely, when your just affection
 Will give kind audience to a father's counsel.
 Now other cares demand us.—You forget
 The business I've entrusted to your guidance,
 Which calls for quick dispatch.

LUPERCIO.

Forgive me, Sir!
 May love, that miser, who locks up our thoughts,
 Nor lets them circulate, as duty orders,
 Plead with me for your pardon!—I am gone. [Exit.

GOVERNOR.

My blessing be thy guard!—Long have I wish'd
 To give my daughter to this virtuous youth;
 But 'tis the doom of age, in deeds of moment,
 To feel the fit of warm desire succeeded
 By terror's agonish trembling. I begin
 To fear I've press'd too far her generous mind,

To what her heart recoils from; for she weds
 To indulge a father's wish's, not her own.
 'Tis true, the tenderest motives have impell'd me
 To urge this union, eager to entrust
 Her peace and honour to a kind protector:
 But anxious love, tho' probity may guide it,
 Off, with a fond precipitancy, foils
 Its own dear purpose, and with dizzy rashness
 Leaps in the dreaded gulph it strives to shun.—
 My child return'd so soon! and with a stranger!
 What may this mean?

Enter Marcella and Mendoza.

MENDOZA.

It moves, I see, thy wonder,
 Thou honour'd veteran, that thus uncheck'd
 By ceremony's just observances,
 A youth unknown intrudes upon thy presence,
 And dares to make this lovely maid his herald.

GOVERNOR.

Whoe'er thou art, young Signor, I must own
 Thy graceful semblance prompts me to believe
 Thou hast no common claim to courtesy.

MENDOZA.

'Tis possible thou art not unacquainted
 With young Mendoza's name.

GOVERNOR.

Who knows it not?
 Spain has no martial son, whose generous veins
 Hold richer blood; and fame reports Mendoza
 A youth, whose opening virtues have reflected
 New honour on his noble ancestry.

Our

Our country, with a fond, impatient pride,
 Expects him from his travels; but 'tis said
 That, grac'd with a discerning monarch's friendship,
 He purposes to pass another year
 At the Imperial court.

MENDOZA.

Such as he is,
 Mendoza stands before thee, and thou seest him
 An anxious, humble suitor to thy bounty.

GOVERNOR.

To me, my Lord!

MENDOZA.

To thee, thou happy father!
 To thee, thou blest possessor of a treasure,
 'T hat turns all other wealth to poverty!
 Oft had I heard thy lovely daughter prais'd
 As beauty's standard, and no more allowing
 A competition with inferior fair-ones,
 Than the rich diamond's blaze admits compare
 With the dark amethyst, or clouded opal.
 It was my wish, in passing thro' your city,
 Unknown to gaze upon this beauteous wonder,
 As on a prodigy of nature's work,
 Supreme in loveliness; which to have seen,
 Gives to the eye that saw it a proud sparkle
 Of exultation, whensoever 'tis nam'd.

GOVERNOR.

This lavish praise, my Lord, at once o'erwhelms me
 With joy and pain; and both in the extreme.
 Pray do not spoil, by thus o'errating them,
 The simple charms of an unpolish'd girl!

F 4

MENDOZA.

MENDOZA.

Your pardon! 'tis not in the power of language
 To state their excellence.—At mafs this morning
 My eager eyes firft feafted on their fight :
 I thought I ne'er had feen till that bleft moment ;
 For on my ravish'd fenfe her beauty burft,
 Dazzling and dear, as new-imparted light
 To one, whofe vifual organs from his childhood
 Had pin'd in moping darknefs—from that hour
 My heart cries loudly, that the earth contains
 No prize worth my contention, but her love.—
 Report inform'd me, that her foft affections
 Are yet unfix'd, tho' an accomplifh'd youth,
 Fondly prefuming on a father's friendship,
 Hopes hourly for the promife of her hand.
 Fir'd by thefe tidings, as again I faw her
 Approach the hallow'd precincts of the temple,
 I threw me at her feet, conjur'd her pity
 To guide me to your prefence, and implor'd
 The guardian Saint, whofe votary I fued to,
 That when we next that facred pavement trod,
 Heaven might exalt me to the blifsful honour
 To lead her to the altar.

MARCELLA.

Oft in vain
 I pray'd the gallant ftranger to forbear
 His unavailing fuit, nor vex my father
 With fruitlefs importunity.

MENDOZA.

To both
 I bend for pardon, that my violent love
 Dar'd to o'er-rule the mortifying counfel

Of maidenly reserve, and modest fear.
 If yet thy heart, that throne of happiness,
 Be vacant, I implore thy father's leave
 To join the contest for a prize, whose value
 Might tempt the monarchs of the world in arms
 To hazard each his empire.

GOVERNOR.

Noble youth!

Thy generous warmth so wins on my esteem,
 I will entrust thy own ingenuous heart
 To judge the cause, where e'en thy love's a party.
 The hour's not past, in which, with her assent,
 I gave my daughter to a valiant friend,
 Who long has lov'd her; tho' I frankly own
 His birth and fortune make him not thy equal.
 Such is my story: now assume my place,
 And answer for me! Say! shall I, a soldier,
 An old plain soldier, honesty my pride!
 Shall I revoke my promise, at the lure
 Of interest and ambition?

MENDOZA.

Thou hast found

The way to vanquish all Mendoza's ardour:
 Thy words benumb my soul; but thou shalt see
 My wounded heart has virtue to decide
 Against itself. Mendoza's voice shall never
 Prompt to the lips of honourable age
 The abject sounds of infamy.—Shalt thou
 Revoke thy promise! no! thou brave old man,
 Not tho' my life should end by its completion!
 Let the vain sons of Italy and France
 Attempt, by mental alchemy, to turn
 The lead of falsehood into wisdom's gold,

F 5

And

And sink, their own poor bubbles, in the trial !
 It is the glory of a true Castilian
 To scorn such arts, and hold his word once given
 As sacred as the fiat of a God.

GOVERNOR.

There spoke the spirit of Castilian honour.
 Brave youth ! I yet will love thee as my son,
 Tho' fate forbid such union.—Let us hence,
 It may amuse thy generous mind to shew thee
 The precincts of our castle.

MENDOZA.

Well thou warnest
 Thy giddy guest to fly a dangerous banquet,
 Where his warm soul drinks poison.—Matchless fair-one !
 I must perforce from thy enchanting presence
 Tear my reluctant heart, while yet I can ;
 Before the firm resolve of honour melts
 In that full blaze of frenzy-kindling beauty.
 I go :—Still, ere I quit these walls for ever,
 I shall implore one parting interview ;
 But for a few short moments, but to utter
 My ardent vows, that Heaven may make thee happy ;
 And to entreat, that as the years roll on,
 And bring thee, as I hope they will, new blessings,
 Thou'lt deign, at least on this revolving day,
 To think not harshly of my hapless passion,
 And give one sigh of pity to Mendoza.

[Exit, with the Governor.]

MARCELLA.

He's gone, ere my full heart allow'd me power
 To frame one grateful accent to the man,
 For whom alone my unconstrained lips

Could

Could utter vows of genuine tenderness.
 Enchanting youth!—Dost thou implore my pity?
 Thou canst not need compassion: love and joy
 Will, as thy guardian spirits, hover round thee.
 I am the wretch, whose lacerated mind
 Cries out for pity, which I do not merit.
 Fool that I was! by a reluctant promise
 To violate the heart's prerogative!
 This injur'd sovereign now awakes to vengeance,
 And I deserve these tortures.—O Lupercio!
 Thou wert before an object, from whose touch
 My conscious frame recoil'd.—What art thou now?
 Thy very name is discord in my ear,
 That agitates my wounded brain to frenzy.
 And shall I wed thee? take thee to my bosom?
 An asp's sooner! from whose dearer clasp
 My miseries might hope for welcome death!
 Yet how escape thee, and maintain at once
 My father's honour and my own unshaken?
 O for some kind assistant! whose invention
 May o'er my darken'd thoughts diffuse one glimpse
 Of cheering light!—Here comes a minister
 Who wants not will to serve me.

Enter Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ.

Haste, dear lady,
 Your father asks a moment's parley with you
 In private, and before he walks abroad
 To show our ramparts to a noble stranger.

MARCELLA.

Canst thou, Hernandez, banish from thy memory
 All my past anger, and exert thy powers
 To gain my favor by one single service.

HERNANDEZ.

HERNANDEZ.

Ask me if I exist; for while I live,
I hold my life devoted to your pleasure.

MARCELLA.

I'll put thee to the trial, for the task
Allows not e'en a moment of delay.
Know then, I foolishly have given Lupercio
My ring, the pledge of an unguarded promise,
Which my wrong'd heart forbids me to fulfil.
I warn'd him, if he chanc'd to lose the jewel,
Our compact should be void. If thou'lt devise
Some lucky artifice to lure it from him,
Thou shalt have thrice the value of the gem.

HERNANDEZ.

Wouldst thou elude thy nuptials with Lupercio?
The blest intelligence revives my soul!

MARCELLA.

He is the hated bar, on whose removal
My heart might enter paradise, and follow
The dear suggestions of unfetter'd love.

HERNANDEZ.

Enough! thou shalt be mistress of thyself.

MARCELLA.

Make me but that—My father calls—but that,
And I'll reward thee, till thyself shalt own
My gratitude a prodigal in bounty.
Lose not a moment—set me free to-night,
And thro' my every hour of future life
I'll bless thee for the service.

[Exit.

HERNANDEZ.

HERNANDEZ:

Then to-night
 Shall rid thee of Lupercio—Thou shalt feel,
 Sarcastic boy! I am a dangerous rival.
 I know in what lone quarter of the ramparts
 Nightly thou walk'st in amorous contemplation,
 Murmuring fantastic crotchets to the moon:
 There if I miss thee, still the blended fires
 Of love and of revenge shall aid my search,
 And guide my thirsty poniard to thy heart.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

MARCELIA *alone.*

THE night is past, but the all-cheering morn
 Fails to dispel the darkness of my soul:
 My restless heart yet beats with blended throbs
 Of anguish and delight, at the idea
 That these fond eyes may, with my father's leave,
 Gaze once again upon the dear Mendoza.
 O might they in our parting close for ever!—
 'Tis strange I yet hear nothing of Hernandez.

But

But what can he?—I was indeed an idiot
 To think his paltry aid could terminate
 My miseries; I might as well believe
 That the poor current of a scanty brook
 Might quench the conflagration of the globe.
 O would those final flames, that will consume
 This gloomy world, this stage of wretchedness,
 Were kindling now! for my deliver'd soul,
 Escaping from worse horrors, could rejoice
 In that dread scene of fiery desolation,
 And think it bliss to perish with Mendoza.

MENDOZA (*entering.*)

“ And think it bliss to perish with Mendoza !”
 Extatic sounds! may I believe my sense!
 Have I such tender interest in that bosom?

MARCELLA.

'Tis not well done, my lord, thus at the dawn
 To steal upon my privacy, and rob
 A wounded spirit of its sole support,
 The secrecy of woes beyond a cure.

MENDOZA.

Pardon the impatient speed of anxious passion!
 I have nor rest, nor joy, but in thy presence,
 And hasten'd to thee, in the sad belief,
 (A burden which my heart would now throw off)
 That this dear interview must prove the last.

MARCELLA.

The last indeed it must be!

MENDOZA.

If thy voice
 Can speak with such sweet kindness of Mendoza,

Thou

Thou wilt revoke that sentence ; and what power
Shall burst the hallow'd ties of mutual love,
And tear our wedded spirits from each other ?

MARCELLA.

The ruler of thy life, imperious Honour !
Honour, who has already by thy voice
Pronounc'd the firm immutable decree,
That this ill-fated hand must not be thine.

MENDOZA.

Urge not against me the confus'd decision
Of ignorance and blind mistaken pride !
When I confirm'd thy father in his purpose,
I knew not, that to keep his fatal word
He must become a tyrant to thy heart,
And violate the dearest rights of nature.
I knew not that Mendoz's ardent love
Had in thy bosom rais'd the blest emotion
Of tender sympathy.

MARCELLA.

O that my heart
Had not unwarily betray'd it's weakness !
Then might a just ingenuous pride have taught me
To bear the painful secret to my grave.

MENDOZA.

Unkindly said !—If such could be thy wish,
Thou hast not lov'd Mendoza.

MARCELLA.

Think so ever !
I have not lov'd him ; duty, faith, forbid it :
I am affianc'd to a generous youth,
Who claims the full dominion of my heart ;

Not

Nor shall Mendoza's image lurk within it,
To prove the assassin of my peace and honour.

MENDOZA.

O lovely haughtiness of mind! this conflict,
This agitation of thy artless bosom,
Proves the enchanting truth, I am belov'd :
I read it in those sweetly-speaking eyes,
Where the faint spark of anger is extinguish'd
In melting tenderness. While thus I clasp thee,
Kind sympathy gives to thy every nerve
Delicious softness ; and thy swelling heart
Vibrates in unison with mine, to form
Th' extatic harmony of mutual love.—
Thou weep'st!—O Heaven! I feel these precious drops
Fall on my wounded breast, like liquid fire.
O, I had rather draw upon my head
The worst of human ills, thy hate and scorn!
Rather than touch thee with an ill-starr'd passion,
If it must prove a source of sorrow to thee,
And quench the radiance of thine eyes in tears.

MARCELLA.

I can believe thee, for thy noble soul
Is honour's sanctuary—Then, as my friend,
Let me implore the firmness of thy spirit
To aid the treacherous failing of my own!
I am indeed unpractis'd in the arts
My sex is fam'd for ; I have not the skill
To hide the emotions of a feeling heart :
And I will lay it open to thy view.
I will avow, that if my wayward fortune
Had not forbid the union of our hands,
I would have met the ardour of thy vows
With all the frankness of simplicity,

Proud

Proud of its losing lot. I would have pray'd
 For undecaying charms to keep thy love,
 Blessing the God who form'd us for each other.
 But since the bar—

MENDOZA.

There is, there shall be none :
 We'll urge thy heart's unalienable right
 To be the sole disposer of thy beauty.

MARCELLA.

O speak not thus !—my own unbalanc'd mind,
 Whirl'd in the eddies of tempestuous thought,
 Already has been hurried much too far
 From the safe course integrity prescribes.
 But the remembrance of thy bright example
 Shall be my glorious guide, and still preserve me.
 How nobly hast thou said, thou wouldst not urge
 My honour'd father to revoke his promise,
 Not if thy life should end by its completion !
 Shalt thou, a stranger ! thus against thyself
 Stand forth the firm asserter of his honour,
 And shall his child betray it ?

MENDOZA.

Do not wound
 Thy own pure spirit by this groundless scruple !

MARCELLA.

It is conviction, founded on the laws,
 Th' unquestionable laws of faith and virtue.
 I must for ever fly thee, or disgrace
 My father and myself. And shall I heap
 Grief, disappointment, misery, and shame
 Upon my father's head ? And what a father !
 Rough as he is in the rude scene of arms,

The

The sternest soldier of his time, to me
 The awful thunder of his voice has soften'd
 E'en to the tender sweetness of a lute.
 With me he has for ever thrown aside
 All the asperities of harsh command,
 And disciplin'd my wayward infancy
 With all the mildness of a mother's love,

MENDOZA.

O might I aid thee in thy dearest office,
 To pay him back those long and large arrears
 Of tenderness and care!—Yes! we will make it
 The incessant study of our days to lighten
 Whatever load encroaching age lays on him,
 And by the sweet felicitude extend
 The limit of his blest and honour'd life.

MARCELLA.

Could it be such, our lot indeed were happy;
 But 'tis impossible. Should I, forgetting
 The sanctity of promises, should I
 Attempt to burst the fetters that involve me,
 And struggle to be your's, it could not be
 Kind as he is, my father's firmer spirit
 In points of honour is inflexible!
 Could I myself descend—and wounded pride
 Revolts at the idea—could I stoop
 To beg, that he would countenance my falsehood,
 I know his answer—"Would'st thou," he would cry,
 "Make me an object of the world's contempt?
 Shall I be censur'd as a sordid wretch,
 Who, having given my daughter to a friend,
 Cheated his hopes, and sold her venal beauty
 To the rich splendor of Mendoza's fortune?"

MENDOZA.

MENDOZA.

Perish the envious spirit, who could harbour
 So base a thought of him who gave thee being!
 But should he be reproach'd, (as purest virtue,
 And the beneficence of Heaven itself,
 'Scapes not such profanation) it were better,
 Than to behold thy peace of mind destroy'd,
 And thy soft heart corroded by the shackles,
 The galling shackles of a joyless marriage.—
 Think what it is to press the nuptial couch,
 When, for the roses Love should scatter there,
 The fiend Antipathy has form'd it's pillow
 Of sharpest thorns, that lacerate the brain!

MARCELLA.

I know it must be agony far worse
 Than death's severest pang: the thought already
 Has thrown my troubled mind from off it's balance,
 And plung'd me in distraction.—Thou art cruel,
 To set my woes thus forcibly before me,
 And aggravate the anguish of my fate.

MENDOZA.

Think rather, that with fond anxiety
 I warn you of the precipice you tread,
 And pant to save you trembling on its brink.

MARCELLA.

I pray you leave me, for your dangerous aid
 Can but encrease the horrors of my fall.
 O leave me, I conjure you!

MENDOZA.

Once assure me,
 You will endeavour to draw back your hand

From

From this abhorr'd alliance, I will rest
On the faint hope which may arise from thence.

MARCELLA.

Whatever I can do, and not destroy
My father's peace and honour, shall be done :
For O, 'tis certain, rather than be dragg'd
The victim of Lupercio's nuptial triumph,
My heart would chuse to languish life away
In the lone walls of some sequester'd cell,
Where not one pleasing sound could sooth my suffering,
Save when I clos'd some melancholy prayer
With the dear echo of Mendoza's name.

MENDOZA.

Enchanting softness ! thou shalt yet be mine,
And these heart-rending sighs shall turn to rapture.

MARCELLA.

I hear my father's step ; depart, I pray thee !

MENDOZA.

By Heaven, my feet seem rooted to this spot,
And have not power to bear me from thy presence !

Enter the Governor.

GOVERNOR.

Ah, my young friend ! youth wants a monitor
To bid it mark the rapid flight of time.
Is this your momentary interview ?
Come ! force me not to play the testy father,
And chide you from my roof !

MENDOZA.

O pardon me,
I will but seal one vow of tender friendship

On this fair hand, and instantly attend you.—
Farewell!—Thou art the loveliest work of Heaven,
And may its purest spirits be thy guard!

[Exit, with the Governor.]

MARCELLA.

Torn from me! banish'd from my view for ever!
O, shall these wretched eyes behold no more
The darling of their sight! and as each morn
Of hated life returns, shall they be forc'd
To gaze upon the object that they loath?
Sure all the subtlest of the infernal fiends
Are leagu'd to curse me with their keenest tortures.
Ah, senseless wretch! my folly is the fiend
From whom this misery springs: 'twas I, 'twas I,
Slave that I was! who fasten'd on myself
This iron bondage that corrodes my soul.

HERNANDEZ (*entering*)

Lament its weight no more! thy chain is broken.
Receive the symbol of thy liberty! [*Delivering the ring.*]

MARCELLA.

It is my ring! my gladden'd eyes acknowledge
Its bright assurance of recover'd freedom!—
Fly, stop Mendoza!—Stay! yet tell me first
How thou hast prosper'd, thou excelling servant!—
Thou shalt have great rewards, great as my joy!—
How did the fond Lupercio yield my pledge?
Haste! tell me all—I must prepare myself
To meet him soon, complaining of his loss.

HERNANDEZ.

Be satisfied!—He can no more complain.

MARCELLA.

MARCELLA.

What dost thou mean by that mysterious accent?

HERNANDEZ.

His hated voice shall ne'er be heard again.

MARCELLA.

Thou hast not murder'd him!—By Heaven thou hast;
I read it in thy dark and troubled visage.

HERNANDEZ.

I have indeed been bloody for thy sake.

MARCELLA.

Is he then butcher'd by thy savage hand?—
Unhappy youth! thy pale and gory spectre
Will glare for ever in my sight, and banish
All hopes of quiet from my soul for ever.—
Wretch thou hast sunk me in the deepest gulph
Of horror and perdition.

HERNANDEZ.

Come, be cheer'd!

I have deliver'd thee from him, whose being
Was torture to thy heart.—Lupercio's dead;
And by my caution it must be suppos'd
The nightly robbers, who infest our city,
Have thus reveng'd his vigilance against them.

MARCELLA.

Is this the recompence of all thy merit,
Brave, gen'rous, frank Lupercio?—Tho' my heart
Recoil'd perversely from thy love, it feels,
With cold convulsive pangs of vain regret,
It feels thy worth, thy ill-requited virtues,
And all the horrors of thy barb'rous fate.

HERNANDEZ.

HERNANDEZ.

Reflect thou only from what hated scenes
 Of hopeless pain my daring hand has sav'd thee!
 Think what thou ow'st to me, who for thy sake
 Have put in hazard my immortal soul!

MARCELLA.

Ill-fated wretch! thou also hast my pity.
 'Twas my base conduct, blinded as I was,
 That plung'd thee in this guilt—But haste! be gone!
 Fly! while thou canst, where justice may not find thee.
 Fly to some distant climate; and endeavour,
 By penitence, to make thy peace with Heaven!
 Go where thou wilt, my bounty shall attend thee,
 And aid thee with such lavish sums of gold,
 As may enable thee, by those good deeds
 Which charity delights in, best to cancel
 Or counterpoise the evil of thy crime.

HERNANDEZ.

What! canst thou vainly think, that in thy service
 I've dy'd my unstain'd hand in guiltless blood
 For gold! the needy robber's paltry prey?

MARCELLA.

What was thy aim?—thy frantic eyes affright me!

HERNANDEZ.

Here is the nobler recompence I claim,
 Thy beauty! rich in medicinal balm
 To heal th' envenom'd anguish of remorse.
 Come to my breast! and with thy melting charms
 Drown all the keenest pangs, that guilt can waken,
 In extacy more poignant!

MARCELLA.

MARCELLA.

Slave! unhand me!—
 Away! remember, rash, presumptuous villain!
 The distance of thy station!

HERNANDEZ.

Idle pride!
 Silence it's frivolous and false suggestion!
 The hours just past have plac'd us on a level.
 Thou hast no title now, but Murderers.
 We are confederates in guilt and blood:
 Blood is the cement of our equal union.

MARCELLA.

Thou dar'st not say it.

HERNANDEZ.

Dive into thy bosom!
 Ask thy own heart!—Didst thou not wish his death?
 Aye! had thy flaming eyes, like basilisks,
 Been arm'd with sudden power to strike him dead,
 Their stroke had far outstripp'd my tardy dagger.
 Thou couldst not think thy lover would resign
 The gem, thou bad'st me pilfer, but with life.

MARCELLA.

No! witness Heaven! I thought not of his death.—
 Yet thou hast rent a veil of fatal passion,
 That hid my own soul from me; and I see
 The stains of misery and guilt are on it.
 I am indeed the source, the wretch'd source
 Of all this scene of horror: 'tis to me,
 To me, thou ill-starr'd minister of mischief,
 Thou ow'st the burden of this bloody deed,
 Which cries to angry Heaven for retribution.—
 Now, I conjure thee, raise again thy arm!

Plunge

Plunge thy yet-reeking poniard in my heart,
And by this justice expiate our crimes!

HERNANDEZ.

Away with vain remorse!—Come! let me sleep
Thy troubled senses in those soft delights,
That sweetly steal from the enchanted soul
All memory of pain!

MARCELLA.

Delight from thee!

HERNANDEZ.

I find, contemptuous fair one! I am not
Thy fav'rite! No! thy nice fastidious eye
Delights in daintier forms. My jealous passion
Has caught thy bosom's secret—Yet be grateful,
Be wise! and I will make thee soon the bride
Of thy beloved Mendoza.

MARCELLA.

Canst thou mean it?

HERNANDEZ.

Yes! with this fine-form'd heir of wealth and grandeur,
Soon shalt thou shine in all that blaze of fortune
Which suits thy towering spirit, if thy beauties
Will pay their debt of gratitude to me,
And with those sweet delights, that stealth makes
sweeter,
Reward the secret author of thy greatness.

MARCELLA.

What! be the wife of Honour's noblest son,
And live the servile strumpet of my vassal!—
Presumptuous villainy!—Unhand me, ruffian!

HERNANDEZ.

Nay! struggle not!—I have thee in my toils,
And my keen love shall feast upon its victim,
O'ertaken with such hazard.—Come! be gentler!

MARCELLA.

Never! O never!

HERNANDEZ.

Must I owe to force
The joy thy pitying gratitude should give?
The joy for which my ardent soul has thirsted,
E'en to its own perdition?

MARCELLA.

Hence! away!
Release my hand, or my distracted cries
Shall bring my injur'd father to my aid.

HERNANDEZ.

And dar'st thou threaten me, ungrateful girl?
But it shall not avail thee.—Hear and tremble
At the superior threat thou mak'st me utter!—
Thou see'st, by all the bloody business past,
I hold my life as nothing: if thou still
Deny'st me, what I have so dearly purchas'd,
I will, before our magistrates I will
Avow the murder, charge upon thy head
The black design, and add, I have receiv'd
Thy virgin treasure as my settled hire;
But that remorse has drawn the secret from me.—
Now learn to threaten, girl!—Now take thy choice!
Shame! public shame, with tortures and with death,
Or the safe sweets of privacy and joy!

MARCELLA.

MARCELLA.

Amazement! thy ferocity in guilt
 O'erwhelms my faculties.—Yet hear me, Heaven!
 To thee, altho' offended by my falshood,
 To thee I kneel: O punish my offences
 By any pangs thy justice may ordain,
 But save! O save me from this daring wretch!

HERNANDEZ.

Thy prayer's too late, since thou hast render'd me
 The wretch I am: thy passions made me guilty,
 And thou shalt yield me that reward of guilt
 For which I burn in every vein to madness!—
 Come, my reluctant fair-one!

MARCELLA.

No! by Heaven!

Fulfil thy horrid, the inhuman threats!
 Add perjury to murder! and devote me
 To infamy and death!—I will embrace them,
 Rather than yield to thy abhorr'd suggestion,
 And in that fellowship debase my soul.

HERNANDEZ.

Is there such firmness in the heart of woman?
 Then artifice assist me! (*Aside.*)—Matchless virtue!
 E'en in this frenzy of my tortur'd spirit
 I feel thy awful power!—Thy purity
 Irradiates the dark chaos of my mind,
 And all the warring fires of lawless passion
 Turn at thy voice to penitential tears!—
 I kneel to thee for pardon.

MARCELLA.

Bend to Heaven!

'Tis Heaven who strikes thee, to reclaim thy soul,
 With just compunction.

H E R N A N D E Z .

Thou benignant angel !

On thee depends my safety or perdition ;
Treat me with soothing pity and forgiveness,
And I may yet atone for all my crimes,
The fatal offspring of distracted passion !

M A R C E L L A .

Thou hast my pity.

H E R N A N D E Z .

I will ask no more ;
I will not wound thy dignity, by wishing
What madness only led my heart to fight for.
No ! fair Perfection ! live thou many years
In the chaste bliss of honourable love !
While I, the victim of a frantic fondness,
In some wild desert hide my loath'd existence,
Mourn my past guilt, and hope the pitying vows
Of innocence like thine, may draw from Heaven
A full, tho' late forgiveness of my crimes.

M A R C E L L A .

Unhappy servant ! in my prayers for mercy
Thou ne'er shall be forgotten.

H E R N A N D E Z .

'Tis my purpose
To fly from hence before to-morrow's dawn :
But wherefore ? I nor wish, nor merit life.—
Haste to thy injur'd father ! let him know
The wretch he harbours ! and for all my guilt
Let public justice make her full atonement !

M A R C E L L A .

MARCELLA.

Poor frantic criminal! yet hope in Heaven!
 I, who have blindly led thee into crimes,
 Will not accelerate thy punishment.
 Seek some religious cell, and meditate
 On the infinitude of heavenly mercy!

HERNANDEZ.

I see, I feel it in thy soothing pity!

MARCELLA.

Here meet me once again, some two hours hence;
 I will supply thee with such gold or jewels,
 As may give comfort to thy lengthen'd days.

HERNANDEZ.

Thou art too good, too tender to a villain,
 Who has deserv'd thy hatred and thy scorn.—
 Still let me strive to shew I have a heart
 That knows to value what it cannot merit.
 I will not meet thee. We'll converse no more,
 Lest when my flight is known, some dark suspicion
 Fall on thy innocence.—At evening's close
 Leave thou the gift, thy charity intends,
 In the lone tower, that flanks the garden wall.
 At midnight I will take thy bounty thence,
 And praying for thy peace, depart for ever.

MARCELLA.

I thank thy generous caution; nor will fail
 To bring thee liberal aid: for still, I trust,
 'Tis Heaven's intent, for all thy earlier virtues,
 By years of calm sequester'd penitence
 To purify thy soul, and seal thy pardon.
 Cherish that thought! and Mercy be thy guard! [Exit

HERNANDEZ (*alone.*)

'Tis well—Proud Beauty! I am now thy master :
 Thy haughty spirit, that no threats could tame,
 Sinks unsuspecting in the smooth deception
 That artifice has spread.—In that lone tower,
 Where the coy clamours of a feign'd aversion
 Will only prove a prelude to my joy,
 I'll lurk to seize thy charms.—Now hasten, Night !
 Thy kind companions, Solitude and Darkness,
 Shall o'er this froward fair—one aid my triumph,
 And fate insulted love with sweet revenge.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

HERNANDEZ (*alone.*)

VICTORIOUS passion! thou at length hast gain'd
 The prize, that long has kindled in my soul
 Such wild tumultuous hopes and madding wishes!
 Thy secret joys are safe.—Spite of the frenzy,
 Rais'd by her wounded pride and vain resistance,
 This coy one, stifling her vindictive rage,
 Most wisely hides the mysteries of the night ;

And

And from her silence in this hasty marriage,
My triumph is complete : she now will grow
The willing vassal of my private pleasure.

But hark ! I hear the doating bridegroom's voice :
He moves this way.—I would not he should cast
His keen eyes on me, till my harrafs'd spirit
Regain its wonted firmness.—I'll avoid him. [Exit.

Enter the Governor and Mendoza.

GOVERNOR.

Indeed, my son, I've yielded much too far
To the fond zeal of your intemperate love.
How will the world upbraid me, for allowing
Your hurried nuptials, in this ill-starr'd hour
Of doubtful horrors, your unhappy bride
Or drown'd in tears, or almost craz'd with terror !
And the brave youth, her late affianc'd lord,
My poor ill-fated friend, welt'ring in blood,
From the base wounds of undetected murder !

MENDOZA.

My honour'd father, thou hast only done
What tenderness and duty both enjoin'd.
Her generous wish to be my wedded love,
Her virtuous dread that honour might forbid it,
And the dire fate of that lamented youth,
Whom she both loath'd and pitied, all combin'd,
Had cruelly depriv'd her troubled senses
Of reason's sovereign guidance ; still on me
The lovely maniac rav'd ; implor'd my aid
To save her from Lupercio's nuptial claim
And chase the gory phantom from her sight,
Which frenzy rais'd before it :—what remain'd,
But for Mendoza, urg'd by love and pity,

G 4

To .

