

KNOW YOUR OWN MIND



MILLAMOUR VASTLY WELL

ACT IV.

SCENE I

PAINTED BY SINGLETON

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KNOW YOUR OWN MIND ;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS ;

By ARTHUR MURPHY, 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.

Mr. Murphy, in his prologue to this drama, assured the audience, that it should be his last—and he kept his word. He dreaded a decrease in reputation by courting too long the favour of the Muses; in whose service, wearied by incessant labour, he perceived he should soon lose that poetic ardour, the indispensable requisite for all their successful votaries.

The reception which “Know your own Mind,” obtained from the town, the admiration it gained, both for its characters and dialogue, might have tempted a less discreet man than the author, to have ventured once more his credit as a dramatist: but with all the flattering joy he received from this play, its high repute, its great attraction, there quickly arose an event in the theatrical world, which changed all his laudable pride into humility; and every delight of a prosperous author, to a certain degree of repining.

That well-known star in the dramatic firmament, which outsparkles every other, “The School for Scandal,” made its first appearance at Drury Lane; whilst “Know your own Mind,” was in the zenith of its power at Covent Garden.

The author of the last named comedy, has been heard to say, that he could have borne, without regret, the brilliancy of a rival drama, which had wholly extinguished the blaze of his own; but that he felt a poet's peevish pang on being outshone just at that very identical time, and just upon his own identical subject.

The reader will observe, before he has proceeded far in the following play, that an inclination to scandal is the prominent trait of the first character of the piece, Dashwould; that the wit of the whole composition depends chiefly upon descanting on the faults of the absent; and that the hypocrisy of Malvil, joined to his love of slander, gives him many of the features, in miniature, of Joseph Surface and Mrs. Candour.—“There was one solitary comfort in all my chagrin on this occasion,” Mr. Murphy has been heard to say; “My comedy was brought out first; if it had chanced to have appeared a few months after Mr. Sheridan's, I should have had the additional mortification of being accused of plagiarism.”

But although of these two comedies the corner stones are nearly the same, their superstructures are almost wholly different. Fable, incidents, and even most of their characters, are totally unlike. Still, an unhappy contour makes the present play continually bring to memory the play of “The School for Scandal,” to its own disadvantage; whilst “The School for Scandal,” which rises in value by the

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comparison, never once brings to recollection "Know your own Mind."

To an unfortunate accident like this, which befell Mr. Murphy, every author is, of course, liable; but that two unfortunate accidents, of the very same kind, should befall the same unfortunate author, in the space of a few years, is somewhat extraordinary: and yet it is certain, that Mr. Murphy's comedy of "All in the Wrong," in which *jealousy* is the prevailing passion of every character, was performed under all the disadvantages that could arise from the concurrent representation of Mr. Colman's "Jealous Wife."

With all that merit which the reader will acknowledge in the comedy before him, he will find, in the characters of Mrs. Bromley, and her niece, that the author has there sunk into a sentimental common place, and whining insipidity; degrading to his usual novelty and spirit. It is not only very customary in plays and novels, but very unjust, to delineate a benefactor mostly cruel, and a dependant always patient. Ingratitude is, surely, a crime much more general than that of tyranny. Few minds have strength to support, with fortitude, the weight of obligations—less virtue is requisite for bestowing with generosity: and when faults arise between the giver and the receiver of benefits, suspicion should ever be awake to him or her who has the most perilous duty to perform. "To love our enemies," seems like a severe ordinance; and yet, to many susceptible but arrogant

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MILLAMOUR	<i>Mr. Elliston.</i>
DASHWOULD	<i>Mr. Bannister.</i>
MALVIL	<i>Mr. Palmer.</i>
BYGROVE	<i>Mr. Powell.</i>
CAPTAIN BYGROVE	<i>Mr. De Camp.</i>
SIR JOHN MILLAMOUR	<i>Mr. Eyre.</i>
SIR HARRY LOVEWIT	<i>Mr. Holland.</i>
CHARLES	<i>Mr. Fisher.</i>
SERVANTS	{ <i>Mr. Webb.</i>
	{ <i>Mr. Evans.</i>
LADY BELL	<i>Mrs. Jordan.</i>
LADY JANE	<i>Miss Mellon.</i>
MRS. BROMLEY	<i>Miss Pope.</i>
MISS NEVILLE	<i>Miss Boyce.</i>
MADAME LA ROUGE	<i>Miss Tidswell.</i>

KNOW YOUR OWN MIND.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE 1.

An Apartment in SIR JOHN MILLAMOUR'S House.

Enter SIR JOHN MILLAMOUR and BYGROVE.

Bygrove. Why, then, I'd marry again, and disinherit him.

Sir J. Brother Bygrove, you think too severely in these matters.

Bygrove. Severely, Sir John? If I had a mind that my son should marry, why should not he do as I would have him?

Sir J. Allowance must be made for inclination.—The success of our children depends upon the manner, in which we set them out in the world. They are like bowls, which, if delivered out of hand, with a due regard to their bias, our aim is answered;—if otherwise, they are short or wide of the mark in view, or perhaps rush wildly out of the green.

Bygrove. Well argued, truly! he, that should obey, is to judge for himself, and you, that are his governor, are to be directed by him!

Sir J. Why, he is chiefly interested in the end; and the choice of the means may be fairly left to himself. I can't but be tender of George, a plant of my own rearing, and the tree will hereafter be known by its fruit.

Bygrove. It is a tree that will bear nothing without grafting; and if I could not inoculate what will make it thrive and flourish, it should not encumber a foot of my land.

Sir J. Your system and mine, differ widely, brother Bygrove. My son is of an enlarged and liberal understanding, and I a father, of mild authority.

Bygrove. Authority! your son's word is a law to you. Now, there is my young graceless—he is in the army, and why? Because I chose it—I had a mind he should serve, and so he went to be shot at.—No arguing with me—If I see any thing wrong, I accost him directly:—"Lookye, sir, do you think to go on in this fashion? Not during my life, I promise you: I will acknowledge you no longer than you prove worthy, and if you can't discern what is befitting you, I, at least, will judge what is proper on my part.

Sir J. Well, George and I have lived together as friends—From a boy, I endeavoured to subject him rather to his reason, than his fears. If any little irregularity happened, he was no sooner sensible of it, than his cheek coloured, and the blush of youth not only looked decent, but expressed an ingenuous, and well-disposed mind.

Bygrove. But the consequence of all this?—Has he a settled opinion—a fixed principle, for a moment? He is grown up in caprice; his judgment has not vigour to be decisive upon the merest trifle; he is distracted by little things, and of course, is perishing by little and little.

Sir J. Oh no, all from a good cause: his knowledge of life occasions quick reflection, quick reflection.

tion shows things in a variety of lights. I am not angry—He will settle in the world—you will see him married before long.

Bygrove. In what a variety of lights his wife will appear to him!

Sir J. I beg your pardon for a moment.—I see a person there—Charles, Charles! this way.

Enter CHARLES.

Sir J. Well, Charles, what is he about?

Charles. Very busy, sir, a thousand things in hand.

Bygrove. And all at the same time, I'll warrant?

Charles. We have a deal to employ us, sir.

Sir J. Have you sounded him, in regard to what I mentioned last night?

Charles. That's what I wanted to tell your honour. Last night, sir, as he was going to bed, I touched upon the subject—dropped a hint or two, that it is now time to think of raising heirs to himself—enlarged upon the comforts of matrimony, and I think, with no small degree of eloquence.

Bygrove. The fellow is laughing at you.

Sir J. Well, and how?—What effect?

Charles. A very visible effect, sir. This morning, early, my master rings his bell—"Charles," says he, "I have been considering what you said last night:—I shall pay a visit to the young ladies, and, I believe, I shall marry one of them."

Sir J. There, Mr. Bygrove—I am for ever obliged to you, Charles—Well, go on.

Charles. I fly immediately, to get him his things to dress, and return in an instant. "Charles," says he, then tossed himself back in his chair, beat the ground with his heel, and fell a reading. Won't your honour get ready, to visit the young ladies?—"The ladies?—what ladies, you blockhead?"—Lady Bell, and Lady Jane, your honour, Mrs. Bromley's handsome nieces.—"Po! you're a numskull," says he, with an oblique

kind of a smile—stretched his arms, yawned, talked to himself, and bade me go about my business.

Bygrove. I knew it would end so. He will continue going on from one thing to another, and end in nothing at last.

Sir J. This is provoking! Any body with him this morning?

Charles. He has had a power of people with him, sir—A commission broker, to sell him a company in a marching regiment—the mayor of a borough, about a seat in parliament. And there are several with him now, sir. There is Sir Harry Lovewit, and——

Bygrove. Ay! Sir Harry! I am glad he is of age, and that I am no longer his guardian—He has not had a new idea in his head since he was five years old, and yet the blockhead affects to be lively. He runs after wits, who do nothing but laugh at him.—He repeats scraps and sentences—all memory and no understanding—a mere retailer of what falls from other people, and with that stock, he sets up for a wit.

Charles. He is with my master, sir; and there is Mr. Malvil, and Mr. Dashwould, and—[*Bell rings.*]—He rings, sir—you will pardon me, I must begone, sir. [Exit.]

Bygrove. And that fellow, Dashwould! he is the ruin of your son, and of poor Sir Harry into the bargain. He is the Merry Andrew of the town; honour has no restraint upon him, truth he sets at naught, and friendship he is ever ready to sacrifice to a joke.

Sir J. Po! mere innocent pleasantry—Dashwould has no harm in him.

Bygrove. No harm in him? I grant you the fellow has a quick sense of the ridiculous, and draws a character with a lucky hit—But every thing is distorted by him. He has wit to ridicule you—invention to frame a story of you—humour to help it about; and

when he has set the town a laughing, he puts on a familiar air, and shakes you by the hand.

Enter SIR HARRY LOVEWIT, laughing violently.

Sir H. Oh! oh! oh! I shall certainly expire one day, in a fit of laughing.

Sir J. What's the matter, Sir Harry?

Bygrove. What fool's errand brings him hither?

Sir H. That fellow, Dashwould, will be the death of me.—The very spirit of whim, wit, humour, and raillery possess him.

Bygrove. Ay; wit and humour for the meridian of your understanding.

Sir H. By the shade of Rabelais! he is the most entertaining creature! He has played off such a firework of wit!—I'll tell you what he said this moment——

Bygrove. No, sir, no; if you are a pedler in smart sayings, and brisk repartees, we don't desire you to unpack for us.

Sir H. A plague on him, for an agreeable devil!—And then the rogue has so much ease!

Bygrove. Yes, the ease of an executioner—He puts all to death, without remorse—He laughs at every thing, as if Heaven intended to make its own work ridiculous. He has no relish for beauty, natural or moral. He is in love with deformity, and never better pleased, than when he has most reason to find fault.

Sir H. There is a picture of as harsh features as any in Dashwould's whole collection.

Bygrove. But the picture is true—no exaggeration in it.

Sir H. He gave us a miniature of you, this morning, my dear guardian, and you shall have it. Dashwould has made a discovery, Sir John—What reason do you think he gives, for Mr. Bygrove's railing for ever at your son's inconstancy of temper?

Bygrove. Ay, now! now!

Sir H. You positively shall hear it. Mr. Bygrove's desires being all rusted to a point, looking directly toward the land of matrimony——

Bygrove. Matrimony! now gild the pill with humour, and down it goes.

Sir H. Dashwould has found you out. Mr. Bygrove's desires being all collected, and fixed on matrimony, he rails at the variety of my friend Millamour's whimsies, like Sir George Bumper, with chalkstones on his knuckles as big as nutmegs, hobbling along, and thanking Doctor le Fevre, that he has no small humours flying about him.

Sir J. That's a discovery indeed!

Bygrove. Sir John, can you mind what such a fellow as Dashwould says? Every thing that passes through the medium of his fancy, appears deformed, as the straightest stick looks crooked in troubled water.

Sir H. Well dashed out, upon my soul!—with tolerable spleen, and some vivacity.

Bygrove. Po! if you had taken my advice, Sir Harry, and renounced his acquaintance long ago, you had been now a young man coming into life, with some promise of a character. Continue in dissipation, sir: For my part, it is a rule with me, neither to give, nor to take, a joke.

Sir J. Ha! ha! ha! a pleasant rule, positively—ha! ha! ha! Dashwould shall have it this moment; do you take the consequence, and in the mean time I'll leave you to the practice of your social humour.

[Exit.]

Bygrove. It is such coxcombs as that butterfly, that encourage him to fix his pasquinades upon every man's character. Matrimony! a licentious—No, Sir John, I still cherish the memory of your sister—she was the best of wives——'Sdeath! interrupted again by that—No, it's my friend Malvil; he is a man of true value.

Sir J. Dashwould says, he is a compound of false charity, and real malice.

Bygrove. And it is enough for you, that Dashwould says it. Malvil is a man of honour, sir, and an enemy to all scandal, though wit prove a palatable ingredient in the poison.

Enter MALVIL.

Malvil. Intolerable! there is no being safe where he is—A licentious railer! all truth, all morality sacrificed to a jest! nothing sacred from his buffoonery!

Bygrove. I told you, Sir John, how it is.

Malvil. Oh, such indiscriminate satire! There is no enduring it. Ridicule is a very unfair weapon, Mr. Bygrove; it is, by no means, the test of truth, Sir John.

Sir J. Nay, but you are too grave about this matter.

Malvil. Too grave! shall he wantonly stab the reputation of his neighbour, and then tell you he was in jest? For my part, I had rather throw a veil over the infirmities of my friend, than seek a malicious pleasure in the detection—That's my way of thinking.

Sir J. I fancy you are right. This son of mine does so perplex me! *[Walks aside.]*

Malvil. Pray, Mr. Bygrove, give me leave—I am sorry to hear certain whispers about a friend of ours.

Bygrove. About whom? the widow, Mrs. Bromley?

Malvil. Oh, no, no! I have a great respect for her, though I—Pray, don't you think she throws out the lure for a young husband?

Bygrove. For a husband—yes, but not too young a one—you can serve my interest in that quarter.

Malvil. I know it; rely upon my friendship. But have you heard nothing of an eminent Turkey merchant?

Bygrove. Mr. Freeport?

Malvil. I say nothing—I don't like the affair:—have you really heard nothing?

Bygrove. Not a syllable.

Malvil. So much the better; though it is fit you should be put on your guard. Any money of yours in his hands?

Bygrove. Po! as safe as the bank.

Malvil. I may be mistaken—I hope I am—I was in company the other night—several members of parliament present—they did not speak plainly—hints and inuendo's only—you won't let it go any further?—His seat in the house, they all agreed, is perfectly convenient at this juncture—I hope the cloud will blow over. I shall remember you with the widow.

Bygrove. One good turn deserves another; I shan't be unmindful of your interest.

Malvil. There, now you hurt me—you know my delicacy: must friendship never act a disinterested part? I esteem you, Mr. Bygrove, and that's sufficient. Sir John, give me leave to say, the man who busies himself about other people's affairs, is a pragmatical character, and very dangerous in society.

Bygrove. So I have been telling Sir John: But to laugh at every thing is the fashion of the age. A pleasant, good-for-nothing fellow, is, by most people, preferred to modest merit. A man like Dashwould, who runs on—So! here comes Scandal in folio.

