

A
HINT TO HUSBANDS.

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A
HINT TO HUSBANDS:

A COMEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS,

NOW PERFORMING AT THE

Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden.

By RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

LONDON:

Printed by Richard Taylor & Co.

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AND RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

1806.



TO THE READER.

THE favourable manner in which the Town was pleased to receive this Comedy, has encouraged me to commit it to the Press, and to lay it before the Reader divested of those aids, which were probably its best recommendation to the spectator.

In its pilgrimage to the Stage, it has encountered some adventures, which I could not relate with pleasure; and others, which I cannot consistently with gratitude pass over in silence.

It was written under the auspices of Mr. GRAHAM, and cast for the performers of Drury Lane Theatre. I clearly understood it to be positively accepted for immediate representation, till a short note from that gentleman informed me, "that a material change in the property of " Drury Lane Theatre had taken place, and that all " thoughts of my Comedy for the present season were " given up." As I knew not where to look for that *material change* to which Mr. GRAHAM alludes, I received it in silent submission as the pass-word for my discharge; and tendered my Play to Mr. HARRIS, in whose word there is *no change*. His candour disdained to find any motives for the rejection of my manuscript, except what his judgement might suggest upon the perusal of it; and when he had accepted it, I am certain that no precedent whatever could have tempted him to find a plea for returning it upon my hands.

For many of the defects, which I do not doubt that Mr. GRAHAM's sagacity discovered in my composition, the friendly zeal and judgement of Mr. HARRIS suggested remedies, and prescribed amendments. I therefore avail myself of this opportunity to mark my obligations to him, and pay to him my sincerest thanks,—not only because they are justly due, but because I think it a duty which I owe to my brethren of the Drama, to add my instance to the numbers upon record of the libe-

rality and honour of that gentleman, who has for so long a period conducted the interests of the Theatre he directs, with an unquestioned character for generosity to Authors and good faith in his engagements.

To the rehearsals of this Play Mr. KEMBLE, as Manager, paid an unremitting attention. To him, therefore, and to the Performers, I beg leave to return my most cordial acknowledgements.

I wrote the part of the Irishman expressly for Mr. JOHNSTONE of Drury Lane Theatre, whose abilities in that cast of acting are of unrivalled excellence. It was with difficulty that Mr. BLANCHARD could be persuaded to undertake a character so entirely new to him, and attempt a dialect to which he had never accustomed himself. I am therefore in a peculiar manner bound to pay my thanks to that modest and meritorious actor; and had our public papers vented all their spleen and ill-nature upon me, and spared him, there would have been less injustice in their dealings: for I am fair game, as a voluntary offender—He is not. I am going out of their reach, and shall soon receive my lasting respite from their ceaseless persecution. This, although I feel and suffer by as an author, I can overlook and pardon as a gentleman; because my heart assures me, that having written more for the Stage than any one of my nation ever did, I have constantly studied the propriety of that Stage, nor ever aimed to catch applause by those arts which are a disgrace to it.

I have been consistent in opposing myself to the eccentricities of the modern Drama. These diurnal Critics have professed to think with me, and combined to act against me: but there are understandings which they cannot influence; and times, to which I appeal, when they will be no longer remembered.

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

PROLOGUE,

Written by SIR JAMES BLAND BURGESS, *Bart.*

IF yet a play, by pageantry ungrac'd,
In its plain dress can suit the public taste,
Our bard, perhaps, may venture to appeal,
From those who only gaze, to those who feel.
Bred in the old and half-forgotten school,
He does not quite renounce the Drama's rule;
He boasts no pantomimic skill, nor tries
To make his audience hear him with their eyes:
Whilst Nature prompts, his moral scene imparts
And speaks some honest truths to British hearts.

The first, the noblest purpose of the Stage,
Is to reflect the manners of the age;
By fair example, folly to reclaim;
To guide the thoughtless, and the base to shame.
Experience proves, that many, who refuse
Cold Caution's precepts, listen to the Muse;
That many a heart, in Fashion's vortex caught,
By her to calm reflection has been brought.
If such success our Author should attend;
Should he instruction with amusement blend;
Should from his scene one thoughtless Husband learn
A Wife's neglected merit to discern;
Or, when temptation revels in his soul,
Derive an aid, rash passion to control;
Your gen'rous sanction will applaud his art,
Confirm'd, enhanc'd, by conscience and the heart.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LORD TRANSIT Mr. C. KEMBLE.
SIR CHARLES LE BRUN... Mr. H. JOHNSTON.
HEARTRIGHT..... Mr. POPE.
FAIRFORD Mr. FAWCETT.
GEORGE TREVOR..... Mr. BRUNTON.
PLIANT..... Mr. FARLEY.
SIR HARRY SUMNER. Mr. FIELD.
HARDIMAN Mr. JEFFERIES.
CODICIL..... Mr. EMERY.
CLERK to Fairford..... Mr. MENAGE.
DOGHERTY Mr. BLANCHARD.
COACHMAN Mr. ATKINS.

LADY TRANSIT Miss SMITH.
LADY LE BRUN..... Mrs. GLOVER.
RUTH Mrs. EMERY.

SERVANTS to Lord Transit and Sir Charles Le Brun.

A

HINT TO HUSBANDS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Library. LORD TRANSIT is discovered. He rises and advances.*

LORD TRANSIT.

SATED with guilty pleasures, which had sapp'd
My health, my fortune, and my peace of mind,
I took an humble unspoilt girl to wife ;
And here I hop'd with her, and with my books,
Which taste and education had endear'd,
To lead a calm, sequester'd, virtuous life ;
Her mind was ductile, and her genius seiz'd
With apt advantage what my lessons taught.
The task was charming : but I soon perceiv'd
It was the charm of novelty ; each day
Took something from it, every month impair'd,
A year extinguish'd it ; and now the world
Spreads all its gaudy colours in my view,
Whilst virtue, like a shadow, fades away.

A HINT TO HUSBANDS :

Lady Transit *enters*.

LADY TRANSIT.

May I come in? No answer—That means yes,
Does it not? Still no answer—That's consent
Seal'd with a double silence—Ah, my lord,
My dear Lord Transit, now your humble scholar
Is become gay and happy, you are silent,
Grave, and reserv'd. That is not as it shou'd be.

LORD TRANSIT.

Come, come, no trifling. You and I have pass'd
Some hours of late, which make it much too clear
That these fond levities are out of place.

LADY TRANSIT.

Oh, if you think you've set me up too high,
Pray take me down again—down to the ground—
I hope that reverence is profound enough.

[*Curtsies very low.*]

LORD TRANSIT.

You're spoilt, you're spoilt.—These mockeries disgust;
They don't become you.

LADY TRANSIT.

Nor do those cross looks,
And proud rebuffs, my lord, sit well on you,
Or any one that has a manly feeling
For a defenceless, unoffending woman.

LORD TRANSIT.

Go, go, I've done with you. I dreamt of happiness:
I have it not—I am a wretched man.

A COMEDY.

3

LADY TRANSIT.

You make yourself a wretched man, my lord.

LORD TRANSIT.

Yes, I am married—So far, it is true,
I am a wretched man of my own making.
And yet, take notice, I will own to faults;
Aye, faults by thousands, undomestic humours,
Wandering desires—

LADY TRANSIT.

Do I reproach you with them?

LORD TRANSIT.

No, no, not much; but tacitly enough
To make me urge this question on myself—
Why did I marry you? Can you resolve it?

LADY TRANSIT.

Nay, I can't tell,—unless it was in kindness,
To love me, to inform me of your pleasure,
And teach me how to please you.

LORD TRANSIT.

Either I
Have fail'd to teach, or you to learn, that art.
No more of this! You answer like a child.

LADY TRANSIT.

When you, my lord, forget to be a man,
'Tis well that I, with all a woman's feelings,
Can answer like a child. I have told you
What shou'd have been the motives for your marriage:
Now, if you're not asham'd of the confession,
You may inform me what those motives were.

A HINT TO HUSBANDS :

LORD TRANSIT.

You're lively, madam, and retort upon me ;
 And when the creature, I have rais'd, does that,
 This is my only answer—We must part—
 You must go to your father.

LADY TRANSIT.

Must, my lord !
 Who but the husband *must* maintain the wife
 While she is honest ? Must go to my father !

LORD TRANSIT.

Aye, madam, 'tis my pleasure.

LADY TRANSIT.

Hold, my lord :
 Your pleasure, that is absolute with me,
 May not be such with him. I would not wish you
 So to mistake my father, as to think him
 Less than your equal in the quickest sense
 Of any insult, that shall touch his honour.

LORD TRANSIT.

Oh, if he feels so finely, I must think
 To send him a right honourable daughter
 Is the best compliment that I can pay him.
 I took you as the veriest child of poverty ;
 I send you back appointed as my wife,
 Ennobled, and enrich'd. Of what can he,
 Or you, or any of your kin complain ?
 Farewell ! You'll be provided for your journey.

LADY TRANSIT.

Farewell, my lord ! I'm ready for my journey. [Exit.

LORD TRANSIT.

I do her wrong—by Heaven I do her wrong!
Well, well, well, well! I must not think about it.
The man, who hurries on as passion drives,
Must never put this question to his conscience,
Where am I going, or why go at all?—
Pass on, pass on; take your own way with me,
Dame Nature; on my conscience I believe
Where you lead one man right you puzzle thousands.
Where are my people? Here! who waits?

Dogherty enters.

DOGHERTY.

Myself.

What is your lordship's pleasure to be wanting?

LORD TRANSIT.

My pleasure does not centre in my wants;
Take that for granted. Let my chaise be ready.

DOGHERTY.

Oh, never fear the chaise; I'll answer for it;
I am not quite so sure about the horses.

LORD TRANSIT.

Sirrah, your quibbling sometimes may amuse,
Here it is out of place. Away, begone!

Servant enters.

SERVANT.

Your lordship's equipage is at the door.

[Exit Servant.]

DOGHERTY.

There now, he speaks as a good servant shou'd;
I'm but a quibbling blockhead, an old fool,
A worn-out piece of lumber—Throw me by :
I'm good for nothing.

LORD TRANSIT.

Listen, and don't talk,
I'm setting off for town :—when I am gone,
I shall keep no establishment at the castle.

DOGHERTY.

What will my lady do ?

LORD TRANSIT.

Go to her father.
I've order'd her away.

DOGHERTY.

What ! then 'tis clear
You will keep no establishment at the castle ;
For, by my faith, all that she don't take with her,
Will take themselves away.

LORD TRANSIT.

And you amongst them,
If your long service hangs so light upon you.
Go where you will, or go with her—I care not.

DOGHERTY.

With her, so please your lordship ; for I'm sure
That Heav'n's good providence will still be with her ;
And I shall be right glad to take my chance
For making one in such good company.

LORD TRANSIT.

I do believe you 've made the wiser choice.
The dye is cast—Commend me to your lady.

[*Exit.*]

DOGHERTY.

Commend you! Troth, there's little to commend
In or about you. You have had a taste
Of peace and purity; if that don't serve,
'Faith, you must e'en take up with dirty company,
And dirty dishes of the devil's providing.

Mrs. Ruth *enters.*

RUTH.

Oh Tim!

DOGHERTY.

Stop there,—Timotheus is my name,
Timotheus Dogherty—I would avoid
Too much familiarty with the wicked.

RUTH.

Do you call me the wicked? Give that name
To your own lord; he merits it most richly
For his base treatment of the best of ladies.
Ah! Mr. Dogherty, would you believe it?
He 'as turn'd her off, and sent her to her father.

DOGHERTY.

Yes, and there's one will send him to his father:
Make yourself sure of that.

RUTH.

Well, for my part,
The sooner we are out of this bad house
The better.

A HINT TO HUSBANDS:

DOGHERTY.

Right! it is an ugly house,
And, when your lady goes, the devil may enter:
I'll not be one to stop him.

RUTH.

So say I.

Would you were going with us—Wou'd you were!

DOGHERTY.

You're a good creature, are you not, to wish it?
Now I should guess, by the short time you spare
For conversation, you're extremely hurried.

RUTH.

Oh yes, I'm packing up my lady's things
As fast as possible.

DOGHERTY.

I see you are;

But at the pace you go 't will soon be done:
And when you've pack'd your lady, Mrs. Ruth,
Look out a tight portmanteau for my rags,
And thrust 'em in, d'ye mind me—neatly now
By neck and shoulders, as you do your own.

RUTH.

You're going with us?

DOGHERTY.

You may say all that.

RUTH.

Oh, I'm so happy—and so very busy—
And here's the coachman—He'll be bawling out

For trunks and handboxes, and all the while
I'm slaving, as you see, to get things ready.

[*Exit.*]

Coachman *enters.*

DOGHERTY.

So, honest Joe! you are like Mrs. Ruth,
Slaving and toiling to get all things ready
For your good lady's going.

COACHMAN.

Master Dogherty,

'Tis a foul job;—I say it, and don't care
Who hears me—and, what's more, I am the man
That will not eat the bread of any master
Who wrongs so good a lady.

DOGHERTY.

Why, that's honest.

But servants must not talk.

COACHMAN.

Well! they can feel.

DOGHERTY.

Why, so they can, and so can horses too :
Now recollect that, Joe, when next you drive.
Here comes my lady—Go, go, get you gone!

[*Exit Joe.*]

Lady Transit *enters.*

LADY TRANSIT.

So, friend! it seems that you and I must part.

DOGHERTY.

Not so—I'm going by my lord's commands

To pay my duty to you at your father's ;
And, as I know no one step of the road,
I'm thinking, after all, that to go with you
Will be the readiest way to meet you there.

LADY TRANSIT.

Did my Lord Transit recommend this to you ?

DOGHERTY.

Yes ; and what's more, I recommended it
To my own self. That makes the business easy.

LADY TRANSIT.

My lord is kind in sparing me a servant
Of such tried honesty.

DOGHERTY.

I have all that.
A willing mind—I boast of nothing else.

LADY TRANSIT.

You will repent of it. My father's house
Is not like this great castle.

DOGHERTY.

I believe it :
Less in its bulk, but bigger in content.

LADY TRANSIT.

Make yourself ready for the journey then—
With my lord's leave I do accept your service.

DOGHERTY.

Oh then, I'll go and saddle old blind Bob ;
He never starts, he only tumbles down.

All our hacks else do both. I despise pomp;
And study nothing but my ease and safety.

[*Exit.*

Servant enters.

SERVANT.

Sir Charles Le Brun, to wait upon your ladyship.

LADY TRANSIT.

Sir Charles must pardon me—I see no visitors.

SERVANT.

He bade me say he had a message for you
Of much importance.

LADY TRANSIT.

From my lord, perhaps.

Admit Sir Charles.

[*Exit Servant.*

A high-flown gentleman,
Blest with the most high-flying wife in England.

Sir Charles Le Brun enters.

SIR CHARLES.

Ah, I was sure my goddess would not turn
The humblest of her votaries from her door.

LADY TRANSIT.

Well, you are not turn'd from my door, you see.
Now, then, lay by your stilts, and tell me plainly,
As suits an humble mortal, and no goddess,
What is your business. Have you any message
From my lord to me?

SIR CHARLES.

Oh! don't name him to me.
Transit has lost me quite. I can't speak of him

With common patience. What! forsake an angel,
The brightest effort of creative nature!
Why, Paradise could not content that fellow.

LADY TRANSIT.

Come, come, your business.

SIR CHARLES.

What I hear is shocking.
You're going to your father.

LADY TRANSIT.

Does that shock you?

SIR CHARLES.

Unspeakably—the very surest course
To slur the credit of the purest fame.
A father's house is, in the world's construction,
The last sad refuge for a ruin'd daughter.
If you fly thither, either you must prove
In public court your husband's brutal treatment,
Or else submit, and leave the world to put
Their own interpretation on the measure—
Which Heaven forbid!

LADY TRANSIT.

It may be as you state;
But I have not another friend on earth,
To whom I can resort.

SIR CHARLES.

Ah! say not so!
You have a friend, a tender, feeling friend,
Pure, spotless as yourself. She sends me to you;

She begs you, as you prize your fame, to make
Her house, her heart, her honour, your asylum.

LADY TRANSIT.

And she is—who?

SIR CHARLES.

My wife.

LADY TRANSIT.

Lady Le Brun!

Nay now, my good Sir Charles, you must excuse me,
You certainly say this by way of jest;
I'm sure you do. I hardly know your lady
To curtsy to her. Recollect withal,
How should your lady, who is now in Town,
Know an event, which only came to pass
Within this hour?

SIR CHARLES.

Why, that's a natural question:
It struck me you would ask it.

LADY TRANSIT.

I dare say—
It don't strike me that you will answer it.

SIR CHARLES.

Have patience, goddess! I foresaw your danger,
And I appris'd my wife.

LADY TRANSIT.

Did you? It shows
How cautiously you guard my reputation:
And how munificent! to make your house
A hospital for unprotected wives,

And be the keeper of their consciences—
Heavens! what a blest assembly will that be!
Of rival goddesses, and you the Paris
To keep us all in humour!

SIR CHARLES.

Nay, but hear me!
If you turn friendship into jest, I've done.
That any man can be insensible
To Lady Transit's charms, is out of nature:
If I should boast myself to be that man,
It were a lying boast.—My greatest pride
Will be, to guard those charms that I admire,
And, by convincing a censorious world
That you are not less virtuous than fair,
Bar those suspicions that may else attach
To your unsullied fame.

LADY TRANSIT.

I rather doubt,
My good Sir Charles, if you are quite the man
For such an office.

SIR CHARLES.

Can you doubt my honour?

LADY TRANSIT.

Oh, not your honour—nobody doubts that—
But very many people would doubt mine,
If I should make that transfer of myself
Which you advise. But let me see your orders—
Show me your lady's letter.

SIR CHARLES.

Be content :

I have it not about me.

LADY TRANSIT.

Search your pockets.

SIR CHARLES.

I never carry letters in my pockets.

LADY TRANSIT.

Oh yes, on such occasions, when you come
Express on a commission, you would bring it.

SIR CHARLES.

Now why should you desire to see a letter
Which 'tis so natural for a man to burn
As soon as he has read it ?—A mere start
Of fond effusion from a doting wife
To a devoted husband.

LADY TRANSIT.

Ah, that 's true,

That's very true:—You are so fond a husband,
And your dear lady such a darling wife ;—
Upon my word, Sir Charles, I will not be
Your goddess any longer—not, at least,
Your household goddess. There you must excuse me;
And so, good morning ! When I see your lady
I'll pay my thanks to her. [Exit.

SIR CHARLES.

The vengeance ! will you ?
That will be perfectly mal-à-propos.

Confound her cunning! she has found me out:
She's not that soft submissive thing I thought her.
Transit, methinks, may have some other cause
Than mere caprice for acting as he does;
Therefore, I'll not despair, but still pursue:—
For where the husband's harsh neglect is felt
The lover's assiduity may triumph. [Exit.

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

Servant enters followed by TREVOR.

SERVANT.

My lady, sir, can see no company.

TREVOR.

I am no company—I am her cousin;
Her father's nephew.

SERVANT.

May I beg your name?

TREVOR.

My name is Trevor.

SERVANT.

Here my lady comes.

[Exit Servant.

Lady Transit enters.

LADY TRANSIT.

Ah! is it you? Why do you stand aloof?

Give me your hand, George! We have been old
friends

And play-fellows.—Don't think I can forget you!

TREVOR.

Oh! had I found that lovely nature chang'd—
Had you received me haughtily, I think
It would have broke my heart.

LADY TRANSIT.

Why shou'd you doubt me?
But I am all impatience for your news.
Is my dear father well?

TREVOR.

In health most perfect,
In manner not less rugged than he was.

LADY TRANSIT.

Well, well, we know his humour, and his heart.

TREVOR.

I have a letter from him to your lord;
I think I cross'd upon him at the door.

LADY TRANSIT.

'Twas not my lord: it was Sir Charles Le Brun.

TREVOR.

I'm glad I pass'd him. Where shall I deliver
This packet I am charg'd with?

LADY TRANSIT.

Give it me.

My lord is not at home. Do you suppose
That I may read it?

TREVOR.

I am sure you may.

A HINT TO HUSBANDS:

LADY TRANSIT.

'Tis not my father's hand.

TREVOR.

His lawyer wrote it ;
He set his name to it. So, that's enough.
Read, read it ! The contents will not displease you.

LADY TRANSIT.

[reads] " My Lord !—A considerable property
" having fallen to me unexpectedly, I must desire
" you will permit my daughter to come to me in
" London without delay, having business to adjust,
" in which she, as my only child, is materially inte-
" rested.—I am, my Lord, your very humble servant,

" PHILIP FAIRFORD.

P. S. " I have sent my nephew with this letter,
" who will conduct her to my house in the City."

TREVOR.

Yes ; that's all true : it is a princely fortune.
Old Gallishoff, the Russian merchant, will'd it
To your good father—and your father earn'd it ;
Got him a world of money ; made four voyages
To Russia—I was with him on the last.
You married in his absence—I must tell you
It did not please him ; but you'll find a pardon.

LADY TRANSIT.

When such good fortune falls upon my family
I must not murmur.

TREVOR.

Rather say you will not ;

And true it is, you need not ; for I trace
The fountains of affliction in those eyes,
Whose mute expression words could never mend.
Ah, my Louisa !—let me still address you
By that dear name—I know you are unhappy.

LADY TRANSIT.

How can you know that ? Since I was a wife
We've never met.

TREVOR.

Think not, because I'm banish'd
From these proud doors, which have denied access
E'en to your father, that no voice hath told
A tale of secret sorrows in my ear :
Yes ; I have heard them—felt them.

LADY TRANSIT.

Stop, my friend :

If I have sorrows, they shall be my own ;
If I am arm'd in innocence, and clear
And bold in conscience, I want no defender.

TREVOR.

Well, if that day shall come, and I am living,
You will remember that there is a creature
Who lov'd you as a brother ;—how much better
Is not for me to say.

LADY TRANSIT.

Doubt me not, George !

'Tis not a title can estrange my mind
From its remembrance of those happy days,
When kindred nature twin'd our hearts together.

But 'tis not now of moment to look back
 And dwell on scenes like these. I must depart.
 My lord's command confirms my father's call ;
 I scarce can bid you welcome to the castle ;
 So instant we must be upon our journey.

TREVOR.

I may attend upon you——?

LADY TRANSIT.

Oh, no doubt ;
 My father sent you hither for that purpose :
 You'll be my sole companion ; I shall take
 No equipage of Lord Transit's, and one servant
 Of either sex ; no more.

TREVOR.

Can you be serious ?
 This is not going as becomes your rank.

LADY TRANSIT.

If it becomes my duty so to go,
 I'll ask no leave of rank, but go without it ;
 And when you find me slighted and forsaken
 By him whose wife I am, make no appeal,
 But let him go, till conscience in his heart
 Shall fix that hook by which to draw him back
 To his domestic peace ; for sure the fruits
 Of virtue are not of that tasteless sort,
 That the pall'd appetite should feel disgust
 At her pure regimen, and turn aside
 To snatch at pleasures, by experience found
 Productive only of remorse and shame. [*Exeunt.*]

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*London.—An apartment in Lord Transit's house.*

Lord Transit, Pliant, Sir Harry Sumner, and Hardiman. Heartright follows, sits down to a table in the back scene, takes up a newspaper and reads,

PLIANT.

YOUR lordship comes amongst us in good time ;
A little more philosophy had marr'd you.

LORD TRANSIT.

Well, spare your raillery—it is confest
We country-people do but crawl through life :
The world, I see, gallops apace with you ;
'Tis a free tit, my masters, and you ride
As if you meant to make it a short race.

PLIANT.

Yes, we go off at score, and trust to bottom,

LORD TRANSIT.

You're men of penetration, I perceive,
And calculate most truly of yourselves.
You are not of the sort that carry weight ;
Mere feathers in the scale.

PLIANT.

We have no wives ;
We don't ride double, as your lordship does.

SIR HARRY.

Come, Pliant, Pliant, you have got your charge ;
Keep your pan down, nor let your priming flash.

LORD TRANSIT.

Oh ! stop him not.—He is exceeding pleasant ;
There is much argument in his discourse ;
For what escapes so fast as pleasure does ?
And wou'd not you, who chase it, be thrown out,
If you pull'd up for breath ?

PLIANT.

Truly, my lord,
We do not often stop to moralise,
And make profound remarks upon the practice
Of other men, as you make upon ours.

LORD TRANSIT.

It speaks well for your candour, worthy sir ;
And by the same rule I must plead my humour
For having married, though you all prefer
A life of singleness and liberty.

SIR HARRY.

Come, gentlemen, we'll drop these disquisitions.

HEARTRIGHT.

And you'll do well ; for you have much more wine
Than wisdom in your heads.

[sitting at the table.]

SIR HARRY.

And now, my lord,
What kind of neighbours have you in the Country?

LORD TRANSIT.

But few, Sir Harry; and of those, perhaps,
The only man you know is Charles Le Brun.

PLIANT.

He is a damn'd honest fellow.

LORD TRANSIT.

I shou'd doubt
If he has honesty enough to damn him.

PLIANT.

You can speak well of no man.

LORD TRANSIT.

Yes, of him:

For, with your leave, I hold it worth some praise
"To affect a virtue, though you have it not."
That merit I allow him.

PLIANT.

He's my friend.

LORD TRANSIT.

Well, if you choose your friend shou'd be a saint,
He can be one, whene'er it suits his purpose.
I hope that satisfies you, Mr. Pliant.

PLIANT.

Not at all satisfies me, not at all:
I must insist upon it with my lord,
My friend Sir Charles Le Brun shall have all dues,

Rights and prerogatives, pertaining to him,
 That he's no saint, that he has not a virtue,
 But all those graceful eccentricities,
 Those high-bred aberrations from decorum,
 That sit so well upon a fort-esprit,
 And (what I style him) a damn'd honest fellow.

HARDIMAN.

Come, pr'ythee, Pliant, let us have no more.
 Sir Harry, let us wish my lord good night.

LORD TRANSIT.

Who waits? Attend upon the gentlemen.

PLIANT.

I satisfied! I'm any thing but that.

[*Exeunt Pliant, Sir Harry, and Hardiman.—*
Manent Lord Transit and Heartright. Heart-
right rises and speaks.

HEARTRIGHT.

So! these are the agreeable companions
 For whose society you have renounc'd
 Tedious tranquillity, and those dull virtues
 That want the zest of vice to recommend them.
 I think this specimen may be enough
 To recreate your genius with a taste
 Of those soft pleasures which this Town supplies.

LORD TRANSIT.

I see you hold by your old humour still;
 Bitter and blunt as ever.

HEARTRIGHT.

Yes: I see

No cause to sweeten my morality
To the pall'd palate of a libertine.
For you, my lord, whom I have train'd at school,
At university, abroad, at home,
Ever your friend, I'm not dispos'd to smooth
My bluntness down to such a silvery edge
As cannot penetrate the steel, in which
That heart is cas'd, which can revolt from virtue
When all her blessings were shower'd down upon you.

LORD TRANSIT.

What have I done, that like a chidden boy
You school me at this rate; which when I bear,
You are beholden to your age?

HEARTRIGHT.

My age!

If you can say I have no other claim
Upon your patience, let your anger loose—
I fear it not.

LORD TRANSIT.

Hold, hold—I do remember
That the last words my dying father spoke
Bequeath'd me to your friendship, to your care.
Give me your pardon—I am calm.

