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E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN
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XK 82.1 [Pla]

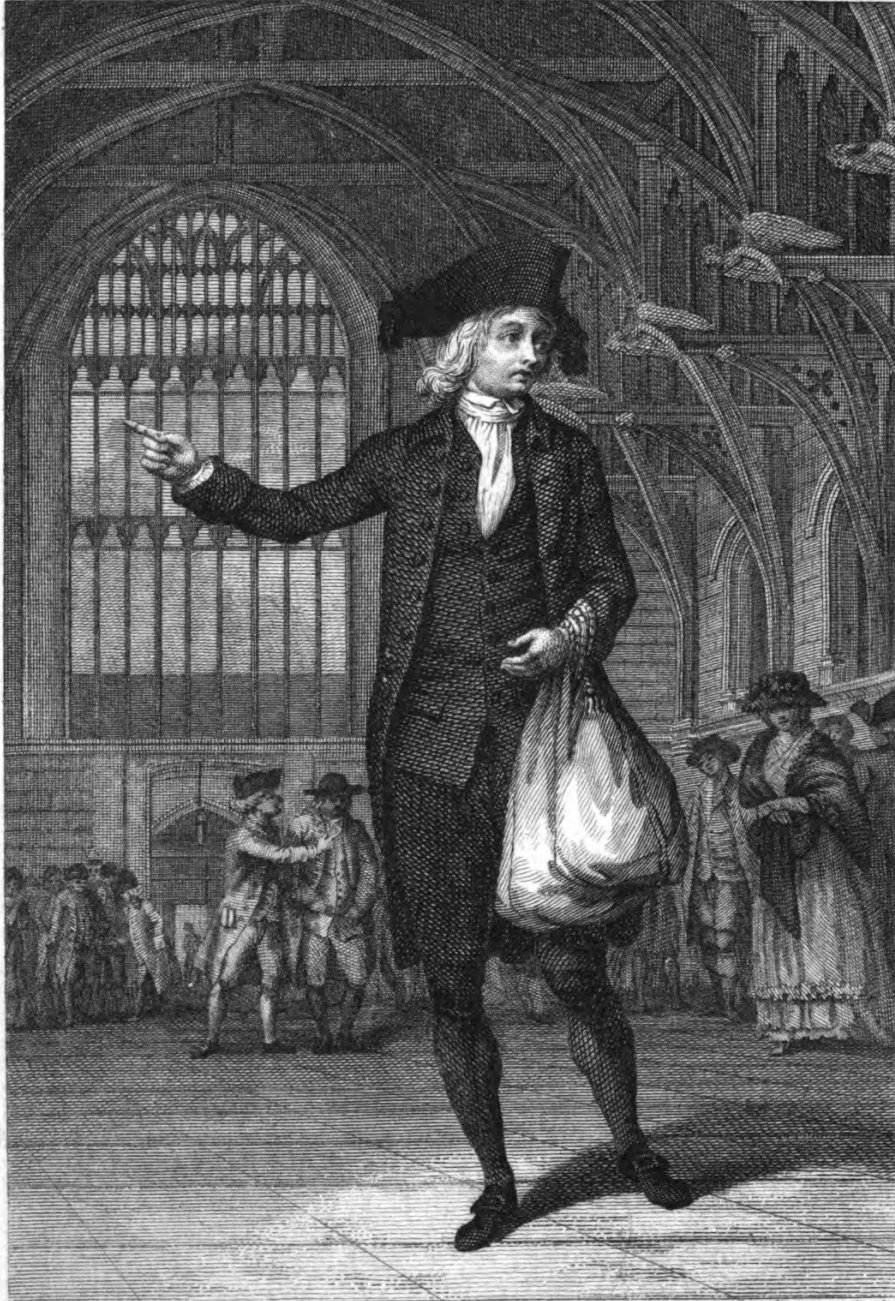
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XK 82.1 [Pla]

Act 3^d

PLAIN DEALER.

Scene 2^d



Ryley ad vivum del

Angus sculpsit

M. EDWIN in the Character of
JERRY BLACKACRE.

*I'll go pay the man at the gate two
Shillings I owe him.*

Published, 1st Nov. 1786 by W. Lowndes.

THE
PLAIN DEALER,
A COMEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS;
ALTERED FROM WYCHERLY,

BY

Mr. BICKERSTAFF:

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden.

A NEW EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed for W. LOWNDES, S. BLADON, and W. NICOLL.

M DCC LXXXVI.

(*Price One Shilling and Six-pence.*)

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2000

2001

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2014

TO

DAVID GARRICK, ESQUIRE,
THE GREATEST ORNAMENT
THE THEATRE EVER HAD TO BOAST;
IN GRATITUDE
FOR HIS JUDICIOUS CORRECTION OF
THESE ALTERATIONS;
AND HIS JUST AND LIVELY INSTRUCTIONS,
WHICH HAVE SO GREATLY ASSISTED THEM IN
REPRESENTATION;
AND AS A TRIBUTE
OF AFFECTION AND ESTEEM,
FOR HIS MANY SHINING
AND AMIABLE QUALITIES;
THIS ATTEMPT TO RESTORE TO THE STAGE
ONE OF THE FATHERS OF OUR
ENGLISH COMEDY
IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS MOST OBLIGED
AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

ISAAC BICKERSTAFF.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Covent-Garden. Drury-Lane.

Manly,	Mr. <i>Wroughton,</i>	Mr. <i>Bensley.</i>
Freeman,	Mr. <i>Farren,</i>	Mr. <i>Farren.</i>
Lord Plausible,	Mr. <i>Wewitzer,</i>	Mr. <i>Suett.</i>
Novel,	Mr. <i>Lewis,</i>	Mr. <i>Palmer.</i>
Varnish,	Mr. <i>Davies,</i>	Mr. <i>Packer.</i>
Major Oldfox,	Mr. <i>Quick,</i>	Mr. <i>Moody.</i>
Jerry Blackacre,	Mr. <i>Edwin,</i>	Mr. <i>Dodd.</i>
Counfel. Quillit,	Mr. <i>Booth,</i>	Mr. <i>Wrighten.</i>
Oakum,	Mr. <i>Fearon,</i>	Mr. <i>Wright.</i>
A Boy,	Master <i>Farley,</i>	
Counfel. Ploddon.		
Bookseller.		

Olivia,	Mrs. <i>Bates,</i>	Miss <i>Pope.</i>
Fidelia,	Mrs. <i>Wells,</i>	Mrs. <i>Wilson.</i>
Mrs. Blackacre,	Mrs. <i>Webb,</i>	Mrs. <i>Hopkins.</i>
Eliza,	Mrs. <i>Inchbald,</i>	Miss <i>Wheeler.</i>
Lettrice,	Miss <i>Stuart,</i>	Miss <i>Tidswell.</i>

T H E

The Plain Dealer.

ACT I. SCENE, Manly's Lodgings.

Manly enters in a Morning Gown, followed by Lord Plausible.

Man. **P**RAY, my lord, pray my lord Plausible, give me leave, I have more of the mastiff than the spaniel in my nature, I own it; besides I am too old now to learn to play tricks: I cannot fawn, and fetch and carry; neither will I ever practise that servile complaisance, which some people pique themselves on being masters of.

L. Plau. Well, but seriously, my dear friend, this is being singular; will you declare war against general custom; refuse to subscribe to the common forms of good breeding?

Man. Forms indeed, my lord, they are mere forms, and therefore shall not sway me. In short, I will not, as your subscribers to forms do, whisper my contempt or hatred; call a man fool, or knave, by signs, or mouths over his shoulder, while I have him in my arms.—I will not do as you do.

L. Plau. As I do!—Heaven defend me! upon my honour, I never attempted to abuse, or lessen any one in my life.

Man. What! you were afraid!

L. Plau. No; but seriously I hate to do a rude thing.—No, faith, I speak well of all mankind.

Man. I thought so; but know that is the worst sort of detraction, for it takes away the reputation of the

few good men in the world, by making all alike.— Now I speak ill of most men, because they deserve it.

L. Plau. Well, tell not me, my dear friend, what people deserve; I, like an author in a dedication, never speak well of a man for his sake, but my own: I will not disparage any one to disparage myself: to speak ill of people behind their backs is not pretty, and to speak ill of them to their faces would be the most monstrous thing in nature.

Man. So that if you was to say an unhandfome thing of any of your friends, I suppose you would chuse to do it behind their backs.

L. Plau. Oh certainly, certainly; I would do it behind their backs out of pure good manners.

Man. Very well, my lord: I have not leasure at present to examine into the propriety of your decorums: I confess, I am but an unpolished sea-fellow. But there is a favour, which if your lordship would grant me—

L. Plau. A favour, dear Sir! you make me the happiest man in the world; pray let me know how I have it in my power to serve you.

Man. No otherwise, my lord, than by leaving me a little to myself; at present I am really quite unfit for company.

L. Plau. Perhaps you have business.

Man. If you have any I would not detain your lordship.

L. Plau. Detain me! dear Sir, I came on purpose to pay my respects to you: I heard of your arrival in town last night, and could not be easy. But be free with me; if my company is in the least disagreeable or inconvenient—

Man. I have told your lordship, already, I had rather be alone.

L. Plau. I will lay hold then of some other opportunity of paying my most humble respects to you; and in the mean time—

Enter

Enter Oakum.

Man. Oakum! wait on his Lordship down.

L. Plau. Sir, I am your most obedient.

Man. Good-bye to your lordship.

L. Plau. Your most faithful.

Man. Your servant, your servant.

L. Plau. And eternally—

Man. And eternal ceremony!—

L. Plau. You shall use no ceremony, by my life!

Man. I do not intend it.

L. Plau. Where are you going then?

Man. Zounds! to see you out of doors, that I may shut them against more welcomes.

[*Exeunt Manly and Lord Plausible.*

Oak. Well said, bully-tar! He came alongside of his match when he grappled with you, I can tell him that. Zounds he makes no more of one of these fresh-water sparks, than a three-decker would of a bomb-boat! But he's as brave a heart as ever stept between stem and stern; and so's a sign, by his sinking our fine vessel the other day, rather than let her fall into the hands of the rascally French, when he found three or four of their piccaroons at once were too many for us. Let me see—'Tis just six weeks since we sailed out of Portsmouth harbour, and we had scarce been a month on our cruize before we fell in with the enemy's squadron—Ah! we have made a base, broken, short voyage of it—Howsomever, he soon expects to be put into commission again, and I would go with him about the round world, if so be it was his destination; for, thof he's as crusty as any one sometimes, and will be obey'd, there's never a captain in the navy that's a truer friend to a seaman—Avast tho'! He steers this way, in company of our merry lieutenant: 'tis foul weather, I doubt; I'll loof up, and get to windward of him. [Retires.

Enter Manly and Freeman.

Free. But how the devil could you turn a man
B 2 of

of his quality down stairs? You use a lord with very little ceremony it seems.

Man. A lord! What, you are one of those who esteem men only by the value and marks which fortune hath set upon them, and never consider intrinsic worth! but counterfeit honours will not be current with me; I weigh the man, not his title: it is not the king's inscription can make the metal better or heavier. Your lord is a leaden shilling, which you bend every way, and debases the stamp he bears, instead of being raised by it—And you, rascal, block-head! didn't I order you to deny me to every body?

Oak. Yes, your honour; and so I would, but I was just stepped into the back-parlour to play a game at all-fours with our landlady's daughter; and, while we were wrangling about the cards, the little boy let the gentleman up unknown to us.

Man. Well, be more careful for the future: stand at the stair-foot, and, at your peril, keep all that ask for me from coming up.

Oak. Must no one come up to you, Sir?

Man. No man, Sir.

Oak. A woman, an't like your honour?

Man. No woman, neither, you impertinent rascal.

Oak. Indeed, your honour, it will be hard for me to deny a woman any thing, since we are so newly come on shore: but I'll let no *old* woman come up to you.

Man. Would you be witty?—You become a jest as ill as you do a horse—Be gone. [*Exit Oakum.*]

Free. Nay, let the poor rogue have his fore-castle jests: a sailor cannot help them in a storm, scarce when a ship's sinking—But what, will you see nobody? not your friends?

Man. Friends! I have only one friend, and he I hear is not in town: nay, can have only one; for a true heart admits but of one friendship, as of one love; but in having that friend I have a thousand; for he has the courage of men in despair, yet the caution and diffidence of cowards; secrecy of the revengeful,

vengeful, and the constancy of martyrs; one fit to advise, to keep a secret, to fight, to die for his friend—But words are but weak testimonies of his merit, and my esteem: I have trusted him in my absence with the care of the woman I love; which is a charge of so tender, so delicate a nature—

Free. Well, but all your good thoughts are not for him alone, I hope! Pray what do you think of me for a friend?

Man. Of you! Why you are a latitudinarian in friendship; that is, no friend; you will side with all mankind, but suffer for none; you are, indeed, like your Lord Plausible, the pink of courtesy, and therefore have no friendship.

Free. No! that's very odd doctrine, indeed.

Man. Look you, I am so much your friend that I would not deceive you; and therefore must tell you, not only because my heart is taken up, but according to your rules of friendship, I cannot be your friend.

Free. Why, pray?

Man. Because you will say he that is a true friend to a man is a friend to all his friends; but you must excuse me; I cannot wish well to a pack of coxcombs, sharpers, and scoundrels, whom I have seen you treat, I know not how often, as the dearest friends in the world.

Free. What, I suppose you have observed me in the park, and at the coffee-house, doing the business of the several places! But could you really think I was a friend to all those I bowed to, shook hands with, and received in open arms?

Man. You told them you were; nay, and swore it too; I heard you.

Free. Ay, but, when their backs were turn'd, did not I tell you the greater part of them were wretched, infamous fellows, whom I despised and hated?

Man. Very true; but what right had I to believe you spoke your heart to me, who professed deceiving so many?

6 THE PLAIN DEALER,

Free. Nay, if you are such a precise adherer to matter of fact, it is in vain to argue with you; yet surely you would not have every man wear his opinion upon his sleeve, and find fault and quarrel with all that he cannot in his conscience approve.

Man. I would have every man speak truth, and neither act the part of a hypocrite or a coward.

Free. Yet, pray, Sir, believe the friendship I offer you real, whatever I have professed to others—Try me at least.

Man. Why, what would you do for me? However, spare yourself the trouble of professing; for, go as far as you will—here comes one will say as much at least—

Enter Fidelity.

Don't you love me dev'lishly, too, my little volunteer? as well as he, or any man can?

Fide. Better than any man can love you, my dear captain: as well as you do truth and honour, Sir: as well—

Man. Nay, good young gentleman, enough for shame! Sure you forget that I am an unsuccessful man; that I have met with nothing abroad but losses and disappointments; and am like to find nothing at home but frowns and vexation! Why do you follow me, then, flatter my vanity now; since, so far from being able to befriend you, I stand in need of a patron myself?

Fide. I never followed reward or preferment, Sir, but you alone; and, were you this instant to embark on the most hazardous expedition, I would cheerfully risk my life for the bare pleasure of serving with you.

Man. Nay, hold there, Sir; did not I see you, during the engagement, more afraid—

Fide. Yet do me justice, Sir; when we took to our long-boat, on your giving orders to sink the ship, did I shew any signs of dread or weariness; though

though the waves broke over us on every side, and the night was so dark?—

Man. Ay, ay, you were in haste to get to land: the apprehension of death made you insensible of danger, and so you were valiant out of fear.

Fide. Well, Sir, 'tis in vain for me to avow my sentiments, since you are determined not to believe me; but one day or other, perhaps—

Free. Poor lad! you bring tears into his eyes: consider his youth and inexperience, and make some allowances.

