

**A school for greybeards: or, the mourning
bride: a comedy**

Hannah Cowley

ACT I.

SCENE, An Apartment at Don Sebastian's.

Enter two Servants, on opposite sides.

Pedrillo.

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

Jaquez.

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

Pedrillo.

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

Jaquez.

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

Pedrillo.

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

Jaquez.

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

Pedrillo.

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

Jaquez.

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

Pedrillo.

Hist; here comes Don Sebastian.

(Enter Sebastian.)

Here is a stranger waiting without Sir.

Sebas.

Who is he?

Pedrillo.

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

Jaquez.

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

Sebas.

Hah! Where is he?

(going to the wing)

No, bring him hither—bring him instantly! The brave unfortunate Don Henry! This hour will be to him, the heaviest of his life.

(he enters)

Welcome, Sir! the friend of Don Henry cannot find a house in Portugal, where he would be more joyfully received.

Henry.

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

(Throwing open his cloak.)

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

Quarrel!

(with contempt)

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

Sebas.

Pray then inform—

Henry.

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

Sebas.

I knew him well.

Henry.

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

(holding his sword, and bending over it)

I punish'd *his* traducer!

Sebas.

Surely you cannot doubt of pardon.

Henry.

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

Sebas.

Is she not already lost?

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

Alas!—it is—well, but pray go on.

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

(shaking his head.)

Henry.

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

Sebas.

I cannot give found to words so cruel— but fly, and save that life, which if you are dis|covered here, must be forfeited.

Henry.

Hah—I understand you—she's married! she's married! Antonia is another's!
Oh, Sebas|tian — let me breathe!

(throwing himself on Sebastian.)

Sebas.

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

Henry.

Oh!

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

Alas! he's mad.

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

(going.)

Sebas.

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

Don Henry.

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

Exeunt.

SCENE changes to Don Gasper's.

He enters, meeting Rachel.

Don Gasper.

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

Rachel.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Rachel.

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

Don Gasp.

Tear! ay tears of joy, to be sure!

Rachel.

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

Don Gasp.

Pshaw!

Rachel.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Rachel.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Rachel.

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

Exit.

Don. Gasp.

I don't know whether it is stupidity or archness in the wench—I am afraid she means to laugh at me. Hang me if I would have married at all, if my son would have married; but families must be kept up; and nothing can persuade that young dog into the trammels—he'd rather turn monk than turn to matrimony.

(Enter servant)

Well, you saw your Lady, honest Peter?

Peter.

Yes, Sir.

Don Gasp.

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

Peter.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Exit servant.

(Enter Octavio.)

Octavio.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Octavio.

Shall it be mamma, Sir?

Don Gasp.

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

Octavio.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Octavio.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Octavio.

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

(Drawling.)

Don Gasp.

Pshaw—nonsense!

Octavio.

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

Don. Gasp.

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

Octavio.

I saw her at church with her father. The sermon was on Christian charity, and to see how well she could illustrate the doctrine, she lifted her veil on that side next me—for she saw me hungering, and thirsting, for a view.

Don Gasp.

Memorandum—My wife never goes to church.

Octavio.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Enter Servant.

Serv.

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

Octavio.

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

Exit.

Enter Don Alexis.

Don Alexis.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Alexis.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Alexis.

Ay, that's a blessed fear to be goaded with, in the last stage of one's mortal journey! I wish the day I left my bed to marry, I had been confined in it with a gout, an asthma, and a dropsy. Oons man, there's no end of your plagues from this moment!

Don Gasp.

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

Don. Alexis.

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

going.

Don Gasp.

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

Don Alexis.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Alexis.

A physician—What d'ye mean?

Don Gasp.

Why a lover to take your daughter off your hands.

Don Alexis.

Who'll be the bold man to do that?

Don Gasp.

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

Don Alexis.

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

Don Gasp.

If its a joke you have it but at second hand; the original inventor is now in the house, and has just desired me to employ all my interest in his favour.

Don Alexis.

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

Exit.

Don Gasp.

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

(going.)

Enter Servants.

Serv.

Sir, here's one Don Julio from Spain.

Don Gasp.

Hey!

Serv.

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

Don Gasp.

Hah! my own sister's son—my poor Olivia's boy, of whom she died in childbed. Let him come in.

(Don Henry introduced.)

My dear nephew, why I am as glad to see thee as if—how dost do? Grown up a man! dear, dear, how time slips! 'Twas but yesterday that your mother came out of the Convent to be married.—Like her too—very like her indeed! Well, and how dost do Julio? how is thy father?

Don Henry.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Henry.

Those are not my habits, Sir.

Don Gasp.

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

Don Henry.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Henry.

(Aside)

Hypocritical slanderer! How shall I contain my emotions?

(Antonia enters with ladies)

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

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

(Aside)

Nauseous! Oh Clara, my fate seems to open on me at this moment with a horror I never yet conceived!

Clara.

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

Gasp.

Out, out, no whispering till you grow old enough to turn backbiters! Now call up your smiles

(patting Antonia's cheek),

and your pretty roguish leers! Come ladies your spirits, your wit! I thought every woman was happy on a wedding-day, whether 'twas her own or her neighbour's.

Lady.

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

Antonia.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Henry.

(Aside)

Not one chance look this way! and yet I can forgive the sweet averted eye, because it speaks disgust to all around her.

Antonia.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

I hope to prove my duty, Sir. He never ask'd my love!

(aside.)

Don. Gasp.

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

(She curtsies without regarding him.)

Don Henry.

(aside)

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

(She starts at his voice, looks, and shrieks.)

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

Were Don Henry living, I should believe the stranger him; but oh 'tis impossible—the grave will not give back its prey; no, not to agonizing love!

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

Yes, Sir.

Don Gasp.

Well, he got his end there—what would you have? Come, let us go to the music-room. There you, who have husbands, will find them; and you who have none, may make snares for them. Come, Pet!

(leading her)

you are already snared; and egad! he must look sharp who gets you out of my net.

(Exeunt all but Don Henry.)

Don Henry.

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

(Donna Clara returns, and twitches his arm.)

Donna Clara.

Turn, young man, I pray!

(he starts)

Good Don Julio, tell Don Henry we did not expect to find him in masquerade to grace Antonia's nuptials.

Don Henry.

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

Donna Clara.

Faithless, has she been?

Don Henry.

Is she not this day to be married?

Donna Clara.

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

Don Henry.

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

Donna Clara.

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

Don Henry.

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

Donna Clara.

Pray then tell me—

Don Henry.

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

Donna Clara.

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

Exeunt.

END of the FIRST ACT.

SCENE, An Apartment at Don Sebastian's.

Enter two Servants, on opposite sides.

Pedrillo.

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

Jaquez.

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

Pedrillo.

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

Jaquez.

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

Pedrillo.

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

Jaquez.

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

Pedrillo.

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

Jaquez.

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

Pedrillo.

Hist; here comes Don Sebastian.

(Enter Sebastian.)

Here is a stranger waiting without Sir.

Sebas.

Who is he?

Pedrillo.

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

Jaquez.

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

Sebas.

Hah! Where is he?

(going to the wing)

No, bring him hither—bring him instantly! The brave unfortunate Don Henry! This hour will be to him, the heaviest of his life.

(he enters)

Welcome, Sir! the friend of Don Henry cannot find a house in Portugal, where he would be more joyfully received.

Henry.

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

(Throwing open his cloak.)

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

Quarrel!

(with contempt)

Do you then suspect it was *a fray* in which I fought; or that my sword is drawn in tavern brawls; or to sup|port the insolence, or perfidy of an abandoned wanton? Duels of that sort, a soldier stoops not to!

Sebas.

Pray then inform—

Henry.

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

Sebas.

I knew him well.

Henry.

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

(holding his sword, and bending over it)

I punish'd *his* traducer!

Sebas.

Surely you cannot doubt of pardon.

Henry.

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

Sebas.

Is she not already lost?

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

Alas!—it is—well, but pray go on.

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

My dear unhappy Henry, summon your fortitude whilst I tell you, that Don Julio's friend|ship, united with your own temerity, cannot save your honour — if your honour is to be wounded by—

(shaking his head.)

Henry.

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

Sebas.

I cannot give found to words so cruel— but fly, and save that life, which if you are dis|covered here, must be forfeited.

Henry.

Hah—I understand you—she's married! she's married! Antonia is another's!
Oh, Sebas|tian — let me breathe!

(throwing himself on Sebastian.)

Sebas.

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

Henry.

Oh!

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

Alas! he's mad.

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

(going.)

Sebas.

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

Don Henry.

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

Exeunt.