HEARTRIGHT.

Enough!

You have dismiss'd your wife.—That is a deed,
Which if you cannot justify by fact,

No sophistry can palliate. What induc'd you
So to disgrace the woman of your choice ?

LORD TRANSIT.

Unless I cou'd lay open to your sight
The movements of my heart, I cou'd not answer
Why, for no crime committed on her part,
No fault, no failing, I dismiss'd my wife.
But as the sailor sickens in the calm,
So did the tame serenity, in which
I liv'd, deprive my spirits of their spring,
And made me sigh for change.

HEARTRIGHT.

And what a change!
Lady Le Brun, for instance—Gracious Heaven,
Cou'd such a change as that be worth a sigh ?

LORD TRANSIT.

It costs me many.

HEARTRIGHT.

It will cost you more.
Go on, go on.

LORD TRANSIT.

I see you know my weakness.

HEARTRIGHT.

Consult those casuists who have just now left you ;
They'll find a salvo to excuse your weakness.

LORD TRANSIT.

Hang 'em, dull rascals !

HEARTRIGHT.

Well! I grant 'em rascals:

Yet are they the prime spirits of the time,
Whom the men copy, and the women court.
To undermine the virgin's chastity,
The parent's peace, the wife's fidelity,
The husband's honour—These are modern arts,
Events too trivial to create surprise,
And crimes too common to extort a blush.

LORD TRANSIT.

My conscience hardly will subscribe to that.

HEARTRIGHT.

Hardly, I grant; for you have made of late
A kind of cautionary truce with Virtue,
Which tho' you've cancell'd, still your nature feels
Some small repugnance to be all at once
The monster that such wickedness will make you.
But Vice, when once admitted to the heart,
Soon grows familiar, talks reflection down,
And from a rubric of her own can quote
Lessons, to teach that passion is a plea
For every crime that can defile the soul.

[Exit.

LORD TRANSIT.

I cannot bear his lectures. They disturb me.
His graceless manner mars his good intent,
And checks, not turns me; puzzles, not persuades.

[Exit.

A HINT TO HUSBANDS:

SCENE II.—*A street.*

Pliant *meeting* Sir Charles Le Brun.

PLIANT.

Oh, by Olympian Jove, I'm charm'd to see you!
Where are you going?

SIR CHARLES.

What is that to you?
You're tipsy, my gay fellow.

PLIANT.

Well, I'm tipsy;
That's granted.—What do you infer from that?
Wine mends the memory; props the body up
When the legs flinch their duty; makes the heart
Beat a quick march upon the ribs, and scares
Blue devils off—that, else, would come at night
In shape of owls, and hoot us into megrims.
Wine gives us courage to defend our friends;
And that I've done for you.

SIR CHARLES.

Who has assail'd me?

PLIANT.

Oh, as for that, leave me to tell you who.
You have been rattled off at no allowance;
Lord Transit is your man.

SIR CHARLES.

Hold! say no more:
My house is close at hand—We are too public—
This way, and recollect yourself the whilst.

PLIANT.

Give me your arm ! So ! that helps recollection.
How is your beauteous lady ?

SIR CHARLES.

What of her ?

PLIANT.

By the nectareous gods, we pledg'd her health
In brimmers of rich Burgundy, my boy !

SIR CHARLES.

Did my Lord Transit put that toast about ?

PLIANT.

Did he ? He did ; and merrily it went,
For no man stopp'd the bottle. Heh ! what ails you ?
Ah, baronet, if you would start a quarrel
With every man that shall admire your wife,
You may turn out with thousands.

SIR CHARLES.

Come, this gabble

Rouses no curiosity in me ;

I must hear graver matters—Come along !

[*Exeunt.*]SCENE III.—*A room in Fairford's house.*

Trevor and Lady Transit.

TREVOR.

And now, my noble cousin, welcome home.

LADY TRANSIT.

I've been a sad companion to you, George.

TREVOR.

Not so, not so. Your patience was so lovely,
I am convinc'd it is a female virtue,
Which I can never learn.

LADY TRANSIT.

'Tis, as you say,
A female virtue, for it springs from fear
And awful dread of man's superior power;
Ev'n now I tremble to approach my father.

TREVOR.

Why shou'd you tremble? Tho' he may come down
As fierce upon you as a hungry bear,
You know his nature.—Hark, I hear him coming!
Courage, sweet cousin! meet him without fear.

[Exit.

Fairford speaks as he is entering.

FAIRFORD.

Where is this child, this disobedient child?
Come hither, hussey! You, my Lady Transit,
Down on your knees, and ask your father's pardon.
(*She is about to kneel.*)

Hold! you sha'n't kneel to me—Take notice, child,
Though I embrace, and press you to my heart,
'Tis not a certain proof that I forgive you.
No, no; nor are these tears a mark of fondness—
'Tis fury, anger, rage, that wring them from me—
Are you not frightened?

LADY TRANSIT.

No, my dearest father.
What can I fear from you, whose heart o'erflows

With human kindness, not alone to me
Your grateful daughter, but to all the world?

FAIRFORD.

You're wrong, you're wrong. It is not so. I'm
chang'd:

I've a new nature. Not one spark of pity
Lives in my heart; 'tis frozen.

LADY TRANSIT.

Can it freeze
And melt at the same time?

FAIRFORD.

How dar'd you marry
Without my leave?

LADY TRANSIT.

You were in Russia, sir.
My mother gave consent.

FAIRFORD.

Your mother! Yes—
Your mother—Ah, she's gone; she is no more.
Fierce, unforgiving as I am by nature,
I will not speak of her, but as of one
Who had the goodness of an angel in her,
And now is gone where angels will receive her.
In her 'twas a mistake;—in you a sin.

LADY TRANSIT.

I never sinn'd against you in my heart:
Heav'n knows I never did.

FAIRFORD.

Come, don't tell me—

Your eye was caught with colours, and you took
 A painted pheasant for your tawdry mate,
 When you had match'd yourself, with better hopes
 Of lasting comfort, with an honest equal.
 And where's this lord of yours? No matter where;
 No matter where he is. I've nothing for him;
 No, not a shilling, though I'm monstrous rich,
 Rich to a surfeit:—I'll have no concern
 With lords or ladies—I'll repair no castles,
 Buttress no broken fortunes—I'll endow
 And build an alms-house.

LADY TRANSIT.

Ah! I now perceive
 The reason why you call'd me up to Town;
 I am to lay the first stone of your alms-house.
 Your letter to my lord is now explain'd.

FAIRFORD.

I wrote no letter. 'Twas a fool that wrote it.

LADY TRANSIT.

He was no fool that sign'd it.

FAIRFORD.

Hold your tongue.
 Perhaps some little trifle I may give you
 To answer your expenses on the road,
 Because I'll take no favour from your lord.
 Here, here! You'll never have a farthing more.
(Gives her a packet of bank bills.)

LADY TRANSIT.

And if I never have, 'tis great, 'tis noble.—
Oh, my too generous, too indulgent father,
How can I merit this excess of goodness,
This unexampled bounty?—'Tis too much!

FAIRFORD.

I give thee nothing as Lord Transit's wife;
To him or his I would not deal out bread;
But to my darling child, to the dear image
Of her blest mother, I will give my heart,
My life, my all—For thee alone I live,
For thee, my child!

*[He embraces her, holds her in his arms for a time,
then breaks from her, and speaks:]*

There! now you've made me angry—
Leave me! I will not hear another word.

LADY TRANSIT.

Heav'n in its providence protect my father!

[Exit,

FAIRFORD.

Poor thing, poor thing! That lord has us'd her ill,
I know he has—Oh! had she but been happy,
And proud, and prosperous, I had shut my heart
As hard against her, and as icy cold
As the warp'd Neva, when the fur-clad Russ
Sleds o'er its glassy surface:—but to tread
The humbled and afflicted spirit down
Is cruelty of so sublime a pitch,
My nature is not quite prepar'd to reach it,

Tim. Dogherty *enters to* Mr. Fairford.

DOGHERTY.

The blessing be about you, worthy sir,
And long life to enjoy the goodly fortune
That tumbles in upon you, so commodious!
Troth, 'tis a lucky chance, when rascals scramble,
If honest men get any of the booty.

FAIRFORD.

To whom am I indebted for this greeting?
I do not recollect you.

DOGHERTY.

That may be,
Seeing I've been a lodger forty years.
In yonder castle, where you've never been.

FAIRFORD.

What castle do you speak of?

DOGHERTY.

Ah, what castle?

Why, that big house, where your sweet daughter
dwelt,

Blessing and blest by all, inside and out.
Troth, you did well, when you had her, to stop;
You hardly would have father'd such another
Out of a hundred, if the Lord had sent them.

FAIRFORD.

You're an odd fellow—but I now perceive
You are my lord's domestic.

DOGHERTY.

Not at all.

I'm not domestic with him. I belong

To your sweet daughter—Ah, there's nothing like
her,
I tell you so in plainness—and moreover,
I'm proud to let you know your own good name
Is up among your people.

FAIRFORD.

Pooh! my people!

What do they know of me?

DOGHERTY.

I'll tell you what.

They know you for a crabbed shell without,
But sound at heart, and wholesome.

FAIRFORD.

Who believes them?

DOGHERTY.

Whugh! who believes them! Take your own course
then;

And if you think they speak too well of you,
Turn 'em away, and get another set
To know you better, and to praise you less.

FAIRFORD.

You've got your nation's nimble wits, I see,
And dare say you could make up a good story
For your own lord.

DOGHERTY.

My nation you may know,
But me you do not. I don't deal in stories,
And when I can't speak well, can hold my tongue;
Therefore, when you are nam'd, I shall be silent.

A HINT TO HUSBANDS:

FAIRFORD.

Give me your hand! You and I must be friends.

A Clerk enters.

CLERK.

A gentleman attends, whose name is Heartright.

FAIRFORD.

What is his business? I know no such person.

CLERK.

I think he is an agent of Lord Transit,
And comes about the interest of your mortgage
Upon that lord's estate.

FAIRFORD.

Well, let him pay it,
And go about his business.

DOGHERTY.

Why, he comes
About his business; can he come and go
At the same moment? Ah, now, if you knew
This worthy Mr. Heartright, as I know him,
You'd throw your two fond arms about his neck,
And hug him as your daughter's dearest friend.
A better man don't breathe the breath of life;
And would you have an honest gentleman trot
From Hyde-Park Corner clear to Wellclose-Square,
Only to see the outside of your house?

FAIRFORD.

Well, get you gone. I can't be angry with you.
Tell Mr. Heartright I'll be glad to see him.

[Exit Clerk.]

DOGHERTY.

Why, now you answer like a British merchant.
If you drive on a trade with all the world,
Why, you must be at home to all the world.
[Exit.

Heartright *enters*.

HEARTRIGHT.

Your clerk has kept me waiting a good while :
Perhaps I come unwelcome ?

FAIRFORD.

By no means.

HEARTRIGHT.

I understand, old Gallishoff is dead :
My business was with him about a mortgage,
The interest of which is over-due
From the Lord Transit.

FAIRFORD.

Have you brought the money ?

HEARTRIGHT.

Truly, I have not : and my lord requests
From the executors a little patience.

FAIRFORD.

I'm the executor.

HEARTRIGHT.

Well, if you are,
You are the very man to do our business,
If you have but the patience that we want.

FAIRFORD.

I'm not dispos'd to accommodate your friend.

HEARTRIGHT.

I guess'd as much—If I had brought the cash,
Perhaps your patience would have serv'd to count it.
You must foreclose.

FAIRFORD.

Perhaps I sha'n't do that.
Lord Transit has enough, with management ;
But nothing is enough for dissipation.

HEARTRIGHT.

You're right. It play'd him but an ugly trick,
When dissipation laid him at your mercy.

FAIRFORD.

I like your plainness. You may know your lord,
But me you do not know.

HEARTRIGHT.

Nor do you know
The lady of my lord—Else you would know,
Though dissipation reign'd before her time,
She brought good order.

FAIRFORD.

Pooh ! she brought no fortune.

HEARTRIGHT.

True ; in your sense of fortune, she brought nothing :
In my sense, every thing that's rich and precious ;
Virtues above all price ; and charms, that wealth
Tenfold what you inherit could not purchase.

FAIRFORD.

You're warm in her applause.

HEARTRIGHT.

Because I know her.

FAIRFORD.

I know her too ; and do not only pardon,
But thank you for your warmth. I pray excuse me
For a few moments. I will soon return. [*Exit.*]

HEARTRIGHT.

Something has greatly mov'd him, I perceive—
There is a feeling heart in that rough case ;
Therefore, by sympathy of soul I'm bound
To bear with his coarse manners. I forgot
To inform me of his name—What do I see ?
My dear, my honour'd lady ! How is this ?

Fairford returns with Lady Transit.

LADY TRANSIT.

Even as you see, my good and worthy friend !
Give me your hand, and let me introduce you
To my beloved father.

HEARTRIGHT.

Hah ! your father !

[*They embrace.*]

LADY TRANSIT.

Yes ; take him, sir, and wear him in your heart,
As I in mine.—He merits your esteem.

[*to her father.*]

FAIRFORD.

When you bestow'd such praises on my daughter,
I was resolv'd to bring her face to face,
And shame you for your flattery. Had you seen her,
As when I left her, in the prime of youth
And virgin bloom of beauty, then indeed
You might have truly said, no wealth could reach
The worth of charms like hers. I thought so too—

And now behold a base injurious lord,
 A titled tyrant, first despoils those charms
 Of their pure lustre, and then turns away
 To whet his sated appetite afresh
 With profligate incitements.

LADY TRANSIT.

Hold, my father!
 Spare him, spare me, devoutly I implore,
 And take good heed you do not urge too far
 This aggravated charge beyond the bounds
 Of justice, truth, or mercy. Hear him first
 Before you strike so deep; examine well
 How far, though innocent of purpos'd ill,
 I, your own daughter, may have brought upon me
 The loss of his affections, from my want
 Of grace and judgment how to keep alive
 And fan that passion I had once inspir'd.
 Ah, sir, there's much allowance to be made
 For human errors—Who can else abide it?

HEARTRIGHT.

There, there is patience in its fairest form!
 Put out your hand, and reach it. Who would keep
 So sweet an inmate in his family,
 And make no court to gain it?

FAIRFORD.

Who but you
 Would doubt my patience, when it stands the trial
 Of your rough sparring buffets? But I see
 You drive in your philanthropy head downwards;
 A clumsy workman: but as I am sure

Your zeal is honest, and your love sincere
For genuine virtue,—here ! I leave her with you.

[*Takes his daughter's hand, gives it to Heart-
right, and goes out.*]

Manent Lady Transit and Heartright.

LADY TRANSIT.

I'm glad we are alone. Oh sir ! my friend,
The friend of my lost lord ; I don't accuse him.
I pray you still to love him, to protect him,
To guard him with your counsel—There is need.
I only call Heav'n's truth to witness for me,
That nor in deed, nor word, nor meditation
Have I, unless in ignorance, giv'n him cause
To treat me thus unkindly.

HEARTRIGHT.

I believe you :

Nay, he himself acquits you.

LADY TRANSIT.

You have seen him ?—

HEARTRIGHT.

I have.

LADY TRANSIT.

Then there is hope—for him, I mean.
For me, my only wish is to enjoy
That triumph, that revenge, which mercy feels
When it redeems and pardons an offender.
I know my lord, just now, is bare of money ;
And this new course of life may plunge him deeper,
And drive him upon desperate resources.
I cannot bear the thought. I brought him nothing :

A HINT TO HUSBANDS:

My father's bounty now has made me rich;
Take him this money.

HEARTRIGHT.

What should I do with it?

LADY TRANSIT.

Tell him you've found an easy creditor;
Yourself, for instance—

HEARTRIGHT.

That will never pass.

LADY TRANSIT.

Nothing so easy—Let him only find
His wants supplied, he'll not be over curious
To know from whom the obligation springs.

HEARTRIGHT.

If you supply his wants, you feed his wishes,
And they are in no worthy train, believe me.

LADY TRANSIT.

I fear they are not; but he is no gamester.

HEARTRIGHT.

Lady Le Brun is.

LADY TRANSIT.

There! ah, there indeed
You probe the wound, that rankles in his heart
Unheal'd, untented!—There you sound the depth
Of my profound affliction! Hear me, now!
I am resolv'd to see this dangerous fair one
So fatal to my peace. I shall not play
The clamorous Statira with my rival;
Therefore mistake me not.—Sir Charles Le Brun
Upon my lord's departure found admission,
And had, or feign'd, a letter from his lady

To tender the asylum of her house.
This is the plea for my intended visit.

HEARTRIGHT.

Are you determin'd on this rash adventure?

LADY TRANSIT.

Not to be mov'd.

HEARTRIGHT.

Then I will bear your message;
For better 't were for both, that you should meet
Prepar'd for the occasion. Ah, dear lady!
You take much pains for an unhappy man,
Who is environ'd by a set of wretches
Whose swords are at his throat, and push him on
To ruin, to perdition.

LADY TRANSIT.

Save him then;
For Heav'n's sweet sake redeem him; bid him fly
The snares of that fair syren; set before him
The horrors of his crime, the avenging sword
Of an insulted husband.—'Tis an act
Blessed for ever, that now calls upon you.

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the Second Act.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An elegant apartment.*Lord Transit *and* Lady Le Brun.

LADY LE BRUN.

LET go my hand, Lord Transit! Don't be tiresome.
I tell you, once for all, I will be drawn
Into no ambushes, no holes and corners.

LORD TRANSIT.

Stop here, then.—Here is room for all your virtue.

LADY LE BRUN.

Keep yours, then, at its proper distance from it,
For I suspect they are scarce cater-cousins.

LORD TRANSIT.

Lady Le Brun, by heavens it makes me mad
To see a woman, born to be the charm
Of all mankind, devote herself so wholly
To a vile crew of gambling sharks and tabbies,
As if you had no soul but in your cards!

LADY LE BRUN.

Perhaps I do not wish to charm mankind.
The most immediate jewel of my soul
Is reputation. Now, then, you are answer'd,
And in your own heroic style, methinks.

LORD TRANSIT.

Well, madam, I don't want to steal your jewels.
Cards are more likely to purloin that treasure
Than I am.

LADY LE BRUN.

I have heard enough of cards.
What else have you to say?

LORD TRANSIT.

You gave me hopes
That you would let me see Sir Charles's letter.

LADY LE BRUN.

Oh! aye; his letter about Lady Transit.—
How can that int'rest you? You have dismiss'd
That speculation, and are come to Town,
In hopes to find that London husbands care
As little for their wives as you for yours.

LORD TRANSIT.

You are sarcastic, madam.

LADY LE BRUN.

No; I think
You have endur'd your matrimonial spell
As long, at least, as any one who knows you
Could have suppos'd; and when you broke the
charm,
You did not turn your charmer out of doors,
As some less gentle husbands would have done,
But civilly dismiss'd her to her father.
Now that was so considerate, so kind,
So careful of the jewel reputation,
That every wife, who values her good name,
Will hold Lord Transit henceforth and for ever
In all due estimation and regard!

LORD TRANSIT.

Your wit, fair lady, carries a keen edge ;
And you can smite and smile at the same time.
I know not how I have deserv'd this from you.

LADY LE BRUN.

I really think you can deserve no less
From every woman, who has fellow-feeling
For a much-injur'd, guiltless, virtuous wife.
Ask not to see the letter from my husband ;
It would not flatter you,—unless, indeed,
You hold it for a salvo to your conscience
To put a pledge into his hands as sacred
As that you would inveigle out of them.

LORD TRANSIT.

What pledge do you allude to ?

LADY LE BRUN.

Let this billet

By you, a married man, address'd to me,
A married woman, show you to yourself.
What have I done to warrant this affront ?
Here, take it back again !—My only reason
For not exposing it and you, my lord,
To my vindictive husband, is because
I abhor duels, and despise the writer.

LORD TRANSIT.

Why all this tragic fury ?—I suspect
You've lost at cards, my lady ?

LADY LE BRUN.

If I have,

It was my money only ; not my mind,

My character, my conscience, as you have.
And what is there in me, which you can't find
Fresher and fairer in your own pure wife?
She loves not cards; has not consum'd her time,
Or tainted the sweet lustre of her bloom,
With a vile crew of gambling sharks and tabbies,
As you say I have done. In slighting her
For such a Town-complexion'd face as mine,—
Upon my word, my lord, I think in taste
You err as widely as in principle.

LORD TRANSIT.

You bear me down with words.—Hear my defence.
I do confess, from the first time my eyes
Glanc'd on your form, I've been the slave of passion.
I married, and believ'd I had subdued
That dangerous enemy to my repose.
Again I saw you, and again desire
Seiz'd on my truant heart. I turn'd aside,
From peace, from truth, from honour, to pursue you,
And mark how I am punish'd!

LADY LE BRUN.

Not by me.

I am not form'd, my lord, to make you happy.
Look at Sir Charles; his temper is more placid,
More mild than yours: he slights me; he has reason:
I am not worthy to be call'd a wife,
Being a thoughtless, undomestic creature;
A woman of the world, as it is call'd,
And not averse, as truly you observe,
To the destructive desperate love of play.
Is it not madness, then, to fly from her,

Whose faultless heart was form'd to make you blest,
And sigh for me, who would have made you
wretched?

LORD TRANSIT.

Your self-accusing candour is so charming,
The more you labour to extinguish hope
The more you charm me and exalt yourself.

LADY LE BRUN.

Go home, go home. I tell you, as a friend,
You never will succeed with me, my lord ;
And in the mean time others may succeed
With your neglected lady. She's no more
Than a mere woman, and I'm much mistaken
If frailty be not moulded with the clay
Of which we all are made.

LORD TRANSIT.

What do you mean?

Your hints alarm me.

LADY LE BRUN.

Lay them to your heart :
And recollect, that if she falls from virtue
The guilt is yours, for you are her destroyer. [*Exit.*]

LORD TRANSIT.

I thought I was a hard, unfeeling wretch,
Whom no remorse could touch. I now perceive
I am a thinking, conscientious villain,
That never can know peace, and know myself
The base destroyer of an injur'd wife,
In whose arms I have slept and dreamt of virtue.

(*Pliant is passing the stage.*)

Stop, sir, a word with you.

PLIANT.

Hah! my dear lord,
Ever well met. My eyes have been so dazzled
With the bright blaze of beauty in that room,
I do protest I did not see your lordship.

LORD TRANSIT.

You have said quite enough about your eyes;
I hope you have not lost your memory.

PLIANT.

No, no; your lordship glances at what pass'd
When last I din'd with you.

LORD TRANSIT.

Exactly that.

PLIANT.

Gay, lively, free, delectable discourse;
Much wit, much humour, and some repartee;
I thought your lordship made a pleasant run
Upon my friend Le Brun:—'Faith, 'twas so good,
I told it to him in my raillying way,
Just to keep up the jest.—What ail'd the man,
I cannot for the soul of me conceive;
He couldn't taste the joke, but knit his brow,
And gnaw'd his lips, and in a peevish fit
Desir'd that I would give your lordship notice
That he would wait on you to-morrow morning.
This I have now the honour to perform.

LORD TRANSIT.

Yes, and the honour to create the cause
Of his unfriendly visit.—Tell him, therefore,
Come when he will, from day-break to broad noon,
He'll find me at his call.

PLIANT.

Spoke like yourself,
With elegance and spirit, well becoming
Your rank and fashion—Day-break to broad noon!
[*Exit.*

Lady Le Brun *enters.*

LADY LE BRUN.

My lord, my lord,—the company's broke up.
I'm going home. Take courage! I shall send you
An invitation, which you'll not refuse;
And we will bury all unkindness past,
And seal a peace.—Come! see me to my coach.

LORD TRANSIT.

You puzzle me—I cannot comprehend you.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The street.*Sir Charles Le Brun *meeting* Dogherty.

SIR CHARLES.

Well met, friend Timothy! what news with you?

DOGHERTY.

There now! to see how thoughts will sometimes jump,
And jostle one another in by jerks.
Just as I met your honour, I was thinking
What I should say, if any body ask'd me
What news, friend Timothy?

SIR CHARLES.

Well, let us hear

What you will say.

DOGHERTY.

Long life to your kind honour!
It is good news if you are well in health.

Health is a blessing, and the only one
Which the poor have in common with the rich.

SIR CHARLES.

You serve the Lady Transit, I believe?—
Pray, my good fellow, is she now in Town?

DOGHERTY.

Troth, sir, to say where any lady is,
When she is out of sight, is above me.

SIR CHARLES.

But you can tell me if she was in Town
When last you saw her.

DOGHERTY.

As I cannot speak
To time and place correctly to your question,
I humbly beg to waive it altogether.

SIR CHARLES.

You're dumb; but wine will make a dumb man speak.
Will you accept a trifle to procure it?

DOGHERTY.

Sweet sir, most thankfully. Good wine's a jewel,
And whisky punch, and whisky its ownself
In its own naked innocence and beauty,
As we enjoy it in our blessed nation;
All these are harmless wholesome recreations.

SIR CHARLES.

Take this,—and now direct me to your lady.

DOGHERTY.

Ah, noble sir, I hope I'm better taught
Than to lose any time in seeking out

A comely public-house to drink your health in ;
And when I've done that handsomely, good chance
If I am able to direct myself.

Good day to your good honour ! Ah ! a guinea !
[Exit.

SIR CHARLES.

The murrain light upon that Irish pagan !
He has fobb'd me of my guinea, and gone off.
But see ! as sure as can be, 'tis the youngster
That came to London with the Lady Transit.

Trevor enters.

Sir, your most humble servant ! With your leave
A few words, if your business is not pressing.

TREVOR.

Sir Charles Le Brun ?

SIR CHARLES.

The same—at your command.
I think I saw you with the Lady Transit ?

TREVOR.

'Tis very possible.

SIR CHARLES.

You live, perhaps,
In this part of the town ?

TREVOR.

Yes, with my uncle.

SIR CHARLES.

And who is he ?

TREVOR.

My mother's father's son.

SIR CHARLES.

That does not edify.

TREVOR.

I'm sorry for it.

If in the way of business you wou'd know him,
You'll trace him by the firm of Gallishoff
As readily as you can find the Bank.
If your inquiry only tends to ask
Where Lady Transit may be visited,
I have the honour to inform you, sir,
That lady can receive no visitors.

[Exit.

SIR CHARLES *alone*.

If she receives me, I shall little care
How few besides may visit her. These citizens
Give full instruction on their corner houses
To lead us to their execrable shops,
But not one finger-post that points to love.

[Exit.

SCENE III.—*An apartment in Fairford's house.**A table with papers, parchments, &c.*

Fairford, and Codicil his lawyer, discovered at table.

FAIRFORD.

There, there, friend Codicil, dash on! dash on!
My meaning's clear enough till you explain it,
And talk yourself and me into a puzzle.

CODICIL.

Who talks but you? And whilst your clack is going
Thirteen to the dozen, who the plague can write?

FAIRFORD.

Call you this writing? Foh! your curst law scratches
Won't give the honest alphabet fair play.
Look how you crook your rs, and twist the necks

Of your poor half-hang'd *ts*, that look behind 'em
 As if you'd set your bailiffs at their heels!
 Come, where's this doughty deed of separation?

CODICIL.

Why, here it is; but what use is it of?
 You'll not enforce it.

FAIRFORD.

