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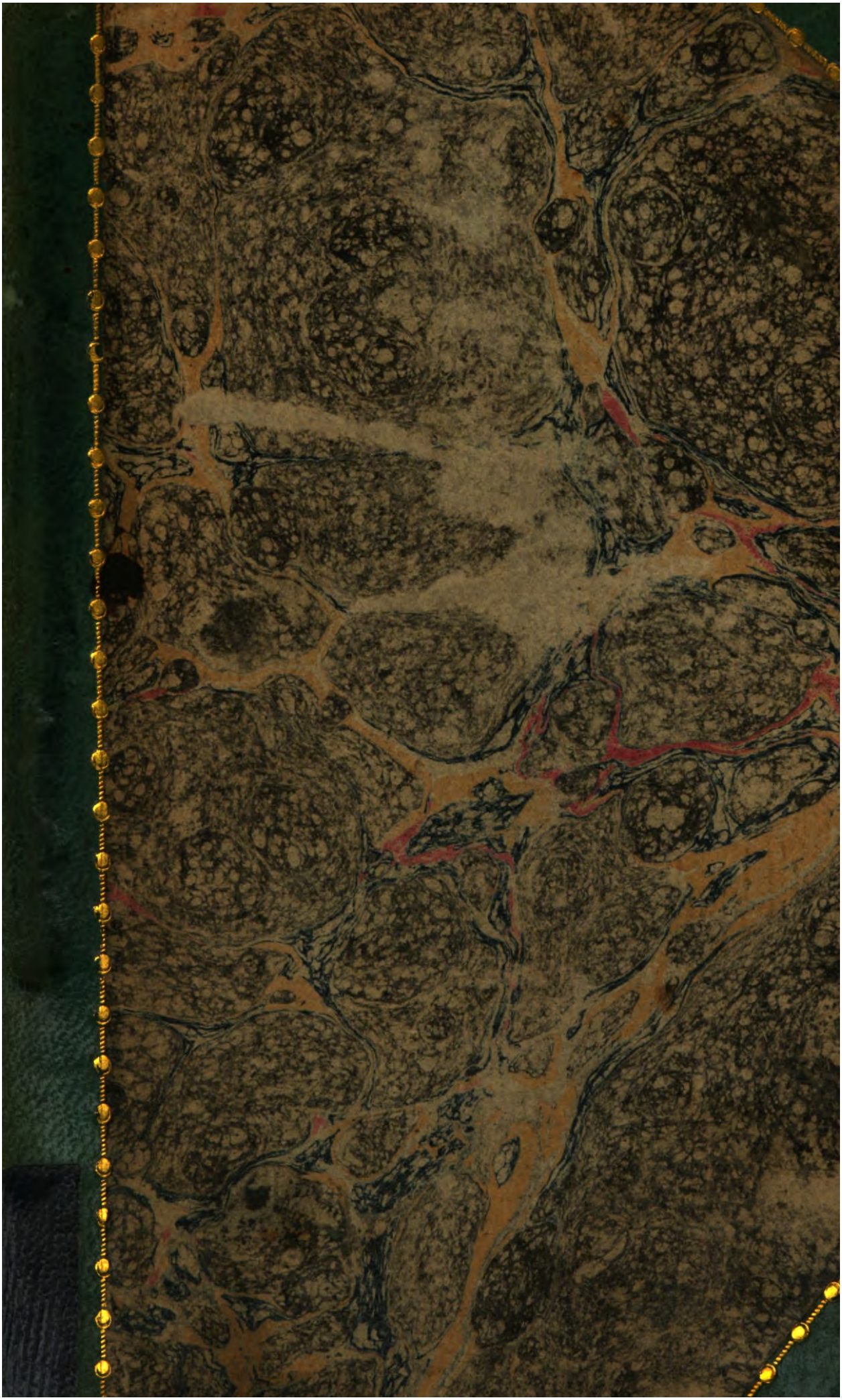

Malone. B. 162.

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[Giles,] Sale by Evans - July 1820

Malone. B. 163.

M E L I T E,

A

C O M E D Y.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

P. C O R N E I L L E.

L O N D O N:

Printed for and Sold by T. BELL, No. 26, BELL-YARD, TEMPLE-BAR, and G. BURNET, STRAND.—MDCCLXXVI.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ERASTUS, Lover of MELITE.

THYRSIS, Friend of ERASTUS.

PHILANDER, Lover of CLORIS.

MELITE, Beloved by ERASTUS and THYRSIS.

CLORIS, Sister of THYRSIS.

LISIS, Friend of THYRSIS.

CLITO, NURSE, &c.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

M E L I T E.

ACT. I. SCENE I.

SCENE. PARIS.

ERASTUS and THYRSIS.

ERASTUS.

I OWN, my friend, my diſorder is ſo incurable
That but one remedy offers for my relief;
And after the diſdain Melite has treated me with,
It would be but juſt to quit her for another.
But in ſpite of all her cruelty, ſhe rules with
Such powerful ſway o'er my heart, that I dare to murmur
Only in her abſence. In vain, I uſe every effort to
Surmount this paſſion, and make a thouſand
Reſolutions when ſhe is not preſent; for, I no ſooner
See her again, but a ſingle glance, rivets my
Fetters ſtronger, and throws ſuch a pleaſing and delightful
Veil o'er my reaſon, that I purſue my diſorder,
And fly from every remedy I propoſed. But this
Flattering hope, this pleaſing deluſion only rekindles
Up my flame, and confirms me the more her ſlave.

THYRSIS.

An excellent diſcourſe, and as admirably delivered.

So

So, my dear friend then, to convince me of your eloquence,
You put on a moſt grave countenance and counterfeit
Miſery and pain: and all this, for what? Is it not Eraſtus,
With a deſign to ſee how I ſhall condole and pity your
Unhappy ſtate? no, no, my friend, think not that
Thyrſis can ever ſtrive to comfort thee on a
Feigned grief, and accuſe your dear Melite
Of cruelty. Come, come, do I not perfectly know as well
As numbers elſe, how favourable you ſtand
In her opinion.

ERASTUS.

Ah! Thyrſis, thou art deceived; the kind reception
She gives me, and my perſeverance, has been the foundation
Of this falſe report. Her contempt is hid, and thoſe who
Feel not her power, cannot know what I have to
Combat with.

THYRSIS.

Prithee, what more would your love-ſick heart
Require than a favourable reception? is not that
Enough.

ERASTUS.

This favourable reception, the ſame to all as well as me,
Only makes my torments greater. She patiently hears,
My vows and ſighs, and yet when I ſpeak to her of marriage
She turns aſide, nor will hear it mentioned.

THYRSIS.

A truce with this diſſimulation, grave Eraſtus.
Marriage! your friend Thyrſis knows you are
Not ſuch a blockhead as to take her for thy wedded wife.

ERAS-

ERASTUS.

How, do you doubt of my intentions?

THYRSIS.

Not I, upon my word; I know both thy intentions and
Affections: the latter, I believe, are placed upon a fair
Face, regular features, and a pair of killing eyes, all which
Are perishable commodities, and therefore should be marketable
While they are in their prime;—but as for your intentions,
Why, faith, it would be extremely uneivil of a gentleman
So qualified for the lover as Erastus, to see so amiable
A lady without saying a few amorous words
To her. Thus confining your passion to a flattering
Compliment only, your marriage design, I fancy, lies
Another way. Do not I know that many of the richest
And noblest families, would be glad of your alliance, and do not I?—

ERASTUS.

Stop, Thyrsis, your words are treason, to love so
Pure as mine, which looks on sordid avarice
As a crime. Gold to me has no allurements, and the
Person of my Melite, is to me, the greatest treasure
This earth can afford.

THYRSIS.

Egad, I begin to think thou art in earnest;
But, if that is the road you take for your love, it is
Quite unbeaten, and only followed by those who have not
Sudied life. All those fine words are proper enough
To take a lady's ear, and those a youthful love should
First learn. His speech should be entirely composed
Of flames, hearts, passion, love, darts and the whole

Vocabulary in Ovid's art of love. He ſhould counterfeit
The pain, the brightneſs of her eyes occaſion, and then
Intreat her to cure it: invoke Phœbus, promiſe
Impoſſibilities and miracles, and ſwear that no obſtacle ſhall conquer
His ardent paſſion. In ſhort, a lover may talk
And make as many oaths as he pleaſes, which ſhould be looked
Upon only as wind.

ERASTUS.

Leave ſuch diſcourſe for meaner beauties,
Such as Chryſolite, but my Melite muſt be treated
In another manner. Oh! ſhe is all that can
Be painted beautiful. Venus, the immortal goddeſs
Whoſe power is ſo great, hid her diminiſhed head at
Melite's birth; the graces deſcended from their heavenly
Abode and accompanied her eyes, while the little powerful
God of love, ſeated himſelf on every feature,
And made her ſmiles his darts.

THYRSIS.

Amaſingly ſublime, heroical and romantic:
Nay, I do not doubt but you could have lengthened
This emphatical and metaphorical ſpeech much
Farther. Poor lover--unfortunate Eraſtus, I pity thee
From my ſoul. Doſt thou not yet know, that the
More adorable the beauty before marriage, the more
It palls upon our appetite afterwards, and an object
Becomes of leſs value in our eyes
By poſſeſſion. 'Tis true, at firſt we only throw out a
Thouſand fooleries to a woman, but then 'tis only to gain
Her favour, a charm of uſe to the lover, but of none to the huſband.

ERASTUS.

This disgraceful caprice, and these vain chimera's
Will never stagger the worthy mind. He that has taken
A woman of honour to his bed, need never fear a suborner's art.

THYRSIS.

Possibly you are in the right, but this choice is so very difficult that it very often
Deceives the most cautious man. Hymen himself
Is so heavy and dismal a burthen, that we should regard him
In the same light as death. To be all our live's
Fastened to one woman! to lose all our quiet and
Repose by undutiful children, whose number choaks up the
Whole house! ah! my friend, he that loves such a yoke
Admires it with but little reason.

ERASTUS.

Talk as thou list, yet marriage is the port we must
All one time or other arrive at: all must love, and the libertine
How wild soe'er he may be, will be caught at last.
Thou, even thou Thyrsis, who now roams with freedom
From fair to fair, will not escape the unerring dart
Of love.

THYRSIS.

