The Fathers

Henry Fielding

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THE FATHERS:
OR, The Good−Natur'd Man.
A COMEDY.
As it is Acted at the Theatre Royal, IN DRURY−LANE.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND, LORD LIEUTENANT OF THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, AND MASTER OF THE HORSE TO THE KING.

MY LORD,

The author of this play was an upright, useful and distinguished magistrate for the County of Middlesex; and by his publications laid the foundation of many wholesome laws for the support of good order and subordination in this metropolis, the effects of which have been, and now are, forcibly felt by the public. His social qualities made his company highly entertaining. His genius so universally admired, has afforded delight and instruction to thousands. The memory of such a man calls for respect; and to have that respect shewn him by the great and

praise−worthy must do him the highest honour.

Under these circumstances this little orphan posthumous work, replete with humour and sound sense, looks up to your grace for protection, as a nobleman who makes rank and affluence answer the great purposes of displaying true dignity
and beneficence. Thus adorned by accomplishments, and enriched by manly sentiments, it is the interest of society to join with me in the warmest wishes for the continuance of your Grace's health, and of all those powers so liberally and so constantly exerted by your Grace for the good of mankind.

I ahve the honour to be, MY LORD, Your Grace's Respectful and Obediant Servant, JOHN FIELDING

Brompton−Place

Dramatis Personæ.
Sir George Boncour,by Mr. King. Mr. Boncour,Mr. Bensley.Young Boncour (*his son*)Mr. Webster.Old Valence, Mr. Parsons.Young Valence (*his son*) Mr. WhitfieldOld Kennel,Mr. Baddeley.Young Kennel (*his son*)Mr. Dodd.
WOMEN.
Mrs. Boncour,by Mrs. Hopkins.Miss Boncour,Miss Younge. Miss Valence,Mrs. Baddeley.

PROLOGUE. [By Garrick, D.]

Written by Mr. Garrick, and spoken by Mr. King.

When from the world departs a son of fame,
His deeds or works embalm his precious name;
Yet not content, the public call for art,
To rescue from the tomb his mortal part;
Demand the painter's and the sculptor's hand,
To spread his mimick form throughout the land:
A form, perhaps, which living, was neglected,
And when it could not feel respect, respected.
This night no bust or picture claims your praise,
Our claim's superior, we his spirit raise:
From time's dark stere−house, bring a long−lost play,
And drag it from oblivon into day.
But who the Author? need I name the wit?
Whom nature prompted as his genius writ;
Truth smil'd on Fancy for each well−wrought story,
Where characters, live, act, and stand before ye:
Suppose these characters, various as they are,
The knave, the fool, the worthy, wise, and fair,
For and against the Author pleading at your bar.
First pleads Tom Jones grateful his heart and warm;
Brave, gen'rous Britons shield this play from harm:
My best friend wrote it, should it not succeed,
Though with my Sophy blest my heart will bleed
Then from his face he wipes the manly tear;
Courage, my master, Partridge cries, don't fear:
Should Envy's serpents hiss, or malice frown,

Though I'm a coward, zounds! I'll knock 'em down:
Next, sweet Sophia comes she cannot speak
Her wishes for the play o'erspread her cheek;
In e'ery look her sentiments you read:
And more than eloquence her blushes plead.

Now Blifil bows with smiles his false heart gilding,
He was my foe I beg you'll damn this Fielding;
Right Thwakum roars no mercy, Sirs, I pray
Scourge the dead Author, thro' his orphan play.
What words! (cries Parson Adams), fie, fie, disown 'em;
Good Lord! de mortuis nil nisi bonum:
If such are Christian teachers, who'll revere 'em
And thus they preach, the Dev'l alone should hear 'em.
Now Slipslop enters tho' this scrv'ning vagrant,
'Salted my virtue, which was ever flagrant,
Yet, like black 'Thello, I'd bear scorns and whips,
Slip into poverty to the very hips,
'T' exult this play may it decrease in favour;
And be it's fame immoraliz'd for ever!
'Squire Western, reeling, with October mellow,
Tall, yo! Boys! Yoax Criticks! hunt the fellow!
Damn'en, these wits are varmint not worth breeding.
What good e'er came of writing and of reading?
Next comes, brim−full of spite and politicks;
His sister Western and thus deeply speaks:
Wits are arm'd pow'rs like France attack the foe;
Negotiate 'till they sleep then strike the blow!
Allworthy last, pleads to your noblest passions
Ye gen'rous leaders of the taste and fashions;
Departed genius left his orphan play,
To your kind care what the dead wills obey:
O then respect the Father's fond bequest,
And make his widow smile, his spirit rest.

EPILOGUE. [By Garrick, D.]

Written by Mr. Garrick, and spoken by Miss Young.

Prologues and Epilogues to speak the phrase
Which suits the warlike spirit of these days
Are cannon charg'd, or should be charg'd, with wit,
Which, pointed well, each rising folly hit;
By a late Gen'ral who commanded here,
And fought our bloodless battles many a year!
'Mongst other favours were conferr'd on me,
He made me Captain of Artillery!

At various follies many guns I fir'd
Hit 'em point black, and thought the foe retir'd,
But vainly thought for to my great surprize,
They now are rank and file before my eyes!
Nay to retreat may even me oblige;
The works of Folly stand the longest siege!
With what brisk firing, and what thunder−claps,
Did I attack those high−built castles caps!
But tow'ring still, they swell in lofty state,
Nor strike one ribband to capitulate;
Whilst beaux behind, thus peeping, and thus bent,
Are the besieg'd, behind the battlement:
But you are conquerors, Ladies have no dread,
Henceforth in peace enjoy the cloud−cap'd−head!
We scorn to ape the French, their tricks give o'er,
Nor at your rigging fire one cannon more!
And now ye Bucks, and Bucklings of the age.
Tho' caps are clear, your hats shall feel my rage;
The high−cock'd, half−cock'd, quaker, and the slouch,
Have at ye all! I'll hit you, though ye crouch;
We read in history one William Tell,
An honest Swiss, with arrows shot so well

On his son's head, he aim'd with so much care,
He'd hit an apple, and not touch one hair:
So I, with such−like skill, but much less pain,
Will strike your hats off, and not touch your brain:
To curse our head−dress! an't you pretty fellows!
Pray who can see thro' your broad−brim'd umbrellas?
That pent−house worn by slim Sir Dainty Dandle!
Seems to extinguish a poor farthing candle
We look his body thro' But what fair she,
Thro' the broad cloud that's round his head can see?
Time was, when Britons to the boxes came,
Quite spruce, and chapeau bas! address'd each dame.
Now in flapt hats, and dirty boots they come,
Look knowing thus to every female dumb;
But roar out Hey, Jack! so, Will! you there, Tom?
Both sides have errors, that there's no concealing;
We'd low'r our heads, had but mens' hearts some feeling.
Valence, my spark, play'd off his modish airs,
But nature gave us wit to cope with theirs;
Our sex have some small faults won't bear defending,
And tho' near perfect, want a little mending;
Let Love step forth, and claim from both allegiance,
And bring back caps and hats to due obedience.

ACT I.

Scene I

Scene a Parlour in Mr. Boncour's House.

Enter Boncour and Mrs. Boncour.

Boncour.

Pray be pacified

Mrs. Boncour.

It is intolerable, and I will never submit to it.

Boncour.

But, my dear!

Mrs. Boncour.

Good Mr. Boncour, leave off that odious word; you know I detest it; such fulsome stuff is nauseous to the ears of a woman of strict virtue.

Boncour.

I don't doubt your virtue.

Mrs. Boncour.

You don't I am very much oblig'd to you, indeed; nor any one else, I apprehend: I thank Heaven my carriage is such that I dare confront the world.

Boncour.

You mistake me, Madam.

Mrs. Boncour.

That is as much as to say I have not common understanding; to be sure I can't comprehend any thing.

Boncour.

I should be sorry to think I had given you any reason to be out of humour.

Mrs. Boncour.

Then I am in the wrong; a wife is always in the wrong, certainly; it is impossible for a wife to be in the right in any thing.

Boncour.

My dear, I never said so.

Mrs. Boncour.

That is as much as to say I don't tell truth: I desire you will treat me with good manners at least; that I think I may expect. A woman of virtue, who brought you a fortune, may expect that.

Boncour.

Madam, I esteem you for your virtue, and am grateful to you for your fortune; I should blush if you could upbraid me with lavishing it on my own pleasures, or ever denying you the enjoyment of it.

Mrs. Boncour.

How! have I a coach at my command? you keep one, indeed, but I am sure I have no command of it.

Boncour.

Indeed you wrong me.

Mrs. Boncour.

Why, have you not lent it this very morning without my knowledge?

Boncour.

My dear I thought the chariot would have serv'd.

Mrs. Boncour.

How can that serve when I am to take three other ladies with me.

Boncour.

Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Bid John take the chariot to my cousin, and let the coach attend my wife I ask your pardon, child; I own I should have told you of it, but business really put it out of my head.

Mrs. Boncour.

Well, and suppose I should find but one of the ladies at home, must I drag about a heavy coach all over the town, like an alderman's or a country justice of peace's lady?

Boncour.

Nay, since you are so unresolv'd the promise was not absolute; you shall not be uneasy on any account Tell the fellow he need not go to my cousin at all *(exit Servant)* now, my dear, you may have your choice, and I hope you will be easy.

Mrs. Boncour.

Easy! yes; I have a great deal of reason to be easy, truly; now your relations, if they have not the coach, will lay the whole blame upon me; sure never was so unfortunate a creature as I am! no, let them have both, and then they will
be satisfied; I dare say I shall find a coach amongst my acquaintance, though you deny me your's.

(Exit.

Boncour.

So! this comes of meddling with matters out of my sphere; but I deserve it, who know her temper so well.

Enter Sir George Boncour

Sir George.

Brother, good morrow, I hope no accident hath happened, for I met my sister in a violent hurry at the door.

Boncour.

No, nothing extraordinary: wives will have their humours, you know.

Sir George.

Aye, wives who have such husbands.

Boncour.

I hope I give her no occasion to be uneasy.

Sir George.

Indeed you do You are a very wicked man, brother.

Boncour.

How!

Sir George.

For you have spoilt a very good sort of a woman; you have many an uneasy hour, many a heart−ache, many a sigh, and many a tear to answer for, which you have been the occasion of to my poor sister.

Boncour.

I don't remember I ever deny'd her any thing.

Sir George.

That is the very reason; for what can a poor woman be oblig'd to consult, so unsteady as her own inclinations? if you would contradict her a little, it would prevent her contradicting herself. A man pretends to be a good husband, and yet imposes continually that hard task upon his wife, to know what she has a mind to.

Boncour.

Brother, I admit rallery, but I should contemn myself, if I refused any thing to a woman who brought me so immense a fortune, to which my circumstances were so very unequal: I do not think with the world, that I make a woman amends for robbing her of her fortune, by taking her person into the bargain.

Sir George.

I would not have you rob her; I would only have you keep her from robbing herself. Ah! I should have made an excellent husband, if I could ever have been persuaded to marry.

Boncour.

Doubtless, your wife would have agreed rarely with this doctrine.

Sir George.

She must have been a most unreasonable woman else; for I should have desired no more of her than only to do whatever I would have her. I am not that person you would make me appear; for, except a few diversions which I have an antipathy to, such as music, balls, cards, plays, operas, assemblies, visits, and entertainments, I should scarce ever deny her any thing.

Boncour.

Your exceptions put me in mind of some general pardons, where every thing is forgiven except crimes.

Sir George.

I suppose you would have me suffer her to keep an assembly, and rendezous of all such idle people as can't stay at home; that is, have nothing to do any where else.

Boncour.

Perhaps I love an assembly no more than you.

Sir George.

Why do you keep one then?

Boncour.

For the same reason that I do many other things not very agreeable to me, to gratify my wife.

Sir George.

But, brother, pray for what purpose do you think the law gives you a power to restrain her?

Boncour.

Brother, the law gives us many powers, which an honest man would scorn to make use of.

Sir George.

So the advantage you receive from your wife's fortune, is to be her steward, while she lays it out in her own pleasures.

Boncour.

And that no inconsiderable one.

Sir George.

No!

Boncour.

No: for the greatest pleasure I can enjoy is that of contributing to her's.

Sir George.

You are a great deal too good for this world, indeed you are; and really, considering how good you are, you are tolerably lucky; for were I half so good, I should expect, whenever I returned home, to catch my wife in an intrigue; my servants robbing my house; my son married to a chambermaid; and my daughter run away with a footman.

Boncour.

These would be ill returns to your goodness.

Sir George.

That's true: but they are very common ones for all that; and I wish somewhat worse does not happen to your son; for I must tell you, and I am sorry to tell it you, the town talk of him.

Boncour.

I hope they can say nothing ill of him.

Sir George.

Nothing ill of him! they say every thing ill of him O brother, I think myself obliged to discover it to you, this son, this eldest son of yours, the hopes of your family, whom I intended my heir; this profligate rascal, I tell it with tears in my eyes keeps keeps a wench.

Boncour.

I know it

Sir George. (in a passion.)

Know it! wh at that he keeps a wench?

Boncour.

I am sorry for it.

Sir George.

If he was a son of mine, I'd skin him I'd flea him I'd starve him. He shall never have a groat a farthing of mine: I'll marry to−morrow, and if I hav'n't an heir, I'll endow an hospital, or give my money to the Sinking Fund.

Boncour.

Come, brother, I am in hopes to reclaim him yet.

Sir George.

His vices are all owing to you.

Boncour.

I never gave him instructions in that way.

Sir George.

You have given him money, that is giving him instructions: whoever gives his son money, is answerable for all the ill uses he puts it to.

Boncour.

Rather, whoever denies his son a reasonable allowance, is answerable for all the ill methods he is forced into to get money.

Sir George.

Reasonable! brother: why there is our dispute; I am not so rigid as some fathers; I am not for totally curbing a young man; I would not have him
without a shilling or two in his pocket to appear scandalous at a coffee−house no.

Boncour.

Sir George, instead of disputing longer on this subject, will you go with me and visit my son: suppose we should find him at his studies?

Sir George.

I as soon expect to find him at his prayers. Well, I will go, as I have no other business; though I know the world better than to expect either to convince myself or you.

Boncour.

I am ready to wait on you; my coach is at the door.

Sir George.

If I should break the rascal's head, you'll forgive me Keep I'd keep him if he was a son of mine.

(Exeunt.

Scene II

Scene at Young Boncour's.

Young Boncour, Miss Boncour, Miss Valence, come forward.

Young Boncour.

Dear sister, how could you let this inundation of nonsense in upon us?

Miss Boncour.

Nay, don't blame me.

Miss Valence.

