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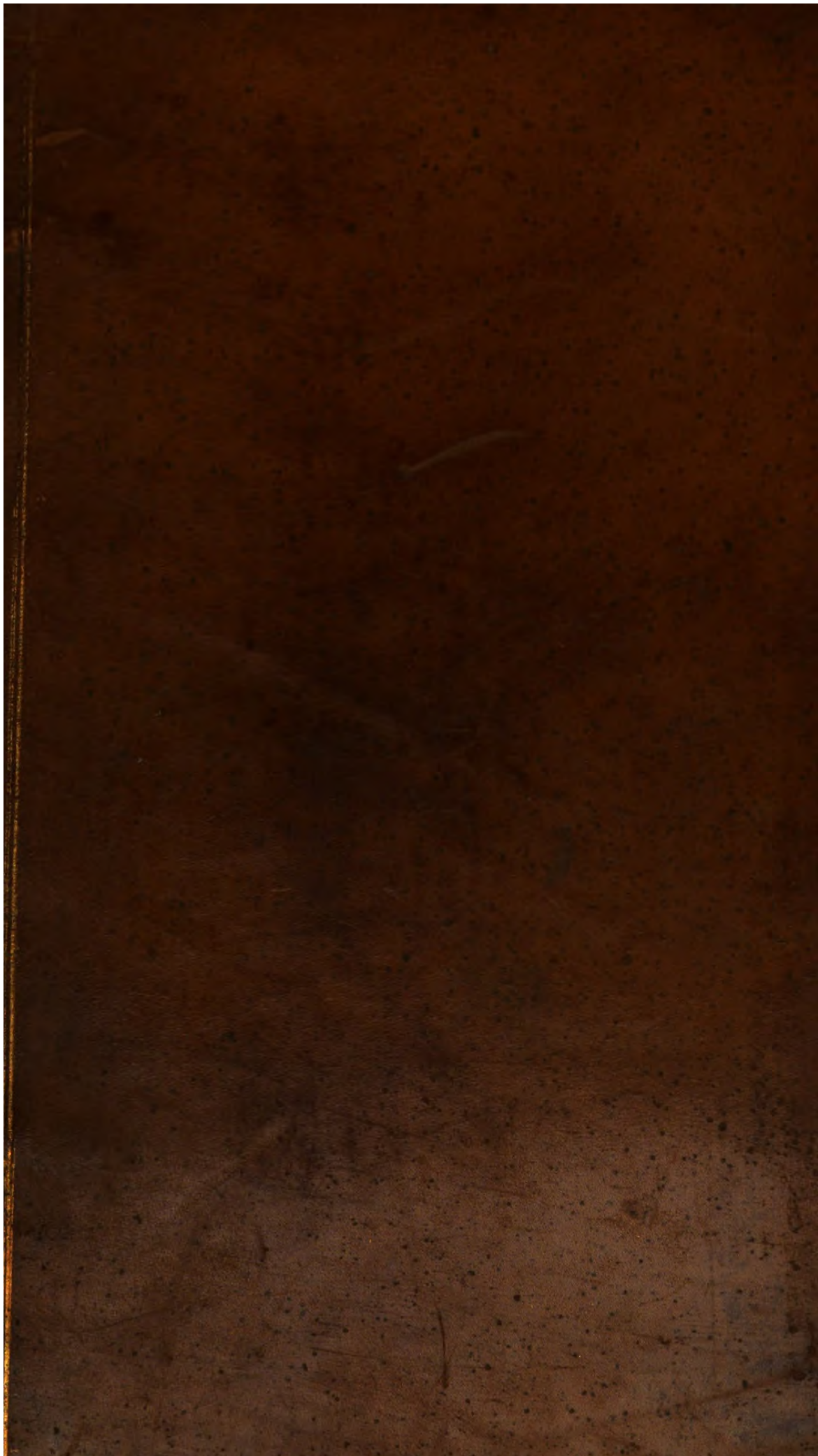
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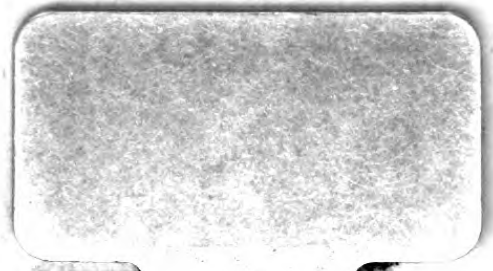


donated by Mrs King.



Edward Hippen.

Weddingall Park in London

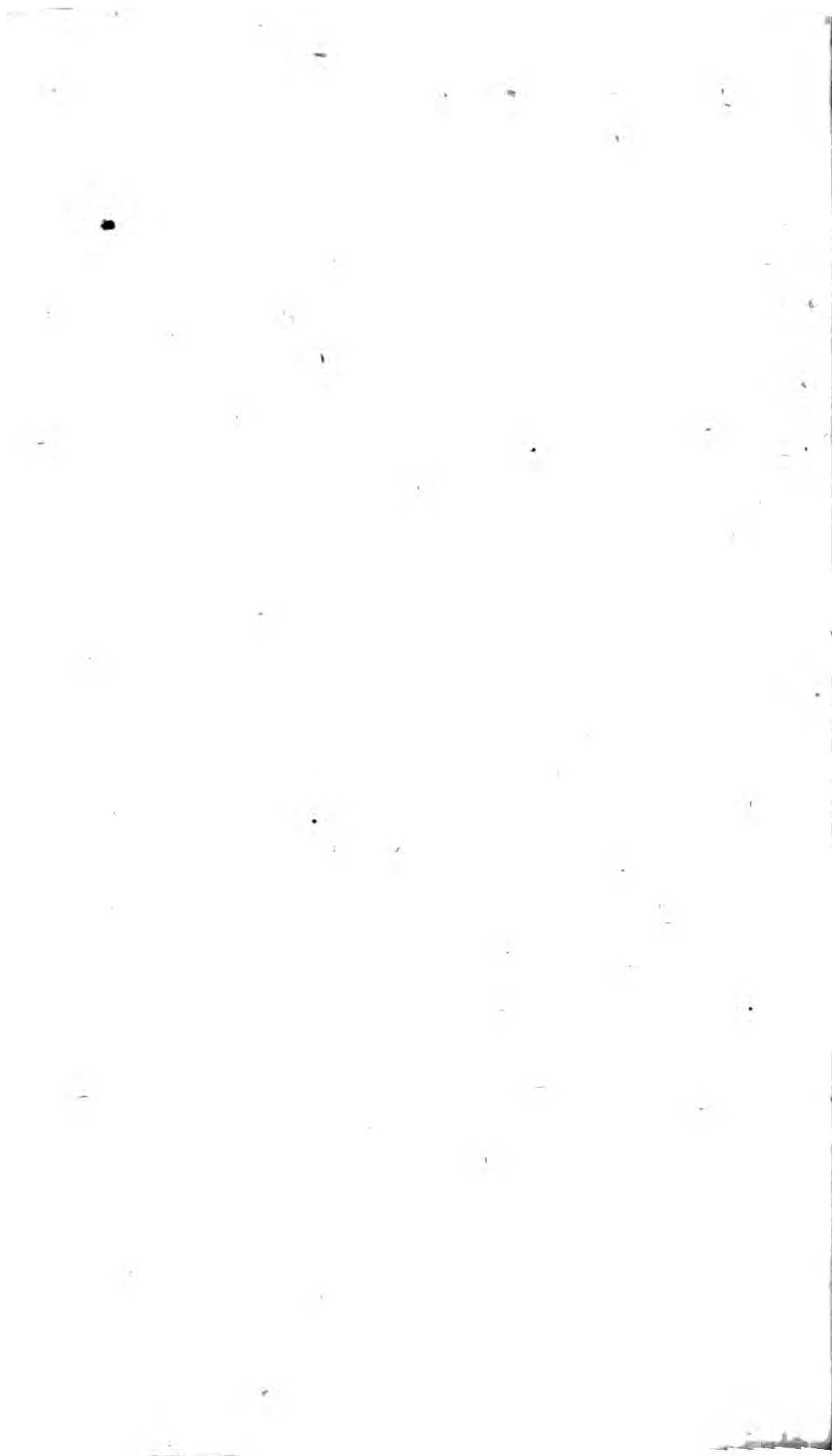


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THE  
WORKS

OF

Mr. *William Congreve*:

IN THREE VOLUMES.

CONSISTING OF HIS

PLAYS and POEMS.

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The SIXTH EDITION.

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L O N D O N :

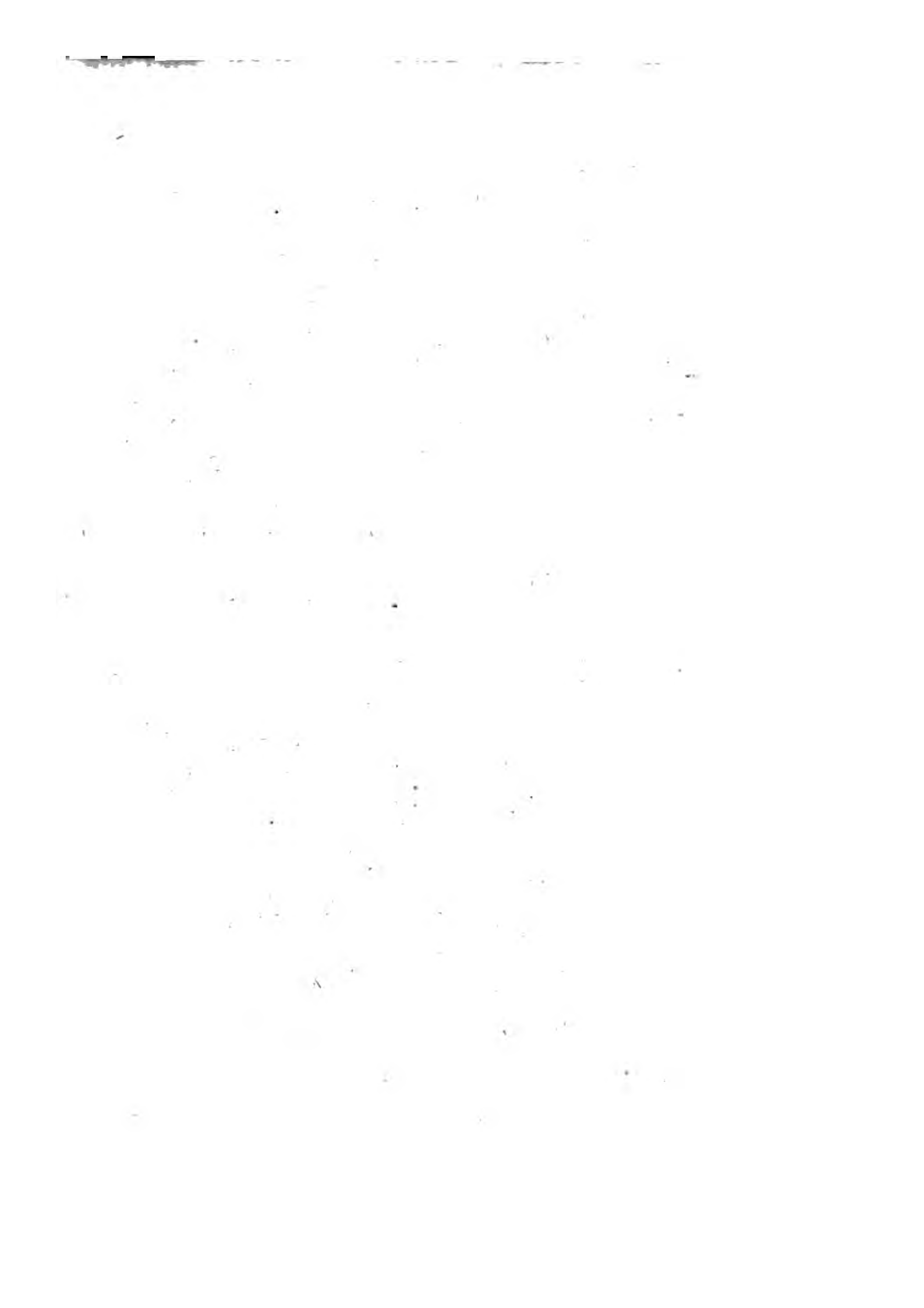
Printed for J. and R. TONSON and S. DRAPER  
in the *Strand*.

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MDCCLIII.









J. Flaxman inv. et del.

C. Grignion sculp.

*The Old Bachelor.*

THE  
WORKS

OF

Mr. *William Congreve.*

VOLUME *the* FIRST.

CONTAINING

*The OLD BATCHELOR.* } Comedies.  
*The DOUBLE-DEALER.* }

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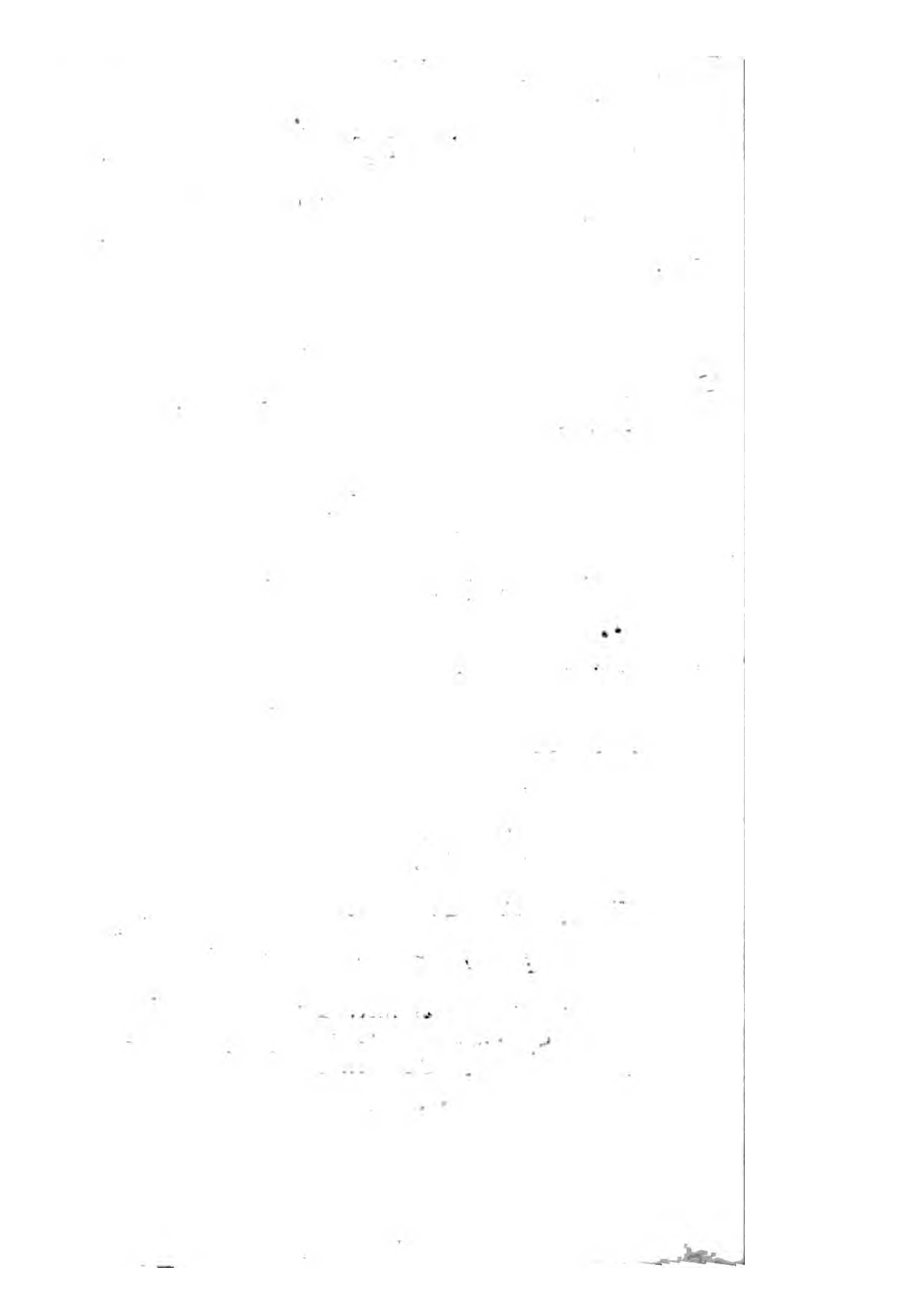
L O N D O N:

Printed for J. and R. T O N S O N and  
S. D R A P E R in the *Strand.*

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MDCCLIII.







# P R E F A C E.



HERE is no Occasion to say any thing in relation to these Plays, which some time since have been every way made Public: And consequently, are already plac'd in that degree of Reputation, (whatever it be) which their Auditors and Readers have thought fit to allow them.

This Edition of them, therefore, is only recommended as the least faulty Impression, which

A 3 has

## P R E F A C E.

has yet been Printed; in which, Care has been taken both to Revise the Press, and to Review and Correct many Passages in the Writing.

Notwithstanding which Care, it must be confess'd, too many *Errata* in both kinds, still remain; those of the Press, are to be reckoned amongst Things, which no Diligence can prevent. Mr. *Bayle*, in his Preface to the first Edition of his Dictionary, speaks of the Vexation of ineffectual Supervising the Press, in Terms so feeling, that they move Compassion in his Reader; and concludes the Paragraph touching it, in these Words, “ *Je*  
“ *l'oublie autant que Je puis, ani-*  
“ *mus meminisse horret.*”

The

## P R E F A C E.

The Tragedy of the *Mourning Bride*, in this Edition is reformed in its *Numbers*, and by several little Variations and Transpositions in the Expression, intirely cast into blank Verse; in respect of which Measure, it was before, in many Places, defective. Some few Verses are also, in one or two Places, inserted or substituted in the Room of others, it is hoped for the better.

It will hardly be deny'd, that it is both a Respect due to the Public, and a Right which every Man owes to himself, to endeavour that what he has written, may not appear with any Faults, which he is capable of avoiding. This Consideration alone,

## P R E F A C E.

were sufficient to have occasion'd this Edition; but it has been hasten'd by another Motive, which is, that these five Plays have lately undergone a spurious Impression, and have been very faultily, as well as very indirectly Published; in Prejudice both to the Author, and the Bookseller who has the Property of the Copy.

In the Third Volume there is an Opera, which has never yet appear'd; of which there is little to be said in this Place, but that the Music to it is excellently well compos'd by Mr. *John Eccles*.

The Miscellaneous Verses, which conclude this Work, are of several kinds, and written occasionally  
at

## P R E F A C E.

at distant Times; the early Date of some, no doubt, will plainly appear, and it is hoped will also plead their Excuse. Part of 'em has heretofore been Printed singly, or dispers'd in Miscellanies.





The first part of the paper discusses the  
 importance of the study and the objectives  
 of the research. It also outlines the  
 methodology used in the study and the  
 results of the data analysis.

The second part of the paper discusses the  
 findings of the study and the implications  
 of the results. It also discusses the  
 limitations of the study and the  
 directions for future research.

The third part of the paper discusses the  
 conclusions of the study and the  
 recommendations for practice. It also  
 discusses the significance of the study  
 and the contribution of the research.

The final part of the paper discusses the  
 acknowledgments and the references. It  
 also includes a list of the authors and  
 their affiliations.

THE  
OLD BATCHELOR.  
A  
COMEDY.

---

*Quem tulit ad Scenam ventoso gloria Curru,  
Exanimat lentus Spectator; sedulus inflat.  
Sic leve, sic parvum est, animum quod laudis avarum  
Subruit, aut reficit ———*

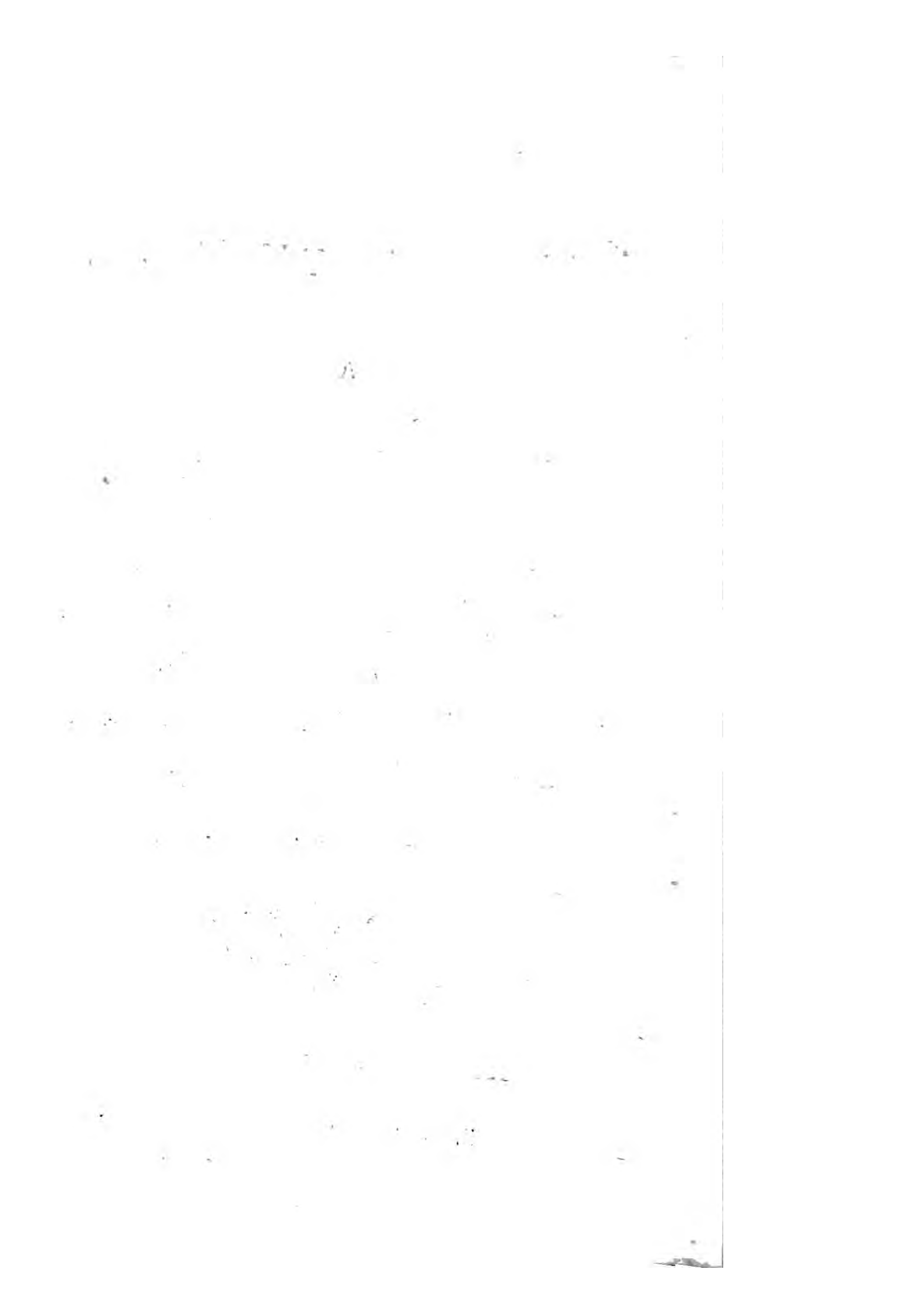
Horat. Epist. I. Lib. II.

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Printed in the YEAR 1753.





To the Right Honourable

**CHARLES *Lord* Clifford,**

O F

***LANESBOROUGH, &c.***

*My LORD,*



T is with a great deal of Pleasure, that I lay hold on this first Occasion, which the Accidents of my Life have given me of Writing to your Lordship: For since at the same time, I write to all the World, it will be a means of publishing (what I would have every Body know) the Respect and Duty which I owe  
and

## D E D I C A T I O N .

and pay to you. I have so much Inclination to be yours, that I need no other Engagement: But the particular Ties, by which I am bound to your Lordship and Family, have put it out of my Power to make you any Compliment ; since all Offers of myself, will amount to no more than an honest Acknowledgment, and only shew a Willingness in me to be grateful.

I am very near wishing, That it were not so much my Interest to be your Lordship's Servant, that it might be more my Merit ; not that I would avoid being obliged to you, but I would have my own Choice to run me into the Debt ; that I might have it to boast, I had distinguish'd a Man, to whom I would be glad to be obliged, even without the Hopes of having it in my Power, ever to make him a Return.

It is impossible for me to come near your Lordship, in any kind, and not to receive some Favour ; and while in appearance I am only making an Acknowledgement

## DEDICATION.

ledgement (with the usual underhand dealing of the World) I am at the same time insinuating my own Interest. I cannot give your Lordship your due, without tacking a Bill of my own Privileges. 'Tis true, if a Man never committed a Folly, he would never stand in need of a Protection : But then Power would have nothing to do, and Good-nature no Occasion to shew itself ; and where those Qualities are, 'tis pity they should want Objects to shine upon. I must confess this is no reason, why a Man should do an idle thing, nor indeed any good Excuse for it, when done ; yet it reconciles the Uses of such Authority and Goodness, to the Necessities of our Follies ; and is a sort of Poetical Logic, which at this Time I would make use of, to argue your Lordship into a Protection of this Play. It is the first Offence I have committed in this kind, or indeed, in any kind of Poetry, tho' not the first made Public ; and, therefore, I hope will the more easily be pardoned :  
But



## DEDICATION.

But had it been Acted, when it was first written, more might have been said in its behalf; Ignorance of the Town and Stage, would then have been Excuses in a young Writer, which now, almost four Years Experience, will scarce allow of. Yet I must declare myself sensible of the Good-nature of the Town, in receiving this Play so kindly, with all its Faults, which I must own were, for the most part, very industriously cover'd by the Care of the Players; for, I think, scarce a Character but receiv'd all the Advantage it would admit of, from the Justness of the Action.

As for the Critics, my Lord, I have nothing to say, to, or against, any of them of any kind; from those who make just Exceptions, to those who find Fault in the wrong place. I will only make this general Answer in behalf of my Play, (an Answer, which *Epiſtetus* advises every Man to make for himself, to his Censurers) *viz. That if they who find some Faults in it, were as intimate with it as I am,*  
*they*

## DEDICATION.

*they would find a great many more.* This is a Confession, which I needed not to have made ; but however, I can draw this Use from it, to my own Advantage, that I think there are no Faults in it but what I do know ; which, as I take it, is the first step to an Amendment.

Thus I may live in hopes (some time or other) of making the Town amends ; but you, my Lord, I never can, tho' I am ever

*Your LORDSHIP's*

*most Obedient, and*

*most Humble Servant,*

WILL. CONGREVE.



T O

Mr. CONGREVE.

**W**HEN *Virtue in pursuit of Fame appears,*  
*And forward shoots the Growth beyond the*  
*Years,*

*We timely court the rising Hero's Cause :*  
*And on his side, the Poet wisely draws ;*  
*Bespeaking him hereafter, by Applause.* }  
*The Days will come, when we shall all receive*  
*Returning Interest, from what now we give ;*  
*Instructed, and supported by that Praise,*  
*And Reputation, which we strive to raise.*

*Nature so coy, so hardly to be woo'd,*  
*Flies like a Mistress, but to be pursu'd.*  
*O Congreve ! boldly follow on the Chase ;*  
*She looks behind, and wants thy strong Embrace :*  
*She yields, she yields, surrenders all her Charms,*  
*Do you but force her gently to your Arms :*  
*Such Nerves, such Graces, in your Lines appear,*  
*As you were made to be her Ravisher.*

*Dryden has long extended his Command,*  
*By Right Divine, quite through the Muses Land,*  
*Absolute Lord ; and holding now from none,*  
*But great Apollo, his undoubted Crown,*  
*(That Empire settled, and grown old in Pow'r)*  
*Can wish for nothing, but a Successor :*  
*Not to enlarge his Limits, but maintain*  
*Those Provinces, which he alone could gain.*

*His*

## TO MR. CONGREVE.

*His eldest Wicherly, in wise Retreat,  
Thought it not worth his Quiet to be Great.  
Loose, wand'ring Etherege, in wild Pleasures tost,  
And foreign Int'rests, to his Hopes long lost:  
Poor Lee and Otway dead! Congreve appears,  
The Darling, and last Comfort of his Years:  
May'st thou live long in thy great Master's Smiles,  
And growing under him, adorn these Isles:  
But when——when part of him (be that but late)  
His Body yielding must submit to Fate,  
Leaving his deathless Works, and Thee behind,  
(The natural Successor of his Mind)  
Then may'st thou finish what he has begun:  
Heir to his Merit, be in Fame his Son.  
What thou hast done, shews all is in thy Pow'r;  
And to write better, only must write more.  
'Tis something to be willing to commend;  
But my best Praise, is, that I am your Friend.*

THO. SOUTHERNE.



## TO MR. CONGREVE.

**T**HE Danger's great in these censorious Days,  
When Critics are so rife, to venture Praise:  
When the infectious and ill-natur'd Brood  
Behold, and damn the Work, because 'tis good;  
And with a proud, ungenerous Spirit try  
To pass an Ostracism on Poetry.  
But you, my Friend, your Worth does safely bear  
Above their Spleen; you have no Cause for Fear;  
Like

TO MR. CONGEEVE.

*Like a well-mettled Hawk, you took your Flight  
Quite out of Reach, and almost out of Sight.  
As the strong Sun, in a fair Summer's Day,  
You rise, and drive the Mists and Clouds away,  
The Owls and Bats, and all the Birds of Prey. }  
Each Line of yours, like polish'd Steel's so hard,  
In Beauty safe, it wants no other Guard.  
Nature her self's beholden to your Dress,  
Which tho' still like, much fairer you express.  
Some vainly striving Honour to obtain,  
Leave to their Heirs the Traffic of their Brain,  
Like China under Ground, the ripening Ware,  
In a long time, perhaps grows worth our Care :  
But you now reap the Fame, so well you've sown ;  
The Planter tastes his Fruit to Ripeness grown.  
As a fair Orange-tree at once is seen,  
Big with what's ripe, yet springing still with green :  
So at one time, my worthy Friend appears,  
With all the sap of Youth, and Weight of Years.  
Accept my pious Love, as forward Zeal,  
Which tho' it ruins me I can't conceal :  
Expos'd to Censure for my weak Applause,  
I'm pleas'd to suffer in so just a Cause :  
And tho' my Offering may unworthy prove,  
Take, as a Friend, the Wishes of my Love.*

J. MARSH.



To



To Mr. CONGREVE, on his Play  
called *The Old Batchelor*.

**W**IT, like true Gold, refin'd from all Alloy,  
Immortal is, and never can decay,  
'Tis in all Times and Languages the same;  
Nor can an ill Translation quench the Flame:  
For, tho' the Form and Fashion don't remain,  
Th' intrinsic Value still it will retain.  
Then let each studied Scene be writ with Art:  
And Judgment sweat to form the labour'd Part:  
Each Character be just, and Nature seem;  
Without th' Ingredient, Wit, 'tis all but Phlegm.  
For that's the Soul, which all the Mass must move,  
And wake our Passions into Grief, or Love.  
But you, too Bounteous, sow your Wit so thick,  
We are surpris'd, and know not where to pick:  
And while with Clapping, we are just to you,  
Ourselves we injure, and lose something new.  
What mayn't we then, great Youth, of thee presage,  
Whose Art and Wit so much transcend thy Age?  
How wilt thou shine at thy Meridian height?  
Who, at thy Rising, giv'st so vast a Light.  
When Dryden dying, shall the World deceive,  
Whom we Immortal, as his Works believe;  
Thou shalt succeed, the Glory of the Stage,  
Adorn and entertain the coming Age.

BEVIL HIGGONS:

P R O-





P R O L O G U E intended for  
*The OLD BATCHELOR.*

Written by the Lord *FALKLAND.*

**M**OST Authors on the Stage at first appear  
*Like Widows Bridegrooms, full of Doubt and  
Fear :*

*They judge, from the Experience of the Dame,  
How hard a Task it is to quench her Flame :  
And who falls short of furnishing a Course,  
Up to his brawny Predecessor's Force ;  
With utmost Rage from her Embraces thrown,  
Remains convicted, as an empty Drone.  
Thus often, to his Shame, a pert Beginner,  
Proves in the End, a miserable Sinner.*

*As for our Youngster, I am apt to doubt him :  
With all the Vigour of his Youth about him :  
But he more Sanguine, trusts in one and twenty,  
And impudently hopes he shall content you :  
For tho' his Batchelor be worn and cold,  
He thinks the Young may club to help the Old :  
And what alone can be atchiev'd by neither,  
Is often brought about by both together.*

*The*

## P R O L O G U E.

*The briskest of you all have felt Alarms,  
Finding the Fair one prostitute her Charms  
With broken Sighs, in her old Fumbler's Arms.  
But for our Spark, he swears he'll ne'er be jealous  
Of any Rivals, but young lusty Fellows.  
Faith let him try his Chance, and if the Slave,  
After his Bragging, prove a washy Knave,  
May he be banish'd to some lonely Den,  
And never more have leave to dip his Pen :  
But if he be the Champion he pretends,  
Both Sexes sure will join to be his Friends ;  
For all agree, where all can have their ends.  
And you must own him for a Man of Might,  
If he hold out to please you the third Night.*



P R O.



# PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle.

**H**O W this vile World is chang'd ! In former  
Days,

*Prologues were serious Speeches, before Plays ;  
Grave solemn Things, as Graces are to Feasts ;  
Where Poets begg'd a Blessing from their Guests.*

*But now, no more like Suppliants we come ;  
A Play makes War, and Prologue is the Drum :*

*Arm'd with keen Satire, and with pointed Wit,  
We threaten you who do for Judges sit,*

*To save our Plays, or else we'll damn your Pit.*

*But for your Comfort it falls out to-day,  
We've a young Author, and his first-born Play ;*

*So, standing only on his good Behaviour,*

*He's very civil and intreats your Favour.*

*Not but the Man has Malice, wou'd he show it,*

*But on my Conscience he's a bashful Poet ;*

*You think that strange——no matter, he'll out-  
grow it.*

*Well, I'm his Advocate——by me he prays you,*

*(I don't know whether I shall speak to please you)*

*He*

## PROLOGUE.

*He prays ——— O blefs me! what fhall I do now!  
Hang me if I know what he prays, or how!  
And 'twas the prettieft Prologue as he wrote it!  
Well, the deuce take me, if I han't forgot it.  
O Lord, for Heaven's fake excúse the Play,  
Because, you know, if it be damn'd to-day,  
I fhall be hang'd for wanting what to fay.  
For my fake then — but I'm in fuch Confufion,  
I cannot ftay to hear your Refolution.*

}

[Runs off.



# Dramatis Personæ.

## M E N.

<i>Heartwell</i> , a surly old Batchelor, pretending to slight Women, secretly in Love with <i>Sylvia</i> ,	}	Mr. <i>Betterton</i>
<i>Belmour</i> , in Love with <i>Belinda</i> ,		Mr. <i>Powel</i> .
<i>Vainlove</i> , capricious in his Love; in Love with <i>Araminta</i> ,	}	Mr. <i>Williams</i> .
<i>Sharper</i> ,		Mr. <i>Verbrugge</i>
Sir <i>Joseph Wittoll</i> ,		Mr. <i>Bowen</i> .
Captain <i>Bluffe</i> ,		Mr. <i>Haines</i> .
<i>Fondlewife</i> , a Banker,		Mr. <i>Dogget</i> .
<i>Setter</i> , a Pimp,		Mr. <i>Underhill</i> .
Servant to <i>Fondlewife</i> .		

## W O M E N.

<i>Araminta</i> , in Love with <i>Vainlove</i> ,	}	Mrs. <i>Bracegird</i>
<i>Belinda</i> , her Cousin, an affected Lady, in Love with <i>Bellmour</i> ,		Mrs. <i>Mountfo</i>
<i>Lætitia</i> , Wife to <i>Fondlewife</i> ,		Mrs. <i>Barry</i> .
<i>Sylvia</i> , <i>Vainlove</i> 's forsaken Mistress,		Mrs. <i>Bowman</i>
<i>Lucy</i> , her Maid,		Mrs. <i>Leigh</i> .
<i>Betty</i> .		
Boy and Footmen.		

## SCENE, LONDON.

T H



THE  
OLD BATCHELOR.

---

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, *The Street.*

*Bellmour and Vainlove meeting.*

B E L L M O U R.



*Vainlove*, and abroad so early ! Good Mor-  
row ; I thought a Contemplative Lover  
could no more have parted with his Bed  
in a Morning, than he could have slept  
in't.

V A I N L O V E.

*Bellmour*, good Morrow --- Why truth on't is, these  
early Sallies are not usual to me ; but Business, as you see,

B 2

Sir

4 *The* OLD BATCHELOR.

Sir --- [*Shewing Letters.*] And Business must be follow'd,  
or be lost.

B E L L M O U R.

Business! --- And so must Time, my Friend, be close  
pursued, or lost. Business is the Rub of Life, perverts our  
Aim, casts off the Bias, and leaves us wide and short of  
the intended Mark.

V A I N L O V E.

Pleasure, I guess you mean.

B E L L M O U R.

Ay, what else has Meaning?

V A I N L O V E.

Oh the Wise will tell you ----

B E L L M O U R.

More than they believe ---- or understand.

V A I N L O V E.

How, how, *Ned*, a wise Man say more than he un-  
derstands?

B E L L M O U R.

Ay, ay, Wisdom's nothing but a pretending to know  
and believe more than we really do. You read of but one  
wise Man, and all that he knew was, that he knew no-  
thing. Come, come, leave Business to Idlers, and Wis-  
dom to Fools; they have need of 'em: Wit, be my Fa-  
culty; and Pleasure, my Occupation; and let Father Time  
shake his Glass. Let low and earthly Souls grovel 'till they  
have work'd themselves six Foot deep into a Grave ----  
Business is not my Element ---- I roll in a higher Orb,  
and dwell ----

V A I N L O V E.

In Castles i'th' Air of thy own building: That's thy  
Element, *Ned*---- Well, as high a Flier as you are, I have  
a Lure may make you stoop. [*Flings a Letter.*]

B E L L M O U R.

I marry, Sir, I have a Hawk's Eye at a Woman's  
Hand



*The* OLD BATCHELOR. 5

Hand ---- There's more Elegancy in the false Spelling of this Supercription [*Takes up the Letter.*] than in all *Cicero*

---- Let me see ---- How now! *Dear perfidious Vainlove.*

[*Reads.*

*VAINLOVE.*

Hold, hold, s'life that's the wrong.

*BELLMOUR.*

Nay let's see the Name (*Sylvia!*) How canst thou be ungrateful to that Creature? She's extremely pretty, and loves thee intirely ---- I have heard her breathe such Raptures about thee -----

*VAINLOVE.*

Ay, or any Body that she's about ----

*BELLMOUR.*

No faith *Frank* you wrong her; she has been just to you.

*VAINLOVE.*

That's pleasant, by my troth from thee, who hast had her.

*BELLMOUR.*

Never ---- her Affections: 'Tis true by Heav'n, she own'd it to my Face; and blushing like the Virgin Morn when it disclos'd the Cheat, which that trusty Bawd of Nature, Night, had hid, confess'd her Soul was true to you; tho' I by Treachery had stoll'n the Blifs ----

*VAINLOVE.*

So was true as *Turtle* ---- in Imagination, *Ned*, ha? Preach this Doctrine to Husbands, and the married Women will adore thee.

*BELLMOUR.*

Why faith I think it will do well enough ---- If the Husband be out of the way, for the Wife to shew her Fondness and Impatience of his Absence, by choosing a Lover as like him as she can, and what is unlike, she may help out with her own Fancy.

B 3

*VAIN*



6 *The* OLD BATCHELOR.

VAINLOVE.

But is it not an Abuse to the Lover to be made a Blind of ?

BELLMOUR.

As you say the Abuse is to the Lover, not the Husband : For 'tis an Argument of her great Zeal towards him, that she will enjoy him in Effigy.

VAINLOVE.

It must be a very superstitious Country, where such Zeal passes for true Devotion. I doubt it will be damn'd by all our Protestant Husbands for flat Idolatry ---- But if you can make Alderman *Fondlewife* of your Persuasion, this Letter will be needless.

BELLMOUR.

What, the old Banker with the handsom Wife ?

VAINLOVE.

Ay.

BELLMOUR.

Let me see, *Letitia* ! Oh 'tis a delicious Morsel. Dear *Frank*, thou art the truest Friend in the World.

VAINLOVE.

Ay, am I not ? To be continually starting of Hares for you to course. We were certainly cut out for one another ; for my Temper quits an Amour, just where thine takes it up ----- But read that, it is an Appointment for me, this Evening ; when *Fondlewife* will be gone out of Town, to meet the Master of a Ship, about the Return of a Venture which he's in danger of losing. Read, read.

BELLMOUR reads.

Hum, Hum ---- *Out of Town this Evening, and talks of sending for Mr. Spintext to keep me Company ; but I'll take care he shall not be at home. Good ! Spintext ! Oh, the Fanatic one-ey'd Parson !*

VAIN-

The OLD BATCHELOR. 7

VAINLOVE.

Ay.

BELLMOUR reads.

Hum, Hum ----- *That your Conversation will be much more agreeable, if you can counterfeit his Habit to blind the Servants.* Very good! Then I must be disguised ----- With all my Heart ----- It adds a Gusto to an Amour; gives it the greater resemblance of Theft; and among us lewd Mortals, the deeper the Sin the Sweeter. *Frank,* I'm amaz'd at thy Good-nature ---

VAINLOVE.

Faith I hate Love when 'tis forc'd upon a Man, as I do Wine --- And this Business is none of my seeking; I only hapned to be once or twice where *Latitia* was the handsomest Woman in Company, so consequently apply'd myself to her --- And it seems she has taken me at my Word --- Had you been there, or any Body, 'thad been the same.

BELLMOUR.

I wish I may succeed as the same.

VAINLOVE.

Never doubt it; for if the Spirit of Cuckoldom be once raised up in a Woman, the Devil can't lay it, till she has done't.

BELLMOUR.

Pr'ythee, what sort of Fellow is *Fondlewife*?

VAINLOVE.

A kind of Mongrel Zealot, sometimes very precise and peevish; but I have seen him pleasant enough in his way: Much addicted to Jealousy, but more to Fondness: So that as he is often jealous without a Cause, he's as often satisfied without Reason.

BELLMOUR.

A very even Temper, and fit for my Purpose. I must get your Man *Setter* to provide my Disguise.

B. 4

VAIN-

8 *The OLD BATCHELOR.*

*VAINLOVE.*

Ay, you may take him for good and all if you will, for you have made him fit for nobody else ---- Well----

*BELLMOUR.*

You're going to visit in return of *Sylvia's* Letter ---- Poor Rogue! Any Hour of the Day or Night will serve her ----- But do you know nothing of a new Rival there?

*VAINLOVE.*

Yes, *Heartwell*, that surly, old, pretended Woman-hater, thinks her Virtuous; that's one Reason why I fail her: I would have her fret herself out of Conceit with me, that she may entertain some Thoughts of him. I know he visits her ev'ry Day.

*BELLMOUR.*

Yet rails on still, and thinks his Love unknown to us; a little time will swell him so, he must be fore'd to give it birth; and the Discovery must needs be very pleasant from himself; to see what Pains he will take, and how he will strain to be deliver'd of a Secret, when he has miscarried of it already.

