

Lillo, George

**The London Merchant: or, The History of
George Barnwell**

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George Lillo

The London Merchant

or

The History of George Barnwell

To Sir John Eyles, bar, member of parliament for, and Alderman of the City of London, and sub-governor of the South-Sea Company.

Sir,

If tragick poetry be, as Mr Dryden has somewhere said, the most excellent and most useful kind of writing, the more extensively useful the moral of any tragedy is, the more excellent that piece must be of its kind.

I hope I shall not be thought to insinuate that this, to which, I have presumed to prefix your name, is such; that depends on its fitness to answer the end of tragedy, the exciting of the passions in order to the correcting such of them as are criminal, either in their nature, or through their excess. Whether the following scenes do this in any tolerable degree, is, with the deference that becomes one who would not be thought vain, submitted to your candid and impartial judgment.

What I wou'd infer is this, I think, evident truth; that tragedy is so far from losing its dignity by being accomodated to the circumstances of the generality of mankind, that it is more truly august in proportion to the extent of its influence and the numbers that are properly affected by it. As it is more truly great to be the instrument of good to many, who stand in need of our assistance, than to a very small part of that number.

If princes, etc. were alone liable to misfortunes, arising from vice, or weakness in themselves or others, there wou'd be good reason for confining the characters in tragedy to these of superior rank; but, since the contrary is evident, nothing can be more reasonable than to proportion the remedy to the disease.

I am far from denying that tragedies, founded on any instructive and extraordinary events in history, or well-invented fables, where the persons introduced are of the highest rank, are without their use, even to the bulk of the audience. The strong contrast between a *Tamerlane* and a *Bajazet* may have its weight with an unsteady people, and contribute to the fixing of them in the interest of a prince of the character of the former, when, through their own levity or the arts of designing men, they are rendered factious and uneasy, though they have the highest reason to be satisfied. The sentiments and example of a *Cato* may inspire his spectators with a just sense of the value of liberty, when they see that honest patriot prefer death to an obligation from a tyrant, who wou'd sacrifice the constitution of his country, and the liberties of mankind, to his ambition or revenge. I have attempted, indeed, to enlarge the province of the graver kind of poetry, and should be glad to see it carried on by some abler hand. Plays founded on moral tales in private life may be of admirable use, by carrying conviction to the mind with such irresistible force as to engage all the faculties and powers of the soul in the cause of virtue, by stifling vice in its first principles. They who imagine this to be too much to be attributed to tragedy, must be strangers to the energy of that noble species of poetry. *Shakespeare*, who has given us such amazing proofs of his genius, in that as well as in comedy, in his *Hamlet* has the following lines:

Had he the motive and the cause for passion

That I have, he wou'd drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free;
Confound the ignorant; and amaze indeed
The very faculty of eyes and ears.

And farther, in the same speech:

I've heard that guilty creatures at a play
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,
Been so struck to the soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions.

Prodigious! yet strictly just. But I shan't take up your valuable time with my remarks; only give me leave just to observe, that he seems so firmly perswaded of the power of a well-wrote piece to produce the effect here ascribed to it, as to make *Hamlet* venture his soul on the event, and rather trust that than a messenger from the other world, tho' it assumed, as he expresses it, his noble father's form, and assured him that it was his spirit, »I'll have«, says *Hamlet* »grounds more relative«,

... The Play's the thing,
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

Such plays are the best answers to them who deny the lawfulness of the stage.

Considering the novelty of this attempt, I thought it would be expected from me to say something in its excuse; and I was unwilling to lose the opportunity of saying something of the usefulness of tragedy in general, and what may be reasonably expected from the farther improvement of this excellent kind of poetry.

Sir, I hope you will not think I have said too much of an art, a mean specimen of which I am ambitious enough to recommend to your favour and protection. A mind, conscious of superior worth, as much despises flattery as it is above it. Had I found in myself an inclination to so contemptible a vice, I should not have chose *SIR JOHN EYLES* for my patron. And indeed the best writ panegyrick, tho' strictly, must place you in a light much inferiour to that in which you have long been fix'd by the love and esteem of your fellow citizens; whose choice of you for one of their representatives in Parliament has sufficiently declared their sense of your merit. Nor hath the knowledge of your worth been confined to the City. The proprietors in the *South-Sea Company*, in which are included numbers of persons as considerable for their rank, fortune, and understanding, as any in the kingdom, gave the greatest proof of their confidence in your capacity and probity when they chose you sub-governour of their company, at a time when their affairs were in the utmost confusion, and their properties in the greatest danger. Nor is the Court insensible of your importance. I shall not therefore attempt a character so well known, nor pretend to add anything to a reputation so well established.

Whatever others may think of a dedication wherein there is so much said of other things, and so little of the person to whom it is address'd, I have reason to believe that you will the more easily pardon it on that very account.

I am, sir,
Your most obedient,
Humble servant,

George Lillo.

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The scene added in this fifth edition, is, with some variation, in the original copy: but on the advice of some friends it was left out in the representation, and is now published by the advice of others: which are in the right I shall not pretend to determine. There are amongst both, gentlemen whose judgement I prefer to my own. As this play succeeded on the stage without it, I shou'd not, perhaps, have published it, but to distinguish this edition from the incorrect, pyrated ones which the town swarms; to the great prejudice of the proprietors of the copy, as well as to all the fair traders, who scorn to encourage such unjust practices.

I cou'd not but reproach myself with ingratitude shou'd I neglect this opportunity of confessing my obligations and returning my thanks to the public in general, and my friends in particular, for their favorable reception of this piece. I am very sensible how much I owe to their indulgence, and wish I may be able by any future performance, if any shou'd appear, to observe the continuance of their favour.

Prologue

Spoken by Mr Cibber, Jun.

The Tragick Muse, sublime, delights to show
Princes distrest and scenes of royal woe;
In awful pomp, majestick to relate
The fall of nations or some hero's fate;
That scepter'd chiefs, may by example know
The strange vicissitude of things below:
What dangers on security attend;
How pride and cruelty in ruin end;
Hence Providence supream to know, and own
Humanity adds glory to a throne.
In ev'ry former age and foreign tongue
With native grandure thus the goddess sung.
Upon our stage indeed, with wish'd success,
You've sometimes seen her in a humbler dress –
Great only in distress. When she complains
In Southern's, Rowe's, or Otway's moving strains,
The brilliant drops that fall from each bright eye
The absent pomp with brighter jems supply.
Forgive us then, if we attempt to show,
In artless strains, a tale of private woe.
A London' prentice ruin'd is our theme,
Drawn from the fam'd old song that bears his name.
We hope your taste is not so high to scorn
A moral tale, esteemed ere you were born;
Which, for a century of rolling years,
Has fill'd a thousand-thousand eyes with tears.
If thoughtless youth to warn, and shame the age
From vice destructive, well becomes the stage;
If this example innocence secure,
Prevent our guilt, or by reflection cure;
If Millwood's dreadful crimes and sad despair
Commend the virtue of the good and fair:
Tho' art be wanting, and our numbers fail,
Indulge the attempt, in justice to the tale!

Dramatis Personae

Men.

Thorowgood
Barnwell, uncle to George

George Barnwell
Trueman
Blunt

Women.

Maria
Millwood
Lucy

Officers with their Attendants, Keeper, and Footmen.

Scene: London and an adjacent village.

Learn to be wise from others' harm,
And you shall do full well.

Old Ballad of The Lady's Fall.

Act I

Scene I

A room in Thorowgood's house.

Enter Thorowgood and Trueman.

TR. Sir, the packet from Genoa is arrived *gives letters*.

THOR. Heav'n be praised! The storm that threatened our royal mistress, pure religion, liberty and laws, is for a time diverted; the haughty and revengeful Spaniard, disappointed of the loan on which he depended from Genoa, must now attend the slow return of wealth from his new world to supply his empty coffers, ere he can execute his purpos'd invasion of our happy island; by which means time is gain'd to make such preparations on our part as may, heav'n concurring, prevent his malice, or turn the meditated mischief on himself.

TR. He must be insensible indeed, who is not affected when the safety of his country is concern'd. Sir, may I know by what means – if I am too bold.

THOR. Your curiosity is laudable; and I gratify it with the greater pleasure, because from thence you may learn how honest merchants, as such, may sometimes contribute to the safety of their country, as they do at all times to its happiness; that if hereafter you should be tempted to any action that has the appearance of vice or meanness in it, upon reflecting on the dignity of our profession, you may, with honest scorn, reject whatever is unworthy of it.

TR. Shou'd Barnwell, or I, who have the benefit of your example, by our ill conduct bring any imputation on that honorable name, we must be left without excuse.

THOR. You complement, young man. *Trueman bows respectfully* Nay, I'm not offended. As the name of merchant never degrades the gentleman, so by no means does it exclude him; only take heed not to purchase the character of complaisant at the expense of your sincerity. But to answer your question. The bank of Genoa had agreed, at excessive interest and on good security, to advance the King of Spain a sum of money sufficient to equip his vast Armado; of which our peerless Elizabeth (more than in name, the mother of her people) being well informed, sent Walsingham, her wise and faithful secretary, to consult the merchants of this loyal city, who all agreed to direct their several agents to influence, if possible, the Genoese to break their contract with the Spanish court. 'Tis done; the state and bank of Genoa, having maturely weigh'd and rightly judged of their true interest, prefer the friendship of the merchants of London to that of a monarch who proudly stiles himself King of both Indies.

TR. Happy success of prudent councils! What and expence of blood and

treasure is here saved; Excellent Queen! Oh, how unlike those princes, who make the danger of foreign enemies a pretence to oppress their subjects by taxes great and grievous to be borne.

THOR. Not so our gracious queen, whose richest exchequer is her people's love, as their happiness her greatest glory.

TR. On these terms to defend us, is to make our protection a benefit worthy her who confers it, and well worth our acceptance. – Sir, have you any commands for me at this time?

THOR. Only look carefully over the files to see whether there are any tradesmen's bills unpaid; if there are, send and discharge 'em. We must not let artificers lose their time, so useful to the public and their families, in unnecessary attendance. – *Exit Trueman. Enter Maria.*

Well, Maria, have you given orders for the entertainment? I would have it in some measure worthy the guests. Let there be plenty, and of the best, that the courtiers may at least commend our hospitality.

MA. Sir, I have endeavoured not to wrong your well-known generosity by an ill-tim'd parsimony.

THOR. Nay, 'twas a needless caution; I have no cause to doubt your prudence.

MA. Sir, I find myself unfit for conversation at present, I should but increase the number of the company without adding to their satisfaction.

THOR. Nay, my child, this melancholy must not be indulged.

MA. Company will but increase it. I wish you would dispense with my absence; solitude best suits my present temper.

THOR. You are not insensible that it is chiefly on your account these noble lords do me the honour so frequently to grace my board; shou'd you be absent, the disappointment may make them repent their condescension, and think their labour lost.

MA. He that shall think his time or honour lost in visiting you can set no real value on your daughter's company, whose only merit is that she is yours. The man of quality who chuses to converse with a gentleman and merchant of your worth and character may confer honour by doing so, but he loses none.

THOR. Come, come, Maria; I need not tell you that a young gentleman may prefer your conversation to mine, yet intend me no disrespect at all; for, tho' he may lose no honour in my company, 'tis very natural for him to expect more pleasure in yours. I remember the time when the company of the greatest and wisest man in the kingdom would have been insipid and tiresome to me, if it had deprived me of an opportunity of enjoying your mother's.

MA. Yours no doubt was as agreeable to her; for generous minds know no pleasure in society but where 'tis mutual.

THOR. Thou know'st I have no heir, no child but thee; the fruits of many years' successful industry must all be thine. Now, it would give me pleasure great as my love, to see on whom you would bestow it. I am daily solicited by men of the greatest rank and merit for leave to address you; but I have hitherto declin'd it, in hopes that by observation I shou'd learn which way your inclination tends; for, as I know love to be essential to happiness in the marriage stats, I had rather my approbation should confirm your choice than direct it.

