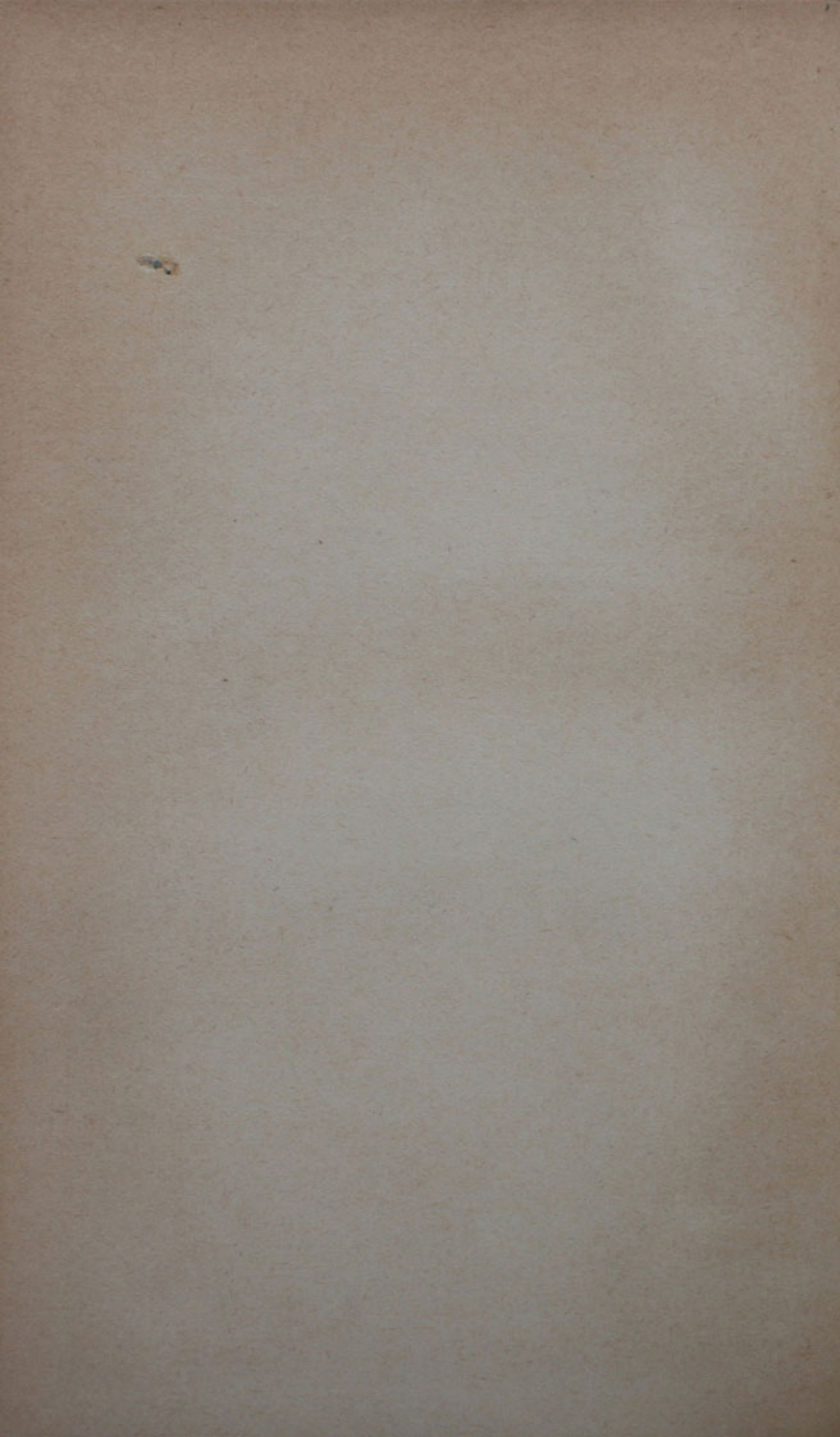


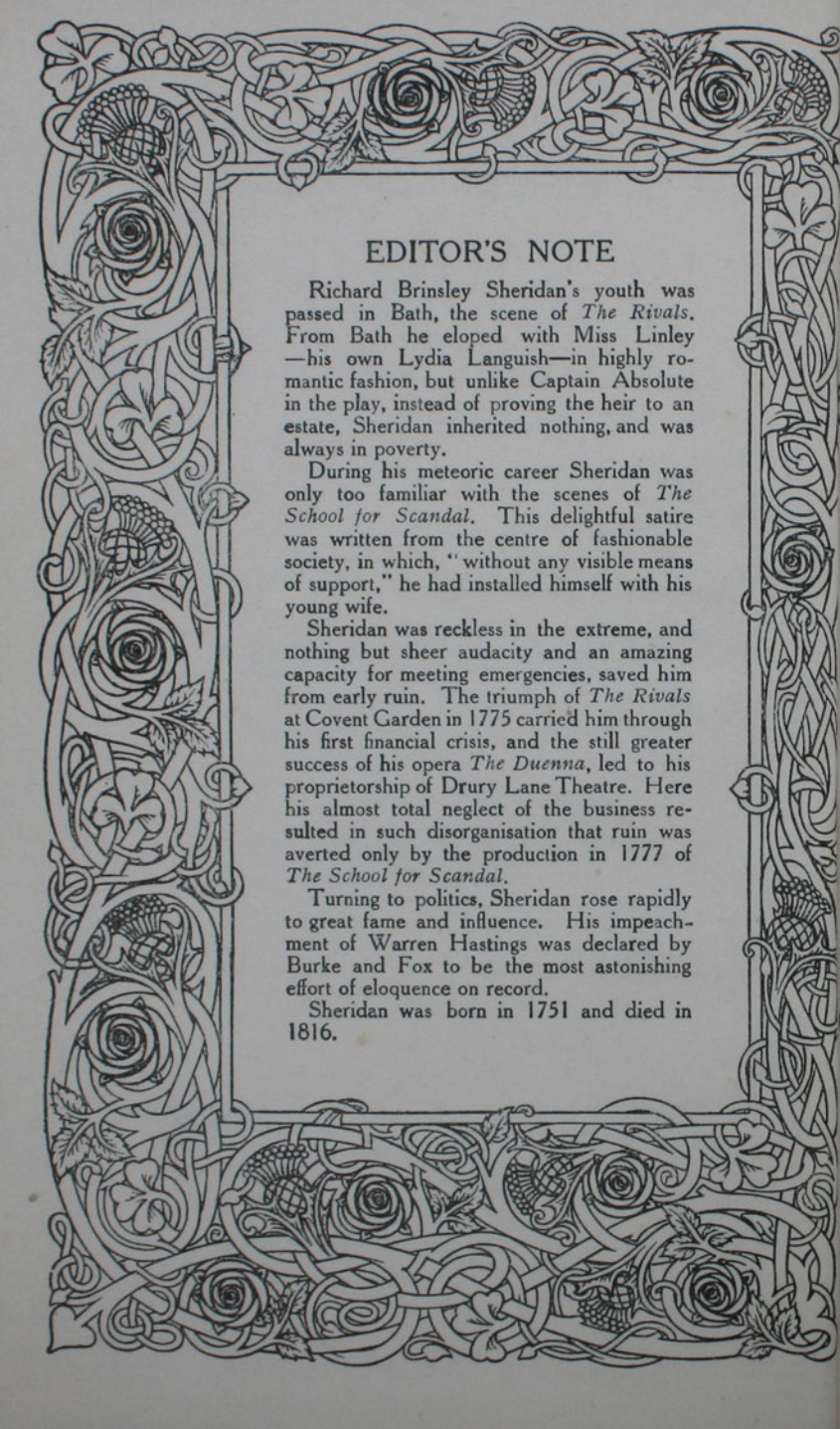
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DRAMATIC WORKS

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN



EDITOR'S NOTE

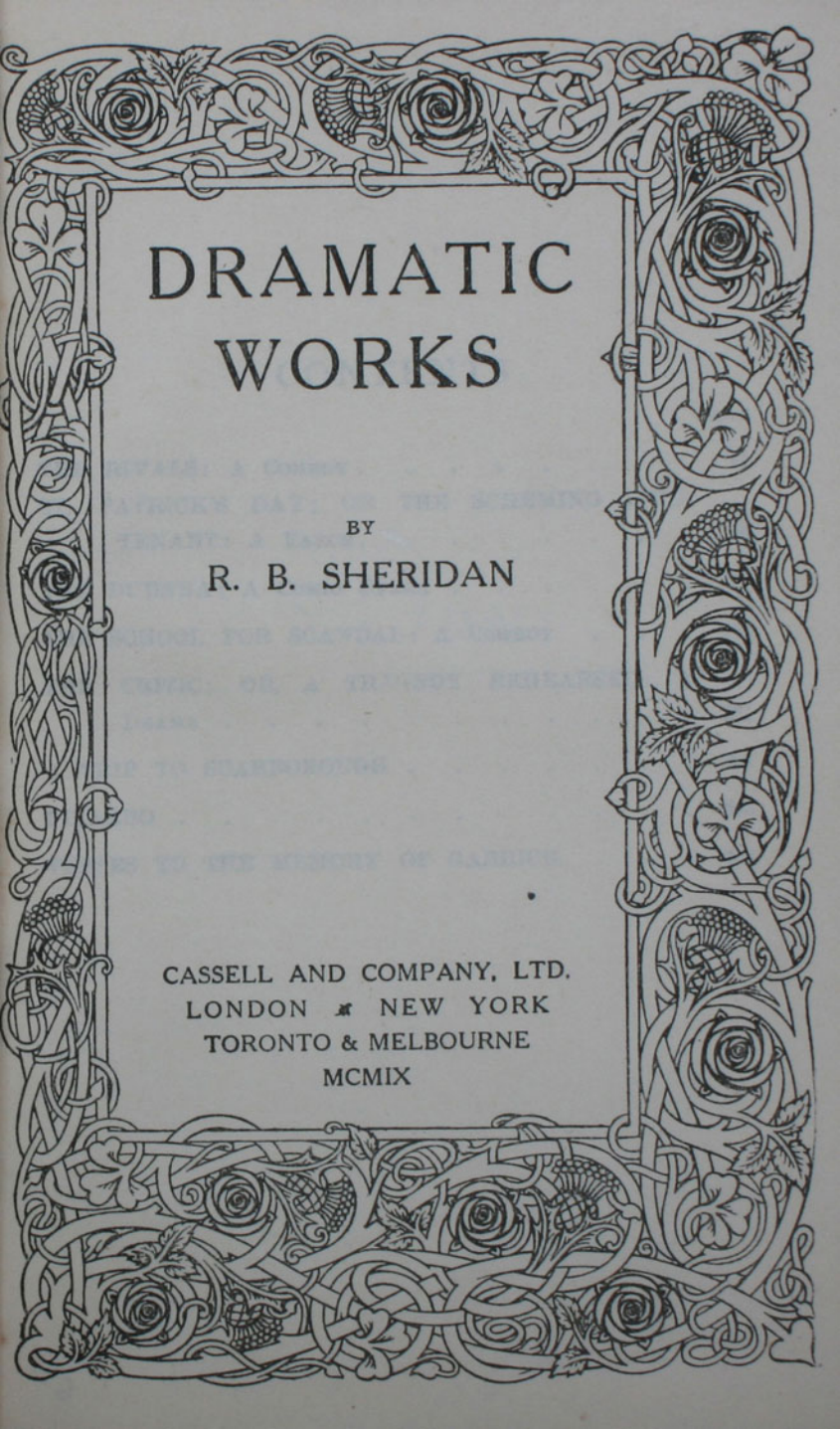
Richard Brinsley Sheridan's youth was passed in Bath, the scene of *The Rivals*. From Bath he eloped with Miss Linley—his own Lydia Languish—in highly romantic fashion, but unlike Captain Absolute in the play, instead of proving the heir to an estate, Sheridan inherited nothing, and was always in poverty.

During his meteoric career Sheridan was only too familiar with the scenes of *The School for Scandal*. This delightful satire was written from the centre of fashionable society, in which, "without any visible means of support," he had installed himself with his young wife.

Sheridan was reckless in the extreme, and nothing but sheer audacity and an amazing capacity for meeting emergencies, saved him from early ruin. The triumph of *The Rivals* at Covent Garden in 1775 carried him through his first financial crisis, and the still greater success of his opera *The Duenna*, led to his proprietorship of Drury Lane Theatre. Here his almost total neglect of the business resulted in such disorganisation that ruin was averted only by the production in 1777 of *The School for Scandal*.

Turning to politics, Sheridan rose rapidly to great fame and influence. His impeachment of Warren Hastings was declared by Burke and Fox to be the most astonishing effort of eloquence on record.

Sheridan was born in 1751 and died in 1816.



DRAMATIC
WORKS

BY

R. B. SHERIDAN

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD.
LONDON & NEW YORK
TORONTO & MELBOURNE
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE RIVALS: A COMEDY	11
ST. PATRICK'S DAY; OR THE SCHEMING LIEU- TENANT: A FARCE	95
THE DUENNA: A COMIC OPERA	119
THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL: A COMEDY	173
THE CRITIC; OR, A TRAGEDY REHEARSED: A DRAMA	261
A TRIP TO SCARBOROUGH	309
PIZARRO	365
VERSES TO THE MEMORY OF GARRICK	423

THE RIVALS

PREFACE

A PROLOGUE to a play seems generally to be considered as a kind of novel prologue, in which—if the play has been successful—the author admits that indignation from the reader which he had before experienced from the audience; but as the scope and immediate object of a play is to please a select assembly in representation, whose judgment in the theatre at least is decisive, its degree of reputation is usually as determined as possible before it can be prepared for the wider tribunal of the study. Thus any further solicitude as to the reception of the play has been abandoned in the present case, and the author has been obliged to the reader, like an appeal, to be regarded as the representation of a play, and a representation of the resolution of the case. Upon these considerations, the following comedy would certainly have been introduced to the reader without any further introduction than what it had in the representation; but that its success has probably been founded on a circumstance which the author is informed has not before attended a theatrical trial, and which consequently might not be past unmentioned.

THE RIVALS

A COMEDY

I need scarcely add, that the circumstances alluded to was the willingness of the piece to receive those imperfections in the first representation which were not obvious to escape reprehension, and too numerous to admit of a hasty correction. There are few writers, I believe, who, even in the full and possession of error, do not wish to palliate the faults which they acknowledge; and however willing the performers, to accept their exhibition of its deficiencies by whatever piece might have disgraced to their ability. In the present instance, it cannot be said to amount either to candour or modesty in me, to acknowledge an error, or inexperience and want of judgment on matters in which I had no guidance from practice. 78—A* in many cases a young man should not only be least of being so adept. If it be said that under such cir-

THE RIVALS

A COMEDY

THE RIVALS

PREFACE

A PREFACE to a play seems generally to be considered as a kind of closet prologue, in which—if his piece has been successful—the author solicits that indulgence from the reader which he had before experienced from the audience ; but as the scope and immediate object of a play is to please a mixed assembly in *representation* (whose judgment in the theatre at least is decisive), its degree of reputation is usually as determined as public, before it can be prepared for the cooler tribunal of the study. Thus any further solicitude on the part of the writer becomes unnecessary at least, if not an intrusion : and if the piece has been condemned in the performance, I fear an address to the closet, like an appeal to posterity, is constantly regarded as the procrastination of a suit from a consciousness of the weakness of the cause. From these considerations, the following comedy would certainly have been submitted to the reader without any further introduction than what it had in the representation, but that its success has probably been founded on a circumstance which the author is informed has not before attended a theatrical trial, and which consequently ought not to pass unnoticed.

I need scarcely add, that the circumstance alluded to was the withdrawing of the piece, to remove those imperfections in the first representation which were too obvious to escape reprehension, and too numerous to admit of a hasty correction. There are few writers, I believe, who, even in the fullest consciousness of error, do not wish to palliate the faults which they acknowledge ; and however trifling the performance, to second their confession of its deficiencies by whatever plea seems least disgraceful to their ability. In the present instance, it cannot be said to amount either to candour or modesty in me, to acknowledge an extreme inexperience and want of judgment on matters in which, without guidance from practice or spur from success, a young man should scarcely boast of being an adept. If it be said, that under such dis-

advantages no one should attempt to write a play, I must beg leave to dissent from the position, while the first point of experience that I have gained on the subject is a knowledge of the candour and judgment with which an impartial public distinguishes between the errors of inexperience and incapacity, and the indulgence which it shows even to a disposition to remedy the defects of either.

It were unnecessary to enter into any further extenuation of what was thought exceptionable in this play, but that it has been said, that the managers should have prevented some of the defects before its appearance to the public—and in particular the uncommon length of the piece as represented the first night. It were an ill return for the most liberal and gentlemanly conduct on their side, to suffer any censure to rest where none was deserved. Hurry in writing has long been exploded as an excuse for an author;—however, in the dramatic line it may happen that both an author and a manager may wish to fill a chasm in the entertainment of the public with a hastiness not altogether culpable. The season was advanced when I first put the play into Mr. Harris's hands: it was at that time at least double the length of any acting comedy. I profited by his judgment and experience in the curtailing of it—till, I believe, his feeling for the vanity of a young author got the better of his desire for correctness, and he left many excrescences remaining, because he had assisted in pruning so many more. Hence, though I was not un-informed that the acts were still too long, I flattered myself that, after the first trial, I might with safer judgment proceed to remove what should appear to have been most dissatisfactory. Many other errors there were, which might in part have arisen from my being by no means conversant with plays in general, either in reading or at the theatre. Yet I own that, in one respect, I did not regret my ignorance: for as my first wish in attempting a play was to avoid every appearance of plagiary, I thought I should stand a better chance of effecting this from being in a walk which I had not frequented, and where, consequently, the progress of invention was less likely to be interrupted by starts of recollection: for on subjects on which the mind has been much informed, invention is slow of exerting itself. Faded ideas float in the fancy like half-forgotten dreams; and the imagination in its fullest

enjoyments becomes suspicious of its offspring, and doubts whether it has created or adopted.

With regard to some particular passages which on the first night's representation seemed generally disliked, I confess that if I felt any emotion of surprise at the disapprobation, it was not that they were disapproved of, but that I had not before perceived that they deserved it. As some part of the attack on the piece was begun too early to pass for the sentence of *judgment*, which is ever tardy in condemning, it has been suggested to me that much of the disapprobation must have arisen from virulence of malice rather than severity of criticism: but as I was more apprehensive of there being just grounds to excite the latter than conscious of having deserved the former, I continue not to believe that probable which I am sure must have been unprovoked. However, if it was so, and I could even mark the quarter from whence it came, it would be ungenerous to retort: for no passion suffers more than malice from disappointment. For my own part, I see no reason why the author of a play should not regard a first night's audience as a candid and judicious friend attending, in behalf of the public, at his last rehearsal. If he can dispense with flattery, he is sure at least of sincerity, and even though the annotation be rude, he may rely upon the justness of the comment. Considered in this light, that audience, whose *fiat* is essential to the poet's claim, whether his object be fame or profit, has surely a right to expect some deference to its opinion, from principles of politeness at least, if not from gratitude.

As for the little puny critics who scatter their peevish strictures in private circles, and scribble at every author who has the eminence of being unconnected with them, as they are usually spleen-sworn from a vain idea of increasing their consequence, there will always be found a petulance and illiberality in their remarks which should place them as far beneath the notice of a gentleman as their original dulness had sunk them from the level of the most unsuccessful author.

It is not without pleasure that I catch at an opportunity of justifying myself from the charge of intending any national reflection in the character of Sir Lucius O'Trigger. If any gentleman opposed the piece from that idea, I thank them sincerely for their opposition; and if the condemnation of this comedy (however misconceived the provo-

cation) could have added one spark to the decaying flame of national attachment to the country supposed to be reflected on, I should have been happy in its fate; and might with truth have boasted, that it had done more real service in its failure than the successful morality of a thousand stage-novels will ever effect.

It is usual, I believe, to thank the performers in a new play, for the exertion of their several abilities. But where, as in this instance, their merit has been so striking and uncontroverted as to call for the warmest and truest applause from a number of judicious audiences, the poet's after-praise comes like the feeble acclamation of a child to close the shouts of a multitude. The conduct, however, of the principals in a theatre cannot be so apparent to the public. I think it, therefore, but justice to declare, that from this theatre (the only one I can speak of from experience) those writers who wish to try the dramatic line will meet with that candour and liberal attention, which are generally allowed to be better calculated to lead genius into excellence, than either the precepts of judgment or the guidance of experience.

THE AUTHOR

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE IN 1775

SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE	<i>Mr. Shuter</i>
CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE	<i>Mr. Woodward</i>
FAULKLAND	<i>Mr. Lewis</i>
ACRES	<i>Mr. Quick</i>
SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER	<i>Mr. Lee</i>
FAG	<i>Mr. Lee Lewes</i>
DAVID	<i>Mr. Dunstal</i>
THOMAS	<i>Mr. Fearon</i>
MRS. MALAPROP	<i>Mrs. Green</i>
LYDIA LANGUISH	<i>Miss Barsanti</i>
JULIA	<i>Mrs. Bulkley</i>
LUCY	<i>Mrs. Lessingham</i>

Maid, Boy, Servants, &c.

SCENE—BATH

Time of action—Five Hours

PROLOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

Spoken by Mr. Woodward and Mr. Quick

Enter SERJEANT-AT-LAW, and ATTORNEY following, and giving a paper

Serj. WHAT'S here!—a vile cramp hand! I cannot see
Without my spectacles.

Att. He means his fee.

Nay, Mr. Serjeant, good sir, try again. [*Gives money*]

Serj. The scrawl improves! [*more*] Oh, come, 'tis pretty plain.

Hey! how's this? Dibble!—Sure it cannot be!
A poet's brief! a poet and a fee!

Att. Yes, sir! though you without reward, I know,
Would gladly plead the Muse's cause.

Serj. So!—so!

Att. And if the fee offends, your wrath should fall
On me.

Serj. Dear Dibble, no offence at all.

Att. Some sons of Phœbus in the courts we meet,

Serj. And fifty sons of Phœbus in the Fleet!

Att. Nor pleads he worse, who with a decent sprig
Of bays adorns his legal waste of wig.

Serj. Full-bottom'd heroes thus, on signs, unfurl
A leaf of laurel in a grove of curl!

Yet tell your client, that, in adverse days,
This wig is warmer than a bush of bays.

Att. Do you, then, sir, my client's place supply,
Profuse of robe, and prodigal of tie—

Do you, with all those blushing powers of face,
And wonted bashful hesitating grace,
Rise in the court, and flourish on the case. [*Exit*]

Serj. For practice then suppose—this brief will show it,—
Me, Serjeant Woodward,—counsel for the poet.
Used to the ground, I know 'tis hard to deal
With this dread court, from whence there's no appeal;

No tricking here, to blunt the edge of law,
 Or, damn'd in equity, escape by flaw :
 But judgment given, your sentence must remain ;
 No writ of error lies—to Drury-lane ;

Yet when so kind you seem, 'tis past dispute
 We gain some favour, if not costs of suit.

No spleen is here ! I see no hoarded fury ;—

I think I never faced a milder jury !

Sad else our plight ! where frowns are transportation,

A hiss the gallows, and a groan damnation !

But such the public candour, without fear

My client waives all right of challenge here.

No newsman from our session is dismiss'd,

Nor wit nor critic we scratch off the list ;

His faults can never hurt another's ease,
 His crime, at worst, a bad attempt to please :

Thus, all respecting, he appeals to all,

And by the general voice will stand or fall.

PROLOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

Spoken on the Tenth Night, by Mrs. Bulkley

GRANTED our cause, our suit and trial o'er,

The worthy serjeant need appear no more :

In pleasing I a different client choose,

He served the Poet—I would serve the Muse ;

Like him, I'll try to merit your applause,

A female counsel in a female's cause.

Look on this form,*—where humour, quaint and sly,

Dimples the cheek, and points the beaming eye ;

Where gay invention seems to boast its wiles

In amorous hint, and half-triumphant smiles ;

While her light mask or covers satire's strokes,

Or hides the conscious blush her wit provokes.

Look on her well—does she seem form'd to teach ?

Should you expect to hear this lady preach ?

Is grey experience suited to her youth ?

Do solemn sentiments become that mouth ?

* Pointing to the figure of Comedy.

Bid her be grave, those lips should rebel prove
To every theme that slanders mirth or love.

Yet thus adorn'd with every graceful art
To charm the fancy and yet reach the heart—
Must we displace her? And instead advance
The goddess of the woful countenance—
The sentimental Muse!—Her emblems view,
The Pilgrim's Progress, and a sprig of rue!
View her—too chaste to look like flesh and blood—
Primly portray'd on emblematic wood!
There, fix'd in usurpation, should she stand,
She'll snatch the dagger from her sister's hand:
And having made her votaries weep a flood,
Good heaven! she'll end her comedies in blood—
Bid Harry Woodward break poor Dunstal's crown!
Imprison Quick, and knock Ned Shuter down;
While sad Barsanti, weeping o'er the scene,
Shall stab herself—or poison Mrs. Green.

Such dire encroachments to prevent in time,
Demands the critic's voice—the poet's rhyme.
Can our light scenes add strength to holy laws!
Such puny patronage but hurts the cause:
Fair virtue scorns our feeble aid to ask,
And moral truth disdains the trickster's mask,
For here their favourite stands,* whose brow severe
And sad, claims youth's respect and pity's tear;
Who, when oppress'd by foes her worth creates,
Can point a poniard at the guilt she hates.

* Pointing to Tragedy.

ACT ONE

SCENE I.—A Street

Enter THOMAS ; he crosses the Stage ; FAG follows, looking after him

Fag. What ! Thomas ! sure 'tis he ?—What ! Thomas ! Thomas !

Thos. Hey !—Odd's life ! Mr. Fag !—give us your hand, my old fellow-servant.

Fag. Excuse my glove, Thomas : I'm devilish glad to see you, my lad. Why, my prince of charioteers, you look as hearty !—but who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath ?

Thos. Sure, master, Madam Julia, Harry, Mrs. Kate, and the postillion, be all come.

Fag. Indeed !

Thos. Ay, master thought another fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit ;—so he'd a mind to gi't the slip, and whip ! we were all off at an hour's warning.

Fag. Ay, ay, hasty in every thing, or it would not be Sir Anthony Absolute !

Thos. But tell us, Mr. Fag, how does young master ? Odd ! Sir Anthony will stare to see the captain here !

Fag. I do not serve Captain Absolute now.

Thos. Why, sure !

Fag. At present I am employed by Ensign Beverley.

Thos. I doubt, Mr. Fag, you ha'n't changed for the better.

Fag. I have not changed, Thomas.

Thos. No ! Why didn't you say you had left young master ?

Fag. No.—Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle you no further :—briefly then—Captain Absolute and Ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

Thos. The devil they are !

Fag. So it is indeed, Thomas ; and the ensign half of my master being on guard at present—the captain has nothing to do with me.

Thos. So, so !—What, this is some freak, I warrant !

—Do tell us, Mr. Fag, the meaning o't—you know I ha' trusted you.

Fag. You'll be secret, Thomas?

Thos. As a coach-horse.

Fag. Why then the cause of all this is—Love,—Love, Thomas, who (as you may get read to you) has been a masquerader ever since the days of Jupiter.

Thos. Ay, ay;—I guessed there was a lady in the case:—but pray, why does your master pass only for ensign?—Now if he had shammed general indeed—

Fag. Ah! Thomas, there lies the mystery o' the matter. Hark'ee, Thomas, my master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste: a lady who likes him better as a half-pay ensign than if she knew he was son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a year.

Thos. That is an odd taste indeed!—But has she got the stuff, Mr. Fag? Is she rich, hey?

Fag. Rich!—Why, I believe she owns half the stocks! Zounds! Thomas, she could pay the national debt as easily as I could my washerwoman! She has a lap-dog that eats out of gold,—she feeds her parrot with small pearls,—and all her thread-papers are made of bank-notes!

Thos. Bravo, faith!—Odd! I warrant she has a set of thousands at least;—but does she draw kindly with the captain?

Fag. As fond as pigeons.

Thos. May one hear her name?

Fag. Miss Lydia Languish.—But there is an old tough aunt in the way; though, by-the-bye, she has never seen my master—for we got acquainted with miss while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

Thos. Well—I wish they were once harnessed together in matrimony.—But pray, Mr. Fag, what kind of a place is this Bath?—I ha' heard a deal of it—here's a mort o' merry-making, hey?

Fag. Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well—'tis a good lounge; in the morning we go to the pump-room, though neither my master nor I drink the waters; after breakfast we saunter on the parades, or play a game at billiards; at night we dance; but damn the place, I'm tired of it: their regular hours stupefy me—not a fiddle nor a card after eleven!—However, Mr. Faulkland's gentleman and I keep it up a little in private parties;—I'll introduce you there, Thomas—you'll like him much.

Thos. Sure I know Mr. Du Peigne—you know his master is to marry Madam Julia.

Fag. I had forgot.—But, Thomas, you must polish a little—indeed you must.—Here now—this wig!—What the devil do you do with a wig, Thomas?—None of the London whips of any degree of *ton* wear wigs now.

Thos. More's the pity! more's the pity! I say. Odd's life! when I heard how the lawyers and doctors had took to their own hair, I thought how 'twould go next:—odd rabbit it! when the fashion had got foot on the bar, I guessed 'twould mount to the box!—but 'tis all out of character, believe me, Mr. Fag: and look'ee, I'll never gi' up mine—the lawyers and doctors may do as they will.

Fag. Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

Thos. Why, bless you, the gentlemen of the professions ben't all of a mind—for in our village now, thoff Jack Gauge, the exciseman, has ta'en to his carrots, there's little Dick the farrier swears he'll never forsake his bob, though all the college should appear with their own heads!

Fag. Indeed! well said, Dick!—But hold—mark! mark! Thomas.

Thos. Zooks! 'tis the captain.—Is that the lady with him?

Fag. No, no, that is Madam Lucy, my master's mistress's maid. They lodge at that house—but I must after him to tell him the news.

Thos. Odd! he's giving her money!—Well Mr. Fag—

Fag. Good-bye, Thomas. I have an appointment in Gyde's Porch this evening at eight; meet me there, and we'll make a little party. [*Exeunt severally*]

SCENE II.—A Dressing-room in MRS. MALAPROP'S Lodgings

LYDIA sitting on a sofa, with a book in her hand. LUCY, as just returned from a message

Lucy. Indeed, ma'am, I traversed half the town in search of it: I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath I ha'n't been at.

Lyd. And could not you get *The Reward of Constasy*?

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lyd. Nor *The Fatal Connexion*?

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lyd. Nor *The Mistakes of the Heart*?

Lucy. Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, Mr. Bull said Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetched it away.

Lyd. Heigh-ho!—Did you inquire for *The Delicate Distress*?

Lucy. Or, *The Memoirs of Lady Woodford*? Yes, indeed, ma'am. I asked everywhere for it; and I might have brought it from Mr. Frederick's, but Lady Slattern Lounger, who had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's-eared it, it wa'nt fit for a Christian to read.

Lyd. Heigh-ho!—Yes, I always know when Lady Slattern has been before me. She has a most observing thumb; and, I believe, cherishes her nails for the convenience of making marginal notes.—Well, child, what have you brought me?

Lucy. Oh! here, ma'am.—[*Taking books from under her cloak, and from her pockets.*] This is *The Gordian Knot*,—and this *Peregrine Pickle*. Here are *The Tears of Sensibility*, and *Humphrey Clinker*. This is *The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, written by herself*, and here the second volume of *The Sentimental Journey*.

Lyd. Heigh-ho!—What are those books by the glass?

Lucy. The great one is only *The Whole Duty of Man*, where I press a few blonds, ma'am.

Lyd. Very well—give me the sal volatile.

Lucy. Is it in a blue cover, ma'am?

Lyd. My smelling-bottle, you simpleton!

Lucy. Oh, the drops!—here, ma'am.

Lyd. Hold!—here's some one coming—quick, see who it is.—[*Exit LUCY.*] Surely I heard my cousin Julia's voice.

Re-enter LUCY

Lucy. Lud! ma'am, here is Miss Melville.

Lyd. Is it possible?— [Exit LUCY]

Enter JULIA

Lyd. My dearest Julia, how delighted am I!—[*Embrace.*] How unexpected was this happiness!

Jul. True, Lydia—and our pleasure is the greater.—But what has been the matter?—you were denied to me at first!

Lyd. Ah, Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you!

—But first inform me what has conjured you to Bath ? Is Sir Anthony here ?

Jul. He is—we are arrived within this hour—and I suppose he will be here to wait on Mrs. Malaprop as soon as he is dressed.

Lyd. Then before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress !—I know your gentle nature will sympathise with me, though your prudence may condemn me ! My letters have informed you of my whole connection with Beverley ; but I have lost him, Julia ! My aunt has discovered our intercourse by a note she intercepted, and has confined me ever since ! Yet, would you believe it ? she has absolutely fallen in love with a tall Irish baronet she met one night since we have been here, at Lady Mac-shuffle's rout.

Jul. You jest, Lydia !

Lyd. No, upon my word.—She really carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a feigned name though, till she chooses to be known to him ;—but it is a Delia or a Celia, I assure you.

Jul. Then, surely, she is now more indulgent to her niece.

Lyd. Quite the contrary. Since she has discovered her own frailty, she is become more suspicious of mine. Then I must inform you of another plague ?—That odious Acres is to be in Bath to-day, so that I protest I shall be teased out of all spirits !

Jul. Come, come, Lydia, hope for the best—Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs. Malaprop.

Lyd. But you have not heard the worst. Unfortunately I had quarrelled with my poor Beverley, just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since, to make it up.

Jul. What was his offence ?

Lyd. Nothing at all !—But, I don't know how it was, as often as we had been together, we had never had a quarrel, and somehow, I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity. So, last Thursday, I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself that Beverley was at that time paying his addresses to another woman. I signed it *your friend unknown*, showed it to Beverley, charged him with his falsehood, put myself in a violent passion, and vowed I'd never see him more.

Jul. And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since ?

Lyd. 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out. I intended only to have teased him three days and a half, and now I've lost him for ever.

Jul. If he is as deserving and sincere as you have represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia, you tell me he is but an ensign, and you have thirty thousand pounds.

Lyd. But you know I lose most of my fortune if I marry without my aunt's consent, till of age; and that is what I have determined to do, ever since I knew the penalty. Nor could I love the man who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

Jul. Nay, this is caprice!

Lyd. What, does Julia tax me with caprice?—I thought her lover Faulkland had inured her to it.

Jul. I do not love even his faults.

Lyd. But apropos—you have sent to him, I suppose?

Jul. Not yet, upon my word—nor has he the least idea of my being in Bath. Sir Anthony's resolution was so sudden, I could not inform him of it.

Lyd. Well, Julia, you are your own mistress (though under the protection of Sir Anthony), yet have you, for this long year, been a slave to the caprice, the whim, the jealousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the right of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious as a lover.

