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A School for Greybeards

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Cowley.(Mrs.) SCHOOL FOR GREYBEARDS. COMEDY. 1786.

A

SCHOOL FOR GREYBEARDS;

OR, THE

MOURNING BRIDE:

A

COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

BY MRS. COWLEY.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXXXVI.

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AN

ADDRESS.

I OFFER the following Comedy to the public, under a circumſtance which has given my mind the moſt exquiſite uneaſineſs. On the morning after the firſt repreſentation, it was obſerved by the papers that there had been perſons preſent at the Theatre the preceding evening, who went there *determined* to diſapprove at all events. From ſuch a determination it is hard indeed to eſcape! And the oppoſition intended, was juſtified it ſeems, by the indecency of ſome of the expreſſions. —From ſuch a charge I feel it impoſſible to defend myſelf; for againſt an imputation like this, even *vindication* becomes diſgraceful!

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As I was not at the Theatre, I ſhould have had ſome difficulty in underſtanding at what paſſages the objections were levelled, had not one of the papers recorded them, with many cruel remarks. The particulars which were thus pointed out, will, I truſt, be a ſufficient apology for themſelves. In the following pages they are *all* reſtored; that the public AT LARGE may have the power to adjudge me, as well as that ſmall part of it, confined within the walls of a Theatre.

Theſe paſſages have not been reſtored from any pertinacious opinion of their beauty—for other expreſſions might have conveyed my intention as well; but had I allowed one line to ſtand as altered for the ſtage, what might not that reprobated line have been ſuppoſed to expreſs? I ſhrink from the idea! And therefore moſt ſolemnly aver, that the Comedy, as now printed, contains EVERY WORD which was oppoſed the firſt night, from the ſuſpicion of indelicacy; hoping their *obvious* meaning only will be attended to, without the coarſe ingenuity of ſtrained explanations; which have

have been made, by perſons who ſeem deſirous to ſurround my taſk of dramatic writing, with as many difficulties as poſſible.

A celebrated Critic, more attended to for the diſcrimination and learning which appear in his ſtrictures, than for their *lenity*; in his obſervations on the Greybeards, has the following.

" When Mrs. Cowley gets poſſeſſion of " the ſpirit and turn of a character, ſhe " ſpeaks the language of *that* character better " than *any* of her dramatic cotemporaries."

This, I confeſs, I hold to be very high praiſe; and it is to this very praiſe, which my cotemporaries reſolve I ſhall have no claim. They will allow me, indeed, to draw ſtrong character, but it muſt be without ſpeaking its language. I may give vulgar or low bred perſons, but they muſt converſe in a ſtile of elegance. I may deſign the coarſeſt manners, or the moſt diſguſting folly, but its expreſſions muſt not deviate from the line of politeneſs.

politeneſs. Surely it would be as juſt to exact from the Artiſts who are painting the Gallery of Shakeſpeare, that they ſhould compleat their deſigns without the uſe of light and ſhade.

It cannot be the *Poet*'s mind, which the public deſire to trace, in dramatic repreſentation; but the mind of the *characters*, and the truth of their colouring. Yet in my caſe it ſeems reſolved that the point to be conſidered, is not whether that *dotard*, or that *pretender*, or that *coquet*, would ſo have given their feelings, but whether Mrs. *Cowley* ought ſo to have expreſſed herſelf.

This is a criterion which happily no author is ſubjected to, but thoſe of the drama. The Noveliſt may uſe the boldeſt tints;—ſeizing Nature for her guide, ſhe may dart through every rank of ſociety, drag forth not only the accompliſhed, but the ignorant, the coarſe, and the vulgar-rich; diſplay them in their ſtrongeſt colours, and ſnatch immortality both for them, and for herſelf! I, on the

the contrary, feel encompaſſed with chains when I write, which check me in my happieſt flights, and force me continually to reflect, not, whether *this is juſt?* but, whether *this is ſafe?*

Theſe are vain regrets, which I hope my readers will pardon me, for having a moment indulged. I now haſten to that part of the Comedy which will be found in the following ſheets, as *altered* for the ſecond repreſentation.

The idea of the buſineſs which concerns Antonia, Henry, and Gaſper was preſented to me in an obſolete Comedy; the work of a poet of the drama, once highly celebrated. I ſay the *idea*, for when it is known that in the original the ſcene lay amongſt traders in the city of London—and thoſe traders of the loweſt and moſt deteſtable manners, it will be conceived at once, that in removing it to Portugal, and fixing the characters amongſt the nobility, it was hardly poſſible to carry with me *more* than the idea. The circumſtance which moſt particularly intereſted me,

and fixed itſelf in my mind, was that of ſnatching a young woman from a hateful marriage, the moment before that marrige became valid—that is to ſay, after the ceremony. This very circumſtance to which the Comedy owes its exiſtence, was that, which ſome of the audience found diſcordant to their feelings. An event which had in the laſt century been ſtampt with the higheſt applauſe, (tho' ſurrounded by many repulſive circumſtances) was found in this, to be ill-conceived. I did not, however, diſpute the deciſion of my Critics,—and the marriage has been in courſe diſſolved.

The manner in which the Comedy has ſince been received, gives room to ſuppoſe that the alteration is approved. It has ſtruggled with many oppreſſive circumſtances: the chaſm in the performance, occaſioned by the repeated illneſs of Mr. Parſons, was ſufficient to have ſunk it;—but neither that, nor the ſterile month of December, always *againſt* the Theatres, has prevented its being diſtinguiſhed by many brilliant and crouded nights.

nights. I now reſign it to the cloſet, where without the aid of fine acting, or the faſcinations of beauty, and deriving all its little force from the pen which compoſed it, it hopes ſtill to amuſe;—the innocent flame of Seraphina's coquetry may ſtill ſhed rays of delight on her readers, and the affecting ſituation of Antonia intereſt them.

H. COWLEY.

PROLOGUE.

BY MR. COBB.

SPOKEN BY MR. BANNISTER, JUN.

PROLOGUES, like mirrors, which opticians place
In their ſhop windows, to reflect each face
That paſſes by—ſtill mark how faſhion varies;
Reflecting Ton in all her wild vagaries:
Point out when hats and caps are large or ſmall,
And regiſter when collars riſe or fall.
Caricature the faſhionable hobby;
And tell if boots or ſhoe-ſtrings grace the lobby:
Nay, bolder grown, have ſought for your applauſe,
With many a naughty joke on cork and gauze.
Yet howſoe'er the ſaucy comic muſe
Delights fantaſtic faſhion to abuſe,
From pert Thalia's wit let's try to ſave her,
And ſee what can be ſaid in faſhion's favour.
How many own immortal Handel's ſway,
Since faſhion to the Abbey led the way!
There taking long neglected nature's part,
She hail'd him Shakeſpeare of th' harmonic art.
In vain had warbled Galatea's woe,
If faſhion had not bid the tear to flow.
"Hailſtones and fire" had ſpent their rage in vain;
You might as well have heard a ſhower of rain.
But now, awaken'd to his magic ſong,
Folks wonder how the deuce they've ſlept ſo long.

His tortur'd airs, all voices made to ſuit,
His choruſſes adapted for a flute.
Hand organ, hurdygurdy, tambourine;
In Handel's praiſe all join the general din.
When Miſs is teiz'd to ſing by every gueſt;
And fond Mamma, too, joining with the reſt,
Cries, "Get the new guittar Papa has bought you;
Play the laſt leſſon Mr. Tweedle taught you."
Miſs hems and ſimpers—feigns a cold of courſe;
After the uſual "Dear Sir, I'm ſo hoarſe,"
Inſtead of a cotillon from her book,
Where favour'd Handel triumphs o'er Malbrouk.
By way of prelude to the charming ſquall,
Thrums like a minuet the March in Saul.
Papa too, who a connoiſſeur now grows,
Accompanies divinely—with his noſe.
Since muſic is ſo univerſal grown,
Shall not our Mourning Bride its influence own?
Sure 'tis the wiſh of ev'ry female breaſt
That harmony may ſoothe her cares to reſt.
Guided by *harmony's* enchanting laws,
Her ſweeteſt muſic will be your applauſe.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Don Alexis, - - -	Mr. KING.
Don Gaſper, - - -	Mr. PARSONS.
Don Octavio - - -	Mr. PALMER.
Don Henry, - - -	Mr. KEMBLE.
Don Sebaſtian, - -	Mr. BANNISTER, Jun.
Donna Seraphina, -	Miſs FARREN.
Donna Antonia, - -	Mrs. CROUCH.
Donna Viola, - -	Mrs. BRERETON.
Donna Clara, - -	Mrs. CUYLER.
Rachel, - - - -	Mrs. WRIGHTEN.
Cartola, - - - -	Mrs. WILSON.

Bride Maids, Ladies, Servants, &c.

SCENE, Portugal.

SCHOOL FOR GREYBEARDS;

OR, THE

MOURNING BRIDE.

ACT I.

SCENE, *An Apartment at* Don Sebaſtian's.

Enter two Servants, on oppoſite ſides.

Pedrillo.

SO our Maſter is dreſſing, to dine with Don Gaſper to-day, previous to the wedding ceremony.

Jaquez. Yes—Gad the bride will be well match'd! there's hardly a richer man in Liſbon.

Pedrillo. Well married you mean;—as to the match, you might have made a better, between a canary bird and a jack-a-lantern. Sixty-five and eighteen, is a union full as vapoury and unnatural.

Jaquez. Now you have done it! Prithee who can that ſtranger be, ſo muffled up, without?

Pedrillo. I know not—he takes as much pains to hide his face, as tho' he had ſtol'n it.

Jaquez. Silly!—ſtol'n faces are always ſhewn off the moſt boldly; witneſs our Ladies, after they have been robbing the rouge pots. But as to this ſtranger! he ſays he comes from our Maſter's friend, Don Henry.

Pedrillo. Hah! does he ſo? What that Don Henry who was obliged to fly, for having fought a duel?

Jaquez. The ſame. Hang me if I'd be playing at hide-and-ſeek in foreign lands, for drawing a little blood. I'd go boldly to court, and aſk to ſpeak to the Queen's Majeſty, and fall upon my knees, and ſay——

Pedrillo. Hiſt; here comes Don Sebaſtian.

(*Enter* Sebaſtian.)

Here is a ſtranger waiting without Sir.

Sebaſ. Who is he?

Pedrillo. Truly, Sir, I can't diſcover. I have queſtion'd and croſs queſtion'd him to no purpoſe ——he's as dexterous at ſhifting an anſwer, as tho' he was foſter-brother to a lawyer.

Jaquez. But he ſays, Sir, he came from Don Henry,—he who was oblig'd to fly his country for challenging the ——.

Sebaſ. Hah! Where is he? (*going to the wing*) No, bring him hither—bring him inſtantly! The brave unfortunate Don Henry! This hour will be to him, the heavieſt of his life. (*he enters*) Welcome, Sir! the friend of Don Henry cannot find a houſe in Portugal, where he would be more joyfully received.

Henry. What, Sir! dare you thus receive the friend of a baniſh'd man?—of a man, who were he ſeen in Liſbon, would have his head claimed the next hour, by the executioner? If thus you can receive his friend, how will you receive himſelf? (*Throwing open his cloak.*)

Sebaſ. In my arms, and in my heart! I re—— no, I do not rejoice. Oh Don Henry, what imprudence! How dare you venture hither before your pardon has been obtained?

Henry. Could you ſuppoſe the intelligence of Antonia's marriage, would ſuffer me to reſt in any other ſpot, that the proud ſun viſits? Had I been beneath the zone from whence he pours his broadeſt rays, or in the duſky regions of Cimmeria, ſuch intelligence muſt have impell'd me hither!

Sebaſ. And to what purpoſe? Surely this is a ſort of Quixotiſm, that muſt end, like the ſublime Knight's contention with the windmills.

Henry. I care not how it ends. The diſpleaſure of my ſovereign, and my heart torn by the ingratitude of the woman on whom it doats—the ſooner the end approaches, the better!

Sebaſ. I am not now to learn, how hard it is, to ſtem the torrent of your paſſions—yet if you would be patient, all might be well.—At leaſt I truſt ſo; tho' my viſit to England, at that period, prevented my knowing preciſely the ground of your quarrel.

Henry. Quarrel! (*with contempt*) Do you then ſuſpect it was *a fray* in which I fought; or that my ſword is drawn in tavern brawls; or to ſupport the inſolence, or perfidy of an abandoned wanton? Duels of that ſort, a ſoldier ſtoops not to!

Sebaſ. Pray then inform——

Henry. I fought to punish the slanderer of him, who taught me *how* to fight—the brave D'Almeida; that once conquering hero!

Sebaſ. I knew him well.

Henry. 'Twas he first plac'd a sword upon my youthful thigh; and drawing forth the burnish'd blade, never my Henry, said the hoary general —— "never be its lustre stain'd, except to serve your king, or vindicate your friend! These are the outlines of a soldier's duty;—would you be a perfect soldier? Labour to be an exemplary man!" with *that* sword——I thank it! (*holding his sword, and bending over it*) I punish'd *his* traducer!

Sebaſ. Surely you cannot doubt of pardon.

Henry. But, whilst I wait for pardon in another kingdom, my Antonia's lost—oh!

Sebaſ. Is she not already lost?

Henry. No, she is not—and by heaven she shall not! She's my contracted wife;—no power on earth can make her another's, whilst I live.

Sebaſ. All this, my friend, only proves the bitter excess of your disappointment—have you any settled scheme?

Henry. I have.—At Madrid it chanc'd that Don Julio, nephew to old Gaſper my rival, conceived a warm attachment for me.—From him I learnt the news of this abhorr'd marriage—the agonies it threw me in, he compassionated; and formed a scheme, which wears a face of success.

Sebaſ. Alas!—it is—well, but pray go on.

Henry. Learning that my person was unknown to Don Gaſper, whose retired life throws him out of all public circles, Julio conceived the resolution to make me pass for himself.

Sebaſ.

Sebaſ. You to paſs for Don Gaſper's nephew—well!

Henry. With this view he pretended an ardent deſire to viſit Portugal. His father has in courſe written to Don Gaſper; we both arrived laſt night, and Julio has given me the letter, which will fix me in the houſe of my rival; to prevent, by whatever means that may offer themſelves, the deſign upon my honour—the robbery of my wife!

Sebaſ. My dear unhappy Henry, ſummon your fortitude whilſt I tell you, that Don Julio's friendſhip, united with your own temerity, cannot ſave your honour—if your honour is to be wounded by—(*ſhaking his head.*)

Henry. What's that? oh ſpeak Sebaſtian—my apprehenſions choak me!

Sebaſ. I cannot give ſound to words ſo cruel—but fly, and ſave that life, which if you are diſcovered here, muſt be forfeited.

