

FESTINALENTE



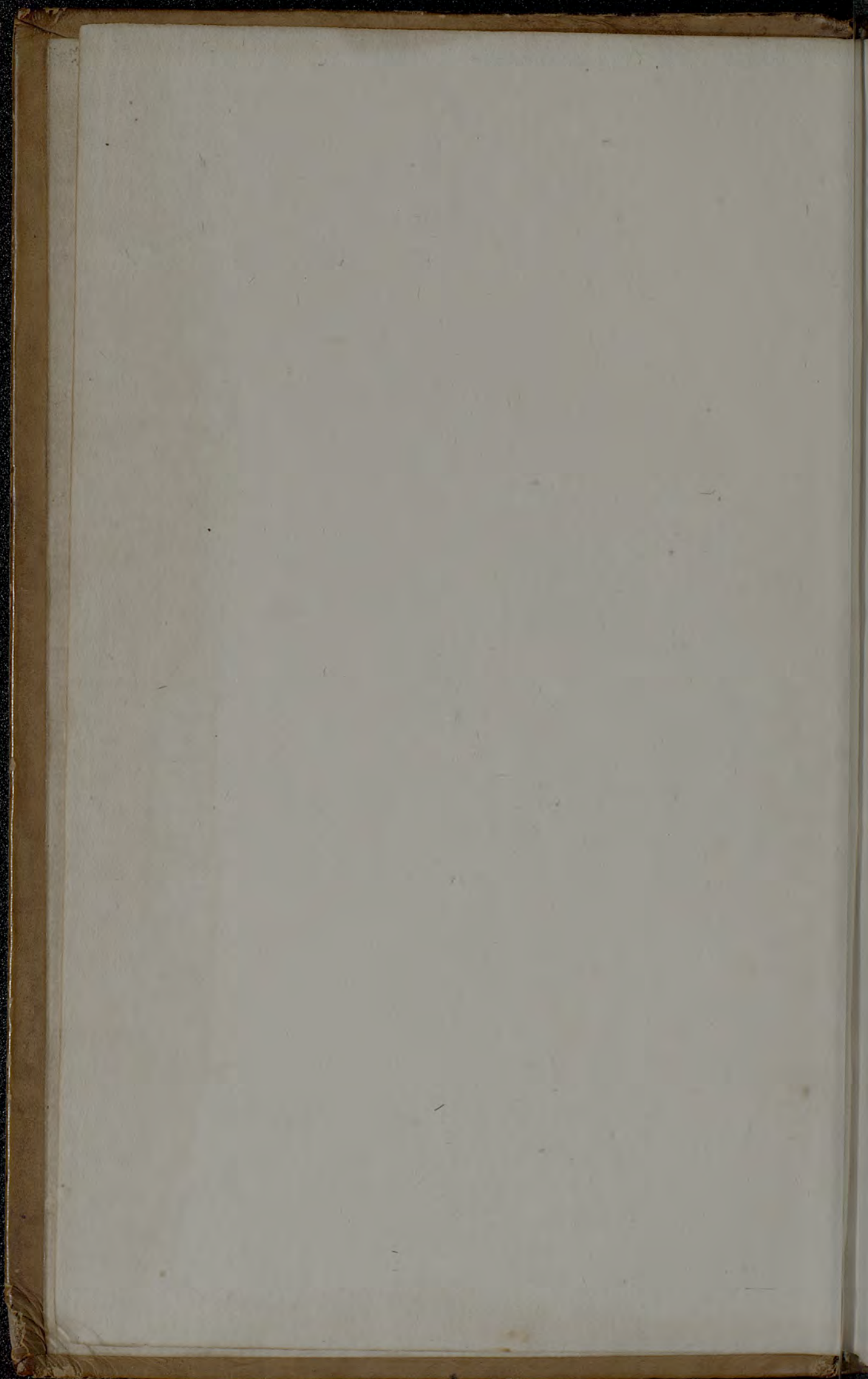
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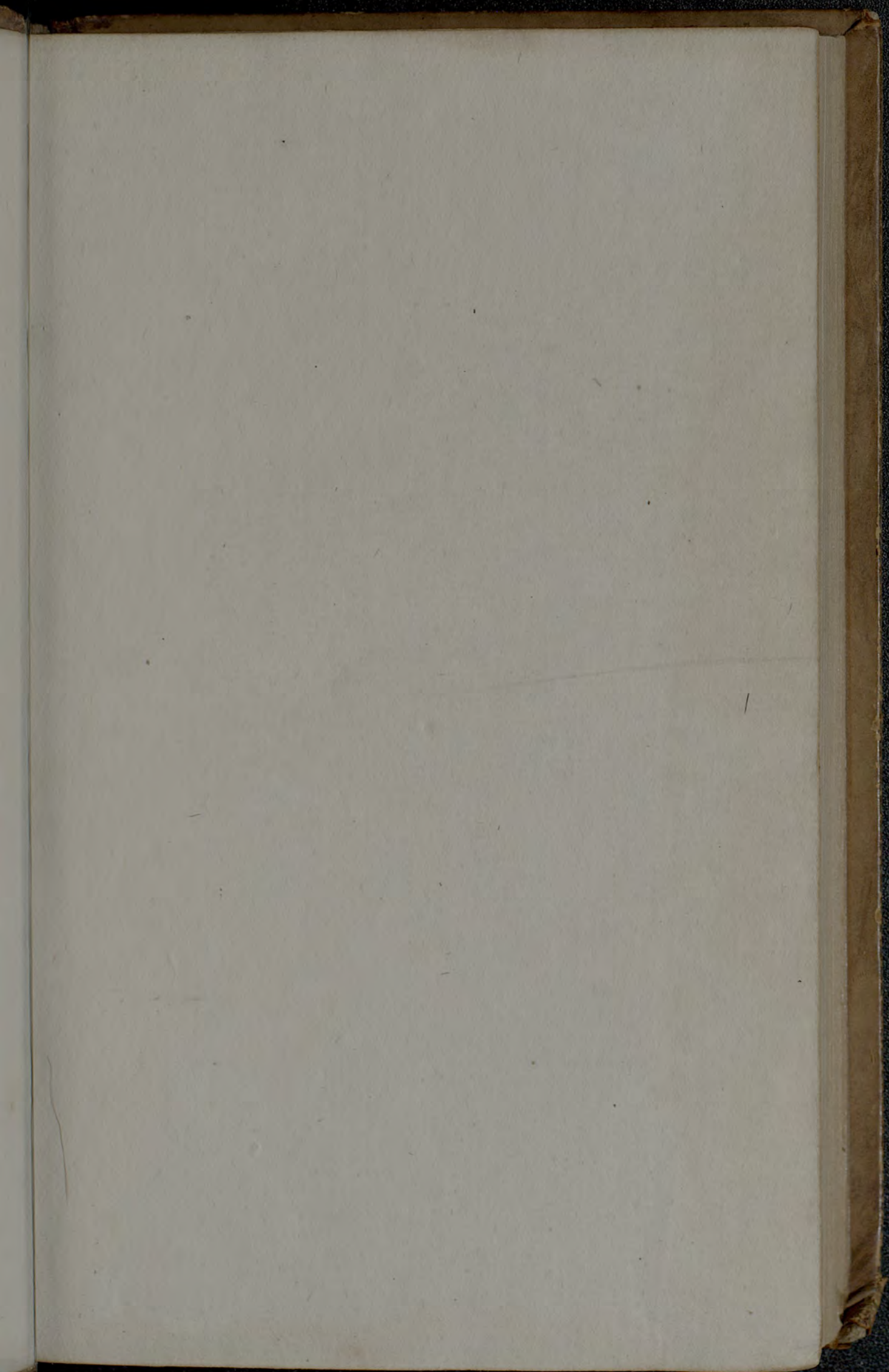
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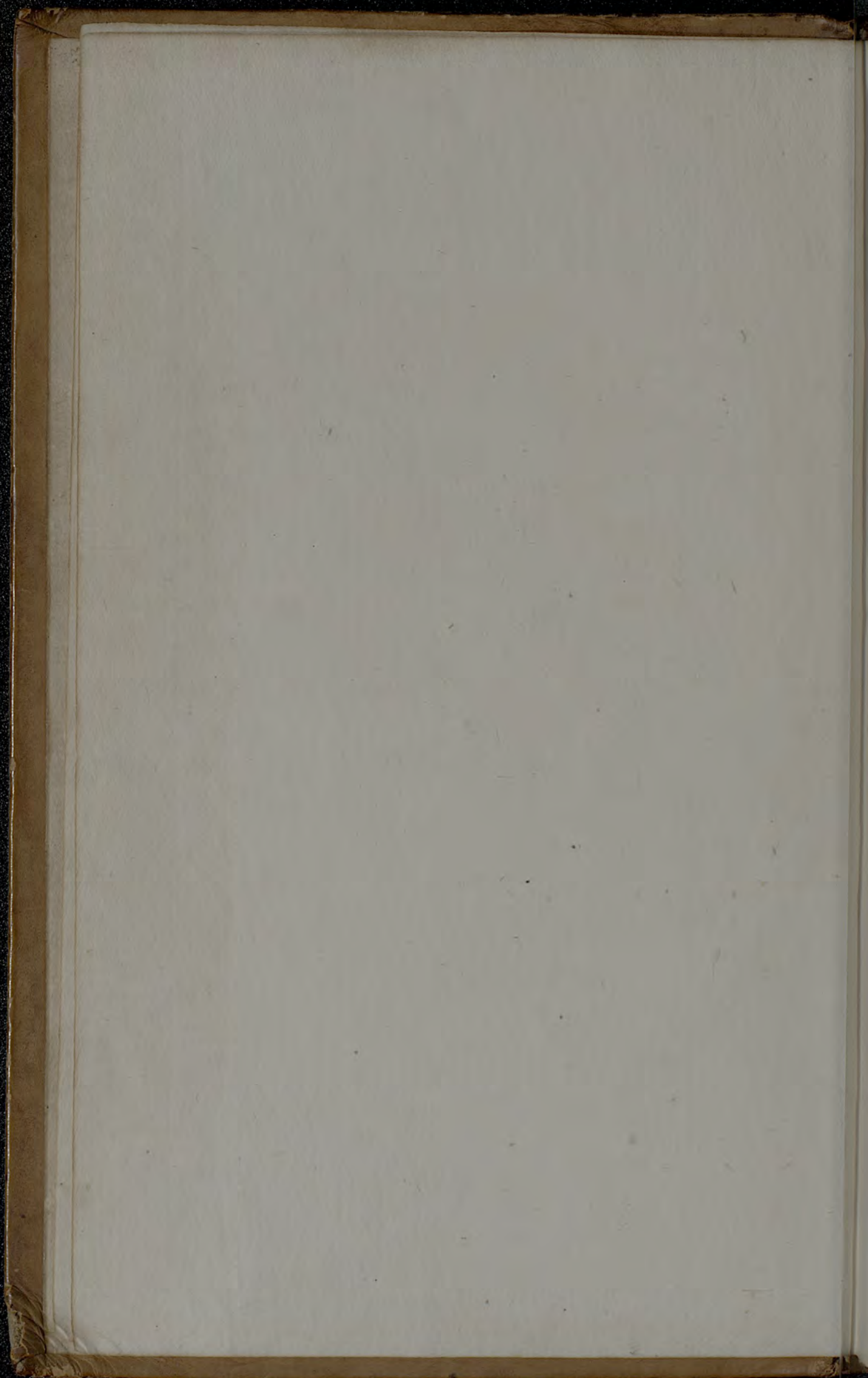
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THEATRE
1781
VOL. I

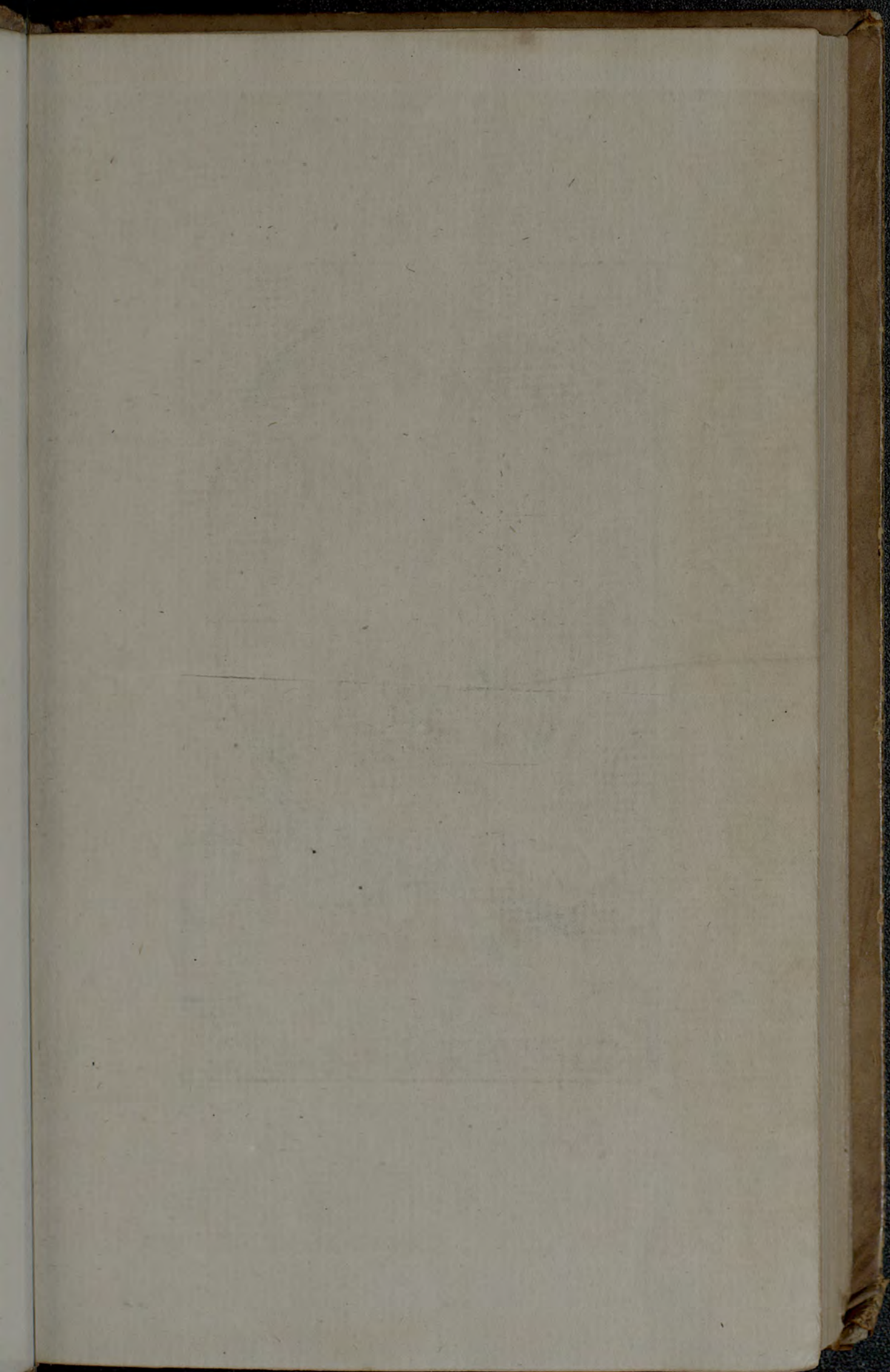


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T H E A T R E
O F
E D U C A T I O N .

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
O F
T H E C O U N T E S S D E G E N L I S .

Leçon commence, exemple achevé.

LA MOTTE, *Fable de L'Aigle et L'Aiglon.*

I N F O U R V O L U M E S .

V O L . I .

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. CADELL, and P. ELMSLY, in the
Strand; and T. DURHAM, Charing-Cross.

MDCCLXXXI.

T H E A T R E

o r

E D U C A T I O N

T R A N S L A T E D F R O M T H E F R E N C H

o r

T H E C O U R S E O F A L L

I N F O U R V O L U M E S

V O L I

L O N D O N

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE merit of the *Theatre of Education*, is sufficiently acknowledged in the universal demand for the original, which, in less than a year from its publication, has been translated into six foreign languages.

The French Censor has justly observed, “that it is impossible to paint morality in colours more natural or more affecting;” nor has any performance appeared in the present age more capable of inspiring the young mind with a love of virtue.

The work is equally adapted to the instruction of both sexes, who will find engaging descriptions of characters well worth their imitation, and meet with instructive examples to deter them from

ADVERTISEMENT.

those vices and follies which are most incident to an early period of life. Though the Comedies of the Countess de Genlis, in which she has shewn extensive knowledge, fine taste, exquisite sensibility, and the most exalted virtue, were written for the use of youth, they are not confined to the improvement of the young; persons of all ages, of all ranks and professions, may discover useful hints for the regulation of their conduct in the most important situations of life: where they meet not with instruction, they will always find amusement, but in general, it has been the aim of this respectable lady to unite these objects, in which she has so happily succeeded, that her work is considered as an agreeable domestic monitor in most families on the Continent.

P R E F A C E
O F T H E E D I T O R .

IT must be allowed, that the Author of this little Theatre has the merit of having invented a kind of Comedies of which no one had hitherto conceived the idea; it is a species of writing which undoubtedly may be improved, but a first attempt is entitled to indulgence. Great difficulties were to be surmounted in making them interesting without the aid of intrigue, violent passions, the contrast of virtues and vices; in short, when the Author had laid it down as a rule, not to allow a male character to appear*, nor a single

* The exclusion of male characters applies only to this volume, which appeared some time before the rest.

sentence to be uttered, which was not of itself a lesson, or did not lead to some instruction.

These comedies are only moral treatises brought into action, and it is hoped that young people may find lessons in them, both entertaining and instructive. Besides, in playing these pieces, in learning them by heart, several advantages may be found; such as, engraving excellent principles upon their minds, exercising their memories, forming their pronounciation, and giving them a graceful pleasing manner.

Learning detached pieces of verse and prose by heart, cannot produce the same effects, because it is impossible to declaim alone in a chamber with the same spirit as in playing a character.

We have few comedies which young people can play without danger, and

OF THE EDITOR. 5

most of them are above their comprehension. The author has very attentively guarded against introducing any character truly odious; none have been presented but growing errors, always accompanied with a good heart, and consequently susceptible of correction.

There is only one character, that of *Dorina* in *The Spoiled Child*, which is really vicious, but it was thought right to guard young people against those mercenary flatterers, sometimes to be found among the domestics by whom they may be surrounded, which is the sole reason for having represented that person so odious and disagreeable.

In short, these essays, the fruit of the labours of an author who has dedicated her youth and her life to that kind of meditation, have been dictated by the most laudable motives.

May the children who shall read them be struck with the examples they contain! May they thereby become better, more feeling, more ingenuous, more affectionate to their parents, and every wish of the author will be accomplished.



HAGAR in the DESART,

A

SERIOUS DIALOGUE.

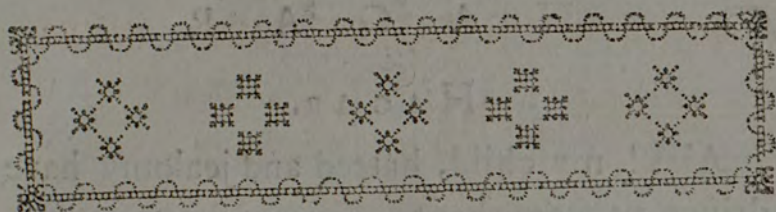
THE PERSONS.

HAGAR.

ISHMAEL.

THE ANGEL.

Scene a Desert.



HAGAR in the DESART,
A SERIOUS DIALOGUE.

SCENE FIRST,

HAGAR, ISHMAEL.

HAGAR, *leading her son in one hand, and
carrying a pitcher in the other.*

WHAT a dismal place! . . . What dreadful solitude!

ISHMAEL.

Mama, let us return to my Father; we were so happy while with him!

H A G A R.

Alas! my child, hatred and jealousy have driven us from thence, never more to return.

I S H M A E L.

Hatred! what have I done to deserve hatred? And Mama, is it possible that any one can hate you?

H A G A R.

Envy my son, breeds cruelty and injustice; it occasions hatred, which is the blackest and most detestable of all the passions.

I S H M A E L.

Can a heart of any sensibility ever be tainted with it?

H A G A R.

A feeling heart may run astray;—pride, my son, may corrupt the most compassionate disposition, and give it up to all the violence of revenge.

I S H M A E L.

Ah Mama, if I have any pride, I pray you employ all your attention to correct it.

IN THE DESART. 11

HAGAR.

Reason alone should be a sufficient security to us. The author of nature has made nothing but what is good, to him we are indebted for all our virtues, but our vices we owe to ourselves.

ISHMAEL.

We are born then without pride?

HAGAR.

The Almighty has impressed a salutary desire in our hearts, which leads us to distinguish ourselves, and to pursue what is honourable.

ISHMAEL.

That is self-love?

HAGAR.

Yes, my son, it is that divine principle which makes great men and heroes; it is then pure, and such as it was when bestowed upon us by the divinity; but corrupted man abuses the precious gift, he debases and changes its nature, and by turning it towards vain and trifling objects, it at last degenerates into pride.

ISHMAEL.

Mama, God Almighty is good; when we obey his law, he will certainly love us.

H A G A R.

He is then our Father.

I S H M A E L.

Why then do you lament? wherefore are we without help, without support in this desert?

H A G A R.

He watches over us, and means only to try us.

I S H M A E L.

In the mean time, we are oppressed with fatigue and vexation: deprived of food and protection, how can we resist so many ills?

H A G A R.

By courage which contemns them, and resignation which submits without murmuring. To suffer is the portion of this life; it is a time of storm and trial; but it is short, and quickly passeth away, and is followed by immortality glory and happiness, as the reward of virtue. Let us then cease to complain; let us think of the happiness which awaits us, and endeavour to render ourselves worthy.

IN THE DESART. 13

ISHMAEL.

Mama, you are not afraid then of death?

HAGAR.

Alas! I have no fear, but the fear of surviving you.

ISHMAEL.

Death then is nothing!—it is but for an instant!—but to suffer, to endure thirst and hunger, ah Mama!

HAGAR.

There is an affliction still more dreadful my son—it is that of not having it in our power to comfort those we love.

ISHMAEL.

Have I not felt it?—Have I not seen you in tears?

HAGAR.

Ah! my child, if I could save your life by the sacrifice of mine!—

ISHMAEL.

What could I do without you Mama?—

H A G A R.

My dear Ishmael—Cruel Sarah, if you but heard him—if you saw him—yes, your barbarous heart would be melted.—And what must I feel?—Ah! my son, let us not despair; our lot is dreadful, but the Almighty protects us and can change it.

I S H M A E L.

This desert certainly produces some wild fruit which can afford us nourishment, but under such a sultry sun, we are consumed with thirst, and neither spring nor rivulet is to be found.—

H A G A R.

