

FIRST LOVE;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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REMARKS.

The author of this comedy, as the author of the comedy of "The West Indian" and "The Jew," gives high importance to the work; and yet his very reputation as a dramatist, may here prove the means of disappointment to many of his readers; for, in "First Love," though possessing much merit, there is scarce a page which denotes dramatic talents, such as Mr. Cumberland has evinced in the before named productions.

It would be unjust to send forth this play from the stage to the closet, without intimating to the reader, who may, possibly, be unacquainted with all the numerous dramas by the same writer—that this, he is going to peruse, is inferior to every one of them. Still it was successful on its appearance, is now occasionally acted, and receives that degree of encomium, which must ever attach even to the most hasty or negligent composition of a man of genius.

That the interest excited by "First Love" is not deep, nor the events forcible; that no peculiar passion is awakened, no comic effect produced by any incident or character, may, in part, be attributed to the locality of the subject—the sorrows of a French emi-

grant—which seem to have stimulated the author to write, without affording him the means to write with his accustomed skill. What could fiction add, what could imagination invent, what could poetic description supply, to heighten the real sufferings of, or increase the general compassion for, those outcasts of their country?

The very materials which give to this drama the semblance of real life, have cast an insipidity upon the whole substance. The author, placing his dependence upon a fact, has spared his powers of invention their usual labour; and, lulled into security by the charms of a popular topic, has slumbered throughout his employment, nearly to the sleep of death.

But whilst there is no part of this comedy which claims high praise, still less is there any one scene deserving of censure. They will each produce, both for readers and auditors, a degree of entertainment worthy of their leisure; though by no means equal to that delight, which the same author has been in the constant habit of dispensing.

Some excellent instruction to the married will be found in the connubial conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Wrangle; particularly at the conclusion of the fourth act: and moral lessons, to which the author in all his various writings most virtuously adheres, will be read in every page, and plainly seen to pervade almost every occurrence and every character.

Lord Sensitive is, perhaps, the only exception to the success of moral effort in this play; for, with all his lordship's pretended susceptibility, he is even too

unfeeling for an example. Men, of his class in iniquity, have hearts too hard for warnings to impress: their cruelties are the effect of deliberation, and their amendment (like his) but the result of whim. No incident, perhaps, in the whole piece, is more whimsical than the sudden reformation of this vile lord. Poetic justice has at least been dealt to him; for his repentance is as ludicrous as his transgression was enormous.

May this atrocious character never be brought forward to invalidate the following most excellent description of Mr. Cumberland, as a writer, by the poet Goldsmith:

“ A flattering painter, who made it his care,
To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are.
His gallants are all faultless.

Say, where has our poet this malady caught?
Or wherefore his characters, thus without fault?
Say, was it, that vainly directing his view,
To find out men's virtues, and finding them few,
Quite sick of pursuing each troublesome elf,
He grew lazy at last, and drew from himself?”

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD SENSITIVE	<i>Mr. Wroughton.</i>
SIR MILES MOWBRAY	<i>Mr. King.</i>
FREDERICK MOWBRAY	<i>Mr. Palmer.</i>
DAVID MOWBRAY	<i>Mr. Bannister, Jun.</i>
MR. WRANGLE	<i>Mr. Benson.</i>
BILLY BUSTLER	<i>Mr. Suett.</i>
ROBIN, SERVANT to SIR MILES	<i>Mr. Hollingsworth.</i>
SERVANT to LADY RUBY	<i>Mr. Trueman.</i>
SERVANT to MR. WRANGLE	<i>Mr. Webb.</i>
SABINA ROSNY	<i>Mrs. Jordan.</i>
LADY RUBY	<i>Miss Farren.</i>
MRS. WRANGLE	<i>Miss Pope.</i>
MRS. KATE	<i>Miss Tidswell.</i>
WAITING WOMAN to LADY RUBY	<i>Miss Heard.</i>

FIRST LOVE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The Street.

Enter FREDERICK MOWBRAY, followed by DAVID.

David. Well ! I could almost swear—yet I won't be sure. I wish he would look back once again.—Yes it is, by St. George, it is my dear brother Frederick ! —Ah ! my sweet fellow, welcome to England ! Don't you remember little David ?

Fred. David ! may I believe my eyes ? Tis, he sure enough ! Come to my arms, my brave lad ! Why you are altered out of knowledge ! and in the navy-uniform —That's right, my boy, there you're in your proper line.

David. Ay, ay, sir !—But we'll talk of that by-and-by. How are you, in the first place ? How fares it with you, my hearty ? where are you come from ? what sort of a cruize have you had in t'other country ? Have you fallen in with father ?

Fred. No, nor do I wish him to know of my arrival as yet.

David. Be it so, be it so ! Mum's the word for that.—Are you come home full or empty ? Egad, you'll find father cling plaguily by the claws, damn'd

close in the lockers: if you are bare of the ready, I've plenty.

Fred. Thank you, David, thank you heartily; but I can shift. Keep your money, my good lad.

David. Not that, with your leave; I know a little better than so, we may hope.—But what brings you home o'the sudden?

Fred. My father's peremptory commands.

David. Enough said: then 'tis on account of sister's wedding.

Fred. I believe not—but I did not know till this moment she was married. Tell me the particulars, for 'tis interesting intelligence.

David. Why, she's married, that's all I can tell you: she has got a mate of father's own chusing; so he thinks he has done a mighty feat, and rigged her out for a fair weather voyage; but between you and me, I suspect there's foul wind in feather-bed bay, and a kind of cat-and-dog harmony on board between 'em, that's my notion.

Fred. I can well believe it: She has not the best temper in the world. What is the gentleman's name and condition?

David. Wrangle is his name, and wrangling I suspect to be his condition; but I heartily dislike the man, and therefore I would not have you take his character from me: see him, and judge for yourself.

Fred. There is one marriage in our family then to begin with; and now I must tell you, David, in confidence, that I do not believe it was on account of this wedding my father called me home in such haste, but with a view to another.

David. Like enough; that's your look out, thank Heaven, and not mine.

Fred. Bad luck for me, David, if it is as I fear; but you know Sir Paul Ruby is now dead, and my first love is a widow, young, blooming, and mistress of a mine of wealth: You can remember Clara Mid-

dleton, how devotedly I was attached to her, and how cruelly my father tore me from her?

David. Do I remember it? Yes, to be sure, and in my mind never forgave old crusty for his hardheartedness, to this hour; but if that be his sport, let him come on: By the Lord Harry, Fred. you'll be a gay fellow if you can bring that prize into harbour.

Fred. Hush! hush! that can never be.

David. Why you are in the right not to be too sure, for all the world is after her; but if she has a hankering for you still, you know—

Fred. Heaven forbid!

David. Well, well, I won't flatter you, brother, you are a little gone off, to be sure, rather the worse for wear, a small matter out of trim, but we can soon put that to rights, if your timbers are but staunch.

Fred. It is not there I should fail, let us hope; but if death was the alternative, I could not give my hand to Lady Ruby.

David. I take you now; you'll be no man's second; I see how it is with you, first oar or none at all.—Lord love you, what a whim is that! 'Tis no denial to a good ship because another man has commanded her.

Fred. You are wide of the mark, friend David; it is not that I object to Lady Ruby as a widow, for I dare say she is still beautiful as an angel.

David. That's more than I know, for I never saw one; but I'm sure she is as fresh and as fine as a daisy.

Fred. Why, that is as lowly a similitude as you can well find for her; but with all her charms, and all her riches, and all the love she could bestow upon me, were it warm and flattering as in our fondest moments, the barrier between us would be insuperable: fate has disunited us for ever.

David. Then fate has played you a very foul trick, let me tell you; for, search the world through, you will no where find her fellow.

Fred. If I dare trust you with a secret, I would put that to the trial; and yet I think you are too good a fellow to tell tales.

David. Give me none to tell, and that's a sure way to prevent it; but I think you might venture to trust me too.

Fred. This it is, and I'll make a short story of it.

David. Do so!

Fred. I have brought a virtuous and lovely girl with me into England.—

David. Indeed!

Fred. Who has been the preserver of my life, the companion of my journey from Padua to this place, and whom I have pledged myself to make the partner of my fortune.

David. Your wife?

Fred. My wife: the word is past, and I must keep it.

David. To be sure you must: but I'm sorry for it; there's no more to be said.—Death and fury! What a torrent will you have about your ears! Why father will come down upon you like a water-spout.

Fred. I am now seeking out some place where she can be lodged and boarded with people of reputation, till I can arrange my affairs; but I have been so long out of England, that I am almost as much a stranger in London as herself. Perhaps, David, you can help me out.

David. Why that's what I'm a thinking of: I have a friend, a right one, as staunch an old cock as ever crowed, my navy agent, Billy Bustler by name. I'm to dine with him to-day—and he has a sister Kate by the same token; a good soul! but if your miss isn't of the right sort, look you—

Fred. Oh fie, fie! Can you suppose any otherwise?

David. Well, well! but a word in time, you know—for Kate's a pure maiden, you must think, with a good deal of the buckram about her. Lord! how I do

set her up sometimes! So, if you've stowed away all your courtship, d'ye see, and got your marriage tack fairly aboard, why, upon these terms, I think I have interest enough with Kate to coax her into compliance.—Now, what say you?

Fred. Let us about it directly; for my lovely charge is expecting me, and time is precious.

David. Say no more, my bright fellow! As for Billy, he's a sure card. Give me your arm, and we'll be down upon him in a whiff. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A Chamber in MR. WRANGLE'S House.

Enter MR. and MRS. WRANGLE.

Mrs. W. Ah, my dear dear Mr. Wrangle, I have been sighing for a sight of you this many a long hour: Where in this world have you hidden yourself from the eyes of your fond, doting wife?—Come, come, my love, look kindly upon me: We, that are so happy in each other, should always meet with rapture.

Mr. W. Well, my dear Lyddy, and who is so rapturous as I? Where is the husband that so dotes upon his wife?

Mrs. W. Don't say so, don't say so. Can you lay your hand on your heart, and say you love me to the full as well as ever you did?

Mr. W. Better, better.

Mrs. W. No, you don't.

Mr. W. Yes, I do.

Mrs. W. I'll swear you don't; I know to a certainty your affection abates, whereas mine increases

every hour: nay, it is so excessive, that I am almost afraid it grows troublesome to you.

Mr. W. Don't fear it; from my soul I believe our fondness for each other is equal and alike: The uninterrupted harmony of our nuptial state, and the fidelity I have ever manifested——

Mrs. W. Well, and what has my fidelity been, I would ask? Notorious, unique, the talk of all the town. I am really so pointed at in all companies, as a mere domestic creature, that I am almost ashamed to show my face in any fashionable circle.

Mr. W. Never mind their sneering; your own conscience can acquit you of deserving it.—If I were you, Mrs. Wrangle, I would sometimes pass an evening at home, if it were only to show them you despise their spleen.

Mrs. W. Sometimes, Mr. Wrangle! sometimes pass an evening at home! Where is the woman of fashion passes so many evenings at home as I do?

Mr. W. The present won't be one of the number, if I may judge from your dress.

Mrs. W. The present indeed! How can you expect it? Isn't it opera night? Would you wish to deprive me of my only pleasure? Is there any thing in life I love so well as an opera?

Mr. W. Oh yes! your husband.

Mrs. W. Well, my husband to be sure—my husband is before every pleasure, so you need not take me up so quickly; for you know, my dear, you are all in all to me.

Mr. W. With the opera to help out.

Mrs. W. The opera indeed! You should be ashamed to mention the opera; where, I think, considering all things, I might expect to be indulged with a box to myself, instead of scrubbing into the pit, as I do at present; which, give me leave to say, few women of my pretensions would put up with.

Mr. W. Keep your temper, Mrs. Wrangle.