SCENE changes to Don Gasper's.

He enters, meeting Rachel.

Don Gasper.

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

Rachel.

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

Don Gasp.

Statute! but why don't you talk to her then, *Mrs. Statute*; and tell her how happy she is? You should say d'ye see ma'am what a fine house you are mistress of?—d'ye see ma'am how many servants are at your command?—and

this rich casket of jewels ma'am, which my master presents to you—how many ladies will envy you these jewels!—Did not her eyes sparkle when she found 'em on her toilet?

Rachel.

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

Don Gasp.

Tear! ay tears of joy, to be sure!

Rachel.

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

Don Gasp.

Pshaw!

Rachel.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Rachel.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Rachel.

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

Exit.

Don. Gasp.

I don't know whether it is stupidity or archness in the wench—I am afraid she means to laugh at me. Hang me if I would have married at all, if my son would have married; but families must be kept up; and nothing can persuade that young dog into the trammels—he'd rather turn monk than turn to matrimony.

(Enter servant)

Well, you saw your Lady, honest Peter?

Peter.

Yes, Sir.

Don Gasp.

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

Peter.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Exit servant.

(Enter Octavio.)

Octavio.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Octavio.

Shall it be mamma, Sir?

Don Gasp.

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

Octavio.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Octavio.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Octavio.

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

(Drawling.)

Don Gasp.

Pshaw—nonsense!

Octavio.

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

Don. Gasp.

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

Octavio.

I saw her at church with her father. The sermon was on Christian charity, and to shew how well she could illustrate the doctrine, she lifted her veil on that side next me—for she saw me hungering, and thirsting, for a view.

Don Gasp.

Memorandum—My wife never goes to church.

Octavio.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Enter Servant.

Serv.

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

Octavio.

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

Exit.

Enter Don Alexis.

Don Alexis.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Alexis.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Alexis.

Ay, that's a blessed fear to be goaded with, in the last stage of one's mortal journey I wish the day I left my bed to marry, I had been confined in it with a gout, an asthma, and a dropsy. Oons man, there's no end of your plagues from this moment!

Don Gasp.

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

Don. Alexis.

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

going.

Don Gasp.

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

Don Alexis.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Alexis.

A physician—What d'ye mean?

Don Gasp.

Why a lover to take your daughter off your hands.

Don Alexis.

Who'll be the bold man to do that?

Don Gasp.

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

Don Alexis.

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

Don Gasp.

If its a joke you have it but at second hand; the original inventor is now in the house, and has just desired me to employ all my interest in his favour.

Don Alexis.

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

Exit.

Don Gasp.

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

(going.)

Enter Servants.

Serv.

Sir, here's one Don Julio from Spain.

Don Gasp.

Hey!

Serv.

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

Don Gasp.

Hah! my own sister's son—my poor Olivia's boy, of whom she died in childbed. Let him come in.

(Don Henry introduced.)

My dear nephew, why I am as glad to see thee as if—how dost do? Grown up a man! dear, dear, how time slips! 'Twas but yesterday that your mother came out of the Convent to be married.—Like her too—very like her indeed! Well, and how dost do Julio? how is thy father?

Don Henry.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Henry.

Those are not my habits, Sir.

Don Gasp.

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

Don Henry.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Henry.

(Aside)

Hypocritical slanderer! How shall I contain my emotions?

(Antonia enters with ladies)

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

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

(Aside)

Nauseous! Oh Clara, my fate seems to open on me at this moment with a horror I never yet conceived!

Clara.

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

Gasp.

Out, out, no whispering till you grow old enough to turn backbiters! Now call up your smiles

(patting Antonia's cheek),

and your pretty roguish leers! Come ladies your spirits, your wit! I thought every woman was happy on a wedding-day, whether 'twas her own or her neighbour's.

Lady.

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

Antonia.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Don Henry.
(*Aside*)

Not one chance look this way! and yet I can forgive the sweet averted eye, because it speaks disgust to all around her.

Antonia.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

I hope to prove my duty, Sir. He never ask'd my love!

(*aside.*)

Don. Gasp.

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

(*She curtsies without regarding him.*)

Don Henry.
(*aside*)

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

(She starts at his voice, looks, and shrieks.)

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Antonia.

Were Don Henry living, I should believe the stranger him; but oh 'tis impossible—the grave will not give back its prey; no, not to agonizing love!

Don Gasp.

Come, come, little Pudsey, what d'ye cry for? your cousin that was drown'd, went to Mexico to make his fortune, didn't he?

Antonia.

Yes, Sir.

Don Gasp.

Well, he got his end there—what would you have? Come, let us go to the music-room. There you, who have husbands, will find them; and you who have none, may make snares for them. Come, Pet!

(leading her)

you are already snared; and egad! he must look sharp who gets you out of my net.

(Exeunt all but Don Henry.)

Don Henry.

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

(Donna Clara returns, and twitches his arm.)

Donna Clara.

Turn, young man, I pray!

(he starts)

Good Don Julio, tell Don Henry we did not expect to find him in masquerade to grace Antonia's nuptials.

Don Henry.

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

Donna Clara.

Faithless, has she been?

Don Henry.

Is she not this day to be married?

Donna Clara.

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

Don Henry.

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

Donna Clara.

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

Don Henry.

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

Donna Clara.

Pray then tell me—

Don Henry.

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

Donna Clara.

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

Exeunt.

ACT II. An Apartment at Don Alexis's.

Enter Seraphina, pulling in Alexis.

Seraphina.

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

Alex.

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

Seraph.

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

Alex.

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

Seraph.

Listen, Deary! and I'll bless ye with a secret. Blind your windows, and nail your doors, but if your honour

(curtseying)

has no better security than these, you'll be soon in the herd, whose ideal ornaments *(touching his forehead)*

are so terrific to you.

Alex.

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

Seraph.

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

Alex.

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

Seraph.

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

Alex.

Whom I represent! who's that?

Seraph.

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

Alex.

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

Seraph.

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

Alex.

Lord have mercy!

(muttering to himself.)

Seraph.

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

Alex.

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

Enter a Servant.

Serv.

Don Octavio, Sir.

(exit)

Alex.

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

(exit)

Seraph.

I shall give his daughter no such charge, poor girl! How can she receive Octavio well, with her heart devoted to Sebastian? I wonder what sort of a thing this Signor is—some wr•••ed privy counsellor, like himself, I suppose.

very odd now, that those *antients* should take it into their venerable noddles, that a youthful bride is a proper appendage to their dignity; or to fancy that it requires no more talents to please a pretty wife, than to govern a stupid nation. Lord! if my deary would but speak the truth now, and warn his wise brethren—Heyday! is *this* the Octavio? Handsome, I vow! young! bold! *He* a privy counsellor! Mercy, how could I slander him so?

(*Enter Octav.*)

Welcome, Don Octavio! for I am inform'd that here you *must* have wel|come. The man I saw at church, I protest.

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

If you mean to shorten my hope by disappointment, 'tis kind to protract it; but there is a way of ending hope, enchanting Viola! with|out giving despair.

Seraph.

Viola, did he call me?

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

From the moment I beheld you at ves|pers, your image has never left me.

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

Why what did it promise you?

Octav.

Elegance, liveliness, frankness, and un|derstanding!

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

Oh, by all means—I like to increase my captives. There!

(making as though she flung something over his neck)

there are my chains—do you feel them?

Octav.

Yes, as rosy wreaths—they delight me!

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

What were those hopes, I pray?

Octav.

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

Seraph.

Indeed—I can hardly think it.

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

(aside)

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

(Running off.)

Octav.

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

Exit.

SCENE, Don Alexis's Garden.

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

Sebas.

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

Viola.

(Coming forward.)

Won't you indeed? Let me look in your face, whilst you make that wicked oath.

Sebas.

I could cuff you this instant for looking so pretty. Heavens! what a horrible length of time is before you to do mischief! Sixteen!—The fire of those eyes can't be quench'd, nor that ala|baster skin shrivell'd, in less than twenty years—oh, 'tis dreadful!

Viola.

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

Sebas.

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

Viola.

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

Sebas.

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

Viola.

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

Enter Carlota.

Carl.

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

Sebas.

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

Carl.

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

Viola.

Be it hours, or minutes, you must leave me my Sebastian—Should my father surprize us, I could expect nothing less than six months impri|sonment in a

garret; with the lives of the saints for my study, and bread and water for my banquet.

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

Carl.

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

(going.)

Viola.

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

Exit.

Carl.