To take the dear distress'd one to his bosom,
 Bear her from hence, and in more tranquil scenes
 Heal her distemper'd mind, and fondly cherish
 The gentle sufferer into peace and joy ?

GOVERNOR.

Heaven blefs the generous fervor of thy fondness,
 Thou noble-minded youth !—I had not power
 To thwart thy wish, tho' my paternal heart,
 Trembling in its completion, still endures
 Painful vicissitudes of hope and fear.

MENDOZA.

Doubt not, my father, lenient time and love,
 That mutual love which consecrates our union,
 Will from the harass'd spirit of thy daughter,
 Remove this load of complicated anguish,
 And make us soon the happiest pair that ever
 Reach'd the pure summit of connubial bliss.

GOVERNOR.

I know she loves thee to a fond excess ;
 Her soul was form'd for love : and thou art blest,
 Most richly blest, with all that can enchant
 The eye or heart of woman :—on this ground
 I build my strongest hope. Yet O, my son,
 Weak as she is, her senses scarce restor'd,
 How can I yield this darling from my sight,
 E'en to a guard so tender ?

MENDOZA.

Speak your pleasure ?
 If 'tis your wish, we will remain your guests.
 But change of place will sooth the harass'd mind

Of

Of our sweet sufferer. She should quit this scene,
 While, in avenging the brave murder'd youth,
 You nobly pay your great and awful debt
 To private friendship and to public justice.

GOVERNOR.

I have no doubts on that atrocious deed.—
 My poor lost friend's incautious ardent spirit
 Had fatally provok'd some desperate villains
 Who lurk within our city: the base wretches
 Have thus reveng'd a menace, which Lupercio
 Pronounc'd against their chief;—but by my orders
 We soon shall see the bloody slaves secur'd.
 A care still heavier presses on my heart,
 My poor perturbed child!—My anxious love
 Wavers in painful doubt, nor can resolve
 To speed her hence, or to retain her here.

MENDOZA.

Submit it to her choice!—Soon as the priest
 Ended our hasty and affecting marriage,
 You know she begg'd permission to retire,
 To gain by solitude reviving strength,
 And still those throbs of lovely agitation,
 Which in the solemn rite subdu'd her softness.
 Go to her chamber, your paternal care
 May best explore her wishes: let them be
 Our guides in every step!—For me, I hold
 My fortune and my life but ministers
 Bound to fulfil our dearest mutual hope,
 And make the bliss of your angelic daughter
 As perfect as her beauty.

GOVERNOR.

Noble youth!

A father's tears must thank thee.—I will follow
Thy generous counsel, and return to bless thee. [*Exit.*]

MENDOZA.

How mighty is thy power, Parental Love!
The hardy sinews of this gallant veteran,
Proof 'gainst the weight of war's severest toils,
Yield to thy pressure.—That undaunted firmness,
Which peril could not shake, is turn'd by thee
To wavering fear and fond irresolution.

Enter Lopez.

LOPEZ.

My honour'd lord, forgive me, if my zeal
Urge me to trouble you with painful truths!

MENDOZA.

What wouldst thou, Lopez?—Hence with idle preface,
And speak thy meaning boldly!

LOPEZ.

'Tis my duty

That forces from my lips, at such a season,
What I must grieve to speak, and you to hear.

MENDOZA.

Well thou hast credit for thy good intention,
Spare thy apologies, and tell thy tale!

LOPEZ.

'Tis thus, my lord—but promise me your pardon—

MENDOZA.

I'll pardon any thing but thy suspense.

LOPEZ.

LOPEZ.

Know then, the steward of this house, Hernandez,
Has been observ'd to throw his daring arms
With such licentious freedom round your bride,
As honour cannot brook.

MENDOZA.

Good simple fellow !
Is this thy wondrous tale ? thy painful truth ?
What ! art thou yet to learn, that ancient servants
Are amply privileg'd on days like this ?
The man who bore the infant in his arms
May kiss the ripen'd bride without a crime,
And the quick eye of jealousy itself
Shall wink at his presumption.—Get thee gone !

LOPEZ.

He boasts he will attend you to Madrid ;
Says he is fix'd for life my lady's usher,
Defying e'en her husband to displace him.

MENDOZA.

I will not quarrel with his honest pride,
Inebriate with joy ;—yet as the world
Is prone to censure, 'twill perhaps be prudent
To strike this boasting vassal from our train :
But that hereafter.—Hence ! my father comes—
Yet, Lopez, stay—one word with thee alone.

Exit with Lopez.

Enter the Governor and Marcella.

MARCELLA.

Think not, thou kindest parent that e'er drew
From the fond eyes of a protected child
The tears of filial gratitude, think not

Thy

Thy daughter thankless for thy guardian care
From her impatient haste to quit thy mansion!

GOVERNOR.

No! my sweet child! I know thy heart too well
To doubt it's tenderness. Trust me, thy father,
Much as he joys to have thee in his sight,
Feels in these moments all thee forceful reasons
That urge thy quick departure.

MARCELLA.

Then farewell

To this paternal roof! Ye walls, that echoed
With the gay music of my infant songs,
Farewell! If aught of evil hover o'er ye,
May it depart with me! depart for ever!
Safety and honour, pure celestial guards,
Watch o'er this dome! and bleis it's dear possessor!—
Hear this my parting prayer, indulgent Heaven!
Whate'er thy pleasure may ordain for me,
Here or hereafter, grant, O grant me this,
To die before my father can have cause
To wish he were not author of my being!

GOVERNOR.

Live but till then, and thou must be immortal!
Rise, my kind daughter!—Thou wilt ever prove
My age's darling! dearer to thy father
Than life or glory. Heaven, I trust, for thee
Has years in store of still encreasing joy.

MARCELLA.

Alas! my father, dost thou not perceive
The poor Lupercio whispering from his shroud
How short and how precarious mortal being!

If soon thou chance to hear thy child is dead,
 And his shade tells me thou wilt hear it soon,
 I pray thee let not an intemperate grief
 Bend to the earth thy venerable age.
 Yet O forget me not! with tender sorrow
 Give thy pure prayers to my departed soul!

GOVERNOR.

Rise, rise, my child!—Let not these gloomy fancies
 O'ercloud thy chearful spirit! raise thine eyes
 To all the radiant paths of varied pleasure
 That open now before thee!—See thy lord,
 The bright conductor of thy future steps,
 Comes, like the sun new-risen, to disperse
 These noxious vapours from thy darken'd mind,
 And give thy charms new lustre!

Enter Mendoza.

GOVERNOR.

Dear Mendoza,
 We will from hence to-day: I will myself
 Play the young foldier, and escort your bride
 Across this province.

MENDOZA.

Blest the travellers,
 Whose road is shorten'd by so dear a guide!

GOVERNOR.

Raise thou that drooping lily, while I go
 And issue orders for our quick departure.

[Exit.

MENDOZA.

Come to my arms, thou sweet seraphic being!
 Come, and preside o'er all my future life,

As

As a benignant angel, by whose guidance
 I wish to regulate my every thought!—
 Bless that kind tear! it is the sweet reply
 Of tenderness too delicate for language.—
 Yet speak, Marcella—my delighted ear
 Doats on the music of thy soothing voice.

MARCELLA.

O had I but the power to make thee happy &
 Were it possible, thy life should prove
 Unclouded, as thy virtues and thy love!

MENDOZA.

In thee I've every blessing man can wish.
 My conscious pride, exulting in thy love,
 Boldly defies the wantonness of fancy
 To figure joys above th' unchequer'd bliss
 Which my full heart has found in thy perfection.
 Be thou as happy as thou mak'st Mendoza,
 And we shall live the envy of the world.—
 Why gush these tears? Why heaves thy lab'ring bosom?
 Why roves thy troubled eye around the chamber,
 Seeming to parley with the senseless walls?—
 My tender fair-one! I perceive thy thoughts:
 'This is the fond adieu which thy soft spirit
 Expresses to this dear paternal mansion.
 Be cheer'd! thou soon shalt visit it again,
 When its glad gates shall leap at thy approach,
 And ev'ry echoing stone repeat thy welcome.—
 Still pensive!—Come, sweet partner of my life!
 Prepare we for our travels.—Have your women
 Receiv'd their orders? Pray, ere we depart,
 Inform Hernandez we will not deprive
 His generous master of so tried a servant!
 Tell him he must not quit his post.

MARCELLA—

MARCELLA.

I dare not.

MENDOZA.

How! dare not, didst thou say? What! dare not utter
A just direction to an ancient vassal?

MARCELLA.

He is the master of a fatal secret,
I dare not drive him to reveal.

MENDOZA.

A secret?

Hast thou a secret thou canst wish to hide
From the fond eye of all-forgiving love?

MARCELLA.

I have: for thee thou darling of my soul,
And for my father's peace, I strongly wish'd
'To bear it with me to an early grave,
And hide its painful horrors in the shade
Of hasten'd death: but, like the inbred fire,
That burns its passage thro' the groaning earth,
Struggling, it bursts from my convulsive bosom,
And all the blazing ruin rushes on thee.

MENDOZA.

Amazement!—Thou hast petrified my heart:
Yet speak! whatever wretchedness awaits me,
I wish to hear it from no lips but thine.

MARCELLA.

Thou generous object of my fatal love!—
Wretch as I am, how shall I bear the pangs,
The keener pangs, I'm destin'd to inflict.

On the pure heart I wish'd to make most happy ?
 Ill-starr'd Mendoza ! dear, deluded youth !
 Thou fondly think'st thou'st taken to thy bosom
 A spotless form of purity and truth ;
 But oh ! 'tis stain'd by complicated crimes,
 Too horrible for utterance.

MENDOZA.

Can it be ?

Who but thyself should call thee base, and live ?
 Thou canst not be so : yet, I pray thee, speak
 The dreadful purport lab'ring on thy lips !

MARCELLA.

By Heaven I cannot ! anguish, shame, remorse
 Stifle my words.—Here let me fall before thee !
 In pity both to me and to thyself
 Kill the vile wretch thus groveling at thy feet,
 Before her guilty tale shall freeze thy blood.

MENDOZA.

Rise, thou dear sufferer ; I conjure thee speak—
 No words, how horrible foe'er their import,
 Can torture more than this soul-harrowing silence.

MARCELLA.

Lupercio——

MENDOZA.

What !—Thou knew'st not of his murder !

MARCELLA.

Hernandez——

MENDOZA.

Ha ! was he the black assassin ?

MARCELLA.

MARCELLA.

I did not place the poniard in his hand ;
I did not ask for blood ! but my base falshood,
Falshood the offspring of my love to thee,
Led to that bloody deed.

MENDOZA.

My bride a murd'ress!

MARCELLA.

Look not upon me thus ! I cannot bear
The fierce abhorrence of those angry eyes.
Plunge thy sword here, and give me gentler death !

MENDOZA.

Thou canst not be so guilty. Thou hast injured
Thy own soft heart.—Unfold the fatal story.

MARCELLA.

Thou'rt yet to hear accumulated horrors,
To make me still more loathsome to thy sight :
But I can never speak them.—Kill me ! kill me !
In mercy end my miseries, before
The lightning of my father's indignation
Strikes his detested daughter into dust.

MENDOZA.

Would I could save him from the pangs I feel !
But 'tis impossible, if thou art guilty.

MARCELLA.

It is, it is—then save me from his wrath !
Save my departing spirit from his curie,
And death may then atone for my offences.
I only wish to die by that dear hand ;
For oh ! Mendoza, had not my fond heart

Doated

Doated upon thee with unbounded love,
We ne'er had known this miserable hour.

MENDOZA.

'Tis true, thou lovely criminal!—O Heaven!
Why was she fram'd with such pernicious beauty?—
I dare not trust myself to gaze upon thee
In this wild tumult of my madd'ning soul.—
Rest in this chamber, and restrain thy tears,
While I regain some little use of reason,
To hear more calmly all thy wretched tale.

*[He leads Marcella weeping to the adjoining chamber,
and closes the door upon her.]*

MENDOZA.

What's to be done? my dizzy soul, thus falling
From joy's bright summit to these depths of horror,
Loses the faculty of thought—Here, Lopez!
Go! bring Hernandez instantly before me!

Enter the Governor.

My father! are you come? I wish'd your presence,
Yet I would freely part with life, to save you
From the dread scene we must sustain together.

GOVERNOR.

What means Mendoza?—whence thy alter'd visage?—
What new affliction?—where's my hapless child?

MENDOZA.

Thou brave, thou good, affectionate old man,
It wounds my soul to tell thee, that thy roof
Harbours the murderer thy justice seeks.
Behold, he comes to answer for his crime!

[Lopez and other Servants bring in Hernandez.]

GOVERNOR.

GOVERNOR.

Hernandez!—Art thou certain of his guilt?
Or whence is thy surmise?

MENDOZA.

Hear and decide!

Thou faithless servant, who hast stain'd a life
Of long integrity by one black deed,
I charge thee with the blood of that brave youth
Thy master call'd his friend.—Say! art thou able
To plead thy innocence?—Thou need'st not speak;
Thy guilty features answer thy accuser.

HERNANDEZ (*aside.*)

The trait'refs has betray'd me: then, revenge,
Thou art the only sweet that I can taste,
And I will banquet on thee.

GOVERNOR.

If thou art
So base a monster of ingratitude,
Prepare thyself for tortures.

HERNANDEZ.

Spare thy threats,
Thou know'st not yet the partner of my guilt:—
Thou would not chuse to see thy daughter's beauty
Expos'd a mangled victim in those streets,
Where never eye survey'd her passing form
But with delight or envy!

GOVERNOR.

Sland'rous ruffian!
Dar'st thou prophane the virtue of my child?—
But her pure soul could no more league with thine,
Than Heaven's most favor'd angel could descend

To

To aid the hellish plots of that arch fiend
Who prompted thee to perpetrate this murder.

MENDOZA (*aside to Hernandez.*)

Peace, villain! and if e'er thou hop'ft for mercy,
Respect the feelings of a wounded father!

HERNANDEZ.

Talk not to me of mercy—I despise it.—
Death is, I know, my portion; but its pangs
Are turn'd to transport by my rich revenge.
Too long the jests of mockery were lavish'd
On my mishapen form and ardent love.
One gibing youth has paid me with his life,
For insolent derision; and o'er thee,
Thou haughty husband, thou fair golden image,
Whom beauty worships unconstrain'd, o'er thee
My triumph rises to a prouder height
Of bold revenge. I have enjoy'd thy bride.

MENDOZA.

Thou blood-stain'd liar, hence!—Away with him
To strict confinement in your deepest dungeon!

HERNANDEZ.

Bite thy proud frantic lip, in savage hope
To see my crooked body on the wheel
Crush'd, and expos'd a public spectacle!
My vengeance is consummate; but for thine,
'Tis the vain menace of presumptuous pride,
Which courage laughs at:—I escape it thus.

[*Stabs himself.*]

MENDOZA.

Thou hast indeed eluded the slow hand
Of human justice, but thou canst not foil
The surer vengeance of high-judging Heaven.

GOVERNOR.

GOVERNOR.

Go! bring thy wife! she must appear this instant.
 The form of injur'd innocence must draw
 From the pale lips of this expiring villain
 Th' avowal of his falshood.

HERNANDEZ.

My dim eyes
 Are closing, and in this deceitful world
 Shall look no more upon her fatal beauty:
 But in the next—O mercy! [Dies.

GOVERNOR.

Where is my daughter?

MARCELLA (*entering*)

Here's the hapless being,
 Who once was proud of that endearing name:
 Tho' fallen, less guilty than the world might judge me,
 From the base insult of this bleeding wretch,
 Whose crimes are clos'd by death; yet O! my father,
 Too vile to claim thy kindness, or to live.

GOVERNOR.

Wrong not thyself! thou art all innocence.

MARCELLA.

Thou dear, deluded parent—'twas my wish
 To die, and not deprive thee of a thought,
 In which thy virtuous spirit would have found
 Sweet consolation for thy lost delight.—
 I wish'd a little longer to support
 This wretched being, that I might not stain,
 By my accelerated fate, this mansion,
 The dear asylum of thy honour'd age!

But

But my gall'd spirit, never form'd to bear
 The heavy load of unacknowledg'd guilt,
 Sunk in its painful efforts to sustain it.
 Hence the quick end of that abhorr'd affassin!
 And hence thy child, atoning now by death
 For her conceal'd offences, thus implores thee
 To pardon, and to bless her parting spirit!

GOVERNOR.

O thou dear sufferer! whate'er thy failings,
 Attempt not aught against thy precious life!

MENDOZA.

Live, I conjure thee, and the tears of love
 Shall wash th' ideal blemish from thy heart.

MARCELLA.

My generous husband! let me speak that name,
 Still precious to me, tho' so rashly purchas'd!
 Think not thy injur'd bride design'd to give
 To thy chaste bed a vile dishonour'd partner,
 Tho' forcibly dishonour'd!

GOVERNOR.

Ha, my child!

Hast thou endur'd from that atrocious ruffian—

MARCELLA.

O good my father, ask not my faint voice,
 Which soon will sink in everlasting silence,
 T'unfold a tale, whose utterance would call
 Shame's burning blush to the pale cheek of death.—
 My vital faculties, but I have left
 A friendly poison has already numb'd
 A written legacy of fatal fondness,
 In which, unless my blotting tears have marr'd it,
 You'll read what I have done, and what endur'd.—
 Nay, weep not! both of you may love me dead,
 Living you could not.

MEN.

MENDOZA.

Could affection rescue
Thy beauty from the grave, thou should'st not die.

MARCELLA.

I know, ye generous spirits, death will cancel
In your kind mem'ries all my fatal errors:
And hence its pangs are welcome.—One base purpose
Produc'd these scenes of unexpected horror;
But Heaven has will'd that crime should quicken crime
To shew the danger of one devious step
From the clear paths of probity and truth.—
My dear Mendoza! thou wilt not deny me
The title of thy wife to grace my tomb,
And I shall sleep in peace.—Console my father,
And let him find in thee a worthier child!
I had a heart to reverence his virtues,
But not the strength to imitate.—O Heaven! [Dies.

MENDOZA.

'Tis gone! 'tis fled! the lovely soul,
That could not brook the shadow of dishonour!
Thy monument shall be the nuptial bed
On which Mendoza will recline, and breathe
His faithful fondness to thy list'ning spirit.
Nor will I slight the dear and hallow'd trust,
Bequeath'd by filial piety, to shield
With constant care thy father's honour'd age.—
Unhappy father! round the livid breast
Of his lost child in speechless agony
His arms are riveted!—Aid me to raise,
And bear him gently from this scene of death!



THE
TWO CONNOISSEURS:
A COMEDY,
OF THREE ACTS, IN RHYME.

VOL. III.

H

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

LORD SEEWELL,
Mr. BERIL,
MR. BIJOU,
MR. CYCLE,
TOM CARELESS,
HARRY, Servant to MR. BERIL,
MR. VARNISH.

LADY HARRIOT, } Daughters of LORD SEE-
LADY FRANCES, } WELL,
Mrs. BIJOU,
JOAN.

T H E
T W O C O N N O I S S E U R S .

A C T I .

S C E N E I. *Chambers in the Temple.*

Tom Careless and Mr. Cycle.

CARELESS.

WHATE'ER the success of your journey may
be,
My dear rural sage, you are welcome to me :
Your benevolent projects I hope you'll complete,
By this trip from your snug scientific retreat.
In return for amusement you've given me there,
By your fine apparatus, and lectures on air,
I'll shew you the town ; and the town is a science.

H 2

Mr.

MR. CYCLE.

On my tutor, dear Tom, I've perfect reliance,
For I know in that study what vigils you've kept.

CARELESS.

'Tis the only one, truly where I'm an adept ;
For as to the law, that's the science of thorns,
And tho' its black robe my lean figure adorns,
Perhaps twice a year, for my father's good pleasure,
I've renounced, I confess, both its toil and its treasure.
From my sapient Lord Coke this advantage I gain ;
He led me to find out a flaw in my brain,
That title! on which, as wise parents have done,
My father laid claim to the seals for his son.

MR. CYCLE.

Such language, dear Tom, is in truth but a brogue,
That betrays the young heir as an indolent rogue.
'Tis the cant of ye all—ye wants talents to drudge.

CARELESS.

Well! think me, my friend, wise enough for a judge,
I still must rejoice I have nothing to do,
As my heart now inclines me to wait upon you.
I wish I could raise you the cash you require,
But you know I depend on a close-handed fire,
Who promises largely, and often has said
He will make me a Cræsus whenever I wed ;
But to drive me, I think, to the conjugal state,
Keeps the purse of the bachelor woefully strait ;
And guineas at present are scarce, to my sorrow.
How much are you now come to London to borrow ?
Two thousand, d'ye say ?

MR

MR. CYCLE.

Yes! two thousand at least,
 And perhaps rather more, as my plan is increas'd.
 I wish for no profit, but public esteem;
 And much good to the world must arise from my scheme.

CARELESS.

Well! I wish you may prosper, but, as I'm a sinner,
 I as soon should expect a roast Phenix for dinner,
 As in times like the present such loans from a friend,
 When Opulence has not a stiver to lend.
 You philosophers look with contempt upon cash;
 But the fools of this town are so fond of the trash,
 That as you're a chemist, both skilful and bold,
 You had best try to make a few odd lumps of gold;
 And this newly-found art you may try with less cost,
 Since to borrow with ease seems an art that is lost.

MR. CYCLE.

Dear Careless you're welcome to rally my hopes;
 So attack them with all your rhetorical tropes!
 The man is ill-wrapt in philosophy's cloak,
 ✓ Whose bosom is ruffled, dear Tom, by a joke.
 I know money's scarce; yet I will not despond:
 I've two friends who'll supply what I want, on my bond.

CARELESS.

What! *two* such good friends! so rich, open, and free!
 Dear Cycle, I pray introduce them to me;
 For not one of that cast my long list can produce:
 Why! man, such a friend is the golden-egg'd goose;
 You may hunt for the bird e'en as long as you're able,
 But at last you will find it is only a fable.
 I wanted but one hundred pound, t'other day,
 And ask'd fifty friends, that chance threw in my way,

But they all shook their heads, with a negative nod,
 So I dunn'd my old father, in spite of the rod.
 But pray do I know the good creatures you mean?

MR. CYCLE.

Aye! both.—They're two friends, whom for years I've
 not seen;
 But in juvenile days I held each as my brother,
 And I trust that we all are still dear to each other.
 You're acquainted with Beril—

CARELESS.

Well! there, I confess,
 Your wishes have some little chance of success.
 If there's one in the world, who, regardless of self,
 Would relieve a friend's wants, tho' he straiten'd him-
 self,
 You have now nam'd the man. Yet perhaps he can't
 lend:
 I know he has suffer'd by aiding a friend;
 And I fancy he has but a slender estate.
 'Tis true, he ne'er plays, tho' carest by the great;
 Yet in statues and books he's expensive, 'tis said—
 I have seen him bid high for a porphyry head.

MR. CYCLE.

'Tis hard, fortune still should torment him with crosses;
 I sooth'd him to bear the severest of losses:
 I was with him, when blasted in youth's blooming charms
 His lovely Sophia was torn from his arms.
 You knew not, I think, that unfortunate fair,
 The victim of cruelty, love, and despair.
 She was bound to our friend by a mutual affection,
 But her rich sordid parents oppos'd the connection.

The

The canker of sorrow incessantly prey'd
 On the perishing bloom of the delicate maid :
 Her duty, her suff'rings, made nature relent,
 And wrung from her father a tardy consent ;
 But death render'd vain the late sanction he gave,
 And his child's bridal bed was the pitiless grave.
 Many years have now soften'd the lover's wild grief :
 Perhaps some new beauty now yields him relief.
 He's still single, I think ?

CARELESS.

Yes ! in learning and art
 He has fought the chief balm for the wounds of his
 heart ;
 Hence a pleasing mild elegance runs thro' his life ;
 And had I a sister I'd wish her his wife.—
 But now for your second friend !—What is his name ?
 For acquaintance with him too I'll certainly claim.
 You say that I know him : come ! tell me who is it !

MR. CYCLE.

Yes ! indeed, it is one whom you frequently visit.
 And here you must own, that my hopes are well found-
 ed,
 Since in kindness and wealth he has ever abounded ;
 And a legacy lately——

CARELESS.

You dont, mean Bijou,
 That collector of knick-knacks ?

MR. CYCLE.

Indeed, tom, I do,
 I've a title to ask any favor from him :
 He has some little vanity, some little whim,
 Yet still he's a friendly, benevolent man.

H 4

CARELESS.

CARELESS.

You may rap at his door—but get in if you can!
 Your friend, when you saw him, was jocund and free,
 His heart full of bounty, his spirit of glee;
 His vanities too had so mirthful a cast,
 That Friendship herself even wish'd them to last.
 But Marriage, that changer of mind and of feature,
 Has made poor Bijou quite a different creature.

MR. CYCLE.

I am told that his wife, with a pocket well laden,
 Was a little, fat, ancient, and well-behav'd maiden;
 Who, having a similar taste for virtue,
 Put her cabinet under the care of Bijou.

CARELESS.

Yes, indeed! in an odd fit of amorous hunger,
 He married an old curiosity-monger,
 Who is ready to faint, if a visitor knocks
 While she's brushing the dust from her raree-shew box.
 Her maid t'other day threw her into a swoon,
 By cracking the eye of a great stuff'd baboon;
 For instead of young children, whose troublesome noise
 Might disturb their sedate, *virtuofical* joys,
 She fills their fine house with new monsters or mummies.

MR. CYCLE.

Of your story, dear Tom, I perceive what the sum is.
 You don't like the lady: she may not please you,
 And yet be an excellent wife for Bijou.
 I am told she has really much merit and taste.
 In her morals they say she's remarkably chaste;
 So with lectures, perhaps, she has wounded your ear,
 And you rakes of the Temple may think her severe.

CARELESS.

CARELESS.

No, faith! with the lady I stand very well,
 I bought her esteem with an old empty shell.
 I own she has piety, morals, and sense:
 To chastity no one will doubt her pretence.
 But tho' with these virtues I freely invest her,
 My heart, I confess, is inclin'd to detest her.
 She has ruin'd her husband—at least so I think;
 To a dwarf she has made his benevolence shrink,
 And puff'd up his vanity into a giant.
 To all her strange whims he's so fervently pliant,
 He'd obey her caprice, whatso'er it might hint,
 And deny himself bread to buy her an odd flint.

MR. CYCLE.

Why, Tom, that's a proof of his fond tender heart.

CARELESS.

To me it proves nought but her ladyship's art:
 And so you yourself would explain the whole riddle,
 If you heard her once flatter his pencil or fiddle,
 As a more wretched brush never blotted poor paper,
 And ne'er squeak'd a Cremona beneath a worse scraper.
 Tho' pamper'd with flattery thus by his wife,
 Our friend has quite lost all his humor and life;
 And whenever I look on his cold cheerless face,
 As he stands by the side of his wife's fossil-case,
 I think her a perfect Medusa, I own,
 Who has turn'd her poor husband himself into stone.

MR. CYCLE.

You loungers, dear Tom, in your idle disputes,
 Love to ridicule all life's amusing pursuits:
 But they all have their use; and the lady who joys
 In collecting an odd set of whimsical toys,

138 THE TWO CONNOISSEURS :

Is herself a rare gem, that my judgment regards,
 More than all the fair votaries of scandal and cards.
 I know I shall like her, in spite of your stricture,
 And I'm going to see how you've fail'd in her picture.
 My old friend's good-will I shall put to the trial,
 And solicit his aid without fear of denial.

CARELESS.

Come along !—I will see if your welcome is hearty ;
 Indeed I may serve you by joining the party,
 And I'm eager to know (for my portrait is true)
 What you think of the change she has wrought in Bijou.
 To a knowledge of nature I ne'er will pretend,
 If, when you have seen, in the house of our friend,
 All the natural rarities rang'd in a glass,
 You don't rank his heart in the petrified class. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to a Drawing Room at Mrs. Bijou's
 with a Door open into an interior Cabinet of Curio-
 sities—Several stuff'd Creatures and other Rarities dis-
 covered in the Apartment.

JOAN, with a Brush.

Lackaday ! would I once were well out of this house,
 Where I tremble to move, full as much as a mouse !
 And Nanny's afraid to come into this room ;
 Indeed the poor creature can scarce hold a broom,
 For my mistress, she says, has done nothing but beat
 her,
 Since she brush'd off the tail of the new alligator.
 I've a great mind to lay up my brush on the shelf,
 And leave madam to dust all her monsters herself.
 Would my master would make her, for these stocks and
 stones,
 A young little plaything of good flesh and bones !

But,

But, alas ! these old ladies who can't raise a baby,
 Are as full of nonsensical maggots as may be.
 And our house is so cramm'd with this whimsical jumble,

That if you touch one thing, another will tumble.
 Madam says, I misplace whatsoever I clean,
 But I'll venture to wipe off the dust from this screen.

Throws it down.

A plague take the things ! they do nothing but fall.
 Lud ! my fingers have run thro' the cover and all.

Taking up the Screen, and uncovering it.

'Tis my master's new drawing—how madam will thunder—

This fine naked beauty I've torn quite afunder :
 And the rent must be seen—I can thrust my whole
 hand in,

And I've no time to mend it—my mistress is coming—

MRS. BIJOU (*entering in a dark brown Bed-gown,
 with a Brush of Peacock's Feathers.*)

Some new mischief's done here.—Lord ! Joan, what's
 the matter ?

I am sure you broke something, I heard such a clatter.

JOAN.

Indeed, Ma'am, I've had a most cruel disaster.
 The screen——

MRS. BIJOU.

What ! the beautiful work of your master !

JOAN.

My finger slip't thro', as I wip'd it in haste,
 But I'm sure I can mend it again with some paste.

MRS.

MRS. BIJOU.

You awkward, pert huffey! pray let it alone!
 Can paste mend a flaw in a goddess's zone?
 Ye stars! give me patience!—Get out of this door,
 And pray let me never set eyes on you more!
 I knew I should suffer as soon as you came,
 For taking a thing with so gothic a name.

JOAN.

I'll go—for I live but the life of a cur:
 Yet pray! on my name do not throw any slur!
 I am sure 'tis good English, altho' it is Joan,
 And that's more than you're able to say of your own.

[*Ex. s.*]

MR. BIJOU (*entering.*)

What's the matter, my dear?—What new plague from
 your maids?

You for ever are vext by these pestilent jades:
 If bred in this town, you object to their morals;
 If rustics, they break all your glasses or corals.
 Let 'em come whence they will, they bring trouble and
 strife,

And your quarrels have made me half sick of my life.

MRS. BIJOU.

Don't say so!—You know, my dear Mr. Bijou,
 I take no young maids, out of fondness to you;
 And these middle-aged creatures are all so unhandy,
 They make me as fretful as old Mr. Shandy.
 But, my dear, if you see me sometimes in a flame,
 I think you won't say that my temper's to blame:
 'Twas my love for the works of your delicate hand,
 Which produc'd an emotion I could not command,

If

If I rated old Joan in a great agitation,
 I am sure you will own I had much provocation,
 When you see this sad cause of the bustle between us :
 She has utterly ruin'd your very best Venus,
 This new lovely drawing! the joy of all eyes!
 I vow I could cry.—

MR. BIJOU.