Mrs. W. And don't I keep my temper, Mr. Wrangle? Isn't it the part of a friend, to let you know the whole town cries out upon you? that you're the public talk? your character suffers by it—People know what a fortune I brought you, and you know in your heart, my dear, that if you had a little more of the gentleman in your spirit—

Mr. W. 'Sblood, madam, if I had a great deal less, you are enough to call it up.

Mrs. W. There, there! now you are going to be in one of your tantarums.

Mr. W. Then why do you provoke me to it?

Mrs. W. I provoke you! I only tell you of your faults, and you have not temper to hear of them.

Mr. W. You are very sharp-sighted in spying out my faults, methinks, and at the same time either shut your eyes upon your own, or find them too incurable to meddle with.

Mrs. W. I plead to no fault but the fault of keeping terms with you; and that I'm resolved to correct out of hand: I'll put up with your ill humours no longer; my father, my family, the whole town, shall know your treatment of me. I could bear my lot well enough, if the world did but know I was not that happy wife they suppose me to be.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Lady Ruby.

[*Exit.*

Mr. W. Best impart your sorrows to her then; she, you know, is your bosom friend.

Enter LADY RUBY.

Mrs. W. My dear Lady Ruby!

Lady R. My dear Mrs. Wrangle!

Mr. W. Here's a tender greeting! An honest man would suppose these women had a regard for each other; nothing less at heart with either. [*Aside.*

Lady R. Oh! you incorrigible creature! *tête-à-tête* with your own wife.

Mr. W. I have the grace at least of taking a hint, when the friends of my wife would dispense with my company. *[Exit.*

Lady R. Did you ever see the like? Upon my life, Lydia, you have spoilt that good man of yours, and made him as freakish as a humour'd child: There is not one in a thousand of that silly sex can bear being petted.

Mrs. W. Never think about him; he grows quite intolerable.

Lady R. Bless me! I could not have believed it.

Mrs. W. No, because you will believe me what I am not, never have been, nor ever shall be—happy with that man: My temper is quick, his sullen; my nature is open and sincere, his dark and jealous.

Lady R. He jealous! Mr. Wrangle jealous!

Mrs. W. Oh! extremely so.

Lady R. I could not have believed it.

Mrs. W. Now cannot I for the life of me comprehend why you could not have believed it; because, though I am sufficiently guarded in my conduct, especially before him, yet I should hope I am not too vain, when I suppose some few attractions, some small pretensions, may still be said to belong to me—though comparatively nothing with what your ladyship possesses.

Lady R. Certainly, my dear madam, you have charms in full measure; and if you rather chuse to be complimented upon them than your discretion, your husband shall be credited by me for all the jealousy you think fit to ascribe to him, with as much or as little cause for it is as you may be disposed to allow of.

Mrs. W. I believe there is no woman but would be mortified if her husband was to say to her, "It is not in your power to make me jealous."

Lady R. I grant you the power is desirable, the exercise of it an experiment of some danger : 'tis like a dormant title; one would not give it up, though it may not suit us to assume it.

Mrs. W. A-propos to a title—now your year of widowhood is up, have you asked a certain question of that little heart of yours, and has the sly thing ever been brought to confession about this same Lord Sensitive, who follows you up and down like your shadow ?

Lady R. Oh, yes—I've talked with the sly thing as you call it, by the hour about him, and a very edifying conversation it was, I assure you.

Mrs. W. Ay, indeed ! as how ?

Lady R. Why, I took it roundly to task ; for I began to perceive it had got some foolish fluttering, which you good wives know nothing of—now this I did not like, for, being as you see, a free woman, I resolve to profit by past sorrows, and not enslave myself any more.

Mrs. W. Humph ! that's a widow's resolution, made without meaning, and broken without remorse ; but for my part, as I don't believe you are at all in love with him, I must wonder what amusement you can find in tormenting him.

Lady R. Law, child ! the man torments himself ; he takes all trouble off my hands, and makes me a bye-stander in my own quarrels : He sees things that never had existence, hears things that were never said, and seems to have a phantom ever at his beck, like a conjuror's familiar, that whispers in his ear, and drives him upon extravagancies that exceed all credibility.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Lord Sensitive begs permission to pay his respects to you.

Lady R. Look you there, now—phantom again—Better send him away ; for if he gets a haunt of your house, he'll be under your couch, behind your bed-curtains ; not a corner, closet, nor cupboard will be free from him.

Mrs. W. Now I won't send him away, for I perceive she's jealous—Provoking creature ! how vexatiously well dressed she is ! [*Aside.*—Show my Lord Sensitive up. [*Exit SERVANT.*

Enter LORD SENSITIVE.

Lord S. I have presumed upon the privilege of an old acquaintance—

Mrs. W. To come in search of a new one.—I am much beholden to Lady Ruby for the honour of this visit.

Lord S. Now that is quite cruel, Mrs. Wrangle ; it really gives me pain ; but it is my misfortune to have every attention of mine misunderstood.

Mrs. W. Would your lordship be understood then to have no attention for any lady in this room besides myself ?

Lord S. I would be thought not to want more temptations than one for visiting Mrs. Wrangle ; but whatever interpretation you may please to put upon my intentions, I must think myself highly honoured when they are regarded as an object either by yourself or Lady Ruby.

Lady R. My lord !—meaning me ?—

Lord S. Madam !

Lady R. I thought I heard my own name ; that was all.

Lord S. And do I offend by pronouncing it ! if so, I fear I am guilty even in my sleep—nay in my prayers ; for I am apt to name you then.

Mrs. W. Now that's too much, by all that's tender !—Heavens, what a Philander ! Such milk and sugar speeches make me sick. [*Aside.*

Lord S. I am very unlucky, ladies, and perhaps unseasonably intrude upon some more interesting business; Lady Ruby's thoughts at least seem to be otherwise engaged than upon the present subject.

Lady R. You are not quite out of your guess; they were just then upon a ramble.—I think, my lord, you was last summer in Italy—

Lord S. In Italy! Yes, yes, madam, I was in Italy.

Lady R. Did you visit Padua?

Lord S. Padua! No—What do I say? Yes, I have been at Padua.

Lady R. Did you make any long stay there?

Lord S. Really I—I have almost forgot how long I stayed.—But pray, madam, why do you wish to know? Have you any particular motive for inquiring how long I stayed at Padua, or what passed whilst I was there?

Lady R. None, none at all; not the least curiosity, be assured.

Mrs. W. Don't believe her, my lord; she has a motive for every thing, and never speaks without forethought.

Lady R. How can you say so? Oh! you spiteful thing, what a persecution have you drawn upon me!

Lord S. Indeed and indeed, Lady Ruby, you have alarmed me: I feel every thing that falls from you, and am tremblingly alive to the slightest whisper that may wound my reputation where I am most interested to guard it. I entreat, if you have heard any thing against me, that you will suffer me to defend myself.

Mrs. W. No time like the present, therefore I'll charitably leave you together—which is a goodnatured way of making you perfectly disagreeable to each other. [Exit.]

Lord S. It is now in your power, Lady Ruby, to make this abrupt departure of Mrs. Wrangle's the

kindest action of her life, and the happiest moment of mine—

Lady R. My lord, I don't perfectly understand you.

Lord S. By permitting me to justify my character to your entire satisfaction: I will suppose, madam, you have heard that I had an idle attachment at Padua.

Lady R. I did not hear it was idle.

Lord S. Admit it was a serious one then, for argument's sake—such fooleries, I should hope, do not stick fast to a man's character, especially after the object is shaken off, and forgotten.

Lady R. Perhaps that may be the worst part of the story, if the lady was not unworthy—but I am no inquisitor.

Lord S. I'll not impeach the lady's reputation, neither will I allow it to be said, I have dealt dishonourably with her in any shape—If any gentleman dares to fix that aspersion upon me, I am ready with my answer.

Lady R. I don't doubt it; there's a certain argument that answers every thing.

Lord S. I guess from whom your information is derived: Mr. Frederick Mowbray has been at Padua—is there still perhaps.

Lady R. Hold, my lord, I must set you right in one particular; and I insist on your believing me when I declare to you, upon my honour, that Frederick Mowbray is not my informer, neither does my information come by any other channel from him.

Lord S. May I ask the lady's name you suppose me to have been attached to?

Lady R. Sabina Rosny, of noble parents, who had perished under the axe in France; an orphan fugitive, young, beautiful, and friendless.

Lord S. I befriended her, I protected her.—If our best deeds are to be perverted by detraction, and, then urged against us as crimes, who is safe?

Lady R. Innocence.

Lord S. Well, madam, I hope that is my case.

Lady R. I hope it is—and if it is, you'll treat such stories with contempt.

Lord S. And so I do ; but I am penetrated, cut to the heart, confounded with—with contrition—no, not that—but with shame and vexation, that such stories should be entertained by you in any serious light.

Lady R. Your agitation makes them serious.

Lord S. My agitation is proportioned to the—to the agony it gives me to say, that I regard myself as dismissed, discarded, banished from your sight for ever.
[Exit.

Lady R. Guilty, upon my honour !

Enter MRS. WRANGLE.

Mrs. W. Well, my dear lady, you have quarrelled, as I supposed, and parted with high words : and now if his lordship should fall to his prayers, I should doubt if it will be a blessing he'll bestow upon you.

Enter LORD SENSITIVE.

Lord S. I step back once more, and for the last time—Confusion ! Mrs. Wrangle here ?— [Exit.

Mrs. W. Shall I stop him ?

Lady R. No, I beseech you let him go.

Mrs. W. He is terribly agitated.

Lady R. Not a whit more than will do him good ; let us hope his fermentation will refine him.

Mrs. W. Ah, my dear lady, I see plainly how it will be ; you will marry that man ; positively you will marry him.

Lady R. If you are positively right and infallible

in your predictions, it must be so ; if I have any thing to say to it, I shall beg leave to doubt—But time flies fast in your society, and I have been making you a most unconscionable visit. May I request your servant to order up my coach ?

Mrs. W. Must I part from you ?—Who waits ?

Enter a SERVANT.

Order Lady Ruby's servants.

Lady R. Well, good bye to you !—we shall meet at the opera.

Mrs. W. My dear dear friend, all happiness attend you. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Room in BILLY BUSTLER's House.

Enter BILLY BUSTLER and MRS. KATE.

Billy B. Well, Kate ! well, girl ; now let us hear how it goes in the kitchen quarter—It comes a little mal-a-propos, to be sure, for I'm plaguy busy ; but I know you like to set out a dinner, so give us your bill o' fare.

Kate. Why, you know, Billy, this is Michaelmas day.

Billy B. Yes, yes, I know that fast enough : I hope you have a goose ?

Kate. Law ! brother ! how you snap one up—to be sure, there is a goose.

Billy B. At first course, I hope, bottom dish.—

Kate. No, the goose is at top.

Billy B. I tell you, no; my goose shall be at bottom.

Kate. Why then you must have two geoses, for no one shall cut it up but myself. There's a boiled leg of corned pork for your carving; I hope you call that a bottom dish—with a pease pudding on one side, and a bowl of apple sauce on the other.

Billy B. I'll tell you what, Kate, I can't give up the goose; I love to have him under my own nose, smoking, with sage and onions—Oh! he's a savoury fellow!—can't give him up, Kate; can't, upon my soul.

Kate. Then you must give up me, for I won't sit at table on any other terms.—You, indeed, to dispute with me about tops and bottoms!—with me, who could have set out seven and eleven before you was man enough to tuck a napkin under your chin! Do, pr'ythee, keep to your own receipt book, and leave me to mine; I know it all, from a lark to a loin of beef, and, in the economy of the table, wou'dn't hold a candle to Hannah Glass herself, if she was living, and here present.

Enter DAVID.

David. Heyday! how came this to pass? here's a breeze, indeed! here's a ripple!—Kitty, my charmer, who has vexed you?

Kate. Why, Billy has vexed me; he will chatter about things he knows nothing of.

Billy B. I've done, I've done: serve up the goose in your own way.

David. Out upon him, for a lubber! he has been running foul of the kitchen hawlyards, after his old fashion.

