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THE
MARRIAGE PROMISE:

A COMEDY

IN

FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED

AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

BY

JOHN TILL ALLINGHAM.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JAMES RIDGWAY, YORK-STREET, ST. JAMES'S
SQUARE.

1803.

[Price 2s. 6d.]



DEDICATION.

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TO

JOHN BANNISTER, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

FOR your attention and assiduity, accept my thanks ; for your skill and ability, as Manager, my applause ;— and for your friendly exertions, honour me, by accepting the “ MARRIAGE PROMISE.”

My dear Sir,

Your's, most sincerely,

THE AUTHOR.

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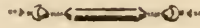
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ADVERTISEMENT.

To the Ladies and Gentlemen, whose exertions have contributed so much to the success of this Comedy, the Author begs to return his most sincere acknowledgments. He has not only to thank them for the display of those talents which have so often delighted the Public, but feels particular pleasure in saying, they have conferred a greater obligation, by the friendly anxiety which they have all evinced for him, not only on the first night of representation, but during the many rehearsals, which they have so punctually attended. It would be an invidious task to particularize any individual, when the Author is so truly obliged to all;—but he begs to observe, that he owes much to the kindness of those who have given an importance to his Comedy, by performing parts far beneath what their talents have a right to command.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



Charles Merton,	-	-	-	-	Mr. C. KEMBLE.
Sidney,	-	-	-	-	Mr. DWYER.
Consols,	-	-	-	-	Mr. DOWTON.
Policy,	-	-	-	-	Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH.
Tandem,	-	-	-	-	Mr. BANNISTER, JUN.
Woodland,	-	-	-	-	Mr. PALMER.
George Howard,	-	-	-	-	Mr. POPE.
Jefferies,	-	-	-	-	Mr. POWELL.
Thomas,	-	-	-	-	Mr. FISHER,
Bailiff,	-	-	-	-	Mr. MADDOCKS.
Constables,	-	-	-	-	{ Mr. PURSER.
					{ Mr. SPARKS.
Servant,	-	-	-	-	Mr. EVANS.
Mrs. Howard	-	-	-	-	Mrs. POWELL.
Mary Woodland,	-	-	-	-	Miss MELLON.
Mrs. Harvey,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. SPARKS.
Emma,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. JORDAN.
Margery,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. MADDOCKS.



THE
MARRIAGE PROMISE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Drawing Room.*

Enter JEFFERIES *and* THOMAS.

Jeff. I TELL you he is expected every moment, and when you see him you will be able to judge for yourself—you are very inquisitive, Thomas.

Thos. I think it's natural for us servants to wish to know what sort of a master we are going to have—I hope there's no offence, Mr. Jefferies.

Jeff. Five years have passed since I saw him, Thomas—he was then just sixteen—a nobler lad the sun never shone on—I loved him from
his

his cradle, Thomas; and old Jeff was the first name he ever learn'd to lisp—I have carried him on my back till I grew double under him.

Thos. Then you think he'll make a kind master?

Jeff. A kind master!—he'll spoil ye all—I tell you he's too good.

Thos. You don't know how his long stay abroad may have altered him.

Jeff. I should judge by his letters that he is much the same in disposition as he was.

Thos. By his letters!—Is he then so familiar as to write to you?

Jeff. Why, Thomas, though he has ten thousand a year, and I am only his servant and a poor man, yet you shall see him lend me his arm, and help me about as if I were his father—for he looks at a man's heart, Thomas, not at his purse—I am the steward of his charities; and these letters of his which I speak of, provide me with the means of relieving many an aching heart. (*Shouts without.*) But hark! Thomas, what sounds were those? As I live, the villagers welcoming him on his arrival—look out, good Thomas, look out. [*Exit Thos.*]

Jeff. Ah! this is a happy moment; the warmth of my heart lends a new vigour to my old frame, and makes me young again.

(*Retires up the Stage.*)

Enter

Enter MERTON and SIDNEY, amidst the Shouts and Acclamations of the Villagers.

Sid. Well! here we are at last—the good people seem overjoy'd to see you, Charles.

Mer. They have, indeed, given me a kind reception (*sees Jeff.*) Ah! what my old friend, my companion, my second father (*they embrace.*)

Jeff. My dear, dear boy.

Mer. How fares it, Jeff?

Jeff. Why I thought I was a hale, strong old man, but I find I am as weak as a child; for childish tears and sobs prevent my speech, or I would tell you how overjoy'd I am to see you—I shall recover myself presently, and then I have a thousand things to say you (*embraces him*). The blessings of an old man, and all Heav'n's comforts, light upon you. [*Exit.*]

Sid. An old relation, Charles, I suppose?

Mer. An old servant, Sidney.

Sid. A servant! you shou'd keep up your dignity, Merton.

Mer. I know no dignity but what must yield to the dignity of virtue—I esteem and venerate that old man; and for my whole estate I wou'd not insult his honest heart with the freezing *hauteur* which your dignity requires.

Sid. You have some strange notions; but a little knowledge of the world will soon dissipate them

them—you have yet to learn what it is to live in style—you must get rid of these rigid ideas of honour and equity, and strict justice—they are quite incompatible with the character of a man of the world—you don't know the value of ten thousand a year.

Mer. I value it as it will give me ten thousand opportunities of rendering happiness to my fellow-creatures.

Sid. Ay, that is all very well to be sure—I like to be charitable myself sometimes—but I seldom have it in my power.

Mer. How so?

Sid. My creditors are such uncharitable rogues.

Mer. Your estate is considerable too.

Sid. Yes, Charles, pretty well; and by means of hazard and *crim. con.*—settlements and ruin'd spinsters, and dashing curricles, race horses and opera girls, punting and pick-nickery, I have been enabled to improve it wonderfully.

Mer. Indeed!

Sid. Yes, I have clipp'd off all the straggling meadows, the ins and outs, and ragged ends, and it is now all within a ring-fence, my boy.

Tand. (*without*) John! Robert! Thomas! I hope every thing is properly prepared.

Sid. Ha! what strange animal have we here, Charles? (*looking out.*)

Mer.

Mer. You know, Sidney, my long residence on the Continent has made me as much a stranger here as yourself.

Enter TANDEM.

Tand. (*addressing himself to Sidney*) Sir, your most obedient and very humble servant—I have, Sir, the honour to be intrusted with the management of your affairs—I am steward—my name is Timotheus Tandem—I am a man of business—I was for a short time steward to your late father—a man of honour—was continued in that office by Mr. Mindful, your guardian—a man of probity and wisdom—hope still to remain so by your own appointment—I see he is a man of fashion—permit me to tell you that you are the very image of your late much lamented father—you are, as I may say, his couterpart—whilst I look at you, I almost think I have him before my eyes—look a little this way, if you please, Sir,—Oh, the very turn of his eye, and his walk too, exactly.

Mer. (*advancing.*) You address yourself to me, I presume, Sir—my name is Merton.

Sid. Ha! ha! ha!—pray, Charles, was my father acquainted with your mother?

Tand. Bless my soul what an unlucky mistake. (*Aside.*) Exactly so, Sir,—exactly—'tis as you say—Sir, I have the extreme plea-

sure to wish you joy on your coming to the possession of your estate, which consists of fifteen hundred acres of arable land, four hundred ditto of meadow ditto, one hundred and sixty ditto of ditto covered with water, two hundred ditto of wood ditto, besides various farm houses and other dwelling houses, barns, stables, cow houses, and various other tenements, water-streams, water-mills, and wind-mills, rights of commons, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera—all this estate being freehold except about——

Mer. We'll talk of this some other time if you please.

Tand. Certainly, Sir—certainly—hates business I see—a man of pleasure—so much the better.

Sid. I hope to gain information from you on more interesting topics—and first, I'll ask you concerning the females—how are they here?—

Tand. He's a man of inquiry.—They are all pretty well, I thank you.

Sid. I mean as to their persons.

Tand. Short and fat—what we call a little chubby or so—snub noses—red cheeks—thick lips—sun-burnt complexions—and gummy about the ankles.

Sid. Not very tempting.

Tand.

Tand. We have two or three of a finer sort—hair, jet—skin, ivory—lips, red and pouting—eyes, blue or black—teeth, pearl—bosoms—Oh, but if you'll condescend I'll introduce you, and you shall judge for yourself.—Girls of gig—fond of romping—tea and coffee—talk scandal and make love—a glass of wine—a rubber at whist, or a pool at pope joan or commerce—cross questions and answers—cry the forfeits—buz and black faces—a game at blindman's buff, and go home—

Sid. Very pleasant indeed, Mr. ——

Tand. Tandem is my name, Sir—Timotheus Tandem—I am a man of business.

Sid. (*aside to Merton*) This fellow will afford us some amusement; he is really a character.

Mer. (*aside to Sidney*) A very whimsical one, indeed.

Sid. Mr. Tandem, I shall be happy to become better acquainted with you.

Tand. Sir, you do me great honour—a man of discernment, I see—any thing in my way to make myself agreeable; a morning's chat, or an afternoon's soak; a pipe and a game at cribbage, back-gammon, bowls, or billiards—politics or mensuration—take a part in a catch or a glee—play the fiddle for a country dance, a
hornpipe,

hornpipe, or a Scotch reel—draw a lease, or make your will—crack a joke—puns and conundrums—nothing comes amiss—I am a church and king man, and a good shot. Pray, Sir, what can you do?

Sid. Really I am very deficient in most of these accomplishments.

Tand. A man of modesty, I see.—At our club, Sir, there I talk to them;—there's Parson Puzzle, a man of many words, we argue together, but I always beat the parson—so I do at all-fours and brag.

Mer. I don't doubt the latter.

Tand. Then, Sir, there is Daniel Dawdle, our apothecary, a man of pills, potions, prescriptions and gallipots—I have convinced him a thousand times that I know more of physic than he does—I have confuted him till he is become as sour as cream of tartar—he! he! he!—I beg pardon for laughing, Sir—in fact, Sir, I may truly be called the light of the village—I teach the schoolmaster latin—the attorney law—and the farmers agriculture and the art of breeding.

Sid. I should rather have thought that you preferr'd teaching the farmers wives the latter art.