What sweet softness!—she cries!—
 These feelings, indeed, prove the true connoisseur :
 This ill treatment of Art her fine sense can't endure.
 Henceforth, of my works let them say what they will,
 No painter can boast such a test of his skill.—
 Come, cheer up, my dear Cognoscente! come! come!
 I can mend it again with a brush full of gum.

MRS. BIJOU.

D'ye think you can mend it?—and won't it look brown,
 If you don't hide the skin with the skirt of a gown?
 'T would be pity to cloak up a body so fine,
 Especially since you have drawn it from mine.
 And you know I caught cold, when I stript to the waist,
 To fit for the figure, in true attic taste :
 But I did it from fondness, that you might not roam,
 And wickedly hunt after models from home.
 To be sure I love art—but all artists, they say,
 By their studies of nature are tempted to stray ;
 And I own that your genius gives me great alarms.

MR. BIJOU.

My dear, tender creature! pray trust your own charms!

MRS. BIJOU.

Affectionate terrors will rise in my head.
 I was jealous, I own, t'other day of the dead.

MR.

MR. BIJOU.

What fond sensibility ! exquisite feeling !

MRS. BIJOU.

I hope I was wrong, but strange fancies will steal in,
 When fondness has open'd the heart to suspicion.
 You're so dear to the females of every condition :
 But, I hope, Lady Fancybird was not so vicious ;
 'There was nothing, indeed, in her air meretricious ;
 Yet a jealous pang seiz'd me, I own, when I found
 That by will she bequeath'd to you three thousand pound.
 'Tis true, that a legacy's very commodious ;
 Yet the money appears to me utterly odious,
 When I think it was possibly meant as the price
 Of endearments, to which she had art to entice,
 And not in return for the pictures you drew,
 Of her parrot, her bull-finch, and old cockatoo.

MR. BIJOU.

Lord ! my dear, if such phantoms your quiet consume,
 You will make the old lady jump out of her tomb.
 'Tis true, that I flatter'd her favourite passion,
 As I love to be well with old ladies of fashion :
 But pray don't suppose, I was e'er so absurd
 As to stroke her pale cheek for the pole of her bird.

MRS. BIJOU.

Ah ! you humorous man, you've such infinite wit,
 You can turn to a jest whatso'er you think fit !—
 But my heart on this point can be never at ease,
 Unless you'll allow me to spend as I please,
 Half the money, of which you're so oddly possess'd ;
 And then I shall think it an honest bequest.
 Besides, there's an auction at Lady Toy-Truckle's,
 And I long for a rap at the Duchess's knuckles,

Who

Who out-bid me, you know, t'other day, for a shell.
'Tis all for your credit.

MR. BIJOU.

Well! well! my dear, well!
I never refuse you the cash I can spare.

MRS. BIJOU.

You are sure I shall turn it to something most rare:
For indeed I'm no pitiful hoarder of pelf;
And I've now let my heart on some true ancient delf.

MR. BIJOU.

'Tis time you were drest.

MRS. BIJOU.

As I live, there's a rap;
I'm not fit to be seen, in this bed-gown and cap.
Run! and charge them, my dear, not to let in a foul!—
With my cabinet dust I'm as black as coal.

MR. BIJOU (*looking out.*)

I'm too late.

MRS. BIJOU.

For my orders they don't care a pin;
And to vex me, old Joan has let somebody in.
I'll escape—I can't bear to be seen in this trim.

MR. BIJOU.

'Tis only Tom Careless—you need not mind him.

Enter Careless and Mr. Cycle.

CARELESS.

Here, good folks! I have brought you a very rare bird;
'Tis five years since his notes in this town have been
heard.

MR,

MR. BIJOU.

Mr. Cycle! my worthy, old friend! how d'ye do?—
Give me leave to present to you Mrs. Bijou!

MRS. BIJOU.

I'm aſham'd to be found in this garb.

MR. BIJOU.

O! my dear,
From a man of true ſcience you've nothing to fear;
He'll freely allow, for he's candid and juſt,
Philoſophical ladies muſt dabble in duſt.—
Mr. Cycle, my wife is a curious collector:
In natural knowledge I hope you'll direct her;
You are maſter of all, from the earth to the ſtars,
And may aid her in ranging her foſſils and ſpars.

MR. CYCLE.

She ſhall freely command all the little I know.

MRS. BIJOU.

You're extremely obliging, dear Sir, to ſay ſo!
But I cannot attend you in this duſty veſt.
I'll ſoon ſlip it off.

CARELESS.

You ſha'n't ſtir, I proteſt.
To talk of your dreſs, my dear Ma'am, is a joke,
To a ſage, who exiſts but in chemical ſmoke.
Your robe is indeed like the robe of Saint Bruno,
Yet ſtill by your air we might take you for Juno,
While the tail of your peacock, that type of com-
mand,
With ſuch dignity waves in your awful white hand.

Mrs.

Mrs. BIJOU.

You're a young faucy creature !

Mr. CYCLE.

These idle rogues, Madam,
More like fons of the Serpent, than children of Adam,
Are apt to esteem it a dull occupation,
To study the wonders of this fair creation :
And hence they all rally, with humor ill-plac'd,
Those who seek for amusement in science and taste.

Mr. BIJOU.

Well said ! Mr. Cycle—I'm glad that Virtù
Has found both a friend and a champion in you.
Come and peep at my wife's philosophical treasure !
I hope you'll survey it again, at your leisure.—
My dear, d'ye allow me to shew your museum ?
I'm exact in all matters of *tuum* and *meum*.

Mrs. BIJOU.

Mr. Cycle, I'm sure, is a priviledg'd man.

Mr. BIJOU.

It is open.—Come, Sir !

[Exit, with Mr. Cycle, into the interior Apartment.]

Mrs. BIJOU.

Tell me, Tom, if you can,
Is not this Mr. Cycle a man of great worth,
Who wrote a most excellent book on the Earth.

CARELESS.

'Tis the author himself ; and I know not what college
Can shew his superior in virtue and knowledge.
He's a man of few words, with a heart and a mind
Ever busied in schemes for the good of mankind ;

And

And he now visits London, in hopes to procure
Some support in a plan for relieving the poor.

MRS. BIJOU.

The poor !—of their name I'm alarm'd at the mention :
Mr. Cycle, indeed, may have no ill intention,
But I fear he'll involve my good husband in trouble—
These projects of charity end in a bubble.
The poor are ungrateful, disorderly wretches,
Who can shift for themselves by their tricks and their
fetches ;
They deserve not a learned philosopher's thought.

CARELESS.

Your pardon !—He'll think, if he thinks as he ought,
That Philosophy, drawing from Heaven her birth,
Is the science of soft'ning the evils on earth.
By your fears you have done our friend infinite wrong,
For tho' his heart's tender, his judgment is strong :
To the projects of Folly he never can stoop—
Philanthropy's friend is not Phantasy's dupe.

MRS. BIJOU.

Why, Careless ! you talk in a language quite new :
Who could dream of a charity-sermon from you ?

CARELESS.

Oh ! a cobbler can preach, when his spirit's inflam'd.
Mine is apt to blaze forth, if I hear a friend blam'd ;
And indeed I can't stifle my heart's ebullitions,
When such good folks as you harbour vile suppositions.
But I'm sure you'll forgive all the warmth I have shewn,
When the worth of our friend is to you better known,
If you're angry, I know that your anger will cease,
When you hear on what terms I can purchase my peace.

A shell

A shell I can bring you—my interest such is—
 Very like what you lately gave up to the Duchefs.
 Perhaps I may give it you—

MRS. BIJOU.

You're a good soul—
 As large as her Grace's, and perfectly whole?

CARELESS.

Yes, I think 'tis as large, and in colour as high.

MRS. BIJOU.

Are you sure of its shape?

CARELESS.

Do you question my eye?
 I'll convince you I'm right; let us instantly look
 At the fine colour'd plates in your great Danish book.

MRS. BIJOU.

Come—you give me more joy than I'm able to speak—
 I can't bear that her Grace should possess an *Unique*.

*[They retire into the interior Apartment, from whence
 Mr. Bijou and Mr. Cycle return.]*

MR. BIJOU.

This scheme, my good friend, does you honor indeed.
 In a business so noble I hope you'll proceed;
 And may you accomplish your utmost desires,
 In raising the sum which your project requires!—
 Pray look at this new little drawing of mine!
 Don't you think it an elegant pretty design?

MR. CYCLE.

Very lively indeed!—But, my friend, you forget
 What I've said on the point of incurring this debt.

Do not fly from the subject!—I hate all evasion:
 I must say for your aid I have serious occasion.
 You know what I've ask'd, and in asking I deem,
 That I give you a proof of my cordial esteem.
 In a poor-house myself I would rather work hard,
 Than apply thus to one whom I did not regard.

MR. BIJOU.

Mr. Cycle, I know you're a man without guile,
 And you think in a noble and singular style;
 But if asking for cash is of love a sure test,
 With affectionate friends all the wealthy are blest.

MR. CYCLE.

I have done, as I see that you wish to evade
 A request, that I thought I with justice had made;
 As you know, when of fortune you felt a reverse,
 You had once the command of my prosperous purse;
 And since you of opulence now are possess'd,
 More enrich'd too of late by a friendly bequest,
 I suppos'd, without trouble—

MR. BIJOU.

Dear Cycle, 'tis true
 You shall have it; but mum! towards Mrs. Bijou

MR. CYCLE.

O! I now understand all the cause of demur;
 And if that is the case, I have done, my dear Sir.
 At the hazard of discord the sum you sha'n't lend;
 In family strife I'll not plunge my old friend.

MR. BIJOU.

Do not think me a slave!—there's no danger of strife
 But you'll find, if you e'er try the conjugal life,
 It is best not to waken the frowns of a wife.

Befi

Befides. there is surely no reason why you
Should talk on such business to Mrs. Bijou.

MR. CYCLE.

There is certainly none—you shall do as you please.

MR. BIJOU.

One thousand, my friend, I can spare you with ease;
'Tis the sum I shall go to receive very soon;
If you'll call here again, you shall have it by noon.
And to tell you the truth, I would have you make haste,
Lest my wife should demand it for matters of taste.
When an auction is near, she is apt to be rash,
In laying her hand upon all my loose cash;
And as she is thought so judicious a buyer,
Her elegant wishes I seldom deny her.
Yet 'tis time to grow prudent:—but hush! here they
come.

Remember my charge—dear philosopher, mum!

Enter Mrs Bijou and Careless.

MRS. BIJOU.

O my dear! I'm in raptures: my young friend has cur'd
All the bitter vexation I've lately endur'd.
Now in shells by the Duchefs I am not surpris'd;
Tom will bring me the fellow to what she bought last.

MR. BIJOU.

He's exceedingly kind!—But, my dear, it grows late;
Remember the guest, whom you must not make wait.
Old Baron Van-Bettle's appointed to-day
Your curious collection of flies to survey;
As some business abroad will oblige me to leave him,
I entreat you, my dear, to be dress'd to receive him.
These friends will excuse you.

MRS.

Mrs. BIJOU.

I'll bid them fare
Mr. Cycle, your servant!—Remember the shell

MR. BIJOU.

O my friend! you've a thousand new drawings
I can tell you, our artists grow jealous of me.

JOAN (*entering hastily.*)

Sir, a coach is just stopt, and a man with a star

MR. BIJOU.

Od's life! I must leave you, to wait on the Ba

MR. CYCLE.

I beg we mayn't keep you.

MR. BIJOU.

My good friends, adieu!

Dear Cycle! pray meet me again here at two!
I am sorry I'm forc'd thus to part with you now
But for such an engagement I'm sure you'll allow
For the flies are all rang'd in the parlour below,
And a guest like the Baron one can't leave, you
As the key's in the case, he perhaps might unl
And whip the best butterfly into his pocket.

'Tis a law with the curious to watch a collector
And you never must trust him without an inspe

CARELESS.

Now, my friend, what d'ye say to the portrait
Were my colours too dark for good Madam Bij
But how have you far'd in your money-petitic
If you get it, I'll call you a mighty magician.
I can tell you, that madam suspected a plot.

MR. CYCLE.

I've his promise—but shall I accept it, or not?

CARELESS.

If you can, by all means!—'twill be fav'd from her
clutches,

Who would throw it away in out-bidding a Duchess:

And at auctions indeed she'd her husband undo,

Were she not in her house quite a close-handed Jew.

But on saving a penny she frequently ponders,

And her avarice scrapes what her vanity squanders.—

O! if I were her master, her whimsies I'd cure,

And make a good wife of this vile connoisseur.—

Now for Beril—he's one of a different cast.

MR. CYCLE.

Come along!—since I saw him some long years have
past,

And I'm eager to clasp his affectionate hand.

CARELESS.

Stop a moment!—and answer me this one demand!

Don't you see a sad change in our poor friend be-
low?

Where's the lively companion, the humourous beau?

All his pleasantries gone—

MR. CYCLE.

I confess, by his carriage,

He seems to be render'd more serious by marriage.

CARELESS.

By my life, I am griev'd, in thus seeing him grow

The poor trumpeting slave to his wife's raree-show.—

Well!

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Well! ye Gods! if, whenever my nuptial star twinkle
I should wed an old hunter of odd periwinkles,
To engage her nice eye with unchanging attraction,
May I turn in her arms to a cold petrification!

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE I. *An elegant Apartment, ornamented with a few Busts and Books, a large Statue covered up, and a Door open into a more extensive Library.*

Mr. Beril and Harry.

MR. BERIL.

PRAY, Harry, remove from the statue its case;
And be careful in clearing the dust from its base.

HARRY.

Directly, Sir?

MR. BERIL.

Yes! you must instantly do it.
For my worthy Lord Seewell is coming to view it.—
Now, my sweet Lady Frances! I soon shall behold
All thy quick sensibility wake and unfold:

Thou

Thou wilt pay to this sculpture the tribute most dear;
 Thou wilt praise the fine work by an eloquent tear,
 Unless by gay Harriot thy softness is check'd.
 How I long in thy features to mark the effect
 Produc'd by the wonders of exquisite art,
 On a delicate mind and a sensible heart!
 But why on thy graces do I rashly dwell?
 Why study those charms, that I know but too well?
 In my station 'tis madness to think of thy hand;
 Yet thou, of all women in this lovely land,
 Thou only could'st fill, in my desolate breast,
 The place that my tender Sophia possesseth.

HARRY (*advancing.*)

There, Sir, 'tis as neat as a new-twisted cord;
 But I hope you won't sell this fine thing to my Lord.
 He's a desperate bidder for stone-work, I'm told;
 Yet I hope you will keep it in spite of his gold.

MR. BERIL.

Do you hope so?—pray why?—I should rather have
 thought
 You'd rejoice if his lordship the statue had bought;
 It would save you some trouble.

HARRY.

For that I don't care.
 Why I wish you to keep it, I'll freely declare:—
 I've observ'd, since the day that poor Miss Sophy died,
 And that's five years, I think, next Bartholomew-tide,
 There is only this statue, that's now in our sight,
 In which you have seem'd to take any delight;
 And if this marble woman your heart so engages,
 Before you should tell her I'd give up my wages.

MR. BERIL.

Thou'rt a generous lad, with an excellent heart!—
Honest Harry! the statue and I shall not part.

But I hear a coach stop:—haste, and let my Lord in

[Exit Ha

MR. BERIL (*alone.*)

Harry's warmth is affecting.—'Tis pleasant to win
A regard unconstrain'd from the low ranks of life,
Which are falsely suppos'd full of baseness and strife.
How mistaken is he, who incessantly raves,
That domestics are nothing but idiots or knaves!
When nature oft shines, with a lustre most fervent;
In the zeal of an honest, affectionate servant.

Enter Lord Seewell, *with* Lady Frances *and* La
Harriot.

LORD SEEWELL.

Dear Beril, my girls would attend me, to see
Either you or your statue.—Howe'er that may be,
I know you'll allow them a sight of your treasure.

MR. BERIL.

My Lord, I confess, I had hopes of this pleasure;
And my statue henceforth I more highly shall rate,
Since to that I'm in debt for an honor so great.

LADY HARRIOT.

That's right, Mr. Beril:—I pray make it known,
That we come for the sake of the marble alone,
For tho' we have both a fair name, as I think,
Yet our poor reputations will instantly sink,
If 'tis said by your neighbour, old Lady Soap-Fan,
That instead of a statue, we visit a man.

MR. BERIL.

If on spirit and worth there is any reliance,
 Lady Harriot may set every hag at defiance;
 And force even Scandal in silence to sit—
 If not just to her innocence, aw'd by her wit.

LADY HARRIOT.

My dear Sir, do not talk in so pleasing a tone,
 If you do, I sha'n't relish the silence of stone,
 And the statue 'll seem dull.—So pray! tell us where is
 it,
 Pray present us to her that we're now come to visit.

MR. BERIL.

Here's the lady you honour. [*Shewing the Statue.*]

LORD SEEWELL.

Indeed, this is fine:
 What perfect expression! what strength of design!

MR. BERIL.

Pray! my dear Lady Frances, advance to the place,
 Which will give you, I think, the best view of the face—
 'Tis the tender Alcestis, just yielding her breath,
 On the arm of her husband reclining in death;
 And tho' pain o'er her form so much langour has thrown,
 You may still discern beauties resembling your own.

LORD SEEWELL.

Whence came it, dear Beril?—'tis surely antique;
 The work, my good friend, is undoubtedly Greek.
 I swear the Laocoon is not so fine:
 Had I choice of the two, this, I'm clear, would be mine.
 The subject more pleasing!—expression still higher!—
 This long hidden treasure where could you acquire?

MR. BERIL.

I owe it to chance, to acknowledge the truth,
 And a princely and brave Neapolitan youth,
 Whom I luckily sav'd, in a villainous strife,
 From the dagger of jealousy, aim'd at his life.
 The work was dug up on his father's estate,
 And, knowing my passion for marble is great,
 He nobly has sent me the gift in your view,
 In return for what accident led me to do.

LORD. SEEWELL.

'Tis the first piece of sculpture perhaps on the earth,
 And I hardly know how to appreciate it's worth;
 But if ever you wish to dispose of the treasure,
 I'll accept it at three thousand guineas with pleasure

MR. BERIL.

My Lord, you now speak with that liberal spirit
 Which you ever display when you estimate merit.
 Tho' I own works of art, of such high estimation,
 Seem but ill to agree with my fortune and station,
 Yet these figures at present I wish to retain,
 Tho' the wish may appear ostentatious and vain.
 But, my Lord, if they e'er change their master anew
 They shall find a more worthy possessor in you.

LADY HARRIOT.

Well! ye dear connoisseurs! you amaze me, I own
 By the value you set on this sorrowful stone.
 I indeed can believe 'tis a fine piece of art;
 But to buy it for furniture!—as to my part,
 I'd as soon o'er my house throw a sepulchre's gloom,
 And purchase from Westminster-Abbey a tomb.

LORD SEEWELL.

You're a wild idle gipsy, and past all correcting ;
You have not the least relish for what is affecting.

LADY HARRIOT.

That's your fault, dear Papa ;—but my sister, you see,
Makes ample amends for this failing in me ;
She gazes, like you, with such serious delight,
That she's half turn'd to marble herself by the sight :
I vow it has made her unable to speak,
And has drawn a cold tear down her petrified cheek.

LADY FRANCES.

Pray ! my dear, don't expose me !

MR. BERIL.

O seek not to hide
What nature design'd your chief beauty and pride !—
With different charms she enriches the earth ;
To your sister she gave the sweet dimples of mirth ;
And, that each in her province no rival may find,
All the soft pensive graces to you she assign'd.

LADY HARRIOT.

Believe me, you shine, Mr. Beril, most brightly,
In the delicate science of praising politely ;
In which many beaux are so savagely stupid,
They a scalping-knife take for the weapon of Cupid ;
And to tickle one nymph, basely slash every other.—
Well ! dear Frances, how are you ?

LADY FRANCES.

Indeed I can't smother,
What I feel in surveying this wonder of art ;
It has something which takes such fast hold of the heart.

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In the faint dying wife such a fond resignation !
 In the poor widow'd husband such wild agitation !
 Such sorrow ! such anguish ! such love to Alcestis !

LADY HARRIOT.

That is true ; but I know the whole story a jest is ;
 And Admetus, I think, such a shuffling poltroon,
 That he moves me no more than the man in the moon.
 A pitiful fellow ! to live, in his case,
 And let his poor wife pass the Styx in his place !
 Modern husbands, indeed, I believe would be merry,
 If their wives in their stead would cross over that ferry.

MR. BERIL.

But perhaps, Ma'am, you think that no husband could
 find
 A young modern wife of Alcestis's mind ?

LADY HARRIOT.

No ! indeed, my good Sir !—Here's my dear sister Fan,
 She'd be willing to die, to preserve her good man ;
 But I own for myself, I should doubt and demur,
 If I thought my spouse wish'd his own trip to defer :
 Tho' myself to his fortunes I'd freely devote,
 If we both might embark at one time in the boat,
 I confess I should scarce be wondrously kind,
 As to set sail myself, but to leave him behind.

HARRY (*entering.*)

Two gentlemen, Sir, wish to see you below ;
 Mr. Careless is one.

LORD SEEWELL (*to Mr. Beril.*)

Harriot's favourite beau !

LADY HARRIOT.

Lord, Papa ! Mr. Beril will think me in love.

MR.

MR. BERIL (*to Harry.*)

Let the gentlemen know we expect them above.

[*Exit Harry.*]

LORD SEEWELL.

Tom and Harriot have long had flirtations together,
But their courtship has changeable fits, like the weather:
The improvident girl, thinking lovers are plenty,
Declares she won't wed till she's past one-and-twenty;
Nor e'en then take her beau, (in her charms such her
trust is)

Unless he bids fair to become a chief justice;
And Tom is the heir of too large an estate,
To load his gay spirit with law's heavy weight.
But here comes our young lawyer, to urge his own plea!

Enter Careless and Mr. Cycle.

MR. BERIL.

My dear Tom! how d'ye do?—My good stars! can it
be?

Is it you, my dear Cycle, my long-absent friend?

MR. CYCLE.

And still heartily yours.

MR. BERIL.

But why would you not fend,
And of your affection afford me a proof,
By bespeaking your quarters here under my roof.
However, I'm happy, that chance is so kind,
As to give me th' occasion I've long wish'd to find,
To present you to one, who, of all men on earth,
Is most able to judge of your genius and worth.—
My dear Lord, to your notice now let me commend
The man to whose name you're already a friend!
Behold Mr. Cycle!

LORD SEEWELL.

Dear Sir, let me say,
That I often have wish'd for this fortunate day,
Which makes me acquainted with one whom I deem
So justly entitled to public esteem ;
Whose writings and life shew in fairest alliance,
Philanthropical virtue and genuine science.

MR. CYCLE.

My good Lord, these art honours far more than my
Yet I own with delight I receive them from you ;
As you're led to o'er-rate my poor merits, I feel,
By this dear partial friend's kind affectionate zeal.

LORD SEEWELL.

He indeed is your friend—I regard his applause ;
But to wish your acquaintance I've still higher cause
Be assur'd I shall think myself truly your debtor,
If you'll give me the pleasure of knowing you better
Either Beril or Carelet's will guide you to me ;
I have some things perhaps it may please you to see
Yet no gem, I believe, that's so worthy your sight,
As a statue which Beril has just brought to light,
Allow me to shew it you—

MR. BERIL (to Lady Frances.)

Your tender breath,

My dear Lady Frances, I fear, is oppress'd
By this sculptur'd distress, the mere creature of art,
Yet too painful a scene for so feeling a heart.

LADY FRANCES.

No, indeed!—at first sight, tho' it made my veins th
And I felt thro' my bosom a cold icy chill,
That impression once over, I view it again
With a soothing delight, unembitter'd by pain.

LADY HARRIOT (to Careless.)

And pray, Sir, from *which* court of justice come you?

CARELESS.

From the worshipful court of wise Madam Bijou;
Where, blind as old Themis, she utters decrees
On the price of stuff'd parrots and petrified trees.

LADY HARRIOT.

O you mischievous creature! you certainly mean,
By the sound of her name to awaken my spleen:
You know that the thought of her sickens me quite,
And that I at her house must do penance to-night.

CARELESS.

Then I vow I'll be there, if it's only to see
How Mortification and you may agree:
Even that gloomy spright must appear with some grace,
If it lurks in the lines of so lively a face.

LADY HARRIOT.

All my gaiety dies when her presence I come in;
No cramp-fish could give me a shock so benumbing—
She's my utter aversion—

LORD SEEWELL.

Pray tell me, my dear,
Of whom do you speak in a style so severe?

LADY HARRIOT.

Of your friend, dear Papa, your good Mrs. Bijou.

LORD SEEWELL.

That's ungrateful, dear Harriot—she's civil to you;
And you should not indulge a fatyrical vein.

LADY HARRIOT.

You forget, my dear Sir, how you often complain
That her low little pride, and nonsensical whim,
Have reduc'd your old friend to a pitiful trim ;
And I think she has made him so gloomy a slave,
She has pent her good man in Trophonius's cave.
Such to him was the temple of Hymen ; for after
He enter'd its vestibule,—farewell to laughter.

LORD SEEWELL.

Why, Harriot ! you really are quite acrimonious :
But if you call wedlock the cave of Trophonius,
Have a care, if that cavern you chance to step near !
You love laughing too well to resign it, my dear.

LADY HARRIOT.

And therefore, tho' woo'd like the nymph of Toboso,
I never will marry an old virtuoso,
Who thinks himself blest with taste, science, and worth,
Because he picks up all the odd things on earth.—
When a passion for art, or for nature, is join'd
With a warm friendly heart, and a liberal mind.
I respect the pure taste which that union produces,
Free from vanity's sordid fantastic abuses.
Tho' I do not possess it, I see and commend
Such taste, dear Papa, both in you and your friend ;
But I view with an utter contempt, I confess,
Those who awkwardly ape what you really possess :
And for Mrs. Bijou, she has just as much soul
As a monkey, who carries queer things to its hole :
She with wonderful gusto, half Gothic, half Dutch,
Like an old squirrel, hides all she can in her hutch.

CARELESS.

CARELESS.

An excellent portrait! and true, I protest,
For I've just had a peep at the old squirrel's nest.

LADY HARRIOT.

Pray, since we together her closet inspected,
What whimsical rarities has she collected?

CARELESS.

O, before I could count half the baubles she buys,
I could tell you the name of each star in the skies:
Her sphere is too wide for my genius to scan it;
But I know what she reckons her Georgian planet,
Her newly found star—which to-night, if you're free,
'Thro' a glass she perhaps may allow you to see.

LADY HARRIOT.

What wonder is this?—is it flesh, fish, or fowl?
A Lilliput dog? or a Brobdignag owl?
Or 's it a remnant for Joseph's odd coat?

CARELESS.

It is something once held by a person of note
In our island; and now I defy you to guess.

LADY HARRIOT.

Is it Essex's ring? or the ruff of Queen Bess?
Or Alfred's cake-toaster? or Rizzio's fiddle?
Pray tell me!—I hate to be teaz'd by a riddle.

CARELESS.

In short, 'tis a night-cap, not worth half a groat,
Which she for a guinea has luckily bought;
Because this old fragment of worsted, she vows,
Once serv'd as a crown for poor Chatterton's brows:

Tho'

Tho' I think we should find, if we knew the whole truth,
That cap was ne'er seen by that wonderful youth.

LADY HARRIOT.

Now, Chatterton! boast, that thy ill-fated verse
Can teach antiquarians to open their purse!
Yet hadst thou, in misery, su'd for that guinea,
Its mistress had call'd thee a vain rhyming ninny;
And prov'd, to thy grief, by the style of her giving,
Virtuoso's have little esteem for the living.

LORD SEEWELL.

Come, Harriot! I *must* stop the tide of your wit,
Tho' you're now on a topic you don't love to quit.

(To Mr. Beril)

We *must* take our leave—Many thanks for our pleasure.—

Mr. Cycle, remember!—your first day of leisure!—
You sha'n't stir, my dear Beril, you sha'n't leave your friend:

Here is Careless, you know, on the girls to attend.
Let us see you together, and shortly!—Adieu!

LADY HARRIOT (to Careless, *aside*.)

Below let me whisper a few words to you!

Mr. Beril and Mr. Cycle.

MR. BERIL.

Well, my worthy old friend, I rejoice you are here,
And that now you are known to that excellent peer;
Who, free from all pride, affectation, and vanity,
Unites useful virtue to pleasing urbanity;
Plain, simple, sincere, yet of judgment refin'd,
And fond of the arts, as they're friends to mankind;
Ennobled

Ennobled much less by his birth than his spirit;
 The model of Honor, and patron of Merit!
 But how have you done for this age? and what plan,
 For the profit of science, or service of man,
 Brings you now from your fav'rite sequester'd retreat?
 Whate'er the occasion, I'm glad that we meet;
 Tho' I meant to be with you ere next summer's sun.

MR. CYCLE.

I know, my dear Beril, that you are not one
 Whose welcome will suddenly sink to sorrow,
 When I tell you, I now visit London to borrow.

MR. BERIL.

If I'm able to levy the sum you require,
 The world can scarce give me a pleasure much higher,
 Than that of assisting a friend, to whose mind
 I have infinite debts of a far deeper kind.
 I can never forget what I owe to your care,
 In the frenzy of desolate love and despair;
 When my reason had yielded to passion's wild strife,
 Your friendship alone reconcil'd me to life.
 But tell me, dear Cycle, what sum will suffice?

MR. CYCLE.

You must know, I have lately been led to devise
 A scheme for the poor —

MR. BERIL.

My dear friend, at your leisure
 I'll hear your benevolent projects with pleasure;
 But farther discourse you must let me prevent,
 On the source of your wants, till I know their extent;
 For indeed I can't rest, till I'm happily sure
 That whatever you wish I have means to procure.

MR.

MR. CYCLE.

Not to keep you in doubt, then, my dear ardent friend,
 'T'wo thousand, I fancy, will answer my end:
 The one I am promis'd to day from Bijou;
 For the other, I own, I've depended on you.

MR. BERIL.

And why not allow me to furnish the whole?—
 Poor Bijou has a wife with no liberal soul;
 If any demur in that quarter you see,
 I entreat you to take all you wish for of me.
 But of this more anon—here is Careless return'd.

Mr. Beril, Mr. Cycle, *and* Careless.

CARELESS.

Well! my worthy philosopher, a'n't you concern'd
 To find our friend still unsupply'd with a wife,
 Thus form'd as he is for the conjugal life?
 As you're fond of new schemes for the good of the na-
 tion,
 I'll recommend one to your consideration,
 To revive wedded love, that old, obsolete passion,
 And bring honest Hymen again into fashion,

MR. CYCLE.

In truth, my dear Tom, I am quite of your mind,
 There is no better scheme for the good of mankind;
 And nothing, I know, that could give it more weight,
 Than the grace which our friend would bestow on that
 state.

MR. BERIL.

You are merry, good friends!—I subscribe to your
 joke—
 My gravity's fit for the conjugal yoke!

CARELESS.

CARELESS.

I am serious, indeed, and have often ~~express'd~~, *declard*^s
 That had I a sister, for wedlock prepar'd,
 Of all men in the world, if you'd deign to embrace her,
 In your arms it would make me most happy to place her.
 But you're courted too much to be easily won;
 He, whom many are fond of, can fix upon none.

MR. BERIL.

