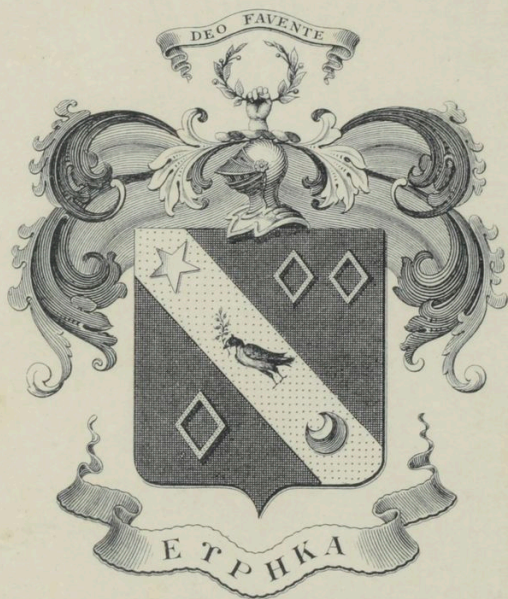


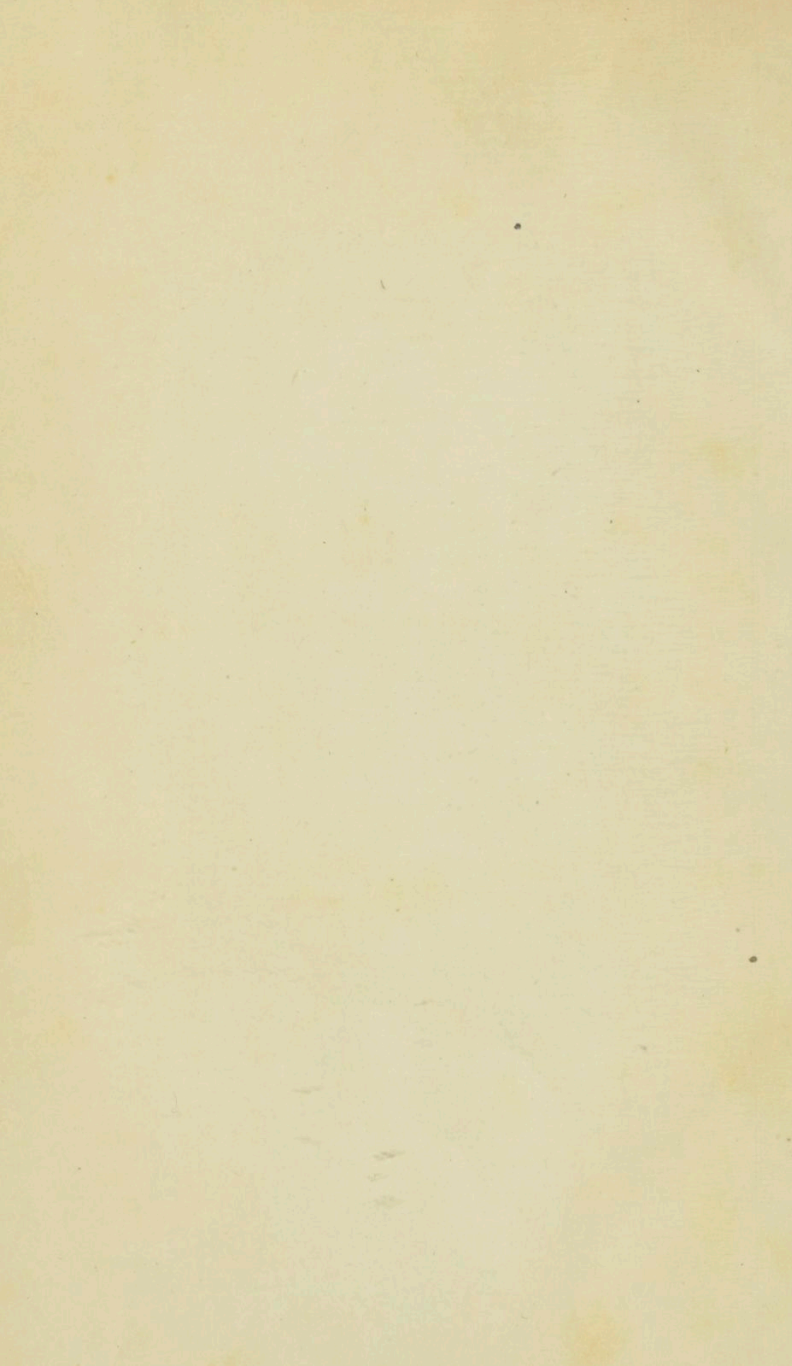
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David Scott Mitchell.



SECRETS WORTH KNOWING;

A

C O M E D Y,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

By THOMAS MORTON, Esq.

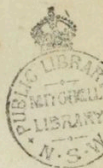
AUTHOR OF COLUMBUS, CHILDREN IN THE WOOD,
CURE FOR THE HEART ACHE, &c. &c.

L O N D O N :

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1798.

[PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.]



SEVENTH EDITION

C. O. M. B. D. Y.

IN FIVE VOLS.

THE HISTORY OF THE

IN THOMAS MORTON, ESQ.

LONDON

(Printed by J. B. ...)

PROLOGUE.



FROM Dryden's period to our present days,
Thus would be-critics censure modern plays;
Some are too dull, without intrigue, or jest—
And some mere speaking pantomimes at best;
That living authors are by dead surpass,
So he must write the worst, who writes the last—
Still each new drama captiously they blame,
And, though the town be pleas'd, deny it fame.
Should this decision be allow'd as just,
The bays denied the Bard, may grace his bust!
But if this taste for antiques we pursue,
Age may improve wit, wine, and women too.
One *old opinion* we would still retain,
The right that England has to rule the main!
Long as the sea shall fence our envied land,
Long as our navy shall the sea command;
So long shall Howe's, St. Vincent's, Duncan's name,
Be grav'd by memory on the rock of fame!
'The page of hist'ry shall their deeds repeat,
With Britain's triumph, and the foe's defeat.

But ah! the pensive muse, with tearful eye,
Views glory's brightest triumph with a sigh!
And midst the shouts victorious fleets attend
Mourns o'er the ashes of an honoured friend,
Who in his country's quarrel fought and bled,
By England numbered with her patriot dead!
May war's alarms midst rival nations cease,
And all embrace that lovely stranger—Peace,
Whose olive branch once planted by her hand,
Shall bless a loyal, brave, and happy land.

This night our Author's hopes on you are placed,
His former efforts by your smiles were graced;
To your decree submissively he bends,
Trusting his judges will be found his friends.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GREVILLE	MR. POPE.
EGERTON	MR. HOLMAN.
ROSTRUM	MR. LEWIS.
UNDERMINE	MR. MUNDEN.
APRIL	MR. FAWCETT.
PLETHORA	MR. KNIGHT.
NICHOLAS	MR. QUICK.
VALET	MR. FARLEY.
BUTLER	MR. ABBOT.
COOK	MR. THOMPSON.
COACHMAN	MR. REES.
MRS. GREVILLE	MRS. POPE.
ROSE SYDNEY	MRS. MOUNTAIN.
SALLY.	MRS. MATTOCKS.



SECRETS WORTH KNOWING.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Greville House.*

Servants talking without.

Enter Valet, Butler, Coachman, Cook, and Footmen.

VALET.

SILENCE, I say! Why, you keep as loud a gabbling as if you were settling the balance of Europe in the lobby of the House of Commons. Order, I say—the question is this. Our old master being dead, and our young one expected every moment from abroad, ought we, when he arrives, to laugh or cry? Hear the Cook!

Cook. Why, I thinks, that for the death of an old master, a little dripping from the eyes would be quite natural.

Valet. It may be natural, master Cook; but lord bless you, the genteel feel of your tip top folks, is no more like nature, than one of your fine kabobbed fricassees is to plain roast and *taties*. Besides, when a man leaves behind him a good ten thousand a year, I think it quite natural for the heir to laugh. What say you, Coachy?

B

Coach.

Coach. I pulls with you, Mr. Valet—young master must in the main be glad, for we all know that the old gemman seeing that he run skittish, kept him upon low provender beyond sea. So my verdict is, Mr. Butler, that we all smiles agreeably.

Butler. So say I. Dam'me, I'll look as pleased as punch, ha! ha!

Valet. Softly. And will you, sir, who have but thirty pounds a-year, dare to be as pleased at seeing your master, as I, who have fifty? No, no—subordination is every thing.

Coach. Ecod, the best reason we should not be sorry, is, that the old Buck left us no legacies.

Valet. That settles it. (*all laugh.*) (*a knocking at the door.*) Here he comes—I am to look most pleased, and stand in the front. Back a little, Coachy, and remember I am to speak.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. GREVILLE.

Grev. Why this boisterous mirth?

Coach. You are to speak, you know.

(*to the Valet.*)

Grev. Is it thus you honor the memory of your departed master? My love, welcome to England, and to my father's house. If I can trust my heart, the greatest happiness I shall feel from prosperity, (should it await us,) will be in placing my Maria in the elevated station her virtues will illumine.

SALLY, in a travelling dress, speaks as she enters.

Sally. Travelling indeed! nothing but extortion I declare—Such a gang of them! First, in comes the bill; then, remember the Waiter—John Ostler,

fir—the Chambermaid, ma'am—don't forget poor Boots—I am the Porter—the Post Boy, your honor—so that your hand keeps constantly moving up and down, up and down, like the great lump of wood at Chelsea waterworks.—(*the Servants nod and wink to her.*)—What are you all nodding and winking at? why don't you set chairs?—(*Servants set chairs.*)—Now, go along all of you, and see the luggage unpacked—(*Servants surprized*)—why don't you go? (*Greville waves his hand.*)

Valet. To be ordered about by such a dowdy! My dear Coachy, this will never do for us.

[*Exeunt Servants.*]

Sally. A parcel of lazy chaps. I dare say—but I'll make them stir their stumps. Well, here we are at last. Oh gemini gig! how my poor bones do ache!

Mrs. Greville. My Greville, excuse her familiarity—she has lived with me from my infancy, and is, indeed, a faithful, affectionate creature.

Sally. Aye, that I am. Oh bless its pretty face! (*patting her mistress's cheek.*)

Mrs. Grev. Leave us, good Sally.

Sally. Leave you?

Mrs. Grev. Yes.

Sally. Well, I will. I am a foolish, good natured—I'll go and scold the servants. [*Exit Sally.*]

Mrs. Grev. You look uneasy, Charles.

Grev. 'Tis for thy sake, Maria. Between hope and fear my mind is tortured: when I reflect on my father's determined, but just, resentment at my dissipated conduct while in England—so determined, that I dared not acquaint him of my union with my adored Maria—then I fear that he died without blessing me, and has estranged me from his house and fortune. When I reflect that I am

perhaps destitute of the means of supporting thee—surrounded by creditors—(*a knocking at the door.*)

Enter SALLY.

Sally. Oh! master, here is such a frightful old fellow wants to speak with you. Such a—Oh Lord! here he is.

Enter NICHOLAS, his face wrinkled, hollow cheeks, and every exhibition of dolefulness, age, and decrepitude.

Grev. Your name, friend, and business?

Nich. Sir, my name is—so, there is a lady in the case—my name, sir, is Nicholas Rue, and my business will be explained by this letter. (*Greville reads the letter, and seems elated with pleasure.*) Now to have a peep. (*puts on his spectacles.*) Eh! as I hope to live these fifty years—Mills Egerton. How my master will be surprised!

Grev. What happy tidings! present my best respects to your master—I will wait on him immediately.

Nich. Very well, sir. How my master will be surprised! [*Exit.*]

Grev. This letter, Maria, is from my father's executor. (*Reads.*)

“ Sir,

“ As executor to my dear, departed friend,
“ Mr. Greville, I have to inform you, his will
“ leaves you, conditionally, his sole heir.”

Sally. He! he! how happy I am!

Grev. The familiarity of this girl is intolerable.

Sally.