Perhaps we shall discover some.—Besides, this pitcher, now our only property, still has some water in it, which I reserve for you, and is the last resource of maternal tenderness.

I S H M A E L.

I will share it with you.

IN THE DESART. 15

H A G A R.

It is only by saving your life that I can prolong mine.

I S H M A E L.

Mama.

H A G A R.

What would you, my child?

I S H M A E L.

I have not slept these two days; I feel myself quite tired, let us sit down.

H A G A R.

Come and take some rest, it will recover your strength; here, lie down under the shade of this bush.

(Ismael follows her and lays himself down, she places herself near him with the pitcher at her feet.)

I S H M A E L.

Mama, do you try and sleep too.

H A G A R.

No my dear, I will watch over you.

ISHMAEL.

You will not go from me while I am asleep.

H A G A R.

Ah! can your mother leave you one moment!—His eyes are shut—O happy age!—

(Ismael falls asleep.)

Sleep, sleep my child, you will not feel your misfortunes, and mine will be alluaged—
(she looks at him attentively.) Alas! how his features are changed! They bear the impression of grief. O my son, if it was not for thee, for thy sorrows which tear my heart, with what courage could I support my fate.—But to hear him complain—to see his falling tears, O Heaven it is a torment I cannot endure, and exhausts all my resolution. How he sleeps!—Poor child!—
(she embraces him,) how I love thee! *(she puts her hand on his forehead.)* His face is burning, the sun strikes upon his head. Alas! even in his sleep he is destined to suffer!—But cannot I form a shelter for him by tying my veil to that branch? *(She tries to draw*

IN THE DESART. 17

she branch to her.) I cannot reach it, I must get up and take off my veil. *(She gets up, and in moving overturns the pitcher and spills the water.)* Gracious God! what have I done?—That pitcher, my only resource, the life of my son!—Ah! wretched woman that I am,—this water might at least have served till to-morrow—before that time, by new attempts we might have discovered some spring!—*(She falls down near her son oppressed with grief.)* Oh, Heaven!—

ISHMAEL, waking.

Mama!—

HAGAR.

O, my son!—

ISHMAEL:

Oh Mama! I burn—I can no longer endure it—a cruel fire consumes me.—

B

H A G A R, *taking him in her arms,
and covering him with her veil.*

O God, have compassion on my distress!—

I S H M A E L.

Mama, I die of thirst; one drop of water
dear mama, and you restore me to life.

H A G A R.

Alas, my son, alas! receive then my last
sigh.—Thou diest, and I the cause;—
pardon me dear child, I follow thee.

I S H M A E L.

Have you then drank all the water Mama?

H A G A R.

What sayest thou?—Great God!—

I S H M A E L.

If there were any remaining, and you felt
what I now feel Mama, I would not drink it.

H A G A R.

My child! can you think me so inhuman?

ISHMAEL.

Alas! my grief and sufferings disturb my reason; pardon me dear Mother.

HAGAR.

I wanted to shelter you from the sun, and rising for that purpose overturned the pitcher. Alas! I have been the cause of your death!—

ISHMAEL.

No Mama,——no——that water would not have saved me.——

HAGAR.

How pale he grows!——My child?

ISHMAEL.

Mama, give me your hand——let me kiss it once more.——

HAGAR.

His hand is cold and trembling.——My child?——He makes no answer!——Ishmael open your eyes.——Once more embrace your unhappy mother——(*She puts her hand upon his heart.*) It still beats.——(*She kneels.*) O Almighty and most gracious God,

to whom all things are possible! O thou the support and protector of the unfortunate, deign to cast an eye of pity upon me.—If it be thy will O God, I submit, but my confidence in thy goodness is equal to my obedience!—Preserve to me the gift thou hast bestowed, or at least O Lord do not condemn me to survive him.—I await thy decree—but it is a father who is to restore him.—

(She sinks down near her son with her face hid.)

(After a long silence.)

(The ANGEL, behind the Scene.)

Hagar?—

H A G A R.

What do I hear? What heavenly voice comes to revive my soul?—

(A sweet symphony heard at a distance.)

Where am I?

(The curtain at the bottom of the stage rises and discovers the Angel sitting upon a cloud with a palm branch in his hand. The scene shifts to a delightful landscape ornamented with fruit and flowers.)

S C E N E II.

The ANGEL, HAGAR, ISHMAEL.

The ANGEL:

Hagar!—

HAGAR:

What do I see! (*She looks steadfastly on her son lying motionless on the ground.*) O, my son!

The ANGEL, *coming forward.*

Hagar!—Dry up your tears.

HAGAR:

My son is then to be restored to me!—
But O heavens! he is still motionless.—
Ishmael!—Ishmael!—He is gone, he
is no more!—(*She rises quickly, and runs to
throw herself at the feet of the Angel.*) Must I
then lose all hope?—

The ANGEL.

Is your faith and confidence equal to your submission, Hagar?

H A G A R, *still at the feet of the Angel.*

Yes, I am resigned.—Alas! if God requires it, I shall even cease to complain. But my courage forsakes me—a dreadful doubt freezes me to the heart.—Is it the will of God to try me, or to weigh me down with sorrow?—

The ANGEL.

Will you without murmuring, sacrifice all that remains to you of this world—that beloved child?

H A G A R.

From the goodness of God I received him—he can withdraw his bounties.—
(*She rises and runs to her son*) My son!—I call upon him in vain. Alas! if he was still alive he would hear me. The voice of his distracted mother would recall his senses. My cries are fruitless; Ishmael cannot answer.—Ishmael! O name hitherto so

IN THE DESART. 23

pleasing to repeat!—O much loved name,
which I shall no longer pronounce without
trembling!—

The ANGEL.

Hagar! Wherefore do you give yourself
up to vain despair—You bewail your son.
He appears dead in your eyes, but do you
doubt of the power of the immortal God?

HAGAR, *raising herself.*

His power!—Ah! undoubtedly he can
do what he pleaseth; he can dry up the
source of my tears; he can restore my son.
—Fool, that I am, I weep, yet God sees
and hears me. Perhaps he is offended with
the excess of my sorrow. That thought op-
presses and rends my heart. O God pardon
my guilty transports, deign to cast a look of
paternal tenderness on this child, that his in-
nocence may plead with thee. O may he
not fall the victim of the faults and frailties
of his unhappy mother. O Heaven, let thy
wrath fall only upon my head, and restore my

son, that he may live, that I may speak to him and hear him; O my God, and with my dying breath I will adore and bless thy justice and thy goodness.

The ANGEL.

Hagar, every thing with which you are now surrounded points out, or portends his infinite goodness; he hath transformed the dreadful desert in which you was sorrowing into a delightful abode. His power and glory shine around you.

H A G A R.

Alas! one object only strikes my sight. I can see nothing but Ishmael deprived of life.

The ANGEL.

O Hagar, be not cast down; thou art faithful and submissive. Have you not the happy privilege to hope for every good. What miracle is impossible to the Supreme Being who sees into your heart. He judges and

IN THE DESART. 25

protects you. He punishes with a sparing hand, and he alone can reward beyond measure.

HAGAR.

O Heaven! What do I hear, what comforting and heavenly language!

The ANGEL.

Open your eyes, and see, O Hagar, the goodness of the Lord working a new miracle for you. *(The Angel touches the earth with the palm branch, and instantly an abundant spring bursts forth.)*

HAGAR.

O my God! such benefits cannot be sent to me in vain; it is thy will that I shall enjoy them; Ishmael shall revive?

The ANGEL, *draws near to Ishmael.*

Hagar, approach!

HAGAR, *running, throws herself upon her knees at the feet of her son.*

O Gracious God! my son! but is not this illusion? his colour returns.—O Heavens! if I deceive myself. *(She takes him by the hand.)*

His hand——is no longer cold.——Ishmael!
O my God! compleat what thou hast begun!—

(After a short silence she looks attentively at her son.)

He opens his eyes, O my son!——I die.

(She sinks upon the ground.)

The ANGEL.

Hagar, Hagar, revive to praise and thank
the Lord.

HAGAR, *recovering.*

Ishmael!

The ANGEL.

Resume your senses Hagar, and look upon
your son.

HAGAR.

My son!——He is restored to me.——Do
I not dream?

ISHMAEL, *raising himself up.*

Ah! I revive.

IN THE DESART. 27

HAGAR.

Oh! my son! my dearest child, come to my arms, come and embrace the happiest of mothers! What do I say——No, let us prostrate ourselves and give thanks to heaven.

ISHMAEL.

Ah mama! What do I not owe to heaven, that has again restored us to each other.

The ANGEL.

From henceforth Hagar enjoy unchangeable happiness. The Lord commanded me to try you, he is satisfied, and all your sorrows are at an end. Educate your child, teach him to be virtuous, and inspire him with the fear, and more especially with the love of the Lord. That is the most pleasing homage which gratitude can offer.

HAGAR.

Ah! can I fail after so many benefits?

The ANGEL.

May your Example Hagar remain a lesson to mankind; may it correct the murmurings of foolish mortals, and teach them to know that God can reward patience, submission, courage and virtue.

T H E E N D.

THE BEAUTY

AND THE

MONSTER;

A COMEDY

In two Acts.

THE BEAUTY

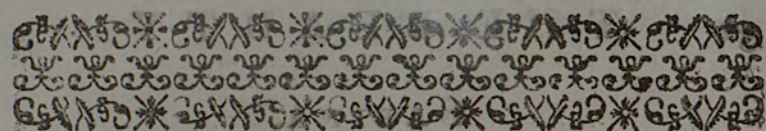
THE PERSONS.

SABINA.

PHEDIM A, *friend of Sabina.*

PHANOR, *a Genius.*

The Scene is in the Palace of the Genius.



THE BEAUTY
AND THE
MONSTER,
A COMEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.

PHANOR, SABINA.

PHANOR *appears holding SABINA by her robe,
while she seems to fly from him, turning away
her head with horror.*

PHANOR.

AH, Sabina! stay I pray you one instant;
deign to hear me but a moment.

SABINA.

Let me go——let me go.

PHANOR.

If you command me, I obey; your least desires are supreme laws for the unfortunate Phanor; but when he presumes for the first time to beg a moment's conversation, will you have the cruelty to refuse?

SABINA, *aside.*

Unfortunate Phanor! how I pity him!

PHANOR, *letting go Sabina's robe.*

Sabina, you are free: I wish not to owe any thing to violence; you may still fly me if you please.

SABINA, *still turning away her head.*

But what have you to say to me?

PHANOR.

O Heavens! you tremble.—My hideous aspect must inspire you with aversion, Sabina! you may hate me, but alas! wherefore should you dread me?

AND THE MONSTER. 33

SABINA.

I do not hate you.

PHANOR.

Well then, my wishes are gratified—the happiness of being beloved is not for me, I do not pretend to it; but learn however, that this horrid figure which you dare not look on, conceals a feeling, delicate and faithful heart.

SABINA, *aside.*

How affecting his voice!—Wherefore must—(*She looks at him and screams with fright.*) Oh Heavens! (*She takes some steps to fly from him.*)

PHANOR, *wishing to stop her.*

Ah Sabina, calm your fears.

SABINA.

In the name of heaven let me go.

(She escapes.)

C

SCENE II.

PHANOR, *alone.*

I began to soften her, her soul was opening to compassion, but a look, a single look has undone all——and can I still continue to hope?——Cruel fairy, thou enjoyest the excess of my sorrow; thy power, superior to mine, has hitherto condemned me to support life under this hideous form, and I cannot resume my original figure, but by making myself beloved, and in this frightful shape gaining a heart which has been hitherto insensible. Ah Sabina! if you knew my secret, or if I was permitted to tell it; but the fatal oracle forbids.——Alas! how unhappy am I, and the greatest, the most cruel part of my sufferings is, loving as no one ever loved before.——

(*He sinks upon a chair oppressed with grief.*)

S C E N E III.

P H E D I M A, P H A N O R.

P H E D I M A, *without being perceived.*
Sabina told me he was here.—Ha, he is fo!

P H A N O R, *raising himself up.*
O Phedima, what is Sabina doing?

P H E D I M A.

I come from her to tell you, that she is exceedingly afflicted at having left you in the hasty rude manner she did.

P H A N O R.

And why did she not come and tell me so herself?

P H E D I M A.

Is that your complaisance to me?

P H A N O R.

Phedima ! I beg your pardon, I per-
C i j

fectly know how much I am indebted to you, alas ! if it was not for you, what would become of me ?

PHEDIMA.

Come, come, I forgive you ; I have no resentment, and to prove it to you, I must tell you, that the short conversation you have just had with Sabina, has worked wonders.

PHANOR.

How can I think so, after the proofs of aversion which she shewed at quitting me ?

PHEDIMA.

But she is sorry for it, is not that a great deal ?

PHANOR.

But she never can get the better of that dread she has in looking at me.

PHEDIMA.

Only think, it is but eight days since you carried us off, and to speak plain, I must say that more than eight days are necessary

AND THE MONSTER. 37

to be reconciled to your figure. If you had not admitted me into your confidence, and won me to your interest a long time before you brought us hither, though I am not so timid as Sabina, I believe I should not have had courage to look at you this moment.

PHANOR.

You have been the friend of Sabina from her infancy; you are acquainted with her heart and her sentiments, tell me then sincerely, charming Phedima, do you think at present, that the hopes you have sometimes given me are not absolutely chimerical?

PHEDIMA.

At this rate I must always repeat the same thing to you. Well then! Sabina has sensibility, a delicate understanding, and a grateful heart: merit and virtue, must make deep impressions upon such a temper as hers, and you have every thing to hope from time.

PHANOR.

But notwithstanding the entertainments and pleasures I procure for her, she seems to be

dissatisfied in this palace.

PHEDIMA.

She is delighted however in being in it. An orphan and tyrannized over by cruel and unjust relations, she was about to be sacrificed to their ambition, when fortunately you came and carried us off.

PHANOR.

Sabina was going to be united with a person who was not worthy of her, and whom she did not esteem; but alas! perhaps since she has seen me, she regrets the loss of him.

PHEDIMA.

You may rest assured that she every instant rejoices at the happiness of having escaped, and yet the object of her hatred possessed all the charms of the most seducing figure; but he was deficient in understanding, and more so in delicacy; he is an ignorant rustic, without one promising quality, and Sabina thought him hateful.

PHANOR.

You know Phedima what are the reasons of my attachment to Sabina; it was not

the charms of her person which produced that sentiment so deeply impressed upon my mind. O happy day, never absent from my thoughts, when by my art, invisible to human eyes, I stopped in that meadow where the young companions of Sabina were celebrating her birth-day. Melancholy had overspread the countenance of your friend, which at first struck me, and melted me into compassion; she withdrew from the crowd, and with you only, sat down at the foot of a palm tree, while she disclosed her mind to you.

P H E D I M A.

And you heard our discourse?

P H A N O R.

I did not lose a single word. Sabina lamented her fate, and the ill-suited match to which her friends obliged her to consent. “ Alas! said she, the authors of my being
“ are now no more. An unhappy orphan,
“ I no longer depend but upon relations who
“ are insensible to my prayers and tears;
“ young and without experience, I ought to

“respect their authority, and the first duty of
 “my age is obedience : I have lost the guides
 “given me by nature, and the law has as-
 “signed others to whom I must submit. If
 “they abuse their power, they will be more
 “to be pitied than I; I shall become their
 “victim, but I shall have done my duty, and
 “surely there are no sorrows, but must find
 “comfort in conscious virtue and inno-
 “cence.”

P H E D I M A.

Sabina said all this ?

P H A N O R.

But in a manner, a thousand times more affecting. A deluge of tears rushed down her cheeks.

P H E D I M A.

Yes, I recollect she was in tears.

P H A N O R.

She then remained some time silent.—

P H E D I M A.

I admire your memory, for in short it

AND THE MONSTER. 41

is two long Months since that conversation, and you remember the smallest circumstances, even the Palm-tree.

PHANOR.

Ah, that Palm-tree, I think I see it still ! it supported Sabina's head ; Sabina's hair touched its bark.

P H E D I M A.

And against what tree did I lean ?

PHANOR.

In the whole meadow I saw but one Palm-tree.

P H E D I M A, *laughing.*

O ! Now you are in fault.—Let us try again ; what did I say to Sabina ?

PHANOR.

Nothing, I believe.

P H E D I M A.

Nothing : Pass two hours with Sabina and not answer her ?—But hush, I hear a noise ; somebody comes.—'tis she.

PHANOR.

It is Sabina, I leave you.

PHEDIMA.

Yes, for a moment, but don't go to a distance, I shall call you back presently.

PHANOR.

Remember Phedima, that I have deposited the dearest interests of my life in your hands.—Farewell, I see Sabina.

(He goes out.)

PHEDIMA *alone.*

Poor Phanor! how affecting his discourse! His goodness, his benevolence and understanding should make his deformity be forgotten.

S C E N E IV.

PHEDIMA, SABINA,

SABINA *(entering in deep thought.)*

Such virtue deserves another fate.

PHEDIMA.

Sabina!

AND THE MONSTER. 43

SABINA.

I did not observe you Phedima.

P H E D I M A.

You are very pensive, deeply engaged.

SABINA.

Yes, I have reason to be so; I was thinking of Phanor.

P H E D I M A.

Well, what then?

SABINA.

Phedima, we have been eight days in this palace, and till now we did not know whose it is.

P H E D I M A.

This palace belongs to Phanor.

SABINA.

Hear me! I just now, for the first time, walked out of the pavilion in which we live, and which is parted from the rest of this vast palace by a large garden; after having crossed it, I found myself in an immense gallery.

Judge of my surprize when I saw a prodigious crowd of men, women, and children, all differently cloathed.

P H E D I M A.

Probably they are the subjects of the Genius.

S A B I N A.

No, I inquired, and am informed they are only travellers.

P H E D I M A.

How travellers !

S A B I N A.

We did not take notice Phedima, of the affecting inscription which Phanor has caused to be engraved over the gate of this palace ; this gate is always open, and you may read over it : *To all the Unhappy.*

P H E D I M A.

O ! all is explained then.

S A B I N A.

If it had not been by chance, I should still have been ignorant of the sacred asylum in which we live : Phanor would never have informed us.

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P H E D I M A.

Sabina, you are in tears!

S A B I N A.

I do not desire to prevent it. Ah, Phanor!
unhappy Phanor! heaven has been unkind
to you!

P H E D I M A.

Must heaven grant every gift? Phanor has
been favoured with virtue and understanding.

S A B I N A.

But that hideous figure!

P H E D I M A.

Sabina, ask the unfortunate inhabitants of
this palace, if that figure which is so disgust-
ing to you, prevents them from loving Phanor.

S A B I N A.

They ought to love him; gratitude should
oblige them.

P H E D I M A.

And you, do you owe nothing to Phanor?
He succours the unfortunate, because he pities

them; your misfortunes likewise drew his attention, and he carried you off that he might rescue you from cruel violence; in short, in becoming acquainted with your virtue, he attaches himself to you, and you cannot love him.——

SABINA.

Alas! I love him when I do not see him.

PHEDIMA.

Such a manner of loving is quite captivating! If he had no other attachment to you but one of those contemptible whims, founded solely on your exterior charms, you would do right to say to him, *my figure pleases you, I am sorry for it, because yours is frightful to me*; he then could not reply; but it is your understanding that pleases him, your disposition which has captivated him. If you were ugly he would still love you.

SABINA.

Ah! If he was only ugly!

PHEDIMA.

In fact he possesses all those qualities by which you have charmed him, but you are

AND THE MONSTER. 47

infensible to them!

SABINA.

Infensible! No I am not; but I never can accustom myself to look at him.

P H E D I M A.

I conceive that at first he terrifies, but when his goodness and gentle temper is known, is it possible to fear him? Besides, though it is true that his figure is very singular, yet I have seen some more disgusting. He does himself justice at least; he is not a fool.

SABINA.

A fool!—how filly you are!

P H E D I M A.

Why should not he be like many others who are scarce more favoured by nature?

SABINA.

You was with him just now, what did he say to you?

P H E D I M A.

That you are the cause of his unhappiness.

SABINA.

That is a great unhappiness to me.

PHEDIMA.

I am certain he is not far off.

SABINA.

Do you think so?

PHEDIMA.

Shall I call him?

SABINA.

I dare not.—

PHEDIMA.

Come, come, how childish!

SABINA.

I think I hear him.

PHEDIMA.

Yes, it is he.—Sabina, you turn pale!

SABINA.

No, no, 'tis nothing——Phedima do not leave me.

PHEDIMA.

Here he comes, I pray you constrain yourself, and remain for a moment.

S C E N E V.

SABINA, PHEDIMA, PHANOR.

(Sabina goes to the opposite side.)

PHANOR, *approaching gently.*

She is going to fly from me again.

PHEDIMA.

Phanor, I was going in search of you.

PHANOR.

I thought I heard my name pronounced,
and——

PHEDIMA.

You tremble, and are speechless.

PHANOR.

I am indeed.

PHEDIMA *looks attentively at Sabina and Phanor.*

This outset promises well, the conversation will be spirited——*(To Sabina.)* If I constrain you, I will withdraw.

D

SABINA, *holding her.*

Ah, Phedima!

PHANOR.

Sabina, say, would you have me retire?

SABINA.

No, do not go away,

PHEDIMA.

Shall we have some entertainment to day?

PHANOR.

I wait Sabina's commands.

SABINA.

I have just now been enjoying the greatest pleasure I have tasted in this palace; you have hitherto deprived me of it Phanor, I must complain.

PHANOR.

Of what?

SABINA.

Can there be a more pleasing entertainment, than to see benevolence assisting the

AND THE MONSTER. 51

unhappy, and to hear gratitude applauding
virtue?

PHANOR.

Can there be a happiness comparable with
that of being approved by——Sabina?

PHEDIMA.

By those we love.

PHANOR.

Phedima, explains what I dare not.

SABINA.

Phanor!—you are too timid.

PHANOR.

Ah Sabina!

PHEDIMA.

Well! why so silent, Phanor?

PHANOR.

What Sabina! do not my ears deceive me?
my sentiments are not hateful to you! you
allow us then to take the liberty of declaring
them?

SABINA.

Let me never be accused of ingratitude.

D ij

PHANOR.

Alas! I accuse only my unhappy fate.

PHEDIMA.

Now we are fallen back to our former sadness—*(low to Sabina)* Speak to him. Come, make an effort; at least look at him.

PHANOR.

O heavens! what do you say Phedima? No Sabina, do not look at me; I shall lose all my happiness.

SABINA, *looks at him with timidity, and then upon the ground.*

You see Phanor that you are unjust.

PHANOR.

Ah, may you still prove it to me! *(He approaches towards Sabina; she starts, and takes some steps to fly from him; he draws back, and Sabina remains motionless.*

PHEDIMA, *after a short silence.*

They are both astonished.—Well Phanor, I who have no dread of you, desire

AND THE MONSTER. 53

you will give me your arm, and conduct me to the play. You promised me an entertainment, and positively I must have it; come along——

PHANOR.