Upon my word—so *I* must be the scapegoat! But I won't be blamed I vow—I'll pretend I don't know you.—'Tis very extraordinary, Sir,

(raising her voice)

that the gard'ner could not leave the wicket open, whilst he threw out his rubbish, but you must throw yourself in for more rubbish. —If you don't go this minute, I'll call him to bring his basket, and sling you out again with the rest.

Sebas.

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

Exit.

Carl.

She feels it too.—Ay, pray get you gone; and don't mistake your neighbour's gardens again. —There—there,—that's your way.

(Going with him thro' the wing.)

Enter Alexis.

Alexis.

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

Carl.

(re-entering)

I wonder people are not ashamed of themselves, I swear, to pretend—Oh, dear Sir, are you here?

Alex.

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

Carl.

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

Alex.

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

Carl.

(Aside.)

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

Alexis.

(Aside)

Is it past twelve?
(going a little off)

"She feels it too!" that sits like custard and cucumber. Those were not the words mistress— try again! I mean his expression just before you said, pray get ye gone.

Carl.

Oh that, Sir—then he said—what he said just then was—that's a fine poplar!

(pointing to a tree.)

Alexis.

(Aside)

"A fine poplar," "she feels it too." That does not meet a bit closer than t'other. Come, once more comb-brush, recollect! or by St. Anthony—

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

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(Aside)

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

(shaking her.)

Carl.

Oh how you gripe my arm! devil take it, if you will have it, hear it then! He said, "I feel that Viola must be mine."

(Bawling.)

Now are you satisfied?

Alexis.

"I feel that Viola must be mine"— "she feels it too!" H—h—h—m!—that fits like the two shells of an oyster.

(Aside.)

Now minx, I feel that I have the truth; and I feel a violent desire to make you feel this cane. And so that curious stranger must have been Don Sebastian, whom I have order'd her never to think of— never—never!—

Carl.

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

Alexis.

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

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Viola.

Bless me Carlota, where have you been?

Alex.

Oh dear, why she has been so kind to entertain one of your lovers without doors, ma|dam, whilst you were engaged with another within.

Viola.

I do not understand you, Sir.

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You don't! Come troop mistress

(to Carl|lota)

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To be sure my father's bewitch'd.

(Aside.)

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

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Exit.

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Well innocent ones, what sort of enter|tainment did you give Octavio?

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

Enter Seraphina, hastily.

Seraph.

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

Alexis.

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

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

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I believe they are both beside them|selves.

(Aside.)

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

Alexis.

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

Exit.

Seraph.

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

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How very grateful he will be!

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Exeunt.

END of the SECOND ACT.

SCENE, Don Alexis's Garden.

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

Sebas.

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

Viola.

(Coming forward.)

Won't you indeed? Let me look in your face, whilst you make that wicked oath.

Sebas.

I could cuff you this instant for looking so pretty. Heavens! what a horrible length o time is before you to do mischief! Sixteen!—The fire of those eyes can't be quench'd, nor that ala|baster skin shrivell'd, in less than twenty years—oh, 'tis dreadful!

Viola.

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Sebas.

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Exeunt.

ACT III. An Apartment at Don Gasper's.

Enter Don Henry, hastily, followed by Don Sebastian.

Henry.

OH 'tis too much!

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Henry.

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

Sebas.

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

Exit.

Enter Don Gasper.

Don Gasp.

Why how now Julio! What stole a|way?—run from the guests—hide in corners— how's this?

Henry.

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

Don Gasp.

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

Henry.

If it turns out so, Sir.

Don Gasp.

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

Henry.

Ay, Sir, what did?—I long to be in|form'd. Wine perhaps will make him communi|cative.

(Aside.)

—A splendid jointure probably.

Don Gasp.

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

Henry.

I am not fortunate in guessing.

Don Gasp.

Then I'll tell ye—half a sheet of paper got her. Ay, you may well stare. 'Twas but half a sheet of paper—in which I procured it to be said, that one Don Henry, whom she lov'd, was shrouded and buried—that got her my boy!

(slapping him on the shoulder)

—there's a contriving uncle for you!

Henry.

Is it possible?

Don Gasp.

Possible, why I *did* it—I did it. And where's the harm? A banish'd man is a dead man in the eye of the law, and a dead man can be no husband. He fought a duel and was forced to fly.

Henry.

And how, Sir, could you take advantage—

Don Gasp.

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

Henry.

And so the lady believed your intelligence?

Don Gasp.

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

Henry.

No, no! female grief, tho' sometimes obstinate, is seldom fatal. Why, my dear uncle, you are a perfect Machiavel at a plot. I shall try if I can't out-plot you though.

(Aside.)

It will be amusing to see Antonia's astonishment, when she finds her Henry is still living—ha, ha— but then she'll be your's, ha, ha, ha.

Don Gasp.

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

Henry.
(*Aside.*)

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

Don Gasp.

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

Henry.

But if he obtains his pardon, he'll re|turn, and then—

Don Gasp.

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

Henry.

How, Sir—bought his pardon!

Don Gasp.

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

Henry.

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

Don Gasp.

Kindness—tut! I got his pardon for myself, that nobody else should have it;— so that if he gets any one to ask for it, it will be answered, "the pardon has been already granted" —but for want of my appearance, he's defunct de|pend on't;—

ay, as much out of the world, as tho' the sexton had cover'd him with green-sod.

Henry.

And are you actually in possession of his pardon?

Don Gasp.

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

Henry.

What a discovery is here!

(Aside.)

(Don Alexis enters, pulling in Octavio.)

Alex.

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

Octav.

Let us not disturb my father, Sir.

Alex.

Disturb—a feather! Will you leave us?

Gasp.

Yes, yes, I'll leave ye—but first let me present my nephew to you. The son of my sister Victoria—you knew her.

Alex.

Knew her—ay, as well as your nose does its spectacles. So, young gentleman, what you are come to dance at young uncle's wedding? and 'twas worth while

to come post from Madrid on purpose;—you won't cut capers at so wise a wedding every day, I can tell you.

Gasp.

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

Alex.

Not a bit.

Gasp.

No! the eyes are the very same.

Alex.

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

Gasp.

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

Alex.

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

Gasp.

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

Alex.

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

Gasp.

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

(Exit with Don Henry.)

Alex.

Don't take him to your Antonia, lest she should have the odd notion, that he's a fitter bridegroom for her, than you are.

(Bawling after him.)

Well, my dear boy, I am come on purpose to ask how you manag'd to-day with my daughter. The young slut is so mealy-mouth'd, I could get no|thing out of her. Was she kind—did she shew a proper sense of the favour?

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

She was all goodness, Sir. Why what an old fellow's this!

(aside)

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.
(*aside*)

What can be the meaning of all this? Is it his suspicion, or his folly?

Alex.

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

Octav.

What shall I tell you, Sir?

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

No! why had you not my permission?

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

(*aside*)

Octav.

Kind! she was all angelic sweetness, Sir!

Alex.

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

Octav.

She had the condescension to promise—

Alex.

What—what?

Octav.

That when you should order her to bestow her hand on me, she would obey you with|out reluctance.

Alex.

She promis'd *that*, did she?

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Exit.

Alex.

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

(Exit.)

SCENE. Don Gasper's Garden.

Enter Henry.

Don Henry.

(looking, as tho' uncertain.)

Surely 'tis herself—yes, 'tis Antonia! Like the soft lilly press'd by the dewy robe of night, she bends her lovely head. Oh Clara! lead her—lead her to her Henry! Hah—accordant to my wish they come! But how may I be master of her thoughts? Perhaps to her friend, she will unveil her inmost heart. I'll seem to sleep—yes; but whilst I appear to slumber, my ear will hang on every sound she utters, and my whole soul be suspended on her breath.

(He reclines on a bank. Some shrubs prevent his being immediately seen.)

Enter Antonia and Clara.

Cla.

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

Ant.

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

Clara.

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

(*pointing to Henry.*)

Ant.

(*Not regarding her.*)

Oh, I'll call back each sacred hour which blest our wedded souls; trace each fond scene that chasten'd love made pure, and in the dear review, forget that I'm a wretch.

Clara.

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

Ant.

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

Clara.

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

Ant.

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

[*Sings.*]

Sweet rosy sleep! Oh do not fly,
Bind thy soft fillet on his eye,
That o'er each grace my own may rove,
And feast my hapless, joyless love!
For when he lifts those shading lids,

His chilling glance such bliss forbids —
Then rosy sleep oh do not fly,
But bind thy fillet on his eye!

Clara.

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

Ant.

Fie, Clara! let us go this instant—you will surely wake him.

(going hastily.)

Exit Clara.

Henry.

(Starting up.)

