

Wives as they were
and
Maids as they are

Elizabeth Inchbald

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WIVES AS THEY WERE, AND MAIDS AS THEY ARE.

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY THE AUTHOR.



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LONDON.

REMARKS.

The writer of this drama seems to have had a tolerable good notion of that which a play ought to be; but has here failed in the execution of a proper design.

Here are both fable and characters to constitute a good comedy; but incidents, the very essence of a dramatic work, are at times wanting, at other times ineffectual.

The first act promises a genuine comedy; and the authoress appears to have yielded up her own hopes with reluctance. In the dearth of true comic invention, she has had recourse at the end of her second act, to farce; though she certainly knew, that the natural, and the extravagant, always unite so ill, that in the combination, the one is sure to become insipid, or the other revolting.

Aware of this consequence, and wanting humour to proceed in the beaten track of burlesque, she then essays successively, the

serious, the pathetic, and the refined comic; failing by turns in them all, though by turns producing chance effect; but without accomplishing evident intentions, or gratifying certain expectations indiscreetly raised.

The outline of a good play is a dangerous drawing to give to the public;—a feeble plan is the surest safe-guard for an indifferent work: want of talent is never so forcibly perceived, as when certain parts are imperfect, whilst the rest demand eulogium. Critics are nice, and sometimes enraged where they find at once, ability, and imbecile attempt to explain vigorous conceptions.

Happy the author whose imagination extends no farther than the produce of his own anxious efforts! Such an one knows not his danger—his incapacity; and escaping censure, enjoys with triumph implied success, or receives animadversion with a sense of injury: whilst the more judicious, though more humble writer, often shrinks from praise as unmerited, yet bears with still heavier heart the critic's reproach as his due.

There are some just sentiments, some repartees, a little pathos, and an excellent moral in this production;—but there are also vapid scenes, and improbable events, which, perhaps, more than counterbalance those which are lively and natural.

Had the punishment of the two fashionable women been inflicted by a less disgraceful means, than a prison for debt; and had the singular conduct of Lord and Lady Priory been supported by occurrences, as pleasantly singular, this might have ranked among some very deserving comedies: Yet even in

its present imperfect state, assisted by the art of excellent acting, it was most favourably received on the stage; and may now, without the charm of scenic aid, afford an hour's amusement to the reader.

The character of Miss Dorrillon is by far the most prominent and interesting one in the piece; and appears to have been formed of the same matter and spirit as compose the body and mind of the heroine of the "Simple Story"—A woman of fashion with a heart—A lively comprehension, and no reflection:—an understanding, but no thought.—Virtues abounding from disposition, education, feeling:—Vices obtruding from habit and example.

This part was written purposely for Miss Farren; but the very season she should have performed it, she quitted the stage, to appear in a more elevated character.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD PRIORY	<i>Mr. Quick.</i>
SIR WILLIAM DORRILLON	<i>Mr. Munden.</i>
SIR GEORGE EVELYN	<i>Mr. Pope.</i>
MR. BRONZELY	<i>Mr. Lewis.</i>
MR. NORBERRY	<i>Mr. Waddy.</i>
OLIVER	<i>Mr. Fawcett.</i>
NABSON	<i>Mr. Thompson.</i>

LADY PRIORY

Miss Chapman.

LADY MARY RAFFLE

Mrs. Mattocks.

MISS DORRILLON

Miss Wallis.

Several SERVANTS, &c.

Scene—London.



WIVES AS THEY WERE, AND MAIDS AS THEY ARE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at MR. NORBERRY'S.

Enter SIR WILLIAM DORRILLON, followed by MR. NORBERRY.

Mr. Nor. Why blame me?—Why blame me?—My sister had the sole management of your daughter by your own authority, from the age of six years, till within eight months of the present time, when, in consequence of my sister's death, she was transferred to my protection.

Sir W. Your sister, Mr. Norberry, was a prudent good woman—she never could instruct her in all this vice.

Mr. Nor. Depend upon it, my dear friend, that Miss Dorrillon, your daughter, came to my house just the same heedless woman of fashion you now see her.

Sir W. [Impatiently.] Very well—'Tis very well.—But, when I

think on my disappointment——

Mr. Nor. There is nothing which may not be repaired. Maria, with you for a guide——

Sir W. Me! She turns me into ridicule—laughs at me! This morning, as she was enumerating some of her frivolous expenses, she observed me lift up my hands and sigh; on which she named fifty other extravagances she had no occasion to mention, merely to enjoy the pang, which every folly of her's sends to my heart.

Mr. Nor. But do not charge this conduct of your daughter to the want of filial love:—did she know you were Sir William Dorrillon, did she know you were her father, every word you uttered, every look you glanced, would be received with gentleness and submission:—but your present rebukes from Mr. Mandred (as you are called), from a perfect stranger, as she supposes, she considers as an impertinence, which she has a right to resent.

Sir W. I wish I had continued abroad. And yet, the hope of beholding her, and of bestowing upon her the riches I acquired, was my sole support through all the toils by which I gained them.

Mr. Nor. And, considering her present course of life, your riches could not come more opportunely.

Sir W. She shall never have a farthing of them. Do you think I have encountered the perils of almost every climate, to squander

my hard-earned fortune upon the paltry vicious pleasures in which she delights? No; I have been now in your house exactly a month—I will stay but one day longer—and then, without telling her who I am, I will leave the kingdom and her for ever——Nor shall she know, that this insignificant merchant, whom she despises, was her father, till he is gone, never to be recalled.

Mr. Nor. You are offended with some justice; but, as I have often told you, your excessive delicacy, respecting the conduct of the other sex, degenerates into rigour.

Sir W. True; for what I see so near perfection as woman, I want to see perfect. We, Mr. Norberry, can never be perfect; but surely women, women, might easily be made angels!

Mr. Nor. And if they were, we should soon be glad to make them into women again.

Sir W. [*Inattentive to MR. NORBERRY.*]*—*She sets the example. She gives the fashion!—and now your whole house, and all your visitors, in imitation of her, treat me with levity, or with contempt.—But I'll go away to-morrow.

Mr. Nor. Can you desert your child in the moment she most wants your protection? That exquisite beauty just now mature——

Sir W. There's my difficulty!—There's my struggle!—If she were not so like her mother, I could leave her without a pang—cast her off, and think no more of her.—But that shape! that face! those speaking looks! Yet, how reversed!—Where is the

diffidence, the humility—where is the simplicity of my beloved wife? Buried in her grave.

Mr. Nor. And, in all this great town, you may never see even its apparition.

Sir W. I rejoice, however, at the stratagem by which I have gained a knowledge of her heart; deprived of the means of searching it in her early years, had I come at present as her father, she might have deceived me with counterfeit manners, till time disclosed the imposition.——Now, at least, I am not imposed upon.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Lord Priory.

[*Exit.*

Sir W. Lord Priory!

Mr. Nor. An old acquaintance of mine, though we seldom meet. He has some singularities; and yet, perhaps——

Enter LORD PRIORY.

Mr. Nor. My dear Lord, I am glad to see you. Mr. Mandred.
[*Introducing* SIR WILLIAM.] My lord, I hope I see you in perfect health.

Lord P. Yes; but in very ill humour. I came to London early this morning with my family for the winter, and found my house,

after going through only a slight repair, so damp, that I dare not sleep in it: and so I am now sending and going all over the town to seek for lodgings.

Mr. Nor. Then seek no further, but take up your lodgings here.

Lord P. To be plain with you, I called in hopes you would ask me; for I am so delicately scrupulous in respect to Lady Priory, that I could not bear the thought of taking her to an hotel.

Mr. Nor. Then pray return home, and bring her hither immediately, with all your luggage.

Lord P. I am most extremely obliged to you [*very fervently*]; for into no one house belonging to any of my acquaintance would I take my wife, so soon as into yours. I have now been married eleven years, and during all that time I have made it a rule never to go on a visit, so as to domesticate, in the house of a married man.

Sir W. May I inquire the reason of that?

Lord P. It is because I am married myself; and having always treated my wife according to the ancient mode of treating wives, I would rather she should never be an eye witness to modern household management.

Sir W. The ancients, I believe, were very affectionate to their wives.

Lord P. And they had reason to be so; for their wives obeyed them. The ancients seldom gave them the liberty to do wrong:

but modern wives do as they like.

Mr. Nor. And don't you suffer Lady Priory to do as she likes?

Lord P. Yes, when it is what I like too. But never, never else.

Sir W. Does not this draw upon you the character of an unkind husband?

Lord P. That I am proud of. Did you never observe, that seldom a breach of fidelity in a wife is exposed, where the unfortunate husband is not said to be "the best creature in the world! Poor man, so good natured!—Dotingly fond of his wife!—Indulged her in everything!—How cruel in her to serve him so!" Now, if I am served so, it shall not be for my good nature.

Mr. Nor. But I hope you equally disapprove of every severity.

Lord P. [*Rapidly.*] What do you mean by severity?

Mr. Nor. You know you used to be rather violent in your temper.

Lord P. So I am still—apt to be hasty and passionate; but that is rather of advantage to me, as a husband—it causes me to be obeyed without hesitation—no liberty for contention, tears, or repining. I insure conjugal sunshine, by now and then introducing a storm; while some husbands never see any thing but a cloudy sky, and all for the want of a little domestic thunder to clear away the vapours.

Sir W. I have long conceived indulgence to be the bane of

female happiness.

Lord P. And so it is.—I know several women of fashion, who will visit six places of different amusement on the same night, have company at home besides, and yet, for want of something more, they'll be out of spirits: my wife never goes to a public place, has scarce ever company at home, and yet is always in spirits.

Sir W. Never visits operas, or balls, or routs?

Lord P. How should she? She goes to bed every night exactly at ten.

Mr. Nor. In the name of wonder, how have you been able to bring her to that?

Lord P. By making her rise every morning at five.

Mr. Nor. And so she becomes tired before night.

Lord P. Tired to death. Or, if I see her eyes completely open at bed time, and she asks me to play one game more at piquet, the next morning I jog her elbow at half after four.

Mr. Nor. But suppose she does not reply to the signal.

Lord P. Then I turn the key of the door when I leave the chamber; and there I find her when I come home in the evening.

Sir W. And without her having seen a creature all day?

Lord P. That is in my favour: for not having seen a single soul, she is rejoiced even to see me.

Mr. Nor. And will she speak to you after such usage?

Lord P. If you only considered how much a woman longs to speak after being kept a whole day silent, you would not ask that question.

Mr. Nor. Well! this is the most surprising method!

Lord P. Not at all. In ancient days, when manners were simple and pure, did not wives wait at the table of their husbands? and did not angels witness the subordination? I have taught Lady Priory to practise the same humble docile obedience—to pay respect to her husband in every shape and every form—no careless inattention to me—no smiling politeness to others in preference to me—no putting me up in a corner—in all assemblies, she considers her husband as the first person.

Sir W. I am impatient to see her.

Lord P. But don't expect a fine lady with high feathers, and the et cætera of an Eastern concubine; you will see a modest plain Englishwoman, with a cap on her head, a handkerchief on her neck, and a gown of our own manufacture.

Sir W. My friend Norberry, what a contrast must there be between Lady Priory and the ladies in this house!

Lord P. [*Starting.*] Have you ladies in this house?

Mr. Nor. Don't be alarmed; they are both single, and can give Lady Priory no ideas concerning the marriage state.

Lord P. Are you sure of that? Some single women are more informed than their friends believe.

Mr. Nor. For these ladies, notwithstanding a few, what you would call, excesses, I will answer.

Lord P. Well, then, I and my wife will be with you about nine in the evening; you know we go to bed at ten.

Mr. Nor. But remember you bring your own servants to wait on you at five in the morning.

Lord P. I shall bring but one—my old servant, Oliver, who knows all my customs so well, that I never go any where without him.

Mr. Nor. And is that old servant your valet still?

Lord P. No, he is now a kind of gentleman in waiting. I have had no employment for a valet since I married:—my wife, for want of dissipation, has not only time to attend upon herself, but upon me. Do you think I could suffer a clumsy man to tie on my neckcloth, or comb out my hair, when the soft, delicate and tender hands of my wife are at my command?

[*Exit.*

Sir W. After this amiable description of a woman, how can I endure to see her, whom reason bids me detest; but whom nature

still——

Mr. Nor. Here she comes; and her companion in folly along with her.

Sir W. There's another woman! that Lady Mary Raffle! How can you suffer such people in your house?

Mr. Nor. She is only on a visit for a few months—she comes every winter, as her family and mine have long been intimately connected.

Sir W. Let us go—let us go. I cannot bear the sight of them.
[*Going.*]

Mr. Nor. Stay, and for once behave with politeness and good humour to your daughter—do—and I dare venture my life, she will neither insult nor treat you with disrespect. You know you always begin first.

Sir W. Have not I a right to begin first?

Mr. Nor. But that is a right of which she is ignorant.

Sir W. And deserves to be so, and ever shall be so. I stay and treat her with politeness and good humour! No—rather let her kneel and implore my pardon.

Mr. Nor. Suffer me to reveal who you are, and so she will.

Sir W. If you expose me only by one insinuation to her knowledge, our friendship is at that moment at an end.

Mr. Nor. [*Firmly.*] I have already given you my promise on that subject; and you may rely upon it.

Sir W. I thank you—I believe you—and I thank you.