Sabina, you may follow your friend without fear, I shall remain here.

P H E D I M A.

By no means, you must do the honours of the entertainment, for my part I insist upon it: you carried me off as well as Sabina, I was as unhappy as she, so that I have the same title to your complaisance.—Besides, I think I deserve some little preference; you do not appear handsome in my eyes, but I think you truly amiable. (*She takes hold of his arm*) Sabina, will you come with us? Why don't you answer? O you are in the pouts.

SABINA, *Aside.*

How she teazes me!

D iij

PHEDIMA.

Adieu, Sabina.

SABINA *vexed*.

Since I incommode you, I pray you go
Phedima——go Phanor.

PHANOR *quitting Phedima's arm*.

O heaven Sabina, can you believe it?——

PHEDIMA.

What means this? I never saw you in
these whims before.——Come, come, what
is here to do! Will you go to the play, for
my part I will not lose it for your fancy.

SABINA.

Yes, I will go——if Phanor will go too.

PHANOR.

Ah, Sabina! I am sensible of the value of
such goodness, but to profit by it would be
perhaps to abuse it.——Pardon me, I can
see into your heart, though I have done no-
thing for you, yet you imagine you owe me

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gratitude; you strive to combat the just dread which my countenance inspires, but I suffer much more from your uneasiness than my own, and I cannot endure the constraint you impose upon yourself. You reign here, you are the only sovereign of this palace; rule over all in it, and fly me; if you are free and content, Phanor will be too happy.

SABINA.

Thou most generous of men! How contemptible should I be in my own eyes, if from henceforth I could look upon you with uneasiness.—No Phanor, gratitude can never be a painful duty to the heart of Sabina.

P H E D I M A.

Very well, let us begone, we will finish this conversion at the play. (*She takes Phanor by the arm.*) Sabina, if you want a conductor, Phanor can——

P H A N O R.

O heavens! take care what you say.

D iij

SABINA *looking at Phanor, with timidity, but without terror.*

Phanor will you give me your arm.

PHANOR.

Ah! if you pity me, if you are concerned for me, I repeat it to you, I presume to beg, Sabina, you will not constrain yourself on my account.

SABINA *taking him by the arm.*

Well I obey you, it is without struggle or constraint.

PHANOR.

Ah Sabina, would to heaven you could read what passes in my heart!

PHEDIMIA.

You will give us an account of that at the play; come, let us go (*Aside in going out.*)
Thank heaven Sabina begins to be reconciled to him.

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

SCENE FIRST.

SABINA, PHEDIMA.

PHEDIMA.

You must allow that it is impossible to be more pleasing, more interesting.

SABINA.

I shall never recover from my surprize; I could not have thought it possible for me to have accustomed myself to his figure.

PHEDIMA.

That is quite natural; you would not hear him; you could not therefore know either the excellence of his disposition, nor the charms of his conversation.

SABINA.

He has such goodness, such delicacy—He

has even something very agreeable in his manner.—How affecting the sound of his voice!

P H E D I M A.

So then you are no longer afraid?

S A B I N A.

I esteem him too much to fear him—but that concern with which he inspires me, makes me feel something sad and painful, which I cannot describe. Yesterday I had only that compassion for him which is due to the unfortunate, and I was grieved for his hard fate; but that pity did not occasion the melancholy which engrosses all my thoughts at present; I think of him in spite of me, and I cannot think of him but with inexpressible sorrow.

P H E D I M A.

This is very extraordinary—yesterday he was much to be pitied, and to-day that you behave well to him, he is satisfied. Why then does your pity increase when his sorrows are lessened?

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SABINA.

There is an idea presents itself incessantly to my imagination and torments me.—It is impossible to see him for the first time without astonishment and terror.

PHEDIMA.

Well, what is it to him, if you have entirely got the better of that first impression?

SABINA.

I wish to have justice done him; I am grieved to think that the aspect of such a virtuous benevolent being, should inspire more dread and terror, than the sight of one of those savage animals in whom a blind ferocity is their sole instinct.—This is a dreadful idea, and I cannot think of it without shuddering.

PHEDIMA.

But if you determine to remain in this palace, Phanor never will leave it; he will see you only, and for your sake will renounce all the world.

SABINA.

I do not yet know what my destiny may be; I do not know Phedima, whether I ought to accept for life the asylum that is afforded us in this place.

PHEDIMA.

And if you leave it, what will become of you?

SABINA.

I do not know. But it must be friendship, and not necessity, that can make me determine to remain here.

PHEDIMA.

But will Phanor consent to separate himself from you.

SABINA.

Phanor is too generous to make any attempt upon our liberty.

PHEDIMA.

For my part, I find myself so well here, that I am greatly inclined to remain.

SABINA.

What, Phedima, without me?

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P H E D I M A.

I shall remain to console Phanor.

S A B I N A.

Console him?

P H E D I M A.

I have sensibility, he is grateful; my friendship will atone for your ingratitude, and in this manner, my dear Sabina, I shall make amends for your injustice, so you need not constrain yourself.

S A B I N A:

How different are our tempers, Phedima, every thing affords you a subject of raillery.

P H E D I M A.

By no means; I do not rally.

S A B I N A.

I thought you did——let us break off this conversation——(*aside.*) I do not know what is the matter with me; I find myself out of humour——

P H E D I M A.

You seem thoughtful.

SABINA.

Very true, I am so.

PHEDIM A.

Do you wish to be alone ?

SABINA.

Just as you please.

PHEDIM A.

Adieu till evening, Sabina.

SABINA.

Where are you going ?

PHEDIM A.

For my part I am not thoughtful, I love to chat. I'll go and find Phanor.

SABINA.

As you think proper—but I hope you will not acquaint him with the conversation we have had just now.

PHEDIM A.

O I am discreet, I promise you I will not mention it.

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SABINA.

That is all I desire——But what will you say to him then?

PHEDIMA.

You are very curious.

SABINA.

What, is it a mystery?

PHEDIMA.

Perhaps.

SABINA.

O, I have no desire to discover it, I assure you.

PHEDIMA.

If that is the case, I shall be silent.

SABINA *aside*.

I can hold no longer.

PHEDIMA.

Farewell Sabina, when your reverie is over you will call me.—(*Aside.*) I will now go to Phanor, and give him some useful advice. (*She goes out*).

S C E N E II.

SABINA *alone, after a short silence.*

I could restrain myself no longer, I am glad she is gone.—And is this Phedima? Is this the affectionate friend which was always so ready to sacrifice every thing to my happiness? What an astonishing change! It seems she prefers Phanor to me.—I feel myself quite oppressed.—(*She sits down*) My heart is filled with bitter affliction, and I cannot myself unravel what passes there.—I really do not know.—Yes, I will leave this palace.—Phedima may remain without me.—But to-morrow, perhaps this very day, I withdraw from hence, never to return. Phedima will console Phanor, they will both forget me, and after all, I shall be the only one to be pitied.—Alas! I deserved another fate; I deserved other friends.—I have known misfortune, but I never suffered what I endure at present. I am frightened at the thought of it.—Somebody comes. O heavens! 'tis Phanor.—(*She falls back upon a chair.*)

S C E N E III

P H A N O R, S A B I N A.

P H A N O R *aside.*

I will follow Phedima's advice, and see what effect pity can have upon a heart of such sensibility. (*He makes some steps forward, and stops.*) Sabina, will you give me leave to approach?

S A B I N A *rising.*

Yes, come Phanor, I want to speak with you a moment.

P H A N O R.

What have you to say to me? Sabina, what are your commands?

S A B I N A.

(*Aside*) I cannot speak to him; I feel myself abashed: (*aloud*) Phanor I am afraid to distress you; there is a question I dare not ask.

P H A N O R.

Would to heaven I could divine what you wish, Sabina, your desires should be prevented.

E

I am attached to you by the sincerest gratitude—but after all, I cannot promise you I will always remain in this palace.—Phanor will you leave me at liberty to quit it?

PHANOR.

I understand you, and I will not complain of the severe destiny which I see awaits me. This palace, open to the unhappy, is an asylum, not a prison; you are not only at liberty, but you reign in it. I am nothing here but an unfortunate wretch, submissive to whatever laws you please to dictate, and ready to banish myself from hence for your satisfaction; but I beg at least you will do justice to my sentiments, and not consider me either as a tyrant or a ravisher.

SABINA.

You a tyrant, you Phanor, O Heaven, do you think me capable of entertaining the least doubt of your generosity. Alas! I may be at variance with myself, I may be incon-

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sistent and irresolute ; but no Phanor, I never can be unjust to you.

PHANOR.

Know then all my soul ; I am but too sensible of the effect which my presence must produce ; I know the invincible obstacle which a dreadful deformity opposes to my happiness ; I never entertained the foolish hope of its being in my power to please you, and engage you to unite your destiny to mine : I have merited your esteem, that is sufficient, and after having obtained the only good that I could presume to expect, I ought to forget myself, and think only of you.

SABINA.

You terrify me ; to what does this discourse lead ?——Phanor, what is your purpose ?

PHANOR.

To make you absolute mistress of your destiny, and to free you for ever from what can either constrain or displease you. Re-

ceive this box, it contains a precious ring, by putting it upon your finger, you will find yourself transported to whatever place you choose, and there, by the power of this same ring, every thing you wish will be realised; palaces, gardens, containing whatever is most beautiful in art or nature, of which you will be the sole mistress.

SABINA.

Take back your gifts, and deign to allow me to remain with you.

PHEDIMAS.

No, do not despise the last homage—of so sincere a passion. Farewel, Sabina, think sometimes on the unhappy Phanor.

(He goes out.)

SABINA, *alone.*

Stop, stop—he escapes from me; Phanor, Phanor; I call in vain—O Heavens! a secret terror freezes my senses, and renders me motionless—*his last homage*, what means that mysterious expression?—What did he intend to say?—I shudder—some con-

AND THE MONSTER. 69

fused ideas have suddenly started to disturb my brain.—Perhaps this box which he has left in spite of me, contains an explanation of those forebodings which oppress me—I dare not open it. (*She lays it on the table.*) Ah! let me run to find Phanor, he alone can extricate me from my distress.

S C E N E IV.

P H E D I M A S A B I N A.

P H E D I M A.

Sabina, where are you running?

S A B I N A.

Ah! Phedima, have you seen Phanor?

P H E D I M A.

I have just left him.

S A B I N A.

Well then?

P H E D I M A.

I know what present he has made you,

and I come to ask what use you intend to make of it. I met Phanor distracted, out of his mind; the wildness of his manner frightened me; I wanted to speak with him, he shunned me, he fled from me, and quitted the palace in bidding me a sorrowful adieu.

SABINA.

What do I hear, O Heavens!—he has left the palace?—Where is he?

PHEDIMA.

How do I know?

SABINA.

A thought strikes me. With that ring which he left me, I can transport myself to wherever he is—and there I wish to be. (*She takes the box and opens it.*) Here is the ring;—But what is this I see? writing.

PHEDIMA.

That writing will inform you of his destiny.

SABINA.

Ah! Phedima, I tremble.—

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P H E D I M A.

Come, read.

S A B I N A.

Alas! What am I to learn from this?
(She reads it aloud.) “ I wish to free you
“ from a hateful object, I know that my
“ presence must be disagreeable to you, and
“ I cannot endure life absent from you, I
“ therefore renounce it without reluctance.
“ Farewell Sabina, receive the last adieu of
“ the faithful and affectionate Phanor.”
(Sabina having read it.) Oh! I die. *(She faints in the arms of Phedima.)*

P H E D I M A.

Oh Heavens what do I see! Sabina, Sabina!

S A B I N A.

He is no more—leave me Phedima, your
cares are vain. Life is hateful.—At last,
when too late, I find in my heart.—O
Phanor, I have dug your grave and my own.
The wretched Sabina will immediately fol-
low you. Yes Phanor, I loved you; I can-

not exist without you. (*While she pronounces these last words, soft music is heard behind the stage.*) What do I hear? (*The music continues.*)

(*The scene changes, and Phanor appears at the bottom, in his proper figure, seated on a throne of flowers.*)

SABINA.

Where am I? What object is this I see?



S C E N E V.

SABINA, PHEDIMA, PHANOR.

PHANOR *running to throw himself at the feet of Sabina.*

Ah Sabina, my dear Sabina, recollect Phanor by the excess of his tenderness.

SABINA.

Phanor, O Heavens!

PHANOR.

The oracle is fulfilled, I resume my original form, and it is to Sabina I owe my life and my happiness.

SABINA.

Ah! Phanor, how pleasing to dedicate our life to him, for whom we would sacrifice it.

PHEDIMA.

What a happy day!

SABINA.

My dear Phedima, you increase our happiness by sharing it,

PHANOR.

And I,——what do I not owe her?

P H E D I M A.

Be always happy, and all my wishes will be gratified. (*She addresses herself to the audience.*) Ye feeling virtuous hearts, never complain of your fate, and may this example teach you to know, that goodness and benevolence are the surest means of pleasing, and the only claims to love.

T H E E N D.

THE PHIALS,

A

COMEDY.

In one Act.

T H E P E R S O N S .

T H E F A I R Y .

M E L I N D A .

C L A R A .

E L I Z A .

The Scene is the Palace of the Fairy.



THE PHIALS,
A COMEDY.

SCENE FIRST.

THE FAIRY, MELINDA.

THE FAIRY.

MY dear Melinda, for these three months since I saw you, the children whom you entrusted to my care, have given me a great deal of vexation.

MELINDA.

What, my daughters?

THE FAIRY.

Don't frighten yourself, the evil is not

without remedy ; you know that I presided at their birth, but as my power is limited, I had but one gift to bestow upon them : it was left to my choice and I did not hesitate, I gave them tender grateful hearts.—

MELINDA.

That was equally to serve them and yourself ; for such a gift is worth all other gifts.

THE FAIRY.

I repent not of what I have done ; virtue is preferable to beauty, but even virtue without a good heart is of little value. But to be happy, to be loved, a feeling heart is not sufficient. I have consulted the fates for the sake of your daughters, and I observed, that the happiness of both depends entirely on their preferring the qualities of the heart and understanding, to all the advantages of figure.

MELINDA.

They are educated by you, therefore I have

nothing to fear.

THE FAIRY.

I give all possible attention to their education, but I must own to you, they do not keep pace with my wishes. Clara is gentle, and has a happy genius to learn, but she is conceited, indolent, and seldom gives application.

MELINDA.

And her sister?

THE FAIRY.

Eliza has candour, sensibility and gaiety, but she is giddy, trifling, and violent; added to this, they already have a great share of vanity; they have been told they are handsome, and instead of receiving such a compliment as a common civility, they have taken it for a truth. They are not disagreeable, but they are very far from being beauties.— Judge then what they prepare for themselves!

MELINDA.

My God! What have they to be vain of?

80 THE PHIALS.

They have great defects from nature, and to you they owe every advantage they possess.

THE FAIRY.

However I have been perfectly satisfied with them these two months; I have found a method of humbling and punishing them.

MELINDA.

How?—

THE FAIRY.

I made them believe that I had rendered them hideous, and by my art I fascinated their eyes in such a manner, that either in looking at themselves in a glass, or at one another, they found they were frightful: I cautioned all who were about them, and every moment for the few first days, it was constantly repeated to them that they were dreadfully ugly; they at first cried bitterly, the youngest especially, Eliza, was quite inconsolable. I comforted them, and told them that the

only thing they could do was to make their deformity be forgotten by their good qualities, their virtues and their talents; they believed me, and—but hush, I hear a noise, certainly 'tis the girls coming in search of you; I leave you together; farewell, do not forget to confirm them in their error.

(She goes out.)

S C E N E II.

MELINDA, CLARA, ELIZA. *The girls remain at the door hiding their faces.*

MELINDA.

Poor little dears, they dare not come forward, they are afraid, I shall be shocked at the sight of them.

CLARA, *weeping.*

Come sister, there is no help for it, she must see us.

ELIZA.

Do you go first.

F

CLARA.

I dare not.

MELINDA *aside*.

I must pretend not to know them. (*aloud*.)
Why don't my children come, I must go and
find them.—

CLARA.

Do you hear that Eliza?—

ELIZA.

I find that the Fairy has not acquainted her
with our misfortune.—

CLARA.

She looks at us without knowing us.

ELIZA.

How can she, since we are so changed?

[CLARA,

Cruel Fairy!—

MELINDA *approaching, and addressing herself to
them.*

Who are you? What do you want?

(Clara and Eliza draw near both weeping.)

M E L I N D A.

What strange figures !

C L A R A *to Eliza.*

Do you see how we terrify her ?

E L I Z A.

We are much to be pitied.

C L A R A.

Ah ! I have never been so grieved at being
frightful as now.

M E L I N D A.

I pray you young ladies, tell me, who are
you ?

C L A R A and E L I Z A *throwing themselves at
her feet.*

Ah mama !——

M E L I N D A.

What do I hear ?

C L A R A.

Yes mama, we are your children.

You! good God!

ELIZA.

Dear mama, pray acknowledge us, for notwithstanding our frightful change, our hearts are still the same.

MELINDA *raising them.*

That is sufficient: I pity you for a misfortune which however may easily be borne, and you may be persuaded I shall not love you less.

ELIZA.

What excellent goodness!

CLARA.

Well then, I am comforted.

MELINDA.

Come and embrace me my dear children; be but amiable, gentle and virtuous. and you will have no occasion to regret the trifling charms which you now want.

C L A R A.

Mama, I am Clara.

E L I Z A *sighing*.

And I Eliza.

M E L I N D A.

I distinguished both of you by your voices.

C L A R A.

The Fairy then did not tell you any thing?

M E L I N D A.

She concealed your ugliness from me ; she only informed me that you had given her great cause to be displeas'd with you, but for these two months she was delighted with your conduct.

E L I Z A.

We become accustom'd to every thing : for my part, I am reconcil'd to my figure ; the time which I spent at my toilet, I employ now in reading, and playing on the harpsichord.—

MELINDA.

That is what you must have done, if you had been beauty itself,

CLARA.

We daily repeat to ourselves, that we have only lost a little sooner what we must necessarily have lost in course of time, and thereby gained reflexion and instruction, which perhaps we should never have known but for the change.

MELINDA.

That is a most happy way of thinking.

ELIZA.

It is much more agreeable to please by the charms of the temper and understanding, than by those of the person; and if I can attain to the power of pleasing as I now am, I shall be more delighted than if I was still handsome.

MELINDA.

Still handsome!—Did you really think you was ever handsome Eliza?

ELIZA.

I may now tell what I thought, for it is like speaking of another person.

MELINDA.

Let me hear then?

ELIZA.

Well mama, though my features were not regular, I was very agreeable, and really handsome.

MELINDA.

My dear child, you are mistaken; you was not ugly, but your figure was exceedingly ordinary.

ELIZA.

You say so to lessen my regret, indeed mama, you are very good.—

MELINDA.

No indeed, I suppose you are so reasonable as not to have any regret. And Clara, did you think you was charming too?

CLARA.

O no mama, but—

Go on.

CLARA.

I thought my features more regular than agreeable, and I should rather have preferred my sister's.

MELINDA.

Very well, you thought you was handsome: truly my children you were both fools—— my dear girls you had both of you figures that were passable, rather good than bad, that is all.

ELIZA.

That is not what we were told.

MELINDA.

When you are better acquainted with the world, my children, you will know how much their praises are to be depended on.

CLARA.

If the world is a liar I shall not love it.

M E L I N D A.

You must know the world, and distrust yourself; but you should not hate it, because, you are to live in it; and you ought to make yourself esteemed in the world, because you will be judged by it.

E L I Z A.

If the world is deceitful, I will fly from it.

M E L I N D A.

It deceives only those silly fools who are blinded by vanity. It is sometimes unjust, but it recovers from its prejudices; it has more of levity than wickedness, and is more trifling than dangerous: in short, it is not contemptible, for it always honours and respects virtue, and even in tolerating vice, exposes and punishes it. The greater the number of people collected together, the more faults and irregularities will be found; therefore, in suffering from those of the world, we should excuse them.

E L I Z A.

That requires great generosity!

MELINDA.

It requires only justice. Are you without faults? Do not you need the indulgence of others? You ought certainly to be prepared to grant what you yourself require.

ELIZA.

I have great faults, but I am only a child, and will diligently endeavour to correct them.

MELINDA.

Indulgence is of the number of the virtues, and stamps a value upon all the rest; so of course, perfection even does not excuse you from it, but quite the contrary.

CLARA.

It seems to me likewise, that it is much better to be silent, than to make ourselves uneasy; we should detest wickedness, and shut our eyes as much as possible against that which we cannot prevent.

MELINDA.

A want of indulgence is always accompa-

nied with contention and ill-nature; let us shun the wicked, but let us pity them, and learn to live with them, if it must be our fate. They are rather deserving of compassion than contempt.

C L A R A.

Pray Mama, explain to me what it is to be wicked, for I do not rightly understand it.

M E L I N D A.

My dear, what is meant by a wicked person, is one who has a bad heart, incapable of any sort of tenderness, that loves nothing.

C L A R A.

Ah Mama! you are right to say that they are to be pitied. They can never be happy.

M E L I N D A.

Wicked people are rarely to be met, though wickedness is common, and is usually the effect of a want of understanding, idleness, and levity.

E L I Z A.

What! can they be guilty of wickedness without being wicked?

MELINDA.

That happens every day. With good hearts and many amiable qualities, there are people who suffer themselves to be led into most guilty errors.

ELIZA.

But how mama?

MELINDA.

By faults trivial in appearance, but dreadful in their consequences: by ill-founded vanity, giddiness.—

ELIZA.

Giddiness! Ah mama you make me shudder. What, I may one day—O sister, let us correct ourselves.

MELINDA.

Nothing is more easy; you need only to reflect, and have a sincere desire to amend.

CLARA.

O! I will apply without intermission.

M E L I N D A.

Such attention, my children, will secure both your happiness and mine. But who is this coming to interrupt us. Ha! it is the Fairy.

S C E N E III.

The FAIRY, MELINDA, CLARA,
ELIZA.

M E L I N D A.

Come, Madam, and receive my best thanks; I am delighted with Clara and Eliza; they are indebted to you for a degree of reason and sensibility, which makes me very happy.

The FAIRY.

I am happy to find you are pleased.

M E L I N D A.

I am chiefly so from their promises, and the hopes they give me of their correcting all their faults.

The FAIRY.

Well, I am ready here to offer them a sure and speedy means.

MELINDA.

What is it?

CLARA and ELIZA.

O say what is it?

The FAIRY.