And should Thyrsis ever marry, believe it will not
Be merely for the beauty of a face. No, I shall regulate
My desires as my interest guides: should Doris's purse be
Handsome and her features ugly, I should esteem her
More than the admired Phillis or Amintа. Her fortune would
To me be a sufficient balance for the other's beauty.
—This then, my friend, is the best way to love;
Believe me, there is no stronger bond for conjugal Affec-

Affection than a weighty purſe. Beauty, perſon,
Wit, air, and other accompliſhments may warm the heart,
But believe me, they will never heat the kitchen.
Hymen too, before ſo amiable, has many miſerable days
After ſome follies of love are over, and a long laſting friendſhip
Is very badly attempted to be raiſed on ſuch weak
Foundations; while gold has a certain ſplendor
Which gives to the moſt ugly features a kind of beautiful tint,
That laſts a longer time than the marriage of the
Mere love-ſick pair.

ERASTUS.

Thy boaſtings are vain and idle, nor could even Thyrſis
Keep his opinion, if he ſaw my lovely Melite.

THYRSIS.

Ha, ha, ha; no, no, my friend my opinion is unalterable,
I can withſtand the power of the brighteſt eyes.

ERASTUS.

Lucky chance, here comes Melite; now ſummon up all
Your courage, and fortify your heart againſt all
That's beautiful; for, notwithſtanding all you have
Said, you'll be obliged to own I'm in the right.

SCENE II.

ERASTUS, MELITE and THYRSIS.

ERASTUS.

Madam, your preſence is fortunate to ſettle a diſpute
Between two friends. A ſlave to love defend its power
Againſt a rebellious heart, that never yet has felt its force.
All my arguments have not been ſufficient to conquer
His detraction, and no longer able to guard againſt his ſubtlety,

Muſt

Muſt leave to your eyes what was ineffectual to
my words.

MELITE.

You ſhould rather ſay, he will find there ſomewhat
To confirm his averſion to love.

THYRSIS.

My heart already retracts my words, and I muſt
lament the fate of
Thoſe who have unfortunately ſeen ſo much beauty.

MELITE.

Your compliment is unreaſonable;
I ne'er have been the cauſe of love to any one:
Nor never had that power.

ERASTUS.

Oh! that power is but too great, behold be-
fore you
An unfortunate proof, who would glory in his
charms
If Melite would not ſo cruelly puniſh.

MELITE.

No more Melite, ceaſe your idle complaints,
Nor at the expence of your underſtanding flatter me.

THYRSIS.

Madam, 'twould be ungrateful for you not to
Acknowledge the gifts which nature has given you.
That face, that air, all conſpires to convince
The power of your charms. Let me then, madam,
Plead in Eraſtus's favour, nor with icy looks
Receive his burning flame.

MELITE.

And does a foe to love ſpeak this language:
It would better ſuit your courage to aſſiſt your words
And practiſe the advice you give to others.

THYRSIS.

I now madam, acknowledge my error,
And own the power of beauty.

MELITE.

To find, you ſir, retract your opinion on ſo
frivolous
A ſubject, makes me ſmile: but as flattery I deteſt,
I muſt

I muſt quit this preſent diſcourſe. You gentlemen
Will excuſe my abſence.

ERASTUS.

In human fair, on whom my every
Happineſs depends, wilt thou then leave me thus
In doubt and torment.

MELITE.

Leave Eraſtus, this idle diſcourſe, nor
Longer trouble thyſelf and me, with what I will
not hear. [Exit.

SCENE III.

ERASTUS.

She's gone, nor heeds my paſſion.
Ah! Thyrſis, what think'ſt thou of my fair, do I
deſerve
The blame which late thou gav'ſt me?

THYRSIS.

Yes, ſhe is indeed lovely. My heart till now
Inſenſible of love, with difficulty oppoſes
Its invincible power.

ERASTUS.

Rather freely own ſhe has poſſeſſion of your heart,
But that your honour wilt not ſuffer the name of
An unfaithful friend to be blended with the lover,
And that nothing but our friendſhip could make thee
Avoid it. Thy paſſion will ſhew itſelf, and ſhortly
We ſhall ſee proofs of it in your writings.

THYRSIS.

In fact, after the ſight of ſo much beauty,
Who could avoid ſuch a ſubject for his muſe?
In faith Eraſtus, after the beholding of ſuch raviſhing
Charms what mortal could reſtrain his pen,
I always loved thoſe plaintive ſtrains, where ſighs,
Tears, and torrents are depicted; of thoſe in for-
mer times,
My muſe has ſung, but only knew the name and
ſound,
The real power of love I had not felt.

Per-

Permit my muſe then, now Eraſtus to depict the delightful
Flame with which you burn. Melite can receive
It as your own.

ERASTUS.

Ah! Thyrſis, in vain your friendſhip ſtrives for
My intereſt yet ſpeaks for itſelf. Nor do I doubt,
But while you endeavour to paint the power of my love,
You will only utter thy own hearfelt ſentiments.

THYRSIS.

May heaven exert its utmoſt vengeance on me,
If ever the thought of ſuch a crime enters this friendly breaſt.

ERASTUS.

Enough, I reſt content, and rely upon thy word,
Thy honour, I know is too nice, to wrong your friend. [Exit.

THYRSIS.

And yet I fear my treacherous heart will
Soon revolt. No power binds us to keep our word,
When love is in the way.
Urged by its power the beſt friends do prove,
That oaths, and promiſes, are ſlight to love.

SCENE IV.

PHILANDER and CLORIS.

PHILANDER.

And will my Cloris not forgive a fault ariſing
From my love? will her anger ſtill continue?

CLORIS.

The pardon follows the offence, ſince I find
Philander innocent.
Oh! my Cloris, thou adorable object of my flame,
How my heart is o'erwhelmed with the exceſſes of
Your charms. I try to find ſome defect of nature,
In thy perſon, but in vain, the more I gaze,
The more I am enthrall'd, thy beauty, judgment,
Wit, and temper, all, all conſpire to charm me.

CLO-

CLORIS.

And Cloris own's ſhe's pleaſed, to think that
After this alarm, thy deceived imagination,
Returns thee to thy love, never more I hope
To change.

PHILANDER.

Thy beauty will ſpeak my perſeverance, nor
Need my farther vows, aſſure you of
My fidelity. But I ſhould deſpiſe the wretches whoſe
Faith was only kept alive thro' promiſes: thy charms
So perfect, will bind this heart for ever, nay, would
Render conſtant the gayeſt libertine.

CLORIS.

Ceaſe, Philander from thy praiſes, my affection,
Reſt aſſured of, as long as thou'rt faithful. But while,
Thou art ſo laviſh on my perſon, thy paſſion loſes half
Its power by flattery. Falſe praiſe is only ſecret
Blame. If I appear agreeable in thine eyes, 'tis
All I aſk, and the greateſt happineſs to which
I can aſpire.

PHILANDER.

This goodneſs overcomes me, yet midſt the pleaſure
With which my heart rebounds, I ſtill hang wavering
Between hope and fear. Therefore, my lovely Cloris
Since our love is mutual and in pity to the ſufferings,
I have long endured, name the day ſhall make
Philander happy.—

CLORIS.

Ceaſe thy tranſports, I ſee my brother.

SCENE V.

THYRSIS, PHILANDER, and CLORIS.

THYRIS.

If I may believe appearances,
My preſence here might be diſpenſed with.

PHILANDER.

What are thy thoughts then, Thyrſis?

THYRSIS.

THYRSIS.

Not to conceal my thoughts, Philander,
You both appear ſo happy with each other, that it
Would not require the aid of a ſorcerer, to devine,
How importunate a third perſon muſt at preſent
prove.

CLORIS.

You have full liberty to ſay what you will, ſince
The flame, with which we burn is not criminal.
And to convince thee of the truth of my aſſertion,
Thy conſent is only wanting to fix the day for
Our mutual happineſs.

THYRSIS.

That ſiſter you may reſt aſſured of, but I
Believe, my pretty Cloris, has thought
The day already too long deferred, and would have
Not been greatly diſobliged it had been ſooner.

CLORIS.

You are jocular brother, and ſeem in a mighty
Good humour. May I requeſt the ſubject.

THYRSIS.

The thought of rendering my ſiſter happy, will
Always make me ſo.

CLORIS.

Ah! Thyrſis that is not all.

THYRSIS.

True, it is not all, I own Cloris, I have
Seen———

CLORIS.

What?

THYRIS.

One, my ſiſter, whom if Philander had ſeen with
My eyes, thy affairs, I aſſure you, would have been
But in in a bad ſituation.

CLORIS.

Your ſervant, ſweet brother, but I am poſſeſſed,
Of too much vanity, to think that Philander's heart,
Will ever be ſurprized by another.

THYRSIS.

A truce with thy vanities, and reſt upon my word,
That the object I have ſeen, far, far ſurpaſſes you.

PHILANDER.

Thyrſis, ſpeak with more reſpect of the object of
My flame. That blaſphemy in another's mouth,
Would have riſqued a life.

THYRSIS.

Oh, her beauty is beyond.—

CLORIS.

Prithee brother, ſtop your enthuſiaſm, and let us
Know this beauty's name.

THYRSIS.

Not ſo faſt, not ſo faſt, good ſiſter: 'tis not ſuch an eaſy
Matter to get this ſecret from my breaſt—but I
Fear I have already been too importunate, ſo I ſhall leave
You to the mercy of love; and you, Philander, to your
Brunette—farewell.—

CLORIS.

A ſecret! but he muſt not think thus to avoid
My inquiries; no, I will cloſely follow his
Steps, and watch all his motions; but I'll diſcover it. (going.)

PHILANDER (Stopping CLORIS)

Is it thus then you would quit a lover, to follow
A brother for an idle curioſity.

CLORIS.

Excuſe me for a moment, Philander, my curioſity
Will prove no infidelity to thee. Let me but at preſent
Seek to diſcover this ſecret, we will laugh together
At the flame with which this brother of mine
Conſumes, who ſo long has been the foe to love.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

ERASTUS.

'Tis true, then—I had rightly judged his unfaithful
Heart, would not be proof againſt this cruel
Fair one, who treats all her lovers with diſdain,
And only ſhews her favours to the laſt that offers.
No ſooner did he ſee her, but I marked his viſage,
And read the preſage of his diſloyal friendſhip.
My whole frame ſtruck with an unknown trembling
Foreboded my misfortune. Since that time,
This fickle friend avoids my ſight, and if chance
Throws him in my way, my ſpeech confounds him,
And his diſordered ſenſes anſwers me but with difficulty:
Melite too, regards him with the utmoſt pleaſure:
The name of Thyrſis betrays her paſſion, her ſighs
And broken words, her praiſes of him all evince it:
His perfections pleaſe her, and his flatteries alone
Charms her ear: No longer now they hide their real
Flame, but the open day is witneſs to their meetings;
Laſt night I ſurprized the traitor with Melite,
And marked the content that ſat on either brow!
Quit then this love, this friendly reſpect, Eraſtus, and
Seek for exemplary vengeance on both their
Treacherous heads. But 'twill be better to conceal
My anger, and by rallying of their flame, evince
My ſentiments.

