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Lord *BLUNDER*'s
CONFESSIO*N*;

OR,

Guilt makes a Coward.

A NEW

BALLAD-OPERA.

*Remember GAVESTON, or SPENCER think;
The Cup is full, and Somebody must drink.*

The SCREEN.

By the Author of *VANELIA*,
an OPERA.



L O N D O N:

Printed for T. REYNOLDS, over-against the
Fountain-Tavern in the *Strand*. MDCCLXXXIII.

Price One Shilling and Six-pence.

THE BIRCH

THE BIRCH

THE BIRCH

THE BIRCH

THE BIRCH

THE BIRCH

THE BIRCH

THE BIRCH

THE BIRCH



A

TABLE of the SONGS.

AIR	1. <i>Let's be jolly, fill our Glasses.</i>	p. 9
	2. <i>When young fit to toy, &c.</i>	13
	3. <i>See, see, my Seraphina comes.</i>	17
	4. <i>Over the Hills, and far away.</i>	20
	5. <i>Young Philoret</i>	22
	6. <i>An Old Woman cloathed in grey</i>	26
	7. <i>Abbot of Cantetbury</i>	31
	8. <i>Chivey-Chace</i>	34
	9. <i>Fie, let us all to the Wedding</i>	36
	10. <i>I'll marry a Lass with a Lump of Land</i>	} 39
	11. <i>When Chloe we ply</i>	
	12. <i>The Broom of Cowdenknows</i>	46
	13. <i>Cold and raw the Winds did blow</i>	50
	14. <i>Packington's Pound.</i>	54
	15. <i>Bessy Bell and Mary Grey</i>	56
	16. <i>When fair Aurelia tript the Plain</i>	60
	17. <i>Grim King of the Ghosts</i>	62
	18. <i>The Lass of Paty's Mill</i>	63
	19. <i>Which Nobody can deny</i>	64
	20. <i>Oh! Ponder well, ye Parents dear</i>	66
	21. <i>To all ye Ladies now at Land</i>	67

A 2

Dra

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

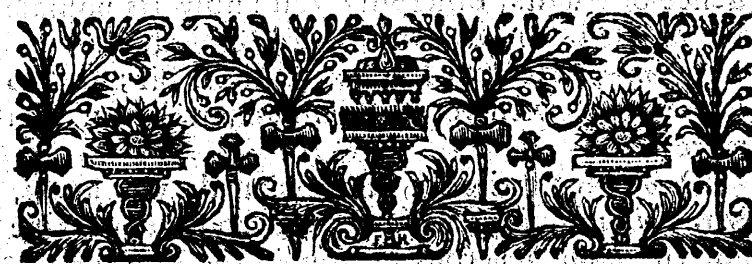
Lord *Blunder*.*Oliver Blunder*, his Brother, an ignorant, ill-bred Fellow, pretending to Wit, and great Skill in Politicks.*Isaac Whalebone*, Brother to Mrs. *Blunder*, an Upstart Scoundrel.Sir *William Brazen*, *Bob Drugget*, and *Daniel Transfer*, Dependants, and Creatures of Lord *Blunder*.*Dick Dash*, and *James Trimwell*, employ'd by Lord *Blunder* to abuse his Adversaries, and write Daily Panegyrics upon him.Lord *Freeman*, a Worthy Patriot in the Cause of Liberty.Lord *Sparkle*, a Nobleman of distinguish'd Wit, who has a great Talent for Satyr.Sir *Abraham Standfast*, and Sir *William Meanwell*, Friends to Lord *Freeman*.Mr. *Gaylove*, a young Gentleman of Wit and Learning, who sometimes diverts himself with answering Lord *Blunder's* Writers.*Graspall*, Lord *Blunder's* Gentleman.*Siftwell*, Lord *Freeman's* Gentleman.Ghost of *Phillippo*.

W O M E N.

Lady *Meanwell*, Wife to Sir *William Meanwell*, a Lady of Beauty and Family.Mrs. *Blunder*, Wife to *Oliver Blunder*, descended from the Dregs of the People, of Foreign Extraction, excessive filly, and ridiculously proud.*Skitsilla*, a professed Prude, but privately kept by Lord *Blunder*, in Love with *Gaylove*.*Lucy*, her Maid.*Fawnwell*, Woman, & Housekeeper to Mrs. *Blunder*.*Clara*, a young Gentlewoman of Wit and Merit, whose Friends were ruin'd by one of Lord *Blunder's* Schemes; Woman to Lady *Meanwell*.

Servants, Attendants, &c.

(5)



Lord *BLUNDER's*
CONFESSIO N;



A C T I.

S C E N E I. A Tavern.

Enter *DICK DASH*, and *TRIMWELL*.*Trimwell*.

RAY, Mr. *Dash*, without farther Ceremony, come to the Business which occasion'd your sending for me hither.

Dash. I assure you, Sir, I should not have taken that Liberty, but in Obedience to my Lord's positive Command, 'tis his Pleasure that we

(6)

we should consult together, on the present Exigence of Affairs, otherwise you know 'tis possible we might both write upon one Subject.

Trim. There's no Danger of that, Sir; for, to deal plainly with you, I shall never write for him more.

Dash. Not write for him! what do you mean, Mr. *Trimwell*, does he not pay you well? Is he not the most generous Patron in the World?

Trim. Yes, to you.

Dash. And to you too, Sir; how many handsome Posts has he given you?

Trim. Handsome Posts do you call them? I I ne'er had one yet that was worth my keeping.

Dash. If you thought fit to sell them, was that his Fault? he has continually given, and you as often sold; 'tis impossible for him to supply as fast as you can sell, Sir.

Trim. I don't want any Supply from him; in short, I have stretch'd my Conscience to the very last String, and am in some fear, if I should proceed much farther, that my Neck will be in Danger of being stretch'd some Inches longer than I should care for.

Dash. Pr'ythee, dear *Jemmy*, leave off bantering, I am certain you are not in Earnest.

Trim. I am certain the good People near the *Change* were in Earnest, when they pull'd, pinch'd, and squeez'd me almost to Pieces t'other Day, and had surely duck'd me in a Horse-Pond, if my good Friends the *Brokers* had not with great Difficulty drag'd me into *Change-Alley*.

Dash. Pho! that was a Mob.

Trim. And pray who is more likely to dash a Man's Brains out than a Mob? But, let me tell you, Sir, if you call them a Mob, I believe you may

(7)

may include three Parts of the Kingdom under that Denomination, and will find them to the full as willing to serve his Lordship, and all his Sycophants, as civilly as they did your humble Servant, but be that as it will, I'll provoke them no farther.

Dash. Would you have me tell this to my Lord?

Trim. No, I shall do it myself, I am going to wait on him instantly.

Dash. Fye, I protest your Ingratitude shocks me.

Trim. 'Tis merry enough to hear the Talk of Ingratitude; who is most guilty of that Vice, you, who never sit down to write till you are drunk, and then fill your Paper with palpable Lies, and downright *Billingsgate*, or I, who chuse to be silent, because I am sensible that all the Arguments in the World will never persuade People to think well of my Patron.

Dash. Though you have Assurance enough to abuse your Benefactor, I assure you, Mr. *Trimwell*, I shall resent your Usage to me in a Manner you won't like.

Trim. Ha, ha, ha! pr'ythee, don't make me laugh; go on, little *Dick*, and tell the World, that thy Patron's Family is as ancient as the Conquest, that he had three Thousand Pounds a Year before he was born, ha, ha, ha! Well, 'tis a strange incredulous Age, and yet, really, I think thou art in the right, at least, in thy first Assertion; nay, thou mightest have stretch'd it farther, for, certainly, the Family of the *Blunderers* are as old as *Adam*, who committed the first and greatest Blunder when he suffer'd his Wife to persuade him to taste the fatal Apple, ha, ha.

Dash.

(8)

Dasb. Very well, Sir, have you done?

Trim. No, I must give you a Word of Advice first, which is, to manage your Affairs more prudently; the Town, Sir, being a little alarmed at your jumping so soon into a Chariot, have been at the Pains to enquire very strictly into the rest of your Management, and have found out that you trifle away a Thousand Pounds a Year, at least, in treating a Pack of mean Scoundrels, and common Whores; *Burgundy* and *Champagne* are as plenty as Water at your Entertainments. 'Tis well if your Folly don't cause an Enquiry, which will not be to your Patron's Advantage; consider whole Money 'tis you lavish, there will be a heavy Pay-day, think of that, and tremble.

[Exit Trimwell.]

Dasb solus.

Saucy Puppy, he has put me quite out of Humour; the Town taken Notice, damn the Town, I hope to see the Day when the best Tradesmen's Wives in *London* shall be glad to hobble about in Wooden Shoes; yet I own the Rogue has alarm'd me a little, but what is it to me whose Money I spend, let my Lord answer that as he can; and now for a Wench and a Bottle.

[Rings a Bell.]

Enter Drawer.

Dasb. Are the Gentlemen and Ladies come yet?

Draw. The Gentlemen are, an't please Your Honour, and the Ladies will be here immediately; they only stay to shift themselves.

[Exit Drawer]

Dasb

(9)

Dasb sings.

A I R I. Let's be jolly, fill our Glasses.

*Since, in spite of Man's Endeavour,
Perfect Bliss is sought in vain,
We must strive, when mix'd together,
Pleasure may o'erbalance Pain.*

Fa, la, la, re.

*Hence when gloomy Thoughts o'ertaking,
Fill my Soul with anxious Care,
I dull Solitude forsaking,
Seek the Bottle and the Fair.*

Fa, la, la, re.

S C E N E II.

Lord Freeman's Dining-Room.

Enter Lord Freeman, Sir William Meanwell,
and Sir Abraham.

Sir Wm. Did ever Mortal see such a wretched Figure as *Blunder* made at the *Assembly* Yesterday? Guilt and Fear appear'd so strongly in his horrid Countenance, that native Impudence was entirely banish'd for a considerable Time.

Sir Abr. Nay, the poor Wretch wept almost as heartily as if the Executioner had appear'd with Halter in Hand to present the Reward due to his Merit.

B

Ld.

(10)

Ld. *Freem.* Well, Gentlemen, ye may be as merry as ye please; but give me Leave to assure ye that he wears another Face to-day.

Sir *Wm.* Is that a Wonder? a harden'd Criminal never thinks of Punishment longer than the Sword of Justice hangs over his Head, that once remov'd, the common Thief robs on, till his old Friend Satan, having no longer Occasion for his Service, thinks fit in one unguarded Moment to call him home; but pray, my Lord, be so good to tell us what strange Thing has happen'd to lessen *Blunder's* Fears?

Ld. *Freem.* You know my Gentleman, honest *Siftwell*, I'll call him to give you an Account of the whole Matter; the sly Rogue has found a Way, by railing at me, and pretending to discover Secrets, to insinuate himself into that worthy Family; and, to convince you that *Blunder's* Sense has a strong Affinity to his Name, he often condescends to talk to the Fellow; nay, gives him Money to betray me: By my Order he paid a private Visit this Morning, the Consequence of which you shall hear. [Rings a Bell.]

Enter Siftwell.

Ld. *Freem.* Come, *Siftwell*, without farther Ceremony, entertain these Gentlemen with your Adventure at Ld. *Blunder's*; I have already inform'd them you are my Ambassador Extraordinary at *Blunder-Hall*.