Indeed, my dear Tom, you are wrong on this theme.—
 In return for a proof of your cordial esteem,
 I'll tell you the reason, with frankness and truth,
 Why no nymph has supply'd the lost love of my youth:
 There is one, whose mild virtue and elegant grace,
 The dear girl I deplore in my heart might replace;
 But my fortune's too humble for her rank of life,
 Tho' she may be *your sister*, she can't be *my wife*.

CARELESS.

Would you wed Lady Frances?

MR. CYCLE.

The lady I've seen?—
 She is like poor Sophia in feature and mien.

MR. BERIL.^s

You are right, my dear friend;—it was that very thought
 Led my heart to attach itself more than it ought:
 But my reason considers her rank and her station,
 And forbids me to form any rash expectation.
 Nor would I attempt to engage her affection,
 Without the least hope of our happy connection.

CARELESS.

More honor than foresight you shew by this strain,
 Be bold!—there is nothing *you* may not attain.—

More

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More of this when we meet!—I must now say adieu.

MR. CYCLE.

So must I—for you know my appointment at two.

MR. BERIL.

But I hope, my good friends, you will both dine with me.

MR. CYCLE.

For myself, I'll return to you soon after three.

CARELESS.

I am griev'd to refuse such a frank invitation:
But to tell you the truth—I've a kind attestation.

MR. BERIL.

Love and pleasure attend you!

CARELESS.

Dear Beril, adieu!

Let us all meet to-night at the house of Bijou!

[*Exit*]

The Drawing Room of Mrs. Bijou.

MRS. BIJOU (*speaking as she enters.*)

Look over the stair-case! and tell me who knocks!

JOAN (*entering.*)

Mr. Varnish is come, with a thing in a box.

MRS. BIJOU.

A thing in a box!—You're a horrible Goth:
But as you're to leave me, I'll stifle my wrath.
'Tis a picture, you oaf!—bid him bring it to me.

[*Exit Joan*]

Some cabinet jewel I now hope to see.

Thi

This intelligent Varnish my patronage courts,
And I get the first peep at whate'er he imports.

Mrs. Bijou and Mr. Varnish.

MRS. BIJOU.

Well, Varnish!

MR. VARNISH.

Dear Madam, with most humble duty,
I have brought you a gem of unparagon'd beauty.

MRS. BIJOU.

Good Varnish! what is it?

MR. VARNISH.

An exquisite Titian.

You never saw one in such brilliant condition.

MRS. BIJOU.

And what is the subject?

MR. VARNISH. (*opening the Case.*)

Now, Ma'am, I'll display it.—

Here's a feast for the eye that knows how to survey it!

Here's a Joseph!—I ne'er saw his like in my life.

And pray, Ma'am, observe what a Potiphar's wife!

How chaste the design! yet the colours how warm!

What tints in each face! and what life in each form!

Pray! Madam, remark how he struggles to fly!

We hear him exclaiming, "No, Mitre's! not I!"

MRS. BIJOU.

It seems very fine, and has striking expression.—

Was it ever in any great person's possession?

MR. VARNISH.

Not a soul here has seen it, except a poor Peer,

For whom it was bought:—but, alas! 'twas too dear.

His

His steward, my friend—but I must not be rash,
 And betray a good Earl, with more gusto than cash.—
 Our Lords are all poor, and so ruin'd my trade is,
 I should starve, were it not for you well-judging ladies
 There's my old Lady Ogle-nud, had she a peep,
 Would certainly buy it before she would sleep:
 But having receiv'd many favours from you,
 I made it a point you should have the first view.

Mrs. BIJOU.

I thank you, good Varnish.—But what is the price?

MR. VARNISH:

She'd give me a thousand, I know, in a trice,
 And buy some companions besides, if I had 'em;
 But I'll leave it with you foreigh't-hundred, dear Madam.

Mrs. BIJOU.

Eight hundred!—Sure, Varnish, that sum is too much.

MR. VARNISH.

Dear Madam, observe what a delicate touch!
 See how finely 'tis pencil'd! and what preservation!
 There is not, I know, such a gem in the nation;
 And Italy has not a brighter, I'm sure.
 The figures so glowing! the story so pure!—
 Good ladies would never have wand'ring spouses,
 If they'd only hang subjects like this in their houses.

Mrs. BIJOU.

I protest, your remark is ingenious and new:
 You have gusto in Morals as well as Virtu.

MR. VARNISH (*aside*.)

I have hopes that my hint will assist our transaction,
 For the old dame is jealous, they say, to distraction.

Mrs

MRS. BIJOU.

Well! I own, Mr. Varnish, your picture is fine.—
If my husband is rich, it shall quickly be mine.
Here he comes to decide it.

Enter Mr. Bijou.

MRS. BIJOU.

My dear, here's a sight!
You are luckily come to complete my delight.
Mr. Varnish has been so exceedingly kind,
As he knows on a Titian I've long set my mind,
To bring me the finest I ever survey'd:
And as we have often befriended his trade,
He offers to leave it a bargain with us.

MR. BIJOU.

Its merit or price it is vain to discuss:
Tho' the picture possesses so tempting an air,
At present, my dear, I've no money to spare.

MRS. BIJOU.

Mr. Varnish, pray step in the parlour below!
Our final resolve you shall presently know.

MR. VARNISH.

Dear Madam, for hours I'll wait on your pleasure;
And I beg you will note all its beauties at leisure.

(Aside, as he goes out.)

Now success to the sex!—Be this struggle more glorious!

May the Joseph be kind! and the Lady victorious!

MRS. BIJOU.

My dearest, you'll not let the picture depart,
When you see it has taken such hold on my heart!—

I really

I really can't rest, till a Titian we've got,
 That *we* may have something Lord Seewell has *not*.
 And as we expect him, you know, here to-night,
 I would fiew him this piece with triumphant delight:

MR. BIJOU.

I love to indulge all your wishes, my dear,
 But I'm quite out of cash.

MRS. BIJOU.

Nay! Bijou! I am clear
 You have now all I want in your pocket.—Come! come!
 I know you went out to receive a large sum;
 And still have it about you.—I vow I will look.—
 Here it is!—here are notes in this little red book.

[Takes out his Pocket-B.

MR. BIJOU.

Indeed, I must beg you that book to release!

MRS. BIJOU.

Here are ten, I declare, of an hundred apiece!—
 I'll take just enough, and restore you the rest.

MR. BIJOU.

I can't suffer this freedom, my dear, I protest;
 For the notes are not mine, they belong to a friend.

MRS. BIJOU.

To a friend!—O! I guess, Sir, to whom you would
 lend.

Your sly-looking guest, Mr. Cycle's the man;
 I know he was here on a borrowing plan.
 Throw your thousand away on a charity bubble!
 And leave your poor wife to vexation and trouble!

MR. BIJOU.

Nay! my dear, be not vex'd!—you have misunderstood:
The sum will be safe, and the interest good.

MRS. BIJOU.

And what is the pitiful profit you'll raise,
Compar'd to the transport with which we should gaze
On the picture my fondness would have you possess,
For reasons the purest that wife can profess?
Unkind as you are!—I have reasons above
Even profit and pleasure!—the reason of love.
'Tis my aim, by this modest production of art,
To strengthen your virtue and chasten your heart.
If you daily survey an example so bright,
This model of continence ever in sight,
No naughty young women will tempt you to wander,
But your truth and your love will grow firmer and son-
der.

MR. BIJOU.

What a tender idea!—how virtuously kind!
What affection and taste! by each other refin'd!

MRS. BIJOU.

But if for a poor and a foolish projector,
You can thwart a fond wife, can afflict and neglect her—
Go! go! I shall weep, while abroad you may roam,
That your charity has no beginning at home.

MR. BIJOU.

It begins, and shall end there.—I'm melted, my dear!—
You may keep all the notes!—Let me kiss off that tear!

MRS. BIJOU.

Now again you're my own, dear, delightful Bijou!
And the Titian is mine, and my love will be true!

[Exit in great haste.

MR.

MR. BIJOU (*alone.*)

Such virtuous endearments what heart could
Yet I fear by poor Cycle this sum will be m
And what shall I say for failure?—In foorth,
I think 'twill be fairest to tell him the truth.
And, sage as he is, he perhaps too has felt
That gold, at the breath of a woman, will
As I live, here he is! and I look rather fime
With a pocket so empty, to answer his call.

Enter Mr. Cycle.

MR. BIJOU.

Mr. Cycle, you're come, and I'm really co
But I know the mischance will by you be e:
In notes I had got you the thousand complet
They were all in this pocket——

MR. CYCLE.

The thieves c
Have not pick'd it, I hope, in the bustle of

MR. BIJOU.

It was pick'd, I confes, by the hand of my
But for reasons so pure, in so tender a mode

MR. CYCLE.

I am happy the sum is so justly bestow'd.

MR. BIJOU.

I know you'll forgive, when I come to exp

MR. CYCLE.

Dear Bijou! let me save you at once from th
And assure you, with truth, that I now reall
As ready to quit, as to take up the sum;

Since Beril's so kind, that, without my desire,
He has offer'd me all that my wants can require.

MR. BIJOU.

I protest, I am glad you have found such a friend;
But if you hereafter should wish me to lend,
I beg you will call without scruple on me.—
Your worthy friend Beril to-night we shall see;
And Seewell, in gusto the first of our Earls,
Will be here with his daughters, two delicate girls!
To prove, my good friend, your forgiveness is hearty,
Let me hope you will kindly make one of the party!

MR. CYCLE.

Most cheerfully!

MR. BIJOU.

Well!—I am griev'd, I must say,
That I cannot detain you to dinner to-day;
But to tell you the truth, when for these gala nights,
My wife is preparing to shew her fine sights,
She spends so much time in adjusting her shelves,
That we take a cold snack in the kitchen ourselves.
So I'm sure you'll excuse it.

MR. CYCLE.

Your reason is strong;
And I'm sorry, my friend, I've intruded so long.

MR. BIJOU.

We have time enough yet—do not hurry away!

MR. CYCLE.

It really grows late.

MR. BIJOU.

I won't press you to stay,

As

176 THE TWO CONNOISSEURS :

As at night o'er our concert you'll come to preside
I am heartily glad all your wants are supply'd.

MR. CYCLE.

Indeed, I believe you, my honest Bijou!
So, till night, fare you well!

MR. BIJOU.

My dear Cycle, adieu

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

Lord Seewell *and* Lady Harriot.

LADY HARRIOT.

DEAR Papa, don't betray me!—her delicate
Would be wounded, I know, and would think m

But you, who for others so sensibly feel,
 May here be the dupe of affectionate zeal;
 And I hope you're mistaken.

LADY HARRIOT.

My dear Sir, observe!

You may trace her attachment in every nerve:
 If I name Mr. Beril in some idle tale,
 Poor Fanny will blush, and as often turn pale.
 In his absence still more and more pensive she grows,
 Yet thinks not from whence her uneasiness flows.
 And when he returns, tho' her pleasure is meek,
 Yet the glow of content may be seen on her cheek;
 And her heart, as if fully consol'd by his sight,
 Appears to repose in a tranquil delight.
 Dear Papa, you'll perceive, if you'll open your eyes,
 That from none but herself she her love can disguise.
 No other exception perhaps we may find,
 As I think Mr. Beril is equally blind,
 And robb'd, like herself, of the talent of seeing,
 By that diffident love, which denies its own being.

LORD SEEWELL.

Hope this attachment, which neither has shewn,
 Exists, my good girl, in your fancy alone.

LADY HARRIOT.

Why so, my dear Sir?—Should it prove, as you fear,
 I hope, dear Papa, that you won't be severe.
 Consider the delicate frame of my sister!
 But I know you've a heart that can never resist her,
 If you once clearly see she has fixt her affection,
 Tho' she own not her wishes for such a connection;
 As you know that her nature's so modest and meek,
 She would die from concealment before she would speak.

I have strength to encounter the crosses of life,
 And to make my part good, as a daughter or wife
 But our gentle sweet Frances is ill-form'd to bear
 The undeserv'd load of vexation and care ;
 And therefore should wed, unregardful of self,
 A husband as tender and mild as herself.

LORD SEEWELL.

Your reasoning, I think, is not perfectly just.
 In the kindness of Beril perhaps I might trust ;
 But the motive you urge for this union, my dear,
 Is what, I confess, would awaken my fear.
 As you say, your mild sister should never be harri'd
 By those various ills with which life is embarrass'd
 I should guard her from all the vexations that wait
 On a liberal mind with a narrow estate :
 And if Beril had thoughts of becoming my son,
 Had I *not* more objections, yet this must be one.

LADY HARRIOT.

I'll remove it, my Lord, for indeed this is all:
 As you think they'll be pinch'd by an income too
 You shall add to their fortune, and large it will be
 Two thirds of the portion you've destin'd for me

LORD SEEWELL.

Dear Harriot! I'm charm'd with thy soul, I con-
 Thou'rt a generous girl—to a noble excess.

LADY HARRIOT.

To that name, dear Papa, I've no title, indeed,
 As I only give up what I never can need.
 In your house all my wants will, I know, be sup-
 And if I should leave it, as Careless's bride,
 The liberal heir of so large an estate
 Will not grieve that my fortune has sunk in its w

And I think by the note, which to you I resign,
Your conjectures are not so well founded as mine.

LADY HARRIOT (*perusing the Letter.*)

“Occasion for money.”——“The statue to you!”——
I’m amaz’d—and can hardly believe it is true.
He never would part with so dear a possession,
But for some urgent reason.

LORD SEEWELL.

You see his confession:
His strong call for money is frankly declar’d;
And I fear his small fortune is greatly impair’d.

LADY HARRIOT.

These tidings, indeed, give me real concern:
But the source of this step I will speedily learn.
Careless soon will be here.—I will make him discover;
And till we know all, give no peace to my lover.—
But, now, my dear Lord, by this note you may find,
How the heart of my sister is really inclin’d:
I’m convinc’d this will prove her affection is strong.
Here she comes for the trial—pray see if I’m wrong!

LORD SEEWELL.

Well, my dear, I will try, by an innocent plot,
If your sister has really this passion or not.

Enter Lady Frances.

LORD SEEWELL.

Dear Fanny, you’re come our concern to partake,
For we both are much griev’d for our friend Beril’s sake.

LADY FRANCES.

Mr. Beril! dear Sir,—Is he hurt?—Is he kill’d?

LORD SEEWELL.

No!—with terrors too lively your bosom is fill'd.
 My dear, how you tremble!—But I was to blame,
 To raise this alarm in your delicate frame.
 He is well, but some crosses of fortune, I fear,
 Make him sell what he justly consider'd so dear.
 You will see by this letter.—(*Aside, to Lady Harriot.*)
 Ah, Harriot, 'tis so;
 The excess of her fear from affection must flow!

LADY FRANCES.

How painful to him must the exigence be,
 Which extorts from his hand the agreement I see!
 How cruel! for him to relinquish a treasure,
 Whence his elegant spirit deriv'd so much pleasure!
 But I trust, dear Papa, that your generous mind
 Will not now press the bargain he once has declin'd;
 And, scorning to profit by any distress,
 Will not catch at the gem he still ought to possess.

LORD SEEWELL.

My dear, can I now, what I offer'd, withhold?
 And should I, the statue no less would be sold.

LADY FRANCES.

Perhaps, if you chose half its value to lend,
 From so galling a sale you might rescue your friend!

LORD SEEWELL.

I am pleas'd, my dear girl, with your spirit, I own,
 But these are bad times for a dangerous loan;
 And, to tell you the truth in this knotty affair,
 I have just at this crisis no money to spare.
 But I'll frankly explain our finances to you,
 And you shall instruct me in what I shall do.—

As I've seen that old fathers, tho' reckon'd most sage,
Often injure a child by the frolics of age,
That you may not suffer from follies like these,
I have just now consign'd to the care of trustees
All I've sav'd for you both :—so if I prove unsteady,
You are safe.—When you wed, both your fortunes are
ready.

LADY FRANCES.

How kind, my dear Sir, is whatever you do!
No child was e'er hurt by a parent like you.

LADY HARRIOT.

Must smile, dear Papa, at your terrors of slipping;
They who take such precautions are seldom found tripping.
But if in old age your philosophy varies,
I protest I'll forgive you for any vagaries.

LORD SEEWELL.

Very well, Madam Harriot! remember your word!
I shall claim your indulgence, if e'er I'm absurd.
But as what I have done our loose money secures,
No longer can touch what I've firmly made yours.

LADY FRANCES.

Let the fortune of Harriot be sacred, I pray,
For not very distant is her wedding-day.
But as I am convinc'd I shall not wed at all,
Let my portion, Papa, answer every call:
I must beg you to look on it still as your own;
And if it may serve for so timely a loan,
It can't give me more joy, whatsoever my station,
Than by saving your friend from such mortification.

LORD SEEWELL.

My dear girls! you are both the delight of
 May each warm-hearted daughter be blest;
 What I said was but meant your kind spirit
 For the wants of our friend I can amply sup-
 Of esteem it will please me to give him a p-
 And preserve the fine statue still under his r-

Enter a Servant.

SERVANT.

Mr. Careless, my Lord!

LADY HARRIOT.

Now the whole I

LORD SEEWELL.

Stay!—

SERVANT.

He wishes to see Lady Harriot bel-

LORD SEEWELL.

Being equally anxious this point to discove-
 We will all, my dear Harriot, attend on y-

SCENE, *the Apartments of Mrs B*

MR. BILLOU.

Where the deuce is my wife?—All her rariti
 Her apartments adjusted with exquisite taste
 Some disaster has happen'd, or she would be
 Where she ought to be waiting to welcome t!
 And I fancy I heard her in anger below.

Enter Mrs. Bijou, in great Agitation.

MR. BIJOU.

What's the matter, my love?

MRS. BIJOU.

O, my dear, such a blow!

I really had swoon'd, if vexation and wrath
Had not quicken'd my spirits, to scold at the Goth.
That awkward old Joan!—an unmannerly minx!
Has knock'd off the nipple, my dear, from a Sphinx;
And now on our chimney it cannot be plac'd,
With a wound so indelicate naim'd and disgrac'd.
But I've happily got these two Griffins of gold,
In the room of the Sphinxes, our candles to hold.

MR. BIJOU.

My dear, the exchange is most lucky and right.
For Sphinx is an awkward dispenser of light;
But whether your Griffin's of gold or of copper,
A flame from his mouth is exceedingly proper.

MRS. BIJOU.

By your lessons, my love, I improve in Virtù:
All the gusto I have, I have gather'd from you.—
I have fixt the Great Mummy, my dear, to the wall,
Lest the pert Lady Harriot should give him a fall:
She'd be glad to throw down my old king, out of spite;
And I would not be vext in our triumph to-night.
I know our new picture will stir up her gall,
And this Titian will make us the envy of all.
My dear, don't you think it looks well by this light?

MR. BIJOU.

The colours, indeed, are uncommonly bright.

Mrs. BIJOU.

What a beautiful youth is this Joseph!—I swear,
I am more and more charm'd with this delicate air,
I delight in him more since I've found, dear Bijou,
That in one of his features he's very like you.

Mr. BIJOU.

Where can you, my dear, any likeness suppose?

Mrs. BIJOU.

I protest he has got the true turn of your nose;
Not the aquiline curve, but a little Socratic:
And his eye flashes fire, that is chafly ecstatic.—
There's a rap at our door! and I hope my Lord's come.
If vexation and envy do not strike him dumb,
I think he'll harangue, like a critic of Greece,
On the exquisite charms of this beautiful piece!
I long to behold how he's touch'd by the sight:
But I know that his envy will sink his delight.
The moment he sees it, he'll think his luck cruel,
In missing so precious a cabinet jewel.

Enter Mr. Beril and Mr. Cycle.

Mr. BIJOU.

Dear Cycle, I take this exceedingly kind;
And I hope you've not left your Cremona behind;
In your presence to-night I most truly rejoice,
And shall call for the aid of your hand and your voice,
(As my wife gives a snug little concert below).
When you've seen what her upper apartments can shew.

Mr. CYCLE.

You may freely command me, my friend, as you please.

Mrs. BIJOU.

You're a judge; Mr. Beril, of treasures like these;

And

And I'm eager to shew you a Titian, that's new
Since we last had the joy of a visit from you.

MR. BERIL.

The story is told, Ma'am, with striking expression.

MRS. BIJOU.

Don't you envy my husband this brilliant possession?
I thought you'd burst forth into rapturous praise;
But with no keen delight on this picture you gaze!

MR. BERIL.

To confess, Ma'am, the truth, I'm a whimsical being,
And a subject like this I've no pleasure in seeing.
On your lovely sex 'tis a satire most bitter,
That ill-nature may laugh at, and levity titter:
But I'm griev'd, when an artist has lavish'd his care
On a story that seems a disgrace to the Fair.

MRS. BIJOU.

Our sex's chief lustre, I own, it obscures:
But think what a lesson it offers to yours!

*Enter Lady Harriot, Lady Frances, Lord Seawell,
and Mr. Careless.*

MR. BIJOU.

My dear Lord, I this instant was wishing for you.
Your voice is decisive in points of Virtù;
And you're come in the moment to end an odd strife,
In a matter of taste about Potiphar's wife.—
Should her story be painted?—We want your decision;
And here is the picture that caus'd our division.

LORD SEAWELL.

Ha! my poor old acquaintance!—But how, dear Bijou,
How the deuce could this picture find favor with you?
I hope that rogue Varnish has play'd you no trick.—
You have paid no great price—

MRS.

Mrs. BIJOU.

I am cut to the quick!
Sure, my Lord, you ne'er look'd on this picture before?

LORD SEEWELL.

Dear Madam! 'tis one that I turn'd out of door;
And, as I may aid you to 'scape from a fraud,
I'll proceed to inform you, I bought it abroad,
To relieve the distress of an indigent youth,
Who copied old Masters with spirit and truth;
And when it came home, as I valu'd it not,
My steward, by chance, this gay furniture got.
To a new house of his, it has lately been carried,
And as your friend Varnish his daughter has married,
I suppose the sly rogue by this picture has try'd,
To encrease the small fortune he gain'd with his bride.
Search the garment of Joseph! you'll find on its hem,
And within a dark fold, the two letters T. M.

Mrs. BIJOU.

Aye! there is the mark!—we are cheated, we're plunder'd.

That infamous villain, to ask me eight hundred!—
But the law shall restore it.

Mr. BIJOU.

See! Mrs Bijou,
See the fruits of my hasty indulgence to you!

LORD SEEWELL.

Cheer up, my old friend!—'Tis my wish that this night
May be witness to nothing but peace and delight.
I'll engage to make Varnish your money restore;
And perhaps this adventure may save you much more.

All

All we old connoisseurs, if the truth we would own,
 Have, at times, been outwitted with canvass or stone :
 But here's one, whose example our tr be now invites
 To correct our mistakes, and improve our delights.
 Here's Beril, tho' blest with a treasure most rare,
 That with few works of art will admit of compare,
 Gives up the proud joys, that on such wealth attend,
 For the nobler delight of assisting a friend !

MR. BERIL.

My Lord ! you amaze me ; how could you divine ?—
 O, Careless ! your zeal has betray'd my design.

LORD SEEWELL.

You have fixt on the traitor, yet are not aware,
 That you're almost involv'd in a dangerous snare :
 But I'll shew you this traitor's accomplice, my friend,
 And tell you what mischief these plotters intend.
 You must know, Tom and Harriot in concert pursue
 Their dark machinations 'gainst Frances and you :
 They have sworn you've a tender esteem for each other,
 Which you both have in modesty labour'd to smother.
 If your charge can be prov'd, I your freedom restrain,
 And sentence you both to the conjugal chain.

MR. BERIL.

O, my Lord ! that I love Lady Frances, is true ;
 Yet I could not avow it to her, or to you :
 But to force my confession, such means you employ,
 I almost may call them the torture of joy.
 I'm o'erwhelm'd with surprize, with delight, and with
 dread,
 Lest I falsely have heard the kind things you have said.
 Speak ! my dear Lady Frances, my anguish relieve !
 Does this tumult of hope my wild fancy deceive ?

LADY

LADY FRANCES.

I so long have my father's indulgence confess,
That against his decrees I shall never protest.

MR. BERIL.

O, how shall I thank thee, dear pride of my life !

LORD SEEWELL.

By cherishing still in the mind of your wife,
Such generous feelings as you have display'd.—
From my hand, my dear Beril, receive the kind maid !
Your statue is not more indebted to art,
'Than she is to nature for molding her heart.
They both shall be yours ; both the statue and bride !
And the wants of your friend shall no less be supply'd.—
Being free from one modish and wealth-wasting vice,
From those pests of our order, the turf and the dice,
I enjoy, my dear children, the fortunate power,
Of securing your bliss by an affluent dower.
Your quiet shall ne'er by your income be hurt,
Which shall equal your wish, tho' below your desert.

MR. BERIL.

Of your kindness, my Lord, I so feel the excess,
That my voice cannot speak what my heart would
express.

MR. BIJOU.

I am charmed, my dear Lord, by your choice of a son.

LORD SEEWELL.

I know, my old friend, you'll approve what I've done.
You and I, dear Bijou, wanting proper correction,
Have on vanity lavish'd the dues of affection,
We have both squander'd cash on too many a whim ;
But in taste let us take a new lesson from him !

And

And rate our improvements in real Virtù,
 By the generous acts he may teach us to do!
 To remember this truth is the connoisseur's duty;
 "A benevolent deed is the essence of beauty."

MR. BIJOU.

I confess, I too oft have been vanity's fool;
 But shall hope to grow wise, my good Lord, in your
 school.
 And, as mirth should be coupled with wisdom, I'll go
 And see if the fiddles are ready below. [Exit.]

LORD SEEWELL.

To-night, my dear Madam, you must not look grave;
 Tho' Varnish has prov'd such an impudent knave,
 I promise to make him your money refund.

MRS. BIJOU.

With surprize and vexation I almost was stunn'd;
 But depending, my Lord, on your friendly assistance,
 I am ready to drive all chagrin to a distance,
 And to share in the joy of our dear happy guests.

MR. BERIL.

What I owe to you, Careless, this fair one attests:
 And our sister, I hope, if I dare use the name,
 From your friendship will judge of your love's ardent
 flame,
 And, short'ning your rigorous term of probation,
 Now fill your kind heart with complete exultation.

LADY HARRIOT.

The warm blaze of our joy, I assure you, dear brother,
 With the cold damp of prudery I will not smother.
 Your friend has for you play'd so feeling a part,
 I confess, I am charm'd with his spirit and heart.

As in law and long courtship he likes not to drudge,
I will make him at once my comptroller and judge.

CARELESS.

I with transport and pride the dear office embrace!

LORD SEEWELL.

And long may you fill it with spirit and grace!
My voice, my dear Careless, confirms her election;
And I give her with joy to your tender direction.
For sealing, dear Tom, you may fix your own day,
Without dreading from law any irksome delay,
As your father and I have, with friendly advances,
Already adjusted your nuptial finances.

MR. BIJOU (*entering.*)

Our musicians below are all ready, my Lord:
Of pleasure you teach us to touch the true chord.
I've selected a few little pieces to-night,
That are suited, I hope, to the present delight.—
May we all think this day the best day of our life!
It will prove so, I'm sure, both to me and my wife.
If a bargain should tempt us, we will not be rash,
But remember the Titian, and pocket our cash.
To Friendship and Want all we can we will give,
And buy no more baubles as long as we live.

L O R D R U S S E L ;

A T R A G E D Y ,

O F T H R E E A C T S .



P R E F A C E.

I HAVE endeavoured to delineate, in the following Drama, an exact portrait of the noble Personage, whose name it bears; as I believe, that a more engaging model of public and private virtue can hardly be selected from the annals of any nation: although the extreme mildness of his temper, the simplicity of his manners, and, above all, his unaffected piety, are such qualities, as are very rarely admitted in the formation of a Tragic Hero.

To

196 P R E F A C E.

To render my performance interesting to my country, I have adhered as closely to our history, as the nature of dramatic composition allowed me to do; and in points where I have varied from historical truth, such variations are, I trust, supported by dramatic probability.

IN the spirited and judicious introduction to the lately-published letters of Lady Ruffel, the testimony of different Historians is collected concerning the sentiments of Charles the Second and his brother, on the impending fate of Lord Ruffel.

“ IN the Duke of Monmouth’s Journal, it is said, that the King told him, he inclined to have saved the Lord Ruffel, but was forced to consent to his death, otherwise he must have broke with his brother the Duke of York.”—*Kennet*.

THE

THE sentence just quoted is, I hope, a sufficient foundation for the conduct which I have assigned to Charles; whose character indeed was such, that fiction can hardly impute to him any instance of irresolution, duplicity, and falsehood, which the tenor of his life will not bring within the limits of theatrical credibility.

THE candid reader will readily allow the liberty I have taken, in laying the scene in the Tower, after Ruffel's condemnation; as it affords many advantages to the conduct of the play.

IN compliance with that respect, which dramatic authors have lately paid to the Clerical character, I have not introduced either Tillotson or Burnet among the persons of the drama, though the latter was so constant an attendant on the captivity of my Hero; an omission which
I have

I have in some degree supplied, by the introduction of Mr. Spencer; a character drawn from the printed trial of Lord Ruffel, where the name of that gentleman appears in the list of those, who gave an honourable evidence in behalf of the noble prisoner.

I HAVE many obligations to the journal written by Burnet, at the request of Lady Ruffel, which contains all the minute circumstances that occurred, during the imprisonment, and at the execution of her Lord. This very interesting and pathetic narrative is printed in the General Dictionary, under the article Ruffel. I have not only taken from it many of the sentiments, which I have assigned to him in this Tragedy, but I have sometimes adopted the very words, that were really uttered by Lord Ruffel; and this I have done, not only from an affectionate admiration of his character,

character, but from a despair of surpassing the elegant simplicity, and the force of his expression.

THE offer relating to his escape, so generously made, and so nobly refused, is a fact universally known, and must render the names of Cavendish and Russel an honour to your country, as long as magnanimity and friendship retain their just value in the estimation of mankind.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

KING CHARLES THE SECOND,
JAMES DUKE OF YORK,
EARL OF BEDFORD,
LORD RUSSEL,
LORD CAVENDISH,
MR. SPENCER,
LIEUTENANT OF THE TOWER.

LADY RUSSEL,
LADY MARGARET RUSSEL.

OFFICERS, &c.

SCENE, *during the first Act, in* BEDFORD HOUSE,
and afterwards in the TOWER.

L O R D R U S S E L.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

Bedford *and* Lady Margaret Ruffel.

LADY MARGARET.

REST here, my gentle Father! nor again
Expose your wearied age and watted spirits
To scenes of such dread influence to shake
Each fibre of a heart that feels like yours!—
I pray you rest with me!

BEDFORD.

My tender child!
Thanks to thy filial aid! my strength returns,
And my reviving soul has gather'd force
To bear the killing fight.—'Tis true, when first
I saw my mild and unoffending son,

{ VOL. III.

L

Pride

Pride of my age! and England's dear resource
 In these disastrous days! when I beheld
 My blameless Ruffel at that bar arraign'd,
 Where only guilt and infamy should stand;
 When I beheld each servile judge support
 A lawless jury basely fram'd against him,
 Indignant anguish robb'd my wounded heart
 Of vital energy: quick from the court
 My hasty friends hurried my senseless frame,
 To this our quiet home: but since, my daugh
 Thy kind endearing cares have now restor'd me
 I will resume my station by thy brother,
 In these distressful moments:—to his side
 Affection calls me, and paternal duty.

