

Our heroine conquered those impressions, and recovered her tranquillity.

After staying abroad about a year, Mr. and Mrs. Inchbald returned to England, from whence they had been absent near five years. They constantly avoided the gentleman who had nearly proved so fatal to their happiness, and continued to live in the most perfect harmony near two years, when Mr. Inchbald's death gave our heroine a new occasion of testifying how much she had ever thought herself obliged to him, by an unaffected concern for his memory, and by a firm regard to a strict vow which she had taken, never again to behold the man who had once designed the ruin of her peace and the injury of her husband.

Once more left to herself, her former wishes and her former curiosity returned; and, notwithstanding all the difficulties she had hitherto encountered, she again resolved 'to see a little more of the world,' and again turned her attention to London; and though, upon her arrival, she immediately obtained a situation in one of the theatres, she, four long years, experienced little more than poverty, aggravated by persecution. For some trifling inattention, or a rejection of some peculiar article required by the manager, but, repugnant to her feelings, she was one winter expelled the Theatre, and obliged to take refuge, under some hard terms, in Ireland. We well recollect the event of her going to Dublin that season; but the particular circumstances that occasioned her quitting London, or her unhappy situation in it, or what induced her to return, and re-entrance in the same Theatre from whence she was, during the season of playing, suddenly discharged, we cannot take upon us to state: There are private occurrences which come not within the verge of our knowledge; and we shall not stain the authenticity of these memoirs by giving as facts the conclusions of conjecture.

Thus oppressed and unhappy, and living in the most retired manner, our heroine, probably to divert her mind from a too frequent recollection of these circumstances, directed her attention to dramatic composition, in which she has so happily succeeded, that whatever cause induced her to 'woo the muse,' the public have rejoiced in the effect.

It was in the fourth year of Mrs. Inchbald's engagement at Covent-Garden Theatre that the *Magul Tale* was sent to Mr. Colman. This was the first piece which she brought upon the stage; though the comedy of *I'll tell you what* was written near three years before, and had lain all that time unread, in Mr. Colman's possession. Appearing in a female hand, and

sent by an anonymous author, that gentleman probably concluded it unworthy of his perusal. The *Magul Tale* was sent in the same manner; its brevity seems to have been its recommendation for speedy attention; and its success induced Mrs. Inchbald to remind the manager of her comedy: His reply was, 'I'll go home and read it.'—He read; he approved; and in the following summer the town was delighted with that popular piece, to which Mr. Colman gave the title of *I'll tell you what*.

Success, they say, makes people vain; but Mrs. Inchbald's success seems to have had no other effect than that of stimulating her to new exertions; and she moves in the dramatic hemisphere with the rapidity and the brilliancy of those fascinating fires 'that charm, but hurt not.' This comedy of *I'll tell you what*, has been succeeded by *Appearance is against them*; *The Widow's Poem*; *Such Things are*; and *The Midnight Hour*. It is needless to descant on the merits of compositions so well known to the public, and from which they will yet derive much profitable pleasure; for it is the almost exclusive property of all Mrs. Inchbald's dramatic productions, that their merit ranks them in the list of what are called 'stock plays,' plays which are likely to amuse succeeding generations. To these works of genius we may also add a novel, for which, we are assured, Mrs. Inchbald has been offered a considerable sum, but which, for reasons best known to herself, she declines publishing at present.

The comedy of *I'll tell you what*, was written at the age of twenty-four, and the remainder of the pieces at periods of life so remarkably early, that we are naturally reminded of the praise bestowed by Dr. Johnson on one of the poets: 'When it is remembered,' he says, 'that this author produced these four plays before he had passed his twenty-fifth year; before other men, even such as are, some time, to shine in eminence, have passed their probation of literature, or presume for any other notice than such as is bestowed on diligence and inquiry, I doubt whether any one can be produced that more surpassed the common limits of nature than him.' The appropriation to our authoress of this striking sentence, and we think that appropriation but mere justice, redounds more to the honour of Mrs. Inchbald than any praise immediately directed to herself. And were we even to divert her writings of all that popularity and fashion which have so fortunately attended them, still it must be acknowledged, and her works evidently prove, that she has more than accomplished