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LOVE'S GRADVATE

A COMEDY

BY

JOHN WEBSTER

PRINTED AT THE PRIVATE PRESS OF

H. DANIEL

FELLOW OF WORCESTER COLLEGE

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of which this is No. 59.*



NOTE

THE idea of this volume originated with Mr. EDMUND GOSSE, when he pointed out how, under an unpleasant title and among matter which would be offensive were it not contemptible, there lies obscured a charming domestic drama of English country life three centuries ago, the work of a famous hand. Even the title is due to Mr. GOSSE, as much as the Essay he has kindly prefixed to the play.

JOHN WEBSTER has here laid aside the tragic thunders which his name calls to remembrance; or at least only lets them be heard in distant rumblings of sword-and-dagger fights on Calais sands, of Spanish Warships threatening the Kentish shore, or of fiery passions subdued just not too late. In "LOVE'S GRADUATE" we breathe a calmer and a fresher air; the virtues and failings of the Persons are those of our own country and of common life; by force of simple trustfulness evil is turned to good, and a tangled mesh of circumstance is unravelled to a happy conclusion. The crudities, for such there are, of metre, of plot, and sometimes of language, can easily be tolerated, and would, it may be thought, be mitigated in representation on the stage.

It has been the aim of the writer of this Note to restore WEBSTER's original work, so far as is now possible, by means of simple omission of the scenes and parts of scenes which contain the underplot; and for these omissions he alone is responsible. Otherwise the text is that of DYCE, with a few slight verbal alterations, and many of punctuation. There are many passages in the play which a PORSON of English might greatly improve: and looking to the late date, 1661, at which it was first printed, the application to it of such critical ingenuity would seem at least defensible. This however cannot here be attempted.

Our play as now presented, enriched with the criticism of Mr. GOSSE, and embodied in the typography of Mr. DANIEL, is humbly commended to all true lovers of English literature.

S. E. S. R.

LONDON: March 22, 1885.

PREFATORY ESSAY

IN THE ensuing pages an enthusiastic lover of the fame of Webster has performed a pious duty. He has extracted the ore from "a mineral of metals base", and the poetry from a work in which a poetaster had more than a finger. It is peculiarly grateful to me that the Editor should ask me to introduce his experiment to the world of letters with a few critical words, since the conception of the scheme was mine, as he kindly admits, and even the name of the new play. Moreover, if it be a discovery, it is the eldest child of my research. I was hardly more than a schoolboy when I formed the view of Kirkman's venture which has been accepted by the best critics, and I have a peculiar fondness for this the earliest trophy of my spear & of my pen. When I first found an opportunity of divulging my opinion, in 1874, it was met with general approval. When, in 1883, I embodied it, with more confident expression, in my volume of *Seventeenth Century Studies*, such refined and learned students of our drama as Mr. John Addington Symonds, Mr. George Saintsbury and Professor Edward Dowden pointedly congratulated me on it anew. Lastly, lest my theory should not be found to bear the passage of years, on receiving the Editor's invitation, I applied to my old friend and earliest censor, Mr. Swinburne, begging him to glance once more at

the original and at my phrases, and to tell me whether the latter still commended themselves to him. I take his reply as final in its encouragement. He tells me that on fresh examination he still "wholly concurs in my conclusion as to the parts respectively assignable to Webster and to Rowley". He adds, too indulgently, "Your analysis of the play in question was admirable", and I, remembering the tender and callow years I bore when that analysis was conceived, am reminded of that paradoxical remark of Théophile Gautier, that we change in taste, perhaps, certainly in force, from twenty upwards, but not in the quality of our opinions. Perhaps, then, I may be permitted to speak in this one instance of my conjectures as of facts, without seeming to throw my lot in with the school of arrogant pedants who measure verse with their fingers, or if with ears at all, with ears for thickness and length like those of Midas. With these men the trick of dividing dramatist from dramatist has become a disease, but I trust that the investigation, which our Editor has here at length illustrated, was conducted on my part with all due regard to none but sound imaginative and metrical traditions.

In 1661 the bookseller Francis Kirkman, who had been a collector of books before he took to the trade of a publisher, sent forth from his shop at the sign of John Fletcher's Head, on the back-side of St. Clement's Church, a play in quarto entitled A Cure for a Cuckold, A pleasant comedy As it hath been several times Acted with great Applause. Written by John Webster & William Rowley. It was then nearly forty years since Webster had been heard of alive, yet only seven since the first publication of his undoubted Tragedy of Appius and Virginia. Both the

White Devil and the Dutchess of Malfy were very shortly to be revived, and Webster was the one Elizabethan poet, after Jonson, Fletcher and Shakespeare, in whom the Restoration would take an intelligent interest. There is no doubt that it was a revival of curiosity about Webster which induced Kirkman to print this old MS. play, in company with many others which he possessed. He was less happy in simultaneously presenting to the public the windy trash called The Thracian Wonder as being also a joint tragedy of Webster and Rowley. It has doubtless been the worthlessness of this latter play, which Dyce admitted into Webster's works in 1830, and then rejected again in 1857, which has led to the neglect of its sister-venture, A Cure for a Cuckold. At all events until I drew attention to this last, it had never received the critical examination which its partial beauty and dignity demand.

It is perhaps the only play of double authorship which has come down to us from the seventeenth century which we can confidently and yet not rashly divide in detail between its two parents. There seems in this one instance no danger whatever in dissecting the piece, scene by scene, and labelling each one "Webster" or "Rowley". The circumstances of its creation I have surmised to be these. William Rowley, a rough playwright of the Jacobean age, whose work bears no traces of that academic polish which a Cambridge man should have brought from the College which nourished Spenser and Gray, had attained a sudden success with such loose comedies as A Shoemaker a Gentleman & A New Wonder, Woman never vexed. He came into so good repute for patching up other men's serious work with light town-comedy, that we find

Day, Wilkins, Middleton, Heywood and even Massinger happy to accept him in dramatic partnership. To mix his lukewarm tide of wit with that of the author of *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* or of *The Mayor of Queensborough*, however, was one thing, and another to mingle with the dreadful *Muse of Webster*. Sooner might the chalky waters melt into the crystal below the walls of Geneva than Rowley become indistinguishable from such a coadjutor as this. The result is that his coarse & boisterous little farce proceeds side by side with Webster's stately comedy, & mingles with it as little as life below should mingle with life above stairs.

Hence the spirit of the two tiny dramas clashes continually; consistent alone, viewed together they are most inconsistent. Webster's characters are sententious, gentleman-like and of a sensitive nobility, Rowley's are ribald & vulgar. In short, not to repeat further what I have said elsewhere, the Webster portion of the joint production forms a complete and independent work which I have long hoped that some editor might see his way to detaching from its coarse surroundings. This has been done at last, and Webster's comedy is presented to the reader without any of Rowley's mud adhering to it. The Editor has further adopted for the now otherwise nameless piece the title of *Love's Graduate*, which I suggested on the score of Clare's protest, so ill sustained by her, that she will "never ambition have to become a graduate in Love's school."

The central scene of *Love's Graduate*, the quarrel on Calais sands between Lessingham and Bonville, bears a resemblance to another piece of Caroline drama which I had already noted, and which could not evade the observation of so profound

a student of old plays as Mr. Swinburne. He writes to me ;—
“Have you noticed the identity of motive between Webster’s part
of A Cure for a Cuckold and the story of Montrose, Cleremond
and Leonora in Massinger’s Parliament of Love ? I cannot but
think that the two poets must have gone to a common source for
the leading idea of their plots. Massinger’s treatment of it is, I
think, in his best manner,—full of noble grace and dignity.”—
This passage from Massinger it will perhaps please the reader of
our play to be able to compare with the scene on pp. 30—36. As
in Love’s Graduate, so in the Parliament of Love, a captious
woman, Leonora, not wholly realising her own wickedness, insists
that Cleremond, if he would win her love, should kill his best
friend first. Just as Bonville, on the very day of his marriage,
is decoyed by Lessingham to Calais Sands to be nominally his se-
cond but in fact his victim, so Cleremond insists, with the same
duplicity, that Montrose should break the first appointment that
the woman he loves has ever made with him. The scene in Mas-
singer runs thus ;—

An open part of the Country near Paris.

Enter Cleremond and Montrose.

Cler. This is the place.

Mont. An even piece of ground,
 Without advantage ; but be jocund, friend :
 The honour to have entered first the field,
 However we come off, is ours.

Cler. I need not,

So well I am acquainted with your valour,
 To dare, in a good cause, as much as man,
 Lend you encouragement ; and should I add,
 Your power to do, which Fortune, howe'er blind,
 Hath ever seconded, I cannot doubt
 But Victory still fits upon your sword,
 And must not now forsake you.

Mont. You shall see me
 Come boldly up ; nor will I shame your cause,
 By parting with an inch of ground not bought
 With blood on my part.

Cler. 'Tis not to be question'd :
 That which I would entreat, (and pray you grant it,)
 Is, that you would forget your usual softness,
 Your foe being at your mercy : it hath been
 A custom in you, which I dare not praise,
 Having disarm'd your enemy of his sword,
 To tempt your fate, by yielding it again ;
 Then run a second hazard.

Mont. When we encounter
 A noble foe, we cannot be too noble.

Cler. That I confess ; but he that's now to oppose you,
 I know for an archvillain ; one who hath lost
 All feeling of humanity, one that hates
 Goodness in others, 'cause he's ill himself !
 A most ungrateful wretch, (the name's too gentle,
 All attributes of wickedness cannot reach him,)
 Of whom to have deserved, beyond example,

Or precedent of friendship, is a wrong
Which only death can satisfy.

Mont. You describe
A monster to me.

Cler. True, Montrose, he is so.
Afric, though fertile of strange prodigies,
Never produced his equal ! be wise, therefore,
And if he fall into your hands, despatch him :
Pity to him is cruelty. The sad father,
That sees his son stung by a snake to death,
May, with more justice, stay his vengeful hand,
And let the worm escape, than you vouchsafe
A minute to repent : for 'tis a slave
So sold to hell and mischief, that a traitor
To his most lawful prince, a church-robber,
A parricide, who, when his garners are
Cramm'd with the purest grain, suffers his parents,
Being old, and weak, to starve for want of bread ;
Compared to him, are innocent.