SCENE II.

ERASTUS and MELITE.

ERASTUS.

What, alone madam, without the amiable Thyrſis? really
It is amazing your new lover ſhould ſo eaſily
Quit you, when ſo fair an opportunity offers of recounting
The exceſs of his fervent love.

MELITE.

MELITE.

You know then the ſtate of Thyrſis's heart?

ERASTUS.

Perfectly, ſince he has ſeen Melite, his mind
Is pleaſed with the remembrance of her charms;
And his only pleaſure now is with the object he
So much eſteems.

MELITE.

And has he not a right to pleaſe himſelf? love
To him, as well as to me, appears a puniſhment:
And his coldneſs plainly ſhews he is reſolved never
To love.——

ERASTUS.

Any but Melite.

MELITE.

I have no ſuch vanity, to think that any merit
I poſſeſs, can conquer his obdurate heart.

ERASTUS.

Yet madam, 'twould ſuit Melite to have ſome for
This new adorer of her charms. Yes, madam, I perceive
Your love for Thyrſis:—but your averſion towards me, ſhall no longer
Trouble this heart. I know you ſee him, hear him and hang
Upon his words: can I then doubt where your affection
Lies, and can Eraſtus e'er expect Melite to hear his paſſion.

MELITE.

And ſhould Thyrſis e'er talk to me as Eraſtus
Has done, no longer would I admit his preſence.

ERASTUS.

But, madam, if new objects thus perpetually changes
Your affection, think that Thyrſis as well as me
Will alter both his temper and his language. At
Preſent beloved as ſoon as ſeen, his paſſion heard with pleaſure,

Looks

Looks from the object he adores, that but too well
Explain his happineſs; can he complain? or
Murmur at his fate, like me.

MELITE.

Eraſtus, ceaſe this jealous diſpoſition, nor longer
Let ſuch frenzy torment your brain.
Leave me with freedom to my own inclinations,
Nor attempt to govern my diſpoſition.
Who made you the cenſor of my actions?
Muſt I be accountable to your chagrin?

ERASTUS.

No, madam, but in ſpite of all my power,
In ſpite of all the ſlights you have ſhewn towards me
I cannot avoid reddening with ſhame for your
Behaviour. The world, Melite, the world already
Speaks of the too great privity you allow him.

MELITE.

Think on your own concerns, nor reſt uneaſy
On my behaviour.

ERASTUS.

'Tis enough, madam: henceforth I throw off every
Anxious thought for a woman I once adored:
But thinkeſt thou, I could without regret ſee thee
Deaf to the lawful prayers of honourable men, yet
Ready to attend to thoſe of a ſuborner.

MELITE.

I can no longer bear to hear your ſlanderous tongue:
Your jealous fears drives you almoſt to madneſs.
Farewel, Eraſtus! but remember, thy wrong aſperſions
Pleads for Thyrſis more than you imagine. [Exit.

SCENE III.

ERASTUS.

So this then is all my painful ſervices deſerves?
Is it thus my flame, is recompenſed by cruelty and
Diſdain? and can you prefer a traiterous friend to

Eraſtus

Eraſtus—but think not thy baſeneſs, though by
resentment
Urged, I'll publickly expoſe. 'Twould only feed
thy pride,
And too greatly evince the abject love with which I
Burn. No, I'll revenge myſelf by other means, and
Appear with indifference to both.—But O, thou
unfaithful
Friend, reſt aſſured, thy hour is not far diſtant,
when by
A cunning equal to thy crimes, diſorder ſhall reign
Where thou looked for nought but quiet and repoſe.
I know a crafty, venal and deſigning acquaintance
Of Melite, ever ready to commit any act for thoſe
Who pays her well, nor thinks aught unjuſt where
Intereſt is concerned. To her I'll go, and without
delay,
Give ſpeedy revenge to my irritated mind. [Exit.

SCENE IV.

THYRSIS and CLORIS.

THYRSIS.

Siſter, I muſt requeſt your opinion of theſe few
Lines I have jumbled together in favour of the
miſtreſs
Of my friend. See if thou knoweſt her, and whether my
Heavy muſe has accommodated the words to the
Paſſions of another. (Reads.)
" What beauty with Melite can compare."

CLORIS.

Ah! brother, it is ſufficient.

THYRSIS.

Peace, Cloris, thy too haſty interruption
Is not ſupportable. (Reads.)
" What beauty with Melite can compare,
" Than my paſſion what ſtronger can prove,
" So matchleſs her charms, I declare,
" Can be equalled by nought but my love.

" Tho'

"Tho' new beauties appear to my eyes,
"Though her coldneſs embitters my heart,
"Too cruel, ſhe hears not my ſighs,
"Too lovely, ſhe rivets the dart.
"But no wonder ſhe's deaf to my flame,
"To the pow'r of the god I ſubmit,
"Since I love's whole power muſt feel,
"But ſhe only beauty and wit."

CLORIS.

And ſo theſe lines were compoſed for Eraſtus!

THYRSIS.

Yes, I have there depicted the flame with which he burns.

CLORIS.

Or, rather what you feel in your own breaſt.

THYRSIS.

Thou know'ſt me well, Cloris, and that my humour,
Free and volatile, has no other part in them than that of being the author.

CLORIS.

Poor brother, there needs no more than thy ſilence
And the language of thy eyes to excuſe thee; they, in
Spite of all, plainly evince how much your heart
Sighs for Melite.

THYRSIS.

For Melite?

CLORIS.

Yes, for Melite, who by the appearance of thy muſe
Seems to feel for you not the leaſt ſpark of that
Paſſion you have depicted.

THYRSIS.

My muſe then has led you into an egregious error,
And thy wiſe conjectures have deceived you.
What, think'ſt thou that the attraction of a pair of fine
Blue eyes, or a delicate complexion, can have any power
Over my gay and volatile diſpoſition. No, my muſe is only

A faithful

A faithful portrait of what Eraſtus ſuffers for this hard
Hearted female.

CLORIS.

Prithee, brother, if that is really the caſe, and thou
Doſt not feel the leaſt paſſion for Melite, evince it
By moderating that joy which appears in your countenance,
And other ſtrong ſymptoms of your love plainly viſible

THYRSIS.

Well then, Cloris, I will own that notwithſtanding
All my friendſhip for Eraſtus, I cannot conquer this
Fatal paſſion. By turns by friendſhip urged, by turns
By love, my wavering mind is toſſed. Sometimes I
Am the friend, and then the rival, and often bluſh
That I muſt be either perfidious to Eraſtus, or inſenſible to
Melite's charms. My troubled ſoul divided between
Theſe two contrary paſſions, knows not which way to Act.

CLORIS.

A very pretty and winding diſcourſe to convince me
That love has conquered you againſt your will.
But I know too well, that in the preſent times
Mankind only ſerves their friends in
Thoſe matters where their own intereſt is not concern'd.—But to the point,
Uneaſineſs, and friendſhip aſide, you fear leſt ſo ſtrong
An advocate as gold, ſhould plead more powerful in
Melite's breaſt, than thy paſſion.

THYRSIS.

Thou haſt devined the real cauſe of all my fears.

CLORIS.

And of theſe hideous fears Cloris will relieve thee.
Tell me, Thyrſis, how long has Eraſtus attended on
Melite.

THYRSIS.

For upwards of two years he has rendered homage
To her beauty.

CLORIS.

CLORIS.

But has he offered her marriage?

THYRSIS.

He never ſees her but he preſſes her on that theme.

CLORIS.

Then let him preſs on,
Nor let that unhappy lover give you the leaſt
Uneaſineſs: believe me, however rich he may be,
Melite diſlikes him; for after two years of ſubmiſſive
Love paid to a female, if he was not the object of
Her hate, ſhe would accept the hand where the heart
Was offered with it.

THYRSIS.

But the abſolute power of her mother ——

CLORIS.

Think already then your buſineſs finiſhed?
If the mother is violent, and would force her,
She'll fly for reſcue to another lover's arms.

THYRSIS.

My fears are diminiſhed, and my pain appeaſed,
I fly to know my fate. Farewel, then, Cloris,
And may I meet with as favourable a reception with
Melite, as Philander has with you. [Exit.

CLORIS.

Succeſs attend you. But what makes Philander
Stay. The ſlothful lover ſhould meet with ſome
Rebuke; my frowns perhaps may learn him
To ſpeed his lingering ſteps another time.

[Exit.

SCENE V.

ERASTUS and CLITO.

ERASTUS (giving him a letter.)

Go, ſeek Philander; tell him that Melite has
Deſcribed her paſſion in this epiſtle: tell him
That ſhe could no longer conceal the flame with
Which ſhe burns.—But be cautious, play thy
Part like an accompliſhed actor; obſerve his colour,

Air, his ſpeech and looks: let not a motion eſcape your
Notice, that we may know his mind by his emotion.

CLITO.

It ſhall be done.

ERASTUS.

And, harkee, Clito,
Uſe all your addreſs to gain his confidence.

CLITO.

Rely, ſir, upon my fidelity?
I warrant you, in ſpite of all his reſolution, he
Falls into the pit.—But, ſir, you know——

ERASTUS.

Here, fly, be diligent; (gives him a purſe.)
Common ſouls have only money for their end.
But return as ſoon as poſſible.

CLITO.

Have but a little patience, ſir, and you may hear
Every particular from his own mouth.

ERASTUS.

How?

CLITO.

Quick, conceal yourſelf behind this corner, I
See Philander coming: from thence you can, when
Occaſion requires, appear and aſſiſt my undertaking,
But ſee, he comes;—to your concealment.

SCENE VI.

PHILANDER and CLITO. (ERASTUS liſtening.)

PHILANDER.

What a reception from Cloris? The means of
Pleading my excuſe—

CLITO.

I am happy, ſir, in meeting you ſo a-pro-pos
To diſcharge my truſt. (gives him a letter.)

PHILANDER.

What is this?

CLITO.

CLITO.

You will find, ſir, in that letter, a happineſs
Offered to you, the greateſt man on earth would
wiſh for.

PHILANDER (opens the letter, and reads.)

" IN ſpite of all the duty and decorum of my
" ſex, this epiſtle has eſcaped my pen in favour of
" your acknowledged merit. Know then, Melite
" writes this, and loves Philander. If ſhe is ſo
" happy as to receive a reciprocal affection, Philander
" will at preſent be contented with this epiſtolary
" correſpondence, until ſhe has removed the pre-
" judice of her mother for another perſon.

" MELITE."

ERASTUS, (feigning to have overlooked him as he
read the letter.)

