
ROSINA

A comic opera in two acts.

Text by

Frances Brooke

Music by

William Shield

First performance: 31 December 1782, London.

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Infine ringrazio la mia famiglia, per il tempo rubatole e dedicato a questa attività.

I titoli vengono scelti in base a una serie di criteri: disponibilità del materiale, data della prima rappresentazione, autori di testi e musiche, importanza del testo nella storia della lirica, difficoltà di reperimento.

A questo punto viene ampliata la varietà del materiale, e la sua affidabilità, tramite acquisti, ricerche in biblioteca, su internet, donazione di materiali da parte di appassionati. Il materiale raccolto viene analizzato e messo a confronto: viene eseguita una trascrizione in formato elettronico.

Quindi viene eseguita una revisione del testo tramite rilettura, e con un sistema automatico di rilevazione sia delle anomalie strutturali, sia della validità dei lemmi.

Vengono integrati se disponibili i numeri musicali, e individuati i brani più significativi secondo la critica.

Viene quindi eseguita una conversione in formato stampabile, che state leggendo.

Grazie ancora.

Dario Zanotti

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Mr. **BELVILLE** BASS

CAPTAIN BELVILLE TENOR

WILLIAM ALT

RUSTIC

1ST IRISHMAN

2ND IRISHMAN

ROSINA SOPRANO

DORCAS ALT

PHEBE SOPRANO

Reapers, Gleaners, Servants, etc.

A village in the North.

Advertisement

The favourable reception this little piece has met with from the public, demands my warmest acknowledgements: nor can I say too much of the support it has received, both from the music, admirably adapted to the words, and the spirited and judicious performance of the several characters, which surpass'd my most sanguine wishes.

The decorations, designed and executed in that style of elegant and characteristic simplicity which the subject requir'd, add greatly to the effect of the whole.

The fable of this piece, taken from the book of Ruth, a fable equally simple, moral, and interesting, has already furnish'd a subject for the beautiful episode of Palemon and Lavinia in Thomson's Seasons, and a pleasing opera of mons. Favart: of both I have availed myself as far as the difference of my plan would allow; but as we are not, however extraordinary it may appear, so easily satisfied with meet sentiment as our more sprightly neighbors the French, I found it necessary to diversify the story by adding the comic characters of William and Phœbe, which I hop'd might at once relieve, and heighten, the sentimental cast of the other personages of the drama.

Some of the songs, and a few short passages of the dialogue (printed with inverted commas) though judiciously omitted in the representation from the apprehension of making the opera too long, are here restor'd, as tending to mark the characters with more precision.

ACT I

Scene opens and discovers a rural prospect: on the left side a little hill with trees at the top; a spring of water rushes from the side, and falls into a natural bason below: on the right side a cottage, at the door of which is a bench of stone. At a distance a chain of mountains. The manor-house in view. A field of corn fills up the scene.

In the first act the sky clears by degrees, the morning vapour disperses, the sun rises, and at the end of the act is above the horizon: at the beginning of the second he is past the height, and declines till the end of the day. This progressive motion should be made imperceptibly, but its effect should be visible through the two acts.

Scene I

The day begins to break; a few stars still appear; after the trio, the sun is seen to rise. The door of the cottage is open, a lamp burning just within. Dorcas, seated on the bench, is spinning; Rosina and Phœbe, just within the door, are measuring a bushel of corn; William comes from the top of the stage; they sing the following trio.

WILLIAM, ROSINA, PHŒBE

When the rosy morn appearing
 paints with gold the verdant lawn,
 bees, on banks of thyme disporting,
 sip the sweets, and hail the dawn.
 Warbling birds, the day proclaiming,
 carol sweet the lively strain;
 they forsake their leasy dwelling,
 to secure the golden grain.
 Set, content, the humble gleaner,
 take the scatter'd ears that fall!
 Nature, all her children viewing,
 kindly bounteous, cares for all.

(William retires.)

ROSINA See! my dear Dorcas, what we glean'd yesterday in mr. Belville's fields!

(Coming forward, and shewing the corn at the door.)

DORCAS Lord love thee! but take care of thyself: thau art but tender.

ROSINA Indeed it does not hurt me. Shall I put out the lamp?

DORCAS Do, dear: the poor must be sparing.

(Rosina going to put out the lamp, Dorcas looks after her and sighs, she returns hastily.)

ROSINA Why do you sigh, Dorcas?

DORCAS I canno' bear it: it's nothing to Phœbe and me, but thou wast not born to labour.

(Rising and pushing away the wheel.)

ROSINA Why should I repine? Heaven, which deprived me of my parents and my fortune, left me health, content, and innocence. Nor is it certain that riches lead to happiness. Do you think the nightingale sings the sweeter for being in a gilded cage?

DORCAS Sweeter, I'll maintain it, than the poor little linnet which thou pick'st up half starv'd under the hedge yesterday, after its mother had been shot, and brought'st to life in thy bosom. Let me speak to his honour, he's main kind to the poor.

ROSINA Not for worlds, Dorcas, I want nothing: you have been a mother to me.

DORCAS Wou'd I cou'd! wou'd I cou'd! I ha' work'd hard and 'arn'd money in my time; but now I am old and feeble, and am push'd about by every body.

Because I, this summer, am turn'd of fourscore they flout me, and lay straws across at my door: the bairns, wicked bairns! both at church and at green, make faces, and jeer; 'tis a shame to be seen. Where I go, I'm the jest of the lads and the lasses; tis thus, in life's winter, a woman's time passes.

More's the pity, I say: it was not so in my young time; but the world grows wickeder every day.