Sally. (*pouting.*) Tolerable indeed! Oh, Mr. Egerton, her noble brother behaved different: He never thought me tolerable.

Mrs. Grev. For shame, Sally!

Sally. And so it is a shame that a poor servant should be out of her wits for joy at hearing her dear lady's good fortune? Sir, I has as much right to be happy as you *has*, and I will be happy, tho' you make me cry all day for it.

Grev. Well, Well—loving Maria atones for a thousand faults.

Sally. (*significantly.*) Ha! he! perhaps this is as lucky for Mister Somebody, as for Sally Down-right.

Mrs. Grev. Dear Sally—!

Sally. Do you say dear?

Mrs. Grev. Pray be silent.

(*Sally puts her hand to her mouth, and retires.*)

Grev. My love, I must hasten to Mr. Undermine.

Mrs. Grev. Who?

Grev. Mr. Undermine, my father's executor.

Mrs. Grev. Heavens!

Grev. Do you know him, Maria!

Mrs. Grev. Alas! too well.

Sally. (*advancing.*) Know him! he is the blackest villain, sir—It was he who ruined her dear brother, and drove him from England, to wander, nobody knows where.

Mrs. Grev. Oh, Greville! I doubt the goodness of that fortune to which he is harbinger.

Grev. You alarm me; but I will hasten to him.

Sally. And I'll go with you, and, by gemini gig, I'll give it him—

Grev. For heaven's sake, be quiet! Droop not my dearest love! 'Tis prosperity awaits us. I go

to seize the prize, and lay it at thy feet, a fit oblation to thy surpassing virtues. [Exit,

Mrs. Grev. Heigho!

Sally. Don't sigh, dear lady! I know from experience riches don't give happiness. When poor, I was happy, and now that I am independent, having £.3 10s. a year in the consolidated real grand Bank of England, yet I'm not happy; but I shall be so when my darling mistress is a great lady, and her dear brother comes home a general.

Mrs. Grev. Poor Egerton! What perils has he not encountered for my sake—perhaps his precious life——

Sally. Oh, no, no—take comfort, for sure nobody wou'd go to kill so handsome and good a creature as he is—besides, ma'am, has not he a mole on his right arm? Was he not born with a cawl? And has he not a pocket-piece that I got conjured?

Mrs. Grev. Peace, foolish girl! Yet I will take comfort, for he has the protecting arm of heaven.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*A Room in UNDERMINE'S House.*

Enter NICHOLAS.

Nich. (*crossing the stage.*) That the sister of Egerton shou'd be the lady—this is news indeed. They must be married, and then my old rogue of a master gets the estate, and poor I, only a thousand pounds for assisting in the roguery; but 'tis a snug sum.

Enter UNDERMINE, (*yawning.*)

Und. Good morning. You look ill, Nicholas.

Nich.

Nich. Oh dear! don't say so—I feel pretty much in the old way—eat little to be sure—sleep less.

Und. Ah! but you have been a sad old rogue, Nicholas.

Nich. I have always executed your honor's commands faithfully. Sir, I don't like 12 o'clock at night. All dark as pitch! The church-bell tolling, and nothing else to be heard but the rats in the wainscott.

Und. Don't talk of it.

Nich. Then, somehow a trembling seizes me—

Und. And you feel a kind of shivering damp, don't you?

Nich. Yes.

Und. I know—I know. Then the dreams. I dreamt that old Greville came to my bed, and demanded justice to his son, with horrible ghastly eyes like—just like yours, Nicholas;—and—pshaw! I'm becoming a superstitious fool. Away to Greville with my letter.

Nich. I have already been there. You see how anxious I am to put you in possession.

Und. How anxious you are to touch the £.1000, Nicholas!

Nich. Well, sir! he is arrived, and with him—

Und. Aye!

Nich. A lady.

Und. His wife, think you?

Nich. I'll tell you who she is, and leave you to judge—the sister of Egerton.

Und. Indeed!

Nich. Whom you ruined.

Und. And he deserved it for his folly. What chance had he, with only old blind justice on his side, while I had possession, a long purse, and a chancery suit, ha! ha! you don't laugh, Nicholas?

Nich. Lord, fir, I hav'n't laughed these thirty years.

Und. Ah! you have been a sad rogue. But when am I to expect Greville?

Nich. Directly, fir.

Und. Then give me his father's will out of that drawer.

Nich. (*significantly.*) Which will, fir?

Und. Which will? why, you are a wag, Nicholas. Not his *second* will, which you burnt. Ha! ha! you are a wag. No, no—this is the will for us, Nicholas; the second did not suit quite so well—it did not contain this beautiful proviso—
 “ But in case my said son shall have acted, or shall
 “ act, contrary to this my will, I then bequeath
 “ all my estates, whatsoever and wheresoever, to
 “ my herein named executor, adviser, and valued
 “ friend, Urban Undermine esquire.”—And was not I a good adviser, eh? But then, Nicholas, what trouble I had, to make the old superannuated fool sign it. How I had, to enforce the sin of disobedience, read to him all the tragical stories of improvident marriages—yet, Nicholas, we are not quite safe, while my late servants, the witnesses to the burnt will, are forth coming. Have you been to Newgate to see them?

Nich. Yes, fir; and says I to them—you know my master's plate was found at the bottom of your trunks, (which you know, fir, I put there myself,) and the law has condemned you to be hang'd—now your kind master has got your sentence softened to a mere trip to Botany Bay.

Und. And they were quite happy, I suppose?

Nich. No, fir—they grumbled.

Und. Ah! man—man—never contented. This is my reward for sending them to a charming flourishing

flourishing colony, where there is every luxury—even a play-house, Nicholas.

Nich. And I am told, fir, there are very good actors there.

Und. I dare say there are. (*a knocking at the door.*) Run to the window, and see if it be Greville.

Nich. Lord, fir, I can't run—nor I can't see.

Und. (*aside.*) Pshaw! old withered dolt!—can't see—one comfort is, you will soon be dead. [*Exit.*]

Nich. But I can hear—Soon be dead, eh? Oh dear me, no—equally obliged to you notwithstanding—I am pretty well—indeed—excepting a slight liver complaint, a flying gout, and a touch of the dropsy, I am quite well—Ah! the one thousand pounds must be first duly and truly paid, or I'll shew you a trick you little expect, old master of mine.

Enter UNDERMINE.

Und. 'Tis he—'tis Greville—run to the door.

Nich. I can't run, I tell you. [*Exit.*]

Und. If he be but married! Now for management—If he be but married—

Enter GREVILLE.

Mr. Greville, I presume—allow me to congratulate you on your arrival in England. I hope you enjoyed your health abroad?

Grev. Perfectly so. Excuse me, Mr. Undermine; but my anxiety—

Und. I understand—Here, fir, is your good father's will.

Grev. (*reads.*) “I, Robert Greville, do make and declare this my will. To my only son, Charles
“ Greville,

“ Greville, I bequeath my forgiveness and blessing,
 “ (*bows in thankfulness,*) together with all my es-
 “ tates, real and personal, provided my said son
 “ has not during my life contracted, or does not,
 “ till he has fulfilled his twenty-fifth year, con-
 “ tract—matrimony.” (*greatly agitated.*)

Und. He is miserable—I am a happy man!

Grev. (*reading.*) “ And in case my said son shall
 “ have acted, or shall act contrary to this my
 “ will, I then bequeath all my estates, whatso-
 “ ever and wheresoever, to my herein-named exe-
 “ cutor, adviser, and valued friend, Urban Un-
 “ dermine esquire.” (*aside.*) Most accomplished
 ruin! Oh, Maria!

Und. You seem indisposed.

Grev. How shall I act? Sir, the dying blessing
 of a justly offended father has agitated my spirits.
 (*aside.*) And shall this wretch, the enemy of Maria,
 riot in the blessings she should enjoy?

Und. Mr. Greville!

Grev. (*aside.*) Suppose I conceal my marriage—
 The clergyman who officiated abroad, being dead,
 and the certificate safe in my possession, detection
 is impossible.

Und. Sir, the pleasure I might otherwise feel at
 so large an acquisition of property as your *mar-*
riage gives me, is really, sir, changed into anguish
 on your account.

Grev. (*aside.*) I'll conceal my marriage—I'll tor-
 ture him. Mr. Undermine, how happy am I to
 relieve your benevolent heart from the anguish
 which oppresses it, and make you happy by de-
 claring, I am not married; but you don't seem
 happy.

Und. N—no—not married!—Is it possible that—

Grev. It is quite possible.

Und.

Und. That is—I mean—I—I—have the pleasure of knowing Miss Egerton.

Grev. True, and she says she knows you *well*,

Und. Yet, on reflection, who can wonder——

Grev. What do you say?

Und. Who can wonder, I say, that the sister of a proud beggar should be lost to those celestial virtues——

Grev. 'Tis false! Virtues! she is their representative on earth.

Und. Except chastity.

Grev. (*aside.*) Distraction! Oh, my wrong'd wife! am I the assassin of thy fame?—If I remain here, I shall betray myself.

Und. Yet, I say——

Grev. Say no more, sir.

Und. Allow me to advise——

Grev. Pardon me, *good* sir—the advice you have here given is so excellent, (*returning the will,*) that I should be deemed a monopolist, did I engross more. Let the world benefit; my family have had quite enough of it.

Und. In short, then, Mr. Greville——

Grev. In short, then, Mr. Undermine, I am equal to the attendance on my own affairs. Do you prove your attention to yours, by promptly attending me in the capacity of executor, and not as heir, to my father. [*Exit.*]

Und. So, so, so—Yet he must be married; but then how to prove it—how to manage——

Enter NICHOLAS, *running and capering.*

Nich. Well, sir, here I am—ready to touch.

Und. You *can* run, I see.

Nich. Why, after a thousand pounds, I can hobble a bit,

Und.

Und. Can you? Then hobble to Lucern, in Switzerland, and obtain proof of their union—he denies being married.

Nich. Deny being married! But I'll take my oath he is.

Und. I dare say you will—But who will believe you, Nicholas? I'll probe him to the quick—a licentious profligate! Ah, Nicholas! let this be a lesson to you. Avoid the sin of seduction!

Nich. I will, sir.

Und. To rob innocence of its thousand charms.

Nich. To rob me of my thousand pounds!

Und. But he *is* married. I'll after him directly.

Nich. Sir, you forget the steward is coming.

Und. True, true, old April—a full twenty years since we met.

Nich. He must be tottering on the grave, poor old fellow.

Und. He tells me he has brought Rose Sydney to town with him, our joint ward. I have left the care of her entirely to him, because it never struck me how I cou'd get any thing by her.

April. (*without.*) Up stairs, do you say? Come along, Rose.

Und. The old fellow is fumbling his way up. Don't hurry yourself, friend April, I'll help you.

Enter APRIL and ROSE SYDNEY.—*APRIL's figure representing the "lusty winter" of life, strong, corpulent, a ruddy complexion, and long, flowing, silver hair.*

April. Who the devil wants your help! Friend Undermine, how are you? heartily glad to see you, (*shaking him violently by the hand.*)

Nich. Ah, Mr. April!

April.

April. What, old Nick! alive! You grow devilish like your namesake! Ha, ha! (*stops laughing suddenly.*) My dear Rose; ask pardon—forgot to introduce, and all that—Undermine, this is our ward, our pretty Rose—brought her up to town to see all the devilments and things, and marry her to my grandson Plethora, who is by this time, I warrant, a celebrated physician.

Rose. That is, Guardy, if I like him.

April. To be sure—no compulsion—no—no—You see mine has been a difficult task, friend Undermine—not only to take care of a large lump of land, but also this pretty little morsel of live stock.

Rose. Which is certainly the harder task of the two; for where you leave a pasture at night, there you are sure to find the pasture in the morning; but you may leave me peaceably browsing in that pasture in the evening, and the next day, hear of my curvetting and frisking it on a certain Green, called Gretna.

Und. Ha, ha! madam, you will be esteemed a wit.

April. She will—for she has three thousand a year, ha, ha! But, old Nick, have not you a bit of dried wainscot in the house, commonly called a housekeeper. Rose will want an army of miliners, haberdashers, and odds and ends.

