

BURGOYNE

JOHN

THE HEIRESS;
A COMEDY, IN
FIVE ACTS

John Burgoyne

The Heiress; a comedy, in five acts

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Burgoyne J.

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Содержание

REMARKS	5
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ	7
ACT THE FIRST	8
SCENE I	8
SCENE II	11
SCENE III	15
ACT THE SECOND	17
SCENE I	17
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	20

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The Heiress; a comedy, in five acts

REMARKS

The author of this play was an elegant writer, and a brave soldier – yet, as an author he had faults, and as a general failures. His life was eventful; and he appears to have had, among his other qualities, that of patient philosophy: or if, in the warmth of youth, or pride of manhood, he was ever elated by prosperity, it is certain he bore adversity with cheerful resignation; that adversity, which is more formidable to the ambitious, than poverty to the luxurious – disappointment of expected renown.

Secret love, and clandestine marriage, composed the first acts of that tragi-comedy, called his life. His cultivated mind, and endearing manners, reconciled, in a short time, the noble house of Derby to his stolen union with Lady Charlotte Stanley: her father, the late Earl of Derby, acknowledged him for his son-in-law; while the present Earl considered him, not only as his uncle, but his friend¹.

The author was, at that period, but a subaltern in the army. The patronage of his new relations, more than his own merit, it is probable, obtained him higher rank. He was, however, possessed of talents for a general, and those talents were occasionally rewarded with success. But his misfortunes in battle have been accompanied by circumstances more memorable than his victories – the latter were but of slight or partial consequence; his defeat at Saratoga was of great and direful import.

He sent an able, and most pathetic account, from America, of the surrender of his whole army – it was correctly written, and the style charmed every reader – but he had better have beaten the enemy, and mis-spelt every word of his dispatch; for so, probably, the great Duke of Marlborough would have done, both by one and the other.

General Burgoyne appears to have been a man capable of performing all things that did not require absolute genius. He was complete in mediocrity, A valiant, but not always a skilful, soldier; an elegant, but sometimes an insipid, writer.

When the comedy of "The Heiress" was first acted, it was compared, and preferred by some persons, to "The School for Scandal." It attracted vast sums of money from the east, as well as the west part of the metropolis; – but was more justly appreciated when the season of acting was over, and the playhouses closed.

Still, it is a production which claims high respect, from a degree of refinement which pervades the whole work; from the peculiar situation of its author; and from other circumstances closely connected with its performance on the stage. – "The Heiress" is dedicated to the Earl of Derby; and the present Countess of Derby was the Lady Emily of the drama when it was first acted.

The author, in his Preface, has, with much art, paid a deference to Miss Farren, by a compliment separate from her brother and sister performers; at the same time, wisely taking care not to excite their jealousy, while he soothed the partiality of his noble relation. He thanks and praises her merely for speaking his Epilogue, in which, of course, no other performer had a claim to his acknowledgments.

Lieutenant General Burgoyne is the author of another comedy, called "The Maid of the Oaks," and the excellent farce of "Bon Ton." – He was enamoured of the stage, and was at a play, in the little theatre of the Haymarket, the night previous to that on which he died suddenly, in the summer of 1792.

He was a Privy Counsellor, Colonel of the 4th regiment of foot, and Member of Parliament for Preston, in Lancashire. He had held many offices of great emolument; but having resigned them

¹ The late Earl of Derby was grandfather to the present Earl, his son having died before him.

all about the time he wrote this comedy, he was at length rather a confirmation of, than an exception to, the adage – an author is seldom wealthy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SIR CLEMENT FLINT *Mr. King.*
CLIFFORD *Mr. Smith.*
LORD GAYVILLE *Mr. Palmer.*
ALSCRIP *Mr. Parsons.*
CHIGNON *Mr. Baddeley.*
MR. BLANDISH *Mr. Barnister, jun.*
PROMPT *Mr. R. Palmer.*
MR. RIGHTLY *Mr. Aickin.*
LADY EMILY *Miss Farren.*
MISS ALSCRIP *Miss Pope.*
MISS ALTON *Mrs. Crouch.*
MRS. SAGELY *Mrs. Booth.*
TIFFANY *Miss Tidswell.*
MRS. BLANDISH *Mrs. Wilson.*
CHAIRMEN, SERVANTS, &c.

SCENE—*London.*

ACT THE FIRST

SCENE I

A Lady's Apartment.