Sift. [bowing.] In Obedience to Your Lordship's Command, I this Morning attended Mr. *Graspall*, Chief Minister to that Noble Lord; and having the Honour to stand very high in his Favour, by Virtue of several trifling Presents I have made him, I soon gain'd Admittance, through his Means, to his Lord.

Sir

(11)

Sir *Abr.* Is it possible the Wretch can be so very silly?

Sift. O dear Sir, this is nothing to what you'll hear bye and bye; why, we drank Chocolate together.

Sir *Wm.* Chocolate! you amaze me, pr'ythee, what Excuse did you make for coming?

Sift. O Sir, to condole with him on his late Misfortune, and put him in a Way to succeed better for the future.

Sir *Abr.* This is admirable, pray Sir, proceed, let us hear your Advice.

Sift. Why, Sir, humbly begging Pardon of the good Company now present, I told him, that my Lord and all his Friends were—a Pack of stubborn spiteful Villains, who envy'd his superior Merit; for, you must know, the only Way to gain his Favour, is to call Names heartily.

Sir *Wm.* A good Beginning truly, but what Answer did he make you?

Sift. Why, after having vented the Fulness of his great Heart, by calling Names as well as I, he told me I was a very honest deserving Gentleman, and should be soon provided for after an extraordinary Manner, but begg'd I would have the Patience to stay with my Lord a little, only till the Intelligence I should be able to give him might enable him to hang ye all, Gentlemen, and then I am to have a large Snack out of your Estates; for whatever ye may think on't, I can assure ye, that to act contrary to his Interest or Inclination, is High-Treason.

Sir *Abr.* Then I doubt we are all guilty. *Siftwell*, and so is every honest Man in the Kingdom.

Sift. I can't help that, Sir, I must be grateful to my Benefactor; [shakes a Purse.] you see I

B 2

have

(12)

have taken a Fee, and I'll promise you I have given him sound Advice, if he does but follow it well.

Ld. Freem. You need not tell us what it was, I'll inform my Friends; but go on, and let us hear who attended, and what pass'd at the grand Levee.

Sift. Who attended my Lord? Why, two or three hundred People, all the humble Creatures of his Will, who say black's white, if he bids them; I did not know a Tythe of them.

Sir Wm. Name those you did know.

Sift. There was his Brother *Noll* in an old Coat, a Pair of dearned Worsted Stockings, and a Wig, that would not have yielded half a Crown in *Monmouth-Street*, *Mr. Whalebone*, and *Beau Brazen*, who, between the horrid Stink of his Breath, and the Strength of the Perfumes he had about him almost poison'd me; *Bob Drugget*, *Mr. Transfer* the *Change-Broker*, two or three poultry Scriblers, and a quarter of a hundred *Scotch Lairds*: in short, they all join'd in praising his Lordship's Wisdom, Courage, Honour, Honesty, and the Devil knows what beside, and concluded with many Protestations, that he should always command their Lives and Fortunes. These fine Speeches, in which, by the bye, there was not one Word of Truth, had however the desired Effect; for they put his vain Lordship into high good-humour; he grin'd like a Dog in a Halter, and shew'd his depopulated Gums, to the great Diversion of the Company; I could not stay to hear his Answer, because *Graspall*, who longs to be fingering his Share of the Booty, beckon'd me out.

A I R

(13)

A I R II. When young fit to toy, &c.

*Would ye be a fit Tool
For a Coward and a Fool,
His Wit and his Courage commending,
He'll believe all you say,
And your Flattery pay,
Such Credit his Vanity lending.*

Sir Abr. Ha, ha, ha, excellently well perform'd indeed, *Mr. Siftwell*; but when are you to visit your wife Patron again?

Sift. By six to-morrow Morning, Sir; at which Time I am to give him a full Account of all that pass'es at your Club to-night, and receive fresh Tokens of his Bounty: I hope, Gentlemen, ye'll have the Goodness to say a great many bitter Things, that I may be able to scare him heartily; for the more I frighten him the better he pays.

Ld. Freem. As ridiculous as this Account may seem to ye, Gentlemen, I assure ye 'tis a true one; all his Creatures make use of the same Method with great Success.

Sir Wm. I wonder he does not find out the Trick, since it is so often put in Practice.

Ld. Freem. O fie, that would be to shew he was one Degree wiser than a Fool; why, Sir, he has long since declared open War against Sense and Honesty: I defy you to name one Man amongst the Numbers he provides for daily, who has one Grain of either.

Sir Abr. What do you think of *Sir William Brazen*?

Ld.

(14)

Ld. *Free*. Why, he is no Fool; but what he wants in that he makes up in the other, and yet, to my Knowledge, *Blunder* rather fears than loves him: But you must know, after he has once enter'd a Man in his Service, he never durst part with, or disoblige him afterwards.

Sir *Wm*. Why so?

Ld. *Free*. Because he cannot keep his own Secrets, and never play'd the Knave in his Life, but he brag'd of his great Performance of that Sort to all his Crew; if *Fame* speaks true, he has more than once done Things that come within the Reach of the Law, and by this Means, put himself in the Power of so many People, that one may properly say he lives but by their Courtely.

Sir *Wm*. He is an Original of Impudence and Folly: But, since he thinks fit to be as mischievous as a Monkey in his Tricks, we must endeavour to clip his Claws.

Ld. *Free*. We'll consider at Night on some Method to disappoint his Aims, and prevent his doing any Mischief; but now I think 'tis Time to go to Breakfast. [*Exeunt Omnes.*]

S C E N E III.

Mrs. Blunder's Dressing-Room, she sitting at her Toilet, Fawnwell standing behind her.

Skittilla just entering.

Skit. Fie, my dear Lady, what, not dress'd yet! sure, you have forgot you promis'd to dine at Lady *Meanwell's*?

Mrs. Blund. I protest, as you say, Child, I had forgot it quite; but you must consider People of my exalted Rank are continually pester'd with Busi-

(15)

ness, I have received more than twenty Petitions this Morning already, besides I know not how many foreign Letters.

Skit. And when do you design to answer them all?

Mrs. Blund. Oh, I can't tell that; but one must be at the Pains to read them, you know.

Skit. If Business comes in so thick every Day, indeed, my Dear, you ought to keep two or three Secretaries, or you'll have no Time for Pleasure: Methinks, Mr. *Blunder* should ease you of the Trouble of receiving Petitions.

Mrs. Blund. O fie—no—that would be giving the Power out of my Hand; the Vulgar would be apt to think he reign'd Master in his own House, which I assure you he shall never do while he has the Honour to be my Husband.

Skit. Most heroically resolv'd, indeed, Madam, I wish all the Husbands in *Europe* were bound to submit to the same Rules, Matrimony then would be a comfortable State: but does he never dispute your Authority?

Mrs. Blund. Not in the least, Child; if he has but a swindging Piece of Roast-Beef, a huge Plumb-Pudding, and a Pack of drunken Companions, as mannerly as so many *Russian* Bears, he troubles himself no farther.

Skit. I hope Your Ladiship never dines with this polite Company.

Mrs. Blund. Not above twice a Year, and then it is for some political End in which the Brutes may be useful, ha, ha, pry'thee let us quit this filthy Subject, or I shall be downright sick; do you know what Company will be at Lady *Meanwell's*?

Skit. Nobody but ourselves, I believe, you know she don't love much Company.

Mrs.

(16)

Mrs. *Blund*. She is a strange insipid Creature, I wonder how so polite a Gentleman as Sir *William* came to marry her.

Skit. Why — she is nobly descended, had a prodigious Fortune, and you know the whole Town cry her up for a perfect Beauty.

Mrs. *Blund*. O Lard! don't you think the whole Town are blind then, why, the poor Wretch has no manner of Air, she puts on her Cloaths as tight and formal as if they were sew'd on with a Needle and Thread, don't you think so, *Fawnwell*?

Fawnw. With humble Submission to Your Ladyship's Judgment, I think she looks at best but like a Wax-Baby stuck up in a Shew-Glass; but alas! Madam, all the *English* Beauties appear but like so many awkward Doudies, when you are present.

Mrs. *Blund*. Thou really hast too much Wit, Wench, and that's a great Fault; but you should not flatter me, *Fawnwell*, I hate Flattery.

Fawnw. 'Tis impossible to flatter your Ladyship, I am sure all the fine Gentlemen are of my Opinion: If you had but heard with what Transport Sir *William Meanwell* prais'd your Beauty 'other Day, I am sure you would have pity'd him. Well, 'tis a dreadful Thing to be deeply in Love where there is no Possibility of a Return: Oh, Madam! what a charming Purse of Gold was I forced to refuse, because I knew your Virtue was so extremely severe, it would not suffer you even to open an innocent Letter.

Skit. [*Aside*.] What a Heap of Lies has this plaguy Wench pack'd together to flatter the Vanity of that rawny Fool her Mistress: To my certain Knowledge, Sir *William* hates her worse than the Devil. [*To her*.] I'll interceed for you,
Mrs.

(17)

Mrs. *Fawnwell*, 'tis Pity you should lose so much Money.

Mrs. *Blund*. O Law, Child, sure you would not advise me to read a Love-Letter.

Skit. Why not, Paper can't ravish you.

Mrs. *Blund*. That's true; but did ever any virtuous Lady do such a Thing, think you?

Skit. Was ever any Woman virtuous enough to refuse such a Thing, think you? We all love to be admir'd, 'tis in vain to deny it; and if we never commit a greater Crime than reading a Letter, I confess I see no Harm in it.

Mrs. *Blund*. Well, since you say so, I think it would be a Pity to hinder poor *Fawnwell*'s Profits for the future.

Fawn. I humbly thank both your Ladyships.

Skit. [*Aside*.] Where the Devil this Toad will find Letters to give her I am at a Loss to guess, unless she pays a Scrivener to write them.

Fawn. Since Your Ladyship is so very good, I may venture to shew you a Song that was made on you lately by the very same Gentleman.

[*Pulling out a Song*:

Skit. [*Aside*.] This is a Master-Piece, indeed. [*To her*.] Pray, Mrs. *Fawnwell*, do us the Favour to sing it.

Mrs. *Blund*. Ay, do sing it, since my Friend desires you; but I vow you make me blush.

Fawnwell sings.

AIR III. See, see, my *Seraphina* comes,

If Beauty unremitting see

The dying Lover's Care,

In Verse her Charms unsung should be,

Since cruel as she's fair.

C

The

(18)

*The Sun on Afric's scorching Plains
Thus darts with fiery Rays,
And heedless of the swartby Swains,
His burning Beams displays.*

Skit. The Song's very pretty, and Mrs. Fawnwell has a fine Voice: Come now, deal sincerely, Madam, and tell us if there is not a great deal of Pleasure in hearing a Song sung on one's Self, especially when one reflects that the Author is distractedly in Love. Well, I vow I pity poor Lady Meanwell; good now make Haste, and finish dressing, 'tis Time to go.

Mrs. Blund. I am just ready, my Dear; but I hope Sir William will not be at home, if he is, I shall be quite out of Countenance, he'll see Guilt in my Face.

Skit. Guilt, ha, ha, ha, I hope the Song has not put ill Thoughts in your Head.

Mrs. Blund. Lard, how wickedly you talk.

[Fawnwell dressing her all the while.]

