FOUNDLING



PUDLE NOW FOR A SPERBY WORTH TWENTY PRICES

NTER BY SINGULTON PUBLISHED BY LONGMAN WE

# FOUNDLING;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

### By EDWARD MOORE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

# THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

#### LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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WILLIAM SAVACE, PRINTER,

# REMARKS.

"From such dull stuff, what profit can you reap? You cry—'Tis very fine!—and fall asleep."

Those lines; from the Epilogue, written by Garrick, have, for the present taste of the town, somewhat too much of truth in them: for assuredly "The Foundling" would not, at this period, have power to keep an audience from the enjoyment of a comfortable slumber. It may, however, be read with pleasure, as a little novel, by which the reader will neither be induced to laugh, to weep, nor to admire—though he may yet be amused by a certain degree of interest, attached to the fable and the events. It was the first dramatic work of a man, since much esteemed for having produced the tragedy of "The Gamester;" notwithstanding both that, and the present drama, met with considerable opposition on the first night of their representation.

The character of Faddle, in this comedy, was the part at which the audience revolted, when it first appeared; and, no doubt, he is a being whose mind is too much deformed for public exhibition.

<sup>&</sup>quot; Such abject trash

<sup>&</sup>quot;Deserves not satire's, but the hangman's, lash."

Nor is Young Belmont, the hero of the piece, more than one degree removed from this, his friend, in baseness; and that distinction is in the article of courage. For this solitary virtue he is allowed, by the author, to be forgiven all his vices, and blessed with the hand of the woman he loves;—yet the play has the reputation of containing an excellent moral.

Sir Charles Raymond, excepting Fidelia, is by far the best drawn character in the whole work—nay, Fidelia, perhaps, should give place to him. Their relationship is well contrived, and would be more interesting, was the discovery less romantically brought about.

Mrs. Cibber, the idol of the public, at the time this comedy first appeared, is said to have been exquisite in the part of the Foundling; but it is a character, which requires, in an actress, abilities, so little at present in use, that it can be hardly conceived what plaintive, or pathetic arts, this performer possessed, to make so insipid a personage have power over the hearts of an audience.

"The Foundling" has been called an imitation of "The Conscious Lovers." If it be so, like all imitations, it falls infinitely beneath the merit of its original.—It was first acted in 1748.

Mr. Moore, the author of this play, wrote, besides his two dramatic works, "The Trial of Selim, the Persian," a poem, in compliment to Lord Lyttelton, which has been praised as a most elegant panegyric—and his "Fables for the Female Sex" have been compared with Gay's.—He married a lady, who

was herself poetical, and, in her maiden state, being deeply in love with her future husband (while her passion was a secret both to him and all her friends) her muse prompted her to write a copy of verses to a young lady, her cousin, in which were contained the following lines, perfectly mysterious; till being shown to a number of persons, and to Mr. Moore amongst the rest, he had the sagacity to find out the riddle, and the gratitude to reward its fair authoress with his hand.

- "Would you think it, my coz; for the fault I must own,
- "Your Jenny, at last, is quite covetous grown:
- "Though millions, if fortune should lavishly pour,
- " I still should be wretched, if I had not More.
- "You will wonder, my dear, who this charmer can be.
- "Whose merit can boast such a conquest as me;
- "But you shan't know his name, though I told you before;
- " It begins with an M-but I dare not say More.

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#### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR ROBERT BELMONT
SIR CHARLES RAYMOND
YOUNG BELMONT
VILLIARD
COLONEL RAYMOND
FADDLE
JOHN

ROSETTA FIDELIA Mr. Cherry.
Mr. Wroughton.
Mr. Elliston.
Mr. Cooke.
Mr. Raymond.
Mr. De Camp.
Mr. Maddocks.

Mrs. Jordan. Miss Cherry.

Continuol & Bantans Dart 1888

SCENE-SIR ROBERT BELMONT'S House, in London.

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# FOUNDLING.

## ACT THE FIRST,

SCENE I.

An Apartment in SIR ROBERT BELMONT'S House.

Enter Young Belmont and Colonel RAYMOND.

Bel. My dear Colonel, you are as unlettered in love, as I am in war. What! a woman, a fine woman, a coquette, and my sister!—and to be won by whining! Mercy on us! that a well-built fellow, with common sense, should take pains to unman himself, to tempt a warm girl of two-and-twenty to come to bed to him!—I say, again, and again, Colonel, my sister's a woman.

Ray. And the very individual woman that I want,

Charles.

Bel. And, of all women in the world, the least fit for thee. An April day is less changeable than her humour. She laughs behind her fan at what she should not understand; calls humility meanness, and blushing the want of education. In all affairs with

a man, she goes by contraries; if you tell her a merry story, she sighs; if a serious one, she laughs; for yes, she says no, and for no, yes; and is mistress of such obedient features, that her looks are always ready to confirm what her tongue utters.

Ray. Fine painting, upon my word, and no flat-

tery!

Bel. This is the lady. Now for the lover. A fellow made up of credulity and suspicion; believing where he should doubt, and doubting where he should believe; jealous without cause, and satisfied without proof. A great boy, that has lost his way, and blubbering through every road, but the right, to find his home again—Ha! ha! ha!

Ray. Mighty florid, indeed, sir!

Bel. Come, come, Colonel; love, that can exalt the brute to a man, has set you upon all-fours. Women are indeed delicious creatures; but not what you think them. The first wish of every mother's daughter is power; the second, mischief! the way to her heart is by indifference, or abuse; for whoever owns her beauty, will feel her tyranny: but if he call her ugly, or a fool, she'll set her cap at him, and take pains for his good opinion.

Ray. And so, submission and flattery are out of

your system?

Bel. For submission and flattery I substitute impudence and contradiction; these two, well managed, will do more with beauty in an hour, than fine speeches in a year. Your fine woman expects adoration, and receives it as common incense, which every fool offers; while the rude fellow, who tells her truth, claims all attention. Difficulty endears conquest. To him only she appears what she should be to all; and, while she labours with her natural charms to secure him, she's lost herself.

Ray. Why, 'faith, Charles, there may be some music in these wild notes; but I am so far gone in-

the old ballad, that I can sing no other words to any tune.

Bel. Ha! ha! Thou poor mournful nightingale in a cage, sing on, then! and I'll whistle an upper part with thee, to give a little life to the measure.

Ray. That will be kind; for, Heaven knows, I have need of assistance!—Prythee, tell me, dost think

Rosetta wants understanding?

Bel. N-o, 'faith, I think not.

Ray. Good humour?

Bel. Hum-She's generally pleased.

Ray. What, then, can reconcile her behaviour to me, and her fondness for such a reptile as Faddle? A fellow made up of knavery and noise, with scandal for wit, and impudence for raillery; and so needy, that the very devil might buy him for a single guinea. I say, Charles, what can tempt her even to an acquaintance with this fellow?

Bel. Why, the very understanding and good humour you speak of. A woman's understanding is design, and her good humour, mischief. Her advances to one fool are made only to tease another.

Ray. Sir, your most humble servant.

Bel. And her good humour is kept alive by the success of her plots.

Ray. But why so constant to her fool?

Bel. Because her fool's the fittest to her purpose—He has more tricks than her monkey, more prate than her parrot, more servility than her lap-dog, more lies than her woman, and more wit than her—colonel. And, 'faith, all these things considered, I can't blame my sister for her constancy.

Ray. Thou art a wild fellow, and in earnest about nothing but thy own pleasures—and so we'll change

the subject. What says Fidelia?

Bel. Why, there, now!—That a man can't instruct another, but he must be told, by way of thanks, how much he stands in need of assistance himself!

Ray. Any new difficulties?

Bel. Mountains, Colonel, a few mountains in my way. But, if I want faith to remove them, I hope I shall have strength to climb them, and that will do my business.

Ray. She's a woman, Charles.

Bel. By her outside, one would guess so; but look a little farther, and, except the stubbornness of her temper, she has nothing feminine about her. She has wit without pertness, beauty without consciousness, pride without insolence, and desire without wantonness. In short, she has every thing—

Ray. That you would wish to ruin in her. Why, what a devil are you, Charles, to speak so feelingly of

virtues, which you only admire to destroy!

Bel. A very pretty comforter, truly!

Ray. Come, come, Charles, if she is as well born as you pretend, what hinders you from cherishing these qualities in a wife, which you would ruin in a

mistress?- Marry her, marry her.

Bel. And hang myself in her garters the next morning, to give her virtues the reward of widowhood.—'Faith, I must read Pamela twice over first. But suppose her not born as I pretend, but the outcast of a beggar, and obliged to chance for a little education?

Ray. Why, then, her mind is dignified by her obscurity; and you will have the merit of raising her to a rank which she was meant to adorn. And where's the mighty matter in all this? You want no addition to your fortune, and have only to sacrifice a little unnecessary pride to necessary happiness.

Bel. Very heroical, upon my word!—And so, my dear Colonel, one way or other, I must be married, it

seems.

Ray. If Fidelia can be honest, my life on't, you are of my mind within this fortnight. But, pr'ythee, since I am not to believe your former account of her,

who is this delicious girl, that must, and will, get the

better of your pride?

Bel. A sister of the Graces, without mortal father or mother; she dropped from the clouds in her cradle, was lulled by the winds, christened by the rains, fostered by a hag, sold for a whore, sentenced to a rape, and rescued by a rogue—to be ravished by her own consent. There's mystery and hieroglyphic for you! and every syllable, a truth, beyond apocrypha.

Ray. And what am I to understand by all this?

Bel. 'Faith, just as much as your understanding can carry. A man in love is not to be trusted with a secret.

Ray. And, pray, most discreet sir, is Rosetta ac-

quainted with her real history?

Bel. Not a circumstance. She has been amused like you, and still believes her to be the sister of a dead friend of mine, at college, bequeathed to my guardianship. But the devil, I find, owes me a grudge for former virtues; for this sister of mine, who dotes upon Fidelia, and believes every thing I have told her of her family and fortune, has very fairly turned the tables upon me.—She talks of equality of birth, forsooth; of virtue, prudence, and good sense; and bids me bless my stars, for throwing in my way the only woman in the world that has good qualities enough to redeem my bad ones, and make me, what she says every man ought to be—a good husband.

Ray. Was ever poor innocent fellow in such distress!—But what says the old gentleman, your fa-

ther?

Bel. Why, 'faith, the certainty of a little money would set him at work the same way—But I'll have one trial of skill with them yet.—As I brought her in by one lie, I'll take her out by another—I'll swear she's a whore—that I may get an opportunity to make her one.

Ray. Most religiously resolved, upon my word! Bel. Between you and me, Colonel, has not your old gentleman, Sir Charles, a liquorish look out for Fidelia himself?

Ray. No, upon my honour. I believe his assiduities there, are more to prevent the designs of another,

than to forward any of his own.

Bel. As who should say, because I have no teeth for a crust, I'll muzzle the young dog that has. A plague of everything that's old, but a woman!-for 'tis but varying her vocation a little, and you may make her as useful at fifty-five as fifteen. But what say you to a little chat with the girls this morning? I believe we shall find them in the next room.

Ray. Not immediately-I have an appointment at

White's.

Bel. For half an hour, I am your man there too .-D've return so soon?

Ray. Sooner, if you will.

Bel. With all my heart. Allons! [Exeunt.

# SCENE II

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# Another Apartment.

Enter ROSETTA and FIDELIA, meeting.

Ros. O, my dear! I was just coming to see if you were dressed. You look as if you had pleasant dreams last night.