Jul. Nay, you are wrong entirely. We were contracted before my father's death. That, and some consequent embarrassments, have delayed what I know to be my Faulkland's most ardent wish. He is too generous to trifle on such a point:—and for his character, you wrong him there too. No, Lydia, he is too proud, too noble to be jealous; if he is captious, 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, without rudeness. Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover—but being unhackneyed in the passion, his affection is ardent and sincere; and as it engrosses his whole soul, he expects every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his. Yet, though his pride calls for this full return, his humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him which would entitle him to it; and not feeling why he should be loved to the degree he wishes, he still suspects that he is not loved enough. This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours; but I have

learned to think myself his debtor, for those imperfections which arise from the ardour of his attachment.

Lyd. Well, I cannot blame you for defending him. But tell me candidly, Julia, had he never saved your life do you think you should have been attached to him as you are?—Believe me, the rude blast that overset your boat was a prosperous gale of love to him.

Jul. Gratitude may have strengthened my attachment to Mr. Faulkland, but I loved him before he had preserved me; yet surely that alone were an obligation sufficient.

Lyd. Obligation! why a water spaniel would have done as much!—Well, I should never think of giving my heart to a man because he could swim.

Jul. Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

Lyd. Nay, I do but jest.—What's here?

Re-enter LUCY in a hurry

Lucy. O ma'am, here is Sir Anthony Absolute just come home with your aunt.

Lyd. They'll not come here.—Lucy, do you watch.

[Exit LUCY]

Jul. Yet I must go. Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to show me the town. I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs. Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long as she chooses, with her select words so ingeniously misapplied, without being mispronounced.

Re-enter LUCY

Lucy. O Lud! ma'am, they are both coming upstairs.

Lyd. Well, I'll not detain you, coz.—Adieu, my dear Julia, I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland.—There—through my room you'll find another staircase.

Jul. Adieu!

[Embraces LYDIA and exit]

Lyd. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books. Quick, quick.—Fling *Peregrine Pickle* under the toilet—throw *Roderick Random* into the closet—put *The Innocent Adultery* into *The Whole Duty of Man*—thrust *Lord Aimworth* under the sofa—cram *Ovid* behind the bolster—there—put *The Man of Feeling* into your pocket—so, so—now lay *Mrs. Chapone* in sight, and leave *Fordyce's Sermons* open on the table.

Lucy. O burn it, ma'am! the hair-dresser has torn away as far as *Proper Pride*.

Lyd. Never mind—open at *Sobriety*.—Fling me *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*.—Now for 'em. [Exit LUCY]

Enter MRS. MALAPROP, and SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE

Mrs. Mal. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Lyd. Madam, I thought you once——

Mrs. Mal. You thought, miss! I don't know any business you have to think at all—thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow—to illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory.

Lyd. Ah, madam! our memories are independent of our wills. It is not so easy to forget.

Mrs. Mal. But I say it is, miss; there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle as if he had never existed—and I thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

Sir. Anth. Why, sure, she won't pretend to remember what she's ordered not!—ay, this comes of her reading!

Lyd. What crime, madam, have I committed, to be treated thus?

Mrs. Mal. Now don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter; you know I have proof controvertible of it.—But tell me, will you promise to do as you're bid? Will you take a husband of your friends' choosing?

Lyd. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Mrs. Mal. What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a blackamoor—and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made!—and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed!

—But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

Lyd. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs. Mal. Take yourself to your room.—You are fit company for nothing but your own ill-humours.

Lyd. Willingly, ma'am—I cannot change for the worse. [Exit

Mrs. Mal. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wondered at, ma'am,—all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven! I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

Mrs. Mal. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy.

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library!—She had a book in each hand—they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers!—From that moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress!

Mrs. Mal. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge! It blossoms through the year!—And depend on it, Mrs. Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs. Mal. Fy, fy, Sir Anthony! you surely speak laconically.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs. Mal. Observe me, Sir Anthony. I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance, I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning—neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments.—But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts;—and as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries;—but above all, Sir

Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not misspell, and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do ; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know ;—and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you ; though I must confess that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question. But, Mrs. Malaprop, to the more important point in debate—you say you have no objection to my proposal ?

Mrs. Mal. None, I assure you. I am under no positive engagement with Mr. Acres, and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

Sir Anth. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly. He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs. Mal. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony ; but I hope no objection on his side.

Sir Anth. Objection !—let him object if he dare !—No, no, Mrs. Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly. My process was always very simple—in their younger days, 'twas “ Jack, do this ; ”—if he demurred, I knocked him down—and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs. Mal. Ay, and the properest way, o' my conscience !—nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity.—Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr. Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations ;—and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently.—Well, I must leave you ; and let me beg you, Mrs. Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl.—Take my advice—keep a tight hand : if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key ; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about.

[Exit

Mrs. Mal. Well, at any rate I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition. She has somehow discovered my partiality for Sir Lucius O'Trigger—sure, Lucy can't

have betrayed me!—No, the girl is such a simpleton, I should have made her confess it.—Lucy!—Lucy!—*[Calls.]* Had she been one of your artificial ones, I should never have trusted her.

Re-enter LUCY

Lucy. Did you call, ma'am?

Mrs. Mal. Yes, girl.—Did you see Sir Lucius while you was out?

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am, not a glimpse of him.

Mrs. Mal. You are sure, Lucy, that you never mentioned—

Lucy. O gemini! I'd sooner cut my tongue out.

Mrs. Mal. Well, don't let your simplicity be imposed on.

Lucy. No, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. So, come to me presently, and I'll give you another letter to Sir Lucius; but mind, Lucy—if ever you betray what you are entrusted with (unless it be other people's secrets to me), you forfeit my malevolence for ever; and your being a simpleton shall be no excuse for your locality. *[Exit*

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha!—So, my dear Simplicity, let me give you a little respite.—*[Altering her manner.]* Let girls in my station be as fond as they please of appearing expert, and knowing in their trusts; commend me to a mask of silliness, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it!—Let me see to what account have I turned my simplicity lately.—*[Looks at a paper.]* For abetting Miss Lydia Languish in a design of running away with an ensign:—in money, sundry times, twelve pound twelve; gowns, five; hats, ruffles, caps, etc., etc., numberless;—From the said ensign, within this last month, six guineas and a half.—About a quarter's pay!—Item, from Mrs. Malaprop, for betraying the young people to her—when I found matters were likely to be discovered—two guineas, and a black paduasoy.—Item, from Mr. Acres, for carrying divers letters—which I never delivered—two guineas, and a pair of buckles.—Item, from Sir Lucius O'Trigger, three crowns, two gold pocket-pieces, and a silver snuff-box;—Well, done, Simplicity!—Yet I was forced to make my Hibernian believe that he was corresponding, not with the aunt, but with the niece: for though not over rich, I found

he had too much pride and delicacy to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortune. [Exit

ACT TWO

SCENE I.—CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE'S Lodgings

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE and FAG

Fag. Sir, while I was there Sir Anthony came in: I told him you had sent me to inquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

Abs. And what did he say on hearing I was at Bath;

Fag. Sir, in my life I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished! He started back two or three paces, rapped out a dozen interjectural oaths, and asked what the devil had brought you here.

Abs. Well, sir, and what did you say?

Fag. Oh, I lied, sir—I forget the precise lie; but you may depend on 't, he got no truth from me. Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I should be glad to fix what has brought us to Bath; in order that we may lie a little consistently. Sir Anthony's servants were curious, sir, very curious indeed.

Abs. You have said nothing to them?

Fag. Oh, not a word, sir,—not a word! Mr. Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips)—

Abs. 'Sdeath!—you rascal! you have not trusted him!

Fag. Oh, no, sir—no—no—not a syllable, upon my veracity!—He was, indeed, a little inquisitive; but I was sly, sir—devilish sly! My master (said I), honest Thomas (you know, sir, one says honest to one's inferiors), is come to Bath to recruit—Yes, sir, I said to recruit—and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, sir, is nothing to him, nor any one else.

Abs. Well, recruit will do—let it be so.

Fag. Oh, sir, recruit will do surprisingly—indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas that your honour had already enlisted five disbanded chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard-markers.

Abs. You blockhead, never say more than is necessary.

Fag. I beg pardon, sir—I beg pardon—but, with submission, a lie is nothing unless one supports it. Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge indorsements as well as the bill.

Abs. Well, take care you don't hurt your credit by offering too much security.—Is Mr. Faulkland returned?

Fag. He is above, sir, changing his dress.

Abs. Can you tell whether he has been informed of Sir Anthony and Miss Melville's arrival?

Fag. I fancy not, sir; he has seen no one since he came in but his gentleman, who was with him at Bristol.—I think, sir, I hear Mr. Faulkland coming down——

Abs. Go, tell him I am here.

Fag. Yes, sir.—[*Going.*] I beg pardon, sir, but should Sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember that we are recruiting, if you please.

Abs. Well, well.

Fag. And, in tenderness to my character, if your honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I should esteem it as an obligation; for though I never scruple a lie to serve my master, yet it hurts one's conscience to be found out. [Exit

Abs. Now for my whimsical friend—if he does not know that his mistress is here, I'll tease him a little before I tell him.—

Enter FAULKLAND

Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again; you are punctual in your return.

Faulk. Yes; I had nothing to detain me, when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you? how stand matters between you and Lydia?

Abs. Faith, much as they were; I have not seen her since our quarrel; however, I expect to be recalled every hour.

Faulk. Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once?

Abs. What, and lose two-thirds of her fortune? you forget that, my friend.—No, no, I could have brought her to that long ago.

Faulk. Nay, then, you trifle too long—if you are sure of her, propose to the aunt in your own character, and write to Sir Anthony for his consent.

Abs. Softly, softly; for though I am convinced my little Lydia would elope with me as Ensign Beverley, yet am I by no means certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friends' consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune on my side; no, no; I must prepare her gradually for the discovery and make myself necessary to her, before I risk it.—Well, but Faulkland, you'll dine with us to-day at the hotel?

Faulk. Indeed I cannot; I am not in spirits to be of such a party.

Abs. By heavens! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover!—Do love like a man.

Faulk. I own I am unfit for company.

Abs. Am not I a lover; ay, and a romantic one too? Yet do I carry everywhere with me such a confounded farrago of doubts, fears, hopes, wishes, and all the flimsy furniture of a country miss's brain!

Faulk. Ah! Jack, your heart and soul are not, like mine, fixed immutably on one only object. You throw for a large stake, but losing, you could stake and throw again:—but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed were to be stripped of all.

Abs. But, for Heaven's sake! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present?

Faulk. What grounds for apprehension, did you say? Heavens! are there not a thousand? I fear for her spirits—her health—her life.—My absence may fret her; her anxiety for my return, her fears for me may oppress her gentle temper: and for her health, does not every hour bring me cause to be alarmed? If it rains, some shower may even then have chilled her delicate frame! If the wind be keen, some rude blast may have affected her! The heat of noon, the dews of the evening, may endanger the life of her, for whom only I value mine. O Jack! when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension!

Abs. Ay, but we may choose whether we will take the hint or not.—So, then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia were well and in spirits, you would be entirely content?

Faulk. I should be happy beyond measure—I am anxious only for that.

Abs. Then to cure your anxiety at once—Miss Melville is in perfect health, and is at this moment in Bath.

Faulk. Nay, Jack—don't trifle with me.

Abs. She is arrived here with my father within this hour.

Faulk. Can you be serious?

Abs. I thought you knew Sir Anthony better than to be surprised at a sudden whim of this kind.—Seriously, then, it is as I tell you—upon my honour.

Faulk. My dear friend!—Hollo, Du Peigne! my hat.—My dear Jack—now nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness.

Re-enter FAG

Fag. Sir, Mr. Acres, just arrived, is below.

Abs. Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of Sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your mistress has been ever since you left her.—Fag, show the gentleman up.

[*Exit FAG*]

Faulk. What, is he much acquainted in the family?

Abs. Oh, very intimate: I insist on your not going: besides, his character will divert you.

Faulk. Well, I should like to ask him a few questions.

Abs. He is likewise a rival of mine—that is, of my other self's, for he does not think his friend Captain Absolute ever saw the lady in question: and it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of one Beverley, a concealed skulking rival, who—

Faulk. Hush!—he's here.

Enter ACRES

Acres. Ha! my dear friend, noble captain, and honest Jack, how do'st thou? just arrived, faith, as you see.—Sir, your humble servant.—Warm work on the roads, Jack!—Odds whips and wheels! I've travelled like a comet, with a tail of dust all the way as long as the Mall.

Abs. Ah! Bob, you are indeed an eccentric planet, but we know your attraction hither.—Give me leave to introduce Mr. Faulkland to you; Mr. Faulkland, Mr. Acres.

Acres. Sir, I am most heartily glad to see you; sir, I

solicit your connections.—Hey, Jack—what, this is Mr. Faulkland, who——

Abs. Ay, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr. Faulkland.

Acres. Odso! she and your father can be but just arrived before me:—I suppose you have seen them. Ah! Mr. Faulkland, you are indeed a happy man.

Faulk. I have not seen Miss Melville yet, sir;—I hope she enjoyed full health and spirits in Devonshire?

Acres. Never knew her better in my life, sir,—never better. Odds blushes and blooms! she has been as healthy as the German Spa.

Faulk. Indeed!—I did hear that she had been a little indisposed.

Acres. False, false, sir—only said to vex you: quite the reverse, I assure you.

Faulk. There, Jack, you see she has the advantage of me; I had almost fretted myself ill.

Abs. Now you are angry with your mistress for not having been sick?

Faulk. No, no, you misunderstand me: yet surely a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love.—Now confess—isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling health?

Abs. Oh, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence, to be sure!

Acres. Good apartments, Jack.

Faulk. Well, sir, but you was saying that Miss Melville has been so exceedingly well—what, then, she has been merry and gay, I suppose?—Always in spirits—hey?

Acres. Merry, odds crickets! she has been the belle and spirit of the company wherever she has been—so lively and entertaining! so full of wit and humour!

Faulk. There, Jack, there.—Oh, by my soul! there is an innate levity in woman that nothing can overcome.—What! happy, and I away!

Abs. Have done.—How foolish this is! just now you were only apprehensive for your mistress's spirits.

Faulk. Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the company?

Abs. No indeed, you have not.

Faulk. Have I been lively and entertaining?

Abs. Oh, upon my word, I acquit you.

Faulk. Have I been full of wit and humour?

Abs. No, faith; to do you justice, you have been confoundedly stupid indeed.

Acres. What's the matter with the gentleman?

Abs. He is only expressing his great satisfaction at hearing that Julia has been so well and happy—that's all—hey, Faulkland?

Faulk. Oh! I am rejoiced to hear it—yes, yes, she has a happy disposition!

Acres. That she has indeed—then she is so accomplished—so sweet a voice—so expert at her harpsichord—such a mistress of flat and sharp, squallante, rumblante, and quiverante!—There was this time month—odds minims and crotchets! how she did chirrup at Mrs. Piano's concert!

Faulk. There again, what say you to this? you see she has been all mirth and song—not a thought of me!

Abs. Pho! man, is not music the food of love?

Faulk. Well, well, it may be so.—Pray, Mr. —, what's his damned name?—Do you remember what songs Miss Melville sang?

Acres. Not I, indeed.

Abs. Stay, now, there were some pretty melancholy purling-stream airs, I warrant; perhaps you may recollect:—did she sing, *When absent from my soul's delight*?

Acres. No, that wa'n't it.

Abs. Or, *Go, gentle gales*?

[Sings

Acres. Oh, no! nothing like it. Odds! now I recollect one of them—*My heart's my own, my will is free.* [Sings

Faulk. Fool! fool that I am! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler! 'Sdeath! to make herself the pipe and ballad-monger of a circle! to soothe her light heart with catches and glees!—What can you say to this, sir?

Abs. Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, sir.

Faulk. Nay, nay, nay—I'm not sorry that she has been happy—no, no, I am glad of that—I would not have had her sad or sick—yet surely a sympathetic heart would have shown itself even in the choice of a song—she might have been temperately healthy, and somehow, plaintively gay;—but she has been dancing too, I doubt not!

Acres. What does the gentleman say about dancing?

Abs. He says the lady we speak of dances as well as she sings.

Acres. Ay, truly, does she—there was at our last race ball—

Faulk. Hell and the devil! There!—there—I told you so! I told you so! Oh! she thrives in my absence!—Dancing; but her whole feelings have been in opposition with mine;—I have been anxious, silent, pensive, sedentary—my days have been hours of care, my nights of watchfulness.—She has been all health! spirit! laugh! song! dance!—Oh! damned, damned levity!

Abs. For Heaven's sake, Faulkland, don't expose yourself so!—Suppose she has danced, what then?—does not the ceremony of society often oblige—

Faulk. Well, well, I'll contain myself—perhaps as you say—for form sake.—What, Mr. Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a minuet—hey?

Acres. Oh, I dare insure her for that—but what I was going to speak of was her country dancing. Odds swimming! she has such an air with her!

Faulk. Now disappointment on her!—Defend this, Absolute; why don't you defend this?—Country-dances! jigs and reels! am I to blame now? A minuet I could have forgiven—I should not have minded that—I say I should not have regarded a minuet—but country-dances!—Zounds! had she made one in a cotillion—I believe I could have forgiven even that—but to be monkey-led for a night!—to run the gauntlet through a string of amorous palming puppies!—to show paces like a managed filly!—Oh, Jack, there never can be but one man in the world whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair with in a country-dance; and, even then, the rest of the couples should be her great-uncles and aunts!

Abs. Ay, to be sure!—grandfathers and grandmothers!

Faulk. If there be but one vicious mind in the set, 'twill spread like a contagion—the action of their pulse beats to the lascivious movement of the jig—their quivering, warm breathed sighs impregnate the very air—the atmosphere becomes electrical to love, and each amorous spark darts through every link of the chain!—I must leave you—I own I am somewhat flurried—and that confounded looby has perceived it. [Going

Abs. Nay, but stay, Faulkland, and thank Mr. Acres for his good news.

Faulk. Damn his news!

[Exit

Abs. Ha! ha! ha! poor Faulkland five minutes since—

“nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness!”

Acres. The gentleman wa'n't angry at my praising his mistress, was he?

Abs. A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

Acres. You don't say so? Ha! ha! jealous of me—that's a good joke.

Abs. There's nothing strange in that, Bob; let me tell you, that sprightly grace and insinuating manner of yours will do some mischief among the girls here.

Acres. Ah! you joke—ha! ha! mischief—ha! ha! but you know I am not my own property; my dear Lydia has forestalled me. She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly—but odds frogs and tambours! I shan't take matters so here, now ancient madam has no voice in it; I'll make my old clothes know who's master. I shall straightway cashier the hunting-frock, and render my leather breeches incapable. My hair has been in training some time.

Abs. Indeed!

Acres. Ay—and tho'ff the side curls are a little restive, my hind-part takes it very kindly.

Abs. Oh, you'll polish, I doubt not.

Acres. Absolutely, I propose so—then if I can find out this Ensign Beverley, odds triggers and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't.

Abs. Spoke like a man! But pray, Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing—

Acres. Ha! ha! you've taken notice of it—'tis genteel, isn't it!—I didn't invent it myself though; but a commander in our militia, a great scholar, I assure you, says that there is no meaning in the common oaths, and that nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable; because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, but would say, by Jove! or by Bacchus! or by Mars! or by Venus! or by Pallas! according to the sentiment; so that to swear with propriety, says my little major, the oath should be an echo to the sense; and this we call the *oath referential* or *sentimental swearing*—ha! ha! 'tis genteel, isn't it?

Abs. Very genteel, and very new, indeed!—and I dare say will supplant all other figures of imprecation.

Acres. Ay, ay, the best terms will grow obsolete.—Damns have had their day.

Re-enter FAG

Fag. Sir, there is a gentleman below desires to see you.— Shall I show him into the parlour?

Abs. Ay—you may.

Acres. Well, I must be gone——

Abs. Stay; who is it, *Fag*?

Fag. Your father, sir.

Abs. You puppy, why didn't you show him up directly?

[*Exit FAG*]

Acres. You have business with Sir Anthony.—I expect a message from Mrs. Malaprop at my lodgings. I have sent also to my dear friend Sir Lucius O'Trigger. Adieu, Jack; we must meet at night, when you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

Abs. That I will with all my heart.—[*Exit ACRES.*] Now for a parental lecture—I hope he has heard nothing of the business that has brought me here—I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul!

Enter Sir ANTHONY ABSOLUTE

Sir, I am delighted to see you here; looking so well! your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack.—What, you are recruiting here, hey?

Abs. Yes, sir, I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it, for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business.—Jack, I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

Abs. Pardon me, sir, I never saw you look more strong and hearty; and I pray frequently that you may continue so.

Sir Anth. I hope your prayers may be heard, with all my heart. Well then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty I may continue to plague you a long time. Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit.

Abs. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my

boy make some figure in the world. I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

Abs. Sir, your kindness overpowers me—such generosity makes the gratitude of reason more lively than the sensations even of filial affection.

Sir Anth. I am glad you are so sensible of my attention—and you shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

Abs. Let my future life, sir, speak my gratitude; I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence.—Yet, sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

Sir Anth. Oh, that shall be as your wife chooses.

Abs. My wife, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay, ay, settle that between you—settle that between you.

Abs. A wife, sir, did you say?

Sir Anth. Ay, a wife—why, did not I mention her before?

Abs. Not a word of her, sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so!—I mustn't forget her though.—Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by a marriage—the fortune is saddled with a wife—but I suppose that makes no difference.

Abs. Sir! sir!—you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

Abs. I was, sir,—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

Sir Anth. Why—what difference does that make? Odds life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

Abs. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase.—Pray, sir, who is the lady?

Sir Anth. What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

Abs. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir Anth. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to object to a lady you know nothing of.

Abs. Then, sir, I must tell you plainly that my inclinations are fixed on another—my heart is engaged to an angel.

Sir Anth. Then pray let it send an excuse. It is very sorry—but business prevents its waiting on her.

Abs. But my vows are pledged to her.

Sir Anth. Let her foreclose, Jack; let her foreclose; they

are not worth redeeming; besides, you have the angel's vows in exchange, I suppose; so there can be no loss there.

Abs. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Hark'ee, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool—quite cool; but take care—you know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted;—no one more easily led—when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a frenzy.

Abs. Sir, I must repeat it—in this I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now damn me! if ever I call you Jack again while I live.

Abs. Nay, sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word! not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog,—if you don't by—

Abs. What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness! to—

Sir Anth. Zounds! sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose: she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's Museum; she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet I will make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty.

Abs. This is reason and moderation indeed!

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jackanapes!

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, sir, I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

Abs. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

Sir Anth. None of your passion, sir! none of your violence, if you please!—It won't do with me, I promise you.

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do.

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word—

Sir Anth. So you will fly out! can't you be cool like me? What the devil good can passion do?—Passion is of

no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate !—There, you sneer again ! don't provoke me !—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog, you play upon the meekness of my disposition !—Yet take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last !—but mark ! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this : if you then agree, without any condition, to do everything on earth that I choose, why—confound you ! I may in time forgive you—If not, zounds ! don't enter the same hemisphere with me ! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me ; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own ! I'll strip you of your commission ; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you ! and damn me ! if ever I call you Jack again ! [Exit

Abs. Mild, gentle, considerate father—I kiss your hands !—What a tender method of giving his opinion in these matters Sir Anthony has ! I dare not trust him with the truth.—I wonder what old wealthy hag it is that he wants to bestow on me !—Yet he married himself for love ! and was in his youth a bold intriguer, and a gay companion !

Re-enter FAG

Fag. Assuredly, sir, your father is wroth to a degree ; he comes down stairs eight or ten steps at a time—muttering, growling, and thumping the banisters all the way : I and the cook's dog stand bowing at the door—rap ! he gives me a stroke on the head with his cane ; bids me carry that to my master ; then kicking the poor turnspit into the area, damns us all for a puppy triumvirate !—Upon my credit, sir, were I in your place, and found my father such very bad company, I should certainly drop his acquaintance.

Abs. Cease your impertinence, sir, at present.—Did you come in for nothing more ?—Stand out of the way !

[Pushes him aside, and exit

Fag. So ! Sir Anthony trims my master : he is afraid to reply to his father—then vents his spleen on poor Fag !—When one is vexed by one person, to revenge one's self on another, who happens to come in the way, is the vilest injustice ! Ah ! it shows the worst temper—the basest—

Enter Boy

Boy. Mr. Fag! Mr. Fag! your master calls you.

Fag. Well, you little dirty puppy, you need not bawl so!—The meanest disposition! the——

Boy. Quick, quick, Mr. Fag!

Fag. Quick! quick! you impudent jackanapes! am I to be commanded by you too? you little impertinent, insolent, kitchen-bred——

[Exit kicking and beating him]

SCENE II.—*The North Parade*

Enter LUCY

Lucy. So—I shall have another rival to add to my mistress's list—Captain Absolute. However, I shall not enter his name till my purse has received notice in form. Poor Acres is dismissed!—Well, I have done him a last friendly office, in letting him know that Beverley was here before him.—Sir Lucius is generally more punctual, when he expects to hear from his *dear Delia*, as he calls her: I wonder he's not here!—I have a little scruple of conscience from this deceit; though I should not be paid so well, if my hero knew that Delia was near fifty, and her own mistress.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER

Sir Luc. Ha! my little ambassadress—upon my conscience, I have been looking for you; I have been on the South Parade this half hour.

Lucy [*Speaking simply.*] O gemini! and I have been waiting for your worship here on the North.

Sir Luc. Faith!—may be that was the reason we did not meet; and it is very comical, too, how you could go out and I not see you—for I was only taking a nap at the Parade Coffee-house, and I chose the window on purpose that I might not miss you.

Lucy. My stars! Now I'd wager a sixpence I went by while you were asleep.

Sir Luc. Sure enough it must have been so—and I never dreamt it was so late till I waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me?

Lucy. Yes, but I have—I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

Sir Luc. O faith! I guessed you weren't come empty-handed.—Well—let me see what the dear creature says.

Lucy. There, Sir Lucius. [Gives him a letter]

Sir Luc. [Reads.] *Sir—there is often a sudden incentive impulse in love, that has a greater induction than years of domestic combination: such was the commotion I felt at the first superfluous view of Sir Lucius O'Trigger.—Very pretty, upon my word.—Female punctuation forbids me to say more, yet let me add, that it will give me joy infallible to find Sir Lucius worthy the last criterion of my affections.* DELIA. Upon my conscience! *Lucy*, your lady is a great mistress of language. Faith, she's quite the queen of the dictionary!—For the devil a word dare refuse coming at her call—though one would think it was quite out of hearing.

Lucy. Ay, sir, a lady of her experience—

Sir Luc. Experience! what, at seventeen?

Lucy. Oh, true, sir—but then she reads so—my stars! how she will read offhand!

Sir Luc. Faith, she must be very deep read to write this way—though she is rather an arbitrary writer too—for here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get their *habeas corpus* from any court in Christendom.

Lucy. Ah! Sir Lucius, if you were to hear how she talks of you!

Sir Luc. Oh, tell her I'll make her the best husband in the world, and Lady O'Trigger into the bargain!—But we must get the old gentlewoman's consent—and do every thing fairly.

Lucy. Nay, Sir Lucius, I thought you wa'n't rich enough to be so nice.

Sir Luc. Upon my word, young woman, you have hit it:—I am so poor, that I can't afford to do a dirty action. If I did not want money, I'd steal your mistress and her fortune with a great deal of pleasure.—However, my pretty girl [*gives her money*], here's a little something to buy you a ribbon; and meet me in the evening, and I'll give you an answer to this. So, hussy, take a kiss beforehand to put you in mind.

[Kisses her]

Lucy. O Lud! Sir Lucius—I never seed such a gemman! My lady won't like you if you're so impudent.

Sir Luc. Faith she will, Lucy!—That same—pho! what's the name of it?—modesty—is a quality in a lover more praised by the women than liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether Sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her fifty—my dear.

Lucy. What, would you have me tell her a lie?

Sir Luc. Ah, then, you baggage! I'll make it a truth presently.

Lucy. For shame now! here is some one coming.

Sir Luc. Oh, faith, I'll quiet your conscience!

[*Exit, humming a tune*]

Enter FAG

Fag. So, so, ma'am! I humbly beg pardon.

Lucy. O Lud! now, Mr. Fag, you flurry one so.

Fag. Come, come, Lucy, here's no one by—so a little less simplicity, with a grain or two more sincerity, if you please.—You play false with us, madam.—I saw you give the baronet a letter.—My master shall know this—and if he don't call him out, I will.

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha! you gentlemen's gentlemen are so hasty.—That letter was from Mrs. Malaprop, simpleton.—She is taken with Sir Lucius's address.

Fag. How! what tastes some people have!—Why, I suppose I have walked by her window a hundred times.—But what says our young lady? any message to my master?

Lucy. Sad news, Mr. Fag.—A worse rival than Acres! Sir Anthony Absolute has proposed his son.

Fag. What, Captain Absolute?

Lucy. Even so—I overheard it all.

Fag. Ha! ha! ha! very good, faith. Good bye, Lucy; I must away with this news.

Lucy. Well, you may laugh—but it is true, I assure you.—[*Going*] But, Mr. Fag, tell your master not to be cast down by this.

Fag. Oh, he'll be so disconsolate!

Lucy. And charge him not to think of quarrelling with young Absolute.

Fag. Never fear! never fear!

Lucy. Be sure—bid him keep up his spirits.

Fag. We will—we will.

[*Exeunt severally*]

ACT THREE

SCENE I.—*The North Parade**Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE*

Abs. 'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed. Whimsical enough, faith! My father wants to force me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with! He must not know of my connection with her yet awhile. He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters. However, I'll read my recantation instantly. My conversion is something sudden, indeed—but I can assure him it is very sincere. So, so—here he comes. He looks plaguy gruff. [*Steps aside*]

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE

Sir Anth. No—I'll die sooner than forgive him. Die, did I say? I'll live these fifty years to plague him. At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper. An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy! Who can he take after? This is my return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters!—for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty pounds a year, besides his pay, ever since! But I have done with him; he's anybody's son for me. I will never see him more, never—never—never.

Abs. [*Aside, coming forward.*] Now for a penitential face.

Sir Anth. Fellow, get out of my way!

Abs. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

Sir Anth. I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

Abs. A sincere penitent. I am come, sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

Sir Anth. What's that?

Abs. I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

Sir Anth. Well, sir?

Abs. I have been likewise weighing and balancing what you were pleased to mention concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

Sir Anth. Well, puppy?

Abs. Why then, sir, the result of my reflections is—a

resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

Sir Anth. Why, now you talk sense—absolute sense—I never heard anything more sensible in my life. Confound you! you shall be Jack again.

Abs. I am happy in the appellation.

Sir Anth. Why then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you who the lady really is. Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, prevented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for wonder and rapture—prepare. What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

Abs. Languish! What, the Languishes of Worcester-shire?

Sir Anth. Worcestershire! no. Did you never meet Mrs. Malaprop and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

Abs. Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay—I think I do recollect something. Languish! Languish! She squints, don't she? A little red-haired girl?

Sir Anth. Squints! A red-haired girl! Zounds! no.

Abs. Then I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

Sir Anth. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen?

Abs. As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent. If I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

Sir Anth. Nay, but Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack, her lips! Oh, Jack, lips smiling at their own discretion; and if not smiling, more sweetly pouting; more lovely in sullenness!

Abs. That's she, indeed! Well done, old gentleman.

[*Aside*

Sir Anth. Then, Jack, her neck! Oh, Jack! Jack!

Abs. And which is to be mine, sir, the niece, or the aunt?

Sir Anth. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you! When I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The aunt, indeed! Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched anything old or ugly to gain an empire.

Abs. Not to please your father, sir ?

Sir Anth. To please my father ! zounds ! not to please—Oh, my father—odd so !—yes—yes ; if my father indeed had desired—that's quite another matter. Though he wa'n't the indulgent father that I am, Jack.

Abs. I dare say not, sir.

Sir Anth. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful ?

Abs. Sir, I repeat it—if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome ; but, sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind—now, without being very nice, I own I should rather choose a wife of mine to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back : and though one eye may be very agreeable, yet as the prejudice has always run in favour of two, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

Sir Anth. What a phlegmatic sot it is ! Why, sirrah, you're an anchorite !—a vile, insensible stock. You a soldier !—you're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on ! Odds life ! I have a great mind to marry the girl myself.

Abs. I am entirely at your disposal, sir : if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the aunt ; or if you should change your mind, and take the old lady—'tis the same to me—I'll marry the niece.

Sir Anth. Upon my word, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or—but, come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie—I'm sure it must—come, now—damn your demure face !—come, confess Jack—you have been lying—ha'n't you ? You have been playing the hypocrite, hey !—I'll never forgive you, if you ha'n't been lying and playing the hypocrite.

Abs. I'm sorry, sir, that the respect and duty which I bear to you should be so mistaken.

Sir Anth. Hang your respect and duty ! But come along with me. I'll write a note to Mrs. Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethean torch to you—come along, I'll never forgive you, if you don't come back stark mad with rapture and impatience—if you don't, egad, I will marry the girl myself !

[*Exeunt*

SCENE II.—JULIA'S *Dressing-room*FAULKLAND *discovered alone*

Faulk. They told me Julia would return directly; I wonder she is not yet come! How mean does this captious, unsatisfied temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment! Yet I know not that I indulge it in any other point: but on this one subject, and to this one subject, whom I think I love beyond my life, I am ever ungenerously fretful and madly capricious! I am conscious of it—yet I cannot correct myself! What tender honest joy sparkled in her eyes when we met! how delicate was the warmth of her expressions! I was ashamed to appear less happy—though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence prevented my proposed expostulations: yet I must be satisfied that she has not been so very happy in my absence. She is coming! Yes!—I know the nimbleness of her tread, when she thinks her impatient Faulkland counts the moments of her stay.

Enter JULIA

Jul. I had not hoped to see you again so soon.

Faulk. Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome—restrained as we were by the presence of a third person?

Jul. Oh, Faulkland, when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered something of coldness in your first salutation.

Faulk. 'Twas but your fancy, Julia. I was rejoiced to see you—to see you in such health. Sure I had no cause for coldness?

Jul. Nay, then, I see you have taken something ill. You must not conceal from me what it is.

Faulk. Well, then—shall I own to you that my joy at hearing of your health and arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was somewhat damped by his dwelling much on the high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire—on your mirth—your singing—dancing, and I know not what! For such is my temper, Julia, that I should regard every mirthful moment in your absence as a treason to constancy. The mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

Jul. Must I never cease to tax my Faulkland with this teasing minute caprice? Can the idle reports of a silly boor weigh in your breast against my tried affection?

Faulk. They have no weight with me, Julia: No, no—I am happy if you have been so—yet only say, that you did not sing with mirth—say that you thought of Faulkland in the dance.