O, I was a witness to what passed; however, now they are gone, I must remind you of your promise, to let me hear that song. I think both the words and air admirable.

Miss Boncour.

You will make George proud if you praise his poetry.

Young Boncour.

Love or poverty makes most poets; and I hope I shall never want at least one of those motives as Mr. Warbler is gone, I will attempt it myself.

SONG,

By G. Boncour.

I.

While the sweet blushing spring glowing fresh in her prime,
  All nature with smiles doth adorn;
Snatch at each golden joy check the ravage of time,
  And pluck every bud from the thorn.
In the May−morn of life, while gladsome and gay,
  Each moment, each pleasure improve,
For life we shall find is at best but a day,
  And the sun−shine that gilds it is love.

II.

The rose now so blooming, of nature the grace,
  In a moment is shrunk and decay'd,
And the glow which now tinges a beautiful face
  Must soon, alas! wither and fade.

In the May−morn of life then, while gladsome and gay,
  Each moment, each pleasure improve,
For life we shall find is at best but a day,
  And the sun−shine that gilds it is love.

Enter Boncour and Sir George.

Young Boncour.

My father! and uncle too so, so!

Boncour.

Dear George, don't let us interrupt your entertainment; your uncle and myself called only to see how you did, as we went by. If I had known you had had company, we should not have come up Pray go on with your music.

Young Boncour.

Sir; you are always the kindest and most condescending but from you, Sir, this is an unexpected honour.

Sir George.

Dear Sir, most obliging, and most gracious Sir, you do me an infinite deal of honour indeed you see he is at his studies, brother.

Boncour.

Pray, George, don't let us interrupt your entertainment.

Sir George.

Upon my word my nephew shews an exceeding good taste in his morning diversions.

Young Boncour.

Yes, Sir, these ladies have been so good as to hear a silly trifle of my own writing.

Sir George.

I am sorry we came too late, for I think nonsense is never so agreeable as when set to music.

Miss Boncour.

The music my brother design'd for me and this lady; and I doubt not if he had had any expectation of your company, my dear uncle, he would have provided some more serious entertainment.

Sir George.

Upon my word, Sir, you have a very pretty house here, compleatly finished and furnished when I was a young fellow we had not half so good a taste.

Young Boncour.

No, Sir, the age is improv'd since that time when a knight of the shire used to jog to town with a brace of geldings, and a single livery−man; and very prudently take a first floor in the Strand, when if you ask'd in the shop for Sir Thomas, a dirty fellow, behind the counter, call'd out, maid, is Sir Thomas above? I dare swear, uncle, in your time, many a tradesman hath had half a dozen men of fashion in his house.

Sir George.

If he had nine men of fashion in his house, he had fewer in his books, I believe.

Miss Boncour.

And once in seven years came up Madam in the stage−coach, to see one comedy, one tragedy, go once to the opera, and rigg out herself and family till the next general election, ha! ha! ha!

Sir George.

Well, Miss Malapert, and what do you think you have said now? why, nothing more than that your grandmothers had ten times as much prudence as yourselves.

Enter Servant hastily.

Servant.

Sir, I ask pardon. I thought your honour had been gone.

Boncour.

Speak out, Sir.

Servant.

Sir, there be below Mons. de Pannier, with a new suit; and Mons. de la Mouton Maigre, with some embroidery for your honour.

Sir George.

There is another virtue of the age! if you will be extravagant can't you let your own tradesmen reap the benefit of it? is it not enough to send your money out of your own family, but you must send it out of your own country too!

Young Boncour.

I consider nothing farther than who serves me the best.

Boncour.

I must join your uncle here, George, I am afraid it is fashion rather that guides you to the choice; but, were it otherwise, every man ought to have some partiality for his own country; it is a laudable prejudice, without which, no people ever were or can be great.

Sir George.

It ever was the characteristick of this nation but now a passion for French dress and fopperies is as prevailing as the use of their frippery tongue Ah! there was a time, when we found the way to be understood in France, without the help of their language *(looks on his watch)* but I have trifled away more time than I could well afford: shall I carry you any where, brother, or will you stay here?

Boncour.

Have you any engagement, George?

Young Boncour.

None, at present.

Boncour.

Then, brother, I wish you a good morning. I have some business with my son.

Sir George.

Good morrow to you, brother. Pray, Sir, will you order some of your domesticks to shew me out of these noble apartments, for there are so many doors to them, I may possibly miss my way.

Young Boncour.

I will do myself that honour, Sir.

Sir George.

Upon my soul, Sir, you are so full of complaisance you confound me; nay, Sir, pray walk first, I insist upon it.

Young Boncour.

Sir, it is my duty to obey.

Sir George.

Extravagant rascal! if I had such a son, I would make a little free with his coxcomical pate.

Boncour.

I wish, child, you would take that young lady away, for I have something to say to your brother.

Miss Boncour.

La, Papa, you are always so full of secrets!

Boncour.

You know, dear Harriet, how fond I am of your company.

Miss Boncour.

Yes; eternally sending me away is a proof of it.

Boncour.

This is a disobedience which I ought to love you for, instead of chiding you; and I will break an appointment to enjoy this evening with you and your brother.

Miss Boncour.

Nay, I can't promise to be at home this evening, for I shall be engag'd to go to the play, and if I should not happen to go to the play, I shall be engag'd to a party at cards.

Miss Valence.

Miss Boncour, you must remember your promise to set me down at home; my time is out and I dare not stay one minute beyond it.

Miss Boncour.

Dare not? ha! ha! ha!

Miss Valence.

No; my father will never forgive me if I should.

Enter young Boncour.

Young Boncour.

I have got my uncle into his chariot at last; but he was so full of ceremony I thought I never should; he has made fifty bows to my servants; I never saw him in such a humour.

Boncour.

You know his temper, George, and may easily guess at the reason of it.

Miss Boncour.

Well, if you are so positive

Miss Valence.

Don't call me positive I act against my inclination.

Young Boncour.

Are you going already, Madam you will do me the honour

(Exit, leading her out.

Boncour (alone)

How wretched is that animal, whose whole happiness centers in himself; who cannot feel any satisfaction, but in the indulgence of his own appetite. I feel my children still a part of me; they are, as it were, additional senses, which let in daily a thousand pleasures to me; my enjoyments are not confin'd to those which nature hath adapted to my own years, but I can in my son's fruition, taste those of another age nor am I charitable but luxurious, when I bestow on them the instruments of their pleasures.

Enter young Boncour.

So, George, you have soon quitted the young lady.

Young Boncour.

I was going to make that excuse for leaving you so long.

Boncour.

You have been a good husband this quarter.

Young Boncour.

Sir; you are always so good as to prevent my necessities, and almost my wishes; for indeed I should have been obliged

Boncour.

I thought a hundred would not be burthensome.

(Giving him a note.

Young Boncour (bowing respectfully with a smile)

A hundred! Gad, it is but a hundred.

Boncour.

What are you considering, George?

Young Boncour.

I was thinking, Sir, how happy such a sum as this would have made me when I was at school; but really, in my circumstances, it will go a very little way; it will but just pay for a picture which I bought yesterday.

Boncour.

A hundred pounds is a large price for a picture.

Young Boncour.

A meer trifle, Sir; one can get nothing to hang up in a room for less.

Boncour.

I only give that hint, because I should be sorry that your demands should ever be such, as I should be unable to answer.

Young Boncour.

I am not such a stranger to your fortune, Sir, as to incur expence beyond its reach.

Boncour.

No more of this! call on me by−and−by, and your wants shall be supplied; but, I believe, you guess by the formality of my preparation, and my sending away your sister, that I have something of moment to impart to you without more preface what think you of marriage?

Young Boncour.

Marriage, Sir!

Boncour.

Aye: I don't expect your good sense will treat my proposition with the common stale raliery of those noble free spirited libertines, whose great souls disdain to be confined within the limits of matrimony: who laugh at constancy to the chaste arms of a woman of virtue, while at the expence
of health and fortune they are strictly faithful to the deceitful embraces of some vile designing harlot.

Young Boncour.

Pardon me, Sir: my thoughts of marriage are different; but I hope, Sir, you will indulge me in choosing a wife for myself?

Boncour.

You need not apprehend too much compulsion or restraint; but the lady I shall recommend to you is so unexceptionable

Young Boncour.

To be sincere, Sir, my affections are already engaged; and though I have no hasty thoughts of marrying, yet when I do, I am determined on the person, and one whom I think unexceptionable on your side.

Boncour.

Her name?

Young Boncour.

Miss Valence.

Boncour.

Her fortune, I apprehend, is much inferior to that of the lady I should have proposed; but neither her fortune or family are such as shall make me endeavour to oppose your inclinations.

Young Boncour.

Sir, you are ever good; though indeed in this you indulge me only in the common right which nature has bestowed upon me; for to restrain the inclination in that point, is not a lawful, but an usurp'd power in a parent: how can nature give another the power to direct those affections which she has not enabled even ourselves to govern?

Boncour.

However, you will give me leave to treat with Mr. Valence on this subject; for though I know he must rejoice at the offer, yet he is a man of that kind, who must be dealt with, with due circumspection; and the minds of lovers are too much wrapt up in sublime pleasures to attend to the low settlement of worldly affairs.

Enter Servant.

Servant.

Sir, Monsieur Valance desire to know if your honour be at home.

Young Boncour.

I shall be glad to see him.

Boncour.

I'll leave you, and go and find out the old gentleman.

Young Boncour.

I believe, Sir, you may treat with him farther than for me; my sister's inclinations, I am confident, look toward the same family.

Boncour.

Are you certain of that?

Young Boncour.

By incontestable proofs.

Boncour.

Well, Mr. Valance and I have been old acquaintance and neighbours; he is of a good family, and has a good fortune; and the world gives him and his children a fair character. I am glad you have dispos'd of your affections in no worse manner: good morrow to you, George I shall see you in the afternoon.

Young Boncour.

I shall not forget to pay my duty to you, Sir.

Boncour.

No ceremony with me.

(Exit.

Young Boncour.

Sir. *(bows)* I believe I have the most complaisant father in Christendom. Though all fathers are too niggardly This sneaking hundred; ha! ha! ha! my dear Valance, good morrow:

Enter Young Valance.

Why look you so sprightly and gay? some unexpected happiness has befallen you.

Young Valance.

O Boncour, my father! can you believe it? he sent for me this morning, of his own accord, without the least petition, the least motion of mine, sent for me, and with the utmost generosity, made me a present of ten pieces

Young Boncour.

Ha! ha! ha!

Young Valance.

Why do you laugh?

Young Boncour.

To see you so much over rate a trifle. My father paid me a visit this morning, and with the utmost generosity made me a present of a hundred: upon which, with the utmost gratitude, I asked him for more! why, tell me, Charles, dost thou think it is not his duty, who hath begot us with all those appetites and passions, to supply them to the utmost of his power? But, Charles, I hope you will make your friends partakers of your father's generosity: you will dine with us to day.

Young Valance.

Your company is generally too expensive for me.

Young Boncour.

Why, faith, the world is grown to such a pass, that without expence, a man cannot keep good company.

Young Valance.

By good company, I suppose you mean embroider'd company; for men of sense are to be come at cheaper.

Young Boncour.

By good company, I mean polite company, for true politeness, though it does not make a man of sense, it mends him.

Young Valance.

But does politeness never dine without a French cook, nor eat out of any thing but plate?

Young BONCOUR.

To show you I think otherwise, I will dine with you, wherever you please.

Young Valance.

Why, my business with you was, to let you know my father has been so good to give my sister leave to spend this day at your house; now, if you will, without ceremony, let me invite myself to the same place

Young BONCOUR.

You make me perfectly happy, and I hope to know something this afternoon which will make you so; at least, if you wish to call me brother as eagerly as I do to call you by that name.

Young Valance.

Need I declare that to you?

Young BONCOUR.

Then I assure you, your father's consent is only wanting.

Young VALANCE.

Ha! you make me happy, indeed, for were the alliance less advantageous, he is so good, so indulgent, I will fly to him and throw myself at his feet to obtain it.

Young BONCOUR.

I believe my chariot is at the door; I will carry you O, my dear Charles, my spirits are now so high, that it must be an uncommon accident which will ruffle them; and, believe me, the vast delight which the near prospect of enjoyment of my love affords me, is not a little heightened by the expectations of seeing you also happy in your wishes; and I can look down with contempt on the merchant, who sees the anchor cast to his ship; the general who has just obtained a victory; or the despairing minister who has just carried his point, and subverted the designs of his enemies.

(Exeunt.

End of the First ACT.

ACT II.

Scene I

A Room in Valence's House.

Enter Old Valence and Servant.

Old Valence.

Tell Mr. Boncour I shall be glad to see him. What can this formal visit mean? I hope he has not discovered the intimacy between our children: if I could once compass that double marriage, I should compleat my wishes, why not? For I know the violent passion of the young people, and the extreme indulgence of the father: but tho' he is a weak man, it is impossible he should give his consent; the disparity of fortune is too great; well! but, as he has brought up his children to hate, and despise him, perhaps they may not ask it; no, it would make me too happy.

Enter Boncour.

Boncour.

My good old friend and neighbour, how do you do?

Valence.

Mr. Boncour, I am heartily glad to see you; this is extremely kind, and hath prevented me this very morning paying you that visit, which I have been obliged to owe you some time against my inclination.

Boncour.

Ceremony between old friends, my good neighbour is ridiculous; it is the privilege of friendship and love, to throw aside those forms, which only serve men to keep an appearance of affection where there is none; there has been a long acquaintance and intimacy between our families.

Valence.

There has been so, indeed, and highly to my satisfaction.

Boncour.

I am deceived, my very good old friend, if there are not some who wish a much closer alliance; you know, Mr. Valence, my way hath been always to discover my sentiments, without great formality of introduction; in short, I have discover'd a very particular intimacy between our younger branches; I am mistaken if they are not desirous to knit the alliance still closer.

Valence.

So! (just what I fear'd)

[Aside.

Boncour.

But you know, my old friend, the views of young people, and of their parents in matrimony are extremely different; theirs is only the satisfaction of an immediate passion, ours look forward to their future happiness.

Valence.

Sir, I am surpriz'd at what you tell me,

[Confusedly.

Boncour.

Why surpriz'd? it is but a natural affection.

Valence.

It is an affection, Sir, which I never encourag'd in them.

Boncour.

It is in our power, Mr. Valence.

Valence.

I shall be very ready to contribute mine, I assure you; I scorn to connive at my children's stealing a match into any family, particularly my friends; I do assure you, I should scorn it.

Boncour.

I believe, indeed, you wou'd But

Valence.

If I had had but the least suspicion if such a thing had ever enter'd into my thoughts, you should have known it that moment.

Boncour.

I am convinc'd, but give me leave perhaps the advantage may be somewhat of your side.

