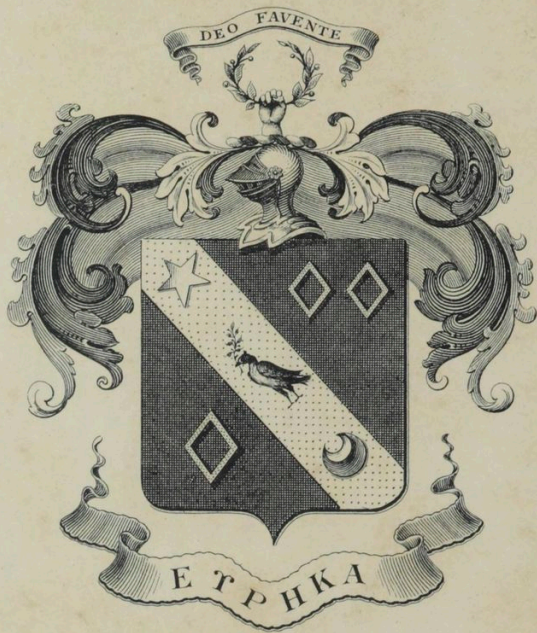


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David Scott Mitchell.

4.
THE

FASHIONABLE FRIENDS ;

A C O M E D Y,

IN FIVE ACTS:

AS PERFORMED BY

THEIR MAJESTIES SERVANTS

AT THE THEATRE ROYAL,

Drury-Lane,

M. Barry

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. RIDGWAY, YORK STREET, ST. JAMES'S
SQUARE,
1802.

[Price Two Shillings and Six Pence.]

THE

FASHIONABLE FRIENDS;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS:

AS PERFORMED BY

THEIR MAJESTIES SERVANTS

AT THE THEATRE ROYAL,

Drap Lane.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. RUDGWAY, YORK STREET, ST. JAMES'S

ROADE.

1800.

Printed by S. GOSNELL,
Little Queen Street, Holborn.

PROLOGUE.

Written by WILLIAM ROBERT SPRAGUE, Esq.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Comedy, found among the papers of the late EARL of ORFORD, and remaining unclaimed in the hands of his Executors for five years, was brought forward at the request of Mr. KEMBLE, on the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane: after the extraordinary abuse that has been lavished upon it, the Executors considered it as a duty to the unknown Author to publish it.

PROLOGUE.

Written by WILLIAM ROBERT SPENCER, *Esq.*

Spoken by Mr. C. KEMBLE.

HARD is the chase poor authors now pursue
In this *old* world, to hunt out something *new* !
Where can the modern poet turn to find
One undiscover'd treasure of the mind,
One drop untasted yet in Learning's spring,
Or one unwearied plume in Fancy's wing ?
Our grandfire bards, with prodigal expense,
Squander'd the funds of genius, wit, and sense ;
Annuitants of fame, they took no care
How ill their beggar'd successors might fare :
Each thought exhausted, all invention drain'd,
A selfish immortality they gain'd,
And left no spot in all Apollo's garden,
No farm in all Parnassus worth a farthing !
Some keen observers, on dame Nature's face,
The crow-foot marks of time and sickness trace ;
No wonder, then, if our poetic fires
Felt for her youthful bloom more genuine fires ;
Nature to *them* her virgin smiles display'd,
They woo'd a spotless, *we* a ruin'd maid !
For she was won, if chronicles speak truth,
By many a Grecian, many a Roman youth ;
But still the lovely libertine retain'd
Charms yet unview'd, and favours yet ungain'd,
For one immortal boy ! to *him* alone,
Her beauties and her failings *all* were shewn.

Heedless

Heedless of *time, or place, or mode, or fashion,*
Disorderly she own'd her glorious passion.
 What time all rules of critic prudery brav'd,
 In Avon's hallow'd stream her angel form she lav'd!
 Her fading graces *now* less transport move,
 We feel for Nature artificial love,
 Though, for her age, the dame looks passing well,
 Six thousand years hard living still must tell!
 E'en for the satirist few themes remain,
 Folly herself has long been in the wane,
 Folly, though here immortal still she dwells,
 In *Strulbrug* palsy shakes her rusted bells!
 Is Folly then so old?—Why, let me see,
 About what time of life may Folly be—
 Oh, she was born, by nicest calculation,
 One moment after woman's first creation!

This night our *unknown* author will produce
 Old subjects moderniz'd for present use;
 If you're displeas'd, be cautious how you shew it,
 Perhaps your nearest neighbour is the poet;
 But if you're pleas'd, and anxious to befriend us,
 Like FASHIONABLE FRIENDS, in crowds attend us!

Dramatis Personae.

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------|---|
| <i>Sir Valentine Vapour,</i> | - - | Mr. KING. |
| <i>Sir Dudley Dorimant,</i> | - - | Mr. C. KEMBLE. |
| <i>Mr. Lovell,</i> | - - - - | Mr. BARRYMORE. |
| <i>Doctor Syrop,</i> | - - - - | Mr. SUETT. |
| <i>Music Master,</i> | - - - - | Mr. MADDOCKS. |
| <i>Shopman,</i> | - - - - | Mr. EVANS. |
| <i>Lapierre,</i> | - - - - | Mr. WEWITZER. |
| <i>John,</i> | - - - - | Mr. CHIPPENDALE. |
| <i>Servants,</i> | - - - - | { Messrs. GIBBONS, FISHER, and WEBB. |
| | | |
| <i>Lady Selina Vapour,</i> | - - - | Miss DE CAMP. |
| <i>Mrs. Lovell,</i> | - - - | Mrs. YOUNG. |
| <i>Mrs. Racket,</i> | - - - | Miss POPE. |
| <i>Miss Racket,</i> | - - - | Mrs. JORDAN. |
| <i>Trimming,</i> | - - - | Mrs. HARLOWE. |
| <i>Lappet,</i> | - - - | Miss TIDSWELL. |

THE
FASHIONABLE FRIENDS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Drawing-room in Mr. Lovell's House.

JOHN and LAPPET.

John, *in the powdering Jacket of a Valet de Chambre, arranging the Room; Lappet traverses the Stage quickly.*

John.

MRS. Lappet, Mrs. Lappet, where the devil are you running so fast?—there's no such thing as getting a word with you.

Lap. To order the coach—Here's my Lady Selina Vapour's Swiss, Mr. Lapiere, *currier*, as they call him, just arrived—he says his mistress will be at the hotel in Pall Mall by this time—my lady is going there directly to meet her; and you know it is as much as my place is worth to make any delay—I have often waked my lady with notes from her at four o'clock in the morning, even when she lived in the next street.

John. Ay, and when I was my lady's footman I have often been waked at four o'clock to carry the answers; but my master's service is another guess sort of a thing;—he, thank God, has no bosom friends to whom
he

he writes every two hours—and my place is now, upon the whole, as much that of a single gentleman's as in any family in London.

Lap. More shame for ye both—if you had any *idear* of sentimental happiness and refined enjoyments, as my lady calls them, you would not lead the lives you do.—Always running down to Newmarket—generally in town when we are in the country, and in the country when we are in town.

John. As to that, we take no more liberty than we give you—you amuse yourselves as you please, go where you please, when you please—we are neither jealous nor inquisitive.

Lap. I don't know how my lady contrives to put up with such indifference—I am sure it so hurts my tender feelings, that, if I was she, I would be revenged one way or other, that's what I would.

John. Oh! you would, would ye? You are upon your high horse now that you have got back that lace-coated jackanapes Lapierre—I thought we were fairly rid of him a month ago.

Lap. Speak with more respect of your betters, Mr. John.

John. Betters indeed!

Lap. Mounseer Lapierre is a very pretty sort of a man, has travelled, understands the fine arts, and has a thousand delicate attentions for the fair *sect*, of which some people have no *idear*.

John. Fine arts! yes, he had the fine art of making you believe he was in love with you, and the delicate attention of coming every day about dinner-time to the steward's room, pretending to teach you *parlez vous*; and I fancy, thought himself well paid with a slice of good English roast beef.

Lap. He is far above such mean sensual considerations—society is what he seeks—he tells me he only travels for two or three years, to see the world, and acquire

quire taste, and then means to retire to his family estate.

John. Which I suppose is a powder-puff and a pair of curling-irons.

Lap. We all know why *you* speak so slightly of him, Mr. John; but, I tell you, he travels under a feigned name, for his father is a *Marqui*, and has a castle in his own country.

John. A castle! ay, a castle in the air—the sign of the Castle, I suppose, where his father, the *Marqui*, may be tapster, or boots.

Enter Mrs. Lovell, with a Note in her Hand.

Mrs. Lov. Have you ordered the carriage? give this note to Lapiere, and say I shall be at the hotel in a few minutes. [*Exeunt John and Lappet.*] What can have brought her thus suddenly to town, when but just settled in the country—suddenly too going abroad again? She talks of the duties of friendship tearing her away from her family, and again agitating her too susceptible heart—I cannot rest till I see her.

Enter Sir Dudley Dorimant.

Sir D. So soon breakfasted, Ma'am?—I thought minds like Mrs. Lovell's, unagitated by passion, and awake only to the soothing sentiments of friendship and duty, were apt to enjoy all that repose of which they so often rob others.

Mrs. Lov. If I rob others, like all ill-gotten possessions, it profits me nothing, for nobody enjoys so little of it as myself. But I have something to talk of more interesting than *my* repose—do you know our dear Selina is coming to town again?

Sir D. Coming to town again!

Mrs. Lov. That her servant is arrived, that she herself will be here in a quarter of an hour, and that I am

stying to the hotel to meet her?—Does no sympathy tell you that she is near, and don't you anticipate the charm of seeing her thus unexpectedly?

Sir D. Judge of my feelings by your own; for be assured nothing can so much interest *you*, without affecting me very nearly.

Mrs. Lov. I used to be more satisfied with your sentiments; I used to suppose you capable of the warmest attachment, and worthy of all the refined and delicate sentiments of our friend.

Sir D. Be assured I am more capable than ever of the warmest attachment, more open to all the refinements of sentiment, more——

Enter Mr. LovELL.

Mr. Lov. I beg pardon, Ma'am, for entering thus abruptly and thus early into your apartment; but I was going out to call upon the Knight here, when I found his curricule at the door, and was told he was with you.

Mrs. Lov. And I should have thought, Sir, that when you knew I was receiving other visitors, an apology from *you* was hardly necessary.

Mr. Lov. It is then generally that the visits of a husband require the most apology.

Mrs. Lov. Yours are so rare, that they are sure at least of the recommendation of novelty—but to shew you that my discretion is not less than yours, as your business is with Sir Dudley, I leave you—I might be an interruption. [Exit.

Remain Sir DUDLEY and Mr. LovELL.

Sir D. A more polite couple, it must be confessed, does not exist in the parish of St. George's.

Mr. Lov. Yes, I think we are now upon a perfectly good footing; we live each in our own apartments, a

la Françoise; and when she comes to my dinners, or I go to her assemblies, we are asked with almost as much form as any of the other guests.

Sir D. This is the true plan to keep up a good understanding between man and wife, and neither to be cloyed with the sweets, nor tired with the enjoyment of a matrimonial life.

Mr. Lov. I cannot say I have experienced *that* good effect from it; for, by Heaven, I am as tired of the life I lead as if we had been passing the last twelve months like Sir Charles and Lady Constant, airing out every morning in the same carriage, and sitting in the same box at the opera every night.

Sir D. The world, however, gives you credit for a gayer life. Your attentions to Lady Selina Vapour, before she left town, began to be remarked, and to do you credit—for a man might almost as well live *bourgeoisement* with his own wife, as not be known to have a fashionable arrangement with some other woman.

Mr. Lov. Certainly: but with these women of fashion to *afficher* a passion one has *not*, is almost as difficult as to conceal a passion one *has*.

Sir D. Not at all—the world is very indulgent, and soon satisfied upon this score—if a man contrives to return with a fashionable woman from her ride in a morning, lounges into her box at the opera, talks to her in the door-way of any assembly where they may happen to meet, he must be in devilish ill luck indeed if in a month's time they are not always invited to the same places, and, before the end of the winter, their names coupled together in a newspaper, by the help of some *kind* friend to one of the parties; and, believe me, some of the most fashionable intrigues of this town are carried on without a greater expense either of time or passion.

Mr. Lov. I fancy all Lady Selina's admirers must content themselves with this *economical* arrangement of

both; for she is so hemmed in on every side with sentiment, delicacy, refinement, and all the farrago of female defence, that one might as well attempt any thing more serious with one's grandmother.

Sir D. Will you *never* know more of women, than if you had only seen them gliding round Ranelagh? Still talking of impossible attempts—Has not even marriage cured you of respect for the sex?—Incorrigible Lovell!

Mr. Lov. Marriage has cured me of nothing but respect for my own wife, and I should be confoundedly sorry to buy off that of any other individual of the sex, at the same price.

Sir D. Luckily, you may have it at a much cheaper rate—only give any of them an opportunity to shew you how little they respect themselves, and the devil's in it, if you continue to respect them.

Lov. Ay, but these women of sentiment, of superior feelings——

Sir D. Only tell you, in as plain terms as decency will permit, that their desires are more troublesome, and their passions less under their control, than the rest of their sex—if you won't profit by the information, *tant pis pour vous*—they won't thank you for your self-denial.

Mr. Lov. These opinions will at least preserve you from the ennui of matrimony yourself.

Sir D. So far from it, that I trust I am at this instant in a fair way of becoming a husband; and so impatient am I for the title, and all the privileges and immunities thereunto annexed, that if I find any further obstacles thrown in the way of my happiness, I think I shall prevail on my belle to treat the town with an elopement.

Mr. Lov. And who, for heaven's sake, is the transcendant nymph whose beauty has wrought such a miracle on thy libertine heart?

Sir D. Beauty! even to my prejudiced eyes she has not the least pretensions to beauty.

Mr. Lov. What then, do you suppose that you have found the Phoenix, the individual she, that unites in herself all the virtues that you deny to other women?

Sir D. If I think her beauty less than that of other women, I assure you I don't think her virtue greater—no, not even my prepossession can deceive me there.

Mr. Lov. Heyday! are you going then to sacrifice yourself to some lovesick damsel, who finds nothing but marriage will satisfy her longing, and swears she cannot live without you?

Sir D. I am persuaded she is already as perfectly indifferent to me as if we had been married a twelve-month.

Mr. Lov. Then, why the devil can't you both imagine that you had? it would cure you of all further desire, I assure you.

Sir D. Marriage by no means presents itself to our eyes under the dismal form it seems to have assumed to yours—to me it appears the means of prosecuting my pleasures at greater expense—to her, a more brilliant existence in society, an establishment, and all the liberties belonging to it. You drew the knot so tight, that it soon galled you—ours will be from the first a running noose, which we shall neither of us ever feel.