Mont. I ne'er heard
Of such a cursed nature : if long-lived,
He would infect mankind : rest you assured,
He finds from me small courtesy.

Cler. And expect
As little from him : blood is that he thirsts for,
Not honourable wounds.

Mont. I would I had him
Within my sword's length !

Cler. Have thy wish : thou hast !

[*Cleremond draws his sword.*

Nay, draw thy sword, and suddenly ; I am
That monster, temple-robber, parricide,
Ingrateful wretch.

The resemblance here is wonderfully close, and Mr. Swinburne, as we have seen, believes that each poet drew his inspiration from some common source. It may be so, but we must remember that The Parliament of Love is a play with a curious history. It is, not the last, but a very late arrival into the family of Massinger's plays. It was first printed by Gifford from a unique and incomplete MS., lent him by Malone, a MS. which, on being compared with the famous corrections in the Duke of Milan, appeared to be in the poet's own handwriting. It had been licensed in 1624, a date rather low down in the century to be considered exactly contemporary with Webster, and it had been entered on the books of the Stationers' Company in June, 1660, or a few months before A Cure for a Cuckold was printed, and then apparently withdrawn from publication. Again, this abortive attempt at publication itself is coupled in some vague way with the name of W. Rowley. The Parliament of Love, though excellently written, is perhaps less original in plot than any other of Massinger's. Two of its most effective scenes are borrowed from Shakespeare, and recall rather too baldly Cymbeline & Winter's Tale. Now Kirkman tells us that A Cure for a Cuckold had been a favourite acting play ; "several persons," he says in 1661, "remember the acting of it, and say that it then pleased generally

well." *My own opinion is, I confess, that Massinger had seen it, and that the Parliament of Love missed publication, first in Massinger's life-time, and afterwards at the Restoration, because the circumstances in it reminded people too openly of scenes in this and other popular plays.*

Our beautiful little trouvaille, our piece of silver-work by the sculptor whose other groups are all in bronze, will know how to win the admiration of its readers. It breathes now for the first time, since its original appearance was a still birth. This lovely fragment of the romance of Elizabeth came into the world when Etheredge was eating custard, in a Chedreux periwig, on the bridge at Paris, and when Dryden was tagging rhymes into the Rival Ladies in pale following of Corneille. Webster's fresh-coloured gentlemen were as old-fashioned then as were the hose and the slashed doublets they had worn. We, with our new sympathy for pure romance, are nearer to them after these two centuries than were Mr. Kirkman's customers, at the sign of the John Fletcher's Head, on the morning that the play was published.

EDMUND GOSSE,

LOVE'S GRADVATE

PERSONS

WOODROFF, a justice of the peace, father to Annabel.

FRANCKFORD, a merchant, brother-in-law to Woodroff.

LESSINGHAM, a gentleman, in love with Clare.

BONVILE, a gentleman, the bridegroom and lover to Annabel.

RAYMOND

EVSTACE

LIONEL

GROVER

ROCHFELD, a young gentleman and a thief.

A Sailor.

ANNABEL, the bride and wife to Bonvile.

CLARE, Lessingham's mistress.

A Waitingwoman.

LOVE'S GRADVATE

Act I. Scene 1.

Lessingham and Clare.

Less. This is a place of feasting and of joy,
And, as in triumphs and ovations, here
Nothing save state and pleasure.

Clare. 'Tis confess'd.

Less. A day of mirth and solemn jubilee,—

Clare. For such as can be merry.

Less. A happy nuptial,
Since a like pair of fortunes suitable,
Equality in birth, parity in years,
And in affection no way different,
Are this day sweetly coupled.

Clare. 'Tis a marriage.

Less. True, lady, and a noble precedent
Methinks for us to follow. Why should these

Outstrip us in our loves, that have not yet
Outgone us in our time ? If we thus lose
Our best and not-to-be-recovered hours
Unprofitably spent, we shall be held
Mere truants in love's school.

Clare. That is a study
In which I never shall ambition have
To become graduate.

Leff. Lady, you are sad :
This jovial meeting puts me in a spirit
To be made such. We two are guests invited
And meet by purpose not by accident :
Where's then a place more opportunely fit
In which we may solicit our own loves,
Than before this example ?

Clare. In a word,
I purpose not to marry.

Leff. By your favour ;
For as I ever to this present hour
Have studied your observance, so from henceforth
I now will study plainness :—I have loved you
Beyond myself, mis-spended for your sake
Many a fair hour which might have been employed
To pleasure or to profit ; have neglected
Duty to them from which my being came,
My parents, but my hopeful studies most :
I have stolen time from all my choice delights
And robb'd myself, thinking to enrich you :

Matches I have had offer'd, some have told me
As fair, as rich,—I never thought them so :
And lost all these in hope to find out you.
Resolve me then for Christian charity ;
Think you an answer of that frozen nature
Is a sufficient satisfaction for
So many more than needful services ?

Clare. I have said, sir.

Leff. Whence might this distaste arise ?
Be at least so kind to perfect me in that.
Is it of some dislike lately conceiv'd
Of this my person, which perhaps may grow
From calumny and scandal ? if not that,
Some late-received melancholy in you ?
If neither, your perverse and peevish will,—
To which I most imply it ?

Clare. Be it what it can or may be, thus it is ;
And with this answer pray rest satisfied.
In all these travels, windings, and indents,
Paths, and by-paths, which many have sought out,
There's but one only road, and that alone,
To my fruition : which who so finds out
'Tis like he may enjoy me ; but that failing,
I ever am mine own.

Leff. O, name it, sweet !
I am already in a labyrinth,
Vntil you guide me out.

Clare. I'll to my chamber :

May you be pleas'd unto your mis-spent time
To add but some few minutes, by my maid
You shall hear further from me.

Leff. I'll attend you.

[*Exit Clare.*]

What more can I desire than be resolv'd
Of such a long suspense? Here's now the period
Of much expectation.

Enter Raymond, Eustace, Lionel, and Grover.

Ray. What, you alone retir'd to privacy
Of such a goodly confluence, all prepar'd
To grace the present nuptials!

Leff. I have heard some say
Men are ne'er less alone than when alone,
Such power hath meditation.

Eust. O these choice beauties
That are this day assembled! but of all
Fair Mistresses Clare, the bride excepted still,
She bears away the prize.

Lion. And worthily;
For, setting off her present melancholy,
She is without taxation.

Grov. I conceive
The cause of her so sudden discontent.

Ray. 'Tis far out of my way.

Grov. I'll speak it, then.
In all estates, professions, or degrees,

In arts or sciences, there is a kind
 Of emulation ; likewise so in this.
 There's a maid this day married, a choice beauty :
 Now Mistress Clare, a virgin of like age
 And fortunes correspondent, apprehending
 Time lost in her that's in another gain'd,
 May upon this—for who knows women's thoughts ?—
 Grow into this deep sadness.

Ray. Like enough.

Leff. You are pleasant, gentlemen, or else perhaps,
 Though I know many have pursu'd her love,—

Grov. And you amongst the rest, with pardon, sir ;
 Yet she might cast some more peculiar eye
 On some that not respects her.

Leff. That's my fear,
 Which you now make your sport,

Enter Waitingwoman.

Wait. A letter, sir.

Leff. From whom ?

Wait. My mistress.

[*Gives letter.*]

Leff. [*aside*] She has kept her promise ;
 And I will read it, though I in the same
 Know my own death included.

Wait. Fare you well, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Leff. [*reads*] *Prove all thy friends, find out the best & nearest ;
 Kill for my sake that friend that loves thee dearest.*

Her servant, nay her hand and character,
 All meeting in my ruin!—Read again.
Prove all thy friends, find out the best and nearest ;
Kill for my sake that friend that loves thee dearest.
 And what might that one be ? 'tis a strange difficulty,
 And it will ask much counsel. [Exit.

Ray. Lessingham
 Hath left us on the sudden.

Eust. Sure, the occasion
 Was of that letter sent him.

Lion. It may be
 It was some challenge.

Grov. Challenge ! never dream it :
 Are such things sent by women ?

Ray. 'Twere an heresy
 To conceive but such a thought.

Lion. Tush, all the difference
 Begot this day must be at night decided
 Betwixt the bride and bridegroom.—Here both come.

Enter Woodroff, Annabel, Bonvile and Franckford.

Wood. What did you call the gentleman we met
 But now in some distraction ?

Bon. Lessingham ;
 A most approv'd and noble friend of mine,
 And one of our prime guests.

Wood. He seem'd to me

Somewhat in mind distemper'd. What concern
Those private humours our so public mirth,
In such a time of revels? Mistress Clare,
I miss her too: why, gallants, have you suffer'd her
Thus to be lost amongst you?

Anna. Dinner done,
Vnknown to any, she retir'd herself.

Wood. Sick of the maid perhaps, because she sees
You, mistress bride, her school and playfellow,
So suddenly turn'd wife.

Franck. 'Twas shrewdly guess'd.

Wood. Go find her out.—Fie, gentlemen, within
The music plays unto the silent walls,
And no man there to grace it: when I was young,
At such a meeting I have so bestir'd me
Till I have made the pale green-sickness girls
Blush like the ruby, and drop pearls apace
Down from their ivory foreheads; in those days
I have cut capers thus high. Nay, in, gentlemen,
And single out the ladies.

Ray. Well advis'd.—
Nay, mistress bride, you shall along with us,
For without you all's nothing.

Anna. Willingly,
With master bridegroom's leave.

Bon. O my best joy,
This day I am your servant.

Wood. True, this day;

She his, her whole life after,—so it should be ;
 Only this day a groom to do her service,
 For which, the full remainder of his age,
 He may write master. I have done it yet,
 And so, I hope, still shall.—Come, we are miss'd
 Among the younger fry : gravity ofttimes
 Becomes the sports of youth, especially
 At such solemnities ; and it were sin
 Not in our age to show what we have bin. [Exeunt.]