MA. What can I say? How shall I answer, as I ought, this tenderness, so uncommon even in the best of parents? But you are without example; yet had you been less indulgent, I had been most wretched. That I look on the crowd of courtiers that visit here with equal esteem but equal indifference, you have observed, and I must needs confess; yet had you asserted your authority, and insisted on a parent's right to be obeyed, I had submitted, and to my duty sacrificed my peace.

THOR. From your perfect obedience in every other instance, I fear'd as much; and therefore would leave you without a byass in an affair wherein your happiness is so immediately concern'd.

MA. Whether from a want of that just ambition that wou'd become your daughter, or from some other cause, I know not; but I find high birth and titles don't recommend the man who owns them to my affections.

THOR. I wou'd not that they shou'd unless his merit recommends him more. A noble birth and fortune, tho' they make not a bad man good, yet they are a real advantage to a worthy one, and place his virtues in the fairest light.

MA. I cannot answer for my inclinations, but they shall ever be submitted to your wisdom and authority; and, as you will not compel me to marry where I cannot love, love shall never make me act contrary to my duty. Sir, have I your permission to retire?

THOR. I'll see you to your chamber. – *Exeunt.*

Scene II

A room in Millwood'd house.

Millwood at her toilet. Lucy, waiting.

MILL. How do I look today, Lucy?

LUCY. Oh, killingly, madam! A little more red, and you'll be irresistible! But why this more than ordinary care of your dress and complexion? What new conquest are you aiming at?

MILL. A conquest wou'd be new indeed!

LUCY. Not to you, who make 'em every day, – but to me – well! 'tis what I am never to expect, unfortunate as I am. But your wit and beauty.

MILL. First made me a wretch, and still continue me so. Men, however generous or sincere to one another, are all selfish hypocrites in their affairs with us. We are no otherwise esteemed or regarded by them, but as we contribute to their satisfaction.

LUCY. You are certainly, madam, on the wrong side in this argument. Is not the expence all theirs? And I am sure it is our own fault if we ha'n't our share of the pleasure.

MILL. We are but slaves to men.

LUCY. Nay, 'tis they that are slaves most certainly; for we lay them under contribution.

MILL. Slaves have no property – no, not even in themselves. All is the victor's.

LUCY. You are strangely arbitrary in your principles, madam.

MILL. I would have my conquests compleat, like those of the Spaniards in the New World, who first plunder'd the natives of all the wealth they had, and then condemn'd the wretches to the mines for life to work for more.

LUCY. Well, I shall never approve of your scheme of government; I should think it much more politick, as well as just, to find my subjects an easier employment.

MILL. It's a general maxim among the knowing part of mankind, that a Yoman without virtue, like a man without honour or honesty, is capable of any action, tho' never so vile; and yet what pains will they not take, what arts not use, to seduce us from our innocence, and make us contemptible and wicked, even in their own opinions! Then is it not just, the villains, to their cost, should find us so? But guilt makes them suspicious, and keeps them on their guard; therefore we can take advantage only of the young and innocent part of the sex, who, having never injured women, apprehend no injury from them.

LUCY. Ay, they must be young indeed.

MILL. Such a one, I think, I have found. As I've passed thro' the City, I have often observ'd him, receiving and paying considerable sums of money; from thence I conclude he is employed in affairs of some consequence.

LUCY. Is he handsome?

MILL. Ay, ay, the stripling is well made, and has a good face.

LUCY. About.

MILL. Eighteen.

LUCY. Innocent, handsome, and about eighteen. You'll be vastly happy. Why, if you manage well, you may keep him to yourself these two or three years.

MILL. If I manage well, I shall have done with him much sooner. Having long had a design on him, and meeting him yesterday, I made a full stop, and, gazing wishfully on his face, ask'd him his name; he blush'd, and bowing very low, answer'd: »George Barnwell«. I beg'd his pardon for the freedom I had taken, and told him that he was the person I had long wish'd to see, and to whom I had an affair of importance to communicate at a proper time and place. He named a tavern; I talk'd of honour and reputation, and invited him to my house. He swallow'd the bait, promis'd to come, and this is the time I expect him. *Knocking at the door* Somebody knocks; – d'ye hear; I am at home to nobody today but him. *Exit Lucy.*

Less affairs must give way to those of more consequence; and I am strangely mistaken if this does not prove of great importance to me and him too, before I have done with him. Now, after what manner shall I receive him? Let me consider – what manner of person am I to receive? He is young, innocent, and bashful; therefore I must take care not to put him out of countenance at first. But then, if I have any skill in physiognomy, he is amorous, and, with a little assistance, will soon get the better of his modesty. – I'll trust to Nature, who does wonders in these maters. If to seem what one is not, in order to be the better liked for what one really is; if to speak one thing, and mean the direct contrary, be art in a woman – I know nothing of nature. *Enter Barnwell, bowing very low. Lucy at a distance.*

MILL. Sir! the surprise and joy –.

BAR. Madam –.

MILL. *still advances*. So unhop'd for – *Barnwell salutes her*.

BARN. Pardon me, madam –.

MILL. *still advances*. So unhop'd – for *Barnwell salutes her, and retires in confusion* – to see you here. Excuse the confusion.

BARN. I fear I am too bold.

MILL. Alas, sir! I may justly apprehend you think me so. Please, sir, to sit. – I am as much at a loss how to receive this honour as I ought, as I am surprized at your goodness in conferring it.

BARN. I thought you had expected me –. I promis'd to come.

MILL. That is the more surprizing; few men are such religious observers of their word.

BARN. All who are honest are.

MILL. To one another. But we simple women are seldom thought of consequence enough to gain a place in your remembrance. *laying her hand on his, as by accident*.

BARN *aside*. Her disorder is so great, she don't perceive she has laid her hand on mine. Heaven! how she trembles! What can this mean?

MILL. The interest I have in all that relates to you (the reason of which you shall know hereafter), excites my curiosity; and, were I sure you would pardon my presumption, I should desire to know your real sentiments on a very particular subject.

BARN. Madam, you may command my poor thoughts on any subject; I have none that I would conceal.

MILL. You'll think me bold.

BARN. No, indeed.

MILL. What then are your thoughts of love?

BARN. If you mean the love of women, I have not tho't of it at all. My youth and circumstances make such thoughts improper in me yet. But if you mean the general love we owe to mankind, I think no one has more of it in his temper than myself. I don't know that person in the world whose happiness I don't wish, and wouldn't promote, were it in my power. In an especial manner I love my uncle and my master, but, above all, my friend.

MILL. You have a friend then whom you love?

BARN. As he does me, sincerely.

MILL. He is, no doubt, often bless'd with your company and conversation?

BARN. We live in one house, and both serve the same worthy merchant.

MILL. Happy, happy youth! Whoe'er thou art, I envy thee, and so must all who see and know this youth. What have I lost, by being form'd a woman! I hate my sex, – myself. Had I been a man, I might, perhaps, have been as happy in your friendship, as he who now enjoys it; but, as it is – oh!

BARN *aside*. I never observ'd women before, or this is sure the most beautiful of her sex! – You seem disorder'd, madam! May I know the cause?

MILL. Do not ask me. I can never speak it, whatever is the cause. I wish for things impossible. I would be a servant, bound to the same master, to live in one house with you.

BARN *aside*. How strange, and yet how kind, her words and actions are! And

the effect they have on me is strange. I feel desires I never knew before; I must be gone, while I have power to go *aside*. – Madam, I humbly take my leave.

MILL. You will not sure, leave me so soon!

BARN. Indeed I must.

MILL. You cannot be so cruel! I have prepared a poor supper, at which I promis'd myself your company.

BARN. I am sorry I must refuse the honour that you design'd me, but my duty to my master calls me hence. I never yet neglected his service; he is so gentle, and so good a master, that, should I wrong him, tho' he might forgive me, I never should forgive myself.

MILL. Am I refus'd, by the first man, the second favour I ever stoop'd to ask? Go then thou proud, hard-hearted youth! But know, you are the only man that cou'd be found who would let me sue twice for greater favours.

BARN. What shall I do! How shall I go or stay!

MILL. Yet do not, do not, leave me! I with my sex's pride wou'd meet your scorn, but when I look upon you, – when I behold those eyes – oh! spare my tongue, and let my blushes – this flood of tears to that will force their way declare – what woman's modesty should hide.

BARN *aside*. Oh! heavens! she loves me, worthless as I am; her looks, her words, her flowing tears confess it! – And can I leave her then? Oh, never, never! – Madam, dry up your tears! You shall command me always; I will stay forever, if you'd have me.

LUCY *aside*. So! she has wheedled him out of his virtue of obedience already, and will strip him of all the rest, one after another, till she has left him as few as her ladyship, or myself.

MILL. Now you are kind, indeed; but I meant not to detain you always. I would have you shake off all slavish obedience to your master, but you may serve him still.

LUCY *aside*. Serve him still! Aye, or he'll have no opportunity of fingering his cash, and then he'll not serve your end, I'll be sworn. – *Enter Blunt*.

BLUNT. Madam, supper's on the table.

MILL. Come, sir, you'll excuse all defects. My thoughts were too much employ'd on my guest to observe the entertainment. *Exeunt Millwood and Barnwell*.

BLUNT. What's all this preparation, this elegant supper, variety of wines, and musick, for the entertainment of that young fellow?

LUCY. So it seems.

BLUNT. What! is our mistress turn'd fool at last? She's in love with him, I suppose.

LUCY. I suppose not; but she designs to make him in love with her, if she can.

BLUNT. What will she get by that? He seems under age, and can't be supposed to have much money.

LUCY. But his master has, and that's the same thing, as she'll manage it.

BLUNT. I don't like this fooling with a handsome young fellow; while she's endeavouring to ensnare him, she may be caught herself.

LUCY. Nay, were she like me, that would certainly be the consequence; for, I confess, there is something in youth and innocence that moves me mightily.

BLUNT. Yes, so does the smoothness and plumpness of a partridge move a mighty desire in the hawk to be the destruction of it.

LUCY. Why, birds are their prey, as men are ours; – though, as you observ'd we are sometimes caught ourselves; but that – I dare say – will never be the case of our mistress.

BLUNT. I wish it may prove so; for you know we all depend upon her. Should she trifle away her time with a young fellow that there's nothing to be got by, we must all starve.

LUCY. There's no danger of that, for I am sure she has no view in this affair but interest.

BLUNT. Well, and what hopes are there of success in that?

LUCY. The most promising that can be. 'Tis true, youth has his scruples; but she'll soon teach him to answer them by stifling his conscience. Oh, the lads in a hopeful way, depend upon't. – *Exeunt.*

Scene draws and discovers Barnwell and Millwood at supper. An entertainment of musick and singing. After which they come forward.

BARN. What can I answer? All that I know is, that you are fair and I am miserable.

MILL. We are both so, and yet the fault is in ourselves.

BARN. To ease out present anguish, by plunging into guilt, is to buy a moment's pleasure with an age of pain.

MILL. I should have thought the joys of love as lasting as they are great; if ours prove otherwise, 'tis your inconstancy must make them so.

BARN. The law of Heaven will not be revers'd; and that requires us to govern our passions.

MILL. To give us sense of beauty and desires, and yet forbid us to taste and be happy, is cruelty to nature. Have we passions only to torment us?

BARN. To hear you talk, tho' in the cause of vice; to gaze upon your beauty, press your hand, and see your snow-white bosom heave and fall, enflames my wishes. My pulse beats high; my senses are all in a hurry, and I am on the rack of wild desire. Yet, for a moment's guilty pleasure, shall I lose my innocence, my peace of mind, and hopes of solid happiness?

MILL.

Chimeras all! Come on with me and prove:

No joy's like woman kind, no heav'n like love.

BARN.

I wou'd not, yet must on.

Reluctant thus, the merchant quits his ease,

And trusts to rocks, and sands, and stormy seas;

In hopes some unknown golden coast to find

Commits himself, though doubtful, to the wind;

Longs much for joys to come, yet mourns those left behind.

The End of the First Act.

Act II

Scene I

A room in Thorowgood's house.

Enter Barnwell.