Mr. Lov. I am all impatience for the name of the fortunate damsel destined to such rare happiness.

Sir D. That fortunate damsel is no other than the accomplished Miss Racket, who, with a happy natural disposition, the help of her mother, a French governess, and a variety of the first masters, is as ignorant and as affected, with the seeds of as much mischief in her, as any *accomplished* young lady in London.

Mr. Lov. And what can have determined you upon acquiring the exclusive property of *accomplishments*, which you seem to appreciate so justly?

Sir D. Being determined upon acquiring the exclusive property of three thousand a year, and a considerable sum of ready money, both of which I appreciate no less
justly

justly than their possessor—but, alas! the very pains I took to win these longed-for charms, turn against myself, and are a dangerous obstacle in my way.

Mr. Lov. What, is the girl a coquette already?

Sir D. No—but the mother is so still. The attention that I paid her last summer at Weymouth, where we met, by way of securing the daughter, she placed all to her own account, and is now so confoundedly jealous, that she would rather give her daughter to the devil, than not punish me for my supposed passion for such a baby face, and neglect of her maturer charms.

Mr. Lov. So that you have fairly overshot your mark?

Sir D. Not so either, I hope; for the daughter, who is a fine forward girl, by the assistance of my hints begins to understand my situation with her mother; so that if she talks of interfering with any authority to prevent the girl making an imprudent marriage (which is the footing on which she chooses to ground her opposition), I think I shall have no difficulty in persuading the young lady, by one bold step, to free herself from all authority——

Mr. Lov. But your own.

Sir D. Yes; but I am by no means desirous of coming to these extremities—her guardian happens to be Sir Valentine Vapour, your uncle, whom, I think, with a little good management, I shall make as anxious to give me his ward as I can be to have her.

Mr. Lov. But, pray, how do you feel so certain of bringing Sir Valentine into your wishes? I thought that, in your short acquaintance with him at my house last year, the little interest that you took in all the various schemes, projects, and systems, that eternally occupy his head, had by no means advanced you in his good graces.

Sir D. Ay, but here *you* must help me, Lovell—you must describe me as an altered man, giving up all my time to plans of improvement, to canals, or mills,

or drains, or any other scheme that you may happen to discover reigns uppermost in his head.

Mr. Lov. And some one it is certain always does, and completely occupies it as ever woman did yours or mine. I have known him thus, by turns, have the four elements for mistresses—for a long time he was totally engrossed by the wonderful properties of air; it was the *pabulum vitæ*, the universal aliment, we none of us knew its powers and virtues; he would not have come near a great city for the world, it was poisoned for ten miles round; he actually proposed to Government a plan for purifying and ameliorating the atmosphere of London, to be done by a parish rate.

Sir D. Like the paving and lighting?

Mr. Lov. Ay; and he assured me he had composed a pure, rectified, and double-distilled spirit of air, which nobody but himself and two mice had ever had the luxury of breathing, and of which he thought he should make a fortune, by selling it at half a guinea a quart, to weak lungs, crazy constitutions, and fanciful women.

Sir D. Many a less efficacious nostrum has, I believe, enriched the proprietor.

Mr. Lov. Last year every thing was to be done by fire, and he spent the Lord knows what in steam-engines, which were to make ships sail, and carriages move, without either danger or trouble:—this violent passion for fire was suddenly quenched by a decided preference to water, as a general means of abridging all labour; and he had almost turned the lawn round his house into a morass, by the water he had collected for experiments.

Sir D. Well, remember to make me an adorer either of fire, water, or air, whichever happens to be the reigning divinity.

Mr. Lov. You may depend upon my good word; I shall see him this morning, and will do what I can for you; though, upon my soul, I shall regret being instrumental

strumental in shackling such an agreeable fellow as you with matrimony, and seeing you change and melt down into a good sort of *family man*.

Sir D. Brand me with that title, when you know one woman I have a mind to, that resists me, or one believing husband that escapes the fate he deserves.

[*Exit.*

Mr. Lov. (solus.) There's a fellow! to whom I seem to have been tacked all my life, merely to serve as his foil. At Eton I often made the exercise which got him the reputation of the better scholar, and in every dashing scrape, he so got in, and so got out, that he had always the honour, and I the thrashing—abroad, I never introduced him to a mistress with whom he did not contrive to be much better amused than ever I was myself, and now he is going to marry a girl he don't care a curse for, of whom he will never be half so tired as I am of a woman I thought I loved—and this very woman, whose company, I know not why, has ceased to charm me, he finds so very agreeable, that if I was disposed to be jealous—but, hang it, she don't rouse me to that.—What the devil is it that thus sets one man over the head of another?—I have a better estate than he, and a better constitution—I have spent more money, done more foolish things, kept more horses, and more women—if all this won't distinguish a man, give him some eclat, I don't know what will—and yet he shines a star of the first magnitude, while I am hardly noticed in the hemisphere of fashion.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Hotel in Pall Mall.

*Enter Lady SELINA VAPOUR, and Mrs. LOVELL, Arm
in Arm.*

Mrs. Lovell,

THE charm of seeing you thus unexpectedly—
Lady S. Can only be guessed by those who, formed to pass their lives together, have *suffered* separation for a long month!

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. When would you please to have your carriage, Ma'am?

Mrs. Lov. I cannot separate myself from you—tell me, when you will be ready to return home with me?—you must positively take up your abode with me, or I shall live at the hotel.

Lady S. (Aside.) Neither would exactly suit me.—I must not stir to-day; my nerves are in such a state as to require the most perfect quiet.—Laudanum and a sofa (you know) have long been the only props of my frail existence, and they hold a most unequal struggle with the extreme delicacy of my feelings.

Mrs. Lov. Shall I say twelve o'clock?

Lady S. I cannot bear to hear you name an hour for quitting me.—Make your carriage wait.

Mrs. Lov. Ay, desire the coachman to wait,

c

Ser.

Ser. (Aside.) —To wait in the rain from this time to midnight. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Lov. Now the first surprize of seeing you is over, I am all impatience to know what has brought you so unexpectedly to town, and what duties your letter mentions which must tear you away immediately from your friends, your children, and your country.

Lady S. The duties of friendship, my dear Louisa; no other power, you may be sure, could draw me from that retirement for which my too susceptible heart is only fit.

Mrs. Lov. You talked of it indeed in such raptures, that you know I intended to have joined you as soon as possible.—Where are the moonlight walks, and the strolls in mossy woods, that we were to have had together?

Lady S. All over for the present.—I last post received a letter from Naples, telling me that my friend the Dutchess of Castalaria had a dreadful *infreddatura*, a violent cold, that her confessor Padre Cacciascrupoli assures her she is in a very dangerous way, and that she is extremely desirous to see me. I did not hesitate a moment, took a hasty leave of my family, left my children to the care of their governess, and flew up here in my way to Naples.

Mrs. Lov. But, my dear creature, an't you afraid that your friend may be no more before you can possibly arrive?

Lady S. These are the cold dictates of reason, of which a friendship like mine knows nothing—so my father-in-law Sir Valentine said; and I was obliged to prevail upon him to let me set off by bringing him to town with me, upon some of his wild projects, I suppose.

Mrs. Lov. Would to Heaven I were thus at liberty to follow every dictate of my heart!—but the being to whom fate has united me, seems to have lost all
idea

idea of the attentions, of the duties of minds of a superior order. Would you believe it, he was out of all patience at my sending an express after you, with my picture, the night you left me?

Lady S. Abominable! when he knew that I had sent to the painter's for it every two hours of the day before I left town, and was in despair at going without it!

Mrs. Lov. But, in short, we are become such totally different beings—no sympathy in our ideas—no familiarity in our tastes—no attraction in our souls—

Lady S. And yet he loves you, surely?—*(Aside.)* I fear too well.

Mrs. Lov. He *did*, in his own gross way—he admired my person, liked my society, and wished to be always with me: this I soon convinced him must not be, and would make us both ridiculous among the people we lived with; but I could never get him to enter into my ideas on other subjects—and he is now grown so careless to me, that if it were not for opposing me in trifles, I should almost forget what we once were to one another, and might certainly enjoy a degree of freedom that I should hardly know what to do with.

Lady S. How many of our sex would envy such a situation!

Mrs. Lov. And yet, like most envied situations, the person placed in it would willingly exchange it.—Heigh ho!—that we should seldom meet in public, and never go out together, this is all as I could wish; but his neglect is now so marked, so known, so provoking:—even his friend, Sir Dudley Dorimant, is every day observing fresh instances of it.

Lady S. *(Aside.)*—Obliging creature!

Mrs. Lov. Though indeed he always endeavours to make the best of Lovell's conduct, and vows he would never mention it to me, but for the interest he takes in our happiness.—Sir Dudley is surely a man

of exquisite feeling; he is so open to the charm of friendship—enters so much into our ideas upon the subject—but this morning he was with me, and seemed quite affected at the idea of your return.

Lady S. (Aside.) That I dare say—his sentiments, indeed, are more refined than those of most of his sex; but they have none of them any idea of the delicacy, the disinterestedness of female friendship; and to friendship I have resolved to dedicate my future life.

Enter SERVANT announcing Sir DUDLEY DORIMANT.

Mrs. Lov. You come, Sir, just in time to plead the cause of your sex. Lady Selina here involves you all in one general charge of indifference, selfishness, and want of delicacy, which if your sentiments and conduct don't refute, I fear it is a lost cause, for I am more than half of her opinion.

Sir D. However little faith Lady Selina may herself have in the virtues of our sex, I hope she don't succeed in making proselytes:—freedom of opinion is allowed on all subjects in this land of liberty; but if she makes a profession of faith, she must be publicly refuted, and the danger of her doctrines exposed.

Lady S. How like a pedant he talks!—you have certainly got into bad company since I left town, and been living with the Blue Stockings.

Sir D. No, faith, there is no danger of that till I see them worn by younger and handsomer legs.

Mrs. Lov. For shame, Sir Dudley! is not your friend Mrs. Atall one of them? Don't I see you for ever at her parties?

Sir D. I am sorry, Madam, you have never discovered the only reason that ever leads me within her doors.

Lady S. What, is that the woman who argues all
her

her acquaintance out of their senses because Lord Spintext tells her she has a logical head?

Sir D. Yes; and who, while she is ruining her husband's fortune, proves to him by syllogisms, that she is the most economical wife in London.

Enter SERVANT ; gives a Note to Mrs. Lovell.

Ser. Ma'am, a note from Lady Wear'em; she begs to see you instantly in Upper Harley Street:—her servant has been twice at your house, and was ordered not to return till he had found you.

Mrs. Lov. Lord! how provoking! when I had intended spending the whole day with my dear Selina, this tiresome woman sending for me to the world's end!

Sir D. Can't you send an excuse?

Mrs. Lov. Impossible: she would declare me without common humanity, quarrel with me directly, and abuse me to all my particular friends as the most hard-hearted of human beings.

Lady S. But what can be this business that admits not of a moment's delay?

Mrs. Lov. Oh, Lord! only tedious complaints of the ill usage of her servants, the neglect of some friend, or the peevishness of her Lord—I dare swear.

Sir D. And how can you throw away your time, your affections, your pity, upon such a being, when all the real sufferings, of which yourself are cause, you see with indifference, and will not bestow a moment to relieve?

Mrs. Lov. I shall bestow as few moments as possible upon her; and it is ten to one, before I get to Harley Street, somebody else may have called, on whom she has already disemboved her griefs, and then she will no more wish to keep me, than I to stay. (*Going.*)

Lady S. Adieu! I shall languish for your return.

(*Embracing her.*)

Mrs.

Mrs. Lov. I know not how to tear myself away!—
Adieu, adieu! [Exit Mrs. Lovell.]

Manent Lady SELINA, and Sir DUDLEY.

(*They remain for some moments without speaking.*)

Lady S. I see how much your cold, calculating heart is discomposed at my return.

Sir D. Fye, fye!—you know the power you still have over me, and the steadiness of my sentiments.

Lady S. I know you steady to nothing but your own indulgence and interest;—their claims, indeed, are often determined by such caprice, and such trifles, that more rationally selfish people have sometimes thought you disinterested.

Sir D. You know the power you still have over me, however ill treated:—the soft remembrance of former joys still attaches me to you.—I am no shepherd, no Colin; but you know me to be a man of honour, and——

Lady S. I know you to be what passes for one in the world, because you have contrived never to quarrel with the friend you have betrayed, nor the woman you have dishonoured.

Sir D. And, faith, let me tell you, as the world goes, a very useful sort of honour,—à l'usage des deux sexes.

Lady S. And it is this *useful* sort of honour, I fancy, that teaches you to dread my return; to dread that the importunity of neglected passion, or the quick eyes of unwearied attachment, should disturb your system of honourable tranquillity, or derange some new connexion; but you have neither, be assured, to dread from me.—I knew, too well, the lover, not to avoid the husband, and your own inconstancy has long invited that indifference it has at last produced.

Sir D. For Heaven's sake! do more justice to your own charms, if not to my character. But I never knew you so sententious before. Do you think you are speaking to your sentimental friend Mrs. Lovell? By the bye, a very pretty woman, that same friend of yours.

Lady S. So, Sir, I have long perceived, you think——

Sir D. You know my adoration of beauty; I should consider myself as unworthy to have felt the power of your resistless charms, if I could behold, without emotion, a hardly less potent, perhaps less cruel divinity.

Lady S. That you will not find her: with all her sentiment, her husband's indifference to her, and the many temptations of this town, she is at present such a novice to every thing like passion, that she will start from it the instant it discovers itself.

Sir D. But while her desires are raised under the convenient name of sentiment, by a kind friend, and baulked by an indifferent husband, do you suppose it to be so very difficult to substitute passion for sentiment, and the character of a lover under the title of a friend?

Lady S. Such things, to be sure, have happened; but my friendship for her, my knowledge of all the sufferings to which she would be exposed, should make me the first person to warn her of her danger—to put her upon her guard:—her husband too, whose neglect and indifference she laments, seems to me a being that only wants forming to render him infinitely interesting.

Sir D. So, Madam, I have long perceived, you think——

Lady S. You know what a charm such natural characters have to me; they excite a regard, a pity, an affection, a sort of sentiment——

Sir

Sir D. (Aside.) How many different names for what she won't call by its own!

Lady S. Necessary to occupy a heart like mine.

Sir D. And necessary to occupy a heart like his, while he continues to think neglect of his wife as much a concomitant to the character of a man of the world, as I have taught him to think a fashionable arrangement with some other person—but should his wife persist in substituting nobody in his place, she may some day or other (in spite of the ceremony that has passed between them) become his mistress, which would certainly make them a much less *interesting* couple to you and to me.

Lady S. Oh, Lord! to be sure—a couple completely happy in each other are much too independent of the world to interest any body.