Hear me attentively: To rid you of a ridiculous vanity, my dear children, I have been obliged to render both of you frightful. Of all advantages beauty is the least valuable, though I own that to have a disgusting figure is disagreeable; however, if I can give you every virtue, and all the charms of understanding for your portion, you will have made a good exchange. But I mean to leave all to your own choice, and therefore come to make you the following offer. I have compounded for each of you, two phials, which contain a divine essence, the one of which

Will carry off your deformity and restore you to your former looks; or, the other will bestow upon you every quality of the heart and understanding, in which you are deficient. But you must choose one of them, for I cannot give you both; my power does not extend so far.

E L I Z A.

What a pity!

The F A I R Y.

Here are the phials——(*She takes the phials out of a box.*) This one, of a rose colour, will, by drinking it, make your ugliness disappear; and in like manner, the white will make you perfect.

M E L I N D A.

Well, what say you?

C L A R A.

Mama, 'tis you should advise us.

The F A I R Y.

No, no; you must decide for yourselves.

ELIZA.

Let me see that rose-coloured one.

MELINDA.

Eliza.—

The FAIRY to *Melinda*.

I pray you be silent.

ELIZA.

I only wanted to look at it. (*The Fairy gives her the phial.*) How agreeable it smells!

The FAIRY.

We will leave you by yourselves to consult together, and in half an hour shall return to know your answer.

CLARA.

Ah!—do not leave us.

The FAIRY.

It is absolutely necessary, we must not constrain you.

ELIZA.

If we drink both phials?

The FAIRY.

It will have no effect, the mixture will destroy their virtues. Here Clara, here are your two phials; and Eliza, here are yours. Adieu.

ELIZA.

The rose colour will restore our original form.

The FAIRY.

They are properly marked, so that you cannot mistake in case you determine before our return. Come let us leave them.

MELINDA.

My dear Clara; my dear Eliza!——

The FAIRY *to Melinda.*

Come, once more, follow me (*She says to Melinda aside in going out.*) One moment longer, and you would have spoiled my experiment. (*They go out.*)

G

SCENE IV.

CLARA, ELIZA.

CLARA, after a short silence.

Well sister!

ELIZA.

Well Clara!

CLARA.

What shall we do?

ELIZA.

We must reflect on what we are about.
*(They both sit down and place their phials on
little table.)*

CLARA.

The Fairy herself owns, it is a great mis-
fortune to have a disgusting figure.

ELIZA.

And alas we are frightful!——

CLARA.

What then?

ELIZA.

The hazard is great—Here is a looking-glass upon this table.

CLARA.

I'll lay a wager that is a malicious trick of the Fairy. A looking-glass at present is only a dangerous temptation, Eliza, let us not look in it.

ELIZA.

That is a delightful scruple; it is always good to have a looking-glass to consult.
(She places the looking-glass upon the table.)

CLARA.

Let us only consult our reason.

ELIZA.

We should hear the opinions of all the world. *(She looks at herself in the glass.)*
What a figure!

CLARA.

Ah Sister, you are going to choose the rose-coloured Phial.

ELIZA *still looking at herself.*

I never saw my ugliness so extraordinary, so hideous.—certainly Clara, yours is not so disagreeable.

CLARA.

Till now you seemed to me to think quite the contrary.

ELIZA.

That was because I did not examine myself attentively. I only do myself justice; surely your figure is not so shocking as mine.

CLARA.

What an idea!

ELIZA.

In the first place you are not near so crooked as I am.

CLARA.

I don't think so.

ELIZA *still looking at herself.*

I am by far worse coloured than you are.

CLARA.

I dont see that.

ELIZA.

But look, examine both our figures in the glafs, and you will allow it.

CLARA *leans and looks at herself.*

Oh, I am a thousand times more frightful than you.

ELIZA.

How fhall we decide, Sifter?

CLARA.

I do not know——this glafs has unfettled all my ideas. (*She looks again.*)

ELIZA.

The Fairy might very well fay that it is impoffible with fuch countenances ever to appear in the world.

CLARA.

Under fuch a difguffing exterior who will ever look for underftanding or a good difpofition.

ELIZA.

We and our internal perfections will be left to take care of ourselves.

CLARA.

Besides, cannot we correct our faults ourselves, without the help of the white phial? 'Tis true, it will not be so speedily.

ELIZA.

But we need not be in such a hurry.—

CLARA.

To be sure we are very young.

ELIZA.

Come, come, let us no longer hesitate.
(*She takes the rose-coloured phial.*) Here fister.

CLARA.

Give it me—

ELIZA uncorks hers, and Clara sinks into a reverie.

Clara, what stops you?

CLARA.

Eliza !

ELIZA.

What is the matter with you, you tremble ?

CLARA.

Ah, sister, what are we going to do ?

ELIZA.

You cannot determine for yourself, come then, I will set you the example.

CLARA *snatching the phial from her.*

No, dear Eliza, you should take it from me, I am oldest.

ELIZA.

And I the most reasonable.

CLARA.

Hear me, I pray you : If we prefer that phial, we shall distress mama.

ELIZA.

Ah, if I thought so, I would rather break it.

CLARA.

Well sister, you may depend upon it; I observed her anxiety when she left us; she trembled for fear we should make an imprudent choice.

ELIZA.

Indeed I recollect the last look she cast upon us at parting; it was very tender and melancholy.

CLARA.

That look should teach us our duty, we must follow it.

ELIZA.

Our deformity is not so grievous, as our mama is dear to us.

CLARA.

She and the fairy only desire our happiness.

ELIZA taking the phials.

Let us sacrifice ourselves for her; here dear Clara,

CLARA *taking the phial.*

I no longer hesitate to choose this.

(They both drink.)

ELIZA *after having drank.*

Now I have accomplished it.

CLARA *looking at her sister.*

What do I see!—

ELIZA.

Ah sister, you have resumed your original figure.

CLARA.

And so have you!—My God, can we have mistaken the Phials.

SCENE V.

The FAIRY, MELINDA, CLARA, ELIZA.

THE FAIRY.

Take courage my dear children, come and embrace us.

MELINDA *embracing them.*

Clara! Eliza!—how I love you!

CLARA.

Then we are happy.—But by what prodigy did the white phial—

THE FAIRY.

After the decision which you have just made, we must not look upon you as children. I shall no longer deceive you; all that has happened to you, was done only to try you. Your affection for your mother and me, has got the better of your vanity; such a sacrifice was the work of reason and sentiment, and you may judge whether

or not we esteem it, and if our hearts are sensible of its full value.

E L I Z A.

But shall we always have the same faults.

M E L I N D A.

In choosing the white phial it was almost a proof that you did not need it.

CLARA *to Melinda and the Fairy.*

You are satisfied; then we ought to be so.

M E L I N D A.

You have got rid of your deformity, and you are dearer to us than ever; this is what you have gained by your good conduct. Never forget my children, that in every event in life, the most worthy and virtuous resolution is always the best and most certain of success.

T H E E N D.

A COMEDY

which we often find in our hearts and in
the eyes of the world.

ACT I

But still we always have the same feeling.

In choosing the right path I was almost
a moment ago and did not realize it.

CHARACTER NAMES and the Play.

Let us be satisfied; then we ought to be so.

ACT II

You have got rid of your doubts, and
return about to us that every day is what
you have found by your good conduct.
Do not forget my children, that in every case
in life the most useful and virtuous way
is to be honest, the best and most certain of

THE END

T H E

H A P P Y I S L A N D,

A

C O M E D Y.

In two Acts.

THE PERSONS.

ASTERIA, *the brilliant Fairy.*

MELISSA, *the benevolent Fairy, her sister.*

The Princess ROSALIDA, *Pupil of Asteria.*

The Princess CLARINDA, *Pupil of Melissa.*

LAMIA, *Princess Rosalida's maid.*

The Scene is in a Palace.



T H E
H A P P Y I S L A N D,
A C O M E D Y.

A C T I.

S C E N E F I R S T.

L A M I A.

WHAT a racket in this palace! all the world are impatiently waiting the close of this day, which must decide the fate of the Happy Island: the people are anxious, they are inquisitive, and I believe the fairies and the young princesses are in violent agitation. For my part, being engaged these three days in

the service of the Princess Rosalida all my wishes are in her favour, however I dont know if she will prevail over Clarinda.—It is said that Rosalida has a good understanding, accomplishments, and a superior degree of merit; but she is haughty and capricious: she is flattered, and praised, and perhaps admired, but Clarinda is beloved, and I am afraid.—I hear some one coming. O'tis my young mistress.

SCENE II.

ROSALIDA, LAMIA.

At last I have got away from that tiresome crowd which has been distracting me these two hours.—Ha! Lamia are you here?

LAMIA.

Well madam is the hour for the coronation fixed?

ROSALIDA.

Yes, the Queen of the Happy Island will be proclaimed at six o'clock this evening.—

LAMIA *kissing the bottom of Rosalida's robe.*

Let me then be the first to pay her homage.

ROSALIDA.

What folly Lamia.—Do you not know that my fate is uncertain, and that Clarinda may be crowned?—

LAMIA.

I know madam that your pretensions are the same, but your titles are different.

ROSALIDA.

No, you deceive yourself; the deceased queen of this island, on her death-bed, appointed as regents of her dominions, the two fairies who have bred up Clarinda and me; while she begged them to take charge of our education, she, at the same time desired, that when we should have attained the age decreed by the laws, they would form council of the old men and sages of the island, who by a plurality of voices, should choose the one of the two whom they deemed the most worthy of being elected queen.

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LAMIA.

But madam, have you not a nearer claim to the throne by your birth?

ROSALIDA.

No, the claims of Clarinda in this respect are likewise the same; we were both related to the deceased queen, but in so distant a degree, that the proofs of each party were equally obscure. The queen having no other heirs, did not choose to decide between us, but by the prudent dispositions of which I have just now given you the particulars, she found means to settle a just precedence, since she has only left her dominions to the one who shall be found most worthy to govern.

LAMIA.

Ah, madam, how happy for you was such a——!

ROSALIDA.

Very well Lamia, I forgive you that stroke of flattery, it is not ill turned; but don't have

recourse to it too frequently ; for praises have not always the gift of pleasing me ; however I own I love flattery, but I warn you before hand, that I am very hard to be pleased.

L A M I A.

In presuming to offer them, it is not intentionally ; they escape, and therefore you should excuse it.

R O S A L I D A.

Lamia, you don't want for sense, I perceive that we may agree.—Have you seen the Fairy to day ?

L A M I A.

No madam, she is so busy preparing for the coronation.—It is for you she is employed.—

R O S A L I D A.

There will be a great many entertainments.—I am tired of entertainments.

L A M I A.

It is true, the fairy every day endeavours

H ij

to procure you some new amusement; she loves you excessively!—but that is so natural!—

ROSALIDA *aside*.

Again!—I begin to tire of this eternal insipidity, (*aloud*) Lamia, leave me. (*Lamia moves to the bottom of the stage where she remains.*)

ROSALIDA.

I dismissed Zelis because I found her giddy; I could not keep Fatima, Zerbina, nor Zirphy—and I begin already to be dissatisfied with Lamia—is the fault in me or in them?—To see constantly new faces, without being able to engage the affections of one!—Alas! notwithstanding all the cares of the fairy, I feel that I am not happy.—(*She sits down upon a chair and falls into a reverie.*)

LAMIA, *approaches softly and says*:

Madam!—

ROSALIDA.

What; what do you want?—

L A M I A.

I thought you called me.

R O S A L I D A.

No, I did not call; but stay.—Go and bring my harp.—Stop, I will rather read.—Lamia, have you any accomplishments?—

L A M I A.

I could draw and sing formerly, and I plainly tell you with such success, that I fancied I had attained the greatest perfection.

R O S A L I D A.

Well.—

L A M I A.

Ah madam, I have been undeceived since I have had the happiness to be with you.

R O S A L I D A.

Have you seen the last drawing I gave the Fairy?—

L A M I A.

Alas, madam! yes I have seen it; the
Hij

Fairy has caused it to be put up in the grand gallery : I spent two hours in examining it this morning, and on returning to my chamber, I threw all my sketches, crayons and pencils in the fire.

ROSALIDA.

Some verses, pretty enough, have been made upon that drawing, have you seen them?—

LAMIA.

Yes madam, but I do not like them; it is true that I am never satisfied with the encomiums made upon you; I always find there is something wanting.—But the door opens, 'tis certainly the brilliant Fairy Aferia; yes, 'tis she.

ROSALIDA *going to meet the Fairy.*

Lamia, leave us ———

LAMIA *aside in going out.*

I pray Heaven that Rosalida may be queen, she loves flattery; I have discovered her weak side, and I am sure from henceforth, of governing her as I please. (*She goes out.*)

S C E N E III

THE FAIRY ASTERIA, ROSALIDA.

A S T E R I A:

What is the matter with you my dear Rosalida, you seem melancholy!

R O S A L I D A.

I own to you Madam, I am a little out of humour at present.——

A S T E R I A.

Why so? Are you uneasy on account of the election that is to be this evening?—

R O S A L I D A.

O no, by no means, it is not that; and what engaged my attention when you entered does not deserve——

A S T E R I A.

No matter, I desire to know it.——

H iij

ROSALIDA.

Well then madam, since you desire it; I was thinking of the young girl whom you have lately placed with me.

ASTERIA.

Does not she suit you?

ROSALIDA.

I have no good opinion of her disposition; if you knew with what meanness and insipidity she praises me.

ASTERIA.

O! is that all; but my dear child, your modesty makes you take plain truths for flattery, I assure you; I tell you sincerely I am proud of my work, and it is certain, thanks to Nature, and more especially to the education I have given you, you are perfectly accomplished.

ROSALIDA.

Accomplished! Dear madam, in all sincerity I cannot believe it.

ASTERIA.

I know it well, and this proves the perfection of my work, for if you did yourself justice, one virtue would be wanting.

ROSALIDA.

However, I have a great deal of pride.

ASTERIA *laughing*.

Yes, be always perfectly persuaded of that.

ROSALIDA *quickly*.

Yes madam, I have a great deal, and since you oblige me to speak out, I find no one preferable to myself; is that being modest? — You laugh, you think I exaggerate; no, I only speak what I think—and yet notwithstanding this excessive vanity, I am almost always dissatisfied with myself; how can you reconcile this?

ASTERIA.

She is charming! Come to my arms my dear Rosalida. If you are not pleased with

yourself, who ever can have reason for self approbation ?

ROSALIDA.

I do not complain of nature, she hath given me a feeling grateful heart ; I ought to praise fortune for giving me such a benefactress as you ; but say what you will madam, I have faults which escape your notice, because you love me, and in spite of me I am sensible of them myself, because I am a sufferer.

ASTERIA.

She is always dwelling upon her faults. I wish my sister, who thinks you so vain, and is incessantly telling me of the surprizing humility of Clarinda, could but hear this conversation. In short this day, my dear Rosalida, this very day, the fairest of my life, your destiny is going to be fixed according to my desire ; I shall this evening see you queen of the happy island ; my joy shall know no interruption, unless from the pain my sister must feel, for she has the folly to form the

most flattering hopes for her pupil: could you conceive a blind partiality carried to such an extreme?

R O S A L I D A.

I cannot judge of the merit of Princess Clarinda; I know her so little, and have seen her so seldom, though both of us have been educated in this palace.—

A S T E R I A.

As my sister's ideas of education were totally opposite to mine, I would not for that reason consent to your being intimate with Clarinda; but at present I think it is proper you should form a particular intimacy, since she who shall be queen, ought to love and protect the other.—

R O S A L I D A.

Ah madam, all the good I have heard spoken of Clarinda, has for a long time inclined my heart to love her.—

A S T E R I A.

Yes indeed, she is truly engaging; she has

no shining qualities, but she is gentle and good; and though she was born with but middling understanding, if I had undertaken to educate her, I should have made her a charming woman. My sister told me she would introduce her to you this day. But Rosalida, you don't attend, you are absent.—

R O S A L I D A.

'Tis very true, madam,—I was thinking on something you said a little ago, of the benevolent Fairy Meliffa.

A S T E R I A.

What of her?

R O S A L I D A.

You said, she thinks I am vain; and this returns to my imagination, I do not know for what.—

A S T E R I A.

Well, what then?—

R O S A L I D A.

I should be glad to know upon what grounds she founds such an accusation: I never boast of myself.

A S T E R I A.

O by no means, quite the contrary.——

R O S A L I D A.

I never speak of myself; I hate and avoid praise——upon what then does she judge that I am vain?——

A S T E R I A.

Because she certainly thinks you possess all those qualities which might give occasion for it.——

R O S A L I D A.

But she positively said that I was vain.

A S T E R I A.

It is undoubtedly from jealousy she depreciates your talents and agreeable accomplishments; for example, that last drawing which you made, and certainly it is a master-piece, she looked at it not only without enthusiasm, but praised it with a negligence, a coldness.——

R O S A L I D A.

I own I feel myself hurt at such instances of aversion; I cannot bear to be treated with

injustice—it disgusts and afflicts me, and puts me quite beside myself.

ASTERIA.

Be calm my child; the poor little dear, she has tears in her eyes; how affecting!

ROSALIDA *with a forced smile.*

Who I ma'am! I assure you I do not feel the least tendency to melt into tears; I am only grieved at having displeas'd the benevolent Fairy, I have shewn my surprize, for I have done nothing to draw such a misfortune upon myself; but otherwise, I protest to you I do not feel the least anger or resentment.—

ASTERIA.

O I am convinced of it!—but what does Lamia want?



S C E N E IV.

ASTERIA, ROSALIDA, LAMIA:

LAMIA *to the Fairy.*

Madam, the ambaffadors of King Zolphir are juft now arrived, and demand an audience.

ASTERIA.

My fifter muft be acquainted——but here ſhe comes, and Clarinda with her—— (*Lamia goes out.*)

S C E N E V.

The FAIRY MELISSA, ROSALIDA,
CLARINDA, The FAIRY ASTERIA.

MELISSA.

Clarinda, go and embrace Roſalida, and aſk her friendſhip ——

ROSALIDA *coming forward.*

May you my dear Clarinda, desire it with the same sincerity with which it is granted.

CLARINDA.

I promise you the love of an affectionate sister, and my heart expects the same from you.

ASTERIA *to Melissa.*

I believe they will be happy to converse without witnesses; will you give them leave to go together to my closet.—

MELISSA.

I have no objection, Clarinda follow Rosalida.

(The young Princesses take each other by the arm, and go out. Rosalida in passing Melissa, curtsies to her with a look of haughtiness and disdain.)



SCENE VI.

THE TWO FAIRIES.

MELISSA, *looking at Rosalida as she goes out.*

BY my being a Fairy I possess the art of reading in the eyes, and can pretty nearly guess the thoughts; I observed a violent resentment against me in those of Rosalida; what can be the reason?—

ASTERIA.

Let us leave that, my Sister, and speak of business of more consequence. Do you know that some Ambassadors are arrived?

MELISSA.

Yes, and I gave orders to let them know we shall see them after the coronation.—

ASTERIA.

What do you imagine is the subject of their embassy?—

MELISSA.

These same Ambassadors were here about eight months since, and then they must have heard of the election, which you know should have happened six weeks ago.

ASTERIA.

Yes indeed, it has been delayed.——

MELISSA.

I imagine they conclude it is already over, and are come from their master to compliment the new Queen.——

ASTERIA.

Well, Sister, tell me truly, what at the bottom of your heart are its forebodings on the decision that must be made this evening?

MELISSA.

I can easily guess yours, but I beg leave to conceal mine; you have a greater share of spirits than I, and——

ASTERIA.

To deal plainly then, you imagine Clarinda will be preferred?

MELISSA.

I have employed all my care to render her worthy of it.

ASTERIA.

And for fifteen years I have been engaged solely in the education of Rosalida.

MELISSA.

You have given her many accomplishments, you have adorned and cultivated her understanding, and it is but doing you justice to declare it.——

ASTERIA.

And her heart, principles, and sentiments?

MELISSA.

I cannot judge of them; I do not know them.

ASTERIA.

For my part, I cannot judge of the accomplishments and understanding of Clarinda; for I do not know them.

MELISSA.

You may at least judge of her benevolence, her gentleness, her even temper and good

sense. I believe nobody will hesitate to allow her these good qualities. The choice of a Queen this day depends upon the esteem and love of the people, so, Sister, I cannot be without some hopes.—

A S T E R I A.

So you think superiority of talents hurtful in a Princess born to reign.

M E L I S S A.

True superiority consists in gaining the hearts of the people, and is the only superiority which I admire.—

A S T E R I A.

And you do not believe that merit creates hatred and envy?—

M E L I S S A.

A feeling heart, an equal and gentle temper, guards the possessor from hatred; and when no vain display of accomplishments is made, envy, even in discovering them, extinguishes itself, or knows how to be silent.

A S T E R I A.

In short, I believe Clarinda perfect, since

you say so, but her reputation is not so splendid as it should be; her name is scarcely known, whilst that of Rosalida is celebrated even in countries the most distant from this Island.

MELISSA.

I don't know, Sister, what Clarinda's reputation may be beyond this Island, but I am certain she is beloved by all who approach her.

ASTERIA.

And Rosalida is admired by all who either see or hear her.—

MELISSA.

But who is this coming to interrupt us?

ASTERIA.

Lamia, what do you want?

SCENE VII.

ASTERIA, MELISSA, LAMIA.

LAMIA, giving a letter to Melissa.

MADAM, this letter was carried to your apartments, and I was desired to deliver it into your own hands; the Ambassadors who are just arrived, hoped for an opportunity of presenting it themselves from the King their master; but as they know you will not see them till the evening——

MELISSA.

That is sufficient Lamia. (*Lamia goes out. Melissa opens the letter and reads it to herself.*)

ASTERIA.

Why, is this letter only for you, Sister?——
May we not at least know the contents?——

MELISSA, after having read it.

Nothing important; I beg you won't desire to know the particulars.——

ASTERIA.

So then you have secrets!

MELISSA.

No, Sister; but I wish you would excuse me.—

ASTERIA.

That letter is from King Zolphir?—

MELISSA.

Yes it is.—

ASTERIA.

Why this mystery then?—it is injurious, and I cannot conceive—

MELISSA, *giving her the letter.*
Since you will read it, with all my heart.

ASTERIA *reads aloud.*

“ I know, O Melissa, thou prudent Fairy,
“ that the Queen of the Happy Island must
“ be already chosen; from all I have heard
“ by my Ambassadors, of the incomparable
“ Clarinda, and from all that public report
“ has said of her benevolence and singular

“good qualities, which with the enthusiastic
 “regard the people of the Happy Island have
 “for her, I cannot entertain a doubt of her
 “being already placed upon the throne of
 “which she is so deserving. Receive then,
 “O great Fairy, the assurance of the sincere
 “satisfaction I feel upon the occasion, and
 “deign to inform the new Queen, that she
 “cannot have a more faithful friend and ally
 “than the King.

“ZOLPHIR.”

This is certainly the most extraordinary
and impertinent letter——

MELISSA.