BARN. How strange are all things round me! Like some thief, who treads forbidden ground and fain would lurk unseen, fearful I enter each apartment of this well-known house. To guilty love, as if that was too little, already have I added breach of trust. – A thief! – Can I know myself that wretched thing, and look my honest friend and injured master in the face? Tho' hypocrisy may a while conceal my guilt, at length it will be known, and publick shame and ruin must ensue. In the meantime, what must be my life? Ever to speak a language foreign to my heart; hourly to add to the number of my crimes in order to conceal 'em. Sure, such was the condition of the grand apostate, when first he lost his purity; like me, disconsolate he wander'd, and, while yet in heaven, bore all his future Hell about him. – *Enter Trueman.*

TR. Barnwell! Oh, how I rejoice to see you safe! so will our master and his gentle daughter, who during your absence often inquir'd after you.

BARN *aside*. Wou'd he were gone! His officious love will pry into the secrets of my soul.

TR. Unless you know the pain the whole family has felt on your account, you can't conceive how much you are belov'd. But why thus cold and silent? When my heart is ful of joy for your return, why do you turn away – Why thus avoid me? What have I done? How am I alter'd since you saw me last? Or rather, what have you done? and why are you thus changed, for I am still the same.

BARN *aside*. What have I done, indeed!

TR. Not speak! – nor look upon me!

BARN. By my face he will discover all I would conceal; methinks, already I begin to hate him.

TR. I cannot bear this usage from a friend – one whom till now I ever found so loving, whom yet I love, tho' this unkindness strikes at the root of friendship, and might destroy it in any breast but mine.

BARN *turning to him*. I am not well. Sleep has been a stranger to these eyes since you beheld them last.

TR. Heavy they look indeed, and swoln with tears; now they overflow. Rightly did my sympathizing heart forbode last night, when thou wast absent something fatal to our peace.

BARN. Your friendship engages you too far. My troubles, whate'er they are, are mine alone; you have no interest in them, nor ought your concern for me give you a moment's pain.

TR. You speak as if you knew of friendship nothing but the name. Before I saw your grief I felt it. Since we parted last I have slept no more than you, but pensive in my chamber sat alone, and spent the tedious night in wishes for

your safety and return; e'en now, tho' ignorant of the cause, your sorrow wounds me to the heart.

BARN. 'Twill not always be thus. Friendship and all engagements cease, as circumstances and occasions vary; and, since you once may hate me, perhaps it might be better for us both that now you loved me less.

TR. Sure, I but dream! Without a cause would Barnwell use me thus?

Ungenerous and ungrateful youth, farewell! I shall endeavour to follow your advice. *Going. aside* Yet stay, perhaps I am too rash, and angry when the cause demands compassion. Some unforeseen calamity may have befalln him, too great to bear.

BARN *aside*. What part am I reduc'd to act! 'Tis vile and base to move his temper thus – the best of friends and men!

TR. I am to blame; prithee, forgive me, Barnwell; Try to compose your ruffled mind, and let me know the cause that thus transports you from yourself: my friendly counsel may restore your peace.

BARN. All that is possible for man to do for man, your generous friendship may effect; but here even that's in vain.

TR. Something dreadful is labouring in your breast. O give it vent, and let me share your grief; 'twill ease your pain, shou'd it admit no cure, and make it lighter by the part I bear.

BARN. Vain supposition! My woes increase by being observ'd; should the cause be known, they would exceed all bounds.

TR. So well I know thy honest heart, guilt cannot harbour there.

BARN *aside*. Oh, torture insupportable!

TR. Then why am I excluded? Have I a thought I would conceal from you?

BARN. If still you urge me on this hated subject, I'll never enter more beneath this roof, nor see your face again.

TR. 'Tis strange. But I have done, say but you hate me not!

BARN. Hate you! I am not that monster yet.

TR. Shall our friendship still continue?

BARN. It's a blessing I never was worthy of; yet now must stand on terms, and but upon conditions can confirm it.

TR. What are they?

BARN. Never hereafter, tho' you should wonder at my conduct, desire to know more than I am willing to reveal.

TR. 'Tis hard; but upon any conditions, I must be your friend.

BARN. Then as much as one lost to himself can be another's 'I am yours.

Embracing.

TR. Be ever so, and may heav'n restore your peace!

BARN. Will yesterday return? We have heard the glorious sun, that till then incessant roll'd, once stopp'd his rapid course, and once went back. The dead have risen, and parched rocks pour'd forth a liquid stream to quench a peoples thirst; the sea divided, and form'd walls of water, while a whole nation pass'd in safety thro' its sandy bosom; hungry lions have refus'd their prey, and men unhurt have walked amidst consuming flames. But never yet did time, once past, return.

TR. Tho' the continued chain of time has never once been broke, nor ever will,

but uninterrupted must keep on its course, till lost in eternity it ends there where it first begun: yet, as Heav'n can repair whatever evils time can bring upon us, he who trusts Heaven ought never to despair. But business requires our attendance – business, the youth's best preservative from ill, as idleness his worst of snares. Will you go with me?

BARN. I'll take a little time to reflect on what has passed, and follow you. *Exit Trueman.* – I might have trusted Trueman and engaged him to apply to my uncle to repair the wrong I have done my master – but what of Millwood? must I expose her too? Ungenerous and base! Then Heav'n requires it not. But heaven requires that I forsake her. What! never see her more! Does Heaven require that? I hope I may see her, and heav'n not be offended. Presumptuous hope – dearly already have I proved my frailty; should I once more tempt heaven, I may be left to fall never to rise again. Yet shall I leave her, forever leave her, and not let her know the cause? – she who loves me with such a boundless passion. Can cruelty be duty? I judge of what she then must feel by what I now endure. The love of life and fear of shame, oppos'd by inclination strong as death or shame, like wind and tide in raging conflict met, when neither can prevail, keep me in doubt. How then can I determine?

Enter Thorowgood.

THOR. Without a cause assign'd, or notice given, to absent yourself last night was a fault young man, and I came to chide you for it, but hope I am prevented. That modest blush, the confusion so visible in your face, speak grief and shame. When we have offended Heaven, it requires no more; and shall man, who needs himself to be forgiven, be harder to appease? If my pardon or love be of moment to your peace, look up, secure of both.

BARN *aside.* This goodness has o'ercome me. – O sir! you know not the nature and extent of my offence; and I should abuse your mistaken bounty to receive 'em. Though I had rather die than speak my shame; tho' racks could not have forced the guilty secret from my breast, your kindness has.

THOR. Enough, enough; whate'er it be, this concern shows you're convinced, and I am satisfied *aside.* How painful is the sense of guilt to an ingenuous mind – some youthful folly which it were prudent not to enquire into. When we consider the frail condition of humanity, it may raise our pity, not our wonder, that youth should go astray: when reason, weak at the best when oppos'd to inclination, scarce form'd, and wholly unassisted by experience, faintly contends, or willingly becomes the slave of sense. The state of youth is much to be deplored, and the more so because they see it not: they being then to danger most expos'd, when they are least prepar'd for their defence.

BARN. It will be known, and you recall your pardon and abhor me.

THOR. I never will. Yet be upon your guard in this gay, thoughtless season of your life; when the sense of pleasure's quick and passion high, the voluptuous appetites raging and fierce demand the strongest curb, take heed of a relapse: when vice becomes habitual, the very power of leaving it is lost.

BARN. Hear me, then, on my knees confess –

THOR. I will not hear a syllable more upon this subject; it were not mercy, but

cruelty, to hear what must give you such torment to reveal.

BARN. This generosity amazes and distracts me.

THOR. This remorse makes thee dearer to me than if thou hadst never offended; Whatever is your fault, of this I'm certain: 'twas harder for you to offend than me to pardon. – *Exit Thorowgood.*

BARN. Villain! villain! villain! basely to wrong so excellent a man! Shou'd I again return to folly? – detested thought! – But what of Millwood then? – Why, I renounce her – I give her up – The struggle's over and virtue has prevail'd. Reason may convince, but gratitude compels. This unlook'd-for generosity has sav'd me from destruction. *Going.*

Enter a Footman.

FOOT. Sir, two ladies from your uncle in the country desire to see you.

BARN *aside.* Who shou'd they be? – Telle them I'll wait upon 'em. – *Exit Footman.* – Methinks I dread to see 'em. Now everything alarms me. Guilt, what a coward hast thou made me! –

Scene II

Another room in Thorowgood's house.

Millwood and Lucy discovered. Enter Footman.

FOOT. Ladies, he'll wait upon you immediately.

MILL. 'Tis very well. I thank you. *Exit Footman.*

Enter Barnwell.

BARN. Confusion! – Millwood!

MILL. That angry look tells me that here I'm an unwelcome guest I fear'd as much – the unhappy are so everywhere

BARN. Will nothing but my utter ruin content you?

MILL. Unkind and cruel! Lost myself, your happiness is now my only care.

BARN. How did you gain admission?

MILL. Saying we were desir'd by your uncle to visit and deliver a message to you, we were receiv'd by the family without suspicion, and with much respect directed here.

BARN. Why did you come at all?

MILL. I never shall trouble you more; I'm come to take my leave for ever. Such is the malice of my fate. I go hopeless, despairing ever to return. This hour is all I have left. One short hour is all I have to bestow on love and you, for whom I thought the longest life too short.

BARN. Then we are met to part forever?

MILL. It must be so. Yet think not that time or absence shall ever put a period to my grief or make me love you less; tho' I must leave you, yet condemn me not!

BARN. Condemn you? No, I approve your resolution and rejoice to hear it. 'Tis just; 'tis necessary; I have well weigh'd and found it so.

LUCY *aside*. I'm afraid the young man has more sense than she thought he had.

BARN. Before you came, I had determin'd never to see you more.

MILL *aside*. Confusion!

LUCY *aside*. Ay; we are all out! This is a turn so unexpected that I shall make nothing of my part; they must e'en play the scene betwixt themselves.

MILL. 'Twas some relief to think, tho' absent, you would love me still. But to find, tho' Fortune had been indulgent, that you, more cruel and inconstant, had resolved to cast me off – this, as I never could expect, I have not learnt to bear.

BARN. I am sorry to hear you blame in me a resolution that so well becomes us both.

MILL. I have reason for what I do, but you have none.

BARN. Can we want a reason for parting, who have so many to wish we never had met?

MILL. Look on me, Barnwell! Am I deform'd or old, that satiety so soon succeeds enjoyment? Nay, look again; am I not she whom yesterday you thought the fairest and the kindest of her sex? Whose hand, trembling with ecstasy, you pressed and moulded thus, while on my eyes you gazed with such delight, as if desire increas'd by being fed?

BARN. No more! let me repent my former follies, if possible, without remembering what they were.

MILL. Why?

BARN. Such is my frailty that 'tis dangerous.

MILL. Where is the danger, since we are to part?

BARN. The thought of that already is too painful.

MILL. If it be painful to part, then may I hope at least you do not hate me?

BARN. No – no – I ever said I did. – O my heart!

MILL. Perhaps you pity me?

BARN. I do – I do – indeed, I do.

MILL. You'll think upon me?

BARN. Doubt it not, while I can think at all!

MILL. You may judge an embrace at parting too great a favour – though it would be the last? *He draws back*. A look shall then suffice – farewell forever. *Exeunt Millwood and Lucy*.

BARN. If to resolve to suffer be to conquer, I have conquer'd. Painful victory!

Re-enter Millwood and Lucy.

MILL. One thing I had forgot; I never must return to my own house again. This I thought proper to let you know, lest your mind shou'd change and you shou'd seek in vain to find me there. Forgive me this second intrusion; I only came to give you this caution; and that perhaps was needless.

BARN. I hope it was; yet it is kind, and I must thank you for it.

MILL *to Lucy*. My friend, your arm. – Now I am gone forever. *Going*.

BARN. One thing more: sure there's no danger in my knowing where you go?

If you think otherwise –.

MILL *weeping*. Alas!

LUCY *aside*. We are right, I find; that's my cue. – Ah; dear sir, she's going she knows not whither; but go she must.

BARN. Humanity obliges me to wish you well: why will you thus expose yourself to needless troubles?