Sir D. Remember then, that, if his wife is your friend, I am his, and that my regard is as sincere, my friendship as disinterested, and my heart as much occupied as yours. (*Sir Dudley remains on the stage.*)

Enter SERVANT, announcing Doctor SYROP,

Lady S. Doctor, I have been in town these four hours, and dying to see you—I am arrived, with my nerves in such a state, that I positively cannot stir till you have wound me up.

Dr. Sy. No, to be sure, I hope not.—Half the fine women in London, after they have run themselves down, send to me to set them a-going again—well, let me see, what key must I use? laudanum?

Lady S. Lord! you know I take it every day.

Dr. Sy. Æther?

Lady S. Ah, filthy! one never gets rid of the smell.

Dr. S. Cordials?

Lady S. Shocking! would you betray me into dram-drinking, like Lady Reeler?

Dr. Sy. I protest, Madam, that your Ladyship's nerves are of so singularly fine a texture, that I have almost exhausted the whole materia medica upon them in vain.

Lady S. So all the physicians I have ever consulted have always said—my case baffles their art—I never could explain my feelings—always obliged to prescribe for myself. Heavens! what a misfortune to be constituted so perfectly unlike the rest of the world! Poor Rousseau! he perfectly understood my feelings.

Dr. Sy. Pray, Madam, was that Rousseau a physician, or an apothecary? he must have had prodigious practice in nervous cases, for I find almost all my patients have, one time or other, had dealings with him.

Lady S. He was the physician of the soul! the Esculapius of all feeling minds!

Dr. Sy. Ay, there again! Esculapius!—I dare say a mere quack in his time; knew nothing of nerves—and as for Doctor Rousseau, he seems to me, always to have left his patients much worse than he found them.

(Sir DUDLEY comes forward; SYROP bows very formally to him.)

Dr. Sy. Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

Sir D. Oh! we are among friends, Syrop—I admire your prudence, but you may acknowledge me here.

Dr. Sy. Absolutely necessary in my line of business, Sir Dudley, not to be the first to claim acquaintance—one never knows how matters may stand.

Sir D. A most estimable caution, which justifies all the confidence placed in you. We all know how highly you are in favour with the ladies.

Dr. Sy. Oh, Lord! Sir Dudley, you banter me—they are, indeed, vastly good to me; but it is only in the way of my profession that my poor abilities can be of any use to them, only in the way of my profession.

Sir D. I know no way in which you can serve them more effectually.

Dr. Sy. I do flatter myself, that I have been of great use in some extraordinary cases that have come under my care.

Sir D. I don't in the least doubt your abilities, believe me, Doctor.

Dr. Sy. Then I run great risks at times, great risks, to preserve family peace. Were it not for me, Lord and Lady Dovecott would never have been quoted as models of conjugal fidelity.

Sir D. Indeed!

Dr. Sy. And a certain young heir as much owes his title to me, as ever his ancestors did to the king.

Sir D. You see how deservedly he merits his great reputation (*to Lady Selina*);—but I must not forget to imitate his discretion, by not intruding myself longer.

[*Exit Sir Dudley.*]

Manent Lady SELINA and Doctor SYROP.

(*Lady SELINA coughs.*)

Dr. Sy. Does that cough mean that our lungs are afflicted?

Lady S. Oh! this climate is enough to affect any lungs—don't you think I should change it, Doctor?

Dr. Sy. Oh Lord! no, by no means, Ma'am—must not lose so good a patient, if I can help it—(*Aside.*) We shall do very well without that—let me see (*feels her pulse*); suppose we were to stay a few weeks longer in town, just during the spring, and then take the waters at Tunbridge, or bathe in the sea at Brighton, or go to Cheltenham, or——

Lady S. Nothing of this sort will do. In short, I feel that nothing can save me but returning to Naples; and I depend upon your declaring to my father-in-law, the absolute necessity of it.

Dr.

Dr. Sy. These sort of prescriptions are of a very peculiar nature, Ma'am, and——

Lady S. You need not doubt my putting a just value upon them.

Dr. Sy. Well, well, well, we must reconsider the case, and then I shall certainly make no scruple of giving a very decided opinion in favour of——. What is the situation you would choose?

Lady S. Naples. You must assure him my life depends upon it.

Dr. Sy. Upon going immediately? or some time hence?

Lady S. Um!——not immediately.

Dr. Sy. No, no, no, as soon as the weak state of your nerves will permit your moving with safety. What road do you mean to take?

Lady S. Must that be specified?

Dr. Sy. Certainly best——prevents all suspicion. When I sent Lady Duper away from her Lord, last year, to Spa, I specified almost every post; insisted upon her absolutely avoiding all inns facing the north-east, and mentioned the very street and house in which I wished her to lodge.

Lady S. And did it succeed?

Dr. Sy. In every respect; for she returned in perfect health, and produced a son and heir within the year. But I must be gone; am expected at three o'clock to a consultation upon the nerves of a Dryfalter's lady in the Borough——shall soon dispatch her with a trip to Margate, and some tincture of valerian.

Lady S. Don't let the hurry of your business prevent your seeing Sir Valentine.

Dr. Sy. See him certainly to-day——settle the matter as you would have it——am so used to these cases! In the mean time send you some composing draughts, something to quiet your nerves, support your spirits, and keep your mind quite easy.

[Exit Syrop.

Lady S. (sola.) This necessity of going abroad once established, keeps me at least as long as I please in London, and near Lovell at home. With any body more formed and more like other people than Lovell, my absence and return, and his regret, and pleasure, and importunity, and all that follows, would be understood. But, upon my life, with these delicately diffident people, one is obliged to speak most indelicately plain! for Lovell is really unlike any body one meets with now—a laudable desire to be talked of, and fashionable, and yet a thousand old prejudices hanging about him—too spirited not to be tired of his wife, and too silly not to have still a sort of prepossession; a remains of attachment for her, which, I fear, I shall continue to find in my way—Now to contrive to see him before she returns from her visit, or else I am pinned down to her society for the whole evening; and really, I feel my nerves quite unequal to *sentiment* to-day. [Exit.

A Room in Mrs. Racket's House.

Miss RACKET, with her Music Master: a Music Desk and a Harp before her: she plays a few Bars upon the Harp ill, as if the end of a piece of Music.

Miss Rac. I wish this harp had never come in fashion, for I hate the plague of it—twing, twang, twing, from morning till night, and never in tune—nasty thing! if it was not so becoming, I would never touch it.

Music M. It is, indeed, as you say, ver nasty ting, and ver becoming; but you have no patience. You have no learnt above five years yet.

Miss Rac. And don't know five tunes yet, though you told mamma you would make me play in six months as well as Madame Krumplehorn, you know you did—but come, you shall sing now, and I will accompany you.

Music M. Wid all my heart, ver improving.

Miss

Miss Rac. No. I will sing without any accompaniment at all.

Music M. By all means—vat you please—noting so good for de voice.

Miss Rac. (*Sings, without any accompaniment, part of a plaintive air.*) Lord! I hate these melancholy ditties: let us have something gay—Tol de rol de rol. (*She sings a lively air.*)

Enter TRIMMING.

Trim. Sir Dudley Dorimant, Miss. Shall I let your mamma know? or shew him in here?

Miss Rac. No, no; in here, to be sure. I can send him (*pointing to the Music Master*) away as usual. (*Puts her hand to her head, as if taken suddenly ill.*)—Lord! I have got such a sudden pain in my head, I could not play another note to-day for the world.

Music M. (*Taking up his hat and stick.*) Oh! no, to be sure, it would be ver bad for you.—Poor young lady! you are so subject to dese pains in your head! I come again to-morrow?

Trim. Ay, ay, you may come, if you please; we can always send you away again, as we do to-day.

Music M. Tant mieux, tant mieux, so much de better. [*Exeunt Music Master and Trimming.*]

Miss RACKET sola.

Now, to receive this lover of mine.—Lover, indeed! if it was not that mamma is angry at it, and jealous, it is no more like love—no distress, no fears, no quarrels, no letters!—Captain Sash, now, to my fancy, is fifty times a better lover—but then, for a husband, I think Sir Dudley would do very well, and so—every one in their way; but I won't be dawdled with much longer, I can tell him, like a beauty without a shilling:

ling : egad, I'll be as indifferent as he, and try what that will do.

Enter Sir DUDLEY DORIMANT.

Miss Rac. (*Hums a tune.*) So, I suppose, if it had not happened that mamma was denied, because she was busy with my guardian, you would have gone first to her, as usual.

Sir D. You know my only reasons for ever going to her at all.

Miss Rac. Oh ! but I can tell you I don't like this way of being made love to by proxy.

Sir D. Faith, I think now, that so many mothers make love to men for their daughters, it is but civil that we should sometimes return them the compliment.

Miss Rac. Ay, but when they make love for themselves, as they dispense with one ceremony, I think you might with the other. I would not give a pin for a lover I have not the credit of.

Sir D. Now-a-days every body begins first with having the credit of a husband.

Miss Rac. Then I will have a husband as soon as I can, that I may lose no time in getting a lover. I want somebody that will fit by one at an opera, and dance with one at a ball, and call for one's carriage, and hand one out, and——

Sir D. Lord, child ! how much you expect of a lover ! where could you get such antiquated ideas ? I trust you are less *exigeante* upon the subject of husbands, or, upon my soul ! violent as my passion is, I should be almost afraid to venture upon matrimony with you.

Miss Rac. I shall desire nothing more of my husband than other women of fashion have from theirs.

Sir D. That is being very moderate in your desires, I must confess.

Miss

Miss Rac. Oh! I intend to be completely fashionable in every thing.

Sir D. (*Aside.*) The devil you do? Nobody is certainly better qualified.

Miss Rac. Yes, if mamma would let one shew one's self, and not keep one always in the back ground.

Sir D. I am afraid her reasons for so doing will increase every day with your charms.

Miss R. So Captain Sash told me last night; but now I am of age, I won't bear being snubbed much longer, I can tell her; and kept still drudging with nonsensical masters, teaching me this, and that, and t'other, and a parcel of stuff.

Sir D. Barbarous! as if you were capable of improvement.

Miss Rac. Did not Doctor Botherem tell her six months ago, that I knew more than any of the Miss Pacers, who are reckoned wonders? and have not I got a medal for the second best drawing from the what-do-ye-call-it society? and can't I go over all the capitals in Europe, and the rivers on which they stand?—Lisbon on the Tagus, Madrid on the Manzanares, Rome on the——

Sir D. Can you suppose I want any thing to convince me of the superiority of your acquirements, and of your mamma's ill usage?

Miss Rac. I am sure nobody would have born it patiently as long as myself, and so every body tells me. Miss Forward, who had not above half my fortune, ran away long before she was of my age; and Captain Sash says nobody could blame me if I did the same.

Sir D. Certainly such conduct dissolves all natural ties; you must, therefore, resolve to free yourself at once from every restraint by making me happy.

Miss Rac. But how am I to be sure that making you happy will make me so?

Sir D. If my life and fortune at your disposal——

Miss

Miss Rac. As to your life, that will do me no good; and as to your fortune, perhaps I have a better of my own.

Sir D. Nay, you have the best security in the world—mutual interest will ensure mutual happiness. You are determined upon being a fashionable wife—I as certainly mean to be a fashionable husband;—our pursuits will be so much the same, that we shall go on like parallel lines in the same course, without ever coming in each other's way.

Miss Rac. I don't know what you call parallel lines, and the same way; but when I am married, I intend to be in every body's way.

Sir D. And so you shall, in the handsomest carriages in London.

Miss Rac. Shall I indeed? and then I must have a chair with tassels, to go swagging up and down St. James's Street, and two monstrous tall, handsome footmen to walk before it.

Sir D. Oh! by all means, a chair——

Miss Rac. And the handsome footmen?

Sir D. Um!—You are very particular in your demands.

Miss Rac. Lady Cormorant has three, every one six feet, without his shoes.

Sir D. The devil!

Miss Rac. And then I must have horses to ride in the Park, and a villa to give breakfasts in the spring, and——

Sir D. Oh! certainly, a villa and breakfasts.—
(*Aside.*) Egad, I must not let her go on thus making terms, or she will spend her whole fortune in idea, before I am sure of touching a farthing of it in reality.

Miss Rac. Then Captain Sash talked of my driving a phaeton and four. I should like that vastly, in the cold foggy mornings, wrapped up in a coat with fifteen capes, like Lady Dasher, splashing down Bond Street, and along Piccadilly, and in again at Grosvenor Gate

—ch,

—ch, ch, ch! upe! (*Making the noise of cheering horses.*) Oh! I must have a phaeton and four.

Sir D. (*Aside.*) Captain Sash, I find, has been beforehand with me, and, if I don't strike a bargain directly, may outbid me.—Do not thus particularize your wishes, but consent to be mine, and dispose of me as you please.

Miss Rac. Well! I think I must consent. I own I should like to be married before next birthday, for I have the idea of a white and silver petticoat, which Mademoiselle Pateline, the milliner, says will be divine. But then—

Sir D. Then what? Wherefore this hesitation? What are you thinking about?

Miss Rac. I am thinking *how* I am to be married; it must be in the most fashionable manner.

Sir D. *How* you are to be married! Faith, I fancy much as all your grandmothers have been since the days of Eve.

Miss Rac. Oh! but I should like vastly to be married in some new way, for I won't be packed off directly into the country, poking alone till every body but one's self forgets one is married at all—

Sir D. And only just to recover their memories on the subject when we begin to lose ours.

Miss Rac. Going down, now, to Richmond, or Shooter's Hill, or the Toy, with four horses, and silver favours, and white gloves, I should like very well,—but then it's so vulgar! and, besides, my cousin Kitty, from Cateaton Street, was married so, and I would not, for the world, be married like her.

Enter TRIMMING.

Trim. Miss, the mantua-maker's waiting to try on your dress for Lady Crowder's masquerade to-night.

[*Exit Trimming.*
Sir

Sir D. (Aside.) This masquerade suggests an idea—Egad, the young lady knows so much more of her own mind than I thought, that if I don't clinch the matter while she's in the humour, somebody else will.—Suppose now, instead of retiring into the country, or Richmond Hill, or any of the common, every day ways of being married, we were to elope from the masquerade to-night;—the method is not quite new, to be sure, but—

Miss Rac. Well, I swear now, that's a very good thought.—Ay; but then we shall lose the masquerade—thank you for nothing—one may be married every day in the year; but there an't above three or four masquerades in a whole season.

Sir D. Oh, Lord! we will lose nothing:—we can slip out, under favour of our masks; have done with the parson in a moment, return to the ball, and take all the rest at our leisure.

Miss Rac. Um!—I think this will be spoiling two good things.

Sir D. (Aside.)—Damn it, I shall never get her settled.—Recollect your mother's opposition, and how it will vex her to find us married without her consent, and how angry at her own disappointment!

Miss Rac. Well, I vow, that *will* be charming, and I dare say, mamma counted upon flirting with you at the masquerade herself.