Mr. Blandish and Mrs. Letitia Blandish discovered writing: Letters folded up, and Message Cards scattered upon the Table.

Mrs. Blandish leans upon her Elbows, as meditating; writes, as pleased with her Thought; lays down the Pen.

Mrs. Blandish. There it is, complete —

[Reads conceitedly.

*Adieu, my charming friend, my amiable, my all
Accomplished associate! conceive the ardour of
Your lovers united with your own sensibility —
Still will the compound be but faintly expressive
Of the truth and tenderness of your*

Letitia Blandish.

There's phrase – there's a period – match it, if you can.

Blandish. Not I, indeed: I am working upon a quite different plan: but, in the name of the old father of adulation, to whom is that perfect phrase addressed?

Mrs. Blandish. To one worth the pains, I can tell you – Miss Alscrip.

Blandish. What, sensibility to Miss Alscrip! My dear sister, this is too much, even in your own way: had you run changes upon her fortune, stocks, bonds, and mortgages; upon Lord Gayville's coronet at her feet, or forty other coronets, to make footballs of if she pleased, – it would have been plausible; but the quality you have selected —

Mrs. Blandish. Is one she has no pretensions to; therefore the flattery is more persuasive – that's my maxim.

Blandish. And mine also, but I don't try it quite so high – Sensibility to Miss Alscrip! you might as well have applied it to her uncle's pig-iron, from which she derives her first fifty thousand; or the harder heart of the old usurer, her father, from which she expects the second. But come, [*Rings.*] to the business of the morning.

Enter Prompt

Here, Prompt – send out the chairman with the billets and cards. – Have you any orders, madam?

Mrs. Blandish. [*Delivering her Letter.*] This to Miss Alscrip, with my impatient inquiries after her last night's rest, and that she shall have my personal salute in half an hour. – You take care to send to all the lying-in ladies?

Prompt. At their doors, madam, before the first load of straw.

Blandish. And to all great men that keep the house – whether for their own disorders, or those of the nation?

Prompt. To all, sir – their secretaries, and principal clerks.

Blandish. [*Aside to Prompt.*] How goes on the business you have undertaken for Lord Gayville?

Prompt. I have conveyed his letter, and expect this morning to get an answer.

Blandish. He does not think me in the secret?

Prompt. Mercy forbid you should be!

[*Archly.*

Blandish. I should never forgive your meddling.

Prompt. Oh! never, never!

Blandish. [*Aloud.*] Well, dispatch —

Mrs. Blandish. Hold! – apropos, to the lying-in list – at Mrs. Barbara Winterbloom's, to inquire after the Angola kittens, and the last hatch of Java sparrows.

Prompt. [*Reading his Memorandum as he goes out.*] Ladies in the straw – ministers, &c. – old maids, cats, and sparrows: never had a better list of how d'ye's, since I had the honour to collect for the Blandish family.

[*Exit.*

Mrs. Blandish. These are the attentions that establish valuable friendships in female life. By adapting myself to the whims of one, submitting to the jest of another, assisting the little plots of a third, and taking part against the husbands with all, I am become an absolute essential in the polite world; the very soul of every fashionable party in town or country.

Blandish. The country! Pshaw! Time thrown away.

Mrs. Blandish. Time thrown away! As if women of fashion left London, to turn freckled shepherdesses. – No, no; cards, cards and backgammon, are the delights of rural life; and, slightly as you may think of my skill, at the year's end I am no inconsiderable sharer in the pin-money of my society.

Blandish. A paltry resource – Gambling is a damned trade, and I have done with it.

Mrs. Blandish. Indeed!

Blandish. Yes; 'twas high time. – The women don't pay; and as for the men, the age grows circumspect in proportion to its poverty. It's odds but one loses a character to establish a debt, and must fight a duel to obtain the payment. I have a thousand better plans, but two principal ones; and I am only at a loss which to chuse.

Mrs. Blandish. Out with them, I beseech you.

Blandish. Whether I shall marry my friend's intended bride, or his sister.

Mrs. Blandish. Marry his intended bride? – What, pig-iron and usury? – Your opinion of her must advance your addresses admirably.

Blandish. My lord's opinion of her will advance them; he can't bear the sight of her, and, in defiance of his uncle, Sir Clement Flint's, eagerness for the match, is running mad after an adventure, which I, who am his confidant, shall keep going till I determine. – There's news for you.