Tand. He! he! he!—I beg pardon for laughing
ing

ing, Sir.—Very true, Sir.—A man of wit, I see—I like him the better—I'm fond of men of talent.

Mer. I may consider myself happy as having in my employ a person of so much knowledge as Mr. Tandem.

Tand. Oh, Sir, you confuse me, you do, indeed—come he is no fool—he's a man of taste.

Sid. Pray, Mr. Tandem, is it not near the dinner hour?—the country air gives me an appetite.

Tand. (*looking at his watch.*) The dinner will be on table in five minutes.

Sid. (*aside to Merton.*) Ask him to dine with us.

Mer. If I thought our dignity would not suffer.—Mr. Tandem, we hope to be honoured with your company.

Tand. O, Sir—I—I—he has found out that I am a man of pleasing manners.

Sid. There is some famous old wine in the cellar, I dare say.

Tand. So old, Sir, that I expect to see a few dead men this afternoon—ha! ha! ha!—I beg pardon—and if you are fond of ale we have some humming stuff—a glass or two of it will make your head spin like a tetotum.

Mer. You know, Sidney, I have but a poor head for the bottle, you must excuse me.

Sid.

Sid. You only want practice.

(*A Bell rings.*)

Tand. Gentlemen, that is your call.

Mer. Come, I'll shew you the way. [*Exit.*]

Sid. I say, Mr. Tandem, are you fond of fun?

Tand. I love it dearly.

Sid. My friend is a philosopher; he won't drink.

Tand. A philosopher and not drink!—impossible!—wine always makes me a philosopher.

Sid. I want to see the sober, jesuitical rogue under the table.

Tand. Well, that is friendly, however.

Sid. Will you assist me? shall we soak the philosopher?

Tand. With all my heart: if you'll not betray me, I am your man—I dare say he'll be cursed comical in his cups—I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll serve him as I did Block the Butcher—a man of—of—twenty stone weight—I put some brandy into his beer—made him so drunk that he did not know a pair from a prial, and then won all his money from him at cribbage—that's the way to get on—Oh let me alone—I am a man of business.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE

SCENE II.—*A Room in an Inn.*

Enter CONSOLS and POLICY.

Con. Odd's heart! I feel myself so happy since I set out on this expedition, that I am quite an alter'd man, and here I swear that I never will interest myself about money-matters again—no—never—never—I never will! mind you send me a regular account how stocks are.

Pol. Ha! ha! you make a good beginning, Sir.

Con. Well, well, you need not mind, then—I can see by the newspapers how things are going on.

Pol. Ah, Sir, you are set so fast in the stocks that I believe you will never get out.

Con. Yes, I will—for I mean to sell out when the 3 per cents. are at ninety.

Pol. There, Sir, you see you are at it again—it's utterly impossible for you to help thinking of these things—Why money is as natural to you as—as—mud is to a pig.

Con. Right, that is very well said, Policy—very well, indeed—money is mud—and, like mud, whilst it lies in a heap 'tis useless and good for nothing—but scatter it on a poor and barren soil, and it will repay you with smiling plenty:—my money has lain too long in such a useless heap, and I am resolved to scatter it on a soil
which

which shall yield me an interest of five-and-twenty per cent. at least.

Pol. I always knew you cou'd make the most of it ; but what is your plan now, Sir ?

Con. My soil shall be the hearts of the poor—my crop shall be their smiles, their blessing, and their thanks.

Pol. A very profitable scheme, truly—why surely, Sir, you have lost your senses.

Con. No, I am only just come to my senses—I have found out that I have so much money that it makes me miserable—and I have found out that by parting with a little of it, I may make myself and hundreds more happy ; I have a plethora, and nothing will relieve me but bleeding, therefore, I am resolved to bleed freely.

Pol. And have you been living on a crust, and hoarding up money all your life, to go and make ducks and drakes of it at last ?

Con. Ah, now you talk of ducks, I am afraid there'll be a damn'd deal of waddling next settling day—I shall never get my money from some of them, I fear.

Pol. What ! money again, Sir ?

Con. Pshaw ! it's all your fault—Why do you talk to me of ducks and drakes ?—I begin to think I shall never get out of the Stock Exchange ; and now I'm in the country, curse me
if

if I can ever look a bull in the face without remembering what a monstrous bear I have been—How the devil can I look at you without thinking of money?—Your face is a perpetual memorandum of pounds, shillings, and pence—you book of accounts—you walking ledger—you omnium of disagreeables—leave me, and don't let me see or hear from you for this month.

Pol. What shall I do if stocks should rise, Sir?

Con. Very true—why let me see—you had better—you must—you must go about your business—I'll knock you down if you talk to me about the stocks—go, leave me, Sir, and don't write to me even if the bank should be swallowed up by an earthquake.

Pol. Very well, Sir, I shall obey your orders—and I wish you success in your new scheme with all my heart (*going*).

Con. Here, Policy, come back—look at me—do you think any body will suspect that I am rich?—do I look like a rich man?

Pol. Exactly; Abraham Newland has set his mark upon you—and the mint has stamp'd you for its own—one may see in a moment that you are a rich man, you look so miserably poor. [*Exit.*

Con. Oh dear—Oh dear—I hope nobody will find me out; for if it's once discovered that I

am rich, I am ruined—all my plan frustrated.—What have I been hoarding up money all my life for?—My poor lost child, I can never hope to see again. She is gone for ever—she might have been the comfort of my age—well, well—I must not think of it.—I have no child to inherit, no brother to share my wealth—not one relation in the world to leave it to—I don't even know that I have a friend—every body courts the rich old miser, but all their friendship is in the funds. When a man bows to me, it's not out of respect for me, but for the 3 per cents—and all the civility I meet with, is meant to my East India bonds and long annuities—Oh, what a miserable, poor, rich old old fellow I am.—Well, I will go and seek for sincerity in some cottage where I may forget my counting-house and all my cares—and instead of studying how to get money, I will for the future study how to get rid of it.—I shall not want customers in my new trade, I dare say—and, as it is a ready money business, I need not fear making bad debts. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*Mrs. HARVEY's House.*

Enter Mrs. HARVEY reading a Letter.

“ Madam.—It is with the greatest regret that
 “ I inform you of a circumstance which will, I
 “ fear, affect your happiness considerably.—
 I went

“ I went (as you requested) to wait on Mr. Scrip,
 “ for the purpose of settling your account with
 “ him, when I found that he had failed only a
 “ few days before. His affairs are in so bad a
 “ state, that his creditors expect little or nothing
 “ from them.”——Then all is lost!—this was
 my last, my only hope.——“ I tell you the worst
 “ at once, because I know you have fortitude
 “ to bear misfortune. If it can be any allevia-
 “ tion to your distress to know that a friend
 “ shares it with you, believe me, no one can
 “ sympathize with you more sincerely than,
 “ your’s truly,

“ ABEL BLAMELESS.”

EMMA sings without and enters.

Emma. Well, my dear mother, I have seen him—he is indeed a most delightful young man—a countenance so full of benevolence, he has already won the hearts of the villagers, who welcome his approach with shouts of joy.

Mrs. Har. Who?—of whom do you speak?

Emma. Do you not know that Mr. Merton is just arrived? If you did, I am sure you would partake in the general joy.

Mrs. Har. (aside) Alas! it is a day of sorrow to me.

Emma. (apart) I wonder now whether or no he’ll go to church next Sunday.

Mrs. Har.

Mrs. Har. (*aside*) I am unwilling to damp her spirits—yet she must know it.

Emma. He will frequent our assembly I dare say; for I am sure he is not proud.—My dearest mother, surely something unusual depresses you—what is it? Have you a sorrow which I do not share?

Mrs. Har. Too soon you will learn it. Prepare then, my child, to bear with patience and fortitude the affliction which cannot be averted.

Emma. Not from you, dearest mother!—can it not be averted from you?—cannot I bear it for you?

Mrs. Har. We must suffer together—were it myself alone, I should be more resigned.

Emma. Nay, do not weep—I shall not grieve if you do not. Let me know the worst at once—indeed I will bear it patiently.

Mrs. Har. Hitherto, my Emma, you have lived in this world of trouble without tasting of the bitter cup of sorrow—hitherto you have known no care—felt no misfortune. It has been the pleasure of my life to see you happy, and my employment to make you so—this day deprives us both of every comfort, and sends us forth into the world destitute and forlorn.

Emma. And must we leave our cottage?—Who will force us from it?—who can have the heart to do it?

Mrs. Har.

Mrs. Har. It is no longer ours—the late Mr. Merton, this young gentleman's father, was your father's intimate friend—to him we owe every thing; for when Captain Harvey return'd from the Indies, disqualified to continue in the service by a wound he had received, he had nothing but his half pay to subsist on. Mr. Merton, not being able to prevail with him to accept any pecuniary assistance, granted him a lease of this house and land, at so low a rate, that, since your poor father's death, I have let the land so as to clear nearly one hundred pounds a year—but this day our lease expires, and we are left without a house. Think not, my child, that I have been so improvident as to forget to lay something by for this winter's day.

Emma. Then we still are happy! However small the pittance, let us be content.

Mrs. Har. Alas! we are totally destitute—the agent, to whose care I entrusted the management of the small sum I had saved, has failed.

Emma. And have you no hope then?

Mrs. Har. None, whatever.

Emma. What! have you no hope in me? I can work—Heaven will give me strength to support my aged mother. Then do not despair. I will be your comfort—in such a cause the hardest labour would become a pleasing task to me.

Mrs. Har.

Mrs. Har. (*embracing her affectionately*) Kind, affectionate girl!—Heaven will not doom thy innocence to suffer. I will hope, my Emma—we must not forget that Power which can at once disperse the cloud that lours over us, and bless us with eternal sunshine. — [Exit.

Emma. (*after recovering from a thoughtful attitude*) I am sure I shall be successful—I will go to Mr. Merton instantly, and make him acquainted with our situation—he will not deny his protection to the unfortunate. Dull sorrow fly—I will not yield to you while such a hope remains for me. Old age views only the gloomy side of the landscape where nodding rocks and dreadful precipices threaten the timid traveller with destruction—but my youthful fancy sees a path bedecked with beauteous flowers and fragrant shrubs, through which the cherub Hope beckons the delighted wanderer to happiness and joy. [Exit.