Fid. Whatever my dreams were, they can't disturb the morning's happiness, of meeting my dear Rosetta

so gay and charming.

Ros. My sweet creature !- But what were your dreams?

Fid. O, nothing—A confusion of gay castles, built by Hope, and thrown down by Disappointment.

Ros. O barbarous!——Well, for my part, I never built a castle in my sleep, that would not last till doomsday. Give me a dream, and I am mistress of the creation. I can do what I will with every man in it—And power, power, my dear, sleeping or waking, is a charming thing!

Fid. Now in my opinion, a woman has no business with power—Power admits no equal, and dismisses friendship for flattery. Besides, it keeps the men at a distance, and that is not always what we wish.

Ros. But then, my dear, they'll come when we call them, and do what we bid them, and go when we send them—There's something pretty in that, sure—And for flattery—take my word for't, 'tis the highest proof of a man's esteem—'Tis only allowing what one has not, because the fellow admires what one has—And she that can keep that, need not be afraid of believing she has more.

Fid. Ay, if she can keep that. But the danger is, in giving up the substance for the shadow.—Come, come, my dear, we are weak by nature; and 'tis but knowing that we are so, to be always upon our guard. Fear may make a woman strong, but confidence undoes her.

Ros. Ha! ha! how different circumstances direct different opinions! You are in love with a rake of a fellow, who makes you afraid of yourself——And I hold in chains a mighty colonel, who's afraid of me. And so, my dear, we both go upon right principles. Your weakness keeps you upon your guard, and my power leaves me without danger.

Fid. And yet you must forgive me, if I tell you,

that you love this colonel.

Ros. Who told you so, my dear creature?

Fid. I know it by the pains you take to vex him. Besides, I have seen you look as if you did.

Ros. Look, child! Why, don't I look like other

people?

Fid. Ay, like other people in love. Oh, my dear, I have seen just such looks in the glass, when my heart has beat at my very lips.

Ros. Thou art the most provoking creature-

Fid. You must pardon me, Rosetta—I have a heart but little inclined to gaiety; and am rather wondering, that when happiness is in a woman's power, she should neglect it for trifles—or how it should ever enter her thoughts, that the rigour of a mistress can endear the submission of a wife.

Ros. As certain, my dear, as the repentance of a sinner outweighs in opinion the life of a saint. But, to come to serious confession, I have, besides a woman's inclination to mischief, another reason for keeping off a little——I am afraid of being thought mercenary.

Fid. Heyday !- why, are you not his equal every

way?

Ros. That's not it—I have told you, that before his father's return from exile—You know his unhappy attachments to a successless party—This colonel (brought up in our family, and favoured by Sir Robert and my brother) laid violent siege to me for a whole year. Now though I own I never disliked him, in all that time, either through pride, folly, or a little mischief, I never gave him the least hint, by which he could guess at my inclinations.

Fid. Right woman, upon my word!

Ros. Tis now about three months, since the king, in his goodness, recalled Sir Charles; and, by restoring the estate, made the colonel heir to a fortune, more than equal to my expectations. And now, to confess all, the airs that folly gave me before, reason bids me continue—for to surrender my heart at once to this new made commander, would look as if the poor colonel had wanted a bribe for the governor. Besides, he has affronted my pride, in daring to imagine I

could descend so low, as to be fond of that creature, Faddle. A fellow, formed only to make one laugh—a cordial for the spleen, to be bought by every body; and just as necessary in a family as a monkey. For which insolence, I must and will be revenged:

Fid. Well, I confess, this looks a little like reason. But, are you sure, all this while, the colonel, in despair, won't raise the siege, and draw off his forces to

another place?

Ros. Pshaw! I have a better opinion of the men, child. Do but ply them with ill usage, and they are the gentlest creatures in the world. Like other beasts of prey, you must tame them by hunger—but if once you feed them high, they are apt to run wild, and forget their keepers.

Fid. And are all men so, Rosetta?

Ros. By the gravity of that question, I'll be whipped now, if you don't expect me to say something civil of my brother—Take care of him, Fidelia, for hunger can't tame him, nor fulness make him wilder.

—To leave you to his guardianship, was setting the fox to keep the chicken.

Fid. Wild as he is, my heart can never beat to another—And then I have obligations, that would amaze

you.

Ros. Obligations!—Let me die, if I would not marry my colonel's papa, and put it out of his power

to oblige, or disoblige me.

Fid. Still you banter me with Sir Charles—Upon my life, he has no more designs upon me than you have—I know no reason for his friendship, but his general humanity, or perhaps the singularity of my circumstances.

Ros. Why, as you say, youth and beauty are particular circumstances to move humanity—Ha! ha! ha!—Oh, my dear, time's a great tell-tale, and will discover all—What a sweet mamma shall I have, when I marry the colonel!

Enter Young Belmont and Colonel RAYMOND.

Bel. When you marry the colonel, sister!—A match, a match, child!—Here he is, just in the nick; and, 'faith, as men go, very excellent stuff for a husband.

Ray. Those were lucky words, madam.

Ros. Perhaps not so lucky, if you knew all, sir. - Now, or never, for a little lying, Fidelia, if you love me.

[Apart to Fidelia.

Fid. I'll warrant you, my dear—You must know, sir, [To Belmont.] that your sister has taken it into her head, that the colonel's father is my lover.

Ros. What is she going to say now? [Aside. Fid. And as she looks upon herself to be as good as married to the colonel—

Ros. Who I!-I!-

Fid. She has been settling some family affairs with her new mamma here: and, upon my word, she's a sweet contriver!

Ros. And you think I won't be even with you for this, Fidelia?

Bel. Sister!

Ray. And was it so, madam?—And may I hope?

Ros. Was it so, madam?—And may I hope? [Mocking him.] No, sir, it was not so, and you may not hope—Do you call this wit, Fidelia?

Fid. My dear creature, you must allow me to

laugh a little-Ha! ha! ha!

Ros. "Tis mighty well, madam—Oh, for a little devil at my elbow now, to help out invention! [Aside.

Bel. Ha! ha! ha! -Won't it come, sister?

Ros. As soon as your manners, brother. You and your grave friend there have been genteelly employed indeed, in listening at the door of a lady's chamber: and then, because you heard nothing for your purpose, to turn my own words to a meaning, I should hate myself for dreaming of.

Bel. Why, indeed, child, we might have perplexed you a little, if Fidelia had not so artfully brought you off.

Ros. Greatly obliged to her, really!

[Walking in disorder.

Ray. I never knew till now, Rosetta, that I could find a pleasure in your uneasiness.

Ros. And you think, sir, that I shall easily forgive

this insolence? But you may be mistaken, sir.

Bel. Poor thing, how it pants! Come, it shall have a husband! We must about it immediately, Colonel, for she's all over in a flame.

Ros. You grow impertinent, brother. Is there no relief? [Aside.

Bel. Shall I lift up the sash for a little air, child?

#### Enter SERVANT.

Ros. So, John !—Have you delivered the card I gave you?

Serv. Yes, madam; and Mr. Faddle desires his compliments to your ladyship, and Madam Fidelia.

Ros. Mr. Faddle, John! --- Where did you see

Serv. He met me in the street, madam, and made me step into a coffee-house with him, till he wrote this, madam.

[Delivers a Letter, and exit.

Ros. Oh, the kind creature!—Here's a letter from Mr. Faddle, Fidelia!—Fortune, I thank thee for this little respite.

[Aside, and reading the Letter.]

Ray. Does she suffer the fool to write to her too? Fid. What, pining, colonel, in the midst of victory? Ray. To receive his letters, madam!—I shall run mad.

Bel. So!-Away prop, and down scaffold-All's

over, I see.

Ros. Oh, Fidelia!—You shall hear it You shall all hear it—And there's something in't about the colonel too.

Ray. About me, madam? [Peevishly. Ros. Nay, colonel, I am not at all angry now. Methinks this letter has made me quite another creature.—To be sure, Mr. Faddle has the most gallant way of writing! But his own words will speak best for him.

Dear creature,

Since I saw you yesterday, time has hung upon me like a winter in the country; and unless you appear at rehearsal of the new opera this morning, my sun will be in total eclipse for two hours. Lady Fanny made us laugh last night, at IV hat's my Thought like, by comparing your colonel to a great box o' the ear—Because it was very rude, she said, and what nobody cared for—I have a thousand things to say, but the clamour of a coffee house is an interruption to the sentiments of love and veneration, with which I am,

Madam, most unspeakably yours,

William Faddle.

-- Is it not very polite, colonel?

Ray. Extremely, madam !—Only a little out as to the box o' the ear; for you shall see him take it, ma-

dam, as carelessly as a pinch of snuff.

Ros. Fie, colonel! You would not quarrel before a lady, I hope. Fidelia, you must oblige me with your company to the rehearsal—I'll go put on my capuchin, and step into the coach, this moment.

Fid. I am no friend to public places; but I'll at-

tend you, madam.

Ros. You'll come, colonel?
Ray. To be sure, madam.

Bel. Sister!-Oh, you're a good creature!

[Exit Rositta, laughing affectedly.

Fid. Shall we have your company, sir?

[To BELMONT.

Bel. We could find a way to employ time better,

child—But I am your shadow, and must move with you every where. [Exit Fidelia.]—Ha! ha! ha!—How like a beaten general dost thou look now!—while the enemy is upon the march, to proclaim Te Deum for a complete victory!

Ray. I am but a man, Charles, and find myself no

match for the devil and a woman.

Bel. Courage, boy!—and the flesh and the devil may be subdued—Ha! ha! ha!—Such a colonel!

[Exeunt.

### ACT THE SECOND.

#### SCENE I.

#### SIR ROBERT BELMONT'S House.

Enter Sir Robert Belmont and Sir Charles
RAYMOND.

Sir R. A voracious young dog!-Must I feed orto-

lans to pamper his gluttony!

Sir C. Be under no apprehensions, Sir Robert; Mr. Belmont's excesses are mitigated by the levity of youth, and a too early indulgence. In his moments of thinking, I know him generous and noble—And for Fidelia;—I think I can be answerable for her conduct, both in regard to what she owes herself, and you.

Sir R. Why, look you, Sir Charles, the girl's a sweet girl, and a good girl—and beauty's a fine thing, and virtue's a fine thing—But as for marriage!—

Why, a man may buy fine things too dear. A little money, Sir Charles, would set off her beauty, and find her virtue employment—But the young rogue does not say a word of that of late.

Sir C. Nor of marriage, I am sure—His love of liberty will prevent your fears one way, and, I hope,

Fidelia's honour, another.

Sir R. Must not have her ruined though!

Sir C. Fear it not, Sir Robert,—And when next you see your son, be a little particular in your inquiries about her family and circumstances—If she is what her behaviour bespeaks her, and he pretends, a lady of birth and fortune—why, secrets are unnecessary: if he declines an explanation, look upon the whole as a contrivance to cover purposes, which we must guard against.

Sir R. What, you don't think the rogue has had

her, hah, Sir Charles?

Sir C. No, upon my honour—I hold her innocence to be without stain! But, to deal freely with my friend, I look upon her story as strange, and improbable—An orphan, of beauty, family, and fortune, committed by a dying brother, to the sole care of a licentious young fellow! You must pardon me, Sir Robert.

Sir R. Pray go on, sir.

Sir C. Brought in at midflight too! And then, a young creature so educated, and so irresistibly amiable, to be, in all appearance, without alliance, friend or acquaintance, in the wide world!—a link, torn off from the general chain!—I say, Sir Robert, this is strange!

Sir R. By my troth, and so it is!