Mrs. Blandish. And his sister, Lady Emily, the alternative! The first match in England, in beauty, wit, and accomplishment.

Blandish. Pooh! A fig for her personal charms; she will bring me connexion that would soon supply fortune; the other would bring fortune enough to make connexion unnecessary.

Mrs. Blandish. And as to the certainty of success with the one or the other —

Blandish. Success! – Are they not women? – But I must away. And first for Lord Gayville, and his fellow student, Clifford.

Mrs. Blandish. Apropos! Look well to Clifford. Lady Emily and he were acquainted at the age of first impressions.

Blandish. I dare say he always meant to be the complete friend of the family; for, besides his design on Lady Emily, his game, I find, has been to work upon Lord Gayville's understanding; he thinks he must finally establish himself in his esteem, by inexorably opposing all his follies. – Poor

simpleton! – Now, my touch of opposition goes only to enhance the value of my acquiescence. So adieu for the morning – You to Miss Alscip, with an unction of flattery, fit for a house-painter's brush; I to Sir Clement, and his family, with a composition as delicate as ether, and to be applied with the point of a feather.

[Going.

Mrs. Blandish. Hark you, Blandish – a good wish before you go: To make your success complete, may you find but half your own vanity in those you have to work on!

Blandish. Thank you, my dear Letty; this is not the only tap you have hit me to-day, and you are right; for if you and I did not sometimes speak truth to each other, we should forget there was such a quality incident to the human mind.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II

Lord Gayville's Apartment.

Enter Lord Gayville and Mr. Clifford

Lord G. My dear Clifford, urge me no more. How can a man of your liberality of sentiment descend to be the advocate of my uncle's family avarice?

Cliff. My lord, you do not live for yourself. You have an ancient name and title to support.

Lord G. Preposterous policy! Whenever the father builds, games, or electioneers, the heir and title roust go to market. Oh, the happy families Sir Clement Flint will enumerate, where this practice has prevailed for centuries; and the estate been improved in every generation, though specifically spent by each individual!

Cliff. But you thought with him a month ago, and wrote with transport of the match – "Whenever I think of Miss Alscrip, visions of equipage and splendour, villas and hotels, the delights of independence and profuseness, dance in my imagination."

Lord G. It is true, I was that dissipated, fashionable wretch.

Cliff. Come, this reserve betrays a consciousness of having acted wrong: You would not hide what would give me pleasure: But I'll not be officious.

Lord G. Hear me without severity, and I'll tell you all. Such a woman, such an assemblage of all that's lovely in the sex! —

Cliff. Well, but – the who, the how, the where?

Lord G. I met her walking, and alone; and, indeed, so humbly circumstanced as to carry a parcel in her own hand.

Cliff. I cannot but smile at this opening of your adventure. – But proceed.

Lord G. Her dress was such as a judicious painter would chuse to characterise modesty. But natural grace and elegance stole upon the observation, and, through the simplicity of a quaker, showed all we could conceive of a goddess. I gazed, and turned idolater.

Cliff. [*Smiling.*] You may as well finish the description in poetry at once; you are on the very verge of it.

Lord G. She was under the persecution of one of those beings peculiar to this town, who assume the name of gentlemen, upon the sole credentials of a boot, a switch, and round hat – the things that escape from counters and writing desks, to disturb public places, insult foreigners, and put modest women out of countenance. I had no difficulty in the rescue.

Cliff. And, having silenced the dragon, in the true spirit of chivalry, you conducted the damsel to her castle.

Lord G. The utmost I could obtain was leave to put her into a hackney coach, which I followed unperceived, and lodged her in the house of an obscure milliner, in a bye street, whose favour was soon conciliated by a few guineas. I almost lived in the house; and often, when I was not suspected to be there, passed whole hours listening to a voice, that would have captivated my very soul, though it had been her only attraction. At last —

Cliff. What is to follow?

Lord G. By the persuasions of the woman, who laughed at my scruples with an unknown girl, a lodger upon a second floor, I hid myself in the closet of her apartment: and the practised trader assured me, I had nothing to fear from the interruption of the family.

Cliff. Oh, for shame, my lord! whatever may be the end of your adventure, such means were very much below you.