Enter DASHWOULD.

Dash. Sir John, I rejoice to see you—Mr. Bygrove, I kiss your hand. *Malvil*, have you been uneasy for any friend since?

Malvil. Po! absurd! [Walks away.]

Dash. I have been laughing with your son, Sir John.—Pray have I told you about Sir Richard Doriland?

Bygrove. You may spare him sir, he is a very worthy man.

Dash. He is so—great good nature about him—I love Sir Richard: You know he was divorced from his wife, a good fine woman, but an invincible idiot.

Malvil. Lookye there now, Mr. Bygrove!

Bygrove. My Lady Doriland, sir, was always accounted a very sensible woman.

Dash. She was so; with too much spirit to be ever at ease, and a rage for pleasure, that broke the bubble as she grasped it. She fainted away, upon hearing that Mrs. Allnight had two card tables more than herself.

Bygrove. Inveterate malice!

Dash. They waged war a whole winter, for the honour of having the greatest number of fools, thinking of nothing but the odd trick.—First, Mrs. Allnight kept Sundays; her ladyship did the same—Mrs. Allnight had forty tables; her ladyship rose to fifty—Then one added, then t'other, till every room in the house was crammed like the black hole at Calcutta; and at last, upon casting up the account, Sir Richard sold off fifteen hundred acres, to clear incumbrances.

Sir J. Ridiculous! and so they parted upon this?

Dash. Don't you know the history of that business?

Malvil. Now mark him—now.

Dash. Tender of reputation, Malvil!—The story is well known. She was detected with—the little foreign count—I call him the Salamander—I saw him five times in one winter upon the back of the fire, at Bath, for cheating at cards.

Malvil. Go on, sir, abuse every body. My lady was perfectly innocent: I know the whole affair—a mere contrivance to lay the foundation of a divorce.

Dash. So they gave out. Sir Richard did not care a nine-pin for her, while she was his.—You know his way; he despises what is in his possession, and languishes for what is not. Her ladyship was no sooner married to——what's his name?—His father was a footman, and Madam Fortune, who, every now and

then loves a joke, sent him to the East Indies, and in a few years brought him back at the head of half a million, for the jest's sake.

Malvil. Mr. Dashwould, upon my word, sir—Families to be run down in this manner!

Dash. Mushroom was his name; my Lady Doriland was no sooner married to him, but, up to his eyes, Sir Richard was in love with her.—He dressed at her—sighed at her—danced at her; she is now libelled in the Commons, and Sir Richard has a crim. con. against him in the King's Bench.

Malvil. Pshaw! I shall stay no longer, to hear this strain of defamation. [Exit.]

Dash. Malvil, must you leave us? A pleasant character, this same Mr. Malvil.

Bygrove. He has a proper regard for his friends, sir.

Dash. Yes, but he is often present where their characters are canvassed, and is anxious about whispers, which nobody has heard. He knows the use of hypocrisy better than a court chaplain.

Bygrove. There, call honesty by a burlesque name, and so pervert every thing.

Dash. Things are more perverted, Mr. Bygrove, when such men as Malvil make their vices do their work, under a mask of goodness; and with that stroke we'll dismiss his character.

Sir J. Ay, very right; my brother Bygrove has a regard for him, and so change the subject. My son, Mr. Dashwould, what does he intend?

Dash. Up to the eyes in love with Lady Bell, and determined to marry her.

Sir J. I told you so, Mr. Bygrove—I told you, you would soon see him settled in the world. Mr. Dashwould, I thank you; I'll step and confirm George in his resolution. [Exit.]

Dash. A goodnatured man, Sir John, and does not want credulity!

Bygrove. Ay, there! the moment his back is turned!

Dash. Gulliver's Travels is a true history, to him! His son has strange flights.—First, he was to be a lawyer—bought chambers in the Temple, eat his commons, and was called to the bar. Then the law is a damned, dry, municipal study; the army is fitter for a gentleman; and as he was going to the war-office, to take out his commission, he saw my Lord Chancellor's coach go by; in an instant back to the Temple, and no sooner there, "Po! pox! hang the law! better marry, and live like a gentleman." Now marriage is a galling yoke, and he does not know what he'll do. He calls his man, Charles—sends him away—walks about the room, sits down, asks a question—thinks of something else—talks to himself, sings, whistles, lively, pensive, pleasant, and melancholy, in an instant. He approves, finds fault; he will, he will not; and, in short, the man does not know his own mind for half a second. Here comes Sir John.

Enter SIR JOHN MILLAMOUR.

You find him disposed to marry, Sir John?

Sir J. I hope so, he wavers a little, but still I——

Bygrove. Po! I have no patience—my advice has been all lost upon you—I wish it may end well. A good morning, Sir John. [*Going.*]

Dash. Mr. Bygrove, yours: Sir John will defend you in your absence.

Bygrove. If you will forget your friends in their absence, it is the greatest favour you can bestow upon them. [*Exit.*]

Dash. Did I ever tell you what happened to him last summer, at Tunbridge?

Sir J. Excuse me for the present. This light young man!—I must step and talk with my lawyer.

Dash. I'll walk part of the way with you. A strange medley, this same Mr. Bygrove: with something like

wit, he is always abusing wit. You must know, last summer, at Tunbridge——

Sir J. Another time, if you please. [Exit.]

Dash. The story is worth your hearing: a party of us dined at the Sussex—— [Following *SIR JOHN*.]

Enter CHARLES.

Charles. Mr. Dashwould! Mr. Dashwould!

Enter DASHWOULD.

Dash. What's the matter, Charles?

Charles. My master desires you won't go.

Enter SIR HARRY LOVEWIT.

Sir H. Hey! what, going to leave us?

Dash. Only a step with Sir John. Strange vagaries in your master's head, Charles!—Sir Harry! going to wait upon Miss Neville, I suppose—She has beauty, and you have a heart.

Sir H. Pshaw! there you wrong me now! Why will you?

Dash. Very well, be it so; I can't see, to be sure, but take my word for it, you will marry that girl.—Come, I follow you.

Sir H. I must not part with you—I had rather lose the whole college of physicians. [Exit.]

Dash. March on, Sir Harry. [Turns to *CHARLES*.] Did you ever see such a baronet! This fellow, Charles, is as ridiculous himself as any of them. [Exit.]

Charles. Now have I but one man in the house, and he will be fifty different men in a moment!—Hurry! hurry! nothing but hurry! Get me this—get me that—get me t'other—bring me the blue and silver, scoundrel!—what do you fetch me this for?—let me have the brown and gold. A poor servant does not know which way to turn himself in this house.

Enter RICHARD.

Well, Richard, what are you about?

Richard. Why, a man in a whirlwind may as well tell what he is about. Going to order the coachman to put up. He intends to change his dress, and walk to the Temple. *[Exit.*

Charles. What does he mean by talking of the Temple again? I hope we are not going to take to our studies once more. I hate the law: there is not a footman in the Temple has a grain of taste. All mere lawyers! They have not an idea out of the profession.

Enter ROBERT.

Robert. Richard! Richard! where is he gone?

Charles. What's in the wind now?

Robert. The wind's in another quarter. He has been writing verses, as he calls them, ever since the company left him. He has torn a quire of paper, I believe, and now he wants the carriage directly.

[Exit.

Charles. Run, and order it. I had rather be a country curate, than go on in this manner. *[Bell rings.]* What is he at now?

Millamour. *[Within.]* Charles!—who answers there?

Charles. Ay; now for the old work.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

Mil. Is the chariot ready?

Charles. At the door, sir.

Mil. Do you step to Mrs. Bromley's, and—perhaps it would be better to—No, do you step, Charles, and—you need not mind it—another time will do as well. *[Exit.*

Charles. There again now! this is the way, from morning to night.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

Mil. The sooner, the better : I promised Sir John, and I will pay this visit. Lady Bell reigns sovereign of my heart. That vivacity of mind ! “ Quick as her eyes, and as unfix’d as those.”

Charles. She is by far preferable to her sister, your honour.

Mil. Po ! you are illiterate in these matters. The sober graces of Lady Jane !—Lady Bell advances like a conqueror, and demands your heart : Lady Jane seems unconscious of her charms, and yet enslaves you deeper.

Charles. Which of them does your honour think—

Mil. Which of them. Charles ? *[Reads a Paper.*
“ I look’d, and I sigh’d, and I wish’d I could speak.”

Enter ROBERT.

Robert. Captain Bygrove, sir.

Mil. That’s unlucky ! I am not at home ; tell him I went out an hour ago.

Enter CAPTAIN BYGROVE.

My dear Bygrove, I longed to see you. But why that pensive air ? Still in love, I suppose.

[Exeunt CHARLES and ROBERT.

Capt. B. My dear Millamour, you have guessed it. I am in love, and glory in my chains.

Mil. Shall I tell you a secret ? I suspect myself plaguily. Every thing is not as quiet here as it used to be.

Capt. B. Indulge the happy passion. Let wits and libertines say what they will ; there is no true happiness, but in the married state.

Mil. Why, I have thought much upon the subject of late, and, with a certain refinement, I don’t know but a man may fashion a complying girl to his taste

of happiness. Virtuous himself, he confirms her in her virtue; constant, he secures her fidelity: and, by continuing the lover, instead of commencing the tyrant husband, he wins from her the sweetest exertion of tenderness and love. I shall most positively marry. Who is your idol? My dear boy, impart.

Capt. B. There I beg to be excused. You know my father. I must not presume to think for myself. I must contrive some stratagem, to make him propose the match. Were it to move first from me, I should be obliged to decamp from before the town at once.

Mil. I wish you success. My resolution is taken, and with the most amiable of her sex. She romps about the room, like one of the graces; and deals about her wit with such a happy negligence——

Capt. B. An agreeable portrait; but mine is the very reverse. That equal serenity in all her ways! Wit she has, but without ostentation; and elegance itself seems the pure effect of nature.

Mil. [*Aside.*] I don't know whether that is not the true character for a wife. And pray, what progress have you made in her affections?

Capt. B. Enough to convince me that I am not quite unacceptable. My dear Millamour, I had rather fold that girl in my arms, than kiss his majesty's hand for the first regiment of guards.

Mil. I am a lost man. I shall most positively marry. We will wonder at each other's felicity; and be the envy of all our acquaintance.

Enter DASHWOULD.

Dash. I am as good as my word, you see. Most noble Captain, your father was here this morning. A good agreeable old gentleman, and about as pleasant as a night mare. Millamour, whom do you think I met since I saw you?

Mil. Whom?

Dash. Our friend Beverley, just imported from Paris, perfectly frenchified, and abusing every thing in this country—"Oh! there is no breathing their English atmosphere.—Roast beef and liberty will be the death of me!"

Mil. Ha! ha! poor Beverley! I saw him, last summer, at Paris, dressed in the style of an English foxhunter: he swore there was not a morsel to eat in their country: kept an opera-singer upon beef-steaks and oyster sauce; drove to his villa every Saturday, in a phaeton, and returned on the Monday, like a young buck, just come upon town.

Dash. He has done his country great honour abroad.

Capt. B. He will settle at home now: he is going to be married.

Dash. Yes, I hear he is in love, and much good may it do him. I wish I may die, if I know so ridiculous a thing as love!—"My life!—My soul!—Hybla dwells upon her lips; ecstasy and bliss! blank verse, and pastoral nonsense!" In a little time, the man wonders what bewitched him: an arm chair after dinner, and a box and dice till five in the morning, make all the comforts of his life.

Mil. Very true! Love is a ridiculous passion indeed.

Capt. B. Do you take up arms against me? But a moment since, just as you came in, he was acknowledging to me——

Mil. No, not I, truly; I acknowledge nothing. Marriage is not to my taste, I promise you. The handsome wife!—she is all affectation; routs, drums, hurricanes, and intrigue!

Dash. And the ugly! she makes it up with good sense; pronounces upon wit; and talks you dead with maxims, characters, and reflections.

Mil. And the woman of high birth! she produces

her pedigree, as her patent for vice and folly. "Seven's the main," and away goes your whole fortune!

Capt. B. Mere common place.

Dash. And the tender maukin! she dotes upon you. "Don't drink any more, my dear;" "You'll take cold, near that window, my love;" "Pray don't talk so much; you'll flurry your spirits"—And then kisses you before company.

Mil. And the sick madam! she has the vapours, and finds that she has nerves.—"I wish I had none.—But it is too true, that I have nerves, as slight as so many hairs."

Dash. Ha! ha! the whole sex is divided into so many classes of folly.

Mil. Right! so it is. Ha! ha! ha! [*Both laugh.*]

Capt. B. You play finely into one another's hands.

Mil. Now mark the champion of the sex!—

Dash. Yes; he'll throw down the gauntlet for them. [*Both laughing.*]

Capt. B. Nay, decide it your own way. Since you won't hear, gentlemen, there is a clear stage for you. [*Exit.*]

Dash. Fare ye well, most noble Captain! A facetious companion! did you ever hear him say any thing?

Mil. He is in for it; and my father would fain reduce me to the same condition, with one of Mrs. Bromley's nieces. A good fine woman, Mrs. Bromley!

Dash. Has been! Were she now to rub her cheek with a white handkerchief, her roses and lilies would go to the clear starcher.

Mil. Ha! ha! and yet she sets up for the rival of her nieces.

Dash. The young ladies are pretty well in their way too. Lady Bell has a brisk volubility of nothing, that she plays the pretty idiot with: and Lady Jane, a sly piece of formality, ready to go post for

Scotland, with the first red coat, that asks her the question. We all dine at the widow's to-day? are you to be with us?

Mil. Yes, to meet you: the party will be diverting.

Dash. Observe old Bygrove. He pronounces with rigour upon the conduct of others, and hopes his own follies lie concealed. His whole struggle is to escape detection. He hoodwinks himself, and thinks he blinds you. Positive and dogmatical in his opinions, yet a dupe to the designs of others: and, flattering himself that a peevish and censorious spirit hides every defect, he gives you the full ridicule of his character.

Mil. I have marked him before now.

Dash. Mark him with the widow: you will see him sighing for his deceased wife and Mrs. Bromley's charms at the same time. One eye will weep for the dead, and the other ogle the living.

Mil. Ha! ha!—And then Malvil laying siege to Miss Neville!

Dash. Miss Neville is the best of them. Mrs. Bromley has taken her into her house, as a poor relation, whom she pities; and her pity is no more than the cruel art of tormenting an unhappy dependant upon her generosity.

Mil. But she has generosity. She has promised Miss Neville a fortune of five thousand pounds.

Dash. And so the hook is baited for Malvil. The widow flings out that snare, to counteract Sir Harry.

Mil. Sir Harry!

Dash. Yes; he is in love with Miss Neville; and the best of the story is, he is afraid I shall think him ridiculous. If I say the word, and promise not to laugh at him, he breaks his mind at once. Miss Neville sees clearly that he admires her, and, of course, will never listen to Malvil. The self-interested designs of that fellow shall be disappointed.

Mil. Admirable! thou art a whimsical fellow. Come, I attend you. A pleasant groupe they are altogether. It is as you say,

Our passions sicken, and our pleasures cloy;
A fool to laugh at, is the height of joy. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Room in MRS. BROMLEY'S House.