Valence.

Dear, Sir, the whole world knows how infinitely it is so; but I am not like the world in all respects; I am not so devoted to my interest to do a mean thing; I would not do a mean thing for the world.

Boncour.

Nor am I so like the world to place my own, or my children's interest in riches only, or rather to sacrifice their happiness to my own vanity: I am willing when they have taken out a licence, that they shall have

no more to do with Doctors Commons, for which reason I will neither marry my daughter to a spindle shank'd beau, nor my son to a rampant woman of quality. Mr. Valence, our children love each other; and their passions, if encourag'd, may make them happy; my business with you, my neighbour, is not to frustrate, but to compleat their attachments; in a word, what think you of a double marriage between our families?

Valence.

(Surpriz'd)

Sir!

Boncour.

Are you willing it should be so?

Valence.

Are you in earnest?

Boncour.

I thought you had known me too well to suspect me of jesting on such an occasion; I assure you I have no other business here at present: I know my son's happiness is wrapt up in your daughter, and for ought I know, my daughter may have the same affection for your son; I do not only therefore propose the match to you, but I do it with earnestness.

Valence.

Do you? Why then, for that very reason, I shall put on some backwardness; eagerness is always to be taken advantage of.

(Aside.

Boncour.

Be not surpriz'd, perhaps, there may be some advantage in point of fortune on one side or other:
if it should be on mine, I can never give it up better than to an old friend.

Valence.

Hum That estate of mine in Northumberland is a very good estate, and very improveable, let me tell you it is an estate that

Boncour.

It will be the business of hereafter to consider each particular; we have been neighbours to each other so long, that our affairs in general can be no secret to either. At present I should be glad of your direct answer.

Valence.

A double marriage between our children! It is a matter, Mr. Boncour, which will require great consideration.

Boncour.

Aye!

Valence.

Are you certain your son has so violent an affection for my daughter?

Boncour.

I am certain.

Valence.

And that your daughter has the same liking towards my son.

Boncour.

Women are not so open on these occasions, but I have reason to believe it.

Valence.

And they meet, I suppose, with a suitable return of affection from my children.

Boncour.

I believe they do.

Valence.

And you are entirely willing to have this double match go forward?

Boncour.

I am desirous of it, earnestly desirous.

Valence.

So that my consent alone is wanting?

Boncour.

Even so.

Valence.

It will require great consideration.

Boncour.

How?

Valence.

Mr. Boncour, I have always had the greatest respect for you and your family; there is nothing in my power which I could not do to serve you; consider, Sir, I have but two children, a boy and a girl, they are my all, and the disposal of them is as a matter of great weight; you cannot expect me to be so hasty in taking any measures leading to it.

Boncour.

Why, what objections can you apprehend?

Valence.

I dont know: I have not yet considered enough of the matter. You will excuse me, Mr. Boncour, but treaties of this nature oblige us to enquire a litte into one anothers affairs: why that estate now of your's in Hampshire, is a very ill timber'd estate.

Boncour.

Sir, I am in no doubt but that my estate will be able to answer your demands.

Valence.

They will not be unreasonable, Mr. Boncour; I shall act in a most generous manner; I have always despised those who have used any art in their actions: I shall be glad if it happens to sall within my power to oblige you; but truly this affair requires great consideration.

Boncour.

Well, Sir, I will leave you to it, in the afternoon I shall expect your answer.

Valence.

Mr. Boncour, you shall have my answer this very evening; be assured, if possible, I will comply with your desires.

Boncour.

I shall expect you this afternoon.

Valence.

I will wait on you, and hope there will be no difficulty.

Boncour.

There shall be none on my side.

(Exit.

Valence.

This is beyond my utmost expectation; but I must not appear forward, that I may make the better bargain; nothing is so foolish as leaping eagerly at an advantageous proposal.

Enter Young Valence.

So, son, where have you been? I have wanted you; is it impossible for you to stay at home with money in your pocket?

Young VALENCE.

Sir, if I had known you would have wanted me

VALENCE.

But you are not to know always: I don't know myself, you must keep in the way; young fellows now a days mind nothing but their pleasures.

Young VALENCE.

Sir, you will have no reason to complain of that, for to please you is my greatest pleasure.

VALENCE.

And so it ought to be, for I think my generosity to you this morning, shews you that I have a pleasure in pleasing you.

Young VALENCE.

O, Sir, if my happiness can give you pleasure, it is in your power to make me so happy!

VALENCE.

So, something else is wanted, I see, but whatever it be, I may thank myself for it: bestowing one favour, is giving right to ask a second; the first is a gift, the rest are payments.

Young VALENCE.

If a son hath any right to ask, it is the favour I shall ask of you; and if any son could hope to obtain, I must, since the only reason which prompts a father to deny is in my favour, and the lady on whom I have placed my affection, is my superior in fortune.

VALENCE.

Aye! perhaps, he means my friend's daughter, and then my prudent backwardness will be finely rewarded; *(aside)* who is the lady?

Young VALENCE.

One whose person, family, and fortune, are no unknown to you; but, why should I fear to name her? Miss Boncour.

VALENCE.

Who What?

Young VALENCE.

Miss Boncour, sure you can have no objections.

VALENCE.

What a way is that of talking? You are sure I can have no objections? How can you tell what objections I may make? Are you to dictate to me? This is the consequence of my generosity to you this morning; this all arises from my foolish prodigality.

Young VALENCE.

Sir, I own my obligations, and am sorry I used an unguarded expression, by which I meant no more than that I hoped her fortune would be agreeable to you.

VALENCE.

I don't know that.

Young VALENCE.

I thought, Sir, so long an acquaintance with her father

VALENCE.

And, pray, why have you thought that my long acquaintance with her father must let me into the knowledge of his circumstances? Mr. Boncour has the reputation of a weak man, but notwithstanding that, I know he has a little low cunning in him, which makes it more difficult to see through his affairs than those of a wiser man; so let me give you a little advice: if you have an affection for this girl, don't let her father see it; I hate deceit, and love to act openly and honestly with mankind; but still with some prudence towards such a cunning knave as Boncour.

Young VALENCE.

Sir, I shall pay an exact observance to your orders.

VALENCE.

Well, well, perhaps you might have settled your affections worse; I don't know, I don't promise any thing, but if matters appear exactly to my mind

Young VALENCE.

Sir, you are the best and most indulgent of fathers.

VALENCE.

Remember, I promise nothing.

Young VALENCE.

You are the kindest of men, and I the happiest.

VALENCE.

Observe my advice.

Young VALENCE.

I should be unworthy, indeed, were I to neglect it.

VALENCE.

Go, send your sister to me, remember I promise nothing.

Young VALENCE.

Sir, you are the best of fathers.

(Exit.

VALENCE.

This is the effect of severity; severity is, indeed, the whole duty of a parent now for my daughter a little caution will suffice with her; for women of their own accord are apt enough to practice deceit, and now, I think, I have my old neighbour's fortune at my disposal.

Enter Miss Valence.

Miss Valence.

My brother told me, Sir, you had sent for me.

Valence.

Yes, Sophy, I did: Come hither, I have not very lately given you any pocket money.

Miss Valence.

Sir, it is not my business to keep an account where I have no demand, but from the generosity of the giver.

Valence.

But I think I have not lately, that is, very lately given you much.

Miss Valence.

No, really, Sir, I don't remember to have had any thing of you, since you gave me a ticket for the opera, and that is almost a year ago.

Valence.

Well, well, there are a couple of pieces for you; be a good housewife, and you shan't want money.

Miss Valence.

I give you a thousand thanks, Sir.

Valence.

Now, Sophy, look me full in the face, and tell me what you think of young Boncour.

Miss Valence.

Why should you ask me what I think of him, Sir?

Valence.

What an impertinent question is that? You give me fine encouragement to be generous to you; why should I ask you? I have a reason, no doubt of it, but your cheeks answer me better than your lips; that blush sufficiently assures me what you think of him.

Miss Valence.

If I blush'd, Sir, it was at your suspicion, for I am sure Mr. Boncour is no more to me than another man.

Valence.

But, suppose I have a desire he should be more to you?

Miss Valence.

I shall be dutiful to you in all things.

Valence.

I believe it will be an easy piece of duty; you are all very dutiful when you are ordered to follow your inclinations; but, young Lady, what I insist on at present is, that if this gentleman has your affections, you will be so good as to conceal them.

Miss Valence.

Pray, Sir, why should you think he has my affections?

Valence.

Again at your why's! madam, I tell you I expect you to behave with discretion; that is, in other words, to deal as dishonestly with your lover as you do with your father, I am sure you can never repine at such easy commands; so this afternoon, I desire you will put on all your reserve, all your airs and indifference: but, perhaps, you have given him encouragement already, perhaps you have dutifully intended to marry him without consent or approbation of mine?

Miss Valence.

Indeed, Sir, you have no reason

Valence.

How, have I no reason! a pretty compliment to your father; go to your chamber, madam, and stay there till you have learnt a more respectful behaviour.

Miss Valence.

Sir, I obey

(Exit.

Valence.

Ah, there's nothing like severity! children are so vile, that one dares not indulge one's good inclinations towards them: I have brought all this on me by my own generosity; but now for the business with Boncour, I will go to my lawyer, and we will draw up proposals together. An imprudent man in my situation, would have testified immediate raptures, but the best general rule I know is, never to discover your thoughts, either in your words, or your countenance.

(Exit.

Scene II.

Boncour's House.

Enter Boncour, and Miss Boncour.

Miss Boncour.

Dear, papa, don't teize me about the fellow: I care not if he was hanged, and all other fellows; I affections for the creature! I wonder who can have put it into your head!

Boncour.

Nay, if it be not so, tell me frankly, and you shall be left out of the treaty which I am carrying on with the old gentleman, relative to a match between your brother and his daughter.

Miss Boncour.

A match between my brother and Miss Valence?

Boncour.

We met this morning, and shall meet again this afternoon about it.

Miss Boncour.

And pray tell me, dear Sir, what makes you suspect any thing between me and Mr. I forget the creature's name!

Boncour.

Are my suspicions well grounded?

Miss Boncour.

La, Sir, I can't conceive what should make you imagine any such thing.

Boncour.

You will not answer me directly?

Miss Boncour.

I don't know what to answer.

Boncour.

Nay, I desire no more! well, my dear, we will not be long in finishing the settlements.

Miss Boncour.

Settlements! Sir you frighten me. I hope I have not said any thing can't one converse and dance with a man But I assure you, Sir, it is no such thing.

Enter young Boncour.

Boncour.

So, George, you find me engaged in an impossible task.

Young Boncour.

I am sorry for that, Sir, pray what is it?

Boncour.

Nothing more than trying to get truth from a woman; it seems we have been under a mistake all this while, and one half of our treaty is abortive; your sister disavows all regard for Mr. Valence.

Young Boncour.

I am glad of it! for I should be sorry if she threw away her affections on one so worthless one who, while he is addressing her, is engaged to another woman.

Boncour.

How!

Young Boncour.

Sir, I have had ocular demonstration; nay, I question if he be not married already; at least, I am certain every thing is concluded.

Boncour.

Say you so; this very well accounts for that backwardness which surprized me in the father

Miss Boncour.

Ha! ha! ha! an affection, indeed! ha! ha! ha! no, I assure you, Sir, I have no affection an affection truly; no, I have all the abhorrence and contempt in the world for him.

Young Boncour.

Dear, sister, don't be in a passion.

Miss Boncour.

I am in no passion, brother; it is impossible for a man I hate and despise, to put me in a passion; no, brother, when I know a man to be a villain, I assure you, brother, he shall never have it in his power to give me uneasiness.

Young Boncour.

But, my dear

Miss Boncour.

No, brother, I would not have you think I am in a passion on his account; all that vexes me is, that my father should think I had a value for him.

Young Boncour.

Well, dear Sir, I believe I need not fear to ask you the success of the business you was so kind to undertake.

Boncour.

Upon my word, George, it was such as surprized me, till you accounted for it; by this engagement of young Valence's, I think on comparing his circumstances, I might have expected a more hearty concurrence, but I do assure you, the best answer I could obtain was, that he would consider of it.

Young BONCOUR.

O, Sir, that was only to lessen the opinion which he feared you might have the advantageousness of the proposal; I think I know him so well, that he would make an outward difficulty of assenting to a point, which inwardly, he heartily wish'd to compass; especially, when he had no fear of losing it by so doing, as perhaps your goodnatur'd forwardness made him secure on that side.

BONCOUR.

Aye, faith, it is surprising there should be such foolish wise men in the world.

Miss BONCOUR.

Brother, one word with you, who told you this villain was to be married?

Young BONCOUR.

Excuse me I cannot tell you.

Miss BONCOUR.

I would not deny you, brother.

Young BONCOUR.

I should not have curiosity enough to ask what no ways concern'd me.

Miss BONCOUR.

But suppose it did concern me.

Young BONCOUR.

Is that possible? what, he that never made any addresses to you?

Miss BONCOUR.

Addresses, pugh! Pshaw, this is using me in a manner I did not expect; I would not conceal a secret from you, especially a secret of this nature.

Young BONCOUR.

Oh! a secret of this nature; now, be honest, and tell me why you call'd Valence a villain, and I will discover the whole.

Miss BONCOUR.

A villain! if you knew as much as I, you would think it a term too gentle. Don't imagine I have the least concern at losing him; but if what you say is true, he is the most perfidious wicked villain that ever broke his solemn vows to a woman.

Young BONCOUR.

Then to be as honest and sincere with you, there is not one single syllable of truth in all I have said. I am convinc'd he loves you sincerely, and since I find you return his passion with equal ardour

Miss BONCOUR.

What do you mean, brother?

BONCOUR.

Nay, child, 'tis in vain to dissemble, you are fairly caught.

Miss BONCOUR.

Well, I protest now, this is the most barbarous treatment; and so the story you rais'd of poor Valence is absolutely false?

Young BONCOUR.

As mere fiction as ever came from a traveller or a news paper.

BONCOUR.

Well, child, I think you need say no more to encourage me to include you in the treaty, at least I shall take your silence for consent.

Miss BONCOUR.

Then if I must speak

Young BONCOUR.

Let it be truth for once.

Miss BONCOUR.

The devil take the story for I never was more frightened by one in all my life.

BONCOUR.

George, I think there will be no farther obstruction, Mr. Valence will be here this afternoon; and as soon as matters can be settled by the lawyers, you may depend on your happiness.

Young BONCOUR.

Here is my mother coming this way; I believe it would be my sister's wish, as well as mine, that this affair should be yet a secret from her.

BONCOUR.

I think you are in the wrong there; nor am I willing she should be unacquainted with a thing of this nature.

Young BONCOUR.