Sir C. I know not why I am so interested in this lady's concerns; but yesterday, I indulged my curiosity with her, perhaps, beyond the bounds of goodmanners—I gave a loose to my suspicion, and added oaths of secrecy to my inquiries. But her answers

only served to multiply my doubts; and, still as I persisted, I saw her cheeks covered with blushes, and her eyes swimming in tears—But, my life upon't, they were the blushes and the tears of innocence!

Sir R. We must, and will, be satisfied, Sir Charles.

Sir C. For who knows, while we are delaying, but some unhappy mother, perhaps of rank too, may be wringing her hands, in bitterness of misery, for this lost daughter.—Girls, who have kept their virtue, Sir Robert, have done mad things for a man they love.

Sir R. And so, indeed, they have—I remember, when I was a young fellow myself—But is not that

my Charles, coming through the hall yonder?

Sir C. Ay, Sir Robert.—Attack him now—But let your inquiries have more the show of accidental chat, than design; for too much earnestness may beget suspicion—And so, sir, I leave you to your discretion.

[Exit.

Sir R. You shall see me again before dinner—A plague of these young, rakehelly rogues! a girl's worth

twenty of them-if one could but manage her.

Enter Young Belmont, repeating, No warning of th' approaching flame, Swiftly, like sudden death, it came; Like mariners, by lightning kill'd, I burnt the moment—

My dear sir, I have not seen you to-day before!

Sir R. What, studying poetry, boy, to help out the

year's allowance?

Bel. 'Faith, sir, times are hard, and unless you come down with a fresh hundred now and then, I may go near to disgrace your family—and turn poet.

Sir R. And so want friends all thy life after!—But now we talk of money, Charles, what art thou doing with Fidelia's money? I am thinking, that a round

sum thrown into the stocks now, might turn to a pretty tolerable account.

Bel. The stocks, sir?

Sir R. Ay, boy-My broker will be here after dinner, and he shall have a little chat with thee, about laying out a few of her thousands.

Bel. I hope he'll tell us where we shall get these

thousands.

Aside. Sir R. Thou dost not answer me, Charles-Art

dumb, boy?

Bel. Why, to be sure, sir, as to that - Fidelia-I can't say, but that she may-However, that is, you know, sir-If, as to possibility-Will your broker be here after dinner, sir?

Sir R. Take a little time, Charles; for, at present,

thou dost not make thyself so clearly understood.

Bel. Quite right, to be sure, sir-Nothing could,... beyond all doubt, be more judicious, or more advantageous-Her interest, sir-why, as to that-a pretty fortune—but—did you know her brother, sir?

Sir R. Who I, child?—No.

Bel. 'Faith, nor I neither. [Aside.]—Not know Jack, sir?-The rogue would have made you laugh. -Did I never read you any of his epigrams?-But then, he had such an itch for play !- Why, he would set you a whole fortune at a cast!-And such a mimic too !- But no economy in the world !- Why, it cost him a cool six thousand, to stand for member once-Oh, I could tell you such stories of that election, sir-

Sir R. Pr'ythee, what borough did he stand for?

Bel. Lord, sir!—He was flung all to nothing— My Lord What-d'ye-call-um's son carried it, fifteen to one, at half the expense-In short, sir, by his extravagance, affairs are so perplexed, so very intricate, that, upon my word, sir, I declare it, I don't know what to think of them - A plague of these questions! [Aside.

Sir R. But she has friends and relations, Charles;

-I fancy, if I knew who they were, something might be done.

Bel. Yes, yes, sir, she has friends and relations—I see, sir, you know nothing of her affairs—Such a string of them!—The only wise thing her brother ever did, was making me her guardian, to take her out of the reach of those wretches—I shall never forget his last words—Whatever you do, my dear Charles, says he, taking me by the hand, keep that girl from her relations. Why, I would not, for a thousand pounds, sir, that any of them should know where she is.

Sir R. Why, we have been a little cautious, Charles

-but where does the estate lie?

Bel. Lord, sir!—an estate and no estate—I wonder a man of your knowledge would ask the question.—An earthquake may swallow it, for any thing I care.

Sir R. But where does it lie, Charles?-In what

county, I say?

Bel. And then, there's the six thousand pounds, that her father left her—

Sir R. What! that gone too, Charles?

Bel. Just as good, I believe—Every shilling on't in a lawyer's hands.

Sir R. But she is not afraid to see him too,

Charles?—Where does he live?

Bel. Live, sir?—Do you think such a fellow ought to live?—Why, he has trumped up a contract of marriage with this girl, sir, under the penalty of her whole fortune—There's a piece of work for you!

Sir R. But has he no name, Charles? What is he

called, I say?

Bel. You can't call him by any name, that's too bad for him—But, if I don't draw his gown over his ears—why, say I am a bad guardian, sir, that's all.

Services I I bear the sections will

Sir R. If this should be apocryphal now?

Bel. Sir ?

Sir R. A fetch! a fib, Charles—to conceal some honest man's daughter, that you have stolen, child!

Bel. And brought into a sober family, to have the entire possession of, without let, or molestation!——Why, what a deal of money have you lavished away,

sir, upon the education of a fool!

Sir R. There is but that one circumstance to bring thee off—For, to be sure, her affairs might have been as well settled in private lodgings——And, besides, Charles, a world of troublesome questions, and lying answers, might have been saved. But take care, boy, for I may be in the secret before thou art aware on't.

—A great rogue, Charles! [Exit

Bel. So! the mine's sprung, I see, and Fidelia has betrayed me—And yet, upon cooler thoughts, she durst not break her word with me; for though she's a woman, the devil has no part in her.—Now will I be hanged, if my loving sister is not at the bottom of all this—But if I don't out-plot her—Let me see—Ay—Faddle shall be called in—for the fool loves mischief, like an old maid, and will outlie an attorney.

#### Enter ROSETTA.

Ros. What, musing, brother!—Now would I fain know, which, of all the virtues, has been the subject of your contemplations.

Bel. Patience, patience, child; for he, that has connexion with a woman, let her be wife, mistress, or

sister, must have patience.

Ros. The most useful virtue in the world, brother!

—and Fidelia shall be your tutoress—I'll hold six to four, that she leads you into the practice on't, with more dexterity, than the best philosopher in England

—She shall teach it, and yet keep the heart without hope, brother.

Bel. Why, that's a contrary method to yours, sister: for you give hope, where you mean to try pa-

tience most, and, I take it, you are the abler mistress in the art. Why, every coxcomb in town, has been

your scholar, child.

Ros. Not to learn patience; there's your mistake now; for it has been my constant practice, to put my scholars out of all patience. What are you thinking of, brother?

Bel. Why, I was thinking, child, that 'twould be a question to puzzle a conjurer, what a coquette was

made for.

Ros. Am I one, brother?

Bel. Oh, fie, sister!

Ros. Lord! I, that am no conjurer, can tell you that—A coquette!—Oh!—Why, a coquette is a sort of beautiful desert in wax-work, that tempts the fool to an entertainment, merely to baulk his appetite.—And will any one tell me that nature had no hand in the making a coquette, when she answers such wise and necessary purposes?—Now, pray, sir, tell me what a rake was made for?

Bel. Am I one, sister? Ros. Oh, fie, brother!

Bel. Nay, child, if a coquette be so useful in the system of morals, a rake must be the most horrid thing in nature—He was born for her destruction, child: she loses her being at the very sight of him, and drops plump into his arms, like a charmed bird, into the mouth of a rattlesnake.

Ros. Bless us all!—What a mercy it is, that we are brother and sister!

Bel. Be thankful for't night and morning, upon your knees, hussy; for I should certainly have been the ruin of you—But come, Rosetta—'tis allowed then, that we are rake and coquette—And now, do you know, that the essential difference between us, lies only in two words—petticoat and breeches.

Ros. Ay, make that out, and you'll do something. Bel. Pleasure, child, is the business of both—and

the same principles that make me a rake, would make you—no better than you should be, were it not for that tax upon the petticoat, called scandal. Your wishes are restrained by fear; mine, authorized by custom: and, while you are forced to sit down with the starved comfort of making men fools, I am upon the wing to make girls—women, child.

Ros. Now, as I hope to be married, I would not be a rake, for the whole world—unless I were a man; and then, I do verily believe, I should turn out just

such another.

Bel. That's my dear sister! Give me your hand, child—Why, now thou art the honestest girl in St. James's parish; and I'll trust thee for the future, with all my secrets—I am going to Fidelia, child.

Ros. What a pity 'tis, brother, that she is not such

a coquette as I am!

Bel. Not so, neither, my sweet sister; for, 'faith, the conquest will be too easy to keep a man constant.

Ros. Civil creature!

Bel. But here comes the colonel—Now to our several vocations—You to fooling, and I to business—At dinner we'll meet, and compare notes, child.

Ros. For a pot of coffee, I succeed best.

Bel, 'Faith, I'm afraid so.

[Exit.

#### Enter COLONEL RAYMOND.

Ray. To meet you alone, madam, is a happiness— Ros. Pray, Colonel, are you a rake? Methinks, I would fain have you a rake.

Ray. Why so, madam? 'Tis a character I never

was fond of.

Ros. Because I am tired of being a coquette; and my brother says, that a rake can transform one, in the flirt of a fan.

Ray. I would be any thing, madam, to be better in your opinion.

Ros. If you were a rake, now, what would you say to me?

Ray. Nothing, madam-I would-

[Snatches her Hand, and kisses it.

Ros. Bless me! is the man mad? I only asked

what you would say to me.

Ray. I would say, madam, that you are my life—my soul—my angel! That all my hopes of happiness are built upon your kindness!

Ros. Very well-keep it up!

Ray. That your smiles are brighter than virtue, and your chains, sweeter than liberty!

Ros. Upon my word!

Ray. Oh, Rosetta! How can you trifle with a heart that loves you?

Ros. Very well-Pathetic too!

Ray. Pshaw! this is not in your nature.

Ros. Suspicion!-Pretty enough!

Ray. You know I have not deserved this.

Ros. Anger too !- Go on !

Ray. No, madam; Faddle can divert you this way, at an easier price.

Ros. And jealousy !- All the vicissitudes of love!

Incomparable!

Ray. You will force me to tell you, madam, that I can bear to be your jest no longer.

Ros. Or thus-

Am I the jest of her I love? Forbid it, all the gods above!

It may be rendered either way—But 1 am for the rhyme—I love poetry vastly—Don't you love poetry, Colonel?

Ray. This is beyond all patience, madam!

[Very angrily.

Ros. Bless me! Why, you have not been in earnest, Colonel?—Lord, Lord, how a silly woman may be mistaken!

Ray. Shall I ask you one serious question, madam?

Ros. Why, I find myself somewhat whimsical this morning—and I don't care if I do take a little stuff; but don't let it be bitter.

Ray. Am I to be your fool always, madam, or, like other fools, to be made a husband of, when my time's out?

Ros. Lord, you men-creatures do ask the strangest questions!—Why, how can I possibly say now, what I shall do ten years hence?

Ray. I am answered, madam.

[Walking in disorder.

#### Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mr. Faddle, madam.

[Exit.

# Enter FADDLE.

Faddle. Oh, my dear, soft toad!—And the colonel by all that's scarlet! Now, plague catch me, if nature ever formed so complete a couple—since the first pair in Paradise!

Ros. 'Tis well you are come, Faddle; Give me something to laugh at, or I shall die with the spleen.

Ray. Ay, sir, make the lady laugh, this moment,

or I shall break your bones, rascal!

Faddle. Lord, Colonel!—What!—What!—hah!