LUCY. Nay, there's no help for it. She must quit the town immediately, and the kingdom as soon as possible; it was no small matter, you may be sure, that could make her resolve to leave you.

MILL. No more, my friend; since he for whose dear sake alone I suffer, and am content to suffer, is kind and pities me. Whene'er I wander through wilds and desarts, benighted and forlorn, that thought shall give me comfort.

BARN. For my sake? Oh, tell me how; which way am I so curs'd as to bring such ruin on thee?

MILL. No matter; I am contented with my lot.

BARN. Leave me not in this uncertainty!

MILL. I have said too much.

BARN. How, how am I the cause of your undoing?

MILL. To know, it will but increase your troubles.

BARN. My troubles can't be greater than they are.

LUCY. Well, well, sir; if she won't satisfy you, I will.

BARN. I am bound to you beyond expression.

MILL. Remember, sir, that I desir'd you not to hear it.

BARN. Begin, and ease my racking expectation!

LUCY. Why, you must know, my lady here was an only child; but her parents, dying while she was young, left her and her fortune (no inconsiderable one, I assure you) to the care of a gentleman who has a good estate of his own.

MILL. Ay, ay, the barbarous man is rich enough – but what are riches when compared to love?

LUCY. For a while he perform'd the office of a faithful guardian, settled her in a house, hir'd her servants – but you have seen in what manner she liv'd so I need say no more of that.

MILL. How I shall live hereafter, heaven knows!

LUCY. All things went on as one cou'd wish till, some time ago, his wife dying, he fell violently in love with his charge, and would fain have marry'd her. Now, the man is neither old nor ugly, but a good, personable sort of a man; but I don't know how it was, she could never endure him. In short, her ill usage, so provok'd him, that he brought in an account of his executorship, wherein he makes her a debtor to him.

MILL. A trifle in itself, but more than enough to ruin me, whom, by his unjust account, he had stripp'd of all before.

LUCY. Now, she having neither money nor friend, except me, who am as unfortunate as herself, he compell'd her to pass his account, and give bond for the sum he demanded; but still provided handsomely for her, and continued his courtship, till, being inform'd by his spies (truly I suspect some in her own family) that you were entertain'd at her house and stay'd with her all night, he came this morning raving and storming like a madman; talks no more of

marriage – so there's no hopes of making up matters that way – but vows her ruin unless she'll allow him the same favour that he supposes she granted you.
BARN. Must she be ruin'd or find her refuge in another's arms?

MILL. He gave me but an hour to resolve in. That's happily spent with you – and now I go.

BARN. To be expos'd to all the rigours of the various seasons, the summer's parching heat, and winter's cold; unhous'd to wander friendless thro' the inhospitable world, in misery and want, attended with fear and danger, and pursu'd by malice and revenge wouldst thou endure all this for me, and can I do nothing, nothing to prevent it?

LUCY. 'Tis really a pity there can be no way found out.

BARN. Oh, where are all my resolutions now? Like early vapours, or the morning dew, chas'd by the sun's warm beams, they're vanish'd and lost, as tho' they had never been.

LUCY. Now, I advis'd her, sir, to comply with the gentleman; that wou'd not only put an end to her troubles, but make her fortune at once.

BARN. Tormenting fiend, away! I had rather perish, nay, see her perish, than have her sav'd by him; I will myself prevent her ruin, tho' with my own. A moment's patience; I'll return immediately. *Exit Barnwell.*

LUCY. 'Twas well you came; or, by what I can perceive, you had lost him.

MILL. That, I must confess, was a danger I did not foresee; I was only afraid he should have come without money. You know a house of entertainment like mine is not kept without expence.

LUCY. That's very true; but then you shou'd be reasonable in your demands; 'tis pity to discourage a young man.

Re-enter Barnwell with a bag of money.

BARN *aside*. What am I to do? Now you, who boast your reason all-sufficient, suppose yourselves in my condition, and determine for me; whether it's right to let her suffer for my faults, or, by this small addition to my guilt, prevent the ill effects of what is past.

LUCY. These young sinners think everything in the ways of wickedness so strange; but I cou'd tell him that this is nothing but what's very common; for one vice as naturally begets another, as a father a son. But he'll find out that himself, if he lives long enough.

BARN. Here, take this, and with it purchase your deliverance; return to your house, and live in peace and safety.

MILL. So I may hope to see you there again.

BARN. Answer me not, but fly – lest, in the agonies of my remorse, I take again what is not mine to give, and abandon thee to want and misery!

MILL. Say but you'll come!

BARN. You are my fate, my heaven, or my hell, only leave me now; dispose of me hereafter as you please.

Exeunt Millwood and Lucy.

What have I done! Were my resolutions founded on reason and sincerely made; why then has heaven suffer'd me to fall? I sought not the occasion; and, if my heart deceives me not, compassion and generosity were my motives. Is virtue inconsistent with itself, or are virtue and vice only empty names? Or do they depend on accidents beyond our power to produce or prevent – wherein we have no part, and yet must be determin'd by the event? But why should I attempt to reason? All is confusion, horror, and remorse. I find I am lost, cast down from all my late erected hopes, and plunged again in guilt, yet scarce know how or why:

Such undistinguish'd horrors make my brain,
Like Hell, the seat of darkness and of pain.

The End of the Second Act.

Act III

Scene I

A room in Thorowgood's house.

Enter Thorowgood and Trueman.

THOR. Methinks, I wou'd not have you only learn the method of merchandize, and practise it hereafter, merely as a means of getting wealth. 'Twill be well worth your pains to study it as a science, to see how it is founded in reason, and the nature of things; how it has promoted humanity, as it has opened and yet keeps up an intercourse between nations, far remote from one another in situation, customs and religion; promoting arts, industry, peace and plenty; by mutual benefits diffusing mutual love from pole to pole.

TR. Something of this I have consider'd, and hope, by your assistance, to extend my thoughts much farther. I have observ'd those countries, where trade is promoted and encouraged, do not make discoveries to destroy, but to improve, mankind; by love and friendship, to tame the fierce and polish the most savage; to teach them the advantages of honest traffick by taking from them, with their own consent, their useless superfluities, and giving them in return what, from their ignorance in manual arts, their situation, or some other accident, they stand in need of.

THOR. 'Tis justly observ'd: The populous East, luxuriant, abounds with glittering gems, bright pearls, aromatic spices, and health-restoring drugs. The late found western world's earth glows with unnumber'd veins of gold and silver ore. On every climate and on every country heaven has bestowed some good peculiar to itself. It is the industrious merchant's business, to collect the various blessings of each soil and climate, and, with the product of the whole, to enrich his native country. – Well! I have examin'd your accounts: they are not only just, as I have always found them, but regularly kept and fairly enter'd. I commend your diligence. Method in business is the surest guide. He who neglects it frequently stumbles, and always wanders perplex'd, uncertain, and in danger. Are Barnwell's accounts ready for my inspection? He does not use to be the last on these occasions.

TR. Upon receiving your orders he retir'd, I thought, in some confusion. If you please, I'll go and hasten him. I hope he hasn't been guilty of any neglect.

THOR. I'm now going to the Exchange; let him know, at my return, I expect to find him ready. – *Exeunt.*

Enter Maria with a book; sits and reads.

MARIA. How forcible is truth! the weakest mind, inspir'd with love of that, fix'd and collected in itself, with indifference beholds the united force of earth and Hell opposing. Such souls are rais'd above the sense of pain, or so supported that they regard it not. The martyr cheaply purchases his heaven.

Small are his sufferings great is his reward; not so the wretch who combats love with duty; when the mind, weaken'd and dissolved by the soft passion, feeble and hopeless, opposes it own desires. What is an hour, a day, a year of pain, to a whole life of tortures such as these?

Enter Trueman.

TR. O Barnwell! O my friend, how thou art fallen!

MA. Ha! Barnwell! What of him? Speak! – say, what of Barnwell!

TR. 'Tis not to be conceal'd. I've news to tell of him that will afflict your generous father, yourself, and all who know him.

MA. Defend us, heaven!

TR. I cannot speak it. See there. *Gives a letter. Maria reads.*

»Trueman,

I know my absence will surprize my honour'd master and yourself, and the more when you shall understand that the reason of my withdrawing, is my having embezzled part of the cash with which I was entrusted. After this, 'tis needless to inform you that I intend never to return again. Though this might have been known by examining my accounts, yet, to prevent that unnecessary trouble, and to cut off all fruitless expectations of my return, I have left this from the lost.

George Barnwell.«

TR. Lost indeed! Yet, how he shou'd be guilty of what he there charges himself withal, raises my wonder equal to my grief. Never had youth a higher sense of virtue; justly he thought, and as he thought he practised; never was life more regular than his – an understanding uncommon at his years – an open, generous manliness of temper – his manners easy, unaffected, and engaging.

MA. This and much more you might have said with truth. He was the delight of every eye and joy of every heart that knew him.

TR. Since such he was, and was my friend, can I support his loss? See! the fairest and happiest maid this wealthy city boasts, kindly condescends to weep for thy unhappy fate, poor ruin'd Barnwell!

MA. Trueman, do you think a soul so delicate as his, so sensible of shame, can e'er submit to live a slave to vice?

TR. Never, never! So well I know him, I'm sure this act of his, so contrary to his nature, must have been caused by some unavoidable necessity.

MA. Is there no means yet to preserve him?

TR. Oh, that there were! But few men recover reputation lost – a merchant, never. Nor wou'd he, I fear, though I shou'd find him, ever be brought to look upon his injur'd master in the face.

MA. I fear as much – and therefore wou'd never have my father know it.

TR. That's impossible.

MA. What's the sum?

TR. 'Tis considerable. I've mark'd it here, to show it, with the letter, to your father, at his return.

MA. If I shou'd supply the money, cou'd you so dispose of that, and the

account, as to conceal this unhappy mismanagement from my father?

TR. Nothing more easy. But can you intend it? Will you save a helpless wretch from ruin? Oh! 'twere an act worthy such exalted virtue as Maria's. Sure, heaven in mercy to my friend inspired the generous thought!

MA. Doubt not but I wou'd purchase so great a happiness at a much dearer price: – but how shall he be found?

TR. Trust to my diligence for that. In the meantime, I'll conceal his absence from your father, or find such excuses for it that the real cause shall never be suspected.

MA. In attempting to save from shame one whom we hope may yet return to virtue, to heaven and you, the only witnesses of this action, I appeal, whether I do anything misbecoming my sex and character.

TR. Earth must approve the deed; and Heaven, I doubt not, will reward it.

MA. If heaven succeeds it, I am well rewarded. A virgin's fame is sullied by suspicion's lightest breath; and therefore as this must be a secret from my father and the world, for Barnwell's sake, for mine, let it be so to him! –

Exeunt.

Scene II

A room in Millwood's house.

Enter Lucy and Blunt.

LUCY. Well! what do you think of Millwood's conduct now?

BLUNT. I own it is surprizing; I don't know which to admire most, her feign'd or his real passion – tho' I have sometimes been afraid that her avarice wou'd discover her. But his youth and want of experience make it the easier to impose on him.

LUCY. No, it is his love. To do him justice, notwithstanding his youth, he don't want understanding; but you men are much easier imposed on, in these affairs, than your vanity will allow you to believe. Let me see the wisest of you all as much in love with me as Barnwell is with Millwood, and I'll engage to make as great a fool of him.

BLUNT. And all circumstances considered, to make as much money of him too?

LUCY. I can't answer for that. Her artifice in making him rob his master at first, and the various stratagems by which she has obliged him to continue that course, astonish even me, who know her so well.

BLUNT. But then you are to consider that the money was his master's.

LUCY. There was the difficulty of it. Had it been his own, it had been nothing. Were the world his, she might have it for a smile. But those golden days are done; he's ruin'd, and Millwood's hopes of farther profits are at an end.

BLUNT. That's no more than we all expected.

LUCY. Being call'd by his master to make up his accounts, he was forc'd to quit his house and service, and wisely flies to Millwood for relief and entertainment.

BLUNT. I have not heard of this before! How did she receive him?

LUCY. As you wou'd expect. She wonder'd what he meant; was astonish'd at his impudence; and, with an air of modesty peculiar to herself, swore so heartily that she never saw him before, that she put me out of countenance.