Nick. Do you imagine, sir, we exist without the blandishments of the softer sex? Allow me to conduct you—don't be alarm'd, miss, you may rely on my prudence and delicacy.

[*Exeunt Nicholas and Rose.*]

April. Come, let me look at you, old boy. You are grown devilish rusty.

Und. Impudent blockhead!

April. My countenance is the same.

Und. Yes, brass never rusts; but you must want repose.

April. Repose, ha, ha! Why I walked good twenty miles yesterday, over hedge and stubble, to shoot you a bag of birds, old boy. How you stare!

Und. How the devil have you contrived to keep so ruddy a face?

April. By keeping clean hands, friend Undermine.

Und. And how do you manage to keep your body upright?

April. By keeping my heart in the same attitude; for I soon found out that the weight of every ill-gotten guinea is laid on a man's shoulders for life—bends him down—there is no getting rid of the load. (*Undermine tries to hold up his head, but fails.*) So I prefer'd a long life to a long annuity, and a light heart to a heavy purse, eh, master Undermine?

Und. A most excellent plan indeed—for the country.

April. Well, but the news—is Greville arrived? The young heir—the dear boy, Charles—is he well?

Und. Yes, a pretty chick he is—a profligate—a seducer.

April. What! Oh, I see—a joke of yours, to try to prevent my laughing, ha, ha! Eh, you shake your head tho'.

Und. What would you say, if I told you he had basely seduced a virtuous and superior woman?

April. I would say it was a lie.

Und. Go then, and convince yourself.

April. What Charles Greville guilty of dishonor, merely to get a fashionable name?

Und.

Und. And even there he will be disappointed. Formerly, indeed, the ruin of an innocent woman was thought wickedness enough to entitle you to a seat in the coterie of fashion; but now, unless that woman be the wife of your friend, or the daughter of your benefactor, your gusto is scouted, and you are black-balled for want of a due qualification.

April. Oh, rare London, ha, ha! Should not laugh tho'.—Sad doings. I'll go to him; if what you say be true, he wont dare to look even me in the face—but it can't be.—Oh! he was the bravest, noblest lad. I'll tell you stories of him, will make you so laugh, ha, ha! And I'll tell you stories will make you so cry. [Exeunt.]

A C T II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in UNDERMINE'S House.*

Enter APRIL and UNDERMINE.

April. But tell me, tell me—have you seen my grandson Plethora lately?

Und. No, not lately.

April. Is he one of your *first* rate doctors, eh?

Und. (*concealing a laugh.*) Not quite, I believe.

April. He must be grown a tremendous fellow. Sent him to town in high condition—full of health—all sinew—strong as a castle.

Und. You'll find your castle reduced to mere lath and plaister. (*aside.*)

April. And a power of money in his pocket.

Und. Aye, how much?

April. All I was worth.

Und. The devil you did?

April. To be sure. The road of life is confoundedly up hill, so I determined the boy should not want provender. Besides, they say money gets money—and by this time I dare say he has doubled, aye, trebled it.

Und. (*aside.*) Ha! ha! Give all he has to a young spendthrift. Well, you'll follow me to Greville's?

April. Never to do things by halves is a maxim in the family of the Aprils.

Und. (*aside.*) And you have certainly proved yourself the first of the Aprils, ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Enter

Enter ROSE.

April. Ah, Rose, my girl, I expect your lover every moment. (*Rose shakes her head.*) Nay, fair play—see him, and hear him—let us have no sending adrift without a fair trial. Egad, you'll see a man fit for a husband; like—like what I was fifty years ago.

Rose. Of this I am sure: I never can hate any thing that resembles my dear Guardy.

April. Bless thee! —(*knocking.*)—— Eh—here he comes—the head of Apollo, the strength of Hercules, the voice of a Stentor, the——

Enter PLETHORA, his visage thin and emaciated, his figure lean, his voice tremulous. A man of twenty with a constitution of eighty. APRIL jumps with surprise.

April. Eh! what! no!

Pleth. How are you, Grandad?

April. Rose, my love, speak to it.

Rose. Alas! poor ghost!

Pleth. How goes it, I say?—Grown quite slim and genteel since you saw me last, an't I?

April. Quite!

Pleth. This is shape and make, is not it?

April. Why, Bob—ha, ha! should not laugh—Poor fellow! perhaps 'tis intense study.—But, he, he! zounds, doctor, instead of giving it to others, you seem to have taken all the physic yourself.

Pleth. Yes, of cherry-bounce quantum suff.—and old Oporto,—a couple of magnums—that's my physic—a short life and a merry one, ha, ha!—Ugh, ugh! But you sent word you wanted me on business. What is it, eh?

C

April

April. Why, I had an intention of proposing a marriage between you and that sweet girl. But I don't know what to say—you don't seem exactly calculated. What do you think, Rose? (*She shakes her head and laughs.*) Nay, don't laugh at my grandson. Age is respectable. I say, old one, what do you think of marriage?

Pleth. With that fine girl—with all my heart. A short life, and a merry one.

Rose. Don't be rash, sir. And will you venture to run away with me?

Pleth. That I will. Easy stages tho'.

Rose. Easy stages!—It won't do, Guardy.

April. No; we must give it up. But what have you done with all the money I gave you?

Pleth. Why, I duly considered the hardness of the times, and so threw it into circulation.

April. Indeed! And pray how do you intend to live?

Pleth. I am one of the host of Pharoah.

April. Dam'ne, you are one of the lean kine, ha! ha! But zounds and fury!—(*going up to him.*)

Rose. Oh, don't!—If you touch him you'll kill him.

Pleth. You have arrived in time; for I have just decanted the last hundred. Come, tip a rouleau.

April. I heard you kept a carriage.

Pleth. Two—a gig and a tandem.

April. You a physician! Why, you ignorant—

Pleth. Come, tip. (*holding out his hand a la medicin.*)

April. Eh! ignorant—I beg your pardon—No, I see you understand at least the grand principle of the pro-

profession, (*imitating*,) ha, ha! But, 'sdeath! what have you to shew for all the money?

Pleth. Shew! Ask at the College.

April. Oh! in Warwick Lane.

Pleth. Warwick Lane! Curse the old quizes! ha, ha!—ugh, ugh!—No, I mean the Horse College.

April. The Horse College!

Pleth. To be sure. Farriery is now the only learning fit for a man of fashion. Why, have not you read the Rights of Cattle?

April. No.

Pleth. No! Then you are a yahoo.—Nor Loose Thoughts on a Horse-shoe, six volumes folio, price twenty guineas?

April. No.

Pleth. Nor you, ma'm?

Rose. No, sir.

Pleth. What, both ignorant of horse-shoeing! Why, you an't fit to shew your heads in polished society. I tell you 'tis the only thing going.

April. Indeed! Well, as it is a thing going, there can be no harm in wishing it gone.

Pleth. Gone! Why, bless you, so far from that, there's Lord Snaffle learning to read a purpose. But I must be off.

April. Where?

Pleth. To the College to be sure—never miss—famous day. Two lectures—one, a grand dissertation on the use and abuse of cruppers.

April. Amazing!

Pleth. The other, on the proper application of the horfewhip.

April. You need not go on that account. I'll shew you that in two minutes. (*is restrained by Rose.*)

Pleth. But, I say—if I am to match with that

nice girl, say the word, that I may go into training accordingly.

Rose. Certainly not, sir.

Pleth. Then good bye.—I say, a short life and a merry one, he, he!—ugh, ugh! [Exit.

April. So, all my property gone to make a farrier. I say, did you ever see such a bit of blood, ha, ha! But I must away to Greville's. Good bye, my girl! Horse-shoeing!—Egad, doctor, you shall have a bellyful of it; for into the country you go, and farrier you are for life. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*A Library at GREVILLE'S.*

Mrs. GREVILLE discovered, dejectedly leaning her cheek on her hand—SALLY looking out of the window.

Mrs. Grev. Greville not yet returned?

Sally. There he is, ma'am, pacing up and down the Square, with his arms crossed—now he stops—now he walks quick.

Mrs. Grev. Oh! call him to me.

Sally. He is coming, ma'am. Don't agitate your dear spirits.—

Enter GREVILLE, under great agitation; not observing his wife, he draws a chair, and sits down.

Grev. To conceal my marriage—How can I ask it of my wife? To confess it, then! (*rising.*) Ruin without hope. I cannot bear the thought. Unfortunate Maria!

Mrs. Grev. (leaning on his shoulder.) Not so—while I possess your love—Oh, tell me, Charles! the wild disorder of your eye terrifies me. (*Greville*

ville *points to Sally.*)—Leave us good Sally! (*Exit Sally.*)—Tell me, Oh, tell me the worst.

Grev. I will—it is—for us, a prison during life. Beggary for our child. (*Mrs. Greville weeps.*) This horrid fate you can alone avert.

Mrs. Grev. (*smiling thro' her tears.*) Oh, Charles! how unkind to think that misfortune shall for a moment oppress your heart, which I can avert. 'Twill be a happiness——

Grev. (*mournfully.*) Happiness, Maria! mark me. To prevent the heavy hand of poverty from crushing us, you must declare—how shall I utter it?—that we are not married. Should that be known, I am disinherited.

Mrs. Grev. Oh! must we part?

Grev. I mean not that. Consent to live with me, yet——

Mrs. Grev. Say on.

Grev. Declare yourself—think the rest.

Mrs. Grev. Your mistress. (*faintly.*) I will. Pardon me a moment's agitation. (*recovering.*) Yes, cheerfully.

Grev. Think, my love, 'twill be but a transient sorrow.

Mrs. Grev. Alas! I think but this—it was my Greville asked it; and I solemnly swear by the holy marriage vow, never to claim the honour'd name of wife, but at your command.

Grev. Let me adore thee!

Mrs. Grev. Yet, oh! (*bursting into an agony of tears.*)

Grev. Is this cheerfulness, Maria?

Mrs. Grev. 'Tis not for myself—the title of mistress gives not this pang. But, oh Charles, what name will attach to our pretty innocent?

Grev. I cannot bear the conflict. Let ruin come.

Mrs. Grev. Oh no! forgive me—but at that moment the mother felt strong within me. Indeed I will be all you wish. Pray look happy. Come, you shall see I'll act my part to admiration! Be gay.
(*faints.*)

Grev. Maria—my love!—

Mrs. Grev. (*recovering.*) I am better. It was my last struggle. Indeed I am better.

Grev. Within there! (*Sally makes one step on the stage.*) You were very near at hand.—Her secrecy will be necessary. By your alacrity, I judge it would be needless to repeat what has now passed?

Sally. Why, sir, to speak the truth, I overheard every word you said.

Grev. This, then, is your duty?—

Sally. Ah, sir!—If my love for my dear mistress had not been stronger than my duty, you would not have been so long troubled with Sally Downright.

Grev. Well, well—have the servants asked you any questions about your mistress?

Sally. A thousand.

Grev. What answer did you give them?

Sally. None.

Grev. That was right. Now attend to my orders. You must deny my marriage with your mistress.

Sally. I won't.

Grev. What!

Sally. I will not. (*with firmness.*)

Grev. I am not to be trifled with. Will you obey my orders? (*she shakes her head.*) Then leave this house instantly.

Sally. I won't go. (*takes a chair and sits down between them.*) Her dear noble brother left her to my care—

Grev. But your charge is superseded by a husband's protection.

Sally. Act like a husband, and I'll go, bag and baggage.—'Till then, here I sit.

Mrs. Grev. Would you see us reduced to want?

Sally. Want!—Nonsense! Have not I a pair of hands strong enough to work for you? And I suppose his are strong enough to work for himself. Want, indeed!

Mrs. Grev. Leave her with me. I know I can prevail. Retire, my love.

Grev. My mind is too oppressed to meet Undermine. Tell him to return in two hours.

Mrs. Grev. Compose your spirits.

Grev. Thanks, my kind Maria. [Exit.

Sally. What! deny his own honourable, real, lawful spouse, and such a lady! And then expect me to encourage——

Mrs. Grev. Come, come—you can refuse me nothing.