Henry. Hah—I underſtand you—ſhe's married! ſhe's married! Antonia is another's! Oh, Sebaſtian — let me breathe! (*throwing himſelf on Sebaſtian.*)

Sebaſ. Courage man! if you would but ſwear a little now, and give all the ſex, black, brown, and yellow, to the devil, I ſhould have ſome hopes of you.

Henry. Oh!

Sebaſ. There's no bearing this! a fine young fellow yielding himſelf to deſpair, at the very moment his perfidious miſtreſs is giving herſelf to another! This very day ſhe weds Don Gaſper.

Henry. This very day ſaid'ſt thou?—oh, ſpeak it again Sebaſtian—bleſs me with the ſound! is it this very day?

Sebaſ. Alas! he's mad.

Henry.

Henry. Oh, no; if it be *but* this day, there yet are hopes.——

Sebaſ. She is now in the houſe of your rival. According to the cuſtom of our country, ſhe this morning went there, attended by her bride-maids; and in the evening old Gaſper receives her vows.

Henry. They are mine!—in the face of heaven, and before witneſſes they are mine;—if ſhe has given them to another they cannot be valid, but by my aſſent. I'll fly inſtantly to the houſe—

(*going.*)

Sebaſ. Nay, ſuffer me to attend you; for tho' I have dear and tender cares of my own, I ſhall ſcarcely be awake to them, whilſt my friend is in ſuch danger!

Don Henry. Oh, Sebaſtian! the bliſs or miſery of all my years to come, muſt be determined before the approaching night hath told out half its hours. The enterprize is difficult—is full of danger! but what danger can be formidable to a wretch, who, precipitated on a gulph, muſt leap it, or be loſt? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to* Don Gaſper's.

He enters, meeting Rachel.

Don Gaſper. Well Rachel, how is my little girl? how is the bride? Are her ſpirits got up? What does ſhe do?—What does ſhe ſay?

Rachel. Oh lord, Sir, ſhe ſays but little; and as to doing, a half ſtifled ſigh pops out now and then, or elſe ſhe's as ſtill as an ivory ſtatute.

Don Gaſp. Statute! but why don't you talk to her then, *Mrs. Statute*; and tell her how happy ſhe

ſhe is? You ſhould ſay d'ye ſee ma'am what a fine houſe you are miſtreſs of?—d'ye ſee ma'am how many ſervants are at your command?—and this rich caſket of jewels ma'am, which my maſter preſents to you—how many ladies will envy you theſe jewels!—Did not her eyes ſparkle when ſhe found e'm on her toilet?

Rachel. No, Sir; but they glitter'd—for there was a tear in each.

Don Gaſp. Tear! ay tears of joy, to be ſure!

Rachel. The bride-maids and the reſt of the ladies endeavour'd all they could to divert her, but to no purpoſe—ſo I up, and ſaid—ſays I, laws! ma'am, you are the happieſt lady in Portugal. My maſter is the moſt agreeableſt man for an old—I mean a middle-aged gentleman—that was the word indeed, Sir! for a middle-aged gentleman in all the world. He's never out of temper, nor peeviſh, except when he has got the gout.

Don Gaſp. Pſhaw!

Rachel. Then ſays I, Ma'am, as to wrinkles—Lord, what ſignifies minding a few wrinkles? Why, in forty years, Ma'am, you'll be as wrinkley as he is.

Don Gaſp. What the devil did you talk to her of wrinkles for? Wrinkles! to be ſure I have the crow's feet about my eyes; but many men have them before they are thirty.

Rachel. That's true. Then ſays I, as to my Maſter's teeth, Ma'am, they are as white, and even, and poliſh'd—ay, as your Ladyſhip's! And ſo they are you know, Sir—they have been home but a fortnight.

Don Gaſp. Zounds! Get into the kitchen, and go near your Lady no more. Was there ever ſuch a ſtupid chattering ——

Rachel.

Rachel. It's nuts to me to ſting him, for I pity the poor young creature from my ſoul. [*Exit.*

Don. Gaſp. I don't know whether it is ſtupidity or archneſs in the wench—I am afraid ſhe means to laugh at me. Hang me if I would have married at all, if my ſon would have married; but families muſt be kept up; and nothing can perſuade that young dog into the trammels—he'd rather turn monk than turn to matrimony. (*Enter ſervant*) Well, you ſaw your Lady, honeſt Peter?

Peter. Yes, Sir.

Don Gaſp. Ah—well—well—isn't ſhe a pretty tight thing? Look in the garden—there ſhe trips—there ſhe trips.

Peter. With ſubmiſſion, Sir, I wiſh the *trip* may'nt have been your's. I am afraid this marriage is one of the falſeſt ſteps your worſhip ever made.—And here's my young maſter—I am out, if he does not think ſo too, for all he looks ſo full of ſpirits.

Don Gaſp. What care I for what your young maſter thinks, or you either, you old——

[*Exit ſervant.*

(*Enter* Octavio.)

Octavio. Joy to you, Sir! joy on this feſtive morn! but by the way it is very ill dreſs'd for a bridal morn—the ſame duſky blue it has worn this fortnight; nor has the ſun been at the expence of one ray extraordinary! All nature ſhould have been in gala, on ſuch an event as your nuptials.—But where is my mother? I came eagerly to pay my duty.

Don Gaſp. Mother! Gad it will look odd, to ſee ſuch a ſtrapper as you, call her mother.

Octavio.

Octavio. Shall it be mamma, Sir?

Don Gaſp. No. *Madam*—that's grave and comely. Madam has a diſtant ſound in it—you ſhall call her madam. But inſtead of coming dutifully to congratulate me Sir, why did you not dutifully marry yourſelf?

Octavio. Faith, Sir, of all the duties fate has impoſed upon a man, I think that the hardeſt.

Don Gaſp. 'Tis an impoſition that ſome hundred dozen of your great-grandfires, as wiſe and as witty as your worſhip, have ſubmitted to.

Octavio. 'Tis deviliſh ſtrange, that it was neceſſary for ſo many great men to play the fool, to bring me into exiſtence!

Don Gaſp. There's Don Alexis d'Alva has been half mad to give you his daughter—ever ſince your return from Italy.

Octavio. Ay; had I had the grace to humour him, Sir, how happy for your fair Antonia! She might have become at the ſame moment a virgin bride, and a grandmamma. (*Drawling.*)

Don Gaſp. Pſhaw—nonſenſe!

Octavio. However, Sir, let her not deſpair—ſhe may hope for the honour of being a *grand*-mother yet. I refuſed the daughter of Don Alexis, without having ſeen her; but now that I have ſeen her, I think I could venture to exchange my dear prized liberty, for captivity with her.

Don. Gaſp. Say you ſo my boy? Its the happieſt news that I have heard. But where could you ſee her? for Don Alexis is ſo nicely jealous, that if his ſtone walls had eyes, he'd never ſuffer either his wife or daughter to unveil before them.

Octavio. I ſaw her at church with her father. The ſermon was on Chriſtian charity, and to ſhew

how well she could illustrate the doctrine, she lifted her veil on that side next me—for she saw me hungering, and thirsting, for a view.

Don Gasp. Memorandum—My wife never goes to church.

Octavio. You shock me, Sir——What is my dear mamma to turn heathen?

Don Gasp. No, Sir—I'll read homilies to her, and she shall have prayers at home.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Don Alexis de Alva, Sir, is come to pay his compliments to you on your wedding.

Octavio. 'Tis a happy presage!—Pray recommend my suit Sir, and in the mean time I'll go and ask blessing of the young lady in the garden.

[*Exit.*

Enter Don Alexis.

Don Alexis. So my old friend, you're going to do a wise deed to day; Soloman and the child was nothing to it! Give ye joy—I give ye joy!

Don Gasp. You have a happy knack in your civilities. You wish me joy, as tho' you hoped it would be sorrow; and congratulate with an air of reproach.

Don Alexis. Air of a fiddle-stick's end! Why didn't ye ask my advice? Could any body have given ye better? Have I not done the same thing—have I not made an old ass of myself, by marrying a girl?

Don Gasp. Never mind that, if your girl does not transform your ass-ship's ears to horns.

Don Alexis. Ay, that's a blessed fear to be goaded with, in the last stage of one's mortal journey!

ney! I wiſh the day I left my bed to marry, I had been confined in it with a gout, an aſthma, and a dropſy. Oons man, there's no end of your plagues from this moment!

Don Gaſp. Pray keep your temper now—keep your temper. 'Tis a very bad one; but pray keep it however!

Don. Alexis. Why, you'd find it eaſier to ſpin cables out of cobwebs; or to pierce thro' the earth, and ſwim out at the Antipodes, than to manage a young rantipole wife, and ſo your ſervant—I give ye joy—much good may it do you. [*going.*

Don Gaſp. Stay, ſtay, a moment, man! and tell me which is the greateſt torment, a young wife, or daughter?

Don Alexis. Oh lord! why a daughter is a ſeventh day ague, and a wife is a frenzy fever.

Don Gaſp. Well, come, I'll recommend ye a phyſician for your ague,

Don Alexis. A phyſician—What d'ye mean?

Don Gaſp. Why a lover to take your daughter off your hands.

Don Alexis. Who'll be the bold man to do that?

Don Gaſp. An impudent young raſcal ſix feet and a half high; who upon ſuch authority as huſbands are obliged to take, calls me father; if you like it, he may call *you* ſo.

Don Alexis. What Octavio! Will he be my doctor!—Octavio marry my daughter!—But perhaps this is a wedding day joke of yours, old Signor! Gad you'll find this day's work no joke believe me.

Don Gaſp. If its a joke you have it but at ſecond hand; the original inventor is now in the

houſe, and has juſt deſired me to employ all my intereſt in his favour.

Don Alexis. Intereſt—let him uſe his own intereſt—bid him come. Oh the ſtout rogue!—*Your* intereſt! you have no more than a corkcutter with an archbiſhop. Bid him come, I ſay! I'll hurry home and prepare my daughter. Ay, ay, let boys and girls marry, my old friend, but as for—well I'll ſay no more—much good may it do ye! [*Exit.*

Don Gaſp. By Saint Jeffery the old fellow has made me feel chilly upon the buſineſs!—What brought him here to throw cold water upon all my ardors, and all the pretty little loves that were ſpringing up, and warming the Lapland region about my heart. In one's wintry age thoſe gleams require to be cheriſh'd, and not—Gad I'll go to little Tony—the baggage has never yet given me one kiſs; the warm touch of her lips will be an antidote to his cold poiſon, or I'm—(*going.*)

Enter Servants.

Serv. Sir, here's one Don Julio from Spain.

Don Gaſp. Hey!

Serv. Your worſhip's nephew, Sir, from Madrid. He has brought you a letter from his father, Don Henriques; and deſires you'll admit him to pay his duty.

Don Gaſp. Hah! my own ſiſter's ſon—my poor Olivia's boy, of whom ſhe died in childbed. Let him come in. (*Don Henry introduced.*) My dear nephew, why I am as glad to ſee thee as if—how doſt do? Grown up a man! dear, dear, how time flips! 'Twas but yeſterday that your mother came out of the Convent to be married.——Like her

too

too—very like her indeed! Well, and how doſt do Julio? how is thy father?

Don Henry. Don Henriques was well, Sir, when I left Madrid—that letter will inform you of his wiſhes. Scarcely can I contain my feelings! I am now under the roof with the perfidious Antonia—and this wretch will call her his *wife!* Let him beware how he ſhews the ſlighteſt fondneſs! by heaven if he ſhould——

Don Gaſp. Ay, very well—very well. Your father deſires you may be receiv'd as my gueſt; and adds, that you are of a remarkable ſober ſerious turn. I am glad of it Julio—never be wild my boy! I ſuppoſe you can ſee a pretty woman without wiſhing her huſband at the devil; or endeavouring to perſuade her, that you are a finer fellow than he is.

Don Henry. Thoſe are not my habits, Sir.

Don Gaſp. I believe ye—there's ſomething in your look that confirms what you ſay. Well you are come in happy time—you are going to have a new aunt—I'll preſent ye to her. But ſhe is very rigid;——Remember that! ſhe'll expect ye to treat her with the moſt *diſtant* reſpect. She's not ſo young as ſhe looks; no—no—a ſedate perſon. Some women will look young in ſpite of years.

Don Henry. True, Sir; as ſome men will be fools in ſpite of wrinkles.

Don Gaſp. Ay, you are right nephew—'tis a vile fooliſh age!—Now I'll carry ye to your aunt—hah, here ſhe comes;—but not ſo pretty a woman I aſſure you, when examined; as at the firſt glance—ſome women ſtrike at firſt, you know—

Don Henry. (*Aſide*) Hypocritical ſlanderer! How ſhall I contain my emotions? (Antonia *enters with*

with ladies) Hah! ſhe doth not look happy—ſome conſolation to my rack'd heart!

Don Gaſp. Come deary, cheer up, cheer up! What all theſe trinkets, and rich laces, and finery, not brighten ye? Had you married a young fellow, he'd have made you no ſuch preſents—his money would have been laviſh'd on his miſtreſſes —I'll keep no miſtreſſes; no naughty women ſhall ſeduce thy nown old man.

Antonia. (*Aſide*) Nauſeous! Oh Clara, my fate ſeems to open on me at this moment with a horror I never yet conceived!

Clara. 'Tis a moment too late ſweet couſin! You have ſubmitted to your *fate*, think now how to make your fate ſubmit to *you*.

Gaſp. Out, out, no whiſpering till you grow old enough to turn backbiters! Now call up your ſmiles (*patting Antonia's cheek*), and your pretty roguiſh leers! Come ladies your ſpirits, your wit! I thought every woman was happy on a wedding-day, whether 'twas her own or her neighbour's.

Lady. The bride's penſiveneſs infects us, Sir. Mirth ſeems to be impertinent.

Antonia. Oh pardon me! Were my ſpirits obedient to my wiſhes, your reproach would have been undeſerved; but tho' we can determine how to *act*, I find we cannot determine how to *feel*.

Don Gaſp. Feel, feel! When I was a youngſter, women had no ſuch word in their vocabulary. Can't you leave your feelings alone? Never mind 'em; and then like neglected gueſts they'll be in no hurry to repeat their viſits. I have not regarded my feelings many years; and now they have learnt manners, and don't interrupt me.

Don Henry. (*Aſide*) Not one chance look this way!

way! and yet I can forgive the ſweet averted eye, becauſe it ſpeaks diſguſt to all around her.

Antonia. You know the cauſe I have for ſorrow, and have allowed it; yet my penſiveneſs ought not to throw a weight upon the day;—I *will* be better.