Billy B. No, no, it's all over; there's an end; I

knock under: Your presence, Pickle, always makes peace.

David. Why, how long have you lived by the sea, friend Bustler, not to find out that it's sure to make rough water where two tides meet? Kitty's temper is as smooth as a mill-pond, if you won't put in your oar. Come, come, let us be all in good humour with each other, for I've a favour to ask of you.

Kate. What is that, lapwing?

David. Oh! quite a small matter; I know you'll grant it at the first word.

Kate. It shall go hard but I'll try for it. Let us hear it.

David. Why, 'tis only to accommodate a friend of mine with a night or two's lodging in your spare cabin.

Kate. Is that all?

David. Yes; that's all.

Billy B. Any friend of yours, my dear boy, shall be welcome to my house, bed and board, for as long as he likes.—Why didn't you bring the gentleman with you?

David. Gentleman! No, no, the gentleman in this case happens to be a lady.

Kate. Ah, gemini! you little wicked devil, would you foist your naughty husseys into my house?

David. Who says she's a naughty hussey? She's as spotless a virgin as yourself, only she is not so obstinately bent to continue one; for she's about to be married out of hand.

Kate. Get you gone, get you gone! I'll have nothing to do with her.

Billy B. Hold, hold; let us understand this a little better. What is the lady's name—who is she going to marry—and how are you interested about her? I don't think David Mowbray would bring a bad woman into my family.

David. Why, who can suppose I would? But with

respect to entering into her history with you, I can't do it; for 'tis brother Frederick's affair, and he'll satisfy you in all points. It is not I that am going to marry her, but he: all I know is, that she is a person of rank, and an emigrant. Take notice, I have never seen her, and moreover it is a close secret from father.

Kate. Billy, Billy, if it is a secret affair, don't meddle or make with it: as sure as can be, you'll get into hot water with Sir Miles Mowbray.

Billy B. Hot water, indeed! let him take care, then, he don't scald his own fingers. I shall act the straight part by my friend David; if he deceives me, that is his fault; if I deceive him, I am a flincher, and no true Englishman—so, I say, the lady shall be welcome: I say it, and who shall gainsay it?

David. Come, sweet Kate, it only wants your concurrence; take a little pity into your heart for a poor orphan stranger, driven out of her own country by the murderers of her parents, and give her a small sample of your hospitality, for the honour of old England.

Kate. Nay, if she is an orphan, and a stranger, and a fugitive from that cruel country, who but a monster would refuse to take her in? I'll not be outdone in charity by any body.—Let her come when she will, I'll do every thing in my power for her.

Billy B. Well said, Kate! thou art a kind soul, though a dear lover of a little contradiction.

David. When there's a good heart at bottom, what matters it how you get to it?—But I'm going to my brother, and, when I bring him in my hand, I shall bring one, for whose honour I will vouch with my life.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

MR. WRANGLE'S *House*.

Enter MR. and MRS. WRANGLE.

Mr. W. So, child, how comes it to pass you are not at the opera to-night?

Mrs. W. The fates decreed it otherwise.

Mr. W. Nonsense! the fates, indeed! You have other reasons than they can give you.

Mrs. W. Well, if you are not contented with the fates, you must make inquiry amongst the casualties.—Your coach broke down with me at the opera door.

Mr. W. My coach! my new coach!

Mrs. W. The very same; and, for an accident, methinks you have come off reasonably well. If my limbs had been broken at the same time, you would have had double repairs on your hands.

Mr. W. Humph! are my horses safe?

Mrs. W. They are jobs, you know; you need have no feeling for them.

Mr. W. How did you come home?

Mrs. W. Took the first carriage that was offered me.

Mr. W. And whose was that?

Mrs. W. Colonel, Colonel—I can't think of the man's name.

Mr. W. Come, come, I know your man. I'll bet ten to one, 'twas Colonel Doricourt's.

Mrs. W. That's high odds but you'd win the wager.

Mr. W. You came home with Colonel Doricourt—

Mrs. W. Exactly so.

Mr. W. Damnation! then there are more repairs on my hands than a broken carriage; there is a ruined reputation.

Mrs. W. Carry in your damages: the gentleman will satisfy you.

Mr. W. And do you think I'll be satisfied with this cool contempt, this insolent indifference to my just remonstrances? No, madam, your new method of insensibility won't serve: I'll make you feel, before we part.

Mrs. W. Keep your temper, Mr. Wrangle.

Mr. W. I'll not keep my temper.

Mrs. W. Throw it aside then, and get a better; for it is thoroughly worn out, and no longer fit for any gentleman's wear.

Enter SIR MILES MOWBRAY.

Sir M. So, so, so! very good, very good! Here you both are, close as ever: here I left you, and here I find you, still the same, ever fond and loving, ever happy in each other.

Mr. W. Oh! supremely happy—

Mrs. W. Both superlatively blest—

Sir M. Yes, yes, I know it well: and why are you so superlatively blest, but because you had the grace to discover that I could chuse better for you than you could for yourself? Why is a father called the head of his family, but as it is his business to think for all those whose heads can't think for themselves? The human heart, children, has been my peculiar study; and as I have kept myself exempt from all those passions that disturb it, I may say without vanity, I am master of the subject.

Mr. W. And pray, sir, may I ask how you became thus learned in the passions, having never experienced the effects of them?

Sir M. As a physician finds out a disease without feeling it; by natural intuition and deep reflection.

Mrs. W. And by which of these do you discover to a certainty that I am as happy as I pretend to be?

Sir M. Can I fail to discover it is day when the sun shines? If there were any hypocrisy in your heart, can you suppose it would escape me? When your brother Frederick was in love, did not I find it out? Yet I never was the dupe of that nonsensical passion myself.

Mrs. W. So I should think, sir, when you undertook to reason him out of it.

Sir M. Ay, madam, and now you shall see I'll reason him into it.

Mr. W. That I should guess will be no hard task, if Lady Ruby is the object. Mr. Mowbray will be a happy man if he obtains her.

Mrs. W. He'll be a rich one at least: why you should so decidedly say he will be a happy one, I am at a loss to guess, because I know the lady is no favourite of yours.

Mr. W. I can have no favourites, whilst one reigns mistress of my heart, compared with whom all other objects are as nothing.

Sir M. Do you hear that, Lyddy? By my soul, Wrangle, though I say it to my daughter's face, (and she's a good girl, I confess) thou art enough to spoil any wife in England.

Mrs. W. Not with kindness, I should think.

Mr. W. Can I possibly be too kind to such a wife?

Sir M. No, but you may talk too much about it: you may turn her head with too many fine speeches.

Mrs. W. I wish you had heard what fine speeches he made to me just now.

Sir M. I don't doubt it.

Mrs. W. I had the misfortune to have my coach broke down at the opera. I have seen husbands that will fret and fume at such an accident, and scold the poor wife without mercy.

Sir M. Ay, those are peevish paltry fellows truly.

Mrs. W. Are they not? yet even those, who are such tyrants out of sight, shall be sycophants to your face, and pass themselves upon the world for the best of husbands, by the mean resource of flattery and fine speeches.

Sir M. Very true, they are the most loathsome characters in nature.

Mrs. W. I think so from my soul—and all the while the poor wife, though in fact the most miserable of beings, shall be falsely supposed the happiest of women.

Sir M. That is the most provoking circumstance of all.

Mrs. W. Insupportably so in my opinion—Then the odious creature is so jealous upon every trifling occasion, and so petulant withal, that one knows not which he is most to be despised for, his captiousness or his cruelty.

Sir M. Ah child, child! had you been refractory and self-willed, all these miseries might have fallen upon you; whereas, by following my judgment in the great concern of life, you have all the blessings of wedlock, and escape its sorrows.—So farewell! I leave you happy; I have made you happy: and if I have the same success with Lady Ruby, to whom I am now going, we shall all be happy. [Exit.

Mr. W. My dearest life, permit me to attend upon you—Honour me so far as to give me your hand.

Mrs. W. Oh! that I could recall the day when I did give you my hand! neither force, nor flattery, nor all the fortune upon earth, should prevail with me to consent to it. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

A Chamber in LADY RUBY'S House.

Enter LADY RUBY and WAITING WOMAN.

Lady R. When Lord Sensitive's confidential servant informed you of his attachment for Sabina Rosny, did he speak of her as a woman of character?

W. Woman. Oh yes, my lady; he gave the young gentlewoman a very high character.

Lady R. For her discretion, I ask you?

W. Woman. For her good qualities, my lady, her accomplishments, and, above all, for her beauty.

Lady R. Pooh! her beauty is out of the question; I am simply talking of her character, of her conduct.

W. Woman. Pardon me, madam, I did not think it handsome to be over-curious about conduct; for I concluded Mr. Carrington too much a man of honour to betray his master's secrets.

Lady R. So it should seem indeed, by his taking you into counsel for the keeping them.—You may leave me.

[Exit WAITING WOMAN.]

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Lord Sensitive delivered this himself, and bids me say, he attends to know your ladyship's pleasure.

[Delivers a Note.]

Lady R. Very well! *[Reads it.]*—My compliments to his lordship, and, if he wishes to walk up, I am at home. *[Exit SERVANT.]* So! here's another explanation to undergo—Ah! man, man! positively thou art the most irrational, nonsensical animal in the creation.

Enter LORD SENSITIVE.

Lord S. Am I permitted once more to approach you?

Lady R. You have the same permission, my lord, that you always had.

Lord S. I am sensible my visits can no longer be acceptable to you: where suspicion has taken hold, kindness cannot keep its place; I had therefore determined never to intrude again, but a natural wish to attempt my justification, and, more than all, a natural weakness, which my heart cannot instantly shake off, induce me once more, and for the last time, to solicit an admission.

Lady R. I am happy to see your lordship upon any terms; and I hope you will repeat your visits for the last time so often, that our acquaintance will improve by it.

Lord S. Ah, madam, madam, whilst you can sport with my feelings in this manner, your levity convinces me how indifferent I am to you: nay, I believe, from my soul, I am become your aversion; and I am astonished, when your ladyship so well knows the real motives of my visits here, you have not ordered your doors to be shut against so unwelcome an intruder.

Lady R. Pray, my lord, what is our quarrel just now? and why should my doors, that are apt to be open to all persons of honour, and my friends in general, be shut against you in particular?

Lord S. Because I understand some tattling busy-body has impressed you with unfavourable notions of my conduct, in an affair, which delicacy forbids me to explain.

Lady R. Then let delicacy prevail with you to forbear the subject. We may be good friends, without searching into the secrets of each other's heart.

Lord S. Right, madam; 'tis a compromise that saves us both from an unpleasant task: my heart is not pure enough for your inspection; yours, was I to search it, would disclose all the tender feelings, all the fond, unabated, affections, that are there glowing and alive for a certain person, who sways it still, though absent and neglectful.—'Sdeath, madam! it is a discovery that would drive me into madness, nor will I stoop to friendship, where I have once aspired to love!

Lady R. That is sincere, at least: you think my nature steady to a first attachment; credit yourself for the same principle, and we have each of us our separate pursuits; they clash no longer.

Lord S. May I then be permitted to ask you one plain question?

Lady R. With all my heart; propose it.

Lord S. Are you not, at this moment, still so wedded to a first attachment, as to be no longer susceptible of any other?

Lady R. That is a question, let me observe to you, that none but the most intimate friend could expect an answer to; how, then, can your lordship look for it, when you will not submit to be regarded in that character?

Lord S. But if a lover presumed to put such a question, would you wave it in his case?

Lady R. If he was a man I disliked, I might, perhaps, avail myself of so fair an opportunity for getting rid of him; if he was one I esteemed, I should be sorry to find he had so self-tormenting a curiosity belonging to him.

Lord S. Oh, loveliest of women! ever charming, ever irresistible, pardon my too anxious sensibility, and pity one who lives but in your sight. I find it is impossible to escape—scorn me, trifle with me, torture me as you will, still I must adore you.

