

Samuel Foote (1720-1777). The Nabob; a comedy, in three acts. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in the Haymarket. London: Printed by T. Sherlock, For T. Cadell [etc.], 1778.

Preliminaries omitted. [Text modified from Literature Online]
[parenthetical page references are inserted at the *start* of each new page]

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PROLOGUE, Spoken by Mr. FOOTE,
At the Theatre-Royal in Dublin, On the 19th of November, 1773.

Upwards of twenty years are fled and wasted
Since in this spot your favour first I tasted.
Urg'd by your smiles thro' various realms to roam,
The Muse now brings her motley cargo home;
For frugal Nature, with an equal hand,
Bestows peculiar gifts to every land.
To France she gave her rapid repartee,
Bows, and bons mots, fibs, fashions, flattery,
Shrugs, grins, grimace, and sportive gaiety:
Arm'd with the whole artillery of love,
Latium's soft sons possess the powers to move:
Humour, the foremost of the festive crew,
Source of the comic scene, she gave to you;
Humour, with arched brow, and leering eye,
Shrewd, solemn, sneering, subtle, slow and sly;
Serious herself, yet laughter still provoking,
By teasing, tickling, jeering, gibing, joking:
Impartial gift, that owns nor rank nor birth!
'Tis theirs who rule the realm, or till the earth;
Theirs who in senates wage the wordy war,
And theirs whose humble lot conducts the car:
If aught deriv'd from her adorns my strain,
You gave, at least discover'd first, the vein.
Should wide experience, or maturing age,
Have brought or mirth or moral to the stage, [Page vi]
To you, the patrons of the wilder song,
The chaster notes in justice must belong:
But should infirmities with time conspire,
My force to weaken or abate my fire,
Less entertainment may arise to you,
But to myself less danger will ensue.
If age contracts my muscles, shrills my tone,
No man will claim those foibles as his own;
Nor, if I halt or hobble thro' the scene,
Malice point out what citizen I mean:
No foe I fear more than a legal fury,
Unless I gain this circle for my jury.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

<i>Sir Matthew Mite,</i>	Mr. Foote.
<i>Sir John Oldham,</i>	Mr. Gentleman.
<i>Mr. Thomas Oldham,</i>	Mr. Aickin.
<i>Young Oldham,</i>	Mr. Du-Bellamy.
<i>Mr. Mayor,</i>	Mr. Parsons.
<i>Touchit,</i>	Mr. Baddeley.
<i>First Antiquarian,</i>	Mr. Loyd.
<i>Second Antiquarian,</i>	Mr. Hamilton.
<i>Secretary,</i>	Mr. Davis.
<i>Rapine,</i>	Mr. Lings.
<i>Nathan,</i>	Mr. Castle.
<i>Moses,</i>	Mr. Jacobs.
<i>Janus,</i>	Mr. Weston.
<i>Putty,</i>	Mr. Weston.
<i>Conserve,</i>	Mr. Fearon.
<i>Waiter,</i>	Mr. Ward.
<i>Lady Oldham,</i>	Mrs. Egerton.
<i>Sophy,</i>	Miss Ambrose.
<i>Mrs. Match'em,</i>	Mrs. Gardner.
<i>Crocus,</i>	Miss Craven.
<i>Beadle, Servants, &c.</i>	

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ACT I.**Scene 1***A Chamber.**Enter Lady Oldham and Sir John Oldham.**L Oldham* Not a syllable more will I hear!*Sir John* Nay, but, my dear—*L Oldham* I am amazed, Sir John, at your meanness! or that you could submit to give his paltry proposals so much as a reading!*Sir John* Nay, my dear, what would you have had me done?*L Oldham* Done? returned them with the contempt they deserved. But, come, unfold! I am calm: Reveal the pretty project your precious head has produced. [Page 2]*Sir John* Nay, my dear, as to that, my head produced—*L Oldham* Nay, I don't wonder that shame has tied up your tongue! But, come; I will spare the confusion, and tell you what you would say. Here, Lady Oldham, Sir Matthew Mite

- has just sent me a letter; modestly desiring that, in return for the ruin he has brought on me and my house, I would be so kind as to bestow upon him my darling daughter, the hopes of my—And is it possible you can be mean enough to think of such an alliance? Will you, Sir John, oblige me with an answer to a few short questions?
- Sir John* Without doubt.
- L Oldham* I suppose you consider yourself as sprung from a family at least as ancient as any in the country you live in?
- Sir John* That I fancy will not be denied.
- L Oldham* Nor was it, I fancy, dishonoured by an alliance with mine?
- Sir John* My Lady, the very reverse.
- L Oldham* You succeeded, Sir, to a patrimony, which though the liberal and hospitable spirit of your predecessors would not suffer to encrease, yet their prudence took care should never be diminished?
- Sir John* True.
- L Oldham* From the public and private virtues of [Page 3] your ancestors, the inhabitants of the neighbouring borough thought their best and dearest interests in no hands so secure as in theirs?
- Sir John* Right.
- L Oldham* Nor till lately were they so tainted by the fashion of the times, as to adopt the egregious absurdity, That to be faithfully served and protected above, it was necessary to be largely bribed and corrupted below?
- Sir John* Why, I can't say, except now and then a bit of venison, or an annual dinner, they have ever put me to any great—
- L Oldham* Indulge me yet a moment, Sir John! In this happy situation, did the last year cheerfully close; our condition, though not opulent, affluent, and you happy in the quiet possession of your family honours.
- Sir John* There is no gainsaying of that.
- L Oldham* Now, look at the dismal, shocking reverse!
- Sir John* There is but too much reason in what your ladyship says.
- L Oldham* And consider, at the same time, to whom you are obliged.
- Sir John* Why, what could we do? your ladyship knows there was nobody more against my giving up than yourself.
- L Oldham* Let me proceed. At this crisis, [Page 4] preceded by all the pomp of Asia, Sir Matthew Mite, from the Indies, came thundering amongst us; and, profusely scattering the spoils of ruined provinces, corrupted the virtue and alienated the affections of all the old friends to the family.
- Sir John* That is nothing but truth.
- L Oldham* Compelled by the same means to defend those that were employed in attacking your interest, you have been obliged deeply to encumber your fortune; his superior address has procured a return, and probably your petition will complete the ruin his opposition began.
- Sir John* Let us hope all for the best.
- L Oldham* And who can tell, but you may be soon forced to part with your patrimony, to the very

insolent worthless individual, who has been the author of your distress?

Sir John I would sooner perish, my Lady!

L Oldham Parallel instances may be produced; nor is it at all unlikely, but Sir Matthew, taking a liking to your family mansion, has pursued this very method to compel you to sell it.

Sir John It is, my dear, to avoid this necessity that I wish you to give his letter a reading.

L Oldham Is it possible, not to mention the meanness, that you can be weak enough to expect any real service from that infamous quarter? [Page 5]

Sir John Who can tell, my love, but a consciousness of the mischief he has done us, may have roused some feelings that—

L Oldham His feelings! will he listen to a private complaint, who has been deaf to the cries of a people? or drop a tear for particular distress, who owes his rise to the ruin of thousands?

Sir John Well, Lady Oldham, I find all that I say signifies nothing.—But here comes brother Thomas; two heads are better than one; let us take his opinion, my love.

L Oldham What need of any opinion? the case is too clear; nor indeed, if there had been a necessity for consulting another, should I have thought your brother the properest man to advise with on the occasion.

Sir John And why not? there is not a merchant whose judgment would be sooner taken.

L Oldham Perhaps not, on the value of merchandize, or the goodness of a Bill of Exchange: But there is a nicety, a delicacy, an elevation of sentiment, in this case, which people who have narrowed their notions with commerce, and considered during the course of their lives their interest alone, will scarce comprehend.

[Enter Mr. Thomas Oldham.]

Thomas So, sister! what! upon your old topic, I find? [Page 6]

L Oldham Sir!

Thomas Some pretty comparisons, I suppose, not much to the honour of trade.

L Oldham Nay, brother, you know I have always allowed merchants to be a useful body of men; and considered commerce, in this country, as a pretty resource enough for the younger shoots of a family.

Thomas Exceedingly condescending, indeed! And yet, sister, I could produce you some instances where the younger shoots have flourished and throve, when the reverend trunk has decayed.

L Oldham Perhaps, brother Thomas—

Thomas Nay, nay, don't let us revive our antient disputes!—You seem warm; no misunderstanding, I hope?

Sir John No, no; none, in the least: You know, my lady's temper's apt to be lively now and then.

Thomas Nay, sister—But, come! what has occasioned this mighty debate?

Sir John You know, brother, how affairs stand between Sir Matthew and us.

Thomas Well!

Sir John He has sent us here a kind of a compromise; I don't know well what to call it; a sort of a treaty. [Page 7]

Thomas That in your hand?

Sir John Yes; and I can't prevail on my lady to give it a reading.