Enter MRS. BROMLEY and MISS NEVILLE.

Mrs. Brom. Why, to be sure, Neville, there is something in what you say: one is so odd, and so I don't know how, in a morning.

Miss Nev. Certainly, madam; and then people of your turn, whose wit overflows in conversation, are liable to a waste of spirits, and the alteration appears sooner in them.

Mrs. Brom. So it does: you observe very prettily upon things. Heigho! I am as faded as an old lute-string to-day.

Miss Nev. No indeed, madam, you look very tolerably, considering.

Mrs. Brom. [*Aside.*] Considering! she grows pert, I think.—I am glad you think me not altogether intolerable.

Miss Nev. Ma'am !

Mrs. Brom. Tolerably ! she is Lady Bell's prime agent. [*Aside.*] Has Sir Harry given you hopes lately ?

Miss Nev. Sir Harry ! I really don't understand why he is mentioned.

Mrs. Brom. Do you think it will be a match ? And have you made up your quarrel with Lady Bell ?

[*Sits down.*]

Miss Nev. The sweetness of her disposition reconciles every thing.

Mrs. Brom. And is Millamour reconciled to Lady Bell ?

Miss Nev. There was only a slight mistake, which I explained.

Mrs. Brom. Oh ! you explained ? that was prudently done ; I am glad to hear this : and do you think he loves her ? Tell me ; tell me all. Why ? why do you think he loves her ?

Miss Nev. He cannot be insensible to her merit ; and the other day he asked me if you were likely to approve of his proposing for Lady Bell.

Mrs. Brom. And you told him——Well !—what did you tell him ?

Miss Nev. That you, no doubt, would be ready to promote the happiness of so amiable a young lady.

Mrs. Brom. You told him so ? [*Rises, and walks about.*] And so you are turned match-maker : you busy yourself in my family ?—Hey !—Mrs. Start-up ! you are dizen'd out, I think : my wardrobe has supplied you.

Miss Nev. Your pardon, ma'am : I had these things in the country, when you first showed so much goodness to me.

Mrs. Brom. What airs ! you know I hate to see creatures give themselves airs. Was not I oblig'd to provide you with every thing ?

Miss Nev. You have been very kind ; I always acknowledge it.

Mrs. Brom. Acknowledge it ! Does not every body know it ?

Miss Nev. Yes, ma'am, I dare say every body does know it.

Mrs. Brom. That's maliciously said : I can spy a sneer upon that false face. You suppose I have made my brags. That's what lurks in your ambiguous meaning. I deserve it : deliver me from poor relations !

Miss Nev. [*Aside.*] Now the storm begins ! I am sure I have said nothing to offend you. I am helpless, it is true, but your relation, and by that tie a gentlewoman still.

Mrs. Brom. I made you a gentlewoman. Did not I take you up in the country, where you lived in the parsonage house, you, and your sister, with no other company to converse with, than the melancholy tombstones, where you read the high and mighty characters of John Hodge, and Deborah his wife ? While your father's miserable horse, worn to a shadow with carrying double to the next market town, limped about, with a dull alms-begging eye, in quest of the wretched sustenance, that grew thriftily between the graves ? Did not I take you out of your misery ?

Miss Nev. You did, ma'am. [*In a softened Tone.*

Mrs. Brom. Did not I bring you home to the great house ?

Miss Nev. You did, ma'am ! [*Weeps aside.*

Mrs. Brom. And I am finely thanked for it ! Warm the snake, and it will turn upon you.

Miss Nev. I cannot bear to be insulted thus !

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Brom. So ! your spirit is humbled, is it ?

Miss Nev. Give me leave to tell you, madam, that when people of superior fortune, whom Providence has

enabled to bestow obligations, claim a right, from the favour they confer, to tyrannize over the hopes and fears of a mind in distress; they exercise a cruelty more barbarous than any in the whole history of human malice.

Mrs. Brom. Is this your gratitude?

Miss Nev. I could be thankful for happiness, if you permitted me to enjoy it: but when I find myself, under colour of protection, made the sport of every sudden whim; I have a spirit, madam, that can distinguish between real benevolence, and the price of riches.

Mrs. Brom. Oh brave! that is your spirit!

Miss Nev. A spirit, give me leave to say, that would rather, in any obscure corner, submit to drudgery, for a slender pittance, than continue to be an unhappy subject, for cruelty to try its experiments upon.

[Weeps.]

Mrs. Brom. I fancy I have been too violent. After all this sour, I must sweeten her a little. Come, dry up your tears: you know I am goodnatured in the main. I am only jealous, that you don't seem to love me.

Miss Nev. Were that left to my own heart, every principle there would attach me to you. But to be dunned for gratitude!—

Mrs. Brom. You are right; the observation is very just: I am in the wrong.—Come, let us be friends; I have a great regard for you, Neville. [Walks aside.] The creature should visit with me, only she looks so well.—How! did not I hear Mr. Malville's voice? yes, it is he; I am visible; I am at home; show him in. Walk in, Mr. Malvil.

Enter MR. MALVIL.

Malvil. To a person of sentiment, like you, madam, a visit is paid with pleasure.

Mrs. Brom. You are very good to me. Neville, do you step and bring me the letter, that lies upon my

table. [*Exit Miss NEVILLE.*] I am obliged to go out this morning. [*Smiles at MALVIL.*] She looks mighty well: I have been speaking for you: our scheme will take. Sir Harry will not be able to rival you: she will be your reward for all your services to me.

Malvil. Your generosity is above all praise, and so I was saying this moment, to Mr. Bygrove: he is coming to wait on you.

Mrs. Brom. That's unlucky! I wanted to have some talk with you: well, have you seen Millamour?

Malvil. Yes, and I find him apt: I have hopes of succeeding.

Mrs. Brom. Hush!—not so loud!—you think me mad, I believe. May I hazard myself with that wild man?

Malvil. Your virtue will reclaim him. I have a friendship for Millamour, and that is my reason for counteracting the designs of my friend Bygrove.—Mr. Bygrove has desired me to speak favourably of him to your ladyship.

Mrs. Brom. Oh! but he kept his last wife mewed up in the country; I should certainly expire in the country.

Malvil. Why, I can't say much for a country life: you are perfectly right. Rooks and crows about your house; fox-hounds in full cry all the morning; the country'squires as noisy at dinner as their own hounds; disputes about the game; commissioners of turnpikes, justices of the peace, and pedigrees of horses! "Oroonoko, brother to White Surry, got by Brisk Lightning, his dam by Bold Thunder."—That's the whole of their conversation.

Mrs. Brom. Deliver me! it would be the death of me! But don't tell Mr. Bygrove: amuse him with hopes.

Malvil. He is a very worthy man. I am sorry to see some oddities in him; but that is very common in life. Vices always border upon virtues. Dash-

would says,—but there is no believing his slander;—he says Mr. Bygrove's sorrow for his deceased wife, is all mere artifice, to weep himself into the good graces of another. But I don't believe it.

Mrs. Brom. I hear him coming. Do you go and take care of your interest with Neville.

Malvil. I obey your commands. [Going.]

Mrs. Brom. I shall make her fortune five thousand. Be sure you speak to Millamour. Go, go; success attend you. [Exit MALVIL.]

Enter MR. BYGROVE.

Bygrove. [Bowing.] Madam!

Mrs. Brom. This attention to one in my forlorn state is so obliging——

Bygrove. It is a favour on your part to receive a lost, dejected, sprightless——

Mrs. Brom. I admire your sensibility, Mr. Bygrove. That tender look, which you are for ever casting back to a beloved, but irrecoverable object, shows so amiable a sorrow! oh! there is something exquisite in virtuous affection.

Enter MISS NEVILLE.

Miss Nev. Is this the letter you want, madam?

[Gives it her.]

Mrs. Brom. I thank you, Neville. Yes, there is a luxury in hankering after a valuable person, who has been snatched away. I have found a pleasing indulgence in contemplations of that sort; have not I, Neville?

Miss Nev. Ma'am!

Mrs. Brom. Ma'am! are you deaf? Are you stupid? I was telling Mr. Bygrove, what a taking I was in, when poor dear Mr. Bromley died.

Miss Nev. I was not with you then, ma'am.

Mrs. Brom. Was not with me! what memories some

folks have!—Go, and try if you can recover your memory: leave the room.

Miss Nev. Ungenerous narrow-minded woman!

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Brom. Oh! you little know what a profusion of goodness I have lavished on that creature. She returns it all with sullenness, with ill-humour, with aversion. She perfectly remembers the affliction I was in, when I lost the best of men.

Bygrove. I have had my trials too. Heigho!

Mrs. Brom. I beg your pardon: I am recalling your afflictions: you should not give way; you should struggle a little. Heaven knows how I have struggled. I have appeared, indeed, with an air, but it was all struggling. [*Looks, and smiles.*] I could divert you this morning. Do you know that your son is in love with Lady Jane!

Bygrove. In love! has he said any thing?

Mrs. Brom. I don't know as to that; but I can see what is working in his heart. He is above stairs now: I don't half like his choice: Lady Bell is the proper match for him, and her fortune is the best. An estate, you know, must come to her, by the family settlement. You should direct his choice.

Bygrove. This comes of his presuming to think for himself. Has he declared himself?

Mrs. Brom. I fancy not; but he hinted something to me, about a match in my family.

Bygrove. [*Looks at her, and smiles.*] Why, a match in your family has diverted me of late—Heigho!—It is the only thing that has entertained me for a long time.

Mrs. Brom. I have had my fancies too. I should like to talk further, but I am engaged abroad, this morning. Can I set you down? Will you trust yourself with me?

Bygrove. You encourage a smile, madam.

Mrs. Brom. We shall be the town talk: but let them

talk: what need we mind? I will just step and say a word to Neville—You should not be too solitary.

Bygrove. So my friends tell me.

Mrs. Brom. I shall be with you in a moment. [*Returns.*] Do you know that we are very like each other in our tempers? After all, that is the true foundation of lasting friendships. Poor, dear Mr. Bromley! [*Going, returns.*] It was similitude of temper brought us together; and if ever I could be prevailed upon again, similitude of temper must do it. Well, you have diverted me this morning. Here comes your son; talk to him now. [*Exit.*]

Enter CAPTAIN BYGROVE.

Bygrove. Well, sir, what brings you to this house?

Capt. B. A morning visit, sir; merely to kill half an hour.

Bygrove. There is nothing I hate so much as hypocrisy. I know your errand; you must pretend to be in love.

Capt. B. I, sir!

Bygrove. What have you been saying to Lady Jane? I thought I had cautioned you against presuming to think for yourself.

Capt. B. You have been very kind in that way.

Bygrove. See what comes of your friend Milla-mour's being left to his own discretion. The ass in the fable, divided in his choice, and still doubting on, till it is too late to resolve, gives but a faint image of him.

Capt. B. And if I, sir, to avoid his irresolution——

Bygrove. You are in the opposite extreme: he thinks too much, and never decides. You never think at all, and so resolve without judgment. Take the advice of your friends before you come here to play the antic tricks of love; to kneel, cringe, fawn, flatter, and make yourself ridiculous. Do you know enough of the world to judge for yourself? Can you tell what

they are all doing in the gay sphere of life? The young are all bred up under the veterans of vice and folly. They see their mothers, with autumnal faces, playing the agreeable, and forgetting that they are no longer young. The men are advanced beyond all former bounds, and the women press close after them. A club for the ladies! intrepidity is now the female charm: to complete their career, there is nothing left but to build a turf coterie, at Newmarket, and ride their own matches, over the four-mile course.

Capt. B. An admirable picture, sir! Dashwould could not colour it higher.

Bygrove. Dashwould! an indiscriminate railer! I speak for your good; and remember, I tell you, you know nothing of the world. After all, sir, Lady Bell is the person I wish to see you married to;—go, and pay your addresses to her. I will settle that matter for you: you may then marry the person, to whom you have not degraded yourself, by pining, sighing, love verses, and I know not what.

Capt. B. This is all unaccountable to me, sir. If you will but hear me——

Enter MR. MALVIL.

Bygrove. No, sir, no; I won't allow you to fetch a single sigh, till I say the word; when I give leave, you may then go and sigh till your heart is ready to break. I'll hear no more; no parleying with me. Leave the house, this moment.

Capt. B. I obey.

[*Exit.*

Malvil. I interrupt you.

Bygrove. No, no; I am glad to see you. Well, have you had any opportunity with the widow?

Malvil. I have; she surprises me a little: she has dropped the mask. I did not think she had been so eager to marry. We had some talk about you. You know my heart: I am always true to my friends: I

see but one difficulty: she will never agree to live in the country.

Bygrove. The lover need not dispute that point, whatever the husband may do hereafter.

Malvil. Very true; and besides, though I am not inclined, with the malicious part of the world, to suspect her virtue, yet this town has temptations. It grieves me to see the ways of this great city; fine women without principle; friends without sincerity: marriages to-day, divorces to-morrow; whole estates set upon the cast of a die; masquerades without wit or humour; new comedies, that make you cry, and tragedies, that put you to sleep: It grieves me to see all this. You are in the right to prefer good sense and tranquillity in the country.

Enter MRS. BROMLEY and MISS NEVILLE.

Mrs. Brom. I beg your pardon, gentlemen. Neville, mind what I say to you: don't let those giddy girls go out in my absence; to walk in the Green Park, or run to hideous painters, under pretence of seeing odious pictures, that they may have an interview with more odious originals. Keep them at home; I will reward your pains. Allons, Mr. Bygrove. [*Exit BY-GROVE.*] Come, Mr. Malvil.

Malvil. Had not I better stay, and——

Mrs. Brom. No, no; come now, you may return to her. [*Exit.*]

Malvil. [*To MISS NEVILLE.*] You see that I am torn from you; but I shall return as soon as possible.

[*Exit.*]

Miss Nev. Tyrannical woman! some virtues she has; but they are overshadowed by their opposite qualities. Her love of praise, is a gross appetite of flattery. She oppresses with kindness, and her very civilities are sure to be disobliging. Oh! state of dependence! for mere support, to be subject every hour to caprice and arrogance!—Is it pride that makes me

feel with this sensibility? No, my heart can answer it is not. I can bow to the hand that relieves me; but I cannot stoop to the servile office of pampering vanity and ostentation, with low and fulsome flattery. What does Lady Bell mean by talking to me of Sir Harry? She does it—I know her goodness—she does it to soften affliction, and, if possible, divert a mind, depressed with sorrow. Sir Harry never threw away a thought on me: He behaves, indeed, with marked civility, but I don't know what to think of him.—I must not aspire too high—no, I have no pretensions.

Enter LADY JANE.

Lady Jane. Miss Neville, I am very angry with you. What is the matter? Has any thing made you uneasy?

Miss Nev. No; I am not remarkable for high spirits, you know.

Lady Jane. Why would not you give us your company?—How can you be so cross? That sister of mine is the veriest madcap!

Miss Nev. Lady Bell is rather lively to be sure!

Lady Jane. But when she once begins, she hazards every thing, and talks sometimes like a very libertine.

Miss Nev. The overflowing of gaiety, and good humour.