'Tis true, then, that the beautiful Melite
Has made a worthy choice of the brave Philander;
And, that he from his merit alone has obtained
What Thyrſis and Eraſtus in vain have ſought.
Indeed, my regret for her refuſal of my love is
Greatly diminiſhed by ſo good a choice: beſides,
Her coldneſs towards me, has made me weary
So long of offering my vows in vain, and glad to be
Releaſed by ſo good a pretext.

PHILANDER.

What, ſay'ſt thou, Thyrſis adores Melite? that
Rebel to the power of love.

ERASTUS.

With the utmoſt ardour he conſumes with his
Paſſion.

PHILANDER.

If then, Eraſtus, thou withdraw'ſt thy heart,
Withdraw it in favour of thy friend: but, upon
My regard for Melite, I would not have you
Rely. My love, already fixed, can never look
towards

Another.

Another. And all that I can do, is to endeavour
To turn her esteem for me towards my Cloris's
brother.

ERASTUS.

What is thy Cloris when compared with Melite?

PHILANDER.

Erastus must pay more respect to her I love.

ERASTUS.

I will allow, that Cloris is lovely, young, and witty;
But not comparable to the divine beauty that
Now offers you her heart.

PHILANDER.

Whether her beauty surpasses her's I love, or not,
I cannot change; my heart is fixed on one,
And is insensible to all the world beside.

ERASTUS.

Consider the advantage that will accrue; her
Riches will counterbalance your love for Cloris.

PHILANDER.

Shameful motive! No, Cloris meets me
With an equal flame; nor can this proffered
Love of Melite be so true as her's.

ERASTUS.

Philander, undeceive yourself, place
Both Melite and Cloris in their proper light,
And see the difference of their love.
Melite, in her love for you, exposes herself
To a contemptuous denial: while the other
Loved you not till you was first smitten.
One is beloved by abundance of adorers, yet
Fixes her choice on thee, in preference to all the rest.
The other, receiving no other addresses but thine,
Accepts the choice, because no other offers.
This ———

PHILANDER.

Farewell, Erastus, so unimportant are
Thy arguments, they cannot shake my constancy.
Expect to see me here again in a couple (aside to Clito)
Of hours, when I'll return an answer.

CLITO.

CLITO.

Freely diſpoſe of my poor abilities. [Exit.

ERASTUS. (alone)

He may attempt to diſguiſe his real ſentiments,
Yet I plainly ſee the bait is ſwallowed. Cloris
No longer has the power ſhe had o'er his heart
An hour ago. Oh! bleſt revenge! Thus
My ſubtlety by one artful ſtroke will
Render both the brother and the ſiſter miſerable.

SCENE VII.

THYRSIS, ERASTUS, MELITE.

THYRSIS.

Eraſtus, ſtop, a word with you.

ERASTUS.

What has Thyrſis to ſay?

THYRSIS.

To give Eraſtus the verſes that he promiſed him.

MELITE (apart while Eraſtus reads.)

What can they both be diſcourſing about? This jealouſy
Between them will produce a quarrel, and the
Compliments they now pay each other, are perhaps
Only civilities they diſown in their hearts.

ERASTUS, (returning Thyrſis the verſes.)

Another time, Thyrſis, ſome preſſing buſineſs at
Preſent hinders me from accepting of them.
Your muſe may elſewhere find a better meſſenger.

THYRSIS, (alone.)

Very conciſe, truly: heavens! what a humour
The man is in. Cold looks, frowns, and
An abrupt departure, are all the thanks I am to
Receive for racking my brain to hammer out theſe
Few lines. If now I had not but a good aſſurance,
I'd deliver them to his miſtreſs myſelf, and take this
Favourable opportunity to acquaint her what power her
Eyes have o'er my heart. Alas! that I ſhould be ſo
Confoundedly overtaken with this curſed modeſty!
Ah!

Ah! there ſhe is now, and I dare not, for the blood and ſoul
Of me, utter a ſingle ſyllable. Her looks ſtrikes me dumb.
Ha, ſhe comes this way; would to God ſhe'd break
The ice firſt.

SCENE VIII.

THYRSIS and MELITE.

MELITE.

You are contemplating, ſir; you will excuſe my
Interruption, in demanding what has ſo abruptly robbed
Us of the company of your friend.

THYRSIS.

That, madam, is beyond my comprehenſion;
For ſcarce had I opened my mouth, but the fantaſtical
Spark turned upon his heel, and left me.

MELITE.

My appearance, perhaps, occaſioned this ſudden
Departure: ſure never a lover was like Eraſtus.
Uneaſy at every one that ſpeaks to me but himſelf;
He never meets me but with reproaches. And you, even his
Avowed friend, cannot ſee me without giving him offence.

THYRSIS.

And his anger is the lighteſt of all my troubles.
Could I but gain Melite's favour, a legion of rivals
Like to Eraſtus, would not turn aſide my love.

MELITE.

Such diſcourſe from Thyrſis I muſt not hear,
Eraſtus——

THYRSIS.

Talk not of Eraſtus; conſult your own will.
Muſt you, who poſſeſſes a ſupreme power
Over every heart, not have the diſpoſal of her own?
Love of all paſſions owns no law, nor rule,
Nor counſel, but what it dictates of itſelf.

ME-

MELITE.

I own then, Thyrsis, tho' 'tis my sex's nature to conceal
Their passion, that thy merit stronger than
Thy flattering arguments, renders me less scrupulous
Of giving up Erastus. I perhaps may say
Too much, and shew myself a too easy conquest.
But Thrysis by that will see, the strength
Of my affection by the confidence I repose in him.

THYRSIS.

What joy! what love o'erflows my elated heart
At this acknowledgement. Yes, Melite, you shall find me true,
Faithful and sincere: since I am not despised
By you, my chiefest care, shall be to wait upon
Your pleasure, and gratify the least of your desires.
This sonnet which I wrote for Erastus, will better
Speak my flame, than I at present can.

MELITE.

I accept it, as the precious token of your love,
But I must leave you, I hear my mother's voice,
Farewell! and be faithful, in spite of the jealous Erastus. [Exit.

THYRSIS.

Heavens! sure never man was so happy, and since,
Erastus was first offended, i'll change my friendship
For him, into a more stronger passion for his mistress,
In vain we boast of friendship's powerful sway,
All yield to love; and all, it's power obey.
[Exit.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

PHILANDER.

Thou hast conquered, Melite, it is impossible any
Longer to be insensible to such a multitude of favours.
Those letters where without disguise thy thoughts,
Are painted: those wherein thy whole heart is
Written, have charmed all my senses: their

De-

Delightful promiſes, are preferable to the endearments
Of Cloris. But Melite I offend thee, by mentioning
The name of her, who ſo long has rendered me blind to
Thy adorable chorms.
Importunate remembrance, why in ſpite of all
My efforss, doſt thou place before my eyes a portrait I
Would feign efface. Fly then from my mind, nor
Longer trouble my ardent tranſports: return to Cloris,
Tell her from me, that ſhe now is free to make another
Choice, that I no longer burn for her, or if a
Spark of love remains, I wiſh it may be extinguiſh'd,
Tell her that Melite, like a goddeſs rules with
Sovereign ſway over all our deſires, diſpoſes of
Our hearts, compels our wills, and that all our deſigns by
Her ſurmounted, think themſelves too happy to obey
Her orders. Tell her that's all my vows.—

SCENE II.

PHILANDER and THYRSIS.

THYRSIS.

Philander.

PHILANDER.

Who calls Philander.

THYRSIS.

Thyrſis, whoſe fortune now at its utmoſt height,
Cannot be perfect, till he has made thee a partner of his happineſs.

PHILANDER.

Your confidence I reſpect as an honour.

THYRSIS.

'Twould be imprudence in me to attempt to
Diſſemble or conceal what my eyes would but render
Too apparent.

PHILAN-

PHILANDER.

Indeed if I can judge by your countenance, if I can read
Your thoughts in your eyes, they expreſs a moſt amazing
Joy, that I cannot even form a ſubject expreſſive
Enough of the ſigns I ſee.

THYRSIS.

If the ſigns only ſurprizes thee, what then will the real occaſion
Of them do? my fortune is greater than can be imagined:
Beloved by a fair one, beautiful, ſenſible, genteel,
Witty and whoſe charms might ſtrike the moſt
Obdurate heart.

PHILANDER.

If ſhe is ſuch as you have painted her, your choice
Is good; but—

THYRSIS.

But what?

PHILANDER.

Doſt thou love her?

THYRSIS.

Love her, by heavens, nought can equal
The flame with which I burn.

PHILANDER.

And this beautiful Damſel—

THYRSIS.

Feels the ſame paſſion for your humble ſervant,
But why theſe queſtions?

PHILANDER.

Only to remind you, that a beautiful
Face is very often no more than the hypocritical
Maſk of a bad heart.

THYRSIS.

Oh! but my——

PHILANDER.

Stop, Thyrſis, I have obſerved many of their ſex
Have ſeen ſome who have ſeemed to be all ice, yet

Burnt with a concealed flame, which increaſed
The more it was confined. Others, I have ſeen who
Under the fatal appearance of proofs of love,
Which they did not feel, have lulled the paſſion
Of their lovers by their pretended flame. But
I have ſeen very few whoſe paſſion anſwered
To their faces.

THYRSIS.

Yet, of the laſt you ſpeak of my face muſt be numbered
For I hold myſelf as ſure poſſeſſed of her heart,
As you do of my ſiſters.

PHILANDER.

From that very reaſon, believe me Thyrſis
Both our lives will be attended with a like event.

THYRSIS.

If I ſhould not be happy I am greatly deceived.

PHILANDER.

To humour thee, then, I will not damp your
Flattering expectations. But prithee, who is this amiable fair one?

THYRSIS.

Melite.

PHILANDER.

Melite?

THYRSIS.

Ay, no other than that beautiful maid to whom
Every heart is turned.

PHILANDER.

And you met with a favourable reception.

THYRSIS.

Reception. A perfect love has too many ſigns
For a lover not to obſerve. A glance, a look, a--

PHILANDER.

Ridiculous favours, idle tokens,
Which only ſerve to deceive too credulous minds.
Had you no other proofs?

THYR-

THYRSIS.

Her word and plighted faith.

PHILANDER.

And are thoſe all mere trifles. You ſhould tell me of an
Amiable tenderneſs, little kindneſſes
And all thoſe proofs of love, which ſhould be joined to ſuch
Promiſes you ſpeak of. You ſhould be poſſeſſed
Of letters, her hand-writing, to confirm you of her Love.

THYRSIS.