BLUNT. That's much, indeed! But how did Barnwell behave?

LUCY. He griev'd, and, at length, enrag'd at this barbarous treatment, was preparing to be gone; when, making toward the door, show'd a sum of money which he had stol'n from his master's – the last he's ever like to have from thence.

BLUNT. But then, Millwood?

LUCY. Aye, she, with her usual address, return'd to her old arts of lying, swearing, and dissembling – Hung on his neck, wept, and swore 'twas meant in jest, till the amorous youth, melted into tears, threw the money into her lap, and swore he had rather die than think her false.

BLUNT. Strange infatuation!

LUCY. But what follow'd was stranger still. As doubts and fears, follow'd by reconcilment, ever increase love, where the passion is sincere: so in him it caus'd so wild a transport of excessive fondness, such joy, such grief, such pleasure, and such anguish, that nature in him seem'd sinking with the weight, and the charm'd soul disposed to quit his breast for hers. Just then, when every passion with lawless anarchy prevail'd, and reason was in the raging tempest lost, the cruel, artful Millwood prevail'd upon the wretched youth to promise – what I tremble but to think on.

BLUNT. I am amaz'd! What can it be?

LUCY. You will be more so, to hear it is to attempt the life of his nearest relation and best benefactor –.

BLUNT. His uncle, whom we have often heard him speak of as a gentleman of a large estate and fair character in the country where he lives?

LUCY. The same. She was no sooner possess'd of the last dear purchase of his ruin, but her avarice, insatiate as the grave, demanded this horrid sacrifice. Barnwell's near relation, and unsuspected virtue must give too easy means to seize the good man's treasure, whose blood must seal the dreadful secret, and prevent the terrors of her guilty fears.

BLUNT. Is it possible she cou'd perswade him to do an act like that? He is, by nature, honest, grateful, compassionate, and generous; and though his love and her artful perswasions have wrought him to practise what he most abhors; yet we all can witness for him with what reluctance he has still comply'd! So many tears he shed o'er each offence, as might, if possible, sanctify theft, and make a merit of a crime.

LUCY. 'Tis true; at the naming the murder of his uncle he started into rage, and, breaking from her arms, where she till then had held him with well-dissembled love and false endearments, called her ›cruel, monster, devil‹, and told her she was born for his destruction. She thought it not for her purpose to meet his rage, but affected a most passionate fit of grief – rail'd at her fate, and curs'd her wayward stars: that still her wants shou'd force her to press him to act such deeds as she must needs abhor as well as he; but told him necessity had no law, and love no bounds; that therefore he never truly lov'd, but meant,

in her necessity, to forsake her; then kneel'd, and swore, that since, by his refusal, he had given her cause to doubt his love, she never wou'd see him more, unless, to prove it true, he robb'd his uncle to supply her wants, murder'd him to keep it from discovery.

BLUNT. I am astonish'd! What said he?

LUCY. Speechless he stood; but in his face you might have read that various passions tore his very soul. Oft he, in anguish, threw his eyes towards Heaven, and then as often their beams on her; then wept and groan'd, and beat his troubled breast; at length, with horror, not to be express'd, he cry'd: »Thou cursed fair! have I not given dreadful proofs of love? What drew me from my youthful innocence, to stain my then unspotted soul, but love? What caus'd me to rob my worthy gentle master, but cursed love? What makes me now a fugitive from his service, loath'd by myself, and scorn'd by all the world, but love? What fills my eyes with tears, my soul with torture never felt on this side death before? Why, love, love, love! And why, above all, do I resolve (for, tearing his hair, he cry'd, ›I do resolve‹) to kill my uncle?«

BLUNT. Was she not mov'd? It makes me weep to hear the sad relation.

LUCY. Yes – with joy, that she had gain'd her point. She gave him no time to cool, but urg'd him to attempt it instantly. He's now gone; if he performs it and escapes, there's more money for her; if not, he'll ne'er return, and then she's fairly rid of him.

BLUNT. 'Tis time the world were rid of such a monster.

LUCY. If we don't do our endeavours to prevent this murder, we are as bad as she.

BLUNT. I'm afraid it is too late.

LUCY. Perhaps not. – Her barbarity to Barnwell makes me hate her. We 've run too great a length with her already. I did not think her or myself so wicked, as I find, upon reflection, we are.

BLUNT. This true, we have all been too much so. But there is something so horrid in murder, that all other crimes seem nothing when compared to that. I wou'd not be involv'd in the guilt of that for all the world.

LUCY. Nor I, Heaven knows; therefore, let us clear ourselves by doing all that is in our power to prevent it. I have just thought of a way that, to me, seems probable. Will you join with me to detect this curs'd design?

BLUNT. With all my heart. He who knows of a murder intended to be committed and does not discover it, in the eye of the law and reason is a murderer.

LUCY. Let us lose no time; I'll acquaint you with the particulars as we go. –
Exeunt.

Scene III

A walk at some distance from a country seat.

Enter Barnwell.

BARN. A dismal gloom obscures the face of day; either the sun has slipp'd

behind a cloud, or journey down the west of Heaven with more than common speed, to avoid the sight of what I'm doom'd to act. Since I set forth on this accursed design, where'er I tread, methinks, the solid earth trembles beneath my feet. Yonder limpid stream, whose hoary fall has made a natural cascade, as I pass'd by, in doleful accents seem'd to murmur »Murder«. The earth, the air, and water, seemed concern'd – but that's not strange; the world is punish'd, and nature feels a shock when Providence permits a good man's fall! Just heaven! Then what should I be? – for him that was my father's only brother, and since his death has been to me a father, who took me up an infant, and an orphan; reard me with tenderest care, and still indulg'd me with most paternal fondness. Yet here I stand avow'd his destin'd murderer. I stiffen with horror at my own impiety. 'Tis yet unperform'd. What if I quit my bloody purpose, and fly the place! *Going, then stops.* But whether, oh, whether, shall I fly? My master's once friendly doors are ever shut against me; and without money Millwood will never see me more, and life is not to be endured without her. She's got such firm possession of my heart, and governs there with such despotick sway – aye, there's the cause of all my sin and sorrow! Tis more than love; tis the fever of the soul and madness of desire. In vain does nature, reason, conscience, all oppose it; the impetuous passion bears down all before it; and drives me on to lust, to theft, and murder. O conscience! feeble guide to virtue, thou only show'st us when we go astray, but wantest power to stop us in our course. Ha, in yonder shady walk I see my uncle. He's alone. Now for my disguise! *Plucks out a vizor.* This is his hour of private meditation. Thus daily he prepares his soul for Heaven – whilst I – but what have I to do with Heaven? Ha! No struggles, conscience!

Hence, hence, remorse, and ev'ry thought that's good:
The storm that lust began must end in blood.

Puts on vizor, draws a pistol and exit.

Scene IV

A close walk in a wood.

Enter Uncle

UN. If I were superstitious, I should fear some danger lurk'd unseen, or death were nigh. A heavy melancholy clouds my spirits; my imagination is fill'd with gashly forms of dreary graves and bodies chang'd by death; when the pale, lengthen'd visage, attracts each weeping eye, and fills the musing soul, at once, with grief and horror, pity and aversion. I will indulge the thought. The wise man prepares himself for death by making it familiar to his mind. When strong reflections hold the mirror near, and the living in the dead behold their future selves, how does each inordinate passion and desire cease, or sicken at the view! The mind scarce moves; the blood, curdling and chill'd, creeps slowly through the veins –; fix'd, still, and motionless we stand –, so like the solemn object of our thoughts, we are almost at present – what we must be hereafter, 'till curiosity awakes the soul and sets it on inquiry.

Enter George Barnwell at a distance.

Oh Death, thou strange mysterious power, seen every day, yet never understood but by the incommunicative dead, what art thou? The extensive mind of man, that with a thought circles the earth's vast globe, sinks to the centre, or ascends above the stars; that worlds exotic finds, or thinks it finds – thy thick clouds attempts to pass in vain: lost and bewilder'd in the horrid gloom; defeated, she returns more doubtful than before; of nothing certain – but of labour lost.

During this speech, Barnwell sometimes presents the pistol and draws it back again.

BARN. Oh, 'tis impossible!

Uncle starts and attempts to draw his sword, throwing down the pistol.

UN. A man so near me, arm'd and masqu'd.

BARN. Nay, then there's no retreat.

Plucks a poniard from his bosom, and stabs him.

UN. Oh! I am slain! All-gracious Heaven, regard the prayer of thy dying servant! Bless, with the choicest blessings, my dearest nephew; forgive my murderer, and take my fleeting soul to endless mercy!

Barnwell throws off his mask, runs to him, and,

kneeling, raises and chafes him.

BARN. Expiring saint! O murder'd, martyr'd uncle! Lift up your dying eyes, and view your nephew in your murderer! Oh, do not look so tenderly upon me! Let indignation lighten from your eyes, and blast me ere you die! – By heaven, he weeps in pity of my woes. Tears, – tears, for blood! The murder'd, in the agonies of death, weeps for his murderer. – Oh, speak your pious purpose – pronounce my pardon then – and take me with you! – He wou'd, but cannot. – Oh, why, with such fond affection, do you press my murdering hand? – What! will you kiss me? *Barnwell kisses his uncle, who groans and dies.* Life, that hover'd on his lips but till he had sealed my pardon, in that kiss expir'd. He's gone forever – and oh! I follow. *Swoons away upon his uncle's dead body.* – Do I still live to press the suffering bosom of the earth? Do I still breathe, and taint with my infectious breath the wholesome air? Let heaven from its high throne, in justice or in mercy, now look down on that dear murder'd saint and me the murderer. And, if his vengeance spares, let pity strike and end my wretched being! – Murder the worst of crimes, and parricide the worst of murders, and this the worst of parricides! Cain, who stands on record from the birth of time, and must to its last final period, as accurs'd, slew a brother favour'd above him. Detested Nero by another's hand dispatch'd a mother that he fear'd and hated. But I, with my own hand, have murder'd a brother, mother, father, and a friend, most loving and belov'd. This execrable act of mine's without a parallel. Oh, may it ever stand alone – the last of murders, as it is the worst!

The rich man thus, in torment and despair,
Prefer'd his vain but charitable prayer.
The fool, his own soul lost, wou'd fain be wise
For others' good; but Heaven his suit denies
By laws and means well known we stand or fall,
And one eternal rule remains for all.

The End of the Third Act.

Act IV

Scene I

A room in Thorowgood's house.

Enter Maria.

MA. How falsely do they judge who censure or applaud as we're afflicted or rewarded here! I know I am unhappy, yet cannot charge myself with any crime more than the common frailties of our kind, that shou'd provoke just Heaven to mark me out for sufferings so uncommon and severe. Falsly to accuse ourselves, heaven must abhor; then it is just and right that innocence should suffer, for Heaven must be just in all its ways. Perhaps by that we are kept from moral evils much worse than penal, or more improved in virtue; or may not the lesser ills that we sustain be made the means of greater goods to others? Might all the joyless days and sleepless nights that I have past but purchase peace for thee,

Thou dear, dear cause of all my grief and pain,
Small were the loss, and infinite the gain;
Tho' to the grave in secret love I pine,
So life and fame and happiness were thine.

Enter Trueman.

What news of Barnwell?

TR. None. I have sought him with the greatest diligence, but all in vain.

MA. Does my father yet suspect the cause of his absence?

TR. All appear'd so just and fair to him, it is not possible he ever shou'd; but his absence will no longer be conceal'd. Your father's wise; and, though he seems to hearken to the friendly excuses I wou'd make for Barnwell, yet I am afraid he regards 'em only as such, without suffering them to influence his judgment.

MA. How does the unhappy youth defeat all our designs to serve him! Yet I can never repent what we have done. Shou'd he return, 'twill make his reconciliation with my father easier, and preserve him from future reproach from a malicious, unforgiving world.

Enter Thorowgood and Lucy.

THOR. This woman here has given me a sad, and (bating some circumstances) too probable account of Barnwell's defection.

