

Crab. Nay, egad, it's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymers in the kingdom. Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire?—Do, Benjamin, repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore at Mrs. Drowzie's conversazione. Come now; your first is the name of a fish, your second a great naval commander, and—

Sir Ben. Uncle, now—pr'ythee—

Crab. I' faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise you to hear how ready he is at all these sort of things.

Lady Sneer. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish any thing.

Sir Ben. To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. However, I have some love elegies, which, when favoured with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public.

[Pointing to MARIA]

Crab. [To MARIA.] 'Fore heaven, ma'am, they'll immortalise you!—you will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharissa.

Sir Ben. [To MARIA.] Yes, madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall meander through a meadow of margin. 'Fore Gad they will be the most elegant things of their kind!

Crab. But, ladies, that's true—have you heard the news?

Mrs. Can. What, sir, do you mean the report of—

Crab. No, ma'am, that's not it.—Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Can. Impossible.

Crab. Ask Sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. 'Tis very true, ma'am: every thing is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

Crab. Yes—and they do say there were pressing reasons for it.

Lady Sneer. Why, I have heard something of this before.

Mrs. Can. It can't be—and I wonder any one should believe such a story of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

Sir Ben. O Lud! ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and

so reserved, that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Can. Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny sickly reputation, that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robuster characters of a hundred prudes.

Sir Ben. True, madam, there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution, who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

Mrs. Can. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

Crab. That they do, I'll be sworn, ma'am. Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge?—Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

Sir Ben. Oh, to be sure!—the most whimsical circumstance.

Lady Sneer. How was it, pray?

Crab. Why, one evening, at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a young lady in company, I have known instances of it; for Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins. "What!" cried the Lady Dowager Dundizzy (who, you know, is as deaf as a post), "has Miss Piper had twins?" This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughter. However, 'twas the next morning everywhere reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and a girl: and in less than a week there were some people who could name the father, and the farmhouse where the babies were put to nurse.

Lady Sneer. Strange, indeed!

Crab. Matter of fact, I assure you. O Lud! Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

Jos. Surf. Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

Crab. He has been in the East Indies a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe? Sad comfort,

whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on!

Jos. Surf. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him. He may reform.

Sir Ben. To be sure he may: for my part, I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say: and, though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

Crab. That's true, egad, nephew. If the Old Jewry was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman: no man more popular there, 'fore Gad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine; and that, whenever he is sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

Sir Ben. Yet no man lives in greater splendour. They tell me, when he entertains his friends he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities; have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Jos. Surf. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

Mar. [*Aside.*] Their malice is intolerable!—[*Aloud.*] Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning: I'm not very well. [*Exit*]

Mrs. Can. O dear! she changes colour very much.

Lady Sneer. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her; she may want your assistance.

Mrs. Can. That I will, with all my soul, ma'am.—Poor dear girl, who knows what her situation may be! [*Exit*]

Lady Sneer. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

Sir Ben. The young lady's *penchant* is obvious.

Crab. But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that: follow her, and put her into good humour. Repeat her some of your own verses. Come, I'll assist you.

Sir Ben. Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you; but depend on't your brother is utterly undone.

Crab. O Lud, ay! undone as ever man was—can't raise a guinea!

Sir Ben. And every thing sold, I'm told, that was movable.

Crab. I have seen one that was at his house. Not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscots.

Sir Ben. And I'm very sorry also to hear some bad stories against him. [Going]

Crab. Oh, he has done many mean things, that's certain.

Sir Ben. But, however, as he's your brother—

[Going]

Crab. We'll tell you all another opportunity.

[Exeunt CRABTREE and SIR BENJAMIN]

Lady Sneer. Ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

Jos. Surf. And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than Maria.

Lady Sneer. I doubt her affections are further engaged than we imagine. But the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are, and we shall have an opportunity of observing further; in the meantime, I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study sentiment. [Exeunt]

SCENE II.—A Room in SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE

Sir Pet. When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men—and I have been the most miserable dog ever since! We tift a little going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. Yet I chose with caution—a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown, nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race ball. Yet she now plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of fashion and the town, with as ready a grace as if she never had seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square! I am sneered at by all my acquaintance, and paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humours; yet the worst of it is, I doubt I

love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it.

Enter ROWLEY

Row. Oh! Sir Peter, your servant: how is it with you, sir?

Sir Pet. Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Row. What can have happened since yesterday?

Sir Pet. A good question to a married man!

Row. Nay, I'm sure, Sir Peter, your lady can't be the cause of your uneasiness.

Sir Pet. Why, has any body told you she was dead?

Row. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

Sir Pet. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am myself the sweetest-tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper; and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

Row. Indeed!

Sir Pet. Ay; and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong! But Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage the perverseness of her disposition. Then, to complete my vexation, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power of a father over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband; meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

Row. You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen. I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of the elder. For Charles, my life on't! he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father, once my honoured master, was, at his years, nearly as wild a spark; yet, when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

Sir Pet. You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both, till their uncle Sir Oliver's liberality gave them an early independence: of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment,

and acts up to the sentiments he professes ; but, for the other, take my word for 't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance. Ah ! my old friend, Sir Oliver, will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

Row. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

Sir Pet. What ! let me hear.

Row. Sir Oliver is arrived, and at this moment in town.

Sir Pet. How ! you astonish me ! I thought you did not expect him this month.

Row. I did not : but his passage has been remarkably quick.

Sir Pet. Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'Tis sixteen years since we met. We have had many a day together :—but does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival ?

Row. Most strictly. He means, before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

Sir Pet. Ah ! there needs no art to discover their merits ;—however he shall have his way ; but, pray, does he know I am married ?

Row. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

Sir Pet. What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption ! Ah ! Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together, but he has been steady to his text. Well, he must be soon at my house, though—I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

Row. By no means.

Sir Pet. For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes ; so I'll have him think, Lord forgive me ! that we are a very happy couple.

Row. I understand you :—but then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

Sir Pet. Egad, and so we must—and that 's impossible. Ah ! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves—no—the crime carries its punishment along with it. [Exeunt

ACT TWO

SCENE I.—A Room in SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House

*Enter SIR PETER and LADY TEAZLE**Sir Pet.* Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!*Lady Teaz.* Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please! but I ought to have my own way in every thing, and, what's more, I will too. What! though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.*Sir Pet.* Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?*Lady Teaz.* Authority! No, to be sure:—if you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me: I am sure you were old enough.*Sir Pet.* Old enough!—ay, there it is. Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance!*Lady Teaz.* My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.*Sir Pet.* No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon into a greenhouse, and give a *fête champêtre* at Christmas.*Lady Teaz.* And am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet!*Sir Pet.* Oons! madam—if you had been born to this I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.*Lady Teaz.* No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.*Sir Pet.* Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style—the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first sitting at your tambour, in pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side, your hair combed smooth over a

roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted, of your own working.

Lady Teaz. Oh, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, ma'am, 'twas so indeed.

Lady Teaz. And then, you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up: to play Pope Joan with the curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

Sir Pet. I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach—*vis-à-vis*—and three powdered footmen before your chair; and, in the summer, a pair of white cats to draw you to Kensington Gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, on a docked coach-horse.

Lady Teaz. No—I swear I never did that: I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

Sir Pet. This, madam, was your situation: and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank—in short, I have made you my wife.

Lady Teaz. Well, then, and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation, that is—

Sir Pet. My widow, I suppose?

Lady Teaz. Hem! hem!

Sir Pet. I thank you, madam—but don't flatter yourself; for, though your ill conduct may disturb my peace of mind, it shall never break my heart, I promise you; however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady Teaz. Then why will you endeavour to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

Sir Pet. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

Lady Teaz. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion!

Sir Pet. The fashion, indeed! what had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

Lady Teaz. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Pet. Ay—there again—taste! Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

Lady Teaz. That's very true, indeed, Sir Peter! and, after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, since we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir Pet. Ay, there's another precious circumstance—a charming set of acquaintance you have made there!

Lady Teaz. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

Sir Pet. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose any body should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

Lady Teaz. What, would you restrain the freedom of speech?

Sir Pet. Ah! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

Lady Teaz. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace.

Sir Pet. Grace indeed!

Lady Teaz. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse: when I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humour; and I take it for granted they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

Sir Pet. Well, well, I 'll call in, just to look after my own character.

Lady Teaz. Then, indeed, you must make haste after me, or you 'll be too late. So good-bye to ye. [Exit

Sir Pet. So—I have gained much by my intended expostulation! Yet with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasantly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me.

[Exit

SCENE II.—A Room in LADY SNEERWELL'S House

LADY SNEERWELL, MRS. CANDOUR, CRABTREE,
SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, and JOSEPH SURFACE, *discovered*

Lady Sneer. Nay, positively, we will hear it.

Jos. Surf. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

Sir Ben. O plague on 't, uncle! 'tis mere nonsense.

Crab. No, no; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore!

Sir Ben. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance. You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Betty Curricle was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of duodecimo phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which, I took out my pocket-book, and in one moment produced the following:—

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;
Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies:
To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

Crab. There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback too.

Jos. Surf. A very Phœbus, mounted—indeed, Sir Benjamin!

Sir Ben. Oh dear, sir! trifles—trifles.

Enter LADY TEAZLE and MARIA

Mrs. Can. I must have a copy.

Lady Sneer. Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter?

Lady Teaz. I believe he 'll wait on your ladyship presently.

Lady Sneer. Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall sit down to piquet with Mr. Surface.

Mar. I take very little pleasure in cards—however, I 'll do as your ladyship pleases.

Lady Teaz. I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her; I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came. [Aside

Mrs. Can. Now, I 'll die; but you are so scandalous, I 'll forswear your society.

Lady Teaz. What 's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

Mrs. Can. They 'll not allow our friend Miss Vermilion to be handsome.

Lady Sneer. Oh, surely she is a pretty woman.

Crab. I am very glad you think so, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. She has a charming fresh colour.

Lady Teaz. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs. Can. Oh, fie! I 'll swear her colour is natural: I have seen it come and go!

Lady Teaz. I dare swear you have, ma'am: it goes off at night, and comes again in the morning.

Sir Ben. True, ma'am, it not only comes and goes; but, what 's more, egad, her maid can fetch and carry it!

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha! how I hate to hear you talk so! But surely, now, her sister is, or was, very handsome.

Crab. Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! she 's six-and-fifty if she 's an hour!

Mrs. Can. Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost—and I don't think she looks more.

Sir Ben. Ah! there 's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that 's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre caulks her wrinkles.

Sir Ben. Nay, now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, 'tis not that she paints so ill—but, when she has finished her face, she joins it on so badly to her neck that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur may see at once that the head is modern, though the trunk 's antique.

Crab. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, nephew!

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha! Well, you make me laugh; but I vow I hate you for it. What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir Ben. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

Lady Teaz. Yes; and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on a-jar, as it were—thus. [Shows her teeth]

Mrs. Can. How can you be so ill-natured?

Lady Teaz. Nay, I allow even that 's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture

of a poor's-box, and all her words appear to slide out edge-wise, as it were—thus: *How do you do, madam? Yes, madam.*

[*Mimics*

Lady Sneer. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

Lady Teaz. In defence of a friend it is but justice. But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE

Sir Pet. Ladies, your most obedient.—[*Aside.*] Mercy on me, here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose.

Mrs. Can. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious—and Lady Teazle as bad as any one.

Sir Pet. That must be very distressing to you, indeed, Mrs. Candour.

Mrs. Can. Oh, they will allow good qualities to nobody; not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.

Lady Teaz. What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night?

Mrs. Can. Nay, her bulk is her misfortune; and, when she takes so much pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

Lady Sneer. That 's very true, indeed.

Lady Teaz. Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small whey; laces herself by pulleys; and often, in the hottest noon in summer, you may see her on a little squat pony, with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's and puffing round the Ring on a full trot.

Mrs. Can. I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

Sir Pet. Yes, a good defence, truly.

Mrs. Can. Truly, Lady Teazle is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

Crab. Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious—an awkward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

Mrs. Can. Positively you shall not be so very severe. Miss Sallow is a near relation of mine by marriage, and, as for her person, great allowance is to be made; for, let me tell you, a woman labours under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl of six-and-thirty.

Lady Sneer. Though, surely, she is handsome still—and

for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candle-light, it is not to be wondered at.

Mrs. Can. True, and then as to her manner; upon my word I think it is particularly graceful, considering she never had the least education; for you know her mother was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

Sir Ben. Ah! you are both of you too good-natured!

Sir Pet. Yes, damned good-natured! This their own relation! mercy on me! [Aside]

Mrs. Can. For my part, I own I cannot bear to hear a friend ill spoken of.

Sir Pet. No, to be sure!

Sir Ben. Oh! you are of a moral turn. Mrs. Candour and I can sit for an hour and hear Lady Stucco talk sentiment.

Lady Teaz. Nay, I vow Lady Stucco is very well with the dessert after dinner; for she's just like the French fruit one cracks for mottoes—made up of paint and proverb.

Mrs. Can. Well, I will never join in ridiculing a friend; and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle, and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical on beauty.

Crab. Oh, to be sure! she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

Sir Ben. So she has, indeed—an Irish front——

Crab. Caledonian locks——

Sir Ben. Dutch nose——

Crab. Austrian lips——

Sir Ben. Complexion of a Spaniard——

Crab. And teeth à la Chinoise——

Sir Ben. In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa—where no two guests are of a nation——

Crab. Or a congress at the close of a general war—wherein all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Mercy on my life!—a person they dine with twice a week! [Aside]

Mrs. Can. Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so—for give me leave to say, that Mrs. Ogle——

Sir Pet. Madam, madam, I beg your pardon—there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when I

tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you 'll not take her part.

Lady Sneer. Ha! ha! ha! well said, Sir Peter! but you are a cruel creature—too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit in others.

Sir Pet. Ah, madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your ladyship is aware of.

Lady Teaz. True, Sir Peter; I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

Sir Ben. Or rather, suppose them man and wife, because one seldom sees them together.

Lady Teaz. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by parliament.

Sir Pet. 'Fore heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as poaching on manors, and pass an act for the preservation of fame, as well as game, I believe many would thank them for the bill.

Lady Sneer. O Lud! Sir Peter; would you deprive us of our privileges?

Sir Pet. Ay, madam; and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputations, but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

Lady Sneer. Go, you monster!

Mrs. Can. But, surely, you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

Sir Pet. Yes, madam, I would have law merchant for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crab. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

Lady Sneer. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

Enter SERVANT, who whispers SIR PETER

Sir Pet. I 'll be with them directly.—[*Exit SERVANT.*] I 'll get away unperceived.

Lady Sneer. Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us?

Sir Pet. Your ladyship must excuse me; I 'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me. [Exit

Sir Ben. Well—certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being: I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily if he were not your husband.

Lady Teaz. Oh, pray don't mind that; come, do let's hear them. [*Exeunt all but JOSEPH SURFACE and MARIA*]

Jos. Surf. Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

Mar. How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humour, Heaven grant me a double portion of dulness!

Jos. Surf. Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are; they have no malice at heart.

Mar. Then is their conduct still more contemptible; for, in my opinion, nothing could excuse the intemperance of their tongues but a natural and uncontrollable bitterness of mind.

Jos. Surf. Undoubtedly, madam; and it has always been a sentiment of mine, that to propagate a malicious truth wantonly is more despicable than to falsify from revenge. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others, and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Mar. Why will you distress me by renewing this subject?

Jos. Surf. Ah, Maria! you would not treat me thus, and oppose your guardian, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favoured rival.

Mar. Ungenerously urged! But, whatever my sentiments are for that unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother.

Jos. Surf. Nay, but, Maria, do not leave me with a frown; by all that's honest, I swear— [*Kneels*]

Re-enter LADY TEAZLE behind

[*Aside.*] Gad's life, here's Lady Teazle.—[*Aloud to MARIA.*] You must not—no, you shall not—for, though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle—

Mar. Lady Teazle!

Jos. Surf. Yet were Sir Peter to suspect—

Lady Teaz. [*Coming forward.*] What is this, pray?

Does he take her for me?—Child, you are wanted in the next room.—[Exit MARIA.] What is all this, pray?

Jos. Surf. Oh, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I have for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavouring to reason with her when you came in.

Lady Teaz. Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning—do you usually argue on your knees?

Jos. Surf. Oh, she's a child, and I thought a little bombast—But, Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

Lady Teaz. No, no; I begin to think it would be imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion requires.

Jos. Surf. True—a mere Platonic cicisbeo, what every wife is entitled to.

Lady Teaz. Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion. However, I have so many of my country prejudices left, that though Sir Peter's ill humour may vex me ever so, it never shall provoke me to—

Jos. Surf. The only revenge in your power. Well, I applaud your moderation.

Lady Teaz. Go—you are an insinuating wretch! But we shall be missed—let us join the company.

Jos. Surf. But we had best not return together.

Lady Teaz. Well, don't stay; for Maria sha'n't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you. [Exit

Jos. Surf. A curious dilemma, truly, my politics have run me into! I wanted, at first, only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last. [Exit

SCENE III.—A Room in SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE and ROWLEY

Sir Oliv. Ha! ha! ha! so my old friend is married, hey?—a young wife out of the country. Ha! ha! ha!

that he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into a husband at last!

Row. But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

Sir Oliv. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance!—Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles—never sees him, hey?

Row. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has industriously been led into by a scandalous society in the neighbourhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name. Whereas, the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favourite.

Sir Oliv. Ay, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you! No, no; if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Row. Then my life on 't, you will reclaim him. Ah, sir, it gives me new life to find that your heart is not turned against him, and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

Sir Oliv. What! shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths; and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was?

Row. Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. But here comes Sir Peter.

Sir Oliv. Egad, so he does! Mercy on me! he's greatly altered, and seems to have a settled married look! One may read husband in his face at this distance!

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE

Sir Pet. Ha! Sir Oliver—my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!

Sir Oliv. Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter! and i' faith I am glad to find you well, believe me!

Sir Pet. Oh! 'tis a long time since we met—fifteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

Sir Oliv. Ay, I have had my share. But, what! I find you are married, hey, my old boy? Well, well, it can't be helped; and so—I wish you joy with all my heart!

Sir Pet. Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver.—Yes, I have entered into—the happy state; but we'll not talk of that now.

Sir Oliv. True, true, Sir Peter; old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting. No, no, no.

Row. [*Aside to SIR OLIVER.*] Take care, pray, sir.

Sir Oliv. Well, so one of my nephews is a wild rogue, hey?

Sir Pet. Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there; he's a lost young man, indeed. However, his brother will make you amends; Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be—every body in the world speaks well of him.

Sir Oliv. I am sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Every body speaks well of him! Psha! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

Sir Pet. What, Sir Oliver! do you blame him for not making enemies?

Sir Oliv. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

Sir Pet. Well, well—you'll be convinced when you know him. 'Tis edification to hear him converse; he professes the noblest sentiments.

Sir Oliv. Oh, plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly. But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter; I don't mean to defend Charles's errors; but, before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts; and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

Row. And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

Sir Pet. Oh, my life on Joseph's honour!

Sir Oliv. Well—come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink the lad's health, and tell you our scheme.

Sir Pet. Allons, then!

Sir Oliv. And don't, Sir Peter, be so severe against your old friend's son. Odds my life! I am not sorry that he

has run out of the course a little ; for my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth ; 'tis like ivy round a sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree.

[*Exeunt*]

ACT THREE

SCENE I.—A Room in SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, and ROWLEY

Sir Pet. Well, then, we will see this fellow first, and have our wine afterwards. But how is this, Master Rowley ? I don't see the jet of your scheme.

Row. Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, whom I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was once a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter, since his confinement, both to Mr. Surface and Charles ; from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do : and he is, at this time, endeavouring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

Sir Oliv. Ah ! he is my brother's son.

Sir Pet. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to—

Row. Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends ; and, as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging, at least, of the benevolence of their dispositions : and believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it,—

“a heart to pity, and a hand,
Open as day, for melting charity.”

Sir Pet. Psha ! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either, when he has nothing left to give ? Well, well, make the trial, if you please. But where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine relative to Charles's affairs ?

Row. Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence.—This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done every thing in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

Sir Pet. Pray let us have him in.

Row. Desire Mr. Moses to walk upstairs.

[Calls to SERVANT

Sir Pet. But, pray, why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

Row. Oh, I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived; so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests. I have also another evidence in my power, one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall shortly produce to remove some of your prejudices, Sir Peter, relative to Charles and Lady Teazle.

Sir Pet. I have heard too much on that subject.

Row. Here comes the honest Israelite.

Enter MOSES.

—This is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew Charles.

Mos. Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him; but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliv. That was unlucky, truly; for you have had no opportunity of showing your talents.

Mos. None at all; I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliv. Unfortunate, indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses?

Mos. Yes, he knows that. This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will, I believe, advance him some money.

Sir Pet. What, one Charles has never had money from before?

Mos. Yes, Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

Sir Pet. Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me!—Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium?

Mos. Not at all.

Sir Pet. Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old romancing

tale of a poor relation: go with my friend Moses, and represent Premium, and then, I'll answer for it, you'll see your nephew in all his glory.

Sir Oliv. Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.

Sir Pet. True—so you may.

Row. This is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure. However, Moses, you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful?

Mos. You may depend upon me.—[*Looks at his watch.*] This is near the time I was to have gone.

Sir Oliv. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses.—But hold! I have forgot one thing—how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Mos. There's no need—the principal is Christian.

Sir Oliv. Is he? I'm very sorry to hear it. But, then again, ain't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money-lender?

Sir Pet. Not at all; 'twould not be out of character, if you went in your own carriage—would it, Moses?

Mos. Not in the least.

Sir Oliv. Well, but how must I talk? there's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.

Sir Pet. Oh, there's not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands. Hey, Moses?

Mos. Yes, that's a very great point.

Sir Oliv. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent. on the loan, at least.

Mos. If you ask him no more than that, you'll be discovered immediately.

Sir Oliv. Hey! what, the plague! how much then?

Mos. That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent.; but if you find him in great distress, and wants the moneys very bad, you may ask double.

Sir Pet. A good honest trade you're learning, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. Truly, I think so—and not unprofitable.

Mos. Then, you know, you haven't the moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of a friend.

Sir Oliv. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

Mos. And your friend is an unconscionable dog: but you can't help that.

Sir Oliv. My friend an unconscionable dog, is he?

Mos. Yes, and he himself has not the moneys by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

Sir Oliv. He is forced to sell stock at a great loss, is he? Well, that's very kind of him.

Sir Pet. I'faith, Sir Oliver—Mr. Premium, I mean—you'll soon be master of the trade. But, Moses! would not you have him run out a little against the annuity bill? That would be in character, I should think.

Mos. Very much.

Row. And lament that a young man now must be at years of discretion before he is suffered to ruin himself?

Mos. Ay, great pity!

Sir Pet. And abuse the public for allowing merit to an act whose only object is to snatch misfortune and imprudence from the rapacious gripe of usury, and give the minor a chance of inheriting his estate without being undone by coming into possession.

Sir Oliv. So, so—Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

Sir Pet. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

Sir Oliv. Oh, never fear! my tutor appears so able, that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner.

[Exit with MOSES]

Sir Pet. So, now, I think Sir Oliver will be convinced: you are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

Row. No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say presently. I see Maria, and want to speak with her.—[Exit ROWLEY.] I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph—I am determined I will do it—he will give me his opinion sincerely.

Enter MARIA

So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

Mar. No, sir; he was engaged.

Sir Pet. Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

Mar. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely—you compel me to declare that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

Sir Pet. So—here's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

Mar. This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him: I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable, if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

Sir Pet. Well, well, pity him as much as you please; but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Mar. Never to his brother!

Sir Pet. Go, perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is: don't compel me to inform you of it.

Mar. I can only say, you shall not have just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute; but must cease to think you so, when you would compel me to be miserable.

[*Exit*

Sir Pet. Was ever man so crossed as I am, every thing conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight, before her father, a hale and hearty man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter.—[*Lady Teazle sings without.*] But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good humour. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!

Enter LADY TEAZLE

Lady Teaz. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarrelling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill-humoured when I am not by.

Sir Pet. Ah, Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good-humoured at all times.

Lady Teaz. I am sure I wish I had; for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at this moment. Do be good-humoured now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

Sir Pet. Two hundred pounds; what, ain't I to be in a good humour without paying for it! But speak to me thus, and i' faith there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it; but seal me a bond for the repayment.

Lady Teaz. Oh, no—there—my note of hand will do as well. [Offering her hand]

Sir Pet. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly to surprise you: but shall we always live thus, hey?

Lady Teaz. If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling, provided you'll own you were tired first.

Sir Pet. Well—then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

Lady Teaz. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you. You look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would: and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow, who would deny me nothing—didn't you?

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, and you were as kind and attentive—

Lady Teaz. Ay, so I was, and would always take your part, when my acquaintance used to abuse you, and turn you into ridicule.

Sir Pet. Indeed!

Lady Teaz. Ay, and when my cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said, I didn't think you so ugly by any means.

Sir Pet. Thank you.

Lady Teaz. And I dared say you'd make a very good sort of a husband.

Sir Pet. And you prophesied right; and we shall now be the happiest couple—

Lady Teaz. And never differ again?

Sir Pet. No, never!—though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very

seriously; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always began first.

Lady Teaz. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter: indeed, you always gave the provocation.

Sir Pet. Now see, my angel! take care—contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

Lady Teaz. Then don't you begin it, my love!

Sir Pet. There, now! you—you are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

Lady Teaz. Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason, my dear—

Sir Pet. There! now you want to quarrel again.

Lady Teaz. No, I'm sure I don't: but, if you will be so peevish—

Sir Pet. There now! who begins first?

Lady Teaz. Why, you, to be sure. I said nothing—but there's no bearing your temper.

Sir Pet. No, no, madam: the fault's in your own temper.

Lady Teaz. Ay, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

Sir Pet. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.

Lady Teaz. You are a great bear, I'm sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir Pet. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more!

Lady Teaz. So much the better.

Sir Pet. No, no, madam: 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you—a pert, rural coquette, that had refused half the honest 'squires in the neighbourhood.

Lady Teaz. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you—an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty, only because he never could meet with any one who would have him.

Sir Pet. Ay, ay, madam: but you were pleased enough to listen to me: you never had such an offer before.

Lady Teaz. No! didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who every body said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broken his neck since we have been married.

Sir Pet. I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful—but there's an end of every thing.

I believe you capable of every thing that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, you and Charles are, not without grounds—

Lady Teaz. Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

Sir Pet. Very well, madam! very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

Lady Teaz. Agreed! agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple and never differ again, you know: ha! ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you—so, bye! bye! [Exit

Sir Pet. Plagues and tortures! can't I make her angry either? Oh, I am the most miserable fellow! But I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper: no! she may break my heart, but she sha'n't keep her temper. [Exit

SCENE II.—A Room in CHARLES SURFACE'S House

Enter TRIP, MOSES, and SIR OLIVER SURFACE

Trip. Here, Master Moses! if you'll stay a moment, I'll try whether—what's the gentleman's name?

Sir Oliv. Mr. Moses, what is my name? [Aside to MOSES

Mos. Mr. Premium.

Trip. Premium—very well. [Exit, taking snuff

Sir Oliv. To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what!—sure, this was my brother's house?

Mos. Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, &c., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliv. In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

Re-enter TRIP

Trip. My master says you must wait, gentlemen: he has company, and can't speak with you yet.

Sir Oliv. If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not send such a message?

Trip. Yes, yes, sir; he knows you are here—I did not forget little Premium: no, no, no.

Sir Olive. Very well; and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

Trip. Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

Sir Olive. Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess?

Trip. Why, yes—here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough; but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear—and not very great either—but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

Sir Oliv. Bags and bouquets! halters and bastinades! [Aside]

Trip. And à propos, Moses, have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

Sir Oliv. Wants to raise money too!—mercy on me! Has his distresses too, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns. [Aside]

Mos. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip.

Trip. Good lack, you surprise me! My friend Brush has indorsed it, and I thought when he put his name at the back of a bill 'twas the same as cash.

Mos. No, 'twouldn't do.

Trip. A small sum—but twenty pounds. Hark'ee, Moses, do you think you couldn't get it me by way of annuity?

Sir Oliv. An annuity! ha! ha! a footman raise money by way of annuity! Well done, luxury, egad! [Aside]

Mos. Well, but you must insure your place.

Trip. Oh, with all my heart! I'll insure my place, and my life, too, if you please.

Sir Oliv. It's more than I would your neck. [Aside]

Mos. But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately; but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes, with equity of redemption before November—or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit on the blue and silver;—these, I should think, Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles, as a collateral security—hey, my little fellow?

Mos. Well, well.

[Bell rings]

Trip. Egad, I heard the bell! I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you. Don't forget the annuity, little

Moses! This way, gentlemen, I'll insure my place, you know.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] If the man be a shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed! [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III.—*Another Room in the same*

CHARLES SURFACE, SIR HARRY BUMPER, CARELESS, and GENTLEMEN, *discovered drinking*

Chas. Surf. 'Fore heaven, 'tis true!—there's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but, plague on't, they won't drink.

Care. It is so, indeed, Charles! they give into all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit. Oh, certainly society suffers by it intolerably! for now, instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spa-water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulency of champagne, without its spirit or flavour.

1 *Gent.* But what are they to do who love play better than wine?

Care. True! there's Sir Harry diets himself for gaming, and is now under a hazard regimen.

Chas. Surf. Then he'll have the worst of it. What! you wouldn't train a horse to the course by keeping him from corn? For my part, egad, I am never so successful as when I am a little merry: let me throw on a bottle of champagne, and I never lose.

All. Hey, what?

Chas. Surf. At least I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

2 *Gent.* Ay, that I believe.

Chas. Surf. And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats at the top is the maid that has bewitched you.

Care. Now then, Charles, be honest, and give us your real favourite.

Chas. Surf. Why, I have withheld her only in compassion

to you. If I toast her, you must give a round of her peers, which is impossible—on earth.

Care. Oh! then we'll find some canonised vestals or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant!

Chas. Surf. Here then, bumpers, you rogues! bumpers! Maria! Maria!—

Sir Har. Maria who?

Chas. Surf. Oh, damn the surname!—'tis too formal to be registered in Love's calendar—Maria!

All. Maria!

Chas. Surf. But now, Sir Harry, beware, we must have beauty superlative!

Care. Nay, never study, Sir Harry: we'll stand to the toast, though your mistress should want an eye, and you know you have a song will excuse you.

Sir Har. Egad, so I have! and I'll give him the song instead of the lady. [*Sings*

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen;

Here's to the widow of fifty;

Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,

And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

Chorus. Let the toast pass,—

Drink to the lass,

I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize;

Now to the maid who has none, sir:

Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,

And here's to the nymph with but one, sir.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow:

Now to her that's as brown as a berry:

Here's to the wife with a face full of woe,

And now to the damsel that's merry.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,

Young or ancient, I care not a feather;

So fill a pint bumper quite up to the brim,

So fill up your glasses, nay, fill to the brim,

And let us e'en toast them together.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

All. Bravo! bravo!

Enter TRIP, and whispers CHARLES SURFACE

Chas. Surf. Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little.—Careless, take the chair, will you?

Care. Nay, pr'ythee, Charles, what now? This is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose, has dropped in by chance?

Chas. Surf. No, faith! To tell you the truth, 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

Care. Oh, damn it! let 's have the Jew in.

1 *Gent.* Ay, and the broker too, by all means.

2 *Gent.* Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker.

Chas. Surf. Egad, with all my heart!—Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in.—[*Exit TRIP.*] Though there 's one of them a stranger, I can tell you.

Care. Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy, and perhaps they 'll grow conscientious.

Chas. Surf. Oh, hang 'em, no! wine does but draw forth a man's natural qualities; and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery.

Re-enter TRIP, with SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES

Chas. Surf. So, honest Moses; walk in, pray, Mr. Premium—that 's the gentleman's name, isn't it, Moses?

Mos. Yes, sir.

Chas. Surf. Set chairs, Trip.—Sit down, Mr. Premium.—Glasses, Trip.—[*TRIP gives chairs and glasses, and exit.*] Sit down, Moses.—Come, Mr. Premium, I 'll give you a sentiment; here 's *Success to usury!*—Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

Mos. Success to usury! [Drinks

Care. Right, Moses—usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir Oliv. Then here 's—All the success it deserves!

[Drinks

Care. No, no, that won't do! Mr. Premium, you have demurred at the toast, and must drink it in a pint bumper.

1 *Gent.* A pint bumper, at least.

Mos. Oh, pray, sir, consider—Mr. Premium 's a gentleman.

Care. And therefore loves good wine.

2 *Gent.* Give Moses a quart glass—this is mutiny, and a high contempt for the chair.

Care. Here, now for 't! I'll see justice done, to the last drop of my bottle.

Sir Oliv. Nay, pray, gentlemen—I did not expect this usage.

Chas. Surf. No, hang it, you shan't; Mr. Premium's a stranger.

Sir Oliv. Odd! I wish I was well out of their company.

Care. Plague on 'em, then! if they won't drink, we'll not sit down with them. Come, Harry, the dice are in the next room.—Charles, you'll join us when you have finished your business with the gentlemen? [*Aside*]

Chas. Surf. I will! I will!—[*Exeunt SIR HARRY BUMPER and GENTLEMEN; CARELESS following.*] Careless!

Care. [*Returning.*] Well!

Chas. Surf. Perhaps I may want you.

Care. Oh, you know I am always ready; word, note, or bond, 'tis all the same to me. [*Exit*]

Mos. Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honour and secrecy; and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is—

Chas. Surf. Psha! have done. Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression; he'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this: I am an extravagant young fellow who wants to borrow money; you I take to be a prudent old fellow, who have got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent. sooner than not have it; and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take a hundred if you can get it. Now, sir, you see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without farther ceremony.

Sir Oliv. Exceeding frank, upon my word. I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

Chas. Surf. Oh no, sir! plain dealing in business I always think best.

Sir Oliv. Sir, I like you the better for it. However, you are mistaken in one thing; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend; but then he's an unconscionable dog. Isn't he, Moses? And must sell stock to accommodate you. Mustn't he, Moses?

Mos. Yes, indeed! You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie!

Chas. Surf. Right. People that speak truth generally do. But these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What! I know money isn't to be bought without paying for 't!

Sir Oliv. Well, but what security could you give? You have no land, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. Not a mole-hill, nor a twig, but what's in the bough-pots out of the window!

Sir Oliv. Nor any stock, I presume?

Chas. Surf. Nothing but live stock—and that's only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connexions?

Sir Oliv. Why, to say truth, I am.

Chas. Surf. Then you must know that I have a devilish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations.

Sir Oliv. That you have a wealthy uncle, I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

Chas. Surf. Oh no!—there can be no doubt. They tell me I'm a prodigious favourite, and that he talks of leaving me everything.

Sir Oliv. Indeed! this is the first I've heard of it.

Chas. Surf. Yes, yes, 'tis just so. Moses knows 'tis true; don't you, Moses?

Mos. Oh yes! I'll swear to 't.

Sir Oliv. Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal. [Aside]

Chas. Surf. Now I propose, Mr. Premium, if it's agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life; though at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me, that I give you my word, I should be very sorry to hear that anything had happened to him.

Sir Oliv. Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me—for I might live to a hundred and never see the principal.

Chas. Surf. Oh yes you would! the moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you would come on me for the money.

Sir Oliv. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

Chas. Surf. What! I suppose you're afraid Sir Oliver is too good a life?

Sir Oliv. No, indeed, I am not; though I have heard

he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

Chas. Surf. There again, now, you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor uncle Oliver. Yes, yes, he breaks apace, I'm told—and is so much altered lately that his nearest relations would not know him.