Do you imagine, Sister, that I ought to be
offended?

ASTERIA.

Raillery is very ill-timed at present.

MELISSA.

Dear Sister, I pray you don't put yourself
out of humour. We have different interests;
but you promised me that they should not
occasion a quarrel between us.

A S T E R I A.

In short, the fate of Clarinda and Rosalida will be decided in two hours, and I expect that important moment with the greatest impatience.—

M E L I S S A.

And I expect it with perfect tranquillity. Here come our Pupils; let us leave them together, and go to give our last orders for the coronation.

(Melissa goes out.)

A S T E R I A.

Rosalida, let me find you in the great gallery in half an hour; I have still some instructions to give you.

(She goes out.)

SCENE VIII.

ROSALIDA, CLARINDA.

ROSALIDA.

INSTRUMENTS! — It is probably something relating to the ceremony of the election, for otherwise I don't think I have much instruction to receive. —

CLARINDA.

You are very accomplished then? —

ROSALIDA.

People are bad judges of themselves; but you have just now heard me sing, and play upon different instruments; you have likewise seen my drawings, what is your opinion? —

CLARINDA.

I thought all was charming, and I said so; but at my age one is not capable of being a good judge; our knowledge must be so imperfect, so limited. —

ROSALIDA.

At your age! — Don't you know that we are the same age? —

CLARINDA.

Yes I know it. —

ROSALIDA.

Well then — you see however, that at our age it is possible to know something. —

CLARINDA.

Yes, that is what I said. —

ROSALIDA.

But you don't allow a superiority. —

CLARINDA.

O no. —

ROSALIDA, *aside*.

I believe indeed she is right. — (*Aloud.*) I have got a dreadful head-ach. Are not you sometimes out of humour? —

CLARINDA.

Out of humour, what is that? is it not vexation, disquiet. —

ROSALIDA.

Yes, vexation without a cause.

CLARINDA.

Without a cause!——I know it not.——

ROSALIDA, *shrugging up her shoulders,*
says aside.

She knows nothing. How badly she has been educated!——(*Aloud.*) Has Melissa made you learn any foreign languages?——

CLARINDA.

O yes, she has taken all imaginable pains in my education.

ROSALIDA, *aside.*

So it seems.——(*Aloud.*) I know four languages; how many do you know?

CLARINDA.

Much the same.

ROSALIDA.

And perfectly?

CLARINDA.

O by no means; I know nothing perfectly.

ROSALIDA, *looking at her attentively.*

She is at least modest.——What a sweet look! (*Clarinda smiles*) What do you laugh at Clarinda?

CLARINDA.

I don't know.——

ROSALIDA, *still looking attentively.*

She has a certain timidity, which is wonderfully engaging.——Clarinda, are you much afraid of the ceremony this evening?

CLARINDA.

Much afraid!——no.——

ROSALIDA.

Do you know the ceremonial?

CLARINDA.

Yes, almost. We are to be conducted into a great hall, where each of us is to make a short speech, and then the council of old men and fages are to declare.——

ROSALIDA.

It is so, except the shortness of the speech, for mine will last three quarters of an hour.—

CLARINDA.

Indeed!—

ROSALIDA.

Yes, at the least.—

CLARINDA.

I am glad of it.—

ROSALIDA.

You are very obliging.—

CLARINDA.

I shall certainly be much diverted with it.—

ROSALIDA, *aside*.

How silly she is!—(Aloud.) It will divert you then?—I do not believe to divert is the proper word to express what is meant.

CLARINDA.

Excuse me, no other word can express my idea.—I find there is a something in your

manner, in your air, and in every thing you say, which I cannot express; that I never saw in any one but you, and is to me very entertaining.

ROSALIDA.

Upon my word, this is a kind of encomium quite new to me.—

CLARINDA.

But is it really an encomium?—I had no such intention.

ROSALIDA.

I indeed imagine your language frequently does not correspond exactly with your intentions, and that without art or deceit; for certainly you could not be suspected, you have such a gentle unaffected manner.—

CLARINDA.

And as to me, I do not take that for an encomium; am I wrong?

ROSALIDA.

Yes, for I really think that candour and innocence are painted on your countenance.

CLARINDA.

But if your intention was not perfectly consonant with your language——

ROSALIDA.

Do you know that you have a great deal of understanding ; natural understanding I mean.

CLARINDA.

And pray what understanding is it that is not natural ? —— Perhaps you could teach me. ——

ROSALIDA.

Really one would be tempted to think at present, that she understands finesse. —— But let us return to your speech ; is it very elegant ?

CLARINDA.

I have prepared no speech. ——

ROSALIDA.

O, you speak off hand. ——

CLARINDA.

Just so.

ROSALIDA.

And your Fairy advised you to do so?

CLARINDA.

She positively commanded me.

ROSALIDA.

That is surprizing. But tell me, my dear Clarinda, what sort of a life have you led hitherto?

CLARINDA.

I have always been so happy, that I could not look but with dread upon any change that might happen to me.

ROSALIDA.

I was doubtful whether you had any ambition; but if you are declared Queen this evening?—

CLARINDA.

I shall dedicate my whole attention to the means of justifying the choice the council shall have condescended to make.

ROSALIDA.

I am much pleased with your answer; but

I am sorry, Clarinda, that I can only amuse you, while you make a much more lasting impresson upon me, and interest me deeply in your favour.

CLARINDA.

I do not flatter myself that there is a great conformity in our dispositions and understandings, but I am confident that our hearts may suit each other.——

ROSALIDA.

I'll lay a wager that the Fairy Meliffa has prejudiced you against me.——

CLARINDA.

You know her but little ;——she is not capable of it.

ROSALIDA.

Yet I know, she in many respects disapproves of the education given me by the brilliant Fairy.

CLARINDA.

That may be, but I have never heard her mention it.——

ROSALIDA.

That may be——and if it was so, do you think she judges right?

CLARINDA.

Melissa never can be wrong. If you knew how just, sagacious, and good she is——

ROSALIDA.

You love only her.——

CLARINDA.

No; but I love her as I ought, I prefer her to all the world.——

ROSALIDA.

And who do you love besides?

CLARINDA.

Zemira, the companion, the friend chosen for me by Melissa, and who is to me what Lamia is to you.

ROSALIDA, *confused.*

Lamia has only been two days with me.

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CLARINDA.

Can you have lost your friend? And have I had the imprudence to renew your grief?—

ROSALIDA.

No.—Clarinda, let us change the subject.

CLARINDA.

Rosalida, what is the matter with you? I have given you pain without intending it.—

ROSALIDA, *sorrowfully*.

You deserve to be loved, Clarinda; I am not surpris'd that you have had a friend from your infancy; but for my part I have none.

CLARINDA.

I will be your friend, my dear Rosalida.—

ROSALIDA, *aside*.

How good and engaging she is!—and I ridiculed her.

CLARINDA.

I pray you banish this melancholy, it grieves me.—

R O S A L I D A.

Every word she speaks melts and penetrates me to the heart. Clarinda, let us promise that whatever may be the decision of our fate, we never shall part.

C L A R I N D A.

O, I make that vow with transport.

S C E N E IX.

R O S A L I D A, C L A R I N D A, L A M I A.

L A M I A, *to Rosalida.*

M A D A M, the Fairy waits you.

R O S A L I D A.

Come then, we must part, my dear Clarinda.

C L A R I N D A.

Let me at least see you to the door of the gallery.—

(They go out.)

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST.

ASTERIA, ROSALIDA.

ASTERIA.

JUDGE of my surprize at reading the letter.

ROSALIDA.

I own to you I share it, and this great renown of Clarinda's surprizes me infinitely. It is with pleasure I do justice to her good qualities; she is, as you said, gentle, amiable, and engaging; but I do not think she possesses that turn of mind which can inspire admiration and rapture.

ASTERIA.

She has no talents, nor superiority of any kind. I am likewise persuaded that this pre-

tended renown does not exist; her affability must have gained the hearts of the Ambassadors, who have undoubtedly drawn a most exaggerated picture to their master.

R O S A L I D A.

I do recollect indeed, that during their first embassy I scarcely saw them; their strange aukward manners disgusted me, and I even took the liberty to laugh at them openly.

A S T E R I A.

We need look no farther; that explains the enigma, and will bring down a little of the vanity of my Sister, who triumphs in secret, notwithstanding all her modesty.

R O S A L I D A.

She triumphs!—O then she takes the letter quite seriously?

A S T E R I A.

She did not shew the least surprise, I assure you.

ROSALIDA.

Indeed!

ASTERIA.

In short, the discovery approaches, and we shall triumph in our turn.—

ROSALIDA.

Are the Ambassadors of King Zolphir to be present at the ceremony of the election?

ASTERIA.

Certainly; I gave orders to desire their attendance.

ROSALIDA.

I own to you, Madam, that of all things in the world, I could wish the master himself to be present.

ASTERIA.

Nothing can be more easy, and you have suggested an excellent idea to me. By the power of my art I can without difficulty—

ROSALIDA.

Ah, Madam, you are very good!

A S T E R I A.

Not only Zolphir shall be there, but likewise all the Kings and Princes who are the neighbours of this Island. It is my desire, my dear Rosalida, that the assembly where you are going to appear, and to be elected unanimously, shall be the most august and splendid in the universe. Do you remain here, while I go to my closet to employ the resources of my art in such a way as shall gratify both your wishes and my own, and I will return to you presently. (*She goes out.*)

R O S A L I D A *alone.*

I don't know what is the matter with me to-day, but I feel a strange uneasiness, which I never experienced before.—Since I have seen Clarinda, I am more dissatisfied with myself, yet I believe I am superior to her; and I truly think so, when I reflect and draw the comparison—but when I cease to reason, and hearken only to the feelings of my heart, all that merit of which I am so proud seems to vanish, and I wish to resemble Clarinda: She engages, she attracts, she captivates, and I find that I already love her sincerely.

SCENE II.

LAMIA, ROSALIDA.

LAMIA, *running*.

O Madam, I have been to see the grandest and most noble fight perhaps in the world.

ROSALIDA.

What is it?

LAMIA.

It is the coronation-hall. Only conceive old men, princes, kings, and sages, all collected in one place——such a spectacle is not common.——I am struck with admiration!

ROSALIDA, *aside*.

The moment approaches, and in spite of me, I feel disturbed.——

LAMIA.

There is a noise, an uproar in the gardens

and galleries, which increases every instant; hearken, don't you hear the cries?—Certainly some extraordinary accident must have happened.

ROSALIDA.

I think I hear them repeating the name of Clarinda.—Go and see what is the matter, Lamia.—

LAMIA *goes to see, and returns.*

It is the Princess Clarinda crossing the galleries to come hither.

ROSALIDA.

And why these redoubled cries?

LAMIA.

'Tis a multitude of poor people who were waiting for her going past; it is said she is very charitable.—(*A cry is distinctly heard, behind the scenes.*) *Long live the Princess Clarinda, long live our generous benefactress!*

Good heavens, what a crowd!—all the unhappy people who have been succoured by Clarinda, are certainly assembled.

ROSALIDA.

They are offering up their prayers for her; they are right. Ah, such prayers deserve to be heard.—(They cry nearer and louder :)
Long live Clarinda, long live our dear benefactress!—

How has she had the happiness to be useful to so many people? For my part, I never saw any unhappy people in the palace!

LAMIA.

It is said she went in search of them.

ROSALIDA.

Ah, Aferia!—you might have led me to them!—(Aside.) I feel myself quite oppressed; never was my mind filled with such bitterness!—

LAMIA.

Here come the Fairies and the Princess.

S C E N E III.

ROSALIDA, LAMIA, MELISSA,
ASTERIA, CLARINDA.

(The two Fairies carrying a Crown set with diamonds.)

MELISSA.

THE decisive moment is at last arrived.—
Here is the crown, which in less than an hour we must place with our own hands upon the head of the Queen of the Happy Island.—
(They lay it on a Table.) Rosalida, if it is your fate to be called to the throne, I swear by that friendship which unites my Sister and me, to continue to love and protect you, and never to employ the powers of my art, but for your glory, and the happiness of your dominions.

ROSALIDA.

Alas, every thing that I hear this day only serves to perplex me!—

ASTERIA.

Clarinda, it is with pleasure I bind myself to you by the same vows; and you, my Sister, who know my heart, you know whether I shall be faithful.

MELISSA.

O, I have no doubts.—Rosalida and Clarinda, the assembly wait you, go.—

CLARINDA *to Melissa.*

What! without you?—

MELISSA.

Yes; from the dread of constraining the votes of the council, my Sister and I shall remain here: go then, my children.

CLARINDA.

Come, my dear Rosalida, and do not forget the promises you made me.—

ROSALIDA, *in giving her her arm.*

Ah, if it was not for fate, and the Fairies that oblige me to contend with you for the throne, how happy should I be to yield it to your virtues!—

CLARINDA.

Nobody can think you more deserving of
it than Clarinda! —

MELISSA.

Go, my dear children, and shew the as-
sembly, that now expect you, not two rivals,
but two friends, who are too noble and too
generous, to let either interest or ambition
difunite them.

ROSALIDA.

Give me your arm, dear Clarinda. — (*Aside
in going out.*) I tremble, and can scarce walk.

(*They go out, Lamia following.*)

SCENE IV.

MELISSA, ASTERIA.

MELISSA, *after a short silence, during which she looks attentively at her Sister, who is in a deep reverie.*

WELL, Sister?—

ASTERIA.

You know my thoughts; I will not attempt to conceal the agitation I feel at this moment, and with the same sincerity I must tell you, I begin to suspect your hopes for Clarinda are not without foundation.—She is universally beloved, and I have just now seen unquestionable proofs of it.—Perhaps, this general esteem will obtain the crown for her; if that be the case, I must allow you have chosen the most certain means for placing her on the throne;—but pray does she possess those brilliant qualities which alone can render a reign memorable and glorious?

MELISSA.

I did not wish Clarinda to have any reputation but what I believed to be the most solid ; that of goodness and benevolence.

ASTERIA.

That may be sufficient to carry the election, but not to reign with splendor. How shall Clarinda, who I allow is good, but simple and inexperienced, without instruction or taste for the arts, be capable of discerning merit, encouraging abilities ; in short, how can she know men, or judge of them so as to employ them successfully ?

MELISSA.

But, Sister, did I ever tell you, that Clarinda was simple and uninstructed ?

ASTERIA.

Have you cultivated her understanding, have you given her accomplishments ?

MELISSA.

Yes, Sister, I have.

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ASTERIA.

Clarinda accomplishments!

MELISSA.

Yes, Sister.—

ASTERIA.

You are in raillery, sure.—

MELISSA.

No, I tell you nothing but the plain truth.

ASTERIA.

But what does she know then?

MELISSA.

All that Rofalida knows.

ASTERIA.

But, Sister, how comes it about I never heard it mentioned before?—

MELISSA.

I wished her to have accomplishments, not to proclaim them to the world, but for her own amusement, and the amusement of her friends; they are not a source of any vanity in her, she does not seek admiration, and she is not envied.

A S T E R I A.

Say what you will, I very much doubt of the excellence of her abilities ; she has so little spirit !——

M E L I S S A.

You deceive yourself again, Sister ; Clarinda has a great deal of spirit.

A S T E R I A.

Wherein does she shew it ?

M E L I S S A.

Yes, Sister, she has infinite spirit ; I allow that she can neither banter, dissemble, nor harangue ; she never turns simplicity and ignorance into ridicule ; she does not think it an unpardonable crime to be deficient in what is called the customs of the world : yet she knows and follows all these little covenants ; but at the same time they appear so trifling, that to her it seems very natural some of them should frequently be forgotten. The only thing which strikes her in a ridiculous light, is caprice, of which she

has no conception, and laughs at it very naturally; for she has all the ingenuousness of her age. She reflects much and judges soundly: perhaps it will never be said that she is *captivating*, but the better she is known, the greater will be the pleasure to hear her, and the zeal to consult her.

ASTERIA.

I own to you, you astonish me.—

MELISSA.

I hear a noise——some one comes, we shall have news.—

ASTERIA.

Ah heaven——it is Lamia, and joy sparkling in her countenance.—

Well, Lamia.—

S C E N E V.

ASTERIA, MELISSA, LAMIA.

*ASTERIA to Lamia.***I**S the Queen chosen?

L A M I A.

No, Madam; but if I dared to foretell the event——

M E L I S S A.

Speak without constraint.

L A M I A.

You desire it, Madam?

M E L I S S A.

Yes, speak out.——

L A M I A to Asteria.

Ah, Madam, how shall I describe to you the amazing success of the Princess Rosalida, the astonishing effect produced by her speech; with what a noble graceful manner did she

harangue the assembly ! by her eloquence and her charms she gained the universal suffrage ; redoubled acclamations obliged her to stop ten times ; at last, when she ceased to speak, the applause with which the hall resounded had not suffered the Princess Clarinda to begin, when I came away to acquaint you with the happy news.

ASTERIA.

I am very sensible, my dear Lamia, of this proof of your attachment. Go back to the Princesses ; I hope we shall soon see them.

(Lamia goes out.)

SCENE VI.

ASTERIA, MELISSA.

MELISSA.

DO not restrain yourself, my dear Sister ; give vent to your joy.——

ASTERIA.

If I thought it could be offensive to you,
I would not yield to my feelings.

MELISSA.

No indeed, Sister, personal considerations
shall never make me unjust.

ASTERIA.

Indeed, Sister, I love Rosalida as you love
Clarinda; therefore you may imagine I can-
not bear the hopes which have been given
me, without being delighted.

MELISSA.

The sentiment is quite natural; besides,
Rosalida in many respects deserves your af-
fection: I only find fault with her caprice and
vanity; but she has a good understanding and a
good heart, and can easily correct her faults.

ASTERIA.

She has an excellent heart, you may depend
upon it.

MELISSA.

I believe it, and I have this day seen several proofs of it which convince me.

ASTERIA.

You delight me——ah, dear Sister, this unchangeable goodness, this perfect equity which you possess in such an eminent degree, engages and wins all my confidence. Though I believe at this instant that Rosalida has carried the prize from Clarinda, you have opened my eyes, and I see that the education you have given your pupil renders her more worthy to reign. I was misled by vanity; I was desirous that Rosalida should be admired, and directed her self-love only to trifling objects; undoubtedly all her faults she owes to me, I feel and own it: but at this instant however, while I am condemning myself, she is perhaps crowned! Clarinda is adored for her benevolence, and a thousand good qualities; but those of Rosalida, though not so solid, are more brilliant, and even the sages, seduced and subdued by them, place

her upon the throne.—Indeed, Sister, I cannot but believe that what dazzles men, will always influence their conduct.

MELISSA.

Then, they never attend to their hearts.—
But what noise is this?—

ASTERIA.

Ah, the Queen is chosen!—I hear the voice of Rosalida!

MELISSA.

Let us take the Crown, it is we that must give it. (*The doors are thrown open, Clarinda and Rosalida come forward, Lamia following.*)

SCENE VII.

ASTERIA, ROSALIDA, CLARINDA,
MELISSA.

(The Fairies move forward to take the Crown.)

ASTERIA.

Rosalida!—

ROSALIDA.

Go, dear Clarinda, and receive the reward
of your virtues.

ASTERIA.

What do I hear!—what! Clarinda?—

ROSALIDA.

Yes, Madam, she is Queen, and by the unanimous voice of the people.—*(To Melissa.)*
Ah, Madam, if you had but seen with what general acclamations she was proclaimed! She no sooner had begun to speak, than compassion and emotion penetrated every heart.

Every sentence of her noble affecting discourse will remain indelibly engraven upon my memory : every eye was fixed upon her, and filled with tears ; mine likewise flowed ; I partook of the general enthusiasm with which she inspired the audience, and with transport added my suffrage to that of the whole assembly.

CLARINDA.

O Rosalida, thou feeling, generous friend!—

ASTERIA.

You have gained, dear Sister, enjoy your triumph ; do not be afraid of afflicting me, I admire your work, and my heart without reluctance must applaud the just success with which it is rewarded. Come, thou amiable and virtuous Clarinda, come and receive the Crown.

CLARINDA.

My dear Rosalida——I cannot accept it, but in sharing it with you.

ASTERIA.

O heaven!—

ROSALIDA.

Who I!—

CLARINDA.

Yes, it is my irrevocable resolution.

ROSALIDA.

No, no, you alone deserve it.

CLARINDA.

I make you an offer of what I myself would have accepted; if you love me as much as I love you, Rosalida, you will not hesitate.

MELISSA.

Reign both of you; fulfil the wishes of the people, who could not have placed Clarinda upon the throne without regretting Rosalida!—

ROSALIDA.

After the choice they have made, what more can they desire?—Ah! this day has

taught me to know myself too well to let me regret the loss of a throne, which I now blush for having presumed to claim.

CLARINDA.

You have nothing to blush for, but the offence you offer to friendship by your cruel refusal.

MELISSA.

Rosalida, if your soul is as feeling as it is great and noble, you will not oppose the happiness of your friend!—

ROSALIDA.

Ah, Clarinda!—

CLARINDA.

The council continues assembled for the ceremony of the coronation; come, my dear Rosalida, join your friend in ascending that throne which becomes valuable by your deigning to partake it.

ROSALIDA.

You command it, I therefore obey.—

CLARINDA.

You gratify all my wishes.

ROSALIDA.

But you must always remain my guide and my model; teach me your virtues, and, if possible, make me like yourself, or you will have done nothing for me.

ASTERIA.

Continue, my dear children, to enjoy the happiness of which you are so deserving; and remember, that the greatest talents and most brilliant accomplishments, are only useless or dangerous, if unaccompanied with modesty, goodness, and benevolence.

THE END.

THE SPOILED CHILD,

A COMEDY

IN TWO ACTS.

THE PERSONS.

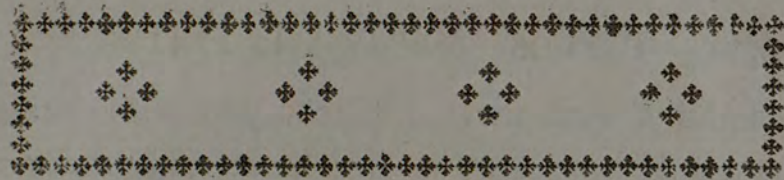
MELINDA, *a Widow.*

LUCY, *her Niece.*

DORINA, *Lucy's Mistress of Music and
Drawing, and living with Melinda.*

PHILLIS, *the Daughter of Melinda's Maid,
and educated with Lucy.*

The Scene at Paris, in Melinda's House.



THE
SPOILED CHILD,
A COMEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.

*The scene represents a Study, with books,
globes, &c.*

MELINDA, DORINA.

MELINDA.

MY dear Dorina, I have been a long time
desirous of a particular conversation with you,
about my niece; and I wish you would deal

M

candidly with me. I placed you with her, not only to improve her heart and understanding, and to teach her some agreeable accomplishments, but, above all things, to tell me the truth, and assist me to know her disposition.