Don Gaſp. Yes, yes, we ſhall be as happy, and as faithful as two turtle-doves—ſhan't we, Pet?

Antonia. I hope to prove my duty, Sir. He never aſk'd my love! (*aſide.*)

Don. Gaſp. Ud! I had forgot——here, here's a nephew of mine—a nephew of *yours* now; pray receive him. Don Julio Cavallo.

(*She curtſies without regarding him.*)

Don Henry. (*aſide*) Where then is the ſecret ſympathy of love, which ſhould inſtruct her that her Henry's near? She *ſhall* obſerve me.—May this day be happy to you, lady; and to him, whom moſt you wiſh to bleſs!

(*She ſtarts at his voice, looks, and ſhricks.*)

Don Gaſp. Heyday little Pet, what ails ye?—why do you ſtart and ſhriek?—he's my own fleſh and blood.

Antonia. Surprize, Sir. Your nephew ſo much—he ſo much reſembles———

Don Gaſp. Ay, like me, mayhap you think. I believe there is a family likeneſs, but that need not have ſcared you ſo.

Antonia. No, Sir, it was not that——his reſemblance is to——to a moſt belov'd relation, whom I have loſt.

Don Gaſp. Oh, what your couſin I ſuppoſe; that fine young man who went to Mexico, and was drown'd——ay, poor fellow he was drown'd!

Antonia. Were Don Henry living, I ſhould believe the ſtranger him; but oh 'tis impoſſible——

the

the grave will not give back its prey; no, not to agonizing love!

Don Gaſp. Come, come, little Pudſey, what d'ye cry for? your couſin that was drown'd, went to Mexico to make his fortune, did'nt he?

Antonia. Yes, Sir.

Don Gaſp. Well, he got his end there—what would you have? Come, let us go to the muſic-room. There you, who have huſbands, will find them; and you who have none, may make ſnares for them. Come, Pet! (*leading her*) *you* are already ſnared; and egad! he muſt look ſharp who gets you out of my net.

(*Exeunt all but Don Henry.*)

Don Henry. Yes I will look ſharp, and get her out of thy net, cloſely as thou haſt entangled her.

(*Donna Clara returns, and twitches his arm.*)

Donna Clara. Turn, young man, I pray! (*he ſtarts*) Good Don Julio, tell Don Henry we did not expect to find him in maſquerade to grace Antonia's nuptials.

Don Henry. I am diſcover'd then——Oh Donna Clara! your faithleſs couſin.

Donna Clara. Faithleſs, has ſhe been?

Don Henry. Is ſhe not this day to be married?

Donna Clara. Truly I think ſo, Signor, or I am not a bridemaid; but how far faithleſs I know not—for I return'd from Arragon laſt night, after more than a year's abſence. We met but an hour ſince in the church, nor have we yet had time for converſation.

Don Henry. Then I entreat you let this diſcovery reſt with yourſelf.—It is of the laſt importance to me, that I ſhould not be known to Don Gaſper; and at preſent, I would be equally concealed from Antonia.

Donna

Donna Clara. You muſt give me reaſons for this requeſt; for I am not certain that I ought not inſtantly to betray you. It is true, you have been her lover, but ſhe is now to be the wife of Don Gaſper;—her duties to him will be of the moſt ſacred ſort, and ſhe muſt fulfil them ſcrupulouſly.

Don Henry. Think me not a ſeducer! I have lov'd Antonia for her purity and virtue; and to deſtroy *her* honour, would be to trample on my own. Oh Clara! few have lov'd as I do. My paſſion is mingled with the tender protecting affection of a brother; and violation is impoſſible!

Donna Clara. Pray then tell me——

Don Henry. You ſhall know all;—and ſhould Antonia's marriage be voluntary, I will take no revenge but to leave her;—but if, as her melancholy allows me to hope, ſhe has been deceiv'd into it, there's not a power on earth that can divide us.

Donna Clara. If your deſign is not contrary to rectitude, be aſſured I ſhall not oppoſe it. Follow me to a more diſtant room——a new ſecret is almoſt as delightful as a new lover. [*Exeunt.*

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

An Apartment at Don Alexis's.

Enter Seraphina, pulling in Alexis.

Seraphina.

COME along, my charming husband! Bless me, what eloquence and fire, considering you are fifty nine! I protest, a man thirty years younger could hardly have found such a variety of things to have said on so trivial a subject. One might mistake you for an English senator, instead of a Portugueze privy counsellor, you can say so much upon nothing.

Alex. Nothing! what is it nothing that whenever I go out of the door, your head is directly out of the window—like the sign of Queen Jezebel? 'Tis known to all the impudent young face-hunters in Lisbon, who saunter about my gates, like wolves before a sheep-fold——d'ye call that nothing?

Seraph. Oh no; Heaven forbid I should be so ungrateful towards the grand pleasure of my life! Nothing! 'tis *every thing*—my happiness! I wait for sunset every day with impatience, because 'tis known that I then mount my throne——that is, I enter my balcony, and see new prostrate subjects adoring, and deifying me.

Alex. Zounds! what a vile cuſtom it was to build houſes with windows! I'll have them all block'd up. Sky-lights are the only things for a Chriſtian country.——Windows and balconies!—they are fit only for Turkiſh baths, and public brothels.

Seraph. Liſten, Deary! and I'll bleſs ye with a ſecret. Blind your windows, and nail your doors, but if your honour (*curſeying*) has no better ſecurity than theſe, you'll be ſoon in the herd, whoſe ideal ornaments (*touching* his *forehead*) are ſo terrific to you.

Alex. The devil's in it if ſtone walls won't keep ye! What ſtronger ſecurity could my honour have?

Seraph. *My* honour! Rely on that, and I ſwear to you by every thing ſacred, that no veſtal's life ſhall be more blameleſs. It is due to my own feelings to be chaſte—I dont' condeſcend to think of yours in the affair. The reſpect I bear myſelf, makes me neceſſarily preſerve my purity——but if I am ſuſpected, watch'd, and haunted, I know not but ſuch torment may weary me out of principles, which I have hitherto cheriſh'd as my life.

Alex. If all this is true, what the devil makes ye ſo fond of admiration?

Seraph. I can't tell what devil makes me ſo fond of admiration; but I know I love admiration, and I will have it; till he, whom you repreſent, ſays no.

Alex. Whom I repreſent! who's that?

Seraph. Mercy! who can it be, but old, ſhrivell'd, grey-pated Time? To *his* negative I ſhall yield—but with a very ill will, I aſſure you. If the paſſion we have for admiration is wrong, let nature look to it—'twas ſhe impreſs'd it on our hearts;

and it is *her* law, that to tyrannize over the peace of man, is to woman conſummation of happineſs!

Alex. And yet you every one of ye pretend to be tender-hearted, and compaſſionate, and all that.

Seraph. Why to ſay truth, one is a ſort of a paradox. At a tale of woe, I melt like Niobe; and am agoniz'd at diſtreſs, if I cannot relieve it; —yet a lover's miſery is delightful! I would not abate a man who adored me a ſingle ſigh; and ſhould have no reſt at night, if I thought he was ſleeping quietly.

Alex. Lord have mercy! (*muttering to himſelf.*)

Seraph. Now I hope you feel yourſelf very much honour'd, that I take you ſo far into my confidence.—If you have a grain of ſenſe, you'll be charm'd with it.

Alex. I don't know what the devil to make of ye. Sometimes I think one thing, and ſometimes another.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Don Octavio, Sir. (*exit*)

Alex. Better he, than Ceſar! I'll wait upon him directly.——Well, I am in the way at laſt, to have one plague leſs however! Don Octavio is come to offer himſelf to Viola——Pray ſtep, and ſend her here to receive him; for I am oblig'd to go inſtantly to council. I ſhall but juſt ſpeak to Octavio, and ſend him up;—charge her to receive him well——ſhe ſhall be married in leſs than a week. (*exit*)

Seraph. I ſhall give his daughter no ſuch charge, poor girl! How can ſhe receive Octavio well, with her heart devoted to Sebaſtian? I wonder what

what ſort of a thing this Signor is—ſome wrinkled privy counſellor, like himſelf, I ſuppoſe. 'Tis very odd now, that thoſe *antients* ſhould take it into their venerable noddles, that a youthful bride is a proper appendage to their dignity; or to fancy that it requires no more talents to pleaſe a pretty wife, than to govern a ſtupid nation. Lord! if my deary would but ſpeak the truth now, and warn his wife brethren——Heyday! is *this* the Octavio? Handſome, I vow! young! bold! *He* a privy counſellor! Mercy, how could I ſlander him ſo? (*Enter Octav.*) Welcome, Don Octavio! for I am inform'd that here you *muſt* have welcome. The man I ſaw at church, I proteſt.

Octav. That cruel *muſt*, checks the tranſport your welcome gave me! May I not hope that *without* a muſt, you would have given me welcome?

Seraph. Oh yes! pray hope it; for as I think the ſeaſon of *hoping*, the moſt delightful in our lives, I ſhould be ſorry to ſhorten yours.

Octav. If you mean to ſhorten my hope by diſappointment, 'tis kind to protract it; but there is a way of ending hope, enchanting Viola! without giving deſpair.

Seraph. Viola, did he call me?

Octav. Oh permit me to believe, that the honour your father allows me, of telling you I adore you, is not diſpleaſing to you.

Seraph. Mercy, he takes me for my huſband's daughter——delightful!

Octav. From the moment I beheld you at veſpers, your image has never left me.

Seraph. I vow I won't undeceive him. I take it very ill of my image, to follow a young man about, and keep ſuch bad company without my leave.

Octav.

Octav. Whilſt your diſpleaſure is thus playful, I can ſupport it.——Oh how charming, to find the information of your face did not deceive me.

Seraph. Why what did it promiſe you?

Octav. Elegance, livelineſs, frankneſs, and underſtanding!

Seraph. Oh dear! how our ſelf-love operates on every occaſion. Had I receiv'd you with frowns, and given you room to believe the commands of Don Alexis unpleaſant to me, you would have thought me intolerably ſtupid, and wonder'd why nature gave intelligent eyes to an ideot.

Octav. I will not defend myſelf; to be the object of your raillery is an enviable diſtinction—pray go on.

Seraph. Nay then I have done. An enemy who won't reſiſt, is not worth combating.

Octav. If you will not combat an unreſiſting enemy, I hope you will condeſcend to rank him with your ſlaves.——Conſent to give me your chains.

Seraph. Oh, by all means—I like to increaſe my captives. There! (*making as though ſhe flung ſomething over his neck*) there are my chains—do you feel them?

Octav. Yes, as roſy wreaths—they delight me!

Seraph. That's not what I intend. I would have you ſigh under them——aye, in downright earneſt too.

Octav. It is impoſſible for me to ſigh in earneſt, unleſs you tell me the hopes Don Alexis has given me, make *you* ſigh in earneſt.

Seraph. What were thoſe hopes, I pray?

Octav. That I ſhould have the tranſporting joy of calling you mine.

Seraph. Indeed——I can hardly think it.

Octav.

Octav. By all the tempting witch'ries of your face, and the ſoft Cupids in your graceful air, 'tis true!

Seraph. So pretty an oath deſerves a civil reply, and I therefore proteſt to you, the moment Don Alexis conſents to my being yours, I'll yield you my hand without reluctance. But after this frank engagement, Don Octavio, I expect you to leave me for the preſent—I have a peculiar reaſon to requeſt this favour. Some one will come in a moment, and ſpoil my roguery. (*aſide*)

Octav. Your commands ſhall ever govern me; but when may I again preſume——

Seraph. I cannot tell you exactly now—be at the gate in the evening. Adieu!—adieu!

(*Running off.*)

Octav. At the gate in the evening! How ſweetly that would ſound, if the little villain had not matrimony in her head. Well, if I muſt be a ſlave at ſome time in my life, e'en let it be now—a deſperate action ſhould be done as ſoon as reſolved on. [*Exit.*

SCENE, Don Alexis's *Garden.*

Sebaſtian *and* Viola *ſeated on a garden chair in the front. He throws flowers at her, then riſes haſtily.*

Sebaſ. No, I ſwear it Viola—I'll love thee no more. No more from this inſtant—I am fix'd!

Viola. (*Coming forward.*) Won't you indeed? Let me look in your face, whilſt you make that wicked oath.

Sebaſ. I could cuff you this inſtant for looking ſo pretty. Heavens! what a horrible length of time

time is before you to do miſchief! Sixteen!—The fire of thoſe eyes can't be quench'd, nor that alabaſter ſkin ſhrivell'd, in leſs than twenty years—oh, 'tis dreadful!

Viola. You are miſtaken. The ſmall pox may fret it, the jaundice may tarniſh it—you've many chances to behold me frightful yet.

Sebaſ. Would to heaven ſome of them would arrive! You to continue ſo lovely, and your father ſo cruel!

Viola. But ſuppoſe the change ſhould happen to my father, and he ſhould favour our wiſhes;—will you then allow me to keep my charms?

Sebaſ. Ay, then indeed—oh, how I would doat on them! Not one but ſhould have its ſeparate ſhare of paſſion divided and ſubdivided.—I'd give to each a twelvemonth, and then begin again.

Viola. Inventive love! ever the ſame, and yet for ever new!

Enter Carlota.

Carl. Bleſs me, madam, Don Alexis is returned;—the council is put off—he is aſking for you, and will be in the garden directly.

Sebaſ. 'Tis impoſſible! ſcarcely have I had time to vent half the *malice* of my tenderneſs—I have been here but three minutes.

Carl. Three minutes! Oh dear—how every woman the noon ſide of twenty would rejoice, if time meaſured out his minutes as love does! You have been here one hour and a quarter, by the great dial at the end of the walk.

Viola. Be it hours, or minutes, you muſt leave me my Sebaſtian—Should my father ſurprize us, I could

could expect nothing leſs than ſix months impriſonment in a garret; with the lives of the ſaints for my ſtudy, and bread and water for my banquet.

Sebaſ. Oh, I would *embrace* the puniſhment, if at the end of the period, he would allow *you* to give me a new impriſonment.

Carl. Now you might as well have put off thoſe two ſpeeches and a half to the next opportunity —ſee the conſequence! here comes the old gentleman. Well, I'll not be in the meſs I aſſure ye —take it all to yourſelves—(*going.*)

Viola. Oh ſtay—ſtay, my dear Carlota! he can't diſcern at this diſtance who we are—let me run away—I'll go into the houſe thro' the cloſe walk, and Sebaſtian ſhall ſtay and paſs for your lover;—it muſt be ſo—the danger will be leſs to you than me.—— [*Exit.*

Carl. Upon my word—ſo *I* muſt be the ſcapegoat! But I won't be blamed I vow—I'll pretend I don't know you.—'Tis very extraordinary, Sir, (*raiſing her voice*) that the gard'ner could not leave the wicket open, whilſt he threw out his rubbiſh, but you muſt throw yourſelf in for more rubbiſh. —If you don't go this minute, I'll call him to bring his baſket, and fling you out again with the reſt.