At least, Sir, till I have the honour of seeing you again.

Miss BONCOUR.

Aye, do, dear Sir.

BONCOUR.

Well, so far I will indulge you.

(Exeunt Young Boncour and Miss Boncour.

Enter Mrs. BONCOUR.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

Do Mr. Valence's family dine here to day?

BONCOUR.

Yes, my dear.

Mrs BONCOUR.

Very well, then I will dine abroad.

Boncour.

As you please, child, since your daughter is at home.

Mrs. Boncour.

I know, Sir, it is a matter of indifference to you; but I think you need not affect it it would be civiller to express some regard for me, tho' it was never so counterfeit.

Boncour.

Would you have me say you shall not dine abroad?

Mrs. Boncour.

Shall not! I should laugh at that indeed!

Boncour.

Why, my dear, should I ever discover an inclination contrary to your's, by which you must be driven to the uneasiness of knowing you thwart one or the other? you know, child, concealments of this kind are the greatest delicacies of friendship.

Mrs. Boncour.

To be sure I can conceal nothing, nor I have no delicacy of friendship about me; I wonder you would chuse so indelicate a woman.

Boncour.

Come, it is happy for you I did chuse you; at least you might have fallen to the lot of one who would have been less observant of your temper; suppose you had been married to my brother Sir George?

Mrs. Boncour.

Sir George! why Sir George? I know no man who would make a better husband.

Boncour.

So he says himself, and this I must confess, he would never have had a dispute of this kind with his wife; for he would have told her peremptorily, madam, I have invited the company, and you shall stay and dine with them.

Mrs. Boncour.

Well, and that would have been kinder than indifference; for my part, I aver, I could bear contradiction from a man that was fond of me.

Boncour.

What, rather than compliance!

Mrs. Boncour.

I am not that fool you may imagine me; I know a little of human nature, and am convinc'd there is no man truly fond of his wife, who is not uneasy at the loss of her company.

Boncour.

Will it please you if I order you to stay at home?

Mrs. Boncour.

Order me! no, truly, if my company be so indifferent, that you consult only my pleasure in desiring it, I shall never think myself oblig'd to you on that account; I thank heaven, I am not every where so despicable, but that there are some weak enough to desire my conversation, and, perhaps, might prefer it to the agreeable Miss Valence herself.

Boncour.

She is a guest of my daughter's, not of mine: surely, you don't conceive I have any particular pleasure in Miss Valence's company.

Mrs. Boncour.

O, I am not jealous, I assure you, you wrong me mightily if you think I am jealous; she must be a poor creature, indeed, who could be jealous
of every little flirt; no, I should have too much contempt for the man who delighted in the conversation of such flirts; but this I think I might reasonably expect, that he would enjoy them by himself, and not insist of my being of the company.

Boncour.

You cannot charge me with any such behaviour, nay, scarce with a single desire that would contradict your inclinations; therefore, when you told me you would dine abroad, I answered, just as you please, tho' I knew not the company to be disagreeable to you.

Mrs. Boncour.

But I will not dine abroad, Mr. Boncour, I will dine at home; pray give me leave to know my own inclinations better than you; I am neither a fool nor a child, whatever you may think of me, nor will I be treated as such by any husband in the universe. What! I suppose I must shortly come with my hands before me, and ask you leave before I do any thing; pray, Mr. Boncour, will you give me leave to make a few visits this morning?

Boncour.

Ha! ha! ha! My dear, did I ever deny you?

Mrs. Boncour.

You insist on my asking then it seems, but I assure you I shall not; I did not part with my fortune, to part with my liberty too, so your servant.

(Exit.

Boncour.

Well, Sir George is in the right; I have spoil'd this woman certainly; for her temper from a good one is now become intolerable; but she brought me a fortune; true, she did, and an immense one, and with it, what I took for better and for worse; and so it is idle to complain.

(Exit.

End of the Second Act.

ACT III.

Scene Mr. Boncour's House.

Enter Boncour and Servant.

SERVANT.

Mr. Valence's man left this letter.

BONCOUR.

So! here I shall have, I suppose, my neighbour's sentiments at large on this important business.

(Reads the letter.)

SIR,

I have maturely weigh'd your proposal; and, to convince you of the desire I have to an alliance with your family, notwithstanding some offers lately made me, which, to a wordly−minded man, might, perhaps, appear more advantageous, I have consented to the union between our children, for which purpose I have drawn up a few articles, not doubting but you will think them very reasonable.

First, You shall vest your whole estate immediately in the possession of your son, out of which, besides your wife's fortune, you shall be allotted two hundred pounds per annum during life.

Secondly, You shall pay down fifteen thousand pounds as your daughter's portion, for which she shall have a proportionable settlement, as our lawyers shall agree.

Thirdly, That as a very large part of my estate will, at my death, descend to my son, I shall remain in possession of the whole during my life, except But why should I read any farther? is this man mad, or doth he conclude me to be so?

Enter Sir George Boncour.

Sir GEORGE.

I call'd on you, brother, to let you know I shall dine with you, for my friend has sent me word the house will sit late.

BONCOUR.

Oh, Sir George, I am particularly glad to see you; I will give you an instance that your opinion of mankind is juster than my own; since I saw you, I have, to comply with my son's inclination, propos'd a match in Mr. Valence's family; could you imagine he would send me such a letter as this in answer? oh, you need only look at the articles.

Sir GEORGE (reading).

Well, what of this?

BONCOUR.

What! can you think the man is in his senses?

Sir GEORGE.

Certainly; for 'tis impossible he should suppose you to be in your's, when you made him the offer to which this letter is an answer.

BONCOUR.

But, brother, is my making him an advantageous offer, a reason for so impudent an imposition?

Sir GEORGE.

Aye, surely, no one can give another a stronger hint to impose upon him, than by first imposing upon himself; you have infinite obligations to
him, I think, for he sees you have an inclination to beggary, and therefore would make you a beggar. Besides, can any thing be more reasonable than what he proposes? I am sure I should not expect such gentle terms in the same case; what doth he desire of you more than to throw yourself on the bounty of your son? well, and who the devil would make any scruple of trusting a son, especially such a son as your's a fine gentleman one who keeps a wench never fear, man, I warrant he'll allow you pocket−money enough.

BONCOUR.

Rallery, Sir George, may exceed the bounds of good−nature, as well as good−breeding; I did not expect that you would have treated the serious concerns of my family in so ludicrous a manner, nor have laugh'd at me when I ask'd your advice.

Sir GEORGE.

Zounds! what shall I say? I thought to have pleas'd you, by calling his demands reasonable; shall I take the other side of the question? for, like a lawyer, I can speak on either; he hath taken the most prudent way of calling you a fool, and his proposals seem to proceed rather from a design of insulting you, than from any hopes of success.

BONCOUR.

It really has that appearance.

Sir GEORGE.

Well, then, and do you want my advice what to do?

BONCOUR.

I shall, undoubtedly, reject them with scorn, and if myself alone were concern'd, I could with ease, but my son, I fear, has set his heart on the young lady.

Sir GEORGE.

Then break his heart: why what a devil of a fellow is this son of your's? he sets his fortune on one wench, and his heart on another.

BONCOUR.

Come, brother, you are a little too hasty: when we reflect on the follies of our youth, we should be more candid to the faults of our children.

Sir GEORGE.

You are welcome to throw the sins of my youth in my face: I own I have been as wicked as any, and therefore I would not suffer a son to be so: of what use is a parent's experience, but to correct his children; and, give me leave to tell you, you are a very unnatural father, in not suffering your son to reap any benefit from your former sins; but you, brother, to obtain the character of a good−natur'd man, are content to be the bubble of all the world.

BONCOUR.

Well, I had rather be the bubble of other mens will than of my own; for, let me tell you, brother, whatever impositions knavery puts upon others, it puts greater on itself.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Sir, dinner is upon the table.

BONCOUR.

Well, we will defer this affair 'till the afternoon, when I believe my behaviour will please you.

Sir GEORGE.

It will surprise me too if it does.

[Exeunt.

Scene Valence's House.

Enter Valence and Servant.

VALENCE.

Sir Gregory come to town, say you?

SERVANT.

He is at the coffee−house, and will be here immediately.

VALENCE.

Well, shew him up. *(Exit Servant.)* What great affair can have brought him up? who has not, I believe, been in town these twenty years: something of vast importance must have drawn him from his fox−hounds! he hath been so long absent, the town will be a sight to him, at least he will be a sight to the town. *(Sir Gregory hallows without.)* He is not far off, I hear.

Enter Sir Gregory Kennel.

Sir GREGORY.

Hey a vox, master Valence how goes it, my old friend? you look surpriz'd to see me in town.

VALENCE.

I must confess, Sir Gregory, you were one of the last persons I expected to see here.

Sir GREGORY.

It is like a fox running against the wind: well, how does madam, and how does your fine son do?

VALENCE.

Alas! my wife, poor woman, I have lost her some time; I thought you must have heard of that.

Sir GREGORY.

Like enough I may: I can't remember every trifle.

VALENCE.

I hope your family is well, Sir Gregory?

Sir GREGORY.

Why I have lost my lady too, since I saw you: she is six feet deep, by George; but the boys are all well enough: Frank, he is at home; and Will is at Oxford; and the 'Squire, he is just come from his travels.

VALENCE.

And how does master Francis? I think he is my godson.

Sir GREGORY.

Why Frank, Frank is well enow; I would a brought un to town, but the dogs would not spare un: he is mightily improved, I can tell you, since you saw un; he takes a five−bar gate like a greyhound; but the 'Squire is the top of the pack: I have been at some pains in his education; he has made, what do you call it, the tower of Europe.

VALENCE.

What, has master Gregory been abroad?

Sir GREGORY.

I think so he hath been out almost two years, in France, and Italy, and Venice, and Naples, and I do'nt know where.

VALENCE.

Indeed! why I thought he had been too young to travel.

Sir GREGORY.

No, no; he's old enough, he will be of age in half a year more.

VALENCE.

He is much improv'd by his travels, no doubt on't.

Sir GREGORY.

Improv'd, aye, that he is Egad he over tops them all he was the finest gentleman at sessions I have nothing to do for'n, but marry un to a woman of quality, and get un made a parliament man, and then his fortune is made, then he will be a compleat gentleman; now I have secur'd one o' um; I have agreed for a borough, and I fancy, neighbour Valance, you can recommend me to t'other; you converse with quality; do you know now ever a woman of quality that's very handsome, with a great fortune, that wants a husband?

VALENCE.

Quality, beauty, and fortune; you are somewhat high in your demands, Sir Gregory.

Sir GREGORY.

Why, if she be not handsome, the boy won't like her; and if she have no fortune, I shan't.

VALENCE.

But, why quality? what use is there in that?

Sir GREGORY.

Nay, I can't tell much use in it; but there is something in it to be sure, for I have seen men proud on it in the country, who have nothing else to be proud of Odsure I fancy they have forgot to direct the boy hither: I left him at the coffee−house having his shoes clean'd; the dog's grown so nice since his travels, that he did but just step into a kennel, tho' he wan't over the instep; the shoes o'un must be clean'd immediately; I will step and see for 'un, and be back with you in an instant.

(Exit.

VALENCE.

If this cub hath no more wit than his father, it will not be difficult to match him to my own daughter. He will be a much greater match than young Boncour: this is an effect of my prudence; but I am afraid, as unreasonable as my demands are to Boncour, folly will make him accept them; if he should, I can raise them so high, that, even so great a fool as he is, will reject them: however, I will be first sure on this side.

Enter Sir Gregory and Young Kennel.

Sir GREGORY.

Here he is; here is the boy; child, this is my friend Mr. Valence.

(Young Kennel runs to Valence, and kisses his hand.)

VALENCE.

I am glad to see you returned.

Young KENNEL.

Pardie! Sir, your most humble servant.

Sir GREGORY.

Is not he a fine gentleman? well, Gregory, let us hear a little more of your travels; come, don't be asham'd before folks, don't Come, tell us what you

Young KENNEL.

Dear, old Gentleman, don't give yourself any pain on my account: I should have made the tour of Europe to very little purpose, if I had any modesty left.

Sir GREGORY.

Neighbour Valence, do ask him about pleaces?

VALENCE.

Pray, Sir, how do you like Venice?

Young KENNEL.

Not at all, Egad it stands in the middle of the sea!

Sir GREGORY.

How! no lyes, Greg. don't put the traveller upon us!

VALENCE.

Indeed he speaks truth. How do you like the humour, the temper of the Italians?

Young KENNEL.

I don't know any thing of them, for I never would converse with any, but those of my own country.

Sir GREGORY.

That's right; I would have thee always be a true Englishman.

VALENCE.

I suppose you saw Rome, Sir.

Young KENNEL.

Faith, Sir, I can't say I saw it, for I went extremely late in, and staid there but a week: I intended to have taken a walk or two about town, but happening to meet with two or three English dogs at our inn mortblue! I never stirr'd abroad till the day I came away.

Sir GREGORY.

What! did'st not see the Pope of Rome?

Young KENNEL.

No, not I: I should have seen him, I believe, but I never heard a word that he was at Rome 'till after I came into France, and then I did not think it was worth going back for: I did not see any one thing in Italy worth taking notice of, but their pictures; they are magnifique, indeed!

VALENCE.

How do you like the buildings, Sir, in Italy?

Young KENNEL.

They show'd me some old buildings, but they are so damnably out of repair, one can't tell what to make of them.

Sir GREGORY.

Well, Gregory, give us a little account of France: you saw the King of France, did not you Greg?

Young KENNEL.

Yes, and the Queen, and the Dolphin; why, Paris is well enough, and the merriest place I saw in all my travels: one never wants company there; for there is such a rendezvous of English, I was never alone for three months together, and scarce ever spoke to a Frenchman all the while.

Sir GREGORY.

There, Mr. Valence, you see how unjustly they speak against our sending our sons to travel: you see they are in no danger of learning foreign vices, when they don't keep company with foreigners. Well, Mr. Valence, how do you like 'un?

VALENCE.

O, infinitely well, indeed! he is really a finish'd gentleman

Sir GREGORY.

Aye, is he not a fine fellow? But, Greg, you don't tell Mr. Valence half what you told me, about a strange man at Orlines.

Young KENNEL.

You will excuse my father's pronounciation, as he has never been abroad: he means Orleans, where I saw one of the largest men I ever saw in my life; I believe he was about eight foot high.

Sir GREGORY.

What a misfortune it is not to travel in one's youth: I can scarce forgive my father's memory for keeping me at home. Well, but about the King of France.

Young KENNEL.

Zounds! father, don't ask me so many questions. You see, Sir, what a part he is.

(Aside to Val.

Sir GREGORY.

Why, you rogue, what did I send you abroad for, but to tell me stories when you came home.