DORINA.

It is my misfortune not to be able to conceal my thoughts; but, Madam, such is your own penetration——

MELINDA.

I penetrating! by no means; that is precisely what I am not; then, such is the life of dissipation I lead, that it leaves me no time to reflect.—I love the world, but I love my niece still more; and if I had been better instructed myself, I would have given up all other pursuits with pleasure, to have dedicated myself entirely to the education of Lucy.

DORINA.

Nobody is more capable, Madam——

MELINDA.

No, no; I do myself justice, when I own

that I have no abilities, and that I know nothing ; I had masters when I was young ; but I was educated in a convent, which is the best excuse I can offer for my ignorance. In short, Lucy is, beyond expression, dear to me : I am a widow, I have no children, and she is my only heir ; I would not leave it in her power to reproach me on a future occasion, for that negligence, of which, in the bottom of my heart, I could not help accusing my friends a thousand times, in their conduct towards me.

DORINA.

Miss Lucy is very deserving of your affection ; she is a charming girl.

MELINDA.

That is what you are incessantly repeating to her, and what I frequently say myself ; and we are both wrong, for we spoil her.

DORINA.

Ah ! Madam, it is not such a disposition as hers that is to be spoiled.

MELINDA.

Tis true, she is more womanly than is com-

M ij

mon at her age——for example, that ease with which she mimicks every body, is what I never saw but in her.

DORINA.

And yet she is not fourteen.

MELINDA.

Certainly she is very promising; but to all her natural charms, I wish to add great talents and a good heart: without talents, people languish, time hangs heavy, as I have dearly experienced. To pay and receive visits, is a pleasure of which one very soon grows tired!——yet, that is the great resource of people who have no object to pursue. In short, I wish she may have a feeling mind, because without that, nothing can be enjoyed, and 'tis always an excellent resource when beauty is no more. Then it is with pleasure we think friends are more to be valued than admirers.

DORINA.

You have such a fund of moral reflections, Madam, I am always happy in hearing you.

MELINDA.

I hope that Lucy, instructed and educated by you, will have still more; and that study and reading will give to her understanding, what is wanting in mine.

DORINA.

And the rather, as she has such application, memory——and natural taste.——

MELINDA.

Yes, she has a great deal of taste, which is visible even in the smallest things.——I believe she will dress in good taste.——She already dresses her head very gracefully——but I did not think she gave great application.

DORINA.

Too much, perhaps, Madam, for her health; she has such delicate nerves——

MELINDA.

She takes that after me——you always tell me you are delighted with her, that she learns wonderfully; yet, after all, what does she know?

DORINA.

She is so young.—

MELINDA.

When I am present at your lessons, I own to you, that her inattention and your indulgence always provoke me.

DORINA.

But Madam, I have already accounted for it to you; your presence either intimidates her, or engages her attention; she looks at you, thinks of you, and——

MELINDA.

My dear, Dorina, you flatter me.

DORINA.

My God, Madam, it was but yesterday I found fault with her, for having played so badly on the harpsichord when you was present; she said, it was because my Aunt was opposite to me, and I don't think that in the world there are such beautiful, expressive, brilliant eyes as hers——

MELINDA, *in a tone of severity.*

Lucy told you so?

DORINA.

Word for word, and with that simplicity, that graceful manner, so natural to her.—

MELINDA, *in the same tone.*

Do you really think to impose upon me, by this ridiculous flattery?

DORINA.

What, Madam, do you think me capable?—

MELINDA.

Hear me. I believe you have a thousand good qualities; you have understanding, abilities, and have been well instructed; but, for heaven's sake, if you desire that we should continue to live together, do not praise me; I hate encomiums, and I always suspect them.

DORINA.

Modesty always accompanies superior merit.

MELINDA.

Again!—

DORINA.

Let us say no more about it; but I beg

you will believe, that my attachment to you and your niece is boundless, and that——

MELINDA.

Prove it to me, then, by seconding my views. There is one thing more I must require of you: it is, that you will pay some attention to the education of that little girl who has been bred up with Lucy.——

DORINA.

Phillis?——

MELINDA.

Yes. She is an orphan, and the daughter of a woman who was fifteen years in my service, and recommended her to me on her death-bed; besides, this young creature has the sweetest temper, and the happiest disposition: you observe how she improves by the instructions you give to Lucy; she draws, she plays on the harpsichord all the day long; I am not a judge to know whether it is successfully; but that desire to improve at her age, makes her very engaging.

DORINA.

I shall obey you, Madam; but I own to you I have no great idea of her genius.

MELINDA.

She is gentle, ingenuous, feeling, and sincere; when with people to whom she owes respect, she scarcely speaks till she is asked, and then her answers are always pertinent; she excels in every thing she does; she is reserved, discreet, assiduous and grateful; she makes herself beloved. If it is true that she can be all this without genius, you will allow, that genius is an advantage which one may very easily forego. (*She looks at her watch*) But in chatting, I forget that it is past twelve o'clock, and that I am to have twenty people to breakfast with me, who must be already come.

DORINA.

Is there not to be a reading party here to-day?

MELINDA.

Yes, indeed, which will keep us till four

o'clock ; and I want to go to the new opera, for I have bespoke a box. Lucy is coming to learn her lesson, and you may tell her, that if you are satisfied with her, I will take her with me to the opera. Farewell, my dear Dorina ; do not forget this conversation ; and justify, by your conduct, the confidence which I place in you. *(She goes out.)*

SCENE II.

DORINA *alone.*

WHAT A FOOL!—knotting, going to public places, and receiving visits, are her sole employments. She is always praising to her niece, the charms of study, and the advantages of application ; but the example she sets, is eternally in direct opposition to her discourse. Then, at other times, hearkening only to a blind affection, she fancies her niece to be a little prodigy of perfections, and praises her exceedingly ; to please her, every body says as much ; but she no sooner turns her back,

than they laugh at this little girl; who, in short, is vain, intractable, giddy, and will never learn any thing. Besides, what is it to me? I flatter her, I take no notice of her whims, and I make myself loved by it: she will get married; she will be rich, and make my fortune, that is all I want.—But hush, I hear some one coming;—O, 'tis Lucy.

SCENE III.

DORINA, LUCY.

LUCY.

I Thought my Aunt was here?

DORINA.

She is this instant gone; and desired me to tell you, that if you learn all your lessons well, she will take you with her to the opera.

LUCY.

To-night?

DORINA.

Yes.

LUCY.

And 'tis the new opera?—O, I am delighted! My God, I wish I had known it sooner.

DORINA.

Why so?

LUCY.

Because my head is most horridly dressed.——And my new gown——I shan't have it till to-morrow!——it is very provoking, you will allow.

DORINA.

No matter how you are dressed, are not you always sure of being admired?

LUCY.

Nay, but this is raillery!——I set so little value on all these things. Do you think the trimming of this gown genteel?

DORINA.

It is charming.

LUCY.

Yes, but it is a little faded.——I like the

rose-coloured gown I wore yesterday better.
What do you think?

DORINA.

I think, that in whatever I see you dressed,
that seems to me always the prettiest.

LUCY.

Shan't I have time to dress before dinner?

DORINA.

And our lessons?

LUCY.

That is true.—Come, come, I'll remain
as I am; it is so much trouble saved, and I
mortally hate dressing.—Well, what shall
we do?

DORINA.

Your dancing-master is coming, and when
you have danced, we will draw, and then play
on the harpsichord.

LUCY.

O, it is impossible I can dance to day; I

slept so ill, and am so languid, that I can scarce stand upon my legs.—

DORINA.

You had best sit down then. (*She reaches her a chair; and Lucy sits down, and stretches herself carelessly.*)

LUCY.

I have really such a dreadful languor.

DORINA.

Indeed you seem quite dejected.

LUCY.

You, seriously then, think I am changed?

DORINA.

Exceedingly.

LUCY.

That is perhaps owing to the shocking trim I am in this morning.—I am positively determined to have my head dressed again before the opera.—Does not my Aunt give a breakfast to-day.

DORINA.

Yes; and there is to be a reading party.

LUCY.

Well, when I am married I will have reading parties and breakfasts too——these breakfasts are charming.

DORINA.

Yes, it takes up from mid-day till four o'clock.

LUCY.

Then, public places, suppers, balls; that is what is called enjoying life. What a happy woman is my Aunt!——well I will have my turn.

DORINA.

But in the mean time you should cultivate your understanding; if one happens to get tired of public places, or balls become fatiguing, or company disagreeable, it is a great satisfaction to be able to enjoy one's self.

LUCY.

But don't you see my Aunt preserves all the desires of her young days; why should

not I have the same constancy? and why should I, by laborious studying, give myself up to certain vexation, to procure distant resources, of which perhaps I shall have no occasion?

DORINA.

But, Madam, does not your Aunt herself lament every day, how much her education was neglected? She gives herself up to dissipation more from habit than taste.—

LUCY.

It is true, she yawns at the play, she has the vapours constantly after all her breakfastings, and the megrim always after she has been at a ball or the opera. Yes, that is true.—I am very sensible, that talents and instruction may be of some advantage—then, to be accounted ignorant, that is mortifying, it shocks me I must own. (*She sinks into a reverie.*)

DORINA.

You are thoughtful?

LUCY.

Yes, I feel some efforts of reason which

grieve me ; you have just now told me some things with which I am struck.—What is the reason, my dear friend, that you have not always spoken to me in the same manner ?

DORINA.

I was unwilling to vex or contradict you.

LUCY.

Don't you think that by taking more pains than I have done, I might at least in time have the appearance of some talents?—a superficial knowledge is all that I desire.

DORINA.

And is it not believed that you have that already ?

LUCY.

Yes, but between you and I, I know nothing.

DORINA.

O, that is being too modest ; you play very prettily upon the harpsichord.

N

LUCY.

Alas! only three or four pieces which I know by rote.

DORINA.

You draw very well; your last head is charming.

LUCY.

Thanks to you for that.

DORINA.

No, truly, I scarcely touched it.

LUCY.

But I know not one word either of history or geography.

DORINA.

You know the titles of a number of books, and that is enough for the world; boldly declare that you have read them all; with this, and a book in your work-bag, and another on your toilet, maintain that you have a passionate love for reading, and you will very soon pass for being deeply learned.

LUCY.

That is a droll way of being learned, and suits me wonderfully. Well, I will adopt it, and then, my dear friend, you will always continue to live with me; you will correct my drawings, and even my pictures, when I come to paint; so that I shall have one accomplishment certain.

DORINA.

Persist, Miss, and I promise you all those which are common in society. The true, the very eminent talents, are so uncommon in people of your condition!

LUCY.

That is precisely the reason which makes them desirable.—Phillis will really have them;—I wish to resemble her.

DORINA.

Upon my word, a very whimsical wish.

LUCY.

I love Phillis, I am not jealous of the ad-

vantages she has over me; but I see them, and there are moments when that thought gives me pain.

DORINA.

That is being very blind indeed, both as to her and yourself. You have an uncommon genius, and the happiest turn for improvement; as to Phillis, the little girl is capable of abundant application, but notwithstanding her little thoughtful look, and her dry ironical manner, she is in fact but very shallow.

LUCY.

No, don't deceive yourself; Phillis, with her gentle innocent manner, does not want genius.

DORINA.

I own you are very capable of judging, but you are so indulgent——perhaps my opinion is owing to the comparison I am constantly making between you and her; but she displeases me exceedingly.

LUCY.

I am sorry for it, because I love Phillis.

DORINA.

She has a certain rusticity however, a sourness in her temper, which cannot be very consonant with yours.

LUCY.

It is true, she says things a little bluntly; it vexes me sometimes, and then I forgive her: it is very extraordinary that her sincerity should be offensive to me. If Phillis was less free, she certainly would be more agreeable, but perhaps I should not have the same confidence in her. I cannot explain how it comes about, but I find, the more she contradicts me, the more I am attached to her.

DORINA.

If that is the case, Miss, I am exceedingly unfortunate, for I love you to such excess, that I cannot bear to offer you the least contradiction.

LUCY.

For that reason, my dear friend, I love you still better than Phillis; you appear to me a

thousand times more amiable than Phillis. I would wish to consult her sometimes, but I should choose to pass my life with you.

DORINA.

Well, I am satisfied with my portion; but however, I am afraid it is not the most solid.—

LUCY.

Depend upon it, my affection for you shall be as lasting as it is tender.—But who is this coming to interrupt us? O, it is Phillis.

SCENE IV.

PHILLIS, LUCY, DORINA,

LUCY.

WHAT do you want, Phillis?

PHILLIS.

Miss, your dancing-master is come.—

LUCY.

I shan't dance to day ; you have only to give him a ticket, and fend him away.

PHILLIS.

But, Miss, you sent him away last time without taking a lesson.—

DORINA.

Well, what then——would you have Miss dance in her present condition ?

PHILLIS.

What is the matter with her ?

DORINA.

She has; she has a dreadful languor.

PHILLIS.

All that I know is, she was perfectly well half an hour ago, and was jumping in the garden.—

LUCY.

That is because I don't incline to give way to my feelings ; I am not delicate——but the

fact is, I am indisposed, and I won't take a lesson of dancing.

PHILLIS.

The last fact seems certain, and I readily believe it. Well, I will go and give him his ticket,——There is money well laid out.

(She goes out.)

LUCY, *after a short silence.*

When I reflect, I think it will be right to take a lesson of the dancing-master.——

DORINA.

Shall I call back Phillis?

LUCY.

What do you advise me?

DORINA.

But——not to fatigue yourself,

LUCY.

Besides, I shall dance longer to-morrow.

DORINA.

Surely, and that will be the same thing, and as to a lesson more or a lesson less, what does it signify?

LUCY.

My dear friend, you are so gentle and indulgent!——But what has brought Phillis back again?

PHILLIS *returning.*

Mifs, your Aunt wants you.

LUCY.

The reading is not begun then?

PHILLIS.

No, Mifs, and there are several Ladies who wish to see you for a little. You are desired to bring your portfolio with your drawings.

DORINA.

There it is,

(Lucy takes it.)

LUCY to Dorina.

My dear friend, do you wait here for me.
 ——Adieu; I am mighty glad to go and
 take a turn within. (*She goes out running and
 jumping.*)

SCENE V.

DORINA, PHILLIS.

PHILLIS, looking at Lucy going out.
THE languor seems to go off, I think,

DORINA smiling.

You believe then that she has exaggerated
 a little? ——

PHILLIS.

Yes, Ma'am, and you think so too.

DORINA, in a dry manner.

Where did you learn that? I can discover
 what are your thoughts, and I see that you
 suspect Miss Lucy of artifice and falsehood;

but for my part, I am very far from entertaining such an opinion of her.

P H I L L I S.

It requires no great address to discover my thoughts, for I declare them very plainly; but I can frequently observe that there are people who wish to disguise theirs.

D O R I N A.

Of whom do you say this, pray?

P H I L L I S.

Ah, that is my secret.

D O R I N A.

You may keep it; I have no desire to know it: but there is one thing of which I wish you to be informed; that is, if you will be so good as to change the manner of speaking, you have assumed of late, not with me, for I am absolutely indifferent about what you say, but with Miss Lucy. You forget yourself truly; your behaviour to her is insupportable; you censure without reserve every thing she either does or says. It really

seems as if you held her in detestation. If you persevere, I tell you beforehand, that I shall acquaint her Aunt with it ; I think it an indispensable duty.

PHILLIS.

You have too much good sense, Ma'am, to go such lengths without having previously heard my vindication. In the first place, nobody can be more attached to Miss Lucy than I am ; I have not the happiness to please her ; yet I love her, because, in spite of every obstruction I meet with, I think she is good, she has great sensibility and candour. When she does amiss, it does not proceed from herself. When she does not speak the truth, when she is harsh, proud, or capricious, all these faults are infused into her ; they are not natural to her, for her disposition is excellent. In like manner, when I blame her, it is not her that I censure.—You must conceive what I mean ; I express myself badly, and perhaps I speak a little obscurely, but if you please, I will endeavour to explain myself better.

DORINA.

'Tis enough. The consequence will shew you, that I have understanding sufficient to conceive your meaning. But some one comes. (*Aside, looking at Phillis.*) What a dangerous little creature! we must get her packed about her business.

SCENE VI.

DORINA, PHILLIS, LUCY.

LUCY.

She enters running, and throws her portfolio upon the table.

O! I am quite out of breath?—My God, what a number of people within! O my dear friend, what a charming gown I saw just now.

DORINA.

Whose is it?

LUCY.

'Tis Mrs. Bercy's. It is just a Polonese,

but trimmed with peach-flowers, in such taste and elegance.—I never saw a trimming of peach-flowers before. O 'tis beautiful!—Mrs. Bercy has a fine fancy!

DORINA.

It were only to be wished, that she was a little handsomer.

LUCY.

She is a gay woman.

DORINA.

Yes; but it is said, she puts on white.

LUCY.

Indeed!—

DORINA.

O, I don't believe it.—However her forehead is very shining.

LUCY.

Ha, ha, 'tis very droll to have a shining forehead.—

P H I L L I S.

Yes, some people put on white. It is a rule worth remembering. For example, your great Uncle certainly puts on white.—

L U C Y.

Such nonsense!—

P H I L L I S.

Bless me, the rule must be false then, for his forehead is much more shining than Mrs. Bercy's.

D O R I N A, *to Lucy.*

What did they say of your drawings?

L U C Y.

They thought them charming, especially the old man's head.

P H I L L I S.

But that was entirely done by Miss Dorina.

D O R I N A.

Not at all; I only sketched it, and gave it some expression.

PHILLIS.

Very true; you only did the outline and the finishing.

LUCY, *with a forced smile.*

Phillis does not spoil me.

PHILLIS.

To flatter is to deceive; how can we deceive those we love?

LUCY.

With this manner, Phillis, you shall always say to me whatever you please.

DORINA.

Is Mrs. Surville one of the company?

LUCY.

Yes, with her daughter, who is more stiff and upright than ever.

DORINA.

O, I believe Miss Flora is very proud of being one at a reading party.

L U C Y.

I promise you she is; yet she is but two years older than I, and is such a pedant——

P H I L L I S.

I am told she is a prodigy, she has acquired such knowledge.

D O R I N A, *ironically.*

A prodigy!——and who told her so?

P H I L L I S.

Not she by whom she is educated, but by all who know her. For my part, I can assure you, she has a great deal of modesty; for she never speaks of herself, and always endeavours to stamp a value upon the merit of others.

D O R I N A.

It is true, that she pays a particular attention to Miss Phillis; and every time she comes here, praises her great abilities.

P H I L L I S.

No, Miss, she does not lavish ridiculous

and exaggerated praises upon me; she has too much good sense to be obliging at the expence of truth; but she always makes me admire her good nature.

LUCY.

My dear Phillis, I believe Miss Flora really has a great deal of merit, but I can't conceal from you, that I think she has the misfortune to be a pedant.

DORINA, *laughing.*

Yes, yes! a pedant is the very expression; it is admirably hit off. And a pedant at sixteen!—What charms does it not promise in future!

PHILLIS, *to Lucy.*

But Miss, may I presume to beg you would inform me in what she is a pedant?

LUCY.

In what?—Why, in every thing.

PHILLIS.

But I beg you will be so good as to mention some instances.

LUCY.

O, I'll mention a thousand.

PHILLIS.

One only, if you please.

LUCY.

She has a pedantic manner, a certain way of pinching her mouth, and when she comes into a room——Stop, do you wish to see her?——that is she.——

DORINA, *laughing.*

Perfectly, perfectly, 'tis she herself.——
Once more, I pray you——That is delightful.——

LUCY.

Then, when she sits, it is just so——on the edge of the chair——she looks mighty ferious; turns round as if she had no joints——and every now and then a little cough.——

DORINA.

O, the little cough is admirable!——'Tis she herself.——My God, I think I see her——except that she has not that shape, nor that countenance.

LUCY, *laughing.*

Phillis is vexed, she don't laugh.

PHILLIS.

I hear, I look on, and I am instructed. I had formed to myself a quite different idea of pedantry. I imagined that it chiefly consisted in seeking occasions of shining in company, in making quotations, and deciding boldly. But your definition is much more simple.—To have a tender breast, and to sit on the edge of a chair; that is what makes a pedant: I will remember it.

LUCY, *laughing.*

Really, Phillis is nettled.—Well Phillis, since you love Miss Surville so much, I promise you I won't laugh at her any more; it will cost me some pains to restrain myself, but I give you my word on it—come, don't pout.

PHILLIS.

But tell me, Miss, what has she done to you, that you should hate her?

LUCY.

I don't hate her.

PHILLIS.

However, you say all the ill of her you can; and if you will be sincere, you will own, that you exaggerate what appears to you ridiculous in her; what more could hatred do?

LUCY.

But——do you think, Phillis?——you have made me uneasy by what you have said——yet I do not attack her reputation.——

PHILLIS.

If you were capable of any thing so black, is there room for it? Is not Miss Surville a model of gentleness, modesty, and goodness? Would any one listen to you, if you said otherwise?——

LUCY, *to Dorina.*

My dear friend, she terrifies me.——My God, is what I have done so very criminal?

DORINA.

How childish to reproach you for a little innocent raillery, which can only appear dan-

gerous in the eyes of Miss Phillis. A great harm indeed in your mimicking Miss Flora: she has only to retort it upon you; certainly you would not be offended.

LUCY.

By no means; on the contrary, I shall be very much pleased. Yes, I shall be glad to have her retort upon me, that we may be quit: for, I don't know why, but that jest oppresses me at present, in spite of me.

PHILLIS.

As to Miss Surville, I assure you, she pardons you with all her heart.

LUCY.

How! does she know that I take her off?

PHILLIS.

Several people have told her of it; she mentioned it to me, and I could not deny it.

LUCY.

Well, what did she say?

PHILLIS.

She laughed heartily.

LUCY.

She laughed.

DORINA.

From the teeth outward, I believe.

PHILLIS.

Then she reproached herself for having laughed : for, said she to me, it is rather a cause of pity ; that young girl, who thinks she is only making diversion, gives a bad opinion both of her heart and understanding ; and these same people, who seem to be entertained with her humour, judge her with as much severity for this trifling offence, as if she was already arrived at the years of reason.

LUCY.

She said so ?——She thinks so ?——

PHILLIS.

O, she is truth itself.

LUCY.

I will have an explanation with her.——I will justify myself, or at least repair my

fault.——Phillis, do you think she believes I have a bad heart?

DORINA.

Let us have done with this conversation, which is really void of common sense. You must go to dinner, and lose no time, for we still have all our lessons to get before the opera. *(To Lucy)* Come, Miss, what are you so thoughtful about?

LUCY.

I am vexed to death.——I have no appetite; I won't dine.

DORINA.

If you are really sick, you had better lie down: you won't go to the opera.