Yes, I will.

CODICIL.

You won't,
 I know you won't, and so I plainly tell you:
 You let that Heartright fob you of your mortgage;
 Every man draws a needle through your nose.

FAIRFORD.

What's this you've given me? This is not the deed;
 This is my will. You've caught the unclean beast
 By the wrong ear; you're puzzled.

CODICIL.

Well I may—You are enough to puzzle any man,
 Blustering and bouncing—Here! we're right at last—
 Give me your will—That may come into use
 Some time or other, when you're dead and gone;
 For die you must.

(They rise and come forward.)

FAIRFORD.

I do believe I must.

You're right, friend Codicil, you're very right;
 You bring the pleasant recollection home:
 And when the time comes, which you kindly hint at,
 The will, perhaps, may be of use to some folks,—
 Yourself, amongst the rest, if you survive me.

For I have tack'd a little rider to it,
In your behalf, for old acquaintance-sake ;
Something to make your winter evenings merry.
So there is codicil for Codicil—
That is but fair, you'll say.

CODICIL.

I'll not say that.

I'm not of your opinion, Mr. Fairford.
I do not hold it for a lawyer's honour
To have his name found in his client's will.
Leave me your snuff-box, or your walking-stick—
I'll take a token from you—nothing more.

FAIRFORD.

I wou'd I had my walking-stick just now ;
You well deserve it.

CODICIL.

I don't care for that.

You've ever been my friend, and that's enough.

FAIRFORD.

I was all that when I was nothing else ;
It wou'd be shameful were I less your friend
When I've more means to be so. But, no matter ;
You are a mule, a veritable mule,
And, thanks to Nature, generation stops ;
None of your cross-grain'd progeny will plague us.
Whence come you, sirrah ?

Trevor enters.

TREVOR.

From my agent, sir,
Thanks to your bounty ! Here is my commission.
I'm Ensign Trevor now.

A HINT TO HUSBANDS :

FAIRFORD.

Pshaw ! Ensign Trevor !

I would have put you in a way to thrive—
 Made you a merchant.—Would you think it, sir ?
 This fellow had no taste for Russia duck,
 Hemp, pot-ash, pickled sturgeon, linen rags,
 And such nice wares as wou'd have quickly made him
 A prancing trader. He must be a soldier;
 And honourably starve on ensign's pay.
 So, let him go ! I've done with you for ever :
 Go to your cousin ; put on your red coat,
 (I know you have your regimentals ready)
 And let her see how clownish and how clumsy
 A Russian bear shows in a lion's skin.

TREVOR.

Very well, uncle ! You and I have fac'd
 The north-sea storm, when not a rag of sail
 Clung to the yard ; you did not find me then
 A man unfit for service, or afraid
 To look upon a sight more terrible
 Than armies can present : so launch your joke ;
 Your Russian bear may with the lion's skin
 Possess the lion's heart. This I will promise,
 Go where he will, your bear sha'n't shame his leader.
 [Exit.

CODICIL.

That's a brave boy ; he charms me, and behold !
 He pumps the water up into your eyes.

FAIRFORD.

No, no ; they're weak, they're wat'ry. Come, I'll go
 And see Louisa.—Pshaw ! what ails my eyes ?
 [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—*Another apartment.*Lady Transit *and* Dogherty.

DOGHERTY.

Ah, gracious lady, how it glads my heart
That you approve of your poor servant's answer
To that Sir Charles Le Brun! I took his money,
'Tis true; but why? because I scorn a bribe—
Whereby I neither laid it out, nor kept it:
I gave it to a poor old beggar woman
Of my own kindred, Judey Dogherty—
Quite an old creature. Troth, it did her good,
For she was mighty boozy when I met her
But a few minutes after.

LADY TRANSIT.

I should doubt
If that could do her good.

DOGHERTY.

Oh yes, oh yes.
It oil'd the springs and hinges of her heart,
And made her dance and roll about for joy.

LADY TRANSIT.

She made herself a beast.

DOGHERTY.

How so, my lady?
To get drunk is the privilege of reason;
Beasts never find it out.

LADY TRANSIT.

That's truly said.

DOGHERTY.

Oh yes; I always like to say the truth,

Whether of man or beast—whereby, d'ye see,
 I trusted to my wits with that Sir Charles
 To keep clear of the truth, and tell no lie.
 Ach! I am good at that. Sir Charles, says I,
 'Tis not for me to prate about my lady,
 Whether she's here or there, or no where else.

LADY TRANSIT.

Well, Tim, I've heard it once. We'll not repeat it.

DOGHERTY.

Your will is mine; but, by my faith I think
 'T would bear repeating!

LADY TRANSIT.

Tell it then to Ruth;
 It will be new to her. In the mean time
 I hear my father coming.—You may leave me.

DOGHERTY.

The blessings of a thousand years be with you!

Fairford *enters*.

Sir, I'm your most devoted humble servant.
 Humph! not a word.—He could not well say less.
[*Exit.*

FAIRFORD.

There! there's a sickener for the queazy lord;
 Let him digest that paper as he can;
 I hope 't will choke him.

LADY TRANSIT.

What does it contain?

FAIRFORD.

A list of his bad actions, and your good ones,
 About an equal quantity of each

Fairly divided ; and in this account
No errors are excepted, I can promise.

LADY TRANSIT.

What does it lead to ?

FAIRFORD.

What but separation ?

Where else should I lead, when he drives so hard ?
Does it surprise you ?

LADY TRANSIT.

No, not much, not much ;

But it is rather sudden.

FAIRFORD.

How we differ !

I thought it rather slow, and hurried on
Old snail-pac'd Codicil into a gallop,
That shook him in his saddle. What ! a fellow
To take my only child without my leave,
And send her back without my leave or license !—
Too much, too much !

LADY TRANSIT.

I am a woman, sir ;

I am a wife.

FAIRFORD.

Aye, so you are—a wife

To one of the worst husbands in existence.
But you've a father, who won't see you wrong'd.

LADY TRANSIT.

Sir, that I am your daughter is, I trust,
Warrant enough that I have sense to feel,
And spirit to resent the wrong that's done me.
But separation is a serious act,
And you will not refuse a little pause
For meditation.—Spare me till to-morrow,
And you shall have my answer.

FAIRFORD.

Pshaw! to-morrow!

I hate to-morrow. A long sleepless night
Lies between it and me.

LADY TRANSIT.

Kind Heaven forbid!

The guardian spirit that protects the good
Will watch your couch, and, with his balmy hand
Laid on your aching temples, give you rest.
Your dreamsshall be compos'd of those pure thoughts
Which only in untroubled bosoms spring,
Whilst the good angel whispers to the soul
Joys of hereafter, which to th' waking ear
Cannot be told by tongue of mortal man.
Go, go—Benevolence like yours, my father,
Will need no rocking.

FAIRFORD.

Oh, that any fool

Could own a gem so rare, and cast it from him!

[Exit.

LADY TRANSIT *alone*.

That he has basely, cruelly renounc'd me,
Without a shadow of pretence, is true;
And that his treatment justifies the measure
My father dictates, cannot be denied:
Yet there is something at my heart, which pleads
That time and healing leisure be allow'd
To the relapse of virtue, and reminds me,
Lest execution should too closely tread
Upon the heels of judgment. I would act
With all the dignity that's due to virtue,
And not forget what charity prescribes.
Let me with candour recollect myself:—

When Transit married me—ah! had I then
Or wit to fascinate, or grace to charm,
Or beauty to surprise? No, no, not I;
Nothing beyond the common dole of nature
To all her unsophisticated brood—
Freshness and health, simplicity of soul,
And modesty innate:—Such and no better
He found and wedded me; such and no worse
I still continued, and he put me from him.

Trevor, in his regimentals, enters.

TREVOR.

Well, cousin, here I am, fresh boil'd and bright.
How do you like me?

LADY TRANSIT.

Oh, to admiration!

I think you'll do prodigious execution.

TREVOR.

I think I shall—abroad eventually;
At home particularly. My uncle calls me
A Russian bear: if so, you know, sweet cousin,
I can plead instinct, if I'm tried for hugging.

LADY TRANSIT.

I am afraid, friend George, your uncle thinks
You choose a poor trade, and forgo a rich one.

TREVOR.

I think I choose well, when I take a trade
Which puts me on a par with any man
Who dares to wrong a lady, of whose honour
By fair succession I'm the avow'd defender.
My King has slung a sword upon my thigh,
(I thank His Majesty) and I take credit

For a bright forethought, when I learnt to use it;
In that accomplishment I yield to none.

LADY TRANSIT.

I'm sorry you're so learned in that art.

TREVOR.

I think I could not learn a better art,
Than to protect the feeble and oppress
Against the strong and brutal.

LADY TRANSIT.

Then go forth;
Find my Lord Transit out; be my averger;
Not against him—beware! He is my husband—
But against those seducers who distract
And warp his virtues from their natural bent.

TREVOR.

Beware how you employ me with your lord,
Who, by insulting you, has given to me
A stab, which, if he does not well atone for,
Will never heal in my flesh; never, never,
Till I have made reprisals upon his.

LADY TRANSIT.

George, George! why will you terrify me thus,
And breathe defiance whilst I sigh for peace?

TREVOR.

I cannot help it. I have dearly lov'd you
From infancy to youth, from youth to manhood,
And shall love to the last-drawn breath of life.
But I was poor, and never did my heart
Cherish a hope of you; for you had charms
To claim the prospect of a match as noble
As this which you have gain'd. When fortune
shower'd

These riches on your father, and I heard
Of the injurious treatment you receiv'd,
All other views but the redressing you
Vanish'd at once; and I besought my uncle
To make me what I am—his lordship's equal,
And the declar'd avenger of your wrongs.

LADY TRANSIT.

I know your generous motives, and can trace them
To that pure source of brotherly affection
Which you have nourish'd from your earliest years.
But though your spirit may be still awake,
Your sword, I hope, will sleep.

TREVOR.

It shall, it shall.
I'll see your lord, and for your sake be calm.
I know there is a luxury in mercy,
Which to your soft sensations gives delight—
Though I don't feel it, nor does he deserve it.

LADY TRANSIT.

Ah! if we stay to calculate his merit,
We shall outstay the time to save his life.
Treat men as they deserve—make it your rule
To deal no more than rigid justice claims,
To your frail fellow-creatures,—what becomes
Of those sweet charities that give the soul
Its conscious foretaste of unfading bliss,
Make the day cheerful, and our nightly couch
A bed of roses redolent of heaven? [Exeunt.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Lord Transit *alone*.

LORD TRANSIT.

So heavily my sleepless hours have pass'd,
That though 'tis morning to the world, to me
It comes in darkness like another night.

Dogherty *enters*.

DOGHERTY.

My lord, my lord! I hope you'll not be angry,
If poor old Dogherty peeps in upon you
Just to say—What's your pleasure?—Can I serve you?

LORD TRANSIT.

Come in, come in! I'm glad to see you, Tim.

DOGHERTY.

That's mighty good and gracious in your lordship.
Forty long years of service in your family
Have made your house, as 'twere, my nat'ral home:
And though I serve a sweet and kindly lady,
(Ah, Heav'n be with her!) still, I know not why,
I feel myself a stranger at her father's;
And my old heart will cherish a fond hope
That we are not cut off, but I may live
To stand behind your lordship's chair once more,
And see your lovely lady grace your table.

LORD TRANSIT.

Is she in health? Does she support her spirits?

DOGHERTY.

In truth, my lord, her spirits want support;
But still an easy conscience can do much:
And now, but that I fear to give offence,
I should have ask'd your lordship the same question:
I'm cruelly afraid you are not well.

LORD TRANSIT.

I've had a restless night.

DOGHERTY.

Ah, there's the case.
I thought as much—Your looks betoken it;—
No rest at night!—This Town air does not suit you.

LORD TRANSIT.

I'm sick at heart, old man. Nothing can suit me;
Nor air, nor hours, nor any thing that throws
One gleam of comfort on the human heart,
Is now in store to cheer me.

DOGHERTY.

Ah! my lord,
Your castle stands exactly where it did.
The road is open.

LORD TRANSIT.

Yes, the road is open
That I must travel. It takes in creation:
All that have life must tread it.

Servant enters.

SERVANT.

Please your lordship,
An officer, who says his name is Trevor,
Desires to see your lordship.

LORD TRANSIT.

Show him up.

I shall be glad to see him.

[Exit Servant.]

DOGHERTY.

And you'll see
 As brave and bright a boy as walks the earth ;
 Ay, and a pretty swordsman, a neat hand.—
 I took a thrust or two with him at foils,
 In faith, I had it in my stomach quickly :
 I was but as a child with him.

LORD TRANSIT.

He comes—

Leave us together.

[*Exit* Dogherty.]*Trevor is introduced.*

TREVOR.

As I've not the honour
 To be known to your lordship, I must hope
 My near alliance to the Lady Transit
 Will plead in my excuse.

LORD TRANSIT.

I understand
 You are her near relation, and am happy
 To show you all respect on her account.

TREVOR.

It is on her account I wait upon you ;
 At her request, whose generous heart yet feels
 An interest in your safety, I consent,
 Ev'n at my honour's risk, to warn your lordship
 What peril you are in.

LORD TRANSIT.

Do you allude
 To any thing about Sir Charles Le Brun ?

TREVOR.

I've no connection with Sir Charles Le Brun.

LORD TRANSIT.

Has Lady Transit seen him ?

TREVOR.

Never, never.

But as I see to what your question leads,
I beg, my lord, you'll put none such to me,
As in the slightest manner tends t'impeach
The spotless purity of my relation.

LORD TRANSIT.

You're very quick, and I am not aware
That any thing I've said can give offence.

TREVOR.

If I am over zealous in this cause,
Your lordship hardly will complain of me,
Seeing I now by right of kindred fill
That honourable post which you have quitted.

LORD TRANSIT.

Sir, do you recollect to whom you're speaking ?

TREVOR.

Yes, to Lord Transit, who, by happy choice,
When he had worthily bestow'd his hand
Upon a creature form'd to crown his days
With envied blessings, haughtily withdrew it,
And threw the slighted virtue from his arms
To beg protection at her father's door.

LORD TRANSIT.

Am I so lost to virtue? No; you wrong me.
Awe-struck, I mark how strong her pulses beat,
Ev'n in the arteries of a beardless boy;
How high in energy sublime he lifts
Your swelling spirit up, and tramples down
My coward conscience grov'ling in the dust.

Servant enters.

SERVANT.

My lord, Sir Charles Le Brun, and Mr. Pliant.

[Exit Servant.]

Sir Charles Le Brun *and* Pliant *enter.*

SIR CHARLES.

Lord Transit, may we speak to our affair
Before this gentleman ?

LORD TRANSIT.

He'll answer that.

TREVOR.

If there is no objection—

SIR CHARLES.

None whatever.

Your lordship has been pleas'd to treat my name
With undue liberty before my friends
Sir Harry Sumner and this gentleman,
Who has reported to me what you said,
And what no man of honour can put up with,
Unless by revocation most express,
And unequivocal, you shall recall it.

LORD TRANSIT.

Sir Charles Le Brun, our conference will be short ;
For if that gentleman sits at my table,
And chooses, in defiance of the rights
Of hospitality, to recollect
Words utter'd in the heedlessness of talk,
I am not careful to correct my speech
Under the terror of his information,
Nor shall recall one syllable I spoke.

PLIANT.

Recall it ! No, my lord, sooner than that
I'm ready to recall my recollection.

SIR CHARLES.

How, sir ! do you equivocate ? Take care.

PLIANT.

Yes ; I am very careful to avoid
A quarrel any how, with any body.
When I am tipsy, 't is another thing :
But soberly I think the words of man
Should not be weigh'd against the life of man.
Egad, for my part I would sooner eat them.

SIR CHARLES.

Then you must eat them.

PLIANT.

Well, and so I will,
Give me but wine enough to wash 'em down.
Lord love you both ! two of my dearest friends !
What harm could I intend to either of you ?
The wine was in my head ; I met Sir Charles ;
Went home with him, and told him our discourse,
As a good joke :—But he, brim-full of honour,
Took it in dudgeon, brew'd it in his mind,
Bottled it up in secrecy, and stor'd it
Where it fermented,—whilst I fell asleep,
Unconscious of the folly I committed.
Now, my good lord, and sir, shake hands, I pray you ;
And don't let a poor devil hang himself,
For doing mischief which he never meant.

LORD TRANSIT.

Sir Charles, how say you ? For my part, I think
Friend Pliant's plea is irresistible.

SIR CHARLES.

I think so too, my lord ; but as I see
A gentleman of the army has been present
At the discussion of this point of honour,
Let us refer it to his arbitration.

LORD TRANSIT.

With all my heart.

PLIANT.

Now, dear good sir, for once,
Though I don't know your name, take to your heart
A little harmless wholesome recollection ;
And as you are a fine young hopeful cub
Of the old British lion, copy him,
Whose honest gallant heart abounds in mercy :
I'm at your feet. He always spares the fallen.
Odslife ! how eloquent it makes a man,
When he is pleading to the heart of man !

SIR CHARLES.

Now, sir, we wait your judgment.

TREVOR.

'T wou'd be rash,

And ill becoming me, to interpose
My feeble judgment, were it not a case
Too plain for a mere novice to mistake.
I think Lord Transit shou'd assure sir Charles
There was no malice in the words he spoke ;
And I am very certain there is due
A full apology from Mr. Pliant
To the Lord Transit, for a breach of trust.—
This being done, I see no cause for quarrel.

SIR CHARLES.

Fairly decided ! All is past, and over :

All words that have been said, are done away ;
All that should still be said, I will suppose
Are said ; and so, good morning to your lordship.
[Exit.]

PLIANT.

Now, that's too brief for me—I rather like
To make my exit with a handsome speech.
My good Lord Transit, I've a shallow head,
And a fool's tongue ; but I've an honest heart !
And honestly I ask your lordship's pardon.

[Lord Transit give his hand.]

Sir, I pray Heav'n no bullet may annoy you,
But that your enemies will let you live
To be a blessing to your friends, and sit
Content with glory, and replete with years,
A fine old prosing grave gray-headed General,
And fight your battles in your easy-chair.

[Exit.]

Heartright enters.

TREVOR.

Your lordship will allow me now to leave you.

[Exit.]

HEARTRIGHT.

The merchant will accommodate your lordship
About the interest due upon the mortgage.

LORD TRANSIT.

I scarce expected it.

HEARTRIGHT.

You'd no great right

To expect it, give me leave to say,
Seeing that merchant is your lady's father.
The rich old Russian Gallishoff is dead,

And has bequeath'd his wealth, a boundless mass,
To a plain, honest, well-deserving man,
The father of your lady, who is now
One of the richest heiresses in England.

LORD TRANSIT.

Then Providence has made its work complete.
Nature had giv'n her charms, Heav'n had endow'd
Her heart with charity; and Fortune now,
Who had withheld her boon, at length relents,
And largely recompenses past unkindness.

HEARTRIGHT.

If you've occasion for a sum of money
In making up your balance with the world;
And a few thousands can accommodate,
I have them for you. I have found a person
That lends on easy interest—nothing more
Than a demand upon your heart at sight.

LORD TRANSIT.

She has my heart, she has my full contrition
Unpurchas'd and sincere.—So tell your sender;
So tell my injur'd wife; and say withal,
This self-accusing scroll, in which she'll read
The anguish of my heart, and trace my tears,
Was dictated by conscience, by remorse,
By zeal to vindicate her spotless fame:
In this, when ign'rant of what now has chanc'd,
To raise the humble state in which I found her,
I give her all that I have power to give.

HEARTRIGHT.

Well, I will take your olive-branch in charge;

And may it prove the emblem of a peace
At length concluded 'twixt your heart and Heaven!

LORD TRANSIT.

I have receiv'd much good instruction from you,
And paid you hitherto with little else
But disappointment, sorrow, and vexation.
Now, from this moment you shall blush no more
For pains mispent, and kindness ill-applied.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A chamber in Fairford's house.*

Dogherty *enters.*

DOGHERTY.

So, there's no fight at last! Well, let it go.
Some folks, I see, can quarrel without fighting;
My countrymen can fight without quarrel.
'Tis mighty neat and natural for a gentleman,
Who makes a pastime in that kind of sport,
And loses nothing when his life is lost;
But not quite so commodious for a lord,
Who occupies a castle,—not like those
Which some of my good friends build in the air,
But solid brick and stone on the dry ground.

Ruth *enters.*

RUTH.

Ah, Mr. Dogherty, wou'd you believe it?
My lady is gone out.

DOGHERTY.

I believe that,
Because I saw it.

RUTH.

Nay, but hear me out—

As sure as can be, she will make it up
With her false lord.—Were I so fine a lady,
Aye, and so rich withal, wou'd I do that ?
No : I wou'd bring him down upon his knees,
That's what I wou'd ; and so I tell my lady,
And so I say to every one.

DOGHERTY.

Stop there !

I wish to breathe a secret in your ear,
Which, if you blab it, shall remain a secret ;
For I will never tell it you again.

RUTH.

Oh, Mr. Timothy, I am so happy
To hear you talk !

DOGHERTY.

Then you must hold your tongue.
Observe me now—There are two kinds of silence :
One is a silence that don't talk at all ;
That's not your method—T'other is a way
To keep all folks from talking but yourself :
Now in that sort of silence you are perfect.

RUTH.

Well ! I have done ; I've done.

DOGHERTY.

Recollect then,
That damsels of the bed-chamber like you,
Who are a virgin (if I'm wrong, correct me),
Shou'd never prate about their lords and ladies.
It is not seemly—Shut your lips, sweet Ruth,
And don't be cackling to betray your nest.

There, there ; that's all. Here's Mr. Heartright
coming—

Good b'ye, sweet Ruth !

RUTH.

Ah, you're a cunning creature ;
You twist and turn me just which way you will.
[Exit.

Heartright enters, meeting and stopping Dogherty.

HEARTRIGHT.

Where is your lady ?

DOGHERTY.

Not at home just now.

HEARTRIGHT.

Gone out ?

DOGHERTY.

You've hit upon it, worthy sir :
She is gone out, and therefore not at home.

HEARTRIGHT.

Is Fairford in the house ?

DOGHERTY.

Aye is he ; close
With that old Codicil, driving the quill
To separate these poor creatures from each other ;
Which you know may be law, but is not gospel.

HEARTRIGHT.

I think of it as you do.

DOGHERTY.

To be sure.

'Tis strangulation to my lord at once ;
And under favour, I'm not rightly sure
'T'wou'd be quite wholesome in my lady's case.

And where's the use of battering their brains
For slight-of-hand tricks now, to slip the knot
That blessed Mother Church had tied too tight
For all their botheration to undo?

HEARTRIGHT.

Fear nothing, my good fellow: I'm persuaded
I have a weapon to defeat their purpose.

DOGHERTY.

You have indeed, if you've a stout shelelah
To carry with you into consultation.
It splits a difference in no time at all,
And beats all heads into the same opinion.

HEARTRIGHT.

I bear the olive, Tim, and not the sword.

DOGHERTY.

If you take one without the other, sir,
Ev'n tie the olive-branch about your neck,
And ask the next stray friend to tuck you up.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*An apartment in Lady Le Brun's house.*

Lady Le Brun speaking to a Servant.

LADY LE BRUN.

When Lady Transit comes, you will admit her.
Take notice, I'm at home to no one else.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Well, I protest I am so greatly taken
With my new character, I really think
I shall lay by my old one.—Sir, you play—
Madam, you deal—My lady, you have lost.
Ah! that's a dull tune, and has tir'd my ears;

I'll e'en leave them to sing it out, that like it.
Gaming ! good b'ye ! you never was my friend—
Prudence ! your servant—Pretty miss, how prim
And proper you are dress'd ! you wear deep
tuckers,
And keep good hours—Well ! I won't promise
either.

But come, sweet Pity ! whom I always lov'd,
Celestial Charity, whom I adore,
Come, ye kind Virtues, I am all your own !

Servant enters.

SERVANT.

The Lady Transit, madam. [*Exit Servant.*]

Lady Transit enters.

LADY LE BRUN.

My dear lady,

I'm honour'd by this visit. You seem faint ;
My tedious stairs have tir'd you—Will you sit ?

LADY TRANSIT.

You're very kind.

I'm sensible I can't conceal my weakness ;
But I persuade myself that you can pity it.

LADY LE BRUN.

A woman to a woman needs not blush
To own her weakness ; and perhaps there needs
No great sagacity to guess the cause.
Ah, madam, I am not without experience
How little trust can be repos'd in husbands,
And cou'd, if needful, tell as bad a tale
Of my good man, as you can do of yours.
We, who are wives, shou'd make it common cause :
Therefore confide in me ; I sha'n't betray you.

LADY TRANSIT.

I was a girl obscurely, humbly bred,
And little grac'd with those attractive powers,
Which you possess, to charm the hearts of men,
And draw them back again if they attempt
To escape from your allurements.

LADY LE BRUN.

My dear lady,
I see that you mistake me, and are seeking
To find a by-path to an open heart.
Do me more justice, and believe for once
A woman of the world can be sincere.
Had I those fascinating charms you speak of
(Which, by the way, my glass could never show
me),

I might perchance have sent a random glance
At some pert heartless coxcomb for my sport,
And teas'd him with a little cat-like play;
But to alarm the wife, allure the husband,
And do unholy mischief with my eyes,—
Sooner than that, I'd rather be a mole,
Condemn'd to grope in darkness all my life.

LADY TRANSIT.

Ah, now I see how much I am undone;
For if I hear you talk a little longer,
And see you smile, I shall acquit my husband.

LADY LE BRUN.

Aye; but I do not smile upon your husband;
And when I talk, 'tis only with a view
To talk him out of his absurdity.
The silly man, because I lost my money,
Thought I must be a loser every way.

LADY TRANSIT.

Then you have seen him?—

LADY LE BRUN.

Oh, yes, I have seen him,
And, till he married, saw him every where,
Prowling from place to place, and making eyes
At each stray miss—myself amongst the many.
He call'd it love. It made no way with me;
For my sage mother bade me set my cap
At none but marrying men. He was not that;
And now he is that, be assur'd his lordship
Is further off than ever.

LADY TRANSIT.

You console me.

LADY LE BRUN.

Ah! you may draw that consolation, madam,
From nineteen fellow-sufferers out of twenty.
I laugh my cares away; for ridicule
Puts melancholy down as it does pride.
Your lord is gone, as those sage persons go
Who hunt for butterflies,—on a short tour,
To seek about for what he'll never find.
Nay, more; I know he's jaded, sicken'd, sham'd
Out of his freak already.—Come to me
This afternoon, you'll see him at your feet.

LADY TRANSIT.

How can that be expected?

LADY LE BRUN.

I'll secure it.

I will apprise him he shall meet you here
And seal a peace—I'll answer for his coming.

A HINT TO HUSBANDS.

LADY TRANSIT.

At what hour shall I come ?

LADY LE BRUN.

At eight precisely.

LADY TRANSIT.

Is there no chance that I shall meet Sir Charles ?

LADY LE BRUN.

Sir Charles is off, and whirl'd away as fast
 As four lean post-horses can scour the road.
 Yet, you are right to guard against that chance.
 Sir Charles is mischievous, I fairly tell you ;
 And if a man of his aspiring sort
 Once sets his foot though on the lowest streak
 Of sly seduction's ladder, let the virtue
 Which he assails beware. I ask your pardon :
 I know this caution don't apply to you.

