

Act III.



SCENE I. *An open Field.*

FREDERICK *alone, with a few pieces of money which he turns about in his hands.*

Frederick - HENRY C. To return with this trifle for which I have stooped to beg! return to see my mother dying! I would rather fly to the world's end. [*Looking at the money.*] What can I buy with this? It is hardly enough to pay for the nails that will be wanted for her coffin. My great anxiety will drive me to distraction. However, let the consequence of our affliction be what it may, all will fall upon my father's head; and may he pant for Heaven's forgiveness, as my poor mother —— [*At a distance is heard the firing of a gun, then the cry of Hallo, Hallo—Gamekeepers and Sportsmen run across the stage—he looks about.*] Here they come—a nobleman, I suppose, or a man of fortune. Yes, yes—and I will once more beg for my mother.—May Heaven send relief!

Enter the BARON followed slowly by the COUNT - RUSHWORTH . The BARON stops.

Baron -- YATES. Quick, quick, Count! Aye, aye, that was a blunder indeed. Don't you see the dogs? There they run—they have lost the scent. [*Exit Baron looking after the dogs.*]

Count - RUSHWORTH. So much the better, Colonel, for I must take a little breath. [*He leans on his gun—Frederick goes up to him with great modesty.*]

Frederick - HENRY C. Gentleman, I beg you will bestow from your superfluous wants something to relieve the pain, and nourish the weak frame, of an expiring woman.

The BARON re-enters.

Count - RUSHWORTH. What police is here! that a nobleman's amusements should be interrupted by the attack of vagrants.

Frederick [*to the Baron*]. Have pity, noble Sir, and relieve the distress of an unfortunate son, who supplicates for his dying mother.

Baron -- YATES. [*taking out his purse*]. I think, young soldier, it would be better if you were with your regiment on duty, instead of begging.

Frederick - HENRY C. I would with all my heart: but at this present moment my sorrows are too great.—[*Baron gives something.*] I entreat your pardon. What you have been so good as to give me is not enough.

Baron -- YATES. [*surprised*]. Not enough!

Frederick - HENRY C. No, it is not enough.

Count - RUSHWORTH. The most singular beggar I ever met in all my travels.

Frederick - HENRY C. If you have a charitable heart, give me one dollar.

Baron -- YATES. This is the first time I was ever dictated by a beggar what to give him.

Frederick - HENRY C. With one dollar you will save a distracted man.

Baron -- YATES. I don't choose to give any more. Count, go on.

[Exit Count—as the Baron follows, Frederick seizes him by the breast and draws his sword.]

Frederick - HENRY C. Your purse, or your life.

Baron -- YATES. [calling]. Here! here! seize and secure him.

[Some of the Gamekeepers run on, lay hold of Frederick, and disarm him.]

Frederick - HENRY C. What have I done!

Baron -- YATES. Take him to the castle, and confine him in one of the towers. I shall follow you immediately.

Frederick - HENRY C. One favour I have to beg, one favour only.—I know that I am guilty, and am ready to receive the punishment my crime deserves. But I have a mother, who is expiring for want—pity her, if you cannot pity me—bestow on her relief. If you will send to yonder hut, you will find that I do not impose on you a falsehood. For her it was I drew my sword—for her I am ready to die.

Baron -- YATES. Take him away, and imprison him where I told you.

Frederick [as he is forced off by the keepers]. Woe to that man to whom I owe my birth! [Exit.]

Baron [calls another Keeper]. Here, Frank, run directly to yonder hamlet, inquire in the first, second, and third cottage for a poor sick woman—and if you really find such a person, give her this purse. [Exit Gamekeeper.]

Baron -- YATES. A most extraordinary event!—and what a well-looking youth! something in his countenance and address which struck me inconceivably!—If it is true that he begged for his mother—But if he did—for the attempt upon my life, he must die. Vice is never half so dangerous, as when it assumes the garb of morality. [Exit.]



SCENE II. *A room in the Castle.*

Amelia [alone.] Why am I so uneasy; so peevish; who has offended me? I did not mean to come into this room. In the garden I intended to go [going, turns back]. No, I will not—yes, I will—just go, and look if my auriculas are still in blossom; and if the apple tree is grown which Mr. Anhalt planted.—I feel very low-spirited—something must be the matter.—Why do I cry?—Am I not well?

Enter Mr. ANHALT - EDMUND B.

Ah! good morning, my dear Sir—Mr. Anhalt, I meant to say—I beg pardon.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Never mind, Miss Wildenhaim—I don't dislike to hear you call me as you did.

Amelia - MARY C In earnest?

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Really. You have been crying. May I know the reason? The loss of your mother, still?—

Amelia - MARY C No—I have left off crying for her.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. I beg pardon if I have come at an improper hour; but I wait upon you by the commands of your father.

Amelia - MARY C You are welcome at all hours. My father has more than once told me that he who forms my mind I should always consider as my greatest benefactor. [*looking down*] And my heart tells me the same.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. I think myself amply rewarded by the good opinion you have of me.

Amelia - MARY C When I remember what trouble I have sometimes given you, I cannot be too grateful.

Anhalt [*to himself*] Oh! Heavens!—[*to Amelia*]. I—I come from your father with a commission.—If you please, we will sit down. [*He places chairs, and they sit.*] Count Cassel is arrived.

Amelia - MARY C Yes, I know.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. And do you know for what reason?