Sir D. Let us lose no time then in concerting our measures:—I had better see your dress for fear of a mistake, and then I can avoid all suspicion by not going with you.

Miss Rac. Oh, Lord! ay, so you must, and the mantua-maker is luckily waiting with it:—step in here, and we can settle the whole scheme.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T III.

Mrs. Racket's Dressing Room.—Mrs. RACKET and Sir VALENTINE VAPOUR rise from a Table, and come forward.

Sir Valentine.

WELL, Madam, I protest it is admirable, that, in the midst of the life you lead, you should find so much time to bestow on your daughter's education.

Mrs. Rac. Dear Sir Valentine! I should be quite ashamed if I did not;—every body now bestows time on education—it is quite the fashion.

Sir V. I am sorry for that; for then, like other fashions, it won't last; however, the rising generation will be the better for it.—Miss Racket, I hope, Madam, answers all your expectations?

Mrs. Rac. All her masters declare it is impossible to make a greater progress;—for my part, I don't pretend to understand these things; but several of her drawings have been already engraved, and two sets of sonatas dedicated to her.

Sir V. Indeed!

Mrs. Rac. Then she has the Roman History at her fingers end;—tells you about Decembers and Trumvers, and all those sort of things, and has all Gray's Memoria Technica by heart.

Sir Val. I should be almost afraid that this great superiority of knowledge might draw upon her the jealousy of her less accomplished companions.

Mrs. Rac. Oh, dear! no, Sir; every body is accomplished now:—every body paints, and sings, and plays, and is ingenious.

Sir V. I wish their ingenuity may calculate them

for making better wives, and their accomplishments keep them more innocently employed. However, Madam, I think you will agree with me, that the sooner a young woman with the large property of my ward is settled in life to the satisfaction of her friends, the better.

Mrs. Rac. Certainly, Sir Valentine, and I am sure I have taken every pains that the anxious mind of a parent could suggest. She has been at all the watering-places in the summer;—in town, hardly ever misses a ball in the winter.

Sir V. Egad, now, in my days that would have been the way never to have got a husband at all:—we did not look for wives to dance with.

Mrs. Rac. I took her to Tunbridge as soon as ever I heard that Lord Lounger, the Marquis of Dawdle's only son, was there;—but as I found my Lady Mac Catchem and her daughter had got before me, I knew nothing was to be done there, and so went away directly to Weymouth, where Lord Gorget's militia was encamped.

Sir V. Ay, ye all like a red coat.

Mrs. Rac. And here I had great hopes of bringing about a match; but the foolish girl, forsooth, fancied herself attached to another person, and so took no pains to second my plan.

Sir V. Young people, you know, Mrs. Racket, will have their attachments—we have all had ours.—What, I suppose she saw all human perfections united in the person of some rakehelly younger brother, with more ells of muslin round his throat than shillings in his pocket.

Mrs. Rac. No, Sir; the person on whom she fixed her eyes was a man both of fortune and fashion, in the very first company, and universally admired.

Sir V. Indeed!

Mrs. Rac. A man for whom *any body* might own an attachment.

Sir V. Well, Madam, but——

Mrs. Rac. A man who took a lively interest in *my* daughter.

Sir V. Well, Madam, but where then was the mighty objection?—Why might not he have done as well as Lord Gorget?

Mrs. Rac. Because I tell you, though he took a lively interest in my daughter, I have good reason to believe he was seriously attached elsewhere.

Sir V. Indeed!—poor thing!—well, I hope she has got the better of this silly, hopeless passion.

Mrs. Rac. I am afraid not, Sir Valentine; on the contrary, to tell you the truth, I believe she still does every thing in her power to engage his affections, and I sometimes fear not without success; for Sir Dudley seems to me now to pay her a degree of attention, which gives *me* great uneasiness.

Sir V. Sir Dudley!—I don't wonder at your uneasiness, indeed, Ma'am.—Sir Dudley Dorimant!—what, is he the person?—As mere an idle, gambling, driving, careless coxcomb as ever lived. I met him at my nephew Lovell's last year, thinking of nobody but himself; perfectly indifferent to every thing that is going on about him.

Mrs. Rac. Your opinion of Sir Dudley is very different from that of the rest of the world.

Sir V. Because I know him, Ma'am;—he would be a pretty person truly, to take care of my ward's estate—knows no more of his own—boasted that he never had been there but once, when he came of age; owned that he was much out at elbows; has I know not how many acres of moor land, and would not take the trouble of trying my scheme of electrifying barren ground to make it fertile, though I offered to direct the whole operation myself.

Mrs. Rac. His time is too much taken up in the first circles of the capital, to think of any such schemes of rustic improvement.

Sir

Sir V. More fool he—in a little time he will have nothing left to improve, but himself—and for that he will probably have leisure in the King's Bench—but he shan't carry my ward there, if I can help it; nor her estate, with his own, to the hammer.

Mrs. Rac. Indeed, Sir Valentine, the very idea of such a marriage gives me all the uneasiness it can you.

Sir V. No, no, we must endeavour to find another husband for her as soon as possible—some clever, active man, who understands what he is about, and knows how to make the most of things. The estate lies so conveniently on the coast—such a fine opportunity for making experiments upon.

Mrs. Rac. Experiments! experiments! Lord, Sir Valentine, you shock me to death—one would suppose you were going to marry her to something outlandish, or monstrous, to the Irish giant, or the Polish dwarf, or——

Sir V. No, no; never fear, Madam, neither to dwarf, nor giant. But, godzooks! I must be gone: (*looking at his watch:*) it is now past two, and I appointed a person upon business to be with me before three—I am always busy; can't bear your people that idle away their time.

Mrs. Rac. Nor I, Sir Valentine.

Sir V. I hate to waste any thing; and, to tell you the truth, this person I am going to meet is no other than the proprietor of the violet soap, by whose means I hope to turn to good account the quantity of violets that it has hitherto always vexed me to see wasted under all the hedges in my neighbourhood.

Mrs. Rac. Few people make more use of their time than I do; all my acquaintance wonder how I contrive to do so much business; but then, to be sure, I am never at home an hour in the course of the day, except when dressing.

Sir V. Egad, then I should never contrive to do any business at all—but I am waited for. Farewell, Madam.

Mrs.

Mrs. Rac. The accounts, Sir Valentine, that my steward brought you—

Sir V. I will look over them at my first leisure moment; though, I confess, I have not your talent for business. But be upon the watch about Sir Dudley, Madam, and don't let him run away with the principal, while I am taking care of the interest.

Mrs. Rac. That I shall, I promise you, (*Exit Sir Valentine.*) for more reasons than you suppose, you old-fashioned quiz. Since her guardian too thinks it would be such an improper marriage for my daughter, the best, the most proper, cautious thing I can possibly do, is to put it out of her power, by marrying him immediately myself—and then, let what will happen, I shall always have the consolation of thinking I sacrificed myself for the good of my child. But, surely, I see him in the drawing-room (*looking towards the coulisse*) in close conference too with my maid—perhaps he is at this instant sounding her upon my subject—they seem very earnest—coming this way too—I won't interrupt the conversation, it may be a very critical moment. Suppose I was to step aside here, within hearing; and if it should be as I suspect, it will be a fine opening for me to come to a right understanding with him. [*Exit at a door at the back of the Stage, which she keeps a jar.*]

Sir DUDLEY and TRIMMING come on talking, as if from the next Room.

Sir D. And you are certain she will go to the masquerade?

Trim. Oh, certain, Sir; my Lady has never missed one for these many years.

Sir D. And you think you are sure of her dress—exactly the same as her daughter's?

Trim. Lord, Sir, after hearing of nothing else for this fortnight, I think I must know it at last—first they were

were to have been two fair Circaffians; then two Indian Princeffes, to fhew their diamonds; then the Queen and Princefs Royal of Otaheite—then Lady Loveit told my miftrefs that it looked as if one had nothing to do at a mafquerade, to go fo finely dressed; and then ſhe reſolved upon theſe hoods.

Sir D. Well, remember to pin on the diſtinguiſhing mark, the blue bow on the left ſide.

Trim. Do you ſuppoſe I was never employed in a mafquerade frolic before? Beſides, I conſider this as quite a good work; making amends for any other ſchemes in which I may ever have been concerned. What ſignifies ſhilly-ſhallying at her age? Sure ſhe is old enough to judge for herſelf in the choice of a huſband.

Mrs. Rac. (*Within the door.*) It is plain who they are talking of.

Sir D. And this will prevent all debating, and oppoſition, and awkwardneſs on the ſubject; and when it is over, every one will be pleaſed with it.

Trim. Ay, to be ſure, Sir; for we women, at bottom, all like a bold ſtroke for a wife.

Mrs. Rac. (*As before.*) A bold ſtroke! Heavens! What does he mean to perpetrate?

Sir D. Every thing will be prepared where I mean to carry her; and you will take care and be in the outer room, near the door, and follow us out as a witneſs.

Mrs. Rac. (*As before.*) A witneſs! Oh, I ſhall never ſupport a witneſs.

Trim. Never fear me, Sir; when one can't be principal upon theſe occaſions, I like nothing better, for my part, than being a witneſs.

Mrs. Rac. (*As before.*) Oh! the audacious huſſey.

[*Bell rings hard in the next room.*]

Trim. Well, well, I'm coming, I'm coming—I vow I believe ſhe's jealous even of me.

Sir D. All the preliminaries of our treaty are now, I think,

think, settled: nothing remains but securing the subsidies, and interchanging presents; for the first, you must trust to my honour—for the second, we will sign and seal on the spot, if you please. (*Gives her a present, and kisses her. Bell rings again.*)—And now away with you, and be sure to keep your mistress in her present good dispositions.

Trim. I am sure, Sir, if her dispositions are any thing like mine, they can't be better.—(*Bell rings again violently.*) Coming, coming, I tell you—Lord, you don't give one time either to do your business, or my own. [*Exit.*]

Sir D. (Solus.) Who the devil would suppose that I should ever be caught cajoling a chambermaid, and planning an elopement?—I, who have no more belief in the necessity of adventures in modern gallantry than in those of Amadis de Gaul, or the Knights of the Round Table—I, who have always found the willing fair laugh romance out of countenance, and abridge all novels, from the first pages to the catastrophe. 'Tis true, my pursuit is now a wife, not a mistress, and in all situations their treatment should be very different; for, as I think, I should have been heartily sorry to have made any of my mistresses my wife; so I have now prudently determined on a wife, who will certainly never be my mistress.

(*Sir Dudley turns a little, and sees Mrs. Racket at the bottom of the Stage.*)

Sir D. Watched, by Jupiter!—I must put a grave face upon the matter. (*Walks about pensively, as if he had not seen her—she advances slowly.*)

Mrs. Rac. Sir Dudley, you seem in so deep a reverie——

Sir D. That nobody, but yourself, could have agreeably interrupted it.

Mrs. Rac. Indeed!

Sir D. Yes, for your society procures me in reality what I was only enjoying in imagination—I have been waiting this hour for you, while you, I find, have been

been closeted with Sir Valentine Vapour. You must have a great deal of business with Sir Valentine Vapour.

Mrs. Rac. (Aside.) Jealous, I vow and protest.

Sir D. I, perhaps, had business too.

Mrs. Rac. I am sure, Sir Dudley, any business of yours; if I had any guess——

Sir D. I was going to propose—I was going to ask you——

Mrs. Rac. (Aside.) He is certainly going to propose himself.

Sir D. If you don't mean to go to the masquerade to-night?

Mrs. Rac. Certainly, Sir Dudley, I *did* mean it—that is to say, I do—that is to say, if——

Sir D. If? if what?—for heaven's sake, let no *if* destroy my hopes.

Mrs. Rac. Your hopes? of what, Sir Dudley?

Sir D. Of meeting you there, Ma'am.

Mrs. Rac. Oh Lord, I shall be so muffled up—so concealed.

Sir D. No concealment can secure you from my penetration.

Mrs. Rac. We shall see that.

Sir D. I hope so.

[*Going.*

Mrs. Rac. Beware of a mistake; there will be many like me.

Sir D. None to my eyes—be only there, and leave the rest to me.

[*Exit.*

Mrs. Rac. (Sola.) Leave the rest to him!—as clear as daylight what he means. Lord! if he had not put one into such a flutter and such a hurry, I should have convinced him that this elopement business was quite unnecessary. Well, but perhaps, as he said, it may prevent all opposition and awkwardness on the subject—and now let me see, shall I sound Trimming? She must know the whole plot—but what if she won't confess?—and what if she will?—then I should be obliged to take some odious measures against it, and expose myself

self

self to scandal. No, I think, upon the whole, I had better take no notice of what I have heard, but patiently wait the event, and be prepared for the worst.—But then, to leave my daughter without a chaperon at the masquerade, would be shocking—I vow I never thought of that—I'll go out immediately, and get somebody to go with us—there can be no fear of a mistake—I shall not forget the blue bow. [Exit.]

Scene changes to Lady Selina's Apartment in the Hotel.

On one side of the Stage a Table covered with Letters, Papers, and Books; on the other, a Toilet Table.

Lady SELINA, and Mr. LOVELL.

Mr. Lov. Going abroad again? Heavens! you don't say so?

Lady S. Nothing so true. This cold foggy country is as ill suited to the tenderness of my feelings as to the delicacy of my constitution—what should I do here?

Mr. Lov. Stay, and be adored.

Lady S. Adored, by whom?—The men never speak to a woman till they are what they call *in love* with her, and then they weary her to death with such a clumsy, downright, surfeiting passion!

Mr. Lov. If its violence offends you, impute it to your own charms.

Lady S. Incapable of that tender, sentimental, sympathetic affection, those delicate attentions so necessary to my feelings.

Mr. Lov. Where you shall have smiled favourably, can you fail inspiring every sentiment you wish?

Lady S. (Looking tenderly at Lovell.) Could I suppose this indeed, I should be in less haste to fly my country, and avoid those whom I feel at once the most dangerous and most mortifying society to me.

Mr. Lov. You cannot doubt it; and if you do, let

me be destined to the happiness of undeceiving you—from me you shall experience every thing that the most ardent passion, the most sympathetic affection, the most tender feelings can dictate.—(*Aside.*) The devil's in it if this won't do.

Lady S. Oh, heavens! am I then born to destroy the happiness of every thing that I hold most dear—always doomed to inspire these fatal, unfortunate passions—to feel for and participate in torments which—I cannot relieve?

Mr. Lov. (*Aside.*) What the devil is she at now?—Not relieve? Pshaw! don't let us lose moments in talking, that we can employ so much better.

Lady S. Impossible!—I lament, I pity, I enter into your passion—I wish you to become my friend.

Mr. Lov. So I will as soon as you have proved that you put a proper degree of confidence in me—and the sooner this necessary preliminary to our friendship is settled, the better.