LUCY. I am sorry, sir, that my frank confession of my former unhappy course of life shou'd cause you to suspect my truth on this occasion.

THOR. It is not that; your confession has in it all the appearance of truth. *To them.* Among many other particulars, she informs me that Barnwell has been

influenc'd to break his trust, and wrong me, at several times, of considerable sums of money; now, as I know this to be false, I wou'd fain doubt the whole of her relation, too dreadful to be willingly believ'd.

MA. Sir, your pardon; I find myself on a sudden so indispos'd that I must retire. – *Aside* Providence opposes all attempts to save him. Poor ruin'd Barnwell! Wretched, lost Maria! – *Exit Maria.*

THOR. How am I distress'd on every side! Pity for that unhappy youth, fear for the life of a much valued friend – and then my child, the only joy and hope of my declining life! Her melancholy increases hourly, and gives me painful apprehensions of her loss. O Trueman! this person informs me that your friend, at the instigation of an impious woman, is gone to rob and murder his venerable uncle.

TR. Oh, execrable deed! I am blasted with the horror of the thought.

LUCY. This delay may ruin all.

THOR. What to do or think I know not. That he ever wrong'd me, I know is false; the rest may be so – there's all my hope.

TR. Trust not to that; rather suppose all true than lose a moment's time even now the horrid deed may be a doing – dreadful imagination: – or it may be done, and we be vainly debating on the means to prevent what is already past.

THOR *aside*. This earnestness convinces me that he knows more than he has yet discover'd. – What ho! without there! who waits?

Enter a Servant.

Order the groom to saddle the swiftest horse, and prepare himself to set out with speed! An affair of life and death demands his diligence. – *Exit servant.*

To Lucy For you, whose behaviour on this occasion I have no time to commend as it deserves, I must ingage your farther assistance. Return and observe this Millwood till I come. I have your directions, and will follow you as soon as possible. – *Exit Lucy.*

Trueman, you, I am sure, wou'd not be idle on this occasion. – *Exit Thorowgood.*

TR. He only who is a friend can judge of my distress.

Scene II

Millwood's house.

Enter Millwood.

MILL. I wish I knew the event of his design; the attempt without success would ruin him. – Well! what have I to apprehend from that? I fear too much. The mischief being only intended, his friends, in pity of his youth, turn all their rage on me. I shou'd have thought of that before. Suppose the deed done: then, and then only, I shall be secure; or what if he returns without attempting at all?

Enter Barnwell, bloody.

But he is here, and I have done him wrong; his bloody hands show he has done the deed, but show he wants prudence to conceal it.

BARN. Where shall I hide me? Whether shall I fly to avoid the swift, unerring hand of Justice?

MILL. Dismiss your fears. Though thousands had pursu'd you to the door, yet being enter'd here, you are safe as innocence. I have such a cavern, by art so cunningly contriv'd, that the piercing eyes of Jealousy and Revenge may search in vain, nor find the entrance to the safe retreat. There will I hide you, if any danger's near.

BARN. Oh, hide me from myself if it be possible; for while I bear my conscience in my bosom, tho' I were hid, where man's eye never saw nor light ever dawn'd, twere all in vain. For oh! that inmate – that impartial judge, will try, convict, and sentence me for murder; and execute me with never-ending torments. Behold these hands all crimson'd o'er with my dear uncle's blood! Here's a sight to make a statue start with horror, or turn a living man into a statue.

MILL. Ridiculous! Then it seems you are afraid of your shadow, or, what's less than a shadow, your conscience.

BARN. Though to man unknown I did the accursed act, what can we hide from Heavn's all-seeing eye?

MILL. No more of this stuff! What advantage have you made of his death? or what advantage may yet be made of it? Did you secure the keys of his treasure – those no doubt were about him. What gold, what jewels, or what else of value have you brought me?

BARN. Think you I added sacrilege to murder? Oh! had you seen him as his life flowed from him in a crimson flood, and heard him praying for me by the double name of nephew and of murderer! alas, alas! he knew not then that his nephew was his murderer! how wou'd you have wish'd, as I did, tho' you had a thousand years of life to come, to have given them all to have lengthen'd his one hour! But, being dead, I fled the sight of what my hands had done, nor could I, to have gain'd the empire of the world, have violated, by theft, his sacred corpse.

MILL. Whining, preposterous, canting villain, to murder your uncle, rob him of life, nature's first, last, dear prerogative, after which there's no injury then fear to take what he no longer wanted! and bring to me your penury and guilt! Do you think I'll hazard my reputation – nay, my life, to entertain you?

BARN. Oh! Millwood! this from thee! – But I have done; if you hate me, if you wish me dead: then are you happy – for oh! 'tis sure my grief will quickly end me.

MILL. *aside.* – In his madness he will discover all, and involve me in his ruin. We are on a precipice from whence there's no retreat for both – then, to preserve myself *pauses*. There is no other way, – 'tis dreadful; but reflection comes too late when danger's pressing – and there's no room for choice. It must be done. *Rings a bell. Enters a Servant.*

Fetch me an officer, and seize this villain: he has confess'd himself a murderer. Shou'd I let him escape, I justly might be thought as bad as he.

Exit Servant.

BARN. O Millwood! sure thou dost not, canst not mean it. Stop the messenger! – upon my knees I beg you, call him back! 'Tis fit I die indeed, but not by you. I will this instant deliver myself into the hands of justice; indeed I will; for death is all I wish. But thy ingratitude so tears my wounded soul, tis worse ten thousand times than death with torture.

MILL. Call it what you will, I am willing to live, and live secure – which nothing but your death can warrant.

BARN. If there be a pitch of wickedness that seats the author beyond the reach of vengeance, you must be secure. But what remains for me but a dismal dungeon, hard-galling fetters, an awful tryal, and an ignominious death – justly to fall unpitied and abhorr'd – after death to be suspended between Heaven and earth, a dreadful spectacle, the warning and horror of a gaping croud? This I could bear nay, wish not to avoid, had it but come from any hand but thine.

Enter Blunt. Officer and Attendants.

MILL. Heaven defend me! Conceal a murderer? Here, sir; take this youth into your custody. I accuse him of murder, and will appear to make good my charge. *They seize him.*

BARN. To whom, of what, or how shall I complain? I'll not accuse her: the hand of Heav'n is in it, and this is the punishment of lust and parricide. Yet Heav'n, that justly cuts me off, still suffers her to live, perhaps to punish others. Tremendous mercy! so fiends are curs'd with immortality, to be the executioners of heaven –.

Be warn'd, ye youths, who see my sad despair,
Avoid lewd women, false as they are fair;
By reason guided, honest joys pursue;
The fair, to honor and to virtue true,
Just to herself, will ne'er be false to you.
By my example learn to shun my fate;
(How wretched is the man who's wise too late!)
Ere innocence, and fame, and life, be lost,
Here purchase wisdom, cheaply, at my cost!

Exeunt Barnwell, Officer and Attendants.

MILL. Where's Lucy; Why is she absent at such a time?

BLUNT. Wou'd I had been so too. Lucy will soon be here, I hope, to thy confusion, thou devil!

MILL. Insolent! This to me?

BLUNT. The worst that we know of the devil is that he first seduces to sin and then betrays to punishment. – *Exit Blunt.*

MILL. They disapprove of my conduct then, and mean to take this opportunity

to set up for themselves. My ruin is resolv'd. I see my danger, but scorn both it and them; I was not born to fall by such weak instruments. *Going.*

Enter Thorowgood.

THOR. Where is the scandal of her own sex and curse of ours?

MILL. What means this insolence? Who do you seek?

THOR. Millwood.

MILL. Well, you have found her then. I am Millwood.

THOR. Then you are the most impious wretch that e'er the sun beheld.

MILL. From your appearance I shou'd have expected wisdom and moderation, but your manners belie your aspect. What is your business here? I know you not.

THOR. Hereafter you may know me better; I am Barnwell's master.

MILL. Then you are master to a villain; which, I think, is not much to your credit.

THOR. Had he been as much above thy arts as my credit is superior to thy malice, I need not have blushed to own him.

MILL. My arts? I don't understand you, sir. If he has done amiss, what's that to me? was he my servant, or yours? You should have taught him better.

THOR. Why should I wonder to find such uncommon impudence in one arriv'd to such a height of wickedness? When innocence is banish'd, modesty soon follows. Know, sorceress, I'm not ignorant of any of the arts, by which you first deceiv'd the unwary youth. I know how, step by step, you've led him on, reluctant and unwilling, from crime to crime, to this last horrid act, which you contriv'd and, by your curs'd wiles, even forced him to commit.

MILL *aside*. Ha! Lucy has got the advantage and accused me first. Unless I can turn the accusation and fix it upon her and Blunt, I am lost.

THOR. Had I know your cruel design sooner, it had been prevented. To see you punished as the law directs, is all that now remains. Poor satisfaction! for he, innocent as he is, compared to you, must suffer too. But Heaven, who knows our frame, and graciously distinguishes between frailty and presumption will make a difference, tho' man cannot, who sees not the heart, but only judges by the outward action.

MILL. I find, sir, we are both unhappy in our servants. I was surprized at such ill treatment without cause, from a gentleman of your appearance, and therefore too hastily return'd it; for which I ask your pardon. I now perceive you have been so far imposed on as to think me engaged in a former correspondence with your servant, and, some way or other, accessory to his undoing.

THOR. I charge you as the cause, the sole cause, of all his guilt and all his suffering – of all he now endures, and must endure, till a violent and shameful death shall put a dreadful period to his life and miseries together.

MILL. 'Tis very strange! but who's secure from scandal and detraction? so far from contributing to his ruin, I never spoke to him till since that fatal accident, which I lament as much as you. 'Tis true, I have a servant, on whose account he has of late frequented my house; if she has abus'd my good opinion of her,

am I to blame? Hasn't Barnwell done the same by you?

THOR. I hear you; pray, go on!

MILL. I have been inform'd he had a violent passion for her, and she for him; but till now I always thought it innocent; I know her poor, and given to expensive pleasures: now who can tell but she may have influenced the amorous youth to commit this murder, to supply her extravagancies? It must be so; I now recollect a thousand circumstances that confirm it. I'll have her and a manservant that I suspect as an accomplice, secured immediately. I hope, sir, you will lay aside your ill-grounded suspicions of me, and join to punish the real contrivers of this bloody deed. *Offers to go.*

THOR. Madam, you pass not this way; I see your design, but shall protect them from your malice.

MILL. I hope you will not use your influence, and the credit of your name, to skreen such guilty wretches. Consider, sir, the wickedness of perswading a thoughtless youth to such a crime!

THOR. I do – and of betraying him when it was done.

MILL. That which you call betraying him, may convince you of my innocence. She who loves him, tho' she contriv'd the murder, would never have deliver'd him into the hands of justice, as I, struck with the horror of his crimes, have done.

THOR *aside*. How shou'd an unexperienc'd youth escape her snares? The powerful magick of her wit and form might betray the wisest to simple dotage, and fire the blood that age had froze long since. Even, I that with just prejudice came prepared, had by her artful story, been deceived, but that my strong conviction of her guilt makes even a doubt impossible. – Those whom subtilly you wou'd accuse, you know are your accusers; and which proves unanswerably their innocence and your guilt, they have accus'd you before the deed was done, and did all that was in their power to prevent it.

MILL. Sir, you are very hard to be convinc'd; but I have such a proof which, when produced, will silence all objections. – *Exit Millwood.*

Enter Lucy, Trueman, Blunt, Officers, etc.

LUCY. Gentlemen, pray place yourselves, some on one side of that door, and some on the other; watch her entrance, and act as your prudence shall direct you. – *To Thorowgood.* This way! and note her behaviour. I have observ'd her; she's driven to the last extremity, and is forming some desperate resolution. I guess at her design.

Re-enter Millwood with a pistol. Trueman secures her.

TR. Here thy power of doing mischief ends, deceitful, cruel, bloody woman!

MILL. Fool, hypocrite, villain – man! Thou canst not call me that.

TR. To call thee woman were to wrong thy sex, thou devil!

MILL. That imaginary being is an emblem of thy cursed sex collected – a mirrour, wherein each particular man may see his own likeness, and that of all mankind.