Sir Oliv. No! Ha! ha! ha! so much altered lately that his nearest relations would not know him! Ha! ha! ha! egad—ha! ha! ha!

Chas. Surf. Ha! ha!—you're glad to hear that, little Premium?

Sir Oliv. No, no, I'm not.

Chas. Surf. Yes, yes, you are—ha! ha! ha!—you know that mends your chance.

Sir Oliv. But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over; nay, some say he is actually arrived.

Chas. Surf. Psha! sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no, rely on't he's at this moment at Calcutta. Isn't he, Moses?

Mos. Oh yes, certainly.

Sir Oliv. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority. Haven't I, Moses?

Mos. Yes, most undoubted!

Sir Oliv. But, sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing you could dispose of?

Chas. Surf. How do you mean?

Sir Oliv. For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate.

Chas. Surf. O Lud! that's gone long ago. Moses can tell you how better than I can.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] Good lack! all the family race-cups and corporation-bowls!—[*Aloud.*] Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and compact.

Chas. Surf. Yes, yes, so it was—vastly too much so for a private gentleman. For my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] Mercy upon me! learning that had run in the family like an heir-loom!—[*Aloud.*] Pray, what are become of the books?

Chas. Surf. You must inquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you.

Mos. I know nothing of the books.

Sir Oliv. So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. Not much, indeed; unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors above; and if you have a taste for old paintings, egad, you shall have 'em a bargain!

Sir Oliv. Hey! what the devil! sure, you wouldn't sell your forefathers, would you?

Chas. Surf. Every man of them, to the best bidder.

Sir Oliv. What! your great-uncles and aunts?

Chas. Surf. Ay, and my great-grandfathers and grandmothers too.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] Now I give him up!—[*Aloud.*] What the plague, have you no bowels for your own kindred? Odd's life! do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

Chas. Surf. Nay, my little broker, don't be angry; what need you care, if you have your money's worth?

Sir Oliv. Well, I'll be the purchaser: I think I can dispose of the family canvas.—[*Aside.*] Oh, I'll never forgive him this! never!

Re-enter CARELESS

Care. Come, Charles, what keeps you?

Chas. Surf. I can't come yet. I'faith, we are going to have a sale above stairs; here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors!

Care. Oh, burn your ancestors!

Chas. Surf. No, he may do that afterwards, if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you; egad, you shall be auctioneer—so come along with us.

Care. Oh, have with you, if that's the case. I can handle a hammer as well as a dice-box! Going! going!

Sir Oliv. Oh, the profligates! [*Aside*

Chas. Surf. Come, Moses, you shall be appraiser, if we want one. Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business?

Sir Oliv. Oh yes I do, vastly! Ha! ha! ha! yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction—ha! ha!—[*Aside.*] Oh, the prodigal!

Chas. Surf. To be sure! when a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance, if he can't make free with his own relations? [Exeunt]

Sir Oliv. I'll never forgive him; never! never!

ACT FOUR

SCENE I.—A Picture Room in CHARLES SURFACE'S House

Enter CHARLES SURFACE, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, MOSES, and CARELESS

Chas. Surf. Walk in, gentlemen, pray walk in;—here they are, the family of the Surfaces, up to the Conquest.

Sir Oliv. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, these are done in the true spirit of portrait-painting; no *volontière grace* or expression. Not like the works of your modern Raphaels, who give you the strongest resemblance, yet contrive to make your portrait independent of you; so that you may sink the original and not hurt the picture. No, no; the merit of these is the inveterate likeness—all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature besides.

Sir Oliv. Ah! we shall never see such figures of men again.

Chas. Surf. I hope not. Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family. But come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer; here's an old gouty chair of my grandfather's will answer the purpose.

Care. Ay, ay, this will do. But, Charles, I haven't a hammer; and what's an auctioneer without his hammer?

Chas. Surf. Egad, that's true. What parchment have we here? Oh, our genealogy in full. [Taking pedigree down.] Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany, here's the family tree for you, you rogue! This shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliv. What an unnatural rogue!—an *ex post facto* parricide! [Aside]

Care. Yes, yes, here's a list of your generation indeed;—faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could

have found for the business, for 'twill not only serve as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. Come, begin—A-going, a-going, a-going!

Chas. Surf. Bravo, Careless! Well, here's my great-uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet. What say you, Mr. Premium? look at him—there's a hero! not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipped captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be. What do you bid?

Sir Oliv. [*Aside to Moses.*] Bid him speak.

Mos. Mr. Premium would have you speak.

Chas. Surf. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff-officer.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds!—[*Aloud.*] Very well, sir, I take him at that.

Chas. Surf. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard.—Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great-aunt Deborah, done by Kneller, in his best manner, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten—the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] Ah! poor Deborah! a woman who set such a value on herself!—[*Aloud.*] Five pounds ten—she's mine.

Chas. Surf. Knock down my aunt Deborah! Here, now, are two that were a sort of cousins of theirs.—You see, Moses, these pictures were done some time ago, when beaux wore wigs, and the ladies their own hair.

Sir Oliv. Yes, truly, head-dresses appear to have been a little lower in those days.

Chas. Surf. Well, take that couple for the same.

Mos. 'Tis a good bargain.

Chas. Surf. Careless!—This, now, is a grandfather of my mother's, a learned judge, well known on the western circuit.—What do you rate him at, Moses?

Mos. Four guineas.

Chas. Surf. Four guineas! Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig.—Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the woolsack; do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

Sir Oliv. By all means.

Care. Gone!

Chas. Surf. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of parliament, and noted speakers; and, what's very extraordinary, I believe, this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

Sir Oliv. That is very extraordinary, indeed! I'll take them at your own price, for the honour of parliament.

Care. Well said, little Premium! I'll knock them down at forty.

Chas. Surf. Here's a jolly fellow—I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Norwich; take him at eight pounds.

Sir Oliv. No, no; six will do for the mayor.

Chas. Surf. Come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen there into the bargain.

Sir Oliv. They're mine.

Chas. Surf. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen. But, plague on't! we shall be all day retailing in this manner; do let us deal wholesale: what say you, little Premium? Give me three hundred pounds for the rest of the family in the lump.

Care. Ay, ay, that will be the best way.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, anything to accommodate you; they are mine. But there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

Care. What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee?

Sir Oliv. Yes, sir, I mean that; though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow, by any means.

Chas. Surf. What, that? Oh, that's my uncle Oliver! 'twas done before he went to India.

Care. Your uncle Oliver! Gad, then you'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw; an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance! an inveterate knave, depend on't. Don't you think so, little Premium?

Sir Oliv. Upon my soul, sir, I do not; I think it is as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. But I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

Chas. Surf. No, hang it! I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and, egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] The rogue's my nephew after all!—

[*Aloud.*] But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Chas. Surf. I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, haven't you got enough of them?

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] I forgive him everything!—[*Aloud.*] But, sir, when I take a whim in my head, I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Chas. Surf. Don't tease me, master broker; I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] How like his father the dog is!—[*Aloud.*] Well, well, I have done.—[*Aside.*] I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a striking resemblance.—[*Aloud.*] Here is a draft for your sum.

Chas. Surf. Why 'tis for eight hundred pounds!

Sir Oliv. You will not let Sir Oliver go?

Chas. Surf. Zounds! no! I tell you, once more.

Sir Oliv. Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that another time. But give me your hand on the bargain; you are an honest fellow, Charles—I beg pardon, sir, for being so free.—Come, Moses.

Chas. Surf. Egad, this is a whimsical old fellow!—But hark'ee, Premium, you'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen.

Sir Oliv. Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

Chas. Surf. But hold; do now send a genteel conveyance for them, for, I assure you, they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oliv. I will, I will—for all but Oliver.

Chas. Surf. Ay, all but the little nabob.

Sir Oliv. You're fixed on that?

Chas. Surf. Peremptorily.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] A dear extravagant rogue!—[*Aloud.*] Good day!—Come, Moses.—[*Aside.*] Let me hear now who dares call him profligate! [Exit with MOSES]

Care. Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever met with!

Chas. Surf. Egad, he's the prince of brokers, I think. I wonder how the devil Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow.—Ha! here's Rowley.—Do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a few moments.

Care. I will—but don't let that old blockhead persuade you to squander any of that money on old musty debts, or

any such nonsense ; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

Chas. Surf. Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them.

Care. Nothing else.

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, never fear.—[*Exit CARELESS.*] So ! this was an odd fellow, indeed. Let me see, two-thirds of these five hundred and thirty odd pounds are mine by right. 'Fore Heaven ! I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for ?—Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful servant.

[*Bows ceremoniously to the pictures*]

Enter ROWLEY

Ha ! old Rowley ! egad, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintance.

Row. Yes, I heard they were a-going. But I wonder you can have such spirits under so many distresses.

Chas. Surf. Why, there's the point ! my distresses are so many, that I can't afford to part with my spirits ; but I shall be rich and splenetic, all in good time. However, I suppose you are surprised that I am not more sorrowful at parting with so many near relations ; to be sure, 'tis very affecting, but you see they never move a muscle, so why should I ?

Row. There's no making you serious a moment.

Chas. Surf. Yes, faith, I am so now. Here, my honest Rowley, here, get me this changed directly, and take a hundred pounds of it immediately to old Stanley

Row. A hundred pounds ! Consider only——

Chas. Surf. Gad's life, don't talk about it ! poor Stanley's wants are pressing, and if you don't make haste, we shall have some one call that has a better right to the money.

Row. Ah ! there's the point ! I never will cease dunning you with the old proverb——

Chas. Surf. *Be just before you're generous.*—Why, so I would if I could ; but Justice is an old, hobbling beldame, and I can't get her to keep pace with generosity, for the soul of me.

Row. Yet, Charles, believe me, one hour's reflection——

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, it's very true ; but, hark'ee, Rowley, while I have, by Heaven I'll give ; so, damn your economy ! and now for hazard. [Exeunt

SCENE II.—*Another Room in the same**Enter* SIR OLIVER SURFACE *and* MOSES

Mos. Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles in high glory; 'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

Sir Oliv. True, but he would not sell my picture.

Mos. And loves wine and women so much.

Sir Oliv. But he would not sell my picture.

Mos. And games so deep.

Sir Oliv. But he would not sell my picture. Oh, here's Rowley.

Enter ROWLEY

Row. So, Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase—

Sir Oliv. Yes, yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Row. And here has he commissioned me to re-deliver you part of the purchase-money—I mean, though, in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

Mos. Ah! there is the pity of all; he is so damned charitable.

Row. And I left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who, I'm sure, won't be paid, and this hundred would satisfy them.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, I'll pay his debts, and his benevolence too. But now I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Row. Not yet a while; Sir Peter, I know, means to call there about this time.

Enter TRIP

Trip. Oh, gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out; this way—Moses, a word. [*Exit with* MOSES

Sir Oliv. There's a fellow for you! Would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master!

Row. Indeed!

Sir Oliv. Yes, they are now planning an annuity business. Ah, Master Rowley, in my days servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were worn a little threadbare; but now they have their vices, like their birthday clothes, with the gloss on. [*Exeunt*

SCENE III.—A Library in JOSEPH SURFACE'S House

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE and SERVANT

Jos. Surf. No letter from Lady Teazle?

Ser. No, sir.

Jos. Surf. [*Aside.*] I am surprised she has not sent, if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet I wish I may not lose the heiress, through the scrape I have drawn myself into with the wife; however, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favour. [*Knocking without*

Ser. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

Jos. Surf. Hold! See whether it is or not before you go to the door: I have a particular message for you if it should be my brother.

Ser. 'Tis her ladyship, sir; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.

Jos. Surf. Stay, stay; draw that screen before the window—that will do;—my opposite neighbour is a maiden lady of so curious a temper.—[SERVANT draws the screen, and exit.] I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria; but she must by no means be let into that secret,—at least, till I have her more in my power.

Enter LADY TEAZLE

Lady Teaz. What, sentiment in soliloquy now? Have you been very impatient? O Lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I couldn't come before.

Jos. Surf. O madam, punctuality is a species of constancy very unfashionable in a lady of quality.

[Places chairs, and sits after LADY TEAZLE is seated

Lady Teaz. Upon my word, you ought to pity me. Do you know Sir Peter is grown so ill-natured to me of late, and so jealous of Charles too—that's the best of the story, isn't it?

Jos. Surf. I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up. [*Aside*

Lady Teaz. I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced; don't you, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Surf. [*Aside.*] Indeed I do not.—[*Aloud.*] Oh, certainly I do! for then my dear Lady Teazle would also be

convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

Lady Teaz. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking to have the most ill-natured things said of one? And there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and all without any foundation too; that's what vexes me.

Jos. Surf. Ay, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance—without foundation; yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed, for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

Lady Teaz. No, to be sure, then I'd forgive their malice; but to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody—that is, of any friend; and then Sir Peter, too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart—indeed 'tis monstrous!

Jos. Surf. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken, and she owes it to the honour of her sex to endeavour to outwit him.

Lady Teaz. Indeed! So that, if he suspects me without cause, it follows, that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't!

Jos. Surf. Undoubtedly—for your husband should never be deceived in you: and in that case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

Lady Teaz. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my innocence—

Jos. Surf. Ah, my dear madam, there is the great mistake! 'tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms, and careless of the world's opinion? why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences? why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper, and outrageous at his suspicions? why, the consciousness of your innocence.

Lady Teaz. 'Tis very true!

Jos. Surf. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas*, you can't conceive how cautious you would grow, and how ready to humour and agree with your husband.

Lady Teaz. Do you think so?

Jos. Surf. Oh, I am sure on't; and then you would find all scandal would cease at once, for—in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

Lady Teaz. So, so; then I perceive your prescription is, that I must sin in my own defence, and part with my virtue to preserve my reputation.

Jos. Surf. Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

Lady Teaz. Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine, and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

Jos. Surf. An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

Lady Teaz. Why, if my understanding were once convinced—

Jos. Surf. Oh, certainly, madam, your understanding should be convinced. Yes, yes—Heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honour to desire it.

Lady Teaz. Don't you think we may as well leave honour out of the argument? [Rises

Jos. Surf. Ah, the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

Lady Teaz. I doubt they do indeed; and I will fairly own to you, that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill usage sooner than your honourable logic, after all.

Jos. Surf.—Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of— [Taking her hand

Re-enter SERVANT

'Sdeath, you blockhead, what do you want?

Ser. I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

Jos. Surf. Sir Peter!—Oons—the devil!

Lady Teaz. Sir Peter! O Lud! I'm ruined! I'm ruined!

Ser. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

Lady Teaz. Oh! I'm quite undone! What will become of me? Now, Mr. Logic—Oh! mercy, sir, he's on the

stairs—I'll get behind here—and if ever I'm so imprudent again—

[Goes behind the screen

Jos. Surf. Give me that book.

[Sits down. SERVANT pretends to adjust his chair

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE

Sir Pet. Ay, ever improving himself—Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface—

[Pats JOSEPH on the shoulder

Jos. Surf. Oh, my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon—
[Gaping, throws away the book.] I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. Books, you know, are the only thing I am a coxcomb in.

Sir Pet. 'Tis very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you can make even your screen a source of knowledge—hung, I perceive, with maps.

Jos. Surf. Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir Pet. I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry.

Jos. Surf. Ay, or to hide any thing in a hurry either.

[Aside

Sir Pet. Well, I have a little private business—

Jos. Surf. You need not stay. [To SERVANT

Ser. No, sir. [Exit

Jos. Surf. Here 's a chair, Sir Peter—I beg—

Sir Pet. Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you—a point of the greatest moment to my peace; in short, my good friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me very unhappy.

Jos. Surf. Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it.

Sir Pet. Yes, 'tis but too plain she has not the least regard for me; but, what's worse, I have pretty good authority to suppose she has formed an attachment to another.

Jos. Surf. Indeed! you astonish me!

Sir Pet. Yes! and, between ourselves, I think I've discovered the person.

Jos. Surf. How! you alarm me exceedingly.

Sir Pet. Ay, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathise with me!

Jos. Surf. Yes, believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

Sir Pet. I am convinced of it. Ah! it is a happiness to have a friend whom we can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean?

Jos. Surf. I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

Sir Pet. Oh no! What say you to Charles?

Jos. Surf. My brother! impossible!

Sir Pet. Oh, my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

Jos. Surf. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

Sir Pet. True; but your brother has no sentiment—you never hear him talk so.

Jos. Surf. Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

Sir Pet. Ay; but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

Jos. Surf. That's very true.

Sir Pet. And then, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any great affection for me; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor who had married a girl.

Jos. Surf. That's true, to be sure—they would laugh.

Sir Pet. Laugh! ay, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

Jos. Surf. No, you must never make it public.

Sir Pet. But then, again—that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

Jos. Surf. Ay, there's the point. When ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

Sir Pet. Ay—I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian; in whose house he had been so often entertained; who never in my life denied him—my advice!

Jos. Surf. Oh, 'tis not to be credited! There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but, for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine—I disclaim kindred with him: for the man who can break the laws of hospitality, and tempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

Sir Pet. What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

Jos. Surf. Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honour.

Sir Pet. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her; and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall have her own way, and be her own mistress in that respect for the future; and, if I were to die, she will find I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune at my death.

Jos. Surf. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous.—[*Aside.*] I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.

Sir Pet. Yes, I determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet a while.

Jos. Surf. Nor I, if I could help it. [Aside]

Sir Pet. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your hopes with Maria.

Jos. Surf. [*Softly.*] Oh no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

Sir Pet. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

Jos. Surf. [*Softly.*] I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate! —[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, I shall be ruined every way!

Sir Pet. And though you are averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion, I'm sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

Jos. Surf. Pray, Sir Peter, now oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is entrusted with his friend's distresses can never—

Re-enter SERVANT

Well, sir?

Ser. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and he says he knows you are within.

Jos. Surf. 'Sdeath, blockhead, I'm not within—I'm out for the day.

Sir Pet. Stay—hold—a thought has struck me:—you shall be at home.

Jos. Surf. Well, well, let him up.—[*Exit SERVANT.*] He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however. [Aside]

Sir Pet. Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere, then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.

Jos. Surf. Oh fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick?—to trepan my brother too?

Sir Pet. Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me: [*Going up.*] here, behind the screen will be—Hey! what the devil! there seems to be one listener here already—I'll swear I saw a petticoat!

Jos. Surf. Ha! ha! ha! Well this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph either! Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner, a silly rogue that plagues me; and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

Sir Pet. Ah, Joseph! Joseph! Did I ever think that you—But, egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

Jos. Surf. Oh, 'twill never go any farther, you may depend upon it!

Sir Pet. No! then, faith, let her hear it out.—Here 's a closet will do as well.

Jos. Surf. Well, go in there.

Sir Pet. Sly rogue! sly rogue. [*Goes into the closet*]

Jos. Surf. A narrow escape, indeed! and a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

Lady Teaz. [*Peeping.*] Couldn't I steal off?

Jos Surf. Keep close, my angel!

Sir Pet. [*Peeping.*] Joseph, tax him home.

Jos Surf. Back, my dear friend!

Lady Teaz. [*Peeping.*] Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

Jos. Surf. Be still, my life!

Sir Pet. [*Peeping.*] You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

Jos. Surf. In, in, my dear Sir Peter!—'Fore Gad, I wish I had a key to the door.

Enter CHARLES SURFACE

Chas. Surf. Holla! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Jos. Surf. Neither, brother, I assure you.

Chas. Surf. But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

Jos. Surf. He was, brother; but, hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

Chas. Surf. What! was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

Jos. Surf. No, sir: but I am sorry to find, Charles, you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

Chas. Surf. Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men. But how so, pray?

Jos. Surf. To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavouring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

Chas. Surf. Who, I? O Lud! not I, upon my word.—Ha! ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he?—or, what is worse, Lady Teazle has found out she has an old husband?

Jos. Surf. This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh—

Chas. Surf. True, true, as you were going to say—then, seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honour.

Jos. Surf. Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this. [*Raising his voice*]

Chas. Surf. To be sure I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement. Besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

Jos. Surf. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you—

Chas. Surf. Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonourable action; but if a pretty

woman was purposely to throw herself in my way—and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father——

Jos. Surf. Well!

Chas. Surf. Why, I believe I should be obliged to——

Jos. Surf. What?

Chas. Surf. To borrow a little of your morality, that's all. But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly, by naming me with Lady Teazle; for, i'faith, I always understood you were her favourite.

Jos. Surf. Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

Chas. Surf. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange significant glances——

Jos. Surf. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

Chas. Surf. Egad, I'm serious! Don't you remember one day, when I called here——

Jos. Surf. Nay, pr'ythee, Charles——

Chas. Surf. And found you together——

Jos. Surf. Zounds, sir, I insist——

Chas. Surf. And another time when your servant——

Jos. Surf. Brother, brother, a word with you!—[*Aside.*] Gad, I must stop him.

Chas. Surf. Informed, I say, that——

Jos. Surf. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying. I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

Chas. Surf. How, Sir Peter! Where is he?

Jos. Surf. Softly, there! [Points to the closet]

Chas. Surf. Oh, 'fore Heaven, I'll have him out. Sir Peter, come forth!

Jos. Surf. No, no——

Chas. Surf. I say, Sir Peter, come into court.—[Pulls in SIR PETER.] What! my old guardian!—What! turn inquisitor, and take evidence incog.? Oh fie! Oh fie!

Sir Pet. Give me your hand, Charles—I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph—'twas my plan!

Chas. Surf. Indeed!

Sir Pet. But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did: what I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

Chas. Surf. Egad, then, 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more. Wasn't it, Joseph?

Sir Pet. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

Chas. Surf. Ah, ay, that was a joke.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, I know his honour too well.

Chas. Surf. But you might as well have suspected him as me in this matter, for all that. Mightn't he, Joseph?

Sir Pet. Well, well, I believe you.

Jos. Surf. Would they were both out of the room!

[*Aside*

Sir Pet. And in future, perhaps, we may not be such strangers.

Re-enter SERVANT, and whispers JOSEPH SURFACE

Serv. Lady Sneerwell is below, and says she will come up.

Jos. Surf. Lady Sneerwell! Gad's life! she must not come here. [*Exit SERVANT.*] Gentlemen, I beg pardon—I must wait on you down-stairs: here is a person come on particular business.

Chas. Surf. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Jos. Surf. [*Aside.*] They must not be left together.—[*Aloud.*] I'll send Lady Sneerwell away, and return directly. [*Aside to SIR PETER.*] Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

Sir Pet. [*Aside to JOSEPH SURFACE.*] I! not for the world!—[*Exit JOSEPH SURFACE.*] Ah, Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Chas. Surf. Psha! he is too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a wench.

Sir Pet. No, no,—come, come,—you wrong him. No, no! Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either, in that respect.—[*Aside.*] I have a great mind to tell him—we should have such a laugh at Joseph.

Chas. Surf. Oh, hang him! he's a very anchorite, a young hermit.

Sir Pet. Hark'ee—you must not abuse him: he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

Chas. Surf. Why, you won't tell him?

Sir Pet. No—but—this way.—[*Aside.*] Egad, I'll tell

him.—[*Aloud.*] Hark'ee—have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

Chas. Surf. I should like it of all things.

Sir Pet. Then, i' faith, we will! I'll be quit with him for discovering me. He had a girl with him when I called.

[*Whispers*

Chas. Surf. What! Joseph? you jest.

Sir Pet. Hush!—a little French milliner—and the best of the jest is—she's in the room now.

Chas. Surf. The devil she is!

Sir Pet. Hush! I tell you. [*Points to the screen*

Chas. Surf. Behind the screen! 'Slife, let's unveil her!

Sir Pet. No, no, he's coming:—you sha'n't, indeed!

Chas. Surf. Oh, egad, we'll have a peep at the little milliner!

Sir Pet. Not for the world!—Joseph will never forgive me.

Chas. Surf. I'll stand by you—

Sir Pet. Odds, here he is!

[*CHARLES SURFACE throws down the screen*

Re-enter JOSEPH SURFACE

Chas. Surf. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

Sir Pet. Lady Teazle, by all that's damnable!

Chas. Surf. Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad, you seem all to have been diverting yourselves here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? Not a word!—Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What! is Morality dumb too?—Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute!—Well—though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another: so I'll leave you to yourselves.—[*Going.*] Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man grounds for so much uneasiness.—Sir Peter! there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment! [*Exit*

Jos. Surf. Sir Peter—notwithstanding—I confess—that appearances are against me—if you will afford me your patience—I make no doubt—but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

Sir Pet. If you please, sir.

Jos. Surf. The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing

my pretensions to your ward Maria—I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper—and knowing my friendship to the family—she, sir, I say—called here—in order that—I might explain these pretensions—but on your coming—being apprehensive—as I said—of your jealousy—she withdrew—and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

Sir Pet. A very clear account, upon my word; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

Lady Teaz. For not one word of it, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. How! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

Lady Teaz. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

Sir Pet. I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am!

Jos. Surf. [*Aside to LADY TEAZLE.*] 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

Lady Teaz. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I'll speak for myself.

Sir Pet. Ay, let her alone, sir; you'll find she'll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

Lady Teaz. Hear me, Sir Peter!—I came here on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of this gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came, seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honour to his baseness.

Sir Pet. Now, I believe, the truth is coming indeed!

Jos. Surf. The woman's mad!

Lady Teaz. No, sir; she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means.—Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me—but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has so penetrated to my heart, that had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected honourable addresses to his ward—I behold him now in a light so despicable, that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him. [*Exit*

Jos. Surf. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, Heaven knows—

Sir Pet. That you are a villain! and so I leave you to your conscience.

Jos. Surf. You are too rash, Sir Peter; you shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to—

Sir Pet. Oh, damn your sentiments!

[*Exeunt SIR PETER and JOSEPH SURFACE, talking*]

ACT FIVE

SCENE I.—*The Library in JOSEPH SURFACE'S House*

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE and SERVANT

Jos. Surf. Mr. Stanley! and why should you think I would see him? you must know he comes to ask something.

Ser. Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

Jos. Surf. Psha! blockhead! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations!—Well, why don't you show the fellow up?

Ser. I will, sir.—Why, sir, it was not my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady—

Jos. Surf. Go, fool!—[*Exit SERVANT.*] Sure Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before! My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment! I'm in a rare humour to listen to other people's distresses! I shan't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley.—So! here he comes, and Rowley with him. I must try to recover myself, and put a little charity into my face, however. [*Exit*]

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE and ROWLEY

Sir Oliv. What! does he avoid us? That was he, was it not?

Row. It was, sir. But I doubt you are come a little too abruptly. His nerves are so weak, that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. I should have gone first to break it to him.

Sir Oliv. Oh, plague of his nerves! Yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking!

Row. As to his way of thinking, I cannot pretend to decide; for, to do him justice, he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the

kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir Oliv. Yet he has a string of charitable sentiments at his fingers' ends.

Row. Or, rather, at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he has such faith in as that *Charity begins at home*.

Sir Oliv. And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort which never stirs abroad at all.

Row. I doubt you 'll find it so; but he 's coming. I mustn't seem to interrupt you; and you know, immediately as you leave him, I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

Sir Oliv. True: and afterwards you 'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

Row. Without losing a moment.

[*Exit*]

Sir Oliv. I don't like the complaisance of his features.

Re-enter JOSEPH SURFACE

Jos. Surf. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting.—Mr. Stanley, I presume.

Sir Oliv. At your service.

Jos. Surf. Sir, I beg you will do me the honour to sit down—I entreat you, sir.

Sir Oliv. Dear sir—there 's no occasion.—[*Aside.*] Too civil by half!

Jos. Surf. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley; but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, I think, Mr. Stanley?

Sir Oliv. I was, sir; so nearly that my present poverty, I fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

Jos. Surf. Dear sir, there needs no apology;—he that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I am sure I wish I was one of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

Sir Oliv. If your uncle, Sir Oliver, were here, I should have a friend.

Jos. Surf. I wish he was, sir, with all my heart: you should not want an advocate with him, believe me, sir.

Sir Oliv. I should not need one—my distresses would re-

commend me. But I imagined his bounty would enable you to become the agent of his charity.

Jos. Surf. My dear sir, you were strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man, a very worthy man; but avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age. I will tell you, my good sir, in confidence, what he has done for me has been a mere nothing; though people, I know, have thought otherwise, and, for my part, I never chose to contradict the report.

Sir Oliv. What! has he never transmitted you bullion—rupees—pagodas?

Jos. Surf. Oh, dear sir, nothing of the kind. No, no; a few presents now and then—china, shawls, congou tea, avadavats, and Indian crackers—little more, believe me.

Sir Oliv. Here's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds!—Avadavats and Indian crackers! [*Aside*]

Jos. Surf. Then, my dear sir, you have heard, I doubt not, of the extravagance of my brother: there are very few would credit what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

Sir Oliv. Not I, for one! [*Aside*]

Jos. Surf. The sums I have lent him! Indeed, I have been exceedingly to blame; it was an amiable weakness; however, I don't pretend to defend it—and now I feel it doubly culpable, since it has deprived me of the pleasure of serving you, Mr. Stanley, as my heart dictates.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] Dissembler!—[*Aloud.*] Then, sir, you can't assist me?

Jos. Surf. At present, it grieves me to say, I cannot; but, whenever I have the ability, you may depend upon hearing from me.

Sir Oliv. I am extremely sorry—

Jos. Surf. Not more than I, believe me; to pity, without the power to relieve, is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

Sir Oliv. Kind sir, your most obedient humble servant.

Jos. Surf. You leave me deeply affected, Mr. Stanley.—William, be ready to open the door. [*Calls to SERVANT.*]

Sir Oliv. Oh, dear sir, no ceremony.

Jos. Surf. Your very obedient.

Sir Oliv. Your most obsequious.

Jos. Surf. You may depend upon hearing from me, whenever I can be of service.

Sir Oliv. Sweet sir, you are too good!

Jos. Surf. In the meantime I wish you health and spirits.

Sir Oliv. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

Jos. Surf. Sir, yours as sincerely.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] Now I am satisfied. [*Exit*

Jos. Surf. This is one bad effect of a good character ; it invites application from the unfortunate, and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense. The silver ore of pure charity is an expensive article in the catalogue of a man's good qualities ; whereas the sentimental French plate I use instead of it makes just as good a show, and pays no tax.

Re-enter ROWLEY

Row. Mr. Surface, your servant : I was apprehensive of interrupting you, though my business demands immediate attention, as this note will inform you.

Jos. Surf. Always happy to see Mr. Rowley,—a rascal.—[*Aside. Reads the letter.*] Sir Oliver Surface!—My uncle arrived!

Row. He is, indeed : we have just parted—quite well, after a speedy voyage, and impatient to embrace his worthy nephew.

Jos. Surf. I am astonished!—William! stop Mr. Stanley, if he's not gone. [*Calls to SERVANT*

Row. Oh! he's out of reach, I believe.

Jos. Surf. Why did you not let me know this when you came in together?

Row. I thought you had particular business. But I must be gone to inform your brother, and appoint him here to meet your uncle. He will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

Jos. Surf. So he says. Well, I am strangely overjoyed at his coming.—[*Aside.*] Never, to be sure, was anything so damned unlucky!

Row. You will be delighted to see how well he looks.

Jos. Surf. Oh! I'm overjoyed to hear it.—[*Aside.*] Just at this time!

Row. I'll tell him how impatiently you expect him.

Jos. Surf. Do, do ; pray give my best duty and affection. Indeed, I cannot express the sensations I feel at the thought of seeing him—[*Exit ROWLEY.*] Certainly

his coming just at this time is the cruellest piece of ill fortune. [Exit

SCENE II.—A Room in SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House

Enter MRS. CANDOUR and MAID

Maid. Indeed, ma'am, my lady will see nobody at present.

Mrs. Can. Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs. Candour?

Maid. Yes, ma'am; but she begs you will excuse her.

Mrs. Can. Do go again; I shall be glad to see her, if it be only for a moment, for I am sure she must be in great distress.—[Exit MAID.] Dear heart, how provoking! I'm not mistress of half the circumstances! We shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the names of the parties at length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE

Oh, dear Sir Benjamin! you have heard, I suppose——

Sir Ben. Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface——

Mrs. Can. And Sir Peter's discovery——

Sir Ben. Oh, the strangest piece of business, to be sure!

Mrs. Can. Well, I never was so surprised in my life. I am so sorry for all parties, indeed.

Sir Ben. Now, I don't pity Sir Peter at all: he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.

Mrs. Can. Mr. Surface! Why, 'twas with Charles Lady Teazle was detected.

Sir Ben. No, no, I tell you: Mr. Surface is the gallant.

Mrs. Can. No such thing! Charles is the man. 'Twas Mr. Surface brought Sir Peter on purpose to discover them.

Sir Ben. I tell you I had it from one——

Mrs. Can. And I have it from one——

Sir Ben. Who had it from one, who had it——

Mrs. Can. From one immediately. But here comes Lady Sneerwell; perhaps she knows the whole affair.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL

Lady Sneer. So, my dear Mrs. Candour, here's a sad affair of our friend Lady Teazle!

Mrs. Can. Ay, my dear friend, who would have thought—

Lady Sneer. Well, there is no trusting appearances; though, indeed, she was always too lively for me.

Mrs. Can. To be sure, her manners were a little too free; but then she was so young!

Lady Sneer. And had, indeed, some good qualities.

Mrs. Can. So she had, indeed. But have you heard the particulars?

Lady Sneer. No; but everybody says that Mr. Surface—

Sir Ben. Ay, there; I told you Mr. Surface was the man.

Mrs. Can. No, no; indeed the assignation was with Charles.

Lady Sneer. With Charles! You alarm me, Mrs. Candour!

Mrs. Can. Yes, yes; he was the lover. Mr. Surface, to do him justice, was only the informer.

Sir Ben. Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; but, be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not—

Mrs. Can. Sir Peter's wound! Oh, mercy! I didn't hear a word of their fighting.

Lady Sneer. Nor I, a syllable.

Sir Ben. No! what, no mention of the duel?

Mrs. Can. Not a word.

Sir Ben. Oh yes: they fought before they left the room.

Lady Sneer. Pray, let us hear.

Mrs. Can. Ay, do oblige us with the duel.

Sir Ben. "Sir," says Sir Peter, immediately after the discovery, "you are a most ungrateful fellow."

Mrs. Can. Ay, to Charles—

Sir Ben. No, no—to Mr. Surface—"a most ungrateful fellow; and old as I am, sir," says he, "I insist on immediate satisfaction."

Mrs. Can. Ay, that must have been to Charles; for 'tis very unlikely Mr. Surface should fight in his own house.

Sir Ben. Gad's life, ma'am, not at all—"giving me immediate satisfaction."—On this, ma'am, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and Charles after her, calling out for hartshorn and water; then, madam, they began to fight with swords—

Enter CRABTREE

Crab. With pistols, nephew—pistols! I have it from undoubted authority.

Mrs. Can. Oh, Mr. Crabtree, then it is all true!

Crab. Too true, indeed, ma'am, and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded——

Sir Ben. By a thrust in segoon quite through his left side——

Crab. By a bullet lodged in the thorax.

Mrs. Can. Mercy on me! Poor Sir Peter!

Crab. Yes, madam; though Charles would have avoided the matter, if he could.

Mrs. Can. I told you who it was; I knew Charles was the person.

Sir Ben. My uncle, I see, knows nothing of the matter.

Crab. But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude——

Sir Ben. That I told you, you know——

Crab. Do, nephew, let me speak!—and insisted on immediate——

Sir Ben. Just as I said——

Crab. Odds life, nephew, allow others to know something too! A pair of pistols lay on the bureau (for Mr. Surface, it seems, had come home the night before late from Salthill, where he had been to see the Montem with a friend, who has a son at Eton), so, unluckily, the pistols were left charged.