Fawn. Your Ladyship looks killingly handsome to-day, and tho' I say it, I have dress'd you to a Miracle, don't you think so, Madam?

Skit. Oh, extremely well, indeed, Mrs. Fawnwell.

Mrs. Blund. Is the Phaeton ready?

Fawn. Yes, an't please Your Ladyship.

[Exeunt Ladies.]

Fawn. Ha, ha, poor Woman! I wonder how I did to keep my Countenance; why, she looks ugly enough to frighten the Devil, ha, ha, ha.

[Exit Fawnwell laughing.]

S C E N E

(19)

S C E N E IV. *The same Tavern.*

Enter Dick Dash drunk, several Tradesmen, two Strumpets, Drawers attending, the Company sitting round a Table, Bottles and Glasses before them.

Dash. Come, Gentlemen, Prosperity to the noble Lord Blunder. [Hiccup, and drinks.]

1 Trade. With all my Heart, Sir. [Drinks.]

1 Strum. I'll pledge you, Sir, I know His Lordship very well; I have had the Honour of being often in his Company, when he kept my old Acquaintance Betty Cantril.

2 Strum. Oh dear, was that old jolly Gentleman, who kept poor Betty, my good Lord Blunder?

1 Strum. The very same indeed, Madam; many and many a half Guinea has he given me to shew my Leg, and sing a Bawdy Song; but he was not a Lord at that time, he gives better Prices now, I assure you: Here's to his good Health.

Dash. Shew your Leg, [Hiccups.] and sing a Song; why, can you sing, Husky? Here's a Guinea, [Hic up.] come, that's double the Price, sing away, and entertain my Friends while I take a Nap; for 'faith, I must write, the Press waits — [Lays his Head in her Lap, and falls asleep.]

2 Trade. Come, Madam, pray favour us with the Song, I love singing mightily.

1 Strum. Lack-a-day, Sir, I vow I don't know what to sing, I have a bad Voice, and no Memory, I can't think of a Song, Hem, hem.

C 2

2 Strum.

(20)

2 *Strum*. Sing the Song that *Betty Cantvil* made on her leaving my Lord, and running away with the handsome *Irish* Captain.

1 *Strum*. Oh, ay, that's a very good one; the Girl had a deal of Wit, but she made a very ill Use on't; for she dy'd in the *Lock-Hospital*, poor Soul.

A I R IV. Over the Hills and far away.

*Thou Dotard, only warm with Vice,
Which thou mistak'st for native Fire;
Ne'er grieve for me — but take Advice,
And quell preposterous Desire;
Nor wonder at my sudden Flight,
Or guess what Charms could me engage,
The Sun emerges soon from Night,
And Youth agrees but ill with Age.*

*Now far from you I fly away,
Let no dull Thoughts your Wit betray;
Old Men their Reason should obey.
Wherever wanton Wenches stray.*

3 *Trade*. That's my good Wench; why, you sing like a Nightingal, *Hussy*. [*Kisses her.*] Pr'ythee wake *Mr. Dab* — Gently, Child, he'll be too late with his Paper.

[*She jogs him, he starts up, and rubs his Eyes.*]

1 *Trade*. It grows late in the Day, Sir, and we were afraid you should over-sleep yourself; are you any better?

Dab. Yes, yes, I am quite fresh again. Here, Drawer, bring Pen, Ink, and Paper to the other Table; ye may be as merry as ye please, good People,

(21)

People, it won't disturb my Writing: one Glass, and then to Work; Success to Lord *Blunder*, and confound his Enemies — Huzza.

[*Drinks, they pledge him, and hallow, he sits down, and writes.*]

2 *Trade*. Good Luck to the Paper, *Mr. Dab*, that it may be bitter enough to make our Adversaries hang themselves by Dozens.

Dab. O never fear, *Mr. Tipperary*, I think I may, without boasting, say I am the best Author for Satyr that ever appear'd in the World; my very Foes confess'd it, tho' Spite makes them term it *Billingsgate*. Poor Fools, I despise their Malice; their Scriblers scarce get Bread, while my superior Merit, you see, has placed me in a Chariot, and enabled me to spend fifteen or twenty Guineas a Day upon my Friends, whenever I think fit, ha, ha, ha.

2 *Trade*. Ay, ay, worthy Sir, we are all in Duty bound to pray for you and my good Lord; for, while the rest of the Town growls and mutters for Want of Trade, you generously find Work for us, or else pay us for our Company; and the little Intelligence we are able to pick up at the Publick Houses we frequent, alas, I doubt, it is but of little Use, but you are so good, you reward us for our good Intentions.

3 *Trade*. I am sure I may say so, I have taken more Money of His Honour in three Months than of all my Customers beside in a whole Year.

2 *Strum*. He is a rare Benefactor to the Ladies; 'tis but t'other Day he gave me five Guineas to fetch my Sister *Jenny* out of *Bridewell*.

1 *Trade*. What was she put in for, pray, Madam?

2 *Strum*.

(22)

2 *Strum*. Why, to tell you the Truth, Sir, the poor Girl has such a strong Attachment to the *Blunderenians*, that when she happens to fall in Company with any of the adverse Party, she thinks it no Sin to ease their Pockets; that was all, I assure you, Sir.

Dash. Hold your Tongue, you Jade, what need you have told that Story? ha, ha, ha. But 'tis really true, Gentlemen, *Jenny* is a good Wench, and perfectly honest to the Cause, ha, ha, ha. But now to the Business, hearken to this Paragraph, [*Reads*.] the Leaders of the *Freeman-Faction* are seditious saucy Knaves, and would have good Reason to call us Fools, if we were to be frighten'd whenever they think fit to gather a Mob of *Sturdy Beggars*; there I have hit them, I think.

2 *Trade*. That's home, Sir; at 'em again, ha, ha, ha.

Dash. Your Company is so engaging that I scarce know how to part with ye, but Business must be minded; so let us have a Song from the other Lady, and in the mean while, Drawer, prepare the Bill, I'll finish my Work at home. Come, Madam, begin.

2 *Strum*. I'll do my best to oblige Your Honour.

A I R. V. Young *Philoret*.

*He who would prove
Success in Love,
Must in Address be bold,
Not whine and sigh,
For none need die,
Who offers well in Gold.*

From

(23)

*From Jealousy
He must be free,
Still ready to obey;
His only Care
To please the Fair
Young, frolick, brisk and gay.*

Dash. Receive my Thanks, Madam, [*Gives her Money*.] I shall be glad of your Company, Ladies, and will let ye know when I have a Leisure-Hour. Here, Drawer, wait on the Ladies to a Coach, and bring up the Bill.

[*Exeunt Women*.]

1 *Trade*. Really, they are very good-natur'd agreeable Girls; 'tis Pity they are not provided for.

Dash. Why, do you take them for common Women? No, Sir, I assure you they are both in keeping; I mortally hate common Women, Faw.

[*Spits*.]

1 *Trade*. I beg Pardon, Sir, I thought *Kept-Ladies* would not have expos'd themselves to so much Company.

Dash. I'd have you to know, Sir, there are Ladies of Rank and strict Virtue, who would break thro' all Rules to oblige me. [*Drawer gives him the Bill*.] But Eight Pounds; I vow 'tis very reasonable. Here, [*Gives him the Money*.] there's a Crown for yourself.

Draw. God bless Your Honour.

Dash. Ye'll excuse me, my Friends; but ye know 'tis improper that any Body should be seen to go out with me: so adieu till *Wednesday-Evening* at Nine.

[*Exit Dash*.]

2 *Trade*.

(24)

2 *Trade*. Ha, ha, ha, why, this Fellow is almost as great a Fool as his Master.

1 *Trade*. What need we care, as long as we gain by his Folly? But his Kept-Ladies was the best Part of the Jest.

3 *Trade*. Pho! they make him believe so, why, I know them both; they live in the Hundreds of *Drury*: But what Reason had I to spoil their Market? he gets his Money by the Publick, and why should not the Publick Whores be the better for it, shall we go? 'tis Time.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

S C E N E V.

Oliver Blunder and Mr. Gaylove meeting.

Ol. You seem in great Haste, Mr. *Gaylove*, one may easily guess there is some Mischief stirring when you put on your busy Face.

Gayl. 'Tis plain it don't thrive well on your Side of the Question, Mr. *Blunder*.

Ol. Why, as you say, you have at present some Cause for Triumph; but how long do you think it may last?

Gayl. Why, just as long as Wit and Honesty can in this depraved Age make a Shift to be too hard for Impudence and Villany. I hope you are answer'd, Sir?

Ol. Nay, pr'ythee don't be out of Humour, I did but jest with you; why should you and I quarrel about the Matter? E'en let my Brother and *Ld. Freeman* fight it out as they can, they are a Brace of hot-headed Coxcombs; and, in my Opinion, they are both in the Wrong.

Gayl. How will you make that out, Mr. *Blunder*? I can't conceive.

Ol.

(25)

Ol. Oh with great Ease, in the first Place, my Clod-pated Brother would never hearken to my Advice, tho' all the World knows I have ten times his Sense and Understanding in Politicks, I always told him this Thing would never do, but he would go on; and now you see how much he has got by the Bargain: Then for *Ld. Freeman*, he was as obstinate t'other Way; he never gave himself the Trouble to search into the Bottom of the Matter, but right or wrong he resolv'd to ruin it, for no other Reason but because my Brother seem'd to like it: But, for my Part, I don't care a Fart what they do, my Noodle has got the Hatred of all the Parish about it already in such a Degree, that I dare swear for the future, he will never be able to get in so much as a Petty-Constable amongst them.

Gayl. Your Arguments are very strong, Sir; 'tis Pity my Lord will not govern himself by your Directions.

Ol. No, dear *Gaylove*, he has too many Sycophants about him ever to come to Good; they persuade him he is violently belov'd, tho' they know at the same Time he is scarce ever named without a Curse, and that the Working-People would tear him to Pieces, if they did not fear the Law.

Gayl. You should tell him the plain Truth, Mr. *Blunder*, and not suffer him to be deceived.

Ol. Alas! I have done so a thousand times to no Purpose, would you believe it? Nay, this very Day the whole Gang are to meet, and consider of Ways and Means to raise the Rents, and oppress the Tenants under a new Shape, notwithstanding all I could say to the contrary.

Gayl. If they begin that Game again I doubt it will prove of fatal Consequence.

D

Ol.

(26)

Ol. I read their Destiny to them this Morning
in a Song of my own composing; I'll hum it
over to you, Mr. *Gaylove*, I know you have Judgment
in such Things.

A I R VI. An Old Woman clothed in grey.

*When Blockheads are hoisted on high,
In Impudence still they abound,
Mankind as below them they spy,
And every Thing seems to turn round.*

*Till falling their Pride doth disarm,
Then finding their Folly too late,
With the Loss of a Leg or an Arm,
Reduc'd to their primitive State.*

Gayl. I assure you, Sir, 'tis an extraordinary
Performance, and has more Truth in it than
they, I suppose, cared to hear; but 'tis ten to
one they had not Wit enough to understand it.

Ol. No, they are confounded dull Rogues;
but we'll talk that Matter over at my House, if
you'll favour me with your Company at Dinner.

Gayl. Sure you jest; why, your Brother will
never forgive you, if it should reach his Ear.