Amelia - MARY C He wishes to marry me.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Does he? *hastily*] But believe me, the Baron will not persuade you—No, I am sure he will not.

Amelia - MARY C I know that.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. He wishes that I should ascertain whether you have an inclination ——

Amelia - MARY C For the Count, or for matrimony do you mean?

Anhalt - EDMUND B. For matrimony.

Amelia - MARY C All things that I don't know, and don't understand, are quite indifferent to me.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. For that very reason I am sent to you to explain the good and the bad of which matrimony is composed.

Amelia - MARY C Then I beg first to be acquainted with the good.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. When two sympathetic hearts meet in the marriage state, matrimony may be called a happy life. When such a wedded pair find thorns in their path, each will be eager, for the sake

of the other, to tear them from the root. Where they have to mount hills, or wind a labyrinth, the most experienced will lead the way, and be a guide to his companion. Patience and love will accompany them in their journey, while melancholy and discord they leave far behind.—Hand in hand they pass on from morning till evening, through their summer's day, till the night of age draws on, and the sleep of death overtakes the one. The other, weeping and mourning, yet looks forward to the bright region where he shall meet his still surviving partner, among trees and flowers which themselves have planted, in fields of eternal verdure.

Amelia - MARY C You may tell my father—I'll marry. [*Rises.*]

Anhalt - EDMUND B. [*rising*]. This picture is pleasing; but I must beg you not to forget that there is another on the same subject.—When convenience, and fair appearance joined to folly and ill-humour, forge the fetters of matrimony, they gall with their weight the married pair. Discontented with each other—at variance in opinions—their mutual aversion increases with the years they live together. They contend most, where they should most unite; torment, where they should most soothe. In this rugged way, choaked with the weeds of suspicion, jealousy, anger, and hatred, they take their daily journey, till one of these *also* sleep in death. The other then lifts up his dejected head, and calls out in acclamations of joy—Oh, liberty! dear liberty!

Amelia - MARY C I will not marry.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. You mean to say, you will not fall in love.

Amelia - MARY C Oh no! [*ashamed*] I am in love.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Are in love! [*starting*] And with the Count?

Amelia - MARY C I wish I was.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Why so?

Amelia - MARY C Because *he* would, perhaps, love me again.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. [*warmly*]. Who is there that would not?

Amelia - MARY C Would you?

Anhalt - EDMUND B. I—I—me—I—I am out of the question.

Amelia - MARY C No; you are the very person to whom I have put the question.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. What do you mean?

Amelia - MARY C I am glad you don't understand me. I was afraid I had spoken too plain. [*in confusion*].

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Understand you!—As to that—I am not dull.

Amelia - MARY C I know you are not—And as you have for a long time instructed me, why should not I now begin to teach you?

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Teach me what?

Amelia - MARY C Whatever I know, and you don't.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. There are some things I had rather never know.

Amelia - MARY C So you may remember I said when You began to teach me mathematics. I said I had rather not know it—But now I have learnt it gives me a great deal of pleasure—and [*hesitating*] perhaps, who can tell, but that I might teach something as pleasant to you, as resolving a problem is to me.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Woman herself is a problem.

Amelia - MARY C And I'll teach you to make her out.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. You teach?

Amelia - MARY C Why not? none but a woman can teach the science of herself: and though I own I am very young, a young woman may be as agreeable for a tutoress as an old one.—I am sure I always learnt faster from you than from the old clergyman who taught me before you came.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. This is nothing to the subject.

Amelia - MARY C What is the subject?

Anhalt - EDMUND B. — Love.

Amelia - MARY C [*going up to him*]. Come, then, teach it me—teach it me as you taught me geography, languages, and other important things

Anhalt [*turning from her*] Pshaw!

Amelia - MARY C Ah! you won't—You know you have already taught me that, and you won't begin again.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. You misconstrue—you misconceive every thing I say or do. The subject I came to you upon was marriage.

Amelia - MARY C A very proper subject from the man who has taught me love, and I accept the proposal [*curtsy*].

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Again you misconceive and confound me.

Amelia - MARY C Ay, I see how it is—You have no inclination to experience with me "the good part of matrimony:" I am not the female with whom you would like to go "hand in hand up hills, and through labyrinths"—with whom you would like to "root up thorns; and with whom you would delight to plant lilies and roses." No, you had rather call out, "O liberty, dear liberty."

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Why do you force from me, what it is villanous to own?—I love you more than life—Oh, Amelia! had we lived in those golden times, which the poet's picture, no one but you —

But as the world is changed, your birth and fortune make our union impossible—To preserve the character, and more the feelings of an honest man, I would not marry you without the consent of your father—And could I, dare I propose it to him.

Amelia - MARY C He has commanded me never to conceal or disguise the truth. I will propose it to him. The subject of the Count will force me to speak plainly, and this will be the most proper time, while he can compare the merit of you both.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. I conjure you not to think of exposing yourself and me to his resentment.

Amelia - MARY C It is my father's will that I should marry—It is my father's wish to see me happy—If then you love me as you say, I will marry; and will be happy—but only with you.—I will tell him this.—At first he will start; then grow angry; then be in a passion—In his passion he will call me "undutiful:" but he will soon recollect himself, and resume his usual smiles, saying "Well, well, if he love you, and you love him, in the name of heaven, let it be."#151;Then I shall hug him round the neck, kiss his hands, run away from him, and fly to you; it will soon be known that I am your bride, the whole village will come to wish me joy, and heaven's blessing will follow.