Lady R. Must you be always in extremes? Now you are more intolerable than ever.—Let go my hand, I desire of you.

Lord S. Grudge me not this short respite from my anguish; for pity's sake, do not leave me.

Lady R. Positively I must.—Ah! you have crushed my hand—release it, I beseech you.

Lord S. Spare me these few moments; I am not so presumptuous as to flatter myself they can last.

Lady R. I hardly think they should; I don't believe any human hand could bear to be so squeezed much longer.

Lord S. Thus let me atone the injury I have done it.

[*Kisses her Hand.*]

Lady R. I perceive, my lord, our interviews should last no longer than whilst we keep up the spirit of controversy; as soon as ever we begin to be of the same mind, it is time we should part.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Miles Mowbray begs the honour of a few minutes conversation with your ladyship.

Lord S. There, there, there! all my apprehensions are verified.

Lady R. Hush! hush!—wait without a few moments.—[*SERVANT retires.*—] I confess I am puzzled to account for this visit.

Lord S. So am not I—His motives are too clear: your fortune is the loadstone; he comes to make proposals for his son.

Lady R. Ridiculous! Go, go, you shall not stay a minute longer; I must admit him.—Who waits?—Tell Sir Miles Mowbray, I am at his service.

Lord S. Well, madam—if it must be so, and if Sir Miles's business is so very interesting—

Lady R. Don't be so tiresome.

Lord S. I will obey—And yet—Oh! Lady Ruby, think of me!

[*Exit.*]

Enter SIR MILES MOWBRAY.

Sir M. I am your ladyship's very humble servant—greatly obliged to you for this indulgence, very greatly obliged to you indeed. I am a suitor to your ladyship, under favour, for a few moments of your patience, if my request be not unseasonable.

Lady R. I am entirely at your command, Sir Miles.—Be pleased to take a chair.

Sir M. Not so, my lady; let me entreat you to be seated first.

Lady R. Pray, use no ceremony—With your leave, I will sit by you.

Sir M. I humbly thank you.—In truth, my lady, I do greatly covet to be near you, near in every sense. Believe me, I should greet the moment as the happiest in my life, that connected me and mine in the closest and nearest alliance with your ladyship.

Lady R. Has that always been your wish?

Sir M. Madam!—My lady!—Ahem! I am not sure I rightly comprehend your ladyship's question.

Lady R. If I remind you of your past opinion, Sir Miles, it is because I would not have you be deceived as to your present one—I do not think that, within the period since you and I have ceased to be acquainted, I have any such acquirements to boast of as should induce you to think better of me, now that I am a widow, than you did before I was a wife.

Sir M. 'Tis a proof of your modesty, that you are pleased to say so; and what is so engaging? 'tis a token of your candour and sincerity (amiable qualities!) and I always did you the justice to say, that you possessed them in a very eminent degree.

Lady R. Indeed! did you say that?

Sir M. I did, I did, upon my soul—I said it, and I thought it.

Lady R. Then I suspect you do not think better of a woman for being only modest, candid, and sincere.

Sir M. Pardon me, madam! Can I give a stronger proof how highly I esteem those virtues than by tendering you my son, my eldest son Frederick?

Lady R. Bless me! would you recommend so bad a bargain to your son?

Sir M. How so, my lady? how so? Why do you say so bad a bargain?

Lady R. Because you have only reckoned up a ragged troop of virtues, which you once turned from your doors, when they were in better plight than at present, without naming money, which, I believe, in your opinion, is a virtue worth them all.

Sir M. I know the value of money, madam, though I won't call it a virtue; and I own to you, that Sir Paul Ruby's property, so worthily bequeathed to your ladyship, consolidated with what Frederick, as my heir, may expect, are circumstances not to be overlooked in the calculations of a prudent father.

Lady R. Well, Sir Miles, I am still so much your son's friend as to rejoice at having discovered, that, when interest prompts you to seek out an alliance for him, the good qualities of the lady you contract with will be no bar to your bargain.

Sir M. Very much on the contrary, very much indeed; and therefore let me hope, my good lady, when my son, whom I look for hourly, shall arrive, you will graciously permit me to lay him at your feet.—In this hope, I humbly take my leave—

Lady R. Your patience for a moment: Whatever hopes you are pleased to found upon this conversation, I must candidly tell you they are not at all to be depended upon; and recollect, Sir Miles, that if my affection for your son is now extinguished, it was your own authority that put an end to it;—let me add,

that, if I am not greatly flattered by the honour of this visit, it is because I clearly comprehend the motives of it.

Sir M. My lady, I—I—I am your very humble servant.

Lady R. Your most obedient, Sir Miles Mowbray.—Who waits? [*Exit SIR MILES.*] O, Frederick, Frederick! false, forgetful man! Did you but feel those wishes, which your interested father expresses, how little would you need an advocate!—how easily would my resentment be appeased! [*Exit.*]

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

BILLY BUSTLER'S *House.*

FREDERICK and SABINA.

Fred. Friend of my life! my benevolent preserver! I have now happily accomplished one effort of my gratitude, by escorting you to an asylum, where persecution cannot reach you.

Sabina. Generous Mowbray! I do wish to tell you, in the language you have taught me, how my poor heart is penetrated with your goodness to me, but I am not eloquent; I can only say, I do thank you for your care of me, and for bringing me to your cha-

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ritable country, which I do honour from my soul; indeed, I do honour it; but, alas! it is not for me ever to be happy in it.

Fred. Why do you say that? I am incapable of deceiving you: this instant I am going to my father, and be assured it shall not be many days before the dubious situation you are in shall be honourably done away, and all my promises fulfilled.

Sabina. No, no, no, my good friend; I shall not call upon you from those promises; we are now in England, and those promises are nothing—they are void.

Fred. What can you mean, Sabina? Do you suspect my integrity?

Sabina. I do not suspect you at all—but you was sick, take notice, very sick, and deranged in your senses, when, because I did do my possible, in pity and compassion, to assist you in your malady, you was pleased to make those promises you speak; and I did let them pass for the time, saying nothing to the contrary of them, because they were very good and commodious for me, as a single woman, travelling alone with you, under protection of your honour; but now that you are at home again, and, thanks to Heaven! in good health, I shall not be so base to let you ruin yourself by marrying poor me, only because you pledged your word, when you did hardly know what that word meant.

Fred. Nobly conceived! But I am not that wretch, to sacrifice my honour to a mean, mercenary evasion: Though my heart has been wounded, as you know, it has not been debased; and I am determined to go this instant to my father, and announce the resolution I have taken.

Sabina. Stop, I conjure you, stop! I have something on my mind to tell you.—Ah, misericorde! What is a-coming now?

Enter LADY RUBY.

Lady R. Bless me! I did not know this room was occupied: I beg a thousand pardons—Mr. Mowbray!—

Fred. Lady Ruby!—this is indeed a surprise.

Lady R. I desire I may not break in upon your conference, sir. My business with the master of this house may be transacted in his office.

Fred. Our conference, madam, is at an end. I was on the point of my departure.

Lady R. By no means let me hasten it—I should be sorry to deprive the lady of one moment of your company.

Fred. It has been my good fortune to be the lady's companion for some time, and we are just arrived in England. Mademoiselle Rosny is an emigrant of noble birth, as much to be admired for her virtues, as she is to be pitied for her misfortunes.

Lady R. Rosny, is that the lady's name?

Sabina. Yes, madam, that is my name: Alas! I am the last that bear it: Those, that did honour to it once, are now no more: I am a miserable, solitary relict.

Lady R. So young an orphan! How my heart bleeds for you!

Sabina. How good, to feel for the distressed and stranger! Ah, had you known my parents!—They perished at Marseilles; I fled to Padua, but sorrow overtook me; I had great sufferings there.

Lady R. I can well believe it.—Lord Sensitive has that to answer for.

[*Aside.*

Fred. Sabina, you shall spare yourself the painful recital: Lady Ruby, if I rightly know her, is not curious to inquire into the private histories of the unfortunate.

Lady R. In point of idle curiosity, I hope you do me no more than justice; but to know misfortunes, for the purpose of relieving them, permit me to say

that I am curious.—If Mademoiselle Rosny should prefer the protection of one of her own sex to her present situation, my heart and house are open to receive her.

Sabina. Oh! that is great consideration for me, truly.

Lady R. What say you, amiable Sabina? I am, like you, a solitary woman: will you consent to be my companion and friend?

Sabina. I have all possible empressement for your goodness; and certainly so charming a lady cannot fail to have a tender heart for the unhappy; but I am without a friend in England, except this worthy gentleman, and I do think he will advise me for the best. It seems to me that you are not quite estranged to one another: Mr. Mowbray is very honourable and good to poor me; I pray you, let me hear what he will say.

Lady R. Speak, Frederick.

Fred. I scarce know how to answer.

Lady R. If you believe me worthy of the trust, and sincere in wishing for it—

Fred. How can I doubt of either? But my connexion with this lady is a delicate one.

Lady R. I must suppose it is an honourable one.

Fred. In the strictest sense. Gratitude not less than, under Providence, for my life, bind me to Sabina Rosny. Through the sad period of an excruciating illness, her soothing pity was my only support—snatched by her care from death, or a condition worse than death, could I do less than dedicate what's left of life and senses to the generous preserver of them? I am now going to my father—I need not say how much my fate depends upon that interview.

Sabina. No, no, no! I do once more pray and implore of you, Mr. Frederick, not to speak of me to your father: I have reasons for that, which it would

be great pain and difficulty for me to explicate to you; but since my lady is so good to permit me to come to her, I do pray you let me avail myself of her kind favour, and then, when I will make my confession to her, you shall find yourself very happy that you have not spoken to your father.

Fred. Go, then, and may you find your happiness where mine was lost!—Oh, Lady Ruby, pardon a distracted mind—

Sabina. Be tranquil, my good friend, you shall have no cause to complain of me; and I am persuaded this lady, who has the beauty of an angel, has also the benevolence of one.

Enter KATE and BILLY BUSTLER, hastily.

Kate. My lady, I am your ladyship's most obedient humble servant!—Pray, my lady, excuse this seeming want of manners; if we had had any item of your ladyship's doing us this great honour, things should have been in another sort of fashion, to have welcomed such a visitor.

Billy B. Sister and I had but just stepped out.

Kate. Yes, my lady, brother Billy and I had but just stepped out to provide something dainty for our charming guest—and a lovely young lady she is, though I say it to her face, as any in the kingdom, your ladyship always excepted.

Lady R. No apology to me, my good Mrs. Catherine; your brother knows that my business relates only to some small accounts of Sir Paul Ruby's, and those can be adjusted at any other time as well as the present.

Billy B. They are all ready, my lady; examined, vouched, and balanced; with your leave, I will bring up the abstract, and pay in the amount.

Lady R. Another time, if you please: till then I will trouble you to be my banker; every body knows your punctuality, my good friend.

Billy B. Pretty correct, pretty correct, I flatter myself, fair lady: hav'n't lost my credit yet—hope I never shall.

Lady R. There is a loss, however, you must be prepared for; I am going to rob you of your amiable guest: you must pardon me if I take Mademoiselle Rosny with me.

Billy B. Every thing this house contains is so entirely at your ladyship's command, that, if you was to take away not only my amiable guest, but sister Kate into the bargain, I must submit and obey.

Kate. Law, brother, how you talk! as if such a person as me could be company for her ladyship—but Miss Rosny deserves better entertainment than we can give her; and, to be sure, if your ladyship so wishes, much as we shall feel the loss of her sweet society, yet, with Mr. Frederick's consent, we shall resign her.

Sabina. I am very thankful, indeed I am, good madam and good sir, for your politeness; and, I am persuaded, that the more I had known you, the more and more I should have loved you; but adieu for the present; I will pay you my devoirs as soon as it is in my power.

Kate. The blessing of blessings light upon you, sweet innocent! they must be monsters who could harm you.

Lady R. Come, my dear, are you ready?