[*Exeunt* SIR WILLIAM *and* MR. NORBERRY.]

Enter LADY MARY RAFFLE *and* MISS DORILLON.

Miss Dor. [*Stealing on as* MR. NORBERRY *and* SIR WILLIAM *leave the stage.*] They are gone. Thank Heaven they are gone out of this room, for I expect a dozen visitors! and Mr. Norberry looks so gloomy upon me, he puts me out of spirits: while that Mr. Mandred's peevishness is not to be borne.

Lady R. Be satisfied; for you were tolerably severe upon him this morning in your turn.

Miss Dor. Why, I am vexed; and I don't like to be found fault with in my best humour, much less when I have so many things to tease me.

Lady R. What are they?

Miss Dor. I have now lost all my money, and all my jewels, at play; it is almost two years since I have received a single remittance from my father; and Mr. Norberry refuses to advance me a shilling more.—What I shall do to discharge a debt, which must be paid either to-day or to-morrow, Heaven only knows!—Dear Lady Mary, you could not lend me a small sum, could you?

Lady R. Who, I! [*With surprise.*]—My dear creature, it was the very thing I was going to ask of you: for when you have money, I know no one so willing to disperse it among her friends.

Miss Dor. Am not I?—I protest I love to part with my money; for I know with what pleasure I receive it myself; and I like to see that joy sparkle in another's eye, which has so often brightened my own. But last night ruined me—I must have money somewhere.—As you cannot assist me, I must ask Mr. Norberry for his carriage, and immediately go in search of some friend that can lend me four, or five, or six, or seven hundred pounds. But the worst is, I have lost my credit—Is not that dreadful?

Lady R. Yes, yes; I know what it is.

[*Shaking her Head.*]

Miss Dor. What will become of me?

Lady R. Why don't you marry, and throw all your misfortunes upon your husband?

Miss Dor. Why don't you marry? For you have as many to throw.

Lady R. But not so many lovers who would be willing to receive the load. I have no Sir George Evelyn with ten thousand pounds a year—no Mr. Bronzely.

Miss Dor. If you have not now, you once had: for I am sure

Bronzely once paid his addresses to you.

Lady R. And you have the vanity to suppose you took him from me!

Miss Dor. Silence.—Reserve your anger to defend, and not to attack me. We should be allies by the common ties of poverty: and 'tis time to arm; for here's the enemy.

Enter SIR WILLIAM, with MR. NORBERRY.

Sir W. They are here still.

[Aside to MR. NORBERRY, and offering to go back.]

Mr. Nor. *[Preventing him.]* No, no.

Miss Dor. I have been waiting here, Mr. Norberry, to ask a favour of you. *[He and SIR WILLIAM come forward.]* Will you be so kind as to lend me your carriage for a couple of hours?

Mr. Nor. Mr. Mandred *[Pointing to SIR WILLIAM.]* has just asked me for it to take him into the city.

Lady R. Oh, Mr. Mandred will give it up to Miss Dorrillon, I am sure: he can defer his business till to-morrow.

Sir W. No, madam, she may as well put off her's. I have money to receive, and I can't do it.

Miss Dor. I have money to pay, and I can't do it.

Lady R. If one is going to receive, and the other to pay money, I think the best way is for you to go together; and then, what deficiency there is on one side, the other may supply.

Miss Dor. Will you consent, Mr. Mandred?—Come, do, and I'll be friends with you.

Sir W. [*Aside.*] "She'll be friends with me!"

Miss Dor. Will you?

Sir W. No.

Miss Dor. Well, I certainly can ask a favour of Mr. Mandred better than I can of any person in the world.

Mr. Nor. Why so, Maria?

Miss Dor. Because, instead of pain, I can see it gives him pleasure to refuse me.

Sir W. I never confer a favour, of the most trivial kind, where I have no esteem.

Miss Dor. [*Proudly.*] Nor would I receive a favour, of the most trivial kind, from one—who has not liberality to esteem me.

Mr. Nor. Come, Miss Dorrillon, do not grow serious: laugh as much as you please, but say nothing that——

Sir W. [*To her, impatiently.*] From whom, then, can you ever

receive favours, except from the vain, the idle, and the depraved?—from those whose lives are passed in begging them of others?

Miss Dor. They are the persons who know best how to bestow them: for my part, had I not sometimes felt what it was to want a friend, I might never have had humanity to be the friend of another.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir George Evelyn.

Mr. Nor. And pray, my dear, whose friend have you ever been?

Enter SIR GEORGE EVELYN.

Not Sir George Evelyn's, I am sure; and yet he, of all others, deserves your friendship most.

Miss Dor. But friendship will not content him: as soon as he thought he had gained that——

Sir G. He aspired to the supreme happiness of your love.

Miss Dor. Now you talk of "supreme happiness," have you procured tickets for the fête on Thursday?

Sir G. I have; provided you have obtained Mr. Norberry's leave to go.

Mr. Nor. That I cannot grant.

Miss Dor. Nay, my dear sir, do not force me to go without it.

Sir W. [With Violence.] Would you dare?

Miss Dor. [Looking with Surprise.] "Would I dare," Mr. Mandred!—and what have *you* to say if I do?

Sir W. [Recollecting himself.] I was only going to say, that if you did, and I were Mr. Norberry——

Miss Dor. And if you *were* Mr. Norberry, and treated me in the manner you now do,—depend upon it, I should not think your approbation or disapprobation, your pleasure or displeasure, of the slightest consequence.

Sir W. [Greatly agitated.] I dare say not—I dare say not. Good morning, Sir George—I dare say not.—Good morning, Mr. Norberry. [*Going.*]

Mr. Nor. Stop a moment.—Maria, you have offended Mr. Mandred.

Miss Dor. He has offended me.

Sir W. [At the Door, going off.] I shan't offend you long.

Mr. Nor. [Going to him, and taking him by the Arm.] Stay, Mr. Mandred: Miss Dorrillon, make an apology: Mr. Mandred is my friend, and you must not treat him with this levity.

Lady R. No, no apology.

Miss Dor. No, no apology. But I'll tell you what I'll do. [*Goes up to SIR WILLIAM.*] If Mr. Mandred likes, I'll shake hands with him—and we'll be good friends for the future. But then, don't find fault with me—I can't bear it. *You* don't like to be found fault with yourself—You look as cross as any thing every time I say the least word against you. Come, shake hands; and don't let us see one another's failings for the future.

Sir W. There is no future for the trial.

Miss Dor. How do you mean?

Mr. Nor. Mr. Mandred sets off again for India to-morrow.

Miss Dor. Indeed! I thought he was come to live in England! I am sorry you are going.

Sir W. [*With earnestness.*] Why sorry?

Miss Dor. Because we have so frequently quarrelled. I am always unhappy when I am going to be separated from a person with whom I have disagreed; I often think I could part with less regret from a friend.

Sir G. Not, I suppose, if the quarrel is forgiven?

Miss Dor. Ah! but Mr. Mandred does not forgive! no! in his looks I can always see resentment.—Sometimes, indeed, I have traced a spark of kindness, and have gently tried to blow it to a little flame of friendship; when, with one hasty puff, I have put it

out.

Sir W. You are right. It is—I believe—extinguished.

[*Exit* SIR WILLIAM—MR. NORBERRY *following*.

Sir G. A very singular man.

Lady R. Oh! if he was not rich, there would be no bearing him—Indeed, he seems to have lost all his friends; for, during the month he has been here, I never found he had any one acquaintance out of this house.

Miss Dor. And, what is very strange, he has taken an aversion to me.—But it is still more strange, that, although I know he has, yet in my heart I like *him*. He is morose to an insufferable degree; but then, when by chance he speaks kind, you cannot imagine how it soothes me.—He wants compassion and all the tender virtues; and yet, I frequently think, that if any serious misfortune were to befall me, he would be the first person to whom I should fly to complain.

Lady R. Then why don't you fly, and tell him of your misfortune last night?

Sir G. [*Starting.*] What misfortune?

Miss Dor. [*To* LADY RAFFLE.] Hush!

Lady R. A loss at play.—[*To* MISS DORRILLON.]—I beg your pardon, but it was out before you said hush!

Sir G. Ah, Maria! will you still risk your own and my happiness? For mine is so firmly fixed on you, it can only exist in yours.

Lady R. Then, when she is married to Mr. Bronzely, you will be happy, because she will be so?

Sir G. Bronzely! has he dared?

Miss Dor. Have not *you* dared, sir?

Lady R. But I believe Mr. Bronzely is the most daring of the two.—[*Aside to SIR GEORGE.*] Take care of him.

[*Exit.*]

Sir G. Miss Dorrillon, I will not affront you by supposing that you mean seriously to receive the addresses of Mr. Bronzely; but I warn you against giving others, who know you less than I do, occasion to think so.

Miss Dor. I never wish to deceive any one—I do admit of Mr. Bronzely's addresses.

Sir G. Why, he is the professed lover of your friend Lady Mary! or, granting he denies it, and that I even pass over the frivolity of the coxcomb, still he is unworthy of you.

Miss Dor. He says the same of you; and half a dozen more say exactly the same of each other. If you like, I'll discard every one of you as unworthy; but, if I retain you, I will retain the rest. Which do you chuse?

Sir G. I submit to any thing, rather than the total loss of you—
But remember, that your felicity—

Miss Dor. "Felicity! felicity!"—ah! that is a word not to be found in the vocabulary of my sensations!—

[*Sighing.*

Sir G. I believe you, and have always regarded you with a compassion that has augmented my love. In your infancy, deprived of the watchful eye and anxious tenderness of a mother; the manly caution and authority of a father; misled by the brilliant vapour of fashion; surrounded by enemies in the garb of friends——Ah! do you weep? blessed, blessed be the sign!—Suffer me to dry those tears I have caused, and to give you a knowledge of true felicity.

Miss Dor. [*Recovering.*] I am very angry with myself.—Don't, I beg, tell Mr. Norberry or Mr. Mandred you saw me cry—they'll suppose I have been more indiscreet [*Stifling her Tears.*] than I really have. For in reality I have nothing——

Sir G. Do not endeavour to conceal from me, what my tender concern for you has given me the means to become acquainted with. I know you are plunged in difficulties by your father neither sending nor coming, as you once expected: I know you are still deeper plunged by your fondness for play.

Miss Dor. Very well, sir! proceed.

Sir G. Thus then—Suffer me to send my steward to you this morning; he shall regulate your accounts, and place them in a

state that shall protect you from further embarrassment till your father sends to you; or shall protect you from his reproaches, should he arrive.

Miss Dor. Sir George, I have listened to your detail of the vices, which I acknowledge, with patience, with humility—but your suspicion of those which I have *not*, I treat with pride, with indignation.

Sir G. How! suspicion!

Miss Dor. What part of my conduct, sir, has made you dare to suppose I would extricate myself from the difficulties that surround me, by the influence I hold over the weakness of a lover?

[*Exeunt, separately.*]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

Another Apartment at MR. NORBERRY'S.

Enter Two PORTERS from an upper Entrance, bringing in Trunks; LORD PRIORY and MR. NORBERRY following.

Mr. Nor. Here, Stephens, why are you out of the way? Show the men with these boxes into the dressing-room appointed for my Lord Priory.

[A SERVANT enters on the opposite Side, and the PORTERS follow him off at a lower Entrance on that Side.]

Enter SIR WILLIAM DORRILLON.

Sir W. My lord, I hope I see you well this evening.

Lord P. Yes, sir—and you find I have literally accepted Mr. Norberry's invitation, and am come to him with all my luggage.

Enter OLIVER, with a small Box in each Hand.

Lord P. Follow those men with the trunks, Oliver.

Mr. Nor. Ah, Mr. Oliver, how do you do?

Oliver. Pretty well—tolerably well—I thank you, sir.

[Exit.]

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Lady Priory.

Enter LADY PRIORY.

Lord P. [To her.] Mr. Norberry, our worthy host; and Mr.

Mandred. [*She courtesies.*]

Mr. Nor. I hope your ladyship will find my house so little inconvenient to you, as to induce you to make no very short visit.

Lady P. I have no doubt, sir, but I shall find, from your friendship, every comfort in this house, which it is possible for me to enjoy out of my own.

Enter LADY MARY RAFFLE *and* MISS DORRILLON.

Mr. Nor. [*Introducing them.*] Lady Priory—Lady Mary Raffle—Miss Dorrillon—Lord Priory.

Lady R. Permit me, Lady Priory, to take you to the next room: we are going to have tea immediately.

Lady P. I have drank tea, madam.

Miss Dor. Already! it is only nine o'clock.

Lady P. Then it is near my hour of going to bed.

[LORD PRIORY, SIR WILLIAM, *and* MR. NORBERRY, *retire to the Back of the Stage, and talk apart.*]

Lady R. Go to bed already! in the name of wonder, what time did you rise this morning?

Lady P. Why, I do think it was almost six o'clock.

Lady R. [*In amaze.*] And were you up at six this morning?

Lady P. Yes.

Miss Dor. At six in the month of January!

Lady R. It is not light till eight: and what good, now, could you possibly be doing for two hours by candle-light?

Lady P. Pray, Lady Mary, at what time did you go to bed?

Lady R. About three this morning.

Lady P. And what good, could you, possibly be doing for eleven hours by candle-light?

Lady R. Good! it's as much as can be expected from a woman of fashion, that she does no harm.

