

WHICH IS THE MAN. A COMEDY

Hannah Cowley

Freeditorial 

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A DRAWING-ROOM.

(Mrs.

JOHNSON

crosses the Stage, a Boy following.)

HERE, Betty, Dick! Where are ye? Don't you see my Lord

Sparkle

's carriage?—I shall have my lodgers disturbed with their thundering.—What, in the name of wonder, can bring him here at this time in the morning?—Here he comes, looking like a rake as he is!

Enter

LORD SPARKLE

(yawning).

Bid 'em turn; I shan't stay a moment.—So, Mrs.

Johnson,

I pull'd the string just to see how your Sylvans go on.

As usual, my Lord; but, bless me! how early your Lordship is!

How late, you mean.—I have not been in bed since yesterday at one!—I am going home now to rest for an hour or two, and then to the Drawing-room.—But what are the two rustics about? I have not been plagued with them these three or four days.

They are now out.

I suppos'd that, or I should not have call'd.—But prithee, do they talk of returning to their native woods again?

Oh no, Sir!—The young gentleman seems to have very different ideas:—Miss, too, has great spirits, though she seems now and then at a loss what to do with herself.

Do with herself! Why don't you persuade her to go back to Cornwall? You should tell 'em what a vile place London is, full of snares, and debaucheries, and witch-crafts.—You don't preach to 'em,

Johnson.

Indeed I do, my Lord; and their constant answer is,

"Oh, Lord

Sparkle

is our friend! Lord

Sparkle

would take it amiss if we should go; 'twould look like distrusting his Lordship."

Was ever man so hamper'd!—Two fools! to mistake common forms and civilities for attachments.

I fear, my Lord, towards the young Lady something more

than forms—

(interrupting)

Never, upon my honour!—I kissed her; so I did all the women in the parish—the septennial ceremony. The Brother I us'd to drink vile Port with, listen to his village-stories, call his vulgarity wit, and his impudence spirit. Was not that fatigue and mortification enough, but I must be

bored

with 'em here in Town?

But,

Miss,

Sir, talks of pressing invitations, and letters, and—

Things of course; they had influence, and got me the borough. I, in return, said she was the most charming girl in the world; that I ador'd her;—and some few things that every body says on such occasions, and nobody thinks of.

But it appears that Miss

did

think—

Yes, 'faith: and on my writing a civil note that I should be happy to see them in Town,

et caetera—

which

I

meant to have suspended our acquaintance till the General Election—they took me at my word; and before I thought the letter had reach'd 'em, they were in my house, all joy and congratulation. I didn't chuse to be encumber'd with 'em, so placed 'em with you. The Boy was at first amusing, but our Circles have had him, and I must be rid of him.

I must say, I wish I was quit of them at present; for my constant lodger Mr.

Belville

came to town last night, and he wants this drawing-room to himself: he's oblig'd to share it now with Mr.

Pendragon

and his sister.

Hey!

Belville!—

'Gad, that's lucky! There is not a fellow in Town better receiv'd by the women.—Throw the girl in his way, and get quit of her at once.

If you mean dishonestly, my Lord, you have mistaken your person: I did not live so many years with your mother to be capable of such a thing.—Ah, my Lord, if my Lady were living—

She would scold to little purpose,—and you may spare yourself the trouble.—I tell you, I care nothing about the girl: I merely want to get rid of her, and you must assist me.—

(Mrs.

Johnson

turns from him with disgust)

—Hey-dey! the nicety of your Ladyship's honour is piqued! Ha! ha! ha!—the mistress of a lodging-house!

—Bien drole—

Ha! ha! ha!

[Exit Mrs.

Johnson.

But who is this hobbling up stairs?—Ha! old Cato the Censor, my honourable cousin!—What the devil shall I do?—No avoiding him, however.—

Enter Mr.

FITZHERBERT.

I wish I had been out of the house,
Fitzherbert,
before you appeared! I know I shall not escape without some abuse.
I never throw away reproof, where there are no hopes of amendment—your Lordship is safe.
Am I to take that for wit?
No; for then I fear you would not understand it.
Positively, you must give me more of the felicity of your conversation: I want you to teach me
some of that happy ease which you possess in your rudeness; 'twould be to me an acquisition. I
am eternally getting into the most horrid scrapes, merely by politeness and good-breeding.—
Here are two persons now in this house, for instance—
(interrupting)
Who do
not
know, that the language of what
you
call politeness, differs from that of truth and honour.—You see I know those to whom you
allude.—But we only lose time!—Good day, my Lord!
Lose time! Ha! ha! ha!—Why, of what value can time be to you? the greatest enemy you have,
adding every day to your wrinkles and ill-humour. I'll prove to you now, that I have employ'd the
last twelve hours to better purpose than you have. Nine of them you slept away—the last three
you have been running about Town,
snarling
and making people uneasy with themselves;—whilst I have been sitting peaceably at Weltjie's,
where I have won—guess what?
Half as much as you lost yesterday—a thousand or two guineas, perhaps.
Guineas! Poh! you are jesting! Guineas are as scarce with us, as in the coffers of the Congress.
Like them we stake with counters, and play for solid earth.
(impatiently)
Well!
Bullion is a mercantile kind of wealth, passing thro' the hands of dry-salters, vinegar-merchants,
and Lord-Mayors.
—Our
Goddess holds a cornucopia instead of a purse, from which she pours corn-fields, fruitful vallies,
and rich herds. This morning she popp'd into my dice-box a snug villa, five hundred acres, arable
and pasture, with the next presentation to the living of Guzzleton.
A church-living in a dice-box!—Well, well; I suppose it will be bestow'd as worthily as it was
gain'd!—Good day, my Lord, good day!
[Turning from him.
Good night, Crabtree—good night!
[Going off.
Enter a
SERVANT.
Tell
Belville
I call'd to congratulate his escape from the stupid country.
[Going.

My Lord!
(returning)

Sir!

I am going this morning to visit Lady
Bell Bloomer,—

I give you this intimation, that we may not risk another rencontre.

Civilly design'd; and for the same polite reason I inform you, that I shall be there in the evening.

[Exit Lord

Sparkle.

Your master in bed yet! What time was he in Town yesterday?

Late, Sir.—We should have been earlier, but we met with Sir Harry Hairbrain on the road, with his new fox-hounds.—Fell in with the hunt at Bagshot—broke cover, run the first burst across the heath towards Datchet;—she then took right an end for Egham, sunk the wind upon us as far as Staines, where Reynard took the road to Oxford, and we the route to Town, Sir.

[Bowing.

Very geographical indeed, Sir.—Now, pray inform your master—Oh, here we come!

Enter

BELVILLE

in a robe de chambre.

Just risen from your pillows!—Are you not ashamed of this? A fox-hunter, and in bed at eleven!

My dear, morose, charming, quarrelsome old friend, I am ever in character!—In the country, I defy fatigue and hardship.—Up before the lazy slut Aurora has put on her pink-coloured gown to captivate the plough-boys—scamper over hedge and ditch. Dead with hunger, alight at a cottage; drink milk from the hands of a brown wench, and eat from a wooden platter. In Town, I am a fine gentleman; have my hair exactly dressed; my cloaths

au dernier gout;

dine on made-dishes; drink Burgundy; and, in a word, am every-where the
ton.

So much the worse, so much the worse, young man! To be the
ton

where Vice and Folly are the ruling deities, proves that you must be sometimes a fool, at others
a—

(interrupting)

Psha! you satirists, like moles, shut your eyes to the light, and grope about for the dark side of the human character: there is a great deal of good-sense and good-meaning in the world. As for its follies, I think folly a mighty pleasant thing; at least, to play the fool
gracefully,

requires more talents than would set up a dozen cynics.

Then half the people I know must have

wond

rful

talents, for they have been playing the fool from sixteen to sixty.

—Apropos!

I found my precious kinsman Lord

Sparkle

here.

Ay! there's an instance of the happy effects of total indifference to the sage maxims you recommend.

Happy
effects do you call them?

Most triumphant! Who so much admired? who so much the fashion?—the general favourite of the Ladies, and the common object of imitation with the men. Is not Lord

Sparkle

the happy man, who's to carry the rich and charming widow Lady

Bell Bloomer

from so many rivals?—And will not you, after quarrelling with him half your life, leave him a fine estate at the end of it?

No, no!—I tell you, No!

[With warmth.

Nay, his success with the widow is certain.—He boasts his triumph every-where; and as she is such a favourite of yours, every thing else will follow.

No; for if she marries

Sparkle,

she will be no longer a favourite. Yet she receives him with a degree of distinction that sometimes makes me fear it; for we frequently see women of accomplishments and beauty, to which every heart yields homage, throw themselves into the arms of the debauched, the silly, and the vain.

Enter a

SERVANT.

Mr.

Beauchamp.

[Exit.

Oh! I expected him to call on you this morning. You must obtain his confidence; it will assist me in my designs. When I found myself disappointed in my hopes of his Lordship, I selected

Beauchamp

from the younger branches of my family: but of this he knows nothing, and thinks himself under high obligations to the patronage of the Peer; an error in which I wish him to continue, as it will give me an opportunity of proving them both.—But here he comes!—This way I can avoid him.

[Exit.

Enter

BEAUCHAMP.

Beauchamp!—

and in regimentals!—Why, prithee,

George,

what spirit has seized thee now? When I saw thee last, thou wert devoted to the grave profession of the Law, or the Church; and I expected to have seen thee envelop'd in wig, wrangling at the bar; or seated in a fat benefice, receiving tythe-pigs and poultry.

Those,

Be

ville,

were my school-designs; but the fire of youth gave me ardors of a different sort. The heroes of the Areopagus and the Forum have yielded to those of Marathon; and I feel, that whilst my

country is struggling amidst surrounding foes, I ought not to devote a life to learned indolence, that might be gloriously hazarded in her defence.

(smiling.)

I shan't give you credit now for that fine flourish.—This sudden ardor for "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war,"—I dare swear this heroic spirit springs from the whim of some fine Lady, who fancied you would be a smarter fellow in a cockade and gorget, than in a stiff band and perriwig.

If your insinuation means that my heart has not been insensible of the charms of some fair Lady, you are right; but my transformation is owing to no whim of her's: for, oh

Charles!

she never yet condescended to make me the object of her thoughts.

Modest too!—Ay, you were right to give up the Law.—But who, pray, may this exalted Fair-one be who never condescended?

I never suffer my lips to wanton with the charming sounds that form her name. I have a kind of miserly

felicity in glosing on her dear idea, that would be impaired, should it be known to exist in my heart.

Ha! ha! ha! who

can

be the nymph who has inspired so

obsolete

a passion!—In the days of chivalry it wou'd have been the ton.

I will gratify you thus far: The Lady has beauty, wit, and spirit; but, above all, a mind.—

Is it possible,

Charles,

to love a woman without a mind?

Has she a mind for you? That is the most important question.

I dare not feed my passion with so presumptuous a hope; yet I would not extinguish it, if I could: for it is not a love that tempts me into corners to wear out my days in complaints: it prompts me to use them for the most important purposes:—the ardors it gives me, shall be felt in the land of our enemies; they shall know how

well

I love.

Poh! poh! this is the gallantry of One Thousand One Hundred and One; the kind of passion that animated our fathers in the fields of Cressy and Poitiers.—Why, no Beauty of our age, man, will be won in this stile!—Now, suppose yourself at the Opera

(looking through his hand)

"Gad, that's a fine girl! Twenty thousand, you say? I think I'll have her. Yes, she'll do! I—I must have her! I'll call on her to-morrow and tell her so."

Have you spirit and courage enough for that, my Achilles?

No truly.

Then give up all thoughts of being received.