Lord G. I confess it, and have been punished. Upon the discovery of me, fear, indignation, and resolution, agitated the whole frame of the sweet girl by turns. – I should as soon have committed sacrilege, as have offered an affront to her person. – Confused – overpowered – I stammered out a few incoherent words – Interest in her fortune – respect – entreaty of forgiveness – and left her, to detest me.

Cliff. You need go no farther. I meant to rally you, but your proceedings and emotion alarm me for your peace and honour. You are on a double precipice; on one side impelled by folly, on the other —

Lord G. Hold, Clifford, I am not prepared for so much admonition. Your tone is changed since our separation; you seem to drop the companion, and assume the governor.

Cliff. No, my lord, I scorn the sycophant, and assert the friend.

Enter Servant, followed by Blandish

Serv. My lord, Mr. Blandish.

[Exit.]

Cliff. [*Significantly.*] I hope every man will do the same.

Blandish. Mr. Clifford, do not let me drive you away – I want to learn your power to gain and to preserve dear Lord Gayville's esteem.

Cliff. [*With a seeming Effort to withdraw his Hand, which Blandish holds.*] Sir, you are quite accomplished to be an example. —

Blandish. I have been at your apartment, to look for you – we have been talking of you with Sir Clement – Lady Emily threw in her word. —

Cliff. [*Disengaging his Hand.*] Oh, sir, you make me too proud. [*Aside.*] Practised parasite!

[Exit.]

Blandish. [*Aside.*] Sneering puppy. – [*To Lord Gayville.*] My lord, you seem disconcerted; has any thing new occurred?

Lord G. No, for there is nothing new in being disappointed in a friend.

Blandish. Have you told your story to Mr. Clifford?

Lord G. I have, and I might as well have told it to the cynic my uncle: he could not have discouraged or condemned me more.

Blandish. They are both in the right. I see things exactly as they do – but I have less fortitude, or more attachment than others: – The inclinations of the man, I love, are spells upon my opposition.

Lord G. Kind Blandish! you are the confidant I want.

Blandish. What has happened since your discovery in the closet?

Lord G. The lovely wanderer left her lodgings the next morning – but I have again found her – she is in a house of equal retirement, but of very different character, in the city, and inaccessible. I have wrote to her, and knowing her to be distressed, I have enclosed bank bills for two hundred pounds, the acceptance of which I have urged with all the delicacy I am master of, and, by Heaven! without a purpose of corruption.

Blandish. Two hundred pounds, and Lord Gayville's name —

Lord G. She has never known me, but by the name of Mr. Heartly. Since my ambition has been to be loved for my own sake, I have been jealous of my title.

Blandish. And pr'ythee by what diligence or chance, did Mr. Heartly trace his fugitive?

Lord G. By the acuteness of Mr. Prompt, your valet de chambre. You must pardon me for pressing into my service for this occasion, the fellow in the world fittest for it. – Here he comes.

Enter Prompt

Prompt. Are you alone, my lord?

[Starts at seeing his Master.

Lord G. Don't be afraid, Prompt – your peace is made.

Prompt. Then there is my return for your lordship's goodness. *[Giving the Letter.]* This letter was just now brought to the place appointed, by a porter.

Lord G. By a Cupid, honest Prompt, and these characters were engraved by the point of his arrow! *[Kissing the Superscription.]* "To – Heartly, Esq." Blandish, did you ever see any thing like it?

Blandish. If her style be equal to her hand-writing —

Lord G. If it be equal! – Infidel! you shall have proof directly. *[Opens the Letter precipitately.]* Hey-day! what the devil's here? my bills again, and no line – not a word – Death and disappointment, what's this!

Prompt. Gad it's well if she is not off again – 'faith I never asked where the letter came from.

Lord G. Should you know the messenger again?

Prompt. I believe I should, my lord. For a Cupid he was somewhat in years, about six feet high, and a nose rather given to purple.

Lord G. Spare your wit, sir, till you find him.

Prompt. I have a shorter way – my life upon it I start her myself.

Blandish. And what is your device, sirrah!

Prompt. Lord, sir, nothing so easy as to bring every living creature in this town to the window: a tame bear, or a mad ox; two men, or two dogs fighting; a balloon in the air – (or tied up to the ceiling 'tis the same thing) make but noise enough, and out they come, first and second childhood, and every thing between – I am sure I shall know her by inspiration.

Lord G. Shall I describe her to you?