TR. Think not by aggravating the faults of others to extenuate thy own, of which the abuse of such uncommon perfections of mind and body is not the least!

MILL. If such I had, well may I curse your barbarous sex, who robb'd me of 'em ere I knew their worth! then left me, too late, to count their value by their loss. Another and another spoiler came, and all my gain was poverty and reproach. My soul disdain'd, and yet disdains, dependance and contempt. Riches, no matter by what means obtain'd, I saw, secur'd the worst of men from both; I found it therefore necessary to be rich, and, to that end, I summon'd all my arts. You call 'em wicked; be it so! They were such as my conversation with your sex had furnish'd me withal.

THOR. Sure, none but the worst of men convers'd with thee.

MILL. Men of all degrees and all professions I have known, yet found no difference but in their several capacities; all were alike wicked to the utmost of their power. In pride, contention, avarice, cruelty and revenge, the reverend priesthood were my unerring guides. From suburb-magistrates, who live by ruined reputations, as the inhospitable natives of Cornwall do by shipwrecks, I learn'd that to charge my innocent neighbours with my crimes, was to merit their protection; for to skreen the guilty is the less scandalous, when many are suspected, and detraction, like darkness and death, blackens all objects and levels all distinction. Such are your venal magistrates, who favour none but such as, by their office, they are sworn to punish. With them, not to be guilty is the worst of crimes; and large fees privately paid are every needful virtue.

THOR. Your practice has sufficiently discover'd your contempt of laws, both human and divine; no wonder then that you should hate the officers of both.

MILL. I know you, and I hate you all. I expect no mercy and I ask for none; I follow'd my inclinations, and that the best of you do every day. All actions seem alike natural and indifferent to man and beast, who devour, or are devour'd, as they meet with others weaker or stronger than themselves.

THOR. What pity it is, a mind so comprehensive, daring, and inquisitive, shou'd be a stranger to religion's sweet and powerful charms!

MILL. I am not fool enough to be an atheist, tho' I have known enough of men's hypocrisy to make a thousand simple women so Whatever religion is in itself, as practis'd by mankind, it has caus'd the evils you say it was design'd to cure. War, plague, and famine, has not destroy'd so many of the human race as this pretended piety has done, and with such barbarous cruelty, as if the only way to honour Heaven, were to turn the present world into hell.

THOR. Truth is truth, tho' from an enemy and spoke in malice. You bloody, blind, and superstitious bigots, how will you answer this?

MILL. What are your laws, of which you make your boast, but the fool's wisdom and the coward's valour: the instrument and skreen of all your villainies, by which you punish in others what you act yourselves, or wou'd have acted had you been in their circumstances. The judge who condemns the poor man for being a thief, had been a thief himself, had he been poor. Thus you go on deceiving, and being deceiv'd, harassing, and plaguing, and destroying one another: but women are your universal prey.

Women, by whom you are, the source of joy,
With cruel arts you labour to destroy;
A thousand ways our ruin you pursue,
Yet blame in us those arts first taught by you.
O may, from hence, each violated maid,
By flatt'ring, faithless, barb'rous man betray'd,
When robb'd of innocence, and virgin fame,
From your destruction raise a nobler name
To right their sex's wrongs devote their mind,
And future Millwoods prove, to plague mankind!

The End of the Fourth Act.

Act V

Scene I

A room in a prison.

Enter Thorowgood, Blunt and Lucy.

THOR. I have recommended to Barnwell a reverend divine, whose judgment and integrity I am well acquainted with. Nor has Millwood been neglected; but she, unhappy woman, still obstinate, refuses his assistance.

LUCY. This pious charity to the afflicted well becomes your character; yet pardon me, sir, if I wonder you were not at their trial.

THOR. I knew it was impossible to save him, and I and my family bear so great a part in his distress, that to have been present wou'd have aggravated our sorrows without relieving his.

BLUNT. It was mournful, indeed. Barnwell's youth and modest deportment, as he past, drew tears from every eye; when placed at the bar and arraigned before the reverend judges, with many tears and interrupting sobs, he confess'd and aggravated his offences, without accusing, or once reflecting on Millwood, the shameless author of his ruin, who, dauntless and unconcern'd, stood by his side, viewing with visible pride and contempt the vast assembly, who all with sympathizing sorrow wept for the wretched youth. Millwood, when called upon to answer, loudly insisted upon her innocence, and made an artful and bold defence; but, finding all in vain, the impartial jury and the learned bench concurring to find her guilty, how did she curse herself, poor Barnwell, us, her judges, all mankind! But what cou'd that avail? She was condemn'd and is this day to suffer with him.

THOR. The time draws on. I am going to visit Barnwell, as you are Millwood.

LUCY. We have not wrong'd her, yet I dread this interview. She's proud, impatient, wrathful, and unforgiving. To be the branded instruments of vengeance, to suffer in her shame, and sympathise with her in all she suffers, is the tribute we must pay for our former ill-spent lives, and long confederacy with her in wickedness.

THOR. Happy for you it ended when it did! What you have done against Millwood, I know proceeded from a just abhorrence of her crimes, free from interest, malice or revenge. Proselytes to virtue shou'd be encourag'd. Pursue your purposed reformation, and know me hereafter for your friend.

LUCY. This is a blessing as unhop'd for as unmerited; but Heaven, hat snatched us from impending ruin, sure, intends you as its instrument to secure us from apostacy.

THOR. With gratitude to impute your deliverance to Heaven, is just. Many, less virtuously dispos'd than Barnwell was, have never fallen in the manner he has done; may not such owe their safety rather to Providence than to themselves? With pity and compassion let us judge him! Great were his faults, but strong was the temptation. Let his ruin learn us diffidence, humanity, and

circumspection; for we, who wonder at his fate – perhaps, had we like him been tryed, like him we had fallen too. – *Exeunt.*

Scene II

A dungeon. A table and lamp.

Barnwell, reading. Enter Thorowgood at a distance.

THOR. There see the bitter fruits of passion's detested reign and sensual appetite indulg'd – severe reflections, penitence, and tears.

BARN. My honoured, injured master, whose goodness has covered me a thousand times with shame, forgive this last unwilling disrespect! Indeed, I saw you not.

THOR. 'Tis well; I hope you were better employ'd in viewing of yourself. Your journey's long, your time for preparation almost spent. I sent a reverend divine to teach you to improve it, and shou'd be glad to hear of his success.

BARN. The word of truth, which he recommended for my constant companion in this my sad retirement, has at length remov'd the doubts I labour'd under. From thence I've learn'd the infinite extent of heavenly mercy; that my offences, tho' great, are not unpardonable; and that 'tis not my interest only, but my duty, to believe and to rejoice in that hope: so shall Heaven receive the glory, and future penitents the profit of my example.

THOR. Proceed!

BARN. 'Tis wonderful that words shou'd charm despair, speak peace and pardon to a murderer's conscience! but truth and mercy flow in every sentence, attended with force and energy divine. How shall I describe my present state of mind? I hope in doubt, and trembling rejoice. I feel my grief increase, even as my fears give way. Joy and gratitude now supply more tears than the horror and anguish of despair before.

THOR. These are the genuine signs of true repentance, the only preparatory, certain way to everlasting peace. – Oh, the joy it gives to see a soul form'd and prepar'd for Heaven! For this the faithful minister devotes himself to meditation, abstinence, and prayer, shunning the vain delights of sensual joys, and daily dies that others may live for ever. For this he turns the sacred volumes o'er, and spends his life in painful search of truth. The love of riches and the lust of power he looks on with just contempt and detestation, who only counts for wealth the souls he wins, and whose highest ambition is to serve mankind. If the reward of all his pains be to preserve one soul from wandering, or turn one from the error of his ways, how does he then rejoice, and own his little labours overpaid!

BARN. What do I owe for all your generous kindness? But tho' I cannot, Heaven can and will reward you.

THOR. To see thee thus is joy too great for words. Farewell! Heaven strengthen thee! Farewell!

BARN. O sir, there's something I cou'd say if my sad, swelling heart would give me leave.

THOR. Give it vent a while, and try.

BARN. I had a friend – 'tis true I am unworthy, yet methinks your generous example might perswade – cou'd I not see him once before I go from whence there's no return?

THOR. He's coming, and as much thy friend as ever; but I'll not anticipate his sorrow; too soon he'll see the sad effect of his contagious ruin. *Aside.* This torrent of domestick misery bears too hard upon me; I must retire to indulge a weakness I find impossible to overcome. – Much lov'd, and much lamented youth, farewell! Heaven strengthen thee! Eternally farewell!

BARN. The best of masters and of men, farewell! While I live, let me not want your prayers!

THOR. Thou shalt not: thy peace being made with Heaven, death's already vanquish'd; bear a little longer the pains that attend this transitory life, and cease from pain forever. – *Exit Thorowgood.*

BARN. Perhaps I shall. I find a power within that bears my soul above the fears of death, and, spight of conscious shame and guilt, gives me a taste of pleasure more than mortal.

Enter Trueman and Keeper.

KEEP. Sir, there's the prisoner. – *Exit Keeper.*

BARN. Trueman – my friend, whom I so wisht to see! yet now he's here I dare not look upon him. *Weeps.*

TR. O Barnwell! Barnwell!

BARN. Mercy, mercy, gracious Heaven! For death, but not for this, I was prepared.

TR. What have I suffer'd since I saw you last! What pain has absence given me! But oh! to see thee thus!

BARN. I know it is dreadful; I feel the anguish of thy generous soul – but I was born to murder all who love me. *Both weep.*

TR. I came not to reproach you; I thought to bring you comfort. But I'm deceiv'd, for I have none to give. I came to share thy sorrow, but cannot bear my own.

BARN. My sense of guilt, indeed, you cannot know: 'tis what the good and innocent, like you, can ne'er conceive. But other griefs at present I have none, but what I feel for you. In your sorrow I read you love me still. But yet methinks 'tis strange, when I consider what I am.

TR. No more of that! I can remember nothing but thy virtues, thy honest, tender friendship, our former happy state, and present misery. – Oh, had you trusted me when first the fair seducer tempted you, all might have been prevented.

BARN. Alas, thou know'st not what a wretch I've been! Breach of friendship was my first and least offence: so far was I lost to goodness, so devoted to the author of my ruin, that, had she insisted on my murdering thee, I think I shou'd have done it.

TR. Prithee, aggravate thy faults no more!

BARN. I think I shou'd! – Thus, good and generous as you are, I shou'd have

murdered you!

TR. We have not yet embrac'd, and may be interrupted. Come to my arms!

BARN. Never! never will I taste such joys on earth; never will I so soothe my just remorse! Are those honest arms and faithful bosom fit to embrace and to support a murderer? These iron fetters only shall clasp, and flinty pavement bear me *throwing himself on the ground* – even these too good for such a bloody monster.

TR. Shall fortune sever those whom friendship join'd? Thy miseries cannot lay thee so low but love will find thee. Here will we offer to stern calamity, this place the altar, and ourselves the sacrifice! Our mutual groans shall eccho to each other thro' the dreary vault. Our sighs shall number the moments as they pass, and mingling tears communicate such anguish as words were made to express.

BARN. Then be it to! *Rising*. Since you propose an intercourse of woe, pour all your griefs into my breast, and in exchange take mine! *Embracing*. Where's now the anguish that you promis'd? You've taken mine, and make me no return. Sure, peace and comfort dwell within these arms, and sorrow can't approach me while I'm here! This too is the work of Heaven, who having before spoke peace and pardon to me, now sends thee to confirm it. Oh, take, take some of the joy that overflows my breast!

TR. I do, I do. Almighty Power, how hast thou made us capable to bear, at once, the extreams of pleasure and of pain?

Enter Keeper.

KEEP. Sir!

TR. I come.

Exit Keeper.

BARN. Must you leave me? Death would soon have parted us forever.

TR. O my Barnwell, there's yet another task behind; again your heart must bleed for others' woes.

BARN. To meet and part with you, I thought was all I had to do on earth! What is there more for me to do or suffer?

TR. I dread to tell thee; yet it must be known! – Maria –.