LADY TRANSIT.

In truth, it does not.

LADY LE BRUN.

Then you'll come this evening ?

LADY TRANSIT.

Yes, I will come—I cannot, will not doubt her.
 (Lady Le Brun rings the bell.)

LADY LE BRUN.

Who waits ? Call up the Lady Transit's coach.

LADY TRANSIT.

Lady Le Brun, my fate is in your hands ;
 And I must hope, that one by Heav'n endow'd
 With such sweet graces, such persuasive powers,
 Would not employ them but to those good ends
 For which they were bestow'd.

LADY LE BRUN.

No ; I can mix
With a bad world, and be the friend of virtue :
Of course your friend—At eight I shall expect you.
Now where is that provoking creature Pliant ?

[*Exit Lady Transit.*

Pliant enters to Lady Le Brun.

PLIANT.

Oh ! here I am.

LADY LE BRUN.

Aye ; you're a dear good soul !
I've tir'd your patience out.

PLIANT.

No ; I am us'd to't.
Nobody lets me in till they've let out
All others, and are weary of themselves.
My whole life through has been a waiting job :
I've waited for preferment ; it don't come :
I've waited for the death of a rich aunt ;
The old girl is immortal : I have waited
For promises, for friendships, for the favours
Of the fair sex.—

LADY LE BRUN.

Aye, there you wait in vain.

PLIANT.

Well, but I look'd to have snapt a dainty widow :
Seven years her husband was a dying man.
He died at last : I staid her mourning out ;
So did not she :—She married in six months.
I wait for every one ; no one waits for me,
Except my creditors.

A HINT TO HUSBANDS:

LADY LE BRUN.

Now, stop your tongue,
And listen to th' instructions I shall give you.
Find out Lord Transit—find him, do you mind me,
Let him be where he will ; take no denial—
Be sure of that.

PLIANT.

I will, I will be sure.
I have a way of dealing with denials ;
They don't daunt me—I'm too well us'd to them.

LADY LE BRUN.

Now you must tell him I have had a visit
From his afflicted lady.

PLIANT.

What afflicts her ?
She's a fine woman—I should like to comfort her.

LADY LE BRUN.

Oh, thou tormenting wretch ! I'll trust no message
To such a windmill-headed thing as thou'rt.
I'll write a letter—you can carry that.
Come, follow me—I'm going to my closet.

PLIANT.

Aye, so am I—I'm very fond of closets.

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Green Park.*Sir Charles Le Brun *alone.*

SIR CHARLES.

LADY LE BRUN believes me out of town.
It is not much amiss sometimes to try
These small deceptions on our loving wives,
Merely to mark how harmlessly they pass
Their melancholy hours when we are absent.
My lady is a miracle of goodness ;
Devotes best portion of her time to play,—
Yet finds some hours to moralise, no doubt,
With the Lord Transit.

Pliant *appears.*

Hah ! your servant, sir !

Your very humble servant, Mr. Pliant !

Are you not now of all mankind—

PLIANT.

The best.—

I know you meant to say it : but don't praise me ;
Your praise confounds me : I can bear my own,
I'm us'd to that.

SIR CHARLES.

You will have none from me.

Why did you trap me into a discussion
With Transit, and then turn about, and leave me
To be a laughing-stock, for my credulity ?

PLIANT.

Why did I turn about?—Was it not time?
Cou'd I be too respectful of a life
So infinitely precious to the world?
Who wou'd have led the fashions of the Town,
Had we lost you? How many brilliant eyes
Wou'd have been blind with weeping!

SIR CHARLES.

Come, no raillery.
I think my wife, for one, wou'd have surviv'd it.

PLIANT.

Oh such an angel woman! such a heart!

SIR CHARLES.

What do you know of her?

PLIANT.

What do I know?
Enough to canonize her for a saint.

SIR CHARLES.

To which of all her numberless perfections
Has she made you the confidential witness?

PLIANT.

You'll see—you'll see.

SIR CHARLES.

I shall be glad to hear
What I'm to see.

PLIANT.

You're going out of Town—

SIR CHARLES.

Within this hour.

PLIANT.

Go, go! you safely may.

Her time will be most blessedly employ'd;
She is the most benevolent of beings:
Your house will be the scene of reconciliation.
I've been to Transit with your lady's letter—
Oh! such a peace-maker!

SIR CHARLES.

A perfect saint.

PLIANT.

You see that I know something.

SIR CHARLES.

Yes, I see it.

You saw the letter too?

PLIANT.

I saw her write it.

SIR CHARLES.

You took it to him?

PLIANT.

To be sure I did.

SIR CHARLES.

Quite right, quite right. It was an invitation?

PLIANT.

At eight o'clock this evening.—Ah, my friend,
You are the happiest man—

SIR CHARLES.

You make me so,

By telling me the virtues of my wife.
At eight this evening?

PLIANT.

Yes.

SIR CHARLES.

Before that hour
I shall be fifty miles upon my way.
Good b'ye ! I must make ready for my journey.

[Exit.]

PLIANT.

There, there now ! Sure I am the luckiest fellow
At making people happy with each other !
It is a gift—by Heav'n, an actual gift !
It can be nothing less. There is he gone
As gayly out of Town, as free from care,
As if he had no wife at all to think of.
My lady may be virtuous, nay, she is so
For aught I know ; but if I were her husband,
I should not take that letter quite so coolly :
I watch'd her as she wrote it, and can swear
To more than one tear that the writing cost her.
Well, well—I'm but the bearer of the letter ;
And be it what it may, by this manœuvre
I've made all parties safe. Trust me for that.
Yes, yes ; I take that credit to myself. [Exit.]

SCENE II.—*An apartment in Lord Transit's house.*

LORD TRANSIT *reading a letter.*

“ I have appointed your afflicted wife
“ To come to me this night at eight o'clock—
“ If your heart feels compunction, meet her here,
“ And take her pardon ; take her to your arms,
“ And let her intercession turn aside
“ That wrath which Heav'n will else discharge upon
“ you.”

“ CLARA LE BRUN.”

Yes, Clara, I obey
Your anxious summons. Now I understand
Your promise, as I led you to your coach,
Of an appointment. All which then appear'd
Dark and equivocal, is bright and clear.
Why did I suffer my dishonest thoughts
To build unfair presumptions on the chance
That Gaming had expos'd you to seduction?
Virtue, I see, can take so bright a polish,
That e'en *that* dæmon's touch cannot defile it.

Servant enters.

SERVANT.

My lord, some gentlemen in company
With Mr. Fairford—

LORD TRANSIT.

I am not at home.

SERVANT.

I told him so; but he'll take no refusal.

LORD TRANSIT.

What is the hour?

SERVANT.

Just on the stroke of eight.

And see! he has follow'd me to the very door.

[Exit Servant.]

Fairford enters, followed by Heartright and Codicil.

LORD TRANSIT.

Well, Mr. Fairford, since you won't be answer'd
By any apology, behold me present.

FAIRFORD.

You are the man I wanted to behold.

And here's your paper, that friend Heartright brought ;—

A handsome recantation, I acknowledge—
All written with your own hand, is it not ?

LORD TRANSIT.

It is my writing, and it was my paper.

FAIRFORD.

It was your paper—Right ! It is mine now :
And in return for paper, there is parchment.

(*pointing to the mortgage deed in Codicil's hand.*)

That was your mortgage to old Gallishoff ;
It came to me, and now it goes to you.
Take it, I've nothing more to do with it.
You've clear'd my daughter, I clear your estate.

LORD TRANSIT.

Hold, Mr. Fairford : 'tis not yet the time
That honour will allow me to receive it—
I beg you will release me.

FAIRFORD.

Heh ! release you ?
Egad, I rather think we shou'd confine you :
You're in a high delirium, a brain-fever.

LORD TRANSIT.

Well, be that as it may, I must decline it :
Imperious reasons force me to decline it.

FAIRFORD.

Imperious reasons ! Let me tell you, sir,
I've reasons as imperious as yours can be,
Aye, and resentments too.

LORD TRANSIT.

I cannot help it.

Lady Le Brun invited me this evening
To meet my wife, and to receive my pardon.
My heart with joy embrac'd the blest occasion
To pour out all its penitence, its thanks,
Its hoarded transports of returning love,
And vow eternal truth in her dear arms ;
When lo ! with all my passions
Alive, and kindling fire in every vein,
You come, you cross me in the very hour,
The instant of my fate—'Sdeath ! cou'd you offer
The wealth of worlds, I wou'd not stop to take it.
[Exit.

FAIRFORD.

Oho ! that gives the case another colour :
Those are imperious reasons, I confess.
I'm not so angry now, nay I must own
My anger was for once in the wrong place.

HEARTRIGHT.

Every man's anger is in the wrong place.

FAIRFORD.

I'm satisfied ; I'm calm ; my heart's at rest.

CODICIL.

So is your mortgage—I may take this home.

FAIRFORD.

No, give it me.

CODICIL.

'Tis safer in my keeping ;
Your pocket burns, my friend.

FAIRFORD.

Well, if it does ;
Methinks I take the ready way to quench it.

CODICIL.

I don't care what you do. When you were poor,
 I lik'd you most; and when you're poor again,
 I shall not like you less. I only say,
 Give to the worthy man, and you give well;
 But give to every man for giving's sake,
 When your whim's over, you will find yourself
 With empty pockets in a thankless world.

[*Exit* Codicil.

HEARTRIGHT.

There's no great flattery to mankind in that;
 But there's a plaguy deal of truth, I fear.

FAIRFORD.

Hear, and then judge. Amongst my dead wife's
 papers

I have discover'd letters that have pass'd
 Betwixt this lord and her; and it appears
 That in my absence, when the best of beings
 (She for whose sake I wou'd have sluic'd my
 blood)

Was pincht by poverty, even to want
 Of common necessities—Oh my God!
 Sir, I perceiv'd myself his lordship's debtor
 For sums, not great perhaps in their amount,
 But greatly, nobly, delicately giv'n,
 Without parade or vaunting.—Now, by Heav'n!
 I were a dog, not fit to feed on scraps,
 If I cou'd hold a claim upon his purse,
 Though thousands hung to it, whose hand was open
 To the necessities of that dear saint
 When cruel want oppress'd her.—Am I right?

HEARTRIGHT.

I think you are, and do believe you'll find,
When every heart is search'd, you have been right.
Let us withdraw.

FAIRFORD.

Aye, aye; we'll give them time
For reconciliation, and then share their joys.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—Lady Le Brun's *chamber*.

Lady Le Brun *ushers in* Lady Transit.

LADY LE BRUN.

This way, dear madam! You're before your time—
But never mind; my lord will soon be here;
I'm sure he will. I show you to this chamber,
Because it is my private sacristy,
Which nobody approaches. Shall I stay,
Or be at hand to usher in your lord?

LADY TRANSIT.

Stay a few minutes, but till I recover
My flutter'd spirits.

LADY LE BRUN.

Come, come, be compos'd;
I can ensure your perfect reconciliation.

LADY TRANSIT.

Indeed!—I feel as if it cou'd not be.
I won't detain you longer. I'll attend
And wait my lord's arrival.

LADY LE BRUN.

I obey you.

Alas, poor thing! (*aside*).

[*Exit.*]

LADY TRANSIT.

What did that look imply?
 It seem'd like pity; it might be contempt;
 They are allied too nearly. Did I not
 Come here unsanction'd by my father's leave?
 And can I wonder if chastising Heaven
 Provides a punishment for disobedience?
 O Trevor, gallant friend, what wou'd I give
 That thou wert now beside me! Ha! who's that?

Sir Charles Le Brun *appears*.

SIR CHARLES.

A friend as gallant, and not less dispos'd
 Than Trevor to protect you. Fear me not!
 Whilst you are silent, you are in no danger;
 If you cry out, you bring destruction down
 On all around you, and perhaps this chamber
 Shall float with your unworthy husband's blood.

LADY TRANSIT.

Sir Charles Le Brun, I set you at defiance.
 I find that innocence can feel no fear;
 That conscious virtue buoys my spirit up,
 To meet your menaces with firm contempt.
 Why should I cry, when there are none to hear?
 When you, whose heart no pity can approach,
 Have barr'd your doors from them who might
 have felt it?

SIR CHARLES.

You do me wrong: you wrong the truest friend
 That ever sacrific'd his heart's best feelings
 To pity, to respect, to love for woman.
 Your faithless husband spurn'd you from his doors,
 I open'd mine—You've enter'd, and are safe.

LADY TRANSIT.

Then let me pass.

SIR CHARLES.

Stop ! you must hear me first—
 I felt your wrongs, and seiz'd the first occasion
 To vent my vengeance on the man who wrong'd
 you :

His insolence soon gave me fair pretence—
 My sword was ready ; but you stay'd my hand.

LADY TRANSIT.

Did I ? Your conscience will have cause to bless
 me.

SIR CHARLES.

I sheath'd my sword at Trevor's intercession,
 Who spoke, as I believ'd, by your commission.
 Now will you tell me I am not your friend ?
 Now will you spurn me, set me at defiance ?
 Now will you turn my fury on your husband ?
 Or hear me plead my passion at your feet,
 And let me seize this unopposing hand,
 And press it to the fondest, truest heart
 That ever beat within a lover's breast ?

LADY TRANSIT.

Thou wretch ! thou murderer, if this be death
 That now comes over me—dark, dark, and cold—
(She faints, and Sir Charles supports her.)

SIR CHARLES.

Heav'ns ! I have gone too far —She faints —she falls.
*Here after a pause, Lord Transit enters unseen
 by Sir Charles, and stands horror-struck,
 while Sir Charles proceeds :*

Oh, let my arms support you ! let my breast
 Be Beauty's pillow, lovelier in its paleness

Than when its roseate lustre glow'd so bright
That my rapt eye cou'd hardly rest upon it.

LORD TRANSIT.

I'm petrified with horror—No! Go on;
Stir not—but what you have subdued, support,
And prop the ruin that records your triumph!

SIR CHARLES.

Hear me, my lord!

LORD TRANSIT.

I will not hear you, sir;
Nor will I stay to look upon that wreck
Of all that was divine, and pure, and lovely.
Alive we never part. I shall wait for you. [*Exit.*
Lady Le Brun runs to the assistance of Lady Transit.

LADY LE BRUN.

My lord, my lord, return! Sir Charles, you've
kill'd her;
Inhuman wretch, you've kill'd her—Hence, away!
Go, hide yourself for ever—I'm your wife,
And cannot speak the word that fits your crime.

Trevor rushes in, and draws his sword.

TREVOR.

I can—a villain! With that word I stamp you,
And with my sword am ready to confirm it.

LADY LE BRUN.

Put up your sword! For Heav'n's sweet sake forbear!
Cease your loud anger! She revives! she lives!

TREVOR.

Louisa, I am with you.

LADY TRANSIT.

Raise me up.
George, something terrible, I know, has happen'd;

But I am innocent—Where is my lord?
Send for him! Madam, if you are sincere,
You can explain—

LADY LE BRUN.

And will—although the truth
Will strike conviction to that heart, whose honour
Shou'd be as dear to me as is my own.

Lord Transit, *followed by Fairford and Heartright.*

LORD TRANSIT.

Bay not me, sir, with your outrageous din;
Come in, and see *your* daughter in the arms
Of her triumphant lover.

FAIRFORD.

No, not she;
She is in no man's arms—'Tis false, 'tis false.
You have defam'd my daughter—That I see,
And, by defaming, seek to screen yourself:
That I can understand—My child is wrong'd;
And this your charge is false and foul as hell.

LADY TRANSIT.

George, calm his anger. (*To Trevor.*)

TREVOR.

Uncle, hear me speak.

FAIRFORD.

Aye, and I'm glad you're here, my gallant boy!

TREVOR.

Lady Le Brun, when I appeal to you,
I know you can expound this dark affair;
And as I think your motives were sincere
In bringing this much-injur'd lady hither,
By justifying her you'll clear yourself.

LADY LE BRUN.

As truly as I can attest to Heaven,
 That I invited Lady Transit hither
 For no one purpose but to meet her lord,
 And seal his pardon,—so can I declare
 She came for that sole purpose, being told
 By me expressly, that Sir Charles Le Brun
 Was gone from Town. For this I had his word;
 And why he broke it, why he came by stealth,
 By robber-like surprise (for other name
 I cannot give it), to insult this lady,
 Under his own roof, let Sir Charles account;
 I cannot.

LORD TRANSIT.

Nor can he devise a tale
 To overthrow the evidence of sight.
 I saw my wife encircled by his arms,
 Claspt in his fond embrace—Aghast I stood
 Rooted with horror—He the whilst exclaim'd—
 “Oh, let my arms support you! Let my breast
 “Be Beauty’s pillow!”—More he said; but this
 Will serve his character, the favour’d lover.

SIR CHARLES.

Lord Transit, when I call’d on you to hear,
 I wou’d have utter’d from my heart the truth
 You wou’d not hear: proudly you turn’d away,
 Threw me your challenge, threaten’d me with death,
 And thought to force confessions from my fear,
 Which from my conscience I had freely made.
 I know the duty that I owe to truth,
 To innocence, to justice—and I’ll pay it;
 But not at your command, nor till I see
 That letter which my wife was pleas’d to write,
 And sent by Mr. Pliant to your lordship.

LADY LE BRUN.

Lord Transit, if you have that letter with you,
I solemnly adjure you to produce it.

LORD TRANSIT.

Here is the letter—Let your husband read it.

(Gives it to Lady Le Brun.)

Pliant *enters*.

PLIANT.

Ah! here I am, the source of all confusion!
Ah, my sweet lady, if you want to know
Who 't was betray'd your letter to Sir Charles,
'Twas I—I did it—I do all the mischief,
And never mean it—That is my misfortune—

LADY LE BRUN.

And every body's else, that has to do with you.

PLIANT.

I know it; I acknowledge it for truth.
No sooner do I fasten on a man
My curst left-handed friendship, down he goes
Plump as the whale does when the Thresher rides
him.

SIR CHARLES.

Lady Le Brun, I'm satisfied—Your letter
Does honour to your heart. I ask your pardon.

LADY TRANSIT.

I now desire Sir Charles will recollect,
That I stand here and silently endure
Unjust suspicions to attain my honour.
'Tis time for innocence to speak, when crimes
Black and detestable are on the point
Of being shifted from their real author,
And fasten'd upon me. Sir Charles, confess!

SIR CHARLES.

If Honour ever harbour'd in my heart,
 Or Truth e'er found a passage to my lips,
 'Tis now—when solemnly I do aver
 Myself the hateful cause that casts a doubt
 Ev'n for a moment on that spotless wife,
 Who, when expecting to receive her husband,
 Was by my rude, profane assailance struck
 With indignation, terror, and surprise ;
 And fainting, nay, expiring, as I fear'd,
 Was so discover'd senseless in my arms.

FAIRFORD.

Ay, vengeance light upon you! well she might.

SIR CHARLES.

Now, if my lord has any other doubt,
 Let him propound it.

LORD TRANSIT.

You was at the castle,
 And visited my Lady Transit there
 The instant I had left it.

SIR CHARLES.

I was there,
 And only found admission to your lady
 On the surmise that I might be encharg'd
 With some kind message from you ; some farewell
 That look'd like pity, which you never felt.

FAIRFORD.

There, my Lord Transit, have you heard enough ?
 Will that content you ?

HEARTRIGHT.

Come, no more of this.
 His heart is wounded deep, and deep enough ;

Your acids will but agonize it more.
 Look, look! the load-star that directs his course
 Beams in your daughter's eyes. See where he
 moves,

And follows as its soft attraction draws,
 To its safe haven, there to rest for ever.

(Lord Transit during this speech fondly advances towards his wife, and in conclusion falls into her arms.)

FAIRFORD.

There, there! All's over!—Heartright, I cou'd hug
 you,

'Sdeath, I cou'd strangle you, but that I love you.
 Oh, you can smile—Egad, I'm pleas'd to see it.

HEARTRIGHT.

Yes, 't is a sympathy my muscles have,
 A kind of trick, when I see others happy.
 Jests are not apt to move them.

FAIRFORD.

Nephew George,
 I won't say much to you. I feel the more.

LORD TRANSIT.

When Mercy and Forgiveness are gone forth,
 The moment is auspicious to offenders.
 May it not then be time for us, who feel
 And own our imperfections, to prefer
 The only plea that we presume to urge—
 A zeal to profit, and a wish to please?

END OF THE COMEDY.

EPILOGUE.

WILL a Hint do for every Husband? No:
Here and there one deserves a knock-down blow.
The surly chuff, whose malice can abuse
His gentle dame, will hardly hear the Muse;
Whilst you, whose untir'd patience still survives
Our curtain lecture, may endure your wives.

But, is the fault for ever with the men?
Not always—about nine times out of ten.
Why then, you'll say, do they expound the laws
So much in favour of the husband's cause?
Why did a certain Judge prescribe a stick,
Provided only 'twas not over thick?

Aye, why, indeed? I hope that learned brother,
When he took one stick, gave his wife another.

The sooty Hymen, who beside the Tweed
Rivets love's fetters on with holy speed,
Case-harden'd as his steel, heeds no complaints,
Nor cares what father fumes, what mother faints.
His rattling anvil stops Compassion's ears,
And the hot forge exhausts his source of tears;
Nothing to him, what future ills betide
The tricking bridegroom, or the truant bride:
When craft and folly play their desp'rate game,
If the knave cheats, the dupe must share the blame.

But when true love in equal union binds
Harmonious tempers and congenial minds,—
If Time's cold hand shall wither beauty's bloom,
And the gay features deepen into gloom,—
That is the husband's sacred hour to prove
The strength of honour, and the truth of love;
That is the time to guard, support, and raise
The drooping partner of his happier days,—
Like the firm oak, whose branches wide and strong
Shield the fond vine, that clung to it so long:
Then if his past experience can impart
A Hint to Husbands,—it will reach the heart.

PROLOGUE,

Written by W. T. FITZGERALD, Esq.

SPOKEN BY MR. BETTERTON.

IN ev'ry age, the trump of deathless fame
Proclaims the warrior's and the poet's name;
Painting and sculpture all their pow'rs combine,
And *laurels* deck the bard's and hero's thrine.
No further can the parallel extend,
The poet's honours on success depend;
While Fortune's frown can ne'er molest the brave,
Nor blast the laurel springing from his grave.
An equal wreath impartial Fame supplies,
To him who conquers, and to him who dies;
For British valor was displayed, not more
On Nile's proud flood, than Helder's barren shore!
The chance of war the bravest may control,
But leaves untouch'd the courage of the soul;
And England gives her heroes, ever dear!
The shout of triumph, or the starting tear.
Not so the Bard—with him success is all!
When Fortune frowns, his air-built castles fall:
But if she smiles, he sails with prosperous breeze,
Like the small Nautilus o'er Summer seas;
Whose little oars on ocean's bosom sweep,
Fearless of all the monsters of the deep.

(After a pause.) Oft at *this Bar*, our Author has been *tried*,
Where English Judges take the pris'ner's side!
Guilty of faults no doubt he will appear,
But human errors find acquittal here——
Where e'en the friendless always meet support,
From honest Juries, and an upright Court.
Critics, who rule o'er politics and plays,
If you are adverse, vain the poet's lays!
“ You, who with equal hands the balance hold,
“ Whose just decision ne'er was bought or sold,
“ But who to ev'ry candidate dispense
“ His lot of humour, and his share of sense,”
Protect our Author on the coming day,
And though you damn the Prologue—spare the Play:
To your decree each Dramatist must bow,
Give but your aid, and that will “ Speed the Plough!”

The lines marked with inverted commas were omitted.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir Philip Blandford	-	Mr. POPE.
Morrington	- - -	Mr. MURRAY.
Sir Abel Handy	- -	Mr. MUNDEN.
Bob Handy	- - -	Mr. FAWCETT.
Henry	- - -	Mr. H. JOHNSTON.
Farmer Ashfield	- -	Mr. KNIGHT.
Evergreen	- - -	Mr. DAVENPORT.
Gerald	- - -	Mr. WADDY.
Postillion	- - -	Mr. ABBOT.
Young Handy's Servant		Mr. KLANERT.
Peter	- - -	Mr. ATKINS.
Miss Blandford	- -	Mrs. H. JOHNSTON.
Lady Handy	- -	Mrs. DIEDIN.
Susan Ashfield	- -	Miss MURRAY.
Dame Ashfield	- -	Mrs. DAVENPORT.

SPEED THE PLOUGH.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*In the fore ground a Farm House—
A view of a Castle at a distance.*

Farmer ASHFIELD *discovered with his jug and pipe.*

*Enter Dame ASHFIELD in a riding dress, and a
basket under her arm.*

ASHFIELD.

WELL, Dame, welcome whoam. What
news does thee bring vrom market?

Dame. What news, husband? What I always
told you; that Farmer Grundy's wheat brought
five shillings a quarter more than ours did.

Ash. All the better vor he.

Dame. Ah! the sun seems to shine on purpose
for him.

Ash. Come, come, Missus, as thee has not the
grace to thank God for prosperous times, dan't thee
grumble when they be unkindly a bit.

Dame. And I assure you Dame Grundy's butter was quire the crack of the market.

Ash. Be quiet, wo lye? aleways ding, dinging Dame Grundy into my ears—what will Mrs. Grundy zay? What will Mrs. Grundy think?—Casn't thee be quiet, let ur alone, and behave thyzel pratty?

Dame. Certainly I can—I'll tell thee, Tummas, what she said at church last Sunday.

Ash. Canst thee tell what parson zaid? Noa—Then I'll tell thee—A' zaid that envy were as foul a weed as grows, and cankers all wholesome plants that be near it—that's what a'zaid.

Dame. And do you think I envy Mrs. Grundy indeed?

Ash. What dant thee letten her aloane then—I do verily think when thee goest to t'other world, the vurst question thee't ax 'il be, if Mrs. Grundy's there—Zoa be quiet, and behave pratty, do'ye—Has thee brought whoam the Salisbury news?

Dame. No, Tummas; but I have brought a rare wadjet of news with me. First and foremost I saw such a mort of coaches, servants, and wag-gons, all belonging to Sir Abel Handy, and all coming to the Castle—and a handsome young man, dressed all in lace, pull'd off his hat to me, and said—"Mrs. Ashfield, do me the honour of "presenting that letter to your husband."—So, there he stood without his hat—Oh, Tummas, had you seen how Mrs. Grundy looked!

Ash. Dom Mrs. Grundy—be quiet, and let I read, wo lye? (*reads*) "My dear Farmer" (*taking off his hat*), Thankye, Zur—zame to you we all my heart and soul—"My dear Farmer"—

Dame. Farmer—Why, you are blind, Tummas; it is—"My dear Father"—'Tis from our own dear Susan.

Ash.

Ash. Odds! dickens and daizeys! zoo it be, zure enow!—"My dear Feyther, you will be surprized"—Zoo I be, he, he! What pretty writing, beant it? all as strait as thof it were ploughed—"Surprised to hear that in a few hours I shall embrace you—Nelly, who formerly was our servant, has fortunately married Sir Abel Handy Bart."—

Dame. Handy Bart—Pugh! Bart. stands for Baronight, mun.

Ash. Likely, likely—Drabbit it, only to think of the zwaps and changes of this world!

Dame. Our Nelly married to a great Baronet! I wonder, Tummas, what Mrs. Grundy will say?