Man. What, does he cry?—No more, you milk-fop! Dry your eyes: I will never make you afraid again; for of all men, if I had occasion, you should not be my second; and when I return to sea—

Fide. You will not leave me behind!—

Man. Leave you behind! Ay, ay; you are a hopeful youth for the shore only; you have a smock-face, and an officious readiness about you: you may get yourself recommended to some great man, by flattering his valet-de-chambre; or, who knows, some liquorish old woman, or wanton young one, may take a fancy to you, allow you a conditional annuity, and make your fortune that way.

Fide. Sure, Sir, you are industrious to find yourself reasons for an aversion to me: do you think then I am capable of being the despicable wretch you describe?

Man. Why, don't I know you to be a coward, Sir; a wretch capable of any thing?

Fide. Yet consider, Sir; do not turn me off to beggary and ruin: when I came to you, I told you I was helpless and friendless.

Man. Very well, Sir—I will provide you with half a score friends, which will help you a little—in the mean time be gone; go! you will fare better in any place than with me.

Fide. I can fare well no where, lost as I am; I pursue happiness, but at every turn I meet complicated misery. [*Afide.*]

[*Exit.*
Enter

8 THE PLAIN DEALER,

Enter Oakum.

Oak. There's a woman below, an please your honour, who scolds and buffles to come up, as much as a seaman's widow at the Navy-office; she says her name's Blackacre.

Man. That fiend!

Free. The widow Blackacre, that litigious she-pettifogger, who is at law and difference with all the world! I wish I could make her agree with me in a church. She hath three thousand pounds a year jointure, and the care of her son—that is, the destruction of his estate!

Man. The lawyers, attornies, and solicitors, have three thousand pounds a year, while she is content to be poor to make other people so; for she is as vexatious as her father was, the great Norfolk attorney—

Free. Ay, the devil take him! I am four hundred pounds a year out of pocket by his knavish practices on an old aunt of mine; though indeed there was suspicion of a false deed of conveyance; I once had a design of suing the widow upon it, and something I will now think of seriously—but, hang her! she won't pretend to know me!

Man. Go to her, can't you? When she's in town she lodges in one of the inns of court, where she breeds her son, and is herself his tutorefs in law-French: but bid her come up; she is Olivia's relation, and may make me amends for her visit, by giving me some account of her.

Enter Mrs. Blackacre and Jerry.

Mrs. Black. I never had so much trouble with a judge's door-keeper, as with your's: you should consider, Captain Manly, this is term time, and folks have something else to do, besides waiting for admittance to people they have business with.

Man. Well, well, a truce with your exclamations, and tell me something about your cousin. How does Olivia?

Mrs.

Mrs. Black. Jerry, give me the subpoena.—It was by mere chance I heard of your being in town, and you are my chief witness: you can't imagine how my cause—

Man. Damn your cause! when did you see Olivia?

Mrs. Black. I am no visitor, captain, but a woman of business: or, if ever I visit, 'tis only the Chancery-lane ladies towards the law; and none of your lazy, good for nothing, fashionable gill-flirts.—Many a fine estate has been lost in families for want of a notable stirring woman, to rumage among the writings: but come, Sir, we have no time to lose; and since you won't listen to me, I desire you may hear my son a little; let him put our case to you; for, if the trial comes on to day, it will not be amiss to have your memory refreshed, and your judgment informed, lest you should give your evidence improperly.—Jerry!

Jer. What's the matter with you now?

Mrs. Black. Come, child, put our case to Captain Manly—Nay, don't hold down your head and look like a fool; for you can do it very well if you please.

Jer. I wish I may be hanged if I ever knew such a woman as you are in my life! I wonder you are not ashamed to make one an antic before strangers this way!

Mrs. Black. Jerry, Jerry! don't be perverse, but lay down the bags, and speak out like a good child, when I bid you.—Lord, Sir, it would do you good to hear him sometimes.—Why don't you begin?

Jer. Psha! you are always in such a hurry, there's no such thing as doing nothing for you—What case must I put?

Mrs. Black. Our case that comes on to day in the Common Pleas: you know well enough, but you will be stubborn! Pray, captain, mark him.

Jer. Hem! hem!—John a Stiles—

Man.

Man. You may talk, young lawyer, and put her case, if you think proper; but I shall no more mind you than I would your mother, if I was in your case, when she bid me do a thing to make a fool of myself.

Fer. Look you there now; I told you so.

Mrs. Black. Never mind him, Jerry, he only says that to dash you: go on! Bless my soul, I could hear our Jerry put cases all day!

Fer. John a Stiles—no—there are first, Fitz, Pere, and Ayle; no, no, Ayle, Pere, and Fitz—Ayle is feized in fee of Blackacre; John a Stiles disseizes the Ayle; Ayle makes claim, and the disseffors die—Then the Ayle—no the Fitz—

Mrs. Black. No, the Pere, firrah!

Fer. Oh, the Pere—ay, the Pere, Sir, and the Fitz—No, the Ayle—No, the Pere and the Fitz—

Man. Damn Pere, Ayle, and Fitz, Sir!

Mrs. Black. No, you are out, child. Take notice of me, captain—There are Ayle, Pere, and Fitz: Ayle is feized in fee of Blackacre; and being so feized, John a Stiles disseizes the Ayle: Ayle makes claim, and the disseizor dies; then the Pere enters.—The Pere, firrah, the Pere!—And the Fitz enters upon the Pere; and the Ayle brings his writ of disseizen in the Post, and the Pere brings his writ of disseizen in the Pere, and—

Man. 'Sdeath, Freeman, can you listen to this stuff?

Mrs. Black. Hold, Sir! I must serve you (*gives a paper, which he throws away*); you are required, Sir, by this to give your testimony—

Man. I'll be forsworn, to be revenged of you.

[*Exit.*

Mrs. Black. Get you gone for an unmannerly fellow! But the service is good in law, so he must attend it at his peril.—Come, Jerry, I had almost forgot, we are to meet at the master's before eleven. Let us mind our business still, child.

Fer. Well, and who hinders you?

Free.

Free. Nay, Madam, now I would beg you to hear me a little—A little of my business.

Mrs. Black. I have business of my own, Sir, calls me away.

Free. My business would prove your's too, Madam.

Mrs. Black. What, 'tis no Westminster-hall business! would you have my advice?

Free. No, faith; 'tis a little Westminster Abbey business: I would have your consent.

Mrs. Black. Fye, fye! to me such language, Sir! and in the presence of my dear minor here.

Jer. Ay, ay, mother, he would be taking livery and seizure of your jointure, by digging the turf; but I'll watch his waters, and so you may tell him. Come along. *[Exeunt Jerry and Widow.]*

Enter Fidelia.

Fide. Dear Mr. Freeman, speak to the captain for me.

Free. Where is he?

Fide. Within, Sir.

Free. Sighing and meditating, I suppose, on his darling mistress—He would never trust me to see her; is she handsome?

Fide. I am not a proper judge.

Free. What is she?

Fide. A gentlewoman, I believe; but of as mean fortune as beauty. You know, Sir, the captain made early choice of a sea life, to which the particularity of his disposition afterwards attached him. But some time since he determined to quit the navy; and, having conceived a violent passion for this lady, was about to marry and retire with her into the country.

Free. And what prevented him?

Fide. The offer of a ship to go against the enemies of his country: however, when he came home again the treaty was to be concluded; and, in the meantime, he left his intended wife ten or twelve thousand

and pounds, lest any thing should happen to him whilst he was abroad.

Free. He has left her in the care of some friend, has he not? Pray do you know any thing of him?

Fide. Nothing further than that his name's Varnish; and he's a man in whom the captain puts the greatest confidence.

Free. But if this Olivia be not handsome, what the devil can he see in her?

Fide. He imagines her, I suppose, the only woman of truth and sincerity in the world.

Free. No common beauties, I must confess—

Fide. But methinks he should have had more than common proofs of them, before he trusted the bulk of his fortune in her hands.

Free. Why, did he leave the sum you mention actually in her custody?

Fide. So I am told.

Free. Then he shewed love to her indeed—But I'll go plead with him for you, and learn something more of this wonderful fair one. *[Exit.*

Fide. Was ever woman in so strange, so cruel a situation? As long as I have worn this disguise, I cannot look at myself without astonishment; but when I consider that I have run such lengths for a man who knows not that I love him, and if he did know it would certainly reject my passion, I am startled indeed. At the time I formed the bold resolution of going with him to sea, I was sensible his affections were engaged to another: Why then did I embark in so rash an adventure? because I loved; and love is apt to buoy itself up with false hopes; he left the object of his desires behind: he took me with him; and from that favourable circumstance I suffered myself to be cheated with a thousand fond imaginations—Here he comes, and I must avoid him. Oh, fortune, fortune! I have been indiscreet; yet surely I may be punished for my indiscretion with too great severity. *[Exit.*

Enter

Enter Manly, in his uniform, followed by Freeman.

Man. 'Sdeath! 'tis past eleven o'clock, and I should have been abroad before nine! But this comes of being pestered with a pack of impertinent visitors. Well, I am going out, and shall not return all day.

Free. What, I suppose you are going to pay your devoirs to some great man now?

Man. And why should you suppose that?

Free. Nay, faith, only because I think 'tis what you ought to do; and I know 'tis what those sort of people expect.

Man. Well, but if they expect it from me they shall be disappointed; I have done nothing to be afraid of, that I need solicit their interest by way of a screen; and I leave those to dance attendance who are more supple, and can play the parasite better—If they want, let them come to me—No, I am going at present where I dare swear I shall be a welcome guest; and where I ought to have gone last night, indeed; but I came to town too late for her regular hours.

Free. Oh! I guess where you mean; to the lady I have so often heard you talk of. Methinks I would give a good deal to see this phenomenon. She must needs be mistress of very extraordinary charms to engage a person of your difficult disposition.

Man. The charms of her person, though in them she excels most of her sex, are her meanest beauties: her tongue, no more than her face, ever knew artifice: she is all sincerity; and hates the creeping, canting, hypocritical tribe, as I do; for which I love her, and I am sure she hates not me; for, as an instance of her inviolable attachment, when I was going to sea, and she found it impracticable to accompany me, she insisted upon my suffering her to swear, that, in my absence, she would not listen to the addresses of any other man; which oath—

Free. You thought she would keep!

Man. Yes, for I tell you she is not like the rest of her

her sex, but can keep her promise though she has sworn it.

Free. Ha, ha, ha!

Man. You doubt it then! Well, I shall be at her house in an hour; come to me there; the volunteer will shew you the way; and we'll try how long your infidelity will be able to resist conviction. [*Exeunt.*]

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

SCENE, *A Dressing Room.*

Enter Olivia, Eliza, and Lettice:

Oliv. **O**H! horrid, abominable! Peace, cousin Eliza, or your discourse will be my aversion—But you cannot be in earnest, sure, when you say you like the filthy world!

Eliz. You cannot be in earnest, sure, when you say you dislike it! Come, come, cousin Olivia, I will never believe that a place which has such a variety of charms for other women should have none for you! Pray what do you think of dressing and fine clothes?

Oliv. Dressing! it is of all things my aversion: I hate dressing: and I declare solemnly—Mercy on us! Come hither you dowdy—Heavens! what a figure you have made of my head to-day!—Oh, hideous! I can't bear it! Did you ever see any thing so frightful?

Eliz. Well enough, cousin, if dressing be your aversion.

Oliv. It is so; and for variety of rich clothes, they are more my aversion.

Lett. That's because you wear them too long; Madam.

Oliv. Infatiable creature! I take my death I have not wore this gown above three times; and I have made up six or seven more within these two months.

Eliz.

Eliz. Then your averſion to them is not altogether ſo great.

Oliv. Alas! couſin, it is for my woman I wear them.

Eliz. But what do you think of viſits—balls?

Oliv. Oh! I deteſt them!

Eliz. Of plays?

Oliv. I abominate them—Filthy, obſcene, hideous things!

Eliz. What ſay you to the opera in winter, and to Ranelagh and Vauxhall in ſummer?—or, if theſe want attractions to engage you, what ſay you to the court?

Oliv. The court, couſin! the court!—my averſion! my averſion of all averſions!

Eliz. Well, but prithee—

Oliv. Nay, don't attempt to defend the court; for, if you do, you will make me rail againſt it.

Eliz. To come nearer the point then—pray what think you of a rich young huſband?

Oliv. Oh, rueful!—Marriage!—What a pleaſure you have found out!—I nauſeate the very thoughts on't.

Lett. Mayhap, Ma'am, my lady would rather like a generous, handſome, young lover!

Oliv. What do mean, Mrs. Impertinence, by talking ſuch ſtuff in my hearing? A handſome young lover! A lover, indeed! I hate men of all things; and I declare ſolemnly I would not let one into my doors.

Enter Footboy.

Boy. Madam, here's the gentleman to wait on you.

Oliv. On me, you little blockhead! Do you know what you ſay?

Boy. Yes, Ma'am, 'tis the gentleman that comes every day to you.

Oliv. Hold your tongue, you little heedleſs animal, and get out of the room. This country boy, couſin,
takes

takes my music-master, mercer, and spruce milliner, for visitors. (Novel speaks within.)

Lett. No, Madam, 'tis Mr. Novel, I am sure, by his talking so loud; I know his voice too, Madam.

Oliv. You know nothing, you stupid creature! You would make my cousin believe I receive visits—However, if it be your Mr.—

Lett. Mr. Novel, Madam—

Oliv. Peace, will you! I'll hear no more of him—But, if it be your Mr.—I cannot think of his name again—I suppose he followed my cousin hither.

Eliz. No, cousin, I will not rob you of the honour of the visit; it is to you, cousin, for I know him not.

Oliv. Nor I neither, upon my honour, cousin! Besides, have not I told you that visits, and the business of visits, flattery and detraction, are my aversion? Do you then think I would admit such a coxcomb as he; the scandal-carrier of the whole town! more impudently scurrilous than a party libeller, who abuses every person and every thing, and piques himself upon his talents for ridicule!

Eliz. I find you do know him, cousin; at least have heard of him.

Oliv. Yes, now I remember, I have heard of him.

Eliz. Well, but if he is such a dangerous coxcomb, for heaven's sake let him not come up! tell him, Mrs. Lettice, your lady is not at home.

Oliv. No, Lettice, tell him my cousin is here, and that he may come up: for, notwithstanding I detest the sight of him, you may like his conversation; and I will not be rude to you in my own house. Since he has followed you hither, let him come up, I say.

Eliz. Very fine! Let him go and be hang'd, I say, for me! I know him not, nor desire it. Send him away, Mrs. Lettice! [Exit Lettice.

Oliv. Upon my word, she shall not; I must disobey your commands, to comply with your desires. Mr. Novel!—Mr. Novel!

Enter

Enter Novel.

Nov. I beg ten thousand pardons, Madam! perhaps you are busy; I did not know you had company.

Eliz. Yet he comes to me, cousin.

Oliv. Chairs there!—Pray, Sir, be seated.

Nov. I should have waited on you yesterday evening, according to appointment; but I dined at a place where there is always such a profusion of good cheer, and so hearty a welcome, that one can never get away, while one has either appetite or patience left—You know that surfeiting piece of hospitality, lady Autumn? Ha, ha, ha! the nauseous old fury at the upper end of her table—

Oliv. Revives the ancient Grecian custom of serving up a death's head with their banquets! Oh, Gad; I detest her hollow cherry cheeks! She looks like an old coach new painted, affecting an unseemly smugness, while she is ready to drop in pieces.

Nov. Excellent and admirable simile upon my soul! But do, Madam, give me leave to paint her out to you a little, because I am intimately acquainted with the family.—You must know she is horridly angry if I don't dine at her house three times a week.

Oliv. Nay, for that matter, any one is welcome to partake of her victuals who will be content to listen to her stories of herself when she was a young woman, and used to go with her fat Flanders mares, in her father's great gilt chariot, to take the air in Hyde Park.—Oh, cousin! I must tell you——

Nov. What, Madam! I thought I was going to tell the lady; but perhaps you think nobody has wit enough to draw characters but yourself, in which case I have done.