Ol. What the Devil do I care for my Brother,
I have a great Respect for you, Mr. *Gaylove*, I
love a Man of Wit; and a T---d for Pasty, I
say.

Gayl. To shew you how much I esteem your
Friendship, Sir, I'll but just step and write an
Excuse to a fair Lady with whom I had an Ap-
pointment, and follow you home in six Minutes.

Ol. Thou art a dear obliging Creature, adieu
till then. [Exit Oliver Blunder.

Gayl.

(27)

Gayl. Ha, ha, ha, this is a strange filly Fel-
low, now shall I have all the Secrets of his Heart,
I must praise his Wit till I make him play the
downright Fool; and yet, to speak Truth, the
poor Soul has more Honesty than all the Family
of the *Blunders* put together, whenever he errs
it may very well be called a Sin of Ignorance:
Now will his haughty Brother bluster like the
North-Wind when he hears we been together;
and 'tis ten to one but *Oliver* beats him, for he
is too obstinate to bear Controul, and has a
strange Inclination to Boxing.

Villains are ever despicably dull,
Honest — a Man is valu'd, tho' a Fool.

End of the First ACT.



ACT

(28)



ACT II. SCENE I.

A Room in Lord Blunder's House.

Isaac Whalebone, Sir William Brazen,
Bob Drugget, and Transter the Broker,
seated round a Table.

Sir *Wm.* I Am sorry to be the Messenger of ill News; but my Lord commands me to tell you, that he is positively resolved to raise the Rents, and our present Business is to consider on a proper Method to do it.

Bob. 'Tis Madness to attempt such a Thing, considering the violent Heats the Tenants are in at present; I am sure the Man who advises him to it is not his Friend, Sir.

Whale. His Friend, no, you may be sure of that; for, if he were, my Lord would not hearken to any thing he said: In short, he is grown to such a Pitch of Pride, that if you saw him just ready to cut his Throat, and should offer to take away the Knife, he would think you a very insolent Rascal for pretending to contradict his Will.

Trans. Indeed he is mightily altered for the worse of late.

Sir *Will.* What ye say, Gentlemen, is but too true; I have already used all the Arguments I could think of, but to no Purpose; He will presently be here, and give me Leave to tell ye, Opposition will only make him more violent.

Bob.

(29)

Bob. I care not what it makes him, I shall tell him my Mind plainly; 'tis base to see a Man on the Brink of Ruin, and not endeavour to prevent it.

Sir *Will.* You'll put him in a Passion, he'll give you ill Language.

Bob. And I shall be apt to return it, who do you think is bound to bear his Insolence?

Whale. Everybody, Sir, who thinks fit to keep him Company: To tell you the Truth, too much Money, too many Flatterers, and too much Power to do Mischief has made him mad.

Sir *Wm.* He is much obliged to you for the Character you give him, Sir; what could his Enemies do more?

Whale. Why, call him to an Account, and reward him according to his Merits.

Trans. Fie, Gentlemen, these Feuds do not become us, we all know he is to blame; but we ought to consider, that if he falls we shall share his Fate: We have gone on with him too long to think of turning back, the Tenants hate us as bad as they do him; nay, they don't stick to say we advise him to all the Ill he does: 'Tis therefore our Interest to bear with his Humours, and support his Interest to the very uttermost of our Power.

Bob. I'll endeavour to keep my Temper; but all we can do, I doubt, will be to little Purpose: 'Tis true, we are bound to stand by him for our own Sakes.

Whale. Why then we are bound to lean against a falling Wall.

Trans. If ye will take my Advice, Gentlemen, let us seem to agree to every Thing he proposes; applaud his Wisdom, and keep him in good Humour; 'tis the only Way to work upon his haughty

(30)

haughty Soul, at least, it will give us an Opportunity to put off the Execution of the Design a little longer; and 'tis ten to one but he will grow out of Love with it himself by that time.

Sir *Wm.* You have propos'd the best Method Mr. *Transfer*; but what Method shall we tell him we have thought on for the Accomplishment of his Desire.

Trans. Leave that to me, I'll tell him I've taken all your Opinions in Short-Hand, and am to draw it up in Form.

Whale. He will be much delighted when he reads it, if you do but draw them up as we have delivered them to-day.

Sir *Wm.* Leave jesting, Sir, I hear him coming.

Enter Lord Blunder. They all stand up till he is seated at the Upper-End of the Table.

Ld. *Blund.* I am glad to see ye all. Sir *William*, have you communicated my Orders to these Gentlemen? Are ye agreed on the Manner by which we are to humble the Rascals? They force me to harsh Means, I can never rest till the Leaders are hang'd, and the Mob reduced to Brown Bread and Wooden Shoes.

Sir *Wm.* My Lord, Mr. *Transfer* has minuted down all our Observations on that Head; and has undertaken to draw them into a proper Form for Your Lordship's Perusal.

Ld. *Blund.* 'Tis very well, but how long will it be before they are ready? You must remember, Mr. *Transfer* this Business requires Haste.

Trans. I'll attend Your Lordship on Monday-Morning without fail.

Ld. *Blund.* What makes you look so dull, Mr. *Drugget*? I'll warrant Yesterday's Business has frighten'd you.

Bob

(31)

Bob. I was concern'd for Your Lordship; I heard the Mob were very rude to you.

Ld. *Blund.* Why ay, they were, as you say, a little rude, they gave me a Chuck or two under the Chin, and call'd me a few Names, or so; but I shall soon reward their Courtesy, I assure you, I stick at nothing that may procure me a plentiful Revenge, 'tis too late to be squeamish; they shall know their Driver.

A I R VII. The Abbot of Canterbury.

*As the Kine went to Smithfield, for Slaughter design'd;
Fierce Robin came whistling with Pleasure behind;
And as he at Leisure came trolling his Song,
To the Market he drove the Beasts gently along.*

Derry down.

*But when of the Blood they smelt such a Stench,
The Ground they tore up, and their Halters they wrench;
Quoth Robin, and ham-string'd the Drove with all Speed,
The Cattle are Cattle, — and Z——s, they must bleed.*

Derry down.

Ld. *Blund.* Well, how do ye like my Song? Is it to the Purpose? Come, let us be merry a little, too much Business dulls the Brain.

Whale. 'Tis an admirable Song, my Lord; is it of your own composing?

Ld. *Blund.* How couldst thou ask such a silly Question? A Man of my high Rank write Songs Ha, ha, ha. No, 'twas made by *Dick Dash*; that Fellow has a great deal of Wit, and deserves Encouragement.

Bob. The World are of another Opinion, my Lord, they take him for a downright Driveller;
and

(32)

and say, Your Lordship, instead of paying him for his Works, ought to send him to School again to learn Grammar.

Ld. Blund. The Town are Fools, Sir; and you are very impudent to offend my Ears with their Nonsense.

Bob. If you call that Impudence, you shall have a little more on't, my Lord. I say, it would become you to give the Town less Occasion to talk; they don't spare you, tho' you are blind to your own Faults.

Ld. Blund. My Faults, Sir; I'll make the Town and you know that I am above being guilty of Faults.

Bob. We all know you are above hearing of them; but I doubt, if you don't mend your Manners, you'll quickly be forced to hear and feel too Things that you don't like; and so farewell.

[Exit Bob Drugget in a Passion.]

Ld. Blund. I ask Pardon, Gentlemen, but really, this Fellow's Ingratitude has a little discomposed me; 'tis hard to bear the Insolence of a Scoundrel I raised from the Dunghill.

Sir Wm. I am heartily concern'd, my Lord, for what has happen'd; Mr. *Drugget* is much to blame: But Your Lordship knows he is very honest, and firmly attached to your Interest; Passion is his only Fault, and he'll be very penitent as soon as 'tis over.

Ld. Blund. That is very true, Sir *William*; but he ought to consider the mighty Difference there is between him and me. Gentlemen, shall I beg your Patience a little, I have some private Orders for Sir *William*; Dinner will be ready immediately, and my Gentleman shall give ye Notice.

[Exeunt *Ld. Blunder* and *Sir William*.]

[Manent *Whalebone* and *Transfer*.]

Whale.

(33)

Whale. Now speak your Mind freely, Sir; don't you think this Man is a little wrong in the Head?

Trans. Really, I don't know what to make of him; he has made three Parts of the Town his Enemies, and yet cannot forbear disobliging the few Friends he has left. I have known him many Years, Sir.

Whale. Yes, I know you have managed all his Affairs in the *Alley* ever since the Year Twenty.

Trans. Alas! we were acquainted many Years before that, Sir; and then he was the most humble, godly, good-natur'd Gentleman imaginable,

Whale. Then I am sure he was poor, or under some great Misfortune.

Trans. Why, as you say, Mr. *Whalebone*, he was pretty deeply touch'd both Ways.

Whale. He little dream'd of being *Ld. Blunder* then, I suppose; but you must know, Sir, he is sometimes troubled with Qualms of Conscience now; but that proceeds from his keeping a Parson in the House, who now and then puts him in mind of his Sins: This makes him very melancholy for the Time, but the good Fit soon goes off. *Tom Starch* is sent for, who laughs him out of it, and in two or three Hours leaves him perfectly easy, and fully persuaded there is neither God or Devil, Heaven or Hell.

Trans. A fine Comfort truly, well, that *Tom Starch* must be a very wicked Man; for my Lord used to be a very constant Churchman, when he was plain Mr. *Blunder*. I remember when he had the Misfortune to be forced to keep out of the Way for Debt; his greatest Concern was, that he durst not go to Church for fear of being known.

E.

Whale.

(34)

Whale. Keep out of the Way for Debt! Ha, ha, I have often heard such Stories of him, but never believed them before. Pray, Sir, be so good to give me a short History of his Life and Original, I perceive you are thoroughly acquainted with it.

Trans. Ay, Sir, I knew his Father; he was a plain honest Man, and had about Four hundred Pounds a Year: But even that, for all his bragging, was ill-got. You must know, Sir, his Grand-father was the Bastard of a *Romish* Priest, who was afterwards executed for Treason, be-gotten upon a Farmer's Maid. How they came to give him the Name of *Blunder* I cannot tell; but this I know, that he is no Ways related to the ancient Family of that Name: When this Grandfather, who was educated at the Charge of the Parish, grew up, he was first a Footman, and afterwards preferred to be Steward to Old *Sir Thomas Friendly*; and so growing a great Favourite, and his Master being much in Years, he made a Shift to cheat the Family out of this same Estate. I assure you, Sir, what I tell you is Matter of Fact.

Whale. I don't doubt it, Sir; and humbly thank you for this Intelligence, because it will give me an Opportunity whenever he upbraids me with the Meanness of my Birth, to be even with him.

A I R VIII. Chevy-Chace:

A Butterfly with spangled Wings,

Who on a Lilly sate,

Was wont to talk of lofty Things,

And took on mighty State;

The

(35)

*The Ants, who up and down did bear,
Their Corn with Pain and Toil;
This Butterfly was wont to jeer
And treat as Insects vile.*

*At last, quoth one, tho' now deck'd out
With Colours red or blue,
You, forty of this Revel-Rout
A Caterpillar knew:
Why would'st thou make us use thee so,
As might thy State deform?
Who will not laugh to hear that thou
Wert once a Cabbage-Worm?*

Trans. I thank you, Sir, for your merry Song; which, really, is quite *apropos*, Ha, ha, ha.