Ash. Now, woolye be quiet, and let I read—"And the has proposed bringing me to see you; an offer, I hope, as acceptable to my dear feyther"—

Dame. "And mother"—

Ash. Bless her, how prettily she do write feyther, dant she?

Dame. And mother.

Ash. Ees, but feyther first, though—"As acceptable to my dear feyther and mother, as to their affectionate daughter—Susan Ashfield"—Now beant that a pratty letter?

Dame. And, Tummas, is not she a pretty girl?

Ash. Ees; and as good as she be pratty—Drabbit it, I do feel zoo happy, and zoo warm,—for all the world like the zun in harvest.

Dame. Oh, Tummas, I shall be so pleased to see her, I shan't know whether I stand on my head or my heels.

Ash. Stand on thy head! vor sheame o'thyzel—behave pratty, do.

SPEED THE PLOUGH.

Dame. Nay, I meant no harm—Eh, here comes friend Evergreen the gardener, from the Castle. Bless me, what a hurry the old man is in.

Enter EVERGREEN.

Everg. Good day, honest Thomas.

Asb. Zame to you, measter Evergreen.

Everg. Have you heard the news?

Dame. Anything about Mrs. Grundy?

Asb. Dame, be quiet, woolye now?

Everg. No, no—The news is, that my master, Sir Philip Blandford, after having been abroad for twenty years, returns this day to the Castle; and that the reason of his coming, is to marry his only daughter to the son of Sir Abel Handy, I think they call him.

Dame. As sure as twopence, that is Nelly's husband.

Everg. Indeed!—Well, Sir Abel and his son will be here immediately; and, Farmer, you must attend them.

Asb. Likely, likely.

Everg. And, mistress, come and lend us a hand at the Castle, will you?—Ah, twenty long years since I have seen Sir Philip—Poor Gentleman! bad, bad health—worn almost to the grave, I am told.—What a lad do I remember him—till that dreadful—(*checking himself.*) But where is Henry? I must see him—must caution him (*a gun is discharged at a distance*). That's his gun, I suppose—he is not far then—Poor Henry!

Dame. Poor Henry! I like that indeed! What, though he be nobody knows who, there is not a girl in the parish that is not ready to pull caps for him

him—The Miss Grundys, genteel as they think themselves, would be glad to snap at him—If he were our own, we could not love him better.

Everg. And he deserves to be loved—Why, he's as handsome as a peach tree in blossom; and his mind is as free from weeds as my favourite carnation bed. But, Thomas, run to the Castle, and receive Sir Abel and his son.

Ash. I wool, I wool—Zo, good day, (*bowing.*) Let every man make his bow, and behave pratty—that's what I say—Missus, do'ye shew un Sue's letter, woolye? Doye letten see how pratty she do write feyther. [*Exit.*]

Dame. Now Tummas is gone, I'll tell you such a story about Mrs. Grundy—But come, step in, you must needs be weary; and I am sure a mug of harvest beer, sweetened with a hearty welcome, will refresh you. [*Exeunt into the house.*]

SCENE II.—*Outside and Gate of the Castle.—*
Servants cross the Stage, laden with different Packages.

Enter ASHFIELD.

Ash. Drabbit it, the wold castle 'ull be hardly big enow to hold all thic lumber—Who do come here? A do zeem a comical zoart ov a man—Oh, Abel Handy, I suppoze.

Sir Abel Handy (without). Gently there! mind how you go, Robin. [*A crash.*]

He enters—SERVANT following.

Zounds and fury! you have killed the whole county, you dog! for you have broke the patent
I medicine

medicine chest, that was to keep them all alive!—Richard, gently!—take care of the grand Archimedian corkscrews!—Bless my soul! so much to think of! Such wonderful inventions in conception, in concoction, and in completion!

Enter PETER.

Well, Peter, is the carriage much broke?

Peter. Smashed all to pieces. I thought as how, Sir, that your infallible axletree would give way.

Sir Abel. Confound it, it has compelled me to walk so far in the wet, that I declare my waterproof shoes are completely soaked through.

[Exit PETER.]

Now to take a view with my new-invented glass!
(*pulls out his glass.*)

Ash. (*loud and bluntly.*) Zarvent, Zur! Zarvent!

Sir Abel (*starting*). What's that? Oh, good day.—Devil take the fellow! (*aside.*)

Ash. Thankye, Zur; zame to you wi' all my heart and zoul.

Sir Abel. Pray, friend, cou'd you contrive gently to inform me, where I can find one Farmer Ashfield.

Ash. Ha, ha, ha! (*laughing loudly.*) Excuse my tittering a bit—but your axing myzel vor I be so domm'd zilly (*bowing and laughing*).—Ah! you stare at I beceas I be bashful and daunted.

Sir Abel. You are very bashful to be sure. I declare I'm quite weary.

Ash. If you'll walk into the Castle, you may zit down, I dare zay.

Sir Abel. May I, indeed! you are a fellow of extraordinary civility.

Ash.

Asb. There's no denying it, Zur.

Sir Abel. No, I'll sit here.

Asb. What! on the ground? Why, you'll wring your ould withers—

Sir Abel. On the ground—no, I always carry my seat with me (*spreads a small camp-chair*).—Here I'll sit and examine the surveyor's account of the Castle.

Asb. Dickens and daizeys! what a gentleman you wou'd be to shew at a vair!

Sir Abel. Silence, fellow, and attend—"An account of the castle and domain of Sir Philip Blandford, intended to be settled as a marriage portion on his daughter, and the son of Sir Abel Handy, by Frank Flourish, surveyor.—Imprimis—The premises command an exquisite view of the isle of Wight."—Charming! delightful! I don't see it though (*rising*)—I'll try with my new glass—my own invention—(*he looks through the glass*) Yes, there I caught it—Ah! now I see it plainly—Eh! no—I don't see it, do you?

Asb. Noa, Zur, I doant—but little zweeepy do tell I he can zee a bit out from the top of the chimbley—zoa, an you've a mind to crawl up you may zee un too, he, he!

Sir Abel. Thank you—but damn your titter! (*reads*)—"Fish ponds well stocked"—That's a good thing, Farmer.

Asb. Likely, likely—but I doant think the vishes do thrive much in theas ponds.

Sir Abel. No! Why?

Asb. Why, the ponds be always dry i' the summer; and I be tuoid that beant wholesome vor the little vishes.

Sir Abel. Not very, I believe—Well said surveyor! "A cool summer-house."

Asb.

Asb. Ees, Zur, quite cool—by reason the roof be tumbled in.

Sir Abel. Better and better—"The whole capable of the greatest improvement."—Come, that seems true however—I shall have plenty to do, that's one comfort—I'll have such contrivances! I'll have a canal run through my kitchen.—I must give this rustic some idea of my consequence (*aside*). You must know, Farmer, you have the honour of conversing with a man who has obtained patents for tweezers, tooth-picks, and tinder-boxes—to a philosopher who has been consulted on the Wapping docks and the Gravesend tunnel; and who has now in hand two inventions which will render him immortal—the one is, converting saw-dust into deal boards, and the other is, a plan of cleaning rooms by a steam engine—and, Farmer, I mean to give prizes for industry—I'll have a ploughing match.

Asb. Will you, Zur?

Sir Abel. Yes; for I consider a healthy young man between the handles of a plough, as one of the noblest illustrations of the prosperity of Britain.

Asb. Faith and troth! there be some tightish hands in theas parts, I promise ye.

Sir Abel. And, farmer, it shall precede the hymeneal festivities——

Asb. Nan!

Sir Abel. Blockhead! the ploughing match shall take place as soon as Sir Philip Blandford and his daughter arrive.

Asb. Oh, likely, likely!

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Abel, I beg to say, my master will be here immediately.

Sir

Sir Abel. And, Sir, I beg to ask who possesses the happiness of being your master?

Serv. Your son, Sir, Mr. Robert Handy.

Sir Abel. Indeed! and where is Bob?

Serv. I left him, Sir, in the belfrey of the church.

Sir Abel. Where?

Serv. In the belfrey of the church.

Sir Abel. In the belfrey of the church! What was he doing there?

Serv. Why, Sir, the *natives* were ringing a peal in honour of our arrival—when my master finding they knew nothing of the matter, went up to the steeple to instruct them, and ordered me to proceed to the Castle—I have the honour—

[*Bows and exit.*]

Sir Abel. Wonderful! My Bob, you must know, is an astonishing fellow!—you have heard of the *admirable Crichton*, maybe? Bob's of the same kidney! I contrive, he executes—*Sir Abel invenit, Bob fecit.* He can do everything—everything!

Ash. All the better vor he. Izay, Zur, as he can turn his hand to everything, pray, in what way med he earn his livelihood?

Sir Abel. Earn his livelihood!

Ash. Ees, Zur—How do he gain his bread?

Sir Abel. Bread! Oh, he can't earn his bread. Bless you! he's a genius.

Ash. Genius! Drabbit it, I have got a horze o' thic name, but dom' un he'll never work—never.

Sir Abel. Egad! here comes my boy Bob!—Eh! no—it is not! no.

Enter

Enter POSTBOY with a round Hat and Cane.

Why who the devil are you?

Postb. I am the postboy, your Honour; but the Gem'man said I did not know how to drive, so he mounted my horse, and made me get inside—Here he is.

Enter HANDY, jun. with a postboy's cap and whip.

Handy, jun. Ah, my old Dad, is that you?

Sir Abel. Certainly; the only doubt is, if that be you?

Handy, jun. Oh, I was teaching this fellow to drive—Nothing is so horrible as people pretending to do what they are unequal to—Give me my hat—That's the way to use a whip.

Postb. Sir, you know you have broke the horses knees all to pieces.

Handy, jun. Hush, there's a guinea (*apart*).

Sir Abel (to ASHFIELD). You see Bob can do every thing. But, Sir, when you knew I had arrived from Germany, why did you not pay your duty to me in London?

Handy, jun. Sir, I heard you were but four days married, and I would not interrupt your honeymoon.

Sir Abel. Four days! oh, you might have come (*sighing*).

Handy, jun. I hear you have taken to your arms a simple rustic, untrophicated by fashionable follies, —a full blown blossom of nature.

Sir Abel. Yes!

Handy, jun. How does it answer?

Sir Abel. So, so!

Handy,

Handy, jun. Any thorns?

Sir Abel. A few!

Handy, jun. I must be introduced—where is she?

Sir Abel. Not within thirty miles; for I don't hear her.

Asb. Ha, ha, ha!

Handy, jun. Who is that?

Sir Abel. Oh, a pretty behaved tittering friend of mine.

Asb. Zarvent, Zur—no offence I do hope—Could not help tittering a bit at Nelly—when she were zarvent maid wi' I, she had a tightish prattle wi' her, that's vor zartain.

Handy, jun. Oh! so then my honored Mamma was the fervant of this tittering gentleman—I say, father, perhaps she has not lost the tightish prattle he speaks of.

Sir Abel. My dear boy, come here—Prattle! I say, did you ever live next door to a pewterer's?—that's all—you understand me—did you ever hear a dozen fire-engines full gallop?—were you ever at Billingsgate in the sprat season?—or——

Handy, jun. Ha, ha!

Sir Abel. Nay, don't laugh, Bob.

Handy, jun. Indeed, Sir, you think of it too seriously. The storm, I dare say, soon blows over.

Sir Abel. Soon! You know what a trade wind is, don't you, Bob? why, she thinks no more of the latter end of her speech, than she does of the latter end of her life——

Handy, jun. Ha, ha!

Sir Abel. But I won't be laughed at—I'll knock any man down that laughs!

Handy,

Handy, jun. I beg your pardon—but how in the name of Babel did she wheedle you into matrimony?

Sir Abel. Why, she dealt with me as the devil deals with a witch—humoured me for a time, that I might be her slave for ever! I thought I was marrying a notable woman, who would have eased my head of part of its burthen:—instead of which——

Handy, jun. She has added to its burthen.

Sir Abel. You know, my dear boy, my aim is to make my head useful—

Handy, jun. And her aim, I suppose, is to make it ornamental.

Sir Abel. Bob, if you can say anything pleasant, I'll trouble you; if not, do what my wife can't—hold your tongue.

Handy, jun. I'll shew you what I can do—I'll amuse you with this native (*apart*).

Sir Abel. Do—do—quiz him—at him, Bob.

Handy, jun. I say, Farmer, you are a set of jolly fellows here, an't you?

Ash. Ees, Zur, deadly jolly—excepting when we be otherwise, and then we beant.

Handy, jun. Play at cricket, don't you?

Ash. Ees, Zur; we Hampshire lads conceat we can bowl a bit or thereabouts.

Handy, jun. And cudgel too, I suppose?

Sir Abel. At him, Bob.

Ash. Ees, Zur, we sometimes break oon an-others heads by way of being agreeable, and the like o'that.

Handy, jun. Understand all the guards? (*putting himself in an attitude of cudgelling.*)

Ash. Can't zay I do, Zur.

Handy,

Handy, jun. What ! hit in this way, eh ? (*makes a hit at ASHFIELD, which he parries, and hits Young HANDY violently.*)

Asb. Noa, Zur, we do hit thic way.

Handy, jun. Zounds and fury !

Sir Abel. Why, Bob, he has broke your head.

Handy, jun. Yes ; he rather hit me—he some-how——

Sir Abel. He did indeed, Bob.

Handy, jun. Damn him—The fact is, I am out of practice.

Asb. You need not be, Zur ; I'll gi' ye a belly full any day, wi' all my heart and soul.

Handy, jun. No, no, thank you—Farmer, what's your name ?

Asb. My name be Tummas Ashfield—anything to say against my name ? (*threatening.*)

Handy, jun. No, no—Ashfield ! shou'd he be the father of my pretty Susan—Pray, have you a daughter ?

Asb. Ees, I have—anything to zay against she ?

Handy, jun. No, no ; I think her a charming creature.

Asb. Do ye faith and troth—Come, that be deadly kind o'ye however—Do you zee, I were frighful she were not agreeable.

Handy, jun. Oh, she's extremely agreeable to me, I assure you.

Asb. I vow, it be quite pratty in you to take notice of Sue. I do hope, Zur, breaking your head will break noa squares—She be a coming down to theas parts wi' lady our maid Nelly, as wur—your spouse, Zur.

Handy, jun. The devil she is ! that's awkward !

Asb. I do hope you'll be kind to Sue when she do come, woolye, Zur ?

Handy, jun. You may depend on it.

Sir Abel. I dare say you may. Come, Farmer, attend us.

Ash. Ees, Zur; wi' all respect—Gentlemen, pray walk thic way, and I'll walk before you.

Sir Abel. Now, that's what he calls behaving pretty. [Exit.]

Handy, jun. Susan Ashfield coming here!

Sir Abel. What, Bob, some intrigue, eh?

Handy, jun. Oh fie!

Sir Abel. Consider, Sir, you come here to marry the beautiful and accomplished Miss Blandford—and consider on the other hand, you have already got a slight memorandum of the Farmer's agreeable way. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—*A Grove.*

(MORRINGTON comes down the stage, wrapped in a great coat—He looks about—then at his watch, and whistles—which is answered.)

Enter GERALD.

Mor. Here, Gerald! Well, my trusty fellow, is Sir Philip arrived?

Ger. No, Sir; but hourly expected.

Mor. Tell me, how does the castle look?

Ger. Sadly decayed, Sir.

Mor. I hope, Gerald, you were not observed.

Ger. I fear otherwise, Sir: on the skirts of the domain I encountered a stripling with his gun; but

but I darted into that thicket, and so avoided him.

(HENRY appears in the back ground, in a shooting dress, attentively observing them.)

Mor. Have you gained any intelligence?

Ger. None: the report that reached us was false—The infant certainly died with its mother—Hush! conceal yourself—we are observed—this way.

They retreat.—HENRY advances.

Henry. Hold! as a friend one word!

They exeunt, he follows them and returns.
Again they have escaped me——“The infant died
“with its mother”—This agony of doubt is insupportable.

Enter EVERGREEN.

Everg. Henry, well met.

Henry. Have you seen strangers?

Everg. No!

Henry. Two but now have left this place—They spoke of a lost child—My busy fancy led me to think I was the object of their search—I pressed forward, but they avoided me.

Everg. No, no; it could not be you; for no one on earth knows but myself, and——

Henry. Who, Sir Philip Blandford?

Everg. I am sworn, you know, my dear boy; I am solemnly sworn to silence.

Henry. True, my good old friend; and if the knowledge of who I am can only be obtained at
the

the price of thy perjury, let me for ever remain ignorant—let the corroding thought still haunt my pillow, cross me at every turn, and render me insensible to the blessings of health and liberty—yet, in vain do I suppress the thought—who am I? why thus abandoned? perhaps the despised offspring of guilt—Ah! is it so? (*seizing him violently.*)

Everg. Henry, do I deserve this?

Henry. Pardon me, good old man! I'll act more reasonably—I'll deem thy silence mercy.

Everg. That's wisely said.

Henry. Yet it is hard to think that the most detested reptile that Nature forms, or man pursues, has, when he gains his den, a parent's pitying breast to shelter in; but I——

Everg. Come, come, no more of this.

Henry. Well!——I visited to-day that young man who was so grievously bruised by the breaking of his team.

Everg. That was kindly done, Henry.

Henry. I found him suffering under extreme torture, yet a ray of joy shot from his languid eye—for his medicine was administered by a father's hand—it was a mother's precious tear that dropt upon his wound—Oh, how I envied him!

Everg. Still on the same subject—I tell thee, if thou art not acknowledged by thy race, why, then become the noble founder of a new one. The most valuable carnations were once seedlings—and the pride of my flower-bed is now a Henry, which, when known, will be envied by every florist in Britain—Come with me to the Castle for the last time.

Henry. The last time!

Everg.

Everg. Aye, boy; for when Sir Philip arrives, you must avoid him.

Henry. Not see him! where exists the power that shall prevent me?

Everg. Henry, if you value your own peace of mind—if you value an old man's comfort, avoid the Castle.

Henry (aside). I must dissemble with this honest creature—Well, I am content.

Everg. That's right—that's right, Henry—Be but thou resigned and virtuous, and he who cloaths the lily of the field, will be a parent to thee.

[*Exeunt.*

THE END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE I.—*A Lodge belonging to the Castle.*

(Dame ASHFIELD discovered making Lace.)

Enter HANDY, jun.

HANDY, jun.

A SINGULAR situation this my old Dad has placed me in; brought me here to marry a woman of fashion and beauty, while I have been professing and I've a notion feeling the most ardent love for the pretty Susan Ashfield—Propriety says, take Miss Blandford—Love says, take Susan—Fashion says, take both—but would Susan consent to such an arrangement?—and if she refused, would I consent to part with her? Oh, time enough to put that question when the previous one is disposed of—(seeing DAME) How do you do? How do you do?—Making lace I perceive—Is it a common employment here?

Dame. Oh, no, Sir! nobody can make it in these parts but myself!—Mrs. Grundy indeed pretends—but, poor woman! she knows no more of it than you do.

Handy,

Handy, jun. Than I do! that's vastly well!—
My dear Madam, I passed two months at Mechlin
for the express purpose.

Dame. Indeed!

Handy, jun. You don't do it right—now I can
do it much better than that. Give me leave, and
I'll shew you the true Mechlin method (*turns the
cushion round, kneels down and begins working*).
First you see, so—then, so—

Enter Sir ABEL and Miss BLANDFORD.

Sir Abel. I vow, Miss Blandford, fair as I ever
thought you, the air of your native land has given
additional lustre to your charms!—(*Aside*) If
my wife looked so—Ah! But where can Bob be?—
You must know, Miss, my son is a very clever
fellow! you won't find him wasting his time in
boyish frivolity!—no; you will find him—(*sees
him.*)

Miss B. Is that your son, Sir?

Sir Abel (*abashed*). Yes, that's Bob!

Miss B. Pray, Sir, is he making lace, or is he
making love?

Sir Abel. Curse me if I can tell (*bits him with
his stick*). Get up, you dog! don't you see Miss
Blandford?

Handy, jun. (*starting up.*) Zounds! how un-
lucky! Ma'am, your most obedient servant (*en-
deavours to hide the work*). Curse the cushion!
(*throws it off*).

Dame. Oh! he has spoil'd my lace!

Handy, jun. Hush! I'll make you a thousand
yards another time—You see, Ma'am, I was ex-
plaining to this good woman—what—what need

not be explained again—Admirably handsome by Heaven! (*aside.*)

Sir Abel. Is not she, Bob?

Handy, jun. (*to Miss B.*) In your journey from the coast, I conclude you took London in your way? Hush! (*to DAME.*)

Miss B. Oh no, Sir, I could not so soon venture into the *beau monde*; a stranger just arrived from Germany—

Handy, jun. The very reason—the most fashionable introduction possible! but I perceive, Sir, you have here imitated other German importations, and only restored to us our native excellence.

Miss B. I assure you, Sir, I am eager to seize my birth-right, the pure and envied immunities of an English woman!

Handy, jun. Then I trust, Madam, you will be patriot enough to agree with me, that as a nation is poor, whose only wealth is importation—that therefore the humble native artist may ever hope to obtain from his countrymen those fostering smiles, without which genius must sicken and industry decay. But it requires no *valet de place* to conduct you through the purlieus of fashion, for now the way of the world is, for every one to pursue their own way, and following the fashion is differing as much as possible from the rest of your acquaintance.

Miss B. But surely, Sir, there is some distinguishing feature by which the votaries of fashion are known?

Handy, jun. Yes; but that varies extremely—sometimes fashionable celebrity depends on a high waist—sometimes on a low carriage—sometimes on high play, and sometimes on low breeding—last winter it rested solely on green peas!

Miss

Miss B. Green peas!

Handy, jun. Green peas!—that Lady was the most enchanting who could bring the greatest quantity of green peas to her table at Christmas! the struggle was tremendous! Mrs. Rowley Powley had the best of it by five pecks and a half, but it having been unfortunately proved, that at her ball there was room to dance and eat conveniently—that no lady received a black eye, and no coachman was killed, the thing was voted decent and comfortable, and scouted accordingly.

Miss B. Is comfort then incompatible with fashion?

Handy, jun. Certainly!—Comfort in high life would be as preposterous as a lawyer's bag crammed with truth, or his wig decorated with coquelicot ribbons! No—it is not comfort and selection that is sought, but numbers and confusion! So that a fashionable party resembles Smithfield market,—only a good one when plentifully stocked—and ladies are reckoned by the score like sheep, and their husbands by droves like horned cattle!

Miss B. Ha, ha! and the conversation—

Handy, jun. Oh! like the assembly—confused, vapid, and abundant; as “How do, Ma'am!—no accident at the door?—he, he!”—“Only my carriage broke to pieces!”—“I hope you had not your pocket picked!”—“Won't you sit down to faro?”—“Have you many to-night?”—“A few, about six hundred!”—“Were you at Lady Overall's?”—“Oh yes; a delicious crowd and plenty of peas, he, he!”—and thus runs the fashionable race.

Sir Abel. Yes; and a precious run it is—full gallop all the way: first they run on—then their fortune is run through—then bills are run up—
then

then they are run hard—then they've a run of luck—then they run out, and then they run away!—But I'll forgive fashion all its follies in consideration of one of its blessed laws.

Handy, jun. What may that be?

Sir Abel. That husband and wife must never be seen together.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Miss Blandford, your father expects you.

Miss B. I hope I shall find him more composed.

Handy, jun. Is Sir Philip ill?

Miss B. His spirits are extremely depressed, and since we arrived here this morning his dejection has dreadfully increased.

Handy, jun. But I hope we shall be able to laugh away despondency.

Miss B. Sir, if you are pleased to consider my esteem as an object worthy your possession, I know no way of obtaining it so certain as by your shewing every attention to my dear father. (*As they are going*)

Enter ASHFIELD.

Ash. Dame! Dame! she be come!

Dame. Who? Susan! our dear Susan?

Ash. Ees—zo come along—Oh, Sir Abel! Lady Nelly, your spouse, do order you to go to her directly!

Handy, jun. Order! you mistake—

Sir Abel. No, he don't—she generally prefers that word.

Miss

Miss B. Adieu! Sir Abel.

[*Exeunt Miss BLANDFORD and HANDY, jun.*]

Sir Abel. Oh! if my wife had such a pretty way with her mouth!

Dame. And how does Susan look?

Ash. That's what I do want to know, zoa come along—Woo ye though—Missus, let's behave pratty—Zur, if you please, Dame and I will let you walk along wi' us.

Sir Abel. How condescending! Oh, you are a pretty-behaved fellow!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—Farmer ASHFIELD's Kitchen.

Enter Lady HANDY and SUSAN.

Susan. My dear home, thrice welcome!—What gratitude I feel to your Ladyship for this indulgence!

Lady H. That's right, child!

Susan. And I am sure you partake my pleasure in again visiting a place where you received every protection and kindness my parents could shew you, for I remember while you lived with my father—

Lady H. Child! don't put your memory to any fatigue on my account—you may transfer the remembrance of who I was to aid your more perfect recollection of who I am.

Susan. Lady Handy!

Lady H. That's right, child!—I am not angry.

Susan (*looking out*). How luxuriantly the honey-suckle has grown that I planted!—Ah! I see my dear father and mother coming through the garden.

Lady

Lady H. Oh! now I shall be carested to death; but I must endure the shock of their attentions.

Enter Farmer and Dame with Sir ABEL.

Ash. My dear Susan! (*they run to SUSAN.*)

Dame. My sweet child! give me a kiss.

Ash. Hald thee! Feyther first though—Well, I be as mortal glad to zee thee as never war—and how be'st thee? and how do thee like Lunnun town?—it be a deadly lively place I be tuold.

Dame. Is not she a sweet girl?

Sir Abel. That she is.

Lady H. (*with affected dignity.*) Does it occur to any one present that Lady Handy is in the room?

Sir Abel. Oh, Lud! I'm sure, my dear wife, I never forget that you are in the room.

Ash. Drabbit it! I overlooked Lady Nelly, sure enow; but consider, there be zome difference between thee and our own Susan! I be deadly glad to zee thee hqwever.

Dame. So am I, Lady Handy!

Ash. Don't ye take it unkind I ha'nt a bus'd thee yet—meant no flight indeed (*kisses her*).

Lady H. Oh! shocking! (*aside.*)

Ash. No harm I do hope, Zur.

Sir Abel. None at all.

Ash. But dafh it, Lady Nelly, what do make thee paint thy vace all over we rud ochre zoo? Be it vor thy spouse to know thee?—that be the way I do know my sheep.

Sir Abel. The flocks of fashion are all marked so, Farmer.

Ash. Likely! Drabbit it! thee do make a tightish kind of a Ladyship zure enow.

Dame.

Dame. That you do, my Lady! you remember the old house?

Asb. Aye; and all about it, doant ye? Nelly! my Lady!

Lady H. Oh! I'm quite shock'd—Susan, child! prepare a room where I may dress before I proceed to the Castle.

[*Exit SUSAN.*]

Enter HANDY, jun.

Handy, jun. I don't see Susan—I say, Dad! is that my Mamma?

Sir Abel. Yes—speak to her.

Handy, jun. (*chucking her under the chin.*) A fine girl upon my soul!

Lady Handy. Fine girl indeed! Is this behaviour?

Handy, jun. Oh! beg pardon, most honoured parent (*she curtsies*)—that's a damned bad curtsy. I can teach you to make a much better curtsy than that!