Oliv. Nay, I swear, you shall tell us who you had there at dinner.

Nov. With all my heart, Madam, if you will condescend to listen to me.

Oliv. Most patiently, Sir: pray speak.

C

Nov:

Nov. In the first place, then, we had her daughter, whom I suppose you have seen.

Oliv. Seen! oh, I see her now! the very disgrace to good clothes, which she always wears to heighten her deformity, not mend it; for she is still most splendidly, gallantly ugly! and looks like an ill piece of daubing in a rich frame.

Nov. Very well, Madam! Have you done with her? And can you spare her a little to me?

Oliv. If you please, Sir.

Nov. In my opinion she is like—

Oliv. She is, you would observe, like a great city bride; the greater fortune, but not the greater beauty, for her dress.

Nov. Yet have you done, Madam?

Oliv. Pray, Sir, proceed.

Nov. Then she—

Oliv. I was just going to say so—she—

Eliz. I find, cousin, one may have a collection of all one's acquaintance's pictures at your house, as well as at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with this difference only, that his are handsome likenesses: to say the truth, you are the first of the profession of portrait painters I ever knew without flattery.

Oliv. I draw from the life, cousin; paint every one in their proper colours.

Eliz. Oh! cousin, I perceive you hate detraction!

Oliv. But, Mr. Novel, who had you besides at dinner?

Nov. Ladies, I wish you a good morning!

Oliv. 'Psha! how can you be so provoking? Nay, I take my death you shall not go till you tell us the rest of the company! (*Stopping Novel, who rises.*) Come, sit down again: I long to hear who your men were; for I am sure I am acquainted with some of them.

Nov. We had no men there, at all, Madam.

Oliv. What! was not Sir Marmaduke Gimcrack with you?

you?—I'll lay fifty pounds on't! for I know he is courting one of her ladyship's crooked nieces.—

Nov. Pray, Ma'am, let me go.

Oliv. Nay, I know another of your company, I hold you a wager of it.—Come, my Lord Plausible dined with you too, who is cousin—

Eliz. You need not tell me what he is, cousin; for I know him to be a civil good-natured gentleman; who talks well of all the world, and is never out of humour.

Oliv. Hold, cousin! I hate detraction: but I must tell you he is a tiresome, infipid coxcomb; without either sense to see faults, or wit to expose them; in fine, he is of all things my aversion, and I never admit his visits beyond my hall.

Nov. No! he visit you; damn him! he's never admitted to any one but worn-out dowagers, and superannuated maidens, who want to be flattered into conceit with themselves; he has often strove to scrape acquaintance with me, but I always took care—

Enter Lord Plausible.

Hah! my dear, my dear lord! let me embrace you.

Eliz. Well, this is pleasant!

L. Plau. Your most faithful, humble servant, generous Mr. Novel; and Madam, I am your eternal slave, and kiss your fair hands, which I had done sooner, according to your orders—

Oliv. No excuses, my lord, I know you must divide yourself; your company is too general a good to be engrossed by any particular friend.

Eliz. You hate flattery, cousin!

L. Plau. Oh Lord, Madam, my company! your most obliged, faithful, humble servant!—But I might have brought you good company indeed; for I parted just now at your door with two of the most sensible, worthy men.

Oliv. Who were they, my lord?

Nov. Who do you call the most sensible, worthy men?

L. Plau. Oh, Sir, two of the brightest characters of the present age; men of such honour and virtue. Perhaps you may know them—Count Levant, and Sir Richard Court-Title.

Nov. Court-Title! Ha! ha! ha!

Oliv. And Count Levant! How can you keep such a wretch company, my lord?

L. Plau. Oh, seriously, Madam, you are too severe: he is highly carest by every body.

Oliv. Carest, my lord! why he was never three times in any company in his life, without being twice kicked out of it.

Nov. And for Sir Richard!—

L. Plau. He is nice in his connections, and loves to chuse those he converses with.

Oliv. He loves a lord indeed—

Nov. Or any thing with a title—

Oliv. Though he borrows his money, and never pays him again. Nay, he carries his passion for quality so far, that they say the creature has an intrigue among them; and half starves his poor wife and family, by keeping up a correspondence with that overgrown piece of right honourable filthiness, lady Bab Clumsey.

L. Plau. Oh, Madam, he frequents her house because it is the tabernacle-gallant, the meeting-house for all the fine ladies and people of fashion about town.

Nov. Mighty fine ladies! There is first—

Oliv. Her honour, as fat as a hostess!

L. Plau. She is somewhat plump indeed! a woman of a noble and majestic presence.

Nov. Then there's Miss what d'ye call her—

Oliv. As fluttish and flatterly as an Irish woman bred in France.

L. Plau. She has a prodigious fund of wit; and the handsomest heel, elbow, and tip of an ear, you ever saw.

Nov. Heel and elbow! Ha, ha, ha!

Eliz.

Eliz. I find you see all faults with lover's eyes, my lord!

L. Plau. Oh, Madam, your most obliged, faithful, very humble servant to command!

Nov. Pray, my lord, are you acquainted with lady Sarah Dawdle?

L. Plau. Yes, sure, Sir, very well, and extremely proud I am of the great honour; for she is a person whose wit, beauty, and conduct, nobody can call in question.

Oliv. No!

Nov. No!—Pray, Madam, let me speak.

Oliv. In the first place, can any one be called handsome that squints?

L. Plau. Her eyes languish a little I own.

Nov. Languish! Ha, ha, ha!

Oliv. Languish!

Eliz. Well, this is to be borne no longer: cousin, I have some visits to make this morning, and will take my leave.

Oliv. You will not, sure; nay, you shall not venture my reputation, by leaving me with two men here.—You'll disoblige me for ever—

Eliz. If I stay!—Your servant. [Exit.

Manly and Footboy. *Speak within.*

Man. Not at home? Not see me! I tell you she is at home, and she will see me—Let her know my name is Manly.

Boy. Well, but your honour, my lady's sick, I dare not go to her.

Man. Well, then I'll go to her.

Boy. Help, Mrs. Lettice!—Help!—Here's the sea-gentleman.

Oliv. What noise is that?

Enter Manly.

Man. My Olivia! 'Sdeath, what do I see? In close conversation with these!

Oliv. Hah, Manly! this is somewhat unexpected: however, I am prepared for him. [*Aside.*

L. Plau. Most noble and heroic captain, your most obliged, faithful, very humble—

Nov. Captain Manly, your servant.

Man. Away!—Madam—

Oliv. Sir!

Man. It seems, Madam, as if I was an unwelcome guest here: your footboy would hardly allow me admittance; at first he told me you were not at home. Indeed I did not expect to find you in such good company.

Oliv. I suppose, Sir, my servant had orders for what he did.

L. Plau. Perhaps, Madam, Mr. Novel and I incommode you; the captain and you may have something to say, so we'll retire.

Oliv. Upon my honour, my lord, you shan't stir; the captain and I have nothing to say to one another, assure yourself, nor ever shall: 'tis only one of his mad freaks, for which you will make allowances; salt-water lovers, you know, will be boisterous now and then.

Man. Confusion!

Nov. We shall have a quarrel here presently: I see she's going to use him damnably.

Man. What am I to think of this behaviour, Madam?

Oliv. Even what you please, good captain?

Man. And is this the reception I meet with after an absence—

Oliv. And is this behaving like a gentleman, to force into a lady's apartment contrary to her inclinations? I suppose it is Wapping breeding: however, you are fitted for your ill manners.

Man. I am fitted for believing you could not be fickle, though you were young; could not dissemble love, though it was for your interest; nor be vain, though you were handsome; nor break your promise, though to a parting lover. But I take not your contempt

tempt of me worfe than your keeping company with and encouraging thefe things here.

Nov. Things!

L. Plau. Let the captain rally a little.

Man. Yes, things. Dare you be angry you thing?

Nov. No, fince my lord fays you fpeak in railery.

Man. And pray, Madam, let me ask you, what is it you find about them to entertain you? For example, this fpark here: is it the merit of his fashionable impudence, the brisknefs of his noife, the wit of his laugh, or his judgment and fancy in his folitaire, that engages your efteem?

Nov. Very well, Sir! Egad thefe captains of fhips—

Man. Then, for this gentle piece of tame courtefy—

Oliv. Good, jealous captain, no more of your—

L. Plau. No, Madam, let him go on; for perhaps he may make you laugh; and I would contribute to your pleafure any way.

Man. Obliging coxcomb!

Oliv. No, noble captain, you cannot think any thing would tempt me more than that heroic title of yours, captain! for you know we women love honour inordinately.

Nov. Ha, ha, ha! I cannot hold; I muft laugh at you, faith, Mr. Manly!

L. Plau. And i'faith, dear captain, I beg your pardon and leave to laugh at you too; though I proteft I mean you no hurt—

Man. Peace, you buffoons! And be not you vain that thefe laugh on your fide; for they will laugh at their own dull jefts; but no more of them: for I will only now fuffer this lady to be witty.

Oliv. You would not have your panegyric interrupted! I go on then to your honour. Is there any thing more agreeable than the pretty oddity of that? Then the greatnefs of your courage! which moft of
all

all appears in your spirit of contradiction: for you dare give all mankind the lie; and your opinion is your only mistress, for you renounce that too when it becomes another man's.

L. Plau. Ha, ha, ha!

Nov. Ha, ha, ha!

Man. Why, you impudent, pitiful wretches! You presume, sure, upon your effeminacy, to urge me; for you are all things so like women, it might be thought cowardice to chastise you.

Oliv. No hectoring, good captain!

Man. Or perhaps you think this lady's presence secures you; but have a care; she hath talked herself out of all the respect I had for her; and, by using me ill before you, hath given me a privilege of using you so before her—Therefore be gone immediately.

Nov. Be gone! What!

L. Plau. Nay, worthy, noble, generous captain!

Man. Begone, I say!

Nov. Well, Madam, we'll step into the next room; you will not stay long with him, I suppose. Fal, la!

[*Exeunt Lord Plausible and Novel.*]

Oliv. Turn hither your rage, good captain Swagger-huff! and be faucy with your mistress, like a true captain; but be civil to your rivals and betters; and do not threaten any thing but me here; no, not so much as my windows: do not think yourself in the lodgings of one of your suburb mistresses beyond the tower.

Man. Do not you give me the cause to think so! For those less infamous women part with their lovers, just as you did from me, with unforced vows of constancy, and floods of willing tears; but the same winds bear away their lovers and their vows; and for their griefs, if the credulous, unexpected fools return, they find new comforters, such as I found here; the mercenary love of these women, too, suffer shipwreck with their lovers fortune: you have heard chance has used me indifferently, and you do so too. Well, persevere in your ingratitude, falsehood, and disdain;

disdain; be constant in something; and I promise to be as just to your real scorn as I was to your feign'd love; and henceforward despise, loath, and detest you most faithfully.

Oliv. I'll wait upon you again in a minute. [*Exit.*

Enter Fidelia and Freeman.

Free. How now, captain!

Man. Pray keep out of my way; don't speak to me.

Fide. Dear Sir, what's the matter?

Man. Blockhead!—Oh, Freeman! I have been so cheated, so abused, by this perfidious—

Free. Nay, Sir, you need not tell us, for we have been for some time within hearing in the next room. But now, I hope, you will act as becomes you.

Man. I hope so too.

Fide. Do you but hope it, Sir?

Man. She has restored my reason with my heart.

Free. But there are other things, captain, which, next to a man's heart, he would not part with, and methinks she ought to restore too; I mean your money and jewels, Sir; which I understand she has.

Man. What's that to you, Sir?

Free. Pardon me; whatever belongs to you, I have a share in, I am sure, which I will not lose for want of asking; though you may be too generous, or too angry now to do it yourself.

Fide. Nay, then I'll make bold too—

Man. Hold, you impertinent, officious—How have I been deceived?

Enter Olivia.

Free. Madam, excuse this liberty—but we are captain Manly's friends, and have accidentally been witnesses to your disagreement.

Oliv. And what am I to infer from thence, Sir?

Free. Why then, Madam, there are certain appurtenances to a lover's heart, called jewels, which always go along with it.

Fide.

Fide. And with lovers, Madam, have no value, but from the heart they come with—Our captain's, it seems, you scorn to keep, much more those worthless things without it, I am confident.

Oliv. I understand you, gentlemen. Captain, your young friend here has a very persuading face, I must confess; but you might have asked me yourself for those trifles you left with me, which—Hark you a little—for I dare trust you with a secret, you are a man of so much honour I am sure—I say then, considering the chance of war, the danger of the seas, and being in doubt whether you might ever return again, I have delivered your jewels and money to—

Man. Whom?

Oliv. My husband.

Man. Your husband!

Oliv. Ay, my husband. For, since you could leave me, I am lately and privately married to one, who is a man of so much honour and experience, that I dare not ask him for your things again to restore them to you, lest he should conclude you never would have parted with them to me on any other score than the exchange of my virtue; which, rather than you would bring into suspicion—

Man. Triumphant impudence!—Married!

Oliv. There's no resisting one's destiny, or love, you know.

Man. Damnation!

Oliv. Oh, don't swear! 'Tis true, my husband is now absent in the country; however, he returns shortly; therefore I beg, for your own ease and quiet, and my reputation, you will never see me more.

Man. I wish I never had seen you!

Oliv. You may perceive by this how great a dependance I have upon your friendship: I am sensible every man might not be talked to in the same manner; but your uncommon delicacy of thinking will, I am sure, feel for a person in my nice circumstances.

Man.

Man. True, perfect woman! and if I could say any thing more injurious to you I would—Leave me; go!—lest I should be tempted to do something, which may hereafter make me think as meanly of myself, as I do now of you.

Oliv. Sir, it is a maxim with me never to stay in any place where my company is disagreeable: I obey you with all willingness—Young gentleman, your servant! [Exit Olivia.]

Enter Footboy.

Boy. Here are Madam Blackacre and Major Oldfox, to wait on my lady.

Man. do you hear that? Let's be gone before he comes.

Free. Excuse me; the widow is the very game I have in view; I wanted just such an opportunity to attack her—And if you will take my advice, you'll stay too; if it be only to see this Major Oldfox, her supernumerary 'squire, her occasional gentleman-usher: he is a character I assure you.

Man. No; confound him, he is as bad as the cockatrice herself, whom I would avoid as a sinking ship, and the whole sex, for ever. [Exit with Fidelia.]

Enter Mrs. Blackacre, Jerry, and Major Oldfox.

Mrs. Black. 'Tis an errant sea-ruffian! I thought he would have pushed us down, Major. Jerry, where's my paper of memorandums? Give it me. So! where's my cousin Olivia, now—my kind relation?

Free. Here's one that would be your kind relation, Madam.

Mrs. Black. Hey day, who is this wild rude fellow?

Jer. Why, don't you know him?—It's the man that wanted to fall aboard you at captain Manley's this morning.

Old. Pray be civil to the lady, Mr. —, she is a person of quality—A person, that is, no person—

Free.

Free. Yes, but she is a person that is a widow. Be you civil to her; because you are to pretend only to be her 'squire, to arm her to her lawyer's chambers: but I will be impudent and forward; for she must love and marry me.

Mrs. Black. Marry come up; you faucy, familiar puppy!—marry you! Gad forgive me! now-a-days every idle young rascal, with a laced waistcoat, and a bit of black ribbon in his hat, thinks to carry away any widow of the best degree.

Old. No, no, soft! you are a young man, and not fit; besides, others have laid in their claims before you.

Free. Not you, I hope!

Old. Why not I, Sir? Sure I am a much more proportionable match for her than you, Sir: I, who am a person of rank and means in the world, and of equal years—

Mrs. Black. How's that? you unmannerly—I would have you to know I was born in Ann fecun Georgii prim—

Old. Your pardon, Madam, your pardon; be not offended—But I say, Sir, you are a beggarly younger brother; twenty years younger than she; without any land or stock; but your great stock of impudence: therefore what pretensions can you have to her?

