

procal; where age and fortune are the same; where there is no disparity of years to make the supposition ludicrous; where there is no disparity of fortune to render it suspicious. Let us see whether the present action can be so palliated, or whether it does not exhibit a picture of fraud and avarice, and meanness and hypocrisy, so laughable that it is almost impossible to criticise it; and yet so debasing, that human pride almost forbids its ridicule.

It has been left to me to defend my unfortunate old client from the double battery of *law* and of *love*, which, at the age of 65, has so unexpectedly opened on her. Oh, Gentlemen! how vain-glorious is the boast of beauty! How misapprehended have been the charms of youth if years and wrinkles can thus despoil their conquests, and depopulate the navy of its prowess, and beguile the bar of its eloquence! How mistaken were all the amatory poets from Anacreon downwards, who preferred the bloom of the rose and the thrill of the nightingale, to the saffron hide and dulcet treble of sixty-five.

I know not whether any of you have ever seen a very beautiful print representing the fatal glory of Quebec, and the last moments of its immortal conqueror; if so, you must have observed the figure of the Staff Physician, in whose arms the hero is expiring: that identical personage, my lord, was the happy swain, who, forty or fifty years ago, received the reward of his valour and his skill in the virgin hand of my venerable client! The doctor lived something more than a century, during a great part of which Mr. Wilkins was his companion. The father of the plaintiff, it cannot be unknown to you, was for many years in the most indigent situation. Perhaps it is not a matter of concealment, that he found in Mrs. Wilkins a most generous benefactress. She assisted and supported him, until at last his increasing necessities reduced him to take refuge in an Act of Insolvency. During their intimacy, frequent allusion was made to a son, whom Mrs. Wilkins had never seen since he was a child, and who had risen to a lieutenant in the navy, under the patronage of their relative, Sir Benjamin Bloomfield. In a parent's panegyric, the gallant lieutenant was, of course, all that even hope could picture; young, gay, heroic, and disinterested; the pride of the navy, the prop of the country, independent as the gale that wafted, and bounteous as the wave that bore him. I am afraid that it is rather an anti-climax to tell you after this, that he is the present plaintiff. The eloquence of Mrs. Blake was not exclusively confined to her encomiums on the lieutenant; she diverged at times into an episode on the matrimonial felicities, painted the joy of passion and delights of love, and obscurely hinted, that *Hymen* with his torch, had an exact personification in her son Peter, bearing a match-light, in his Majesty's ship the *Hydra*. While these contrivances were practising on Mr. Wilkins, a by-plot was got up on board the *Hydra*, and Mr. Blake returned to his mourning country, influenced, as he says, by his partiality for the defendant; but in reality, compelled by ill health and disappointments, added, perhaps, his mother's very absurd and avaricious speculation. What a loss the navy had of him, and what a loss he had of the navy! Alas! Gentlemen, he could not resist his affection for a female he never saw—almighty love eclipsed the glories of ambition—Trafalgar and St. Vincent flitted from his memory—he gave up all for woman, as Mark Antony did before him. Oh! Gentlemen, only imagine him on the lakes of North America—alike to him the varieties of season or the vicissitudes of warfare. One sovereign image monopolizes his sensibilities. Does the storm rage—the widow Wilkins outstrips the whirlwind. Is the ocean calm—its mirror shews him the lovely widow Wilkins! Is the battle won—he thins his laurel that the widow Wilkins may interweave her myrtles. Does the broadside thunder—he invokes the widow Wilkins!

"A sweet little Cherub she sits up aloft,
To keep watch for the life of poor Peter!"

Alas! how much is he to be pitied!—how amply should he be recompensed! Who but must mourn his sublime, disinterested, sweet souled patriotism!—who but must sympathize with his pure, ardent, generous affection! Affection too confiding to require an interview! Affection too warm to wait