Lady P. But I should fear you would do a great deal of harm to your health, your spirits, and the tranquillity of your mind.

[MR. NORBERRY *goes off*—LORD PRIORY *and* SIR WILLIAM
come forward.

Lady R. Oh, my Lord Priory, I really find all the accounts I have heard of your education for a wife to be actually true!—and I can't help laughing to think, if you and I had chanced to have married together, what a different creature you most likely would have made of me, to what I am at present!

Lord P. Yes; and what a different creature you most likely

would have made of *me*, to what I am at present.

Sir W. Lady Priory, I am not accustomed to pay compliments, or to speak my approbation, even when praise is a just tribute; but your virtues compel me to an eulogium.—That wise submission to a husband who loves you, that cheerful smile so expressive of content, and that plain dress, which indicates the elegance, as well as the simplicity, of your mind, are all symbols of a heart so unlike to those which the present fashion of the day misleads——

Miss Dor. Why look so steadfastly on me, Mr. Mandred? Do you pretend to see my heart?

Sir W. Have you any?

Miss Dor. Yes; and one large enough to hold—even my enemy.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mr. Bronzely.

Miss Dor. Show him into the other room. [*Exit SERVANT.*] Come, Lady Priory, we must introduce you to Mr. Bronzely: he is one of the most fashionable, agreeable, pleasant, whimsical, unthinking, and spirited creatures in all the world: you'll be charmed——

Lady P. I dare say it's near ten o'clock. I am afraid I shan't be able to keep awake.

Miss Dor. You must—We are going to have a little concert—'Twill be impossible to sleep.

[*Exit* MISS DORRILLON, *leading off* LADY PRIORY.

Lady R. Upon my word, my lord, your plan of management has made your wife unfit for company.

Lord P. So much more fit to be a wife.

Lady R. She is absolutely fatigued with hard labour—for shame!—How does household drudgery become her hand?

Lord P. Much better than cards and dice do yours.

[*Exit* LADY MARY, *followed by* LORD PRIORY—
SIR WILLIAM *is left on the Stage alone.*

Sir W. She "has a heart large enough to receive her enemy."—And by that enemy she means her father. [*He sits down, and shows Marks of Inquietude.*

Enter SIR GEORGE EVELYN.

Sir G. I beg your pardon, Mr. Mandred—I hope I don't interrupt you—I only wished to speak to Miss Dorrillon.

Sir W. She is just gone into the next room.

Sir G. To the concert?

Sir W. Are not you invited?

Sir G. Yes; but before I go in, I wish to know who are the company.—Can you tell whether—a Mr. Bronzely is there?

Sir W. I know he is.

Sir G. Are you acquainted with him?

Sir W. I have met him here frequently.

Sir G. And are you *certain* he is here at present?

Sir W. I have reason to be certain.

Sir G. Any particular reason?

Sir W. Your mistress, when his name was announced, went out, exclaiming, "he was the most charming and accomplished man in the world."

Sir G. [*Greatly agitated.*] She loves him, sir—I have reason to believe—to know she loves him. Thus she gives up my happiness and her own, to gratify the vanity of a man, who has no real regard for her; but whose predominant passion is to enjoy the villanous name of a general seducer.

Sir W. [*Rising.*] Why do you suffer it?

Sir G. Hush! Don't repeat what I have said, or I lose her for ever. I am at present suffering under her resentment; and have just sent into the next room, to ask, if she were there, to speak with her.

Enter MISS DORRILLON.

Miss Dor. And is it possible I was sent for by you?

Sir G. Don't be offended, that I should be uneasy, and come to atone——

Miss Dor. I can't forgive you, sir; 'tis impossible. [*Going.*]

Sir G. You pardon those, Maria, who offend you more.

Sir W. But an ungrateful mind always prefers the unworthy.

Miss Dor. Ah! Mr. Mandred, are you there? [*Playfully.*] And have you undertaken to be Sir George's counsel? If you have, I believe he must lose his cause.—To fit you for the tender task of advocate in the suit of love, have you ever been admitted an honourable member of that court? Have you, with all that solemn wisdom of which you are master, studied Ovid, as our great lawyers study Blackstone? If you have—show cause——why plaintiff has a right to defendant's heart.

Sir W. A man of fortune, of family, and of character, ought at least to be treated with respect, and with honour.

Miss Dor. You mean to say, "That if A is beloved by B, why should not A be constrained to return B's love?" Counsellor for defendant—"Because, moreover, and besides B, who has a claim on defendant's heart, there are also C, D, E, F, and G; all of whom put in their separate claims—and what, in this case, can poor A do? She is willing to part and divide her love, share and share alike; but B will have all or none: so poor A, must

remain, A, by herself, A."

Sir G. Do you think I would accept a share of your heart?

Miss Dor. Do you think I could afford to give it you all?
"Besides," says defendant's counsellor, "I will prove that plaintiff B has no heart to give defendant in return—he has, indeed, a pulsation on the left side; but, as it never beat with any thing but suspicion and jealousy; in the laws of love, it is not termed, admitted, or considered—a heart." [*Going.*]

Sir G. Where are you going?

Miss Dor. To the music-room, to be sure: and if you follow me, it shall be to see me treat every person there better than yourself—and Mr. Bronzely, whom you hate, to see me treat him best of all.

[*Exit.*]

Sir G. I must follow you, though to death.

[*Exit.*]

Sir W. Fool! And yet am not I nearly as weak as he is? Else why do I linger in this house? Why feed my hopes with some propitious moment to waken her to repentance? Why still anxiously wish to ward off some dreaded fate?—If she would marry Sir George, now—if she would give me only *one* proof of discretion, I think I would endeavour to own her for my child.

Enter MR. BRONZELY, in haste.

Mr. Bron. My dear sir, will you do me the greatest favour in the world?—you must do it in an instant too. Do, my dear sir, ask no questions; but lend me your coat for a single moment, and take mine—only for a moment—I cannot explain my reasons now, my impatience is so great;—but, the instant you have complied, I will inform you of the whole secret; and you will forever rejoice that you granted my request.

[Pulling off his Coat.]

Sir W. [Aside, with great Scorn.] And this very contemptible fellow is the favoured lover of my daughter!—I'll—*[After a Struggle.]*—yes—I'll make myself master of his secret—it may possibly concern her—my child—my child's safety may depend upon it.

Mr. Bron. Dear Mr. Mandred, no time is to be lost!

Sir W. This is rather a strange request, Mr. Bronzely. However, your fervency convinces me you must have some very forcible reason.—There's my coat, sir.

[Gives it him.]

Mr. Bron. Thank you, dear sir, a thousand times.—This goodness I shall for ever remember—this binds me to you for ever! *[Putting it on.]* Thank you, sir, a thousand times!

[Bowing, dressed, and composed.]

Sir W. [After putting on the other Coat.] And now, sir, explain the cause of this metamorphosis?—let me have the

satisfaction to know what advantage will accrue from it; and in what I have to rejoice?

Mr. Bron. Will you promise me not to reveal the secret, if I trust you with it?

Sir W. Would you add conditions after the bargain is made? I must know your secret instantly. [*Threatening.*]

Mr. Bron. Then I will disclose it to you voluntarily; and rely on your honour to keep it.

Sir W. [*Attentively.*] Well, sir.

Mr. Bron. Hark! I thought I heard somebody coming!

[*Offers to go.*]

Sir W. I insist upon the information.

[*Laying hold of him.*]

Mr. Bron. Well, then, sir—well—you shall—you shall.—Then, sir—in the small gallery, which separates the music-room from the rest of these apartments—in that little gallery, the lamp is just, unfortunately, gone out.—I was (as unfortunately) coming along, when the whisking of a woman's gown made me give a sudden start!—I found a person was in the gallery with me, and in the dark.

Sir W. Well, sir!

Mr. Bron. And so, confidently assuring myself, that it was Miss Dorrillon's waiting-maid, or Lady Mary's waiting-maid, I most unluckily clasped my arms around her, and took one kiss.

Sir W. Only one?

Mr. Bron. There might be half a dozen! I won't pretend to swear to one. We'll say half a dozen, before I knew who she was. My rapidity would not let her breathe at first, and she was fairly speechless.—But the moment she recovered her breath, she cried, "Villain! whoever you are, you shall repent this:"—and I found it was the voice of a lady to whom I had just been introduced in the concert room, one Lady Priory! It seems, she was stealing to bed at the time we unhappily met.

Sir W. But what has this to do with your coat?

Mr. Bron. A great deal, sir—you will find, a great deal.—As I perceived she did not know me, I carefully held my tongue—but she, with her prudish notions, called "Help!" and "murder!" On which, I flew to the door, to get away before the lights could be brought—she flew after me; and, as I went out, exclaimed—"Don't hope to conceal yourself; I shall know you among the whole concert room; for I carry scissars hanging at my side, and I have cut a piece off your coat."—[*SIR WILLIAM looks hastily at his Coat—on which BRONZELY holds up the Part cut.*]—And, sure enough, so she had!

Sir W. [In Anger.] And what, sir, am I to have the shame——

Mr. Bron. Either you or I must.

Sir W. And do you dare——

Mr. Bron. Consider, my dear sir, how much less the fault is, if perpetrated by you than by me! This is the first offence of the kind which, I dare say, you have committed this many a year; and it will be overlooked in *you*. But I have been suspected of two or three things of the same sort within a very short time; and I should never be forgiven.

Sir W. Nor ought you to be forgiven—it would be scandalous in me to connive——

Mr. Bron. But would it not be more scandalous to reveal the secret of a person who confided in you?—who flew to you in distress, as his friend, the partner of his cares?

Sir W. Your impertinence to me, but more your offence to a woman of virtue, deserves punishment. Yet I think the punishment of death, in the way that a man of my Lord Priory's temper might inflict it, much too honourable for your deserts; so I save your life for some less creditable end. I lend you my coat, to disgrace you by existence: and will go to my chamber, and put on another myself.

[*Passes BRONZELY, in order to retire to his Chamber.*

Enter LORD PRIORY, who meets him. SIR WILLIAM starts.

Mr. Bron. [*Going up to LORD PRIORY.*] Ah, my lord! is the concert over? charming music! that *solo* was divine.

[*SIR WILLIAM steals to a Chair, and sits down to hide his*

Coat.

Lord P. [*After looking inquisitively at BRONZELY'S Dress.*] It is time the concert should be over—it had been better had it never begun; for there have been some very improper persons admitted.

[*In great Anger.*

Mr. Bron. [*Affecting surprise.*] Indeed!

Lord P. [*Trembling with Rage.*] I am at a loss how to act. [*Draws a Chair with violence, and places himself down by SIR WILLIAM—SIR WILLIAM appears disconcerted and uneasy.*] But if I could find the man to whom this piece of cloth belongs——

Mr. Bron. What! that small piece of woollen cloth?

Lord P. Yes; then I should know how to act. In the mean time, Mr. Mandred, as I know you are a great admirer of my wife [*SIR WILLIAM starts.*] and a grave prudent man of honour, I come to ask your advice, how I am the most likely to find out the villain who has dared to insult her; for a gross insult she has received from one of Mr. Norberry's visitors, wearing a coat of which this is a part.

Mr. Bron. The villain, no doubt, stole out of the house immediately.

Lord P. I ordered the street door to be guarded that instant—and you, Mr. Bronzely, are now the last man whose habit I have examined.

Mr. Bron. And you see I am perfectly whole.

[*Turning round.*]

Lord P. I do see—I do see.

[*SIR WILLIAM moves about on his Chair, and appears greatly embarrassed. LORD PRIORY starts up in a violent Passion—SIR WILLIAM starts up with him.*]

Lord P. I'll find him out if he be on earth—I'll find him out if—My passion carries me away—I have not coolness to detect him myself—I'll employ another—I'll send Oliver in search. Oliver! [*Calling.*] Oliver! here, Oliver! Why don't you answer when you are called, you stupid, dull, idle, forgetful, blundering, obstinate, careless, self-sufficient——

[*Exit, in a Fury.*]

Sir W. [*Rising with great Dignity.*] And now, Mr. Bronzely, how do you think you are to repay me, for having felt one transitory moment of shame? Understand, sir, that shame is one of the misfortunes to which I have never——

Enter LADY MARY RAFFLE.

Mr. Bron. [*Aside to SIR WILLIAM.*] Sit down, sit down, sit down—hold your tongue, and sit down.

[*SIR WILLIAM reluctantly retires to a Chair.*]

Lady R. Well, I do most cordially rejoice, when peevish,

suspicious, and censorious people, meet with humiliation! I could die with laughing at the incident, which has put both my Lord and my Lady Priory into the greatest terror, grief, and rage.

Sir W. [*Rising.*] I am out of all patience. The malicious depravity of persons in a certain sphere of life is not to be borne. [*With Firmness and Solemnity.*] Lady Mary—Mr. Bronzely——

Mr. Bron. [*In a half Whisper to him.*] Go away—don't expose yourself—steal out of the room—take my advice, and go to bed—hide yourself. So great is my respect for you, I would not have you detected for the world.

Sir W. I am going to retire, sir. I would not throw my friend's house into confusion and broils; therefore I am as well pleased not to be detected as you can be. [*Goes to the Door, then turns.*] But before I quit the room, I am irresistibly impelled to say—Mr. Bronzely! Lady Mary! while you continue to ridicule all that is virtuous, estimable, dignified, your vices most assuredly will plunge you into that very disgrace——

Enter OLIVER, and places the Piece of Cloth against SIR WILLIAM'S Coat.