Sebaſ. I deteſt the ſubterfuge, but I muſt ſubmit to it.—Oh Carlota, I feel that Viola muſt be mine!—— [*Exit.*

Carl. She feels it too.—Ay, pray get you gone, and don't miſtake your neighbour's gardens again. —There—there,—that's your way. (*Going with him thro' the wing.*)

Enter Alexis.

Alexis. Oh you traitreſs—artful ſlut! this muſt be all a feint. I clearly heard *ſhe feels it too!* that *ſhe* muſt concern my wife, or my daughter—oh my blood burns!—"She feels it too!"

Carl. (*re-entering*) I wonder people are not aſhamed of themſelves, I ſwear, to pretend—Oh, dear Sir, are you here?

Alex. Am I here—cunning gentlewoman! who was that ſpark, hey? Speak thou powder-puff—thou ſnip of gauze—thou black pin! Who was he?—Tell me truth, for I have a touchſtone to try thee by, that thou canſt not evade.

Carl. I never thought of aſking who he was. The careleſs gard'ner left the door open—he's ſome curious ſtranger walking about the ſtreets of Liſbon.

Alex. Ay; ſeeking whom he may devour. But come—what were the curious ſtranger and you talking about—What were his parting words?

Carl. (*Aſide.*) The devil is ſurely prompting him! Why, Sir, they are not worth repeating, he was ſaying 'twas——he aſked if it was paſt twelve o'clock.

Alexis. (*Aſide*) Is it paſt twelve? (*going a little off*) "She feels it too!" that fits like cuſtard and cucumber. Thoſe were not the words miſtreſs—try again! I mean his expreſſion juſt before you ſaid, pray get ye gone.

Carl. Oh that, Sir—then he ſaid—what he ſaid juſt then was—that's a fine poplar! (*pointing to a tree.*)

Alexis. (*Aſide*) "A fine poplar," "ſhe feels it too." That does not meet a bit cloſer than t'other.

t'other. Come, once more comb-brush, recollect! or by St. Anthony——

Carl. Now I have it, Sir; I have recollected now the very words—what the gentleman said at going away, was——oh, you little black-ey'd rogue!

Alexis. (*Aside*) "You little black-ey'd rogue"—"she feels it too!" As wide as Lisbon harbour, from the Irish channel. Now by our lady, if thou dost persist in giving me the trouble to question thee again, this cane and you shall be better acquainted than your skin and your bones, hussey! (*Shaking her.*)

Carl. Oh how you gripe my arm! devil take it, if you will have it, hear it then! He said, "I feel that Viola must be mine." (*Bawling.*) Now are you satisfied?

Alexis. "I feel that Viola must be mine"—"she feels it too!" H—h—h—m!—that fits like the two shells of an oyster. (*Aside.*) Now minx, I feel that I have the truth; and I feel a violent desire to make you feel this cane. And so that curious stranger must have been Don Sebastian, whom I have order'd her never to think of—never—never!—

Carl. Why, Sir, she has ordered herself never to think of him; but lord, her thoughts mind *her* no more than a conclave of Cardinals would you—they will gallop towards him in spite of her.—

Alexis. Will they? but I'll cripple their speed—they shall have a check rein before she's aware. I'll go this moment, and—oh here madam comes!

Enter Viola.

Viola. Bless me Carlota, where have you been?

Alex. Oh dear, why she has been so kind to

entertain one of your lovers without doors, madam, whilſt you were engaged with another within.

Viola. I do not underſtand you, Sir.

Alex. You don't! Come troop miſtreſs (*to Carlota*) you little black-ey'd rogue!

Viola. To be ſure my father's bewitch'd. (*Aſide.*)

Alexis. I'll fit ye! you ſhall pack up your wardrobe in your pocket handkerchief you little black ey'd rogue! and beat your march before you are three hours nearer your wrinkles.———

Carl. I hope I ſhall never overtake my wrinkles if they are to make me ſo ſuſpicious and tyrannical, as your's have made you. [*Exit.*

Alexis. Well innocent ones, what ſort of entertainment did you give Octavio?

Viola. Sir!

Alexis. How did you like him?

Viola. Bleſs me, what has he got in his head? (*Aſide.*)

Alexis. Did you coquet, and give yourſelf only the *allow'd* airs on theſe occaſions; or was your ſtubborn mind ſo full of Sebaſtian, that you gave him no hopes?

Viola. My dear father, if you'll be pleas'd to ſpeak in a way that I can underſtand——

Alexis. Don't provoke me! What encouragement, I ſay, have you given Don Octavio? have you dar'd to throw cold water on his hopes? Why how you ſtand—if you don't anſwer me——

Enter Seraphina, haſtily.

Seraph. Bleſs me, my dear, what is all this noiſe?

Alexis.

Alexis. Why I can't get her to ſay a word about Octavio;—I know no more than my ſhoe-ſtring whether ſhe behav'd decently to him or not.

Seraph. To be ſure ſhe did—how can you queſtion it? But you are really very coarſe; allow ſomething to her delicacy!

Viola. I believe they are both beſide themſelves. (*Aſide.*)

Seraph. Leave her with me—I'll get out all that paſt—ſhe'll be undiſguis'd to me.

Alexis. Gad I'll go to Octavio himſelf—that's the ſhorteſt way. I'll aſk *him* what paſt—if he is content, I ſhall be ſo. I'll go to Octavio! [*Exit.*

Seraph. Ha, ha, ha, my dear Viola, this is a web of my weaving—how I ſhall puzzle thro' it, I know not. And your poor father—ha, ha, ha, how you ſtare! be pleas'd to know then that I have juſt been receiving the moſt violent love in the name of your ladyſhip——actually perſonating you!

Viola. Perſonating me?

Seraph. Your father went out this morning, my dear, and either begg'd, borrow'd, or ſtole a lover for ye.—The poor youth was introduced to my apartment—took it for granted that I was Viola; and begun (as I ſuppoſe he promis'd your father he would) to adore, and die for me, in very good form.

Viola. Oh, now the myſtery is clear'd—this is the Don Octavio——

Seraph. Yes, yes—now you have the nut—ſhall we crack it, or throw it away?

Viola. Pray let us get at the kernel. If you can contrive to keep my father in the dark ſome little time, it will allow me to concert meaſures with

with Don Sebaſtian. You do him the honour to approve his addreſſes, I know.

Seraph. Oh, if you can make any thing of the incident, it is quite at your ſervice. I'll liſten to Octavio's love-tales with all the condeſcenſion imaginable; and let him adore me, for a month to come, if it will be of uſe to you and Sebaſtian.

Viola. How very grateful he will be!

Seraph. Well, let us go then and ſettle matters. We muſt take Carlota into our council, or the thing can't go on.

Viola. My father has diſcharged her.

Seraph. Pho, I'll manage that. It would be hard, indeed, to marry an old man, and not make him do as one likes. Young huſbands we are content to ſubmit to, but when we marry GREYBEARDS, it is with the pious deſign to have our way in every thing. [*Exeunt.*

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

An Apartment at Don Gaſper's.

Enter Don Henry, haſtily, followed by Don Sebaſtian.

Henry.

OH 'tis too much!

Sebaſ. Too much! ay, ſo it is, that they ſhould be all ſo blind to your ſtarts, your angry bluſhes, and your ill conceal'd confuſion. I drew you from the company the moment dinner ended, leſt when they had done eating they ſhould begin to obſerve. Do you reflect that Don Philip has only to betray you to the miniſter, to get rid of his rival for ever?

Henry. It is more than I can bear—the old dotard's fondneſs, which I dare not yet oppoſe, diſtracts me! Oh that I could ſpeak to her alone! —'tis plain amidſt all the bridal gaiety her heart is not at eaſe.

Sebaſ. Your wiſh is half anſwered, for here comes *her* half—the worſt half indeed by forty years.

Henry. Half! thou a lover, and able to ſpeak thus *to* a lover? Speak of them as *one!*

Sebaſ. Forgive me! for faith I am ſo much a lover at this moment, that I ſcarcely know what I am ſaying. In a word, I am ſummon'd by my miſtreſs's maid, who has ſome new information—in an hour I am again at your ſervice. [*Exit.*

Enter Don Gaſper.

Don Gaſp. Why how now Julio! What ſtole away?—run from the gueſts—hide in corners—how's this?

Henry. I am not in ſpirits for company, Sir; or to be ſure this joyful occaſion——

Don Gaſp. Not in ſpirits on your uncle's wedding-day—out upon it!—But tell me boy what do you think of the bride?—Am I not a happy man—hey?

Henry. If it turns out ſo, Sir.

Don Gaſp. Oh, I fear no turns. She is virtuous and modeſt, and you know a modeſt woman is above all price—but perhaps you do *not* know that; for the obſervation is made in a book not much read now a days.—But what d'ye think help'd me to get her?

Henry. Ay, Sir, what did?—I long to be inform'd. Wine perhaps will make him communicative. (*Aſide.*)—A ſplendid jointure probably.

Don Gaſp. Jointure! ſhe minds a jointure no more than a jointed doll—gueſs again!

Henry. I am not fortunate in gueſſing.

Don Gaſp. Then I'll tell ye—half a ſheet of paper got her. Ay, you may well ſtare. 'Twas but half a ſheet of paper—in which I procured it to be ſaid, that one Don Henry, whom ſhe lov'd, was ſhrouded and buried—that got her my boy! (*flapping him on the ſhoulder*)—there's a contriving uncle for you!

Henry. Is it poſſible?

Don Gaſp. Poſſible, why I *did* it—I did it. And where's the harm? A baniſh'd man is a dead man

in

in the eye of the law, and a dead man can be no husband. He fought a duel and was forced to fly.

Henry. And how, Sir, could you take advantage———

Don Gasp. Why those young rascals take every advantage over us, with nature to back 'em; and we have a right to make reprisals when we can by the help of art.

Henry. And so the lady believed your intelligence?

Don Gasp. Yes, yes, she believ'd—and swoon'd—and raved—and took to her bed. Faith the doctor gave her up; but I still determined when it came to the last gasp, to tell her the truth, rather than have her death to answer for—but it never came to that.

Henry. No, no! female grief, tho' sometimes obstinate, is seldom fatal. Why, my dear uncle, you are a perfect Machiavel at a plot. I shall try if I can't out-plot you though. (*Aside.*) It will be amusing to see Antonia's astonishment, when she finds her Henry is still living—ha, ha—but then she'll be your's, ha, ha, ha.

Don Gasp. Yes, then she'll be mine—she'll be mine! ha, ha, ha, You must know the chit had no fortune, tho' of a noble family—was pester'd with youthful profligate lovers, and at length to get rid of them, agreed to give herself to me——there's a stroke of prudence in a girl!

Henry. (*Aside.*) Oh, 'twas more;—I feel it was a stroke of love to *me!* But what will Don Henry say to this pretty jest, which you and I find so laughable?

Don Gasp. What care I what a man says a thousand miles off.

Henry. But if he obtains his pardon, he'll return, and then———

Don Gaſp. Pardon! Oh, you don't know how deep I am.—I leave no loop-holes for my ſchemes to drop through. Hark in your ear—but be ſecret—I have bought his pardon.

Henry. How, Sir——bought his pardon!

Don Gaſp. Huſh! that's all under the roſe——you underſtand me—it coſt me a good lump of moidores!

Henry. You aſtoniſh me!—Strange kindneſs to a man whom you could rob of his wife!

Don Gaſp. Kindneſs—tut! I got his pardon for myſelf, that nobody elſe ſhould have it;——ſo that if he gets any one to aſk for it, it will be anſwered, "the pardon has been already granted"—but for want of my appearance, he's defunct depend on't;—ay, as much out of the world, as tho' the ſexton had cover'd him with green-ſod.

Henry. And are you actually in poſſeſſion of his pardon?

Don Gaſp. As good;—the money is paid, and I ſhall receive it from the broad-ſeal office to-morrow.

Henry. What a diſcovery is here! (*Aſide.*)

(Don Alexis *enters, pulling in* Octavio.)

Alex. Come in here; come into this room, my dear Octavio! So, here's the *young* bridegroom. Now prithee be ſo kind to leave the apartment to me and Octavio.

Octav. Let us not diſturb my father, Sir.

Alex. Diſturb—a feather! Will you leave us?

Gaſp. Yes, yes, I'll leave ye—but firſt let me pre-

preſent my nephew to you. The ſon of my ſiſter Victoria—you knew her.

Alex. Knew her—ay, as well as your noſe does its ſpectacles. So, young gentleman, what you are come to dance at your uncle's wedding? and 'twas worth while to come poſt from Madrid on purpoſe;—you won't cut capers at ſo wiſe a wedding every day, I can tell you.

Gaſp. Come, come, a truce to your ſneers. Don't you think he reſembles his poor dear mother?

Alex. Not a bit.

Gaſp. No! the eyes are the very ſame.

Alex. Eyes!—why, her's were blue, and his are black.

Gaſp. That's nothing—they've juſt the ſame look with 'em.

Alex. Yes. I grant ye as to the look, his look as much like eyes as her's did. Then ſhe was round favour'd.

Gaſp. What ſignifies that———a long face, and a ſhort face, may have the ſame air.

Alex. But his hair is dark, and her's was light.

Gaſp. Oons! how you talk—Why all hair muſt be light, or dark, or ſome colour. Come along, nephew——When people get old, they grow ſo obſtinate, there's no convincing them of any thing. Come along—come along. (*Exit with Don Henry.*)

Alex. Don't take him to your Antonia, leſt ſhe ſhould have the odd notion, that he's a fitter bridegroom for her, than you are. (*Bawling after him.*) Well, my dear boy, I am come on purpoſe to aſk how you manag'd to-day with my daughter. The young ſlut is ſo mealy-mouth'd, I could get nothing out of her. Was ſhe kind—did ſhe ſhew a proper ſenſe of the favour?

Octav. Senſe of the favour, Sir! She permitted *me* to implore the favour of being allow'd to hope.

Alex. Well, well, that's the point I would come to—hang phraſes! Was you contented with your reception——was ſhe no more than decently coy?

Octav. She was all goodneſs, Sir. Why what an old fellow's this! (*aſide*)

Alex. All goodneſs——well, that's in generals. Tell me—come now tell me honeſtly, did ſhe let you kiſs her?