even for an introduction! Indeed, his Amanda, herself, seemed to think his love most desirable at a distance, for at the first visit after his return, he was refused admittance. His captivating charmer was then sick and nurse-tended at her brother's house, after a winter's confinement, reflecting most likely, rather on her funeral than on her wedding. Mrs. Blake's avarice instantly took the alarm, and she wrote the letter, and that almost immediately after its receipt, Miss Blake introduced herself to Brownville, where Mrs. Wilkins was—remained two days—lamented bitterly her not having appeared to the Lieut. when he called to visit her—said that her poor mother had set her heart on an alliance; that she was sun, dear woman, a disappointment would be the death of her; in short, that there was no alternative but the tomb or altar! To all this Mrs. Wilkins only replied, how totally ignorant the parties most interested were of each other, and that were she even so inclined to connect herself with a stranger (poor old fool), the debts in which her generosity to the family had already involved her, formed, at least for the present, an insurmountable impediment. This was not sufficient. In less than a week, the indefatigable Miss Blake returned to the charge, actually armed with an old family bond to pay off the incumbrances; and a renewed representation of the mother's suspense and the brother's desperation. You will not fail to observe, gentlemen, that while the female conspirators were thus at work, the lover himself had never seen the object of his idolatry. Like the maniac in the farce, he fell in love with the picture of his grandmother. Like a Prince of the blood, he was willing to woo and to be wedded by proxy. For the gratification of his avarice, he was contented to embrace age, disease, infirmity and widowhood; to bind his youthful passions to the carcass for which the grave was opening; to feed by anticipation on the uncold corpse, and cheat the worm of its reversionary corruption. Educated in a profession proverbially generous, he offered to barter every joy for money! Bore in a country ardent to a fault, he advertised his happiness to the highest bidder! and he now solicits an Honorable Jury to become the panders to this heartless cupid! No sooner was this contract, the device of their covetousness, and the evidence of their shame, swindled from the wretched object of this conspiracy, than its motives became apparent; they avowed themselves the keepers of their melancholy victim. They watched her movements—they dictated her actions—they forbade all intercourse with her own brother—they duped her into accepting bills, and let her be arrested for the amount. What an object for the speculations of avarice!—what an angel for the idolatry of youth! Gentlemen, when this miserable dupe to her own dotting vanity and the vice of others saw how she was treated—when she found herself controuled by the mother, beset by the daughter, begared by the father, and held by the son as a kind of windfall, that, too rotten to keep its hold, had fallen at his feet to be squeezed and trampled—when she saw the intercourse of her relatives prohibited, the most trifling remembrances of her ancient friendship denied, the very exercise of her habitual charity denounced; when she saw that all she was worth was to be surrendered to a family confiscation, and that she was herself to be gibbeted in the chains of wedlock, an example to every superannuated dotard, upon whose plunder the ravens of the world might calculate, she came to the wisest determination of her life, and decided that her fortune should remain at her own disposal. Acting upon this decision, she wrote to Mr. Blake, complaining of the cruelty with which she had been treated, desiring the restoration of the contract of which she had been duped, and declaring, as the only means of procuring respect, his final determination as to the controul over her property. That Gentleman, acting at once as her agent and her friend, instantly repaired to Galway, where he had an interview with Mr. Blake. This was long before the commencement of any action. A conversation took place between them on the subject, which must, in my mind, set the present action at rest altogether; because it must show that the non-performance of the contract originated entirely with the plaintiff himself. Mr. M'Namara inquired whether it was not true that Mr. Blake's own family declined any connection, unless Mrs. Wilkins consented to settle on them the entire of her property? Mr. Blake

replied it was. Mr. M'Namara rejoined, that her contract did not bind her to any such extent. "No," replied Mr. Blake, "I know it does not; however, tell Mrs. Wilkins, that I understand she has about £580 a-year, and I will be content to settle the odd £80 on her by way of pocket-money." Here, of course, the conversation ended; which Mr. M'Namara detailed, as he was desired to Mrs. Wilkins, who rejected it with the disdain which I hope it will excite in every honourable mind. He first, Gentlemen, attacked her fortune, with herself, through the artillery of the church, and having failed in that, he now attacks her fortune without herself through the assistance of the law. However, if I am instructed rightly, he has nobody but himself to blame for his disappointment. Observe, I do not vouch for the authenticity of this fact? but I do certainly assure you that Mrs. Wilkins was persuaded of it. You know the proverbial frailty of our nature; the gallant lieutenant was not free from it. Perhaps you imagine that some younger, or, according to his taste, some older fair one, weaned him from the widow. Indeed they did not. He had no heart to lose, (and can you solve the paradox?) his infirmity was Love; as the poet says, "Love—still—Love!"—No, it was not to Venus, it was to Bacchus he sacrificed. . . . With an eastern idolatry he commenced at day-light, and so persevering was his piety till the shades of night, that when he was not on his knees, he could scarcely be said to be on his legs! When I come to this passage, I could not avoid involuntarily exclaiming "Oh, Peter, Peter! whether it be in liquor or in love, none but thyself can be thy parallel!"—But, Gentlemen, let us try to be serious, and seriously give me leave to ask you, on what grounds does he solicit your verdict? Is it for the loss of his profession? Does he deserve compensation if he abandon it for such a purpose—if he deserted at once his country to trepan the weakness of a wealthy dotard? But did he, (base as the pretence is) did he do so? Is there nothing to cast any suspicion on the pretext? Do you believe if any accident had bereft the defendant of her fortune, that her persecutor would be likely to retain his constancy? Do you believe that the marriage thus sought to be enforced, was one likely to promote morality and virtue? Do you believe that those delicious fruits, by which the struggles of social life are sweetened, and the anxieties of parental care alleviated, were ever once anticipated? Do you think that such an union could exhibit those reciprocities of love and endearments by which this tender rite should be consecrated and recommended? Do you not rather believe that it originated in avarice—that it was promoted by conspiracy; and that it would perhaps have lingered through some months of crime, and then terminated in a heartless and disgusting abandonment? Gentlemen, these are questions which you will discuss in your Jury room. I am not afraid of your decision. Remember, I ask you for no mitigation of damages. Nothing less than your verdict will satisfy me. By that verdict you will sustain the dignity of your sex—by that verdict you will uphold the honour of the national character—by that verdict you will assure not only the immense multitude of both sexes that thus so unusually crowd around you, but the whole rising generation of your country, that marriage can never be attended with honour, or blessed with happiness, if it has not its origin in mutual affection. I surrender with confidence my case to your decision.