Thomas And why not?

L Oldham To what end?

Thomas A very natural one; in order to know the contents.

L Oldham Of what importance can they be to us?

Thomas That the letter will tell you. But surely, Lady Oldham, you are rather too nice. Give it me!

Sir John Is it your ladyship's pleasure?

Thomas Psha! here's a rout, indeed!—One would be apt to suspect that the packet was pestilential, and came from the Archipelago, instead of the Indies. Now let us see what this formidable memorial contains!

[*opens the letter.*]

“To Sir John Oldham. Sir Matthew Mite having lately seen, at Lady Levant's rout, the eldest Miss Oldham, and being struck with her personal charms, proposes to her father the following treaty.”

L Oldham A very monarchical address!

Thomas “Imprimis; Upon a matrimonial union between the young lady and him, all hostilities and contention shall cease, and Sir John be suffered to take his seat in security.” [Page 8]

L Oldham That he will do, without an obligation to him.

Thomas Are you, sister, certain of that?

L Oldham You don't harbour the least doubt of our merits?

Thomas But do they always prevail?

L Oldham There is now, brother Thomas, no danger to dread; the restraint the popular part of government has in this instance laid on itself, at the same time that it does honour to them, distributes equal justice to all.

Thomas And are you aware what the expence will be to obtain it?—But, pray, let me proceed! —“Secondly, as Sir Matthew is bent upon a large territorial acquisition in England, and Sir John Oldham's finances are at present a little out of repair, Sir Matthew Mite will make up the money already advanced in another name, by way of future mortgage upon his estate, for the entire purchase, five lacks of roupees.”

L Oldham Now, Sir John! was I right in my guess?

Sir John Your ladyship is never out.—But, brother Thomas, these same lacks—to what may they amount?

Thomas Sixty thousand, at least.

Sir John No inconsiderable offer, my lady. [Page 9]

L Oldham Contemptible! But pray, Sir, proceed.

Thomas “Or if it should be more agreeable to the parties, Sir Matthew will settle upon Sir John and his Lady, for their joint lives, a jagghire.”

Sir John A jagghire?

Thomas The term is Indian, and means an annual income.

L Oldham What strange jargon he deals in!

Thomas His stile is a little Oriental, I must own; but most exceedingly clear.

L Oldham Yes, to Cossim Ali-Khan, or Mier Jaffeir. I hope you are near the conclusion.

Thomas But two articles more.

[reads]

“And that the principals may have no cares for the younger parts of their family, Sir Matthew will, at his own expence, transport the two young ladies, Miss Oldham's two sisters, to Madrass or Calcutta, and there procure them suitable husbands.”

L Oldham Madrass, or Calcutta!

Thomas Your patience, dear sister!—“And as for the three boys, they shall be either made supercargoes, ships' husbands, or go out cadets and writers in the Company's service.”

L Oldham Why, he treats my children like a parcel of convicts: Is this their method of supplying their settlements? [Page 10]

Thomas This, with now and then a little kidnapping, dear sister.---Well, madam, you have now the means of getting rid of all your offspring at once: Did not I tell you the paper was worth your perusal? You will reply to his wish; you can have no doubts, I suppose.

L Oldham Not the least, as I will shew you.

[Tears the letter.]

And, if Sir John has the least spirit or pride, he will treat the insolent principal as I do his proposals.

Thomas But that method, as things stand, may not be altogether so safe. I am sorry you were so hasty in destroying the letter: If I remember rightly, there is mention made of advancing money in another man's name.

L Oldham We have been compelled to borrow, I own; but I had no conception that he was the lender.

Thomas That's done by a common contrivance; not a country lawyer but knows the doctrine of transfer.—How much was the sum?

Sir John Ten thousand pounds.

Thomas And what, Sir John, were the terms?

Sir John As I could give no real security, my estate being settled till my son John comes of age, I found myself obliged to comply with all that was asked.

Thomas A judgment, no doubt. [Page 11]

Sir John They divided the sum, and I gave them a couple.

Thomas Which will affect not only your person, but personal property; so they are both in his power.

Sir John Too true, I am afraid!

Thomas And you may be sent to a gaol, and your family turned into the streets, whenever he pleases.

L Oldham How! Heaven forbid!

Thomas Not the least doubt can be made.—This is an artful project: No wonder that so much contrivance and cunning has been an overmatch for a plain English gentleman, or an innocent Indian. And what is now to be done? Does your daughter Sophy know of this letter?

L Oldham Sir John?

Sir John It reached my hands not ten minutes ago.

Thomas I had some reason to think, that, had you complied, you would not have found her very eager to second your wishes.

L Oldham I don't know that, brother: Young girls are easily caught with titles and splendor; magnificence has a kind of magick for them.

Thomas I have a better opinion of Sophy. You know, Lady Oldham, I have often hinted, that my boy was fond of his cousin; and possibly [Page 12] my niece not totally averse to his wish; but you have always stopp'd me short, under a notion that the children were too nearly allied.

L Oldham Why, brother, don't you think—

Thomas But that, sister, was not the right reason; you could have easily digested the cousins, but the compting-house stuck in his way: Your favourite maxim has been, that citizens are a distinct race, a sort of creatures that should mix with each other.

L Oldham Bless me, brother, you can't conceive that I—

Thomas Nay, no apology, good Lady Oldham! perhaps you have a higher alliance in view; and let us now consider what is to be done. You are totally averse to this treaty?

L Oldham Can that be a question?

Thomas Some little management is necessary, as to the mode of rejection: As matters now stand, it would not be prudent to exasperate Sir Matthew.

L Oldham Let Sir John discharge the debt due to him at once.

Thomas But where shall we get materials?

L Oldham Can that be a difficult task?

Thomas Exceedingly so, as I apprehend: But few can be found to advance so large a sum on such slender security; nor is it to be expected, [Page 13] indeed, unless from a friend to relieve, or a foe to ruin.

L Oldham Is it possible Sir Matthew can have acted from so infernal a motive, to have advanced the money with a view of distressing us deeper?

Thomas Sir Matthew is a profound politician, and will not stick at trifles to carry his point.

L Oldham With the wealth of the East, we have too imported the worst of its vices. What a horrid crew!

Thomas Hold, sister! don't gratify your resentment at the expence of your justice; a general conclusion from a single instance is but indifferent logick.

L Oldham Why, is not this Sir Matthew—

Thomas Perhaps as bad a subject as your passion can paint him: But there are men from the Indies, and many too, with whom I have the honour to live, who dispense nobly and with hospitality here, what they have acquired with honour and credit elsewhere; and, at the same time they have increased the dominions and wealth, have added virtues too to their country.

L Oldham Perhaps so: But what is to be done? Suppose I was to wait on Sir Matthew myself.

Thomas If your ladyship is secure of commanding your temper. [Page 14]

Sir John Mercy on us, brother Thomas, there's no such thing as trusting to that!

L Oldham You are always very obliging, Sir John! if the embassy was to be executed by you—

Thomas Come, come, to end the dispute, I will undertake the commission myself.

L Oldham You will take care, brother, to make no concessions that will derogate from—

Thomas Your dignity, in my hands, will have nothing to fear.—But should not I see my niece first? she ought to be consulted, I think.

Sir John By all means.

Thomas For, if she approves of the knight, I don't see any thing in the alliance so much to be dreaded.

L Oldham I will send Sophy to her uncle directly; but I desire the girl may be left to herself; no undue influence!

[*Exit.*

Thomas The caution was needless.

Sir John Why, really, now, brother, but that my lady's too warm, I don't see any thing so very unreasonable in this same paper here that lies scattered about. But, I forget, did he mention any thing of any fortune he was to have with the girl?

Thomas Pho! a paltry consideration, below his concern. [Page 15]

Sir John My lady herself must own there is something generous in that.

Thomas Will you stay and represent the case to Sophy yourself?

Sir John She is here!

[*Enter Sophy.*]

Your uncle, child, has something to say to you: You know he loves you, my dear, and will advise you for the best.

[*Exit.*

Thomas Come hither, Sophy, my love! don't be alarmed. I suppose my lady has opened to you, that Sir Matthew has sent a strange kind of a romantic letter.

Sophy But she did not seem, Sir, to suppose that it deserved much attention.

Thomas As matters now stand, perhaps more than she thinks. But come, my good girl, be explicit: Suppose the affairs of your family should demand a compliance with this whimsical letter, should you have any reluctance to the union proposed?

Sophy Me, Sir? I never saw the gentleman but once in my life.

Thomas And I don't think that would interest you much in his favour.

Sophy Sir! [Page 16]

Thomas No prepossession? no prior object that has attracted your notice?

Sophy I hope, Sir, my behaviour has not occasioned this question.

Thomas Oh, no, my dear; it naturally took its rise from the subject. Has your cousin lately been here?

Sophy Sir!

Thomas Tom Oldham, my son?

Sophy We generally see him, Sir, every day.