ROSINA Your age, my good Dorcas, requires rest: go into the cottage, whilst Phœbe and I join the gleaners, who are assembling from every part of the village.

DORCAS Many a time have I carried thy dear mother, an infant, in these arms: little did I think a child of her's would live to share my poor pittance.

- But I wo'not grieve thee.

(Dorcas enters the cottage, looking back affectionately at Rosina.)

PHŒBE What makes you so melancholy, Rosina? Mayhap it's because you have not a sweetheart? But you are so proud you won't let our young men come a-near you. You may live to repent being so scornful.

[Air]

When William, at eve, meets me down at the stile,
 how sweet is the nightingale's song!
 Of the day I forget all the labour and toil,
 whilst the moon plays you branches among.
 By her beams, without blushing, I hear him complain,
 and believe every word of his song:
 you know not how sweet 'tis to love the dear swain,
 whilst the moon plays you branches among.

(During the last stanza William appears at the end of the scene, and makes signs to Phœbe, who, when it is finished, steals softly to him, and they disappear.)

ROSINA How small a part of my evils is poverty! And how little does Phœbe know the heart she thinks insensible! the heart which nourishes a hopeless passion. I blest, like others, Belville's gentle virtues, and knew not that 'twas love. Unhappy! lost Rosina!

[Air]

The morn returns, in saffron drest,
 but not to sad Rosina rest.
 The blushing morn awakes the strain,
 awakes the tuneful choir,
 but sad Rosina ne'er again
 shall strike the sprightly lyre.

RUSTIC To work, my hearts of oak, to work; here the sun is half an hour high, and not a stroke struck yet.
 (Between the scenes.)

Enters singing, followed by Reapers.

[Air]

RUSTIC See, ye swains, yon streaks of red
 call you from your slothful bed:
 late you till'd the fruitful soil;
 see! where harvest crowns your toil!

CHORUS OF REAPERS Late you till'd the fruitful soil;
 see! where harvest crowns your toil!

RUSTIC As we reap the golden corn,
 laughing plenty fills her born:
 what would gilded pomp avail
 should the peasant's labour fail?

CHORUS OF REAPERS What would gilded pomp avail
 should the peasant's labour fail?

RUSTIC Ripen'd fields your cares repay,
 sons of labour, haste away;
 bending, see the waving grain
 crown the year, and chear the swain.

CHORUS OF REAPERS Bending, see the waving grain,
 crown the year, and chear the swain.

RUSTIC Hist! there's his honour. Where are all the lazy Irishmen I hir'd
 yesterday at market?

Enter Belville, followed by two Irishmen and Servants.

1ST IRISHMAN Is it us he's talking of, Paddy? Then the devil may thank him for
 his good commendations.

BELVILLE You are too severe, Rustic, the poor fellows came three miles this
 morning; therefore I made them stop at the manor-house to take a
 little refreshment.

1ST IRISHMAN God love your sweet face, my jewel, and all those that take your
 part. Bad luck to myself if I would not, with all the veins of my
 heart, split the dew before your feet in a morning.

RUSTIC If I do speak a little cross, it's for your honour's good.
 (to Belville)

(The Reapers cut the corn, and make it into sheaves. Rosina follows, and gleans.)

RUSTIC What a dickens does this girl do here? Keep back: wait till the
 (seeing Rosina) reapers are off the field, do like the other gleaners.

ROSINA If I have done wrong, sir, I will put what I have glean'd down
 (timidly) again.

(She lets fall the ears she had glean'd.)

BELVILLE How can you be so unfeeling, Rustic? she is lovely, virtuous, and
 in want. Let fall some ears, that she may glean the more.

RUSTIC Your honour is too good by half.

BELVILLE No more: gather up the corn she has let fall. Do as I command
 you.

RUSTIC There, take the whole field, since his honour chuses it.

(Putting the corn into her apron.)

ROSINA I will not abuse his goodness.

(Retires gleaning.)

2ND IRISHMAN Upon my soul now, his honour's no churl of the wheat, whatever
 he may be of the barley.

BELVILLE What bewitching softness! There is a blushing, bashful,
 (looking after Rosina) gentleness, an almost infantine innocence in that lovely
 countenance, which it is impossible to behold without emotion!
 She turns this way: what bloom of that cheek! 'Tis the blushing
 down of the peach.

[Air]

Her mouth, which a smile,
 devoid of all guile,
 half opens to view,
 is the bud of the rose,
 in the morning that blows,
 impearl'd with the dew.
 More fragrant her breath
 than the flower-scented heath
 at the dawning of day;
 the hawthorn in bloom,
 the lily's perfume,
 or the blossoms of May.

Enter Captain Belville in a riding dress.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Good morrow, brother; you are early abroad.

BELVILLE My dear Charles, I am happy to see you. True, I find, to the first of September.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE I meant to have been here last night, but one of my wheels broke, and I was obliged to sleep at a village six miles distant, where I left my chaise, and took a boat down the river at day-break. But your corn is not off the ground.

BELVILLE You know our harvest is late in the north, but you will find all the lands clear'd on the other side of the mountain.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE And, pray, brother, how are the partridges this season?

BELVILLE There are twenty coveys within sight of my house, and the dogs are in fine order.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE The game-keeper is this moment leading them round. I am fir'd at the sight.