Whale. O you are very obliging, Sir; but if it be not too much Trouble, I should be glad to be informed a little in my Lord's own Affairs, I mean, in the Days of his Poverty.

Trans. Why, in few Words then, he had a Spirit above his Circumstances; how he did it I cannot tell, but this I know, that at that Time the Estate was mortgaged: And the first Time I had the Honour to see him was in a Bailiff's House, to which Place I was brought by a Friend of his and mine. We soon took a Fancy to one another, he intrusted me in many Things, and I lent him Money; which, indeed, he has honourably paid me since. O Sir, he was in a very melancholy Condition then, his Goods were taken in Execution; the fine Library he so often talks of, I saw sold for Seventeen Pounds.

E 2

Whale.

(36)

Whale. The Devil you did ; by his Discourse I thought it had been sold for as many Hundreds, Ha, ha, ha.

Trans. O Sir, he has an excellent Talent at Multiplication.

A I R IX. Fie, let us all to the Wedding.

Mother Gurton, who lives at the Mill,
Is perfect in ev'ry Degree ;
Her Neighbours fall short of her Skill,
And none's such a Housewife as she.

Her Milk comes like Cream from her Kine,
Her Butter's like Gold in the Pan,
Her Pigs are all fatter than Swine,
And ev'ry Goose is a Swan.

Whale. I have scarce Time to thank you for the Song ; but hope you'll favour me with your Company at my House, Sir. Behold *Graspall.*

Enter Graspall.

Grasp. My Lord desires your Company, Dinner is on the Table.

Both. We'll attend him

[*Exeunt following Graspall.*

S C E N E II.

Sir William Meanwell's House.

Enter Lady Meanwell and Clara.

Lady Mean, I am quite sick with stiffling my Laugh ; sure, Nature never produced such another Creature as *Mrs. Blunder.* *Clara.*

(37)

Clara. She is so great a Fool, that I dare say Your Ladyship might have laugh'd at every Word she said, without giving Offence ; when she gave you the History of her Grandeur, when her Husband was Factor Abroad, I was forced to turn to the Window ; her receiving Visits in a Chair of State under a Canopy was beyond all bearing.

L. Mean. And yet 'tis really true ; nay, she went farther : For People of the first Rank in that Country were obliged to sit upon Stools when they visited her.

Clara. I suppose they never troubled her with a second Visit, Madam.

L. Mean. You mistake, they came very often to divert themselves at her ridiculous Behaviour : Besides, they found their own Account in humouring her Vanity ; for by keeping her in good Humour, they persuaded the poor Doodle her Husband out of the little Sense he had, and then buded him into signing an Agreement very prejudicial to the Merchants who had intrusted him : 'Tis true they laugh'd at both behind their Backs, and gave her grand Ladyship the Nickname of *Mademoiselle de Tailleure*, alluding to the Meanness of her Birth, and her Father's Trade.

Clara. Did not Your Ladyship observe with how much Eagerness she praised Sir *William* ? On my Conscience, I believe she has a Design on his Person.

L. Mean. Ha, ha, ha, What a dangerous Rival hast thou pick'd out for me ? I must compliment him on the glorious Conquest ; I wish it may not make him too vain.

Clara. The very Sight of her would turn his Stomach ; why, her Skin looks as if it was rubb'd with

(38)

with a Woollen-Cloth and Oil, to make it shine like the brown Tables in the Country.

L. Mean. A fine Comparison, truly; and yet, if I am not mistaken, she was painted an Inch thick; for, as soon as she had talk'd herself into a Heat, the Red ran down her Checks in large Drops.

Clara. If you had but view'd her well, Madam, when she grew cool again, her Face resembled a Weather-beaten Sign, the brown and red lay in Streaks.

L. Mean. Ha, ha, ha, Thou art a sad Girl, to talk at this Rate of a fine Lady; but what did you think of *Skitilla* and *Gaylove*?

Clara. Why, as I always did, Madam; that her outward Appearance of Sanctity is only put on to cover private Lewdness. I'll lay my Life there is an Intrigue between her and Mr. *Gaylove*; and yet, by the Coldness of his Behaviour to her to-day I fancy 'tis almost over on his Side.

L. Mean. Thou talk'st as spitefully as an Old Maid.

Clara. I am a little too apt to speak Truth, Madam, that's all; and as good an Opinion as Your Ladyship is pleas'd to have of *Skitilla*, I am positive 'tis *Ed. Blunder*'s Purse that supports her Finery.

L. Mean. Fie, you grow quite scandalous; you should never report Things to the Prejudice of a Lady's Reputation.

Clara. If it be false, Madam, I had it from her own Maid *Lucy*, and a great deal more to the same Purpose; I thought it my Duty to acquaint Your Ladyship, because the Town begins to talk very much to her Disadvantage.

L. Mean.

(39)

L. Mean. You were very much in the Right, *Clara*; because it will be proper for me to break off the Acquaintance of such a Woman. But now pr'ythee tell me how your Affairs go on with *Graspall*.

Clara. Much at the old Rate, Madam; he sighs, whines, and swears, if I will not quickly have him, he'll hang himself to convince me of the Violence of his Passion. I heartily wish he would, for the Sake of the poor Ballad-Singers, who would be great Gainers by a doleful Ditty on that Occasion.

L. Mean. I would have you consider seriously, Child, that though this Fellow is much below you in Birth and Merit, yet he has made a good Estate under *Ed. Blunder*: Six hundred a Year is not to be despis'd, as the Case stands with you at present, tho' a Fool be ty'd to its End.

Clara. I humbly thank Your Ladyship, for your good Advice, and if I can bring the Puppy to settle half his Fortune upon me, by way of separate Maintenance, in Case I should not care to live with him, I believe I shall, for my own Sake, consent to go before the Parson with him.

A I R X. I'll marry a Lass with a Lump of Land.

Since Money's a Thing that all must have,

Who would pass thro' Life with Pleasure and Ease,
It matters not much whether handsome or brave,
Our Eyes we must stint our Prudence to please.

For we live in an Age in which none enquire,

If Virtue, or Fame, or Worth we possess;

'Tis Money alone that all Men desire;

Then nought in a Husband I'll value but This.

L. Mean.

(40)

L. Mean. Your Lover is very much obliged to you, pray when do you expect to see him?

Clara. He just now sent to ask my Permission to pay me a Visit, I expect him every Minute, Madam.

L. Mean. I'll go into my Closet, and write for an Hour; but remember, Sir *William* desired you would order the Matter so that he may press you to sup with him at his Lord's Country-House this Evening; I don't know his Reason for it as yet, but he'll take Care to give you your Lesson in time.

Clara. The poor Wretch will run half mad with Joy at such a Proposal, Ha, ha, ha. As merry as I appear before my Lady, it stings my very Soul to think of marrying *Graspall*, a meer Scoundrel, just started from a Dunghill, made wealthy by the Spoils of the Poor, and wicked by partaking of his Lord's Crimes; such Wealth can never thrive, ——— and yet it may with me; 'tis my just Due: I may honestly take it as Part of what my Father was cheated of amongst them: but then the Fellow, well, I must take him too, since there is no Way to get at one without the other, I shall use him like a Dog, but that will be for the Good of his Soul; he ought to do some Penance on this Side the Grave.

Enter Graspall.

Grasp. You grieve me to the Heart, my dearest Angel, to hear you talk of the Grave; forbear such melancholy Reflections; consent to bless me, and you shall soon shine out as fine as any Lady of them all.

Clara. I am not fond of outward Shew, Mr. *Graspall*, Happiness don't consist in Finery: In short, if you would persuade me of the Sincerity

(41)

rity of your Passion, it must be by the Largeness of the Settlement you propose.

Grasp. If that will convince you, I am ready this Moment to settle my whole Estate on you, and your Heirs; chuse what Trustees you please, and what Lawyer you like to draw the Settlement; say but you will be mine.

Clara. You are too generous, I require but half; and on that Condition I consent to be marry'd, as soon as Things can be got ready.

Grasp. [*Kneeling.*] Oh! I shall die with Joy! ——— [*Kissing her Hand.*] Let me run home this Moment, and send you the Writings; for every Day's Delay will seem an Age to me: Why would you cruelly keep me in Suspence so long? Could you believe I value Life or Fortune any longer than they conduced to your Happiness? Then shake off Melancholy, my Charmer. Do you think your Lady would spare you to take the Air a little in the Evening?

Clara. She seldom denies me any thing; but I hate publick Places: Yet I could like to take a Walk in your Lord's Gardens, if it be a proper Time.

Grasp. He goes to his Country-House to-night, and has given Orders to admit nobody but Madam *Skittilla*; there is but two Servants allowed to be there at such Times; If you will be so good to sup with me, we shall meet with no Interruption; for my Lord never stirs out of his own Apartment.

Clara. I'll get ready by Seven o'Clock, but must desire you to shorten this Visit, because I have some Business requires Dispatch before I go out.

Grasp. I'll send you the Writings, and one of my Lord's Chariots shall attend you at the Hour

F

you

(42)

you mention; but permit me, Madam, to beg you would order your Lawyer to be speedy, if you value my Quiet: Consider how impatient I am to be yours; and tho' I am sensible your Charms may command Gentlemen of greater Birth than I, yet the Power I have over my Lord makes People of high Rank covet the Honour of my Acquaintance; ay, and pay me well for it into the Bargain.

A I R XI. When *Chloe* we ply.

*When Men vow and protest,
They are mostly in Jest,
Such Forms we ne'er Friendship should call;
I am civil ——— and they
For my Favours still pay;
So 'tis all Interest, Interest all.*

Clara. You are perfectly gay, Mr. *Graspall*, but consider that every Minute we trifle away now hinders the main Business.

[Exit. *he following her.*

S C E N E III. A Garden.

Enter *Skitilla* and *Lucy*.

Lucy. 'Tis past the Hour, Madam; and if I durst presume to advise you.

Skit. What is it your Wisdom would advise? Come, I know the Malice of your Heart; you hate *Gaylove*, and want to blow me up to a Passion: but, for the future, Mistress *Pert*, let me advise you to hold your Tongue, and never answer till you are ask'd a Question, or I shall reduce

(43)

reduce you to your primitive State. Do you forget the Tatterdemalion Pickle you were in when I first took Pity on you; when all the Cloaths you had to your Back would scarce have made a Rag-Mop.

Lucy. [Aside.] And if I don't ruin her for that provoking Speech it shall cost me a Fall. Lord *Blunder* shall know how he's us'd, her Pride shall have a Fall, I assure her: Sure, I am something handsomer than she; and tho' she little dreams of it, have had the Honour to be to the full as familiar with His Lordship.

[*Skitilla* walks about in a Passion.

Enter *Gaylove*.

Gayl. I ask Pardon; Madam, for making you wait; but Mr. *Blunder* has followed me about wherever I went for these two Hours.

Skit. You never want an Excuse, Sir, to cover your Want of Inclination.

Gayl. Did you appoint me to come hither, Madam, with a Design to quarrel, and part? If so, I am always ready to obey your Commands.

Skit. I believe a final Parting would be very agreeable to you, ungrateful Monster! how have I deserved this Usage? [Weeps.

Gayl. Are you mad? Why do you suffer your Woman to be a Witness of your Folly? Send her farther off, I have something of Consequence to say to you.