Sabina. One word with you, Mr. Frederick—Ah, my good friend, give me your hand: I shall see you soon, and you shall know all my sad history; then you will pity and excuse me: meanwhile I do pray, if you regard my happiness or your own, say not one word to your father on the subject we were speaking of.

Fred. So far I promise you, till the mystery is cleared up.—Lady Ruby, I commit to your protec-

tion a tender pledge, which, if I had not kept sacred whilst under guardianship of my honour, I were a wretch too hideous for society. What she has to reveal to you, I know not: if misfortunes, you will pity them; if mistakes, you will pardon them—wronged she may be, guilty she cannot be.

Lady R. Oh, Frederick! Frederick! I have much to say to you—many things to explain, and something to impart that will surprise you.—Be cautious in your language to your father. After you have conferred, let me see you.

Fred. Is it possible you can wish it? Is there an object so unwelcome, so proscribed as I am?

Lady R. If your heart suggests that question, why do you trust me with a charge so dear to you? And, if you were unwelcome, why did I solicit the trust? Ah! where is your wonted intuition?

Fred. I can make no reply; I'll strive to fortify my heart, and wait upon you.—Shall I attend upon you to your coach?

Lady R. By no means; stay where you are.—Here is my beau.

[*Exit, attended by* BUSTLER, *and followed by* SABINA *and* MRS. CATHERINE.]

Fred. Where am I? What is this obscurity, that gathers like a cloud ready to burst upon me? Sabina meditates to set me free—but why? I cannot penetrate her motives: I have no trace of what I may have divulged in the wanderings of my reason. Perhaps she has discovered my first love in the person of this lady, and means to make a generous sacrifice of her right in me.—I'll not permit it: no! though my heart should burst with the recoil of that unconquerable affection, which the sight of my enchantress has revived, I never will submit to be a villain, and abandon my preserver.—David!

Enter DAVID MOWBRAY.

David. Ay, sure enough I am he.—Where's *Mademoiselle*?

Fred. Gone with Lady Ruby.

David. Is she so? then I caught a glimpse of her, for the first time.—Well! I say nothing, every man to his own fancy; but, for my part, brother *Frederick*, if little England cou'dn't furnish me with a mate to my liking, I would be content to go single for the rest of my days.

Fred. David, we won't talk upon that subject just now.

David. Very well, then you must keep clear of father, for he will talk of nothing else; yet I think you should speak him quickly, for it's out of chance for you to lie hid in this tattling town much longer.

Fred. I waited only till *Sabina* was disposed, and am going to him directly. Will you accompany me?

David. To be sure I will, if you wish it.—But harkye, *Frederick*; I hope you don't take in ill part what I said to you, only because I thought it a pity an honest Englishman should go out of his own country for a wife; whereas, do you see, if your heart is pledged, why, there's an end of the matter.

Fred. There let the matter end then.

David. Enough said; leave it there: only, if father comes down upon you with a spanking breeze, I would not have him take you at a nonplus.

Fred. A man, who knows his duty, cannot be surprised: I am his son in all lawful service; but where my honour is engaged, friend *David*, I think you will agree with me, that an honest heart ought not to be shaken either by menaces or soothings—so let us boldly set forward, face our fortune, and defy its malice.

David. Come on, my brave fellow! to the last

breath of my life I will stand by you ; and, if father cuts you off with a shilling, and leaves me his estate, the shilling shall be mine, and the estate shall be yours. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

An Apartment in SIR MILES'S House.

ROBERT *passes the Stage*—MR. WRANGLE *follows.*

Mr. W. Robin ! Robin !—A word in your ear—

Robert. I humbly beg your pardon, Mr. Wrangle, I did not see you.

Mr. W. No offence, my good friend, no offence—How are you, honest Robin ?

Robert. Thank you, sir ! What are your commands, I pray ?

Mr. W. Where's your master ? where's Sir Miles ? I want a word or two with him in private.

Robert. I'll tell him as much. [Exit.]

Mr. W. Do so, do so ! I'm determined it shall come out : she threatens to complain of me to her father ; and, as she always takes care to have the last word, it is but fair that I should have the first.

Enter ROBERT.

Robert. I crave your pardon, sir ; but I hope you have no bad news about my young mistress ?

Mr. W. Why should you suppose it, Robin ?

Robert. Because I hear she had an accident at the opera door ; no bad consequences from the fright, I hope—Oh, here my master comes ! [Exit.]

Enter SIR MILES MOWBRAY.

Sir M. So, Wrangle, what's the best news with you?

Mr. W. I cannot say, Sir Miles, that I have any particular good news to impart to you; and yet, with your leave, I would fain solicit your attention for a few minutes.

Sir M. What's the matter now? Why do you round me with a circumbendibus in this manner, when I so often desire you to speak plainly, and to the point at once?

Mr. W. Well, sir, then to the point at once.

Sir M. To be sure, that's the way to be understood, son Wrangle; whereas, to be verbose and circumstantial, is to be tedious; and, when a man is tedious, you know, 'tis ten to one if his hearers are not tired with his preamble, before he lets them into the body of his bill.

Mr. W. At the present moment I conceive that fault does not lie with me.

Sir M. I don't say it does, I don't say it does; yet a fault it is, lie where it will; and every man has his faults, which it is the part of a friend to tell him of, it is the part of a father—You yourself are not without faults, son Wrangle.

Mr. W. I own it, sir; I do not affect to disguise them; but the faults I would recommend to your cognizance are secret faults, which you do not see, and which I cannot remedy without your help.

Sir M. Come, come, sir, my insight may go deeper than you are aware of; I have spied out some little lurking peccadilloes in a certain person, which I shall not descant upon in your hearing.

Mr. W. Peccadilloes, do you call them? they merit a much harder name, believe me.

Sir M. Well, well, well; if, for obvious reasons,

I don't give them hard names, let that be no proof with you I mean to overlook them.

Mr. W. I hope you will not.

Sir M. Be sure of that, son Wrangle; you will hardly doubt but I have my daughter's interest very thoroughly at heart, and, having been the author of your union, feel myself responsible for the happiness or unhappiness that may result from it.

Mr. W. Sir Miles, I honour you for the candour of that very liberal confession: ours was not a match of passion; prudence concerted our alliance, and on your wisdom I reposed my hopes; but indeed, and indeed, I am not what I seem; I am not that happy man you supposed me to be.

Sir M. Why, I'm sorry for it; but don't despair; confiding your situation to me, you take a prudent step, and you shall find me, my dear Wrangle, a zealous friend to serve you—Temper may be corrected; there shall be no want of admonition on my part, in your behalf; in the mean time, let it be a secret between you and me; don't tell your wife a word of what has passed: I shall take the affair into my own hands.

Mr. W. Well, sir, on that condition I will not let her know I have appealed to you.

Sir M. Every husband ought to keep up his consequence and authority; whereas this would only tend to lower you in her respect, as if you had not power of yourself to regulate your own concerns, without calling me in to assist you.

Mr. W. 'Tis very true; I see your motives, and am beholden to you for them. Under your fatherly correction, worthy sir, I may now flatter myself we shall go on better than ever.

Sir M. I hope you will—and now you see the good effects of plain speaking; let me advise you never to be circumlocutory any more.

Enter ROBERT, hastily.

Robert. Oh, sir! sir! sir! rare news! Master Frederick is arrived well and hearty. Heaven be praised for all things! Humbly beg pardon for my boldness, but I couldn't contain myself for joy. *[Exit.*

Enter FREDERICK and DAVID.

Sir M. How, how, how is all this?—Ay, there he is, sure enough, my own dear boy come home again.—Welcome, Freddy, welcome, again and again! And how are you, my brave fellow? glad to see old England once more?

Fred. I am happy to see you, sir, in such health and spirits.

Sir M. Why, for health, thank Heaven! I am pretty well; for spirits, look you, I am all the better for the sight of you.—But hold, hold! here's a new relation of yours, Caleb Wrangle, Esquire, husband to our Lyddy, and such a husband—Bear up, Wrangle! I'm no blab.—*[Aside.]*—(Ay, that's right, that's right! take him by the hand; give him joy!) though I say it to his face, I don't know such another. Davy knows what a fond couple they are; don't you, Davy?

David. Not I, father; that's only known to themselves.

Sir M. Out upon thee, surly boots! wilt never be civilized?—Wrangle, I am staunch, I'll stand by you. *[Aside.*

Mr. W. We are so rarely favoured with our brother David's company, that he cannot witness what he does not see: I flatter myself Mr. Frederick will be more neighbourly; but I'll not intrude upon moments so precious—I'll run home to my beloved, and gladden her fond heart with the joyful tidings.

[Exit.

Sir M. There he goes, the paragon of husbands, bating a few infirmities of temper, which I shall soon correct.

David. I'll lend you a hand heartily at that job, father, if you want a mate.

Sir M. Hold your tongue, sirrah; if you were as free to find out your own failings, and as candid to confess them, as he is, you would be fitter for society than you are.—I hope, son Frederick, you at least like your new brother-in-law.

Fred. I hope my sister does, sir; that is most to the purpose: all I can say of him is, that he seems a very civil, smooth-spoken gentleman.

Sir M. You are right, a little too oily tongued; that is a fault, to be sure, but I shall correct that: I own I like a man that speaks his mind boldly.

David. Not when it does not fall in with your own, father.

Sir M. Peace, puppy!—I'm now coming to the point with you, Frederick.—I have sent for you home, upon an affair of the last consequence to your happiness and my own: your first love, Lady Ruby, is now a free woman, and one of the greatest fortunes in the kingdom.

Fred. Her fortune is no lure to me.

David. You like a man that speaks his mind boldly.

Sir M. Get out of my sight!—Her fortune no lure! You was in love with her then for her poverty, was you not? You liked her best when you had a fair chance of starving with her?

Fred. Not so, sir; but, as you considered her good qualities but as dust in the scale, till money was thrown into it, I consider money but as dust to dust.

Sir M. Your humble servant, sir!—You may march back to your old quarters: your head is turned, you

have filled it with foreign vapour and outlandish rhodomontade.

Fred. I hope I did not go out of my own country to be taught the duties of a man of honour.

Sir M. I wish you would learn the duties of a son, and not insult my ears with that puppy word, honour: I can remark you have always the honour to think differently from me; if it was not for that same honour of running counter to my wishes, you would run into this lady's arms; your honour was eager enough for it, when I stood your friend, and opposed it.

David. Ay, father, you spoke your mind boldly then, and now it's Frederick's turn to speak his.

Sir M. Saucebox! jackanapes! impudent varlet! If you don't instantly vanish, by the horns of Jupiter Ammon, I swear I will extinguish you.

David. Say no more, father! I'm off!—Good morning to you. Marry, I'd rather mess with you a week than a fortnight.—By the horns of Jupiter Ammon—that's a good one, by the Lord Harry! [*Exit.*]

Fred. With your permission, sir, I will take my leave for the present—

Sir M. Sir, you may take it for everlasting—I care not what becomes of a reprobate son. [*Exit FREDERICK.*—Ah! poor Wrangle! he has a thousand faults, but what then? he has the grace to own them. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in LADY RUBY'S House.

LADY RUBY and SABINA.

Lady R. I pry not into your secrets, amiable Sabina; tell me nothing that will give you pain to reveal; but treat me as a friend, who needs no spur to serve you, nor any other testimonies of your innocence than you carry in your countenance.

Sabina. Ah, my dear good lady! you are very considerate of me, and have great pity for unhappy Sabina; but it is my duty to explain to you my follies, as well as my misfortunes: you are too good in crediting me for my innocence, but I will not be a deceiver, though I have myself been sacrificed by deceit.

Lady R. What do I hear? Has Frederick—

Sabina. Oh! no, no, no! He is perfection of a man, and if he did know my wrongs, I do believe he would expose his life for my redress; therefore I will not let the name of my betrayer pass my lips, for fear that it should reach his ears.

Lady R. How's this, Sabina? Have you been wronged, betrayed, and yet did you consent to Frederick's proposal?