SCENE IV.—*A Drawing Room.*—Enter TAND-DEM and SIDNEY.

Tand. (*drunk*) Ha! ha! ha!—egad, we have soaked the philosopher, though—he is gone dancing through the village like a deer—but I say, where are you?—come here—let me look at you—you are a little damaged yourself I see.

Sid. Do you think so, my upright steward?

Tand.

Tand. O yes; I can see it in your eyes—they seem just as if they were looking for one another—It's a strange thing to me that a man cannot keep himself sober—if you could but see yourself just as you are—do you think you wou'd ever get drunk again?—tell me that—tell me that.

Sid. Come—no moralizing—I want to be introduced to the blindman's buff.

Tand. What, in that state? O fie; do you think you are fit for b-b-buff, in such a pickle as that—stay at home—be correct—don't expose yourself—stay at home—I must go and take care of the philosopher.

Sid. He's able to take care of himself—never mind him.

Tand. Not mind him!—that's flat rebellion—it's sedition—not mind my master?—Am I not his steward—the grand depository of all his trust and confidence—his man of business?—and shall I suffer him to expose himself?—no, no—stay at home—go to bed and sleep yourself sober.

Sid. How did you contrive to keep yourself so sober?

Tand. If I had drank another bottle I should have been just as bad as you—but I always know when to leave off—Steady—hold up—very well—Come, you are not so bad as I thought—steady.

(*Exeunt.*)

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Mrs. HOWARD'S *House*.

Enter GEORGE HOWARD, *who throws himself into a chair—to him, enter Mrs. HOWARD.*

Mrs. How. My son, you seem fatigued.

How. 'Tis a warm day, and I have worked hard, good mother.

Mrs. How. Ah, my poor George, how little did I expect once that you should have been reduced to this necessity—little did I imagine that your hands wou'd ever have been disgraced by labour.

How. (*warmly*) Disgrac'd by labour! disgrac'd! mother; are such your sentiments?—These hands are made hard, 'tis true, by my honest endeavours to keep want from our doors; but they have never yet been employed in any action to harden this heart—then what disgrace do I suffer?

Mrs. How. Well—perhaps I have been wrong—I spoke unguardedly; but why are you so impatient?—why do you look so sternly at me?

How. Pardon, good mother; you know I love and honour you—but nature has warm'd my bosom with a fire that will sometimes burst into a flame, spite of my efforts to smother it—let us
leave

leave this—What mean these rejoicings in the village?

Mrs. How. Surely you are not ignorant that the young 'Squire, Merton, is this day of age, and is come here to take possession of his estate—The whole village congratulates him.

How. Fools! Do they know why they rejoice?

Mrs. How. He is reported to be humane, benevolent, and just.

How. And possessing ten thousand a year!—these are not always the virtues of the rich.

Mrs. How. Though rich, he surely may be virtuous.

How. Certainly he may—but, tell me, mother, is not charity the fountain from which every virtue flows?

Mrs. How. It is—and if this young man should resemble his father, the day that brings him to this village will be a happy one—he was rich and charitable.

How. You knew his father then?—

Mrs. How. Yes—George—I—did—know his father—

How. What affects you? you seem strangely agitated.

Mrs. How. Nothing—surely I may respect the memory of a good man.

How. You, perhaps, received some great benefit from him.

Mrs. How. He had many virtues—but alas! I only knew him by his faults.

Enter CONSOLS.

Con. I ask your pardon, good folks, for thus intruding—but a faint and weary traveller in-treats your assistance.

How. Come in, old man—sit down, sit down—come, mother, stir, stir, assist the stranger, make him welcome.

Mrs. How. I will hasten and prepare refreshment for him, George. [*Exit.*

Con. Thank you, good madam—I like that woman's face—my heart glows at the sight of her—I will leave her a legacy (*aside*)—You farmers have had fine times lately.

How. Yes; but when we reflect that every grain of wheat we have sold at an immoderate price has been moistened by the tears of the poor, we have, I think, no great reason to rejoice in our gains.

Con. Another legacy! I swear by Abraham Newland! (*aside.*)

How. (*looking attentively at him*) My friend, I fear you are very poor.

Con. So poor, that I can say I never yet knew the pleasure of possessing money.

How. I see it in your countenance—there I can

can perceive cares and troubles innumerable—
wou'd I cou'd relieve you of them !

Con. You shall relieve me of some of them
(*aside.*)

How. A premature old age brought on by
misery and want—here, haughty affluence, here
is a lesson for you.

Con. (*aside*) A lesson, indeed !

How. How many thousands are there, who,
by parting with what they wou'd never miss,
could render this old man's journey down the
hill of life easy and pleasant to him—then might
they feel, as they watched the tears of gratitude
flowing thro' the care-worn furrows in his cheek,
a joy divine—Oh ! if I were one of those——

Con. And one of those you surely shall be—
I'll pay him his legacy in advance, without a
premium (*aside.*)

How. Oh ! when I think what the rich might
do, and what they do, how despicably mean,
how little does all their greatness appear to my
view.

Con. If he knew how rich I am, I suppose
he wou'd kick me out of his house (*aside.*)

How. I am rejoiced that I have it in my
power to offer you some relief (*takes a canvas
purse out of his pocket*), pray accept this, and
believe, that if I had the means, the will would
not

not be wanting to render my service more complete.

Con. It is deposited in a bank which will yield an interest ten-thousand-fold (*aside*)—Young man, young man, you know not the extent of the good you have done—yourself (*aside*.)

How. If you travel far, I hope I have enabled you to pursue your journey with more ease—shou'd it suit your convenience to stay here and rest yourself, you are welcome to share what our cottage affords—come, my mother, I see, has prepared you some refreshment; and if a sincere welcome can add a zest to your entertainment, be assured you have the best that heart can give—this way—this way.

[*Exit Howard.*

Con. (*looking at the money*) Stocks are up! My fortune's made—I am happier to-day, by fifty *per cent.* than ever I was in my life before—I'll stay and end my days here, for I have found what I sought—sincerity. My young farmer has hit upon a good speculation—he has bought in at a good time—and when settling day arrives, he shall find he has made the best bargain he ever closed since he went to market [Exit.

SCENE

SCENE II.—WOODLAND'S *House*.—*Enter*
WOODLAND and TANDEM, *meeting*.

Tand. How are you to-day, farmer?

Wood. Whoy I be toitish—how be you?

Tand. Well, farmer, well, I thank you—and pray how is your daughter, Miss Mary, the beauteous Mary—Oh, how I long for the happy day that is to put me in possession of that charming tenement by lease for life.

Wood. I doant knaw what'ee do mean, not I—but thic I do knaw, her won't ha' thee.

Tand. What! not have me, Timotheus Tandem, Gent. !—and why, pray?

Wood. I doant knaw but her zays thee beest so ugly, mon, and zo thee beest—I do think thee beest as queer a looking zort of a chap as one loight on in a long zummer's day.

Tand. I a queer looking sort of a chap—what do you mean?—A fellow of coarse manners, and no taste—do you mean to affront me?

Wood. Whoy ees, mon, if it be all the zaimé to'ee, I doant kear if I do.

Tand. But it's not all the same to me; and if you don't mind what you are about, I shall make you repent your impertinence, man of straw.

Wood. What ails 'ee, mon?—doant 'ee be so crass-temper'd—can I help it if the wench woant
ha'

ha' thee—you doant want to marry me, do'ee?

Tand. Now I dare say you think that's very comical.

Wood. I doant know—what do you think about it?

Tand. I think I shall ruin you for a joker, if you don't take care—go and talk to your daughter—for if she refuses the honour I intend her, you will both be sorry for it—I am Timotheus Tandem, a man of power—you are farmer Woodland, a man without power—so do as I bid you, or you'll find that your pigs will be driven to a bad market.

Wood. Whoy I do think there be no driving a pig, nor leading on him noither—doant'ee be in such a plaguy passion—it ean't my fault—what can I do?

Tand. Why, are you not her father, and can't you make her do as you please?

Wood. Perhaps I mought—but I do count it wou'd not do to force her, and I shou'd not loike it.

Tand. You wou'd not like to be forced into a prison, wou'd you?

Wood. Noa, noa, I shou'd not, I do count—but look'ee here now, and I'll show'ee—her's a good wench, and always does as I bids her, zoa I doan't loike to bid she do any thing as wou'd make she unhappy.

Tand.

Tand. And can you possibly think, that her marrying me wou'd make her unhappy?

Wood. Whoy ees, truth's truth, and I do, mon.

Tand. Am I not a man of money, and a man of importance?

Wood. Ees—but then as to your money, nobody knows how you came boy it.

Tand. (aside) Yes, every body knows that, I believe.

Wood. And as to your importance, perhaps nobody do count so much o'that as you doa, mon.

Tand. That's very well, farmer—very clever, indeed—I see you are a man of wit—I'll propose a conundrum to you—now mind, what is a man like, who owes money which he can't pay?

Wood. Loike! whoy he be very loike me, mon.

Tand. So he is, farmer; and you are very like to go to prison.

Wood. I do zee what'ee be about, Measter Tandem, but it woan't doa—I do owe thee money zure, but I doan't owe thee a dowter I do count—if I mun go to jail, why I mun goa, but I woan't break moy wench's heart—and if thou canst put a mon there for zaying zoa, you'll

you'll be worse off out o' jail than I shall be within, I do count.

Tand. We'll try that, man of independence—I'll soon let you know that Timotheus Tandem, Gent. (Esquire, I believe I may say) is not to be affronted with impunity—John Doe and Richard Roe, two intimate friends of mine, men of business, will soon call on you in my behalf—I dare say, as they are men of justice, honour, and integrity, their mediation will be of service in accommodating this little difference between you and me—so good morning to you, old verjuice. [*Exit.*

Wood. Dom me if I han't a good moind to zet our Jowler at un, he'd zettle matters wi' un zoon—what, does he think as I'd goa to zell moy wench to keep moy old bones out of a jail—dom me if I woudn't stairve vurst—the young squire won't hold wi' un in such ways, I do count, if he does, what with he and his measter, we shall ha' but a baddish zort of a treade on it, I do vear.—However, dom me if I doan't stairve, rot and perish, afore I'll make a zale of my poor child. [*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE III.—MRS. HOWARD'S *House*.