Mrs. Black. And what pretensions have you, Major? Go and solicit a brevet for Chelsea Hospital, you old mummy!—Air yourself there under the cloisters; smoke your pipe, and make love to your landlady: you shall have a widow with three thousand pounds a year, you shall, you barbarous brute!

Old. How, Madam!

Free. Ha, ha, ha!

Jer. Well said mother! use all suitors thus for my sake.

Mrs. Black. A senseless, impertinent, quibbling, scribbling, feeble, paralytic, conceited, ridiculous, pretending, old bellweather!

Jer.

Jer. Hey! brave mother for calling names!

Mrs. Black. Would you make a caudle-maker, a nurse of me? Can't you be bed-rid without a bed-fellow? Won't your swan-skins, furs, flannels, and the scorched trencher, keep you warm there? Would you make me your Scotch warming pan, with a plague to you!

Jer. Ay, you old Fobus, and you would be my guardian, would you? to take care of my estate, that half of it should never come to me, by letting long leases at pepper-corn rents?

Mrs. Black. If I would have married an old man, 'tis well known I might have married an earl.—Nay, what's more, a judge, and been cover'd the winter night's with the lamb-skins, which I prefer to the ermines of nobles. And do you think I would wrong my poor minor here, for you?

Free. Your minor is a chopping minor; Heaven blefs him!

Old. Your minor may be a major of horse or foot for his bigness: and it seems you will have the cheating of your minor yourself.

Mrs. Black. Pray, Sir, bear witness: cheat my minor! I'll bring my action of the case, for the slander.

Free. Nay, I would bear false witness for you now, widow, since you have done me justice, and thought me the fitter man!

Mrs. Black. Fair and softly, Sir! 'tis my minor's case more than my own: and now I must do him justice on you. And, first, you are, to my knowledge—for I am not unacquainted with you—a debauch'd, drunken, hectoring, lewd, gaming spend-thrift.

Jer. There's for you, bully-rock!

Mrs. Black. A worn-out rake at five and twenty, both in body and estate: a cheating, lying, cozening, impudent fortune-hunter! and would patch up your own broken income with the ruins of my jointure.

Jer. Ay, and make havock of our estate personal, and of all our gilt plate—I should soon be picking
up

up our silver handled knives and forks, spoons, mugs, and tankards, at most of the pawnbrokers between the Hercules Pillars and the Boatswain at Wapping. And you would be scouring among my trees, and making them play at loggerheads, would you?

Mrs. Black. I would have you to know, you pitiful, paltry, lath-backed fellow, if I would have married a young man, it is well known I might have had any young heir in Norfolk; nay, the hopefulest young man this day at the King's-bench bar! I, that am a relict, and executrix of known plentiful affets and parts, who understand myself and the law; and would you have me under covert baron again? No, Sir, no covert baron for me.

Free. Well, but dear madam—

Mrs. Black. Fie, fie! I neglect my business with this foolish discourse of love—Jerry, child, let me see a list of the jury, I am sure my cousin Olivia must have some acquaintance among them: but where is she?

Free. Will you not allow me one word then?

Mrs. Black. No, no, Sir: have done, pray

Old. Ay, pray, Sir, have done, and don't be troublesome; since you see the lady has no occasion for you, though you are a younger brother. Ha, ha, ha!

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the Second Act.

A C T III.

SCENE, *A View of St. James's Park.*

Manly enters alone, musing.

HOW irksome is restraint to a mind naturally averse to hypocrisy! Yet, I who used to give birth to my thoughts as freely as I conceived them; I, who was wont to speak without reserve to every body;

body ; am now endeavouring even to deceive myself—That ingrateful woman, in whom I placed such unlimited confidence ! into whose keeping I had given my heart, my judgment, nay, my very senses ! 'Sdeath ! had a man treated me ill, resentment would at once have cancelled regard, and revenge have prevented vexation : but here I am obliged to side with my enemy, and increase the injuries she hath done me, by loving her in spite of them.

Enter Fidelia.

Fide. Sir, have I liberty to speak to you ?

Man. What would you say ?—You see this is no place to talk in ; don't trouble me now.

Fide. I shall not detain you long, Sir ; and you may bear to hear two or three words from me, though you do hate me, as you have often said.

Man. I must confess I hate a flatterer : why will you not learn to be a man ; and scorn that mean, that sneaking vice ?

Fide. Perhaps I am to blame, Sir ; but I do not come to offend you at present—I have something to tell you, if you will vouchsafe to listen to me.—Who do you think I met on the other side of the park just now, Sir ?

Man. Nay, how should I know ? Prithee, kind impertinence, leave me. You are as hard to shake off, as that obstinate, effeminate mischief, love.

Fide. Love, Sir !—did you name love ?

Man. No, no ! Prithee away ! Be gone !—I had almost discovered my shame, my weakness ; which must draw on the derision even of this boy.

Fide. There is something, Sir, that makes you uneasy : am I not worthy to be acquainted with the cause ?

Man. What cause, child ? Nothing makes me uneasy ; a little involuntary thoughtfulness, that's all. But you say you met somebody in the park just now ; who was it ?

Fide.

Fide. Why, really, Sir, on second thoughts, I don't know how to mention her name to you: but it was that creature, that wretch, that—

Man. That who? Who is it you are going to speak of now, that you preface your discourse with all this bitterness of invective?

Fide. Why, Sir, that monster of ingratitude, Olivia!

Man. Olivia!

Fide. Yes, Sir.

Man. Well, and how?

Fide. Nay, not much, Sir; only she called me over to her as I was crossing the Mall, and would feign have had me gone home to her house; where she had something to communicate: but for my part I could hardly bear to look at her, much less afford her an opportunity for conversation—Pray, Sir, don't you think she has a most forbidding countenance?

Man. I can't say I ever observ'd it.

Fide. Then her shape is by no means one of the best.

Man. Indeed!

Fide. But I hope, Sir, your eyes are now as open to her deformities as they must be to her perfidiousness; and that you will never think of her any more—But why do I mention that?—You never can think of her without bringing your good sense, nay, your reputation, in question: for, after such unworthy, such infamous usage—

Man. Confusion! Who told you, Sir, she had used me ill?

Fide. Why, Sir, was not I a witness?

Man. 'Sdeath, firrah, if ever I hear you mutter such a word again, I'll shake you into atoms! How am I exposed and rendered contemptible?—It is enough that I think I have nothing to complain of—I am perfectly well satisfied with her conduct—Do you mark!—perfectly well satisfied.

Fide. Very well, Sir! I have done.

Man.

Man. Oh, the curse of being conscious of a weakness one is ashamed to divulge! Hold, Sir! come hither—Have you resolution enough to endure the torture of a secret; for such to some is insupportable.

Fide. I would keep it as safe as if your dear precious life depended upon it.

Man. It concerns more than my life—my honour.

Fide. Doubt me not, Sir.

Man. And do not discover it by too much fear of discovering—D'ye mark?—But, above all things, take care that Freeman find it not out.

Fide. I warrant you, Sir.

Man. Then I know I love Olivia; doat on her: her ingratitude and disdain, like oil thrown into the flames, have only made my passion burn the fiercer.

Fide. Oh, heavens!

Man. You say she met you just now, and wanted you to go home with her, in order to communicate something: who knows what that might be?—Perhaps she hath repented her behaviour this morning—Perhaps it was the result of passion, of affectation, or was meant to try me: in short, I can assign a thousand reasons for it besides that one of change in her affections; for, I am sure, once she loved me.

Fide. Hang her, dissembling creature! Love you! It was only for her interest then.

Man. Well, well, no matter; but, I tell you, I know better: I am sure once she did love me.

Fide. Indeed, Sir, she never cared for you.

Man. Will you have done, Sir!

Fide. Besides, Sir, did she not tell you she was married?

Man. Well, well, but that might be artifice too—'Sdeath, Sir! will you listen to me or go about your business, and never let me see you more?

Fide. I beg pardon, Sir.

Man. I say you shall go to her house, and hear what this business is.

Fide. I go to her house, Sir? I would sooner go—

Man. No hesitating, Sir! I say you must: she lives but in the next street.

Fide. Indeed, Sir, I can't go there.

Man. No, Sir!

Fide. Besides, Sir, consider: you scorned her this morning.

Man. I know not what I did this morning: I dissembled this morning.—What! are you not gone yet?

Fide. Well, Sir, now I think on't I will go: for, perhaps, this is a sting of conscience; and she hath a mind to make some recompence for her ill usage of you, by returning your money and jewels: methinks I feign would have them out of her hands.

Man. Stay, Sir; if she drops the least hint of any such thing, I charge you, come away immediately, and do not stay even to give her an answer.

Fide. Well, but, dear Sir, only let me speak one word—

Man. I'll not hear a syllable: you'll find me in Westminster-hall: be gone! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, Westminster-hall; *a crowd of people, serjeants, counsellors, and attorneys, walking busily about. Enter Mrs. Blackacre in the middle of half a dozen lawyers, Jerry following with a green bag.*

Mrs. Black. Offer me a reference, you saucy blockhead! Do you know who you speak to? Are you a solicitor in Chancery, and offer a reference? Mr. Serjeant Ploddon, here's a fellow has the impudence to offer me a reference!

Plod. Who's that has the impudence to offer a reference within these walls?

Mrs. Black. Nay, for a splitter of causes to do it!

Plod. No, Madam, to a lady learned in the law as you are, the offer of a reference were to impose upon you.

Mrs. Black. No, never fear me for a reference, Mr. Serjeant—But come, have not you forgot your brief?

brief? Are you sure you shall not make the mistake of—Hark you—

Enter Major Oldfox and Bookfeller.

——— Come, Mr. Splitcaufe, pray go see when my caufe in Chancery comes on; and go speak with Mr. Quillet in the King's Bench, and Mr. Quirk in the Common Pleas; and see how matters go there.

Old. Madam, I have the pleasure to bid you good-morrow once again; and may all your causes go as prosperously as if I myself was to be the judge of them.

Mrs. Black. Sir, excuse me, I am busy and cannot answer compliments in Westminster-hall. Go, Mr. Splitcaufe, and come to me again at the bookfeller's.

Old. No, Sir, come to the lady at the other bookfeller's. If you please, Madam, I'll attend you thither.

Mrs. Black. And why to the other bookfeller's, major?

Old. Because, Madam, he is my bookfeller.

Mrs. Black. To sell you lozenges for your cough, or salve for your corns? What else can a major deal with a bookfeller for?

Old. Madam, he publishes for me.

Mrs. Black. Publishes! oh, that's true, I forgot—You are an author.

Old. Now and then, Madam, now and then—the good of one's country, you know.

Mrs. Black. And pray, major, what are your books upon?

Old. Deign you, Madam, to peruse one of them! There is a thing of mine lately come out; and I'll assure you a certain great person, whom I presented it to, was pleased to pay me a compliment in the Court of Requests.—

Book. Do you want any thing, Madam? We have all the plays, magazines, and new pamphlets—

Mrs. Black. Have you the Lawyer's Magazine?

Book. We have no law books at all, Madam.

Mrs. Black. No! you are a pretty bookseller!

Old. Come hither, young man—Has your master got any of my last pamphlet left?

Book. Yes, Sir, we have got enough of them; we never had above two or three called for, besides what you took away yourself.

Old. May be so, may be so: the thing is not sufficiently known yet. Well, let me see a couple (*gets them.*) It is entitled, Madam, “A Letter to a certain great Man on the present Posture of Affairs;” and if you will condescend to accept one, *ex dono auctoris*—

Fer. Hoh, hoh, hoh! (*laughing at a pamphlet behind.*)

Mrs. Black. Jerry, what have you got there?

Fer. Why—nothing—

Mrs. Black. Nothing! Let me look at that book—Rocheſter’s Jeſts! A very pretty ſtudy truly. Give him the Young Clerk’s Guide.

Old. No, no, give the young gentleman my Treatiſe upon Military Diſcipline.

Mrs. Black. Away with ſuch traſh! Do you want to ſend him to the devil headlong? I ſhould have him teasing me, to-morrow or next day, to buy him an enſign’s commiſſion. I would as lief he ſhould read a play!

Fer. Well, and what if I did? There’s very good diſcourſe to be got out of plays, for all you.

Mrs. Black. Sirrah, firrah! Don’t let me hear ſuch a word out of your mouth. What has ſpoiled moſt of the attornies’ clerks in London, but turning critics, and running every night to the playhouſes at half price? and do you want to follow their example?—Stay, Jerry—Is not that Mr. What d’ye call him goes yonder, he that offered to ſell me a ſuit in chancery for five hundred pounds, for an hundred down, and only paying the clerk’s fees?

Fer. Yes, that’s he.

Mrs. Black. It is the cheapeſt thing I ever heard of—Stay here, and have a care of the bags, while I go

I go and talk with him.—Have a care of the bags, I say—— [Exit.

Fer. Have a care of the fiddle's end, I say: Gad, I am sure I lead a dog's life with you.

Enter Freeman.

Free. So, here's a limb of my widow, that used to be inseparable from her; she can't be far——How now, major!

Old. What do you mean by that, Sir?—Who are you, Sir? What are you, Sir?

Free. Nay, my dear Don Cholerick, don't snap my nose off.

Old. Sir, you are a very impertinent fellow, Sir!—And, Sir—'Squire, where's your mother?

Fer. Oh, what you were so intent upon rearing your works, you let her give you the flip, did you? Well, yonder she is, talking to that weazle-face man in the big wig—Hobble after her.

Old. An unmannerly, insignificant, ignorant—I shall take notice of you, Mr. Sea-lieutenant, I shall take notice of you! [Exit.

Fer. Look you, master, I'll tell you what it is—I'll buy that book of choice sayings from you, if so be you'll take half a crown for it, and stay 'till lawyer Splitcaufe comes to lend me the money to pay you.

Free. Lend you! Here, I'll pay him—I am sorry, 'squire, a man of your estate should want money.

Fer. Why, I am not at age yet, you must understand.

Free. At age! You are at age already, man, to have spent a fortune: there are younger than you, who to my knowledge have kept their girls these three years; ruined half a dozen tradesmen, and lost as many thousand pounds at play. But what is the reason, 'squire, that you will not give your consent to my marrying your mother?

Fer. Why you would not be such a fool, would you?

D 3

Free.

Free. Why I would not be a fool if I could help it : but has not she a good jointure ?

Fer. A good jointure ! If she has she knows what to do with it : she will let no body have a finger in the pie but herself, I can tell you that. Come a little this way—Why, you would not believe what an old plague my mother is ; she'll never allow me sixpence in my pocket, so that I am ashamed to go into company, because I have not wherewithal to call for a glass of wine and do as the rest do.—And, for a wench!—I was but making a little fun with our laundress's daughter upon the staircase, the other night, and she threatened to send the poor girl to Bridewell.

Free. Sure !

Fer. Upon my word she did ! Oh, you don't know what a woman she is.

Free. Well, but 'squire, methinks this might easily be remedied : if I was you, I would go to law with her.

Fer. Law ! Lord help your head ! Why she is as big a lawyer as any in our inn ; and would not desire better sport—Besides, I would not care to do that, for fear she should marry out of spite, and cut down my trees. I should hate to see my father's wife kist and flopt by another man—and our trees are the purest, nice, shady, even twigs !

Free. Come, 'squire, let your mother and your trees fall, as she pleases, rather than go off this fashion all your life—But you shall be able to deal with her the right way.

Fer. Nay, if I had any friend to stand by me, I would shew her a trick worth two of it, I can tell you that.

Free. Suppose I was to be your friend ! Look you, 'squire, I don't use to profess much ; however, there's a trifle for your present occasions.