Sabina. Not for the universe would I consent; for I do know his heart too well, and my own conscience still better. Ah, my dear lady, if you can pity me,

a stranger, for my sufferings, what must you feel for his, when you shall know yourself to have been the cause of them?

Lady R. I!—I the cause of them?

Sabina. Ah! yes, indeed; it was your marriage broke his heart, his brain; he was a dying, a distracted man.

Lady R. How could my marriage so affect him? Had he not forsaken me, had he not renounced me, I would have suffered death ere I would have joined my hand to any other man's.

Sabina. I know not how that was; I only know how he did rave when his poor mind was gone, and his life almost at the last moment: I'm sure, if ever woman was adored by man, you are by Mr. Frederick; for myself, then, if I was free (which I am not) judge if I could in honour marry him.

Lady R. Did he not freely offer it? Does he not still most strongly press it?

Sabina. He presses it in honour, not in heart; and, when he offered it, he was beside himself with rage and disappointment for the loss of you: in fine, my lady, I do wish I had a friend just now, who would say to Mr. Frederick, that Sabina Rosny cannot, if she would, accept his hand; and further, if she could, for his sake she would not.

Lady R. And who so fit to say that, as Sabina Rosny herself?

Sabina. Alas! alas! how difficult for me, how dangerous for him! If I should say how I was treated by a certain person of this country (I did believe all Englishmen were honest) would he not force me to confess the whole? And then—Oh terrible! is it not better I should bury my sad story in my heart, and suffer in secret?

Lady R. A villain should be dragged to light, and punished by the world's contempt.

Sabina. Let his own conscience be his punishment!

Though he has ruined me, basely betrayed me by a pretended marriage, and then cruelly abandoned me; what can I say or do? Shall a poor alien like me contend with power like his?—Your laws will not redress me; my religion is not his religion: I know not who is that Italian monk that married us; I know not where to find him; or, if I could, what then? My lord would little care for that.

Lady R. My lord shall care; doubt not but there are means to make him care, and feel and tremble for his character, which public fame shall blast through all the world, unless he does you right.

Sabina. But you don't know him; I did say too much, when I said, unawares, "my lord;" but yet I have not named him.

Lady R. I know his name; his nature too I know, and how susceptible he is of the world's fame, how quick of feeling.—Am I not right, Sabina? is he not very, very—Sensitive?

Sabina. Ah! [*Shrieks.*]—You are *magicienne*.

Lady R. Come, come, you see you might as well have trusted me at once; I've fathomed your deep secret. Be now convinced, Sabina, a man cannot do wrong in this country, and escape discovery; in the next place, assure yourself Lord Sensitive is not that man, who can offend without atoning for it: Honour belongs to him still, though he can shift it off a while, but nakedness will soon shame him into wearing it again.—Hark! we have a visitor—perhaps you'll wish to ponder on these things in private.

Sabina. I pray you let me retire—my heart is very full.

[*Exit.*]

Enter LORD SENSITIVE.

Lord S. If I am too bold in approaching you, without special permission, your servants are in the

fault, who said they had orders to admit me without reserve.

Lady R. They told you truth ; you may remember I said, my doors were open to all persons of honour, and who fulfils that character more completely than Lord Sensitive ?

Lord S. But might I not have interrupted a conversation more agreeable than Lord Sensitive's—Frederick Mowbray is come home.

Lady R. Well, if he is ?

Lord S. Then there is one more votary (and no mean one, I confess) to offer incense at the shrine of that divinity whom all men worship, and all women envy.

Lady R. I could give you a reason, my lord, which I am sure you would admit to be conclusive against Mr. Mowbray's addressing me.

Lord S. May I ask what should prevent him from paying his addresses to your ladyship ?

Lady R. Simply this—because he has pledged them elsewhere, and is too much a man of honour to violate his engagements.

Lord S. Oh ! if he is engaged elsewhere—that is, if—if he is absolutely bound—that alters the case.

Lady R. To be sure it does : I knew you would allow the reason to be good ; I knew you would feel the force of it.

Lord S. I do, indeed—I feel the force of it very thoroughly.

Lady R. I'm satisfied you do, and I hope you will credit me, when I declare to you, upon the word of truth, that if Frederick Mowbray was the one man whom I preferred before all men living, and I knew him guilty of having pledged his faith to another woman, whom he afterwards abandoned, I would as soon join hands with infamy, and be the outcast of society, as with such a traitor.

Lord S. That—that is very strong, Lady Ruby,

and bespeaks your utter abhorrence of double dealing; but you will permit me to observe that much would depend upon who and what the woman was.

Lady R. I would not hear of such a plea, and you, my lord, would be the last man living to allow of it: 'twould be a mere evasion, not a mitigation of his guilt—Every mean wretch can blast the reputation of the fond, believing victim, whom his unmanly cunning has seduced, and his unprincipled inconstancy deserted.

Lord S. That is quite unanswerable, Lady Ruby; that brings it home to a man's conscience, I confess; I have nothing to offer in defence of such a proceeding.

Lady R. No, no, there is no sophistry can palliate seduction—What then would you say, if, in aggravation of his wickedness, he had abused her credulity, by a pretended marriage!

Lord S. Madam!—Madam!—Who told you this?

Lady R. Who told me? What is it you mean? I am supposing a case, and did you understand I was stating a fact? I hope there is no one (of my acquaintance at least) whose conscience can plead guilty to a charge like this; if there is, I am sure Frederick Mowbray is not the man.—So now your lordship sees I have set you perfectly at your ease about him.

Lord S. I cannot say, madam, I am just now perfectly at my ease.

Lady R. Why how now, my good lord! I think I have been tolerably explicit.

Lord S. Yes, yes, I don't complain of that: I perfectly understand you.

Lady R. Well then, what ails you?

Lord S. Oh! I have many ails.

Lady R. What other phantom have you conjured up?—Come, come, you are very dull company; I

shall not let you in another time, if you are such a melancholy gentleman.

Lord S. I will ask to be admitted to you but once more, before I take my leave for ever. I most heartily beg your pardon for all the foolish things I have said or done since I had the honour of knowing you : I was betrayed into involuntary admiration ; it is not easy to reflect within the sphere of your attraction, but I have regained my senses, and shall be out of England before three days are at an end.

Lady R. Ay, so you say ; but this is one of your freaks : however, I conjure you, let me see you before you go—Promise me this—

Lord S. I promise.

Lady R. Upon your honour ?

Lord S. Solemnly I promise—then you shall know me better.
[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

The Street.

Enter DAVID, meeting BILLY BUSTLER.

David. Ah ! Billy, my fine fellow, how fares it with you ?

Billy B. I don't know whether I shall speak to you ; I am not sure I shall acknowledge you.

David. Heyday ! what's in the wind now, my heart of oak ? what have I done, to offend you ?

Billy B. What have you done ? inquire of sister Kate ; she'll let you know what you have done, and set her claws into your face at the same time, for your

doings. You have brought a naughty woman into our house.

David. 'Tis false.

Billy B. Don't say so ! I have proof positive.—She a virtuous suffering innocent !—She to be married to your brother Mowbray ! No such thing, friend David ; she is married already, and your honourable brother has made free to steal a march with another man's wife.

David. I'll tell you what, Billy, in one word—either prove what you say, prove it upon the spot, or fall to your prayers, and take leave of life ; for damn me if you don't tread upon your grave !

Billy B. Read then, and be convinced—Here is a trinket sister Kate found in her drawer, after she had left us : 'tis the portrait of some gentleman : his name is not to it, but see what is inscribed at the back.

David. Give it me, give it me—I should know this face.—Aha ! my lord, have I discovered you ?—Now for the writing at the back, "*The husband of the forsaken Sabina!*"—Damnation ! does the world contain such villany ! I'll make him swallow it, ay and digest it, ere I suffer my poor brother to be so abused.

Billy B. Why, you astonish me ; I never could have thought—

David. Mark me ! don't think at all, for this business belongs to me ; your only part is to be inviolably secret, hushed as death, till I have sifted it to the minutest grain ; that done, I will report to you the particulars, and then as I am sure my brother's honour will come out clear as the light, you must revoke every syllable you have uttered injurious to his reputation.

Billy B. Ay, ay, revoke—one of us must revoke ; for I'll swear there is a foul trick somewhere.—So your humble servant.

[*Exit.*]

David. Now which tack shall I be upon ? Whether

to begin first with madam or monsieur, (for I am positive this leering traitor is Lord Sensitive) or, first and foremost, to make sure of my poor Frederick, and snatch him from the snare, is a question that—I need not debate upon, for here he comes.—How now, Fred; whither bound?

Enter FREDERICK.

Fred. In your phrase I answer, on a dangerous coast; I believe I am rash enough to be going to Lady Ruby.

David. I believe not.

Fred. Why do you say that?

David. Because I think your rashness will not attempt to make its passage through my body, and there is no other road.

Fred. I comprehend you, and I take your motive in good part: You see my weakness, you perceive I am relapsing into my former passion for Lady Ruby, and you tremble for the honour I have pledged to Sabina Rosny.

David. You are right; I tremble for your honour; I plant myself between you and ruin; and I conjure you, nay, I compel you, to turn back with me from that house, which will else be the tomb of your happiness, your fortune, and your fame.

Fred. Explain yourself.

David. I cannot now; I will hereafter.—Answer me this, are you married to the Frenchwoman?

Fred. I am not.

David. Thank Heaven!

Fred. Speak of her however more respectfully, if you mean we should be friends.

David. Friends, friends! Who dares to call my friendship into question, when I have pledged it to a brother?—I am no trifle, Frederic.

Fred. I will not treat you as such, but follow you as my guardian genius, sent to snatch me from dis-

grace ; for, alas ! I must confess to you, I am lost, if I behold that syren, who first took possession of my soul.—Come, let us fly ! whither shall we go ? Carry me to my sister.

David. To your sister then ! Hav'nt you seen her yet ?

Fred. Not I ; Lady Ruby, Lady Ruby is the loadstone that draws away every particle of steel that should fortify my heart, and leaves it weaker than a woman's tear.

David. What's all that, brother ? A kind of gabble I don't deal in, nor aim to understand : Let actions speak for me.—Come along. [Exit.

SCENE III.

The House of MR. WRANGLE.

Enter MR. WRANGLE, speaking to a SERVANT.

Mr. W. Tell your mistress I would speak with her before she goes out. Hold ! I see she is coming—Leave me. [Exit SERVANT.

Enter MRS. WRANGLE.

So, madam, you are on the wing, I perceive : Have you any very pressing engagements on your hands ?

Mrs. W. Half a hundred

Mr. W. And suppose I had a wish to engross a few minutes of your conversation, how many of these very pressing engagements would you dispense with at my request ?

Mrs. W. Ridiculous ! What conversation can you want with me ?

Mr. W. A very serious one, be assured ; therefore, with your leave, I will dismiss your equipage, and in place of half a hundred frivolous visits, recommend you a more profitable method of disposing of your time with me. [*He is going.*]

Mrs. W. Hold, sir ! are you mad ?

Mr. W. No, madam, I am not mad ; nor will I suffer you to act as if you were.

Mrs. W. Do you mean to make your house my prison ? Shall I not be allowed to visit my own father ?

Mr. W. By all means your father : I'll go with you to Sir Miles myself.

Mrs. W. You are a bold man, Mr. Wrangle, if you will venture to face that accusation, which I shall prefer against you : I should doubt if your hypocrisy will bear you out with my too credulous father any longer.

Mr. W. Try it, Mrs. Wrangle ; I shall resort to no hypocrisy ; truth will serve my purpose.

Mrs. W. Are you sure of that ? Shan't you feel a little awkward in attempting so very new an experiment ? I rather think your interest lies in a quarter opposite to truth.

Mr. W. I believe, madam, you will find it pretty strong in a quarter you don't suspect ; if you are wise, you will be silent ; Sir Miles Mowbray knows you.