Skit. Get away, and wait my coming at the Garden-Door. [Exit *Lucy*.

Gayl. You ought to turn off that Wench immediately, or you'll be ruin'd beyond Redemption; *Oliver* told me but this Moment, as a

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great

(44)

great Secret, that, to his Knowledge, Lord *Blunder* lyes with her; if so, you must expect she'll tell all she can of our Affair: 'Tis a strange Thing that you Women can't keep your own Secrets, and not put 'em in the Power of such slow Trollops to blow your Foibles for the Diversion of the Town.

Skit. Dear *Gaylove*, you surprize me terribly: For Heaven's Sake advise me, or I am lost; I am afraid it is but too true, this Wench is strangely altered in her Behaviour lately.

Gayl. If you'll be ruled by me, all may yet be well; betray not the least Suspicion, but treat her kindly, seem wonderous fond of *Blunder*; and, if possible, persuade him to sign the Settlement this Afternoon.

Skit. If you have got it drawn, I'll make him sign it before I part with him; and then a Fig for his Anger afterwards.

Gayl. To convince you I don't neglect your Interest, here it is; but I will not give it you till you promise me one Thing.

Skit. What need you make Conditions? You know too well I can deny you nothing. Pr'ythee name this one Thing.

Gayl. Why, you must give me the Key of Lord *Blunder's* Back-Garden-Gate, by which I know you enter, at his Country-House; you need not fear being discover'd, because I'll get another made before Night, and return you the Original.

Skit. I would do it, but I tremble, lest you should let in his Enemies to murder him.

Gayl. I humbly thank you, Madam; do you take me for a Murderer? There's the Settlement, and now Adieu for ever. *[Offers to go.]*

Skit.

(45)

Skit. Stay, cruel *Gaylove*, I'll trust to your Honour. *[Giving him the Key.]* I won't presume to ask what Use you design to put it to.

Gayl. I am under a Promise, and cannot tell you yet: but this you may depend upon, not a Hair of his Head shall be hurt. I know 'tis a busy Night with him, and I would have you, if possible, make some Excuse to get away from him by Ten; a Servant shall wait for you at my Lodgings. You may be sure I'll be with you before Twelve, and in those dear Arms reveal the whole Secret. But be sure to get the Paper sign'd.

Skit. I'll engage to do that, if this bold Wench don't prevent me, by telling him some Story before: Yet, now I think on't, I'll send immediately, and beg to see him.

Gayl. And in the *Interim* amuse the Slut with some Story or other, that she may have no Mistrust. What Hour shall you want the Key?

Skit. By seven, at farthest: Remember your Promise, no Hurt shall come to him; for, tho' I know he deserves to be sent to the Devil head-long, yet I should be loth to have a Hand in it.

Gayl. Pr'ythee cease your vain Fears; believe me when I assure you, that not one of the Gentlemen, whom you call his Enemies, would hurt him in any other Manner than by due Course of Law. Adieu till Twelve.

Skit. You'll find my hopeful Attendant at the Garden-Gate, pray sent her to me.

Gayl. I will, and design to make her a Present, to put her in Temper. *[Exit Gaylove.]*

Skittilla.

(46)

Skittilla sola.

I may say with *Evadne*,
Happy the Innocent, whose equal Thoughts
Are free from Anguish, as they are from Faults.

For, since the cursed Day on which I forfeited my Innocence, my Soul has been a Stranger to Peace; my wretched Father sold me to Lord *Blunder*, a Man I loathed; and I, to comfort myself under that Misfortune, invol'd myself still deeper in Guilt, by foolishly indulging a criminal Passion for *Gaylove*. My Heart tells me I have done wrong in delivering the Key; I dread the Consequence: But what Woman has Resolution enough to deny a Favourite-Lover?

A I R XII. The Broom of *Cowdenknows*.

Too constant is the Man I hate,
My favour'd Youth too wild;
How just, how hapless is my Fate,
Beguiling, and beguiled:
Oh! what Care, what killing Care!
My beating Bosom knows.
O Love! how fierce thy Torments are!
What Pain from Passion flows!

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. I protest, Madam, it rejoiced my very Heart when I heard you singing; you were so very angry with me just now, that I have done nothing but sigh and tremble ever since; thought I to myself, certainly I must have done some very bad

(47)

bad Fault, tho' I cannot remember what it is, or so good a Lady as mine would not have chid me so severely.

Skit. Thou art a good-natur'd simple Girl, to vex thyself about it: Alas! *Lucy*, thou hast never been in Love, or thou wouldst quickly have found out the true Cause of my ill Humour.

Lucy. No indeed, Madam, by the Symptoms you give of that Passion, I find I never felt it; and yet that is very strange: for, to confess the Truth, I have two or three Sweethearts at this very Time.

Skit. And do you not like one better than the rest?

Lucy. Really, Madam, I cannot be positive; for I never yet have had an Opportunity to see them all together.

Skit. You are in a very happy State, *Lucy*; Indifference is the only Way to be easy, and ill Usage a never failing Rule to teach a Lover Constancy.

Lucy. I'll be sure to follow Your Ladyship's Advice; and if ill Usage is so prevalent with that Sex, I am resolv'd to use all my Sweethearts like Dogs.

Skit. But tell me, *Lucy*, what you think of the Story I told you about Mrs. *Blunder*? I fancy one might, with a little Contrivance, make a good deal of Diversion.

Lucy. What if you give me Leave to pay a Visit to Mrs. *Clara*, and I tell it her as a great Secret, you may be sure, Madam, she will carry it immediately to her Lady.

Skit. That's true, but then we should lose our Share of the Jest; I fancy it would do better, as you say, if I sent you to consult with her, that we may all join together to carry on the Trick.

Lucy.

(48)

Lucy. But if it should ever come to Lord *Blunder's* Ears, would he not be very angry, Madam?

Skit. 'Tis impossible for him to hear of it; you know Sir *William* and he are declared Enemies to such a Degree, that their very Servants are not allowed to speak to one another.

Lucy. And yet they do, to my Knowledge; for Mr. *Graspall* has courted Mrs. *Clara* some Time.

Skit. No, Matter, she has more Sense than to prattle every Thing to him: Beside, to shew you my Dexterity, while you go thither I'll visit Mrs. *Blunder*; who, I know, is up to the Ears in Love: She will be easily persuaded, after receiving the Song, she ought to write a Line, and thank Sir *William* for it. I'll contrive it so that the Letter shall be sent while you are there; *Clara* will take Care to get it deliver'd, and then you will be able to bring me Word how we are to proceed, Ha, ha, ha. [*Aside.*] By this Means I shall get the Slut out of the Way, while I finish my Business with Lord *Blunder*; that once done, I shall have Time to consider whether I had best turn her away, or poison her; I learned that Maxim of his Lordship, *Dead Folks tell no Tales.*

Lucy. But, do you really think, Madam, that Mrs. *Blunder* will be Fool enough to write? They say she is very proud, and pretends to be a Pattern of Virtue; for my Part, I should never have imagin'd she would have fail'd in the last Point.

Skit. Why so? I tell you, when once a Woman takes it in her Head to fall in Love, from that very Moment, Religion, Virtue, Honour, and Reason lose all their Power; especially a marry'd Woman.

Lucy. Ay, and to be in Love with a marry'd Man too; and yet I dare swear her Virtue's safe for all that.

Skit.

(49)

Skit. I can't see how you will make that out, Opportunity and Importunity are dangerous Things.

Lucy. 'Tis possible, indeed, she may give Opportunity, but the Devil himself, I doubt, would be loth to make Use of it, she is so shockingly ugly.

Skit. Why, did you never know a fine Gentleman in Love with an ugly Woman? Did not Lord *Graton*, who was more beautiful than Poets feign *Adonis*, marry *Hecatissa*, when she was fifty; and tho' her Face resembled the Picture of *Bacchus* bestriding his Tun; yet he doated on this superannuated Hag to his dying Day: Nay, I can name you a certain Duke, who very lately kept a Blackamoor, notwithstanding he has a very pretty Lady to his Wife.

Lucy. But I am much afraid, Madam, Mrs. *Blunder* will not find Sir *William* so well inclined to her Wishes; these Noblemen you mention had a particular Taste indeed: And since I dare say Your Ladyship is well assured her Passion will meet with no Return; is it not a Pity to lead her up in Fool's Paradise? Who knows but she may make away with herself, for meer Vexation?

Skit. No Danger, I'll warrant you; 'tis much better to let her see her Folly, it may deter her from such Attempts for the future; the Affair will go no farther now than amongst a few Friends: whereas, if she were to go on, she might fall into the Hands of some *Irish* Sharper, who would flatter her Vanity, till he had drain'd her Purse, and at last, render her a Jest to the whole Town.

Lucy. Your Ladyship is always in the Right; so, unless you have any farther Commands, I

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(50)

will go immediately to Lady *Meanwell's*, and open this comical Scene; homely People should be made to know that Love is a Crime in them; soft Speeches only become a fine Mouth, and nothing can be more ridiculous than to see such a Creature as *Mrs. Blunder* attempt to put on a languishing Look, Ha, ha, ha.

AIR XIII. Cold and raw the Winds did blow.

*The Peacock we with Pleasure see
His gorgeous Train exposing;
The Turkey too, in high Degree,
Becoming Pride disclosing.*

*But, should the silly, awkward Goose,
Pretend to any such Matter,
We to our Spleen should quickly give loose,
Or burst, with smothering Laughter.*

Skit. Ha, ha, ha. If the poor Woman was to hear this Song, she would run mad with Anger; but 'tis Time to be gone. [Exit, follow'd by Lucy.]

End of the Second ACT.



ACT

(51)



ACT III. SCENE I.

BLUNDER-HALL.

Enter Lord Blunder and Graspall.

Grasp. THE whole Account of this last Month's Perquisites amounts but to poor sixty Guineas indeed, my Lord.

Ld. Blund. This is a prodigious Decrease, *Graspall*; what can be the Meaning on't? Speak plainly, you know I am never angry at hearing the Truth from you; tho' I don't think fit to suffer any Body else to be so free with me.

Grasp. Why really, my Lord, when I deliver'd the common Pensions to all your Dependants, not one of the sneaking Rascals gave me a single Guinea; and when I took Notice of it, some of them had the Impudence to tell me, that, considering how Affairs stand at present, they expected Your Lordship to double their Allowance, instead of their being obliged to pay me Poundage out of it: Nay, this very Morning, notwithstanding you had so much Company, I got but one melancholy Moidore, and that was from a Country-Put.

Ld. Blund. You should have minded the Door better, and not have suffer'd the Porter to give them Admittance so easily; they must not go on at this Rate.

Grasp. Alas! my Lord, I told them you was busy; and did every Thing in my Power to make them bleed freely, but to no Purpose; I found they were resolv'd to go back again, rather than pay for their Entrance.

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Ld.

(52)

Ld. *Blund*. You only fancy'd so, you did not try them far enough.

Grasp. Some of them flatly told me, That the Case was alter'd, that truly they came now out of pure Respect to you, and to do you Honour, in the Sight of the Parish; for they were sensible, they said, it would not be long in your Power, even to make a Sexton: Your Claim to the management of the Mannor would be disputed, and 'twas well if you come off with only losing your Estate: So I was oblig'd to let the Doors be set wide open, and make no more Words; for your Lordship knows it would not have been for your Credit in the Neighbourhood to have let them all go away grumbling.