LUCY.

Well, I will go and sit at table. Phillis, give me your arm. *(She goes out with Phillis.)*

DORINA, *seeing them go out.*

Miss Phillis, you ruin all that I do, but I'll be even with you. *(She goes out.)*

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

SCENE FIRST.

MELINDA, LUCY, *who looks sad
and thoughtful.*

MELINDA.

I AM happy, my dear, that I made you come back a second time to the saloon; your success gave me inexpressible pleasure.

LUCY.

Yet I played very badly on the harpsichord.

MELINDA.

O, I assure you, every body was delighted with your accomplishments.

LUCY.

Ah! dear Aunt, are these encomiums very sincere?

MELINDA.

That doubt does credit to your modesty ; but keep up your spirits, my dear, and depend upon it, when you please, there is no degree of praise to which you may not be justly entitled.—Farewell my dear girl; you must finish your lessons ; I am going to send Dorina to you, and in a couple of hours I will be back to take you with me to the opera.

(She goes out.)

LUCY, *alone.*

How she is blinded in my favour by her affection !—Alas ! she has done every thing that depended upon her to procure me an excellent education—And what return have I made for all her tendernefs ?—

SCENE II.

LUCY, DORINA.

(Lucy sits down, and seems thoughtful.)

DORINA.

WELL, Miss, you have captivated every one; there is nothing spoken of within, but your accomplishments, and your graceful manner—but why this melancholy, thoughtful air? What is the matter with you?

LUCY.

If you knew what I have heard, and what I discovered by accident!—

DORINA.

What is it?

LUCY.

After having sung and played upon the harpsichord, I went down to the garden; and passing along the great covered walk, I heard my name pronounced, upon which I stopped, and was concealed by the trees.

DORINA.

You overheard the conversation?

LUCY.

Without any intention, and even in spite of me, I did not miss a word.

DORINA.

Well, what did they say of you?

LUCY.

Whatever was severe, or could be inspired by the most galling criticism: in short, I heard those very people who had just before loaded me with encomiums in the saloon, tear me to pieces, and ridicule me without mercy. Only one, however took my part, and that in the strongest and most generous manner. You will never guess who it was?

DORINA.

I die with impatience to know.

LUCY.

It was Miss Surville.

DORINA.

Well!—But are you very sure that she had not a glimpse of you across the walk.

LUCY.

I am very certain of it ; she was not on the same side with me. I own to you, that this goodness from her, humbled while it affected me, and occasioned a kind of distress which I cannot describe, and which the malevolence of the rest could not cause. The deceitfulness of all these people, inspired me rather with contempt than either anger or vexation ; but the generosity of Miss Surville, provoked me against myself, and in proportion as she spoke, I felt my tears flowing. It seems, that it is more painful to see one's self convicted of injustice, than to experience it from others.

DORINA.

Miss Flora's behaviour on the occasion, was certainly very good ; but you may like-

wife believe, that the desire of appearing to advantage in the eyes of the rest, and affecting a good disposition, had some share in it.

LUCY.

Granting that to be true, she still had the merit of taking the best means of being esteemed; and that is a great deal.

DORINA.

However, Miss, we must think of our lessons. Where shall we begin?

LUCY.

I don't know.—I feel such a sadness, such a despondency to-day, as I never experienced before.

DORINA.

The conversation you have heard is the cause of this little discontent. But, Miss, do you desire to hear something that will very much astonish you.

LUCY.

What is it?

DORINA.

It is, that all this abuse which was levelled against you, is at bottom only a most flattering triumph for you.

LUCY.

How so?

DORINA.

Yes, this criticism, you may depend upon it, is the effect of jealousy.

LUCY.

You think so?

DORINA.

O, I promise you it is. If you was less handsome, less amiable, and had not so much wit, they would do more justice to such promising talents.

LUCY.

What a villainous thing is envy!

DORINA.

You will see more of it in time. You may expect to be hated by the women, who will never pardon your superiority over them.—

LUCY.

Women, in general, then, have very little spirit.—It seems to me, that if I were capable of that humiliating vice you mention, I would employ all my attention to conceal it, and my vanity at least would prevent me from being unjust.

DORINA.

You need not grieve at an evil which is inevitable. Consider, that the hatred of the envious is a secret proof of their admiration, and that their malignity only serves to set off the lustre of that merit which they wish to depress.

LUCY.

Hatred!—I have no idea of what can inspire hatred.—For my part, I shall never hate any one; I am confident of it.

DORINA.

Comfort yourself, you will only be hated by the wicked; feeling hearts will adore you.

LUCY, *embracing her.*

How amiable you are, my dear friend; you

drive away all melancholy thoughts; they are immediately dispelled, if you are present.

DORINA.

Come, let us think no more of the invidious; but prepare for the opera; and, that you may be sure of going there, let us get rid of our lessons. Well, will you play on the harpsichord?

LUCY.

I have no relish for the harpsichord to-day.

DORINA.

Besides, it is not in tune, therefore, if you please, we will sing.

LUCY.

Most willingly.—But I have a cold in my head, and a very fore throat. (*She coughs.*)

DORINA.

And so have I; and nothing is more dangerous, than to sing when one is hoarse; it is enough to destroy the voice for ever.

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LUCY.

Really, I believe I begin to lose my voice.
——But, however, if you please——

DORINA.

No, certainly, I will not allow you to sing;
positively I will not. But let us draw.

LUCY.

I have no objection——But I am dressed,
and I am afraid of spoiling my gown with the
dirty red and black crayons.

DORINA.

That would be a pity, for it suits you to ad-
miration. Come, you are right.——Well, we
will let them alone for this day.

LUCY.

I am well enough inclined, but what will
my Aunt say? perhaps she won't take me to
the opera.

DORINA.

Don't you be uneasy, I'll take care of that.
——Some one is coming, I believe. O, 'tis
Phillis.

SCENE III.

LUCY, DORINA, PHILLIS.

LUCY.

WHAT do you want, Phillis?

PHILLIS.

I am come to be present at your lesson, Miss, and, as your Aunt gives me leave, in the hopes of improving.

DORINA.

You are come too late, the lesson is over.

PHILLIS.

Ah, I am very sorry for it; I am so fond of instruction!

DORINA.

You have, on that head, an excellent model under your eye.

PHILLIS.

Who is it?

P 5

DORINA, *pointing to Lucy.*

Is not Miss there?

PHILLIS.

Miss Lucy a model of application! Upon my word, I should never have suspected it.

LUCY (*aside.*)

Nor I neither.

DORINA.

But, Phillis, I suppose you have not the presumption to believe that you have made greater progress, and are better instructed, than Miss?

PHILLIS.

I beg pardon, but——

DORINA.

How is this? you are quite wanting in respect for her.

PHILLIS.

Ah, my God, that is by no means my intention.

DORINA.

You should know, likewise, that when one

has so much beauty as Miss Lucy, accomplishments may be overlooked.

PHILLIS.

But, Miss, it is you who are wanting in respect for her at this instant.

DORINA.

How so!

PHILLIS.

You are making game of her.

LUCY, *aside*.

I really think so too.

DORINA.

Indeed, Phillis, you are very impertinent.

LUCY.

Ah, I pray you don't be angry with her.

DORINA.

You take her part when the injury is offered to you. Such generosity!—Yes, you have every virtue.

PHILLIS, *to Dorina.*

Miss, I had almost forgot to tell you, I was ordered to let you know, as soon as Miss Lucy's lesson should be over, that you are expected to go and give an account of it to her Aunt.

DORINA.

I shall go. (*Softly to Lucy*) Be perfectly easy, I will tell her wonders of you, and the progress you have made. (*Aloud*) Adieu, Miss, I will be back with you presently.

(*She goes out.*)

SCENE IV.

LUCY, PHILLIS.

LUCY, *aside.*

SHE is going to tell lies to my Aunt; she is going to deceive her; it gives me great vexation?

PHILLIS.

Miss, you seem melancholy; are you angry with me?

LUCY.

No, my dear Phillis——but I have been vexed, and for a considerable time.

PHILLIS.

Well, what is the matter?——how you distress me!

LUCY.

You love me, then, Phillis?

PHILLIS.

Yes, I do——but I don't love Miss Dorina.

LUCY.

Why so?

PHILLIS.

It is because she does not speak truth, and that is so wicked.

LUCY.

Well, I want to tell you a secret; but you must promise me not to speak of it to any one, not even to my Aunt.

PHILLIS.

And does not she herself say, that we must not betray a secret?

LUCY.

I may depend upon you, then?

PHILLIS.

Entirely.

LUCY.

Well, Phillis, I love Dorina; but I own to you, I have for some time observed that she flatters me too much.

PHILLIS.

As to that, I'll lay a wager I discovered it before you did.

LUCY.

Her praises are too great, to be sincere.—

PHILLIS.

And but just now——

LUCY.

I observed it. And likewise she deceives my Aunt about my lessons. I commonly consume

half my time in doing nothing, and she conceals it.

P H I L L I S.

I see that every day.

L U C Y.

And yet that is nothing in comparison of what has happened this day.

P H I L L I S.

What can it be?

L U C Y.

When she tells my Aunt, that I have given application, that I have learnt my lessons well, it is not quite the truth; but at least, I have always done something.—

P H I L L I S.

Yes, either well or ill.

L U C Y.

Well then, think only that for this day, —
Truly, I dare not go on.

P H I L L I S.

Say on, Miss, I pray you.

LUCY.

This day, Phillis, I have not done any thing.

PHILLIS.

What! did you neither sing, draw, nor play on the harpsichord?

LUCY.

Not even made the attempt; yet, at this moment is she telling my Aunt that I have done wonders.

PHILLIS.

How wicked that is!

LUCY.

It is really a dreadful falsehood.

PHILLIS.

Ah, Miss, confess the whole to your Aunt.

LUCY.

I cannot; she will dismiss Dorina.

PHILLIS.

A fine loss, indeed; a liar,

LUCY.

With all her faults she loves me, and that idea attaches me to her.

PHILLIS.

If she loved you, would she flatter you? Would she let all your whims pass unnoticed? Would she not endeavour to correct you?—

LUCY.

That is true.—But, however, I can't but think she has a regard for me, she repeats it so frequently.

PHILLIS.

And don't you know that lies cost her nothing?

LUCY.

That would be so enormous!—

PHILLIS.

Not more than the deceiving your Aunt, who has placed such confidence in her.

LUCY.

In short, I must have a very clear proof

before I can be persuaded she does not love me ; and as I have none, I am resolved not to make her be dismissed. Phillis, be sure to keep my secret.

PHILLIS.

You may depend upon it.—But I hear your Aunt's voice. 'Tis she, and Miss Dorina following her.

SCENE V.

PHILLIS, LUCY, MELINDA,
DORINA.

MELINDA, *to Lucy.*

COME and embrace me, my dear Lucy ; Dorina is delighted with you, and what she has been telling me of you, gives me great pleasure.

LUCY, *aside.*

That pierces me to the soul.

MELINDA.

If you always behave in this manner, you will make me happy.

LUCY, *embarrassed.*

Aunt——

MELINDA.

Promise me, my dear, that you will do as well every day.——You do not answer, you look down——you are not willing to promise what would make me very happy?

DORINA.

O, I am sure Miss will acquit herself of it with pleasure.

LUCY, *sharply to Dorina.*

No, Miss, no.——

DORINA, *to Lucy.*

But you do not reflect.

MELINDA, *to Lucy.*

Well, Lucy, I am not displeas'd at what you said just now; at least it had sincerity to recommend it. I wish you to be accomplish'd, but above all things, I wish you to love truth; it is the chief of all the virtues.

LUCY, *aside.*

How I suffer from this ; what a reproach for me !

MELINDA.

Let us talk no more of study to-day ; Dorina is pleased with you, and you must be rewarded : let us only think of amusing ourselves.

LUCY.

Truly, my dear Aunt, I do not deserve to be rewarded.

MELINDA.

That opinion shews you are the more deserving.

DORINA, *softly to Lucy.*

Lay aside that confused lock.

LUCY, *to Dorina, peevishly.*

Let me alone.

MELINDA, *to Lucy.*

My dear, I observe you are dejected and changed ; are you sick ?

LUCY.

No, Madam.

MELINDA.

She has given too much application to her lesson. (*To Dorina*) You must not give her such long lessons any more; I don't choose that she should be fatigued.

LUCY, *aside*.

Every word she says penetrates me to the quick.

MELINDA.

It is only four o'clock; I will go and take a walk in the garden before I finish my dressing. Lucy, will you go with me?

LUCY.

Most willingly, dear Aunt.

MELINDA.

The air will do you good, for I dare say you have a head-ach. Come, child.——(*She leans upon Lucy, they go out, Phillis following.*)

SCENE VI.

DORINA *alone.*

LUCY gave me a very serious look ; what could it mean ?——She is a whimsical little creature.——But now I am alone, I will read over the letter I began this morning. In truth, I have not a moment to myself. (*She searches her pocket.*) Ah, that is another. I believe, God forgive me, I have lost it.——That would be dreadful. (*She still searches.*) I cannot find it. Perhaps I have left it upon my table. O, heaven, how vexing ! I must go and find it. (*She makes some steps to go.*)

SCENE VII.

DORINA, PHILLIS.

PHILLIS.

MY God, Miss, where are you running so fast?

DORINA.

Have you not found a paper by accident?

PHILLIS.

What is it like?

DORINA.

A sheet folded.

PHILLIS.

Is there any writing?

DORINA.

Yes, there is.

PHILLIS.

Two pages?—

Q

DORINA.

Ay, that is it. Come, give it me.

PHILLIS.

I have found nothing; it was only to laugh.

DORINA.

Plague take the little blockhead, that has kept me so long.—I must go and find it.—
(*She goes out.*)

PHILLIS, *alone.*

Yes, yes, make haste. Go your ways, but you'll find nothing.—Little blockhead, said she?—not such a blockhead neither.—Ah, here comes Miss Lucy in the nick of time.

SCENE VIII.

PHILLIS, LUCY,

PHILLIS.

COME, come, Miss, I have something droll to tell you.

LUCY.

What about?

PHILLIS.

Will you always continue to believe Miss Dorina's friendship for you?

LUCY.

I have no new reason to doubt her.

PHILLIS.

Do you know her writing?

LUCY.

I think so.

PHILLIS, *taking a Letter out of her pocket.*

Well, here is a letter she has begun. Will you hear how she treats you in it?

LUCY.

You have read it, then?

PHILLIS.

Yes, at first, without knowing what it was, and afterwards to be perfectly informed with regard to her.

LUCY.

Phillis, what you have done is very bad ;
you ought not to——

PHILLIS.

I own it; but it was my attachment to you
made me commit this fault. I observed that
you was mentioned in this letter, and I want-
ed to know upon what I might depend.
Here it is.

LUCY.

If you give it me, I will burn it without
opening it.

PHILLIS.

If that is the case I will keep it. But,
Miss, the evil is already done ; do you take
the advantage of it?——

LUCY.

But how did the paper fall into your
hands?——

PHILLIS.

I found it upon the stairs.

LUCY.

And is it Dorina speaks ill of me?

P H I L L I S.

Perhaps they are only truths. I shall read, and you will judge for yourself. (*She reads aloud.*) “Pity me, my dear friend, not only
“because of my being separated from you,
“but likewise on account of the disagree-
“able life I lead here. That little girl whom
“I mentioned to you formerly, distracts me
“every day more and more.—

L U C Y, *interrupting her.*

My name is not mentioned, perhaps she means you.

P H I L L I S.

Hear me to the end. (*She reads.*) “In ad-
“dition to all my trouble, I am obliged to
“approve of her, and still more to flatter
“her, because she is so vain it is the only
“means of pleasing her.”—

L U C Y.

Ah, my God!—

P H I L L I S, *continuing to read.*

“She imagines herself to be a little pro-

“ digy of wit, while in fact, she has not
 “ common sense ; for she has every fault that
 “ can make her a blockhead ; she is proud
 “ and makes game of people ; passes her life
 “ in idleness, bantering, and slander, or be-
 “ fore the looking-glass, in contemplating the
 “ most indifferent and most common figure
 “ you ever saw. In short, Lucy”——(*she in-*
terrupts herself) the name is mentioned this
 time !——

LUCY.

Ah, what malice !——

PHILLIS, *continuing.*

“ In short, Lucy will one day be the
 “ most impertinent and ridiculous little crea-
 ture——”

That is all, Miss, the letter is not finished.
 ——She stopped there in a fair way.

LUCY.

Give it me, I'll read it myself. (*She takes
 the letter and reads it to herself.*)

CHILD.

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PHILLIS.

See, there it is ; I have added nothing.

LUCY, *returning the letter.*

Is it possible to have a mind so base, as to carry falsehood such lengths.—I may have all the faults she finds in me, but why conceal them from me ? Why did she not warn me of them ? I might have corrected myself.

PHILLIS.

You must acquaint your Aunt with every thing.

LUCY.

Won't that look like revenge. And revenge is so disgraceful !

PHILLIS.

It will not be revenging yourself, but ceasing to deceive your Aunt.

LUCY.

I shall not mention the letter ; I shall only make a confession of the falsehood which was told her a little while ago.

PHILLIS.

Your Aunt is so good, that that confession will not be sufficient to make her dismiss Dorina.

LUCY.

No matter, I am determined to speak of nothing but that.

PHILLIS.

I will go and find your Aunt.

LUCY.

Don't say any thing to her, I will own my fault to her myself.

PHILLIS, *aside*.

Yes, yes, she won't mention the letter; but I will shew it. The wicked must be punished. *(She goes out.)*

LUCY, *alone*.

Such ingratitude! Such falsehood!—I must lament her being so wicked; it will occasion much repentance.—People are not born so; she certainly has had a bad education.—Alas! perhaps she was flattered when she was a child!—Odious flattery! I shall ever detest you! *(She sinks down upon a chair.)*

SCENE IX.

DORINA, LUCY.

DORINA, *at the bottom of the stage, not seeing Lucy.*

I have not found it. There is enough in it to ruin me.—

LUCY, *rising.*

(Aside.) 'Tis she, my heart beats. *(Aloud)*
What are you looking for?

DORINA:

Nothing; but what do you do here alone?

LUCY.

I was thinking.

DORINA:

Of what was you thinking?

LUCY.

On a thousand things—for example, I was thinking of my faults.

DORINA.

So you are occupied in thinking of chimeras; I shall chide you, if you employ your time so badly.

LUCY.

No; I have at last learnt to know, and I wish to correct myself; but you must second me, and tell me the truth.—Inform me when I do wrong—tell me all my faults; in a word, become sincere.—On that condition, I may still—yes, Dorina, I may still continue my regard for you.

DORINA.

What is the meaning of this language, and this gloomy, reserved manner?

LUCY.

I cannot dissemble—That dreadful vice, at least is not yet in my heart. I will summon friendship to my assistance; she will not flatter me, but tell me the truth.—I am young, and perhaps shall get the better of those faults, with which I have been too justly reproached.—

DORINA.

What do I hear!—Ah! I am ruined—

LUCY.

I am not offended with you for describing me such as you see me, and such perhaps as I really am;—but, at least, in giving the detail of my faults, you should not complain, since they are your own work.

DORINA.

It is enough, Miss; spare me the rest, and receive my adieu.

LUCY.

Your adieu!—Why leave me?—I repeat it to you, you may atone for what you have done.—Do not deceive me any more, and continue.

DORINA.

No, Miss, I must bid you an eternal adieu.

LUCY.

Eternal?—Stop—Dorina, what will become of you?

DORINA.

I do not know.——

LUCY.

Well, then, remain with me, I conjure you ; my Aunt shall not know what is past, I promise you.

DORINA.

But, Miss, can you forget it ?

LUCY.

I cannot forget it, but you need not doubt my forgiveness.

DORINA.

That is not enough ; my presence must be disagreeable to you ; you shall be freed from it.——Farewell, Miss. *(She goes out.)*

LUCY, *in tears.*

Hear me——hear me.——She is gone!——where can she go?——I feel my tears flow in spite of me.——She deceived me, she hated me ; I no longer esteem her, I must no longer

love her!—But I did love her—'Tis that recollection which affects me. She can no longer be dear to me;—however, I must interest myself in her fate.—Some body comes.—Ah! it is my Aunt.

SCENE X.

MELINDA, PHILLIS, LUCY.

MELINDA.

MY dear Lucy, I come to thank you for your purpose of owning your faults to me.

LUCY.

My dear Aunt, has Phillis told you?—

MELINDA.

She has told me all, and shewn me the letter, notwithstanding you forbid her; which, however, I approve of. Dorina has received the just reward of her wickedness; she is unmasked, and dismissed.

LUCY.

You met her, then?

MELINDA.

This instant ; and I gave her her discharge.

LUCY.

But where will she find an asylum ?

MELINDA.

I do not know.

LUCY.

Ah ! dear Aunt, she has no fortune ; I conjure you——

MELINDA.

You desire it, that is enough ; I promise you I will make a necessary provision for her. At last, thank heaven, her imprudence has made amends for the injury she did you by her treachery. May this sad proof teach you, my child, to distrust flatterers, and to cherish truth, which alone can shew us our faults, and check that vanity which seduces and leads us astray.

T H E E N D.

THE
EFFECTS OF CURIOSITY,

A COMEDY

IN TWO ACTS.

THE PERSONS.

Lady WALCOURT.

SOPHIA, }
HELEN, } *her Daughters.*

CONSTANCE, *Niece of Lady Walcourt.*

Lord WALCOURT, *Son of Lady Walcourt, a
silent person.—He should be dressed in Regi-
mentals, and with his hair dishevelled.*

ROSE, *the Gardener's Daughter.*

Scene, Lady Walcourt's house in the country.



T H E
EFFECTS OF CURIOSITY.
A C O M E D Y.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

The stage represents a garden.

S O P H I A, H E L E N.

H E L E N.

SISTER, my dear Sophia, I conjure
you—

S O P H I A.

Once more I tell you, all these persecutions
are fruitless ; I know no secrets.

R

H E L E N.

What, Sophia! you whose disposition is truth itself, can you maintain a falsehood with such assurance?

S O P H I A.

A falsehood!—an obliging expression——

H E L E N.

It is a just one, however.

S O P H I A.

No; for you always confound indiscretion with frankness, and make a virtue of what is truly a fault: to deceive from a view of interest, from vanity, or in jest, is to tell a lie; but they who steadily maintain that they are ignorant of the secrets with which they have been entrusted, discharge the duty imposed by honour, and upon which the safety of society depends.

H E L E N.

So at last you own you are the depositary of a secret? O, I beg to congratulate you.

SOPHIA.

What I say does not relate to me, I speak in general.

HELEN.

Very well, it is only a remonstrance in form of a definition.

SOPHIA.

Helen, let us change the subject; you are going to vex yourself, I see plainly.

HELEN.

Am I wrong? I am your sister, I love you, I tell you all I know, and you have no confidence in me.