Yes, he is awakened indeed! Oh my Antonia, turn! Turn sweet traitress, and look
upon the man you've injured!

Ant.

(Shrieking.)

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

Henry.

Convince thyself.

(Embracing her.)

Oh, my Antonia!

Ant.

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

Henry.

A treasure you have lightly priz'd.

Ant.

Alas, my Henry, I believ'd thee dead! Oh let me touch thee yet again!

(taking his hand)

These veins are warm with life! health blushes on thy cheeks; and this soft pressure darts thro' my nerves, and is new life to me. Oh my Henry! it is—it is thyself!

Henry.

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

Ant.

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

Henry.

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

Ant.

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

Henry.

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

Ant.

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

Henry.

And in heaven 'tis recorded!

Ant.

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

Henry.

Wilt thou then follow my sad fortunes?

Ant.

Yes—to the utmost boundaries of the earth!

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

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To-morrow!

Henry.

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

Ant.

Thus then!

(kneeling)

and hear me, hea|ven!

Henry.

And thus I listen to thee.

(kneeling)

Enter Don Philip, followed by Alexis.

Gasp.

Tony! my little Tony, where art? Hey!

(starting)

Alex.

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

Henry.

We are undone!

Ant.

Trust to me.

(apart)

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

Phil.

Her contracted husband—mark that now.

(to Alexis)

Henry.

And thus do I invoke the same gracious powers, to bless you, as you're true; and to pre|serve thee and *that* husband in a sweet eternity of love!

(Don Philip runs to help them up.)

Phil.

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

Alex.

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

Phil.

Envy—sheer envy! You see when *I* marry a girl, *I* know how to chuse one. Come along, my pigeons.

(going off with one under each arm.)

Exit Philip and Antonia.

Alex.

Hark ye, Don Julio—give me a minute.

(twitching him back)

Come, I know there's some jest in this. You must trust me, and egad if you will, I'll—do trust me, I know 'tis some jest.

Henry.

I admire your penetration.

Alex.

I love a jest to my soul, and gad if you'll trust me—here—here's a seal ring

(taking it off)

'twas worn by my great grandfather fifteen generations back. I value it beyond the great ruby in the throne at Delhi.—Egad I have a great mind to give it ye.

(Putting it on again, and throwing his hand behind him.)

Henry.

An idea darts upon me!—yes, by heaven it shall be done! this is the critical instant of Antonia's fate.

(Aside.)

A ring valued by you so highly, Don Alexis, ought to grace no finger but your own—I refuse to accept it; but if you'll entrust it to me, I swear when you next see it you shall know the jest.

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

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

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

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

END of the THIRD ACT.

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ACT IV.

SCENE, Seraphina's Apartment.

Enter Seraphina, followed by Octavio.

Seraphina.

IT is in vain, and so—

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

This is so singular!

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

Impossible—impossible.

Octav.

How so?

Seraph.

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

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

Octav.

Ah, 'tis plain we were born for each other, we think so exactly alike!

(aside.)

These I confess are misfortunes; but how in our case are they to be avoided?

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

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

Octav.

I swear you shall be obey'd, whatever I hazard. Who knows but an elopement may finish the affair short of marriage!

(Aside.)

(A hustle without—the door opens a little, and discovers Carlota struggling to keep out Alexis.)

Alexis.

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

Carl.

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

Seraph.

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

Alexis.

Let me in I say.

Octav.

Pardon me, Sir, you must not come in.

(Going to the door.)

Alexis.

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

Octav.

Not quite so kind as I wish her to be.

Alexis.

Oh, a jade! You slut you—you per|verse baggage! I will have you kind to Octavio.

Octav.

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

(Aside.)

Alexis.

Octy! Octy!

(struggling with Carlota)

have you kiss'd her yet?

Octav.

No!

(loud—in passion.)

Alex.

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

Carl.

Lord Sir! How can you be so rum|busterous?

Alex.

Come *in*, I will.

Seraph.

(aside)

Then go *out* I must.

Exit.

Alex.

So! what's she off!

(bursting in.)

Octav.

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

(going.)

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

Are you so obstinate Sir!

Alex.

Ay—and if she dares demur—

Octav.

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

Alex.

How now!

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

You must conceal your knowledge of that.

Alex.

Pho! d'ye imagine I don't see your whole drift now? If you was to continue talking a Lapland winter, you could not make the hint clearer. Gad she's coming, and my wife with her! So d'ye hear you Signor Don Octavio,

(speaking loud)

you are—I say you are—you shall know what you are another time; for the present that's your way, Sir, that your way out; and I'll be sworn you shall never know the way in.

(Pushing him out.)

Enter Seraphina and Viola.

Seraph.

Why my dear husband is so mere a gudgeon, there's no credit in deceiving him.
Now remember your lesson.

(to Viola)

Alex.

So mistress—I have dispatch'd your lover.

Viola.

Have you, Sir?

Alex.

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

Seraph.

My sweet love, are you speaking of Don Octavio?

Alex.

Yes, I am. Take care you give him no encouragement, d'ye hear girl? No whisperings from your balcony; no private correspondences; no billets dropt by your officious maid, on pretence they are meant for some carotty-pated country cousin!

Viola.

Dear Sir!

Alex.

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

Seraph.

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

Alex.
(*aside*)

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

Viola.

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

Alex.

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

Seraph.

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

Alex.

Ay, and when we are sifted—

Seraph.

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

Viola.

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

Alex.

Handsome is he, that handsome does—remember that.

Viola.

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

Alex,

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

Seraph.

No, our widgeons are all within doors.

Viola.

Unfortunate that I am! just made up my mind to dismiss Sebastian, nay absolutely to dis|like him, and now—

Alex.

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

Viola.

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

Alex.

Thoughts are free, daughter! Gad I could hug her.

(aside.)

Seraph.

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

Alex.

(aside)

Zounds! she knows nothing of our plot, and gives that advice seriously.

Seraph.

He is a most accomplish'd young man.

Alex.

Wise!

Seraph.

Engaging in his manners, and resistless in his form.

Alex.

My dear, I say.

(spitefully.)

Seraph.

His eyes are expressive, and his tongue is eloquent.

Alex.

The devil's in *your* tongue!

(aside.)

You don't know what you are talking of.

Seraph.

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

Alex.

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

(pushing off Viola.)

Seraph.

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

Alex.

Zounds let him alone!

(driving her off on the other side)

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

Exit laughing.

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

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

Rach.

(looking back)

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

Don Gasp.

(capering in, and singing.)

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

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

(strutting.)

Ant.

(Aside)

Oh heaven! where is Henry? Rachel, my soul sinks within me.

Rach.

Truly, mine is not very high.

Gasp.

Heyday! what's all this about? What! she must be coax'd now I warrant—they all love coaxing. Come now, my pretty Tony, my nown little Tony.

(Taking her under his arm.)

Ant.

(breaking from him)

Henry! Henry! Where art thou? Oh, he mocks me!

Gasp.

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

Henry.

(without.)

Where is he—the bride|groom! the happy bridegroom!

Ant.

Oh my heart—he is come!

Gasp.

Here he is—here is the happy bride|groom.

(Henry enters)

Come, you are just in time to witness the ceremony.—The priest waits to join us in his rosy bands. Look at her! h-u-m! Oh, you sweet little—There are smiles and blushes for ye! Look at her!

Henry.

They are like those of Aurora, when she slies before the jolly god of day!

Gasp.

And I the jolly god of day pursue her.

Henry.

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

Gasp.

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

Henry.

It is happy I have a token to convince you. Here, Sir, — do you know this great scal ring? the impression is—stay, can you see it?

(taking a candle)

the impression is a satyr; look at his horns.

Gasp.

The devil's in such luck! A man on the wrong side of fifty or so, can't marry but at every turn he has horns in his teeth. If he's invited to a tavern, the dinner is sure to be at the *horns*: They'll *wake* me with horns to-morrow morning—nay, I am even kept from the ceremony to|night, to be regaled with the sight of *horns*.

Ant.

(to Clara.)

What can be the purport of the ring? I can hardly breathe thro' terror!

Henry.

Do you know them, Sir?

Gasp.

Know them! Yes—they are Don Alexis's horns, not mine—it is his ring; —but what have I to do with it, any more than with the ring of Saturn, or the belt of Jupiter? If you are for rings, you shall see one presently

(taking Antonia's hand)

on this waxen finger, that—

Henry.

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

Gasp.

Meet Don Alexis! What is he mad? or are you mad? or does he think me mad? Go, prithee—I'll meet him to-morrow.

(seizing An|tonia's hand)

My service to his night cap!

(going.)

Henry.