Octav. Heavens! I dared not let ſuch a thought exiſt. Had any man but her father aſk'd me——

Alex. You'd have ſaid yes;—you would, I know you would! Boaſted of the ſweetneſs of her lip, and of the preſſure of her white hand, but I—I muſt know nothing—I am an old father.

Octav. (*aſide*) What can be the meaning of all this? Is it his ſuſpicion, or his folly?

Alex. Come, why won't you tell me now?—Tell me at once.

Octav. What ſhall I tell you, Sir?

Alex. What!—why that ſhe treated ye kindly—that you liked her pouting lips; and that——

Octav. Believe me, Sir, I dared not attempt ſuch a liberty.

Alex. No! why had you not my permiſſion?

Octav. I did not ſo conſider it, Sir; but if you'll lay your commands on the lady, when I have the honour to wait on her again——

Alex. Ay, that I will, never fear me. But pray where's the foundation of your great content, if nothing kind paſt? I fear the ſlut has deceiv'd him. (*aſide*)

Octav. Kind! ſhe was all angelic ſweetneſs, Sir!

Alex.

Alex. Pho! don't tell me of *angelic* ſweetneſs; a young fellow ſhould be content with nothing leſs than *mortal* ſweetneſs, when with a blooming girl.

Octav. She had the condeſcenſion to promiſe—

Alex. What—what?

Octav. That when you ſhould order her to beſtow her hand on me, ſhe would obey you without reluctance.

Alex. She promis'd *that*, did ſhe?

Octav. She did; and my delighted ſoul hath dwelt on the ſound from that moment.

Alex. Well, well, come again this evening, and your ſoul ſhall have ſomething elſe beſides ſound to dwell upon, or I'll underſtand why.

Octav. Good Sir, you would be very convenient I perceive, but it unfortunately happens, that I chuſe the ſweet trouble of getting over my love difficulties myſelf.

Alex. Oh to be ſure—above being oblig'd I ſee! but I tell you theſe young baggages have all their arts to make a man half mad, and I know 'em—I'll manage her my little Octy, never fear! Sound indeed!

Octav. Allow me, Sir, with all humility, to requeſt that you'll give yourſelf no trouble in the buſineſs. S'death! If I don't take care I ſhan't have the pleaſure of running down my own game. If you wiſh to make a ſon-in-law of me, Sir, you muſt permit me to travel the road of love in my own manner.—No bearing him! [*Exit.*

Alex. Zounds! what a heat you're in! Why, ſo you may travel the road of love in your own manner—I only mean humbly to open the turnpike gates for ye.—See what one gets by one's good nature! (*Exit.*)

SCENE.

SCENE. Don Gaſper's *Garden.*

Enter Henry.

Don Henry. (*looking, as tho' uncertain.*) Surely 'tis herſelf—yes, *'tis* Antonia! Like the ſoft lilly preſs'd by the dewy robe of night, ſhe bends her lovely head. Oh Clara! lead her—lead her to her Henry! Hah—accordant to my wiſh they come! But how may I be maſter of her thoughts? Perhaps to her friend, ſhe will unveil her inmoſt heart. I'll ſeem to ſleep—yes; but whilſt I appear to ſlumber, my ear will hang on every ſound ſhe utters, and my whole ſoul be ſuſpended on her breath. (*He reclines on a bank. Some ſhrubs prevent his being immediately ſeen.*)

Enter Antonia *and* Clara.

Cla. This is the ſtrangeſt whim! ſeeking ſhades and ſolitude, inſtead of company and mirth. What will Don Gaſper ſay?

Ant. Oh name him not; the arrival of the young ſtranger his nephew, has renewed all my miſeries. But here my ſorrows have a ſhort ceſſation. Oh, how thoſe lonely ſhades will ſooth my ſadneſs! Each day I'll ſeek the ſoft receſs, and opening all the treaſures of remembrance, live on my Henry's image.

Clara. Come, come, that's a ſort of image worſhip we don't allow. It would be more catholic to live in lonely ſhades with himſelf. "*This ſoft receſs*" would be at leaſt more *poetical* my dear, with a handſome young man in it, even tho' he ſhould be uncivilly aſleep. (*pointing to Henry.*)

Ant. (*Not regarding her.*) Oh, I'll call back each ſacred hour which bleſt our wedded ſouls; trace each fond ſcene that chaſten'd love made pure, and in the dear review, forget that I'm a wretch.

Cla. Ay, do forget it pray, and look behind thoſe ſhrubs—there's a youth as much like Don Henry, as ever one impudent rogue was like another.

Ant. Hah! 'tis Don Julio—let us retire before he wakes. And yet—Oh Clara! I could wiſh his ſleep lengthen'd to eternity; and myſelf immortal, to ſtand thus and gaze on him!

Clara. One might almoſt fancy it Don Henry himſelf; only unhappily 'tis not the cuſtom for people to leave their family manſions in the churchyard, to repoſe on violets for their miſtreſſes to gaze on them.

Ant. The reſemblance is ſtronger now he ſleeps. When awake, this ſtranger has a ſcorn—a ſeverity in his eye—ſomething that made me fear; but Henry's eye talk'd only love! Oh, I have ſeen a volume in a ſingle glance;—one look has ſaid, what eloquence and learning might try to imitate in vain.

[*Sings.*]

Sweet roſy ſleep! Oh do not fly,
Bind thy ſoft fillet on his eye,
That o'er each grace my own may rove,
And feaſt my hapleſs, joyleſs love!
For when he lifts thoſe ſhading lids,
His chilling glance ſuch bliſs forbids ——
Then roſy ſleep oh do not fly,
But bind thy fillet on his eye!

Clara.

Clara. I ſay on the contrary open your eyes! Who knows but they may by this time have acquired a ſofter expreſſion?

Ant. Fie, Clara! let us go this inſtant—you will ſurely wake him. (*going haſtily.*) [*Exit* Clara.

Henry. (*Starting up.*) Yes, he is awakened indeed! Oh my Antonia, turn! Turn ſweet traitreſs, and look upon the man you've injured!

Ant. (*Shrieking.*) Oh, I ſhall ſink! What art thou? Is Henry then alive in Julio? Oh tell me whilſt I yet can breathe—Say, art thou both, or nothing?

Henry. Convince thyſelf. (*Embracing her.*) Oh, my Antonia!

Ant. No! 'tis not air—my arms return not empty to my boſom, but meet a ſolid treaſure!

Henry. A treaſure you have lightly priz'd.

Ant. Alas, my Henry, I believ'd thee dead! Oh let me touch thee yet again! (*taking his hand*) Theſe veins are warm with life! health bluſhes on thy cheeks; and this ſoft preſſure darts thro' my nerves, and is new life to me. Oh my Henry! it is—it is thyſelf!

Henry. Can this joy be real? You thought me dead, Antonia, and choſe in bridal pomp to celebrate my obſequies!—The Epheſian ſtory will be always new.

Ant. Think not my *heart* perfidious. Had I choſe a youthful huſband, you might have term'd me fickle—but from thoſe I fled—abhorr'd a ſecond love, and fix'd where venerable age ſecured my heart from every tender impulſe. A guardian 'twas I aſk'd, and not a huſband.

Henry. Nature made women falſe, to ſee how well they would excuſe their crimes.

Ant.

Ant. 'Tis well you treat me thus, to check the tranſport of beholding thee, which elſe might be too much! But think, reproachful man! conſider my high birth, and ſlender fortunes—Behold me a lonely orphan, haunted by a train of lovers—ſome too high in rank to make them fear to act, whate'er their wiſhes prompted. 'Twas to eſcape all theſe—

Henry. Oh, was it that indeed, which forced thee to this marriage?

Ant. It cannot be a marriage ſince my Henry lives! My vows were given to thee—the ſolemn contract ſign'd; and heaven, by its holy prieſt, invoked to bleſs the engagement!

Henry. And in heaven 'tis recorded!

Ant. I do acknowledge it: and death alone could give Antonia *right* to make herſelf another's. Baſe artifice deceiv'd me, and virtuous art muſt free me from the deceiver.—But, oh, thy life's at ſtake! Where ſhall we fly?—At what bleſt altar ſolemnize our vows?

Henry. Wilt thou then follow my ſad fortunes?

Ant. Yes—to the utmoſt boundaries of the earth!

Henry. Oh, my ſick ſoul needed a cordial of this mighty ſtrength to cheer it! Know then, Antonia, we need not fly—my pardon's promis'd—I have important ſecrets to communicate—to-morrow thou'lt be mine.

Ant. To-morrow!

Henry. Tranſporting hour! And wilt thou yet be Henry's? Oh bind the promiſe on thy knee; —invoke the ſacred powers to witneſs it.

Ant. Thus then! (*kneeling*) and hear me, heaven!

Henry. And thus I liſten to thee. (*kneeling*)

Enter Don Philip, *followed by* Alexis.

Gaſp. Tony! my little Tony, where art? Hey! (*ſtarting*)

Alex. 'Sblood! what's all this?—Ah—didn't I warn ye of the bride's odd notions?—didn't I warn ye?

Henry. We are undone!

Ant. Truſt to me. (*apart*) Thus then I invoke the ſacred powers to witneſs my reſolve—Never to know another love! never to hold myſelf bound by any vows, but thoſe made to the lord of my affections, the contracted huſband of my heart!

Phil. Her contracted huſband——mark that now. (*to Alexis*)

Henry. And thus do I invoke the ſame gracious powers, to bleſs you, as you're true; and to preſerve thee and *that* huſband in a ſweet eternity of love! (*Don Philip runs to help them up.*)

Phil. Thank ye, my dear children! There—there, what d'ye ſay now to my choice? Had ever man ſuch a wife, and ſuch a nephew?

Alex. No faith, I believe not; and may I be hanged if I believe it now, though I have ſeen it.

Phil. Envy—ſheer envy! You ſee when *I* marry a girl, *I* know how to chuſe one. Come along, my pigeons. (*going off with one under each arm.*) [*Exit Philip and Antonia.*

Alex. Hark ye, Don Julio—give me a minute. (*twitching him back*) Come, I know there's ſome jeſt in this. You muſt truſt me, and egad if you will. I'll——do truſt me, I know 'tis ſome jeſt.

Henry. I admire your penetration.

Alex. I love a jeſt to my ſoul, and gad if you'll truſt me—here—here's a ſeal ring (*taking it off*) 'twas worn by my great grandfather fifteen gene-

rations back. I value it beyond the great ruby in the throne at Delhi.—Egad I have a great mind to give it ye. (*Putting it on again, and throwing his hand behind him.*)

Henry. An idea darts upon me!—yes, by heaven it ſhall be done! this is the critical inſtant of Antonia's fate. (*Aſide.*) A ring valued by you ſo highly, Don Alexis, ought to grace no finger but your own—I refuſe to accept it; but if you'll entruſt it to me, I ſwear when you next ſee it you ſhall know the jeſt.

Alexis. Shall I indeed?

Henry. Yes—and I'll venture to promiſe that you ſhall enjoy it too!

Alexis. There's my ring. I pant for the hour of its being reſtored, as much as a girl does to unburthen her firſt love ſecret.

Henry. I too pant for the hour; for if I miſtake not, I ſhall mean time make ſuch a uſe of your great grandfather's ſeal ring, as muſt make that and every future hour bliſsful to me! [*Exit.*

Alexis. What can he mean to do with it? that ſeal ring make all his future hours bliſsful! May be there's ſome conceal'd witchcraft in it, and he has had wit enough to find it out; or if rightly turn'd it may make a man inviſible, or ſomething of that ſort—there have been ſuch things formerly.—Gad I'll follow him tho'—if my ring has any properties of that kind, how ſnugly I ſhall be able to watch my wife!

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE, Seraphina's *Apartment.*

Enter Seraphina, *followed by* Octavio.

Seraphina.

IT is in vain, and ſo———

Octav. Charming Viola, why are ye ſo barbarous? Is it not by your own permiſſion I attend you?

Seraph. Yes, I know it is; but what of that? When the ſun ſhone I liked you, and now by candle light I hate you—do go, I will not be teazed.

Octav. This is ſo ſingular!

Seraph. What, that a woman ſhould change her mind ſince morning? You, I ſuppoſe, are ſo wonderfully conſtant, that you change your's only with the moon.

Octav. Do not ſuſpect me of fickleneſs—permit me to prove my conſtancy.

Seraph. Impoſſible—impoſſible.

Octav. How ſo?

Seraph. I ſee I muſt tell you, to avoid altercation. Be pleaſed to know then, Sir, that there is nothing on earth I deteſt like this ſober, quiet, prudent

prudent method of loving. Your vows have a *father's* approbation;—you are expected;—you enter the houſe without difficulty;—you yawn through an hour of common-place;—the wedding-day is fixed, and we go to church to be married, in the ſame hum-drum ſtupid way, that millions of dull couples have done before us. No, no, this I can't ſubmit to, believe me!

Octav. Ah, 'tis plain we were born for each other, we think ſo exactly alike! (*aſide.*) Theſe I confeſs are misfortunes; but how in our caſe are they to be avoided?

Seraph. If you are really in earneſt in your love, you muſt contrive to make Don Alexis hate you. Let him throw a thouſand difficulties in the way, and then I'll throw *myſelf*—into your arms!

Octav. Oh, that extatic promiſe! But your father is unhappily attach'd to our marriage—What the devil can I do to make him ſet his face againſt it? I fear it is impoſſible.

Seraph. Poor Don Octavio! then you have no hopes—for I do ſwear by every thing that can bind me, whilſt Don Alexis approves of our nuptials, I never will be your's.

Octav. I'll bribe fellows to ſlander me! was ever ſo unhappy a dilemma? I thought his approbation till this moment a bleſſing; but now I would willingly make him ſhut his doors againſt *me*, and confine *you* to a grated room, with a dozen ſmoak-dried Duennas to guard you.

Seraph. Ay, then indeed things would go on glorioufly! You would be ſighing and groaning without, and I ſhould be weeping and wailing within. Then for plots and contrivances—then for bribes and ſcaling ladders—then for eſcapes

and

and purſuits—Oh, what would I not do for a man who ſhould bring me into ſuch bliſsful difficulties!

Octav. I ſwear you ſhall be obey'd, whatever I hazard. Who knows but an elopement may finiſh the affair ſhort of marriage! (*Aſide.*) (*A buſtle without—the door opens a little, and diſcovers Carlota ſtruggling to keep out Alexis.*)

Alexis. I tell you, Mrs. Brazen, I will be amongſt 'em.

Carl. Bleſs me, Sir, how can you be ſo barbarous to diſturb the young people?

Seraph. There's Don Alexis! now begin your taſk directly—prevent his coming in; if he enters, I never will be your's.

Alexis. Let me in I ſay.

Octav. Pardon me, Sir, you muſt not come in. (*Going to the door.*)

Alexis. Muſt not come in—why you young dog! Well, well, tell me then, is ſhe kind—hey my little Octy! is ſhe kind?