Ros. Make her laugh this instant, I say, or I'll make you cry—Not make her laugh, when she bids you!—Why, sirrah!—I have made her laugh this half hour, without bidding.

Ros. Ha! ha! ha!

Faddle. Why, there, there, there, Colonel!—She does, she does!

## Enter Young Belmont and Fidelia.

Bel. Why, how now, Faddle? What has been the matter, prythee?

Ray. A rascal! Not make a lady laugh!

Faddle. What, Charles, and my little Fiddy, too!

Stand by me a little; for this robust colonel has relaxed my very sinews, and quite tremulated my whole system.—I could not have collected myself, without your presence.

Fid. And was he angry with you, Faddle?

Faddle. To a degree, my dear—But I have forgot it—I bear no malice to any one in the world, child.

Ros. Do you know, Faddle, that I have a quarrel

with you too?

Faddle. You, child!—Heh! heh!—What, I am inconstant, I suppose—and have been the ruin of a few families this winter, hah, child?—Murder will out, though it's done in the centre—But, come, vicace! Let the storm loose—and you shall see me weather it, like the osier in the fable—it may bend, but not break me.

Ros. Nay, it shall come in a breeze—I'll whisper it. [Whispers FADDLE.

Bel. Colonel!

Ray. Now I could cut my throat, for being vexed at this puppy; and yet the devil, jealousy, will have it so.

[Apart to Belmont.

Faddle. Oh, what a creature have you named, child!—Heh! heh! heh!—May grace renounce me, and darkness seal my eye-lids, if I would not as soon make love to a miller's doll!

Bel. Prythee, what mistress has she found out for

thee, Faddle?

Faddle. By all that's odious, Charles, Miss Gargle, the 'pothecary's daughter!—the toad is fond of me, that's positive—but such a mess of water-gruel!—
Ugh—To all purposes of joy, she's an armful of dry shavings! And then, she's so jealous of one!—
Lord, says she, Mr. Faddle, you are eternally at Sir Robert's—one can't set eyes upon you in a whole day—Heh! heh! And then the tears do so trickle down those white-wash cheeks of hers, that, if she could but warm me to the least fit of the heart-burn, I be-

lieve I should be tempted to take her, by way of chalk and water—Heh! heh! heh!

Bel. Ros. Fid. Ha! ha! ha!

Ros. Isn't he a pleasant creature, Colonel?

Ray. Certainly, madam, of infinite wit, with abund-

ance of modesty!

Faddle. Pugh! Plague of modesty, Colonel! But do you know, you slim toad, you, [To ROSETTA.] what a battle I had last night, in a certain company, about you, and that ugly gipsy there?

Fid. Meaning me, sir?

Fuddle. Pert, and pretty!-You must know, there was Jack Taffaty, Billy Cruel, Lord Harry Gymp, and I, at Jack's lodgings, all in tip-top spirits, over a pint of burgundy-a pox of all drinking though!-I shall never get it out of my head .- Well, we were toasting a round of beauties, you must know: The girl of your heart, Faddle, says my lord. Rosetta Belmont, my lord, says I-and, 'faith, down you went, you delicate little devil you, in almost half a glass, Rot your toast, says my lord, I was fond of her last winter. - She's a wit, says Jack; And a scold, by all that's noisy! says Billy.—Isn't she a little freckled, says my lord-Damnationly padded, says Jack; and painted like a Dutch doll, by Jupiter! says Billy.-She's very unsusceptible, says my lord .- No more warmth than a snow-ball, says Jack .- A mere coldbath to a lover, curse catch me! says Billy.-Heh! heh! heh! says I, that's because you want heart to warm her, my dears: to me, now, she's all over combustibles; I can electrify her by a look: touch but her lip, and snap she goes off, in a flash of fire!

Ros. Oh, the wretch! what a picture has he drawn of me! [To Fidelia.

Fid. You must be curious, my dear,

Bel. Ha! ha! But you forgot Fidelia, Faddle.

Faddle. Oh! And there's the new face, says Billy—Fidelia, I think they call her.—If she was an ap-

purtenance of mine, says my lord, I'd hang her upon a peg in my wardrobe, amongst my cast clothes. With those demure looks of hers, says Jack, I'd send her to my aunt in Worcestershire, to set her face by, when she went to church. Or, what think you, says Billy, of keeping her in a show-glass, by way ofgentlemen and ladies, walk in, and see the curiosity of curiosities—the perfect Pamela in high life! Observe Gentlemen, the blushing of her cheeks, the turning-up of her eyes, and her tongue, that says nothing but fie! fie!—Ha! ha! ha!—Incomparable! said all three— Pugh! pox! says I, not so bad as that, neither: the little toad has not seen much of the town indeed-but she'll do, in time; and a glass of preniac may serve one's turn, you know, when champaign is not to be had. [Bowing to ROSETTA.

All. Ha! ha! ha!

Bel. Why, thou didst give it them, 'faith, bully !

## Enter SERVANT, and whispers ROSETTA.

Ros. Come, gentlemen, dinner waits-We shall

have all your companies, I hope?

Bel. You know, you dine with me, at the King's [Apart to FADDLE. Arms, Faddle? Faddle. Do I? I am sorry, my dear creature, that

a particular appointment robs me of the honour.

To Rosetta.

[Exit.

Ros. Pshaw! you are always engaged, I think .-Come, Fidelia. Exeunt ROSETTA and FIDELIA. Ray. Why, then, thank Heaven, there's some re-

spite. Bel. Hark you, Faddle; I hope you are not in the least ignorant, that, upon particular occasions, you can be a very great rascal?

Faddle. Who, I, Charles ?- Pugh! Plague! Is this

the dinner I am to have?

Bel. Courage, boy! And, because I think so well

of thee, there- Gives him a Purse. 'twill buy thee a

new laced coat, and a feather.

Faddle. Why, ay, this is something, Charles !- But what am I to do, hah? I won't fight, upon my soul, I won't fight!

Bel. Thou canst lie a little?

Faddle. A great deal, Charles, or I have spent my time among women of quality, to little purpose.

Bel. I'll tell thee, then. - This sweet girl, this angel, this stubborn Fidelia, sticks so at my heart, that I must either get the better of her, or run mad.

Faddle. And so, thou wouldst have me aiding and abetting, hah, Charles? Must not be tucked up for a

rape, neither.

Bel. Peace, fool! About three months ago, by a very extraordinary adventure, this lady dropped into my arms. It happened, that our hearts took fire at first sight: But, as the devil would have it, in the hurry of my first thoughts, not knowing where to place her, I was tempted, for security, to bring her to this haunted house here, where, between the jealousy of Sir Charles, the gravity of the colonel, the curiosity of a sister, and the awkward care of a father, she must become a vestal, or I-a husband.

Faddle. And so, by way of a little simple fornication, you want to remove her to private lodgings, hah,

Charles?

Bel. But how, how, how, thou dear rascal?

Faddle. Let me see-Hum-And so, you are not

her guardian, Charles?

Bel. Nor she, the woman she pretends, boy-I tell thee, she was mine by fortune-I tilted for her at midnight-But the devil tempted me, I say, to bring her hither-The family was in bed, which gave me time for contrivance—I prevailed upon her to call me guardian, that, by pretending authority over her, I might remove her at pleasure; but here too, I was

And Policy be it tog note a man, you mound out at

deceived—My sister's fondness for her, has rendered every plot of mine to part them, impracticable—And without thy wicked assistance, we must both die in

our virginity.

Faddle. Hum! That would be a pity, Charles—But let me see—Ay—I have it.—Within these three hours, we'll contrive to set the house in such a flame, that the devil himself may take her—if he stand at the street door—To dinner, to dinner, boy! Tis here, here, here, Charles!

Bel. If thou dost-

Faddle. And if I don't—why, no more purses, Charles.—I tell thee, 'tis here, here, boy! To dinner! [Exeunt.

## ACT THE THIRD.

#### SCENE I.

An Apartment in SIR ROBERT BELMONT'S House.

#### Enter ROSETTA and FIDELIA.

Fid. "Tis all your own doing, my dear. You first tease him into madness, and then wonder to hear his chains rattle.

Ros. And yet how one of my heavenly smiles sobered him again!

Fid. If I were a man, you should use me so but once. Rosetta.

Ros. Pshaw !- If you were a man, you would do as

men do, child—Ha! ha! ha!—They are creatures of robust constitutions, and will bear a great deal—Besides, for my part, I can't see what a reasonable fellow ought to expect before marriage, but ill usage.—You can't imagine, my dear, how it sweetens kindness afterwards—for, take my word for't, there's no charm like cruelty, to keep the men constant; nor no deformity like kindness, to make them loath you.

#### Enter SERVANT.

Serv. A letter for your ladyship, madam. [Exit. Ros. For me? I don't remember the hand.

[Opens, and reads the Letter to herself. Fid. You seem strangely concerned, madam—I

hope no ill news?

Ros. The worst in the world, Fidelia, if it be true. Fid. 'Pray Heaven it be false, then!—But must it be a secret?—I hope, my dear Rosetta knows, that whatever affects her quiet, can't leave mine undisturbed?

Ros. Who's there?

#### Enter SERVANT.

How did you receive this letter?

Serv. From a porter, madam.

Ros. Is he without?

Serv. No, madam; he said it required no answer.

Ros. Had you any knowledge of him? Serv. Not that I remember, madam.

Ros. Should you know him again?

Serv. Certainly, madam.

Ros. Where did my brother say he dined to-day?

Serv. At the King's Arms, madam. Ros. And Mr. Faddle with him?

Serv. They went out together, madam.

Ros. Run this moment, and say I desire to speak with both of them immediately, upon an extraordinary affair.

Serv. Yes, madam.

Exit.

Fid. What can this mean, Rosetta?—Am I unfit to be trusted?

Ros. Tell me, Fidelia-But no matter-Why

should I disturb you !- I have been too grave.

Fid. Still more and more perplexing!—But my inquiries are at an end—I shall learn to be less troublesome, as you are less kind, Rosetta.

Ros. Prythee, don't talk so, Fidelia-I can never

be less kind.

Fid. Indeed, I won't deserve you should.

Ros. I know it, Fidelia.—But tell me, then—is there a circumstance in your life, that would call a blush to your cheeks, if 'twere laid as open to the world's knowledge, as to your own?

Fid. If from the letter you ask me that strange

question, madam, surely I should see it.

Ros. I think not, Fidelia——For, upon second thoughts, 'tis a trifle, not worth your notice.

Fid. Why were you so much alarmed, then?

Ros. I confess, it startled me at first—but 'tis a lying letter, and should not trouble you.

Fid. Then it relates to me, madam?

Ros. No matter, Fidelia.

Fid. I have lost my friend, then—I begged, at first, to be a sharer in Rosetta's griefs—but now I find they are all my own, and she denies my right to them.

Ros. This is too much, Fidelia—And now, to keep you longer in suspense would be cruelty.—But the writer of this scroll has a mind darker than night.—You shall join with me in wondering, that there is such a monster in the world.

[Reads.]

### To MISS ROSETTA BELMONT.

Madam,

As I write without a name, I am alike indifferent to your thanks or resentment .- Fidelia is not what she seems-She has deceived you, and may your brother, to his ruin. Women of the town know how to wear the face of innocence, when it serves the purposes of guilt. -Faddle, if he pleases, can inform you farther-But, be assured, I have my intelligence from more sufficient authority.

P.S. There needs no farther address in this matter, than a plain question to Fidelia-Is she the sister of

Mr. Belmont's friend?

Fid. Then I am lost!

Aside. Ros. What, in tears, Fidelia? -- Nay, I meant to raise your contempt only-Pr'ythee, look up, and let us laugh at the malice of this nameless libeller.