Let thoſe who chuſe them ſeek ſuch idle trifles,
Which are not always real proofs; for my part
I have her word, nor do I deſire more.

PHILANDER.

If that is all then, I believe, I know a friend of
Your's, who has more intereſt in her breaſt than you.

THYRSIS.

I know who thou mean'ſt, but that rival
Has more to complain of than rejoice;
Eraſtus who has met with her rigorous diſdain—

PHILANDER.

No, no, there thou'rt perfectly miſtaken, I ſpeak of
Another leſs unfortunate than he.

THYRSIS.

I know only of Eraſtus that loves her.

PHILANDER.

To keep thee no longer in ſuſpenſe, even while
Your loving Melite was amuſing you with her
Words, an unknown rival poſſeſſes all her
Heart, and the diſſembler, in contempt of your flame
Has each day by letters proffered herſelf to him.

THYRSIS.

'Tis treaſon all, Melite holds ſuch an action in utter abhorrence.

PHILANDER.

In pity then, and to draw thee from this error
I lately received this letter, read it, and there
You'll find how likely your ſucceſs may prove.

" Letter

"Letter ſuppoſed from MELITE to PHILANDER."

"I begin to ſet a greater value on myſelf, ſince "I have the happineſs of pleaſing you, and my "glaſs offends me in not repreſenting me beauti- "ful enough, to merit your affection. I would "alſo have you know that Melite thinks only to "poſſeſs thy heart, as an extraordinary recom- "pence from an exceſs of love, with which ſhe "endeavours to ſupply the defect of the graces "heaven has denied her,"

PHILANDER.

What ſay'ſt thou now, Thyrſis? does her ſentiments not
Sting thee?

THYRSIS.

Not in the leaſt, the letter being in thy hands, gives me
Not the leaſt uneaſineſs.

PHILANDER.

The reaſon?

THYRSIS.

The bearer knowing the friendſhip I have
For you, has in gallantry left it in your poſſeſſion,
Knowing there is nothing hid between two perfect friends.

PHILANDER.

You flatter yourſelf in too great a manner, and ſeem
To be fond of your own deception. But, I believe
I can find another of theſe epiſtles, which, belonging
To you, ſhould be certainly reſtored to the real owner. See there.

(gives Thyrſis another letter.)

THYRSIS. (reads)

"You have nought to fear from Thyrſis; I "only permit his company, that his faults may be "more ſtriking to my mother; after which Phi- "lander and Melite will be at leiſure to laugh to- "gether

" gether at the ſimple imaginations with which
" both the brother and ſiſter have fed their ex-
" pectations."

PHILANDER.

Now, Thyrſis, doſt thou think thoſe letters
Were addreſſed to thee?

THYRSIS.

Traitor, is it thus, then, that the ſlight you pay my
Siſter, muſt only ſerve you as a ſubject for your laughter?
Is it thus too, Melite forfeiting her word, only makes a
Jeſt of ſo black a perjury; and is it thus you ſuborn
My love without a bluſh? Villain, if thy courage
Dare to ſupport thy crime, follow me—a
Sudden puniſhment ſhall ſucceed thy treacherous actions.

PHILANDER.

If, by being undeceived, your raſhneſs impels
You to throw away your life, let thy deſpair ſeek
Some other to do you the favour. As for your
Humble ſervant ——

THYRSIS.

Coward, doſt thou fear to draw to thy ſword?

PHILANDER.

No, not abſolutely afraid to draw my ſword,
But only timorous for the conſequences. I have not
The leaſt notion Thyrſis, of being obliged to fly my
Country, and leave the object of my love, becauſe you chuſe
To die. Beſides, we fight at great diſadvantage if you
Are killed. Why it is not much matter, the loſs is not
So great, as only one perſon is loſt: but if I die,
Another's life is loſt with mine; Melite
Never could ſurvive me.

THYR-

THYRSIS.

Vain coxcomb, thy want of courage, and thy reasons,
Are both shameful proofs of your baseness. But,
Once for all, follow me, or I will stigmatize thee to
Public view as a notorious coward, who dare
Not venture his life in support of his honour.

PHILANDER.

As for my life, why that is no longer in my
Disposal; but since I find you will not hear reason,
Why, faith, I had rather part with my mistress,
Than my life; therefore this evening will take my
Leave of Melite.—So farewel. [Exit.

THYRSIS.

Farewel, and remember you keep your word.

SCENE III.

THYRSIS.

Perfidious wretch! thy cowardice protects you!
To what mean actions will the coward stoop!
These letters, left in my possession, and which Philander
Regards only as superfluous favours, would be to me
An inestimable blessing. These letters, which are the
Witnesses of all our shame, only proves Melite's
False disposition, Philander's perjury, and my deficiency
Of judgment, in being thus deceived.—It is but
Just, such an unfaithful wretch as Philander, should
Meet with such a traitress as Melite, for quitting Cloris.
Yet, I believed the false appearances with which she
Fed my frivolous hopes. I believed her looks, her eyes
Filled with love, spoke the sentiments of her treacherous
Heart. O heavens! that so much deceit should ever exist

Under

Under ſo fair a form, to cheat mankind!—It cannot be:
So much beauty could not be falſe.—Did not Melite
Own her love, nay, ſwear I might rely on her affection?
Why am I then ſo credulous, to believe this deceitful
Fable, this forgery with which he would deceive me;
But all his efforts are in vain.—Her words own that ſhe
Loved; and that ſweet remembrance rekindles up my flame.
I know not what to think or credit; her words now fix
Me that ſhe's true—then her letters, her very name pleads
Againſt her.—Away, then, with this flame which flatters me
That ſhe is true.—Alas! I now too plainly ſee her volatile
Diſpoſition. Her pledged words are flown, and her pen
Speaks ſtrongly againſt her. Have not I here the
Shameful image of her flame, where the diſgraceful
Offer of her heart only fills mine with rage.
O! I ſhall ſtart out to madneſs, and all my troubled
Senſes are loaded with a mortal grief.—But let me
Be calm, let me conceal my ſhame, and if I muſt die,
Let it be in ſecret, that my guilt may not give her
Treacherous ſoul the vanity of aſſerting I died for her.

SCENE IV.

THYRSIS and CLORIS.

CLORIS.

How, does my brother turn from me! Gods,
What a change.—You ſeem not to know me, now turn
Pale, then red, while your wandering eyes ſhews ſome

Inward

Inward trouble. If Cloris ever merited a brother's love
Let her know what affliction now torments him.

THYRIS.

Since thou wouldſt know the cauſe of my preſent
Emotion, thou ſhall hear it. But, before I
Acquaint thee with my fate, prepare to hear
What I dread will but too much afflict you.—
In one word, we both are unfortunate; both our
Love's are croſſed, and only made a jeſt of.—Philander.——
Alas! grief ſtifles my ſpeech; farewel then Cloris,
Farewel, I can ſpeak no farther; take theſe letters
And read both our fates.

CLORIS.

But let not your diſordered mind—

THYRSIS.

Let me intreat you, Cloris.—

CLORIS.

How, ſhall I then leave thee to the raſh effect of
Melancholy and diſtraction: no, before thou reſolvedſt to die
Let me read the cauſe of all this trouble.

CLORIS. (after having read the letters.)

And is this all the cauſe of your chagrin?
What, muſt you be offended, becauſe this unfaithful fair
One throws off the maſk, and ſhews you how greatly you
Have been deceived? learn the ſubtlety of love better
For the future, and know that artful women ſeldom diſcover
The bottom of their thoughts. Their eyes too, aiding their
Diſguiſe, gives them the power of artfully deluding.
There are other females as beautiful as Melite,
Deſerves your love; be not then uneaſy at loſing
This flighty, changeable maid, but ſeek for

Ano-

Another who is more ſincere and faithful. Fickle as the
Wind, ſhe never could fix her choice, and Damon, Ariander,
Geront and Eraſtus by turns have been her ſlaves.
You, Thyrſis, have alſo joined the band, and Philander
Now is the object of her wiſhes. But why do I ſay now?
—Perhaps, already ſome other youth ſupplants him.
Think then, Melite with all her charms, no more
Than the gay coquet, whoſe heart accompanies not her
Tongue. Infidelity is her favourite ſyſtem,
And to a man of ſenſe her beauty being join'd
With ſo fickle a mind, would have no attractions.

THYRSIS.

Think not to ſtop my fatal deſign by thy reproaches?
And whether they are truths or falſities
You only redouble my pain inſtead of
Relieving me. Farewel! none but death can
Give me eaſe. [Exit.

CLORIS.

Yet, Thyrſis ſtop.—he's gone, and whither will his
Deſpair drive him. Preſerve me, heavens, from
Such raſhneſs. An inconſtant lover has left me, —
I will leave him too; my anxiety for the loſs would
But render his triumph greater. Thoſe that
Afflict themſelves for the loſs of a lover, give only
More advantage to thoſe who ſlight them.
Let me act better, and by braving his inconſtancy,
Shew him he was of too ſlight importance to
Give me any pain. Let then, Philander, pay his
Adorations to the ſhrine that pleaſes him, if he expects
That I ſhould mourn his loſs, he is much miſtaken.
Oh! that my brother, would bear it with as much

Resolution as I do; I'll endeavour to find him
Out, and once more try to divert his attention from
This fickle fair: how dearly
Does the thought of revenge delight me. These
Letters will furnish me with an opportunity of
Gratifying it: in them I shall have sufficiency to
Disturb their hearts.—But here comes one, who
Willingly would avoid me.

SCENE VI.

PHILANDER and CLORIS.

CLORIS.

How, Philander, do you pass me without a single look.

PHILANDER.

Some pressing business, madam, prevents me from
Enjoying this fortunate interview as I could wish

CLORIS.

Must I then love more than I am loved: my whole
Thoughts are on Philander.——

PHILANDER.

My hurry is great, if Cloris has any thing to say,--

CLORIS.

I detain you too, I fear.
But as thy faith is plighted to me, I am not the least
Alarmed at thy indifference. Did not thy business
Press thee to be gone, I would have shewn thee
What Thyrsis's muse has produced for the charming
Object of his passion. I have just obtained it and
Some letters from the object he adores. But your
Time is precious, another opportunity—

PHILANDER.

The present time is best, I can spare a few
Minutes for their perusal; quick Cloris, satisfy
My curiosity, let me see how he has depicted his
Flame.

CLORIS.

Here they are, but you must promise me
Before you have them, never to divulge what is
Contained therein: do not think—

PHI-

PHILANDER (recognizing the letters.)

Ay, and are they then in your poſſeſſion, return them Cloris.—

CLORIS.

No, Philander, they are as well in my cuſtody
As in yours. I ſhall preſerve them better, and
Keep by me the perjured words of an inconſtant
Woman.