Sally. I cannot say it.

Mrs. Grev. But you can be silent.

Sally. That I can.

Mrs. Grev. Then promise me to remain so, should the subject be mentioned to you.

Sally. I do.

Mrs. Grev. Aye, but seriously?

Sally. Or may I never see your dear brother again. 'Tis lucky he does not know of these doings.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Undermine. [Exit.

Mrs. Grev. Be prudent, Sally—remember.

Enter UNDERMINE.—Mrs. GREVILLE bows coldly, and retires up the Stage.

Und. This is the confident, I suppose. (*beckons her towards him.*) I'll try a dose of flattery: that costs nothing. You are as handsome as an angel.

Sally. So are you, sir.

Und. Me! no, that won't do. Ah! then I must apply to the grand specific; (*takes out a purse.*) put that in your pocket for my sake; but don't talk about it.

Sally. You shall never hear of it again depend on't.

Und. I say—a handsome couple.

Sally. Very.

Und. I suppose you had a very jolly wedding. (*she remains silent.*) Come, come, you may trust me. Why should you suppose me a babbling idiot, that cannot keep a secret?

Sally. Why should you suppose me one?

Und. (*after looking at her with suspicion.*) I'll thank you just to look at that purse again.

Sally. Certainly, sir. (*feeling for it.*) But, can you really be snug?

Und. I can—keep the purse—I insist on it—I have her—I have her.

Sally. Can you be secret?

Und. Yes.

Sally. So can I.

[*Exit.*

Und. God bless my soul!—She is gone—and the purse is gone—Somehow, I didn't manage quite so cleverly. Eh! but now for the mistress. I'll humble her, however—yes—with the earth—Madam, I am under the necessity of asking by what name I am to have the honor of addressing you.

Mrs.

Mrs. Grev. (coming forward.) By a name most unhappy, most wronged—yet, by the still proud name of Egerton. Mr Greville cannot see you at present. In two hours he will be at leisure. That is the door.

Und. Alas! madam, I pity you.

Mrs. Grev. (stifling her indignation.) I thank you for thinking I deserve it. How superior, then, am I, to that wretch, who basely defrauds worth, and drives from his friends and country a noble youth, to encounter calamity, perhaps death;—for, in the awful hour of retribution, who will pity him. That, sir, is the door. *[Exit.*

Und. God bless my soul! I have not triumphed quite so much as I expected. I don't exactly know what to do. I see no particular use in staying here, and, as she observed, that certainly is the door. God bless my soul! *[Exit.*

Enter SALLY and APRIL.

Sally. (bobbing a curtsy.) My master is not at home, sir.

April. Pugh—pugh—tell him 'tis April come to see him. I am his steward.

Sally. Indeed, sir——

April. And who are you?

Sally. I am Sally, sir—I came with them from foreign parts.

April. Then I suppose you can prattle German, Sally?——

Sally. Me jabber their outlandish stuff! Sir, I'll give you my opinion on that subject. I think, that, for a true-born Briton to speak one word of foreign lingo, is a mortal sin.

April. Bravo, English Sally! and how did you like the people?

Sally.

Sally. Not at all—a parcel of conceited chaps—pretended not to understand me, tho' I spoke as legibly to them in the real vulgar tongue as I does to you.

April. Ha, ha! And how did you like the country?

Sally. Not a bit—high frightful mountains all covered with ice. Ugh! (*shivering.*) And horrible roaring cascades, making such terrible noises. No—Taunton Dean for my money. Regular hay-fields, and corn-fields, and a good turnpike-road.

April. Egad, you are a girl to my mind.

Sally. And I am sure you are a nice old man.

April. Do you think so, ha, ha! Now to found her. Pray, Sally, how long has our young master been married? (*she is moving off silently, he gets between her and the door.*) And so you think me a nice old man, eh?

Sally. Yes, that I do—ha! ha!

April. And so they were married abroad, eh? (*Sally looks grave again, and exit.*) Then it is so. Ah, here he comes—he is grown a noble fellow. Pity that so fine a tree should be rotten at the core. Ah! I see he is a man of pleasure, he looks so miserable.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. GREVILLE.

Grev. Ah! April, the same man I left.

April. Yes, the same—body and heart.—Can you say so to me, Charles?

Grev. So, so—more torture.

April. What a charming creature! (*addressing Mrs. Greville.*) Don't be offended, madam—you look like an angel—nay don't droop—I dare say you will be one. Heaven is merciful! give me
your

your fair hand. An old man's blessing will not harm you, lady. *(wiping his eyes.)*

Mrs. Grev. He weeps. Oh Greville, let us retire. Even the pity of a villain did not move me; but the virtuous tears of that old man press on my heart with agony insupportable.

April. Oh, Charles! Charles!

Enter SALLY.

Grev. Mr. April, are you content to be a silent observer of my conduct?

April. I cannot—I cannot.

Grev. Then, sir, you must estrange yourself from this house. *[Exeunt Mr. and Mrs. Greville.]*

April. I'll go—I'll go—Is this my once noble boy—my pride?—forbid me his house!

Sally. Never mind his forbidding. I shall always be proud to see you, sir.

April. Thank you, Sally. I, that taught him to shoot flying, and now have his dogs so trained—coveys waiting for him to come and shoot them—'tis all over. Pray, (but tell me if I am impertinent,) who is that lovely creature?

Sally. The sister of Mr. Egerton. Ah! there is a man. How I loved him! Platonic, I assure you. And the regard was mutual; for, excepting the old greyhound, I was first favourite.

April. What, he likes greyhounds—then I dare say he is a fine fellow. I'll think no more of Greville—And so, your love was platonic, eh?—Ha! ha!—nay, if I can't laugh, 'tis all over with me. yes, I will leave your house. Lend me your arm, my good girl; for to say the truth, Sally, this quarter of an hour has shook me worse than the last twenty years wear. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT

A C T III.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in UNDERMINE'S House.*

Enter UNDERMINE and NICHOLAS.

Nich. Well, fir, what news of Greville? Does he confess?

Und. No.

Nich. Dear me, I should like to touch. I am an old man, and I can't, I suppose, hope to live always. Do you think I can, fir?

Und. Not always, I shou'd think.

Nich. Ah! (*sighs*) then, fir, if—ever—I should by any accident happen to die—it would be consoling to clutch the £.1000 first. Oh dear—I forgot.—Your nephew Rostrum, the young auctioneer, is below.

Und. What does he want?

Nich. Every thing—riches, title, sence, elegance; because (to express myself in one grand, energetic word), he wants the *cash*.

Und. Well, well, give him a guinea—stay, I have a thought. Suppose I make him an engine to torment Greville—but he is such a Sneakup! Were he a boy of metal, I would adopt him—but he is so honest, Nicholas.

Nich. 'Tis excusable in youth, fir.—Time and your instructions—

Und. Then he is deficient in spirit.

Nich. Lord, fir, you have never allowed him fair play: give him a purse full of gold—try that—adod, it would make a buck of me.

Und.

Und. I will try it.

Nich. And, fir,—a thought has struck me too.

Und. Out with it.

Nich. I don't think, fir, we lead very happy lives.

Und. No—not remarkably so.

Nich. Suppose then, fir, when you get the Greville estate, and I get the thousand pounds, that we get rid of the cold damps and shiverings.

Und. Aye, but how!—how!

Nich. Lord, fir, don't you see, how the great contrive it. Instead of passing twelve o'clock at night in darkness, and the blue devils—their houses are illuminated, full of company and jollity.

Und. And a most excellent plan it is—I'll do it.—Yes, I'll pass the next fifty years of my life in luxury and honourable uprightnes.

“*Nich.* Except I suppose any snug bit of roguery shou'd occur in our way.

“*Und.* Certainly, and I'll become a man of taste and virtù.

“*Nich.* What become a man of virtue! Sir?

“*Und.* No—no—you blockhead—I'll explain to you, Nicholas—Virtù is an admiration of every thing usefess, or monstrous; as old books full of lies—tea cups—bad fixpences—butterflies—kittens with two heads, and so forth; while Virtue is, that—I say Virtue is a—every body knows what Virtue is.”

Nich. And edod I'll have my jollifications, and who knows but in time I may learn to laugh again. [Exit.

Und. Now how to provide handsomely for my nephew, without it's costing me a farthing—I have it—marry him to Rose Sidney—ah! let me alone for management. Ah, here is my young auctioneer.

Enter

Enter ROSTRUM.

Rof. How do you do, fir. (*bowing low.*)

Und. Curse your bowing—come here, fir,—hold up your head.

Rof. Civility, fir, in my line is every thing.

Und. Yes, but I am going to make a dashing buck of you, and in that line—civility will be all against you.

Rof. What, fir, am I to leave my pulpit,—and part with my little hammer.

Und. (*throws him a purse.*) There is something better than your little hammer.

Rof. Oh dear, and what am I to do with all this ?

Und. What you please.

Rof. I'll go to a sale.

Und. Go to a sale—I gave it you to throw to the devil.

Rof. I'll take it to my attorney's.

Und. Take it to Bond-street—purchase expensive cloaths, horses, carriages—I'll make a man of you.

Rof. Well, I shou'd not have thought that becoming a sprig of fashion was the way to make a man of me.

Und. I say, how do you feel with a heavy purse ?

Rof. Quite light, fir—the cash certainly loosens a man's joints, and gives a sort of a—I—don't—care—a—damn—for—any—body, kind of a feel.—

(*strutting about.*)

Und. Obey me, and my fortune's yours—disobey me, and you are a beggar. In the first place, forget your absurd auctioneer jargon—you understand.—

Rof. Sir, I take your bidding—I mean I take your hint.

Und.

Und. And get rid of that respectful manner, the age of supple adulation is passed; bend now to the great, and they will sink you lower.—No, you must assume a superiority—you must hold up your head.—Do you think, for instance, you can get rid of your respect for me?

Ros. With the greatest ease possible.

Und. Very well. Observe, every thing may be done by management. I who am now look'd up to—aye, sir, look'd up to; once kept you, know,—a paltry grocer's shop.

Ros. It was a chandler's shop.

Und. Was it—well—well—how have I become what I am—by management—for instance—I am thought to possess a strong understanding—is it so?

Ros. It never struck me that you did.

Und. Very well—again—the world calls me a man of scrupulous integrity—am I so?

Ros. Certainly not, sir.

Und. Very well, then—all the effect of management. Say little—yet never seem ignorant; but by significant nods and smiles, seem to say, I know all—but won't tell.

Ros. Oh! when ever I don't understand a subject, I must nod.

Und. Yes.

Ros. Then, my dear uncle, I shall nod my head off to a certainty.

Und. No, no, you may manage—get a smattering of politics at a party bookseller's—morality you may learn at the playhouses—mechanism at Merlin's.—and the fine arts——

Ros. At my own auction room.

Und. Confound your auction room—away and begin your career.—Stay; a little trifle I had forgot—I am going to marry you to a——

Ros.

Ros. Marry me!—Oh lock, fir! (*with bashfulness.*)

Und. Oh lock, fir!—You sneaking——

Ros. Upon my soul I meant sink me—I meant to say—so you are going to marry me. Sink me.

Und. Yes; and to a lady who has all the requisites for an excellent wife. In the first place, she is esteemed beautiful by all who have seen her—fine estate in Worcester-shire.

Ros. Fine estate! I shou'd like to sell it—freehold or copyhold?

Und. Freehold, I believe.

Ros. Within a ring fence.

Und. How the devil should I know. In the next place, she is remarkably sensible and witty—that I had from a gentleman who says her estate is the prettiest in the county.

Ros. A most excellent authority.

Und. And thirdly, she has a crowd of lovers, which certainly proves——

Ros. That her estate is the prettiest in the county; quite natural, for now a-days no gentleman comes more frequently to the hammer than little Cupid—but I must away; this purse makes me very fidgetty.