Octav. Not quite ſo kind as I wiſh her to be.

Alexis. Oh, a jade! You ſlut you—you perverſe baggage! I will have you kind to Octavio.

Octav. Devil take him, why does he not bid her diſmiſs me? then ſhe'd fly to my boſom. (*Aſide.*)

Alexis. Octy! Octy! (*ſtruggling with Carlota*) have you kiſs'd her yet?

Octav. No! (*loud—in paſſion.*)

Alex. Then you ſhall—I will ſee you kiſs her, by Jove!

Carl. Lord Sir! How can you be ſo rumbuſterous?

Alex. Come *in*, I will.

Seraph. (*aſide*) Then go *out* I muſt. [*Exit.*

Alex. So! what's ſhe off! (*burſting in.*)

Octav.

Octav. Off! yes, and now I'll be off. What woman of delicacy could bear to be thus treated? Or what father but you——(*going.*)

Alex. Now dear Octy do not be angry—do not be angry! You have the character of one of the civileſt, politeſt, diſcreeteſt——

Octav. The character lies, Sir—I am none of theſe. I am rude, ill-natured, unjuſt, fickle, and full of extravagance!

Alex. Hey day! Why I believe you are full of wine too.

Octav. I am every thing you ought to dread. You could not in all Liſbon have picked out ſo hopeleſs a huſband for your daughter.

Alex. Oh Lord! no—you are a very hopeful young gentleman—The character you have given of yourſelf, would ſuit ye all I doubt;—but you ſeem ſo intimate with *your* faults, that like a ſtale acquaintance, they'll ſoon diſguſt ye—therefore fickle, drunk, or mad, my daughter ſhall be your wife.

Octav. Are you ſo obſtinate Sir!

Alex. Ay—and if ſhe dares demur—

Octav. Oh I am ruin'd—if you perſiſt I am ruin'd. Dear Don Alexis pardon me! I ſee my ſcheme was ridiculous—a better ſtrikes me. In one word—ſtay, let's take care we are not heard—in one word, you and I muſt both be in a plot, againſt your lovelely capricious daughter.

Alex. How now!

Octav. Her vivacity renders a ſtupid, formal, *allow'd* courtſhip, intolerable to her. If you perſiſt in countenancing my addreſſes ſhe will hate me; but if you order her to ſee me no more, and allow me to ſteal her out of a window, or over

over the garden wall, ſhe'll be the happieſt bride in Portugal.

Alex. D'ye ſay ſo? Oh a perverſe baggage—but I'll fit her! Won't love ye, merely becauſe I order her to do it! that ſhe had from her mother! ——

Octav. You muſt conceal your knowledge of that.

Alex. Pho! d'ye imagine I don't ſee your whole drift now? If you was to continue talking a Lapland winter, you could not make the hint clearer. Gad ſhe's coming, and my wife with her! So d'ye hear you Signor Don Octavio, (*ſpeaking loud*) you are—I ſay you are—you ſhall know what you are another time; for the preſent that's your way, Sir, that your way out; and I'll be ſworn you ſhall never know the way in. (*Puſhing him out.*)

Enter Seraphina *and* Viola.

Seraph. Why my dear huſband is ſo mere a gudgeon, there's no credit in deceiving him. Now remember your leſſon. (*to* Viola)

Alex. So miſtreſs—I have diſpatch'd your lover.

Viola. Have you, Sir?

Alex. A young rakeſhame! your not liking him proves you have your father's penetration. Notwithſtanding his modeſt front, there's not ſuch a deſperate fellow this ſide the Ganges; no nor 'tother ſide the Black Sea.

Seraph. My ſweet love, are you ſpeaking of Don Octavio?

Alex. Yes, I am. Take care you give him no encouragement, d'ye hear girl? No whiſperings from your balcony; no private correſpondences; no

no billets dropt by your officious maid, on pretence they are meant for ſome carotty-pated country couſin!

Viola. Dear Sir!

Alex. No pencil'd aſſignations on the back of your fan; or cards in lemon juice—to be call'd on detection ſecret orders to your perfumer, for pearl powder, and bloom of Circaſſia.

Seraph. How can you put ſuch things in the girl's head, deary?

Alex. (*aſide*) That her fingers may put them in practice, to be ſure; but you are not up to me there, deary! (*aſide.*)

Viola. But a few minutes ſince, you were fearful, Sir, that he was not received with ſufficient favour.

Alex. That was—that—well, no matter. That was, perhaps, to try how far things had gone.

Seraph. Oh I beg your pardon! the curtain riſes, and we ſee the ſun! Now I underſtand your policy—how admirable! You middle-aged gentlemen are ſo deep, that 'tis difficult to ſift ye.

Alex. Ay, and when we are ſifted——

Seraph. You are found to be chaff. Poor dear Don Octavio! Send him a garland of willows, Viola.

Viola. Rather of myrtles—he's too handſome for willows.

Alex. Handſome is he, that handſome does—remember that.

Viola. Why Sir, *he* does handſomely. He has travell'd handſomely, has a handſome eſtate, has brought home a handſome character, and now wiſhes for a handſome wife.

Alex, Ay, but he muſt go further a field to catch her though. He'll find neither wives nor widgeons in my orchard.

Seraph. No, our widgeons are all within doors.

Viola. Unfortunate that I am! juſt made up my mind to diſmiſs Sebaſtian, nay abſolutely to diſlike him, and now—

Alex. And now! why now you muſt make up your mind t'other way. Perhaps in my preſent humour, of the two fools, I like Sebaſtian beſt.

Viola. But that humour muſt change, for I can never think of thoſe two young men as you do, my dear father.

Alex. Thoughts are free, daughter! Gad I could hug her. (*aſide.*)

Seraph. You ſee your father generouſly leaves your thoughts unſhackled, my dear; he only deſires to controul your actions—pray oblige him, and take Sebaſtian.

Alex. (*aſide*) Zounds! ſhe knows nothing of our plot, and gives that advice ſeriouſly.

Seraph. He is a moſt accompliſh'd young man.

Alex. Wife!

Seraph. Engaging in his manners, and reſiſtleſs in his form.

Alex. My dear, I ſay. (*ſpitefully.*)

Seraph. His eyes are expreſſive, and his tongue is eloquent.

Alex. The devil's in *your* tongue! (*aſide.*) You don't know what you are talking of.

Seraph. I do indeed—perfectly. In ſhort, Viola, he is ſo amiable, ſo captivating, and loves you with ſuch unbounded fondneſs, that if you marry any other, your miſery ought to equal your ingratitude.

Alex. Gad ſhe ſpeaks with an air of too much conviction—this muſt be managed more nicely. To your chamber, huſſey, and try to forget Octavio.

(*puſhing off Viola.*)

Seraph.

Seraph. And remember your Sebaſtian. Let him be preſent to you waking, and ſleeping; let him——

Alex. Zounds let him alone! (*driving her off on the other ſide*) you may be doing miſchief all this while. I dare not let her into my plot, leſt her perverſeneſs, or her folly ſhould mar it. And yet, I think—no hang it I won't—I won't. The only plot that ever had a woman in it came to nothing. I'll conduct this ſolely by my own ſagacity, and have a hearty laugh at the poor fools, when all is over.

[*Exit laughing.*

SCENE, *An elegant Apartment at* Don Gaſper's, *illuminated.*

Rachel *enters firſt; followed by* Gaſper, Antonia, Clara, *and a number of Ladies.*

Rach. (*looking back*) Bleſs us! the approach of the ceremony has made my maſter half out of his ſenſes. The poor bride too ſeems half out of her's—but not with joy—if I may gueſs.

Don Gaſp. (*capering in, and ſinging.*)

Tired of dance, of ſong, and play,
Now we end our wedding-day.

Yes, yes, now for the ceremony! Come my pretty Pet, the Prieſt is waiting in the next room to make thee the happieſt girl in Portugal. In ten minutes thou wilt be the wife of Don Gaſper de Frontado! (*ſtrutting.*)

Ant. (*Aſide*) Oh heaven! where is Henry? Rachel, my ſoul ſinks within me.

Rach. Truly, mine is not very high.

Gaſp. Heyday! what's all this about? What! ſhe muſt be coax'd now I warrant—they all love coaxing. Come now, my pretty Tony, my nown little Tony. (*Taking her under his arm.*)

Ant. (*breaking from him*) Henry! Henry! Where art thou? Oh, he mocks me!

Gaſp. Come, let us to the prieſt, and tie the knot, which even Alexander who cut the gordion will never be able to deſtroy.

Henry. (*without.*) Where is he—the bridegroom! the happy bridegroom!

Ant. Oh my heart—he is come!

Gaſp. Here he is—here is the happy bridegroom. (Henry *enters*) Come, you are juſt in time to witneſs the ceremony.—The prieſt waits to join us in his roſy bands. Look at her! h-u-m! Oh, you ſweet little———There are ſmiles and bluſhes for ye! Look at her!

Henry. They are like thoſe of Aurora, when ſhe flies before the jolly god of day!

Gaſp. And I the jolly god of day purſue her.

Henry. But charming Antonia, the bliſsful fate which awaits you muſt be poſtponed a few hours. Oh, Sir, I am ſent———

Gaſp. Sent—about what! from whom?—who has ſent you to poſtpone Antonia's bliſs?

Henry. It is happy I have a token to convince you. Here, Sir,—do you know this great ſeal ring? the impreſſion is——ſtay, can you ſee it? (*taking a candle*) the impreſſion is a ſatyr; look at his horns.

Gaſp. The devil's in ſuch luck! A man on the wrong ſide of fifty or ſo, can't marry but at every turn he has horns in his teeth. If he's invited to a tavern, the dinner is ſure to be at the *horns*: They'll *wake* me with horns to-morrow morning

—nay, I am even kept from the ceremony to-night, to be regaled with the fight of *horns*.

Ant. (*to* Clara.) What can be the purport of the ring? I can hardly breathe thro' terror!

Henry. Do you know them, Sir?

Gaſp. Know them! Yes—they are Don Alexis's horns, not mine—it is his ring;—but what have I to do with it, any more than with the ring of Saturn, or the belt of Jupiter? If you are for rings, you ſhall ſee one preſently (*taking* Antonia's *hand*) on this waxen finger, that——

Henry. You will not hear me, Sir. This is a token from Don Alexis——obſerve me, Sir, a *token*; by which you are required, as a counſellor of the realm, to meet Don Alexis immediately at his own houſe, on affairs of imminent importance.

Gaſp. Meet Don Alexis! What is he mad? or are you mad? or does he think me mad? Go, prithee——I'll meet him to-morrow. (*ſeizing* Antonia's *hand*) My ſervice to his night cap! (*going.*)

Henry. To-morrow! Why, all our throats may be cut by to-morrow.

Gaſp. Hey! throats cut!

Hen. Why Sir, there's a plot—a plot.

Gaſp. A plot!

Clara. (*to Ant.*) Now I have his deſign. My dear Don Gaſper, at a juncture ſo important, every ſelfiſh conſideration muſt be annihilated. Should our diſcontented citizens take arms——

Hen. Nay, for aught I know they are in arms already.

Gaſp. Arms! well what can I do? Fight dog fight bear—I'll be married. (*going.*)

Rachel. (*dropping on her knee*) Oh dear Sir, there'll be nothing but rapes and murder! Oh take pity on us poor virgins, Sir, and go.

Gaſp.

Gaſp. Don't be a fool! (*ſtriving to get free.*)

Clara. Conſider, Sir, the good of the nation.

Rach. Ay, Sir, the good of the nation;—what wouldn't a body do for the good of the nation?

Gaſp. Good of the nation!—'twould be a ſhame! Go—go Julio, and vote for me; I'll make you my proxy.

Hen. Your proxy *there*, Sir! No, no, excuſe me. But haſten;—whilſt you dally, all Liſbon may be fired.

Gaſp. If there's ſuch danger, I am ſafeſt here—an't I, duck? (*to Ant.*)

Ant. Oh Sir, if you can reſiſt the calls of honour, do not reſiſt me. To marry in the midſt of ſuch horrible apprehenſions, is impoſſible—and my fears are ſo great, they will deſtroy me. Sweet Don Gaſper, go!

Gaſp. Nay then——come, my dear Nephew, let us go together; not a ſtep will I move without you.

Hen. (*aſide*) Oh miſerable, to be thus circumvented. Had I not better ſtay here to guard the——

Gaſp. Stay *here!*—Oh you are a dutiful Nephew. No, Sir, you ſhall guard me, if I ſtir—but I won't ſtir by all——

Ant. Fye, Don Julio! ſurely you will not deſert your uncle. Leave him in the ſtreet, and return inſtantly! (*apart*) Adieu, ſweet bridegroom, (*helping to get him out*) ſpeed quickly back, (*looking after them*) but find Antonia gone! Dear liberty, I hail thee! Oh Rachel, now I claim thy promiſe;—aſſiſt my flight, and make thy terms and fortune. Follow—follow me! [*Exit.*

Rachel.

Rachel. I will—but let me conſider firſt what I have engaged to do, to make my fortune. Why I am to aſſiſt a pretty girl to run away from an old huſband to a young one; from age, gout, and petulance, to youth, health, and glowing love. Ay, that I will, or may I never arrive at higher honour than to attend miſſes in their bibs, and antient maidens in their ſpectacles!

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT V.

An Apartment at Don Alexis's.

A Table with Candles and Chairs.

He enters, followed by a Servant.

Alexis.

HEY dey! why what's the meaning of all this? The family are all up, though it is paſt twelve o'clock, and my wife's apartments in a blaze—illuminated! as though it was ſome grand anniverſary. What's the meaning of all this, I ſay?

Serv. Donna Seraphina has ladies with her, Sir—they have been playing.

Alex. Playing! go, get along and let me know when they break up. (*Exit Servant.*) There's no having any reſt in this world.—No, or at leaſt not for the *huſbands* of this world.—This cuſtom of letting one's wives receive female company, is like ſhutting your gates upon the enemy, and then helping them over the wall. Not a woman but has her head full of projects, and her pockets of *billets-doux*. Well, if at laſt Don Octavio ſhould really marry my daughter, I ſhall then hope———

Enter Servant.

Serv. Don Gaſper de Frontado is without, Sir.

Alex.

Alex. Don Gaſper—Don Gaſper! it can't be.

Serv. He is indeed, Sir, attended by moſt of his ſervants, with drawn ſwords and torches.

Alex. Swords and torches—why he's mad! the near approach of matrimony has turn'd his brain. Well, no great wonder. It is Gaſper ſure enough! (*looking through the wing*) What a figure!—

Gaſp. (*Speaking as he enters*) Bleſs me, why all is quiet——all is quiet, my dear nephew! ah (*looking back*) what's he gone? Not a voice in the ſtreet, but two old women quarrelling about a ſtring of ſauſages.