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

Gasp.

Hey! throats cut!

Hen.

Why Sir, there's a plot—a plot.

Gasp.

A plot!

Clara.

(to Ant.)

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

Hen.

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

Gasp.

Arms! well what can I do? Fight dog fight bear—I'll be married.

(going.)

Rachel.

(dropping on her knee)

Oh dear Sir, there'll be nothing but rapes and murder! Oh take pity on us poor virgins, Sir, and go.

Gasp.

Don't be a fool!

(striving to get free.)

Clara.

Consider, Sir, the good of the nation.

Rach.

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

Gasp.

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

Hen.

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

Gasp.

If there's such danger, I am safest here— an't I, duck?

(to Ant.)

Ant.

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

Gasp.

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

Hen.
(*aside*)

Oh miserable, to be thus circumvented. Had I not better stay here to guard the—

Gasp.

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

Ant.

Fye, Don Julio! surely you will not desert your uncle. Leave him in the street, and return instantly!

(*apart*)

Adieu, sweet bridegroom,
(*helping to get him out*)

speed quickly back,
(*looking after them*)

but find Antonia gone! Dear liberty, I hail thee! Oh Rachel, now I claim thy promise;—assist my flight, and make thy terms and fortune. Follow—follow me!

Exit.

Rachel.

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

END of the FOURTH ACT.

SCENE, Seraphina's Apartment.

Enter Seraphina, followed by Octavio.

Seraphina.

IT is in vain, and so—

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

This is so singular!

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

Impossible—impossible.

Octav.

How so?

Seraph.

I see I must tell you, to avoid altercation. Be pleased to know then, Sir, that there is nothing on earth I detest like this sober, quiet, prudent method of loving. Your vows have a *father's* approbation;—you are expected;—you enter the house without difficulty;—you yawn through an hour of common-place;—the wedding-day is fixed, and we go to church to be married, in the same hum-drum stupid way, that millions of dull couples have done before us. No, no, this I can't submit to, believe me!

Octav.

Ah, 'tis plain we were born for each other, we think so exactly alike!

(aside.)

These I confess are misfortunes; but how in our case are they to be avoided?

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

Ay, then indeed things would go on gloriously! You would be sighing and groaning without, and I should be weeping and wailing within. Then for plots and contrivances—then for bribes and scaling ladders—then for escapes and pursuits—Oh, what would I not do for a man who should bring me into such blissful difficulties!

Octav.

I swear you shall be obey'd, whatever I hazard. Who knows but an elopement may finish the affair short of marriage!

(Aside.)

(A hustle without—the door opens a little, and discovers Carlota struggling to keep out Alexis.)

Alexis.

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

Carl.

Bless me, Sir, how can you be so bar|barous to disturb the young people?

Seraph.

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

Alexis.

Let me in I say.

Octav.

Pardon me, Sir, you must not come in.

(Going to the door.)

Alexis.

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

Octav.

Not quite so kind as I wish her to be.

Alexis.

Oh, a jade! You slut you—you per|verse baggage! I will have you kind to Octavio.

Octav.

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

(Aside.)

Alexis.

Octy! Octy!

(struggling with Carlota)

have you kiss'd her yet?

Octav.

No!

(loud—in passion.)

Alex.

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

Carl.

Lord Sir! How can you be so rum|busterous?

Alex.

Come *in*, I will.

Seraph.

(aside)

Then go *out* I must.

Exit.

Alex.

So! what's she off!

(bursting in.)

Octav.

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

(going.)

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

Are you so obstinate Sir!

Alex.

Ay—and if she dares demur—

Octav.

Oh I am ruin'd—if you persist I am ruin'd. Dear Don Alexis pardon me! I see my scheme was ridiculous—a better strikes me. In one word—stay, let's take

care we are not heard— in one word, you and I must both be in a plot, against your lovelely capricious daughter.

Alex.

How now!

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

You must conceal your knowledge of that.

Alex.

Pho! d'ye imagine I don't see your whole drift now? If you was to continue talking a Lapland winter, you could not make the hint clearer. Gad she's coming, and my wife with her! So d'ye hear you Signor Don Octavio,

(speaking loud)

you are—I say you are—you shall know what you are another time; for the present that's your way, Sir, that your way out; and I'll be sworn you shall never know the way in.

(Pushing him out.)

Enter Seraphina and Viola.

Seraph.

Why my dear husband is so mere a gudgeon, there's no credit in deceiving him. Now remember your lesson.

(to Viola)

Alex.

So mistress—I have dispatch'd your lover.

Viola.

Have you, Sir?

Alex.

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

Seraph.

My sweet love, are you speaking of Don Octavio?

Alex.

Yes, I am. Take care you give him no encouragement, d'ye hear girl? No whisperings from your balcony; no private correspondences; no billets dropt by your officious maid, on pretence they are meant for some carotty-pated country cousin!

Viola.

Dear Sir!

Alex.

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

Seraph.

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

Alex.

(aside)

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

Viola.

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

Alex.

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

Seraph.

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

Alex.

Ay, and when we are sifted—

Seraph.

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

Viola.

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

Alex.

Handsome is he, that handsome does—remember that.

Viola.

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

Alex,

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

Seraph.

No, our widgeons are all within doors.

Viola.

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

Alex.

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

Viola.

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

Alex.

Thoughts are free, daughter! Gad I could hug her.

(aside.)

Seraph.

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

Alex.

(aside)

Zounds! she knows nothing of our plot, and gives that advice seriously.

Seraph.

He is a most accomplish'd young man.

Alex.

Wise!

Seraph.

Engaging in his manners, and resistless in his form.

Alex.

My dear, I say.

(spitefully.)

Seraph.

His eyes are expressive, and his tongue is eloquent.

Alex.

The devil's in *your* tongue!

(aside.)

You don't know what you are talking of.

Seraph.

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

Alex.

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

(pushing off Viola.)

Seraph.

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

Alex.

Zounds let him alone!

(driving her off on the other side)

you may be doing mischief all this while. I dare not let her into my plot, lest her per|verseness, or her folly should mar it. And yet, I think—no hang it I won't—I won't. The only plot that ever had a woman in it came to nothing. I'll conduct this solely by my own sagacity, and have a hearty laugh at the poor fools, when all is over.

Exit laughing.

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

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

Rach.

(looking back)

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

Don Gasp.

(capering in, and singing.)

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

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

(strutting.)

Ant.

(Aside)

Oh heaven! where is Henry? Rachel, my soul sinks within me.

Rach.

Truly, mine is not very high.

Gasp.

Heyday! what's all this about? What! she must be coax'd now I warrant—they all love coaxing. Come now, my pretty Tony, my nown little Tony.

(Taking her under his arm.)

Ant.

(breaking from him)

Henry! Henry! Where art thou? Oh, he mocks me!

Gasp.

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

Henry.

(without.)

Where is he—the bride|groom! the happy bridegroom!

Ant.

Oh my heart—he is come!

Gasp.

Here he is—here is the happy bride|groom.

(Henry enters)

Come, you are just in time to witness the ceremony.—The priest waits to join us in his rosy bands. Look at her! h-u-m! Oh, you sweet little—There are smiles and blushes for ye! Look at her!

Henry.

They are like those of Aurora, when she slies before the jolly god of day!

Gasp.

And I the jolly god of day pursue her.

Henry.

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

Gasp.

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

Henry.

It is happy I have a token to convince you. Here, Sir, — do you know this great scal ring? the impression is—stay, can you see it?

(taking a candle)

the impression is a satyr; look at his horns.

Gasp.

The devil's in such luck! A man on the wrong side of fifty or so, can't marry but at every turn he has horns in his teeth. If he's invited to a tavern, the dinner is sure to be at the *horns*: They'll *wake* me with horns to-morrow morning—nay, I am even kept from the ceremony to|night, to be regaled with the sight of *horns*.

Ant.

(to Clara.)

What can be the purport of the ring? I can hardly breathe thro' terror!

Henry.

Do you know them, Sir?

Gasp.

Know them! Yes—they are Don Alexis's horns, not mine—it is his ring; —but what have I to do with it, any more than with the ring of Saturn, or the belt of Jupiter? If you are for rings, you shall see one presently

(taking An|tonia's hand)

on this waxen finger, that—

Henry.

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

Gasp.

Meet Don Alexis! What is he mad? or are you mad? or does he think me mad?
Go, prithee—I'll meet him to-morrow.

(seizing Antonia's hand)

My service to his night cap!
(going.)

Henry.

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

Gasp.

Hey! throats cut!

Hen.

Why Sir, there's a plot—a plot.

Gasp.

A plot!