Jul. I never can be happy in your absence. If I wear a countenance of content, it is to show that my mind holds no doubt of my Faulkland's truth. If I seemed sad, it were to make malice triumph; and say, that I had fixed my heart on one, who left me to lament his roving, and my own credulity. Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you, when I say, that I have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears.

Faulk. You were ever all goodness to me. Oh, I am a brute, when I but admit a doubt of your true constancy.

Jul. If ever without such cause from you, as I will not suppose possible, you find my affections veering but a point, may I become a proverbial scoff for levity and base ingratitude.

Faulk. Ah! Julia, that last word is grating to me. I would I had no title to your gratitude! Search your heart, Julia; perhaps what you have mistaken for love, is but the warm effusion of a too thankful heart.

Jul. For what quality must I love you?

Faulk. For no quality! To regard me for any quality of mind or understanding, were only to esteem me. And for person—I have often wished myself deformed, to be convinced that I owed no obligation there for any part of your affection.

Jul. Where nature has bestowed a show of nice attention in the features of a man, he should laugh at it as misplaced. I have seen men, who in this vain article, perhaps, might rank above you; but my heart has never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

Faulk. Now this is not well from you, Julia—I despise person in a man—yet if you loved me as I wish, though I were an Æthiop, you'd think none so fair.

Jul. I see you are determined to be unkind! The contract which my poor father bound us in gives you more than a lover's privilege.

Faulk. Again, Julia, you raise ideas that feed and justify my doubts. I would not have been more free—no—I am proud of my restraint. Yet—yet—perhaps your high respect alone for this solemn compact has fettered your inclinations, which else had made a worthier choice. How shall I be sure, had you remained unbound in thought and promise, that I should still have been the object of your persevering love?

Jul. Then try me now. Let us be free as strangers as to what is past: my heart will not feel more liberty!

Faulk. There now! so hasty, Julia! so anxious to be free! If your love for me were fixed and ardent, you would not loose your hold even though I wished it!

Jul. Oh! you torture me to the heart! I cannot bear it.

Faulk. I do not mean to distress you. If I loved you less I should never give you an uneasy moment. But hear me. All my fretful doubts arise from this. Women are not used to weigh and separate the motives of their affections: the cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty, may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart. I would not boast—yet let me say, that I have neither age, person, nor character, to found dislike on; my fortune such as few ladies could be charged with indiscretion in the match. Oh, Julia! when love receives such countenance from prudence, nice minds will be suspicious of its birth.

Jul. I know not whether your insinuations would tend: but as they seem pressing to insult me, I will spare you the regret of having done so.—I have given you no cause for this! [Exit in tears]

Faulk. In tears! Stay, Julia: stay but for a moment.—The door is fastened!—Julia!—my soul—but for one moment!—I hear her sobbing!—'Sdeath! what a brute am I to use her thus! Yet stay.—Ay—she is coming now:—how little resolution there is in woman!—how a few soft words can turn them!—No, faith!—she is not coming either.—Why, Julia—my love—say but that you forgive me—come but to tell me that—now this is being too resentful. Stay! she is coming too—I thought she would—no steadiness in anything: her going away must have been a mere trick then—she shan't see that I was hurt by it.—I'll affect indifference—[Hums a tune: then listens.] No—zounds! she's not coming!—nor don't intend it, I suppose.—This is not steadiness, but obstinacy!

Yet I deserve it.—What, after so long an absence to quarrel with her tenderness!—'twas barbarous and unmanly!—I should be ashamed to see her now.—I'll wait till her just resentment is abated—and when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever! and be linked instead to some antique virago, whose gnawing passions, and long hoarded spleen, shall make me curse my folly half the day and all the night.

[Exit

SCENE III.—MRS. MALAPROP'S Lodgings

MRS. MALAPROP, with a letter in her hand, and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

Mrs. Mal. Your being Sir Anthony's son, captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; but from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

Abs. Permit me to say, madam, that as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement in this affair at present is the honour of being allied to Mrs. Malaprop; of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

Mrs. Mal. Sir, you do me infinite honour! I beg, captain, you'll be seated.—[*They sit.*] Ah! few gentlemen, now-a-days, know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman! few think how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewoman!—Men have no sense now but for the worthless flower of beauty!

Abs. It is but too true, indeed, ma'am; yet I fear our ladies should share the blame—they think our admiration of beauty so great, that knowledge in them would be superfluous. Thus, like garden-trees, they seldom show fruit, till time has robbed them of the more specious blossom.—Few, like Mrs. Malaprop and the orange-tree, are rich in both at once!

Mrs. Mal. Sir, you overpower me with good-breeding.—He is the very pine-apple of politeness!—You are not ignorant, captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eaves-dropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows anything of.

Abs. Oh, I have heard the silly affair before.—I'm not at all prejudiced against her on that account.

Mrs. Mal. You are very good and very considerate, captain. I am sure I have done every thing in my power since I exploded the affair; long ago I laid my positive conjunctions on her, never to think on the fellow again;—I have since laid Sir Anthony's preposition before her; but, I am sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every particle that I enjoin her.

Abs. It must be very distressing, indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. Oh! it gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree.—I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but, behold, this very day I have interceded another letter from the fellow; I believe I have it in my pocket.

Abs. Oh, the devil! my last note. [Aside

Mrs. Mal. Ay, here it is.

Abs. Ay, my note indeed! O the little traitress Lucy.

[Aside

Mrs. Mal. There, perhaps you may know the writing.

[Gives him the letter

Abs. I think I have seen the hand before—yes, I certainly must have seen this hand before—

Mrs. Mal. Nay, but read it, captain.

Abs. [Reads.] *My soul's idol, my adored Lydia!*—Very tender indeed!

Mrs. Mal. Tender! ay, and profane too, o' my conscience.

Abs. [Reads.] *I am excessively alarmed at the intelligence you send me, the more so as my new rival—*

Mrs. Mal. That's you, sir.

Abs. [Reads.] *Has universally the character of being an accomplished gentleman and a man of honour.*—Well, that's handsome enough.

Mrs. Mal. Oh, the fellow has some design in writing so.

Abs. That he had, I'll answer for him, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. But go on, sir—you'll see presently.

Abs. [Reads.] *As for the old weather-beaten she-dragon who guards you—Who can he mean by that?*

Mrs. Mal. Me, sir!—me!—he means me!—There—what do you think now?—but go on a little farther.

Abs. Impudent scoundrel!—[Reads.] *it shall go hard but I will elude her vigilance, as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity, which makes her dress up her coarse features, and*

deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand—

Mrs. Mal. There, sir, an attack upon my language! what do you think of that?—an aspersion upon my parts of speech! was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!

Abs. He deserves to be hanged and quartered! let me see—[reads] *same ridiculous vanity—*

Mrs. Mal. You need not read it again, sir.

Abs. I beg pardon, ma'am.—[Reads.] *does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration—an impudent coxcomb!—so that I have a scheme to see you shortly with the old harridan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interview.—Was ever such assurance!*

Mrs. Mal. Did you ever hear any thing like it?—he'll elude my vigilance, will he—yes, yes! ha! ha! he's very likely to enter these doors;—we'll try who can plot best!

Abs. So we will, ma'am—so we will! Ha! ha! ha! a conceited puppy, ha! ha! ha!—Well, but Mrs. Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while I, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead.

Mrs. Mal. I am delighted with the scheme: never was anything better perpetrated!

Abs. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes now?—I should like to try her temper a little.

Mrs. Mal. Why, I don't know—I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind. There is a decorum in these matters.

Abs. O Lord! she won't mind me—only tell her Beverley—

Mrs. Mal. Sir!

Abs. Gently, good tongue.

[Aside

Mrs. Mal. What did you say of Beverley?

Abs. Oh, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverley who was below; she'd come down fast enough then—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Mal. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves; besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to

see her—ha! ha! Let him if he can, I say again. Lydia, come down here!—*[Calling.]*—He'll make me a go-between in their interviews!—ha! ha! ha! Come down, I say, Lydia! I don't wonder at your laughing, ha! ha! ha! his impudence is truly ridiculous.

Abs. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, ma'am, ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Mal. The little hussy won't hear. Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is—she shall know that Captain Absolute is come to wait on her. And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

Abs. As you please, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. For the present, captain, your servant. Ah! you've not done laughing yet, I see—elude my vigilance; yes, yes; ha! ha! ha! *[Exit]*

Abs. Ha! ha! ha! one would think now that I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security; but such is Lydia's caprice, that to undeceive were probably to lose her. I'll see whether she knows me. *[Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at the pictures]*

Enter LYDIA

Lyd. What a scene am I now to go through! surely nothing can be more dreadful than to be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's heart. I have heard of girls persecuted as I am, who have appealed in behalf of their favoured lover to the generosity of his rival; suppose I were to try it—there stands the hated rival—an officer too!—but oh, how unlike my Beverley! I wonder he don't begin—truly he seems a very negligent wooer!—quite at his ease, upon my word!—I'll speak first—Mr. Absolute.

Abs. Ma'am. *[Turns round]*

Lyd. O heavens! Beverley!

Abs. Hush!—hush, my life! softly! be not surprised!

Lyd. I am so astonished! and so terrified! and so overjoyed!—for Heaven's sake! how came you here?

Abs. Briefly, I have deceived your aunt—I was informed that my new rival was to visit here this evening, and contriving to have him kept away, have passed myself on her for Captain Absolute.

Lyd. Oh, charming! and she really takes you for young Absolute?

Abs. Oh, she's convinced of it.

Lyd. Ha! ha! ha! I can't forbear laughing to think how her sagacity is overreached!

Abs. But we trifle with our precious moments—such another opportunity may not occur; then let me now conjure my kind, my condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and with a licensed warmth plead for my reward.

Lyd. Will you then, Beverley, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth?—that burden on the wings of love?

Abs. Oh, come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness! Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia—for well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay.

Lyd. How persuasive are his words!—how charming will poverty be with him! [*Aside*]

Abs. Ah! my soul, what a life will we then live! Love shall be our idol and support! we will worship him with a monastic strictness; abjuring all worldly toys, to centre every thought and action there. Proud of calamity, we will enjoy the wreck of wealth; while the surrounding gloom of adversity shall make the flame of our pure love show doubly bright. By Heavens! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with a prodigal hand, to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia to my bosom, and say, the world affords no smile to me but here—[*Embracing her.*] If she holds out now, the devil is in it! [*Aside*]

Lyd. Now could I fly with him to the antipodes! but my persecution is not yet come to a crisis. [*Aside*]

Re-enter MRS. MALAPROP, listening

Mrs. Mal. I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. [*Aside*]

Abs. So pensive, Lydia!—is, then, your warmth abated?

Mrs. Mal. Warmth abated!—so!—she has been in a passion, I suppose. [*Aside*]

Lyd. No—nor ever can while I have life.

Mrs. Mal. An ill-tempered little devil! She'll be in a passion all her life—will she? [*Aside*]

Lyd. Think not the idle threats of my ridiculous aunt can ever have any weight with me.

Mrs. Mal. Very dutiful, upon my word! [*Aside*]

Lyd. Let her choice be Captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

Mrs. Mal. I am astonished at her assurance!—to his face—this is to his face! [*Aside*]

Abs. Thus then let me enforce my suit. [*Kneeling*]

Mrs. Mal. [*Aside.*] Ay, poor young man!—down on his knees entreating for pity!—I can contain no longer.—
[*Coming forward.*] Why, thou vixen!—I have overheard you.

Abs. Oh, confound her vigilance! [*Aside*]

Mrs. Mal. Captain Absolute, I know not how to apologise for her shocking rudeness.

Abs. [*Aside.*] So all's safe, I find.—[*Aloud.*] I have hopes, madam, that time will bring the young lady—

Mrs. Mal. Oh, there's nothing to be hoped for from her! she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile.

Lyd. Nay, madam, what do you charge me with now?

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou unblushing rebel—didn't you tell this gentleman to his face that you loved another better?—didn't you say you never would be his?

Lyd. No, madam—I did not.

Mrs. Mal. Good Heavens! what assurance!—Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know that lying don't become a young woman!—Didn't you boast that Beverley, that stroller Beverley, possessed your heart?—Tell me that, I say.

Lyd. 'Tis true, ma'am, and none but Beverley—

Mrs. Mal. Hold!—hold, Assurance!—you shall not be so rude.

Abs. Nay, pray, Mrs. Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech: she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt me in the least, I assure you.

Mrs. Mal. You are too good, captain—too amiably patient—but come with me, miss.—Let us see you again soon, captain—remember what we have fixed.

Abs. I shall, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

Lyd. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev—

Mrs. Mal. Hussy! I'll choke the word in your throat!—come along—come along.

[*Exeunt severally*; CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE kissing his hand to LYDIA—MRS. MALAPROP stopping her from speaking

SCENE IV.—ACRES' Lodgings

ACRES, as just dressed, and DAVID

Acres. Indeed, David—do you think I become it so?

Dav. You are quite another creature, believe me, master, by the mass! an' we've any luck we shall see the Devon monkerony in all the print-shops in Bath!

Acres. Dress does make a difference, David.

Dav. 'Tis all in all, I think.—Difference! why, an' you were to go now to Clod-hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you: master Butler wouldn't believe his own eyes, and Mrs. Pickle would cry, Lard presarve me! our dairy-maid would come giggling to the door, and I warrant Dolly Tester, your honour's favourite, would blush like my waistcoat.—Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there an't a dog in the house but would bark, and I question whether Phillis would wag a hair of her tail!

Acres. Ay, David, there's nothing like polishing.

Dav. So I says of your honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!

Acres. But, David, has Mr. De-la-grace been here? I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.

Dav. I'll call again, sir.

Acres. Do—and see if there are any letters for me at the post-office.

Dav. I will.—By the mass, I can't help looking at your head!—If I hadn't been by at the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself!

[Exit

Acres. [Practising a dancing step.] Sink, slide—coupee.—Confound the first inventors of cotillons! say I—they are as bad as algebra to us country gentlemen—I can walk a minuet easy enough when I am forced!—and I have been accounted a good stick in a country-dance.—Odds jigs and tabors! I never valued your cross-over to couple—figure in—right and left—and I'd foot it with e'er a captain in the county!—but these outlandish heathen allemandes and cotillons are quite beyond me!—I shall never prosper at 'em, that 's sure—mine are true-born English legs—they don't understand their curst French lingo!—their *pas* this, and *pas* that, and *pas* t'other!—damn me! my feet don't like to be called paws! no, 'tis certain I have most Anti-gallican toes!

Enter SERVANT

Serv. Here is Sir Lucius O'Trigger to wait on you, sir.

Acres. Show him in. *[Exit servant]*

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER

Sir Luc. Mr. Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

Acres. My dear Sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

Sir Luc. Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath?

Acres. Faith! I have followed Cupid's Jack-a-lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last.—In short, I have been very ill-used, Sir Lucius.—I don't choose to mention names, but look on me as on a very ill-used gentleman.

Sir Luc. Pray what is the case?—I ask no names.

Acres. Mark me, Sir Lucius, I fall as deep as need be in love with a young lady—her friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—send word of my arrival; and receive answer, that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of.—This, Sir Lucius, I call being ill-used.

Sir Luc. Very ill, upon my conscience.—Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

Acres. Why, there's the matter; she has another lover, one Beverley, who, I am told, is now in Bath.—Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it.

Sir Luc. A rival in the case, is there?—and you think he has supplanted you unfairly?

Acres. Unfairly! to be sure he has. He never could have done it fairly.

Sir Luc. Then sure you know what is to be done!

Acres. Not I, upon my soul!

Sir Luc. We wear no swords here, but you understand me.

Acres. What! fight him!

Sir Luc. Ay, to be sure: what can I mean else?

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir Luc. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world. Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another than to fall in love with the same woman? Oh, by my soul! it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

Acres. Breach of friendship! ay, ay; but I have no acquaintance with this man. I never saw him in my life.

Sir Luc. That's no argument at all—he has the less right then to take such a liberty.

Acres. Gad, that's true—I grow full of anger, Sir Lucius!—I fire apace! Odds hilts and blades! I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right of my side?

Sir Luc. What the devil signifies right, when your honour is concerned! Do you think Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great, ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul, they drew their broad-swords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

Acres. Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching! I certainly do feel a kind of valour rising as it were—a kind of courage, as I may say.—Odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

Sir Luc. Ah, my little friend, if I had Blunderbuss Hall here, I could show you a range of ancestry, in the O'Trigger line, that would furnish the new room; every one of whom had killed his man!—For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipped through my fingers, I thank Heaven our honour and the family pictures are as fresh as ever.

Acres. O, Sir Lucius! I have had ancestors too!—every man of 'em colonel or captain in the militia!—Odds balls and barrels! say no more—I'm braced for it. The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast;—Zounds! as the man in the play says, *I could do such deeds!*

Sir Luc. Come, come, there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly.

Acres. I must be in a passion, Sir Lucius—I must be in a rage.—Dear Sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if you love me. Come, here's pen and paper.—[*Sits down to write.*] I would the ink were red!—Indite,—I say indite!—How shall I begin? Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however.

Sir Luc. Pray compose yourself.

Acres. Come—now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme.

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! do the thing decently, and like a Christian. Begin now—*Sir*——

Acres. That's too civil by half.

Sir Luc. *To prevent the confusion that might arise——*

Acres. Well——

Sir Luc. From our both addressing the same lady——

Acres. Ay, there's the reason—same lady—well——

Sir Luc. I shall expect the honour of your company——

Acres. Zounds! I'm not asking him to dinner.

Sir Luc. Pray be easy.

Acres. Well then, honour of your company——

Sir Luc. To settle our pretensions——

Acres. Well.

Sir Luc. Let me see, ay, King's-Mead-Fields will do—
in King's-Mead-Fields.

Acres. So, that's done—Well, I'll fold it up presently: my own crest—a hand and dagger shall be the seal.

Sir Luc. You see now this little explanation will put a stop at once to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

Acres. Ay, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

Sir Luc. Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time.—Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening if you can; then let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

Acres. Very true.

Sir Luc. So I shall see nothing more of you, unless it be by letter, till the evening.—I would do myself the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my own hands. There is a gay captain here, who put a jest on me lately, at the expense of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman, to call him out.

Acres. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life! I should like to see you kill him if it was only to get a little lesson.

Sir Luc. I shall be very proud of instructing you.—Well for the present—but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do everything in a mild and agreeable manner.—Let your courage be as keen, but at the same time as polished, as your sword. [Exeunt severally

ACT FOUR

SCENE I.—ACRES' Lodgings

ACRES and DAVID

Dav. Then, by the mass, sir! I would do no such thing—ne'er a Sir Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say, when she hears o't?

Acres. Ah! David, if you had heard Sir Lucius!—Odds sparks and flames! he would have roused your valour.

Dav. Not he, indeed. I hate such bloodthirsty cormorants. Look'ee, master, if you'd wanted a bout at boxing, quarterstaff, or short-staff, I should never be the man to bid you cry off: but for your curst sharps and snaps, I never knew any good come of 'em.

Acres. But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very careful of my honour.

Dav. Ay by the mass! and I would be very careful of it; and I think in return my honour couldn't do less than to be very careful of me.

Acres. Odds blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

Dav. I say then, it would be but civil in honour never to risk the loss of a gentleman.—Look'ee, master, this honour seems to me to be a marvellous false friend: ay, truly, a very courtier-like servant.—Put the case, I was a gentleman (which, thank God, no one can say of me); well, my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance.—So—we fight. (Pleasant enough that!) Boh!—I kill him—(the more 's my luck!) now, pray who gets the profit of it?—Why, my honour. But put the case that he kills me!—by the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy.

Acres. No, David—in that case!—Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave.

Dav. Now, that's just the place where I could make a shift to do without it.

Acres. Zounds! David, you are a coward!—It doesn't become my valour to listen to you. What, shall I disgrace my ancestors?—Think of that, David—think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors!

Dav. Under favour, the surest way of not disgracing them, is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Look'ee now, master, to go to them in such haste—with an ounce of lead in your brains—I should think might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should choose to have a visiting acquaintance with.

Acres. But, David, now you don't think there is such very, very, very great danger, hey?—Odds life! people often fight without any mischief done!

Dav. By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you!—Oons! here to meet some lion-headed fellow, I warrant, with his damned double-barrelled swords, and cut-and-thrust pistols!—Lord bless us! it makes me tremble to think o't!—Those be such desperate bloody-minded weapons! Well, I never could abide 'em—from a child I never could fancy 'em!—I suppose there an't been so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

Acres. Zounds! I won't be afraid!—Odds fire and fury! you shan't make me afraid.—Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend Jack Absolute to carry it for me.

Dav. Ay, i' the name of mischief, let him be the messenger.—For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the mass! it don't look like another letter! It is, as I may say, a designing and malicious-looking letter; and I warrant smells of gunpowder like a soldier's pouch!—Oons! I wouldn't swear it mayn't go off!

Acres. Out, you poltroon! you han't the valour of a grasshopper.

Dav. Well, I say no more—'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod-Hall! but I ha' done.—How Phillis will howl when she hears of it!—Ay, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after! And I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born.

[*Whimpering*

Acres. It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

Enter SERVANT

Ser. Captain Absolute, sir.

Acres. Oh! show him up. [Exit SERVANT

Dav. Well, Heaven send we be all alive this time to-morrow.

Acres. What's that?—Don't provoke me, David!

Dav. Good-bye, master. [Whimpering

Acres. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven! [Exit DAVID

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

Abs. What's the matter, Bob?

Acres. A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead! If I hadn't the valour of St. George and the dragon to boot—

Abs. But what did you want with me, Bob?

Acres. Oh!—There— [Gives him the challenge

Abs. [Aside.] *To Ensign Beverley.*—So, what's going on now!—[Aloud.] Well, what's this?

Acres. A challenge!

Abs. Indeed! Why, you won't fight him; will you, Bob?

Acres. Egad, but I will, Jack. Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage—and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

Abs. But what have I to do with this?

Acres. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

Abs. Well, give it to me, and trust me he gets it.

Acres. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

Abs. Not in the least—I beg you won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

Acres. You are very kind.—What it is to have a friend!—You couldn't be my second, could you, Jack?

Abs. Why, no, Bob—not in this affair—it would not be quite so proper.

Acres. Well, then, I must get my friend Sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack?

Abs. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

Re-enter SERVANT

Ser. Sir Anthony Absolute is below, inquiring for the captain.

Abs. I'll come instantly.—[*Exit SERVANT.*] Well, my little hero, success attend you. [*Going*]

Acres. Stay—stay, Jack.—If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow—will you, Jack?

Abs. To be sure I shall. I'll say you are a determined dog—hey, Bob!

Acres. Ay, do, do—and if that frightens him, egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a week; will you, Jack?

Abs. I will, I will; I'll say you are called in the country Fighting Bob.

Acres. Right—right—'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life if I clear my honour.

Abs. No!—that's very kind of you.

Acres. Why, you don't wish me to kill him—do you, Jack?

Abs. No, upon my soul, I do not. But a devil of a fellow, hey? [*Going*]

Acres. True, true—but stay—stay, Jack—you may add, that you never saw me in such a rage before—a most devouring rage!

Abs. I will, I will.

Acres. Remember, Jack—a determined dog!

Abs. Ay, ay, Fighting Bob! [*Exeunt severally*]

SCENE II.—MRS. MALAPROP'S Lodgings

MRS. MALAPROP and LYDIA

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou perverse one!—tell me what you can object to him? Isn't he a handsome man?—tell me that. A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

Lyd. [*Aside.*] She little thinks whom she is praising! —[*Aloud.*] So is Beverley, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. No caparisons, miss, if you please. Caparisons don't become a young woman. No! Captain Absolute is indeed a fine gentleman!

Lyd. Ay, the Captain Absolute you have seen. [*Aside*]

Mrs. Mal. Then he's so well bred—so full of alacrity, and adulation!—and has so much to say for himself:—in such good language too! His physiognomy so grammatical!

Then his presence is so noble ! I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play :—

“Hesperian curls—the front of Job himself!—
An eye, like March, to threaten at command!—
A station, like Harry Mercury, new—”

Something about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude struck me directly.

Lyd. How enraged she 'll be presently, when she discovers her mistake !

[*Aside*

Enter SERVANT

Ser. Sir Anthony and Captain Absolute are below, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. Show them up here.—[*Exit SERVANT.*] Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving as becomes a young woman. Show your good breeding, at least, though you have forgot your duty.

Lyd. Madam, I have told you my resolution !—I shall not only give him no encouragement, but I won't even speak to, or look at him.

[*Flings herself into a chair, with her face from the door*

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

Sir Anth. Here we are, Mrs. Malaprop ; come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty,—and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow.—I don't know what's the matter ; but if I had not held him by force, he 'd have given me the slip.

Mrs. Mal. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair. I am ashamed for the cause !—[*Aside to LYDIA.*] Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you !—pay your respects !

Sir Anth. I hope, madam, that Miss Languish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and my alliance.—[*Aside to CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.*] Now, Jack, speak to her.

Abs. [*Aside.*] What the devil shall I do !—[*Aside to SIR ANTHONY.*] You see, sir, she won't even look at me whilst you are here. I knew she wouldn't ! I told you so. Let me entreat you, sir, to leave us together !

[*Seems to expostulate with his father*

Lyd. [*Aside.*] I wonder I ha'n't heard my aunt exclaim

yet! sure she can't have looked at him!—perhaps their regimentals are alike, and she is something blind.

Sir Anth. I say, sir, I won't stir a foot yet!

Mrs. Mal. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my affluence over my niece is very small.—[*Aside to LYDIA.*] Turn round, Lydia: I blush for you!

Sir Anth. May I not flatter myself, that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son!—[*Aside to CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.*] Why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy—speak!

Mrs. Mal. It is impossible, Sir Anthony, she can have any. She will not say she has.—[*Aside to LYDIA.*] Answer, hussy! why don't you answer?

Sir Anth. Then, madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness.—[*Aside to CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.*]—Zounds! sirrah! why don't you speak?

Lyd. [*Aside.*] I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself.—How strangely blind my aunt must be!

Abs. Hem! hem! madam—hem!—[*Attempts to speak, then returns to SIR ANTHONY.*] Faith! sir, I am so confounded!—and—so—so—confused!—I told you I should be so, sir—I knew it.—The—the—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

Sir Anth. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it?—Go up, and speak to her directly!

[CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE makes signs to MRS. MALAPROP to leave them together.]

Mrs. Mal. Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together?—[*Aside to LYDIA.*] Ah! you stubborn little vixen!

Sir Anth. Not yet, ma'am, not yet!—[*Aside to CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.*] What the devil are you at? unlock your jaws, sirrah, or—

Abs. [*Aside.*] Now Heaven send she may be too sullen to look round!—I must disguise my voice.—[*Draws near LYDIA, and speaks in a low hoarse tone.*] Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love? Will not—

Sir Anth. What the devil ails the fellow? Why don't you speak out?—not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsy!

Abs. The—the—excess of my awe, and my—my—my modesty quite choke me!

Sir Anth. Ah! your modesty again!—I'll tell you what,

Jack ; if you don't speak out directly, and glibly too, I shall be in such a rage !—Mrs. Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side-front.

[MRS. MALAPROP seems to chide LYDIA]

Abs. [*Aside.*] So all will out, I see !—[*Goes up to LYDIA, speaks softly.*] Be not surprised, my Lydia, suppress all surprise at present.

Lyd. [*Aside.*] Heavens ! 'tis Beverley's voice ! Sure he can't have imposed on Sir Anthony too !—[*Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*] Is this possible !—my Beverley !—how can this be ?—my Beverley ?

Abs. Ah ! 'tis all over, [*Aside*]

Sir Anth. Beverley !—the devil—Beverley !—What can the girl mean ?—This is my son, Jack Absolute.

Mrs. Mal. For shame, hussy ! for shame ! your head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes !—beg Captain Absolute's pardon directly.

Lyd. I see no Captain Absolute, but my loved Beverley !

Sir Anth. Zounds ! the girl's mad !—her brain's turned by reading.

Mrs. Mal. O' my conscience, I believe so !—What do you mean by Beverley, hussy ?—You saw Captain Absolute before to-day ; there he is—your husband that shall be.

Lyd. With all my soul, ma'am—when I refuse my Beverley—

Sir Anth. Oh ! she's as mad as Bedlam !—or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick !—Come here, sirrah : who the devil are you ?

Abs. Faith, sir, I am not quite clear myself ; but I'll endeavour to recollect.

Sir Anth. Are you my son, or not ?—answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

Mrs. Mal. Ay, sir, who are you ? O mercy ! I begin to suspect !—

Abs. [*Aside.*] Ye powers of impudence, befriend me !—[*Aloud.*] Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son, and that I sincerely believe myself to be yours also, I hope my duty has always shown.—Mrs. Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer, and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew,—I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name and station, which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

Lyd. So!—there will be no elopement after all!

[*Sullenly*

Sir Anth. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! To do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Abs. Oh, you flatter me, sir—you compliment—'tis my modesty, you know, sir,—my modesty that has stood in my way.

Sir Anth. Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however!—I'm glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog—I am. So this was your *penitence*, your *duty* and *obedience*!—I thought it was damned sudden!—*You never heard their names before*, not you!—*what the Languishes of Worcestershire*, hey?—*if you could please me in the affair it was all you desired*!—Ah! you dissembling villain!—What!—[*Pointing to LYDIA*] *she squints, don't she?—a little red-haired girl!*—hey?—Why, you hypocritical young rascal!—I wonder you an't ashamed to hold up your head!

Abs. 'Tis with difficulty, sir.—I am confused—very much confused, as you must perceive.

Mrs. Mal. O Lud! Sir Anthony!—a new light breaks in upon me!—hey!—how! what! captain, did you write the letters then!—What—am I to thank you for the elegant compilation of *an old weather-beaten she-dragon*—hey!—O mercy!—was it you that reflected on my parts of speech?

Abs. Dear sir! my modesty will be overpowered at last, if you don't assist me—I shall certainly not be able to stand it!

Sir Anth. Come, come, Mrs. Malaprop, we must forget and forgive;—odds life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart to be so good-humoured! and so gallant! hey! Mrs. Malaprop!

Mrs. Mal. Well, Sir Anthony, since you desire it, we will not anticipate the past!—so mind, young people—our retrospection will be all to the future.

Sir Anth. Come, we must leave them together; Mrs. Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant!—Jack—isn't the cheek as I said, hey?—and the eye, you rogue!—and the lip—hey? Come, Mrs. Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—theirs is the time of life for happiness!—*Youth's the season made for joy*—[*Sings*]—hey! Odds life! I'm in such spirits,—I don't know what I could not do!—Permit me, ma'am—[*Gives his hand to Mrs.*

MALAPROP.] Tol-de-rol—'gad, I should like to have a little fooling myself—Tol-de-rol! de-rol.

[Exit, singing and handing MRS. MALAPROP.—LYDIA sits sullenly in her chair

Abs. [Aside.] So much thought bodes me no good.—
[Aloud.] So grave, Lydia!

Lyd. Sir!

Abs. [Aside.] So!—egad! I thought as much!—that damned monosyllable has froze me!—[Aloud.] What, Lydia, now that we are as happy in our friends' consent, as in our mutual vows—

Lyd. Friends' consent indeed! [Peevishly

Abs. Come, come, we must lay aside some of our romance—a little wealth and comfort may be endured after all. And for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as—

Lyd. Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

Abs. Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the licence, and—

Lyd. The licence!—I hate licence!

Abs. Oh my love! be not so unkind!—thus let me entreat— [Kneeling

Lyd. Psha!—what signifies kneeling, when you know I must have you?

Abs. [Rising.] Nay, madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you.—If I have lost your heart—I resign the rest—[Aside.] 'Gad, I must try what a little spirit will do.

Lyd. [Rising.] Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud.—What, you have been treating me like a child!—humouring my romance! and laughing, I suppose, at your success!

Abs. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me—only hear—

Lyd. So, while I fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flattered myself that I should outwit and incense them all—behold my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation—and I am myself the only dupe at last!—[Walking about in a heat.] But here, sir, here is the picture—Beverley's picture! [taking a miniature from her bosom.] which I have worn, night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties!—There, sir; [flings it to him] and be assured I throw the original from my heart as easily.

Abs. Nay, nay, ma'am, we will not differ as to that.—Here—[*taking out a picture*] here is Miss Lydia Languish.—What a difference!—ay, there is the heavenly assenting smile that first gave soul and spirit to my hopes!—those are the lips which sealed a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar! and there the half-resentful blush, that would have checked the ardour of my thanks!—Well, all that's past!—all over indeed!—There, madam—in beauty that copy is not equal to you, but in my mind its merit over the original, in being still the same, is such—that—I cannot find in my heart to part with it. [*Puts it up again*]

Lyd. [*Softening.*] 'Tis your own doing, sir—I, I, I suppose you are perfectly satisfied.

Abs. O, most certainly—sure, now, this is much better than being in love!—ha! ha! ha!—there's some spirit in this!—What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises:—all that's of no consequence, you know.—To be sure, people will say, that miss don't know her own mind—but never mind that! Or, perhaps, they may be ill-natured enough to hint, that the gentleman grew tired of the lady and forsook her—but don't let that fret you.

Lyd. There is no bearing his insolence. [*Bursts into tears*]

Re-enter MRS. MALAPROP and SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE

Mrs. Mal. Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing awhile.

Lyd. This is worse than your treachery and deceit, you base ingrate! [*Sobbing*]

Sir Anth. What the devil's the matter now!—Zounds, Mrs. Malaprop, this is the oddest billing and cooing I ever heard!—but what the deuce is the meaning of it?—I am quite astonished!

Abs. Ask the lady, sir.

Mrs. Mal. Oh, mercy!—I'm quite analysed, for my part!—Why, Lydia, what is the reason of this?

Lyd. Ask the gentleman, ma'am.

Sir Anth. Zounds! I shall be in a frenzy!—Why, Jack, you are not come out to be any one else, are you?

Mrs. Mal. Ay, sir, there's no more trick, is there?—you are not like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, are you?

Abs. You'll not let me speak—I say the lady can account for this much better than I can.

Lyd. Ma'am, you once commanded me never to think of

Beverley again—there is the man—I now obey you: for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever. [Exit

Mrs. Mal. O mercy! and miracles! what a turn here is—why sure, captain, you haven't behaved disrespectfully to my niece.

Sir Anth. Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!—now I see it. Ha! ha! ha!—now I see it—you have been too lively, Jack.

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word—

Sir Anth. Come, no lying, Jack—I'm sure 'twas so.

Mrs. Mal. O Lud! Sir Anthony!—O fy, captain!

Abs. Upon my soul, ma'am—

Sir Anth. Come, no excuses, Jack; why, your father, you rogue, was so before you:—the blood of the Absolutes was always impatient.—Ha! ha! ha! poor little Lydia! why, you've frightened her, you dog, you have.