Fid. No, Rosetta-The mind must be wrapped in its own innocence, that can stand against the storms

of malice-I fear I have not that mind.

Ros. What mind, Fidelia?

Fid. And yet that letter is a false one.

Ros. Upon my life, it is-For you are innocence itself.

Fid. Oh, Rosetta !- No sister of Mr. Belmont's friend kneels to you for pardon-but a poor wretched outcast of fortune, that, with an artful tale, has imposed upon your nature, and won you to a friendship for a helpless stranger, that never knew herself.

Ros. Rise, Fidelia-But take care !- For, if you have deceived me, honesty is nothing but a name.

Fid. Think not too hardly of me neither-For. though I am not what I seem, I would not be what that letter calls me, to be mistress of the world.

Ros. I have no words, Fidelia-Speak on-But

methinks you should not weep so.

Fid. Nay, now, Rosetta, you compel me—For this gentleness is too much for me—I have deceived you, and you are kind—If you would dry up my tears, call forth your resentment—Anger might turn me into stone—but compassion melts me.

Ros. I have no anger, Fidelia-Pray, go on.

Fid. When my tears will let me—I have played a foolish game, Rosetta—and yet my utmost fault has been consenting to deceive you.—What I am, I know not—That I am not what I seem, I know.—But why I have seemed otherwise than I am, again I know not.—'Tis a riddle that your brother only can explain.—He knows the story of my life, and will in honour reveal it. 'Would he were here!

Ros. 'Would he were, Fidelia!-for I am upon the

rack-Pr'ythee, go on, and inform me farther.

Fid. There's my grief, Rosetta—For I am bound by such promises to silence, that, to clear my innocence, would be to wound it.—All I have left to say, is, that my condition of life only has been assumed, my virtue never.

#### Enter SERVANT.

Ros. Well, sir!

Serv. Mr. Belmont, madam, was just gone; but Mr. Faddle will wait upon your ladyship immediately.

Ros. Did they say where my brother went?

Serv. They did not know. - Mr. Faddle is here, madam.

## Enter FADDLE, humming a Tune.

Faddle. In obedience to your extraordinary commands, madam—But you should have been alone, child.

Ros. No trifling, sir—Do you know this handwriting? [Gives him the Letter.

Fuddle. Hum!—Not I, as I hope to be saved.— Nor you neither, I believe: [Aside.]—Is it for my perusal, madam?

Fid. And your answering too, sir.

Faddle. Mighty well, madam! [Reads.] Hum!—Fidelia—Women—of the town—Innocence—Guilt—Faddle inform you farther!——Why, what a plague am I brought in for?——Intelligence—Question—Fidelia—Sister of Mr. Belmont's friend.

Ros. Well, sir! [Stares and whistles. [Takes the Letter.

Faddle. Oh!—I am to guess at the writer—Can't, upon my soul—Upon my soul, I can't, child.—'Tis a woman, I believe, though, by the damned blabbing that's in't.

Fid. The letter says, sir, that you can inform this lady farther concerning me.—Now, sir, whatever you happen to know, or to have heard, of me, deliver it freely, and without disguise.—I entreat it, as an act of friendship, that will for ever oblige me.

Faddle. Let me see No It can't be her neither. She is a woman of too much honour—and yet, I don't remember to have opened my lips about

it, to any soul but her.

Fid. You know me, then, sir?

Ros. Speak out, sir.

Faddle. Methinks, if these letter-writers were a little more communicative of their own names, and less so of their neighbours', there would be more honesty in them.—Why am I introduced here!—Truly, forsooth, because a certain person in the world is overburdened with the secrets of her own slips; and, for a little vent, chuses to blab those of another—Faddle inform you farther!—Faddle will be damned as soon.

Ros. Hark you, sir—If you intend to enter these doors again, tell me all you know, for I will have it. You have owned your telling it elsewhere, sir.

Fid. What is it you told, sir?

Faddle. What I shan't tell here, madam. Her angry ladyship must excuse me, 'faith.

Fid. Indeed, Rosetta, he knows nothing.

Faddle. Nothing in the world, madam, as I hope to be saved. Mine is all hearsay. And, curse upon them! the whole town may be in a lie, for any thing I know. So they said of Lady Bridget, that she went off with her footman; but 'twas all slander, for 'twas a horse grenadier, that she bought a commission for last week.

Ros. What has Lady Bridget, or the town, to do

with Fidelia, sir?

Faddle. So I said, madam—the very words. Says I, a woman of the town? Does a slip or two with particulars make a lady a woman of the town? Or, if it did, says I, many a one has taken up, and lived honestly afterwards. A woman of the town, indeed!

Fid. Hold your licentious tongue, sir! Upon my life, Rosetta, 'tis all malice. 'Tis his own contrivance. I dare him to produce another villain, that's base enough to say this of me.

Faddle. Right, madam! Stick to that, and, 'egad, I'll be of your side.

[Aloud in her Ear.

Fid. Insolence ! [Strikes him.] Oh, I am hurt be-

yond all bearing!

Ros. And I, lost in perplexity. If thou art linked with any wretch base enough to contrive this paper, or art thyself the contriver, may poverty and a bad heart be thy companions: but if thou art privy to any thing, that concerns the honour of this family, give it breath, and I'll insure thee both protection and reward.

Fid. I dare him to discovery.

Faddle. Ladies, I have had the honour of a blow conferred on me by one of you, and am favoured with the offer of protection and reward from the other; now, to convince both, that, in spite of indignities, or obligations, I can keep a secret, if ever I open my lips upon this matter, may plague, famine, and the horned devil, consume and seize me. And so, ladies, I take my leave.

[Exit, singing.

Ros. What can this fellow mean, Fidelia! Has he

not abused you?

Fid. Is it a doubt, then? 'Would I had leave to

speak!

Ros. And why not, Fidelia? Promises unjustly extorted, have no right to observance. You have deceived me by your own acknowledgment, and, methinks, at such a time, matters of punctilio should give place to reason and necessity.

Fid. I dare not, Rosetta. Twould be a crime to your brother, and I owe him more than all the

world.

Ros. And what are those obligations, Fidelia?
Fid. Not for me to mention. Indeed, I dare not,
Rosetta.

Ros. 'Tis well, madam! And when you are inclined to admit me to your confidence, I shall perhaps know better how to conduct myself. [Going.

## Enter Young BELMONT.

Oh, are you come, brother! Your friend's sister, your ward there, has wanted you, sir.

Bel. What is it, Fidelia?

Fid. I have no breath to speak it. Your sister, sir, can better inform you.

Ros. Read that, sir.

[Gives him the Letter, which he reads to himself. Fid. Now, Rosetta, all shall be set right. Your brother will do me justice, and account for his own conduct.

Ros. I expect so, Fidelia.

Bel. Impertment! [Gives back the Letter.] I met Faddle as I came in; and, I suppose, in pure love of mischief, he has made my believing sister, here, a convert to the villany of that letter. But I'll make the rascal unay every thing he has said, or his bones shall ache fort.

Fid. Stay, sir, I entreat you. That I am a counter-

feit, in part, I have already confessed-

Bel. You have done wrong, then.

Fid. But am I a creature of the town, sir? Your sister must learn that from you. You have been once my deliverer—be so now. Tell her, I am poor and miserable, but not dishonest. That I have only consented to deceive her, not desired it. Tell her, I deserve her pity, not her anger. 'Tis my only request. Can you deny it me?

Bel. You have said too much, Fidelia. And, for your own sake, I shall forbear to mention what I know of your story. How far your own honour is bound, you are the best judge. But a breach of the most solemn promises, let me tell you, madam, will be a wretched vindication of the innocence you con-

tend for.

Fid. And is this all, sir?

Bel. For my own part, I must have better authority than Faddle, or a nameless writer, to believe any thing to your dishonour. And for you, sister, I must not have this lady ill treated. While I am satisfied of her innocence, your suspicions are impertinent. Nor will I consent to her removal, madam, mark that, whatever you, in your great wisdom, may have privately determined.

[Exit.

Ros. You are a villain, brother.

Fid. Now I have lost you, Rosetta!

Ros. When you incline to be a friend to yourself, Fidelia, you may find one in me. But while explanations are avoided, I must be allowed to act from

my own opinion, and agreeable to the character I am to support.

Fid. Then I am wretched! But that's no novelty. I have wandered from my cradle, the very child of misfortune. To retire and weep, must now be my only indulgence.

[Exit.

# Enter Young Belmont.

Bel. Why, what a rogue am I! Here have I thrown a whole family, and that my own too, into perplexities, that innocence can't oppose, nor cunning guard against. And all for what? Why, a woman!—Take away that excuse, and the devil himself would be a saint to me; for all the rest is sinning without temptation. In my commerce with the world, I am guarded against the mercenary vices.—I think, I have honour above lying, courage above cruelty, pride above meanness, and honesty above deceit; and yet, throw but coy beauty in my way, and all the vices, by turns, take possession of me. Fortune, fortune, give me success this once—and I'll build churches!

# Enter FADDLE.

Faddle. What, Charles !—Is the coast clear, and the finishing stroke given to my embassy, hah?

Bel. Thou hast been a most excellent rascal, and, 'faith, matters seem to be in a promising condition. For I have flung that in Rosetta's way, which, if she keeps her womanhood, will do the business.

Faddle. Prythee, what's that, Charles?

Bel. Why, I have bid her not to think of parting with Fidelia.

Faddle. Nay, then, tip she goes headlong out at window. But hast thou no bowels, Charles? for, methinks, I begin to feel some twitches of compunction about me.

Bel. I understand you, sir; but I have no more purses.

Faddle. Why, look you, Charles, we must find a way to lull this conscience of mine—here will be the devil to do else. That's a very pretty ring, Charles.

Bel. Is it so, sir? Hark you, Mr. Dog, if you demur one moment to fetching and carrying in this business, as I bid you, you shall find my hand a little heavy upon you.

Faddle. Pugh, pox, Charles! can't a body speak? People may be in good humour, when they want

people to do things for people, methinks.

Bel. Troop this moment, with your rascally conscience, to the King's Arms, and wait there till I come, sir.

Faddle. Why, so I will, Charles—A plague of the swaggering son of a—Not so big neither, if one had but a little courage.

[Aside, and going.]

Bel. Hark you, Faddle—Now I think on't, there is a way yet for thee to make another purse out of this business.

Faddle. Why, one would not be a rogue for nothing, methinks.

Bel. I saw Sir Charles going into Fidelia's chamber—thou may'st steal upon them unobserved—they'll have their plots too, I suppose.

Faddle. And where am I to come and tell thee,

hah?

Bel. At the King's Arms, boy.

Faddle. But you'll remember the purse, Charles?

Bel. Softly, rascal! [Exit FADDLE.] Why, there it is again now!! I am a fellow of principle! and so I will be, some time or other. But these appetites are the devil, and at present I am under their direction.

[Exit

Agriculture three or a such to be

#### SCENE II

# Another Apartment.

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# SIR CHARLES RAYMOND and FIDELIA discovered sitting:

Sir C. He durst not say, directly, you were that creature the letter called!

Fid. Not in terms, sir; but his concealments struck deeper than the sharpest accusations.

Sir C. And could Mr. Belmont be silent to all

this?

Fid. He said he had his reasons, sir, and it was my part to submit. I had no heart to disoblige him.

Sir C. You are too nice, madam. Rosetta loves

you, and should be trusted.

Fid. Alas, sir! if it concerned me only, I should have no concealment.