Oliver. 'Tis as exact a match as ever was—it fits to a thread. Ha! ha! ha!—Ha! ha! ha!

Sir W. Rascal!

Mr. Bron. Did not I entreat you to go to bed?

Lady R. Oh, this is the highest gratification I ever knew! My lord! my lord! [*Calling.*]

Mr. Bron. Hush, hush!—hold, for Heaven's sake.

Oliver. But mercy and goodness defend us! who would have thought of this grave gentleman? Ha! ha! ha!—I can tell you what, sir; my lord will be in a terrible passion with you. This house won't hold you both; and I am sure I hate to make mischief.—Mum—I'll say nothing about it. [*Clapping* SIR WILLIAM *on the Shoulder.*] And so make yourself easy.

Mr. Bron. [*On the other side of* SIR WILLIAM.] Yes, make yourself easy.

Oliver. A good servant should sometimes be a peacemaker—for my part, I have faults of my own, and so, I dare say, has that gentleman—and so, I dare say, has that gentlewoman. But of all the birds in the wood, how came you to make up to my lady? ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mr. Bron. No jests—no jests. Mr. Mandred is my friend—my very good friend—and he is not so much to blame as you think for.—Good night, my dear sir.—Heaven bless you.—I thank you a thousand times.—Good night.

[*Shaking Hands with* SIR WILLIAM, *and leading him towards the Door.*]

Sir W. [*With steady Composure.*] Good night.—Good night, Lady Mary.

[*Exit.*

Oliver. Why, he never so much as once said he was obliged to me.

Lady R. I am sure, if you do not discover this to your master, I will.

Oliver. Oh! as that old gentleman had not manners to say "Thank you for your kindness," I'll go tell my lord directly.

[*Exit.*

Mr. Bron. [*Running after him.*] No, no, no—stop, Oliver. He is gone.

Lady R. What makes you thus anxious and concerned, Bronzely? Now, may I suffer death if, till I came into this room, I did not think you were the offender.

Mr. Bron. I! I indeed!—No, if I could have been tempted to offend any woman in this house in a similar manner, it could have been none but you. [*Bowing.*]

Lady R. No, Bronzely, no; I have been too partial to you, to have any remaining claims——Hark! don't I hear Lord Priory's voice in a dreadful rage!

Mr. Bron. Then Oliver has informed him. What shall I do to prevent mischief? Dear Lady Mary, as it is not proper for me to stay here any longer uninvited, do you run and try to pacify my Lord Priory. Tell him Mandred does not sleep here to-night; and

in the morning you are sure he will make an apology.

Lady R. I will do as you desire—but I know Mr. Mandred so well, that I am sure he will not apologise.

[*Exit.*

Mr. Bron. Then I will for him. Early in the morning, I'll wait on Lady Priory, and beg pardon in his name, without his knowing it. Yes, I have got poor Mandred into a difficulty, and it is my duty to get him out of it. And then, I shall not only serve him, but have one more interview with that heavenly woman.

[*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at MR. NORBERRY'S.

Enter MR. BRONZELY, followed by a SERVANT.

Mr. Bron. [*Looking at his Watch.*] I am early, I know: but Lady Priory is the only person I wish to see. Is my lord with her?

Serv. No, sir, Lord Priory sat up very late, and is yet in bed.

Mr. Bron. Acquaint Lady Priory, a person who comes on urgent business, begs to speak with her. If she asks my name, you know it. [*Exit SERVANT.*] Pray Heaven she may bless me with her sight! Never was so enchanted by a woman in my life!—and never played such a trick in my life. I am half inflamed by love, and half by spite, once more to attempt her.

Enter LADY PRIORY—he bows most respectfully—she courtesies.

Mr. Bron. Lady Priory, I come—I come upon rather an awkward, yet a very serious business: it was my misfortune to be among that company yesterday evening, where an unworthy member of it, had the insolence to offer an affront to your resplendent virtue.

Lady P. I have some household accounts to arrange, and breakfast to make for my lord as soon as he leaves his chamber: therefore, if you please, sir, proceed to the business on which you came, without thinking it necessary to interrupt it, by any compliment to me.

Mr. Bron. I will be concise, madam.—In a word, I wait upon you from Mr. Mandred, with the most humble apology for his late conduct, which he acknowledges to have been indecorous and unwarrantable: but he trusts, that, in consequence of the concession which I now make for him, the whole matter will, from this hour, be buried in oblivion.

Lady P. [*Going to the Side of the Scene, and speaking.*] If my

lord be at leisure, tell him, here is a gentleman would be glad to speak with him——[*To BRONZELY.*] I am sorry, sir, you should know so little of the rules of our family, as to suppose, that I could give an answer upon any subject on which my husband condescends to be engaged. [*Going.*]

Mr. Bron. Lady Priory, stop. You can at least use your power to soften Lord Priory's resentment; and unless this apology is accepted, a challenge must follow, and possibly he may fall.

Lady P. Possibly. [*Sighing.*]

Mr. Bron. You are interested for your husband's life?

Lady P. Certainly. But I set equal value on his reputation. [*Going.*]

Mr. Bron. Hear me one sentence more.—I cannot part from her. [*Aside.*] Oh, I have something of such importance to communicate to you—and yet—I know not how!

Lady P. Then tell it to my husband.

Mr. Bron. Hem—hem. [*Aside.*] Oh, Lady Priory, if the insult of last night has given you offence, should you not wish to be informed of a plan laid for yet greater violence?

[*She starts.*]

Lady P. Good Heaven!

Mr. Bron. This is neither time nor place to disclose what I

wish to say; nor do I know how to find an opportunity to speak with you alone, free from the possibility of intrusion; where I could reveal a secret to you, which is connected with your happiness—with your future peace.

Lady P. You alarm me beyond expression! I am going to my own house about twelve o'clock, for a couple of hours—follow me there.

Mr. Bron. And I shall be admitted?

Lady P. Certainly—for you have excited my curiosity, and I am all impatience to hear what you have to communicate that so much concerns me!

Mr. Bron. Promise, then, no person but yourself shall ever know of it. [*She hesitates.*] Unless you promise this, I dare not trust you.

Lady P. [*After a second Hesitation.*] I do promise—I promise faithfully.

Mr. Bron. Your word is sacred, I rely?

Lady P. Most sacred.

Mr. Bron. And you promise that no one but yourself shall know of the appointment we have now made at your house, nor of the secret which I will then disclose to you.

Lady P. I promise faithfully, that no one but myself shall ever know of either.

Mr. Bron. Remember then to be there alone, precisely at—

Lady P. At one o'clock.

Mr. Bron. And that your servants have orders to show me to you.

Lady P. I am too much interested to forget a single circumstance.

Mr. Bron. Go now, then, to Lord Priory with Mandred's apology—and urge his acceptance of it, with all that persuasion by which you are formed to govern, while you appear to obey.

Lady P. I will present the apology as I received it from you; but do not imagine I dare give my opinion upon it, unless I am desired.

Mr. Bron. But if you are desired, you will then say——

Lady P. Exactly what I think.

[*Exit.*

Mr. Bron. I'll do a meritorious act this very day. This poor woman lives in slavery with her husband. I'll give her an opportunity to run away from him. When we meet, I'll have a post chaise waiting a few doors from her house; boldly tell her that I love her; and——

Enter MISS DORRILLON.

My dear Miss Dorrillon, I could not sleep all night, and am come thus early on purpose to complain of your treatment of me during the whole of yesterday evening. Not one look did you glance towards me—and there I sat in miserable solitude up in one corner, the whole time of the concert.

Miss Dor. I protest I did not see you!—and, stranger still!—never thought of you.

Mr. Bron. You then like another better than you like me?

Miss Dor. I do.

Mr. Bron. Do you tell him so?

Miss Dor. No.

Mr. Bron. You tell him you like me the best.

Miss Dor. Yes.

Mr. Bron. Then I will believe what you say to him, and not what you say to me.—And though you charge me with inconstancy, yet I swear to you, my beloved Maria, [*Taking her Hand.*] that no woman, no woman but yourself——

Enter SIR WILLIAM, *and starts at seeing his Daughter in such close Conversation with* BRONZELY.

Sir W. [*Aside.*] How familiar!—my eyes could not be shocked with a sight half so wounding to my heart as this!

Mr. Bron. [*Apart to* MISS DORRILLON.] Hush! you have heard the story; but don't laugh at him now. He is in a devilish ill humour, and it will all fall on me. Go away.—It's a very good story, but laugh at him another time.

Miss Dor. I don't believe a word of the story; yet, as a received opinion, it is an excellent weapon for an enemy, and I long to use it.

Mr. Bron. Not now, not now—because I have some business with him, and 'twill put him out of temper.

[*He hands her to the Door.—Exit* MISS DORRILLON.]

Sir W. [*Looking steadfastly after her.*] Poor girl! poor girl! I am not yet so enraged against her, but that I compassionate her for her choice!—Is this the man who is to be, for life, her companion, her protector!

Mr. Bron. Well, Mr. Mandred, I believe, I have settled it.

Sir W. Settled what? [*Anxiously.*]

Mr. Bron. At least I have done all in my power to serve you: perhaps you don't know that Mr. Oliver divulged the whole affair. But I have waited on my Lady Priory, and I do believe I have settled it with her, to manage it so with my lord, that every thing shall be hushed up. You may expect a few jests among your female acquaintance, and a few epigrams in the news-papers; but I verily believe every thing material is safe.—Is there any further satisfaction which you demand from me?

Sir W. Not at present—a man is easily satisfied who possesses both courage and strength to do himself right, whenever he feels his wrongs oppressive. I have as yet found but little inconvenience from the liberties you have taken with me; and what, just at this time, far more engages my attention than revenge, is, an application to you for intelligence. Without further preface, do you pay your addresses to the young lady who lives in this house?

Mr. Bron. Yes I do, sir—I do.

Sir W. You know, I suppose, which of the two ladies I mean?

Mr. Bron. Which ever you mean, sir, 'tis all the same; for I pay my addresses to them both.

Sir W. [*Starting.*] To them both?

Mr. Bron. I always do.

Sir W. And pray, which of them do you love?

Mr. Bron. Both, sir—upon my word, both—I assure you, both.

Sir W. But you don't intend to marry both?

Mr. Bron. I don't intend to marry either: and, indeed, the woman whom I love best in the world, has a husband already. Do you suppose I could confine my affections to Lady Mary, or Miss Dorrrillon, after Lady Priory appeared? do you suppose I did not know who it was I met last night in the dark? wherever I visit, Mr. Mandred, I always make love to every woman in the

house: and I assure you, they expect it—I assure you, sir, they all expect it.

[SIR WILLIAM *walks about in anger.*

Have you any further commands for me?

Sir W. Yes, one word more.—And you really have no regard for this girl who parted from you as I came in?

Mr. Bron. Oh yes, pardon me—I admire, I adore, I love her to distraction: and if I had not been so long acquainted with Lady Mary, nor had seen my Lady Priory last night, I should certainly call Sir George Evelyn to an account, for being so perpetually with her.

Sir W. [*Anxiously.*] Do you think he loves her?

Mr. Bron. Yes, I dare say as well as I do.

Sir W. Do you think she likes him?

Mr. Bron. I think she likes me.

Sir W. But, according to your method of affection, she may like him too.

Mr. Bron. She may, she may.—In short, there is no answering for what she likes—all whim and flightiness—acquainted with every body—coquetting with every body—and in debt with every body. Her mind distracted between the claims of lovers, and the claims of creditors,—the anger of Mr. Norberry, and the

want of intelligence from her father.

Sir W. She is in a hopeful way!

Mr. Bron. Oh, it would be impossible to think of marrying her in her present state—for my part, I can't—and I question whether Sir George would.—But if her father come home, and give her the fortune that was once expected, why, then I may possibly marry her myself.

Sir W. [Firmly.] She will never have any fortune.—I came from India, lately, you know; and you may take my word, her father is not coming over, nor will he ever come.

Mr. Bron. Are you sure of that?

Sir W. Very sure.

Mr. Bron. Then keep it a secret—don't tell her so—poor thing! it would break her heart. She is dotingly fond of her father.

Sir W. Hah! how!—oh no, she can have no remembrance of him.

Mr. Bron. Not of his person, perhaps: but he has constantly corresponded with her—sent her presents, and affectionate letters—and you know a woman's heart is easily impressed.

Sir W. I never heard her mention her father.

Mr. Bron. Not to you; but to us who are kind to her, she talks

of him continually. She cried bitterly the other day when the last ship came home, and there was no account of him.

Sir W. Did she? did she? [*Eagerly.*] Ay, I suppose she is alarmed lest he should be dead, and all his riches lost.

Mr. Bron. No, I believe her affection for him is totally unconnected with any interested views. I have watched her upon that head, and I believe she loves her father sincerely.

Sir W. [*Wiping a Tear from his Eye.*] I believe it does not matter whom she loves.

Mr. Bron. By the by, she hates you.

Sir W. I thought so.

Mr. Bron. Yes, you may be satisfied of that. Yes, she even quarrelled with me the other day for speaking in your favour: you had put her in a passion, and she said, no one that loved *her*, ought to have any respect for you.