BARN. Our master's fair and virtuous daughter?

TR. The same.

BARN. No misfortune, I hope, has reached that lovely maid! Preserve her, Heaven, from every ill, to show mankind that goodness is your care!

TR. Thy, thy misfortunes, my unhappy friend, have reach'd her. Whatever you and I have felt, and more, if more be possible, she feels for you.

BARN *aside*. I know he doth abhor a lie, and would not trifle with his dying friend. This is, indeed, the bitterness of death!

TR. You must remember, for we all observ'd it, for some time past, a heavy melancholy weigh'd her down. Disconsolate she seem'd, and pin'd and languish'd from a cause unknown; till, hearing of your dreadful fate, the long

stifled flame blazed out: she wept, she wrung her hands, and tore her hair, and in the transport of her grief discovered her own lost state whilst she lamented yours.

BARN. Will all the pain I feel restore thy ease, lovely, unhappy maid?
weeping. Why didn't you let me die and never know it?

TR. It was impossible; she makes no secret of her passion for you, and is determin'd to see you ere you die. She waits for me to introduce her.

Exit Trueman.

BARN. Vain, busy thoughts, be still! What avails it to think on what I might have been? I now am – what I've made myself.

Enter Trueman with Maria.

TR. Madam, reluctant I lead you to this dismal scene. This is the seat of misery and guilt. Here awful justice reserves her publick victims. This is the entrance to shameful death.

MA. To this sad place, then, no improper guest, the abandon'd, lost Maria brings despair – and see the subject and the cause of all this world of woe! Silent and motionless he stands, as if his soul had quitted her abode, and the lifeless form alone was left behind – yet that so perfect that beauty and death, ever at enmity, now seem united there.

BARN. I groan, but murmur not. Just Heaven, I am your own; do with me what please.

MA. Why are your streaming eyes still fix'd below, as tho' thou'dst give the greedy earth thy sorrows and rob me of my due? Were happiness within your power, you should bestow it where you pleas'd; but in your misery I must and will partake!

BARN. Oh! say not so, but fly, abhor, and leave me to my fate! Consider what you are – how vast your fortune, and how bright your fame; have pity on your youth, your beauty, and unequalled virtue, for which so many noble peers have sigh'd in vain! Bless with your charms some honourable lord! adorn with your beauty, and by your example improve, the English court, that justly claims such merit! so shall I quickly be to you – as though I had never been.

MA. When I forget you, I must be so indeed. Reason, choice, virtue, all forbid it. Let women like Millwood, if there are more such women, smile in prosperity and in adversity forsake! Be it the pride of virtue to repair, or to partake, the ruin such have made.

TR. Lovely, ill-fated maid! Was there ever such generous distress before? How must this pierce his grateful heart, and aggravate his woes!

BARN. Ere I knew guilt or shame, when fortune smiled, and when youthful hope were at the highest – if then to have rais'd my thoughts to you had been presumption in me, never to have been pardoned: think how much beneath yourself you condescend, to regard me now!

MA. Let her blush who, professing love, invades the freedom of your sex's choice, and meanly sues in hopes of a return! Your inevitable fate hath

render'd hope impossible as vain. Then why shou'd I fear to avow a passion so just and so disinterested?

TR. If any shou'd take occasion from Millwood's crimes to libel the best and fairest part of the creation, here let them see their error! The most distant hopes of such a tender passion from so bright a maid might add to the happiness of the most happy, and make the greatest proud. Yet here 'tis lavish'd in vain: tho' by the rich present the generous donor is undone he on whom it is bestow'd receives no benefit.

BARN. So the aromattick spices of the East, which all the living covet and esteem, are with unavailing kindness, wasted on the dead.

MA. Yes fruitless is my love, and unavailing all my sighs and tears. Can they save thee from approaching death – from such a death? Oh, terrible idea! What is her misery and distress, who sees the first, last object of her love, for whom alone she'd live – for whom she'd die a thousand, thousand deaths, if it were possible – expiring in her arms? Yet she is happy, when compared to me. Were millions of worlds mine, I'd gladly give them in exchange for her condition. The most consummate woe is light to mine. The last of curses to other miserable maids is all I ask, and that's deni'd me.

TR. Time and reflection cure all ills.

MA. All but this; his dreadful catastrophe virtue herself abhors. To give a holiday to suburb slaves, and passing entertain the savage herd, who, elbowing each other for a sight, pursue and press upon him like fate! A mind with piety and resolution arm'd may smile on death. But publick ignominy, everlasting shame, shame, the death of souls – to die a thousand times, and yet survive even death itself, in never-dying infamy – is this to be endured? Can I, who live in him, and must, each hour of my devoted life, feel all these woes renew'd, can I endure this?

TR. Grief has impair'd her spirits, she pants as in the agonies of death.

BARN. Preserve her, Heaven, and restore her peace; nor let her death be added to my crimes! *Bell toll.* I am summon'd to my fate.

Enter Keeper and Officers.

KEEP. The officers attend you. Millwood is already summon'd.

BARN. Tell 'em I'm ready. – And now, my friend, farewell! *Embracing.*

Support and comfort the best you can this mourning fair. No more! Forget not to pray for me! – *Turning to Maria.* Would you, bright excellence, permit me the honour of a chaste embrace, the last happiness this world cou'd give were mine. *She enclines toward him; they embrace.* Exalted goodness! O', turn your eyes from earth, and me, to Heaven, where virtue like yours, is ever heard.

Pray for the peace of my departing soul! Early my race of wickedness began, and soon has reach'd the summit. Ere nature has finish'd her work and stamp'd me man – just at the time that others begin to stray – my course is finish'd.

Tho' short my span of life, and few my days, yet count my crimes for yers, and I have liv'd whole ages. Thus justice, in compassion to mankind, cuts off a wretch like me, by one such example to secure thousands from future ruin. Justice and mercy are in Heaven the same: its utmost severity is mercy to the

whole, thereby to cure man's folly and presumption, which else wou'd render even infinite mercy vain and ineffectual.

If any youth, like you, in future times,
Shall mourn my fate, tho he abhors my crimes;
Or tender maid, like you, my tale shall hear,
And to my sorrows give a pitying tear;
To each such melting eye, and throbbing heart
Would gracious Heaven this benefit impart –
Never to know my guilt, nor feel my pain.
Then must you own, you ought not to complain;
Since you nor weep, nor shall I die, in vain.

Exeunt Barnwell and Officers.

Scene the Last

*The place of execution. The gallow and ladders at the farther end of the stage.
A crowd of spectators. Blunt and Lucy.*

LUCY. Heavens! What a throng!

BLUNT. How horrible is death when thus prepar'd!

LUCY. Support them, Heaven; thou only canst support them; all other help is vain.

OFFICER *within*. Make way there; make way; and give the prisoners room.

LUCY. They are here; observe them well. How humble and composed young Barnwell seems! But Millwood looks wild, ruffled with passion, confounded and amazed.

Enter Barnwell, Millwood, Officers and Executioner.

BARN. See, Millwood, see; our journey's at an end. Life, like a tale that's told, is past away; that short, but dark and unknown passage, death, is all the space 'tween us and endless joys, or woes eternal.

MILL. Is this the end of all my flattering hopes? Were youth and beauty given me for a curse, and wisdom only to insure my ruin? They were, they were! Heaven, thou hast done thy worst. Or, if thou hast in store some untried plague, somewhat that's worse than shame, despair and death, unpitied death, confirm'd despair and soul confounding shame, something that men and angels can't describe, and only fiends, who bear it can conceive: now, pour it on this devoted head, that I may feel the worst thou canst inflict, and bid defiance to thy utmost power!

BARN. Yet, ere we pass the dreadful gulph of death, yet, ere you're plunged in everlasting woe; O, bend your stubborn knees and harder heart, humbly to deprecate the wrath divine! Who knows but Heaven, in your dying moments, may bestow that grace and mercy which your life despised?

MILL. Why name you mercy to a wretch like me? Mercy's beyond my hope, almost beyond my wish. I can't repent, nor ask to be forgiven.

BARN. Oh, think, what 'tis to be for ever, ever miserable; nor with vain pride oppose a power, that's able to destroy you.

MILL. That will destroy me; I feel it will. A deluge of wrath is pouring on my soul. Chains, darkness, wheels, racks, sharp stinging scorpions, molten lead, and seas of sulphur, are light to what I feel.

BARN. Oh, add not to your vast account despair, a sin more injurious to Heaven than all you've committed.

MILL. Oh! I have sin'd beyond the reach of mercy.

BARN. Oh, say not so; 'tis blasphemy to think it. As yon bright roof is higher than the earth, so, and much more, does Heaven's goodness pass our apprehension. Oh, what created being shall présume to circumscribe mercy, that knows no bounds?

MILL. This yelds no hope. Tho' mercy may be boundless, yet 'tis free; and I

was doom'd, before the world began, to endless pains, and thou to joys eternal.
BARN. O gracious Heaven! extend thy pity ho her! let thy rich mercy flow in plenteous streams, to chase her fears and heal her wounded soul!

MILL. It will not be. Your prayers are lost in air, or else returned, perhaps with double blessing, to your bosom; but me they help not.

BARN. Yet hear me, Millwood!

MILL. Away! I will not hear thee: I tell thee, youth, I am by Heaven devoted a dreadful instance of its power to punish. *Barnwell seems to pray*. If thou wilt pray, pray for thyself, not me! How doth his fervent soul mount with his words, and both ascend to Heaven! that Heaven, whose gates are shut with adamantine bars against my prayers. Had I the will to pray. I cannot bear it – sure, 'tis the worst of torments to behold others enjoy that bliss that we must never taste!

OFFICER. The utmost limit of your time's expired.

MILL. Incompassed with horror, whither must I go? I wou'd not live – nor die. That I cou'd cease to be! – or ne'er had been!

BARN. Since peace and comfort are denied her here, may she find mercy where she least expects it, and this be all her hell! From our example may all be taught to fly the first approach of vice; but, if o'ertaken

By strong temptation, weakness, or surprize,
Lament their guilt, and by repentance rise;
Th'impenitent alone die unforgiven;
To sin's like man, and to forgive like heaven.

Exeunt. Enter Trueman.

LUCY. Heart-breaking sight! O wretched, wretched Millwood!

TR. How is she disposed to meet her fate?

BLUNT. Who can describe unutterable woe?

LUCY. She goes to death encompassed with horror – loathing life, and yet afraid to die; no tongue can tell her anguish and despair.

TR. Heaven be better to her than her fears: may she prove a warning to others, a monument of mercy in herself!

LUCY. Oh, sorrow insupportable! break, break, my heart!

TR. In vain

With bleeding hearts and weeping eyes we show
A human, gen'rous sense of others' woe,
Unless we mark what drew their ruin on,
And, by avoiding that – prevent our own.

Finis.

Epilogue

Written by Colley Cibber, esq., poet laureat and spoken by Mrs. Cibber.

Since fate has robb'd me of the hopeless youth
For whom my heart had hoarded up its truth,
By all the laws of love and honour now
I'm free to chuse – and one of you.

But soft – with caution first I'll round me peep;
Maids, in my case, shou'd look before they leap.
Here's choice enough, of various sorts and hue,
The cit, the wit, the rake cock'd up in cue,
The fair, spruce mercer, and the tawney Jew.

Suppose I search the sober gallery? – No,
There's none but prentices, and cuckolds all a-row;
And these, I doubt, are those that make 'em so.

Pointing to the boxes.

'Tis very well, enjoy the jest! But you,
Fine, powder'd sparks – nay, I'm told 'tis true –
Your happy spouses – can make cuckolds too.

'Twixt you and them, the diff'rence this perhaps,
The cit's asham'd whene'er his duck he traps;
But you, when madam's tripping, let her fall,
Cock up your hats, and take no shame at all.

What if some favour'd poet I cou'd meet,
Whose love wou'd lay his lawrels at my feet?
No; painted passion real love abhors:
His flame would prove the suit of creditors:

Not to detain you, then, with longer pause,
In short, my heart to this conclusion draws:
I yield it to the hand that's loudest in applause.