LADY MARGARET.

Forgive me, that I dare to thwart your wish,
 But from my generous brother I've receiv'd
 A kind injunction to detain your age
 From that afflicting scene. He has engag'd
 'To tell us, by repeated messengers,
 Each petty circumstance that passes there.
 Already from the number of his friends
 He has selected one to bring us tidings:
 His faithful Spencer comes.

Enter Spencer.

BEDFORD.

What from my Son
 The sentence is not pass'd!

SPENCER.

No, my dear lord.
 England is yet unsoiled with the stain
 That must disgrace her, if the sword of Justice
 Turns to the murderous dagger of Revenge,

To stab your virtuous son.—By his request
I come to soothe your anxious sufferings,
And to relate the process of a scene,
Where he conjures you to appear no more.

BEDFORD.

What perjur'd slaves have they suborn'd against him?
How far has truth been wrong'd, and law been tortur'd,
To frame those snares of legal death, in which
They labour to involve incautious virtue?
Have they not dealt most hardly with my son?

SPENCER.

He has experienc'd subtle cruelty
From venal ruffians in the robes of justice;
But the base wrong his patient worth endures,
Is the dark foil which gives the diamond lustre.
When he requested aid for his defence,
His keen insidious foes, who strongly fear'd
Some upright advocate might save their victim,
Enjoin'd him to employ a servant's hand.
There rose indeed a servant at his side,
Most eager for the task; but O! what words
Can speak the fond surprize, and thrilling anguish,
Which shook the bosom of each sad spectator,
Who in that servant saw his lovely wife?
The crowd, with eyes bedimm'd by starting tears
Of tenderest admiration, gaz'd upon her,
And murmur'd kindest pray'rs, as they beheld
Connubial love, in that angelic form,
Thus firmly yielding unexpected succour
To virtue struggling in oppression's toils.

BEDFORD.

Most excellent of women! worthy offspring
Of my departed friend, the good Southampton!

L 2

If

If Tyranny prevails against thy husband,
 How shall the wretched Bedford's feeble age
 Support thy widow'd heart? I can no more
 Than in strict fellowship of bitterest sorrow
 Echo thy groans, and mourn our mutual loss.

L A D Y M A R G A R E T .

Do not, dear father, do not yield so soon
 To comfortless despair!—we yet may hope
 The radiant probity of Russel's life
 Will dissipate each dark and ~~dark~~^{dark} ~~and~~ ~~generous~~ cloud
 That perjur'd Calumny can raise around him.
 Remember all the candor of his mind!
 Think how his temperate virtues have been prais'd
 By Envy's self! how to the gaze of youth
 His conduct has been held up as a book,
 In which all English eyes may read their duty,
 And learn the fairest path to spotless honour.

S P E N C E R .

If abject lawyers, and a venal jury,
 Should violate the sanctity of justice
 By Russel's condemnation, still his merits
 Are grav'd so deeply on the Nation's breast,
 He stands so firm the idol of her love,
 Oppression's self will fear to execute
 The sentence of the prostituted law
 Against a life so priz'd.

B E D F O R D .

Alas! my friend,
 When did a tyrant, like vindictive York,
 (For 'tis the Duke who thirsts for Russel's blood)
 When did a spirit of that sullen temper,
 Impell'd by rancorous hate, by bigot rage,

And abject terror, when did such a spirit
 Respect the virtue, Nature made its foe,
 And treacherous Fortune gave it power to crush?
 But tell me of the scene from whence you come!
 Say! what has been alledg'd against my son?
 I have been told the fierce and subtle Jefferies,
 The Duke's base agent in this bloody business,
 Relies upon the evidence of Howard,
 As the sure instrument of Ruffel's death:
 Unprincipled he is, and prone to utter
 What interest and fear may bid him swear.
 What has he said? or is he yet unsummon'd?

SPENCER.

Before I left your son, the faithless Howard
 Began his artful tale; but soon he falter'd,
 With feign'd affliction of a dread event,
 Which suddenly was rumour'd through the court,
 And struck the throng'd assembly with such wonder,
 Malice stood mute, and Persecution paus'd.
 Fresh from the Tower the tidings came, that Essex,
 From terrors of that bar, where Ruffel stood,
 Had with rash violence rush'd out of life,
 And stain'd his desperate hands in his own blood.

BEDFORD.

It cannot be! the firm, the gallant Essex
 Could never end his being so ignobly;
 And in the moment, when his generous soul
 Felt only for his Friend; his Ruffel's life
 Yet wavering in the balance.

SPENCER.

Such, my lord,
 Such is the comment of all honest hearts

L 3

On

On this dark story.—Heaven reveal the murder,
 And punish it, though in th' assassin's veins
 The tainted stream of royal blood may flow !—
 Soon as the rumour reach'd your son, he bade me
 Attempt to penetrate this dark transaction,
 And bring you the result of all I heard ;
 Adding, that in the instant of his doom,
 He would dispatch to you the noble Cavendish
 With tidings of his sentence.

BEDFORD.

Ah! my friend,
 The fatal word, that ends his blessed life,
 Has rung already in my tortur'd ear ;
 For I have seen the venal band suborn'd
 To purchase, by the sacrifice of truth,
 The blood of her mild champion. There's his guilt
 'Tis that his pure and patriotic zeal,
 Guiding the voice of an enlighten'd senate,
 Has labor'd to preserve the throne of England
 From that blood-thirsty bigot, at whose feet
 Her laws now lie, in hasty prostitution,
 Slaves to a tyrant yet uncrown'd ; converted
 From sacred guards of slander'd innocence,
 Into base engines of vindictive murder.

LADY MARGARET.

Alas! my father, thou hast judg'd too well :
 Thy dreadful presage is too soon confirm'd :
 Behold the zealous Cavendish! he comes,
 With no quick step of joyous exultation ;
 But in his agitated gesture shews
 A settled sorrow, and a fierce despair.

Enter CAVENDISH.

I come, my lord, the wretched messenger
Of that accurst event, which my weak judgment,
Not reaching the extent of human baseness,
Had hastily pronounc'd beyond the line
Of possible injustice. All the crimes,
That coward Tyranny can wish committed,
Shall now have credit.—Ruffel is condemn'd.

LADY MARGARET.

O mockery of justice!—Righteous Heaven!
Yet interpose to save him!

BEDFORD.

My kind friend,
Thou but relatest what a father's eye
Forefaw too clearly, when I view'd the jury,
So justly challeng'd by my innocent son,
Marshall'd without the warrantry of law
To ensnare his life.

CAVENDISH.

Eternal infamy
Fall on the base assassins! chiefly fall
On those superior ministers of evil,
The treacherous guardians of our trampled laws,
Who in the robes of Heaven's high delegates
Perform the work of hell! from prostrate Justice
Wrest her pure sword, to stain it with the blood
Of her most faithful votary!

LADY MARGARET.

Yet try,
Try, my dear father, ere it prove too late,
By urgent intercessions to preserve him!

L 4

Your

Your friends are many, and, howe'er inflam'd
 By the vile arts of sanguinary York,
 The king has still a tenderness of heart,
 That may incline to spare my gentle brother.

B E D F O R D .

Alas! my daughter, cherish not too much
 A hope, whose cruel failure will impart
 New poignancy to thy too keen affliction!
 All the mild virtues, which to thy pure sense
 Plead for thy brother's safety, in the ear
 Of envious Hate and terrified Oppression
 Cry loudly for his death.

C A V E N D I S H .

He shall not die.

What! though the blood-hound Jefferies has fasten'd
 His fangs upon him! though the barbarous judges
 Would make the temple of insulted Law
 The slaughter-house of Tyranny!—there yet
 Are means to turn the sharpen'd axe aside,
 And shield the life of their devoted victim.

B E D F O R D .

What would thy dauntless zeal?

C A V E N D I S H .

Your gentle son
 Has just such credit with this injur'd nation,
 For public virtue, and designs exempt
 From every selfish bias of the soul,
 Thousands would throw into extremest hazard
 Their fortunes, and their being, to preserve
 The dying martyr of defenceless freedom.
 I hold it easy, in the very hour

Oppre

Oppression means to triumph in his blood,
 With some selected horsemen to o'erpower
 The slaves who guard him, ere they reach the scaffold,
 And bear him swiftly to a safe retreat.
 Applauding millions will assist his rescue,
 And bless the efforts of his brave deliverers!

BEDFORD.

No! Cavendish! by friendship's holy ties,
 That prompt thy generous purpose, I conjure thee
 To think of it no further.

CAVENDISH.

What! my Lord,
 Shall we look tamely on, and by connivance
 Be made a party in this legal murder?

BEDFORD.

Dear ardent friend! there are disastrous times,
 And this is one of them, when all the functions
 True courage is allow'd to exercise,
 Are resignation and a brave endurance.
 My word is given to thy kind thoughtful friend,
 To check all desperate sallies of affliction,
 All, that the fond intemperance of love
 Could hazard for his safety.

CAVENDISH.

Generous Ruffel!
 By Heaven 'tis happier far to share thy death,
 Than live, to see our wretched country robb'd
 Of all her hopes in thy unequal'd virtue.

BEDFORD.

To me much happier!—to a father's heart
 It would be consolation and delight

To perish with his child ; but there are duties
 More painful to sustain than the short struggle
 That ends our mortal being :—and to us
 These duties now belong—let us remember
 The trust that he bequeaths !—his wife ! his children
 'Tis ours to live for them. Remember too
 His noble answer to the princely Monmouth,
 Offering to share his prison and his fate !
 Did he not say, it would embitter death
 To have his friends die with him ?

CAVENDISH.

O my Lord !

Your sorrow is of pure and heavenly temper ;
 Mine the fierce anguish of indignant frenzy :
 Pray pardon it !

BURFORD.

Pardon thee ! gallant spirit !

Thou bright example of exalted friendship !
 Thou hast my love, my fondest admiration ;
 In my just heart thou rankest with my children,
 And art the pillar, now my Ruffel falls,
 'I haf my weak age must cling to for support.

CAVENDISH.

In duty, my dear Lord, though not in merit,
 You may account me your's : and pitying Heaven
 May yet, in mercy to a nation's prayers,
 Spare to your virtuous age your worthier son :
 I cannot bend my spirit to admit
 His fate inevitable : gracious Powers !
 Who watch o'er suffering virtue, who inspire
 The prosperous deeds of chance-defying friendship,
 Assist my lab'ring and distracted brain,

Who

Whose faculties are on the rack to find
 Expedients to preserve our country's pride,
 The friend and champion of her faith and freedom,
 From the base stroke of tyrannous revenge!

BEDFORD.

Tain are those anxious thoughts: the vigilant eye
 Of keen Oppression will secure her victim.
 The nerveless arm of childhood could as soon
 wrest from the tiger's gripe his bleeding prey,
 As we by violence deliver Ruffel
 From the vindictive York.

CAVENDISH (*after a pause*).

I thank thee, Heaven!

The bright idea is, I feel, from thee:
 And it has chas'd the darkness of despair
 From my o'erclouded mind.

BEDFORD.

What means thy ardour?

CAVENDISH.

Good angels have suggested to my soul
 A project yet to save him.

BEDFORD.

Name it! name it

CAVENDISH.

Your pardon, my dear Lord!—accept alone
 This firm assurance, that my new design
 Has nought of rash exertion to involve
 A single life in danger! or if one,
 It must be mine alone; and in this crisis,

How

How gladly shall I yield my life for his,
And die triumphant in the blest exchange! [1

LADY MARGARET.

Brave Cavendish!—He's gone—Ye saints of heaven!
If friendship, like your own, deserves your care,
Go ever with him, and from all the perils,
That wait the noble self-neglecting spirit,
Protect him! and assist his godlike aim!
Preserve this matchless pair of gallant friends,
And let them shine the ornament of earth!

BEDFORD.

Thou pray'st in vain, dear child!—this daunt
friend,
Transcendent as he is in truth and honour,
Can nought avail us: he must prove the dupe
Of ardent passions and of sanguine virtue.
If there's a ray of glimmering hope, that yet
May faintly lead us through this night of horror,
It cannot rise from any bright endowments
In those we love, but rather from the vice,
The abject vice, that glares in our oppressors.
Our tyrants are necessitous, and thirst
For gold, as keenly as for innocent blood.
Kind fortune, haply for this great emergence,
Has made me master of no common wealth;
And this, with lucky art distributed
Among the needy minions of the king,
May purchase still our Russel's forfeit life.—
Come! my dear child, retire we to consult
On this our sole resource! Thou wilt not scruple
To meet, and to embrace a noble poverty,
If thy lost portion can redeem thy brother!

LA

LADY MARGARET.

Blest be thy happiest thought, my tender father !
 All wealth, all good is center'd in his safety ;
 And, witness Heaven ! my heart would freely bear
 All the loath'd hardships of the houseless vagrant,
 And think them blessings, if they aught conduc'd
 To rescue Ruffel from a traitor's death.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T . II.

S C E N E I.

Lord and Lady Ruffel in Prison.

A Table with Papers, Pen, and Ink.

LADY RUSSEL.

MUST I entreat in vain?—Alas! my Ruffel,
 Where is thy sweet compliancy of soul,
 That made, till now, thy Rachel's voice a stranger
 To rude and irksome importunity ?
 Has life so little to engage thy wishes
 Thou wilt not ask to live ?

RUSSEL.

Canst thou, my love,
 By so unkind a question canst thou give

Such

Such hard construction to thy Russel's thoughts :
 Where is there one inhabitant of earth,
 If not thy husband, who has every cause
 To cherish his existence ?—Gracious Power !
 Whose wisdom regulates the lot of mortals,
 I feel, and with devoutest gratitude
 Bless thee for signal bounties to thy servant,
 But most for this, thy best and dearest gift,
 This lovely virtuous woman ; whom to part with
 Is now my hardest trial : but from thee,
 Dread Arbiter of every human scene !
 (However strange to man's contracted sense)
 This trial comes , O strengthen us to bear it
 With tender fortitude and meek obedience !

L A D Y R U S S E L .

It is our duty still, and Heaven enjoins it,
 To make all blameless efforts to preserve
 A life so precious : if thy rigid honor,
 In pity both to me and to thy children,
 Will stoop to write one line of supplication
 To the all-powerful York, he will obtain
 Thy instant pardon from the pliant king.

R U S S E L .

Thou knowest not th' inexorable hate
 Of that bloody-thirsty spirit.—It has pleas'd
 The author of my life to let the rage
 Of ruthless bigotry prevail against it :
 A band of venal or misguided men
 Have doom'd me to the scaffold, on the plea
 That I have plotted to destroy my sovereign,
 Though Heaven and thou, who knowest all my
 See the base falshood of the bloody charge :
 But to the voice of Law, however tortur'd,

we a prompt obedience ; nought remains
 t that I meet the stroke of stern Oppression
 suits the votary of Public Virtue.
 ust not fully, by a base submission,
 ame yet spotless, the sole legacy
 s allow'd me to bequeath my children.

LADY RUSSEL.

r as I hold thy life, which is in truth
 only anchor in this sea of troubles,
 eve me, Russel, I would rather yield,
 hout a struggle yield that precious life
 Persecution's stroke, rather than lead,
 ight could lead, thy clear and resolute virtue
 one base act of weakness and dishonour.

RUSSEL.

s ! my love, the cloud of thy affliction
 dimm'd thy quick discernment ; but the paper,
 ich thy fond care now urges me to write,
 uld darken all the story of my life :
 ust not, in that story's closing leaf,
 ere Fortitude should fix the seal of Honor,
 the fair record with a fearful blot.

LADY RUSSEL.

ir Russel ! exercise thy purer judgment ;
 ese are not scruples of thy manly reason,
 niceties of proud fantastic honor,
 honor jealous to a vain excess.
 w can the measure, that my love solicits,
 olve thee in disgrace ? Without abasement,
 i injur'd Innocence not say to Power,
 e me the life, of which Iniquity
 made thy voice the arbiter ?

RUSSEL.

R U S S E L .

Thou knowest,
 Dear inmate of my secret soul ! kind prompter
 Of my best thoughts ! it has been long the aim
 Of my past life to win my country's love ;
 Not by the popular arts of vain ambition,
 (Which Nature never form'd me to possess)
 But by incessant vigilance to shield
 Our faith and freedom, by an ardent wish
 To prove that patriot virtue, (the stale jest
 Of servile spirits, as an empty name)
 Is an existing vigorous principle
 In minds of English temper. I have fail'd
 In the prime object that my soul pursued,
 To save our pure religion and our laws
 From Bigotry's encroachment ; and I lose
 My life, endanger'd by that noble conflict :
 But I have gain'd, and let me still preserve it !
 The kind esteem of this enlighten'd nation :
 This I must forfeit, forfeit all the praise
 And influence of no inglorious life,
 If I become an abject suppliant
 To that fierce zealot, from whose iron rod
 I strove to shelter this devoted land.

L A D Y R U S S E L .

No, Russel ; the corrupted lips of Faction
 Are prone to evil : but the voice of ages,
 The sentence of the world, is firmly just ;
 And by that sentence thou art sure to stand
 High on the list of those bright characters
 Immortaliz'd with pure idolatry
 By Truth and Freedom ; men whose very name
 Is sweetest music to the ear of Nature.

in a future age, when we are dust,
 thy virtues can be question'd, it must be
 by sycophants, who, flattering royalty,
 with slanderous surmises would degrade
 each just antagonist of lawless power ;
 by those yet more abject enemies,
 those sceptics of a cold sarcastic spirit,
 who, judging from their own contracted hearts,
 possess no confidence in human virtue.

RUSSEL.

Reflection over-rates thy Ruffel's merit:
 do not let this fond opinion of his fame
 exclude thy vain request, which, being granted,
 would but afflict thy love. Consider well
 how it would wound thy generous pride, to hear
 thy lord had stain'd the life thou deem'st so glorious
 with an ignoble eagerness to live.

LADY RUSSEL.

Believe me, Ruffel, it would wound me more
 to think that, deaf to all my just entreaties,
 my husband, careless of his orphan children,
 with sullen dignity threw life away,
 rather than stoop to sue for the remission
 of his unrighteous doom.

RUSSEL.

Alas ! my love,
 should I implicitly pursue the dictates
 of all thy fond solicitude, such conduct
 would but provoke the insult of our foes,
 and could avail thee nothing.

LADY

L A D Y R U S S E L .

Yes, my Ruffel,
 Should the relentless York reject thy prayer,
 In those sad years of bitterness and anguish,
 When, if the will of Heaven is fix'd to part us,
 My widow'd soul, with unabating sorrow,
 Must dwell upon thy image, and for ever
 Repas in thought these agonizing scenes,
 It will afford me then a faint relief,
 To think my active love, in this distress,
 Omitted nothing, that had duty's sanction,
 To snatch thee from the scaffold.

R U S S E L .

Lovely suppliant !
 Thy virtuous tenderness has melted me ;
 And, though I could not purchase it by guilt,
 Thy peace is dearer to my heart than glory.
 Thou shalt not say thy Ruffel e'er refus'd
 One prayer of thine :—give me again the pen
 My weak disdain rejected. *[Ruffel writes.*

L A D Y R U S S E L .

Bless thy kindness !
 Bless thy prevailing love ! for I perceive
 How hardly it has struggled, to obtain
 This triumph over brave indignant pride,
 Abhorring even the shadow of disgrace.—
 O thou all-powerful Spirit ! who canst make
 The meanest implements of mortal use
 Thy ministers of safety or destruction ;
 Grant that this love-directed pen may prove
 An instrument of gracious preservation !
 Guide thou my Ruffel's hand !—into this paper

Pour

Pour words of heavenly potency to change
The bloody wish of blinded Superstition,
And melt vindictive Rancour into mercy!

Enter Spencer.

LADY RUSSEL.

Kind Spencer! opportunely art thou come
To cheer my Ruffel's solitary hour,
While my keen hopes to win by supplication,
From potent York, the pardon of my Lord,
Force me to leave him.

SPENCER.

Ill befall the heart
That melts not at the voice of such a suppliant!

-RUSSEL.

Good Spencer! thanks to that unwearied zeal
Which makes thee frequent in thy welcome visits
To a poor captive.—There, my anxious Love!
Take what thy truth and tendernefs have forc'd
From Ruffel's frail and yielding resolution:
His pliancy, I know, will meet with blame;
But those who have a heart to feel thy merits,
Will blush at their quick censure, and recall it.

LADY RUSSEL.

Now let me, Ruffel! from thy prison fl'
Like the exploring dove, whose eager wing
Flew from the ark, to visit it again
With blest assurance of subsiding storms.

[*Exit.*

RUSSEL.

My worthy kinsman, when my voice is silenc'd,
As soon it will be, witness to the world

The

The tender virtues and conjugal love
 Of that angelic woman!—And, I pray,
 As gentleness and honor have endear'd thee
 To all our house, do thou, my faithful Spencer,
 Attend, with pitying care, my wife and father
 On the dread day that ends our mortal union;
 Watch them with all the vigilance of friendship,
 And soothe the recent anguish of their grief.

SPENCER.

Heaven yet, my Lord, may save us from that scene
 Of private woe and national distress.

RUSSEL.

Believe me, though I stoop to ask for life,
 I ask not, thinking to obtain my suit,
 But from the tender wish to mitigate
 The future sufferings of a faithful mourner,
 By this compliance with her fondest prayer.

SPENCER.

The touching eloquence of her affliction,
 Join'd to the memory of her father's merit,
 That honour'd servant of the Crown, Southampton,
 May wrest your pardon from the savage heart
 Of fallen York.

RUSSEL.

Impossible, my friend!
 My life's the prey that his insatiate rage
 Has keenly chas'd—he holds it in his toils,
 And every prospect of escape is clos'd.

SPENCER.

Yet think, my Lord, that other means of safety——

RUSSEL

RUSSEL.

No, Spencer: I have thought, I trust not vainly,
 Of the chief object that my mind must dwell on,
 How to sustain the trying part to which
 The will of Heaven appoints me; how to meet
 The sudden stroke of ignominious death,
 As may become the man whose life has won
 From this brave land observance and regard.—
 O Spencer! when the wearied eye surveys
 The gloomy face of Earth, the Law's abuse,
 And Freedom sinking under savage Power,
 The wreck of Public Virtue, the base arts
 And treachery of her apostate sons,
 With all the countless ills that in her train
 A blind and barbarous Superstition brings;
 When these are present to the guiltless mind,
 It seems a fair and blessed fate to fly
 From this dark den of misery and vice,
 To the bright presence of divine Perfection!

SPENCER.

Yet of how pure a nature are those blessings
 This earth would furnish to your rescued virtue!

RUSSEL.

O gentle kinsman! in my softer hours
 My heart still clings to those attractive objects
 Of tenderest attachment; for this heart
 Was fram'd by nature for the sweet enjoyment
 Of social duties and domestic bliss,
 I will avow to thee, (for thy mild spirit
 Can sympathize in every true distress)
 That when I think to what excess of anguish
 I leave the worthiest and most tender wife,

That

That with endearing innocence and love
 E'er blest a husband, the forbidden tear
 Starts from my eye perforce, my frame is chill'd,
 And shudders at the sharp divorce of steel,
 So soon to fall upon our chaste affection.

SPENCER.

Yet may ye live a blessing to each other ;
 And give a bright example to mankind,
 That happiness abides with virtuous love !—
 Life stands within your choice :—the King, who kn
 With what a fond respect and confidence
 The generous people lean to the opinion
 Of men so rooted in their hearts as you are,
 Courts your acceptance of immediate pardon ;
 If you will but acknowledge, in his presence,
 That you believe no subject has a right,
 However tempted, to resist the Throne.

RUSSEL.

Have any of my friends suppos'd that Russel
 Could buy existence at a price like this ?

SPENCER.

The worthy churchmen, who in this vile prison
 Have been your kind assiduous attendants,
 Build on this ground strong hopes ;—they have obt
 The sanction of your venerable father
 To argue with you this important question ;
 Believing they may lead your candid mind
 To terms, which, in their cool considerate judgme
 Have the clear warrantry of truth and reason.

RUSSEL.

Good men ! they are an honor to the church
 For signal harmony of faith and practice ;

ably, cramp'd by piety's nice scruples,
 : minds have not expanded to embrace
 mighty cause of Freedom.—O my friend !
 it the spirit-stirring faculty
 oquence, to range in bright array
 potent claims of Nature, and enlist
 r pure service all the noble passions
 give distinction to the life of man :
 gracious Heaven endow'd me with a heart
 & the upright virtuous citizen ;
 meet the axe, much rather than betray
 charter'd rights of this my native land.

SPENCER.

ou, my Lord, so settled in your thoughts
 is nice question, that no arguments
 shake the airy fabric of opinion ?

RUSSEL.

Spencer, thou hast known me many years,
 for a man of plain and simple reason ;
 h clearly tells me that the King's position,
 granted, sinks the free-born sons of England
 to tame vassals of a Turkish despot.
 mind can frame no image of a state
 laws have limited, without a right
 guard those limitations ; and my conscience,
 higher sovereign, who challenges
 first obedience in all points of moment,
 not permit me, by a different language,
 to purchase life from the deluded King.

SPENCER.

painful admiration I have heard
 steady dictates of your patriot virtue,

That

That will, with mingled agony and joy,
 Confirm the presage of your noble father.
 Howe'er he listens, with attentive fondness,
 To all that friendly zeal suggests to save you,
 He knows, and glories in your firm adherence
 To the dear rights of England; nor can wish,
 Though with the sanction of such friends, to see you
 Exchange it for the lure of forfeit life.

RUSSEL.

Although I trust he fully knows that mind,
 Which his fond cares have strengthen'd and enrich'd
 With its best powers of manly resolution;
 Yet, as ill-grounded and distressing doubts
 Are natural infirmities of age,
 At times, perchance, my venerable father
 May fear lest the approach of violent death
 Should with disgraceful pliancy infect
 The spirit of his son—I therefore pray thee
 Return; assure him, that our pious friends
 Must lose their well-meant labor in debate:
 My mind's unchangeable; and gracious Heaven,
 As my dark fate draws nearer, gives my soul
 New strength to triumph o'er its shadowy terrors!
 Assure the tender Bedford, I shall meet
 The hour of execution as his love
 Must wish, with that sedate and chearful brow
 Which suits the guiltless son of such a father.

SPENCER.

My Lord, I will religiously obey you,
 And on the instant; as I now perceive
 Your chief heart chosen friend is come to share
 The private converse of your precious hours.

[Exit.

Enter

Enter CAVENDISH.

RUSSEL.

Welcome, dear Cavendish! my eager heart
 Has panted for thy presence, keenly wishing
 To rest the burden of its cares on thee.
 Yet, ere I cease to live, O let me take
 One long farewell of him, whose friendship gave
 Justice and value to that life which fate
 Severely calls me to resign!

CAVENDISH.

Which Love
 And Friendship's voice command thee to preserve.—
 Come to save thee, Russel! nor must lose
 One moment in the heaven-suggested plan..

RUSSEL.

Dear sanguine friend, the fond illusive warmth
 Of thy kind heart invests thy eager fancy
 With visionary power.

CAVENDISH.

The fiends of hell
 Shall not defeat the project my good angel
 Inspires for thy protection!—Swear thou, first,
 By our inviolate friendship, and by ties
 Yet stronger on thy heart, thy wife and children,
 Swear thou wilt grant me one request.

RUSSEL.

Dear Cavendish,
 Thou wouldst engage me in some hasty business,
 Pregnant with danger to thy generous self;
 Else had thy frank affection ne'er devis'd

A bond so needless, to the mind which holds
 Requests from thee as sacred as the laws
 Of faith and honor :—but explain thy purpose.

CAVENDISH.

Here, in this happy hour of privacy,
 Let us exchange our habits ; so may'st thou,
 Muffling thy face as in the veil of sorrow,
 Pass unsuspected, and elude the guard.
 Two of our trusty friends are plac'd to meet thee,
 And all the means of thy escape concerted.
 Haste, I conjure thee ! while I here remain
 Wrapt in thy mourning garb ; but with a spirit
 Ready to burst into triumphant joy,
 And mock the baffled malice of thy foes.

RUSSEL.

Brave Cavendish ! 'tis hard to quit a world
 That furnishes such friends ; yet easier this,
 Than by a hasty flight from death to hazard
 A life I hold still dearer than my own.
 No, I can ne'er expose thy generous virtue
 To that base fate thou urgest me to shun.

CAVENDISH.

They dare not strike at me ; their venal juries
 Have pass'd no treacherous verdict on my head.

RUSSEL.

The eminence of thy exalted virtue
 Would make thee their sure victim ; and perchance
 The latent ruffians (such I think there are)
 Who robb'd the injur'd world of gallant Essex,
 Would double, in the mind of their base master,
 Their murd'rous merits by dispatching thee.

CAVENDISH

CAVENDISH.

There is no peril ; but admit the worst,
I want not strength to grapple with such villains,
And wear a dagger here to punish them.

RUSSEL.

Friend of my inmost soul ! thy generous offer
Yet closer draws those honorable bands
That in our mortal pilgrimage have bound us
Firm to each other, and, defying death,
Will prove to us, I trust, in brighter scenes,
A lasting unextinguishable source
Of pure ambition and angelic joy.
But the kind purpose of thy noble zeal
Thy Russel must reject. Granting thy plan
Free from all perils to thy precious life,
(And it abounds with many most alarming) ;
Flight howso'er effected, would produce
Dishonour to thy friend, as wanting trust
In spotless innocence or manly courage.

CAVENDISH.

The tongue of Slander dares not to impeach
Thy fortitude !

RUSSEL.

Yet more : for I will lay
My secret soul before thee.—Thou hast seen
How far thy friendship and my Rachel's love
Have power to make life lovely in ~~my~~ fight ;
And my kind father, whose declining age——
But I must pause, and check this natural burst
Of tender gratitude.—Thou fully knowest
All the strong ties that chain my heart to earth ;
Yet I perceive these adamant links,
Touch'd, without doubt, by heavenly influence,

M 2

Seem

Seem to give way ; and my aspiring soul
 Begins to covet that ignoble fate,
 Which shews so horrible in vulgar eyes !

CAVENDISH.

And canst thou wish to leave us ?

RUSSEL.

O my friend !

Among the strongest passions of my heart,
 Perhaps more forcible than love and friendship,
 From childhood I have cherish'd an attachment
 To my brave country :—though a transient cloud
 Now hovers o'er her, my prophetic eyes
 Perceive that she is destin'd to emerge
 To happiness and glory. Thou shalt live,
 Dear noble friend ! to view, and to assist
 This blest event.—The death I am to suffer
 Will more contribute, than my life could do,
 To England's welfare :—in the future fabric,
 Destin'd to save and to perpetuate
 The sapp'd foundations of her faith and freedom,
 My blood may prove a cement ; this idea
 Sustains, inspirits, and delights my soul.

CAVENDISH.

Heroic Russel ! bright and genuine martyr
 Of Liberty and Truth ! if thou must perish,
 I yet shall wear, engraven on my heart,
 The radiant image of thy signal virtues,
 As a pure charm, of potency to guard
 The lowliest mind from every servile thought.—
 Hark ! sure I heard the hated voice of York !
 Dares he insult imprison'd innocence,
 By venturing to approach it ? May we not

Move

love farther off from that detested sound ?
 : shakes my tortur'd brain, and almost tempts me
 To rush at once, and from the coward breast
 Of that apostate tear th' envenom'd heart
 That guides the murd'rous axe against my Ruffel.