Mrs. HOWARD, GEORGE HOWARD, and MARY WOODLAND *discover'd*—MARY WOODLAND *in a chair*.

How. Look up, my dearest Mary—you are with friends here—What a villain must he be who cou'd offer an insult to so much innocence!

M. Wood. Indeed, George, I fear you will get into sad trouble on my account.

How. I think not of the consequences—I'll bring the unfeeling tyrant on his knees.

M. Wood. Nay; be not so violent—all is well now—think no more of it.

How. Think no more of it! (*smothering his anger.*)

Mrs. How. Do not be rash, George—consider—what can you accomplish against so powerful an adversary?

How. Is he more than a man, that you wou'd have me be so much less than one?

Mrs. How. Your anger sets reason at defiance.

M. Wood. Must I sue to you in vain?

How. Fear not my discretion.

M. Wood. Do not look so wildly then. Your eyes too plainly tell me what I have to fear.

How. (*aside.*) By Heaven he shall not live!

M. Wood. Think of your mother, too—

Mrs. How. No—I am not worth a thought of his.

How. Mother!—Mother!—hitherto my actions have always been sway'd by the love and duty I owe you—but in this instance you must allow me to think for myself.

M. Wood. Mr. Merton knew not what he did—I am sure he will be ready to apologize when sober reason returns to him.

How. Rather say he will tell the story to his dissolute companions, and set the table in a roar at your expence—No—no—that shall not be—If I suffer such disgrace and have not dear revenge, may this arm become feeble and withered, and may heav'n for ever—

Mrs. How. Hold! hold!—You must not thus give way to passion—when the storm which agitates your bosom is abated, I hope to obtain a promise from you, that you will pursue this no further—I cou'd give you good reasons why you shou'd not refuse me this request—(*with great earnestness.*)

M. Wood. Hear your mother—hear me join my prayers to her's—If you love us, listen to our intreaties.

How. If I love you—so dearly—that even you shall not prevail with me to act in a manner that would make me unworthy of you—I must leave you—those eyes will soften and un-

man

man me else—You shall have no cause to complain of me, since I go to teach proud oppression what is due to innocence and virtue like your's, however humble the cottage in which they dwell. [Exit.

M. Wood. Gone!—and on such an errand! haste, let us pursue him.

Mrs. How. It would be in vain—see how he bounds across the heath—rage and indignation agitate every limb, and drive him on, perhaps, to his destruction.

M. Wood. Oh, do not say so—and I the unhappy cause!—Alas! but for me it had not happened.

Mrs. How. May Heaven's protecting arm shield him from danger. [Exit.

SCENE IV.—*A Grove.*

Enter SIDNEY.

Sid. What, nothing stirring—no mischief to be done—If I stay in this place three days longer, I shall grow as dull and stupid as any country 'squire in his majesty's dominions.—What shall I do with myself—I must break my neck over a five barr'd gate, or blow my brains out with a fowling piece, I suppose; for some amusement I certainly must have, or die of the vapours.—Soho!—Soho!—I spy game—a charming

charming girl indeed—how lightly she trips along—Pshaw! there's a cursed old woman hobbling after her. [*He retires.*

MARGERY *speaks without.*

Mar. Indeed, young lady, your legs are too nimble for threescore and ten—I must sit down and rest myself on this stile.

EMMA *without.*

Emma. Do so if you plesse, Margery.

Enter EMMA.

Emma. Yet do not stay—for I'd fly swifter than the dove who seeks his absent mate—the air born gossamer urg'd by the summer's breath flies not so fast as my desires. As I live, yonder's the conceited spark who makes love to all the girls in the village, and imagines they are all in love with him.—I'll try to match him if I can. [*Sings.*

Sid. (coming forward.) What the devil shall I say to her!—Oh—any nonsense will do—Sweet is the pipe of the shepherd upon the plain—pleasing the note of the lark as she soars—lovely the song of the nightingale in the shade—but pipe of tuneful shepherd, note of sprightly lark, nor song of nightingale delight my soul so much as thy angelic voice.

Emma. (affecting great simplicity) Oh lud!—Oh lud!—how fine! do pray say it over again, Sir

Sid.

Sid. By heaven you are an angel!

Emma. Am I indeed!—well now, do you know I never was told so before—country people are so stupid—it's nothing but my duck, and my darling, and sweeting, but you say—by heav'n you are an angel—well, the truth on't is, I never heard any body talk so to please me before (*a pause*) go on sir.

Sid. She's quite a ninny.—(*aside*)—Were I to talk for years, I could not say enough in your praise—charming creature—I love you—I adore you—

Emma. What! so soon?—if you love me so much now, what will you do by-and-by, when you know me better?

Sid. Oh ho! this is no twelvemonth's siege (*aside*)

Emma. I am sure I ought to be very much obliged to you for loving me so well—but are you sure now that it is all real, true love, and not that fly-away sort of love that's here to-day and gone to-morrow?

Sid. True love I swear, sweet girl, and thus I seal the oath. (*Offering to kiss her.*)

Emma. (*repulsing him.*) Nay, you need not seal it now, for there is no one by to witness it.

Sid. That's not so simple.—Well then I swear by Cytherea's doves, and by young Cupid's bow and quiver, that I love you truly.

Emma. Oh, charming!—delightful!—I could listen

listen to you for a whole month—(*pause*) pray go on, Sir—come say something else, will you?

Sid. You shall go to the great city with me and I'll make an empress of you.

Emma. An empress! well, I should like to be made an empress—but will you really take me to London?

Sid. I will by the chariot of Phœbus.

Emma. I'd rather go by the stage coach.

Sid. By what conveyance you please, my shepherdess of Arcadia.

Emma. And will you shew me all the sights!—the giants at Guildhall, and the lions in the tower?

Sid. Oh yes—I'll shew you the lions.

Emma. But you won't serve me as the song says, will you?

Sid. How is that?

Emma. If you'll promise not to look at me I'll sing it for you.

Sid. Oh, I'll not look upon my honour.

Emma. I must make sure of that, for I should so blush if you were to see me—I must put this handkerchief over your eyes.

Sid. No, no—there's no occasion for that.

Emma. Yes, but there is tho'—for I cannot sing if any body sees me.

(*She ties the handkerchief over SIDNEY'S eyes.*)

Sid. Well, if it must be so—it must—a very pretty figure I cut here.

Emma.

Emma. Now, are you sure you can't see?

Sid. I am as blind as love—zounds—don't pull so hard.

Emma. Now listen.

SONG.—EMMA. (The Music by Mr. KELLY.)

Young Colinette, a lovely maid,
Had she been wise as she was fair,
By Lubin had not been betray'd,
Who prais'd her shape and prais'd her air,
And stole her heart away—
Ah me—Ah me—well a-day.

By vows, as false as false cou'd be,
He ruin'd lovely Colinette,
And careless then away went he,
So left the maid to pine and fret,
And sigh her life away—
Ah me—Ah me—well-a-day.

Sid. A very tragical story indeed.

Emma. Oh, but you must not take the handkerchief off yet, for I have something to say to you, and I wou'd not have you see me for the world.

Sid. What is it?—I am all ears.

Emma. Give me a little time to think how I shall tell you, for I am going to break my mind to you—I——

Enter MARGERY.—EMMA *beckens to her and places her between herself and SIDNEY.*

Sid. (taking Margery by the hand) Speak, my angel—come, I know what you wou'd say to me—by this trembling hand I can tell.

Emma.

Emma. You are so impatient—well now I vow I cannot tell you, it's so very silly.

(Exit EMMA, slowly.)

Sid. Come, rest yourself on my knee *(pulling MARGERY towards him)* Oh moment of extacy, I can withhold no longer—*kissing her with fervour.*)

Enter TANDEM.

Tand. (Ha! ha! ha!—

SIDNEY tears the handkerchief from his eyes—MARGERY curtsies.—TANDEM continues to laugh.

Sid. What has that gipsey been quizzing me all the while?

Tand. Ha! ha! ha!—So—you are a man of intrigue, I see—he! he! he!—beg pardon for laughing.

Sid. What does all this mean?

Tand. So you were determined to have a little blindman's bluff—ha, ha—he's a man of galantry.

Sid. Where can she be gone?

Tand. She's not gone, Sir—here she is—here's your love—

Sid. Psha! damnation! *(Exit SIDNEY.)*

Tand. Won't you take the lady with you?—very rude indeed.—Come, lovely fair, give me your hand.—“Oh thou wert born to please me.”—

(Exeunt singing.)

END OF ACT II.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Library.*

Enter MERTON and SIDNEY.

Mer. Oh Sidney—I shall never forgive myself—eternal shame will pursue me.

Sid. What, man, are you mad?—All this nonsense about rumpling a farmer's daughter a little—give the girl a new gown, and all will be well again.

Mer. Never, Sidney, never!—I am debased lower in my own opinion than the vilest thing on earth.—How far is that noble noble youth above me, whose manly arm rescued her from my ruffian grasp.

Sid. Yes, and if I were you—I would have that noble youth in the stocks for it before night.

Mer. I will have him here for ever, if his generous heart can link itself to one so mean as mine.

Sid. Why Charles, the fellow is a mere clown.

Mer. Shall I despise him for that?

Sid. You seem to forget that you were under the influence of the bottle when you committed this enormous crime!

Mer. Shall I plead that as an excuse?—Shall a man who walks in a dangerous path and blindfold's himself, accuse Providence that he falls and is hurt?

Sid. Well, in the name of all that's logical, have it your own way, Charles—for your arguments are truly so very ingenious that I despair of confuting you.—You know nothing of the world I see.—But pray tell me what do these high-flown notions of honour suggest to you?—what do you intend to do?

Mer. I know not what to do. When personal insult is offered to a man, the offender often atones for it with his life—what then does he deserve who violates the virtuous feelings of a woman?—a being who naturally looks up to him for succour and protection.

Sid. Oh, hanging is too good for such a villain.—Pray Charles, is the girl handsome?

Mer. Her countenance is the most lovely I ever beheld—it was half hidden by a veil of flowing ringlets, thro' which her eyes, beaming with angelic softness, might have disarm'd a savage tyger's fury.