Alex. (*Aſide.*) Ay it is ſo—he's certainly crazy. I am very ſorry Don Gaſper (*gravely taking off his hat*) that any thing ſhould have happen'd to call you from your houſe, at this time.

Gaſp. My houſe—that's nothing! From my bride—from my little Tony—from the very altar, my friend. But *that* is nothing—the good of the nation muſt be minded. Come let us ſit and to buſineſs.

Alex. As ſoon as you pleaſe. Zounds, what a time for him to think on the good of the nation! (*aſide.*)

(*They both draw chairs, and ſit looking at one another, waiting for each to begin.*)

Gaſp. Be brief—my good friend, be brief!

Alex. Brief—why we hav'nt begun yet.

Gaſp. Then why the devil don't we? How long am I to wait, before the mighty matter is brought upon the carpet? Do you conſider that I am on the point of being married, Sir?

Alex. Pray, Sir, what would you be at?

Gaſp. I be at—I want to know what you would be at.

Alex. Ha, ha, ha,—why this is the ſtrangeſt thing! to ſee an old fellow, high in the ſtate, the night he ſhould be married, forſake his bride, and come with a train arm'd cap-à-piè, to diſturb another old fellow, and aſk him what he would be at! What's your buſineſs once more?

Gaſp. My buſineſs, with whom?

Alex. With me, Sir—with me! What the devil do you do here?

Gaſp. That's what I want to know, Sir, and you'd beſt be quick in the relation! You ſeem to think time of no more value to me than ſtraw.

Alex. (*riſing*) Ay, ſtraw—there it is! I thought he was mad; they never think of any thing but ſtraw. I am ſorry you are thus diſturbed, Don Gaſper.

Gaſp. (*Purſuing him*) The diſturbance is nothing, if you would but come to the point—What is the plot—Where are the conſpirators, and what do they aim at?

Alex. Poor ſoul—poor ſoul! My dear friend you really ſhock me very much—tho' I knew your marriage was a mad action, I did not think it would have taken effect ſo ſoon.

Gaſp. Oons! this is beyond all bearing! (*making a motion as tho' to his ſword, and ſeems diſappointed*) no ſword—meet me to-morrow, Sir—meet me to-morrow!

Alex. With all my heart. By that time you'll be in a ſtrait waiſtcoat, and I ſhall be ſafe. (*Aſide.*)

Gaſp. I am cooler. Such old men as we are can afford to waſte no blood—but there's your ring, Sir; and let that be the laſt token of good, or ill will, you ever ſend me. (*Flinging the ring from him.*)

Alex.

Alex. My ring! (*taking it from the floor*) why, how came you—who gave you this ring? who gave it you?

Gaſp. Why did not,—did not—oh, my mind miſgives me!

Alex. You had it from your nephew—eh?

Gaſp. Ye—y-e-s. (*Trembling.*)

Alex. Ha, ha, ha,—oh, a young rogue—oh, a plotting young villain! ha, ha, ha——

Gaſp. What then I have—oh, ſhame to my years—I have been made a jeſt of.

Alex. A jeſt——Heaven grant you may be made nothing worſe of! Hurry home my dear friend; you know what I ſaid to-day about your bride's odd fancies. Hurry home, and be thankful if it *is* a jeſt!

Gaſp. What do you imagine—do you conceive—oh, my dear, dear friend! But hold, you are in the plot——the ring is your's——you are in the plot! (*Ragefully.*)

Alex. Believe me Don Gaſper——

Gaſp. Oh, what a beetle, what a bat, I have been! but I'll repay your jeſt with intereſt. In the firſt place—and that's only for a beginning mind me, only for a beginning——my Octavio ſhall never marry your daughter. How d'ye like that jeſt? Oh what a blind—blind—oh! (*Going off ſtamping.*)

Alex. (*going after him*) My dear Don Gaſper, my friend, my worthy friend, I entreat—Zounds! he's gone! If it had not been for his choak-pear about Octavio, how I could laugh. Why, what the plague did that impertinent Don Julio take ſuch a liberty with my ring for? how dared he haul me head and ears into his ſcheme, to laugh at his worthy uncle? But zooks it is a good laugh

after all—ha, ha, ha——but if Gaſper now, thro' ſpite, ſhould prevent Octavio's marriage! What's to be done? hang me if I go to bed to night—— I'll find out Octavio wherever he is, make him ſteal my daughter, conclude the marriage, and then I'll laugh with Julio, 'till my old ſides crack. [*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to the Street, before* Don Gaſper's.

Enter Don Henry.

He knocks gently at the door.

Hen. I dare not be louder; but ſure the ear of love can catch the gentleſt ſound!

Rach. (*from the balcony*) Oh, are you come, Sir——I'll call my lady down.

Hen. Oh haſte! the minutes fly; I have ſecur'd a ſafe retreat——leave all behind, and bring Antonia only to my arms. (*A noiſe of people advancing*) Hah! what noiſe is that? and lights too! they come this way—ſurely 'tis Don Gaſper's voice——I am breathleſs with my fears.

Gaſp. (*without*) Put out your lights—extinguiſh your torches, and be ſilent.

Hen. Ay, 'tis he—ſhall I plunge this ſword into his boſom, or my own? oh, either way I'm loſt! (*Don Gaſper enters, and knocks loudly.*)

Gaſp. Yes, yes, I'll be a match for his great grandfires, ring, truſt me! (*Knocks again.*)

Rachel. (*from the balcony*) We are juſt ready, Sir—have a moment's patience.

Gaſp. Juſt ready for what? Oh I am arrived in the very nick of ſome curſed ſcheme! Keep your ſwords drawn. (*to his ſervants*) Come, I'll not give

way to ſuſpicions—ſhe ſhall have fair play—appearances may deceive.

The door opens. Antonia *enters.*

Henry. Hah! by Heaven, Antonia—we are ruin'd!

Ant. Where are you, my beſt wiſhes? lord of my vows, and charmer of my ſoul, where are you?

Henry. Oh heavens! (*half drawing his ſword.*)

Gaſp. Well, well, that *may* be all meant for me.

Ant. Give me your hand, my love, my life, and guide me to your boſom—the home for which I pant!

Gaſp. Hum—that is rather too much, too! I'm afraid that's too ſweet a morſel to be meant for my chops.

Ant. (*groping about*) Oh, are you here indeed? you frighten'd me with your ſilence. Here take theſe jewels, and let us haſte away.

Gaſp. H-a-h, are you thereabouts, madam? (*between his teeth*) then I'm cozen'd.

Henry. (*aſide*) To attempt to force her off would be in vain.

Ant. Will you not ſpeak? do you repent already? before poſſeſſion are you cold, and falſe?

Gaſp. Before——ah, ah!—well that's great comfort. Whatever is deſign'd, I am beforehand with the miſchief, however.

Ant. Am I not to be your wife?—this very day did we not invoke Heaven to bleſs our vows?

Gaſp. Now then 'tis clearly me, and I'll be mute no longer.

Ant. Oh Henry! Henry! (*mournfully.*)

Gaſp. (*ſtarting*) Who doſt thou take me for—Henry? Oh thou perfidious wretch!

Ant.

Ant. Don Gaſper——what will become of me? Why—why are you ſo angry, Sir, at my naming one who in the cold grave cannot rival you? I was only going to ſay, that Henry would not have been ſo unkindly ſilent.

Gaſp. Was that all indeed, my little Tony? but 'twas wrong to think upon a young man. Never let your thoughts run upon a young man, whether in a grave, or a garret.

Ant. Never, Sir, be aſſured. Neither in one place, or the other, will my thoughts ever ſeek a lover. But why did you not ſpeak?

Gaſp. Faith, you prattled love ſo prettily, I could have heard your little tongue run for ever. But how came you out ſo late, and with theſe jewels, and parcels?

Ant. Sir!—I was—why Sir——

Rachel. Alas, Sir, we thought the city was in arms, and pack'd up our things to ſecure 'em. Lord, Sir, we were ſo ſcared! about plots, and robberies, and—

Ant. Yes, Sir, terrified to death.

Gaſp. Oh it's all quell'd now—'tis all over, my pretty chuck. As ſoon as *I* appear'd amongſt 'em, and threaten'd 'em, and harangued 'em on their duty, they were as ſilent as the ſoft tread of a thief on a dark ſtair-caſe. I am reſolv'd ſhe ſhan't know what a gull I was. (*aſide*) Come now let's in, and join our tender hearts in one.

Ant. Pardon me, Sir. Day is on the point of breaking—dear welcome day! and I am reſolv'd to paſs it unbound by any vows, but thoſe of love.

Gaſp. How!

Ant. In this one point, Sir, I muſt govern, or here I vow moſt ſolemnly, never to be yours.

Gaſp.

Gaſp. Oh its a raſh vow—a moſt unjuſtifiable vow!

Rach. Not ſo raſh a vow as that you want her to make.

Gaſp. What's that, minx?

Rach. Why Sir, with ſubmiſſion, I ſay its moſt raſh and unjuſtifiable, for eighteen to riſe out of bed, and go to church, to vow to love ſixty-five—and I'll maintain it.

Gaſp. But the vow was made, huſſey, and all vows muſt be kept—religiouſly kept! and therefore, though it goes againſt me, even this laſt ſhall be kept. So come in, my little Tony, and learn of your nown Hubby, never to break a vow.

(*all go in.*)

Henry. That ſecures me! Her delicacy is ſafe from inſult, and when I ſee her next, it ſhall be with powers to ſuppreſs his audacious, fancied rights, and cloſe the neceſſity for theſe degrading acts for ever. [*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to* Don Alexis's *Garden.*

He enters, leading in Octavio.

Alex. Gad I am glad I found ye—'twas deviliſh lucky! Viola is certainly ſomewhere in the garden—both my wife and Carlota aſſured me that ſhe was.

Octav. And the ladder of ropes is ſuſpended from the place you pointed out.

Alex. Exactly there—I help'd to fix it myſelf—'tis very ſecure.

Octav. The dear little madcap muſt have her way; but 'tis ſtrange ſhe prefers ſcaling a wall at midnight, to walking quietly thro' the gate in the ſunſhine. Hiſt!—I hear the tread of gentle feet.

Alex.

Alex. Then I'm off. If ſhe ſhould find us together, the perverſe baggage would ſuſpect our intelligence, and that would ſpoil all——ſo I'm off! (*lowering his voice.*) [*Exit.*

Octav. In a few hours, expect us at your feet aſking pardon and bleſſing. (*A pauſe.*) Charming Viola, appear! I hear you not; yet by the ſoft influence about me, I am ſure you are near. What delightful faculty is this, which allows us to be conſcious of the preſence of the object we adore, without the vulgar intervention of the ſenſes?—It muſt be the privilege of pureſt love!

Seraph. (*entering.*) The privilege of fancy——all mere fancy; tho' you would exalt it into a faculty!

Octav. Hah, my charmer! (*catching her in his arms*) faculties, and fancies, are now equally nothing;——all loſt in tranſport, at finding thee in my arms.

Seraph. I proteſt I begin to believe you very dangerous. I inſiſt on your quitting me this inſtant. (*breaking from him*) Heavens what a ſituation! in the arms of a man—alone—in a garden, at two o'clock in the morning? (*Aſide.*)

Octav. What doſt think of, ſweet angel?

Seraph. That the ſooner we are out of this place the better.

Octav. (*Aſide.*) Suppoſe I ſecure her mine! I almoſt fear ſome new caprice——and if I miſtake not, her little heart flutters at this moment, in uniſon with my own. Dear bewitching woman, let me once more taſte———

Seraph. Hold, Sir! or by all that's good——(*breaking from him*) I never knew till now what *reſiſtance* meant. (*Aſide.*)

Octav.

Octav. By heavens I will not loſe this charming moment!

Seraph. Then you loſe me for ever—make your election!

Octav. This moment is preſented to us by love—let us prove ourſelves worthy of the boon!

Seraph. How? by *diſgracing* love?

Octav. We'll argue that point hereafter; but now———

Seraph. Hold, Sir—I am neither blind to your intention, nor to my own danger—but know you are meditating an irremediable crime!

Octav. How irremediable? Love itſelf ſhall remedy the crimes it makes.

Seraph. Hah! you know not what you ſpeak of, nor can I explain myſelf—but let us fly!

Octav. Then we *will* fly my little trembler, and Hymen ſhall———

Seraph. Yet ſtay—I cannot go with you alone—you muſt conſent that a lady accompanies us.

Octav. Who?

Seraph. No matter. You muſt promiſe me, without aſking queſtions, to conduct *her* ſafely to Don Sebaſtian; and then to conduct me in ſafety to your father's.

Octav. To my ghoſtly father you mean—to a prieſt?

Seraph. No, to Don Gaſper—on thoſe terms I ſcale the wall with you, and on no other.

Octav. It is odd, and myſterious; but I'll ſcale walls with you on any terms. Where is the lady?

Seraph. We ſhall find her in the next walk—oh, no, ſhe is haſt'ning hither. (*Enter* Viola, *veil'd.*) Come fair damſel, this is the valourous knight who is to conduct us thro' all the intervening dragons, and giants, to the quiet and ſober

pale of matrimony—where we ſhall grow good, and ſtupid: (*drawling*) and recollect the kind action of this night, with matronly thankfulneſs and decency.

Octav. (*Aſide.*) 'Tis a vile thought, and ſticks moſt indigeſtibly! Why muſt love be thus ſhackled? I feel I ſhall repent, and leap the pale;—but I am fairly caught now, and muſt ſubmit. Come my little fawns! take each an arm.——Egad, let us make haſte, or ſome unlucky ideas, which are growing rather ponderous, will prevent my ſlight over the wall!

Seraph. I'll be hang'd if it is not the idea of matrimony you find ſo heavy!—but be of good comfort, Signor, and make ſpeed—your fate has prepared a conſolation you little expect. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, Don Gaſper's. *He enters.*

Gaſp. Well, day at laſt is broad awake; and the vile night, which cloaks ſo many ſchemes, and villainous plots, againſt the peace of wary huſbands, is paſs'd away—and all hath gone well! yes, all hath gone well, except with my poor aching bones, and ſleepleſs eyes. Spent all theſe hours upon a mat at Antonia's chamber door—dared not leave it. Truly ſhe is a treaſure, but if to ſecure it I muſt fag out the remnant of my life in theſe alarms, and fears, and miſgivings.—Well, well, 'tis too late now to think about that; my hour is come! (*Dolefully.*)

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Don Octavio, and a lady, Sir. [*Exit.*

[*Octavio enters, leading Seraphina, veil'd.*

Octav. Permit me, Sir, to aſk your protection for

for this lady for a few hours;—if you knew her, you would think ſhe had a right to claim it.