Enter Verdun, the BUTLER.

Amelia - MARY C [*discontented*]. Ah! is it you?

Butler. Without vanity, I have taken the liberty to enter this apartment the moment the good news reached my ears.

Amelia - MARY C What news?

Butler. Pardon an old servant, your father's old butler, gracious lady, who has had the honour to carry the baron in his arms—and afterwards with humble submission to receive many a box o' the ear from you—if he thinks it his duty to make his congratulations with due reverence on this happy day, and to join with the muses in harmonious tunes on the lyre.

Amelia - MARY C Oh! my good butler, I am not in a humour to listen to the muses, and your lyre.

Butler. There has never been a birth-day, nor wedding-day, nor christening-day, celebrated in your family, in which I have not joined with the muses in full chorus.—In forty-six years, three hundred and ninety-seven congratulations on different occasions have dropped from my pen. To-day, the three hundred and ninety-eighth is coming forth;—for heaven has protected our noble master, who has been in great danger.

Amelia - MARY C Danger! My father in danger! What do you mean?

Butler. One of the gamekeepers has returned to inform the whole castle of a base and knavish trick, of which the world will talk, and my poetry hand down to posterity.

Amelia - MARY C What, what is all this.

Butler. The baron, my lord and master, in company with the strange Count, had not been gone a mile beyond the lawn, when one of them ——

Amelia - MARY C What happened? Speak for heaven's sake.

Butler. My verse shall tell you.

Amelia - MARY C No, no; tell us in prose.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Yes, in prose.

Butler. Ah, you have neither of you ever been in love, or you would prefer poetry to prose. But excuse [*pulls out a paper*] the haste in which it was written. I heard the news in the fields—always have paper and a pencil about me, and composed the whole forty lines crossing the meadows and the park in my way home. [*reads.*]

Oh Muse, ascend the forked mount.
And lofty strains prepare,
About a Baron and a Count,
Who went to hunt the hare.

The hare she ran with utmost speed,
And sad, and anxious looks,
Because the furious hounds indeed,
Were near to her, gadzooks.

At length, the Count and Baron bold
Their footsteps homeward bended;
For why, because, as you were told,
The hunting it was ended.

Before them strait a youth appears,
Who made a piteous pother,
And told a tale with many tears,
About his dying mother.

The youth was in severe distress,
And seem'd as he had spent all,
He look'd a soldier by his dress;
For that was regimental.

The Baron's heart was full of ruth,
While from his eye fell brine o!
And soon he gave the mournful youth
A little ready rino.

He gave a shilling as I live,
Which, sure, was mighty well;
But to some people if you give
An inch—they'll take an ell.

The youth then drew his martial knife,
And seiz'd the Baron's collar,
He swore he'd have the Baron's life,
Or else another dollar.

Then did the Baron in a fume,
Soon raise a mighty din,
Whereon came butler, huntsman, groom,
And eke the whipper-in.

Maugre this young man's warlike coat,
They bore him off to prison;
And held so strongly by his throat,
They almost stopt his whizzen.

Soon may a neckcloth, call'd a rope,
Of robbing cure this elf;
If so I'll write, without a trope,
His dying speech myself.

And had the Baron chanc'd to die,
Oh! grief to all the nation,
I must have made an elegy,
And not this fine narration.

MORAL.

Henceforth let those who all have spent,
And would by begging live,
Take warning here, and be content,
With what folks chuse to give.

Amelia - MARY C Your muse, Mr. Butler, is in a very inventive humour this morning.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. And your tale too improbable, even for fiction.

Butler. Improbable! It's a real fact.

Amelia - MARY C What, a robber in our grounds, at noon-day? Very likely indeed!

Butler. I don't say it was likely—I only say it is true.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. No, no, Mr. Verdun, we find no fault with your poetry; but don't attempt to impose it upon us for truth.

Amelia - MARY C Poets are allowed to speak falsehood, and we forgive yours.

Butler. I won't be forgiven, for I speak truth—And here the robber comes, in custody, to prove my words. [*Goes off, repeating*] "I'll write his dying speech myself."

Amelia - MARY C Look! as I live, so he does—They come nearer; he's a young man, and has something interesting in his figure. An honest countenance, with grief and sorrow in his face. No, he is no robber—I pity him! Oh! look how the keepers drag him unmercifully into the tower—Now they lock it—Oh! how that poor, unfortunate man must feel!

Anhalt [*aside*]. Hardly worse than I do.

Enter the BARON -- YATES .

Amelia [*runs up to him*]. A thousand congratulations, my dear papa.

Baron -- YATES . For Heaven's sake spare me your congratulations. The old Butler, in coming up stairs, has already overwhelmed me with them.

Anhalt - EDMUND B . Then, it is true, my Lord? I could hardly believe the old man.

Amelia - MARY C And the young prisoner, with all his honest looks, is a robber?

Baron -- YATES . He is; but I verily believe for the first and last time. A most extraordinary event, Mr. Anhalt This young man begged; then drew his sword upon me; but he trembled so, when he seized me by the breast, a child might have overpowered him. I almost wish he had made his escape—this adventure may cost him his life, and I might have preserved it with one dollar: but, now, to save him would set a bad example.

Amelia - MARY C Oh no! my lord, have pity on him! Plead for him, Mr. Anhalt!