Young KENNEL.

You sent me abroad, Sir, to learn to be a fine gentleman, and to teach me to despise clownish fellows.

VALENCE.

Come, Sir Gregory, perhaps the young gentleman will be more open over a bottle; what say you?

Sir GREGORY.

You know I never flinch from a bottle; and we will have some stories after a glass. Well, Greg, you know what I came to town about, and this gentleman will assist us; he will recommend a wife to you.

Young KENNEL.

I am this gentleman's very humble servant; but I want none of his assistance. There is a lady whom I knew before I went abroad, and saw again last night with another young lady at the play, and mortblue if I marry any other woman.

Sir GREGORY.

How! sirrah.

Young KENNEL.

Pray, dear old gentleman, don't put on that grum look: rat me', do you think I have made the tour of Europe to be snubb'd by an English father, when I came home again?

Sir GREGORY.

Sirrah, I'll beat the tour of Europe out of you again: have I made you a fine gentleman, in order to despise your father's authority!

VALENCE.

Pray, Sir Gregory

Sir GREGORY.

Sirrah, I'll disinherit you: I'll send your brother Will a travelling, and make Frank a Parliament man in your room.

Young KENNEL.

A fig for your disinheriting! it is not in your power; if I can but get this girl, I'll marry her, and carry her back to France. There is a good English company at Bouglogn, as I ever desire to crack a bottle with what do you take me for? a boy! and that you are to make me do what you please, as you did before I went abroad, diable! Do you think to use me as you do brother Frank, who is but your whipper in? mortblue, I have been hunting with the King of France.

Sir GREGORY.

If you have been hunting with the devil, I'll make you know I am your father; and, tho' you are a fine gentleman, the same pains will make your brother Will as fine a gentleman to the full.

VALENCE.

Pray, Sir, consider; don't disoblige your father: come, Sir Gregory, I have order'd a bottle of wine within; let us go and talk over that matter; I dare say I shall bring the young gentleman to reason; come, pray walk in.

Sir GREGORY.

He shall obey me, or

Young KENNEL.

I have travell'd to a fine purpose, truly.

(Exeunt.

Scene Boncour's House.

Enter Boncour and Young Boncour.

Young BONCOUR.

Tho' the articles are a little unreasonable, if you had any compassion or love for your children, who you know have plac'd their hearts on the match, you would comply.

BONCOUR.

My children are ungrateful, if they upbraid me with want of affection: but this is a meer trick, a poor scheme of Mr. Valence's, to take advantage of your passions, and my indulgence.

Young Boncour.

So, we are sacrific'd to contention 'twixt our fathers for the superiority of understanding.

Boncour.

You injure me, son; the low dirty reputation of cunning, I scorn and detest.

Enter Mrs. Boncour.

So, Sir, I hear there are marriages going on in the family, which I was not to be acquainted with.

Boncour.

Pardon me, my dear; I intended to have acquainted you, and should before, but for a particular reason.

Mrs. Boncour.

What reason, pray?

Boncour.

You need not concern yourself.

Mrs. Boncour.

Indeed! not concern myself! who am I? have not I an equal concern; aye, and a superior one!

Boncour.

But hear me, madam.

Mrs. Boncour.

No, I won't hear any thing said for the match; it is below them in family and fortune both.

Boncour.

I do not intend

Mrs. Boncour.

I don't care what you intend; you may keep your reasons to yourself, if you please; but, as for the double marriage, I will have no such thing; all your plots shan't compass it.

Boncour.

I tell you, it is broke off there is to be no match.

Mrs. Boncour.

How, no match! and pray what was the reason you kept it a secret from me?

Boncour.

Ma'am!

Mrs. BONCOUR.

So; I am nobody in the house; matches are made and unmade, and I know nothing of the matter. And why did you break it off?

Boncour.

Because his demands were monstrous exorbitant beyond credibility.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

And pray what was the reason you kept it a secret from me? nay, I will know I am resolved I will know won't you tell me? you are a barbarous man, and have not the least affection for me in the world *(crying).*

Enter Miss Boncour.

Miss Boncour.

Bless me, madam, what is the matter?

Mrs. Boncour.

Nothing extraordinary; your father has behaved to me like a monster.

Miss Boncour.

La, Sir, how can you vex my mama in this manner.

Boncour.

So! she for whom I suffer'd all this, is the first to accuse me.

Mrs. Boncour.

It seems you are to be married without my knowledge.

Miss Boncour.

Married, Madam! to whom, pray?

Mrs. Boncour.

Nay, I don't know whether it is to be so now; for the same wise head that made the match, has, it seems, broke it off again.

Boncour.

Yes, child; Mr. Valence hath been pleas'd from my easy behaviour to him, to use me in such a manner, and insist upon such terms, that I can't, either consistently with common sense or honour, comply with; now, my dear, you see I do not keep all secrets from you, examine them yourself.

Miss Boncour.

(Aside) So, so, so! after my affections are engag'd, they are to be baulked, it seems: but there shall go two words to that bargain.

Mrs. Boncour.

I can't see any thing so unreasonable in his demands: if the match was otherwise good, I, should not have broken it off on this account.

Boncour.

What! would you subvert the order of nature, and change places with your children: would you depend on their duty and gratitude for your bread? and give way to the exorbitant demands of a man, who has made them for no other reason, but because I offered him more than he expected, or could have hoped for?

Mrs. Boncour.

I say his demands are for the advantage of our children, and truly if I can submit to them, you, Mr. Boncour, may be satisfied.

Young BONCOUR.

Nay, then, I think it is a good time for me to appear: O, madam, eternal blessings on your goodness, which it shall be the business of my life to deserve; O cease not till you have prevailed on his obdurate heart to relent.

Miss BONCOUR.

I must second my brother Have pity on him, dear mama! see how he trembles, his lips are pale, his voice faulters; O consider what he suffers with the apprehension of losing the woman he loves; though my father's cruel heart is deaf to all his sufferings, you are all goodness, all tenderness; you, I know, will not bear to see him miserable!

Mrs. BONCOUR.

Why do you address yourself to me? there stands the good man, who wisely contriv'd this match, and then with so much resolution broke it off.

Young BONCOUR.

My passion, 'till you encourag'd it, was governable 'Twas you, Sir, who bid me hope, who cherish'd my young love; and though the modesty of her sex may make her backard to own it, my sister's heart is as deeply concern'd as mine.

Miss BONCOUR.

Thank you, brother, but never mind me: I had my father's command to give my promise, and I must not obey him if he commands me to break it.

Young BONCOUR.

(Takes hold of his sleeve.) Sir, I beseech you

Miss BONCOUR.

(Takes hold of the other.) Dear papa

Mrs. BONCOUR.

And for what reason was this secret kept from me?

Miss BONCOUR.

When he hath put it into his childrens' heads

Young BONCOUR.

When their whole happiness is at stake. Then it is into a family of so good a character.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

I must take my childrens' parts, and you shall consent, or never

Miss BONCOUR.

I'll never let go your hand

Young BONCOUR.

I'll never rise again

Enter Sir George Boncour.

Boncour.

O, brother! you never arriv'd so fortunately to my assistance as now.

Sir George.

Why, what's the matter?

Boncour.

O, I am worried to death by my wife and my children.

Mrs. Boncour.

Nay, brother, you shall judge if he hath reason to complain: he hath, without my knowledge, contracted a match between Mr. Valence's children and his own; and when the young people had united their affections, truly he hath, of his own wise head, broke it off again.

Boncour.

You have appeal'd to a very wrong person now; my brother knows the whole affair.

Sir George.

I know, brother! what do I know? if you have broken off the childrens' match, you have done a very ill thing, let your reasons be what they will.

Boncour.

How, brother! are you my enemy too?

Sir George.

Can you imagine I will be your friend, brother, when you run rashly of your own head into schemes of consequence without consulting your wife! without taking the advice of her, your best friend, your best counsellor?

Mrs. Boncour.

True, dear brother.

Sir George.

And then, when you have done so, and suffer'd a fine gentleman here to engage his precious affections, to fix his constant heart, which always doats with the same ardour, on the same beauteous object.

Young Boncour.

True, by heavens!

Sir George.

And this little bud here, to throw off the veil of her virgin modesty, and all overspread with blushes and confusion, to tell an odious man she will have him, which nothing but her duty to you could ever extort from her.

Miss Boncour.

True, dear uncle!

Sir George.

Then, after all this, out of base worldly motives, such as should never enter into the thoughts of a good man

Young Boncour.

Too true!

Sir GEORGE.

To disappoint all their hopes, to ruin all their fair prospects of happiness to throw your wife into an ill humour

Mrs. Boncour.

Monster!

Sir George.

To make your son here distracted?

Young Boncour.

Unnatural father!

Sir George.

To break your daughter's heart!

Miss Boncour.

Cruel! barbarous!

Boncour.

Now, madam, wife, children, marry, do as you will I oppose you no longer a leaf may as well swim against a cataract

Mrs. Boncour.

But why keep it a secret from me? why must not I be trusted with a secret?

Young Boncour.

And may I depend on my father's permission to be happy.

Boncour.

Even as you please, Sir O aye madam, and you too, I will prevent you the trouble of speaking.

Young Boncour.

Come, dear girl, let us haste to make our friends happy with the news.

(Exeunt Mrs. Boncour, young Boncour, Miss, &c.

Sir George.

Ha! ha! ha!

Boncour.

You use me kindly, brother.

Sir George.

How would you have me use you, brother? you must excuse me if I don't follow your example: you see an instance now, that by humouring these good people, I have gain'd their affections, I mean their thanks; affections, indeed, they have none, but for themselves; but had I taken your part, and spoken my real sentiments, I had pull'd an old house on my head; your wife would have abus'd me, your daughter have hated me, and your son have wish'd to send me out of the world.

Boncour.

But is this consistent with your behaviour this afternoon, when I receiv'd your letter?

Sir George.

Remember, brother, we were alone then; and at the worst I should only have oppos'd my judgment to your's; here I must have encounter'd a majority a measure seldom attended with success; well, but for your comfort, I have contriv'd a scheme to disappoint them all effectually.

Boncour.

Brother, I thank you; but will it be a good−natur'd thing to disappoint them. poor things?

Sir George.

Good−nature! damn the word; I hate it: they say it is a word so peculiar to our language, that it can't be translated into any other Good−nature!

(Exeunt.

End of the Second ACT.

ACT IV.

Scene I.

Valence's House.

Enter Valence and Young Kennel.

VALENCE.

Consider, young gentleman, the consequence of disobedience to a father; especally to so passionate a father as Sir Gregory

Young KENNEL.

Don't talk to me of fathers! Parblieu! it is fine topsy−turvy work, to travel first and go to school afterwards.

VALENCE.

Upon my word it would do some of our young travellers no harm.

Young KENNEL.

That I, who am to inherit a fortune of five thousand pounds a year, may not marry whom I please, but must have cramm'd down my throat some bread pudding of a citizen's daughter, or scrag end of a woman of quality!

VALENCE.

You don't know whom Sir Gregory may provide for you.

Young KENNEL.

But I know whom he will not; besides, I shall provide for myself

VALENCE.

Consider first the sin of disobedience; you know it is in his power to disinherit you.

Young KENNEL.

No, indeed, don't I, nor he neither, that's better: plague! if he could do that, I believe I should be a little civiller to him no, no, that's out of his power, I assure you; my tutor let me into that secret a great while ago.

Enter Miss VALENCE.

VALENCE.

Oh, here comes my daughter according to my orders; now if he had not unluckily seen this wench at the play

(Aside.

Miss VALENCE.

Did you send for me, Sir?

VALENCE.

I send for you! no; but come hither.

Young KENNEL.

Ha! parblieu! 'tis she 'tis the very same.

Miss VALENCE.

What coxcomb is this?

(Aside.

Young KENNEL.

This is the most lucky adventure that hath happened in all my travels.

VALENCE.

You stare at my daughter as if you had seen her before.

Young KENNEL.

As certain as I have seen the king of France; but, Sir, is this lady your daughter?

VALENCE.

She is, Sir; I have only one other child.

Young KENNEL.

Then I believe, Sir, you are father to an angel; you know, Sir, I told you I saw a lady at the play, and for whom I would be disobedient to all the fathers in the universe.

VALENCE.

I protest, Sir, you surprise me.

Miss VALENCE.

Sir, may I go?

VALENCE.

Aye, Aye, child; go go.

(Exit. Miss Val.

Young KENNEL.

Sir madam, can you be so barbarous?

VALENCE.

Sir Gregory will be back in a minute I would not have him know any thing of this for the world, he would run me through the body, tho' I am innocent.

Young KENNEL.

Never fear him, I will defend you. Let me see her once more.

VALENCE.

You shall see her again; but have patience, if you will get your father away, and return back by yourself, you shall see her once to take your leave of her, for you must not disobey your father; but are you certain he can't disinherit you? that is, that he is only tenant for life?

Young KENNEL.

I don't know whether he is tenant for life or for death; but I know that my tutor, and several lawyers too, have told me he could not keep me out of one acre.

VALENCE.

But you are sure you had it from good lawyers?

Young KENNEL.

Aye, as any in the kingdom.

VALENCE.

Well, I am glad of it; 'tis a terrible thing for a man to disinherit his children: don't be undutiful unless you can't help it, and if you can't help it, why it is not your fault; but hush, here's Sir Gregory.

Enter Sir GREGORY.

Sir GREGORY.

Well, have you brought him to it, will he be a good boy, and marry a woman of quality, or no?

VALENCE.

I have said all that I can say, Sir Gregory, and upon my word he is rather too hard for me; I would have you consider a little, Sir, it is only whether he shall chuse a wife for himself or not: consider, Sir Gregory, he is to live with her, not you.

Young KENNEL.

Aye, I am to live with her, not you

Sir GREGORY.

That's not true, Mr. Valence; I intend both he and she shall live with me; they shall down to Dirty Park next week, and there they shall remain.

Young KENNEL.

I'll be curs'd tho' if we do.

VALENCE.

That very argument makes against you; for if he should have fix'd on a private gentlewoman, and that you don't know but he hath, she may go down to Dirty Park; but a woman of quality why, Sir Gregory, she'd fetch Dirty Park up hither, and convert a thousand of your acres into half a rood in Grosvenor square.

Young KENNEL.

Aye, into half a rood in Grosvenor−square.

Sir GREGORY.

Would she? let me see her there once, I'll answer for her; why Mr. Valence, I'll tell you what I did myself. I married this boy's mother in this town, she was a woman of fashion, a well bred woman; tho' I had but a small fortune with her, but twenty thousand pounds I married her for love; well, the next morning down trundled her and I to Dirty Park, and when I had her there, ecod, I kept her there; and whenever she ask'd to go to London, my answer was, that as I hated the town myself, she had better stay till she had a daughter old enough to be her companion.