PHILANDER.

Madam, your ſex protects you, but
I will not tamely put up with this injury:
Your brother, Cloris, your brother's blood
Shall anſwer for this violence.

CLORIS.

How, Philander, valiant on a ſudden,
Ha, ha, ha, he whoſe peaceable hand would never
Suffer him to draw his ſword, now talks of
Honour and of blood; indeed, couragious ſir, if
Your ſword does no more execution than your
Words, it will not terrify even a woman.

PHILANDER.

You may joke, madam, but the event will
Prove my courage. But I loſe my time in talking
To an idle woman. Farewel! tremble for thy
Brother.

CLORIS.

If I had no other reaſon to tremble for his life
than from thy threats, Cloris would be indeed
Happy. But alas! his paſſion o'erwhelms his
Reaſon.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

MELITE and NURSE.

NURSE.

This obſtinacy to be ſo ſecret and reſerved unjuſtly
Accuſes me of indiſcretion.

MELITE

MELITE.

Your importunity is insupportable; how can I
Inform you of what I am not acquainted with?

NURSE.

The visits of Erastus now less frequent, is a
Sufficient proof of some secret disquiet; besides the
Coldness and discontent between you, are only certain
Signs of a disgust—yet you would conceal this
Mystery from me, and thus be severely punished for
Want of my advice, which hitherto you have Successfully followed.

MELITE.

If thou would'st have me devine the cause
Of Erastus's absence, possibly it may arise from his
Having met with a more agreeable object than
Melite to entertain him.

NURSE.

No, Melite, 'tis not on such slight foundations
That a lover quits his mistress, whom he has most
Faithfully followed for two years. Perhaps, some
Disdain on your part has affronted him; but this
Practice should not be followed by young women:
She who is seen in public, should govern
Herself with address and circumspection: disdain and
Frowns become her not; or, if she ought at any time to
Use them, it should be when by absence her lover
Deserves reproof. A little coldness properly managed
May fix the youth whose heart is not wholly
Engaged; and this pride might make him more
Esteem the gentle nature he before did not perceive.
Besides, she should render herself agreeable to all,
Hear all that's said, and without letting her heart be
Surprized, be complaisant, and permit their vows:
Her looks should be the same to every lover,
So that not one may be jealous of another, yet
Each seperately think himself the happy object
Of her choice. Thus should she form her conduct

And

And let all her admirers live in hope, till ſhe has
Made the prudent choice, and preferred the man
Whoſe fortune is ſuperior to her own.
If Melite, you had cloſely purſued this track
Eraſtus would at preſent have been more conformable

MELITE.

But this diviſion of my regard, ſuits not
Eraſtus's diſpoſition; nor will he ſuffer me to look
On any other, thinking that every word I ſpeak to
Any one but him, are but as ſo many thefts
Committed on his love.

NURSE.

I now perfectly underſtand thee, and conceive the
Reaſon of his abſence. But who is this rival?—

MELITE.

If you ſo perfectly underſtand me, you muſt
Know 'tis Thyrſis.

NURSE.

How, Thyrſis, his beſt friend! it grieves me
Much, that thou haſt ſown diſcord between them,
Beſides thou muſt perceive the diſadvantage
Between the two. Eraſtus has much more wealth
than Thyrſis.

MELITE.

Wealth has no power o'er a generous mind.

NURSE.

All the world eſteems him, and every female but
You, would be happy in ſuch an offer.

MELITE.

The report of his merit does not dazzle me.

NURSE.

Conſider his fortune?

MELITE.

Let him diſtribute it to thoſe who want it.

NURSE.

Think, 'tis that alone mankind eſteems.

MELITE.

And 'tis that alone makes mankind ſo deſpicable.
A man, whoſe only virtues conſiſts in wealth
Will be only eſteemed by mean and wretched minds.

NURSE.

NURSE.

If he has any faults his money can repair them.

MELITE.

Rather ſay his money will produce them.
The rich man, commonly deſpiſes good qualities
Which are the ſolid and only ornaments: and a
diſgraceful
Luxury and a vicious life, are the too common
Attendants on a weighty purſe.

NURSE.

At length, then I perceive——

MELITE.

That a jealous lover, though poſſeſſed
Of unbounded riches, will never obtain a place
Within my heart.

NURSE.

Too plain I ſee, then, that this flatterer of thy
Charms, has gained a conqueſt o'er thee, and in
Spite of all my prudent counſel has implanted
Errors in thy mind. Should thy mother know this--

MELITE.

Leave that care to me. I ſee Thyrſis's
Siſter coming this way.

NURSE.

Perhaps, ſhe brings you ſome news from this
New adorer.

MELITE.

Your curioſity is too impertinent. Leave me,
That our diſcourſe may not be interrupted, by thy
Officious care. [Exit Nurſe,

SCENE II.

CLORIS and MELITE.

CLORIS.

Altho' madam, acquainted with you, but
By name, yet your merit which fame ſpeaks loudly
Of, makes me take part in whatever concerns you.
Therefore, hazarding my welcome, I come, perhaps
Importunely to evince you, that your affection has
Not been very prudently fixed

MELITE.

MELITE.

Madam, you might perhaps put ſome other
Perſon in pain with this artifice. But as for me,
I do aſſure you, I do not repent of having made
So good a choice, nor is my heart proffered
But to a youth who juſtly deſerves my love.

CLORIS.

There, madam, you muſt excuſe me;
The youth I ſpeak of is the leaſt deſerving of your love.

MELITE.

If I had only a weak aſſurance of his love, you
Might render me ſuſpicious; but, I am not the leaſt
Aſtoniſhed at your accuſing him, ſince you have
Some intereſt in his concerns.

CLORIS.

I own I love and eſteem him, more than I did before his
Crime: you may judge if I can hate him, when it
Was only in favour of me, that he has betrayed you.

MELITE.

To endeavour to make him unfaithful; is that generous?

CLORIS.

Is there need of compulſion where his duty lies?
'Tis that he only follow, when he quits Melite.

MELITE.

How, does duty compel him to be unfaithful?

CLORIS.

If he had no juſter reaſon than his promiſe,
He ought to keep it.

MELITE.

That, madam, makes againſt you, to me his word is given.

MELITE.

Poſſibly, but long before, a ſolemn vow bound him to me;
Can he then depart from it, or accept your offered hand?

MELITE.

MELITE.

Excuſe me, madam, I took you for another,
And thought it was Cloris that I ſpoke to.

CLORIS.

'Tis true, you are not deceived.

MELITE.

Then Cloris means to be merry at my expence,
And the ſiſter of my lover forms a pretended rival.

CLORIS.

And to blind my ſuſpicions, an unfaithful woman
Would appear true! ah, Melite, know that I am
But too well informed of what you would conceal;
Philander has told me all, you think he loves you,
But when laſt he left you, he related to me the
Moſt trivial circumſtance with which you would
Suborn his paſſion.

MELITE.

I, ſuborn Philander! what art thou ſaying?

CLORIS.

The truth.

MELITE.

Indeed, you are exceedingly pleaſant,
But rather go too far; therefore to ſtop your mirth
Know, I never ſaw Philander, nor ever heard of
Him before.

CLORIS.

Since then you dare boldly aſſert ſuch falſities?
You will at leaſt believe your own epiſtles.
There, madam, read, and convince yourſelf.

MELITE.

Heavens, what an impoſtor! this is
Not my writing.

CLORIS.

Since madam, you perſiſt in your aſſertions
'Tis time to take my leave. The letters you may
Keep in your poſſeſſion as proofs of your diſgrace.

MELITE.

Mighty well; but madam, my innocence
Requires you to give up the name of this impoſtor,
That the diſgrace may fall on the real author.

CLOR-

CLORIS.

What ſignifies your denial when the proof's
So certain; but thoſe that can aſſert a falſity
Knows well how to ſupport it.——

MELITE.

Do not, madam, take ſo much pains to defame me;
All that I deſire to know, is, if ever I ſpoke
A word to Philander.

CLORIS.

Let us a while ſtop our diſcourſe, Liſis comes this
Way, his looks beſpeak ſome diſpleaſure.

SCENE II.

LISIS, MELITE and CLORIS.

LISIS to CLORIS

Prepare yourſelf to hear a mournful event,
Which plunges our hearts in wretchedneſs.
Thy brother is no more.

MELITE.

What, is Thyrſis dead;

LISIS.

Yes, full of rage, at the inconſtancy
Of the fair he loved, a thouſand times he curſed
The ſight of day; called on your name, and at
Length in the utmoſt deſpair flung, himſelf in my
Arms and expired.

MELITE.

Oh! heavens, (faints.)

CLORIS.

Help, ſhe faints, quick Liſis, fly for aid.

SCENE III.

CLITO, NURSE, MELITE, LISIS and CLORIS.

CLITO.

From whence proceeds this noiſe?

NURSE.

What means this ſudden cry?

CLORIS.

Behold Melite.

NURSE.

Alas! ſhe's dead; her colour's flown, and her whole
Frame is of an icy coldneſs.

CLORIS.

Affiſt to carry her to her chamber, my own
Sorrows overcome me. Oh! my brother; I come
To take a laſt ſalute.

SCENE IV.

ERASTUS.

At length I triumph and my friendly fate
Has given me the ſucceſs I wiſhed.
Now is my happineſs complete, ſince by my art
Melite no longer has her lover;
And, as if my revenge was yet too ſmall,
Philander and Cloris runs the ſame dangerous courſe:
Yet why ſhould their diſunited hearts be
Puniſhed for another's crime! what have they done
That I ſhould afflict their minds?—unwelcome conſcience,
Fly far from me, and let nought but joy o'erwhelm me.
Cloris offends me, being the ſiſter of the ungrateful
Thyrſis, and Philander juſtly merits his puniſhment
For his credulity and infidelity. But what means
The ſorrowful looks of Clito.

SCENE V.

ERASTUS and CLITO.

CLITO.

Alas, your deceit and forgery, of which I
Was the accurſed inſtrument, has killed the
Unfortunate Thyrſis.

ERASTUS.

'Tis well, the traitor's gone, and death has kindly
Relieved me from the rival who ſo long has
Troubled me.

CLITO.

CLITO.

But that is not all the effect of your ſcheme,
Melite is likewiſe dead.

ERASTUS.

Melite, ſay'ſt thou?

CLITO.

Alas! it is but too true, the fatal moment
That ſhe heard the news of Thyrſis's death
Terminated her life.

ERASTUS.

Oh! heavens, then, I am indeed wretched!

CLITO.

Ceaſe your complaints and rather boaſt that
Your arts have deſtroyed, all that the world
Held fair and lovely.