Prompt. No, my lord, time is too precious – I'll be at her last lodgings, and afterwards half the town over before your lordship will travel from her forehead to her chin.

Lord G. Away then, my good fellow. He cannot mistake her, for when she was formed, nature broke the mould.

[Exit Prompt.

Blandish. Now for the blood of me, cannot I call that fellow back; it is absolute infatuation: Ah! I see how this will end.

Lord G. What are your apprehensions?

Blandish. That my ferret yonder will do his part completely; that I shall set all your uncle's doctrine at nought, and thus lend myself to this wild intrigue, till the girl is put into your arms.

Lord G. Propitious be the thought, my best friend – my uncle's doctrine! but advise me, how shall I keep my secret from him for the present? 'Faith, it is not very easy; Sir Clement is suspicion personified: his eye probes one's very thought.

Blandish. Your best chance would be to double your assiduities to Miss Alscip. But then dissimulation is so mean a vice. —

Lord G. It is so indeed, and if I give into it for a moment, it is upon the determination of never being her husband. I may despise and offend a woman; but disgust would be no excuse for betraying her. Adieu, Blandish; if you see Prompt first, I trust to you for the quickest communication of intelligence.

Blandish. I am afraid you may – I cannot resist you. [*Exit* Lord Gayville.] – Ah! wrong – wrong – wrong; I hope that exclamation is not lost. A blind compliance with a young man's passions is a poor plot upon his affections.

[Exit.

SCENE III

Mrs. Sagely's *House*.

Enter Mrs. Sagely and Miss Alton

Mrs. Sagely. Indeed, Miss Alton, (since you are resolved to continue that name) you may bless yourself for finding me out in this wilderness. – Wilderness! this town is ten times more dangerous to youth and innocence: every man you meet is a wolf.

Miss Alton. Dear madam, I see you dwell upon my indiscretion in flying to London; but remember the safeguard I expected to find here. How cruel was the disappointment! how dangerous have been the consequences! I thought the chance happy that threw a retired lodging in my way: I was upon my guard against the other sex, but for my own to be treacherous to an unfortunate – could I expect it?

Mrs. Sagely. Suspect every body, if you would be safe – but most of all suspect yourself. Ah, my pretty truant – the heart, that is so violent in its aversions, is in sad danger of being the same in its affections, depend upon it.

Miss Alton. Let them spring from a just esteem, and you will absolve me: my aversion was to the character of the wretch I was threatened with – can you reprove me?

Mrs. Sagely. And tell me truly now; do you feel the same detestation for this worse character you have made acquaintance with? This rake – this abominable Heartly? – Ah, child, your look is suspicious.

Miss Alton. Madam, I have not a thought, that I will not sincerely lay open to you. Mr. Heartly is made to please, and to be avoided; I resent his attempts, and desire never to see him more – his discovery of me here; his letters, his offers have greatly alarmed me. I conjure you lose not an hour in placing me under the sort of protection I solicited.

Mrs. Sagely. If you are resolved, I believe I can serve you. Miss Alscip, the great heiress, (you may have heard of the name in your family) has been inquiring among decayed gentry for a companion. She is too fine a lady to bear to be alone, and perhaps does not look to a husband's company as a certain dependence. Your musical talents will be a great recommendation – She is already apprized, and a line from me will introduce you.

Miss Alton. I will avail myself of your kindness immediately.

Prompt. [*Without.*] I tell you I have business with Mrs. Sagely – I must come in.

Mrs. Sagely. As I live here is an impudent fellow forcing himself into the passage!

Miss Alton. Oh Heaven! if Mr. Heartly should be behind!

Mrs. Sagely. Get into the back parlour; be he who he will, I'll warrant I protect you.

[*Exit Miss Alton.*]

Enter Prompt. [*Looking about.*]

Mrs. Sagely. Who are you, sir? What are you looking for?

Prompt. Madam, I was looking – I was looking – for you.

Mrs. Sagely. Well, sir, and what do you want.

Prompt. [*Still prying about.*] Madam, I want – I want – I want —

Mrs. Sagely. To rob the house, perhaps.

Prompt. Just the contrary, Madam – to see that all is safe within it. – You have a treasure in your possession that I would not have lost for the world – A young lady.

Mrs. Sagely. Indeed! – begone about your business, friend – there are no young ladies to be spoke with here.

Prompt. Lord, madam, I don't desire to speak with her – My attentions go to ladies of the elder sort – I come to make proposals to you alone.