SOPHIA.

My dear Helen, you have an excellent heart, and a thousand good qualities, but—

HELEN.

But I am curious; is not that it? Well, I own I am: it is because I have not your tranquility, your indifference; it is because I set an infinite value upon the least thing

that can be interesting to those I love; that is the reason of my wishing to know, and to discover whatever regards them. If I had less sensibility I should be perfect in your eyes, for in that case, I assure you, I should have no curiosity.

S O P H I A.

But, sister, I always observe that your curiosity exercises itself indifferently, and without choice, on every object that presents itself.

H E L E N.

Yes, formerly; I own, when I was a child I might deserve that reproach.

S O P H I A.

It is no more than fifteen days ago, that Rose, the gardener's daughter was to have been married; she entrusted her secret to me; it became necessary that Mama should prevail with the young man's relations, who had another match in view for him, and till that time the affair was kept secret; but by your industry you discovered it, the secret was divulged, and the marriage broke off.

HELEN.

It is true, I was wrong on that occasion; but I did not foresee what has since happened.

SOPHIA.

I am certain you never intentionally do a bad action; but, sister, excessive curiosity, always draws after it the most dangerous indiscretions. Mama has told you this so often!

HELEN.

That you might spare yourself the trouble of repeating it. But to return to what we were just now speaking of, I protest to you I have no desire to know your secret, but because I have found out that it is you who are personally concerned. For as to mere curiosity, I am corrected—but—absolutely.

SOPHIA.

You assure me of it;—I must believe you. Well sister, rest satisfied: If it be true

that I know a secret, I can assure you it does not regard me.

HELEN.

If it is true!—but speak plain; do you, or do you not know one?

SOPHIA.

What signifies it to you, since the assurance I have given you, ought to put an end to the apprehensions which you had merely on account of your friendship for me?

HELEN.

So that in short I may depend upon it, the secret does not concern you.

SOPHIA.

Still the secret—I by no means allow that I know one, but, on the contrary, I deny it.

HELEN.

Yet every thing gives you the lie. I have eyes! Have I not seen since last night all your whisperings with my cousin; and when I appeared, the signs and gestures, and all the confusion which I occasioned—At this very

moment you expect Constance, I am sure of it; I constrain you by remaining here; you have been rude, you have scolded, you have lectured me, that you might induce me to leave you, but I will remain where I am, I promise you; (*in mockery*) I love you too well my dear little sister to go from you, I am resolved not to part from you one instant this whole day.

SOPHIA.

(*Aside.*) What patience one must have!
(*Aloud.*) Do you imagine Helen that such conduct can induce any one to place much confidence in you?

HELEN.

You go too far; yes, you distract me, you are ungrateful.

SOPHIA.

Ah Helen, how unjust you are!

HELEN.

In short you prefer Constance to me; you make her your confidant, and I am only a

third person, troublesome and teasing to both of you: I, who am older than she is, and who am your sister; is not that cruel?

SOPHIA.

Ah! if you were less curious, and less indiscrete, I should never desire to conceal any thing from you: but, sister, that confidence which you require, you have betrayed so often—

HELEN.

I repeat it to you, I am changed; make a trial, trust me with your secret.

SOPHIA.

So sister, and you pretend to be no longer curious.

HELEN.

I am but in jest—I swear to you, if you were desirous just now to tell me your secret, I would not hearken to it: besides, if I was

anxious to know it, I easily could in spite of you; I can guess right sometimes; you may remember.

SOPHIA.

Yes, and I have seen your penetration mislead you oft'ner than once.

HELEN.

I foresee that it will serve me well upon the present occasion.—I'll lay a wager that it is about marriage.—We are three people here to marry, you, my cousin, and myself; and the whole difficulty is to guess which of the three is the object of the present attention.

SOPHIA.

What! do you think if it was you, it would be concealed from you, and you the only one of the three from whom it would be kept a secret?

HELEN.

O my God, I am sure Mama would trust you with it, before she mentioned it to me, and I should not be informed of it till the whole affair was settled.

SOPHIA.

Ah! Helen, what reflections must the certainty of this occasion you to make! What severe justice do you inflict upon yourself? Is it possible that, being persuaded you inspire such a hurtful humiliating distrust, you do not get the better of your faults?

HELEN.

So, so, you allow then that I have almost guessed.—

SOPHIA.

Guessed what?—

HELEN.

This marriage.

SOPHIA.

How sister, do you imagine you are going to be married?

HELEN.

You made me think so.

SOPHIA.

Who, I?—

HELEN.

It is true, you are older than I — but one year only — Aha! a thought comes in my head — perhaps we are both going to be married at the same time.——

SOPHIA.

Without doubt, and Constance too; three marriages in one day, that is the secret; now you have discovered it.

HELEN.

Now you banter; but for one marriage —there is one in the wind that is certain. —This Baron Sanford, who arrived yesterday, and who was never seen here before —you won't tell me now, there is no secret? —His long conversations with Mama, his absence of mind, his being absorbed in thought, every thing proves it——yet he is very melancholy and very old——I don't suppose it is he that thinks of marrying; but perhaps he has a son —or some nephews——I shall unravel it all. My God, how unlucky it is

my brother is not here; he loves me, he would have no whisperings. Well, he must soon return from his regiment—Sophia, what is the matter with you? You are absent, you don't hearken to me.

SOPHIA.

I have nothing to reply to all the follies you have been uttering this hour.

HELEN.

Follies!—There is nobody reasonable but yourself, at least you think so.—Yes, you think you are a little model of perfection—when you have preached sufficiently, and with great energy, you preserve a contemptuous silence, and not one word more can be obtained from you.—O, you are excellent company!

SOPHIA.

Helen, you want to put me in a passion; but you shall not succeed, except in making me vexed at those faults which my friendship cannot see in you without being excessively grieved.

HELEN.

I don't know how it is, but you always have the secret of being in the right.

SOPHIA.

You that love secrets so much, ought certainly to learn that one; I don't flatter myself that I have it, but at least I know how to prefer it to all other secrets.

HELEN.

Ah! Sophia, if you loved me more, I would esteem you from the bottom of my heart—Somebody comes—ha! it is Constance.

SCENE II.

SOPHIA, HELEN, CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE, *Comes in haste and says:*

SOPHIA! — *(Then, seeing Helen, she stops. They continue a short time silent, during which Helen observes them.)*

SOPHIA, *To Constance.*

Constance, did not you come to look for us?

HELEN.

Yes, and she is happy at finding us together
—It is painted on her countenance.

CONSTANCE.

Why do you think otherwise, Helen; I love
you both equally, you know I do.

HELEN.

Surely! When mutual confidence is estab-
lished, as it is between us three, if one is
absent, the other two wish for her, or go in
search of her: that is what my sister and I
were about to do when you came; but now
that we are got together let us chat; come let
us sit down. *(She draws a seat.)*

SOPHIA, *low to Constance.*

We must dissemble.

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CONSTANCE, *low to Sophia.*

We shall never find a moment to read this letter——(*She stops, because Helen turns her head round to look at them.*)

HELEN.

O, I see what you would be at.

SOPHIA.

What?

HELEN.

To speak softly——truly this is not to be endured——I dare say that from two people so prudent, so discrete, and so perfect, a little more politeness might be expected; but I will be no longer troublesome, I shall leave you at full liberty. Adieu, Sophia; I shall no longer constrain you; from henceforth I shall avoid you, since I have no other means of pleasing you.

SOPHIA.

My dear Helen, how cruel you are; I intreat you to stay.——

HELEN.

No sister, no——to tell you the truth, I am acting against my inclination——if I was to remain, you would make me lose all patience, and I would rather be vexed than go away, but we should learn to master our passions. Adieu. *(She goes out hastily.)*

SCENE III.

SOPHIA, CONSTANCE.

(They remain silent a short time till they have lost sight of Helen.)

CONSTANCE.

So, she is gone at last.——

SOPHIA.

Yes, but I am afraid she will be soon back again.

CONSTANCE.

She is likewise very capable of hiding herself, that she may overhear.——

SOPHIA:

Go softly and see—My God, how vexing,
to be obliged to take precautions against a
person one loves!—

CONSTANCE, *returning.*

Now you may be easy. I met Rose at the
entrance into the grove, and bid her acquaint
us if she sees Helen.

SOPHIA:

But that is telling Rose we have a secret.—

CONSTANCE.

By no means.—Rose is so simple! I told
her, laughing, that it was a joke, and she the
rather believes it, as we have already oftner
than once made her watch for trifles—in
short, we are secure at least that Helen will
not come and surprize us.—Dear Sophia,
let us lose no more time.

S

SOPHIA.

I told you last night I had received a letter from my brother; that I had read it, and was permitted to communicate the contents to you.—

CONSTANCE.

And it was the Steward who delivered the letter to you?

SOPHIA.

Yes; here it is, I will read it to you; ah! my dear Constance.

CONSTANCE.

Sophia! you are in tears——O heavens! what has happened?——

SOPHIA.

If you knew all that I have suffered since yesterday, and with what difficulty I have feemed to be as calm and as gay as usual!— Hear this letter and you will judge——but see first, if Rose is still watching.

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CONSTANCE.

I will.

SOPHIA.

O brother, brother!—what will be the end of this cruel adventure?

CONSTANCE, *returning.*

Rose is still there, and Helen not to be seen; let us take advantage of the present favourable moment; read then, my dear Sophia, either calm, or complete this dreadful disquiet.

SOPHIA.

Alas! what am I going to communicate to you! (*She unfolds the letter.*) The date is, Thursday morning,—

CONSTANCE.

That is yesterday!—but Lord Walcourt's regiment is forty-five leagues from hence; how could you receive it the same day?

SOPHIA.

Ah Constance, my brother is not with his regiment, he is here.—

S ij

CONSTANCE.

Here!

SOPHIA.

Oh my God! don't raise your voice; if we should be heard——Yes, he is concealed in this house, but hear the letter, it will inform you of every thing. (*She reads it aloud but in a low voice, and looking from time to time with apprehension lest some one should come. She runs her eye over it.*) Hum, hum——“ But let me
“ come to the particulars of my unfortunate
“ adventure.——You know that the regiment
“ of the Marquis of Wallace, is thirty leagues
“ distant from our's, and you are no stranger
“ to the friendship which unites us: a letter
“ from one of our common friends, informed
“ me that he had lost a considerable sum at
“ play, and was exceedingly distressed; being
“ desirous to fly without delay to his assist-
“ ance, I ordered my servant to report that I
“ was sick, on purpose to be excused from
“ duty, and I set out immediately, in hopes
“ of returning in two days at farthest.” You will recollect my brother in this action.

CONSTANCE.

Ah! that stroke is a true picture of his
foul.

SOPHIA.

That a noble action should have such fatal
consequences!—but let us have done.
(*She reads.*) “As I set off without leave, I
“had the precaution to change my name for
“that of Sir John Myrtle, under which name
“I arrived at Valenciennes. On entering
“the town, I could not think my dear
“Sophia, without the most tender emotions,
“that I was but fifteen leagues distant from
“my mother and sisters.”—I cannot stop my
tears.

CONSTANCE.

Give it to me; I'll read it. (*She takes the
letter.*)

SOPHIA.

Hush, I hear a noise.

CONSTANCE.

'Tis Rose.

SOPHIA.

Ah! give me my letter.—(*She takes the letter
and puts it in her pocket.*)

Rose enters hastily and mysteriously, and says in passing near Sophia,

Miss Helen is at my heels. (She crosses the stage and goes out at the opposite side.)

SOPHIA.

Was there ever any thing so unlucky?—

CONSTANCE.

Let us go to our chamber.

SOPHIA.

Helen will follow us there likewise—but here she comes; let us change our subject.

SCENE IV.

SOPHIA, CONSTANCE, ROSE, HELEN.

(The last makes some steps and then stops.)

CONSTANCE.

For my part I love the English gardens better.

SOPHIA.

And I think their imitations of nature are but meanly executed, and—

HELEN *coming forward.*

Pardon me, I am afraid I interrupt a very lively and interesting dispute.

CONSTANCE.

O not at all, we were speaking of gardens.

HELEN.

Yes, and for fear of being interrupted in such an important conversation, you placed a sentry at the entrance of the grove.

SOPHIA.

What is it you mean?

S iij

HELEN.

Rose was not here just now. I did not see her take to her heels, to come and acquaint you of my approach. Sophia, Constance, you are both very prudent; but you have no address, you really have none, I must tell you so. I would have you employ some more skill in your little intrigues, without which they will always be discovered,

CONSTANCE.

Well, what have you discovered?

HELEN.

In the first place, that you have a secret; it remains to be known what that secret is, which to discover I only ask the remainder of this day, and in the evening I will give you an account of it: O I promise you, you sha'n't be kept longing for it. Now let me begin. In the first place, by looking at you attentively, I owe to your gestures the discovery of what nature your secret is; you have talked of it, for you cannot think I am to be misled by your English garden. Let me see a little

what impresson it has left on your countenances.—

SOPHIA.

Helen, you see nothing in mine, but the shame I feel for you, on account of that disgraceful curiosity which hurries you to such excess.

HELEN.

With what an air of indignation do you speak to me! O heavens! is it not enough to refuse me your confidence? Sophia, you despise me.—If I have not your good qualities, I may acquire them; I am but young, I may correct myself: Sister, have you lost all hopes of me? Ah answer me; encourage me.—

SOPHIA.

With so good a heart, is it possible you can be incorrigible?

HELEN.

Ah, Sister!—*(They embrace: and after a short silence.)*

SOPHIA.

My dear Helen, I expect every thing from your understanding and reflexion.

HELEN.

And I from your example and advice.

CONSTANCE.

Somebody comes—I believe it is my aunt.

HELEN.

Yes, 'tis she.

SCENE V.

SOPHIA, CONSTANCE, HELEN,
LADY WALCOURT.

Lady WALCOURT *aside at the bottom of the Stage.*

Here she is, the rest must be sent away.
{*aloud.*} Helen, go and receive some company in the saloon that are just arrived, and I will be with you presently. Constance, go with your cousin—and Sophia, do you remain.

HELEN.

And my sister—is not she to come with us?

Lady WALCOURT.

That is not necessary—go, Helen—

H E L E N.

But Mama, Sophia is eldest, and she will do the honours much better than I.

Lady W A L C O U R T.

I think you sufficiently capable to take her place upon the present occasion.

H E L E N.

You will remain then alone with her?

Lady W A L C O U R T.

I wish to have fewer questions, and more obedience, Helen.

H E L E N.

Fewer questions!—I have asked but one.—

Lady W A L C O U R T.

I forbid you to add a second, or to remain one moment longer.

H E L E N.

(Aside, in going out.) This is very hard! I am sadly vexed. *(She goes out, Constance following.)*

SCENE VI.

Lady WALCOURT, SOPHIA.

Lady WALCOURT, *seeing Helen go out.*

What a strange temper!—what vexation she gives me!—Now we are alone, my child, I want to talk with you, Sophia, I have occasion to open my heart to you.

SOPHIA.

Ah, Mama, I dare not ask you the cause of your melancholy.—

Lady WALCOURT.

I am oppressed with vexation, which is more severe, as I must dissemble in the presence of every one. My dear, your prudence and discretion, so superior to your age, justifies my confidence in you; it is boundless, and I am going to prove it, by revealing the most important secret that I ever can discover to you.

SOPHIA.

You may by new instances of kindness add to my happiness, but neither my affection nor gratitude can be increased; my dear Mama, I cannot love you better, nor feel more sensibly all that I owe to you.

Lady WALCOURT.

Ah! my dear Sophia, you make me a happy mother!—but alas! I have but one friend, tho' I have two daughters.

SOPHIA.

Helen will in time render herself deserving of a title so honourable and so dear to—

Lady WALCOURT.

Ah! would to heaven!—But let us return to the secret I want to communicate to you; my dear Sophia, it will distress you.

SOPHIA.

Am I not already prepared for it, since I see you are afflicted?

Lady WALCOURT.

The secret regards your brother.

SOPHIA (*Aside.*)

I know it but too well. (*Aloud.*) Well, Mama.

Lady WALCOURT.

I must begin by telling you that he is well and in safety; at present his history, in two words, is, he left his regiment about twelve days ago, and without leave; friendship called him to Valenciennes where he went under an assumed name; it was his misfortune to put up at the same inn with the son of Baron Sanford; that very evening, they entered into so warm a dispute that they resolved to fight next morning.

SOPHIA.

Good God!

Lady WALCOURT.

In fact they set out at the break of day, both on horseback, to go and fight on the

frontiers; what shall I tell you, my dear Sophia, your brother, after having received a deep and dangerous wound, gave a terrible blow to his adversary, whom he saw stagger, and bathed in blood fall at his feet; he believed he was killed, and himself scarcely able to stand, drew towards his horse, and very soon collecting the little strength that remained to him, withdrew from the fatal place. This dreadful scene happened on the frontiers, and of course but four leagues from hence.—

SOPHIA.

Ah! so near to us!

Lady WALCOURT.

My son having but a step to make to be out of France, intended to leave the kingdom, but in half an hour being quite exhausted from loss of blood, was obliged to stop and sit down at the foot of a tree, where he very soon lost the use of his senses. At that instant, providence conducted the

faithful Theobald, my steward, whose attachment you well know, to the very spot.

SOPHIA.

Ah! could heaven abandon the son of the most affectionate and best of mothers!—All its favours Mama, we owe to your goodness.

Lady WALCOURT.

The greatest of all for me, it has placed in your heart; it is in that pure and feeling mind I find the greatest happiness I can enjoy, and the only consolation of which I am susceptible.—But let us resume that melancholy conversation which perhaps we may have no opportunity of renewing before the evening.

SOPHIA.

Theobald then brought my brother here?

Lady WALCOURT.

Happily he was alone in a covered chaise, into which he carried my son, who continued

insensible; and taking by-roads, brought him at first to his mother's at the end of the village; then, when all this family were gone to bed, he came to acquaint me with the tragical event. I ran myself to find my unhappy son; Theobald, and the family-furgeon, transported him to my apartment, where I have watched him for seven nights, during which he was in great danger!

SOPHIA.

And I have had no share in such dear and melancholy attendance!—But Mama, is my brother perfectly recovered?

Lady WALCOURT.

He is at least in a condition to set out without danger.

SOPHIA.

What! is he going to leave you?

Lady WALCOURT.

Alas! he must. Judge, my dear child, in what distress I am involved: this Baron

T

Sanford, who is just arrived, is the father of the unfortunate young man whom your brother has undoubtedly killed.

S O P H I A.

He knows nothing of this fatal event?—

Lady W A L C O U R T.

Thank heaven, he knows but one part of the truth. He was told that his son and Sir John Myrtle had set out together, and in haste; the people of the inn declared that they had a very warm dispute; that they had received no intelligence of them, and it was but too probable they went off in such hurry for no other purpose but to fight. They added, that in the dispute my son had been the aggressor. On being acquainted with the fatal adventure, Baron Sanford, who is naturally violent, and of keen feelings, was equally animated with grief and resentment: he wrote to the officers commanding the frontier towns, that he might learn if Sir

John Myrtle had passed into the neighbouring state, or to prevent his flight, if there was still time.

SOPHIA.

So that not knowing my brother's true name, he is in pursuit of a phantom.

Lady WALCOURT.

But he may discover that name which is of such importance for us to conceal; his fortune, his rank, and character, make him a most formidable and dangerous enemy—

SOPHIA.

But what is his purpose in coming here?

Lady WALCOURT.

He is come into this province in expectation of obtaining some information about the fate of his son. He supposes that he fought on the frontiers, my estate is situated there, we were acquainted formerly, and all these circumstances have determined him to come here; think what I must feel at seeing him

enter this house!—He gave me the whole detail of this terrible history; he talks to me of nothing but his grief, and his schemes of vengeance; I join him in his sorrow, and weep with him; but how bitter must those tears be which are shed in the bosom of a cruel enemy, the persecutor of my son!—

SOPHIA.

My God! you make me shudder!

Lady WALCOURT.

Sometimes I venture to combat his resentment, and undoubtedly at that time my zeal hurries me too far, for he stares at me with surprize, and his look of astonishment dismays me: I feel as if I was betraying myself, and had pronounced the name of my son—In short, for these four and twenty hours, I have experienced whatever constraint, terror, and pity can inflict that is cruel and grievous. But, alas! the unhappy man who is the occasion of all this distress, is more to be pitied than I.—

SOPHIA.

Unhappy man! he thinks there is comfort in revenge!—

Lady WALCOURT.

Alas! he undoubtedly imposes upon himself;—if it be true that there are hearts which can err so egregiously as to desire vengeance, are there any so inhuman as to satiate such a desire without horror?—This shocking gratification of mean and savage dispositions, degrades him who yields to it, and condemns him to eternal remorse.

SOPHIA.

Mama, is my brother to set out soon?

Lady WALCOURT.

This very night.

SOPHIA.

And these orders given to the Governors of the Frontier Towns?—

Lady WALCOURT.

These orders relate only to Sir John Myrtle; my son is known, and cannot be confounded with a young man of a different

name, and who is represented as an adventurer. These are the reflexions which encourage me, but still I tremble, and am oppressed and persecuted with dreadful apprehensions.—If Baron Sanford was to hear positively of the death of his son; if he was to discover the asylum and real name of his enemy; gracious heaven! to what an excess of mad despair would it not transport him!—

SOPHIA.

Ah! Mama, you terrify me.—

Lady WALCOURT.

I have taken all the precautions which the prudence of a mother could suggest; I have given orders to let no stranger have admittance. Theobald told me that a man came this morning to ask if Baron Sanford was here; Theobald, without hesitation, replied that he was not; this man having received fresh instructions returned in two hours, and insisted on speaking with the Baron, on seeing him alone, and refused to give his name;

Theobald dismissed him, by informing him that the Baron could not receive him till to-morrow evening; and my son by that time will be out of France.

SOPHIA.

This man who conceals what he is, disturbs me; and I recollect, that this morning when I was walking with Helen and my Governess in the little wood, I saw a man wandering up and down who observed us, and seemed desirous to avoid being seen: his hat was pulled over his face so that I would not see his looks.

Lady WALCOURT.

How! did he follow you?

SOPHIA.

Yes, but always at a distance. We sat down, and having lost sight of him, we chatted freely, when in about half an hour, a noise which I heard behind among the leaves, made me look round, and I saw the same man with his back to us, running off with all his speed.

T iij

Lady WALCOURT.

Certainly he heard you:

SOPHIA.

We thought so, and immediately returned home.

Lady WALCOURT.

Undoubtedly it must be the same man Theobald speaks of——But what can this mysterious conduct mean?——Come, let us go to the Baron, and not leave him again——Ah! I wish night was come! What a day has this been!——but I hear somebody coming.

SOPHIA.

'Tis Rose.

Lady WALCOURT.

What can she want?——