Baron -- YATES . Amelia, have you had any conversation with Mr. Anhalt?

Amelia - MARY C Yes, my Lord.

Baron -- YATES . Respecting matrimony?

Amelia - MARY C Yes; and I have told him ——

Anhalt [*very hastily*]. According to your commands, Baron ——

Amelia - MARY C But he has conjured me ——

Anhalt - EDMUND B . I have endeavoured, my Lord, to find out ——

Amelia - MARY C Yet, I am sure, dear papa, your affection for me ——

Anhalt - EDMUND B . You wish to say something to me in your closet, my Lord?

Baron -- YATES . What the devil is all this conversation? You will not let one another speak—I don't understand either of you.

Amelia - MARY C Dear father, have you not promised you will not thwart my affections when I marry, but suffer me to follow their dictates.

Baron -- YATES . Certainly.

Amelia - MARY C Do you hear, Mr. Anhalt?

Anhalt - EDMUND B . I beg pardon—I have a person who is waiting for me—I am obliged to retire.
[*Exit in confusion.*]

Baron [*calls after him*]. I shall expect you in my closet. I am going there immediately. [*Retiring towards the opposite door.*]

Amelia - MARY C Pray, my Lord, stop a few minutes longer; I have something of great importance to say to you.

Baron -- YATES. Something of importance! to plead for the young man, I suppose! But that's a subject I must not listen to. [*Exit.*]

Amelia - MARY C I wish to plead for two young men—For one, that he may be let out of prison: for the other, that he may be made a prisoner for life. [*Looks out.*] The tower is still locked. How dismal it must be to be shut up in such a place; and perhaps—[*Calls*] Butler! Butler! Come this way. I wish to speak to you. This young soldier has risked his life for his mother, and that accounts for the interest I take in his misfortunes.

Enter the BUTLER.

Pray, have you carried anything to the prisoner to eat?

Butler. Yes.

Amelia - MARY C What was it?

Butler. Some fine black bread; and water as clear as crystal.

Amelia - MARY C Are you not ashamed! Even my father pities him. Go directly down to the kitchen, and desire the cook to give you something good and comfortable; and then go into the cellar for a bottle of wine.

Butler. Good and comfortable indeed!

Amelia - MARY C And carry both to the tower.

Butler. I am willing at any time, dear Lady, to obey your orders; but, on this occasion, the prisoner's food must remain bread and water—It is the Baron's particular command.

Amelia - MARY C Ah! My father was in the height of passion when he gave it.

Butler. Whatsoever his passion might be, it is the duty of a true, and honest dependent to obey his Lord's mandates. I will not suffer a servant in this house, nor will I, myself, give the young man any thing except bread and water—But I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll read my verses to him.

Amelia - MARY C Give me the key of the cellar—I'll go myself.

Butler [*gives the key*]. And there's my verses—[*taking them from his pocket*] Carry them with you, they may comfort him as much as the wine. [*She throws them down.*] [*Exit Amelia - MARY C*]

Butler [*in amazement*]. Not take them! Refuse to take them—[*he lifts them from the floor with the utmost respect*]—

"I must have made an elegy,
And not this fine narration." [*Exit.*]

End Act III

ACT IV.

[Scene I.](#) [Scene II.](#)



SCENE I. *A Prison in one of the Towers of the Castle.* FREDERICK [*alone*].

Frederick - HENRY C. How a few moments destroy the happiness of man! When I, this morning, set out from my inn, and saw the sun rise, I sung with joy.—Flattered with the hope of seeing my mother, I formed a scheme how I would with joy surprize her. But, farewell all pleasant prospects—I return to my native country, and the first object I behold, is my dying parent; my first lodging, a prison; and my next walk will perhaps be—oh, merciful providence! have I deserved all this?

Enter AMELIA with a small basket covered with a napkin.—She speaks to someone without.

Amelia - MARY C Wait there, Francis, I shall soon be back.

Frederick [*hearing the door open, and turning around*]. Who's there?

Amelia - MARY C You must be hungry and thirsty, I fear.

Frederick - HENRY C. Oh, no! neither.

Amelia - MARY C Here is a bottle of wine, and something to eat. [*Places the basket on the table.*] I have often heard my father say, that wine is quite a cordial to the heart.

Frederick - HENRY C. A thousand thanks, dear stranger. Ah! could I prevail on you to have it sent to my mother, who is on her death-bed, under the roof of an honest peasant, called Hubert! Take it hence, my kind benefactress, and save my mother.

Amelia - MARY C But first assure me that you did not intend to murder my father.

Frederick - HENRY C. Your father! heaven forbid.—I meant but to preserve her life, who gave me mine.—Murder your father! No, no—I hope not.

Amelia - MARY C And I thought not—Or, if you had murdered any one, you had better have killed the Count; nobody would have missed him.

Frederick - HENRY C. Who, may I enquire, were those gentlemen, whom I hoped to frighten into charity?

Amelia - MARY C Ay, if you only intended to frighten them, the Count was the very person for your purpose. But you caught hold of the other gentleman.—And could you hope to intimidate Baron Wildenhaim?

Frederick - HENRY C. Baron Wildenhaim!—Almighty powers!

Amelia - MARY C What's the matter?

Frederick - HENRY C. The man to whose breast I held my sword——[*trembling*].

Amelia - MARY C Was Baron Wildenhaim—the owner of this estate—my father!