Sir W. I am much obliged to her—very much obliged to her. Did she say nothing more?

Mr. Bron. Only, that you were ill-natured, dogmatic, cruel, and insolent. Nothing more.—And say what she will against you, you know you can be even with her.

Sir W. Yes, I can be even with her, and I will be even with her.

Enter LORD PRIORY, and takes BRONZELY on one Side.

Lord P. I have accepted this man's apology:—I will not call him to a serious account; but he shall not escape every kind of resentment.—I am resolved to laugh at him; to turn the whole affair into mirth and good humour; at the same time to gall him to the heart. Good morning, Mr. Mandred: how do you do this morning, Mr. Mandred?—Let me go, [*Violently to BRONZELY.*] I must joke with him.

Mr. Bron. But neither your voice nor your looks agree with your words.

Lord P. Mr. Mandred, I did intend to be angry—but it would give too respectable an air to a base action—and so I am come to laugh at you.

Enter LADY RAFFLE.

And I am sure you, Lady Mary, will join even me, in laughing at this man of gallantry.

Lady R. Oh, I am absolutely afraid to come near the Tarquin.

Sir W. You need not, Lady Mary; for there can be no Tarquin without a Lucretia.

Lord P. However, Mr. Mandred, it is proper I should tell you, I accept the apology you have made: but at the same time——

Sir W. [*Hastily.*] What do you mean my lord? I have made no apology.

Mr. Bron. Yes, yes, you have—I called and made one for you.

Sir W. Made an apology for me! You have just gone one step too far then; and I insist——

Mr. Bron. [*Drawing SIR WILLIAM on one Side.*] I will—I will—I will set every thing to rights. It would be base in me if I did not; and I will. [*Turns to LORD PRIORY and LADY MARY.*] Yes, Mr. Mandred, I will retrieve your character at the expense of my own. I am more able to contend with the phrenzy of a jealous husband than you are.

Enter MISS DORRILLON and SIR GEORGE EVELYN.

I am happy to see you—you are just come in time to hear me clear the grave, the respectable character of my friend Mr. Mandred, and to stigmatise my own.—My lord, vent all your anger and your satire upon me. It was I (pray believe me, I beg you will; don't doubt my word), it was I who committed the offence, of which my friend, the man I respect and reverence, stands accused—It was I who offended my Lady Priory, and then——

Lord P. It cannot be—I won't be imposed upon.

Lady R. But how generous and noble in him to take it upon himself!

Mr. Bron. [*To SIR WILLIAM.*] There! what can I do more? You see they won't believe me!—Tell me what I can do more? Can I do any thing more?—My feelings are wounded on your account, more than on my own, and compel me, though reluctantly, to quit the room.

[*Exit.*

Sir G. I am at a loss which to admire most, the warmth of Mr. Bronzely's friendship, or the coldness of Mr. Mandred's gratitude.

Lady R. Oh! if it were not for that happy steadiness of feature, he could not preach rectitude of conduct as he does.

Lord P. [*Going up to* SIR WILLIAM.] Eloquent admonisher of youth!

Miss Dor. [*Going to him.*] Indeed, my rigid monitor, I cannot but express admiration, that, under those austere looks, and that sullen brow, there still should lurk——

Sir W. Have a care——don't proceed——stop where you are——dare not you complete a sentence that is meant to mock me.——I have borne the impertinence of this whole company with patience—with contempt; but dare you to breathe an accent suspicious of my conduct, and I will instantly teach you how to respect me, and to shrink with horror from yourself.

[*She stands motionless in Surprise.*

Lord P. What a passion he is in! Compose yourself, Mr. Mandred.

Miss Dor. I protest, Mr. Mandred——

Sir W. Silence! [*Raising his Voice.*] Dare not to address yourself to me.

Lady R. Did you ever hear the like?—And I vow she looks awed by him!

Lord P. How strange, that a man cannot command his temper!

Sir G. Mr. Mandred, permit me to say, I have ever wished to treat you with respect—nor would I be rash in laying that wish aside.—Yet, I must now take upon me to assure you, that if you think to offend every lady in this house with impunity, you are mistaken.

Sir W. Sir George, if you mean to frighten me by your threats, I laugh at you—but if your warmth is really kindled, and by an attachment to that unworthy object, [*Pointing to Miss DORRILLON.*] I only pity you.

Sir G. Insufferable!—[*Going up to him.*]—Instantly make an atonement for what you have said, or expect the consequence!

Sir W. And pray, Sir George, what atonement does your justice demand?

Sir G. Retract your words—Acknowledge you were grossly deceived, when you said Miss Dorrillon was unworthy.

Sir W. Retract my words!

Sir G. Were they not unjust?—Is it a reproach, that, enveloped in the maze of fashionable life, she has yet preserved her virtue unsuspected? That, encumbered with the expenses consequent to her situation, she has proudly disdained, even from me, the honourable offer of pecuniary aid? That her fond hope still fixes

on the return of an absent parent, whose blessing she impatiently expects? and that I, who have watched her whole conduct with an eye of scrutinizing jealousy, have yet only beheld that, which makes me aspire, as the summit of earthly happiness, to become her husband?

Sir W. Young man, I admire your warmth. [*With great Fervour and Affection.*] There is much compassion and benevolence, and charity, in sometimes mistaking the vicious for the virtuous;—and if in the heat of contention I have said a word reflecting on your character, I am ready to avow my error; and, before this company, to beg your pardon.

Sir G. That is not enough, sir,—[*Taking MISS DORRILLON by the Hand, and leading her forward.*]—you must ask this lady's pardon.

[*SIR WILLIAM starts, and turns his Face away, strongly impressed.*]

Sir W. Ask her pardon! Though I forgive some insults, I will not this.—Ask her pardon!—

Miss Dor. Nay, nay, Sir George, you have no business with Mr. Mandred's quarrels and mine.—Reserve your heroic courage for some nobler purpose than a poor woman's reputation.

Sir G. Point out a nobler, and I'll give up this.

Lady R. There is none so noble! And I wish, Sir George, you would undertake to vindicate mine.

Lord P. Come, Lady Mary, let us retire, and leave these two irritable men to themselves.

Lady R. Come, Maria, let us leave them alone. He'll teach Mr. Mandred to be civil for the future.

Miss Dor. [*In great Agitation.*] Dear Madam, I would not leave them alone for the world!

Lady R. Then, my lord, you and I will; they have no offensive weapons; so we may venture to leave them.

Lord P. This comes of being too warm in conversation! This comes of being in a passion!

[*Exeunt* LORD PRIORY *and* LADY MARY.]

Sir G. While there is a female present, I have only to say——good morning, Mr. Mandred. [*Going.*]

Miss Dor. [*Catching hold of him.*] For once I give up my pride to soften yours. Come, do not look thus determined!—I am sure Mr. Mandred did not mean to offend me; the words he made use of fell from his lips by accident.

Sir W. They did not—I meant them—I mean them still—and I repeat them.

Miss Dor. [*To* SIR WILLIAM.] Now, how can you be so provoking?—Nay, hold, Sir George, [*He offers to go.*] you shall not go away with that frowning brow. [*She draws him gently towards* SIR WILLIAM; *then takes* SIR WILLIAM'S *Hand.*] Nor you,

with that sullen aspect.—Come, shake hands, for my sake.—
Now, as I live, Sir George, Mr. Mandred's hand feels warmer
and kinder than yours—he tries to draw it back, but he has not
the heart. [SIR WILLIAM *snatches it away, as by compulsion.*]
Thou art a strange personage!—thou wilt not suffer me either to
praise, or to dispraise thee.—Come, Sir George, make up this
difference—for if you were to fight, and Mr. Mandred was to
fall——

Sir W. What then?

Miss Dor. Why, "I could better spare a better man."

Sir W. How!

Miss Dor. I see you are both gloomy, both obstinate, and I
have but one resource.—Sir George, if you aspire to my hand,
dare not to lift yours against Mr. Mandred. He and I profess to
be enemies: but if I may judge of his feelings by my own, we
have but passing enmities.—I bear him no malice, nor he me, I
dare be sworn. Therefore, sir, lift but your arm against him, or
insult him with another word, and our intercourse is for ever at
an end.

[*Exit.*

[SIR GEORGE *and* SIR WILLIAM *stand for some time silent.*

Sir G. Why is it in the power of one woman to make two men
look ridiculously?

Sir W. I am at a loss to know, sir, whether you and I part

friends or enemies.—However, call on me in the way you best like, and you will find me ready to meet you, either as an enemy, or as a friend.

[*Exeunt separately.*]

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

A Hall at LORD PRIORY'S.

Two SERVANTS discovered sitting—Another enters.

1 *Serv.* Do you hear, Mr. Porter, you are to admit no person but Mr. Bronzely.

2 *Serv.* Mr. Bronzely—very well—[*A loud rapping.*]—and there I suppose he is.

1 *Serv.* [*Looking through the Window.*] Yes; that, I believe, is his carriage.—[*To Third Servant.*]—Let my lady know.

[*Exit Third SERVANT.*]

Enter MR. BRONZELY.

Mr. Bron. You are sure Lady Priory is at home?

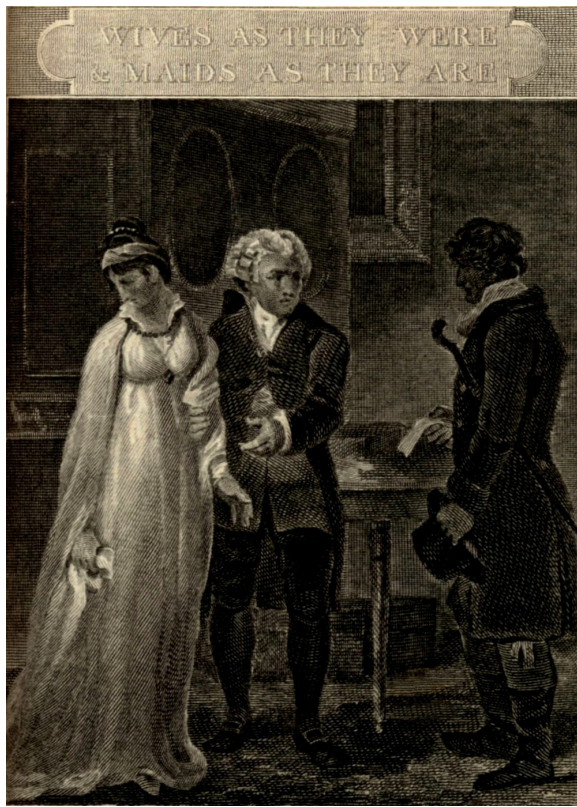
1 *Serv.* Yes, sir, and gave orders to admit nobody but you.

Mr. Bron. Has she been some time at home?

1 *Serv.* Yes, sir; I dare say my lady came from Mr. Norberry's half an hour ago.

Mr. Bron. Waiting for me half an hour—[*Aside.*]—Show me to her instantly.

[*Exit, following the SERVANT hastily.*]



SCENE II.

An Apartment at LORD PRIORY'S.

Enter BRONZELY and LADY PRIORY, on opposite Sides.

Mr. Bron. My dear Lady Priory, how kind you are, not to have forgotten your promise.

Lady P. How was it possible I should? I have been so anxious for the intelligence you have to communicate, that it was pain to

wait till the time arrived.

Mr. Bron. Thus invited, encouraged to speak, I will speak boldly—and I call Heaven to witness, that what I am going to say——

Lady P. No, stay a moment longer—don't tell me just yet—
[*Listening towards the Side of the Scenes.*.]—for I wish him to hear the very beginning.

Mr. Bron. Who, hear the very beginning?

Enter LORD PRIORY.—BRONZELY starts.

Lord P. I have not kept you waiting, I hope. My lawyer stopped me on business, or I should have been here sooner.—My dear Mr. Bronzely—[*Going up to him.*.]—I thank you a thousand times for the interest you take in my concerns; and I come prepared with proper coolness and composure, to hear the secret with which you are going to intrust us.

Mr. Bron. The secret!—yes, sir—the secret which I was going to disclose to my Lady Priory—Ha! ha! ha!—But my lord, I am afraid it is of too frivolous a nature for your attention.

Lord P. I account nothing frivolous which concerns my wife.

Mr. Bron. Certainly, my lord, certainly not.

Lord P. Besides, she told me it was of the utmost importance. Did not you? [*Angrily.*]

Lady P. He said so.

Mr. Bron. And so it was—it was of importance then—just at the very time I was speaking to Lady Priory on the subject.

Lady P. You said so but this very moment.

Lord P. Come, come, tell it immediately, whatever it is. Come, let us hear it.—[*After waiting some time.*] Why, sir, you look as if you were ashamed of what you are going to say! What can be the meaning of this?

Mr. Bron. To be plain, my lord, my secret will disclose the folly of a person for whom I have a sincere regard.

Lord P. No matter—let every fool look like a fool, and every villain be known for what he is—Tell your story.

Lady P. How can you deprive me of the pleasure you promised? You said it would prevent every future care.

Lord P. Explain, sir.—I begin to feel myself not quite so composed as I expected. You never, perhaps, saw me in a passion—she has—and if you were once to see me really angry——

Mr. Bron. Then, my lord, I am apt to be passionate too—and I boldly tell you, that what I had to reveal, though perfectly proper, was meant for Lady Priory alone to hear. I entreated your ladyship not to mention to my lord that I had any thing to communicate, and you gave me a solemn promise you would not.