[Air]

By dawn to the downs we repair,
 with bosoms right jocund and gay,
 and gain more than pheasant or hare ~
 gain health by the sports of the day.
 Mark! mark! to the right hand, prepare ~
 see Diana! ~ she points! ~ see, they rise ~
 see, they float on the bosom of air!
 Fire away! whilst loud echoe replies fire away.
 Hark! the volley resounds to the skies!
 Whilst echo in thunder replies!
 In thunder replies,
 and resounds to the skies,
 fire away! Fire away! Fire away.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE But where is my little rustic charmer? O! there she is: I am
(aside) transported. Pray, brother, is not that the little girl whose dawning
beauty we admir'd so much last year?

BELVILLE It is, and more lovely than ever. I shall dine in the field with my
reapers to-day, brother: will you share our rural repast, or have a
dinner prepar'd at the manor-house?

CAPTAIN BELVILLE By no means: pray let me be of your party: your plan is an
admirable one, especially if your girls are handsome. I'll walk
round the field, and meet you at dinner-time.

BELVILLE Come this way, Rustic; I have some orders to give you.

(Exeunt Belville and Rustic.)

(Captain Belville goes up to Rosina, gleans a few ears, and presents them to her, she refuses them; she runs out,
he follows, her.)

Enter William.

WILLIAM (speaking at the side scene)
Lead the dogs back, James, the Captain won't shoot to-day.
(seeing Rustic and Phœbe behind)
Indeed? so close? I don't half like it.

Enter Rustic and Phœbe.

RUSTIC That's a good girl! Do as I bid you, and you shan't want
encouragement.

(He goes up to the Reapers, and William comes forward.)

WILLIAM O, no; I dare say she won't. So mrs. Phœbe?

PHŒBE And so, mr. William, if you go to that!

WILLIAM A new sweetheart, I'll be sworn; and a pretty comely lad he is:
but he's rich, and that's enough to win a woman.

PHŒBE I don't deserve this of you, William: but I'm rightly served, for
being such an easy fool. You think, mayhap, I'm at my last
prayers; but you may find yourself mistaken.

WILLIAM You do right to cry out first; you think belike that I did not see
you take that posy from Harry.

PHŒBE And you belike that I did not catch you tying up one of
cornflowers and wild roses for the miller's maid: but I'll be fool'd
no longer; I have done with you, mr. William.

WILLIAM I shan't break my heart, mrs. Phœbe. The miller's maid loves the
ground I walk on.

[Duet]

WILLIAM I've kiss'd and I've prattled to fifty fair maids,
and chang'd 'em as oft, d'ye see!
But of all the fair maidens that dance on the green,
the maid of the mill for me.

PHÈBE There's fifty young men have told me fine tales,
and call'd me the fairest she;
but of all the gay wrestlers that sport on the green,
young Harry's the lad far me.

WILLIAM Her eyes are as black as the sloe in the hedge,
her face like the blossoms in May;
her teeth are as white as the new-shorn flock,
her breath like the new-made hay.

PHÈBE He's tall, and he's strait as the poplar tree,
his cheeks are as fresh as the rose;
he look like a squire of high degree
when drest in his Sunday cloaths.
There's fifty young men,
etc.

WILLIAM I've kiss'd and I've prattled,
etc.

(Go off on different sides of the stage.)

(As they go off Rosina runs across the stage, Captain Belville following her.)

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Stay, and hear me, Rosina. Why will you fatigue yourself thus?
Only homely girls are born to work. - Your obstinacy is vain; you
shall hear me.

ROSINA Why do you stop me, sir? My time is precious. When the
gleaning season is over, will you make up my loss?

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Yes.

ROSINA Will it be any advantage to you to make me lose my day's work?

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Yes.

ROSINA Would it give you pleasure to see me pass all my days in
idleness?

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Yes.

ROSINA We differ greatly then, sir. I only wish for so much leisure as
makes me return to my work with fresh spirit. We labour all the
week, 'tis true; but then how sweet is our rest on Sunday!

[Air]

Whilst with village maids I stray,
sweetly wears the joyous day;
cheerful glows my artless breast,
mild content the constant guest.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Mere prejudice, child: you will know better. I pity you, and will make your fortune.

ROSINA Let me call my mother, sir. I am young, and can support myself by my labour; but she is old and helpless, and your charity will be well bestow'd. Please to transfer to her the bounty you intended for me.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Why - as to that -

ROSINA I understand you, sir; your compassion does not extend to old women.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Really - I believe not.

Enter Dorcas.

ROSINA You are just come in time, mother. I have met with a generous gentleman, whose charity inclines him to succour youth.

DORCAS 'Tis very kind. -And old age-!

ROSINA He'll tell you that himself.

(Rosina goes into the cottage.)

DORCAS I thought so. - Sure, sure, 'tis no sin to be old!

CAPTAIN BELVILLE You must not judge of me by others, honest Dorcas. I am sorry for your misfortunes, and wish to serve you.

DORCAS And to what, your honour, may I owe this kindness?

CAPTAIN BELVILLE You have a charming daughter -

DORCAS I thought as much. A vile, wicked man!
(aside)

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Beauty like hers might find a thousand resources in London: the moment she appears there, she will turn every head.

DORCAS And is your honour sure her own won't turn at the same time?

CAPTAIN BELVILLE She shall live in affluence, and take care of you too, Dorcas.

DORCAS I guess your honour's meaning; but you are mistaken, sir. If I must be a trouble to the dear child, I shall rather owe my bread to her labour than her shame.

(Goes into the cottage and shuts the door.)

CAPTAIN BELVILLE These women astonish me: but I won't give it up so.