Clara.

(to Ant.)

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

Hen.

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

Gasp.

Arms! well what can I do? Fight dog fight bear—I'll be married.

(going.)

Rachel.

(dropping on her knee)

Oh dear Sir, there'll be nothing but rapes and murder! Oh take pity on us poor virgins, Sir, and go.

Gasp.

Don't be a fool!

(striving to get free.)

Clara.

Consider, Sir, the good of the nation.

Rach.

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

Gasp.

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

Hen.

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

Gasp.

If there's such danger, I am safest here— an't I, duck?

(to Ant.)

Ant.

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

Gasp.

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

Hen.

(aside)

Oh miserable, to be thus circum|vented. Had I not better stay here to guard the—

Gasp.

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

Ant.

Fye, Don Julio! surely you will not desert your uncle. Leave him in the street, and return instantly!

(apart)

Adieu, sweet bridegroom,

(helping to get him out)

speed quickly back,

(looking after them)

but find Antonia gone! Dear liberty, I hail thee! Oh Rachel, now I claim thy promise;—assist my flight, and make thy terms and fortune. Follow—follow me!

Exit.

Rachel.

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

ACT V. An Apartment at *Don Alexis's*.

A Table with Candles and Chairs.

He enters, followed by a Servant.

Alexis.

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

Serv.

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

Alex.

Playing! go, get along and let me know when they break up.

(Exit Servant.)

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

Enter Servant.

Serv.

Don Gasper de Frontado is without, Sir.

Alex.

Don Gasper—Don Gasper! it can't be.

Serv.

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

Alex.

Swords and torches—why he's mad! the near approach of matrimony has turn'd his brain. Well, no great wonder. It is Gasper sure enough!

(looking through the wing)

What a figure!—

Gasp.

(Speaking as he enters)

Bless me, why all is quiet—all is quiet, my dear nephew! ah

(looking back)

what's he gone? Not a voice in the street, but two old women quarrelling about a string of sausages.

Alex.

(Aside.)

Ay it is so—he's certainly crazy. I am very sorry Don Gasper

(gravely taking off his hat)

that any thing should have happen'd to call you from your house, at this time.

Gasp.

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

Alex.

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

(aside.)

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

Gasp.

Be brief—my good friend, be brief!

Alex.

Brief—why we hav'nt begun yet.

Gasp.

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

Alex.

Pray, Sir, what would you be at?

Gasp.

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

Alex.

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

Gasp.

My business, with whom?

Alex.

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

Gasp.

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

Alex.

(rising)

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

Gasp.

(Pursuing him)

The disturbance is no|thing, if you would but come to the point— What is the plot—
Where are the conspirators, and what do they aim at?

Alex.

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

Gasp.

Oons! this is beyond all bearing!

(making a motion as tho' to his sword, and seems dis/appointed)

no sword—meet me to-morrow, Sir— meet me to-morrow!

Alex.

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

(Aside.)

Gasp.

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

(Flinging the ring from him.)

Alex.

My ring!

(taking it from the floor)

why, how came you—who gave you this ring? who gave it you?

Gasp.

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

Alex.

You had it from your nephew—eh?

Gasp.

Ye—y-e-s.

(Trembling.)

Alex.

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

Gasp.

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

Alex.

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

Gasp.

What do you imagine—do you con|ceive—oh, my dear, dear friend! But hold, you are in the plot—the ring is your's—you are in the plot!

(Ragefully.)

Alex.

Believe me Don Gasper—

Gasp.

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

(Going off stamping.)

Alex.

(going after him)

My dear Don Gasper, my friend, my worthy friend, I entreat—Zounds! he's gone! If it had not been for his choak-pear about Octavio, how I could laugh. Why, what the plague did that impertinent Don Julio take such a liberty with my ring for? how dared he haul me head and ears into his scheme, to laugh at his worthy uncle? But zooks it is a good laugh after all — ha, ha, ha—but if Gasper now, thro' spite, should prevent Octavio's marriage! What's to be done? hang me if I go to bed to night—I'll find out Octavio wherever he is, make him steal my daughter, conclude the marriage, and then I'll laugh with Julio, 'till my old sides crack.

Exit.

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

Enter Don Henry.

He knocks gently at the door.

Hen.

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

Rach.

(from the balcony)

Oh, are you come, Sir—I'll call my lady down.

Hen.

Oh haste! the minutes fly; I have secur'd a safe retreat—leave all behind, and bring Antonia only to my arms.

(A noise of people advancing)

Hah! what noise is that? and lights too! they come this way—surely 'tis Don Gasper's voice—I am breathless with my fears.

Gasp.

(without)

Put out your lights—extinguish your torches, and be silent.

Hen.

Ay, 'tis he—shall I plunge this sword into his bosom, or my own? oh, either way I'm lost!

(Don Gasper enters, and knocks loudly.)

Gasp.

Yes, yes, I'll be a match for his great grandsires, ring, trust me!

(Knocks again.)

Rachel.

(from the balcony)

We are just ready, Sir—have a moment's patience.

Gasp.

Just ready for what? Oh I am arrived in the very nick of some cursed scheme!
Keep your swords drawn.

(to his servants)

Come, I'll not give way to suspicions—she shall have fair play—appearances may deceive.

The door opens. Antonia enters.

Henry.

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

Ant.

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

Henry.

Oh heavens!

(half drawing his sword.)

Gasp.

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

Ant.

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

Gasp.

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

Ant.

(groping about)

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

Gasp.

H-a-h, are you thereabouts, madam?

(be|tween his teeth)

then I'm cozen'd.

Henry.

(aside)

To attempt to force her off would be in vain.

Ant.

Will you not speak? do you repent allready? before possession are you cold, and false?

Gasp.

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

Ant.

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

Gasp.

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

Ant.

Oh Henry! Henry!

(mournfully.)

Gasp.

(starting)

Who dost thou take me for— Henry? Oh thou perfidious wretch!

Ant.

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

Gasp.

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

Ant.

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

Gasp.

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

Ant.

Sir!—I was—why Sir—

Rachel.

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

Ant.

Yes, Sir, terrified to death.

Gasp.

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

(aside)

Come now let's in, and join our tender hearts in one.

Ant.

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

Gasp.

How!

Ant.

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

Gasp.

Oh its a rash vow—a most unjustifiable vow!

Rach.

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

Gasp.

What's that, minx?

Rach.

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

Gasp.

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

(all go in.)

Henry.

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

Exit.

SCENE changes to Don Alexis's Garden.

He enters, leading in Octavio.

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

Then I'm off. If she should find us to|gether, the perverse baggage would suspect our intelligence, and that would spoil all—so I'm off!

(lowering his voice.)

Exit.

Octav.

In a few hours, expect us at your feet asking pardon and blessing.

(A pause.)

Charming Viola, appear! I hear you not; yet by the soft influence about me, I am sure you are near. What delightful faculty is this, which allows us to be conscious of the presence of the object we adore, without the vulgar intervention of the senses?— It must be the privilege of purest love!

Seraph.

(entering.)

The privilege of fancy— all mere fancy; tho' you would exalt it into a faculty!

Octav.

Hah, my charmer!

(catching her in his arms)

faculties, and fancies, are now equally no|thing;—all lost in transport, at finding thee in my arms.

Seraph.

I protest I begin to believe you very dangerous. I insist on your quitting me this in|stant.

(breaking from him)

Heavens what a situa|tion! in the arms of a man—alone—in a garden, at two o'clock in the morning?

(Aside.)

Octav.

What dost think of, sweet angel?

Seraph.

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

Octav.

(Aside.)

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

Seraph.

Hold, Sir! or by all that's good—

(breaking from him)

I never knew till now what *resistance* meant.

(Aside.)

Octav.

By heavens I will not lose this charming moment!

Seraph.

Then you lose me for ever—make your election!

Octav.

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

Seraph.

How? by *disgracing* love?

Octav.

We'll argue that point hereafter; but now—

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

Who?

Seraph.

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

Octav.

To my ghostly father you mean—to a priest?

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

We shall find her in the next walk—oh, no, she is hast'ning hither.

(Enter Viola, veil'd.)

Come fair damsel, this is the valourous knight who is to conduct us thro' all the inter|vening dragons, and giants, to the quiet and sober pale of matrimony—where we shall grow good, and stupid:

(drawling)

and recollect the kind action of this night, with matronly thankfulness and decency.

Octav.

(Aside.)

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

Seraph.

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

Exeunt.

SCENE, Don Gasper's.

He enters.

Gasp.

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

(Dolefully.)

Enter a Servant.

Serv.

Don Octavio, and a lady, Sir.