Sir Ben. I heard nothing of this.

Crab. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one, and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles's shot took effect, as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed; but, what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Shakspeare that stood over the fire-place, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

Sir Ben. My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I confess; but I believe mine is the true one, for all that.

Lady Sneer. [*Aside.*] I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information.

[*Exit*

Sir Ben. Ah! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crab. Yes, yes, they certainly do say—but that 's neither here nor there.

Mrs. Can. But, pray, where is Sir Peter at present ?

Crab. Oh ! they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny him.

Mrs. Can. I believe so, and Lady Teazle, I suppose, attending him.

Crab. Yes, yes ; and I saw one of the faculty enter just before me.

Sir Ben. Hey ! who comes here ?

Crab. Oh, this is he : the physician, depend on 't.

Mrs. Can. Oh, certainly ! it must be the physician ; and now we shall know.

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE

Crab. Well, doctor, what hopes ?

Mrs. Can. Ay, doctor, how 's your patient ?

Sir Ben. Now, doctor, isn't it a wound with a small-sword ?

Crab. A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred !

Sir Oliv. Doctor ! a wound with a small-sword ! and a bullet in the thorax !—Oons ! are you mad, good people ?

Sir Ben. Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor ?

Sir Oliv. Truly, I am to thank you for my degree, if I am.

Crab. Only a friend of Sir Peter's, then, I presume. But, sir, you must have heard of his accident ?

Sir Oliv. Not a word !

Crab. Not of his being dangerously wounded ?

Sir Oliv. The devil he is !

Sir Ben. Run through the body——

Crab. Shot in the breast——

Sir Ben. By one Mr. Surface——

Crab. Ay, the younger.

Sir Oliv. Hey ! what the plague ! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts : however, you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

Sir Ben. Oh, yes, we agree in that.

Crab. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

Sir Oliv. Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation, he is the most imprudent man alive ; for here he comes, walking as if nothing at all was the matter.

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE

Odds heart, Sir Peter! you are come in good time, I promise you; for we had just given you over!

Sir Ben. [*Aside to CRABTREE.*] Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery.

Sir Oliv. Why, man! what do you out of bed with a small-sword through your body, and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

Sir Pet. A small-sword and a bullet!

Sir Oliv. Ay; these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor, to make me an accomplice.

Sir Pet. Why, what is all this?

Sir Ben. We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.

Sir Pet. So, so; all over the town already! [*Aside*

Crab. Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at your years.

Sir Pet. Sir, what business is that of yours?

Mrs. Can. Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied.

Sir Pet. Plague on your pity, ma'am! I desire none of it.

Sir Ben. However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

Sir Pet. Sir, sir; I desire to be master in my own house.

Crab. 'Tis no uncommon case, that's one comfort.

Sir Pet. I insist on being left to myself, without ceremony: I insist on your leaving my house directly!

Mrs. Can. Well, well, we are going; and depend on't, we'll make the best report of it we can. [*Exit*

Sir Pet. Leave my house!

Crab. And tell how hardly you've been treated. [*Exit*

Sir Pet. Leave my house!

Sir Ben. And how patiently you bear it. [*Exit*

Sir Pet. Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them!

Sir Oliv. They are very provoking indeed, Sir Peter.

Enter ROWLEY

Row. I hear high words: what has ruffled you, sir?

Sir Pet. Psha! what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

Row. Well, I 'm not inquisitive.

Sir Oliv. Well, Sir Peter, I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

Sir Pet. A precious couple they are!

Row. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

Sir Oliv. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

Row. Ay, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

Sir Oliv. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Row. It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliv. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age! —but how's this, Sir Peter? you don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected.

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Row. What! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?

Sir Pet. Psha! plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!

Row. Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's so humbled, that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

Sir Pet. And does Sir Oliver know all this?

Sir Oliv. Every circumstance.

Sir Pet. What, of the closet and the screen, hey?

Sir Oliv. Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. 'Twas very pleasant.

Sir Oliv. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you; ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Oh, vastly diverting! ha! ha! ha!

Row. To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, his sentiments! ha! ha! ha! Hypocritical villain!

Sir Oliv. Ay, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet; ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Ha! ha! 'twas devilish entertaining, to be sure!

Sir Oliv. Ha! ha! ha! Egad, Sir Peter, I should like

to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down ;
ha ! ha !

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, my face when the screen was thrown down ; ha ! ha ! ha ! Oh, I must never show my head again !

Sir Oliv. But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you, neither, my old friend ; though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

Sir Pet. Oh, pray don't restrain your mirth on my account ; it does not hurt me at all ! I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. Oh yes ; and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Mr. S——, Lady T——, and Sir P——, will be so entertaining !

Row. Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools. But I see Lady Teazle going towards the next room ; I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

Sir Oliv. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you ; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy.

Sir Pet. Ah, I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart ; though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries.

Row. We'll follow. [Exit SIR OLIVER SURFACE

Sir Pet. She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

Row. No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears.

Sir Pet. Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little ?

Row. Oh, this is ungenerous in you !

Sir Pet. Well, I know not what to think. You remember the letter I found of hers evidently intended for Charles ?

Row. A mere forgery, Sir Peter ; laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction of.

Sir Pet. I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has ! Rowley, I'll go to her.

Row. Certainly.

Sir Pet. Though, when it is known that we are reconciled people will laugh at me ten times more.

Row. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by showing them you are happy in spite of it.

Sir Pet. I' faith, so I will! and, if I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

Row. Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion—

Sir Pet. Hold, Master Rowley! if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter any thing like a sentiment; I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE III.—*The Library in JOSEPH SURFACE'S House*

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE and LADY SNEERWELL

Lady Sneer. Impossible! Will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles, and of course no longer oppose his union with Maria? The thought is distraction to me.

Jos. Surf. Can passion furnish a remedy?

Lady Sneer. No, nor cunning either. Oh, I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer!

Jos. Surf. Sure, Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness.

Lady Sneer. Because the disappointment doesn't reach your heart; your interest only attached you to Maria. Had you felt for her what I have for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy could prevent your showing the sharpness of your vexation.

Jos. Surf. But why should your reproaches fall on me for this disappointment?

Lady Sneer. Are you not the cause of it? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in imposing upon Sir Peter, and supplanting your brother, but you must endeavour to seduce his wife? I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

Jos. Surf. Well, I admit I have been to blame. I confess I deviated from the direct road of wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

Lady Sneer. No!

Jos. Surf. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake

since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us?

Lady Sneer. I do believe so.

Jos. Surf. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove that Charles is at this time contracted by vows and honour to your ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support?

Lady Sneer. This, indeed, might have assisted.

Jos. Surf. Come, come; it is not too late yet.—[*Knocking at the door.*] But hark! this is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver; retire to that room; we'll consult farther when he is gone.

Lady Sneer. Well, but if he should find you out too?

Jos. Surf. Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake—and you may depend on it I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side!

Lady Sneer. I have no diffidence of your abilities: only be constant to one roguery at a time.

Jos. Surf. I will, I will!—[*Exit LADY SNEERWELL.*] So! 'tis confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederate in evil. Well, at all events, my character is so much better than Charles's, that I certainly—hey!—what—this is not Sir Oliver, but old Stanley again. Plague on't that he should return to tease me just now! I shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here—and—

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE.

Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this time? You must not stay now, upon my word.

Sir Oliv. Sir, I hear your uncle Oliver is expected here, and though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he'll do for me.

Jos. Surf. Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now, so I must beg—Come any other time, and I promise you, you shall be assisted.

Sir Oliv. No: Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Jos. Surf. Zounds, sir! then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

Sir Oliv. Nay, sir—

Jos. Surf. Sir, I insist on't!—Here, William! show

this gentleman out. Since you compel me, sir, not one moment—this is such insolence. *[Going to push him out]*

Enter CHARLES SURFACE

Chas. Surf. Heyday! what's the matter now? What the devil, have you got hold of my little broker here? Zounds, brother, don't hurt little Premium. What's the matter, my little fellow?

Jos. Surf. So! he has been with you too, has he?

Chas. Surf. To be sure he has. Why, he's as honest a little—But sure, Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you?

Jos. Surf. Borrowing! no! But, brother, you know we expect Sir Oliver here every—

Chas. Surf. O Gad, that's true! Noll mustn't find the little broker here, to be sure.

Jos. Surf. Yet Mr. Stanley insists—

Chas. Surf. Stanley! why his name's Premium.

Jos. Surf. No, sir, Stanley.

Chas. Surf. No, no, Premium.

Jos. Surf. Well, no matter which—but—

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, Stanley or Premium, 'tis the same thing, as you say; for I suppose he goes by half a hundred names, besides A. B. at the coffee-house. *[Knocking]*

Jos. Surf. 'Sdeath! here's Sir Oliver at the door.—
Now I beg, Mr. Stanley—

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, and I beg, Mr. Premium—

Sir Oliv. Gentlemen—

Jos. Surf. Sir, by Heaven you shall go.

Chas. Surf. Ay, out with him, certainly!

Sir Oliv. This violence—

Jos. Surf. Sir, 'tis your own fault.

Chas. Surf. Out with him, to be sure.

[Both forcing SIR OLIVER out]

Enter SIR PETER and LADY TEAZLE, MARIA, and ROWLEY

Sir Pet. My old friend, Sir Oliver—hey! What in the name of wonder—here are dutiful nephews—assault their uncle at a first visit!

Lady Teaz. Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we came in to rescue you.

Row. Truly it was; for I perceive, Sir Oliver, the character of old Stanley was no protection to you.

Sir Oliv. Nor of Premium either: the necessities of the former could not extort a shilling from that benevolent gentleman; and with the other I stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors, and being knocked down without being bid for.

Jos. Surf. Charles!

Chas. Surf. Joseph!

Jos. Surf. 'Tis now complete!

Chas. Surf. Very.

Sir Oliv. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley too—look on that elder nephew of mine. You know what he has already received from my bounty; and you also know how gladly I would have regarded half my fortune as held in trust for him: judge then my disappointment in discovering him to be destitute of truth, charity, and gratitude!

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, I should be more surprised at this declaration, if I had not myself found him to be mean, treacherous, and hypocritical.

Lady Teaz. And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him call me to his character.

Sir Pet. Then, I believe, we need add no more; if he knows himself, he will consider it as the most perfect punishment, that he is known to the world.

Chas. Surf. If they talk this way to Honesty, what will they say to me, by-and-by? [*Aside*

[*SIR PETER, LADY TEAZLE, and MARIA retire*

Sir Oliv. As for that prodigal, his brother, there—

Chas. Surf. Ay, now comes my turn; the damned family pictures will ruin me! [*Aside*

Jos. Surf. Sir Oliver—uncle, will you honour me with a hearing?

Chas. Surf. Now, if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I might recollect myself a little. [*Aside*

Sir Oliv. I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself? [*To JOSEPH SURFACE*

Jos. Surf. I trust I could.

Sir Oliv. [*To CHARLES SURFACE.*] Well, sir!—and you could justify yourself too, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. What!—Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. True, sir; but they were family secrets, and should not be mentioned again, you know.

Row. Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles's follies with anger.

Sir Oliv. Odd's heart, no more I can; nor with gravity either. Sir Peter, do you know the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors; sold me judges and generals by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

Chas. Surf. To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me sincere when I tell you—and upon my soul I would not say so if I was not—that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

Sir Oliv. Charles, I believe you. Give me your hand again: the ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

Chas. Surf. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

Lady Teaz. [*Advancing.*] Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to. [*Pointing to MARIA*

Sir Oliv. Oh, I have heard of his attachment there; and, with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right—that blush—

Sir Pet. Well, child, speak your sentiments!

Mar. Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy; for me, whatever claim I had to his attention I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

Chas. Surf. How, Maria!

Sir Pet. Heyday! what's the mystery now? While he appeared an incorrigible rake you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform I'll warrant you won't have him!

Mar. His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

Chas. Surf. Lady Sneerwell!

Jos. Surf. Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard to justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed. [*Opens the door*

Enter LADY SNEERWELL

Sir Pet. So! another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room in the house, I suppose!

Lady Sneer. Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

Chas. Surf. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? For, as I have life, I don't understand it.

Jos. Surf. I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

Sir Pet. And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake—Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

Row. Walk in, Mr. Snake.

Enter SNAKE

I thought his testimony might be wanted: however, it happens unluckily, that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, not to support her.

Lady Sneer. A villain! Treacherous to me at last! Speak, fellow, have you, too, conspired against me!

Snake. I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons: you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question; but I unfortunately have been offered double to speak the truth.

Sir Pet. Plot and counter-plot, egad! I wish your ladyship joy of your negotiation.

Lady Sneer. The torments of shame and disappointment on you all! [*Going*]

Lady Teaz. Hold, Lady Sneerwell—before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken, in writing letters from me to Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the scandalous college of which you are president, and inform them, that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

Lady Sneer. You too, madam!—provoking—insolent! May your husband live these fifty years! [*Exit*]

Sir Pet. Oons! what a fury!

Lady Teaz. A malicious creature, indeed!

Sir Pet. What! not for her last wish?

Lady Teaz. Oh no!

Sir Oliv. Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

Jos. Surf. Sir, I am so confounded to find that Lady

Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say : however, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. For the man who attempts to—— [Exit

Sir Pet. Moral to the last !

Sir Oliv. Ay, and marry her, Joseph, if you can. Oil and vinegar !—egad, you 'll do very well together.

Row. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present ?

Snake. Before I go, I beg pardon, once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

Sir Pet. Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

Snake. But I must request of the company, that it shall never be known.

Sir Pet. Hey ! what the plague ! are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life ?

Snake. Ah, sir, consider—I live by the badness of my character ; and, if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

Sir Oliv. Well, well—we 'll not traduce you by saying anything in your praise, never fear. [Exit SNAKE

Sir Pet. There 's a precious rogue !

Lady Teaz. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oliv. Ay, ay, that 's as it should be, and, egad, we 'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Chas. Surf. Thank you, dear uncle.

Sir Pet. What, you rogue ! don't you ask the girl's consent first ?

Chas. Surf. Oh, I have done that a long time—a minute ago—and she has looked yes.

Mar. For shame, Charles !—I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word——

Sir Oliv. Well, then, the fewer the better ; may your love for each other never know abatement.

Sir Pet. And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I intend to do !

Chas. Surf. Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me ; and I suspect that I owe you much.

Sir Oliv. You do, indeed, Charles.

Sir Pet. Ay, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Chas. Surf. Why, as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it. But here shall be my monitor—my gentle guide.—Ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, shouldst waive thy beauty's sway,
 Thou still must rule, because I will obey:
 An humble fugitive from Folly view,
 No sanctuary near but Love and you: [To the audience
 You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
 For even Scandal dies, if you approve. [Exeunt omnes

EPILOGUE BY MR. COLMAN

Spoken by Lady Teazle

I, who was late so volatile and gay,
 Like a trade-wind must now blow all one way,
 Bend all my cares, my studies, and my vows,
 To one dull rusty weathercock—my spouse!
 So wills our virtuous bard—the motley Bayes
 Of crying epilogues and laughing plays!
 Old bachelors, who marry smart young wives,
 Learn from our play to regulate your lives:
 Each bring his dear to town, all faults upon her—
 London will prove the very source of honour.
 Plunged fairly in, like a cold bath it serves,
 When principles relax, to brace the nerves:
 Such is my case; and yet I must deplore
 That the gay dream of dissipation 's o'er.
 And say, ye fair! was ever lively wife,
 Born with a genius for the highest life,
 Like me untimely blasted in her bloom,
 Like me condemned to such a dismal doom?
 Save money—when I just knew how to waste it!
 Leave London—just as I began to taste it!
 Must I then watch the early crowing cock,
 The melancholy ticking of a clock;
 In a lone rustic hall for ever pounded,
 With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats surrounded?
 With humble curate can I now retire,
 (While good Sir Peter boozes with the squire,)
 And at backgammon mortify my soul,
 That pants for loo, or flutters at a vole?
 Seven's the main! Dear sound that must expire,
 Lost at hot cockles round a Christmas fire;
 The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,
 Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content!
 Farewell the pluméd head, the cushioned *tete*,
 That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
 That spirit-stirring drum!—card drums I mean.
 Spadille—odd trick—pam—basto—king and queen!

And you, ye knockers, that, with brazen throat,
The welcome visitors' approach denote ;
Farewell all quality of high renown,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious town !
Farewell ! your revels I partake no more,
And Lady Teazle's occupation 's o'er !
All this I told our bard ; he smiled, and said 'twas clear
I ought to play deep tragedy next year.
Meanwhile he drew wise morals from his play,
And in these solemn periods stalked away :—
“Blessed were the fair like you ; her faults who stopped
And closed her follies when the curtain dropped !
No more in vice or error to engage,
Or play the fool at large on life's great stage.”

THE CRITIC

OR A TRAGEDY-PLEASANT

A DRAMATIC PIECE IN THREE ACTS

And you're knacker, that with broken throat,
The welcome visitors' approach denote;
Farewell all quality of high renown.

And Lady Leathe's occupation's o'er!
Farewell! your travels I pursue no more,
Farewell! your travels I pursue no more.

All this I told our party; the smiles and said 'twas near
I ought to play deep tragedy next year.

Meanwhile he drew with modest front his pipe,
And in these solemn periods, stilled a cry—
"Blessed were the folk like you; but folks who stopped
and closed her follicles when the curtain dropped!"

Or play the fool at Leathe's great stage,
The more in view of error to engage,
The more in view of error to engage.

And then he turned to Lady Leathe and said,
"You've got your own little play to play,
You've got your own little play to play."

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You've got your own little play to play."

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

1877 IN BRITAIN BY THE AUTHOR

TO MRS. CHEVILLE
BY THE AUTHOR

MADAM—In presenting your permission to address the following pages to you, which, as they and themselves to be critical, require every protection and allowance that a private or friendly prejudice can give them, I yet venture to mention no other motive than the gratification of private friendship and esteem. Had I sought a hope that your implied approbation would give a sanction to their defects, your particular reserve and dislike to the reputation of criticism, as well as of poetical talent, would have been a sufficient obstacle to my attempt. However, I am not so much concerned with your approbation as with your disapprobation. I shall not here presume to argue that the same rule and example can extend to all; but I shall endeavour to prove that a just and temperate criticism is the most effectual production of judgment and taste, and that it is the only possession of these advantages. Continue to devote yourself to the idea that you are known only to be eminently qualified to regard the various qualities that attend private friendship, and the general utility that such conversation, though of what you have written, has given into full public notice to answer my purpose; and yet will, perhaps, be the only person conversant in such a discourse, who shall read the address and not perceive that by publishing your permission to appear in the following lines, I have it more interested than to bear the true respect and regard with which I have the honour to be, Madam, your very sincere and obedient humble servant.

THE CRITIC

OR, A TRAGEDY REHEARSED

A DRAMATIC PIECE IN THREE ACTS

Printed by J. G. ...
LONDON: ...

TO MRS. GREVILLE

MADAM,—In requesting your permission to address the following pages to you, which, as they aim themselves to be critical, require every protection and allowance that approving taste or friendly prejudice can give them, I yet venture to mention no other motive than the gratification of private friendship and esteem. Had I suggested a hope that your implied approbation would give a sanction to their defects, your particular reserve, and dislike to the reputation of critical taste, as well as of poetical talent, would have made you refuse the protection of your name to such a purpose. However, I am not so ungrateful as now to attempt to combat this disposition in you. I shall not here presume to argue that the present state of poetry claims and expects every assistance that taste and example can afford it; nor endeavour to prove that a fastidious concealment of the most elegant productions of judgment and fancy is an ill return for the possession of those endowments. Continue to deceive yourself in the idea that you are known only to be eminently admired and regarded for the valuable qualities that attach private friendships, and the graceful talents that adorn conversation. Enough of what you have written has stolen into full public notice to answer my purpose; and you will, perhaps, be the only person, conversant in elegant literature, who shall read this address and not perceive that by publishing your particular approbation of the following drama, I have a more interested object than to boast the true respect and regard with which I have the honour to be, Madam, your very sincere and obedient humble servant,

R. B. SHERIDAN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT DRURY LANE THEATRE IN 1779

SIR FRETFUL PLAGIARY	Mr. Parsons
PUFF	Mr. King
DANGLE	Mr. Dodd
SNEER	Mr. Palmer
SIGNOR PASTICCIO RITORNELLO..	Mr. Delpini
INTERPRETER	Mr. Baddeley
UNDER PROMPTER	Mr. Phillimore
MR. HOPKINS	Mr. Hopkins
MRS. DANGLE	Mrs. Hopkins
SIGNORE PASTICCIO RITORNELLO	Miss Field and the Miss Abrams

Scenemen, Musicians, and Servants

CHARACTERS OF THE TRAGEDY

LORD BURLEIGH	Mr. Moody
GOVERNOR OF TILBURY FORT ..	Mr. Wrighten
EARL OF LEICESTER	Mr. Farren
SIR WALTER RALEIGH.. .. .	Mr. Burton
SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON ..	Mr. Waldron
MASTER OF THE HORSE	Mr. Kenny
DON FEROLO WHISKERANDOS ..	Mr. Bannister, jun.
BEEFEATER	Mr. Wright
JUSTICE	Mr. Packer
SON	Mr. Lamash
CONSTABLE	Mr. Fawcett
THAMES	Mr. Gawdry
TILBURINA	Miss Pope
CONFIDANT	Mrs. Bradshaw
JUSTICE'S LADY	Mrs. Johnston
FIRST NIECE	Miss Collett
SECOND NIECE	Miss Kirby

Knights, Guards, Constables, Sentinels, Servants,
Chorus, Rivers, Attendants, &c., &c.

SCENE,—LONDON: *in DANGLE'S House during the First Act, and throughout the rest of the Play in DRURY LANE THEATRE.*

PROLOGUE

BY THE HONOURABLE RICHARD FITZPATRICK

THE sister muses, whom these realms obey,
 Who o'er the drama hold divided sway,
 Sometimes, by evil counsellors, 'tis said,
 Like earth-born potentates have been misled.
 In those gay days of wickedness and wit,
 When Villiers criticised what Dryden writ,
 The tragic queen, to please a tasteless crowd,
 Had learned to bellow, rant, and roar so loud,
 That frightened Nature, her best friend before,
 The blustering beldam's company forswore ;
 Her comic sister, who had wit, 'tis true,
 With all her merits, had her failings too ;
 And would sometimes in mirthful moments use
 A style too flippant for a well-bred muse ;
 Then female modesty abashed began
 To seek the friendly refuge of the fan,
 A while behind that slight entrenchment stood,
 Till driven from thence, she left the stage for good.
 In our more pious, and far chaster times,
 These sure no longer are the Muse's crimes !
 But some complain that, former faults to shun,
 The reformation to extremes has run.
 The frantic hero's wild delirium past,
 Now insipidity succeeds bombast ;
 So slow Melpomene's cold numbers creep,
 Here dulness seems her drowsy court to keep,
 And we are scarce awake, whilst you are fast asleep.
 Thalia, once so ill-behaved and rude,
 Reformed, is now become an arrant prude ;
 Retailing nightly to the yawning pit
 The purest morals, undefiled by wit !
 Our author offers, in these motley scenes,
 A slight remonstrance to the drama's queens ;
 Nor let the goddesses be over nice ;
 Free-spoken subjects give the best advice.
 Although not quite a novice in his trade,
 His cause to-night requires no common aid.
 To this, a friendly, just, and powerful court,
 I come ambassador to beg support.

Can he undaunted brave the critic's rage?
 In civil broils with brother bards engage?
 Hold forth their errors to the public eye,
 Nay more, e'en newspapers themselves defy?
 Say, must his single arm encounter all?
 By numbers vanquished, e'en the brave may fall;
 And though no leader should success distrust,
 Whose troops are willing, and whose cause is just;
 To bid such host of angry foes defiance,
 His chief dependence must be, your alliance.

ACT ONE

SCENE I.—A Room in DANGLE'S House

MR. and MRS. DANGLE discovered at breakfast, and reading newspapers

Dang. [Reading.] *Brutus to Lord North.—Letter the second on the State of the Army—Psha! To the first L dash D of the A dash Y.—Genuine extract of a Letter from St. Kitt's.—Coxheath Intelligence—It is now confidently asserted that Sir Charles Hardy—Psha! nothing but about the fleet and the nation!—and I hate all politics but theatrical politics.—Where 's the Morning Chronicle?*

Mrs. Dang. Yes, that 's your Gazette.

Dang. So, here we have it.—[Reads.] *Theatrical intelligence extraordinary.—We hear there is a new tragedy in rehearsal at Drury Lane Theatre, called the Spanish Armada, said to be written by Mr. Puff, a gentleman well known in the theatrical world. If we may allow ourselves to give credit to the report of the performers, who, truth to say, are in general but indifferent judges, this piece abounds with the most striking and received beauties of modern composition.—So! I am very glad my friend Puff's tragedy is in such forwardness.—Mrs. Dangle, my dear, you will be very glad to hear that Puff's tragedy—*

Mrs. Dang. Lord, Mr. Dangle, why will you plague me about such nonsense?—Now the plays are begun I shall have no peace.—Isn't it sufficient to make yourself ridiculous by your passion for the theatre, without continually teasing me to join you? Why can't you ride your hobby-horse without desiring to place me on a pillion behind you, Mr. Dangle?

Dang. Nay, my dear, I was only going to read—

Mrs. Dang. No, no; you will never read anything that 's worth listening to. You hate to hear about your country; there are letters every day with Roman signatures, demonstrating the certainty of an invasion, and proving that the nation is utterly undone. But you never will read anything to entertain one.

Dang. What has a woman to do with politics, Mrs. Dangle?

Mrs. Dang. And what have you to do with the

theatre, Mr. Dangle? Why should you affect the character of a critic? I have no patience with you!—haven't you made yourself the jest of all your acquaintance by your interference in matters where you have no business? Are you not called a theatrical Quidnunc, and a mock Mæcenas to second-hand authors?

Dang. True; my power with the managers is pretty notorious. But is it no credit to have applications from all quarters for my interest—from lords to recommend fiddlers, from ladies to get boxes, from authors to get answers, and from actors to get engagements?

Mrs. Dang. Yes, truly; you have contrived to get a share in all the plague and trouble of theatrical property, without the profit, or even the credit of the abuse that attends it.

Dang. I am sure, Mrs. Dangle, you are no loser by it, however; you have all the advantages of it. Mightn't you, last winter, have had the reading of the new pantomime a fortnight previous to its performance? And doesn't Mr. Fosbrook let you take places for a play before it is advertised, and set you down for a box for every new piece through the season? And didn't my friend, Mr. Smatter, dedicate his last farce to you at my particular request, Mrs. Dangle?

Mrs. Dang. Yes; but wasn't the farce damned, Mr. Dangle? And to be sure it is extremely pleasant to have one's house made the motley rendezvous of all the lackeys of literature: the very high 'Change of trading authors and jobbing critics?—Yes, my drawing-room is an absolute register office for candidate actors, and poets without character.—Then to be continually alarmed with misses and ma'ams piping hysteric changes on Juliets and Dorindas, Pollys and Ophelias; and the very furniture trembling at the probationary starts and unprovoked rants of would-be Richards and Hamlets!—And what is worse than all, now that the manager has monopolised the Opera House, haven't we the signors and signoras calling here, sliding their smooth semibreves, and gargling glib divisions in their outlandish throats—with foreign emissaries and French spies, for aught I know, disguised like fiddlers and figure-dancers?

Dang. Mercy! Mrs. Dangle!

Mrs. Dang. And to employ yourself so idly at such an alarming crisis as this too—when, if you had the least

spirit, you would have been at the head of one of the Westminster associations—or trailing a volunteer pike in the Artillery Ground! But you—o' my conscience, I believe, if the French were landed to-morrow, your first inquiry would be, whether they had brought a theatrical troop with them.

Dang. Mrs. Dangle, it does not signify—I say the stage is *the Mirror of Nature*, and the actors are *the Abstract and brief Chronicles of the Time*: and pray, what can a man of sense study better?—Besides, you will not easily persuade me that there is no credit or importance in being at the head of a band of critics, who take upon them to decide for the whole town, whose opinion and patronage all writers solicit, and whose recommendation no manager dares refuse.

Mrs. Dang. Ridiculous!—Both managers and authors of the least merit laugh at your pretensions.—The public is their critic—without whose fair approbation they know no play can rest on the stage, and with whose applause they welcome such attacks as yours, and laugh at the malice of them, where they can't at the wit.

Dang. Very well, madam—very well!

Enter SERVANT

Ser. Mr. Sneer, sir, to wait on you.

Dang. Oh, show Mr. Sneer up.—[*Exit SERVANT.*] Plague on 't, now we must appear loving and affectionate, or Sneer will hitch us into a story.

Mrs. Dang. With all my heart; you can't be more ridiculous than you are.

Dang. You are enough to provoke—

Enter SNEER

Ha! my dear Sneer, I am vastly glad to see you.—My dear, here 's Mr. Sneer.

Mrs. Dang. Good morning to you, sir.

Dang. Mrs. Dangle and I have been diverting ourselves with the papers. Pray, Sneer, won't you go to Drury Lane Theatre the first night of Puff's tragedy?

Sneer. Yes; but I suppose one shan't be able to get in, for on the first night of a new piece they always fill the house with orders to support it. But here, Dangle, I have brought you two pieces, one of which you must exert your-

self to make the managers accept, I can tell you that ; for 'tis written by a person of consequence.

Dang. So ! now my plagues are beginning.

Sneer. Ay, I am glad of it, for now you'll be happy. Why, my dear Dangle, it is a pleasure to see how you enjoy your volunteer fatigue, and your solicited solicitations.

Dang. It's a great trouble—yet, egad, it's pleasant too.—Why, sometimes of a morning I have a dozen people call on me at breakfast-time whose faces I never saw before nor ever desire to see again.

Sneer. That must be very pleasant indeed ?

Dang. And not a week but I receive fifty letters, and not a line in them about any business of my own.

Sneer. An amusing correspondence !

Dang. [Reading.] *Bursts into tears, and exit.*—What, is this a tragedy ?

Sneer. No, that's a genteel comedy, not a translation—only taken from the French : it is written in a style which they have lately tried to run down : the true sentimental, and nothing ridiculous in it from the beginning to the end.

Mrs. Dang. Well, if they had kept to that, I should not have been such an enemy to the stage ; there was some edification to be got from those pieces, Mr. Sneer !

Sneer. I am quite of your opinion, Mrs. Dangle ; the theatre, in proper hands, might certainly be made the school of morality ; but now, I am sorry to say it, people seem to go there principally for their entertainment !

Mrs. Dang. It would have been more to the credit of the managers to have kept it in the other line.

Sneer. Undoubtedly, madam ; and hereafter perhaps to have had it recorded, that in the midst of a luxurious and dissipated age, they preserved two houses in the capital where the conversation was always moral at least, if not entertaining !

Dang. Now, egad, I think the worst alteration is in the nicety of the audience !—No *double entendre*, no smart innuendo admitted ; even Vanbrugh and Congreve obliged to undergo a bungling reformation !

Sneer. Yes, and our prudery in this respect is just on a par with the artificial bashfulness of a courtesan, who increases the blush upon her cheek in an exact proportion to the diminution of her modesty.

Dang. Sneer can't even give the public a good word! But what have we here?—This seems a very odd——

Sneer. Oh, that's a comedy, on a very new plan; replete with wit and mirth, yet of a most serious moral! You see it is called *The Reformed House-breaker*; where, by the mere force of humour, house-breaking is put into so ridiculous a light, that if the piece has its proper run, I have no doubt but that bolts and bars will be entirely useless by the end of the season.

Dang. Egad, this is new indeed!

Sneer. Yes; it is written by a particular friend of mine, who has discovered that the follies and foibles of society are subjects unworthy the notice of the comic muse, who should be taught to stoop only at the greater vices and blacker crimes of humanity—gibbeting capital offences in five acts, and pillorying petty larcenies in two.—In short, his idea is to dramatise the penal laws, and make the stage a court of ease to the Old Bailey.

Dang. It is truly moral.

Re-enter SERVANT

Ser. Sir Fretful Plagiary, sir.

Dang. Beg him to walk up.—[*Exit SERVANT.*] Now, Mrs. Dangle, Sir Fretful Plagiary is an author to your own taste.

Mrs. Dang. I confess he is a favourite of mine, because everybody else abuses him.

Sneer. Very much to the credit of your charity, madam, if not of your judgment.

Dang. But, egad, he allows no merit to any author but himself, that's the truth on 't—though he's my friend.

Sneer. Never.—He is as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six-and-thirty; and then the insidious humility with which he seduces you to give a free opinion on any of his works can be exceeded only by the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations.

Dang. Very true, egad—though he's my friend.

Sneer. Then his affected contempt of all newspaper strictures; though, at the same time, he is the sorest man alive, and shrinks like scorched parchment from the fiery ordeal of true criticism: yet he is so covetous of popularity, that he had rather be abused than not mentioned at all.

Dang. There 's no denying it—though he is my friend.
Sneer. You have read the tragedy he has just finished, haven't you?

Dang. Oh yes; he sent it to me yesterday.

Sneer. Well, and you think it execrable, don't you?

Dang. Why, between ourselves, egad, I must own—though he is my friend—that it is one of the most—He's here—[*Aside.*]—finished and most admirable perform—

Sir Fret. [Without.] Mr. Sneer with him, did you say?

Enter SIR FRETFUL PLAGIARY

Dang. Ah, my dear friend!—Egad, we were just speaking of your tragedy.—Admirable, Sir Fretful, admirable!

Sneer. You never did anything beyond it, Sir Fretful—never in your life.

Sir Fret. You make me extremely happy; for without a compliment, my dear Sneer, there isn't a man in the world whose judgment I value as I do yours and Mr. Dangle's.

Mrs. Dang. They are only laughing at you, Sir Fretful; for it was but just now that—

Dang. Mrs. Dangle!—Ah, Sir Fretful, you know Mrs. Dangle.—My friend Sneer was rallying just now:—he knows how she admires you, and—

Sir Fret. Oh Lord, I am sure Mr. Sneer has more taste and sincerity than to—[*Aside.*] A damned double-faced fellow!

Dang. Yes, yes—Sneer will jest—but a better humoured—

Sir Fret. Oh, I know—

Dang. He has a ready turn for ridicule—his wit costs him nothing.

Sir Fret. No, egad—or I should wonder how he came by it. [Aside]

Mrs. Dang. Because his jest is always at the expense of his friend. [Aside]

Dang. But, Sir Fretful, have you sent your play to the managers yet?—or can I be of any service to you?

Sir Fret. No, no, I thank you: I believe the piece had sufficient recommendation with it.—I thank you, though.—I sent it to the manager of Covent Garden Theatre this morning.

Sneer. I should have thought, now, that it might have been cast (as the actors call it) better at Drury Lane.

Sir Fret. O lud! no—never send a play there while I live—hark 'ee!

[*Whispers SNEER*

Sneer. Writes himself!—I know he does.

Sir Fret. I say nothing—I take away from no man's merit—am hurt at no man's good fortune—I say nothing.—But this I will say—through all my knowledge of life, I have observed—that there is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy.

Sneer. I believe you have reason for what you say, indeed.

Sir Fret. Besides—I can tell you it is not always so safe to leave a play in the hands of those who write themselves.

Sneer. What, they may steal from them, hey, my dear Plagiary?

Sir Fret. Steal!—to be sure they may; and, egad, serve your best thoughts as gypsies do stolen children, disfigure them to make 'em pass for their own.