Frederick [*with the greatest emotion*]. My father!

Amelia - MARY C Good heaven, how he looks! I am afraid he's mad. Here! Francis, Francis. [*Exit, calling.*]

Frederick [*all agitation*]. My father! Eternal judge! tho do'st slumber! The man, against whom I drew my sword this day was my father! One moment longer, and provoked, I might have been the murderer of my father! my hair stands on end! my eyes are clouded! I cannot see any thing before me. [*Sinks down on chair*]. If Providence had ordained that I should give the fatal blow, who, would have been most in fault?—I dare not pronounce— [*after a pause*] That benevolent young female who left me just now, is, then, my sister—and I suppose that fop, who accompanied my father——

Enter Mr. ANHALT - EDMUND B .

Welcome, Sir! By your dress you are of the church, and consequently a messenger of comfort. You are most welcome, Sir.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. I wish to bring comfort and avoid upbraidings: for your own conscience will reproach you more than the voice of a preacher. From the sensibility of your countenance, together with a language, and address superior to the vulgar, it appears, young man, you have had an education, which should have preserved you from a state like this.

Frederick - HENRY C. My education I owe to my mother. Filial love, in return, has plunged me into the state you see. A civil magistrate will condemn according to the law—A priest, in judgment, is not to consider the act itself, but the impulse which led to the act.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. I shall judge with all the lenity my religion dictates: and you are the prisoner of a nobleman, who compassionates you for the affection which you bear towards your mother; for he has sent to the village where you directed him, and has found the account you gave relating to her true.—With this impression in your favour, it is my advice, that you endeavour to see and supplicate the Baron for your release from prison, and all the peril of his justice.

Frederick [*starting*]. I—I see the Baron! I—I supplicate for my deliverance.—Will you favour me with his name?—Is it not Baron——

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Baron Wildenhaim.

Frederick - HENRY C. Baron Wildenhaim! He lived formerly in Alsace.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. The same.—About a year after the death of his wife, he left Alsace; and arrived here a few weeks ago to take possession of his paternal estate.

Frederick - HENRY C. So! his wife is dead;—and that generous young lady who came to my prison just now is his daughter?

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Miss Wildenhaim, his daughter.

Frederick - HENRY C. And that young gentleman, I saw with him this morning, is his son?

Anhalt - EDMUND B. He has no son.

Frederick [*hastily*]. Oh, yes, he has—[*recollecting himself*]—I mean him that was out shooting to-day.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. He is not his son.

Frederick [*to himself*]. Thank Heaven!

Anhalt - EDMUND B. He is only a visitor.

Frederick - HENRY C. I thank you for this information; and if you will undertake to procure me a private interview with Baron Wildenhaim—

Anhalt - EDMUND B. Why private? However, I will venture to take you for a short time from this place, and introduce you; depending on your innocence, or your repentance—on his conviction in your favour, or his mercy towards your guilt. Follow me. [*Exit*].

Frederick [*following*]. I have beheld an affectionate parent in deep adversity.—Why should I tremble thus?—Why doubt my fortitude, in the presence of an unnatural parent in prosperity? [*Exit*].



SCENE II. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter BARON WILDENHAIM *and* AMELIA - MARY C

Baron -- YATES. I hope you will judge more favourably of Count Cassel's understanding since the private interview you have had with him. Confess to me the exact effect of the long conference between you.

Amelia - MARY C To make me hate him.

Baron -- YATES. What has he done?

Amelia - MARY C Oh! told me of such barbarous deeds he has committed.

Baron -- YATES. What deeds?

Amelia - MARY C Made vows of love to so many women, that, on his marriage with me, a hundred female hearts will at least be broken.

Baron -- YATES. Psha! do you believe him?

Amelia - MARY C Suppose I do not; is it to his honour that I believe he tells a falsehood?

Baron -- YATES . He is mistaken merely.

Amelia - MARY C Indeed, my Lord, in one respect I am sure he speaks truth. For our old Butler told my waiting-maid of a poor young creature who has been deceived, undone; and she, and her whole family, involved in shame and sorrow by his perfidy.

Baron -- YATES . Are you sure the Butler said this?

Amelia - MARY C See him and ask him. He knows the whole of story, indeed he does; the names of the persons, and every circumstance.

Baron -- YATES . Desire he may be sent to me.

Amelia [*goes to the door and calls*]. Order old Verdun to come to the Baron directly.

Baron -- YATES . I know tale-bearers are apt to be erroneous. I'll hear from himself, the account you speak of.

Amelia - MARY C I believe it is in verse.

Baron -- YATES . [*angry*]. In verse!

Amelia - MARY C But, then, indeed it's true.

Enter BUTLER.

Amelia - MARY C Verdun, pray have not you some true poetry?

Butler. All my poetry is true—and so far, better than some people's prose.

Baron -- YATES . But I want prose on this occasion, and command you to give me nothing else. [*Butler bows.*] Have you heard of an engagement which Count Cassel is under to any other woman than my daughter?

Butler. I am to tell your honour in prose?

Baron -- YATES . Certainly. [*Butler appears uneasy and loath to speak.*] Amelia, he does not like to divulge what he knows in presence of a third person—leave the room. [*Exit Amelia - MARY C*

Butler. No, no—that did not cause my reluctance to speak.

Baron -- YATES . What then?