Lady S. But what security have I for the duration of your sentiments?—are you not already happy in the possession of a female friend, for whom I supposed your attachment such as to make all others indifferent to you?

Mr. Lov. What, the girl I have at Paddington?—Did not care a pin for her the week after I took her—only just keep a house for her, and give her a drive in my curriole now and then, out of common decency.

Lady S. Hah! and are these the sentiments to which you would have me trust?—when you own your infidelity to your wife, to my amiable friend—for whom I thought your attachment likely to supersede all others?

Mr. Lov. My attachment to my wife! ha! ha! ha!—I don't know who the devil it is that gives you such a bad opinion of me.

Lady S. I thought you one of those happy mortals not subject to the eccentricities of impassioned souls, but reasonably, calmly attached to her.

Mr.

Mr. Lov. It is a dead calm then, in which all pleasure foundered long ago—the only good turn she ever did me was introducing me to you; and as she is your friend, you know, it would be very ill bred not to allow me to profit by the acquaintance.

Lady S. What is it you require of me?—I feel there is nothing of which my soul is not capable for my friend's husband.

Mr. Lov. (*Aside.*) Now confound her for giving me that title just now; it has deranged all I had ready to say—Require of you?

Enter LAPIERRE.

La. Ma'am, Mrs. Racket has called three times this morning to inquire after you.

Lady S. Did not you say I was out?

La. I thought your Ladyship had given orders to be ill.

Lady S. Well, did not you say I was confined?

La. Yes, my Lady, to your bed; but she says she will call again in five minutes, and begs to come up and sit by you.

Lady S. Lord, one must be dead to get rid of this woman—how tiresome!—Well, I believe, as she knows I am at home, I must see her for a moment. [*Exit La.*]

Mr. Lov. How can you bear that vulgar talking woman?

Lady S. I don't know, she is such a good-natured creature!

Mr. Lov. The arrantest gossip in London.

Lady S. Her conversation is, to be sure, sometimes overpowering to nerves like mine—but then, she is such a good-natured creature! knows every body.

Mr. Lov. Does as much mischief with her tongue as Lady Catharine Caustic.

Lady S. She does, to be sure, sometimes come out with things unluckily, but she don't mean it—she is such

such a good-natured creature! always ready to do any thing one wants her.

Mr. Lov. An arrant Mrs. Commode to half her acquaintance.

Lady S. Never has a will of her own!

Mr. Lov. The veriest Toady.

Lady S. So pleased with one's notice!

Mr. Lov. So would the grocer's wife at the corner, and be just as good company—Confounded interruption!

Lady S. Tell me when I shall see you again—I am so impatient for your confidence—I feel that it will be mutual—my soul longs to open itself to you, for I see there is that invincible sympathy between us—that attraction of character—to-morrow morning perhaps.

Mr. Lov. To-morrow morning!—this evening—as soon as she is gone—to-morrow morning! an age!

Lady S. This evening.—(*Aside.*) The tête-à-tête will still be in the family.—Well, I have so much to say to you, for I feel that my confidence will be unbounded.

Mr. Lov. This evening then, my adorable.—(*Aside.*) Egad, I believe if this damned woman would keep away for half an hour, I might be saved the trouble of returning in the evening.

Lady S. My situation is so cruel!—nobody enters into my character.—

Enter SERVANT, announcing Mrs. Racket.

(*To Lovel aside, as he bows and goes out.*) This evening then.

Lady SELINA, and Mrs. RACKET.

Mrs. Rac. My dear Lady Selina, the moment I heard you were in town, and ill, I put off all my morning engagements to come and sit with you, refused going to Kenfington Gardens with Lady Sarah Saunter, and have been twice already at your door.

Lady

Lady S. You are too good to your friends.

Mrs. Rac. Oh, it is amazing how much of my time I dedicate to friendship.—During the influenza I sat with sixteen particular friends every day, besides being electrified three times a week with Lady Wishfort, and going through a course of animal magnetism with Mrs. Slyly.

Lady S. How have you time for all you do?—You must have the constitution of a horse.

Mrs. Rac. Oh, Lord! no: I am often terribly nervous, and obliged to drive about the whole day to get the better of it—just now I am in such a perturbation of spirits, that I would not be a moment alone for the whole world.—But I rejoice to see you so much better than I expected.—You will go to the masquerade to-night?

Lady S. Heavens! not for the world, in the state you see me! (*Coughs.*) Where is it?

Mrs. Rac. At Lady Crowder's—every body is to be there—they say she has given away three hundred tickets more than her house will hold—it will be the charmingest thing in the world.—You must positively go.

Lady S. Oh, impossible! I am ordered perfect quiet—besides, I have no dress.

Mrs. Rac. Oh, Lord! we can get one in a moment—my carriage is at the door, and I was just going to Tavistock Street, to bespeak a dress for Mrs. Dupely, who, you know, poor woman! ever since the affair with young Guetres, can never get to a masquerade without making it a secret from her husband.

Lady S. Poor woman!

Mrs. Rac. So she sent to beg I would meet Col. Conquest at the warehouse, and choose a dress.—I think we shall take a nun's, and send it home as flannel for the children's petticoats.—I shall be hurried to death; but, you know, one could not refuse doing any thing for a person in her cruel situation—so do let us be going.

Lady S. Impossible! Besides, I have a person coming to me in the evening upon business.

Mrs. Rac. Lord! you would not let business interfere—besides, I am sure business will do you more harm than the masquerade—business always makes me quite ill.

Lady S. (*Aside.*) Perhaps my business may be better settled at the masquerade than elsewhere.

Mrs. Rac. Come, you must positively go—Col. Conquest will have been waiting for me in Tavistock Street this half hour.

Lady S. Well, I feel so unwell, that I should not be able to do any thing at home; so, perhaps I may as well go for an hour—but I must write to my people of business.

Mrs. Rac. Certainly; there's paper, do write as fast as you can.

Lady S. (*Goes to a Table on one side of the Stage, and writes.*) You are making me do the strangest thing!—(*Aside.*) I must write both to the husband the wife; and first, for the husband.

Mrs. Rac. (*Aside.*) This is charming—her being of the party will give such eclat to the elopement—nobody is so much the fashion, so much abused, and liked, and talked of, as she is.—While you are writing I will just put a dust of powder into my hair at your glass here, for I see I shan't have a moment's time for dressing the whole day; and I shall be such a figure before night! (*Mrs. Racket settles her dress and practises airs before the glass.*)

Lady S. (*Reads in a low voice what she has written.*) “We were cruelly interrupted this morning. —To get rid of the impertinence of that queer creature Racket, after you left me, I was obliged to promise to go for a moment to Lady Crowder's masquerade this evening—perhaps we may be less liable to interruption in the crowd there, than in my noisy lodgings—As I conclude you will go in a domino,
“come

“ come and take your tea with me ; you can afterwards
 “ slip on your dress at the Hotel, and we may go to-
 “ gether.”—If Lovell don't understand this, he is in-
 corrigible.

Mrs. Rac. (*Still looking in the glass, and settling her dress.*) Come do make haste—I have fifty things to settle to-day, for I shall be so particularly occupied for some time to come——

Lady S. (*Aside.*) And now for the wife—I must lay it all upon my health, that prevents my being able to see her ; and Lord knows ! one of her long, quiet evenings, as she calls them, would make me ill at any time. (*Writes.*)

Mrs. Rac. (*Aside, and coming forward upon the Stage.*) It will make the charmingest paragraph, with stars and dashes, in the papers to-morrow morning.—I shall be quite the fashion for the whole winter,—I won't speak to one of my city acquaintances. (*Walks about, making stiff and distant curtesies.*) Lord ! you will never have done writing.—(*Aside.*) Let me see, how must I receive him when he first discovers his intentions ?—I must be shocked, and frightened, and agitated—Oh yes, agitated to such a degree, that I don't know what I do, nor what he does, nor—Oh ! I must be violently agitated.

Lady S. (*Reading.*) “ I am in despair at not being able
 “ to see you this evening—um—um—um—nerves so
 “ shaken—effects of our meeting—um—um—um—a
 “ book—*triste reverie* on my solitary couch—successful
 “ rival—only one you can ever dread in the heart of—
 “ um—um—um—.” Now I have done—Lapierre
 ——(*Rising from the table, and calling the Servant.*)

Mrs. Rac. Well, come, let's be gone—you will meet your servant on the stairs.

Lady S. (*Folding up the letters in a great hurry.*) Heavens ! how you hurry one's nerves ; you are positively more agitating than green tea at midnight—Lapierre—(*calling*)—I shall be an hour now in getting my
 orders

orders drummed into his Swiss head—Lapierre—
(calling.)

Enter LAPIERRE.

La. Oui, Madame.

Lady S. You must carry these two notes.

La. Oui, Madame.

Lady S. To Mrs. Lovell's.

La. Oui, Madame, à l'ordinaire—as usual.

Lady S. No, not as usual.

La. Non, Madame.

Lady S. You must ask for her maid.

La. Mademoiselle Lappet—it is always de first ting
I do.

Lady S. Ay, but you must remember now to ask
first for Mr. Lovell's man.

La. Monsieur Jean—ah! c'est autre chose.

Lady S. And give him this note. (*Directs one of the
Notes, both of which she had before folded up.*) This to be
delivered immediately.

La. Delivered à Madame.

Lady S. No, à Monsieur.

La. Oh! c'est autre chose.

Lady S. And then give this (*directs the other Note*)
to Lappet.

La. Pour Monsieur aussi.

Lady S. No, pour Madame.

La. Ah! c'est autre chose.

Mrs. Rac. Well, but do let us be gone, for I shall
have no time for any thing.

Lady S. (*Going, speaks to Lapierre.*) Go directly
with the notes, and make no mistake be sure.—(*To
Mrs. Racket.*) Il est si bête! he is so stupid!

[*Exeunt Lady Selina and Mrs. Racket.*

La. (*Solus.*) Not so stupid, not so stupid—for allow-
ing his masters and mistresses to tink themselves so much
cleverer dan himself. [Exit.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Sir Valentine Vapour's Lodgings.

Enter Sir VALENTINE, with a Number of Bills and Papers in his Hand.

Sir Valentine.

WHY, what the devil! here's the income of many a moderate fortune gone in the education of one girl. (*Looking over the accounts.*) To Mr. Parallel, the drawing-master, five guineas entrance: to three sets of prints, picturesque views on the Brentford road—picturesque views on the Brentford road! nine guineas: papers, colours, brushes, preparing drawings, mounting drawings, finishing drawings—why this man seems to have been paid for doing himself what he was employed to teach her. To Signior Celestini, ten guineas entrance: to six sets of sonatas, dedicated to Miss Racket: subscription to his concert: box at his benefit.—Egad, their bills have as many items as a coachmaker's.—To Monsieur Soubrefaut, the dancing-master, attendance during seven winters;—here's one who is above coming to particulars, he deals wholesale by the season. To Mr. Mac Caper, for Scotch steps—Zounds! if this is what they call education, half the private families in England could give their children no education at all. To the teacher and restorer of the art of filigrain;—what the devil of an art is that? I don't recollect a word of it in Chambers's

Dictionary. To philosophical lectures: painting upon velvet: instructions on the eidouranion. To——

Enter Doctor SYROP.

Dr. Sy. Sir, your most humble servant. Sir Valentine Vapour, I presume——

Sir V. At your service, Sir.

Dr. Sy. I come, Sir Valentine, to wait upon you about a business that——

Sir V. Oh, Lord! ay, Sir, you are the very person I was waiting for.—(*Aside.*) This must be the proprietor of the violet soap.—You received my note, then?

Dr. Sy. No, Sir; Lady Selina desired me to call upon you——

Sir V. Lady Selina, my daughter-in-law? What, I suppose, then, she makes use of——

Dr. Sy. Of nothing but what I recommend to her, and, I flatter myself, with much success.

Sir V. She finds it answer then? and puffs you, I hope, to every body?

Dr. Sy. Thank Heaven! Sir Valentine, my character is so well established in the first circles, that I have no need of puffing from any body.

Sir V. Come, come, you must not despise puffing, however—puffing is of use in every thing: many an ordinary woman has been puffed into a beauty, and many a dull fellow into a wit. Besides, you must not confine yourself to the highest circles; money is only to be got from the community at large—you must endeavour to acquire a general reputation.

Dr. Sy. Oh dear! Sir Valentine, that may do very well for country practitioners—people who have nothing but mere common business to depend upon; but when one has the honour to be received into the confidence of the great, and to have got upon the footing
I have,

I have, one is very careless about general reputation, believe me, Sir.

Sir V. What! is your business become already so lucrative as to make you independent? Well, Sir, however, as I think I shall be able to furnish you with the means of considerably enlarging it, I should be glad to know beforehand, about how much you may now make in a season?

Dr. Sy. Really, Sir, that is a very home question; and my line of business depends so much upon contingencies, that really, Sir——

Sir V. What! you are afraid, that, having owned yourself able to pay, I should make harder terms with you?

Dr. Sy. Terms with me, Sir, for enlarging my business? Oh! Sir, if that is what you mean, though I might just at my first setting out touch one or two people to recommend me to Lady Fanciful, and a few nervous people of quality, I am quite above all that sort of thing, now—quite above it.

Sir V. (*Aside.*) A curious fellow this for a dealer in soap.—Well, well, I am not going to exact any thing for good will.

Dr. Sy. Good will! Sir, I beg leave to inform you, that I have not only the good will of all that employ me, but that I consider many of them as much obliged to me as I to them.

Sir V. And who the devil then do you think will employ you? Egad, I am very glad I had a little talk with you before we proceeded to business.—I find I can have no dealings with you.

Dr. Sy. Dealings with me, Sir Valentine!

Sir V. You will end like many flashy fellows that I have known about London, with a nostrum in their pockets, who, upon the strength of their own impudence, and the folly of others, get on for a little with a degree of success, which luckily, by turning their heads, unmasks them, and undeceives the world.

Dr.

Dr. Sy. A nostrum in their pockets!—Dam'me, Sir, do you take me for an apothecary?

Sir V. No, but for a dealer in as great, though perhaps more harmless, trash——

Dr. Sy. Trash! Sir Valentine?

Sir V. Yes, trash. But, however, as I find I can have nothing to do with you, and you see me busy here with papers, I must beg you will not intrude upon my time any longer——

Dr. Sy. Intrude upon your time!—I believe my time is as precious as most people's—a guinea for every half hour I can spare to Lady Dawdle, and thank me too!—I must be at Brompton, now, by six, with Mrs. Hecic, and back by a quarter after, to see Lady Soffly's child put to sleep.—So, Sir, as soon as ever I have executed my commission——

Sir V. Commission, Sir! I tell you I have no commission for you.

Dr. Sy. But, Sir, I come from Lady Selina, to——

Sir V. Lady Selina knows nothing about business—would be taken in by any impostor.

Dr. Sy. But, Sir, she is actually in a situation——

Sir V. What the devil has her situation to do with your business?