*VAINLOVE.*

Well, good Morrow, let's dine together; I'll meet at the old place.

*BELLMOUR.*

With all my Heart; it lies convenient for us to pay our Afternoon Services to our Mistresses. I find I am damnably in Love, I'm so uneasy for not having seen *Belinda* yesterday.

*VAINLOVE.*

But I saw my *Araminta*, yet am as impatient.

SCENE



S C E N E II.

B E L L M O U R *alone.*

B E L L M O U R.

W H Y what a Cormorant in Love am I! who, not contented with the Slavery of honourable Love in one Place, and the Pleasure of enjoying some half a score Mistresses of my own acquiring; must yet take *Rainbowe's* Business upon my Hands, because it lay too heavy upon his: So am not only forc'd to lie with other Mens Wives for 'em, but must also undertake the harder Task of obliging their Mistresses---I must take up, or I shall never hold out; Flesh and Blood cannot bear it always.



S C E N E III.

[*To him*] S H A R P E R.

S H A R P E R.

I'M sorry to see this, *Ned*: Once a Man comes to his Soliloquies I give him for gone.

B E L L M O U R.

*Sharper*, I'm glad to see thee.

S H A R P E R.

What, is *Belinda* cruel, that you are so thoughtful?

B E L L M O U R.

No, faith, not for that ---- But there's a Business of Consequence fall'n out to-day, that requires some Consideration.

B. 5.

S H A R P E R.

10 *The* O L D B A T C H E L O R .

*S H A R P E R .*

Pr'ythee what mighty Business of Consequence canst thou have ?

*B E L L M O U R .*

Why you must know, 'tis a piece of Work toward the finishing of an Alderman ; it seems I must put the last hand to it, and dub him Cuckold, that he may be of equal Dignity with the rest of his Brethren : So I must beg *Belinda's* Pardon, ----

*S H A R P E R .*

Faith e'en give her over for good-and-all ; you can have no hopes of getting her for a Mistress ; and she is too proud, too inconstant, too affected, and too witty, and too handsom for a Wife.

*B E L L M O U R .*

But she can't have too much Money ----- There's twelve thousand Pound, *Tom.* ---- 'Tis true she is excessively foppish and affected, but in my Conscience I believe the *Baggage* loves me : for she never speaks well of me herself, nor suffers any Body else to rail at me. Then, as I told you, there's twelve thousand Pound --- Hum--- Why faith upon second Thoughts, she does not appear to be so very affected neither ---- Give her her due, I think the *Woman's* a *Woman*, and that's all. As such I'm sure I shall like her ; for the Devil take me if I don't love all the Sex.

*S H A R P E R .*

And here comes one who swears as heartily he hates all the Sex.



S C E N E



The OLD BATCHELOR. II



S C E N E IV.

[To them] HEARTWELL.

BELLMOUR.

WHO, *Heartwell!* Ay, but he knows better things --- How now, *George*, where hast thou been snarling odious Truths, and entertaining Company, like a Physician, with Discourse of their Diseases and Infirmities? What fine Lady hast thou been putting out of Conceit with herself, and persuading that the Face she had been making all the Morning, was none of her own? for I know thou art as unmannerly and as unwelcome to a Woman, as a Looking-Glass after the Small-Pox.

HEARTWELL.

I confess I have not been sneering fulsome Lyes and nauseous Flattery, fawning upon a little tawdry Whore, that will fawn upon me again, and entertain any Puppy that comes, like a Tumbler, with the same Tricks over and over; for such I guess may have been your late Employment.

BELLMOUR.

Would thou hadst come a little sooner, *Vainlove* would have wrought thy Conversion, and been a Champion for the Cause.

HEARTWELL.

What, has he been here? that's one of Love's *April-Fools*, is always upon some Errand that's to no purpose, ever embarking in Adventures, yet never comes to Harbour.

SHARPER.

That's because he always sets out in foul Weather, loves  
to

12 *The* OLD BATCHELOR.

to buffet with the Winds, meet the Tide, and sail in the Teeth of Opposition.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

What, has he not dropt Anchor at *Araminta*?

*B E L L M O U R.*

Truth on't is she fits his Temper best, is a kind of a floating Island; sometimes seems in reach, then vanishes, and keeps him busied in the search.

*S H A R P E R.*

She had need have a good Share of Sense to manage so capricious a Lover.

*B E L L M O U R.*

Faith I don't know, he's of a Temper the most easy to himself in the World; he takes as much always of an Amour as he cares for, and quits it when it grows stale and unpleasant.

*S H A R P E R.*

An Argument of very little Passion, very good Understanding, and very ill Nature.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

And proves that *Vainlove* plays the Fool with Discretion.

*S H A R P E R.*

You *Bellmour* are bound in Gratitude to stickle for him; you with Pleasure reap that Fruit, which he takes pains to sow: he does the Drudgery in the Mine, and you stamp your Image on the Gold.

*B E L L M O U R.*

He's of another Opinion, and says I do the Drudgery in the Mine. Well, we have each our Share of Sport, and each that which he likes best; 'tis his Diversion to Set, 'tis mine to cover the Partridge.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

And it should be mine to let 'em go again.

*S H A R-*

*S H A R P E R.*

Not, till you had Mouth'd a little, *George*, I think that's all thou art fit for now.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

Good Mr. Young-Fellow, you're mistaken; as able as yourself, and as nimble too, tho' I may'nt have so much Mercury in my Limbs; 'tis true indeed, I don't force Appetite, but wait the natural Call of my Lust, and think it time enough to be lewd, after I have had the Temptation.

*B E L L M O U R.*

Time enough? ay, too soon, I should rather have expected, from a Person of your Gravity.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

Yet it is oftentimes too late with some of you young, termagant flashy Sinners---you have all the Guilt of the Intention, and none of the Pleasure of the Practice----- 'tis true you are so eager in pursuit of the Temptation, that you save the Devil the trouble of leading you into it: Nor is it out of Discretion, that you don't swallow that very Hook yourselves have baited, but you are cloy'd with the Preparative, and what you mean for a Whet, turns the Edge of your puny Stomachs. Your Love is like your Courage, which you shew for the first Year or two upon all Occasions; 'till in a little time, being disabled or disarmed, you abate of your Vigour; and that daring Blade which was so often drawn, is bound to the Peace for ever after.

*B E L L M O U R.*

Thou art an old Fornicator of a singular good Principle indeed! and art for encouraging Youth, that they may be as wicked as thou art at thy Years.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

I am for having every body be what they pretend to be; a Whoremaster be a Whoremaster; and not like *Vain-love,*



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*love*, kifs a Lap-Dog with Passion, when it would disgust him from the Lady's own Lips.

B E L L M O U R.

That only happens sometimes, where the Dog has the sweeter Breath, from the more cleanly conveyance. But *George*, you must not quarrel with little Galantries of this nature: Women are often won by 'em. Who would refuse to kifs a Lap-Dog, if it were preliminary to the Lips of his Lady?

S H A R P E R.

Or omit playing with her Fan, and cooling her if she were hot, when it might intitle him to the Office of warming her when she should be cold?

B E L L M O U R.

What is it to read a Play in a rainy Day? Though you should be now and then interrupted in a witty Scene, and she perhaps preserve her Laughter, 'till the Jest were over; even that may be borne with, considering the reward in prospect.

H E A R T W E L L.

I confess you that are Womens Asses bear greater Burdens: Are forced to undergo Dressing, Dancing, Singing, Sighing, Whining, Rhyming, Flattering, Lying, Grinning, Cringing, and the Drudgery of Loving to boot.

B E L L M O U R.

O Brute, the Drudgery of Loving!

H E A R T W E L L.

Ay, why to come to Love through all these Incumbrances, is like coming to an Estate over-charg'd with Debts; which by the time you have pay'd yields no further Profit than what the bare tillage and manuring of the Land will produce at the Expence of your own Sweat.

B E L L M O U R.

Pr'ythee how dost thou love?

S H A R -

*The* OLD BATCHELOR. 15

S H A R P E R.

He! he hates the Sex.

H E A R T W E L L.

So I hate Phyfic too —— yet I may love to take it for my Health.

B E L L M O U R.

Well come off, *George*, if at any time you should be taken straying:

S H A R P E R.

He has need of such an Excuse, considering the present state of his Body.

H E A R T W E L L.

How d'ye mean?

S H A R P E R.

Why, if whoring be purging (as you call it) then, I may say, Marriage is entering into a Course of Phyfic.

B E L L M O U R.

How, *George*, does the Wind blow there?

H E A R T W E L L.

It will as soon blow *North* and by *South*--Marry, quotha! I hope in Heaven I have a greater Portion of Grace, and I think I have baited too many of those Traps to be caught in one myself.

B E L L M O U R.

Who the Devil would have thee? unless 'twere an Oister-Woman, to propagate young Fry for *Billingsgate*—thy Talent will never recommend thee to any thing of better Quality.

H E A R T W E L L.

My Talent is chiefly that of speaking Truth, which I don't expect should ever recommend me to People of Quality — I thank Heav'n, I have very honestly purchas'd the Hatred of all the great Families in Town.

S H A R P E R.

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*S H A R P E R.*

And you in return of Spleen hate them: But could you hope to be receiv'd into the Alliance of a noble Family---

*H E A R T W E L L.*

No, I hope I shall never merit that Affliction-----to be punish'd with a Wife of Birth---be a Stag of the first Head, and bear my Horns aloft, like one of the Supporters of my Wife's Coat. 'Sdeath I would not be a Cuckold to e'er an illustrious Whore in *England*.

*B E L L M O U R.*

What, not to make your Family, Man! and provide for your Children ?

*S H A R P E R.*

For her Children, you mean.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

Ay there you have nick'd it---there's the Devil upon Devil---O the Pride and Joy of Heart 'twou'd be to me, to have my Son and Heir resemble such a Duke----to have a fleeing Coxcomb scoff and cry, Mr. your Son's mighty like his Grace, has just his Smile and Air of's Face. Then replies another---methinks he has more of the Marquis of such a Place, about his Nose and Eyes; though he has my Lord what-d'ye-calls Mouth to a tittle-----Then, I, to put it off as unconcern'd; come chuck the Infant under the Chin, force a Smile, and cry, Ay, the Boy takes after his Mother's Relations---when the Devil and she knows, 'tis a little Compound of the whole Body of Nobility.

*B E L L M O U R, S H A R P E R.*

Ha, ha, ha!

*B E L L M O U R.*

Well, but *George*, I have one Question to ask you---

*H E A R T W E L L.*

Pshaw, I have prattled away my Time---I hope you  
are

*The* OLD BATCHELOR. 17

are in no haste for an Answer----for I shan't stay now.

[*Looking on his Watch.*]

BELLMOUR.

Nay pr'ythee *George*-----

HEARTWELL.

No, besides my Business, I see a Fool coming this way.  
Adieu.



S C E N E V.

SHARPER, BELLMOUR.

BELLMOUR.

WHAT does he mean? Oh, 'tis Sir *Joseph Wittoll* with his Friend; but I see he has turn'd the Corner, and goes another Way.

SHARPER.

What in the Name of Wonder is it?

BELLMOUR.

Why, a Fool.

SHARPER.

'Tis a tawdry Outside.

BELLMOUR.

And a very beggarly Lining---yet he may be worth your Acquaintance---a little of thy Chymistry, *Tom*, may extract Gold from that Dirt.

SHARPER.

Say you so? 'faith I am as poor as a Chymist, and would be as industrious. But what was he that follow'd him? is not he a Dragon that watches those Golden Pip-pins?

BELLMOUR.

Hang him, no, he a Dragon! if he be, 'tis a very peaceful one, I can insure his Anger dormant; or should he

he seem to rouse, 'tis but well lashing him, and he will sleep like a Top.

*S H A R P E R.*

Ay, is he of that Kidney ?

*B E L L M O U R.*

Yet is ador'd by that Biggot Sir *Joseph Wittoll*, as the Image of Valour ? He calls him his Back, and indeed they are never asunder---yet last Night, I know not by what Mischance, the Knight was alone, and had fallen into the Hands of some Night-walkers, who I suppose would have pillaged him : But I chanc'd to come by, and rescued him : though I believe he was heartily frightned, for as soon as ever he was loose, he ran away without staying to see who had help'd him.

*S H A R P E R.*

Is that Bully of his in the Army ?

*B E L L M O U R.*

No, but is a Pretender, and wears the Habit of a Soldier ; which now-a-days as often clokes Cowardise, as a black Gown does Atheism---You must know he has been abroad----went purely to run away from a Campaign ; enrich'd himself with the Plunder of a few Oaths ---and here vents 'em against the General, who flighting Men of Merit, and preferring only those of Interest, has made him quit the Service.

*S H A R P E R.*

Wherein no doubt he magnifies his own Performance.

*B E L L M O U R.*

Speaks Miracles, is the Drum to his own Praise---the only implement of a Soldier he resembles, like that, being full of blustering Noise and Emptiness.----

*S H A R P E R.*

And like that, of no use but to be beaten.

*B E L L M O U R.*

Right ; but, then, the Comparison breaks, for he will take a drubbing with as little Noise as a Pulpit Cushion.

*S H A R P E R.*

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S H A R P E R.

His Name, and I have done?

B E L L M O U R.

Why that, to pass it current too, he has gilded with  
a Title; he is call'd, Captain *Bluffe*.

S H A R P E R.

Well, I'll endeavour his Acquaintance—you steer  
another Course, are bound

*For Love's fair Isle; I, for the golden Coast.  
May each succeed in what he wishes most.*

*End of the First Act.*



A C T





## A C T II. S C E N E I.

*Sir Joseph Wittoll, Sharper following.*

*S H A R P E R.*



URE that's he, and alone.

Sir *J O S E P H W I T T O L L.*

Um---ay this, this is the very damn'd Place; the inhuman Canibals, the bloody-minded Villains would have butcher'd me last Night: No doubt, they would have flea'd me alive, have sold my Skin, and devour'd, &c.

*S H A R P E R.*

How's this!

Sir *J O S E P H W I T T O L L.*

And it hadn't been for a civil Gentleman as came by and frightened 'em away——but agad I durst not stay to give him thanks.

*S H A R P E R.*

This must be *Bellmour* he means——ha! I have a Thought——

Sir *J O S E P H W I T T O L L.*

Zooks, would the Captain would come; the very Remembrance makes me quake; agad I shall never be reconciled to this Place heartily.

*S H A R P E R.*

'Tis but trying, and being where I am at worst. Now luck! ---- curs'd Fortune; this must be the Place, this damn'd unlucky Place——

Sir

*The* OLD BATCHELOR. 21

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Agad and so 'tis-----why here has been more Mis-  
chief done, I perceive.

S H A R P E R.

No, 'tis gone, 'tis lost ----- ten thousand Devils on  
that Chance which drew me hither ; ay here, just here,  
this Spot to me is Hell ; nothing to be found but the De-  
spair of what I've lost. [*Looking about as in Search.*]

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Poor Gentleman----by the Lord *Harry* I'll stay no  
longer, for I've found too —

S H A R P E R.

Ha ! who's that has found ? What have you found ?  
restore it quickly, or by----

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Not I, Sir, not I, as I've a Soul to be fav'd, I have  
found nothing but what has been to my loss, as I may  
say, and as you were saying, Sir.

S H A R P E R.

O your Servant, Sir, you are safe then it seems ; 'tis  
an ill Wind that blows no body good : Well, you may  
rejoice over my ill Fortune, since it paid the Price of your  
Ransom.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

I rejoice ! agad not I, Sir : I'm very sorry for your  
Loss, with all my Heart, Blood and Guts, Sir, and if  
you did but know me, you'd ne'er say I were so ill-natur'd.

S H A R P E R.

Know you ! why can you be so ungrateful, to forget  
me !

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL

O Lord ! forget him ! No, no, Sir, I don't forget you  
—because I never saw your Face before, agad. Ha, ha, ha.

S H A R P E R.

How !

[*Angrily.*  
Sir



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Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Stay, stay Sir, let me recollect---he's a damn'd angry Fellow---I believe I had better remember him, 'till I can get out of his Sight; but out o'fight out o'mind agad.

[*Aside.*

S H A R P E R.

Methought the Service I did you last Night, Sir, in preserving you from those Ruffians, might have taken better Root in your shallow Memory.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Gad's-Daggers-Belts-Blades and Scabbards, this is the very Gentleman! How shall I make him a Return suitable to the greatness of his Merit---I had a pretty thing to that purpose, if he han't frighted it out of my Memory. Hem! hem! Sir, I most submissively implore your Pardon for my Transgression of Ingratitude and Omission; having my intire Dependence, Sir, upon the Superfluity of your Goodness, which, like an Inundation will, I hope, totally immerge the recollection of my Error, and leave me floating in your Sight, upon the full blown Bladders of Repentance---by the help of which, I shall once more hope to swim into your Favour. [*Bows.*

S H A R P E R.

So-h, O Sir I am easily pacify'd, the Acknowledgement of a Gentleman-----

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Acknowledgement! Sir I am all over Acknowledgement, and will not stick to shew it in the greatest Extremity, by Night, or by Day, in Sicknes, or in Health, Winter, or Summer, all Seasons and Occasions shall testify the Reality and Gratitude of your super-abundant humble Servant Sir *Joseph Wittoll* Knight. Hem! hem!

S H A R P E R.

Sir *Joseph Wittoll*?

Sir

*The* OLD BATCHELOR. 23

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

The same Sir, of *Wittoll-Hall* in *Comitatu Bucks.*

SHARPER.

Is it possible! Then, I am happy, to have oblig'd the  
Mirrour of Knighthood and Pink of Courtesy in the Age ;  
let me embrace you.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

O Lord, Sir!

SHARPER.

My loss, I esteem as a Trifle repay'd with Interest, since  
it has purchas'd me the Friendship and Acquaintance of  
the Person in the World, whose Character I admire.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

You are only pleas'd to say so,----But pray if I may be  
so bold, what is that Loss you mention?

SHARPER.

O term it no longer so, Sir. In the Scuffle, last Night,  
I only dropt a Bill of a hundred Pound, which I confess, I  
came half despairing to recover ; but thanks to my bet-  
ter Fortune —

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

You have found it Sir then it seems, I profess I'm  
heartily glad —

SHARPER.

Sir your humble Servant ---- I don't question but you  
are ; that you have so cheap an Opportunity of expressing  
your Gratitude and Generosity. Since the paying so  
trivial a Sum, will wholly acquit you and doubly engage  
me.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

What a dickens does he mean by a trivial Sum? [*Afide*]  
But han't you found it, Sir!

SHARPER.

No otherwise I vow to Gad but in my Hopes in you,  
Sir.

Sir

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Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Humh.

*S H A R P E R.*

But that's sufficient---'Twere Injustice to doubt the Honour of Sir *Joseph Wittoll.*

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

O Lord, Sir.

*S H A R P E R.*

You are above (I'm sure) a Thought so low, to suffer me to lose what was ventur'd in your Service; nay 'twas in a Manner---paid down for your Deliverance; 'twas so much lent you---And you scorn, I'll say that for you—

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Nay I'll say that for myself (with your leave, Sir,) I do scorn a dirty Thing. But agad I'm a little out of Pocket at present.

*S H A R P E R.*

Pshaw you can't want a hundred Pound. Your Word is sufficient any where: 'Tis but borrowing so much Dirt, you have large Acres and can soon repay it---Money is but Dirt, Sir *Joseph*---Meer Dirt.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

But I profess, 'tis a Dirt I have washed my Hands of at present; I have laid it all out upon my Back.

*S H A R P E R.*

Are you so extravagant in Cloaths, Sir *Joseph*?

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Ha, ha, ha, a very good Jest I profess, ha, ha, ha, a very good Jest, and I did not know that I had said it, and that's a better Jest than t'other. 'Tis a sign you and I han't been long acquainted; you have lost a good Jest for want of knowing me---I only mean a Friend of mine whom I call my Back; he sticks as close to me, and follows me through all Dangers---he is indeed Back, Breast and Head-

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Headpiece as it were to me---agad he's a brave Fellow---  
Paugh, I am quite another thing, when I am with him :  
I don't fear the Devil (bless us) almost if he be by. Ah---  
had he been with me last Night---

S H A R P E R.

If he had, Sir, what then? he could have done no  
more, nor perhaps have suffer'd so much---had he a hun-  
dred Pound to lose? [Angrily.]

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

O Lord, Sir, by no means (but I might have sav'd a  
hundred Pound) I meant innocently, as I hope to be sav'd,  
Sir, (a damn'd hot Fellow) only as I was saying, I let  
him have all my ready Money to redeem his great Sword  
from Limbo---But, Sir, I have a Letter of Credit to  
Alderman *Fondlewife*, as far as two hundred Pound, and  
this Afternoon you shall see I am a Person, such a one as  
you would wish to have met with---

S H A R P E R.

That you are, I'll be sworn.  
Why that's great and like yourself.

[Aside.]



S C E N E II.

[To them] Captain BLUFFE.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

O Here a'comes---Ay my *Hector* of *Troy*, welcome  
my Bully, my Back; agad my Heart has gone  
apit pat for thee.

B L U F F E.

How now, my young Knight? Not for Fear, I hope?  
he that knows me must be a Stranger to Fear.

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Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

Nay agad I hate Fear ever since I had like to have dy'd of a Fright---But---

*BLUFFE.*

But ? Look you here Boy, here's your Antidote, here's your Jesuit's Powder for a shaking Fit---But who hast thou got with thee, is he of Mettle !

[*Laying his Hand upon his Sword.*

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

Ay, Bully, a devilish smart Fellow : 'a will fight like a Cock.

*BLUFFE.*

Say you so ? then I honour him---But has he been abroad ? for every Cock will fight upon his own Dunghil.

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

I don't know, but I'll present you---

*BLUFFE.*

I'll recommend myself---Sir, I honour you ; I understand you love fighting, I reverence a Man that loves fighting. Sir, I kiss your Hilts.

*SHARPER.*

Sir your Servant, but you are misinformed, for unless it be to serve my particular Friend, as Sir *Joseph* here, my Country, or my Religion, or in some very justifiable Cause, I'm not for it.

*BLUFFE.*

O Lord I beg your Pardon Sir, I find you are not of my Palate, you can't relish a Dish of Fighting without sweet Sauce. Now I think---fighting for fighting sake's sufficient Cause ; fighting, to me's Religion and the Laws.

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

Ah, well said my *Hero* ; was not that great, Sir ? by the Lord *Harry* he says true ; fighting, is Meat, Drink, and Cloth to him. But Back, this Gentleman is one of the best Friends I have in the World, and saved my Life last Night---You know I told you.

*BLUFFE.*



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BLUFFE.

Ay! Then I honour him again---Sir may I crave your Name?

SHARPER.

Ay, Sir, my Name's *Sharper*.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL

Pray Mr. *Sharper* embrace my Back ---- very well--- by the Lord *Harry*, Mr. *Sharper*, he's as brave a Fellow as *Cannibal*, are not you Bully-Back!

SHARPER.

*Hannibal* I believe you mean, Sir *Joseph*.

BLUFFE.

Undoubtedly he did Sir; faith *Hannibal* was a very pretty Fellow---but Sir *Joseph*, Comparisons are odious--- *Hannibal* was a very pretty Fellow in those Days, it must be granted---but alas Sir! were he alive now, he would be nothing, nothing in the Earth.

SHARPER.

How Sir! I make a doubt if there be at this Day a greater General breathing.

BLUFFE.

Oh excuse me, Sir; have you serv'd abroad, Sir?

SHARPER.

Not I really, Sir.

BLUFFE.

Oh, I thought so---Why then you can know nothing, Sir: I am afraid you scarce know the History of the late War in *Flanders*, with all its Particulars.

SHARPER.

Not I, Sir, no more than public Letters, or *Gazettes* tell us.

BLUFFE.

*Gazette*! Why there again now---Why, Sir, there are not three Words of Truth the Year round put into the *Gazette*---I'll tell you a strange thing now as to that---

C 2

You

28 *The OLD BATCHELOR.*

You must know, Sir, I was resident in *Flanders* the last Campaign, had a small Post there; but no matter for that---Perhaps, Sir, there was scarce any thing of moment done but an humble Servant of yours, that shall be nameless, was an Eye-witness of.--I won't say had the greatest share in't. Tho' I might say that too, since I name no Body you know---Well, Mr. *Sharper*, would you think it? In all this time---as I hope for a *Truncheon*---this rascally *Gazette*-writer never so much as once mention'd me---Not once, by the Wars---Took no more notice, than as if *Nol Bluffe* had not been in the Land of the Living.

*S H A R P E R.*

Strange!

Sir *J O S E P H W I T T O L L.*

Yet by the Lord *Harry* 'tis true Mr. *Sharper*, for I went every Day to Coffee-houses to read the *Gazette* myself.

*B L U F F E.*

Ay, ay, no matter---You see, Mr. *Sharper*, after all I am content to retire---Live a private Person---*Scipio* and others have done it.

*S H A R P E R.*

Impudent Rogue.

[*Aside.*

Sir *J O S E P H W I T T O L L.*

Ay, this damn'd Modesty of yours---Agad if he would put in for't he might be made General himself yet.

*B L U F F E.*

Oh fy, no Sir *Josepb* --You know I hate this.

Sir *J O S E P H W I T T O L L.*

Let me but tell Mr. *Sharper* a little, how you eat Fire once out of the Mouth of a Cannon---agad he did; those impenetrable Whiskers of his have confronted Flames---

*B L U F F E.*

Death, what do you mean, Sir *Josepb*?

Sir



*The OLD BATCHELOR.* 29

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Look you now, I tell you he's so modest he'll own nothing.

BLUFFE.

Pish, you have put me out, I have forgot what I was about. Pray hold your Tongue, and give me leave.

[Angrily.]

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

I am dumb.

BLUFFE.

This Sword I think I was telling you of, Mr. *Sharper* --- This Sword I'll maintain to be the best Divine, Anatomist, Lawyer or Casuist in *Europe*; it shall decide a Controversy, or split a Cause ---

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Nay, now I must speak; it will split a Hair, by the Lord *Harry*, I have seen it.

BLUFFE.

Zounds, Sir, it's a Lye, you have not seen it, nor shan't see it; Sir, I say you can't see; what d'ye say to that now?

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

I am blind.

BLUFFE.

Death, had any other Man interrupted me ---

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Good Mr. *Sharper* speak to him; I dare not look that way.

SHARPER.

Captain, Sir *Joseph's* penitent.

BLUFFE.

O I am calm Sir, calm as a discharged Culverin --- But 'twas indiscreet, when you know what will provoke me --- Nay, come Sir *Joseph*, you know my Heat's soon over.

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Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Well I am a Fool sometimes --- But I am sorry.

BLUFFE.

Enough.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Come, we'll go take a Glass to drown Animosities.  
Mr. *Sharper*, will you partake?

SHARPER.

I wait on you, Sir; nay pray Captain --- You are Sir  
*Joseph's* Back.



S C E N E III.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, BETTY *waiting in ARAMINTA's Apartment.*

BELINDA.

AH! Nay Dear---pr'ythee good, dear sweet Cousin  
no more, oh Gad, I swear you'd make one sick to  
hear you.

ARAMINTA.

Bless me! what have I said to move you thus?

BELINDA.

Oh you have raved, talked idly, and all in Commem-  
dation of that filthy, aukward, two-legg'd Creature, Man  
--- you don't know what you've said, your Fever has  
transported you.

ARAMINTA.

If Love be the Fever which you mean, kind Heav'n  
avert the Cure: Let me have Oil to feed that Flame, and  
never let it be extinct, 'till I myself am Ashes.

BELINDA.

There was a Whine!---O Gad I hate your horrid  
Fancy---

*The* O L D B A T C H E L O R. 31

Fancy--- This Love is the Devil, and sure to be in Love is to be possess'd---'Tis in the Head, the Heart, the Blood, the---All over --- O Gad you are quite spoil'd---I shall lothe the sight of Mankind for your sake.

A R A M I N T A.

Fy, this is gross Affectation---A little of *Bellmour's* Company would change the Scene.

B E L I N D A.

Filthy Fellow! I wonder, Cousin--

A R A M I N T A.

I wonder, Cousin, you should imagine I don't perceive you love him.

B E L I N D A.

Oh I love your hideous Fancy! Ha, ha, ha, love a Man!

A R A M I N T A.

Love a Man! yes, you would not love a Beast.

B E L I N D A.

Of all Beasts not an Afs---Which is so like your *Vain-love*---Lard I have seen an Afs look so Chagrin, Ha, ha, ha, (you must pardon me I can't help laughing) that an absolute Lover would have concluded the poor Creature to have had Darts, and Flames, and Altars, and all that in his Breast. *Araminta*, come I'll talk seriously to you now; could you but see with my Eyes, the buffoonery of one Scene of Address; a Lover, set out with all his Equipage and Appurtenances; O Gad! sure you would---But you play the Game, and consequently can't see the Miscarriages obvious to every Stander-by.

A R A M I N T A.

Yes, yes, I can see something near it when you and *Bellmour* meet. You don't know that you dreamt of *Bellmour* last Night, and call'd him aloud in your Sleep.

B E L I N D A.

Pish, I can't help dreaming of the Devil sometimes; would you from thence infer I love him?

C 4

A R A.

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*ARAMINTA.*

But that's not all ; you caught me in your Arms when you named him, and press'd me to your Bosom---Sure if I had not pinch'd you till you wak'd you had stified me with Kisses.

*BELINDA.*

O barbarous Asperion !

*ARAMINTA.*

No Asperion, Cousin, we are alone---Nay I can tell you more.

*BELINDA.*

I deny it all.

*ARAMINTA.*

What before you hear it ?

*BELINDA.*

My Denial is premeditated like your Malice---Lard, Cousin, you talk odly---Whatever the Matter is, O my Sol, I am afraid you'll follow evil Courses.

*ARAMINTA.*

Ha, ha, ha, this is pleasant.

*BELINDA.*

You may laugh, but ---

*ARAMINTA.*

Ha, ha, ha.

*BELINDA.*

You think the malicious Grin becomes you ---  
The Devil take *Bellmour*---Why do you tell me of him ?

*ARAMINTA.*

Oh is it come out---now you are angry, I am sure you love him. I tell nobody else, Cousin---I have not betray'd you yet.

*BELINDA.*

Pr'ythee tell it all the World, it's false.

*ARAMINTA.*

Come then, kifs and Friends.

*B E-*

BELINDA.

Piff.

ARAMINTA.

Pry'thee don't be so peevis.

BELINDA.

Pr'ythee don't be so impertinent. *Betty.*

ARAMINTA.

Ha, ha, ha.

BETTY.

Did your Ladyship call, Madam?

BELINDA.

Get my Hoods and Tippet, and bid the Footman call a Chair.

ARAMINTA.

I hope you are not going out in dudgeon, Cousin.



S C E N E IV.

[*To them*] FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN.

M Adam, there are——

BELINDA.

Is there a Chair?

FOOTMAN.

No, Madam, there are Mr. *Bellmour* and Mr. *Vainlove* to wait upon your Ladyship.

ARAMINTA.

Are they below?

FOOTMAN.

No, Madam, they sent before, to know if you were at home.

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BELINDA.

The Visit's to you, Cousin, I suppose I am at my Liberty.

ARAMINTA,

Be ready to shew 'em up.



S C E N E V.

[*To them.*] BETTY *with Hoods and Looking-Glass.*

I Can't tell Cousin, I believe we're equally concern'd: But if you continue your Humour, it won't be very entertaining --- (I know she'd fain be persuaded to stay.

[*Aside.*

BELINDA.

I shall oblige you, in leaving you to the full and free Enjoyment of that Conversation you admire---Let me see; hold, I look wretchedly to-day!

ARAMINTA.

Betty, why don't you help my Cousin?

[*Putting on her Hoods.*

BELINDA.

Hold off your Fists, and see that he gets a Chair with a high Roof, or a very low Seat---Stay, come back here you Mrs. Fidget---you are so ready to go to the Footman---Here take 'em all again, my Mind's chang'd, I won't go.



S C E N E





S C E N E VI.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA.

ARAMINTA.

SO, this I expected.--You won't oblige me then, Cousin, and let me have all the Company to myself?

BELINDA.

No; upon Deliberation, I have too much Charity to trust you to yourself. The Devil watches all Opportunities; and in this favourable Disposition of your Mind, Heav'n knows how far you may be tempted: I am tender of your Reputation.

ARAMINTA.

I am oblig'd to you---but who's malicious now, Belinda?

BELINDA.

Not I; witness my Heart, I stay out of pure Affection.

ARAMINTA.

In my Conscience I believe you.



S C E N E VII.

[To them] VAINLOVE, BELLMOUR, FOOTMAN.

BELLMOUR.

SO Fortune be prais'd! To find you both within, Ladies is —

ARA-

*ARAMINTA.*

No Miracle, I hope.

*BELLMOUR.*

Not o'your side, Madam, I confes---But my Tyrant there and I, are two Buckets that can never come together.

*BELINDA.*

Nor are ever like---Yet we often meet and clash.

*BELLMOUR.*How, never like! marry *Hymen* forbid. But this it is to run so extravagantly in Debt; I have laid out such a World of Love in your Service, that you think you can never be able to pay me all: So shun me for the same Reason that you would a Dun.*BELINDA.*

Ay, on my Conscience, and the most impertinent and troublesome of Duns----a Dun for Mony will be quiet; when he sees his Debtor has not wherewithal----But a Dun for Love is an eternal Torment that never rests---

*BELLMOUR.*

'Till he has created Love where there was none, and then gets it for his Pains. For Importunity in Love, like Importunity at Court, first creates its own Interest, and then pursues it for the Favour.

*ARAMINTA.*

Favours that are got by Impudence and Importunity, are like Discoveries from the Rack, when the afflicted Person for his ease, sometimes confesses Secrets his Heart knows nothing of.

*VAINLOVE.*

I should rather think Favours, so gain'd, to be due Rewards to indefatigable Devotion---For as Love is a Deity, he must be serv'd by Prayer.

*BELINDA.*

O Gad, would you would all pray to Love then, and let us all alone.

*VAIN-*

*VAIN LOVE.*

You are the Temples of Love, and 'tis through you our Devotion must be convey'd.

*ARAMINTA.*

Rather, poor silly Idols of your own making, which upon the least Displeasure you forsake, and set up new—Every Man, now, changes his Mistress and his Religion as his Humour varies, or his Interest.

*VAIN LOVE.*

O Madam——

*ARAMINTA.*

Nay come, I find we are growing Serious, and then we are in great Danger of being dull—— If my Music-Master be not gone, I'll entertain you with a new Song, which comes pretty near my own Opinion of Love and your Sex—Who's there? Is Mr. Gavot gone? [*Calls.*

*FOOTMAN.*

Only to the next Door, Madam; I'll call him.



S C E N E VIII.

*ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAIN LOVE, and  
BELLMOUR.*

*BELLMOUR.*

**W**H Y, you won't hear me with Patience.

*ARAMINTA.*

What's the Matter, Cousin?

*BELLMOUR.*

Nothing, Madam, only——

*BELINDA.*

Pr'ythee hold thy Tongue ---Lard, he has so pester'd me with Flames and Stuff---I think I shan't indure the sight of a Fire this Twelvemonth.

*BELL-*

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*BELLMOUR.*

Yet all can't melt that cruel frozen Heart.

*BELINDA.*

O Gad I hate your hideous Fancy---you said that once before----if you must talk impertinently, for Heaven's sake let it be with Variety ; don't come always, like the Devil, wrapt in Flames---I'll not hear a Sentence more, that begins with an, *I burn*----Or an, *I beseech you Madam.*

*BELLMOUR.*

But tell me how you would be ador'd-----I am very tractable.

*BELINDA.*

Then know, I would be adored in Silence.

*BELLMOUR.*

Humph, I thought so, that you might have all the Talk to yourself-----you had better let me speak ; for if my Thoughts fly to any Pitch, I shall make villanous Signs.

*BELINDA.*

What will you get by that ? to make such Signs as I won't understand.

*BELLMOUR.*

Ay, but if I'm Tongue-ty'd, I must have all my Actions free too----Quicken your Apprehension----and I gad let me tell you, my most prevailing Argument is express'd in dumb Shew.



S C E N E



S C E N E IX.

[To them] MUSIC-MASTER.

ARAMINTA.

O I am glad we shall have a Song to divert the Discourse—Pray oblige us with the last new Song.

S O N G.

I.

*Thus to a ripe, consenting Maid,  
Poor, old, repenting Delia said,  
Would you long preserve your Lover?  
Would you still his Goddess reign?  
Never let him all discover,  
Never let him much obtain.*

II.

*Men will admire, adore and die,  
While wishing at your Feet they lie:  
But admitting their Embraces,  
Wakes 'em from the Golden Dream;  
Nothing's new besides our Faces,  
Every Woman is the same.*

ARAMINTA.

So, how d'ye like the Song, Gentlemen?

BELLMOUR.

O very well perform'd---but I don't much admire the Words.

ARA-

*ARAMINTA.*

I expected it-----there's too much Truth in 'em : If Mr. *Garrot* will walk with us in the Garden, we'll have it once again---you may like it better at second hearing. You'll bring my Cousin.

*BELLMOUR.*

Faith Madam, I dare not speak to her, but I'll make Signs.

[*Addresses Belinda in dumb shew.*]

*BELINDA.*

Oh foh, your dumb Rhetoric is more ridiculous, than your talking Impertinence ; as an Ape is a much more troublesome Animal than a Parrot.

*ARAMINTA.*

Ay, Cousin, and 'tis a sign the Creatures mimic Nature well ; for there are few Men, but do more silly Things than they say.

*BELLMOUR.*

Well, I find my Apishness has paid the Ransom for my Speech, and set it at Liberty----tho' I confess, I could be well enough pleas'd to drive on a Love-Bargain, in that silent Manner----'twould save a Man a World of Lying and Swearing at the Year's end. Besides I have had a little Experience that brings to Mind -----

*When Wit and Reason both have fail'd to move ;  
Kind Looks and Actions (from Success) do prove,  
Ew'n Silence may be Eloquent in Love.*

}

*End of the Second Act.*

A C T





A C T III. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, *The Street.*

S Y L V I A and L U C Y.

S Y L V I A.

W I L L he not come then?

L U C Y.

Yes, yes, come, I warrant him, if you will go in and be ready to receive him.

S Y L V I A.

Why did you not tell me?—Whom

mean you?

L U C Y.

Whom you should mean, *Heartwell.*

S Y L V I A.

Senseless Creature, I meant my *Vainlove.*

L U C Y.

You may as soon hope to recover your own Maidenhead, as his Love. Therefore e'en set your Heart at rest, and in the Name of Opportunity mind your own Business. Strike *Heartwell* home, before the Bait's worn off the Hook. Age will come. He nibbled fairly yesterday, and no doubt will be eager enough to-day, to swallow the Temptation.

S Y L V I A.

Well, since there's no Remedy-----Yet tell me-----for I would know, though to the Anguish of my Soul; how did

42 *The* OLD BATCHELOR.

did he refuse? Tell me—— how did he receive my Letter, in Anger or in Scorn?

LUCY.

Neither; but what was ten times worse, with damn'd, senseless Indifference. By this Light I could have spit in his Face—— Receiv'd it! Why he receiv'd it, as I would one of your Lovers that should come empty-handed; as a Court Lord does his Mercer's Bill, or a begging Dedication:—— he receiv'd it, as if't had been a Letter from his Wife.

SYLVIA.

What, did he not read it?

LUCY.

Hum'd it over, gave you his Respects, and said, he would take time to peruse it— but then he was in haste.

SYLVIA.

Respects, and peruse it! He's gone, and *Araminta* has bewitch'd him from me—— O how the Name of Rival fires my Blood—— I could curse 'em both; eternal Jealousy attend her Love, and Disappointment meet his. Oh that I could Revenge the Torment he has caus'd—— methinks I feel the Woman strong within me, and Vengeance kindles in the room of Love.

LUCY.

I have that in my Head may make Mischief.

SYLVIA.

How, dear *Lucy*.

LUCY.

You know *Araminta's* dissembled Coyness has won, and keeps him hers——

SYLVIA.

Could we persuade him, that she loves another——

LUCY.

No, you're out; could we persuade him, that she dotes on him, himself—— Contrive a kind Letter as from her,

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her, 'twould disgust his Nicety ; and take away his Stomach.

*SYLVIA.*

Impossible, 'twill never take.

*LUCY.*

Trouble not your Head. Let me alone——I will inform myself of what pass between 'em to-day, and about it straight——Hold, I'm mistaken, or that's *Heartwell*, who stands talking at the Corner——'tis he——go get you in Madam, receive him pleasantly, dress up your Face in Innocence and Smiles ; and dissemble the very want of *Disimulation*——You know what will take him.

*SYLVIA.*

'Tis as hard to counterfeit Love, as it is to conceal it : but I'll do my weak Endeavour, though I fear I have not Art.

*LUCY.*

Hang Art, Madam, and trust to Nature for dissembling.

*Man was by Nature Woman's Cully made :  
We never are but by ourselves betray'd.*



S C E N E II.

HEARTWELL, VAINLOVE and BELLMOUR following.

*BELLMOUR.*

HIST, hist, is not that *Heartwell* going to *Sylvia* ?  
*VAINLOVE.*

He's talking to himself, I think ; pr'ythee let's try if we can hear him.

*HEART-*

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*HEARTWELL.*

Why whither in the Devil's Name am I a going now ?  
Hum.—let me think—Is not this *Sylvia's* House, the  
Cave of that Enchantress, and which consequently I ought  
to shun as I would Infection ? To enter here, is to put on  
the invenom'd Shirt, to run into the Embraces of a Fever,  
and in some raving Fit, be led to plunge myself into that  
more consuming Fire, a Woman's Arms. Ha ? well re-  
collected, I will recover my Reason, and be gone.

*BELLMOUR.*

Now *Venus* forbid !

*VAINLOVE.*

Hush——

*HEARTWELL.*

Well, why do you not move ? Feet do your Office—  
not one Inch ; no foregad I'm caught——There stands  
my North, and thither my Needle points——Now could  
I curse myself, yet cannot repent. O thou delicious, damn'd  
dear, destructive Woman ! 'Sdeath how the young Fel-  
lows will hoot me ! I shall be the Jest of the Town : Nay  
in two Days I expect to be Chronicled in Ditty, and sung  
in woeful Ballad, to the Tune of the superannuated Mai-  
den's Comfort, or the Batchelor's Fall ; and upon the third,  
I shall be hang'd in Effigy, pasted up for the exemplary  
Ornament of necessary Houses, and Coblers Stalls——  
Death, I can't think on't——I'll run into the Danger to  
lose the Apprehension.



S C E N E



S C E N E III.

BELLMOUR, VAINLOVE.

BELLMOUR.

A Very certain Remedy, *probatum est*—Ha, ha, ha !  
poor *George*, thou art i'th' right, thou hast sold thy-  
self to Laughter ; the ill-natur'd Town will find the Jest  
just where thou hast lost it. Ha, ha, how a'struggled, like  
an old Lawyer between two Fees.

VAINLOVE.

Or a young Wench between Pleasure and Reputation.