Thomas I am glad to hear that: I was afraid some improper attachment had drawn him from the city so often of late.

Sophy Improper! I dare say, Sir, you will have nothing of that kind to fear from my cousin.

Thomas I hope not: And yet I have had my suspicions, I own; but not unlikely you can remove 'em: Children rarely make confidants of their fathers.

Sophy Sir!

- Thomas* Similarity of sentiments, nearness of blood, and the same season of life, perhaps may have induced him to unbosom to you.
- Sophy* Do you suppose, Sir, that he would discover to me, what he chose to conceal from so affectionate a father?
- Thomas* Nay, prithee, Sophy, don't be grave! What, do you imagine I should think his preferring [Page 17] your ear to mine, for a melting passionate tale, any violent breach of his duty?
- Sophy* You are merry, Sir.
- Thomas* And who knows but you might repay the communication with a similar story? You blush, Sophy.
- Sophy* You are really pleased to be so very particular, that I scarce know what answer to make.
- Thomas* Come, my good niece, I will perplex you no longer: My son has concealed nothing from me; and did the completion of your wishes depend on my approbation alone, you would have but little to fear: But my lady's notions are so very peculiar, you know, and all her principles so determined and fixed—
- Sophy* The merits of my cousin, which she herself is not slow to acknowledge, and time, might, I should hope, soften my mother.
- Thomas* Why then, my dear niece, leave it to time, in most cases the ablest physician. But let your partiality for Tom be a secret!---I must now endeavour to learn when I can obtain an audience from Sir Matthew.
- Sophy* An audience from him?
- Thomas* Yes, child; these new gentlemen, who from the caprice of Fortune, and a strange [Page 18] chain of events, have acquired immoderate wealth, and rose to uncontrolled power abroad, find it difficult to descend from their dignity, and admit of any equal at home. Adieu, my dear niece! But keep up your spirits! I think I foresee an event that will produce some change in our favour.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene 2

Sir Matthew Mite's Hall.

Janus and Conserve discovered.

- Conserve* I own the place of a porter, if one can bear the confinement---And then, Sir Matthew has the character of—
- [*low tap.*]
- Use no ceremony, Mr. Janus; mind your door, I beseech you.
- Janus* No hurry! keep your seat, Mr. Conserve; it's only the tap of a tradesman: I make those people stay till they collect in a body, and so let in eight or ten at a time; it saves trouble.
- Conserve* And how do they brook it?
- Janus* Oh, wonderfully well, here with us. In my last place, indeed, I thought myself bound to be civil; for as all the poor devils could get was good words, it would have been hard to have been sparing of them.

Conserve Very considerate! [Page 19]

Janus But here we are rich; and as the fellows don't wait for their money, it is but fair they should wait for admittance.

Conserve Or they would be apt to forget their condition.

Janus True.

Conserve Upon the whole, then, you do not regret leaving my lord?

Janus No; Lord Levee's place had its sweets, I confess; perquisites pretty enough: But what could I do? they wanted to give me a rider.

Conserve A rider?

Janus Yes; to quarter Monsieur Frissart, my Lady's valet de chambre, upon me; so you know I could not but in honour resign.

Conserve No; there was no bearing to be rid by a Frenchman; there was no staying in after that.

Janus It would have been quoted as a precedent against the whole corps.

Conserve Yes. Pox on 'em! our masters are damned fond of encroachments. Is your present duty severe?

Janus I drudge pretty much at the door; but that, you know, is mere bodily labour: But then, my mind is at ease; not obliged to rack my brain for invention.

Conserve No? [Page 20]

Janus No; not near the lying here, as in my last place.

Conserve I suppose not, as your master is but newly in town; but you must expect that branch to encrease.

Janus When it does, I shall insist the door be done by a deputy.

[*Two raps.*]

Conserve Hark! to your post!

Janus No; sit still! that is some aukward body out of the city; one of our people from Leadenhall-Street; perhaps a director; I sha'n't stir for him.

Conserve Not for a director? I thought he was the commanding officer, the Great Captain's captain.

Janus No, no; quite the reverse; the tables are turned, Mr. Conserve: In acknowledgment for appointing us their servants abroad, we are so obliging as to make them directors at home.

[*A loud rapping.*]

Conserve That rap will rouse you, I think.

Janus Let me take a peep at the wicket. Oh, oh! is it you, with a pox to you? How the deuce came your long legs to find the way hither?—I shall be in no haste to open for you.

Conserve Who is it?

Janus That eternal teizer, Sir Timothy Tallboy. [Page 21] When once he gets footing, there is no such thing as keeping him out.

Conserve What, you know him then?

Janus Yes, rot him, I know him too well! he had like to have lost me the best place I ever had in my life.

Conserve How so?

Janus Lord Lofty had given orders on no account to admit him. The first time, he got by me

under a pretence of stroking Keeper the house-dog; the next, he nick'd me by desiring only just leave to scratch the poll of the parrot, Poll, Poll, Poll! I thought the devil was in him if he deceived me a third; but he did, notwithstanding.

Conserve Prithee, Janus, how?

Janus By begging to set his watch by Tompion's clock in the Hall; I smoaked his design, and laid hold of him here:

[*taking hold of his coat.*]

As sure as you are alive, he made but one leap from the stairs to the study, and left the skirt of his coat in my hand?

Conserve You got rid of him then?

Janus He made one attempt more; and, for fear he should slip by me, (for you know he is as thin as a slice of beef at Marybone-Gardens), I slapped the door in his face, and told him, the dog was mad, the parrot dead, and the clock [Page 22] stood; and, thank Heaven, I have never sat eyes on him since.

[*Knock louder.*]

Conserve But the door!

Janus Time enough.—You had no particular commands, master Conserve?

Conserve Only to let you know that Betsy Robins has a rout and supper on Sunday next.

Janus Constant still, Mr. Conserve, I see. I am afraid I can't come to cards; but shall be sure to attend the repast. A nick-nack, I suppose?

Conserve Yes, yes; we all contribute, as usual: The substantials from Alderman Sirloin's; Lord Frippery's cook finds fricasees and ragouts; Sir Robert Bumper's butler is to send in the wine; and I shall supply the desert.

Janus There are a brace of birds and a hare, that I cribbed this morning out of a basket of game.

Conserve They will be welcome.—

[*Knock louder.*]

But the folks grow impatient!

Janus They must stay till I come.—At the old place, I suppose?

Conserve No; I had like to have forgot! Betsy grew sick of St. Paul's, so I have taken her a house amongst the new buildings; both the air and the company is better.

Janus Right. [Page 23]

Conserve To say truth, the situation was disagreeable on many accounts. Do you know, though I took care few people should behave better at Christmas, that because he thought her a citizen, the housekeeper of Drury-Lane Theatre, when his master mounted, refused her a side-box?

Janus No wonder Miss Betsy was bent upon moving.—What is the name of her street?

Conserve Rebel-Row: It was built by a messenger who made his market in the year forty-five. But shall Miss Robins send you a card?

Janus No, no; I shall easily find out the place.

[*Knock.*]

Now let us see; who have we here? Gads my life, Mrs. Match'em! my master's amorous agent: It is as much as my place is worth to let her wait for a minute.

[*Opens the door. Exit Conserve*

[*Enter Mrs. Match'em, some Tradespeople, who bow low to Janus, and Thomas Oldham.*]

Match'em So, Sir! this is pretty treatment, for a woman like me to dangle at your gate, surrounded by a parcel of tradespeople!

Janus I beg pardon; but, madam—

Match'em Suppose any of my ladies had chanced to drive by: In a pretty situation they'd have seen me! I promise you I shall make my complaints to Sir Matthew. [Page 24]

Janus I was receiving some particular commands from my master.

Match'em I shall know that from him. Where is he? let him know I must see him directly; my hands are so full I have not a moment to spare.

Janus At that door the groom of the chamber will take you in charge; I am sure you'll be admitted as soon as announced.

Match'em There is as much difficulty to get a sight of this signior, as of a member when the parliament's dissolved!

[*Exit.*

Janus Soh! what, you have brought in your bills? damned punctual, no doubt! The steward's room is below.—And, do you hear? when you are paid, be sure to sneak away without seeing me.

All Trades We hope you have a better opinion—

Janus Well, well, march!

[*Exeunt Tradesmen.*]

So, friend; what is your business, pray?

Thomas I have a message to deliver to Sir Matthew.

Janus You have? and pray what is the purport?

Thomas That's for his ear alone.

Janus You will find yourself mistaken in that.

Thomas How? [Page 25]

Janus It must make its way to his, by passing thro' mine.

Thomas Is that the rule of the house?

Janus Ay; and the best way to avoid idle and impertinent prattlers.

Thomas And of that you are to judge?

Janus Or I should not be fit for my post. But, you are very importunate; who are you? I suppose a Jew broker, come to bring my master the price of the stocks?

Thomas No.