Und. Success attend you—don't forget my lessons—(*they nod to each other.*)—Management is every thing—remember—hypocrisy. [*Exit.*

Ros. Hypocrisy! I am sure I ought to nod now, for thank heaven that is a subject I am completely ignorant of. [*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE II.—*Bond Street.*

Enter EGERTON in a military greatcoat and cross belt, with every appearance of distress, and dejection of mind and body.

Eger. 'Tis strange, that I should pass unheeded amidst a crowd of friends, that none should know me; surely the necromancers of old were fools to study life away in vain attempts to become impervious to human sight, when, to render themselves invisible to their nearest friends, 'twas only to put on the garb of wretchedness. (*takes out a miniature.*) This is the only treasure I have left—my sweetest Rose. (*kisses the picture.*) But what have I to do with love or happiness. Yet I'll not part with thee, sweet remembrancer, tho' nature's calls are most imperious, and I sicken with hunger.

Enter ROSTRUM.

Rof. Plague take this purse; I don't know what to do with it. I don't care two-pence for horses—I hate gaming. I can't drive curricles. And as for the once concealed charms of the fair—no need of a purse for that—now a-days, they are all to be seen gratis.—Heigho! I am no more fit to be a blood, than my uncle is to be a bishop—I have nothing to do—no where to go—Oh! what a cursed bore it is to be a gentleman.—Eh! what have we here—Oh! I see a soldier returned from the wars in the full dress of victory.—As we *conoscanti* say, 'tis a grand head, and in nature's best manner. On canvass it would fetch twenty guineas, but on the shoulders of a poor soldier nobody will give sixpence for it—throw this

to the devil—no—suppose, instead, I try to get my name inserted in a better catalogue.—Sir, your most obedient—this fine sharp air gives a keen appetite.

Eger. It does indeed.

Rof. Comical place this Bond Street—brilliant equipages dashing along—most of the owners tho' are in the predicament of your coat—rather out at the elbows.

Eger. Sir!

Rof. I don't mean to offend.—You seem a stranger; give me leave, sir, to shew you the lions—that small gentleman, with a large coronet, is a new peer of ninety-seven—that lady all the bucks are ogling, is an old woman of ninety-seven—that seven feet giant is a milliner—that gentleman running across the way to shake hands with a bailiff, is over head and ears in debt; don't be surpris'd, he is in parliament—in the phaeton with little ponies sits a female gambler, and a great orator: The female gambler, the great orator, and the little ponies are all upon sale, and may be knocked down to the best bidder.—I was once a delightful auctioneer—my present trade is buckism—pray, sir, what may your trade be?

Eger. Alexander's!

Rof. By my soul 'tis an interesting picture, and it shan't be my fault if it has not a gilt frame. Sir, will you have the goodness to lend me twenty pounds?

Eger. Do you mean to insult me?

Rof. I do not indeed—will you then have the goodness to let me lend *you* twenty pounds.

Eger. No, sir.

Rof. Proud as Lucifer—I'll lose some money to him—a remarkable clear bright sun-shiny day.

Eger. Yes.

Rof. I'll bet you ten pounds it rains—

Eger.

Eger. Madman—leave me.

Rof. Leave you! oh very well—if you insist—good bye to you. (*drops his purse, which Egerton picks up.*)

Eger. Sir; here is a purse which you dropt.

Rof. I dropt—oh! you fly dog—Is that your trick—ring dropping—a brilliant and a draft—I understand it all—my dear fellow it won't do—oh for shame of yourself. [Exit.

Eger. A most extraordinary character, but benevolence fills his heart, and I will not insult it, by refusing to take from his purse such benefits as nature so strongly craves. (*Sally crosses the stage singing a ballad,*

“ 'Tis of a sailor that I write,

“ Who on the seas took great delight.”)

Do my eyes deceive me—my sister's servant in England. Sally!

Sally. (*turning round and running into his arms.*)

Oh! my dear master; alive!—he! he! he!—ah! but you are not well.

Eger. Not quite well—

Sally. And in poverty.

Eger. Oh! 'tis the soldier's lean inheritance. He must feel nothing a misfortune—but disgrace. But tell me—why do I meet you in England—surely, Sally, you have not deserted Maria?

Sally. I desert her!—have you received no letter?

Eger. None. You seem agitated—is my sister well?

Sally. Yes—heaven bless her—

Eger. Then I guess the cause—she is married?—(*she looks perplexed.*)—Ah! did'st thou not hear me—she is then married?—(*a pause.*)—no answer—damnation—the thought is madness.—On thy soul, I charge

I charge thee, speak. Is she a wife?—yet silent—
oh! while strength and reason hold—lead me to
her. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in GREVILLE'S house.*

Enter Mrs. GREVILLE.

Eger. (without.) Where is she?

Mrs. Grev. Ah! that voice.—It is my brother?

Enter EGERTON—he sinks into a chair.

Eger. Stand off.—

Mrs. Grev. What means my brother?

Eger. Come not near me but answer.—Art
thou a wife?

Mrs. Grev. Ah! have I not sworn to conceal my
marriage?—Oh! William!—pardon my silence—
I am most unhappy, yet most innocent.

Eger. The laws of honour are simple unsophisti-
cated—thou art an angel, or—'tis plain—I see the
burning blush of guilt—and are my sufferings for
thee thus repaid?

Mrs. Grev. Sufferings! oh! tell me—

Eger. I will tell thee, for thou hast deserved
to know them—When I had given thee all, I
fought my fortunes in a German regiment in the
pay of England; we were ordered to the West In-
dies—there, slowly recovering from the pestilential
fever of the island, my emaciated state would
not allow me to dress in the ranks with my usual
alacrity; the consequence was, that from the cane
of a young ensign I received on my shoulders a
blow. (*rising.*) Yes, a blow—in the paroxysm of
madness I felled him with the earth. (*sinks again into*

the chair.) Yet, it was cowardly in me, for it was a boy that struck me.

Mrs. Grev. Oh! (*weeps.*)

Eger. The punishment of death I was prepared to meet—but Maria! picture the agony of this proud heart, when I was ordered to the halberts—yes, to be punished with ignominy.

Mrs. Grev. Oh! my brother.

Eger. I shall soon conclude—I flew with desperation on my guard, hoping from them to meet the death I longed for—I was deceived, they favoured my escape—at that moment thy image rushed upon my heart, and nature bade me struggle with my fate, and find a sister—I have found her, and may the heavy curse—

Mrs. Grev. (*catching his arm.*) Oh! do not curse me—suspend it but a day—an hour—grant me this, William, or you do not love me.

Eger. Not love thee!—unhappy girl—even now spite of it's wrongs, my heart throbs as it would burst to meet thee.—Yes—one embrace, for her honoured sake who bore thee—no more—curse on my feeble nature. (*sinks into the chair.*)

Mrs. Grev. Ah! you look faint.

Eger. It is not strange—I have not lately tasted food.

Mrs. Grev. Oh! William, protect your valued life—take this—on my knees let me entreat it—

Eger. (*rising with a smile of dignified disdain, and dropping the purse.*) Do not insult me, girl!

Mrs. Grev. Indeed I meant it not.—Oh! Greville, come and save my heart from breaking.

Eger. Greville! ah!—that then is the villain's name.

[*Exit hastily.*]

Mrs. Grev. Oh stay!—my brother—hear me!

[*Exit, following.*]

SCENE IV.—*An Apartment at UNDERMINE'S,**Enter ROSE.*

Rose. Heigh ho! no information yet of my dear Egerton; I fear to enquire for him, for should my guardian, Undermine, know of my attachment, I should become the object of his fixed malevolence.—pshaw—here comes his nephew to make love to me.

Enter ROSTRUM.

Rof. There she stands.

Rose. (*sings.*)

“Deel take the wars, that hurried Willie from me.”

Rof. Who the devil is Willie—I feel very awkward. (*aside.*) How do you do ma’am?

Rose. Now for a specimen of a modern lover.

Rof. I hear, ma’am, you have a charming estate.

Rose. A modern lover indeed—which estate, in my opinion, fir, you value above it’s merits.

Rof. I beg your pardon, ma’am—no—when I am call’d in to value an estate, I——

Rose. Sir!——

Rof. Zounds! no, ma’am; what I wish to speak of is quite another article, I mean quite another lot—I mean quite another affair—’tis not the fine estate in Worcestershire; but, (*blushing.*) but the holy estate of matrimony, ma’am.

Rose. Well fir, what of it?—pray speak?

Rof. (*aside.*) I am tongue-tied—’tis damned hard, I can only preach in my own pulpit.

Rose. What did you say, fir?

Rof.

Rof. I said ma'am, that—I'll try my uncle's way.
(*nods to her.*) You understand?

Rose. Indeed I do not.

Rof. Nor I neither. (*aside.*)—Ma'am!

Rose. Sir!

Rof. I say—(*aside.*) I have it—I'll pour forth a torrent of eloquence.—Oh! miss, believe me, I despise riches—ah! how blessed should I be to live with you in a retired and peaceful cottage; situate in a delightful sporting country, with attached and detached offices, roomy cellaring, and commodious attics.

Rose. Sir!

Rof. Together would we inhale the vernal breeze in an acre and a half of garden ground, crammed with esculents and choice fruit trees—well stocked and cropped.

Rose. The poor man is mad.

Rof. With content smiling round us. I would not languish for town enjoyments—no—tho' situated only an agreeable distance from the turnpike road, with the accommodation of a stage coach passing daily to London.

Rose. But sir, I hate a cottage—and when I marry—

Rof. The premises may be viewed with tickets, and immediate possession had.

Rose. Quite—quite mad.—

Rof. Well, miss—after all that, don't you love me?

Rose. No—(*sings.*)

“The pride of all nature was sweet Willie O!”

Rof. Damn Willie—my name is Tom.

Rose. Tom, is it? ha, ha!

Rof. She is a sweet creature—perhaps, ma'am,

your heart has been previously disposed of by private contract?

Rose. It has—(*sings.*)

“He wou’d be a soldier, wou’d sweet Willie O.”

Ros. Oh! Willie is a soldier is he? then what chance has a simple auctioneer, with his little hammer, against a soldier with his long sword—so ma’am, you can’t bid for me—I mean you can’t love me?

Rose. No, fir.

Ros. What a pity—is there no agreeable attitude I could put myself into—no way—what would I give for one kifs.

Rose. I’ll tell you how you may obtain twenty.

Ros. How?

Rose. By giving up the lover, and assuming a character I am sure you will succeed in—a sincere friend.

Ros. Indeed! thank you—quite happiness enough for me—only place me next to Sweet Willie O in your heart, and I am satisfied—what shall I say—I’ll serve you with fidelity—pugh!—that I would do for any body else—I’ll—I’ll fight for you; and that I would not do for any body else.

Rose. Oh! fir, could I but learn where my soldier is——

Ros. I’ll run and enquire at the War Office.

Rose. (*embracing him.*) Thank you, dear fir.

Ros. Oh charming—farewell. Would it not be as well tho’ if I knew his name, because, if I ask, the clerks for Sweet Willie O! they may not comprehend——

Rose. True! true!—his name is William Eger-ton.

Ros. Happy fellow—one more friendly hug.

Enter

Enter at opposite doors UNDERMINE and APRIL.

April. Hey-day!

Und. (aside.) There's management—he'll do—he'll do.

April. More vexation!—Shame girl—in the arms of a stranger!—

Und. He is my nephew—will be my heir—and he is a very clever fellow. (*Rostrum nods.*)

April. He has a queer way of shewing it.

Und. A tolerable well-looking man, is not he?

April. I can't tell.

Und. He has an excellent heart.

April. I don't know.

Und. Do you think I would deceive you.

April. I can't say—you may be all alike—my grandson has ruined my fortune—Greville has ruined my happiness, and, perhaps, I may find him a coxcomb—my Rose ungrateful—and you a scoundrel—so I'll to the country again, and in the mean time, my dear, you shall see as much of this virtuous town as you possibly can, out of a two pair of stairs window. (*Rose and Rostrum kiss their hands to each other.*) [*Exeunt April and Rose.*]

Und. You are a clever fellow—an exceeding clever fellow.—I say, how did you manage to win her so soon.