BELLMOUR.

Or as you did to-day, when half afraid you snatch'd a  
Kiss from *Araminta*.

VAINLOVE.

She has made a Quarrel on't.

BELLMOUR.

Pauh, Women are only angry at such Offences, to have  
the Pleasure of forgiving 'em.

VAINLOVE.

And I love to have the Pleasure of making my Peace—  
I should not esteem a Pardon if too easily won.

BELLMOUR.

Thou dost not know what thou would'st be at ; whe-  
ther thou would'st have her angry or pleas'd. Could'st  
thou be content to marry *Araminta*?

VAINLOVE.

Could you be content to go to Heav'n ?

BELLMOUR.

Hum, not immediately, in my Conscience not heartily ?  
I'd

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I'd do a little more good in my Generation first, in order to deserve it.

VAINLOVE.

Nor I to marry *Araminta* 'till I merit her.

BELLMOUR.

But how the Devil dost thou expect to get her if she never yield?

VAINLOVE.

That's true; but I would ———

BELLMOUR.

Marry her without her consent; thou'rt a Riddle beyond Woman ———



S C E N E IV.

[*To them*] SETTER.

TRUSTY *Setter*, what Tidings? How goes the Project?

SETTER.

As lewd Projects do, Sir, where the Devil prevents our Endeavours with Success.

BELLMOUR.

A good hearing, *Setter*.

VAINLOVE.

Well, I'll leave you with your Engineer.

BELLMOUR.

And hast thou provided Necessaries?

SETTER.

All, all, Sir; the large sanctified Hat, and the little precise Band, with a swinging long spiritual Cloke, to cover carnal Knavery ——— not forgetting the black Patch, which Tribulation *Spintext* wears, as I'm inform'd, upon  
one



*The* OLD BATCHELOR. 47

one Eye, as a penal Mourning for the ogling Offences of his Youth; and some say, with that Eye, he first discover'd the Frailty of his Wife.

B E L L M O U R.

Well, in this fanatic Father's Habit, will I confess *Letitia*.

S E T T E R.

Rather prepare her for Confession, Sir, by helping her to Sin.

B E L L M O U R.

Be at your Master's Lodging in the Evening, I shall use the Robes.



S C E N E V.

S E T T E R *alone*.

S E T T E R.

I Shall, Sir---I wonder to which of these two Gentlemen I do most properly appertain---the one uses me as his Attendant; the other (being the better acquainted with my Parts) employs me as a Pimp; why that's much the more honourable Employment --- by all means --- I follow one as my Master, t'other follows me as his Conductor.



S C E N E



## S C E N E VI.

[To him] LUCY.

THERE's the Hang-Dog his Man---I had a Power over him in the Reign of my Mistress; but he is too true a *Valet de Chambre* not to affect his Master's Faults; and consequently is revolted from his Allegiance.

S E T T E R.

Undoubtedly 'tis impossible to be a Pimp and not a Man of Parts: That is, without being politic, diligent, secret, wary, and so forth---And to all this valiant as *Hercules*---That is, passively valiant and actively obedient. Ah! *Setter* what a Treasure is here lost for want of being known!

LUCY.

Here's some Villany afoot, he's so thoughtful; may be I may discover something in my Mask---Worthy Sir, a Word with you. [Puts on her Mask.

S E T T E R.

Why, if I were known, I might come to be a great Man

LUCY.

Not to interrupt your Meditation

S E T T E R.

And I should not be the first that has procur'd his Greatness by Pimping.

LUCY.

Now Poverty and the Pox light upon thee, for a Contemplative Pimp.

S E T T E R.

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S E T T E R.

Ha! what art, who thus maliciously has awaken'd me, from my Dream of Glory? Speak thou vile Disturber---

L U C Y.

Of thy most vile Cogitations---thou poor, conceited Wretch, how wert thou valuing thyself, upon thy Master's Employment. For he's the Head Pimp to Mr. *Bellmour*.

S E T T E R.

Good Words, Damsel, or I shall-----But how dost thou know my Master or me?

L U C Y.

Yes, I know both Master and Man to be-----

S E T T E R.

To be Men perhaps; nay faith like enough; I often march in the Rear of my Master, and enter the Breaches which he has made.

L U C Y.

Ay, the Breach of Faith, which he has begun: Thou Traitor to thy lawful Princess.

S E T T E R.

Why how now! prythee who art? Lay by that worldly Face and produce your natural Vizard.

L U C Y.

No, Sirrah, I'll keep it on to abuse thee, and leave thee without Hopes of Revenge.

S E T T E R.

Oh! I begin to smoke ye; thou art some forsaken *Abigail*, we have dallied with heretofore----and art come to tickle thy Imagination with Remembrance of Iniquity past.

L U C Y.

No, thou pitiful Flatterer of thy Master's Imperfection; thou Maukin made up of the Shreds and Pairings of his superfluous Fopperies.

VOL. I.

D

S E T



*S E T T E R.*

Thou art thy Mistress's foul self, composed of her sullied Iniquities and Clothing.

*L U C Y.*

Hang thee----Beggar's Cur----Thy Master is but a Mumper in Love, lies canting at the Gate; but never dares presume to enter the House.

*S E T T E R.*

Thou art the Wicket to thy Mistress's Gate, to be opened for all Comers. In fine thou art the high Road to thy Mistress.

*L U C Y.*

Beast, filthy Toad, I can hold no longer, look and tremble. [Unmasks.]

*S E T T E R.*

How, Mrs. *Lucy!*

*L U C Y.*

I wonder thou hast the Impudence to look me in the Face.

*S E T T E R.*

Adsbud, who's in Fault, Mistress of mine? who flung the first Stone? who undervalued my Function? and who the Devil could know you by Instinct?

*L U C Y.*

You could know my Office by Instinct, and be hang'd, which you have slander'd most abominably. It vexes me not what you said of my Person; but that my innocent Calling should be expos'd and scandaliz'd---I cannot bear it.

*S E T T E R.*

Nay, faith *Lucy*, I'm sorry, I'll own myself to blame, though we were both in fault as to our Offices.—Come, I'll make you any Reparation.

*L U C Y.*

Swear.

*S E T*

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S E T T E R.

I do swear to the utmost of my Power.

L U C Y.

To be brief then ; what is the Reason your Master did not appear to-day according to the Summons I brought him ?

S E T T E R.

To answer you as briefly—He has a Cause to be tried in another Court.

L U C Y.

Come tell me in plain Terms, how forward he is with *Araminta*.

S E T T E R.

Too forward to be turn'd back---Though he's a little in Disgrace at present about a Kifs which he forced. You and I can kifs, *Lucy*, without all that.

L U C Y.

Stand off——He's a precious Jewel.

S E T T E R.

And therefore you'd have him to set in your Lady's Locket.

L U C Y.

Where is he now ?

S E T T E R.

He'll be in the *Piazza* presently.

L U C Y.

Remember to-day's Behaviour— Let me see you with a penitent Face.

S E T T E R.

What, no Token of Amity, *Lucy*? you and I don't use to part with dry Lips.

L U C Y.

No, no, avant——I'll not be flabber'd and kifs'd now——I'm not i'th' humour.

S E T T E R.

I'll not quit you so---I'll follow and put you into the Humour.



## S C E N E VII.

*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL, BLUFFE.

BLUFFE.

AND so out of your unwonted Generosity—  
*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

And good Nature, Back; I am good-natur'd, and I can't help it.

BLUFFE.

You have given him a Note upon *Fondlewife* for a hundred Pound.

*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Ay, ay, poor Fellow, he ventur'd fair for't.

BLUFFE.

You have disoblig'd me in it—for I have occasion for the Money, and if you would look me in the Face again and live, go, and force him to redeliver you the Note—go—and bring it me hither. I'll stay here for you.

*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

You may stay 'till the Day of Judgment then, by the Lord *Harry*, I know better things than to be run through the Guts for a hundred Pound—Why I gave that hundred Pound for being saved, and d'ye think, an there were no Danger, I'll be so ungrateful to take it from the Gentleman again?

BLUFFE.



*B L U F F E.*

Well, go to him from me—Tell him, I say, he must refund-- or Bilbo's the Word, and Slaughter will ensue ---if he refuse, tell him---but whisper that---tell him----  
---I'll pink his Soul---but whisper that softly to him.

Sir *J O S E P H W I T T O L L.*

So softly, that he shall never hear on't I warrant you--- why, what a Devil's the matter, Bully, are you mad? Or d'ye think I'm mad? Agad for my Part, I don't love to be the Messenger of ill News; 'tis an ungrateful Office-- So tell him yourself.

*B L U F F E.*

By these Hilts I believe he frightned you into this Composition : I believe you gave it him out of Fear, pure paltry Fear---confess.

Sir *J O S E P H W I T T O L L.*

No, no, hang't I was not afraid neither---tho' I confess he did in a manner snap me up---yet I can't say that it was altogether out of Fear, but partly to prevent Mischief--for he was a devilish choleric Fellow : And if my Choler had been up too, agad there would have been Mischief done, that's flat. And yet I believe, if you had been by I would have as soon have let him a had a hundred of my Teeth. Adsheart if he should come just now when I'm angry, I'd tell him — Mum.





S C E N E VIII.

[*To them*] BELLMOUR, SHARPER.

BELLMOUR.

THOU'rt a lucky Rogue; there's your Benefactor, you ought to return him Thanks now you've receiv'd the Favour.

SHARPER.

Sir *Joseph* — Your Note was accepted, and the Money paid at Sight: I'm come to return my Thanks—

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

They won't be accepted so readily as the Bill, Sir.

BELLMOUR.

I doubt the Knight repents, *Tom* — He looks like the Knight of the Sorrowful Face.

SHARPER.

This is a double Generosity — Do me a Kindness, and refuse my Thanks-- But I hope you are not offended that I offer'd 'em.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

May be I am Sir, may be I am not Sir; may be I am both, Sir; what then? I hope I may be offended, without any Offence to you, Sir.

SHARPER.

Hey-day! Captain, what's the Matter? you can tell.

BLUFFE.

Mr. *Sharper*, the Matter is plain — Sir *Joseph* has found out your Trick, and does not care to be put upon; being a Man of Honour.

SHARPER.

Trick, Sir?

Sir

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Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Ay Trick, Sir, and won't be put upon, Sir, being a Man of Honour, Sir, and so, Sir——

S H A R P E R.

Harkee, Sir *Joseph*, a Word with ye——in Consideration of some Favours lately received; I would not have you draw yourself into a Premunire, by trusting to that Sign of a Man there——That Pot-Gun charged with Wind.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

O Lord, O Lord, Captain, come justify yourself——I'll give him the Lye if you'll stand to it.

S H A R P E R.

Nay then I'll be beforehand with you, take that---  
Oafe. [Cuffs him.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Captain, will you see this? Won't you pink his Soul?

B L U F F E.

Husht, 'tis not so convenient now---I shall find a time.

S H A R P E R.

What do you mutter about a Time, Rascal---You were the Incendiary---There's to put you in mind of your Time---A Memorandum. [Kicks him.

B L U F F E.

Oh this is your time, Sir, you had best make use on't.

S H A R P E R.

I Gad and so I will: There's again for you.

[Kicks him.

B L U F F E.

You are obliging, Sir, but this is too public a Place to thank you in: But in your Ear, you are to be seen again.

S H A R P E R.

Ay thou inimitable Coward, and to be felt——as for Example.

[Kicks him.

B E L L

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BELLMOUR.

Ha, ha, ha, pr'ythee come away, 'tis scandalous to kick this Puppy, unless a Man were cold, and had no other way to get himself a heat.



S C E N E IX.

*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL, BLUFFE.

BLUFFE.

VERY well---very fine---But 'tis no matter--Is not this fine, *Sir Joseph*?

*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Indifferent, agad in my Opinion very indifferent---I'd rather go plain all my Life, than wear such Finery.

BLUFFE.

Death and Hell to be affronted thus! I'll die before I'll suffer it. [Draws.]

*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

O Lord, his Anger was not raised before---nay, dear Captain, don't be in Passion now he's gone---Put up, put up, dear Back, 'tis your *Sir Joseph* begs, come let me kiss thee; so, so, put up, put up.

BLUFFE.

By Heav'n 'tis not to be put up.

*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

What, Bully?

BLUFFE.

The Affront.

*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

No agad no more 'tis, for that's put up already; thy Sword I mean.

BLUFFE.

Well, *Sir Joseph*, at your Intreaty---But were not you, my Friend, abus'd, and cuff'd, and kickt?

[Putting up his Sword.]

Sir

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Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Ay, ay, so were you too; no matter, 'tis past.

BLUFFE.

By the immortal Thunder of great Guns, 'tis false---  
he sucks not vital Air, who dares affirm it to this Face.

[Looks big.]

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

To that Face I grant you Captain---No, no, I grant  
you---Not to that Face, by the Lord *Harry*---If you  
had put on your fighting Face before, you had done his  
Business---he durst as soon have kist you, as kickt you  
to your Face---But a Man can no more help what's done  
behind his Back, than what's said---Come we'll think  
no more of what's past.

BLUFFE.

I'll call a Council of War within to consider of my  
Revenge to come.



SCENE X. *Sylvia's Apartment.*

HEARTWELL, SYLVIA.

SONG.

*As Amoret and Thrysis lay  
Melting the Hours in gentle Play;  
Joining Faces, mingling Kisses,  
And exchanging harmless Blisses:  
He trembling cry'd with eager haste,  
O let me feed as well as taste;  
I die, if I'm not wholly blest.*

}  
}

*After the SONG, a Dance of Anticks.*

D 5

S R L.

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*S Y L V I A.*

Indeed it is very fine——I could look upon 'em all Day.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

Well, has this prevail'd for me, and will you look upon me ?

*S Y L V I A.*

If you could Sing and Dance so, I should love to look upon you too.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

Why 'twas I sung and danc'd ; I gave Music to the Voice, and Life to their Measures——Look you here *Sylvia*, [*Pulling out a Purse and chinking it.*] here are Songs and Dances, Poetry and Music——hark! how sweetly one Guinea rhymes to another —— and how they dance to the Music of their own Chink. This buys all the t'other--and this thou shalt have ; this, and all that I am worth for the Purchase of thy Love——Say, is it mine then, ha? Speak Siren——Oons why do I look on her! Yet I must——Speak dear Angel, Devil, Saint, Witch ; do not rack me with Suspence.

*S Y L V I A.*

Nay don't stare at me so——You make me blush--- I cannot look.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

Oh Manhood, where art thou! What am I come to? A Woman's Toy ; at these Years! Death, a bearded Baby for a Girl to dandle. O Dotage, Dotage! That ever that noble Passion, *Lust*, should ebb to this degree--- No reflux of vigorous Blood: But milky Love supplies the empty Channels ; and prompts me to the Softness of a Child——a meer Infant and would suck. Can you love me, *Sylvia*? speak.

*S Y L V I A.*

I dare not speak 'till I believe you, and indeed I'm afraid to believe you yet.

*H E A R T.*



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*HEARTWELL.*

Death, how her Innocence torments and pleases me !  
Lying, Child, is indeed the Art of Love ; and Men are  
generally Masters in it : But I'm so newly entered, you  
cannot distrust me of any Skill in the treacherous Myf-  
tery---Now by my Soul I cannot lye, though it were  
to serve a Friend or gain a Mistres.

*S Y L V I A.*

Must you lye then, if you say you love me ?

*HEARTWELL.*

No, no, dear Ignorance, thou beauteous Changeling---  
I tell thee I do love thee, and tell it for Truth, a naked  
Truth, which I am ashamed to discover.

*S Y L V I A.*

But Love, they say, is a tender thing, that will smooth  
Frowns, and make calm an angry Face ; will soften a  
rugged Temper, and make ill-humoured People good :  
You look ready to fright one, and talk as if your Passion  
were not Love, but Anger.

*HEARTWELL.*

'Tis both ; for I am angry with myself when I am  
pleased with you---And a Pox upon me for loving thee so  
well---yet I must on---'Tis a bearded Arrow, and will  
more easily be thrust forward than drawn back.

*S Y L V I A.*

Indeed if I were well assur'd you lov'd ; but how can  
I be well assur'd ?

*HEARTWELL.*

Take the Symptoms---and ask all the Tyrants of thy  
Sex, if their Fools are not known by this Party-coloured  
Livery---I am Melancholic, when thou art absent ; look  
like an Ass, when thou art present ; wake for thee, when  
I should sleep ; and even dream of thee, when I am awake ;  
sigh much, drink little, eat less, court Solitude, am grown  
very entertaining to myself, and (as I am informed) very  
troublesome

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troublesome to every body else. If this be not Love, it is Madness, and then it is pardonable---Nay yet a more certain Sign than all this ; I give thee my Mony.

*S Y L V I A.*

Ay, but that is no sign ; for they say, Gentlemen will give Mony to any naughty Woman to come to Bed to them---O *Gemini*, I hope you don't mean so---for I won't be a Whore.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

The more is the pity.

[*Aside.*

*S Y L V I A.*

Nay, if you would marry me, you should not come to bed to me---you have such a Beard, and would so prickle one. But do you intend to marry me ?

*H E A R T W E L L.*

That a Fool should ask such a malicious Question ! Death, I shall be drawn in, before I know where I am---However, I find I am pretty sure of her Consent, If I am put to it. [*Aside.*] Marry you ? no, no, I'll love you.

*S Y L V I A.*

Nay, but if you love me, you must marry me ; what don't I know my Father lov'd my Mother, and was married to her ?

*H E A R T W E L L.*

Ay, ay, in old Days People married where they lov'd ; but that Fashion is chang'd, Child.

*S Y L V I A.*

Never tell me that, I know it is not chang'd by myself ; for I love you, and would marry you.

*H E A R T W E L L.*

I'll have my Beard shav'd, it shan't hurt thee, and we'll go to Bed---

*S Y L V I A.*

No, no, I'm not such a Fool neither, but I can keep myself honest ;---Here I won't keep any thing that's yours,

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yours, I hate you now, [*Throws the Purse*] and I'll never see you again, 'cause you'd have me be naught. [*Going.*]

HEARTWELL.

Damn her let her go, and a good riddance ——— Yet so much Tenderness and Beauty—-and Honesty together is a Jewel—-Stay *Sylvia*—-but then to marry—-Why every Man plays the Fool once in his Life: But to marry is playing the Fool all one's Life long.

SYLVIA.

What did you call me for?

HEARTWELL.

I'll give thee all I have: And thou shalt live with me in every thing so like my Wife, the World shall believe it: Nay, thou shalt think so thyself—-Only let me not think so.

SYLVIA.

No, I'll die before I'll be your Whore—-as well as I love you.

HEARTWELL. [*Aside.*]

A Woman, and ignorant, may be honest, when 'tis out of Obstinacy and Contradiction ——— But 'Sdeath it is but a may-be, and upon scurvy Terms ——— Well, farewell then ——— if I can get out of Sight I may get the better of myself.

SYLVIA.

Well ——— good by. [*Turns and weeps.*]

HEARTWELL.

Ha! Nay come, we'll kiss at parting. [*Kisses her.*] By Heav'n her Kiss is sweeter than Liberty ——— I will marry thee ——— there thou hast done't. All my Resolves melted in that Kiss—-once more.

SYLVIA.

But when?

HEARTWELL.

I'm impatient 'till it be done; I will not give myself  
Liberty

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Liberty to think, lest I should cool——I will about  
a Licence straight——In the Evening expect me——  
One Kifs more to confirm me mad ; so.

*S Y L V I A.*

Ha, ha, ha, an old Fox trapt——



S C E N E XI.

[*To her*] L U C Y.

**B**LESS me! you frighted me, I thought he had  
been come again, and had heard me.

*L U C Y.*

Lord, Madam, I met your Lover in as much haste,  
as if he had been going for a Midwife.

*S Y L V I A.*

He's going for a Parson, Girl, the forerunner of a Mid-  
wife, some nine Months hence——Well, I find dissem-  
bling to our Sex is as natural as swimming to a *Negro* ;  
we may depend upon our Skill to save us at a Plunge,  
tho' 'till then we never make the Experiment——But  
how hast thou succeeded ?

*L U C Y.*

As you would wish——Since there is no reclaiming  
*Vainlove*. I have found out a Pique she has taken at him ;  
and have fram'd a Letter that makes her sue for Recon-  
ciliation first. I know that will do----walk in and I'll  
shew it you. Come, Madam, you're like to have a hap-  
py Time on't, both your Love and Anger satisfied!----  
All that can charm our Sex conspire to please you.

*That Woman sure enjoys a blessed Night,  
Whom Love and Vengeance both at once delight.*

*End of the Third Act.*

A C T



ACT IV. SCENE I.

SCENE, *The Street.*

BELLMOUR *in Fanatic Habit*, SETTER.

BELLMOUR.



IS pretty near the Hour [*Looking on his Watch*] Well and how *Setter*, hæ? does my Hypocrisy fit me, hæ? does it fit easy on me?

SETTER.

O. most religiously well, Sir.

BELLMOUR.

I wonder why all our young Fellows should glory in an Opinion of Atheism; when they may be so much more conveniently lewd under the Coverlet of Religion.

SETTER.

'Sbud, Sir, away quickly, there's *Fondlewife* just turn'd the Corner, and's coming this way.

BELLMOUR.

Gads fo, there he is, he must not see me.



SCENE





S C E N E II.

FONDLEWIFE, BARNABY.

FONDLEWIFE.

I Say, I will tarry at Home.

BARNABY.

But, Sir.

FONDLEWIFE.

Good lack ! I profess the Spirit of Contradiction hath possess'd the Lad--I say I will tarry at home---*Varlet.*

BARNABY.

I have done, Sir, then farewell 500 Pound.

FONDLEWIFE.

Ha, how's that? Stay, stay ; did you leave Word say you with his Wife? With *Comfort* herself?

BARNABY.

I did ; and *Comfort* will send *Tribulation* hither as soon as ever he comes home---I could have brought young *Mr. Prig*, to have kept my Mistress Company in the mean time : But you say---

FONDLEWIFE.

How, how, say *Varlet!* I say let him not come near my Doors. I say, he is a wanton young *Levite*, and pampereth himself up with Dainties, that he may look lovely in the Eyes of Women---Sincerely I am afraid he hath already defiled the Tabernacle of our Sister *Comfort* ; while her good Husband is deluded by his godly Appearance--I say, that even Lust doth sparkle in his Eyes, and glow upon his Cheeks, and that I would as soon trust my Wife with a Lord's high-fed Chaplain.

BARNABY.



BARNABY.

Sir, the Hour draws nigh ——— and nothing will be done there 'till you come.

FONDLEWIFE.

And nothing can be done here 'till I go---So that I'll tarry, d'ye see.

BARNABY.

And run the Hazard to lose your Affair, Sir!

FONDLEWIFE.

Good lack, good lack — I profess it is a very sufficient Vexation, for a Man to have a handsom Wife.

BARNABY.

Never, Sir, but when the Man is an insufficient Husband. 'Tis then indeed, like the Vanity of taking a fine House, and yet be forced to let Lodgings, to help pay the Rent.

FONDLEWIFE.

I profess a very apt Comparison, *Varlet*. Go and bid my Cocky come out to me. I will give her some Instructions, I will reason with her before I go.



SCENE III.

FONDLEWIFE *alone*.

AND in the mean time, I will reason with myself —  
Tell me *Isaac*, why art thee jealous? Why art thee distrustful of the Wife of thy Bosom? — Because she is young and vigorous, and I am old and impotent —  
Then why didst thee marry, *Isaac*? — Because she was beautiful and tempting, and because I was obstinate and doting ;

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doting; so that my Inclination was (and is still) greater than my Power——And will not that which tempted thee, also tempt others, who will tempt her, *Isaac*?—— I fear it much — But does not thy Wife love thee, nay dote upon thee?——Yes-----Why then?-----Ay, but to say truth, she's fonder of me, than she has reason to be; and in the way of Trade, we still suspect the smoothest Dealers of the deepest Designs——And that she has some Designs deeper than thou canst reach, th'hast experimented *Isaac*?—— But Mum.



S C E N E IV.

FONDLEWIFE, LÆTITIA.

LÆTITIA.

I Hope my dearest Jewel is not going to leave me—— are you, *Nykin*!

FONDLEWIFE.

Wife—— Have you throughly consider'd how detestable, how hainous, and how crying a Sin, the Sin of Adultery is? have you weighed it, I say? For it is a very weighty Sin; and although it may lie heavy upon thee, yet thy Husband must also bear his Part? For thy Iniquity will fall upon his Head:

LÆTITIA.

Bless me, what means, my Dear!

FONDLEWIFE. *Afide.*

I profess, she has an alluring Eye; I am doubtful, whether I shall trust her, even with *Tribulation* himself—— Speak, I say, have you consider'd, what it is to cuckold your Husband?

LÆ.

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LÆTITIA. *Afide.*

I am amazed : Sure he has discover'd nothing---Who has wrong'd me to my Dearest ? I hope my Jewel does not think that ever I had any such thing in my Head, or ever will have.

FONDLEWIFE.

No, no, I tell you I shall have it in my Head—

LÆTITIA. *Afide.*

I know not what to think. But I am resolv'd to find the meaning of it—Unkind Dear ! Was it for this you sent to call me ; is it not Affliction enough that you are to leave me, but you must study to increase it by unjust Suspicions ? [*Crying*] Well—Well—you know my Fondness, and you love to Tyrannize—Go on cruel Man, do, Triumph over my poor Heart, while it holds ; which cannot be long, with this Usage of yours—But that's what you want—Well, You will have your Ends soon—You will---You will—Yes it will break to oblige you.

[*Sighs.*]

FONDLEWIFE.

Verily I fear I have carried the Jest too far—Nay, look you now if she does not weep---'tis the fondest Fool—Nay, Cocky, Cocky, nay, dear Cocky, don't cry, I was but in Jest, I was not ifeck.

LÆTITIA. *Afide.*

Oh then all's safe. I was terribly frighted—My Affliction is always your Jest, barbarous Man ! Oh that I should love to this Degree ! yet—

FONDLEWIFE.

Nay, Cocky.

LÆTITIA.

No, no, you are weary of me, that's it—that's all, you would get another Wife—another fond Fool, to break her Heart—well, be as cruel as you can to me, I'll pray for you ; and when I am dead with Grief, may you  
have

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have one that will love you as well as I have done : I shall be contented to lie at Peace in my cold Grave — since it will please you. [Sighs.

FONDLEWIFE.

Good lack, good lack, she would melt a Heart of Oak — I profess I can hold no longer — Nay dear Cocky — Ifeck you'll break my Heart — Ifeck you will — See you have made me weep — made poor *Nykin* weep — Nay come kifs, bus poor *Nykin* — and I won't leave thee — I'll lose all first.

LÆTITIA. *Afide.*

How! Heav'n forbid! that will be carrying the jest too far indeed.

FONDLEWIFE.

Won't you kifs *Nykin*?

LÆTITIA.

Go naughty *Nykin*, you don't love me.

FONDLEWIFE.

Kifs, kifs, ifeck I do.

LÆTITIA.

No you don't.

[*She kisses him.*

FONDLEWIFE.

What not love Cocky!

LÆTITIA.

No — h.

[*Sighs.*

FONDLEWIFE.

I profess, I do love thee better than 500 Pound — and so thou shalt say, for I'll leave it to stay with thee.

LÆTITIA.

No you shan't neglect your Business for me — No indeed you sant *Nykin* — If you don't go, I'll think you been dealous of me still.

FONDLEWIFE.

He, he, he, wilt thou poor Fool? Then I will go, I won't be dealous — Poor Cocky, kifs *Nykin*, kifs *Nykin*,  
ee,

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ee, ee, ee — Here will be the good Man anon, to talk to Cocky and teach her how a Wife ought to behave herself.

LÆTITIA. *Afide.*

I hope to have one that will shew me how a Husband ought to behave himself — I shall be glad to learn, to please my Jewel. [Kiss.

FONDLEWIFE.

That's my good Dear — Come kiss *Nykin* once more, and then get you in — So — Get you in, get you in. By, by.

LÆTITIA.

By *Nykin*.

FONDLEWIFE.

By Cocky.

LÆTITIA.

By *Nykin*.

FONDLEWIFE.

By Cocky, by, by.



S C E N E V.

VAINLOVE, SHARPER.

SHARPER.

HOW! *Araminta* lost!

VAINLOVE.

To confirm what I have said, read this —

[Gives a Letter.

SHARPER, reads.

Hum, hum — And what then appear'd a Fault, upon Reflection seems only an effect of a too powerful Passion. I'm afraid I give too great a Proof of my own at this time. — I am  
in



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*in Disorder for what I have written. But something, I know not what, forced me. I only beg a favourable Censure of this and your*      Araminta.

*S H A R P E R.*

Lost! Pray Heav'n thou hast not lost thy Wits. Here, here, she's thy own, Man, sign'd and seal'd too — To her, Man—a delicious Melon pure and consenting ripe, and only waits thy cutting up—She has been breeding Love to thee all this while, and just now she's deliver'd of it.

*V A I N L O V E.*

'Tis an untimely Fruit, and she has miscarried of her Love.

*S H A R P E R.*

Never leave this damn'd, ill-natur'd Whimsy, *Frank!* Thou hast a sickly peevish Appetite; only chew Love and cannot digest it.

*V A I N L O V E.*

Yes, when I feed myself — But I hate to be cramm'd — By Heav'n there's not a Woman, will give a Man the Pleasure of a Chase: My Sport is always balkt or cut short — I stumble over the Game I would pursue — 'Tis dull and unnatural to have a Hare run full in the Hound's Mouth; and would distaste the keenest Hunter — I would have overtaken, not have met my Game.

*S H A R P E R.*

However I hope you don't mean to forsake it; that will be but a kind of Mungril Cur's Trick. Well, are you for the Mall?

*V A I N L O V E:*

No, she will be there this Evening — Yes, I will go too — and she shall see her Error in —

*S H A R P E R.*

In her Choice I gad — But thou canst not be so great a Brute as to slight her.

*V A I N.*



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VAIN LOVE.

I should disappoint her if I did not—By her Management I should think she expects it.

*All Naturally fly what does pursue:  
'Tis fit Men should be coy, when Women wooe.*



S C E N E VI.

*A Room in Fondlewife's House.*

A SERVANT introducing BELLMOUR in *Fanatic-Habit*,  
*with a Patch upon one Eye, and a Book in his Hand.*

S E R V A N T.

HERE's a Chair, Sir, if you please to repose yourself. My Mistress is coming, Sir.

B E L L M O U R.

Secure in my Disguise, I have out-fac'd Suspicion, and even dar'd Discovery——This Cloke my Sanctity, and trusty Scarron's Novels my Prayer-Book——Methinks I am the very Picture of *Montufar* in the *Hypocrites*——Oh! she comes.



SCENE



S C E N E VII.

B E L L M O U R, L Æ T I T I A.

B E L L M O U R.

**S**o breaks Aurora through the Veil of Night,  
Thus fly the Clouds, divided by her Light,  
And ev'ry Eye receives a new-born Sight.

[Throwing off his Cloke, Patch, &c.  
L Æ T I T I A.

Thus strew'd with Blushes, like---Ah! Heav'n defend  
me! Who's this? [Discovering him, starts.

B E L L M O U R.

Your Lover.

L Æ T I T I A.

Vainlove's Friend! I know his Face, and he has be-  
tray'd me to him. [Aside.

B E L L M O U R.

You're surpris'd. Did you not expect a Lover, Ma-  
dam? those Eyes shone kindly on my first Appearance,  
tho' now they are o'er-cast.

L Æ T I T I A.

I may well be surpris'd at your Person and Impudence;  
they are both new to me---You are not what your first  
Appearance promised: The Piety of your Habit was  
welcome but not the Hypocrisy.

B E L L M O U R.

Rather the Hypocrisy was welcome, but not the Hy-  
pocrite.

L Æ T I T I A.

Who are you, Sir? You have mistaken the House sure.

B E L L-

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BELLMOUR.

I have Directions in my Pocket, which agree with every thing but your Unkindness. [*Pulls out the Letter.*

LÆTITIA.

My Letter! Base *Vainlove*! Then 'tis too late to dissemble. [*Aside.*] 'Tis plain then you have mistaken the Person. [*Going.*

BELLMOUR.

If we part so I'm mistaken — Hold, hold, Madam--- I confess I have run into an Error — I beg your Pardon a thousand times---What an eternal Blockhead am I! Can you forgive me the Disorder I have put you into--- But it is a Mistake which any Body might have made.

LÆTITIA.

What can this mean! 'Tis impossible he should be mistaken after all this — A handsom Fellow, if he had not surpris'd me: Methinks, now I look on him again, I would not have him mistaken. [*Aside.*] We are all liable to Mistakes, Sir: If you own it to be so, there needs no farther Apology.

BELLMOUR.

Nay 'Faith, Madam, 'tis a pleasant one; and worth your hearing. Expecting a Friend, last Night, at his Lodgings, 'till 'twas late; my Intimacy with him gave me the Freedom of his Bed: He not coming home all night, a Letter was deliver'd to me by a Servant, in the Morning: Upon the perusal I found the Contents so charming, that I could think of nothing all Day, but putting 'em in Practice — 'till just now, (the first time I ever look'd upon the Supercription) I am the most surpris'd in the World to find it directed to Mr. *Vainlove*. Gad, Madam, I ask you a Million of Pardons, and will make you any Satisfaction.

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LÆTITIA

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*LÆTITIA.*

I am discover'd--- And either *Vainlove* is not guilty, or he has handfomly excus'd him. [*Aside.*

*BELLMOUR.*

You appear concern'd, Madam.

*LÆTITIA.*

I hope you are a Gentleman ;—— and since you are privy to a weak Woman's Failing, won't turn it to the Prejudice of her Reputation. You look as if you had more Honour——

*BELLMOUR.*

And more Love ; or my Face is a false Witness, and deserves to be pillory'd—— No, by Heav'n, I swear---

*LÆTITIA.*

Nay, don't swear if you wou'd have me believe you ; but promise——

*BELLMOUR.*

Well, I promise—— A Promise is so cold—— Give me leave to swear —— by those Eyes ; those killing Eyes ; by those healing Lips--- Oh ! press the soft Charm close to mine,—— and seal 'em up for ever.

*LÆTITIA.*

Upon that Condition.

[*He kisses her.*

*BELLMOUR.*

Eternity was in that Moment—— One more, upon any Condition.

*LÆTITIA.*

Nay now—— I never saw any thing so agreeably impudent. [*Aside.*] Won't you censure me for this, now ? —— but 'tis to buy your Silence. [*Kiss.*] Oh, but what am I doing !

*BELLMOUR.*

Doing ! No Tongue can express it---not thy own ; nor any thing, but thy Lips. I am faint with Excess of Blifs :--- Oh, for Love-sake, lead me any whither, where

where I may lie down ; quickly, for I'm afraid I shall have a Fit.

LÆTITIA.

Bless me ! What Fit ?

BELLMOUR.

Oh, a Convulsion---I feel the Symptoms.

LÆTITIA.

Does it hold you long ? I'm afraid to carry you into my Chamber.

BELLMOUR.

Oh, no : Let me lie down upon the Bed;---the Fit will be soon over.



S C E N E VIII.

SCENE St. James's Park.

ARAMINTA and BELINDA meeting.

BELINDA.

LARD, my Dear : I am glad I have met you---I have been at the *Exchange* since, and am so tir'd---

ARAMINTA.

Why, what's the Matter ?

BELINDA.

Oh the most inhumane, barbarous Hackney-Coach ! I am jolted to a Jolly---Am I not horridly touz'd ?

[Pulls out a Pocket Glass.

ARAMINTA.

Your Head's a little out of order.

BELINDA.

A little ! O frightful ! What a furious Phyz I have ! O most rueful ! Ha, ha, ha : O Gad, I hope no body will

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come this Way, 'till I have put myself a little in repair  
 ---Ah! my Dear--I have seen such unhewn Creatures  
 since--Ha, ha, ha, I can't for my Soul help thinking  
 that I look just like one of 'em---Good Dear, pin this,  
 and I'll tell you ----- Very well-----So, thank  
 you my Dear-----But as I was telling you-----Pish,  
 this is the untoward't Lock---So, as I was telling you---  
 How d'ye like me now? Hideous, ha? Frightful still?  
 Or how?

*ARAMINTA.*

No, no; you're very well as can be.

*BELINDA.*

And so-----But where did I leave off, my Dear? I  
 was telling you-----

*ARAMINTA.*

You were about to tell me something, Child---but you  
 left off before you began.

*BELINDA.*

Oh; a most comical Sight: A Country Squire, with  
 the Equipage of a Wife and two Daughters, came to  
 Mrs. *Snipwell's* Shop while I was there--But, O Gad!  
 Two such unlick'd Cubs!

*ARAMINTA.*

I warrant, plump, cherry-cheek'd Country Girls.

*BELINDA.*

Ay, O my Conscience, fat as Barn-Door Fowl: But so  
 bedeck'd, you would have taken 'em for *Friezland* Hens,  
 with their Feathers growing the wrong way-----O such  
 Out-landish Creatures! Such *Tramontanae*, and Foreigners  
 to the Fashion, or any thing in Practice! I had not Pa-  
 tience to behold-----I undertook the modelling of one of  
 their Fronts, the more modern Structure-----

*ARAMINTA.*

Bless me, Cousin: why would you affront any Body so?  
 They might be Gentlewomen of a very good Family--

*BELIN-*



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BELINDA.

Of a very ancient one, I dare swear, by their Dress  
---Affront! Pshaw, how you're mistaken! The poor  
Creature, I warrant, was as full of Curtseys, as if I had  
been her Godmother: The Truth on't is, I did endeavour  
to make her look like a Christian---and she was sensu-  
ble of it; for she thank'd me, and gave me two Apples  
piping hot, out of an Under-Petticoat Pocket--Ha, ha,  
ha: And t'other did so stare and gape---I fancied  
her like the Front of her Father's Hall; her Eyes were  
the two Jut-Windows, and her Mouth the great Door,  
most hospitably kept open, for the Entertainment of tra-  
velling Flies.

ARAMINTA.

So then; you have been diverted. What did they  
buy?

BELINDA.

Why, the Father bought a Powder-Horn, and an Al-  
manac, and a Comb-Case; the Mother a great Fruz-  
Tower, and a fat Amber-Necklace; the Daughters only  
tore two Pair of Kid-leather Gloves, with trying 'em on  
---Oh Gad, here comes the Fool that din'd at my Lady  
*Freelove's* t'other Day.



S C E N E IX.

[*To them*] Sir JOSEPH and BLUFFE.

ARAMINTA.

MAY be he may not know us again.

BELINDA.

We'll put on our Masks to secure his Ignorance?

[*They put on their Masks.*]

E 3

Sir

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Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Nay, Gad, I'll pick up; I'm resolv'd to make a Night on't---I'll go to Alderman *Fondlewife* by and by, and get 50 Pieces more from him. Adflidikins, *Bully*, we'll wallow in Wine and Women. Why, this same *Madera-Wine* has made me as light as a Grasshopper—Hift, hift, *Bully*, dost thou see those Tearers? [*Sings*] *Look you what here is—Look you what here is—Toll—loll—dera—toll—loll—*A Gad, t'other Glas of *Madera*, and I durst have attack'd 'em in my own proper Person, without your help.

*BLUFFE.*

Come on then, Knight—But d'ye know what to say to 'em?

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Say: Pooch, Pox, I've enough to say—never fear it ---that is, if I can but think on't: Truth is, I have but a treacherous Memory.

*BELINDA.*

O frightful! Cousin, What shall we do? These things come towards us.

*ARAMINTA.*

No matter—I see *Vainlove* coming this Way—and, to confess my Failing, I am willing to give him an Opportunity of making his Peace with me—and to rid me of these Coxcombs, when I seem oppress'd with 'em, will be a fair one.

*BLUFFE.*

Ladies, by these Hilts you are well met:

*ARAMINTA.*

We are afraid not.

*BLUFFE.*

What says my pretty little Knapfack Carrier? [*To Belin.*

*BELINDA.*

O monstrous filthy Fellow! Good slovenly Captain  
*Huffe,*

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*Huffe, Bluffe*, (what is your hideous Name?) be gone :  
You stink of Brandy and Tobacco, most Soldier-like.  
Foh. [Spits.]

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Now am I flap-dash down in the Mouth, and have not  
one Word to say ! [Aside.]

ARAMINTA.

I hope my Fool has not Confidence enough to be trou-  
blesome. [Aside.]

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Hem! Pray, Madam, which way's the Wind?

ARAMINTA.

A pithy Question——Have you sent your Wits for  
a Venture, Sir, that you enquire?

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Nay, now I'm in——I can prattle like a Magpie.  
[Aside.]



S C E N E X.

[To them] SHARPER and VAINLOVE at some distance.

BELINDA.

DEAR *Araminta*, I'm tir'd.

ARAMINTA.

'Tis but pulling off our Masks, and obliging *Vainlove*  
to know us. I'll be rid of my Fool by fair Means—  
Well, Sir *Joseph*, you shall see my Face——but, be  
gone immediately—I see one that will be jealous, to find  
me in Discourse with you---Be discreet----No Reply ;  
but away. [Unmasks.]

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Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

The great Fortune, that dined at my Lady *Freelove's*!  
Sir *Joseph*, thou art a made Man. Aged, I'm in Love  
up to the Ears. But I'll be discreet, and hush. [*Aside.*

*BLUFFE.*

Nay, by the World, I'll see your Face.

*BELINDA.*

You shall.

[*Unmasks.*

*SHARPER.*

Ladies, your humble Servant---we were afraid, you  
would not have given us leave to know you.

*ARAMINTA.*

We thought to have been private---But we find Fools  
have the same Advantage over a Face in a Mask, that a  
Coward has, while the Sword is in the Scabbard---So  
were forced to draw in our own Defence.

*BLUFFE.*

My Blood rises at that Fellow: I can't stay where he is;  
and I must not draw in the Park. [*To Sir Joseph.*

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

I wish I durst stay to let her know my Lodging.



S C E N E XI.

*ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, SHARPER.*

*SHARPER.*

**T**HERE is in true Beauty, as in Courage, somewhat  
which narrow Souls cannot dare to admire---And  
see, the Owls are fled, as at the break of Day.

*BELINDA.*

Very courtly---I believe, Mr. *Vainlove* has not rubb'd  
his Eyes since break of Day neither, he looks as if he  
durst

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durst not approach--Nay, come Cousin, be Friends with him--I swear he looks so very simply, ha, ha, ha,--- Well, a Lover in the State of Separation from his Mistress is like a Body without a Soul. Mr. *Vainlove*, shall I be bound for your good Behaviour for the future?

*VAINLOVE.*

Now must I pretend Ignorance equal to hers, of what she knows as well as I. [*Aside.*] Men are apt to offend ('tis true) where they find most Goodness to forgive--- But, Madam, I hope I shall prove of a Temper, not to abuse Mercy, by committing new Offences.

*ARAMINTA.*

So cold!

[*Aside.*

*BELINDA.*

I have broke the Ice for you, Mr. *Vainlove*, and so I leave you. Come, Mr. *Sharper*, you and I will take a Turn, and laugh at the Vulgar--Both the great Vulgar and the small---O Gad! I have a great Passion for *Cowley*---Don't you admire him?