Scene 2.

Enter Lessingham, sad, with a letter in his hand.

Less. *Amicitia nihil dedit Natura maius nec rarius :*
 So saith my author. If then powerful Nature
 In all her bounties shower'd upon mankind,
 Found none more rare and precious than this one
 That we call Friendship, O, to what a monster
 Would this trans-shape me,—to be made that he
 To violate such goodness ! To kill any,
 Had been a sad injunction ; but a friend !
 Nay, of all friends the most approv'd ! a task
 Hell, till this day, could never parallel.
 And yet this woman has a power of me
 Beyond all virtue,—virtue ! almost grace.
 What might her hidden purpose be in this,

Unless she apprehend some fantasy,
 That no such thing has being, and as kindred
 And claims to crowns are worn out of the world,
 So the name friend ? 't may be 'twas her conceit.
 I have tried those that have professed much
 For coin, nay, sometimes, slighter courtesies,
 Yet found them cold enough : so, perhaps, she ;
 Which makes her thus opinion'd. If in the former
 And therefore better days 'twas held so rare,
 Who knows but in these last and worse times
 It may be now with Justice banish'd th' earth ?
 I'm full of thoughts, and this my troubled breast
 Distemper'd with a thousand fantasies.
 Something I must resolve. I'll first make proof
 If such a thing there be ; which having found,
 'Twixt love and friendship 'twill be a brave fight
 To prove in man which claims the greatest right.

Enter Raymond, Eustace, Lionel, and Grover.

Ray. What, Master Lessingham !
 You that were wont to be compos'd of mirth,
 All spirit and fire, alacrity itself,
 Like the lustre of a late-bright-shining sun,
 Now wrapt in clouds and darkness !

Lion. Prithee, be merry ;
 Thy dulness fads the half part of the house
 And deads that spirit which thou wast wont to quicken

And, half-spent, to give life to.

Leff. Gentlemen,
Such as have cause for sport, I shall wish ever
To make of it the present benefit
While it exists ; content is still short-breath'd :
When it was mine, I did so ; if now yours,
I pray make your best use on't.

Lion. Riddles and paradoxes :
Come, come, some crotchet's come into thy pate,
And I will know the cause on't.

Grov. So will I,
Or, I protest, ne'er leave thee.

Leff. 'Tis a business
Proper to myself, one that concerns no second.

Grov. How's that ! not a friend ?

Leff. Why, is there any such ?

Grov. Do you question that ? what do you take me for ?

Eust. Ay, sir, or me ? 'Tis many months ago
Since we betwixt us interchang'd that name,
And, of my part, ne'er broken.

Lion. Troth, nor mine.

Ray. If you make question of a friend, I pray
Number not me the last in your account,
That would be crown'd in your opinion first.

Leff. You all speak nobly ; but amongst you all
Can such a one be found ?

Ray. Not one amongst us
But would be proud to wear the character

Of noble friendship : in the name of which
And of all us here present, I entreat,
Expose to us the grief that troubles you.

Leff. I shall, and briefly. If ever gentleman
Sunk beneath scandal, or his reputation,
Never to be recover'd, suffer'd, and
For want of one whom I may call a friend,
Then mine is now in danger.

Ray. I'll redeem 't,
Though with my life's dear hazard.

Eust. I pray, sir,
Be to us open-breasted.

Leff. Then 'tis thus.
There is to be perform'd a monomachy,
Combat, or duel,—time, place, and weapon
Agreed betwixt us. Had it touch'd myself
And myself only, I had then been happy ;
But I by composition am engag'd
To bring with me my second, and he too
Not, as the law of combat is, to stand
Aloof and see fair play, bring off his friend,
But to engage his person : both must fight,
And either of them dangerous.

Eust. Of all things
I do not like this fighting.

Leff. Now, gentlemen,
Of this so great a courtesy I am
At this instant merely destitute.

Ray. The time?

Leff. By eight o'clock to-morrow.

Ray. How unhappily
Things may fall out! I am just at that hour,
Vpon some late-conceived discontents,
To atone me to my father; otherwise
Of all the rest you had commanded me
Your second and your servant.

Lion. Pray, the place?

Leff. Calais-lands.

Lion. It once was fatal to a friend of mine
And a near kinsman; for which I vow'd then,
And deeply too, never to see that ground:
But if it had been elsewhere, one of them
Had before nine been worms'-meat.

Grov. What's the weapon?

Leff. Single-sword.

Grov. Of all that you could name,
A thing I never practis'd: had it been
Rapier, or that and poniard, where men use
Rather sleight than force, I had been then your man.
Being young, I strain'd the sinews of my arm;
Since then to me 'twas never serviceable.

Euff. In truth, sir, had it been a money-matter,
I could have stood your friend; but as for fighting,
I was ever out at that.

Leff. Well, farewell, gentlemen.

[*Exeunt Raymond, Eustace, Lionel, and Grover.*]

But where's the friend in all this? Tush, she's wife,
And knows there's no such thing beneath the moon :
I now applaud her judgment.

Enter Bonville.

Bon. Why, how now, friend! This discontent, which now
Is so unseason'd, makes me question what
I ne'er durst doubt before, your love to me :
Doth it proceed from envy of my blifs,
Which this day crowns me with? or have you been
A secret rival in my happiness,
And grieve to see me owner of those joys
Which you could wish your own?

Leff. Banish such thoughts,
Or you shall wrong the truest faithful friendship
Man e'er could boast of. O, mine honour, fir!
'Tis that which makes me wear this crown of sorrow :
Were that free from the power of calumny,—
But pardon me, that being now a-dying,
Which is so near to man, if part we cannot
With pleasant looks.

Bon. Do but speak the burden,
And I protest to take it off from you
And lay it on myself.

Leff. 'Twere a request
Impudence without blushing could not ask,
It bears with it such injury.

Bon. Yet must I know't.

Leff. Receive it then :—but I entreat you, fir,
Not to imagine that I apprehend
A thought to further my intent by you ;
From you 'tis least suspected :—'twas my fortune
To entertain a quarrel with a gentleman,
The field betwixt us challeng'd, place and time,
And these to be perform'd not without seconds :
I have relied on many seeming friends,
But cannot blefs my memory with one
Dares venture in my quarrel.

Bon. Is this all ?

Leff. It is enough to make all temperature
Convert to fury. Sir, my reputation,
The life and soul of honour, is at stake,
In danger to be lost ; the word of coward
Still printed in the name of Lessingham.

Bon. Not while there is a Bonville. May I live poor
And die despis'd, not having one sad friend
To wait upon my hearse, if I survive
The ruin of that honour ! Sir, the time ?

Leff. Above all spare me that, for that once known
You'll cancel this your promise and unsay
Your friendly proffer ; neither can I blame you :
Had you confirm'd it with a thousand oaths
The heavens would look with mercy, not with justice,
On your offence, should you infringe them all.
Soon after sun-rise, upon Calais-sands,

To-morrow we should meet : now to defer
Time one half-hour, I should but forfeit all.
But, sir, of all men living, this, alas,
Concerns you least ; for shall I be the man
To rob you of this night's felicity,
And make your bride a widow, her soft bed
No witness of those joys this night expects ?

Bon. I still prefer my friend before my pleasure,
Which is not lost for ever, but adjourn'd
For more mature employment.

Leff. Will you go, then ?

Bon. I am resolv'd I will.

Leff. And instantly ?

Bon. With all the speed celerity can make.

Leff. You do not weigh those inconveniences
This action meets with : your departure hence
Will breed a strange distraction in your friends,
Distrust of love in your fair virtuous bride,
Whose eyes perhaps may never more be blest'd
With your dear sight, since you may meet a grave,
And that not 'mongst your noble ancestors
But amongst strangers, almost enemies.

Bon. This were enough to shake a weak resolve ;
It moves not me. Take horse as secretly
As you well may : my groom shall make mine ready
With all speed possible, unknown to any.

Leff. But, sir, the bride.

Enter Annabel.

Anna. Did you not see the key that's to unlock
My carcanet and bracelets ? now, in troth,
I am afraid 'tis lost.

Bon. No, sweet, I ha't ;
I found it lie at random in your chamber,
And knowing you would miss it, laid it by :
'Tis safe, I warrant you.

Anna. Then my fear's past :
But till you give it back, my neck and arms
Are still your prisoners.

Bon. But you shall find
They have a gentle gaoler.

Anna. So I hope.
Within you're much inquir'd of.

Bon. Sweet, I follow. [*Exit Annabel.*] Dover—

Leff. Yes, that's the place.

Bon. If you be there before me, hire a bark :
I shall not fail to meet you.

[*Exit.*

Leff. Was ever known
A man so miserably blest'd as I ?
I have no sooner found the greatest good
Man in this pilgrimage of life can meet,
But I must make the womb where 'twas conceiv'd
The tomb to bury it, and the first hour it lives
The last it must breathe. Yet there is a fate
That sways and governs above women's hate.

ACT II. Scene I.

Enter Rockfield.

Rock. A younger brother; 'tis a poor calling;
Though not unlawful, very hard to live on:
The elder fool inherits all the lands,
And we that follow, legacies of wit,
And get 'em when we can too. Why should law,
If we be lawful and legitimate,
Leave us without an equal dividend?
Or why compels it not our fathers else
To cease from getting, when they want to give?
No, sure, our mothers will ne'er agree to that;
They love to groan, although the gallows echo
And groan together for us: from the first
We travel forth, t'other's our journey's end.
I must forward. To beg is out of my way,
And borrowing is out of date. The old road,
The old high-way, 't must be, and I am in't:
The place will serve for a young beginner,
For this is the first day I set ope shop.
Success, then, sweet Laverna! I have heard
That thieves adore thee for a deity:

I would not purchase by thee but to eat ;
And 'tis too churlish to deny me meat.—
Soft ! here may be a booty.

Enter Annabel and a Servant.

Anna. Horf'd, say'st thou ?

Serv. Yes, mistress, with Lessingham.