VALENCE.

But she was not a woman of quality, Sir Gregory.

Sir GREGORY.

No, not quite your tip−top of all, not one of your dutchesses, nor your countesses, but her father was a squire, and that's quality enough.

VALENCE.

Now you talk like a reasonable man.

Young KENNEL.

Aye, faith, that's something like a christian.

Sir GREGORY.

Why, you rogue, do you make a heathen of me? why, did I ever talk otherwise?

VALENCE.

Nay, do not be captious, Sir Gregory.

Sir GREGORY.

Captious! ha! ha! ha! why, do you think I am angry with the boy for his wit? no, no, le him be as sharp as he will, I always encourage his wit, that is the chief thing he learnt in his travels.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Sir George Boncour, Sir

Sir GREGORY.

But, come Mr. Valence, let's go and crack one bottle together.

VALENCE.

Shew him up. *(Exit Servant)* Excuse me, Sir Gregory, I have business.

Sir GREGORY.

Well, come Greg, you shan't flinch ah, Mr. Valence, I assure you the rogue is as true an Englishman at his glass as ever.

(Exit.

Young KENNEL.

I shall give him the slip, and be back again as soon as I can.

Sir GREGORY (within.

Why Greg Greg!

Young KENNEL.

Coming! Pardie! he hollows at me as if I was a whipper−in.

(Exit.

VALENCE.

This was beyond my hope, beyond my expectation; I despair not of Sir Gregory's consent but if not, as long as he can't cut off the entail

Enter Sir GEORGE BONCOUR.

Sir GEORGE.

Your servant, Mr. Valence.

VALENCE.

Most noble Sir George, I have not had the honour of seeing you a great while. I suppose he is come to make up the match, but 'tis too late.

(Aside.

Sir George.

I am sorry, Sir, for the occasion of waiting on you now, and so will you too; I know you will;
tho' perhaps, it will give you an opportunity of exerting your friendship; that may be some alleviation; in short, my brother is undone.

Valence.

How!

Sir George.

Unless one can raise ten thousand pounds within an hour, an execution will be in his house.

Valence.

An execution in his house for ten thousand pounds! what! a man of his estate?

Sir George.

Estate! what estate could stand out against the prodigality of his children? besides, between you and me, with all his prudence, he has been dabling in the funds, that bottomless pit, that swallows up any fortune. Estate! ah, all mortgaged, all eat out; it matters not to tell it, for within these two days the whole town must know he is not worth a groat.

Valence.

I am very sorry for it, upon my word; I am shock'd to the last degree, poor gentleman! my neighbour, my acquaintance, my friend!

Sir George.

Do not let it move you too much.

Valence.

Why do you ask impossibilities? do you think me more than man, or that my heart is stone? is flint? oh, my good Sir George, you know not how tenderly I feel the misfortunes of others of my friends especially, and of him my best of friends; I am too tender hearted for a man.

Sir George.

I know your goodness, your excessive goodness, and therefore contrary to the express charge, that of all men, you should know nothing of the matter.

Valence.

I am obliged to him I know the reason of that, but I find you don't.

(Aside.

Sir George.

I say contrary to his express injunction; I acquaint you with his misfortunes; since I know you are both able and willing to save him from disgrace; a mere trifle will do it, tho' nothing but money will do.

Valence.

Money! why does not he sell? why does he not mortgage? there is an estate of his contiguous to mine, I have a value for it, as it is his; and rather than it shall go to a stranger, I will borrow the money to purchase it men in distress always sell penny worths.

(Aside.

Sir George.

Damn'd rascal! *(Aside.)* well, I'll tell him what you say.

Valence.

Pray do. Your humble servant, and pray if that estate be sold let me have the refusal of it. *(Exit Sir Geo.)* Mercy on me! where can one find an honest man? that ever he should lay such a plot of intermarriage between our families, when he knew himself undone! how vary ought a man to be in each moment of his life, when every fool is a politician, and capable of laying schemes to attack him.

Enter Young Valence.

O, Sir, I have news which I am sure will please you! Mr. Boncour hath consented to your terms, so there is now no impediment to the union of our families.

VALENCE.

Indeed, there is an impediment which will be never got over; in short, I have news for you, which I am afraid will not please you. Mr. Boncour is undone.

Young VALENCE.

Undone, Sir!

VALENCE.

Not worth a groat.

Young VALENCE.

How! is it possible?

VALENCE.

Indeed, Sir, I don't know by what means men ruin themselves; we see mens fortunes ruin'd, and others made every day, no one knows how; it is sufficient, I am certain that it is so; and I expect you will have no more thought of his daughter.

Young VALENCE.

Truly, Sir, I am not very ambitious of marrying a beggar.

VALENCE.

You have none of my blood in you if you are; and, take my word for it, there are in marriage many comfortable hours when a man wants not the assistance of beggary to make him hang himself.

Young VALENCE.

Sir, it was in obedience to your commands, that I thought of the match at all.

VALENCE.

And it is, Sir, in obedience to my commands, that I expect you to break it off.

Young VALENCE.

I hope you'll give me leave to do it with civility.

VALENCE.

O! with as much civility as you please, Sir, when you are oblig'd by prudence to do what the world call an ill thing, always do it with civility.

Young VALENCE.

Sir, I shall obey you in all things.

VALENCE.

Send your sister to me in my closet, I must give her a lesson of the same kind.

Young VALENCE.

She will, I am confident, receive it with the same regard.

(Exit Young Valence.

VALENCE.

I have no reason to doubt it; thanks to my severity, for by continually thwarting my childrens' desires, I made their inclinations so useless to them, that at length they seem'd to have none at all, but to be entirely guided by my will. Severity is, in short, the whole duty of a parent.

(Exit.

Scene II.

Boncour's House.

Enter Young Boncour, and Miss Boncour.

Miss BONCOUR.

La, brother, you are always teizing me with your odious questions: what condition is my heart in? what condition is your own in? we seem to be pretty much in the same circumstances.

Young Boncour.

I confess, and glory in it. I wonder why the devil women should have more reserve than men.

Miss Boncour.

O, don't be angry with us on that account; we have not a bit more than is useful to us; and really it seems well enough contriv'd to keep your whimsical affections alive, which seldom pursue us longer than you have difficulties thrown in your way.

Young Boncour.

As you have had no experience, sister, you must have heard this from others; and, believe me, child, they told thee those frightful stories, and made bugbears of men merely to deter thee from marrying, that's all: they only frighten thee, as they do children, with apparitions.

Miss Boncour.

It is preposterous tho' to frighten us, in order to make us desire to lie alone.

Young Boncour.

Well, you don't know but I am an exception to your first rule, if it be general. *(Miss Boncour sighs)* why that sigh?

Miss Boncour.

I wish there may be another.

Young Boncour.

I am convinc'd you will find another in my friend Valence.

Miss Boncour.

It is my interest to hope so, since you have contriv'd among you to marry me to him.

Young Boncour.

All compliance! you have no affection for him, then?

Miss Boncour.

Shall I tell you the truth, brother?

Young Boncour.

I would not put you to too violent pain, sister, but if without great danger of your life, it might come out

Miss Boncour.

Why, then I do love him, and shall love him to all eternity.

Enter Servant.

Servant.

Madam, Mr. Valence to wait on you.

Miss Boncour.

Shew him into the parlour, I'll come to him. *(Exit Servant.)* Brother, you will keep my secret; at least, don't tell him 'till a day or two after I am married, and perhaps I may be before hand with you.

(Exit Miss Boncour.

Young Boncour.

Get you gone for a good natur'd girl: he is a rascal who would not make you happy, and be so himself with you.

(Re−enter Servant with a Letter.)

SERVANT.

Mr. Valence's man, Sir, delivered me this.

(Exit Servant.

Young Boncour.

Ha! I know the dear hand. *(Reads.)* Sir, I am sorry to inform you, that I have this moment
orders from my father to Ha! confusion! to see you no more: you will best know on this occasion how to act, for the sake of your unhappy Sophia Valence! my blood runs cold; I'll fly to her and know the reason of this change of my fortune poor girl, she wants a comforter as much as myself.

(Exit.

Scene III.

Another Apartment in Boncour's House.

Enter Young Valence and Miss Boncour.

Young Valence.

How sudden are the changes in this world, how vain our pursuits! an hour ago I was the happiest of mankind, and am now the most miserable.

Miss Boncour.

This is nothing but some scruple started between the old gentleman, which will be settled again: this be assur'd of, while your happiness is in my power, you shall never be miserable.

Young Valence.

Yet consider, madam, consider my condition; I, who, if I was possest of all my father's fortune, should be an unworthy offering to your beauty: with what assurance can I throw a disinherited son at your feet?

Miss Boncour.

Fathers often threaten what they never perform: but let your's be ever so obstinate, I know my father's good nature to be such, that he will settle a fortune on us that will enable us to live at our ease, if not in splendour.

Young Valence.

O! my dearest love, I fear there are no hope; from that quarter; for the reason of my father's breaking off the match, was an account he just receiv'd from undoubted authority, that your father is irretrievably ruin'd, and is not now worth a shilling in the world.

Miss Boncour.

Good heavens! what do I hear?

Young Valence.

'Tis but too true; and 'tis with the utmost reluctance I come the fatal messenger of such unwelcome tidings! oh that I were now but master of the fortune I am entitled to, that I might prove the sincerity of my passion; that I might shew my sole object was the possession of your lovely self, without any sordid views of fortune.

Miss Boncour.

Then all the flattering prospect of happiness I had before me is vanish'd in an instant.

Young Valence.

Why so, my angel, if the change of fortune makes no change in our love, we may still be happy.

Miss Boncour.

Happy! what by indulging a hopeless passion!

Young Valence.

Why hopeless? it is in our power instantly to realize its joys curse on all those who conspir'd to fetter love with any chains to make it subservient to the gain of lawyers and priests; cannot we trust to the ties of nature and our own affections? is not this dear hand security enough for your heart, without a more formal union? O, melting softness. Ha! by my hopes she dissolves I'll carry her now *(Aside.)* O my paradise, this hour, this minute, this instant.

Miss Boncour.

What do you mean?

Young Valence.

Need I tell you my meaning? or can words do it? O, no; my soul, my angel.

Miss Boncour.

Sure I am in a dream! pray who are you, Sir?

Young Valence.

You are in a dream, indeed; do not you know your Valence?

Miss Boncour.

My Valence! no, he never would use me thus.

Young Valence.

Does the excess of my passion offend you, which, inflamed by disappointment, will admit of no delay? I here plight my solemn vow, and call heaven to witness that you are my wife, and at my father's death

Miss Boncour.

Be gone, villain, and never see me more.

(Exit.

Young VALENCE.

This I might expect on the first proposal; but her distress and my perseverance must in time prevail.

(Exit.

Scene IV.

Another Apartment in Boncour's House.

Enter BONCOUR and Sir GEORGE.

Sir George.

Your ruin will go round the town before night; by six all the good women will order their horses to blame your conduct, and pity your family in every assembly and private company they meet with.

Boncour.

So, you think I shall have no more difficulty to prevent the match.

Sir George.

I do, indeed, and hope you will reap more advantage than that from it.

Boncour.

What, pray?

Sir George.

Be cur'd of your distemper your good nature! have you not oblig'd almost every one of your acquaintance? Have you not lent money without security? Have you not always been inclin'd to speak well of mankind, and blam'd nothing but the most notorious villainy? Have not your doors been open as those of an hospital, to the sustenance of the poor? nay, have you not taken them from a prison, and brought them to your table? Are there not many rich men who owe the original of their wealth to your bounty? and yet, if after all that you have done, should you not be able to borrow five pounds in the town, would it not cure you?

Boncour.

Why should I be sorry that I have been good, because others are evil! if I have acted right, I have done well! tho' alone; if wrong, the sanction of all mankind would not justify my conduct.

Sir George.

I tell you, Sir, you have not acted right: you have acted very wrong in doing kindness to a parcel of rogues and rascals, who with the tenth part of your understanding have call'd you fool for serving them; have privately laugh'd at you in your prosperity, and will publickly despise you in your adversity a good natur'd man! O! 'tis a precious character.

Boncour.

Ha! ha! ha! brother, you yourself are a good natur'd man, and don't know it.

Sir George.

Why, truly, I have been guilty of some infirmities of that kind, for which I am heartily sorry, I have told a man he deserved to be hanged, when he ought to have been broke on the wheel; and sometimes I pay my tradesmens bills in half a year without deduction, when the rascals would gain three per cent, if I paid them in a twelvemonth: I have refus'd going to law with a man for a debt, only because I knew he could not pay the charges: I have shaken a rogue by the hand, only because it was the fashion; and have expressed abundance of sorrow for the misfortunes of my acquaintance, when they have not given me the least uneasiness; yes, I think, in the main, I am too good−natur'd, truly.

Boncour.

Well, Sir George, let the effects this scheme of your's produces upon my children, be the test of our principles.

Sir George.

Content.

Enter Young Boncour.

Young Boncour.

My father! oh, Sir, I have heard such news! heaven forbid the reshould be the least shadow or colour of truth in it.

Sir George.

Why, sure, Sir, it can't surprize you to hear your father is ruin'd, when you have been endeavouring by a long course of extravagance to bring it about!

Young Boncour.

Sir, I can ill bear jesting on this subject: if the indulgence of my father has allowed the inadvertency of my youth to bring this misfortune on him, the agonies of all my future days will not sufficiently punish me for it.

Boncour.

Do you hear that, brother?

Sir George.

I would not have you take it so much to heart neither, since your own ruin will not be absolutely included in your father's; you have a certain reversion of the estate, by the marriage settlement, upon which you may still raise money for your own subsistence; and I do not suppose you mad enough to give up your right to that, in order to enable your father to preserve himself, by cutting off the entail.

Young Boncour.

How! is it in my power to preserve him?

Sir George.

Yes, in that way you may; but in no other.

Young Boncour.

Send for a lawyer this moment: let him point out the method: if there were no other way my blood should sign the deed. O, my father, believe me, I am blest to give you this trifling instance of my duty, of my affection!

Boncour.

My child! O, brother, I can scarce support it.

Young Boncour.

I'll this instant to my lawyer; I am impatient till it be done; justice, gratitude, duty, to the best of fathers, will not let me rest till it is accomplish'd.

(Exit.

Boncour.

Well, Sir George, what think you now?

Sir George.

Think! why I think he has smelt out the trick, and has artfully contriv'd this cheap method of appearing meritorious in your eyes.

Boncour.

Oh, brother, that is too severe a censure; the feeling that he shewed, the warmth, the earnestness with which he expressed himself, could never be assumed by one not accustomed to dissemble.

Sir George.