*SHARPER.*

Oh Madam! He was our *English Horace*.

*BELINDA.*

Ah so fine! So extremely fine! So every thing in the World that I like---O Lord, walk this Way---I see a Couple, I'll give you their History.





## S C E N E XII.

A R A M I N T A, V A I N L O V E.

*VAINLOVE.*

**I** Find, Madam, the Formality of the Law must be observ'd, tho' the Penalty of it be dispens'd with; and an Offender must plead to his Arraignment, though he has his Pardon in his Pocket.

*A R A M I N T A.*

I'm amaz'd! This Insolence exceeds t'other;---whoever has encourag'd you to this Assurance---presuming upon the Easiness of my Temper, has much deceiv'd you, and so you shall find.

*VAINLOVE.*

Hey-day! which way now? Here's fine doubling.

*[Aside.]**A R A M I N T A.*

Base Man! Was it not enough to affront me with your saucy Passion?

*VAINLOVE.*

You have given that Passion a much kinder Epithet than saucy, in another Place.

*A R A M I N T A.*

Another Place! Some Villanous Design to blast my Honour---But, tho' thou hadst all the Treachery and Malice of thy Sex, thou canst not lay a Blemish on my Fame---No, I have not err'd in one favourable Thought of Mankind---How Time might have deceiv'd me in you, I know not; my Opinion was but young, and your early Baseness has prevented its growing to a wrong Belief---Unworthy, and ungrateful! Be gone, and never see me more.

*VAIN-*



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*VAIN LOVE.*

Did I dream? Or do I dream? Shall I believe my Eyes? or Ears? The Vision is here still--Your Passion, Madam, will admit of no farther reasoning--But here's a silent Witness of your Acquaintance.

*[Takes out the Letter, and offers it: She snatches it, and throws it away.]*

*ARAMINTA.*

There's Poison in every thing you touch-- Blisters will follow--

*VAIN LOVE.*

That Tongue, which denies what the Hands have done.

*ARAMINTA.*

Still mystically, senseless, and impudent--I find I must leave the Place.

*VAIN LOVE.*

No, Madam, I'm gone---She knows her Name's to it, which she will be unwilling to expose to the Censure of the first Finder.

*ARAMINTA.*

Woman's Obstinacy made me blind, to what Woman's Curiosity now tempts me to see. *[Takes up the Letter.]*



S C E N E XIII.

B E L I N D A, S H A R P E R.

*BELINDA.*

**N**AY, we have spared no Body, I swear. Mr. *Sharper*, you're a pure Man; where did you get this excellent Talent of Railing?

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*S H A R P E R.*

Faith, Madam, the Talent was born with me:—  
I confess, I have taken care to improve it; to qualify  
me for the Society of Ladies.

*B E L I N D A.*

Nay, sure Railing is the best Qualification in a Wo-  
man's Man.



S C E N E XIV.

[*To them*] FOOTMAN.

*S H A R P E R.*

**T**HE second best——indeed I think.

*B E L I N D A.*

How now, *Pace*? Where's my Cousin?

*F O O T M A N.*

She's not very well, Madam, and has sent to know, if  
your Ladyship would have the Coach come again for you?

*B E L I N D A.*

O Lord, no, I'll go along with her. Come, Mr.  
*Sharper.*



S C E N E



S C E N E XV.

S C E N E *A Chamber in Fondlewife's House.*

LÆTITIA and BELLMOUR, *his Cloke, Hat, &c.*  
*lying loose about the Chamber.*

B E L L M O U R.

H E R E's no Body, nor no Noise——'twas nothing  
but your Fears.

LÆTITIA.

I durst have sworn, I had heard my Monster's Voice  
——I swear, I was heartily frightned——Feel how  
my Heart beats.

B E L L M O U R.

'Tis an Alarm to Love——Come in again, and let  
us——

FONDLEWIFE *without.*

Cocky, Cocky, where are you Cocky? I'm come  
home.

LÆTITIA.

Ah! There he is. Make haste, gather up your Things.

FONDLEWIFE,

Cocky, Cocky, open the Door.

B E L L M O U R.

Pox choke him, would his Horns were in his Throat.  
My Patch, my Patch.

[*Looking about, and gathering up his Things.*

LÆTITIA.

My Jewel, art thou there? No matter for your Patch  
---You s'an't tum in, Nykin---Run into my Chamber,  
quickly, quickly. You s'an't tum in.

FONDLE-

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*FONDLEWIFE.*

Nay, pr'ythee, Dear, i'feck I'm in haste.

*LÆTITIA.*

Then I'll let you in.

[*Opens the Door.*



S C E N E XVI.

*LÆTITIA, FONDLEWIFE, Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

*FONDLEWIFE.*

**K**ISS, Dear----I met the Master of the Ship by the Way-----And I must have my Papers of Accounts out of your Cabinet.

*LÆTITIA.*

Oh! I'm undone!

[*Aside.*

*Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

Pray, first let me have 50 l. good Alderman, for I'm in haste.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

A hundred has already been paid, by your Order. Fifty? I have the Sum ready in Gold, in my Closet.



S C E N E XVII.

*LÆTITIA, Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

*Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

**A**GAD, it's a curious fine, pretty Rogue; I'll speak to her— Pray, Madam, what News d'ye hear?

*LÆTITIA.*

Sir, I seldom stir abroad.

[*Walks about in Disorder.*

*Sir*

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Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

I wonder at that, Madam, for 'tis most curious fine Weather.

LÆTITIA.

Methinks 't has been very ill Weather.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

As you say, Madam, 'tis pretty bad Weather, and has been so a great while.



S C E N E XVIII.

[To them] FONDLEWIFE.

FONDLEWIFE.

HERE are fifty Pieces in this Purse, Sir *Joseph*—  
If you will tarry a Moment, 'till I fetch my Papers,  
I'll wait upon you down Stairs.

LÆTITIA.

Ruin'd past Redemption! What shall I do— Ha! this Fool may be of use. [*Afide.*] [*As Fondlewife is going into the Chamber, she runs to Sir Joseph, almost pushes him down, and cries out.*] Stand off, rude Ruffian. Help me, my Dear—O bless me! why will you leave me alone with such a Satyr?

FONDLEWIFE.

Bless us! What's the Matter? What's the Matter?

LÆTITIA.

Your Back was no sooner turn'd; but like a Lion, he came open-mouth'd upon me, and would have ravish'd a Kifs from me by main Force.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

O Lord! O terrible! Ha, ha, ha, is your Wife mad, Alderman?

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*LÆTITIA.*

Oh! I'm sick with the Fright; won't you take him out of my Sight?

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Oh Traitor! I'm astonish'd. O bloody-minded Traitor!

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

Hey-day! Traitor yourself——By the Lord *Harty*, I was in most Danger of being ravish'd, if you go to that.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Oh, how the blasphemous Wretch swears! out of my House, thou Son of the Whore of *Babylon*; Offspring of *Bell* and the *Dragon*----Bless us! Ravish my Wife! my *Dinah*! Oh *Shechemite*! Be gone I say.

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

Why, the Devil's in the People, I think.



S C E N E XIX.

*LÆTITIA, FONDLEWIFE.*

*LÆTITIA.*

OH! won't you follow, and see him out of Doors, my Dear?

*FONDLEWIFE.*

I'll shut the Door, to secure him from coming back ----Give me the Key of your Cabine, Cocky----Ravish my Wife before my Face! I warrant he's a Papist in his Heart, at least, if not a *French* Man.

*LÆTITIA.*

What can I do now! [*Aside.*] Oh! my Dear, I have been in such a Fright, that I forgot to tell you, poor *Mr. Spintext* has a sad Fit of the Cholic, and is forced to  
lie



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lie down upon our Bed----You'll disturb him ; I can tread softlier.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Alack poor Man-----no, no,-----you don't know the Papers----I won't disturb him ; give me the Key.

*[She gives him the Key, goes to the Chamber Door, and speaks aloud.]*

*LÆTITIA.*

'Tis no Body but Mr. *Fondlewife*, Mr. *Spintext*, lie still on your Stomach ; lying on your Stomach, will ease you of the Cholic.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Ay, ay, lie still ; don't let me disturb you.



S C E N E XX.

*LÆTITIA, alone.*

*LÆTITIA.*

**S**URE, when he does not see his Face, he won't discover him. Dear Fortune help me but this once, and I'll never run into thy Debt again----But this Opportunity is the Devil.



S C E N E



S C E N E XXI.

FONDLEWIFE *returns with Papers.*

FONDLEWIFE.

GOOD luck! good luck!——I profess, the poor Man is in great Torment, he lies as flat——Dear, you should heat a Trencher, or a Napkin——Where's *Deborah*? Let her clap some warm thing to his Stomach, or chafe it with a warm Hand, rather than fail. What Book's this? [*Sees the Book that Bellmour forgot.*

LÆTITIA.

Mr *Spintext*'s Prayer Book, Dear-----Pray Heav'n it be a Prayer-Book. [*Aside.*

FONDLEWIFE.

Good Man! I warrant he dropped it on purpose, that you might take it up, and read some of those pious Ejaculations [*Taking up the Book*] O bless me! O monstrous! A Prayer-Book? Ay, this is the Devil's *Pater-Noster*. Hold, let me see; *The Innocent Adultery*.

LÆTITIA.

Misfortune! now all's ruin'd again. [*Aside.*

BELLMOUR. *Peeping.*

Damn'd Chance! If I had gone a Whoring with the *Practice of Piety* in my Pocket, I had never been discover'd.

FONDLEWIFE.

Adultery, and innocent! O Lord! Here's Doctrine! Ay, here's Discipline!

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LÆTITIA.

Dear Husband I'm amaz'd : ——— Sure it is a good Book, and only tends to the Speculation of Sin.

FONDLEWIFE.

Speculation! No, no, something went farther than Speculation when I was not to be let in——Where is this Apocryphal Elder! I'll ferret him.

LÆTITIA.

I'm so distracted, I can't think of a Lie. [Aside.]



S C E N E XXII.

LÆTITIA, and FONDLEWIFE baling out BELLMOUR.

FONDLEWIFE.

COME out here, thou *Ananias* incarnate——Who, how now! Who have we here?

LÆTITIA.

Ha!

[Scrieks, as surpris'd.]

FONDLEWIFE.

Oh, thou falacious Woman! Am I then brutified? Ay, I feel it here; I sprout, I bud, I blossom, I am ripe-horn-mad. But who in the Devil's Name are you? Mercy on me for swearing. But——

LÆTITIA.

Oh, Goodness keep us? Who's this? Who are you? What are you?

BELLMOUR.

Soh.

LÆTITIA.

In the Name of the-----O! Good, my Dear, don't come near it, I'm afraid 'tis the Devil; indeed it has Hoofs, Dear.

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*FONDLEWIFE.*

Indeed, and I have Horns, Dear. The Devil! no, I am afraid it is the Flesh, thou Harlot. Dear, with the Fox. Come *Siren*, speak, confess, who is this reverend, brawny Pastor?

*LÆTITIA.*

Indeed, and indeed now my dear *Nykin*---I never saw this wicked Man before.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Oh, it is a Man then, it seems.

*LÆTITIA.*

Rather, sure it is a Wolf in the clothing of a Sheep.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Thou art a Devil in his proper clothing, Woman's Flesh. What, you know nothing of him, but his Fleece here!-----You don't love Mutton?----you *Magdalen* unconverted.

*BELLMOUR.*

Well, now I know my Cue-----That is, very honourably to excuse her, and very impudently accuse myself.

*LÆTITIA.*

Why then, I wish I may never enter into the Heav'n of your Embraces again, my Dear, if ever I saw his Face before.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

O Lord! O strange! I am in admiration of your Impudence. Look at him a little better; he is more modest, I warrant you, than to deny it. Come, were you two never Face to Face before? Speak.

*BELLMOUR.*

Since all Artifice is vain---And I think myself obliged to speak the Truth in Justice to your Wife---No.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Humph.

*LÆ-*

LÆTITIA.

No, indeed Dear.

FONDLEWIFE,

Nay, I find you are both in a Story; that I must confess. But, what-----not to be cured of the Cholic? Don't you know your Patient, Mrs. *Quack*? Oh, lie upon your Stomach, lying upon your Stomach will cure you of the Cholic. Ah! Answer me, *Jezebel*?

LÆTITIA.

Let the wicked Man answer for himself; does he think that I have nothing to do but excuse him; 'tis enough, if I can clear my own Innocence to my own Dear.

BELLMOUR.

By my troth, and so 'tis—I have been a little too backward, that's the truth on't.

FONDLEWIFE.

Come, Sir, who are you, in the first Place? and what are you?

BELLMOUR.

A Whore-master.

FONDLEWIFE.

Very Concise.

LÆTITIA.

O beastly, impudent Creature.

FONDLEWIFE.

Well Sir, and what came you hither for?

BELLMOUR.

To lie with your Wife.

FONDLEWIFE.

Good again-----A very civil Person this is, and I believe speaks Truth.

LÆTITIA.

Oh, insupportable Impudence!

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Well, Sir——Pray be cover'd——and you have——  
 Heh! You have finish'd the Matter, hey? And I am, as  
 I should be, a sort of a civil Perquisite to a Whore-master,  
 call'd a *Cuckold*, heh. Is it not so? Come, I'm inclining  
 to believe every Word you say.

*BELLMOUR.*

Why, Faith, I must confess, so I design'd you——But,  
 you were a little unlucky in coming so soon, and hinder'd  
 the making of your own Fortune.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Humph. Nay, if you mince the matter once, and go  
 back of your Word, you are not the Person I took you  
 for. Come, come, go on boldly——What, don't be  
 ashamed of your Profession——Confess, confess, I shall  
 love thee the better for't——I shall, i'feck——What, dost  
 think I don't know how to behave myself in the Em-  
 ployment of a Cuckold, and have been three Years Ap-  
 prentice to Matrimony? Come, come, Plain-dealing is  
 a Jewel.

*BELLMOUR.*

Well, since I see thou art a good honest Fellow, I'll  
 confess the whole Matter to thee.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Oh, I am a very honest Fellow——You never lay with  
 an honest Man's Wife in your Life.

*LÆTITIA.*

How my Heart akes! All my Comfort lies in his Im-  
 pudence, and Heav'n be prais'd, he has a considerable  
 Portion. [*Aside.*

*BELLMOUR.*

In short then, I was inform'd of the Opportunity of your  
 Absence, by my Spy, (for faith, honest *Isaac*, I have  
 a long time design'd thee this Favour) I knew *Spintext*  
 was to come by your Direction——But I laid a Trap for  
 him,



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him, and procured his Habit ; in which, I pass'd upon your Servants, and was conducted hither. I pretended a Fit of the Cholic, to excuse my lying down upon your Bed ; hoping that when she heard of it, her good Nature would bring her to administer Remedies for my Distemper-----You know what might have follow'd-----But like an uncivil Person, you knock'd at the Door, before your Wife was come to me.

FONDLEWIFE.

Ha ! This is Apocryphal ; I may choose whether I will believe it or no.

BELLMOUR.

That you may, faith, and I hope you won't believe a Word on't----But I can't help telling the Truth, for my Life.

FONDLEWIFE.

How ! would you not have me believe you, say you ?

BELLMOUR.

No, for then you must of Consequence part with your Wife, and there will be some Hopes of having her upon the Public ; then the Encouragement of a separate Maintenance-----

FONDLEWIFE.

No ; no, for that Matter----when she and I part, she'll carry her separate Maintenance about her.

LÆTITIA.

Ah, cruel Dear, how can you be so barbarous ? You'll break my Heart, if you talk of parting. [Cries.

FONDLEWIFE.

Ah, dissembling Vermin !

BELLMOUR.

How can't thou be so cruel, *Isaac* ? Thou hast the Heart of a Mountain-Tiger. By the Faith of a sincere Sinner, she's Innocent for me. Go to him, Madam, fling your snowy Arms about his stubborn Neck ; 'bath  
his

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his relentless Face in your salt trickling Tears. ———

[*She goes and hangs upon his Neck, and kisses him. Bellmour kisses her Hand behind Fondlewife's Back.*

So, a few soft Words, and a Kiss, and the good Man melts. See how kind Nature works, and boils-over in him.

*LÆTITIA.*

Indeed, my Dear, I was but just come down Stairs when you knock'd at the Door; and the Maid told me Mr. *Spintext* was ill of the Cholic, upon our Bed. And won't you speak to me, cruel *Nykin*? Indeed, I'll die, if you don't.

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Ah! No, no, I cannot speak, my Heart's so full— I have been a tender Husband, a tender Yoke-Fellow; you know I have—But thou hast been a faithless *Dalilah*, and the *Philistines*—Heh! Art thou not vile and unclean, Heh? Speak. [*Weeping.*

*LÆTITIA.*

No—h. [*Sighing.*

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Oh, that I could believe thee!

*LÆTITIA.*

Oh, my Heart will break. [*Seeming to faint.*

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Heh, how! No, stay, stay, I will believe thee, I will —Pray bend her forward, Sir.

*LÆTITIA.*

Oh! Oh! Where is my Dear?

*FONDLEWIFE.*

Here, here; I do believe thee.—I won't believe my own Eyes.

*BELLMOUR.*

For my part, I am so charm'd with the Love of your Turtle

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Turtle to you, that I'll go and solicit Matrimony with all my Might and Main.

FONDLEWIFE.

Well, well, Sir; as long as I believe it, 'tis well enough. No Thanks to you, Sir, for her Virtue. - But, I'll show you the Way out of my House, if you please. Come, my Dear. Nay, I will believe thee, I do, i'feck.

BELLMOUR.

See the great Blessing of an easy Faith; Opinion cannot err.

*No Husband, by his Wife, can be deceiv'd ;  
She still is virtuous, if she's so believ'd.*

*End of the Fourth Act.*



VOL. I.

F

ACT



A C T V. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, *The Street.*

BELLMOUR *in Fanatic Habit*, SETTER,  
HEARTWELL, LUCY.

BELLMOUR.



SETTER! Well encounter'd.

SETTER.

Joy of your Return, Sir. Have you made a good Voyage? or have you brought your own Lading back?

BELLMOUR.

No, I have brought nothing but Ballast back——made a delicious Voyage, *Setter*; and might have rode at Anchor in the Port 'till this Time, but the Enemy surpris'd us——I would unrig.

SETTER.

I attend you, Sir.

BELLMOUR.

Ha! Is not that *Heartwell* at *Sylvia's* Door? Be gone quickly, I'll follow you:——I would not be known. Pox take 'em, they stand just in my way.



S C E E N



S C E N E II.

BELLMOUR, HEARTWELL, LUCY.

*HEARTWELL.*

I'M Impatient 'till it be done.

*LUCY.*

That may be, without troubling yourself to go again for your Brother's Chaplain. Don't you see that stalking Form of Godliness?

*HEARTWELL*

O ay; he's a Fanatic.

*LUCY.*

An Executioner qualified to do your Business. He has been lawfully ordain'd.

*HEARTWELL.*

I'll pay him well, if you'll break the Matter to him.

*LUCY.*

I warrant you---Do you go and prepare your Bride.



S C E N E III.

BELLMOUR, LUCY.

*BELLMOUR.*

**H**UMPH, fits the Wind there? — What a lucky Rogue am I! Oh, what Sport will be here, if I can persuade this Wench to Secrecy?

F 2

*LUCY.*

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*LUCY.*

Sir : Reverend Sir.

*BELLMOUR.*

Madam.

*[Discovers himself.]*

*LUCY.*

Now, Goodness have Mercy upon me ! Mr. *Bellmour* !  
is it you ?

*BELLMOUR.*

Even I. What dost think ?

*LUCY.*

Think ! That I should not believe my Eyes, and that  
you are not what you seem to be.

*BELLMOUR.*

True. But to convince thee who I am, thou know'st  
my old Token.

*[Kisses her.]*

*LUCY.*

Nay, Mr. *Bellmour* : O Lard ! I believe you are a  
Parson in good earnest, you kifs so devoutly.

*BELLMOUR.*

Well, your Business with me, *Lucy* ?

*LUCY.*

I had none, but through Mistake.

*BELLMOUR.*

Which Mistake you must go thorough with, *Lucy*---  
Come, I know the Intrigue between *Heartwell* and your  
Mistress ; and you mistook me for *Tribulation Spintext*, to  
marry 'em---Ha ? Are not Matters in this Posture ?---  
Confess ; --Come, I'll be faithful ; I will i'faith. ———  
What, Diffide in me, *Lucy* ?

*LUCY.*

Alas-a-day ! You and Mr. *Vainlove*, between you, have  
ruin'd my poor Mistress : You have made a Gap in her  
Reputation ; and can you blame her if she make it up  
with a Husband ?

*BELLMOUR.*

Well, is it as I say ?

*LUCY.*



*The* O L D B A T C H E L O R. 101

L U C Y.

Well, is it then : But you'll be secret ?

B E L L M O U R.

Phuh, Secret, ay :----And to be out of thy Debt, I'll trust thee with another Secret. Your Mistress must not marry *Heartwell*, *Lucy*.

L U C Y.

How ! O Lord !-----

B E L L M O U R.

Nay, don't be in Passion, *Lucy* :----I'll provide a fitter Husband for her.---Come, here's Earnest of my good Intentions for thee too ; let this mollify.---[*Gives her Money.*] Look you, *Heartwell* is my Friend : and tho' he be blind, I must not see him fall into the Snare, and unwittingly marry a Whore.

L U C Y.

Whore ! I'd have you to know my Mistress scorns-----

B E L L M O U R.

Nay, nay, Look you, *Lucy* ; there are Whores of as good Quality.---But to the Purpose, if you will give me leave to acquaint you with it.---Do you carry on the Mistake of me : I'll marry 'em.---Nay, don't pause ; ---If you do, I'll spoil all.---I have some private Reasons for what I do, which I'll tell you within.---In the mean time I promise, ---and rely upon me, ---to help your Mistress to a Husband : Nay, and thee too, *Lucy*-----Here's my Hand, I will ; with a fresh Assurance. [Gives her more Money.]

L U C Y.

Ah, the Devil is not so cunning.---You know my easy Nature.---Well, for once I'll venture to serve you ; but if you do deceive me, the Curse of all kind, tender-hearted Women light upon you.

## B E L L M O U R.

That's as much as to say, *The Pox take me*. Well, lead on.



## S C E N E IV.

VAIN LOVE, SHARPER, and SETTER.

S H A R P E R.

J U S T now, say you, gone in with *Lucy*?

S E T T E R.

I saw him, Sir, and stood at the Corner where you found me, and over-heard all they said: Mr. *Bellmour* is to marry 'em.

S H A R P E R.

Ha, ha; 'twill be a pleasant Cheat,—I'll plague *Heartwell* when I see him. Pr'ythee *Frank*, let's tease him; make him fret 'till he foam at the Mouth, and disgorge his Matrimonial Oath with Interest——Come, thou'rt musty——

S E T T E R.

[To Sharper.] Sir, a Word with you. [Whispers him.]

V A I N L O V E.

*Sharper* swears she has forsworn the Letter——I'm sure he tells me Truth;——but I am not sure she told him Truth:——Yet she was unaffectedly concern'd, he says; and often blush'd with Anger and Surprise:——And so I remember in the Park.—She had Reason, if I wrong her---I begin to doubt.

S H A R P E R.

Say'st thou so!

S E T T E R.

This Afternoon, Sir, about an Hour before my Master receiv'd the Letter.

S H A R-

S H A R P E R.

In my Conscience, like enough.

S E T T E R.

Ay, I know her, Sir, at least, I'm sure I can fish it out of her: She's the very Sluce to her Lady's Secrets: — 'Tis but setting her Mill a going, and I can drain her of 'em all.

S H A R P E R.

Here, *Frank*, your Blood-hound has made out the Fault: This Letter, that so sticks in thy Maw, is counterfeit; only a Trick of *Sylvia* in Revenge, contriv'd by *Lucy*.

V A I N L O V E.

Ha! It has a Colour, — But how do you know it, Sirrah?

S E T T E R.

I do suspect as much; — because why, Sir, — She was pumping me about how your Worship's Affairs stood towards *Madam Araminta*; as, when you had seen her last? when you were to see her next? and, where you were to be found at that time? and such like.

V A I N L O V E.

And where did you tell her?

S E T T E R.

In the *Piazza*.

V A I N L O V E.

There I receiv'd the Letter — It must be so — And why did you not find me out, to tell me this before, Sot?

S E T T E R.

Sir, I was Pimping for Mr. *Bellmour*.

S H A R P E R.

You were well employ'd: — I think there is no Objection to the Excuse.

VAIN LOVE.

Pox o' my saucy Credulity—If I have lost her, I deserve it. But if Confession and Repentance be of Force, I'll win her, or weary her into a Forgiveness.

S H A R P E R.

Methinks I long to see *Bellmour* come forth.



S C E N E V.

S H A R P E R, B E L L M O U R, S E T T E R.

S E T T E R.

TALK of the Devil——See where he comes.

S H A R P E R.

Hugging himself in his prosperous Mischief—No real Fanatic can look better pleas'd after a successful Sermon of Sedition.

B E L L M O U R.

*Sharper!* Fortify thy Spleen: Such a Jest! Speak when thou art ready.

S H A R P E R.

Now, were I ill-natur'd, would I utterly disappoint thy Mirth: Hear thee tell thy mighty Jest, with as much Gravity as a Bishop hears Venereal Causes in the Spiritual Court: Not so much as wrinkle my Face with one Smile; but let thee look simply, and laugh by thyself.

B E L L M O U R.

P'shaw, no; I have a better Opinion of thy Wit--Gad, I defy thee.——

S H A R P E R.

Were it not loss of Time, you should make the Experiment. But honest *Setter*, here, over-heard you with *Lucy*, and has told me all.

B E L L.

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B E L L M O U R.

Nay then, I thank thee for not putting me out of Countenance. But, to tell you something you don't know—I got an Opportunity (after I had marry'd 'em) of discovering the Cheat to *Sylvia*. She took it at first, as another Woman would the like Disappointment; but my Promise to make her amends quickly with another Husband, somewhat pacify'd her.

S H A R P E R.

But how the Devil do you think to acquit yourself of your Promise? Will you marry her yourself?

B E L L M O U R.

I have no such Intentions at present—Pr'ythee, wilt thou think a little for me? I am sure the ingenious Mr. *Setter* will assist.

S E T T E R.

O Lord, Sir!

B E L L M O U R.

I'll leave him with you, and go shift my Habit.



S C E N E VI.

SHARPER, SETTER, *Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL,  
and BLUFFE.

S H A R P E R.

**H**EH! Sure, Fortune has sent this Fool hither on purpose. *Setter*, stand close; seem not to observe 'em; and, hark-ye—

[*Whispers.*]

B L U F F E.

Fear him not—I am prepar'd for him now; and he shall find he might have safer rous'd a sleeping Lion.

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Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Hush, hush: Don't you see him?

BLUFFE.

Shew him to me.——Where is he?

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Nay, don't speak so loud----I don't jest, as I did a little while ago---Look yonder---A-gad, if he should hear the Lion roar, he'd cudgel him into an Ass, and his primitive Braying. Don't you remember the Story in *Æsop's Fables*, Bully? Agad, there are good Morals to be pick'd out of *Æsop's Fables*, let me tell you that; and *Renard the Fox* too.

BLUFFE.

Damn your Morals.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Pr'ythee don't speak so loud.

BLUFFE.

Damn your Morals; I must revenge the Affront done to my Honour.

*[In a low Voice.]*

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Ay; do, do, Captain, if you think fitting——You may dispose of your own Flesh as you think fitting, d'ye see;——But by the Lord Harry, I'll leave you.

*[Stealing away upon his Tip-toes.]*

BLUFFE.

Prodigious! What, will you forsake your Friend in Extremity! You can't in Honour refuse to carry him a Challenge. *[Almost whispering, and treading softly after him.]*

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Pr'ythee, what do you see in my Face, that looks as if I would carry a Challenge? Honour is your Province, Captain; take it——All the World know me to be a Knight, and a Man of Worship.

SETTER.

I warrant you, Sir, I'm instructed.

S H A R-



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S H A R P E R.

Impossible! *Araminta* take a liking to a Fool! [*Aloud.*

S E T T E R.

Her Head runs on nothing else, nor she can talk of nothing else.

S H A R P E R.

I know she commended him all the while we were in the Park; but I thought it had been only to make *Vainlove* jealous ———

Sir J O S E P H W I T T O L L.

How's this! Good Bully, hold your Breath, and let's hearken. A-gad, this must be I.——

S H A R P E R.

Death, it can't be.---An Oaf, an Idiot, a Wittal.

Sir J O S E P H W I T T O L L.

Ay, now it's out; 'tis I, my own Individual Person.

S H A R P E R.

A Wretch, that has flown for Shelter to the lowest Shrub of Mankind, and seeks Protection from a blasted Coward.

Sir J O S E P H W I T T O L L.

That's you, *Bully* Back. [*Bluffe frowns upon Sir Joseph.*

S H A R P E R.

She has given *Vainlove* her Promise, to marry him before to morrow morning.---Has she not? [*To Setter.*

S E T T E R.

She has, Sir;---And I have it in Charge to attend her all this Evening in order to conduct her to the Place appointed.

S H A R P E R.

Well, I'll go and inform your Master; and do you press her to make all the Haste imaginable.

S C E N E



## S C E N E VII.

SETTER, *Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL, BLUFFE.

## S E T T E R.

**W**ERE I a Rogue now, what a noble Prize could I dispose of! A goodly Pinnace, richly laden, and to lanch forth under my auspicious Convoy. Twelve thousand Pounds, and all her Rigging; besides what lies conceal'd under Hatches—Ha! all this committed to my Care! Avant Temptation.—*Setter*, shew thyself a Person of Worth; be true to thy Trust, and be reputed honest. Reputed honest! Hum: Is that all? Ay: For to be honest is nothing; the Reputation of it is all. Reputation! What have such poor Rogues as I to do with Reputation? 'tis above us; and for Men of Quality, they are above it; so that Reputation is e'en as foolish a thing as Honesty. And for my part, if I meet *Sir Joseph* with a Purse of Gold in his Hand, I'll dispose of mine to the best Advantage.

*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Heh, heh, heh: Here 'tis for you, i'faith, *Mr. Setter*. Nay, I'll take you at your Word. [*Chinking a Purse.*]

S E T T E R.

*Sir Joseph* and the Captain too! undone, undone! I'm undone, my Master's undone, my Lady's undone, and all the Business is undone.

*Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

No, no, never fear, Man, the Lady's Business shall be done. What—Come, *Mr. Setter*, I have over-heard all,  
and

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and to speak, is but loss of Time ; but if there be Oc-  
casion, let these worthy Gentlemen intercede for me.

[Gives him Gold.

S E T T E R.

O Lord, Sir, what d'ye mean ? Corrupt my Honesty !  
—They have indeed very persuading Faces. But——

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

'Tis too little, there's more, Man. There, take all----  
Now——

S E T T E R.

Well, Sir *Joseph*, you have such a winning way with  
you——

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

And how, and how, good *Setter*, did the little Rogue  
look, when she talk'd of Sir *Joseph* ? Did not her Eyes  
twinkle, and her Mouth water ? Did not she pull up her  
little Bubbies ? And—A-gad, I'm so overjoy'd——  
And stroke down her Belly ? and then step aside to tie  
her Garter, when she was thinking of her Love ? Hey,  
*Setter* !

S E T T E R.

Oh, Yes, Sir.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

How now, *Bully* ? What, melancholy, because I'm  
in the Lady's Favour ?----No Matter, I'll make your  
Peace----I know they were a little smart upon you——  
But I warrant, I'll bring you into the Lady's good  
Graces.

B L U F F E.

P'shaw, I have Petitions to show, from other-guefs  
Toys than she. Look here ; These were sent me this  
Morning——There, read, [*Shows Letters.*] That ——  
That's a Scrawl of Quality. Here, here's from a Coun-  
tess too. Hum----No, hold--that's from a Knight's  
Wife,

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Wife, she sent it me by her Husband — But here, both these are from Persons of great Quality.

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

They are either from Persons of great Quality, or no Quality at all, 'tis such a damn'd ugly Hand.

[*While Sir Joseph reads, Bluffe whispers Setter.*  
*SETTER.*

Captain, I would do any thing to serve you ! but this is so difficult —

*BLUFFE.*

Not at all. Don't I know him ?

*SETTER.*

You'll remember the Conditions ? —

*BLUFFE.*

I'll give't you under my Hand — In the mean time here's Earnest. [*Gives him Money.*] Come, Knight, — I'm capitulating with Mr. *Setter* for you.

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

Ah, honest *Setter* ; — Sirrah, I'll give thee any thing but a Night's Lodging.



S C E N E VIII.

*SHARPER tugging in HEARTWELL.*

*SHARPER.*

**N**AY, pr'ythee leave Railing, and come along with me : May be she mayn't be within. 'Tis but to yond' Corner-house.

*HEARTWELL.*

Whither ! Whither ? Which Corner-house ?

*SHAR-*

*The OLD BATCHELOR.* III

*SHARPER.*

Why there: The two white Posts.

*HEARTWELL.*

And who would you visit there, say you? (O'ons, how my Heart akes.)

*SHARPER.*

P'shaw, thou'rt so troublesome and inquisitive—Why, I'll tell you; 'Tis a Young Creature that *Vainlove* debauch'd, and has forsaken. Did you never hear *Bellmour* chide him about *Sylvia*?

*HEARTWELL.*

Death, and Hell, and Marriage! My Wife! [*Aside.*

*SHARPER.*

Why thou art as musty as a new marry'd Man, that had found his Wife Knowing the first Night.

*HEARTWELL.*

Hell, and the Devil! Does he know it? But, hold—If he should not, I were a Fool to discover it—I'll dissemble and try him. [*Aside.*] Ha, ha, ha. Why, *Tom*, Is that such an Occasion of Melancholy? Is it such an uncommon Mischief?

*SHARPER.*

No, Faith; I believe not.—Few Women, but have their Year of Probation, before they are cloister'd in the narrow Joys of Wedlock. But, pr'ythee come along with me, or I'll go and have the Lady to myself. B'w'y *George*. [*Going.*

*HEARTWELL.*

O Torture! How he racks and tears me!—Death! Shall I own my Shame; or wittingly let him go and whore my Wife? No, that's insupportable—Oh, *Sbarper!*

*SHARPER.*

How now?

*HEART.*

*HEARTWELL.*

Oh, I am — marry'd.

*SHARPER.*

(Now hold Spleen.) Marry'd!

*HEARTWELL.*

Certainly, irrecoverably marry'd.

*SHARPER.*

Heav'n forbid, Man! How long?

*HEARTWELL.*

Oh, an Age, an Age! I have been marry'd these two Hours.

*SHARPER.*

My old Batchelor marry'd! That were a Jest, Ha, ha, ha.

*HEARTWELL.*

Death! D'ye mock me? Hearnk ye, if either you esteem my Friendship, or your own Safety——Come not near that House——that Corner-House——that hot Brothel. Ask no Questions.

*SHARPER.*

Mad, by this Light.

Thus Grief still treads upon the Heels of Pleasure. Marry'd in haste, we may repent at Leisure.



S C E N E IX.

S H A R P E R, S E T T E R.

*S E T T E R.*

**S**OME by Experience find those Words misplac'd:  
At Leisure marry'd, they Repent in haste.  
As I suppose, my Master *Heartwell.*

*S H A R-*



The OLD BATCHELOR. 113

S H A R P E R.

Here again, my *Mercury*!

S E T T E R.

Sublimate, if you please, Sir: I think my Atchievements do deserve the Epithet---*Mercury* was a Pimp too, but, though I blush to own it, at this time, I must confess I am somewhat fall'n from the Dignity of my Function, and do condescend to be scandalously imploy'd in the Promotion of vulgar Matrimony.

S H A R P E R.

As how, dear dexterous Pimp?

S E T T E R.

Why, to be brief, for I have weighty Affairs depending—Our Stratagem succeeded as you intended—*Bluffe* turns arrant Traitor; bribes me, to make a private Conveyance of the Lady to him, and put a Sham Settlement upon Sir *Joseph*.

S H A R P E R.

O Rogue! Well, but I hope——

S E T T E R.

No, no; never fear me, Sir---I privately inform'd the Knight of the Treachery; who has agreed, seemingly to be cheated, that the Captain may be so in reality.

S H A R P E R.

Where's the Bride?

S E T T E R.

Shifting Clothes for the Purpose, at a Friend's House of mine. Here's Company coming, if you'll walk this Way, Sir, I'll tell you.



S C E N E



S C E N E X.

BELLMOUR, BELINDA, ARAMINTA, and  
VAINLOVE.

*VAINLOVE.*

O H, 'twas Frenzy all: Cannot you forgive it?---  
Men in Madnes have a Title to your Pity.

[*To Araminta.*

*ARAMINTA.*

----- Which they forfeit when they are restor'd to their  
Senses.

*VAINLOVE.*

I am not presuming beyond a Pardon.

*ARAMINTA.*

You who cou'd reproach me with one Counterfeit, how  
insolent would a real Pardon make you! But there's no  
need to forgive what is not worth my Anger.

*BELINDA.*

O my Conscience, I cou'd find in my Heart to marry  
thee, purely to be rid of thee---At least, thou art so  
troublesome a Lover, there's Hopes thou'lt make a more  
than ordinary quiet Husband.

[*To Bellmour.*

*BELLMOUR.*

Say you so-----Is that a Maxim among ye?

*BELINDA.*

Yes: You fluttering Men of the Mode have made  
Marriage a meer *French Dish.*

*BELLMOUR.*

I hope there's no *French Sauce.*

[*Afide.*

*BELIN-*

BELINDA.

You are so curious in the Preparation, that is, your Courtship, one would think you meant a noble Entertainment——But when we come to feed, 'tis all Froth, and Poor, but in Show. Nay, often, only Remains, which have been I know not how many times warm'd for other Company, and at last serv'd up cold to the Wife.

BELLMOUR.

That were a miserable Wretch indeed, who could not afford one warm Dish for the Wife of his Bosom——But you timorous Virgins form a dreadful Chimæra of a Husband, as of a Creature contrary to that soft, humble, pliant, easy thing, a Lover; so gues's at Plagues in Matrimony, in Opposition to the Pleasures of Courtship. Alas! Courtship to Marriage, is but as the Music in the Play-House, 'till the Curtain's drawn; but that once up, then opens the Scene of Pleasure.

BELINDA.

Oh, foh---no: Rather, Courtship to Marriage, is as a very witty Prologue to a very dull Play.



S C E N E XI.

[To them] SHARPER.

SHARPER.

HIST,---Bellmour: If you'll bring the Ladies, make haste to Sylvia's Lodgings, before Heartwell has fretted himself out of Breath.----

BELL-

116 *The OLD BATCHELOR.*

*BELLMOUR.*

You have an Opportunity now, Madam, to revenge yourself upon *Heartwell*, for affronting your Squirrel.

[*To Belinda.*

*BELINDA.*

O the filthy rude Beast!

*ARAMINTA.*

'Tis a lasting Quarrel: I think he has never been at our House since.

*BELLMOUR.*

But give yourselves the Trouble to walk to that Corner-house, and I'll tell you by the way what may divert and surprize you.



SCENE XII. *Sylvia's Lodgings.*

*HEARTWELL and BOY.*

*HEARTWELL.*

GONE forth, say you, with her Maid!

*BOY.*

There was a Man too that fetch'd 'em out——*Setter*, I think they call'd him.

*HEARTWELL.*

So-h——That precious Pimp too----Damn'd, damn'd Strumpet! Cou'd she not contain herself on her Wedding-day? Not hold out till Night? O cursed State! How wide we err, when apprehensive of the Load of Life,

——*We hope to find*  
*That Help which Nature meant in Woman-kind,*  
*To Man that Supplemental Self design'd;* }

*But*

The OLD BATCHELOR. 117

But proves a burning Caustic when apply'd:  
And Adam, sure, cou'd with more Ease abide  
The Bone when broken, than when made a Bride. }



S C E N E XIII.

[To him] BELLMOUR, BELINDA, VAINLOVE,  
ARAMINTA.

BELLMOUR.

NOW George, what, Rhyming! I thought the Chimes  
of Verse were past, when once the doleful Mar-  
riage Knell was rung.

HEARTWELL.

Shame and Confusion. I am exposed.

[Vainlove and Araminta talk apart.]

BELINDA.

Joy, Joy, Mr. Bridegroom; I give you Joy, Sir.

HEARTWELL.

'Tis not in thy Nature to give me Joy—A Wo-  
man can as soon give Immortality.

BELINDA.

Ha, ha, ha! O Gad, Men grow such Clowns when  
they are marry'd—

BELLMOUR.

That they are fit for no Company but their Wives.

BELINDA.

Nor for them neither, in a little Time----I swear, at  
the Month's end, you shall hardly find a marry'd Man,  
that will do a civil Thing to his Wife, or say a civil  
thing to any Body else. How he looks already. Ha, ha, ha.

BELL-

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*BELLMOUR.*

Ha, ha, ha.

*HEARTWELL.*

Death, am I made your Laughing-Stock? For you, Sir, I shall find a time; but take off your Wasp here, or the Clown may grow boist'rous. I have a Fly-Flap.

*BELINDA.*

You have Occasion for't, your Wife has been blown upon.

*BELLMOUR.*

That's home.

*HEARTWELL.*

Not Fiends or Furies cou'd have added to my Vexation, or any thing, but another Woman——You've rack'd my Patience; be gone, or by——

*BELLMOUR.*

Hold, hold. What the Devil, thou wilt not draw upon a Woman!

*VAINLOVE.*

What's the Matter?

*ARAMINTA.*

Bless me! What have you done to him?

*BELINDA.*

Only touch'd a gall'd Beast till he winch'd.

*VAINLOVE.*

*Bellmour*, give it over; you vex him too much; 'tis all serious to him.

*BELINDA.*

Nay, I swear, I begin to pity him, myself.

*HEARTWELL.*

Damn your Pity——But let me be calm a little——How have I deserv'd this of you? Any of ye? Sir, have I impair'd the Honour of your House, promis'd your Sister Marriage, and whor'd her? Wherein have I injur'd you? Did I bring a Physician to your Father when he lay  
lay



*The* OLD BATCHELOR. 119

lay expiring, and endeavour to prolong his Life, and you one and twenty? Madam, have I had an Opportunity with you and bauk'd it? Did you ever offer me the Favour that I refus'd it? Or——

*BELINDA.*

Oh foh! What does the filthy Fellow mean? Lard, let me be gone.

*ARAMINTA.*

Hang me, if I pity you; you are right enough serv'd.

*BELLMOUR.*

This is a little scurrilous tho'.

*VAINLOVE.*

Nay, 'tis a Sore of your own Scratching——Well,  
*George*——

*HEARTWELL.*

You are the principal Cause of all my present Ills. If *Sylvia* had not been your Mistress, my Wife might have been honest.

*VAINLOVE.*

And if *Sylvia* had not been your Wife, my Mistress might have been just---There, we are even---But have a good Heart, I heard of your Misfortune, and come to your Relief.

*HEARTWELL.*

When Execution's over, you offer a Reprieve.