I have no thoughts of hazarding a reception. The pride of birth, and a few hundreds for my education, were the sole patrimony the imprudence of a father left me. My relation Lord Sparkle has procured for me a commission.—Generously to offer that and a knapsack to a Lady of five thousand a year, would be properly answered by a contemptuous dismissal. But suppose she should take a fancy to your knapsack? That would reduce me to the necessity of depriving myself of a happiness I would die to obtain; for never can I submit to be quartered on a Wife's fortune; whilst I have a sword to carve subsistence for myself.

That may be in the great

stile; but 'tis scarcely in the polite.

Will you take chocolate in my dressing-room?

No; I am going to take orders at my Colonel's: where shall we meet in the evening?

'Faith, 'tis impossible to tell! I commit myself to Chance for the remainder of the day, and shall finish it as she directs.

[Exeunt at opposite sides.

Scene changes to an Apartment at

CLARINDA'S.

Enter

CLARINDA,

reading a Catalogue, followed by

TIFFANY.

Poor Lady Squander! So Christie has her jewels and furniture at last!—I must go to the sale.—Mark that Dresden service, and the pearls.

(Gives the catalogue to the Maid)

It must be a great comfort to her to see her jewels worn by her friends.—Who was here last night?

(sitting down, and taking some cards from the table)

I came home so late, I forgot to enquire!—Mrs.

Jessamy—

Lady

Racket—

Miss

Belvoir—

Lord

Sparkle (starting up)—

Lord

Sparkle

here! Oh Heavens and earth! what possessed me to go to Lady

Price

's? I wish she and her concert of three fiddles and a flute had been playing to her kids on the We

ch mountains!—Why did you persuade me to go out last night?

Dear ma'am, you seem'd so low-spirited, that I thought—

I missed him every where!—At four places he was just gone as I came in.—But what does it signify?—'Twas Lady

Bell Bloomer

he was seeking, I dare swear:—his attachment to the relict

is every where the subject. Hang those widows! I really believe there's something cabalistical in their names.—No less than fourteen fine young fellows of fortune have been drawn into the matrimonial noose by them since last February.—'Tis well they were threatened with imprisonment, or we should not have had an unmarried Infant above seventeen, between Charing-Cross and Portman-Square.

Well, I am sure I wish Lady

Bell

was married; she's always putting you out of temper.

Have I not cause? Till she broke upon the Town, I was at the top of fashion—you know I was. My dress, my equipage, my furniture, and myself, were the criterions of taste; but a new French chamber-maid enabled her Ladyship at one stroke to turn the tide against me.

Ay, I don't know what good these Mademoiselles—

(interrupting)

But,

Tiffany,

she is to be at court to-day, out of mourning for the first time: I am resolved to be there.—No, I won't go neither, now I think on't.—If she shou'd really outshine me, her triumph will be increased by my being witness to it.—I won't go to St. James's; but I'll go to her route this evening, and, if 'tis possible, prevent Lord

Sparkle

's being particular to her.—Perhaps that will put her in an ill humour, and then the advantage will be on my side.

[Exit

Clarinda.

Mercy on us! To be a chamber-maid to a

Miss

on the brink of Thirty requires as good politics, as being Prime Minister! Now, if she should not rise from her toilette quite in looks to-day, or if the desertion of a lover, or the victory of a rival, should happen, ten to one but I shall be forced to resign, without even a Pension to retire on.

[Exit

Tiffany.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An elegant Apartment at

LADY BELL BLOOMER'S.

Enter

JULIA,

with Papers in her Hand.

WHAT an invaluable treasure! Those dear papers, that have lain within the frigid walls of a Convent, insensible, and uninteresting to every one around them, contain for me

a world of happiness. He is in England! How little he suspects that

I

too am here!

Enter

KITTY.

Mr.

Fitzherbert

will be here immediately, Ma'am.

Mr.

Fitzherbert!

Very well. Has Lady

Bell

finished dressing yet?

(speaking exceedingly fast)

No, Ma'am.—Mr.

Crape

the hair-dresser has been with her these three hours, and her maid is running here and there, and

Mr.

John

flying about to milliners and perfumers, and the new

vis-à-vis

at the door to carry her Ladyship to court—Every thing black banished, and the liveries come home shining with silver; and the moment she is gone out, every body will be in such a delightful hurry about the route that her Ladyship is to give this evening; and they say all the world—

Ha! ha! ha! Prithee stop! I can't wonder if Lady

Bell

shou'd be transported at dropping her weeds, for it seems to have turn'd the heads of the whole family.

Oh! dearee, Ma'am, to be sure! for now we shall be so gay! Lady

Bell

has such fine spirits!—And 'tis well she has; for the servants tell me, their old master would have broke her heart else.—They all adore her!—I wish you were a little gayer, Ma'am!—Somehow we are so dull!—'Tis a wonder so young and so pretty a Lady—

Don't run into impertinence.—I have neither the taste nor talents for public life that Lady

Bell Bloomer

has.

Laws, Ma'am, 'tis all use!

You

are always at home; but Lady

Bell

knows, that wit and a fine person are not given for a fire-side

at home

(drawing).

She shines every evening in half the houses of half-a-dozen parishes, and he next morning we have stanzas in the

Bevy of Beauties,

and sonnets, and billets-doux, and all the fine things that fine Ladies are so fond of.

I can bear your freedoms no longer!—Carry these flowers with my compliments, and tell her Ladyship I sent to Richmond for them, as I know her fondness for natural bouquets; and bid Harry deny me to every body this morning, except Mr.

Fitzherbert.

[Exit

Kitty.

Enter Mr.

FITZHERBERT.

Happily excepted, my dear Ward! But I suppose you heard my step, and threw in my name for a *douceur*. I can hardly believe, that when you shut your doors on youth and flattery, you would open them to a cross old man, who seldom entertains you with any thing but your faults.

How you mistake, Sir! You are the greatest flatterer I have: your whole conduct flatters me with esteem, and love; and as you do not

squander

these things—

(smiling)

There I must correct you.—I do squander them on few objects, indeed; and they are proportionably warmer. I feel attachments fifty times as strong as your good-humour'd smiling people, who are every one's humble servant, and every body's friend. Where is Lady

Bell?

Yet at her toilette, I believe. My dear Sir, I am every hour more grateful to you, for having given me so charming a friend.

So I would have you. When you came from France, I prevailed on her Ladyship to allow you her society, that you might add to the polish of elegant manners the graces of an elegant mind. Here she comes! her tongue and her heels keeping time.

Enter Lady

BELL.

Ay, ay, if all the women in the world were prating young widows, love and gallantry would die away, and our men grow

reasonable

and

discreet.

Oh you monster! But I am in such divine spirits, that nothing you say can destroy 'em.—My sweet

Julia,

what a bouquet! Lady Myrtle will expire.—She was so envelop'd in flowers and ever-greens last night, that she look'd like the picture of fair Rosamond in her bower.—My dear

Fitz,

do you know we dined yesterday in Hill-street, and had the fortitude to stay till eleven!

I was tired to death with the fatiguing visit.

Now, I, on the contrary, came away with fresh relish for society. The persevering civility of Sir Andrew and the maukish insipidity of his tall daughter act like olives: You can't endure them on your palate, but they heighten the gusto of your Tokay.

Then I advise your Ladyship to serve up Sir Andrew and his daughter at your next entertainment. So I would, only one can't remove 'em with the dessert. But how do you like me? Did you ever see so delightful a head? Don't you think I shall make a thousand conquests to-day?

Doubtless, if you meet with so many fools.—But pray, which of those you have already made, will be the most flattered by all these gay insignia of your liberty?

Probably, he whom it least concerns.

Pray tell us which is that?

Oh, Heavens! to answer that, requires more reflection than I have ever given the subject.

Should you build a temple to your lovers, I fancy we should find Lord

Sparkle

's name on the altar.

Oh! Lord

Sparkle!—

Who can resist the gay, the elegant, the all-conquering Lord

Sparkle?

the most distinguished feather in the plume of fashion—without that barbarous strength of mind which gives importance to virtues or to vices. Fashionable, because he's well drest:—Brilliant, because he's of the first Clubs, and uses his borrowed wit like his borrowed gold, as tho' it was his own.

Why, now, this man, whom you understand so well, you receive as tho' his tinsel was pure gold.

Aye, to be sure!—Tinsel is just as well for shew.—The world is charitable, and accepts tinsel for gold in most cases.

But in the midst of all this sunshine for Lord

Sparkle,

will you not throw a ray on the spirited, modest

Beauchamp?

A ray of favour for

Beauchamp!—

Were I so inclined, to make it welcome, I must change my fan for a spear, my feathers for a helmet, and stand forth a Thalestris.—You know

his

mistress is War—

(sighing, and then recovering).

—But why do I trifle thus?—The hour of triumph is at hand.

Of what?

The moment of triumph!

—Anglice,

the moment when, having shewn myself at half the houses in St. George's, I am set down at St. James's, my fellows standing on each hand, as I descend—the whisper flying thro' the croud,

"Who is she? Who is that sweet creature?—One of the four heiresses?"—"No; she's a foreign ambassadress."

—I ascend the stairs—move slowly thro' the rooms—drop my fan—incommode my bouquet—stay to adjust it, that the

little

gentry may have time to fix their admiration—again move on—enter the Drawing-room—throw a flying glance round the Circle, and see nothing but spite in the eyes of the women, and a thousand nameless things in those of the men.

The very soul of giddiness!

The very soul of happiness!—Can I be less?—Think of a widow just emerg'd from her weeds for a husband to whom her

sather,
not her
heart,

united her—my jointure elegant—my figure charming—deny it if you dare!—Pleasure, Fortune, Youth, Health, all opening their stores before me; whilst Innocence and conscious Honour shall be my handmaids, and guide me in safety through the dangerous ordeal.

To your Innocence and conscious Honour add, if you have time

(archly),

a little Prudence, or your centinels may be surpris'd asleep, and you reduc'd to a disgraceful capitulation.

Oh! I'm mistress of my whole situation, and cannot be surpris'd.—But, Heav'n's! I am losing a conquest every moment I stay!—The Loves and Pleasures have prepared their rosy garlands—my triumphal car is waiting—and

y proud steeds neighing to be gone.—Away to victory!—

[Exit with great spirit.

A charming woman,

Julia!—

She conceals a fine understanding under apparent giddiness; and a most sensible heart beneath an air of indifference.

Yes, I believe her Ladyship's heart is more sensible than she allows to herself. I rally her on Lord Sparkle,

but it is Mr.

Beauchamp,

whose name is never mentioned but her cheeks tell such blushing truths, as she wou'd never forgive me for observing.

Upon my word, you seem well acquainted with your friend's heart!—Will you be equally frank as to your own?

(in great confusion)

Sir!—my heart!

Yes; will you assist me in reading it?

To be sure, Sir.

Then tell me, if amongst the painted, powdered, gilded moths whom your beauty or fortune have allured, is there

one

whom you would honour with your hand?—Aye, take time; I would not have you precipitate.

(hesitatingly)

No, Sir—not one.

I depend on your truth, and on that assurance inform you, that a friend of mine is arriv'd in town, whom I mean this morning to present to you.

As a—

As a lover, who has my warmest wishes that he may become your husband.

Do I know the person for whom you are thus interested, Sir?

You do not; but I have had long intimacy with him, and 'tis the dearest wish of my heart to see him and

Julia Manners
united.

I trust, Sir, you will allow—

Be under no apprehensions.—Much as I'm interested in this union, your inclinations shall be attended to.—I am now going to your lover, and shall introduce him to you this morning.—

Come, don't look so distress'd, child, at the approach of that period which will give you
dignity
and

character

in society.—The marriage-state is that in which your sex evinces its importance; and where, in the interesting circle of domestic duties, a woman has room to exercise every virtue that constitutes the Great and the Amiable.