Lady Jane. I wish she would restrain herself a little—Madam la Rouge is with her; she has the sweetest point eyes ever beheld! I was endeavouring to cheapen it, but Lady Bell was so troublesome! she called me a thousand prudes, and will have it, that nothing runs in my head but a lover.

Miss Nev. I don't know but she may be right—We are apt to deceive ourselves: We talk of vapours, and fidgets, and retirement, but it is often artful, sly, insinuating man, that lurks at the bottom.

Lady Jane. Well, I vow you'll make me hate you!

Miss Nev. Has Captain Bygrove made no disturbance in your heart?

Lady Jane. How can you? You are as great a plague as my sister.—As I live and breathe, the giddy romp is coming! You must take my part.

Enter LADY BELL.—Repeating :

*Yes, I'm in love, I own it now,
And Cælia has undone me ;
And yet, I swear, I can't tell how,
The pleasing plague stole on me.*

What would I give to have some miserable swain talk in that style of me? “Belinda has undone me;”—charming!

Miss Nev. A lively imagination is a blessing, and you are happy, Lady Bell.

Lady Bell. I am so; but then I am not talked of; I am losing all my time.

Lady Jane. Why, you bold creature! I hate to hear you talk with so much intrepidity.

Lady Bell. Prudery, my dear sister! downright prudery! I am not for making mysteries of what all the world knows.

Lady Jane. And how do I make mysteries, pray?

Lady Bell. Why, you confident thing, I'll prove it against you.

Lady Jane. But what—what—what will you prove?

Lady Bell. That you are ready to jump out of your little wits, for a husband, my demure, sober sister. Miss Neville, a poet is not more eager for the success of a new comedy, nor one of his brother poets more desirous to see it fail, than that girl is to throw herself into the arms of a man.

Lady Jane. All scandal, sister.

Lady Bell. Miss Neville shall be judge.

Lady Jane. Your story is mere invention.

Lady Bell. Was there ever such a wrangler!

Lady Jane. You'll not make good your words.

Lady Bell. [*Pats her Hand.*] Hold your tongue, Miss, will you?

Lady Jane. Very well, go on.

Lady Bell. Will you have done? Now mind, Miss Neville; She does not want to be married, she says. The other night, my young madam, whose thoughts are always composed and even, went to sleep as soon as we got to bed, and then her busy imagination went to work with all the vivacity of an intriguing chamber-maid.

Lady Jane. And how can you tell that, pray?

Lady Bell. Out of your own mouth you shall be judged: Miss Neville, she talked in her sleep, like a beauty in a side-box, and then fell a singing,

*No, no, he is true, and I believe;
He look'd, he sigh'd, he can't deceive;
No no, I have conquer'd; he is mine;
My heart is touch'd, and I resign.*

Lady Jane. Oh, you scurrilous creature!

Miss Nev. Fairly caught, Lady Jane.

Lady Jane. All odious slander! you judge of me by yourself.

Lady Bell. I do so: I mean to be married, and am frank enough to own it: But you may let "concealment feed on your damask cheek." My damask cheek, I hope, was made for other purposes.

Lady Jane. Gracious—there is no bearing this! What a mad girl you are!

Lady Bell. Not in the least; A natural character. One would not, to be sure, tell a hideous man, that one loves him: but, when one has encouraged him by degrees, and drawn him on, like a new glove, and perhaps, done him a mischief in the doing it, why then one would draw him off again, and may be, ask a

pretty fellow to help a body; and then the wretch looks so piteous, and kneels at your feet!—then rises in a jealous fit—“I take my everlasting farewell! never to return—no, never! what! to her? who encouraged me?—encouraged him? who promised?—broke her promise? The treacherous, faithless, dear, deluding”——Then returns in an instant; hands dangling—eyes imploring—tongue faltering—“Lady Bell,—Lady Bell—when you know that I adore you!”——And I burst out into a fit of laughter in his face: Oh, that’s my joy—my triumph—my supreme delight!

Lady Jane. And is not there a kind of cruelty in all this?

Lady Bell. Oh, your very humble servant, my sweet Lady Graveairs! Cruelty! The difference between you and me, sister, is this; you deny your love to your female friends, and own it to the man; now I deny it to him, but among ourselves, I fairly own, that Miss Neville is not more impatient to be married to Sir Harry, than I to——

Miss Nev. Who, I? Spare me, I beg of you!—Why Sir Harry?

Lady Jane. Now, now, your turn is come; Never spare her, sister.

Miss Nev. You must excuse me, I am not in spirits for all this raillery. [Going.

Lady Jane. You shan’t leave us.

Miss Nev. Give me leave—I beg you will. I’ll go and talk to Madam La Rouge: Perhaps I may succeed for you. [Exit.

Lady Jane. Well, if you must go.—How you run on, sister! And are you really in love?

Lady Bell. Over head and ears.

Lady Jane. With whom?

Lady Bell. Not with Captain Bygrove:—How alarmed you are!—With Millamour, sister.

Lady Jane. Fix that roving temper, if you can; he

will be on his knees to you, and the first pair of black eyes that enters the room, will be through his heart.

Lady Bell. As to that, I give myself very little trouble; but if I could once catch him paying his adoration to me, my aunt Bromley does not raise and sink poor Miss Neville's spirits, with such exquisite skill in the art of tormenting, as I should his. I should use him as the men do their punch; a little more sweet; a little more sour; a little more spirit; more acid again; then, perhaps, say it's good for nothing, and then, perhaps——

Lady Jane. What?

Lady Bell. Sip it up at last, as you would do at first. You wicked girl! how could you ask me such a question? Law! what am I about? I have a thousand things to do.

Enter MISS NEVILLE and MADAM LA ROUGE.

La Rouge. Ah! my lady! always so gay! English climate no effect upon you. De manieres de Paris for all de vorl. En verite, vous est charmante.

Lady Bell. Oh, Madam La Rouge, you say such polite things! but you rob me of all my money.—My sister is rich, you had better deal with her. Sister, you'll be married before me. [*Sings.*

No, no, he is true, and I believe, &c. [*Exit.*

Lady Jane. Was ever any thing so crazy!

La Rouge. It is all vivacite! and, my lady, you have ver great wit en partage; vous avez les graces; you have de grace; but you no deal vid me.

Lady Jane. I shall call at your house in Pall-mall. Miss Neville, you joined against me! I am very angry with you. [*Exit.*

La Rouge. Mademoiselle, I tell you, persuade my lady to have de lace, and you come to my house, me give you ver pretty present.

Miss Nev. Oh, you have a national talent for applying a little bribery.

La Rouge. Diantre; 'tis false delicatessen. You not know de manieres of de vorl. Ah! Monsieur Malvil!

Enter MALVIL.

Malvil. Madam La Rouge, I did not expect this pleasure.

La Rouge. It is always pleasure to see mes amis;—to see my friends, and I glad to see you here vid de lady.—You have ver good choice; and I can tell you, make de despatch—you have rival.

Malvil. Rival!

La Rouge. You not know? Sir Harry have taste as well as you. Mademoiselle, you are ver great favourite.

Miss Nev. A favourite! keep your vivacity for some other subject; don't make me the town talk.

La Rouge. It is ver true: He come to my house in Pall-mall, and say ver fine ting of Mademoiselle Neville, and Monsieur Dashwould praise you ver much.

Malvil. [*Aside.*] Ay, his malice is at work.

La Rouge. Monsieur, you lose all your time:—[*Goes to him, and speaks low.*] You wait de fortune from Madam Bromley: Sir Harry vil take her vidout any money at all. Vat you slow for?

Malvil. Are the apartments kept ready at your house?

La Rouge. De apartment it is ready. You take it two, tree week ago, and pay de rent for noting—I leave you vid de lady, and I go mind mes affairs. Bon voyage. [*Exit.*]

Malvil. I have disengaged myself, to have the honour of attending you.

Miss Nev. Your attention is thrown away. Did not I hear Mr. Millamour's voice?

Malvil. Yes, he came with me; he is gone into the

next room, to pay his compliments to Lady Jane. I am sorry to see him for ever distracted—always resolving, and yet every day beginning the world over again. You look chagrined, what has disturbed you?

Miss Nev. The old story; Mrs. Bromley's eternal whims.

Malvil. She is not spoken of as I could wish. Goodnatured and arrogant, generous and cruel, obliging and oppressive, at the same time.

Miss Nev. There cannot, surely be a more distressful situation than to remain under daily obligations, and yet not be able to esteem our benefactress.

Malvil. Your delicacy charms me—It has fixed me yours: I long for nothing so much, as to see you out of her power. They have a strange report about town—people will be talking: the whisper goes, that Mr. Bygrove, amidst all his grief, is slyly in a hurry for another wife. Mrs. Bromley, they say, encourages him, and, at the same time, has a design upon my friend Millamour.

Miss Nev. The world is not always wrong.

Malvil. Malice will be busy, and does not spare the young ladies.

Miss Nev. If any thing is said to their disadvantage, believe me, they do not deserve it.

Malvil. I dare say not; I don't think they are too forward. I am sorry to see, in one of the papers, to-day, a character of Sir Harry, not at all favourable: His little follies, his whims, and caprices, one does not mind: He may walk in Dashwoud's train as long as he pleases, that only makes him ridiculous: But it grieves me to hear that perfidy stains his character, and, as I am told, the worst of perfidy: the ruin of beauty and innocence, is his ruling passion.

Miss Nev. This is very odd; somebody has been at the trouble of sending me an anonymous letter, to

that very effect: and why to me? I am not able to decypher.

Malvil. I don't like anonymous letters; In general they aim at mischief; but this, perhaps, is meant as a caution to you: It must be a friend that sent it.

Miss Nev. No, I can guess the quiver from whence that arrow comes.

Malvil. Dashwould, perhaps?

Miss Nev. I don't say that.

Malvil. Nor I, I never charge any body; but, upon recollection, the letter in the newspaper is imputed to him. Mrs. Bromley, I know, has no opinion of Sir Harry: His designs, with regard to you, she does not think honourable. My heart interests me for you; You know I am all heart. The plan which Mrs. Bromley has proposed—Hark! I think I hear Millamour coming—I'll follow you up stairs.

Miss Nev. Oh, sir! you have frightened me out of my wits! [Exit.]

Malvil. She loves Sir Harry, I see, and yet she shan't slip through my hands. I can set on Mrs. Bromley, to lead her a weary life, and if I can prevail upon Millamour to renounce Lady Bell, and marry the widow, my business is done. When Miss Neville is heartily tormented by Mrs. Bromley, affliction softens the mind, and I may then decoy her away, and stand upon terms with the family: But Dashwould's wit will fly about.—No matter, he is a sad scoundrel, and does not mind how he murders reputations. So, here comes Millamour! I must get clear of him, and talk further with Miss Neville.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

Mil. From this moment I blot all other women from my memory. Malvil, wish me joy—The perplexity of choice is now at an end.

Malvil. Why, what has happened?

Mil. Lovely Lady Jane! "And yield her charms of mind with sweet delay."—I can't stay to tell you now.

Malvil. Nor will I stay to interrupt your raptures: You know, I wish you success. *[Exit.*

Enter LADY BELL, reading,

*Who yields too soon, must soon her lover lose,
Would you restrain him long? then long refuse.*

Mil. *[Looks at her, and smiles.]* There is something commanding in that air of vivacity.

Lady Bell. *[Reads.]* *Oft at your door let him for entrance wait,
There let him——*

How! Millamour here! how could you surprise me so? You horrid thing! how long have you been here?

Mil. Been, madam? I have been—I have been in the next room, paying my respects to your sister.

Lady Bell. And never inquired for poor Lady Bell?

Mil. Your ladyship wrongs me. You do injustice to your own charms: they can never be forgot.

Lady Bell. I see how it is: the other day you was listed in my service, and now a deserter to my sister! you are right, you would have been upon hard duty with me.

Mil. Any duty but a forlorn hope would be——

Lady Bell. Hope! why, sure you would not have had the intolerable assurance, to entertain the smallest degree of hope? My sister, I suppose, has given you some hope: Ay, that's her way, she moves by settled rules, and shines with equal light.—Now I—I am a mere comet, I blaze of a sudden—dazzle for a while, then wheel away, and am thought of no more.

Mil. That gaiety of hers is charming! [*Aside.* The impression your ladyship makes——

Lady Bell. Words, mere words; No, I am a strange piece of wild nature, never the same for two minutes together. Now my sister, she is a Prussian blue, holds her colour, and is always the same. I—I am a more changeable silk; I shift about, and my wit, and my folly, so curiously blended, nobody can tell where one begins, or the other am not worth your notice.

[*Walks, and hums*

Mil. [*Looking at her.*] She has described him admirably; without variety, a woman is a piece of insipidity.

Lady Bell. Yes, I have my whims—Never for two minutes together; Now I love to give to folly, and the men say, “Curse catches more when in the wrong, than other when they are in the right.” Then good sense, word, and the next moment I can’t bear the thinking—why won’t somebody write a comedy to divert me? Then all spirit, and I long to lead the ball.

*Ladies, like variegated tulips show,
'Tis to their weakness all their charms they owe*

[*Sings, and walks*

Mil. [*Aside.*] Lady Jane is mere mediocrity compared to her!

Lady Bell. Lord, I run on at a strange rate. Yours, Mr. Millamour. Au revoir.

Mil. A moment longer—You must not let me go. You possess my heart; possess it without a rival.

Lady Bell. Hey! what’s the matter now?

Mil. Do not trifle with a passion sincere. I adore you, my Lady Bell;—adore your matchless charms; thus on my knees adore——

Lady Bell. Stay, stay; let me see what the poet says. [*Reads quick.*]

*Off at your door, let him for entrance wait,
There let him kneel, and threaten, and entreat.*

There, stay there, don't offer to stir: Now put up both your hands, and—pray, pray have compassion, *Lady Bell.* [*Exit, laughing.*]

Mil. She flies, disdainful, from her lover's view,
Yet looks and bids him, as she flies, pursue. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at MRS. BROMLEY'S.

Enter LADY JANE and CAPTAIN BYGROVE.

Lady Jane. And laid his commands upon you to address my sister?

Capt. B. Most peremptorily.

Lady Jane. You have obeyed him, I hope?

Capt. B. You know your power too well; you know that I am devoted to you, and that my happiness depends upon the promise you have made me.

Lady Jane. There, that is always the way with you

men : our smiles are sure marks of approbation, and every thing we say is construed into a promise.

Capt. B. And have not you promised ?

Lady Jane. [*Looks at him, and smiles.*] Need I answer that question ? How easily frightened you are ! but you have some reason to be alarmed : Millamour has been on his knees to me, breathing such raptures——

Capt. B. Ay ! who has set him on ?—what can be at the bottom of this ? And have you listened to him ? Here comes Dashwould ; he, perhaps, can explain.

Lady Jane. He will only laugh at us, and so I'll make my escape. [*Going.*]

Capt. B. Not to hear Millamour again, I hope.

[*Takes her Hand.*]

Lady Jane. Well, well, to purchase my liberty, you need not fear. I have received his vows, delivered with such ardour !—how terrified you look !—I have listened to him, to alarm my sister, with an idea of Millamour's growing passion for me : If her jealousy is once touched, it may fix her resolution ; at present, she is as volatile as Millamour himself.