Ros. I don't know—I believe I have an odd agreeable tickling way with me. Did you never see me coax the ladies to bid at my auctions?—adieu uncle—

Und. Come back, sir—I can't part with you—this match with management, I conclude, is as good as settled.

Ros. Exactly.

Und. Very well—now you must get a mistress—

Ros. A what?

Und.

Und. A mistress—you rascal—do you blush?

Ros. I blush!—sir, I blush to think, that you should think, that I should think of blushing (*fanning himself with his hat.*)—only getting a mistress, when a man is going to be married——

Und. Well, sir.

Ros. I can only say the necessity of it does not strike me.

Und. Necessity!—I tell you 'tis the etiquette.

Ros. Oh! the etiquette is it?

Und. Now for my grand attack on Greville—follow me, sir. [*Exit.*

Ros. This will never do for me. Oh! I foresee a dissolution of partnership here—but he is a relation—what then—am I therefore to sacrifice principle to duty—no—I remember our school adage was “*Amicus Plato sed majis amica veritas;*” which I thus interpret—Undermine is my uncle, but integrity is my father. [*Exit.*

ACT

A C T IV.

SCENE I.—*A Library in GREVILLE'S House.*

Servant introduces UNDERMINE and ROSTRUM.

Und. Tell your master I wait for him——

Ser. My master is from home—I will acquaint my mistress with your arrival—— [Exit.

Und. A noble mansion, is not it?

Ros. A charming tenement indeed. What is the ground rent?

Und. How should I know? Here she comes. What think you of this incumbrance with it, eh? Is not she beautiful?

Ros. Very; but she seems unhappy.

Und. 'Tis the more incumbent in you then to endeavour to make her otherwise——

Enter Servant.

Ser. My mistress.

[Exit.

Enter Mrs. GREVILLE.

Mrs. Grev. Gentlemen, I expect Mr. Greville home every moment. Oh, would he were come!
(*aside.*)

Und. Madam, Mr. Rostrum, my nephew—now address her.

Ros. But she is in tears, sir.

Und. What's that to you, sir? tears! nonsense! Is she not a mistress?

Ros. Is she not a woman?

Und.

Und. Come let us have a specimen of the agreeable tickling way you were talking of.

Ros. (*approaching her.*) What shall I say? Ma'am, what a capital room, ma'am, this would be for a sale.

Mrs. Grev. (*with surprise.*) Very probably, sir

Ros. That is all, ma'am.

Und. S'death, is that your tickling way? Make love to her, you rascal.

Ros. Yes, sir.

Und. Be sprightly.

Ros. Yes, sir.

Und. Dance up to her, you dog.

Ros. Yes, sir. (*addressing Mrs. Greville in a melancholy tone.*) You are the most charming creature.

Mrs. Grev. Sir! (*shrinking in the alarm.*)—(*Enter GREVILLE.*) Oh, I am glad you are returned.

Grev. What is the matter?

Mrs. Grev. Nothing.

Grev. No insult has been offered?

Mrs. Grev. No—I am so timid—indeed, quite childish; but Oh! I have a tale to tell you, Charles. Yet that wretch shall not triumph in our agitation. No—until he is gone I am calm.

Grev. Matchless girl! Come, sir, dispatch.

Und. My nephew, sir. (*Greville bows.*) If I can but put him off his guard.—Now is your time. (*to Rostrum.*)

GREVILLE and UNDERMINE sit at a table, with their eyes fixed on ROSTRUM, who addresses Mrs. GREVILLE in dumb shew.—She appears distressed at his attentions.

Und. These, sir, are the ready money securities. Bonds to the amount of £. 5,000. (*Greville snatching*

snatching the papers, and eagerly returning to his observation.) Bravo! (*eying Rolstrum and Mrs. Greville.*)
 ese are exchequer bills—that is an India bond.

Grev. (quitting his chair and running to his wife.)
 I cannot bear it. 'Tis torture insupportable! I will declare thy innocence.—Poverty, death I can endure; but not thy tears, Maria. Mr. Undermine.——

Mrs. Grev. Hold—Greville—!

Enter SALLY.

Sally. Stand aside; here comes somebody will soon tell who is who. I'll get out of the way. [*Exit.*

Enter EGERTON.

Eger. Who answers to the name of Greville?

Grev. I do.

Eger. Give me your hand.

Grev. What do you mean?

Eger. (seizing his hand.) The gripe of everlasting friendship—for 'tis death must part us. You are a villain. (*presents pistols. Greville snatches one, Mrs. Greville rushes between 'em.*)

Mrs. Grev. Oh my brother!

Grev. Brother! (*throws away his pistol.*)

Mrs. Grev. Oh raise not your arm against——
 (*pauses.*)

Eger. Who? (*Mrs. Greville pauses.*)

Grev. Her husband.

Eger. }
 & } Her husband!

Und. }

Grev. Yes; spite of the poverty that name entails on me, spite of impending ruin, my heart triumphantly exults in proclaiming her my loved, my honored

honored wife! (*kneeling to her.*) By my soul, Maria, I would not raise another blush upon that angel cheek to purchase the world's dominion.

Und. Then the estate is mine. Strut, you dog.
(*to Rostrum.*)

Rof. I do, sir. (*reluctantly.*)

Eger. My darling sister! my pride! let me now hold thee to my heart with rapture. (*puts his handkerchief to his eyes.*)

Und. Tears from a soldier! (*sneeringly.*)

Eger. Unfeeling man! did not tears of joy start from me at beholding beauty and innocence restored to their native lustre, I were unworthy of the name of soldier. And, sir, it may be prudent for you to remember, that a soldier's heart is like his sword, formed of tempered steel; for while it bends with sympathizing pity to the touch of woe, it can resume its springing energy to punish arrogance, or crush oppression.

Rof. Strut, uncle!

Und. No, no—a little is very well. It would not be feeling. When will it be convenient Mr. Greville to give possession?

Grev. Immediately. (*with spirit.*)

Und. I say—I'll triumph by and by—at present we'll go home, snug and quiet. Ten thousand a year, here is management, you dog. [*Exit.*]

Eger. (*to Rostrum who is following.*) Sir, allow me with gratitude to return this purse. You will find that I have greatly benefited by your generosity.

Rof. Nay, don't.

Eger. I insist, sir.

Rof. Conceited fellow! but I must away to enquire for Sweet Willie O.

Grev. Come, Mr. Egerton.

Rof.

Ros. (*turning round.*) Egerton! did I hear rightly? Sir, one word, if you please. Will you take this purse again?

Eger. No, sir.

Ros. You won't! We'll see that. Have you forgot a lady called Rose Sydney?

Eger. Have I forgot her! (*sighing.*)

Ros. I have just parted from her, and she said—will you take this purse?

Eger. Excuse me—but tell me—

Ros. She said—you had better take it, or the devil a word will you get out of me.

Eger. Well, well. (*takes it.*)

Ros. Now you are an honest fellow again—she loves you—sincerely—and if you will meet me in an hour in Berkley Square, she shall tell you so.

Eger. Don't trifle with my feelings.

Ros. By heaven, I am serious. You shall have a kiss, and I'll have another. And I say—bring a parson with you.

Eger. I don't know any. Who will introduce me?

Ros. Who will introduce you to a parson! look at your friend in your right hand, my dear fellow—he is gentleman usher to all mankind, in court or in city.—In public, he will escort you to a great man in his state chamber, or in private to a pretty woman in her bed chamber. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Grev. You are not happy, Greville.

Grev. Yes, Maria—though bereft of fortune; tho' a prison opens its gates to receive us, yet blessed with thy love, and my heart's approbation, I feel that I am happy. Accept my homage, Oh, celestial virtue! Nature's sweet nurse—'tis thou alone can pour a healing balm upon the wounded spirit, and lull the throbbing heart to rest.

Enter

Enter SALLY.

Sally. (*speaking as she enters*) Oh, now 'tis Mrs. Greville, is it? Did not I say it would be so? Now every thing is as it should be, and my tongue can wag again. (*to Egerton.*) Oh my dear master—Well, you must tell me how you have been, and where you have been, and—sir (*to Greville*) I am entirely satisfied with your conduct, and to shew I am perfectly reconciled, you may if you please (*she wipes her mouth, Greville smiles, and salutes her.*) But here am I talking a heap of nonsense, while he wants rest and refreshment.

Mrs. Grev. Oh true.

Eger. Maria! how could I mistake the glow of virtue for the blush of guilt! This lovely cheek resembles that of the chaste queen of night, which can only be illumined by a ray from heaven. Come, my sister. (*takes her hand; Sally on the other side presents hers; he smiles, takes it, and exeunt.*)

Grev. Ah! here comes my early, my excellent old friend. Circumstances obliged me to behave harshly to him; but I know the way to his honest heart.

Enter APRIL.

April. (*softly.*) Huzza! he is my own boy again. Ecod, I could jump over the moon. But he shan't see my joy, that is—if I can help it. Ha, ha! No, he has insulted my regard for him, and it demands satisfaction.

Grev. Well, good April—!

April. (*assuming sulkiness.*) Called for orders, sir.

Grev. Sir! is that language to a friend, to your own boy? Come, if I have been a little frolicsome, pray who was my instructor?

April.

April. (Stifling a laugh, and appearing sulky.) I don't know.

Grev. No—don't you remember the mischievous pranks you taught me?

April. Yes—Ha, ha!—No I don't.

Grev. What! not making me fill the apothecary's boots with cold water?

April. (aside) He, he, he! (sulkily.) It was not cold water, it was hot hasty-pudding.

Grev. True; and then April, in our shooting excursions, how you assisted me in climbing the hills. I think I feel at this moment the pressure of your friendly hand upon my infant fingers. I wonder how it would feel now. (presents his hand.)

April. (no longer able to resist his joy, turns round and embraces him.) Oh! my dear Charley boy! (sobbing.) Now you shall see how merry an old man can be, ha, ha—! The old pye-balled poney is dead tho'. Ecod, I'll tell you a good joke. My dog of a grandson has spent every shilling I am worth, ha, ha—! But you look grave.

Grev. Have I not reason?

April. What reason?

Grev. Are you, then, ignorant, that by my marriage I forfeit my father's estate to Mr. Undermine?

April. Eh! what! forfeit! 'Tis impossible.

Grev. Such is my father's will.

April. That your father's will? Then my old master, heaven rest his soul, is gone to the devil to a certainty. But Undermine can't think of keeping it.

Grev. Ah, you then know little of Mr. Undermine.

April. But I will know him, aye thoroughly. There must be villany. I'll to him directly.—He

E possess

possess the Greville estate—no, no! Tho' his majesty has not a more peaceable subject in his dominions than myself, yet, rather than that, I would throttle him to a certainty. Come, come, cheer up. That's right—don't droop; for while the left side is the stoutest, I warrant it will some how contrive to prop up the other.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in UNDERMINE'S house.*

Enter UNDERMINE meeting ROSTRUM.

Und. Well, nephew, I am a made man; and if I could but see you married to Miss Sydney.

Ros. (*aside.*) Now for a little swaggering!—Make yourself easy. I mean to marry her in an hour.

Und. The devil you do! But how will you get April's consent?

Ros. (*snapping his fingers.*) That for his consent. I'll carry her off.

Und. You don't say so!

Ros. I will—sink me!

Und. But are you sure of her consent?

Ros. I don't care that for her consent neither. I'll carry her off, whether she will or no.

Und. Amazing! I didn't think it was in you. But, I say—you must have somebody to assist in carrying her off.

Ros. I will—I'll get two of our auction-porters, careful fellows—Carried home a Venus the other day without the smallest fracture.

Und. Nonsense!—They won't do.

Ros.

Ros. No! Then I'll get an officer in the army to assist me in the elopement.

Und. That's right—they are used to it. Now for management! Take that. Observe—that key——

Ros. Is a patent one.

Und. Psha! It opens the escrutoire up-stairs. In the right-hand drawer you will find the title deeds of her estate, which April put into my care; and possession——

Ros. Is every thing.—Bravo! This is luck indeed. (*aside.*)

Und. But stay—I must not seem to consent to your carrying her off.