Dr. Sy. A situation that immediately requires——

Sir V. Not violet soap, Sir; so begone, and let me never see you more.

Enter Mr. Lovell.

Mr. Lov. Heyday, uncle! wherefore in such a passion with poor Syrop? He has generally the art of mollifying those he has to do with.

Sir V. His soap may; but as for himself——

Mr. Lov. Soap! What, have you been giving him soap pills? treating him as if he had the jaundice?
(*To Syrop.*)

Sir

Sir V. Egad, he has been treating me as if I had not common sense.

Dr. Sy. And he me as if I had been an apothecary.—(*Aside, to Lovell.*) But by his persisting in not hearing me, and some odd phrases he dropped, I should really fear a material derangement—if I can be of any use, Mr. Lovell; have a charming house near the Gravel Pits, quite a paradise for people afflicted that way; would do any thing, you know, for your family.—Adieu, my dear Sir. Sir Valentine, your humble servant. [*Exit* SYROP.

Manent Sir VALENTINE, and Mr. LOVELL.

Sir V. How came you to know that fellow, nephew?

Mr. Lov. Know him! he is my wife's physician, attends your daughter-in-law, and is in high favour with all the fine ladies, for giving names to disorders that have none, and sometimes, I believe, by giving none to those that have.

Sir V. Egad, I'm very glad he is not the man I took him for; then I have some chance of not losing my violets. But who the devil would suppose that prig of a fellow, with a cropped head, a physician? In my day we should no more have thought of taking a physician without a wig, than a phial without a label.

Mr. Lov. But what procures us a sight of you in town, uncle? I thought you disliked London in spring more than a sportsman does in September.

Sir V. Business, nephew, business of various sorts—you know I am always at work for the good of mankind. And I have now a scheme, which, once put into execution, will rank me among the first benefactors, both to the world and my countrymen—instead of digging into the bowels of the earth for a clumsy aliment for fire, I propose to collect its essence,
in

in all its original purity, from the air, by bringing electricity from the cabinets of the curious to be applied to the common purposes of life.

Mr. Lov. The devil you do? But I am much afraid, uncle, this electrical scheme will shock the understandings of all less philosophical heads than your own.

Sir V. Ay, perhaps just at first, till my scheme is thoroughly known;—all great men meet with opposition. But every body will soon, instead of laying in coals for the winter, make a regular provision of charged phials of electricity——

Mr. Lov. What! every body have a fire-house as well as an ice-house belonging to them?

Sir V. To be sure; and be as anxious to fill the one in a thunder-storm as provident people are to fill the other during a frost.

Mr. Lov. But how is this to be applied in detail?

Sir V. How to be applied in detail? Oh! to the most minute purposes; the housemaid, for instance, in all regular families, should be charged in the morning, and light all the fires in the house with sparks from her knuckles and elbows, instead of sticks and tallow candles.

Mr. Lov. (*Aside.*) I must not forget my promise to Dorimant;—now if he knows any thing of electricity, his fortune is made.—Have you ever heard of my friend Sir Dudley Dorimant's experiments upon this subject?

Sir V. His experiments, a jackanapes! he refused to try mine upon his lean acres, when I had time to make them; but now I shall act upon a much larger scale.

Mr. Lov. His ideas upon conductors, I am told, are quite new.

Sir V. Indeed! Well, I will have some talk with him.

Mr. Lov. It is just what he wishes.

Sir V. Something to be got from every fool.—
Make a memorandum to speak to him. (*Takes out
his pocket-book, and writes.*)

Enter SERVANT: gives Mr. Lovell a Note, and exit.

Mr. Lov. Will you permit me?—a letter upon business.—(*Reads.*) “I am in despair at not being able to
“ see you this evening, (*starts,*) after all the happiness
“ I had proposed to myself in passing it tête-à-tête
“ with you; but when you left me, my physician found
“ my nerves so shaken, and my pulse so much higher,
“ the effect of our meeting,”—the devil! her pulse is
soon affected,—“that he insisted upon perfect soli-
“ tude for me this evening. A book will be my only
“ companion; a triste reverie upon my solitary couch
“ your successful rival—the only one you can ever
“ dread in the heart of your devoted Selina.”—Devil!

Sir V. No bad news, I hope? Nothing going wrong?

Mr. Lov. Yes, faith, a scheme of mine seems to be going quite wrong.

Sir V. A scheme—pray of what nature?

Mr. Lov. Oh! my dear uncle, you are too much a man of business not to know there are many of a nature not to be spoken of.

Sir V. Ay, but I have a confounded bad opinion of all schemes prefaced with “the utmost secrecy may
“ be depended on.”

Mr. Lov. In this case, however, it was necessary.

Sir V. Is the affair actionable? Can you recover matters in a court of justice?

Mr. Lov. No, faith! Nor in a court of conscience neither.

Sir V. Come, come, tell me what's the matter; I am used to these things—nobody has been so often cheated as I have.

Mr. Lov. (*Aside.*) What the devil shall I say to
H him

him?—Why, it was a bargain, as I thought, concluded, by which, for certain services, I was to be put in possession of most desirable premises, which I have long coveted.

Sir V. Not freehold, then?

Mr. Lov. No; I was to be only tenant at will.

Sir V. Pshaw! not worth thinking about;—fifty as pretty things of the same sort to be met with about town, I dare say.

Mr. Lov. None that happen to suit my fancy as much.—You'll excuse me for running away;—business, you know, must be attended to. [Exit.]

Sir V. (solus.) Business, indeed!—Would not one swear he was going to make a large addition to his estate at ten years purchase?—This lad's business, forsooth, is an eager pursuit of some whim, which will cease to please him the instant he possesses it.—Mrs. Racket calls business driving about the streets all day, and never being a moment at home.—My friend the Doctor's business seems, by his own account, to be much the same thing; only he is paid, and she, I fancy, pays for every half hour they get rid of.—Nobody but me I find rationally employed—nobody, whose business is of real importance, and embraces in endless perspective the future interests of the human race. Talk of enlightening mankind! it never can be done but by my electrical system:—so I will lose no time in forwarding the general illumination.

[Exit.]

Scene changes to the Hotel.

Mr. LOVELL, LAPIERRE.

Mr. Lov. Not ill, do you say?

La. Non, Monsieur.

Mr. Lov. Not confined?

La. Non, Monsieur; au contraire, she is gone out wid Madame Racket.

Mr.

Mr. Lov. Gone out!

La. Oui, Monsieur; ça vous tranqualife, n'est ce pas? That make you easy?

Low. Gone out!

La. Oui, Monsieur; gone out to prepare for the evening.

Mr. Lov. To prepare for the evening?

La. Monsieur, surement doit favoir ça;—you ought to know dat, Sir.

Mr. Lov. Yes, indeed, I think I ought, and therefore the sooner you tell me the better.

La. (*Aside.*) Quel drol homme!—but I begin to fear I have got into the wrong box here!

Mr. Lov. And for what is she preparing?

La. (*Aside.*) Ah! je commence à comprendre: he know noting at all.—I don't know, Sir.

Mr. Lov. You don't know?

La. Non Monsieur—I was going to ask you, Sir.

Mr. Lov. Hark'ee, rascal; tell me, this instant, all you know about your Lady, or by Heaven—(*holding up his cane*)—But, hold! this is the surer way. (*Giving him money.*)

La. Oui, surement, Monsieur. (*Bowing.*)

Mr. Lov. Now, for what is she preparing?

La. I believe for de masquerade.

Mr. Lov. For the masquerade!—and with whom does she go?

La. Wid you, Sir, I fancy.

Mr. Lov. With me? pshaw! and with whom else? Answer, rascal! without prevarication:—tell me every thing you know, or believe, or guess at, or fancy.

La. (*Aside.*)—Diable! by his eagerness to make me speak, I believe I should have got more by holding my tongue—Mais, Monsieur,—wid Mrs. Racket, —and—

Mr. Lov. And who else?—speak this instant—or—
(*Threatening him.*)

La. Mais, Monsieur; I suppose, avec Madame Lovell, and par consequent—consequently avec Monsieur le Chevalier Dorimant, dey are alwas togeder.

Mr. Lov. (Aside.) And consequently, I am baulked of my mistress, dishonoured by my wife, and supplanted with both by this fellow I have called my friend. I shall be with them, however—two at a time is rather too much;—I shall contrive to take one off his hands, if I cannot save t'other.—Save her! does she deserve it?—tormenting question!—But this is no time for reflection. Now, for the means of finding them out:—I must not discover myself to this fellow.

La. If Monsieur has no furdur commands?

Mr. Lovell. Well, I am so much satisfied with your information, that if you reply as truly about their dresses, here's another guinea for you.

La. Mais, Monsieur, en verité.

Mr. Lov. No mais, Sir; out with it this instant.

La. D'honneur, Monsieur.

Mr. Lov. This moment. (*Threatening him.*)

La. Ma parole, Monsieur.

Enter SHOPMAN with a Parcel.

Shop. Is this Lady Selina Vapour's apartment?

La. Yes; what you want?

Shop. A parcel that she has sent from the masquerade warehouse in Tavistock Street. (*Puts it down.*)

Mr. Lov. Dresses for to-night?—have you any good ones?

Shop. (Undoing the parcel, and shaking out the dresses.) These, Sir, are black dominos; but we have capuchins, friars of all sorts, Turks, cardinals, and the only real savage in all Tavistock Street.—Shall I wait upon you, Sir?

Mr.

Mr. Lov. I will call at your house.

[*Exeunt Lovell and Shopman.*]

La. (solus.) Pardi, if dis man had not happened to come wid his cardinals, and capuchins, and savages, I should have been obliged to tell a lie only to escape a thrashing for speaking truth.

[*Exit, taking the dresses along with him.*]

Scene changes to the Street near the Hotel.

Enter LOVELL, meeting Sir DUDLEY.

Sir D. Well, have you succeeded with the old Knight? with what demon of improvement does he believe me smitten?—Am I to take water-mills or winds-mills, or what, to him?

Mr. Lov. Nothing of this sort will do.

Sir D. Did you not tell him I was ready to try any scheme?

Mr. Lov. None has a chance at present of rivalling electricity in his imagination; so I have told him you are deep on that subject, and have made some wonderful experiments on conductors.

Sir D. Oh, damn it! I no know no more of electricity and conductors than of the north-west passage;—but, no matter;—I bid him defiance at Lady Crowder's ball this evening: I have already so settled matters as to be able to do without him.

Mr. Lov. Indeed!—Is the girl then so much in your power?

Sir D. Egad, all I fear is my being so much in her power for this evening, as to prevent more agreeable occupation; for marriage is one of those lasting pleasures to which a man should only recur in times of necessity:—but I have a great head for arrangement, and you shall see in what a masterly manner I shall to-night settle two or three different affairs in two or three different stages of the business.

Mr.

Mr. Lov. (Aside.) Now would I give my ears to know what stage he was at of my business.

Sir D. But, Lovell, I suppose you know where Lady Selina goes to-night, and will not miss "the glorious, golden opportunity."—If a man can make nothing of a masquerade, I give him up.

Mr. Lov. Oh, Sir! when you are of the party, I have so little chance——(*Aside.*) I must not let him guess at my suspicions.

Sir D. Sure, you don't suspect me of poaching, do you?—But to convince you of the *purity* of my intentions, I will contrive to assist you, to separate her from her party, and throw her into your arms.

Mr. Lov. You must be happily confident of the success of your own affairs, to be thus kindly attentive to mine.

Sir D. Why, faith, I have so often succeeded where I have not taken pains, that I don't see why I should doubt of success where I have.

Mr. Lov. (Aside.) So, she has cost him some pains at least.—And do you never suppose it possible, that some angry guardian, some sulky husband, or bullying brother, may disturb your success?

Sir D. Pshaw, pshaw! brothers have enough to do now-a-days to take care of their own honour; and as for husbands, guardians, and duennas, they were in all ages made to be deceived, to be angry, and to forgive. [*Exit.*]

Mr. Lov. (solus.) The devil they were!—but I believe you will find you have been reckoning here without your host.—Deceived I may be—have been—angry I certainly shall be;—but damn me if I forgive.—It is plain that his views are not upon Lady Selina to-night; and whatever his plan may be on Miss Racket, he thinks himself too sure of success there, to let her stand in the way of any other pursuit;—and what that other pursuit is, he has hardly the civility to allow me

to doubt. By Heaven, I will follow them like their shadow, and, if it is as I suspect, have the pleasure of detecting her, and cutting his throat.—(*Going.*) But hold, is my wife worth all this?—God! I never thought her worth so much as at this instant, when, perhaps, she is worth nothing. [*Going.*]

Enter Sir VALENTINE.

Sir V. Well, nephew, have you got your business near settled?

Mr. Lov. Yes, faith, I believe both your business and mine is nearer settled than we imagine. Sir Dudley, I fancy——

Sir V. Sir Dudley! what, he is jealous, I suppose, and cries down my plan because it differs from his own?

Mr. Lov. Yes, I fancy you will find his plans differ very essentially from yours.

Sir V. I was sure of it; knew his conductors would lead to nothing.

Mr. Lov. I don't know what his conductors may lead to, but I believe he is conducting himself to lead away your ward, Miss Racket, from the ball at Lady Crowder's to-night; he owned as much to me just now.

Sir V. How! what the devil do you mean?—lead away my ward?—egad, if he does, it shall lead him to the gallows.

Mr. Lov. And what good will that do, after the mischief is done? She is of age now, is not she?

Sir V. Very true, faith; she is just of age, so may play the fool as soon as she pleases; but it shall not be with him, with his conductors and nonsense! a puppy! meddling with every thing: egad, I'll send for constables, and have him taken up this instant.

Mr. Lov. Taken up! for what? for intending to go to a ball to-night?

Sir

Sir V. All her mother said is very true, I find. What the devil shall I do? I'll go and swear the peace against him—I'll knock him down—I'll——

Mr. Lov. Instead of either swearing the peace against him, or breaking it yourself, I should advise you only to determine upon going to the masquerade, and watching them.

Sir V. I, to a masquerade! I, with a fool's coat upon my back?

Mr. Lov. It is the only precaution you can take with safety to yourself; for I know nothing positive of his plan, and only picked up my idea from his hints.

Sir V. Oh, it is certainly so; have not the least doubt of it—this is the first fruits of her fine education—this it is to be accomplished and ingenious, and to have all the Roman history at her fingers' end.

Mr. Lov. Well, are you for the masquerade?

Sir V. Egad, I have not been at a masquerade since the King of Denmark's. I shall never find her out—any body can deceive me. Mummers at Christmas, or boys with corked eyebrows, or whiskers, or a false nose, or an——any thing.

Mr. Lov. Ay, but I will go with you, and assist in finding them out; you can then dodge her, and see if my suspicions are just—or, I'll tell you what would be better still, suppose you were to personate him, under favour of your mask, and so run away with her yourself?