Sir C. It concerns you most, madam. I must deal plainly with you. You have deceived your friend; and, though I believe it not, a severer reproach rests upon you. And shall an idle promise, an extorted one too, and that from a man who solicits your undoing, forbid your vindication? You must think better of it.

Fid. 'Tis not an extorted promise, sir, that seals my lips—but I love him—and, though he pursues me to my ruin, I will obey him in this, whatever happens. He may desert me, but never shall have reason to upbraid me.

Sir C. 'Tis your own cause, madam, and you must act in it as you think proper. Yet still, if I might

advise-

Fid. Leave it to time, Sir Charles. And if you believe me innocent, your friendly thoughts of me, and my own conscience, shall keep me cheerful.

## Enter FADDLE, listening.

Faddle. O, plague, is it so! Now for a secret worth twenty pieces!

Sir C. Has it ever appeared to you, madam, that

Faddle was a confidant of Mr. Belmont's?

Fid. Never, sir. On the contrary, a wretch most heartily despised by him.

Faddle. If she should be a little mistaken now!

Sir C. Can you guess at any other means of his coming to a knowledge of you?

Fid. None that I know of, sir.

Faddle. 'Faith. I believe her. [ Aside.

Sir C. One question more, madam, and I have done. Did Mr. Belmont ever solicit your removing from this house?

Fid. Never directly, sir. He has often, when we have been alone, quarrelled with himself for bringing

me into it.

Sir C. I thank you, madam. And if my inquiries have been at any time too importunate, allow them to the warmth of an honest friendship; for I have a heart that feels for your distresses, and beats to relieve them.

Fid. I have no words, Sir Charles; let my tears

thank you.

Sir C. Be composed, my child. And if Rosetta's suspicions grow violent, I have apartments ready to receive you, with such welcome, as virtue should find with one who loves it.

Fid. Still, Sir Charles, my tears are all that I can thank you with-for this goodness is too much for

me.

Faddle. And so she's a bit for the old gentleman at last! Rare news for Charles! or, with a little addition, I shall make it so. But I must decamp, to avoid danger. [Aside, and exit.

Sir C. Dry up your tears, Fidelia. For, if my conjectures are well grounded, before night, perhaps, something may be done to serve you. And so I leave you to your best thoughts. Exit.

Fid. Then I have one friend left. How long I am to hold him, Heaven knows! 'Tis a fickle world, and nothing in it is lasting, but misfortune-yet I'll have patience:

That sweet relief, the healing hand of Heav'n Alone to suff'ring innocence has giv'n; Come, friend of virtue, balm of every care, Dwell in my bosom, and forbid despair. [Exit.

### ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I. B.

An Apartment.

Enter Colonel RAYMOND and ROSETTA.

Ros. I tell you, I will not be talked to.

Magraph Turk Versila Silver

Ray. 'Tis my unhappiness, madam, to raise no passion in you, but anger.

Ros. You are mistaken, Colonel. I am not angry, though I answer so. My gaiety has been disturbed to-day; and gravity always sits upon me like ill humour. Fidelia has engrossed me, and you are talking of yourself. What would you have me say?

Ray. That your neglect of me has been dissembled, and that I have leave to love you, and to hope for

you.

Ros. This is very strange now! Why, 'tis not in your power to avoid loving me, whether you have leave to hope or not. And as to my dissembling, I know nothing of that-all I know is, that I'm a woman; and women, I suppose, dissemble sometimes-I don't pretend to be a bit better than a woman.

Ray. Be a kind one, and you're an angel.

Ros. But if I were inclined to listen, what have

you to say in favour of matrimony?

Ray. "Tis happiness, or misery, as minds are differently disposed. The necessary requisites are, love, good sense, and good breeding. The first to unite, the second to advise, and the third to comply. you add to these, neatness and competency, beauty will always please, and family cares become agreeable amusements.

Ros. Do you know, now, that you never pleased me so much in all your life?

Ray. If so, Rosetta, one question, and then to

apply.

Ros. How if I should not answer your question?

Ray. 'Tis a fair one, upon my word. Don't you think, that you and I could muster up these requisites between us?

Ros. Let me consider a little—Who must have love, pray?

Ray. Both of us.

Ros. No, I have no mind to have any thing to do with love. Do you take that, and give understanding, to advise. So then you choose, and have all the good breeding, for compliance; then I neatness; and last of all, competency shall be divided between us.

Ray. A match, madam, upon your own terms.— But if ever you should take it into your head to dispute love with me, what other requisite are you willing to give up for it?

Ros. Why, neatness, I think; 'tis of little use to a

married woman, you know.

Ray. A trifle, madam. But when are we to come

together?

Ros. As soon as we can give proof that these ingredients are between us—In a few years, perhaps.

Ray. If our virtues should starve in that time?
Ros. Pshaw!—You know nothing of the matter.
Sense will improve every day, and love and goodbreeding live an age, if we don't marry then. But

we'll have done with these matters; for I can keep

the ball up no longer. You did not say Fidelia upbraided me?

Ray. The very reverse. 'Twas her only affliction, she said, that you had reason to think hardly of her.

Ros. Poor girl! If you would make love to me with success, colonel, clear up these perplexities.—Suppose I was to dismiss my pride a little, and make her a visit with you?

Ray. 'Twould be a kind one.

Ros. Lead on then; for, in spite of my resentments, I have no heart to keep from her.

[Excunt.

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### SCENE II.

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# Another Apartment.

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### Enter Young Belmont and FADDLE.

Bel. If this should be invention, Faddle?

Faddle. I tell thee, I was behind the screen, and heard every syllable on't. Why, I'll say it to his face, pr'ythee.

Bel. What, that he proposed to take her into keep-

ing, and that she consented?

Faddle. Not in those words, man—No, no, Sir Charles is a gentleman of politer elocution. Pray, child, says he, did Young Belmont ever propose your removing from this house? No, sir, says she, but he has cursed himself to damnation for bringing me into it. [Mimicking Sir Charles and Fidelia.] Well, child, says he, the thing may be done to-night; apartments are ready for you. And then, in a lower voice, he said something about virtue, that I could not very well hear; but I saw it set the girl a crying. And presently, in answer to a whisper of his, I heard her say, in a very pretty manner, that she thought it was too much for her. But what his proposals were, the devil a syllable could I hear.

Bel. Ha! ha!-Yonder he is, Faddle, and coming

this way. We must not be seen together.

Faddle. For a little sport, Charles, suppose I fling myself in his way, and make interest to be commode to him, ha!

Bel. And get thy nose twisted for thy pains? Faddle. Why, I can run, if I can't fight.

Bel. Faith, I never doubted thee that way. I'll to my room, then, and wait for thee.

Faddle. But leave the door open, Charles.

Bel. Ha! ha! ha!—You'll not be tedious, sir.

[Exit.

#### Enter SIR CHARLES RAYMOND.

Faddle. If the old gentleman should be in his airs though—Servant, servant, Sir Charles.

Sir C. Oh, sir, you are the man I was looking for! Faddle. If I can be of any service, Sir Charles—What, and so—ha!——'Faith, you're a sly one—But you old poachers have such a way with you?—Why here has Charles been racking his brains for ways and means, any time these three months; and just in the nick, souse comes me down the old kite—and, alackaday, poor chick!—the business is done.

Sir C. Make yourself a little intelligible, sir.

Faddle. And so, I don't speak plain, ha?—Oh, the little rogue!—There's more beauty in the veins of her neck, than in a landscape of Claude; and more music in the smack of her lips, than in all Handel!

Sir C. Let me understand you, sir.

Faddle. Methinks 'twas very laconic, though—
If Rosetta's suspicions grow violent, I have apartments ready to receive you. [Mimiching Sir CharLES.] But a word in your ear, old gentleman—Those apartments won't do.

Sir C. Oh, sir, I begin to be a little in the secret! Faddle. Mighty quick of apprehension, 'faith!—And the little innocent!—Still, Sir Charles, my tears are all that I can thank you with; for this goodness is too much for me. [Mimicking Fidelia.] Upon my soul, you have a great deal of goodness, Sir Charles; a great deal of goodness, upon my soul!

Sir C. Why, now I understand you, sir. And as these matters may require time, for the sake of privacy, we'll shut this door. [Shuts the Door.

Faddle. Any other time, Sir Charles. But I am really so hurried at present, that—Oh, lord! [Aside.

Sir C. Why, what does the wretch tremble at?—Broken bones are to be set again; and thou mayest yet die in thy bed. [Takes hold of him.] You have been a listener, sir.

Faddle. Lord, sir !- Indeed, sir !- Not I, sir!

Sir C. No denial, sir. [Shakes him.

Faddle. Oh, sir, I'll confess! I did listen, sir\_I

did, indeed, sir.

Sir C. Does your memory furnish you with any other villany of yours, that may save me the trouble of an explanation?

Faddle. I'll think, sir--What the devil shall I

say now? [Aside. Sir C. Take care; for every lie thou tellest me,

shall be scored ten fold upon thy flesh. Answer me.

How came Mr. Belmont's sister by that anonymous letter?

Faddle. Letter, sir!

Sir C. Whence came it, I say?

Faddle. Is there no remission, sir?

Sir C. None that thou canst deserve: for honesty is not in thy nature.

Faddle. If I confess?

Sir C. Do so then, and trust me,

Faddle. Yes, and so be beat to a mummy by Charles

-If you won't tell him, sir-

Sir C. I'll think on't.

Faddle. Why then, sir—But he'll certainly be the death of me—It was by his contrivance I wrote the letter, and sent it from the King's Arms.

Sir C. Very well, sir. And did you know to what

purpose it was sent?

Faddle. Yes, sir; it was to alarm the family against Fidelia, that Charles might get her into private lodgings—That was all, as I hope to be saved, sir!

Sir C. Was it, sir? And upon what principles were

you an accomplice in this villany?

Faddle. I was out of money, sir, and not over-valiant; and Charles promised and threatened—'Twas either a small purse, or a great cudgel—And so, I took the one, to avoid tother, sir.

Sir C. And what dost thou deserve for this?

Faddle. 'Pray, sir, consider my honest confession, and think me paid already, if you please, sir.

Sir C. For that thou art safe. If thou wouldst

continue so, avoid me. Begone, I say!

Faddle. Yes, sir --- and well off too, 'faith.

[Aside, and going.

Sir C. Yet stay—If thou art open to any sense of shame, hear me.

Faddle. I will, sir.

Sir C. Thy life is a disgrace to humanity. A foolish prodigality makes thee needy: need makes thee vicious, and both make thee contemptible. Thy wit is prostituted to slander and buffoonery; and thy judgments, if thou hast any, to meanness and villany. Thy betters, that laugh with thee, laugh at thee: and who are they? The fools of quality at court, and those who ape them in the city. The varieties of thy life are pitiful rewards, and painful abuses; for the same trick that gets thee a guinea to-day, shall get thee beaten out of doors to-morrow. Those who caress thee are enemies to themselves; and when they know it, will be so to thee: in thy distresses they'll desert thee, and leave thee, at last, to sink in thy poverty unregarded and unpitied. If thou canst be wise, think of me, and be honest. [Exit.

Faddle. I'll endeavour it, sir—A most excellent discourse, 'faith; and mighty well there was not a larger congregation.—So, so !—I must be witty, with a vengeance!—What the devil shall I say to Charles, now?—And here he comes, like poverty and

the plague, to destroy me at once-Let me see-Av -as truth has saved me with one, I'll try what a little lying will do with t'other.

#### Enter Young Belmont.

Ha! ha! ha! Oh, the rarest sport, Charles!