RUSSEL.

Patience, dear ardent spirit!—Come this way ;
 The adjoining chamber is allotted me
 For privacy and prayer. Come, to receive
 The benediction of thy dying friend. [*Exeunt.*

Enter York, with the Lieutenant of the Tower.

YORK.

I know some proud abettors of his guilt
 Are plotting his escape ; but mark, Lieutenant,
 Of the convicted traitor in your charge
 I appear not on his summons to the scaffold,
 Your life shall answer it.

LIEUTENANT.

I trust your Highness
 Will never see occasion to condemn me
 For any breach or negligence of my duty.

Enter Lady Ruffel.

LADY RUSSEL.

May an unhappy mourner dare to hope
 That gracious mercy guides the princely York
 To Ruffel's prison ? At your feet I fall
 In my dear Lord's behalf, who in this paper
 Implores your intercession with the King
 To save an innocent and injur'd subject.

O let no subtle fiend, with base suggestion,
 Subdue that heavenly impulse ! ne'er was monarch
 More loudly call'd, by Equity and Truth,
 To the exertion of his noblest power,
 The privilege to spare.—So may my soul
 Find grace before the judgment-seat of Heaven,
 As it is sure my Russel never harbour'd
 A single thought of blood, or aught of evil,
 Against the life and welfare of his King :
 Nay more, my Liege ; I know his gentle virtue
 Has often join'd in painful fellowship
 With bold bad men, whom his pure heart abhor'd,
 To lead your child, the young and princely Monmouth
 From the dark paths of their pernicious counsel.

KING.

Your Lord is happy in an advocate
 Of most persuasive powers : I wish, but dare not,
 To stop the course of the offended law
 Against the man for whom your tender virtues
 Plead with such fervency :—my kingdom's peace
 Demands the dread completion of his sentence ;
 His rescu'd life would lead triumphant Faction
 To practices more daring, and distract
 The agitated realm with civil broils.

LADY RUSSEL.

Alas ! you little know the gentle spirit
 Of my wrong'd Lord. But if his life is held
 So hazardous to England's peace, my Liege,
 O let him pass the remnant of his days
 Far from this troubled isle :—his wife and children
 Will guide th' obedient exile where you order ;
 And, if a desert yields him life and safety,
 Think paradise is there !

KING.

You touch my soul,
 air suppliant ! Let them blame my pliant weakness ;
 am not marble, and must shew you mercy.—
 Where is my Lord of Bedford—with his son ?

LADY RUSSEL.

So, my kind Sovereign ;—shall I fly to seek him ?

KING.

bid him, with instant speed, prepare a vessel,
 That may convey Lord Russel to the coast
 Of France or Holland, as our will directs.—
 Lady, you little know what cruel bars
 Obstruct the willing step of royal mercy :
 Kings are forc'd often to do good by stealth,
 And such is now my curse—But let your father
 Make preparations for a secret flight,
 And wait our pleasure with the prisoner here.
 Ere night he shall receive our terms of pardon,
 And with them an express, though private order
 For the enlargement of your captive Lord.

LADY RUSSEL.

May the great Fountain of beneficence,
 The Kings of kings, reward my gracious master
 For this kind promise to his grateful servant !—
 O my good Liege ! let but your own mild spirit
 Be your primè counsellor, to shut your ear
 Against the subtleties of cruel zealots ;
 Tranquillity shall bless your safe dominion,
 And loyalty and love support your throne.—
 But let me fly to my delivered Russel :
 With these most happy tidings of your bounty ;
 And in reiterated prayers to Heaven,

For every good on my indulgent Sovereign,
Pour forth the fullness of my swelling heart !

KING.

How touching is her love ! I envy Ruffel
Th' angelic tenderness of that chaste woman.

Enter York.

YORK.

What ! has the whining wife of guilty Ruffel
Pester'd your ear, my brother, with vain tales,
To vouch the truth of that convicted traitor ?
Whose death must now be speedy, to secure
Your kingdom's quiet, and your person's safety.

KING.

Brother, your Romish friends incline too much
To sanguinary counsels—I abhor them !
What, if in pity to a virtuous woman,
In kind remembrance of her father's merits,
Friend of our exil'd youth, and best support
Of our recover'd throne ; what if I grant
Some little mercy to her urgent prayer,
And change her husband's death to banishment ?

YORK.

By Heaven it must not be !—*What !* when the Law,
That faithful guardian of your sacred life,
Has pass'd its sentence on your prostrate foe,
For base conspiracy and bloody treason,
False to yourself, shall you, in weak compassion
To an insinuating woman's tears,
Thus rescue and empower Rebellion's idol
To form a second more successful plot ?

KING.

KING.

r' haſty fear outruns true policy;
 this exceſs of rigor, which your prieſts
 e taught you, bodes, I think, but little good
 1 to your power and mine.—You, when you chuſe,
 r viſit Rome; I, brother, am too old
 enter once again on foreign travels.

YORK.

may we ſuffer you to fall at home,
 ough careleſs indolence, by Treafon's dagger.
 nk not I ſpeak from ancient enmity
 this infidious Ruffel: for myſelf,
 has my pardon for his crimes to me;
 the regard I owe your hallow'd perſon,
 ds me to prefs for his immediate death:
 re the houſe that bears his father's name,
 : houſe that hid his bloody machinations,
 ſh to ſee the murd'rous rebel die.—
 let us haſte from hence. I will aſſemble
 members of your council moſt inſtructed
 his baſe treafon—they will clearly prove
 I have but this alternative to chuſe,
 execute or periſh——One muſt fall,
 : traiterous convict, or the injur'd King.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

Lord Russel writing, and attended by Spencer.

SPENCER.

Q U I T, my dear Lord, your mournful preparation
For that unworthy fate, which your blest comfort,
Here fully prov'd our good and guardian angel,
Has happily averted.

RUSSEL.

When a life
Hangs, my good Spencer, on a prince's word,
Whose resolution is the pliant slave
Of artifice and importunity,
Reason disdains to take into account
A poor possession held on such a tenure.
I can believe the King inclines to save me;
But know how soon his unresisting spirit
Yields to the voice of that vindictive zeal,
Which with incessant and increasing fury
Now clamours for my blood:—I therefore hold it
The part of prudence to leave nought undone,
Which, on a sudden summons to the block,
I yet might wish, but want the time to do.

SPENCER.

'Useless (though noble) may this caution prove!

RUSSEL.

RUSSEL.

Be that as Heaven thinks best.—Since busy Rumour,
 In his blind haste to catch a fleeting image,
 Is apt to form a faithless portraiture
 Of public characters, I here, my friend,
 Have, as a legacy, bequeath'd the world
 A true though simple picture of myself.
 When I am gone, my honest countrymen,
 Reading this paper, may with confidence
 Say, Such was Russel—this account of him
 Being as clear from falshood and disguise
 As that which, in his hour of heavenly audit,
 Must prove the ground of his eternal doom.
 Here is my latest task : peruse this letter,
 Which on my death the King is to receive !

SPENCER.

It breathes that gentle magnanimity .
 For which your life is noted.

RUSSEL.

At the time,
 The solemn time, when the calm soul prepares
 For quick departure to that world of peace,
 Where enmity and anger cannot dwell,
 'Tis surely right to close our earthly feuds,
 And part from all men in pure charity.
 Though I have never sinn'd against my sovereign,
 By any deed or thought that meant him ill,
 In many vain and inconsiderate hours
 I yet have sported with his name and frailties
 So idly, that I hold it decent now
 To crave his pardon for such levities ;
 And, in the gentlest language I can use,

To

To intimate, that, dying thus unjustly,
I pardon all promoters of my death,
The highest as the lowest.

SPENCER.

Cease, my Lord,
To dwell on dying thoughts. With eyes that speak
Of life and comfort, your deliverer *comes*
Comes, to restore you to domestic bliss.

Enter Lady Ruffel.

LADY RUSSEL.

All, my dear rescued Love! all is prepar'd
To aid your blest removal from this land
Of danger and dissension.—To your flight
Exile shall seem a kind familiar friend,
Conducting you to safety and delight;
You shall not feel you have a foreign home,
For all your house, who live but in your presence,
Are fix'd to travel with us :—the kind Bedford
Will to the rough sea trust his feeble age
For your society. O had you seen
How our dear little ones receiv'd the tidings
Of this heart-healing voyage! how they pant
To 'throw their eager fondling arms around you,
And welcome you again to life and joy!

Enter Bedford.

BEDFORD.

Pride of my soul! my dear, recover'd son!
Again I view thee, with parental transport,
Snatch'd from the broken snares of shameful death
By this blest hand!—In vain thy suppliant father
Had offer'd to exchange his envied treasures
For that superior wealth, which in his heart
Outweighs all opulence :—sullen Revenge,

Subduing

duing Avarice, with scorn rejected
 y proffer'd ransom. Blank despair had seiz'd me ;
 : in the hour when human efforts fail'd,
 is pitying seraph, in a woman's form,
 ngs heavenly aid, and turns a tyrant's heart
 blefs the trembling world with Ruffel's life !

RUSSEL.

ar objects of my love ! I pray you check
 is eagerness of joy ; for O I feel
 at it must prove to you the treacherous herald
 heavier grief !—your kind exulting hope
 a brief day of summer out of season,
 at, promising to end stern winter's tyranny,
 es but supply to his suspended breath
 e power to pierce more deeply :—pray be caution'd,
 d with just foresight arm yourselves against
 e certain rigour of th' inclement time.

BEDFORD.

s not the King relented, and engag'd
 : royal word to save and set thee free ?

RUSSEL.

as, my father ! had his word possess'd
 at stedfast sanctity which should belong
 the pure breath of princes, this fair isle,
 ho trusted in his faith, had never known
 r present depth of national disgrace :
 ve we not seen our sovereign's promises
 verbially invalid ?—Here comes one
 hose message will, I doubt not, end the question.

Enter

Enter an Officer, who beckons Russel, and speaks to him aside.

BEDFORD.

O my dear daughter! the high flood of hope
Sinks in my heart, and leaves a hideous void.

LADY RUSSEL.

Speak, speak, my Ruffel! is it life or death?

RUSSEL.

Patience, sweet sufferer!—Pray inform the Sheriff,
Although this short and peremptory summons
Savours of cruel haste, he shall not wait.

[Exit Officer.]

RUSSEL.

Ye, whose keen sorrow has more power to shake
The heart of Ruffel than th' impending axe,
By our pure love let me conjure ye now
To reconcile your grief-distemper'd thoughts
To Heaven's dread pleasure; who, for some high purpose,
Permits the oppressive doom of innocence!
The King has signified he cannot save me,
And I must die to-day.

LADY RUSSEL.

Perfidious cruelty!
But I will fly, and by my loud complaint,
Waking dead Honor in his wither'd mind,
Force from the treacherous King his promis'd mercy.

Exit.

BEDFORD.

I yet will make one hopeless effort more
To stop the vengeance of insatiate York.

[Exit.]

RUSSEL.

RUSSEL.

Go, ye kind beings! for the busy love
 That finds employment, though in fruitless labor,
 Lightens the pressure of the grief it bears.—
 Thou seest, good Spencer, that my tender wife
 Is now supported by her zeal to save me;
 But on my death, the quickness of her spirit
 Will work like latent fire within her heart,
 A slow consumer of her wasting frame.
 It is her fate that wounds me—for my own
 Is but the shortest and most easy passage
 From earthly trouble to celestial joy.
 It is the fancy of the vulgar mind
 That foolishly arrays the dreaded form
 Of sudden death in visionary horrors:
 Believe me, Spencer, in the month just past,
 The transient sickness of my lovely boy
 Press'd harder on my heart, and more disturb'd
 The native calmness of my even spirit,
 Than my near prospect of the ready scaffold.

SPENCER.

Yet, my dear Lord, I view with awful wonder
 The firm serenity of soul you shew
 On this hard test of human fortitude!

RUSSEL.

Reflect, my friend, that my imprisonment
 Has made the fearful image of my fate
 Familiar to my thought. It is surprize
 That gives to Death his most appalling power,
 To the clear eye of guiltless Contemplation
 That gloomy spectre grows a gorgeous herald,
 Whose trumpet sounds the triumph of the soul,

And

And speaks its entrance on the stage of glory.
 How grand! how pregnant with delight and wonder,
 Must be the change of scene from earth to heaven!—
 What if a mortal, who had pass'd his days
 In the dim cavern of a noxious mine,
 Worn with hard toil, where health-annoying vapours
 Vext and confounded his imperfect sense,
 If such a mortal suddenly were laid
 On the bright summit of a lofty hill,
 To taste the balmy sweetness of the morn,
 And, for the first time, see the rising sun
 Array this fair and smiling earth in all
 The radiant loveliness of form and colour!—
 O Spencer! if I felt for self alone,
 This period, deem'd the saddest of my life,
 Could only fill my mind with heavenly joy;
 But for my mourning friends, and most for her
 Whose faithful love has many years to weep,
 My falt'ring heart—now give it strength, good Hea-
 ven!

For even now its hardest trial comes—
 My Rachel, in the anguish of despair,
 Returns to take a long and last farewell.

Enter Lady Russel.

LADY RUSSEL.

Dear Russel, I renounce illusive hope!
 And now must teach my weakness to sustain
 The heaviest load of misery that ever
 Fell on the bleeding heart of helpless woman!—
 The King denies thee, what the basest felon
 Asks not in vain, the respite of a day.
 Could'st thou believe it? he and savage York
 Are now, like blood-hounds, come to hunt thee hence,

And

I drive thee to thy death! they but allow me
 a few short minutes, in a last embrace
 to clasp, to bless, and part with thee for ever!

RUSSEL.

How may we part as we have liv'd, my Rachel,
 the pure dignity of perfect love,
 constrain'd by weakness!

LADY RUSSEL.

Do not dread my tears;
 they cannot fall to melt thy manly firmness,
 Heaven has steel'd me for this awful hour.

RUSSEL.

O thou dear angelic spirit! 'tis from thee
 that I have learnt the truest fortitude;
 courage built upon a heavenly basis.—
 O gracious Being! who has guided us
 through fourteen years of pure domestic bliss,
 the best and rarest of thy gifts to man,
 accepted, as tribute for thy blessings past,
 my meek submission in this trying hour
 for thy more dreadful pleasure!—at thy call
 I would not decline my guiltless life, nor would I
 die for having struggled to preserve
 thy purest worship in my native land.
 O that my blood might quench that fatal torch
 of barbarous Superstition, which begins
 to shed once more its sanguinary glare
 on this frighted isle! Might Russel prove
 the last to perish by oppressive power,
 the victim of the base sentence of perverted law!—
 O that my blood on the misguided men
 whose fury sheds it!—As I truly pardon

My ruthless enemies, so, Heaven! may'st thou
 Take to the charge of thy heart-healing mercy
 This, my chief care, this dearest, last concern
 Of my departing soul, this spotless woman!

L A D Y R U S S E L .

Let not thy fears for me, my generous Ruffel!
 Too fondly agitate thy feeling mind;
 The gracious Power who blest us in each other,
 Will not, I know, abandon utterly
 An unoffending, weak, afflicted woman,
 Dear to so pure a spirit, sanctified
 By the kind prayers of an expiring martyr!

R U S S E L .

My Love! I will not to thy care commend
 Thy little orphans; for an angel's fight
 Cannot in tender vigilance surpass
 The anxious mother, who survives to shield
 The infant pledges of our chaste affection!
 No, let me press a charge upon thy memory,
 Where I most fear thy failure, thy dear self;
 Regard thy precious health, as the possession
 That I enjoin thee to preserve and cherish.

L A D Y R U S S E L .

Thou guide and guardian of thy Rachel's life!
 Though the dark grave must hide thee from my eyes,
 Thy gentleness, thy love, thy truth, thy virtues,
 Will still, like faithful and protecting spirits,
 Be ever present to my thought, and give
 My grief-dejected mind new power to rear
 'The little idols of my widow'd heart.

R U S S E

RUSSEL.

They will have all, that youth requires, in thee;
 The gentle friend, the fond, yet firm director,
 Whose steady kindness, and rever'd perfection,
 Makes discipline delight: their minds from thine
 May copy all the virtues; chiefly two,
 Of prime distinction, Truth and Fortitude,
 The pillars of all human excellence!—
 I bless thee now for many years of fondness;
 But most for that sublimity of love,
 Which has disdain'd to make my fate more bitter
 By abject vain complaints and weak'ning tears.

LADY RUSSEL.

Refrain, I pray you, from this tender praise;
 It will o'erthrow the firmness you commend,
 And 'waken all the woman in my bosom.

RUSSEL.

Dear Rachel! as my boy approaches manhood,
 Teach him to look upon his father's death
 Rather as noble than unfortunate!
 Tell him, that, dying by no just decree,
 I deem'd it still a happiness that Heaven
 Made me a native of this generous isle,
 Which, though now darken'd by a transient cloud,
 Is doom'd, I trust, to be the radiant throne
 Of settled Liberty and stedfast Faith;
 Early infuse into his youthful spirit,
 As the sure ground-work of all manly virtue,
 A sense of civil and religious freedom;
 Give to his pliant mind true English temper,
 Teach him to fear no Being but his God,
 And to love nothing earthly more than England.

Enter

Enter an Attendant.

ATTENDANT.

My Lord, the officers!

RUSSEL.

They shall not wait.

LADY RUSSEL.

Inhuman haste!—Do thou, great God! proportion
The patience of thy servants in distress
To the infernal malice of their foes!
Since thy unquestionable will permits
Such innocence to perish on the scaffold,
Send the most soothing of thy heavenly spirits
To wait unseen upon the dying martyr!
Take from this hideous form of Violent Death
His horrible attendants, Pain and Anguish!

RUSSEL.

O my kind Love! that quick undreaded stroke,
So soon to sever this frail mortal frame,
Is but a feather's printless touch, compar'd
To this my deepest wound, which now I feel
In tearing thus my faithful heart from thine!
Each moment that we linger but increases
Our mutual pangs; then take in this embrace
My latest benediction!

LADY RUSSEL.

O, farewell!

RUSSEL.

Yet a last kiss!—and for our little ones,
Bear thou to each this legacy of love!
Now we must part!—Farewell!

LADY

LADY RUSSEL.

Farewell for ever!

[*Exit Lady Russel.*]

RUSSEL.

Spencer! the bitterness of death is past,
 And thou hast nothing more to fear for Russel!
 Then quit him, thou kind friend, and be thy care
 Devoted to the precious charge he leaves:
 I pray attend that dear unhappy mourner;
 Place her within my gentle sister's arms,
 And sooth their mutual sorrow!—Tell my father,
 I could have wish'd to clasp his hand once more,
 But that I fear'd to shock his feeble age.

SPENCER.

Grief, my dear Lord, denies me utterance
 Of all that I would say!—Farewell! my tears
 And prompt obedience will, I trust, to you,
 Though mute interpreters, explain my heart.

RUSSEL.

Yet stop!—Thy Russel has now done with time,
 That heavy load to foolish Indolence,
 But active Probity's prolific treasure!
 Take then this small memorial of esteem,
 This little index of the passing hours;
 For thou hast wisdom to improve their value,
 And I am entering on eternity.

[*Giving his watch to Spencer.*]

Stay not for thanks! follow thy weeping charge;
 Hasten to her support; and Heaven reward thee!

[*Exit Spencer.*]

RUSSEL,

RUSSEL (*kneeling.*)

Thou only perfect and unfailing Source
 Of all serenity, all strength, all power,
 In thy frail suppliant man! thou gracious God!
 I bless thy mercy, which in bitterest anguish
 Has fortified my soul, and now dispels
 All fearful hurry from my even thoughts!
 O comfort thou those kind and tender beings,
 To whom my death must prove a lasting wound!
 Grant me to pass my little residue
 Of closing life with chearful constancy,
 And take my willing spirit to thy bosom!

Enter Cavendish.

CAVENDISH.

Allow me, thou blest martyr! once again
 To press thy hand, to bathe it with my tears,
 And, in this agony of greedy sorrow,
 Catch from thy lips the last command of friendship

RUSSEL.

My faithful Cavendish! I have but one,
 One wish to utter that relates to earth;
 And to thy truth I trust for its completion:
 Dying, I charge thee, by the love thou bearest
 To Russel's honor and our country's welfare,
 Quell, in the hearts of all who may lament me,
 The frantic passion to revenge my death!
 Wilt thou be mindful of this last injunction!

CAVENDISH.

If I neglect one dictate of thy virtue,
 May Heaven, to punish me, take from my soul
 The dear remembrance of our amity!

Ru

RUSSEL.

is well!—thy promise ends my only fear.
 Well, my gallant, generous bosom-friend!
 Well!—still think me living in my children,
 Whom in their little frames embrace thy Russel!

[*Russel departs, but after a short pause returns.*]

RUSSEL.

Nothing there is that yet I wish to say.

CAVENDISH.

Speak! for every accent of thy voice
 Takes my breath, and all thy words shall live
 Upon as laws on my retentive heart!

RUSSEL.

From the end of my youth, I have for many years
 Occupied a prime place within thy noble bosom,
 Where I studied all its rich and rare perfections,
 And its radiant virtues in fair order marshall'd
 Under the guidance of presiding honor:
 I have seen thee full of high and glorious thoughts
 Directed towards this world; but pardon if I say,
 That thy brave mind, to me, has seem'd to fail
 In its homage to the sovereignty of Heaven.

CAVENDISH.

Thou godlike monitor! in such a moment
 Thou dost feel for my offences!

RUSSEL.

Do not wonder
 At the calm temper of thy dying friend;
 Thy own spotless and exalted spirit
 Shall commune more with Heaven, and thou wilt find

The blessed habit of considering
 'That we are acting in our Maker's eye,
 Arms the unshrinking soul for every scene.
 Weigh well the powers of simple piety,
 Make it the key-stone in thy arch of virtue,
 And it will keep that graceful fabric firm,
 Though all the storms of fortune burst upon it.
 Yet farther would I press this counsel to thee,
 But time forbids me.—Once again, farewell !
 Long be thy life, and crown'd with every blessing,
 Till in its peaceful close we meet in heaven. [Exit

CAVENDISH.

Smiling he's gone to triumph o'er Oppression
 By brave endurance! while my voice, suspended
 By anguish, love, and wonder, wanted power
 To breathe one last adieu!—While yet he lives,
 I cannot bear to be divided from him :
 No, I will follow—I will fondly gaze
 On the dear model of consummate virtue
 E'en to his latest moment, I will see
 His heavenly patience meet the murd'rous axe ;
 I will behold his death, though in the fight
 My tortur'd eyestrings burst with agony. [E,

Enter York with an Officer.

YORK.

At length I have prevail'd!—the traitor dies,
 Spite of the weakness in my wavering brother.
 This is indeed an hour of exultation !
 To all the friends of our true ancient faith
 This public fall of her arch enemy
 Is a sure omen that she soon will rise
 In all her gorgeous pomp of elder time,

And from the turbulence of heresy
Clear this recover'd isle.

OFFICER.

Her fairest hope
Lives in the spirit of your Highness' zeal.

YORK.

Yet this insidious Ruffel is so dear
To the deluded vulgar, I still dread
A struggle for his rescue!—Say, my friend,
Hast thou arrang'd our private partizans
At proper intervals to guard the scaffold,
And keep the gaping multitude in awe,
Those resty knaves, who, in this factious land,
Are ever ready to engage in riot,
And hazard life for every bold impostor,
Or subtle demagogue who raves on freedom?

OFFICER.

Fear not, my Lord! the voice of loud Sedition
Will hardly dare to breathe a single murmur
Upon her idol's fall.

YORK.

And hast thou settled
A clear succession of immediate signals,
Which may, as Ruffel drops, transport to me
A quick assurance that his head is off?

OFFICER.

Your Highness, in the minute of its fall,
Will be appriz'd 'tis fallen by the sound
Of fifes now station'd in this armoury.

YORK.

'Tis well; my trusty friend, I thank thy care:

N 2

I cannot

I cannot rest till I am satisfied
The heretic has lost all power to hurt us.

BEDFORD (*entering in extreme haste.*)

Yet pardon, yet preserve him, princely York!
I know thy word is able to suspend
The lifted axe.

YORK.

Away, thou weak old man!

BEDFORD.

Spurn not my prayer! its object is thy peace
Not less than mine:—by all thy trembling hopes
Of future greatness and secure dominion,
Haste thou to snatch him from impending fate!
If, in these moments of extreme despair,
Thy pity saves my son, thou wilt appear
As the bright delegate of heavenly mercy!

[*The fives*

YORK,

Away! the sound thou hearest is a signal
That the just rigor of the law has fallen
Upon his finish'd life.

BEDFORD.

O my lost child!—

But he is happy in the fellowship
Of saints, who to his higher purity
Pay blessed homage—his deliver'd spirit
Gives a new impulse to my lifeless heart:
His sufferings all are ended; but this hour,
Which sees them close, for thee, relentless York
Beholds a train of dark calamities,
The spreading offspring of thy cruelty,
Rise into being!

YORK.

Go, retire, old man,
 And heal thy shatter'd mind : I have not leisure
 To hear the ravings of distracted age.

[*Exit York, with the Officer.*]

BEDFORD.

'Tis not the frenzy of a weak old man
 That now proclaims thy fate, inhuman bigot,
 Rushing through guiltless blood to thy destruction !
 It is the spirit of my angel son !
 He for a moment leaves the heavenly choir,
 (Whose ready harps shall usher him to glory)
 To drown a father's anguish in this vision
 Of soul-possessing prescience !—yes, 'tis he
 Who now presents to my astonish'd eye
 These crowding images !—I see thee now,
 Infatiate York ! invest'd with that crown
 For which thy barbarous ambition panted ;
 I see it fall from thy unkingly head,
 Shaking with fear's vile palsy !—in thy terror
 I see thee sue, imperious, abject spirit !
 To the insulted Bedford, but in vain.
 Thy power, that highest trust of Heaven, abus'd,
 Passes from thee ! The cruel blood-stain'd tyrant
 Wanders a wretched exile ! This wrong'd island
 Emerges from the darkness of Oppression !—
 Hail, scenes of triumph to all English hearts !
 Hail, thou bright festival of settled Freedom !
 I see and bless thy firm establishment.
 And hark ! the justice of a patriot king,
 Uniting with a grateful nation's voice,
 Turns the base sentence of my murder'd Ruffel
 To a fair record of soul-soothing honor,
 And hails me glorious in my matchless son !

N 3

Enter

Enter CAVENDISH.

CAVENDISH.

'Tis past, my Lord! I have beheld him seal
A life of virtue with a death of glory!

BEDFORD.

And thou canst tell me, dying, he appear'd,
E'en as he liv'd, a model to mankind!

CAVENDISH.

Never did martyr with more lovely grace
Part from a world unworthy to possess him!
To the surrounding crowd he mildly spoke
A few short words of pardon to his foes,
With fervent benediction to his country;
Commending to the hearts of all who heard him,
A love of peace and purified religion;
Then with a chearful readiness invited
The stroke of death! I saw the unhappy man,
Who with a trembling arm lifted the axe
O'er his unshaken victim, in his tremor
Measuring the neck to strike his even blow;
I saw him raze the skin! and in that moment
The cheek of Russel held its native hue
Unblanc'd with fear!—it was a sight to turn
The grief of friendship to idolatry!
And your paternal sorrow into pride!

BEDFORD.

Dear Cavendish! I will not wound his spirit,
His gallant spirit, by unmanly mourning:
No, I have pride, such pride as Heaven approves;
Nor would I now exchange my murder'd Russel
For any living son in Christendom!

CAVENDISH

CAVENDISH.

this fond firmness of the English father!
etrates and cheers my aching heart.—
, my dear Lord, let us retire from hence,
othe yet fonder sorrow, weeping now
nes which he has hallow'd by his care,
past days of social happiness:
: let us sit, and still with sad delight
o'er his numerous virtues: they shall be
heme of every tongue! and, ages hence,
x the love of every English spirit!
, if the voice of Learning would compare
rich Antiquity and Modern Time
seen of public virtue, while the hand
ory justly in her balance throws
gather'd worthies of the Pagan world,
nd shall boast her own superior wealth,
poise the rival scale with Ruffel's name!

Handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is extremely faint and illegible due to the quality of the scan. It appears to be a continuous block of text, possibly a letter or a page from a book.

THE
MAUSOLEUM;

A COMEDY,

OF THREE ACTS, IN RHYME.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

CAREY.

JASPER,

RUMBLE.

FACIL,

TROPE.

GERRARD, the Butler.

LADY SOPHIA SENTIMENT, Widow of
SIR SIMON SENTIMENT, a wealthy Merchant.

FRANCES, Sister to JASPER, and a Relation of
the deceased SIR SIMON.

MRS. RUMBLE.

SERVANTS, &c.

SCENE, *the magnificent Villa of* LADY SOPHIA.

T H E
M A U S O L E U M

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

CAREY *and* FRANCES.

FRANCES.

PRAY temper with patience your warm indignation,
And treat with more mercy my tender relation:
Because with your passions her whims interfere,
To her foibles, dear Carey, you're grossly severe.

CAREY.

My patience, sweet Frances, I own is exhausted:
She will wed the first suitor by whom she's accosted
Though in widowhood's dainty vagaries, her pride
Forbids her fair cousin to shine as a bride;
And keeps us, my Love, from that altar away,
Where Hymen with justice upbraids our delay.

But,

But, in noble contempt of your unsettled dower,
~~Let us seize on the bliss that is plac'd in our power;~~
 And, if such artful vanities yield her relief,
 Leave my Lady to play off fresh fountains of grief,
 While we, my sweet girl! pass our happier youth
 In delights that are hallow'd by Nature and Truth:
 Though my income is small, with your prudent direc-
 tion,

Dear Fanny—

FRANCES.

I'm pleas'd with this proof of affection:
 Yet before we our union, dear Carey, complete,
 As your love is so ardent—let mine be discreet.
 No honest return of regard should I feel,
 Could I suffer your heart, in its generous zeal,
 To abandon a portion your bride should obtain,
 And hazard by hurry what patience will gain.
 'Tis unlucky, my cousin, Sir Simon, forgot
 To specify what he design'd as my lot:
 But I know this omission, by which I am left,
 At her Ladyship's mercy, of fortune bereft,
 Was the work of Old Vellum, whose foresight and skill
 Were employ'd for himself when he made the Knight's
 will.

Yet her Ladyship says, that my cousin told her
 The sum that he meant upon me to confer;
 And though she delays, from a delicate whim,
 Left our marriage should seem disrespectful to him—

CAREY.

Good God! my dear Fanny, how can you defend her?
 To refinement and faith she's an empty pretender.
 Have not twelve months elaps'd from Sir Simon's inter-
 ment?

Yet her sorrow still bubbles in ludicrous ferment;
 Though

Though the farce of her grief, as our friends have all
said,

Is address'd to the living much more than the dead ;
And her vanity means, though she prizes not self,
To keep you unmarried, and marry herself.

FRANCES.

Indeed you mistake all her harmless intentions ;
She will certainly give me the fortune she mentions ;
I know her kind heart, and its pure inclination.

CAREY.