Anna. Alack, I know not what to doubt or fear !

I know not well whether't be well or ill :
But, sure, it is no custom for the groom
To leave his bride upon the nuptial day.
I am so young and ignorant a scholar—
Yes, and it proves so ; I talk away perhaps
That might be yet recover'd. Prithee, run :
The fore-path may advantage thee to meet 'em,
Or the ferry, which is not two miles before,
May trouble 'em until thou com'st in ken ;
And if thou dost, prithee enforce thy voice
To overtake thine eyes, cry out, and crave
For me but one word 'fore his departure ;
I will not stay him, say, beyond his pleasure
Nor rudely ask the cause, if he be willing
To keep it from me. Charge him by all the love—
But I stay thee too long : run, run.

Serv. If I had wings, I would spread 'em now, mistress.

Anna. I'll make the best speed after that I can ;
Yet I'm not well acquainted with the path :

My fears, I fear me, will misguide me too.

[Exit.]

Roch. There's good movables,
I perceive, whate'er the ready coin be :
Whoever owns her, she's mine now ; the next ground
Has a most pregnant hollow for the purpose.

[Exit.]

Scene 2

*Enter Servant, who runs over, and exit : then enter Annabel ;
after her, Rockfield.*

Anna. I'm at a doubt already where I am.

Roch. I'll help you, mistress : well overtaken.

Anna. Defend me goodness !—What are you ?

Roch. A man.

Anna. An honest man, I hope.

Roch. In some degrees hot, not altogether cold
So far as rank poison, yet dangerous
As I may be dress'd : I am an honest thief.

Anna. Honest and thief hold small affinity ;
I never heard they were akin before :
Pray heaven I find it now !

Roch. I tell you my name.

Anna. Then, honest thief, since you have taught me so,
For I'll enquire no other, use me honestly.

Roch. Thus, then, I'll use you. First, to prove me
honest,

I will not violate your chastity
(That's no part yet of my profession),
Be you wife or virgin.

Anna. I am both, fir.

Rob. This then it seems should be your wedding-day
And these the hours of interim, to keep you
In that double state : come then I'll be brief,
For I'll not hinder your desired hymen.
You have about you some superfluous toys
Which my lank hungry pockets would contain
With much more profit and more privacy ;
You have an idle chain which keeps your neck
A prisoner ; a manacle, I take it,
About your wrist too. If these prove emblems
Of the combined hemp to halter mine,
The Fates take their pleasure ! these are set down
To be your ransom, and there the thief is prov'd.

Anna. I will confess both, and the last forget.
You shall be only honest in this deed :
Pray you take it ; I entreat you to it,
And then you steal them not.

Rob. You may deliver them.

Anna. Indeed I cannot. If you observe fir,
They are both lock'd about me, and the key
I have not : haply you are furnished
With some instrument that may unloose them.

Rob. No in troth lady ; I am but a freshman ;
I never read further than this book you see,

And this very day is my beginning too :
These picking-laws I am to study yet.

Anna. O do not show me that fir, 'tis too frightful !
Good, hurt me not, for I do yield them freely :
Use but your hands ; perhaps their strength will serve
To tear them from me without much detriment :
Somewhat I will endure.

Rob. Well, sweet lady,
You're the best patient for a young physician
That I think e'er was practis'd on. I'll use you
As gently as I can, as I'm an honest thief.
No ? will't not do ? Do I hurt you, lady ?

Anna. Not much fir.

Rob. I'd be loth at all. I cannot do't.

Anna. Nay then, you shall not fir. You a thief

[*She draws his sword.*]

And guard yourself no better ? no further read ?
Yet out in your own book ? a bad clerk, are you not ?

Rob. Ay, by Saint Nicholas :—lady, sweet lady,—

Anna. Sir, I have now a masculine vigour
And will redeem myself with purchase too.
What money have you ?

Rob. Not a cross, by this foolish hand of mine.

Anna. No money ? 'twere pity then to take this from thee ;
I know thou'lt use me ne'er the worse for this ;
Take it again, I know not how to use it :
A frown had taken't from me, which thou hadst not.
And now hear and believe me,—on my knees

I make the protestation—forbear
 To take what violence and danger must
 Dissolve, if I forego them now. I do assure
 You would not strike my head off for my chain,
 Nor my hand for this : how to deliver them
 Otherwise, I know not. Accompany
 Me back unto my house, 'tis not far off :
 By all the vows which this day I have tied
 Vnto my wedded husband, the honour
 Yet equal with my cradle-purity,
 (If you will tax me,) by the hoped joys,
 The blessings of the bed, posterity,
 Or what aught else by woman may be pledg'd,
 I will deliver you in ready coin
 The full and dear'st esteem of what you crave.

Rock. Ha ! ready money is the prize I look for :
 It walks without suspicion any where,
 When chains and jewels may be stay'd and call'd
 Before the constable : but—

Anna. But ! can you doubt ?
 You saw I gave you my advantage up :
 Did you e'er think a woman to be true ?

Rock. Thought's free : I have heard of some few, lady,
 Very few indeed.

Anna. Will you add one more to your belief ?

Rock. They were fewer than the articles of my belief,
 Therefore I have room for you, and will believe you.
 Stay ; you'll ransom your jewels with ready coin ;

So may you do, and then discover me.

Anna. Shall I reiterate the vows I made
To this injunction, or new ones coin?

Roch. Neither; I'll trust you: if you do destroy
A thief that never yet did robbery,
Then farewell I, and mercy fall upon me!
I knew one once fifteen years courtier old,
And he was buried ere he took a bribe:
It may be my case in the worser way.
Come, you know your path back.

Anna. Yes, I shall guide you.

Roch. Your arm: I'll lead with greater dread than will;
Nor do you fear, though in thief's handling still. [Exeunt.]

Scene 3.

*Enter Woodroff, Franckford, Raymond, Eustace, Grover,
Lionel, and Clare.*

Wood. This wants a precedent, that a bridegroom
Should so discreet and decently observe
His forms, postures, all customary rites
Belonging to the table, and then hide himself
From his expected wages in the bed.

Franck. Let this be forgotten too, that it remain not
A first example.

Ray. Keep it amongst us,

Left it beget too much unfruitful sorrow.
 Most likely 'tis that love to Lessingham
 Hath fastened on him, we all denied.

Eust. 'Tis more certain than likely : I know 'tis so.

Grov. Conceal then : the event may be well enough.

Wood. The bride my daughter, she is hidden too ;
 This last hour she hath not been seen with us.

Ray. Perhaps they are together.

Eust. And then we make too strict an inquisition :
 Under correction of fair modesty,
 Should they be stol'n away to bed together
 What would you say to that ?

Wood. I would say, speed them well ;
 And if no worse news comes I'll never weep for't.

Clare. [*aside*] I fear myself most guilty for the absence
 Of the bridegroom. What our wills will do
 With over-rash and headlong peevishness
 To bring our calm discretions to repentance !
 Lessingham's mistaken, quite out o'the way
 Of my purpose too.

Wood. So, so ;
 There's some good luck yet, the bride's in sight again.

Enter Annabel, and Rockfield.

Anna. Father, and gentlemen all, beseech you
 Entreat this gentleman with all courtesy :
 He is a loving kinsman of my Bonville's,

That kindly came to gratulate our wedding ;
But as the day falls out, you see alone
I personate both groom and bride ; only
Your help to make this welcome better.

Wood. Most dearly.

Ray. To all, assure you, sir.

Wood. But where's the bridegroom, girl ?
We are all at a nonplus here, at a stand,
Quite out ; the music ceas'd, and dancing furbated,
Not a light heel amongst us ; my cousin Clare too
As cloudy here as on a washing-day.

Clare. It is because you will not dance with me ;
I should then shake it off.

Anna. 'Tis I have cause
To be the sad one now, if any be :
But I have question'd with my meditations,
And they have render'd well and comfortably
To the worst fear I found. Suppose this day
He had long since appointed to his foe
To meet and fetch a reputation from him,
Which is the dearest jewel unto man :
Say he do fight, I know his goodness such
That all those powers that love it are his guard
And ill cannot betide him.

Wood. Prithee peace ;
Thou'lt make us all cowards to hear a woman
Instruct so valiantly,—Come, the music !
I'll dance myself rather than thus put down :

What! I am rife a little yet.

Anna. Only this gentleman
Pray you be free in welcome to : I tell you
I was in a fear when first I saw him.

Rock. [*aside*] Ha! she'll tell.

Anna. I had quite lost my way in
My first amazement ; but he so fairly came
To my recovery, in his kind conduct
Gave me such loving comforts to my fears ;
'Twas he instructed me in what I spake,
And many better than I have told you yet ;
You shall hear more anon.

Rock. [*aside*] So, she will out with't.

Anna. I must, I see, supply both places still.—
Come, when I have seen you back to your pleasure,
I will return to you, sir : we must discourse
More of my Bonvile yet.

Omnes. A noble bride, faith.

Clare. [*aside.*] You have your wishes and you may be merry :
Mine have over-gone me. [*Exeunt all except Rockfield.*]

Rock. It is the trembling'st trade to be a thief!
H'ad need have all the world bound to the peace,
Besides the bushes and the vanes of houses :
Every thing that moves, he goes in fear of's life on ;
A fur-gown'd cat, an meet her in the night,
She stares with a constable's eye upon him,
And every dog a watchman ; a black cow
And a calf with a white face after her

Shows like a furly justice and his clerk ;
 And if the baby go but to the bag,
 'Tis ink and paper for a mittimus.
 Sure I shall never thrive on't ; and it may be
 I shall need take no care,—I may be now
 At my journey's end, or but the goal's distance,
 And so to t'other place. I trust a woman
 With a secret worth a hanging ; is that well ?
 I could find in my heart to run away yet :
 And that were bafe too, to run from a woman :
 I can lay claim to nothing but her vows,
 And they shall strengthen me.

Re-enter Annabel.

Anna. See, fir, my promise :
 [*Giving money*] There's twenty pieces, the full value, I vow,
 Of what they cost.