[Exit

Fitzherbert.

The moment I so much dreaded is arrived! How shall I reveal to my Guardian, and to Lady Bell,

that I

am

married? that I have already dared to take on me those important duties? I must not reveal it—my solemn promise to my husband—But where is he?—Oh! I must write to him this moment, that I may not be left defenceless to brave the storm of offended authority, and love.

[Exit

Julia.

SCENE II.

BELVILLE's

Lodgings.

Enter

BELVILLE

new-drest.

Let my trunks be ready, and the chaise at the door to-morrow morning by six, for I shall dine in Dover.

Ha! just in time, I see!—You are ready plumed for flight.

True; but my flight wou'd have been to you.—Impatient to know the cause of your summoning me from the Dryades and Hamadryades of Berkshire, your letter reach'd me at the very instant I was setting out for Dover, in my way to Paris.

Paris!

Yes.

Poh! poh! stay where you are, stay where you are! The great turnpike between Dover and Calais is a road destructive to this kingdom; and I wish there were toll-gates erected on its confines, to restrain with a

heavy tax
the number of its travellers.

I fear the
tax
would be more generally felt than the
benefit;

for it would restrain not only the folly-mongers and the fashion-mongers, but the rational enquirer and the travelling connoisseur.

So much the better! so much the better!—Our travelling philosophers have done more towards destroying the nerves of their country, than all the politics of France. Their chief aim seems to be, to establish infidelity, and to captivate us with delusive views of manners still more immoral and licentious than our own.—Hey-dey! who's this?—Oh, the Cornish lad, I suppose, whom
Lord

Sparkle
placed here.

(laughing)

Yes; an odd being!—He was designed by nature for a Clodpole; but the notice of a Peer overset the little understanding he had, and so he commenced fine gentleman. He has a sister with him, who ran wild upon the commons till her father's death; but she fancies herself a wit, and satirizes Bruin.—Here he comes.

Enter

PENDRAGON.

My dear fellow-lodger, I'm come to—Oh! your servant, Sir!

(to

Fitzherbert)

—Is this gentleman a friend of yours?

He is.

Your hand, Sir!

(passes

Belville,

and stands between them)

—If you are Mr.

Belville

's friend, you are my friend, and we are all friends; I soon make acquaintance.

A great happiness!

Yes, so it is, and very polite too. I have been in the Great World almost six weeks, and I can see no difference between the Great World and the Little World, only that they've no ceremony; and so as that's the mark of good-breeding, I tries to hit it off.

With success.

To convince you of that, I'll tell you a devilish good thing.—You must know—

(interrupting.)

Excuse me now, but I am convinc'd you will amuse me, and desire your company at dinner—they'll give you my address below. Mr.

Belville,

I have business of importance.

[Exit

Fitzherbert
and
Belville.

Gad, I'm glad he ask'd me to visit him!—He must be a Lord by his want of ceremony.
(imitating)

"Mr.

Belville,

I have business of importance"—and off they go.—Now in Cornwall we should have thought that damn'd rude—but 'tis easy.—"Mr.

Belville,

I have business of importance."—

(going)

Easy—easy—easy!

Enter

SOPHY PENDRAGON.

Brother

Bobby!—

Brother

Bobby!

(returning.)

I desire, Miss

Pendragon,

you won't

Brother

me at this rate—making one look as if one didn't know Life.—How often shall I tell you, that it is the most ungenteeled thing in the world for relations to

Brother,

and

Father,

and

Cousin

one another, and all that sort of thing. I did not get the better of my shame for three days, when you bawl'd out to Mrs. Dobson at Launceston Concert—"Aunt, Aunt, here's room between Brother and I, if Cousin Dick will sit closer to Father!"

Lack-a-day!—and where's the harm? What d'ye think one has relations given one for?—To be asham'd of 'em?

I don't know what they were given us for; but I know no young man of fashion cares

for his relations.

More shame for your young men of fashion; but I assure you, Brother

Bobby,

I shall never give in to any such unnatural, new-fangled ways. As for you, since Lord

Sparkle

took notice of you, you are quite another thing. You used to creep into the parlour, when Father had company, hanging your head like a dead partridge; steal all round the room behind their

backs to get at a chair; then sit down on one corner of it, tying knots in your handkerchief; and if any-body drank your health, rise up, and scrape your foot so—"Thank you kindly, Sir!"—

By Goles, if you—

(shaking his fist)

But now, when you enter a room, your hat is toss'd carelessly on a table; you pass the company with a half bend of your body; fling yourself into one chair, and throw your legs on another:—

"Pray, my dear Sir, do me the favour to ring."—"John, bring Lemonade."—"Mrs. Plume has been driving me all morning in Hyde-Park, against the wind, and the dust has made my throat mere plaister of Paris."—

Hang me, if I don't like myself at second-hand better than I thought I should!—Why, if I do it as well as you,

Sophy,

I shall soon be quite the thing!—And now I'll give you a bit of advice:—As 'tis very certain Lord Sparkle

means to introduce you to High Life, 'tis sitting you should know how to behave; and as I have been amongst 'em, I can tell you.

Well!

Why, first of all, if you should come into a drawing-room, and find twenty or thirty people in the circle, you are not to take the least notice of any one.

No!

No!—The servant will, perhaps, give you a chair;—if not, slide into the nearest. The conversation will not be interrupted by your entrance; for they'll take as little notice of you, as you of them.

Psha!

Then, be sure to be equally indifferent to the coming-in of others.—I saw poor Lady Carmine one night dying with confusion, for the vulgarity and illbreeding of her friend, who actually rose from her chair, at the entrance of the Dutchess of Dulcet and Lady Betty Blowze.

Be quiet,

Bobby!

True, as I am a young man of fashion!—Then you must never let your discourse go beyond one word.—If any body should happen to take the trouble to entertain the company, you may throw in—"Charming!—Odious! —Capital!"—Never mount to a phrase, unless to that dear delightful one, of "all that sort of thing."—The use made of that is wonderful!

—"All that sort of thing,"

is an apology for want of wit; it is a substitute for argument; it will serve for the point of a story, or the fate of a battle.

Well then,—upon going away?

Oh, you go away as you came in!—If one has a mind to give the lady of the house a nod,

(nodding)

one may; but 'tis still higher breeding to leave

her

with as little ceremony as

I

do you.

[Exit

Pendragon

without looking at her.

I wish I could be sure it was the fashion not to mind forms, I'd go directly and visit Lord Sparkle.

I could tear my eyes out to think I was abroad to-day when he call'd on Mrs. Johnson!—

In all the books I have read, I never met with a lover so careless as he is.—Sometimes I have a mind to treat him with disdain, and then I recollect all I have read about Ladies behaviour that break their Lovers hearts;—but he won't come near me.—Now I have been three days in a complying humour—but 'tis all one; still he keeps away. I'll be hang'd, if I don't know what he's about soon!—He sha'n't think to bring me from the Land's End to make a fool of me:

Sophy Pendragon

has more spirit than he thinks for.

[Exit

Sophy.

Re-enter

FITZHERBERT

and

BELVILLE.

A Wife! Heaven's last best gift!—But—a—no—I sha'n't marry yet. I have a hundred little follies to act before I do so rash a thing.

But I say, you shall

marry.—I have studied you from eighteen, and know your character, you faults, and your virtues; and such as you are, I have pick'd you out from all the blockheads and fools about you, to take a fine girl off my hands with twenty thousand pounds.

'Tis a bride, doubtless!—But what is

the Lady; Coquet, Prude, or Vixen?

You may make her what you will. Treat her with confidence, tenderness, and respect, and she'll be an angel; be morose, suspicious, and neglectful, and she'll be—a woman.—The Wife's character and conduct is a comment on that of the Husband.

(gaily)

Any thing more?—

Yes, she is my ward, and the daughter of the friend of my youth.—I entertain parental affection for her, and give you the highest proof of my esteem in transferring to you

the care of her happiness. Refuse it, if you dare.

Dare! My dear friend, I must

refuse the honour you offer me.

How!

To be serious, it is not in my power to wed the Lady.

I understand you.—I am disappointed!—I should have mentioned this subject to you, before I had suffered it to make so strong a feature in my picture of future happiness.

Would you had, that I might have informed you at once—that I am—married.

Married!—Where, when, how, with whom?

Where?—

In France.

—When?—

About eight months since.

—How?—

By an English clergyman.

—With whom?—

Ah, with such a one!—Her beauty is of the Greek kind, which pleases the mind more than the eye.—Yet to the eye nothing can be more lovely.—To this charming creature add the name of

Julia Manners,

and you know my wife.

Julia Manners! Julia Manners

did you say?

Yes,

Julia Manners!

I first knew her at the house of a friend in Paris, whose daughters were in the same convent with herself. I often visited her at the grate; at length, by the assistance of Mademoiselle St. Val, prevailed on her to give me her hand, but was immediately torn from her by a summons from my uncle at Florence; whence I was dispatched to England on a ministerial affair.

So, so, so, very fine!

(aside)

—I suppose you had the prudence to make yourself acquainted with the Lady's family, before you married her?

Yes: her family and fortune are elegant. She has a guardian, whose address she sweetly refused to give me, that she might herself reveal the marriage;—which I had reasons, however, to request her not to do, till we both arrived in England.

Then you have not seen your bride in England?

Oh no!—My

Julia

is yet in her convent. I have been preparing for her reception in Berkshire, and have written to inform her, that I would meet her at Calais; but I fear my letters have missed her, and shall therefore set out for Paris, to conduct to England the woman who must give the point to all my felicities.

(aside)

And has

Julia

been capable of this?—Ungrateful girl! is it thus she rewards my cares?

Your silence and your resentment, my dear friend, whilst they flatter, distress me.

I'm indeed offended at your marriage, but not with you:—on

you

I had no claims.

I do not apprehend you.

Perhaps not; and at present I shall not explain myself.

(going.)

If you

will

leave me, adieu! I am going to run over the Town. My mind, impatient for the moment which carries me to my sweet bride, feels all the intermediate time a void, which any adventure may fill up.

[Exit.

Spite of my displeasure, I can hardly conceal from him his happiness!—Yet I will.—Julia

must be punished. To vice and folly I am content to appear severe; but she

ought not to have thought me so. I have not deserved this want of confidence, and must correct it. If I don't mistake,

Pendragon

is a fit instrument.—I'll take him home with me.—Yes, yes, my young Lady, you shall have a lover!—Oh these headstrong girls!

[Exit.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE 1.

LORD SPARKLE'S.

LORD SPARKLE

and

BEAUCHAMP

discover'd at a Table, on which are Pens, Paper, &c.

SPARKLE

superbly drest.

POOR

George!

and so thou wilt really be in a few days in the bosom of the Atlantic!

"Farewel to green fields and sweet groves,

"Where Chloe engag'd my fond heart"—

(rises and comes forward)

Hey for counterscarps, wounds, and victory!

I accept your last words for my omen; and now, in the true spirit of Homer's Heroes, should take my

congé,

and depart, with its influence upon me.

First take an office which I know must charm you.—You admire Lady

Bell Bloomer?

Admire her!—Yes, by Heaven—

(with great warmth)

(interrupting)

No heroics, dear

George—

no heroics! They are totally out now—totally out both in love and war.

How, my Lord!

Indifference!—that's the rule.—We love, hate, quarrel, and even fight without suffering our tranquility to be incommoded;—nothing disturbs.—The keenest discernment will discover nothing particular in the behaviour of

lovers

on the point of marriage, nor in the

married,

whilst the articles of separation are preparing.

Disgustful apathy!—What becomes of the energies of the heart in this wretched system? Does it annihilate your feelings?

