

INDEPENDENCE;  
OR  
WHICH DO YOU LIKE BEST,  
THE  
PEER, OR THE FARMER?

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

(FOUNDED ON THE NOVEL OF "THE INDEPENDENT,")

AND PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE, CHARLESTON,  
WITH UNBOUNDED APPLAUSE.

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BY WILLIAM IOOR,  
OF ST. GEORGE, DORCHESTER, SOUTH-CAROLINA.

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" Oh knew he but his happiness, of men  
" The happiest he! who, far from public rage,  
" Deep in the vale, with a choice few retir'd,  
" Drinks the pure pleasures of a country life." THOMPSON.

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M,DCCCXV.

*Wood.* By no means, my lord. It will be a very easy matter for you to remedy the inconvenience. If you cannot procure, of the manufacturers, as much cotton as will be sufficient to stop your illustrious ears, you may surround your gardens with a wall, whose top shall reach to heaven, and within that elegant enclosure enjoy your own amusements, undisturbed by the sports of us poor rustics, who inhabit the humble vale.

*Lord Fan.* No sir, I'll adopt neither of your plans. I despise walls, and detest cotton. I'll have recourse to another expedient. I'll purchase your farm.

*Wood.* Not unless I choose to sell it?

*Lord Fan.* But sir, I say you cannot choose to deny any thing to a person of my quality!

*Wood.* Why not my Lord? Quality is no word of con-  
juration with me, I assure you. I am an independent farmer, don't owe five guineas in the world. I grant indeed, you are a lord. Heaven and the king be praised by you therefor. But on this charming little farm, I am a prince—Here I reign in rural state. I wage war with hawks and grain devouring crows—defend my territories from the inroads of plundering foxes, and preserve leagues of amity, with the parson, and other neighbouring pacific potentates—among whom I should be truly glad to number your lordship.

*Lord Fan.* Sir, let me tell you this language is pretty free. But I ask you once for all, will you sell me your farm?

*Wood.* And I answer once for all—No. Not all the gold that ever was, is, or shall be in your lordship's coffers could tempt me to forsake this heavenly spot. What is there in the power of gold to purchase which I need? No courtier can be as happy as we are. Do you see those lads my lord—they love me, and strive hard who shall please me best. Yon snug farm house affords me a peaceful shelter, and these grateful fields bless me with plenty. While

slumbering under these shades in summer, I pine not for your lordships silken canopies; nor while laughing by my hall fire of a winter's night, do I sigh for the glare of an opera or a masquerade.

*Lord Fan.* Mortification upon mortification, switch me.  
(*Aside.*)

*Wood.* What a hopeful situation would Old England be in, could she boast of many such peers of the realm, as the sample before us! however his father purchased his earldom, and that accounts for it. (*Aside.*) *Sings.*

“To plow and sow,” &c.

Play away pipes and catgut! surely you are not petrified at the sight of a peer of the realm?

*Lord Fan.* You shall repent this insult very shortly, take my word for it, sir.

*Wood.* I would advise your lordship not to be too hasty in attempting to carry your threat into execution; for fear you should be more hastily convinced that the honest peasantry about us, prefer the farmer to the peer, and INDEPENDENCE to tyranny. (*Exeunt at different sides.*)

*SCENE—A superb apartment in LORD FANFARE'S MANSION.*

*Enter LADY FANFARE and LADY LOUISA FANFARE, at opposite sides.*

*Lady Fan.* Well I protest Louisa, this meeting is exceedingly well timed; I was on the look out for you, in order to tell you agreeable news. Know then, there resides in our neighbourhood a gentleman farmer!!! Margaret has been entertaining me with a description of him this morning, and if one half she says be true, he must be a wonderful man indeed! She says, he is “the beautifullest man” she ever saw—and, what is still better, as good as he is beautiful. The whole county adores him, and no one in distress applies to him in vain. He will relieve them, in some way or other—and yet he is far from rich—labours in his fields himself. Margaret is “positive sure” he is a gentleman,