Enter DASHWOULD.

Dash. As volatile as Millamour ! what can that be ? I never knew any thing that would bear a comparison.

Lady Jane. What think you of my sister ?

Dash. Lady Bell has her whims ; I left her above stairs, in close conference with Millamour ; he has deserted your ladyship already.—Mrs. Bromley will be the next, I hope : Your father, Captain, would grieve more for that, than for his deceased wife.

Lady Jane. And then Miss Neville's turn may come.

Dash. Oh, no ; To sport with her would be inhumanity ; but a brisk widow is fair game.

Capt. B. Yes, and it may help to cure my father of his folly.

Lady Jane. It would be sport, but I despair of it. You know, Mr. Dashwould, you allow that Millamour has understanding?

Dash. But he does not act from his understanding. — Fits and starts of passion govern him. If, in any one pursuit of real use, he had half the alacrity of mind, with which he runs on from one folly to another he would be a man for the ladies to pull caps for: But he lives for ever in inconsistencies. One action of his life is the sure forerunner of the contrary—First, Malville is his favourite—then arm in arm with me. Can any two things be more opposite? It is the same among the ladies; they all have him by turns, and the whim of one moment is sure to find a ridiculous antithesis in the next.

Lady Jane. He sat for that picture, I'll swear.—Well, there's a gentleman wants your advice, and so I'll leave you together. *[Exit.*

Capt. B. My dear Dashwould, you must assist me!

Dash. What distresses you?

Capt. B. My evil genius is at work. You know what my father has resolved upon? Lady Bell is the person he chuses for me.

Dash. I know all that business: a counterplot of the widow's fertile brain, to disappoint Lady Bell, and wreak her malice on Millamour.

Capt. B. But the malice falls on me only.—Why will not Millamour know his own mind? Lady Bell loves him, I know she does.—I am thwarted in the tenderest point; what must be done?

Dash. Do as they would have you—you ensure success: Millamour's jealousy takes fire upon the first alarm, and while the passion holds, he will have vigour enough to act decisively.

Capt. B. May I hazard the experiment?

Dash. It's a sure card; take my advice.

Enter MISS NEVILLE.

Miss Nev. Mrs. Bromley's coach has just stopp'd at the door: had not you better step up stairs, gentlemen?

Enter SIR HARRY LOVEWIT.

Sir Harry. Dashwould, you are absent too long; They are all as dull as a funeral, above stairs.

Dash. [*Aside to CAPTAIN BYGROVE.*] How the baronet follows Miss Neville from room to room!—Come, Captain, I'll play a game of picquet with you before dinner.—Allons!

[*Exit, with CAPTAIN BYGROVE.*]

Sir Harry. If I might have the liberty, ma'am, to——

Miss Nev. Another time, if you please, Sir Harry, —Mrs. Bromley is coming—I hear her voice.

Sir Harry. And you promise me the hearing?

Miss Nev. You are entitled to it, sir. I beg you'll leave me now.

Sir Harry. I obey your commands;—I am gone—you'll remember.

[*Exit.*]

Miss Nev. Here she comes, and, I think, in good humour.

Enter MRS. BROMLEY.

Mrs. Brom. Oh, I am heartily tired! I have been paying visits to people, who have never been let into my house, and who, I hope, will never be at home for me.—I hate them all, but out of civility, we must keep up an acquaintance. Where are the girls?—Has nobody been here?

Miss Nev. Mr. Millamour, ma'am, and the rest of the gentlemen that dine here—they are all above stairs.

Mrs. Brom. Stupidity!—Did not I give orders—How long has Millamour been here?

Miss Nev. About an hour.

Mrs. Brom. With Lady Bell, I suppose?—Thou base ingratitude! and Sir Harry is here too, I reckon? Does your match go on?—You shall go back to the country, I promise you.—You'll be the ruin of those girls—They shall have no visitors, when my back is turned.—I'll give orders to all the servants this very moment. [Going.]

Enter SIR JOHN MILLAMOUR.

Sir J. To see Mrs. Bromley looking so well—

Mrs. Brom. You are very polite, sir.—Business calls me now, Sir John—I beg your pardon. [Exit.]

Sir J. Has my son been here to-day?

Miss Nev. He is above stairs, with Lady Bell, sir.

Mrs. Bromley. [Within.] Miss Neville! Neville, I say!

Miss Nev. You'll excuse me, Sir John—What can she want? [Exit.]

Sir J. This visit portends some good, I hope.—I shall be happy, if he has declared himself—I'll step and see what he is about. [Going.]

Enter MILLAMOUR.

Mil. Exquisite! lovely angel!

Sir J. Well!—how!—what!

Mil. I beg your pardon, sir, I am not at leisure; I am in the third region, and can't descend to the language of the nether world.

Sir J. Then you are in love, George?

Mil. She is a sister of the graces, and surpasses the other three. I am fixed, unalterably fixed, and am going about the marriage articles directly.

Sir J. They are at my lawyer's, ready engrossed, and only wait for the lady's name, to fill up the blanks.

Mil. I know it, sir: I must step for them; I have it through my heart: I feel it here: I am your humble servant, sir. [Going.]

Sir J. No, no; do you stay here; I'll step for Mr. Copyhold. The writings shall be here in ten minutes. [Exit.]

Mil. The sooner the better, sir.

*Let those love now, who never loved before;
Let those who always loved, now love the more!*

[Sings.] Lol, tol, lol.

Enter MR. MALVIL.

Malvil. Bravo! you seem in prodigious spirits!

Mil. I am so: I am happy in myself, and happy in my friends, and happy in every circumstance, and in tip-top spirits, and—my dear Malvil, yours down to the ground.

Malvil. Methinks, I sympathize with you. When our friends are happy, the sensation is well called a fellow feeling.

Mil. Malvil, I thank you; your turn of mind is formed for lasting friendships. With Dashwould it is all dissipation, and giddy mirth, the mere bubble of pleasure. To you, I may talk seriously. The topic of the day is enough for Dashwould. I can now tell you, that I shall be happy for life. But for Dashwould, I should have been settled long ago. That fellow has led me into a thousand errors.

Malvil. He has his admirers, and not without reason. He thinks me his enemy, but he is mistaken. I never harbour resentment.

Mil. You are growing grave, and I am a flight above common sense at present.

Malvil. Dashwould, notwithstanding all his faults, does hit the mark sometimes. I don't usually laugh at his pleasantry; I don't like to encourage him too

much; but it must be owned, he is often right. Behind his back, I cannot help being diverted by him. He has a quick insight into characters.

Mil. No want of penetration there.

Malvil. No, no; he says, and perhaps rightly, your lively ladies often want common prudence; and, giddy in the pursuit of pleasure, they are frequently miserable in the end.

Mil. But Lady Bell's good sense, that refinement of understanding——

Malvil. There are false refinements; the shadow for the substance. Who is it that observes, we all discover early symptoms of the disease, by which our minds and bodies go to ruin?

Mil. Po! with Lady Bell there can be no risk.

Malvil. I don't know whether Dashwould is good authority.—You know him best. He says——

Mil. Well!

Malvil. He is a shrewd observer.

Mil. Nobody more so.

Malvil. If he has a regard for any body, it is for you. You are the only man I never heard him speak ill of. A match with Lady Bell is not to his mind. He talked seriously on the subject. Has not he told you?

Mil. Not a syllable.

Malvil. I wonder at that. Lady Bell, he says, shewed herself early. Impatient of advice, attentive to nothing but her beauty! whole days at her looking glass—I repeat his very words—he seemed to speak out of downright regard for you.—At her toilette every feature had its instructions how to look; but no instruction for the mind. And then, says he, that terrible love of gaming!

Mil. Gaming!

Malvil. Don't you know it? I can't say I ever saw it myself. Time will determine her character.

Mil. If she loves gaming, it is pretty well determined already.

Malvil. Perhaps not: I still hope for the best.

Mil. Why, yes; a man of sense may form her mind, and then the gentler affections may take their turn.

Malvil. The very thing I said.—But our pleasant friend had an answer ready—Gentle affections! says he! don't you see that it is with people that once love play, as with persons addicted to strong cordials? they never return to cooler liquors.

Mil. There is some truth in that. I am for ever obliged to you. It is ingenuous, it is friendly of you to convey the hint.

Malvil. Don't build too much upon it. I have told you my author; and you know his way: he may deny it all.

Mil. Shall I talk to him?

Malvil. I don't know what to say to that. In his vein of pleasantry, he may give it another turn.

Mil. He may so. I am glad to know all this. But my Lady Jane, there's a model for her sex to imitate.

Malvil. Have you watched her well? People should appear what they really are. Let a precipice look like a precipice. When covered over with flowers, it only serves to deceive the unwary. Mrs. Bromley has been very communicative about Lady Jane.

Mil. You alarm me. My dear friend explain.

Malvil. To do Lady Bell justice, she is above disguise. And though she has her faults, I have seen her please by those very faults.

Mil. [*Smiling.*] And so have I. Her very blemishes are beauty spots.

Malvil. No frankness about the youngest girl. It is friendship for you that makes me speak. Her character is all forced, studied, put on with her rouge.

Mil. Does she paint?

Malvil. A little; the prudent touch. I am sorry for

her. When she is settled in the world, many qualities, which now lie concealed, will break out into open day-light.

Mil. What a masked battery there will be to play off upon a husband!

Malvil. Their aunt told me all in confidence. You may judge how painful it is to her. I have known the family for some time. I can't but be sorry for the young ladies.

Mil. And since this is the case, I don't care how little I know of them, or their family.

Malvil. No occasion to quarrel with the family. Great merit about Mrs. Bromley. She made an admirable wife, and that at an early period. She was but seventeen when she married.

Mil. No more?

Malvil. Not an hour: she is not thirty: an estate in her own right, and the command of half a borough. No opposition there: the old houses have the votes. A man may get a seat without trouble. Does not Sir John want to see you in parliament?

Mil. Yes. It would give him pleasure.

Malvil. Well, you will judge for yourself. Were I as you, I should know what course to take. Here she comes! a good fine woman! a man may there sit down to his happiness at once.

Enter MRS. BROMLEY.

Mrs. Brom. Mr. Millamour, [*Courtesies.*] Mr. Malvil, what have you done with Mr. Bygrove?

Malvil. I parted with him where you set us down. [*Speaks to her aside.*] I have talked to Millamour, and I think it will do.

Mrs. Brom. Go you up stairs. [*Aside to MALVIL.*

Malvil. How charmingly you look! like Lady Bell's eldest sister!

Mrs. Brom. Po! you are laughing at me.

Malvil. Not I truly: I appeal to Millamour. I'll

take the liberty to join the company above. [*Aside to MILLAMOUR.*] She is the best of the family. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Brom. A valuable man Malvil is! He has a great esteem for you, sir. His sincerity is unequalled. You seem thoughtful, Mr. Millamour.

Mil. Thoughtful, ma'am!—There are certain subjects that—what Malvil says is true—A man may marry her, and sit down to his happiness at once.

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Brom. Sir John has been saying a great deal to me about you.

Mil. Has he, ma'am?—There is a circumstance, which he is as yet a stranger to—a circumstance, which to communicate, will perhaps——It is what I have long wished, and——

Mrs. Brom. Faultering! hesitating! [*Aside.*] I interrupt you.

Mil. There is a circumstance, ma'am—the affair is—My father for a long time——Sir John, for a long time——Sir John has wished——

Mrs. Brom. To see you married?

Mil. To see me married, ma'am—and—he has—he has wished it much.—And a settlement, by way of jointure—long ready for the lady's name—that is—any lady, who shall honour me with her affection—and——

Mrs. Brom. No lady can be insensible of your pretensions.

Mil. You are very good, ma'am; and, after long observation, and a lasting passion grafted on it, which, though silent hitherto, yet working secretly—when disclosed at length—may, to the person in the world—who, already formed by experience, may in every respect—and if, without presuming too far——

Mrs. Brom. What a delicate confusion he is in!

[*Aside.*

Mil. And if this paper, ma'am——

Mrs. Brom. [*Taking the Paper.*] When given by you, sir——

Enter BYGROVE.

Perverse and cruel ! [*Walks aside.*

Bygrove. You both look grave ; nothing amiss, I hope.

Mrs. Brom. Every thing is as it should be, sir.

Mil. [*Aside.*] Not if he knew all.

Bygrove. Sir John has been complaining——

Mrs. Brom. Pass that by ; advise your own son ; had not you better step up stairs ? Mr. Millamour will do what is right. [*Smiling at him.*] You may leave it all to him ; trust to his judgment.

Enter SIR HARRY LOVEWIT.

Sir H. Millamour, I have such a story for you : Malvil and Dashwould have been quarrelling about you, and——

Bygrove. Po ! and here they all come ; I knew the substance could not be far off, when the shadow projected before it.

Enter LADY BELL, DASHWOULD, and MALVIL.

Lady Bell. Mr. Dashwould, do you think I'll bear this ? What liberty will you take next ? You think, because I laugh, that I am not offended.—Aunt, I received a letter, and he has attempted to snatch it from me.

Dash. Why, it brings a little cargo of ridicule from the country, and my friend Malvil sees no joke in it.

Malvil. When my friend's name is brought in question, sir——

Lady Bell. It is diverting, notwithstanding.—Aunt, what do you think ? My cousin, Cynthia, you know, was to be married to Sir George Squanderstock ; her mother opposed it, and broke off the match, and now

it's come out, that she was all the time the clandestine rival of her own daughter !

Mil. Not inapplicable to the present business !

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Brom. Go, you giddy girl, no such thing !

Mil. [*Aside.*] She charms by her very faults.

Sir H. [*Goes up to BYGROVE.*] And Dashwould has been saying—

Bygrove. Po ! repeat none of his sayings to me.

Lady Bell. Did you say any thing, Mr. Dashwould ? What was it ?

Dash. Oh ! nothing. Sir George Squanderstock is my very good friend.

Malvil. And, for that reason, you might spare him. No man is without his faults.

Dash. Ay, allow him faults out of tenderness.

Bygrove. Sir George is a valuable man, sir, and represents his county to great advantage.

Dash. He does so ; takes a world of pains ; nothing can escape him ; Manilla ransom not paid ; there must be a motion about that matter : he knots his handkerchief, to remember it.—Scarcity of corn ! another knot—triennial parliaments—[*Knots.*] Juries judges of law as well as fact—[*Knots.*] National debt—[*Knots.*] Bail in criminal cases—[*Knots.*] And so on he goes, till his handkerchief is twisted into questions of state ; the liberties and fortunes of all posterity dangling like a bede roll ; he puts it in his pocket, drives to the gaming table, and the next morning his handkerchief goes to the wash, and his country and the minority are both left in the suds.

Lady Bell. What a description ! [*Laughing.*

Sir H. Hey ! lively Lady Bell ! [*Laughing.*

Mil. Ho ! ho ! I thank you, Dashwould.

Mrs. Brom. [*Aside to MILLAMOUR.*] How can you encourage him ? Let us leave them to themselves.

Malvil. You see, Mr. Bygrove——

Bygrove. Ay ! thus he gets a story to graft his ma-

lice upon, and then he sets the table in a roar at the next tavern.