Oh, no!—I feel, for instance, that I must have Lady

Bell Bloomer,

and I feel curiosity to know her sentiments of me, of which, however, I have very little doubt: but all my art can't make her serious; she fences admirably, and keeps me at the length of her foil.—To you she will be less on her guard.

Me I you surprise me, my Lord! How can I be of use in developing her Ladyship's sentiments?

Why, by sifting them. When you talk of me, see if she blushes. Mention some woman as one whom I admire, and observe if she does not make some spiteful remark on her shape, complexion, or conduct; provoke her to abuse me with violence, or to speak of me with confusion—in either case, I have her.

Your instructions are ample, my Lord; but I do not feel myself equal to the embassy.

(with pique)

Your pardon, Sir! You

refuse

then to oblige me?

I cannot

refuse

you—my obligations to your Lordship make it impossible:—but, of all mankind, I perhaps am the last you shou'd have chosen for the purpose.

Nay, prithee don't be ridiculous! It is the last service you can do me: and you are the only man whom I could entrust with so delicate a business.

I accept it as a proof of your Lordship's confidence, and will discharge the commission faithfully.—

(aside)

It will at least give me an occasion to converse with Lady

Bell,

and to converse with her on

love.—

Oh! my heart! how wilt thou contain thy ardors in the trying moment?

[Exit

Beauchamp.

Ha! ha! ha! I am confirm'd in my suspicions, that the fellow has had the vanity to indulge a passion for Lady

Bell,

himself. Well, so much the better! the commission I have given him will sufficiently punish him for his presumption.

Enter a

SERVANT.

Mrs.

Kitty

is below, my Lord, Miss

Manners

's woman.

Ha! Send her up—send her up.

(Exit

Serv.)

I had began to give up that affair; but I think I won't neither. It will be rather a brilliant thing to have Lady

Bell

for a wife, and her friend for a mistress:—yes, it will be a point. I think I'll have the eclat

of the thing.—

(Enter

Kitty)

—Well,

Kitty,

what intelligence from the land of intrigue? What says the little frost-piece

Julia?

Oh, nothing new, my Lord! She's as insensible as ever.—I makes orations all day long of your Lordship's merit, and goodness, and fondness, and—

(staring)

Merit,

and

goodness,

and

fondness!

And don't you give a parenthesis to my sobriety, and my neatness too! Ha! ha! ha! you foolish little devil, I thought you knew better!—Tell her of my fashion, my extravagance; that I play deepest at

Weltjie

's, am the best-drest at the Opera, and have half ruined myself by granting annuities to pretty girls.—Goodness and fondness are baits to catch old prudes, not blooming misses.

What, my Lord! is spreading out your faults the way to win a fair Lady?

Faults!

Thine is chambermaid's morality, with a vengeance!—What have all my past lessons been thrown away upon thee, Innocence!—Have I not told thee, that the governing passion of the female mind is the rage of being envied? The most generous of them wou'd like to break the hearts of half-a-dozen of their friends, by the preference given to themselves. Go home again, good

Kitty,

and con your lessen afresh: if you can pick up any stories of extravagance and gallantry, affix my name to 'em, and repeat them to your mistress.

Then she'll tell 'em to Lady

Bell,
perhaps, for a warning—
(drawling)
For a warning, quotha!—My devoirs to Lady
Bell
are of a different kind, and we understand each other. I address
her
for a wife, because she's the fashion; and I address
Julia
for a mistress, because 'tis the fashion to have mistresses from higher orders than sempstresses
and mantua-makers.
And is that your only reason, my Lord, for bribing me so high?
Not absolutely. I have a pique against her guardian, who, tho' he has the honour to be related to
me, will not suffer me to draw on his banker for a single guinea. His estates, indeed, he can't
deprive me of; so as it can do no harm, I'll have the
eclat
of affronting him with spirit.
Oh Gemini! I am glad to hear that! I'd do any thing to plague Mr.
Fitzherbert,
and can go on now with a safe conscience!—He had like to have lost me my place once, because
he thought I was flighty;—but I'll be up with him, now.
Enter
SERVANT.
Mr.
Belville.
[Exit.
Enter
BELVILLE.
My dear
Belville!
(apart)
Go,
Kitty,
into that room, I'll speak to you presently.
[Exit
Kitty.
Welcome once more to the region of business and pleasure!
I thank you! But pray, my Lord, don't dismiss the lady.
The lady! Ha! ha! ha. That lady, Sir, is a Lady's
gentlewoman,
a'n't please ye! I suppose you have heard that I am going to marry Lady
Bell Bloomer;
we are the two most fashionable people in town, and in course must come together.
A clear deduction.
Now she has a friend, whom I mean at the same time to take for a mistress:—won't that be a
stroke, eh!

Decidedly. Your life is made up of strokes! Every thing with you, my Lord, is a hit. True, true! I detest a regular, mechanical mode of doing things.—Men of sense have one way of getting through life; men of genius, another.

Doubtless; and the advantage lies with the men of genius, for to their genius

are all their faults imputed; nay, their faults are considered as the graceful meanderings of a mind too ethereal

to be confined to the rules of common-sense and decorum;—a mighty easy way of building reputation! ha! ha! ha! You are drest with infinite malice to-day, my Lord.

Malice! Not at all.—The women now-a-days are neither caught by finery or person!—I am drest for court.—I was going to Westminster; but I hear there is to be a presentation of

Misses

to-day, and I would not for the world lose the dear creatures blushes on their first appearance; for, 'faith, most of them will never blush again.—Will you go?

'Tis too late to dress: besides, I have devoted this day to adventure. I am rambling through the town, discovering what new stars have appeared in the Galaxy of Beauty during my absence, and a dangerous progress it is! The rays of a pair of black eyes from a chariot in Pall-mall would have annihilated me, had not at the same instant two beautiful blue ones from a window given a fillip to my sinking spirits. A fine-turn'd ankle, whose polish shone thro' its neat silk stocking, encounter'd me in St. James's-street; but I was luckily relieved by a little rosy mouth, that betray'd, with a deceitful smile, teeth most murderously white. A Galatea darted by me on the right, whilst a Helen swam along on the left:—in short, from such sweet besiegers nothing could have preserved me but the sweeter charms of a beloved, though absent fair-one.

(sighing.)

Now, I never trouble my head about absentees!—I love beauty as well as any man; but it must be all in the present tense. Shall I set you down any where? I must go.

No; but I see your writing-things are here. If you'll permit me, I'll pen a short note to Beauchamp

on business I had forgot this morning, and dispatch it by a chairman.

To be sure. I penned a note ten minutes since to my steward, to raise the poor devils rents. Upon my soul, I pity 'em! But how can it be otherwise, whilst one is obliged to wear fifty acres in a suit, and the produce of a whole farm in a pair of buckles? Adieu!

[Exit singing.

(Whilst

Sparkle

is speaking,

Belville

seats himself, and begins to write.)

(writing)

Good morning!—My compliments to the Ladies blushes.

Enter

KITTY;

passes

BELVILLE

in the front of the Stage.

So, so, his Lordship has forgot me! I must go after him.

(coming forward)

Hah! that's the confidante!—So, pretty-one, whose chattels are you?

My mistress's, Sir.

And who is your mistress?

A Lady, Sir.

And her name?

That of her father, I take it.

Upon my word, your Lady has a very brilliant servant!—Is she as clever as you are?

Why, not quite, I think, or she would not keep me to eclipse her.

Bravo! I wish I knew her! Will you tell me her name?

Can you spell?

Yes.

Why then you'll find it in the four-and-twenty letters.

(going.)

(catching her)

Nay, by Heaven, you have rais'd my curiosity!

Poh! what signifies asking me? You know well enough who she is.—I heard you and Lord

Sparkle

talking about her. Let me go; for I am going to carry a message to Mr.

Fitzherbert.

Mr.

Fitzherbert!

Aye, her guardian.

Her guardian! What,

Fitzherbert

of Cambridgeshire?

Yes; and if you want to know more, he's the crossest old wretch that ever breathed. You'll find him out by that description; and so, your servant!

[Exit

Kitty.

Fitzherbert

's ward! and this creature her servant! and Lord

Sparkle

plotting to get her for a mistress!—I am astonish'd!—the

very

Lady he this morning offered for my bride!—Well,—I must find

Fitzherbert

immediately.—Lord

Sparkle

will perhaps think me guilty of a breach of honour—The

imputation

I must incur, that I may not be really guilty of a breach of humanity, and of gratitude.

[Exit

Belville.

SCENE II.

Lady

BELL BLOOMER'S.

Enter

FITZHERBERT,

followed by a Servant.

Tell Miss

Manners

I am here.

(Exit

Servant.)—I cannot perhaps be seriously angry with

Julia;

but I must take some revenge on her disobedience, before I acquaint her with the felicity that attends her. Come in, Young Cornish, pray!

Enter

PENDRAGON.

What, does the Lady live in this fine house?

Yes.—but pray observe, that I don't engage she shall be smitten

with you. I can go no farther than to introduce you; the rest must depend on the brilliancy of your manners.

Oh leave me alone for that!—I knew how 'twould be, if I once shew'd myself in London. If she has a long purse, I'll whask her down to Cornwall, jockey Lord

Sparkle,

and have the Borough myself.

A man of spirit, I see!

Oh, as to my spirit, that nobody ever doubted!—I have beat our Exciseman, and gone to-law with the Parson; and to shew you that I did not leave my spirit in the country, since I came to London I have fined a hackneycoachman for abuse.

Very commendable!—But here comes the Lady!

Enter

JULIA.

Mr.

Pendragon,

this is my ward, who, I am sure, will give your addresses all the encouragement I wish them.

Servant, Ma'am!

(aside)

She looks plaguy glum.

I can scarcely support myself!

(aside.)

Pray, my dear, speak to Mr.

Pendragon!

You seem greatly confused!

Oh, Sir, I understand it! Young Ladies will look confus'd and embarrass'd, and all that sort of thing, on these occasions; but we men of the world are up to all that.

Heavens! is it to such a Being I should have been sacrificed!

(aside.)

I see your ward is one of the modest diffident ones: I am surprised at that—bred in high-life.

Oh, now and then, you find a person of that cast in the best company!—but they soon get over it. Yes, formerly I used to blush, and be modest, and all that sort of thing; but if any one ever catches me modest again, I'll give 'em my estate for a pilchard.

Then it seems impossible—pardon me, Sir!

(to

Fitzherbert)

that a union can take place between you and me; for I place modesty amongst the elegancies of manner, and think it absolutely necessary to the character of a gentleman.

Well done,

Julia!

(aside)

—Fye upon you to treat my friend with such asperity!

O leave her to me, Sir; she's ignorant, but I shall

teach

her. There are three things, Miss, only necessary to the character of a Gentleman;—a good air, good assurance, and good teeth.

(grinning.)

[to

Fitzherbert)

Doesn't his list want

good manners,

Sir?

Oh, no, Ma'am! If you had said good

taste,

it wou'd have been nearer the thing; but even that is unnecessary.—A Gentleman's friends can furnish his house, and chuse his books, and his pictures, and he can learn to criticise them by heart.—Nothing is so easy as to criticise;—people do it continually.

You see, Mr.

Pendragon

has

information, Julia.—

I'll leave you a few moments, that he may unfold himself to advantage; and remember, if you refuse the man I design for your husband, you lose

me.—

Keep it up with spirit! I'll wait for you below

(to

Pendragon).

—Now shall impertinence and disobedience correct each other!

[Exit

Fitzherbert.

Now to strike her with my superior

ease!

(aside)

—So, Miss, your Guardian, I think, has a mind that we shall—in the vulgar speech—marry!