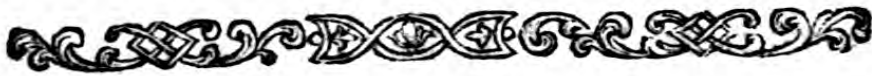
*VAINLOVE.*

What would you give?

*HEARTWELL.*

Oh! Any thing, every thing, a Leg or two, or an Arm; nay, I would be divorc'd from my Virility, to be divorc'd from my Wife.

S C E N E



S C E N E XIV.

[*To them*] S H A R P E R.

*VAINLOVE.*

**F**AITH, that's a sure way — But here's one can sell  
you Freedom better cheap.

S H A R P E R.

*Vainlove*, I have been a kind of a Godfather to you,  
yonder. I have promised and vow'd some Things in  
your Name, which I think you are bound to perform.

*VAINLOVE.*

No signing to a Blank, Friend.

S H A R P E R.

No, I'll deal fairly with you--'Tis a full and free  
Discharge to Sir *Joseph Wittol* and Captain *Bluffe*; for  
all Injuries whatsoever, done unto you by them, until  
the present Date hereof--How say you?

*VAINLOVE.*

Agreed.

S H A R P E R.

Then, let me beg these Ladies to wear their Masks,  
a Moment. Come in, Gentlemen and Ladies.

*HEARTWELL.*

What the Devil's all this to me?

*VAINLOVE.*

Patience.

SCENE



SCENE *The Last.*

[*To them*] Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL, BLUFFE,  
SYLVIA, LUCY, SETTER.

BLUFFE.

ALL Injuries whatsoever, Mr. *Sharper*.  
Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.  
Ay, ay, whatsoever, Captain, stick to that whatsoever.

SHARPER.

'Tis done, these Gentlemen are Witnesses to the general Release.

VAINLOVE.

Ay, ay, to this instant Moment---I have pass'd an Act of Oblivion.

BLUFFE.

'Tis very generous, Sir, since I needs must own—

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

No, No, Captain, you need not own; heh, heh, heh.

'Tis I must own—

BLUFFE.

—That you are over-reach'd too, ha, ha, ha, only a little Art-military used—only undermined, or so, as shall appear by the fair *Araminta*, my Wife's Permission. Oh, the Devil, cheated at last! [Lucy unmasks,

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Only a little Art-military Trick, Captain, only countermin'd, or so—Mr. *Vainlove*, I suppose you know whom I have got—now, but all's forgiven,

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*VAIN LOVE.*

I know whom you have not got; pray Ladies convince him. [Aram. and Belin. unmask.

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

Ah! O Lord, my Heart akes— Ah! *Setter*, a Rogue of all sides.

*SHARPER.*

Sir *Joseph*, you had better have pre-engaged this Gentleman's Pardon: For though *Vainlove* be so generous to forgive the Loss of his Mistress——I know not how *Heartwell* may take the Loss of his Wife.

[*Sylvia unmask.*

*HEARTWELL.*

My Wife! By this Light 'tis she, the very Cockatrice——Oh *Sharper*! Let me embrace thee——But art thou sure she is really marry'd to him?

*SETTER.*

Really and lawfully marry'd, I am Witness.

*SHARPER.*

*Bellmour* will unriddle to you.

[*Heartwell goes to Bellmour.*

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

Pray, Madam, who are you? For I find you and I are like to be better acquainted.

*SYLVIA.*

The worst of me, is, that I am your Wife——

*SHARPER.*

Come, Sir *Joseph*, your Fortune is not so bad as you fear---A fine Lady, and a Lady of very good Quality.

Sir *JOSEPH WITTOLL.*

Thanks to my Knighthood, she's a Lady——

*VAIN LOVE.*

——That deserves a Fool with a better Title——Pray use her as my Relation, or you shall hear on't.

*BLUFFE.*

*The OLD BATCHELOR.* 123

*BLUFFE.*

What, are you a Woman of Quality too, Spouse?

*SETTER.*

And my Relation; pray let her be respected accordingly—Well, honest *Lucy*, fare thee well—I think, you and I have been Play-fellows off and on, any time this seven Years.

*LUCY.*

Hold your prating—I'm thinking what Vocation I shall follow while my Spouse is planting Laurels in the Wars.

*BLUFFE.*

No more Wars, Spouse, no more Wars----While I plant Laurels for my Head abroad, I may find the Branches sprout at home.

*HEARTWELL.*

*Bellmour*, I approve thy Mirth, and thank thee----And I cannot in Gratitude (for I see which way thou art going) see thee fall into the same Snare, out of which thou hast deliver'd me.

*BELLMOUR.*

I thank thee, *George*, for thy good Intention-----But there is a Fatality in Marriage---For I find I'm resolute.

*HEARTWELL:*

Then good Counsel will be thrown away upon you---For my Part, I have once escap'd---And when I wed again, may she be---Ugly, as an old Sawd.

*VAINLOVE.*

---Ill-natur'd, as an old Maid---

*BELLMOUR.*

Wanton as a young Widow----

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*SHARPER.*

And jealous as a barren Wife.

*HEARTWELL.*

Agreed.

*BELLMOUR.*

Well; 'midst of these dreadful Denunciations, and notwithstanding the Warning and Example before me, I commit myself to lasting Durance.

*BELINDA.*

Prisoner, make much of your Fetters.

[*Giving her Hand.*

*BELLMOUR.*

*Frank*, will you keep us in Countenance?

*VAINLOVE,*

May I presume to hope so great a Blessing?

*ARAMINTA.*

We had better take the Advantage of a little of our Friends Experience first.

*BELLMOUR.*

O' my Conscience she dares not consent, for fear he shou'd recant [*Aside.*] Well, we shall have your Company to Church in the Morning——May be it may get you an Appetite to see us all fall to before ye. *Setter*, did not you tell me? ———

*SETTER.*

They're at the Door: I'll call 'em in.

*A D A N C E.*

*BELLMOUR.*

Now set we forward on a Journey for Life-----Come take your Fellow-Travellers. Old *George*, I'm sorry to see thee still plod on alone.

*HEART-*



*HEARTWELL.*

With gaudy Plumes and gingling Bells made proud,  
The youthful Beast sets forth, and neighs aloud.  
A Morning-Sun his Tinsell'd Harness gilds,  
And the first Stage a Down-hill Green-sword yields.  
But, Oh—

What rugged Ways attend the Noon of Life!  
(Our Sun declines) and with what anxious Strife,  
What Pain we tug that galling Load, a Wife!  
All Coursers the first Heat with Vigour run;  
But 'tis with Whip and Spur the Race is won.

}

[*Excunt omnes.*





# EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. BARRY.

*AS a rash Girl, who will all Hazards run,  
And be enjoy'd, tho' sure to be undone ;  
Soon as her Curiosity is over,  
Would give the World she could her Toy recover :  
So fares it with our Poet ; and I'm sent  
To tell you, he already does repent :  
Would you were all as forward, to keep Lent.  
Now the Deed's done, the Giddy-thing has Leisure  
To think o'th' Sting, that's in the Tail of Pleasure.  
Methinks I hear him in Consideration !  
What will the World say ? Where's my Reputation ?  
Now that's at stake---No, Fool, 'tis out o' Fashion.  
If loss of that should follow want of Wit,  
How many undone Men were in the Pit !  
Why that's some Comfort to an Author's Fears,  
If he's an Ass, he will be try'd by's Peers.  
But hold——I am exceeding my Commission ;  
My Business here, was humbly to Petition :  
But we're so us'd to rail on these Occasions,  
I could not help one Trial of your Patience :*

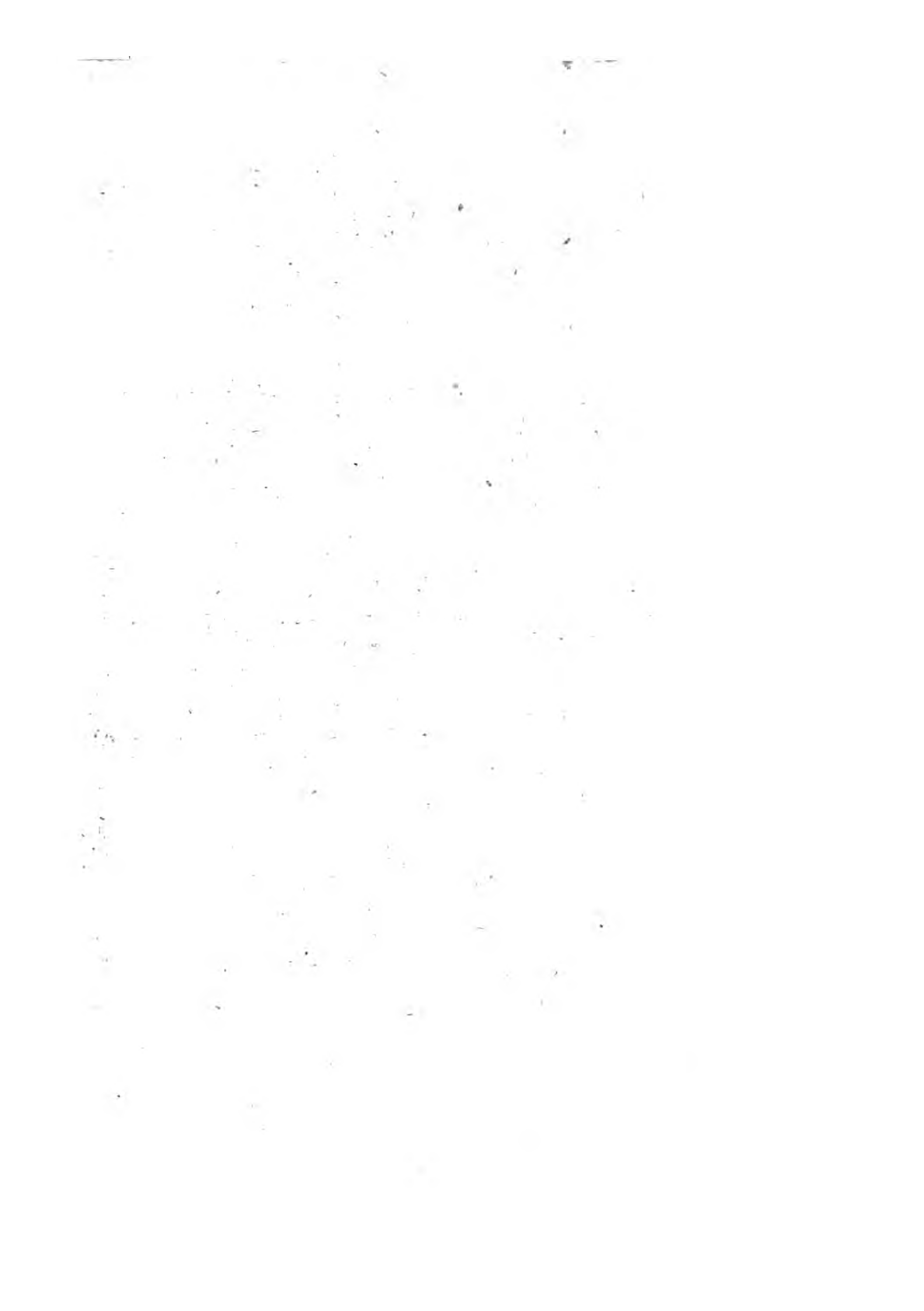
*For*

## EPILOGUE.

*For 'tis our way (you know) for fear o'th' worst,  
To be before-hand still, and cry Fool first.  
How say you, Sparks? How do you stand affected?  
I swear young Bays within is so dejected,  
'Twould grieve your Hearts to see him; shall I call him?  
But then you cruel Critics would so maul him!  
Yet, may be, you'll encourage a Beginner;  
But how? — Just as the Devil does a Sinner.  
Women and Wits are us'd e'en much at one,  
You gain your Ends, and damn 'em when you've done.*









J. Hayman inv. et del.

C. Grignion sculp.

*The Double Dealer.*



THE  
DOUBLE-DEALER.

A

COMEDY.

---

*Interdum tamen, & vocem Comœdia tollit.*

Hor. Ars Poet.

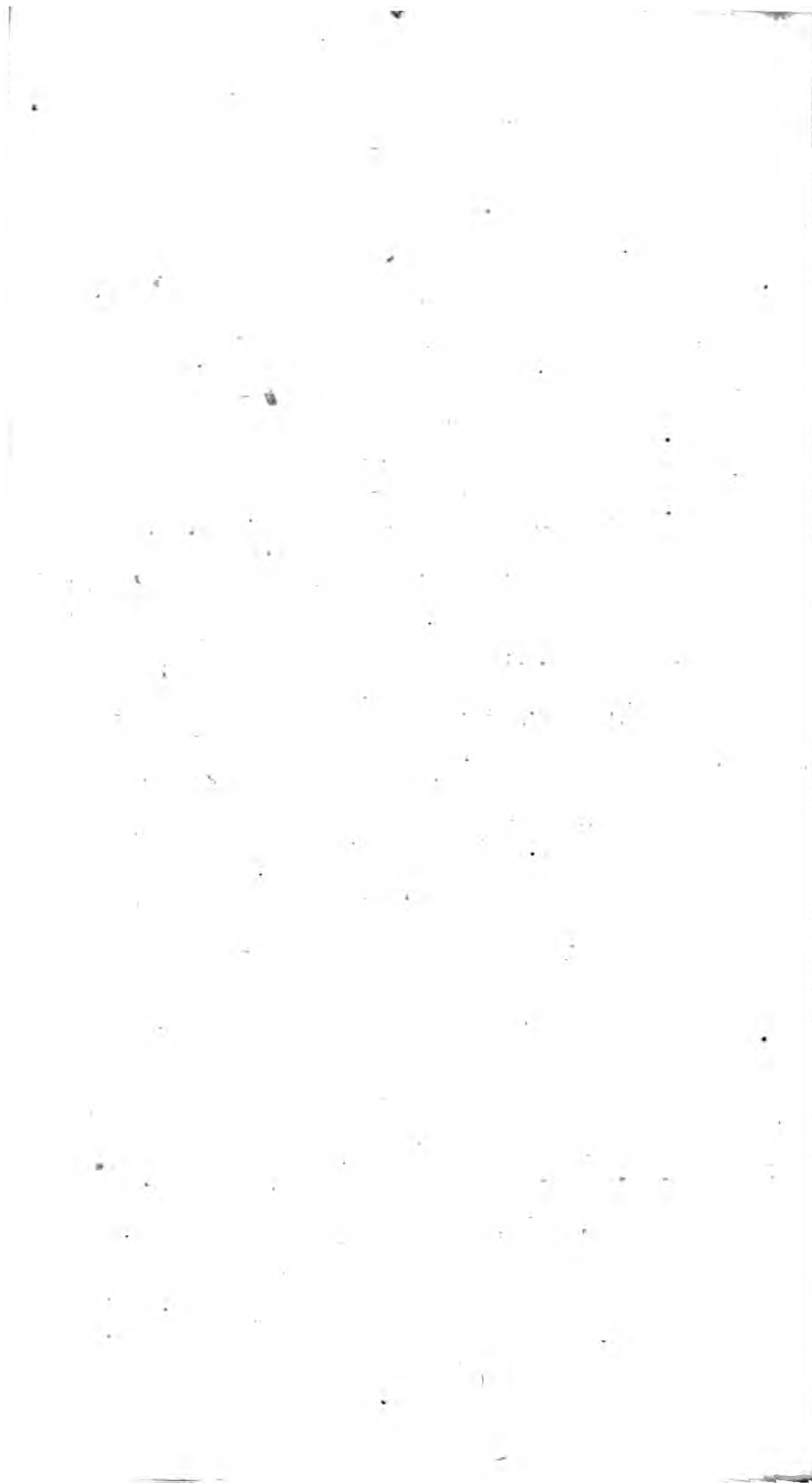
*Huic equidem Consilio palmam do: hic me magnificè effero, qui vim tantam in me & potestatem habeam tantæ astutiæ, vera dicendo ut eos ambos fallam.*

Syr. in Terent. Heaut.

---



Printed in the YEAR 1753.





To the Right Honourable

*Charles Montague,*

ONE OF THE

Lords of the Treasury.

S I R,

**I** Heartily wish this Play were as perfect as I intended it, that it might be more worthy your Acceptance; and that my Dedication of it to you, might be more becoming that Honour and Esteem which I, with every Body who is so fortunate as to know you, have for you. It had your Countenance.

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

nance when yet unknown ; and now it is made Public, wants your Protection.

I would not have any Body imagine, that I think this Play without its Faults, for I am Conscious of several. I confess I design'd (whatever Vanity or Ambition occasion'd that Design) to have written a true and regular Comedy : but I found it an Undertaking which put me in Mind of ——— *Sudet multum, frustra que laboret ausus idem.* And now to make Amends for the Vanity of such a Design, I do confess both the Attempt, and the imperfect Performance. Yet I must take the Boldness to say, I have not miscarry'd in the whole ; for the Mechanical Part of it is regular. That I may say with as little Vanity, as a Builder may say he has built a House according to the Model laid down before him ; or a Gardener that he has set his Flowers in a Knot of such or such a Figure. I design'd the Moral first, and to that Moral I invented the Fable, and do not know that I have borrow'd one Hint of it any where. I made the Plot as strong as I could, because it was single, and I  
made

### *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

made it single, because I would avoid Confusion, and was resolv'd to preserve the three Unities of the Drama. Sir, this Discourse is very impertinent to you, whose Judgment much better can discern the Faults, than I can excuse them; and whose Good-nature, like that of a Lover, will find out those hidden Beauties (if there are any such) which it wou'd be great Immodesty for me to discover. I think I do not speak improperly when I call you a *Lover* of Poetry; for it is very well known she has been a very kind Mistress to you; she has not deny'd you the last Favour; and she has been fruitful to you in a most beautiful Issue——If I break off abruptly here, I hope every Body will understand that it is to avoid a Commendation, which, as it is your Due, would be most easy for me to pay, and too troublesome for you to receive.

I have, since the Acting of this Play, hearken'd after the Objections which have been made to it; for I was conscious where a true Critic might have put me upon my Defence, I was prepared for the  
At-

### *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

Attack; and am pretty confident I could have vindicated some Parts, and excused others; and where there were any plain Miscarriages, I would most ingenuously have confess'd 'em. But I have not heard any thing said sufficient to provoke an Answer. That which looks most like an Objection, does not relate in particular to this Play, but to all or most that ever have been written; and that is Soliloquy. Therefore I will answer it, not only for my own sake, but to save others the Trouble, to whom it may hereafter be Objected.

I grant, that for a Man to Talk to himself, appears absurd and unnatural; and indeed it is so in most Cases; but the Circumstances which may attend the Occasion, make great Alteration. It oftentimes happens to a Man, to have Designs which require him to himself, and in their Nature cannot admit of a Confident. Such, for certain, is all Villany; and other less mischievous Intentions may be very improper to be communicated to a second Person. In such a Case therefore the Audience



### *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

dience must observe, whether the Person upon the Stage takes any Notice of them at all, or no. For if he supposes any one to be by, when he talks to himself, it is monstrous and ridiculous to the last degree. Nay, not only in this Case, but in any Part of a Play, if there is expressed any Knowledge of an Audience, it is insufferable. But otherwise, when a Man in Soliloquy reasons with himself, and *Pro's* and *Con's*, and weighs all his Designs: We ought not to imagine that this Man either talks to us, or to himself; he is only thinking, and thinking such Matter as were inexcusable Folly in him to speak. But because we are conceal'd Spectators of the Plot in Agitation, and the Poet finds it necessary to let us know the whole Mystery of his Contrivance, he is willing to inform us of this Person's Thoughts; and to that end is forc'd to make use of the Expedient of Speech, no other better way being yet invented for the Communication of Thought.

Another very wrong Objection has been made by some who have not taken Leisure

### *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

sure to distinguish the Characters. The Hero of the Play, as they are pleas'd to call him, (meaning *Mellefont*) is a Gull, and made a Fool, and cheated. Is every Man a Gull and a Fool that is deceiv'd? At that rate I'm afraid the two Classes of Men will be reduc'd to one, and the Knaves themselves be at a loss to justify their Title: But if an Open-hearted honest Man, who has an entire Confidence in one whom he takes to be his Friend, and whom he has oblig'd to be so; and who (to confirm him in his Opinion) in all Appearance, and upon several Trials has been so: If this Man be deceiv'd by the Treachery of the other; must he of Necessity commence Fool immediately, only because the other has prov'd a Villain? Ay, but there was Caution given to *Mellefont* in the first Act by his Friend *Careless*. Of what Nature was that Caution? Only to give the Audience some Light into the Character of *Maskwell*, before his Appearance; and not to convince *Mellefont* of his Treachery; for that was more than *Careless* was then able to do: He never knew *Maskwell*  
guilty

## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

guilty of any Villany ; he was only a sort of Man which he did not like. As for his suspecting his Familiarity with my Lady *Touchwood* : Let 'em examine the Answer that *Mellefont* makes him, and compare it with the Conduct of *Maskwell's* Character through the Play.

I would beg 'em again to look into the Character of *Maskwell*, before they accuse *Mellefont* of Weakness for being deceiv'd by him. For upon summing up the Enquiry into this **Objection**, it may be found they have mistaken Cunning in one Character, for Folly in another.

But there is one thing, at which I am more concerned than all the false Criticisms that are made upon me ; and that is, some of the Ladies are offended. I am heartily sorry for it, for I declare I would rather disoblige all the Critics in the World, than one of the fair Sex. They are concerned that I have represented some Women Vicious and Affect-ed : How can I help it ? It is the Business of a Comic Poet, to paint the  
Vices

### *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

Vices and Follies of Human-kind ; and there are but two Sexes, Male, and Female, *Men* and *Women*, which have a Title to Humanity : And if I leave one Half of them out, the Work will be imperfect. I should be very glad of an Opportunity to make my Compliment to those Ladies who are offended : But they can no more expect it in a Comedy, than to be tickled by a Surgeon, when he's letting 'em Blood. They who are Virtuous, or Discreet, shou'd not be offended, for such Characters as these distinguish *them*, and make their Beauties more shining and observ'd : And they who are of the other Kind, may nevertheless pass for such, by seeming not to be displac'd, or touch'd with the Satire of this *Comedy*. Thus have they also wrongfully accus'd me of doing them a Prejudice, when I have in reality done them a Service.

You will pardon me, Sir, for the Freedom I take of making Answers to other People, in an Epistle which ought wholly to be sacred to you : But since I intend  
the

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

the Play to be so too, I hope I may take the more Liberty of Justifying it, where it is in the Right.

I must now, Sir, declare to the World, how kind you have been to my Endeavours; for in regard of what was well meant, you have excus'd what was ill perform'd. I beg you would continue the same Method in your Acceptance of this Dedication. I know no other way of making a Return to that Humanity you shew'd, in protecting an Infant, but by enrolling it in your Service, now that it is of Age and come into the World. Therefore be pleas'd to accept of this as an Acknowledgement of the Favour you have shewn me, and an Earnest of the real Service and Gratitude of,

*S I R,*

*Your Most Obliged,*

*Humble Servant,*

**WILL. CONGREVE.**





To my Dear Friend

Mr. CONGREVE,

On his COMEDY call'd

The DOUBLE-DEALER.

**W**ELL then; the promis'd Hour is come at last;  
The present Age of Wit obscures the past;  
Strong were our Sires; and as they Fought they Writ,  
Conquering with Force of Arms, and Dint of Wit:  
Theirs was the Giant Race before the Flood;  
And thus, when Charles Return'd, our Empire stood.  
Like Janus he the stubborn Soil manur'd,  
With Rules of Husbandry the Rankness cur'd;  
Tam'd us to Manners, when the Stage was rude;  
And boistrous English Wit with Art indu'd.  
Our Age was cultivated thus at length;  
But what we gain'd in Skill, we lost in Strength.  
Our Builders were with want of Genius curst;  
The Second Temple was not like the First;

'Till



To Mr. CONGREVE.

'Till You, the best Vitruvius, come at length;  
Our Beauties equal; but excel our Strength.  
Firm Dorique Pillars found Your solid Base:  
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher Space:  
Thus all below is Strength, and all above is Grace. }  
In easy Dialogue is Fletcher's Praise:  
He mov'd the Mind, but had not Pow'r to raise.  
Great Johnson did by Strength of Judgment please:  
Yet doubling Fletcher's Force he wants his Ease.  
In diff'ring Talents both adorn'd their Age;  
One for the Study, t'other for the Stage.  
But both to Congreve justly shall submit,  
One match'd in Judgment, both o'er-match'd in Wit.  
In him all Beauties of this Age we see;  
Etheridge his Courtship, Southern's Purity; }  
The Satire, Wit, and Strength of Manly Wicherly. }  
All this in blooming Youth you have Atchiev'd;  
Nor are your foil'd Contemporaries griev'd;  
So much the Sweetness of your Manners move,  
We cannot Envy you, because we love.  
Fabius might joy in Scipio, when he saw  
A Beardless Consul made against the Law,  
And join his Suffrage to the Votes of Rome;  
Though he with Hannibal was overcome.  
Thus old Romano bow'd to Raphael's Fame;  
And Scholar to the Youth he taught, became.  
Oh that your Brows my Laurel had sustain'd;  
Well had I been depos'd, if you had Reign'd!  
The Father had descended for the Son;  
For only you are lineal to the Throne.

Thus

To Mr. CONGRIEVE.

Thus when the State one Edward did depose ;  
A greater Edward in his Room arose.  
But now, not I, but Poetry is curs'd ;  
For Tom the Second reigns like Tom the First.  
But let 'em not mistake my Patron's Part ;  
Nor call his Charity their own Desert.  
Yet this I prophesy ; Thou shalt be seen,  
(Tho' with some short Parenthesis between :)  
High on the Throne of Wit ; and seated there,  
Not mine (that's little) but thy Laurel wear.  
Thy first Attempt an early Promise made ;  
That early promise this has more than paid.  
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,  
That your least Praise is to be Regular.  
Time, Place, and Action, may with Pains be wrought,  
But Genius must be born ; and never can be taught.  
This is your Portion, this your Native Store ;  
Heav'n, that but once was Prodigal before,  
To Shakespear gave as much ; she could not give  
him more.

Maintain your Post : That's all the Fame you need ;  
For 'tis impossible you should proceed.  
Already I am worn with Cares and Age ;  
And just abandoning th' Ungrateful Stage :  
Unprofitably kept at Heav'n's Expence ;  
I live a Rent-charge on his Providence ;  
But You, whom ev'ry Muse and Grace adorn,  
Whom I foresee to better Fortune born,  
Be kind to my Remains ; and oh defend,  
Against your Judgment, your departed Friend !

To Mr. CONGREVE.

*Let not th' insulting Foe my Fame pursue ;  
But shade those Laurels which descend to You :  
And take for Tribute what these Lines express :  
You merit more ; nor could my Love do less.*

JOHN DRYDEN.



P R O :



# PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle.

**M**OORS have this Way (as Story tells) to know  
 Whether their Brats are truly got, or no;  
 Into the Sea the New-born Babe is thrown,  
 There, as Instinct directs, to swim, or drown.  
 A barbarous Device, to try if Spouse  
 Has kept religiously her Nuptial Vows.

Such are the Trials, Poets make of Plays:  
 Only they trust to more inconstant Seas;  
 So does our Author, this his Child commit  
 To the tempestuous Mercy of the Pit,  
 To know if it be truly born a Wit.

Critics avant; for you are Fish of Prey,  
 And feed, like Sharks, upon an Infant Play.  
 Be ev'ry Monster of the Deep away;  
 Let's a fair Trial have, and a clear Sea.

Let Nature work, and do not Damn too soon,  
 For Life will struggle long, ere it sink down:  
 And will at least rise thrice, before it drown.  
 Let us consider, had it been our Fate,  
 Thus hardly to be prov'd Legitimate!  
 I will not say, we'd all in Danger been,  
 Were each to suffer for his Mother's Sin:  
 But by my Troth I cannot avoid thinking,  
 How nearly some good Men might have 'scap'd sinking.  
 But,

## PROLOGUE.

*But, Heav'n be prais'd, this Custom is confin'd  
Alone to th' Offspring of the Muses kind:  
Our Christian Cuckolds are more bent to Pity;  
I know not one Moor-Husband in the City.  
Ith' good Man's-Arms the Chopping Bastard thrives,  
For he thinks all his own, that is his Wife's.*

*Whatever Fate is for this Play design'd,  
The Poet's sure he shall some Comfort find:  
For if his Muse has play'd him false, the worst  
That can befall him, is, to be divorc'd;  
You Husbands judge, if that be to be curs'd.*

3



# Dramatis Personæ.

## M E N.

<i>Maskwell</i> , A Villain ; pretended Friend to <i>Mellefont</i> , Gallant to Lady <i>Touch-</i> <i>wood</i> , and in Love with <i>Cynthia</i> .	}	Mr. <i>Betterton</i> .
Lord <i>Touchwood</i> , Uncle to <i>Mellefont</i> .		Mr. <i>Kynaston</i> .
<i>Mellefont</i> , promised to, and in Love with <i>Cynthia</i> .	}	Mr. <i>Williams</i> .
<i>Careless</i> , his Friend.		Mr. <i>Verbruggen</i> .
Lord <i>Froth</i> , a solemn Coxcomb.		Mr. <i>Bowman</i> .
<i>Brisk</i> , a pert Coxcomb.		Mr. <i>Powell</i> .
Sir <i>Paul Plyant</i> , An Uxorious, Foolish, Old Knight ; Brother to Lady <i>Touch-</i> <i>wood</i> , and Father to <i>Cynthia</i> .	}	Mr. <i>Dogget</i> .

## W O M E N.

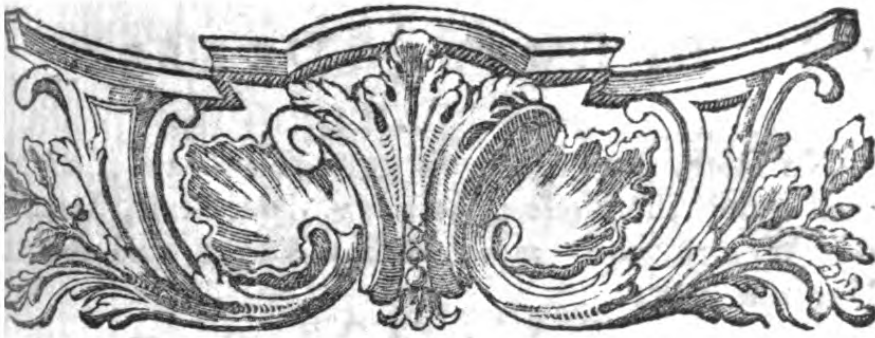
Lady <i>Touchwood</i> , in Love with <i>Mellefont</i> .	Mrs. <i>Barrey</i> .	
<i>Cynthia</i> , Daughter to Sir <i>Paul</i> by a for- mer Wife, promised to <i>Mellefont</i> .	}	Mrs. <i>Bracegirdle</i> .
Lady <i>Froth</i> , a great Coquet ; Pretender to Poetry, Wit, and Learning.		Mrs. <i>Mountfort</i> .
Lady <i>Plyant</i> , insolent to her Husband, and easy to any Pretender.	}	Mrs. <i>Leigh</i> .

*Chaplain, Boy, Footmen, and Attendants.*

The SCENE, A Gallery in the Lord *Touch-*  
*wood*'s House, with Chambers adjoining.

T H E





THE  
DOUBLE-DEALER.

---

ACT I. SCENE I.

---

*A Gallery in the Lord Touchwood's House, with  
Chambers adjoining.*

*Enter Careless, Crossing the Stage, with his Hat, Gloves,  
and Sword in his Hands; as just risen from Table:  
Mellefont following him.*

MELLEFONT.

ED, Ned, whither so fast? What, turn'd  
Flincher! why, you wo' not leave us?

CARELESS.

Where are the Women? I'm weary of  
Guzling, and begin to think them the bet-  
ter Company.

MELLEFONT.

Then thy Reason staggers, and thou'rt almost Drunk.

H 2

CARE-



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CARELESS.

No Faith, but your Fools grow noisy---and if a Man must endure the Noise of Words without Sense, I think the Women have more Musical Voices, and become Nonsense better.

MELLEFONT.

Why they are at the End of the Gallery ; retir'd to their Tea, and Scandal; according to their Ancient Custom after Dinner---But I made a Pretence to follow you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many Opportunities this Evening.

CARELESS.

And here's this Coxcomb most critically come to interrupt you.



S C E N E II.

[To them] BRISK.

BRISK.

BOYS, Boys, Lads where are you ? What, do you give Ground ? Mortgage for a Bottle, ha ? *Careless*, this is your Trick ; you're always spoiling Company by leaving it.

CARELESS.

And thou art always spoiling Company by coming into't.

BRISK.

Pooh, ha, ha, ha. I know you envy me. Spite, proud Spite, by the Gods ! and burning Envy — I'll be judg'd by

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by *Mellefont* here, who gives and takes Rallery better, you or I. Pshaw, Man, when I say you spoil Company by leaving it, I mean you leave no Body for the Company to laugh at. I think there I was with you, ha? *Mellefont*.

MELLEFONT.

O' my Word, *Brisk*, that was a home Thrust; you have silenc'd him.

BRISK.

Oh, my Dear *Mellefont*, let me perish, if thou art not the Soul of Conversation, the very Essence of Wit, and Spirit of Wine-----The Deuce take me if there were three good Things said, or one understood, since thy Amputation from the Body of our Society-----He! I think that's pretty and metaphorical enough: I'gad I could not have said it out of thy Company——*Careless*, ha?

CARELESS.

Hum, ay, what is't?

BRISK.

O, *Mon Cœur*! What is't! Nay gad I'll punish you for want of Apprehension: The Deuce take me if I tell you.

MELLEFONT.

No, no, hang him, he has no Taste,——But, dear *Brisk*, excuse me, I have a little Business.

CARELESS.

Pr'ythee get thee gone; thou seest we are serious.

MELLEFONT.

We'll come immediately, if you'll but go in, and keep up good Humour and Sense in the Company: Pr'ythee do, they'll fall asleep else.

BRISK.

I'gad so they will-----Well, I will, I will, gad you shall command me from the *Zenith* to the *Nadir*-----But the Deuce take me if I say a good thing 'till you come.

H 3

——But

—But pry'thee, dear Rogue, make haste, pry'thee make haste, I shall burst else.---- And yonder's your Uncle, my Lord *Touchwood*, swears he'll disinherit you, and Sir *Paul Phant* threatens to disclaim you for a Son-in-law, and my Lord *Froth* won't dance at your Wedding to-morrow; nor the Deuce take me, I won't write your Epithalamium —and see what a Condition you're like to be brought to.

*MELLEFONT.*

Well, I'll speak but three Words, and follow you.

*BRISK.*

Enough, enough; *Careless*, bring your Apprehension along with you.



### S C E N E III.

*MELLEFONT, CARELESS.*

*CARELESS.*

**P**ERT Coxcomb!

*MELLEFONT.*

Faith 'tis a good-natur'd Coxcomb, and has very entertaining Follies---You must be more humane to him; at this Juncture, it will do me Service.----I'll tell you, I would have Mirth continued this Day at any rate; tho' Patience purchase Folly, and Attention be paid with Noise; There are Times when Sense may be unseasonable, as well as Truth. Pry'thee do thou wear none to Day; but allow *Brisk* to have Wit, that thou may'st seem a Fool.

*CARELESS.*

Why, how now, why this extravagant Proposition?

*MEL.*

MELLEFONT.

O, I would have no room for serious Design ; for I am jealous of a Plot. I would have Noise and Impertinence keep my Lady *Touchwood's* Head from working : For Hell is not more busy than her Brain, nor contains more Devils, than that Imaginations.

CARELESS.

I thought your Fear of her had been over-----Is not to-morrow appointed for your Marriage with *Cynthia* ; and her Father, Sir *Paul Plyant*, come to settle the Writings this Day, on purpose ?

MELLEFONT.

True ; but you shall judge whether I have not Reason to be alarm'd. None besides you, and *Maskwell*, are acquainted with the Secret of my Aunt *Touchwood's* violent Passion for me. Since my first Refusal of her Addresses, she has endeavour'd to do me all ill Offices with my Uncle ; yet has managed 'em with that Subtilty, that to him they have borne the Face of Kindness ; while her Malice, like a dark Lanthorn, only shone upon me, where it was directed. Still it gave me less Perplexity to prevent the Success of her Displeasure, than to avoid the Importunities of her Love ; and of two Evils, I thought myself favour'd in her Aversion : But whether urg'd by her Despair, and a short Prospect of the Time she saw, to accomplish her Designs ; whether the Hopes of Revenge, or of her Love terminated in the View of this my Marriage with *Cynthia*, I know not ; but this Morning she surpris'd me in my Bed.——

CARELESS.

Was there ever such a Fury ! 'tis well Nature has not put it into her Sex's Power to ravish.----Well, bless us, proceed. What follow'd ?



## MELLEFONT.

What at first amaz'd me; for I look'd to have seen her in all the Transports of a slighted and revengeful Woman: But when I expected Thunder from her Voice, and Lightning in her Eyes; I saw her melted into Tears, and hush'd into a Sigh. It was long before either of us spoke; Passion had ty'd her Tongue, and Amazement mine— In short, the Consequence was thus, she omitted nothing that the most violent Love could urge, or tender Words express; which when she saw had no effect, but still I pleaded Honour and Nearness of Blood to my Uncle; then came the Storm I fear'd at first: For starting from my Bed-side like a Fury, she flew to my Sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or herself a Mischief: Having disarm'd her, in a Gust of Passion she left me, and in a Resolution, confirm'd by a thousand Curses, not to close her Eyes, 'till they had seen my Ruin.

## CARELESS.

Exquisite Woman! but what the Devil, does she think thou hast no more Sense, than to get an Heir upon her Body to disinherit thyself. For, as I take it, this Settlement upon you, is, with a Proviso, that your Uncle have no Children.

## MELLEFONT.

It is so. Well, the Service you are to do me, will be a Pleasure to yourself; I must get you to engage my Lady *Plyant* all this Evening, that my pious Aunt may not work her to her Interest. And if you can chance to secure her to yourself, you may incline her to mine. She's handsome, and knows it; is very silly, and thinks she has Sense, and has an old fond Husband.

## CARELESS.

I confess, a very fair Foundation, for a Lover to build upon.

MELLE-



MELLEFONT.

For my Lord *Froth*, he and his Wife will be sufficiently taken up, with admiring one another, and *Brisk's* Gallantry, as they call it. I'll observe my Uncle myself; and *Jack Maskwell* has promised me, to watch my Aunt narrowly, and give me Notice upon any Suspicion. As for Sir *Paul*, my wife Father-in-law that is to be, my dear *Cynthia* has such a share in his Fatherly Fondness, he would scarce make her a Moment uneasy, to have her happy hereafter.

CARELESS.

So, you have mann'd your Works : But I wish you may not have the weakest Guard, where the Enemy is strongest.

MELLEFONT.

*Maskwell*, you mean; pr'ythee why should you suspect him?

CARELESS.

Faith I cannot help it, you know I never lik'd him; I am a little superstitious in Physiognomy.

MELLEFONT.

He has Obligations of Gratitude, to bind him to me; his Dependence upon my Uncle, is through my Means.

CARELESS.

Upon your Aunt, you mean.

MELLEFONT.

My Aunt!

CARELESS.

I'm mistaken if there be not a Familiarity between them, you do not suspect : Notwithstanding her Passion for you.

MELLEFONT.

Pooh, pooh, nothing in the World but his Design to do me Service; and he endeavours to be well in her Esteem, that he may be able to effect it.

H S

CARE-

## CARELESS.

Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken; but your Aunt's Aversion in her Revenge, cannot be any Way so effectually shown, as in bringing forth a Child to disinherit you. She is handfom and cunning, and naturally wanton. *Maskwell* is Flesh and Blood at best, and Opportunities between them are frequent. His Affection to you, you have confessed, is grounded upon his Interest; that you have transplanted; and should it take Root in my Lady, I don't see what you can expect from the Fruit.

MELLEFONT.

I confess the Consequence is visible, were your Suspicions just.—But see, the Company is broke up, let's meet 'em.



## S C E N E IV.

[*To them*] LORD TOUCHWOOD, Lord FROTH, Sir PAUL PLYANT, and BRISK.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

OUT upon't, Nephew-----Leave your Father-in-law, and me, to maintain our Ground against young People.

MELLEFONT.

I beg your Lordship's Pardon——We were just returning.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Were you, Son? Gadsbud much better as it is——Good, strange! I swear I'm almost tipsy——t'other Bottle would have been too powerful for me,——as sure

as

as can be it would.—We wanted your Company : But Mr. *Brisk* — Where is he? I swear and vow, he's a most facetious Person — and the best Company. — And, my Lord *Froth*, your Lordship is so merry a Man, he, he, he.

Lord *FROTH*.

O foy, Sir *Paul*, what do you mean? Merry! O barbarous! I'd as lieve you call'd me Fool.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

Nay, I protest and vow now, 'tis true; when Mr. *Brisk* jokes, your Lordship's Laugh does so become you, he, he, he.

Lord *FROTH*.

Ridiculous! Sir *Paul*, you're strangely mistaken. I find Champagne is powerful. I assure you, Sir *Paul*, I laugh at no Body's Jest but my own, or a Lady's; I assure you, Sir *Paul*.

*BRISK*.

How? how, my Lord? what, affront my Wit! Let me perish, do I never say any Thing worthy to be laugh'd at?

Lord *FROTH*.

O foy, don't misapprehend me, I don't say so, for I often smile at your Conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming to a Man of Quality, than to Laugh; 'tis such a vulgar Expression of the Passion! every Body can laugh. Then especially to laugh at the Jest of an inferior Person, or when any Body else of the same Quality does not laugh with one; ridiculous! To be pleas'd with what pleases the Croud! Now when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

*BRISK*.

I suppose that's because you laugh at your own Jest, I'gad, ha, ha, ha.

Lord

Lord *FROTH*.

He, he, I swear tho', your Rallery provokes me to a Smile.

*BRISK*.

Ay, my Lord, it's a sign I hit you in the Teeth, if you show 'em.

Lord *FROTH*.

He, he, he, I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

*CARELESS*.

I find a Quibble bears more sway in your Lordship's Face, than a Jest.

Lord *TOUCHWOOD*.

Sir *Paul*, if you please we'll retire to the Ladies, and drink a Dish of Tea, to settle our Heads.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

With all my Heart.—Mr. *Brisk*, you'll come to us,—or call me when you joke, I'll be ready to laugh incontinently.



S C E N E V.

MELLEFONT, CARELESS, Lord *FROTH*, *BRISK*.

*MELLEFONT*.

**B**UT does your Lordship never see Comedies?

Lord *FROTH*.

O yes, sometimes,—But I never laugh.

*MELLEFONT*.

No?

Lord *FROTH*.

Oh, no,—Never laugh indeed, Sir.

*CARE-*

CARELESS.

No! why what d'ye go there for?

Lord FROTH.

To distinguish myself from the Commonalty, and mortify the Poets; the Fellows grow so conceited, when any of their foolish Wit prevails upon the Side-Boxes.— I swear, — he, he, he, I have often constrain'd my Inclinations to laugh, — he, he, he, to avoid giving them Encouragement.