[Air]

From flower to flower gay roving,
the wanton butterfly
does nature's charms descry,
from flower to flower gay roving,
the wanton butterfly.
On wavy wings high mounting,
if chance some child pursues.
Forsakes the balmy dews;
on wavy wings high mounting,
if chance some child pursues.
Thus wild and ever changing,
a sportive butterfly,
I mock the whining sigh:
still wild and ever changing,
a sportive butterfly.

A word with you, Rustic.

RUSTIC I'm in a great hurry, your honour: I'm going to hasten dinner.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE I shan't keep you a minute. Take these five guineas.

RUSTIC For whom, sir?

CAPTAIN BELVILLE For yourself. And this purfe.

RUSTIC For whom, sir?

CAPTAIN BELVILLE For Rosina: they say she is in distress, and wants assistance.

RUSTIC What pleasure it gives me to see you so charitable! You are just like your brother.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Prodigiously.

RUSTIC But why give me money, sir?

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Only to - Tell Rosina there is a person who is very much interested in her happiness.

RUSTIC How much you will please his honour by this! He takes mightily to Rosina, and prefers her to all the young women in the parish.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Prefers her! Ah! you sly rogue!

(Laying his hand on Rustic's shoulder.)

RUSTIC Your honour's a wag; but I'm sure I meant no harm.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Give her the money, and tell her she shall never want a friend: but not a word to my brother.

RUSTIC All's safe, your honour.

(Exit Captain Belville.)

RUSTIC I don't vastly like this business. At the Captain's age this violent charity is a little dubious. I am his honour's servant, and it's my duty to hide nothing from him. I'll go seek his honour. Oh, here he comes.

Enter Belville.

BELVILLE Well, Rustic, have you any intelligence to communicate?

RUSTIC A vast deal, sir. Your brother begins to make a good use of his money: he has given me these five guineas for myself, and this purse for Rosina.

BELVILLE For Rosina!

(aside)

'Tis plain he loves her? Obey him exactly; but as distress renders the mind haughty, and Rosina's situation requires the utmost delicacy, contrive to execute your commissfion in such a manner that she may not even suspect from whence the money comes.

RUSTIC I understand your honour.

BELVILLE Have you gain'd any intelligence in respect to Rosina?

RUSTIC I endeavour'd to get all I could from the old woman's granddaughter; but all she knew was, that she was no kin to Dorcas, and that she had had a good bringing-up: but here are the labourers.

BELVILLE "Let the cloth be laid on these sheaves. Behold the table of happiness!" But I don't see Rosina. Dorcas, you must come too, and Phœbe.

DORCAS We can't deny your honour.

RUSTIC I am asham'd; but you command, sir.

Enter the Reapers, following Captain Belville.

[Air Finale]

BELVILLE

By this fountain's flow'ry side,
drest in nature's blooming pride,
where the poplar trembles high,
and the bees in clusters fly;
whilst the herdsman on the hill
listens to the falling rill,
pride and cruel scorn away,
let us share the festive day.

ROSINA, BELVILLE

Taste our pleasures ye who may,
this is nature's holiday.
Simple nature ye who prize,
life's fantastic forms despise.

CHORUS Taste our pleasures ye who may,
this is nature's holiday.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE

Blushing Bell, with downcast eyes,
sighs, and knows not why she sighs;
Tom is by her ~ we shall know ~
how he eyes her! ~ Is't not so?

CHORUS Taste our pleasures ye who may,
this is nature's holiday.

WILLIAM

He is fond, and she is shy;
he would kiss her! ~ fie! ~ oh, fie!
Mind thy sickle, let her be;
by and by she'll follow thee.

CHORUS Busy censors, hence, away!
This is nature's holiday.

RUSTIC, DORCAS

Now we'll quaff the nut-brown ale,
then we'll tell the sportive tale;
all is jest, and all is glee,
all is youthful jollity.

CHORUS Taste our pleasures ye who may,
this is nature's holiday.

PHEBE, IRISH GIRL, 1ST IRISHMAN

Lads and lasses all advance,
carol blithe, and form the dance;
trip it lightly while you may;
this is nature's holiday.

CHORUS Trip it lightly while you may,
this is nature's holiday.

*All rise; the dancers come down the stage through the sheaves of corn,
which are removed; the dance begins, and finishes the act.*

ACT II

Scene I

Scene continues.

RUSTIC This purse is the plague of my life: I hate money when it is not my own. I'll e'en put in the five guineas he gave me for myself: I don't want it, and they do. But I hear the cottage door open.

(Retires a little.)

Dorcas and Rosina came out of the cottage, Dorcas with a great basket on her arm fill'd with skains of thread.

DORCAS I am just going, Rosina, to carry this thread to the weaver's.

ROSINA This basket is too heavy for you: pray let me carry it.

(Takes the basket from Dorcas, and sets it down on the bench.)

DORCAS No, no.
(peevishly)

ROSINA If you love me, only take half: this evening, or to-morrow morning, I will carry the rest.

(She takes part of the skains out of the basket and lays them on the bench, looking affectionately on Dorcas.)

There, be angry with me if you please.

DORCAS No, my sweet lamb, I am not angry; but beware of men.

ROSINA Have you any doubts of my conduct, Dorcas?

DORCAS Indeed I have not, love; and yet I am uneasy.

(Rustic goes up to the cottage.)

RUSTIC Now; now whilst they turn their heads.

(He lays the purse on the bench unperceived, and says to Captain Belville, whom he meets going off.)

RUSTIC I have disposed of your money, sir.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Come this way.

(He takes Rustic aside.)

DORCAS Go back to the reapers, whilst I carry this thread.

ROSINA I'll go this moment.

DORCAS But as I walk but slow, and 'tis a good way, you may chance to be at home before me, so take the key.