Sid. Oh say no more—you've set me on fire—

Mer. Yet I, thus heavenly as she appear'd, assaulted her with brutal violence, and brought the blush of shame upon her modest cheek.

Sid. Shocking—shocking—how could you do so, Charles—you hurt my feelings very much—you do indeed—I shall take compassion on this poor girl myself—I'll provide for her.

Mer.

Mer. Sidney, beware. I know your meaning—but if by word or deed you outrage the feelings of Mary Woodland, I shall take it as an offence to me not to be forgiven.

Sid. I have done, good knight-errand—I have done.—What a pity it is that you did not live in the time of Charlemagne—you wou'd have shone in the page of chivalry.

Mer. Spite of your raillery, Sidney, I shall act as my heart dictates to me—I have done a flagrant wrong in the face of those who look up to me for an example.—My expiation shall be such as to shew them in what light I view my own conduct—I have enquired respecting the character of the girl I have used so ill, and find that she is every way deserving—my heart is free and I am resolved to make atonement by offering her my hand in marriage.

Sid. In marriage!

Mer. Even so—I cou'd give a thousand good reasons why I shou'd do this—but they wou'd only be laugh'd at by one of your way of thinking.

Sid. Marry cheese and butter!—a dairy maid.

Mer. I am resolved. She possesses a chaste and delicate mind, which the insult I have offered to her has severely wounded.

Sid. Your mode of reasoning is rather beyond my comprehension—I shall therefore leave you
to

to converse with yourself ; and, when you have finish'd your flight through the airy regions of romance, I shall be happy to join you again—till then, adieu.—I'll go in search of my damsel, and if I find her, I'll try if I can't make it up with her without matrimony. [*Exit.*

Mer. Yes ; justice demands this from me—and I will hesitate no longer.

(Sits down at a table and writes.)

Enter TANDEM, reading the Direction on a small Box, which he has in his Hand.

Tand. “To be opened by my son Charles Merton, on his coming of age ; or, in case of his death, to be committed to the flames.” What can it be about?—I shall know now.—Many a time when I have been at the great chest, this little box has struck my eye, and more than once I have been on the point of opening it—now my curiosity will be satisfied.—Sir, Sir, I hope I don't intrude—business must be minded—that is ever my maxim—I hope it is your's.—Here are various books of accounts, leases, bonds, mortgages, grants, settlements, title-deeds, bills, notes, letters of business, &c. &c. &c. which require your immediate attention, inspection, perusal, and judgment thereon.—Shall we proceed to look them over ?

Mer. Not at present—some other time if you please, Mr. Tandem.

Tand.

Tand. Oh, Sir, 'tis as you please, by all means.—Here, Sir, is a small box left by your honoured and worthy father, the late Mr. Merton—a man of—a gentleman—with a direction, signifying, saying, and requesting that said box shall not be opened until his son Charles, meaning yourself, Sir,—a young man of much prudence and promise—only a little addicted to drinking—hem!—[*aside*] shall become of age, meaning years of discretion, which many people never arrive at. [*Gives the box.*]

Mer. Directed to me with his own hand.

Tand. You are right, Sir; 'tis his hand, and an excellent hand he wrote.—Your father, Sir, was a man who suited me to a T—for he always minded his P's and Q's—and was without blot—a man of method.

Mer. He was indeed a good man—an excellent man.

Tand. Yes, he was perfectly correct.—Had not you better open the box, Sir?—Oh how I long to know what it contains! [*aside.*]

Mer. Here, perhaps, I shall find his dying request.—If so, to heaven I swear, I will obey him as implicitly as I did when I was under his immediate direction.

Tand. What a time he takes to consider of it! [*aside*]—It's a little good advice from the old gentleman, perhaps—Nothing more proper for a young man just coming into life.—Open the box—pray,

Sir, do—Perhaps it may be a matter of business coming immediately under my department—If so, I can only say that delay is dangerous, and we cannot recall an hour.

Mer. You are perfectly right, Mr. Tandem—But when I open this box I wish to be alone.

Tand. Alone! Heaven forbid!—I would not have it so on any account in the world—Alone!—Give me leave, Sir, I am a man of experience—Open that box before two—I mean one, or more credible witnesses—it may avoid litigation—And the law, you know, Sir, the law is—every body knows what that is—uncertainties—perplexities—difficulties—embarrassments—long bills, subpœnas, and all other disagreeables—Therefore I desire, beg and request, that you will open that box instantly, hereupon and forthwith.

Mer. I thank you for your advice, Mr. Tandem—but I have other business for your attention.

Tand. He's a man of—he's as obstinate as a mule [*aside*—Happy to obey your commands, Sir, with the utmost dispatch, whatever they may be.

Mer. Convey this letter—deliver it yourself—for it is of moment.

Tand. [*reading the direction*] “To Mr. Woodland”—Woodland!—Woodland!

Mer. Surely you know such a man.

Tand. Woodland! Woodland! Woodland!

Mer. He

Mer. He is a tenant of mine—you must know him.

Tand. What! farmer Woodland?—Oh yes, I know the man—he's a man of—a damn'd impudent fellow [*aside*].—I thought it impossible you could correspond with the farmer.

Mer. Why so?—I understand he is an honest man—he bears a most excellent character.

Tand. Consider his walk in life, Sir—You—a man of fortune—He—a dealer in pigs, pease and potatoes.

Mer. I have a great respect for the farmer, as you will soon find.

Tand. Then I am in a pretty scrape—I have sent John Doe and Richard Roe after him—but I'll fly and arrest their proceedings [*aside*]. This letter you say, Sir, is in a hurry—So am I—Dispatch is the soul of business—I am off, Sir—I return instantly—Curse it, he'll open the box whilst I am away—Woodland shall have the Bailiff, Sir—the box—the letter—he shall have it in a box—Pshaw!—in a moment I would have said—Egad I shall get into the wrong box if I don't make haste.

[*Exit.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. A young lady desires to speak with you, Sir.

G 2

Mer. Admit

Mer. Admit her immediately—[*Exit Servant.*]
Who can it be?

Enter EMMA, conducted by Servant.

A most interesting—a lovely countenance.

[*Servant bows and exit.*

Emma. Sir—I—I—beg pardon—I know this is an intrusion—but when I tell you the cause I hope you will not be offended—My spirits forsake me. [*aside.*]

Mer. Be assured I shall not—It is impossible that you should offend.

Emma. I fear you will think I am too bold, thus to obtrude myself.

Mer. There is no need of apology—I must be blind indeed not to perceive that I am in the company of a young lady of superior accomplishments.

Emma. I must not suffer you to continue in that error, Sir.—I have no accomplishments to boast—Secluded from the world, I have passed my whole life in this village, and am now come to you to supplicate—

Mer. To supplicate!—To command—You can ask nothing that I have power to grant, which I have power to refuse to you.

Emma. Your goodness emboldens me to speak at once—My prayer is, that my aged mother may not be driven from her home, but that you will

suffer her to end her days in peace in the dwelling which she already owes to the bounty of your father.—Grant me this, and I will be your slave.

[*preparing to kneel.*]

Mer. [*preventing her*] Most fervently I thank heaven that I have the power to relieve the distress of a mind so amiable—Sweet girl, your affection for your parent shows the goodness of your heart. Whatever you desire is granted.

Emma. My heart is full of acknowledgments, but my tongue denies to utter them [*going.*]

Mer. And are you so soon going to leave me? —What am I saying? [*aside*]

Emma. I fly to my mother to make her acquainted with your goodness—to tell her the extent of the obligation she is under to you.

Mer. You are under no obligation to me—The purse of the rich man is the treasury of the poor and unfortunate—and when the necessitous draw upon him, they give him an opportunity of discharging a debt to Providence.

Emma. [*aside*] I could listen to him for ever.

Mer. I will be a friend to your mother—She shall find me so.

Emma. Heaven will bless you for it—and I—

Mer. Nay—no thanks. I cannot hear them—If I listen to her, I am lost—Oh, could I recall a few hours, what happiness might be mine! [*aside.*]

EMMA

EMMA is looking attentively at him—their eyes meet—
she curtsies and exit.

She is gone, and I must never see her more.—
 What means this anxiety?—A thousand hopes and
 fears agitate me—In my confusion I have forgotten
 to ask her name—Who is there?

Enter JEFFERIES.

That young lady, Jefferies—do you know her?

Jeff. Yes—'tis Emma Harvey—She is the pride
 of the village—beloved by every body.

Mer. Certainly I love her.

Jeff. Do you?—I will run and tell her so.

Mer. Not for the world—'twould be ruin to my
 honour.

Jeff. No—no—not it indeed—She is well born
 —Her father, Captain Harvey, was your father's
 most intimate friend—If he were alive, I am sure he
 would approve your choice.

Mer. I did not mean that—I am completely
 miserable—distracted—Let me seek consolation
 here—[*looking at the box*]—Here, perhaps, I shall
 find a father's prudent admonitions—I stand in
 need of them.

Jeff. Ha! what have you there? I conjure you
 not to look upon it.

Mer. What do you mean?

Jeff. Had your father known that my old life
 would

would have worn till now, he'd not have left you such a legacy—But do not look at it, 'tis death to your happiness.

Mer. I feel an impulse not to be resisted—*[he opens the box.]*

(JEFFERIES standing by him with a dejected air.)

Jeff. 'Tis done—Alas! 'twill grieve him sadly.

Mer. What do I see?—*[reading]*—“Do not disclose the secret I reveal, do not become the impeacher of your father's honour.”—I tremble!—What can this mean? *[reading]*—“A wife and son living when I married your mother.”—Gracious powers! was my father such a—Speak, old man—find words for me—*[reading]* “Jefferies is the only witness of my shame, and he is deeply sworn to secrecy.” Is the lady living?—*(He does not answer.)*—Is she alive?—Dumb—Her son—my brother—does he live?—*[with tenderness]*—Still dumb—*[reads]* “Here is her solemn oath that she will never divulge it.”—But it shall be known—I will publish it to the world—If my brother be alive, it must be known—for the estate is his—Not for the honour of ten thousand fathers would I rob him of his right—Answer me, does he live?—Speak, or I will tear the secret from your heart.