ERASTUS.

Villain, is it thus by your ſarcaſtical reproach
You would upbraid me; rather ſay, that by my
Artifice, at one ſtroke I've loſt a miſtreſs and a
Friend. Tell me that I have violated the moſt
Sacred laws, and betrayed, ſeduced, ſuborned and
Killed, all that was precious in friendſhip and
In love, and then thou wilt ſpeak but half my
Guilt.—Thyrſis and Melite then are no more.
Oh! thou cruel ſiſters, why didſt thou ſo ſoon
Cut the thread of their precious lives;—but why
Do I accuſe thee;—I, Eraſtus, am the impoſtor,
I am the deteſtable author of their miſeries.
—Alas, what effect has my accurſed revenge
Occaſioned.—But why this uſeleſs ſorrow, this
Superfluous repentance; it will not give me
Back Melite. No, ſhe has followed Thyrſis,
And Eraſtus ſoon will join them; my blood ſhall
Anſwer my jealouſy and my baſeneſs—but whither
Will my deſpair drive my troubled ſoul? what
Confuſed murmur's this that ſtrikes my ear.
What flaſhes of fire is darting through the air?
—See the thunderbolt with vengeance hurl'd,
Is levelled at me: ſee the earth opens
Ready to ſwallow me up, and plunge me to hell.
—Gods,

—Gods, I underſtand you; yes, I ſee them there,
Happy in their loves, wandering in the Elyſian
Fields.—There muſt my blood be ſhed.—for that
The earth opens wide its jaws, and points out the
Stygian lake.—I ſee it now—now I'm on it's
Shore: O thou ſilent flood, whoſe name ſtrikes
Terror even to the Gods, be not enraged at a
Villain's voice.—I'll aſk thee but one queſtion:
Has Thyrſis and Melite paſſed this way?—you
anſwer
Not,—Their ſhades are too precious to thy ſhores
To loſe them.—To you then I call, thou wandering
Ghoſts, who reſtleſs here remain, and to whom
Charon has refuſed a paſſage; ſpeak, give me
Some information of Thyrſis and Melite, and by
Th' immortal powers I ſwear, I'll obtain thy
Paſſage over Styx.

CLITO.

What ails you, ſir, your agitated mind
Forms to your ſight imaginary.——

ERASTUS.

Ah! Charon, I ſee thee now;
Quick, and with thy utmoſt ſpeed conduct me
To yonder ſhore.

CLITO.

Be calm, and recover your reaſon; nay, look
Not ſo wild; know'ſt thou not I am Clito.

ERASTUS.

Speed thy ſlackened oar, thou black
Pilot of the infernal ſhades.—How thy
Bark already, ſinks with the burden of
My crimes.—How, would'ſt thou ſave thyſelf
Without me; no, though Cerberus ſhould attempt
To ſtop I'll follow thee.

(Runs after Clito, who is affrighted.)

SCENE VI.

PHILANDER.

This uſage of Thyrſis has ſtirred up all my
Courage, and notwithſtanding all his fiery temper, I
Verily

Verily believe that ſhould we meet, ſome blood
Would be ſhed. Come on then, thou preſumptuous
Rival, Philander no longer fears thee,—but who
Comes here ; Eraſtus ! good heavens, how wild he
Looks.

SCENE VII.

ERASTUS and PHILANDER.

ERASTUS.

Unbind Ixion, fix me in his place !
And ye barbarous ſiſters, ye infernal furies,
It is not thus the perfidious wretch ſhould be
Puniſhed ; now, now they preſs upon me ;
Rouze then ye infernal ſhades, haſte to my
Aſſiſtance, let us root out theſe inhuman monſters
And free yourſelves from your troubles.—Come on
Then, attack them with your chains,
Cruſh their fiery ſcorpions ; ah, ſee they fly,
We are too powerful for thoſe ſons of hell.

PHILANDER.

By his diſcourſe he ſeems to have loſt
His ſenſes.—Eraſtus, my dear friend, what
Deſpair drives thee to ſuch phrenzy.

ERASTUS.

Equitable Minos, thou great judge of hell,
See how unjuſtly they load me with thy fetters :
My crime is not unpardonable ; 'tis true,
Thyrſis is dead, Melite too has followed him,
Cloris too wanders without her credulous Philander,
While I, I am the only cauſe, the guilty wretch
Who contrived the helliſh ſcheme.—Thoſe letters
Which turned Philander's heart, Eraſtus wrote.

PHILANDER.

Ah ! ſay'ſt thou ſo ? but thou feel'ſt ſufficient
Puniſhment ;—thy reproving conſcience
Attacks thee with a thouſand torments worſe
Than death. To deprive thee of life would be
Rendering thee a ſervice, and my revenge is much
Better ſatisfied by thy preſent phrenzy. Oh !
Gracious powers, what a wretched dupe am I.

[Exit.

SCENE

SCENE. VIII.

ERASTUS.

Barbarian, doſt thou fly me then, and leave me a
Prey to theſe cruel ſiſters? ah! ſee with what joy
They look to ſee me in their power! hence Tiſiphon,
Alecto, and thoſe miniſters of Pluto, fly
From my angry arm, thou know'ſt me not.
—In this traiterous body I wear the heart and
Strength of Hercules.—Hence, I ſay, or by
All the powers of hell, I'll overturn thy infernal
Dominions.—See, ſee, twice has the triple
Headed dog vomited his baneful aconite.
—He ſhall not ſtop my vengeance, I'll go to
The bottom of hell to releaſe the tyrant,
And if Pluto dare to oppoſe my courſe,
I'll raviſh Proſerpine from his arms, and
Bear her back to earth. [Exit.

SCENE IX.

LISIS and CLORIS.

LISIS.

Reſt content, thy brother is not dead,
But ſeeing his deplorable ſtate, I tried by
This feigned tale, to ſee if the object of his love,
Would feel any regret at his death.
But now that I find Thyrſis is not indifferent
To Melite, and that ſhe burns with an equal flame,
You ſoon again will ſee him.

CLORIS.

Some ſecret monitor informed me he was not dead,
And my ſpirits were not agitated with a real grief.

LISIS.

Yet to ſpeak frankly, Cloris, few ſiſters
Ever are deſperately grieved at the loſs of an only
Brother, and the name of heireſs has its conſoling charms
To comfort the female breaſt as well as ours.

CLORIS.

You are jocoſe; but buſineſs preſſes, ſo
Farewell, I fly to render Melite the agreeable
News of Thyrſis's life. [Exeunt.

ACT

ACT V.

SCENE I.

CLITO and NURSE.

CLITO.

I have told thee all, nor concealed any part of
The deceit.

NURSE.

It is well, but is it poſſible that
Eraſtus's conſcience pricks him ſo violently
As to deprive him of his reaſon.

CLITO.

'Tis true, I ſaw him laſt, his extravagancies
Were exceeding great; talked of hell and Pluto,
And taking me for Charon, purſued me with his utmoſt
Speed, and belaboured me in ſuch a manner, that
I do aſſure you, had the old waterman received
Such fare from all his cuſtomers, he would be heartily
Glad to quit his employment.

NURSE.

Pleaſant illuſion!

CLITO.

Yes, the recital may be pleaſant enough to you, but
To me who feel the effects, it acts in quite a different
Manner; indeed, if my feet had not befriended me,
I ſhould not have had a tooth left in my mouth.

NURSE.

That was but bad payment for the ſervice you
Had done him.

ERASTUS (behind the Scenes.)

Stop, poltroons.

CLITO.

Farewel nurſe, I hear his
Voice, and will leave you to be his Proſerpine, but,
For me, if he ever takes me for Charon again,
May I have not a whole bone remaining within my ſkin. [Exit.

SCENE II.

ERASTUS and NURSE.

In vain I call thee to defend thyſelf; yes, ye
Cowardly ſquadrons of affrighted phantoms,

See

See they fly for ſafety to dreary dungeons
And ſcarcely daring to truſt themſelves to the
Darkneſs round them, wiſh for another hell to
Fall and hide them from my angry ſight.
My voice alone terrifies them; look how they
Tremble; Tiſiphon too, Alecto and Megara have
Extinguiſhed their torches, and the fates in confuſion
Have abandoned their ſciſſars. Charon aghaſt
Stood in his boat with croſſed arms, aſtoniſhed
That no ghoſt calls him ſince my arrival.
—Oh, ye powerful Gods, why did not thy thunder
Deſtroy me at the deſign of my atrocious crime.
Ah! Melite: ah! Thyrſis! the cruelty of the Gods
Have choſen a juſt puniſhment for my treachery.
Hell alone they thought was not enough, and have
Added the dreadful remembrance of my crime
To torment me, more terrible than all the fire,
ſcorpions,
Chains and puniſhment that hell can inflict.
Dreadful remembrance, for a while be quiet;
At leaſt let me before I die, ſee thoſe happy ſhades
Then uſe all thy rigour, or if thou ſtill will not,
Finiſh a wretched life. (puts his hand to his ſword)
With this I will aſſiſt thee;—but look, now
I ſee Melite. Oh! lovely ſhade, (ſees the nurſe)
Your hated enemy is here before you. It is
Eraſtus; he whoſe only deſire is to evince thee of
His penitence with his life.

NURSE.

Why do you ſuffer ſuch frenzy to reign
Predominant o'er your mind? has hell ſuch light
As this?

ERASTUS.

This preſent brightneſs which now ſpreads
Around, is but the refulgence of thy eyes.

NURSE.

Calm thy paſſion, look at my face more narrowly
Have theſe eyes power like Melite's.

ERASTUS.

I own, they have a heavy look, and now I look
On that face again, I am aſtoniſhed to ſee the
Colour different, the wrinkles ſpeak it to be more
Aged: ah! Melite, how art thou transformed ſince
Death; thou haſt all the appearance of thy ancient
Nurſe. O Gods, 'tis ſhe herſelf—What then,
Doſt thou ſeek Melite here.

NURSE.

Your diſturb'd imagination, paints to you
Ideal places. Look around you, you are ſtill
On earth; Melite too is alive, Clito who ſaw
Her ſwoon, thought her dead, and too haſty carried
Thee the fatal news; Thyrſis too ſtill lives and is
Going to receive the reward of his fidelity.

ERASTUS.

Thou canſt not deceive me, already have
I ſought them in theſe infernal regions; nay,
Have encountered dangers for to find them, nor—

NURSE.

How, your ſenſes are deceived by falſe appearances.
The infernal regions, combats, and all the fancied
Images of your brain are nought but illuſions.

ERASTUS.

What, have I not ſeen the monſters fly before
Me, attacked Pluto and drove him from his throne.

NURSE.