ROSINA I will.

(Whilst Dorcas feels in her pockets for the key.)

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Rosina to be at home before Dorcas? How lucky! I'll slip into the house, and wait her coming, if 'tis till midnight.

(aside)

(He goes unperceiv'd by them into the cottage.)

DORCAS Let no body go into the house.

ROSINA I'll take care; but first I'll double-lock the door.

(Whilst she is locking the door, Dorcas going to take up her basket sees the purse.)

DORCAS Good lack! What is here? a purse as I live!

ROSINA How?

DORCAS Come, and see; 'tis a purse indeed.

ROSINA Heavens! 'tis full of gold!

DORCAS We must put up a bill at the church gate, and restore it to the owner. The best way is to carry the money to his honour, and get him to keep it till the owner is found. You shall go with it, love.

ROSINA Pray excuse me, I always blush so. -

DORCAS 'Tis nothing but childishness: but his honour will like your bashfulness better than too much courage.

(Goes out.)

ROSINA I cannot support his presence - my embarrassment - my confusion - a stronger sensation than that of gratitude agitates my heart - Yet hope in my situation were madness.

[Air]

Sweet transports, gentle wishes, go!
In vain his charms have gain'd my heart;
since fortune still to love a foe,
and cruel duty bid us part.
Ah! why does duty chain the mind,
and part those souls which love has joined?

Enter William.

ROSINA Pray, William, do you know of any body that has lost a purse?

WILLIAM I knows nothing about it.

ROSINA Dorcas, however, has found one.

WILLIAM So much the better for she.

ROSINA You will oblige me very much if you will carry it to mr. Belville; and beg him to keep it till the owner is found.

WILLIAM Since you desire it, I'll go: it shan't be the lighter for my carrying.

ROSINA That I am sure of, William.

(Exit Rosina.)

Enter Phæbe.

PHÆBE There is William; but I'll pretend not to see him.

[Air]

Henry cull'd the flow'ret's bloom,
Marian lov'd the soft perfume,
had playful kist, but prudence near
whisper'd timely in her ear,
"Simple Marian, ah! beware;
touch, them not, for love is there."

(Throws away her nosegay.)

(Whilst she is singing, William turns, looks at her, whistles, and plays with his stick.)

WILLIAM That's Harry's posy; the slut likes me still.

PHOEBE That's a copy of his countenance, I'm certain; he can no more
(aside) help following me than he can be hang'd.

WILLIAM Of all the fair maidens that dance on the green,
(crosses again singing) the maid of the mill for me.

PHOEBE I'm ready to choak wi' madness, but I'll not speak first, an I die
for't.

(William sings, throwing up his stick, and catching it.)

WILLIAM Her eyes are as black as the sloe in the hedge,
her face like the blossoms in May.

PHOEBE I can't bear it no longer - you vile, ungrateful, perfidious - But it's
no matter - I can't think what I could see in you, - Harry loves
me, and is a thousand times more handsomer.

(Sings, sobbing at every word:)

Of all the gay wrestlers that sport on the green,
young Harry's the lad for me.

WILLIAM He's yonder a reaping: shall I call him?

(Offers to go.)

PHOEBE My grandmother leads me the life of a dog; and it's all along of
you.

WILLIAM Well, then she'll be better temper'd now.

PHOEBE I did not value her scolding of a brass farthing, when I thought as
how you were true to me.

WILLIAM Wasn't I true to you? Look in my face, and say that.

[Air]

When bidden to the wake or fair,
 the joy of each free-hearted swain,
 till Phœbe promis'd to be there,
 I loiter'd, last of all the train:
 if chance some fairing caught her eye,
 the ribbon gay or silken glove,
 with eager haste I ran to buy;
 for what is gold compar'd to love?
 My posy on her bosom plac'd
 could Harry's sweeter scents exhale!
 Her auburn locks my ribbon grac'd,
 and flutter'd in the wanton gale.
 With scorn she hears me now complain,
 nor can my rustic presents move:
 her heart prefers a richer swain,
 and gold, alas! has banish'd love.

I see Kate waiting for me. Bye, Phœbe.

PHŒBE Good bye to you.

WILLIAM (coming back)
 Let's part friendly howsomever. Bye, Phœbe: I shall always wish
 you well.

PHŒBE Bye, William.

(Cries, wiping her eyes with her apron.)

WILLIAM My heart begins to melt a little -
 (aside) (aloud)

I lov'd you very well once, Phœbe; but you are grown so cross,
 and have such vagaries -

PHŒBE I'm sure I never had no vagaries with you, William. But go,
 mayhap Kate may be angry.

WILLIAM And who cares for she? I never minded her anger, nor her
 coaxing neither, till you were cross to me.

PHŒBE O the father! I cross to you, William?
 (holding up her hands)

WILLIAM Did not you tell me this very morning as how you had done wi'
 me?

PHŒBE One word's as good as a thousand. Do you love me, William?

WILLIAM Do I love thee? Do I love dancing on the green better than
 thrashing in the barn? Do I love a wake? a harvest-home?

PHŒBE Then I'll never speak to Harry again the longest day I have to
 live.

WILLIAM I'll turn my back o' the miller's maid the first time I meet her.

PHŒBE William you indeed, and indeed?

WILLIAM Marry will I; and more than that, I'll go speak to the parson this moment -

(Kisses her.)

I'm happier - zooks, I'm happier than a lord or a squire of five hundred a year.

PHOEBE Why dost talk of lords and squires, William? we poor folks are happier by far, if so be we are but content. Did not the parson bid us mind how the storm bow'd the great trees on the hills, whilst the little shrubs in the valley ne'er bent a head for the matter?