Exit.

Octavio enters, leading Seraphina, veil'd.

Octav.

Permit me, Sir, to ask your protection for this lady for a few hours;—if you knew her, you would think she had a right to claim it.

Gasp.

To claim it—why, who is she?

Octav.

That I am forbid to tell—do you re|lease me from my promise, madam?

Seraph.

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

Gasp.

Not know the lady!

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

Found herself in your arms; and after|wards leapt the wall with you—that you may safely swear.

Octav.

Yet I know you not—ha, ha, ha, per|mit me

(apart)

—Perhaps you'll deny being her, whom I am to marry to day?

Seraph.

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

Octav.

We have more than his consent—his ardent wishes.

Seraph.

Yet I shall not be your's.

Octav.

Why, what a sweet enigmatical charmer you are!

Seraph.

(to Don Gasper)

If I mistake not, Sir, this house has a mistress—may I be permitted to wait on Donna Antonia?

Gasp.

Madam—ma—Octavio!

(Whispers.)

Octav.

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

Gasp.

Pardon me, madam! I will wait on you to Antonia's apartment.—I shan't care to leave them together tho'!

(Aside.)

Exit, leading Seraphina.

Octav.

What can she mean with her riddle-me|rees? I am perplex'd

(Sebastian enters with Viola.)

Hah Don Sebastian! What the weighty ceremony so lightly over? Madam, I wish you all the joys which belong to your new state. Dear Sebastian
(*taking him aside*)

tell me—how dost feel?

Sebas.

Feel!

Octav.

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

Sebas.

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

Octav.

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

Viola.

(*running to Sebastian.*)

Oh, I hear my father's voice—I would not have him see you at this instant.

(*Apart.*)

Pardon my freedom Don Octavio, but it will be infinitely kind if you'll both leave me.

Sebas.

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

Viola.

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

Octav.

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

Exeunt.

Alexis.

(without)

Octavio, and a lady veil'd?

(entering)

then all is right! Hah Viola! well, tell me, is it all over—are you married?

Viola.

Yes, Sir.

Alex.

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

Viola.

Oh, Sir, forgive what I have done!

Alex.

Forgive thee, my girl! ay that I will— here's my hand upon't.—Hah Don Gasper!

(he enters)

your most obedient very humble servant! How do you find yourself after your last night's whim, Sir?—My seal-ring is at your service, at any time, Don Gasper—ha, ha, ha,—two jokes at once—I shall laugh now, 'till I am a grand|father.

Gasp.

If you laugh till my Octavio makes you a grandfather, it will be a very long fit I pro|mise ye.

Alex.

Dye think so? I'll trust him!

Gasp.

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

Alex.

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

Gasp.

Your daughter—Pardon me, fair lady!

Alex.

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

Gasp.

Her husband—ha, ha, ha.

Alex.

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

Viola.

Alas, Sir! I have no right.

Alex.

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

(Enter Octavio.)

Octav.

Don Alexis—your pleasure?

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

I was.

Alex.

You was!

Octav.

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

Alex.

Love my daughter, and kneel to another!

Octav.

All mistake, Sir—another! I'll convince you that Viola alone

(going to the wing)

here she comes! the dear lively girl! who leapt a garden wall, to give a sober marriage the air of a romance.

Alex.

Oons! where am I? are not you my daughter?

(twitching off Viola's veil)

yes. Did you not leap the wall with him?

Viola.

Yes, Sir.

Alex.

And are you not married?

Viola.

I am indeed!

(curtseying.)

Alex.

And did you, Madam, leap a wall?

Seraph.

Yes, Sir.

Alex.

And are you married too?

Seraph.

I am, indeed!

(throws up her veil, and curtseys.)

Alex.

My wife—Oons—my wife!

Octav.

Amazement! his wife!

Gasp.

His wife leap the wall with my Octavio —ha, ha, ha. I'll add another five hundred mo|dores to your yearly allowance, for that my boy! Prithee, dear

Don, indulge your laugh; you were in a very fine vein a minute ago—ha, ha, ha— now laugh till you're a grandfather!

Seraph.

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

Octav.

You have used me ill, indeed! yet hang it, come, I am not married—I am not married however!

(aside)

Yes, Madam, I can forgive *you*; but how shall I forgive myself? I had you—oh, distraction! I had you alone—amidst the consci|ous shades of night—and in my power!

Seraph.

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

Alex.

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

Seraph.

Just so, my sweet Hubby!

Alex.

Oh!

Gasp.

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

Alex.

Ay, you have it all to nothing now. And you have the impudence to love my wife?

(to Octavio.)

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

Faith, I wish I could tell.

Seraph.

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

(Don Gasp. goes out.)

Octav.

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

Alex.

I don't know what I shall be yet;—both as husband and father, I have ingeniously contrived to bite myself most d—n—bly! As for you, Madam,

(to Viola)

bread and water, and a dark chamber, shall be your lot—

Sebas.

(entering)

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

Alex.

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

Viola.

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

Alex.

Yes, but I depended on your perverse|ness, hussey?

Gasp.

(Leading in Antonia)

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

Ant.

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

(Pointing to the opposite door.)

Don Henry.

(entering)

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

(To Gasp.)

Your nephew! why is this full moon? We are all going to run out of our wits.

Seraph.

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

Gasp.

Why Julio, what in the name of—

Henry.

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

Gasp.

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

Henry.

No, Sir, neither—restored to my country! Behold my pardon!

(Shews a paper.)

Gasp.

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

Henry.

No, Sir!

(throwing down a purse)

there is the gold you basely barter'd for the pardon you solicited. *My* pardon I obtain'd from the hands of majesty itself—from our gracious queen! Oh, when her kingdom's foes provoke correction from her subjects arms, then shall my sword again be drawn, nor ask forgiveness for its ardent duty!

Gasp.

Well, very well—but what has your pardon to do with my wife?

(putting her behind him)

What have you to do with Tony?

Henry.

She is *my* wife; made mine by contract, before you destin'd her the bliss of being your's. Pardon me then, my sweet Antonia!

(taking her from Gasper)

if I deprive you of his venerable charmer, and give you in his place a husband!

Alex.

Hum! hum!

(Sings.)

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

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

Seraph.

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

Alex.

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

Gasp.

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

Ant.

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

Alex.

Gad this looks like a sort of general amnesty—so let the frolick go round! But dare my faults hope forgiveness here?

(to the house)

Yes;—I am on this spot an old offender; and have so often gratefully experienced the candour of my judges, that I trust now to meet their pardon — and invoke the gracious sign!

FINIS.

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

Enter Don Henry.

He knocks gently at the door.

Hen.

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

Rach.

(from the balcony)

Oh, are you come, Sir—I'll call my lady down.

Hen.

Oh haste! the minutes fly; I have secur'd a safe retreat—leave all behind, and bring Antonia only to my arms.

(A noise of people advancing)

Hah! what noise is that? and lights too! they come this way—surely 'tis Don Gasper's voice—I am breathless with my fears.

Gasp.

(without)

Put out your lights—extinguish your torches, and be silent.

Hen.

Ay, 'tis he—shall I plunge this sword into his bosom, or my own? oh, either way I'm lost!

(Don Gasper enters, and knocks loudly.)

Gasp.

Yes, yes, I'll be a match for his great grandsires, ring, trust me!

(Knocks again.)

Rachel.

(from the balcony)

We are just ready, Sir—have a moment's patience.

Gasp.

Just ready for what? Oh I am arrived in the very nick of some cursed scheme!
Keep your swords drawn.

(to his servants)

Come, I'll not give way to suspicions—she shall have fair play—appearances may deceive.

The door opens. Antonia enters.

Henry.

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

Ant.

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

Henry.

Oh heavens!

(half drawing his sword.)

Gasp.

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

Ant.

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

Gasp.

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

Ant.

(groping about)

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

Gasp.

H-a-h, are you thereabouts, madam?

(be/tween his teeth)

then I'm cozen'd.

Henry.

(aside)

To attempt to force her off would be in vain.

Ant.

Will you not speak? do you repent al|ready? before possession are you cold, and false?

Gasp.

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

Ant.

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

Gasp.

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

Ant.

Oh Henry! Henry!

(mournfully.)

Gasp.

(starting)

Who dost thou take me for— Henry? Oh thou perfidious wretch!

Ant.

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

Gasp.

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

Ant.

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

Gasp.

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

Ant.

Sir!—I was—why Sir—

Rachel.

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

Ant.

Yes, Sir, terrified to death.

Gasp.

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

(aside)

Come now let's in, and join our tender hearts in one.

Ant.

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

Gasp.