Well, if that be the case, all I can say is, that you have damn'd good luck in having a son whose natural disposition was so good, that all the pains you have taken, have not been able to spoil him entirely; but who have we here?

Enter Sir Gregory.

Sir Gregory entering.

Pshaw! at home, indeed! plague on thee, dost think I want to ask whether a man's at home when I see him at the window? neighbour Boncour, how fares it? what, Sir George!

Boncour.

Is it possible! Sir Gregory Kennel in town.

Sir Gregory.

That question hath been ask'd by every one I have seen since I have been here: why should it not be as possible for us country gentlemen to come
to town; as for you town gentlemen to come into the country, I don't know whether you are glad to see us here, but we should be glad to see some of you there a little oft'ner.

BONCOUR.

I hope you left all well there, Sir Gregory?

Sir GREGORY.

Yes; I left the tenants very well; and they give their humble service to you, and would be very glad of your company to spend a little of your money amongst them.

Boncour.

But how does your family, Sir Gregory? how does my godson do?

Sir GREGORY.

Why, the 'squire is very well; I was bringing him to see you; but I taught un to travel, I think, and so, ecod, at the corner of one of the streets, he travell'd off, and left me in the lurch: you have no need to be asham'd of your godson, I can tell you; he is a fine gentleman: I suppose you have heard that he has made the tour of Europe, as he calls it.

Boncour.

Not I, truly.

Sir GREGORY.

But, pray, Sir George, what do you think is my business in town?

Sir George.

Faith, I can't tell To sell oxen, I suppose.

Sir GREGORY.

No; not that entirely; though I have some cattle with me too Pray guess again.

Sir George.

To see my Lord Mayor's show, perhaps.

Sir GREGORY.

No, no; I don't love shows. Well then, since you can't tell, I'll tell you; to get a good wife for my son; for though the boy hath seen all Europe, till a man hath married his son, he han't discharged his duty then he hath done all in his power.

Sir George.

Aye, aye, his wife will do the rest.

Enter Miss Boncour.

Miss Boncour.

Sir, when you are at leisure, I shall be happy to speak with you.

Boncour.

Presently, my dear Sir Gregory Kennel a very old friend of mine my daughter, Sir Gregory.

Sir Gregory.

A brave, lass, faith! by your leave, madam, why that's well; you are in the right not to be shy to me, for I have had you in my arms before now.

Boncour.

And her brother too, Sir Gregory.

Sir Gregory.

Aye, so I have, and truly for the matter we were talking of, since I see what I see, I don't care for going any farther; what say you, neighbour Boncour, you know my estate, and I know your's, you have seen my son, and I see your daughter; what say you to a match between them.

Boncour.

My daughter, Sir Gregory, will be the properest person to ask.

Sir Gregory.

Not at all; what signifies asking a person a question, when you know before−hand what will be the answer? especially when you know that answer to be a false one no, no, the boy shall ask her, and then they will lie to one another; for if she swears she does not love him, he'll swear he'll love her for ever, and that is as good a one.

Boncour.

Sir Gregory, I am sensible of the honour you propose me, but shall neither force nor oppose her inclination.

Miss Bouncour.

I find he hath not heard our story

(Aside.

Sir Gregory.

Well, my little Gilliflower, since I am to ask thee, what would it say to a hearty, healthy, good−humour'd young dog, that would love thee till thy heart ached.

Miss Boncour.

Sir; I don't understand you.

Sir Gregory.

O lud, there is a

Miss Boncour.

Hold, Sir, no rudeness; when I am properly ask'd, I shall know how to answer.

(Exit.

Sir Gregory.

That is, when she is ask'd by the young fellow, that I suppose is proper ask'd.

Sir George.

'Tis an alliance on no account to be lost well, Sir Gregory, I hope my niece gave you a satisfactory answer.

Sir Gregory.

The same answer that a lawyer or physician could give who were attack'd without a fee.

Sir George.

What's that?

Sir Gregory.

That they were not properly ask'd; but here will be the proper person himself presently; he who knows where to find me.

Boncour.

In the mean time, Sir Gregory, what say you to a bottle of Burgundy?

Sir Gregory.

I shall like a bottle of any thing very well, for I have not drank a single drop this whole hour.

Boncour.

I am ready to wait on you.

Sir Gregory.

Wait on me! prithee get out and shew me the way; a plague of ceremony.

(Exeunt.

End of the Fourth ACT.

ACT V.

Scene I.

A Room in Valence's House.

Enter Young Boncour and Miss Valence.

Miss VALENCE.

And so you have promised to resign your right of inheritance in the estate to your father?

Young BONCOUR.

I have, madam.

Miss VALENCE.

Then you have done like a fool; and deserve to be pointed at as such.

Young BONCOUR.

How, madam! would you have me insensibly and quietly sit down, and see my father ruin'd?

Miss VALENCE.

Aye, fifty fathers, rather than part with my prospect of a fortune.

Young BONCOUR.

Does this agree with those professions of filial duty I have heard from Miss Valence?

Miss VALENCE.

Profess'd! ha! ha! ha! to my father! when I never dar'd to do otherwise. I may rather say, this foolish generosity, is little of a piece with your frequent professions of disobedience.

Young BONCOUR.

Well, no more of this, dear Sophia. Tell me when you will make me happy?

Miss VALENCE.

I don't know what you mean

Young BONCOUR.

How!

Miss VALENCE.

Sure, you can't imagine, when you parted with the right of your estate, but that you parted with your right to your mistress. Do you think I would do so imprudent a thing as marry a beggar?

Young BONCOUR.

Did you not tell me to day, nay, scarce an hour ago, that neither the misfortunes of my father, nor the commands of your own, should prevent our happiness?

Miss VALENCE.

Nor do they. 'Tis your own folly you are to thank; a folly, which had you lov'd me, you could not have been guilty of Besides, I did not know then, that I had a lover at my command.

[Aside.

Young BONCOUR.

Sure my eyes or my ears deceive me! these words cannot come from the generous Miss Valence.

Miss VALENCE.

Indeed I am as generous, as a prudent woman ought to be, or ever will be; I hope you do not expect me to have the romantic ideas of a girl of fifteen, to dream of woods and desarts; you would not have me live in a cottage on love.

Young BONCOUR.

I find I have been in an error, the grossest, wildest, and most monstrous of errors; I have thought a woman faithful, just and generous.

Miss VALENCE.

Why, truly, that is a mistake, something extraordinary in so great a man; but if you have any thing of importance, I beg you would communicate it, for my mantua−maker waits for me in the next room, and I expect a lady every moment, to carry me into the city, where I am to give her my judgment on a fan mount. So, Mr.
Boncour, you will excuse me at present, and do me the favour to give my compliments to your sister.

[Exit. Miss Valence.

Young Boncour. [Stands some time silent.]

Young BONCOUR.

I have been deceiv'd with a vengeance! Thou art indeed another creature, than the object of my affection was: where is she then? why no where. This is the real creature, and the object of my love was the phantom. Vanish then, my love, with that, for how can a building stand, when the foundation is gone?

(Exit Young Boncour.

Scene II.

Enter Young Valence and Miss Valence, (laughing.

Miss VALENCE.

I assure you, brother, I take it ill of you to overhear my privacies.

Young VALENCE.

Nay, never be asham'd of your merit. I shall esteem you always for your resolution, I own, I scarce believ'd any woman could so easily have resign'd her lover.

Miss VALENCE.

O, 'tis a terrible thing for a woman to resign her lover, when she is under fifteen, or above fifty; that is, for a girl to part with what she calls her first love, or an old woman with what she fears will be her last. But at one and twenty, when one has seen a little of the world, the changing of one lover for another, is as easy as changing one's cloaths.

Young VALENCE.

Well, since you are so frank with me, I'll be as communicative with you. My passion for Miss Boncour is a little more ungovernable, than your's for her brother, and since it is inconvenient to have her for a wife, I have determined to have her for a mistress.

Miss VALENCE.

And do you think you shall be able to accomplish your point?

Young BONCOUR.

Yes, and you will think so too, I believe, when you
know all In short, I attack'd her this very morning, depreciated marriage with violence, and press'd her with all the eagerness of a man, whose appetites were too impatient to endure the tedious ceremony of saying grace before he satisfies them.

Miss VALENCE.

And how did she receive you?

Young VALENCE.

Much better than I expected. However, at last she rallied her spirits, and with some passion commanded me to leave her; I was scarce at home before I received this letter.

Miss VALENCE.

Any letter after such a proposal was an acceptance of it.

(Reads.)

"As you cannot wonder at my being a little surprized at what past this morning between us, you will easily be able to account for my behaviour on that occasion. If you desire me to say I am sorry for so peremptorily putting an end to your visit, you may think I have said so. However, I desire to see you this evening punctually at eight, and that you would, if possible, avoid being seen by any of the family, but your's."

Young VALENCE.

What are you considering about?

Miss VALENCE.

Only whether it is her hand.

Young VALENCE.

That I am sure it is.

Miss VALENCE.

Then I am sure you have nothing to do, but to keep your appointment.

Enter Valence and Young Kennel.

VALENCE.

Since you are so very desirous, Sir, to see my daughter, I don't see how I can refuse the son of my good friend Sir Gregory; refusing indeed is not my talent I own I cannot guess what earnest business you can have with her.

Young KENNEL.

Upon my honour, Sir, it is not of any disservice to the young lady, nay, I believe I may trust you with it.

VALENCE.

No, no, no, I will be trusted with nothing. I see nothing, I hear nothing, I know nothing. But pray, young gentleman, are you sure now (I only ask for an impertinent curiosity) are you sure that Sir Gregory can't cut off the entail of his estate?

Young KENNEL.

Why, if you won't believe, you may ask the lawyers that my tutor consulted about it.

VALENCE.

Nay, nay, it is nothing to me, it is no business of mine O, here is my daughter. Child, Mr. Kennel, eldest son of Sir Gregory Kennel, desires me to introduce him to your acquaintance *(They salute.* Well, Mr. Kennel, you must pardon me, I must leave you on business of consequence: Son, you must come along with me, I ask pardon for only leaving my daughter to keep you company.

Young VALENCE.

Sir, I wait on you.

[Exit Valence and Young Valence.

Young KENNEL.

Pray, madam, was you ever at Paris?

Miss VALENCE.

No, Sir, I have never been out of my own country.

Young KENNEL.

That is a great misfortune to you, madam; for I would not give a fig for any thing that had not made the tour of Europe.

Miss VALENCE.

I thought, Sir, travelling had been a necessary qualification only to you gentlemen. I need not ask, Sir, if you have been at Paris.

Young KENNEL.

No, I hope not, madam; I hope no one will imagine these cloaths to be the handy work of any English taylor: Paris indeed! why, madam, I have made the tour of Europe.

Miss VALENCE.

Upon my word, this is extraordinary in one so young; I suppose, Sir, you went abroad very soon after you left school.

Young KENNEL.

School! ha! ha! ha! why, madam, I was never at school at all; I liv'd with the old witch my grandmother, till I was seventeen, and then my father stole me away from her, and sent me abroad, where I wish I had staid for ever for, ah! madam!

Miss VALENCE.

Now he begins (he is just what I would chuse for a husband)

(Aside.

Young KENNEL.

Can you not read in my eyes that I have lost my heart?

Miss VALENCE.

Avez vous donc laissez vôtre Coeur a Paris, monsieur?

Young KENNEL.

What the devil is that, madam?

Miss VALENCE.

Don't you understand French, Sir?

Young KENNEL.

Not a syllable, upon my soul, except an oath or two.

Miss VALENCE.

I suppose I say, Sir, you have left your heart at Paris.

Young KENNEL.

No, madam, you cannot suppose that: you saw, you must have seen at the play in what corner of the world my heart was.

Miss VALENCE.

I have no time to play the coquette.

[Aside.
Heigh−ho! *(Sighs.)*

Young KENNEL.

Ha! sure that sigh betokens pity.

Miss VALENCE.

How do you know you want it? Have you declared your passion?

Young KENNEL.

Not, unless my eyes have done it.

Miss VALENCE.

Perhaps she who hath your heart, may have returned you her own.

Young KENNEL.

That would make me happier than the King of France, the Doge of Venice, or any prince I have ever seen; but if she hath, sure you must know it, and it is in your power

Miss VALENCE.

I, Sir! O bless me! My power! What have you said?

Young KENNEL.

O, take pity of the most unhappy man that ever was at Versailles.

Miss VALENCE.

I am so frighten'd, so confounded Could I have imagin'd that I had made this impression on your heart.

Young KENNEL.

No, madam, no, no, not you, the other lady that was with you:

Miss VALENCE.

How, Sir!

Young KENNEL.

I am only soliciting you, to let me know where I may find that dear, adorable, divine creature, who was with you at the play the night before last; I lost you both in the croud by a cursed accident, and by the most fortunate one have met with you once again to direct me to my love.

Miss VALENCE.

Unheard of impudence! and am I to be a go−between?

Young KENNEL.

Can you refuse me?

Miss VALENCE.

Refuse you! Go, oaf! Go find your slut, your trollop, your beggar, for so she is.

Young KENNEL.

Were she the meanest beggar upon earth, could I find her, I should be happy.

Miss VALENCE.

I could tear my fan My hair My flesh I'll to my closet, and vent myself in private.

[Exit Miss Valence.

Young KENNEL.

Hey−day! what can have put the woman in such a passion? But tho' she won't tell me, now I have found her out, I shall surely find out her acquaintance; I will watch her closely, for I will discover my angel, tho' I make the tour of the whole world after her.

[Exit.

Scene III.

Boncour's Apartment.

Enter Boncour and Mrs. Boncour.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

But why kept a secret from me, why am I not worthy to know secrets?

BONCOUR.

I have given you what should be a satisfactory reason. I had promised not to tell it you.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

No, to be sure! A wife is not a proper person to be trusted with any thing.

BONCOUR.

You have no reason to arraign my want of confidence in you.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

Well then, do tell me the reason why you keep this a secret from me?

BONCOUR.

That would be to have no confidence in myself: come, my dear, leave this vain solicitation; you know I seldom resolve to contradict you in any thing: but when I do, I have never been wheedled, or cry'd, or bullied out of my resolution.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

What can I think of this?

BONCOUR.

Why you are to think that you owe my condescension, to my tenderness, and not my folly. Pray, my dear, lay aside this caprice of temper, which may work your own misery, but shall not mine; my gratitude to you will prevent my contributing to your uneasiness, but shall never make the quiet of my own life dependant on any other.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

It is a pretty compliment, truly, to assure me that your happiness does not depend on me.

BONCOUR.

I scorn to compliment you, nor did I ever speak to you but from my heart. I challenge you in any one instance of my whole course of behaviour, to blame my conduct, unless you join the world and condemn me for too much easiness of disposition; but I must leave you a little while.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

But I desire you will not leave me.