Jeff. Be cool—be cool—You must not—cannot know him. You find there that I am sworn not to reveal what I know.

Mer. Call all the servants—let me proclaim—

Jeff. What!

Jeff. What!—your father's shame?—Is that the part a son should act?

Mer. Hah!—I know not what to do—My father's memory is dear to me—my own honour is dear to me.

Enter Servant.

Why this abrupt entrance?

Serv. Pardon me, Sir—Here is a young man who will not be denied admittance to you.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Enter GEORGE HOWARD.

JEFFERIES starts, but instantly recovers his surprise.

How. I presume, Sir, you have not forgotten that you have seen me before—nor the circumstances under which we met.

Mer. I have not forgotten that they were most disgraceful to me, and honourable to you.

How. How!

Mer. Is it so surprising to find a man ready to acknowledge his error?

How. I own even that is more than I expected—But to acknowledge your error is not sufficient—You must make the most submissive apology—Mark me, Sir, must do it.

Mer. Must, young man?—and how do you mean to enforce it?

How. At

How. At the hazard of my life.

Mer. Indeed!

MERTON makes a sign to JEFFERIES, who retires unwillingly.

How. Yes—however astonishing it may appear to you to find one who you think so far beneath you, daring to demand an honourable satisfaction from you—know that I possess a heart as proud as yours—which will not suffer an insult to pass with impunity from even a greater man than Mr. Merton.

Mer. I do not know that I have insulted you.

How. He who insults an unprotected female, is liable to answer it to every man of feeling—You have done so, and you shall answer it to me.

Mer. Shall!—Sir—I am not used to be compelled to do any thing—Your impetuosity defies explanation—nor will I give it to a man who has treated me with rudeness.

How. Rudeness?—Pray what ceremony does the gentleman require who has acted so politely to a female?—Your pardon, Sir, yours are the manners of the drawing-room, I suppose.

Mer. Have you any thing more to say to me?

How. Either make the apology I have demanded, or take my defiance.

Mer. I have already told you that I will not be compelled.

How. You refuse it, then?

H

Mer.

Mer. I do—

How. Then you understand how you must answer me—Stript of the supposed superiority which fortune gives you, will you meet me as a man ?

Mer. Name the place.

How. The elm grove on the south side the road.

Mer. Two hours hence I will meet you there.

How. 'Tis well—I shall be punctual. [Exit.

Mer. Why, this is well too—for if his weapon prove but true, my miseries are at an end—I am mad—distracted—Turn which way I will, there is a hideous gulf before me ready to devour me—I had marked out a path for myself which wou'd have led to happiness—but I have wandered a few paces out of my way, and I fear I shall never again recover it—O St. Aubert, guide of my youth—my friend—now I need your assistance—your advice—Your gentle admonitions might console—might direct me in this moment of danger—Be it my endeavour so to act as to merit your approbation!—Honour ! Honour and Justice be my guides !

[Exit.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

*Woodland's house.**Enter WOODLAND and Bailiff.**Woodland.**W*HAT dost want wi' me, measter?*Bail.* I have a writ for you, farmer.*Wood.* A writ—I doan't knaw what 'ee do mean, not I.*Bail.* Here it is.*Wood.* Let's zee—let's zee—Zixty pounds!—Teake hauld on't—it bean't moine.*Bail.* I must take you along with it, Master Woodland—You seem not to understand these things very well: this is a Writ—Timotheus Tandem is plaintiff, and you are defendant—You must either find bail—pay the money, or go to jail.*Wood.* Oh—I do understand thee now—Thee beest John Doe, beest thee?—I did not think as Tandem wou'd ha' done zoa—it be plaguy cros, to be sure—Well, I'll goa—I'll goa—but I do count as you can stay while I bid 'em good boy.*Bail.* Farmer, I believe you to be a very honest man, and I am heartily sorry to see you come to

such a misfortune—I shall make the matter as easy to you as I can—I will leave you to yourself for an hour, if you'll give me your word that at the expiration of that time you'll meet me up at the Greyhound.

Wood. Thee beest koind, and I do thank thee—I'll be zure to come to 'ee.

Bail. Be exact, farmer.

Wood. Doant 'ee be afraid.—[*Exit Bailiff.*—Zoa, I be to go to jail after all!—What will poor Meary zay when her comes to knaw on't?—I do veer her'll vret martally—Howsoever, there I'll goa, and there I'll stay for ever and a day afore measter Tandem shall have his way wi' me.

Enter TANDEM in haste.

Tand. I have outrun the bailiff [*aside*]. Farmer, your most obedient very humble servant!—How sour he looks! [*aside*] Your hand, honest man, your hand.

Wood. Woant my foot do for thee?

Tand. What, is the matter? I hope I have done nothing to offend you, my good friend.

Wood. What, you do zend all your good friends to jail, do 'ee?—You woant meake the place very full, I do count.

Tand. Prison, farmer--pshaw!—nonsense!—can't you take a joke?—You know my way—I am apt to be a little facetious sometimes—He! he! he!—Mean no harm tho'—I wou'd not send you to prison

son for the world—What, an honest, industrious man with a family!—Oh! I'm a man of feeling.

Wood. Feeling!—'Ees, I do think you be always feeling for zummut—but I tell thee, thee had'tt best feel thy way out o'here, or thee shall feel moy ztick.

Tand. Farmer, I tell you I am your friend—Here is a letter which I have brought from Mr. Merton; you'll find I have spoken well of you to him.—I wonder what that letter can be about—I have turn'd it almost inside outwards, and have not been able to read a syllable of it [*aside*]—Shall I read it for you? [*Snatches the letter, and is going to open it.*]

Wood. Noa!

Tand. You had better let me read it—your eyes are bad, you know.

Wood. Thay beant zo bad but what I can zee throw thee without spectacles—Goa thy ways mon, or I'll—[*Shaking his stick.*]

Tand. Oh, fie for shame, farmer!—is that usage for a friend?—He's a man of might.

Wood. Whoy doant 'ee goa?—There's the door, and there's the window—Thee had'tt best goa out at one, or thee must at t'other.

Tand. It's vastly kind of you to give me my choice. I'm not whimsical—the door will do for me. Shan't I take an answer to the letter?—I am yours to command on all occasions—Your most obedient and very humble servant—My respects to Mrs. W. and the whole family.

[*Exit.*]

Wood.

Wood. Odd rot un, he's a false chap—Let's zee what's here [*looking over the letter*]—Hey! what!—Whoy zertain zure moy ould eyes are meaking geame o'me!—I doan't zee this rightly—Meary!—Meary! [*calling*] come thy ways here—whoy it is me zure—Whoy, Meary, I zay, where beeft?

Enter MARY WOODLAND.

M. Wood. Here, father.

Wood. Here—read this, wench, I doan't zee rightly zomehow.

M. Wood [*reads*] “Sir—though I cannot forgive myself for my unmanly behaviour to your daughter, yet I hope her gentle nature will yield to my entreaties, and that she will not refuse me a pardon when she knows my contrition—I trust she will be convinced that I think her totally unworthy such conduct as she has experienced from me, when I tell her that I mean to endeavour to atone for my fault by offering her my hand in marriage—I hope to see you immediately, to convince you how earnestly I wish to expiate my offence, and to know your sentiments on this my proposal.

“Yours,

“CHARLES MERTON.”

Wood. Whoy that's unpossibile.

M. Wood. It's exactly as I have read it.

Wood. Gi' thee awld feither a kiss, wench—

[*kissing*]

[*kissing her*] Luck's come to us at last—O Meary! my awld eyes be runnin go'erw i' joy—Thee'tt be a leady, and zave thy whole family from ruin—It were coming upon us vast if thic had not happened—Dost thee knaw az Tandem were vor zending I to jail?—But that be all over now—I'll goa and tell thy mother all about it—Dom if owld wench and I doant dance together at thoy wedding.

[*Exit.*]

M. Wood. His heart is full of joy, but mine does not share it with him—Why does it not? Shou'd I not rejoice to find that I have it in my power to render my parents so happy?—Ah, no: I feel there is one who has an interest here beyond theirs—Either I must lose him who is dearer to me than all the world—or I must refuse to give happiness to those to whom I am dearer than life itself—How shall I decide?

Enter GEORGE HOWARD, [unobserved.]

How. I now see her, perhaps, for the last time—I fear almost to speak to her, lest she should discover something unusual in my behaviour, which might lead her to suspect that all is not right—Mary! my dearest Mary! Quite lost in thought.

M. Wood. I—indeed I was—thinking of you.

How. Of me?

M. Wood. Yes—but my thoughts were not so pleasant

pleasant as they have been when I have thought of you before.

How. Perhaps you fear'd that I was in danger.

M. Wood. No, I knew you were not.

How. Indeed—how did you know that?

M. Wood. I have reason to think much better of Mr. Merton than I did think of him.

How. I am glad of it.

M. Wood. Read this letter just now brought by Mr. Tandem the Steward.

[G. HOWARD takes the letter and reads—
she watches him the while.]

How. I am astonished—I can scarcely believe that what I see is real—How much I have wronged him!—He must possess a noble mind—Are you not delighted with your good fortune?

M. Wood. Call it not good fortune—It is, in my mind, the worst that could have befallen me.

How. You must not think so, since it gives you the power of extricating your family from the distress in which it is involved, and places it at an unenviable height above the reach of poverty—How difficult shall I find it to teach her this lesson! [*aside*]

M. Wood. I think I could lay down my life for my father—but this—Oh, George!—it is impossible.

How. Will you hesitate for a moment? Do not
parenta

parental duty and affection teach you how to act?

Enter WOODLAND (unobserved.)

I have no claim upon you more than the love I bear you gives me—and that love desires nothing so much as your happiness—Happiness in this world is the result of good actions—Then act as your duty requires of you, and be happy.

Wood. [*aside*] What be all this about love, and duty, and happiness!—

M. Wood. Oh, George!—you break my heart—And could you give me up? Could you part with me so easily?—What have I done that you should cease to love me?