Sneer. But your present work is a sacrifice to Melpomene, and he, you know, never—

Sir Fret. That's no security: a dexterous plagiarist may do anything. Why, sir, for aught I know, he might take out some of the best things in my tragedy, and put them into his own comedy.

Sneer. That might be done, I dare be sworn.

Sir Fret. And then, if such a person gives you the least hint or assistance, he is devilish apt to take the merit of the whole—

Dang. If it succeeds.

Sir Fret. Ay, but with regard to this piece, I think I can hit that gentleman, for I can safely swear he never read it.

Sneer. I'll tell you how you may hurt him more.

Sir Fret. How?

Sneer. Swear he wrote it.

Sir Fret. Plague on 't now, Sneer, I shall take it ill!—I believe you want to take away my character as an author.

Sneer. Then I am sure you ought to be very much obliged to me.

Sir Fret. Hey!—sir!—

Dang. Oh, you know, he never means what he says.

Sir Fret. Sincerely then—you do like the piece?

Sneer. Wonderfully!

Sir Fret. But come now, there must be something that you think might be mended, hey?—Mr. Dangle, has nothing struck you?

Dang. Why, faith, it is but an ungracious thing, for the most part, to——

Sir Fret. With most authors it is just so indeed; they are in general strangely tenacious! But, for my part, I am never so well pleased as when a judicious critic points out any defect to me; for what is the purpose of showing a work to a friend, if you don't mean to profit by his opinion?

Sneer. Very true.—Why then, though I seriously admire the piece upon the whole, yet there is one small objection; which, if you'll give me leave, I'll mention.

Sir Fret. Sir, you can't oblige me more.

Sneer. I think it wants incident.

Sir Fret. Good God! you surprise me!—wants incident.

Sneer. Yes; I own I think the incidents are too few.

Sir Fret. Good God! Believe me, Mr. Sneer, there is no person for whose judgment I have a more implicit deference. But I protest to you, Mr. Sneer, I am only apprehensive that the incidents are too crowded.—My dear Dangle, how does it strike you?

Dang. Really I can't agree with my friend Sneer. I think the plot quite sufficient; and the four first acts by many degrees the best I ever read or saw in my life. If I might venture to suggest anything, it is that the interest rather falls off in the fifth.

Sir Fret. Rises, I believe you mean, sir.

Dang. No, I don't, upon my word.

Sir Fret. Yes, yes, you do, upon my soul!—it certainly don't fall off, I assure you.—No, no; it don't fall off.

Dang. Now, Mrs. Dangle, didn't you say it struck you in the same light?

Mrs. Dang. No, indeed, I did not—I did not see a fault in any part of the play, from the beginning to the end.

Sir Fret. Upon my soul, the women are the best judges after all!

Mrs. Dang. Or, if I made any objection, I am sure it was to nothing in the piece; but that I was afraid it was, on the whole, a little too long.

Sir Fret. Pray, madam, do you speak as to duration of time; or do you mean that the story is tediously spun out?

Mrs. Dang. O lud! no.—I speak only with reference to the usual length of acting plays.

Sir Fret. Then I am very happy—very happy indeed—because the play is a short play, a remarkably short play. I should not venture to differ with a lady on a point of taste; but, on these occasions, the watch, you know, is the critic.

Mrs. Dang. Then, I suppose, it must have been Mr. Dangle's drawling manner of reading it to me.

Sir Fret. Oh, if Mr. Dangle read it, that's quite another affair!—But I assure you, Mrs. Dangle, the first evening you can spare me three hours and a half, I'll undertake to read you the whole from beginning to end, with the prologue and epilogue, and allow time for the music between the acts.

Mrs. Dang. I hope to see it on the stage next.

Dang. Well, Sir Fretful, I wish you may be able to get rid as easily of the newspaper criticisms as you do of ours.

Sir Fret. The newspapers! Sir, they are the most villainous—licentious—abominable—infernal—Not that I ever read them—no—I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper.

Dang. You are quite right; for it certainly must hurt an author of delicate feelings to see the liberties they take.

Sir Fret. No, quite the contrary! their abuse is, in fact, the best panegyric—I like it of all things. An author's reputation is only in danger from their support.

Sneer. Why that's true—and that attack, now, on you the other day—

Sir Fret. What? Where?

Dang. Ay, you mean in a paper of Thursday: it was completely ill-natured, to be sure.

Sir Fret. Oh, so much the better.—Ha! ha! ha! I wouldn't have it otherwise.

Dang. Certainly it is only to be laughed at; for—

Sir Fret. You don't happen to recollect what the fellow said, do you?

Sneer. Pray, Dangle—Sir Fretful seems a little anxious—

Sir Fret. O lud, no!—anxious!—not I,—not the least.—I—but one may as well hear, you know.

Dang. Sneer, do you recollect?—[*Aside to SNEER.*] Make out something.

Sneer. [*Aside to DANGLE.*] I will.—[*Aloud.*] Yes, yes, I remember perfectly.

Sir Fret. Well, and pray now—not that it signifies—what might the gentleman say?

Sneer. Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention or original genius whatever; though you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

Sir Fret. Ha! ha! ha!—very good!

Sneer. That as to comedy, you have not one idea of your own, he believes, even in your common-place book—where stray jokes and pilfered witticisms are kept with as much method as the ledger of the lost and stolen office.

Sir Fret. Ha! ha! ha!—very pleasant!

Sneer. Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to steal with taste:—but that you glean from the refuse of obscure volumes, where more judicious plagiarists have been before you; so that the body of your work is a composition of dregs and sediments—like a bad tavern's worst wine.

Sir Fret. Ha! ha!

Sneer. In your more serious efforts, he says, your bombast would be less intolerable, if the thoughts were ever suited to the expression; but the homeliness of the sentiment stares through the fantastic encumbrance of its fine language, like a clown in one of the new uniforms!

Sir Fret. Ha! ha!

Sneer. That your occasional tropes and flowers suit the general coarseness of your style, as tambour sprigs would a ground of linsey-woolsey; while your imitations of Shakspeare resemble the mimicry of Falstaff's page, and are about as near the standard of the original.

Sir Fret. Ha!

Sneer. In short, that even the finest passages you steal are of no service to you; for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating; so that they lie on the surface like lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilise!

Sir Fret. [*After great agitation.*] Now, another person would be vexed at this.

Sneer. Oh! but I wouldn't have told you—only to divert you.

Sir Fret. I know it—I am diverted.—Ha! ha! ha!—not the least invention!—Ha! ha! ha!—very good!—very good!

Sneer. Yes—no genius! ha! ha! ha!

Dang. A severe rogue! ha! ha! ha! But you are quite right, Sir Fretful, never to read such nonsense.

Sir Fret. To be sure—for if there is anything to one's praise, it is a foolish vanity to be gratified at it; and, if it is abuse,—why one is always sure to hear of it from one damned good-natured friend or another!

Enter SERVANT

Ser. Sir, there is an Italian gentleman, with a French interpreter, and three young ladies, and a dozen musicians, who say they are sent by Lady Rondeau and Mrs. Fugue.

Dang. Gadso! they come by appointment!—Dear Mrs. Dangle, do let them know I'll see them directly.

Mrs. Dang. You know, Mr. Dangle, I shan't understand a word they say.

Dang. But you hear there's an interpreter.

Mrs. Dang. Well, I'll try to endure their complaisance till you come. [Exit

Ser. And Mr. Puff, sir, has sent word that the last rehearsal is to be this morning, and that he'll call on you presently.

Dang. That's true—I shall certainly be at home.—[Exit SERVANT.] Now, Sir Fretful, if you have a mind to have justice done you in the way of answer, egad, Mr. Puff's your man.

Sir Fret. Psha! Sir, why should I wish to have it answered, when I tell you I am pleased at it?

Dang. True, I had forgot that. But I hope you are not fretted at what Mr. Sneer—

Sir Fret. Zounds! no, Mr. Dangle; don't I tell you these things never fret me in the least?

Dang. Nay, I only thought—

Sir Fret. And let me tell you, Mr. Dangle, 'tis damned affronting in you to suppose that I am hurt when I tell you I am not.

Sneer. But why so warm, Sir Fretful?

Sir Fret. Gad's life! Mr. Sneer, you are as absurd as Dangle: how often must I repeat it to you, that nothing can vex me but your supposing it possible for me to mind the damned nonsense you have been repeating to me!—and, let me tell you, if you continue to believe this, you must mean to insult me, gentlemen—and, then, your dis-

respect will affect me no more than the newspaper criticisms—and I shall treat it with exactly the same calm indifference and philosophic contempt—and so your servant. [*Exit*

Sneer. Ha! ha! ha! poor Sir Fretful! Now will he go and vent his philosophy in anonymous abuse of all modern critics and authors.—But, Dangle, you must get your friend Puff to take me to the rehearsal of his tragedy.

Dang. I'll answer for 't, he'll thank you for desiring it. But come and help me to judge of this musical family: they are recommended by people of consequence, I assure you.

Sneer. I am at your disposal the whole morning;—but I thought you had been a decided critic in music as well as in literature.

Dang. So I am—but I have a bad ear. I' faith, Sneer, though, I am afraid we were a little too severe on Sir Fretful—though he is my friend.

Sneer. Why, 'tis certain, that unnecessarily to mortify the vanity of any writer is a cruelty which mere dulness never can deserve; but where a base and personal malignity usurps the place of literary emulation, the aggressor deserves neither quarter nor pity.

Dang. That's true, egad!—though he's my friend!

SCENE II.—A Drawing-room in DANGLE'S House

MRS. DANGLE, SIGNOR PASTICCIO RITORNELLO, SIGNORE PASTICCIO RITORNELLO, INTERPRETER, and MUSICIANS discovered

Interp. Je dis, madame, j'ai l'honneur to introduce et do vous demander votre protection pour le signor Pasticcio Ritornello et pour sa charmante famille.

Signor Past. Ah! vosignoria, noi vi preghiamo di favoritevi colla vostra protezione.

1 *Signora Past.* Vosignoria fatevi questi grazie.

2 *Signora Past.* Sì, signora.

Interp. Madame—me interpret.—C'est à dire—in English—qu'ils vous prient de leur faire l'honneur—

Mrs. Dang. I say again, gentlemen, I don't understand a word you say.

Signor Past. Questo signore spiegherò—

Interp. Oui—me interpret.—Nous avons les lettres de recommandation pour monsieur Dangle de——

Mrs. Dang. Upon my word, sir, I don't understand you.

Signor Past. Sa contessa Rondeau è nostra padrona.

3 Signora Past. Si, padre, et miladi Fugue.

Interp. O!—me interpret.—Madame, ils disent—in English—Qu'ils ont l'honneur d'être protégés de ces dames.—You understand?

Mrs. Dang. No, sir,—no understand!

Enter DANGLE and SNEER

Interp. Ah, voici monsieur Dangle!

All Italians. Ah! signor Dangle!

Mrs. Dang. Mr. Dangle, here are two very civil gentlemen trying to make themselves understood, but I don't know which is the interpreter.

Dang. Eh, bien!

[*The INTERPRETER and SIGNOR PASTICCIO here speak at the same time.*]

Interp. Monsieur Dangle, le grand bruit de vos talens pour la critique, et de votre intérêt avec messieurs les directeurs à tous les théâtres——

Signor Past. Vosignoria siete si famoso par la vostra conoscenza, e vostra interessa colla la direttore da——

Dang. Egad, I think the interpreter is the hardest to be understood of the two!

Sneer. Why, I thought, Dangle, you had been an admirable linguist.

Dang. So I am, if they would not talk so damned fast.

Sneer. Well, I'll explain that—the less time we lose in hearing them the better—for that, I suppose, is what they are brought here for.

[*Speaks to SIGNOR PASTICCIO—they sing trios, &c., DANGLE beating out of time.*]

Enter SERVANT and whispers DANGLE

Dang. Show him up.—[*Exit SERVANT.*] Bravo! admirable, bravissimo! admirablissimo!—Ah! Sneer! where will you find voices such as these in England?

Sneer. Not easily.

Dang. But Puff is coming.—Signor and little signoras obligatissimo!—Sposa signora Dangelena—Mrs. Dangle,

shall I beg you to offer them some refreshments, and take their address in the next room.

[Exit MRS. DANGLE with SIGNOR PASTICCIO, SIGNORE PASTICCIO, MUSICIANS, and INTERPRETER, ceremoniously.]

Re-enter SERVANT

Ser. Mr. Puff, sir.

[Exit

Enter PUFF

Dang. My dear Puff!

Puff. My dear Dangle, how is it with you?

Dang. Mr. Sneer, give me leave to introduce Mr. Puff to you.

Puff. Mr. Sneer is this?—Sir he is a gentleman whom I have long panted for the honour of knowing—a gentleman whose critical talents and transcendent judgment—

Sneer. Dear Sir—

Dang. Nay, don't be modest, Sneer; my friend Puff only talks to you in the style of his profession.

Sneer. His profession!

Puff. Yes, sir; I make no secret of the trade I follow: among friends and brother authors, Dangle knows I love to be frank on the subject, and to advertise myself *vivâ voce*.—I am, sir, a practitioner in panegyric, or, to speak more plainly, a professor of the art of puffing, at your service—or anybody else's.

Sneer. Sir, you are very obliging!—I believe, Mr. Puff, I have often admired your talents in the daily prints.

Puff. Yes, sir, I flatter myself I do as much business in that way as any six of the fraternity in town.—Devilish hard work all the summer, friend Dangle,—never worked harder! But, hark'ee,—the winter managers were a little sore, I believe.

Dang. No; I believe they took it all in good part.

Puff. Ay! then that must have been affectation in them; for, egad, there were some of the attacks which there was no laughing at!

Sneer. Ay, the humorous ones.—But I should think, Mr. Puff, that authors would in general be able to do this sort of work for themselves.

Puff. Why, yes—but in a clumsy way. Besides, we look on that as an encroachment, and so take the opposite side. I dare say, now, you conceive half the very civil paragraphs and advertisements you see to be written by the parties concerned, or their friends? No such

thing: nine out of ten manufactured by me in the way of business.

Sneer. Indeed!

Puff. Even the auctioneers now—the auctioneers, I say—though the rogues have lately got some credit for their language—not an article of the merit theirs; take them out of their pulpits, and they are as dull as catalogues!—No, sir; 'twas I first enriched their style—'twas I first taught them to crowd their advertisements with panegyrical superlatives, each epithet rising above the other, like the bidders in their own auction-rooms! From me they learned to inlay their phraseology with variegated chips of exotic metaphor; by me, too, their inventive faculties were called forth:—yes, sir, by me they were instructed to clothe ideal walls with gratuitous fruits—to insinuate obsequious rivulets into visionary groves—to teach courteous shrubs to nod their approbation of the grateful soil; or on emergencies to raise upstart oaks, where there never had been an acorn; to create a delightful vicinage without the assistance of a neighbour; or fix the temple of Hygeia in the fens of Lincolnshire!

Dang. I am sure you have done them infinite service; for now, when a gentleman is ruined, he parts with his house with some credit.

Sneer. Service! if they had any gratitude, they would erect a statue to him; they would figure him as a presiding Mercury, the god of traffic and fiction, with a hammer in his hand instead of a caduceus.—But pray, Mr. Puff, what first put you on exercising your talent in this way?

Puff. Egad, sir, sheer necessity!—the proper parent of an art so nearly allied to invention. You must know, Mr. Sneer, that from the first time I tried my hand at an advertisement, my success was such, that for some time after I led a most extraordinary life indeed!

Sneer. How, pray?

Puff. Sir, I supported myself two years entirely by my misfortunes.

Sneer. By your misfortunes!

Puff. Yes, sir, assisted by long sickness, and other occasional disorders; and a very comfortable living I had of it.

Sneer. From sickness and misfortunes! You practised as a doctor and attorney at once?

Puff. No, egad; both maladies and miseries were my own.

Sneer. Hey! what the plague!

Dang. 'Tis true, i' faith.

Puff. Hark'ee!—By advertisements—*To the charitable and humane!* and *To those whom Providence hath blessed with affluence!*

Sneer. Oh, I understand you.

Puff. And, in truth, I deserved what I got; for I suppose never man went through such a series of calamities in the same space of time. Sir, I was five times made a bankrupt, and reduced from a state of affluence by a train of unavoidable misfortunes: then, sir, though a very industrious tradesman, I was twice burned out, and lost my little all both times: I lived upon those fires a month. I soon after was confined by a most excruciating disorder, and lost the use of my limbs: that told very well; for I had the case strongly attested, and went about to collect the subscriptions myself.

Dang. Egad, I believe that was when you first called on me.

Puff. In November last?—Oh no; I was at that time a close prisoner in the Marshalsea, for a debt benevolently contracted to serve a friend. I was afterwards twice tapped for a dropsy, which declined into a very profitable consumption. I was then reduced to—Oh no—then, I became a widow with six helpless children, after having had eleven husbands pressed, and being left every time eight months gone with child, and without money to get me into an hospital!

Sneer. And you bore all with patience, I make no doubt?

Puff. Why, yes; though I made some occasional attempts at *jelo de se*; but as I did not find those rash actions answer, I left off killing myself very soon. Well, sir, at last, what with bankruptcies, fires, gouts, dropsies, imprisonments, and other valuable calamities, having got together a pretty handsome sum, I determined to quit a business which had always gone rather against my conscience, and in a more liberal way still to indulge my talents for fiction and embellishments, through my favourite channels of diurnal communication—and so, sir, you have my history.

Sneer. Most obligingly communicative indeed! and your confession, if published, might certainly serve the cause of true charity, by rescuing the most useful channels of appeal to benevolence from the cant of imposition. But

surely, Mr. Puff, there is no great mystery in your present profession?

Puff. Mystery, sir! I will take upon me to say the matter was never scientifically treated nor reduced to rule before.

Sneer. Reduced to rule!

Puff. O lud, sir, you are very ignorant, I am afraid!—Yes, sir, puffing is of various sorts; the principal are, the puff direct, the puff preliminary, the puff collateral, the puff collusive, and the puff oblique, or puff by implication. These all assume, as circumstances require, the various forms of Letter to the Editor, Occasional Anecdote, Impartial Critique, Observation from Correspondent, or Advertisement from the Party.

Sneer. The puff direct, I can conceive—

Puff. Oh yes, that's simple enough! For instance,—a new comedy or farce is to be produced at one of the theatres (though by-the-bye they don't bring out half what they ought to do)—the author, suppose Mr. Smatter, or Mr. Dapper, or any particular friend of mine—very well; the day before it is to be performed, I write an account of the manner in which it was received; I have the plot from the author, and only add—"characters strongly drawn—highly coloured—hand of a master—fund of genuine humour—mine of invention—neat dialogue—Attic salt." Then for the performance—"Mr. Dodd was astonishingly great in the character of Sir Harry. That universal and judicious actor, Mr. Palmer, perhaps never appeared to more advantage than in the colonel;—but it is not in the power of language to do justice to Mr. King: indeed he more than merited those repeated bursts of applause which he drew from a most brilliant and judicious audience. As to the scenery—the miraculous powers of Mr. De Louthembourg's pencil are universally acknowledged. In short, we are at a loss which to admire most, the unrivalled genius of the author, the great attention and liberality of the managers, the wonderful abilities of the painter, or the incredible exertions of all the performers."

Sneer. That's pretty well indeed, sir.

Puff. Oh, cool!—quite cool!—to what I sometimes do.

Sneer. And do you think there are any who are influenced by this?

Puff. O lud, yes, sir! the number of those who undergo the fatigue of judging for themselves is very small indeed.

Sneer. Well, sir, the puff preliminary?

Puff. Oh, that, sir, does well in the form of a caution. In a matter of gallantry now—Sir Flimsy Gossamer wishes to be well with Lady Fanny Fete—he applies to me—I open trenches for him with a paragraph in the Morning Post.—“It is recommended to the beautiful and accomplished Lady F four stars F dash E to be on her guard against that dangerous character, Sir F dash G; who, however pleasing and insinuating his manners may be, is certainly not remarkable for the *constancy of his attachments!*”—in italics. Here, you see, Sir Flimsy Gossamer is introduced to the particular notice of Lady Fanny, who perhaps never thought of him before—she finds herself publicly cautioned to avoid him, which naturally makes her desirous of seeing him; the observation of their acquaintance causes a pretty kind of mutual embarrassment; this produces a sort of sympathy of interest, which, if Sir Flimsy is unable to improve effectually, he at least gains the credit of having their names mentioned together, by a particular set, and in a particular way—which nine times out of ten is the full accomplishment of modern gallantry.

Dang. Egad, Sneer, you will be quite an adept in the business!

Puff. Now, sir, the puff collateral is much used as an appendage to advertisements, and may take the form of anecdote.—“Yesterday, as the celebrated George Bonmot was sauntering down St. James’s Street, he met the lively Lady Mary Myrtle coming out of the park:—‘Good God, Lady Mary, I’m surprised to meet you in a white jacket,—for I expected never to have seen you but in a full-trimmed uniform and a light horseman’s cap!’—‘Heavens, George, where could you have learned that?’—‘Why,’ replied the wit, ‘I just saw a print of you, in a new publication called the Camp Magazine; which, by the by, is a devilish clever thing, and is sold at No. 3, on the right hand of the way, two doors from the printing-office, the corner of Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, price only one shilling.’”

Sneer. Very ingenious indeed!

Puff. But the puff collusive is the newest of any; for it acts in the disguise of determined hostility. It is much used by bold booksellers and enterprising poets.—“An indignant correspondent observes, that the new poem called *Beelzebub’s Cotillon, or Proserpine’s Fête Champêtre*, is one of the most unjustifiable performances he ever read. The severity with which certain characters are handled is quite

shocking; and as there are many descriptions in it too warmly coloured for female delicacy, the shameful avidity with which this piece is bought by all people of fashion is a reproach on the taste of the times, and a disgrace to the delicacy of the age." Here you see the two strongest inducements are held forth: first, that nobody ought to read it; and secondly, that everybody buys it: on the strength of which the publisher boldly prints the tenth edition before he had sold ten of the first; and then establishes it by threatening himself with the pillory, or absolutely indicting himself for *scan. mag.*

Dang. Ha! ha! ha!—'gad, I know it is so.

Puff. As to the puff oblique, or puff by implication, it is too various and extensive to be illustrated by an instance: it attracts in titles and presumes in patents; it lurks in the limitation of a subscription, and invites in the assurance of crowd and incommodation at public places; it delights to draw forth concealed merit, with a most disinterested assiduity; and sometimes wears a countenance of smiling censure and tender reproach. It has a wonderful memory for parliamentary debates, and will often give the whole speech of a favoured member with the most flattering accuracy. But, above all, it is a great dealer in reports and suppositions. It has the earliest intelligence of intended preferments that will reflect honour on the patrons, and embryo promotions of modest gentlemen, who know nothing of the matter themselves. It can hint a ribbon for implied services in the air of a common report; and with the carelessness of a casual paragraph, suggest officers into commands, to which they have no pretension but their wishes. This, sir, is the last principal class of the art of puffing—an art which I hope you will now agree with me is of the highest dignity, yielding a tablature of benevolence and public spirit; befriending equally trade, gallantry, criticism, and politics: the applause of genius—the register of charity—the triumph of heroism—the self-defence of contractors—the fame of orators—and the gazette of ministers.

Sneer. Sir, I am completely a convert both to the importance and ingenuity of your profession; and now, sir, there is but one thing which can possibly increase my respect for you, and that is, your permitting me to be present this morning at the rehearsal of your new tragedy—

Puff. Hush, for Heaven's sake!—*My* tragedy!—Egad,

Dangle, I take this very ill: you know how apprehensive I am of being known to be the author

Dang. I' faith I would not have told—but it's in the papers, and your name at length in the *Morning Chronicle*.

Puff. Ah! those damned editors never can keep a secret!—Well, Mr. Sneer, no doubt you will do me great honour—I shall be infinitely happy—highly flattered—

Dang. I believe it must be near the time—shall we go together?

Puff. No; it will not be yet this hour, for they are always late at that theatre: besides, I must meet you there, for I have some little matters here to send to the papers, and a few paragraphs to scribble before I go.—*[Looking at memorandums.]* Here is *A conscientious Baker, on the subject of the Army Bread*; and *A Detester of visible Brickwork, in favour of the new-invented Stucco*; both in the style of Junius, and promised for to-morrow. The Thames navigation too is at a stand. Misomud or Anti shoal must go to work again directly.—Here too are some political memorandums—I see; ay—*To take Paul Jones, and get the Indiamen out of the Shannon—reinforce Byron—compel the Dutch to—so!*—I must do that in the evening papers, or reserve it for the *Morning Herald*; for I know that I have undertaken to-morrow, besides, to establish the unanimity of the fleet in the *Public Advertiser*, and to shoot Charles Fox in the *Morning Post*.—So, egad, I ha'n't a moment to lose!

Dang. Well, we'll meet in the Green Room.

[Exeunt severally]

ACT TWO

SCENE I.—*The Theatre, before the Curtain*

Enter DANGLE, PUFF, and SNEER

Puff. No, no, sir; what Shakspeare says of actors may be better applied to the purpose of plays; they ought to be *the abstract and brief chronicles of the time*. Therefore when history, and particularly the history of our own country, furnishes anything like a case in point, to the time

in which an author writes, if he knows his own interest, he will take advantage of it; so, sir, I call my tragedy *The Spanish Armada*; and have laid the scene before Tilbury Fort.

Sneer. A most happy thought, certainly!

Dang. Egad it was—I told you so. But pray now, I don't understand how you have contrived to introduce any love into it.

Puff. Love! oh, nothing so easy! for it is a received point among poets, that where history gives you a good heroic outline for a play, you may fill up with a little love at your own discretion: in doing which, nine times out of ten, you only make up a deficiency in the private history of the times. Now I rather think I have done this with some success.

Sneer. No scandal about Queen Elizabeth, I hope?

Puff. O lud! no, no;—I only suppose the governor of Tilbury Fort's daughter to be in love with the son of the Spanish Admiral.

Sneer. Oh, is that all?

Dang. Excellent, i' faith; I see at once. But won't this appear rather improbable?

Puff. To be sure it will—but what the plague! a play is not to show occurrences that happen every day, but things just so strange, that though they never did, they might happen.

Sneer. Certainly nothing is unnatural that is not physically impossible.

Puff. Very true—and for that matter, Don Ferolo Whiskerandos, for that's the lover's name, might have been over here in the train of the Spanish Ambassador; or Tilburina, for that is the lady's name, might have been in love with him, from having heard his character, or seen his picture, or from knowing that he was the last man in the world she ought to be in love with—or for any other good female reason.—However, sir, the fact is, that though she is but a knight's daughter, egad! she is in love like any princess!

Dang. Poor young lady! I feel for her already! for I can conceive how great the conflict must be between her passion and her duty: her love for her country, and her love for Don Ferolo Whiskerandos!

Puff. Oh, amazing!—her poor susceptible heart is swayed to and fro by contending passions like—

Enter UNDER PROMPTER

Und. Promp. Sir, the scene is set, and everything is ready to begin, if you please.

Puff. Egad, then we'll lose no time.

Und. Promp. Though, I believe, sir, you will find it very short, for all the performers have profited by the kind permission you granted them.

Puff. Hey! what?

Und. Promp. You know, sir, you gave them leave to cut out or omit whatever they found heavy or unnecessary to the plot, and I must own they have taken very liberal advantage of your indulgence.

Puff. Well, well.—They are in general very good judges, and I know I am luxuriant.—Now, Mr. Hopkins, as soon as you please.

Und. Promp. [*To the Orchestra.*] Gentlemen, will you play a few bars of something, just to——

Puff. Ay, that's right; for as we have the scenes and dresses, egad, we'll go to't as if it was the first night's performance;—but you need not mind stopping between the acts.—[*Exit UNDER PROMPTER.—Orchestra play—then the bell rings.*] So! stand clear, gentlemen. Now you know there will be a cry of Down! down!—Hats off!—Silence!—Then up curtain, and let us see what our painters have done for us. [*Curtain rises*]

SCENE II.—*Tilbury Fort*

“*Two SENTINELS discovered asleep*”

Dang. Tilbury Fort!—very fine indeed!

Puff. Now, what do you think I open with?

Sneer. Faith, I can't guess——

Puff. A clock.—Hark!—[*Clock strikes.*] I open with a clock striking, to beget an awful attention in the audience: it also marks the time, which is four o'clock in the morning, and saves a description of the rising sun, and a great deal about gilding the eastern hemisphere.

Dang. But pray, are the sentinels to be asleep?

Puff. Fast as watchmen.

Sneer. Isn't that odd though at such an alarming crisis?

Puff. To be sure it is,—but smaller things must give way

to a striking scene at the opening; that's a rule. And the case is, that two great men are coming to this very spot to begin the piece: now, it is not to be supposed they would open their lips, if these fellows were watching them; so, egad, I must either have sent them off their posts, or set them asleep.

Sneer. Oh, that accounts for it.—But tell us, who are these coming?

Puff. These are they—Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Christopher Hatton. You'll know Sir Christopher by his turning out his toes—famous, you know, for his dancing. I like to preserve all the little traits of character.—Now attend.

“*Enter SIR WALTER RALEIGH and SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON.*
Sir Christ. True, gallant Raleigh!”

Dang. What, they had been talking before?

Puff. Oh yes; all the way as they came along.—[*To the actors.*] I beg pardon, gentlemen, but these are particular friends of mine, whose remarks may be of great service to us.—(*To SNEER and DANGLE.*) Don't mind interrupting them whenever anything strikes you.

“*Sir Christ.* True, gallant Raleigh!

But oh, thou champion of thy country's fame,
There is a question which I yet must ask:
A question which I never asked before—
What mean these mighty armaments?
This general muster? and this throng of chiefs?”

Sneer. Pray, Mr. Puff, how came Sir Christopher Hatton never to ask that question before?

Puff. What, before the play began?—how the plague could he?

Dang. That's true, i' faith!

Puff. But you will hear what he thinks of the matter.

“*Sir Christ.* Alas! my noble friend, when I behold
Yon tented plains in martial symmetry
Arrayed; when I count o'er yon glittering lines
Of crested warriors, where the proud steeds neigh,
And valour-breathing trumpet's shrill appeal,
Responsive vibrate on my listening ear;
When virgin majesty herself I view,
Like her protecting Pallas, veiled in steel,
With graceful confidence exhort to arms!

When, briefly, all I hear or see bear stamp
Of martial vigilance and stern defence,
I cannot but surmise—forgive, my friend,
If the conjecture 's rash—I cannot but
Surmise the state some danger apprehends!"

Sneer. A very cautious conjecture that.

Puff. Yes, that 's his character; not to give an opinion
but on secure grounds.—Now then.

"*Sir Walt.* O most accomplished Christopher!"—

Puff. He calls him by his Christian name, to show that
they are on the most familiar terms.

"*Sir Walt.* O most accomplished Christopher! I find
Thy staunch sagacity still tracks the future
In the fresh print of the o'ertaken past."

Puff. Figurative!

"*Sir Walt.* Thy fears are just.

Sir Christ. But where? whence? when? and what
The danger is,—methinks I fain would learn.

Sir Walt. You know, my friend, scarce two revolving suns,
And three revolving moons, have closed their course,
Since haughty Philip, in despite of peace,
With hostile hand hath struck at England's trade.

Sir Christ. I know it well.

Sir Walt. Philip, you know, is proud Iberia's king!

Sir Christ. He is.

Sir Walt. His subjects in base bigotry
And Catholic oppression held;—while we,
You know, the Protestant persuasion hold.

Sir Christ. We do.

Sir Walt. You know, beside, his boasted armament,
The famed Armada, by the Pope baptised,
With purpose to invade these realms—

Sir Christ. Is sailed,
Our last advices so report.

Sir Walt. While the Iberian admiral's chief hope,
His darling son—

Sir Christ. Ferolo Whiskerandos hight—

Sir Walt. The same—by chance a prisoner hath been ta'en,
And in this fort of Tilbury—

Sir Christ. Is now

Confined—'tis true, and oft from yon tall turret's top
I've mark'd the youthful Spaniard's haughty mien—
Unconquer'd, though in chains.

Sir Walt. You also know"—

Dang. Mr. Puff, as he knows all this, why does Sir Walter go on telling him ?

Puff. But the audience are not supposed to know any thing of the matter, are they ?

Sneer. True ; but I think you manage ill : for there certainly appears no reason why Sir Walter should be so communicative.

Puff. 'Fore Gad, now, that is one of the most ungrateful observations I ever heard !—for the less inducement he has to tell all this, the more, I think, you ought to be obliged to him ; for I am sure you'd know nothing of the matter without it.

Dang. That's very true, upon my word.

Puff. But you will find he was not going on.

“*Sir Christ.* Enough, enough—'tis plain—and I no more
Am in amazement lost !”——

Puff. Here, now, you see, Sir Christopher did not in fact ask any one question for his own information.

Sneer. No, indeed : his has been a most disinterested curiosity !

Dang. Really, I find, we are very much obliged to them both.

Puff. To be sure you are. Now then for the commander-in-chief, the Earl of Leicester, who, you know, was no favourite but of the queen's.—We left off—in amazement lost !

“*Sir Christ.* Am in amazement lost.
But, see where noble Leicester comes ! supreme
In honours and command.

Sir Walt. And yet methinks,
At such a time, so perilous, so fear'd,
That staff might well become an abler grasp.

Sir Christ. And so, by Heaven ! think I ; but soft, he's here !”

Puff. Ay, they envy him !

Sneer. But who are these with him ?

Puff. Oh ! very valiant knights : one is the governor of the fort, the other the master of the horse. And now, I think, you shall hear some better language : I was obliged to be plain and intelligible in the first scene, because there was so much matter of fact in it ; but now, i' faith, you have trope, figure, and metaphor, as plenty as noun-substantives.

"Enter EARL OF LEICESTER, GOVERNOR, MASTER OF THE HORSE,
KNIGHTS, &c.

Leic. How 's this, my friends ! is 't thus your new-fledged zeal
And plumèd valour moulds in roosted sloth ?
Why dimly glimmers that heroic flame,
Whose reddening blaze, by patriot spirit fed,
Should be the beacon of a kindling realm ?
Can the quick current of a patriot heart
Thus stagnate in a cold and weedy converse,
Or freeze in tideless inactivity ?
No ! rather let the fountain of your valour
Spring through each stream of enterprise,
Each petty channel of conducive daring,
Till the full torrent of your foaming wrath
O'erwhelm the flats of sunk hostility !"

Puff. There it is—followed up !

"*Sir Walt.* No more !—the freshening breath of thy rebuke
Hath fill'd the swelling canvas of our souls !
And thus, though fate should cut the cable of
[*All take hands*
Our topmost hopes, in friendship's closing line
We 'll grapple with despair, and if we fall,
We 'll fall in glory's wake !

Leic. There spoke old England's genius !
Then, are we all resolved ?

All We are—all resolved.

Leic. To conquer—or be free ?

All To conquer, or be free.

Leic. All ?

All All."

Dang. *Nem. con.* egad !

Puff. O yes !—where they do agree on the stage, their
unanimity is wonderful !

"*Leic.* Then let's embrace—and now— [Kneels"

Sneer. What the plague ! is he going to pray ?

Puff. Yes ; hush !—in great emergencies, there is nothing
like a prayer.

"*Leic.* O mighty Mars !"

Dang. But why should he pray to Mars ?

Puff. Hush !

"*Leic.* If in thy homage bred,
Each point of discipline I've still observed ;

Nor but by due promotion, and the right
 Of service, to the rank of major-general
 Have risen; assist thy votary now!

Gov. Yet do not rise—hear me! [Kneels
Mast. And me! [Kneels
Knight And me! [Kneels
Sir Walt. And me! [Kneels
Sir Christ. And me! [Kneels

Puff. Now pray altogether.