Sir H. Never be out of humour with Dashwould, Mr. Bygrove; he keeps me alive; he has been exhibiting pictures of this sort all the morning, as we rambled about the town.

Dash. Oh, no! no pictures; I have shown him real life.

Sir H. Very true, Dashwould: and now mind him; he will touch them off to the life for you.

Mrs. Brom. Millamour so close with Lady Bell! the forward importunity of that girl.

[*Aside, and goes to MILLAMOUR.*]

Dash. There is positively no such thing as going about this town, without seeing enough to split your sides with laughing. We called upon my friend Sir Volatile Vainlove: he, you know, shines in all polite assemblies, and is, if you believe himself, of the first character for intrigue. We found him drinking Valerian tea for his breakfast, and putting on false calves.

Sir H. And the confusion he was in, when we entered the room!

Dash. In the next room, we found Jack Spinbrain, a celebrated poet, with a kept mistress at his elbow, writing lampoons for the newspaper; one moment murdering the reputation of his neighbours, and the next a suicide of his own.—We saw a young heir, not yet of age, granting annuity bonds, and five jews, and three christians, duped by their avarice to lend money upon them. A lawyer——

Sir H. Hear, hear; it is all true. I was with him.

Dash. A lawyer taking notes upon Shakspeare; a deaf nabob ravished with music, and a blind one buying pictures. Men without talents, rising to preferment, and real genius going to a gaol.—An officer in

a marching regiment with a black eye, and a French hairdresser wounded in the sword arm.

Sir H. Oh! ho! ho! by this light, I can vouch for every word!

Bygrove. Go on, Sir Harry; ape your friend in all his follies; be the nimble marmozet, to grin at his tricks, and try to play them over again yourself.

Sir H. Well now, that is too severe: Dashwould, defend me from his wit. You know I hoard up all your good things.

Dash. You never pay me in my own coin, Sir Harry: try now; who knows but you will say something.

Malvil. Friend or foe, it is all alike.

Lady Bell. [Coming forward.] And where is the mighty harm? I like pulling to pieces, of all things.

Mil. [Following LADY BELL.] To be sure, it is the life of conversation. Does your ladyship know Sir George Squanderstock's sister?

Lady Bell. I have seen her.

Mil. She is a politician in petticoats; a fierce republican; she talks of the dagger of Brutus, while she settles a pin in her tucker; and says more about ship-money, than pin-money.

Bygrove. And now you must turn buffoon?

Dash. I know the lady; she scolds at the loyalists, gossips against the act of settlement, and has the fidgets for magna charta.

Mil. She encourages a wrinkle against bribery; flirts her fan 'at the ministry, and bites her lips at taxes, and a standing army.

Malvil. Mr. Bygrove, will you bear all this?

Enter MISS NEVILLE, and whispers MRS. BROMLEY.

Mrs. Brom. Very well, Neville, I'll come presently.

[Exit MISS NEVILLE.]

Malvil. [*Looking at Miss NEVILLE.*] I shall stay no longer. Mr. Bygrove, will you walk? [*Exit.*

Bygrove. No, sir, I shall not leave the enemy in this room behind me: a bad translator of an ancient poet, is not so sure to deface his original, as his licentious strain to disparage every character.

Dash. Sir Harry, he will neither give nor take a joke.

Sir H. No, I told you so.

Bygrove. Let me tell you, once for all, sir——

Dash. I wish you would.

Bygrove. Why interrupt? Do you know what I was going to say?

Dash. No; do you?

Mil. I'll leave them all to themselves. [*Steals out.*

Mrs. Brom. [*Aside.*] Millamour gone! [*Exit.*

Bygrove. And what does all this mighty wit amount to? The wit in vogue, exposes one man; makes another expose himself; gets into the secrets of an intimate acquaintance, and publishes a story to the world; belies a friend; puts an anecdote, a letter, an epigram, into the newspaper; and that is the whole amount of modern wit.

Dash. A strain of morose invective is more diverting, to be sure.

Bygrove. [*Looking about for MRS. BROMLEY.*] Well, sir, we'll adjourn the debate. You may go on; misrepresent every thing; if there is nothing ridiculous, invent a story: and when you have done it, it is but a cheap and frivolous talent. Has a lady a good natural bloom? her paint must be an expensive article. Does she look grave? she will sin the deeper. Is she gay and affable? her true character will come out at the Commons. That is the whole of your art, and I leave you to the practice of it. [*Going.*

Dash. Satirical Bygrove! now the widow has him in tow.

Bygrove. [Turning back.] Could not you stay till my back was fairly turned? [Exit.]

Dash. What a look there was!

Lady Bell. At what a rate you run on! you keep the field against them all.

Dash. Sir Harry, step up, and watch him with the widow.

Sir H. I will; don't stay too long.

Dash. I'll follow you: and hark, make your party good with Miss Neville.

Sir H. You see, Lady Bell, a fling at every body! [Exit.]

Dash. The baronet does not want parts; that is to say, he has very good materials to play the fool with. I shall get him to marry Miss Neville.

Lady Bell. Bring that about, and you will for once do a serious action, for which every body will honour you.

Dash. In the mean time, do you watch your aunt Bromley: she is your rival.

Lady Bell. Rival! That would be charming.

Dash. It is even so. Now Millamour's understanding is good, but his passion's quick: if you play your cards right——

Lady Bell. Are you going to teach me how to manage a man?

Dash. Coquetry will never succeed with him. A quicksand does not shift so often as his temper. You must take him at his word, and never give him time to change, and veer about.

Lady Bell. Totally out of nature.

Dash. Oh, very well! I give up the point. [Exit.]

Lady Bell. You may leave the man to my management. My aunt Bromley rival me! that would be delightful!

Enter LADY JANE.

Well, sister!

Lady Jane. Can you be serious for a moment?

Lady Bell. Well, the solemnity of that look! Must I set my face by yours, and contract a wrinkle, by a formal economy of features, which you, like the rest of the world, mistake for wisdom?

Lady Jane. Will you hear me? They are hurrying this match too fast, I think. Sir John is come, and his lawyer is expected every moment. He wants to conclude the affair this day, and my aunt does not oppose it. But I don't like all this hurry.

Lady Bell. And why need you be concerned about it?

Lady Jane. Do you think Millamour capable of love?

Lady Bell. For the moment. It will be difficult to fix him.

Lady Jane. What would you have me do?

Lady Bell. Do?—Nothing.

Lady Jane. How silly! you know it is not my seeking.

Lady Bell. What are you about? Talking in your sleep again? Lady Jane, wake yourself. What have you taken into your head?

Lady Jane. Why, since Mr. Millamour has prevailed with me——

Lady Bell. His affections, then, are fixed upon you?—Why, the man has been dying at my feet, with a face as rueful as a love elegy.

Lady Jane. You will permit me to laugh in my turn.

Lady Bell. Oh! I can laugh with you, and at you, and at him too. This gives spirit to the business: here are difficulties, and difficulties enhance victory, and victory is triumph.

Lady Jane. Very well! Oh, brave! laugh away! you will be undeceived presently.—If this does not take, I am at the end of my line.

Lady Bell. What does all this mean? Rivalled, out-

witted by my sister! Insupportable! This begins to grow serious.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

Mil. 'Sdeath! she here! Sir John is quite impatient, and I am going for his attorney.

Lady Bell. And Lady Jane is impatient too: she is the object of your choice.

Mil. Lady Jane! you are pleasant, very pleasant!

Lady Bell. She has told me with inflexible gravity!

Mil. She is a great wit; and great wits have great quickness of invention; and so a story is easily dressed up, I could crack my sides with laughing. If trifling civilities have been received as a declaration of love——

Lady Bell. And is that the case? Very whimsical indeed!

Mil. Yes, very whimsical! I am eternally yours, ma'am, and I am on the wing, and your ladyship's adorer.

[Going.]

Enter LADY JANE.

Lady Jane. *[Aside.]* Now to plague them both.—Sister, you may hear it from himself.

Mil. Confusion!

Lady Bell. That lady, sir, has the strangest notion——

Lady Jane. You will be so good as to explain all to my sister.

Mil. *[Aside.]* Both upon me at once!——I have explained, madam, and all further talk about it is unnecessary.

Lady Bell. Only to satisfy her curiosity.

Lady Jane. To show my sister her mistake.

Mil. *[To LADY JANE.]* I have made every thing clear, ma'am.—*[To LADY BELL.]* Have not I, Lady Bell? And a—*[Turns to LADY JANE.]* every thing now is upon a proper footing.

Lady Jane. Very well; only give her to understand——

Mil. Your understanding is admirable. [*Turns to LADY BELL.*] I told you she would talk in this style. [*Turns to LADY JANE.*] You are perfectly right, and nobody understands things better. [*Turns to LADY BELL.*] Nobody whatever.

[*Looks and laughs at both by turns.*]

Lady Bell. But give me leave. You must speak out, sir.

Mil. [*Aside to LADY BELL.*] Never argue about it, it is not worth your while.

Lady Jane. There is some mystery in all this.

Mil. No; all very clear: [*To LADY JANE.*] drop it for the present.

Lady Bell. But I desire no doubt may remain.

Lady Jane. And I don't like to be kept in suspense.

[*Both pulling him by the Arm.*]

Mil. Distraction! I am like a lawyer, that has taken fees on both sides. You do me honour, ladies; but, upon my soul, I can't help laughing. It will divert us some day or other, this will. Oh! ho! ho! I shall die with laughing! [*Breaks from them.*]

Enter MRS. BROMLEY and SIR JOHN MILLAMOUR.

Mrs. Brom. What is all this uproar for?

Mil. Another witness of my folly!

[*Runs to the other Side.*]

Enter DASHWOULD.

Dash. Millamour, I give you joy. Mr. Copyhold, your attorney, is come with the deeds. What's the matter?

Mil. The strangest adventure! I can't stay now. The ladies have been very pleasant. You love humour, and they have an infinite deal. I'll come to you in a moment. [*Exit.*]

Sir J. George, don't run away: let us finish the business.

Dash. If he says he'll marry, you may depend upon him. A poet, determined to write no more, or a gamester forswearing play, is not so sure to keep his word. I wish I may die, if I don't think him as much to be relied upon as a prime minister!

Lady Bell. Aunt! Would you believe it? The demure Lady Jane—[*Bursts into a laugh.*] She has taken such a fancy into her head! Millamour, she thinks, is up to the eyes in love with her.

Mrs. Brom. Ha! ha! ha! poor Lady Jane!

Lady Jane. And my sister's pride is hurt. She carries it with an air, as if she had made a complete conquest.

Mrs. Brom. How ridiculous the girls are! your son has opened his mind to you, Sir John?

Sir J. He has, and I approve of his choice. I hope it is as agreeable to you, as to his father.

Mrs. Brom. I don't know how to refuse my consent.

Enter BYGROVE, listening.

Bygrove. What does all this mean?

Dash. As I could wish. There he is.

[*Seeing BYGROVE.*]

Mrs. Brom. Since it has your approbation, Sir John, I believe I must yield my consent. I never thought to marry again, but since you will have it so——

Sir J. Lady Bell, I understand, is willing to do me the honour of being my daughter-in-law.

Lady Bell. Oh! ho! ho! ho! this makes amends for all. My dear aunt Bromley, are you imposed upon? Did you listen to the traitor's vows?—The dear, perfidious?
[*Laughs violently.*]

Dash. He will soon be settled, Sir John, since there are now three rival goddesses contending for him. Mr. Bygrove, you are come in good time.

Bygrove. What fool's part are you to play now?

[*Coming forwards.*]

Mrs. Brom. Sir John, I desire I may not be made your sport. Have not I here, under his hand, a declaration of his mind; here, in this copy of verses, given to me by himself, an earnest of his affection?

Lady Bell. Verses, aunt!

Lady Jane. Verses to you?

Mrs. Brom. Verses to me: only hear, Sir John.

[*Reads.*]

*I look'd, and I sigh'd, and I wish'd I could speak,
And fain would have paid adoration.*

Lady Bell. Stay, stay; mine begin the same way.

[*Takes out a Paper.*]

Lady Jane. The very words of mine.

[*Takes out a Paper.*]

Mrs. Brom. Will those girls have done? [*Reads.*]

But when I endeavour'd the matter to break,

Lady Bell. [*Reads.*] *Still then I said least of my
passion.*

Mrs. Brom. Will you be quiet?

[*Reads.*]

*Still then I said least of my passion;
I swore to myself——*

Lady Bell. [*Reads fast.*] *And resolv'd I would try*

Mrs. Brom. and Lady Bell. [*Reading together.*]

Some way my poor heart to recover.

Lady Jane, Lady Bell, and Mrs. Brom. [Reading eagerly together.]

*But that was all vain, for I sooner could die,
Than live with forbearing to love her.*

Lady Bell. Oh! ho! ho! ho! Mr. Dashwould, what a piece of work has he made?

Dash. And the verses copied from Congreve!

Lady Bell. Copied from Congreve!

[Laughs heartily.]

Mrs. Brom. There, Sir John, there is your son's behaviour!

Dash. There, Mr. Bygrove, there is the widow's behaviour!

Bygrove. And now, Mr. Dashwould, now for your wit.

Mrs. Brom. [To SIR JOHN.] I am not disappointed in the least, sir.

Sir J. I never was so covered with confusion!

Lady Bell. I never was so diverted in all my days!

Dash. He has acted with great propriety upon this occasion.

Mrs. Brom. He has made himself very ridiculous. He has exposed nobody but himself. Contempt is the only passion he can excite. A crazy, mad, absurd——

[Tearing the Paper.]

Lady Jane. An inconstant, wild, irresolute——

[Tears the Paper.]

Lady Bell. Ha! ha! ha! so whimsical a character!

[Kisses the Paper.]

Mrs. Brom. [Throwing the Fragments about.] This behaviour will give him prodigious lustre! He will shine after this! I hope his visits will cease at this house.

Bygrove. [Going up to MRS. BROMLEY.] If ever you marry again, similitude of temper must do it.

Mrs. Brom. Distraction! must you plague me too?

Bygrove. You have appeared with an air, but it was all struggling.

Mrs. Brom. I cannot bear this.

Bygrove. Heaven knows how you have struggled!

Mrs. Brom. And you too? [*Mimics him.*] "A match in your family has diverted me of late." I renounce you all. Come, Lady Bell, Lady Jane, and let us leave them to themselves. [*Exit.*

Lady Jane. You would not believe me, sister.

[*Exit.*

Lady Bell. Oh! this to me is as good as a comedy!

[*Exit.*

Dash. [*To BYGROVE.*] What shall I give you for your chance?

Bygrove. More than I'll give you for your wit. And there's your answer. [*Exit.*

Dash. The old pike is hooked, and struggles still at the end of her line.

Sir J. Mr. Dashwould, speak to this silly young man. You have influence over him. Keep him to dinner. You will for ever oblige me. I must go and pacify the ladies. [*Exit.*

Dash. Poor Millamour! Dryden has painted him to a hair.

Blest madman, who can ev'ry hour employ,
With something new to wish, or to enjoy. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at Mrs. BROMLEY'S.

Enter DASHWOULD and SIR HARRY.