Lady P. Upon my honour, during our whole conversation upon that subject, you never named my Lord Priory's name.

Mr. Bron. I charged you to keep what I had to tell you, a profound secret.

Lady P. Yes; but I thought you understood I could have no secrets from my husband.

Mr. Bron. You promised no one should know it but yourself.

Lady P. He is myself.

Lord P. How, Mr. Bronzely, did you suppose she and I were two? Perhaps you did, and that we wanted a third. Well, I quite forgive you for your silly mistake, and laugh at you, ha! ha! ha! as I did at Mr. Mandred.—[*Seriously.*]—Did you suppose, sir, we lived like persons of fashion of the modern time? Did you imagine that a woman of her character could have a wish, a desire, even a thought, that was a secret from her husband?

Mr. Bron. It is amazing to find so much fidelity the reward of tyranny!

Lady P. Sir—I speak with humility—I would not wish to give offence.—[*Timidly.*]—But, to the best of my observation and understanding, your sex, in respect to us, are all tyrants. I was born to be the slave of some of you—I make the choice to obey my husband.

Lord P. Yes, Mr. Bronzely; and I believe it is more for her happiness to be my slave, than your friend—to live in fear of

me, than in love with you. Lady Priory, leave the room. [*Exit*
LADY PRIORY.] Do you see—did you observe the glow of truth and
candour which testifies that woman's faith? and do you not blush
at having attempted it?—Call me a tyrant! Where are the signs?
Oh, if every married man would follow my system in the
management of his wife, every impertinent lover would look
just as foolish as you!

Mr. Bron. This is all boasting, my lord—you live in continual
fear—for (without meaning any offence to Lady Priory's honour)
you know you dare not trust her for one hour alone with any man
under sixty.

Lord P. I dare trust her at any time with a coxcomb.

Mr. Bron. That is declaring I am not one—for I am certain you
dare not leave her alone with me.

Lord P. [*In a Passion.*] Yes, with fifty such.

Mr. Bron. But not with one—and you are right—it might be
dangerous.

Lord P. [*Angrily.*] No, it would not.

Mr. Bron. [*Significantly.*] Yes, it would.

Lord P. Have not you had a trial?

Mr. Bron. But you were present. You constantly follow all her
steps, watch all she says and does. But I believe you are right—
wives are not to be trusted.

Lord P. Mine is.

Mr. Bron. No, my dear Lord Priory, you must first become gentle, before you can positively confide in her affection—before you can trust her in a house, or in any place, alone.

Lord P. [Hastily.] To prove you are mistaken, I'll instantly go back to my friend Norberry's, and leave you here to tell her the secret you boasted. Pay your addresses to her, if that be the secret—you have my free consent.

Mr. Bron. My dear friend, I'll accept it.

Lord P. Ay, I see you have hopes of supplanting me, by calling me your friend.—But can you conceive now that she'll listen to you?

Mr. Bron. You have given me leave to try, and can't recall it.

Lord P. But depend upon it, you will meet with some terrible humiliation.

Mr. Bron. Either you or I shall.

Lord P. I shall laugh to hear you tumbled down stairs.

Mr. Bron. You are not to remain on the watch here; you are to return to Mr. Norberry's.

Lord P. Was that the bargain?

Mr. Bron. Don't you remember? You said so.

Lord P. Well, if that will give you any satisfaction——

Mr. Bron. It will give me great satisfaction.

Lord P. Heaven forgive me, but your confidence makes me laugh. Ha! ha! ha!

Mr. Bron. And yours makes me laugh. Ha! ha! ha!

Enter OLIVER.

Lord P. Hah! What brings you here, Oliver? Lady Priory and I are only come home for a few hours.

Oliver. I know it, my lord. I thought nevertheless I might be wanted.

Mr. Bron. And so you are, good Mr. Oliver. Your lord desires you to conduct me to your lady in the next room, and acquaint her it is with his permission I am come to conclude the conversation which was just now interrupted.—Is not that right, my lord? Are not those words exactly corresponding with your kind promise?

Lord P. I believe they are.

Oliver.—I am "to take Mr. Bronzely to my lady, and tell her you sent him."

[*Exit OLIVER.*]

Mr. Bron. Now this is perfect fashion: and while I step to

Lady Priory, do you go and comfort my intended wife Lady Mary.

Lord P. I hate the fashion—and were I not sure you would now be received in a very unfashionable manner——

Mr. Bron. No rough dealings, I hope?

Lord P. Oh, you begin to be afraid, do you?

Mr. Bron. No—but I have met with an accident or two lately—and I am not so well acquainted with ancient usages as to know, in what manner a man of my pursuits would have been treated in former times.

Lord P. A man of your pursuits, Mr. Bronzely, is of a very late date; and to be shamed out of them by a wife like mine.

Mr. Bron. Then we shall all three be old-fashioned.

[Exit, following OLIVER.]

Lord P. *[Returning and looking anxiously after BRONZELY.]* I am passionate—I am precipitate—I have no command over my temper.—However, if a man cannot govern himself, yet he will never make any very despicable figure, as long as he knows how to govern his wife.

[Exit, on the Opposite Side.]

SCENE III.

SIR WILLIAM'S *Apartment* at MR. NORBERRY'S.

Several Trunks and travelling Boxes.—SIR WILLIAM *discovered, packing Writings into a Portfolio.*

Sir W. And here is the end of my voyage to England!—a voyage, which, for years, my mind had dwelt on with delight!—I pictured to myself a daughter grown to womanhood, beautiful! and so she is.—Accomplished! and so she is.—Virtuous! and so she is.—Am I of a discontented nature then, that I am not satisfied?—Am I too nice?—Perhaps I am.—Soothing thought!—I will for a moment cherish it, and dwell with some little gratitude upon her late anxiety for my safety.

[He walks about in a thoughtful musing manner.—A loud thrusting and rapping is heard at his Chamber Door.

Enter MISS DORRILLON hastily and in affright.

Miss Dor. Oh, Mr. Mandred, I beg your pardon—I did not know this was your apartment. But suffer me to lock the door: *[She locks it.]* and conceal me for a moment, for Heaven's sake.

Sir W. What's the matter? Why have you locked my door?

Miss Dor. *[Trembling.]* I dare not tell you.

Sir W. I insist upon knowing.

Miss Dor. Why then—I am pursued by a——I cannot name the horrid name——

Nabson. [*Without.*] She went into this room.

Miss Dor. [*To SIR WILLIAM.*] Go to the door, and say I did not.

Sir W. How!

Nabson. [*Without.*] Please to open the door.

Miss Dor. Threaten to beat him if he won't go away.

Sir W. Give me the key, and let me see from whom you want to fly.—[*Commanding.*]—Give me the key.

Miss Dor. [*Collecting firmness.*] I will not.

Sir W. [*Starting.*] "Will not"——Will not, when I desire you!

Miss Dor. No—since you refuse me protection, I'll protect myself.

Sir W. But you had better not have made use of that expression to me—you had better not. Recall it by giving me the key.

Miss Dor. If I do, will you let me conceal myself behind that bookcase, and say I am not here?

Sir W. Utter a falsehood?

Miss Dor. I would for you.

[*A hammering at the Door.*

Sir W. They are breaking open the door.—Give me the key, I command you.

Miss Dor. "Command me!" "command me!" However there it is. [*Gives it him.*] And now, if you are a gentleman, give me up if you dare!

Sir W. "If I am a gentleman!" Hem, hem—"If I am a gentleman!" Dares me too!

[*Going slowly towards the Door.*

Miss Dor. Yes. I have now thrown myself upon your protection: and if you deliver me to my enemies——

Sir W. What enemies? What business have you with enemies?

Miss Dor. 'Tis they have business with me.

Sir W. [*To them without.*] I am coming. The door shall be opened.

Miss Dor. [*Follows and lays hold of him.*] Oh, for Heaven's sake, have pity on me—they are merciless creditors—I shall be dragged to a prison. Do not deliver me up—I am unfortunate—I am overwhelmed with misfortunes—have compassion on me!

[*She falls on her Knees.*

Sir W. [*In great agitation.*] Don't *kneel* to me!—I don't mean

you to kneel to me!— What makes you think of kneeling to *me*?
—I must do my duty.

[*He unlocks the Door.*

Enter NABSON—MISS DORRILLON *steals behind a Bookcase.*

Sir W. What did you want, sir?

Nabson. A lady, that I have just this minute made my prisoner: but she ran from me, and locked herself in here.

Sir W. [*With surprise.*] Arrested a lady!

Nabson. Yes, sir; and if you mean to deny her being here, I must make bold to search the room.

Sir W. Let me look at your credentials.—[*Takes the Writ.*]—"Elizabeth Dorrillon for six hundred pounds." Pray, sir, is it customary to have female names on pieces of paper of this denomination?

Nabson. Oh yes, sir, very customary. There are as many ladies who will run into tradesmen's books, as there are gentlemen; and when one goes to take the ladies, they are a thousand times more slippery to catch than the men.

Sir W. Abominable!—Well, sir, your present prisoner shall not slip through your hands, if I can prevent it. I scorn to defend a worthless woman, as much as I should glory in preserving a good one: and I give myself joy in being the instrument of your executing justice.—[*He goes and leads* MISS DORRILLON *from the*

place where she was concealed—she casts down her Head.]—
What! do you droop? Do you tremble? You, who at the ball to-night would have danced lightly, though your poor creditor had been perishing with want! You, who never asked yourself if your extravagance might not send an industrious father of a family to prison, can you feel on the prospect of going thither yourself?

Miss Dor. For what cause am I the object of your perpetual persecution?

Nabson. Lor! Madam, the gentleman means to bail you after all: I can see it by his looks.

Sir W. How, rascal, dare you suppose, or imagine, or hint, such a thing?

[Going up to him in Anger.

Miss Dor. That's right, beat him out of the house.

Sir W. No, madam, he shall not go out of the house without taking you along with him. Punishment may effect in your disposition what indulgence has no hope of producing.—There is your prisoner [*Handing her over to him.*] and you may take my word, that she will not be released by me, or by any one: and it will be only adding to a debt she can never pay, to take her to any house previous to a prison.

[With the Emotion of Resentment, yet deep Sorrow.

Nabson. Is that true, my lady?

Miss Dor. [*After a Pause.*] Very true. I have but one friend—but one relation in the world—and he is far away.

[*Weeps.*—*SIR WILLIAM wipes his Eyes.*

Nabson. More's the pity.

Sir W. No, sir, no—no pity at all—for if fewer fine ladies had friends, we should have fewer examples of profligacy.

[*She walks to the Door, then turns to SIR WILLIAM.*

Miss Dor. I forgive you.

[*Exit, followed by NABSON.*

Sir W. [*Looking after her.*] And perhaps I *could* forgive you. But I must not. No, this is justice—this is doing my duty—this is strength of mind—this is fortitude—fortitude—fortitude.

[*He walks proudly across the Room, then stops, takes out his Handkerchief, throws his Head into it, and is going off.*]

Enter LADY RAFFLE—a Man following at a distance.

Lady R. Mr. Mandred, Mr. Mandred! [*He turns.*] Sir—Mr. Mandred—Sir—[*In a supplicating Tone.*] I presume—I presume, sir——

Sir W. What, madam? what?

Lady R. I came, sir, to request a favour of you.

Sir W. So it should seem, by that novel deportment.

Lady R. If you would for once consider with lenity, the frailty incidental to a woman who lives in the gay world——

Sir W. Well, madam!

Lady R. How much she is led away by the temptation of fine clothes, fine coaches, and fine things.

Sir W. Come, to the business.

Lady R. You are rich, we all know, though you endeavour to disguise the truth.

Sir W. I can't stay to hear you, if you don't proceed.

Lady R. My request is—save from the dreadful horrors of a gaol, a woman who has no friend near her—a woman who may have inadvertently offended you, but who never——

Sir W. 'Tis in vain for you to plead on her account—she knows my sentiments upon her conduct—she knows the opinion I have formed of her; and you cannot prevail on me to change it.

Lady R. Do you suppose I come to plead for Miss Dorrillon?

Sir W. Certainly.

Lady R. No, I am pleading for myself. I am unfortunately

involved in similar circumstances—I have a similar debt to the self-same tradesman, and we are both at present in the self-same predicament.

Sir W. And upon what pretence did you suppose I would be indulgent to you, more than to her?

Lady R. Because you have always treated me with less severity; and because I overheard you just now say, you "should glory in delivering from difficulty a good woman."

Sir W. And so I should.

Lady R. How unlike the world!

Sir W. No—whatever the discontented may please to say, the world is affectionate, is generous, to the good; more especially to the good of the female sex; for it is only an exception to a general rule, when a good woman is in pecuniary distress.

[*Exit* SIR WILLIAM.]

Enter LORD PRIORY, *humming a tune, but with a very serious face: he pulls out his Watch, with evident marks of anxiety—coughs—rubs his forehead—and gives various other marks of discontent and agitation.*—LADY RAFFLE *observes him with attention, then sidles up to him.*

Lady R. By the good humour you appear in, my lord, I venture to mention to you my distresses. I know the virtues of Lady Priory make my failings conspicuous; but then consider the different modes to which we have been habituated—she

excluded from temptation——

Lord P. No—she shuns temptation. Has she not in this very house been compelled to make exertions? Has she not detected and exposed both Mr. Mandred and Mr. Bronzely?