MELLEFONT.

You are cruel to yourself, my Lord, as well as malicious to them.

Lord FROTH.

I confess I did myself some Violence at first, but now I think I have conquer'd it.

BRISK.

Let me perish, my Lord, but there is something very particular in the Humour; 'tis true, it makes against Wit, and I'm sorry for some Friends of mine that write, but — I'gad, I love to be malicious. — Nay, deuce take me there's Wit in't too — and Wit must be foil'd by Wit; cut a Diamond with a Diamond; no other Way I'gad.

Lord FROTH.

Oh, I thought you would not be long, before you found out the Wit.

CARELESS.

Wit! In what? Where the Devil's the Wit, in not laughing when a Man has a Mind to't?

BRISK.

O Lord, why, can't you find it out? — Why there 'tis, in the not laughing — Don't you apprehend me? — My Lord, *Careless* is a very honest Fellow, but harkee, — you understand me, somewhat heavy, a little shallow, or so — Why I'll tell you now: Suppose

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pose now you come up to me—Nay, pr'ythee *Careless* be instructed. Suppose, as I was saying, you come up to me holding your Sides, and laughing as if you would—Well—I look grave, and ask the Cause of this immoderate Mirth.—You laugh on still, and are not able to tell me—Still I look grave, not so much as smile.

*CARELESS.*

Smile, no, what the Devil should you smile at, what you suppose I can't tell you?

*BRISK.*

Pshaw, pshaw, pr'ythee don't interrupt me.—But I tell you, you shall tell me——at last——But it shall be a great while first.

*CARELESS.*

Well, but pr'ythee don't let it be a great while, because I long to have it over.

*BRISK.*

Well then, you tell me some good Jest, or very witty Thing, laughing all the while as if you were ready to die——and I hear it, and look thus.—Would not you be disappointed?

*CARELESS.*

No; for if it were a witty Thing I should not expect you to understand it.

Lord *FROTH.*

O foy, Mr. *Careless*, all the World allows Mr. *Brisk* to have Wit; my Wife says, he has a great deal. I hope you think her a Judge.

*BRISK.*

Pooh, my Lord, his Voice goes for nothing.—I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—Take it t'other Way. Suppose I say a witty Thing to you?

*CARELESS.*

Then I shall be disappointed indeed.

*MELLE.*



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MELLEFONT.

Let him alone, *Brisk*, he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

BRISK.

I'm sorry for him, the Deuce take me.

MELLEFONT.

Shall we go to the Ladies, my Lord?

Lord FROTH.

With all my Heart, methinks we are a Solitude without 'em.

MELLEFONT.

Or what say you to another Bottle of Champagne?

Lord FROTH.

O, for the Universe, not a Drop more I beseech you. Oh Intemperate! I have a flushing in my Face already.

[Takes out a Pocket-Glass and looks in it.]

BRISK.

Let me see, let me see, my Lord, I broke my Glass that was in the Lid of my Snuff-Box. Hum! Deuce take me, I have encouraged a Pimple here too.

[Takes the Glass and looks.]

Lord FROTH.

Then you must mortify him with a Patch; my Wife shall supply you. Come, Gentlemen, *allons*, here is Company coming.



SCENE



S C E N E VI.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD, and MASKWELL.*

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

I'LL hear no more.--Y'are false and ungrateful; come,  
I know you false.

*MASKWELL.*

I have been frail, I confess, Madam, for your Ladyship's Service.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

That I should trust a Man, whom I had known betray his Friend!

*MASKWELL.*

What Friend have I betray'd? Or to whom?

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

Your fond friend *Mellefont*, and to me; can you deny it?

*MASKWELL.*

I do not.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

Have you not wrong'd my Lord, who has been a Father to you in your Wants, and given you Being? Have you not wrong'd him in the highest Manner, in his Bed?

*MASKWELL.*

With your Ladyship's help, and for your Service, as I told you before. I can't deny that neither.—Any thing more, Madam?

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

More! Audacious Villain. O, what's more, is most my Shame,—Have you not dishonour'd me?

*MASK-*

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M A S K W E L L.

No, that I deny ; for I never told in all my Life : So that Accufation's answer'd ; on to the next.

Lady T O U C H W O O D.

Death, do you dally with my Passion ? Insolent Devil ! But have a care, — Provoke me not ; for, by the Eternal Fire, you shall not 'scape my Vengeance — Calm Villain ! how unconcern'd he stands, confessing Treachery and Ingratitude ! Is there a Vice more black ! — O I have Excuses, thousands for my Faults ; Fire in my Temper, Passions in my Soul, apt to ev'ry Provocation ; opprest at once with Love, and with Despair. But a sedate, a thinking Villain, whose black Blood runs temperately bad, what Excuse can clear !

M A S K W E L L.

Will you be in Temper, Madam ? I would not talk not to be heard. I have been [*She walks about disorder'd.*] a very great Rogue for your Sake, and you reproach me with it ; I am ready to be a Rogue still, to do you Service ; and you are flinging Conscience and Honour in my Face, to rebate my Inclinations. How am I to behave myself ; You know I am your Creature, my Life and Fortune in your Power ; to disoblige you, brings me certain Ruin. Allow it, I would betray you ; I would not be a Traitor to myself : I don't pretend to Honesty, because you know I am a Rascal : But I would convince you, from the Necessity of my being firm to you.

Lady T O U C H W O O D.

Necessity, Impudence ! Can no Gratitude incline you, no Obligations touch you ? Have not my Fortune, and my Person, been subjected to your Pleasure ? Were you not in the Nature of a Servant, and have not I in effect made you Lord of all, of me, and of my Lord ? Where is that humble Love, the Languishing, that Adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engaged ?

M A S K -

*MASKWELL.*

Fixt, rooted in my Heart, whence nothing can remove  
'em, yet you——

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

Yet, what yet?

*MASKWELL.*

Nay, misconceive me not, Madam, when I say I have  
had a gen'rous and a faithful Passion, which you had  
never favour'd, but through Revenge and Policy.

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

Ha!

*MASKWELL.*

Look you, Madam, we are alone,—— Pray contain  
yourself, and hear me. You know you lov'd your Ne-  
phew, when I first sigh'd for you; I quickly found it;  
an Argument that I lov'd; for with that Art you veil'd  
your Passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous Eyes.  
This Discovery made me bold; I confess it; for by it, I  
thought you in my Power. Your Nephew's Scorn of  
you, added to my Hopes; I watch'd the Occasion, and  
took you, just repuls'd by him, warm at once with Love  
and Indignation; your Disposition, my Arguments, and  
happy Opportunity, accomplish'd my Design; I prest the  
yielding Minute, and was blest'd. How I have lov'd you  
since, Words have not shown, then how should Words  
expres?

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

Well, mollifying Devil!——And have I not met your  
Love with forward Fire?

*MASKWELL.*

Your Zeal I grant was ardent, but misplac'd; there  
was Revenge in view; that Woman's Idol had defil'd the  
Temple of the God, and Love was made a Mock-Wor-  
ship.—A Son and Heir would have edg'd young *Melle-*  
*font*

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font upon the Brink of Ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for Prevention.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Again, provoke me! Do you wind me like a Larum, only to rouse my own still'd Soul for your Diversion? Confusion!

MASKWELL.

Nay, Madam, I'm gone, if you Relapse—What needs this? I say nothing but what you yourself, in open Hours of Love, have told me. Why should you deny it? Nay, how can you deny it? Is not all this present Heat owing to the same Fire? Do you not love him still? How have I this Day offended you, but in not breaking off his Match with *Cynthia*? Which ere to-morrow shall be done,—had you but Patience.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

How, what said you, *Maskwell*,—Another Caprice to unwind my Temper?

MASKWELL.

By Heav'n, no; I am your Slave, the Slave of all your Pleasures; and will not rest 'till I have given you Peace, would you suffer me.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

O, *Maskwell*, in vain I do disguise me from thee, thou know'st me, know'st the very inmost Windings and Re-cesses of my Soul.—Oh *Mellefont*! I burn; married to-morrow! Despair strikes me. Yet my Soul knows I hate him too: Let him but once be mine, and next immediate Ruin seize him.

MASKWELL.

Compose yourself, you shall possess and ruin him too, —Will that please you?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

How, how? Thou dear, thou precious Villain, how?

MASK-

*MASKWELL.*

You have already been tampering with my Lady *Plyant*?  
Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

I have: She is ready for any Impression I think fit.

*MASKWELL.*

She must be thoroughly persuaded that *Mellefont* loves her.

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

She is so credulous that Way naturally, and likes him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can persuade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling Design; for her first conversing with *Mellefont*, will convince her of the contrary.

*MASKWELL.*

I know it. — I don't depend upon it. — But it will prepare something else; and gain us Leisure to lay a stronger Plot: If I gain a little Time, I shall not want Contrivance.

*One Minute gives Invention to destroy,  
What, to rebuild, will a whole Age employ.*

*End of the First Act.*



**ACT**





ACT II. SCENE I.

Lady FROTH and CYNTHIA.

CYNTHIA.



INDEED, Madam! Is it possible your Ladyship could have been so much in Love?

Lady FROTH.

I could not sleep one Wink for three Weeks together.

CYNTHIA.

Prodigious! I wonder, want of Sleep, and so much Love, and so much Wit as your Ladyship has, did not turn your Brain.

Lady FROTH.

O my dear *Cynthia*, you must not rally your Friend—But really as you say, I wonder too,—But then I had a Way.—For between you and I, I had Whimfies and Vapours, but I gave them Vent.

CYNTHIA.

How pray, Madam?

Lady FROTH.

O I writ, writ abundantly,—Do you never write?

CYNTHIA.

Write, what?

Lady FROTH.

Songs, Elegies, Satires, Encomiums, Panegyrics, Lampons, Plays, or Heroic Poems.

CYN-

*CYNTHIA.*

O Lord, not I, Madam ; I'm content to be a courteous Reader.

Lady *FROTH.*

O Inconsistent ! In Love, and not write ! If my Lord and I had been both of your Temper, we had never come together. — O blefs me ! what a sad Thing would that have been, if my Lord and I should never have met !

*CYNTHIA.*

Then neither my Lord nor you would ever have met with your Match, on my Conscience.

Lady *FROTH.*

O' my Conscience no more we should ; thou say'st right — for sure my Lord *Froth* is as fine a Gentleman, and as much a Man of Quality ! Ah ! Nothing at all of the common Air, — I think I may say he wants nothing, but a blue Ribbon and a Star, to make him shine the very Phosphorus of our Hemisphere. Do you understand those two hard Words ? If you don't, I'll explain 'em to you.

*CYNTHIA.*

Yes, yes, Madam, I'm not so Ignorant. — At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your Instructions.

[*Aside.*]Lady *FROTH.*

Nay, I beg your Pardon ; but being deriv'd from the *Greek*, I thought you might have escap'd the Etymology. — But I'm the more amaz'd, to find you a Woman of Letters, and not write ! Blefs me ! how can *Mellefont* believe you love him ?

*CYNTHIA.*

Why Faith, Madam, he that won't take my Word, shall never have it under my Hand.

Lady

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Lady FROTH.

I vow *Mellefont's* a pretty Gentleman, but methinks he wants a Manner.

CYNTHIA.

A Manner! What's that, Madam?

Lady FROTH.

Some distinguishing Quality; as for Example, the *Bel-air* or *Brillant* of Mr. *Brisk*; the Solemnity, yet Complaisance of my Lord, or something of his own that should look a little *Je-ne-sçay-quoi*; he is too much a Mediocrity, in my Mind.

CYNTHIA.

He does not indeed affect either Pertness or Formality; for which I like him: Here he comes.

Lady FROTH.

And my Lord with him: Pray observe the Difference.



S C E N E II.

[To them] Lord FROTH, MELLEFONT and  
BRISK.

CYNTHIA.

IMPERTINENT Creature! I could almost be angry with her now. [Aside.]

Lady FROTH.

My Lord, I have been telling *Cynthia*, how much I have been in Love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now; Ah! it makes my Heart leap, I vow I sigh when I think on't: My dear Lord! Ha, ha, ha, do you remember, my Lord?

[Squeezes him by the Hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.]

Lord

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Lord *FROTH.*

Pleasant Creature! perfectly well: ah! that Look, ay, there it is; who could resist! 'twas so my Heart was made a Captive first, and ever since 't has been in Love with happy Slavery.

Lady *FROTH.*

O that Tongue, that dear deceitful Tongue! that charming Softness in your Mien and your Expression, and then your Bow! Good my Lord, bow as you did when I gave you my Picture; here, suppose this my Picture—

[*Gives him a pocket Glass.*

Pray mind my Lord; ah! he bows charmingly; nay, my Lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now.

[*He bows profoundly low, then kisses the Glass.*

Lord *FROTH.*

I saw myself there, and kiss'd it for your sake.

Lady *FROTH.*

Ah! Gallantry to the last degree—Mr. *Brisk*, you're a Judge; was ever any thing so well bred as my Lord?

*BRISK.*

Never any Thing; but your Ladyship, let me perish.

Lady *FROTH.*

O prettily turn'd again; let me die but you have a great deal of Wit. Mr. *Mellefont*, don't you think Mr. *Brisk* has a World of Wit?

*MELLEFONT.*

O, yes, Madam.

*BRISK.*

O dear, Madam —

Lady *FROTH.*

An infinite deal!

*BRISK.*

⊙ Heav'ns! Madam —

Lady

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Lady FROTH.

More Wit than any Body.

BRISK.

I'm everlastingly your humble Servant, deuce take me, Madam.

Lord FROTH.

Don't you think us a happy Couple ?

CYNTHIA.

I vow, my Lord, I think you the happiest Couple in the World ; for you're not only happy in one another, and when you are together, but happy in yourselves, and by yourselves.

Lord FROTH.

I hope *Mellefont* will make a good Husband too.

CYNTHIA.

'Tis my Interest to believe he will, my Lord.

Lord FROTH.

D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my Wife ?  
I'm afraid not.

CYNTHIA.

I believe he'll love me better.

Lord FROTH.

Heav'ns ! that can never be ; but why do you think so ?

CYNTHIA.

Because he has not so much Reason to be fond of himself.

Lord FROTH.

O your humble Servant for that, Dear Madam ; well, *Mellefont*, you'll be a happy Creature.

MELLEFONT.

Ay, my Lord, I shall have the same Reason for my Happiness that your Lordship has, I shall think myself happy.

Lord FROTH.

Ah, that's all.

VOL. I.

I

BRISK.

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*BRISK.* [to Lady Froth.]

Your Ladyship is in the right; but I'gad I'm wholly turn'd into Satire. I confess I write but seldom, but when I do——— keen *Iambics*, I'gad. But my Lord was telling me, your Ladyship has made an Effay towards an Heroic Poem.

Lady *FROTH.*

Did my Lord tell you! Yes I vow, and the Subject is my Lord's Love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare swear you won't guess—*The Sillabub*, ha, ha, ha.

*BRISK.*

Because my Lord's Title's *Froth*, I'gad, ha, ha, ha, deuce take me very *à propos* and surprising, ha, ha, ha.

Lady *FROTH.*

He, ay, is not it?——— And then I call my Lord *Spumoso*; and myself, what d'ye think I call myself?

*BRISK.*

*Laëilla*, may be.——'gad I cannot tell.

Lady *FROTH.*

*Biddy*, that's all; just my own Name.

*BRISK.*

*Biddy!* I'gad very pretty——— Deuce take me if your Ladyship has not the Art of surprising the most naturally in the World,—— I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the Poem.

Lady *FROTH.*

O, you must be my Confident, I must ask your Advice.

*BRISK.*

I'm your humble Servant, let me perish,—— I presume your Ladyship has read *Bossu*?

Lady *FROTH.*

O yes, and *Rapin*, and *Dacier* upon *Aristotle* and *Horace*—— My Lord, you must not be jealous, I'm communicating all to Mr. *Brisk*.

Lord



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Lord FROTH.

No, no, I'll allow Mr. *Brisk*; have you nothing about you to shew him, my Dear?

Lady FROTH.

Yes, I believe I have.—Mr. *Brisk*, come, will you go into the next Room? And there I'll shew you what I have.

Lord FROTH.

I'll walk a Turn in the Garden, and come to you.



S C E N E III.

MELLEFONT, CYNTHIA.

MELLEFONT.

YOU'RE thoughtful, *Cynthia*?

CYNTHIA.

I'm thinking, tho' Marriage makes Man and Wife one Flesh, it leaves 'em still two Fools; and they become more Conspicuous by setting off one another.

MELLEFONT.

That's only when two Fools meet, and their Follies are oppos'd.

CYNTHIA.

Nay, I have known two Wits meet, and by the Opposition of their Wit, render themselves as ridiculous as Fools. 'Tis an odd Game we're going to play at: What think you of drawing Stakes, and giving over in time?

MELLEFONT.

No, hang't, that's not endeavouring to win, because it's possible we may lose; since we have shuffled and cut, let's e'en turn up Trump now.

I 2

CYN,

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CYNTHIA.

Then I find it's like Cards, if either of us have a good Hand it is an Accident of Fortune.

MELLEFONT.

No, Marriage is rather like a Game at Bowls, Fortune indeed makes the Match, and the two nearest, and sometimes the two farthest are together, but the Game depends intirely upon Judgment.

CYNTHIA.

Still it is a Game, and consequently one of us must be a Loser.

MELLEFONT.

Not at all; only a friendly Trial of Skill, and the Winnings to be laid out in an Entertainment.—What's here, the Music?—Oh, my Lord has promised the Company a new Song, we'll get 'em to give it us by the Way. [*Musicians crossing the Stage.*] Pray let us have the Favour of you, to practise the Song before the Company hear it.

S O N G .

I.

**C**YNthia frowns when-e'er I woo her,  
Yet she's vex't if I give over;  
Much she fears I should undo her,  
But much more to lose her Lover:  
Thus, in doubting, she refuses;  
And not winning, thus she loses.

II.

Pr'ythee Cynthia look behind you,  
Age and Wrinkles will o'ertake you;  
Then too late Desire will find you,  
When the Power must forsake you:

*Think,*

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*Think, O think o'th' sad Condition,  
To be past, yet wish Fruition.*

MELLEFONT.

You shall have my Thanks below.

*[To the Music, they go out.]*



S C E N E IV.

*[To them]* Sir PAUL PLYANT and Lady PLYANT.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

GADS bud! I am provok'd into a Fermentation, as my Lady Froth says; was ever the like read of in Story?

Lady PLYANT.

Sir Paul have Patience, let me alone to rattle him up.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Pray your Ladyship give me leave to be angry — I'll rattle him up I warrant you, I'll firk him with a *Certiorari*.

Lady PLYANT.

You firk him! I'll firk him myself; pray Sir Paul hold you contented.

CYNTHIA.

Bless me, what makes my Father in such a Passion! — I never saw him thus before.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Hold yourself contented, my Lady Plyant, — I find Passion coming upon me by Inflation, and I cannot submit as formerly, therefore give way.

Lady *PLYANT*.

How now ! will you be pleased to retire, and——  
Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

No marry will I not be pleased, I am pleased to be  
angry, that's my Pleasure at this time.

*MELLEFONT*.

What can this mean !

Lady *PLYANT*.

Gads my Life, the Man's distracted ; why how now,  
who are you ? What am I ? Slidikins, can't I govern you ?  
What did I marry you for ? Am I not to be absolute and  
uncontrolable ? Is it fit a Woman of my Spirit, and  
Conduct, should be contradicted in a Matter of this  
Concern ?

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

It concerns me, and only me ;— Besides, I'm not to  
be govern'd at all Times. When I am in Tranquillity, my  
Lady *Plyant* shall command Sir *Paul* ; but when I am pro-  
vok'd to Fury, I cannot incorporate with Patience and  
Reason, ——— as soon may Tigers match with Tigers,  
Lambs with Lambs, and every Creature Couple with its  
Foe, as the Poet says.——

Lady *PLYANT*.

He's hot-headed still ! 'tis in vain to talk to you ;  
but remember I have a Curtain-Lecture for you, you  
disobedient headstrong Brute.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

No, 'tis because I won't be a Brute, and have my  
Head fortify'd, that I am thus exasperated.—— But I  
will protect my Honour, and yonder is the Violater of my  
Fame.

Lady *PLYANT*.

'Tis my Honour that is concern'd, and the Violation  
was intended to me. Your Honour ! you have none but  
what

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what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please-----therefore don't provoke me.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Hum, gads-bud she says true-----Well, my Lady, march on, I will fight under you then : I am convinced, as far as Passion will permit.

[*L. Plyant and Sir Paul come up to Mellefont.*

Lady PLYANT.

Inhuman and Treacherous.-----

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Thou Serpent and first Tempter of Womankind.-----

CYNTHIA.

Bless me ! Sir : Madam ; what mean you ?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

*Thy, Thy*, come away *Thy*, touch him not, come hither Girl, go not near him, there's nothing but Deceit about him ; Snakes are in his Peruke, and the Crocodile of *Nilus* in his Belly, he will eat thee up alive.

Lady PLYANT.

Dishonourable, impudent Creature !

MELLEFONT.

For Heav'n's sake, Madam, to whom do you direct this Language !

Lady PLYANT.

Have I behav'd myself with all the Decorum and Nicety, befitting the Person of Sir Paul's Wife ? Have I preserv'd my Honour as it were in a Snow-house for these three Years past ? Have I been white and unsoil'd even by Sir Paul himself ?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Nay, she has been an invincible Wife, even to me, that's the Truth on't.

Lady PLYANT.

Have I, I say, preserv'd myself, like a fair Sheet of Paper, for you to make a Blot upon ?-----

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Sir PAUL PLYANT.

And she shall make a Simile with any Woman in *Eng-land*.

MELLEFONT.

I am so amaz'd, I know not what to say.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Do you think my Daughter, this pretty Creature; gads-bud she's a Wife for a Cherubim! Do you think her fit for nothing but to be a stalking Horse, to stand before you while you take aim at my Wife? gads-bud I was never angry before in my Life, and I'll never be appeas'd again.

MELLEFONT.

Hell and Damnation! This is my Aunt; such Malice can be engendred no where else. [Aside.

Lady PLYANT.

Sir Paul, take *Cynthia* from his Sight; leave me to strike him with the Remorse of his intended Crime.

CYNTHIA.

Pray, Sir, stay, hear him, I dare affirm he's Innocent.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Innocent! Why hark'ye, come hither *Thy*, hark'ye, I had it from his Aunt, my Sister *Touchwood*,----gads-bud he does not care a Farthing for any thing of thee, but thy Portion, why, he's in love with my Wife; he would have tantaliz'd thee, and made a Cuckold of thy poor Father,----and that would certainly have broke my Heart ----I'm sure if ever I should have Horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly, I shou'd die of 'em, like a Child that was cutting his Teeth---I should indeed, *Thy*,----therefore come away; but Providence has prevented all, therefore come away when I bid you.

CYNTHIA.

I must obey.

S C E N E





S C E N E V.

*Lady PLYANT, MELLEFONT.*

*Lady PLYANT.*

O, Such a thing! the Impiety of it startles me-----  
to wrong so good, so fair a Creature, and one that  
loves you tenderly---'tis a Barbarity of Barbarities, and  
nothing could be guilty of it.

*MELLEFONT.*

But the greatest Villain Imagination can form, I grant  
it; and next to the Villany of such a Fact, is the Villany  
of aspersing me with the Guilt. How? which way was  
I to wrong her? For yet I understand you not.

*Lady PLYANT.*

Why, gads my Life, Cousin *Mellefont*, you cannot be  
so peremptory as to deny it; when I tax you with it  
to your Face; for now *Sir Paul's* gone, you are *Corum  
Nobis*.

*MELLEFONT.*

By Heav'n, I love her more than Life, or-----

*Lady PLYANT.*

Fiddle, faddle, don't tell me of this and that, and every  
Thing in the World, but give me Mathemacular Demon-  
stration, answer me directly---But I have not Patience  
---Oh! The Impiety of it, as I was saying, and the  
unparallel'd Wickedness! Merciful Father! How could  
you think to reverse Nature so, to make the Daughter the  
means of procuring the Mother?

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MELLEFONT.

The Daughter to procure the Mother!

Lady PLYANT.

Ay, for tho' I am not *Cynthia's* own Mother, I am her Father's Wife; and that's near enough to make it Incest.

MELLEFONT.

Incest! O my precious Aunt, and the Devil in Conjunction. [*Afide.*

Lady PLYANT.

O reflect upon the Horror of that, and then the Guilt of deceiving every Body; marrying the Daughter, only to make a Cuckold of the Father; and then seducing me, debauching my Purity, and perverting me from the Road of Virtue, in which I have trod thus long, and never made one trip, not one *faux pas*; O consider it, what would you have to answer for, if you should provoke me to Frailty? Alas! Humanity is feeble, Heav'n knows! very feeble, and unable to support itself.

MELLEFONT.

Where am I? Is it Day? and am I awake? Madam--

Lady PLYANT.

And no Body knows how Circumstances may happen together-----To my thinking, now I could resist the strongest Temptation,----But yet I know, 'tis impossible for me to know whether I could or not, there's no Certainty in the Things of this Life.

MELLEFONT.

Madam, pray give me leave to ask you one Question.-----

Lady PLYANT.

O Lord, ask me the Question! I'll swear I'll refuse it; I swear I'll deny it----therefore don't ask me, nay you shan't ask me, I swear I'll deny it. O Gemini, you have brought  
brought

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brought all the Blood into my Face; I warrant I am as red as a Turkey-Cock; O fy, Coufin *Mellefont!*

MELLEFONT.

Nay, Madam, hear me; I mean——

Lady *PLYANT*.

Hear you? no, no; I'll deny you first, and hear you afterward. For one does not know how ones Mind may change upon hearing----Hearing is one of the Senses, and all the Senses are fallible; I won't trust my Honour, I assure you; my Honour is infallible and uncomatible.

MELLEFONT.

For Heav'n's sake, Madam,---

Lady *PLYANT*.

O name it no more----Bless me, how can you talk of Heav'n! and have so much wickedness in your Heart? May be you don't think it a Sin----They say some of you Gentlemen don't think it a Sin----May be it is no Sin to them that don't think it so; indeed if I did not think it a Sin----But still my Honour, if it were no Sin,----But then to marry my Daughter for the Conveniency of frequent Opportunities.----I'll never consent to that, as sure as can be, I'll break the Match.

MELLEFONT.

Death and Amazement,--Madam, upon my Knees—

Lady *PLYANT*.

Nay, nay, rise up, come you shall see my good Nature. I know Love is powerful, and no Body can help his Passion: 'Tis not your Fault; nor I swear it is not mine.-----How can I help it if I have Charms? And how can you help it, if you are made a Captive? I swear it is pity it should be a Fault,----But my Honour,----well, but your Honour too----but the Sin!----well but the Necessity----O Lord, here's some Body coming. I dare not stay. Well, you must consider of your Crime;  
and

and strive as much as can be against it,——strive, be sure——But don't be melancholic, don't despair,——But never think that I'll grant you any thing ; O Lord, no ;——but be sure you lay aside all Thoughts of the Marriage, for tho' I know you don't love *Cynthia*, only as a Blind to your Passion for me ; yet it will make me Jealous——O Lord, what did I say ? Jealous ! no, no, I can't be jealous, for I must not love you,——therefore don't hope,——But don't despair neither,——O, they're coming, I must fly.



## S C E N E VI.

MELLEFONT *alone.*

MELLEFONT (*after a Pause.*)

SO then,——spite of my Care and Foresight, I am caught, caught in my Security,——Yet this was but a shallow Artifice, unworthy of my Matchiavilian Aunt : There must be more behind, this is but the first Flash, the priming of her Engine ; Destruction follows hard, if not most presently prevented.



S C E N E



S C E N E VII.

[To him] MASKWELL.

MELLEFONT.

**M** *Askwell*, welcome, thy Presence is a view of Land, appearing to my shipwreck'd Hopes: The Witch has rais'd the Storm, and her Ministers have done their Work; you see the Vessels are parted.

MASKWELL.

I know it; I met Sir *Paul* towing away *Cynthia*: Come, trouble not your Head, I'll join you together ere to-morrow Morning, or drown between you in the Attempt.

MELLEFONT.

There's Comfort in a Hand stretch'd out, to one that's sinking; tho' ne'er so far off.

MASKWELL.

No sinking, nor no Danger,——Come, cheer up; why you don't know, that while I plead for you, your Aunt has given me a retaining Fee;——Nay, I am your greatest Enemy, and she does but Journey-Work under me.

MELLEFONT.

Ha? how's this?

MASKWELL.

What d'ye think of my being employ'd in the Execution of all her Plots? Ha, ha, ha, by Heav'n it's true; I have undertaken to break the Match, I have undertaken to make your Uncle disinherit you, to get you turn'd out of Doors; and to——and to——Ha, ha, ha, I can't  
tell



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tell you for Laughing, ——— Oh she has open'd her Heart to me — I am to turn you a grazing, and to — Ha, ha, ha, marry *Cynthia* myself; there's a Plot for you.

*MELLEFONT.*

Ha! O I see, I see my rising Sun! Light breaks thro' Clouds upon me, and I shall live in Day ——— O my *Maskwell!* How shall I thank or praise thee; thou hast out-witted Women. ——— But tell me, how could'st thou thus get into her Confidence? ——— Ha? How? But was it her Contrivance to persuade my Lady *Plyant* to this extravagant Belief?

*MASKWELL.*

It was, and to tell you the Truth, I encourag'd it for your Diversion; Tho' it made you a little uneasy for the present, yet the Reflection of it must needs be entertaining ——— I warrant she was very violent at first.

*MELLEFONT.*

Ha, ha, ha, ay, ay, a very Fury; but I was most afraid of her Violence at last ——— If you had not come as you did; I don't know what she might have attempted.

*MASKWELL.*

Ha, ha, ha, I know her Temper. ——— Well, you must know then, that all my Contrivances were but Bubbles; 'till at last I pretended to have been long secretly in love with *Cynthia*; that did my business; that convinc'd your Aunt, I might be trusted; since it was as much my Interest as hers to break the Match: Then she thought my Jealousy might qualify me to assist her in her Revenge: And in short, in that Belief, told me the Secrets of her Heart. At length we made this Agreement, if I accomplish her Designs (as I told you before) she has engag'd to put *Cynthia* with all her Fortune into my Power.

*MELLE-*



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M E L L E F O N T.

She is most gracious in her Favour,——Well, and dear *Jack*, how hast thou contrived?

M A S K W E L L.

I would not have you stay to hear it now; for I don't know, but she may come this way; I am to meet her anon; after that I'll tell you the whole Matter; be here in this Gallery an hour hence, by that time I imagine our Consultation may be over.

M E L L E F O N T.

I will; 'till then Success attend thee.



S C E N E VIII.

M A S K W E L L *alone.*

'T I L L then, Success will attend me; for when I meet you, I meet the only Obstacle to my Fortune. *Cynthia*, let thy Beauty gild my Crimes; and whatsoever I commit of Treachery or Deceit, shall be imputed to me as a Merit——Treachery! what Treachery? Love cancels all the Bonds of Friendship, and sets Men right upon the first Foundations.

Duty to Kings, Piety to Parents, Gratitude to Benefactors, and Fidelity to Friends, are different and particular Ties: But the Name of Rival cuts 'em all asunder, and is a general Acquittance——Rival is equal, and Love like Death an universal Leveller of Mankind. Ha! But is there not such a Thing as Honesty? Yes, and whosoever has it about him, bears an Enemy in his Breast: For your honest Man, as I take it, is that nice scrupulous, conscientious Person, who will cheat no Body but himself; such another Coxcomb, as your wise Man,  
who

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who is too hard for all the World, and will be made a Fool of by no Body, but himself: Ha, ha, ha. Well for Wisdom and Honesty, give me Cunning and Hypocrisy; oh, 'tis such a Pleasure, to angle for fair-fac'd Fools! Then that hungry Gudgeon Credulity, will bite at any thing —— Why, let me see, I have the same Face, the same Words and Accents, when I speak what I do think; and when I speak what I do not think——the very same ——and dear Diffimulation is the only Art, not to be known from Nature.

*Why will Mankind be Fools, and be deceiv'd?  
And why are Friends and Lovers Oaths believ'd?  
When, each, who searches strictly his own Mind,  
May so much Fraud and Power of Baseness find.*

*End of the Second Act.*



A C T .



ACT III. SCENE I.

Lord TOUCHWOOD, and Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.



Y Lord, can you blame my Brother *Plyant*, if he refuse his Daughter upon this Provocation? the Contract's void by this unheard of Impiety.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I don't believe it true; he has better Principles——Pho, 'tis Nonsense. Come, come, I know my Lady *Plyant* has a large Eye, and would centre every Thing in her own Circle; 'tis not the first time she has mistaken Respect for Love, and made Sir *Paul* jealous of the Civility of an undefigning Person, the better to bespeak his Security in her unfeigned Pleasures.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

You censure hardly, my Lord; my Sister's Honour is very well known.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little Trick wrought by some pitiful Contriver, envious of my Nephew's Merit.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, my Lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so: But that will require some time; for in such a Case as this, Demonstration is necessary.

Lord

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Lord TOUCHWOOD.

There should have been Demonstration of the contrary too, before it had been believ'd——

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

So I suppose there was.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

How? Where? When?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

That I can't tell; nay I don't say there was——I am willing to believe as favourably of my Nephew as I can.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I don't know that.

[*Half Aside.*]

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

How? don't you believe that, say you, my Lord?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

No, I don't say so — I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his Defence.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

His Defence! bless me, would you have me defend an ill Thing?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

You believe it then?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

I don't know; I am very unwilling to speak my Thoughts in any Thing that may be to my Cousin's Disadvantage; besides, I find, my Lord, you are prepared to receive an ill Impression from any Opinion of mine which is not consenting with your own: But since I am like to be suspected in the End, and 'tis a Pain any longer to dissemble, I own it to you; in short I do believe it, nay, and can believe any thing worse, if it were laid to his Charge----Don't ask me my Reasons, my Lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

Lord

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Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I'm amaz'd, here must be something more than ordinary in this. [*Aside.*] Not fit to be told me, Madam? You can have no Interests, wherein I am not concern'd, and consequently the same Reasons ought to be convincing to me, which create your Satisfaction or Disquiet.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

But those which cause my Disquiet, I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good my Lord, don't press me.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Don't oblige me to press you.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Whatever it was, 'tis past: And that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented; therefore let me beg you to rest satisfy'd--

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

When you have told me, I will----

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

You won't.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

By my Life, my Dear, I will.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

What if you can't.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

How! Then, I must know, nay I will: No more trifling----I charge you tell me---By all our mutual Peace to come; upon your Duty----

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, my Lord, you need say no more, to make me lay my Heart before you; but don't be thus transported; compose yourself: It is not of Concern, to make you lose one Minute's Temper. 'Tis not indeed, my Dear. Nay, by this Kiss you shan't be angry. O Lord, I wish

I

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I had not told you any thing.—Indeed, my Lord, you have frighted me. Nay, look pleas'd, I tell you.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Well, well.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, but will you be calm——indeed it's nothing but——

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

But what ?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

But will you promise me not to be angry—Nay you must——Not to be angry with *Mellefont*——I dare swear he's sorry——and were it to do again, would not——

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Sorry, for what ? Death, you rack me with Delay.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, no great Matter ; only——Well I have your Promise——Pho, why nothing, only your Nephew had a mind to amuse himself sometimes with a little Galantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any thing seriously, but methought it look'd odly.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Confusion and Hell, what do I hear !

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Or, may be, he thought he was not enough akin to me, upon your Account, and had a mind to create a nearer Relation of his own ; a Lover you know, my Lord——Ha, ha, ha. Well but that's all——Now you have it ; well, remember your Promise, my Lord, and don't take any Notice of it to him.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

No, no, no——Damnation !

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, I swear you must not——A little harmless Mirth

——Only



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—Only misplac'd, that's all—But if it were more, 'tis over now, and all's well. For my part I have forgot it; and so has he, I hope—for I have not heard any thing from him these two Days.

Lord *TOUCHWOOD*.

These two Days! Is it so fresh? Unnatural Villain! Death, I'll have him stripp'd and turn'd naked out of my Door this Moment, and let him rot and perish, incestuous Brute!

Lady *TOUCHWOOD*.

O for Heaven's sake, my Lord, you'll ruin me if you take such public Notice of it, it will be a Town-talk: Consider your own and my Honour——nay I told you you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

Lord *TOUCHWOOD*.

Before I've done, I will be satisfy'd. Ungrateful Monster! how long?

Lady *TOUCHWOOD*.

Lord, I don't know: I wish my Lips had grown together when I told you—Almost a Twelvemonth—Nay, I won't tell you any more, 'till you are yourself. Pray, my Lord, don't let the Company see you in this Disorder——Yet I confess, I can't blame you; for I think I was never so surpris'd in my Life——Who would have thought my Nephew could have so misconstrued my Kindness—But will you go into your Closet, and recover your Temper? I'll make an Excuse of sudden Business to the Company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my Lord, let me beg you do now: I'll come immediately, and tell you all; will you, my Lord?

Lord *TOUCHWOOD*.

I will—I am mute with Wonder.

Lady *TOUCHWOOD*.

Well but go now, here's some body coming.

Lord

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Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Well, I go— You won't stay, for I would hear more of this.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

I follow instantly— So.



S C E N E II.

*Lady* TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL.

*MASKWELL.*

**T** HIS was a Master-Piece, and did not need my Help— tho' I stood ready for a Cue to come in and confirm all, had there been Occasion.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Have you seen *Mellefont*?

*MASKWELL.*

I have ; and am to meet him here about this time.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

How does he bear his Disappointment?

*MASKWELL.*

Secure in my Assistance, he seem'd not much afflicted, but rather laugh'd at the shallow Artifice, which so little time must of necessity discover. Yet he is apprehensive of some farther Design of yours, and has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your Plot, yet I would have you use Caution and Expedition.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Expedition indeed ; for all we do, must be perform'd in the remaining Part of this Ev'ning, and before the Company break up ; lest my Lord should cool, and have an  
Oppor-

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Opportunity to talk with him privately—My Lord must not see him again.

*MASKWELL.*

By no Means; therefore you must aggravate my Lord's Displeasure to a Degree that will admit of no Conference with him.—What think you of mentioning me?

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

How?

*MASKWELL.*

To my Lord, as having been privy to *Mellefont's* Design upon you, but still using my utmost Endeavours to dissuade him: 'Tho' my Friendship and Love to him has made me conceal it; yet you may say, I threatened the next time he attempted any thing of that kind, to discover it to my Lord.

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

To what end is this?

*MASKWELL.*

It will confirm my Lord's Opinion of my Honour and Honesty, and create in him a new Confidence in me, which (should this Design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming another Plot that I have in my Head—To you as well as the rest. [*Aside.*

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

I'll do it—I'll tell him you hindred him once from forcing me.

*MASKWELL.*

Excellent! Your Ladyship has a most improving Fancy. You had best go to my Lord, keep him as long as you can in his Closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please: your Guests are so engaged in their own Follies and Intrigues, they'll miss neither of you.

Lady

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Lady T O U C H W O O D .

When shall we meet? — At eight this Evening in my Chamber; there rejoice at our Success, and toy away an Hour in Mirth.

M A S K W E L L .

I will not fail.



S C E N E III.

M A S K W E L L *alone.*

I Know what she means by toying away an Hour well enough. Pox I have lost all Appetite to her; yet she's a fine Woman, and I lov'd her once. But I don't know, since I have been in a great Measure kept by her, the Case is alter'd; what was my Pleasure is become my Duty: And I have as little Stomach to her now as if I were her Husband. Should she smoke my Design upon *Cynthia*, I were in a fine pickle. She has a damn'd penetrating Head, and knows how to interpret a Coldness the right Way; therefore I must dissemble Ardour and Ecstasy, that's resolv'd: How easily and pleasantly is that dissembled before Fruition! Pox on't, that a Man can't drink without quenching his Thirst. Ha! yonder comes *Mellefont* thoughtful. Let me think: Meet her at eight---hum---ha! By Heav'n I have it----if I can speak to my Lord before----was it my Brain or Providence? No matter which-----I will deceive 'em all, and yet secure myself: 'twas a lucky Thought! Well, this Double-Dealing is a Jewel.

Here he comes: now for me.-----

[Maskwell pretending not to see him, walks by him, and speaks as it were to himself.

S C E N E



S C E N E IV.

[To him] MELLEFONT *musing.*

MASKWELL.

MERCY on us! what will the Wickedness of this World come to?

MELLEFONT.

How now, *Jack*? What, so full of Contemplation that you run over!

MASKWELL.

I'm glad you're come, for I could not contain myself any longer: And was just going to give vent to a Secret, which no Body but you ought to drink down.—Your Aunt's just gone from hence.

MELLEFONT.

And having trusted thee with the Secrets of her Soul, thou art villanously bent to discover 'em all to me, ha?

MASKWELL.

I'm afraid my Frailty leans that way — But I don't know whether I can in Honour discover them all.

MELLEFONT.

All, all, Man: What you may in Honour betray her as far as she betrays herself. No tragical Design upon my Person, I hope?

MASKWELL.

No, but it's a comical Design upon mine.

MELLEFONT.

What dost thou mean?



*M A S K W E L L .*

Listen and be dumb; we have been bargaining about  
the Rate of your Ruin——

*M E L L E F O N T .*

Like any two Guardians to an Orphan Heirefs—Well.

*M A S K W E L L .*

And whereas Pleasure is generally paid with Mischief,  
what Mischief I do is to be paid with Pleasure.

*M E L L E F O N T .*

So when you've swallow'd the Potion, you sweeten  
your Mouth with a Plumb.

*M A S K W E L L .*

You are merry, Sir, but I shall probe your Constitution.  
In short, the Price of your Banishment is to be paid with  
the Person of——

*M E L L E F O N T .*

Of *Cynthia*, and her Fortune——Why, you forget;  
you told me this before.

*M A S K W E L L .*

No, no—So far you are right; and I am, as an earnest  
of that Bargain, to have full and free Possession of the Per-  
son of——your Aunt.

*M E L L E F O N T .*

Ha!——Pho, you trifle.

*M A S K W E L L .*

By this Light, I'm serious; all Raillery apart——I  
knew 'twould stun you: This Evening at eight she will  
receive me in her Bed-Chamber.

*M E L L E F O N T .*

Hell and the Devil! is she abandon'd of all Grace—  
Why the Woman is possess'd——

*M A S K W E L L .*

Well, will you go in my stead?

*M E L L E F O N T .*

By Heav'n into a hot Furnace sooner.

*M A S K .*



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M A S K W E L L.

No, you would not—It would not be so convenient, as I can order Matters.

M E L L E F O N T.

What d'ye mean!

M A S K W E L L.

Mean? not to disappoint the Lady, I assure you—  
Ha, ha, ha, how gravely he looks—Come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only thing that Providence could have contriv'd to make me capable of serving you, either to my Inclination or your own Necessity.

M E L L E F O N T.

How, how, for Heav'n's sake, dear *Maskwell*?

M A S K W E L L.