Abs. By all that's good, sir—

Sir Anth. Zounds! say no more, I tell you—Mrs. Malaprop shall make your peace.—You must make his peace, Mrs. Malaprop:—you must tell her 'tis Jack's way—tell her 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of our family!—Come away, Jack—Ha! ha! ha! Mrs. Malaprop—a young villain! [Pushing him out

Mrs. Mal. O! Sir Anthony!—O fy, captain!

[Exeunt severally

SCENE III.—*The North Parade*

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER

Sir Luc. I wonder where this Captain Absolute hides himself! Upon my conscience! these officers are always in one's way in love affairs:—I remember I might have married Lady Dorothy Carmine, if it had not been for a little rogue of a major, who ran away with her before she could get a sight of me! And I wonder, too, what it is the ladies can see in them to be so fond of them—unless it be a touch of the old serpent in 'em, that makes the little creatures be caught, like vipers, with a bit of red cloth. Ha! isn't this the captain coming?—faith it is!—There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow, that is mighty provoking! Who the devil is he talking to?

[Steps aside

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

Abs. [*Aside.*] To what fine purpose I have been plotting! a noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul!—a little gipsy!—I did not think her romance could have made her so damned absurd either. 'Sdeath, I never was in a worse humour in my life!—I could cut my own throat, or any other person's, with the greatest pleasure in the world!

Sir Luc. Oh, faith! I'm in the luck of it. I never could have found him in a sweeter temper for my purpose—to be sure I'm just come in the nick! Now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteelly.—[*Goes up to* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.] With regard to that matter, captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Abs. Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle disputant:—because, sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir Luc. That's no reason. For give me leave to tell you, a man may think an untruth as well as speak one.

Abs. Very true, sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

Sir Luc. Then, sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

Abs. Hark'ee, Sir Lucius; if I had not before known you to be a gentleman, upon my soul, I should not have discovered it at this interview: for what you can drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive!

Sir Luc. I humbly thank you, sir, for the quickness of your apprehension.—[*Bowing.*] You have named the very thing I would be at.

Abs. Very well, sir; I shall certainly not balk your inclinations.—But I should be glad you would please to explain your motives.

Sir Luc. Pray, sir, be easy; the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it stands; we should only spoil it by trying to explain it. However, your memory is very short, or you could not have forgot an affront you passed on me within this week. So, no more, but name your time and place.

Abs. Well, sir, since you are so bent on it, the sooner the better; let it be this evening—here, by the Spring Gardens. We shall scarcely be interrupted.

Sir Luc. Faith! that same interruption in affairs of this nature shows very great ill-breeding. I don't know what's

the reason, but in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother, that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness. However, if it's the same to you, captain, I should take it as a particular kindness if you 'd let us meet in King's-Mead-Fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may despatch both matters at once.

Abs. 'Tis the same to me exactly. A little after six, then, we will discuss this matter more seriously.

Sir Luc. If you please, sir; there will be very pretty small-sword light, though it won't do for a long shot. So that matter's settled, and my mind 's at ease! [*Exit*]

Enter FAULKLAND

Abs. Well met! I was going to look for you. O Faulkland! all the demons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vexed, that if I had not the prospect of a resource in being knocked o' the head by-and-by, I should scarce have spirits to tell you the cause.

Faulk. What can you mean?—Has Lydia changed her mind?—I should have thought her duty and inclination would now have pointed to the same object.

Abs. Ay, just as the eyes do of a person who squints: when her love-eye was fixed on me, t'other, her eye of duty, was finely obliqued: but when duty bid her point that the same way, off t'other turned on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

Faulk. But what 's the resource you——

Abs. Oh, to wind up the whole, a good-natured Irishman here has—[*Mimicking SIR LUCIUS*—] begged leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat; and I mean to indulge him—that's all.

Faulk. Prithee, be serious!

Abs. 'Tis fact, upon my soul! Sir Lucius O'Trigger—you know him by sight—for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet him this evening at six o'clock: 'tis on that account I wished to see you; you must go with me.

Faulk. Nay, there must be some mistake, sure. Sir Lucius shall explain himself, and I dare say matters may be accommodated. But this evening did you say? I wish it had been any other time.

Abs. Why? there will be light enough: there will (as

Sir Lucius says) be very pretty small-sword light, though it will not do for a long shot. Confound his long shots!

Faulk. But I am myself a good deal ruffled by a difference I have had with Julia. My vile tormenting temper has made me treat her so cruelly, that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled.

Abs. By heavens! Faulkland, you don't deserve her!

Enter SERVANT, gives FAULKLAND a letter, and exit

Faulk. Oh, Jack! this is from Julia. I dread to open it! I fear it may be to take a last leave!—perhaps to bid me return her letters, and restore—Oh, how I suffer for my folly!

Abs. Here, let me see.—[*Takes the letter and opens it.*] Ay, a final sentence, indeed!—'tis all over with you, faith!

Faulk. Nay, Jack, don't keep me in suspense!

Abs. Hear then.—[*Reads.*] *As I am convinced that my dear Faulkland's own reflections have already upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I will not add a word on the subject. I wish to speak with you as soon as possible. Yours ever and truly, JULIA.* There's stubbornness and resentment for you!—[*Gives him the letter.*] Why, man, you don't seem one whit the happier at this!

Faulk. O yes, I am; but—but——

Abs. Confound your buts! you never hear anything that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately damn it with a but!

Faulk. Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own honestly—don't you think there is something forward, something indelicate, in this haste to forgive? Women should never sue for reconciliation: that should always come from us. They should retain their coldness till wooed to kindness; and their pardon, like their love, should “not unsought be won.”

Abs. I have not patience to listen to you! thou'rt incorrigible! so say no more on the subject. I must go to settle a few matters. Let me see you before six, remember, at my lodgings. A poor industrious devil like me, who have toiled, and drudged, and plotted to gain my ends, and am at last disappointed by other people's folly, may in pity be allowed to swear and grumble a little; but a captious sceptic in love, a slave to fretfulness and whim, who has no difficulties

but of his own creating, is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion ! [Exit

Faulk. I feel his reproaches ; yet I would not change this too exquisite nicety for the gross content with which he tramples on the thorns of love ! His engaging me in this duel has started an idea in my head, which I will instantly pursue. I'll use it as the touchstone of Julia's sincerity and disinterestedness. If her love prove pure and sterling ore, my name will rest on it with honour ; and once I've stamped it there, I lay aside my doubts for ever ! But if the dross of selfishness, the alloy of pride, predominate, 'twill be best to leave her as a toy for some less cautious fool to sigh for ! [Exit

ACT FIVE

SCENE I.—JULIA'S Dressing-Room

JULIA discovered alone

Jul. How this message has alarmed me ! what dreadful accident can he mean ? why such charge to be alone ?—O Faulkland !—how many unhappy moments—how many tears have you cost me.

Enter FAULKLAND

Jul. What means this ?—why this caution, Faulkland ?

Faulk. Alas ! Julia, I am come to take a long farewell.

Jul. Heavens ! what do you mean ?

Faulk. You see before you a wretch, whose life is forfeited. Nay, start not !—the infirmity of my temper has drawn all this misery on me. I left you fretful and passionate—an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel—the event is, that I must fly this kingdom instantly. O Julia, had I been so fortunate as to have called you mine entirely, before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment !

Jul. My soul is oppressed with sorrow at the nature of your misfortune ; had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought that I could now chase from your bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love. My heart has long known no other guardian—I now entrust my person

to your honour—we will fly together. When safe from pursuit, my father's will may be fulfilled—and I receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a cherub's hand, shall smooth the brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

Faulk. O Julia! I am bankrupt in gratitude! but the time is so pressing, it calls on you for so hasty a resolution.—Would you not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forego, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you beside his solitary love?

Jul. I ask not a moment. No, Faulkland, I have loved you for yourself: and if I now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to an act of love. But let us not linger. Perhaps this delay—

Faulk. 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark. Yet am I grieved to think what numberless distresses will press heavy on your gentle disposition!

Jul. Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by this unhappy act.—I know not whether 'tis so; but sure that alone can never make us unhappy. The little I have will be sufficient to support us; an exile never should be splendid.

Faulk. Ay, but in such an abject state of life, my wounded pride perhaps may increase the natural fretfulness of my temper, till I become a rude, morose companion, beyond your patience to endure. Perhaps the recollection of a deed my conscience cannot justify may haunt me in such gloomy and unsocial fits, that I shall hate the tenderness that would relieve me, break from your arms, and quarrel with your fondness!

Jul. If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit to watch over and console you: one who, by bearing your infirmities with gentleness and resignation, may teach you so to bear the evils of your fortune.

Faulk. Julia, I have proved you to the quick! and with this useless device I throw away all my doubts. How shall I plead to be forgiven this last unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

Jul. Has no such disaster happened as you related?

Faulk. I am ashamed to own that it was pretended; yet

in pity, Julia, do not kill me with resenting a fault which never can be repeated: but sealing, this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of Heaven, receive my future guide and monitress, and expiate my past folly by years of tender adoration.

Jul. Hold, Faulkland!—that you are free from a crime, which I before feared to name, Heaven knows how sincerely I rejoice! These are tears of thankfulness for that! But that your cruel doubts should have urged you to an imposition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang more keen than I can express!

Faulk. By heavens! Julia——

Jul. Yet hear me.—My father loved you, Faulkland! and you preserved the life that tender parent gave me; in his presence I pledged my hand—joyfully pledged it—where before I had given my heart. When, soon after, I lost that parent, it seemed to me that Providence had, in Faulkland, shown me whither to transfer without a pause my grateful duty, as well as my affection: hence I have been content to bear from you what pride and delicacy would have forbid me from another. I will not upbraid you, by repeating how you have trifled with my sincerity——

Faulk. I confess it all! yet hear——

Jul. After such a year of trial, I might have flattered myself that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel as unnecessary! I now see it is not in your nature to be content or confident in love. With this conviction—I never will be yours. While I had hopes that my persevering attention, and unrepublishing kindness, might in time reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gained a dearer influence over you; but I will not furnish you with a licensed power to keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expense of one who never would contend with you.

Faulk. Nay, but, Julia, by my soul and honour, if after this——

Jul. But one word more.—As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another.—I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity; and the dearest blessing I can ask of Heaven to send you will be to charm you from that unhappy temper, which alone has prevented the performance of our solemn engagement. All I request of you is, that you will yourself reflect upon

this infirmity, and when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of, let it not be your least regret, that it lost you the love of one who would have followed you in beggary through the world! [Exit

Faulk. She's gone—for ever!—There was an awful resolution in her manner, that riveted me to my place—O fool!—dolt!—barbarian! Cursed as I am, with more imperfections than my fellow wretches, kind Fortune sent a heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side!—I must now haste to my appointment. Well, my mind is tuned for such a scene. I shall wish only to become a principal in it, and reverse the tale my cursed folly put me upon forging here.—O Love!—tormentor!—fiend!—whose influence, like the moon's, acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them, but meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges sensibility to madness! [Exit

Enter LYDIA and MAID

Maid. My mistress, ma'am, I know, was here just now—perhaps she is only in the next room. [Exit

Lyd. Heigh-ho! Though he has used me so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe one lecture from my grave cousin will make me recall him. [Re-enter JULIA.] O Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation.—Lud! child, what's the matter with you? You have been crying!—I'll be hanged if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you!

Jul. You mistake the cause of my uneasiness!—Something has flurried me a little. Nothing that you can guess at. [Aside.] I would not accuse Faulkland to a sister!

Lyd. Ah! whatever vexations you may have, I can assure you mine surpass them. You know who Beverley proves to be?

Jul. I will now own to you, Lydia, that Mr. Faulkland had before informed me of the whole affair. Had young Absolute been the person you took him for, I should not have accepted your confidence on the subject, without a serious endeavour to counteract your caprice.

Lyd. So, then, I see I have been deceived by every one! But I don't care—I'll never have him.

Jul. Nay, Lydia—

Lyd. Why, is it not provoking? when I thought we were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself

made a mere Smithfield bargain of at last! There, had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements!—so becoming a disguise!—so amiable a ladder of ropes!—Conscious moon—four horses—Scotch parson—with such surprise to Mrs. Malaprop—and such paragraphs in the newspapers!—Oh, I shall die with disappointment!

Jul. I don't wonder at it!

Lyd. Now—sad reverse!—what have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy preparation with a bishop's licence, and my aunt's blessing, to go simpering up to the altar; or perhaps be cried three times in a country church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask the consent of every butcher in the parish to join John Absolute and Lydia Languish, spinster! Oh that I should live to hear myself called spinster!

Jul. Melancholy, indeed!

Lyd. How mortifying, to remember the dear delicious shifts I used to be put to, to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow! How often have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden, stuck like a dripping statue! There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough so pathetically! he shivering with cold and I with apprehension! and while the freezing blasts numbed our joints, how warmly would he press me to pity the flame, and glow with mutual ardour!—Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love.

Jul. If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you only by laughing heartily at you; but it suits more the situation of my mind, at present, earnestly to entreat you not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer that unhappiness from your caprice, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

Lyd. O Lud! what has brought my aunt here?

Enter MRS. MALAPROP, FAG, and DAVID

Mrs. Mal. So! so! here's fine work!—here's fine suicide, parricide, and simulation, going on in the fields! and Sir Anthony not to be found to prevent the antistrophe!

Jul. For Heaven's sake, madam, what's the meaning of this?

Mrs. Mal. That gentleman can tell you—'twas he enveloped the affair to me.

Lyd. Do, sir, will you, inform us? [To FAG

Fag. Ma'am, I should hold myself very deficient in every requisite that forms the man of breeding, if I delayed a moment to give all the information in my power to a lady so deeply interested in the affair as you are.

Lyd. But quick! quick, sir!

Fag. True, ma'am, as you say, one should be quick in divulging matters of this nature; for should we be tedious, perhaps while we are flourishing on the subject, two or three lives may be lost!

Lyd. O patience!—Do, ma'am, for Heaven's sake! tell us what is the matter?

Mrs. Mal. Why, murder's the matter! slaughter's the matter! killing's the matter!—but he can tell you the perpendiculars.

Lyd. Then, prithee, sir, be brief.

Fag. Why then, ma'am, as to murder—I cannot take upon me to say—and as to slaughter, or manslaughter, that will be as the jury finds it.

Lyd. But who, sir—who are engaged in this?

Fag. Faith, ma'am, one is a young gentleman whom I should be very sorry any thing was to happen to—a very pretty behaved gentleman! We have lived much together, and always on terms.

Lyd. But who is this? who! who! who?

Fag. My master, ma'am—my master—I speak of my master.

Lyd. Heavens! What, Captain Absolute!

Mrs. Mal. Oh, to be sure, you are frightened now!

Jul. But who are with him, sir?

Fag. As to the rest, ma'am, this gentleman can inform you better than I.

Jul. Do speak, friend.

[To DAVID

Dav. Look'ee, my lady—by the mass! there's mischief going on. Folks don't use to meet for amusement with fire-arms, firelocks, fire-engines, fire-screens, fire-office, and the devil knows what other crackers beside!—This, my lady, I say, has an angry favour.

Jul. But who is there beside Captain Absolute, friend?

Dav. My poor master—under favour for mentioning him first. You know me, my lady—I am David—and my master of course is, or was, Squire Acres. Then comes Squire Faulkland.

Jul. Do, ma'am, let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief.

Mrs. Mal. O fy!—it would be very inelegant in us:—we should only participate things.

David. Ah! do, Mrs. Aunt, save a few lives—they are desperately given, believe me.—Above all, there is that bloodthirsty Philistine, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Mrs. Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger? O mercy! have they drawn poor little dear Sir Lucius into the scrape?—Why, how you stand, girl! you have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire petrifications!

Lyd. What are we to do, madam?

Mrs. Mal. Why, fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief!—Here, friend, you can show us the place?

Fag. If you please, ma'am, I will conduct you.—David, do you look for Sir Anthony. [Exit DAVID

Mrs. Mal. Come, girls! this gentleman will exhort us.—Come, sir, you're our envoy—lead the way, and we'll precede.

Fag. Not a step before the ladies for the world!

Mrs. Mal. You're sure you know the spot?

Fag. I think I can find it, ma'am; and one good thing is, we shall hear the report of the pistols as we draw near, so we can't well miss them;—never fear, ma'am, never fear. [Exeunt, he talking

SCENE II.—*The South Parade*

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE, putting his sword under his great coat

Abs. A sword seen in the streets of Bath would raise as great an alarm as a mad dog.—How provoking this is in Faulkland!—never punctual! I shall be obliged to go without him at last.—Oh, the devil! here's Sir Anthony! how shall I escape him?

[Muffles up his face, and takes a circle to go off

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE

Sir Anth. How one may be deceived at a little distance! only that I see he don't know me, I could have sworn that was Jack!—Hey! Gad's life! it is.—Why, Jack, what are you afraid of? hey!—sure I'm right.—Why Jack, Jack Absolute!

[Goes up to him

Abs. Really, sir, you have the advantage of me :—I don't remember ever to have had the honour—my name is Saunderson, at your service.

Sir Anth. Sir, I beg your pardon—I took you—hey?—why, zounds! it is—Stay—[*Looks up to his face.*] So, so—your humble servant, Mr. Saunderson? Why, you scoundrel, what tricks are you after now?

Abs. Oh, a joke, sir, a joke. I came here on purpose to look for you, sir?

Sir Anth. You did! well, I am glad you were so lucky :—but what are you muffled up so for?—what's this for?—hey!

Abs. 'Tis cool, sir; isn't it?—rather chilly somehow—but I shall be late—I have a particular engagement.

Sir Anth. Stay!—Why, I thought you were looking for me?—Pray, Jack, where is't you are going?

Abs. Going, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay, where are you going?

Abs. Where am I going?

Sir Anth. You unmannerly puppy!

Abs. I was going, sir, to—to—to—to Lydia—sir, to Lydia—to make matters up if I could;—and I was looking for you, sir, to—to—

Sir Anth. To go with you, I suppose.—Well, come along.

Abs. Oh! zounds! no, sir, not for the world!—I wished to meet with you, sir,—to—to—to—You find it cool, I'm sure, sir—you'd better not stay out.

Sir Anth. Cool!—not at all.—Well, Jack—and what will you say to Lydia?

Abs. Oh, sir, beg her pardon, humour her—promise and vow: but I detain you, sir—consider the cold air on your gout.

Sir Anth. Oh, not at all!—not at all! I'm in no hurry.—Ah! Jack, you youngsters, when once you are wounded here [*Putting his hand to CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE'S breast*] Hey! what the deuce have you got here?

Abs. Nothing, sir—nothing.

Sir Anth. What's this?—here 's something damned hard.

Abs. Oh, trinkets, sir! trinkets!—a bauble for Lydia!

Sir Anth. Nay, let me see your taste.—[*Pulls his coat open, the sword falls.*] Trinkets!—a bauble for Lydia!—Zounds! sirrah, you are not going to cut her throat, are you?

Abs. Ha! ha! ha!—I thought it would divert you, sir, though I didn't mean to tell you till afterwards.

Sir Anth. You didn't?—Yes, this is a very diverting trinket, truly!

Abs. Sir, I'll explain to you.—You know, sir, Lydia is romantic, devilish romantic, and very absurd of course: now, sir, I intend, if she refuses to forgive me, to unsheath this sword, and swear—I'll fall upon its point, and expire at her feet!

Sir Anth. Fall upon a fiddlestick's end!—why, I suppose it is the very thing that would please her.—Get along, you fool!

Abs. Well, sir, you shall hear of my success—you shall hear.—O Lydia! forgive me, or this pointed steel—says I.

Sir Anth. O booby! stab away and welcome—says she.—Get along! and damn your trinkets!

[Exit CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

Enter DAVID, running

Dav. Stop him! stop him! Murder! Thief! Fire!—Stop fire! Stop fire!—O Sir Anthony—call! call! bid 'm stop! Murder! Fire!

Sir Anth. Fire! Murder!—Where?

Dav. Oons! he's out of sight! and I'm out of breath! for my part! O Sir Anthony! why didn't you stop him? why didn't you stop him?

Sir Anth. Zounds! the fellow's mad!—Stop whom? Stop Jack?

Dav. Ay, the captain, sir!—there's murder and slaughter—

Sir Anth. Murder!

Dav. Ay, please you, Sir Anthony, there's all kinds of murder, all sorts of slaughter to be seen in the fields: there's fighting going on, sir—bloody sword-and-gun fighting!

Sir Anth. Who are going to fight, dunce?

Dav. Everybody that I know of, Sir Anthony:—everybody is going to fight, my poor master, Sir Lucius O'Trigger, your son, the captain—

Sir Anth. Oh, the dog! I see his tricks.—Do you know the place?

Dav. King's-Mead-Fields.

Sir Anth. You know the way?

Dav. Not an inch : but I'll call the mayor—aldermen—constables—churchwardens—and beadles—we can't be too many to part them.

Sir Anth. Come along—give me your shoulder ! we'll get assistance as we go—the lying villain !—Well, I shall be in such a frenzy !—So—this was the history of his trinkets ! I'll bauble him ! [*Exeunt*

SCENE III.—*King's-Mead-Fields*

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER and ACRES, with pistols

Acres. By my valour ! then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance. Odds levels and aims !—I say it is a good distance.

Sir Luc. Is it for muskets or small field-pieces ? Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave those things to me.—Stay now—I'll show you.—[*Measures paces along the stage.*] There now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Zounds ! we might as well fight in a sentry-box ! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir Luc. Faith ! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight !

Acres. No, Sir Lucius ; but I should think forty or eight-and-thirty yards—

Sir Luc. Pho ! pho ! nonsense ! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

Acres. Odds bullets, no !—by my valour ! there is no merit in killing him so near : do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot :—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me !

Sir Luc. Well, the gentleman's friend and I must settle that.—But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you ?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius—but I don't understand—

Sir Luc. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A quietus!

Sir Luc. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you choose to be pickled and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!

Sir Luc. I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir Luc. Ah! that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing.—Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files!—I've practised that—there, Sir Lucius—there.—[*Puts himself in an attitude.*] A side-front, hey? Odd! I'll make myself small enough: I'll stand edgeways.

Sir Luc. Now—you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim—— [Levelling at him]

Acres. Zounds! Sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cocked?

Sir Luc. Never fear.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir Luc. Pho! be easy.—Well, now if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side—'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part!

Sir Luc. But, there—fix yourself so—[*Placing him*]—let him see the broad-side of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do any harm at all.

Acres. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

Sir Luc. Ay—may they—and it is much the genteelst attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Look'ee! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one; so, by my valour! I will stand edgeways.

Sir Luc. [*Looking at his watch.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah!—no, faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey!—what!—coming!—

Sir Luc. Ay.—Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

Acres. There are two of them indeed!—well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius!—we—we—we—we—won't run.

Sir Luc. Run!

Acres. No—I say—we won't run, by my valour!

Sir Luc. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow, as I did.

Sir Luc. O fy!—consider your honour.

Acres. Ay—true—my honour. Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honour.

Sir Luc. Well, here they're coming. [*Looking*

Acres. Sir Lucius—if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid.—If my valour should leave me!—Valour will come and go.

Sir Luc. Then pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is certainly going!—it is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out as it were at the palms of my hands!

Sir Luc. Your honour—your honour.—Here they are.

Acres. O mercy!—now—that I was safe at Clod-Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

Enter FAULKLAND and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

Sir Luc. Gentlemen, your most obedient.—Hah!—what, Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here, just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend—then to proceed to business on your own account.

Acres. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

Abs. Hark'ee, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir Luc. Well, Mr. Acres—I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly.—[*To FAULKLAND.*] So, Mr. Beverley, if you'll choose your weapons, the captain and I will measure the ground.

Faulk. My weapons, sir!

Acres. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr. Faulkland; these are my particular friends.

Sir Luc. What, sir, did you not come here to fight Mr. Acres?

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, sir.

Sir Luc. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I

hope, Mr. Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game, you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party by sitting out.

Abs. O pray, Faulkland, fight to oblige Sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr. Acres is so bent on the matter—

Acres. No, no, Mr. Faulkland;—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian.—Look'ee, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

Sir Luc. Observe me, Mr. Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody—and you came here to fight him. Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him—I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

Acres. Why no—Sir Lucius—I tell you, 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face!—If he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

Abs. Hold, Bob—let me set you right—there is no such man as Beverley in the case.—The person who assumed that name is before you; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir Luc. Well, this is lucky.—Now you have an opportunity—

Acres. What, quarrel with my dear friend Jack Absolute?—not if he were fifty Beverleys! Zounds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me so unnatural.

Sir Luc. Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, your valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! Odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my heart—and if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you snug lying in the Abbey here; or pickle you, and send you over to Blunderbuss Hall, or any thing of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward; coward was the word, by my valour!

Sir Luc. Well, sir?

Acres. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, 'tisn't that I mind the word coward—coward may be said in joke.—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls—

Sir Luc. Well, sir?

Acres. I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir Luc. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

Abs. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres—He is a most determined dog—called in the country, Fighting Bob.—He generally kills a man a week—don't you, Bob?

Acres. Ay,—at home!

Sir Luc. Well then, captain, 'tis we must begin—so come out, my little counsellor—[*Draws his sword*—]and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him?

Abs. Come on then, sir—[*Draws*]; since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here 's my reply.

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE, DAVID, MRS. MALAPROP,
LYDIA, and JULIA

Dav. Knock 'em all down, sweet Sir Anthony; knock down my master in particular; and bind his hands over to their good behaviour!

Sir Anth. Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a frenzy—how came you in a duel, sir?

Abs. Faith, sir, that gentleman can tell you better than I; 'twas he called on me, and you know, sir, I serve his majesty.

Sir Anth. Here 's a pretty fellow; I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me, he serves his majesty!—Zounds! sirrah, then how durst you draw the king's sword against one of his subjects?

Abs. Sir, I tell you! that gentleman called me out, without explaining his reasons?

Sir Anth. Gad! sir, how came you to call my son out, without explaining your reasons.

Sir Luc. Your son, sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

Sir Anth. Zounds! Jack, how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook?

Mrs. Mal. Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies—Captain Absolute, come here—How could you intimidate us so?—Here 's Lydia has been terrified to death for you.

Abs. For fear I should be killed, or escape, ma'am?

Mrs. Mal. Nay, no delusions to the past—Lydia is convinced; speak, child.

Sir Luc. With your leave, ma'am, I must put in a word here; I believe I could interpret the young lady's silence. Now mark—

Lyd. What is it you mean, sir?

Sir Luc. Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now—this is no time for trifling.

Lyd. 'Tis true, sir; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections.

Abs. O! my little angel, say you so!—*Sir Lucius*—I perceive there must be some mistake here, with regard to the affront which you affirm I have given you. I can only say, that it could not have been intentional. And as you must be convinced, that I should not fear to support a real injury—you shall now see that I am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency—I ask your pardon.—But for this lady, while honoured with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever.

Sir Anth. Well said, Jack, and I'll stand by you, my boy.

Acres. Mind, I give up all my claim—I make no pretensions to anything in the world; and if I can't get a wife without fighting for her, by my valour! I'll live a bachelor.

Sir Luc. Captain, give me your hand: an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation; and as for the lady, if she chooses to deny her own hand-writing, here—

[Takes out letters

Mrs. Mal. O, he will dissolve my mystery!—*Sir Lucius*, perhaps there's some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate—

Sir Luc. Pray, old gentlewoman, don't interfere where you have no business.—*Miss Languish*, are you my *Delia*, or not?

Lyd. Indeed, *Sir Lucius*, I am not.

[Walks aside with CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

Mrs. Mal. *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeachment—pardon my blushes, I am *Delia*.

Sir Luc. You *Delia*—pho! pho! be easy.

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou barbarous *Vandyke*—those letters are mine—When you are more sensible of my benignity—perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

Sir Luc. *Mrs. Malaprop*, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or *Lucy* have put this trick on me, I am equally beholden to you.—And, to show you I am not ungrateful, *Captain Absolute*, since you have

taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

Abs. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but here's my friend, Fighting Bob, unprovided for.

Sir Luc. Hah! little Valour—here, will you make your fortune?

Acres. Odds wrinkles! No.—But give me your hand, Sir Lucius, forget and forgive; but if ever I give you a chance of pickling me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce, that's all.

Sir Anth. Come, Mrs. Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

Mrs. Mal. O Sir Anthony—men are all barbarians.

[*All retire but JULIA and FAULKLAND*]

Jul. [*Aside.*] He seems dejected and unhappy—not sullen; there was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me—O woman! how true should be your judgment, when your resolution is so weak!

Faulk. Julia!—how can I sue for what I so little deserve? I dare not presume—yet Hope is the child of Penitence.

Jul. Oh! Faulkland, you have not been more faulty in your unkind treatment of me, than I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be ungenerous not to admit the same plea for yours.

Faulk. Now I shall be blest indeed!

Sir Anth. [*Coming forward.*] What's going on here?—So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant! Come, Julia, I never interfered before; but let me have a hand in the matter at last.—All the faults I have ever seen in my friend Faulkland seemed to proceed from what he calls the delicacy and warmth of his affection for you—There, marry him directly, Julia; you'll find he'll mend surprisingly!

[*The rest come forward*]

Sir Luc. Come, now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person, but what is content; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better.

Acres. You are right, Sir Lucius.—So, Jack, I wish you joy—Mr. Faulkland the same.—Ladies,—come now, to show you I'm neither vexed nor angry, odds tabors and pipes! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour to the New Rooms—and I insist on your all meeting me there.

Sir Anth. 'Gad! sir, I like your spirit; and at night we

single lads will drink a health to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop.

Faulk. Our partners are stolen from us, Jack—I hope to be congratulated by each other—yours for having checked in time the errors of an ill-directed imagination, which might have betrayed an innocent heart; and mine, for having, by her gentleness and candour, reformed the unhappy temper of one, who by it made wretched whom he loved most, and tortured the heart he ought to have adored.

Abs. Well, Jack, we have both tasted the bitters, as well as the sweets of love; with this difference only, that you always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while I—

Lyd. Was always obliged to me for it, hey! Mr. Modesty?—But, come, no more of that—our happiness is now as unalloyed as general.

Jul. Then let us study to preserve it so; and while Hope pictures to us a flattering scene of future bliss, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting.—When hearts deserving happiness would unite their fortunes, Virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest hurtless flowers; but ill-judging Passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends them when its leaves are dropped!

[*Exeunt omnes*]

EPILOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

SPOKEN BY MRS. BULKLEY

LADIES, for you—I heard our poet say—
He'd try to coax some moral from his play :
“ One moral's plain,” cried I, “ without more fuss ;
Man's social happiness all rests on us :
Through all the drama—whether damn'd or not—
Love gilds the scene, and women guide the plot.
From every rank obedience is our due—
D' ye doubt ?—The world's great stage shall prove it true.”

The cit, well skill'd to shun domestic strife,
Will sup abroad ; but first he'll ask his wife :
John Trot, his friend, for once will do the same,
But then—he'll just step home to tell his dame.

The surly squire at noon resolves to rule,
And half the day—Zounds ! madam is a fool !
Convinced at night, the vanquish'd victor says,
Ah, Kate ! you women have such coaxing ways.

The jolly toper chides each tardy blade,
Till reeling Bacchus calls on Love for aid :
Then with each toast he sees fair bumpers swim,
And kisses Chloe on the sparkling brim !
Nay, I have heard that statesmen—great and wise—
Will sometimes counsel with a lady's eyes !
The servile suitors watch her various face,
She smiles preferment, or she frowns disgrace,
Curtseys a pension here—there nods a place.

Nor with less awe, in scenes of humbler life,
Is view'd the mistress, or is heard the wife.
The poorest peasant of the poorest soil,
The child of poverty, and heir to toil,
Early from radiant Love's impartial light
Steals one small spark to cheer this world of night :
Dear spark ! that oft through winter's chilling woes
Is all the warmth his little cottage knows !

The wandering tar, who not for years has press'd
The widow'd partner of his day of rest,
On the cold deck, far from her arms removed,
Still hums the ditty which his Susan loved ;

And while around the cadence rude is blown,
The boatswain whistles in a softer tone.

The soldier, fairly proud of wounds and toil,
Pants for the triumph of his Nancy's smile ;
But ere the battle, should he list her cries,
The lover trembles—and the hero dies !
That heart, by war and honour steel'd to fear,
Droops on a sigh, and sickens at a tear !

But ye more cautious, ye nice-judging few,
Who give to beauty only beauty's due,
Though friends to love—ye view with deep regret
Our conquests marr'd, our triumphs incomplete,
Till polish'd wit more lasting charms disclose,
And judgment fix the darts which beauty throws !
In female breasts did sense and merit rule,
The lover's mind would ask no other school ;
Shamed into sense, the scholars of our eyes,
Our beaux from gallantry would soon be wise ;
Would gladly light, their homage to improve,
The lamp of knowledge at the torch of love !

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

ACT ONE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT GOVERNMENT-GARDEN THEATRE IN 1775

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

OR, THE SCHEMING LIEUTENANT

A FARCE

SCENE - A TOWN IN ENGLAND

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE IN
1775

LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR	<i>Mr. Clinch</i>
DOCTOR ROSY	<i>Mr. Quick</i>
JUSTICE CREDULOUS	<i>Mr. Lee Lewes</i>
SERJEANT TROUNCE	<i>Mr. Booth</i>
CORPORAL FLINT	
LAURETTA	<i>Mrs. Cargill</i>
MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS	<i>Mrs. Pitt</i>

Drummer, Soldiers, Countrymen, and Servant

SCENE—A TOWN IN ENGLAND

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

ACT ONE

SCENE I.—LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR'S Lodgings

Enter SERJEANT TROUNCE, CORPORAL FLINT, and four SOLDIERS

1 *Sol.* I say you are wrong ; we should all speak together, each for himself, and all at once, that we may be heard the better.

2 *Sol.* Right, Jack, we 'll argue in platoons.

3 *Sol.* Ay, ay, let him have our grievances in a volley, and if we be to have a spokesman, there 's the corporal is the lieutenant's countryman, and knows his humour.

Flint. Let me alone for that. I served three years, within a bit, under his honour, in the Royal Inniskillions, and I never will see a sweeter-tempered gentleman, nor one more free with his purse. I put a great shamrock in his hat this morning, and I'll be bound for him he 'll wear it, was it as big as Steven's Green.

4 *Sol.* I say again then you talk like youngsters, like militia striplings : there 's a discipline, look'ee, in all things, whereof the serjeant must be our guide ; he 's a gentleman of words ; he understands your foreign lingo, your figures, and such like auxiliaries in scoring. Confess now for a reckoning, whether in chalk or writing, ben 't he your only man ?

Flint. Why the serjeant is a scholar to be sure, and has the gift of reading.

Trounce. Good soldiers and fellow gentlemen, if you make me your spokesman, you will show the more judgment ; and let me alone for the argument. I 'll be as loud as a drum, and point blank from the purpose.

All. Agreed, agreed.

Flint. Oh, fait ! here comes the lieutenant.—Now, serjeant.