Say rather, we know her absurd affectation :
And as for your portion, my dear, I as soon
Shall expect an estate to drop out of the moon,
As to see you receive from my Lady a shilling ;
Allowing, indeed, that her heart may be willing,
She soon will have nothing, I fear, to bestow,
So profuse is the grown in her whimsical woe.
On the new Mausoleum what sums does she waste !
That fantastical fabric of barbarous taste ;
Where all decorations that art can devise,
To adorn the proud tombs of the valiant and wife,
Are mix'd o'er the bones of a simple old cit,
Who display'd not a sparkle of valor or wit ;
Who though rich, pass'd, I think, with small comfort
through life,
A mere slave to the whims of his high-blooded wife.

FRANCES.

That preposterous vault I have view'd with concern !
And have cried and have laugh'd o'er Sir Simon's rich
urn :
But at length, having study'd her Ladyship's trim,
And loving her virtue in spite of her whim,

I've

I've a scheme, that, I think, with success will be crown'd
 On this folly itself her correction to found;
 By indulging her foible, that foible to banish,
 And make all her mournful absurdity vanish.

CAREY.

To your judgment, dear Fanny, I often submit,
 And much could I hope from your goodness and wit:
 Yet I think you can't make, in her youth's giddy season,
 Such a vain wanton widow a creature of reason.

FRANCES.

You judges of nature, and lords of creation,
 Howe'er you pretend to profound speculation,
 Are exceedingly apt your wife selves to deceive
 In the judgments you pass on the daughters of Eve;
 And most when you reckon, in every transaction,
 One indelicate foible their sole spring of action,
 My Lady Sophia you greatly mistake;
 By nature she's neither a prude nor a rake:
 At present, I own, she appears too demure;
 But though her heart's tender, her bosom is pure:
 To a strong understanding she makes no pretence,
 But has many mild virtues, and does not want sense:
 One foible alone has o'erclouded her mind,
 The foible of seeming supremely refin'd:
 But if I succeed, this slight fault she will mend,
 And you'll find her a worthy agreeable friend.

CAREY.

You may say of her purity what you think fit,
 But her case one specific alone will admit.
 Believe me, whene'er a young widow's so prim,
 And by quaint affectation so cramp'd in each limb,
 A new husband alone, by his pliant embrace,
 Can restore her starch'd form to its natural grace:

Is this, my fair Quack! the new nostrum you've got?

FRANCES.

Indeed you shan't hear any part of my plot,
Till I know its success.

CAREY.

Ah! my dear, I'm afraid
This is some coy device my request to evade,
And to keep the wish'd day of our wedding still distant.

FRANCES.

No; in truth, by the aid of a secret assistant,
I've a plan of great moment in high agitation,
Which may happily end all our various vexation:
Allow me three days for its perfect digestion,
And if in that time you will ask me no question,
I promise thenceforth, without murmur or strife,
To obey your commands for the rest of my life.

CAREY.

I gladly subscribe to this bargain of bliss;
So allow me to seal the kind bond with a kiss!
Remember, three days; I can't add a day more,
And shall fancy those three in duration threescore.

FRANCES.

O they'll pass very quick:—much amus'd you will be
With the three rival Bards whom to-day we shall see;
To whom my sad cousin oblig'd me to write
For sepulchral inscriptions in praise of her Knight:
They have sent each an epitaph hither before 'em,
And are coming themselves with all solemn decorum.
As each, without contest, expects here the laurel,
On her Ladyship's judgment they'll probably quarrel:

As you know the whole group, you must wait on the
 choir,
 To soothe the irascible sons of the Lyre.

CAREY.

As to Facil and Trope, if they're hurt, I'll engage
 That one glance of your eyes will extinguish their rage:
 You will find them two chearful and good-humour'd
 lads;

And, whether their Pegasus gallops or pads,
 It will please me, I own, if her Ladyship's fancies
 May tend to recruit their declining finances:
 But for splenetic Rumble, who, grandly absurd,
 Never speaks without using a six-footed word,
 I care not how much he is mortified here.

FRANCES.

But the length of his words hits her Ladyship's ear.

CAREY.

His stiff phrases indeed may accord with her sorrow,
 Yet his spleen will insult her ere this time to-morrow;
 For often he'll call, with quaint arrogant vanity,
 Every head but his own the abode of insanity:
 Because a great author's defects he has caught,
 He vainly pretends to his vigor of thought;
 Though, on similar grounds, he as well might suppose,
 That, because some dark spots may be seen on his nose,
 His face has the lustre and force of the sun.

FRANCES.

In our chorus of Bards I am glad he is one,
 For I'm curious, I own, the strange elf to survey;
 Though I'm rather afraid of his wife, who, they say,

Reads

Reads all the rough verses her husband has penn'd,
Till she stuns every ear she can tempt to attend.
She's to come with her Poet.

CAREY.

I fancy they're here,
For I think I've the hum of his rhymes in my ear.

FRANCES.

No, no; 'tis her Ladyship, mightily smitten
With the high-sounding epitaph Rumble has written.

Enter Lady Sophia (reading).

LADY SOPHIA.

" This doleful domicile of dust contains
" Sir Simon's Sentiment's inert remains ;
" Though Death's cold stroke infrigidate his frame,
" Commerce refounds his emporetic name."
Ah, my friends, here is verse truly grand and pathetic !

How exceedingly fine is the word emporetic !
Why, Carey ! you seem quite untouch'd by its beauty
Of friendship, I fear, you forget the last duty :
You two giddy creatures, though both tender-hearted,
Think more of yourselves than of my dear departed.

CAREY.

As your Ladyship chuses to press me so hard,
I confess, though his memory still I regard,
That my thoughts from Sir Simon will frequently roam ;
And I hope, when you've deck'd his funereal dome,
Your Ladyship's mind may, by Nature's direction,
Assume a more lively and cheerful complexion :
That you'll mix once again—

LADY

LADY SOPHIA.

Never, Carey! no never!
 No time from his grave my devotion shall sever;
 In my eye the fond tear of remembrance shall swim,
 And each sigh of my soul shall be sacred to him!

CAREY.

Consider, dear Madam! that custom and reason
 Prescribe to our sorrows a natural season;
 You have mourn'd like a model of conjugal truth,
 Now attend to the claims of your beauty and youth;
 In the bloom of your graces—

LADY SOPHIA.

Hold, hold, you wild thing!
 In your fancy, I find, gross ideas will spring;
 'Tis the fault of you men;—ere I chastened his mind,
 My Sir Simon himself to that failing inclin'd:
 But I taught him to change the loose laugh of futility,
 For the sweet melting tear of refin'd sensibility,
 Till through his mild frame such pure tenderness ran—
 To such delicate softness I brought the dear man—
 He would weep o'er the withering leaf of a rose,
 And smile at the thorn though it wounded his nose.—
 Ah, my gentle Sir Simon!

FRANCES.

Indeed, he was such,
 That your thoughts cannot dwell on his image too
 much.

LADY SOPHIA.

Your soothing, kind sympathy charms me, my dear:
 I now trust you will wait till the end of next year;

Nor

Nor with Hymen's festivity, grofs and indecent,
Profane our chaste sorrow, so graceful and recent.

CAREY (*Aside to Frances*).

How can you so flatter her curst affectation?
Between you I'm really half mad with vexation.

LADY SOPHIA.

As you, my good girl! with such feeling attend,
When o'er the dear tomb of Sir Simon I bend,
That your thoughts may not roam when our duty we
pay

To that most precious piece of inanimate clay,
That you may not omit o'er his ashes to sigh,
In considering what wedding-cloaths you must buy,
I've determin'd, my dear, as I think it your due,
To resign all my colour'd apparel to you;
To wear it again I indeed am unable,
And on earth while I linger my garb shall be fable.

[*Speaking to a Servant behind the scene.*]

Jenny, bring in the chest that I bid you prepare.

FRANCES (*aside to Carey*).

What d'ye think of this singular present?

CAREY.

O rare!

Her crisis is coming, without much delay;
There might have been doubts had she fix'd upon grey;
But a vow to wear black all the rest of her life
Is a strong indication she'll soon be a wife.

[*Two Servants bring in a large Chest.*]

LADY SOPHIA (*to Frances*).

I have told you, my dear, that, refin'd in my joy,
The array of affection I ne'er could destroy:

These

These are garments unfoil'd, that I beg you to take,
 Thus preserv'd for the conquest they help'd me to make.
 In the sweet days of courtship these garments I wore,
 Vain memorials of pleasure that now is no more!
 Of those dear days of triumph you'll now see the trophy,
 When Sir Simon first call'd me angelical Sophy:
 The fond recollection subdues my soft breast!

FRANCES.

Dear Madam, forbear then to open the chest!

LADY SOPHIA.

No, no, my good girl; I will shew you the whole,
 And how colours express'd various shades in my soul;
 In soft variegation I vied with the dove.
 And reveal'd by my dress the gradations of love.
 Here is, first, a cold brown—in this gown I was nice,
 And repell'd my warm swain with the chillness of ice;
 But growing more soft, in this azure attire
 I allow'd him with hope to enliven desire;
 In this pale black lutestring he found me relent;
 And this rose-colour'd silk was the blush of consent.
 O I ne'er shall forget—

GERRARD (*entering*).

Would your Ladyship chuse
 To receive Mr. Rumble?

CAREY.

The Bard and his Muse!

LADY SOPHIA.

No, not for the wealth that's below the chaste moon,
 Till I meet all the Bards in the sable saloon:
 By his sudden arrival I'm sadly confounded,
 And should faint if he saw me with colours surrounded!

To

To Miss Jasper's apartments away with this chest ;—
 Dear Frances, and Carey, pray wait on my guest,
 Till my poor shatter'd nerves are a little compos'd,
 And the fresh-bleeding wound of my bosom is clos'd.
 Stay, Gerrard.—If cards should be call'd for to-night,
 Place the new jappan'd tables alone in my sight ;
 For the pool of Quadrille set the black-bugle dish,
 And remember you bring us the ebony fish.

[*Exeunt Lady Sophia and Gerrard.*]

FRANCES.

What the deuce shall I do with the wife of the Poet ?
 She may ruin my scheme, if she happen to know it :
 She may pry—

CAREY.

Never fear it ! I'll venture a wager
 That the rhymes of the husband will fully engage her :
 You have seen a proud Bantam crow over a pen,
 Where a small egg has dropt from his favorite hen,
 He crows and he flutters, and struts round the yard :
 So engross'd by her joy is the wife a Bard ;
 And by similar bustle attention she begs,
 And crows o'er her partner's poetical eggs.
 But here come little Parlet and old Chanticleer.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. Rumble.

CAREY.

Mr. Rumble, I'm happy in seeing you here.
 Mrs. Rumble,—Miss Jasper ;—you know, Ma'am, her
 brother—
 And you, Ladies, will soon be well known to each
 other.

MR. RUMBLE.

Though we meet in the house of refined lamentation,
 In your presence, I feel, Sir, some exhilaration ;
 Since

Since I in this spot as a stranger appear,
 I rejoice in a friend who domesticates here.
 My Lady is lodg'd in a sumptuous mansion,
 And I'm pleas'd with her park's evanescent expansion
 As my wife has a taste for the grand and stupendous,
 I am glad I complied with her wish to attend us.

MISS JASPER.

You have had, Ma'am, I hope, an agreeable ride ;
 Our prospects are pleasant on every side,
 And our roads are so good—

MRS. RUMBLE.

That you'll wonder to learn
 We were stop't on our way by an odd overturn.

MISS JASPER.

Indeed ! you surprize me. I hope that no harm
 Has ensued from the accident, save your alarm—
 But how could it happen ?

MRS. RUMBLE.

Sometimes; on the road,
 My dear Mr. Rumble composes an ode ;
 For he says, in such motion his fancy shines most :
 And all true lyric poets, you know, travel post :
 But a chaise-boy, alas ! is a sad ignoramus ;
 And the poor honest booby, whose blunder o'ercame us,
 Mistook a Pindarical ejaculation
 For a horrible, vulgar, profane execration,
 And, turning to stare at my dear Mr. Rumble,
 Drove against a steep hillock, which gave us a tumble.

MISS JASPER.

A most cruel event ! whence, I fear, we may lose
 The unfortunate fruit of the terrified Muse :
 'Twas indeed most unlucky !

Mrs.

Mrs. RUMBLE.

Dear Ma'am, not at all :
Such a genius is not to be crush'd by a fall ;
The accident brighten'd his fancy, and on it
He gallantly gave me an amorous sonnet,
As I know you love verse——

MR. RUMBLE.

Mrs. Rumble, I vow
This display of my trifles I cannot allow ;
You for ever mistake, to my endless vexation,
Gay Levity's sparkles for Wit's coruscation.

Mrs. RUMBLE.

Ah, you dear, modest man ! in a napkin you'd hide
The talent my love must contemplate with pride ;
As Miss Jasper, I'm sure, is a lady of taste,
She shall see some sweet things that I pack'd up in haste,
A few satires and odes——

[Takes out an enormous pocket-book stuffed with papers.]

MR. RUMBLE.

As you dread my displeasure,
Put up that red volume !

Mrs. RUMBLE.

What, bury my treasure !
Indeed I must read one sublime composition :

MR. RUMBLE.

Mrs. Rumble ! the part of a wife is submission.—
Silly woman ! to whom for my sins I am yok'd,
With pulveriz'd gravel you almost are choak'd ;
And, fatigu'd with vehicular dilaceration,
You would murder my verses by rough recitation.

Mrs.

Mrs. RUMBLE.

No, indeed; do but hear me one stanza rehearse;
'Tis my favorite ode.

Mr. RUMBLE.

As you grow so perverse,
To preserve my own temper from exacerbation,
I must thus stop your organs of vociferation.

[Lays his hand on her lips.]

Mrs. RUMBLE.

Well, my dear, I defer it to some fitter time,
And I kiss the sweet hand that has written such rhyme.

Miss JASPER.

Your connubial obedience, dear Ma'am, I admire;
But I'm sure your fatigues some refreshment require—
Give me leave to attend you.

Mrs. RUMBLE.

It gives me concern
To trouble you, Ma'am; but I hope to return
Your obliging attention, so kind and polite,
By a peep at a satire that ne'er saw the light.

[Exit Miss Jasper with Mrs. Rumble.]

CAREY.

Mr. Rumble, you're blest in an excellent wife,
That superlative prize in the lott'ry of life;
The vow of the altar she rises above,
And adds admiration to duty and love.

Mr. RUMBLE.

My wife has, I think, the right feminine nerve:
Her sex was created to wonder and serve,
As their minds have from nature no ponderous powers,
They have nothing to do but to venerate ours.

CAREY.

CAREY.

O fie! can you estimate women so low!
To our fair female authors pray think what we owe.

MR. RUMBLE.

I cannot read one, Sir, without oscitation:
They don't understand antithetic vibration:
Their ideas have nothing of height and profundity,
Their conceptions want vigor, their periods rotundity;
Their truth is too stale, or too feeble their fiction,
And I cannot endure anomalous diction:
But enough of these garrulous wasters of ink—
Her Ladyship likes my inscription, I think;
That lugubrious poem no critic shall garble,
And, I trust, you can shew it me graven on marble.

CAREY.

It would please me to give you that pleasure, dear Sir;
But, in truth, on this point there's a little demur,
Her Ladyship means to consult on the case.

MR. RUMBLE.

What, Sir! is my poem expos'd to disgrace?
Her critical quacks does this woman engage,
To slash my sound verse with empirical rage?

CAREY.

Believe me, good Sir, all the homage that's due
To poetical genius she offers to you;
But her Ladyship's love for Sir Simon is such,
She thinks that he cannot be honor'd too much;
And, to give all his virtues their due celebration,
She from diverse poetical pens of our nation
Has a cargo of epitaphs.

MR. RUMBLE.

Hah! is it so!

Are there rivals to shoot in Apollo's strong bow?

This should have been told me before;—but no matter:
My concurrents, perhaps, may more lavishly flatter,
Yet in funeral song they can't equal my tone;
Where Pope has miscarried, I triumph alone.—
Pray who are these Bards that with me are to cope?

CAREY.

I think you're acquainted with Facil and Trope.

MR. RUMBLE.

What, Facil! whose verse is the tread of tenuity,
That fellow distinguish'd by flippant fatuity,
Who nonsense and rhyme can incessantly mingle,
A poet—if poetry's only a jingle.

CAREY.

Poor Facil wants force; yet may frequently please
By a light airy mixture of mirth and of ease;
But Trope's lofty muse has a higher pretension.

MR. RUMBLE.

Sir! Trope is a rhymier devoid of invention,
Who talks in a high strutting style of the stars,
And the eagle of Jove, and the chariot of Mars;
And pompously tells, in elaborate lines,
That now the moon glistens, and now the sun shines.

CAREY.

How severe, my good friend, are you Bards to each
other!
Yet if each would indulgently look on a brother,
For your general honor—

MR. RUMBLE.

I cannot agree
That these fellows have aught homogeneous with me,
To contend with such scribblers I deem a disgrace,
And my dignity bids me abandon the place:

With

With her Ladyship's judgment I mean not to quarrel,
But shall leave her to crown any monkey with laurel.

CAREY.

Mr. Rumble! in points so exceedingly nice
I do not presume to obtrude my advice;
But allow me to mention, before you depart,
What may tend to encourage your liberal art.
Sir Simon, you know, had a passion for fame,
And left a large sum to eternize his name
By some structure of note; yet he never said what:
So a grand Mausoleum is rais'd on this spot,
At so vast an expence that my Lady, I find,
Has surpass'd what the Knight for the building design'd;
The superfluous cost, be it great as it may,
From her own private purse she designs to defray;
Though an annual fund by the will is adjust'd,
With the guidance of which she is also entrusted;
But from this, as I hear, she has form'd an intention
To give the best epitaph-writer a pension.

MR. RUMBLE.

Has she so!—'tis a gracious, effulgent design;
I protest, of her judgment I highly opine.
Her face has been chiefly ^{my} subject of praise;
But a splendor of intellect now she displays.
I cannot abruptly depart from a scene
Whose mistress discovers the mind of a queen,
Nor rudely desert, though my time is precarious,
A lady whose graces are so multifarious:
But pray, lest some puppy should here circumvent me,
To her Ladyship can't you directly present me?
Though I fear, since my fall, I am hardly so clean as
A Bard should be seen by a female Mæcenas.

O 2

CAREY.

CAREY.

Never fear!—in your coat there is not so much dust
 As to blind the bright eye that to merit is just.
 If you'll step in this room, which is call'd the Apollo,
 And wait a few minutes, I'll speedily follow,
 And acquaint you how soon we may hope for admision;—
 My Lady loves form, in her present condition :
 To amuse yourself there you'll, however, be able,
 For you'll find all the epitaphs rang'd on the table.

MR. RUMBLE.

Are they so!—it is well!—I indeed love to slash
 An inane poetaster's incongruous trash. [Exit.

CAREY.

There I'll venture to leave the old cynical Rumble,
 The prey he has seiz'd to growl over and mumble.
 If this Bard, whom my Lady regards as her darling,
 Has infus'd in his brothers his talent of snarling,
 I think she will find little room to admire
 The harmony form'd by her Lyrical Choir.—
 But lo! the kind Muse an example now sends,
 That two mortals at once may be poets and friends.

Enter Facil and Trope.

CAREY.

My dear lads of Parnassus! you're welcome together ;
 I am glad you associate, like birds of a feather,
 That fools may not cry, " Every Bard hates a brother,
 " And Poets, like Pike, are the prey of each other."
 How fare ye, my friends? have you prosper'd of late?
 I hope each has rais'd his Parnassian estate!
 In our last conversation I heard ye lament
 That your farms on the mountain produc'd a low rent.

FACIL.

FACIL.

In truth 'tis a niggardly foil, at the best,
 As I and my brother can truly attest ;
 But with hopes of a new golden æra, my friend,
 On your patroness here we are come to attend :
 To encourage the arts she has spirit and sense,
 And we're told, my dear Carey, her wealth is immense.

TROPE.

In fortune and soul she's a queen, 'tis agreed,
 And of genius as fond as Christina the Swede ;
 For the Public's dull taste she, we trust, will console us,
 And make our poor Helicon rich as Pæctolus.

FACIL.

Perhaps, my dear Carey, we owe to your care
 The favor of this truly liberal Fair :
 You are, doubtless, appriz'd that my Lady requires—

CAREY.

I know she has paid due respect to your lyres ;
 Yet, indeed, on that title no thanks can I claim ;
 You're indebted alone to your common friend, Fame :
 Her Ladyship knows with what spirit you write,
 And has begg'd your two Muses to honor her Knight ;
 And, I trust, to your mutual advantage and joy,
 She'll reward the rare talents she wish'd to employ.
 But be not too sanguine :—I know how your Bards
 Build the fabric of Hope like a castle of cards :
Entre nous, our good Lady is odd in her taste,
 Tho' her mind is, no doubt, with munificence grac'd ;
 Perhaps to one Bard she'll be lavishly kind,
 And appear to the other as utterly blind.
 Then let each be prepar'd.

FACIL.

So we are, my good friend,
 And by mutual support shall each other defend :
 To tell you a secret, we both wrote in haste,
 And strangers alike to her Ladyship's taste ;
 But agreed, as our purses are equally low,
 To divide what on either she deigns to bestow.

CAREY.

The compact is friendly ; I wish from my heart
 That all who pursue the poetical art
 Would learn, from you two, their mean rage to suppress
 And not rave at the sight of a rival's success.

FACIL.

There, indeed, they may copy from Trope and from me
 From envy, thank Heaven ! we are happily free ;
 We rally each other as much as we please ;—
 I laugh at his figures—he laughs at my ease ;
 Yet with rancour we ne'er try each other to hit,
 But value Benevolence far above Wit,
 The art we still doat on has ruin'd us both ;
 Yet to quit the deceiver we're equally loth :
 From Commerce and Law we were led to retire
 By the splendid illusions that wait on the Lyre ;
 And though each has obtain'd a fair portion of praise,
 We have no golden fruit in our chaplet of bays ;
 Still we look without spleen on our gains and our loss
 Each endear'd to the other by similar crosses.

CAREY.

In truth, my dear Bards, your good-humour is rare ;
 You're philosophers both, and a singular pair :
 With what excellent temper I've heard you rehearse
 A malicious burlesque of your innocent verse !

FACIL

FACIL.

O, with me 'tis a rule not to quarrel with those
 Who attack what I scribble in rhyme or in prose ;
 To skirmish with you, how unjust should I be,
 If, perchance, of my verses you don't think with me,
 When, to tell you the truth, I'm so various an elf,
 I have twenty opinions about them myself!

CAREY.

What an honest confession!

FACIL.

'Tis perfectly true ;
 Yet my works, I must own, I too rarely review ;
 And too quick in their birth are the brats of my brain :
 My Muse is no parent inur'd to long pain,
 Who dandles a rickety chit while it lives,
 And loves it the more for the trouble it gives ;
 She with lively dispatch, like a provident mother,
 Soon as one child is born thinks of rearing another.—
 But enough of a jade that is merely ideal ;
 Let us talk of a female, kind, lovely, and real ;
 An inspirer of something much sweeter than verse,
 And, I hope, with a few thousand pounds in her purse :
 I allude, my good friend, to Miss Jasper, your flame ;
 But, perhaps, she no longer is known by the name,
 And has wisely exchange'd it for Carey.

CAREY.

Not so ;
 The day of our wedding you'll certainly know,
 As I hope that your Muse will the altar attend
 With a rapturous ode on the bliss of your friend.

FACIL.

I accept the gay office with infinite glee ;—
 But at present, I hope, the fair Nymph we shall see :

O 4

Trope

Trope and I were the intimate friends of her brother ;
 What a genius was he !—I ne'er knew such another :
 At school we first saw him his talent display ;
 I remember he modell'd our figures in clay.
 The trade of a sculptor we thought not his fate,
 But suppos'd he'd have half of Sir Simon's estate !

CAREY.

So he would, had not Vellum's more provident care,
 When he made the Knight's will, nam'd himself as his
 heir.

My Lady, indeed, has the rents for her life,
 But to Vellum yields half if again she's a wife ;
 And if without issue her Ladyship dies,
 All this ample estate is old Latitat's prize.

FACIL.

And what says poor Jasper, that spirited lad ?
 Faith, I think such a will might have driven him mad ?
 Though engag'd by his art, he, I'm sure, must be net-
 tled ;

But in Russia, they say, he is happily settled.

CAREY.

When a generous mind has embrac'd a fine art,
 With Fortune's vain gifts it can readily part ;
 From the world's dirty cares it detaches itself,
 To contend for a prize far superior to self ;
 And looks with contempt (I am sure that you feel it)
 Upon heart-hard'ning gold, and the villains who steal it.
 Such a mind, from his childhood, your friend has pos-
 sessed ;

And in Russia, I hear, he is busy and blest ;
 For a patroness there, of imperial spirit,
 The munificent Catherine, honors his merit.

FACIL.

FACIL.

I protest, in the different realms of earth,
There is no friend, like woman, to genius and worth!

TROPE.

I wish you and I may a Catherine find
In the widow whose Knight in our verse is enshrined!

FACIL.

You perhaps, my dear Carey, can tell us some news:
Has her Ladyship told you her thoughts of our Muse?

CAREY.

One thing, my good friends, I can tell you at present,
But I fear you'll not think it exceedingly pleasant;
Yet it's certainly fit you should instantly know it,
And, indeed, emulation inspires a poet:
Nay, look not so grave!—'tis a rival—that's all,
A candidate come at her Ladyship's call.

FACIL.

A rival! who is it?

TROPE.

A rival! pray who?

CAREY.

One, I'll venture to say, fully known to you two,
A Bard whose pretensions are not very humble.

FACIL.

You surely don't mean the pedantical Rumble?

CAREY.

Even so! that long-winded loud Stentor of song;
And the ladies all think that his language is strong.

TROPE.

'Tis as strong and as knotty as Hercules' club,
And as rough as the roll of the old Cynic's tub.

O 5

CAREY.

CAREY.

Hush! hush!—in this chamber the Bear is inclos'd,
Growling over the epitaphs you have compos'd.

FACIL.

Is he so!—introduce us.—I long to partake
In the courteous remarks that his candor will make.

CAREY.

O, if such is your wish, to our guest I'll present you;
But I fancy his comments will quickly content you.

FACIL.

As for me, I defy him to give me vexation;
And Trope will delight in some retaliation.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

MISS JASPER *and* GERRARD.

MISS JASPER.

PRAY watch for my brother, and bring him to me
And let no one, good Gerrard, my visitor see:
On your faithful prudence I solely rely;
We're undone if our guests should his person espy:
From all but ourselves we must keep him unknown;
And, if seen, he must pass for a friend of your own.
I depend on your prudence.

GERRARD

GERRARD.

Dear Miss, never fear;
 him any good I would watch for a year:
 n knows, I have pray'd for him early and late,
 the old lawyer robb'd him of this fine estate;
 ould give all I'm worth could I get him his due.

MISS JASPER.

Gerrard! I know we've a good friend in you:
 ok out for my brother—he'll want your assistance—

GERRARD.

I shall know him at half a mile's distance.

MISS JASPER.

e here ere you stir—prithee run to the gate.

GERRARD.

Miss, you forget; I am past sixty-eight;
 I make all the haste that I can, for your sake,
 I pray for you both at each step that I take.

[Exit.

MISS JASPER.

a worthy old creature, though rather too slow;
 rusty, and will not betray us, I know:
 ough he's secure, I still shudder to think
 y hopes in a moment to nothing may sink.
 crisis comes on, in a hazardous scheme,
 hat infinite terrors the fancy will teem!—
 ropes of the match I was sanguine and hearty;
 ow have my fears in regard to each party.
 my Gentleman turn out too squeamish and coy,
 in the kind art I have deign'd to employ!
 my Lady shew family-pride, at this season,
 ended in vain upon Nature and Reason.

I have

I have studied her well, and I clearly descry
 She's destin'd again to the conjugal tie :
 In spite of the whims false refinement has taught her,
 She is honest dame Nature's benevolent daughter :
 Though a truly good creature, in virtue so strong
 She would not for the world do a thing she thinks wrong,
 Yet of such yielding wax her soft bosom is form'd,
 It will melt in a moment, if properly warm'd ;
 Provided her fancy, affectedly nice,
 Can delude her kind heart with some dainty device,
 Some delicate plea for becoming a wife
 To the youth, who conjures her to bless him for life.
 On this I have founded my whimsical plan,
 In hopes of producing this fortunate man :
 My brother, I know, has a passion for her ;
 And she soon to all men would his person prefer.
 But in my rapid project he will not be steady,
 Unless I persuade him she loves him already ;
 For men rarely know, though of knowledge they're vain,
 By a well-manag'd minute how much they may gain,
 And should he detect the kind art I employ,
 Farewell to my hopes of their conjugal joy !—
 I yesterday thought that my plan could not fail ;
 Now I think 'twill be marvellous should it prevail.—
 But away, cruel fears ! hence, ye painful alarms !
 I behold my dear brother restor'd to my arms !

Enter Jasper.

JASPER.

Heaven bless thee, dear girl !—you have got me once
 more,

In spite of my vow not to visit this shore ;
 And I joyfully fly, with affection's quick pace,
 To enfold thy kind heart in a brother's embrace :
 With that in my grasp, I true opulence feel,
 And my wealth in this casket no lawyer can steal.

Miss

MISS JASPER.

If love and esteem may be reckon'd as treasure,
 You indeed, my dear brother, are rich above measure !
 O how have I long'd all your feelings to learn !
 How ardently pray'd for your speedy return !
 How often accus'd your indignant delay !
 What a million of things had I ready to say !
 What questions to ask !—and yet now you are come,
 The confusion of joy has almost made me dumb !

JASPER.

My tender, good girl !—I perceive you retain
 All your lively sensations of pleasure and pain.—
 But these tears will relieve you—don't check them, my
 dear ;

'Tis a tribute my heart is inclin'd to revere ;
 All flattering language I prize them above,
 And hold them the truest expression of love :
 And indeed, when I think what distress and regret
 Have harass'd your sensible mind since we met ;
 When I think how, from sordid self-interest free,
 You forgot your own wrongs in attention to me ;
 I feel tears of gratitude ready to start,
 And confess my dear sister the pride of my heart !

MISS JASPER.

Yet, for life, you could talk of deserting this sister !

JASPER.

But you see, when she pleaded I could not resist her :—
 When I first was inform'd of old Vellum's vile fraud,
 In my rage I determin'd on living abroad :
 For Russia, you know, I departed from Rome ;
 However, my dear, you may safely presume
 Such an absence from you I could never endure,
 Had you not brought me back by a different lure ;

And

And my friends of the Law with your wishes conspir'^d,
 To make me return with the haste you desir'd,
 As they give me some hopes of soon changing our fate,
 And regaining from Vellum the pilfer'd estate.—
 But how fares my dear widow? whose partial affecti^on
 Seems kindled by some friendly angel's direction,
 To redress half our wrongs, and defeat the old thief,
 Who impos'd on Sir Simon's too simple belief.
 A rascal! to feign a regard for my fame,
 And steal my estate, not to injure my name.
 I thought not my cousin so easy a fool;
 How the deuce could old Vellum so make him his tool?
 For the Knight, on this plea, sign'd his will when in
 health,
 Nor to spoil a great artist by giving me wealth.—
 But where's my kind widow?—I long to express—

MISS JASPER.

You must pardon a little demureness in dress,
 Nor expect her, though you to all men she prefers,
 To fly into your arms.

JASPER.

No; let me fly to her's.

MISS JASPER.