Mrs. Sagely. You make proposals to me? Did you know my late husband, sir?

Prompt. Husband! My good Mrs. Sagely – be at ease – I have no more views upon you, that way, than upon my grandmother – My proposals are of a quite different nature.

Mrs. Sagely. Of a different nature? Why you audacious varlet! Here, call a constable —

Prompt. Dear madam, how you continue to misunderstand me – I have a respect for you, that will set at nought all the personal temptations about you, depend upon it, powerful as they are – And as for the young lady, my purpose is only that you shall guard her safe. – I would offer you a pretty snug house in a pleasant quarter of the town, where you two would be much more commodiously lodged – the furniture new, and in the prettiest taste – A neat little sideboard of plate – a black boy, with a turban to wait upon you —

Mrs. Sagely. And for what purpose am I to be bribed? I am above it, sirrah. I have but a pittance, 'tis true, and heavy outgoings – My husband's decayed bookkeeper to maintain, and poor old Smiler, that so many years together drew our whole family in a chaise – Heavy charges – but by cutting off my luxuries, and stopping up a few windows, I can jog on, and scorn to be beholden to you, or him that sent you. [*Prompt tries at the Door, and peeps through the Key-hole.*] What would the impertinent fellow be at now? Keep the door bolted, and don't stand in sight.

Prompt. [*Aside.*] Oh! oh! – She is here I find, and that's enough. – My good Mrs. Sagely – your humble servant – I would fain be better acquainted with you – in a modest way – but must wait, I see, a more happy hour. [*Aside, going out.*] When honesty and poverty do happen to meet, they grow so fond of each other's company, it is labour lost to try to separate them.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Sagely. Shut the street door after him, and never let him in again.

Enter Miss Alton, from the inner Room

Miss Alton. For mercy, madam, let me begone immediately. I am very uneasy – I am certain Mr. Heartly is at the bottom of this.

Mrs. Sagely. I believe it, my dear, and now see the necessity of your removal. I'll write your letter – and Heaven protect you. Remember my warning, suspect yourself.

[*Exit.*]

Miss Alton. In truth I will. I'll forget the forbearance of this profligate, and remember only his intentions. And is gratitude then suspicious? Painful lesson! A woman must not think herself secure because she has no bad impulse to fear: she must be upon her guard, lest her very best should betray her.

ACT THE SECOND

SCENE I

An Apartment in Sir Clement Flint's House.

Lady Emily Gayville and Clifford at Chess.

Sir Clement sitting at a Distance, pretending to read a Parchment, but slyly observing them.

Lady E. Check – If you do not take care, you are gone the next move.

Cliff. I confess, Lady Emily, you are on the point of complete victory.

Lady E. Pooh, I would not give a farthing for victory without a more spirited defence.

Cliff. Then you must engage with those (if those there are) that do not find you irresistible.

Lady E. I could find a thousand such; but I'll engage with none whose triumph I could not submit to with pleasure.

Sir C. [*Apart.*] Pretty significant on both sides. I wonder how much farther it will go.

Lady E. Uncle, did you speak?

Sir C. [*Reading to himself.*] "And the parties to this indenture do farther covenant and agree, that all and every the said lands, tenements, and hereditaments – um – um." – How useful sometimes is ambiguity.

[Loud enough to be heard.

Cliff. A very natural observation of Sir Clement's upon that long parchment.

[Pauses again upon the Chess-board.

[Lady Emily looking pensively at his Face.

Cliff. To what a dilemma have you reduced me, Lady Emily! If I advance, I perish by my temerity; and it is out of my power to retreat.

Sir C. [*Apart.*] Better and better! To talk in cipher is a curious faculty.

Cliff. Sir?

Sir C. [*Still reading.*] "In witness whereof the said parties have hereunto interchangeably set their hands and seals, this – um – um – day of – um – um – ."

Lady E. [*Resuming an Air of Vivacity.*] Come, I trifle with you too long – There's your coup de grace – Uncle, I have conquered.

[Both rising from the Table.

Sir C. Niece, I do not doubt it – and in the style of the great proficient, without looking upon the board. Clifford, was not your mother's name Charlton?

[Folding up the Parchment, and rising.

Cliff. It was, sir.

Sir C. In looking over the writings Alscip has sent me, preparatory to his daughter's settlement, I find mention of a conveyance from a Sir William Charlton, of Devonshire. Was he a relation?