Trounce. So then, to order.—Put on your mutiny looks ; every man grumble a little to himself, and some of you hum the Deserter's March.

Enter LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR

O'Con. Well, honest lads, what is it you have to complain of ?

Sol. Ahem ! hem !

Trounce. So please your honour, the very grievance of the matter is this :—ever since your honour differed with Justice Credulous, our innkeepers use us most scurvily. By my halbert, their treatment is such, that if your spirit was willing to put up with it, flesh and blood could by no means agree ; so we humbly petition that your honour would make an end of the matter at once, by running away with the justice's daughter, or else get us fresh quarters,—hem ! hem !

O'Con. Indeed ! Pray, which of the houses use you ill ?

1 *Sol.* There's the Red Lion an't half the civility of the old Red Lion.

2 *Sol.* There's the White Horse, if he wasn't case-hardened, ought to be ashamed to show his face.

O'Con. Very well ; the Horse and the Lion shall answer for it at the quarter sessions.

Trounce. The Two Magpies are civil enough ; but the Angel uses us like devils, and the Rising Sun refuses us light to go to bed by.

O'Con. Then, upon my word, I'll have the Rising Sun put down, and the Angel shall give security for his good behaviour ; but are you sure you do nothing to quit scores with them ?

Flint. Nothing at all, your honour ; unless now and then we happen to fling a cartridge into the kitchen fire, or put a spatterdash or so into the soup ; and sometimes Ned drums up and down stairs a little of a night.

O'Con. Oh, all that's fair ; but hark'ee lads, I must have no grumbling on St. Patrick's Day ; so here, take this, and divide it amongst you. But observe me now,—show yourselves men of spirit, and don't spend sixpence of it in drink.

Trounce. Nay, hang it, your honour, soldiers should never bear malice ; we must drink St. Patrick's and your honour's health.

All. Oh, damn malice ! St. Patrick's and his honour's by all means.

Flint. Come away, then, lads, and first we'll parade round the Market-cross, for the honour of King George.

1 *Sol.* Thank your honour.—Come along; St. Patrick, his honour, and strong beer for ever!

[*Exeunt* SOLDIERS

O'Con. Get along, you thoughtless vagabonds! Yet, upon my conscience, 'tis very hard these poor fellows should scarcely have bread from the soil they would die to defend.

Enter DOCTOR ROSY

Ah, my little Dr. Rosy, my Galen a-bridge, what's the news?

Rosy. All things are as they were, my Alexander; the justice is as violent as ever: I felt his pulse on the matter again, and, thinking his rage began to intermit, I wanted to throw in the bark of good advice, but it would not do. He says you and your cut-throats have a plot upon his life, and swears he had rather see his daughter in a scarlet fever than in the arms of a soldier.

O'Con. Upon my word the army is very much obliged to him. Well, then, I must marry the girl first, and ask his consent afterwards.

Rosy. So, then, the case of her fortune is desperate, hey?

O'Con. Oh, hang fortune,—let that take its chance; there is a beauty in Lauretta's simplicity, so pure a bloom upon her charms.

Rosy. So there is, so there is. You are for beauty as nature made her, hey! No artificial graces, no cosmetic varnish, no beauty in grain, hey!

O'Con. Upon my word, doctor, you are right; the London ladies were always too handsome for me; then they are so defended, such a circumvallation of hoop, with a breast-work of whalebone that would turn a pistol-bullet, much less Cupid's arrows,—then turret on turret on top, with stores of concealed weapons, under pretence of black pins,—and above all, a standard of feathers that would do honour to a knight of the Bath. Upon my conscience, I could as soon embrace an Amazon, armed at all points.

Rosy. Right, right, my Alexander! my taste to a tittle.

O'Con. Then, doctor, though I admire modesty in women, I like to see their faces. I am for the changeable rose; but with one of these quality Amazons, if their midnight dissipations had left them blood enough to raise a blush,

they have not room enough in their cheeks to show it. To be sure, bashfulness is a very pretty thing; but, in my mind, there is nothing on earth so impudent as an everlasting blush.

Rosy. My taste, my taste!—Well, Lauretta is none of these. Ah! I never see her but she puts me in mind of my poor dear wife.

O'Con. Ay, faith; in my opinion she can't do a worse thing. Now he is going to bother me about an old hag that has been dead these six years! [*Aside*

Rosy. Oh, poor Dolly! I never shall see her like again; such an arm for a bandage—veins that seemed to invite the lancet. Then her skin—smooth and white as a gallipot; her mouth as round and not larger than the mouth of a penny phial; her lips conserve of roses; and then her teeth—none of your sturdy fixtures—ache as they would, it was but a small pull, and out they came. I believe I have drawn half a score of her poor dear pearls—[*weeps*]—But what avails her beauty? Death has no consideration—one must die as well as another.

O'Con. [*Aside.*] Oh! if he begins to moralize—

[*Takes out his snuff-box*

Rosy. Fair and ugly, crooked or straight, rich or poor—flesh is grass—flowers fade!

O'Con. Here, doctor, take a pinch, and keep up your spirits.

Rosy. True, true, my friend; grief can't mend the matter—all 's for the best; but such a woman was a great loss, lieutenant.

O'Con. To be sure, for doubtless she had mental accomplishments equal to her beauty.

Rosy. Mental accomplishments! she would have stuffed an alligator, or pickled a lizard, with any apothecary's wife in the kingdom. Why, she could decipher a prescription, and invent the ingredients, almost as well as myself. Then she was such a hand at making foreign waters!—for Seltzer, Pyrmont, Islington, or Chalybeate, she never had her equal; and her Bath and Bristol springs exceeded the originals.—Ah, poor Dolly! she fell a martyr to her own discoveries.

O'Con. How so, pray?

Rosy. Poor soul! her illness was occasioned by her zeal in trying an improvement on the Spa-water, by an infusion of rum and acid.

O'Con. Ay, ay, spirits never agree with water-drinkers.

Rosy. No, no, you mistake. Rum agreed with her well enough; it was not the rum that killed the poor dear creature, for she died of a dropsy. Well, she is gone never to return, and has left no pledge of our loves behind. No little babe, to hang like a label round papa's neck. Well, well, we are all mortal—sooner or later—flesh is grass—flowers fade.

O'Con. Oh, the devil!—again! [*Aside*]

Rosy. Life's a shadow—the world a stage—we strut an hour.

O'Con. Here, doctor. [*Offers snuff*]

Rosy. True, true, my friend: well, high grief can't cure it. All's for the best, hey! my little Alexander.

O'Con. Right, right; an apothecary should never be out of spirits. But come, faith, 'tis time honest Humphrey should wait on the justice; that must be our first scheme.

Rosy. True, true; you should be ready; the clothes are at my house, and I have given you such a character that he is impatient to have you: he swears you shall be his bodyguard. Well, I honour the army, or I should never do so much to serve you.

O'Con. Indeed I am bound to you for ever, doctor; and when once I'm possessed of my dear Lauretta, I will endeavour to make work for you as fast as possible.

Rosy. Now you put me in mind of my poor wife again.

O'Con. Ah, pray forget her a little; we shall be too late.

Rosy. Poor Dolly!

O'Con. 'Tis past twelve.

Rosy. Inhuman dropsy!

O'Con. The justice will wait.

Rosy. Cropped in her prime!

O'Con. For Heaven's sake, come!

Rosy. Well, flesh is grass.

O'Con. Oh, the devil!

Rosy. We must all die——

O'Con. Doctor!

Rosy. Kings, lords, and common whores——

[*Exeunt, LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR forcing ROSY off*]

SCENE II.—A Room in JUSTICE CREDULOUS' House

Enter LAURETTA and MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS

Lau. I repeat it again, mamma, officers are the prettiest men in the world, and Lieutenant O'Connor is the prettiest officer I ever saw.

Mrs. Bri. For shame, Laura! how can you talk so?—or if you must have a military man, there's Lieutenant Plow, or Captain Haycock, or Major Dray, the brewer, are all your admirers; and though they are peaceable, good kind of men, they have as large cockades, and become scarlet as well as the fighting folks.

Lau. Psha! you know, mamma, I hate militia officers; a set of dunghill cocks with spurs on—heroes scratched off a church door—clowns in military masquerade, wearing the dress without supporting the character. No, give me the bold upright youth, who makes love to-day, and his head shot off to-morrow. Dear! to think how the sweet fellows sleep on the ground, and fight in silk stockings and lace ruffles.

Mrs. Bri. Oh, barbarous! to want a husband that may wed you to-day, and be sent the Lord knows where before night; then in a twelvemonth perhaps to have him come like a Colossus, with one leg at New York and the other at Chelsea Hospital.

Lau. Then I'll be his crutch, mamma.

Mrs. Bri. No, give me a husband that knows where his limbs are, though he want the use of them:—and if he should take you with him, to sleep in a baggage-cart, and stroll about the camp like a gipsy, with a knapsack and two children at your back;—then, by way of entertainment in the evening, to make a party with the serjeant's wife to drink bohea tea, and play at all-fours on a drumhead;—'tis a precious life, to be sure!

Lau. Nay, mamma, you shouldn't be against my lieutenant, for I heard him say you were the best natured and best looking woman in the world.

Mrs. Bri. Why, child, I never said but that Lieutenant O'Connor was a very well-bred and discerning young man; 'tis your papa is so violent against him.

Lau. Why Cousin Sophy married an officer.

Mrs. Bri. Ay, Laury, an officer in the militia.

Lau. No, indeed, mamma, a marching regiment.

Mrs. Bri. No, child, I tell you, he was major of militia.
Lau. Indeed, mamma, it wasn't.

Enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS

Just. Bridget, my love, I have had a message.

Lau. It was Cousin Sophy told me so.

Just. I have had a message, love——

Mrs. Bri. No, child, she would say no such thing.

Just. A message, I say.

Lau. How could he be in the militia, when he was ordered abroad ?

Mrs. Bri. Ay, girl, hold your tongue !—Well, my dear.

Just. I have had a message from Doctor Rosy.

Mrs. Bri. He ordered abroad ! He went abroad for his health.

Just. Why, Bridget !——

Mrs. Bri. Well, deary.—Now hold your tongue, miss.

Just. A message from Doctor Rosy, and Doctor Rosy says——

Lau. I'm sure, mamma, his regimentals——

Just. Damn his regimentals !—Why don't you listen ?

Mrs. Bri. Ay, girl, how durst you interrupt your papa ?

Lau. Well, papa ?

Just. Doctor Rosy says he'll bring——

Lau. Were blue turned up with red, mamma.

Just. Laury !—says he will bring the young man——

Mrs. Bri. Red ! yellow, if you please, miss.

Just. Bridget !—the young man that is to be hired——

Mrs. Bri. Besides, miss, it is very unbecoming in you to want to have the last word with your mamma ; you should know——

Just. Why, zounds ! will you hear me or no ?

Mrs. Bri. I am listening, my love—I am listening !—But what signifies my silence, what good is my not speaking a word, if this girl will interrupt and let nobody speak but herself ?—Ay, I don't wonder, my life, at your impatience ; your poor dear lips quiver to speak ; but I suppose she'll run on, and not let you put in a word.—You may very well be angry ; there is nothing, sure, so provoking as a chattering, talking——

Lau. Nay, I'm sure, mamma, it is you will not let papa speak now.

Mrs. Bri. Why, you little provoking minx——

Just. Get out of the room directly, both of you—get out!

Mrs. Bri. Ay, go, girl.

Just. Go, Bridget; you are worse than she, you old hag. I wish you were both up to the neck in the canal, to argue there till I took you out.

Enter SERVANT

Ser. Doctor Rosy, sir.

Just. Show him up.

[*Exit SERVANT*]

Lau. Then you own, mamma, it was a marching regiment?

Mrs. Bri. You're an obstinate fool, I tell you; for if that had been the case—

Just. You won't go?

Mrs. Bri. We are going, Mr. Surly.—If that had been the case, I say, how could—

Lau. Nay, mamma, one proof—

Mrs. Bri. How could Major—

Lau. And a full proof—

[*JUSTICE CREDULOUS drives them off.*]

Just. There they go, ding dong in for the day. Good lack! a fluent tongue is the only thing a mother don't like her daughter to resemble her in.

Enter DOCTOR ROSY

Well, doctor, where's the lad—where's Trusty?

Rosy. At hand; he'll be here in a minute, I'll answer for 't. He's such a one as you an't met with—brave as a lion, gentle as a saline draught.

Just. Ah, he comes in the place of a rogue, a dog that was corrupted by the lieutenant. But this is a sturdy fellow, is he, doctor?

Rosy. As Hercules; and the best back-sword in the country. Egad, he'll make the red-coats keep their distance.

Just. O the villains! this is St. Patrick's Day, and the rascals have been parading my house all the morning. I know they have a design upon me; but I have taken all precautions: I have magazines of arms, and if this fellow does but prove faithful, I shall be more at ease.

Rosy. Doubtless he'll be a comfort to you.

Re-enter SERVANT

Ser. There is a man below, sir, inquires for Doctor Rosy.

Rosy. Show him up.

Just. Hold! a little caution—How does he look?

Ser. A country-looking fellow, your worship.

Just. Oh, well, well, for Doctor Rosy; these rascals try all ways to get in here.

Ser. Yes, please your worship; there was one here this morning wanted to speak to you: he said his name was Corporal Breakbones.

Just. Corporal Breakbones!

Ser. And Drummer Crackskull came again.

Just. Ay! did you ever hear of such a damned confounded crew? Well, show the lad in here!

[*Exit SERVANT*]

Rosy. Ay, he'll be your porter; he'll give the rogues an answer.

Enter LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR disguised

Just. So, a tall—Efacks! what! has lost an eye?

Rosy. Only a bruise he got in taking seven or eight highwaymen.

Just. He has a damned wicked leer somehow with the other.

Rosy. Oh, no, he's bashful—a sheepish look—

Just. Well, my lad, what's your name?

O'Con. Humphrey Hum.

Just. Hum—I don't like Hum!

O'Con. But I be mostly called honest Humphrey—

Rosy. There, I told you so, of noted honesty.

Just. Well, honest Humphrey, the doctor has told you my terms, and you are willing to serve, hey?

O'Con. And please your worship I shall be well content.

Just. Well, then, hark ye, honest Humphrey,—you are sure now you will never be a rogue—never take a bribe, hey, honest Humphrey?

O'Con. A bribe! What's that?

Just. A very ignorant fellow indeed!

Rosy. His worship hopes you will never part with your honesty for money.

O'Con. Noa, noa.

Just. Well said, Humphrey—my chief business with

you is to watch the motions of a rake-helly fellow here, one Lieutenant O'Connor.

Rosy. Ay, you don't value the soldiers, do you, Humphrey?

O'Con. Not I; they are but zwaggerers, and you'll see they'll be as much afraid of me as they would of their captain.

Just. And i' faith, Humphrey, you have a pretty cudgel there!

O'Con. Ay, the zwitch is better than nothing, but I should be glad of a stouter: ha' you got such a thing in the house as an old coach-pole, or a spare bed-post?

Just. Oons! what a dragon it is!—Well, Humphrey, come with me.—I'll just show him to Bridget, doctor, and we'll agree.—Come along, honest Humphrey.

[*Exit*

O'Con. My dear doctor, now remember to bring the justice presently to the walk: I have a scheme to get into his confidence at once.

Rosy. I will, I will.

[*They shake hands*

Re-enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS

Just. Why, honest Humphrey, hey! what the devil are you at?

Rosy. I was just giving him a little advice.—Well, I must go for the present.—Good morning to your worship—you need not fear the lieutenant while he is in your house.

Just. Well, get in, Humphrey. Good morning to you, doctor.—[*Exit DOCTOR ROSY.*] Come along, Humphrey.—Now I think I am a match for the lieutenant and all his gang.

[*Exeunt*

ACT TWO

SCENE I.—A Street

Enter SERJEANT TROUNCE, DRUMMER, and SOLDIERS

Trounce. Come, silence your drum—there is no valour stirring to-day. I thought St. Patrick would have given us a recruit or two to-day.

Sol. Mark, serjeant!

Enter two COUNTRYMEN

Trounce. Oh! these are the lads I was looking for; they have the looks of gentlemen.—A'n't you single, my lads?

1 *Coun.* Yes, an please you, I be quite single: my relations be all dead, thank heavens, more or less. I have but one poor mother left in the world, and she's an helpless woman.

Trounce. Indeed! a very extraordinary case—quite your own master, then—the fitter to serve his Majesty.—Can you read?

1 *Coun.* Noa, I was always too lively to take to learning; but John here is main clever at it.

Trounce. So, what you're a scholar, friend?

2 *Coun.* I was born so, measter. Feyther kept grammar-school.

Trounce. Lucky man—in a campaign or two put yourself down chaplain to the regiment. And I warrant you have read of warriors and heroes?

2 *Coun.* Yes, that I have: I have read of Jack the Giant-killer, and the Dragon of Wantly, and the—Noa, I believe that's all in the hero way, except once about a comet.

Trounce. Wonderful knowledge!—Well, my heroes, I'll write word to the king of your good intentions, and meet me half an hour hence at the Two Magpies.

Coun. We will, your honour, we will.

Trounce. But stay; for fear I shouldn't see you again in the crowd, clap these little bits of ribbon into your hats.

1 *Coun.* Our hats are none of the best.

Trounce. Well, meet me at the Magpies, and I'll give you money to buy new ones.

Coun. Bless your honour, thank your honour.

[*Exeunt*

Trounce. [*Winking at SOLDIERS.*] Jack!

[*Exeunt SOLDIERS*

Enter LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR

So, here comes one who would make a grenadier—Stop, friend, will you list?

O'Con. Who shall I serve under?

Trounce. Under me, to be sure.

O'Con. Isn't Lieutenant O'Connor your officer?

Trounce. He is, and I am commander over him.

O'Con. What! be your serjeants greater than your captains?

Trounce. To be sure we are; 'tis our business to keep them in order. For instance now, the general writes to me, dear Serjeant, or dear Trounce, or dear Serjeant Trounce, according to his hurry, if your lieutenant does not demean himself accordingly, let me know.—Yours, General Deluge.

O'Con. And do you complain of him often?

Trounce. No, hang him, the lad is good-natured at bottom, so I pass over small things. But hark'ee, between ourselves, he is most confoundedly given to wenching.

Enter CORPORAL FLINT

Flint. Please your honour, the doctor is coming this way with his worship—We are all ready, and have our cues.

[*Exit*

O'Con. Then, my dear Trounce, or my dear Serjeant, or my dear Serjeant Trounce, take yourself away.

Trounce. Zounds! the lieutenant—I smell of the black hole already.

[*Exit*

Enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS and DOCTOR ROSY

Just. I thought I saw some of the cut-throats.

Rosy. I fancy not; there's no one but honest Humphrey. Ha! Odds life, here come some of them—we'll stay by these trees, and let them pass.

Just. Oh, the bloody-looking dogs!

[*Walks aside with DOCTOR ROSY*

Re-enter CORPORAL FLINT and two SOLDIERS

Flint. Halloa, friend! do you serve Justice Credulous?

O'Con. I do.

Flint. Are you rich?

O'Con. Noa.

Flint. Nor ever will be with that old stingy booby. Look here—take it.

[*Gives him a purse*

O'Con. What must I do for this?

Flint. Mark me, our lieutenant is in love with the old rogue's daughter: help us to break his worship's bones, and carry off the girl, and you are a made man.

O'Con. I'll see you hanged first, you pack of skurry villains !
 [Throws away the purse]

Flint. What, sirrah, do you mutiny? Lay hold of him.

O'Con. Nay then, I'll try your armour for you.

[Beats them]

All. Oh! oh!—quarter! quarter!

[Exeunt CORPORAL FLINT and SOLDIERS]

Just. [Coming forward.] Trim them, trounce them, break their bones, honest Humphrey—What a spirit he has!

Rosy. Aquafortis.

O'Con. Betray your master!

Rosy. What a miracle of fidelity!

Just. Ay, and it shall not go unrewarded—I'll give him sixpence on the spot. Here, honest Humphrey, there's for yourself: as for this bribe, [takes up the purse,] such trash is best in the hands of justice. Now then, doctor, I think I may trust him to guard the women: while he is with them I may go out with safety.

Rosy. Doubtless you may—I'll answer for the lieutenant's behaviour whilst honest Humphrey is with your daughter.

Just. Ay, ay, she shall go nowhere without him. Come along, honest Humphrey. How rare it is to meet with such a servant!
 [Exeunt]

SCENE II.—A Garden

LAURETTA discovered. Enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS and
 LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR

Just. Why, you little truant, how durst you wander so far from the house without my leave? Do you want to invite that scoundrel lieutenant to scale the walls and carry you off?

Lau. Lud, papa, you are so apprehensive for nothing.

Just. Why, hussy—

Lau. Well then, I can't bear to be shut up all day so like a nun. I am sure it is enough to make one wish to be run away with—and I wish I was run away with—I do—and I wish the lieutenant knew it.

Just. You do, do you, hussy? Well, I think I'll take pretty good care of you. Here, Humphrey, I leave this lady in your care. Now you may walk about the garden,

Miss Pert ; but Humphrey shall go with you wherever you go. So mind, honest Humphrey, I am obliged to go abroad for a little while ; let no one but yourself come near her ; don't be shame-faced, you booby, but keep close to her. And now, miss, let your lieutenant or any of his crew come near you if they can. [Exit

Lau. How this booby stares after him !

[Sits down and sings

O'Con. Lauretta !

Lau. Not so free, fellow !

[Sings

O'Con. Lauretta ! look on me.

Lau. Not so free, fellow !

O'Con. No recollection !

Lau. Honest Humphrey, be quiet.

O'Con. Have you forgot your faithful soldier ?

Lau. Ah ! Oh preserve me !

O'Con. 'Tis, my soul ! your truest slave, passing on your father in this disguise.

Lau. Well now, I declare this is charming—you are so disguised, my dear lieutenant, and you look so delightfully ugly. I am sure no one will find you out, ha ! ha ! ha !—You know I am under your protection ; papa charged you to keep close to me.

O'Con. True, my angel, and thus let me fulfil——

Lau. O pray, now, dear Humphrey——

O'Con. Nay, 'tis but what old Mittimus commanded.

[Offers to kiss her

Re-enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS

Just. Laury, my—hey ! what the devil's here ?

Lau. Well now, one kiss, and be quiet.

Just. Your very humble servant, honest Humphrey ! Don't let me—pray don't let me interrupt you !

Lau. Lud, papa ! Now that's so good-natured—indeed there's no harm. You did not mean any rudeness, did you, Humphrey ?

O'Con. No, indeed, miss ; his worship knows it is not in me.

Just. I know that you are a lying, canting, hypocritical scoundrel ; and if you don't take yourself out of my sight——

Lau. Indeed, papa, now I'll tell you how it was. I was sometime taken with a sudden giddiness, and Humphrey, seeing me beginning to totter, ran to my assistance, quite frightened, poor fellow, and took me in his arms.

Just. Oh! was that all—nothing but a little giddiness, hey?

O'Con. That's all, indeed, your worship; for seeing miss change colour, I ran up instantly.

Just. Oh, 'twas very kind in you!

O'Con. And luckily recovered her.

Just. And who made you a doctor, you impudent rascal, hey? Get out of my sight, I say, this instant, or by all the statutes—

Lau. Oh now, papa, you frighten me, and I am giddy again!—Oh, help!

O'Con. O dear lady, she'll fall! [*Takes her into his arms*

Just. Zounds! what, before my face—why then, thou miracle of impudence!—[*Lays hold of him and discovers him.*]—Mercy on me, who have we here?—Murder! Robbery! Fire! Rape! Gunpowder! Soldiers! John! Susan! Bridget!

O'Con. Good sir, don't be alarmed; I mean you no harm.

Just. Thieves! Robbers! Soldiers!

O'Con. You know my love for your daughter—

Just. Fire! Cut-throats!

O'Con. And that alone—

Just. Treason! Gunpowder!

Enter a SERVANT with a blunderbuss

Now, scoundrel! let her go this instant.

Lau. O papa, you'll kill me!

Just. Honest Humphrey, be advised. Ay, miss, this way, if you please.

O'Con. Nay, sir, but hear me—

Just. I'll shoot.

O'Con. And you'll be convinced—

Just. I'll shoot.

O'Con. How injurious—

Just. I'll shoot—and so your very humble servant,
honest Humphrey Hum. [*Exeunt separately*]

SCENE III.—A Walk

Enter DOCTOR ROSY

Rosy. Well, I think my friend is now in a fair way of succeeding. Ah! I warrant he is full of hope and fear,

doubt and anxiety ; truly he has the fever of love strong upon him ; faint, peevish, languishing all day, with burning, restless nights. Ah ! just my case when I pined for my poor dear Dolly ! when she used to have her daily colics, and her little doctor be sent for. Then would I interpret the language of her pulse—declare my own sufferings in my receipt for her—send her a pearl necklace in a pill-box, or a cordial draught with an acrostic on the label. Well, those days are over ; no happiness lasting : all is vanity—now sunshine, now cloudy—we are, as it were, king and beggar—then what avails—

Enter LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR

O'Con. O doctor ! ruined and undone.

Rosy. The pride of beauty—

O'Con. I am discovered, and—

Rosy. The gaudy palace—

O'Con. The justice is—

Rosy. The pompous wig—

O'Con. Is more enraged than ever.

Rosy. The gilded cane—

O'Con. Why, doctor ! [*Slapping him on the shoulder*

Rosy. Hey !

O'Con. Confound your morals ! I tell you I am discovered, discomfited, disappointed.

Rosy. Indeed ! Good lack, good lack, to think of the instability of human affairs ! Nothing certain in this world—most deceived when most confident—fools of fortune all.

O'Con. My dear doctor, I want at present a little practical wisdom. I am resolved this instant to try the scheme we were going to put in execution last week. I have the letter ready, and only want your assistance to recover my ground.

Rosy. With all my heart—I'll warrant you I'll bear a part in it : but how the deuce were you discovered ?

O'Con. I'll tell you as we go ; there's not a moment to be lost.

Rosy. Heaven send we succeed better !—but there's no knowing.

O'Con. Very true.

Rosy. We may, and we may not.

O'Con. Right.

Rosy. Time must show.

O'Con. Certainly.

Rosy. We are but blind guessers.

O'Con. Nothing more.

Rosy. Thick-sighted mortals.

O'Con. Remarkably.

Rosy. Wandering in error.

O'Con. Even so.

Rosy. Futurity is dark.

O'Con. As a cellar.

Rosy. Men are moles.

[*Exeunt, LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR forcing out ROSY*

SCENE IV.—A Room in JUSTICE CREDULOUS' House

Enter JUSTICE CREDULOUS and MRS. BRIDGET CREDULOUS

Just. Odds life, Bridget, you are enough to make one mad! I tell you he would have deceived a chief justice: the dog seemed as ignorant as my clerk, and talked of honesty as if he had been a churchwarden.

Mrs. Bri. Pho! nonsense, honesty!—what had you to do, pray, with honesty? A fine business you have made of it with your Humphrey Hum; and miss, too, she must have been privy to it. Lauretta! ay, you would have her called so; but for my part I never knew any good come of giving girls these heathen Christian names; if you had called her Deborah, or Tabitha, or Ruth, or Rebecca, or Joan, nothing of this had ever happened; but I always knew Lauretta was a runaway name.

Just. Psha, you're a fool!

Mrs. Bri. No, Mr. Credulous, it is you who are a fool, and no one but such a simpleton would be so imposed on.

Just. Why, zounds, madam, how durst you talk so? If you have no respect for your husband, I should think *unus quorum* might command a little deference.

Mrs. Bri. Don't tell me!—Unus fiddlestick! you ought to be ashamed to show your face at the sessions: you'll be a laughing-stock to the whole bench, and a byword with all the pig-tailed lawyers and bag-wigged attorneys about town.

Just. Is this language for his majesty's representative? By the statutes, it's high treason and petty treason, both at once!

Enter SERVANT

Ser. A letter for your worship.

Just. Who brought it?

Ser. A soldier.

Just. Take it away and burn it.

Mrs. Bri. Stay!—now you 're in such a hurry—it is some canting scrawl from the lieutenant, I suppose.—[*Takes the letter.*—*Exit* SERVANT.] Let me see:—ay, 'tis signed O'Connor.

Just. Well, come, read it out.

Mrs. Bri. [*Reads.*] *Revenge is sweet.*

Just. It begins so, does it? I'm glad of that; I'll let the dog know I'm of his opinion.

Mrs. Bri. [*Reads.*] *And though disappointed of my designs upon your daughter, I have still the satisfaction of knowing I am revenged on her unnatural father; for this morning, in your chocolate, I had the pleasure to administer to you a dose of poison.*—Mercy on us!

Just. No tricks, Bridget; come, you know it is not so; you know it is a lie.

Mrs. Bri. Read it yourself.

Just. [*Reads.*] *Pleasure to administer a dose of poison!*—Oh, horrible! Cut-throat villain!—Bridget!

Mrs. Bri. Lovee, stay, here's a postscript.—[*Reads.*] *N.B. 'Tis not in the power of medicine to save you.*

Just. Odds my life, Bridget! why don't you call for help? I've lost my voice.—My brain is giddy—I shall burst, and no assistance.—John!—Laury!—John!

Mrs. Bri. You see, lovee, what you have brought on yourself.

Re-enter SERVANT

Ser. Your worship!

Just. Stay, John; did you perceive anything in my chocolate cup this morning?

Ser. Nothing, your worship, unless it was a little grounds.

Just. What colour were they?

Ser. Blackish, your worship.

Just. Ay, arsenic, black arsenic!—Why don't you run for Doctor Rosy, you rascal?

Ser. Now, sir?

Mrs. Bri. Oh lovee, you may be sure it is in vain: let him run for the lawyer to witness your will, my life.

Just. Zounds! go for the doctor, you scoundrel. You are all confederate murderers.

Ser. Oh, here he is, your worship. [Exit

Just. Now, Bridget, hold your tongue, and let me see if my horrid situation be apparent.

Enter Doctor Rosy

Rosy. I have but just called to inform—hey! bless me, what's the matter with your worship?

Just. There, he sees it already!—Poison in my face, in capitals! Yes, yes, I'm a sure job for the undertakers indeed!

Mrs. Bri. Oh! oh! alas, doctor!

Just. Peace, Bridget!—Why, doctor, my dear old friend, do you really see any change in me?

Rosy. Change! never was man so altered: how came these black spots on your nose?

Just. Spots on my nose!

Rosy. And that wild stare in your right eye!

Just. In my right eye!

Rosy. Ay, and alack, alack, how you are swelled!

Just. Swelled!

Rosy. Ay, don't you think he is, madam?

Mrs. Bri. Oh, 'tis in vain to conceal it!—Indeed, lovee, you are as big again as you were this morning.

Just. Yes, I feel it now—I'm poisoned!—Doctor, help me, for the love of justice! Give me life to see my murderer hanged.

Rosy. What?

Just. I'm poisoned, I say!

Rosy. Speak out!

Just. What! can't you hear me?

Rosy. Your voice is so low and hollow, as it were, I can't hear a word you say.

Just.—I'm gone then!—*Hic jacet*, many years one of his majesty's justices!

Mrs. Bri. Read, doctor!—Ah, lovee, the will!—Consider, my life, how soon you will be dead.

Just. No, Bridget, I shall die by inches.

Rosy. I never heard such monstrous iniquity.—Oh, you are gone indeed, my friend! the mortgage of your little bit of clay is out, and the sexton has nothing to do but to close. We must all go, sooner or later—high and low

—Death 's a debt ; his mandamus binds all alike—no bail, no demurrer.

Just. Silence, Doctor Croaker ! will you cure me or will you not ?

Rosy. Alas ! my dear friend, it is not in my power, but I'll certainly see justice done on your murderer.

Just. I thank you, my dear friend, but I had rather see it myself.

Rosy. Ay, but if you recover, the villain will escape.

Mrs. Bri. Will he ? then indeed it would be a pity you should recover. I am so enraged against the villain, I can't bear the thought of his escaping the halter.

Just. That 's very kind in you, my dear ; but if it 's the same thing to you, my dear, I had as soon recover, notwithstanding.—What, doctor, no assistance !

Rosy. Efacks, I can do nothing, but there 's the German quack, whom you wanted to send from town ; I met him at the next door, and I know he has antidotes for all poisons.

Just. Fetch him, my dear friend, fetch him ! I'll get him a diploma if he cures me.

Rosy. Well, there 's no time to be lost ; you continue to swell immensely. [Exit

Mrs. Bri. What, my dear, will you submit to be cured by a quack nostrum-monger ? For my part, as much as I love you, I had rather follow you to your grave than see you owe your life to any but a regular-bred physician.

Just. I'm sensible of your affection, dearest ; and be assured nothing consoles me in my melancholy situation so much as the thoughts of leaving you behind.

*Re-enter DOCTOR ROSY, with LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR
disguised*

Rosy. Great luck ; met him passing by the door.

O'Con. Metto dowsei pulsum.

Rosy. He desires me to feel your pulse.

Just. Can't he speak English ?

Rosy. Not a word.

O'Con. Palio vivem mortem soonem.

Rosy. He says you have not six hours to live.

Just. O mercy ! does he know my distemper ?

Rosy. I believe not.

Just. Tell him 'tis black arsenic they have given me.

Rosy. Geneable illi arsnecca.

O'Con. Pisonatus.

Just. What does he say?

Rosy. He says you are poisoned.

Just. We know that; but what will be the effect?

Rosy. Quid effectum?

O'Con. Diable tutellum.

Rosy. He says you'll die presently.

Just. Oh horrible! What, no antidote?

O'Con. Curum benakere bono fullum.

Just. What, does he say I must row in a boat to Fulham?

Rosy. He says he'll undertake to cure you for three thousand pounds.

Mrs. Bri. Three thousand pounds! three thousand halters!—No, lovee, you shall never submit to such impositions; die at once, and be a customer to none of them.

Just. I won't die, Bridget—I don't like death.

Mrs. Bri. Psha! there is nothing in it: a moment, and it is over.

Just. Ay, but it leaves a numbness behind that lasts a plaguy long time.

Mrs. Bri. O my dear, pray consider the will.

Enter LAURETTA

Lau. O my father, what is this I hear?

O'Con. Quiddam seomriam deos tollam rosam.

Rosy. The doctor is astonished at the sight of your fair daughter.

Just. How so?

O'Con. Damsellum livivum suvum rislibani.

Rosy. He says that he has lost his heart to her, and that if you will give him leave to pay his addresses to the young lady, and promise your consent to the union, if he should gain her affections, he will on those conditions cure you instantly, without fee or reward.

Just. The devil! did he say all that in so few words? What a fine language it is! Well, I agree, if he can prevail on the girl.—[*Aside.*] And that I am sure he never will.

Rosy. Greal.

O'Con. Writhum bothum.

Rosy. He says you must give this under your hand, while he writes you a miraculous receipt.

[*Both sit down to write*

Lau. Do, mamma, tell me the meaning of this.