Roch. Lady, do not trap me
 Like a sumpter-horse, and then spur-gall me
 Till I break my wind. If the constable
 Be at the door, let his fair staff appear :
 Perhaps I may corrupt him with this gold.

Anna. Nay, then, if you mistrust me,—Father, gentlemen,
 Master Raymond, Eustace !

*Re-enter Woodroff, Franckford, Raymond, Eustace, Grover,
 Lionel, and Clare, with a Sailor.*

Wood. How now ! what's the matter girl ?

Anna. For shame, will you bid your kinsman welcome ?
No one but I will lay a hand on him :
Leave him alone, and all a-revelling !

Wood. O, is that it ?—Welcome, welcome heartily !
I thought the bridegroom had been return'd.—But
I have news, Annabel ; this fellow brought it.—
Welcome fir ! why, you tremble methinks, fir.

Anna. Some agony of anger 'tis, believe it,
His entertainment is so cold and feeble.

Ray. Pray be cheer'd, fir.

Roch. I'm wondrous well fir ; 'twas the gentleman's mistake.

Wood. 'Twas my hand shook belike then ; you must pardon
Age, I was stiffer once. But as I was saying,
I should by promise see the sea to-morrow
('Tis meant for physic) as low as Lee or Margate :
I have a vessel riding forth, gentlemen,
'Tis call'd the God-speed too,
Though I say't, a brave one, well and richly fraughted !
And I can tell you she carries a letter of mart
In her mouth too, and twenty roaring boys
On both sides on her, starboard and larboard.
What say you now, to make you all adventurers ?
You shall have fair dealing, that I'll promise you.

Ray. A very good motion, fir : I begin ;

[*Giving money*] There's my ten pieces.

Eust. [*giving money*] I second them with these.

Grov. [*giving money*] My ten in the third place.

Roch. [*gives money*] And, fir, if you refuse not a proffer'd love,
Take my ten pieces with you too.

Wood. Yours above all the rest, fir.

Anna. Then make them above, venture ten more.

Roch. Alas, lady, 'tis a younger brother's portion,
And all in one bottom !

Anna. At my encouragement, fir :
Your credit, if you want, shall not sit down
Vnder that sum return'd.

Roch. With all my heart, lady.—[*giving money*] There, fir.
[*Aside*] So, she has fish'd for her gold back, and caught it ;
I am no thief now.

Wood. I shall make here a pretty assurance.

Roch. Sir, I shall have a suit to you.

Wood. You are likely to obtain it then, fir.

Roch. That I may keep you company to sea
And attend you back : I am a little travell'd.

Wood. And heartily thank you too, fir.

Anna. Why that's well said.—

Pray you be merry : though your kinsman be absent,
I am here, the worst part of him ; yet that shall serve
To give you welcome : to-morrow may show you
What this night will not ; and be full assur'd,
Vnless your twenty pieces be ill-lent
Nothing shall give you cause of discontent.

[*Giving money*] There's ten more, fir.

Roch. [*aside*] Why should I fear ? Foutre on't !
I will be merry now, spite of the hangman.

[*Exeunt.*

*Act III. Scene 1.**Enter Lessingham and Bonville.*

Bon. We are first i'the field : I think your enemy
Is stay'd at Dover or some other port,
We hear not of his landing.

Less. I am confident
He is come over.

Bon. You look, methinks, fresh-colour'd.

Less. Like a red morning, friend, that still foretells
A stormy day to follow : but methinks,
Now I observe your face, that you look pale ;
There's death in't already.

Bon. I could chide your error.
Do you take me for a coward ? A coward
Is not his own friend, much less can he be
Another man's. Know sir, I am come hither
To instruct you, by my generous example,
To kill your enemy, whose name as yet
I never question'd.

Less. Nor dare I name him yet
For disheartening you.

Bon. I do begin to doubt

The goodnefs of your quarrel.

Leff. Now you have't;
For I proteft that I muft fight with one
From whom, in the whole courfe of our acquaintance,
I never did receive the leaft injury.

Bon. It may be the forgetful wine begot
Some fudden blow, and thereupon this challenge.
Howe'er you are engag'd; and, for my part,
I will not take your courie, my unlucky friend,
To fay your confcience grows pale and heartlefs
Maintaining a bad caufe. Fight as lawyers plead,
Who gain the beft of reputation
When they can fetch a bad caufe smoothly off:
You are in, and muft through.

Leff. O my friend,
The nobleft ever man had! When my fate
Threw me upon this bufinefs, I made trial
Of divers had profeff'd to me much love,
And found their friendship, like the effects that kept
Our company together, wine and riot:
Giddy and finking I had found them oft,
Brave feconds at pluralities of healths;
But when it came to the proof, my gentlemen
Appear'd to me as promifing and failing
As cozening lotteries. But then I found
This jewel worth a thoufand counterfeits:
I did but name my engagement, and you flew
Vnto my fuccour with that cheerfulnefs

As a great general haltes to a battle,
 When that the chief of the adverse part
 Is a man glorious and of ample fame ;
 You left your bridal bed to find your death-bed ;
 And herein you most nobly express'd
 That the affection 'tween two loyal friends
 Is far beyond the love of man to woman
 And is more near allied to eternity.
 What better friend's part could be show'd i'the world !
 It transcends all : my father gave me life,
 But you stand by my honour when 'tis falling
 And nobly underprop it with your fword.
 But now you have done me all this service,
 How, how shali I requite this ? how return
 My grateful recompense for all this love ?
 For it am I come hither with full purpose
 To kill you.

Bon. Ha !

Leff. Yes, I have no opposite i'the world but
 Yourself : [*giving letter*] there, read the warrant for your death.

Bon. 'Tis a woman's hand.

Leff. And 'tis a bad hand too :
 The most of 'em speak fair, write foul, mean worse.

Bon. Kill me ! Away, you jest.

Leff. Such jest as your sharp-witted gallants use
 To utter, and lose their friends. Read there how I
 Am fetter'd in a woman's proud command :
 I do love madly, and must do madly.

Deadliest hellebore or vomit of a toad
Is qualified poison to a woman's malice.

Bon. [*reading*] *And kill that friend.* Strange!

Leff. You may see, sir,
Although the tenure by which land was held
In villanage be quite extinct in England,
Yet you have women there at this day living
Make a number of slaves.

Bon. *And kill that friend!*

She mocks you, upon my life, she does equivocate :
Her meaning is, you cherish in your breast
Either self-love or pride, as your best friend,
And she wishes you'd kill that.

Leff. Sure, her command
Is more bloody : for she loathes me, and has put,
As she imagines, this impossible task,
For ever to be quit and free from me :
But such is the violence of my affection
That I must undergo it. Draw your sword
And guard yourself : though I fight in fury
I shall kill you in cold blood, for I protest
'Tis done in heart-sorrow.

Bon. I'll not fight with you,
For I have much advantage : the truth is,
I wear a privy coat.

Leff. Prithee put it off, then,
If thou beest manly.

Bon. The defence I mean is the justice of my cause ;

That would guard me and fly to thy destruction.
What confidence thou wear'st in a bad cause!
I am likely to kill thee if I fight;
And then you fail to effect your mistress' bidding
Or to enjoy the fruit of't. I have ever
Wished thy happiness, and vow I now
So much affect it, in compassion
Of my friend's sorrow : make thy way to it.

Leff. That were a cruel murder.

Bon. Believe't, 'tis ne'er intended otherwise,
When 'tis a woman's bidding.

Leff. O the necessity of my fate!

Bon. You shed tears.

Leff. And yet must on in my cruel purpose :
A judge, methinks, looks loveliest when he weeps
Pronouncing of death's sentence. How I stagger
In my resolve! Guard thee, for I came hither
To do and not to suffer. Wilt not yet
Be persuaded to defend thee? turn the point,
Advance it from the ground above thy head,
And let it underprop thee otherwise
In a bold resistance.

Bon. Stay. Thy injunction was
Thou shouldst kill thy friend.

Leff. It was.

Bon. Observe me.

He wrongs me most ought to offend me least,
And they that study man say of a friend

There's nothing in the world that's harder found,
 Nor sooner lost. Thou cam'st to kill thy friend,
 And thou mayst brag thou hast done't ; for here for ever
 All friendship dies between us, and my heart,
 For bringing forth any effects of love,
 Shall be as barren to thee as this sand
 We tread on, cruel and inconstant as
 The sea that beats upon this beach. We now
 Are severed : thus hast thou slain thy friend
 And satisfied what the witch, thy mistress, bade thee.
 Go, and report that thou hast slain thy friend.

Leff. I am serv'd right.

Bon. And now that I do cease to be thy friend
 I will fight with thee as thine enemy :
 I came not over idly to do nothing.

Leff. O friend !

Bon. Friend !

The naming of that word shall be the quarrel.
 What do I know but that thou lov'st my wife
 And feign'dst this plot to divide me from her bed,
 And that this letter here is counterfeit ?
 Will you advance, sir ?

Leff. Not a blow :

'Twould appear ill in either of us to fight,
 In you unmanly ; for believe it sir,
 You have disarm'd me already, done away
 All power of resistance in me. It would show
 Beastly to wrong the dead : to me you say

You are dead for ever, lost on Calais-fands
By the cruelty of a woman. Yet remember
You had a noble friend, whose love to you
Shall continue after death. Shall I go over
In the same bark with you?

Bon. Not for yon town
Of Calais : you know 'tis dangerous living
At sea with a dead body.

Leff. O, you mock me.
May you enjoy all your noble wishes!

Bon. And may you find a better friend than I,
And better keep him!

Scene 2.

*Enter Raymond, Eustace, Lionel, Grover, Annabel
and Clare.*

Lion. Whence was that letter sent?

Anna. From Dover, sir.

Lion. And does that satisfy you what was the cause
Of his going over?

Anna. It does : yet had he
Only sent this, it had been sufficient.

Ray. Why, what's that?

Anna. His will, wherein
He has estated me in all his land.

Eust. He's gone to fight.

Lion. Lessingham's second, certain.

Anna. And I am lost, lost in't for ever.