Mrs. W. From your report, I defy him or any person else to know me ; for your malice is too gross to escape detection, and your wit too dull to make even scandal entertaining.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Mr. Frederick and Mr. David Mowbray. [*Exit.*]

Enter FREDERICK and DAVID.

Mrs. W. There, there ! my protectors are at hand.—Welcome, my dear Frederick ! Welcome to England ! Welcome to the rescue of your poor imprisoned sister, whose heart panted to be with you, but whose tyrant husband, lost to all human feelings, would not suffer her to depart from his doors !

Fred. What is all this ? Can you explain it, sir ?

David. Oh, yes ! he can explain any thing.

Fred. How greatly I am shocked, I need not say !—I came to give you both a joyful greeting ; I am saluted by one party with a flaming accusation, by the other with a sullen reserve. What am I to say ?

Mr. W. The less the better between man and wife.—I hope, gentlemen, you do not combine to overawe me in my own house ?

David. Step out of it then with me : the open air is common property, and we will talk together man to man.

Mr. W. I shall do no such thing : It is enough for me that I am married to your sister : I am not bound to risk my life against her brothers.

Fred. It will not be required of you, Mr. Wrangle—My brother David is too quick ; and, I am sure, when I tell him it is my particular request, he will have the kindness to withdraw.

David. With all my heart, for I never wish to be under the same roof with the man I despise.

Fred. Hush, hush ! Impetuous boy !

David. Harkye, Frederick, a word in your ear—Don't quarrel with him : he's below your anger. I am going to Lady Ruby : come to me there ; I have thought better of it since I prevented you a while ago, and have a secret to communicate worth a king's ransom—Don't fail me. And, look ! by Saint George and the Dragon, here comes my father, a

joyful witness to the happiness of a match of his own making.

[*Exit.*]

Enter SIR MILES MOWBRAY.

Sir M. What does the puppy prattle about?

Mrs. W. Oh sir, sir! don't reprove him for his generous indignation against a cruel husband, who oppresses and insults your poor suffering daughter, till, no longer able to endure her sorrows and his tyranny, she is compelled to cast herself at your feet, and implore your pity and protection.

Sir M. I'm thunderstruck! I'm petrified!—This is one fault more, Wrangle, than I thought you had.

Fred. Rise, sister, rise! You are too vehement in your remonstrance; I must believe it is not in this gentleman's nature to oppress or insult an unoffending wife, which I hope you are; and I am heartily sorry you make our father a party in your little domestic squabbles, which might easily be adjusted without his privity.

Sir M. Give me your hand, Frederick, you speak like an angel. I am friends with you from this moment for ever.

Mr. W. Through the favour of Mr. Mowbray's temperate interposition, for which I am greatly beholden to him, I flatter myself I may now have leave to speak.

Sir M. By all means, Mr. Wrangle, by all means; no man speaks better, when his own faults are the topic, and I do not forget the promise I have made you.

Mr. W. To that promise I now appeal. The cause of Mrs. Wrangle's complaint is simply this—She had ordered her coach to make half a hundred idle visits, and I, in the expectation of her brother's coming, would fain have prevailed with her to stay at home and receive him.

Mrs. W. Monstrous prevarication!

Sir M. Hush, child, hush !—A small stretch upon the truth, would have been a softer phrase.

Mr. W. Now, Sir Miles, if you recollect what I hinted to you about your daughter's temper—

Sir M. About my daughter's temper ? What is it you mean ?—I heard a pretty many broad hints of your own temper, but not one of my daughter's.

Mr. W. Of my temper, sir ? No ; whatever faults there may be in my temper, I owe no account of them to you ; because, if you had taken the smallest pains to know me, before I married Miss Mowbray, you must have seen and confessed I was the last person living to make her happy, or be happy with her.

Sir M. I wish you had imparted that to me in good time—Your intelligence, Mr. Wrangle, is rather of the latest.

Mrs. W. It is very true, sir, and had you given me leave to chuse a husband for myself, Mr. Wrangle, be assured, is just the very last man in existence, on whom I should have fixed my choice.

Sir M. Heyday ! Why then did you both agree in persuading me you were the happiest, fondest couple in all England ?

Mrs. W. You persuaded yourself ; we were miserable enough, methinks, not to be mistaken.

Mr. W. 'Tis very true : Mrs. Wrangle herself will do me the justice to say I never pretended to be happy with her.

Mrs. W. No, no, we had both a very sovereign dislike for each other : 'Tis the only point we ever agreed in.

Sir M. Your most obedient humble servant ! I am very much obliged to you both : and as you so lovingly agree in laying all your faults upon me, I leave you in a perfect state of harmony with each other—and I pray Heaven you may live long to to enjoy it !

[Exit.

Fred. Sister, sister, make it up, I conjure you ; where

there is blame on both sides, you should exchange forgiveness.

[Exit.

Mr. W. [After a Pause.] *Mrs. Wrangle*—Love!

Mrs. W. *Mr. Wrangle*—My dear!

Mr. W. I begin to think—

Mrs. W. What do you begin to think?

Mr. W. That we have exposed ourselves very sufficiently.

Mrs. W. Quite enough in all conscience.—Why would you complain to my father?

Mr. W. Why would you complain to your brother?

Mrs. W. We were both to blame: Complaints are very foolish.

Mr. W. Then away with them at once, say I.

Mrs. W. For ever! Let us forbear to gratify our friends, by never publishing our disagreements.

Mr. W. And cure the world of its contempt, by never calling upon it for its pity.

Mrs. W. Agreed! here's my hand upon it.

Mr. W. And here's my heart; to which I press you with the warm affection of a husband, that will never cool.

Mrs. W. And I return it with the love and duty of a wife, who will never create a murmur, nor utter one again.

Mr. W. Why, this is happiness without hypocrisy.

Mrs. W. Perfect felicity unfeigned.

Mr. W. Oh! joyous husband!

Mrs. W. Oh! transported wife!

[Exeunt, Hand in Hand.]

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in LADY RUBY'S House.

Enter LADY RUBY, meeting DAVID.

Lady R. Out upon you, false loon! What can you say for yourself, for not having been near me these three long days?

David. Lord love you, my dear lady, I have been brushing up and down this great town about my ship affairs, here and there, and every where—And now you know brother Frederick is come home.

Lady R. Oh! you sea-creature, was you half as much of a lover, as you are of a hero, you would understand that no excuse will serve for neglecting a fond woman.

David. Always a dab for poor David—but when I am at sea again, and sailing in the *Venus*, I shall never cast a look upon the figure at the head, without thinking of your ladyship.

Lady R. That's very fine, David—but come, be sincere, isn't it the *bon-mot* of the ship? Can you lay your hand on your heart, and declare you never said that to any body before?

David. Never, never; though I don't deny but

others have; for I heard Joe Jackson, our gunner, say it to his wife, as she went over the side at parting.— And now to my business: I have a small matter of property belonging to Mademoiselle Rosny, which I would fain deliver into her own hands.

Lady R. From your brother, we'll suppose—

David. I rather suppose not—Here it is; not very like Frederick—is it, madam?

Lady R. Lord Sensitive to the very life. Where did you pick up this?

David. Billy Bustler delivered it to me, open, as you see; they found it in her toilette, after she had left the house.

Lady R. Have you shown it to your brother?

David. I hardly thought that necessary, as the inscription on the back shows the lady to be already provided with a husband.

Lady R. Yes, yes, I see it. Alas! poor Sabina! this confirms her own sad story, and his lordship's guilt.

David. Does it not do something more than that, if the lady has been carrying on designs upon my brother?

Lady R. There you do her wrong.—Who waits?

Enter SERVANT.

Tell Mademoiselle Rosny I desire to speak with her.—[*Exit SERVANT.*]—She has no designs upon your brother, but in the most decided manner has declined his honourable offers. If she has withheld the secret from him hitherto, it is simply because she would not involve him with Lord Sensitive.—Oh! here she comes!—

Enter SABINA ROSNY.

My dear, this young officer is your friend Mr. Mow-

bray's brother—I don't know if you have met before.

Sabina. I do not remember to have had that honour.

Lady R. He has something in charge to return to you, from the good people in whose house he procured you a reception.—Do you recollect having left any small article of your property behind you?

Sabina. A picture—I have been searching for it every where.

David. I am happy to restore it to you, and wish I could at the same time restore the original to a sense of his honour, for I feel it as a disgrace to myself to own him for my countryman.

Sabina. It is so your brother would have said, if he had seen it; which I hope he has not.

David. No, no, madam; man to man is a fair match; there is no need of two masters to teach one worthless individual his duty.—My sword is at your service.

Sabina. Heaven forbid I should employ your sword, when your country has such need of it! In defending that, you defend me, and thousands like me, who refuge in its generous protection.

Enter a SERVANT, and whispers MR. DAVID.

David. Very well! I'll come to him.

Lady R. What does he tell you?

David. My brother is below.

Lady R. My dear Sabina, do your spirits serve you for an interview with Mr. Mowbray?

Sabina. Aid me, my good lady, and I will do my possible.

Lady R. Say to Mr. Mowbray, we request the favour of his company.—[*Exit SERVANT.*—Now, my brave lad, recollect we are not to aggravate your bro-

ther's mind against Lord Sensitive, for whom I take upon myself to answer; and you, Sabina, whose gentle bosom has long laboured with a painful secret, be assured one short and final effort will conclude your sufferings, and restore you to your peace.

Enter FREDERICK MOWBRAY.

Lady R. Mr. Mowbray, we rejoice to see you.

Fred. I have obeyed your ladyship's commands.

Lady R. You would greatly have disappointed our wishes, if you had not. You see I have your amiable fellow traveller in safe keeping; how I have fulfilled my trust, and whether I deserve a further continuation of it, you have a right to know, and she will take occasion of informing you.

Fred. I cannot doubt your kindness, nor her proper sense of it.

David. Lord! brother! how you stand!—Oh! that I might but speak!

Fred. Sabina, I am prepared to expect some discovery from you, that I am interested to be informed of: I rely upon your candour for the fullest satisfaction, but if you would consult my feelings, you will ask permission of Lady Ruby that we may retire.

Sabina. As it shall be your will, so am I—But if my lady, who knows my sad history, and how I am embarrass to relate it, would have pity for my confusion—

Fred. Oh! Sabina, Sabina! you know not what you ask, nor see the ruin you invite upon yourself and me.—If you would wish to preserve my senses, patiently to hear and honourably to decide, take me from hence without a moment's loss.

Sabina. Come then with me; your happiness, my best of friends, is as my own.

Lady R. Stop, if you please—this room is yours—David and I have something to discuss elsewhere.

David. I wish you'd let me say it here—A little plain sailing would bring us all to the point.

Fred. Are you offended with me, loveliest of women?

Lady R. Not much, not quite past reconciliation—a little, it may be, a very little angry—but if you are disposed to make peace, here is my hand!

Fred. Oh! Heavens! my soul sinks in it.—Where, where are you, Sabina?

[*Exeunt* LADY RUBY and DAVID.]

Sabina. You are alarmed for me, my dear dear friend, without a cause. It is my wish, my prayer, my supplication to Heaven for you, that you may be blest and happy all your long life with that charming lady.

Fred. Sabina, what have you a mind to make of me? a villain, a betrayer of my word and faith! or a distracted husband, without heart or head?

Sabina. Husband! that cannot be. I tell you now in verity, as I did tell you before, you cannot be my husband, because—because—Ah me! ah me! How shall I speak it? I am much ashamed—

Fred. Speak, I beseech you!

Sabina. Because—I am already married!

Fred. Married! It cannot be!—Married!—Beware, Sabina; solemnly I adjure you to reflect that my unalterable purpose cannot be dispensed with. If, because you see me combating a passion that was once my master, you suppose me conquered, you mistake: my faith, my honour, my confirmed experience of your virtues never can be shaken, be the trial ever so severe.