Mortals on earth, ſeeing your phrenzy might
Poſſibly have flown before you, dreading your
Miſchievous rage;—but look again, does this
Place reſemble hell; theſe walls, theſe buildings,
Melite's houſe and Clito's, do they appear like
Infernal ſtructures, or reſemble Pluto's palace?

ERASTUS.

'Tis true, I begin to think my reaſon has been hurt.
Oh! thou good old woman, compaſſionate my
Wandering ſenſes, which my too poignant grief

Has disturbed. Let me see Melite, my recovery
Depends on speaking with her.

NURSE.

Yet a little defer this visit, till you are perfect
Master of your reason. Your face and air have
Not a calm appearance yet: a little rest will
Be of service.

ERASTUS.

Let me intreat you to consent to my request,
Lest my feeble reason deprived of thee for a
Friendly guide, should again relapse.

NURSE.

If it is so, I consent; come on then and
Let us try what effect you can now have
On Melite's heart.

SCENE III.

CLORIS and PHILANDER.

CLORIS.

Trouble me no more, Philander, I beseech thee
No longer is it to effect me in thy power.
Your protestations only now offends me:
Convinced of the shortness of their duration,
I ne'er will accept for pledge a perjured oath,
Nor receive a heart so quickly turn'd by another's
Charms, or which a pretended letter can so soon
Change from the first object it was offered to.

PHILANDER.

Oh, at least forgive the crime, and forget the
Remembrance of so disgraceful an action; 'tis true,
My fault is great, yet if ever——

CLORIS.

Cease to mention thy love, which only
Reproaches me with the flame I once felt
For so treacherous a lover.

PHILANDER.

Yet Cloris, if ever my former vows merited
Thy favour, if ever the return of my love touched
Thy heart, hear me.

CLORIS.

CLORIS.

Thy folly too well points me out Philander's mind;
There I read that ſuch a maid as Cloris, has not
Charms ſtrong enough to bind ſo fickle a lover.
Melite's features can alone ſubdue thee, and 'tis in vain
Thy love is again offered to me; Cloris can
Never accept of a divided heart.

PHILANDER.

Alas! then Cloris, ſome more favoured youth has
Uſurped my place? it is ſufficient: thy diſdain
Too greatly effects me. Farewel, no hope any longer
Remains, and a future time may make Cloris repent
Of her cruelty.

CLORIS.

Farewel, Melite and I ſhall have ſufficient cauſe
To laugh at your expence. Have you no meſſage to your
Lovely enchantreſs?

PHILANDER.

Yes; tell her from me, that Melite, Cloris and Thyrſis
Will too late perceive to what lengths your hate has
Driven me.

CLORIS.

Do not fear that thy anger will terrify us,
Leſt——

PHILANDER.

You rally, but you will ſoon find, I know
How to revenge an abuſed lover. Farewel. [Exit.

CLORIS.

Farewel; thy threats only afford me cauſe
For laughter.

SCENE IV.

THYRSIS and MELITE.

THYRSIS.

Oh! my Melite, ſince fate has diſſipated our fear,
And granted all our wiſhes, let our happineſs be no Longer

Longer croſſed by our paſt misfortunes : let our
Souls give way to all the ardent tranſports which
Love inſpires. We now no longer have need
Of looks alone to explain our paſſions ; thoſe eyes,
Thoſe faithful interpreters of our ſecret love,
Which ſo often have taught me what the voice
Dared not utter; their confidence is no longer
neceſſary.
Love in freedom now may utter all his thoughts,
And refuſes the aſſiſtance of what in a growing
paſſion
Modeſty and fear can only ſpeak with.—But yet,
What blaſphemy to thoſe beautiful eyes: the mouth
Is too weak where the love is ſo exceſſive ; their
Language explains more than all the reſt.
But my Melite, why ſo ſilent ?

MELITE.

You are talking to my eyes, and they anſwer thee.

THYRSIS.

Yes, my Melite, I read the love which now beams
From thoſe eyes, and I have now no greater bleſſing
To aſk the Gods.

MELITE.

Thyrſis may be aſſured, that my eyes only
Speak the language of my heart; when the falſe
Report of thy death was ſpread abroad, the ſen-
timents
Of my ſoul were but too well explained ; but when I
Heard my Thyrſis lived, my only wiſh for life was then
For him. When the obdurate heart of an aged mother
Was ſoftened in thy favour, and a conſent gained for
Our union, what can ſpeak my joy.—a joy
Which now my heart wants words to ſpeak the
Idea of.—Yet, Thyrſis, though my love was ſo
powerful
For thee, thou could'ſt not depend on it ; the forged
letters
Of a miſcreant rendered thee jealous and enraged.

THYRSIS.

THYRSIS.

I blush, my Melite, for the fault, but who, that
Loved like me, could avoid feeling, when so strong
A mark for suspicion was presented him; but no
Sooner had reason taken place, then no longer
Any doubt of thy love remained.

MELITE.

My esteem for thee readily grants a pardon
For thy fault; and criminal as you are, yet I no
Longer will remember that you are so.

THYRSIS.

O, happiness inexpressible; I think myself happy
In being guilty, since I meet with a
Reward when I have deserved a punishment.
I shall love the author of this stratagem,
And if ever I know the hand that dared——

SCENE V.

CLORIS, THYRSIS and MELITE.

CLORIS.

I was cruel, Thyrsis, thus to deceive thy sister, and let
Her so long remain in suspence of thy life.

THYRSIS.

Love has indeed made me somewhat guilty,
But Philander, no doubt, has ere now
Done me justice. Tell me, Cloris,
Has he seen you again without a blush.

CLORIS.

The unfaithful wretch has made me so many
New vows, oaths, and offers, all mingled with a
Repenting face, that—

MELITE.

That you could not help looking on with a
Favourable eye.

CLORIS.

You are wrong.

THYRSIS.

How? have you refused him.

CLORIS.

CLORIS.

His words have had no effect.

MELITE.

And your love is absolutely turned to aversion.

CLORIS.

No, not absolutely so, but I am rather too cunning
To be made a dupe of a second time.

MELITE.

That is to say——.

CLORIS.

That his fickle humour never binds
Me again to him. In vain, he again strives to
Gain my love, since it is happy for me that he
Changed before the yoke of Hymen was put on.
To be his, would make me wretched.—No, let him
Seek another dupe, —I'll wait for a better prospect.

MELITE.

But my dear Cloris, for my sake, for your
Brother's, be not so prejudiced against him.

CLORIS.

It is in vain, his former contempt shall be
Returned, nor can all the intreaties you can
Make, alter my resolution.

SCENE VI.

THYRSIS, NURSE, ERASTUS, MELITE and CLORIS.

THYRSIS.

Let us end this dispute then; the excess of my
Love will not suffer that frivolous objects
Shall disturb this day's felicity. All our thoughts
Are at present due to those bonds which will soon
Render me the happiest of mortals.

NURSE.

Your thoughts may be otherwise employed:
Turn this way, Thyrsis, your rival seeks you and
Demands satisfaction for the place you have usurped.

ERASTUS and MELITE.

No, far be future revenge from Erastus's breast;
You, madam, now see before you a wretch

Whose

Whoſe eternal conſcience renders the day odious.
At your feet then I lay my life; take it, madam,
And revenge yourſelf, ſince death would be
The greateſt felicity earth can afford. Avenge
Your wrongs, and deprive of life the impoſtor
Who has been the cauſe of all theſe troubles.

MELITE.

See the ſureſt paths of heaven to point out her
Guilty victims, and accompliſh its deſigns. Your
Stratagem to deſtroy our loves, has only ſerved to
Make them burn the ſtronger, and fate has drawn a
Remedy from the very wound you gave.
Since then, matters have ended thus happily,
We will no longer look on thy ſcheme as criminal,
As the event has turned out ſo well. But
Since you regard it as a crime, accept my pardon,
If your repoſe will be eſtabliſhed thereby.

ERASTUS.

Confuſed and abaſhed at ſo much goodneſs,
And ſince I have been the guilty occaſion of your
Happineſs—

NURSE to ERASTUS.

Quit this harangue and idle compliments,
Nor trouble us with the remembrance of paſt ills:
You have certainly been guilty, and I will furniſh
A puniſhment which ſhall laſt for life, and ſince
Cloris thro' your means has loſt a lover
Supply his place.

ERASTUS to CLORIS.

If the lovely Cloris, can accept of a hand which
Has cauſed ſo much miſchief, I will offer it.
Melite will anſwer for my perſeverance;
My love for her, now ſuperfluous
And abated ſince her heart is with another,
Now turns towards the fair one I adore.

THYRSIS.

What ſay'ſt thou, ſiſter?

CLORIS.

My affection will always depend on
My brother's will.

THYRSIS.

Thou knoweſt Cloris, I was ever ready to
Gratify your deſires. By thy looks I read
That my conſent would not be diſagreeable; take
It then, and may the bounteous Gods, henceforth leave no
Miſtruſt between us. And that Thyrſis reſpecting
Eraſtus as his brother, and Melite you as his ſiſter,
Our years may flow with greater felicity.

ERASTUS.

I am perfectly happy, and receive the gift with thanks,
But yet my happineſs is not compleat, without
My Cloris will own, I am not diſagreeable to her.

CLORIS.

Only be faithful, and for thy reward I beg for time——

THYRSIS.

Time, this day ſhall make us all happy;
My Melite and I will lead the way, you and Eraſtus
Shall follow.

CLORIS.

At leaſt, brother, grant ſome longer time, I
Have neither his prayers, his ſighs
And all the tender ſervices of a lover.

ERASTUS.

Oh! my Cloris, my future conduct ſhall be all
The lover; therefore grant Melite and Thyrſis's
Deſires, and render happy one whoſe whole ſtudy
Shall be to make you ſo.

CLORIS.

'Tis in vain all your ſolicitations, I ſhall
Rely on the word of Melite's mother, her advice
Will prevent any future repentance, and if ſhe
Requeſts it, thy merit, Eraſtus will plead the reſt.

THYRSIS.

THYRSIS.

Let us then immediately ſet about it, as for
You nurſe, to comfort your aged years, we
Give thee to Philander for a wife. [Exit.

NURSE.

Laugh as you pleaſe; but formerly as gay
Sparks as you, have thought themſelves too happy
When I did not frown. My eyes had then
The power of the ſun, and ſpread abroad their refulgent
Rays. My features were all lovely, and not a part
About me, but was ſpoken of as a miracle of beauty.
My words were oracles on which my lovers fate
Depended.—However, though my eyes have loſt
Their amorous fire, I ſhall ſtill be happy, if by my
Endeavours I can gain the eſteem and applauſe
Of this good company.

FINIS.