Ros. Certainly not.

Und. I must resist you, and you must push me about.

Ros. I will.

Und. Ah! but may I depend on you?

Ros. You may, upon my soul. Good bye, ha, ha!

Und. I say—this is management.

Ros. It is.

Und. You'll trick the old one.

Ros. I mean it, I assure you, ha, ha! [*Exit.*]

Und. I did not think it was in him.

Enter NICHOLAS.

Nich. I give you joy, sir, with all my heart and soul.

Und. Aye, Nicholas, 'tis all settled, so say no more about it. All quite settled.

Nich. Except the one thousand pound, sir.

Und. What? Oh, true. But at present I have not any cash in the house.



Nich. A check on your banker, fir.

Und. Eh! But without pen and ink——

Nich. Here they are, fir.

Und. Well, well—a thousand pounds isn't it?

Nich. And interest.

Und. Interest!—It has not been due an hour.

Nich. A little interest, fir.

Und. How much?

Nich. Five hundred pounds, fir.

Und. (*aside.*) Here's a damn'd villain.—There's no need for hurry.

Nich. I am an old man, and have no time to lose. (*presenting the pen.*)

Und. (*avoiding him.*) You must hire servants.

Nich. I will, fir. (*pursuing with pen.*)

Und. I mean to sup in my new mansion.

Nich. You shall, fir.

Und. And let me have a band of music——

Nich. I'll go directly. I can hire them in St. James's street.

Und. Aye, go directly, Nicholas.

Nich. And as your banker lives in Pall Mall, it will be quite handy.

Und. By and by.

Nich. It must be paid directly; for being due for a little roguery, it of course becomes a debt of honor.

Enter APRIL (unobserved.)

Und. Zounds! don't teize so. Interest forsooth! Consider what an enormous sum a thousand pounds is, for only just popping a will into the fire. I won't be hurried, I tell you. [*Exit.*]

Nich.

Nich. And if I had popped it into the fire, what a pretty way I should be in. Ah! you had no such fool to deal with. No, it is sewed up safe here in my coat. By day the comforter of my heart, by night the companion of my pillow; and it shall not be burnt till the thousand pounds is paid. Ave, and with swinging interest too. (*alarmed.*) Ah! Mr. April, I did not see you.

April. What do you say?—I am very deaf.

Nich. I am devilish glad of it. Then all is snug.

April. Burnt will! (*aside.*)

Nich. Mr. April.—

April. How to fathom it—— (*aside.*)

Nich. I say, I shall be steward now—'tis a great undertaking; but I suppose I shall contrive not to lose much by it.

April. I dare say you will.—A thousand pounds.

Nich. Prepare the tenants for my arrival.

April. Yes; I'll tell them old Nick is coming among them. What the devil did he say about sewing up?

Nich. The country air may be of service.

April. Yes, with the help of that, you may live some weeks.

Nich. Oh dear! some weeks—A large quantity of years, you mean? Well, good bye, April. (*they embrace, and April lays his hand on the left side, where the will is deposited.*)

April. Eh—what—By heaven I felt something like parchment—If it should be—I'll be convinced—Good bye, Nick—a last embrace. (*embraces him closely, and feels for the parchment.*)

Nich. 'Tis suffocation!

April. 'Tis parchment.

Nich. Zounds! it had like to have been a last embrace indeed.

April. How shall I get at that parchment? I can easily persuade him he is ill—perhaps by that means—I'll try—once more.

Nich. No, no—there is my hand.

April. (*taking it.*) Eh!—what! good God!

Nich. What is the matter?

April. Let me look at you—good God!—don't be alarmed.

Nich. But I am very much alarmed. Am I ill?

April. (*shakes his head.*) I dare say you feel—flurried.

Nich. Exceedingly.

April. Palpitation at the heart?—'tis parchment?

Nich. Oh yes—very sudden this. I felt quite well just now.

April. Did you? That's an alarming symptom; for I have always observed, that nothing makes the physician look so grave, as the patient's saying he feels quite well. My dear friend, send for one directly.

Nich. I don't know what to say. They sometimes save your life; but then it is sure to cost you a guinea.

April. (*aside.*) And saving yours is certainly not worth it. But I see you are a philosopher—You are prepared for death.

Nich. Oh dear! not at all—I am quite terrified. If perspiration is good for me, I feel that copiously.—What shall I do?

April. Come, for old acquaintance sake, my grandson shall attend you gratis.

Nich. Oh, thank you.

April.

April. Wonderful physician! Never lost a patient—! (*aside.*) because he never had a patient to lose. I expect him here in five minutes. You had better go to your room.

Nich. Aye.

April. Keep yourself warm.

Nich. I will.

April. Above all things, don't change your clothes.

Nich. I won't.

April. Shall I button your coat?

Nich. No, no—I'll do that myself.

April. Go, I'll follow, and talk to you of your latter end, and keep up your spirits.

Nich. I believe I am dying. 'Tis very good of you to get me a doctor gratis. (*exit, and re-enters.*) But I say—who is to pay the apothecary?

April. I'll settle that too.—(*Exit Nicholas.*)—Now for Undermine—If he have one spark of humanity in his composition, I'll call it forth; if not, and I can get that coat——

Enter UNDERMINE.

Und. Nicholas! What April here—I guess your errand, and am forry, fir, I cannot continue you as steward.

April. (*aside.*) I your steward! No, that is not my errand. I am a feeble fellow, sliding out of the world; but Greville is a noble fellow rising into it. 'Tis respecting him I come. You must assist him. How is he to live?

Und. (*Sneeringly.*) Oh! his integrity will support him.

April. True; but consider what a way you
E 4 would

would be in, if you had nothing but your integrity to support you.

Und. Sir, I see you only want to trifle with me.

April. True; I only want a trifle of you.

Und. I am flint.

April. Well; but even flint, when properly hit, will send forth warm, vivid sparks.

Und. I must leave you. Time presses.

April. So do his wants.

Und. A nobleman is waiting for me.

April. A bailiff is waiting for him.

Und. If you proceed, expect some personal insult.

April. Throw your purse at me. Come—

(Takes hold of his coat.)

Und. I shall burst with rage.

April. They will famish with hunger.

Und. Unhand me, I say. *(strikes April from him.)*

April. What, a blow! *(with subdued irritation.)*

Und. Yes; take him that.

April. No, no, that you meant for myself, and I'll take it, so you will give something better to poor Greville.

Und. I will not.

April. *(shaking him.)* You scoundrel! And do you suppose, that because I would submit to a blow to endeavour to save a friend from ruin, that I want the spirit of a man to resent an indignity. Ask my pardon.

Und. Pardon!

April. Aye.

Und. I do—help! help!

April. On your knees, or your last hour is come.

Und.

Und. Well, I do—I do, Help! help!

Enter Two Servants.—April throws Undermine from him, who retreats behind the Servants.

Und. Leave my house, fir, leave my house, By heaven, I'll be revenged.

April. By hell, you are a villain.

[*Exeunt, severally.*]

ACT

A C T V.

SCENE I.—*Outside of UNDERMINE'S house.*

Enter ROSTRUM *and* EGERTON *with caution.*

Rof. That is the house.

Eger. Does that contain—

Rof. Softly—recollect, fir, you are only a fubaltern in this affair, and that I am your commanding officer; fo, obey orders.

Eger. How do you intend to proceed?

Rof. I am too great a general to communicate my plan of operations; I fhall do my duty in giving you poffeffion of the lovely citadel, and then take care and do your duty. (*going.*) I fay, when the alarm is given, do you retreat—you know how to do that, I dare fay. [*Exit into the house.*]

Eger. I fear to trust my happinefs. Can it be poffible that my adored girl ftill thinks with kindnefs on her poor Egerton? Ah! a noife—what an anxious moment! (*retires.*)

Enter ROSTRUM *from the house, with* Mifs SYDNEY *in one hand, and repelling* UNDERMINE *with the other.*

Rof. I will carry her off.

Und. You fhall not, fir, I am her guardian.

Rof. Do you think I care for guardians? dare to ftir hand or foot, and I'll crush you into atoms, you old fcoundrel. (*during this, Egerton discovers himfelf to Mifs Sydney, who runs into his arms.*)

[*They Exeunt.*]

Und.

Und. That will do—zounds! be quiet—they are gone, I tell you.

Rof. Eh! so they are, ha, ha!—well, how did I do it?

Und. Oh, capitally—(*rubbing his arm.*) has the soldier got her?

Rof. Yes.

Und. That's as it should be,

Rof. Exactly,

Und. Well!

Rof. Well!

Und. Are you mad?

Rof. What is the matter?

Und. The matter! why don't you go?

Rof. Where?

Und. Why zounds! how can you marry the girl if you stand here.

Rof. I marry! oh, very true. I declare it quite escaped me.

Und. 'Sdeath! run.

Rof. I am a-going, a-going, a-going—(*returning.*) Sir! where shall I bring the bride?

Und. To Greville's. Go along.

Rof. (*returning.*) I say—this is management.

Und. Yes, yes—but go along.

Rof. (*returning.*) Sir, you would make a capital puff at an auction.

Und. Zounds! go. (*exit Rostrum.*) So that's settled—and now to Greville's in triumph. I'll walk in with erected crest, and—ugh! confound the fellow, how he has bruised me! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment at Mr. UNDERMINE'S.*

NICHOLAS *discovered on a couch.* APRIL *sitting by him with a book.*

Nich. I wish the doctor were come.—Bless me, I hope I shan't die—I don't care what pain I suffer, so I don't die. Oh! for a swinging rheumatism that would last me twenty years—do read a little to me.

April. (reading.) “Crumbs of comfort for an aged finner.”

Nich. These books are quite new to me.

Enter PLETHORA.

April. (apart to Plethora.) Have you had my letter?

Pleth. Yes.

April. Don't forget—'tis the coat I want—and remember you are a physician, not a farrier.

Pleth. I will—and if I succeed, remember you tip. How do you do?

Nich. That's what I want to know of you.

Pleth. True—oh I see——

Nich. Shall I detail my symptoms?

Pleth. No—'tis a clear case—if you were to talk for an hour, I should not know more of your complaint than I do at present.

April. (apart.) Bleed him—

Pleth. (feels his pulse.) I will. You have no objection to part with a little blood?

Nich. I have an objection to part with any thing.

Pleth. Except to advantage. Now, if by sinking an ounce or two of blood, you can produce an
income

income of sixteen pounds of flesh, the advantage is immense.

Nich. How sensibly he talks! why, 'tis five thousand per cent profit. I'll be bled directly. (*taking off his coat.*)

Pleth. Help him.

Nich. No, no, I can do that myself. (*places the coat carefully under the cushion of the sofa.—As he sits down, April slips the coat from under the cushion, winks to Plethora, and exit on tiptoe.*) 'Tis very terrifying—I'll read a little more. But, doctor, are you sure now I shall not be suddenly called to heaven.

Pleth. I am very sure of that.

Nich. Oh, you are. (*throwing away the book.*) Then, pray, sir, what is my complaint?

Pleth. Complaint! what shall I say? I wish he would return—oh, 'tis the—the glanders.

Nich. The glanders! 'zounds! do you make a horse of me?

Pleth. No—we will be content with making an ass of you. (*aside.*)—(*Enter April with the coat and will, which he exhibits to Plethora in triumph.*) Or perhaps the disorder may be seated in the coats belonging to the stomach.

April. (*coming forward.*) No, no—the disorder was seated in the coat belonging to the back, ha, ha! but now 'tis removed. (*throwing him his coat.*) Do you see this? (*shewing the will.*)

Nich. I am undone.

April. And how the devil could you expect a moment's ease with such a thing as this laying next your heart—you may go—you are quite cured.

Nich. Cured! I am ruined. Oh! if I had but touched the thousand pounds, I would not mind the interest—perhaps 'tis not too late.

April.

April. (*examining the will.*) Sole heir without reservation or restriction; huzza!

Nich. Sir, honourable sir, will you allow me to ask you one small favour?

April. What is it?