Lady H. You teach me, that am old enough to—hem!

Handy, jun. Oh! that toss of the head was very bad indeed—Look at me!—That's the thing!

Lady H. Am I to be insulted? Sir Abel, you know I seldom condescend to talk.

Sir Abel. Don't say so, my Lady; you wrong yourself.

Lady H. But when I do begin, you know not where it will end.

Sir Abel. Indeed I do not (*aside*).

Lady H. I insist on receiving all possible respect from your son.

Handy,

Handy, jun. And you shall have it, my dear girl!—Madam, I mean.

Lady H. I vow I am agitated to that degree—Sir Abel! my fan.

Sir Abel. Yes, my dear—Bob, look here, a little contrivance of my own. While others carry swords and such like dreadful weapons in their canes, I more gallantly carry a fan (*removes the head of his cane and draws out a fan*); a pretty thought, isn't it? (*presents it to his Lady.*)

Ash. Some difference between thic stick and mine, beant there, Zur? (*to HANDY, jun.*)

Handy, jun. (*moving away.*) Yes there is.—(*To Lady H.*) Do you call that fanning yourself? (*taking the fan*) My dear Ma'am, this is the way to manœuvre a fan.

Lady H. Sir, you shall find (*to HANDY, jun.*) I have power enough to make you repent this behaviour, severely repent it.—Susan!

[*Exit, followed by Dame.*]

Handy, jun. Bravo! passion becomes her; she does that vastly well.

Sir Abel. Yes, practice makes perfect.

Enter SUSAN.

Susan. Did your Ladyship call?—Heavens! Mr. Handy!

Handy, jun. Hush! my angel! be composed! that letter will explain (*giving a letter, noticed by ASHFIELD*). Lady Handy wishes to see you.

Susan. Oh, Robert!

Handy, jun. At present, my love, no more.

[*Exit SUSAN, followed by ASHFIELD.*]

Sir

Sir Abel. What were you saying, Sir, to that young woman?

Handy, jun. Nothing particular, Sir. Where is Lady Handy going?

Sir Abel. To dress.

Handy, jun. I suppose she has found out the use of money.

Sir Abel. Yes; I'll do her the justice to say she encourages trade.—Why, do you know, Bob, my best coal-pit won't find her in white muslins—round her neck hangs an hundred acres at least; my noblest oaks have made wigs for her; my fat oxen have dwindled into Dutch pugs, and white mice; my India bonds are transmuted into shawls and otto of roses; and a magnificent mansion has shrunk into a diamond snuff-box.

Enter COUNTRYMAN.

Coun. Gentlemen, the folks be all got together, and the ploughs be ready—and——

Sir Abel. We are coming.

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

Handy, jun. Ploughs!

Sir Abel. Yes, Bob, we are going to have a grand agricultural meeting.

Handy, jun. Indeed!

Sir Abel. If I could but find a man able to manage my new-invented *curricule* plough, none of them would have a chance.

Handy, jun. My dear Sir, if there be anything on earth I can do, it is that.

Sir Abel. What?

Handy, jun. I rather fancy I can plough better than any man in England.

Sir

Sir Abel. You don't say so! What a clever fellow he is!—I say, Bob, if you would—

Handy, jun. No; I can't condescend.

Sir Abel. Condescend! why not?—much more creditable, let me tell you, than galloping a maggot for a thousand, or eating a live cat, or any other fashionable achievement.

Handy, jun. So it is—Egad! I will—I'll carry off the prize of industry.

Sir Abel. But should you lose, Bob.

Handy, jun. I lose! that's vastly well!

Sir Abel. True, with my curricule plough you could hardly fail.

Handy, jun. With my superior skill, Dad—Then, I say, how the newspapers will teem with the account.

Sir Abel. Yes.

Handy, jun. That universal genius, Handy junior, with a plough—

Sir Abel. Stop—invented by that ingenious machinist, Handy senior.—

Handy, jun. Gained the prize against the first husbandmen in Hampshire—Let our Bond-street butterflies emulate the example of Handy junior.—

Sir Abel. And let old City grubs cultivate the field of science, like Handy senior—Egad! I am so happy!

Lady Handy (without). Sir Abel!

Sir Abel. Ah! there comes a damper.

Handy, jun. Courage! you have many resources of happiness.

Sir Abel. Have I? I should be very glad to know them.

Handy, jun. In the first place you possess an excellent temper.

Sir

Sir Abel. So much the worse ; for if I had a bad one, I should be the better able to conquer hers.

Handy, jun. You enjoy good health—

Sir Abel. So much the worse ; for if I were ill she wouldn't come near me.

Handy, jun. Then you are rich—

Sir Abel. So much the worse ; for had I been poor she would not have married me. But I say, Bob, if you gain the prize, I'll have a patent for my plough.

Lady Handy (without). Sir Abel ! I say—

Handy, jun. Father, could not you get a patent for stopping that sort of noise ?

Sir Abel. If I could, what a sale it would have ! —No, Bob, a patent has been obtained for the only thing that will silence her—

Handy, jun. Aye—What's that ?

Sir Abel (in a whisper). A Coffin ! hush !—I'm coming, my dear.

Handy, jun. Ha, ha, ha !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Parlour in ASHFIELD's House.*

Enter ASHFIELD and WIFE.

Ash. I tell ye, I zee'd un gi' Susan a letter, an' I dan't like it a bit.

Dame. Nor I : if shame should come to the poor child—I say, Tummas, what wou! Mrs. Grundy say then ?

Ash. Dom Mrs. Grundy ; what wou'd my poor wold heart zay ? but I be bound it be all innocence.

c

Enter

Enter HENRY.

Dame. Ah, Henry! we have not seen thee at home all day.

Asb. And I do zomehow fanzie things dan't go zo clever when thee'rt away from farm.

Henry. My mind has been greatly agitated.

Asb. Well, won't thee go and zee the ploughing match?

Henry. Tell me, will not those who obtain prizes be introduced to the Castle?

Asb. Ees, and feasted in the great hall.

Henry. My good friend, I wish to become a candidate.

Dame. You, Henry!

Henry. It is time I exerted the faculties heaven has bestowed on me; and though my heavy fate crushes the proud hopes this heart conceives, still let me prove myself worthy of the place Providence has assigned me.—(*Aside*) Should I succeed, it will bring me to the presence of that man, who (I know not why) seems the dictator of my fate.—(*To them*) Will you furnish me with the means?

Asb. Will I!—Thou shalt ha' the best plough in the parish—I wish it were all gould for thy zake—and better cattle there can't be noowhere.

Henry. Thanks, my good friend—my benefactor—I have little time for preparation—So receive my gratitude, and farewell. [*Exit.*]

Dame. A blessing go with thee!

Asb. I zay, Henry, take Jolly, and Smiler, and Captain, but dan't ye take thic lazy beast Genius.—I'll be shot if having vive load an acre on my wheat land could please me more.

Dame.

Dame. Tummas! here comes Susan reading the letter.

Ash. How pale she do look! dan't she?

Dame. Ah! poor thing!—If——

Ash. Hauld thy tongue, woolye? [*They retire.*]

Enter SUSAN, reading the letter.

Susan. Is it possible! Can the man to whom I've given my heart write thus!—"I am compelled to marry Miss Blandford; but my love for my Susan is unalterable—I hope she will not, for an act of necessity, cease to think with tenderness on her faithful Robert."—Oh man! ungrateful man! it is from our bosoms alone you derive your power; how cruel then to use it, in fixing in those bosoms endless sorrow and despair!—"Still think with tenderness"—Base, dishonorable insinuation—He might have allowed me to esteem him. [*Locks up the letter in a box on the table, and exit weeping.*]

(*ASHFIELD and DAME come forward*).

Ash. Poor thing!—What can be the matter—She lock'd up the letter in thic box, and then burst into tears (*looks at the box*).

Dame. Yes, Tummas, she lock'd it in that box sure enough (*shakes a bunch of keys that hangs at her side*).

Ash. What be doing, Dame? what be doing?

Dame (*with affected indifference*). Nothing; I was only touching these keys,

(*They look at the box and keys significantly*).

Ash. A good tightish bunch!

Dame. Yes; they are of all sizes (*they look as before*).

Asb. Indeed!—Well—Eh!—Dame, why dan't ye speak? thou can't chatter fast enow zometimes.

Dame. Nay, Tummas—I dare say—if—you know best—but I think I could find——

Asb. Well, Eh!—you can juft try you knaw (*greatly agitated*). You can try, juft vor the vun on't; but mind, dan't ye make a noife (*she opens it*). Why, thee hasn't open'd it?

Dame. Nay, Tummas, you told me!

Asb. Did I?

Dame. There's the letter!

Asb. Well, why do ye gi't to I?—I dan't want it, I'm zure (*taking it—he turns it over—she eyes it eagerly—he is about to open it*)—She's coming! she coming! (*he conceals the letter, they tremble violently.*) No, she's gone into t'other room (*they hang their heads dejectedly, then look at each other*). What mun that feyther and mother be doing that do blush and tremble at their own dater's coming (*weeps*). Dang it, has she deserv'd it of us—Did she ever deceive us?—Were she not always the most open hearted, dutifullest, kindest—and thee to goa like a dom'd spy and open her box, poor thing!—

Dame. Nay, Tummas——

Asb. You did—I zaw you do it myzel—you look like a thief, now—you doe—Hush!—no—*Dame*—here be the letter—I won't reead a word on't; put it where thee vound it; and as thee vound it.

Dame. With all my heart (*she returns the letter to the box*).

Asb. (*embraces her.*) Now I can wi' pleasure hug my wold wife, and look my child in the vace again—I'll call her and ax her about it; and if she dan't speak without disguisement, I'll be bound to be

be shot—Dame, be the colour of sheame off my face yet?—I never zeed thee look ugly before——
 Susan, my dear Sue, come here abit, woolye?

Enter SUSAN.

Susan. Yes, my dear father.

Asb. Sue, we do wish to give thee abit of admonishing and parent-like konzultation.

Susan. I hope I have ever attended to your admonitions.

Asb. Ees, blefs thee, I do believe thee hast, lamb; but we all want our memories jogg'd abit, or why else do parson preach us all to sleep every Zunday—Zo thic be the topic—Dame and I, Sue, did zee a letter gi'd to thee, and thee—burst'd into tears, and lock'd un up in thic box—and then Dame and I—we—that's all.

Susan. My dear father, if I concealed the contents of that letter from your knowledge, it was because I did not wish your heart to share in the pain mine feels.

Asb. Dang it, didn't I tell thee zoo? (*to his Wife.*)

Dame. Nay, Tummas, did I say otherwise?

Susan. Believe me, my dear parents, my heart never gave birth to a thought my tongue feared to utter.

Asb. There, the very words I zaid!

Susan. If you wish to see the letter I will shew it to you (*she searches for the key*).

Dame. Here's a key will open it.

Asb. Drabbit it, hold thy tongue, thou wold fool! (*aside.*) No, Susan, I'll not zee it—I'll believe my child.

Susan. You shall not find your confidence ill-placed—it is true the gentleman has declared he

loved me; it is equally true that declaration was not unpleasing to me—Alas! it is also true, that his letter contains sentiments disgraceful to himself, and insulting to me!

Ash. Drabbit it, if I'd knaw'd that, when we were cudgelling abit, I wou'd ha' lapt my stick about his ribs pratty tightish, I wou'd.

Susan. Pray, father, don't you resent his conduct to me.

Ash. What! mayn't I leather un abit?

Susan. Oh, no! I've the strongest reasons to the contrary!

Ash. Well, Sue, I won't—I'll behave as pratty as I always do—but it be time to go to the green, and zee the fine zights—How I do hate the noise of thic dom'd bunch of keys—But blest thee, my child—dan't forget that vartue to a young woman be vor all the world like—like—Dang it, I ha' gotten it all in my head; but zomehow—I can't talk it—but vartue be to a young woman what corn be to a blade o'wheat, do ye zee; for while the corn be there it be glorious to the eye, and it be call'd the staff of life; but take that treasure away, and what do remain? why nought but thic worthless straw, that man and beast do tread upon. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—*An extensive View of a cultivated Country—A ploughed Field in the centre, in which are seen six different Ploughs and Horses—At one side a handsome Tent—A number of country People assembled.*

Enter ASHFIELD and DAME.

Ash. Make way! make way for the gentry! and, do ye hear, behave pratty as I do—Dang thee, stond back, or I'll knock thee down, I wool. *Enter*

Enter Sir ABEL and Miss BLANDFORD with Servants.

Sir Abel. It is very kind of you to honour our rustic festivities with your presence.

Miss B. Pray, Sir Abel, where is your son?

Sir Abel. What! Bob? Oh, you'll see him presently—(*nodding significantly*).—Here are the prize medals; and if you will condescend to present them, I'm sure they'll be worn with additional pleasure.—I say, you'll see Bob presently.—Well, Farmer, is it all over?

Asb. Ees, Zur; the acres be plough'd and the ground judg'd; and the young lads be coming down to receive their reward—Heartily welcome, Miss, to your native land; hope you be as pleas'd to zee we as we be to zee you, and the like o'that.—Mortal beautizome to be zure—I declare, Miss, it do make I quite warm zomehow to look at ye.

(*A shout without.*)

They be coming—Now, Henry!

Sir Abel. Now you'll see Bob!—now my dear boy, Bob!—here he comes (*Huzza*)!

Enter HENRY and two young Husbandmen.

Asb. 'Tis he, he has don't—Dang you all, why dan't ye shout? Huzza!

Sir Abel. Why, zounds, where's Bob?—I don't see Bob—Bless me, what has become of Bob and my plough? (*retires and takes out his glass.*)

Asb. Well, Henry, there be the prize, and there be the fine Lady that will gi' it thee.

Henry. Tell me who is that lovely creature?

Asb. the dater of Sir Philip Blandford.

Henry. What exquisite sweetness! Ah! should the father but resemble her, I shall have but little to fear from his severity.

Ash. Miss, thic be the young man that ha' got'n the guolden prize.

Miss B. This! I always thought ploughmen were coarse, vulgar creatures, but he seems handsome and diffident.

Ash. Ees, quite pratty behaved—it were I that teach'd un.

Miss B. What's your name?

Henry. Henry.

Miss B. And your family?

(HENRY, *in an agony of grief, turns away, strikes his forehead and leans on the shoulder of ASHFIELD.*)

Dame (apart to Miss B.) Madam, I beg pardon, but nobody knows about his parentage; and when it is mentioned, poor boy! he takes on sadly—He has lived at our house ever since we had the farm, and we have had an allowance for him—small enough to be sure—but, good lad! he was always welcome to share what we had.

Miss B. I am shocked at my imprudence—(To HENRY) Pray pardon me; I would not insult an enemy, much less one I am inclined to admire—(*giving her hand, then withdraws it*)—to esteem—you shall go to the Castle—my father shall protect you.

Henry. Generous creature! to merit his esteem is the fondest wish of my heart—to be your slave, the proudest aim of my ambition.

Miss B. Receive your merited reward (*he kneels—she places the medal round his neck—the same to the others*).

Sir Abel (advances). I can't see Bob: pray, Sir, do you happen to know what is become of my Bob?

Henry. Sir?

Sir Abel. Did not you see a remarkable clever plough, and a young man—

Henry.

Henry. At the beginning of the contest I observed a gentleman; his horses, I believe, were unruly; but my attention was too much occupied to allow me to notice more. [*Laughing without.*]

Handy, jun. (*without.*) How dare you laugh?

Sir Abel. That's Bob's voice! [*Laughing again.*]

Enter HANDY, jun. in a smock frock, cocked hat, and a piece of a plough in his hand.

Handy, jun. Dare to laugh again, and I'll knock you down with this!—Ugh! how infernally hot! (*walks about.*)

Sir Abel. Why, Bob, where have you been?

Handy, jun. I don't know where I've been.

Sir Abel. And what have you got in your hand?

Handy, jun. What! All I could keep of your nonsensical ricketty plough (*walks about, Sir ABEL following*).

Sir Abel. Come, none of that, Sir.—Don't abuse my plough to cover your ignorance, Sir! where is it, Sir? and where are my famous Leicestershire horses, Sir?

Handy, jun. Where? ha, ha, ha! I'll tell you as nearly as I can, ha, ha! What's the name of the next county?

Ab. It be called Wiltshire, Zur.

Handy, jun. Then, Dad, upon the nicest calculation I am able to make, they are at this moment engaged in the very patriotic act of ploughing Salisbury plain, ha, ha! I saw them fairly over that hill, full gallop, with the curricule plough at their heels.

Ab. Ha, ha! a good one, ha, ha!

Handy, jun. But never mind, father, you must again set your invention to work, and I my toilet;—rather a deranged figure to appear before a lady

in (*fiddles*). Hey day ! What ! are you going to dance ?

Asb. Ees, Zur ; I suppose you can sheake a leg abit ?

Handy, jun. I fancy I can dance every possible step, from the *pas ruse* to the war-dance of the Catawbaws.

Asb. Likely.—I do hope, Miss, you'll join your honest neighbours ; they'll be deadly hurt an you won't gig it a bit wi' un.

Miss B. With all my heart.

Sir Abel. Bob's an excellent dancer.

Miss B. I dare say he is, Sir ; but, on this occasion, I think I ought to dance with the young man who gained the prize—I think it would be most pleasant—most proper, I mean ; and I am glad you agree with me.—So, Sir, if you'll accept my hand (*HENRY takes it*).

Sir Abel. Very pleasantly settled, upon my soul ! —Bob, won't you dance ?

Handy, jun. I dance !—no, I'll look at them—I'll quietly look on.

Sir Abel. Egad now, as my wife's away, I'll try to find a pretty girl, and make one among them.

Asb. That's hearty !—Come, Dame, hang the rheumatics !—Now, lads and lasses, behave pratty, and strike up. [*A dance.*]

(*HANDY, jun. looks on a little, and then begins to move his legs—then dashes into the midst of the dance, and endeavours to imitate every one opposite to him ; then being exhausted, he leaves the dance, seizes the fiddle, and plays till the curtain drops*).

A C T III.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

Sir PHILIP BLANDFORD *discovered on a couch, reading, SERVANTS attending.*

Sir PHILIP.

Is not my daughter yet returned?

Serv. No, Sir Philip.

Sir Philip. Dispatch a servant to her.

[*Exit* SERVANT.]

Re-enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir, the old gardener is below, and asks to see you.

Sir Philip (*rises and throws away the book*). Admit him instantly, and leave me.—

[*Exit* SERVANT.]

Enter EVERGREEN, *who bows, then looking at Sir PHILIP, clasps his hands together and weeps.*

Does this desolation affect the old man?—Come near me—Time has laid a lenient hand on thee.

Everg. Oh, my dear master! can twenty years have wrought the change I see?

Sir Philip. No (*striking his breast*); 'tis the canker here that hath withered up my trunk;—but are we secure from observation?

Everg. Yes.

Sir Philip. Then tell me, does the boy live?

Everg. He does, and is as fine a youth—

Sir Philip. No comments.

Everg. We named him—

Sir Philip. Be dumb! let me not hear his name. Has care been taken he may not blast me with his presence?

Everg. It has, and he cheerfully complied.

Sir Philip. Enough! never speak of him more. Have you removed every dreadful vestige from the fatal chamber? (*EVERGREEN hesitates.*)—O speak!

Everg. My dear master! I confess my want of duty. Alas! I had not courage to go there.

Sir Philip. Ah!

Everg. Nay, forgive me! wiser than I have felt such terrors.—The apartments have been carefully locked up; the keys not a moment from my possession:—here they are.

Sir Philip. Then the task remains with me. Dreadful thought! I can well pardon thy fears, old man.—O! could I wipe from my memory that hour, when—

Everg. Hush! your daughter.

Sir Philip. Leave me—we'll speak anon.

[*Exit EVERGREEN.*]

Enter Miss BLANDFORD.

Miss B. Dear father! I came the moment I heard you wished to see me.

Sir

Sir Philip. My good child, thou art the sole support that props my feeble life. I fear my wish for thy company deprives thee of much pleasure.

Miss B. Oh no! What pleasure can be equal to that of giving you happiness? Am I not rewarded in seeing your eyes beam with pleasure on me?

Sir Philip. 'Tis the pale reflection of the lustre I see sparkling there. My love! did you enjoy the scenes you beheld?

Miss B. Greatly. How strongly they contrast with those we witnessed abroad!

Sir Philip. True. Happy country! which, in the midst of direful war, can draw out its rustic train to join the festive dance, as securely as if peace again had blessed the world!—But tell me, did your lover gain the prize?

Miss B. Yes, papa.

Sir Philip. Few men of his rank—

Miss B. Oh! you mean Mr. Handy?

Sir Philip. Yes.

Miss B. No; he did not.

Sir Philip. Then, whom did you mean?

Miss B. Did you say lover? I—I mistook.—No—a young man called Henry obtained the prize.

Sir Philip. And how did Mr. Handy succeed?

Miss B. Oh, it was so ridiculous!—I will tell you, papa, what happened to him.

Sir Philip. To Mr. Handy?

Miss B. Yes; as soon as the contest was over Henry presented himself. I was surprized at seeing a young man so handsome and elegant as Henry is!—Then I placed the medal round Henry's neck, and was told that poor Henry—

Sir Philip. Henry!—So, my love, this is your account of Mr. Robert Handy!

Miss

Miss B. Yes, papa—no, papa—he came afterwards, dressed so ridiculously, that even Henry could not help smiling.

Sir Philip. Henry again !

Miss B. Then we had a dance.

Sir Philip. Of course you danced with your lover ?

Miss B. Yes, papa.

Sir Philip. How does Mr. Handy dance ?

Miss B. Oh ! he did not dance till—

Sir Philip. You danced with your lover ?

Miss B. Yes—no papa !—Somebody said (I don't know who) that I ought to dance with Henry, because—

Sir Philip. Still Henry ! Oh ! some rustic boy. My dear child, you talk as if you loved this Henry.

Miss B. Oh ! no, papa—and I am certain he don't love me.

Sir Philip. Indeed !

Miss B. Yes, papa ; for when he touched my hand, he trembled as if I terrified him ; and instead of looking at me as you do, who I am sure love me, when our eyes met, he withdrew his and cast them on the ground.

Sir Philip. And these are the reasons which make you conclude he does not love you ?

Miss B. Yes, papa.

Sir Philip. And probably you could adduce proof equally convincing that you don't love him ?

Miss B. Oh yes—quite ; for in the dance he sometimes paid attention to other young women, and I was so angry with him ! Now, you know, papa, I love you—and I am sure I should not have been angry with you, had you done so.

Sir

Sir Philip. But one question more—Do you think Mr. Handy loves you?

Miss B. I have never thought about it, papa.

Sir Philip. I am satisfied.

Miss B. Yes, I knew I should convince you.

Sir Philip. Oh, Love! malign and subtle tyrant, how falsely art thou painted blind! 'tis thy votaries are so; for what but blindness can prevent their seeing thy poisoned shaft, which is for ever doomed to rankle in the victim's heart.

Miss B. Oh! now I am certain I am not in love; for I feel no rankling at my heart. I feel the softest, sweetest sensation I ever experienced. But, papa, you must come to the lawn. I don't know why, but to-day Nature seems enchanting; the birds sing more sweetly, and the flowers give more perfume.

Sir Philip (aside). Such was the day my youthful fancy pictured!—How did it close!

Miss B. I promised Henry your protection.

Sir Philip. Indeed! that was much. Well, I will see your rustic here. This infant passion must be crushed. Poor wench! some artless boy has caught thy infant fancy.—Thy arm, my child.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A Lawn before the Castle.*

Enter HENRY and ASHFIELD.

Ash. Well! here thee'rt going to make thy bow to Sir Philip. I zay, if he should take a fancy to thee, thou'lt come to farm and zee us zometimes, wo'tn't, Henry?

Henry

Henry (shaking his hand). Tell me, is that Sir Philip Blandford who leans on that lady's arm?

Ass. I don't know, by reason, d'ye zee, I never zeed'un. Well, good bye! I declare thee doz look quite grand wi' thic golden prize about thy neck, vor all the world like the lords in their stars, that do come to theas pearts to pickle their skins in the salt zea ocean! Good b'ye, Henry!

[*Exit.*]

Henry. He approaches! why this agitation? I wish, yet dread, to meet him.

Enter Sir PHILIP and Miss BLANDFORD, attended.

Miss B. The joy your tenantry display at seeing you again must be truly grateful to you.

Sir Philip. No, my child; for I feel I do not merit it. Alas! I can see no orphans cloathed with my beneficence, no anguish assuaged by my care.

Miss B. Then I am sure my dear father wishes to shew his kind intentions. So I will begin by placing one under his protection (*goes up the stage and leads down HENRY.* *Sir PHILIP, on seeing him, starts, then becomes greatly agitated.*)

Sir Philip. Ah! do my eyes deceive me? No, it must be him! Such was the face his father wore.

Henry. Spake you of my father?

Sir Philip. His presence brings back recollections which drive me to madness!—How came he here?—Who have I to curse for this?

Miss B. (falling on his neck). Your daughter.

Henry. Oh, Sir! tell me—on my knees I ask it! do my parents live? Bless me with my father's name, and my days shall pass in active gratitude—
my

my nights in prayers for you. (Sir PHILIP *views him with severe contempt.*) Do not mock my misery! Have you a heart?

Sir Philip. Yes; of marble. Cold and obdurate to the world—ponderous and painful to myself—Quit my fight for ever!

Miss B. Go, Henry, and save me from my father's curse.

Henry. I obey: cruel as the command is, I obey it—I shall often look at this (*touching the medal*), and think on the blissful moment when your hand placed it there.

Sir Philip. Ah! tear it from his breast. (SERVANT *advances.*)

Henry. Sooner take my life! It is the first honour I have earned, and it is no mean one; for it assigns me the first rank among the sons of industry! This is my claim to the sweet rewards of honest labour! This will give me competence, nay more, enable me to despise your tyranny!

Sir Philip. Rash boy, mark! Avoid me, and be secure—Repeat this intrusion, and my vengeance shall pursue thee——

Henry. I defy its power!—You are in England, Sir, where the man, who bears about him an upright heart, bears a charm too potent for tyranny to humble. Can your frown wither up my youthful vigour? No!—Can your malediction disturb the slumbers of a quiet conscience? No! Can your breath stifle in my heart the adoration it feels for that pitying angel? Oh, no!

Sir Philip. Wretch! you shall be taught the difference between us!

Henry. I feel it now! proudly feel it!—You hate the man that never wronged you—I could
D love

love the man that injures me — You meanly triumph o'er a worm—I make a giant tremble.

Sir Philip. Take him from my sight! Why am I not obeyed?

Miss B. Henry, if you wish my hate should not accompany my father's, instantly begone.

Henry. Oh, pity me! [Exit.

(*Miss BLANFORD looks after him—Sir PHILIP, exhausted, leans on his Servants*).

Sir Philip. Supported by my servants! I thought I had a daughter!

Miss B. (running to him.) O, you have, my father! one that loves you better than her life!

Sir Philip (to SERVANT). Leave us.

[Exit SERVANT.

Emma, if you feel, as I fear you do, love for that youth—mark my words! When the dove woos for its mate the ravenous kite; when Nature's fixed antipathies mingle in sweet concord, then and not till then, hope to be united.

Miss B. O heaven!