Mrs. Bri. Don't speak to me, girl.—Unnatural parent!

Just. There, doctor; there's what he requires.

Rosy. And here's your receipt: read it yourself.

Just. Hey! what's here? plain English!

Rosy. Read it out; a wondrous nostrum, I'll answer for it.

Just. [*Reads.*] *In reading this you are cured by your affectionate son-in-law, O'CONNOR.*—Who, in the name of Beelzebub, sirrah, who are you?

O'Con. Your affectionate son-in-law, O'Connor, and your very humble servant, Humphrey Hum.

Just. 'Tis false, you dog! you are not my son-in-law; for I'll be poison'd again, and you shall be hanged.—I'll die, sirrah, and leave Bridget my estate.

Mrs. Bri. Ay, pray do, my dear, leave me your estate. I'm sure he deserves to be hanged.

Just. He does, you say!—Hark'ee, Bridget, you showed such a tender concern for me when you thought me poisoned, that for the future I am resolved never to take your advice again in anything.—[*To* LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR.] So, do you hear, sir, you are an Irishman and a soldier, an't you?

O'Con. I am, sir, and proud of both.

Just. The two things on earth I most hate; so I'll tell you what—renounce your country and sell your commission, and I'll forgive you.

O'Con. Hark'ee, Mr. Justice—if you were not the father of my Lauretta, I would pull your nose for asking the first, and break your bones for desiring the second.

Rosy. Ay, ay, you're right.

Just. Is he? then I'm sure I must be wrong.—Here, sir, I give my daughter to you, who are the most impudent dog I ever saw in my life.

O'Con. Oh, sir, say what you please; with such a gift as Lauretta, every word is a compliment.

Mrs. Bri. Well, my lovee, I think this will be a good subject for us to quarrel about the rest of our lives.

Just. Why, truly, my dear, I think so, though we are seldom at a loss for that.

Rosy. This is all as it should be.—My Alexander, I give you joy, and you, my little god-daughter; and now my sincere wish is, that you may make just such a wife as my poor dear Dolly.

[*Exeunt omnes*]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS PERFORMED AT THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, THEATRE
NOV. 21. 1775

Don Fernando
Don Lorenzo
Mr. Wilson

THE DUENNA

A COMIC OPERA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT COVENT GARDEN THEATRE,
NOV. 21, 1775

DON FERDINAND	<i>Mr. Mattocks</i>
DON JEROME	<i>Mr. Wilson</i>
DON ANTONIO	<i>Mr. Dubellamy</i>
DON CARLOS	<i>Mr. Leoni</i>
ISAAC MENDOZA	<i>Mr. Quick</i>
FATHER PAUL	<i>Mr. Mahon</i>
FATHER FRANCIS	<i>Mr. Fox</i>
FATHER AUGUSTINE	<i>Mr. Baker</i>
LOPEZ	<i>Mr. Wewitzer</i>
DONNA LOUISA	<i>Mrs. Mattocks</i>
DONNA CLARA	<i>Mrs. Cargill</i>
THE DUENNA	<i>Mrs. Green</i>

Masqueraders, Friars, Porter, Maid, and Servants

SCENE.—SEVILLE

THE DUENNA

ACT ONE

SCENE I.—*The Street before DON JEROME'S House*

Enter LOPEZ, with a dark lantern

Lop. Past three o'clock!—So! a notable hour for one of my regular disposition, to be strolling like a bravo through the streets of Seville! Well, of all services, to serve a young lover is the hardest.—Not that I am an enemy to love; but my love and my master's differ strangely.—Don Ferdinand is much too gallant to eat, drink, or to sleep:—now, my love gives me an appetite—then I am fond of dreaming of my mistress, and I love dearly to toast her.—This cannot be done without good sleep and good liquor: hence my partiality to a feather-bed and a bottle. What a pity, now, that I have not further time for reflections! but my master expects thee, honest Lopez, to secure his retreat from Donna Clara's window, as I guess.—[*Music without.*] Hey! sure, I heard music! So, so! who have we here? Oh, Don Antonio, my master's friend, come from the masquerade, to serenade my young mistress, Donna Louisa, I suppose: so! we shall have the old gentleman up presently.—Lest he should miss his son, I had best lose no time in getting to my post. [Exit

Enter DON ANTONIO, with MASQUERADERS and music

SONG.—*Don Ant*

Tell me, my lute, can thy soft strain
So gently speak thy master's pain?
So softly sing, so humbly sigh,
That, though my sleeping love shall know
Who sings—who sighs below,
Her rosy slumbers shall not fly?
Thus, may some vision whisper more
Than ever I dare speak before.

1 *Mas.* Antonio, your mistress will never wake, while you sing so dolefully; love, like a cradled infant, is lulled by a sad melody.

Don Ant. I do not wish to disturb her rest.

1 *Mas.* The reason is, because you know she does not regard you enough to appear, if you awaked her.

Don Ant. Nay, then, I'll convince you. [Sings

The breath of morn bids hence the night
Unveil those beauteous eyes, my fair;
For till the dawn of love is there,
I feel no day, I own no light.

DONNA LOUISA—*replies from a window*

Waking, I heard thy numbers chide,
Waking, the dawn did bless my sight;
Tis Phœbus sure that woos, I cried,
Who speaks in song, who moves in light.

DON JEROME—*from a window*

What vagabonds are these, I hear,
Fiddling, fluting, rhyming, ranting,
Piping, scraping, whining, canting,
Fly, scurvy minstrels, fly!

TRIO

Don. Louisa. Nay, prithee, father, why so rough?

Don Ant. An humble lover I.

Don Jer. How durst you, daughter, lend an ear
To such deceitful stuff?

Quick, from the window fly!

Don. Louisa. Adieu, Antonio!

Don Ant. Must you go?

Don. Louisa. } We soon, perhaps, may meet again.

Don Ant. } For though hard fortune is our foe,
The god of love will fight for us.

Don Jer. Reach me the blunderbuss.

Don Ant.

Don. Louisa. } The god of love, who knows our pain—

Don Jer. Hence, or these slugs are through your brain.

[*Exeunt severally*]

SCENE II.—A Piazza

Enter DON FERDINAND and LOPEZ

Lop. Truly, sir, I think that a little sleep once in a week
or so—

Don Ferd. Peace, fool! don't mention sleep to me.

Lop. No, no, sir, I don't mention your low-bred, vulgar, sound sleep; but I can't help thinking that a gentle slumber, or half an hour's dozing, if it were only for the novelty of the thing——

Don Ferd. Peace, booby, I say!—Oh Clara, dear, cruel disturber of my rest!

Lop. And of mine too. [*Aside*]

Don Ferd. 'Sdeath, to trifle with me at such a juncture as this!—now to stand on punctilios!—Love me! I don't believe she ever did.

Lop. Nor I either. [*Aside*]

Don Ferd. Or is it, that her sex never know their desires for an hour together?

Lop. Ah, they know them oftener than they 'll own them.

Don Ferd. Is there, in the world, so inconstant a creature as Clara? [*Aside*]

Lop. I could name one. [*Aside*]

Don Ferd. Yes; the tame fool who submits to her caprice.

Lop. I thought he couldn't miss it. [*Aside*]

Don Ferd. Is she not capricious, teasing, tyrannical, obstinate, perverse, absurd? ay, a wilderness of faults and follies; her looks are scorn, and her very smiles—'Sdeath! I wish I hadn't mentioned her smiles; for she does smile such beaming loveliness, such fascinating brightness—Oh, death and madness! I shall die if I lose her.

Lop. Oh, those damned smiles have undone all! [*Aside*]

AIR.—*Don Ferd*

Could I her faults remember,
Forgetting every charm,
Soon would impartial reason
The tyrant love disarm;
But when enraged I number
Each failing of her mind,
Love still suggests each beauty,
And sees—while reason's blind.

Lop. Here comes Don Antonio, sir.

Don Ferd. Well, go you home—I shall be there presently.

Lop. Ah, those cursed smiles! [*Exit*]

Enter DON ANTONIO

Don Ferd. Antonio, Lopez tells me he left you chanting before our door—was my father waked?

Don Ant. Yes, yes; he has a singular affection for music, so I left him roaring at his barred window, like the print of Bajazet in the cage. And what brings you out so early?

Don Ferd. I believe I told you, that to-morrow was the day fixed by Don Pedro and Clara's unnatural stepmother, for her to enter a convent, in order that her brat might possess her fortune: made desperate by this, I procured a key to the door, and bribed Clara's maid to leave it unbolted; at two this morning, I entered, unperceived, and stole to her chamber—I found her waking and weeping.

Don Ant. Happy Ferdinand!

Don Ferd. 'Sdeath! hear the conclusion.—I was rated as the most confident ruffian, for daring to approach her room at that hour of night.

Don Ant. Ay, ay, this was at first.

Don Ferd. No such thing! she would not hear a word from me, but threatened to raise her mother, if I did not instantly leave her.

Don Ant. Well, but at last?—

Don Ferd. At last! why I was forced to leave the house as I came in.

Don Ant. And did you do nothing to offend her?

Don Ferd. Nothing, as I hope to be saved!—I believe, I might snatch a dozen or two of kisses.

Don Ant. Was that all? well, I think, I never heard of such assurance!

Don Ferd. Zounds! I tell you I behaved with the utmost respect.

Don Ant. O Lord! I don't mean you, but in her. But, hark ye, Ferdinand, did you leave your key with them?

Don Ferd. Yes; the maid, who saw me out, took it from the door.

Don Ant. Then, my life for it, her mistress elopes after you.

Don Ferd. Ay, to bless my rival, perhaps. I am in a humour to suspect everybody.—You loved her once, and thought her an angel, as I do now.

Don Ant. Yes, I loved her, till I found she wouldn't love me, and then I discovered that she hadn't a good feature in her face.

AIR

I ne'er could any lustre see
 In eyes that would not look on me;
 I ne'er saw nectar on a lip,
 But where my own did hope to sip.
 Has the maid who seeks my heart
 Cheeks of rose, untouch'd by art?
 I will own the colour true,
 When yielding blushes aid their hue.

Is her hand so soft and pure?
 I must press it, to be sure;
 Nor can I be certain then,
 Till it, grateful, press again.
 Must I, with attentive eye,
 Watch her heaving bosom sigh?
 I will do so, when I see
 That heaving bosom sigh for me.

Besides, Ferdinand, you have full security in my love for your sister; help me there, and I can never disturb you with Clara.

Don Ferd. As far as I can, consistently with the honour of our family, you know I will; but there must be no eloping.

Don. Ant. And yet, now, you would carry off Clara?

Don Ferd. Ay, that's a different case!—we never mean that others should act to our sisters and wives as we do to others.—But, to-morrow, Clara is to be forced into a convent.

Don Ant. Well, and am not I so unfortunately circumstanced? To-morrow, your father forces Louisa to marry Isaac, the Portuguese—but come with me, and we'll devise something, I warrant.

Don Ferd. I must go home.

Don Ant. Well, adieu!

Don Ferd. But, Antonio, if you did not love my sister, you have too much honour and friendship to supplant me with Clara?—

AIR.—*Don Ant*

Friendship is the bond of reason;
 But if beauty disapprove,
 Heaven dissolves all other treason
 In the heart that's true to love.

The faith which to my friend I swore
 As a civil oath I view ;
 But to the charms which I adore,
 'Tis religion to be true.

[Exit

Don Ferd. There is always a levity in Antonio's manner of replying to me on this subject that is very alarming.—'Sdeath ! if Clara should love him after all !

SONG

Though cause for suspicion appears,
 Yet proofs of her love, too, are strong ;
 I'm a wretch if I'm right in my fears,
 And unworthy of bliss if I'm wrong,
 What heart-breaking torments from jealousy flow,
 Ah ! none but the jealous—the jealous can know !

When blest with the smiles of my fair,
 I know not how much I adore :
 Those smiles let another but share,
 And I wonder I prized them no more !
 Then whence can I hope a relief from my woe,
 When the falsèr she seems, still the fonder I grow !

[Exit

SCENE III.—A Room in DON JEROME'S House

Enter DONNA LOUISA and DUENNA

Don. Louisa. But, my dear Margaret, my charming Duenna, do you think we shall succeed ?

Duen. I tell you again, I have no doubt on't ; but it must be instantly put to the trial. Everything is prepared in your room, and for the rest we must trust to fortune.

Don. Louisa. My father's oath was, never to see me till I had consented to—

Duen. 'Twas thus I overheard him say to his friend, Don Guzman,—*I will demand of her to-morrow, once for all, whether she will consent to marry Isaac Mendoza ; if she hesitates, I will make a solemn oath never to see or speak to her till she returns to her duty.*—These were his words.

Don. Louisa. And on his known obstinate adherence to what he has once said, you have formed this plan for my escape.—But have you secured my maid in our interest ?

Duen. She is a party in the whole ; but remember, if

we succeed, you resign all right and title in little Isaac, the Jew, over to me.

Don. Louisa. That I do with all my soul ; get him, if you can, and I shall wish you joy, most heartily. He is twenty times as rich as my poor Antonio.

AIR

Thou canst not boast of fortune's store,
My love, while me they wealthy call :
But I was glad to find thee poor—
For with my heart I'd give thee all.
And then the grateful youth shall own
I loved him for himself alone.

But when his worth my hand shall gain,
No word or look of mine shall show
That I the smallest thought retain
Of what my bounty did bestow :
Yet still his grateful heart shall own
I loved him for himself alone.

Duen. I hear Don Jerome coming.—Quick, give me the last letter I brought you from Antonio—you know that is to be the ground of my dismissal—I must slip out to seal it up, as undelivered. [Exit

Enter DON JEROME and DON FERDINAND

Don Jer. What, I suppose you have been serenading too ! Eh, disturbing some peaceable neighbourhood with villainous catgut and lascivious piping ! Out on't ! you set your sister, here, a vile example ; but I come to tell you, madam, that I'll suffer no more of these midnight incantations—these amorous orgies, that steal the senses in the hearing ; as, they say, Egyptian embalmers serve mummies, extracting the brain through the ears. However, there's an end of your frolics—Isaac Mendoza will be here presently, and to-morrow you shall marry him.

Don. Louisa. Never, while I have life !

Don Ferd. Indeed, sir, I wonder how you can think of such a man for a son-in-law.

Don Jer. Sir, you are very kind to favour me with your sentiments—and pray, what is your objection to him ?

Don Ferd. He is a Portuguese, in the first place.

Don Jer. No such thing, boy ; he has forsworn his country.

Don. Louisa. He is a Jew.

Don Jer. Another mistake: he has been a Christian these six weeks.

Don Ferd. Ay, he left his old religion for an estate, and has not had time to get a new one.

Don. Louisa. But stands like a dead wall between church and synagogue, or like the blank leaves between the Old and New Testament.

Don Jer. Anything more?

Don Ferd. But the most remarkable part of his character is his passion for deceit and tricks of cunning.

Don. Louisa. Though at the same time the fool predominates so much over the knave, that I am told he is generally the dupe of his own art.

Don Ferd. True; like an unskilful gunner, he usually misses his aim, and is hurt by the recoil of his own piece.

Don Jer. Anything more?

Don. Louisa. To sum up all, he has the worst fault husband can have—he's not my choice.

Don Jer. But you are his; and choice on one side is sufficient—two lovers should never meet in marriage—be you sour as you please, he is sweet-tempered; and for your good fruit, there's nothing like ingrafting on a crab.

Don. Louisa. I detest him as a lover, and shall ten times more as a husband.

Don Jer. I don't know that—marriage generally makes a great change—but, to cut the matter short, will you have him or not?

Don. Louisa. There is nothing else I could disobey you in.

Don Jer. Do you value your father's peace?

Don. Louisa. So much, that I will not fasten on him the regret of making an only daughter wretched.

Don Jer. Very well, ma'am, then mark me—never more will I see or converse with you till you return to your duty—no reply—this and your chamber shall be your apartments; I never will stir out without leaving you under lock and key, and when I'm at home no creature can approach you but through my library: we'll try who can be most obstinate. Out of my sight!—there remain till you know your duty.

[Pushes her out]

Don Ferd. Surely, sir, my sister's inclinations should be consulted in a matter of this kind, and some regard paid to Don Antonio, being my particular friend.

Don Jer. That, doubtless, is a very great recommendation!—I certainly have not paid sufficient respect to it.

Don Ferd. There is not a man living I would sooner choose for a brother-in-law.

Don Jer. Very possible; and if you happen to have e'er a sister, who is not at the same time a daughter of mine, I'm sure I shall have no objection to the relationship; but at present, if you please we'll drop the subject.

Don Ferd. Nay, sir, 'tis only my regard for my sister makes me speak.

Don Jer. Then, pray, sir, in future, let your regard for your father make you hold your tongue.

Don Ferd. I have done, sir. I shall only add a wish that you would reflect what at our age you would have felt, had you been crossed in your affection for the mother of her you are so severe to.

Don Jer. Why, I must confess I had a great affection for your mother's ducats, but that was all, boy. I married her for her fortune, and she took me in obedience to her father, and a very happy couple we were. We never expected any love from one another, and so we were never disappointed. If we grumbled a little now and then, it was soon over, for we were never fond enough to quarrel; and when the good woman died, why, why,—I had as lieve she had lived, and I wish every widower in Seville could say the same. I shall now go and get the key of this dressing-room—so, good son, if you have any lecture in support of disobedience to give your sister, it must be brief; so make the best of your time, d'ye hear?

[Exit

Don Ferd. I fear, indeed, my friend Antonio has little to hope for; however, Louisa has firmness, and my father's anger will probably only increase her affection.—In our intercourse with the world, it is natural for us to dislike those who are innocently the cause of our distress; but in the heart's attachment a woman never likes a man with ardour till she has suffered for his sake—[Noise.] so! What bustle is here? between my father and the Duenna too—I'll e'en get out of the way.

[Exit

Re-enter DON JEROME with a letter, pulling in DUENNA

Don Jer. I'm astonished! I'm thunder-struck! here's treachery and conspiracy with a vengeance! You, Antonio's

creature, and chief manager of this plot for my daughter's eloping!—you, that I placed here as a scarecrow?

Duen. What?

Don Jer. A scarecrow—to prove a decoy-duck! What have you to say for yourself?

Duen. Well, sir, since you have forced that letter from me, and discovered my real sentiments, I scorn to renounce them.—I am Antonio's friend, and it was my intention that your daughter should have served you as all such old tyrannical sots should be served—I delight in the tender passions, and would befriend all under their influence.

Don Jer. The tender passions! yes, they would become those impenetrable features! Why, thou deceitful hag! I placed thee as a guard to the rich blossoms of my daughter's beauty. I thought that dragon's front of thine would cry aloof to the sons of gallantry: steel traps and spring guns seemed writ in every wrinkle of it.—But you shall quit my house this instant. The tender passions, indeed! go, thou wanton sibyl, thou amorous woman of Endor, go!

Duen. You base, scurrilous, old—but I won't demean myself by naming what you are.—Yes, savage, I'll leave your den; but I suppose you don't mean to detain my apparel—I may have my things, I presume?

Don Jer. I took you, mistress, with your wardrobe on—what have you pilfered, eh?

Duen. Sir, I must take leave of my mistress; she has valuables of mine: besides, my cardinal and veil are in her room.

Don Jer. Your veil, forsooth! what, do you dread being gazed at? or are you afraid of your complexion? Well, go take your leave, and get your veil and cardinal! so you quit the house within these five minutes.—In—in—quick!—[*Exit DUENNA.*] Here was a precious plot of mischief!—these are the comforts daughters bring us!

AIR

If a daughter you have, she's the plague of your life,
No peace shall you know, though you've buried your wife;
At twenty she mocks at the duty you taught her—

Oh, what a plague is an obstinate daughter!

Sighing and whining,

Dying and pining,

Oh, what a plague is an obstinate daughter!

When scarce in their teens, they have wit to perplex us,
 With letters and lovers for ever they vex us;
 While each still rejects the fair suitor you've brought her;
 Oh, what a plague is an obstinate daughter!

Wrangling and jangling,
 Flouting and pouting,

Oh, what a plague is an obstinate daughter!

*Re-enter DONNA LOUISA, dressed as DUENNA, with cardinal
 and veil, seeming to cry*

This way, mistress, this way.—What, I warrant, a tender
 parting; so! tears of turpentine down those deal cheeks.
 —Ay, you may well hide your head—yes, whine till your
 heart breaks; but I'll not hear one word of excuse—so
 you are right to be dumb. This way, this way. [*Exeunt*]

Re-enter DUENNA

Duen. So, speed you well, sagacious Don Jerome! Oh,
 rare effects of passion and obstinacy! Now shall I try
 whether I can't play the fine lady as well as my mistress,
 and if I succeed, I may be a fine lady for the rest of my
 life—I'll lose no time to equip myself. [*Exit*]

SCENE IV.—*The Court before DON JEROME'S House*

Enter DON JEROME and DONNA LOUISA

Don Jer. Come, mistress, there is your way—the world
 lies before you, so troop, thou antiquated Eve, thou original
 sin! Hold, yonder is some fellow skulking; perhaps it is
 Antonio—go to him, d'ye hear, and tell him to make you
 amends, and as he has got you turned away, tell him I say
 it is but just he should take you himself; go.—[*Exit DONNA
 LOUISA.*] So! I am rid of her, thank heaven! and now
 I shall be able to keep my oath, and confine my daughter
 with better security. [*Exit*]

SCENE V.—*The Piazza*

Enter DONNA CLARA and MAID

Maid. But where, madam, is it you intend to go?

Don. Clara. Any where to avoid the selfish violence

of my mother-in-law, and Ferdinand's insolent importunity.

Maid. Indeed, ma'am, since we have profited by Don Ferdinand's key, in making our escape, I think we had best find him, if it were only to thank him.

Don. Clara. No—he has offended me exceedingly.

[Retires

Enter DONNA LOUISA

Don. Louisa. So I have succeeded in being turned out of doors—but how shall I find Antonio? I dare not inquire for him, for fear of being discovered; I would send to my friend Clara, but that I doubt her prudery would condemn me.

Maid. Then suppose, ma'am, you were to try if your friend Donna Louisa would not receive you?

Don. Clara. No, her notions of filial duty are so severe, she would certainly betray me.

Don. Louisa. Clara is of a cold temper, and would think this step of mine highly forward.

Don. Clara. Louisa's respect for her father is so great, she would not credit the unkindness of mine.

[DONNA LOUISA turns, and sees DONNA CLARA and MAID

Don. Louisa. Ha! who are those? sure one is Clara—if it be, I'll trust her. Clara! [Advances

Don. Clara. Louisa! and in masquerade too!

Don. Louisa. You will be more surprised when I tell you that I have run away from my father.

Don. Clara. Surprised indeed! and I should certainly chide you most horridly, only that I have just run away from mine.

Don. Louisa. My dear Clara! [Embrace

Don. Clara. Dear sister truant! and whither are you going?

Don. Louisa. To find the man I love, to be sure: and, I presume, you would have no aversion to meet with my brother?

Don. Clara. Indeed I should: he has behaved so ill to me, I don't believe I shall ever forgive him.

AIR

When sable night, each drooping plant restoring,
 Wept o'er the flowers her breath did cheer,
 As some sad widow o'er her babe deploring,
 Wakes its beauty with a tear;

When all did sleep whose weary hearts did borrow
 One hour from love and care to rest,
 Lo! as I press'd my couch in silent sorrow,
 My lover caught me to his breast!
 He vow'd he came to save me
 From those who would enslave me!

Then kneeling,
 Kisses stealing,
 Endless faith he swore;
 But soon I chid him thence,
 For had his fond pretence
 Obtain'd one favour then,
 And he had press'd again,

I fear'd my treacherous heart might grant him more.

Don. Louisa. Well, for all this, I would have sent him to plead his pardon, but that I would not yet a while have him know of my flight. And where do you hope to find protection?

Don. Clara. The Lady Abbess of the convent of St. Catharine is a relation and kind friend of mine—I shall be secure with her, and you had best go thither with me.

Don. Louisa. No; I am determin'd to find Antonio first; and, as I live, here comes the very man I will employ to seek him for me.

Don. Clara. Who is he? he's a strange figure

Don. Louisa. Yes; that sweet creature is the man whom my father has fixed on for my husband.

Don. Clara. And will you speak to him? are you mad?

Don. Louisa. He is the fittest man in the world for my purpose; for, though I was to have married him to-morrow, he is the only man in Seville, who, I am sure, never saw me in his life.

Don. Clara. And how do you know him?

Don. Louisa. He arriv'd but yesterday, and he was shown to me from the window, as he visited my father.

Don. Clara. Well, I'll begone.

Don. Louisa. Hold, my dear Clara—a thought has struck me: will you give me leave to borrow your name, as I see occasion?

Don. Clara. It will but disgrace you; but use it as you please: I dare not stay.—[*Going.*]—But, Louisa, if you should see your brother, be sure you don't inform him that I have taken refuge with the Dame Prior of the convent of St. Catharine, on the left-hand side of the piazza, which leads to the church of St. Anthony.

Don. Louisa. Ha! ha! ha! I'll be very particular in my directions where he may not find you.—[*Exeunt DONNA CLARA and MAID.*]—So! my swain, yonder, has done admiring himself, and draws nearer. [Retires]

Enter ISAAC and DON CARLOS

Isaac. [Looking in a pocket-glass.] I tell you, friend Carlos, I will please myself in the habit of my chin.

Don Car. But, my dear friend, how can you think to please a lady with such a face?

Isaac. Why, what's the matter with the face? I think it is a very engaging face; and, I am sure, a lady must have very little taste who could dislike my beard.—[Sees DONNA LOUISA.]—See now! I'll die if here is not a little damsel struck with it already.

Don. Louisa. Signor, are you disposed to oblige a lady who greatly wants your assistance? [Unveils]

Isaac. Egad, a very pretty black-eyed girl! she has certainly taken a fancy to me, Carlos. First, ma'am, I must beg the favour of your name.

Don. Louisa. [Aside.] So! it's well I am provided.—[Aloud.]—My name, sir, is Donna Clara d'Almanza.

Isaac. What? Don Guzman's daughter? I' faith, I just now heard she was missing.

Don. Louisa. But sure, sir, you have too much gallantry and honour to betray me, whose fault is love?

Isaac. So! a passion for me! poor girl! Why, ma'am, as for betraying you, I don't see how I could get any thing by it; so, you may rely on my honour; but as for your love, I am sorry your case is so desperate.

Don. Louisa. Why so, signor?

Isaac. Because I am positively engaged to another—an't I, Carlos?

Don. Louisa. Nay, but hear me.

Isaac. No, no; what should I hear for? It is impossible for me to court you in an honourable way; and for any thing else, if I were to comply now, I suppose you have some ungrateful brother, or cousin, who would want to cut my throat for my civility—so, truly, you had best go home again.

Don. Louisa. [Aside.]—Odious wretch!—[Aloud.]—But, good signor, it is Antonio d'Ercilla, on whose account I have eloped.

Isaac. How! what! it is not with me, then, that you are in love?

Don. Louisa. No, indeed, it is not.

Isaac. Then you are a forward, impertinent simpleton! and I shall certainly acquaint your father.

Don. Louisa. Is this your gallantry?

Isaac. Yet hold—Antonio d'Ercilla, did you say? egad, I may make something of this—Antonio d'Ercilla?

Don. Louisa. Yes; and, if ever you hope to prosper in love, you will bring me to him.

Isaac. By St. Iago and I will too!—Carlos, this Antonio is one who rivals me (as I have heard) with Louisa—now, if I could hamper him with this girl, I should have the field to myself; hey, Carlos! A lucky thought, isn't it?

Don. Car. Yes, very good—very good

Isaac. Ah! this little brain is never at a loss—cunning Isaac! cunning rogue! Donna Clara, will you trust yourself awhile to my friend's direction?

Don. Louisa. May I rely on you, good signor?

Don. Car. Lady, it is impossible I should deceive you.

AIR

Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
I ne'er could injure you;
For though your tongue no promise claim'd,
Your charms would make me true.
To you no soul should bear deceit,
No stranger offer wrong:
But friends in all the aged you'll meet,
And lovers in the young.

But when they learn that you have blest
Another with your heart,
They'll bid aspiring passion rest,
And act a brother's part:
Then, lady, dread not here deceit,
Nor fear to suffer wrong;
For friends in all the aged you'll meet,
And brothers in the young.

Isaac. Conduct the lady to my lodgings, Carlos; I must haste to Don Jerome. Perhaps you know Louisa, ma'am. She's divinely handsome, isn't she?

Don. Louisa. You must excuse me not joining with you.

Isaac. Why, I have heard it on all hands.

Don. Louisa. Her father is uncommonly partial to her ; but I believe you will find she has rather a matronly air.

Isaac. Carlos, this is all envy.—You pretty girls never speak well of one another.—[*To DON CARLOS.*] Hark ye, find out Antonio, and I'll saddle him with this scrape, I warrant. Oh, 'twas the luckiest thought ! Donna Clara, your very obedient. Carlos, to your post.

DUET

Isaac. My mistress expects me, and I must go to her,
Or how can I hope for a smile ?

Don. Louisa. Soon may you return a prosperous wooer,
But think what I suffer the while !
Alone, and away from the man whom I love,
In strangers I'm forced to confide.

Isaac. Dear lady, my friend you must trust, and he'll prove
Your servant, protector, and guide.

AIR

Don Car. Gentle maid, ah ! why suspect me ?
Let me serve thee—then reject me.
Canst thou trust, and I deceive thee ?
Art thou sad, and shall I grieve thee ?
Gentle maid, ah ! why suspect me ?
Let me serve thee—then reject me.

TRIO

Don. Louisa. Never mayst thou happy be,
If in aught thou'rt false to me.

Isaac. Never may he happy be,
If in aught he's false to thee.

Don Car. Never may I happy be,
If in aught I'm false to thee.

Don. Louisa. Never mayst thou, &c.

Isaac. Never may he, &c.

Don Car. Never may I, &c.

[*Exeunt*

ACT TWO

SCENE I.—A Library in DON JEROME'S House

Enter DON JEROME and ISAAC

Don. Jer. Ha ! ha ! ha ! run away from her father ! has she given him the slip ? Ha ! ha ! ha ! poor Don Guzman !

Isaac. Ay; and I am to conduct her to Antonio; by which means you see I shall hamper him so that he can give me no disturbance with your daughter—this is trap, isn't it? a nice stroke of cunning, hey?

Don Jer. Excellent! excellent! yes, yes, carry her to him, hamper him by all means, ha! ha! ha! poor Don Guzman! an old fool! imposed on by a girl!

Isaac. Nay, they have the cunning of serpents, that's the truth on 't.

Don Jer. Psha! they are cunning only when they have fools to deal with. Why don't my girl play me such a trick—let her cunning over-reach my caution, I say—hey, little Isaac!

Isaac. True, true; or let me see any of the sex make a fool of me!—No, no, egad! little Solomon (as my aunt used to call me) understands tricking a little too well.

Don Jer. Ay, but such a driveller as Don Guzman!

Isaac. And such a dupe as Antonio!

Don Jer. True; never were seen such a couple of credulous simpletons! But come, 'tis time you should see my daughter—you must carry on the siege by yourself, friend Isaac.

Isaac. Sir, you 'll introduce—

Don Jer. No—I have sworn a solemn oath not to see or speak to her till she renounces her disobedience; win her to that, and she gains a father and a husband at once.

Isaac. Gad, I shall never be able to deal with her alone; nothing keeps me in such awe as perfect beauty—now there is something consoling and encouraging in ugliness.

SONG

Give Isaac the nymph who no beauty can boast,
But health and good humour to make her his toast;
If straight, I don't mind whether slender or fat,
And six feet or four—we'll ne'er quarrel for that.

Whate'er her complexion, I vow I don't care;
If brown, it is lasting—more pleasing, if fair:
And though in her face I no dimples should see,
Let her smile—and each dell is a dimple to me.

Let her locks be the reddest that ever were seen,
And her eyes may be e'en any colour but green;
For in eyes, though so various the lustre and hue,
I swear I've no choice—only let her have two.

'Tis true I'd dispense with a throne on her back,
And white teeth, I own, are genteeler than black;
A little round chin too's a beauty, I've heard;
But I only desire she mayn't have a beard.

Don Jer. You will change your note, my friend, when you've seen Louisa.

Isaac. Oh, Don Jerome, the honour of your alliance—

Don Jer. Ay, but her beauty will affect you—she is, though I say it, who am her father, a very prodigy. There you will see features with an eye like mine—yes, i' faith, there is a kind of wicked sparkling—something of a roguish brightness, that shows her to be my own.

Isaac. Pretty rogue!

Don Jer. Then, when she smiles, you'll see a little dimple in one cheek only; a beauty it is certainly, yet you shall not say which is prettiest, the cheek with the dimple, or the cheek without.

Isaac. Pretty rogue!

Don Jer. Then the roses on those cheeks are shaded with a sort of velvet down, that gives a delicacy to the glow of health.

Isaac. Pretty rogue!

Don Jer. Her skin pure dimity, yet more fair, being spangled here and there with a golden freckle.

Isaac. Charming pretty rogue! pray how is the tone of her voice?

Don Jer. Remarkably pleasing—but if you could prevail on her to sing, you would be enchanted—she is a nightingale—a Virginia nightingale! But come, come; her maid shall conduct you to her antechamber.

Isaac. Well, egad, I'll pluck up resolution, and meet her frowns intrepidly.

Don Jer. Ay! woo her briskly—win her, and give me a proof of your address, my little Solomon.

Isaac. But hold—I expect my friend Carlos to call on me here. If he comes, will you send him to me?

Don Jer. I will. Laretta!—*[Calls.]*—Come—she'll show you to the room. What! do you droop? here's a mournful face to make love with!

[Exeunt]

SCENE II.—DONNA LOUISA'S Dressing Room

Enter ISAAC and MAID

Maid. Sir, my mistress will wait on you presently.

[Goes to the door

Isaac. When she's at leisure—don't hurry her.—*[Exit MAID.]*—I wish I had ever practised a love-scene—I doubt I shall make a poor figure—I couldn't be more afraid if I was going before the Inquisition. So, the door opens—yes, she's coming—the very rustling of her silk has a disdainful sound.

Enter DUENNA, dressed as DONNA LOUISA

Now dar'n't I look round for the soul of me—her beauty will certainly strike me dumb if I do. I wish she'd speak first.

Duen. Sir, I attend your pleasure.

Isaac. *[Aside.]* So! the ice is broke, and a pretty civil beginning too!—*[Aloud.]* Hem! madam—miss—I'm all attention.

Duen. Nay, sir, 'tis I who should listen, and you propose.

Isaac. *[Aside.]* Egad, this isn't so disdainful neither—I believe I may venture to look. No—I dar'n't—one glance of those roguish sparklers would fix me again.

Duen. You seem thoughtful, sir. Let me persuade you to sit down.

Isaac. *[Aside.]* So, so; she mollifies apace—she's struck with my figure! this attitude has had its effect.

Duen. Come, sir, here's a chair.