Butler. Your not allowing me to speak in verse—for here is the poetic poem. [*Holding up a paper.*]

Baron -- YATES . How dare you presume to contend with my will? Tell in plain language all you know on the subject I have named.

Butler. Well, then, my Lord, if you must have the account in quiet prose, thus it was—Phoebus, one morning, rose in the East, and having handed in the long-expected day, he called up his brother Hymen——

Baron -- YATES. Have done with your rhapsody.

Butler. Ay; I knew you'd like it best in verse——

There lived a lady in this land,
Whose charms the heart made tingle;
At church she had not given her hand,
And therefore still was single.

Baron -- YATES. Keep to prose.

Butler. I will, my Lord; but I have repeated it so often in verse, I scarce know how.—Count Cassel, influenced by the designs of Cupid in his very worst humour,

"Count Cassel wooed this maid so rare,
And in her eye found grace;
And if his purpose was not fair,"

Baron -- YATES. No verse.

Butler.

"It probably was base."

I beg pardon, my Lord; but the verse will intrude in spite of my efforts to forget it. 'Tis as difficult for me at times to forget, as 'tis for other men at times to remember. But in plain truth, my Lord, the Count was treacherous, cruel, forsworn.

Baron -- YATES. I am astonished!

Butler. And would be more so if you would listen to the whole poem. [*Most earnestly.*] Pray, my Lord, listen to it.

Baron -- YATES. You know the family? All the parties?

Butler. I will bring the father of the damsel to prove the veracity of my muse. His name is Baden—poor old man!

"The sire consents to bless the pair,
And names the nuptial day,
When, lo! the bridegroom was not there,
Because he was away."

Baron -- YATES. But tell me—Had the father his daughter's innocence to deplore?

Butler. Ah! my Lord, ah! and you *must* hear that part in rhyme. Loss of innocence never sounds well except in verse.

"For ah! the very night before,
No prudent guard upon her,
The Count he gave her oaths a score,
And took in change her honour.

MORAL.

Then you, who now lead single lives,
From this sad tale beware;
And do not act as you were wives,
Before you really are."

Enter COUNT CASSEL.

Baron [*to the Butler*]. Leave the room instantly.

Count - RUSHWORTH. Yes, good Mr. family poet, leave the room, and take your doggerels with you.

Butler. Don't affront my poem, your honour; for I am indebted to you for the plot.

"The Count he gave her oaths a score
And took in change her honour."

[*Exit Butler.*

Baron -- YATES. Count, you see me agitated.

Count - RUSHWORTH. What can be the cause?

Baron -- YATES. I'll not keep you in doubt a moment. You are accused, young man, of being engaged to another woman while you offer marriage to my child.

Count - RUSHWORTH. To only *one* other woman?

Baron -- YATES. What do you mean?

Count - RUSHWORTH. My meaning is, that when a man is young and rich, has travelled, and is no personal object of disapprobation, to have made vows but to one woman, is an absolute slight upon the rest of the sex.

Baron -- YATES. Without evasion, Sir, do you know the name of Baden? Was there ever a promise of marriage made by you to his daughter? Answer me plainly: or must I take a journey to inquire of the father?

Count - RUSHWORTH. No—he can tell you no more than, I dare say, you already know; and which I shall not contradict.

Baron -- YATES. Amazing insensibility! And can you hold your head erect while you acknowledge perfidy?

Count - RUSHWORTH . My dear baron,—if every man, who deserves to have a charge such as this brought against him, was not permitted to look up—it is a doubt whom we might not meet crawling on all fours. [*he accidentally taps the Baron's shoulder.*]

Baron [*starts—recollects himself—then in a faltering voice*]. Yet—nevertheless—the act is so atrocious—

Count - RUSHWORTH . But nothing new.

Baron [*faintly*]. Yes—I hope—I hope it is new.

Count - RUSHWORTH . What, did you never meet with such a thing before?

Baron [*agitated*]. If I have—I pronounced the man who so offended—a villain.

Count - RUSHWORTH . You are singularly scrupulous. I question if the man thought himself so.

Baron -- YATES . Yes he did.

Count - RUSHWORTH . How do you know?

Baron [*hesitating*]. I have heard him say so.

Count - RUSHWORTH . But he ate, drank, and slept, I suppose?

Baron [*confused*]. Perhaps he did.

Count - RUSHWORTH . And was merry with his friends; and his friends as fond of him as ever?

Baron -- YATES . Perhaps [*confused*]—perhaps they were.

Count - RUSHWORTH . And perhaps he now and then took upon him to lecture young men for their gallantries?

Baron -- YATES . Perhaps he did.

Count - RUSHWORTH . Why, then, after all, Baron, your villain is a mighty good, prudent, honest fellow; and I have no objection to your giving me that name.

Baron -- YATES . But do you not think of some atonement to the unfortunate girl?

Count - RUSHWORTH . Did *your* villain atone?

Baron -- YATES . No: when his reason was matured, he wished to make some recompense; but his endeavours were too late.

Count - RUSHWORTH . I will follow his example, and wait till my reason is matured, before I think myself competent to determine what to do.

Baron -- YATES . And 'till that time I defer your marriage with my daughter.

Count - RUSHWORTH. Would you delay her happiness so long? Why, my dear Baron, considering the fashionable life I lead, it may be ten years before my judgment arrives to its necessary standard.

Baron -- YATES. I have the head-ach, Count—These tidings have discomposed, disordered me—I beg your absence for a few minutes.