Clare. [*aside*] O fool Lessingham,
Thou hast mistook my injunction utterly,
Utterly mistook it! and I am mad, stark mad
With my own thoughts, not knowing what event
Their going-o'er will come to. 'Tis too late
Now for my tongue to cry my heart mercy.
Would I could be senseless till I hear
Of their return! I fear me both are lost.

Ray. Who should it be Lessingham's gone to fight with?

Eust. Faith, I cannot possibly conjecture.

Anna. Miserable creature! a maid, a wife,
And widow in the compass of two days!

Ray. Are you sad too?

Clare. I am not very well, sir.

Ray. I must put life in you.

Clare. Let me go, sir.

Ray. I do love you in spite of your heart.

Clare. Believe it,
There was never a fitter time to express it,
For my heart has a great deal of spite in't.

Ray. I will discourse to you fine fancies.

Clare. Fine fooleries, will you not?

Ray. By this hand, I love you and will court you.

Clare. Fie!

You can command your tongue, and I my ears

To hear you no further.

Ray. [*aside*] On my reputation,
She's off o' the hinges strangely.

Enter Woodroff, Rockfield, and a sailor.

Wood. Daughter, good news.

Anna. What, is my husband heard of?

Wood. That's not the business : but you have a cousin
You may be mainly proud of ; and I am sorry
'Tis by your husband's kindred, not your own,
That we might boast to have so brave a man
In our alliance.

Anna. What, so soon return'd ?
You have made but a short voyage : howsoever
You are to me most welcome.

Rock. Lady, thanks :
'Tis you have made me your own creature ;
Of all my being, fortunes, and poor fame,
(If I have purchas'd any, and of which
I no way boast,) next the high providence,
You have been the sole creatress.

Anna. O dear cousin,
You are grateful above merit.—What occasion
Drew you so soon from sea ?

Wood. Such an occasion
As I may bless heaven for, you thank their bounty,
And all of us be joyful.

Anna. Tell us how.

Wood. Nay daughter, the discourse will best appear
In his relation : where he fails I'll help.

Rock. Not to molest your patience with recital
Of every vain and needless circumstance,
'Twas briefly thus. Scarce having reach'd to Margate,
Bound on our voyage, suddenly in view
Appear'd to us three Spanish men-of-war.
These, having spied the English cross advance,
Salute us with a piece to have us strike :
Ours, better spirited, and no way daunted,
At their unequal odds, though but one bottom,
Return'd them fire for fire. The fight begins,
And dreadful on the sudden ; still they proffer'd
To board us, still we bravely beat them off.

Wood. But, daughter, mark the event.

Rock. Sea-room we got ; our ship being swift of sail,
It help'd us much. Yet two unfortunate shot,
One struck the captain's head off, and the other
With an unlucky splinter laid the master
Dead on the hatches : all our spirits then fail'd us.

Wood. Not all : you shall hear further, daughter.

Rock. For none was left to manage : nothing now
Was talk'd of but to yield up ship and goods,
And mediate for our peace.

Wood. Nay coz, proceed.

Rock. Excuse me, I entreat you, for what's more
Hath already pass'd my memory.

Wood. But mine it never can.—Then he stood up,
And with his oratory made us again
To recollect our spirits, so late dejected.

Rock. Pray, sir,—

Wood. I'll speak 't out.—By unite consent
Then the command was his, and 'twas his place
Now to bestir him. Down he went below
And put the linestocks in the gunners' hands;
They ply their ordnance bravely: then again
Up to the decks; courage is there renew'd,
Fear now not found amongst us. Within less
Than four hours' fight two of their ships were sunk,
Both founder'd, and soon swallow'd. Not long after,
The third begins to wallow, lies on the lee
To stop her leaks: then boldly we come on,
Boarded, and took her, and she's now our prize.

Sailor. Of this we were eye-witnesses.

Wood. And many more brave boys of us besides,
Myself for one. Never was, gentlemen,
A sea-fight better manag'd.

Rock. Thanks to heaven
We have sav'd our own, damag'd the enemy,
And to our nation's glory we bring home
Honour and profit.

Wood. In which, cousin Rochfield,
You as a venturer have a double share,
Besides the name of captain, and in that
A second benefit; but, most of all,

Way to more great employment.

Rock. [to *Annabel.*] Thus your bounty
Hath been to me a blessing.

Ray. Sir we are all
Indebted to your valour : this beginning
May make us of small venturers to become
Hereafter wealthy merchants.

Wood. Daughter and gentlemen,
This is the man was born to make us all.
Come, enter, enter : we will in and feast :
He's in the bridegroom's absence my chief guest.

*Act IV. Scene 1.**Enter Lessingham and Clare.*

Clara. O fir, are you return'd ? I do expect
To hear strange news now.

Leff. I have none to tell you ;
I am only to relate I have done ill
At a woman's bidding ; that's, I hope, no news.
Yet wherefore do I call that ill, begets
My absolute happiness ? You now are mine,
I must enjoy you solely.

Clare. By what warrant ?

Leff. By your own condition. I have been at Calais,
Perform'd your will, drawn my revengeful sword,
And slain my nearest and best friend i' the world
I had for your sake.

Clare. Slain your friend for my sake ?

Leff. A most sad truth.

Clare. And your best friend ?

Leff. My chiefest.

Clare. Then of all men you are most miserable :
Nor have you aught further'd your suit in this,
Though I enjoined you to't ; for I had thought

That I had been the best esteemed friend
You had i'the world.

Leff. Ye did not wish, I hope,
That I should have murder'd you ?

Clare. You shall perceive more
Of that hereafter : but I pray fir, tell me,—
For I do freeze with expectation of it,
It chills my heart with horror till I know
What friend's blood you have sacrific'd to your fury
And to my fatal sport,—this bloody riddle ;
Who is it you have slain ?

Leff. Bonvile, the bridegroom.

Clare. Say ? O, you have struck him dead thorough my
heart !

In being true to me you have prov'd in this
The falsest traitor. O, I am lost for ever !
Yet, wherefore am I lost ? rather recover'd
From a deadly witchcraft ; and upon his grave
I will not gather rue but violets
To bless my wedding-strewings. Good fir, tell me
Are you certain he is dead ?

Leff. Never, never
To be recover'd.

Clare. Why, now fir, I do love you
With an entire heart. I could dance methinks :
Never did wine or music stir in woman
A sweeter touch of mirth. I will marry you,
Instantly marry you.

Leff. [*aside.*] This woman has strange changes.—You are ta'en
Strangely with his death.

Clare. I'll give the reason
I have to be thus ecstasied with joy :
Know fir, that you have slain my dearest friend
And fataleſt enemy.

Leff. Moſt ſtrange !

Clare. 'Tis true :
You have ta'en a maſs of lead from off my heart
For ever would have ſunk it in deſpair.
When you beheld me yeſterday I ſtood
As if a merchant walking on the downs
Should ſee ſome goodly veſſel of his own
Sunk 'fore his face i'the harbour ; and my heart
Retain'd no more heat than a man that toils
And vainly labours to put out the flames
That burn his houſe to the bottom. I will tell you
A ſtrange concealment fir, and till this minute
Never reveal'd, and I will tell it now
Smiling and not bluſhing. I did love that Bonvile,
Not as I ought, but as a woman might,—
That's beyond reaſon : I did dote upon him,
Though he ne'er knew of 't ; and beholding him
Before my face wedded unto another,
And all my intereſt in him forfeited,
I fell into deſpair ; and at that inſtant
You urging your ſuit to me, and I thinking
That I had been your only friend i'the world,

I heartily did wish you would have kill'd
That friend yourself, to have ended all my sorrow,
And had prepar'd it, that unwittingly
You should have done't by poison.

Leff. Strange amazement !

Clare. The effects of a strange love.

Leff. 'Tis a dream, sure.

Clare. No, 'tis real fir, believe it.

Leff. Would it were not !

Clare. What, fir ! you have done bravely : 'tis your mistress
That tells you you have done so.

Leff. But my conscience
Is of counsel 'gainst you, and pleads otherwise.
Virtue in her past actions glories still,
But vice throws loathèd looks on former ill.
But did you love this Bonville ?

Clare. Strangely, fir ;
Almost to a degree of madness.

Leff. [*aside*] Trust a woman !
Never henceforward : I will rather trust
The winds which Lapland witches sell to men.
All that they have is feign'd, their teeth, their hair,
Their blushes, nay, their conscience too is feign'd :
Let them paint, load themselves with cloth of tissue,
They cannot yet hide woman ; that will appear
And disgrace all. The necessity of my fate !
Certain this woman has bewitch'd me here,
For I cannot choose but love her. O, how fatal

This might have prov'd! I would it had for me!
It would not grieve me though my sword had split
His heart in funder; I had then destroy'd
One that may prove my rival. O, but then
What had my horror been, my guilt of conscience!
I know some do ill at women's bidding
I'the dog-days, and repent all the winter after:
No, I account it treble happiness
That Bonville lives; but 'tis my chiefest glory
That our friendship is divided.

Clare. Noble friend,
Why do you talk to yourself?

Leff. Should you do so,
You'd talk to an ill woman. Fare you well,
For ever fare you well.—[*Afide*] I will do somewhat
To make as fatal breach and difference
In Bonville's love as mine: I am fix'd in't.
My melancholy and the devil shall fashion it.

Clare. You will not leave me thus?

Leff. Leave you for ever:
And may my friend's blood, whom you lov'd so dearly,
For ever lie imposthum'd in your breast,
And i' the end choke you! Woman's cruelty
This black and fatal thread hath ever spun;
It must undo, or else it is undone. [Exit.]

Clare. I am every way lost, and no means to raise me
But bless'd repentance. What two unvalu'd jewels
Am I at once depriv'd of! Now I suffer

Deservedly. There's no prosperity settled :
Fortune plays ever with our good or ill,
Like cros and pile, and turns up which she will.

Enter Bonville.

Bon. Friend !

Clare. O, you are the welcom'ft under heaven !
Lefſingham did but fright me : yet I fear
That you are hurt to danger.