Why thus— I'll go according to Appointment; you shall have Notice at the critical Minute to come and surprise your Aunt and me together: Counterfeit a Rage against me, and I'll make my Escape through the private Passage from her Chamber, which I'll take care to leave open: 'Twill be hard, if then you can't bring her to any Conditions. For this Discovery will disarm her of all Defence, and leave her entirely at your Mercy: Nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

M E L L E F O N T.

Let me adore thee, my better *Genius*! By Heav'n I think it is not in the Power of Fate to disappoint my Hopes—My Hopes! my Certainty!

M A S K W E L L.

Well, I'll meet you here, within a Quarter of eight, and give you Notice.

M E L L E F O N T.

Good Fortune ever go along with thee.



## S C E N E V.

MELLEFONT, CARELESS.

CARELESS.

**M**ellefont, get out o'th' Way; my Lady *Phyant's* coming, and I shall never succeed while thou art in Sight——Tho' she begins to tack about: but I made Love a great while to no Purpose.

MELLEFONT.

Why, what's the Matter? She's convinc'd that I don't care for her.

CARELESS.

I can't get an Answer from her, that does not begin with her Honour, or her Virtue, her Religion, or some such Cant. Then she has told me the whole History of *Sir Paul's* nine Years Courtship; how he has lain for whole Nights together upon the Stairs, before her Chamber Door; and that the first Favour he receiv'd from her, was a Piece of an old Scarlet Petticoat for a Stomacher; which since the Day of his Marriage, he has, out of a Piece of Gallantry, converted into a Night-Cap, and wears it still with much Solemnity on his Anniversary Wedding-Night.

MELLEFONT.

That I have seen, with the Ceremony thereunto belonging——For on that Night he creeps in at the Bed's Feet like a gull'd Bassa that has marry'd a Relation of the *Grand Signior*, and that Night he has his Arms at Liberty. Did not she tell you at what a Distance she keeps

keeps him? he has confess'd to me that but at some certain times, that is I suppose when she apprehends being with Child, he never has the Privilege of using the Familiarity of a Husband with a Wife. He was once given to scrambling with his Hands and sprawling in his Sleep; and ever since she has him swaddled up in Blankets, and his Hands and Feet swath'd down and so put to Bed; and there he lies with a great Beard, like a *Russian* Bear upon a Drift of Snow. You are very great with him, I wonder he never told you his Grievances; he will, I warrant you.

CARELESS.

Excessively foolish!—But that which gives me most Hopes of her, is her telling me of the many Temptations she has resisted.

MELLEFONT.

Nay, then you have her; for a Woman's bragging to a Man that she has overcome Temptations, is an Argument that they were weakly offer'd, and a Challenge to him to engage her more irresistibly. 'Tis only an enhancing the Price of the Commodity, by telling you how many Customers have underbid her.

CARELESS.

Nay, I don't despair——But still she has a grudging to you——I talk'd to her t'other Night at my Lord *Froth's* Masquerade, when I'm satisfy'd she knew me, and I had no Reason to complain of my Reception; but I find Women are not the same bare-faced and in Masks,—and a Vizer disguises their Inclinations as much as their Faces.

MELLEFONT.

'Tis a Mistake, for Women may most properly be said to be unmask'd when thy wear Vizors; for that secures them from Blushing, and being out of Countenance, and next to being in the Dark, or alone, they are most truly

themselves in a Vizor Mask. Here they come, I'll leave you. Ply her close, and by and by clap a *Billet-doux* into her Hand: For a Woman never thinks a Man truly in Love with her, 'till he has been Fool enough to think of her out of her Sight, and to lose so much time as to write to her.



S C E N E VI.

CARELESS, Sir PAUL PLYANT, and Lady PLYANT.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

S HAN'T we disturb your Meditation, Mr. *Careless*?  
You wou'd be private.

CARELESS.

You bring that along with you, Sir *Paul*, that shall be always welcome to my Privacy.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O sweet Sir, you load your humble Servants, both me and my Wife, with continual Favours.

Lady PLYANT.

Sir *Paul*, what a Phrase was there? You will be making Answers, and taking that upon you, which ought to lie upon me: That you should have so little Breeding to think Mr. *Careless* did not apply himself to me. Pray what have you to entertain any Body's Privacy? I swear and declare in the Face of the World I'm ready to blush for your Ignorance.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I acquiesce, my Lady; but don't snub so loud.

[*Aside to her.*  
Lady

Lady *PLYANT*.

Mr. *Careless*, if a Person that is wholly illiterate might be supposed to be capable of being qualified to make a suitable Return to those Obligations which you are pleased to confer upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualify'd in all those Circumstances, I'm sure I shou'd rather attempt it than any thing in the World, [*Curt'sies*] for I'm sure there's nothing in the World that I would rather. [*Curt'sies*] But I know Mr. *Careless* is so great a Critic and so fine a Gentleman, that it is impossible for me—

*CARELESS*.

O Heav'ns ! Madam, you confound me.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

Gad's-bud, she's a fine Person—

Lady *PLYANT*.

O Lord ! Sir, pardon me. We Women have not those Advantages : I know my own Imperfections---But at the same time you must give me leave to declare in the Face of the World that no Body is more sensible of Favours and Things : for with the Reserve of my Honour, I assure you Mr. *Careless*, I don't know any Thing in the World I would refuse to a Person so meritorious— You'll pardon my want of Expression—

*CARELESS*.

O your Ladyship is abounding in all Excellency, particularly that of Phrase.

Lady *PLYANT*.

You are so obliging, Sir.

*CARELESS*.

Your Ladyship is so charming.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

So, now, now ; now, my Lady.

Lady *PLYANT*.

So well bred.



*CARELESS.*

So surprizing.

Lady *PLYANT.*So well drest, so *bonne mine*, so eloquent, so unaffected,  
so easy, so free, so particular, so agreeable——Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*

Ay, so, so, there.

*CARELESS.*

O Lord, I beseech you, Madam, don't——

Lady *PLYANT.*So gay, so graceful, so good Teeth, so fine Shape, so  
fine Limbs, so fine Linen, and I don't doubt but you  
have a very good Skin, Sir.*CARELESS.*For Heav'n's sake, Madam——I'm quite out of Coun-  
tenance.Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*And my Lady's quite out of Breath; or else you should  
hear——Gad's-bud, you may talk of my Lady *Froth!**CARELESS.*O fy, fy, not to be named of a Day——My Lady *Froth*  
is very well in her Accomplishments——But it is when  
my Lady *Plyant* is not thought of——if that can ever be.Lady *PLYANT.*

O you overcome me——That is so excessive.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*

Nay, I swear and vow that was pretty.

*CARELESS.*O Sir *Paul*, you are the happiest Man alive. Such a  
Lady that is the Envy of her own Sex, and the Admi-  
ration of ours.Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*Your humble Servant. I am, I thank Heav'n, in a fine  
way of Living, as I may say peacefully and happily, and  
I think need not envy any of my Neighbours, blessed be  
Proxi-



Providence—Ay truly, Mr. *Careless*, my Lady is a great Blessing, a fine, discreet, well-spoken Woman as you shall see—If it becomes me to say so; and we live very comfortably together; she is a little hafty sometimes, and so am I; but mine's soon over, and then I'm so sorry—O, Mr. *Careless*, if it were not for one thing—



S C E N E VII:

CARELESS, Sir PAUL PLYANT, Lady PLYANT,  
*Boy with a Letter.*

Lady PLYANT.

HOW often have you been told of that, you Jack-napes?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gad so, gad's-bud—*Tim*, carry it to my Lady, you should have carry'd it to my Lady first.

BOY.

'Tis directed to your Worship.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Well, well, my Lady reads all Letters first—Child, do so no more: d'ye hear, *Tim*.

BOY.

No, and't please you.





## S C E N E VIII.

CARELESS, *Sir PAUL PLYANT*, *Lady PLYANT*.*Sir PAUL PLYANT.*

**A** Humour of my Wife's, you know Women have little Fancies—— But as I was telling you, Mr. *Careless*, if it were not for one thing, I should think myself the happiest Man in the World ; indeed that touches me near, very near.

CARELESS.

What can that be, *Sir Paul*.*Sir PAUL PLYANT.*

Why, I have, I thank Heav'n, a very plentiful Fortune, a good Estate in the Country, some Houses in Town, and some Money, a pretty tolerable personal Estate ; and it is a great Grief to me, indeed it is, Mr. *Careless*, that I have not a Son to inherit this—— 'Tis true, I have a Daughter and a fine dutiful Child she is, though I say it, blessed be Providence I may say ; for indeed, Mr. *Careless*, I am mightily beholden to Providence,—— A poor unworthy Sinner—— But if I had a Son, ah, that's my Affliction, and my only Affliction ; indeed I cannot refrain Tears when it comes in my Mind. [Cries.

CARELESS.

Why, methinks that might be easily remedied—— my Lady's a fine likely Woman——

*Sir PAUL PLYANT.*

Oh, a fine likely Woman as you shall see in a Summer's

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mer's Day——Indeed she is, Mr. *Careless*, in all Respects.

CARELESS.

And I should not have taken you to have been so old——

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Alas, that's not it, Mr. *Careless*; ah! that's not it; no, no, you shoot wide of the Mark a Mile; indeed you do, that's not it, Mr. *Careless*, no, no, that's not it.

CARELESS.

No; what can be the matter then?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

You'll scarcely believe me, when I shall tell you--my Lady is so Nice----It's very strange, but it's true: Too true-----she's so very Nice, that I don't believe she would touch a Man for the World----At least not above once a Year; I'm sure I have found it so; and alas, what's once a Year to an old Man, who would do good in his Generation? Indeed it's true, Mr. *Careless*, it breaks my Heart----I am her Husband, as I may say; though far unworthy of that Honour, yet I am her Husband; but alas-a-day, I have no more Familiarity with her Person ----as to that Matter——than with my own Mother——no indeed.

CARELESS.

Alas-a-day, this is a lamentable Story; my Lady must be told on't; she must i'faith, Sir *Paul*; 'tis an Injury to the World.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Ay! would to Heav'n you would, Mr. *Careless*; you are mightily in her Favour.

CARELESS.

I warrant you; what, we must have a Son some way or other.

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Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Indeed, I should be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, Mr. Careless.

Lady PLYANT.

Here, Sir Paul, it's from your Steward, here's a Return of 600 Pounds; you may take fifty of it for the next half Year.

[Gives him the Letter.]



S C E N E IX.

[To them] Lord FROTH, CYNTHIA.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

HOW does my Girl? come hither to thy Father poor Lamb, thou art Melancholic.

Lord FROTH.

Heav'n, Sir Paul, you amaze me, of all things in the World---you are never pleas'd but when we are all upon the broad Grin; all Laugh and no Company; ah, then 'tis such a Sight to see some Teeth-----Sure you're a great Admirer of my Lady Whifler, Mr. Sneer, and Sir Lawrence Loud, and that Gang.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I vow and swear she's a very merry Woman, but I think she laughs a little too much.

Lord FROTH.

Merry! O Lord, what a Character that is of a Woman of Quality-----You have been at my Lady Whifler's upon her Day, Madam?

CYN-

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CYNTHIA.

Yes, my Lord — I must humour this Fool. [*Aside.*

Lord FROTH.

Well and how? hee! What is your Sense of the Conversation?

CYNTHIA.

O most ridiculous, a perpetual Consort of laughing without any Harmony; for sure, my Lord, to laugh out of Time, is as disagreeable as to sing out of Time or out of Tune.

Lord FROTH.

Hee, hee, hee, right; and then, my Lady *Whister* is so ready — she always comes in three Bars too soon — And then, what do they laugh at? For you know laughing without a Jest is as impertinent, hee! as, as —

CYNTHIA.

As dancing without a Fiddle.

Lord FROTH.

Just, i'faith: that was at my Tongue's end.

CYNTHIA.

But that cannot be properly said of them, for I think they are all in good Nature with the World, and only laugh at one another; and you must allow they have all Jest in their Persons, though they have none in their Conversation.

Lord FROTH.

True, as I'm a Person of Honour — For Heav'n's sake let us sacrifice 'em to Mirth a little.

[*Enter Boy and whispers Sir Paul.*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gads so — Wife, Wife, my Lady *Plyant*, I have a Word.

Lady PLYANT.

I'm busy, Sir *Paul*; I wonder at your Impertinence, —

CARE-

## CARELESS.

Sir *Paul*, harkye, I'm reasoning the Matter you know; Madam,—if your Ladyship please, we'll discourse of this in the next Room.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

O ho, I wish you good Success. I wish you good Success. Boy, tell my Lady, when she has done, I would speak with her below.



## S C E N E X.

CYNTHIA, Lord FROTH, Lady FROTH, BRISK.

Lady FROTH.

**T**HEN you think that *Episode* between *Susan*, the Dairy-Maid, and our Coachman is not amiss; you know, I may suppose the Dairy in Town, as well as in the Country.

BRISK.

Incomparable, let me perish— But then being an heroic Poem, had not you better call him a *Charioteer*? *Charioteer* sounds great; besides your Ladyship's Coachman having a red Face, and you comparing him to the Sun— And you know the Sun is call'd *Heav'n's Charioteer*.

Lady FROTH.

Oh, infinitely better; I'm extremely beholden to you for the Hint; stay, we'll read over those half a Score Lines again. [*Pulls out a Paper.*] Let me see here, you know what goes before — the Comparison, you know.

[*Reads.*]

*For as the Sun shines ev'ry Day,  
So of our Coachman I may say.*

BRISK.



B R I S K.

I'm afraid that Simile won't do in wet Weather---Because you say the Sun shines every Day.

Lady F R O T H.

No, for the Sun it won't, but it will do for the Coachman, for you know there's most Occasion for a Coach in wet Weather.

B R I S K.

Right, right ; that saves all.

Lady F R O T H.

Then I don't say the Sun shines all the Day, but that he peeps now and then, yet he does shine all the Day too, you know, tho' we don't see him.

B R I S K.

Right, but the Vulgar will never comprehend that.

Lady F R O T H.

Well, you shall hear——Let me see.

[Reads] *For as the Sun shines ev'ry Day,  
So, of our Coachman I may say,  
He shows his drunken fiery Face,  
Just as the Sun does, more or less.*

B R I S K.

That's right, all's well, all's well. *More or less.*

Lady F R O T H. [reads.]

*And when at Night his Labour's done,  
Then too, like Heav'n's Charioteer the Sun:*

**Ay,** Charioteer does better.

*Into the Dairy he descends,  
And there his Whipping and his Driving ends ;  
There he's secure from Danger of a Bilk,  
His Fare is paid him, and he sets in Milk.*

For Susan, you know, is *Thetis*, and so---

B R I S K.

Incomparably well and proper, i'gad,---But I have  
one

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one Exception to make ---- Don't you think *Bilk* (I know it's good Rhime) but don't you think *Bilk* and *Fare* too like a Hackney Coachman?

Lady *FROTH*.

I swear and vow I'm afraid so——And yet our *Jebu* was a Hackney Coachman when my Lord took him.

*BRISK.*

Was he? I'm answer'd, if *Jebu* was a Hackney Coachman——You may put that in the marginal Notes tho' to prevent Criticism——only mark it with a small Asterism, and say,——*Jebu* was formerly a Hackney Coachman.

Lady *FROTH*.

I will; you'd oblige me extremely to write Notes to the whole Poem.

*BRISK.*

With all my Heart and Soul, and proud of the vast Honour, let me perish.

Lord *FROTH*.

Hee, hee, hee, my Dear, have you done——won't you join with us? we were laughing at my Lady *Whisper*, and Mr. *Sneer*.

Lady *FROTH*.

---- Ay my Dear——Were you? O filthy Mr. *Sneer*? he's a nauseous Figure, a most fulfamic Fop, foh——He spent two Days together in going about *Covent-Garden* to suit the Lining of his Coach with his Complexion.

Lord *FROTH*.

O filly! yet his Aunt is as fond of him, as if she had brought the Ape into the World herself.

*BRISK.*

Who, my Lady *Toothless*? O, she's a mortifying Spectacle, she's always chewing the Cud like an old Ewe.

*CYNTHIA.*

Fy, Mr. *Brisk*! *Eringo's* for her Cough.

Lady

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Lady FROTH.

I have seen her take 'em half chew'd out of her Mouth,  
to laugh, and then put them in again—Foh.

Lord FROTH.

Foh.

Lady FROTH.

Then she's always ready to laugh when *Sneer* offers to  
speak——And sits in Expectation of his no Jest, with  
her Gums bare, and her Mouth open——

BRISK.

Like an Oyster at low Ebb, I'gad——Ha, ha, ha.

CYNTHIA. [*Aside.*]

Well, I find there are no Fools so inconsiderable in  
themselves, but they can render other People contemp-  
tible by exposing their Infirmities.

Lady FROTH.

Then that t'other great strapping Lady——I can't hit  
of her Name; the old fat Fool that paints so exorbi-  
tantly.

BRISK.

I know whom you mean——But deuce take me I can't  
hit of her Name neither——Paints d'ye say? Why she  
lays it on with a Trowel——Then she has a great Beard  
that bristles through it, and makes her look as if she  
were plaister'd with Lime and Hair, let me perish.

Lady FROTH.

Oh you made a Song upon her, Mr. *Brisk*.

BRISK.

He? egad, so I did——My Lord can sing it.

CYNTHIA.

O good my Lord let's hear it.

BRISK.

'Tis not a Song neither——It's a sort of an Epigram,  
or rather an Epigrammatic Sonnet; I don't know what  
to call it, but it's Satire.——Sing it, my Lord.

Lord

Lord *FROTH* sings.

*Ancient Phillis has young Graces,  
'Tis a strange thing, but a true one ;  
Shall I tell you how ?  
She herself makes her own Faces,  
And each Morning wears a new one ;  
Where's the Wonder now ?*

*B R I S K.*

Short, but there's Salt in't ; my way of Writing, I gad.



S C E N E XI.

[*To them*] *FOOTMAN.*

Lady *FROTH.*

**H**OW now ?

*FOOTMAN.*

Your Ladyship's Chair is come.

Lady *FROTH.*

Is Nurse and the Child in it ?

*FOOTMAN.*

Yes, Madam.

Lady *FROTH.*

O the dear Creature ! let's go see it.

Lord *FROTH.*

I swear, my Dear, you'll spoil that Child, with sending it to and again so often ; this is the seventh time the Chair has gone for her to-day.

Lady *FROTH.*

O law, I swear it's but the sixth—and I han't seen her these two Hours—The poor dear Creature—I swear, my Lord, you don't love poor little *Sapho*—Come, my dear

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dear *Cynthia*, Mr. *Brisk*, we'll go see *Sapho*, tho' my Lord won't.

CYNTHIA.

I'll wait upon your Ladyship.

BRISK.

Pray, Madam, how old is Lady *Sapho*?

Lady FROTH.

Three Quarters, but I swear she has a World of Wit, and can sing a Tune already. My Lord, won't you go? Won't you? What, not to see *Saph*? Pray, my Lord, come see little *Saph*. I knew you cou'd not stay.



S C E N E XII.

CYNTHIA *alone*.

'TIS not so hard to counterfeit Joy in the Depth of Affliction, as to dissemble Mirth in Company of Fools—Why should I call 'em Fools? The World thinks better of 'em; for these have Quality and Education, Wit and fine Conversation, are receiv'd and admir'd by the World--If not they like and admire themselves---And why is not that true Wisdom, for 'tis Happiness: And for ought I know, we have misapply'd the Name all this while, and mistaken the Thing: Since

*If Happiness in Self-content is plac'd,  
The Wise are Wretched, and Fools only Bless'd,*

*End of the Third Act.*

A C T



A C T IV. S C E N E I,

MELLEFONT *and* CYNTHIA.

CYNTHIA.



Heard him loud as I came by the Closet-Door, and my Lady with him, but she seem'd to moderate his Passion.

MELLEFONT.

Ay, Hell thank her, as gentle Breezes moderate a Fire; but I shall counter-work her Spells, and ride the Witch in her own Bridle.

CYNTHIA.

It's impossible; she'll cast beyond you still---I'll lay my Life it will never be a Match.

MELLEFONT.

What?

CYNTHIA.

Between you and me.

MELLEFONT.

Why so?

CYNTHIA.

My Mind gives me it won't---because we are both willing; we each of us strive to reach the Goal, and hinder one another in the Race; I swear it never does well when the Parties are so agreed---For when People walk Hand in Hand, there's neither overtaking nor meeting: We hunt in Couples, where we both pursue  
the



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the same Game, but forget one another, and 'tis because we are so near that we don't think of coming together.

MELLEFONT.

Hum, 'gad I believe there's something in't;—Marriage is the Game that we hunt, and while we think that we only have it in View, I don't see but we have it in our Power.

CYNTHIA.

Within reach; for Example, give me your Hand; you have look'd through the wrong End of the Perspective all this while; for nothing has been between us but our Fears.

MELLEFONT.

I don't know why we should not steal out of the House this very Moment and marry one another, without Consideration or the Fear of Repentance. Pox o' Fortune, Portion, Settlements and Jointures.

CYNTHIA.

Ay, ay, what have we to do with 'em; you know we marry for Love.

MELLEFONT.

Love, Love, downright very villanous Love.

CYNTHIA.

And he that can't live upon Love, deserves to die in a Ditch.—Here then, I give you my Promise, in spite of Duty, any Temptation of Wealth, your Inconstancy, or my own Inclination to change—

MELLEFONT.

To run most wilfully and unreasonably away with me this Moment, and be married.

CYNTHIA.

Hold—Never to marry any body else.

MELLEFONT.

That's but a kind of Negative Consent—Why, you don't balk the Frolic?

CYN-

CYNTHIA.

If you had not been so assured of your own Conduct I would not——But 'tis but reasonable that since I consent to like a Man without the vile Consideration of Money, he should give me a very evident Demonstration of his Wit: Therefore let me see you undermine my Lady *Touchwood*, as you boasted, and force her to give her Consent, and then——

MELLEFONT.

I'll do't.

CYNTHIA.

And I'll do't.

MELLEFONT.

This very next ensuing Hour of eight o'Clock is the last Minute of her Reign, unless the Devil assist her *in propria persona*.

CYNTHIA.

Well, if the Devil should assist her, and your Plot miscarry.——

MELLEFONT.

Ay, what am I to trust to then?

CYNTHIA.

Why if you give me very clear Demonstration that it was the Devil, I'll allow for irresistible Odds. But if I find it to be only Chance, or Destiny, or unlucky Stars, or any thing but the very Devil, I'm inexorable: Only still I'll keep my Word, and live a Maid for your sake.

MELLEFONT.

And you won't die one, for your own; so still there's Hope.

CYNTHIA.

Here's my Mother-in-law, and your Friend *Careless*: I would not have 'em see us together yet.

SCENE



S C E N E II.

CARELESS and Lady PLYANT.

Lady PLYANT.

I swear, Mr. *Careless*, you are very alluring—And say so many fine Things, and nothing is so moving to me as a fine Thing. Well, I must do you this Justice, and declare in the Face of the World, never any Body gain'd so far upon me as yourself; with Blushes I must own it, you have shaken, as I may say, the very Foundation of my Honour—Well, sure if I escape your Importunities, I shall value myself as long as I live, I swear.

CARELESS.

And despise me.

[Sighing]

Lady PLYANT.

The last of any Man in the World, by my Purity; now you make me swear—O Gratitude forbid, that I should ever be wanting in a respectful Acknowledgement of an intire Resignation of all my best Wishes, for the Person and Parts of so accomplish'd a Person, whose Merit challenges much more, I'm sure, than my illiterate Praises can description—

CARELESS [In a whining Tone,]

Ah Heav'ns, Madam, you ruin me with Kindness; your charming Tongue pursues the Victory of your Eyes, while at your Feet your poor Adorer dies.

Lady PLYANT.

Ah! Very fine.

CARE-

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*CARELESS* [*Still whining.*]

Ah why are you so Fair, so bewitching Fair? O let me grow to the Ground here, and feast upon that Hand; O Let me press it to my Heart, my trembling Heart, the nimble Movement shall instruct your Pulse, and teach it to alarm Desire.

[*Zoons, I'm almost at the end of my Cant, if she does not yield quickly.* [*Aside.*

Lady *PLYANT*.

O that's so passionate and fine, I cannot hear it—I am not safe if I stay, and must leave you.

*CARELESS*.

And must you leave me! Rather let me languish out a wretched Life, and breathe my Soul beneath your Feet.

[*I must say the same thing over again, and can't help it.* [*Aside.*

Lady *PLYANT*.

I swear I'm ready to languish too——O my Honour! Whither is it going? I protest you have given me the Palpation of the Heart.

*CARELESS*.

Can you be so cruel?

Lady *PLYANT*.

O rise I beseech you, say no more 'till you rise— Why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported I did not see it.—— Well, to shew you how far you have gain'd upon me; I assure you if Sir *Paul* should die, of all Mankind there's none I'd sooner make my second Choice.

*CARELESS*.

O Heav'n! I can't out-live this Night without your Favour---I feel my Spirits faint, a general Dampness over-spreads my Face, a cold deadly Dew already vents through all my Pores, and will to-morrow wash me for ever from your Sight, and drown me in my Tomb.

Lady

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Lady PLYANT.

O you have conquer'd, sweet, melting, moving Sir,  
you have conquer'd----What Heart of Marble can refrain  
to weep, and yield to such sad Sayings. — [Cries.

CARELESS.

I thank Heav'n, they are the saddest that I ever said--  
Oh!

[I shall never contain Laughter. [Aside.

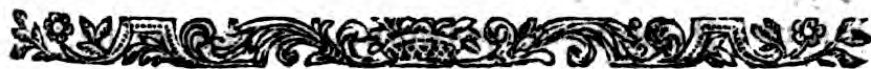
Lady PLYANT.

Oh, I yield myself all up to your uncontrollable Em-  
braces----Say, thou dear dying Man, when, where, and  
how. — Ah, there's Sir Paul.

CARELESS.

'Slife, yonder's Sir Paul; but if he were not come, I'm  
so transported I cannot speak — This Note will inform  
you.

[Gives her a Note.



S C E N E III.

Lady PLYANT, Sir PAUL PLYANT, CYNTHIA.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

THOU art my tender Lambkin, and shalt do what  
thou wilt — But endeavour to forget this Mel-  
fons.

CYNTHIA.

I would obey you to my Power, Sir; but if I have not  
m, I have sworn never to marry.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Never to marry! Heav'n's forbid; must I neither have  
ns nor Grandsons? must the Family of the *Plyants* be  
erly extinct for want of Issue Male! Oh Impiety! But  
you swear, did that sweet Creature swear! ha! How

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durst



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durst you swear without my Consent, ha? Gads-bud, who am I?

CYNTHIA.

Pray don't be angry, Sir: when I swore, I had your Consent; and therefore I swore.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Why then the revoking my Consent does annul, or make of none effect your Oath: So you may unswear it again ——— The Law will allow it.

CYNTHIA.

Ay, but my Conscience never will.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gads-bud no matter for that, Conscience and Law never go together; you must not expect that.

Lady PLYANT.

Ay, but Sir *Paul*, I conceive if she has sworn, d'ye mark me, if she has once sworn, it is most unchristian, inhuman, and obscene that she should break it.-----I'll make up the Match again, because Mr. *Careless* said it would oblige him.

[*Aside.*]

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Does your Ladyship conceive so---Why, I was of that Opinion once too——Nay if your Ladyship conceives so, I'm of that Opinion again; but I can neither find my Lord nor my Lady to know what they intend.

Lady PLYANT.

I'm satisfy'd that my Cousin *Mellefont* has been much wrong'd.

CYNTHIA. [*Aside.*]

I'm amaz'd to find her of our side, for I'm sure she lov'd him.

Lady PLYANT.

I know my Lady *Touchwood* has no Kindness for him: and besides I have been inform'd by Mr. *Careless*, that *Mellefont* had never any thing more than a profound Respect  
——That



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—That he has own'd himself to be my Admirer 'tis true, but he was never so presumptuous to entertain any dishonourable Notions of Things; so that if this be made plain—I don't see how my Daughter can in Conscience, or Honour, or any thing in the World—

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Indeed if this be made plain, as my Lady your Mother says, Child—

Lady PLYANT.

Plain! I was inform'd of it by Mr. *Careless*—And I assure you Mr. *Careless* is a Person—that has a most extraordinary Respect and Honour for you, Sir Paul.

CYNTHIA. [*Aside.*]

And for your Ladyship too, I believe, or else you had not chang'd Sides so soon; now I begin to find it.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I am much oblig'd to Mr. *Careless* really, he is a Person that I have a great Value for, not only for that, but because he has a great Veneration for your Ladyship.

Lady PLYANT.

O las, no indeed, Sir Paul, 'tis upon your Account.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

No, I protest and vow, I have no Title to his Esteem, but in having the Honour to appertain in some measure to your Ladyship, that's all.

Lady PLYANT.

O law now, I swear and declare, it shan't be so, you're too modest, Sir Paul.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

It becomes me, when there is any Comparison made between—

Lady PLYANT.

O fy, fy, Sir Paul, you'll put me out of Countenance—Your very obedient and affectionate Wife; that's all—And highly honour'd in that Title.

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Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*

Gads-bud I am transported ! Give me leave to kiss your Ladyship's Hand.

*CYNTHIA.*

That my poor Father should be so very silly ! [*Afide.*

Lady *PLYANT.*

My Lip indeed, Sir *Paul*, I swear you shall.

[*He kisses her, and bows very low.*

Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*

I humbly thank your Ladyship — I don't know whether I fly on Ground, or walk in Air-----Gads-bud, she was never thus before-----Well, I must own myself the most beholden to Mr. *Careless*-----As sure as can be this is all his doing——something that he has said ; well, 'tis a rare thing to have an ingenious Friend. Well, your Ladyship is of Opinion that the Match may go forward ?

Lady *PLYANT.*

By all means——Mr. *Careless* has satisfy'd me of the Matter.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*

Well, why then Lamb you may keep your Oath, but have a care of making rash Vows ; come hither to me, and kiss *Papa*.

Lady *PLYANT.*

I swear and declare, I am in such a twitter to read Mr. *Careless* his Letter, that I can't forbear any longer——But though I may read all Letters first by Prerogative, yet I'll be sure to be unsuspected this time,——Sir *Paul*.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*

Did your Ladyship call ?

Lady *PLYANT.*

Nay, not to interrupt you, my Dear---Only lend me your Letter, which you had from your Steward to-day :

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I would look upon the Account again ; and may be increase your Allowance.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

There it is, Madam ; Do you want a Pen and Ink ?

[*Bows and gives the Letter.*

Lady PLYANT.

No, no, nothing else, I thank you, Sir Paul. — So, now I can read my own Letter under the Cover of his.

[*Aside.*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

He? and wilt thou bring a Grandson at nine Months end — He? a brave chopping Boy — I'll settle a thousand Pound a Year upon the Rogue as soon as ever he looks me in the Face, I will Gads-bud. I'm overjoy'd to think I have any of my Family that will bring Children into the World. For I would fain have some Resemblance of myself in my Posterity, he *Thy?* Can't you contrive that Affair, Girl? Do, Gads-bud, think on thy old Father ; heh? Make the young Rogue as like as you can.

CYNTHIA.

I'm glad to see you so merry, Sir.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Merry ! Gad's-bud I'm serious, I'll give thee 500*l*, for every Inch of him that resembles me ; ah this Eye, this left Eye ! A thousand Pound for this left Eye. This has done Execution in its time, Girl ; why thou hast my Leer, Hussy, just thy Father's Leer. — Let it be transmitted to the young Rogue by the help of Imagination : why 'tis the Mark of our Family, *Thy* ; our House is distinguish'd by a languishing Eye, as the House of *Austria* is by a thick Lip. — Ah ! when I was of your Age Hussy, I would have held fifty to one, I could have drawn my own Picture — Gads-bud I could have done —

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not so much as you neither, ~~but~~ ~~but~~ nay, don't blush ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

*CYNTHIA.*

I don't blush, Sir, for I vow I don't understand ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*

Pshaw, Pshaw, you fib you Baggage, you do understand, and you shall understand; come don't be so nice, Gads-bud don't learn after your Mother-in-law my Lady here: Marry Heav'n forbid that you should follow her Example, that would spoil all indeed. Bless us, if you should take a Vagary and make a rash Resolution on your Wedding Night, to die a Maid as she did; all were ruin'd, all my Hopes lost ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ my Heart would break, and my Estate would be left to the wide World, he? I hope you are a better Christian than to think of living a Nun; he? Answer me.

*CYNTHIA.*

I'm all Obedience, Sir, to your Commands.

Lady *PLYANT.* [*Having read the Letter.*]

O dear Mr. *Careless*, I swear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charm'd me, as much as I have charm'd him; and so I'll tell him in the Wardrobe when 'tis dark. O *Crimine*, I hope Sir *Paul* has not seen both Letters.

[*Puts the Letter hastily up, and gives him her own.*]  
Sir *Paul*, here's your Letter; to Morrow Morning I'll settle Accounts to your Advantage.



S C E N E



S C E N E IV.

[To them] BRISK.

BRISK.

SIR *Paul*, Gads-bud you're an uncivil Person, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O Law, what's the Matter now? I hope you are not angry, Mr. *Brisk*.

BRISK.

Deuce take me I believe you intend to marry your Daughter yourself; you're always brooding over her like an old Hen, as if she were not well hatch'd, i'gad, he?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Good strange! Mr. *Brisk* is such a merry facetious Person, he, he, he. No, no, I have done with her, I have done with her now.

BRISK.

The Fiddlers have stay'd this Hour in the Hall, and my Lord *Froth* wants a Partner, we can never begin without her.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Oh, go Child, go, get you gone and dance and be merry, I'll come and look at you by and by— Where's my Son *Mellefont*?

Lady PLYANT.

I'll send him to them: I know where he is—

BRISK.

Sir *Paul*, will you send *Careless* into the Hall if you meet him?



Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I will, I will, I'll go and look for him on purpose.



## S C E N E V.

BRISK *alone.*

SO now they are all gone, and I have an Opportunity to practise——Ah! My dear Lady *Frotb!* She's a most engaging Creature, if she were not so fond of that damn'd coxcomby Lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him Wit too, to keep in with him—No matter, she's a Woman of Parts, and I'gad Parts will carry her. She said she would follow me into the Gallery---Now to make my Approaches----Hem hem! Ah Ma- [*Bows.*] dam!----Pox on't, why should I disparage my Parts by thinking what to say? None but dull Rogues *think*; witty Men, like rich Fellows, are always ready for all Expences; while your Blockheads, like poor needy Scoundrels, are forced to examine their Stock, and forecast the Charges of the Day. Here she comes, I'll seem not to see her, and try to win her with a new airy Invention of my own: hem!



S C E N E





S C E N E VI.

[To him] Lady FROTH.

B R I S K *sings walking about.*

I'M sick with Love, ha, ha, ha, pr'ythee come cure me.  
*I'm sick with, &c.*

O ye Pow'rs! O my Lady Froth! my Lady Froth! my  
Lady Froth! Heigho! Break my Heart; Gods I thank you.

[Stands musing with his Arms across.

Lady FROTH.

O Heav'ns, Mr Brisk: What's the Matter?

B R I S K.

My Lady Froth! Your Ladyship's most humble Ser-  
vant;--The Matter, Madam? Nothing, Madam, nothing  
at all P'gad. I was fallen into the most agreeable Amuse-  
ment in the whole Province of Contemplation: That's all  
———(I'll seem to conceal my Passion, and that will  
look like Respect.) [Aside.

Lady FROTH.

Bless me, why did you call out upon me so loud? —

B R I S K.

O Lord, I, Madam! I beseech your Ladyship—when?

Lady FROTH.

Just now as I came in; bless me! why, don't you  
know it?

B R I S K.

Not I, let me perish-----But did I! Strange! I con-  
fess your Ladyship was in my Thoughts; and I was in  
a sort of Dream that did in a manner present a very  
pleasing Object to my Imagination; but———but did I

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indeed?----To see how Love and Murder will out. But did I really name my Lady *Froth*?

Lady *FROTH*.

Three Times aloud, as I love Letters——But did you talk of Love? O *Parnassus*! who would have thought Mr. *Brisk* could have been in Love, ha, ha, ha. O Heav'ns! I thought you cou'd have no Mistress but the Nine Muses.

*BRISK*.

No more I have I'gad, for I adore 'em all in your Ladyship——Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenetic, or airy upon't; the Deuce take me if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry that your Ladyship has made the Discovery.

Lady *FROTH*.

O be merry by all means——Prince *Valscins* in Love! Ha, ha, ha.

*BRISK*.

O barbarous, to turn me into Ridicule! Yet, ha, ha, ha. The Deuce take me, I can't help laughing myself, ha, ha, ha; yet by Heav'ns I have a violent Passion for your Ladyship, seriously.

Lady *FROTH*.

Seriously? ha, ha, ha.

*BRISK*.

Seriously, ha, ha, ha. Gad I have, for all I laugh.

Lady *FROTH*.

Ha, ha, ha! What d'ye think I laugh at? Ha, ha, ha.

*BRISK*.

Me I'gad, ha, ha.

Lady *FROTH*.

No, the Deuce take me if I don't laugh at myself; for hang me if I have not a violent Passion for Mr. *Brisk*, ha, ha, ha.

*BRISK*.

Seriously?

Lady

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Lady FROTH.

Seriously, ha, ha, ha.

BRISK.

That's well enough ; let me perish, ha, ha, ha. O miraculous, what a happy Discovery ! Ah my dear charming Lady Froth !

Lady FROTH.

O my adored Mr. Brisk !

[Embrace.]



S C E N E VII.

[To them] Lord FROTH.

Lord FROTH.

THE Company are all ready ——— How now ?

BRISK.

Zoons, Madam, there's my Lord.

[Softly to her.]

Lady FROTH.

Take no Notice ——— but observe me ——— Now cast off, and meet me at the lower End of the Room, and then join Hands again ; I could teach my Lord this Dance purely, but I vow, Mr. Brisk, I can't tell how to come so near any other Man. Oh here's my Lord, now you shall see me do it with him.

[They pretend to practise part of a Country Dance.]

Lord FROTH.

——— Oh, I see there's no Harm yet ——— But I don't like this Familiarity.

[Aside.]

Lady FROTH.

——— Shall you and I do our close Dance, to show Mr. Brisk ?

Lord

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Lord FROTH.

No, my Dear, do it with him.

Lady FROTH.

I'll do it with him, my Lord, when you are out of the Way.

BRISK.

That's good I'gad, that's good. Deuce take me I can hardly help laughing in his Face. [Aside.

Lord FROTH.

Any other time, my Dear, or we'll dance it below.

Lady FROTH.

With all my Heart.

BRISK.

Come my Lord, I'll wait on you——my charming witty Angel! [To her.

Lady FROTH.

We shall have whispering time enough, you know, since we are Partners.



S C E N E VIII.

Lady PLYANT, and CARELESS.

Lady PLYANT.

O Mr. Careless, Mr. Careless, I'm ruin'd, I'm undone!

CARELESS.

What's the Matter, Madam?

Lady PLYANT.

O the unlucky'st Accident, I'm afraid I shan't live to tell it you.

CARELESS.

Heav'n forbid! What is it?

Lady

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Lady *PLYANT*.

I'm in such a Fright ; the strangest Quandary and Pre-  
munire ! I'm all over in an universal Agitation, I dare  
swear every Circumstance of me trembles.—O your  
Letter, your Letter ! by an unfortunate Mistake, I have  
given Sir *Paul* your Letter instead of his own.

*CARELESS*.

That was unlucky.

Lady *PLYANT*.

O yonder he comes reading of it ; for Heav'n's sake step  
in here and advise me quickly, before he sees.



S C E N E IX.

*Sir PAUL with a Letter.*

*Sir PAUL PLYANT.*

O Providence ! what a Conspiracy have I discover'd—  
But let me see to make an End on't.—[*Reads*]  
Hum---*After Supper in the Wardrobe by the Gallery. If  
Sir Paul should surprise us, I have a Commission from him  
to treat with you about the very Matter of Fact---Matter  
of Fact ! Very pretty ; it seems then I am conducing to  
my own Cuckoldom ? why this is the very traiterous Po-  
sition of taking up Arms by my Authority, against my  
Person ! Well, let me see---'Till then I languish in Expec-  
tation of my adored Charmer.*

[*Dying Ned Careless.*

Gads-bud, would that were Matter of Fact too. Die  
and be damn'd for a *Judas Maccabeus*, and *Iscaiot* both.  
O Friendship ! what art thou but a Name ! Henceforward  
let no Man make a Friend that would not be a Cuckold :

For

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For whomsoever he receives into his Bosom, will find the Way to his Bed, and there return his Careffes with Interest to his Wife. Have I for this been pinion'd Night after Night for three Years past? Have I been swath'd in Blankets 'till I have been even depriv'd of Motion? Have I approach'd the marriage Bed with Reverence as to a sacred Shrine, and deny'd myself the Enjoyment of lawful Domestic Pleasures to preserve its Purity, and must I now find it polluted by foreign Iniquity? O my Lady *Plyant*, you were chaste as Ice, but you are melted now, and false as Water.—But Providence has been constant to me in discovering this Conspiracy; still I am beholden to Providence, if it were not for Providence, sure poor Sir *Paul* thy Heart would break.



S C E N E X.

[ *To him* ] Lady PLYANT.

Lady PLYANT.

SO, Sir, I see you have read the Letter,——Well now, Sir *Paul*, what do you think of your Friend *Careless*? Has he been treacherous, or did you give his Insolence a License to make Trial of your Wife's suspected Virtue? D'ye see here? [*Snatches the Letter as in Anger.*] Look, read it: Gad's my Life if I thought it were so, I would this Moment renounce all Communication with you. Ungrateful Monster! He? Is it so? Ay, I see it, a Plot upon my Honour; your guilty Cheeks confess it: Oh where shall wrong'd Virtue fly for Reparation! I'll be divorced this Instant.

Sir



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Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

Gads-bud what shall I say? this is the strangest Surprise! Why I don't know any thing at all, nor I don't know whether there be any thing at all in the World, or no.

Lady *PLYANT*.

I thought I should try you, false Man. I that never dissembled in my Life: Yet to make Trial of you, pretended to like that Monster of Iniquity, *Careless*, and found out that Contrivance to let you see this Letter; which now I find was of your own inditing——I do Heathen, I do; see my Face no more; I'll be divorced presently.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

O strange, what will become of me!——I'm so amaz'd, and so overjoy'd, so afraid, and so sorry.——But did you give me this Letter on Purpose, he? Did you?

Lady *PLYANT*.

Did I? Do you doubt me, Turk, Saracen? I have a Cousin that's a Proctor in the Commons, I'll go to him instantly——

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

Hold, stay, I beseech your Ladyship—I'm so overjoy'd, stay, I'll confess all.

Lady *PLYANT*.

What will you confess, Jew?

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

Why now as I hope to be saved, I had no Hand in this Letter——Nay hear me, I beseech your Ladyship: The Devil take me now if he did not go beyond my Commission---If I desired him to do any thing more than speak a good Word only just for me; Gads-bud only for poor Sir *Paul*, I'm an Anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

Lady

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Lady *PLYANT*.

Why is not here Matter of Fact?

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

Ay, but by your own Virtue and Continency that Matter of Fact is all his own doing—I confess I had a great Desire to have some Honours conferr'd upon me, which lie all in your Ladyship's Breast, and he being a well spoken Man, I desired him to intercede for me—

Lady *PLYANT*.