Fer. Oh, Lord, Sir ! two guineas ! Do you lend me this ? Is there no trick in it ? Well, Sir, I'll give you my bond for security.

Free.

Free. No, no, you have given me your face for security; any one would swear you do not look like a cheat: and come to me whenever you will, and you shall have what money you please of me.

Fer. By my soul he's a curious fine gentleman! but may I depend upon you? Will you stand by me?

Free. Here's my hand.

Fer. That's enough. Never stir, but the next cross word my mother gives me, but I'll leave her directly, and come off to you—But now I have got money, I'll go pay the man at the gate two shillings I owe him, for I believe the poor soul wants it; and his wife has been two or three times at chambers to dun me. [*Exit.*

Enter Manly, Mrs. Blackacre, and Major Oldfox.

Man. Confound your cause! Can't you lose it without me? which you are like enough to do, if it be, as you say, an honest one: I'll suffer for it no longer.

Mrs. Black. Nay, but captain, you are my chief witness—And Mr. Splitcause tells me we are pricked down for the next hearing. Lord! methinks you should take pleasure in walking here, as half you see now do; for they have no business here I assure you.

Man. Yes, but I assure you then their business is to persecute me——'Sdeath! I can't turn, but one puppy or other has me by the sleeve, with impertinent inquiries or fulsome compliments: I have been acting the sign of the salutation this half hour, with a bow'd body, and my hat off, to one of your law serjeants yonder; while he was loading me with professions of service and friendship, though in all probability he cared not if I was at the devil; and I was wishing him hanged out of my way.

Mrs. Black. Well, well, Sir, compose yourself a little, and every thing shall be made agreeable.—

Jerry, why Jerry!—Mercy on me, major, did not you leave my son here?

Old. Yes, Madam, but perhaps the young gentleman is stept aside.

Mrs. Black. Jerry Blackacre!

Free. Your son will be here in a minute, Madam, he's only just gone out of the hall about a little business.

Mrs. Black. Out of the hall! Gads my life!—Out of the hall!

Free. Don't make yourself uneasy, Madam; I'll answer for it he'll come to no mischief.

Mrs. Black. Sir, I dont direct my discourse to you—But I'll so rate this careless jackanapes—Come along, major, and help me to look for him.

[*Exeunt all but Manly and Freeman.*]

Free. Well, Sir, how have you past your time since you came here? You have had a great deal of patience, sure.

Man. Patience, indeed! for I have drawn but one quarrel and two law-suits upon me.

Free. The devil! How could you quarrel here?

Man. How could I refrain?—But let's get off, for I see another quarrel coming upon me.

Free. What do you mean?

Man. Ask no questions, but walk this way.

Enter Novel.

Nov. Hey! captain! Captain Manly!

Man. What now?

Nov. I beg pardon; but I thought it was you. Have you been in the house hearing the debates? What are they upon to-day?

Man. Considering what passed between you and me at our last interview, Sir, I cannot help being a little astonished at the familiarity of this salutation.

Nov. Pho, pho! a mere trifle. Don't mention it—It has been a very fine morning, Sir.

Free. Yes, Sir, the weather has been tolerable.

Nov. It was very cold yesterday.

Free. I believe it might, Sir.

Nov.

Nov. Captain, what do you think brings me to Westminster-hall?

Man. Why, I suppose somebody has thrashed you lately for being impertinent, and you are come to take the law of them.

Nov. No, that's not it. But I suppose you have heard——

Man. Heard what?

Nov. Why, that I am to be play'd the devil with; costs and damages, and the Lord knows what.

Man. No, really, I have heard nothing about the matter; but what is it? though I'm sure you are in the wrong before you tell me.

Nov. Why, you must know, Sir—Ha, ha, ha! Upon my soul it is so ridiculous a circumstance, that I can hardly think of it without laughing.—— You must know, Sir, I was some time ago at the house of a considerable merchant in the city; where a certain lady's name was brought up; and in the course of the conversation I happened to mention some things which I had heard, and which all the world believe to be fact, egad! However, as you may guess, I did not imagine the discourse would have gone any further.

Free. But I suppose the lady had a friend in company, Sir.

Nov. Oh, Sir! I know how the matter came about now—Yes, yes, the woman of the house was her sister-in-law, which I never dreamt of: the intolerable Jezebel went and told her every thing that passed: an attorney came the next morning to serve me with a copy of a writ; and now they have brought me here to make me prove my words, as they call it.

Man. And pray, Sir, what was it you said of the lady?

Nov. Nothing, nothing!—some story that I heard about her cuckolding her husband; that was all.

Man. I hope she may trounce you severely; nay, and I hope what you said of her was true; that you may be made the more glaring example.

Nov. Well, but my dear creature! how can you
be

be so inhuman to any person that never did you any injury?

Man. Because I would have such mischievous triflers as you are punished for your tattling and effeminacy: I would have you taught the difference between satire and defamation; and learn some other topic for your nonsensical conversations, besides the character and conduct of the absent: you male members of the tea-table, who are, if possible, worse enemies to women, than they are to one another.

Nov. Well, upon my honour, this is pleasant! especially from you, who are remarkable for abusing all the world.

Man. Do you hear him, Freeman? Plain-dealing may well be in disrepute, when 'tis confounded with impudence and scandal: but if I stay here any longer, I find I shall be tempted to beat him.

Free. Nay, prithee don't leave us.

Man. Yes, yes, I must; I shall bring myself into another scrape else: besides, I see a person just now come into the hall that looks for me—Stand out of the way. [Exit.

Nov. This is a sad brutish fellow, Sir; I wonder you will keep him company.

Free. Why, faith, Sir, I don't know how it is; I think I am betwitch'd to him, for my part—and yet, hang him! he has some good qualities too, when one comes to be thoroughly acquainted with him.

Nov. Ay, Sir! Pray what may they be, for I never could find them out.

Free. Why, I think 'tis generally agreed, Sir, that he has a tolerable good understanding.

Nov. Why really I have heard people say so; and yet to me he has always appeared the stupidest animal breathing.

Free. Then as to courage,—It must be allowed he is brave.

Nov. He is quarrelsome, if you please; but his bravery, I fancy, will admit of some dispute. You have

have heard, no doubt, of his late affair with the French?

Free. Ay, Sir; what of that?

Nov. Why, I should not care to have my name mentioned as the author of such a thing; but I assure you there are some very odd reports fly about; and this I believe you may depend upon, that he will be brought to a court-martial for his behaviour on that occasion.

Free. I am glad to hear this, Sir, with all my heart; for you must know I happened to be a partner in the action you mention.

Nov. Were you, Sir?

Free. Yes, faith; but I was ignorant till now of the dangerous situation we were in; however, I am extremely obliged to you for your intelligence, as I dare swear the captain will be—

Nov. Yonder goes my attorney—I'll just speak two or three words to him, and be back with you again in an instant.

Free. Hold, Sir! we must not part so. You must go along with me, Sir, and tell this story to Captain Manly.

Nov. Sir, I have not time at present—I—there's a gentleman beckons me owes a thousand pounds, and goes out of town to-morrow morning.—Mr.—[*Exit.*

Free. Ha, ha, ha! Well, we shall meet again.

Enter Jerry Blackacre.

Free. How now, 'squire, what's the matter?

Jer. Nothing: I don't care; nothing's the matter: but if ever I go home again with her, I wish I may never stir! You said you would stand by me.

Free. Well, and so I will. Who has injured you?

Jer. Why, my mother: she caught me at the place there changing the money you gave me, and flew at me like any mad, and pull'd my hair, and call'd me all the names that ever she could think of—But if I don't be up with her! you will see!
and

and if you won't take me with you, I'll go for a soldier.

Free. Take you with me, 'squire! do you desire to go with me?

Jer. Yes, it's all my desire.

Free. How shall I act in this affair? gad, 'twill be a good stroke towards making something of the widow in earnest; at least of getting my right out of her hands. (*aside*)—Well, 'squire, I'll tell you what, if you are really ferious—

Jer. Oh, Lord! yonder she is coming in at the gate with that old fellow: if you will come, come away; for I won't stay any longer to be beat and abused by her.

Free. Nay, since that's the case, have with you, my boy.

Jer. Ay, and now let's see how she'll be able to help herself. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE changes to the gate of Westminster-Hall. Enter from within Manly and Fidelia, and on the opposite side Mrs. Blackacre and Major Oldfox.

Mrs. Black. A villain! a rascal! I'll teach him better manners than to talk saucily to his mother!—These are pretty doings, are they not? My son flies in my face; and when I go to correct him for it, he tells me truly he'll leave me, and go to the mate of your ship, who has offered to take him.

Man. Well, and what's that to me? You must tie your calf up if you are afraid of his being stolen.

Mrs. Black. But which way did he run, major? May be he is gone to that seducing villain already; and he has got my writings with him, all that concerns my estate, my jointure, my husband's deed of gift, and the evidences for all my suits now depending.

Man. I am glad of that; for, if you have lost your evidence your cause can't go on, and I am at liberty.

Old.

Old. Mr. Jerry went off in a great passion, Madam; I hope he won't commit any rash action, to do himself a mischief.

Mrs. Black. No, no, I know him better than so; he will never be *felo de se* that way: but he may go and chuse a guardian of his own head, and so be *felo de ses beins*; for he has not chosen one yet.

Man. Which I hope he may, with all my heart!

Mrs. Black. Oh, do you so, Sir? then it seems you are in the plot.—Well, look to't; I'll play fast and loose with you all yet, if there be law, and my minor and writings are not forthcoming. I'll bring my action of *detinue* or *trover*—but I'll first go and seek—

Man. Well, I shan't stay here any longer.

Mrs. Black. Stir a step, stir a step, at your peril, till the courts are broke up, and I'll serve you with a rule of contempt.

[*Exeunt Mrs. Blackacre and Major Oldfox.*]

Man. Now, Sir, go on.—You have been with Olivia, you say.

Fide. Yes, Sir, I have seen and spoke with her.

Man. Well, and she received you kindly?

Fide. Kinder than you would think, Sir.

Man. That's well,—come now, let me hear what she said to you.

Fide. Said to me, Sir!

Man. Ay, what was her business with you? Come, come! Why don't you speak? You are so tedious! What was it she had to communicate?

Fide. Modesty, Sir, prevents my entering into particulars; I need only tell you, that her business with me has proved of the most extraordinary kind; I am so shocked at the thoughts of her behaviour, I cannot say more.

Man. Confusion!

Fide. I assure you, Sir, I would not impose upon you by the forgery of a falsehood, and cannot wrong her by any report of her, she is so wicked.

Man. Wicked! 'Sdeath, had she the impudence!

Fide.

Fide. Impudence ! Oh, Sir !

Man. But what ! How did she accost you ?

Fide. When I came to the house, Sir, I was conducted into her dressing-room, where I found her alone ; and I took it for granted she would have begun immediately with talking of you and your late difference with her : but, instead of that, Sir, I had hardly sat down, when she gave me to understand she had desired to see me on my own account only ; and was so bold, and so forward—

Man. But in what terms did she express herself ?

Fide. Her tongue, I confess, was silent, Sir ; but her eyes conveyed such things—

Man. Eyes ! Eyes !—What, then you have only had eye kindness from her ; and your vanity has helped you in this construction so much to the lady's disadvantage ?

Fide. Not so, Sir—At first, indeed, her eyes chiefly were the interpreters of her thoughts ; but, finding they spoke a language I could not, or would not, understand, she threw off the restraint, made a tendre of her passion in direct terms ; and, in short, Sir, offered to prostitute that love to me, at half an hour's acquaintance, which you have deserved whole years in vain.

Man. I'll not believe it—It's a damn'd lie of your own contrivance ; come, I know 'tis a lie.

Fide. I am sorry you should think so, Sir : but, however unlikely it may appear, I can give you proof.

Man. Proof !

Fide. Yes, Sir ; for I have seem'd half consenting to her solicitations, and made a kind of promise to pay her a visit this night, at twelve o'clock, when the family shall be asleep.

Man. Hah !

Fide. For which purpose she has shewn me a back way into her apartment, where a lamp always burns ; for she will have no light in her chamber, because her woman lies in an adjoining closet—Nay, more, Sir ;
she

she has given me the key of the garden, to let myself in with, which I have brought off.

Man. The key of the garden! Let me see it.—I know it well; and have a thousand times gone by the passage you mention to our private interviews: I imagined it led to paradise, and an angel of purity inhabited there; but I must think of that no more—Did she say nothing to you of this husband of her's?

Fide. Yes, Sir; she is actually married, and her husband gone out of town; but she expects him very soon; and that, I suppose, made her more urgent with me to come to night.

Man. And can you think of disappointing a lady upon such an occasion?

Fide. I, Sir!—I should disappoint her more by going.

Man. How so?

Fide. Her impudence and infidelity to you, Sir, has made me loath her.

Man. Well, Sir, but I say the lady shall not be disappointed.

Fide. Not disappointed, Sir!—If ever I go near her again, may you think me as false to you as she is; hate and renounce me.

Man. Well, well, if you won't, leave the matter to me; I'll take care—

Fide. You, Sir!—You take care, Sir!—Pray give me that odious key again, and let me return it with the contempt, the detestation—

Man. No, Sir; this key is the instrument of revenge, which fortune hath put into my hand; and, by Heaven, I'll make use of it.

Fide. Revenge, Sir!—what revenge? Disdain is best revenged by scorn; and faithless love by loving another.

Man. Perhaps it may, where the object has once been esteemed; but I now begin to think I had never any share in her affections; and therefore I'll take another method.

Fide. And what is your design, Sir?

Man.

Man. Not a word more ; here's Freeman coming towards us : we will disengage ourselves from him as soon as we can, and talk of this affair further.

Enter Freeman.

Free. The most whimsical accident has happened to me here to-day, captain ; the most unexpected, unaccountable—Ha, ha, ha !

Man. What, the great boy has rose in rebellion against the tyranny of his widow-mother, and put himself under your protection ! Have a care, Freeman ; though she is a fiend, and I wish her at the devil, we are still to have a regard to justice.

Free. Then we are to do ourselves justice, sure ; which, I promise you, is all the use I shall make of the 'squire's revolt in my favour. Where shall we dine ?

Man. I was just thinking of it—Where can we dine ?

Free. Will you go to the King's Arms ?

Man. Why, I don't much care if I do : but it must be upon one condition.

Free. Name it.

Man. That you shall not attempt to pin yourself upon me after dinner ; I must positively have the whole evening at my own disposal ; for my young volunteer and I have particular business.

Free. That's sufficient, Sir ; you know you always make your own terms with me.

Man. Come then, young gentleman, lead the way. *Exeunt.*

End of the Third Act.

A C T IV.

SCENE, Manly's Lodgings. Manly enters in a surtout coat, followed by Fidelia.

Man. **T**HEN Freeman betray'd no marks of surprise at being told I was gone abroad so early !

early ! and you are positive he had not the least suspicion of my being out all night !

Fide. I believe not, Sir.

Man. So much the better. I have been sitting at the coffee-house these three hours, left knocking at the door at an unseasonable time might alarm the family.—Help me off with my coat—and now shut the door, and bolt it, that no body may come in upon us unawares.

Fide. Heigh ho !

Man. What's the matter with you ?

Fide. Nothing, Sir.

Man. You have been crying !

Fide. I have not been very well, Sir.

Man. Come, you are a good lad ; don't let your spirits sink ; I'll be your friend ; you shall fare as I do ; let that content you.

Fide. I desire no better, Sir.

Man. Take the pen and ink, and sit down there—I am now convinced that what you told me yesterday was truth ; and Olivia is the vilest, and most profligate of her sex.

Fide. Are you convinced, Sir ?—Are you indeed convinced ? Then I hope——

Man. Speak softly—I suppose I need not tell you where I have been !

Fide. Sir !