Sir Philip. Have you not promised me the disposal of your hand?

Miss B. Alas! my father! I didn't then know the difficulty of obedience!

Sir Philip. Hear, then, the reasons why I demand compliance. You think I hold these rich estates—Alas, the shadow only, not the substance.

Miss B. Explain, my father!

Sir Philip. When I left my native country, I left it with a heart lacerated by every wound that the falsehood of others or my own conscience could inflict. Hateful to myself, I became the victim of dissipation—I rushed to the gaming table, and soon became the dupe of villains.—My ample fortune was

was lost; I detected one in the act of fraud, and having brought him to my feet, he confessed a plan had been laid for my ruin; that he was but an humble instrument; for that the man who, by his superior genius, stood possessed of all the mortgages and securities I had given, was one Morrington.

Miss B. I have heard you name him before. Did you not know this Morrington?

Sir Philip. No; he, like his deeds, avoided the light—Ever dark, subtle, and mysterious. Collecting the scattered remnant of my fortune, I wandered wretched and desolate, till, in a peaceful village, I first beheld thy mother, humble in birth, but exalted in virtue. The morning after our marriage she received a packet, containing these words: “The reward of virtuous love, presented by a repentant villain;” and which also contained bills and notes to the high amount of ten thousand pounds.

Miss B. And no name?

Sir Philip. None; nor could I ever guess at the generous donor. I need not tell thee what my heart suffered when death deprived me of her. Thus circumstanced, this good man, Sir Abel Handy, proposed to unite our families by marriage; and in consideration of what he termed the honor of our alliance, agreed to pay off every incumbrance on my estates, and settle them as a portion on you and his son. Yet still another wonder remains.—When I arrive, I find no claim whatever has been made, either by Morrington or his agents. What am I to think? Can Morrington have perished, and with him his large claims to my property? Or, does he withhold the blow, to make it fall more heavily?

Miss B. 'Tis very strange! very mysterious! But my father has not told me what misfortune led him to leave his native country.

Sir Philip (*greatly agitated*). Ha!

Miss B. May I not know it?

Sir Philip. Oh! never, never, never!

Miss B. I will not ask it—Be composed—Let me wipe away those drops of anguish from your brow.—How cold your cheek is! My father, the evening damps will harm you—Come in—I will be all you wish—indeed I will. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

Enter EVERGREEN.

Everg. Was ever anything so unlucky! Henry to come to the Castle and meet Sir Philip. He should have consulted me; I shall be blamed—but, thank heaven, I am innocent.

(*Sir ABEL and Lady HANDY without*).

Lady H. I will be treated with respect.

Sir Abel. You shall, my dear. (*They enter.*)

Lady H. But how! but how, Sir Abel? I repeat it—

Sir Abel (*aside*). For the fiftieth time.

Lady H. Your son conducts himself with an insolence I won't endure; but you are ruled by him, you have no will of your own.

Sir Abel. I have not indeed.

Lady H. How contemptible!

Sir Abel. Why, my dear, this is the case—I am like the ass in the fable; and if I am doomed to carry

carry a pack-saddle, it is not much matter who drives me.

Lady H. To yield your power to those the law allows you to govern!—

Sir Abel. Is very weak indeed.

Everg. Lady Handy, your very humble servant; I heartily congratulate you, Madam, on your marriage with this worthy gentleman—Sir, I give you joy.

Sir Abel (aside). Not before 'tis wanted.

Everg. Aye, my Lady; this match makes up for the imprudence of your first.

Lady H. Hem!

Sir Abel. Eh! What!—what's that—Eh! what do you mean?

Everg. I mean, Sir—that Lady Handy's former husband—

Sir Abel. Former husband!—Why, my dear, I never knew—Eh!

Lady H. A mumbling old blockhead!—Didn't you Sir Abel? Yes; I was rather married many years ago; but my husband went abroad and died.

Sir Abel. Died, did he?

Everg. Yes, Sir; he was a servant in the Castle.

Sir Abel. Indeed! So he died—poor fellow!

Lady H. Yes.

Sir Abel. What, you are sure he died, are you?

Lady H. Don't you hear?

Sir Abel. Poor fellow! neglected perhaps—had I known it, he should have had the best advice money could have got.

Lady H. You seem sorry.

Sir Abel. Why you would not have me pleased at the death of your husband, would you?—a good kind of man!

Everg. Yes; a faithful fellow—rather ruled his wife too severely.

Sir Abel. Did he? (*apart to EVERGREEN.*) Pray do you happen to recollect his manner?—Could you just give a hint of the way he had?

Lady H. Do you want to tyrannize over my poor tender heart?—'Tis too much!

Everg. Bless me! Lady Handy is ill—Salts! salts!

Sir Abel (*producing an essence-box*). Here are salts, or aromatic vinegar, or essence of—

Everg. Any—any.

Sir Abel. Bless me, I can't find the key!

Everg. Pick the lock.

Sir Abel. It can't be picked, it is a patent lock.

Everg. Then break it open, Sir.

Sir Abel. It can't be broke open—it is a contrivance of my own—you see, here comes a horizontal bolt, which acts upon a spring, therefore—

Lady H. I may die while you are describing a horizontal bolt. Do you think you shall close your eyes for a week for this?

Enter Sir PHILIP BLANDFORD.

Sir Philip. What has occasioned this disturbance?

Lady H. Ask that gentleman.

Sir Abel. Sir, I am accused—

Lady H. Convicted! convicted!

Sir Abel. Well, I will not argue with you about words—because I must bow to your superior practice—But, Sir—

Sir Philip. Pshaw! (*apart.*) Lady Handy, some of your people were inquiring for you.

Lady

Lady H. Thank you, Sir. Come, Sir Abel.

[*Exit.*

Sir Abel. Yes, my Lady—I say (*to EVERGREEN*),
cou'dn't you give me a hint of the way he had—

Lady (without). Sir Abel!

Sir Abel. Coming, my soul!

[*Exit.*

Sir Philip. So! you have well obeyed my orders
in keeping this Henry from my presence.

Everg. I was not to blame, Master.

Sir Philip. Has Farmer Ashfield left the Castle?

Everg. No, Sir.

Sir Philip. Send him hither.

[*Exit EVERGREEN.*

That boy must be driven far, far from my sight—
but where?—no matter! the world is large enough.

Enter ASHFIELD.

—Come hither. I believe you hold a farm of
mine?

Ash. Ees, Zur, I do, at your zarvice.

Sir Philip. I hope a profitable one?

Ash. Zometimes it be, Zur. But thic year it
be all t'other way as 'twur—but I do hope as our
landlords have a tightish big lump of the good,
they'll be zo kind hearted as to take a little bit of
the bad.

Sir Philip. It is but reasonab!e—I conclude then
you are in my debt.

Ash. Ees, Zur, I be—at your zarvice.

Sir Philip. How much!

Ash. Sir, I do owe ye a hundred and fifty
pounds—at your zarvice.

Sir Philip. Which you can't pay?

Ash. Not a varthing, Zur—at your zarvice.

Sir Philip. Well, I am willing to give you
every indulgence.

Asb. Be you, Zur? that be deadly kind. Dear heart! it will make my auld Dame quite young again, and I don't think helping a poor man will do your Honour's health any harm—I don't indeed, Zur—I had a thought of speaking to your worship about it—but then thinks I, the gentleman mayhap be one of those that do like to do a good turn, and not have a word zaid about it—zo, Zur, if you had not mentioned what I owed you, I am zure I never should—should not indeed, Zur.

Sir Philip. Nay, I will wholly acquit you of the debt, on condition—

Asb. Ees, Zur.

Sir Philip. On condition, I say, you instantly turn out that boy—that Henry.

Asb. Turn out Henry!—Ha, ha, ha! Excuse my tittering, Zur; but you bees making your vun of I, zure.

Sir Philip. I am not apt to trifle—send him instantly from you or take the consequences.

Asb. Turn out Henry! I do vow I shou'dn't know how to zet about it—I should not indeed, Zur.

Sir Philip. You hear my determination. If you disobey, you know what will follow—I'll leave you to reflect on it. [Exit.]

Asb. Well, Zur, I'll argufy the topic, and then you may wait upon me, and I'll tell ye. (*makes the motion of turning out*)—I shou'd be deadly awkward at it vor zertain—however, I'll put the case—Well! I goes whiztling whoam—noa, drabbit it! I shou'dn't be able to whiztle a bit, I'm zure. Well! I goes whoam, and I zeas Henry zitting by my wife mixing up someit to comfort the wold zoul, and take away the pain of her rheumatics—Very well! Then Henry places a chair vor

vor I by the vire zide, and zays—"Varmer, the
"horfes be fed, the fheep be folded, and you have
"nothing to do but to zit down, fmoke your pipe,
"and be happy!" Very well! (*becomes affected.*)
Then I zays—"Henry, you be poor and friend-
"lefs, zo you muft turn out of my houze directly."
Very well! then my wife ftares at I—reaches her
hand towards the vire place, and throws the poker
at my head. Very well! then Henry gives a kind
of aguifh fhake, and getting up, fighs from the
bottom of his heart—then holding up his head like
a king, zays—"Varmer, I have too long been a
"burthen to you—Heaven proteft you, as you
"have me—Farewel! I go." Then I fays, "If
"thee doez I'll be domn'd! (*with great energy.*)
Hollo! you Mifter Sir Philip! you may come
in.—

Enter Sir PHILIP BLANDFORD.

Zur, I have argued the topic, and it wou'dn't be
pratty—zo I can't.

Sir Philip. Can't! abfurd!

Afb. Well, Zur, there is but another word—
I won't.

Sir Philip. Indeed!

Afb. No, Zur, I won't—I'd zee myzelf hang'd
firft, and you too, Zur—I wou'd indeed (*bowing*).

Sir Philip. You refuse then to obey.

Afb. I do, Zur—at your zarvice (*bowing*).

Sir Philip. Then the law muft take its courfe.

Afb. I be zorry for that too—I be indeed, Zur;
but if corn wou'dn't grow I cou'dn't help it; it
wer'n't poison'd by the hand that zow'd it. Thic
hand, Zur, be as free from guilt as your own.

Sir

Sir Philip. Oh ! (*sighing deeply.*)

Ass. It were never held out to clinch a hard bargain, nor will it turn a good lad out into the wide wicked world because he be poorish a bit. I be zorry you be offended, Zur, quite—but come what wool, I'll never hit thic hand against here, but when I be zure that zomeit at inzide will jump against it with pleazure (*bowing*). I do hope you'll repent of all your zins—I do indeed, Zur; and if you shou'd, I'll come and zee you again as friendly as ever—I wool indeed, Zur.

Sir Philip. Your repentance will come too late!

[*Exit.*]

Ass. Thank ye, Zur—Good morning to you—I do hope I have made myzel agreeable—and so I'll go whoam.

[*Exit.*]

THE END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE I.—*A room in ASHFIELD'S house.*

Dame ASHFIELD discovered at work with her needle.
HENRY sitting by her.

DAME.

COME, come, Henry, you'll fret yourself ill, child. If Sir Philip will not be kind to you, you are but where you were.

Henry (rising). My peace of mind is gone for ever. Sir Philip may have cause for hate;—spite of his unkindness to me, my heart seeks to find excuses for him—for, oh! that heart doats on his lovely daughter.

Dame (looking out). Here comes Tummas home at last. Heyday! what's the matter with the man? He does'nt seem to know the way into his own house.

Enter ASHFIELD, musing, he stumbles against a chair.

Tummas, my dear Tummas, what's the matter?
Ash.

Asb. (*not attending*) It be lucky vor he I be's zoo pratty behaved, or dom if I—(*doubling his fist*)

Dame. Who—what?

Asb. Nothing at all, where's Henry?

Henry. Here, farmer.

Asb. Thee woult'nt leave us, Henry, wou't?

Henry. Leave you! What, leave you now, when by my exertion I can pay off part of the debt of gratitude I owe you? oh, no!

Asb. Nay, it were not vor that I axed, I promise thee; come, gi' us thy hand on't then (*shaking hands*). Now I'll tell ye. Zur Philip did send vor I, about the money I do owe 'un; and said as how he'd make all strait between us——

Dame. That was kind.

Asb. Yes, deadly kind. Make all strait on condition I did turn Henry out o' my doors.

Dame. What!

Henry. Where will his hatred cease?

Dame. And what did you say, Tummas?

Asb. Why, I zivelly tould un, if it were agreeable to be to behave like a brute, it were agreeable to I to behave like a man.

Dame. That was right. I wou'd have told him a great deal more.

Asb. Ah! likely. Then a zaid I shou'd ha a bit of laa vor my pains.

Henry. And do you imagine I will see you suffer on my account? No—I will remove this hated form——(*going.*)

Asb. No, but thee shat'un—thee shat'un—I tell thee. Thee have givun me thy hand on't, and dom'me, if thee shat budge one step out of this house. Drabbit it! what can he do? he can't send
us

us to jail. Why, I have corn will zell for half the money I do owe 'un—and ha'nt I cattle and sheep? deadly lean to be zure—and ha'nt I a thumping zilver watch, almost as big as thy head? and Dame here a got—How many filk gowns have thee got, Dame?

Dame. Three, Tummas—and sell them all—and I'll go to church in a stuff one—and let Mrs. Grundy turn up her nose as much as she pleases.

Henry. Oh, my friends, my heart is full. Yet a day will come, when this heart will prove its gratitude.

Dame. That day, Henry, is every day.

Asb. Dang it! never be down hearted. I do know as well as can be, zome good luck will turn up. All the way I comed whoam I look'd to vind a purse in the path, but I did'nt though.

(A knocking at the door.)

Dame. Ah! here they are coming to sell I suppose—

Asb. Lettun—lettun, zeize and zell; we ha gotten here *(striking his breast)* what we won't zell, and they can't zell. *(knocking again)* Come in—dang it, don't ye be shy.

Enter MORRINGTON and GERALD.

Henry. Ah! the strangers I saw this morning. These are not officers of law.

Asb. Noa!—Walk in, Gemmen. Glad to zee ye wi 'all my heart and zoul. Come, Dame, spread a cloth, bring out cold meat, and a mug of beer.

Gerald (to MORRINGTON). That is the boy. *(MORRINGTON nods.)*

Asb.

Ass. Take a chair, Zur.

Mor. I thank, and admire your hospitality. Don't trouble yourself, good woman.—I am not inclined to eat.

Ass. That be the case here. To-day none o'we be auver hungry: misfortin be apt to stay the stomach confoundedly.—

Mor. Has misfortune reached this humble dwelling?

Ass. Ees, Zur. I do think vor my part it do work its way in every where.

Mor. Well, never despair.

Ass. I never do, Zur. It is not my way. When the sun do shine I never think of voul weather, not I; and when it do begin to rain I always think that's a zure zign it will give auver.

Mor. Is that young man your son?

Ass. No, Zur—I do wish he were we all my heart and zoul.

Gerald (to MORRINGTON). Sir, remember.

Mor. Doubt not my prudence. Young man, your appearance interests me;—how can I serve you?

Henry. By informing me who are my parents.

Mor. That I cannot do.

Henry. Then, by removing from me the hatred of Sir Philip Blandford.

Mor. Does Sir Philip hate you?

Henry. With such severity, that even now he is about to ruin these worthy creatures, because they have protected me.

Mor. Indeed! misfortune has made him cruel. That should not be.

Ass. Noa, it should not indeed, Zur.

Mor. It shall not be.

Ass.

Ash. Shan't it, Zur? But how shan't it?

Mor. I will prevent it.

Ash. Wool ye, faith and troth? Now, Dame, did not I zay zome good luck would turn up?

Henry. Oh, Sir, did I hear you rightly? Will you preserve my friends;—will you avert the cruel arm of power, and make the virtuous happy? my tears must thank you (*taking his hand*).

Mor. (*disengaging his hand*) Young man, you oppress me—forebear! I do not merit thanks—pay your gratitude where you are sure 'tis due—to Heaven. Observe me—here is a bond of Sir Philip Blandford's for £.1000—do you present it to him, and obtain a discharge for the debt of this worthy man. The rest is at your own disposal—no thanks.

Henry. But, Sir, to whom am I thus highly indebted?

Mor. My name is Morington. At present that information must suffice.

Henry. Morington.

Ash. (*bowing*) Zur, if I may be zo bold——

Mor. Nay, friend——

Ash. Don't be angry I had'nt thanked you, Zur, nor I wont.—Only, Zur, I were going to ax when you wou'd call again. You shall have my stampt note vor the money, you shall indeed, Zur. And in the mean time, I do hope you'll take zomeit in way of remembrance as'twere.

Dame. Will your Honor put a couple of turkies in your pocket?

Ash. Or pop a ham under your arm? don't ye zay no, if it's agreeable.

Mor. Farewel, good friends, I shall repeat my visit soon.

Dame.

Dame. The sooner the better.

Ash. Good bye to ye, Zur—Dame and I wool go to work as merry as crickets. Good bye, Henry.

Dame. Heaven blefs your Honour—and I hope you will carry as much joy away with you, as you leave behind you—I do indeed.

[*Exeunt ASHFIELD and Dame.*]

Mer. Young man, proceed to the castle and demand an audience of Sir Philip Blandford. In your way thither I'll instruct you further.—Give me your hand.

[*Exeunt. MORRINGTON, looking stedfastly on HENRY, GERALD following.*]

SCENE II.—*An apartment in the castle.*

Sir PHILIP BLANDFORD discovered—Miss BLANDFORD reading.

Miss B. Shall I proceed to the next essay?

Sir Philip. What does it treat of?

Miss B. Love and friendship.

Sir Philip. A satire?

Miss B. No, father;—an eulogy.

Sir Philip. Thus do we find in the imaginations of men, what we in vain look for in their hearts.—Lay it by (*a knocking at the door*). Come in.

Enter

Enter EVERGREEN.

Ever. My dear master, I am a petitioner to you.

Sir Philip (rises). None possesses a better claim to my favour—ask, and receive.

Ever. I thank you, Sir. The unhappy Henry—

Miss B. What of him?

Sir Philip. Emma, go to your apartment.

Miss B. Poor Henry! [*Exit.*

Sir Philip. Imprudent man!

Ever. (*Sir PHILIP turns from him with resentment*). Nay, be not angry; he is without, and entreats to be admitted.

Sir Philip. I cannot, will not again behold him.

Ever. I am sorry you refuse me, as it compels me to repeat his words: “If,” said he, “Sir Philip denies my humble request, tell him I demand “to see him.”

Sir Philip. Demand to see me! well, his *high* command shall be obeyed then (*sarcastically*); bid him approach. [*Exit* EVERGREEN.

Enter HENRY.

Sir Philip. By what title, Sir, do you thus intrude on me?

Henry. By one of an imperious nature, the title of a creditor.

Sir Philip. I *your* debtor!

Henry. Yes; for you owe me justice. You, perhaps, withhold from me the inestimable treasure of a parent's blessing.

E

Sir

Sir Philip (impatiently). To the business that brought you hither.

Henry. Thus then—I believe this is your signature (*producing a bond*).

Sir Philip. Ah! (*recovering himself*) it is—

Henry. Affixed to a bond of £.1000, which by assignment is mine. By virtue of this I discharge the debt of your worthy tenant Ashfield; who, it seems, was guilty of the crime of vindicating the injured, and protecting the unfortunate. Now, Sir Philip, the retribution my hate demands is, that what remains of this obligation may not be now paid to me, but wait your entire convenience and leisure.

Sir Philip. No; that must not be.

Henry. Oh, Sir! why thus oppress an innocent man?—why spurn from you a heart that pants to serve you? No answer, farewell (*going*).

Sir Philip. Hold—one word before we part—tell me—I dread to ask it (*aside*)—How came you possessed of this bond?

Henry. A stranger, whose kind benevolence stepped in and saved—

Sir Philip. His name?

Henry. Morrington.

Sir Philip. Fiend! tormentor! has he caught me!—You have seen this Morrington?

Henry. Yes.

Sir Philip. Did he speak of me?

Henry. He did—and of your daughter. “Conjure him,” said he, “not to sacrifice the lovely Emma by a marriage her heart revolts at. Tell him the life and fortune of a parent are not his own; he holds them but in trust for his offspring. Bid

Bid him reflect, that while his daughter merits the brightest rewards a father can bestow, she is by that father doomed to the harshest fate tyranny can inflict.

Sir Philip. Torture! (*with vehemence*) Did he say who caused this sacrifice?

Henry. He told me you had been duped of your fortune by sharpers.

Sir Philip. Aye, he knows that well. Young man, mark me:—this Morrington, whose precepts wear the face of virtue, and whose practice seems benevolence, was the chief of the hellish banditti that ruined me.

Henry. Is it possible?

Sir Philip. That bond you hold in your hand was obtained by robbery.

Henry. Confusion!

Sir Philip. Not by the thief who, encountering you as a man, stakes life against life, but by that most cowardly villain, who, in the moment when reason sleeps and passion is roused, draws his snares around you, and hugs you to your ruin; then fattening on the spoil, insults the victim he has made.

Henry. On your soul is Morrington that man?

Sir Philip. On my soul he is.

Henry. Thus, then, I annihilate the detested act—and thus I tread upon a villain's friendship (*tearing the bond*).

Sir Philip. Rash boy! what have you done?

Henry. An act of justice to Sir Philip Blandford.

Sir Philip. For which you claim my thanks?

Henry. Sir, I am thanked already—here (*pointing to his heart*). Curse on such wealth! compared with its possession, poverty is splendour. Fear not for me—I shall not feel the piercing cold; for in that man whose heart beats warmly for his fel-

low creatures, the blood circulates with freedom—My food shall be what few of the pampered sons of greatness can boast of, the luscious bread of independence; and the opiate that brings me sleep, will be the recollection of the day passed in innocence.

Sir Philip. Noble boy!—Oh, Blandford!

Henry. Ah!

Sir Philip. What have I said?

Henry. You called me Blandford.

Sir Philip. 'Twas error—'twas madness.

Henry. Blandford! a thousand hopes and fears rush on my heart. Disclose to me my birth—be it what it may, I am your slave for ever. Refuse me, you create a foe, firm and implacable as—

Sir Philip. Ah! am I threatened? Do not extinguish the spark of pity my breast is warmed with.

Henry. I will not. Oh! forgive me.

Sir Philip. Yes, on one condition—leave me: Ah! some one approaches. Begone, I insist—I entreat.

Henry. That word has charmed me: I obey: Sir Philip, you may hate, but you shall respect me. [Exit.]

Enter HANDY, jun.

Handy, jun. At last, thank heaven, I have found somebody. But, Sir Philip, were you indulging in soliloquy?—You seem agitated.

Sir Philip. No, Sir; rather indisposed.

Handy, jun. Upon my soul I am devilish glad to find you. Compared with this castle, the Cretan labyrinth was intelligible; and unless some kind Ariadne gives me a clue, I shan't have the pleasure of seeing you above once a-week.

Sir

Sir Philip. I beg your pardon, I have been an inattentive host.

Handy, jun. Oh, no; but when a house is so devilish large, and the party so very small, they ought to keep together; for, to say the truth, tho' no one on earth feels a warmer regard for Robert Handy than I do—I soon get heartily sick of his company—whatever he may be to others, he's a cursed bore to me.

Sir Philip. Where is your worthy father?

Handy, jun. As usual, full of contrivances that are impracticable, and improvements that are retrograde; forming, altogether, a whimsical instance of the confusion of arrangement, the delay of expedition, the incommodioufness of accommodation, and the infernal trouble of endeavouring to save it—he has now a score or two of workmen about him, and intends pulling down some apartments in the east wing of the Castle.

Sir Philip. Ah! ruin!—Within there!

Enter a SERVANT.

Fly to Sir Abel Handy—Tell him to desist! order his people, on the peril of their lives, to leave the Castle instantly! Away! *[Exit Servant.]*

Handy, jun. Sir Philip Blandford, your conduct compels me to be serious.

Sir Philip. Oh! forbear! forbear!

Handy, jun. Excuse me, Sir,—an alliance, it seems, is intended between our families, founded on ambition and interest. I wish it, Sir, to be formed on a nobler basis, ingenuous friendship and mutual confidence. That confidence being withheld, I must here pause; for I should hesitate in calling that man father, who refuses me the name of friend.

Sir Philip (aside). Ah!—how shall I act?

Handy, jun. Is my demand unreasonable?

Sir Philip. Strictly just—But oh!—you know not what you ask—Do you not pity me?

Handy, jun. I do.

Sir Philip. Why then seek to change it into hate?

Handy, jun. Confidence seldom generates hate—Mistrust always.

Sir Philip. Most true.

Handy, jun. I am not impelled by curiosity to ask your friendship. I scorn so mean a motive. Believe me, Sir, the folly and levity of my character proceed merely from the effervescence of my heart—you will find its substance warm, steady, and sincere.

Sir Philip. I believe it from my soul.—Allow me a moment's thought.—(*Aside*)—Suspicion is awakened, does not prudence as well as justice prompt me to confide in him. Does not my poverty command me. Perhaps I may find a sympathizing friend—the task is dreadful—but it must be so—perhaps he will perform the awful task of visiting the chamber, and removing every vestige of guilt. (*To him*) Yes, you shall hear my story, I will lay before your view the agony with which this wretched bosom is loaded.

Handy, jun. I am proud of your confidence, and am prepared to receive it.

Sir Philip. Not here—let me lead you to the eastern part of the Castle, my young friend—mark me: This is no common trust I repose in you; for I place my life in your hands.

Hanay, jun. And the pledge I give for its security is what alone gives value to life, my honour.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A gloomy Gallery in the Castle—in the Centre a strongly barred Door.—The Gallery hung with Portraits.*

HENRY *discovered examining a particular Portrait, which occupies a conspicuous Situation in the Gallery.*

Henry. Whenever curiosity has led me to this gallery, that portrait has attracted my attention—the features are peculiarly interesting. One of the House of Blandford—Blandford!—my name—perhaps my father. To remain longer ignorant of my birth, I feel impossible. There is a point when patience ceases to be virtue—Hush. I hear footsteps—Ah! Sir Philip and another, in close conversation. Shall I avoid them?—No—Shall I conceal myself and observe them?—Curse on the base suggestion!—No—

Enter Sir PHILIP and HANDY, jun.

Sir Philip. That chamber contains the mystery.

Henry (aside). Ah!

Sir Philip (turning round). Observe that portrait (*seeing HENRY—starts*). Who's there?

Handy, jun. (to HENRY). Sir, we wish to be private.

Henry. My being here, Sir, was merely the effect of accident. I scorn intrusion (*bows*). But the important words are spoken—that chamber contains the mystery (*aside*). [Exit.

Handy, jun. Who is that youth?

Sir Philip. You there behold his father—my brother—(*weeps*)—I've not beheld that face these

twenty years.—Let me again peruse its lineaments. (*in an agony of grief*) Oh, God! how I loved that man!—

Handy, jun. Be composed.

Sir Philip. I will endeavour. Now listen to my story.

Handy, jun. You rivet my attention.

Sir Philip. While we were boys, my father died intestate. So I, as elder born, became the sole possessor of his fortune; but the moment the law gave me power, I divided in equal portions his large possessions, one of which I with joy presented to my brother.

Handy, jun. It was noble.

Sir Philip. At least it was just—we lived together, Sir, as one man; as my life I loved him, and felt no joys but what he shared—Sorrow I knew not.

Handy, jun. Such love demanded a life of gratitude.