“*All* Behold thy votaries submissive beg,
 That thou wilt deign to grant them all they ask;
 Assist them to accomplish all their ends,
 And sanctify whatever means they use
 To gain them!”

Sneer. A very orthodox quintetto!

Puff. Vastly well, gentlemen!—Is that well managed or not? Have you such a prayer as that on the stage?

Sneer. Not exactly.

Leic. [To PUFF.] But, sir, you haven't settled how we are to get off here.

Puff. You could not go off kneeling, could you?

Sir Walt. [To PUFF.] O no, sir; impossible!

Puff. It would have a good effect, i' faith, if you could exeunt praying!—Yes, and would vary the established mode of springing off with a glance at the pit.

Sneer. Oh, never mind, so as you get them off!—I'll answer for it, the audience won't care how.

Puff. Well then, repeat the last line standing, and go off the old way.

“*All* And sanctify whatever means we use
 To gain them. [Exeunt”

Dang. Bravo! a fine exit.

Sneer. Well, really, Mr. Puff—

Puff. Stay a moment!

“*The SENTINELS get up*

1 *Sent.* All this shall to Lord Burleigh's ear.

2 *Sent.* 'Tis meet it should. [Exeunt”

Dang. Hey!—why, I thought those fellows had been asleep?

Puff. Only a pretence; there's the art of it: they were spies of Lord Burleigh's.

Sneer. But isn't it odd they never were taken notice of, not even by the commander-in-chief?

Puff. O lud, sir! if people, who want to listen or overhear, were not always connived at in a tragedy, there would be no carrying on any plot in the world.

Dang. That's certain!

Puff. But take care, my dear Dangle! the morning-gun is going to fire. [Cannon fires

Dang. Well, that will have a fine effect!

Puff. I think so, and helps to realise the scene.—[Cannon twice.] What the plague! three morning guns! there never is but one!—Ay, this is always the way at the theatre: give these fellows a good thing, and they never know when to have done with it.—You have no more cannon to fire?

Und. Promp. [Within.] No, sir.

Puff. Now, then, for soft music.

Sneer. Pray, what's that for?

Puff. It shows that Tilburina is coming;—nothing introduces you a heroine like soft music. Here she comes!

Dang. And her confidant, I suppose?

Puff. To be sure! Here they are—inconsolable to the minuet in Ariadne! [Soft music

“Enter TILBURINA and CONFIDANT

Tilb. Now has the whispering breath of gentle morn
Bid Nature's voice and Nature's beauty rise;
While orient Phœbus, with unborrow'd hues,
Clothes the waked loveliness which all night slept
In heavenly drapery! Darkness is fled.
Now flowers unfold their beauties to the sun,
And, blushing, kiss the beam he sends to wake them—
The striped carnation, and the guarded rose,
The vulgar wallflower, and smart gillyflower,
The polyanthus mean—the dapper daisy,
Sweet-william, and sweet marjoram—and all
The tribe of single and of double pinks!
Now, too, the feather'd warblers tune their notes
Around, and charm the listening grove. The lark!
The linnet! chaffinch! bullfinch! goldfinch! greenfinch!
But O, to me no joy can they afford!
Nor rose, nor wallflower, nor smart gillyflower,
Nor polyanthus mean, nor dapper daisy,
Nor William sweet, nor marjoram—nor lark,
Linnets, nor all the finches of the grove!”

Puff. Your white handkerchief, madam!—

Tilb. I thought, sir, I wasn't to use that till *heart-rending woe*.

Puff. O yes, madam, at *the finches of the grove*, if you please.

"*Tilb.* Nor lark,
Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove! [*Weeps*"]

Puff. Vastly well, madam!

Dang. Vastly well, indeed!

"*Tilb.* For, O, too sure, heart-rending woe is now
The lot of wretched Tilburina!"

Dang. Oh!—'tis too much!

Sneer. Oh!—it is indeed!

"*Con.* Be comforted, sweet lady; for who knows,
But Heaven has yet some milk-white day in store?"

Tilb. Alas! my gentle Nora,
Thy tender youth as yet hath never mourn'd
Love's fatal dart. Else wouldst thou know that when
The soul is sunk in comfortless despair,
It cannot taste of merriment."

Dang. That 's certain!

"*Con.* But see where your stern father comes:
It is not meet that he should find you thus."

Puff. Hey, what the plague!—what a cut is here! Why, what is become of the description of her first meeting with Don Whiskerandos—his gallant behaviour in the sea-fight—and the simile of the canary-bird?

Tilb. Indeed, sir, you 'll find they will not be missed.

Puff. Very well, very well!

Tilb. [*To CONFIDANT.*] The cue, ma'am, if you please.

"*Con.* It is not meet that he should find you thus.

Tilb. Thou counsel'st right; but 't is no easy task
For barefaced grief to wear a mask of joy.

Enter GOVERNOR

Gov. How's this!—in tears?—O Tilburina, shame!
Is this a time for maudling tenderness,
And Cupid's baby woes?—Hast thou not heard
That haughty Spain's pope-consecrated fleet
Advances to our shores, while England's fate,
Like a clipp'd guinea, trembles in the scale?

Tilb. Then is the crisis of my fate at hand!
I see the fleets approach—I see——"

Puff. Now, pray, gentlemen, mind. This is one of the most useful figures we tragedy writers have, by which a hero or heroine, in consideration of their being often obliged to overlook things that are on the stage, is allowed to hear and see a number of things that are not.

Sneer. Yes; a kind of poetical second-sight!

Puff. Yes.—Now then, madam.

Tilb.

I see their decks

Are clear'd!—I see the signal made!

The line is form'd—a cable's length asunder!

I see the frigates station'd in the rear;

And now I hear the thunder of the guns!

I hear the victor's shouts!—I also hear

The vanquish'd groan!—and now 'tis smoke—and now

I see the loose sails shiver in the wind!

I see—I see—what soon you'll see—

Gov. Hold, daughter! peace! this love hath turn'd thy brain!

The Spanish fleet thou canst not see—because

—It is not yet in sight!

Dang. Egad, though, the governor seems to make no allowance for this poetical figure you talk of.

Puff. No, a plain matter-of-fact man;—that 's his character.

Tilb. But will you then refuse his offer?

Gov. I must—I will—I can—I ought—I do.

Tilb. Think what a noble price.

Gov. No more—you urge in vain.

Tilb. His liberty is all he asks."

Sneer. All who asks, Mr. Puff? Who is——

Puff. Egad, sir, I can't tell! Here has been such cutting and slashing, I don't know where they have got to myself.

Tilb. Indeed, sir, you will find it will connect very well.

“—And your reward secure.”

Puff. Oh, if they hadn't been so devilish free with their cuttings here, you would have found that Don Whiskerandos has been tampering for his liberty, and has persuaded Tilburina to make this proposal to her father. And now, pray observe the conciseness with which the argument is conducted. Egad, the *pro* and *con* goes as smart as hits in a fencing-match. It is indeed a sort of small-sword logic, which we have borrowed from the French.

" *Tilb.* A retreat in Spain!
Gov. Outlawry here!
Tilb. Your daughter's prayer!
Gov. Your father's oath!
Tilb. My lover!
Gov. My country!
Tilb. Tilburina!
Gov. England!
Tilb. A title!
Gov. Honour!
Tilb. A pension!
Gov. Conscience!
Tilb. A thousand pounds!
Gov. Ha! thou hast touch'd me nearly!"

Puff. There you see—she threw in *Tilburina*, Quick, parry quarte with *England!*—Ha! thrust in tierce a *tittle!*—parried by *honour.* Ha! a *pension* over the arm!—put by by *conscience.* Then flankonade with a *thousand pounds*—and a palpable hit, egad!

" *Tilb.* Canst thou—
 Reject the suppliant, and the daughter too
Gov. No more; I would not hear thee plead in vain:
 The father softens—but the governor
 Is fix'd! [*Exit* "

Dang. Ay, that antithesis of persons is a most established figure.

" *Tilb.* 'Tis well,—hence then, fond hopes,—fond passion, hence. Duty, behold I am all over thine—

Whisk. [*Without.*] Where is my love—my—

Tilb. Ha!

Enter DON FEROLLO WHISKERANDOS

Whisk. My beauteous enemy!—"

Puff. O dear, ma'am, you must start a great deal more than that! Consider, you had just determined in favour of duty—when, in a moment, the sound of his voice revives your passion—overthrows your resolution—destroys your obedience. If you don't express all that in your start, you do nothing at all.

Tilb. Well, we 'll try again!

Dang. Speaking from within has always a fine effect.

Sneer. Very.

" *Whisk.* My conquering Tilburina! How! is't thus
 We meet? why are thy looks averse? what means

That falling tear—that frown of boding woe?
 Ha! now indeed I am a prisoner!
 Yes, now I feel the galling weight of these
 Disgraceful chains—which, cruel Tilburina!
 Thy doating captive gloried in before.—

But thou art false, and Whiskerandos is undone!
Tilb. O no! how little dost thou know thy Tilburina!
Whisk. Art thou then true?—Begone cares, doubts, and fears,
 I make you all a present to the winds;
 And if the winds reject you—try the waves.”

Puff. The wind, you know, is the established receiver
 of all stolen sighs, and cast-off griefs and apprehensions.

“*Tilb.* Yet must we part!—stern duty seals our doom:
 Though here I call yon conscious clouds to witness,
 Could I pursue the bias of my soul,
 All friends, all right of parents, I’d disclaim,
 And thou, my Whiskerandos, shouldst be father,
 And mother, brother, cousin, uncle, aunt,
 And friend to me!

Whisk. Oh, matchless excellence! and must we part?
 Well, if—we must—we must—and in that case
 The less is said the better.”

Puff. Heyday! here’s a cut!—What, are all the mutual
 protestations out?

Tilb. Now, pray, sir, don’t interrupt us just here: you
 ruin our feelings.

Puff. Your feelings!—but zounds, my feelings, ma’am!

Sneer. No; pray don’t interrupt them.

“*Whisk.* One last embrace.

Tilb. Now,—farewell for ever.

Whisk. For ever!

Tilb. Ay, for ever!

[*Going*”

Puff. ’Sdeath and fury!—Gad’s life!—sir! madam! if
 you go out without the parting look, you might as well
 dance out. Here, here!

Con. But pray, sir, how am I to get off here?

Puff. You! pshaw! what the devil signifies how you
 get off! edge away at the top, or where you will—[*Pushes*
the CONFIDANT off.] Now, ma’am, you see——

Tilb. We understand you, sir.

“Ay, for ever.

Both. Oh! [*Turning back, and exeunt.—Scene closes.*”

Dang. Oh, charming!

Puff. Hey!—'tis pretty well, I believe: you see I don't attempt to strike out anything new—but I take it I improve on the established modes.

Sneer. You do, indeed! But pray is not Queen Elizabeth to appear?

Puff. No, not once—but she is to be talked of for ever; so that, egad, you'll think a hundred times that she is on the point of coming in.

Sneer. Hang it, I think it's a pity to keep her in the green room all the night.

Puff. O no, that always has a fine effect—it keeps up expectation.

Dang. But are we not to have a battle?

Puff. Yes, yes, you will have a battle at last; but, egad, it's not to be by land, but by sea—and that is the only quite new thing in the piece.

Dang. What, Drake at the Armada, hey?

Puff. Yes, i' faith—fire-ships and all; then we shall end with the procession. Hey, that will do, I think?

Sneer. No doubt on't.

Puff. Come, we must not lose time; so now for the under-plot.

Sneer. What the plague! have you another plot?

Puff. O Lord, yes; ever while you live have two plots to your tragedy. The grand point in managing them is only to let your under-plot have as little connection with your main-plot as possible.—I flatter myself nothing can be more distinct than mine; for as in my chief plot the characters are all great people, I have laid my under-plot in low life; and as the former is to end in deep distress, I make the other end as happy as a farce.—Now, Mr. Hopkins, as soon as you please.

Enter UNDER PROMPTER

Under Promp. Sir, the carpenter says it is impossible you can go to the park scene yet.

Puff. The park scene! no! I mean the description scene here, in the wood.

Under Promp. Sir, the performers have cut it out.

Puff. Cut it out!

Under Promp. Yes, sir.

Puff. What! the whole account of Queen Elizabeth?

Under Promp. Yes, sir.

Puff. And the description of her horse and side-saddle ?

Under Promp. Yes, sir.

Puff. So, so ; this is very fine indeed !—Mr. Hopkins, how the plague could you suffer this ?

Mr. Hop. [*Within.*] Sir, indeed the pruning-knife——

Puff. The pruning-knife—zounds !—the axe ! Why, here has been such lopping and topping, I sha'n't have the bare trunk of my play left presently !—Very well, sir—the performers must do as they please ; but, upon my soul, I 'll print it every word.

Sneer. That I would, indeed.

Puff. Very well, sir ; then we must go on.—Zounds ! I would not have parted with the description of the horse !—Well, sir, go on !—Sir, it was one of the finest and most laboured things.—Very well, sir ; let them go on.—There you had him and his accoutrements, from the bit to the crupper.—Very well, sir ; we must go to the park scene.

Under Promp. Sir, there is the point : the carpenters say, that unless there is some business put in here before the drop, they sha'n't have time to clear away the fort, or sink Gravesend and the river.

Puff. So ! this is a pretty dilemma, truly !—Gentlemen, you must excuse me—these fellows will never be ready, unless I go and look after them myself.

Sneer. Oh dear, sir, these little things will happen.

Puff. To cut out this scene !—but I 'll print it—egad, I 'll print it every word !

[*Exeunt*]

ACT THREE

SCENE I.—*The Theatre, before the Curtain*

Enter PUFF, SNEER, and DANGLE

Puff. Well, we are ready ; now then for the justices.

[*Curtain rises*]

“JUSTICES, CONSTABLES, &c., *discovered*”

Sneer. This, I suppose, is a sort of senate scene.

Puff. To be sure ; there has not been one yet.

Dang. It is the under-plot, isn't it?

Puff. Yes.—What, gentlemen, do you mean to go at once to the discovery scene?

Just. If you please, sir.

Puff. Oh, very well!—Hark 'ee, I don't choose to say any thing more; but, i' faith, they have mangled my play in a most shocking manner.

Dang. It's a great pity!

Puff. Now, then, Mr. Justice, if you please.

"*Just.* Are all the volunteers without?

Const. They are.

Some ten in fetters, and some twenty drunk.

Just. Attends the youth, whose most opprobrious fame
And clear convicted crimes have stamp'd him soldier!

Const. He waits your pleasure; eager to repay
The blest reprieve that sends him to the fields
Of glory, there to raise his branded hand
In honour's cause.

Just. 'Tis well—'tis justice arms him!

Oh! may he now defend his country's laws

With half the spirit he has broke them all!

If 'tis your worship's pleasure, bid him enter.

Const. I fly, the herald of your will. [Exit "

Puff. Quick, sir.

Sneer. But, Mr. Puff, I think not only the Justice, but the clown seems to talk in as high a style as the first hero among them.

Puff. Heaven forbid they should not in a free country!—Sir, I am not for making slavish distinctions, and giving all the fine language to the upper sort of people.

Dang. That's very noble in you, indeed.

"Enter JUSTICE'S LADY"

Puff. Now, pray mark this scene.

"*Lady* Forgive this interruption, good my love;
But as I just now pass'd a prisoner youth,
Whom rude hands hither lead, strange bodings seized
My fluttering heart, and to myself I said,
An if our Tom had lived, he'd surely been
This stripling's height!

Just. Ha! sure some powerful sympathy directs
Us both—

Re-enter CONSTABLE with SON

What is thy name?

Son My name is Tom Jenkins—*alias* have I none—
Though orphan'd and without a friend!

Just. Thy parents?

Son My father dwelt in Rochester—and was,
As I have heard—a fishmonger—no more."

Puff. What, sir, do you leave out the account of your birth, parentage, and education?

Son. They have settled it so, sir, here.

Puff. Oh! oh!

"*Lady* How loudly nature whispers to my heart!
Had he no other name?

Son I've seen a bill
Of his sign'd Tomkins, creditor.

Just. This does indeed confirm each circumstance
The gipsy told!—Prepare!

Son I do.

Just. No orphan, or without a friend art thou—
I am thy father; here's thy mother; there
Thy uncle—this thy first cousin, and those
Are all your near relations!

Lady O ecstasy of bliss!

Son O most unlook'd for happiness!

Just. O wonderful event!

[*They faint alternately in each other's arms*]

Puff. There, you see relationship, like murder, will out.

"*Just.* Now let's revive—else were this joy too much!
But come—and we'll unfold the rest within;
And thou, my boy, must needs want rest and food.
Hence may each orphan hope, as chance directs,
To find a father—where he least expects! [*Exeunt*]"

Puff. What do you think of that?

Dang. One of the finest discovery scenes I ever saw!—
Why, this under-plot would have made a tragedy itself.

Sneer. Or a comedy either.

Puff. And keeps quite clear you see of the other.

Enter SCENEMEN, taking away the seats

Puff. The scene remains, does it?

Sceneman. Yes, sir.

Puff. You are to leave one chair, you know.—But it is always awkward in a tragedy, to have you fellows coming in in your playhouse liveries to remove things.—I wish

that could be managed better.—So now for my mysterious yeoman.

“Enter BEEFEATER

Beef. Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee.”

Sneer. Haven't I heard that line before ?

Puff. No, I fancy not.—Where, pray ?

Dang. Yes, I think there is something like it in Othello.

Puff. Gad! now you put me in mind on 't, I believe there is—but that 's of no consequence ; all that can be said is, that two people happened to hit on the same thought—and Shakespeare made use of it first, that 's all.

Sneer. Very true.

Puff. Now, sir, your soliloquy—but speak more to the pit, if you please—the soliloquy always to the pit, that 's a rule.

“Beef. Though hopeless love finds comfort in despair,
It never can endure a rival's bliss!
But soft—I am observed.

[Exit”

Dang. That 's a very short soliloquy.

Puff. Yes—but it would have been a great deal longer if he had not been observed.

Sneer. A most sentimental Beefeater that, Mr. Puff!

Puff. Hark 'ee—I would not have you be too sure that he is a Beefeater.

Sneer. What, a hero in disguise ?

Puff. No matter—I only give you a hint. But now for my principal character. Here he comes—Lord Burleigh in person! Pray, gentlemen, step this way—softly—I only hope the Lord High Treasurer is perfect—if he is but perfect!

“Enter LORD BURLEIGH, goes slowly to a chair, and sits”

Sneer. Mr. Puff!

Puff. Hush!—Vastly well, sir! vastly well! a most interesting gravity!

Dang. What, isn't he to speak at all ?

Puff. Egad, I thought you 'd ask me that!—Yes, it is a very likely thing—that a minister in his situation, with the whole affairs of the nation on his head, should have time to talk!—But hush! or you 'll put him out.

Sneer. Put him out! how the plague can that be, if he 's not going to say any thing ?

Puff. There's the reason! why, his part is to think; and how the plague do you imagine he can think if you keep talking?

Dang. That's very true, upon my word!

"*LORD BURLEIGH comes forward, shakes his head, and exit*"

Sneer. He is very perfect indeed! Now, pray what did he mean by that?

Puff. You don't take it?

Sneer. No, I don't, upon my soul.

Puff. Why, by that shake of the head, he gave you to understand that even though they had more justice in their cause, and wisdom in their measures—yet, if there was not a greater spirit shown on the part of the people, the country would at last fall a sacrifice to the hostile ambition of the Spanish monarchy.

Sneer. The devil! did he mean all that by shaking his head?

Puff. Every word of it—if he shook his head as I taught him.

Dang. Ah! there certainly is a vast deal to be done on the stage by dumb show and expression of face; and a judicious author knows how much he may trust to it.

Sneer. Oh, here are some of our old acquaintance.

"*Enter SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON and SIR WALTER RALEIGH*"

Sir Christ. My niece and your niece too!
By Heaven! there's witchcraft in 't.—He could not
else

Have gain'd their hearts.—But see where they
approach:

Some horrid purpose lowering on their brows!

Sir Walter Let us withdraw and mark them. [*They withdraw*]"

Sneer. What is all this?

Puff. Ah! here has been more pruning!—but the fact is, these two young ladies are also in love with Don Whiskerandos.—Now, gentlemen, this scene goes entirely for what we call situation and stage effect, by which the greatest applause may be obtained, without the assistance of language, sentiment, or character: pray mark!

"*Enter the two NIECES*"

1st Niece Ellena here!

She is his scorn as much as I—that is
Some comfort still!"

Puff. O dear, madam, you are not to say that to her face!—aside, ma'am, aside.—The whole scene is to be aside.

1st Niece She is his scorn as much as I—that is
Some comfort still. [*Aside*]

2nd Niece I know he prizes not Pollina's love ;
But Tilburina lords it o'er his heart. [*Aside*]

1st Niece But see the proud destroyer of my peace.
Revenge is all the good I've left. [*Aside*]

2nd Niece He comes, the false disturber of my quiet.
Now, vengeance do thy worst. [*Aside*]

Enter DON FEROLO WHISKERANDOS

Whisk. O hateful liberty—if thus in vain
I seek my Tilburina!

Both Nieces And ever shalt!

SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON and SIR WALTER RALEIGH come
forward

Sir Christ. and Sir Walt. Hold! we will avenge you.

Whisk. Hold you—or see your nieces bleed!

[*The two NIECES draw their two daggers to strike WHISKERANDOS: the two UNCLES at the instant, with their two swords drawn, catch their two NIECES' arms, and turn the points of their swords to WHISKERANDOS, who immediately draws two daggers, and holds them to the two NIECES' bosoms*]

Puff. There's situation for you! there's an heroic group!—You see the ladies can't stab Whiskerandos—he durst not strike them, for fear of their uncles—the uncles durst not kill him, because of their nieces—I have them all at a dead lock!—for every one of them is afraid to let go first.

Sneer. Why, then they must stand there for ever!

Puff. So they would, if I hadn't a very fine contrivance for 't.—Now mind——

“*Enter BEEFEATER, with his halberd*

Beef. In the queen's name I charge you all to drop
Your swords and daggers!

[*They drop their swords and daggers*]

Sneer. That is a contrivance indeed!

Puff. Ay—in the queen's name.

“Sir Christ. Come, niece!

Sir Walter Come, niece!

[*Exeunt with the two NIECES*]

Whisk. What's he, who bids us thus renounce our guard?

Beef. Thou must do more—renounce thy love!

Whisk. Thou liest—base Beefeater!

Beef. Ha! hell! the lie!

By Heaven thou'st roused the lion in my heart!

Off, yeoman's habit!—base disguise! off! off!

*[Discovers himself, by throwing off his upper dress,
and appearing in a very fine waistcoat.]*

Am I a Beefeater now?

Or beams my crest as terrible as when

In Biscay's Bay I took thy captive sloop?"

Puff. There, egad! he comes out to be the very captain of the privateer who had taken Whiskerandos prisoner—and was himself an old lover of Tilburina's.

Dang. Admirably managed, indeed!

Puff. Now, stand out of their way.

"*Whisk.* I thank thee, Fortune, that hast thus bestowed
A weapon to chastise this insolent.

[Takes up one of the swords]

Beef. I take thy challenge, Spaniard, and I thank thee,
Fortune, too!

[Takes up the other sword]"

Dang. That's excellently contrived!—It seems as if the two uncles had left their swords on purpose for them.

Puff. No, egad, they could not help leaving them.

"*Whisk.* Vengeance and Tilburina!

Beef. Exactly so—

*They fight—and after the usual number of wounds
given, WHISKERANDOS falls.*

Whisk. O cursèd parry!—that last thrust in tierce
Was fatal.—Captain, thou hast fencèd well!
And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene
For all eter—

Beef. —nity he would have added, but stern death
Cut short his being, and the noun at once!"

Puff. Oh, my dear sir, you are too slow: now mind me.
—Sir, shall I trouble you to die again?

"*Whisk.* And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene
For all eter—

Beef. —nity—he would have added,—"

Puff. No, sir—that's not it—once more, if you please.

Whisk. I wish, sir, you would practise this without me
—I can't stay dying here all night.

Puff. Very well ; we'll go over it by-and-by.—[*Exit WHISKERANDOS.*] I must humour these gentlemen !

“*Beef.* Farewell, brave Spaniard ! and when next ”—

Puff. Dear sir, you need n't speak that speech, as the body has walked off.

Beef. That 's true, sir—then I 'll join the fleet.

Puff. If you please.—[*Exit BEEFEATER.*] Now, who comes on ?

“*Enter GOVERNOR, with his hair properly disordered*

Gov. A hemisphere of evil planets reign !

And every planet sheds contagious frenzy !

My Spanish prisoner is slain ! my daughter

Meeting the dead corse borne along, has gone

Distract !

[*A loud flourish of trumpets*

But hark ! I am summon'd to the fort :

Perhaps the fleets have met ! amazing crisis !

O Tilburina ! from thy aged father's beard

Thou 'st pluck'd the few brown hairs which time had
left !

[*Exit*”

Sneer. Poor gentleman !

Puff. Yes—and no one to blame but his daughter !

Dang. And the planets—

Puff. True.—Now enter Tilburina !

Sneer. Egad, the business comes on quick here.

Puff. Yes, sir—now she comes in stark mad in white satin.

Sneer. Why in white satin ?

Puff. O Lord, sir—when a heroine goes mad she always goes into white satin.—Don't she, Dangle ?

Dang. Always—it 's a rule.

Puff. Yes—here it is—[*Looking at the book.*] “*Enter Tilburina stark mad in white satin, and her confidant stark mad in white linen.*”

“*Enter TILBURINA and CONFIDANT, mad, according to custom*”

Sneer. But, what the deuce, is the confidant to be mad too ?

Puff. To be sure she is : the confidant is always to do whatever her mistress does ; weep when she weeps, smile when she smiles, go mad when she goes mad.—Now, madam confidant—but keep your madness in the back-ground, if you please.

"*Tilb.* The wind whistles—the moon rises—see, They have kill'd my squirrel in his cage; Is this a grasshopper?—Ha! no; it is my Whiskerandos—you shall not keep him— I know you have him in your pocket— An oyster may be cross'd in love!—Who says A whale's a bird?—Ha! did you call, my love?— He's here! he's there!—He's everywhere! Ah me! he's nowhere!"

[Exit "

Puff. There, do you ever desire to see any body madder than that?

Sneer. Never, while I live!

Puff. You observed how she mangled the metre?

Dang. Yes—egad, it was the first thing made me suspect she was out of her senses.

Sneer. And pray what becomes of her?

Puff. She is gone to throw herself into the sea, to be sure—and that brings us at once to the scene of action, and so to my catastrophe—my sea-fight, I mean.

Sneer. What, you bring that in at last?

Puff. Yes, yes—you know my play is called *The Spanish Armada*; otherwise, egad, I have no occasion for the battle at all.—Now then for my magnificence!—my battle!—my noise!—and my procession!—You are all ready!

Under Prompt. [Within.] Yes, sir.

Puff. Is the Thames dressed?

"Enter THAMES, with two ATTENDANTS"

Thames. Here I am, sir.

Puff. Very well, indeed!—See, gentlemen, there's a river for you!—This is blending a little of the masque with my tragedy—a new fancy, you know—and very useful in my case; for as there must be a procession, I suppose Thames, and all his tributary rivers, to compliment Britannia with a fête in honour of the victory.

Sneer. But pray, who are those gentlemen in green with him?

Puff. Those?—those are his banks.

Sneer. His banks?

Puff. Yes, one crowned with alders, and the other with a villa!—you take the allusions?—But hey! what the plague! you have got both your banks on one side.—Here, sir, come round.—Ever while you live, Thames, go

between your banks.—[*Bell rings.*] There, go! now for 't!
—Stand aside, my dear friends!—Away, Thames!

[*Exit THAMES between his banks*

[*Flourish of drums, trumpets, cannon, &c. &c. Scene changes to the sea—the fleets engage—the music plays “Britons, strike home.”—Spanish fleet destroyed by fire-ships, &c.—English fleet advances—music plays “Rule, Britannia.”—The procession of all the English rivers, and their tributaries, with their emblems, &c., begins with Handel’s water-music, ends with a chorus, to the march in Judas Maccabæus.—During this scene, PUFF directs and applauds every thing—then*

Puff. Well, pretty well—but not quite perfect.—So, ladies and gentlemen, if you please, we’ll rehearse this piece again to-morrow.

[*Curtain drops*

A TRIP TO SCARBOROUGH

A COMEDY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT DRURY-LANE THEATRE IN 1777

LORD FOPPINGTON	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Dodd</i>
SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSY	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Moody</i>
COLONEL TOWNLY	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Brereton</i>
LOVELESS	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Smith</i>
TOM FASHION	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. J. Palmer</i>
LA VAROLE	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Burton</i>
LORY	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Baddeley</i>
PROBE	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Parsons</i>
MENDLEGS	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Norris</i>
JEWELLER	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Lamash</i>
SHOEMAKER	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Carpenter</i>
TAILOR	..	..	..	..	<i>Mr. Parker</i>
AMANDA	..	..	..	..	<i>Mrs. Robinson</i>
BERINTHIA	..	..	..	..	<i>Miss Farren</i>
MISS HOYDEN	..	..	..	..	<i>Mrs. Abington</i>
MRS. COUPLER	..	..	..	..	<i>Mrs. Booth</i>
NURSE	..	..	..	..	<i>Mrs. Bradshaw</i>

SEMPSTRESS, POSTILLION, MAID, and SERVANTS

SCENE—SCARBOROUGH AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

A TRIP TO SCARBOROUGH

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. KING

WHAT various transformations we remark,
From east Whitechapel to the west Hyde Park !
Men, women, children, houses, signs, and fashions,
State, stage, trade, taste, the humours and the passions ;
The Exchange, 'Change Alley, wheresoe'er you 're ranging,
Court, city, country, all are changed or changing :
The streets, some time ago, were paved with stones,
Which, aided by a hackney-coach, half broke your bones.
The purest lovers then indulged in bliss ;
They run great hazard if they stole a kiss.
One chaste salute !—the damsel cried—Oh, fie !
As they approach'd—slap went the coach awry—
Poor Sylvia got a bump, and Damon a black eye.

But now weak nerves in hackney-coaches roam,
And the cramm'd glutton snores, unjolted, home :
Of former times, that polish'd thing, a beau,
Is metamorphosed now from top to toe ;
Then the full flaxen wig, spread o'er the shoulders,
Conceal'd the shallow head from the beholders !
But now the whole 's reversed—each fop appears,
Cropp'd and trimm'd up, exposing head and ears :
The buckle then its modest limits knew,
Now, like the ocean, dreadful to the view,
Hath broke its bounds, and swallows up the shoe ;
The wearer's foot, like his once fine estate,
Is almost lost, the encumbrance is so great.
Ladies may smile—are they not in the plot ?
The bounds of nature have not they forgot ?
Were they design'd to be, when put together,
Made up, like shuttlecocks, of cork and feather ?
Their pale-faced grandmamas appear'd with grace,
When dawning blushes rose upon the face ;

No blushes now their once-loved station seek ;
The foe is in possession of the cheek !
No heads of old, too high in feather'd state,
Hinder'd the fair to pass the lowest gate ;
A church to enter now, they must be bent,
If ever they should try the experiment.

As change thus circulates throughout the nation,
Some plays may justly call for alteration ;
At least to draw some slender covering o'er
That *graceless wit** which was too bare before :
Those writers well and wisely use their pens,
Who turn our wantons into Magdalens ;
And howsoever wicked wits revile 'em,
We hope to find in you their stage asylum.

* "And *Van* want grace, who never wanted wit."—POPE.

ACT ONE

SCENE I.—*The Hall of an Inn*

Enter TOM FASHION and LORY, POSTILLION following with a portmanteau

Fash. Lory, pay the postboy, and take the portmanteau.

Lory. [*Aside to TOM FASHION.*] Faith, sir, we had better let the postboy take the portmanteau and pay himself.

Fash. [*Aside to LORY.*] Why, sure, there's something left in it!

Lory. Not a rag, upon my honour, sir! We ate the last of your wardrobe at Newmalton—and if we had had twenty miles further to go, our next meal must have been of the cloak-bag.

Fash. Why, 'sdeath, it appears full!

Lory. Yes, sir—I made bold to stuff it with hay, to save appearances, and look like baggage.

Fash. [*Aside.*] What the devil shall I do?—[*Aloud.*] Hark'ee, boy, what's the chaise?

Post. Thirteen shillings, please your honour.

Fash. Can you give me change for a guinea?

Post. Oh, yes, sir.

Lory. [*Aside.*] So, what will he do now?—[*Aloud.*] Lord, sir, you had better let the boy be paid below.

Fash. Why, as you say, Lory, I believe it will be as well.

Lory. Yes, yes; I'll tell them to discharge you below, honest friend.

Post. Please your honour, there are the turnpikes too.

Fash. Ay, ay, the turnpikes by all means.

Post. And I hope your honour will order me something for myself.

Fash. To be sure; bid them give you a crown.

Lory. Yes, yes—my master doesn't care what you charge them—so get along, you—

Post. And there's the hostler, your honour.

Lory. Psha! damn the hostler!—would you impose upon the gentleman's generosity?—[*Pushes him out.*] A rascal, to be so cursed ready with his change!

Fash. Why, faith, Lory, he had nearly posed me.

Lory. Well, sir, we are arrived at Scarborough, not

worth a guinea! I hope you'll own yourself a happy man—you have outlived all your cares.

Fash. How so, sir?

Lory. Why, you have nothing left to take care of.

Fash. Yes, sirrah, I have myself and you to take care of still.

Lory. Sir, if you could prevail with somebody else to do that for you, I fancy we might both fare the better for it. But now, sir, for my Lord Foppington, your elder brother.

Fash. Damn my eldest brother!

Lory. With all my heart; but get him to redeem your annuity, however. Look you, sir, you must wheedle him, or you must starve.

Fash. Look you, sir, I will neither wheedle him nor starve.

Lory. Why, what will you do, then?

Fash. Cut his throat or get some one to do it for me.

Lory. 'Gad so, sir, I'm glad to find I was not so well acquainted with the strength of your conscience as with the weakness of your purse.

Fash. Why, art thou so impenetrable a blockhead as to believe he'll help me with a farthing?

Lory. Not if you treat him *de haut en bas*, as you used to do.

Fash. Why, how would'st have me treat him?

Lory. Like a trout—tickle him.

Fash. I can't flatter.

Lory. Can you starve?

Fash. Yes.

Lory. I can't—good by t' ye, sir.

Fash. Stay—thou 'lt distract me. But who comes here? My old friend, Colonel Townly.

Enter COLONEL TOWNLY

My dear Colonel, I am rejoiced to meet you here.

Col. Town. Dear Tom, this is an unexpected pleasure! What, are you come to Scarborough to be present at your brother's wedding?

Lory. Ah, sir, if it had been his funeral, we should have come with pleasure.

Col. Town. What, honest Lory, are you with your master still?

Lory. Yes, sir ; I have been starving with him ever since I saw your honour last.

Fash. Why, Lory is an attached rogue—there's no getting rid of him.

Lory. True, sir, as my master says, there's no seducing me from his service.—[*Aside.*] Till he's able to pay me my wages.

Fash. Go, go, sir—and take care of the baggage.

Lory. Yes, sir—the baggage !—O Lord ! [*Takes up the portmanteau.*] I suppose, sir, I must charge the landlord to be very particular where he stows this ?

Fash. Get along, you rascal.—[*Exit LORY, with the portmanteau.*] But, Colonel, are you acquainted with my proposed sister-in-law ?