Gaſp. To claim it—why, who is ſhe?

Octav. That I am forbid to tell—do you releaſe me from my promiſe, madam?

Seraph. No, certainly;—and yet if I did, it were much the ſame thing, for you do not know me.

Gaſp. Not know the lady!

Seraph. Believe me he does not; and yet if you aſk him, he'll ſwear he does.

Octav. Surely, tho' you are veil'd, I can ſwear you are the ſame ſweet melting creature, who in a certain garden———

Seraph. Found herſelf in your arms; and afterwards leapt the wall with you—that you may ſafely ſwear.

Octav. Yet I know you not—ha, ha, ha, permit me (*apart*)——Perhaps you'll deny being her, whom I am to marry to day?

Seraph. Oh, no—I ſwear I will marry you to day, if Don Alexis gives conſent.

Octav. We have more than his conſent—his ardent wiſhes.

Seraph. Yet I ſhall not be your's.

Octav. Why, what a ſweet enigmatical charmer you are!

Seraph. (*to Don Gaſper*) If I miſtake not, Sir, this houſe has a miſtreſs—may I be permitted to wait on Donna Antonia?

Gaſp. Madam—ma—Octavio! (*Whiſpers.*)

Octav. Oh yes, of rank and reputation—but a little capricious.

Gaſp. Pardon me, madam! I will wait on you

to Antonia's apartment.——I ſhan't care to leave them together tho'! (*Aſide.*)

[*Exit, leading Seraphina.*

Octav. What can ſhe mean with her riddle-me-rees? I am perplex'd (*Sebaſtian enters with Viola.*) Hah Don Sebaſtian! What the weighty ceremony ſo lightly over? Madam, I wiſh you all the joys which belong to your new ſtate. Dear Sebaſtian (*taking him aſide*) tell me—how doſt feel?

Sebaſ. Feel!

Octav. Ay;—in a few hours I ſhall be in the ſame claſs, and I want to gueſs how it is.

Sebaſ. If you love as I do, you'll feel as I do—bleſt!

Octav. I fear all you married rogues are ſo many decoy ducks; you look up with envy, and cry *quake, quake,* to your fellows at large; and when you have coax'd us into the ſnare, clap your wings, and exult.

Viola. (*running to Sebaſtian.*) Oh, I hear my father's voice—I would not have him ſee you at this inſtant. (*Apart.*) Pardon my freedom Don Octavio, but it will be infinitely kind if you'll both leave me.

Sebaſ. Thoſe fears are idle my charmer—the moment *muſt* arrive.

Viola. Nay, do not ſtay to argue, but oblige me!

Octav. What, Sir, ſo much of a huſband in half an hour, as to diſpute a command? I'll take him to taſk, madam, and give him a leſſon on obedience. [*Exeunt.*

Alexis. (*without*) Octavio, and a lady veil'd? (*entering*) then all is right! Hah Viola! well, tell me, is it all over—are you married?

Viola. Yes, Sir.

Alex.

Alex. Yes, Sir—enough ſaid! ha, ha, ha,—now I can laugh at Gaſper, and enjoy Don Julio's joke—ha, ha, ha——and you too—you have been finely nick'd—I have been oblig'd to cheat you into marrying the man you liked—ha, ha, ha——

Viola. Oh, Sir, forgive what I have done!

Alex. Forgive thee, my girl! ay that I will—here's my hand upon't.—Hah Don Gaſper! (*he enters*) your moſt obedient very humble ſervant! How do you find yourſelf after your laſt night's whim, Sir?—My ſeal-ring is at your ſervice, at any time, Don Gaſper—ha, ha, ha,—two jokes at once—I ſhall laugh now, 'till I am a grandfather.

Gaſp. If you laugh till my Octavio makes you a grandfather, it will be a very long fit I promiſe ye.

Alex. D'ye think ſo? I'll truſt him!

Gaſp. He is now in the next room, at the feet of a young lady, whoſe charms are ſufficient, I truſt, to blot thoſe of your daughter from his heart.

Alex. What's that? Octavio at the feet of a lady! d'ye hear that, Viola?

Gaſp. Your daughter—Pardon me, fair lady!

Alex. Ay, Sir, and your daughter too—your daughter! Let me ſee you encourage her huſband to kneel to other women in your houſe.

Gaſp. Her huſband—ha, ha, ha.

Alex. Zounds, Sir, this is no laughing matter—how dare you, Sir—Why, Viola, why don't you rave and ſtorm, as women do on theſe occaſions?

Viola. Alas, Sir! I have no right.

Alex. No right! I ſhall ſee that. Here Don Octavio, I ſay! The very day of his marriage—nay within the hour! (*Enter Octavio.*)

Octav.

Octav. Don Alexis—your pleasure?

Alex. My pleasure, Sir, is, that—Zounds!—that *your* pleasure shall be with my daughter.

Octav. 'Tis very kind—nothing can make me so happy.

Alex. Then what the devil do you mean by—by—your father says you were at the feet of a lady.

Octav. I was.

Alex. You was!

Octav. Why should that offend you? Do you not wish me to love your daughter?

Alex. Love my daughter, and kneel to another!

Octav. All mistake, Sir—another! I'll convince you that Viola alone (*going to the wing*) here she comes! the dear lively girl! who leapt a garden wall, to give a sober marriage the air of a romance.

Alex. Oons! where am I? are not you my daughter? (*twitching off* Viola's *veil*) yes. Did you not leap the wall with him?

Viola. Yes, Sir.

Alex. And are you not married?

Viola. I am indeed! (*curtseying.*)

Alex. And did you, Madam, leap a wall?

Seraph. Yes, Sir.

Alex. And are you married too?

Seraph. I am, indeed! (*throws up her veil, and curtseys.*)

Alex. My wife—Oons—my wife!

Octav. Amazement! his wife!

Gasp. His wife leap the wall with my Octavio—ha, ha, ha. I'll add another five hundred moidores to your yearly allowance, for that my boy! Prithee, dear Don, indulge your laugh; you were in a very fine vein a minute ago—ha, ha, ha—now laugh till you're a grandfather!

Seraph. Don Octavio, I have uſed you ill; but I truſt your generoſity will pardon my taking advantage of your partiality for me, to ſerve two amiable and faithful lovers.

Octav. You have uſed me ill, indeed! yet hang it, come, I am not married—I am not married however! (*aſide*) Yes, Madam, I can forgive *you*; but how ſhall I forgive myſelf? I had you—oh, diſtraction! I had you alone—amidſt the conſcious ſhades of night—and in my power!

Seraph. Pardon me, Sir! no woman can be alone, nor in the power of any man, whilſt ſhe reſpects herſelf, and is guarded by a ſenſe of her duty. You ſee, Don Alexis, what benefits ariſe from plotting *without* a woman. Ha, ha, ha.

Alex. Oh, I ſhall be mad! ſo it was my wife, then, to whom you were kneeling? and it was you whom I preſs'd yeſterday to grant him ſome ſmall favours?

Seraph. Juſt ſo, my ſweet Hubby!

Alex. Oh!

Gaſp. Come, be merry, old Gentleman.—A companion for your ſeal ring—two jokes at once, ha, ha, ha.

Alex. Ay, you have it all to nothing now. And you have the impudence to love my wife? (*to Octavio.*)

Octav. More than ever, now there's no danger of matrimony.

Alex. And you are now conſidering when you ſhall make me a—a ſatyr, eh? come, be frank—when is it to be?

Octav. Faith, I wiſh I could tell.

Seraph. I will anſwer for him!—it ſhall be *never*; whilſt you repoſe a generous confidence in me, and allow me to be the guardian of my own honour. (*Don Gaſp. goes out.*)

Octav.

Octav. Now I intreat you, my dear Don Alexis, be a very tyrant! fuspect her, watch her, and confine her—will you be so much my friend?

Alex. I don't know what I shall be yet;—both as husband and father, I have ingeniously contrived to bite myself most d—n—bly! As for you, Madam, (*to* Viola) bread and water, and a dark chamber, shall be your lot———

Sebas. (*entering*) No, Sir,—*I* am the arbiter of her lot;—however, I confirm half your punishment; and a dark chamber she shall certainly have *.

Alex. What then, thou art really married—and married to Sebastian!

Viola. Dear, Sir, you assured me, that of the two fools you preferred *him*.

Alex. Yes, but I depended on your perverseness, hussey?

Gasp. (*Leading in* Antonia) Come, you, who have not seen my little pet, behold her—Nay, I present her to ye all, as the pattern of meekness and perfect love—Oh its a sweet pudsey.

Ant. Meekness, alas! you should not answer for; you know I am a woman. My perfect love, indeed you may—the world has not a heart so truly wedded as Antonia's—behold its master—its lawful lord, my husband! (*Pointing to the opposite door.*)

Don Henry. (*entering*) Come, my Antonia, to his arms! Yes, I *am* thy husband—now I stand boldly forward, and proclaim my title—I am thy husband! that dear distinction which heaven has blest me with, heaven only shall reclaim!

Octav. What! am I to lose my mother as well as my wife?

* This is the expression, I am told, which had nearly prov'd fatal to the Comedy. I should not have printed it, but from the resolution I have religiously kept, of restoring every thing that was objected to. *Alex.*

Alex. (*To Gaſp.*) Your nephew! why is this full moon? We are all going to run out of our wits.

Seraph. Don't be diſhearten'd—tho' it ſhould be ſo—*You'll* not have far to run!

Gaſp. Why Julio, what in the name of——

Henry. No, Sir—not Julio, but Don Henry. That Don Henry whom you ſo baſely reported to be dead; that you might diſhonour him in ſecurity.

Gaſp. How!—why—why you *are* dead—as good as dead; you are dead in law—you are outlaw'd, baniſh'd———

Henry. No, Sir, neither——reſtored to my country! Behold my pardon! (*Shews a paper.*)

Gaſp. Your pardon!—hum! Now, then I ſee the whole;—I muſt be telling my ſecrets, with a devil to it! Well you got it through me you know—you may thank the muſic of my moidores for that dance!

Henry. No, Sir! (*throwing down a purſe*) there is the gold you baſely barter'd for the pardon you ſolicited. *My* pardon I obtain'd from the hands of majeſty itſelf—from our gracious queen! Oh, when her kingdom's foes provoke correction from her ſubjects arms, then ſhall my ſword again be drawn, nor aſk forgiveneſs for its ardent duty!

Gaſp. Well, very well—but what has your pardon to do with my wife? (*putting her behind him*) What have you to do with Tony?

Henry. She is *my* wife; made mine by contract, before you deſtin'd her the bliſs of being your's. Pardon me then, my ſweet Antonia! (*taking her from Gaſper*) if I deprive you of this venerable charmer, and give you in his place a huſband!

Alex. Hum! hum! (*Sings.*)

Once I was a merry old man,
But now the caſe is chang'd!

Who could have thought that my old ſeal ring would ever have been a taliſman to make lovers happy, and ſave a Greybeard from folly?

Seraph. Come Don Gaſper, let me adviſe you to think your loſs a gain—you ſee in your humble ſervant, what miſchievous creatures young wives are;—ſhe'd plague your heart out, as I do my old huſband's.

Alex. Faith ſhe ſays true. A minute ago I thought the laugh on my ſide; but 'tis ſtill on your own. You have loſt a young wife, and I have found one.

Gaſp. Why, to ſay truth, if it were not that at preſent I feel a little aukward, and don't know very well which way to look.—As to your contract I might perhaps diſpute its powers, but as here is a ſtroke or two of mine, which may be, I ſhan't be ſorry to have drop'd, e'en go to church i'gad's name; and when ye come home beware of plots and ſeal rings!

Ant. This is generous! The ſentiments you profeſs'd for me I ſee will be converted to a more decent regard, and we ſhall all be united in the bands of charming friendſhip.

Alex. Gad this looks like a ſort of general amneſty—ſo let the frolick go round! But dare my faults hope forgiveneſs here? (*to the houſe*) Yes;—I am on this ſpot an old offender; and have ſo often gratefully experienced the candour of my judges, that I truſt now to meet their pardon—and invoke the gracious ſign!

FINIS.

EPILOGUE,

By Mr. COBB.

SPOKEN BY MISS FARREN.

A Mourning Bride!—that wou'd be ſomething new—
(That I'm a Mourning Huſband is too true,
Cries old Sir Teſty in his gouty chair,)
" Ah could I wedlock's fatal ſlip repair!
" But young wives are a ſort of flying gout,
" Torments for which no cure was e'er found out;
" Both old men's plagues, to puniſh youthful tricks,
" Equally difficult, I fear, to fix.
" Of wife and gout alike I ſtand in dread,
" For both, alas! ſometimes affect the head."
Thus rail old cynics, ſtriving to diſparage
The charming ſilken ties of modern marriage.
In former times, when folks agreed to wed,
The ſilent bride by ſilent bridegroom led,
Up to the altar march'd in ſolemn ſtate,
All was demure, and ſtupidly ſedate.
Impreſs'd with awe, while neither dar'd to ſpeak,
A wedding was a mere Ballet Tragique.
Thank Heav'n we're paſt the ages of romance;
Wedlock is now a kind of country dance,
Where man and wife with ſmiles each other greet,
Take hands, change ſides, and part as ſoon as meet;
Pleaſure's ſoft accents ev'ry care diſpel,
While Hymen fiddles Vive la Bagatelle.
Bleſt age! when ceremony's chains are worn,
Like bracelets, not to fetter, but adorn.
When we aſſume deep mourning's ſable ſhew,
'Tis etiquette preſcribes the form of woe:
Whate'er our loſs, we muſt have faſhion's leave,
Ere we can venture decently to grieve.

Blameleſs

Blameleſs the heir o'er the dear parchment chuckles,
If he's unpowder'd, and puts on black buckles,
Till the grey frock ſpeaks his firſt anguiſh o'er,
And he's but half as wretched as before.
Ere the gay widow firſt abroad is ſeen,
Deck'd in exhilarating bombazeen,
While the dear Col'nel viſits unſuſpected,
And ſhe's as well as could have been expected;
Cuſtom's indulgence wiſely does ſhe borrow,
In cards of compliments exhauſts her ſorrow;
Of tears her black-edg'd paper fills the place,
Mourns as her proxy, and preſerves her face.
Our Mourning Bride, who with no ſorrow labours,
And mourns but in *appearance*, like her neighbours,
Tho' forc'd by etiquette, good humour loves, as well as any here,
Bleſt in the fate which theſe kind ſmiles decree her,
She hopes her friends will often come to ſee her.

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