Bon. Not a ſcratch.

Clare. Indeed, you look exceeding well, methinks.

Bon. I have been ſea-ſick lately, and we count
That excellent phyſic. How does my Annabel ?

Clare. As well fir as the fear of ſuch a loſs
As your eſteemed ſelf will ſuffer her.

Bon. Have you ſeen Lefſingham ſince he return'd ?

Clare. He departed hence but now and left with me
A report had almoſt kill'd me.

Bon. What was that ?

Clare. That he had kill'd you.

Bon. So he has.

Clare. You mock me.

Bon. He has kill'd me for a friend, for ever ſilenc'd
All amity between us. You may now
Go and embrace him, for he has fulfill'd
The purpoſe of that letter.

[*Gives letter.*

Clare. O I know't.

And had you known this, which I meant to have sent you

[She gives him another.]

An hour 'fore you were married to your wife,

The riddle had been constru'd.

Bon. Strange ! this expresses

That you did love me.

Clare. With a violent affection.

Bon. Violent indeed ; for it seems it was your purpose
To have ended it in violence on your friend :

The unfortunate Lessingham unwittingly

Should have been the executioner.

Clare. 'Tis true.

Bon. And do you love still ?

Clare. I may easily

Confess it, since my extremity is such

That I must needs speak or die.

Bon. And you would enjoy me

Though I am married ?

Clare. No indeed, not I sir :

You are to sleep with a sweet bed-fellow

Would knit the brow at that.

Bon. Come, come, a woman's telling truth

Makes amends for her playing false : you would enjoy me ?

Clare. If you were a bachelor or widower,

Afore all the great ones living.

Bon. But 'tis impossible

To give you present satisfaction ; for

My wife is young and healthful, and I like

The summer and the harvest of our love,
 Which yet I have not tasted of, so well
 That, an you'll credit me, for me her days
 Shall ne'er be shorten'd. Let your reason therefore
 Turn you another way, and call to mind
 With best observance the accomplish'd graces
 Of that brave gentleman whom late you sent
 To his destruction; a man so every way
 Deserving, no one action of his
 In all his life-time e'er degraded him
 From the honour he was born to. Think how observant
 He'll prove to you in nobler request that so
 Obey'd you in a bad one; and remember
 That afore you engag'd him to an act
 Of horror, to the killing of his friend,
 He bore his steerage true in every part
 Led by the compass of a noble heart.

Clare. Why do you praise him thus? You said but now
 He was utterly lost to you; now't appears
 You are friends, else you'd not deliver of him
 Such a worthy commendation.

Bon. You mistake,
 Utterly mistake that I am friends with him
 In speaking this good of him. To what purpose
 Do I praise him? only to this fatal end,
 That you might fall in love and league with him:
 And what worse office can I do i' the world
 Vnto my enemy than to endeavour

By all means possible to marry him
Vnto a whore ? and there, I think, she stands.

Clare. Is whore a name to be belov'd ? if not,
What reason have I ever to love that man
Puts it upon me falsely ? You have wrought
Strange alteration in me : were I a man,
I would drive you with my sword into the field
And there put my wrong to silence. Go, you're not worthy
To be a woman's friend in the least part
That concerns honourable reputation ;
For you are a liar.

Bon. I will love you now
With a noble observance if you will continue
This hate unto me : gather all those graces,
From whence you have fall'n, yonder, where you have left them
In Lessingham, he that must be your husband ;
And though henceforth I cease to be his friend,
I will appear his noblest enemy
And work reconciliation 'tween you.

Clare. No you shall not ;
You shall not marry him to a strumpet : for that word
I shall ever hate you.

Bon. And for that one deed
I shall ever love you. Come, convert your thoughts
To him that best deserves them, Lessingham.
It is most certain you have done him wrong ;
But your repentance and compassion now
May make amends : disperse this melancholy,

[LOVE'S GRADVATE]

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And on that turn of Fortune's wheel depend,
When all calamities will mend or end.

[*Exeunt.*

*Act V. Scene 1.**Enter Rockfield and Annabel.*

Rock. Believe me, I was never more ambitious
Or covetous, if I may call it so,
Of any fortune greater than this one,
But to behold his face.

Anna. And now's the time ;
For from a much-fear'd danger, as I heard,
He's late come over.

Rock. And not seen you yet !
'Tis some unkindness.

Anna. You may think it so ;
But for my part, fir, I account it none.
What know I but some business of import
And weighty consequence, more near to him
Than any formal compliment to me,
May for a time detain him ? I presume
No jealousy can be asperf'd on him
For which he cannot well apology.

Rock. You are a creature every way complete,
As good a wife as woman ; for whose sake,
As I in duty am endear'd to you,

Of a long-look'd-for husband.

Roch. May it thrive

According to your wishes!

[*Exit Annabel.*]

Leff. [*aside*] Now's my turn.—

Without offence fir, may I beg your name?

Roch. 'Tis that I never yet denied to any,
Nor will to you that seem a gentleman;
'Tis Rochfield.

Leff. Rochfield! You are then the man
Whose noblenefs, virtue, valour, and good parts
Have voic'd you loud: Dover, and Sandwich, Margate,
And all the coast is full of you:
But more, as an eye-witnefs of all these,
And with moft truth, the mafter of this houfe
Hath given them large expreffions.

Roch. Therein his love
Exceeded much my merit.

Leff. That's your modefty.
Now I, as one that goodnefs love in all men,
And honouring that which is but found in few,
Defire to know you better.

Roch. Pray your name?

Leff. Leffingham.

Roch. A friend to Mafter Bonvile?

Leff. In the number
Of thofe which he efteems moft dear to him
He reckons me not laft.

Roch. So I have heard.

Leff. Sir, you have cause to bless the lucky planet
Beneath which you were born; 'twas a bright star
And then shin'd clear upon you: for as you
Are every way well-parted, so I hold you
In all designs mark'd to be fortunate.

Rock. Pray do not stretch your love to flattery;
It may call it then in question: grow, I pray you,
To some particulars.

Leff. I have observ'd
But late your parting with the virgin bride,
And therein some affection.

Rock. How!

Leff. With pardon,—
In this I still applaud your happiness
And praise the blessed influence of your stars:
For how can it be possible that she,
Unkindly left upon the bridal day
And disappointed of those nuptial sweets
That night expected, but should take the occasion
So fairly offer'd? nay, and stand excus'd,
As well in detestation of a scorn
Scarce in a husband heard of, as selecting
A gentleman in all things so complete
To do her those neglected offices
Her youth and beauty justly challengeth?

Rock. [*aside*] Some plot to wrong the bride; and I now
Will marry craft with cunning: if he'll bite,
I'll give him line to play on.—Were't your case,

You being young as I am, would you intermit
So fair and sweet occasion?
Yet misconceive me not, I do entreat you,
To think I can be of that easy wit
Or of that malice to defame a lady,
Were she so kind as to expose herself;
Nor is she such a creature.

Leff. [*aside*] On this foundation
I can build higher still.—Sir, I believe't.
I hear you two call cousins: comes your kindred
By the Woodroffs or the Bonviles?

Rock. From neither; 'tis a word of courtesy
Late interchang'd betwixt us; otherwise
We are foreign as two strangers.

Leff. [*aside*] Better still.

Rock. I would not have you grow too inward with me
Vpon so small a knowledge: yet to satisfy you,
And in some kind too to delight myself,
Those bracelets and the carcanet she wears
She gave me once.

Leff. They were the first and special tokens pass'd
Betwixt her and her husband.

Rock. 'Tis confess'd;
What I have said, I have said. Sir, you have power
Perhaps to wrong me or to injure her:
This you may do; but, as you are a gentleman,
I hope you will do neither.

Leff. Trust upon't.

[*Exit Rockfield.*]

If I drown, I will sink some along with me;
For of all miseries I hold that chief,
Wretched to be when none coparts our grief.
Here's another anvil to work on: I must now
Make this my master-piece, for your old foxes
Are seldom ta'en in springes.

Enter Woodroff.

Wood. What, my friend!
You are happily return'd; and yet I want
Somewhat to make it perfect. Where's your friend,
My son-in-law?

Leff. O sir!

Wood. I pray resolve me;
For I do suffer strangely till I know
If he be in safety.

Leff. Fare you well: 'tis not fit
I should relate his danger.

Wood. I must know't.
I have a quarrel to you already
For enticing my son-in-law to go over:
Tell me quickly, or I shall make it greater.

Leff. Then truth is, he is dangerously wounded.

Wood. But he's not dead, I hope.

Leff. No sir, not dead:
Yet, sure, your daughter may take liberty
To choose another.

Wood. Why, that gives him dead.

Leff. Vpon my life fir, no: your fon's in health,
As well as I am.

Wood. Strange! you deliver riddles.

Leff. I told you he was wounded, and 'tis true;
He is wounded in his reputation.
I told you likewise, which I am loth to repeat,
That your fair daughter might take liberty
To embrace another: that's the consequence
That makes my best friend wounded in his fame.
This is all I can deliver.

Wood. I must have more of't;
For I do sweat already, and I'll sweat more:
'Tis good, they say, to cure aches; and o'the sudden
I am sore from head to foot. Let me taste the worst.

Leff. Know fir, if ever there were truth in falsehood,
Then 'tis most true your daughter plays most false
With Bonvile, and hath chose for her favourite
The man that now pass'd by me, Rochfield.

Wood. Say?
I would thou hadst spoke this on Calais-sands,
And I within my sword and poniard's length
Of that false throat of thine! I pray fir, tell me
Of what kin or alliance do you take me
To the gentlewoman you late mention'd?

Leff. You are her father.

Wood. Why then, of all men living, do you address
This report to me, that ought of all men breathing

To have been the last o'the roll, except the husband,
That should have heard of't ?

Leff. For her honour, fir, and yours ;
That your good counsel may reclaim her.

Wood. I thank you.

Leff. She has departed fir, upon my knowledge ,
With jewels and with bracelets, the first pledges
And confirmation of the unhappy contract
Between herself and husband.