Ld. *Blund*. Well, we must bear all this patiently for the present, *Graspall*: But I doubt not yet, but I shall be too hard for my Enemies; and then let these grateful Friends of mine look to it.

Grasp. It grieves me to my Soul, my Lord, to see this Alteration; there is the forty Guineas, [*Giving a Purse.*] *My Lord counts it over.*

Ld. *Blund*. Ay, 'tis very right, according to our former Reckoning: But indeed, *Graspall*, till the Times mend, I can't afford to let you have above a fourth Part for the future.

Enter Skittilla.

Grasp. [*Aside.*] A fourth Part! If things once come to that, 'tis Time for me to be gone: I'll give him Warning To-morrow; Misfortunes may come thick upon him, and then he'll want to borrow Money of me. [*Exit Graspall.*]

Ld. *Blund*. My dear *Skittilla*, thou art always welcome to me: I was pleas'd when I receiv'd your Letter; for I wanted you on a very particular Occasion.

Skitt.

(53)

Skitt. I was Impatient to know how you did after yesterday's Fatigue; but I hope, my Lord, your Enemies are not so powerful as they are reported to be.

Ld. *Blund*. They are Powerfull enough to do Mischief, and have exasperated the Tenants to such a Degree, that 'tis scarce safe for me to stir out of Doors. I hear they have sent for Lord *Sparkle* to Town, with Design to turn me out of the Manor-House, and fix him in my Place; but I am before-hand with them: The Lord Lieutenant is firm to my Interest; and, to revenge my Quarrel, has fairly turn'd out his witty Lordship, and a few more of his Friends. Ha, ha, ha.

Skitt. I rejoice at your Success; but will not this still exasperate the Tenants more, you know Lord *Sparkle* is their Darling?

Ld. *Blund*. 'Twas for that very Reason I got him remov'd; it shall be the Business of my Life to plague the Rakehells: I'll humble their Pride, and raise the Rents, 'till their Wives shall be glad to wear Linsley-Woolsey, instead of Brocades, and themselves rejoice to get Drunk with plain Porter, instead of *Burgundy* and *Champaign*.

Skitt. I am afraid, my Lord, an Attempt of that Kind might raise a Mutiny.

Ld. *Blund*. So much the better, Child; a Mutiny at this time would be of great Service to me.

Skitt. But your Life might be in Danger if such a thing should happen; and I own, I am at a loss to guess how it could be of any Advantage to you.

Ld. *Blund*. Why, you little Fool, don't you know that a Mutiny in a Country Town, and a Plot at Court are of equal Use; the Lord of a Mannor who hates, and is equally hated by his Tenants, gains by the former an Opportunity to cut off his Adversarie

(54)

Adversaries, by Virtue of the Riot-Act, as many a wicked Statesman has in former Ages beheaded, hang'd, drawn, and quarter'd, by Doves all Ranks and degrees of Men, who stood in his Way under the specious Pretence of a Plot, tho' in Reality it was one of his own making.

Skitt. But does not your Lordship think that such a Statesman was very wicked?

Ld. Blund. No, Child; he was certainly very Wife.

A I R XIV. *Packington's Pound.*

*Let Nobles of Taste, be proud of their Parts,
Be wanton in Wit, or in Learning profound,
Their Prowess in Arms, or their knowledge in Art's,
Can never a Man of my Talants confound.*

*By cunning still I
Shall their Malice defye;*

*For tho' smiling I seem, yet in Mischief I'm sly;
Thus a Priest rode all France in the Age which is
[gone,
And Cunning rules still in more Countries than one.*

Skitt. Self-Preservation is a very powerful Article; but, my dear Lord, you must be well upon your Guard, till you have brought your Designs to Perfection, lest they should do you a Mischief privately.

Ld. Blund. That shall never be in their Power, my Dear: But, to convince you that I design to be cautious, I intend to bring my strong Box to your House in two Hours, lest they should break into mine, when I am out; for, should they get that into their Clutches, they would ruin me indeed.

(55)

deed. Pray let it be set in your Closet, and don't let even *Lucy* know that it belongs to me.

Skitt. You may depend on my Care; but I tremble to take such a Charge into my Custody for fear of Accidents.

Ld. Blund. It does not contain Money, Child, but something, if possible, more valuable, the Contract between a certain *Spanish* Merchant and I, about an Affair we transacted some Years ago; tho', to my great Grief, I have not as yet been able to fulfil the Bargain, yet I have endeavour'd several times to do it. Oh! that is a cursed Affair, should it be found out, I would not give a Pin for my Life; then there is all my Securities for Money abroad, my own Journal, several original Letters, and other Things of great Consequence; but we'll talk more of this matter at Night, I'd have you come to me before Eight.

Skitt. I will my Lord, but I think it will not be safe for me to lie from home, while I have the Box under my Care.

Ld. Blund. There you are in the Right, but I must see you at the Time I mention, for many Reasons; but you sha'n't stay above two Hours. I had almost forgot to tell you, how prettily I am used by Sir *William Brazen*; and in short, by all the Gang of Villains, whom I have rais'd from nothing: Oh! it makes me mad to think on't. [*Walks about in a Passion.*]

Skitt. 'Tis impossible sure, that they can be ungrateful, they deserve Death, if they dare dispute your Will, considering they owe their All to your Bounty.

Ld. Blund. I don't know what you call disputing my Will; but this very Morning when I gave them Orders, they frankly told me they would not stir a Foot, unless I paid them beforehand for every Jobb.

Skitt.

(56)

Skitt. Horrid Impudence! If I were in your Place, my Lord, I'd endeavour to be reconciled to my Enemies, and join with them to hang up the saucy Rogues.

A I R XV. *Bessy Bell, and Mary Gray,*

*In Things perplex'd, I may advise,
To this you're sure, no Stranger:
That Women oft have help'd the Wise,
When sore beset with Danger.
While yet in Power exert your Will,
To doom these Rogues to Ruin;
Ne'er trust to Men who've us'd you ill,
Lest worst they should be brewing.*

Ld. Blund. Thou art a dear witty Girl, and I protest I could be glad to take thy Advice, if it were practicable; but these flattering Knaves, have by their Tricks, rendered me so universally hated, that a Reconciliation is impossible; come into the Study with me, I fancy I had better let you have the Box home now than bring it myself: But why have you not prepared the Settlement I ordered.

Skitt. I have it in my Pocket, my Lord.

Ld. Blund. That's well, I'll sign it within.
[Exit leading her.]

SCENE II.

Sir William Meanwell's Drawing-Room.

Enter Sir William, Lady Meanwell, Mr. Gaylove, and Clara, [Lord Sparkle entering.]

Sir Wm. This is kind indeed, my Lord, [Embracing h.m.] to come a whole Week sooner than we expected you. *Ld.*

(57)

Ld. Spark. If my Company is so pleasing to you, I assure you, you owe the Obligation of having it so soon to my good Lord *Blunder*.

Sir Wm. You surprize me, how is that possible?

Ld. Spark. Why, his Lordship knowing that I am extremely fond of my Friends, was afraid that Business might keep me too long from them, and so kindly prevail'd with the Lord Lieutenant, to send me Word this Morning, that I might return; that's all.

Sir Wm. Confound him, and his Kindness, will his Cup of Iniquity never be full? Yes, when his Life is ended; never before, but prythee don't look out of Humour on my Account, it is our Duty to forget our private Interest, when the Publick's in such evident Danger! let us bend our whole Thoughts on saving the Tenants, poor Souls! they depend on us to save them from being reduced to Want and Beggary by this Monster.

L. Mean. I heartily wish Success to your generous Undertakings; but that must be a Work of Time: However, in the Interim, we have at present, my Lord, two Projects just ripe for Execution; The one relates to Mrs. *Blunder*, who has taken it into her Head to fall in Love with my Husband; and the other is, to frighten Lord *Blunder* into a Confession of all his Sins.

Ld. Spark. The last is possible for him to do, if he had an Inclination; why, you might as well set him to count the Sands in the Sea, as to repeat a Hundredth Part of his Crimes.

Gay. Oh! We'll be contented to hear as many as he can remember; we are very reasonable People, my Lord.

Ld. Spark. I doubt he will scarce be brought to believe so: But pray let me into the whole Secret, and how you propose to accomplish your
H Designs.

(58)

Designs; the Love-part must needs have something very whimsical in it.

Enter Lord Freeman, and Sir Abraham Standfast; they embrace Lord Sparkle.

L. Mean. Oh! here comes two of the principal Actors, I was just going to give Lord *Sparkle* the History of our Plot.

Ld. Freem. But, has your Ladyship found a Way to produce the majick Key yet? Ha, ha.

Gay. Here it is, my Lord; [*Holding it up*] you see we are well prepared, the Dress and all is ready, I try'd it on just now.

L. Mean. And I protest he looks so charming terrifying in it, that he half scared himself when he peep'd in the Glass. Ha, ha, ha.

Sir Abra. This Adventure can't fail of Success, if Mr. *Ghost* can but keep his Countenance; which I am sure I could not do on the like Occasion: The strange Figure he will make in his Fright, would certainly set me a laughing.

Gay. Then I beg you will stay with Lady *Meanwell* till our Return; for Laughters are by no Means fit to be within hearing, when this Part is perform'd.

Ld. Spark. I guess your Intent, by what I have already heard: But pray, where is it to be put in Execution, and when?

Sir Wm. This very Night at his Country-House, the Key, you said, belongs to his Back-Garden Gate, by which only his Privades enter, it will give Mr. *Ghost* Admittance into his very Study, and us an Opportunity of peeping thro' the Windows, and being Spectators of the whole Affair. My Wife, and as many of our Friends, who are conscious that they cannot retain their Laugh, are to wait at the *Swan-Inn*, which is just by, till we return. Ld.

(59)

Ld. Spark. The Plot seems well laid, but whose Ghost are you to represent Mr. *Gay*?

Gay. Oh, a very humble one, my Lord; 'tis that of poor *Phil. Ninny*, whom the World say was sent to sleep his last, by his Lordship's Order, and the help of a Bottle of strange Drops scrced up his Nose when he was a sleep, his Ears and Mouth being stopt at the same time, his Business was done in a Minute.

Ld. Spark. I remember the Story perfectly well, the poor Fellow had been trusted by him in some particular Affairs, and having the Impudence to demand a Sum of Money for Secret Services, his Lordship apprehending a Denial would be of ill Consequence, had him arrested in a sham Action.

Sir Wm. And *Phil* being a clever Fellow, made his Escape out of the Bailiff's House. Ha, ha, ha.

Ld. Free. Yes, thro' a double Iron-Bar Window, and so over two or three Houses; but had the ill Luck to be found standing upright in the Mud of a certain River, at least two hundred Yards from the Place.

Sir Abra. Ha, ha, ha, and so, Mr. *Ghost*, you design this very Night to stick yourself up at *Blunder-Hall in Terrorem*; ha.

Gay. Indeed I do, and I'll ingage to make him do more than he has done these many Years; that is, deal sincerely, and tell Truth. Ha, ha, ha.

Ld. Spark. I desire to be admitted, and give you my Word, that I will neither laugh, nor speak: But if we get clear off when the Affair is over, how shall we know what becomes of him afterwards? I would not have him die in the Fright.