Sabina. I pray you pardon my poor mode of speaking, but I do feel your goodness at my heart—indeed, indeed I do; and be not angry with me, my good friend, for that I did not tell you this before, but it is true no less—I am a wife—I will not say a happy one, for it was not for me to find a heart like yours; but I

will hope the best, for I have not merited to be forsaken.

Fred. Is there a monster living would forsake you?

Sabina. Oh! yes, for I am poor—My family, my fortune perished—yet I should not expect a noble Englishman would make my poverty my crime, when there was nothing else that he could urge against me.

Fred. Sabina, I must now believe that you are serious; my part therefore must change with your condition: but though some obligations are dissolved, others are left in force, which honour cannot acquit me of—therefore, before I ask the name of your betrayer, be he who he may, I solemnly devote myself to your redress.

Sabina. Ah! that is why I tremble to disclose his name.—Oh! my dear friend, I pray you to excuse me this one day. My Lady Ruby flatters me with hopes all shall be well.

Fred. I must insist upon his name.

Sabina. No, no, you will not make me more unhappy than I am: you will not sure refuse my intercession, if I do pray you on my knees.

Fred. Hold, hold, sweet supplicant, be not so humble! I will not wound your tender sensibility for all the earth: Compose yourself.

Sabina. Oh! when you are so good to me, how can I stop my tears?

Fred. What can I say? what shall I do to comfort you?

Sabina. I wish, I wish, my lady was but here.

Fred. Behold! she comes upon your wish!

Enter LADY RUBY.

Lady R. My dear, what ails you?

Sabina. Oh, he is so generous and so kind to poor Sabina, that my heart is fit to break: I do think he is the best man living, and I do know he loves you, my

sweet lady—Heaven ! how he does love you !—Will you, then, be very angry with me, if I shall be so bold to say, you are the only lady upon earth that does deserve him.

Lady R. Oh ! you seducing creature, that is not his opinion ; for there is only this distinction between your fate and mine, that Frederick ran from me before marriage, Lord Sensitive from you after it.

Fred. Lord Sensitive ! I'm thunderstruck.

Sabina. Ah ! what have you said ?

Lady R. Was it a secret ?

Fred. So help me, Heaven, I cannot name the man, whose honour I would so implicitly have vouched for as Lord Sensitive.

Lady R. And he'll redeem his honour, be assured.

Fred. Yes, or his life must answer it.—I know him well, brave, generous, quick to feel and to resent each breath that glances at his fame—Either there is some error in his brain, or else some villanous traducer has imposed on his credulity—I'll probe him to the heart—

Lady R. Ah, Frederick ! there are certain cases of the heart, which women are supposed to treat better than men—Leave this to me ; if he does not receive his cure from under my hands, I'll then consent to turn him over as a desperate case to you, [*Loud knocking.*] That must be Lord Sensitive.

Sabina. Ah misericorde ! what will now come of me !

Lady R. Away, away ! take your fair protégée off the field, and leave it clear for me.—On your allegiance, Frederick, stir not from your post till I relieve you. [*Exeunt FREDERICK and SABINA.*] Now, conscience, take our part ! 'tis your own cause, support it.

Enter LORD SENSITIVE.

Lord S. Lady Ruby, I have remembered my pro-

mise; and as I know your late impressive words were pointed at my heart, I beg leave to assure you they have reached it. When I say I am your convert, need I add that I am prepared to make atonement to Sabina Rosny?

Lady R. I congratulate your lordship on that resolution, and am persuaded you can only find your happiness where you have left your honour.

Lord S. I'll not attempt to varnish my misdeeds. I acknowledge that Sabina Rosny has every requisite of merit, birth, and beauty, to engage and fix my heart.—When I left her on a sudden call to England, I was not guilty of a purpose to desert her; my promise of a speedy return was sincerely given—but in the interim—what shall I say? Your candour must supply the rest.

Lady R. We'll talk not of the past: Sabina's candour, and your lordship's better thoughts, as soon as you shall meet, will bury all offences in oblivion.

Lord S. You predict flatteringly, but I have many anxious hours to pass before that meeting.

Lady R. 'Tis a long distance between this and Padua; but if your resolution is made up—

Lord S. Unalterably—I shall set out within this hour.

Lady R. Wait a few moments, then; and though I cannot promise you a wind, as witches did of old, I'll do my best to give you a quick passage.—Sit down; your sylph shall be at your elbow before you can well draw a sigh. [Exit.

Lord S. What can she mean? what project has her active fancy sprung, to back this bold profession?—Hark! I hear her.—Well, fair sylph, I keep my post, and wait your promised favour.—Hah! what now?—Sabina! Heaven uphold me! from what cloud have you dropped down on earth?

Enter SABINA.

Sabina. My lord! my husband!

Lord S. Come to my arms! Oh unexpected joy!
Now we will part no more.

Sabina. Indeed! will you not forsake your poor Sabina any more?—Ah! what sad moments I have passed, counting the hours for your return, day after day, but all in vain.—No lord, no letter, no hope left at last, no country to receive me, no parents, brothers, friends, to fly to: miserable me! I did believe I was renounced of Providence, and destined to despair.

Lord S. Oh my much-injured, my acknowledged wife.

Sabina. That has sweet sound with it: my heart is comforted.

Lord S. My life shall be devoted to atonement.—Trust me, my sweet Sabina, 'tis not my nature to be base or cruel: once restored to your forgiveness (and methinks your eyes promise me that) I will offend no more.

Sabina. I know not how to call it an offence, for what am I? My fortune nothing, my nobility a shadow—a heart to honour you is all that I can boast. How, then, can I be angry, if, when returned to your own happy country, where so many fairer ladies court your attention, you forgot poor, humble, lost Sabina;—But of this no more—I have a friend, an honourable, noble friend, to whom I owe this happy meeting; I must take you to him—give me your hand.

Lord S. My heart and hand.—Thus led by virtue, and restored to reason, I am a man again. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

An Apartment in SIR MILES MOWBRAY'S House.

SIR MILES MOWBRAY and MR. WRANGLE.

Sir M. Well, sir, 'tis your own concern; if you are contented with each other, it's a proof you are soon pleased. Quarrel when you like, and make it up how you can, you have my free leave. I find by late experience, that the man, who thinks for more heads than he carries on his own shoulders, lays out care for himself, and reaps no thanks for his kindness.

Mr. W. Believe me, my good Sir Miles—

Sir M. Pardon me, my good Sir Caleb; that is a weakness I am cured of.—I was the dupe of credulity, when I believed you would make my daughter happy, and when I took your word for your being so: I was the veriest dolt in creation, when I thought I could either qualify your failings, or compose your squabbles.—I pray you, sir, be husband and wife in your own way, and never let me be middle man between you, henceforth and for ever.

Enter MRS. WRANGLE.

Mrs. W. Oh! my dear, dear father! this is at length a joyful meeting.

Sir M. I am glad to hear it—what am I to be joyful for?

Mrs. W. For the total and complete extinction of all possible dissensions between my beloved and myself.

Sir M. If he is your beloved, keep that a secret to yourself; at least don't insist upon my believing it.

Mrs. W. Nay, surely you'll believe me, and rejoice, when I tell you, that my ever dear Mr. Wrangle—

Sir M. Child, child, your fondlings make me sick, and your feuds make me sad; therefore let me have no more of either, I beseech you.

Enter FREDERICK and DAVID.

Welcome, welcome! Frederick, give me your hand; I have to ask your pardon for my folly, in supposing I had a right over your affections, first, by diverting them from the woman of your heart, and secondly by directing them towards her; and all my wonder is, you had the patience to listen to my nonsensical authority in either instance.—I have also an apology to make to that amiable lady for a most impertinent visit.

Fred. That amiable lady thinks the apology rather due for her reception of you, than for your visit to her; and before many minutes are gone by, I expect she will be here to tell you so.

Sir M. I can't believe it, Freddy; I won't believe it; 'tis a happiness above my hopes.—How now, Robert, how now!

Enter ROBERT hastily.

Robert. Sir! your honour! She's a coming, she's a coming up the stairs—

Sir M. Who's a coming?

Robert. Sir, the lady—the lady—I shall forget my own name—my young master knows who I mean.

[*Exit ROBERT.*—*FREDERICK goes out to receive*
LADY RUBY.

Enter LADY RUBY, LORD SENSITIVE, and SABINA.

Sir M. My Lady Ruby, this is indeed an honour and happiness—and a—My lord, I am your most obedient—may I request to be made known to this fair stranger?

Lord S. This fair stranger, Sir Miles, whom I have the honour to call wife, is ambitious to pay her compliments to the father of her best friend, and my greatest benefactor.

Sabina. Yes, truly, sir, I am very happy to make my humble obeisance to you, for the sake of your honourable son, my very good friend, Mr. Frederick Mowbray; for whose favours I have not the words to speak my gratitude, though I have a heart, that will never cease to feel them.

Lord S. If such be your gratitude, lovely Sabina, what should mine be to those friends of honour who have restored you to my heart, and blessed me with a prospect of that state of happiness, which I truly hope the married part of this company will continue to enjoy, and the unmarried make haste to obtain!

David. Brother Wrangle, there's one wish for you and my sister, part it between you—And, brother Frederick, was I as you, I would drop down on both knees, to my sweet Lady Ruby, and beg to go halves in the other wish with her.

Sabina. And if my prayers could profit for his sake, I would kneel and pray, till some kind saint, that favours virtuous love, should hear me.

Fred. [*Kneeling.*] Oh! more than ever dear, long-lost, lamented and despaired of, even to distraction; has your once tender heart, weaned by time, or alienated by suspicion, forgot its former feelings?

Lady R. Rise, Frederick, explanations of this nature should be private; yet I will freely own, in presence of this company, 'twas the abrupt and secret manner of your leaving me, which I could not reconcile to that generous sensibility I gave you credit for.—Did you write me one letter from abroad?

Fred. Several, many.—Did you answer one?

Lady R. As truth shall judge me, not a line of yours ever reached my hands.

David. I wish to my soul they had passed through

mine; I would have staked my life for the delivery of them.—Father, I should like to know if any body here present could give an account of those same unlucky letters.

Sir M. Say no more, say no more—My conscience flies in my face; but a man can do no more than own it.

Fred. I have done—This only let me assert, in vindication of the truth, that I ceased not from the tenderest expostulations on your silence; imploring you to keep me in your thoughts, and promising eternal constancy on my part, till I heard you was married—then I confess I was not hypocrite enough to send you my congratulation—my exhausted spirits sunk under the shock of that intelligence.

Lady R. Here let us pause.—You have a zealous advocate, from whom I have heard the rest. I have now only to apologize to Sir Miles Mowbray, for my reception of his visit, which if he is not discouraged to repeat, I can only assure him that the same proposal will not be treated with the same indifference.

Sir M. I am infinitely happy to hear you say so; but really, madam, I am so confounded and ashamed of my past mistakes in cases of the heart, that I dare not venture upon more than putting up a prayer in secret for your happiness, and my son's. Hitherto I have been an officious, and, I fear, an unfortunate, father.

Mrs. W. Suffer me for a moment to interrupt your self reproaches, so far at least as they apply to me.—I now declare from my soul, that if a second choice was in my power, I would voluntarily fix it where you first directed.

Mr. W. And I protest, with equal and unfeigned sincerity, that, brought to recollection by this scene, and resolute to emulate the examples I behold, my life shall be devoted to the blessing you bestowed upon me.

Sir M. Excellently resolved on, both sides! I only hope you will not want me to put you in mind of it.

David. We all join in that hope.—Peace at home, for your sakes, ye happy husbands!—war abroad, for mine, and yours, my gallant comrades!

Sir M. Corrected by experience, I will now venture to pronounce, that *First Love* is a faithful guide; and the parent who attempts to turn that stream from its course, makes himself responsible for all the miseries and miscarriages, that may result from his diversion of it.

THE END.

WHEEL OF FORTUNE



WEAZEL— WITH YOUR LEAVE, I WANT A FEW
WORDS WITH YOU

ACT I

SCENE I

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