Sir V. Run away with her myself! Gad zounds, and how the devil am I ever to get rid of her?

Mr. Lov. Why there is no necessity to carry on the farce to the last act, and really marry her yourself—but if she agrees, believing you Sir Dudley, to go off with you, she throws herself into your power, and at the same time confesses such intentions, as will authorize any measures of authority on the part of her mother and guardian,

Sir V. Very true, very true. Well, if you can provide me with a dress, and if once I can lodge her safe again in her mother's hands, and clear mine of her fortune, I will see all the accomplished young ladies in London at the devil, before I will take as much trouble for any one of them.

Mr. Lov. Come, come, we have no time for invective; it is late and you have to prepare for our scheme.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene changes to Mrs. Lovell's Dressing Room.

Sir DUDLEY DORIMANT ushered in by a Servant, who goes out at the opposite side of the Stage, and leaves Sir DUDLEY solus.

Sir D. Now that I am about to swallow this bitter, but necessary pill of matrimony, let me contrive at least to have something ready to put the taste out of my mouth, and think a little of bringing my affairs here with this sentimental belle to a crisis. She has long fluttered round the dangerous flame, disguised to herself under various specious names, and yet seems hitherto to have escaped unscorched—but this cannot, must not last. My marriage, as I shall manage it, will only make her place more implicit confidence in me as a friend, and establish between us a subject of complaint common to both—an admirable engine in the hands of a man who knows how to use it—in the meantime, I must pique her more strongly on the subject of her husband, and magnify his indifference, till I force her to draw a parallel between it and my assiduity. I dare not yet put her upon the scent of Lady Selina: her candour, and high opinion of her friend, would spoil all, by leading too soon to an explanation—which is the devil, when one wants to keep up a useful misunderstanding between friends—but if I contrive well, I think I may lay a train of suspicion, even from
this

this masquerade to-night, which I may afterwards fire into jealousy, or smother into indifference, whichever best suits my purpose.—But here she comes.

Enter Mrs. LOVELL with Lady Selina's Note in her Hand.

Mrs. Lov. This note is from my dear Selina—I am delighted to find that her spirits are so much better, as to allow her to think of going to Lady Crowder's masquerade to-night; she tells me, since I left her, she has been persuaded to go, and begs me to come to her early, and slip on a dress at the hotel, that I may accompany her.

Sir D. Indeed!—and you comply?

Mrs. Lov. Certainly—I should rather, to be sure, have preferred passing the evening quietly in the apartment of my friend, but in her society any place has charms.

Sir D. Amiable creature! how few people go to a masquerade from such motives! and how are they requited! how ill matched!

Mrs. Lov. Such motives, believe me, if they have any merit, requite themselves.

Sir D. (*Looking tenderly at her.*) That any body happy in the possession of such a gem, should ever for a moment be dazzled with the false lustre of inferior charms!

Mrs. Lov. I know not to what you allude—some new fancy of Lovell's, I suppose.

Sir D. That he should carelessly expose a real treasure, in pursuit of a phantom of imaginary value!

Mrs. Lov. The value of this treasure, you see, like that of most others, depends entirely upon opinion—there is no standard in these cases but true affection, and by that, I fear, I am never to be tried

Sir D. How can you so wrong my tender, faithful friendship, which weighs with unremitting and painful attention

attention all your charms, against all your wrongs, and laments every hour that your want of sufficient confidence in me, prevents your doing more justice to the one, and revenging the other—but friendship, friendship, I feel, too surely, can never heal the wounds of love.

Mrs. Lov. Revenge, I fear, would but double their pain.

Sir D. Not if such as even injustice must confess merited, and self-reproach oblige him to forgive—but while thus every new whim is followed with impunity, even in your very society, with immediate opportunity of comparing all he abandons with all he gains—Oh, I am ashamed of him.

Mrs. Lov. You speak in enigmas, and as I have long known the only subject your friendship thus veils to me, it disturbs me to find you more mysterious than usual.

Sir D. Do not press me further on the subject; you know I can refuse you nothing—I have already said too much.

Mrs. Lov. Come, come, I dare say you consider this too severely—your friendship for me magnifies my wrongs. Since you will not speak, I will, and I dare say divine the whole of what your over-delicacy conceals from me—Lovell, I conclude, has some new pursuit, to which this very masquerade is to be subservient; is it not so?

Sir D. Why will your too great penetration always outrun my precautions to preserve your peace, and save, if I could, the honour of my friend?

Mrs. Lov. You find yourself awkwardly situated—the confident both of husband and wife—the one goes to the masquerade to accompany her friend, the other—

Sir D. To meet a mistress.

Mrs. Lov. Hah! (*Starts, but recovers herself immediately.*)—But, alas! since I have found no sympathy

existing between us—since his mind is ever estranged from me—what can it signify who captivates his fancy?

Sir D. (Aside.) The devil's in this woman: while she continues thus jealous only of mind, it will be equally difficult either to possess or get rid of her.

Enter a SERVANT, announcing Miss and Mrs. RACKET.

Mrs. Rac. It is an age since I have had the pleasure of seeing you, Mrs. Lovell—Sir Dudley, your servant—but really, I find it so difficult at this time of the year to balance all my visiting accounts—

Mrs. Lov. And nobody, I am sure, has so much reason to be a forgiving creditor as myself.

Mrs. Rac. Seven hundred upon my book, I assure you, besides dancing-men and country families in lodgings. Then I expected certainly to have met you at Mrs. Drummajor's assemblies; all the town was there: or at my Lady Frail's balls, but, perhaps, you don't visit her—many people have scruples—nobody so nice as myself, but I protest I never saw any thing amiss in her—that shocking affair with the coachman, you know, was never proved—and as for reports—

Sir D. (Looking at Mrs. Racket.) Nothing can be so malicious as giving any credit to them, when to a person's disadvantage.

Mrs. Rac. (Looking at Sir Dudley.) So I begin to think, Sir Dudley; one cannot be too slow in believing any appearances against a person to whom one is naturally inclined to be partial.

Sir D. Surely one may be led into such mistakes—people appear so different from what they are—such unexpected turns may be given to conduct.

Mrs. Rac. (Aside.) How delicately he assures me of his passion!

Miss Rac. (Aside.) How nicely he bamboozles mamma!

Mrs.

Mrs. Lov. To retrieve my credit with you, Mrs. Racket, and convince you I have not quite abandoned the world, I mean to be at Lady Crowder's, who sees masks to-night.—Sir Dudley, I have a notion, intends tormenting us all there, for he has never said whether he means to go.

Sir D. (*Aside.*) But he would have been confoundedly disappointed if you had not inquired.—I should certainly go if I thought my presence could in the slightest degree interest one individual that is to be there.—(*Looking at Mrs. Lovell.*)

Mrs. Lov. (*Aside.*) His earnestness affects me.

Mrs. Rac. (*Aside.*) This making love to me before mamma's face would be pure sport if she did but understand what he is saying as well as I do.

Sir D. But a masquerade to a person without some pursuit, some object to which he looks forward with eager solicitude as the end and aim of all his wishes—(*Looking at Mrs. Lovell.*)

Mrs. Rac. We all, to be sure, feel the truth of what you say, Sir Dudley.—(*Aside.*) His passion is quite moving.

Sir D. Is the dullest of all meetings where every one depends upon his neighbour for entertainment, and thinks he has a right to complain at finding him as stupid as himself.

Mrs. Lov. I am glad to see the dissipation and late hours of London seem to agree so well with Miss Racket—she is grown quite fat.

Miss Rac. Oh, the dissipation and late hours would agree very well with me if mamma did not make me get up so early every morning to pace in the square with all the sick children and mangy lap-dogs in the parish.

Mrs. Rac. Air and exercise, you know, Mrs. Lovell, one cannot exist without;—to be sure, it was otherwise in my day;—air spoilt the complexion and exercise the shape, and we did perfectly well without either the one or the other;—but these things are all fashion;

fashion; so I make my daughter walk every morning an hour and an half before breakfast, even though she should not have been two hours in bed;—then, at twelve, she goes to the riding-school, and at three takes a turn or two with me in the Park or Kensington Gardens; and this, what with walking in and out of three or four assemblies every night, I think must give her one of the strongest constitutions in the world.

Mrs. Lov. Indeed, I think the efficacy of the regimen is proved by the possibility of supporting such severe discipline.

Miss Rac. Ay,—but then I drink porter, and eat meat three times a day, and do every thing I can think of to be fat; for you know we all feed for a shape now, instead of starving.

Mrs. Lov. What enviable spirits!

Miss Rac. Dear! you know one must be in spirits; nobody is grave and prim and melancholy, but country quizzes and county town belles.

Mrs. Lov. Of all fashions, good spirits is that one would most wish to follow.

Mrs. Rac. Dear Miss Racket, you will really give Mrs. Lovell and Sir Dudley a strange opinion both of yourself and the people with whom I have allowed you to live.

Miss Rac. (*Aside to Sir Dudley.*) You see she never will allow me to speak a word before you. (*They whisper apart.*)

Mrs. Rac. Come, come, child, we must be gone, or I shall be too late for the French china in Bond Street:—come, Sir Dudley, you must come with us; we can't do without you.

Sir D. Without me, Ma'am!

Mrs. Rac. Yes, yes, I insist.—Adieu, Mrs. Lovell; we shall all meet at the masquerade. [*Gives her hand to Sir Dudley, who exits with Mrs. and Miss Racket, on one side the Stage, and Mrs. Lovell on the other.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Lady Selina's Apartment at the Hotel.

Lady SELINA, and Mrs. LOVELL, discovered sitting, with a little Table before them, at Work.

Mrs. Lovell.

HOW charming, if the world, and all its tedious forms, allowed one to pass more evenings like this, in the calm enjoyments of friendship!

Lady S. You know how peculiarly suited they are to my pensive turn of mind.—(*Yawns.*)—Thus agreeably situated, I could positively forget all time—I have no idea how long we have already been together—(*Yawns.*)—Pray, my dear, what o'clock is it?

Mrs. Lov. I dread looking, for fear it should be near the hour that we must exchange this charming quiet, for all the noise and confusion of the masquerade.

Lady S. (*Aside, and looking towards the door.*) I expect Lovell every instant: how shall I ever get her away?

Mrs. Lov. (*Looking at her watch.*) It is but just ten o'clock.

Lady S. Ten o'clock! is it possible?—(*Aside.*) This evening will, to be sure, be lost for ever—Lovell's want of impatience, though not very flattering, is lucky as things have happened. (*They rise, and come forward.*)

Mrs. Lov. You know not how many reasons I have

have for thinking of this masquerade with a sort of reluctance.

Lady S. Do not then, I beseech you, go on my account.—(*Aside.*) Would to heaven she would take my advice!

Mrs. Lov. No, I have resolved to get the better of my repugnance, so do not rob me of my only agreeable inducement—but I really believe, had I known, not even your note, your manner of proposing it, and the temptation of passing the whole evening together, could have prevailed upon me.

Lady S. (*Aside.*) My manner of proposing it, and the temptation of passing the whole evening together! Provoking! There must have been some mistake about the notes, which I dare not inquire into. But why this particular reluctance to-night to the masquerade? You used to like a masquerade.

Mrs. Lov. So I do still, but—Lovell goes to this.

Lady S. And if he does, are you become so fashionable a wife, that the very presence of a husband in a public place, and under a mask too, should absolutely preclude all possibility of amusing yourself?

Mrs. Lov. Pshaw! pshaw! you know how foreign all this is in reality to my heart—it is not his presence at the masquerade, but his absence from me there, that in spite of myself disturbs me.

Lady S. Lord, my dear! you would not have him for ever tied to your apron-string, like Lord and Lady Sober, who are never asunder because they are afraid of being alone; and no other creatures, male or female, can be found to support their dulness.

Mrs. Lov. You know I would not—but yet—

Lady S. But what?

Mrs. Lov. Accustomed as I am to his neglect, and aware of his infidelity, this fresh instance—this feeling myself in the same society, breathing the same air, partaking of the same amusement, with a being who reigns absolutely over that heart, where I have lost all hold—

over

Lady

Lady S. What can you mean?—you alarm me more than I can express.

Mrs. Lov. In short, Lovell, I know, has an assignation at this very masquerade, with some new favourite.

Lady S. Indeed! You know not how much what you say concerns me—But how are you sure of this?

Mrs. Lov. Oh! too sure: I forced the secret from Sir Dudley, who was as unwilling to tell, as I pretended to be to hear it.

Lady S. Hah! Sir Dudley!—and what did he tell you?

Mrs. Lov. That Lovell is totally occupied, interested, and engrossed by a new object, whom he this evening meets by appointment at Lady Crowder's, who sees masks.

Lady S. Indeed!—(*Aside.*) Ungrateful Lovell! A new object! This is the reason of my neglected invitation.

Mrs. Lov. I know how much your tender heart will partake my feelings, and understand my distress.

Lady S. It is impossible that you yourself should be more shocked and hurt at his conduct than I am.

Mrs. Lov. Cruel, careless, provoking Lovell!

Lady S. False, perfidious, deceitful Lovell!

Mrs. Lov. Does he suppose my patience inexhaustible? and is it thus that unwearied constancy is rewarded?

Lady S. Is it thus that favours are rejected?—Let us go immediately to the masquerade, and endeavour to find him out—some opportunity of detection may occur.

Mrs. Lov. If it did, I don't know that I should feel courage enough to make use of it.

Lady S. But I should, and reproach him bitterly for his conduct, I assure you.

Mrs. Lov. Your friendship for me, my dear creature, makes you feel all this as warmly as if it were

your own cause ; but take care your zeal for me don't lead you too far.

Lady S. There are no lengths I would not go to wean him from this improper connexion. Come, let us slip on our dresses, and be gone—in the rooms we will separate, and each try to meet him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Masquerade. A crowd of Masks passing and repassing
 —*Sir VALENTINE and Mr. LOVELL come forward*
 —*Sir Valentine in a coloured dress, Mr. Lovell in a black domino ; both unmasked.*

Sir V. Is this what you call a private masquerade ? Zounds ! here are people now to fill St. Paul's cathedral.

Mr. Lov. Yes, for a private masquerade is just an excuse for making your house more public than you could in any other way ; and receiving those, whom on other occasions you would not choose to acknowledge as acquaintance. But quick, on with your mask—I think I perceive our game.

Sir V. Which ? Where ?

Mr. Lov. There, in hoods, just come in at the side door—but pray be gentle, for remember you must make love, and persuade her to go off with you.

Sir V. God ! I have made love to nothing since fat Bridget, my gouvernante in the country ; and a silk gown and a bottle of ratafia did her business at once.—Must I be very eager and loving ?