Sir Philip (*with suppressed agony*). You shall now hear, Sir, how I was rewarded. Chance placed in my view a young woman of superior personal charms; my heart was captivated—Fortune she possessed not—but mine was ample. She blessed me by consenting to our union, and my brother approved my choice.

Handy, jun. How enviable your situation.

Sir Philip. Oh! (*sighing deeply*) On the evening previous to my intended marriage, with a mind serene as the departing sun, whose morning beam was to light me to happiness, I fauntered to a favourite tree, where, lover-like, I had marked the name of my destined bride, and with every nerve braced to the tone of ecstasy, I was wounding the bark

bark with a deeper impresson of the name—when, oh, God!——

Handy, jun. Pray proceed!

Sir Philip. When the loved offspring of my mother, and the woman my soul adored—the only two beings on earth who had wound themselves round my heart, by every tie dear to the soul of man, placed themselves before me; I heard him—even now the sound is in my ears, and drives me to madness—I heard him breathe vows of love, which she answered with burning kisses—He pitied his poor brother, and told her he had prepared a vessel to bear her for ever from me.—They were about to depart, when the burning fever in my heart rushed upon my brain—Picture the young tiger, when first his savage nature rouses him to vengeance—the knife was in my gripe—I sprung upon them—with one hand I tore the faithless woman from his damned embrace, and with the other——stabbed my brother to the heart.

Handy, jun. (*Starting with horror, then recovering*). What followed?—

Sir Philip. At that dreadful moment my brother's servant appeared, and the vessel that was to waft him to happiness bore away his bleeding body; a few days brought the news that he had died suddenly in France, and all inquiry ceased (*exhausted he falls into* HANDY, jun. *arms*).

Handy, jun. You are faint—But let me lead you from this place—Yet hold!—the wretched woman——

Sir Philip. Was secretly conveyed here—even to that chamber.—She proved pregnant, and in giving birth to a son, paid the forfeit of her perjury by death.

Handy,

Handy, jun. Which son is the youth that left us.

Sir Philip. Even so—Tell me, could wretch be born possessed of a more solid title to my hate?

Handy, jun. Yet he is innocent.

Sir Philip. My task being ended, yours begins.

Handy, jun. Mine!

Sir Philip. Yes, that chamber contains evidence of my shame; the fatal instrument, with other guilty proofs, lie there concealed—can you wonder I dread to visit the scene of horror—can you wonder I implore you, in mercy, to save me from the task. Oh! my friend, enter the chamber, bury in endless night those instruments of blood, and I will kneel and worship you.

Handy, jun. I will.

Sir Philip (weeps). Will you (*embraces him*)? I am unused to kindness from man, and it affects me. Oh! can you press to your guiltless heart that blood-stained hand!

Handy, jun. Sir Philip, let men without faults condemn—I must pity you.

[*Exeunt* HANDY, jun. *leading* Sir PHILIP.]

THE END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

SCENE I.—*A wooded view of the country.*

Enter SUSAN ASHFIELD, who looks about with anxiety, and then comes forward.

SUSAN.

I FEAR my conduct is very imprudent.—Has not Mr. Handy told me he is engaged to another? But 'tis hard for the heart to forego, without one struggle, its only hope of happiness; and conscious of my own honor, what have I to fear? Perhaps he may repent of his unkindness to me—at least I'll put his passion to the proof; if he be worthy of my love, happiness is for ever mine; if not, I'll tear him from my breast, though from the wound my life's blood should follow. Ah! he comes—I feel I am a coward, and my poor alarmed heart trembles at its approaching trial—pardon me, female delicacy, if for a moment I seem to pass thy sacred limits.

[Retires up the stage.]

Enter

Enter HANDY, jun.

Handy, jun. By heavens! the misfortunes of Sir Philip Blandford weigh so heavily on my spirits, that—but confusion to melancholy! I am come here to meet an angel, who will, in a moment, drive away the blue devils like mist before the sun. Let me again read the dear words; (*reading a letter*) “I confess I love you still;” (*kisses the letter*) but I dare not believe their truth till her sweet lips confirm it. Ah! she’s there—Susan, my angel! a thousand thanks. A life of love can alone repay the joy your letter gave me.

Susan. Do you not despise me?

Handy, jun. No; love you more than ever.

Susan. Oh! Robert, this is the very crisis of my fate.—From this moment we meet with honour, or we meet no more. If we must part, perhaps when you lead your happy bride to church, you may stumble over your Susan’s grave. Well, be it so.

Handy, jun. Away with such sombre thoughts!

Susan. Tell me my doom—yet hold—you are wild, impetuous—you do not give your heart fair play—therefore promise me (perhaps ’tis the last favour I shall ask) that before you determine whether our love shall die or live with honour, you will remain here alone a few moments, and that you will give those moments to reflection.

Handy, jun. I do—I will.

Susan. With a throbbing heart I will wait at a little distance. May virtuous love and sacred honour direct his thoughts! (*aside.*) [Exit.

Handy, jun. Yes, I will reflect, that I am the most fortunate fellow in England. She loves me still—
what

what is the consequence?—that love will triumph—that she will be mine—mine without the degradation of marriage—love, pride, all gratified—how I shall be envied, when I triumphantly pass the circles of fashion! one will cry, “Who is that angel?”—another, “Happy fellow!” then Susan will smile around—will she smile? oh yes—she will be all gaiety—mingle with the votaries of pleasure, and—what! Susan Ashfield the companion of licentious women!—Damnation!—no; I wrong her—she would not—she would rather shun society—she would be melancholy—melancholy! (*sighs and looks at his watch*)—would the time were over!—Pshaw! I think of it too seriously—’tis false—I do not.—Should her virtue yield to love, would not remorse affect her health? should I not behold that lovely form sicken and decay—perhaps die?—die! then what am I?—a villain, loaded with her parents’ curses and my own.—Let me fly from the dreadful thought.—But how fly from it?—(*calmly*) By placing before my imagination a picture of more honourable lineaments.—I make her my wife.—Ah! then she would smile on me—there’s rapture in the thought!—instead of vice producing decay, I behold virtue emblazoning beauty; instead of Susan on the bed of death, I behold her giving to my hopes a dear pledge of our mutual love. She places it in my arms—down her father’s honest face runs a tear—but ’tis the tear of joy. Oh, this will be luxury! paradise!—Come, Susan!—come, my love, my soul—my *wife*.

Enter

Enter SUSAN—she at first hesitates—on hearing the word wife, she springs into his arms.

Susan. Is it possible ?

Handy, jun. Yes, those charms have conquered.

Susan. Oh ! no ; do not so disgrace the victory you have gained—'tis your own virtue that has triumphed.

Handy, jun. My Susan ! how true it is, that fools alone are vicious. But let us fly to my father, and obtain his consent. On recollection, that may not be quite so easy. His arrangements with Sir Philip Blandford are—are—not mine, so there's an end of that. And Sir Philip, by misfortune, knows how to appreciate happiness. Then poor Miss Blandford—upon my soul, I feel for her.

Susan (ironically). Come, don't make yourself miserable. If my suspicions be true, she'll not break her heart for your loss.

Handy, jun. Nay, don't say so ; she will be unhappy.

Ash. (without) There he is. Dame, shall I shoot at un ?

Dame. No.

Handy, jun. What does he mean ?

Susan. My father's voice.

Ash. Then I'll leather un wi' my stick.

Handy, jun. Zounds ! no—come here.

Enter ASHFIELD and DAME.

Ash. What do thee do here with my Sue, eh ?

Handy, jun. With your Sue !—she's mine—mine by a husband's right.

Ash. Husband ! what, thee Sue's husband ?
Handy,

Handy, jun. I soon shall be.

Asb. But how tho' ?—What ! faith and troth ?—
What ! like as I married Dame ?

Handy, jun. Yes.

Asb. What ! axed three times ?

Handy, jun. Yès ; and from this moment I'll maintain that the real temple of love is a parish church—Cupid is a chubby curate—his torch is the sexton's lantern—and the according pæan of the spheres is the profound nasal thorough bass of the clerk's Amen.

Asb. Huzza ! only to think now—my blessing go with you, my children !

Dame. And mine.

Asb. And Heaven's blessing too. Ecod, I believe now, as thy feyther zays, thee canst do every thing !

Handy, jun. No ; for there is one thing I cannot do—injure the innocence of woman.

Asb. Drabbit it ! I shall walk in the road all day to zee Sue ride by in her own coach.

Susan. You must ride with me, father.

Dame. I say, Tummas, what will Mrs. Grundy say then ?

Asb. I do hope thee will not be a sham'd of thy feyther in laa, wool ye ?

Handy, jun. No ; for then I must also be ashamed of myself, which I am resolved not to be again.

Enter Sir ABEL HANDY.

Sir Abel. Heyday, Bob ! why an't you gallanting your intended bride ? but you are never where you ought to be.

Handy,

Handy, jun. Nay, Sir, by your own confession I *am* where I ought to be.

Sir Abel. No; you ought to be at the castle—Sir Philip is there, and Miss Blandford is there, and Lady Handy is there, and therefore—

Handy, jun. You are *not* there. In one word, I shall not marry Miss Blandford.

Sir Abel. Indeed! who told you so?

Handy, jun. One who never lies—and, therefore, one I am determined to make a friend of—my conscience.

Sir Abel. But, zounds! Sir, what excuse have you?

Handy, jun. (*taking SUSAN'S hand*) A very fair one, Sir—is not she?

Sir Abel. Why, yes, Sir, I can't deny it—but, 'sdeath, Sir, this overturns my best plan!

Handy, jun. No, Sir; for a parent's best plan is his son's happiness, and that it will establish. Come, give us your consent. Consider how we admire all your wonderful inventions.

Sir Abel. No, not my plough, Bob—but 'tis a devilish clever plough.

Handy, jun. I dare say it is. Come, Sir, consent, and perhaps, in our turn, we may invent something that may please you.

Sir Abel. He! he! he! well—but hold—what's the use of my consent without my wife's—bless you! I dare no more approve, without—

Enter GERALD.

Gerald. 'Health to this worthy company!

Sir Abel. The same to you, Sir.

Handy,

Handy, jun. Who have we here, I wonder?

Gerald. I wish to speak with Sir Abel Handy.

Sir Abel. I am the person.

Gerald. You are married?

Sir Abel. Damn it! he sees it in my face.—Yes, I have that happiness.

Gerald. Is it a happiness?

Sir Abel. To say the truth—why do you ask?

Gerald. I want answers, not questions—and depend on't, 'tis your interest to answer me.

Handy, jun. An extraordinary fellow this!

Gerald. Would it break your heart to part with her?

Sir Abel. Who are you, Sir, that——

Gerald. Answers—I want answers—would it break your heart, I ask?

Sir Abel. Why, not absolutely I hope. Time, and philosophy, and ——

Gerald. I understand—what sum of money would you give to the man who would dissolve your marriage contract?

Handy, jun. He means something, Sir.

Sir Abel. Do you think so, Bob?

Gerald. Would you give a thousand pounds?

Sir Abel. No.

Handy, jun. No!

Sir Abel. No; I would not give one; but I would give five thousand pounds.

Gerald. Generously offered—a bargain—I'll do it.

Sir Abel. But, an't you deceiving me?

Gerald. What should I gain by that?

Sir Abel. Tell me your name?

Gerald. Time will tell that.

Lady H. (without.) Sir Abel—where are you?

Gerald. That's your wife's voice—I know it.

Sir Abel. So do I.

Gerald. I'll wait without—Cry, "Hem!" when you want me.

Sir Abel. Then you need not go far—

[*Exit* GERALD.]

I dare not believe it—I should go out of my wits—and then if he fail, what a pickle I shall be in! Here she is.

Enter Lady HANDY.

Lady H. So, Sir, I have found you at last?

Handy, jun. My honoured namma, you have just come in time to give your consent to my marriage with my sweet Susan.

Lady H. And do you imagine I will agree to such degradation?

Ash. Do'e, Lady Nelly, do'e be kind hearted to the young lovers—Remember how I used to let thee zit up all night a sweethearting.

Lady H. Silence! and have you dared to consent? (*to* Sir ABEL.)

Sir Abel. Oh, no, my Lady!

Handy, jun. Sir, you had better cry—"Hem!"

Sir Abel. I think it's time, Bob—Hem!

Handy, jun. Hem!

Lady H. What do you mean by—Hem?

Sir Abel. Only, my dear, something troublesome I want to get rid of—Hem!

Enter GERALD.

There he is—never was so frightened in all my life.

(GERALD)

(GERALD *advances.*)

Lady H. (shrieks and exclaims) Gerald!

Gerald. Yes.

Lady H. An't you dead, Gerald? Twenty years away and not dead?

Gerald. No, wife.

Sir Abel. Wife! Did you say, wife?

Gerald. Yes.

Sir Abel. Say it again.

Gerald. She is my wife.

Sir Abel. Once more.

Gerald. My lawful, wedded wife.

Sir Abel. Oh, my dear fellow!—Oh, my dear boy! Oh, my dear girl!—(*embraces GERALD and the rest*) Oh, my dear! (*running to Mrs. GERALD*) No—yes, now she an't my wife, I will—well—how will you have the five thousand? Will you have it in cash, or in bank notes—or stocks or India bonds, or lands, or patents, or——

Gerald. No—land will do—I wish to kill my own mutton.

Sir Abel. Sir, you shall kill all the sheep in Hampshire.

Gerald. Sir Abel, you have lost five thousand pounds, and with it, properly managed, an excellent wife, who, though I cannot condescend to take again as mine—you may depend on't shall never trouble you. Come! this way (*beckoning to Mrs. GERALD*)—important events now call on me, and prevent my staying longer with this good company. Sir Abel, we shall meet soon. Nay, come, you know I'm not used to trifle; come, come—(*she reluctantly, but obediently, crosses the stage, and runs off—GERALD follows*).

Sir Abel (imitating). Come, come—That's a damn'd clever fellow! Joy, joy, my boy! Here, here, your hands—The first use I make of liberty, is to give happiness—I wish I had more imitators—Well, what will you do? (*walks about exultingly.*) Where will you go? I'll go anywhere you like—Will you go to Bath, or Brighton, or Petersburg, or Jerusalem, or Seringapatam? all the same to me—we single fellows—we rove about—nobody cares about us—we care for nobody.

Handy, jun. I must to the Castle, father.

Sir Abel. Have with you, Bob (*singing*). "I'll sip every flower—I'll change every hour."
—(*beckoning*)—Come, come—[*Exeunt Sir ABEL, HANDY, jun. and SUSAN. SUSAN kisses her hand to ASHFIELD and DAME.*]

Ash. Bless her! how nicely she do trip it away with the gentry!

Dame. And then, Tummas, think of the wedding.

Ash. (reflecting.) I declare I shall be just the same as ever—may be I may buy a smartish bridle, or a silver backy stopper, or the like o' that.

Dame (apart). And, then, when we come out of church, Mrs. Grundy will be standing about there—

Ash. I shall shake hands agreeably wi' all my friends (*apart*).

Dame (apart). Then I just look at her in this manner.

Ash. (apart.) How dost do, Peter—Ah, Dick,—glad to zee thee wi' all my zoul (*bows towards the centre of the stage*).

Dame (apart). Then, with a kind of half curtesy, I shall—(*she advances to the centre also, and their heads meet*).

Ash.

Asb. What an wold fool thee bees't, Dame—
Come along, and behave pratty, do'e. [*Exeunt.*]

•SCENE II.—*The same as Act fourth, Scene third,*

*Enter HANDY, jun. with Caution, bearing a Light
and a large Key.*

Handy, jun. Now to fulfil my promise with Sir Philip Blandford—by—entering that chamber, and removing—'Tis rather awful—I don't half like it, somehow, everything is so cursedly still. What's that? I thought I heard something—no—why, 'sdeath, I am not afraid—no—I'm quite su—su—sure of that—only every thing is so cursedly hush, and—*(a flash of light and a tremendous explosion takes place)* What the devil's that? *(trembling)* I swear I hear some one—lamenting—who's there?

Enter Sir ABEL HANDY.

Father! *(trembling.)*

Sir Abel (trembling). Bob!

Handy, jun. Have you seen anything?

Sir Abel. Oh, my dear boy!

Handy, jun. Damn it, don't frighten one—

Sir Abel. Such an accident! Mercy on us!

Handy, jun. Speak!

Sir Abel. I was mixing the ingredients of my grand substitute for gunpowder, when, somehow, it blew up, and set the curtains on fire, and—

Handy, jun. Curtains! zounds, the room's in a blaze.

Sir Abel. Don't say so, Bob.

Handy, jun. What's to be done? Where's your famous preparation for extinguishing flames?

Sir Abel. It is not mixed.

Handy, jun. Where's your fire escape?

Sir Abel. It is not fixed.

Handy, jun. Where's your patent fire-engine?

Sir Abel. 'Tis on the road.

Handy, jun. Well, you are never at a loss.

Sir Abel. Never.

Handy, jun. What's to be done?

Sir Abel. I don't know. I say, Bob, I have it—perhaps it will go out of itself!

Handy, jun. Go out! it increases every minute—Let us run for assistance—Let us alarm the family. [Exit.

Sir Abel. Yes—dear me! dear me!

Servant (without). Here, John! Thomas! some villain has set fire to the Castle. If you catch the rascal, throw him into the flames.

(*Sir ABEL runs off and the alarm bell rings.*)

SCENE III.—*The Garden of the Castle.—The effects of the Fire shewn on the Foliage and Scenery.*

Enter HENRY meeting EVERGREEN.

Henry. The Castle in flames!—What occasioned it?

Everg. Alas, I know not!

Henry. Are the family in safety?

Everg. Sir Philip is.

Henry. And his daughter?

Everg. Poor lady! I just now beheld her looking with agony from that window!

Henry. Ah! Emma in danger!—Farewell!
Everg

Everg. (*holding him.*) Are you mad? the great staircase is in flames.

Henry. I care not! Should we meet no more, tell Sir Philip I died for his daughter!

Everg. Yet reflect.

Henry. Old man, do not cling to me thus—'Sdeath! men will encounter peril to ruin a woman, and shall I hesitate when it is to save one? [*Exit.*

Everg. Brave, generous boy! Heaven preserve thee!

Enter Sir PHILIP BLANDFORD.

Sir Philip. Emma, my child, where art thou?

Everg. I fear, Sir, the Castle will be destroyed.

Sir Philip. My child! my child! where is she! speak!

Everg. Alas! she remains in the Castle!

Sir Philip. Ah! then will I die with her! (*going.*)

Everg. Hold, dear master! if human power can preserve her, she is safe—The bravest, noblest of men has flown to her assistance.

Sir Philip. Heaven reward him with its choicest blessings!

Everg. 'Tis Henry.

Sir Philip. Henry! Heaven will reward him—I will reward him!

Everg. Then be happy! Look, Sir!

Sir Philip. Ah! dare I trust my eyes!

Everg. He bears her safe in his arms.

Sir Philip. Bountiful Creator, accept my thanks!

Enter HENRY, bearing EMMA in his arms.

Henry. There is your daughter.

Sir Philip. My child! my Emma, revive!

Henry (apart). Aye—now to unfold the mystery—The avenue to the eastern wing is still passable—the chamber not yet in flames—the present moment lost, and all is closed for ever. I will be satisfied, or perish. *[Exit.*

Miss B. Am I restored to my dear father's arms?

Sir Philip. Yes, only blessing of my life! In future thy wishes shall be mine—thy happiness my joy.

Enter HANDY, jun. and SUSAN.

Handy, jun. My dear friend safe! and the lovely Emma in his arms! Then let the bonfire blaze.

Sir Philip. My young friend, do you mark? the flames will save the trial I imposed on you. Behold—they already burst from the eastern turret! Ere this they must have reached the chamber—that consumed, the secret is with us secure.

Miss B. Oh, father, this unkind man has refused me, and given his hand to that sweet girl.

Handy, jun. I confess 'tis true—Your eyes can only fail to conquer those who are before subdued.

Sir Philip. But, Emma, where is your Henry? I wish to be just to him—I wish to thank him.

Miss B. He has withdrawn to avoid our gratitude.—

Everg. No—he again rushed into the Castle, exclaiming, “I will penetrate that chamber, or “perish in the attempt.” *Sir*

Sir Philip. Then all is discovered.

Handy, jun. Hush! for heaven's sake collect yourself!

Enter HENRY, in great agitation.

Miss B. Ah! (*sobs.*) Thank heaven he's safe. What urged you, Henry, again to venture in the Castle?

Henry. Fate! the desperate attempt of a desperate man!

Sir Philip. Ah!

Henry. Yes; the mystery is developed. In vain the massy bars, cemented with their cankerous rust, opposed my entrance—in vain the heated suffocating damps enveloped me—in vain the hungry flames flashed their vengeance round me! What could oppose a man struggling to know his fate? I forced the doors, a firebrand was my guide, and among many evidences of blood and guilt, I found—these! (*produces a knife and bloody cloth.*)

Sir Philip (*starts with horror, then with solemnity*). It is accomplished! Just heaven, I bend to thy decree!—Blood must be paid by blood! Henry, that knife, aimed by this fatal hand, murdered thy father!

Henry. Ah! (*grasping the knife.*)

Miss B. (*placing herself between him and her father.*) Henry! (*he drops his hand.*) Oh, believe him not! 'Twas madness! I've heard him talk thus wildly in his dreams! We are all friends! None will repeat his words—I am sure none will! My heart will break!—Oh, Henry! will you destroy my father?

Henry. Would I were in my grave!

Enter

Enter GERALD.

Sir Philip. Ah, Gerald here! How vain concealment! Well, come you to give evidence of my shame?

Gerald. I come to announce one, who for many years has watched each action of your life.

Sir Philip. Who?

Gerald. Morrington.

Sir Philip. I shall then behold the man who has so long avoided me—

Gerald. But ever has been near you—he is here.

Enter MORRINGTON, wrapped up in his cloak.

Sir Philip. Well, behold your victim in his last stage of human wretchedness! Come you to insult me?

(MORRINGTON *clasps his hands together and hides his face.*)

Ah! can even you pity me? Speak—still silent—still mysterious—Well, let me employ what remains of life in thinking of hereafter—(*Addressing heaven*) Oh, my brother! we soon shall meet again—And let me hope, that stript of those passions which make men devils, I may receive the heavenly balm of thy forgiveness, as I, from my inmost soul, do pardon thee.

(MORRINGTON *becomes convulsed with agony, and falls into GERALD's arms.*)

Ah, what means that agony? He faints! give him air!—

(*They throw open his cloak and bat.*)

(*Starts*) Angels of mercy! my brother! 'tis he! he lives! Henry, support your father!

Henry.

Henry (running to MORRINGTON). Ah, my father! he revives!

Sir Philip. Hush!

(MORRINGTON recovers — seeing his brother, covers his face with shame, then falls at his feet).

Mor. Crawling in the dust, behold a repentant wretch!—

Sir Philip (indignantly). My brother, Morrington!

Mor. Turn not away—in mercy hear me!

Sir Philip. Speak!

Mor. After the dreadful hour that parted us, agonized with remorse, I was about to punish home what your arm had left unaccomplished; when some angel whispered—"Punishment is life, not death—Live and atone!"

Sir Philip. Oh! go on!

Mor. I flew to you—I found you surrounded by sharpers—What was to be done? I became Morrington! littered with villains! practised the arts of devils! braved the assassin's steel! possessed myself of your large estates—lived hateful to myself, detested by mankind—to do what? to save an injured brother from destruction, and lay his fortunes at his feet! *(places parchments before Sir PHILIP.)*

Sir Philip. Ah! is it possible?

Mor. Oh, is that atonement? No—By me you first beheld her mother! 'Twas I that gave her fortune! Is that atonement? No—But my Henry has saved that angel's life—Kneel with me, my boy—lift up thy innocent hands with those of thy guilty father, and beg for mercy from that injured saint *(HENRY kneels with him).*

Sir Philip. O, God! how infinite are thy mercies! Henry, forgive me—Emma, plead for me—There—there *(joining their hands).*

Henry. But my father——

Sir Philip (approaching). Charles!

Mor. Philip!

Sir Philip. Brother, I forgive thee.

Mor. Then let me die—blest, most blest!

Sir Philip. No, no (*striking his breast*). Here
—I want thee here—Raise him to my heart.

(*They raise MORRINGTON—in the effort to embrace, he falls into their arms exhausted.*)

Again! (*They sink into each others arms.*)

Handy, jun. (*comes forward*.) If forgiveness be
an attribute which ennobles our nature, may we not
hope to find pardon for our errors—here?

(*The curtain falls.*)

THE END OF THE COMEDY.

EPILOGUE,

Written by MILES PETIT ANDREWS, Esq.

SPOKEN BY MR. FAWCETT.

So here I am—once more to bear a bob,
And for our Author do a friendly job ;
Perhaps you don't know how to clap a Play ;
Mind me—hand rattle hand—thus (*claps his hands*)—that's the
way !

No doubt you think, though second sore to none,
I'm rather sanguine about number *One* ;
Ask all the world, who everything would try,
And all the world will answer, I ! I ! I !
Your sprightly Damsels seeking active fame,
Will rival schoolboys in each schoolboy game ;
Give 'em but rope enough, they'll shine in skipping !
While many a lucky rogue may catch them tripping :
Others, with beauteous arm and lovely shoulder,
Conspicuous to each accurate beholder,
Vaulting on toe, with tamborine and bells,
Surpass the heroines of—Sadler's Wells !

Nor less our Beaux excite our admiration ;
Their shoulders too are worthy observation ;
Not bare indeed, but cas'd in tenfold stuffing—
They need not, if they like not, feel a cuffing ;
Nay what's more frequent, and preserves as much,
They save the pressure of a Bailiff's touch.

Stuffing's a charm attracts us every minute ;
E'en female bosoms find protection in it ;
Expos'd to open charms and powerful flattery,
Why not gain conquests by a well-mask'd battery ?

But truce to satire—Folly's lost in doubt,
And this age enters e'er that age goes out :

None

None know, so none to blame can find pretext,
 Whether we sin last century or the next.
 " You're a base man !" cries wealthy Madam Dump,
 To her fond spouse who took her by the lump,
 " To hide a wench last week behind the screen !"
 " Last week, my love !—last *Century* you mean."
 " Sure ! says Miss Lydia Lank, an ancient maid,
 " You will not countenance that painted jade :
 " I hate to name the odious word *miscarried* ;
 " And yet the wanton minx was never married !"
 " That's an old story !"—" Old ! two months or so."
 " Two months ! you dream ! a *Century* ago !"
 " Dam'me !" cries Dash, " each age has its beginning !"
 His chin quite buried in five rounds of linen ;
 " Think you we drive through life with too much haste ?
 " 'Tis neck or nothing with us lads of taste !"
 " Your taste !" cries Dad ; " I fear your credit shocks,
 " The rise of *Cravats* proves the fall of *Stocks* :
 " Save then to-day, to-morrow we'll want some."
 " To-morrow, Squaretoes ! That's an *Age* to come !"

Since then from changeful Time's uncertain state,
 Our very foibles now are out of date ;
 Let the Bard's faults find shelter on the Stage,
 And let his labours live at least an age.

Chear with your smiles the Poet's growing joy—
 A scanty harvest must his hopes destroy ;
 To brighten future prospects, all should now,
 With heart and hand unite to—Speed the Plough !



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