L. Mean. My Woman will have an Opportunity of being an Eye-Witness of the latter Part; for you must know, the famous Mr. *Graspall*, his Lordships Gentleman, has just made her a Settle-

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(60)

ment of half his ill-got Estate, she is to sup with him To-Night, in order to settle the grand Affair, I mean their Wedding; and will bring us a full and true Account at the appointed Place.

Ld. Spark. Your Ladyship is an excellent Politician; but I am surpriz'd how you came by the Key.

L. Mean. Nay, that was obtain'd by Mr. Gaylove, we must not ask how; tho' if I guess right, I believe, Cupid was the Thief: Nay, you colour; now I am sure I am right. [To Gaylove.]

Gayl. Your Lordship forgets that I am a Spirit, and of course could slip thro' a Key-hole: this ought to convince you, that I wanted no Cupid's Aid to get at the Key.

L. Mean. Indeed, Mr. Gaylove, I doubt you found the Key by the very same Means Sampson's Enemies found out his Riddle. Ha, ha, ha.

A I R XVI. When Fair *Aurelia* tripp'd the Plain.

*Love can the noblest Virtues raise,
That swell the human Breast;
Oft Heroes owe to it their Bays,
It fires the Bard with the sweet Lays,
And betters even the Best.*

*But oh! in Souls of baser Mold,
If Passion hap to sway,
It makes them timorous, wanton, bold,
It by no Bars can be controul'd,
But will at Random stray.*

L. Free. We are extremely oblig'd to your Ladyship for this Song, which, by Mr. Gaylove's Colour, I perceive has too much Truth it.

L. Spark. But I long to inform Madam in the Love-Article: you bear a Rival with admirable Patience. Ha, ha, ha.

L. Mean.

(61)

L. Mean. Would you have me be angry with a fair Lady, my Lord, because she has the Misfortune to fall in Love? No really, I would fain persuade Sir William to be kind; but I can't prevail: 'tis a sad thing when our Sex makes Advances. Ha, ha, ha.

Sir Wm. 'Tis Pity Mother *Shipton* did not live in our Days; if she had, I fancy she would have made me some Overtures: and really I do not know but I might have received her Addresses with more Pleasure than my fine Love-Letter from that surfeiting Succubus Mrs. *Blunder*. All a Love Letter. Ha, ha, ha.

Sir Wm. Yes, a Love-Letter, and my precious Wife would fain have persuaded me to have gone to the Rendezvous.

Gayl. Then you ought to thank me Sir, *William*, who, to save you the Trouble, have contrived to send her Husband in your Stead.

Sir *Abra*. But is not that being very ill-natur'd? Merhinks, a Disappointment would be Punishment enough for her Folly.

Gayl. That's true, Sir, if we had not a good Reason to the contrary: but you must know, that *Oliver* is apt to follow his Brother to his Country-House, and should he happen to be there, it would spoil our Sport.— Now the Quarrel that this Affair will naturally produce, will keep him at home you know.

Ld. Free. A very pretty Contrivance truly, the whole Family of the *Blunders*, Male, and Female, are much oblig'd to you.

Gayl. Oh, my Lord, I am ready, and willing to serve them ten thousand times farther than in such Trifles; you cannot think how I should hug myself, if my Appearance To-Night would but have the good Luck to frighten him out of his Wits: why, after all, it would be doing him a Service; for a Mad-Man can never be call'd to an Account. What, if I should alarm him at first with a Song in a hoarse Voice, to the Tune of, *Grim King of the Ghost*.

A I R

(62.)

A I R. XVII. Grim King of the Ghosts.

For Realms ever cover'd with Night,
From the Depths of the Grave am I come,
Untimely to which, by thy Spite,
I sunk — or thou'd'st dy'd in my Room.

Ld. *Freem.* Really, Mr. *Ghost*, you sing extremely well; one would not judge by your Voice that you had been smother'd in the Mud: However, if you desire to fright him, you must not sing before *Blunder*; for, if you do, as great a Blunderer as you take him for, he'll certainly find you out. Ha, ha, ha.

Enter a Footman.

Foot. There's a Chariot at the Door has waited for you, Mrs. *Clara*, a great While.

L. *Mean.* She is coming immediately. [*Exit Footman.*] Pray, make your Lover wait no longer; for 'tis Time we were all a-going. [*Exit Clara.*]

Sir *Wm.* As you say, my Dear, 'tis almost Time for the *Ghost* to appear. Sir *Abraham*, since you seem apprehensive that you can't refrain from laughing, I'll commit my Wife to your Care.

Gayl. It vexes me that I cannot be present at the meeting of *Oliver* and his Wife; but I'll engage, notwithstanding, I have arm'd him with her own Letter, she'll get the better of him, and he'll bear his intended Cuckoldom, as patiently as his Brother did his real one, when he catch'd Col. *Limberham* in Bed with his Lady, who pacify'd him by singing the following Song, to prove that the Crime was as excusable in her as in himself. She is very fond of *Lex Talionis*.

A I R

(63)

A I R. XVIII. The Lads of Paty's Mill.

If you in Freedom rove,
By Duty unrestrain'd,
Why unto wedded Love
Should I be longer chain'd?

What Lawyer but will say
Such Contract must be void;
In this I you obey,
And toy, as you have toy'd.

L. *Mean.* Come, don't plague me with more Singing, I am impatient to be gone; slip on your *Ghost's* Habit, and let us repair to our different Posts.

Ld. *Spark.* We have but a short Way to go, and I am as impatient as Your Ladyship. [*Exeunt Omnes.*]

S C E N E III.

Lord *Blunder* sitting in his Study reading.

Ld. *Blund.* I like none of their Maxims, *Somerset* was a Fool, and knew not how to use his Power; and *Buckingham* shrunk at the very Thought of drawing Blood. Ha, ha, ha. Had I been in his Place, I would have found a Way to remove every Creature that I but suspected, without the tedious Forms of Law. Well, 'tis a Pity I should pass my Time in a private Manner; Nature certainly design'd me for a Statesman, but there is no struggling with Fate: I must be contented, and by exercising my Talent on my Tenants and their Abettors, convince the World what I am able to do. There is Lord *Freeman*, Sir *William Meanwell*, and about twenty more, that I must be rid on; what would I not give at this Time for a few Bottles of Citron-Water well rested in *Italy*.

A I R

(64)

A I R. XIX. Which No-bbdy can deny.

In Virtue or Vice Men should always excel,
None were ever made Saints for bare doing well;
And none for a Trifle should venture on Hell.

Which Nobody can deny.

The Loss of their Breath deprives Men of Spite,
For the fiercest of Dogs, when dead, never bite:
This Machiavel said, and that Machiavel's right,

There's Nobody will deny.

[Just as the Song ends, Gaylove appears at the
Study-Door. Blunder starts.]

Blund. Ha! What's that? Sure my Eyes deceive
me! Oh! Who art thou? [Goes to ring a Bell,
Ghost strikes it off the Table.]

Ghost. Don't you know me, cruel, bloody Wretch?
Is injur'd Phillippo so soon forgot? While sleeping,
sent, without one Moment's Time to call for Mercy,
to answer for those Crimes in which you had involv'd
him. Repent, repent, the Sword of Vengeance hangs
over thy guilty Head, and soon 'twill strike: Say,
Wretch, what Excuse do'st thou hope to make for
deceiving thy Friends, contriving the Death, and
Ruin of every honest Man, who but endeavours to
prevent thy villanous Designs, for fleecing thy poor
industrious Neighbours to fill thy own Coffers? Is
their own Sin in all the dreadful Catalogue of which
thou darest to say thou art not guilty. Speak, quick-
ly speak. [In a furious Tone.]

Ld. Blund. Oh! not one, I do, I do confess, I am
the vilest Wretch that ever breath'd; if possible,
more wicked than thou callest me: yet there is Mercy.
Oh! I will repent. [Falls on his Knees.]

Ghost. Vain Wretch, thou talk'st of Repentance as
an easy Task: What Restitution canst thou make for
the

(65)

the numberless Injuries thou hast committed? Canst
thou fetch me to Life again?

Ld. Blund. That is impossible, I wish it were not;
accept my Contrition, and I will become a new Man.
Oh! forgive me. [Trembling.]

Ghost. I do forgive, but cannot help thee; thy
Time's but short, make the best Use on't, and don't
forget my friendly Admonition.

[Lord Blunder faints, and Gaylove slips out the while.]

The SCENE closes on him,

SCENE changes to a Room in the Inn.

Lady Meanwell and all the Company sitting, Gay-
love running in with the Dress in his Hand,
they laugh.

Gayl. Ye are brave Soldiers, indeed, to run away,
shut the Door behind ye, and leave me to get over
the Wall as I could.

Ld. Freem. 'Faith, you must forgive us, Gaylove;
we found it impossible to hold from laughing, when
you brought him to his Penitentials, so were forced
to make the best of our Way as fast as we could, and
in the Hurry shut the Door after us, without know-
ing what we did.

L. Mean. I am glad you escap'd tho', or this Want
of Thought might have been of ill Consequence?
but in what Condition did you leave him?

Gayl. The best in the World for my Purpose; the
Violence of the Fright threw him into a Swoon. Ha,
ha, ha.

Sir Abr. I hope he'll come to no Harm, though; I
begin to repent the Frolick.

Ld. Spark. So do not I; he may happen to turn
good upon't: I'll warrant you, Clara, who, doubt-
less, was very attentive, would hear the Fall, and
send her Lover to assist him.

Sir Wm. Turn good, did you say? No, no, my
Lord, he'll forget it all by To-morrow; his Friend
Tom

(66)

Tom Search will persuade him, that it was only a strong Fit of the Hippo. Ha, ha, ha.

L. Mean. I would have given any Thing to have seen how he look'd in his Fright.

Gayl. Oh! very ghastly, that he almost frighten'd me as much as I did him. He trembled every Limb, fell on his Knees, confess'd all that I charged him with, promised to repent, and humbly ask'd my Pardon in particular.

Sir Abr. Sure, you could not be so uncharitable to refuse him that. Ha, ha, ha.

Gayl. No indeed, I very good-natur'dly gave it him; but told him I could not help him; spoke some ugly Words, which made him believe the Devil was in a Hurry, and this threw him into the Condition I tell you. Ha, ha, ha.

Ld. Freem. I peep'd thro' the Window, heard and saw all that pass'd; but sure, no Criminal at the Gallows ever made so wretched a Figure as poor *Blunder* did: I shall think of it every Time I see him. Ha, ha, ha. But, will it not be better to talk this Matter over more fully at home, for Fear of Suspicion?

Ld. Spark. As you please, my Lord; now I dare say twenty real Ghosts, if there, really, are any such Things, would not have frighten'd any Man in this Company; but *Villains are always Cowards.*

A I R XX. Oh! ponder well, ye Parents dear.

*Who would himself with Crimes defile,
Who knew the dismal Plight,
In which involv'd, such Caitiffs vile
Live on in endless Fright?*

L. Mean.

(67)

L. Mean. [Sings.]

A I R XXI. To all ye Ladies now at Land.

*For Power, or Wealth, let others job,
While Virtue we persue;
Which merry makes each Country-Hob,
And gives a Smile to Sue:
However poor, they're still content,
And happy, as they're innocent.*

With a Fal, la, la, &c.



F I N I S.

(17)

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