Cliff. My grandfather, sir: The plunder of his fortune was one of the first materials for raising that of Mr. Alscip, who was steward to Sir William's estate, then manager of his difficulties, and lastly his sole creditor.

Sir C. And no better monopoly than that of a needy man's distresses. Alscip has had twenty such, or I should not have singled out his daughter to be Lord Gayville's wife.

Cliff. It is a compensation for my family losses, that in the event they will conduce to the interest of the man I most love.

Sir C. Heyday, Clifford! – take care – don't trench upon the Blandish – Your cue, you know, is sincerity.

Cliff. You seem to think, sir, there is no such quality. I doubt whether you believe there is an honest man in the world.

Sir C. You do me great injustice – several – several – and upon the old principle that – "honesty is the best policy." – Self-interest is the great end of life, says human nature – Honesty is a better agent than craft, says proverb.

Cliff. But as for ingenuous, or purely disinterested motives —

Sir C. Clifford, do you mean to laugh at me?

Cliff. What is your opinion, Lady Emily?

Lady E. [*Endeavouring again at Vivacity.*] That there may be such: but it's odds they are troublesome or insipid. Pure ingenuousness, I take it, is a rugged sort of thing, which scarcely will bear the polish of common civility; and for disinterestedness – young people sometimes set out with it; but it is like travelling upon a broken spring – one is glad to get it mended at the next stage.

Sir C. Emily, I protest you seem to study after me; proceed, child, and we will read together every character that comes in our way.

Lady E. Read one's acquaintance – delightful! What romances, novels, satires, and mock heroics present themselves to my imagination! Our young men are flimsy essays; old ones, political pamphlets; coquets, fugitive pieces; and fashionable beauties, a compilation of advertised perfumery, essence of pearl, milk of roses, and Olympian dew. – Lord, I should now and then though turn over an acquaintance with a sort of fear and trembling.

Cliff. How so?

Lady E. Lest one should pop unaware upon something one should not, like a naughty speech in an old comedy; but it is only skipping what would make one blush.

Sir C. Or if you did not skip, when a woman reads by herself, and to herself, there are wicked philosophers, who doubt whether her blushes are very troublesome.

Lady E. [*To Sir Clement.*] Do you know now that for that speech of yours – and for that saucy smile of yours, [*To Clifford.*] I am strongly tempted to read you both aloud!

Sir C. Come try – I'll be the first to open the book.

Lady E. A treatise of the Houyhnhnms, after the manner of Swift, tending to make us odious to ourselves, and to extract morose mirth from our imperfections. – [*Turning to Clifford.*] Contrasted with an exposition of ancient morality addressed to the moderns: a chimerical attempt upon an obsolete subject.

Sir C. Clifford! we must double down that page. And now we'll have a specimen of her Ladyship.

Lady E. I'll give it you myself, and with justice; Which is more than either of you would.

Sir C. And without skipping.

Lady E. Thus then; a light, airy, fantastic sketch of genteel manners as they are; with a little endeavour at what they ought to be – rather entertaining than instructive, not without art, but sparing in the use of it —

Sir C. But the passions, Emily. Do not forget what should stand in the foreground of a female treatise.

Lady E. They abound: but mixed and blended cleverly enough to prevent any from predominating; like the colours of a shot lutestring, that change as you look at it sideways or full: they are sometimes brightened by vivacity, and now and then subject to a shade of caprice – but meaning no ill – not afraid of a Critical Review: and thus, gentlemen, I present myself to you fresh from the press, and I hope not inelegantly bound.

Sir C. Altogether making a perfectly desirable companion for the closet: I am sure, Clifford, you will agree with me. Gad we are got into such a pleasant freedom with each other, it is a pity to separate while any curiosity remains in the company. Pr'ythee, Clifford, satisfy me a little as to your history. Old Lord Hardacre, if I am rightly informed, disinherited your father, his second son.

Cliff. For the very marriage we have been speaking of. The little fortune my father could call his own was sunk before his death, as a provision for my mother; upon an idea that whatever resentment he might personally have incurred, it would not be extended to an innocent offspring.

Sir C. A very silly confidence. How readily now, should you and I, Emily, have discovered in a sensible old man, the irreconcilable offence of a marriage of the passions – You understand me?

Lady E. Perfectly! [*Aside.*]

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