WILLIAM Thou say'st true, Phœbe.

[Duet]

PHOEBE In gaudy courts, with aching hearts,
the great at fortune rail:
the hills may higher honours claim,
but peace is in the vale.

WILLIAM See high-born dames, in rooms of state,
with midnight revels pale;
no youth admires their fading charms,
for beauty's in the vale.

BOTH Amid the shades of virgin's sighs
add fragrance to the gale:
so they that will may take the hill,
since love is in the vale.

(Exeunt arm in arm.)

Enter Belville.

BELVILLE I tremble at the impression this lovely girl has made on my heart. My cheerfulness has left me, and I am grown insensible, even to the delicious pleasure of making those happy who depend on my protection.

[Air]

Ere bright Rosina met my eyes,
how peaceful pass'd the joyous day!
In rural sports I gain'd the prize,
each virgin listen'd to my lay.
But now no more I touch the lyre,
no more the rustic sport can please;
I live the slave of fond desire,
lost to myself, to mirth, and ease.
The tree that in a happier hour,
it's boughs extended o'er the plain,
when blasted by the lightnings power,
nor charms the eye, nor shades the swain.

Enter William.

WILLIAM (He speaks between the scenes:)
 Here's his honour, Phœbe; wait for me at the stile.
 (bowing)
 Please your honour, I am sent to tell you Dorcas and Rosina have found a purse.

BELVILLE Does any body claim it?

WILLIAM No, sir.

BELVILLE Let them keep it, William.

WILLIAM But they charg'd me, please your honour, to give it you.

BELVILLE Go, William, and carry it back.

WILLIAM He put it there himself I thought so; 'tis so like him. I shall, your
 (aside) honour.

(Exit William.)

BELVILLE Since the sun rose, I have been in continual exercise; I feel exhausted, and will try to rest a quarter of an hour on this bank.

(Lies down on a bank by the fountain.)

Gleaners pass the stage, with sheaves of corn on their heads; last Rosina, who comes forward singing.)

[Air]

ROSINA

Light as thistledown moving which floats on the air,
 sweet gratitude's debt to this cottage I bear:
 of autumn's rich store I bring home my part,
 the weight on my head, but gay joy in my heart.

What do I see? mr. Belville asleep? I'll steal softy - at this moment I may gaze on him without blushing.

(Lays down the corn, and walks softly up to him.)

The sun points full on this spot; let me fasten these branches together with this ribbon, and shade him from its beams - yes - that will do. - But if he should wake. -

(Takes the ribbon from her bosom, and ties the tranches together.)

How my heart beats! One look more - Ah! I have wak'd him -

(She flies, and endeavours to hide herself against the door of the cottage, turning her head every instant.)

BELVILLE What noise was that?

(Half raising himself.)

ROSINA He is angry - How unhappy I am! - How I tremble!

BELVILLE This ribbon I have seen before, and on the lovely Rosina's bosom

-

(He rises, and goes towards the cottage:)

ROSINA I will hide myself in the house.

(Opening the door, sees Captain Belville, and starts back.)

Heavens! a man in the house!

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Now, love assist me!

(Comes out, and seizes Rosina; she breaks from him, and runs affrighted cross the stage - Belville follows; Captain Belville, who comes out to pursue her, sees his brother, and steals off at the other scene. - Belville leads Rosina back.)

BELVILLE Why do you fly thus, Rosina? What can you fear? You are out of breath.

ROSINA O, sir! - my strength fails. -
(Leans on Belville, who supports her in his arms.)
Where is he? - A gentleman pursued me.
(Looking round.)

BELVILLE Don't be alarm'd, 'twas my brother - he could not mean to offend you.

ROSINA Your brother? Why then does he not imitate your virtues? Why was he here?

BELVILLE Forget this; you are safe. But tell me, Rosina, for the question is to me of importance; have I not seen you wear this ribbon?

ROSINA Forgive me, sir; I did not mean to disturb you. I only meant to shade you from the too great heat of the sun.

BELVILLE To what motive do I owe this tender attention?

ROSINA Ah, sir! Do not the whole village love you?

BELVILLE "At this moment, Rosina, think me a brother; or a friend a thousand times more affectionate than a brother." You tremble; why are you alarm'd!

[Duet]

(taking her hand)

For you, my sweet maid, may be not afraid,

(Rosina withdraws her hand)

I feel an affection which yet wants a name.

ROSINA When first - but in vain - I seek to explain,
what heart but must love you? I blush, fear, and shame ~

BELVILLE Why thus timid, Rosina? still safe by my side,
let me be your guardian, protector, and guide.

ROSINA My timid heart pants ~ still safe by your side.
Be you my protector, my guardian, my guide.

BOTH Why thus timid,
etc.
My timid heart pants,
etc.

BELVILLE Unveil your whole heart to me, Rosina. The graces of your form, the native dignity of your mind which breaks through the lovely simplicity of your deportment, a thousand circumstances concur to convince me you were not born villager.

ROSINA To you, sir, I can have no reserve. A pride, I hope an honest one, made me wish to sigh in secret over my misfortunes.

BELVILLE They are at an end.
(eagerly)

ROSINA Dorcas approaches, sir: she can better relate my melancholy story.

Enter Dorcas.

DORCAS His honour here? Good lack! How sorry I am I happen'd to be from home. Troth, I'm sadly tir'd.

ROSINA Why would you insist on going? Indeed, sir, she will kill herself.

BELVILLE Will you let me speak with you a moment alone, Dorcas?