BONCOUR.

I am oblig'd, I am guilty of rudeness every moment I stay. I assure you it is regard to decency only, and not to pleasure, calls me from you.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

Why will you go then?

BONCOUR.

Because I will always do what I think right, without regard to my own pleasure, or that of others.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

You shall stay.

BONCOUR.

I will not.

Mrs. BONCOUR.

I will come and disturb your company.

BONCOUR.

You would make me miserable if you did, by forcing me to the last of evils.

Mrs. Boncour.

What is that, pray?

Boncour.

That of using violence to you.

(Exit Boncour.

Mrs. Boncour.

What does the man mean? he never utter'd any thing like this before! I must turn over a new leaf, and exert more spirit than I have lately done. I will go this instant and break up his company but suppose he should use violence; he seemed very resolute. Ha! I will not provoke him so far but the secret I will hear or he shall never sleep again, that I am resolv'd.

(Exit.

Scene IV.

Another Room in Boncour's House.

Sir George, Sir Gregory, and Mr. Boncour discovered drinking.

Sir GEORGE.

Sir Gregory, it is your glass.

Sir GREGORY.

Well, and it shall be my glass then here's success to the war; and I hope we shall shortly have French pointers in England as plenty as ours.

Sir GEORGE.

Well said, Sir Gregory, spoke like a true Englishman.

Sir GREGORY.

Aye, like an Englishman that will drink as long as he can stand, for the good of his country odso, here comes my son.

Enter Young Kennel.

BONCOUR.

Sir George, this is young Mr. Kennel.

[They salute.

Sir GEORGE.

Is this your son, Sir Gregory?

Sir GREGORY.

Aye, I think so.

Sir GEORGE.

A hopeful youth, truly.

[Aside.

Sir GREGORY.

So, rascal, how have you the assurance to look me in the face? how have you the impudence to come into my presence, sirrah, after running away from me.

Young KENNEL.

Nay, if you come to that, you run away from me.

Sir GREGORY.

That's a lie, and would be a pretty story if it was true, to be outwalked by your father.

Young KENNEL.

Hold there, not so fast, Sir, I don't allow you can outwalk me neither.

Sir GREGORY.

Don't you? why then I will see whether I can out drink you, I believe I can do that yet: Mr. Boncour, let us have a quart glass, for the rascal shall start fair, we won't give him a bottle scope,

Young KENNEL.

A quart glass! why, Sir, you don't intend to make me drunk?

Sir GREGORY.

Yes I do, Sir, but I hope a quart won't do it; you are not such a milk−sop as that. Harkee, sirrah, it is all over, I have done your business for you; this gentleman and I have agreed that he shall be your father−in−law, so nothing remains but for you to see the wench, marry, and to bed, and then down to Dirty Park.

Young KENNEL.

Two words to that bargain, Sir, for I am engaged.

BONCOUR.

Nay, Sir Gregory, then

Enter Young Boncour, and takes his father aside.

Young BONCOUR.

Sir, I have something to say to you in private from my sister.

Sir GREGORY.

You are engaged?

Young KENNEL.

Even so, Sir.

Sir GREGORY.

Why then, Sir, my estate is engag'd too; I will disinherit you, sirrah: I won't leave you money enough to pay the taylor for such another fool's cover as you have on now.

Young KENNEL.

Ha, ha, ha!

Sir GREGORY.

Do you laugh at me, you dog?

Young KENNEL.

Only at your disinheriting me; my tutor has let me into that secret.

Sir GREGORY.

O, ho, he has, I will thank him for that the first time I see him: and in the mean time, sirrah, do as I would have you, or

(Lifts up his stick.

Sir George.

Why, Sir Gregory, do you think this is the way to prevail with your son? it may be a knock down argument, I grant you, but I am much mistaken if it will ever prove a convincing one.

Young KENNEL.

If he could disinherit me, as I know he can't, I will never marry unless it be the woman I love. Nay, don't shake your stick about, I know a little of quarter−staff as well as you.

Sir GREGORY.

Sirrah I'll I'll

Sir GEORGE.

It is almost a pity to hinder these two loggerheads from falling foul of one another.

BONCOUR.

Gentlemen, I must beg to be excused one moment, I will return to you instantly Sir George, I wish you would bring the company after us, I have a particular reason for it.

(Exit Boncour and Young Boncour.

Sir GEORGE.

To Sir Gregory] Come, Sir Gregory, be pacified, you had best try by gentler methods to bring the young gentleman to reason.

Sir GREGORY.

I'll bring him by a good cudgel, that's my reason, oddsbodkins, I have sent him a travelling to a fine purpose, truly, to learn to despise his father!

Young KENNEL.

You have hit it at last, my good old gentleman.

Sir GEORGE.

Come, Sir Gregory, we will if you please, adjourn for a few minutes; you have not seen the house here are some pictures worth your seeing.

Sir GREGORY.

Why, I like to see pictures well enough, if they are handsome ones.

Young KENNEL.

They may do well enough for you, but I am convinced they must be sad trash to a man that has seen Italy.

(Exeunt.

Scene V.

Another Apartment.

Young VALENCE and Miss BONCOUR.

Young VALENCE.

I will out wit my father, I will plunder him of every thing he has, to keep you in affluence equal to your desire.

Miss BONCOUR.

And do you intend literally to make me your mistress?

Young VALENCE.

I intend to make you happy, and myself with you, be assured, if love, if wealth, can make you happy, thou shalt be so.

Miss BONCOUR.

No, there is something in that word mistress, which I don't like.

Young VALENCE.

A groundless prejudice cannot we join ourselves, without the leave or assistance of a priest? are we more capable of transferring raptures to each other's bosoms by a few cant words which he pronounces? Where is the difference then of our being one another's, with marriage or without it?

Miss BONCOUR.

Yes, as to me, it differs a little.

Young VALENCE.

How, my dearest creature?

Miss BONCOUR.

I shall be infamous this way, that's all.

Young VALENCE.

A false opinion of the world, unworthy your regard, our happiness is precarious, indeed, if it is to be blown up and down by the inconstant changeable breath of mankind.

Miss BONCOUR.

It seems strange to me, however, that a man would make the creature he loves infamous. Could I ever have thought I should have brought infamy on myself by that tender passion for you, which I now frankly own? can you endeavour to make use of the sincerest, honestest, and tenderest affection, to the ruin of her who bears it to you? I need not tell you how willingly I would have sacrificed my all, how eagerly I would have done, or suffer'd any thing for you; and would you sacrifice my eternal guilt, my spotless fame, my unguarded innocence, to the satisfaction of an appetite which every common prostitute may serve?

Young VALENCE.

Every moment I see you, every word you utter, adds new fuel to my flame.

Miss BONCOUR.

Think of the injury you do me, and the least drop of humanity will cool the hottest passion.

Young VALENCE.

Think of the bliss I am to enjoy.

Miss BONCOUR.

And would you enjoy it to my ruin? O consider those tedious miserable hours which I must suffer for the momentary bliss you will possess! behold me abandoned by my father, deserted by my relations, denied by my acquaintance, shun'd, slighted, scorn'd by all the world! see me in the horrors of this state, and think 'twas you who brought me to it; 'twas you who plunged me into this scene of misery that creature who would not, to have gain'd the treasures of the world, have done an act to destroy your quiet; consider this and answer me, Could you enjoy any happiness at the price of my eternal ruin?

Young VALENCE.

O, can you ask it? let us not think beyond the present moment.

Miss BONCOUR.

Hold thou lowest, meanest, and most abject villain, think not this trial was made to recover your love: O, no! this morning I saw, I despised the baseness of your heart, and bore your hated presence those few moments but to expose you. Open the door.

Young VALENCE.

Ha! damnation!

Enter Boncour, Valence, and the rest.

VALENCE.

O, monstrous! Nothing but my own ears could have made me give credit to it: you will outwit your father, Sir; your father will outwit you of every farthing, I can tell you; I'll disinherit you this afternoon, and turn you out like a vagabond as you are.

Young VALENCE.

Death and despair! I'am ruin'd for ever.

(Exit Young Valence.

VALENCE.

Not one penny, nor one single farthing shall he ever have of mine.

BONCOUR.

My daughter, my dear child! as much now the object of my admiration, as this morning of my love.

Miss BONCOUR.

Thou best of men, it shall be the business of my future days, to be your comfort only.

Enter Sir George, Sir Gregory, and Young Kennel.

Sir GREGORY.

You are a civil man, indeed, neighbour, to have one in your own house What, do you grudge your wine?

BONCOUR.

You'll pardon me, Sir Gregory, I had a little business; besides, I am not able to drink, and my brother there is your match.

Sir GREGORY.

As to the business, that's a lie, I believe; and if you can't drink, what a plague are you good for: but come, is this my god−daughter? Here, sirrah, where are you; this is the lady you are to have: come, let one see you fall to making love: let us see a little of the fruits of your travels.

Young KENNEL.

Sir, I am so surpriz'd! nor know I whether to thank you or fortune.

Sir GREGORY.

I know you had rather thank any body than your father, you rascal; but this is the lady whom I found out for you, you dog.

Young KENNEL.

And this is the lady for whom alone I refus'd to be obedient, not knowing who your choice was.

VALENCE.

Hah! what's that, what's that?

Miss BONCOUR.

With your leave, I would be excus'd at present, Sir.

BONCOUR.

No, no, my dear, pray stay, do not disoblige Sir Gregory; you may trust me, that I shall not force your inclinations.

Sir GREGORY.

Come, begin, sirrah, begin.

Enter Young Boncour.

Young BONCOUR.

Sir, Mr. Recorder, your lawyer, is in the next room, and waits to execute the deed.

BONCOUR.

My heart, my eyes overflow with tenderness, for so much goodness; sure 'tis a sensation almost worthy to be bought with ruin: but, oh! what happiness must be mine, who, while I hear these instances of my children's goodness, can assure them my fortune wants not so dear a reputation. The story was your uncle's invention; the reason for it I will tell you anon: no, my son, tho' perhaps I may not much increase, I shall be at least a faithful steward of my wife's fortune to her children.

VALENCE.

How, Mr. Boncour! is this possible?

BONCOUR.

It is true, indeed, neighbour.

VALENCE.

Indeed, neighbour, I am very glad of it; and what was this only a jest of Sir George's!

BONCOUR.

Even so.

VALENCE.

I am extremely happy in hearing it, and will, if you please, make this a memorable æra in the happiness of our children. I speak not of my son, I will abandon him, and give all I am worth to my daughter, and give that daughter to your son.

Young BONCOUR.

You will pardon me, Mr. Valence; but, had I been reduc'd to the lowest degree of distress, I would not have accepted of your daughter with any fortune she could have brought.

VALENCE.

How, Sir!

Young BONCOUR.

She will, if she relate to you faithfully her behaviour to me this day, lessen your surprise at what I say.

VALENCE.

I will go home, turn my daughter out of doors, disinherit my son, give my estate to build an hospital, and then hang myself up at the next charitable tree I can find.

Sir GEORGE.

Mr. Valence, Mr. Valence! I have spoke to my brother about that estate that lies so contiguous to your's, and when it is to be sold, you shall certainly have the refusal of it.

VALENCE.

What, am I mock'd, scoff'd, ah! zounds! I shall run mad.

(Exit Valence.

Young KENNEL.

Madam, I have seen a great deal of the world; but all the women I have seen, are no more comparable to you, than the smallest chapel in London is to the church of Notre Dame.

Miss BONCOUR.

Ha! ha! ha!

Sir GREGORY. (To Boncour.)

Why should there go so many words to a bargain: let us have the wedding directly.

Sir GEORGE.

Wedding, directly! what, do you think you are coupling some of your animals in the country? Do you think that a union of bodies is all that is requisite in a state, wherein there can be no happiness without a union of minds too? Go, and redeem past time: your son is not yet too old to learn: employ some able man to cultivate the share of understanding that nature gave him; to weed out all the follies and fopperies that he has pick'd up in the tour of Europe, as he calls it: then, when he appears to be a rational creature, and not till then, let him pay his addresses to my niece.

Young KENNEL.

So, then, I find I am not a rational creature! and faith, I begin to think so myself. And whose fault was that, father, but your's, that did not give me a rational education.

Sir GREGORY.

Why, you dog, I gave you the same education I had myself: would you have had a better education than your father, sirrah? But did not I send you, besides, to travel, to finish your education? and when an education is

finish'd, is not that enough? what signifies what the beginning was? But never fear them, Greg; with such an education as I had, I got twenty thousand pounds with my wife; and you who have travelled may, I think, expect more. Never fear 'em, boy, the acres, the acres will do the business.

Sir GEORGE.

There you may find yourself mistaken; for I have some dirty acres to add to my niece's fortune that may chance to weigh against your scale. Her behaviour this day has pleas'd me; and I never will consent to see her wedded to any one, who has not understanding enough to know her value.

Young KENNEL.

Oh! heavens! I'll do any thing to mend my understanding rather than lose the only woman I can love; and tho' I have hated books as I do the devil, if that be the only way to improve it, I'll pore my eyes out rather than lose her.

BONCOUR.

Why, this must be a work of time; and whenever you render yourself worthy of her, you may have a chance to succeed.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Sir, my lady has sent me to acquaint your honour, that supper is on table.

BONCOUR.

We will attend her.

(Exit Servant.

Sir GEORGE.

Well, brother, I think you begin to find already the good effects of my advice to you: your wife, you see, civilly sends in, instead of rushing herself into company with her scream of, "why must not I be let into the secret?"

BONCOUR.

Sir George, I thank you; and am now convinc'd, that a little exertion of a proper authority on my part, will soon make my wife act like a rational woman.

Sir GEORGE.

Well, George, your behaviour this day has, I confess, wiped away some part of the very bad opinion I had of you; and if you will cast off your follies, and turn away your wench, I have a wife in view for you, the same that your father intended to propose, who will make you amends for the one you have lost: and in that case, to make you more worthy of her, I don't care if I settle the best part of my estate on you.

Young BONCOUR.

Sir, I know that professions, on such occasions, often pass only for words of course; but you will see, by a total reformation of my past conduct, that the whole study of my life hereafter shall be to please so generous an uncle, and so good a father.

Sir GEORGE.

What a variety of strange events has this day produced! I can't help thinking, that they might furnish out good subject for a comedy.

BONCOUR.

Only a catastrophe would be wanting; because you know it is a constant rule, that comedies should end in a marriage.

Sir GEORGE.

That's true; but if the reformer, who is to represent your character, should only step forward at the end, and make a smooth speech or so, an English audience is generally so good natur'd, that they would pass over that, and all the other faults that might be in the piece, for the sake of the Good−Natur'd Man.