Dash. This way, Sir Harry. While they are all engaged in the pleasures of the table, I want a word with you in private.

Sir H. With that face of importance! what is coming now?

Dash. Listen to me: know a little of the subject, before you give your opinion.

Sir H. I am all attention.

Dash. Did you mark Miss Neville, at dinner?

Sir H. You know I did. And when Mrs. Bromley railed at her——

Dash. She railed at her with a littleness of spirit, that disgraced wealth and affluence, and gave to poverty the superior character. You must have seen in the behaviour of that girl, though treated with pride and arrogance, a propriety that was elegant, and went even further; it interested every heart for her. She is the best of the groupe. Were I, at the head of such a fortune as yours, to chuse a wife, she should be the object of my affection.

Sir H. You have some scheme in all this.

Dash. I have; to serve you. I should mortify the pride of Mrs. Bromley, by placing a valuable, but helpless, young lady upon a level with her at once.

Sir H. [*Bursts into a laugh.*] This is to end in some joke!

Dash. Wait for the wit before you laugh. I am in serious earnest. Her understanding is the best among them. The others are all artificial; she is a natural character; and if I am not mistaken, has a heart. If I wanted heirs to my estate, she should be the mother of my children.

Sir H. Were I to be the dupe of all this, how you would laugh at me? Ha! ha! ha! I know you too well.

Dash. Again! laughing without the provocation of a joke. Don't be the dupe of your own cunning. I know you love her; and will it not be a generosity worthy of you, to extricate merit out of distress? Nay, the merit which you admire? The merit which would do honour to the choice of any man in England?

Sir H. Well, I cannot contain! [*Laughs heartily.*]

Dash. What's the matter?

Sir H. The scrape in which you involved Millamour with the widow!

Dash. Foolish! that was Malvil's doing. You'll hear more of it by and by. There is an underplot in all his actions. I advise you for the best. Here is a lady in question, untainted by the fashions of the age. Make her your own. She has no fortune; what then? Show yourself superior to the sordid views, that govern the little mercenary spirits of the world.

Sir H. [*Laughs.*] I have just recollected what you said of Jack Invoice, upon his marriage.

Dash. Jack Invoice? He never was intended for any thing but to be laughed at. Upon the death of a rich uncle in the city, he comes to the West-end of the town, with a plumb in his pocket, and not an idea in his head; marries a fantastical woman of rank, and with a sovereign contempt of all his former acquaintance, mixes with lords and people of quality, who win his money, and throw his wig in the fire, to divert

themselves. He laughs at their wit, and thinks himself in good company.

Sir H. Admirable! you have him to a hair!

[*Laughing heartily.*]

Dash. [*Laughing.*] Hey! the picture is like.—

[*Laughs.*] Pretty well, is not it?

Sir H. Oh! ho! ho! the very thing! poor Jack Invoice! you have hunted him down.

Dash. Have I? [*Laughs.*] Yes, I think I have been pleasant upon him. But come; to our point: in marrying Miss Neville, there is nothing ridiculous. You like her, that's clear.

Sir H. But she does not like me, and that's as clear. Somebody has done me a prejudice there. She received this letter, and gave it me to read.

Dash. *To Miss Neville.*—[*Opens it.*] Without a name?

Sir H. A poisoned arrow in the dark.

Dash. [*Reads.*] *Anonymous letters are generally the effect of clandestine malice; this comes from a friend. If your honour, your virtue, and your peace of mind, are worth your care, avoid the acquaintance of Sir Harry. He is the deceiver of innocence, and means to add your name to the list of those whom his treachery has already ruined. Make use of this hint, and act accordingly.*

A pretty epistle—[*Pauses.*] Don't I know this hand?—So, so! I understand it: I can trace this: say no more, Sir Harry: pursue Miss Neville the closer for this. Will you let such a fellow as Malvil, rob you of a treasure?

Sir H. You don't suspect him?

Dash. Leave it all to me. Assure Miss Neville that this shall be cleared up. Hush! we are interrupted! go and join the company.

Enter MR. MALVIL.

Sir H. Pshaw! pox! the company without you—

Dash. Very well; leave me now: [*Exit SIR HARRY.*]
What's the matter, Malvil?

Malvil. It will be over presently: a sudden sensation; I can't bear to see others made unhappy. Mrs. Bromley is a very valuable woman, but at times rather violent.

Dash. And that's much to be lamented, is not it?

Malvil. You may laugh at it, sir, but I think it a serious matter. I left poor Miss Neville in a flood of tears; and——here she comes!

Enter MISS NEVILLE.

Dash. Not rising from table so soon?

Miss Nev. Excuse me, sir, I had rather not stay.

Dash. Never mind Mrs. Bromley's humours; come, we will all take your part.

Miss Nev. I am not fit for company, sir.

Dash. I am sorry to lose you: I'll leave you with my worthy friend; he will administer consolation.

[*Exit.*]

Miss Nev. Was ever such inhuman tyranny? Insulted before the whole company!

Malvil. It hurts me to the quick. I could not have believed her capable of such violence.

Miss Nev. You saw that I gave her no provocation.

Malvil. It pains me to see what I do.

Miss Nev. She breaks out in such passionate onsets, and never considers that an overbearing pride is the worst of cruelty to an ingenuous mind.

Malvil. There are few who know how to confer an obligation. A disinterested action gives such moments of inward pleasure! Oh! there are moments of the heart, worth all the giddy pleasures of life. One benevolent action pays so amply, and yields such exqui-

site interest, that I wonder people are not fond of laying out their money in that way.

Miss Nev. During the whole time of dinner, it was one continued invective against me.

Malvil. Millamour's behaviour had disconcerted her. But that is no excuse. Goodness by fits, and generosity out of mere whim, can never constitute a valuable character. I am sorry to see you so afflicted.

Miss Nev. You are very good, sir.

Malvil. No, I have no merit in it; the instincts of my nature leave me no choice. I have studied myself, and I find I am only good by instinct. I am strangely interested for you. I have thought much of your situation: our time is short; they will be all rising from table, presently. Attend to what I say: since Mrs. Bromley is so incessant in her tyranny, do as I already hinted to you. Withdraw from this house at once. Madam La Rouge has an apartment ready for you. You may there remain concealed. In the mean time I shall be at work for you. I shall prevail upon Mrs. Bromley to keep her word, about the five thousand pounds. That added to what is in my power, will make a handsome settlement for you.

Miss Nev. You heard what she said to Sir Harry?

Malvil. She wants to drive you to some act of despair; perhaps to give you up a sacrifice to Sir Harry's loose desires.

Miss Nev. Are you so clear about Sir Harry?

Malvil. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath! I see she loves him.— Hereafter, I will open a scene to astonish you. [*Pauses, and looks at her.*] You can never be happy under this roof. Mrs. Bromley will make this quarrel up, I know she will. The whole of her virtue consists in repentance, but what kind of repentance? A specious promise to reform her conduct, and a certain return of the same vices.

Miss Nev. She has made me desperate. I can stay

here no longer. I'll go back to the country. I shall there be at peace.

Malvil. You will be there too much out of the way. When you are settled at Madam La Rouge's, the haughty Mrs. Bromley will see to what she has driven you, and for the sake of her character, will begin to relent. Sir Harry must not know where you are. He means your ruin, I am sorry to say it, but I can give you such convincing proof——

Enter MRS. BROMLEY.

Mrs. Brom. Do you go to your room, madam ; let me see you no more to-day.

Malvil. It was a mere unguarded word that fell from Miss Neville. [*Speaks to MRS. BROMLEY aside.*] Millamour is ashamed of his conduct. He is under my influence still : I shall mould him to your wishes.

Mrs. Brom. [*Aside to him.*] I am a fool to think any more about him. Go to him ; watch him all day ; you will not find me ungrateful. [*Loud.*] And pray tell those girls to come up stairs. [*Exit MALVIL.*] Mighty well, madam. [*To MISS NEVILLE.*] You must sit next to Sir Harry ; you have no pretensions, have you ? and you must vouch for Lady Bell too ? She does not love gaming ; that story is all calumny : bespeak yourself a place in the stage coach ; you shall quit this house, I promise you.

Miss Nev. It will be the last time I shall receive those orders, madam. Your favours are so embittered ; there is such a leaven of pride, even in your acts of bounty, that I cannot wish to be under any further obligations. If doing justice to Lady Bell, if avowing my sentiments in the cause of so amiable a friend, can give you umbrage, I am not fit to remain in this house. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Brom. O brave ! you shall travel. Give her a fortune ! No, let Lady Bell reward her. How ! —— Millamour, as I live !

Enter MILLAMOUR.

Mil. Deliver me, fate! she here!—Madam—I—
I—you are not going to leave us, I hope?

Enter SIR JOHN MILLAMOUR.

Mrs. Brom. [*Smiling at MILLAMOUR.*] And how can you look me in the face?

Mil. [*Seeing SIR JOHN.*] I am glad you are come, sir, I wanted to—

Mrs. Brom. Perverse! what brings Sir John!—
[*Aside.*]—I shall expect you above stairs, gentlemen. I must try once more to fix that irresolute, inconstant man. [*Exit.*]

Sir J. What a day's work have you made here!

Mil. Sir!

Sir J. Can you expect any good from all this?—For ever doing and undoing. These proceedings are terrible to your father.

Mil. You know, sir, that to gratify you is the height of my ambition.

Sir J. For shame! don't imagine that you can deceive me any longer. Are you to be for ever in suspense? Always resolving, and yet never decided?—Never knowing your own mind for five minutes?

Mil. I have not been hasty to determine.

Sir J. My indulgence has made me too ridiculous. You will force me to tell you my mind in harsher terms than I ever thought I should have occasion to do.

Mil. What has happened to-day, was but a mere frolic, and it has all passed off in a little raillery.

Sir J. And do you think that sufficient? While you remain insensible of your folly, transferring your inclinations from one object to another, hurried away by every casualty, you will prove the jest of all your acquaintance. You will cease to live, before you have begun.

Mil. This is rather too much, sir. If I have, in a few instances, departed from a resolution that seemed fixed, you know very well, it is not uncommon; and when a person means an extraordinary leap, he retires back, to take advantage of the ground, and springs forward with greater vigour.

Sir J. And thus you amuse yourself, compounding upon easy terms, for the folly of every hour. There is no relying upon you.

Mil. After all, sir, it is the prudent part to consider every thing. The ladies were rather hasty in their conclusion. In our moments of reflection, as objects pass before us, opinion will wear different colours.

Sir J. The veryameleon has that merit: but is there to be nothing inward? no self-governing principle? A ship without a pilot, without rudder, or compass, is as likely to avoid rocks and quicksands, as you to steer clear of ruin.

Mil. You seem exasperated; but I really don't see the cause.

Sir J. No!—Can't you feel how absurd it is to be always beginning the world? For ever in a doubt? Day after day embarking in new projects; nay, twenty different projects in one day, and often in an hour?

Mil. Spare my confusion: I feel my folly; I feel it all; and let my future conduct——

Sir J. George, can I take your word? I know you have been at the gaming table.

Mil. The gaming table!

Sir J. Say no more: I know it all: after the indulgence I have shown you, I now see that my hopes are all to be disappointed. If you have a mind to atone for what is past, pursue one certain plan, and be somebody. The time now opens a new scene, and calls for other manners. Reform your conduct, and I shall be happy. But I am tired of this eternal levity: my patience is wore out. I shall stay no

longer in this house, to be a witness of your absurdity. *[Exit.]*

Mil. I have made myself very ridiculous here.—I can't show my face any more in this family. I'll go back to the Temple, and not marry these ten years. The law leads to great things; a seat in parliament, a vote or two against your conscience, a silk gown, and a judge; that's the course of things.—I'll pursue my ambition.—Honest friend! *[Calls to a SERVANT.]* hist! honest friend, will you be so good as just to get my hat?

Enter DASHWOULD.

Dash. No, I bar hats. What, going to desert us? The sport is but just beginning. Bygrove has been lecturing his son, and quarrelling with Malvil. The integrity of that honest gentleman is suspected at last. He was the worthiest man in the world this morning, as good a creature as ever was born; but now he has sold himself to the widow. Lady Bell has been lively upon the occasion; and Malvil, to support his spirits, has plyed the burgundy, till he looks the very picture of hypocrisy, with a ruddy complexion, and a sparkling eye.

Mil. You may divert yourself, sir; I have done with them all.

Dash. But I can't part with you—you shall join us; Malvil shall have no quarter: he will stick to his glass, till his charity for his neighbour begins to stagger; then off drops the mask: he will have courage enough to rail at mankind, and his true character will come forth, like letters in lemon juice before the fire.

Mil. Po! absurd! I am on the rack. Why did you force me to stay dinner? I have been so weak, so frivolous!

Dash. How so? Because you changed your mind?

There is nothing more natural. Don't you see men doing the same thing every day? Down goes the old mansion; a new one rises; exotic trees smile on the landscape, and enjoy the northern air: and when the whole is finished, in less than a twelvemonth, the auctioneer mounts his pulpit.—“Pleasing contiguity;”—“Beautiful and picturesque scene;”—“Delectably featured by nature;”—“Shall I say twenty thousand?”—Down it goes to the highest bidder, who pays his money, and runs away the next morning, with an opera singer, to Italy.

Mil. [*Laughing.*] Why, yes, we see these things every day.

Dash. No doubt; men are fickle and inconstant.

Mil. Very true; it is the way through life, in the lowest rank, as well as the highest. You shan't see a journeyman weaver, but he has his disgust, like a lord, and changes his lodging, his house of call, his barber, and his field preacher.

Dash. Certainly, and then there is a real charm in variety: Besides, what you did to-day, was a mere frolic.

Mil. Nothing more; and that fellow, Malvil, was the occasion of it.—My heart never rightly warmed to that man; I shall never consult him again—Affairs were in a right train, if he had not interposed.

Dash. You shall have your revenge: I have a mine to spring, will blow him up: [*Laughs.*] His advice to-day has served to produce the widow's character.

Mil. Yes, it has given a display of her. [*Laughs.*] How could she think me in earnest? Marry her! I would go into the army sooner!

Dash. A good, pretty trade, the army: if you are killed in battle, it is your affair; if you conquer, you may retire, and live very prettily upon half pay.

Mil. Very true; the law is a more certain road.

Dash. A good, agreeable life, the law is: for ever

entangled in the cobwebs of Westminster Hall, and you help to spin them yourself into the bargain.

Mil. And at the end of twenty years, you are thought a good, promising young man.

Dash. In the mean time, you are constantly hiring out your lungs, and ever in a passion about other people's affairs.

Mil. And travelling circuits, in hopes of finding each county distracted; with a barbarous, bloody murder, in every gaol, and so live upon the calamities of mankind.

Dash. Like physicians, when a north-east wind, a Lord Mayor's feast, or a gaol distemper, has made a good sickly time of it. *[Both laugh.]*

Enter LADY BELL and LADY JANE.

Lady Bell. Come, sister, leave the men to themselves. Mr. Dashwould, has their wit frightened you away?

Mil. *[Looking at her.]* "Look in her face, and you forget them all."

Dash. Won't your ladyship have compassion on that gentleman?

Lady Bell. Compassion! my sister and I, we hope for his protection!