Wood. Love her! I 'er heard o'thic afore. (*aside*)

How. Cease to love you!—Impossible—My heart bleeds, but she must not know what I feel [*aside*]—You will soon forget me—This young gentleman will drive me from your memory—You will find his manners more engaging than mine—He is in every respect more worthy of you—Remember my last words to you are, to beg that you will accept his proposal, and complete the happiness of your honest, worthy father and your family.—Farewell, Mary—my love, farewell. [*Exit.*

M. Wood. Yet stay one moment.—What!—gone!—His last words, did he say?—Oh—I cannot bear—Oh——(*she faints, and falls into Woodland's arms.*)

Wood. Poor wench!—poor wench!—What, didst thee think I'd ha' thee marry aginst thy will for moy zeake?—Noa—noa!—Whoy did'nt thee tell me az thou loved him?—Meary!—whoy, Meary, I do zay—Lord! Lord! her's all as coald as a stoane. [*calling*] Here, George Howard, come thy ways back—What mun I doa?—Whoy, Meary, look up—(*he is carrying her off*) Help! help!—Here, Bridget—where beest?—Help—help—here, Bridget, where beest?—Help—help, I do zay—Lord! Lord! what a mortal zinner I be!—Zell my child!—Dom me if Merton's estate should buy her if 'twas as big as the whole world! [*Exit, bearing off Mary.*]

SCENE II.

*A Grove.**Enter TANDEM.*

Tand. Curse that queer old hunks Woodland—I shall never be able to manage him—I will not believe that the girl could refuse me—that I think is impossible—A man of my figure and accomplishments rejected!—disdain'd!—me,—who all the girls in the village are dying for—Poh!—the girl's no such fool—But I'll transfer my love—I'll make some other fair one happy—Let me see, who shall it be?—Ha!—here's little Blindman's buff coming again—I'll attack her—Curse me, though, if I think

think I am a match for her.—I believe I had better fend her my propofals in writing [*withdraws*]

Enter EMMA.

Writing verfes in a fmall pocket-book, and reading.

EMMA (*reading*).

My love I love, and love in vain:

I'll keep the fecret here.

Love—gentle love, why caufe fuch pain?

It is not love, but fear,

That my love loves not me.

Fond heart be ftill, nor thus declare

The torments I muft know.

Fond eyes be clos'd, ye muft not dare

To tell my love my woe—

That my love loves not me.

Tand. Oh fhe's touch'd—fhe has it—it can be nobody but me—there's no other agreeable perfon in the village—(*comes forward*) A very pretty fong, Mifs Harvey.

Emma. I am glad it pleafes you, Sir.

Tand. She's glad it pleafes me. (*afide*) Love is—hem!—love is—is love.

Emma. It is indeed, Sir.

Tand. Ay, you know what it is—I have fome reason to believe, Mifs, that you are a little difpofed that way. He! he! he!—I beg pardon for laughing—I am quite ferious, I affure you—Are you not a little—juft a little touch'd about here?

Emma. Oh yes—I am very bad there.

Tand. Feel a little queer—Nothing more natural.

Emma. Were you ever in love, Mr. Tandem?

Tand. Hem!—(*looking significantly*) Never so much as now.

Emma. Heigho!

Tand. Why do you sigh?—Oh the sweet creature!—What causes such emotion in that tender breast? Oh, how she looks at me!—Speak—declare—who are you in love with?

Emma. If I am in love, 'tis with one on whom nature has lavish'd her choicest gifts.

Tand. Oh, Miss!—

Emma. A person, all elegance and grace.

Tand. She must mean me.

Emma. A countenance divine.

Tand. You flatter—indeed you do.

Emma. A heart full of benevolence, and a mind replete with every virtue.

Tand. A very highly finished picture, indeed, Miss!

Emma. Not equal to the original, I assure you, Sir.

Tand. Indeed you flatter—you do, indeed.

Emma. I did not think the fellow was so great a coxcomb. [*aside*]—You won't say I flatter if I draw you another picture of a man who thinks I am in love with him.

Tand. Some conceited puppy, I dare say.

Emma. An ignorant silly fellow.

Tand. Ah—no doubt.

Emma. As ugly as he is vain.

Tand. Oh the wretch!

Emma.

Emma. As full of noise and impertinence as a magpie.

Tand. A magpie!—a conceited fool!

Emma. A heart full of selfishness—and a head full of folly.

Tand. God blefs me!—and with all these faults he dares pretend to you!—Amazing effrontery!

Emma. How do you like that picture?

Tand. I really can't find out the likenefs.

Emma. No—you can't see him—but I can—
Ha! ha! ha!—Good bye, Mr. Tandem—how do you like your portrait? Ha! ha! ha!—I beg pardon for laughing. (*mimics*) [Exit.

Tand. I don't much like the portrait—but there is no one living whom I have a greater regard for than the original. [Exit.

SCENE III.

Mrs. HOWARD'S.

(*Mrs. HOWARD and CONSOLS discovered.*)

Mrs. How. Yet he returns not—Alas! I fear his impetuous temper will drive him to commit an action that will be fatal to our peace.

Conf. Be comforted, good Madam—do not make yourself unhappy till you have cause.

Mrs. How. And have I not cause? You perhaps do not know what it is to be a parent.

Conf. (*with feeling*) I have known what it is to be a parent.

Mrs. How. To have an only child torn from you!

Conf. Alas! I have known that too—You bring to my mind a misfortune which I cannot think of even at this distant period without shedding tears—Pardon the weakness of an old man—I had a daughter whom I tenderly loved—and she—

Mrs. How. Died? I suppose.

Conf. Worse—worse than that—She left me—deserted the father who loved her—A villain seduced her.

Mrs. How. Your story affects me—Excuse me, Sir, I must retire.

Conf. Nay—stay—I will say no more of it—'Tis five-and-twenty years ago—'tis time it ^{shou'd} be forgotten—Yet sometimes I cannot help thinking how happy she might have made me—how I should have doted on her children—and—Well—well—'tis all over—She's gone, and I—

Mrs. How. You distress me exceedingly.

Conf. I beg pardon for obtruding my sorrows upon you, Madam—but so much sympathy from a stranger I did not expect.

Mrs. How. And you have never heard of your daughter since she left you?

Conf. Yes—once, and only once—She wrote me a letter full of contrition, in which she told me,
that

that circumstances compell'd her to banish herself from my presence for ever—Too well has she kept her rash resolution—Alas! perhaps she's dead!

Mrs. How. Support me, Heaven!

Con. Here is her letter—I always carry it about me—Read it, Madam—You will find the poor girl was fully impress'd with a just sense of her fault—*(gives her the letter)*—She is very much affected—I fear you are unwell, Madam.

Mrs. How. A little overcome—I shall soon recover—Your story has reminded me of troubles—How shall I tell him?—My faltering tongue denies it's assistance—I had a father whom I loved and honoured—I left him—I am that wretch, doom'd now to see him sinking into the grave in misery and sorrow—Look, Sir—look on this—*(Shows Confols a picture.)*

Conf. Gracious Heavens! what do I see!—My own portrait—It was a gift to my daughter—the daughter I have lost.

Mrs. How. Have five-and-twenty years of sorrow so alter'd this face, that you can find no trace by which you may remember her whom you loved so well, and who requited you so ill?

Conf. Yes, yes—here I remember you—my heart leaps with joy, and claims you for its own *(embraces her.)*

Mrs. How. And can you forgive me?

Conf.

Conf. Talk not of forgiveness—these tears of joy have wash'd away the memory of your offence.

Mrs. How. Oh, my father—had I thought that you were poor and friendless, nothing should have kept me from you—How must your old age have required a daughter's fostering care! and that daughter has denied it you—But I thought you had been rich, and cou'd command the comforts which your age required—Alas! I have been deceived, my father—

Conf. We won't say any thing about that just now—We must forget what's past my child—Your son—I am now all anxiety on his account—where is he?

Mrs. How. Oh, let us fly in search of him—Some dreadful misfortune has, I fear, befallen him.

Conf. Heaven forbid!—I feel an unusual interest for him—I had adopted him for my own before I knew what claim he had upon me.

Mrs. How. You will, I trust, find him every way worthy of your good opinion.

Conf. I began my journey as the servant of Providence—My services are accepted, and here I receive my reward before I have been able to deserve it. Come, let us seek your son.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*A Drawing Room.**Enter MERTON and WOODLAND.**Woodland.*

YOUR zarvant, zir—I be come to have a little matter o' konzultation wi' you—Moy neame be Woodland—Zummut about matrimony—it be an arkard zoart of a thing.

Mer. Matrimony—Sometimes it is indeed:

Wood. Noa—noa—I did no' mean thic—Matrimony be well enough when folk do loike one another—but when they doant—they do meake but a baddish treade on't, I do count.

Mer. True—very true—He comes to drive me still further into the toil [*vehemently.*]

Wood. Lord, what a mortal rage he be in! [*aside*] Then, as I were a zaying, zir—if they doant loike one another—whoy they doan't—and all the talking in the world won't meake 'em.

Mer. There can be no happinefs in the married state without a reciprocal attachment.

Wood. Zartin, zartin—zure there can't—thic be
K
just

just what I do think—Woantee zit down, zir, and let us talk thic matter over?—*[They sit.]*

Mer. With all my heart—Come, speak out—I am prepared for the worst—*[wildly]*

Wood. Now if I do tell him as our Meary woan't ha' him he'll zartainly do himself zome mortal harm—*[aside]*—Now moy wench would be a blessing to any mon az her loiked.

Mer. No doubt of it.

Wood. But if her doan't loike him, whoy what's to be done then?—I cou'd loike thee for a zon-in-law well enough—but if moy wench doan't like thee, I doan't knaw how to meake her.

Mer. *[starting up]* Not love me, did you say?

Wood! *[alarmed]* Noa—noa—I did not mean thic!—Be cool—be cool—What mun I zay to un? *[aside]*—Doan't'ee be angry wi' I—for it be no vault o' moine—But thic be it—Thou woudst not chooze to have a wench vor thy woife az loved another better ner thee?

Mer. Oh, if it were so!—*[passionately]*

Wood. Thou'dst go and hang thyself, I do count.—Now, come what will on't, I'll not tell nim *(aside)*.—I did no' zay az her did no' loike thee—Doant'ee be zo mortal crafs.

Mer. Do you come here to torture me! to drive me mad!—Away! Bring your daughter to me instantly, lest I revoke the word I have given, and
refuse

refuse to become the destroyer of my own happiness. [Exit.