DORCAS Sure will I, your honour. Rosina, take this basket.

ROSINA I'll "put the rest of the thread in, and" run with it to the weaver's.
(aside) (Exit.)

Captain Belville at the top of the stage speaking to a servant.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Rosina has taken that bye road: run instantly, and execute my orders, but be prudent, and watch the moment.
(He retires.)

DORCAS Will your honour please to walk into our homely cottage?

BELVILLE I thank you, Dorcas, but 'tis pleasanter here: sit down by me on the bench.

(She curtsies and sits down.)

DORCAS Dear squi! not a bit of pride.

BELVILLE Rosina has referr'd me to you, Dorcas, for an account of her birth, which I have long suspected to be above her present situation.

DORCAS To be sure, your honour, since the dear child gives me leave to speak, she's of as good a family as any in England. Her mother, swet lady, was my bountiful old master's daughter, squire Welford of Lincolnshire.

BELVILLE What happiness! but go on.

DORCAS He was a noble gentleman, and no body's enemy but his own. His estate was seiz'd for a mortgage of not half its value, just after young madam was married, and she ne'er got a penny of her portion. They say, if Rosina had a friend, she might get the estate again by paying the mortgage.

BELVILLE And her father? -

DORCAS Was a brave gentleman too, a colonel: a charming couple they were, and lov'd one an other so, it would have done your heart good to see them. His honour went to the Eastern Indies, to better his fortune, and madam would go with him. The ship was lost, and they, with all the little means they had, went to the bottom. Young madam Rosina was their only child; they left her at school; but when this sad news came, the mistress did not care for keeping her, so the dear child has shar'd my poor morsel.

- BELVILLE 'Tis enough, Dorcas: you shall not repent your kindness to her.
But her father's name?
- DORCAS Martin; colonel Martin.
- BELVILLE I am too happy: he was the friend of my father's heart: a thousand times have I heard him lament his fate. Rosina's virtues shall not go unrewarded.
- DORCAS Yes, I know'd it wou'd be so. Heaven never forsakes the good man's children.
- BELVILLE I have another question to ask you, Dorcas, and answer me sincerely; is her heart free?
- DORCAS To be sure, she never would let any of our young men come a-near her, and yet -
- BELVILLE Speak: I am on the rack.
- DORCAS I'm afear'd - she mopes and she pines - But your honour wou'd be angry - I'm afear'd the Captain -
- BELVILLE Then my foreboding heart was right! 'Tis well, Dorcas; I see my
(aside) brother yonder, leave us.
- DORCAS I'll go seek for the dear child.
(She goes out.)

Enter Captain Belville.

- CAPTAIN BELVILLE I wish it was over; I'm not quite easy.
- BELVILLE I thought you intended to shoot to-day, brother?
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE No; I chang'd my mind.
- BELVILLE You fancied it pleasanter chatting with Rosina?
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE With Rosina?
- BELVILLE O, don't affect ignorance, I saw you come out of her cottage.
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE True, yes; I had forgot. Fatigu'd with the heat, I enter'd the house, and finding nobody there, threw myself on the bed, and fell asleep; that was all, I assure you.
- BELVILLE Not quite: for whom was the purse intended? Come, brother, you love her.
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE Just as I love all pretty women: one must be amus'd in the country.
- BELVILLE I see plainly the source of all your errors, brother: an early acquaintance with the worst part of the sex, has given you an unfavourable idea of the best. But time will correct that mistake; "your heart is noble, and therefore cannot but be charm'd with virtue when she comes led by the loves and the graces." Be sincere with me, brother; do you think Rosina loves you?
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE She has a few palpitations, I believe; but the little fool does not know what ails her.

- BELVILLE 'Tis enough; since she loves you, you shall marry her.
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE Marry her? Do I hear right?
- BELVILLE Why do you smile? she is amiable, and merits to be treated with respect.
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE Respect? I shall expire - Respect - a little gleaner! - No power of face can stand this.
- BELVILLE Hear me, sir.
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE But pray, Charles, since she is so very respectable, why not marry her yourself?
- BELVILLE I wish her partiality for you did not prevent my taking your advice. To obviate every objection, she is your equal; the daughter of colonel Martin, and entitled to a share of her grandfather's estate. In the mean time obtain her consent, and a third of my fortune is yours.
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE This alters the case extremely, brother: Rosina in herself - But let us find her.
- (Going.)
- BELVILLE Whither are you going, brother?
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE Only to - S'death! What shall I say? I am ruin'd if my fellows meet her -

Enter Dorcas and Rustic.

- DORCAS Help, for heaven's sake, sir! I have lost my child!... she is carried away -
- BELVILLE Rosina?
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE Don't be alarm'd - let me go.
(confusedly)
- DORCAS I heard her cries, and ran to the place; but she was gone. -
- CAPTAIN BELVILLE I fly to save her.
- BELVILLE With me, sir - I will not lose sight of you. Rustic, hasten instantly with our reapers. Dorcas, you will be our guide.
- (Exit.)

Scene II

Scene changes to a meadow by the river side. Enter Belville, Captain Belville, and Dorcas; on the other side Rustic, and the first and second Irishman.

- RUSTIC Don't be frightened, sir; the Irishmen have rescued her; she is just here.

1ST IRISHMAN Dry your tears, my jewel; we have done for them.
(to Dorcas)

DORCAS Have you sav'd her? I owe you more than life.