Enter CAPTAIN BYGROVE.

Capt. B. When you go away from company, Lady Bell, you draw every body in your train.

Lady Bell. Oh, you have so overpowered me with civil and tender things!

Mil. *[Aside.]* What does he follow her for?

Lady Bell. A l'honneur, gentlemen. *[Goes up to MILLAMOUR.]* Uncle! Uncle Millamour, when you are married to my aunt, I hope you will be kind to us both. *[Courtesies.]*

Mil. *[Turning away.]* Confusion! daggers! daggers!

Lady Jane. [*Courtesying.*] May I salute you, uncle?

Mil. Po! this foolery! [*Walks away.*]

Lady Bell. Let us give him all his titles!—Brother, when you marry my sister—[*Makes a low Courtesy.*]

Mil. How can you, Lady Bell!

Lady Jane. Uncle!—Brother! [*Laughs.*]

Lady Bell. And Brother Uncle! [*Laughs.*]

Mil. [*Breaking away from them.*] This is too much—No patience can endure it. [*Turns to LADY BELL.*] Madam, this usage—

[*LADY BELL and LADY JANE both laugh loud.*]

Lady Jane. Come, sister, let us leave him. [*Exit.*]

Lady Bell. Oh! oh! oh! I shall expire! [*Going.*]

Mil. Why will you torment me thus? [*Takes her by the Hand.*] Am I to be for ever made your sport?

Lady Bell. Oh! you would not have me laugh:—To be sure, when one considers, it is a serious matter! And, though Captain Bygrove [*Pointing to him.*] has orders to be in love with me—and though he has declared himself in the warmest terms—

Mil. And could you listen to him?

Lady Bell. And yet, after all your promises, when you had touched my heart—[*In a softened Tone.*]

Mil. Jealous of me, by this light! [*Aside.*]

Lady Bell. After all your faithless vows, to break them as you have done, like a Turk, or a Jew, or a Mahometan! [*Crying.*] and leave me, like Dido and Æneas, it is enough to break a young girl's heart! [*Crying bitterly.*] so it is, it is—There, will that please you? [*Bursts into a Laugh.*] Adieu, uncle! my compliments to my aunt. [*Exit.*]

Mil. Damnation!

Enter SIR HARRY LOVEWIT.

Sir H. Did not I hear somebody crying?

Mil. Yes, and laughing too. Captain Bygrove, you said something to Lady Bell, what was it, sir?

Capt. B. What I desire the world to know; I love

her—I adore her! My father has ordered it—Mrs. Bromley approves—Lady Bell encourages me; and I shall be the happiest of mankind.

Mil. You and I must talk apart, sir.—You know my prior claim.—Attempt my life rather than my love.—You must think no more of her, sir; she is mine by every tie, and so I shall tell her, this moment. [Exit.

Dash. Now hold that resolution, if you can.

Capt. B. I have managed it well?

Dash. Admirably!

Sir H. What does all this mean? Dash would, you are wanted in the next room. Malvil is in for it: he sits toasting Miss Neville, while every idea fades away from his countenance, all going out one by one, and his eye sinks into the dim vacuity of a brisk no meaning at all.

Dash. I'll look in upon them. Bygrove, I see Miss Neville; let us give Sir Harry his opportunity.

Enter MISS NEVILLE.

Miss Nev. I thought Lady Bell was here: I beg your pardon, gentlemen.

Dash. Your company is always agreeable, is not it, Sir Harry? The gentleman will speak for himself. Come, Bygrove, I have occasion for you.

[Exit, with CAPTAIN BYGROVE.

Sir H. May I now presume, madam——

Miss Nev. You chuse your time but ill, Sir Harry. I have so many things to distract me, I cannot listen to you now.

Sir H. *[Takes her Hand.]* But you promised to hear me; I have long beheld your sufferings.

Miss Nev. They do not warrant improper liberties. I can be humble, as becomes my situation. I hope you will not oblige me to show that spirit, which virtue is as much entitled to, as the proudest fortune in the kingdom.

Sir H. I mean you no disrespect. That letter is a black artifice, to traduce my character: the fraud shall be brought to light; you may rely upon it; nor will you be so ungenerous as to believe the dark assassin of my honour.

Miss Nev. I know not what foundation there is for it, nor is it for me to charge you with any thing. I have no right to take that liberty.

Sir H. Why harbour suspicions unworthy of you? In me, you behold a warm admirer, who aspires at the possession of what he loves, and trembles for the event.

Miss Nev. I must take the liberty to doubt your sincerity. I know my own deficiencies, and I beg leave to withdraw.

Sir H. By all that's amiable in your mind and person, my views are honourable as ever yet inspired a lover's heart.

Miss Nev. I would fain express my gratitude.

[Weeps.]

Sir H. Why these tears?

Miss Nev. Your character, I dare say, sir, will come out clear and unsullied. You will permit me to take care of mine. It is all I have to value. I shall not continue any longer in this house. Mrs. Bromley has made it impossible; I wish you all happiness, sir.

Sir H. That resolution I approve of: let me provide you a retreat, and in a few days——

Miss Nev. I must beg to be excused: that I can never think of.

Sir H. By Heaven, I mean to raise you to that independence, which your merit deserves. I would place you in that splendour, which Mrs. Bromley may envy.

Miss Nev. I can only return my thanks. Lady Bell will know where I am. I feel no ambition: I do not want to give pain to Mrs. Bromley: I seek humble content, and ask no more.

Sir H. You do injustice to yourself and me :—Hey! all breaking up from table!

Miss Nev. You must not detain me now, Sir Harry. I humbly take my leave. [Exit.]

Sir H. I wonder what Dashwould will say to all this. I shall like to hear him: he will turn it to a joke, I warrant him. No end of his pleasantry!

Enter MALVIL, in Liquor, BYGROVE, and DASHWOULD.

Malvil. Very well; make the most of it. Since you force me to speak, I say her character is a vile one.

Bygrove. Here is a fellow, whom wine only inspires with malice!

Dash. Po! malice! Malvil has no harm in him.

Malvil. You may talk of Mrs. Bromley, but she is as vile a character, as pride, and insolence, and avarice, and vanity, and fashionable airs, and decayed beauty, can jumble together.

Bygrove. Here's a return for her hospitality!

Malvil. Marry her, I say; marry her, and try.

Bygrove. You shall not have a shilling with Miss Neville.

Malvil. There, the secret's out: you want to marry her, and make her break her word. Mankind's a villain! a medley of false friends, eloping wives, stock-jobbers, and usurers. Wits that won't write, and fools that will. [Sings.]

Bygrove. Dashwould, you are a panegyrist, compared to this man.

Sir H. Yes, he takes your trade out of your hands.

Malvil. She is Mrs. Bromley, the widow, and you are Mr. Bygrove, the widower; and so, bite the biter, that's all.

Bygrove. His wit soars above you, Mr. Dashwould.

Malvil. Wit is a bad trade. Letters have no friend

left in these degenerate times. Show a man of letters to the first of your nobility, and they will leave him to starve in a garret. Introduce a fellow, who can sing a catch, write a dull political pamphlet, or remarks upon a Dutch memorial, or play off fireworks, and he shall pass six months in the country, by invitation. Mæcenas died two thousand years ago, and you are not historian enough to know it.

Sir H. Dashwould, he makes a bankrupt of you!

Bygrove. I have found him out: I know him now: a pretended friend, that he may more surely betray you. Go, and get some coffee, to settle your head.

[*Exit.*]

Malvil. Mrs. Bromley will settle your head.

Dash. Let us take him up stairs; he'll tumble over the tea-table, to show his politeness.

Sir H. [*Taking him by the Arm.*] Come, the ladies wait for us.

Malvil. Mankind, I say, is a villain! [*Sings.*]

Enter LADY BELL.

Lady Bell. Bless me, Mr. Malvil!

Malvil. All Dashwould's doing, to expose a body. Do you look to Millamour, that's what I say to you.

Dash. He shan't stay to plague your ladyship.—Come, Malvil, let us go, and be tender of reputation above stairs.

Malvil. I'm always tender, and you are scurrilous.

[*Sings, and exit, led by DASHWOULD and SIR HARRY.*]

Lady Bell. How Millamour follows me up and down! Charming! here he comes!

Enter MILLAMOUR.

Mil. Lady Bell, allow me but one serious moment.

Lady Bell. This bracelet is always coming off.
[*Fiddles with it.*]

Mil. Whatever appearances may have been, I burn with as true a passion, as ever penetrated a faithful heart.

Lady Bell. [*Aside, and smiling.*] I know he is mine.—This silly, obstinate bauble! What were you saying?—Oh, making love again!

Mil. By this dear hand, I swear——

Lady Bell. Hold, hold, no violence! Give me my liberty—and thus I make use of it.

[*Runs away from him.*]

Enter CAPTAIN BYGROVE.

Lady Bell. [*Meeting him.*] Oh, I have been wishing for you! How could you stay so long?

Capt. B. They detained me against my will; but you see I am true to my appointment.

Mil. [*Aside to BYGROVE.*] Are you so? You shall keep an appointment with me.

Lady Bell. I was surrounded with darts and flames.—That gentleman was for renewing the old story, but it was so ridiculous!

[*Walks up the Stage with CAPTAIN BYGROVE.*]

Mil. Distraction! to be insulted thus!

Lady Bell. [*As she walks up.*] You have prevailed upon me to be in earnest at last. Since your father has proposed it, and since you have declared yourself, why, if I must speak, get my aunt's consent, and mine follows of course.

Mil. [*Listening.*] If ever I forgive this——

Capt. B. Mrs. Bromley has consented. [*Then aside to LADY BELL.*] He has it; this will gall his pride.

Mil. No end of her folly: I was bent on marriage, but now it's all her own fault: And yet she knows my heart is fixed upon her.

Lady Bell. [*Walking down with CAPTAIN BYGROVE.*] You are so obliging, and I have so many things to say to you! but if people will not perceive, when they interrupt private conversation——

Mil. If ever I enter these doors again, may the scorn of the whole sex pursue me. *[Exit.*

Capt. B. We have carried this too far.

Lady Bell. The barbarous man! when he should have taken no denial, but have lain on the ground, imploring, beseeching—Delightful! here he comes again. *[Goes to CAPTAIN BYGROVE.*

Enter MILLAMOUR.

Mil. *[Walking up to LADY BELL.]* Is it not strange, that you can't know your own mind for two minutes together?

Lady Bell. Ho! ho! the assurance of that reproach! *[Walks away.*

Mil. *[To BYGROVE.]* Appoint your time and place—I must have satisfaction for this.

Capt. B. To-morrow morning, when the marriage ceremony is over.

Mil. I shall expect you, sir. *[Going.*

Enter LADY JANE.

Mil. This is lucky—I was in quest of your ladyship.

Lady Jane. In quest of me, sir?

Mil. In quest of you, ma'am. I have been waiting for an opportunity, and, if the sincerest sorrow can expiate past offences—Here's a chair, ma'am.

[Hands a Chair.

Capt. B. *[To LADY BELL.]* We may drive him to extremities with Lady Jane: I'll leave you to recover your wanderer. *[Exit.*

Mil. *[Sitting down.]* If you will permit me to assure you—

Lady Jane. But while my sister is my rival—

Mil. Your sister's charms carry their own antidote with them. If there is faith in man, I mean to atone for what is past.

Lady Bell. *[Coming forward.]* So, so; with what

pleasure she hears him ! Did you speak to me, Mr. Millamour ?

Mil. There was a time, ma'am !—[*Turns to LADY JANE.*] Now she wants to interrupt us—don't let us mind her, and she'll withdraw.

Lady Bell. Wear the willow, Lady Bell?—Not a word, sir ; You are in the right ; my spirits are too violent for you, and though what I say is not absolutely wit—Do you like wit ? I am sure you ought, for it is undefinable, like yourself.

Mil. [*Smiling.*] That is not ill said.

Lady Bell. [*Sits at a Distance.*] Horrid ! I shall be vapoured up to my eyes. I'll try my song, to banish melancholy.—Where is that foolish guitar ?

[*Goes for it.*

Mil. Now her jealousy is at work.—I knew she would be mortified : Let us agree to pique her pride, and probe her to the quick.

Lady Bell. Though I can't sing, it diverts a body to try. [*Sits down, and sings.*

*Sabrina, with that sober mien,
The converse sweet, the look serene ;
Those eyes that beam the gentlest ray,
And though she loves, that sweet delay ;
Unconscious, seems each heart to take,
And conquers for her subject's sake.*

Mil. Vastly well !

[*Listens, smiles, looks at her, draws his Chair near her, and beats time on her Knee.*

LADY BELL.—Sings.

*The tyrant Cynthia wings the dart,
Coquetting with a bleeding heart ;
Has cruelty, which all adore,
Flights that torment, yet please the more :*

*Her lover strives to break his chain,
But can't, such pleasure's in the pain.*

Mil. Oh, charming! charming! [*Kisses her Hand.*]

Lady Bell. What are you about, you wretch? Only look, sister—I suppose, sir, when you have done, you will give me my hand again?

Lady Jane. I promise you, sister, your triumph will be short. [*Exit.*]

Lady Bell. How she flung out of the room!
[*Rises, and walks about.*]

Mil. You know, Lady Bell, that I am yours, by conquest: I adore you still, and burn with a lover's faithful fires.

Lady Bell. Come, and have a dish of tea, to cool you.

Mil. Hear me but a moment—It is now time you should be tired of this eternal display of your power. Your power is sufficiently acknowledged, and felt by all: You may triumph over adoring crowds, but one lover, treated with generosity, will be more to your honour, and your happiness.

Lady Bell. Pretty—very pretty! I have read all that in one of the poets. [*Repeats:*]

*By our distress, you nothing gain;
Unless you love, you please in vain.*

Come up stairs, and I'll show you the whole poem.

*And one adorer kindly us'd,
Gives more delight than crowds refus'd.*

Will you come? [*Beckons him.*] Won't you? Well, consider of it, and when you know your own mind, you may change it again. [*Exit.*]

Mil. There, now! every thing by turns, and nothing long. Fickle, do they call me? A man must

be fickle, who pursues her through all the whimsies of her temper. Admire her in one shape, and she takes another in a moment.

*One charm display'd, another strikes our view,
In quick variety for ever new.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Room in MRS. BROMLEY'S House.

Enter MILLAMOUR and DASHWOULD.

Mil. Am I to be sacrificed to your humour?

Dash. Am I to be sacrificed to your absurdity?

Mil. When pleasantry is out of all time and place—

Dash. Why, then, I shall be tired of all time and place.

Mil. Lookye, Mr. Dashwould, it is time to be serious. The wit, that wounds the breast of a friend, is the pest of society.

Dash. The passion, Mr. Millamour, that runs headlong without cause, and will not hearken to reason, is a greater pest to society, than all the little wit that has been in the world. What does all this mean, sir? what is it about?

Mil. If I lost money at play, was it for you to carry the tale to my father? for you to subject me to his reproaches?

Dash. I don't know by what fatality it happens, but that generally comes last, which ought to be mentioned first. I repeated nothing to Sir John—Who did?—Do you ask that question? Malvil, sir, with his usual duplicity.