Not so fast, my dear brother, you surely forget
 By what vigilant enemies we are beset!
 Should Vellum, whose spies are now under this roof,
 And against whose vile art no affection is proof,
 Should he get the least hint of my Lady's attachment,
 He would rage like the wolf in that new-painted hatch-
 ment;
 Your mutual regard he would set at defiance,
 And move earth and hell to prevent your alliance.

JASPER.

JASPER.

Would he so?—By my faith, as the widow's so kind,
I care not what mischiefs may lurk in his mind;
Not a legion of imps, by a lawyer instructed,
Shall mar the sweet business her heart has conducted.—
But has she quite hid her connubial design?
Has the rogue no surmise she will shortly be mine?

MISS JASPER.

No, not any.

JASPER.

Well manag'd, my dear fairy elf!

MISS JASPER.

To say truth, 'tis a secret not known to herself.

JASPER.

To herself!—am I dup'd then?

MISS JASPER.

Dear brother, be cool.

JASPER.

Have you sent for me home, but to make me a fool?

MISS JASPER.

No indeed! but to make you most happy for life,
And give you a lovely and excellent wife;
In so serious a point could you think that I jested?—
Have you purchas'd the licence my letter requested?

JASPER.

Here it is—and our folly will finely expose,
If the fair one escapes whom this chain should inclose.

MISS JASPER.

Implicitly trust to my care as your guide,
And ere midnight, perhaps, you may clasp a kind bride.

JASPER.

JASPER.

You tease me, dear girl! with much whimsical pain
But I beg that you'll clearly these riddles explain.
I fear you have form'd some nonsensical plot:
Has the Widow declar'd she will have me, or not?

MISS JASPER.

Dear brother! indulge me with patient attention,
And our true situation I'll honestly mention:
But, however my project may strike you at first,
Into rage and despair do not hastily burst;
To be bold in such points is, in truth, to be wise,
And a widow's a fort to be won by surprize.

JASPER.

So she has not engag'd, then, to give me her hand?

MISS JASPER.

Have patience!—her state you shall soon understand.
That she loves you, I know; and with innocent art:
I have cherish'd the passion still hid in her heart:
For she fancies, good creature! that, safe from love's
ashes,

She's devoted her life to Sir Simon's cold ashes.—
You know, she affects to be highly refin'd:
And a project I've built on this cast of her mind,
Which, if you'll obey me, I'll venture my life,
Like a stroke of true magic, will make her your wife,
And before any soul can suspect our intention.

JASPER.

Well, my girl! and pray what is your magic invention?

MISS JASPER.

You must know, she believes that you only return
To oblige her, by gracing Sir Simon's rich urn:
She thinks the Czarina, on this one condition,
That you travel incog. gives you her kind permission:

And

And her Ladyship's mind I have fill'd with these notions,
 As they form an excuse for concealing your motions:
 So she hopes from your hand, with the highest delight,
 To behold a fine statue of her noble Knight.
 Now, Sir Simon and you have been thought much alike;
 And, to make the resemblance more forcibly strike,
 I mean to array you, her heart to entrap,
 In his blue fatten night-gown and red velvet cap;
 The dress which, to humour his elegant Fair,
 The courteous old Cit was contented to wear.

JASPER.

And is this your fine plan! you impertinent jade?
 Dress me up as the Punch of a dull masquerade!

MISS JASPER.

Have patience!—my scheme must surprize you, no
 doubt,
 Yet I think you'll applaud, if you hear it throughout;
 And if you have spirit I know 'twill succeed.

JASPER.

To play the dead man—a fine project, indeed!

MISS JASPER.

Nay, but hear me!—your actions I will not controul.

JASPER.

Well, you've made me an idiot; so tell me the whole.

MISS JASPER.

No! I've taught you to make yourself all you desire,
 If you will but restrain this intemperate fire.—
 Come, attend to my plot:—You fond creatures shall
 meet

In the new Mausoleum, that pensive retreat;
 On a pedestal there you your person must place,
 To shew how a statue the building may grace:

To

To behold you so fixt I'll my Lady prepare :
 She'll be struck in surveying your figure and air ;
 She with tender surprize will your features review,
 And fancy she sees her Sir Simon in you :
 Then spring from your pedestal, seize her sweet charms,
 And swear as you fold her soft heart in your arms,
 You are like her Sir Simon in soul as in form,
 That your heart towards her is as tenderly warm ;
 You may add—in a vision he bade you direct her
 To take you for life as her legal protector,
 And, to make her chaste love to his memory known,
 Chuse his living resemblance before one of stone.—
 There's a promising scheme for a widow's relief!

JASPER.

Set woman to woman, as thief to catch thief!
 I confess in your plot there is spirit and foul ;
 On her governing foible you've grounded the whole ;
 And rapid success might attend to your plan,
 But for puppet-show courtship I am not the man :
 I possess not the face that your stratagem needs,
 For so bold an attack on a widow is weeds ;
 And I feel some reluctance, in truth at my heart.
 To such an appearance of fraudulent art.

MISS JASPER.

Away, my dear brother, with scruples like these!
 Of the amorous heart doubt's a common disease,
 But one that my counsels may speedily cure :
 You both love each other—your meaning is pure—
 The gentle Sophia you'll tenderly treat,
 Her form is enchanting, her temper is sweet ;
 And if your odd courtship appears like a jest,
 In your marriage, I'm sure, you'll be equally blest :
 Without

at it, indeed, our fair friend is undone,
 Vellum intends that the coxcomb his son,
 he comes from his travels—But somebody's near;
 en surprize in this quarter I fear,
 haste to my room—I must school you above:
 ou'll act as I wish if you've one spark of love.
 d you have not—I shall honestly say,
 ust give up the part that I meant you to play.
[*Exeunt hastily.*]

Lady Sophia with Papers in her hand attended by
 Carey.

LADY SOPHIA.

the great doors of the sable saloon.
[*The Scene opens, and discovers a large Apartment, with a black velvet Pavilion.*]
 thoughts of this business I'm ready to swoon!
 ay, my good Carey, will lessen my pain,
 d my weak nerves the sad scene to sustain;
 Gentleman—usher you'll kindly attend,
 ring the three Bards to an audience, my friend:
 fit to receive them beneath my pavilion.
 ay their sweet verse I could wish for a million;
 think that each Bard will be pleas'd with his lot:
 ing them—Stay, Carey, one thing I've forgot;
 w 'tis too late for my purpose, I fear;
 it to have order'd the horns to be here,
 t little soft music these rites to begin,
 b found a dead march as the Poets walk in.

CAREY.

Madam, their verses will want no such aid;
 e haste to present them.—Fantastical jade!
[*Aside, as he goes out.*]

LADY

LADY SOPHIA.

(Seating herself under the Pavilion, and looking over the Papers in her hand).

For these epitaphs, thus, I may happily borrow
The parts that most flatter my delicate sorrow ;
And while in one piece I harmoniously blend
Four lines from each poem these authors have penn'd,
I am pleas'd that on them no vexation can fall,
That I shall not hurt one, and must gratify all.—
But the Geniuses come.

Enter Carey, introducing Rumble, Facil, and Trope, who advance with profound Bows towards the Pavilion.

LADY SOPHIA.

Ye kind friends to my grief!
Who employ your fine parts in affliction's relief ;
My mournful distress by your talents ye calm,
And my dear lost Sir Simon your verses embalm.
As I ought, let me first Mr. Rumble address :
What I owe to you, Sir, I can never express,
Yet the force of your pen let my gratitude mention.

RUMBLE (*aside*).

I perceive she has sense—and I'm sure of the pension!

LADY SOPHIA.

In my choice I have done equal justice, I hope,
To you, Mr. Facil—and you, Mr. Trope :
From your various productions twelve verses I chuse,
And I blend the rich sweets of each different Muse ;
Thus a wreath is completed to deck the dear shrine,
And to honor Sir Simon three Poets combine.
Here you'll see how I've manag'd this nice combination.

[Distributing a paper to each,

RUMBLE.

RUMBLE.

protest I can't suffer this conglomeration
Of marble and brick ! this anomalous jumble !

CAREY (*in a whisper to Rumble*).

Remember the pension, my good Mr. Rumble !

RUMBLE.

Sir ! my admurmurations shall loudly be heard !
've a right to exclaim that my Lady's absurd :
In her cap she as well might conquassate together
The down of green geese and an ostrich's feather.

FACIL.

I think, Mr. Rumble, my Lady displays
The most dexterous art in uniting our lays :
Your elder Muse first, like the waggon of Night,
Moves solemn and grand ;—like the chariot of Light,
My airy Trope then advances, with different pace ;—
And, like Twilight, between you I find my right place.

RUMBLE.

Remember, young man ! while his splendor you brag on,
That rich Ponderosity rides in a waggon.—
But I will not descend to a vile contestation ;
Our minds were not fashion'd for reciprocation.
My Lady I pardon, on this one condition,
That she quickly proceeds to a decomposition :
She may chuse of our epitaphs which she thinks fit ;
But a mixture so monstrous I will not admit.
She as well with her scissars might hastily snip
From different portraits the eye, nose, and lip,
And think that her needle accomplish'd great matters,
By compacting a face of the discrepant tatters.

LADY SOPHIA.

O mercy !—dear Sir, pray this business adjust,
And do not disturb my Sir Simon's calm dust !

If a squabble concerning his tomb you excite,
I am sure his dear spirit will haunt us to-night :
I feel in this terror new anguish arise,
And a fresh flood of sorrow swells into my eyes !

CAREY (*aside to Rumble*).

Mr. Rumble ! I fear if you do not submit,
My Lady will have an hysterical fit.

RUMBLE.

Sir ! in points that my credit and honor involve,
A few drops of salt-water won't melt my resolve.

FACIL (*aside to Carey*).

I protest, though fantastic I own she appears,
I can not bear the sight of such beauty in tears ;
And as I perceive she is really distressed,
I'll at once put an end to the strife in her breast.

[*To Lady Sophia.*]

Dear Madam ! that you on this point may not grieve,
And your delicate mind from all doubt to relieve,
Let me and my friend our pretensions resign,
And leave one single Bard to embellish the shrine ;
We beg that alone Mr. Rumble may bear
The honor he thinks that we ought not to share.

CAREY.

No, no, my good friend ! you're too modest, indeed !
I've a plan for ye all, that I trust will succeed.

LADY SOPHIA.

What is it, good Carey ? I wish to pursue
Some happy expedient suggested by you.

CAREY.

At Mecca, dear Ma'am, seven poems, we're told,
O'er the Prophet's rich tomb were suspended in gold ;
Now,

Now, let three worthy Bards each an elegy write,
And suspend all their works o'er the tomb of your Knight.

LADY SOPHIA.

O charming!—your thought is enchantingly fine!—
Mr. Rumble! I hope you applaud his design?

RUMBLE.

From this proposition I will not revolt,
Though my young rivals' pride it may serve to exalt;
Of the honor you do them I will not be jealous;
But I'll teach the vain youths to revere an Entellus.

LADY SOPHIA.

Well, I hope what has past will be kindly forgot,
And that now you'll all deign to compose on the spot—
I commend, my good Carey, the Bards to your care,
Entertain them, I beg, with the choicest of fare:
And, as it grows late, you must leave me, my friend,
In affliction's chaste rites my lone evening to spend.—
Farewell, worthy Sirs;—you now leave me to sorrow,
But I hope to attend you at dinner to-morrow.

CAREY.

Come, my friends! now permit me to be your director.—
Mr. Rumble, 'Rack Punch is your genuine nectar;
As the night's coming on, I'll prepare the rich bowl,
That shall give to you Poets fresh vigour of soul;
For the Muse with new force, like the flying-fish, springs,
When she stoops for the purpose of wetting her wings.

[Exit Carey, with Rumble, Facil, and Trope.

LADY SOPHIA *alone*,

I am glad we have sooth'd Mr. Rumble's chagrin!

Enter

Enter Miss Jasper.

LADY SOPHIA.

O, my dear, with the Poets I've had such a scene!
They have shaken my nerves to that cruel degree,
I shall quiver all night like a poor aspen-tree.

MISS JASPER.

My tidings new life in your heart will infuse;
The young Sculptor's arriv'd!

LADY SOPHIA.

That, indeed, is sweet news!
Then in effigy, soon I shall clasp my dear Knight!
Is the block too provided and perfectly white?
Of the true Parian marble, I trust, he will mold
The statue my bosom so pants to behold.

MISS JASPER.

I assure you, the business engages his heart,
And you'll see a fine work from his exquisite art.
To my brother already the vault I have shewn;
And of attitudes there he is thinking alone.
As I mean to conceal his arrival at home,
We went by the pass under ground to the dome.

LADY SOPHIA.

We will join him, dear Fanny, and go the same way,
I long at the tomb my devotions to pay;
To hear how your brother's fine fancy and skill
With new decorations the structure may fill,
And to see in what posture the statue may stand.

MISS JASPER.

Let us go—he'll be happy to kiss your fair hand.

[Exeunt.]

[The

[*The Scene changes to the inside of a grand Mausoleum; on one side, a large oblong Tomb of white marble, on the other, some steps ascending from a subterraneous passage. Jasper appears in the Gown and Cap of Sir Simon.*]

JASPER.

What a part has my sister induc'd me to play!
 I wish from the scene I could well slip away.
 I shall never succeed—surely love was ne'er made,
 Since the days of old Jove, in such odd masquerade!
 I scarce know myself, in this whimsical plight,
 But I fancy I look very like the old Knight:
 Yet if you, my sweet Widow, incline to my plan,
 This image will beat the original man.
 Gad! I hope she won't fancy I'm really his ghost!—
 But I hear them below—I must leap to my post.

[*Jasper places himself in a striking attitude on the top of the marble Tomb, while Lady Sophia and Miss Jasper ascend the steps from the subterranean passage.*]

LADY SOPHIA (*starting.*)

O mercy!—what phantom amazes my sight!
 Has the grave to my love given back the dear Knight?—
 'Tis himself I perceive—'tis no fanciful-dream!
 O, I faint— [Falls on the arm of Miss Jasper.

[*Jasper flies to Lady Sophia in great agitation, and speaks at the same time to Miss Jasper.*]

See the end of your pitiful scheme!—
 As I live, her fond fears have suspended her breath!
 And I've frighten'd the delicate creature to death!

MISS JASPER.

Never fear, simple Charles! you will not lose your wife:—
 You understand marble much better than life!

LADY SOPHIA (*reviving*).

Where am I!—O, pray Sir, are you Mr. Jasper?

MISS JASPER (*whispering her brother*).

In your arms, you poor simpleton! hasten to clasp her!—
If you stand so confounded, how can you succeed?
I shall presently think you a statue indeed!

JASPER (*to Lady Sophia*).

How fare you, dear Lady?—'tis true that you see
Your devoted affectionate Jasper in me:
Of your beauty my heart has long felt the effect,
In chaste admiration and tender respect:
No licentious design with my passion could mingle;
But the very first moment I heard you were single,
All my foreign pursuits I resolv'd to disclaim;
For your smiles are to me more attractive than fame.
Though the wintry ocean was roaring between us,
My love, with fond hope in the favor of Venus,
Bade me cross the rough deep, and, disdain'g controul,
Fly with speed to the distant delight of my soul!

LADY SOPHIA.

How like my Sir Simon in person and air!
The mild turn of his lip, and his eye to a hair!

JASPER.

O think not the likeness lies only in feature?
I've his soul, heart, and passions, my sweet, lovely creature!

In me, then, O fancy you see him restor'd!
And with fondness connubial be lov'd and ador'd!
Instead of a senseless, cold image of stone,
Make his living resemblance for ever your own!
A soft statue of wax in your hand I will prove,
You shall mold me to all the chaste fancies of love.

LADY

LADY SOPHIA.

stest your idea is sweetly refin'd,
 delight the pure warmth of a delicate mind!
 uld wish such a likeness to keep in my view,
 for ever contemplate Sir Simon in you:
 though the mere offspring of tender sensation,
 a wish would be reckon'd a gross inclination;
 I'm sure I should die at that horrid suggestion!

JASPER (*embracing her*).

r angel! no tongue shall thy purity question.

LADY SOPHIA.

Charles! to my bosom you give such a flutter,
 my reasons against you I want breath to utter.

JASPER.

he eloquent glance of that dear melting eye,
 h my delicate purpose I know you'll comply.

MISS JASPER.

h! hush! I have heard some one step near the door,
 be still, till the coast I can clearly explore.

LADY SOPHIA.

ny stars! should my people discover at home,
 at night I converse with a man in this dome——

MISS JASPER.

ce I away! under ground you must quickly retreat.

JASPER (*taking up Lady Sophia in his arms*).

ce, escape in my arms!

LADY SOPHIA.

Don't you feel my heart beat?

P 2

JASPER.

JASPER.

So does mine, lovely creature! my soul is on fire.

LADY SOPHIA.

But I never can yield to your sensual desire.

[Exit Jasper, bearing off Lady Sophia
down the subterranean staircase.]

CAREY.

(*Speaking without the great door of the Mausoleum*).
Miss Jasper! Miss Jasper! pray, are you within?

MISS JASPER (*opening the door*).

Is it you, Sir, who make so uncivil a din?—
Pray what is the cause of this sudden intrusion?
Have your Poets produc'd a new scene of confusion?

CAREY.

Gerrard says you have lock'd up the key of the 'Rack,
So to give the Bards punch be so kind to come back.
Come, my dear.—

MISS JASPER.

The deuce take your poetical potion!
You have spoil'd my poor Lady's nocturnal devotion.—
How forgetful old Gerrard is suddenly grown!
He has, surely, the key in some draw'r of his own.
But you jest.—Get you gone!—I must hasten to her.

CAREY.

But without a few kisses indeed I shan't stir.

MISS JASPER.

Pish!—nonsense!—make haste then—I've no time to
spare.

CAREY.

Can't you give me some minutes, my dear busy Fair?

MISS

MISS JASPER.

No, in truth, not a moment; my hurry is great—
Meet me here in the morning precisely at eight,
And perhaps I may make you some pleasing amends.
Good-night!

CAREY.

Let us part, though, like lovers and friends;
I deserve this sweet kiss for my patience.

MISS JASPER.

Good-night!
To-morrow, I hope, will bring wonders to light!
[*Exeunt different ways.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE I. *The Mausoleum.*

Enter Trope with Facil, laughing.

IN my life I ne'er knew an adventure so drole!

TROPE.

But what is it, dear Facil, pray tell me the whole?

FACIL.

So I will, when a little calm breath I can draw,
In ceasing to laugh at the figure I saw.

TROPE.

What figure?

P 3

FACIL.

FACIL.

Why, Rumble: I now see him stand
 With his garments half-button'd, a scroll in his hand;
 And the poor frightened girl!

TROPE.

What the deuce do you mean?
 In an odd wanton frolic has Rumble been seen—
 To an Abigail's room did the old Bard repair?

FACIL.

No, no, I'll relate to you all the affair.—
 You must know that our punch had so heated my brain,
 That to sleep half the night I endeavour'd in vain;
 But was just in a slumber, between three and four,
 When a half-array'd figure threw open my door:
 'Twas a poor trembling damsel, who hastily said,
 "Rise! rise! or you'll surely be burnt in your bed!"
 And I heard Rumble's voice thrice repeat the word
 "Fire!"

But as that dreadful word was soon follow'd by "Lyre,"
 I perceiv'd the good girl, I now held by the arm,
 Had mistaken his verse for a cry of alarm.

TROPE.

Very good!—he has often these starts in the night
 But how did you calm the poor girl in her fright?

FACIL.

The wild little wench, like a poor frightened hare,
 Knew not which way to run, and did nothing but stare;
 When, holding the door of my chamber a-jar,
 We perceiv'd, by the aid of the bright morning-star,
 The old Bard, who of liquor had taken his fill,
 Sally forth from his quarters in odd dishabille;
 With punch and with poetry heated, he swaggers,
 And reels down the stairs, like a horse in the staggers,
 Repeating

Repeating with emphasis, several times,
 The unfortunate word in his dangerous rhymes ;
 And the girl, who now saw her mistake very clear,
 Laugh'd, in spite of her shame, at the source of her fear.

TROPE.

And you, I suppose, when her terror was fled,
 Taught her bloom to revive by the warmth of your bed?

FACIL.

No, indeed ; had her panic been only affected,
 I perhaps had been foolish, as you have suspected ;
 But her fear and her modesty both were so true
 That they won my regard, and she safely withdrew.

TROPE.

But where's our friend Rumble ?

FACIL.

O, nobody knows.

TROPE.

'T'o some shady retreat he is gone to compose.

FACIL.

On the house-top, perhaps, like a bird he may sit ;
 He considers keen air as a friend to his wit.
 It would not surprize me this phoenix to see
 Oddly perch'd on a bough of an old lofty tree ;
 For he thinks he writes best when he's nearest to heaven :
 But he'll soon want his breakfast—'tis much after seven.

TROPE.

Hark ! what is that noise, like the woodman's loud stroke?

FACIL.

As I live, it is Rumble in yon shatter'd oak !
 Don't you see where he's sitting astride on the branch ?
 He has crack'd that large limb by the weight of his
 paunch.

TROPE.

I believe he's asleep!—shall we give him a call,
Lest he chance in his slumber to get a bad fall?

FACIL.

Never fear:—here is one to take care of his life,
Here's the nurse of our Brobdignag baby, his wife.

Enter Mrs. Rumble, hastily.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Pray, Gentlemen, where is my dear Mr. Rumble?—
I have news for you Poets, to make you all grumble!—
But where is my husband?—I seek him in haste.

FACIL.

Dear Ma'am! we're surpriz'd that, with singular taste,
From the soft arms of Beauty he strangely has fled,
To embrace the rough limbs of an oak in their stead!—
On that bough you may see him.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Ah! barbarous man!

He will venture his life, let me say what I can.
I am sure some mischance will his genius o'erwhelm,
T'other day he fell down from the top of an elm.—
Mr. Rumble! take care!—Mr. Rumble, my dear!

FACIL.

In this case, my dear Madam, you've nothing to fear.
Behold! 'tis an incident only for mirth,
For the bough gently falling consigns him to earth.

MRS. RUMBLE.

I rejoice he is landed!

Enter Rumble, stretching himself and yawning.

MRS. RUMBLE.

My dear Mr. Rumble!

It is well you have met with so easy a tumble:

I wish

I wish that your fancy was not so romantic;
All the people will think you are perfectly frantic.

RUMBLE.

Peace, woman!—I care not for idle derision,
I have had a superb elegiacal vision:
Homer says, with great truth, “Onar ek dies esti.”

MRS. RUMBLE.

On first waking, my dear, you are apt to be testy;
But I'm glad if the Muse has been kind to your slumbers,
And I hope we shall hear your mellifluous numbers.

RUMBLE.

In my dream I've compos'd, and with clear continuity,
Such emollient verse for the grief of viduity,
'T would have sooth'd the sad relict of old king Mausolus!

MRS. RUMBLE.

In our passions the Nine may have charms to control us;
But your Muse, I'm afraid, might as well have miscarried,
For the lady you praise as a widow is married!

RUMBLE.

Peace, woman! you're crazy!

FACIL.

How! married, dear Madam!

MRS. RUMBLE.

Ay, married! as sure as we're children of Adam.
You know, Sir, rich folks, with a licence, have power
To marry without the canonical hour;
And, leaving her guests o'er their punch to carouse,
My Lady at midnight receiv'd a new spouse.

RUMBLE.

Mrs. Rumble, I fear 'tis our punch that has bred
These nuptial phantasma's in your giddy head:
Your story has nothing of concatenation.

Mrs.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Mr. Rumble, you always will doubt my narration!
But I deal not in fiction, although a Bard's wife;
On the truth of this secret I'd venture my life:
From one of the house-maids I happen'd to worm it,
And here comes a gentleman who will confirm it.

Enter Carey.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Your voice, Mr. Carey, will prove I am right;
Pray was not her Ladyship married last night?

CAREY.

Dear Madam! your question can hardly be serious.

MRS. RUMBLE.

I am sure she was wed, though the wedding's mysterious.

CAREY.

Do you really believe it?—dear Madam, to whom?
It must be to one of these Bards, or a groom:
For, excepting ourselves and the men of her train,
Not a male did this mansion last night entertain:
But whence your conjecture? on what is it grounded?

RUMBLE.

Silly woman! I tell you your brain is confounded;
But I think we may guess, from your dream of this fact,
How in widowhood you will be tempted to act;
I suppose, when I've finish'd my scene of mortality,
However you sorrow in shew and verballity,
You soon will renounce all your dignified gravity;
And, entic'd by some bellman's poetical suavity,
Go to church with a fellow who deigns to rehearse
A quatrain on your charms in his annual verse.

Mrs.

MRS. RUMBLE.

O you barbarous man ! by so cruel a jest
 Would you wound the chaste love of so tender a breast ?
 You know me too well to believe what you say.—
 Thank my stars ! here's an evidence coming this way ;
 And you'll see truth and justice are both on my side.

Enter Miss Jasper.

MRS. RUMBLE (*basily*).

Miss Jasper ! pray is not my Lady a Bride ?

MISS JASPER.

You are right, my dear Madam.

CAREY.

It cannot be real !

MISS JASPER.

From you Bards I request a sublime hymeneal.

TROPE.

So suddenly married !

FACIL.

You certainly joke.

MISS JASPER.

A word of more truth in my life I ne'er spoke.

CAREY.

What d'ye mean, my dear Fanny ? pray do not deceive us.

MRS. RUMBLE.

What infidels, Madam ! they will not believe us.

FACIL.

Pray, to what happy man may so fair a prize fall ?

MISS JASPER.

The Bridegroom I'll soon introduce to you all ;
 And you Poets, I trust, will a new string employ,
 With singular pleasure to echo his joy.

RUMBLE

RUMBLE.

So my fine elegiacs are now out of season;—
 I was mad, to think woman a creature of reason,
 And on widowhood's slippery virtues to raise
 The luminous fabric of rythmical praise!
 But I'll haste to be gone from this scene of fatuity:
 Come along, Mrs. Rumble; I've done with viduity.—
 My Lady may welcome more juvenile comers,
 I have no time to waste upon conjugal mummers.

MISS JASPER.

Mr. Rumble! pray stay; in our joy to partake.

MRS. RUMBLE.

Stay, my dear Mr. Rumble! you'll stay for my sake.
 Though the grand and the gloomy is all your delight,
 I confess that festivity pleases my sight;
 Pray indulge me for once!--it would half break my heart
 Without seeing the Bridegroom were we to depart.

RUMBLE.

Curiosity ruin'd your grandmother Eve;
 And to gratify yours you shall not have my leave:
 From a farcical scene it is time we should go,
 And who plays the Jack Pudding I want not to know.

MRS. RUMBLE.

My Lady may still wish your verse to peruse!

RUMBLE.

For Politics henceforth I give up the Muse;
 Though political paths may have some tortuosity,
 To enter on them I have less scrupulosity,
 Than to feed your vain sex with poetical flummery,
 And at last be the dupe of their amorous mummery.

But

But I'll have my revenge, and, before my spleen cools,
I will prove all the sex-flattering poets are fools.—
Come away, Mrs. Rumble!—your duty's submission.

[*Exit, bearing off Mrs. Rumble.*]

MISS JASPER.

Poor woman! I pity her dismal condition,
And am griev'd that so roughly he makes her return:—
But here's one to console us for every concern.

Enter Jasper.

MISS JASPER.

To you, my good friends, I the Bridegroom present,
And you all will rejoice in this happy event.

CAREY.

Dear Jasper! o'erwhelm'd by this joyous surprize,
I am almost afraid to believe my own eyes!
Are you really return'd? and, in truth, are you married?
Has this excellent plan been so suddenly carried?
Or, with potent illusion and artful pretences,
Has this fair little forcerers cheated our senses?

JASPER.

You may trust in her magic, as honest and true;
She has render'd me happy, and so she will you:
To you, my dear Carey, I give her for life;
So enchanting a sister must prove a sweet wife;
And, with pleasure I add, you'll receive your fair Bride
With the fortune she merits completely supplied.

CAREY.

Her heart in itself is an opulent dower!

JASPER (*to Facil and Trope.*)

My worthy old friends! in this fortunate hour
It increâses my joy to meet you on this spot.

FACIL.

FACIL.

I rejoice in your bliss!

TROPE.

I am charm'd with your lot!

JASPER.

And with double delight the good fortune I view,
Which may prove I retain a warm friendship for you:
I've a scheme for ye both, my dear Facil and Trope,
That will meet with your hearty concurrence, I hope.
You must yield to my wish—I will not be denied
From any vain scruples of generous pride.

FACIL.

With hearts so enliven'd by seeing you blest,
We shall hardly refuse whatsoe'er you request.

JASPER.

Though a few dainty whims, of a singular kind,
Have o'erclouded the worth of her excellent mind,
'The soul of my Lady Sophia is fraught
With the true mental treasures of generous thought.
She perceives, and disclaims for the rest of her days,
The foibles to which false refinement betrays:
She now thinks this proud fabric of the ill-applied art
The ridiculous whim of too feeling a heart.
Sir Simon had many calm virtues, whose claim
From ungrateful Oblivion shall rescue his name:
But all the distinctions of rank are confus'd,
Fame herself is insulted, and Art is abus'd,
When the plume and the laurel insultingly wave
O'er the honest plain Merchant's preposterous grave:
Convinc'd of this truth, 'tis my Lady's design
To alter this dome on a new plan of mine.

Here

Here with Freedom and Ease you, my friends, may reside;
 Good apartments for each I shall quickly provide:
 For this dome, where the Founder shall rise in a nich,
 Is to prove an asylum for artists not rich.

CAREY.

I am charm'd with your project, dear Jasper!

JASPER.

Yet hear!—

By the will there's a fund of four hundred a year
 Of real hard cash, from incumbrances free,
 Which my Lady herself is to guide as trustee,
 To support any structure she chuses to plan,
 To perpetuate the name of her worthy good man;
 This between you, dear Bards, she is pleas'd to adjust:
 And when opulent Honesty sinks in the dust,
 May his heirs ever use what he leaves upon earth
 In securing calm comfort to Genius and Worth!

FACIL.

We always have said, and your actions evince,
 You, Jasper, were born with the soul of a prince;
 But our gratitude how shall we utter to you?

JASPER.

By returning your thanks where they chiefly are due.
 My Lady's pure bounty, that scorns to be stinted,
 Surpass in your favour whatever I hinted—
 To prove that I wed not from motives of self,
 I have settled her wealth on her generous self;
 She is rich, and intends to make use of her treasure
 In the purchase of noble and permanent pleasure:
 At the highest of interest our gold we employ,
 When it brings a return of benevolent joy.—
 Thank my stars! all my wishes are crown'd with success;
 Kind Fortune, I just now have learn'd by express,

Outruns,

Open terms which none, for any quantity of time,
At my Lady's request, shall be willing to take.—
But come, my good friends, let us haste to the ha
Where the Bride will be happy to welcome you a

CAREY.

Well, my friend! I confess, in the course of my
I have oft been provok'd with your new lovely w
But for this her last act her late whims I forgive,
And shall bless the kind creature as long as I live.—
You will teach, as you mold her life's sweetest du
All her virtues to shine as complete as her beauty:
And may each childless widow, in youth's lively
Who has yielded an honest old husband to fate,
In a partner like you find the surest relief,
And to sensible joy turn fantastical grief!

F I N I S.