Isaac. Madam, the greatness of your goodness overpowers me—that a lady so lovely should deign to turn her beauteous eyes on me so.

(She takes his hand, he turns and sees her)

Duen. You seem surprised at my condescension.

Isaac. Why, yes, madam, I am a little surprised at it.—*[Aside.]* Zounds! this can never be Louisa—she's as old as my mother!

Duen. But former prepossessions give way to my father's commands.

Isaac. *[Aside.]* Her father! Yes, 'tis she then.—Lord, Lord; how blind some parents are!

Duen. Signor Isaac!

Isaac. *[Aside.]* Truly, the little damsel was right—she

has rather a matronly air, indeed! ah! 'tis well my affections are fixed on her fortune, and not her person.

Duen. Signor, won't you sit? [*She sits*]

Isaac. Pardon me, madam, I have scarce recovered my astonishment at—your condescension, madam.—[*Aside.*] She has the devil's own dimples, to be sure!

Duen. I do not wonder, sir, that you are surprised at my affability—I own, signor, that I was vastly prepossessed against you, and, being teased by my father, I did give some encouragement to Antonio; but then, sir, you were described to me as quite a different person.

Isaac. Ay, and so you were to me, upon my soul, madam.

Duen. But when I saw you I was never more struck in my life.

Isaac. That was just my case too, madam; I was struck all on a heap, for my part.

Duen. Well, sir, I see our misapprehension has been mutual—you expected to find me haughty and averse, and I was taught to believe you a little black, snub-nosed fellow, without person, manners, or address.

Isaac. Egad, I wish she had answered her picture as well! [*Aside*]

Duen. But, sir, your air is noble—something so liberal in your carriage, with so penetrating an eye and so bewitching a smile!

Isaac. Egad, now I look at her again, I don't think she is so ugly! [*Aside*]

Duen. So little like a Jew, and so much like a gentleman!

Isaac. Well, certainly, there is something pleasing in the tone of her voice. [*Aside*]

Duen. You will pardon this breach of decorum in praising you thus, but my joy at being so agreeably deceived has given me such a flow of spirits!

Isaac. Oh, dear lady, may I thank those dear lips for this goodness?—[*Kisses her.*] Why she has a pretty sort of velvet down, that's the truth on't. [*Aside*]

Duen. O sir, you have the most insinuating manner, but indeed you should get rid of that odious beard—one might as well kiss a hedgehog.

Isaac. [*Aside.*] Yes, ma'am, the razor wouldn't be amiss—for either of us.—[*Aloud.*] Could you favour me with a song?

Duen. Willingly, sir, though I am rather hoarse—ahem!
[*Begins to sing*]

Isaac. [*Aside.*] Very like a Virginia nightingale!—
[*Aloud.*] Ma'am, I perceive you're hoarse—I beg you will not distress—

Duen. Oh, not in the least distressed. Now, sir.

SONG

When a tender maid
Is first assay'd
By some admiring swain,
How her blushes rise
If she meet his eyes,
While he unfolds his pain!
If he takes her hand, she trembles quite!
Touch her lips, and she swoons outright!
While a-pit-a-pat, &c.,
Her heart avows her fright.

But in time appear
Fewer signs of fear!
The youth she boldly views:
If her hand he grasp,
Or her bosom clasp,
No mantling blush ensues!
Then to church well pleased the lovers move,
While her smiles her contentment prove;
And a-pit-a-pat, &c.,
Her heart avows her love.

Isaac. Charming, ma'am! enchanting! and, truly, your notes put me in mind of one that's very dear to me—a lady, indeed, whom you greatly resemble!

Duen. How! is there, then, another so dear to you?

Isaac. Oh no, ma'am, you mistake; it was my mother I meant.

Duen. Come, sir, I see you are amazed and confounded at my condescension, and know not what to say.

Isaac. It is very true, indeed, ma'am; but it is a judgment, I look on it as a judgment on me, for delaying to urge the time when you'll permit me to complete my happiness, by acquainting Don Jerome with your condescension.

Duen. Sir, I must frankly own to you, that I can never be yours with my father's consent.

Isaac. Good lack! how so?

Duen. When my father, in his passion, swore he would never see me again till I acquiesced in his will, I also made

a vow, that I would never take a husband from his hand ; nothing shall make me break that oath : but, if you have spirit and contrivance enough to carry me off without his knowledge, I'm yours.

Isaac. Hum !

Duen. Nay, sir, if you hesitate—

Isaac. [*Aside.*] I' faith, no bad whim, this !—If I take her at her word, I shall secure her fortune, and avoid making any settlement in return ; thus I shall not only cheat the lover, but the father too. Oh, cunning rogue, Isaac ! ay, ay, let this little brain alone ! Egad, I'll take her in the mind !

Duen. Well, sir, what's your determination ?

Isaac. Madam, I was dumb only from rapture—I applaud your spirit, and joyfully close with your proposal ; for which thus let me, on this lily hand, express my gratitude.

Duen. Well, sir, you must get my father's consent to walk with me in the garden. But by no means inform him of my kindness to you.

Isaac. No, to be sure, that would spoil all ; but trust me, when tricking is the word—let me alone for a piece of cunning ; this very day you shall be out of his power.

Duen. Well, I leave the management of it all to you ; I perceive plainly, sir, that you are not one that can be easily outwitted.

Isaac. Egad, you're right, madam—you're right, i' faith.

Re-enter MAID

Maid. Here's a gentleman at the door, who begs permission to speak with Signor Isaac.

Isaac. A friend of mine, ma'am, and a trusty friend—let him come in—[*Exit MAID.*] He is one to be depended on, ma'am.

Enter DON CARLOS

So, coz.

[*Talks apart with DON CARLOS*

Don Car. I have left Donna Clara at your lodgings, but can nowhere find Antonio.

Isaac. Well, I will search him out myself. Carlos, you rogue, I thrive, I prosper !

Don Car. Where is your mistress ?

Isaac. There, you booby, there she stands.

Don Car. Why, she's damned ugly!

Isaac. Hush! [Stops his mouth]

Duen. What is your friend saying, signor?

Isaac. Oh, ma'am, he is expressing his raptures at such charms as he never saw before. Eh, Carlos?

Don Car. Ay, such as I never saw before, indeed!

Duen. You are a very obliging gentleman. Well, Signor Isaac, I believe we had better part for the present. Remember our plan.

Isaac. Oh, ma'am, it is written in my heart, fixed as the image of those divine beauties. Adieu, idol of my soul!—yet once more permit me—— [Kisses her]

Duen. Sweet, courteous sir, adieu!

Isaac. Your slave eternally! Come, Carlos, say something civil at taking leave.

Don Car. I' faith, Isaac, she is the hardest woman to compliment I ever saw; however, I'll try something I had studied for the occasion.

SONG

Ah! sure a pair was never seen
 So justly form'd to meet by nature!
 The youth excelling so in mien,
 The maid in ev'ry grace of feature.
 Oh, how happy are such lovers,
 When kindred beauties each discovers!
 For surely she
 Was made for thee,
 And thou to bless this lovely creature!

So mild your looks, your children thence
 Will early learn the task of duty—
 The boys with all their father's sense,
 The girls with all their mother's beauty!
 Oh, how happy to inherit
 At once such graces and such spirit!
 Thus while you live
 May fortune give
 Each blessing equal to your merit! [Exeunt

SCENE III.—A Library in DON JEROME'S House

DON JEROME and DON FERDINAND discovered

Don Jer. Object to Antonio! I have said it. His poverty, can you acquit him of that?

Don Ferd. Sir, I own he is not over rich; but he is of as ancient and honourable a family as any in the kingdom.

Don Jer. Yes, I know the beggars are a very ancient family in most kingdoms; but never in great repute, boy.

Don Ferd. Antonio, sir, has many amiable qualities.

Don Jer. But he is poor; can you clear him of that, I say? Is he not a gay, dissipated rake, who has squandered his patrimony?

Don Ferd. Sir, he inherited but little; and that, his generosity, more than his profuseness, has stripped him of; but he has never sullied his honour, which, with his title, has outlived his means.

Don Jer. Psha! you talk like a blockhead! nobility without an estate is as ridiculous as gold lace on a frieze coat.

Don Ferd. This language, sir, would better become a Dutch or English trader than a Spaniard.

Don Jer. Yes; and those Dutch and English traders, as you call them, are the wiser people. Why, booby, in England they were formerly as nice, as to birth and family, as we are; but they have long discovered what a wonderful purifier gold is; and now, no one there regards pedigree in anything but a horse. Oh, here comes Isaac! I hope he has prospered in his suit.

Don Ferd. Doubtless, that agreeable figure of his must have helped his suit surprisingly.

Don Jer. How now? [DON FERDINAND walks aside]

Enter Isaac

Well, my friend, have you softened her?

Isaac. Oh, yes; I have softened her.

Don Jer. What, does she come to?

Isaac. Why, truly, she was kinder than I expected to find her.

Don Jer. And the dear little angel was civil, eh?

Isaac. Yes, the pretty little angel was very civil.

Don Jer. I'm transported to hear it. Well, and you were astonished at her beauty, hey?

Isaac. I was astonished, indeed! Pray, how old is miss?

Don Jer. How old! let me see—eight and twelve—she is twenty.

Isaac. Twenty?

Don Jer. Ay, to a month.

Isaac. Then, upon my soul, she is the oldest-looking girl of her age in Christendom!

Don Jer. Do you think so! But, I believe, you will not see a prettier girl.

Isaac. Here and there one.

Don Jer. Louisa has the family face.

Isaac. Yes, egad, I should have taken it for a family face, and one that has been in the family some time too.

[*Aside*

Don Jer. She has her father's eyes.

Isaac. Truly, I should have guessed them to have been so! If she had her mother's spectacles, I believe she would not see the worse.

[*Aside*

Don Jer. Her aunt Ursula's nose, and her grandmother's forehead, to a hair.

Isaac. Ay, faith, and her grandfather's chin, to a hair.

[*Aside*

Don Jer. Well, if she was but as dutiful as she's handsome—and hark ye, friend Isaac, she is none of your made-up beauties—her charms are of the lasting kind.

Isaac. I' faith, so they should—for if she be but twenty now, she may double her age before her years will overtake her face.

Don Jer. Why, zounds, Master Isaac! you are not sneering, are you?

Isaac. Why now, seriously, Don Jerome, do you think your daughter handsome?

Don Jer. By this light, she's as handsome a girl as any in Seville.

Isaac. Then, by these eyes, I think her as plain a woman as ever I beheld.

Don Jer. By St. Iago! you must be blind.

Isaac. No, no; 'tis you are partial.

Don Jer. How! have I neither sense nor taste? If a fair skin, fine eyes, teeth of ivory, with a lovely bloom, and a delicate shape—if these, with a heavenly voice, and a world of grace, are not charms, I know not what you call beautiful.

Isaac. Good lack, with what eyes a father sees! As I have life, she is the very reverse of all this: as for the dimity skin you told me of, I swear 'tis a thorough nankeen as ever I saw! for her eyes, their utmost merit is not squinting—for her teeth, where there is one of ivory, it

neighbour is pure ebony, black and white alternately, just like the keys of a harpsichord. Then, as to her singing, and heavenly voice—by this hand, she has a shrill, cracked pipe, that sounds, for all the world, like a child's trumpet.

Don Jer. Why, you little Hebrew scoundrel, do you mean to insult me? Out of my house, I say!

Don Ferd. [*Coming forward.*] Dear sir, what's the matter?

Don Jer. Why, this Israelite here has the impudence to say your sister's ugly.

Don Ferd. He must be either blind or insolent.

Isaac. So, I find they are all in a story. Egad, I believe I have gone too far! [*Aside*]

Don Ferd. Sure, sir, there must be some mistake; it can't be my sister whom he has seen.

Don Jer. 'Sdeath! you are as great a fool as he! What mistake can there be? Did not I lock up Louisa, and haven't I the key in my own pocket? and didn't her maid show him into the dressing-room? and yet you talk of a mistake! No, the Portuguese meant to insult me—and, but that this roof protects him, old as I am, this sword should do me justice.

Isaac. I must get off as well as I can—her fortune is not the less handsome. [*Aside*]

DUET

Isaac. Believe me, good sir, I ne'er meant to offend;
My mistress I love, and I value my friend:
To win her and wed her is still my request,
For better for worse—and I swear I don't jest.

Don Jer. Zounds! you'd best not provoke me, my rage is so high!

Isaac. Hold him fast, I beseech you, his rage is so high!

Don Jer. Good sir, you're too hot, and this place I must fly.

Don Jer. You're a knave and a sot, and this place you'd best fly.

Isaac. Don Jerome, come now, let us lay aside all joking, and be serious.

Don Jer. How?

Isaac. Ha! ha! ha! I'll be hanged if you haven't taken my abuse of your daughter seriously.

Don Jer. You meant it so, did not you?

Isaac. O mercy, no! a joke—just to try how angry it would make you.

Don Jer. Was that all, i' faith? I didn't know you had

been such a wag. Ha! ha! ha! By St. Iago! you made me very angry, though. Well, and you do think Louisa handsome?

Isaac. Handsome! Venus de Medicis was a sibyl to her.

Don Jer. Give me your hand, you little jocose rogue! Egad, I thought we had been all off.

Don Ferd. So! I was in hopes this would have been a quarrel; but I find the Jew is too cunning. [*Aside*]

Don Jer. Ay, this gust of passion has made me dry—I am seldom ruffled. Order some wine in the next room—let us drink the poor girl's health. Poor Lousia! ugly, eh! ha! ha! ha! 'twas a very good joke, indeed!

Isaac. And a very true one, for all that. [*Aside*]

Don Jer. And, Ferdinand, I insist upon your drinking success to my friend.

Don Ferd. Sir, I will drink success to my friend with all my heart.

Don Jer. Come, little Solomon, if any sparks of anger had remained, this would be the only way to quench them.

TRIO

A bumper of good liquor
Will end a contest quicker
Than justice, judge, or vicar;
So fill a cheerful glass,
And let good humour pass.
But if more deep the quarrel,
Why, sooner drain the barrel
Than be the hateful fellow
That's crabbed when he's mellow.
A bumper, &c.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—ISAAC'S Lodgings

Enter DONNA LOUISA

Don. Louisa. Was ever truant daughter so whimsically circumstanced as I am? I have sent my intended husband to look after my lover—the man of my father's choice is gone to bring me the man of my own: but how dispiriting is this interval of expectation!

SONG

What bard, O Time, discover,
 With wings first made thee move!
 Ah! sure it was some lover
 Who ne'er had left his love!
 For who that once did prove
 The pangs which absence brings,
 Though but one day
 He were away,
 Could picture thee with wings?
 What bard, &c.

Enter DON CARLOS

So, friend, is Antonio found?

Don Car. I could not meet with him, lady; but I doubt not my friend Isaac will be here with him presently.

Don. Louisa. Oh, shame! you have used no diligence. Is this your courtesy to a lady who has trusted herself to your protection?

Don Car. Indeed, madam, I have not been remiss.

Don. Louisa. Well, well; but if either of you had known how each moment of delay weighs upon the heart of her who loves, and waits the object of her love, oh, ye would not then have trifled thus!

Don Car. Alas, I know it well!

Don. Louisa. Were you ever in love, then?

Don Car. I was, lady; but, while I have life, will never be again.

Don. Louisa. Was your mistress so cruel?

Don Car. If she had always been so, I should have been happier.

SONG

Oh, had my love ne'er smiled on me,
 I ne'er had known such anguish;
 But think how false, how cruel she,
 To bid me cease to languish;
 To bid me hope her hand to gain,
 Breathe on a flame half perish'd;
 And then, with cold and fix'd disdain,
 To kill the hope she cherish'd.

Not worse his fate, who on a wreck,
 That drove as winds did blow it,
 Silent had left the shatter'd deck,
 To find a grave below it.

Then land was cried—no more resign'd,
 He glow'd with joy to hear it;
 Not worse his fate, his woe, to find
 The wreck must sink ere near it!

Don. Louisa. As I live, here is your friend coming with Antonio! I'll retire for a moment to surprise him. [*Exit*]

Enter ISAAC and DON ANTONIO

Don Ant. Indeed, my good friend, you must be mistaken. Clara d'Almanza in love with me, and employ you to bring me to meet her! It is impossible!

Isaac. That you shall see in an instant. Carlos, where is the lady?—[*DON CARLOS points to the door.*] In the next room, is she?

Don Ant. Nay, if that lady is really here, she certainly wants me to conduct her to a dear friend of mine, who has long been her lover.

Isaac. Psha! I tell you 'tis no such thing—you are the man she wants, and nobody but you. Here's ado to persuade you to take a pretty girl that's dying for you!

Don Ant. But I have no affection for this lady.

Isaac. And you have for Lousia, hey? But take my word for it, Antonio, you have no chance there—so you may as well secure the good that offers itself to you.

Don Ant. And could you reconcile it to your conscience to supplant your friend?

Isaac. Pish! Conscience has no more to do with gallantry than it has with politics. Why, you are no honest fellow if love can't make a rogue of you—so come, do go in and speak to her, at least.

Don Ant. Well, I have no objection to that.

Isaac. [*Opens the door.*] There—there she is—yonder by the window—get in, do.—[*Pushes him in, and half shuts the door.*] Now, Carlos, now I shall hamper him, I warrant! Stay, I'll peep how they go on. Egad, he looks confoundedly posed! Now she's coaxing him. See, Carlos, he begins to come to—ay, ay, he'll soon forget his conscience.

Don Car. Look—now they are both laughing!

Isaac. Ay, so they are—yes, yes, they are laughing at that dear friend he talked of—ay, poor devil, they have outwitted him.

Don Car. Now he's kissing her hand.

Isaac. Yes, yes, 'faith, they 're agreed—he 's caught, he 's entangled. My hear Carlos, we have brought it about. Oh, this little cunning head! I'm a Machiavel—a very Machiavel!

Don Car. I hear somebody inquiring for you—I'll see who it is. [Exit

Re-enter DON ANTONIO and DONNA LOUISA

Don Ant. Well, my good friend, this lady has so entirely convinced me of the certainty of your success at Don Jerome's, that I now resign my pretensions there.

Isaac. You never did a wiser thing, believe me; and, as for deceiving your friend, that 's nothing at all—tricking is all fair in love, isn't it, ma'am?

Don. Louisa. Certainly, sir; and I am particularly glad to find you are of that opinion.

Isaac. O Lud! yes, ma'am—let any one outwit me that can, I say! But here, let me join your hands. There, you lucky rogue! I wish you happily married, from the bottom of my soul!

Don. Louisa. And I am sure, if you wish it, no one else should prevent it.

Isaac. Now, Antonio, we are rivals no more; so let us be friends, will you?

Don Ant. With all my heart, Isaac.

Isaac. It is not every man, let me tell you, that would have taken such pains, or been so generous to a rival.

Don Ant. No, 'faith, I don't believe there's another beside yourself in all Spain.

Isaac. Well, but you resign all pretensions to the other lady?

Don Ant. That I do, most sincerely.

Isaac. I doubt you have a little hankering there still.

Don Ant. None in the least, upon my soul.

Isaac. I mean after her fortune.

Don Ant. No, believe me. You are heartily welcome to everything she has.

Isaac. Well, i' faith, you have the best of the bargain, as to beauty, twenty to one. Now I'll tell you a secret—I am to carry off Louisa this very evening.

Don. Louisa. Indeed!

Isaac. Yes, she has sworn not to take a husband from her father's hand—so I've persuaded him to trust her to

walk with me in the garden, and then we shall give him the slip.

Don. Louisa. And is Don Jerome to know nothing of this?

Isaac. O Lud, no! there lies the jest. Don't you see that, by this step, I over-reach him? I shall be entitled to the girl's fortune, without settling a ducat on her. Ha! ha! ha! I'm a cunning dog, an't I? a sly little villain, eh?

Don Ant. Ha! ha! ha! you are indeed!

Isaac. Roguish, you'll say, but keen, hey? devilish keen?

Don Ant. So you are indeed—keen—very keen.

Isaac. And what a laugh we shall have at Don Jerome's when the truth comes out! hey?

Don. Louisa. Yes, I'll answer for it, we shall have a good laugh when the truth comes out. Ha! ha! ha!

Re-enter DON CARLOS

Don Car. Here are the dancers come to practise the fandango you intended to have honoured Donna Louisa with.

Isaac. Oh, I shan't want them; but, as I must pay them, I'll see a caper for my money. Will you excuse me?

Don. Louisa. Willingly.

Isaac. Here's my friend, whom you may command for any service. Madam, your most obedient—Antonio, I wish you all happiness.—[*Aside.*] Oh, the easy blockhead! what a tool I have made of him!—This was a masterpiece!

[*Exit*

Don. Louisa. Carlos, will you be my guard again, and convey me to the convent of St. Catharine?

Don Ant. Why, Louisa—why should you go there?

Don. Louisa. I have my reasons, and you must not be seen to go with me; I shall write from thence to my father; perhaps, when he finds what he has driven me to, he may relent.

Don Ant. I have no hope from him. O Louisa! in these arms should be your sanctuary.

Don. Louisa. Be patient but for a little while—my father cannot force me from thence. But let me see you there before evening, and I will explain myself.

Don Ant. I shall obey.

Don. Louisa. Come, friend. Antonio, Carlos has been a lover himself.

Don Ant. Then he knows the value of his trust.

Don Car. You shall not find me unfaithful.

TRIO

Soft pity never leaves the gentle breast
Where love has been received a welcome guest;
As wandering saints poor huts have sacred made,
He hallows every heart he once has sway'd,
And, when his presence we no longer share,
Still leaves compassion as a relic there.

[*Exeunt*]

ACT THREE

SCENE I.—A *Library in DON JEROME'S House.**Enter DON JEROME and SERVANT*

Don Jer. Why, I never was so amazed in my life! Louisa gone off with Isaac Mendoza! What! steal away with the very man whom I wanted her to marry—elope with her own husband, as it were—it is impossible!

Ser. Her maid says, sir, they had your leave to walk in the garden while you were abroad. The door by the shrubbery was found open, and they have not been heard of since.

[*Exit*]

Don Jer. Well, it is the most unaccountable affair! 'sdeath! there is certainly some infernal mystery in it I can't comprehend!

Enter SECOND SERVANT, with a letter

Ser. Here is a letter, sir, from Signor Isaac. [*Exit*]

Don Jer. So, so, this will explain—ay, Isaac Mendoza—let me see— [*Reads*]

Dearest Sir,

You must, doubtless, be much surprised at my flight with your daughter!—yes, 'faith, and well I may—I had the happiness to gain her heart at our first interview. The devil you had!—But, she having unfortunately made a vow not to receive a husband from your hands, I was obliged to comply

with her whim!—So, so!—We shall shortly throw ourselves at your feet, and I hope you will have a blessing ready for one, who will then be your son-in-law, ISAAC MENDOZA.

A whim, hey? Why, the devil's in the girl, I think! This morning she would die sooner than have him, and before evening she runs away with him! Well, well, my will's accomplished—let the motive be what it will—and the Portuguese, sure, will never deny to fulfil the rest of the article.

Re-enter SERVANT, with another letter

Ser. Sir, here's a man below, who says he brought this from my young lady, Donna Louisa. [Exit

Don Jer. How! yes, it's my daughter's hand, indeed! Lord, there was no occasion for them both to write; well, let's see what she says— [Reads

My dearest Father,

How shall I entreat your pardon for the rash step I have taken—how confess the motive?—Pish! hasn't Isaac just told me the motive?—one would think they weren't together when they wrote.—If I have a spirit too resentful of ill usage, I have also a heart as easily affected by kindness.—So, so, here the whole matter comes out; her resentment for Antonio's ill usage has made her sensible of Isaac's kindness—yes, yes, it is all plain enough. Well.—I am not married yet, though with a man, I am convinced, who adores me.—Yes, yes, I dare say Isaac is very fond of her.—But I shall anxiously expect your answer, in which, should I be so fortunate as to receive your consent, you will make completely happy your ever affectionate daughter, LOUISA.

My consent! to be sure she shall have it! Egad, I was never better pleased—I have fulfilled my resolution—I knew I should. Oh, there's nothing like obstinacy! Lewis! [Calls

Re-enter SERVANT

Let the man who brought the last letter, wait; and get me a pen and ink below.—[Exit SERVANT.] I am impatient to set poor Louisa's heart at rest. Holloa! Lewis! Sancho! [Calls

Enter SERVANTS

See that there be a noble supper provided in the saloon to-night ; serve up my best wines, and let me have music, d' ye hear ?

Ser. Yes, sir.

Don Jer. And order all my doors to be thrown open ; admit all guests, with masks or without masks.—[*Exeunt SERVANTS.*] I' faith, we'll have a night of it ! and I'll let them see how merry an old man can be.

SONG

Oh, the days when I was young,
When I laugh'd in fortune's spite ;
Talk'd of love the whole day long,
And with nectar crown'd the night ;
Then it was, old father Care,
Little reck'd I of thy frown ;
Half thy malice youth could bear,
And the rest a bumper drown.

Truth, they say, lies in a well,
Why, I vow, I ne'er could see ;
Let the water-drinkers tell,
There it always lay for me.
For when sparkling wine went round,
Never saw I falsehood's mask ;
But still honest truth I found
In the bottom of each flask.

True, at length my vigour's flown,
I have years to bring decay ;
Few the locks that now I own,
And the few I have are grey,
Yet, old Jerome, thou mayst boast,
While thy spirits do not tire ;
Still beneath thy age's frost
Glows a spark of youthful fire.

[*Exit*SCENE II.—*The New Piazza**Enter DON FERDINAND and LOPEZ*

Don Ferd. What, could you gather no tidings of her ? nor guess where she was gone ? O Clara ! Clara !

Lop. In truth, sir, I could not. That she was run away from her father was in everybody's mouth ; and that Don

Guzman was in pursuit of her was also a very common report. Where she was gone, or what was become of her, no one could take upon them to say.

Don Ferd. 'Sdeath and fury, you blockhead! she can't be out of Seville.

Lop. So I said to myself, sir. 'Sdeath and fury, you blockhead, says I, she can't be out of Seville. Then some said she had hanged herself for love; and others have it Don Antonio had carried her off.

Don Ferd. 'Tis false, scoundrel! no one said that.

Lop. Then I misunderstood them, sir.

Don Ferd. Go, fool, get home! and never let me see you again till you bring me news of her.—[*Exit LOPEZ.*] Oh, how my fondness for this ungrateful girl has hurt my disposition.

Enter ISAAC

Isaac. So, I have her safe, and have only to find a priest to marry us. Antonio now may marry Clara, or not, if he pleases.

Don Ferd. What! what was that you said of Clara?

Isaac. Oh, Ferdinand! my brother-in-law that shall be, who thought of meeting you?

Don Ferd. But what of Clara?

Isaac. I' faith, you shall hear. This morning, as I was coming down, I met a pretty damsel, who told me her name was Clara d'Almanza, and begged my protection.

Don Ferd. How?

Isaac. She said she had eloped from her father, Don Guzman, but that love for a young gentleman in Seville was the cause.

Don Ferd. Oh, Heavens! did she confess it?

Isaac. Oh, yes, she confessed at once. But then, says she, my lover is not informed of my flight, nor suspects my intention.

Don Ferd. [*Aside.*] Dear creature! no more I did indeed! Oh, I am the happiest fellow!—[*Aloud.*] Well, Isaac?

Isaac. Why then she entreated me to find him out for her, and bring him to her.

Don Ferd. Good Heavens, how lucky! Well, come along, let's lose no time. [*Pulling him*

Isaac. Zooks! where are we to go?

Don Ferd. Why, did anything more pass?

Isaac. Anything more! yes; the end on't was, that I was moved with her speeches, and complied with her desires.

Don Ferd. Well, and where is she?

Isaac. Where is she? why, don't I tell you? I complied with her request, and left her safe in the arms of her lover.

Don Ferd. 'Sdeath, you trifle with me!—I have never seen her.

Isaac. You! O Lud, no! how the devil should you? 'Twas Antonio she wanted; and with Antonio I left her.

Don Ferd. [*Aside.*] Hell and madness!—[*Aloud.*] What, Antonio d'Ercilla?

Isaac. Ay, ay, the very man; and the best part of it was, he was shy of taking her at first. He talked a good deal about honour, and conscience, and deceiving some dear friend; but, Lord, we soon overruled that!

Don Ferd. You did!

Isaac. Oh, yes, presently.—Such deceit! says he.—Pish! says the lady, tricking is all fair in love. But then, my friend, says he.—Psha! damn your friend, says I. So, poor wretch, he has no chance.—No, no; he may hang himself as soon as he pleases.

Don Ferd. I must go, or I shall betray myself. [*Aside*

Isaac. But stay, Ferdinand, you ha'n't heard the best of the joke.

Don Ferd. Curse on your joke!

Isaac. Good lack! what's the matter now? I thought to have diverted you.

Don Ferd. Be racked! tortured! damned!

Isaac. Why, sure you are not the poor devil of a lover, are you?—I' faith, as sure as can be, he is! This is a better joke than t' other. Ha! ha! ha!

Don Ferd. What! do you laugh? you vile, mischievous varlet!—[*Collars him.*] But that you're beneath my anger, I'd tear your heart out! [*Throws him from him*

Isaac. O mercy! here's usage for a brother-in-law!

Don Ferd. But, hark ye, rascal! tell me directly where these false friends are gone, or, by my soul—— [*Draws*

Isaac. For Heaven's sake, now, my dear brother-in-law, don't be in a rage! I'll recollect as well as I can.

Don Ferd. Be quick, then!

Isaac. I will, I will!—but people's memories differ; some have a treacherous memory: now mine is a cowardly memory—it takes to its heels at sight of a drawn sword; it does i' faith; and I could as soon fight as recollect.

Don Ferd. Zounds! tell me the truth, and I won't hurt you.

Isaac. No, no, I know you won't, my dear brother-in-law; but that ill-looking thing there—

Don Ferd. What, then, you won't tell me?

Isaac. Yes, yes, I will; I'll tell you all, upon my soul!—but why need you listen sword in hand?

Don Ferd. Why there.—[*Puts up.*] Now.

Isaac. Why, then, I believe they are gone to—that is, my friend Carlos told me, he had left Donna Clara—dear Ferdinand, keep your hands off—at the convent of St. Catharine.

Don Ferd. St. Catharine!

Isaac. Yes; and that Antonio was to come to her there.

Don Ferd. Is this the truth?

Isaac. It is, indeed; and all I know, as I hope for life!

Don Ferd. Well, coward, take your life! 'tis that false, dishonourable Antonio who shall feel my vengeance.

Isaac. Ay, ay, kill him; cut his throat, and welcome.

Don Ferd. But, for Clara! infamy on her! she is not worth my resentment.

Isaac. No more she is, my dear brother-in-law. I' faith, I would not be angry about her; she is not worth it, indeed.

Don Ferd. 'Tis false! she is worth the enmity of princes!

Isaac. True, true, so she is; and I pity you exceedingly for having lost her.

Don Ferd. 'Sdeath, you rascal! how durst you talk of pitying me?

Isaac. Oh, dear brother-in-law, I beg pardon! I don't pity you in the least, upon my soul!

Don Ferd. Get hence, fool, and provoke me no further; nothing but your insignificance saves you!

Isaac. [*Aside.*] I' faith, then, my insignificance is the best friend I have.—[*Aloud.*] I'm going, dear Ferdinand.

—[*Aside.*] What a curst hot-headed bully it is!

[*Exeunt severally*]

SCENE III.—*The garden of the Convent*

Enter DONNA LOUISA and DONNA CLARA

Don. Louisa. And you really wish my brother may not find you out?

Don. Clara. Why else have I concealed myself under this disguise?

Don. Louisa. Why, perhaps, because the dress becomes you; for you certainly don't intend to be a nun for life.

Don. Clara. If, indeed, Ferdinand had not offended me so last night——

Don. Louisa. Come, come, it was his fear of losing you made him so rash.

Don. Clara. Well, you may think me cruel, but I swear, if he were here this instant, I believe I should forgive him.

SONG

By him we love offended,
How soon our anger flies!
One day apart, 'tis ended;
Behold him, and it dies.

Last night, your roving brother,
Enraged, I bade depart;
And sure his rude presumption
Deserved to lose my heart.

Yet, were he now before me,
In spite of injured pride,
I fear my eyes would pardon
Before my tongue could chide.

Don. Louisa. I protest, Clara, I shall begin to think you are seriously resolved to enter on your probation.

Don. Clara. And, seriously, I very much doubt whether the character of a nun would not become me best.

Don. Louisa. Why, to be sure, the character of a nun is a very becoming one at a masquerade; but no pretty woman, in her senses, ever thought of taking the veil for above a night.

Don. Clara. Yonder I see your Antonio is returned—I shall only interrupt you; ah, Louisa, with what happy eagerness you turn to look for him! [Exit

Enter DON ANTONIO

Don Ant. Well, my Louisa, any news since I left you?

Don. Louisa. None. The messenger is not yet returned from my father.

Don Ant. Well, I confess, I do not perceive what we are to expect from him.

Don. Louisa. I shall be easier, however, in having made the trial: I do not doubt your sincerity, Antonio; but there is a chilling air around poverty, that often kills affection, that was not nursed in it. If we would make love our household god, we had best secure him a comfortable roof.

SONG.—*Don Antonio*

How oft, Louisa, hast thou told,
 (Nor wilt thou the fond boast disown,)
 Thou wouldst not lose Antonio's love
 To reign the partner of a throne.
 And by those lips, that spoke so kind,
 And by that hand, I've press'd to mine,
 To be the lord of wealth and power,
 By Heavens, I would not part with thine!

Then how, my soul, can we be poor,
 Who own what kingdoms could not buy?
 Of this true heart thou shalt be queen,
 In serving thee, a monarch I.
 Thus uncontroll'd, in mutual bliss,
 I rich in love's exhaustless mine,
 Do thou snatch treasures from my lips,
 And I'll take kingdoms back from thine!

Enter MAID, with a letter

Don. Louisa. My father's answer, I suppose.

Don Ant. My dearest Louisa, you may be assured that it contains nothing but threats and reproaches.

Don. Louisa. Let us see, however.—[*Reads.*] *Dearest daughter, make your lover happy; you have my full consent to marry as your whim has chosen, but be sure come home and sup with your affectionate father.*

Don Ant. You jest, Louisa!

Don. Louisa. [*Gives him the letter.*] Read! read!

Don Ant. 'Tis so, by Heavens! Sure there must be some mistake; but that's none of our business.—Now, Louisa, you have no excuse for delay.

Don. Louisa. Shall we not then return and thank my father?

Don Ant. But first let the priest put it out of his power to recall his word.—I'll fly to procure one.

Don. Louisa. Nay, if you part with me again, perhaps you may lose me.

Don Ant. Come then—there is a friar of a neighbouring convent is my friend ; you have already been diverted by the manners of a nunnery ; let us see whether there is less hypocrisy among the holy fathers.