Mr. Lov. Very confident and impudent will be more likely to deceive, I believe—this way, and we shall not lose fight of them. [*Exeunt.*

(*A group of Ballad-singers come forward.—A Ballad sung*
 —*Among the audience are Mrs. and Miss Racket, in coloured hoods, and Lady Selina, and Sir Dudley, and Mrs. Lovell, in black dominos.*)

Enter Sir VALENTINE, and Mr. LOVELL.

(*Lovell points out Mrs. and Miss Racket to Sir Valentine, and himself goes a little round the group to where the rest of the party are standing. Sir Valentine observes particularly Mrs. Racket (taking her for her daughter), dodges and follows her; of which she takes notice, and coquettes with him in dumb shew. As soon as the singing is over, they come forward, and the rest of the party disperse.*)

Mrs. Rac. (*In a masquerade voice.*) Do you know me?

Sir V. Yes, that I do better than you imagine.

Mrs. Rac. To convince me of that, tell me what brought you here.

Sir V. To meet a charming creature, whose impertinent, insolent, undutiful friends take the liberty of opposing my passion.—(*Aside.*) She will never suspect me now.

Mrs. Rac. (*Aside.*) Sir Dudley, delicate and tender as I expected.—And what right have any friends to interfere in such nice points as the passions of the heart?

Sir V. (*Aside.*) Pretty circulating library morality! but I must humour it.—Perhaps I flattered myself too much, when I thought it was only excessive reserve, bashful coyness, and extreme modesty, that prevented my success.

Mrs. Rac. Cruel man! how could you suspect me of such unnatural ideas?

Sir V. Come along then, my angel; we part no more to-night, and to-morrow the parson shall set all right, and bid defiance to your friends. Come along. (*Taking hold of her arm.*)

Mrs. Rac. I see you count upon my easy, yielding disposition.—To-night, heavens!

Sir V. To-night or never, egad!

Mrs. Rac. Well, don't frighten me; don't be too violent—I trust to your honour—I think I must—Lord! where are you hurrying me to?

[*Exeunt, arm in arm, hurrying along.*]

Sir DUDLEY and Miss RACKET come forward from the crowd.

Sir D. Now is the moment for us to escape, while your mother is engaged with that mask. Come, let us lose no time, that we may be back while the ball is brilliant. [Exeunt.

Mrs. LOVELL comes forward, followed by Mr. LOVELL, both masked.

Mrs. Lov. The heat is intolerable within; let us be going.

Mr. Lov. This way, through the saloon, to the staircase. I have a carriage waiting at the corner of the street——

Mrs. Lov. I came in a chair, and mean to return in it.

Mr. Lov. No, no! after my experience of this morning, I separate myself no more from you. Your “nerves might be so affected” in the way, that by the time I arrived, your door might be shut against me. You might “find an absolute necessity for repose.”—“A book might be again my successful rival.”

Mrs. Lov. It is so late, and I am so overcome with fatigue, that I mean to go immediately to bed.

Mr. Lov. By all means; but you must take me along with you.

Mrs. Lov. What can you mean by this new and unaccountable manner of addressing me?

Mr. Lov. Mean! I mean that you are captivating, and I so captivated, as not to let you slip through my fingers

fingers a second time. Come, come, own you would be damned angry if I did.

Mrs. Lov. I wish to suppose all this the effect of your supper here; but as it has probably made you unable to take care of yourself, you will excuse me desiring to return to my party.

Mr. Lov. Is that the turn you give to my impatience? Is that the manner in which you again propose to escape from my importunity to that of a more favoured rival? But, by Heaven, by your fair self, I swear, no party upon earth separates us to-night. *(Seizing her hand.)*

Mrs. Lov. *(Pulling off her mask.)* Sir Dudley, as you regard yourself, beware of obliging me to expose you to your friend.

Mr. Lov. *(Aside.)* My wife, by all that's whimsical: now for my own satisfaction, I must be Sir Dudley still.—Pardon, lovely creature, the excess of a passion which, excited by your charms, and irritated by this resistance, breaks through the thin disguise which has long ill concealed it; for surely it was not my pretended friendship for Lovell which could conceal my adoration here.

Mrs. Lov. That pretended friendship for Lovell justifies at least my heart, though not my head, for the mistaken ideas it has hitherto entertained of you.

Mr. Lov. Call them not mistaken ideas: his conduct more than justifies your favours to a more attentive admirer. Besides, after the confidence you have placed in me, after all that has passed between us——

Mrs. Lov. What has ever passed between us? or what confidence have I ever placed in you which did not prove the sincerity of my present sentiments? I thought, fool that I was! to Lovell's friend, to him who was always noticing his indifference, and lamenting his conduct to me, I might indulge myself in owning how much I felt it, without exposing to in-

different

different eyes a character, which, though I had ceased to interest, I could never cease to love.

Mr. Lov. Talk not of loving a careless, indifferent husband; but hear me, hear your passionate adorer swear——

Mrs. Lov. Nor now, nor ever will I hear you more. Had you sooner used this open, this affronting language of corruption, instead of the fine-spun doctrines of exalted sentiment and disinterested attachment, which I have been accustomed to hear from you, I should have been saved the regret of ever having suffered the suggestions of vice to have approached me under the garb of sentiment, and have earlier fled from its insidious attacks to the more rationally affectionate bosom of a husband, which I may now, too late, find shut against me for ever.

Mr. Lov. (*Throwing away his mask.*) Behold it open to receive you with a warmth, a confidence of affection, which I have never known till now.

Mrs. Lov. My husband!

Mr. Lov. Yes, Louisa, that husband who feels himself ashamed of the trial he has put you to, and unworthy of the sentiments it has discovered to him——

Mrs. Lov. Say not so, my Lovell; we have been both to blame, happily, I trust, both less than we imagined.

Mr. Lov. That husband, who, while courting an interest in the affected feelings of a sentimental coquette, left the warm and delicate affections of your heart to be played upon by the insidious addresses of a profligate coxcomb, and the exaggerated sentiments of a false friend.

Mrs. Lov. Enough, enough, dear Charles; this day has been a lesson to us both. My confidential friendship will henceforth be confined to one dear bosom. I have seen enough to convince me, that an affectionate husband must be the first of friends——

Mr.

Mr. Lov. And an amiable wife the most interesting of mistresses. (*Embracing.*) But see, somebody is surprizing us.

Enter Sir VALENTINE with Mrs. RACKET hanging upon his Arm.

Sir V. Zounds! I shall never find my way out here.—Oh! nephew, I am glad I have found you:—tell me where I can stow my prize in safety.—I have got her, you see; and egad I am as tired of lugging her about as if I had had her in tow this twelvemonth.

Mrs. Rac. Nephew! (*Seeing Mr. Lovell.*) Sir Valentine, as I live!

Sir V. (*Stopping her.*) Nay, sure you would not desert me so soon after such an ardent declaration of passion not half an hour ago.—Egad, I never thought myself such an irresistible fellow before.—I shall be attacking all the young girls at out next assizes.

Mrs. Rac. (*Still endeavouring to go.*) Barbarous man!—Is it thus I am trepanned?

Sir V. Trepanned!—no, egad! I have prevented your being trepanned by other people, and shall not let you out of my sight now till I have once more lodged you safely, where you may think better of your mad plans, and cool the ardour of your passion.

Mrs. Rac. And pray what right have you to control my inclinations and thwart my plans?

Sir V. A right which I promise you I shall never exercise again either for you or any body else.—No, no, after having saved you this once, if you can't take better care of yourself, you must e'en go to the devil your own way.

Mrs. Rac. I shall never go your way, you old scheming madman; so let me pass, and never see your face again. (*Still endeavouring to get away.*)

Sir V. Gently, gently; you must be content to see my

my face till you see your mother's.—What will she say to this after all the pains she has taken with your education?

Enter Sir DUDLEY and Miss RACKET, without masks, married.

Sir V. Heyday! what's all this?—who have we got here?

Sir D. My wife, Sir Valentine, returned like a dutiful ward to beg your approbation and her mother's blessing on our marriage.

Sir V. And who the devil then is this, upon whom I have laid violent hands?—for Heaven's sake unmask, Madam, and clear up this mystery.

Miss Rac. (*Going up to her mother.*) Pray, mamma, forgive me—indeed I will do so no more.—

Sir V. Mamma!—so, so—both crows of the same nest, I find; and I was securing the old bird while the nestling escaped me.

Mrs. Rac. (*unmasked.*) Audacious girl!—how can you suppose that I will ever countenance the indelicacy of your proceedings?—Run away from a masquerade!—you, who were always cited as a pattern of propriety!

Miss Rac. Ay, that was just the case; I always hated patterns, and could not bear to think of being one.

Sir D. (*To Mrs. Racket.*) May I not hope at least, your daughter's choice not particularly disagreeable to you?

Mrs. Rac. I wonder, Sir, how you have the impudence to address me after all that has passed.

Sir V. Ay, Sir, how have you the impudence to address yourself to a lady who is just disappointed of being run away with herself?

Sir D. I must then address myself to you, Sir Valentine, to make up this difference.

Sir V. Faith, Sir, the only difference seems to arise from the ladies having thought too much alike.

Sir D. My wish to have some claim in right of my wife to your direction in my plans, and to profit by your present pursuits, has been a principal motive for my seeking a connexion with this family; I should hope, therefore—*(They retire, talking together at the back of the Stage, as do Mrs. and Miss Racket.)*

Mr. and Mrs. Lovell come forward.

Mrs. Lov. What you tell me is confirmed by a thousand little circumstances.—My only distress will now be, how to get rid of an intimacy which I should henceforth feel in every respect more burdensome to me than ever I have fancied it agreeable.

Mr. Lov. It is ever thus with all intimacies assuming the name of friendship, without its only solid foundation, mutual worth, and real sympathy of character.—But let not this distress you: depend upon it, when she finds us no longer separated in our pursuits, ideas, and society, her attentions will soon be diverted to others less aware of the futility of her professions, the affectation of her sentiments, and the profligacy of her mind.

Mrs. Lov. I think I see her coming towards us;—I would avoid, if possible, any open or sudden breach with a person for whom my former imprudent partiality might justly give the world a plausible handle against myself.

Enter Lady Selina.

Lady S. (Starts at seeing Mr. and Mrs. Lovell together, and says, aside,) Ha! Lovell with her!—I am overwhelmed with the most fruitless fatigue; but I rejoice to see my friend's search has not been as unsuccessful as my own.

Mrs. Lov. I have, indeed, been more successful in every respect than I could possibly have hoped or expected.

Lady S. How is this?—I don't understand.

Mrs. Lov. My suspicions are all removed; and I am sure it will be my own fault, if from this hour I do not date my happiness, my perfect relief from all those regrets of which you have often heard me complain, as clouding my domestic life.

Lady S. This assurance of your happiness overcomes me more than I can express;—it is too much for my feelings; I must retire to indulge them. You know, I only live in the happiness of my friend;—I shall now hurry away to Naples, where my whole soul calls me. [Exit.

Mrs. Lov. How ridiculous does this exaggerated expression of false feelings now appear to me, accompanied by a dereliction of all real duties!

Sir DUDLEY and Sir VALENTINE, and Mrs. and Miss RACKET, come forward.

Mrs. Rac. Sir Valentine, I conclude you don't mean to sanction these proceedings;—I can never be brought to approve of them.

Sir V. Come, come, Madam, consider, “what right have any friends to interfere on such nice points as the passions of the heart?”—In short, Madam, what's done can't be undone; and I fancy both you and I have too much business on our hands to lose time in useless opposition.

Mrs. Rac. Yes, indeed, I have so many engagements for next week, that I am sure it would be vastly inconvenient for me to be in distress.

Sir V. Well, then, let's forgive, to get rid of them; and, that I may clear my hands of all my ward's affairs, and have nothing further to disturb me in the promulgation

promulgation of my great electrical plan, in which Sir Dudley here promises me his assistance——

Miss Rac. La! what should he trouble his head about such nonsense for now?—as for me, (*coming forward to the audience.*)

Now, that I 'm come of age, and married too,
I 'll not be snubb'd, whate'er I choose to do:
I 'll laugh at mother's, master's, husband's lectures,
Let me but hope in *you* to find protectors.

END OF THE FIFTH ACT.

EPILOGUE.

Written by the Honourable WILLIAM LAMB.

Spoken by Miss DE CAMP.

SURE, had our Author, whom in vain we seek,
 Compos'd the play, you just have seen, last week,
 He would not now have sent me to attend,
 In Italy, the death-bed of my friend;
 To throw away this gay auspicious year,
 And lose the prospect which is opening here.
 Is this a time for me abroad to roam?
 Now Peace will send so many lovers home;
 Sailors victorious still on every sea,
 O'er every foe, who yet must strike to me;
 And captains, cover'd with hard-earn'd renown,
 From Eastern climates beautifully brown—
 Peace, which in every face throughout the isle
 Has spread an heart-felt, universal smile—
 Peace, which in all most variously excites
 New views, new thoughts, new fancies, new delights:
 Some think on pleasure, some alone on gain,
 On price of stocks, or plenty of Champaign—
 Exports and imports trading men engage,
 Cloth for new marts, new dancers for the stage—
 Forward the epicure with transport looks
 To a fresh troop of revolution cooks,
 And o'er the pie exults, whose precious store
 Has been denied him ten sad years before;
 While the gay nymph, who lures a crowd of slaves,
 Prepares her charms, resolv'd to cross the waves—
 Resolv'd the beaux of Paris to invade,
 And flirt with whisker'd generals of brigade.
 Amidst these different tastes, may I advance
 The grounds on which I vote for peace with France?

Then—though through all this time of woe and fear,
 We have not suffer'd much in England here,
 Yet now, I own, new hopes within me rise,
 Of times more great, more happy, and more wise—
 Now London shall appear itself again,
 Adorn'd with fresh supplies of handsome men;
 No thought of business now shall e'er invade
 The nightly ball, and frequent masquerade;
 Now luxury again on wealth shall thrive,
 And pleasure rule, and usury revive—
 Exulting fashion hails the happy league;
 Hence love of cards, and leisure for intrigue;
 Credit, and curricles, and dice increase,
 Racing, and all the useful arts of peace.

The Morning Post may now display unfurl'd,
 Four columns of the Fashionable World,
 And not confin'd to tell of war's renown,
 Spread all the news around of all the town;
 While gay Gazettes the polish'd Treasury writes,
 Of splendid fashions, not of vulgar fights;
 Proud to record the taylor's deeds and name,
 And give the milliner to deathless fame,
 Who first shall force proud Gallia to confess
 Herself inferior in the arts of dress.

Oh! join to pray my hopes may not be vain:
 Commence, gay Peace, a long and joyous reign—
 May Europe's nations, by my counsels wise,
 Learn e'en thy faults to cherish and to prize,
 And shunning glory's bright, but fatal star,
 Prefer thy follies, to the woes of war!

THE END.

A.
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ERRATUM.

In a few copies, p. 65, last line, *for* well think, *read*, well, I think.

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