Wood. Lord, Lord! what a desperate thing this love be! He be mad az zure az a gun.—Well, I'll goa and fetch Meary to un, and zee what she can do wi' un—I'll leave 'em to zettle it their own way—Lord, Lord! how he will teake on when he comes to knaw as Meary woan't ha' him!—He'll hang himzelf az zure az I be borned. [Exit.

SCENE II.

A Grove.

Enter TANDEM, followed by two Constables.

Tand. Give challenges! A pretty fellow, truly! A man of mettle too!—What an opportunity for me to show my affection to Mr. Merton! I am glad old Jefferies told me of it.—[*To the Constables*] Mind you spring on him suddenly, and hold him fast; for he is a terrible dog, and if he should catch hold of me, he'll worry me in a moment.

1st Const. Well, but, Measter Tandem, you'll help us if the fendant shou'd be obstrobolus?

Tand. Not I, indeed: I won't come within fifty yards of him.

1st Const. Whoy then I doubt Dick and I shall hardly be a match for'n; shall us, Dick?

2d Const. Whoy I can charge him in the King's name to keep the peace, if you will hold him fast.

1st Const.

1st Const. Lord help you! he'll no more mind charging than you'd mind a pop-gun. I doubt we shall get paid upon the pate for charging him.

Tand. You abominable cowards! are you afraid of one man?—Is not that he coming this way? [*fearfully.*] Do your duty—I'll stand here [*retires up.*] Spring on him.

1st Const.] We'll do the best we can, but I am afraid he'll be a little rumgumtious, or so.

[*They withdraw.*]

Enter GEORGE HOWARD.

How. Yes, I will wait here; for I strongly suspect some foul play. If he should come as he has promised, it will then be time enough to explain. I know Tandem, who brought the letter, to be a fellow totally devoid of principle, and I am disposed to think there can be no honourable intention where he is concerned.

Tand. Very well, my man! Mighty pretty, indeed!—Now, lads; now is the time. [*The Constables advance.*]

How. It is impossible; Merton cannot be sincere—It is some device—some—— [*The Constables seize him.*]

Both Const. We charge you, in the King's name, to keep the peace.

How. What does this mean?

1st Const.

1st Const. Peace, in the King's name.

How. Good friends, how have I broken the peace?

1st Const. [*to 2d Const.*] How has he broke the peace?

2d Const. I know nought o' that; but he must come with us—So bring him along.

How. By whose desire do you act thus?

[*TANDEM makes signs to the Constables.*]

1st Const. What d'ee ston grinning there for? Whoy doant'ee come and tell fendant what he's charg'd?

[*TANDEM comes forward reluctantly.*]

Tand. Oh curse the blockhead! Hold him fast! hold him fast, I say!

How. So, then, my suspicions were not unfounded—Reptile! [*to Tandem furiously.*]

Tand. [*alarmed.*] Hold him fast! hold him fast!

How. Vile tool of unjust power!

Tand. Bring him along.

How. Good friends, do not resist me; the consequences may be fatal to you.

[*After a slight struggle he escapes from the Constables, and runs up to TANDEM in a threatening posture. The Constables run off.*]

Tand. Pray now do, honest man, consider I am oblig'd to do as I am bidden.

How. What, then, you confess your villany!

Tand.

Tand. Don't be in such a passion, and I will confess any thing.

How. The letter you brought to Farmer Woodland was all a cheat—a trick—a contrivance.

Tand. Yes, it was a contrivance.

How. And you are the vile emissary of a greater villain than yourself, sent here to prevent his receiving the punishment I——

Tand. Yes, that is exactly it, I confess—Be appeased, man of might, be appeased!

How. Wretch! you are beneath my resentment.

Tand. Upon my soul I am very glad of it.

How. Go.

Tand. With speed—I am off.

How. Tell your employer that his mean arts will not avail, and he shall find that he has no common enemy to deal with.

Tand. I shall communicate——Oh, he's a terrible tiger—I'm glad I am out of his claws.

Exit.

How. Yes, I will attack the serpent in his hiding-place—By Heaven he shall not escape me!

[*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE III.

A Parlour in MERTON'S House.

Enter JEFFERIES, *followed by* Mrs. HARVEY *and*
EMMA.

Emma. Can we not see Mr. Merton, Sir?

Jeff. Not at present, young lady—He is gone out—but I hope he will soon return.—May I ask your business?

Emma. I have brought my mother to thank him for his kindness to her.

Mrs. Har. We are much beholden to him, Mr. Jefferies—He has renewed the lease for my daughter's life and mine—and sent us an order on his banker to pay my daughter one thousand pounds on the day of her marriage.

Jeff. Excellent young man!—Pray heaven no harm come to him!

Emma. [*earnestly*] Is he in any danger, Mr. Jefferies?

Jeff. No, no, I trust not—I have taken good care to prevent any bad consequences—Well, a thousand pounds is no bad portion—The dear boy has done that out of respect for your father's memory.

Emma. But I shall never claim it, Mr. Jefferies—I do not intend to marry.

Jeff. What, never, young lady?—I know one,
7 who,

who, if things go as they should, will soon offer himself, and I think you will not refuse him—We shall see—we shall see.

Emma. [*aside*] O delusive hope, whither do you lead me?—

TANDEM *without.*

Tand. Murder!—murder!—murder!

Enter TANDEM.

Tand. They are at it—they are at it—Pistols, blunderbusses, flugs and hair-triggers—Wogden and Mortimer—he'll be killed!—Howard's a sure shot as ever went into a stubble—I never knew him miss his bird.—Mr. Merton will lose his life, and I shall lose my place.

Emma. Mr. Merton! Oh heavens!

Jeff. Why do I stand here?—Oh, that I had the activity of youth, that I might fly to save him!

[*Exit.*

Tand. I did as I was desired—but I cou'd not prevent the meeting; for Howard got away from me, and Mr. Merton came up just in the same moment—He's a dead man as sure as I am alive—Come along, Miss—There is nothing like having a lady by on these occasions—Lord! how pale you look—She'll certainly faint—Come, old lady, help her along—make haste, or it will be all over before we get there.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE IV.

A Grove.

Enter MERTON *and* GEORGE HOWARD *meeting.*

How. [*sarcastically*] So, Sir! you are caught in your own snare.—No doubt you expected to meet me here.

Mer. I do not understand you—nor am I much disposed to parley—Come, we are both unattended, and 'tis best it should be so—Such scenes as these shou'd have no witnesses.

How. And are there none?—Is there no one concealed to spring upon and disarm me?—Has your cunning devised no trick to shield your cowardice?

Mer. [*drawing his pistol*] Cowardice!—[*recollecting himself*] But I came here to die—dispatch!—I am the aggressor—aim at my heart, and——

Enter JEFFERIES.

Jeff. [*rushing between them*] Madmen, hold!—Ye know not what you do.

How. Admirably plann'd, indeed!—and just as I expected.

Mer. [*to Jefferies, who clings to him*] Old man, away!—away, I say!

How. This is the contrivance of a coward!—

L

Mer.

Mer. Again!—It is not to be borne. [*presents his pistol*]

Jeff. [*clinging to him*] Hold!

[*MERTON disengages himself.*]

Jeff. [*rushes up to him—and speaks in an under voice to him*] 'Tis a brother's blood you would spill.

Mer. [*sinks into Jefferies's arms*] A brother!—Heaven have mercy!—did you say a brother?—Brother—[*affectionately to Howard, who is in amazement*] Do not fly my embrace—you are my brother—[*embracing him*]

[*Enter all the characters hastily.*]

[*EMMA faints in MERTON's arms—SIDNEY assy to recover her.*]

[*Mrs. HOWARD runs up to GEORGE HOWARD*

Mrs. How. My son! my son!—what is it you do?

How. Do not be alarmed, dear mother—Here is no harm done—But there might have been if what I hear be true.—Have I—have I a brother?

[*Mrs. HOWARD is surprized, and hesitates.*]

Mer. Answer him boldly, Madam, by reading this. [*gives a paper*]

Mrs. How. [*reads*] “And as it is for your interest, I solemnly swear never to reveal the secret of our marriage.” It should indeed never have been reveal'd.

Mer. Excellent woman!—you have been deeply wronged—But thank heaven, I live to do you justice.

How. And have I fought a brother's life?

Mer. I am indeed your brother—proud of the title which deprives me of ten thousand a year.

Conf. He shall not touch one shilling of it—I tell him so—his grandfather, Old Confols.

Mrs. How. Here, George, you owe another duty.

Conf. Stand not amazed, my boy—Confols is a name you need not be ashamed of (*embracing him*)

Tand. What—the rich Christopher Confols of Throgmorton Street?

Cons. Yes—I am old Kit.

Tand. Why, report says you are worth half a million in 3 per cents—4 per cents—5 per cents—India stock—Bank stock—live and dead stock, and all other stocks.

Conf. Report speaks truly for once.

Tand. I wish I were a relation of yours, if it were only sixteenth cousin.

Conf. You are from town, I suppose, Sir?—Pray can you tell me the price of stocks?

Wood. Well—ye be all settling matters your own ways—and I shou'd be glad to know which o' you two brothers be to ha' Meary—I can answer for it as she do love you best, George.

M. Wood. He is my first, my only love.

Mer. What do I hear ?

Wood. There now—he' ll go mad again.

Mer. (*looking at Emma*) Then I am free to choose.—May I—may I hope ?

Jeff. I'll speak to that—I have made some observations—and I think—I may venture to do this (*joining their hands.*)

Tand. What am I to get by all this ?

Wood. A good ztick, I do hope.

Tand. I think, Mr. Sidney, you and I had better pair off together.

Sid. Merton, you have made a convert of me—Adieu to dissipation, I am now for a country life, a——

Tand. Fat wife, fourteen children,—pigs,—poultry,—peace and plenty—that is what you wish I know.

Mer. Your virtues, dearest Madam, claim my respect, and duty ; and if I know my heart aright, it will pay you with true filial affection—Fraternal love affords me a new source of delight—and here I have a treasure, which I shall possess without alloy, if surrounding friends will sanction my choice, and pledge themselves never to flight

THE MARRIAGE PROMISE.

FINIS.