Count - RUSHWORTH. I obey—And let me assure you, my Lord, that, although, from the extreme delicacy of your honour, you have ever through life shuddered at seduction; yet, there are constitutions, and there are circumstances, in which it can be palliated.

Baron -- YATES. Never [*violently*].

Count - RUSHWORTH. Not in a grave, serious, reflecting man such as *you*, I grant. But in a gay, lively, inconsiderate, flimsy, frivolous coxcomb, such as myself, it is excusable: for me to keep my word to a woman, would be deceit: 'tis not expected of me. It is in my character to break oaths in love; as it is in your nature, my Lord, never to have spoken any thing but wisdom and truth. [*Exit*

Baron -- YATES. Could I have thought a creature so insignificant as that, had power to excite sensations such as I feel at present! I am, indeed, worse than he is, as much as the crimes of a man exceed those of an idiot.

Enter AMELIA - MARY C

Amelia - MARY C I heard the Count leave you, my Lord, and so I am come to enquire—

Baron [*sitting down, and trying to compose himself*]. You are not to marry count Cassel—And now, mention his name to me no more.

Amelia - MARY C I won't—indeed I won't—for I hate his name.—But thank you, my dear father, for this good news [*draws a chair, and sits on the opposite side of the table on which he leans.—And after a pause*] And who am I to marry?

Baron [*his head on his hand*]. I can't tell.

[*Amelia appears to have something on her mind which she wishes to disclose.*]

Amelia - MARY C I never liked the Count - RUSHWORTH .

Baron -- YATES. No more did I.

Amelia [*after a pause*]. I think love comes just as it pleases, without being asked.

Baron -- YATES. It does so [*in deep thought*].

Amelia [*after another pause*]. And there are instances where, perhaps, the object of love makes the passion meritorious.

Baron -- YATES. To be sure there are.

Amelia - MARY C For example; my affection for Mr. Anhalt as my tutor.

Baron -- YATES . Right.

Amelia [*after another pause*]. I should like to marry. [*sighing.*]

Baron -- YATES . So you shall [*a pause*]. It is proper for every body to marry.

Amelia - MARY C Why, then, does not Mr. Anhalt marry?

Baron -- YATES . You must ask him that question yourself.

Amelia - MARY C I have.

Baron -- YATES . And what did he say?

Amelia - MARY C Will you give me leave to tell you what he said?

Baron -- YATES . Certainly.

Amelia - MARY C And you won't be angry?

Baron -- YATES . Undoubtedly not.

Amelia - MARY C Why, then—you know you commanded me never to disguise or conceal the truth.

Baron -- YATES . I did so.

Amelia - MARY C Why, then he said——

Baron -- YATES . What did he say?

Amelia - MARY C He said—he would not marry me without your consent for the world.

Baron [*starting from his chair*]. And pray, how came this the subject of your conversation?

Amelia [*rising*]. I brought it up.

Baron -- YATES . And what did you say?

Amelia - MARY C I said that birth and fortune were such old-fashioned things to me, I cared nothing about either: and that I had once heard my father declare, he should consult my happiness in marrying me, beyond any other consideration.

Baron -- YATES . I will once more repeat to you my sentiments. It is the custom in this country for the children of nobility to marry only with their equals; but as my daughter's content is more dear to me than an ancient custom, I would bestow you on the first man I thought calculated to make you happy: by this I do not mean to say that I should not be severely nice in the character of the man to whom I gave you; and Mr. Anhalt, from his obligations to me, and his high sense of honour, thinks too nobly—

Amelia - MARY C Would it not be noble to make the daughter of his benefactor happy?

Baron -- YATES . But when that daughter is a child, and thinks like a child——

Amelia - MARY C No, indeed, papa, I begin to think very like a woman. Ask *him* if I don't.

Baron -- YATES . Ask him! You feel gratitude for the instructions you have received from him, and fancy it love.

Amelia - MARY C Are there two gratuities?

Baron -- YATES . What do you mean?

Amelia - MARY C Because I feel gratitude to you; but that is very unlike the gratitude I feel towards him.

Baron -- YATES . Indeed!

Amelia - MARY C Yes; and then he feels another gratitude towards me. What's that?

Baron -- YATES . Has he told you so?

Amelia - MARY C Yes.

Baron -- YATES . That was not right of him.

Amelia - MARY C Oh! if you did but know who I surprized him!

Baron -- YATES . Surprized him?

Amelia - MARY C He came to me by your command, to examine my heart respecting Count Cassel. I told him that I would never marry the Count - RUSHWORTH .

Baron -- YATES . But him?

Amelia - MARY C Yes, him.

Baron -- YATES . Very fine indeed! And what was his answer?

Amelia - MARY C He talked of my rank in life; of my aunts and cousins; of my grandfather, and great-grandfather; of his duty to you; and endeavoured to persuade me to think no more of him.

Baron -- YATES . He acted honestly.

Amelia - MARY C But not politely.

Baron -- YATES . No matter.

Amelia - MARY C Dear father! I shall never be able to love another—Never be happy with any one else. [*Throwing herself on her knees.*]

Baron -- YATES . Rise, I command you.

[As she rises, enter ANHALT - EDMUND B .]

Anhalt - EDMUND B . My Lord, forgive me! I have ventured, on the privilege of my office, as a minister of holy charity, to bring the poor soldier, whom your justice has arrested, into the adjoining room; and I presume to entreat you will admit him to your presence, and hear his apology, or his supplication.