Nich. Only to delay mentioning this (*sighing.*) joyful discovery for a few moments. My master and I have a little account to settle, and I should like just to strike a balance before he knows what has happened.

April. Oh, I understand—we have bled you, and now you want to go and bleed him.

Nich. Just a little, sir.

April. With all my heart, old Nick. Devil claw devil.

Nich. Oh, thank you, sir.

April. But dispatch—

Nich. I fly, sir.

[*Exit hobbling.*]

April. Now with heels as light as our hearts we'll away to Greville's.

Pleth. Stop—stop for me, grandfather.

April. I beg your pardon, old one. Here take my arm—let your grandfather assist you. Upon my soul, I quite forget you. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*An elegant Drawing room in GREVILLE'S house, illuminated.—A band of music playing.—A number of Servants dressed in splendid liveries.*

Enter UNDERMINE in great elation, joining the music in, "See the conquering hero," &c.

Und. Approach! is Greville gone?

Serv. Not yet, sir.

Und.

Und. Any of my guests arrived?

Serv. No, sir.

Und. Has the *Traiteur* furnished a splendid entertainment?

Serv. Yes, sir.

Und. Let music usher in the guests. (*music plays.*)

Enter APRIL singing—"See the conquering hero,"
&c. flourishing the will in his hand; seeing Undermine, he conceals it.

Und. Zounds! he here.—(*to the Servant.*)—
Don't go away, sir.

(*places the Servant between him and April.*)

April. How do you do?

Und. How do you do? (*with alarm.*)

April. I have overcome my passion, and thought better.

Und. Oh, very well—then 'tis all over.

April. Yes.

Und. (*to the Servant.*) You impudent rascal, how dare you stand between me and my friend?—Begone, you scoundrel!—I thought you would see the absurdity of my supporting Greville.

April. Oh yes; it would have been quite out of character.

Music plays. *ROSTRUM, singing*—"See the conquering hero," *&c. enters leading in EGERTON and ROSE SYDNEY.*

April. Heyday! my ward here! why, girl—?

(*goes up to her, and they converse in dumb show.*)

Und. (*to Rostrum.*) Come here—come here—give me your hand, you dog—I suppose 'tis all settled.

Ref. It is—the wedding's over.

Und. I say—what will that old fool April say, I wonder?

Rof. We shall hear.

April. (to Miss Sydney.) I understand. Mr. Undermine, have you given our ward permission to marry?

Und. To be sure I have.

April. If that be the case, my dear, you have mine.

Eger. Gentlemen, I thank you.

Und. He thank me! what has he to do with it. Oh! I forgot he helped you to this delicious morsel.

Rof. No, he did not; he helped himself—and what is more, persuaded a parson to say grace.

Und. Egerton her husband! Did not I order you to marry her? Did not I bid——

Rof. You did bid, sir; but honor bid more.

April. I give you joy, my girl. You have chosen a noble fellow.

Und. Well, and I give her joy, for she has chosen a beggar.

Rof. On that point I beg to be heard. You remember you gave me a key—here it is.

Und. Well, sir?

Rof. It belonged, ladies and gentlemen, to an escrutoire, with a secretary drawer. Pannells richly fineered—scrole pediment head—bracket feet—the whole finished in a workmanlike manner, and well worth the attention——

Und. At the auctioneer again. Zounds! you are so fond of it, I dare say you would sell me.

Rof. Sir, I would knock you down with all the pleasure in life.

Und. But what of the key?—the key——

Rof. The key certainly opened the drawer you mentioned;

mentioned ; and it as certainly opened a drawer you did not mention.

Und. What?

Ros. Be quiet. There I found a parcel of papers, and title deeds, which you must have put there entirely by mistake, my dear sir, because I perceived they belonged to Mr. Egerton.

Und. Give them to me directly, directly—I say, sir, restore——

Ros. Every thing to its right owner. Certainly—I don't wish to keep your, or any man's property—so, Egerton, there are your papers again—and, Uncle, there is your key again.

April. Ha, ha!

Eger. What disinterested integrity!

Und. What damned rascality!

Ros. Oh fie! no, no.

Und. What is it then?

Ros. Management.

Und. Well, you have managed finely for yourself however—I discard you. Had you followed my instructions, you would have been exalted——

Ros. To the pillory, I suppose.—No sir, tho' you don't scruple it to others, far be it from me to rob *you* of your natural inheritance.

Und. I would have left you all I am worth.

Ros. What then? you forget all you are worth belongs to other people. When you were gone, they would naturally ask me for their own, and how could I have the face to refuse them?

April. Give me your hand. You have acted your part nobly, and now 'tis my turn.

Und. All this I laugh at. Am I not possessed of the Greville estate? Who has any thing to say on that subject!

April. I believe I shall trouble you with a word or two.

Und. I see Greville is about to depart, and I must beg you will all follow his example.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. GREVILLE, SALLY following with a small bundle, and weeping.

Eger. My best friends, allow me to present to you a sister. By this gentleman's kindness, Maria, happiness again dawns upon us.

April. (aside.) And I will make it blaze with meridian splendour.

Grev. Let us then leave this man to the full enjoyment of such reflections as his conscience may administer.

April. I beg your pardon a moment. Umph! Mr. Undermine, I hear doubts have arisen respecting the authenticity of the late Mr. Greville's signature.

Und. (with a confident smile.) Indeed!—Sir, to shew my fairness, I'll leave this point to your decision. (*shewing the will.*)

April. 'Tis genuine, it must be confessed.

Und. Must it so?

April. Any objection to my reading it?

Und. None.

April. Perhaps it may tire you?

Und. By no means. I think it remarkably entertaining.

April. (substituting the second will, reads.) "I, Robert Greville, do declare this my last will.—
"To my only son, Charles Greville, I give and
"bequeath my forgiveness and my blessing, together with all my estates real and personal."—
Umph! that is very entertaining.

Und.

Und. Very—but I prefer the remainder—“Provided my said son”—go on—go on.

April. What do you say?

Und. 'Pshaw!—“Provided my said son has not contracted”—why don't you go on?

April. I don't see any thing like it.

Und. You don't—ha, ha! Give me leave to direct your attention. (*looks at the will, drops his hat and cane, and groans deeply.*)

Grev. What does this mean!

April. Mean!—That my young master, my friend, my dear Charles, is happy—that my old master is in heaven, and that I am in heaven; two wills were made; by the last, which he endeavoured to suppress, you are sole heir, without reservation.

Mrs. Grev. Is it possible?

Grev. How shall I express my gratitude for this discovery?—for giving happiness to my Maria?

Sally. And to me too. Oh, you are a nice old man.

Und. He must have dealt with——

April. Old Nick. You are right—I did—and here he comes.

Enter NICHOLAS.

Und. Ah, Nicholas—Nicholas!

Nich. Ah, master—master!

Und. A dreadful affair this!

Nich. Very shocking indeed, sir.

Und. Eh—zounds! I have given him a draft for a thousand pounds. (*coaxingly.*) Nicholas—Come here, Nicholas. I am not angry. My consolation is, what's done, can't be undone. I gave you a draft——

Nich. You did, fir. And my consolation is, what's done, can't be undone.

Und. Indeed! But it will be of no use. I have no cash at my banker's.

Nich. Dear fir, what credit you have! They paid it without a word.

Und. (*eagerly.*) You have not been——

Nich. Yes, fir—I just contrived to hobble there.

Und. You infernal! (*gulping down his passion.*) Old friends should not quarrel, Nicholas; suppose we go home, and talk it over agreeably. I'll propose something reasonable.

Nich. It must be very reasonable.

Und. It shall. Gentlemen——(*bowing.*)

Rof. What, bowing! You forget, fir, your own lessons.—Be erect, and I'll tell you how you may be so;—become an honest man, and on my life, that will make you hold up your head more gallantly than the first dancing master in Europe can;—“depend on't, fir. Roguery is the worst
“trade a man can follow; for (to the credit of
“human nature) I sincerely believe, that where
“one fortune is raised by pursuing the devious
“mazes of chicanery, a hundred are acquired by
“walking in the simple path of industrious inte-
“grity.”

Und. Indeed!

Nich. You had better stick to management!

Und. Management!—Oh, I have had enough of that. [*Exeunt Undermine and Nicholas.*]

April. Now, being all as happy as heart can wish, come along with me, Sally. Good bye to you——

Grev. Where are you going, April?

April. To the kitchen. I have no notion of your houses, not I, where all the joy is confined to

the drawing-room. Let there be degrees in every thing but happiness; and 'fore George, if any servant in this house be sober enough to wait on you at supper, I'll discharge him to-morrow morning.—Poor fellows! must not make them ill tho'. Never mind—Come along Sally.

Sally. Oh, you are a nice old man!

[*Exeunt April and Sally.*]

Ros. (to Egerton and Greville.) If I must have thanks, gentlemen, let me receive them here!—(kissing the ladies' hands.) Happy fellows! you are to be envied.

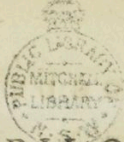
Mrs. Grev. So are you. We have received happiness, you have given it.

Rose. Your fortunes, sir, will be our peculiar care.

Ros. Thank you, dear ladies; but, with your permission, I'll stick to my trade.

And oh! could all my pray'rs but gain this lot,
To raise my pulpit nightly on this spot;
Then your poor Auctioneer would prize his
station,
While you vouchsafed one nod of approbation.

END OF THE COMEDY.



EPILOGUE.

SECRETS worth knowing—Shall I tell you one?

Don't frown, or our poor Bard will be undone.

Change to a grin his present woeful phiz,

Last year he cur'd your Heart Ache, now cure his.

But leaving him, as we're left here alone,

Suppose I tell a secret of my own.

Know then, I think—tho' women will be craving,

Your men-folks at the best are scarce worth having.

No more entire—they go about by halves,

Like legs consumptive, that have lost their calves;

What with their crops, slouched gait, and short furtouts,

Half heads, half tails, half manners, and half boots.

A wife, or an old maid! Aye, that's the question;

Both bitter pills, and bad for our digestion;

The prim old maid detests all amorous huffies,

Her nursery 's confin'd to pups and pussies;

Pug's her gallant, and her dear fondled baby,

Master Grimalkin, or grey-ey'd miss Tabby.

“ Man, what an animal! to love to hug,

“ Puppies they are; but not like my sweet pug,

“ Prating as parrots, obstinate as donkies;

“ We'd better all lead apes than follow monkies.”

The wife poor thing, at first so blithe and chubby,

Scarce knows again her lover in her hubby;

No more—“ my charming dear! my sweetest life,”

‘ Tis—“ stir that fire, give me some coffee, wife.”

“ There—now you've burnt my fingers;—what a ninny

“ My dog's more *nouse* than you, I'll bet a guinea!”

He flies about to swallow port by dozens;

She stays at home, to mope with aunts and cousins.

Some wives there are, perhaps as well intentioned,

More spirited than such as I have mentioned;

Flirt

EPILOGUE.

Flirt at the opera, gamble at quadrille,
 Run down a character, run up a bill;
 Should spouse not be at dinner to say grace,
 Can find a substitute to fill his place;
 Invade man's province, bluffer and look big,
 Nor wear the breeches only, but the *wig*.

Enchanting taste! each day we change our hue,
 White, auburn, grizzle, tye-wig, scratch or queue.
 The red-hair'd lasfs, to hide her golden nob,
 Tucks up her tresses in a nut-brown bob.
 And full blown dames, thro' time a little flaxen,
 Conceal that outrage by a coal-black caxen,
 Nay, profing belles, however bald the pate,
 Can by this means insure a tête-a-tête.

To shew I prize the mode, and would not mock it,
 I carry all my graces in my pocket,
 These are the *native* charms with which I shine,

(*takes out a wig.*)

A stamp receipt will prove that they are mine.

(*puts on the wig.*)

How do I look? Methinks 'tis grand to move

(*walks about with wig on.*)

Beneath the covert of this curly grove.

It shields one too; for, should some wag, in scoff,

Affault my scratch, he can but scratch it off.

Shall I, in future, then, this helmet wear?

Decree, and I'll obey you to a *Hair*.



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