Bel. What sport, prythee?

Faddle. I shall burst!-Ha! ha! ha!-The old gentleman has let me into all his secrets!

Bel. And, like a faithful confidant, you are going

to reveal them.

Faddle. Not a breath, Charles-Only that I am in commission, my dear, that's all.

Bel. So I suppose, indeed.

Faddle. Nay, Charles, if I tell thee a lie, cut my throat. The short of the matter is, the old poacher, finding me in the secret, thought it the wisest way to make a confidant of me; and this very moment, my dear, I am upon the wing to provide lodgings for the occasion.

Bel. If this should be apocryphal, as my father

says-

Faddle. Gospel every syllable, as I hope to be saved -Why, what in the devil's name have I to do, to be inventing lies for thee ?- But here comes the old gentleman again, 'faith-Oh, the devil! [Aside.]-Pr'ythee, stroke him down a little, Charles, if 'tis only to see how awkward he takes it-I must about the lodgings, ha! ha! ha!-But if ever I set foot in this house again, may a horse-pond be my portion !

[ Aside, and exit.

Enter SIR CHARLES RAYMOND, with a Letter in his Hand, speaking to a SERVANT.

Sir C. Bid him wait a little, and I'll attend him. [Exit SERVANT.] What can this mean?—Let me read it again. [Reads.] If the interest of Sir Charles Raymond's family be dear to him, he will follow the bearer with the same haste that he would shun ruin .- That he would shun ruin! This is strange! But, be it as it will. I have another concern that must take place first.

Bel. Sir Charles, your servant. Any news, sir?

Sir C. Not much, sir; only, that a young gentleman of honour and condition had introduced a virtuous lady to his family; and, when a worthless fellow defamed her innocence, and robbed her of her quiet, he, who might have dried her tears, and vindicated her virtue, forsook her in her injuries, to debauch his mind with the assassin of her reputation.

Bel. If your tale ends there, sir, you have learned but half on't; for my advices add, that a certain elderly gentleman, of title and fortune, pitying the forlorn circumstances of the lady, has offered her terms of friendship and accommodation; and this night she bids farewell to maidenhood, and a female bedfellow.

in private apartments.

Sir C. You treat me lightly, Mr. Belmont.

Bel. You use me roughly, Sir Charles. Sir C. How, sir?

Bel. In the person of Fidelia.

Sir C. Make it appear, and you shall find me a

very boy in my submissions.

Bel. I would be time lost; and I can employ it to advantage. But remember, sir, that this house is another's, not yours; that Fidelia is under my direction, not yours; and that my will must determine her removal, not yours.

Sir C. Is she your slave, sir, to bear the burden of your insults without complaining, or the right of

chusing another master?

Bel. And who shall be that master? You, sir? The poor bird, that would escape the kite, is like to find warm protection from the fox!

Sir C. Pr'ythee, think me a man, and treat me as such.

Bel. As the man I have found you, Sir Charles. Your grave deportment, and honesty of heart, are covers only for wantonness and design. You preach up temperance and sobriety to youth, to monopolize, in age, the vices you are unfit for.

Sir C. Hark you, young man—you must curb this impetuous spirit of yours, or I shall be tempted to teach you manners, in a method disagreeable to you.

Bel. Learn them first yourself, sir. You say Fidelia is insulted by me; how is it made out? Why, truly, I would possess her without marriage!——I would so. Marriage is the thing I would avoid: 'tis the trick of priests, to make men miserable, and women insolent. I have dealt plainly, and told her so. Have you said as much? No; you wear the face of honesty, to quiet her fears; that, when your blood boils, and security has stolen away her guard, you may rush at midnight upon her beauties, and do the ravage you have sworn to protect her from.

Sir C. Hold, sir. You have driven me beyond the limits of my patience; and I must tell you, young man, that the obligations I owe your father, demand no returns that manhood must blush to make. Therefore, hold, I say; for I have a sword to do me justice, though it should leave my dearest friend

childless.

Bel. I fear it not.

Sir C. Better tempt it not; for your fears may come too late. You have dealt openly with Fidelia, you say: deal so for once with me, and tell me, whence came that vile scroll to Rosetta this after-

Bel. It seems, then, I wrote it. You dare not

think so.

Sir C. I dare speak, as well as think, where homour directs me.

Bel. You are my accuser, then?

Sir C. When I become so, I shall take care, Mr. Belmont, that the proof waits upon the accusation.

Bel. I disdain the thought.

Sir C. Better have disdained the deed.

Bel. I do both - and him that suspects me.

Sir C. Away! You fear him that suspects you; and have disdained neither the thought nor the deed.

Bel. How, sir? [Drawing.

Sir C. Put up your sword, young man, and use it in a better cause: this is a vile one. And now you shall be as still through shame, as you have been loud through pride. You should have known, that cowards are unfit for secrets.

Bel. And if I had, sir?

Sir C. Why, then, sir, you had not employed such a wretch as Faddle, to write that letter to Rosetta.

Bel. The villain has betrayed me! But I'll be sure

on't. [Aside.] He durst not say I did!

Sir C. You should rather have built your innocence upon the probability of his unsaying it; for the same fear that made him confess to me, may make him deny every syllable to you.

Bel. What has he confessed, sir?

Sir C. That, to-day, at dinner, you prompted the letter that he wrote. That your design was, by vilifying Fidelia, to get her dismissed, and the dismission to prepare her ruin in private lodgings. Was this your open behaviour, sir?

Bel. Go on with your upbraidings, sir. Speak to me as you will, and think of me as you will. I have

deserved shame, and am taught patience,

Sir C. Was this well done? Did her innocence, and her undissembled love, deserve this treatment?

Bel. Proceed, sir.

Sir C. No, sir, I have done. If you have sense of your past conduct, you want not humanity to heal

the wounds it has given. Something must be done, and speedily.

Bel. What reparation can I make her?

Sir C. Dry up her tears, by an immediate acknowledgment of her wrongs.

Bel. I would do more.

Sir C. Bid her farewell, then, and consent to her removal.

Bel. I cannot, sir.

Sir C. Her peace demands it: but we'll talk of that hereafter. If you have honour, go and do her justice, and undeceive your abused sister. Who waits there?—Indeed, you have been to blame, Mr. Belmont.

#### Enter SERVANT.

Show me to the bearer of this letter.

[Exit, with the SERVANT.

Bel. Why, what a thing am I!—But'tis the trick of vice, to pay her votaries with shame; and I am rewarded amply. To be a fool's fool too! to link myself in villany with a wretch below the notice of a man! and to be outwitted by him!—So, so!—I may have abused Sir Charles too—Let me think a little—I'll to Fidelia instantly, and tell her what a rogue I have been. But will that be reparation?—I know but of one way; and there my pride stops me—And then I lose her—Worse and worse!—I'll think no more on't; but away to her chamber, and bid her think for me.

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# ACT THE FIFTH.

# SCENE I.

An Apartment in SIR ROBERT BELMONT'S House.

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Enter SIR ROBERT BELMONT and SERVANT. SIR ROBERT with a Letter in his Hand.

Sir R. Very fine doings, indeed! But I'll teach the dog to play his tricks upon his father. A man had better let a lion loose in his family, than a town-rake. Where is Sir Charles, I say?

Serv. This moment come in, sir.

Sir R. And why did not you say so, blockhead? Tell him I must speak with him this moment.

Serv. The servant says, he waits for an answer to

that letter, sir.

Sir R. Do as I bid you, rascal, and let him wait. Fly, I say! [Exit Servant.]—The riotous young dog! to bring his harlots home with him! But I'll outwit the baggage.

#### Enter SIR CHARLES RAYMOND.

Oh, Sir Charles, 'tis every word as we said this morning! The boy has stolen her, and I am to be ruined by a law-suit.

Sir C. A law-suit! with whom, sir?

Sir R. Read, read! [Gives the Letter.

Sir C. [Reads.] I am guardian to that Fidelia, whom your son has stolen from me, and you unjustly detain. If you deny her to me, the law shall right me. I wait your answer by the bearer, to assert my claim in GEORGE VILLIARD. the person of

Why, then, my doubts are at an end. But I must conceal my transports, and wear a face of coolness, while my heart overflows with passion. [Aside.

Sir R. What, not a word, Sir Charles?-There's a piece of work for you !- And so I am to be ruined! Sir C. Do you know this Villiard, Sir Robert?

Sir R. Whether I do or not, sir, the slut shall go

to him this moment.

man education deviation

Sir C. Hold a little. This gentleman must be heard, sir; and, if his claim be good, the lady restored.

Sir R. Why, e'en let her go as it is, Sir Charles. Sir C. That would be too hasty. Go in with me,

sir, and we'll consider how to write to him.

Sir R. Well, well, well-I wish she was gone, though. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. tray end by hear density safe had

# Another Apartment.

## Enter Young Belmont and Fidelia.

Bel. Ask me not why I did it, but forgive me. Fid. No, sir, 'tis impossible. I have a mind, Mr. Belmont, above the wretchedness of my fortune; and, helpless as I am, I can feel in this breast a sense of injuries, and spirit to resent them. Bel. Nay, but hear me, Fidelia.

Fid. Was it not enough to desert me in my distresses, to deny me the poor request I made you, but must you own yourself the contriver of that letter? This insupportable! If I consented to assume a rank that belonged not to me, my heart went not with the deceit. You would have it so, and I complied. Twas shame enough, that I had deceived your sister; it needed not that I should bring a prostitute to her friendship. This was too much, too much, Mr. Belmont.

Bel. Yet hear me, I say.

Fid. And then, to leave me to the malice of that wretch; to have my supposed infamy the tavern jest of his licentious companions!—I never flattered myself, Mr. Belmont, with your love; but knew not, till now, that I have been the object of your hatred.

Bel. My hatred! But I have deserved your hardest thoughts of me.—And yet, believe me, Fidelia, when

I used you worst, I loved you most.

Fid. Call it by another name; for love delights in acts of kindness—Were yours such, sir?—And yet, must 1 forget all; for I owe you more than injuries can cancel, or gratitude repay.

Bel. Generous creature! This is to be amiable in-

deed! But, must we part, Fidelia?

Fid. I have resolved it, sir, and you must yield to

Bel. Never, my sweet obstinate.

Fid. That I have loved you, 'tis my pride to acknowledge; but that must be forgot. And the hard task remains, to drive the passion from my breast, while I cherish the memory of your humane offices. This day, then, shall be the last of our meeting. Painful though it may be, yet your own, mine, and the family's peace, requires it. Heaven, in my distresses, has not left me destitute of a friend; or, if it had, I can find one in my innocence, to make even poverty supportable.

Bel. You have touched me, Fidelia; and my heart yields to your virtues. Here, then, let my follies have an end; and thus let me receive you as the everlasting partner of my heart and fortune.

Offers to embrace her.

Fid. No, sir. The conduct, that has hitherto secured my own honour, shall protect yours. I have been the innocent disturber of your family; but never will consent to load it with disgrace.

Bel. Nor can it be disgraced. I mean to honour

it. Fidelia: you must comply.

Fid. And repay generosity with ruin! No, Mr. Belmont; I can forego happiness, but never can consent to make another miserable.

Bel. When I repent, Fidelia; -But, see, where my

sister comes, to be an advocate for my wishes!

#### Enter ROSETTA.

Ros. Oh, sir, you are found! You have done nobly indeed! But your thefts are discovered, sir. This lady's guardian has a word or two for you.

Bel. Her guardian ? Upon my life, Fidelia, Vil-

liard! He comes as I could wish him.