Don. Louisa. I'm afraid not, Antonio—for in religion, as in friendship, they who profess most are ever the least sincere. [Exeunt

Re-enter DONNA CLARA

Don. Clara. So, yonder they go, as happy as a mutual and confessed affection can make them, while I am left in solitude. Heigho ! love may perhaps excuse the rashness of an elopement from one's friend, but I am sure nothing but the presence of the man we love can support it. Ha ! what do I see ! Ferdinand, as I live ; how could he gain admission ? By potent gold, I suppose, as Antonio did. How eager and disturbed he seems ! He shall not know me as yet. [Lets down her veil

Enter DON FERDINAND

Don Ferd. Yes, those were certainly they—my information was right. [Going

Don. Clara. [Stops him.] Pray, signor, what is your business here ?

Don Ferd. No matter—no matter ! Oh, they stop.—[Looks out.] Yes, that is the perfidious Clara indeed !

Don. Clara. So, a jealous error—I'm glad to see him so moved. [Aside

Don Ferd. Her disguise can't conceal her—no, no, I know her too well.

Don. Clara. [Aside.] Wonderful discernment !—[Aloud.] But, signor—

Don Ferd. Be quiet, good nun ; don't tease me !—By Heavens, she leans upon his arm, hangs fondly on it ! O woman, woman !

Don. Clara. But, signor, who is it you want ?

Don Ferd. Not you, not you, so pr'ythee don't tease me. Yet pray stay—gentle nun, was it not Donna Clara d' Almanza just parted from you ?

Don. Clara. Clara d'Almanza, signor, is not yet out of the garden.

Don Ferd. Ay, ay, I knew I was right ! And pray is not

that gentleman, now at the porch with her, Antonio d'Ercilla?

Don. Clara. It is indeed, signor.

Don Ferd. So, so; now but one question more—can you inform me for what purpose they have gone away?

Don. Clara. They are gone to be married, I believe.

Don Ferd. Very well—enough. Now if I don't mar their wedding! [Exit

Don. Clara. [Unveils.] I thought jealousy had made lovers quick-sighted, but it has made mine blind. Louisa's story accounts to me for this error, and I am glad to find I have power enough over him to make him so unhappy. But why should not I be present at his surprise when undeceived? When he's through the porch, I'll follow him; and, perhaps, Louisa shall not singly be a bride.

SONG

Adieu, thou dreary pile, where never dies
The sullen echo of repentant sighs,
Ye sister mourners of each lonely cell,
Inured to hymns and sorrow, fare ye well!
For happier scenes I fly this darksome grove,
To saints a prison, but a tomb to love! [Exit

SCENE IV.—A Court before the Priory

Enter ISAAC, crossing the stage, DON ANTONIO following

Don Ant. What, my friend Isaac!

Isaac. What, Antonio! wish me joy! I have Louisa safe.

Don Ant. Have you? I wish you joy with all my soul.

Isaac. Yes, I am come here to procure a priest to marry us.

Don Ant. So, then, we are both on the same errand; I am come to look for Father Paul.

Isaac. Ha! I am glad on't—but, i' faith, he must tack me first; my love is waiting.

Don Ant. So is mine—I left her in the porch.

Isaac. Ay, but I am in haste to go back to Don Jerome.

Don Ant. And so am I too.

Isaac. Well, perhaps he'll save time, and marry us both

together—or I'll be your father, and you shall be mine. Come along—but you're obliged to me for all this.

Don Ant. Yes, yes. [Exeunt]

SCENE V.—A Room in the Priory

FATHER PAUL, FATHER FRANCIS, FATHER AUGUSTINE, and other FRIARS, discovered at a table drinking

GLEE AND CHORUS

This bottle's the sun of our table,

His beams are rosy wine;

We, planets, that are not able

Without his help to shine.

Let mirth and glee abound!

You'll soon grow bright

With borrow'd light,

And shine as he goes round.

Paul. Brother Francis, toss the bottle about, and give me your toast.

Fran. Have we drunk the abbess of St. Ursuline?

Paul. Yes, yes: she was the last.

Fran. Then I'll give you the blue-eyed nun of St. Catharine's.

Paul. With all my heart.—[Drinks.] Pray, brother Augustine, were there any benefactions left in my absence?

Aug. Don Juan Corduba has left a hundred ducats, to remember him in our masses.

Paul. Has he? let them be paid to our wine-merchant, and we'll remember him in our cups, which will do just as well. Anything more?

Aug. Yes: Baptista, the rich miser, who died last week, has bequeathed us a thousand pistoles, and the silver lamp he used in his own chamber, to burn before the image of St. Anthony.

Paul. 'Twas well meant, but we'll employ his money better—Baptista's bounty shall light the living, not the dead. St. Anthony is not afraid to be left in the dark, though he was.—[Knocking.] See who's there.

[FATHER FRANCIS goes to the door and opens it

Enter PORTER

Port. Here's one without, in pressing haste to speak with father Paul.

Fran. Brother Paul!

[FATHER PAUL comes from behind a curtain with a glass of wine, and in his hand a piece of cake.

Paul. Here! how durst you, fellow, thus abruptly break in upon our devotions?

Port. I thought they were finished.

Paul. No, they were not—were they, brother Francis?

Fran. Not by a bottle each.

Paul. But neither you nor your fellows mark how the hours go; no, you mind nothing but the gratifying of your appetites; ye eat and swill, and sleep, and gourmandise, and thrive while we are wasting in mortification.

Port. We ask no more than nature craves.

Paul. 'Tis false, ye have more appetites than hairs! and your flushed, sleek, and pampered appearance is the disgrace of our order—out on't! If you are hungry, can't you be content with the wholesome roots of the earth? and if you are dry, isn't there the crystal spring?—*[Drinks.]* Put this away—*[Gives the glass]* and show me where I'm wanted.—*[PORTER drains the glass.—PAUL, going, turns]* So, you would have drunk it if there had been any left! Ah, glutton! glutton! *[Exeunt]*

SCENE VI.—*The Court before the Priory*

Enter ISAAC and DON ANTONIO

Isaac.—A plaguy while coming, this same father Paul!—He's detained at vespers, I suppose, poor fellow.

Don Ant. No, here he comes.

Enter FATHER PAUL

Good father Paul, I crave your blessing.

Isaac. Yes, good father Paul, we are come to beg a favour.

Paul. What is it, pray?

Isaac. To marry us, good father Paul; and in truth thou dost look the very priest of Hymen.

Paul. In short, I may be called so ; for I deal in repentance and mortification.

Isaac. No, no, thou seemest an office of Hymen, because thy presence speaks content and good humour.

Paul. Alas ! my appearance is deceitful. Bloated I am, indeed ! for fasting is a windy recreation, and it hath swollen me like a bladder.

Don Ant. But thou hast a good fresh colour in thy face, father ; rosy, i' faith.

Paul. Yes, I have blushed for mankind, till the hue of my shame is as fixed as their vices.

Isaac. Good man !

Paul. And I have laboured too, but to what purpose ? they continue to sin under my very nose.

Isaac. Efects, father, I should have guessed as much, for your nose seems to be put to the blush more than any other part of your face.

Paul. Go, you're a wag !

Don Ant. But, to the purpose, father—will you officiate for us ?

Paul. To join young people thus clandestinely is not safe : and, indeed, I have in my heart many weighty reasons against it.

Don Ant. And I have in my hand many weighty reasons for it. Isaac, haven't you an argument or two in our favour about you ?

Isaac. Yes, yes ; here is a most unanswerable purse.

Paul. For shame ! you make me angry : you forget who I am, and when importunate people have forced their trash—ay, into this pocket, here—or into this—why, then the sin was theirs.—[*They put money into his pockets.*] Fie, now how you distress me ! I would return it, but that I must touch it that way, and so wrong my oath.

Don Ant. Now then, come with us.

Isaac. Ay, now give us our title to joy and rapture.

Paul. Well, when your hour of repentance comes, don't blame me.

Don Ant. [*Aside.*] No bad caution to my friend Isaac.—
[*Aloud.*] Well, well, father, do you do your part, and I'll abide the consequence.

Isaac. Ay, and so will I.

Enter DONNA LOUISA, running

Don. Louisa. O Antonio, Ferdinand is at the porch, and inquiring for us.

Isaac. Who? Don Ferdinand! he's not inquiring for me, I hope.

Don Ant. Fear not, my love: I'll soon pacify him.

Isaac. Egad, you won't. Antonio, take my advice, and run away; this Ferdinand is the most unmerciful dog, and has the cursedest long sword!—and, upon my soul, he comes on purpose to cut your throat.

Don Ant. Never fear, never fear.

Isaac. Well, you may stay if you will; but I'll get some one to marry me; for, by St. Iago, he shall never meet me again while I am master of a pair of heels.

[Runs out.—DONNA LOUISA lets down her veil

Enter DON FERDINAND

Don Ferd. So, sir, I have met with you at last.

Don Ant. Well, sir.

Don Ferd. Base, treacherous man! whence can a false, deceitful soul, like yours, borrow confidence to look so steadily on the man you've injured?

Don Ant. Ferdinand, you are too warm: 'tis true you find me on the point of wedding one I loved beyond my life; but no argument of mine prevailed on her to elope—I scorn deceit, as much as you. By heaven, I knew not that she had left her father's till I saw her!

Don Ferd. What a mean excuse! You have wronged your friend, then, for one, whose wanton forwardness anticipated your treachery—of this, indeed, your Jew pander informed me; but let your conduct be consistent, and, since you have dared to do a wrong, follow me, and show you have a spirit to avow it.

Don. Louisa. Antonio, I perceive his mistake—leave him to me.

Paul. Friend, you are rude to interrupt the union of two willing hearts.

Don Ferd. No, meddling priest! the hand he seeks is mine.

Paul. If so, I'll proceed no further. Lady, did you ever promise this youth your hand?

[To DONNA LOUISA, who shakes her head

Don Ferd. Clara, I thank you for your silence—I would not have heard your tongue avow such falsity; be't your punishment to remember I have not reproached you.

Enter DONNA CLARA, veiled

Don. Clara. What mockery is this?

Don Ferd. Antonio, you are protected now, but we shall meet.

[*Going, DONNA CLARA holds one arm, and DONNA LOUISA the other.*]

DUET

Don. Louisa. Turn thee round, I pray thee,
Calm awhile thy rage.

Don. Clara. I must help to stay thee,
And thy wrath assuage.

Don. Louisa. Couldst thou not discover
One so dear to thee?

Don. Clara. Canst thou be a lover,
And thus fly from me? [*Both unveil*]

Don Ferd. How's this? My sister! Clara too—I'm confounded.

Don. Louisa. 'Tis even so, good brother.

Paul. How! what impiety! did the man want to marry his own sister?

Don. Louisa. And ar'n't you ashamed of yourself not to know your own sister?

Don. Clara. To drive away your own mistress—

Don. Louisa. Don't you see how jealousy blinds people?

Don. Clara. Ay, and will you ever be jealous again?

Don Ferd. Never—never!—You, sister, I know will forgive me—but how, Clara, shall I presume—

Don. Clara. No, no, just now you told me not to tease you—"Who do you want, good signor?" "Not you, not you!"—Oh, you blind wretch! but swear never to be jealous again, and I'll forgive you.

Don Ferd. By all—

Don. Clara. There, that will do—you'll keep the oath just as well. [*Gives her hand*]

Don. Louisa. But, brother, here is one to whom some apology is due.

Don Ferd. Antonio, I am ashamed to think—

Don Ant. Not a word of excuse, Ferdinand—I have not

been in love myself without learning that a lover's anger should never be resented. But come—let us retire with this good father, and we'll explain to you the cause of this error.

GLEE AND CHORUS

Oft does Hymen smile to hear
 Wordy vows of feign'd regard;
 Well he knows when they're sincere,
 Never slow to give reward:
 For his glory is to prove
 Kind to those who wed for love. [*Exeunt*

SCENE VII.—A Grand Saloon in DON JEROME'S House

Enter DON JEROME, LOPEZ, and SERVANTS

Don Jer. Be sure, now, let everything be in the best order—let all my servants have on their merriest faces: but tell them to get as little drunk as possible till after supper.—[*Exeunt* SERVANTS.] So, Lopez, where's your master? sha'n't we have him at supper?

Lop. Indeed, I believe, not, sir—he's mad, I doubt! I'm sure he has frighten me from him.

Don Jer. Ay, ay, he's after some wench, I suppose: a young rake! Well, well, we'll be merry without him.

[*Exit* LOPEZ]

Enter a SERVANT

Ser. Sir, here is Signor Isaac. [*Exit*

Enter ISAAC

Don Jer. So, my dear son-in-law—there, take my blessing and forgiveness. But where's my daughter? where's Louisa?

Isaac. She's without, impatient for a blessing, but almost afraid to enter.

Don Jer. Oh, fly and bring her in.—[*Exit* ISAAC.] Poor girl, I long to see her pretty face.

Isaac. [*Without.*] Come, my charmer! my trembling angel!

Re-enter ISAAC with DUENNA; DON JEROME runs to meet them; she kneels

Don Jer. Come to my arms, my—[*Starts back.*] Why, who the devil have we here?

Isaac. Nay, Don Jerome, you promised her forgiveness ; see how the dear creature droops !

Don Jer. Droops indeed ! Why, Gad take me, this is old Margaret ! But where's my daughter ? where's Louisa ?

Isaac. Why, here, before your eyes—nay, don't be abashed, my sweet wife !

Don Jer. Wife with a vengeance ! Why, zounds, you have not married the Duenna !

Duen. [*Kneeling.*] Oh, dear papa ! you'll not disown me, sure !

Don Jer. Papa ! papa ! Why, zounds, your impudence is as great as your ugliness !

Isaac. Rise, my charmer, go throw your snowy arms about his neck, and convince him you are——

Duen. Oh, sir, forgive me ! [*Embraces him*]

Don Jer. Help ! murder !

Enter SERVANTS

Ser. What's the matter, sir ?

Don Jer. Why, here, this damned Jew has brought an old harridan to strangle me.

Isaac. Lord, it is his own daughter, and he is so hard-hearted he won't forgive her !

Enter DON ANTONIO and DONNA LOUISA ; they kneel

Don Jer. Zounds and fury ! what's here now ? who sent for you, sir, and who the devil are you ?

Don Ant. This lady's husband, sir.

Isaac. Ay, that he is, I'll be sworn ; for I left them with a priest, and was to have given her away.

Don Jer. You were ?

Isaac. Ay ; that's my honest friend, Antonio : and that's the little girl I told you I had hampered him with.

Don Jer. Why, you are either drunk or mad—this is my daughter.

Isaac. No, no ; 'tis you are both drunk and mad, I think—here's your daughter.

Don Jer. Hark ye, old iniquity ! will you explain all this or not ?

Duen. Come then, Don Jerome, I will—though our

habits might inform you all. Look on your daughter, there, and on me.

Isaac. What's this I hear?

Duen. The truth is that in your passion this morning you made a small mistake; for you turned your daughter out of doors, and locked up your humble servant.

Isaac. O Lud! O Lud! here's a pretty fellow, to turn his daughter out of doors instead of an old Duenna!

Don Jer. And, O Lud! O Lud! here's a pretty fellow, to marry an old Duenna instead of my daughter! But how came the rest about?

Duen. I have only to add that I remained in your daughter's place, and had the good fortune to engage the affections of my sweet husband here.

Isaac. Her husband! why, you old witch, do you think I'll be your husband now? This is a trick, a cheat! and you ought all to be ashamed of yourselves.

Don Ant. Hark ye, Isaac, do you dare to complain of tricking? Don Jerome, I give you my word this cunning Portuguese has brought all this upon himself, by endeavouring to over-reach you, by getting your daughter's fortune, without making any settlement in return.

Don Jer. Over-reach me!

Don. Louisa. 'Tis so, indeed, sir, and we can prove it to you.

Don Jer. Why, Gad take me, it must be so, or he could never have put up with such a face as Margaret's—so, little Solomon, I wish you joy of your wife, with all my soul.

Don. Louisa. Isaac, tricking is all fair in love—let you alone for the plot.

Don Ant. A cunning dog, ar'n't you? A sly little villain, eh?

Don. Louisa. Roguish, perhaps; but keen, devilish keen!

Don Jer. Yes, yes; his aunt always called him little Solomon.

Isaac. Why, the plagues of Egypt upon you all!—but do you think I'll submit to such an imposition?

Don Ant. Isaac, one serious word—you'd better be content as you are; for, believe me, you will find that, in the opinion of the world, there is not a fairer subject for contempt and ridicule than a knave become the dupe of his own art.

Isaac. I don't care—I'll not endure this. Don Jerome, 'tis you have done this—you would be so cursed positive about the beauty of her you locked up, and all the time I told you she was as old as my mother, and as ugly as the devil.

Duen. Why, you little insignificant reptile——

Don Jer. That's right!—attack him, Margaret.

Duen. Dare such a thing as you pretend to talk of beauty?—A walking rouleau!—a body that seems to owe all its consequence to the dropsy!—a pair of eyes like two dead beetles in a wad of brown dough!—a beard like an artichoke, with dry shrivelled jaws, that would disgrace the mummy of a monkey!

Don Jer. Well done, Margaret!

Duen. But you shall know that I have a brother who wears a sword—and, if you don't do me justice——

Isaac. Fire seize your brother, and you too! I'll fly to Jerusalem to avoid you!

Duen. Fly where you will, I'll follow you.

Don Jer. Throw your snowy arms about him, Margaret.
—[*Exeunt ISAAC and DUENNA.*] But, Louisa, are you really married to this modest gentleman?

Don. Louisa. Sir, in obedience to your commands, I gave him my hand within this hour.

Don Jer. My commands!

Don Ant. Yes, sir; here is your consent, under your own hand.

Don Jer. How! would you rob me of my child by a trick, a false pretence? and do you think to get her fortune by the same means? Why, 'slife, you are as great a rogue as Isaac!

Don Ant. No, Don Jerome; though I have profited by this paper in gaining your daughter's hand, I scorn to obtain her fortune by deceit. There, sir.—[*Gives a letter.*] Now give her your blessing for a dower, and all the little I possess shall be settled on her in return. Had you wedded her to a prince, he could do no more.

Don Jer. Why, Gad take me, but you are a very extraordinary fellow! But have you the impudence to suppose no one can do a generous action but yourself? Here, Louisa, tell this proud fool of yours that he's the only man I know that would renounce your fortune; and, by my soul, he's the only man in Spain that's worthy of it. There, bless you both; I'm an obstinate old fellow when

I'm in the wrong ; but you shall now find me as steady in the right.

Enter DON FERDINAND and DONNA CLARA

Another wonder still ! Why, sirrah ! Ferdinand, you have not stole a nun, have you ?

Don Ferd. She is a nun in nothing but her habit, sir—look nearer, and you will perceive 'tis Clara d'Almanza, Don Guzman's daughter ; and, with pardon for stealing a wedding, she is also my wife.

Don Jer. Gadsbud, and a great fortune ! Ferdinand, you are a prudent young rogue, and I forgive you : and, ifecks, you are a pretty little damsel. Give your father-in-law a kiss, you smiling rogue !

Don. Clara. There, old gentleman ; and now mind you behave well to us.

Don Jer. Ifecks, those lips ha'n't been chilled by kissing beads ! Egad, I believe I shall grow the best-humoured fellow in Spain. Lewis ! Sancho ! Carlos ! d'ye hear ? are all my doors thrown open ? Our children's weddings are the only holidays our age can boast ; and then we drain, with pleasure, the little stock of spirits time has left us.—*[Music within.]* But see, here come our friends and neighbours !

Enter MASQUERADERS

And, i' faith, we'll make a night on't, with wine, and dance, and catches—then old and young shall join us.

FINALE

Don Jer. Come now for Jest and smiling,
Both old and young beguiling,
Let us laugh and play, so blithe and gay,
Till we banish care away.

Don. Louisa. Thus crown'd with dance and song,
The hours shall glide along,
With a heart at ease, merry, merry glees
Can never fail to please.

Don. Ferd. Each bride with blushes glowing,
Our wine as rosy flowing,
Let us laugh and play, so blithe and gay,
Till we banish care away.

Don Ant. Then healths to every friend
The night's repast shall end,
With a heart at ease, merry, merry glees
Can never fail to please.

Don. Clara. Nor, while we are so joyous,
Shall anxious fear annoy us;
Let us laugh and play, so blithe and gay,
Till we banish care away.

Don Jer. For generous guests like these
Accept the wish to please,
So we'll laugh and play, so blithe and gay,
Your smiles drive care away.

[*Exeunt omnes*]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ
LADNUS' ROT JOURNAL THE
AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT DRURY LANE THEATRE IN

1777

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

A COMEDY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT DRURY LANE THEATRE IN
1777

SIR PETER TEAZLE	<i>Mr. King</i>
SIR OLIVER SURFACE	<i>Mr. Yates</i>
SIR HARRY BUMPER	<i>Mr. Gawdry</i>
SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE	<i>Mr. Dodd</i>
JOSEPH SURFACE	<i>Mr. Palmer</i>
CHARLES SURFACE	<i>Mr. Smith</i>
CARELESS	<i>Mr. Farren</i>
SNAKE	<i>Mr. Packer</i>
CRABTREE	<i>Mr. Parsons</i>
ROWLEY	<i>Mr. Aickin</i>
MOSES	<i>Mr. Baddeley</i>
TRIP	<i>Mr. Lamash</i>
LADY TEAZLE	<i>Mrs. Abington</i>
LADY SNEERWELL	<i>Miss Sherry</i>
MRS. CANDOUR	<i>Miss Pope</i>
MARIA	<i>Miss P. Hopkins</i>

Gentlemen, Maid, and Servants

SCENE.—LONDON

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

A PORTRAIT

ADDRESSED TO MRS. CREWE, WITH THE COMEDY OF THE
SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

By R. B. SHERIDAN, ESQ.

TELL me, ye prim adepts in Scandal's school,
Who rail by precept, and detract by rule.
Lives there no character, so tried, so known,
So deck'd with grace, and so unlike your own
That even you assist her fame to raise,
Approve by envy, and by silence praise!
Attend!—a model shall attract your view—
Daughters of calumny, I summon you!
You shall decide if this a portrait prove,
Or fond creation of the Muse and Love.
Attend, ye virgin critics, shrewd and sage,
Ye matron censors of this childish age,
Whose peering eye and wrinkled front declare
A fix'd antipathy to young and fair;
By cunning, cautious; or by nature, cold,
In maiden madness, virulently bold!—
Attend, ye skill'd to coin the precious tale,
Creating proof, where innuendos fail!
Whose practised memories, cruelly exact,
Omit no circumstance, except the fact!—
Attend, all ye who boast,—or old or young,—
The living libel of a slanderous tongue!
So shall my theme as far contrasted be,
As saints by fiends, or hymns by calumny.
Come, gentle Amoret (for 'neath that name
In worthier verse is sung thy beauty's fame);
Come—for but thee, who seeks the Muse? and while
Celestial blushes check thy conscious smile,
With timid grace, and hesitating eye,
The perfect model, which I boast, supply:—

Vain Muse! couldst thou the humblest sketch create
 Of her, or slightest charm couldst imitate—
 Could thy blest strain in kindred colours trace
 The faintest wonder of her form and face—
 Poets would study the immortal line,
 And Reynolds own his art subdued by thine;
 That art, which well might added lustre give
 To Nature's best, and Heaven's superlative:
 On Granby's cheek might bid new glories rise,
 Or point a purer beam from Devon's eyes!
 Hard is the task to shape that beauty's praise,
 Whose judgment scorns the homage flattery pays!
 But praising Amoret we cannot err,
 No tongue o'ervalues Heaven, or flatters her!
 Yet she by fate's perverseness—she alone
 Would doubt our truth, nor deem such praise her own.
 Adorning fashion, unadorn'd by dress,
 Simple from taste, and not from carelessness;
 Discreet in gesture, in deportment mild,
 Not stiff with prudence, nor uncouthly wild;
 No state has Amoret; no studied mien;
 She frowns no goddess, and she moves no queen.
 The softer charm that in her manner lies
 Is framed to captivate, yet not surprise;
 It justly suits the expression of her face,—
 'Tis less than dignity, and more than grace!
 On her pure cheek the native hue is such,
 That, form'd by Heaven to be admired so much
 The hand divine, with a less partial care,
 Might well have fix'd a fainter crimson there,
 And bade the gentle inmate of her breast—
 Inshrined Modesty—supply the rest.
 But who the peril of her lips shall paint?
 Strip them of smiles—still, still all words are faint.
 But moving Love himself appears to teach
 Their action, though denied to rule her speech;
 And thou who seest her speak, and dost not hear,
 Mourn not her distant accents 'scape thine ear;
 Viewing those lips, thou still may'st make pretence
 To judge of what she says, and swear 'tis sense:
 Clothed with such grace, with such expression fraught,
 They move in meaning, and they pause in thought!
 But dost thou farther watch, with charm'd surprise,
 The mild irresolution of her eyes,

Curious to mark how frequent they repose,
In brief eclipse and momentary close—
Ah! seest thou not an ambush'd Cupid there,
Too tim'rous of his charge, with jealous care
Veils and unveils those beams of heavenly light,
Too full, too fatal else, for mortal sight?
Nor yet, such pleasing vengeance fond to meet,
In pard'ning dimples hope a safe retreat.
What though her peaceful breast should ne'er allow
Subduing frowns to arm her alter'd brow,
By Love, I swear, and by his gentle wiles
More fatal still the mercy of her smiles!
Thus lovely, thus adorn'd, possessing all
Of bright or fair that can to woman fall,
The height of vanity might well be thought
Prerogative in her, and Nature's fault.
Yet gentle Amoret, in mind supreme
As well as charms, rejects the vainer theme;
And, half mistrustful of her beauty's store,
She bars with wit those darts too keen before:—
Read in all knowledge that her sex should reach,
Though Greville, or the Muse, should deign to teach,
Fond to improve, nor timorous to discern
How far it is a woman's grace to learn;
In Millar's dialect she would not prove
Apollo's priestess, but Apollo's love,
Graced by those signs which truth delights to own,
The timid blush and mild submitted tone:
Whate'er she says, though sense appear throughout
Displays the tender hue of female doubt;
Deck'd with that charm, how lovely wit appears,
How graceful science, when that robe she wears!
Such too her talents, and her bent of mind,
As speak a sprightly heart by thought refined:
A taste for mirth, by contemplation school'd,
A turn for ridicule, by candour ruled,
A scorn of folly, which she tries to hide;
An awe of talent, which she owns with pride!
Peace, idle Muse! no more thy strain prolong,
But yield a theme, thy warmest praises wrong;
Just to her merit, though thou canst not raise
Thy feeble verse, behold th' acknowledged praise
Has spread conviction through the envious train,
And cast a fatal gloom o'er Scandal's reign!

And lo! each pallid hag, with blister'd tongue,
Mutters assent to all thy zeal has sung—
Owns all the colours just—the outline true,
Thee my inspirer, and my model—CREWE!

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN BY MR. GARRICK

A SCHOOL for Scandal! tell me, I beseech you,
Needs there a school this modish art to teach you?
No need of lessons now, the knowing think;
We might as well be taught to eat and drink.
Caused by a dearth of scandal, should the vapours
Distress our fair ones—let them read the papers;
Their powerful mixtures such disorders hit;
Crave what you will—there's *quantum sufficit*.
“Lord!” cries my Lady Wormwood (who loves tattle,
And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle),
Just risen at noon, all night at cards when thrashing
Strong tea and scandal—“Bless me, how refreshing!
Give me the papers, Lisp—how bold and free! [*Sips*
Last night Lord L. [Sips.] was caught with Lady D.
For aching heads what charming sal volatile! [*Sips*
If Mrs. B. will still continue flirting,
We hope she'll DRAW, or we'll UNDRAW the curtain.
Fine satire, poz—in public all abuse it,
But, by ourselves [*Sips*], our praise we can't refuse it.
Now, Lisp, read you—there, at that dash and star.”
“Yes, ma'am—A certain lord had best beware,
Who lives not twenty miles from Grosvenor Square;
For, should he Lady W. find willing,
Wormwood is bitter”——“Oh! that's me! the villain!
Throw it behind the fire, and never more
Let that vile paper come within my door.”
Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the dart;
To reach our feelings, we ourselves must smart.
Is our young bard so young, to think that he
Can stop the full spring-tide of calumny?
Knows he the world so little, and its trade?
Alas! the devil's sooner raised than laid.
So strong, so swift, the monster there's no gagging:
Cut Scandal's head off, still the tongue is wagging.

Proud of your smiles once lavishly bestow'd,
 Again our young Don Quixote takes the road;
 To show his gratitude he draws his pen,
 And seeks this hydra, Scandal, in his den.
 For your applause all perils he would through—
 He'll fight—that's write—a cavalliero true,
 Till every drop of blood—that's ink—is spilt for you.

ACT ONE

SCENE I.—LADY SNEERWELL'S *Dressing-room*

LADY SNEERWELL *discovered at her toilet*; SNAKE *drinking chocolate*

Lady Sneer. The paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted?

Snake. They were, madam; and, as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion whence they came.

Lady Sneer. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

Snake. That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish. In the common course of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackitt's ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then, you know, the business is as good as done.

Lady Sneer. Why, truly, Mrs. Clackitt has a very pretty talent, and a great deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day. To my knowledge, she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons being disinherited; of four forced elopements, and as many close confinements; nine separate maintenances, and two divorces. Nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tête-à-tête* in the "Town and Country Magazine," when the parties, perhaps, had never seen each other's face before in the course of their lives.

Lady Sneer. She certainly has talents, but her manner is gross.

Snake. 'Tis very true. She generally designs well, has a free tongue and a bold invention; but her colouring is too dark, and her outlines often extravagant. She wants that delicacy of tint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguish your ladyship's scandal.

Lady Sneer. You are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least; everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or look than many can with the most laboured detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

Lady Sneer. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite

to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own reputation.

Snake. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

Lady Sneer. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbour, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

Snake. I do. Here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death; the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of—the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character: the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship, and apparently your favourite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a city knight, with a good jointure, should not close with the passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

Lady Sneer. Then, at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

Snake. No!

Lady Sneer. His real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune; but, finding in his brother a favoured rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

Lady Sneer. Heavens! how dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess that Charles—that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation—that he it is for whom I am thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice everything?

Snake. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent: but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

Lady Sneer. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious—in short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. Yes; yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England; and, above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

Lady Sneer. True; and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy he has brought Sir Peter entirely into his interest with regard to Maria; while poor Charles has no friend in the house—though, I fear, he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

Enter SERVANT

Ser. Mr. Surface.

Lady Sneer. Show him up. [*Exit SERVANT.*] He generally calls about this time. I don't wonder at people giving him to me for a lover.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE

Jos. Surf. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do to-day? Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

Lady Sneer. Snake has just been rallying me on our mutual attachment; but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us; and, believe me, the confidence is not ill placed.

Jos. Surf. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, no compliments now; but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria—or, what is more material to me, your brother.

Jos. Surf. I have not seen either since I left you; but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

Lady Sneer. Ah, my dear Snake! the merit of this belongs to you. But do your brother's distresses increase?

Jos. Surf. Every hour. I am told he has had another execution in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I have ever heard of.

Lady Sneer. Poor Charles!

Jos. Surf. True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one can't help feeling for him. Poor Charles! I'm sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves——

Lady Sneer. O Lud! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

Jos. Surf. Egad, that's true! I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter. However, it is certainly a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed, can be so only by a person of your ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming: I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you. Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

Jos. Surf. Sir, your very devoted.—[Exit SNAKE.] Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any further confidence in that fellow.

Lady Sneer. Why so?

Jos. Surf. I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

Lady Sneer. And do you think he would betray us?

Jos. Surf. Nothing more likely: take my word for't, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faithful even to his own villainy. Ah, Maria!

Enter MARIA

Lady Sneer. Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

Mar. Oh! there's that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's, with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out, and ran hither to avoid them.

Lady Sneer. Is that all?

Jos. Surf. If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

Lady Sneer. Nay, now you are severe; for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard you were here. But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done, that you should avoid him so?

Mar. Oh, he has done nothing—but 'tis for what he has said: his conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

Jos. Surf. Ay, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him; for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend; and his uncle's as bad.

Lady Sneer. Nay, but we should make allowance; Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

Mar. For my part, I own, madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice. What do you think, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Surf. Certainly, madam; to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

Lady Sneer. Psha! there's no possibility of being witty without a little ill nature: the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick. What's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Surf. To be sure, madam; that conversation, where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, will ever appear tedious and insipid.

Mar. Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable; but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalry, and a thousand motives to depreciate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one.

Re-enter SERVANT

Ser. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

Lady Sneer. Beg her to walk in.—[*Exit SERVANT.*] Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste; for, though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best natured and best sort of woman.

Mar. Yes, with a very gross affectation of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Jos. Surf. P' faith that's true, Lady Sneerwell: whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

Lady Sneer. Hush!—here she is!

Enter MRS. CANDOUR

Mrs. Can. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century?—Mr. Surface, what news do you hear?—though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

Jos. Surf. Just so, indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. Oh, Maria! child—what, is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume—the town talks of nothing else.

Mar. I am very sorry, ma'am, the town has so little to do.

Mrs. Can. True, true, child: but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn, from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

Mar. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

Mrs. Can. Very true, child: but what's to be done? People will talk—there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filigree Flirt. But, Lord! there's no minding what one hears; though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

Mar. Such reports are highly scandalous.

Mrs. Can. So they are, child—shameful, shameful! But the world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill nature of people, that they say her uncle stopped her last week, just as she was stepping into the York Mail with her dancing-master.

Mar. I'll answer for't there are no grounds for that report.

Mrs. Can. Ah, no foundation in the world, I dare swear; no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month, of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino—though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

Jos. Surf. The licence of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

Mar. 'Tis so; but, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

Mrs. Can. To be sure they are ; tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers—'tis an old observation, and a very true one : but what 's to be done, as I said before ? how will you prevent people from talking ? To-day, Mrs. Clackitt assured me, Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted that a certain widow, in the next street, had got rid of her dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner. And at the same time Miss Tattle, who was by, affirmed that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame ; and that Sir Harry Bouquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar provocation. But, Lord, do you think I would report these things ! No, no ! tale-bearers, as I said before, are just as bad as the tale-makers.

Jos. Surf. Ah ! Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your forbearance and good nature !

Mrs. Can. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs ; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance I own I always love to think the best. By-the-by, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined ?

Jos. Surf. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. Ah ! I heard so—but you must tell him to keep up his spirits ; everybody almost is in the same way : Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickit—all up, I hear, within this week ; so, if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation.

Jos. Surf. Doubtless, ma'am—a very great one.

Re-enter SERVANT

Ser. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite. [*Exit*

Lady Sneer. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you ; positively you sha'n't escape.

Enter CRABTREE and SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE

Crab. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite ? Egad, ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too. Isn't he, Lady Sneerwell ?

Sir Ben. Oh fie, uncle !