How!

Ant.

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

Gasp.

Oh its a rash vow—a most unjustifiable vow!

Rach.

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

Gasp.

What's that, minx?

Rach.

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

Gasp.

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

(all go in.)

Henry.

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

Exit.

SCENE changes to Don Alexis's Garden.

He enters, leading in Octavio.

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

Then I'm off. If she should find us together, the perverse baggage would suspect our intelligence, and that would spoil all—so I'm off!

(lowering his voice.)

Exit.

Octav.

In a few hours, expect us at your feet asking pardon and blessing.

(A pause.)

Charming Viola, appear! I hear you not; yet by the soft influence about me, I am sure you are near. What delightful faculty is this, which allows us to be conscious of the presence of the object we adore, without the vulgar intervention of the senses?— It must be the privilege of purest love!

Seraph.

(entering.)

The privilege of fancy— all mere fancy; tho' you would exalt it into a faculty!

Octav.

Hah, my charmer!

(catching her in his arms)

faculties, and fancies, are now equally nothing;—all lost in transport, at finding thee in my arms.

Seraph.

I protest I begin to believe you very dangerous. I insist on your quitting me this instant.

(breaking from him)

Heavens what a situation! in the arms of a man—alone—in a garden, at two o'clock in the morning?

(Aside.)

Octav.

What dost think of, sweet angel?

Seraph.

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

Octav.

(Aside.)

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

Seraph.

Hold, Sir! or by all that's good—

(breaking from him)

I never knew till now what *resistance* meant.

(Aside.)

Octav.

By heavens I will not lose this charming moment!

Seraph.

Then you lose me for ever—make your election!

Octav.

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

Seraph.

How? by *disgracing* love?

Octav.

We'll argue that point hereafter; but now—

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

Who?

Seraph.

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

Octav.

To my ghostly father you mean—to a priest?

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

We shall find her in the next walk—oh, no, she is hast'ning hither.

(Enter Viola, veil'd.)

Come fair damsel, this is the valourous knight who is to conduct us thro' all the inter|vening dragons, and giants, to the quiet and sober pale of matrimony—where we shall grow good, and stupid:

(drawling)

and recollect the kind ac|tion of this night, with matronly thankfulness and decency.

Octav.

(Aside.)

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

Seraph.

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

Exeunt.

SCENE, Don Gasper's.

He enters.

Gasp.

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

(Dolefully.)

Enter a Servant.

Serv.

Don Octavio, and a lady, Sir.

Exit.

Octavio enters, leading Seraphina, veil'd.

Octav.

Permit me, Sir, to ask your protection for this lady for a few hours;—if you knew her, you would think she had a right to claim it.

Gasp.

To claim it—why, who is she?

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Gasp.

Not know the lady!

Seraph.

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

Octav.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

Yet I know you not—ha, ha, ha, permit me

(apart)

—Perhaps you'll deny being her, whom I am to marry to day?

Seraph.

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

Octav.

We have more than his consent—his ardent wishes.

Seraph.

Yet I shall not be your's.

Octav.

Why, what a sweet enigmatical charmer you are!

Seraph.

(to Don Gasper)

If I mistake not, Sir, this house has a mistress—may I be permitted to wait on Donna Antonia?

Gasp.

Madam—ma—Octavio!

(Whispers.)

Octav.

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

Gasp.

Pardon me, madam! I will wait on you to Antonia's apartment.—I shan't care to leave them together tho'!

(Aside.)

Exit, leading Seraphina.

Octav.

What can she mean with her riddle-me|rees? I am perplex'd

(Sebastian enters with Viola.)

Hah Don Sebastian! What the weighty ceremony so lightly over? Madam, I wish you all the joys which belong to your new state. Dear Sebastian

(taking him aside)

tell me—how dost feel?

Sebas.

Feel!

Octav.

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

Sebas.

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

Octav.

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

Viola.

(running to Sebastian.)

Oh, I hear my father's voice—I would not have him see you at this instant.

(Apart.)

Pardon my freedom Don Octavio, but it will be infinitely kind if you'll both leave me.

Sebas.

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

Viola.

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

Octav.

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

Exeunt.

Alexis.

(without)

Octavio, and a lady veil'd?

(entering)

then all is right! Hah Viola! well, tell me, is it all over—are you married?

Viola.

Yes, Sir.

Alex.

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

Viola.

Oh, Sir, forgive what I have done!

Alex.

Forgive thee, my girl! ay that I will— here's my hand upon't.—Hah Don Gasper!

(he enters)

your most obedient very humble servant! How do you find yourself after your last night's whim, Sir?—My seal-ring is at your service, at any time, Don Gasper—ha, ha, ha,—two jokes at once—I shall laugh now, 'till I am a grand|father.

Gasp.

If you laugh till my Octavio makes you a grandfather, it will be a very long fit I pro|mise ye.

Alex.

Dye think so? I'll trust him!

Gasp.

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

Alex.

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

Gasp.

Your daughter—Pardon me, fair lady!

Alex.

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

Gasp.

Her husband—ha, ha, ha.

Alex.

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

Viola.

Alas, Sir! I have no right.

Alex.

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

(Enter Octavio.)

Octav.

Don Alexis—your pleasure?

Alex.

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

I was.

Alex.

You was!

Octav.

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

Alex.

Love my daughter, and kneel to another!

Octav.

All mistake, Sir—another! I'll con|vince you that Viola alone

(going to the wing)

here she comes! the dear lively girl! who leapt a garden wall, to give a sober marriage the air of a romance.

Alex.

Oons! where am I? are not you my daughter?

(twitching off Viola's veil)

yes. Did you not leap the wall with him?

Viola.

Yes, Sir.

Alex.

And are you not married?

Viola.

I am indeed!

(curtseying.)

Alex.

And did you, Madam, leap a wall?

Seraph.

Yes, Sir.

Alex.

And are you married too?

Seraph.

I am, indeed!

(throws up her veil, and curtseys.)

Alex.

My wife—Oons—my wife!

Octav.

Amazement! his wife!

Gasp.

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

Seraph.

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

Octav.

You have used me ill, indeed! yet hang it, come, I am not married—I am not married however!

(aside)

Yes, Madam, I can forgive *you*; but how shall I forgive myself? I had you—oh, distraction! I had you alone—amidst the consci|ous shades of night—and in my power!

Seraph.

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

Alex.

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

Seraph.

Just so, my sweet Hubby!

Alex.

Oh!

Gasp.

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

Alex.

Ay, you have it all to nothing now. And you have the impudence to love my wife?

(to Octavio.)

Octav.

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

Alex.

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

Octav.

Faith, I wish I could tell.

Seraph.

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

(Don Gasp. goes out.)

Octav.

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

Alex.

I don't know what I shall be yet;—both as husband and father, I have ingeniously contrived to bite myself most d—n—bly! As for you, Madam,

(to Viola)

bread and water, and a dark chamber, shall be your lot—

Sebas.

(entering)

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

Alex.

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

Viola.

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

Alex.

Yes, but I depended on your perverse|ness, hussey?

Gasp.

(Leading in Antonia)

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

Ant.

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

(Pointing to the opposite door.)

Don Henry.

(entering)

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

Octav.

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

Alex.

(To Gasp.)

Your nephew! why is this full moon? We are all going to run out of our wits.

Seraph.

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

Gasp.

Why Julio, what in the name of—

Henry.

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

Gasp.

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

Henry.

No, Sir, neither—restored to my country! Behold my pardon!

(Shews a paper.)

Gasp.

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

Henry.

No, Sir!

(throwing down a purse)

there is the gold you basely barter'd for the pardon you solicited. *My* pardon I obtain'd from the hands of majesty itself—from our gracious queen! Oh, when her kingdom's foes provoke correction from her subjects arms, then shall my sword again be drawn, nor ask forgiveness for its ardent duty!

Gasp.

Well, very well—but what has your pardon to do with my wife?

(putting her behind him)

What have you to do with Tony?

Henry.

She is *my* wife; made mine by contract, before you destin'd her the bliss of being your's. Pardon me then, my sweet Antonia!

(taking her from Gasper)

if I deprive you of his venerable charmer, and give you in his place a husband!

Alex.

Hum! hum!

(Sings.)

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

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

Seraph.

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

Alex.

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

Gasp.

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

Ant.

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

Alex.

Gad this looks like a sort of general amnesty—so let the frolick go round! But dare my faults hope forgiveness here?

(to the house)

Yes;—I am on this spot an old offender; and have so often gratefully experienced the candour of my judges, that I trust now to meet their pardon — and invoke the gracious sign!

Freeeditorial 