Col. Town. Only by character—her father, Sir Tunbelly Clumsy, lives within a quarter of a mile of this place, in a lonely old house, which nobody comes near. She never goes abroad, nor sees company at home ; to prevent all misfortunes, she has her breeding within doors ; the parson of the parish teaches her to play upon the dulcimer, the clerk to sing, her nurse to dress, and her father to dance ;—in short, nobody has free admission there but our old acquaintance, Mother Coupler, who has procured your brother this match, and is, I believe, a distant relation of Sir Tunbelly's.

Fash. But is her fortune so considerable ?

Col. Town. Three thousand a year, and a good sum of money, independent of her father, beside.

Fash. 'Sdeath ! that my old acquaintance, Dame Coupler, could not have thought of me, as well as my brother, for such a prize.

Col. Town. Egad, I wouldn't swear that you are too late—his lordship, I know, hasn't yet seen the lady—and, I believe, has quarrelled with his patroness.

Fash. My dear Colonel, what an idea have you started !

Col. Town. Pursue it, if you can, and I promise you you shall have my assistance ; for, besides my natural contempt for his lordship, I have at present the enmity of a rival towards him.

Fash. What, has he been addressing your old flame, the widow Berinthia ?

Col. Town. Faith, Tom, I am at present most whimsically circumstanced. I came here a month ago to meet the lady you mention ; but she failing in her promise, I, partly from pique and partly from idleness, have been diverting my

chagrin by offering up incense to the beauties of Amanda, our friend Loveless's wife.

Fash. I never have seen her, but have heard her spoken of as a youthful wonder of beauty and prudence.

Col. Town. She is so indeed; and, Loveless being too careless and insensible of the treasure he possesses, my lodging in the same house has given me a thousand opportunities of making my assiduities acceptable; so that, in less than a fortnight, I began to bear my disappointment from the widow with the most Christian resignation.

Fash. And Berinthia has never appeared?

Col. Town. Oh, there's the perplexity! for, just as I began not to care whether I ever saw her again or not, last night she arrived.

Fash. And instantly resumed her empire.

Col. Town. No, faith—we met—but, the lady not condescending to give me any serious reasons for having fooled me for a month, I left her in a huff.

Fash. Well, well, I'll answer for it she'll soon resume her power, especially as friendship will prevent your pursuing the other too far.—But my coxcomb of a brother is an admirer of Amanda's too, is he?

Col. Town. Yes, and I believe is most heartily despised by her. But come with me, and you shall see her and your old friend Loveless.

Fash. I must pay my respects to his lordship—perhaps you can direct me to his lodgings.

Col. Town. Come with me; I shall pass by it.

Fash. I wish you could pay this visit for me, or could tell me what I should say to him.

Col. Town. Say nothing to him—apply yourself to his bag, his sword, his feather, his snuff-box; and when you are well with them desire him to lend you a thousand pounds, and I'll engage you prosper.

Fash. 'Sdeath and furies! why was that coxcomb thrust into the world before me? O Fortune, Fortune, thou art a jilt, by Gad!

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE II.—LORD FOPPINGTON'S *Dressing-room*

Enter LORD FOPPINGTON *in his nightgown, and*

LA VAROLE

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Well, 'tis an unspeakable pleasure to be a man of quality—strike me dumb! Even the boors

of this northern spa have learned the respect due to a title.—[*Aloud.*] *La Varole!*

La Var. Milor——

Lord Fop. You ha'n't yet been at Muddymoat Hall, to announce my arrival, have you?

La Var. Not yet, milor.

Lord Fop. Then you need not go till Saturday—[*Exit LA VAROLE*] as I am in no particular haste to view my intended sposa. I shall sacrifice a day or two more to the pursuit of my friend Loveless's wife. Amanda is a charming creature—strike me ugly! and, if I have any discernment in the world, she thinks no less of my Lord Foppington.

Re-enter LA VAROLE

La Var. Milor, de shoemaker, de tailor, de hosier, de sempstress, de peru, be all ready, if your lordship please to dress.

Lord Fop. 'Tis well; admit them.

La Var. Hey, messieurs, entrez!

*Enter TAILOR, SHOEMAKER, SEMPSTRESS, JEWELLER,
and MENDLEGS*

Lord Fop. So, gentlemen, I hope you have all taken pains to show yourselves masters in your professions?

Tai. I think I may presume, sir——

La Var. Milor, you clown, you!

Tai. My lord—I ask your lordship's pardon, my lord. I hope, my lord, your lordship will be pleased to own I have brought your lordship as accomplished a suit of clothes as ever peer of England wore, my lord—will your lordship please to view 'em now?

Lord Fop. Ay; but let my people dispose the glasses so that I may see myself before and behind; for I love to see myself all round. [Puts on his clothes]

Enter TOM FASHION and LORY. They remain behind, conversing apart

Fash. Heyday! what the devil have we here? Sure my gentleman's grown a favourite at court, he has got so many people at his levee.

Lory. Sir, these people come in order to make him a favourite at court—they are to establish him with the ladies.

Fash. Good Heaven! to what an ebb of taste are women

fallen, that it should be in the power of a laced coat to recommend a gallant to them!

Lory. Sir, tailors and hair-dressers debauch all the women.

Fash. Thou sayest true. But now for my reception.

Lord Fop. [*To Tailor.*] Death and eternal tortures! Sir—I say the coat is too wide there by a foot.

Tai. My lord, if it had been tighter, 'twould neither have hooked nor buttoned.

Lord Fop. Rat the hooks and buttons, sir! Can any thing be worse than this? As Gad shall judge me, it hangs on my shoulders like a chairman's surtout.

Tai. 'Tis not for me to dispute your lordship's fancy.

Lory. There, sir, observe what respect does.

Fash. Respect! damn him for a coxcomb!—But let's accost him.—[*Coming forward.*] Brother, I'm your humble servant.

Lord Fop. O Lard, Tam! I did not expect you in England—brother, I'm glad to see you.—But what has brought you to Scarborough, Tam?—[*To the TAILOR.*] Look you, sir, I shall never be reconciled to this nauseous wrapping-gown, therefore pray get me another suit with all possible expedition; for this is my eternal aversion.—[*Exit TAILOR.*] Well but, Tam, you don't tell me what has driven you to Scarborough.—Mrs. Calico, are not you of my mind?

Semp. Directly, my lord.—I hope your lordship is pleased with your ruffles?

Lord Fop. In love with them, stap my vitals!—Bring my bill, you shall be paid to-morrow.

Semp. I humbly thank your lordship. [*Exit*

Lord Fop. Hark thee, shoemaker, these shoes aren't ugly, but they don't fit me.

Shoe. My lord, I think they fit you very well.

Lord Fop. They hurt me just below the instep.

Shoe. [*Feels his foot.*] No, my lord, they don't hurt you there.

Lord Fop. I tell thee they pinch me execrably.

Shoe. Why then, my lord, if those shoes pinch you, I'll be damned.

Lord Fop. Why, wilt thou undertake to persuade me I cannot feel?

Shoe. Your lordship may please to feel what you think fit, but that shoe does not hurt you—I think I understand my trade.

Lord Fop. Now, by all that's good and powerful, thou

art an incomprehensive coxcomb!—but thou makest good shoes, and so I'll bear with thee.

Shoe. My lord, I have worked for half the people of quality in this town these twenty years, and 'tis very hard I shouldn't know when a shoe hurts, and when it don't.

Lord Fop. Well, pr'ythee be gone about thy business.—
[*Exit SHOEMAKER.*] Mr. Mendlegs, a word with you.—The calves of these stockings are thickened a little too much; they make my legs look like a porter's.

Mend. My lord, methinks they look mighty well.

Lord Fop. Ay, but you are not so good a judge of those things as I am—I have studied them all my life—therefore pray let the next be the thickness of a crown-piece less.

Mend. Indeed, my lord, they are the same kind I had the honour to furnish your lordship with in town.

Lord Fop. Very possibly, Mr. Mendlegs; but that was in the beginning of the winter, and you should always remember, Mr. Hosier, that if you make a nobleman's spring legs as robust as his autumnal calves, you commit a monstrous impropriety, and make no allowance for the fatigues of the winter. [Exit MENDLEGS]

Jewel. I hope, my lord, these buckles have had the unspeakable satisfaction of being honoured with your lordship's approbation?

Lord Fop. Why, they are of a pretty fancy; but don't you think them rather of the smallest?

Jewel. My lord, they could not well be larger, to keep on your lordship's shoe.

Lord Fop. My good sir, you forget that these matters are not as they used to be; formerly, indeed, the buckle was a sort of machine, intended to keep on the shoe; but the case is now quite reversed, and the shoe is of no earthly use, but to keep on the buckle.—Now give me my watches, [SERVANT fetches the watches,] my chapeau, [SERVANT brings a dress hat,] my handkerchief, [SERVANT pours some scented liquor on a handkerchief, and brings it,] my snuff-box, [SERVANT brings snuff-box.] There, now the business of the morning is pretty well over. [Exit JEWELLER]

Fash. [*Aside to LORY.*] Well, Lory, what dost think on't?—a very friendly reception from a brother, after three years' absence!

Lory. [*Aside to TOM FASHION.*] Why, sir, 'tis your own

fault—here you have stood ever since you came in, and have not commended any one thing that belongs to him.

[SERVANTS all go off]

Fash. [*Aside to LORY.*] Nor ever shall, while they belong to a coxcomb.—[*To LORD FOPPINGTON.*] Now your people of business are gone, brother, I hope I may obtain a quarter of an hour's audience of you?

Lord Fop. Faith, Tam, I must beg you'll excuse me at this time, for I have an engagement which I would not break for the salvation of mankind.—Hey!—there!—is my carriage at the door?—You'll excuse me, brother. [*Going*]

Fash. Shall you be back to dinner?

Lord Fop. As Gad shall judge me, I can't tell; for it is passible I may dine with some friends at Donner's.

Fash. Shall I meet you there? for I must needs talk with you.

Lord Fop. That I'm afraid mayn't be quite so praper; for those I commonly eat with are people of nice conversation; and you know, Tam, your education has been a little at large.—But there are other ordinaries in town—very good beef ordinaries—I suppose, Tam, you can eat beef?—However, dear Tam, I'm glad to see thee in England, stap my vitals! [*Exit, LA VAROLE following*]

Fash. Hell and furies! is this to be borne?

Lory. Faith, sir, I could almost have given him a knock o' the pate myself.

Fash. 'Tis enough; I will now show you the excess of my passion by being very calm.—Come, Lory, lay your loggerhead to mine, and, in cold blood, let us contrive his destruction.

Lory. Here comes a head, sir, would contrive it better than both our loggerheads, if she would but join in the confederacy.

Fash. By this light, Madam Coupler! she seems dissatisfied at something: let us observe her.

Enter MRS. COUPLER

Mrs. Coup. So! I am likely to be well rewarded for my services, truly; my suspicions, I find, were but too just.—What! refuse to advance me a petty sum, when I am upon the point of making him master of a galleon! But let him look to the consequences; an ungrateful narrow-minded coxcomb!

Fash. So he is, upon my soul, old lady ; it must be my brother you speak of.

Mrs. Coup. Ha ! stripling, how came you here ? What, hast spent all, eh ? And art thou come to dun his lordship for assistance ?

Fash. No, I want somebody's assistance to cut his lordship's throat, without the risk of being hanged for him.

Mrs. Coup. Egad, sirrah, I could help thee to do him almost as good a turn, without the danger of being burned in the hand for 't.

Fash. How—how, old Mischief ?

Mrs. Coup. Why, you must know I have done you the kindness to make up a match for your brother.

Fash. I am very much beholden to you, truly !

Mrs. Coup. You may before the wedding-day yet : the lady is a great heiress, the match is concluded, the writings are drawn, and his lordship is come hither to put the finishing hand to the business.

Fash. I understand as much.

Mrs. Coup. Now, you must know, stripling, your brother's a knave.

Fash. Good.

Mrs. Coup. He has given me a bond of a thousand pounds for helping him to this fortune, and has promised me as much more, in ready money, upon the day of the marriage ; which, I understand by a friend, he never designs to pay me ; and his just now refusing to pay me a part is a proof of it. If, therefore, you will be a generous young rogue, and secure me five thousand pounds, I'll help you to the lady.

Fash. And how the devil wilt thou do that ?

Mrs. Coup. Without the devil's aid, I warrant thee. Thy brother's face not one of the family ever saw ; the whole business has been managed by me, and all his letters go through my hands. Sir Tunbelly Clumsy, my relation—for that's the old gentleman's name—is apprised of his lordship's being down here, and expects him to-morrow to receive his daughter's hand ; but the peer, I find, means to bait here a few days longer, to recover the fatigue of his journey, I suppose. Now you shall go to Muddymoat Hall in his place.—I'll give you a letter of introduction : and if you don't marry the girl before sunset, you deserve to be hanged before morning.

Fash. Agreed ! agreed ! and for thy reward——

Mrs. Coup. Well, well;—though I warrant thou hast not a farthing of money in thy pocket now—no—one may see it in thy face.

Fash. Not a sous, by Jupiter!

Mrs. Coup. Must I advance then? Well, be at my lodgings, next door, this evening, and I'll see what may be done—we'll sign and seal, and when I have given thee some further instructions, thou shalt hoist sail and begone.

[Exit

Fash. So, Lory, Fortune, thou seest, at last takes care of merit! we are in a fair way to be great people.

Lory. Ay, sir, if the devil don't step between the cup and the lip, as he used to do.

Fash. Why, faith, he has played me many a damned trick to spoil my fortune; and, egad, I am almost afraid he's at work about it again, now; but if I should tell thee how, thou'dst wonder at me.

Lory. Indeed, sir, I should not.

Fash. How dost know?

Lory. Because, sir, I have wondered at you so often, I can wonder at you no more.

Fash. No! What wouldst thou say, if a qualm of conscience should spoil my design?

Lory. I would eat my words, and wonder more than ever.

Fash. Why faith, Lory, though I have played many a roguish trick, this is so full grown a cheat, I find I must take pains to come up to't—I have scruples.

Lory. They are strong symptoms of death. If you find they increase, sir, pray make your will.

Fash. No, my conscience sha'n't starve me neither; but thus far I'll listen to it. Before I execute this project, I'll try my brother to the bottom. If he has yet so much humanity about him as to assist me—though with a moderate aid—I'll drop my project at his feet, and show him how I can do for him much more than what I'd ask he'd do for me. This one conclusive trial of him I resolve to make.—

Succeed or fail, still victory is my lot;

If I subdue his heart, 'tis well—if not,

I will subdue my conscience to my plot.

[Exeunt

ACT TWO

SCENE I.—LOVELESS'S *Lodgings*

Enter LOVELESS and AMANDA

Love. How do you like these lodgings, my dear? For my part, I am so pleased with them, I shall hardly remove whilst we stay here, if you are satisfied.

Aman. I am satisfied with every thing that pleases you, else I had not come to Scarborough at all.

Love. Oh, a little of the noise and folly of this place will sweeten the pleasures of our retreat; we shall find the charms of our retirement doubled when we return to it.

Aman. That pleasing prospect will be my chiefest entertainment, whilst, much against my will, I engage on those empty pleasures which 'tis so much the fashion to be fond of.

Love. I own most of them are, indeed, but empty; yet there are delights of which a private life is destitute, which may divert an honest man, and be a harmless entertainment to a virtuous woman: good music is one: and truly (with some small allowance) the plays, I think, may be esteemed another.

Aman. Plays, I must confess, have some small charms. What do you think of that you saw last night?

Love. To say truth, I did not mind it much—my attention was for some time taken off to admire the workmanship of nature, in the face of a young lady who sat some distance from me, she was so exquisitely handsome.

Aman. So exquisitely handsome!

Love. Why do you repeat my words, my dear?

Aman. Because you seemed to speak them with such pleasure, I thought I might oblige you with their echo.

Love. Then you are alarmed, Amanda?

Aman. It is my duty to be so when you are in danger.

Love. You are too quick in apprehending for me. I viewed her with a world of admiration, but not one glance of love.

Aman. Take heed of trusting to such nice distinctions. But were your eyes the only things that were inquisitive? Had I been in your place, my tongue, I fancy, had been

curious too. I should have asked her where she lived—yet still without design—who was she, pray?

Love. Indeed I cannot tell.

Aman. You will not tell.

Love. Upon my honour, then, I did not ask.

Aman. Nor do you know what company was with her?

Love. I do not. But why are you so earnest?

Aman. I thought I had cause.

Love. But you thought wrong, Amanda; for turn the case, and let it be your story: should you come home and tell me you had seen a handsome man, should I grow jealous because you had eyes?

Aman. But should I tell you he was exquisitely so, and that I had gazed on him with admiration, should you not think 'twere possible I might go one step further, and inquire his name?

Love. [*Aside.*] She has reason on her side; I have talked too much; but I must turn off another way.—[*Aloud.*] Will you then make no difference, Amanda, between the language of our sex and yours? There is a modesty restrains your tongues, which makes you speak by halves when you commend; but roving flattery gives a loose to ours, which makes us still speak double what we think.

Enter SERVANT

Serv. Madam, there is a lady at the door in a chair desires to know whether your ladyship sees company; her name is Berinthia.

Aman. Oh dear! 'tis a relation I have not seen these five years; pray her to walk in.—[*Exit* SERVANT.] Here's another beauty for you; she was, when I saw her last, reckoned extremely handsome.

Love. Don't be jealous now; for I shall gaze upon her too.

Enter BERINTHIA

Ha! by heavens, the very woman!

[*Aside*]

Ber. [*Salutes* AMANDA.] Dear Amanda, I did not expect to meet you in Scarborough.

Aman. Sweet cousin, I'm overjoyed to see you.—Mr. Loveless, here's a relation and a friend of mine, I desire you'll be better acquainted with.

Love. [*Salutes* BERINTHIA.] If my wife never desires a harder thing, madam, her request will be easily granted.

Re-enter SERVANT

Serv. Sir, my lord Foppington presents his humble service to you, and desires to know how you do. He's at the next door; and, if it be not inconvenient to you, he'll come and wait upon you.

Love. Give my compliments to his lordship, and I shall be glad to see him.—[*Exit SERVANT.*] If you are not acquainted with his lordship, madam, you will be entertained with his character.

Aman. Now it moves my pity more than my mirth to see a man whom nature has made no fool be so very industrious to pass for an ass.

Love. No, there you are wrong, Amanda; you should never bestow your pity upon those who take pains for your contempt: pity those whom nature abuses, never those who abuse nature.

Enter LORD FOPPINGTON

Lord Fop. Dear Loveless, I am your most humble servant.

Love. My lord, I'm yours.

Lord Fop. Madam, your ladyship's very obedient slave.

Love. My lord, this lady is a relation of my wife's.

Lord Fop. [*Salutes BERINTHIA.*] The beautifulest race of people upon earth, rat me! Dear Loveless, I am overjoyed that you think of continuing here: I am, stap my vitals!—[*To AMANDA.*] For Gad's sake, madam, how has your ladyship been able to subsist thus long, under the fatigue of a country life?

Aman. My life has been very far from that, my lord; it has been a very quiet one.

Lord Fop. Why, that's the fatigue I speak of, madam; for 'tis impossible to be quiet without thinking: now thinking is to me the greatest fatigue in the world.

Aman. Does not your lordship love reading, then?

Lord Fop. Oh, passionately, madam; but I never think of what I read. For example, madam, my life is a perpetual stream of pleasure, that glides through with such a variety of entertainments, I believe the wisest of our ancestors never had the least conception of any of 'em. I rise, madam, when in tawn, about twelve o'clock. I don't rise sooner, because it is the worst thing in the world for the complexion: nat that I pretend to be a beau; but a man

must endeavour to look decent, lest he makes so odious a figure in the side-bax, the ladies should be compelled to turn their eyes upon the play. So at twelve o'clock, I say, I rise. Naw, if I find it is a good day, I resolve to take the exercise of riding; so drink my chocolate, and draw on my boots by two. On my return, I dress; and, after dinner, lounge perhaps to the opera.

Ber. Your lordship, I suppose, is fond of music?

Lord Fop. Oh, passionately, on Tuesdays and Saturdays; for then there is always the best company, and one is not expected to undergo the fatigue of listening.

Aman. Does your lordship think that the case at the opera?

Lord Fop. Most certainly, madam. There is my Lady Tattle, my Lady Prate, my Lady Titter, my Lady Sneer, my Lady Giggle, and my Lady Grin—these have boxes in the front, and while any favourite air is singing, are the prettiest company in the waurld, stap my vitals!—Mayn't we hope for the honour to see you added to our society, madam?

Aman. Alas! my lord, I am the worst company in the world at a concert, I'm so apt to attend to the music.

Lord Fop. Why, madam, that is very pardonable in the country or at church, but a monstrous inattention in a polite assembly. But I am afraid I tire the company?

Love. Not at all. Pray go on.

Lord Fop. Why, then, ladies, there only remains to add, that I generally conclude the evening at one or other of the clubs; nat that I ever play deep; indeed I have been for some time tied up from losing above five thousand paunds at a sitting.

Love. But isn't your lordship sometimes obliged to attend the weighty affairs of the nation?

Lord Fop. Sir, as to weighty affairs, I leave them to weighty heads; I never intend mine shall be a burden to my body.

Ber. Nay, my lord, but you are a pillar of the state.

Lord Fop. An ornamental pillar, madam; for sooner than undergo any part of the fatigue, rat me, but the whole building should fall plump to the ground!

Aman. But, my lord, a fine gentleman spends a great deal of his time in his intrigues; you have given us no account of them yet.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] So! she would inquire into my

amours—that's jealousy, poor soul!—I see she's in love with me.—[*Aloud.*] O Lord, madam, I had like to have forgot a secret I must needs tell your ladyship.—Ned, you must not be so jealous now as to listen.

Love. [*Leading BERINTHIA up the stage.*] Not I, my lord; I am too fashionable a husband to pry into the secrets of my wife.

Lord Fop. [*Aside to AMANDA, squeezing her hand.*] I am in love with you to desperation, strike me speechless!

Aman. [*Strikes him on the ear.*] Then thus I return your passion.—An impudent fool!

Lord Fop. Gad's curse, madam, I am a peer of the realm!

Love. [*Hastily returning.*] Hey! what the devil, do you affront my wife, sir? Nay, then—— [*Draws. They fight*

Aman. What has my folly done?—Help! murder! help! Part them, for Heaven's sake.

Lord Fop. [*Falls back and leans on his sword.*] Ah! quite through the body, stap my vitals!

Enter SERVANTS

Love. [*Runs to LORD FOPPINGTON.*] I hope I ha'n't killed the fool, however. Bear him up.—Call a surgeon there.

Lord Fop. Ay, pray make haste. [*Exit SERVANT*

Love. This mischief you may thank yourself for.

Lord Fop. I may so; love's the devil indeed, Ned.

Re-enter SERVANT, with PROBE

Serv. Here's Mr. Probe, sir, was just going by the door.

Lord Fop. He's the welcomest man alive.

Probe. Stand by, stand by, stand by; pray, gentlemen, stand by. Lord have mercy upon us, did you never see a man run through the body before?—Pray stand by.

Lord Fop. Ah, Mr. Probe, I'm a dead man.

Probe. A dead man, and I by! I should laugh to see that, egad.

Love. Pr'ythee don't stand prating, but look upon his wound.

Probe. Why, what if I won't look upon his wound this hour, sir?

Love. Why, then he'll bleed to death, sir.

Probe. Why, then I'll fetch him to life again, sir.

Love. 'Slife! he's run through the body, I tell thee.

Probe. I wish he was run through the heart, and I should get the more credit by his cure. Now I hope you are satisfied? Come, now let me come at him—now let me come at him.—[*Viewing his wound.*] Oons! what a gash is here! Why, sir, a man may drive a coach and six horses into your body.

Lord Fop. Oh!

Probe. Why, what the devil! have you run the gentleman through with a scythe?—[*Aside.*] A little scratch between the skin and the ribs, that's all.

Love. Let me see his wound.

Probe. Then you shall dress it, sir; for if any body looks upon it, I won't.

Love. Why, thou art the veriest coxcomb I ever saw!

Probe. Sir, I am not master of my trade for nothing.

Lord Fop. Surgeon!

Probe. Sir.

Lord Fop. Are there any hopes?

Probe. Hopes! I can't tell. What are you willing to give for a cure?

Lord Fop. Five hundred paunds with pleasure.

Probe. Why, then perhaps there may be hopes; but we must avoid further delay.—Here, help the gentleman into a chair, and carry him to my house presently—that's the properest place—[*Aside.*] to bubble him out of his money,—[*Aloud.*] Come, a chair—a chair quickly—there, in with him.

[SERVANTS put LORD FOPPINGTON into a chair]

Lord Fop. Dear Loveless, adieu! if I die, I forgive thee; and if I live, I hope thou wilt do as much by me. I am sorry you and I should quarrel, but I hope here's an end on't; for, if you are satisfied, I am.

Love. I shall hardly think it worth my prosecuting any further, so you may be at rest, sir.

Lord Fop. Thou art a generous fellow, strike me dumb!—[*Aside.*] But thou hast an impertinent wife, stap my vitals!

Probe. So—carry him off, carry him off!—We shall have him prate himself into a fever by-and-by.—Carry him off!

[*Exit with LORD FOPPINGTON*]

Enter COLONEL TOWNLY

Col. Town. So, so, I am glad to find you all alive—I met a wounded peer carrying off. For heaven's sake what was the matter?

Love. Oh, a trifle! he would have made love to my wife before my face, so she obliged him with a box o' the ear, and I run him through the body, that was all.

Col. Town. Bagatelle on all sides. But pray, madam, how long has this noble lord been an humble servant of yours?

Aman. This is the first I have heard on 't—so, I suppose, 'tis his quality more than his love has brought him into this adventure. He thinks his title an authentic passport to every woman's heart below the degree of a peeress.

Col. Town. He's coxcomb enough to think any thing; but I would not have you brought into trouble for him. I hope there's no danger of his life?

Love. None at all. He's fallen into the hands of a roguish surgeon, who, I perceive, designs to frighten a little money out of him: but I saw his wound—'tis nothing: he may go to the ball to-night if he pleases.

Col. Town. I am glad you have corrected him without further mischief, or you might have deprived me of the pleasure of executing a plot against his lordship, which I have been contriving with an old acquaintance of yours.

Love. Explain.

Col. Town. His brother, Tom Fashion, is come down here, and we have it in contemplation to save him the trouble of his intended wedding; but we want your assistance. Tom would have called, but he is preparing for his enterprise, so I promised to bring you to him—so, sir, if these ladies can spare you—

Love. I'll go with you with all my heart.—[*Aside.*] Though I could wish, methinks, to stay and gaze a little longer on that creature. Good gods! how engaging she is!—but what have I to do with beauty? I have already had my portion, and must not covet more.

Aman. Mr. Loveless, pray one word with you before you go.

[*Exit COLONEL TOWNLY*]

Love. What would my dear?

Aman. Only a woman's foolish question: how do you like my cousin here?

Love. Jealous already, Amanda?

Aman. Not at all: I ask you for another reason.

Love. [*Aside.*] Whate'er her reason be, I must not tell her true.—[*Aloud.*] Why, I confess, she's handsome: but you must not think I slight your kinswoman if I own

to you, of all the women who may claim that character, she is the last that would triumph in my heart.

Aman. I'm satisfied.

Love. Now tell me why you asked?

Aman. At night I will—adieu!

Love. I'm yours.

[*Kisses her, and exit*]

Aman. I'm glad to find he does not like her, for I have a great mind to persuade her to come and live with me.

[*Aside*]

Ber. So! I find my colonel continues in his airs: there must be something more at the bottom of this than the provocation he pretends from me.

[*Aside*]

Aman. For Heaven's sake, Berinthia, tell me what way I shall take to persuade you to come and live with me.

Ber. Why, one way in the world there is, and but one.

Aman. And pray what is that?

Ber. It is to assure me—I shall be very welcome.

Aman. If that be all, you shall e'en sleep here to-night.

Ber. To-night!

Aman. Yes, to-night.

Ber. Why, the people where I lodge will think me mad.

Aman. Let 'em think what they please.

Ber. Say you so, Amanda? Why, then, they shall think what they please: for I'm a young widow, and I care not what any body thinks—Ah, Amanda, it's a delicious thing to be a young widow!

Aman. You'll hardly make me think so.

Ber. Pooh! because you are in love with your husband.

Aman. Pray, 'tis with a world of innocence I would inquire whether you think those we call women of reputation do really escape all other men as they do those shadows of beaux?

Ber. Oh no, Amanda; there are a sort of men make dreadful work amongst 'em, men that may be called the beau's antipathy, for they agree in nothing but walking upon two legs. These have brains, the beau has none. These are in love with their mistress, the beau with himself. They take care of their reputation, the beau is industrious to destroy it. They are decent, he's a fop; in short, they are men, he's an ass.

Aman. If this be their character, I fancy we had here, e'en now, a pattern of 'em both.

Ber. His lordship and Colonel Townly?

Aman. The same.

Ber. As for the lord, he is eminently so; and for the other I can assure you there's not a man in town who has a better interest with the women, that are worth having an interest with.

Aman. He answers the opinion I had ever of him.—
[*Takes her hand.*] I must acquaint you with a secret—'tis not that fool alone has talked to me of love; Townly has been tampering too.

Ber. [*Aside.*] So; so! here the mystery comes out!—
[*Aloud.*] Colonel Townly! impossible, my dear!

Aman. 'Tis true, indeed; though he has done it in vain; nor do I think that all the merit of mankind combined could shake the tender love I bear my husband; yet I will own to you, Berinthia, I did not start at his addresses, as when they came from one whom I contemned.

Ber. [*Aside.*] Oh, this is better and better!—[*Aloud.*] Well said, Innocence! and you really think, my dear, that nothing could abate your constancy and attachment to your husband?

Aman. Nothing, I am convinced.

Ber. What, if you found he loved another woman better?

Aman. Well!

Ber. Well!—why, were I that thing they call a slighted wife, somebody should run the risk of being that thing they call—a husband. Don't I talk madly?

Aman. Madly indeed!

Ber. Yet I'm very innocent.

Aman. That I dare swear you are. I know how to make allowances for your humour: but you resolve then never to marry again?

Ber. Oh no! I resolve I will.

Aman. How so?

Ber. That I never may.

Aman. You banter me.

Ber. Indeed I don't: but I consider I'm a woman, and form my resolutions accordingly.

Aman. Well, my opinion is, form what resolution you will, matrimony will be the end on 't.

Ber. I doubt it—but a—Heavens! I have business at home, and am half an hour too late.

Aman. As you are to return with me, I'll just give some orders, and walk with you.

Ber. Well, make haste, and we'll finish this subject as we go—[*Exit AMANDA.*] Ah, poor Amanda! you have led

a country life. Well, this discovery is lucky! Base Townly! at once false to me and treacherous to his friend!—And my innocent and demure cousin too! I have it in my power to be revenged on her, however. Her husband, if I have any skill in countenance, would be as happy in my smiles as Townly can hope to be in hers. I'll make the experiment, come what will on 't. The woman who can forgive the being robbed of a favoured lover, must be either an idiot or something worse. [Exit

ACT THREE

SCENE I.—LORD FOPPINGTON'S *Lodgings*

Enter LORD FOPPINGTON *and* LA VAROLE

Lord Fop. Hey, fellow, let my *vis-à-vis* come to the door.

La Var. Will your lordship venture so soon to expose yourself to the weather?

Lord Fop. Sir, I will venture as soon as I can to expose myself to the ladies.

La Var. I wish your lordship would please to keep house a little longer; I'm afraid your honour does not well consider your wound.

Lord Fop. My wound!—I would not be in eclipse another day, though I had as many wounds in my body as I have had in my heart. So mind, Varole, let these cards be left as directed; for this evening I shall wait on my future father-in-law, Sir Tunbelly, and I mean to commence my devoirs to the lady, by giving an entertainment at her father's expense; and hark thee, tell Mr. Loveless I request he and his company will honour me with their presence, or I shall think we are not friends.

La Var. I will be sure, milor.

[Exit

Enter TOM FASHION

Fash. Brother, your servant; how do you find yourself to-day?

Lord Fop. So well that I have ardered my coach to the door—so there's no danger of death this baut, Tam.

Fash. I'm very glad of it.

Lord Fop. [Aside.] That I believe's a lie. — [Aloud.]

Pr'ythee, Tam, tell me one thing,—did not your heart cut a caper up to your mauth, when you heard I was run through the bady?

Fash. Why do you think it should?

Lord Fop. Because I remember mine did so, when I heard my uncle was shot through the head.

Fash. It then did very ill.

Lord Fop. Pr'ythee, why so?

Fash. Because he used you very well.

Lord Fop. Well!—Naw, strike me dumb! he starved me; he has let me want a thousand women for want of a thousand paund.

Fash. Then he hindered you from making a great many ill bargains; for I think no woman worth money that will take money.

Lord Fop. If I was a younger brother I should think so too.

Fash. Then you are seldom much in love?

Lord Fop. Never, stap my vitals!

Fash. Why, then, did you make all this bustle about Amanda?

Lord Fop. Because she's a woman of insolent virtue, and I thought myself piqued, in honour, to debauch her.

Fash. Very well.—[*Aside.*] Here's a rare fellow for you, to have the spending of ten thousand pounds a year! But now for my business with him. [*Aloud.*] Brother, though I know to talk of any business (especially of money) is a theme not quite so entertaining to you as that of the ladies, my necessities are such, I hope you'll have patience to hear me.

Lord Fop. The greatness of your necessities, Tam, is the worst argument in the waurld for your being patiently heard. I do believe you are going to make a very good speech, but, strike me dumb! it has the worst beginning of any speech I have heard this twelvemonth.

Fash. I'm sorry you think so.

Lord Fop. I do believe thou art: but come, let's know the affair quickly.

Fash. Why then, my case in a word is this: the necessary expenses of my travels have so much exceeded the wretched income of my annuity, that I have been forced to mortgage it for five hundred pounds, which is spent. So, unless you are so kind as to assist me in redeeming it, I know no remedy but to take a purse.

Lord Fop. Why faith, Tam, to give you my sense of the thing, I do think taking a purse the best remedy in the waurld; for if you succeed, you are relieved that way, if you are taken, [*Drawing his hand round his neck,*] you are relieved t'other.

Fash. I'm glad to see you are in so pleasant a humour; I hope I shall find the effects on 't.

Lord Fop. Why, do you then really think it a reasonable thing, that I should give you five hundred pounds?

Fash. I do not ask it as a due, brother; I am willing to receive it as a favour.

Lord Fop. Then thou art willing to receive it any how, strike me speechless! But these are damned times to give money in; taxes are so great, repairs so exorbitant, tenants such rogues, and bouquets so dear, that, the devil take me, I am reduced to that extremity in my cash, I have been forced to retrench in that one article of sweet pawder, till I have brought it down to five guineas a maunth—now judge, Tam, whether I can spare you five hundred pounds.

Fash. If you can't, I must starve, that's all.—[*Aside.*] Damn him!

Lord Fop. All I can say is, you should have been a better husband.

Fash. Ouns! if you can't live upon ten thousand a year, how do you think I should do 't upon two hundred?

Lord Fop. Don't be in a passion, Tam, for passion is the most unbecoming thing in the waurld—to the face. Look you, I don't love to say any thing to you to make you melancholy, but upon this occasion I must take leave to put you in mind that a running horse does require more attendance than a coach-horse. Nature has made some difference 'twixt you and me.

Fash. Yes—she has made you older.—[*Aside.*] Plague take her!

Lord Fop. That is not all, Tam.

Fash. Why, what is there else?

Lord Fop. [*Looks first on himself, and then on his brother.*] Ask the ladies.

Fash. Why, thou essence-bottle, thou musk-cat! dost thou then think thou hast any advantage over me by what Fortune has given thee?