Did you so, Presumption! Oh! he comes, the *Tarquin* comes; I cannot bear his Sight.



S C E N E XI.

CARELESS, Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

*CARELESS*.

**S**IR *Paul*, I'm glad I've met with you! 'gad I have said all I could, but can't prevail—Then my Friendship to you has carried me a little farther in this Matter—

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

Indeed—Well Sir—I'll dissemble with him a little.

[*Afide.*]

*CARELESS*.

Why Faith I have in my Time known honest Gentlemen abused by a pretended Coyness in their Wives, and I had a Mind to try my Lady's Virtue—And when I could not prevail for you, 'gad I pretended to be in Love myself—but all in vain, she would not hear a Word upon that Subject: Then I writ a Letter to her; I don't know

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know what Effects that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you when I do, tho' by this Light I believe her Virtue is impregnable.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

O Providence! Providence! What Discoveries are here made? Why, this is better and more miraculous than the rest.

*CARELESS*.

What do you mean?

Sir *PAUL PLYANT*.

I can't tell you, I am so overjoy'd; come along with me to my Lady, I can't contain myself; come my dear Friend.

*CARELESS*.

So, so, so, this Difficulty's over.

[*Aside.*]



S C E N E XII.

*MELLEFONT, MASKWELL, from different Doors.*

*MELLEFONT*.

**M***Askwell!* I have been looking for you---'tis within a Quarter of Eight.

*MASKWELL*.

My Lady is just gone into my Lord's Closet, you had best steal into her Chamber before she comes, and lie concealed there, otherwise she may lock the Door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprise us.

*MELLEFONT*.

He? You say true.

*MASK*.

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*MASKWELL.*

You had best make haste ; for after she has made some Apology to the Company for her own, and my Lord's Absence all this while, she'll retire to her Chamber instantly.

*MELLEFONT.*

I go this Moment : Now Fortune I defy thee.



S C E N E XIII.

*MASKWELL, alone.*

I Confess you may be allow'd to be secure in your own Opinion ; the Appearance is very fair, but I have an After-Game to play that shall turn the Tables, and here comes the Man that I must manage.



S C E N E XIV.

[*To him*] *Lord TOUCHWOOD.*

*Lord TOUCHWOOD.*

*M* *Askwell*, you are the Man I wish'd to meet.

*MASKWELL.*

I am happy to be in the way of your Lordship's Commands.

*Lord TOUCHWOOD.*

I have always found you prudent and careful in any thing that has concern'd me or my Family.

*MASK-*

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*MASKWELL.*

I were a Villain else—I am bound by Duty and Gratitude, and my own Inclination, to be ever your Lordship's Servant.

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

Enough—You are my Friend; I know it: Yet there has been a thing in your Knowledge, which has concern'd me nearly, that you have conceal'd from me.

*MASKWELL.*

My Lord!

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

Nay, I excuse your Friendship to my unnatural Nephew thus far——But I know you have been privy to his impious Designs upon my Wife. 'This Ev'ning she has told me all: Her good Nature conceal'd it as long as was possible; but he perseveres so in Villany, that she has told me even you were weary of dissuading him, though you have once actually hindred him from forcing her.

*MASKWELL.*

I am sorry, my Lord, I can't make you an Answer; this is an Occasion in which I would willingly be silent.

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

I know you would excuse him——And I know as well that you can't.

*MASKWELL.*

Indeed I was in hopes 'thad been a youthful Heat, that might have soon boil'd over; but——

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

Say on.

*MASKWELL.*

I have nothing more to say, my Lord——But to express my Concern; for I think his Frenzy increases daily.  
Lord

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Lord T O U C H W O O D .

How! Give me but Proof of it, Ocular Proof, that I may justify my Dealing with him to the World, and share my Fortunes.

M A S K W E L L .

O my Lord! consider that is hard: Besides, Time may work upon him: Then, for me to do it! I have profess'd an everlasting Friendship to him.

Lord T O U C H W O O D .

He is your Friend, and what am I?

M A S K W E L L .

I am answered.

Lord T O U C H W O O D .

Fear not his Displeasure; I will put you out of his and Fortune's Power; and for that thou art scrupulously honest, I will secure thy Fidelity to him, and give my Honour never to own any Discovery that you shall make me. Can you give me a demonstrative Proof? Speak.

M A S K W E L L .

I wish I could not——To be plain, my Lord, I intended this Evening to have try'd all Arguments to dissuade him from a Design, which I suspect; and if I had not succeeded, to have informed your Lordship of what I knew.

Lord T O U C H W O O D .

I thank you. What is the Villain's Purpose?

M A S K W E L L ,

He has own'd nothing to me of late, and what I mean now, is only a bare Suspicion of my own. If your Lordship will meet me a Quarter of an Hour hence there, in that Lobby of my Lady's Bed-Chamber, I shall be able to tell you more,

Lord T O U C H W O O D .

I will,

M A S K



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MASKWELL.

My Duty to your Lordship, makes me do a severe Piece of Justice.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I will be secret, and reward your Honesty beyond your Hopes.



S C E N E XV.

SCENE opening shews Lady TOUCHWOOD's Chamber.

MELLEFONT *solus.*

PRAY Heav'n my Aunt keep touch with her Affignation.—Oh that her Lord were but sweating behind this Hanging, with the expectation of what I shall see—Hift, she comes—Little does she think what a Mine is just ready to spring under her Feet. But to my Post. *[Goes behind the Hanging.]*



S C E N E XVI.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

'TIS eight o'Clock: Methinks I should have found him here. Who does not prevent the Hour of Love, out-stays the Time; for to be dully Punctual, is too slow,—I was accusing you of Neglect.

S C E N E



S C E N E XVII.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD, and MASKWELL.*

*MELLEFONT absconding.*

*MASKWELL.*

I Confess you do reproach me when I see you here before me; but 'tis fit I should be still behind-hand, still to be more and more indebted to your Goodness.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

You can excuse a Fault too well, not to have been to blame—A ready Answer shews you were prepared.

*MASKWELL.*

Guilt is ever at a Loss, and Confusion waits upon it; when Innocence and bold Truth are always ready for Expression—

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

Not in Love; Words are the weak Support of cold Indifference; Love has no Language to be heard.

*MASKWELL.*

Excess of Joy has made me stupid! Thus may my Lips be ever clos'd. [*Kisses her.*] And thus—Oh who would not lose his Speech, upon Condition to have Joys above it?

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

Hold; let me lock the Door first. [*Goes to the Door.*

*MASKWELL. [Aside.]*

That I believ'd: 'twas well I left the private Passage open.

*Lady*

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Lady TOUCHWOOD.

So that's safe.

MASKWELL.

And so may all your Pleasures be, and secret as this  
Kiss—

MELLEFONT.

And may all Treachery be thus discover'd. [*Leaps out.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Ah!

[*Shrieks.*

MELLEFONT.

Villain!

[*Offers to draw.*

MASKWELL.

Nay then, there's but one Way.

[*Runs out.*



S C E N E XVIII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MELLEFONT.

MELLEFONT.

SAY you so, were you provided for an Escape? Hold,  
Madam, you have no more Holes to your Borough,  
I'll stand between you and this Sally-Port.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Thunder strike thee dead for this Deceit, immediate  
Lightning blast thee, me, and the whole World— Oh! I  
could rack myself, play the Vulture to my own Heart,  
and gnaw it piece-meal, for not boding to me this Mis-  
fortune.

MELLEFONT.

Pe Patient—

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Be Damn'd.

M E L-

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*MELLEFONT.*

Consider I have you on the Hook; you will but flounder yourself a weary, and be nevertheless my Prisoner.

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

I'll hold my Breath and die, but I'll be free.

*MELLEFONT.*

O Madam, have a care of dying unprepar'd; I doubt you have some unrepented Sins that may hang heavy, and retard your Flight.

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

O! what shall I do? say? Whither shall I turn? Has Hell no Remedy?

*MELLEFONT.*

None. Hell has serv'd you ev'n as Heav'n has done, left you to yourself.—You're in a kind of *Erasmus'* Paradise; yet if you please you may make it a Purgatory; and with a little Penance and my Absolution all this may turn to good Account.

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.* [*Afide.*]

Hold in my Passion, and fall, fall a little thou swelling Heart; let me have some Intermision of this Rage, and one Minute's Coolness to dissemble. [*She weeps.*]

*MELLEFONT.*

You have been to blame.—I like those Tears, and hope they are of the purest kind—Penetential Tears.

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

O the Scene was shifted quick before me—I had not time to think—I was surpris'd to see a Monster in the Glass, and now I find 'tis myself; Can you have Mercy to forgive the Faults I have imagin'd, but never put in Practice—O consider, consider how fatal you have been to me, you have already kill'd the Quiet of this Life. The Love of you was the first wand'ring Fire that e'er misled my Steps, and while I had only that in View, I was betray'd into unthought-of Ways of Ruin.

*MEL-*

M E L L E F O N T.

May I believe this true ?

Lady T O U C H W O O D.

O be not cruelly incredulous—How can you doubt these streaming Eyes ? Keep the severest Eye o'er all my future Conduct ; and if I once relapse, let me not hope Forgiveness ; 'twill ever be in your Power to ruin me— My Lord shall sign to your Desires ; I will myself create your Happiness, and *Cynthia* shall be this Night your Bride — Do but conceal my Failings, and forgive.

M E L L E F O N T.

Upon such Terms I will be ever yours in ev'ry honest Way.



S C E N E XIX.

M A S K W E L L *softly introduces Lord T O U C H W O O D,*  
*and retires.*

M A S K W E L L.

I H A V E kept my Word, he's here, but I must not be seen.





S C E N E XX.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD, Lord TOUCHWOOD,  
MELLEFONT,*

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

**H**ELL and Amazement! she's in Tears.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.* [*Kneeling.*]

Eternal Blessings thank you——Ha! My Lord  
list'ning! O Fortune has o'erpaid me all, all! all's my  
own! [*Aside.*]

*MELLEFONT.*

Nay, I beseech you rise.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.* [*Aloud.*]

Never, never! I'll grow to the Ground, be buried quick  
beneath it, ere I'll be consenting to so damn'd a Sin as  
Incest! unnatural Incest!

*MELLEFONT.*

Ha!

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

O cruel Man, will you not let me go——I'll forgive  
all that's past——O Heav'n, you will not ravish me!

*MELLEFONT.*

Damnation!

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

Monster, Dog! your Life shall answer this——  
[*Draws and runs at Mellefont, is held by Lady Touch-*  
*wood.*]

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

O Heav'ns my Lord! Hold! hold! for Heav'n's sake.

*MELLE-*



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MELLEFONT.

Confusion! my Uncle! O the damn'd Sorcerers!

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Moderate your Rage, good my Lord! He's mad, alas he's mad—Indeed he is, my Lord, and knows not what he does—See how wild he looks.

MELLEFONT.

By Heav'n 'twere senseless not to be mad, and see such Witchcraft.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

My Lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Hence from my Sight, thou living Infamy to my Name; when next I see that Face I'll write Villain in't with my Sword's Point.

MELLEFONT.

Now, by my Soul, I will not go 'till I have made known my Wrongs—Nay, 'till I have made known yours, which (if possible) are greater—though she has all the Host of Hell her Servants.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Alas he raves! Talks very Poetry! For Heav'n's sake away my Lord, he'll either tempt you to Extravagance, or commit some himself.

MELLEFONT.

Death and Furies, will you not hear me—Why by Heav'n she laughs, grins, points to your Back; she forks out Cuckoldom with her Fingers, and you're running Horn-mad after your Fortune.

[*As she is going she turns back and smiles at him.*

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I fear he's mad indeed—Let's send *Maskwell* to him.

MELLEFONT.

Send him to her.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Come, come, good my Lord, my Heart akes so, I shall faint if I stay.



## S C E N E XXI.

MELLEFONT *alone.*

**O** I could curse my Stars, Fate, and Chance; all Causes and Accidents of Fortune in this Life! But to what Purpose? Yet, 'sdeath, for a Man to have the Fruit of all his Industry grow full and ripe, ready to drop into his Mouth, and just when he holds out his Hand to gather it, to have a sudden Whirlwind come, tear up Tree and all, and bear away the very Root and Foundation of his Hopes; What Temper can contain? They talk of sending *Maskwell* to me; I never had more need of him — But what can he do? Imagination cannot form a fairer and more plausible Design than this of his which has miscarried — O my precious Aunt, I shall never thrive without I deal with the Devil, or another Woman.

*Women like Flames have a destroying Pow'r,  
Ne'er to be quench'd, 'till they themselves devour.*

S C E N E *shuts.*

A C T



ACT V. SCENE I.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD and MASKWELL.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

AS'T not lucky?

MASKWELL.



Lucky! Fortune is your own, and 'tis her Interest so to be; by Heav'n I believe you can control her Pow'r, and she fears it; though Chance brought my

Lord, 'twas your own Art turn'd it to Advantage.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

'Tis true, it might have been my Ruin—But yonder's my Lord, I believe he's coming to find you, I'll not be seen.



SCENE II.

MASKWELL *alone.*

SO; I durst not own my introducing my Lord, though it succeeded well for her; for she would have suspected a Design which I should have been puzzled to excuse. My Lord is thoughtful—I'll be so too; yet he shall know my Thoughts; or think he does—

M 3

SCENE



S C E N E III.

[*To him*] Lord TOUCHWOOD.

MASKWELL.

WHAT have I done?  
Lord TOUCHWOOD.  
Talking to himself!

MASKWELL.

'Twas honest——and shall I be rewarded for it?  
No, 'twas honest, therefore I shan't;——Nay, rather  
therefore I ought not; for it-rewards itself.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Unequal'd Virtue!

[*Aside.*]

MASKWELL.

But should it be known! Then I have lost a Friend!  
He was an ill Man, and I have gain'd; for half myself  
I lent him, and that I have recall'd; so I have serv'd  
myself, and what is yet better, I have serv'd a worthy  
Lord to whom I owe myself.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Excellent Man!

[*Aside.*]

MASKWELL.

Yet I am wretched. O there is a Secret burns within  
this Breast, which should it once blaze forth, would ruin  
all, consume my honest Character, and brand me with  
the Name of Villain.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Ha!

MASKWELL.

Why do I love! yet Heav'n and my waking Conscience  
are

are my Witnessess, I never gave one working Thought a Vent; which might discover that I lov'd, nor ever must; no, let it prey upon my Heart; for I would rather die, than seem once, barely seem, dishonest: O, should it once be known I love fair *Cynthia*, all this that I have done would look like Rival's Malice, false Friendship to my Lord, and base Self-interest. Let me perish first, and from this Hour avoid all Sight and Speech; and, if I can, all Thought of that pernicious Beauty. Ha! but what is my Distraction doing? I am wildly talking to myself, and some ill Chance might have directed malicious Ears this way.

[*Seems to start, seeing my Lord.*]

Lord FOUCHWOOD.

Start not— let guilty and dishonest Souls start at the Revelation of their Thoughts, but be thou fix'd, as is thy Virtue.

MASKWELL.

I am confounded, and beg your Lordship's Pardon for those free Discourses which I have had with myself.

Lord FOUCHWOOD.

Come, I beg your Pardon that I over-heard you, and yet it shall not need— Honest *Maskwell*! thy and my good Genius led me hither— Mine, in that I have discover'd so much manly Virtue; thine, in that thou shalt have due Reward of all thy Worth. Give me thy Hand— my Nephew is the alone remaining Branch of all our ancient Family; him I thus blow away, and constitute thee in his Room to be my Heir—

MASKWELL.

Now Heav'n forbid—

Lord FOUCHWOOD.

No more— I have resolv'd— the Writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be sign'd, and have his Name insert'd— Yours will fill the Blank as well— I will have no Reply— Let me command



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this time ; for 'tis the last, in which I will assume Authority---hereafter, you shall rule where I have Power.

*MASKWELL.*

I humbly would Petition——

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

Is't for yourself ?---[Mask. *pauses.*] I'll hear of nought for any body else.

*MASKWELL.*

Then Witness Heav'n for me, this Wealth and Honour was not of my seeking, nor would I build my Fortune on another's Ruin : I had but one Desire——

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

Thou shalt enjoy it—If all I'm worth in Wealth or Interest can purchase *Cynthia*, she is thine.---I'm sure Sir *Paul's* Consent will follow Fortune ; I'll quickly shew him which way that is going.

*MASKWELL.*

You oppress me with Bounty ; my Gratitude is weak, and shrinks beneath the Weight, and cannot rise to thank you--What, enjoy my Love ! Forgive the Transports of a Blessing so unexpected, so unhop'd for, so unthought of !

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee.



SCENE IV.

*MASKWELL* alone.

**T**HIS is prosp'rous indeed--Why let him find me out a Villain, settled in possession of a fair Estate, and full fruition of my Love, I'll bear the Railings of a losing Gamester---But shou'd he find me out before ! 'tis dangerous



dangerous to delay---Let me think----should my Lord proceed to treat openly of my Marriage with *Cynthia*, all must be discover'd, and *Mellefont* can be no longer blinded, ---It must not be; nay, should my Lady know it--- ay, then were fine Work indeed! Her Fury wou'd spare nothing, tho' she involv'd herself in Ruin. No, it must be by Stratagem---I must deceive *Mellefont* once more, and get my Lord to consent to my private Management. He comes opportunely---Now will I, in my old way, discover the whole and real Truth of the Matter to him, that he may not suspect one Word on't.

*No Mask like open Truth to cover Lies,  
As to go naked is the best Disguise.*



S C E N E V.

[ *To him* ] MELLEFONT.

MELLEFONT.

O *Maskwell*, what Hope? I am confounded in a Maze of Thoughts, each leading into one another, and all ending in Perplexity. My Uncle will not see, nor hear me.

MASKWELL.

No matter, Sir, don't trouble your Head, all's in my Power.

MELLEFONT.

How? for Heav'n's sake?

MASKWELL.

Little do you think that your Aunt-has kept her Word,  
—How the Devil she wrought my Lord into this Do-

M 5

tage,

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tage, I know not; but he's gone to Sir *Paul* about my Marriage with *Cynthia*, and has appointed me his Heir.

MELLEFONT.

The Devil he has! What's to be done?

MASKWELL.

I have it; it must be by Stratagem; for it's in vain to make Application to him. I think I have that in my Head that cannot fail: Where's *Cynthia*?

MELLEFONT.

In the Garden.

MASKWELL.

Let us go and consult her; my Life for yours, I cheat my Lord.



S C E N E VI.

*Lord TOUCHWOOD, Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

**M** *Askwell* your Heir, and marry *Cynthia*!

*Lord TOUCHWOOD.*

I cannot do too much, for so much Merit.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD.*

But this is a Thing of too great Moment to be so suddenly resolv'd. Why *Cynthia*? Why must he be marry'd? Is there not Reward enough in raising his low Fortune, but he must mix his Blood with mine, and wed my Neice? How know you my Brother will consent, or she? Nay, he himself perhaps may have Affections elsewhere.

*Lord TOUCHWOOD.*

No, I am convinc'd he loves her.

*Lady*

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Lady TOUCHWOOD.

*Maskwell* love *Cynthia*? impossible!

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I tell you, he confess'd it to me.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Confusion! how's this!

[*Aside.*]

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

His Humility long stifled his Passion: And his Love of *Mellefont* would have made him still conceal it. — But by Encouragement, I wrung the Secret from him; and know he's no way to be rewarded but in her. I'll defer my farther Proceedings in it till you have consider'd it; but remember how we are both indebted to him.



S C E N E VII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD *alone.*

**B**OTH indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all. Villain! O I am wild with this Surprise of Treachery: It is impossible; it cannot be. — He love *Cynthia*! What, have I been Bawd to his Designs, his Property only, a baiting Place? Now I see what made him false to *Mellefont*.---Shame and Diffraction! I cannot bear it. Oh! what Woman can bear to be a Property? To be kindled to a Flame, only to light him to another's Arms? Oh! that I were a Fire indeed, that I might burn the vile Traitor. What shall I do? How shall I think? I cannot think.---All my Designs are lost, my Love unfated, my Revenge unfinish'd, and fresh Cause of Fury from unthought-of Plagues.

S C E N E



S C E N E VIII.

[ *To her* ] Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

MADAM, Sister, my Lady Sister, did you see my  
Lady my Wife?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Oh! Torture!

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gads-bud, I can't find her high nor low; where can  
she be, think you?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Where she's serving you, as all your Sex ought to be  
serv'd; making you a Beast. Don't you know that  
you're a Fool, Brother?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

A Fool! he, he, he, you're merry---No, no, not I,  
I know no such Matter.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Why then you don't know half your Happiness.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

That's a Jest with all my Heart, faith and troth,—  
But harkye, my Lord told me something of a Revolution  
of things; I don't know what to make on't,---Gads-bud  
I must consult my Wife,---he talks of disinheriting his  
Nephew; and I don't know what,----Look you, Sister,  
I must know what my Girl has to trust to; or not a  
Syllable of a Wedding, Gads-bud---to shew you that  
I am not a Fool.

Lady

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Hear me; consent to the breaking off this Marriage, and the promoting any other, without consulting me, and I'll renounce all Blood, all Relation and Concern with you for ever,—nay, I'll be your Enemy, and pursue you to Destruction, I'll tear your Eyes out, and tread you under my Feet.—

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Why, what's the Matter now? Good Lord, what's all this for? Pooh, here's a Joke indeed—Why, where's my Wife?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

With *Careless*, in the close Arbour; he may want you by this time, as much as you want her.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O, if she be with Mr. *Careless*, 'tis well enough.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Fool, Sot, insensible Ox! but remember what I said to you, or you had better eat your own Horns, by this Light you had.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

You're a passionate Woman, Gads-bud,—But to say Truth, all our Family are Choleric; I am the only peaceable Person amongst 'em.



S C E N E IX.

MELLEFONT, MASKWELL *and* CYNTHIA.

MELLEFONT.

I Know no other Way but this he has propos'd; if you have Love enough to run the Venture.

CYN.

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*CYNTHIA.*

I don't know whether I have Love enough,——but I find I have Obstinacy enough to pursue whatever I have once resolv'd; and a true Female Courage to oppose any thing that resists my Will, tho' 'twere Reason itself.

*MASKWELL.*

That's right,——Well, I'll secure the Writings, and run the Hazard along with you.

*CYNTHIA.*

But how can the Coach and Six Horses be got ready without Suspicion?

*MASKWELL.*

Leave it to my Care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my Lord's own Order.

*MELLEFONT.*

How?

*MASKWELL.*

Why, I intend to tell my Lord the whole Matter of our Contrivance; that's my way.

*MELLEFONT.*

I don't understand you.

*MASKWELL.*

Why, I'll tell my Lord, I laid this Plot with you, on purpose to betray you; and that which put me upon it, was, the finding it impossible to gain the Lady any other way, but in the Hopes of her marrying you.——

*MELLEFONT.*

So——

*MASKWELL.*

So, why so, while you're busied in making yourself ready, I'll wheedle her into the Coach; and instead of you, borrow my Lord's Chaplain, and so run away with her myself.

*MEL-*



MELLEFONT.

O I conceive you, you'll tell him so?

MASKWELL.

Tell him so! ay; why you don't think I mean to do so?

MELLEFONT.

No, no; ha, ha, I dare swear thou wilt not.

MASKWELL.

Therefore for our farther Security, I would have you disguis'd like a Parson, that if my Lord should have Curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the Coach, but think the Cheat is carried on as he would have it.

MELLEFONT.

Excellent *Maskwell!* thou wert certainly meant for a Statesman or a Jesuit,—but thou art too honest for one, and too pious for the other.

MASKWELL.

Well, get yourselves ready, and meet me in half an Hour, yonder in my Lady's Dressing Room; go by the back Stairs, and so we may slip down without being observ'd,—I'll send the Chaplain to you with his Robes; I have made him my own,—and ordered him to meet us to-morrow morning at *St. Albans*; there we will sum up this Account, to all our Satisfactions.

MELLEFONT.

Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little Time we have.



SCENE



S C E N E X.

CYNTHIA, MASKWELL.

MASKWELL.

MADAM, you will be ready?  
CYNTHIA.

I will be punctual to the Minute. [Going.

MASKWELL.

Stay, I have a Doubt---Upon second Thoughts, we had better meet in the Chaplain's Chamber here, the corner Chamber at this End of the Gallery, there is a back Way into it, so that you need not come through this Door---and a pair of private Stairs leading down to the Stables---It will be more convenient.

CYNTHIA.

I am guided by you,---but *Mellefont* will mistake.

MASKWELL.

No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

CYNTHIA.

I will not fail.



S C E N E XI.

MASKWELL alone.

WHY, *qui vult decipi decipiatur*---'Tis no Fault of mine. I have told 'em in plain Terms, how easy 'tis for me to cheat 'em; and if they will not hear the  
Serpent's

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Serpent's Hiss, they must be stung into Experience, and future Caution—Now to prepare my Lord to consent to this,---But first I must instruct my little Levite; there is no Plot, public or private, that can expect to prosper without one of them has a Finger in't. He promised me to be within at this Hour.---Mr. Saygrace, Mr. Saygrace.

[Goes to the Chamber-Door, and knocks



S C E N E XII.

MASKWELL, SAYGRACE.

Mr. SAYGRACE [looking out.]

SWEET Sir, I will but pen the last Line of an Acrostic, and be with you in the twinkling of an Ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an *Amen*, or before you can-----

MASKWELL.

Nay, good Mr. Saygrace, do not prolong the Time, by describing to me the Shortness of your Stay; rather, if you please, defer the finishing of your Wit, and let us talk about our Business, it shall be Tithes in your Way.

SAYGRACE [Enters.]

You shall prevail, I would break off in the middle of a Sermon to do you a Pleasure.

MASKWELL.

You could not do me a greater,---except---the Business in Hand---Have you provided a Habit for *Mellefont*?

SAYGRACE.

I have, they are ready in my Chamber, together with a clean starch'd Band and Cuffs.

MASK-

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*M A S K W E L L .*

Good, let them be carry'd to him,---have you stich'd the Gown Sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waste time in putting it on ?

*S A Y G R A C E .*

I have ; the Gown will not be indued without Perplexity.

*M A S K W E L L .*

Meet me in half an Hour, here in your own Chamber. When *Cynthia* comes, let there be no Light, and do not speak, that she may not distinguish you from *Mellefont*. I'll urge haste, to excuse your Silence.

*S A Y G R A C E .*

You have no more Commands ?

*M A S K W E L L .*

None, your Text is short.

*S A Y G R A C E .*

But pithy, and I will handle it with Discretion.

*M A S K W E L L .*

It will be the first you have so serv'd.



S C E N E XIII.

*Lord TOUCHWOOD, M A S K W E L L .*

*Lord TOUCHWOOD.*

**S**URE I was born to be controlled by those I should command : My very Slaves will shortly give me Rules how I shall govern them.

*M A S K W E L L .*

I am concern'd to see your Lordship discompos'd.--

Lord

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Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Have you seen my Wife lately, or disoblig'd her?

MASKWELL.

No, my Lord.--What can this mean! [*Aside.*]

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Then *Mellefont* has urg'd some Body to incense her--  
Something she has heard of you which carries her beyond  
the Bounds of Patience.

MASKWELL.

This I fear'd. [*Aside.*]--Did not your Lordship tell  
her of the Honours you design'd me?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Yes.

MASKWELL.

'Tis that; you know my Lady has a high Spirit, she  
thinks I am unworthy.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Unworthy! 'Tis an ignorant Pride in her to think so  
—Honesty to me is true Nobility. However, 'tis my  
Will it shall be so, and that shou'd be convincing to her  
as much as Reason—By Heav'n, I'll not be Wife-rid-  
den; were it possible, it shou'd be done this Night.

MASKWELL.

By Heav'n he meets my Wishes, [*Aside.*]--Few Things  
are impossible to willing Minds.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Instruct me how this may be done, you shall see I  
want no Inclination.

MASKWELL.

I had laid a small Design for to-morrow (as Love will  
be inventing) which I thought to communicate to your  
Lordship—But it may be as well done to-night.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Here's Company---Come this way, and tell me.

S C E N E



SCENE XIV.

CARELESS and CYNTHIA.

CARELESS.

IS not that he, now gone out with my Lord?  
CYNTHIA.

Yes.

CARELESS.

By Heav'n there's Treachery----The Confusion that I saw your Father in, my Lady *Touchwood's* Passion, with what imperfectly I overheard between my Lord and her, confirm me in my Fears. Where's *Mellefont*?

CYNTHIA.

Here he comes.



SCENE XV.

[*To them*] MELLEFONT.

CYNTHIA.

DID *Maskwell* tell you any thing of the Chaplain's Chamber?

MELLEFONT.

No ; my Dear, will you get ready---the Things are all in my Chamber ; I want nothing but the Habit.

CARELESS.

You are betray'd, and *Maskwell* is the Villain I always thought him.

CYN-



*The* DOUBLE-DEALER. 261

CYNTHIA.

When you were gone, he said his Mind was chang'd, and bid me meet him in the Chaplain's Room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you Notice.

MELLEFONT.

How!

CARELESS.

There's *Saygrace* tripping by with a Bundle under his Arm---He cannot be ignorant that *Maskwell* means to use his Chamber; let's follow and examine him.

MELLEFONT.

'Tis loss of Time---I cannot think him false.



S C E N E XVI.

CYNTHIA, Lord TOUCHWOOD.

CYNTHIA.

MY Lord musing!

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

He has a quick Invention, if this were suddenly design'd---Yet he says he had prepar'd my Chaplain already.

CYNTHIA.

How's this! Now I fear indeed.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

*Cynthia* here! Alone, fair Cousin, and melancholy?

CYNTHIA.

Your Lordship was thoughtful.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

My Thoughts were on serious Business, not worth your hearing.

CYN-

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CYNTHIA.

Mine were on Treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Treachery concerning me! pray be plain—Hark! What Noise!

MASKWELL [*within.*]

Will you not hear me?

Lady TOUCHWOOD [*within.*]

No, Monster! Traitor! No.

CYNTHIA.

My Lady and *Maskwell!* this may be lucky—My Lord, let me intreat you to stand behind this Skreen, and listen; perhaps this Chance may give you Proof of what you ne'er could have believ'd from my Suspicions.



S C E N E XVII.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD with a Dagger, and MASKWELL, CYNTHIA and Lord TOUCHWOOD abscond, listning.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

**Y**OU want but Leisure to invent fresh Falshood, and sooth me to a fond Belief of all your Fictions; but I will stab the Lie that's forming in your Heart, and save a Sin, in pity to your Soul.

MASKWELL.

Strike then---Since you will have it so.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Ha! A steady Villain to the last!

MASKWELL.

Come, why do you dally with me thus?

Lady

*The* DOUBLE-DEALER. 263

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Thy stubborn Temper shocks me, and you knew it would—— this is Cunning all, and not Courage ; no, I know thee well : But thou shalt miss thy Aim.

MASKWELL.

Ha, ha, ha.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Ha! Do you mock my Rage? then this shall punish your fond, rash Contempt! Again Smile!

[Goes to strike.

And such a Smile as speaks in Ambiguity! Ten thousand Meanings lurk in each Corner of that various Face.

Oh! that they were written in thy Heart, that I, with this, might lay thee open to my Sight!

But then 'twill be too late to know,---

Thou hast, thou hast found the only way to turn my Rage; Too well thou know'st my jealous Soul cou'd never bear Uncertainty. Speak then and tell me---Yet are you silent? Oh, I am wilder'd in all Passions! But thus my Anger melts. [Weeps] Here, take this Poniard, for my very Spirits faint, and want Strength to hold it; thou has disarm'd my Soul.

[Gives the Dagger.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Amazement shakes me —— Where will this end?

MASKWELL.

So, 'tis well——let your wild Fury have a Vent; and when you have Temper, tell me.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

MASKWELL. [Aside.]

Thanks, my Invention; and now I have it for you--- First tell me what urg'd you to this Violence? For your Passion broke in such imperfect Terms, that yet I am to learn the Cause.

Lady

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Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

My Lord himself surpris'd me with the News, you were to marry *Cynthia*----That you had own'd your Love to him, and his Indulgence would assist you to attain your Ends.

*CYNTHIA.*

How, my Lord!

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

Pray forbear all Resentments for a while, and let us hear the rest.

*MASKWELL.*

I grant you in Appearance all is true; I seem'd consenting to my Lord; nay, transported with the Blessing--- But could you think that I, who had been happy in your lov'd Embraces, cou'd e'er be fond of an inferior Slavery?

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

Ha! O Poison to my Ears! What do I hear!

*CYNTHIA.*

Nay, good my Lord, forbear Resentment, let us hear it out.

Lord *TOUCHWOOD.*

Yes, I will contain, tho' I cou'd burst.

*MASKWELL.*

I that had wanton'd in the rich Circle of your World of Love, cou'd be confin'd within the puny Province of a Girl? No--- Yet tho' I dote on each last Favour more than all the rest; tho' I would give a Limb for every Look you cheaply throw away on any other Object of your Love; yet so far I prize your Pleasures o'er my own, that all this seeming Plot that I have laid, has been to gratify your Taste, and cheat the World, to prove a faithful Rogue to you.

Lady *TOUCHWOOD.*

If this were true---But how can it be?

*MASK-*

MASKWELL.

I have so contriv'd, that *Mellefont* will presently, in the Chaplain's Habit, wait for *Cynthia* in your Dressing-Room: But I have put the Change upon her, that she may be other-where employ'd—Do you procure her Night-Gown, and with your Hoods tied over your Face, meet him in her stead; you may go privately by the back Stairs, and, unperceiv'd, there you may propose to reinstate him in his Uncle's Favour, if he'll comply with your Desires; his Case is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any Conditions.—If not, here take this; you may employ it better, than in the Heart of one who is nothing when not yours. *[Gives the Dagger.]*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Thou can'tst deceive every Body,—Nay, thou hast deceiv'd me; but 'tis as I would wish,—Trusty Villain! I could worship thee——

MASKWELL.

No more——It wants but a few Minutes of the time; and *Mellefont's* Love will carry him there before his Hour.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

I go, I fly, incomparable *Maskwell!*



S C E N E XVIII.

MASKWELL, CYNTHIA, Lo. TOUCHWOOD.

MASKWELL:

SO, this was a Pinch indeed, my Invention was upon the Rack; and made Discovery of her last Plot: I hope *Cynthia* and my Chaplain will be ready, I'll prepare for the Expedition.





S C E N E XIX.

CYNTHIA, and Lord TOUCHWOOD.

CYNTHIA.

NOW, my Lord?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Astonishment binds up my Rage! Villany upon Villany! Heav'ns, what a long Track of dark Deceit has this discover'd! I am confounded when I look back, and want a Clue to guide me through the various Mazes of unheard of Treachery. My Wife! Damnation! my Hell!

CYNTHIA.

My Lord, have Patience, and be sensible how great our Happiness is, that this Discovery was not made too late.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I thank you; yet it may be still too late, if we don't presently prevent the Execution of their Plots;—Ha! I'll do't. Where's *Mellefont*, my poor injur'd Nephew, —How shall I make him ample Satisfaction? —

CYNTHIA.

I dare answer for him.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I do him fresh Wrong to question his Forgiveness; for I know him to be all Goodness,—Yet my Wife! Damn her, —She'll think to meet him in that Dressing-Room; —Was't not so? and *Maskwell* will expect you in the Chaplain's Chamber.—For once, I'll add my Plot too, —let us haste to find out, and inform my Nephew; and do you, quickly as you can, bring all the Company into this Gallery. —I'll expose the Strumpet and the Villain.

S C E N E





S C E N E XX.

*Lord FROTH and Sir PAUL PLYANT.*

Lord *FROTH*.

**B**Y Heav'ns I have slept an Age,--*Sir Paul*, what o'Clock is it! Past Eight, on my Conscience: My Lady's is the most inviting Couch; and a Slumber there, is the prettiest Amusement! But where's all the Company?---

*Sir PAUL PLYANT*.

The Company, gads-bud, I don't know, my Lord; but here's the strangest Revolution, all turn'd topsy-turvy; as I hope for Providence.

Lord *FROTH*.

O Heav'ns, what's the matter? where's my Wife?

*Sir PAUL PLYANT*.

All turn'd topsy-turvy, as sure as a Gun.

Lord *FROTH*.

How do you mean? my Wife!

*Sir PAUL PLYANT*.

The strangest Posture of Affairs!

Lord *FROTH*.

What, my Wife?

*Sir PAUL PLYANT*.

No, no, I mean the Family.---Your Lady's Affairs may be in a very good Posture; I saw her go into the Garden with Mr. *Brisk*.

Lord *FROTH*.

How? where? when? what to do?

*Sir PAUL PLYANT*.

I suppose they have been laying their Heads together.

Lord *FROTH.*

How?

Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*

Nay, only about Poetry, I suppose, my Lord; making Couplets.

Lord *FROTH.*

Couplets!

Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*

O, here they come.



S C E N E XXI.

[ *To them* ] Lady *FROTH, BRISK.*

*BRISK.*

**M**Y Lord, your humble Servant; Sir *Paul*, yours,---  
the finest Night!

Lady *FROTH.*

My Dear, Mr. *Brisk* and I have been Star-gazing, I don't know how long.

Sir *PAUL PLYANT.*

Does it not tire your Ladyship? are not you weary with looking up?

Lady *FROTH.*

Oh, no, I love it violently-----My dear, you're melancholy.

Lord *FROTH.*

No, my Dear; I'm but just awake.---

Lady *FROTH.*

Snuff some of my Spirit of Hartshorn.

Lord *FROTH.*

I've some of my own, thank you, my Dear.

Lady

*The* D O U B L E - D E A L E R. 269

Lady F R O T H.

Well, I swear, Mr. *Brisk*, you understood Astronomy like an old *Egyptian*.

B R I S K.

Not comparably to your Ladyship ; you are the very *Cynthia* of the Skies, and Queen of Stars.

Lady F R O T H.

That's because I have no Light, but what's by Reflection from you, who are the Sun.

B R I S K.

Madam, you have eclipsed me quite, let me perish, — I can't answer that.

Lady F R O T H.

No matter, --- Hark ye, shall you and I make an Almanack together ?

B R I S K.

With all my Soul --- Your Ladyship has made me the Man in't already, I'm so full of the Wounds which you have given.

Lady F R O T H.

O finely taken ! I swear now you are even with me. O *Parnassus* ! you have an infinite deal of Wit.

Sir P A U L P L Y A N T.

So he has, Gads-bud, and so has your Ladyship.



S C E N E XXII.

[*To them*] Lady PLYANT, CARELESS, CYNTHIA.

Lady P L Y A N T.

**Y**OU tell me most surprising things ; blefs me, who would ever trust a Man ? O my Heart akes for fear they should be all deceitful alike.

N 3

C A R E -

270 *The* DOUBLE-DEALER.

CARELESS.

You need not fear, Madam; you have Charms to fix Inconstancy itself.

Lady PLYANT.

O dear, you make me blush.

Lord FROTH.

Come, my Dear, shall we take leave of my Lord and Lady?

CYNTHIA.

They'll wait upon your Lordship presently.

Lady FROTH.

Mr. *Brisk*, my Coach shall set you down.

A L L.

What's the Matter?

*[A great Shriek from the Corner of the Stage.]*



S C E N E XXIII.

*[To them]* Lady TOUCHWOOD runs out affrighted, my Lord after her, like a Parson.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

O I'm betray'd.----Save me, help me!

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Now, what Evasion, Strumpet?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Stand off, let me go.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Go, and thy own Infamy pursue thee.——You stare as you were all amazed,——I don't wonder at it,——but too soon you'll know mine and that Woman's Shame.

S C E N E



SCENE *the Last.*

Lord TOUCHWOOD, Lord FROTH, Lady FROTH, Lady PLYANT, Sir PAUL PLYANT, CYNTHIA, MELLEFONT, MASKWELL; MELLEFONT *disguis'd in a Parson's Habit and pulling in MASKWELL.*

MELLEFONT.

NAY, by Heav'n you shall be seen. — *Careless*, your Hand:---Do you hold down your Head? Yes, I am your Chaplain: look in the Face of your injur'd Friend, thou Wonder of all Falshood.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Are you silent, Monster?

MELLEFONT.

Good Heav'ns! How I believ'd and lov'd this Man!— Take him hence for he's a Disease to my Sight.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Secure that manifold Villain. [*Servants seize him.*]

CARELESS.

Miracle of Ingratitude!

BRISK.

This is all very surprizing, let me perish.

Lady FROTH.

You know I told you *Saturn* look'd a little more angry than usual.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

We'll think of Punishment at Leisure, but let me hasten to do Justice, in rewarding Virtue and wrong'd Innocence. — Nephew, I hope I have your Pardon, and *Cynthia's*.

MELLE-

272 *The* DOUBLE-DEALER.

MELLEFONT.

We are your Lordship's Creatures.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

And be each other's Comfort ;----Let me join your Hands:----Unwearied Nights, and wishing Days attend you both ; mutual Love, lasting Health and circling Joys, tread round each happy Year of your Long Lives.

*Let secret Villany from hence be warn'd,  
Howe'er in private Mischiefs are conceiv'd,  
Torture and Shame attend their open Birth ;  
Like Vipers in the Womb, base Treachery lies,  
Still gnawing that, whence first it did arise ;  
No sooner born but the wile Parent dies.*

}

[Exeunt omnes,



E P I-





# EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. Mountford.

**C**OU'D Poets but foresee how Plays wou'd take,  
Then they cou'd tell what Epilogues to make ;  
Whether to thank or blame their Audience most :  
But that late Knowledge does much Hazard cost :  
'Till Dice are thrown, there's nothing won, nor lost. }  
So 'till the Thief has stoll'n, he cannot know  
Whether he shall escape the Law, or no.  
But Poets run much greater Hazards far,  
Than they who stand their Trials at the Bar ;  
The Law provides a Curb for its own Fury,  
And suffers Judges to direct the Fury.  
But in this Court, what Diff'rence does appear ! }  
For every one's both Judge and Jury here ;  
Nay, and what's worse, an Executioner.  
All have a Right and Title to some Part,  
Each choosing that in which he has most Art.  
The dreadful Men of Learning all confound,  
Unless the Fable's good, and Moral sound.  
The Vizor-Masks that are in Pit and Gallery,  
Approve, or damn, the Repartee and Rallery.

The

## EPILOGUE.

*The Lady Critics, who are better read,  
Enquire if Characters are nicely bred;  
If the soft Things are penn'd and spoke with Grace:  
They judge of Action too, and Time, and Place;  
In which we do not doubt but they're discerning,  
For that's a kind of Affignation Learning.  
Beaus judge of Dress; the Witlings judge of Songs;  
The Cuckoldom, of Ancient Right, to Cits belongs.  
Poor Poets thus the Favour are deny'd,  
Even to make Exceptions when they're Try'd.  
'Tis hard that they must ev'ry one admit:  
Methinks I see some Faces in the Pit,  
Which must of Consequence be Foes to Wit.  
You who can judge, to Sentence may proceed;  
But tho' he cannot Write, let him be freed  
At least from their Contempt, who cannot Read.*

The End of the FIRST Volume.