Lady R. Bronzely! Bronzely! How! [*Aside.*] Another rival?

Lord P. She has not done with *him* yet, I believe; for, to tell the truth, he is now with her at my house in Park Street. He taxed me with being jealous of my wife—to prove in what contempt I held the accusation, I left them together, and bid him make love to her.

Lady R. Is that possible?

Lord P. I can't say I would have done so rash an action, had I been married to some women—to you, for instance——but I have not a doubt of Lady Priory's safety: her mind, I know, is secure, and I have servants in the house to protect her from personal outrage. The only fear is, lest he should have received one; for 'tis now near two hours [*Looking at his Watch.*] since I came away, and I have neither seen nor heard any thing of either of them!—But to your Ladyship's concerns.

Lady R. I am at this instant, my lord, in the power of an implacable creditor: and unless some friend will give bond for a certain sum, I must—I blush to name it—be taken to a prison.

Lord P. I am not at all surprised at the circumstance, madam: but it amazes me that you should apply to me for deliverance. You have a brother in town; why not send to him?

Lady R. He was my friend the very last time a distress of this kind befell me. [*Weeps.*]

Lord P. Ask Mr. Norberry.

Lady R. He was my friend the time before.

Lord P. Mr. Bronzely, then.

Lady R. And Bronzely the time before that.

Enter OLIVER.

Lord P. Ah, Oliver! I am glad to see you, my good fellow. Ah! what have you done with Mr. Bronzely?

Oliver. Nay, my lord, that I can't tell. I can't tell what he has done with himself.

Lord P. How long has he been gone from my house?

Oliver. He is not gone yet, as I know of; for none of the servants let him out.

Lord P. Not gone! and you can't tell where he is!

Oliver. No, that we can't: we have looked in every room for him, and can't find him any where.

Lord P. Not find him! [*Recollecting himself.*] Ho! ho! I thought how it would be—I thought he'd have some trick played him. Where's your lady?

Oliver. That I can't tell neither. We have looked in every room, and can't find *her*.

Lord P. How!

Oliver. 'Tis as sure as I am alive. I and the butler, two footmen, and all the maids have been looking in parlours, chambers, and garrets, every crick and corner, and no where can we find either Mr. Bronzely or my lady: but, wherever they are, there's no doubt but they are together. Ha! ha!

Lady R. No doubt at all, Mr. Oliver.

Lord P. Together! together! and not in my house! You tell a falsehood. I'll go myself and find them.

Oliver. You must look sharp, then.

Lord P. How came you to miss them?

Oliver. I chanced to go into the next room, to see if there was a proper fire to get it well aired; I knew I had taken Mr. Bronzely to my lady in the inner room, and I had heard them both laughing not a quarter of an hour before; but now, all on a sudden, there was neither laughing nor talking, nor any noise at all—every thing was quiet.

Lord P. [*Anxiously.*] Well!

Oliver. And so I thought to myself, thought I, I'll sit down here; for my lady will be ringing soon: however, there was no ringing for a whole half hour; and so then I thought I would e'en rap at

the door; but nobody called "Come in." So then I went in of my own accord; and there I found——

Lord P. What?

Oliver. Nobody! not a soul to be seen!

Lord P. [*Affecting indifference.*] Oh! she has been playing Bronzely some trick! She has been hiding him; and in some miserable place!

Oliver. But why need she hide herself along with him?

Enter MR. NORBERRY.

Mr. Nor. My dear friend, my dear Lord Priory, let me speak with you alone.—I come upon business that——

Lord P. You look pale! What is your business? Tell it me at once.

Mr. Nor. It is of so delicate a nature——

Lord P. I know my wife is with Mr. Bronzely—I left them together. I know he is a depraved man; but I know she is an innocent woman.—Now, what have you to tell me?

Mr. Nor. What I have just learnt from one of your servants. About a quarter of an hour after you left them, they stole softly out at the back of your house, ran to a post-chaise and four that was in waiting, and drove off together full speed.

Lord P. Gone! eloped! run away from me! left me! left the tenderest, kindest, most indulgent husband, that ever woman had!

Lady R. That we can all witness.

Lord P. I was too fond of her—my affection ruined her—women are ungrateful—I did not exert a husband's authority—I was not strict enough—I humoured and spoiled her!—Bless me! what a thick mist is come over my eyes!

Lady R. No, my lord, it is clearing away.

Lord P. Lead me to my room.

[He is led off by MR. NORBERRY, exhausted with grief and anger.—OLIVER looks after LORD PRIORY, then takes out his Handkerchief, and follows him off, crying.]

Lady R. Ha! ha! ha! Oh, how I enjoy this distress! Ha! ha! ha!

[The OFFICER who has attended her during the Scene, and kept at the further part of the Stage, now comes forward, and bows to her. She starts on seeing him—takes out her Handkerchief, and goes crying off at the opposite Side, he following.]



ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at MR. BRONZELY'S.

Enter HOUSEKEEPER and FOOTMAN.

House. Dinner enough for twelve, and only two to sit down to it! Come home without one preparation—not a bed aired, or the furniture uncovered.

Foot. This is not the first time he has done so.

House. No: for 'tis always thus when a woman's in the case. Well, I do say that my own sex are—

Foot. Hush! here they are. Run away.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter LADY PRIORY and MR. BRONZELY.

Lady P. Only twelve miles from London?

Mr. Bron. No more, be assured.

Lady P. And you avow that I did not come hither by the commands of my husband, but was deceived into that belief by you.

Mr. Bron. Still it was by his commands your servant

introduced me to you; and, upon an errand, which I feared to deliver till I arrived at a house of my own.

Lady P. What is the errand?

Mr. Bron. To tell you that—I love you.

Lady P. Do you assert, Lord Priory sent you to me for this?

Mr. Bron. I assert, that, in triumph at your betraying to him our private appointment, he gave me leave to have a second trial. If, then, you have ever harboured one wish to revenge, and forsake a churlish ungrateful partner, never return to him more—but remain with me.

Lady P. And what shall I have gained by the exchange, when you become churlish, when you become ungrateful? My children's shame! the world's contempt! and yours! [*Smiling.*] Come, come; you are but jesting, Mr. Bronzely! You would not affront my little share of common sense, by making the serious offer of so bad a bargain. Come, own the jest, and take me home immediately.

Mr. Bron. Is it impossible for me to excite your tenderness?

Lady P. Utterly impossible.

Mr. Bron. I will then rouse your terror.

Lady P. Even that I defy.

Mr. Bron. Lady Priory, you are in a lonely house of mine,

where I am sole master, and all the servants slaves to my will.

[LADY PRIORY *calmly takes out her Knitting, draws a Chair, and sits down to knit.*

Mr. Bron. [*Aside.*] This composure is worse than reproach—a woman who meant to yield would be outrageous.—[*Goes to speak to her, then turns away.*] By Heaven she looks so respectable in that employment, I am afraid to insult her. [*After a struggle with himself.*] Ah! do not you fear me?

Lady P. No—for *your* fears will protect me—I have no occasion for mine.

Mr. Bron. What have I to fear?

Lady P. You fear to lounge no more at routs, at balls, at operas, and in Bond Street; no more to dance in circles, chat in side-boxes, or roar at taverns: for you have observed enough upon the events of life to know—that an atrocious offence, like violence to a woman, never escapes condign punishment.

Mr. Bron. Oh! for once let your mind be feminine as your person—hear the vows——

[*He seizes her Hand—she rises—he starts back.*

Lady P. Ah! did not I tell you, you were afraid? 'Tis you who are afraid of me. [*He looks abashed.*] Come, you are ashamed, too—I see you are, and I pardon you.—In requital, suffer me to return home immediately. [*He shakes his Head.*]——How! are not you ashamed to detain me here?

Mr. Bron. I was not this moment—But now you urge the subject, I think I am.

Lady P. Repent your folly, then, and take me home. [*Hastily.*]

Mr. Bron. Can you wish to go back to the man who has made this trial of your fidelity, and not resent his conduct?

Lady P. Most assuredly I wish to return. But if you deliver me safe, perfectly safe, from further insult, it will be impossible for me not to show resentment to Lord Priory.

Mr. Bron. Why only in that case?

Lady P. Because, only in that case, you will make an impression on my heart—and I will resent his having exposed me to such a temptation.

Mr. Bron. Oh! I'll take you home directly—this moment—Any thing, any sacrifice to make an impression on your heart. William!—[*Calling.*—] I'll take you home directly. Here, John, Thomas, William—[*Calling.*] But, upon my life, it will be a hard task—I cannot do it—I am afraid—I am afraid I cannot.—Besides, what are we to say when we go back?—No matter what, so you will but think kindly of me.

Enter SERVANT.

Order the horses to be put to the chaise; I am going back to London immediately. Quick! quick! Bid the man not be a moment, for fear I should change my mind.

Serv. The chaise is ready now, sir; for the post boy was going back without unharnessing his horses.

Mr. Bron. Then tell him he must perform his journey in half an hour—If he is a moment longer, my resolution will stop on the road. [*Exit SERVANT.*] I feel my good designs stealing away already—now they are flying rapidly. [*Taking LADY PRIORY'S Hand.*]—Please to look another way—I shall certainly recant if I see you. [*Going.*]—And now, should I have the resolution to take you straight to your husband, you will have made a more contemptible figure of me by this last act, than by any one you have led me to.

[*Exit, leading her off.*]

Mr. Bron. [*Without.*] Tell the post boy he need not wait—I have changed my mind—I shall not go to London to-night.

SCENE II.

A Room in a Prison.

Enter MISS DORRILLON and MR. NORBERRY.

Mr. Nor. You ought to have known it was vain to send for me. Have not I repeatedly declared, that, till I heard from your father, you should receive nothing more from me than a bare subsistence?—I promise to allow you thus much, even in this miserable place: but do not indulge a hope that I can release you

from it. [*She weeps—he goes to the Door—then returns.*] I forgot to mention, that Mr. Mandred goes on board to-morrow, for India; and, little as you may think of his sensibility, he seems concerned at the thought of quitting England in resentment, without just bidding you a parting farewell. He came with me hither—shall I send him up?

Miss Dor. Oh, no! for Heaven's sake! Deliver me from his asperity, as you would save me from distraction.

Mr. Nor. Nay, 'tis for the last time—you had better see him. You may be sorry, perhaps, you did not, when he is gone.

Miss Dor. No, no: I sha'n't be sorry.—Go, and excuse me—Go, and prevent his coming. I cannot see him.—[*Exit MR. NORBERRY.*]—This would be aggravation of punishment, to shut me in a prison, and yet not shelter me from the insults of the world!

Enter SIR WILLIAM.—She starts.

Sir W. I know you have desired not to be troubled with my visit; and I come with all humility—I do not come, be assured, to reproach you.

Miss Dor. Unexpected mercy!

Sir W. No; though I have watched your course with anger, yet I do not behold its end with triumph.

Miss Dor. It is not to your honour, that you think necessary to give this statement of your mind.

Sir W. May be——but I never boasted of perfection, though I can boast of grief that I am so far beneath it. I can boast too, that, though I frequently give offence to others, I could never part with any one for ever (as I now shall with you), without endeavouring to make some atonement.

Miss Dor. You acknowledge, then, your cruelty to me?

Sir W. I acknowledge I have taken upon me to advise, beyond the liberty allowed, by custom, to one who has no apparent interest or authority.——But, not to repeat what is passed; I come with the approbation of your friend Mr. Norberry, to make a proposal to you for the future.

[*He draws Chairs, and they sit.*]

Miss Dor. What proposal?—What is it? [*Eagerly.*]

Sir W. Mr. Norberry will not give either his money or his word to release you.—But as I am rich—have lost my only child—and wish to do some good with my fortune, I will instantly lay down the money of which you are in want, upon certain conditions.

Miss Dor. Do I hear right? Is it possible I can find a friend in you!—a friend to relieve me from the depth of misery! Oh, Mr. Mandred!

Sir W. Before you return thanks, hear the conditions on which I make my offer.

Miss Dor. Any conditions—What you please!

Sir W. You must promise, solemnly promise, never to return to your former follies and extravagancies. [*She looks down.*] Do you hesitate? Do you refuse?—Won't you promise?

Miss Dor. I would, willingly—but for one reason.

Sir W. And what is that?

Miss Dor. The fear, I should not keep my word.

Sir W. You will, if your fear be real.

Miss Dor. It is real—it is even so great, that I have no hope.

Sir W. You refuse my offer, then, and dismiss me?

[*Rises.*

Miss Dor. [*Rising also.*] With much reluctance.—But I cannot, —indeed I cannot make a promise, unless I were to feel my heart wholly subdued; and my mind entirely convinced that I should never break it.—Sir, I am most sincerely obliged to you for the good which I am sure you designed me; but do not tempt me with the proposal again—do not place me in a situation, that might add to all my other afflictions, the remorse of having deceived you.

Sir W. [*After a Pause.*] Well, I will dispense with this condition—but there is another I must substitute in its stead.—Resolve to pass the remainder of your life, some few ensuing years at least, in the country. [*She starts.*] Do you start at that?

Miss Dor. I do not love the country. I am always miserable while I am from London. Besides, there are no follies or extravagancies in the country.—Dear sir, this is giving me up the first condition, and then forcing me to keep it by the second.