Lord Fop. I do, stap my vitals!

Fash. Now, by all that's great and powerful, thou art the prince of coxcombs!

Lord Fop. Sir, I am proud at being at the head of so prevailing a party.

Fash. Will nothing provoke thee?—Draw, coward!

Lord Fop. Look you, Tam, you know I have always taken you for a mighty dull fellow, and here is one of the foolish-est plats broke out that I have seen a lang time. Your poverty makes life so burdensome to you, you would provoke me to a quarrel, in hopes either to slip through my lungs into my estate, or to get yourself run through the guts, to put an end to your pain. But I will disappoint you in both your designs; far with the temper of a philosopher, and the discretion of a statesman—I shall leave the room with my sword in the scabbard. [Exit

Fash. So! farewell, brother; and now, conscience, I defy thee. Lory!

Enter LORY

Lory. Sir!

Fash. Here's rare news, Lory: his lordship has given me a pill has purged off all my scruples.

Lory. Then my heart's at ease again: for I have been in a lamentable fright, sir, ever since your conscience had the impudence to intrude into your company.

Fash. Be at peace; it will come there no more: my brother has given it a wring by the nose, and I have kicked it down stairs. So run away to the inn, get the chaise ready quickly, and bring it to Dame Coupler's without a moment's delay.

Lory. Then, sir, you are going straight about the fortune?

Fash. I am.—Away—fly, Lory!

Lory. The happiest day I ever saw. I'm upon the wing already. Now, then, I shall get my wages. [Exeunt

SCENE II.—A Garden behind LOVELESS'S Lodgings

Enter LOVELESS and SERVANT

Love. Is my wife within?

Serv. No, sir, she has gone out this half hour.

Love. Well, leave me.—[Exit SERVANT.] How strangely does my mind run on this widow!—Never was my heart

so suddenly seized on before. That my wife should pick out her, of all womankind, to be her playfellow! But what fate does, let fate answer for: I sought it not. So! by Heavens! here she comes.

Enter BERINTHIA

Ber. What makes you look so thoughtful, sir? I hope you are not ill.

Love. I was debating, madam, whether I was so or not, and that was it which made me look so thoughtful.

Ber. Is it then so hard a matter to decide? I thought all people were acquainted with their own bodies, though few people know their own minds.

Love. What if the distemper I suspect be in the mind?

Ber. Why then I'll undertake to prescribe you a cure.

Love. Alas! you undertake you know not what.

Ber. So far at least, then, you allow me to be a physician.

Love. Nay, I'll allow you to be so yet further; for I have reason to believe, should I put myself into your hands, you would increase my distemper.

Ber. How?

Love. Oh, you might betray me to my wife.

Ber. And so lose all my practice.

Love. Will you then keep my secret?

Ber. I will.

Love. Well—but swear it.

Ber. I swear by woman.

Love. Nay, that's swearing by my deity; swear by your own, and I shall believe you.

Ber. Well then, I swear by man!

Love. I'm satisfied. Now hear my symptoms, and give me your advice. The first were these: when I saw you at the play, a random glance you threw at first alarmed me. I could not turn my eyes from whence the danger came—I gazed upon you till my heart began to pant—nay, even now, on your approaching me, my illness is so increased that if you do not help me I shall, whilst you look on, consume to ashes.

[Takes her hand

Ber. O Lord, let me go! 'tis the plague, and we shall be infected.

[Breaking from him

Love. Then we'll die together, my charming angel.

Ber. O Gad! the devil's in you! Lord, let me go!—here's somebody coming.

Re-enter SERVANT

Serv. Sir, my lady's come home, and desires to speak with you.

Love. Tell her I'm coming.—[*Exit SERVANT.*] But before I go, one glass of nectar to drink her health.

[*To BERINTHIA*

Ber. Stand off, or I shall hate you, by Heavens!

Love. [*Kissing her.*] In matters of love, a woman's oath is no more to be minded than a man's. [*Exit*

Ber. Um!

Enter COLONEL TOWNLY

Col. Town. [*Aside.*] So! what's here—Berinthia and Loveless—and in such close conversation!—I cannot now wonder at her indifference in excusing herself to me!—O rare woman!—Well then, let Loveless look to his wife, 't will be but the retort courteous on both sides.—[*Aloud.*] Your servant, madam; I need not ask you how you do, you have got so good a colour.

Ber. No better than I used to have, I suppose.

Col. Town. A little more blood in your cheeks.

Ber. I have been walking!

Col. Town. Is that all? Pray was it Mr. Loveless went from here just now?

Ber. O yes—he has been walking with me.

Col. Town. He has!

Ber. Upon my word I think he is a very agreeable man; and there is certainly something particularly insinuating in his address!

Col. Town. [*Aside.*] So, so! she hasn't even the modesty to dissemble!—[*Aloud.*] Pray, madam, may I, without impertinence, trouble you with a few serious questions?

Ber. As many as you please; but pray let them be as little serious as possible.

Col. Town. Is it not near two years since I have presumed to address you?

Ber. I don't know exactly—but it has been a tedious long time.

Col. Town. Have I not, during that period, had every reason to believe that my assiduities were far from being unacceptable?

Ber. Why, to do you justice, you have been extremely troublesome—and I confess I have been more civil to you than you deserved.

Col. Town. Did I not come to this place at your express desire, and for no purpose but the honour of meeting you?—and after waiting a month in disappointment, have you condescended to explain, or in the slightest way apologise, for your conduct?

Ber. O Heavens! apologise for my conduct!—apologise to you! O you barbarian! But pray now, my good serious colonel, have you anything more to add?

Col. Town. Nothing, madam, but that after such behaviour I am less surprised at what I saw just now; it is not very wonderful that the woman who can trifle with the delicate addresses of an honourable lover should be found coquetting with the husband of her friend.

Ber. Very true: no more wonderful than it was for this honourable lover to divert himself in the absence of this coquette, with endeavouring to seduce his friend's wife! O colonel, colonel, don't talk of honour or your friend, for Heaven's sake!

Col. Town. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath! how came she to suspect this?—[*Aloud.*] Really, madam, I don't understand you.

Ber. Nay, nay, you saw I did not pretend to misunderstand you.—But here comes the lady: perhaps you would be glad to be left with her for an explanation.

Col. Town. O madam, this recrimination is a poor resource; and to convince you how much you are mistaken, I beg leave to decline the happiness you propose me.—Madam, your servant.

Enter AMANDA. COLONEL TOWNLY *whispers* AMANDA, and *exit*

Ber. [*Aside.*] He carries it off well, however; upon my word, very well! How tenderly they part!—[*Aloud.*] So, cousin; I hope you have not been chiding your admirer for being with me? I assure you we have been talking of you.

Aman. Fy, Berinthia!—my admirer! will you never learn to talk in earnest of any thing?

Ber. Why, this shall be in earnest, if you please; for my part, I only tell you matter of fact.

Aman. I'm sure there's so much jest and earnest in what you say to me on this subject, I scarce know how to take it. I have just parted with Mr. Loveless; perhaps

it is fancy, but I think there is an alteration in his manner which alarms me.

Ber. And so you are jealous! is that all?

Aman. That all! is jealousy, then, nothing?

Ber. It should be nothing, if I were in your case.

Aman. Why, what would you do?

Ber. I'd cure myself.

Aman. How?

Ber. Care as little for my husband as he did for me. Look you, Amanda, you may build castles in the air, and fume, and fret, and grow thin, and lean, and pale, and ugly, if you please; but I tell you, no man worth having is true to his wife, or ever was, or ever will be so.

Aman. Do you then really think he's false to me? for I did not suspect him?

Ber. Think so? I am sure of it.

Aman. You are sure on't?

Ber. Positively—he fell in love at the play.

Aman. Right—the very same! But who could have told you this?

Ber. Um!—Oh, Townly! I suppose your husband has made him his confidant.

Aman. O base Loveless! And what did Townly say on't?

Ber. [*Aside.*] So, so! why should she ask that?—
[*Aloud.*] Say! why he abused Loveless extremely, and said all the tender things of you in the world.

Aman. Did he?—Oh! my heart!—I'm very ill—dear Berinthia, don't leave me a moment. [*Exeunt*

SCENE III.—*Outside of SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSY'S House*

Enter TOM FASHION and LORY

Fash. So, here's our inheritance, Lory, if we can but get into possession. But methinks the seat of our family looks like Noah's ark, as if the chief part on't were designed for the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field.

Lory. Pray, sir, don't let your head run upon the orders of building here: get but the heiress, let the devil take the house.

Fash. Get but the house, let the devil take the heiress! I say.—But come, we have no time to squander; knock at the door.—[*LORY knocks two or three times at the gate.*]

What the devil! have they got no ears in this house?—
Knock harder.

Lory. Egad, sir, this will prove some enchanted castle; we shall have the giant come out, by-and-bye, with his club, and beat our brains out. [Knocks again]

Fash. Hush, they come.

Serv. [Within.] Who is there?

Lory. Open the door and see: is that your country breeding?

Serv. Ay, but two words to that bargain.—Tummas, is the blunderbuss primed?

Fash. Ouns! give 'em good words, Lory,—or we shall be shot here a fortune catching.

Lory. Egad, sir, I think you're in the right on 't.—Ho! Mr. What-d'ye-call-'um, will you please to let us in? or are we to be left to grow like willows by your moat side?

SERVANT appears at the window with a blunderbuss

Serv. Well naw, what's ya're business?

Fash. Nothing, sir, but to wait upon Sir Tunbelly, with your leave.

Serv. To weat upon Sir Tunbelly! why you'll find that's just as Sir Tunbelly pleases.

Fash. But will you do me the favour, sir, to know whether Sir Tunbelly pleases or not?

Serv. Why, look you, d'ye see, with good words much may be done.—Ralph, go thy ways, and ask Sir Tunbelly if he pleases to be waited upon—and dost hear, call to nurse, that she may lock up Miss Hoyden before the gates open.

Fash. D'ye hear that, Lory?

Enter SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSY, with SERVANTS, armed with guns, clubs, pitchforks, &c.

Lory. Oh! [Runs behind his master.] O Lord! O Lord! Lord! we are both dead men!

Fash. Fool! thy fear will ruin us. [Aside to LORY]

Lory. My fear; sir? 'sdeath, sir, I fear nothing.—[Aside.] Would I were well up to the chin in a horsepond!

Sir Tun. Who is it here hath any business with me?

Fash. Sir, 'tis I, if your name be Sir Tunbelly Clumsy.

Sir Tun. Sir, my name is Sir Tunbelly Clumsy, whether you have any business with me or not.—So you see I am not ashamed of my name, nor my face either.

Fash. Sir, you have no cause that I know of.

Sir Tun. Sir, if you have no cause either, I desire to know who you are; for, till I know your name, I sha'n't ask you to come into my house: and when I do know your name, 'tis six to four I don't ask you then.

Fash. Sir, I hope you'll find this letter an authentic passport. [Gives him a letter]

Sir Tun. Cod's my life, from Mrs. Coupler!—I ask your lordship's pardon ten thousand times.—[To a SERVANT.] Here, run in a-doors quickly; get a Scotch coal fire in the parlour, set all the Turkey work chairs in their places, get the brass candlesticks out, and be sure stick the socket full of laurel—run!—[Turns to TOM FASHION.] My lord, I ask your lordship's pardon.—[To SERVANT.] And, do you hear, run away to nurse; bid her let Miss Hoyden loose again.—[Exit SERVANT.] I hope your honour will excuse the disorder of my family. We are not used to receive men of your lordship's great quality every day. Pray where are your coaches and servants, my lord?

Fash. Sir, that I might give you and your daughter a proof how impatient I am to be nearer akin to you, I left my equipage to follow me, and came away post with only one servant.

Sir Tun. Your lordship does me too much honour—it was exposing your person to too much fatigue and danger, I protest it was; but my daughter shall endeavour to make you what amends she can; and, though I say it that should not say it, Hoyden has charms.

Fash. Sir, I am not a stranger to them, though I am to her; common fame has done her justice.

Sir Tun. My lord, I am common fame's very grateful, humble servant. My lord, my girl's young—Hoyden is young, my lord; but this I must say for her, what she wants in art she has in breeding; and what's wanting in her age is made good in her constitution.—So pray, my lord, walk in; pray, my lord, walk in.

Fash. Sir, I wait upon you. [Exeunt]

SCENE IV.—A Room in SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSY'S House

MISS HOYDEN discovered alone

Miss Hoyd. Sure, nobody was ever used as I am! I know well enough what other girls do, for all they think

to make a fool o' me. It's well I have a husband a-coming, or ecod I'd marry the baker, I would so. Nobody can knock at the gate, but presently I must be locked up; and here's the young greyhound can run loose about the house all the day long, so she can.—'Tis very well!

Nurse. [*Without, opening the door.*] Miss Hoyden! miss, miss, miss! Miss Hoyden!

Enter NURSE

Miss Hoyd. Well, what do you make such a noise for, ha? What do you din a body's ears for? Can't one be at quiet for you?

Nurse. What do I din your ears for? Here's one come will din your ears for you.

Miss Hoyd. What care I who's come? I care not a fig who comes, or who goes, so long as I must be locked up like the ale-cellar.

Nurse. That, miss, is for fear you should be drank before you are ripe.

Miss Hoyd. Oh, don't trouble your head about that; I'm as ripe as you, though not so mellow.

Nurse. Very well! Now I have a good mind to lock you up again, and not let you see my lord to-night.

Miss Hoyd. My lord! why, is my husband come?

Nurse. Yes, marry, is he; and a goodly person too.

Miss Hoyd. [*Hugs NURSE.*] Oh, my dear nurse, forgive me this once, and I'll never misuse you again; no, if I do, you shall give me three thumps on the back, and a great pinch by the cheek.

Nurse. Ah, the poor thing! see now it melts; it's as full of good-nature as an egg's full of meat.

Miss Hoyd. But, my dear nurse, don't lie now—is he come, by your troth?

Nurse. Yes, by my truly, is he.

Miss Hoyd. O Lord! I'll go and put on my laced tucker, though I'm locked up for a month for 't.

[*Exeunt.* MISS HOYDEN goes off capering, and twirling her doll by its leg

ACT FOUR

SCENE I.—A Room in SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSY'S House

Enter MISS HOYDEN and NURSE

Nurse. Well, miss, how do you like your husband that is to be ?

Miss Hoyd. O Lord, nurse, I'm so overjoyed I can scarce contain myself !

Nurse. Oh, but you must have a care of being too fond ; for men, nowadays, hate a woman that loves 'em.

Miss Hoyd. Love him ! why, do you think I love him, nurse ? Ecod, I would not care if he was hanged, so I were but once married to him. No, that which pleases me is to think what work I'll make when I get to London ; for when I am a wife and a lady both, ecod, I'll flaunt it with the best of 'em. Ay, and I shall have money enough to do so too, nurse.

Nurse. Ah, there's no knowing that, miss ; for though these lords have a power of wealth indeed, yet, as I have heard say, they give it all to their sluts and their trulls, who joggle it about in their coaches, with a murrain to 'em, whilst poor madam sits sighing and wishing, and has not a spare half-crown to buy her a Practice of Piety.

Miss Hoyd. Oh, but for that, don't deceive yourself, nurse ; for this I must say of my lord, he's as free as an open house at Christmas ; for this very morning he told me I should have six hundred a year to buy pins. Now, if he gives me six hundred a year to buy pins, what do you think he'll give me to buy petticoats ?

Nurse. Ah, my dearest, he deceives thee foully, and he's no better than a rogue for his pains ! These Londoners have got a gibberish with 'em would confound a gipsy. That which they call pin-money is to buy everything in the versal world, down to their very shoe-knots. Nay, I have heard some folks say that some ladies, if they'll have gallants, as they call 'em, are forced to find them out of their pin-money, too.—But look, look, if his honour be not coming to you !—Now, if I were sure you would behave yourself handsomely, and not disgrace me that have brought you up, I'd leave you alone together.

Miss Hoyd. That's my best nurse ; do as you'd be

done by. Trust us together this once, and if I don't show my breeding, I wish I may never be married, but die an old maid.

Nurse. Well, this once I'll venture you. But if you disparage me——

Miss Hoyd. Never fear.

[*Exit NURSE*]

Enter TOM FASHION

Fash. Your servant, madam; I'm glad to find you alone, for I have something of importance to speak to you about.

Miss Hoyd. Sir (my lord, I meant), you may speak to me about what you please, I shall give you a civil answer.

Fash. You give so obliging an one, it encourages me to tell you in a few words what I think, both for your interest and mine. Your father, I suppose you know, has resolved to make me happy in being your husband; and I hope I may obtain your consent to perform what he desires.

Miss Hoyd. Sir, I never disobeyed my father in any thing but eating green gooseberries.

Fash. So good a daughter must needs be an admirable wife. I am therefore impatient till you are mine, and hope you will so far consider the violence of my love, that you won't have the cruelty to defer my happiness so long as your father designs it.

Miss Hoyd. Pray, my lord, how long is that?

Fash. Madam, a thousand years—a whole week.

Miss Hoyd. Why, I thought it was to be to-morrow morning, as soon as I was up. I'm sure nurse told me so.

Fash. And it shall be to-morrow morning, if you'll consent.

Miss Hoyd. If I'll consent! Why, I thought I was to obey you as my husband?

Fash. That's when we are married. Till then, I'm to obey you.

Miss Hoyd. Why then, if we are to take it by turns, it's the same thing. I'll obey you now, and when we are married, you shall obey me.

Fash. With all my heart. But I doubt we must get nurse on our side, or we shall hardly prevail with the chaplain.

Miss Hoyd. No more we sha'n't, indeed; for he loves

her better than he loves his pulpit, and would always be a-preaching to her by his good will.

Fash. Why then, my dear, if you'll call her hither, we'll persuade her presently.

Miss Hoyd. O Lud! I'll tell you a way how to persuade her to any thing.

Fash. How's that?

Miss Hoyd. Why tell her she's a handsome comely woman, and give her half-a-crown.

Fash. Nay, if that will do, she shall have half a score of 'em.

Miss Hoyd. O gemini! for half that she'd marry you herself—I'll run and call her. [Exit

Fash. So! matters go on swimmingly. This is a rare girl, i' faith. I shall have a fine time on't with her at London.

Enter LORY

So, Lory, what's the matter?

Lory. Here, sir—an intercepted packet from the enemy; your brother's postillion brought it. I knew the livery, pretended to be a servant of Sir Tunbelly's, and so got possession of the letter.

Fash. [Looks at the letter.] Ouns! he tells Sir Tunbelly here that he will be with him this evening, with a large party to supper.—Egad, I must marry the girl directly.

Lory. Oh, zounds, sir, directly to be sure. Here she comes. [Exit

Fash. And the old Jezebel with her.

Re-enter MISS HOYDEN and NURSE

How do you do, good Mrs. Nurse? I desired your young lady would give me leave to see you, that I might thank you for your extraordinary care and kind conduct in her education: pray accept of this small acknowledgment for it at present, and depend upon my further kindness when I shall be that happy thing her husband. [Gives her money

Nurse. [Aside.] Gold, by the maakins!—[Aloud.] Your honour's goodness is too great. Alas! all I can boast of is, I gave her pure good milk, and so your honour would have said, an you had seen how the poor thing thrived, and how it would look up in my face, and crow and laugh, it would.

Miss Hoyd. [To NURSE, taking her angrily aside.] Pray,

one word with you. Pr'ythee, nurse, don't stand ripping up old stories, to make one ashamed before one's love. Do you think such a fine proper gentleman as he is cares for a fiddle-come tale of a child? If you have a mind to make him have a good opinion of a woman, don't tell him what one did then, tell him what one can do now.—[To TOM FASHION.] I hope your honour will excuse my mis-manners to whisper before you; it was only to give some orders about the family.

Fash. Oh, every thing, madam, is to give way to business; besides, good housewifery is a very commendable quality in a young lady.

Miss Hoyd. Pray, sir, are young ladies good housewives at London-town? Do they darn their own linen?

Fash. Oh no, they study how to spend money, not to save.

Miss Hoyd. Ecod, I don't know but that may be better sport, ha, nurse?

Fash. Well, you shall have your choice when you come there.

Miss Hoyd. Shall I? then, by my troth, I'll get there as fast as I can.—[To NURSE.] His honour desires you'll be so kind as to let us be married to-morrow.

Nurse. To-morrow, my dear madam?

Fash. Ay, faith, nurse, you may well be surpris'd at miss's wanting to put it off so long. To-morrow! no, no; 'tis now, this very hour, I would have the ceremony performed.

Miss Hoyd. Ecod, with all my heart.

Nurse. O mercy! worse and worse!

Fash. Yes, sweet nurse, now and privately; for all things being signed and sealed, why should Sir Tunbelly make us stay a week for a wedding-dinner?

Nurse. But if you should be married now, what will you do when Sir Tunbelly calls for you to be married?

Miss Hoyd. Why then we will be married again.

Nurse. What, twice, my child?

Miss Hoyd. Ecod, I don't care how often I'm married, not I.

Nurse. Well, I'm such a tender-hearted fool, I find I can refuse you nothing. So you shall e'en follow your own inventions.

Miss Hoyd. Shall I? O Lord, I could leap over the moon!

Fash. Dear nurse, this goodness of yours shall be still more rewarded. But now you must employ your power with the chaplain, that he may do his friendly office too, and then we shall be all happy. Do you think you can prevail with him?

Nurse. Prevail with him! or he shall never prevail with me, I can tell him that.

Fash. I'm glad to hear it; however, to strengthen your interest with him, you may let him know I have several fat livings in my gift, and that the first that falls shall be in your disposal.

Nurse. Nay, then, I'll make him marry more folks than one, I'll promise him.

Miss Hoyd. Faith, do, nurse, make him marry you too; I'm sure he'll do 't for a fat living.

Fash. Well, nurse, while you go and settle matters with him, your lady and I will go and take a walk in the garden.—[*Exit NURSE.*] Come, madam, dare you venture yourself alone with me? [Takes MISS HOYDEN by the hand]

Miss Hoyd. Oh dear, yes, sir; I don't think you'll do anything to me I need be afraid on. [Exeunt]

SCENE II.—AMANDA'S Dressing-room

Enter AMANDA, followed by her maid

Maid. If you please, madam, only to say whether you'll have me buy them or not?

Aman. Yes,—no—Go, teaser; I care not what you do. Pr'ythee leave me. [Exit MAID]

Enter BERINTHIA

Ber. What, in the name of Jove, is the matter with you?

Aman. The matter, Berinthia! I'm almost mad; I'm plagued to death.

Ber. Who is it that plagues you?

Aman. Who do you think should plague a wife but her husband?

Ber. Oh, ho! is it come to that?—We shall have you wish yourself a widow by-and-by.

Aman. Would I were any thing but what I am! A base, ungrateful man, to use me thus!

Ber. What! has he given you fresh reason to suspect his wandering?

Aman. Every hour gives me reason.

Ber. And yet, Amanda, you perhaps at this moment cause in another's breast the same tormenting doubts and jealousies which you feel so sensibly yourself.

Aman. Heaven knows I would not.

Ber. Why, you can't tell but there may be some one as tenderly attached to Townly, whom you boast of as your conquest, as you can be to your husband?

Aman. I'm sure I never encouraged his pretensions.

Ber. Psha! psha! no sensible man ever perseveres to love without encouragement. Why have you not treated him as you have Lord Foppington?

Aman. Because he presumed not so far. But let us drop the subject. Men, not women, are riddles. Mr. Loveless now follows some flirt for variety, whom I'm sure he does not like so well as he does me.

Ber. That's more than you know, madam.

Aman. Why, do you know the ugly thing?

Ber. I think I can guess at the person; but she's no such ugly thing neither.

Aman. Is she very handsome?

Ber. Truly I think so.

Aman. Whate'er she be, I'm sure he does not like her well enough to bestow anything more than a little outward gallantry upon her.

Ber. [*Aside.*] Outward gallantry! I can't bear this.— [*Aloud.*] Come, come, don't you be too secure, Amanda: while you suffer Townly to imagine that you do not detest him for his designs on you, you have no right to complain that your husband is engaged elsewhere. But here comes the person we were speaking of.

Enter COLONEL TOWNLY

Col. Town. Ladies, as I come uninvited, I beg, if I intrude, you will use the same freedom in turning me out again.

Aman. I believe it is near the time Loveless said he would be at home. He talked of accepting of Lord Foppington's invitation to sup at Sir Tunbelly Clumsy's.

Col. Town. His lordship has done me the honour to invite me also. If you'll let me escort you, I'll let you

into a mystery as we go, in which you must play a part when we arrive.

Aman. But we have two hours yet to spare ; the carriages are not ordered till eight, and it is not a five minutes' drive. So, cousin, let us keep the colonel to play at piquet with us, till Mr. Loveless comes home.

Ber. As you please, madam ; but you know I have a letter to write.

Col. Town. Madam, you know you may command me, though I am a very wretched gamester.

Aman. Oh, you play well enough to lose your money, and that's all the ladies require ; and so, without any more ceremony, let us go into the next room, and call for cards and candles. [*Exeunt*

SCENE III.—BERINTHIA'S *Dressing-room*

Enter LOVELESS

Love. So, thus far all 's well : I have got into her dressing-room, and, it being dusk, I think nobody has perceived me steal into the house. I heard Berinthia tell my wife she had some particular letters to write this evening, before she went to Sir Tunbelly's, and here are the implements of correspondence.—How shall I muster up assurance to show myself when she comes ? I think she has given me encouragement ; and, to do my impudence justice, I have made the most of it.—I hear a door open, and some one coming. If it should be my wife, what the devil should I say ? I believe she mistrusts me, and, by my life, I don't deserve her tenderness ; however, I am determined to reform—though not yet. Ha ; Berinthia !—So, I'll step in here, till I see what sort of humour she is in.

[*Goes into the closet*

Enter BERINTHIA

Ber. Was ever so provoking a situation ! To think I should sit and hear him compliment Amanda to my face ! I have lost all patience with them both ! I would not for something have Loveless know what temper of mind they have piqued me into ; yet I can't bear to leave them together. No, I'll put my papers away, and return to disappoint them.—[*Goes to the closet.*]—O Lord ! a ghost ! a ghost ! a ghost !

Re-enter LOVELESS

Love. Peace, my angel! it's no ghost, but one worth a hundred spirits.

Ber. How, sir, have you had the insolence to presume to—run in again, here's somebody coming.

[*LOVELESS goes into the closet*]

Enter MAID

Maid. O Lord, ma'am! what's the matter?

Ber. O Heavens! I'm almost frightened out of my wits! I thought verily I had seen a ghost, and 'twas nothing but a black hood pinned against the wall. You may go gain; I am the fearfullest fool! [*Exit MAID*]

Re-enter LOVELESS

Love. Is the coast clear?

Ber. The coast clear! Upon my word, I wonder at your assurance!

Love. Why then you wonder before I have given you a proof of it. But where's my wife?

Ber. At cards.

Love. With whom?

Ber. With Townly.

Love. Then we are safe enough.

Ber. You are so! Some husbands would be of another mind, were he at cards with their wives.

Love. And they'd be in the right on't too: but I dare trust mine.

Ber. Indeed! and she, I doubt not, has the same confidence in you. Yet do you think she'd be content to come and find you here?

Love. Egad, as you say, that's true!—Then, for fear she should come, hadn't we better go into the next room, out of her way?

Ber. What, in the dark?

Love. Ay, or with a light, which you please.

Ber. You are certainly very impudent.

Love. Nay, then—let me conduct you, my angel!

Ber. Hold, hold! you are mistaken in your angel, I assure you.

Love. I hope not; for by this hand I swear—

Ber. Come, come, let go my hand, or I shall hate you! —I'll cry out as I live!

Love. Impossible! you cannot be so cruel.

Ber. Ha! here's someone coming. Begone instantly!

Love. Will you promise to return, if I remain here?

Ber. Never trust myself in a room again with you while I live.

Love. But I have something particular to communicate to you.

Ber. Well, well, before we go to Sir Tunbelly's, I'll walk upon the lawn. If you are fond of a moonlight evening, you'll find me there.

Love. I' faith, they're coming here now!—I take you at your word. [Exit into the closet

Ber. 'Tis Amanda, as I live! I hope she has not heard his voice; though I mean she should have her share of jealousy in her turn.

Enter AMANDA

Aman. Berinthia, why did you leave me?

Ber. I thought I only spoiled your party.

Aman. Since you have been gone, Townly has attempted to renew his importunities. I must break with him—for I cannot venture to acquaint Mr. Loveless with his conduct.

Ber. Oh, no! Mr. Loveless mustn't know of it by any means.

Aman. Oh, not for the world!—I wish, Berinthia, you would undertake to speak to Townly on the subject.

Ber. Upon my word, it would be a very pleasant subject for me to talk upon! But, come, let us go back; and you may depend on't I'll not leave you together again, if I can help it. [Exeunt

Re-enter LOVELESS

Love. So—so! a pretty piece of business I have overheard! Townly makes love to my wife, and I am not to know it for all the world. I must inquire into this—and, by Heaven, if I find that Amanda has, in the smallest degree—yet what have I been at here!—Oh, 'sdeath! that's no rule.

That wife alone unsullied credit wins,
Whose virtues can atone her husband's sins.
Thus, while the man has other nymphs in view,
It suits the woman to be doubly true.

[Exit

ACT FIVE

SCENE I.—*The Garden behind LOVELESS's Lodgings**Enter LOVELESS*

Love. Now, does she mean to make a fool of me, or not? I shan't wait much longer, for my wife will soon be inquiring for me to set out on our supping party. Suspense is at all times the devil, but of all modes of suspense, the watching for a loitering mistress is the worst.—But let me accuse her no longer; she approaches with one smile to o'erpay the anxieties of a year.

Enter BERINTHIA

O Berinthia, what a world of kindness are you in my debt! had you stayed five minutes longer——

Ber. You would have gone, I suppose?

Love. Egad, she's right enough.

[*Aside*]

Ber. And I assure you it was ten to one that I came at all. In short, I begin to think you are too dangerous a being to trifle with; and as I shall probably only make a fool of you at last, I believe we had better let matters rest as they are.

Love. You cannot mean it, sure?

Ber. What more would you have me give to a married man?

Love. How doubly cruel to remind me of my misfortunes!

Ber. A misfortune to be married to so charming a woman as Amanda?

Love. I grant all her merit, but——'sdeath! now see what you have done by talking of her—she's here, by all that's unlucky, and Townly with her.—I'll observe them.

Ber. O Gad, we had better get out of the way; for I should feel as awkward to meet her as you.

Love. Ay, if I mistake not, I see Townly coming this way also. I must see a little into this matter. [Steps aside]

Ber. Oh, if that's your intention, I am no woman if I suffer myself to be outdone in curiosity.

[*Goes on the other side*]*Enter AMANDA*

Aman. Mr. Loveless come home, and walking on the lawn! I will not suffer him to walk so late, though perhaps

it is to show his neglect of me.—Mr. Loveless, I must speak with you.—Ha! Townly again! How I am persecuted!

Enter COLONEL TOWNLY

Col. Town. Madam, you seem disturbed.

Aman. Sir, I have reason.

Col. Town. Whatever be the cause, I would to Heaven it were in my power to bear the pain, or to remove the malady.

Aman. Your interference can only add to my distress.

Col. Town. Ah, madam, if it be the sting of unrequited love you suffer from, seek for your remedy in revenge; weigh well the strength and beauty of your charms, and rouse up that spirit a woman ought to bear. Disdain the false embraces of a husband. See at your feet a real lover; his zeal may give him title to your pity, although his merit cannot claim your love.

Love. So, so, very fine, i' faith! [*Aside*

Aman. Why do you presume to talk to me thus? Is this your friendship to Mr. Loveless? I perceive you will compel me at last to acquaint him with your treachery.

Col. Town. He could not upbraid me if you were.—He deserves it from me; for he has not been more false to you than faithless to me.

Aman. To you?

Col. Town. Yes, madam; the lady for whom he now deserts those charms which he was never worthy of was mine by right; and, I imagined too, by inclination. Yes, madam, Berinthia, who now——

Aman. Berinthia! Impossible!

Col. Town. 'Tis true, or may I never merit your attention. She is the deceitful sorceress who now holds your husband's heart in bondage.

Aman. I will not believe it.

Col. Town. By the faith of a true lover, I speak from conviction. This very day I saw them together, and overheard——

Aman. Peace, sir! I will not even listen to such slander—this is a poor device to work on my resentment, to listen to your insidious addresses. No, sir, though Mr. Loveless may be capable of error, I am convinced I cannot be deceived so grossly in him as to believe what you now report; and for Berinthia, you should have fixed on some more probable person for my rival than her who is my relation and my

friend : for while I am myself free from guilt, I will never believe that love can beget injury, or confidence create ingratitude.

Col. Town. If I do not prove to you——

Aman. You never shall have an opportunity. From the artful manner in which you first showed yourself to me I might have been led, as far as virtue permitted, to have thought you less criminal than unhappy ; but this last unmanly artifice merits at once my resentment and contempt. [Exit

Col. Town. Sure there's divinity about her ; and she has dispensed some portion of honour's light to me ; yet can I bear to lose Berinthia without revenge or compensation ? Perhaps she is not so culpable as I thought her. I was mistaken when I began to think lightly of Amanda's virtue, and may be in my censure of my Berinthia. Surely I love her still, for I feel I should be happy to find myself in the wrong. [Exit

Re-enter LOVELESS and BERINTHIA

Ber. Your servant, Mr. Loveless.

Love. Your servant, madam.

Ber. Pray what do you think of this ?

Love. Truly, I don't know what to say.

Ber. Don't you think we steal forth two contemptible creatures ?

Love. Why, tolerably so, I must confess.

Ber. And do you conceive it possible for you ever to give Amanda the least uneasiness again ?

Love. No, I think we never should indeed.

Ber. We ! why, monster, you don't pretend that I ever entertained a thought ?

Love. Why then, sincerely and honestly, Berinthia, there is something in my wife's conduct which strikes me so forcibly, that if it were not for shame, and the fear of hurting you in her opinion, I swear I would follow her, confess my error, and trust to her generosity for forgiveness.

Ber. Nay, pr'ythee, don't let your respect for me prevent you ; for as my object in trifling with you was nothing more than to pique Townly, and as I perceive he has been actuated by a similar motive, you may depend on't I shall make no mystery of the matter to him.

Love. By no means inform him ; for though I may

choose to pass by his conduct without resentment, how will he presume to look me in the face again?

Ber. How will you presume to look him in the face again?

Love. He, who has dared to attempt the honour of my wife!

Ber. You, who have dared to attempt the honour of his mistress! Come, come, be ruled by me, who affect more levity than I have, and don't think of anger in this cause. A readiness to resent injuries is a virtue only in those who are slow to injure.

Love. Then I will be ruled by you; and when you shall think proper to undeceive Townly, may your good qualities make as sincere a convert of him as Amanda's have of me.—When truth's extorted from us, then we own the robe of virtue is a sacred habit.

Could woman but our secret counsels scan—
 Could they but reach the deep reserve of man—
 To keep our love they'd rate their virtue high,
 They live together, and together die.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE II.—A Room in SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSY'S House

Enter MISS HOYDEN, NURSE, and TOM FASHION

Fash. This quick despatch of the chaplain's I take so kindly, it shall give him claim to my favour as long as I live, I assure you.

Miss Hoyd. And to mine too, I promise you.

Nurse. I most humbly thank your honours; and may your children swarm about you like bees about a honey-comb!

Miss Hoyd. Ecod, with all my heart—the more the merrier, I say—ha, nurse?

Enter LORY

Lory. One word with you, for Heaven's sake.