Well, Sir; but are you not frighten'd at your approach to such a state!—Do you know what belongs to the character of a Husband?

What belongs to it? Aye! Do you know what belongs to being a Wife?

Yes; I guess that to

your

wife will belong ill-humour with you at home—shame with you abroad;—in her face forc'd smiles—in her heart hidden thorns.

The Devil! What, you have found your tongue, Ma'am! Oh, oh, I shall have a fine time on't, I guess, when our

connection

begins!

Our

connection!—Pray, Sir, drop the idea!—I protest to you, that were it possible for me to become your wife, I should be the most wretched of women.

Oh no, you wouldn't! I hardly know a wife who is

not

wretched.

Unfeeling man! Would

you

presume to enter into a state, to the happiness of which, union of soul, delicacy of sentiment, and all the elegant attentions of polish'd manners are necessary and indispensable?

What's all that! Union of soul! sentiment! attentions!—That's not Life, I'm sure.

I am not able to conceive by what witchcraft Mr.

Fitzherbert

has been blinded to the weakness of your head, and the turpitude of your heart.—Tell him, Sir, there is not a fate I would not prefer to that of being united to a man whose vice is the effect of folly, and whose folly is as hateful even as his vice.

[Exit

Julia.

Yes, yes, I'll tell, depend on't!—Egad, she's a spirit!—So much the better, more pleasure in taming her!—A meek wife cheats a man of his rights, and deprives him of the pleasure of

exacting

her obedience.—Let me see!—Vice—folly—impudence—ignorance—Ignorance too!

[Exit

Pendragon.

Re-enter

JULIA.

What have I done? I dare not now see my guardian! His displeasure will kill me. Oh

Belville!

where art thou! Come and shield thy unhappy bride!—What steps can I take?

Enter

KITTY.

Dear Ma'am, I'm so griev'd to see you so unhappy! If I had such a cross old guardian, I'd run away from him.

The very thought which that instant presented itself to my mind!—Have you not told me, that some relation of your's has lodgings?

Yes, Ma'am; the most elegantest in London.

I don't want elegant apartments; but I wish for a short time to be conceal'd in some family of reputation.

To be sure, Ma'am, 'tis the most prudent thing you can do.

And yet my heart fails me.

Oh, Ma'am, don't hesitate! I'll go and pack up a few things, and call a coach and be off, before

Lady

Bell

comes from Court.

I fear 'tis a wrong step; and yet what other can I take? I dare not reveal my marriage, without the permission of my husband; and till his arrival, I must avoid both a guardian's anger and the addresses of a lover.—The honour of

Belville

would be insulted, should I permit them to be repeated.

(aside.)

[Exit Julia.

I know not what she means, but there is some mystery, I find. So there shou'd be!—If ladies had not mysteries, a chambermaid's place would be hardly worth keeping.—I have mysteries too, and she shall have their explanation from Lord

Sparkle.

[Exit.

SCENE III.

CLARINDA'S

House.

Enter Lady

BELL

meeting

CLARINDA.

Ha! ha! ha! my dear creature, what an embarras!

Driving swiftly through the streets, Lady Whipcord dash'd upon us in her flaming phaeton and six, gave a monstrous big Newmarket word to my poor fellows, and with infinite dexterity entangled the traces. It happen'd near your door; so I have taken shelter with you, and left her Ladyship to settle the dispute with my coachman, ha! ha! ha! But why were you not at Court to-day?

I had a teasing head-ach; but pray, tell me what happen'd there.—

(aside)

Deuce take her, she looks as well as ever!

Oh, the Ladies, as usual, brilliant—nothing so flat as the men! The horrid

English

custom ruins them for conversation. They make themselves members of Clubs, in the way of business; and Members of Parliament, in the way of amusement: all their passions are reserved for the first, and all their wit for the last.

'Tis better in Paris.

Oh, 'tis quite another thing! Whilst we awkwardly copy the follies of the Parisians, we absurdly omit the charming part of their character. Devoted to elegance, they catch their opinions, their wit, and their bons mots from the mouths of the ladies.—'Tis in the drawing-room of Madame the Dutchess, the Marquis learns his politicks; whilst the sprightly Countess dispenses taste and philosophy to a circle of Bishops, Generals, and Abbés.

All that may be just; yet I am mistaken, if you have not found one

Englishman to reconcile you to the manners of the rest. Lord Sparkle,

for instance—your Ladyship thinks, I'm sure, that be

has wit at will.

Oh yes, quite at will!—His wit, like his essence-bottle, is a collection of all that is poignant in a thousand flowers; and, like that, is most useful, when he himself is most insipidly vacant.

With such sentiments, I wonder you can suffer his addresses.

What

can

I do? The man is so much the fashion, and I shall be so much envied.—Why you now, my dear, for instance—you'd be inclin'd to stick a poisoned nosegay in my bosom, if I should take him.

Ha! ha! ha! ridiculous! Believe me, Madam, I shall neither prepare a bouquet, nor invoke a fiery shower to grace your nuptials.

(aside)

No, your shower would be tears, I fancy.—Here he comes!

Hah! Lord

Sparkle!

Your Ladyship's accident was fortunate.

(sneering.)

Enter

LORD SPARKLE.

Heavens! Lady

Bell!

your horses fly like the doves of Venus. I follow'd you from St. James's;—but my poor earth-born cattle wouldn't keep pace with yours.

Oh, don't complain! If her Ladyship won the race, you see she stopp'd for you at the goal.

Charming Miss

Belmour,

what an enliv'ning intimation! Where was your Ladyship on Thursday? You would have found excellent food for your satire at Mrs.

Olio

's: We had all the Law Ladies from Lincoln's-inn, a dozen gold velvets from Bishopsgate, with the wives and daughters of half the M. D's. and L. L. D's. in town.

Oh, my entertainment was quite as good as yours! We were in Brook-street, at Lady

Laurel

's, and found her surrounded by her Literati of all denominations.—We had Masters of Art and Misses of Science:—on one hand, an Essayist; on the other, a Moralist:—there, a Poetaster; here, a Translator:—in that corner, a Philosopher; in the other, a Compiler of Magazines.—Tropes,

Epigrams, and Syllogisms flew like skyrockets in every direction; 'till the ambition of pre-eminence lighted the flame of controversy, when they gave each other the lye literary

with infinite spirit and decorum.

Excellent! I'll repeat every word in a place where it will be remember'd, and the satire enjoy'd.

In that hope your Lordship may safely knock at every door in the street:—satire is welcome every where.

Yes, if it will bear a laugh—that's the grand art of conversation. They pretend we are fond of slander; but rob scandal of its laugh, and 'twould soon be banish'd to the second table, for the amusement of butlers and chambermaids.

Indeed! Then I believe half our acquaintance wou'd go down stairs to the second table too!—they'd think their servants had the best of the dish.

(Enter a

Servant,

gives

Lord Sparkle

a letter, and exit.)

(reads it aside)

Julia!

astonishing!—So sudden in your movements, Mrs.

Kitty?—

(turning to the Ladies)

This vulgar thing call'd business is the greatest evil in life! It destroys our most brilliant hours, and is sit only for younger brothers and humble cousins.—Miss

Belmour,

I must tear myself away. Shall I attend your Ladyship to your carriage?

If you please!—Miss Belmour,

"I must tear myself away;"—

but you'll shine upon us at night.

[Exeunt

L. Sparkle

and

Lady Bell.

Shine

upon you at night!—That I know you are insolent enough to believe impossible.—What can I think of her sentiments for Lord

Sparkle!

Sometimes I believe 'tis a mere attachment of vanity on both sides.—That reserv'd creature

Beauchamp

is in his confidence; but he leaves town this very day, and I shall have no opportunity of conversing with him.

(muses)

There is but one chance—going to visit him.—But how can I possibly do that? Deuce take him!

If he had a library, one might go to look at his books. Well, I don't care, go I will; and if I can't invent an excuse, I'll put a good face upon the matter, and go without one.

(going)

I should expire if my visit shou'd be discover'd. Poh! I must risque every thing!—To be bold, is sometimes to be right.

[Exit.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Au Apartment at
LADY BELL's.

Enter

LADY BELL,
followed by her
Maid.

MISS

Manners

gone out in a hackney-coach, and no message left!

No, Madam.

Very strange!

Mr.

Beauchamp

has been waiting almost an hour for your Ladyship's return.

Mr.

Beauchamp!—

Here, go and put some otto of roses in that handkerchief.

(Exit

Maid)

Now, shall I admit him, or not? This formal waiting looks very like formal business. Poh, I hate that!—I suppose he has at length vanquish'd his modesty, and is come to tell me that—that—Well, I vow I won't hear him.—Yes, I will. I long to know the stile in which these reserv'd men make love.—To what imprudence would my heart betray me? Yet I may surely indulge myself in hearing him

speak

of love; in hearing, probably for the first time, its genuine language.

(Enter

Maid,

and presents the handkerchief)

Tell Mr.

Beauchamp

I am here.

(Exit

Maid)

Now, how shall I receive him? It will be intolerable to be formal.—

(Takes her fan from her pocket and traverses the stage, humming a tune.—Enter
Beauchamp.)

Oh, Mr.

Beauchamp,

this is the luckiest thing!—I have had ten disputes to-day about the figures in my fan; and you shall decide 'em. Is that beautiful nymph a flying Daphne, or an Atalanta?

(looking at her fan)

From the terror of the eye, Madam, and the swiftness of her step, it must be a Daphne. I think Atalanta's head would be more at variance with her feet; and whilst she flies,

her eye would be invitingly turn'd on her pursuers.

I think you are right!—Yes—there does want the kind, inviting glance, to be sure.

What a misfortune to a lover! I know one to whom your Ladyship appears the disdainful Daphne.—How happy! could he behold in

your

eye the encouragement of Atalanta's!

(aside)

Mercy! for so bashful a man that's pretty plain.

This is probably the last visit I can make you before I leave England:—will your Ladyship permit me,

before

I leave it, to acquaint you that there is a man, whose happiness depends on your favour?

(agitated.)

So, now he's going to be perplexing again!

(aside)

—A man whose happiness depends on me, Mr.

Beauchamp!

(looking on her fan.)

Yes, Madam!—and—and—

(aside)

I cannot go on—Why did I accept a commission in which success would destroy me?

How evidently this is the first time he ever made love!

(aside)

—The man seems to have chosen a very diffident advocate in you, Sir.

'Tis

more

than diffidence, Madam, my task is painful.

Ay, I thought so! You have taken a brief in a cause you don't like; I could plead it better myself.

I feel the reproach.

'Tis difficult for you, perhaps, to speak in the

third

person?—Try it in the

first.

Suppose now, ha! ha! only suppose, I say! for the jest's sake, that you yourself have a passion for me, and

then

try—how you can plead it.

(kneeling)

Thus—thus would I plead it, and swear, that thou art dear to my heart as fame, and honour!—To look at thee is rapture; to love thee, tho' without hope,—felicity!

Oh, I thought I should bring him to the point at last!

(aside)

(rising, aside)

To what dishonesty have I been betray'd—Thus, Madam, speaks my friend, thro' my lips;—'tis thus

he

pleads his passion.

Provoking!

(aside)

—What

friend is this, Sir, who is weak enough to use the language of another to explain his heart?

Lord

Sparkle.

Lord

Sparkle!

Was it for him you knelt?

(he bows to her)

—Then, Sir, I must inform you, that the liberty you have taken—

(aside)

Heavens, how do I betray myself!—Tell me, Sir, on your honour, do you wish

to succeed in pleading the passion of Lord

Sparkle?

(hesitating)

My obligations to his Lordship—our relationship—the confidence he has repos'd in me—

Stop, Sir! I too will repose confidence in you, and confess that there is a man whom I sometimes suspect not to be indifferent to me;—but 'tis not Lord

Sparkle!