The damages were laid at £5000; and the plaintiff's counsel were, in the end, contented to withdraw a Juror, and let him pay his own costs.

BOSTON, MAY 26.

LIVERPOOL MARKETS, APRIL 22.

Considerable quantities of Flour have come to hand the last week; and a few lots of best New-York, superfine, were sold at 70 a 71s.

PRICES AT CORK, APRIL 10.

Flour, 95 a 100 per bbl.; Flaxseed, new, 1, 3 a 1, 20; Tobacco, prime Virginia, 14 a 15d per lb. inferior, 5 a 8d.

PRICES AT BELFAST, APRIL 5.

Am. Flour, 92s 6d per bbl. of 195 wt.

WEST INDIA MARKETS.

The Merchants, Planters, &c. of St. Kitts, have petitioned the governor of that place, to open the ports, for the admission

of provisions, representing that, and the neighboring Islands, to be in a state of almost absolute starvation. This memorial, was accompanied with the proceedings of a meeting of Merchants, Planters and others, in the town of Basseterre, convened for the purpose of devising some means of averting the evils of starvation with which they are threatened. One of the Resolutions of this meeting expresses a conviction that the shortness of the crops the last year, both in the United States and Europe, will render it impossible that they should continue to receive even the inadequate supply heretofore obtained from these sources. The resolutions recommend the immediate formation of the meeting into an Agricultural Society, for the purpose of adopting such a system of cultivation as may yield the most abundant crop of ground provisions.

A proclamation also appears from the Governor of St. Vincent, and other Grenadine Islands, prohibiting the exportation from those Islands, for six months from the date thereof, of every species of ground provisions under the penalty of forfeiting the vessel and cargo by those who may infract the proclamation.

These accounts are taken from the *Antigua Register*, of the 29th April.

Capt. Conklin, arrived at Baltimore from Amsterdam, in 23 days, informs, that all kinds of business there was in a very depressed state. Tobacco and other articles of American produce were very low. Fourteen sail of vessels were preparing to take out upwards of 5000 Swiss and German passengers, who were about to seek an asylum in America. The ships were destined principally for Philadelphia.

THE SEASON.

Bad Prospect.—The Worcester papers give many alarming accounts of the depredations of the Locust Larva, or Cut Worm, in the pastures of that vicinity. We have conversed with gentlemen from many parts of the country, and find the accounts of the destruction of this voracious insect—and the fears excited by them, have not been exaggerated. We have heard of their appearance in Lancaster, Billerica, Bridgewater, Shrewsbury, and numerous other places besides those which have been mentioned. In the towns to the westward they are extremely numerous. A gentleman from Shrewsbury informs us, that on Tuesday afternoon he was present when a square foot of earth was dug up, and upwards of 300 of these insects found in it. Our informant says, they commence their depredations about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and cease about 7 in the morning. Their progress is in a direct course, turning neither to the right nor left; and when they meet obstructions in front which they cannot surmount they persevere until they perish. Furrows made in front of them are found to be an effectual impediment, when not very numerous. A similar Worm appeared about the year 1779; and the ridges of furrows then made to stop their progress are visible in many places. Our informant conjectures that the eggs from which these voracious insects have issued, were deposited by the innumerable small flies which were seen immediately after the snow was dissolved last year. They do not touch clover grass. *Centinel.*

The editor of the *Centinel* has a phial, containing a number of these insects; some of which are over an inch long. They are of a brown color, with a light longitudinal stripe; their heads lighter than their bodies; and appear to be very voracious. In Lancaster, a farmer had 40 acres of pasture so completely destroyed by them, that not a single spike of green grass is left thereon.

Better Prospects.—We are glad to learn, that in some other places, the pasture first attacked by them, are recovering their verdure; and that the roots of the grass are not injured.

Wheat, in the western countries of New-York, was never known to exhibit a more flourishing appearance.

From Maine we have the most pleasing prospect of an abundant harvest of fruit and grain.

FROM THE BRITISH NAVY LIST FOR MARCH, 1817.

WIDOWS' PENSIONS.—Of a flag Officer, per An. £129; Admirals, 100; Post Captains, 80 a 90; Commanders, 70; do. superan. 60; Lieutenants, 50;