[*Taking* TOM FASHION *hastily aside*]

Fash. What the devil's the matter?

Lory. Sir, your fortune's ruined if you are not married. Yonder's your brother arrived, with two coaches and six horses, twenty footmen, and a coat worth fourscore pounds—so judge what will become of your lady's heart.

Fash. Is he in the house yet ?

Lory. No, they are capitulating with him at the gate. Sir Tunbelly luckily takes him for an impostor ; and I have told him that we have heard of this plot before.

Fash. That 's right.—[Turning to Miss HOYDEN.] My dear, here 's a troublesome business my man tells me of, but don't be frightened ; we shall be too hard for the rogue. Here 's an impudent fellow at the gate (not knowing I was come hither incognito) has taken my name upon him, in hopes to run away with you.

Miss Hoyd. Oh, the brazen-faced varlet ! it 's well we are married, or may be we might never have been so.

Fash. [Aside.] Egad, like enough.—[Aloud.] Pr'ythee, nurse, run to Sir Tunbelly, and stop him from going to the gate before I speak with him.

Nurse. An't please your honour, my lady and I had best lock ourselves up till the danger be over.

Fash. Do so, if you please.

Miss Hoyd. Not so fast ; I won't be locked up any more, now I 'm married.

Fash. Yes, pray, my dear, do, till we have seized this rascal.

Miss Hoyd. Nay, if you 'll pray me, I 'll do any thing.

[Exit with NURSE

Fash. Hark you, sirrah, things are better than you imagine. The wedding 's over.

Lory. The devil it is, sir !

[Capers about

Fash. Not a word—all 's safe—but Sir Tunbelly don't know it, nor must not yet. So I am resolved to brazen the brunt of the business out, and have the pleasure of turning the impostor upon his lordship, which I believe may easily be done.

Enter SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSY

Did you ever hear, sir, of so impudent an undertaking ?

Sir Tun. Never, by the mass ; but we 'll tickle him, I 'll warrant you.

Fash. They tell me, sir, he has a great many people with him, disguised like servants.

Sir Tun. Ay, ay, rogues enow, but we have mastered them. We only fired a few shot over their heads, and the regiment scoured in an instant.—Here, Tummas, bring in your prisoner.

Fash. If you please, Sir Tunbelly, it will be best for me

not to confront the fellow yet, till you have heard how far his impudence will carry him.

Sir Tun. Egad, your lordship is an ingenious person. Your lordship then will please to step aside.

Lory. [*Aside.*] 'Fore heaven, I applaud my master's modesty!
[*Exit with TOM FASHION*]

Enter SERVANTS, with LORD FOPPINGTON disarmed

Sir Tun. Come, bring him along, bring him along.

Lord Fop. What the plague do you mean, gentlemen? Is it fair time, that you are all drunk before supper?

Sir Tun. Drunk, sirrah! here's an impudent rogue for you now. Drunk or sober, bully, I'm a justice o' the peace, and know how to deal with strollers.

Lord Fop. Strollers!

Sir Tun. Ay, strollers. Come, give an account of yourself. What's your name? where do you live? do you pay scot and lot? Come, are you a freeholder or a copyholder?

Lord Fop. And why dost thou ask me so many impertinent questions?

Sir Tun. Because I'll make you answer 'em, before I have done with you, you rascal you!

Lord Fop. Before Gad, all the answers I can make to them is, that you are a very extraordinary old fellow, stap my vitals!

Sir Tun. Nay, if thou art joking deputy lieutenants, we know how to deal with you.—Here, draw a warrant for him immediately.

Lord Fop. A warrant! What the devil is 't thou would'st be at, old gentleman?

Sir Tun. I would be at you, sirrah, (if my hands were not tied as a magistrate,) and with these two double fists beat your teeth down your throat, you dog you!

[*Driving him*]
Lord Fop. And why wouldst thou spoil my face at that rate?

Sir Tun. For your design to rob me of my daughter, villain.

Lord Fop. Rob thee of thy daughter! Now do I begin to believe I am in bed and asleep, and that all this is but a dream. Pr'ythee, old father, wilt thou give me leave to ask thee one question?

Sir Tun. I can't tell whether I will or not, till I know what it is.

Lord Fop. Why, then, it is, whether thou didst not write to my Lord Foppington, to come down and marry thy daughter?

Sir Tun. Yes, marry, did I, and my Lord Foppington is come down, and shall marry my daughter before she's a day older.

Lord Fop. Now give me thy hand, old dad; I thought we should understand one another at last.

Sir Tun. The fellow's mad!—Here, bind him hand and foot.

[*They bind him*

Lord Fop. Nay, pr'ythee, knight, leave fooling; thy jest begins to grow dull.

Sir Tun. Bind him, I say—he's mad: bread and water, a dark room, and a whip, may bring him to his senses again.

Lord Fop. Pr'ythee, Sir Tunbelly, why should you take such an aversion to the freedom of my address as to suffer the rascals thus to skewer down my arms like a rabbit!—[*Aside.*] Egad, if I don't awake, by all that I can see, this is like to prove one of the most impertinent dreams that ever I dreamt in my life.

Re-enter MISS HOYDEN and NURSE

Miss Hoyd. [*Going up to LORD FOPPINGTON.*] Is this he that would have run?—Fough, how he stink of sweets!—Pray, father, let him be dragged through the horse-pond.

Lord Fop. This must be my wife, by her natural inclination to her husband.

[*Aside*

Miss Hoyd. Pray, father, what do you intend to do with him—hang him?

Sir Tun. That at least, child.

Nurse. Ay, and it is e'en too good for him too.

Lord Fop. Madame la gouvernante, I presume: hitherto this appears to me to be one of the most extraordinary families that ever man of quality matched into.

[*Aside*

Sir Tun. What's become of my lord, daughter?

Miss Hoyd. He's just coming, sir.

Lord Fop. My lord, what does he mean by that, now?

[*Aside*

Re-enter TOM FASHION and LORY

Stap my vitals, Tam, now the dream's out! [Runs]

Fash. Is this the fellow, sir, that designed to trick me of your daughter?

Sir Tun. This is he, my lord; how do you like him? is not he a pretty fellow to get a fortune?

Fash. I find by his dress he thought your daughter might be taken with a beau.

Miss Hoyd. Oh, gemini! is this a beau? let me see him again. [Surveys him.] Ha! I find a beau is no such ugly thing, neither.

Fash. [Aside.] Egad, she'll be in love with him presently—I'll e'en have him sent away to jail.—[To LORD FOPPINGTON.] Sir, though your undertaking shows you a person of no extraordinary modesty, I suppose you ha'n't confidence enough to expect much favour from me?

Lord Fop. Strike me dumb, Tam, thou art a very impudent fellow.

Nurse. Look, if the varlet has not the effrontery to call his lordship plain Thomas!

Lord Fop. My Lord Foppington, shall I beg one word with your lordship?

Nurse. Ho, ho, it's my lord with him now! See how afflictions will humble folks.

Miss Hoyd. Pray, my lord—[To FASHION.]—don't let him whisper too close, lest he bite your ear off.

Lord Fop. I am not altogether so hungry as your ladyship is pleased to imagine.—[Aside to TOM FASHION.] Look you, Tam, I am sensible I have not been so kind to you as I ought, but I hope you'll forgive what's past, and accept of the five thousand pounds I offer—thou mayst live in extreme splendour with it, stap my vitals!

Fash. It's a much easier matter to prevent a disease than to cure it. A quarter of that sum would have secured your mistress; twice as much cannot redeem her.

[Aside to LORD FOPPINGTON]

Sir Tun. Well, what says he?

Fash. Only the rascal offered me a bribe to let him go.

Sir Tun. Ay, he shall go, with a plague to him!—Lead on, constable.

Enter SERVANT

Serv. Sir, here is Muster Loveless, and Muster Colonel Townly, and some ladies to wait on you. [To TOM FASHION]

Lory. [*Aside to TOM FASHION.*] So, sir, what will you do now?

Fash. [*Aside to LORY.*] Be quiet; they are in the plot.—[*Aloud.*] Only a few friends, Sir Tunbelly, whom I wish to introduce to you.

Lord Fop. Thou art the most impudent fellow, Tam, that ever nature yet brought into the world.—Sir Tunbelly, strike me speechless, but these are my friends and acquaintance, and my guests, and they will soon inform thee whether I am the true Lord Foppington or not.

Enter LOVELESS, COLONEL TOWNLY, AMANDA, and BERINTHIA.—LORD FOPPINGTON accosts them as they pass, but none answer him.

Fash. So, gentlemen, this is friendly; I rejoice to see you.

Col. Town. My lord, we are fortunate to be the witnesses of your lordship's happiness.

Love. But your lordship will do us the honour to introduce us to Sir Tunbelly Clumsy?

Aman. And us to your lady.

Lord Fop. Gad take me, but they are all in a story! [*Aside*

Sir Tun. Gentlemen, you do me much honour; my Lord Foppington's friends will ever be welcome to me and mine.

Fash. My love, let me introduce you to these ladies.

Miss Hoyd. By goles, they look so fine and so stiff, I am almost ashamed to come nigh 'em.

Aman. A most engaging lady, indeed!

Miss Hoyd. Thank ye, ma'am.

Ber. And I doubt not will soon distinguish herself in the beau-monde.

Miss Hoyd. Where is that?

Fash. You'll soon learn, my dear.

Love. But Lord Foppington—

Lord Fop. Sir!

Love. Sir! I was not addressing myself to you, sir!—Pray who is this gentleman? He seems rather in a singular predicament—

Col. Town. For so well-dressed a person, a little oddly circumstanced, indeed.

Sir Tun. Ha! ha! ha!—So, these are your friends and your guests, ha, my adventurer?

Lord Fop. I am struck dumb with their impudence, and cannot positively say whether I shall ever speak again or not.

Sir Tun. Why, sir, this modest gentleman wanted to pass himself upon me as Lord Foppington, and carry off my daughter.

Love. A likely plot to succeed, truly, ha! ha!

Lord Fop. As Gad shall judge me, Loveless, I did not expect this from thee. Come, pr'ythee confess the joke; tell Sir Tunbelly that I am the real Lord Foppington, who yesterday made love to thy wife; was honoured by her with a slap on the face, and afterwards pinked through the body by thee.

Sir Tun. A likely story, truly, that a peer would behave thus!

Love. A pretty fellow, indeed, that would scandalize the character he wants to assume; but what will you do with him, Sir Tunbelly?

Sir Tun. Commit him, certainly, unless the bride and bridegroom choose to pardon him.

Lord Fop. Bride and bridegroom! For Gad's sake, Sir Tunbelly, 'tis torture to me to hear you call 'em so.

Miss Hoyd. Why, you ugly thing, what would you have him call us—dog and cat?

Lord Fop. By no means, miss; for that sounds ten times more like man and wife than t' other.

Sir Tun. A precious rogue this to come a-wooing!

Re-enter SERVANT

Serv. There are some gentlefolks below to wait upon Lord Foppington. [Exit

Col. Town. 'Sdeath, Tom, what will you do now?

[Aside to TOM FASHION

Lord Fop. Now, Sir Tunbelly, here are witnesses who I believe are not corrupted.

Sir Tun. Peace, fellow!—Would your lordship choose to have your guests shown here, or shall they wait till we come to 'em?

Fash. I believe, Sir Tunbelly, we had better not have these visitors here yet.—[Aside.] Egad, all must out.

Love. Confess, confess; we'll stand by you.

[Aside to TOM FASHION

Lord Fop. Nay, Sir Tunbelly, I insist on your calling evidence on both sides—and if I do not prove that fellow an impostor—

Fash. Brother, I will save you the trouble, by now con-

fessing that I am not what I have passed myself for.—Sir Tunbelly, I am a gentleman, and I flatter myself a man of character ; but 'tis with great pride I assure you I am not Lord Foppington.

Sir Tun. Ouns ! — what 's this ? — an impostor ? — a cheat ? — fire and faggots, sir, if you are not Lord Foppington, who the devil are you ?

Fash. Sir, the best of my condition is, I am your son-in-law ; and the worst of it is, I am brother to that noble peer.

Lord Fop. Impudent to the last, Gad dem me !

Sir Tun. My son-in-law ! not yet, I hope.

Fash. Pardon me, sir ; thanks to the goodness of your chaplain, and the kind offices of this gentlewoman.

Lory. 'Tis true, indeed, sir ; I gave your daughter away, and Mrs. Nurse, here, was clerk.

Sir Tun. Knock that rascal down ! — But speak, Jezebel, how 's this ?

Nurse. Alas ! your honour, forgive me ; I have been over-reached in this business as well as you. Your worship knows, if the wedding-dinner had been ready, you would have given her away with your own hands.

Sir Tun. But how durst you do this without acquainting me ?

Nurse. Alas ! If your worship had seen how the poor thing begged and prayed, and clung and twined about me like ivy round an old wall, you would say, I who had nursed it, and reared it, must have had a heart like stone to refuse it.

Sir Tun. Ouns ! I shall go mad ! Unloose my lord there, you scoundrels !

Lord Fop. Why, when these gentlemen are at leisure, I should be glad to congratulate you on your son-in-law, with a little more freedom of address.

Miss Hoyd. Egad, though, I don't see which is to be my husband after all.

Love. Come, come, Sir Tunbelly, a man of your understanding must perceive that an affair of this kind is not to be mended by anger and reproaches.

Col. Town. Take my word for it, Sir Tunbelly, you are only tricked into a son-in-law you may be proud of : my friend Tom Fashion is as honest a fellow as ever breathed.

Love. That he is, depend on 't ; and will hunt or drink with you most affectionately : be generous, old boy, and forgive them——

Sir Tun. Never! the hussy!—when I had set my heart on getting her a title.

Lord Fop. Now, Sir Tunbelly, that I am untrussed— give me leave to thank thee for the very extraordinary reception I have met with in thy damned, execrable mansion; and at the same time to assure you, that of all the bumpkins and blockheads I have had the misfortune to meet with, thou art the most obstinate and egregious, strike me ugly!

Sir Tun. What's this? I believe you are both rogues alike.

Lord Fop. No, Sir Tunbelly, thou wilt find, to thy unspeakable mortification, that I am the real Lord Foppington, who was to have disgraced myself by an alliance with a clod; and that thou hast matched thy girl to a beggarly younger brother of mine, whose title-deeds might be contained in thy tobacco-box.

Sir Tun. Puppy! puppy!—I might prevent their being beggars, if I chose it; for I could give 'em as good a rent-roll as your lordship.

Lord Fop. Ay, old fellow, but you will not do that—for that would be acting like a Christian, and thou art a barbarian, stap my vitals!

Sir Tun. Udzoekers! now six such words more, and I'll forgive them directly.

Love. 'Slife, Sir Tunbelly, you should do it, and bless yourself—Ladies, what say you?

Aman. Good Sir Tunbelly, you must consent.

Ber. Come, you have been young yourself, Sir Tunbelly.

Sir Tun. Well then, if I must, I must; but turn—turn that sneering lord out, however, and let me be revenged on somebody. But first look whether I am a barbarian or not; there, children, I join your hands; and when I'm in a better humour, I'll give you my blessing.

Love. Nobly done, Sir Tunbelly! and we shall see you dance at a grandson's christening yet.

Miss Hoyd. By goles, though, I don't understand this! What, an't I to be a lady after all? only plain Mrs.—What's my husband's name, nurse?

Nurse. Squire Fashion.

Miss Hoyd. Squire, is he?—Well, that's better than nothing.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Now I will put on a philosophic air, and show these people that it is not possible to put a man of my quality out of countenance.—[*Aloud.*] Dear Tam, since things are fallen out, pr'ythee give me leave to wish

thee joy ; I do it *de bon cœur*, strike me dumb ! You have married into a family of great politeness and uncommon elegance of manners, and your bride appears to be a lady beautiful in person, modest in her deportment, refined in her sentiments, and of nice morality, split my windpipe !

Miss Hoyd. By goles, husband, break his bones, if he calls me names !

Fash. Your lordship may keep up your spirits with your grimace, if you please ; I shall support mine by Sir Tunbelly's favour, with this lady and three thousand pounds a year.

Lord Fop. Well, adieu, Tam !—Ladies, I kiss your hands.—Sir Tunbelly, I shall now quit this thy den ; but while I retain the use of my arms, I shall ever remember thou art a demned horrid savage ; Ged demn me ! [Exit

Sir Tun. By the mass, 'tis well he 's gone—for I should ha' been provoked, by-and-by, to ha' dun un a mischief. Well, if this is a lord, I think Hoyden has luck o' her side, in troth.

Col. Town. She has indeed, Sir Tunbelly.—But I hear the fiddles ; his lordship, I know, had provided 'em.

Love. Oh, a dance and a bottle, Sir Tunbelly, by all means !

Sir Tun. I had forgot the company below ; well—what—we must be merry then, ha ? and dance and drink, ha ? Well, 'fore George, you shan't say I do these things by halves. Son-in-law there looks like a hearty rogue, so we 'll have a night on 't : and which of these ladies will be the old man's partner, ha ?—Ecod, I don't know how I came to be in so good a humour.

Ber. Well, Sir Tunbelly, my friend and I both will endeavour to keep you so : you have done a generous action, and are entitled to our attention. If you should be at a loss to divert your new guests, we will assist you to relate to them the plot of your daughter's marriage, and his lordship's deserved mortification ; a subject which perhaps may afford no bad evening's entertainment.

Sir Tun. Ecod, with all my heart ; though I am a main bungler at a long story.

Ber. Never fear ; we will assist you, if the tale is judged worth being repeated ; but of this you may be assured, that while the intention is evidently to please, British auditors will ever be indulgent to the errors of the performance.

[Exeunt omnes

PIZARRO

A TRAGEDY

ADVERTISEMENT

As the two translations which have been published of Kotzebue's *Spaniards in Peru* have, I understand, been very generally read, the public are in possession of all the materials necessary to form a judgment on the merits and defects of the Play performed at Drury Lane Theatre.

DEDICATION

To her, whose approbation of this Drama, and whose peculiar delight in the applause it has received from the public, have been to *me* the highest gratification derived from its success—I dedicate this Play.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT DRURY-LANE THEATRE IN 1799

ATALIBA	<i>Mr. Powell</i>
ROLLA	<i>Mr. Kemble</i>
OROZEMBO	<i>Mr. Downton</i>
ORANO	<i>Mr. Archer</i>
ALONZO	<i>Mr. C. Kemble</i>
PIZARRO	<i>Mr. Barrymore</i>
ALMAGRO	<i>Mr. Caulfield</i>
GONZALO	<i>Mr. Wentworth</i>
DAVILLA	<i>Mr. Trueman</i>
GOMEZ	<i>Mr. Surmount</i>
VALVERDE	<i>Mr. R. Palmer</i>
LAS-CASAS	<i>Mr. Aickin</i>
OLD BLIND MAN	<i>Mr. Cory</i>
BOY	<i>Master Chatterley</i>
SENTINEL	<i>Mr. Holland</i>
ATTENDANT	<i>Mr. Maddocks</i>
CORA	<i>Mrs. Jordan</i>
ELVIRA	<i>Mrs. Siddons</i>
ZULUGA	

Peruvian Warriors, Women, and Children, High-priest,
Priests, and Virgins of the Sun, Spanish Officers,
Soldiers, Guards, &c. &c.

SCENE—PERU

PIZARRO

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN BY RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

Spoken by Mr. King

CHILL'D by rude gales, while yet reluctant May
Withholds the beauties of the vernal day ;
As some fond maid, whom matron frowns reprove,
Suspends the smile her heart devotes to love ;
The season's pleasures too delay their hour,
And Winter revels with protracted power :
Then blame not, critics, if, thus late, we bring
A Winter Drama—but reproach—the Spring.
What prudent cit dares yet the season trust,
Bask in his whisky, and enjoy the dust ?
Horsed in Cheapside, scarce yet the gayer spark
Achieves the Sunday triumph of the Park ;
Scarce yet you see him, dreading to be late,
Scour the New Road, and dash through Grosvenor Gate :—
Anxious—yet timorous too—his steed to show,
The hack Bucephalus of Rotten Row.
Careless he seems, yet vigilantly sly,
Woos the gay glance of ladies passing by,
While his off heel, insidiously aside,
Provokes the caper which he seems to chide.
Scarce rural Kensington due honour gains ;
The vulgar verdure of her walk remains !
Where night-robed misses amble two by two,
Nodding to booted beaux—"How'do, how'do ?"
With generous questions that no answer wait,
"How vastly full ? An't you come vastly late ?
Isn't it quite charming ? When do you leave town ?
An't you quite tired ? Pray, can't we sit down ?"
These suburb pleasures of a London May,
Imperfect yet, we hail the cold delay ;
Should our Play please—and you're indulgent ever—
Be your decree—" 'Tis better late than never."

ACT ONE

SCENE I.—A Pavilion near PIZARRO'S Tent

ELVIRA discovered sleeping under a canopy. VALVERDE enters, gazes on ELVIRA, kneels, and attempts to kiss her hand; ELVIRA, awakened, rises and looks at him with indignation

Elv. Audacious! Whence is thy privilege to interrupt the few moments of repose my harassed mind can snatch amid the tumults of this noisy camp? Shall I inform thy master, Pizarro, of this presumptuous treachery?

Val. I am his servant, it is true—trusted by him—and I know him well; and therefore 'tis I ask, by what magic could Pizarro gain your heart? by what fatality still holds he your affection?

Elv. Hold! thou trusty secretary!

Val. Ignobly born! in mind and manners rude, ferocious, and unpolished, though cool and crafty if occasion need—in youth audacious—ill his first manhood—a licensed pirate—treating men as brutes, the world as booty; yet now the Spanish hero is he styled—the first of Spanish conquerors! and, for a warrior so accomplished, 'tis fit Elvira should leave her noble family, her fame, her home, to share the dangers, humours, and the crimes, of such a lover as Pizarro!

Elv. What! Valverde moralising! But grant I am in error, what is my incentive? Passion, infatuation, call it as you will; but what attaches thee to this despised, unworthy leader? Base lucre is thy object, mean fraud thy means. Could you gain me, you only hope to win a higher interest in Pizarro. I know you.

Val. On my soul, you wrong me! What else my faults, I have none towards you. But indulge the scorn and levity of your nature; do it while yet the time permits; the gloomy hour, I fear, too soon approaches.

Elv. Valverde a prophet too!

Val. Hear me, Elvira. Shame from his late defeat, and burning wishes for revenge, again have brought Pizarro to Peru; but trust me, he overrates his strength, nor measures well the foe. Encamped in a strange country, where terror cannot force, nor corruption buy a single

friend, what have we to hope? The army murmuring at increasing hardships, while Pizarro decorates with gaudy spoil the gay pavilion of his luxury, each day diminishes our force.

Elv. But are you not the heirs of those that fall?

Val. Are gain and plunder, then, our only purpose? Is this Elvira's heroism?

Elv. No, so save me Heaven! I abhor the motive, means, and end of your pursuits; but I will trust none of you. In your whole army there is not one of you that has a heart, or speaks ingenuously—aged Las-Casas, and he alone, excepted.

Val. He! an enthusiast in the opposite and worst extreme!

Elv. Oh! had I earlier known that virtuous man, how different might my lot have been!

Val. I will grant Pizarro could not then so easily have duped you: forgive me, but at that event I still must wonder.

Elv. Hear me, Valverde. When first my virgin fancy waked to love, Pizarro was my country's idol. Self-taught, self-raised, and self-supported, he became a hero; and I was formed to be won by glory and renown. 'Tis known that, when he left Panama in a slight vessel, his force was not a hundred men. Arrived at the island of Gallo, with his sword he drew a line upon the sands, and said, "Pass those who fear to die or conquer with their leader." Thirteen alone remained, and at the head of these the warrior stood his ground. Even at the moment when my ears first caught this tale, my heart exclaimed, "Pizarro is its lord!" What since I have perceived, or thought, or felt, you must have more worth to win the knowledge of.

Val. I press no further, still assured that, while Alonzo de Molina, our general's former friend and pupil, leads the enemy, Pizarro never more will be a conqueror.

[*Trumpets without*]

Elv. Silence! I hear him coming; look not perplexed. How mystery and fraud confound the countenance! Quick, put on an honest face, if thou canst.

Piz. [*Without.*] Chain and secure him; I will examine him myself.

Enter PIZARRO. VALVERDE bows—ELVIRA laughs

Piz. Why dost thou smile, Elvira?

Elv. To laugh or weep without a reason is one of the few privileges poor women have.

Piz. Elvira, I will know the cause, I am resolved!

Elv. I am glad of that, because I love resolution, and am resolved not to tell you. Now my resolution, I take it, is the better of the two, because it depends upon myself, and yours does not.

Piz. Psha! trifler!

Val. Elvira was laughing at my apprehensions that——

Piz. Apprehensions!

Val. Yes—that Alonzo's skill and genius should so have disciplined and informed the enemy as to——

Piz. Alonzo! the traitor! How I once loved that man! His noble mother intrusted him, a boy, to my protection. [*ELVIRA walks about pensively in the background.*] At my table did he feast—in my tent did he repose. I had marked his early genius, and the valorous spirit that grew with it. Often had I talked to him of our first adventures—what storms we struggled with—what perils we surmounted! When landed with a slender host upon an unknown land—then, when I told how famine and fatigue, discord and toil, day by day, did thin our ranks amid close-pressing enemies—how still undaunted I endured and dared—maintained my purpose and my power in despite of growing mutiny or bold revolt, till with my faithful few remaining I became at last victorious!—when, I say, of these things I spoke, the youth Alonzo, with tears of wonder and delight, would throw him on my neck, and swear his soul's ambition owned no other leader.

Val. What could subdue attachment so begun?

Piz. Las-Casas.—He it was, with fascinating craft and canting precepts of humanity, raised in Alonzo's mind a new enthusiasm, which forced him, as the stripling termed it, to forego his country's claims for those of human nature.

Val. Yes, the traitor left you and joined the Peruvians, and became thy enemy, and Spain's.

Piz. But first with weariless remonstrance he sued to win me from my purpose, and untwine the sword from my determined grasp. Much he spoke of right, of justice, and humanity, calling the Peruvians our innocent and unoffending brethren.

Val. They! Obdurate heathens! They our brethren!

Piz. But, when he found that the soft folly of the pleading tears he dropped upon my bosom fell on marble, he—

flew and joined the foe : then, profiting by the lessons he had gained in wronged Pizarro's school, the youth so disciplined and led his new allies, that soon he forced me—ha! I burn with shame and fury while I own it!—in base retreat and foul discomfiture to quit the shore.

Val. But the hour of revenge is come.

Piz. It is ; I am returned : my force is strengthened, and the audacious boy shall soon know that Pizarro lives, and has—a grateful recollection of the thanks he owes him.

Val. 'Tis doubted whether still Alonzo lives.

Piz. 'Tis certain that he does ; one of his armour-bearers is just made prisoner : twelve thousand is their force, as he reports, led by Alonzo and Peruvian Rolla. This day they make a solemn sacrifice on their ungodly altars. We must profit by their security, and attack them unprepared—the sacrificers shall become the victims.

Elv. Wretched innocents ! And their own blood shall bedew their altars !

Piz. Right !—[*Trumpets without.*] Elvira, retire !

Elv. Why should I retire ?

Piz. Because men are to meet here, and on manly business.

Elv. O men ! men ! ungrateful and perverse ! O woman ! still affectionate, though wronged ! [*VALVERDE retires back.*] The beings to whose eyes you turn for animation, hope, and rapture, through the days of mirth and revelry ; and on whose bosoms, in the hour of sore calamity, you seek for rest and consolation ; them, when the pompous follies of your mean ambition are the question, you treat as playthings or as slaves !—I shall not retire.

Piz. Remain then ; and, if thou canst, be silent.

Elv. They only babble who practise not reflection. I shall think—and thought is silence.

Piz. [*Aside.*] Ha ! there's somewhat in her manner lately—

[*Looks sternly and suspiciously at ELVIRA, who meets his glance with a commanding and unaltered eye*

Enter LAS-CASAS, ALMAGRO, GONZALO, DAVILLA, OFFICERS and SOLDIERS.—Trumpets without

Las-Cas. Pizarro, we attend thy summons.

Piz. Welcome, venerable father !—My friends, most welcome !—Friends and fellow soldiers, at length the hour is

arrived, which to Pizarro's hopes presents the full reward of our undaunted enterprise and long-enduring toils. Confident in security, this day the foe devotes to solemn sacrifice: if with bold surprise we strike on their solemnity—trust to your leader's word—we shall not fail.

Alm. Too long inactive have we been mouldering on the coast; our stores exhausted, and our soldiers murmuring. Battle! battle! then death to the armed, and chains for the defenceless.

Dav. Death to the whole Peruvian race!

Las-Cas. Merciful Heaven!

Alm. Yes, general, the attack, and instantly! Then shall Alonzo, basking at his ease, soon cease to scoff our sufferings, and scorn our force.

Las-Cas. Alonzo!—scorn and presumption are not in his nature.

Alm. 'Tis fit Las-Casas should defend his pupil.

Piz. Speak not of the traitor! or hear his name but as the bloody summons to assault and vengeance. It appears we are agreed?

Alm. Dav. We are.

Gon. All.—Battle! battle!

Las-Cas. Is, then, the dreadful measure of your cruelty not yet complete? Battle! gracious Heaven! against whom? Against a king, in whose mild bosom your atrocious injuries even yet have not excited hate! but who, insulted or victorious, still sues for peace. Against a people who never wronged the living being their Creator formed: a people who, children of innocence! received you as cherished guests with eager hospitality and confiding kindness. Generously and freely did they share with you their comforts, their treasures, and their home; you repaid them by fraud, oppression, and dishonour. These eyes have witnessed all I speak—as gods you were received; as fiends have you acted.

Piz. Las-Casas!

Las-Cas. Pizarro, hear me!—Hear me, chieftains!—And Thou, all powerful! whose thunders can shiver into sand the adamantine rock—whose lightnings can pierce to the core of the rived and quaking earth—oh! let Thy power give effect to Thy servant's words, as Thy spirit gives courage to his will!—Do not, I implore you, chieftains—countrymen—do not, I implore you, renew the foul barbarities which your insatiate avarice has inflicted on this

wretched, unoffending race!—But hush, my sighs!—fall not, drops of useless sorrow!—heart-breaking anguish, choke not my utterance!—All I entreat is, send me once more to those you call your enemies.—Oh! let me be the messenger of penitence from you; I shall return with blessings and with peace from them.—[Turning to ELVIRA.] Elvira, you weep!—Alas! and does this dreadful crisis move no heart but thine?

Alm. Because there are no women here but she and thou.

Piz. Close this idle war of words: time flies, and our opportunity will be lost. Chieftains, are ye for instant battle?

Alm. We are.

Las-Cas. Oh, men of blood!—[Kneels.] God! Thou hast anointed me Thy servant—not to curse, but to bless my countrymen: yet now my blessing on their force were blasphemy against Thy goodness.—[Rises.] No! I curse your purpose, homicides! I curse the bond of blood by which you are united. May fell division, infamy, and rout defeat your projects and rebuke your hopes! On you and on your children be the peril of the innocent blood which shall be shed this day! I leave you, and for ever! No longer shall these aged eyes be seared by the horrors they have witnessed. In caves, in forests, will I hide myself; with tigers and with savage beasts will I commune; and when at length we meet before the blessed tribunal of that Deity, whose mild doctrines and whose mercies ye have this day renounced, then shall you feel the agony and grief of soul which tear the bosom of your accuser now!

[Going

Elv. [Rises and takes the hand of LAS-CASAS.] Las-Casas! Oh, take me with thee, Las-Casas!

Las-Cas. Stay! lost, abused lady! I alone am useless here. Perhaps thy loveliness may persuade to pity, where reason and religion plead in vain. Oh! save thy innocent fellow-creatures if thou canst: then shall thy frailty be redeemed, and thou wilt share the mercy thou bestowest.

[Exit

Piz. How, Elvira! wouldst thou leave me?

Elv. I am bewildered, grown terrified! Your inhumanity—and that good Las-Casas—oh! he appeared to me just now something more than heavenly: and you! ye all looked worse than earthly.

Piz. Compassion sometimes becomes a beauty.

Elv. Humanity always becomes a conqueror.

Alm. Well! Heaven be praised, we are rid of the old moralist.

Gon. I hope he 'll join his preaching pupil, Alonzo.

Piz. [*Turning to ALMAGRO.*] Now to prepare our muster and our march. At midday is the hour of the sacrifice. [*ELVIRA sits.*] Consulting with our guides, the route of your divisions shall be given to each commander. If we surprise, we conquer; and, if we conquer, the gates of Quito will be open to us.

Alm. And Pizarro then be monarch of Peru.

Piz. Not so fast—ambition for a time must take counsel from discretion. Ataliba still must hold the shadow of a sceptre in his hand—Pizarro still appear dependent upon Spain: while the pledge of future peace, his daughter's hand, [*ELVIRA rises, much agitated,*] secures the proud succession to the crown I seek.

Alm. This is best. In Pizarro's plans observe the statesman's wisdom guides the warrior's valour.

Val. [*Aside to ELVIRA.*] You mark, Elvira?

Elv. Oh, yes—this is best—this is excellent!

Piz. You seem offended. Elvira still retains my heart. Think—a sceptre waves me on.

Elv. Offended?—no! Thou knowest thy glory is my idol; and this will be most glorious, most just and honourable.

Piz. What mean you?

Elv. Oh, nothing! mere woman's prattle—a jealous whim, perhaps: but let it not impede the royal hero's course.—[*Trumpets without.*] The call of arms invites you.—Away! away! you, his brave, his worthy fellow-warriors.

Piz. And go you not with me?

Elv. Undoubtedly! I needs must be first to hail the future monarch of Peru.

Enter GOMEZ

Alm. How, Gomez! what bringest thou?

Gom. On yonder hill, among the palm-trees, we have surprised an old cacique: escape by flight he could not, and we seized him and his attendant unresisting; yet his lips breathe nought but bitterness and scorn.

Piz. Drag him before us.—[*ELVIRA sits pensively. GOMEZ goes out and returns with OROZEMBO and Attendant, in chains, guarded.*] What art thou, stranger?

Oro. First tell me which among you is the captain of this band of robbers.

Piz. Ha!

Alm. Madman!—Tear out his tongue, or else——

Oro. Thou 'lt hear some truth.

Dav. [*Showing his poniard.*] Shall I not plunge this into his heart?

Oro. [*To PIZARRO.*] Does your army boast many such heroes as this?

Piz. Audacious! this insolence has sealed thy doom. Die thou shalt, grey-headed ruffian. But first confess what thou knowest.

Oro. I know that which thou hast just assured me of—that I shall die.

Piz. Less audacity perhaps might have preserved thy life.

Oro. My life is as a withered tree; it is not worth preserving.

Piz. Hear me, old man. Even now we march against the Peruvian army. We know there is a secret path that leads to your stronghold among the rocks; guide us to that, and name thy reward. If wealth be thy wish——

Oro. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Piz. Dost thou despise my offer?

Oro. Thee and thy offer! Wealth!—I have the wealth of two dear gallant sons—I have stored in heaven the riches which repay good actions here—and still my chiefest treasure do I bear about me.

Piz. What is that? inform me.

Oro. I will; for it never can be thine—the treasure of a pure, unsullied conscience.

[*ELVIRA sits, still paying marked attention to OROZEMBO*

Piz. I believe there is no other Peruvian who dares speak as thou dost.

Oro. Would I could believe there is no other Spaniard who dares act as thou dost!

Gom. Obdurate Pagan! How numerous is your army?

Oro. Count the leaves of yonder forest.

Alm. Which is the weakest part of your camp?

Oro. It has no weak part; on every side 'tis fortified by justice.