Janus Or some country cousin, perhaps?

Thomas Nor that neither.

Janus Or a voter from our borough below? we never admit them but against an election.

Thomas Still wide of the mark.—

[*Aside.*]

There is but one way of managing here; I must give the Cerberus a sop, I perceive.— Sir, I have really business with Sir Matthew, of the utmost importance; and if you can obtain me an interview, I shall think myself extremely obliged.

[*Gives money.*]

Janus As I see, Sir, by your manner, that it is a matter of moment, we will try what can be done; but you must wait for his levee; there is no seeing him yet.

Thomas No?

Janus He is too busy at present; the waiter [Page 26] at Almack's has just brought him home his macaroni dress for the hazard-table, and is instructing him to throw the dice with a grace.

Thomas Then where can I wait?

Janus If you will step into that room, I will take care to call you in time.
[Exit Mr. Oldham.]
—Looking at the money.] A good sensible fellow! At first sight, how easily one may be mistaken in men!

[Exit.]

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ACT II.**Scene 1***A Chamber.*

Sir Matthew Mite in his gaming dress, a Waiter attending.

Mite Main and chance?

Waiter Five to nine, please your honour.

Mite I am at all that is set. How must I proceed?

Waiter With a tap, as the chances are equal; then raise the box genteelly and gently, with the finger and thumb.

Mite Thus?

Waiter Exactly, your honour. Cinque and quater: You're out.

Mite What is next to be done?

Waiter Flirt the bones with an air of indifference, and pay the money that's set.

Mite Will that do?

Waiter With a little more experience, your honour.

Mite Then pass the box to my neighbour?

Waiter Yes; or you make a back hand, if you please. [Page 28]

Mite Cou'dn't you give me some general rules? for then, you know, I might practise in private.

Waiter By all means. Seven, Sir, is better nicked by a stamp.

Mite So?

Waiter Yes. When you want to throw six and four, or two cinques, you must take the long gallery, and whirl the dice to the end of the table.

Mite Thus?

Waiter Pretty well, please your honour. When your chance is low, as tray, ace, or two deuces, the best method is to dribble out the bones from the box.

Mite Will that do?

Waiter Your honour comes rapidly on.

Mite So that, perhaps, in a couple of months, I shall be able to tap, flirt, stamp, dribble, and whirl, with any man in the club?

Waiter As your honour has a genius, you will make a wonderful progress, no doubt: But these nice matters are not got in a moment; there must be parts, as well as practice, your honour.

Mite What! parts for the performance of this?

Waiter This? Why, there's Sir Christopher Clumsey, in the whole losing his fortune, (and [Page 29] I believe he was near a twelvemonth about it) never once threw, paid, or received, with one atom of grace.

Mite He must have been a dull devil, indeed.

Waiter A mere dunce! got no credit by losing his money; was ruined without the least reputation.

Mite Perhaps so. Well, but, Dick, as to the oaths and phrases that are most in use at the club?

Waiter I have brought them here in this paper: As soon as your honour has got them by heart, I will teach you when and in what manner to use them.

Mite [after looking at the paper.] How long do you apprehend before I may be fit to appear at the table?

Waiter In a month or six weeks. I would advise your honour to begin in the Newmarket week, when the few people left do little better than piddle.

Mite Right: So I shall gain confidence against the club's coming to town.

[Enter Servant.]

Servant Mrs. Crocus, from Brompton, your honour.

Mite Has she brought me a bouquet? [Page 30]

Servant Your honour?

Mite Any nosegays, you blockhead?

Servant She has a boy with a basket.

Mite Shew her in!

[Exit Servant.]

—Well, Dick, you will go down to my steward, and teach him the best method of making a rouleau; And, do you hear? let him give you one for your pains.

Waiter Your honour's obedient! You'd have me attend every morning?

Mite Without doubt: It would be madness to lose a minute, you know.

[Exit Waiter.]

[Enter Mrs. Crocus.]

Well, Mrs. Crocus; let us see what you have brought me. Your last bouquet was as big as a broom, with a tulip strutting up like a magistrate's mace; and, besides, made me look like a devil.

Crocus I hope your honour could find no fault with the flowers? It is true, the polyanthuses were a little pinched by the easterly winds; but for pip, colour, and eye, I defy the whole parish of Fulham to match 'em.

Mite Perhaps not; but it is not the flowers, but the mixture, I blame. Why, here now, Mrs. Crocus, one should think you were out of your senses, to cram in this clump of

- jonquils! [Page 31]
- Crocus* I thought your honour was fond of their smell.
- Mite* Damn their smell! it is their colour I talk of. You know my complexion has been tinged by the East, and you bring me here a blaze of yellow, that gives me the jaundice. Look! do you see here, what a fine figure I cut? You might as well have tied me to a bundle of sun-flowers!
- Crocus* I beg pardon, your honour!
- Mite* Pardon! there is no forgiving faults of this kind. Just so you served Harry Hectic; you stuck into his bosom a parcel of hyacinths, though the poor fellow's face is as pale as a primrose.
- Crocus* I did not know—
- Mite* And there, at the opera, the poor creature sat in his side-box, looking like one of the figures in the glass-cases in Westminster-Abbey; dead and drest!
- Crocus* If gentlemen would but give directions, I would make it my study to suit 'em.
- Mite* But that your cursed climate won't let you. Have you any pinks or carnations in bloom?
- Crocus* They are not in season, your honour. Lillies of the valley—
- Mite* I hate the whole tribe! What, you [Page 32] want to dress me up like a corpse! When shall you have any rose-buds?
- Crocus* The latter end of the month, please your honour.
- Mite* At that time you may call.
- Crocus* Your honour has no further commands?
- Mite* None, You may send nosegays for my chairmen, as usual.
- [Exit Mrs. Crocus.]
- Piccard! Here, take that garland away: I believe the woman thought she was dressing a may-pole. Make me a bouquet with the artificial flowers I brought from Milan.
- [Enter Servant.]
- Servant* Would your honour please to see Madam Match'em?
- Mite* Introduce her this instant.
- [Enter Mrs. Match'em.]
- My dear Match'em! Well, what news from Cheapside?
- Match'em* Bad enough; very near a total defeat.
- Mite* How so? you were furnished with ample materials.
- Match'em* But not of the right kind, please your honour. I have had but little intercourse with that part of the world: My business has chiefly [Page 33] lain on this side of the Bar; and I was weak enough to think both cities alike.
- Mite* And arn't they?
- Match'em* No two nations can differ so widely! Though money is supposed the idol of merchants, their wives don't agree in the worship.
- Mite* In that article I thought the whole world was united.
- Match'em* No; they don't know what to do with their money; a Pantheon subscription, or a masquerade ticket, is more negotiable there than a note from the Bank.
- Mite* What think you of a bracelet, or a well-fancied aigret?

Match'em I should think they must make their way.

Mite I have sent some rough diamonds to be polished in Holland; when they are returned, I will equip you, Match'em, with some of these toys.

Match'em Toys? how light he makes of these things!—Bless your noble and generous soul! I believe for a trifle more I could have obtained Lady Lurcher last night.

Mite Indeed?

Match'em She has been pressed a good deal to discharge an old score, long due to a knight from the North; and play-debts, your honour [Page 34] knows, there is no paying in part: She seemed deeply distressed; and I really believe another hundred would have made up the sum.

Mite And how came you not to advance it?

Match'em I did not chuse to exceed my commission; your honour knows the bill was only for five.

Mite Oh, you should have immediately made it up; you know I never stint myself in these matters.

Match'em Why, had I been in cash, I believe I should have ventured, your honour. If your honour approves, I have thought of a project that will save us both a good deal of trouble.

Mite Communicate, good Mrs. Match'em!

Match'em That I may not pester you with applications for every trifle I want, suppose you were to deposit a round sum in my hands.

Mite What, Match'em, make you my banker for beauty? Ha, ha, ha!

Match'em Exactly, your honour. Ha, ha, ha!

Mite Faith, Match'em, a very good conceit.

Match'em You may depend on my punctuality in paying your drafts.

Mite I don't harbour the least doubt of your honour.

Match'em Would you have me proceed in Patty Parrington's business? She is expected from Bath in a week. [Page 35]

Mite And what becomes of her aunt?

Match'em That Argus is to be left in the country.

Mite You had better suspend your operations for a while. Do you know, Mrs. Match'em, that I am a-going to be married?

Match'em Married? your honour's pleased to be pleasant: That day I hope never to see.

Mite The treaty wants nothing but her friends' ratification; and I think there is no danger of their with-holding that.

Match'em Nay, then, the matter is as good as concluded: I was always in dread of this fatal stroke!

Mite But, Match'em, why should you be so averse to the measure?

Match'em Can it be thought, that with dry eyes I could bear the loss of such a friend as your honour? I don't know how it is, but I am sure I never took such a fancy to any man in my life.

Mite Nay, Match'em!