Man. I say, I suppose I need not tell you where I have been since we parted.—I have been with Olivia ; and she has bestowed on me a thousand caresses, which I returned with seemingly an equal ardour.

Fide. Lord, Sir, I am vastly sick of a sudden !

Man. You are a coward—What ails you ?

Fide. I don't know, Sir, I never was so oddly taken in my life ; but it will away again.

Man. Listen to me, then, and be surpris'd yet more—I have pass'd myself upon Olivia for you !

Fide. For me, Sir !

Man. Yes—Darkness, and the particularity of our
E situation.

situation, favoured the deceit; and I was cautious not to undeceive her, by speaking but little, and that softly; and leaving her this morning before it was light.

Fide. Surely, Sir, you will never go near this abominable woman more!

Man. That we'll consider of—In part, my revenge is satisfied.

Fide. Well, Sir, what are your commands with me?

Man. Hear me! I would have you go immediately and write Olivia a very tender billet-doux; deplore the necessity which forced you from her this morning, so much against your inclination; and appoint another meeting with her, at her own house, this evening, as soon as it shall be dusk.

Fide. Out of revenge, I suppose, Sir!

Man. It is so—for I intend to go there.

Fide. Sir, my life is devoted to your service; but, however meanly you may think of me, I cannot descend so low as to the infamous office you would lay upon me.—Excuse me, Sir, I cannot act the part of a pander.

Man. Your principles of honour I do not dislike, if they are sincere; but I tell you you are mistaken in this matter.

Fide. Indeed, Sir, I am not; I see all plain enough; but, upon my knees, I beg, if you have the least regard for yourself, renounce this woman, give her up, and never——

Man. What am I to think of your behaviour? Sure you would have me believe you love her yourself; which, indeed, I have all along suspected.

Fide. Indeed, Sir, it is all my concern for your safety.

Man. Methinks you might trust that to my care—but, once for all, I desire I may have no more impertinent disputing or advice—you have reason to know I am unalterable.

Fide. Sir, you must give up either Olivia or me!

Man. Why so, Sir? What have you and Olivia to do with one another?

Fide

Fide. Well, Sir, let me hear your commands.

Man. I have already told them to you—I wou'd have you write this letter, to make the appointment; you shall keep it in person; and when you have been with her some time, I will come in at the back door, which you shall purposely leave open, and catch you together.

Fide. Well, Sir, and what then!

Man. Why then, Sir, I will upbraid her falsehood, confront her impudence, boast of the triumph I have had over her, and never see her more.

Fide. And is this really all you intend, Sir?

Man. All.

Fide. I think you can have no kindness left for Olivia now, Sir; I think you can't—You don't love her the least bit, captain, do you?

Man. Love her! Damn her! I think of her with abhorrence.

Fide. Then I will go and write the letter directly, Sir.

Free. (*Speaks within*) Well, well, I will introduce you.

Man. Do so—and open the door, for I think I hear Freeman in the next room. [*Exit Fidelity.*]

Enter Freeman and Major Oldfox.

Free. Captain, here's a gentleman who is ambitious of being ranked amongst the number of your acquaintance.—This, Sir, is Major Oldfox, at once the votary of Mars and Apollo, and equally an ornament to the pen and the sword.

Old. Sir, I am your most——

Man. What do you mean by bringing the old fool to me?—Why will you, Freeman, take these liberties?

Free. Excuse me; upon my soul I could not avoid it.—The captain is a whimsical man, major; but I suppose you know his humour!

Old. Ay, ay, I have heard, and like him the better.—Captain, I honour you, you are a great man,

Sir: your late behaviour against the enemy has proved you such, and I shall be proud of being better known to you: as Mr. Freeman has intimated, I am an humble admirer of the arts, and now and then throw my thoughts upon paper: *nequeo dormire*, as the poet says.

Man. And what then, Sir?

Old. Nay, good captain, take me along with you.—I suppose you would not be displeas'd to have the particulars of your late action laid in a proper manner before the public; and if so, I should be glad to drink a bottle, and have a little discourse with you about it—That's all, Sir.

Man. Ha, ha, hah!

Old. He's an odd man, Mr. Freeman.

Free. But ingenious, major.

Old. Ay, ay—Pray, captain, do you ever read the Royal Chronicle?

Man. No.

Old. Nor the Imperial Magazine?

Man. Neither.

Old. That's much, that's much indeed; neither the Royal Chronicle, the imperial Magazine, nor—! There are often very excellent pieces make their appearance in those publications, Mr. Freeman.

Free. So there are, major, so there are—and I believe I can guess to whom the public is indebted for a good many of 'em! What say you? Eh!—Don't I know the signum—three stars and a dash?

Old. No, Mr. Freeman, no upon my honour, Sir! That was my mark formerly; but now all my things are sign'd Philanthropos.

Free. You are not author of that soliloquy in blank verse, in the papers the other day!

Old. What! an address to the land carriage fish office?

Free. Ay.

Old. Why, did you like it?

Free. As good as Milton!

Old. Mr. Freeman, my dear soul!—I am extremely

tremely sorry that any thing should happen between us ; but, as I said before, I hope that is all forgotten ; and you will henceforward look upon me as your friend.—It was I that writ it.—But mum !—between ourselves.

Man. Hark you, old gentleman, it seems you have taken into your head you can write, and are turned author ; shall I tell you what I once said to an acquaintance of mine, who was possessed of the same unaccountable whim ?

Old. Well, Sir, and what was that ?

Man. Why, faith, I told him very plainly he was making himself an ass.

Old. Mr. Freeman, I shall be glad to see you at my house, to eat a bit of mutton with me, and to have a little conversation about a matter I shall tell you.—Sir, your servant ! [Exit.

Free. You took a very sure way to get rid of an author, by advising him not to write.—But you are grown a very early man, sure ; I was here two hours ago, and was told you were gone out.

Man. Ay, and I should have said out if I had known what company you intended to bring me.

Free. As to that, don't be angry ; the major, you must know, is the widow's harbinger, who is coming in pursuit of her son ; and he and I having a little quarrel, I had a mind to make it up with him, by doing what he said he would consider as the greatest obligation—introducing him to you.

Man. Well, and what have you done with your charge ?

Free. Stay and you shall see : I have rigg'd him out with the remains of my shipwreckt wardrobe : he has been under your sea valet de chambre's hands.—By Jupiter ! that's his mother's knock at the door. Stay, and I'll fetch him.

Man. No—you know I cannot easily laugh ; but I desire once more you will take care, and bring yourself into no disagreeable circumstances by this business. [Exit.

SCENE, *Covent-Garden Piazza.*

Enter Mrs. Blackacre and Major Oldfox.

Old. But will you not walk in, Madam?

Mrs. Black. No, major, no; I shall not put my foot into his house, since I have not my lawyer with me. I called on Counsellor Quillit, but he's attending a trial for an assault.

Old. Well, but Madam, this is a strange place to transact business in.

Mrs. Black. Major, you are an ignoramus! do you know, that as I have no search-warrant, execution, or other legal authority, if I was to go into his house, he might bring his writ for a forcible entry on the premises.—I served a person so once myself.

Old. Well, Madam, I have sent the servant to call him out; and that you mayn't think the time long 'till he comes, I'll just read you over a little fancy that came into my head this morning.

Mrs. Black. Lord, major, how can you trouble me with such cursed stuff, when you see how I am perplexed and plagued here?

Old. Nay, in troth, I must have your opinion of a satire I am going to publish; it is a lash for the Reviewers; in which I give such a character——

Mrs. Black. Nay, if you talk of characters, look at my last suit in Chancery, which gives such a character of my adversary, makes him as black as the very devil.

Old. Then here's the outlines of what I once intended for a pamphlet—The Coffee-house Man's Case on the late rise of News-Papers, humbly addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

Enter Freeman and Jerry.

Mrs. Black. What do I see?—Jerry Blackacre, my minor, in red breeches!—Oh, Jerry, Jerry! have I lost all my good inns of court-breeding upon you, then? and will you go breeding yourself at coffee-houses and bagnios?

Jer. Ay, ay! what then? perhaps I will, and what's that to you? Here's my guardian and tutor now, that I am out of your huckster's hands.

Mrs. Black. How! you have not chose him for your guardian yet?

Jer. Yes, but I have though; and I'll do any thing he bids me, and I'll go all over the world with him, to ordinaries or bagnios, or any where else.

Mrs. Black. Do not go to ordinaries and bagnios, good Jerry!

Jer. Why, have you had any dealings there? you never had any ill by them, had you? but if I have left you, you may thank yourself; for you used me so barbarously, I was weary of my life.

Mrs. Black. But consider, Jerry, you are yet but an infant; however, if you will go home with me again, and be a good child, you shall see——

Free. I beg your pardon, Madam; this young gentleman is now under my care; and it is my duty, in quality of his guardian——

Mrs. Black. Why, you villain, would you part mother and minor? rob me of my child and my writings? but you shall find that there is law; and as in the case of ravishment of guard. Westm. the second.——

Old. Well, but Madam, by what I can find, this has been all the young gentleman's own doing. Come, 'squire, pray be ruled by your mother and friends.

Jer. Yes, I'll be ruled by my friends, and therefore not by my mother. I'll chuse him for my guardian till I am at age—nay, may be for as long as I live.

Mrs. Black. Will you so, you wretch? and when you are of age, you will sign, seal, and deliver too, will you?

Jer. Yes, I will.

Mrs. Black. Oh! do not squeeze wax, son! rather go to ordinaries and bagnios, than squeeze wax. If thou dost that, farewell the goodly manor of Black-

acre, with all its woods and underwoods, and appurtenances whatever.

Free. Come, Madam, don't afflict yourself: 'tis true, this young gentleman, of his own free-will, has chosen me for his guardian: however, he's not out of your power; and might I flatter myself with hopes of being in the mother's good graces—

Mrs. Black. I understand you, Sir;—No, if one of us must be ruined, e'en let it be him, if he won't be ruled by me.—What say you, booby, will you be ruled?

Jer. Let me alone, can't you?

Mrs. Black. Will you chuse him for a guardian, whom I refuse for a husband?

Jer. Ay, to chuse, I thank you! for I have taken leave of lawyering and pettifogging.

Mrs. Black. Pettifogging, you profane villain! have you so?—Pettifogging! then you shall take your leave of me, and your estate too; you shall be an alien to me and it for ever.—Pettifogging!

Jer. Oh, but if you go there, we have the deeds and settlements, I thank you! would you cheat me of my estate?

Mrs. Black. No, no; I will not cheat your little brother Bob; for you were not born in wedlock; you was—

Jer. What quirk has she got in her head now?

Mrs. Black. I say you cannot, shall not inherit the Blackacre estate: you are but my base child, and, according to law, cannot inherit it. Nay, you are not so much as a bastard eigne.

Jer. What am I then, mother, the son of a——?

Mrs. Black. The law says——

Free. Madam, we know what the law says—but have a care what you say! do not let your passion to ruin your son, ruin your reputation.

Mrs. Black. Hang reputation, Sir! am not I a widow; have no husband, nor intend to have any?

Jer. But have you no shame left in you, mother?

Mrs.

Mrs. Black. No, no, Sir! Come, major, let us make haste to the prerogative court. [Exeunt.

Free. Nay, but Madam.—We must not let her go so, 'squire!

Fer. Nay, the devil can't stop her, if she has a mind to it. But I'll tell you what, master guardian-licutenant, we will go and advise with three attornies, two proctors, two sollicitors, and a sharp dog in White-Friars, and sure all they will be too hard for her! for I fear, honest guardian of mine, you are too good a joker to have any law in your head.

Free. You are in the right on't, 'squire; I understand no law, especially that against bastards—which custom is against, I am sure; for more people get estates by being so, than lose them. [Exeunt.

Scene, Olivia's Lodgings.

Enter Olivia, with Varnish booted and spurr'd, as just come off a journey.

Oliv. Lord bless me, my dear! you came upon me so unawares, you quite startled me—feel how my heart beats!

Var. Beats!—you seem startled indeed.—And yet surely you expected somebody, when you met me so kindly in the dark passage!

Oliv. Why I thought it was your step, and could not refrain from coming out of my chamber;—and yet I did not know how to believe it either, because it was so much sooner than your letters bid me look for you.

Var. And yet you began with upbraiding me for having staid beyond my time.—Let me tell you, Madam, this conduct is mysterious, and requires explanation.

Oliv. What explanation, my soul?—you misunderstood my words. I upbraid you with having staid too long from me; and you shall never be absent so long from me again,—you shan't indeed; by this kiss you shan't! But, my dearest, I have strange news to tell you.—since you went, Manly's return'd.

Var. Fortune forbid!

Oliv. He met with the French fleet; fought, and afterwards sunk his ship. He was here with me yesterday.

Var. you did not own our marriage to him!

Oliv. I told him I was married, to get rid of him; but to whom is yet a secret to all the world.—And I used him so abominably ill, that his pride, I believe, will prevent his troubling me any further.

Var. I hope it has given him a surfeit of the shore, and will send him to sea again; be you sure only to keep our great secret: in the mean time, I will lead the easy fool by the nose, as I used to do; and whilst he stays rail with him at you; and when he's gone laugh with you at him. By that time, too, I shall have settled some affairs, which I have now on hand, and shall not care who knows of our marriage. As for the notes and jewels which he left with you, if he should want to recover them by law, you may plead a gift; but I fancy we are pretty safe as to that, for I know the particularity of his temper so well—

Oliv. Yet let us be cautious, my love—Have you taken the thousand guineas, he lodged in my name, out of the banker's hand?

Var. No—where was the necessity?

Oliv. The greatest in the world.—Don't confide too much in his generosity: I am well inform'd a much smaller sum would be acceptable to him at present; and no doubt his necessity will make him ready enough to take money, wherever he can claim any thing like a property.

Var. I believe you are in the right, and I will take care to remove them to-morrow.

Oliv. To-morrow! for Heaven's sake stay not till then; he may receive them before to-morrow. Go this night—immediately.

Var. You advise well, and I will only stay to rest myself a little.

Oliv. Rest yourself when you come back.—Pray,
 dear

dear Varnish, don't trifle upon such an important occasion.—Go this very instant!

Var. Well, well, I'll go now directly—a hackney coach will take me to Fleet-street, and back again, in an hour.

Oliv. If you stay till midnight, no matter.—Make haste, dearest! I am impatient 'till you are out of the house. [Exit Varnish.

I shan't recover myself a good while, this unexpected visit has so flurried me! Who could have thought of his coming—a beast!—And at so critical a juncture!—And yet, if he had stayed a few moments longer, he might have taken me still more at a disadvantage.—My conduct is mysterious, and requires explanation.—Sure he intends to give himself the airs of being jealous—I wish I had never married him! He's of a cruel and dangerous temper; and, had I not luckily thought of the money as an expedient to send him out again, I know not what might have happened, had he and my young friend met—

Enter Fidelia.

Ah, heavens!

Fide. I hope I don't frighten you, Madam.

Oliv. Oh, is it you? No, no; but I am the strangest timorous creature!—Well, you can excuse a woman's weakness; indeed I have given you too great proofs of mine—I hope you are not one of those capricious conquerors who despise a victory for being too easily gained!

Fide. I hope, Madam—

Oliv. Nay, I know you will say to the contrary, and I shall believe you: though the hurry you were in to leave me, and your unkind behaviour, in hardly speaking to me, might make one of a less jealous temper suspect—

Fide. Upon my word, Madam!—

Oliv. I am satisfied; you will tell me, no doubt, your letter contained a sufficient apology for that; and, to convince you I desire no other, if you are as sincere

sincere

sincere as I am, I will this moment put into yo^ur possession what, in many parts of the world, will be a magnificent fortune. In short, I am ready to forsake friends, country, reputation, and fly with you—

Fide. This offer, Madam, does me so great an honour—

Oliv. Honour! Why will you make use of that cold expression? But methinks you look grave upon it! must I have the mortification to find that your passion is less violent than mine?