Tell him so;—and tell him that—that—tell him what you will.

Heavens, what does she mean! What language is this her eye speaks?

(aside)

Do

you

visit me this evening. Here will be many of my friends, and you shall then see me in the presence of the man my heart prefers.

(Beauchamp

bows, and goes to the door; then returns, advances towards Lady

Bell,

makes an effort to speak; finds it impossible, then bows, and exit.)

Heavens! what necessity have lovers for words? What persuasion in that bashful irresolution!

Now, shall I let him quit England, or not!—What! give up a coronet and Lord

Sparkle

for a cockade and

Beauchamp!

Preposterous! says Vanity.—But what says Love? I don't exactly know; but I'll examine their separate claims, and settle them with all the casuistry of four-and-twenty.

[Exit.

SCENE II.

LORD SPARKLE's

House.

Enter

JULIA

and

KITTY.

I am so agitated with this rash step, that I can hardly breathe!

(throwing herself into a chair)

Why did you confirm me in my imprudent resolution?

Imprudent! I'm sure, Ma'am, 'tis very prudent, and very right, that a young lady like you should not be snubb'd, and have her inclination thwarted by an ill-natur'd positive old guardian.

(looking round)

What apartments! and the hall we came through had an air much beyond a lodging-house! 'Tis all too fine for my purpose; I want to be private.

Oh dear Ma'am, you may be as private here as you please!

(a rapping at the door)

There's my cousin come home, I dare say; I'll send her to you, and then you may settle terms.

[Exit.

I feel I have done wrong, and yet I am so distracted, I know not how I could have done otherwise.

(Enter

Lord Sparkle)

Heavens! Lord

Sparkle

here!

Yes, my lovely

Julia,

here I am; and upon my soul, if you knew the engagements I have broke for the happiness, you would be gratified.

Gratified! I am astonish'd! equally astonish'd at your being here, and at your strange address.

Astonish'd at my being here! Why, to be sure, it is not usual to find a man of fashion in his own house; but when I heard that

you

were in my house, how could I do less than fly home?

Home! Your own house! What can all this mean?—

Mean! Love—Gallantry—Joy, and ever-new delights.

Oh! I am betray'd! Where is my wicked servant?

Poh, never think of her!—Why all this flutter, my sweet girl! You have only chang'd guardians; and you shall find, that being ward to a young man of fashion and spirit, is a very different thing from—

Oh Heavens! what will become of me?

Nay, this is quite ridiculous, after having fled to my protection! I feel myself highly honour'd by your confidence, and will take care to deserve it.

Why do I remain here an instant?

(going towards the door.)

(holding her)

This is downright rudeness! But you young Ladies are so fickle in your resolutions—But be assured, after having chosen my house for your asylum, I shall not be so impolite as to suffer you to seek another.

Oh wretched artifice! You know, Sir, that your house and you

I would have fled from to the farthest corner of—

(Enter

Beauchamp)

Oh, Mr.

Beauchamp,

save me!—I have been basely betray'd!—

(astonish'd)

Betray'd!—Miss

Manners!

Yes, Madam, I will protect you at every hazard.

Come, none of your antique virtues,

George,

pray! This is a piece of

badinage

of the Eighteenth Century, and you can't possibly understand it!—Miss

Manners

chose to pay me a visit, and I desire you'll leave us.

My Lord, how dare you thus trifle with a woman's honor?

Be not alarm'd, Madam, I will defend you.

(taking him aside)

Poh, prithee,

George,

be discreet! This is all female artifice!—You popp'd upon us, and this is a salver for her reputation.

Pardon me, my Lord! In believing you in opposition to the evidence of this young Lady's terrors, I may be guilty of an irremiable error.

Nay, if you are serious, Sir, how dare you break in upon my privacy?

This is not a time to answer you, my Lord! The business that brought me here, I am indebted to; I should not else have prevented your base designs.

Base designs, Mr.

Beauchamp!

Yes, Lord

Sparkle!—

Shall I attend you home, Madam?

Oh, Sir, I dare not go there! I fled from Lady

Bell

's, when I was betray'd into this inhuman man's power.—Convey me to some place where I may have leisure to reflect.

And do you think, Mr.
Beauchamp,
I shall put up with this?—Remember, Sir—
(interrupting)

Yes, my Lord, that, as a
Man,

it is my duty to protect endanger'd innocence; that, as a
Soldier,

it is part of the essence of my character; and, whilst I am grateful to you for the commission I
have the honour to bear, I will not disgrace it, in suffering myself to be intimidated by your
frowns.

[Exit

Beauchamp,
leading

Julia.

So!—so!—so!—an antient hero in the house of a modern man of fashion!—Alexander in the tent
of Darius!—Scipio and the fair Parthenia! The fellow has not an idea of any morals but those in
use during the Olympiads.

Enter

SERVANT.

Mr.

Pendragon

and his sister, my Lord.

Who!

(with an air of disgust.)

Mr. and Miss

Pendragon.

Then carry 'em to the Housekeeper's room!—Give 'em jellies and plumb-cake, and tell 'em—

(Enter

Pendragon,

leading

Sophy)

Oh, my dear Miss

Pendragon,

you honour me!—But I am the most unlucky man on earth!—I am oblig'd, upon business of
infinite consequence, to be at Whitehall within five minutes.

But, first, my Lord, you must settle a little business

here

with Miss

Pendragon.

I tell you,

Bobby,

I'll speak myself;—and as few words are best, pray, my Lord, what do you mean by treating me
in this manner?

I shall be miserable beyond bearing, if any treatment of mine has incurr'd your displeasure.

Well, now you talk of being miserable, you have soften'd my heart at once! But pray, my Lord, is it fashionable for people on the terms you and I are, to keep asunder?

What the Devil can the girl mean?

(aside.)

Never even write!—no billets!—no bribing the maid to slip notes into my hand!—Why you don't even complain, tho' 'tis five days since you saw me.

Complain! I am sure I have been exceedingly wretched.

Then why did you not tell me so? Why, that's the very thing I wanted! If I had known you had been wretched, I should have been happy.

Well, I see I shall lose an opportunity here!—I came to challenge you, my Lord.

Challenge me!

Yes!—Miss

Pendragon

told me she was

dissatisfied:—

then says I,

I'll

demand

satisfaction:—

and I didn't care if things had gone a little farther; for to call out a Lord would be a feather in my cap as long as I live.—However, you are agreed.

Do be quiet,

Bobby!—

We are not agreed:—I have heard nothing of Settlements yet; nothing of Jewels.

My dear Ma'am, you are pleased to amuse yourself.

Why, my Lord, those things must be all settled before-hand, you know.

Before what!

What! Before our marriage, my Lord.

Marriage! Ha, ha, ha!

Heydey! Will you pretend that you did not intend to marry me, when I can prove that you have courted me from twenty instances?

Indeed!

Ay, that she can! instances as striking as your Lordship's red heels.—Come, Miss

Pendragon,

your proofs? I'll support 'em.

Why, in the first place, my Lord, you once placed a nosegay in my bosom, and said,

"Oh! I wish I were these happy roses!"—

the very speech that Sir Harry Hargrave made to Miss Woodville!—Another time you said,

"I was a most bewitching and adorable girl!"—

exactly what Colonel Finch said to Lady Lucy Lustre!—Another time you said,

"How would a Coronet become those shining tresses!"—

the very speech of Lord Rosehill to Miss Danvers; and these couples were every one married.

Married! I never heard of 'em!—Who are they? Where the Devil do they live?

(strutting up to him)

Live!—Why in our county, to be sure.

No, no,

Bobby,

in

The Reclaim'd Rake,

and

The Constant Lovers,

and

Sir Charles Grandison,

and

Roderic Random,

and—

Yes, Sir; they live at Random, with Sir Charles Grandison.—Now d'ye know 'em?

Ha! ha! ha! you are a charming little Lawyer,

(to

Sophy)

and might, perhaps, establish your proofs for

precedents,

if Sir Charles Grandison was on the Bench: yet I never heard of his being made Chief-Justice, tho' I never thought him fit for any thing else.

What the Devil's this?—What, did not you bring all those fine proofs from fashionable life?—

And are you such a fool as not to understand what we call

common-place?

Common-place!

Yes, we persons of elegant life use the figure Hyperbōle.—

Hyperbōle! What's that?

Why, that's as much as to say, a stretch.

A stretch! What, then, you have been mocking me, my Lord?

Not in the least; I shall be the happiest man existing to, to—

(aside)

Egad, I must take care of my phrases!—I mean, that I shall be always, and upon all occasions, your most devoted,

tres humblement serviteur.—

Were there ever two such Bumpkins!

[Exit.

What's he gone? Oh! Villain! Monster! I am forsaken! Oh! I am rejected!—All Cornwall will know it!

(crying)

Tin-Mines and all. But don't ye cry, Miss

Pendragon—

don't ye cry!

(sobbing)

Oh! I am rejected!

I am glad on't, with all my heart! I'll challenge him yet, and they won't know in Cornwall exactly how it was.—They'll hear that a Lord fought about ye, and all that sort of thing; and whether

for

ye or

against

ye, 'twill be much the same.

But will you challenge him, really,
Bobby?

Upon honor!—I admire the
claw

of the thing! Egad,

Sophy,

I'm glad he's forsaken thee! Now my character will be finish'd. A man can't shew his face in
company, till he has stood shot, and fired his pistol in the air.

In the air! If you don't fire it

thro'

him—

Oh, never fear! I'll do all that sort of thing. Come along! I'll go home directly, and practise at the
hen-coop in the yard. I'll fire thro' one end, and you shall hold your calash against the other; and
if I don't hit it, say I'm no marksman.

[Exit

Pendragon,

with

Sophy

under his arm.

SCENE III.

BEAUCHAMP'S

Lodgings.

Enter

Beauchamp

and

Julia.

I intreat your pardon for conducting you to my own lodgings;—but here, Madam, you will be
safe, 'till you determine how to act.—What are your commands for me?

Oh, Mr.

Beauchamp,

I have no commands—I have no designs!—I have been very imprudent; I am still more unhappy.

Shall I acquaint Mr.

Fitzherbert?

It was to avoid him that I left Lady

Bell.—

I have reasons that make it impossible to see Mr.

Fitzherbert

now.

Is there no other friend?

O yes, I have

one

friend!—Were he here, all my difficulties would vanish!—It may seem strange, Mr.

Beauchamp,

but I expect that you believe—Heavens! here's company!

(looking at the wing)

'Tis Miss

Belmour—

the last woman on earth whom I would trust!—Where can I go?

Miss

Belmour!

Very odd!—But pray be not uneasy!—That room, Madam, if you will condescend—

(she rushes thro' the door.)

Enter

CLARINDA

laughing.

Ha! ha! ha! I expect your gravity to be amazingly discompos'd at so hardy a visit; but I took it very ill that you did not design to call upon me before your departure; and so as I was passing your door, I stopp'd in mere frolic to enquire the cause.

You do me infinite honour, Madam! I am thankful that I fail'd in my attention, since it has procur'd me so distinguish'd a favour.

Oh, your most obedient!—You are going to leave England for a long while! You'll find us all in different situations, probably, on your return!—Your friend Lord

Sparkle,

for instance—I am inform'd that he is really to marry Lady

Bell Bloomer;

but I don't believe it—do you?

'Tis impossible, Madam, for me—

Poh! poh!

impossible!

Such friends as you are I suppose keep nothing from one another.—We women can't exist without a confidante; and I dare say, you men are full as communicative. Not that it is any thing to me; but as I have a prodigious regard for Lady

Bell—

(behind)

Beauchamp! Beauchamp!