Baron -- YATES . Anhalt, you have done wrong. I pity the unhappy boy; but you know I cannot, must not forgive him.

Anhalt - EDMUND B . I beseech you then, my Lord, to tell him so yourself. From your lips he may receive his doom with resignation.

Amelia - MARY C Oh father! See him and take pity on him; his sorrows have made him frantic.

Baron -- YATES . Leave the room, Amelia - MARY C [*on her attempting to speak, he raises his voice.*] Instantly.—[Exit Amelia - MARY C

Anhalt - EDMUND B . He asked for a private audience: perhaps he has some confession to make that may relieve his mind, and may be requisite for you to hear.

Baron -- YATES . Well, bring him in, and do you wait in the adjoining room, till our conference is over. I must then, Sir, have a conference with you.

Anhalt - EDMUND B . I shall obey your commands. [*He goes to door, and re-enters with Frederick - HENRY C . Anhalt then retires at the same door.*]

Baron [*haughtily to Frederick*]. I know, young man, you plead your mother's wants in excuse for an act of desperation: but powerful as this plea might be in palliation of a fault, it cannot extenuate a crime like yours.

Frederick - HENRY C . I have a plea for my conduct even more powerful than a mother's wants.

Baron -- YATES . What's that?

Frederick - HENRY C . My father's cruelty.

Baron -- YATES . You have a father then?

Frederick - HENRY C . I have, and a rich one—Nay, one that's reputed virtuous, and honourable. A great man, possessing estates and patronage in abundance; much esteemed at court, and beloved by his tenants; kind, benevolent, honest, generous—

Baron -- YATES . And with all those great qualities, abandons you?

Frederick - HENRY C . He does, with all the qualities I mention.

Baron -- YATES . Your father may do right; a dissipated, desperate youth, whom kindness cannot draw from vicious habits, severity may.

Frederick - HENRY C. You are mistaken—My father does not discard me for my vices—He does not know me—has never seen me—He abandoned me, even before I was born.

Baron -- YATES. What do you say?

Frederick - HENRY C. The tears of my mother are all that I inherit from my father. Never has he protected or supported me—never protected her.

Baron -- YATES. Why don't you apply to his relations?

Frederick - HENRY C. They disown me, too—I am, they say, related to no one—All the world disclaim me, except my mother—and there again, I have to thank my father.

Baron -- YATES. How so?

Frederick - HENRY C. Because I am an illegitimate son.—My seduced mother has brought me up in patient misery. Industry enabled her to give me an education; but the days of my youth commenced with hardship, sorrow, and danger.—My companions lived happy around me, and had a pleasing prospect in their view, while bread and water only were my food, and no hopes joined to sweeten it. But my father felt not that!

Baron [*to himself*]. He touches my heart.

Frederick - HENRY C. After five years' absence from my mother, I returned this very day, and found her dying in the streets for want—Not even a hut to shelter her, or a pallet of straw—But my father, he feels not that! He lives in a palace, sleeps on the softest down, enjoys all the luxuries of the great; and when he dies, a funeral sermon will praise his great benevolence, his Christian charities.

Baron [*greatly agitated*]. What is your father's name?

Frederick - HENRY C. —He took advantage of an innocent young woman, gained her affection by flattery and false promises; gave life to an unfortunate being, who was on the point of murdering his father.

Baron [*shuddering*]. Who is he?

Frederick - HENRY C. Baron Wildenhaim.

[*The Baron's emotion expresses the sense of amazement, guilt, shame, and horror.*]

Frederick - HENRY C. In this house did you rob my mother of her honour; and in this house I am a sacrifice for the crime. I am your prisoner—I will not be free—I am a robber—I give myself up.—You *shall* deliver me into the hands of justice—You shall accompany me to the spot of public execution. You shall hear in vain the chaplain's consolation and injunctions. You shall find how I, in despair, will, to the last moment, call for retribution on my father.

Baron -- YATES. Stop! Be pacified—

Frederick - HENRY C. —And when you turn your head from my extended corse, you will behold my weeping mother—Need I paint how her eyes will greet you?

Baron -- YATES. Desist—barbarian, savage, stop!

Enter Anhalt alarmed.

Anhalt - EDMUND B. What do I hear? What is this? Young man, I hope you have not made a second attempt.

Frederick - HENRY C. Yes; I have done what it was your place to do. I have made a sinner tremble [*points to the Baron and exit.*]

Anhalt - EDMUND B. What can this mean?—I do not comprehend—

Baron -- YATES. He is my son!—He is my son!—Go, Anhalt,—advise me—help me—Go to the poor woman, his mother—He can show you the way—make haste—speed to protect her—

Anhalt - EDMUND B. But what am I to—

Baron -- YATES. Go.—Your heart will tell you how to act. [*Exit Anhalt - EDMUND B.*]
[*Baron distractedly.*] Who am I? What am I? Mad—raving—no—I have a son—A son! The bravest—I will—I must—oh! [*with tenderness.*] Why have I not embraced him yet? [*increasing his voice.*] why not pressed him to my heart? Ah! see—[*looking after him*]—He flies from the castle—Who's there? Where are my attendants? [*Enter two servants*]. Follow him—bring the prisoner back.—But observe my command—treat him with respect—treat him as my son—and your master. [*Exit.*]

End Act IV