Ros. Say so when you have answered him, brother. Am I to lose you at last then, Fidelia? And yet my hopes flatter me, that this too, as well as the letter, is a deceit .- May I think so, Fidelia?

Fid. As truly as of your goodness, Rosetta. Your brother will tell you all. Oh, he has made me

miserable by his generosity!

Bel. This pretended guardian, sister, is a villain, and Fidelia, the most abused of women! Bounteous he has been indeed: but to his vices, not his virtues, she stands indebted for the best of educations. The story will amaze you. At twelve years old-

Ros. He's here, brother, and with him, my papa,

Sir Charles, and the colonel. Now, Fidelia.

Enter SIR ROBERT BELMONT, SIR CHARLES RAYMOND, COLONEL RAYMOND and VILLIARD.

Sir C. If that be the lady, Mr. Villiard, and your claim as you pretend, Sir Robert has told you, she shall be restored sir.

Sir R. Yes, sir, and your claim as you pretend.

Vil. [Going to Fidelia.] This, gentlemen, is the lady; and this, the robber, who stole her from me—[Pointing to Belmont.] By violence, and at midnight, he stole her.

Bel. Stole her, sir!

Vil. By violence, and at midnight, I say.

Bel. You shall be heard, sir.

Vil. Ay, sir, and satisfied. I stand here, gentlemen, to demand my ward.

Sir C. Give us proofs, sir, and you shall have jus-

tice.

Vil. Demand them there, sir. [Pointing to Bel-MONT and FIDELIA.] I have told you, I am robbed: if you deny me justice, the law shall force it.

Sir C. A little patience, sir. [To VILLIARD.] Do

you know this gentleman, Fidelia?

Fid. Too well, sir.

Sir C. By what means, sir, did you become her guardian? [To VILLIARD.

Vil. By the will of her who bore her, sir. Sir C. How will you reply to this, Fidelia?

Fid. With truth and honesty, sir. Bel. Let him proceed, madam.

Vil. Ay, sir, to your part of the story; though both are practised in a damned falsehood to confront me.

Bel. Falsehood?-But I am cool, sir. Proceed.

Vil. My doors were broken open at midnight, by this gentleman, [Pointing to Belmont.] myself wounded, and Fidelia ravished from me. He ran off with her in his arms. Nor, till this morning, in a

coach which brought her hither, have my eyes ever beheld her.

Sir R. A very fine business, truly, young man!

To BELMONT.

Fid. He has abused you, sir. Mr. Belmont is noble-

Bel. No matter, Fidelia. Well, sir, you have been robbed, you say? To VILLIARD.

Vil. And will have justice, sir.

Bel. Take it from this hand then. Drawing. Sir C. Hold, sir. This is adding insult to injuries. Fidelia must be restored, sir.

Sir R. Ay, sir, Fidelia must be restored.

Fid. But not to him. Hear but my story, and, if I deceive you, let your friendship forsake me. He bought me, gentlemen, for the worst of purposes; he bought me of the worst of women. A thousand times has he confessed it, and, as often, pleaded his right of purchase to undo me. Whole years have I endured his brutal solicitations; till, tired with entreaties, he had recourse to violence. This scene was laid, and I had been ruined beyond redress, had not my cries brought the generous Mr. Belmont to my relief. He was accidentally passing by, and, alarmed at midnight, by a woman's shrieks, he forced open the door, and saved me from destruction.

Sir C. How will you answer this, sir?

To VILLIARD.

Vil. 'Tis false, sir! That woman was her nurse;-

these hands delivered her to her care.

Fid. Alas, gentlemen, she tound me a helpless infant at her door! So she has always told me; and, at twelve years old, betrayed me to that monster. Search out the woman, if she be alive, and let me be confronted.

Sir R. If this be true, Sir Charles, I shall bless myself as long as I live, for getting my boy. [Weeps. Vil. Tis false, I say!—a damned contrivance to

escape me. I stand here, sir, to demand my ward. [To Sir Robert.] Deny her to me, at your peril.

Bel. He shall have my life as soon.

Vil. Hark you, sir: [To Sir Robert.] There are things called laws, to do right to the injured. My appeal shall be to them.

Sir C. That woman must be produced, sir.

[To VILLIARD.

Vil. And shall, sir, in a court of justice. Our next meeting shall be there. Till then, madam, you are secure.

Bel. Take care that you are so, sir, when we have occasion to call upon you. You shall have justice.

Vil. And will, sir, in defiance of you. [Exit. Sir C. Fear not, Fidelia; we believe, and will pro-

tect you.

Ros. My sweet girl !—But whence came the letter this afternoon?

Bel. 'Twas I that wrote it.

Ros. Oh, monstrous!—And could you be that wretch, brother?

Bel. And will atone for it, by the only recompense that's left me.

Sir R. And what recompense will you make her,

ha, rogue?

Bel. I have injured her, sir, and must do her justice. If you would retrieve my honour, or promote my happiness, give me your consent, sir, to make her your daughter.

Ros. Why, that's my brother! Now, I am sure

she's innocent. And so you will, papa.

Sir R. But, positively, I will not, child. Marry her, indeed! What! without a shilling, and be ruined by Villiard into the bargain? If your story be true, Fidelia, you shall be provided for: But no marrying, d'ye hear, child?

Fid. You need not doubt me, sir.

Sir R. Why, that's well said, Fidelia!

Ros. And deserves reward, sir. Pray, Sir Charles,

let us have your thoughts upon this matter.

Sir C. Your brother's proposal, madam, and Fidelia's denial, are as generous, as your father's determination is just.

Bel. I expected as much, sir. " and the bell

Sir C. My opinion was asked, sir.

Bel. And you have given it: I thank you, sir.

Sir C. Think of Villiard, Mr. Belmont; his claim may be renewed, sir.

Bel. Fidelia has deceived you then-You think

otherwise, Sir Charles?

Ray. My life upon her innocence!-And where the fortune on one side is more than sufficient, how light is all addition to it, compared to the possession of her one loves !- Let me, sir, be happy in Rosetta, [To SIR ROBERT.] and give her fortune to Fidelia, to make her an object worthy of your son.

Ros. There's a colonel for you!-What says my

sweet Fidelia?

Fid. I intended to be silent, madam; but 'tis now my duty to speak. You have been my deliverer, sir. from the worst of evils; [To Belmont.] and now would nobly augment the first obligation by a generosity too mighty for acknowledgment. If I had the wealth of worlds, it would be too little to bestow .--But, poor and friendless as I am, my heart may break, but never shall consent to make my benefactor a penitent to his virtues.

Sir C, 'Tis nobly said, Fidelia !- And now, Mr. Belmont, our disputes will soon be at an end. You have this day, sir, reproached me often; it remains

now, that you should know me as I am.

Bel. If I have erred, sir-

Sir C. Interrupt me not, but hear me. I have watched your follies with concern; and 'tis with equal pleasure I congratulate your return to honour. It I have opposed your generous inclinations, it was only

to give them strength.-I am now a suppliant to your father, for the happiness you desire.

Bel. This is noble, Sir Charles!

Sir C. And to make Fidelia worthy of his son, a fortune shall be added equal to his warmest expectations.

Sir R. Why, ay, Sir Charles, let that be made out, and I shall have no objections.

Fid. What mean you, sir? [To SIR CHARLES.

Sir C. A minute more, and my sweet girl shall be instructed. You have often told me, sir, [To Bet-MONT.] that I had an interest in this lovely creature.

-I have an interest-an interest, that you shall allow me! My heart dotes upon her!-Oh, I can hold no longer!-My daughter! my daughter!

[Running to FIBELIA, and embracing her.

Fid. Your daughter, sir!

Sir C. Oh, my sweet child!-Sir Robert, Mr. Belmont, my son !- These tears-these tears !- Fidelia is my daughter!

Ray. Is't possible?

Sir C. Let not excess of wonder overpower you, Fidelia, for I have a tale to tell, that will exceed belief.

Fid. Oh, sir!

Sir C. Upbraid me not, that I have kept it a moment from your knowledge-'twas a hard trial; and while my tongue was taught dissimulation, my heart bled for a child's distresses.

Bel. Torture us not, sir, but explain this wonder.

Sir C. My tears must have their way first-Oh, my child! my child! [Turning to SIR ROBERT and the rest.] Know then, that wicked woman, so often mentioned, was my Fidelia's governante. When my mistaken zeal drove me into banishment, I left her, an infant, to her care-To secure some jewels of value I had lodged with her, she became the woman you have heard-My child was taught to believe she was a foundling-her name of Harriet, changed to Fidelia; and, to lessen my solicitude for the theft, a letter was dispatched to me, in France, that my infant daughter had no longer a being. Thus was the father robbed of his child, and the brother taught to believe he had no sister.

Fid. Am I that sister, and that daughter? Oh,

Bel. [Running to her, and raising her.] Be composed, my life! A moment's attention more, and your

transports shall have a loose. Proceed, sir.

Sir C. Where she withdrew herself, I could never learn. At twelve years old, she sold her, as you have heard, and never, till yesterday, made inquiry about her. 'Twas then, that a sudden fit of sickness brought her to repentance. She sent for Villiard, who told her minutely what had happened. The knowledge of her deliverance gave her some consolation. But more was to be done yet. She had information of my pardon and return, and ignorant of my child's deliverer, or the place of her conveyance, she at last determined to unburden herself to me. A letter was brought to me this afternoon, conjuring me to follow the bearer with the same haste that I would shun ruin. I did follow him, and received from this wretched woman the story I have told you.

Fid. Oh, my heart! My father! [Kneels.] Have I at last found you? And were all my sorrows past meant only to endear the present transport ?- 'Tis too

much for me!

Sir C. Rise, my child! To find thee thus virtuous. in the midst of temptations, and thus lovely, in the midst of poverty and distress, after an absence of eighteen melancholy years, when imaginary death had torn thee from my hopes; - to find thee thus unexpectedly, and thus amiable, is happiness, that the uninterrupted enjoyments of the fairest life never equalled!

Fid. What must be mine then? Have I a brother too? [Turning to COLONEL RAYMOND.] Oh, my kind fortune?

Ray. My sister! [Embracing her. Fid. Still there is a dearer claim than all, and now

I can acknowledge it-My deliverer!

Bel. And husband, Fidelia! Let me receive you as the richest gift of fortune! [Catching her in his Arms.

Ros. My generous girl! The pride of your alliance is my utmost boast, as it is my brother's happiness!

Sir R. I have a right in her too, for now you are my daughter, Fidelia. [Kisses her.

Fid. I had forgot, sir—If you will receive me as such, you shall find my gratitude in my obedience.

Sir C. Take her, Mr. Belmont, and protect the virtue you have tried.

[Joining their Hands.

Bel. The study of my life, sir, shall be to deserve her.

Fid. Oh, Rosetta! yet it still remains with you to make this day's happiness complete—I have a brother, that loves you.

Ros. I would be Fidelia's sister every way—So take me while I am warm, Colonel! [Giving him her Hand.

Ray. And when we repent, Rosetta, let the next

Ros. With all my heart!

Fid. Now, Rosetta, we are doubly sisters!

Sir C. And may your lives, and your affections,

know an end together!

Bel. [Taking FIDELIA by the Hand.] And now, Fidelia, what you have made me, take me, a convert to honour—I have at last learnt, that custom can be no authority for vice; and, however the mistaken world may judge, he, who solicits pleasure, at the expense of innocence, is the vilest of betrayers.

Yet savage man, the wildest beast of prey, Assumes the face of kindness, to betray: His giant strength against the weak employs, And woman, whom he should protect, destroys. [Exeunt omnes.

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