Fide. Pardon me, Madam; but the violence of your passion may preface its change; and I must needs be afraid your affections would soon cool to me, since you could once grow indifferent to so worthy a gentleman as Captain Manly.

Oliv. Oh, mention not his name.

Free. Why, Madam, didn't you love him?

Oliv. Never. How could you think it?

Fide. Because he thought it; who is a man of that excellent understanding, and nice discernment—

Oliv. Hang him, untractable, furly brute! Some private reasons, indeed, made me outwardly accommodate myself to his tramontane humour; and he had vanity enough to think I liked him.

Fide. Bless my soul, Madam! Vanity! Why he's very well to be liked, I hope.

Oliv. Ha, ha, ha!

Fide. Indeed, Madam, you don't do well to speak so disrespectfully of the captain.

Oliv. Why, you dear, friendly creature, you could not be a greater advocate for him, if you were one of his mistresses steep into breeches!

Fide. His mistresses, Madam! I don't know what you mean. To be sure I have great obligations to the captain, and don't like to hear him abused—but—

Oliv. Come, come, let's talk no more of him, that's the best way—What say you, shall we go sit in the next room? I have prepared a little collation there.

Fide.

Fide. Are we not better here, Madam?

Oliv. No, no; I'll conduct you; give me your hand.

Fide. I would rather stay where we are, if you please, Madam.

Oliv. Why so?

Fide. I don't know, Madam; I think 'tis more airy here.

Oliv. Airy! Is any thing the matter with you?

Fide. I am afraid I am going to have one of my fits.

Oliv. What fits?

Fide. Oh, Madam, I am very subject to fits; and sometimes lie in a trance for an hour together.

Oliv. Ay!

Fide. Yes, indeed, Madam; but, if you'll let me alone where I am, perhaps I may not have one.

Oliv. Oh, stay, I'll run into the next room and fetch you some spirits; I would not, for the world, you should be seized here. *[Exit.*

Fide. Mercy on us, what shall I do! I wish the captain would come and deliver me from this odious woman; she will certainly discover me if I stay much longer. I wish I was well out of the house!

Enter Olivia.

Oliv. Undone, undone!

Fide. How, Madam! Where?

Oliv. Ask no questions, but get out the back way as fast as you can; my husband's coming!

Fide. Your husband, Madam!

Oliv. Ay, ay; he came in just before you did; I thought he was gone abroad again, but I saw him this moment cross the hall, and he followed me up stairs—Oh, Heavens, here he is!—This way. *[Exit.*

Fide. Hold, Madam!—She has clapt the door after her, and the bolt is shot! What will become of me?

Enter

Enter Varnish.

Var. So, now I am somewhat of a more decent figure to go abroad; while the fellow has been getting me a coach, I have made a shift to alter my dress a little.—Hah! who have we here! Nay, by the Lord you shan't slip by me!

Fide. Pray, Sir, don't be rude.

Var. Rude, you rascal! Who are you? And what brings you into this house?

Fide. I did not come to do you any harm, Sir.

Var. You came here to do no good, I am certain. But now I see who it was my wife expected, and what occasioned her extraordinary trepidation. Damn you, firrah, I have a mind to cut your throat. Come, draw!

Fide. Oh, pray, Sir, don't draw your sword—pray, Sir, don't!

Var. How, a coward; yet dare to do a man the greatest injury in the world! but your want of courage shan't save your life.

Fide. Hold, Sir, hold! Don't terrify me, and I'll satisfy you I could not injure you.

Var. Now, quickly then! What have you to say?

Fide. I am a woman, Sir; a very unfortunate woman!

Var. Hah! a very handsome one, I am sure. It is so—But why in this masquerade?—Well, no matter.

Fide. I hope, Sir, you are so much a man of honour as to let me go, now I have satisfied you.

Var. Let you go, Madam!

Fide. Yes, Sir. You may guess my misfortune to be love, by my disguise; and I dare swear you will not urge me further on secrets which concern my honour.

Var. Oh, no, Madam, by no means—But I thought I saw my wife turn short upon the stairs just now, and run up in a great hurry before me. Has she not been with you?

Fide.

Fide. Yes, Sir.

Var. Well, and where is she gone?

Fide. Out of the house, I believe, Sir.

Var. And why so, Madam?

Fide. I know not, Sir: perhaps, because she would not be forced to discover me to you; or, to guard me from your suspicions, that you might not discover me yourself.

Var. Well, Madam, at any rate I am obliged to her for having left me alone with so charming a creature.—Lovely, bewitching woman!

Fide. What do you mean? Help, ho!

Var. 'Tis in vain to cry out—no one dares to help you; I am lord here.

Fide. Tyrant here!—But, if you are the master of this house, which I have taken for a sanctuary, do not violate it yourself.

Var. No, I'll preserve you in it, and nothing shall hurt you: I will be as true to you as your disguise, but you must trust me.

Fide. You don't look like a villain, Sir—Help, help!

Enter Footboy.

Var. You saucy rascal, how durst you!—

Boy. I come, Sir, to let you know the coach is at the door.

Var. Damn the coach!—Well, Madam, I shall leave you for a little while! perhaps when I come back I shall find you in a better humour. Here, Sir, help me in with this fellow, this dishonourer of my family.

Boy. Fellow! Your honour said she was a woman.

Var. No matter, Sir; must you prate?

Fide. Oh, Heavens! Is there—

Var. Come, Madam, since you will yield to me no other way, you shall, at least, be my prisoner till I have leisure to examine you further—In there, in—I will know you better before I part with you, my pretty

pretty masquerader, or you shall have more strength and cunning than I think you have. [Exeunt.]

End of the Fourth Act.

A C T V.

SCENE, Eliza's Lodgings. Enter Olivia, Eliza, and Lettice.

Oliv. AH cousin! nothing troubles me, but that I have given the malicious world its revenge, and reason now to talk as freely of me as I used to do of it.

Eliz. Faith then let not that trouble you; for to be plain, cousin, the world cannot talk worse of you than it did before.

Oliv. How, cousin! I'd have you to know before this faux-pas, this trip of mine, the world could not talk of me.

Lett. Oh Lud, Madam, here is my master!

Oliv. Whither shall I run? Save, protect me from him!

Enter Varnish.

Var. Nay, nay, come!

Oliv. Oh, Sir! forgive me.

Var. Yes, yes, I can forgive your being alone with a woman in man's clothes, but have a care of a man in woman's clothes!

Oliv. A woman in man's clothes! What does he mean! [Aside.]

Var. Come, come, you need not have lain out of your house for this; but perhaps you were afraid, when I was warm with suspicions, you must have discovered who she was.

Oliv. Who she was! Sure he dissembles only to get me into his power; or perhaps my young spark has imposed upon him! [Aside.]

Var.

Var. Come, what's the matter with you? If I must not know who she was, I am satisfied without—
Come hither.

Oliv. Sure you do know her; she has told you herself, I suppose.

Var. No, I might have known her better, but I was obliged to go to the banker's; and so locked her into your chamber, with a design to examine her when I came back; but in the mean time she got away, by tying the window curtains to the balcony, by which she slid down into the street—for you must know I jested, and made her believe I should be rude with her, which she apprehended, I suppose, in earnest.

Oliv. Then she got from you?

Var. Yes.

Oliv. And is quite gone.

Var. Yes.

Oliv. I am glad on't—otherwise you had been rude with her.—But how durst you go so far, as to make her believe you would? Let me understand that, Sir! What! there is guilt in your face!—You blush too!—Nay, then I see how things have happened—Oh you base fellow!

Eliz. So, so!

Var. Nay, hear me!—Prithee—I swear—

Oliv. I have heard already too many of your false oaths, and vows, especially your last in the church: Wicked man! and wretched woman that I am?

Var. My dear!—

Oliv. My devil!—

Var. Come, prithee be appeased—and go home: I have been so uneasy all day, not knowing where to find you—I'll give you every satisfaction.

Oliv. Satisfaction!

Var. Yes, do but go home, and I'll thoroughly satisfy you—and then too we'll have a fit of laughing at Manly, whom I am going to find at the King's Arms, where I hear he dined—Go, dearest, go home.

Eliz. A very pretty turn indeed, this!

Var. Now, cousin, since by my wife I have the honour and privilege of calling you so, I have something to beg of you too; which is, not to take notice of our marriage to any person whatever yet a while, for some reasons very important to me; and next, that you will do my wife the honour to go home with her, and me the favour to use that power you have with her, in our reconciliation.

Eliz. That I dare promise, Sir, will be no hard matter. Your servant. [*Exeunt Varnish and Lettice.*]
 — Well, cousin, this I confess was a reasonable hypocrisy; you were the better for it.

Oliv. What hypocrisy?

Eliz. Why, this last deceit of your husband was lawful, since in your own defence.

Oliv. What deceit? I would have you to know I never deceived my husband.

Eliz. You do not understand me: I say this was an honest come off, and a good one. But what sort of a gallant must this be, who could so dexterously pass himself for a woman?

Oliv. What do you mean by a gallant, and passing for a woman.

Eliz. What do you mean? You see your husband took him for a woman.

Oliv. Whom?

Eliz. Hey-day! why the man he found with you; for whom, last night, you were so much afraid; and who you told me—

Oliv. Lord, you rave sure!

Eliz. Why, you did not tell me last night?—

Oliv. I know not what I might tell you last night in a fright.

Eliz. Ay, what was that fright for?—For a woman!—Fie, this fooling is insipid, 'tis offensive.

Oliv. And fooling with my honour will be more offensive. Did not you hear my husband say—

Eliz. Come, you need not fear, I'll keep your secret.

Oliv. My secret! I'd have you to know, I have

no need of confidents, though you value yourself on being a good one.

Eliz. Admirable confidence!

Oliv. Confidence! Is this language to me? Nay, then I'll never see your face again! Lettice, where are you? Let us be gone from this censorious, ill woman. [Exit.

Eliz. Your very humble servant, my sweet, good cousin! [Exit.

SCENE, a Tavern, Manly and Freeman discovered, drinking at a table.

Free. What, then you were going to her yesterday evening

Man. I did, as I tell you, intend it; but, being detained on the way by an old ship-mate, just as I had got to the corner of the street, I met the volunteer, breathless, and almost frightened out of his wits, who gave me this whimsical relation of his adventure with her husband.

Free. Whimsical indeed! Damn it—the fellow must be an idiot!

Man. I am not sorry the affair has happen'd, however; for, upon second thoughts, the discovery I have to make should be public, and before a number of witnesses—she must be made as infamous as she is guilty.

Free. Well, I am your man at any mad work; so here's my service to you—but I must now go look a little after my charge; I have disposed of him in the next room, with Lord Plausible, and Mr. Novel, who have been here to day, at the expence of a young Creole, at a turtle feast.

Man. Go your ways then, I won't detain you; but I say, you know Olivia's house, and will be sure not to let slip the hour.

Free. I warrant you.

Man. And come strait up to her chamber, without more ado; and bring your charge, and my fellow Oakum, and whoever else you please; the greater

your company the better. Here, take the watch—
'Tis now five o'clock, and, at half an hour after seven precisely—

Free. You need not doubt my diligence; I am an old blood, and can naturally beat up a wench's quarters that won't be civil to my friend—Shan't we break her windows too?

Man No, no; be punctual only. [*Exit*. Freeman.]

Enter Varnish.

How!—Nay, here's a friend indeed! And he that has him in his arms can know no wants.

Var. Dear Sir! and he that is in your arms is secure from all fears whatever: nay, our nation is secure by your defeat at sea; and the French that fought against you have proved enemies to themselves only, in bringing you back to us.

Man. Fie, fie—this from a friend? And yet, from any other 'twere insufferable. I thought I should never have taken any thing ill from you.

Var. A friend's privilege is to speak his mind, though it be ill taken.

Man. But your tongue need not tell me you think too well of me; I have found it from your heart, which spoke in actions, your unalterable heart. But Olivia is false, my friend; which I suppose is no news to you.

Var. Why, no—it is not.

Man. But could not you keep her true to me?

Var. Not for my life, Sir.

Man. But could you not perceive it at all before I went? Could she so deceive us both?

Var. I must confess, the first time I knew it was three days after your departure, when she received the money you had left in Fleet-street, in her name; and her fears, it seems, did not hinder her from counting it. You must trust her with all, like a true generous lover!

Man. And she like a mean—

Var. Jilting—

Man.

Man. Traiterous—

Var. Base—

Man. Damn'd—

Var. Mercenary strumpet!

Man. Ay, a mercenary strumpet indeed! for she made me pay her before I had her.

Var. How!—why, have you had her?

Man. Have I!—

Var. Nay, she deserves you should report it.

Man. Report it!—By Heaven, 'tis true!

Var. How?—sure not!

Man. I do not use to lie, nor you to doubt me.

Var. When?

Man. The night before last.

Var. Confusion!

Man. But, what—you wonder at it! nay, you seem to be angry too.

Var. I cannot but be enraged against her, for her usage of you;—damn'd, infamous, common jade!

Man. But you do not, for so great a friend, take pleasure enough in your friend's revenge, methinks!

Var. Yes, yes, I am glad to know it, since it is so.

Man. You cannot tell who that rascal her cuckold is?

Var. No.

Man. She would keep it from you, I suppose.

Var. Yes, yes.

Man. You would laugh, if you knew but all the circumstances of my gaining her: come, I'll tell you.

Var. Damn her! I don't care to hear any more of her.

Man. Well, you shall hear it presently, then; and, in the mean time, prithee go to her, but not from me, and try if you can get her to lend me an hundred pounds of my money; which I am at present in great want of. You may, perhaps, have some influence with her; and I suppose there is no recovering it by law.

Var. Not any; think not of it; nor by this way neither.

Man. What have you in your head, that makes you seem so unquiet?

Var. Only this base impudent woman's falsehood.

Man. Oh, my dear friend, be not you too sensible of my wrongs, for then I shall feel them too with more pain, and think them insufferable.

Var. But why can't you go to Olivia yourself? methinks she that granted you the last favour, as they call it, should not deny you any thing.—I understand not that point of kindness, I confess.

Man. No, you do not understand it, and I have not time to let you know all now: but anon, at supper, we'll laugh at leisure together at Olivia's cuckold, who took a young fellow, that goes betwixt his wife and me, for a woman.

Var. Ha!

Man. Senseless, easy rascal! 'twas no wonder she chose him for a husband. She thought him, I thank her, fitter than me for that blind, bearing office.

Var. Take a young fellow for a woman, say you?—'Sdeath, 'tis impossible I could be mistaken! [*aside* Sure he must be a dolt indeed!

Man. Oh, a very buzzard! Did you ever hear so ridiculous a circumstance?

Var. Never, never.

Man. Well, but, my dear friend, I must be gone immediately, in order to meet Olivia again to-night.

Var. To-night! It cannot be, sure?

Man. 'Tis not two hours since I made my young man write to her for that purpose; and she appointed half an hour after seven precisely.—In short, I am, and I am not, to meet her.—It is a riddle, but shall be explained.

Var. But don't you apprehend the husband?—

Man. He, snivelling gull, a thing to be feared!—A husband—the tamest of creatures!

Var. Very fine!

Man. But I must go to my appointment: you'll meet

meet me here at supper, and then we'll have our laugh out. [Exit.

Varnish alone.

Ay, I'll meet with you, but it shall be at Olivia's—Sure it cannot be! she behaves so calmly, with that honest, modest assurance, it can't be true—And yet he does not use to lie—But then the woman in man's clothes, whom he calls a man—Well, but I know her to have been a woman—But then again, his appointment from her to meet with him to-night: I am distracted more with doubt than jealousy. Well, I have no way but to go home immediately, put on a riding suit, and pretend, to my wife, the same business which carried me out of town last requires me to go post to Oxford again to-night: then, if the appointment he boasts of be true, 'tis sure to hold; and I shall have an opportunity either of clearing her, or revenging myself on both. [Exit.