Match'em Something so magnificent and princely in all you say or do, that a body has, as I may

say, a pleasure in taking pains in your service.

Mite Well, but prithee, child---

Match'em And then, when one has brought matters to bear, no after-reproaches, no grumblings from parties, such general satisfaction on all sides! I am sure, since the death of my husband, [Page 36] as honest a man, except the thing he died for---

Mite How came that about, Mrs. Match'em?

Match'em Why, Kit was rather apt to be careless, and put a neighbour's name to a note without stopping to ask his consent.

Mite Was that all?

Match'em Nothing else. Since that day, I saw no mortal has caught my eye but your honour.

Mite Really, Match'em?

Match'em I can't say, neither, it was the charms of your person—though they are such as any lady might like—but it was the beauties of your mind, that made an impression upon me.

Mite Nay, prithee, Match'em, dry up your tears! you distress me! Be persuaded you have nothing to fear.

Match'em How!

Mite Why, you don't suppose that I am prompted to this project by passion?

Match'em No?

Mite Pho! no; only wanted a wife to complete my establishment; just to adorn the head of my table.

Match'em To stick up in your room, like any other fine piece of furniture?

Mite Nothing else; as an antique bust or a picture. [Page 37]

Match'em That alters the case.

Mite Perhaps, I shall be confined a little at first; for when you take or bury a wife, decency requires that you should keep your house for a week: After that time, you will find me, dear Match'em, all that you can wish.

Match'em Ah! that is more than your honour can tell. I have known some of my gentlemen, before marriage, make as firm and good resolutions not to have the least love or regard for their wives; but they have been seduced after all, and turned out the poorest tame family fools!

Mite Indeed?

Match'em Good for nothing at all.

Mite That shall not be my case.

[Enter Servant.]

Servant Your honour's levee is crouded.

Mite I come. Piccard, give me my coat!—I have had some thoughts of founding in this town a seraglio; they are of singular use in the Indies: Do you think I could bring it to bear?

Match'em Why, a customer of mine did formerly make an attempt; but he pursued too violent measures at first; wanted to confine the ladies against their consent; and that too in a country of freedom.

Mite Oh, fy! How the best institutions may fail, for want of a man proper to manage! [Page

38]

Match'em But your honour has had great experience. If you would bestow the direction on me—

Mite Impossible, Match'em! in the East we never confide that office to your sex or complexion. I had some thoughts of importing three blacks from Bengal, who have been properly prepared for the service; but I sha'n't venture till the point is determined whether those creatures are to be considered as mere chattels, or men.

[*Exeunt.*]**Scene 2***A Saloon.**Enter Mayor, Touchit, Nathan, Moses, &c.*

Servant Walk in, gentlemen! his honour will be presently here.

Touchit Do you see, Mr. Mayor? look about you! here are noble apartments!

Mayor Very fine, very curious, indeed! But, after all, Master Touchit, I am not so over-fond of these Nabobs; for my part, I had rather sell myself to somebody else.

Touchit And why so, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor I don't know—they do a mortal deal of harm in the country: Why, wherever any of them settles, it raises the price of provisions for thirty miles round. People rail at seasons and crops; in my opinion, it is all along with them there folks, that things are so scarce. [Page 39]

Touchit Why, you talk like a fool! Suppose they have mounted the beef and mutton a trifle; a'n't we obliged in them too for raising the value of boroughs? You should always set one against t'other.

Mayor That, indeed, is nothing but fair. But how comes it about? and where do these here people get all their wealth?

Touchit The way is plain enough; from our settlements and possessions abroad.

Mayor Oh, may be so. I've been often minded to ask you what sort of things them there settlements are; because why, as you know, I have been never beyond sea.

Touchit Oh, Mr. Mayor, I will explain that in a moment: Why, here are a body of merchants that beg to be admitted as friends, and take possession of a small spot in a country, and carry on a beneficial commerce with the inoffensive and innocent people, to which they kindly give their consent.

Mayor Don't you think now that is very civil of them?

Touchit Doubtless. Upon which, Mr. Mayor, we cunningly encroach, and fortify by little and by little, till at length, we growing too strong for the natives, we turn them out of their lands, and take possession of their money and jewels. [Page 40]

Mayor And don't you think, Master Touchit, that is a little uncivil in us?

Touchit Oh, nothing at all: These people are but a little better than Tartars or Turks.

Mayor No, no, Master Touchit; just the reverse; it is they have caught the Tartars in us.

Touchit Ha, ha, ha! well said, Mr. Mayor. But, hush! here comes his honour. Fall back!

[*Enter Sir Matthew Mite.*]

Mite Oh, Nathan! are you there? You have split the stock, as I bid you?

Nathan I vas punctually obey your directions.

- Mite* And I shall be in no danger of losing my list?
- Nathan* Dat is safe, your honour; we have noting to fear.
- Mite* Moses Mendoza! You will take care to qualify Peter Pratewell and Counsellor Quibble? I shall want some speakers at the next General Court.
- Moses* Please your honour, I shall be careful of dat.
- Mite* How is the stock?
- Moses* It vas got up the end of the veek.
- Mite* Then sell out till you sink it two and a half. Has my advice been followed for burning the tea? [Page 41]
- Moses* As to dat matter, I vas not enquire dat; I believe not.
- Mite* So that commodity will soon be a drug. The English are too proud to profit by the practice of others: What would become of the spice trade, if the Dutch brought their whole growth to market?
- Moses* Dat is very true. Your honour has no farder commands?
- Mite* None at present, master Mendoza.
- [Exit Mendoza.]
- Nathan* For de next settlement, would your honour be de bull or de bear?
- Mite* I shall send you my orders to Jonathan's. Oh, Nathan! did you tell that man in Berkshire, I would buy his estate?
- Nathan* Yes; but he say he has no mind, no occasion to sell it; dat de estate belong to great many faders before him.
- Mite* Why, the man must be mad; did you tell him I had taken a fancy to the spot, when I was but a boy?
- Nathan* I vas tell him as much.
- Mite* And that all the time I was in India, my mind was bent upon the purchase?
- Nathan* I vas say so.
- Mite* And now I'm come home, am determined to buy it? [Page 42]
- Nathan* I make use of de very vords.
- Mite* Well then! what would the booby be at?
- Nathan* I don't know.
- Mite* Give the fellow four times the value, and bid him turn out in a month.—
[To Touchit.]
- May I presume, Sir, to ask who you are, and what your business may be?
- Touchit* My name, Sir, is Touchit, and these gentlemen some friends and neighbours of mine. We are ordered by the Christian Club, of the borough of Bribe'em, to wait upon your honour, with a tender of the nomination of our two members at the ensuing election.
- Mite* Sir, I accept their offer with pleasure; and am happy to find, notwithstanding all that has been said, that the union still subsists between Bengal and the ancient corporation of Bribe'em.
- Touchit* And if they ever are severed, I can assure your honour the Christian Club will not be to blame. Your honour understands me, I hope?
- Mite* Perfectly. Nor shall it, I promise you, be my fault, good Mr. Touchit. But, (you will forgive my curiosity, Sir!) the name your club has adopted, has at first a whimsical

- sound; but you had your reasons, no doubt.
- Touchit* The very best in the world, please [Page 43] your honour: From our strict union and brotherly kindness, we hang together; like the primitive Christians too, we have all things in common.
- Mite* In common? I don't apprehend you.
- Touchit* Why, please your honour, when the bargain is struck, and the deposit is made, as a proof that we love our neighbours as well as ourselves, we submit to an equal partition; no man has a larger share than another.
- Mite* A most Christian-like dispensation!
- Touchit* Yes; in our borough all is unanimity now: Formerly, we had nothing but discontents and heart-burnings amongst us; each man jealous and afraid that his neighbour got more and did better than him.
- Mite* Indeed?
- Touchit* Ay, and with reason sometimes. Why, I remember, at the election some time ago, when I took up my freedom, I could get but thirty guineas for a new pair of jack-boots; whilst Tom Ramskin over the way had a fifty-pound note for a pair of wash-leather breeches.
- Mite* Very partial indeed!
- Touchit* So, upon the whole, we thought it best to unite.
- Mite* Oh, much the best. Well, Sir, you may assure your principals that I shall take care [Page 44] properly to acknowledge the service they do me.
- Touchit* No doubt, no doubt. But—will your honour step a little this way?—Though no question can be made of your honour's keeping your word, yet it has always been the rule with our club to receive the proper acknowledgment before the service is done.
- Mite* Ay, but, Mr. Touchit, suppose the service should never be done?
- Touchit* What then must become of our consciences? We are Christians, your honour.
- Mite* True; but, Mr. Touchit, you remember the proverb?
- Touchit* What proverb, your honour?
- Mite* There are two bad pay-masters; those who pay before, and those who never pay.
- Touchit* True, your honour; but our club has always found, that those who don't pay before are sure never to pay.
- Mite* How! impossible! the man who breaks his word with such faithful and honest adherents, deserves richly a halter. Gentlemen, in my opinion, he deserves to be hanged.
- Touchit* Hush! have a care what you say.
- Mite* What is the matter?
- Touchit* You see the fat man that is behind; he will be the returning officer at the election. [Page 45]
- Mite* What then?
- Touchit* On a gibbet at the end of our town there hangs a smuggler, for robbing the custom-house.
- Mite* Well?
- Touchit* The mayor's own brother, your honour: Now, perhaps, he may be jealous that you