Heaven and earth, how unlucky! Here's some man! I am the nicest creature breathing in my reputation: what will he think? I'll run into this room.

(runs toward the door.)

(preventing her)

Pardon me, Madam, you cannot enter there!

(pushing at the door)

I must—Oh—oh! the door is held, Sir.

My dear Madam, I am infinitely sorry for the accident; but suppose—suppose, I say, Ma'am, that a friend of mine has been in a duel, and conceal'd in that room.

Ridiculous! I saw the corner of a hoop and a white sattin petticoat:—is that the dress of your duelling friends? I will go in.—

(struggling)

So!

(flinging away spitefully)

'tis too late!

Enter

BELVILLE.

So! so! so! I beg your pardon. How could you be so indiscreet,
Beauchamp?

Tho' a young soldier, I thought you knew enough of Generalship to be prepar'd for a surprize.
Oh, so he was; but not for

two

surprizes.—One has happened already, and a hasty retreat the consequence.

Believe me,

Belville—

I am infinitely concerned

(to

Clarinda.)

Oh! I detest your impertinent concern! Keep it for the Lady in the other room.

A Lady in the other room too! Heydey!

Beauchamp,

who would have suspected—

'Tis all a mistake! The Lady in the next room—But prithee go.—

Only tell me if you have seen

Fitzherbert.

I have been seeking him this hour, on a business of the utmost consequence.

I have not; but about this time you'll find him at home.

Enough! Miss

Belmour,

pray suffer no concern; depend on my honour.

—Beauchamp

(taking him aside)

, who is the Lady in the other room?

Had I meant you to have known, that room would have been unnecessary.

(Belville

seems still inquisitive;

Beauchamp

draws him towards the wing).

Now do I die to know who it can be! Indeed, 'tis necessary for my own sake.—Whilst

she

has been hid, I have been exposed; and who knows what the creature may say? I'll try once more.

She has my secret, and I'll have her's.

(forces open the door)

(rushes out)

Belville!

(running towards him.)

(starting back.)

Julia!

Miss

Manners!—

Ha! ha! ha!

Oh,
Belville,
throw me not from you!
Astonishing!
Oh charming! The modest
Julia,
and the reserv'd
Beauchamp!
Ha! ha! ha!—But Mr.
Belville,
how came
you
of this sober party? ha! ha! ha!
Speak to me!
Now, Mr.
Beauchamp,
you know the purport of my visit.—I had heard that Miss
Manners
has been seen to visit you, and, not being willing to trust to such a report, was resolved, if
possible, to discover the truth.
(to
Julia)
Wretched woman!
(to
Clarinda)
Barbarous creature! Oh hear me, I conjure you!
Hear you!—No, madam;—and if my contempt, my hatred, my—oh!
—You,
Sir, I must speak to in another place;—yet perhaps you were not acquainted that—What would I
say!—The word which I have pronounced with rapture, choaks me. From this moment farewell!
(to
Julia).
[Exit
Belville.
What can I think of all this?
Oh Sir!
Permit me, Madam, to ask if you have long known Mr.
Belville?
Yes, too long.
Oh, oh,
too
long!—Aye, young ladies should be cautious how they form acquaintance. For my part—But
you look ill, child!—
(taking her by the hand)
Well, I have no hard heart; I can pity your weakness, Miss;—I won't upbraid you now.—My
coach waits;—shall I conduct you home?

Yes, to Lady

Bell—

to Lady

Bell—

I am very ill!

Adieu, Mr.

Beauchamp!

This has been an unlucky frolic!—'Tis amazing, you grave people can be so careless.

[Exit

Julia

and

Clarinda.

An unlucky frolick, indeed! And I am so thoroughly confounded, that I know not what judgment to form of the adventure.—I always considered Miss

Manners

as a pattern of delicacy and virtue; nor dare I now, spite of circumstances, think otherwise.

Enter

LORD SPARKLE.

So, so, Signor Quixote! What so soon lost your prize! Aye, you see quarrelling for these virtuous women, is as unprofitable as the assault of the windmills.—Have you seen Lady

Bell

in my behalf?

Lady

Bell,

my Lord! Why, sure, 'tis impossible after your attempt on Miss

Manners—

Psha! that is a stroke in my favour. Women like to receive the devoirs of those, whom others of their sex have found so dangerous. What did you discover of Lady

Bell

's sentiment towards me?

I meant to have given the intelligence softened, but the agitations of my mind make it impracticable; I must, therefore, inform you in one word, Lady

Bell Bloomer

's choice is made, and that choice has not fallen upon your Lordship.

Then I must inform you in two words, that I am convinced you are mistaken. But your reasons, Sir, your reasons?

Her Ladyship furnished me with a decisive one: she acknowledged a pre-engagement; and added, if I visited her this evening, I should see her in the presence of the man her heart prefers.

(laughing violently)

Excellent! charming ingenuity! Ha! ha! ha! the kindest, softest, message that ever woman fram'd; and you, like the sheep loaden with the golden fleece, bore it insensible of its value.—Ha! ha! ha! you can't see through the pretty artifice?

No, really.

Why, 'tis

I

who am to be there; there by particular invitation. You'll see her in

my
presence; and this was her pretty mysterious way of informing me that

I
am the object of her choice.

Indeed!

Without a doubt! But you deep people are the dullest fellows at a hint; a man of half your parts
would have seen it.—But

I
am satisfied, and shall go to her route in brilliant spirits.—You shall come, and see my triumph
confirmed.—Come, you rogue! and see the lovely Widow in the presence of the man her heart
prefers.—Poor

George!

You must have been cursedly stupid, not to have conceiv'd that I was the person.

[Exit.

Yes, I will come.—Oh vanity! I had dared to explain—Yes, I construed the sweet confusion—

Oh, I blush at my own arrogance! Lord

Sparkle

must be right.—Well, this night decides it.—Narrowly will I watch each tone and look, to
discover—Oh!—ever-blest!

—he

whom her heart prefers!

[Exit.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at

LADY BELL's.

A Table, with Candles.

Enter

LADY BELL

and

SERVANT.

ARE the tables placed in the outer room?

Yes, Ma'am, all but the Pharaoh-table.

Then carry that there too.—I positively will not have a table in the drawing-room.—

[Exit

Servant.

Those who play don't visit

me,

but the card-tables; and where they find them is very immaterial.—Let me see! For whist, Sir

James Jennet—

Lady

Ponto—

Mrs.

Lurchem,

and Lady
Carmine.—
For Pharaoh, Mrs.
Evergreen,
Lord
Dangle,
Sir
Harry—
Hey-dey!
Enter
CLARINDA

and
JULIA.

Come, child, don't faint!—You had more cause for terror half an hour ago.

Heavens,

Julia!

where have you been?

Ay, that's a circumstance you would not have known, but for an accident; and I am very sorry it fell to my lot to make the discovery.

(taking

Julia's

hand)

Speak, my love!

Miss

Belmour

will tell you all she knows.—I am too wretched!

Nay, as to what I know,—I

know

very little.—I can tell what I saw, indeed.—Having received intimations not quite consonant to one's notions of decorum, I pretended a frolick, and called on Mr.

Beauchamp,

and there I found this Lady

concealed.

Heavens,

Julia!

'Tis impossible.

Nay, she can't attempt to deny what I myself saw.—Other discoveries had liked to have been made too; but Miss

Manners

may explain them herself; for I see your rooms begin to fill.—I shall report that your Ladyship is a little indisposed, as an excuse for your not immediately appearing.

[Exit

Clarinda.

(with a countenance of terror)

Julia! You

at Mr.

Beauchamp

's!

Lady

Bell,

tho' I have acted rashly, and was indeed found there, I am not the guilty creature you imagine.—I am married!—I will no longer conceal it!

(bursting into tears)

Married! Oh Heavens!

(throws herself in a chair, with her back to

Julia)

I dared not reveal it to my guardian, and for that reason fled from your house.

O

Julia,

and you are married! What a serpent have I nourished!—But forgive me!—You knew not—alas!

I knew not myself, till this moment, how much—

My dearest Madam, do not add to my afflictions!—for indeed they are severe.

Ungenerous Girl! why did you conceal from me your situation?

Good Heavens! is it destin'd that one imprudent step is to lose me every blessing! In the agonies of my heart I flew to your friendship, and you kill me with reproaches.

And you have killed

me

by your want of confidence! Oh,

Julia!

had you revealed to me—

I dared not; for when Mr.

Belville

prevailed on me to give him my hand—

(eagerly)

Mr.

Belville!—

Mr.

Belville,

say you?

Yes; it was in Paris we were married.

(aside)

So, so, so; what a pretty mistake I made!—But it

was

a mistake! And so my sweet

Julia

is married! married in Paris! Sly thing! But how came you at Mr.

Beauchamp

's, my Love?

In my rash flight this morning, my wicked Maid betray'd me into Lord

Sparkle

's house.—There Mr.

Beau—champ

snatch'd me from ruin, and gave me a momentary asylum in his lodgings.

Did

Beauchamp!—

But what is his worth and his gallantry to me? Can't he do a right thing, but my

heart must triumph?

(aside.)

At Mr.

Beauchamp

's my husband found me;—and found me hid with so suspicious a secrecy!—Hah! Here comes Mr.

Fitzherbert!

How can I see him?

Enter

FITZHERBERT.

My

Julia!—

My dear

Julia!

Oh Sir!—

Come, I know all; and to relieve one

cause of your distress, will tell you that the lover I shock'd you with today, was only my agent in the little revenge I had resolv'd to take for your having married, without

my consent, the very man for whom all my cares design'd you.

(clasping his hands)

—Is it possible!

At the moment he left Paris for Florence, you received my directions to return home: thus Belville

's letters miss'd you, and he remain'd ignorant that you were in London.

Oh Sir! had you reveal'd this to me this morning, what evils should I have escap'd?

My dear girl, I decreed you a little punishment; but your own rashness has occasioned you a severer portion than you deserv'd.

But where is the Bridegroom? I long to see the necromancer, whose spells can thaw the Vestal's heart, and light up flames in the cold region of a monastery.

He is without, satisfied from the mouth of

Beauchamp

of your conduct,

(to

Julia)

and impatient to fold his

Julia

to his heart.

Oh Sir, lead me to him!—To find my husband, and to be forgiven by you, are felicities too great.

[Exit,

led by
Fitzherbert.
What a discovery has
Julia

's marriage made to me of my own heart! I have persuaded myself it knew no passion but the desire of conquest; that it knew no motive to admiration but vanity; but the pangs of jealousy prov'd to me, in one moment, that all its sense is love!

[Exit L. Bell.

An elegant Apartment lighted up, Card-parties seen.—Two Servants carrying Refreshments.—A Lady enters from the Top of the Stage, and comes down in a hurry.

I protest I have been three quarters of an hour getting from the top of the street to the door!—I really believe, when people give routes, they think more of the bustle they occasion without doors, than the company they have within.

Oh yes! I am quite of that opinion.—The noise and racket in the streets are frequently the pleasantest part of the entertainment; and to plague one's sober neighbours is delightful! Ha! ha! ha! My next-door friend, Mrs.

Saffron,

always wheels into the country on my public nights,—on pretence of her delicate nerves; but the truth is, her rooms will hold but six card-tables, and mine thirteen.

Well, I protest I wish the ladies would banish cards from their assemblies, and give us something in the style of the

Conversaziones.

Oh no, Sir

Charles,

that won't do on this side the Alps;—we have no knack at conversation:—we think too much to be able to talk. Good talkers never think. Sir

Harry Glare,

full of bons mots, never thinks.—I myself am allowed to be tolerable, yet I never think.

Oh, that I believe all your friends will allow.—Hey-dey! here comes Lord

Sparkle

's borough acquaintance—Mr.