1ST IRISHMAN Faith, good woman, you owe me no thing at all. I'll tell your honour how it was. My comrades and I were crossing the meadow, going home, when we saw them first; and hearing a woman cry, I looked up, and saw them putting her into a skiff against her will. Says I, Paddy, is not that the clever little creature that was gleaning in the field with us this morning? "'Tis so, sure enough," says he. "By st. Patrick", says I, "there's enough of us to rescue her". With that we ran for the bare life, waded up to the knees, laid about us bravely with our shillelays, knock'd them out of the skiff, and brought her back safe: and here she comes, my jewel.

(A boat appears, Rosina lands, is led forward by the Reapers, and throws herself into Dorcas's arms.)

DORCAS I canno' speak - Art thou safe? -

BELVILLE I dread to find the criminal.

RUSTIC Your honour need not go far afield, I believe; it must have been some friend of the Captain's, for his French valet commanded the party.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE I confess my crime; my passion for Rosina hurried me out of myself.

BELVILLE Was my house, sir, chosen for the scene of your ungovern'd licentiousness? You have dishonour'd me, dishonour'd the glorious profession you have embrac'd. - But be gone, I renounce you as my brother, and resume my ill-plac'd friendship.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Your indignation is just; I have offended almost past forgiveness. Will the offer of my hand repair the injury?

BELVILLE If Rosina accepts it, I am satisfied.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE What I have done, Rosina, was the effect of a too tender love. Ought you to punish it? Accept my hand.

ROSINA Will you, sir, suffer? - This hope is a second insult. Whoever offends the object of his love is unworthy of obtaining her.
(to Belville)

BELVILLE This noble refusal paints your character. I know another, Rosina, who loves you with as strong, though purer ardor: the timidity inseparable from real love has hitherto prevented his declaring himself - but if allowed to hope -

ROSINA Do not, sir, envy me the calm delight of passing my independent days with Dorcas, in whom I have found a mother's tenderness.

DORCAS Bless thee, my child; thy kindness melts my heart.

BELVILLE Do you refuse me too then, Rosina?

(Rosina raises her eyes tenderly on Belville, lowers them again, and leans on Dorcas.)

DORCAS You, sir? You? - Sure I am in a dream!

CAPTAIN BELVILLE What do I hear?

BELVILLE Rosina, may I hope?

ROSINA My confusion - my blushes -

BELVILLE 'Tis enough; I see I am rejected.

ROSINA 'Tis the first time in your life, I believe, that you ever were mistaken.

(Giving her hand timidly to Belville.)

BELVILLE Then I am happy! My life! my Rosina!

[Air]

How blest, my fair, who on thy face
 unchecked by fear, may fondly gaze!
 Who, when he breathes the tender sigh,
 beholds no anger in thine eye!
 Ah, then, what joys await the swain,
 who ardent pleads, nor pleads in vain;
 whose voice, with rapture all divine,
 secure may say, "This heart is mine!"

CAPTAIN BELVILLE I am punished; but I have too well deserv'd it.

PHŒBE Do you speak to his honour, William.

WILLIAM No; do you speak, Phœbe.

PHŒBE I am asham'd - William and I, your honour - William pray'd me to let him keep me company - so he gain'd my good-will to have him, if so be my grandmother contents.

(Curtsying, and playing with her apron.)

WILLIAM If your honour would be so good to speak to Dorcas.

BELVILLE Dorcas, you must not refuse me any thing to-day. I'll give William a farm.

Dorcas. Your honour is too kind - take her, William, and make her a good husband.

WILLIAM That I will, dame.

WILLIAM, PHŒBE Thank your honour.

(to Belville)

(Belville joins their hands; they bow and curtsy.)

WILLIAM What must I do with the purse, your honour? Dorcas would not take it.

BELVILLE I believe, my brother has the best right.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE 'Tis yours, William; dispose of it as you please.

WILLIAM Then I'll give it to our honest Irishmen, who fought so bravely for Rosina.

BELVILLE You have made a good use of it, William; nor shall my gratitude stop here.

CAPTAIN BELVILLE Allow me to retire, brother, and learn at a distance from you to correct those errors into which the fire of youth, and bad example, have hurried me. When I am worthy of your esteem, I will return, and demand my rights in your affection.

BELVILLE You must not leave us, brother: the man who wishes to be virtuous is already become so. Resume the race of honour; be indeed a soldier, and be more than my brother - be my friend. Dorcas, you have a mother's right in Rosina, and must not leave us.

(During the finale, William distributes the money among the Reapers.)

[Air Finale]

BELVILLE, CAPTAIN BELVILLE

To bless, and to be blest, be ours,
 whate'er our rank, whate'er our powers,
 on some her gifts kind fortune flowers,
 who reap, like us, in this rich scene.
 Yet those who taste her bounty less
 the sigh malevolent repress,
 and loud the feeling bosom bless,
 which something leaves for want to glean.

ROSINA

How blest am I! supremely blest!
 Since Belville all his soul exprest,
 and fondly clasp'd me to his breast:
 I now may reap ~ how chang'd the scene!
 But ne'er can I forget the day,
 when, all to want and woe a prey,
 soft pity taught his soul to say,
 unfeeling Rustic, let her glean!

RUSTIC, DORCAS, WILLIAM, PHEBE

The hearts you glad your own display,
 the heav'ns such goodness must repay;
 and blest through many a summer's day,
 full crops you' ll reap in this rich scene:
 and o! when summer's joys are o'er,
 and autumn yields its fruits no more,
 new blessings be there yet in store,
 for winter's sober hours to glean.

CHORUS OF ALL

And o! when summer's joys are o'er,
etc.

The Reapers form dances, and present nosegays of corn-flowers and poppies to Belville and Rosina.

Finis.

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