Sir W. There, madam, [*Taking out his Pocket-book.*] I scorn to hold out hopes, and then destroy them. There is a thousand pounds free of all constraint—[*She takes it.*]—extricate yourself from this situation, and be your own mistress to return to it when you please. [*Going.*]

Miss Dor. Oh, my benefactor! bid me farewell at parting—do not leave me in anger.

Sir W. How! will you dictate terms to me, while you reject all mine?

Miss Dor. Then only suffer me to express my gratitude—

Sir W. I will not hear you. [*Going.*]

Miss Dor. Hear me then on another subject: a subject of much importance—indeed it is.

Sir W. Well!

Miss Dor. You are going to India immediately—it is possible that there, or at some place where you will land on your way, you may meet with my father.

Sir W. Well!

Miss Dor. You have heard that I have expected him home for some time past, and that I still live in hopes——

Sir W. Well! [*Anxiously.*]

Miss Dor. If you should see him, and should be in his company—don't mention me.

Sir W. Not mention you!

Miss Dor. At least, not my indiscretions——Oh! I should die, if I thought he would ever know of them.

Sir W. Do you think he would not discover them himself, should he ever see you?

Miss Dor. But he would not discover them all at once—I should be on my guard when he first came—My ill habits would steal on him progressively, and not be half so shocking, as if you were to vociferate them all in a breath.

Sir W. To put you out of apprehension at once—your father is not coming home—nor will he ever return to his own country.

Miss Dor. [*Starting.*] You seem to speak from certain knowledge—Oh, Heavens! is he not living?

Sir W. Yes, living—but under severe affliction—fortune has changed, and all his hopes are blasted.

Miss Dor. Fortune changed!—in poverty!—my father in poverty?—[*Weeping.*]—Oh, sir! excuse what may, perhaps,

appear an ill compliment to your bounty; but to me, the greatest reverence I can pay to it.—You are going to that part of the world where he is; take this precious gift back, search out my father, and let him be the object of your beneficence.—[*Forces the Bank Note into his Hand.*]—I shall be happy in this prison, indeed, I shall, so I can but give a momentary relief to my dear, dear father.—[*SIR WILLIAM takes out his Handkerchief.*]—You weep!—This present, possibly may be but poor alleviation of his sufferings—perhaps he is in sickness; or perhaps a prisoner! Oh! if he is, release me instantly, and take me with you to the place of his confinement.

Sir W. What! quit the joys of London?

Miss Dor. On such an errand, I would quit them all without a sigh—and here I make a solemn promise to you——[*Kneeling.*]

Sir W. Hold, you may wish to break it.

Miss Dor. Never—exact what vow you will on this occasion, I will make and keep it.

Enter MR. NORBERRY.—She rises.

——Oh, Mr. Norberry! he has been telling me such things of my father——

Mr. Nor. Has he? Then kneel again—call *him* by that name—and implore him not to disown you for his child.

Miss Dor. Good Heaven!—I dare not—I dare not do as you require.

[*She faints on* NORBERRY.

Sir W. [*Going to her.*] My daughter!—my child!

Mr. Nor. At those names she revives.—[*She raises her Head, but expresses great Agitation.*]—Come, let us quit this wretched place—she will be better then. My carriage is at the door. You will follow us?

[*Exit, leading off* MISS DORRILLON.

Sir W. Follow you!—Yes—and I perceive that, in spite of philosophy, justice, or resolution, I would follow you all the world over.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Another Room in the Prison.

LADY RAFFLE *discovered sitting in a dejected Posture.*

Lady R. Provoking! not an answer to one of my pathetic letters!—not a creature to come and condole with me!—Oh that I could but regain my liberty before my disgrace is announced in the public prints!—I could then boldly contradict every paragraph that asserted it—by—*We have authority to say, no such event ever took place.*

Enter a Man belonging to the Prison.

Man. One Sir George Evelyn is here, madam; he will not name your name, because it sha'n't be made public; but he desires you will permit him to come and speak a few words to you, provided you are the young lady from Grosvenor Street, with whom he has the pleasure of being acquainted.

Lady R. Yes, yes, I am the young lady from Grosvenor Street—my compliments to Sir George, I am that lady—intimately acquainted with him; and intreat he will walk up. [*Exit the MAN.*] This is a most fortunate incident in my tragedy! Sir George no doubt takes me for Miss Dorillon; yet I am sure he is too much the man of gallantry and good breeding to leave me in this place, although he visits me by mistake.

Enter SIR GEORGE EVELYN, speaking as he enters.

Sir G. Madam, you are free—the doors of the prison are open—my word is passed for the——

[*He stops,—looks around—expresses Surprise and Confusion.*]

Lady R. [*Courtesying very low.*] Sir George, I am under the most infinite obligation!—Words are too poor to convey the sense I have of this act of friendship—but I trust my gratitude will for ever——

Sir G. [*Confused.*] Madam—really—I ought to apologize for the liberty I have taken.

Lady R. No liberty at all, Sir George—at least no apology is necessary—I insist on hearing no excuses. A virtuous action requires no preface, no prologue, no ceremony—and surely, if one action be more noble and generous than another, it must be that one, where an act of benevolence is conferred, and the object, an object of total indifference to the liberal benefactor.—Generous man, good evening.—Call me a coach. [*Going.*]

Sir G. Stay, madam—I beg leave to say——

Lady R. Not a word—I won't hear a word—my thanks shall drown whatever you have to say.

Enter the former MAN.

Sir G. Pray, sir, did not you tell me, you had a very young lady under your care?

Man. Yes, sir, so I had—but she, it seems, has just been released, and is gone away with the gentleman who paid the debt.

Lady R. Do you mean Miss Dorrillon?

Man. I mean the other lady from Grosvenor Street.

Sir G. Who can have released her?

Lady R. Some friend of mine, I dare say, by mistake.—Well, if it be so, she is extremely welcome to the good fortune which was designed for me. For my part, I could not submit to an obligation from every one—scarcely from any one—and from

no one with so little regret as I submit to it from Sir George Evelyn.

[*Exit, courtesying to* SIR GEORGE.

Sir G. Distraction! the first disappointment is nothing to this last! to the reflection, that Miss Dorrillon has been set at liberty by any man on earth except myself.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

An Apartment at MR. NORBERRY'S.

Enter LORD PRIORY.

Lord P. What a situation is mine! I cannot bear solitude, and am ashamed to see company! I cannot bear to think on the ungrateful woman, and yet I can think on nothing else! It was her conduct which I imagined had alone charmed me; but I perceive her power over my heart, though that conduct be changed!

Enter MR. NORBERRY, SIR WILLIAM *and* MISS DORRILLON.

Mr. Nor. My dear Lord Priory, exert your spirits to receive and congratulate a friend of mine. Sir William Dorrillon, [*Presenting him.*] father to this young woman, whose failings he has endeavoured to correct under the borrowed name of Mandred.

Sir W. And with that fictitious name, I hope to disburden myself of the imputation of having ever offered an affront to my Lord Priory.

[*He takes LORD PRIORY aside, and they talk together.*

Enter Sir George Evelyn.

Sir G. Is it possible what I have heard can be true? Is it Mr. Mandred who has restored Miss Dorrillon to the protection of Mr. Norberry?

Sir W. [*Coming forward.*] No, Sir George; I have now taken her under my own protection.

Sir G. By what title, sir?

Sir W. A very tender one—don't be alarmed—I am her father.

Sir G. Sir William Dorrillon?

[*They talk apart.*

Enter LADY RAFFLE.

Lady R. Has there been any intelligence of my Lady Priory yet? [*Sees MISS DORRILLON.*] My dear Dorrillon, a lover of yours has done the civilest thing by me!—As I live, here he is. How do you do, Sir George? I suppose you have all heard the news of Bronzely running away with——

Miss Dor. Hush!—Lord Priory is here.

Lady R. Oh, he knows it—and it is not improper to remind him of it—it will teach him humility.

Lord P. I *am* humble, Lady Mary; and own I have had a better opinion of your sex than I ought to have had.

Lady R. You mean, of your management of us; of your instructions, restrictions, and corrections.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Lady Priory and Mr. Bronzely.

Lady R. What of them?

Serv. They are here.

Lord P. I said she'd preserve her fidelity! Did not I always say so? Have I wavered once? Did I not always tell you, that she was only making scoff of Bronzely? Did I not tell you all so?

Enter BRONZELY *and* LADY PRIORY.

Mr. Bron. Then, indeed, my lord, you said truly; for I return the arrantest blockhead——

Lord P. I always said you would; but how is it? Where have you been? What occasion for a post-chaise? Instantly explain, or I shall forfeit that dignity of a husband, to which, in these degenerate times, I have almost an exclusive right.

Mr. Bron. To reinstate you, my lord, in those honours, I

accompany Lady Priory; and beg public pardon for the opinion I once publicly professed, of your want of influence over her affections.

Lord P. Do you hear? Do you hear? Lady Mary, do you hear?

Mr. Bron. Taking advantage of your permission to call on her, by stratagem I induced her to quit your house, lest restraint might there act as my enemy. But your authority, your prerogative, your honour, attached to her under my roof. She has held those rights sacred, and compelled even me to revere them.

Lord P. Do you all hear? I was sure it would turn out so!

Lady R. This is the first time I ever knew a woman's honour vindicated by the good word of her gallant.

Lord P. I will take her own word—the tongue which, for eleven years, has never in the slightest instance deceived me, I will believe upon all occasions. My dear wife, boldly pronounce, before this company, that you return to me with the same affection and respect, and the self-same contempt for this man—[*To BRONZELY*]*—you ever had.*

[*A short Pause.*]

Lady R. She makes no answer.

Lord P. Hush! hush! She is going to speak.—[*Another Pause.*]
—Why, why don't you speak?

Lady P. Because I am at a loss what to say.

Lady R. Hear, hear, hear—do you all hear?

Lord P. Can you be at a loss to declare you hate Mr. Bronzely?

Lady P. I do *not* hate him.

Lady R. I was sure it would turn out so.

Lord P. Can you be at a loss to say you love me?

[She appears embarrassed.]

Lady R. She *is* at a loss.

Lord P. How? Don't you fear me?

Lady P. Yes.

Lady R. She speaks plainly to that question.

Lord P. You know I love truth—speak plainly to all their curiosity requires.

Lady P. Since you command it then, my lord—I confess that Mr. Bronzely's conduct towards me has caused a sentiment in my heart——

Lord P. How! What?

Lady R. You must believe her—"she has told you truth for eleven years."

Lady P. A sensation which——

Lord P. Stop—any truth but this I could have borne.—Reflect on what you are saying—Consider what you are doing—Are these your primitive manners?

Lady P. I should have continued those manners, had I known none but primitive men. But to preserve ancient austerity, while, by my husband's consent, I am assailed by modern gallantry, would be the task of a stoic, and not of his female slave.

Lady R. Do you hear? Do you all hear? My lord, do *you* hear?

Lord P. I do—I do—and though the sound distracts me, I cannot doubt her word.

Lady P. It gives me excessive joy to hear you say so: because you will not then doubt me when I add—that gratitude, for his restoring me so soon to you, is the only sentiment he has inspired.

Lord P. Then my management of a wife is right after all!

Mr. Nor. Mr. Bronzely, as your present behaviour has in great measure atoned for your former actions, I will introduce to your acquaintance, my friend Sir William Dorrillon.

Mr. Bron. Mandred Sir William Dorrillon!

Sir W. And considering, sir, that upon one or two occasions I have been honoured with your confidence—you will not be surprised, if the first command I lay upon my daughter, is—to take refuge from your pursuits, in the protection of Sir George Evelyn.

Sir G. And may I hope, Maria?——

Miss Dor. No—I will instantly put an end to all your hopes.

Sir G. How!

Sir W. By raising you to the summit of your wishes. Alarmed at my severity, she has owned her readiness to become the subject of a milder government.

Sir G. She shall never repine at the election she has made.

Lord P. But, Sir George, if you are a prudent man, you will fix your eyes on my little domestic state, and guard against a rebellion.

Lady P. Not all the rigour of its laws has ever induced me to wish them abolished.

Mr. Bron. [*To LADY PRIORY.*] Dear lady, you have made me think with reverence on the matrimonial compact: and I demand of you, Lady Mary—if, in consequence of former overtures, I should establish a legal authority over you, and become your chief magistrate—would you submit to the same control to which Lady Priory submits?

Lady R. Any control, rather than have no chief magistrate at all.

Sir G. [*To MISS DORRILLON.*] And what do you say to this?

Miss Dor. Simply one sentence.—A maid of the present day,

shall become a wife like those—of former times.

THE END.



TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Contemporary spellings have generally been retained, though names were harmonised. Missing punctuation has been added. Obvious typographical errors have been silently corrected (e.g. sr / sir, substitue / substitute, persectly / perfectly; fuch / such). The scenes in Act 5 have been renumbered (original has two Scenes II and lacks a Scene III).

One substantive change was made and can be identified in the body of the text by a grey dotted underline. In Act 5, Scene 1, "our" was changed to "your" in keeping with the logic of Mr. Bronzeley's speech:

Oh! I'll take you home directly—this moment—Any thing, any sacrifice to make an impression on **our** heart.

Oh! I'll take you home directly—this moment—Any thing, any sacrifice to make an impression on **your** heart.

[The end of *Wives as they were and Maids as they are* by Elizabeth Inchbald]