Wood. To whom ?

Leff. To Rochfield.

Wood. Be not abus'd : but now,
Even now, I saw her wear them.

Leff. Very likely :
'Tis fit, hearing her husband is return'd,
That he should re-deliver them.

Wood. But pray fir, tell me,
How is it likely she could part with them,
When they are lock'd about her neck and wrists,
And the key with her husband ?

Leff. O, fir, that's but practise :
She has got a trick to use another key
Besides her husband's.

Wood. Sirrah, you do lie :
And were I to pay down a hundred pounds
For every lie given, as men pay twelve-pence,
And worthily, for swearing, I would give thee
The lie, nay though it were in the court of honour,

So oft till of the thousands I am worth
 I had not left a hundred. For is't likely
 So brave a gentleman as Rochfield is,
 That did so much at sea to save my life;
 Should now on land shorten my wretched days
 In ruining my daughter? A rank lie!
 Have you spread this to any but myself?

Leff. I am no intelligencer.

Wood. Why then, 'tis yet a secret:
 And that it may rest so, draw! I'll take order
 You shall prate of it no further.

Leff. O my sword
 Is enchanted fir, and will not out o'the scabbard.
 I will leave you fir: yet say not I give ground,
 For 'tis your own you stand on.

Enter Bonvile and Clare.

[*aside*] Clare here with Bonvile! excellent! on this
 I have more to work: this goes to Annabel,
 And it may increase the whirlwind.

[*Exit*]

Bon. How now fir!
 Come, I know this choler bred in you
 For the voyage which I took at his entreaty:
 But I must reconcile you.

Wood. On my credit,
 There's no such matter. I will tell you fir,
 And I will tell it in laughter, the cause of it

Is so poor, so ridiculous, so impossible
To be believ'd : ha, ha ! he came even now
And told me that one Rochfield, now a guest
(And most worthy, sir, to be so) in my house
Is grown exceedingly familiar with
My daughter.

Bon. Ha !

Wood. Your wife ; and that he has had favours from her.

Bon. Favours !

Wood. Love-tokens I did call them in my youth :
Lures to which gallants spread their wings and stoop
In ladies' bosoms. Nay he was so false
To truth and all good manners, that those jewels
You lock'd about her neck, he did protest
She had given to Rochfield. Ha ! methinks o'the sudden
You do change colour. Sir, I would not have you
Believe this in least part : my daughter's honest,
And my guest is a noble fellow ; and for this
Slander deliver'd me by Lessingham
I would have cut his throat.

Bon. As I your daughter's,
If I find not the jewels 'bout her.

Clare. Are you return'd
With the Italian plague upon you, jealousy ?

Wood. Suppose that Lessingham should love my daughter,
And thereupon fashion your going over,
As now your jealousy, the stronger way
So to divide you, there were a fine crotchet !

Do you stagger still? If you continue thus,
I vow you are not worth a welcome home
Neither from her nor me.—See here she comes.

Re-enter Rockfield and Annabel.

Clare. I have brought you home a jewel.

Anna. Wear it yourself;

For these I wear are fetters, not favours.

Clare. I look'd for better welcome.

Roch. Noble fir

I must woo your better knowledge.

Bon. O dear fir

My wife will bespeak it for you.

Roch. Ha, your wife!

Wood. Bear with him fir, he's strangely off o'the hinges.

Bon. [*aside*] The jewels are i'the right place: but the jewel
Of her heart sticks yonder.—You are angry with me
For my going over.

Anna. Happily more angry for your coming over.

Bon. I sent you my will from Dover.

Anna. Yes fir.

Bon. Fetch it.

Anna. I shall fir, but leave your self-will with you. [*Exit.*

Wood. This is fine; the woman will be mad too.

Bon. Sir I would speak with you.

Roch. And I with you of all men living.

Bon. I must have satisfaction from you.

Rock. Sir, it grows upon the time of payment.

Wood. What's that, what's that? I'll have no whispering,

Re-enter Annabel with the will,

Anna. Look you, there's the patent
Of your deadly affection to me,

Bon. 'Tis welcome.

When I gave myself for dead, I then made over
My land unto you : now I find your love
Dead to me, I will alter 't.

Anna. Vse your pleasure.

A man may make a garment for the moon
Rather than fit your constancy,

Wood. How's this?

Alter your will!

Bon. 'Tis in mine own disposing :
Certainly I will alter 't.

Wood. Will you so, my friend?

Why then, I will alter mine too.

I had estated thee, thou peevish fellow,
In forty thousand pounds after my death :
I can find another executor.

Bon. Pray fir, do.

Mine I'll alter without question.

Wood. Dost hear me?

An if I change not mine within this two hours,
May my executors cozen all my kindred

To whom I bequeath legacies !

Bon. I am for a lawyer, fir.

Wood. And I will be with one as soon as thyself,
Though thou rid'st post to the devil. [*Exit Bon.*]

Roch. Stay, let me follow and cool him.

Wood. O, by no means :
You'll put a quarrel upon him for the wrong
H' as done my daughter.

Roch. No, believe it fir ;
He's my wish'd friend.

Wood. O come, I know the way of 't ;
Carry it like a French quarrel, privately whisper,
Appoint to meet, and cut each other's throats
With cringes and embraces. I protest
I will not suffer you exchange a word
Without I overhear 't.

Roch. Use your pleasure. [*Exeunt Woodroff and Rochfield.*]

Clare. You are like to make fine work now.

Anna. Nay, you are like
To make a finer business of 't.

Clare. Come, come,
I must folder you together.

Anna. You ! why, I heard
A bird sing lately, you are the only cause
Works the division.

Clare. Who, as thou ever lov'dst me ?
For I long, though I am a maid, for 't.

Anna. Lessingham.

Clare. Why then, I do protest myself first cause
Of the wrong which he has put upon you both ;
Which, please you to walk in, I shall make good
In a short relation. Come, I'll be the clew
To lead you forth this labyrinth, this toil
Of a suppos'd and causeless jealousy.
Cankers touch choicest fruit with their infection,
And fevers seize those of the best complexion. [*Exeunt.*

Scene 2.

Enter Woodroff and Rockfield.

Wood. Sir, have I not said I love you ? if I have,
You may believe 't before an oracle,
For there's no trick in't but the honest sense.

Rock. Believe it ! that I do sir.

Wood. Your love must then
Be as plain with mine, that they may suit together.
I say you must not fight with my son Bonvile.

Rock. Not fight with him sir ?

Wood. No, not fight with him sir.
I grant you may be wrong'd, and I dare swear
So is my child ; but he is the husband you know,
The woman's lord, and must not always be told
Of his faults neither : I say you must not fight.

Rock. I'll fwear it, if you please, fir.

Wood. And forfwear, I know 't,
Ere you lay ope the secrets of your valour :
It is enough for me I saw you whisper,
And I know what belongs to 't.

Rock. To no such end, assure you.

Wood. I say you cannot fight with him
If you be my friend, for I must use you :
Yonder's my foe, and you must be my second.

Enter Lessingham.

Prepare thee, slanderer, and get another
Better than thyself too ; for here's my second,
One that will fetch him up and firke him too :—
Get your tools ; I know the way to Calais-sands,
If that be your fence-school :—he'll show you tricks, faith ;
He'll let blood your calumny : your best guard
Will come to a *peccavi*, I believe.

Less. Sir, if that be your quarrel,
He is a party in it, and must maintain
The side with me : from him I collected
All those circumstances concern your daughter,
His own tongue's confession.

Wood. Who ? from him ?
He will belie to do thee a pleasure, then,
If he speak any ill upon himself :
I know he ne'er could do an injury.

Roch. So please you, I'll relate it fir.

Enter Bonvile, Annabel, and Clare.

Wood. Before her husband, then,—and here he is,
In friendly posture with my daughter too :
I like that well.—Son bridegroom and lady bride,
If you will hear a man defame himself,
For so he must if he say any ill,
Then listen.

Bon. Sir I have heard this story
And meet with your opinion in his goodness :
The repetition will be needless.

Roch. Your father has not fir : I will be brief
In the delivery.

Wood. Do, do, then : I long to hear it.

Rach. The first acquaintance I had with your daughter
Was on the wedding-eve.

Wood. So ; 'tis not ended yet, methinks.

Roch. I would have robb'd her.

Wood. Ah, thief !

Roch. That chain and bracelet which she wears upon her
She ransom'd with the full esteem in gold,
Which was with you my venture.

Wood. Ah, thief again !

Roch. For any attempt against her honour, I vow
I had no thought on.

Wood. An honest thief, faith, yet.

Roch. Which she as nobly recompens'd, brought me home,
And in her own discretion thought it meet,
For cover of my shame, to call me cousin.

Wood. Call a thief cousin! why, and so she might,
For the gold she gave thee she stole from her husband;
'Twas all his now: yet 'twas a good girl too.

Roch. The rest you know fir.

Wood. Which was worth all the rest,—
Thy valour, lad; but I'll have that in print,
Because I can no better utter it.

Roch. Thus jade unto my wants
And spurr'd by my necessities, I was going,
But by that lady's counsel I was stay'd
(For that discourse was our familiarity):
And this you may take for my recantation;
I am no more a thief.

Wood. A blessing on thy heart!
And this was the first time, I warrant thee, too.

Roch. Your charitable censure is not wrong'd in that.

Wood. No; I knew 't could be but the first time at most:
But for thee, brave valour, I have in store
That thou shalt need to be a thief no more.

[*Soft music within.*]

Ha! what's this music?

Bon. It chimes an *Io pæan* to your wedding fir,
If this be your bride.

Leff. Can you forgive me? some wild distractions
Had overturn'd my own condition

And spilt the goodness you once knew in me :
But I have carefully recover'd it
And overthrown the fury on 't.

Clare. It was my cause
That you were so possess'd : and all these troubles
Have from my peevish will original :
I do repent, though you forgive me not.

Leff. You have no need for your repentance then,
Which is due to it : all's now as at first
It was wish'd to be.

Wood. Why, that's well said of all fides.

FINIS