- meant to throw some reflection on him or his family.
- Mite* Not unlikely.—I say, gentlemen, whoever violates his promise to such faithful friends as you are, in my poor opinion, deserves to be damned!
- Touchit* That's right! stick to that! for tho' the Christian Club may have some fears of the gallows, they don't value damnation of a farthing.
- Mite* Why should they, as it may be so long before any thing of that kind may happen, you know?
- Touchit* Good! good again! Your honour takes us rightly, I see: I make no doubt, it won't be long before we come to a good understanding.
- Mite* The sooner the better, good master Touchit; and, therefore, in one word, pray what are your terms?
- Touchit* Do you mean for one, or would your honour bargain for both? [Page 46]
- Mite* Both, both.
- Touchit* Why, we could not have afforded you one under three thousand at least; but as your honour, as I may say, has a mind to deal in the gross, we shall charge you but five for both.
- Mite* Oh fy! above the market, good Mr. Touchit!
- Touchit* Dog-cheap; neck-beef; a penny-loaf for a halfpenny! Why, we had partly agreed to bring in Sir Christopher Quinze and major Match'em for the very same money; but the major has been a little unlucky at Almack's, and at present can't deposit the needful; but he says, however, if he should be successful at the next Newmarket meeting, he will faithfully abide by the bargain: But the turf, your honour knows, is but an uncertain estate, and so we can't depend upon him.
- Mite* True. Well, Sir, as I may soon have occasion for all the friends I can make, I shall haggle no longer; I accept your proposals: In the next room we will settle the terms.
- Touchit* Your honour will always find the Christians steady and firm.—But, won't your honour introduce us to his Worship whilst we are here?
- Mite* To his Worship? to whom?
- Touchit* To the gentleman in black. [Page 47]
- Mite* Worship? you are mad, Mr. Touchit! That is a slave I brought from the Indies.
- Touchit* Good lack! may be so! I did not know but the gentleman might belong to the tribe, who, we are told by the papers, conferred those splendid titles upon your honour in India.
- Mite* Well, Master Touchit, what then?
- Touchit* I thought it not unlikely, but, in return to that compliment, your honour might chuse to make one of the family member for the corporation of Bribe'em.
- Mite* Why, you would not submit to accept of a Negro?
- Touchit* Our present members, for aught we know, may be of the same complexion, your honour; for we have never set eyes on them yet.
- Mite* That's strange! But, after all, you could not think of electing a black?
- Touchit* That makes no difference to us: The Christian Club has ever been persuaded, that a good candidate, like a good horse, can't be of a bad colour.

[Exit with friends.]

[Enter Thomas Oldham and others.]

Mite [to Oldham]. What is your business, and name?

Thomas Oldham. [Page 48]

Mite The brother of Sir John? I have heard of you: You are, if I mistake not, a merchant?

Thomas I have that honour; Sir Matthew.

Mite Um! honour!—Well, Sir; and what are your commands?

Thomas I wait on you in the name of my brother, with—

Mite An answer to the message I sent him. When do we meet to finish the matter? It must be tomorrow, or Sunday; for I shall be busy next week.

Thomas Tomorrow?

Mite Ay; it is not for a man like me to dangle and court, Mr. Oldham.

Thomas Why, to be plain, Sir Matthew, it would, I am afraid, be but losing your time.

Mite Sir?

Thomas As there is not one in the family, that seems the least inclined to favour your wish.

Mite No? ha, ha, ha! that's pleasant enough! ha, ha, ha! And why not?

Thomas They are, Sir Matthew, no strangers to your great power and wealth; but corrupt as you may conceive this country to be, there are superior spirits living, who would disdain an alliance with grandeur obtained at the expence of honour and virtue. [Page 49]

Mite And what relation has this sentimental declaration to me?

Thomas My intention, Sir Matthew, was not to offend; I was desired to wait on you with a civil denial.

Mite And you have faithfully discharged your commission.

Thomas Why, I'm a man of plain manners, Sir Matthew; a supercilious air, or a sneer, won't prevent me from speaking my thoughts.

Mite Perfectly right, and prodigiously prudent!—Well, Sir; I hope it won't be thought too presuming, if I desire to hear my sentence proceed from the mouth of the father and daughter.

Thomas By all means; I will wait on you thither.

Mite That is not so convenient, at present. I have brought from Italy, antiques, some curious remains, which are to be deposited in the archives of this country: The Antiquarian Society have, in consequence, chosen me one of their body, and this is the hour of reception.

Thomas We shall see you in the course of the day?

Mite At the close of the ceremony. Perhaps, I shall have something to urge, that may procure me some favour from your very respectable [Page 50] family.—Piccard, attend Mr. A—a—a to the door.

Thomas I guess your design.

[Exit.]

Mite Who waits there?

[Enter Servant.]

Step to my attorney directly; bid him attend me within an hour at Oldham's, armed with all the powers I gave him.

[*Exit* Servant.]

I will see if I can't bend to my will this sturdy race of insolent beggars!—After all, riches to a man who knows how to employ them, are as useful in England as in any part of the East: There they gain us those ends in spite and defiance of law, which, with a proper agent, may here be obtained under the pretence and colour of law.

[*Exit.*

[Page 51]

ACT III.

Scene 1

The Antiquarian Society.

Secretary Sir Matthew Mite, preceded by his presents, will attend this honourable Society this morning.

1 Antiquary Is he apprised that an inauguration-speech is required, in which he is to express his love of virtù, and produce proofs of his antique erudition?

Secretary He has been apprised, and is rightly prepared.

2 Antiquary Are the minutes of our last meeting fairly recorded and entered?

Secretary They are.

1 Antiquary And the valuable antiques which have happily escaped the depredations of time ranged and registered rightly?

Secretary All in order.

2 Antiquary As there are new acquisitions to the Society's stock, I think it is right that the members should be instructed in their several natures and names.

1 Antiquary By all means. Read the list!

Secretary "Imprimis, In a large glass-case, and in fine preservation, the toe of the slipper of [Page 52] Cardinal Pandulpho, with which he kick'd the breech of King John at Swinstead-Abbey, when he gave him absolution and penance."

2 Antiquary A most noble remains!

1 Antiquary An excellent antidote against the progress of Popery, as it proves the Pontiff's insolent abuse of his power!—Proceed.

Secretary "A pair of nut-crackers presented by Harry the Eighth to Anna Bullen the eve of their nuptials; the wood supposed to be walnut."

1 Antiquary Which proves that before the Reformation walnut-trees were planted in England.

Secretary "The cape of Queen Elizabeth's riding-hood, which she wore on a solemn festival, when carried behind Burleigh to Paul's; the cloth undoubtedly Kidderminster."

2 Antiquary A most instructive lesson to us, as it proves that patriotic princess wore nothing but the manufactures of England!

Secretary "A cork-screw presented by Sir John Falstaff to Harry the Fifth, with a tobacco-stopper of Sir Walter Raleigh's, made of the stern of the ship in which he first compassed the globe; given to the Society by a clergyman from the North-Riding of Yorkshire."