SCENE, *another room in the same tavern; tables and chairs. Enter Major Oldfox, Mrs. Blackacre, and afterwards Counsellor Quillet.*

Old. But how is it possible, Madam, that you can prove your son has no right to his father's estate?

Mrs. Black. Let me alone for that, Sir; I'll get a lawyer shall prove black's white, if occasion be. But suppose I prove it by his father's will; I have a will, Sir; or can have one made; and how is it he can help himself?

Old. Nay, then, indeed——

Mrs. Black. Yes, yes, I'll shew the villain that he took the wrong sowl by the ear when he meddled with me: I'll lead him such a law-dance, Major, as he never was led in his life; and make him pay the piper into the bargain—Come, counsellor, we shall be quite snug here—Major, you are sure it was at this house the villain appointed us to meet him?

Old. Yes, yes, Madam, I am very sure; and have left orders below accordingly.

Mrs. Black. Well, I suppose he'll be for coming to a compromise; but there's no harm in being prepared—Mr. Quillet, let us sit down.

Counsel. Just as you please, Madam; sit or let it alone, 'tis the same thing to me.

Mrs. Black. I say, counsellor, in part I have already told you what I would have done—With regard to this testament, there are three things to be considered—

Counsel. Ay, Madam, we'll consider them.

Mrs. Black. Well, but hear me out; don't snap one up so—I say there are three things to be considered—First, to prove whether the testator was *compos mentis*—Secondly, whether he was *inops concilii*—And, Thirdly, whether there was a sufficient *probat.*—

Counsel. Nay, nay, but, Madam, this is all unnecessary.

Mrs. Black. Unnecessary! What do you mean?—Was it not so ruled—Catling, 15th Edward the first, folio B? Was it not afterwards confirmed in the Exchequer-chamber, upon error, from *banco regis*?—Look at your reports, Sir; Crook James, 114.

Counsel. Lackaday, Mrs. Blackacre, you are really talking in the clouds—have got quite out of your sphere!—I tell you, there was no devise till the 27th Henry VIII.

Mrs. Black. I say there was, Sir.

Counsel. You mean, Mrs. Blackacre, there was devise in common law, but not in *secundum statutum*; so that your quotation is quite foreign to the purpose: in fine, the whole is nonsense, and I see you know nothing of the law.

Mrs. Black. No, Sir! But I'll shew you that I do know something of the law; and I'll lay you five hundred pounds to your nose-gay, that I know more of the law than you do; and you shall be instructed!

Counsel. Not by you, Madam; not by you! Send your solicitor to me; there's your paper of memorandums.

Mrs.

Mrs. Black. Impertinent! My paper of memorandums! Odds my life! Return me my fee too then; my five guineas that I gave you!

Counsel. Don't put yourself in a passion, Mrs. Blackacre; I am always calm. As to your fee, I shall not return it; for, if it was double the sum, I have had trouble enough for it.

Mrs. Black. Trouble! Major, did you ever see such usage as this?

Counsel. To be short with you, Madam, you are a person, whose affairs I do not chuse to meddle with; for your causes are such as have been set on the left side of the book any time these six years; and, since your evidence at the last Hilary sittings was piloried, my lord chief-justice talks of making an order, that you shall not teaze his court any more.

Mrs. Black. Make an order! Make an order against me, that I should not teaze! No, no, they know which side their bread is buttered on better than that. Ecod, if it was not for me, many a one that's saucy enough in the courts would make but a scurvy figure out of them.

Counsel. Come, come, Madam, that affair of the evidence was very black.

Mrs. Black. 'Tis false, Sir! 'Twas all a prejudice, because he was an Irishman: but, if there was any roguery in it, did not you draw his instructions?

Counsel. You deluded, you deceived me——But guard your expressions, Mrs. Blackacre; guard your expressions; have a care of an action of scandal.

Mrs. Black. Odd's my life, is this language to me, you puny upstart of the law! You green bag carrier! You murderer of unfortunate causes! The clerk's ink is scarce off your fingers! What a shame it is that women should not plead their causes themselves, and not be obliged to employ such ignorant mongrels!

Counsel. Well, Madam, very well! Take notice, you are in the hands of the law—I call you to witness, Sir, that this woman has attacked my reputation
—Depend

—Depend upon it, the bench shall hear of you, and my lord chief-justice determine which is the best lawyer, you or I. [Exit.

Mrs. Black. I have not patience! I'll have him caned! I'll have him caned in the courts, if it costs me ten thousand pounds—an impudent, faucy—make a rule against me!—And you, major, fitting there, with your mouth open—are you a man, a soldier! to wear a sword by your side, and see me treated—Oh, I wish I had a sword!

Old. Don't make yourself uneasy, Madam; I warrant we'll be up with him! I'll write an essay against him in the news-papers; I can get any thing put in for five shillings and six pence.

Mrs. Black. Go, go, you are a filly old afs.

Enter Waiter.

Waiter. What's the matter, Madam?

Mrs. Black. Nothing, nothing; go down stairs—Make a rule against me! Odd's my life!—I wish they durst! egad the parliament should hear of it!

Enter Freeman, Bailiffs and Jerry.

Jer. O law! My mother quarrelling with the waiter.—What's the matter here? won't he pay the reckoning?

Free. Bailiffs, execute your writ; there's your prisoner.

Bail. We arrest you in the king's name, at the suit of Mr. Freeman, guardian to Jeremiah Blackacre, Esq; in an action of ten thousand pounds.

Mrs. Black. How, how! in a choke bail action?

Free. Yes, yes; you are taken indeed, Madam; and we have discovered your equitable design of providing us with a forged will.

Mrs. Black. Undone, undone! no man was ever too hard for me till now.—Oh, Jerry! child, wilt thou vex the mother that bore thee?

Jer. Ay, for bearing me before wedlock, as you say:

say : but I'll teach you to call a Blackacre a bastard, though you are never so much my mother.

Mrs. Black. Well, I am undone! not one trick left!—Cruel Sir, a word with you, I pray.

Free. In vain, Madam; you have no way to release yourself now, but by the bonds of matrimony.

Mrs. Black. How, Sir, how! Matrimony! that were but to sue out an habeas corpus, for a removal from one prison to another.

Free. Bailiffs, away with her!

Mr. Black. Oh, stay Sir! Can you be so cruel as to bring me under covert baron again, and put it out of my power to sue in my own name? But I see, Sir, your aim in all this; and if you think proper, to make us both easy, I will, out of my jointure, secure you an annuity of three hundred pounds a year, and pay your debts; and that's all you younger brothers desire to marry a widow for, I am sure.

Free. Now, Madam, you are come to the point I wanted to bring you to: but you shall find I will not be behind hand with you in generosity—I believe I need not tell you, widow, that I have suffered some injuries from your family, and there is now an estate in it, which lawfully and honestly belongs to me.

Mrs. Black. Why, Sir, I do remember something, and if you will be so good as to let me speak to my attorney—

Free. As for that, Madam, there is no occasion—the land in question brings in about four hundred pounds a year; secure me that, and your person and your son you are welcome to dispose of as you please.

Jer. What, I hope, master Guardian, you are not making agreements without me!

Free. No, no. First, widow, you must say no more that he is a bastard; have a care of that: and then he must have a settled exhibition of one hundred pounds a year, and a nag of assizes, kept by you, but not upon the common.

Mrs. Black. Well, I can grant all this.

Jer. Ay, ay, fair words butter no cabbage: but, Guardian, make her sign—sign and seal; or otherwise,

wife, if you knew her as well as I, you would not trust her word for a farthing.

Free. I warrant you, 'squire.—Come, my lawyer, with writings ready drawn, is within, and in haste.

Mrs. Black. Make a rule against me! a paltry jackanapes! [Exit.]

SCENE, *Olivia's house. Olivia seated at a table, with candles, and a small cabinet.*

Oliv. Sure no intrigue was ever attended with so many odd circumstances as this of mine! I always knew Varnish was a silly fellow, but I thought he had too much experience to mistake a man for a woman. I am glad I pick'd a quarrel with Eliza however, because now people will never believe I was in her power, but take for malice whatever she may say to my disadvantage. But 'tis just the hour I appointed my young sailor.—And, as if my husband had not committed blunders enough already, he is again conveniently gone out of town, to give me a better opportunity of entertaining him: but I married him for a convenience.—Hold, don't I hear somebody treading softly along the passage?—

Enter Fidelia, through back Scene.

Who's there? my dear!

Fide. My life!

Oliv. Well, this is kind; now I think you really love me, because you are punctual to your assignation. I was afraid the misadventure when you was here last would have frightened you from coming any more; and then I should have been so unhappy—

Fide. Why, really, Madam, I was under some apprehensions.

Oliv. Go, you little coward! You a son of Neptune and talk of fear!—But stay, I'll lock the door, though there be no occasion for it, but to keep out your fears, and those ugly fits you tell me you are subject to.

Man.

Man. (at the door.) You have impudence enough to give me fits, and make revenge still impotent.

Oliv. What do you say?

Fide. Madam!

Oliv. I thought I heard you speak—Come—sit down here—What makes you so pensive?

Fide. I am thinking, Madam, if your husband should surprize us again!

Oliv. There's no danger; he's ten miles out of town by this time: however, don't mention his name, lest it should prove ominous.

Fide. Well, but won't you give me the satisfaction of telling you how I abused him last?

Oliv. I have heard enough of it: I hate any discourse when he or Manly must be part of the subject. No, let me rather resume the conversation I began yesterday—Are you willing to go off with me?

Fide. Whither, Madam?

Oliv. Any where—to Lapland or India—I repeat it once more—I have a sufficient fortune to make us happy.

[Trampling without.]

Fide. Hift! Don't I hear a noise?

Oliv. No, no.

[Trampling.]

Fide. Pray, Madam, listen: I am sure I hear the motion of feet upon the stairs.

Oliv. I tell you it's no such thing.

[Trampling.]

Fide. Hark! It grows louder.

Oliv. Be silent then—There's somebody tampering with the lock of the door.—Step gently this way—[Varnish speaks within] Death and confusion, 'tis my husband! I heard him speak to the footboy—he has sent him round to bar the garden gate.

Fide. I thought, Madam, your husband was out of town, you said.

Oliv. No, no, 'tis he.—Fool that I was to trust in his pretended ignorance, or think his reconciliation real; he has laid this train purposely for my undoing.—He has stopt the only passage we could get out by; and I know his revengeful temper so well, if he finds us here he'll murder us.—Let us escape your way
by

by the balcony : here, take this cabinet, it contains jewels and bank notes to a considerable value ; here, put out the candles, while I go into the next room and pull down the curtains. [Exit,

Enter Manly.

Fide. This cabinet I believe is your's, Sir.

Man. It is mine now, indeed ; and shall never escape from me again, at least to her.

Fide. Did you ever hear such a wretch, Sir ?

Man. A wretch ! Why she makes love like a devil in a play. But she wanted to elope with you, Sir ; you never told me that !

Fide. Oh, Sir, I have not told you half her wickedness ; [*loud noise*] but they are breaking open the door. What shall I do, Sir ?

Man. Stay where you are, and fear nothing. Now we shall see who this happy man is she calls husband.

Enter Varnish.

Var. With much labour and forcing, I have at last gained admittance : but now, to find out the occasion of all this privacy and barricading—I heard people talk in the room, I am sure—Hah ! what's here ?

Man. Sword and dark lantern, villain, are some odds ; however, I believe I shall be able to deal with you—Don't be frighten'd my little volunteer.

Fide. Only for your life, Sir.

Var. Damnation ! two at once—but I'll make sure of one of them at least.

Fide. Murder ! Help ! Murder !

Enter Olivia, and then Freeman, Lord Plausible and Novel.

Oliv. What means this uproar ? Distraction ! My husband has got in ! then we shall have murder indeed.—Oh stay, you must not kill one unable to defend himself !—Lights, lights !—

[*Enter Footboy, with lights.*

Man.

Man. Now, Sir, where are you? Freeman, look to the door.—Hold, my dearest, after so much kindness past between us, I cannot part with you yet—Freeman, let no body out; for, notwithstanding your lights, we are still in the dark, till this gentleman turns his face—How! Varnish! Are you the happy man?—You! You!—Speak, I say—But your guilty silence tells me all. Well, I will not upbraid you; let your own reflections be your punishment—Fare ye well, Sir!

Free. Look yonder, captain, to the volunteer; he is hurt, and I believe fainting.

Fide. No, Sir, 'tis only my fright, not yet well over: I shall recover here in the next room.

Man. My boy hurt?

Enter Mrs. Blackacre and Jerry.

Mrs. Black. I dare swear there is something going forward contrary to the statute; and, as in that remarkable case, Stokes plaintiff, against Jenkins and other defendants.—But I'll take minutes; for perhaps one side or other may chuse to bring it into the courts.

Jer. Well, my mother will never let the law alone, I see that; for when she's at a loss for wherewithal to go herself, she's for setting other people at it.

Man. Oh Heaven!—Freeman, come here!

Free. How now! What's the matter?

Man. More miracles still—The volunteer's a woman!

All. A woman!

Fide. Dear captain, spare my blushes; yet, wherefore should I be ashamed of a virtuous and generous passion? Yes, I am a woman, I own it; and, through love for the worthiest of men, have attempted to follow him in this disguise; partly out of fear to disclose my sentiments, for I knew of his engagements to that lady; and the constancy of his nature, which nothing but herself could have changed.

Man. Dear Madam, I desired you to bring me out of confusion, and you have given me more: I know
not

not what to speak to, or how to look upon you; the sense of my rough and ill usage gives me more pain now it is over, than you felt when you suffered it: but, if my affections, once prostituted to such a woman—

Oliv. My breast burns with fury, indignation, disdain, and must have vent. Coxcomb, idiot, brute! But think not long to triumph, for I go to have such vengeance on ye—

L. Plau. Ma'am, will you permit me the honour of your fair hand?

Oliv. Take it.

[*Strikes him and Exit.*]

Nov. Ha, ha, ha! There's for your gentleman-ushership, my lord! Well, what do you think of her now? Did not I always tell you she was a jilt?

L. Plau. Take it from me, Mr. Novel, she's a lady of great virtue and delicacy; though, indeed, I could not have believed her fingers to have been quite so hard.

Mrs. Black. But, pray, Captain Manly, a word with you. Is not this my cousin Olivia's house and furniture? And do you eject her, seize on her goods and chattels *vi et armis*? Ecod, if I was she, I'd make demand—bring my trover.

Man. Good Mrs. Blackacre, be pacified: if your cousin had her deserts, the law would be her greatest enemy. And now, Madam, let me beg of you to accept of this; and with it my heart; both, I confess, too small a recompence for your merit; for you deserve the Indian world, and I would go thither out of covetousness for your sake.

Fide. Your heart, Sir, is a present of that value, I can never make any return for it: but I can give you back such a present as this, which I got by the death of my father, a gentleman of the north, whose only child I was; [*gives a paper*] therefore left me in the present possession of 2000*l.* a year. The name of my family is Grey; my other, Fidel'a; the rest of my story you shall know when I have fewer auditors.

Man.

Man. Nay, Madam, you now take from me all power of making you any compliment on my part: I was going to tell you, that, on your account only, I would forego the pleasures of a retirement I have long wish'd for, and be reconciled again to the world, which was grown odious to me: but if I should, I doubt my friend here would say it was your estate made me friends with it.

Free. I must confess I should; for I think most of our quarrels to the world, are just such as we sometimes have to a handsome woman, only because she won't grant us as many favours as we could wish.

Man. Nay, if you are a Plain Dealer too, give me your hand; and for your two sakes, though I have been so lately deceived in both sexes, I will believe there are still in the world good-natured friends who are not prostitutes, and handsome women worthy to be friends.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

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