Pendragon.

Entr

PENDRAGON.

Bobs, Miss

Belmour,

how d'ye do? I didn't think to see you.—Mr.

Fitzherbert

brought me here, and I have been examining every face, to see if I knew any body; but fine ladies are so alike, that one must have long intimacy to know one's acquaintance!—Red cheeks, white necks, and smiling lips, croud every room.

Hey-dey! a natural curiosity!—Pray, Sir, how long have you been in the world?

How long! Just twenty years, last Lammas.

Poh, I don't enquire into your age! How long is it since you left your native woods?—Was you ever at a route before?

Aye, that I was, last week!—It beat this all to nothing.—'Twas at our neighbour's the Wine-Merchant's—at his country-house at Kentish-Town.

Oh, lud! I wish I had been of your party! I should have enjoy'd a Kentish-Town route.

Oh, you
must

have been pleased; for the rooms were so little, and the company so large, that every thing was done with one consent. We were pack'd so close, that if one party moved, all the rest were obliged to obey the motion.

Delightful!—Well, Sir—

We had all the fat widows, notable misses, and managing wives of the parish; so there was no scandal, for they were

all

there.—At length the assembly broke up.—Such clattering, and

squeedging

down the gangway staircase, whilst the little foot-boy hawl'd from the passage,

"Miss

Bobbin

's bonnet is ready!"—"Mrs.

Sugar-Plumb

's lanthorn waits!"—"Mrs.

Peppercorn

's pattens stop the way!"

(imitating.)

Oh, you creature, come with me! I must exhibit him in the next room.

[Exit

Clarinda

and

Pendragon.

Oh, stay!—Take my card.—I shall have company next Wednesday, and I insist on yours.—He is really amusing!—

(Enter Lord Sparkle

from the top.)

But hide your diminish'd heads, ye Beaus and Witlings! for here comes Lord Sparkle.

(speaking as he comes down)

I hope the Belles won't hide theirs; for in an age where the head is so large a part of the Lady, one should look about for the sex.

Well, my Lord, you see I have obey'd your summons! I should not have been here, notwithstanding Lady

Bell

's invitation, had you not press'd it.

Nor I! I promis'd to meet a certain Lady in the Gallery at the Opera to night,—and I regret that I did not; for I see her husband is here.—Why did you press us so earnestly to come?

Why, 'faith, to have as many witnesses as I could to my glory!—This night is given by Lady

Bell
to ME.—I am the hero of the
fête,
and expect your congratulations. Here the dear creature comes!

LADY BELL

comes down from the top, addressing the Company.
How do you do?—how do you do?

(on each side)

You wicked creature, why did you disappoint me last night! Lady
Harriet,

I have not seen you this age! Oh, Lord

Sparkle!

I have been detain'd from my company by Mr.

Fitzherbert,

planning a scheme for

your

amusement.

Indeed! I did not expect that attention from him; tho' I acknowledge my obligations to your
Ladyship's politeness.

(aside)

That air of self-possession, I fancy, would be incommoded, if you
guess'd

at the entertainment.—Have you seen Mr.

Beauchamp?

For a moment.—But, charming Lady

Bell,

(taking her hand)

I shall make you expire with laughing. I really believe the poor fellow explained your message in
his

own

favour, ha, ha, ha!

Ridiculous! ha, ha, ha!

Enter

BEAUCHAMP.

Ha! 'tis true! There they are, retired from the croud, and enjoying the privacy of lovers.

See there he is! I long to have a little

badinage

on the subject.—Let us teaze him.

Oh, nothing can be more delightful!—"Hither, sighing shepherd, come!"—Come,

Beauchamp,

take one last, one lingering look!—sha'n't he, Lady

Bell?

Doubtless,—if he has your Lordship's leave.

He seems astonish'd—ha, ha, ha!—Nay, it is cruel!—If the poor youth has the misfortune to be
stricken, you know he can't resist fate.—Ixion sighed for Juno.

Yes, and he was punish'd too. What punishment, Mr.

Beauchamp,
shall we decree for you?
I am astonish'd!—Was it for this your Ladyship commanded me to attend you?
How
did I command you? Do you remember the words?
I do, Madam.—You bid me come this evening, that I might behold you in the presence of the
man your heart prefers.
Well, Sir, and now—now you see me!—
Oh, the sweet confusion of the sweet confession!
(kissing her hand.)
(aside)
'Sdeath! this ostentation of felicity, Madam, is ungenerous, since you know my heart; 'tis
unworthy
you!
But I
thank
you for it—I have a pang the less.
(going.)
Hold, Sir, are you going?
This instant, Madam.—I came in obedience to your commands; but my chaise is at your door,
and before your gay assembly breaks up, I shall be far from London, and in a day or two from
England. I
probably
now see your Ladyship for the last time.—Adieu!
Stay, Mr.
Beauchamp!
(agitated)
Ay, prithee stay! I believe Lady
Bell
has a mind to make you her conjugal father at the wedding.
I forgive you, my Lord.—Excess of happiness frequently overflows into insolence, and it is the
privilege of felicity to be unfeeling.—But how, Madam, has the humble passion which has so
long consumed my life, rendered me so hateful to
you,
as to prompt you to this barbarity? I have not
insulted
you with my love; I have scarcely dared whisper it to myself: how then have I deserved—
O mercy, don't be so grave! I am not insensible to your merit, nor have I beheld your passion
with disdain.—But what
can
I do? Lord
Sparkle
has so much fashion, so much elegance—so much—
My dearest Lady
Bell,
you justify my ideas of your discernment: and thus I thank you for the distinguished honour

(kneeling to kiss her hand.)

Enter

SOPHY

from the Wing.

Oh you false-hearted man!

(crying)

(starting up)

Hey-dey!

Don't believe a word he says, for all you are so fine a Lady. He'll tell you of happiness and misery, and this, and that, and the other, but'tis all common-place and hyperbōlé—and all that sort of thing.

Indeed! What has this young Lady claims on your Lordship?

Claims! Ha! ha! ha! Surely your Ladyship can answer that in a single glance. Claims! Ha! ha! ha! Is it my fault that a little rustic does not know the language of the day? Compliments are the ready coin of conversation, and 'tis every one's business to understand their value.

Enter

PENDRAGON.

(clapping him on the shoulder)

True, my Lord, true;—and pray instruct me what was the value of the compliment, when you told me I should make a figure in the Guards, and that you would speak to your great friends to make me a colonel?

Value! Why, of just as much as it would bring! You thought it so valuable then, that you got me a hundred extra votes on the strength of it; and you are now a little ungrateful wretch, to pretend 'twas worth nothing.

Enter

FITZHERBERT,

leading

JULIA.

But here, Lord

Sparkle,

is a Lady who claims a right on a different foundation. She had no Election interest to provoke your flatteries, yet you have not scrupled to profess love to her, whilst under the roof of her friend, whose hand you was soliciting in marriage.

Yes, I intreat your Ladyship not to fancy that you are to break the hearts of half our sex by binding Lord

Sparkle

in the adamantine chains of marriage.—I boast an equal right with you, and don't flatter yourself I shall resign him.

Mere malice, Lady

Bell! Fitzherbert

's malice!—I never had a serious thought of Miss

Manners

in my life.

Enter

BELVILLE.

What, my Lord! and have you dared talk of love to that Lady without a serious thought?

Hey-dey! what right have you—

Oh, very trifling! only the right of a Husband—The Lady so honour'd by your love-making
in jest

is my wife; in course, all obligations to her devolve on me.

Your wife! My dear

Belville,

I give you joy with all my soul! You see 'tis always dangerous to keep secrets from your friends.
But is any body else coming? Have I any new crimes to be accus'd of? Any more witnesses
coming to the bar?

No; but I am a witness in a new cause, and accuse you of loading the mind of my friend

Beauchamp

with a sense of obligation you had neither spirit or justice to confer.

A Commission, my Lord, which was sent Mr.

Beauchamp

under a blank cover, by one who could not bear to see his noble spirit dependent on your
caprices.

And when his sentiments pointed out your Lordship as his benefactor, you accepted the honour,
and have laid heavy taxes on his gratitude.

Well, and what is there in all that?

Beauchamp

did not know to whom he was obliged; and wou'dn't it have been a most unchristian thing to let a
good action run about the world belonging to nobody?—I found it a stray orphan, and so father'd
it.—But you,

Fitzherbert,

I see are the lawful owner of the brat; so prithee take it back, and thank me for the honour of my
patronage.

Your affected pleasantry, Lord

Sparkle,

may shield you from resentment, but it will not from contempt. Your effrontery—

Effrontery! Prithee make distinctions!—What in certain lines would be effrontery, in me is only
the ease of Fashion; that delightful thing, which enables me at this moment to stand serene
amidst your meditated storm.— Come, my dear Lady

Bell,

let us leave these good gentry, and love ourselves amidst the delights of fashion, and the charms
of

bon ton.

Pardon me, my Lord! As caprice is absolutely necessary to the character of a fine lady, you will
not be surpris'd if I give an instance of it now; and, spite of your elegance, your fashion, and your
wit, present my hand to this poor soldier—who boasts only worth, spirit, honour, and love.

Have a care, Madam!—Feelings like mine are not to be trifled with! Once already the hopes you
have inspir'd—

The hour of trifling

is past; and surely it cannot appear extraordinary, that I prefer the internal worth of an
uncorrupted heart, to the outward polish of a mind too feeble to support itself against vice, in the
seductive forms of fashionable dissipation.

Hey-dey! what, is your Ladyship in the plot?

The plot has been deeper laid than you, my Lord, have been able to conceive. As I have the misfortune to be related to you, I thought it my duty to watch over your conduct. I have seen your plans, which generally tended to your confusion and disgrace; and many of them have been defeated, tho' you knew not by what means. But what fate does your Lordship design for these young people, decoy'd by you from their native ignorance and home?

Let them return to their native ignorance and home as fast as they can.

No, no; hang me if I do that!—I know Life now, and Life I'll have—Hyde-Park, Plays, Operas, and all that sort of thing.—But, Old Gentleman, as you promis'd to do something for me, what think ye of a Commission?—The Captain there can't want his now; suppose you turn it over to me?

No, young man, you shall be taken care of; but the requisites of a soldier are not those of pertness and assurance. Intrepid spirit, nice honour, generosity, and understanding, all unite to form him.—It is these which will make a British soldier once again the first character in Europe.—It is such soldiers who must make England once again invincible, and her glittering arms triumphant in every quarter of the globe.

Well,

Bobby

may do as he will—I'll go back to Cornwall directly, and warn all my neighbours to take special care how they trust to a Lord's promises at an Election again.

Well, great attempts and great failings mark the life of a man of spirit!—There is eclat even in my disappointment to-night; and I am ready for a fresh set of adventures to-morrow.

Incorrigible man!—But I have done with you.—Beauchamp

has answered all my hopes, and the discernment of this charming woman, in rewarding him, merits the happiness that awaits her; and that I may give the fullest sanction to her choice, I declare

him

heir to my estate. This, I know, is a stroke your Lordship did not expect.

And was it then to you, Sir!—The tumults of my gratitude—

Your conduct has compleatly rewarded me; and in adopting you—

(interrupting)

Oh, I protest against that!—Our union would then appear a prudent, sober business, and I should lose the credit of having done a mad thing for the sake of the man—my heart prefers.

To you I resign him with pleasure: his fate is in your hands.

Then he shall continue a soldier—one of those whom Love and his Country detain to guard her dearest,

Last possessions.

Love and my Country! Yes, ye shall divide my heart!—Animated by such passions, our forefathers were invincible; and if we wou'd preserve the freedom and independence they obtain'd for us, we must imitate their virtues.

FINIS.

Freeeditorial 