1 Antiquary A rare instance of generosity, as they must have both been of singular use to the

- reverend donor himself! [Page 53]
- Secretary* "A curious collection, in regular and undoubted succession, of all the tickets of Islington-Turnpike, from its first institution to the twentieth of May."
- 2 Antiquary* Preserve them with care, as they may hereafter serve to illustrate that part of the English History.
- Secretary* "A wooden medal of Shakespeare, made from the mulberry-tree he planted himself; with a Queen Anne's farthing; from the Manager of Drury-Lane Playhouse."
- 1 Antiquary* Has he received the Society's thanks?
- Secretary* They are sent.
[Enter Beadle.]
- Beadle* Sir Matthew Mite attends at the door,
- 1 Antiquary* Let him be admitted directly.
[Enter Sir Matthew Mite, preceded by four Blacks; first Black bearing a large book; second, a green chamber-pot; third, some lava from the mountain Vesuvius; fourth, a box. Sir Matthew takes his seat; Secretary receives the first present, and reads the label.]
- Secretary* "Purchased of the Abbé Montini at Naples for five hundred pounds, an illegible manuscript in Latin, containing the twelve books of Livy, supposed to be lost." [Page 54]
- Mite* This invaluable treasure was very near falling into the hands of the Pope, who designed to deposit it in the Vatican Library, and I rescued it from idolatrous hands.
- 1 Antiquary* A pious, learned, and laudable purchase!
- Secretary* [receives the second present, and reads the label.] "A sarcophagus, or Roman urn, dug from the temple of Concord."
- Mite* Supposed to have held the dust of Marc-Antony's coachman.
- Secretary* [receives the third present, and reads.] "A large piece of the lava, thrown from the Vesuvian volcano at the last great eruption."
- Mite* By a chymical analysis, it will be easy to discover the constituent parts of this mass; which, by properly preparing it, will make it no difficult task to propagate burning mountains in England, if encouraged by premiums.
- 2 Antiquary* Which it will, no doubt!
- Mite* Gentlemen! Not contented with collecting, for the use of my country, these inestimable relics, with a large catalogue of petrifications, bones, beetles, and butterflies, contained in that box,
[pointing to the present borne by the fourth Black.]
I have likewise laboured for the advancement of national knowledge: For which end, permit me to clear up some doubts relative to a material and interesting point in the [Page 55] English history. Let others toil to illumine the dark annals of Greece, or of Rome; my searches are sacred only to the service of Britain!
The point I mean to clear up, is an error crept into the life of that illustrious magistrate, the great Whittington, and his no-less-eminent Cat: And in this disquisition four material points are in question.
1st. Did Whittington ever exist?
2d. Was Whittington Lord-Mayor of London?

3d. Was he really possessed of a Cat?

4th. Was that Cat the source of his wealth?

That Whittington lived, no doubt can be made; that he was Lord-Mayor of London, is equally true; but as to his Cat, that, gentlemen, is the gordian knot to untie. And here, gentlemen, be it permitted me to define what a Cat is. A Cat is a domestic, whiskered, four-footed animal, whose employment is catching of mice; but let Puss have been ever so subtle, let Puss have been ever so successful, to what could Puss's captures amount? no tanner can curry the skin of a mouse, no family make a meal of the meat; consequently, no Cat could give Whittington his wealth. From whence then does this error proceed? be that my care to point out!

The commerce this worthy merchant carried [Page 56] on, was chiefly confined to our coasts; for this purpose, he constructed a vessel, which, from its agility and lightness, he aptly christened a Cat. Nay, to this our day, gentlemen, all our coals from Newcastle are imported in nothing but Cats. From thence it appears, that it was not the whiskered, four-footed, mouse-killing Cat, that was the source of the magistrate's wealth, but the coasting, sailing, coal-carrying Cat; that, gentlemen, was Whittington's Cat.

1 Antiquary What a fund of learning!

2 Antiquary Amazing acuteness of erudition!

1 Antiquary Let this discovery be made public directly.

2 Antiquary And the author mentioned with honour.

1 Antiquary I make no doubt but the city of London will desire him to sit for his picture, or send him his freedom in a fifty-pound box.

2 Antiquary The honour done their first magistrate richly deserves it.

1 Antiquary Break we up this assembly, with a loud declaration, that Sir Matthew Mite is equally skilled in arts as well as in arms.

2 Antiquary Tam Mercurio quam Marti.

[*Exeunt* Antiquaries]

Mite Having thus discharged my debt to the public, I must attend to my private affairs. Will Rapine, my attorney, attend as I bid him? [Page 57]

Servant He will be punctual, your honour.

Mite Then drive to Hanover-Square.

Putty [*without*] I will come in!

[*Enter* Servant]

Servant There's a little shabby fellow without, that insists on seeing your honour.

Mite Why, who and what can he be?

Servant He calls himself Putty, and says he went to school with your honour.

Servant [*within.*] His honour don't know you!

Putty I will come in! Not know me, you oaf? what should ail him? Why, I tell you we were bred up together from boys. Stand by, or I'll—

[*Enter* Putty.]

Hey! yes, it is—no, it a'n't—yes, it is Matthew Mite.—Lord love your queer face! what a figure you cut! how you are altered! well, had I met with you by chance, I don't

- think I should ever have known you. I have had a deuced deal of work to get at you.
- Mite* This is a lucky encounter!
- Putty* There is a little fat fellow, that opens the door at your house, was as pert as a prentice just out of his time: He would not give me the least inkling about you; and I should have returned [Page 58] to Shoreditch as wise as I came, if some folks who are gazing at the fine gilt coach in the street, hadn't told me 'twas yours. Well, Master Mite, things are mainly changed since we were boys at the Blue-Coat: Who could have thought that you would have got so up in the world? for you know you were reckoned a dull one at school.
- Servant* Friend, do you know who you talk to?
- Putty* Yes, friend, much better than you do. I am told he is become a Knight, and a Nabob; and what of all that? For your Nabobs, they are but a kind of outlandish creatures, that won't pass current with us; and as to knights, we have a few of them in the city, whom I dare speak to without doffing my hat. So, Mr. Scrapetrencher, let's have no more of your jaw!—I say, Mat, doesn't remember one Easter-Tuesday, how you tipt the barrow-woman into Fleet-Ditch, as we were going about with the hymns?
- Mite* An anecdote that does me infinite honour!
- Putty* How all the folks laughed to see how bolt upright she stood on her head in the mud! ha! ha! ha! And one fifth of November, I shall never forget! how you frightened a preaching methodist taylor, by throwing a cracker into the pulpit. [Page 59]
- Mite* Another pretty exploit!
- Putty* At every bounce, how poor Stitch capered and jumped! Ah! many's the merry freak we have had! for this I must say, though Mat was but bad at his book, for mischiefful matters there wasn't a more ingenious, cuterer lad in the school.
- Mite* Yes; I have got a fine reputation, I see!
- Putty* Well, but Mat! what, be'st dumb? why doesn't speak to a school-fellow?
- Mite* That at present is more than I'll own.—I fancy, Mr. A—a—a, you have made some mistake.
- Putty* Some mistake?
- Mite* I don't recollect that I ever had the honour to know you.
- Putty* What, don't you remember Phil Putty?
- Mite* No.
- Putty* That was prentice to Master Gibson, the glazier in Shoreditch?
- Mite* No.
- Putty* That at the Blue-Coat-Hospital has often saved your bacon by owning your pranks?
- Mite* No.
- Putty* No! What, then, mayhap you ben't Mat Mite, son of old John and Margery Mite, at the Sow and Sausage in St. Mary Axe, that took the tarts from the man in Pye-corner, and [Page 60] was sent beyond sea, for fear worse should come on it?
- Mite* You see, Mr. Putty, the glazier, if that is your name and profession, you are entirely out in this matter, so you need not repeat your visits to me.
- [Exit.
- Putty* Now here's a pretty purse-proud son of a—who, forsooth, because he is grown great

by robbing the heathens, won't own an old friend and acquaintance, and one too of the livery beside! Dammee, the great Turk himself need not be ashamed to shake hands with a citizen! "Mr. Putty the glazier!" well, what a pox am I the better for you? I'll be sworn our company has made more money by a single election at Brentford, than by all his exploits put together.

[Exit.]

Scene 2

Sir John Oldham's house.

Enter Mr. Thomas Oldham, followed by a Servant

Thomas Sir Matthew Mite is not come?

Servant No, Sir.

Thomas Is Tom here?

Servant Mr. Oldham is, I believe, with Miss in the parlour.

Thomas Let him know I would see him.

[Exit Serv.]

Poor boy! Nay, I sincerely grieve for them both! this disappointment, like an [Page 61] untimely frost, will hang heavy on their tender years: To conquer the first and finest feelings of nature is an arduous task!

[Enter Young [Tom] Oldham.]

So, Tom! still attached to this spot, I perceive?

Tom Old. Sir, I arrived but the instant before you.

Thomas Nay, child, I don't blame you. You are no stranger to the almost-invincible bars that oppose your views on my niece; it would be therefore prudent, instead of indulging, to wean yourself by degrees.

Tom Old. Are there no hopes, then, Sir, of subduing my aunt?

Thomas I see none: Nay, perhaps, as matters now stand, a compliance may be out of her power.

Tom Old. How is that possible, Sir? out of her power?

Thomas I won't anticipate: Misfortunes come too soon of themselves; a short time will explain what I mean.

Tom Old. You alarm me! Would you condescend to instruct me, I hope, Sir, I shall have discretion enough—

Thomas It would answer no end. I would have you both prepare for the worst: See your [Page 62] cousin again; and remember, this, perhaps, may be the last time of your meeting.

Tom Old. The last of our—

Thomas But Sophy is here. I must go in to Sir John.

[Oldham bows low to Sophy and retires.]

[Enter Sophy.]

Sophy Sir! What can be the meaning of this? My uncle Oldham avoids me! you seem shocked! no additional misfortune, I hope?

Tom Old. My father has threatened me, in obscure terms, I confess, with the worst that can happen.

Sophy How!

Tom Old. The total, nay, perhaps, immediate loss of my *Sophy*.

Sophy From what cause?

Tom Old. That in tenderness he chose to conceal.

Sophy But why make it a mystery? have you no guess?

Tom Old. Not the most distant conception. My lady's dislike would hardly prompt her to such violent measures. I can't comprehend how this can possibly be; but yet my father has too firm, too manly a mind, to encourage or harbour vain fears.

Sophy Here they come. I suppose the riddle will soon be explained. [Page 63]

[Enter Sir John, Lady, and Thomas Oldham.]

L Oldham But what motive could he have for demanding this whimsical interview? he could not doubt your credentials, or think his presence could be grateful to us.

Thomas I have delivered my message.

L Oldham Perhaps he depends on his rhetorical powers: I hear he has a good opinion of them. Stay, *Sophy*! Sir Matthew Mite, distrusting the message we begged your uncle to carry, desires to have it confirmed by ourselves: I fancy, child, you will do yourself no violence in rejecting this lover. He is an amiable swain, I confess!

Sophy I shall be always happy in obeying your ladyship's orders.

L Oldham Are you sure of that, *Sophy*? a time may soon come for the trial.

Sir John Well, in the main, I am glad of this meeting; it will not only put a final end to this business, but give us an opportunity of discussing other matters, my dear.

L Oldham Is that your opinion, Sir John? I fancy he will not be very fond of prolonging his visit.

[Enter Servant]

Servant Sir Matthew Mite! [Page 64]

L Oldham Shew him in!—Now, Sir John, be on your guard; support this scene with a dignity that becomes one of your birth and—

Sir John Never fear my dignity, love. I warrant you I'll give him as good as he brings.

[Enter Sir Matthew Mite.]

Mite I find the whole tribe is convened.—I hope I am not an intruder; but I confess the extraordinary answer I received from the mouth of this worthy citizen, to a message conveyed by my secretary, induced me to question its authenticity, unless confirmed by yourselves.

L Oldham And why should you think our reply so very extraordinary?

Mite You must give me leave to smile at that question.

L Oldham A very decisive answer, I own!

Mite You are, Lady Oldham, a woman of the world, and supposed not to be wanting in sense.

L Oldham Which this conduct of mine inclines you to doubt?

Mite Why, to be plain, my condition and your own situation considered, prudence might have dictated a different reply.

L Oldham And yet, Sir Matthew, upon the maturest deliberation, all the parties, you see, persist in giving no other. [Page 65]

Mite Is it so? You will permit me, Lady Oldham, to desire one of those reasons which

influenced this august assembly upon the occasion?

L Oldham They will, I dare say, appear but trifling to you.

Mite Let us have them, however.

L Oldham First, we think it right to have a little regard to her happiness, as she is indebted for her existence to us.

Mite Which you think she risques in a union with me?

[Lady Oldham bows.]

And why so? I have the means to procure her, madam, those enjoyments with which your sex is chiefly delighted.

L Oldham You will, Sir Matthew, pardon my weakness; but I would much rather see my child with a competence, nay, even reduced to an indigent state, than voluptuously rioting in pleasures that derive their source from the ruin of others.

Mite Ruin! what, you, I find, adopt the popular prejudice, and conclude that every man that is rich is a villain?

L Oldham I only echo the voice of the public. Besides, I would wish my daughter a more solid establishment: The possessions arising from plunder very rarely are permanent; we every day see what has been treacherously and rapaciously gained, as profusely and full as rapidly squandered. [Page 66]

Mite I am sorry, madam, to see one of your fashion, concur in the common cry of the times; but such is the gratitude of this country to those who have given it dominion and wealth.

Thomas I could wish even that fact was well founded, Sir Matthew. Your riches (which perhaps too are only ideal) by introducing a general spirit of dissipation, have extinguished labour and industry, the slow, but sure source of national wealth.

Mite To these refinements I have no time to reply. By one of your ladyship's hints I shall profit at least: I shall be a little more careful of the plunder I have made. Sir John Oldham, you recollect a small sum borrowed by you?

Sir John I do.

Mite The obligations for which are in my possession at present.

Sir John I understand as much by your letter.

Mite As I find there is an end of our treaty, it would be right, I think, to discharge them directly.

Sir John I can't say that is quite so convenient; besides, I understood the party was to wait till the time that Jack comes of age.

Mite I am told the law does not understand what is not clearly expressed. Besides, the probable event of your death, or the young gentleman's [Page 67] shyness to fulfil the agreement, are enough to put a man on his guard.

Thomas Now comes on the storm.

Mite And, that my prudence might not suffer in that lady's opinion, I have taken some precautions which my attorney will more clearly unfold.—Mr. Rapine!

[Enter Rapine.]

You will explain this affair to Sir John: I am a military man, and quite a stranger to your legal manoeuvres.

- Rapine* By command of my client, Sir Matthew, I have issued here a couple of writs.
- L Oldham* Sir John!
- Sir John* What?
- Rapine* By one of which, plaintiff possesses the person, by t'other goods and chattels, of Sir John the defendant.
- Mite* A definition very clear and concise!
- L Oldham* Goods, Sir? what, must I be turned out of my house?
- Rapine* No, madam; you may stay here till we sell, which perhaps mayn't happen these two days. We must, indeed, leave a few of our people, just to take care that there is nothing embezzled.
- L Oldham* A short respite, indeed! For a little [Page 68] time, I dare say, my brother Oldham will afford us protection. Come, Sir John, nor let us indulge that monster's malice with a longer sight of our misery.
- Rapine* You, madam, are a wife, and may go where you please; but as to Sir John—
- L Oldham* Well!
- Rapine* He must not stir: We are answerable for the possession of him.
- L Oldham* Of him? a prisoner? then indeed is our ruin complete!
- Sophy* Oh, uncle!—You have been pleased, Sir, to express an affection for me: Is it possible, Sir, you can be so cruel, so unkind to my parents—
- Mite* They are unkind to themselves.
- Sophy* Let me plead for mercy! suspend but a little!—My uncle, you, Sir, are wealthy too!—Indeed we are honest! you will not run the least risque.
- Mite* There is a condition, Miss, in which you have a right to command.
- Sophy* Sir!
- Mite* It is in your power, and that of your parents, to establish one common interest amongst us.
- L Oldham* Never! after rejecting, with the contempt they deserved, the first arrogant offers you made, do you suppose this fresh insult will gain us? [Page 69]
- Mite* I am answered.—I presume, Mr. Rapine, there is no longer occasion for me?
- Sophy* Stop, Sir! Mr. Oldham teaches me what I should do. Can I see their distress? Heaven knows with what eagerness I would sacrifice my own peace, my own happiness, to procure them relief!
- [Kneels to Sir Matthew.]
- Thomas* Rise, niece! nor hope to soften that breast, already made too callous by crimes! I have long seen, Sir, what your malice intended, and prepared myself to baffle its purpose. I am instructed, Sir, in the amount of this man's demands on my brother: You will there find a sum more than sufficient to pay it.—And now, my dear sister, I hope you will please to allow a citizen may be useful sometimes.
- Mite* Mr. Rapine, is this manoeuvre according to law?
- Rapine* The law, Sir Matthew, always sleeps when satisfaction is made.
- Mite* Does it? Our practice is different in the Mayor's Court at Calcutta.—I shall now make my bow; and leave this family, whom I wished to make happy in spite of themselves, soon to regret the fatal loss sustained by their obstinate folly.

- Thomas* Nor can it be long, before the wisdom of their choice will appear; as by partaking of [Page 70] the spoil, they might have been involved in that vengeance, which soon or late can't fail to fall on the head of the author: And, Sir, notwithstanding your seeming security, perhaps the hour of retribution is near!
- Mite* You must, Master Oldham, give me leave to laugh at your prophetic effusion. This is not Sparta, nor are these the chaste times of the Roman republic: Now-a-days, riches possess at least one magical power, that, being rightly dispensed, they closely conceal the source from whence they proceeded: That wisdom, I hope never to want—I am the obsequious servant of this respectable family! Adieu!—Come along, Rapine!
- [Exit with Rapine.]
- L Oldham* Brother, what words can I use, or how can we thank you as we ought? Sir John! Sophy!
- Thomas* I am doubly paid, Lady Oldham, in supplying the wants of my friends, and defeating the designs of a villain: As to the mere money, we citizens indeed are odd kind of folks, and always expect good security for what we advance.
- L Oldham* Sir John's person, his fortune, every—
- Thomas* Nay, nay, nay, upon this occasion we will not be troubled with land: If you, sister, will place as a pledge my fair cousin in the hands of my son—
- L Oldham* I freely resign her disposal to you. [Page 71]
- Sir John* And I.
- Thomas* Then be happy, my children! And as to my young cousins within, I hope we shall be able to settle them without Sir Matthew's assistance: For, however praiseworthy the spirit of adventure may be, whoever keeps his post, and does his duty at home, will be found to render his country best service at last!
- [Exeunt.]

Back matter

FINIS.